CHAPTER III

OBSERVANCE AND VIOLATION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF COOPERATION AND THE PRINCIPLE OF POLITENESS
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3.1 Preliminaries
Interlocutors tend to flout the maxims in order to generate an implicature in different linguistic, social and cognitive contexts of interaction. Maxims are violated for many reasons- maxims often overlap with each other as the speaker has to choose one of them; sometimes a maxim is flouted deliberately to generate the correct implicature to convey the right message. A detailed account of the maxims of cooperation and the maxims ofpoliteness has been given in the previous chapter. Based on the theoretical framework, the present chapter analyzes dialogues from the selected novels in the light of the conversational maxims. The main thrust of the analysis lies on the contextual non-observance of the maxims. As the principle of co-operation and the principle of politeness are complementary to each other, a tradeoff between the two is a common phenomenon. Observance of one leads to violation of the other. Therefore, the chapter analyses the principles as a unified entity.

3.2 Violation of the Cooperative Principle
According to Grice, exploitation of a maxim refers to

A procedure by which a maxim is flouted for the purpose of getting
in a conversational implicature by means of something of the nature
of a figure of speech.                             (1989: 33)

Grice’s investigation focused on the violation of a maxim as it generated an implicature.
3.2.1 Flouting the Maxim of Quantity

The maxim of Quantity is flouted when the speaker gives too much or too little information. In other words, all the information is not provided by the speaker.

Example:

Father to ailing son

Father: ‘Are you fine today?’
Son: ‘I don’t know. Can’t say exactly.’

The maxim of quantity is flouted as the son’s answer doesn’t carry adequate information. In this situation may be the son doesn’t feel any improvement in his health even after taking the medicine but doesn’t want to disappoint his caring father. His answer gives further scope to the father to inquire about his health in detail.

The selected novels offer speech events where the maxim of Quantity has been flouted. Each fictional discourse is followed by the conversational implicature it generates.

Example 1

‘What does your boss do for a living, Country-Mouse?’
‘I don’t know.’
‘Being loyal or being stupid, Country-Mouse? Where is he from?’
‘Dhanbad.’

(The White Tiger, 2008:126)

Conversational Implicature

This conversation takes place between Balram Halwai, Mr.Ashok’s driver and one of his driver friends while they are waiting for their masters at the parking lot. The other driver is inquisitive about Balram’s master, Mr.Ashok. Balram, on the
contrary, maintains his loyalty and doesn’t discuss his master’s personal affairs in front of outsiders. He avoids the question when the other driver wants to know about Mr.Ashok’s occupation. He chooses not to answer and thus the maxims of Quantity and Quality are violated. He shows non-cooperation with the other driver. His answer *I don’t know* doesn’t carry adequate information, thus flouts Quantity and secondly, he lies to the other driver flouting the maxim of Quality. Though Quantity is flouted, he observes politeness.

**Example 2**

Someone was inside the mosquito net. I saw a silhouette in the lotus position.

‘Don’t worry, Balram. I know what you are doing.’

A man’s voice. Well, at least it wasn’t Granny – that was my first thought.

Mr.Ashok lifted up the corner of the net and looked at me, a sly grin on his face.

‘I know exactly what you were doing.’

‘Sir?’

I was calling your name and you were not responding. So, I came down to see. But I know exactly what you were doing… that other driver, the man with pink lips, he told me.’

My heart pounded. I looked down at the ground.

‘He said you were at the temple, offering prayers for my health.’

‘Yes, sir,’ I said, with sweat pouring down my face in relief. ‘That’s right, sir.’  

*(The White Tiger, 2008:236)*
Conversational Implicature

The conversation takes place between driver Balram and his master, Mr. Ashok. Mr. Ashok once comes looking for Balram at the basement of the building where he finds him sleeping inside a mosquito net. Balram is shocked to see Mr. Ashok in front of him in that dingy place. Just a while ago Balram had asked for a half day off from his job saying he had some important work. Mr. Ashok had trusted him and granted him leave. Balram had lied to his master and had spent time in a brothel. He is taken aback to see Mr. Ashok in front of him as he has never imagined it. Mr. Ashok is repeatedly saying that he knows exactly what Balram has been doing. Balram has never expected Mr. Ashok to be in the know of his secret visit. He is clueless as it is not apparent from Mr. Ashok’s utterance that how much and what exactly he knows. Mr. Ashok flouts the maxim of Quantity as information given by him is not sufficient for Balram to decipher the truth. Balram does not want Mr. Ashok to know the truth as it would put his reputation at stake. Finally, to his surprise, Mr. Ashok reveals that he has come to know from another driver that Balram has been to a temple to pray for his master’s (Mr. Ashok’s) good health. Balram is relieved to hear this and agrees politely. He observes the Maxim of Agreement but at the same time flouts Quality as he supports a lie told by another driver.

Example 3

He counted on the fingers of his free hand:

1. ‘Are you just a country bumpkin?’
   Pause.
2. ‘Are you a liar?’
   Pause.
3. ‘Are you playing foolish female games?’
   Pause.
4. ‘Are you trying deliberately to make me angry?’
Long long pause.
Then a venomous spat-out sentence.

5. ‘Or are you incredibly stupid?’
When she said nothing, he waited.
‘Which of the above? We are not ending the conversation until you reply.’
Longer wait.
‘Which? Are you bloody stupid, I ask you?!’
Silence.
‘Well, I will have to conclude that it is all of the above. Is it all of the above??’
With fear that grew as she spoke the words, summoning up the same spirit of the powder-puff night, she defied him. To his amazed ears and her own shocked ears, as if waking up to a moment of clarity before death, she said: ‘You are the one who is stupid.’

(The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:304)

Conversational Implicature
The conversation takes place between the judge and his wife Nimi. The judge has a troubled married life. He is a foreign returned civil servant and his wife, Nimi is an average looking village simpleton. He considers it a perfect mismatch. He detests Nimi and demonstrates his dissatisfaction by raising his temper in every small issue. On one such occasion he loses control on his temper. The judge works under the then British rulers and one day he comes to know that his wife has been seen in an anti-British political rally. Nimi, on the other hand is unaware of the gravity of the situation. It leads to a heated argument as the judge interrogates her with insulting questions and derogatory remarks. Nimi keeps silent throughout the interrogation which agitates the judge. The judge provokes her saying if she is ‘stupid’ or if she is ‘playing foolish female games’ with him or if she is
deliberately trying to make him angry’. Nimi is tight lipped throughout the interrogation and violates the principle of cooperation as she chooses not to respond to those derogatory remarks in order to avoid further arguments thus violating the Maxim of Quantity. But the judge is shocked when she finally retaliates. He is not prepared for such a response from his timid wife. Nimi retorts and calls him stupid. She also flouts the maxim of Manner as her accusation against her husband sounds completely obscure. The judge fails to understand Nimi’s retaliation. As both husband and wife indulge in the blame game, the Maxim of Modesty is also violated as both of them maximize dispraise to the other.

**Example 4**

‘So!’ she said. Her voice shrill, flattering. ‘What are your plans? How long will you be staying? Have you decided?’

Rahel tried to say something. It came out jagged. Like a piece of tin. She walked to the window and opened it. For a Breath of Fresh Air.

‘Shut it when you’ve finished with it,’ Baby Kochamma said, and closed her face like a cupboard.


**Conversational Implicature**

Rahel is an unwanted guest at the Ayemenem House, her ancestral maternal home. Now the only inhabitants of the house are her grand aunt Baby Kochamma and the old housemaid Kochu Maria. The unmarried Baby Kochamma is Rahel’s maternal grandfather’s sister. When Rahel’s mother Ammu gets separated from her husband and returns to Ayemenem House with her twins Estha and Rahel, Baby Kochamma disapproves of the whole arrangement. Driven by her own narrow convictions, Baby Kochamma is never feels any genuinely affection for the two
siblings Estha, and Rahel. Years of separation has not changed her harsh feelings for the twins. Rahel is now an adult and has returned to the House after a long time. In the given conversation Baby Kochamma is seen inquiring about Rahel’s plans and discouraging her from making any long term plans to stay in the house. Rahel does not respond to her queries and remains a silent listener. As she chooses not to answer, the Maxim of Quantity is flouted; hence, the principle of cooperation is violated. Baby Kochamma could discern the tinges of the long lost estranged relationship they share in Rahel’s silent non-cooperation.

**Example 5**

When the question is repeated and there is still no response, Mr. Lepidus asks, ‘Mr. Ganguli, does Nikhil follow English?’

‘Of Course he follows,’ Ashoke says. ‘My son is perfectly bilingual.’

In order to prove that Gogol knows English, Ashoke does something he has never done before and addresses his son in careful, accented English.’ Go on Gogol,’ he says patting him on his head. ‘Tell Mrs. Lapidus how old you are.’

‘What was that?’ Mrs. Lapidus says.

‘I beg your pardon, madam?’

‘That name you called him something with a ‘G’.’

‘Oh that, that is what we call him at home only. But his good name should be – is ’ he nods his head firmly – ‘Nikhil’.

Mrs. Lapidus frowns. ‘I’m afraid I don’t understand. Good name?’

‘Yes.’ (The Namesake, 2003:58)

**Conversational Implicature**

Ashoke Ganguly, a Bengali by birth comes to America for research and later settles down with a faculty position at MIT. He is married to Ashima and they
have their first child, a son, Gogol. When Gogol is old enough to go to school, Ashoke takes him for admission. The conversation takes place between Ashoke and the elementary school Principal Mrs. Lapidus. Ashoke introduces Gogol to Mrs. Lapidus as Nikhil. When Mrs. Lapidus starts talking to Gogol addressing him as Nikhil, to everybody’s bewilderment, he does not respond to that name. Mrs. Lapidus thinks that Nikhil is unable to converse in English. Ashoke contradicts her saying that his son is a perfect bilingual. To prove this, he asks Gogol to tell his age to Mrs. Lapidus in English. Mrs. Lapidus notices Ashoke calling his son by another name and inquires about it. Ashoke unwittingly tells her that they call him Gogol at home since it is his ‘pet name’. Mrs. Lapidus finds it intriguing to comprehend as in the western culture they never consider two separate names for a child. Ashok tries to explain that they call him Gogol only at home and Nikhil is his ‘good name’ for school. It is a very prevalent feature of Bengali culture to keep two names for a child. Ashoke does not see any problem in that, while it confuses the Principal. She is not able to understand the need or necessity of two different names. Ashoke flouts the maxim of Quantity unknowingly as his explanation is inadequate for the American lady. This cultural concept is not understood properly by her and leaves her in a state of bewilderment.

Example 6

‘What is done is done,’ his father said. ‘It will be a hassle. Gogol has, in effect, become your good name.’

‘It is too complicated now,’ his mother said, agreeing.

‘You are too old.’

‘I’m not,’ he persisted. ‘I don’t get it. Why did you have to give me a pet name in the first place? What’s the point?’

‘It’s our way, Gogol,’ his mother maintained. ‘It is what Bengalis do.’

‘But it is not even a Bengali name.’ (The Namesake, 2003:99)
Conversational Implicature

Gogol has decided to change his name legally from Gogol to Nikhil and puts forth this idea in front of his parents. Initially his parents do not support the idea and raise doubts that probably he is too old for that now and what has been done should be acceptable to him. Gogol’s point of contention is that he finds his name too unusual to share it with the world and feels inferior to others when occasionally he finds people intrigued by his name. To get rid of the discomfiture, he has decided to change his name. As his parents do not welcome his decision as expected, it baffles him and he tries to justify it. He questions his parents regarding the need of keeping a pet name. Ashima, his mother tries to answer his question but it is not adequately convincing to him. She explains that it is ‘their way’ and that is what all Bengalis do. She tried to show Gogol the cultural aspect of naming a child in the Bengali society but still fails to give a satisfactory answer. Gogol, who is born and brought up in a culture so different from hers, is not able to see through her reasoning. It leads to a communication gap between the parents and the child and the clash between the two cultures only widens that gap. Ashima’s explanation does not satisfy her son’s queries. Hence the maxim of Quantity is flouted. Ashima’s answer, though relevant to her son’s question, is not adequately informative.

3.2.2 Flouting the Maxim of Quality

Maxim of Quality is flouted in various ways.

i. **When speaker doesn’t say what he really thinks**

Example:

My friend is getting ready for a wedding and asks me how he looks. I respond-

‘You would look better without the tie.’

I want my friend to understand that the tie does not suit the purpose. Though I don’t speak it in exact words I send the message across.
ii. **Use of hyperbole**

Example:

One child to another

‘The cat’s eyes were burning in the darkness.’

The child is scared after he encounters a cat in a dark place. His expression is exaggerated when he narrates his experience to his friend in order to make an impact on the latter.

iii. **Use of metaphor**

Example:

The lieutenant boasts of his battalion

‘My soldiers are lion-hearts.’

The officer praises the bravery of the soldiers and calls them lion-hearts. The attribute is justified as soldiers are as fearless and ferocious as a lion. He makes use of the metaphor to make the description more powerful.

iv. **Use of irony**

Example:

A friend borrowed another friend’s umbrella and lost it.
The first friend complaining to the other

‘You should not have given me the umbrella. You know I am forgetful.’

Instead of seeking apology, the friend who lost the umbrella blames his friend who lent it to him in good will.
v. **When speaker uses sarcasm in speech**

Example:

In continuation with the previous example, (refer to Example iii of 3.2.2) the other friend’s reply would be

‘I don’t know what to say, I am speechless. I should have been careful.’

The friend is being ironical in an unfriendly way. The friend is baffled at his careless friend’s reaction. He also violates the principle of politeness.

vi. **White lies**

Example:

A doctor tells the patient who is due for a surgery and is worried about it

‘It is going to be a very minor surgery. You will be out of the Operation Theatre before you know.’

The doctor speaks a white lie to protect the patient from going into some kind of nervous breakdown. In doing so, he delivers an untruthful statement, hence flouts the quality maxim. But it was a lie spoken with good intention to boost the patient’s morale.

Examples selected from the novels in which the maxim of Quality is flouted for different reasons are analyzed below.

**Example 1**

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)

Conversational Implicature
The conversation takes place between Mr.Ashok, his brother Mukesh and their driver Balram. On one of the occasions a one rupee coin falls from Mukesh’s pocket while getting down from the car. He harasses Balram, their driver to look for it. Despite looking for it when Balram fails to locate the coin, Mukesh abuses him and accuses him of theft. To save the poor driver, Mukesh’s brother Mr.Ashok reminds Mukesh of how not so long ago they have bribed the politicians half a million rupees and how it sounds too ironical to bully a servant for a one rupee coin. In spite of the humiliation, Balram maintains his poise and behaves obediently. He politely accepts the mistake he has never committed and skillfully takes out a coin from his own pocket and produces it as the lost coin and apologizes. It can be seen as a beautiful example of the observance of the modesty maxim though Balram flouts Quality by lying to the master. Balram’s subdued
gesture is apt to the situation as he knows that is the only way to calm down the agitated master.

**Example 2**

‘Get up boy’, he said – big, uncut toe nails scratched my cheeks.

Mr.Ashok – The man on the terrace, of course – way by his side now.

‘You’re really from Laxmangarh?’

‘Yes, sir. I used to work in the tea shop – the one with the big photo on Gandhi in it. I used to break coals there. You came once to have tea.’

‘Ah… the old village.’ He closed his eyes. ‘Do people there still remember me? It has been three years since I was there.’

‘Of course, sir – people say, “our father is gone, Thakur Ramdev is gone, the best of the landlords is gone, who will protect us now?” ’

The stork enjoyed hearing that.

(*The White Tiger*, 2008:61)

**Conversational Implicature**

Balram wants the job of a driver in the great socialist’s house. In order to appease the landlord’s ego, he conjures up stories about how the people of his village Laxmangarh still revere him as their father, their caretaker and how they still miss a landlord like him. This is an instance where Balram is seen observing insincere approbation of paying deference to the landlord in order to flatter him and make him feel important and desirable. In reality the landlord is actually a land-shark who has used his power to snatch the poor illiterate villagers’ lands. He has ruled the village like a dictator and the poor villagers have been terrorized by him. The villagers have to sing his false praises to be spared from his animosity. Balram is aware of the atrocity that had spread in the village during the landlord’s rule but
does not let it be obvious in his talk. There is an undertone of flattery in Balram’s utterances. While he observes politeness, he flouts the maxim of Quality as there is no truth in his talk. His intention is to make a living by getting the job.

Example 3

Mukesh sir looked at me with narrowed eyes. He did not know the village ways, but he had all the cunnings of the landlords.

‘Do you drink?’

‘No, sir. In my caste we never drink.’

‘Halwai….’ Mr. Ashok said with a grin. ‘Are you a sweet maker? Can you cook for us while you are not driving?’

‘Certainly, sir.’ I cook very well. Very tasty sweets. *Gulabjamuns, laddoos,* anything you desire,’ I said. ‘I worked at a tea shop for many years.

Mr. Ashok seemed to find this amusing. ‘Only in India’, he said.

‘Your driver can also make sweets for you. Only in India. Start from tomorrow.’

* (The White Tiger, 2008:65)

Conversational Implicature

People in many parts of India have strong cultural conditioning regarding castes and peculiarity of mannerisms found in different castes. Balram has been asked what caste he belongs to and he has lied that he belongs to the Halwais’ caste. His answer does not satisfy the landlord. When asked whether he drinks, he brings in his caste principle in defense and convinces the landlord that the people in his caste are teetotalers. He lies but his answer satisfies the landlords. Again being asked whether he can cook as he belongs to the caste of Halwais, (the caste of sweet makers in Indian culture), he lies again. Though he does not know anything about cooking, he shows off culinary expertise by offering a long list of sweet meats that he can prepare. In his desperation to get a job, he doesn’t hesitate to tell
lies and thus flouts the maxim of Quality. Nonetheless, the orthodox landlords believe in him and give him the job.

**Example 4**

‘Not so fast’, Mukesh sir said. ‘First we have to ask about his family. How many are they, where they live, everything. And one more thing. How much do you want?’

Another test.

‘Absolutely nothing, sir. You’re like a father and mother to me, and how can I ask for money from my parents?’

‘Eight hundred rupees a month,’ he said.

‘No, sir, please – it’s too much. Give me half of that, it’s enough. More than enough.’

‘If we keep you beyond two months, it’ll go to one thousand five hundred.’

Looking suitably devastated, I accepted the money from him.

*(The White Tiger, 2008:65)*

**Conversational Implicature**

Applying all the tactics, as Balram is about to get the driver’s job, the issue of salary is raised by the landlord. The conversation takes place between Balram and the landlord. When the landlord asks how much salary does Balram expect, he refuses to accept any kind of salary and justifies that he cannot accept money from people whom he respects like his parents. Balram knows that the landlords love to be flattered and uses this tactic to get a fat salary. He observes negative politeness as he sounds pessimistic in his response but at the same time assures the decision to be in his favour. Though he tells lies and flouts the Quality maxim, his polite face saving act soothes the landlord’s ego and ultimately he gets the job with a promise of a salary hike in two months.
Example 5

When the caretaker brought out the dishes and put them on the table, Mr. Ashok looked at them and said, ‘Don’t you have anything vegetarian? I don’t eat meat.’

‘I’ve never heard of a landlord who was vegetarian,’ the Wild Boar said. ‘It’s not natural. You need meat to toughen you up.’ He opened his mouth and showed his curved teeth.

‘I don’t believe in killing animals needlessly. I knew vegetarians in America, and I think they’re right.’

‘What crazy ideas do you boys pick up?’ the old man said. ‘You’re a landlord. It’s the Brahmins who are vegetarians not us.’

(The White Tiger, 2008:83)

Conversational Implicature

On one of the occasions, lunch has been served for Balram’s new master Mr. Ashok and Mr. Ashok’s uncle who is referred to as the Wild Boar because of his menacing appearance. The food served is non-vegetarian. Mr. Ashok asks for some vegetarian food which amuses the Wild Boar. He tries to justify meat eating as according to him it toughens a person. When Mr. Ashok debates against the merciless killing of innocent animals for food, the Wild Boar refuses to cooperate. He puts a rhetorical question and ridicules Mr. Ashok that people like him must be fanatical to nurture ideas like these against meat eating. He emphatically states that it is the Brahmins and not landlords who are supposed to be vegetarians. He indirectly disagrees with Mr. Ashok.

Example 6

He touched me on the shoulder.

‘What is your name?’

‘Balram’.
‘So Balram here touched his eye as a mark of respect. The villagers are so religious in the Darkness.’

That seemed to have impressed the two of them, so I put my finger to my eye a moment later, again.

‘What is that for, driver? I don’t see any temples around.’

‘Er… we drove past a sacred tree, sir. I was offering my respects.’

‘Did you hear that? They worship nature. It’s beautiful, isn’t it?’

*(The White Tiger, 2008:90)*

Conversational Implicature

The conversation takes place when Balram is taking his new master Mr. Ashok and his wife Pinky madam for a drive for the first time. He wants to impress them. As they are driving in the rural area, Balram touches his eyes as a gesture of respect to a temple that passes by. The masters take notice of this and get impressed. They come to believe that people are religious in the *Darkness*, a metaphor for the underprivileged rural areas of India. To strengthen their impression Balram enacts the same after sometime when a tree passes by. This time he has done it on purpose. Balram lies to his masters in order to generate a good impression of him and hence violates the maxim of Quality. By doing so he has gained admiration of being a nature worshipper. All of Balram’s actions are intentional as he wants to gain his new master’s trust and confidence.

Example 7

A man in a government uniform sat at the teacher’s desk in the school room, with a long book and a black pen and he was asking everyone two questions.

‘Name’

‘Balram Halwai.’

‘Age.’
‘No age’.
‘No date of birth?’
‘No sir. My parents did not make note of it.’
He looked at me and said, ‘I think you are eighteen. I think you turned eighteen today. You just forgot, didn’t you?’
I bowed to him. ‘That’s correct, sir. I forgot. It was my birthday today.’
‘Good boy.’
And then he wrote that down in his book and told me to go away. So I got a birthday from the government.

(The White Tiger, 2008:96)

**Conversational Implicature**

When Balram is still a young boy, a government official comes to his village to prepare the voters’ list. He asks Balram his age and date of birth to record it in his book. Balram fails to give any information as according to him he does not have any age or a date of birth since his parents have not kept note of it. Though Balram gives a direct and honest answer, he flouts the maxim of Quantity as he is not able to provide adequate information to the government official. On the contrary, the official convincingly writes that day and date as his birthday and declares that Balram’s age is eighteen. Balram cooperates and accepts his birthday decided by the government though it is not a fact. Both of them show mutual solidarity and flout the maxim of Quality. The maxims of Quality and Quantity overlap in conversation. The government official decides the age of eighteen for Balram which is also the legal age of voting in India. The lie benefits both as the official finds one more voter and Balram gets a date of birth.
Example 8

‘Do you want to buy the sculpture, driver?’
‘No, madam. I’m sorry.’
‘Balram Halwai, makers of sweets, driver of cars, connoisseur of sculpture.’
‘I’m sorry, madam.’
The more I apologized, the more amused the two of them got.

(The White Tiger, 2008:161)

Conversational Implicature

When Balram is driving his master Mr. Ashok and his wife Pinky madam through Connaught Place in Delhi, Pinky madam catches him staring at one of the Buddha statues kept for sale on the road side. She starts making fun of Balram by calling him a *connoisseur of art*. It is a hyperbolic statement made for fun at the expense of a servant. Balram too takes it on his stride and apologizes to her. He says *sorry* a number of times to ensure that his mistress is pleased by his self-demeaning gesture. In this act the tact maxim is observed by Balram to observe politeness but at the same time the maxim of Quality is flouted as he begs for apology without any fault. Balram is not genuine in his apology. He utters the words to please his mistress. But his tact has amused the mistress and he remains in her good books.

Example 9

‘God, Balram, what will we do now -- what will we --- ‘He slapped his hand on his thigh. ‘What are all these children doing, walking about Delhi at one in the morning, with no one to look after them?’
When he had said this, his eyes lit up.
‘Oh, she was one of those people.’
‘Who live under the flyovers and bridges, sir. That’s my guess too.’
‘In that case, will anyone miss her…?’
'I don’t think so, sir. You know how people in the Darkness are: they have eight, nine, ten children – sometimes they don’t know the names of their own children. Her parents, if they’re even here in Delhi, if they even know where she is tonight – won’t go to the police.’

He put a hand on my shoulder the way he had been touching Pinky madam’s shoulder earlier that night. Then he put a finger on his lips. I nodded. ‘Of course, sir. Now sleep well – it’s been a difficult night for you and Pinky madam.’

(The White Tiger, 2008:165)

**Conversational Implicature**

Pinky madam’s drunk and careless driving has led to an accident and some poor child has been run over by her. Mr.Ashok is scared and anxious to know how to handle the situation. Balram knows the consequences of the crime but chooses not to speak it as it would worsen the anxiety of his master. Mr.Ashok inquires if the family of the deceased would come looking for her or miss her. Balram has a better judgment of the situation and chooses his words carefully. He very politely assures him that those commoners from the Darkness are people who do not even keep a count of their children. Hence, it is very unlikely that they would miss the deceased. This is part of the strategy of negative politeness where the speaker is careful about the hearer’s negative face wants. This also testifies the observance of the maxim of Agreement where Balram speaks what Mr.Ashok wants to hear. By doing this, Balram flouts the maxim of Quality as he does not speak the truth and hides his true feelings.

**Example 10**

‘Sit down Balram. Make yourself comfortable.’

‘Yes, sir.’
I squatted and made myself uncomfortable again.

‘Would you like some paan, Balram?’ The Mongoose asked.

‘No, sir.’

He smiled. ‘Don’t be shy, Balram. You chew paan, don’t you?’

He turned to the man in the black coat. ‘Give him something to chew, please.’

The man in the black coat reached out into his pocket and held out a small green paan. I stuck it my palm out. He dropped it into my palm without touching me.

‘Put it in your mouth, Balram. It’s for you.’

‘Yes, sir. It’s very good. Chewy. Thank you.’

(The White Tiger, 2008:167)

Conversational Implicature

A homeless stranger has been run over by the car driven by Pinky madam. Consequently, Mr. Ashok’s family wants the driver, Balram to take the blame and surrender to the police in order to save Pinky madam. Mr. Ashok’s brother Mukesh, who is referred to as the Mongoose, has called Balram to negotiate in the presence of a lawyer. The Mongoose suddenly starts behaving in Balram’s favour. In a mock gesture of politeness, he offers paan (betel leaf) to Balram. Observing the Modesty maxim while Balram politely refuses the paan, he is made to have it in the second attempt when it is actually forced on him. Knowing that he is the scapegoat, Balram takes the paan and even thanks the master saying that it is good and chewy. Balram is in great distress but he does not fail to observe the maxim of Agreement to show his loyalty. Though he is uncertain of his future, he never fails to address the masters and the outsider as ‘sir’ even in this critical situation. This is a perfect example of observance of negative politeness when the speaker gives deference to his interlocutor. In the Indian feudal system a servant is expected to be loyal and polite at any given situation. While Balram aptly observes the
strategies of politeness, he does things against his will. He lies to the masters in order to be polite hence flouts the maxim of Quality.

**Example 11**

‘Tell us all about it, Country-Mouse.’

They took positions around me.

‘Tell you what?’

‘The gate keeper spilled the beans. There are no secrets around here. You drove the woman somewhere in the night and came back alone. Has she left him?’

‘I don’t know what you are talking about.’

‘We know they have been fighting, Country-Mouse. And you drove her somewhere at night. The airport? She is gone, isn’t she? It’s a divorce – every rich man these days is divorcing his wife. These rich people…’

He shook his head. His lips curled up in scorn, exposing his reddish, rotting, paan- decaying canines.

‘No respect for God, for marriage, family – nothing.’

‘She just went out for some fresh air. And I brought her back. The gate keeper has gone blind.’

*(The White Tiger, 2008:183)*

**Conversational Implicature**

The conversation takes place between Balram and another driver. The fellow drivers are inquisitive about why and where Balram took Pinky madam, Mr. Ashok’s wife out of the building at the middle of the night. There is speculation among the servants that Balram has dropped her at the airport. The other drivers want to know the truth as it would add to the stock of gossip they have about each others’ masters. Balram, on the other hand, knows that the rumour that has spread around is true but remains tight-lipped as a proof of his loyalty towards his master.
They want him to reveal whether she has left his master forever or it is going to be a divorce. Balram boldly denies all these speculations. He clarifies that he is not aware of any such thing and he does not know anything. He is seen flouting Quality to save his master’s reputation. He lies to the other drivers about Pinky madam that he had taken her for a drive for some fresh air. He intends to say that everything is fine with his master and stops his fellow drivers from interrogating him further about his master’s personal affairs.

**Example 12**

He got up from his chair, walked over to where I was crouched and got down on one knee. He sniffed the air.

‘Your breath smells of aniseed.’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘People chew that to hide the liquor on their breath. Have you been drinking?’

‘No, sir. My caste, we are teetotalers.’

He kept sniffing coming closer all the time.

*(The White Tiger, 2008:242)*

**Conversational Implicature**

An interesting conversation takes place between the Mongoose (Mr. Ashok’s elder brother Mukesh) and driver Balram. The Mongoose suspects Balram of drinking as he smells aniseed on his breath. Balram gets scared as it could cost him his job. He very cleverly tackles the situation and denies the charges. He brings in his caste ethics to sound convincing. He clarifies that he would never do such a thing as he belongs to a caste of teetotalers. Though he flouts the maxim of Quality by not accepting the truth, he observes the maxim of Relation as his answer is relevant and contributes to the conversational goals. He wants his interrogator to understand that since he belongs to a caste of teetotalers, it is unlikely that he
would violate his caste values and be drunk. The suspicion is baseless. Balram uses this tact against his master to save his face as he knows about the orthodox views of his masters on the caste system.

**Example 13**

‘Balram. You’ll need some money, won’t you?’
‘Sir, no. There’s no need of that.’
‘Wait, Balram. Let me take out my wallet. You’re a good member of the family. You never ask for more money – I know other drivers are constantly asking for overtime and insurance: but you never say a word. You’re old fashioned. I like that. We’ll take care of all the wedding expenses, Balram. Here, Balram – here’s… here’s…’
I saw him take out a thousand-rupee note, put it back, then take out a five-hundred, then put it back, and take out a hundred.
Which he handed to me.
‘I assume you’ll be going to Laxmangarh for the wedding, Balram?’
‘…’ I folded the hundred-rupee note and put it in my chest pocket.
‘Thank you for this, sir.’ I said, and turned the ignition key.

* (The White Tiger, 2008:258)

**Conversational Implicature**

In the above conversation Mr.Ashok offers money to his driver Balram, when he comes to know that Balram’s family is planning for his wedding. The conversation is loaded with ironical statements when Mr.Ashok promises Balram that they would bear all expenses of his wedding as he has been a very loyal and faithful servant and is like a member of the family to him. But when time comes to part with money, Mr.Ashok becomes a typical feudal landlord and gives only one hundred rupees to Balram towards his wedding expenses. This is what Balram gets for his loyalty. Balram is disappointed with his master’s action. To save his
master’s face Balram politely thanks him and accepts the hundred rupee note. A subtle tone of sarcasm in hinted in Balram’s utterance but he does not make it apparent in his gesture as the relationship doesn’t allow him to do so. Though he is disappointed with his master, he manages to be polite. By doing so, he flouts Quality as he is not truthful to his emotions but this is what is expected from him as a servant. He has to make it obvious how grateful he is to his benevolent master.

Example 14

That evening I told Mr. Ashok that my family had sent me a helper, someone to keep the car tidy, and instead of getting angry that he would now have to feed another mouth which is what most of the masters would have done – he said, ‘He’s a cute boy. He looks like you. What happens to his face?’
I turned to Dharam. ‘Tell him.’
He blinked a couple of times. He was thinking it over.
‘I fell off the bus.’
Smart boy. (The White Tiger, 2008:263)

Conversational Implicature

In this conversation, Balram, Mr. Ashok’s driver introduces his nephew Dharam to his master. Balram’s grandmother Kusum has sent Dharam to stay with Balram. Dharam arrives at Balram’s place at a time when Balram is making the sinister plan of murdering his master. Dharam’s arrival seems to have shattered Balram’s plans and in a rage of frustration he hits Dharam hard on his face. He cannot bear to imagine his plan getting ruined due to the boy. He soon realizes his mistake and takes Dharam to meet Mr. Ashok. Instead of complaining about it, Mr. Ashok welcomes the idea of Balram having Dharam’s company. When he inquires about Dharam’s bruised face, Balram does not react and leaves the matter to Dharam. He
avoids further questioning by doing so and puts Dharam in the forefront to explain. He is also afraid of Dharam telling the truth but Dharam saves the situation and performs a face saving act in the right moment by saying that he had fallen off the bus. Though Dharam violates the maxim of Quality by choosing not to speak the truth, he gains his uncle’s confidence. Dharam also ensures that his uncle is letting him stay in the city and not sending him back to the village. He secures his position as the future confidante of his uncle by performing this face saving act.

**Example 15**

‘No Nepali?’ he spat, his lips sneering to show what he thought of that, but he continued in Hindi. ‘Guns?’

‘We have no guns here.’

‘Get them.’

‘You must be misinformed.’

‘Never mind with all the nakhra. Get them.’

‘I order you,’ said the judge, ‘to leave my property at once.’

‘Bring the weapons.’

‘I will call the police.’ *(The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:5)*

**Conversational Implicature**

Gorkha rebels have forcefully entered Cho Oyu, the judge’s house, where he stays with his old cook and his young granddaughter Sai. The rebels are all set to rob the house. Along with all other demands they start harassing the judge to give his guns to them. The judge denies that he has no gun in his possession and they must have been misinformed. The judge’s adamant nature is reflected in his denial. It gives rise to two parallel sets of conversation having no obvious connection between each other. Both interlocutors violate the principle of cooperation. The Gorkha rebel flouts the maxim of Relation by not accepting the judge’s refusal. The judge
does not give in and responds only in the negative till the end of the interrogation, hence flouts Quality. He stays persistent that he has no guns in possession.

**Example 16**

‘Say ‘Jai Gorkha,’ they said to the judge. Gorkhaland for Gorkhas.’

‘Jai Gorkha.’

‘Say, I am a fool.’

‘I am a fool.’

‘Loudly. Can’t hear you, huzoor. Say it louder.’

He said it in the same empty voice.

‘Jai Gorkha,’ said the cook, and ‘Gorkhaland for Gorkhas’, said Sai, although they had not been asked to say anything.

‘I am a fool,’ said the cook.

*(The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:7)*

**Conversational Implicature**

The judge’s house has been robbed by the Gorkha rebels. Before leaving the house, the rebels want the Judge to raise pro-Gorkha slogans. They do it on purpose to humiliate the Judge. The judge starts stammering the words ‘Jai Gorkha’ showing his disinterest. The rebels are not satisfied with his response. They do not leave until the judge utters the words satisfactorily. Sai, the Judge’s granddaughter and the cook come to his rescue and repeat the words to satisfy the intruders. They blindly repeat expressions like *I am a fool* and *Gorkha land for Gorkhas* to avoid disagreement with the rebels. It can be seen as a strategy in positive politeness where the speaker pretends to agree with the hearer in order to avoid damaging the hearer’s positive face. In this context, it has become more of a life saving act. There is a possibility of physical assault if the judge and his family act against their commands. The judge, Sai and the cook, however, flout Quality as what they say is out of compulsion and is a lie. The rebels sarcastically call the
judge _huzoor_ (honourific in Indian culture like ‘sir’ in English) mocking him and his pathetic condition, thus, flout the maxim of Quality.

**Example 17**

‘He was completely different,’ he told Sai..., too when she first came to Kalimpong. ‘You cannot believe. He was born a rich man.’

‘Where was he born?’
‘Into one of the top families of Gujarat. Ahmedabad or was it Baroda? Huge _haveli_ like palace.’

.........

Both tell me more,’ she would ask, as he allowed her to spread jam on a tart or grate cheese into a sauce.
‘They sent him to England and ten thousand people saw him off at the station. He went on top of an elephant! He had won, you see a scholarship from the Maharaja......

*(The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:56)*

**Conversational Implicature**
The conversation takes place between the cook and the Judge’s granddaughter Sai. Sai has come to the judge’s house at Kalimpong after her parents die in a car accident. Since her parents and her maternal grandfather, the judge has always had a strained relationship; she has little knowledge about the judge and his past life. She occasionally asks the old cook about her grandfather and the cook tells interesting stories of the judge’s past. On one such occasion Sai asks the cook about her grandfather’s birth, his ancestral place and his upbringing. The cook has been with the judge since his young days and has been a witness to every incident of his master’s life. There is hardly anything impressive about his master to share
apart from the fact that the judge belongs to a family of the peasant caste from Piphit, a remote village in Gujrat and who had managed a scholarship to study abroad. But the cook does not tell the truth to Sai. Instead, he makes the judge’s story sound like a fairy tale. Being a loyal servant, he does not want any outsider to get the real picture of his master’s past. So, he makes up stories like how the judge has been born a rich man having a palatial house and how he had won a scholarship from the king to go to England. He also adds how ten thousand people had come to see him off at the station as he had come riding an elephant. The cook exaggerates the whole affair to make Sai believe the greatness and noble birth of her grandfather. The cook fabricates the truth, thus violating the maxim of Quality. He has done it on purpose to create a good impression of his master. The cook also proves his loyalty to his master by doing so.

**Example 18**

The judge looked them over: ‘But his name is not Solomon Papiah. It is not Sampson. It is not Thomas.’ ‘They liked him so much, you see,’ said the cook’s father, ‘that they gave him a name of their own people. Out of love they called him Thomas.’

*The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:63*

**Conversational Implicature**

The above conversation takes place between the judge and the cook’s father. It is the time when the cook is young and his father has taken him to the judge for a job. The judge has developed a western taste after his short stay in England. He needs a cook with an expertise in western cuisine. The cook’s father is desperate to find a job for his son. To get his work done he introduces his son by an English name ‘Thomas’. The judge is doubtful about an Indian boy bearing an English name ‘Thomas’. The judge is doubtful about an Indian boy bearing an English name. The cook’s father clarifies that his son has previously worked with white men and out of affection they call him ‘Thomas’. The cook’s father lies to the
judge in order to gain his confidence. He knows that the judge will approve of a person who has been recommended by the English people. In order to find a job for his son, the cook’s father tells a lie and violates the maxim of Quality. But he achieves the conversational goal and secures the job for his son.

**Example 19**

‘It is strange the tutor is Nepali,’ the cook remarked to Sai when he had left. A bit later he said, ‘I thought he would be a Bengali.

‘*Hm?*’ asked Sai.  

…………………….  

……………………

‘Bengalis,’ said the cook, ‘are very intelligent.’

‘Don’t be silly,’ said Sai. ‘Although they certainly would agree.’

‘It’s the fish,’ said the cook. ‘Coastal people are more intelligent than inland people.’

‘Who says?’

‘Everyone knows,’ said the cook. ‘Coastal people eat fish and see how much cleverer they are, Bengalis, Malayalis, Tamils. Inland they eat too much grain and it slows the digestion…. Not their fault, poor things.’

‘Go eat some fish yourself.’ Sai said. ‘One stupid thing after another from your mouth.

* (The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:73)

**Conversational Implicature**

The judge has arranged a home tutor for Sai. One day the cook shares his observations on the tutor with Sai. The conversation gets interesting when the cook says that he finds it strange that the teacher is a Nepali and not Bengali as according to the cook Bengalis are cleverer than Nepalis. The cook advocates that
people from the coastal areas are more intelligent as they eat fish unlike the people from the inland like the Nepalis. He says that it surprises him how Sai’s tutor, being a Nepali, is so intelligent despite being from the inland. Sai, however, has a different view. Somehow she has started becoming fond of her tutor and she is not amused by the cook’s remark. She answers back rudely when she says that the cook should also go and have some fish himself. It is impolite on the part of Sai to speak to the cook so rudely. She also violates the maxim of Quality as her utterance has an undertone of sarcasm. Though she speaks it in a jocular manner, yet she hints that the cook should stop thinking and commenting on others’ affairs. Using sarcasm she tells the cook to stop critiquing her tutor.

Example 20

‘Did he really love her so much?’ Sai was astonished.

‘Must have,’ said the cook. ‘But they say he did not show it.’

‘May be he didn’t?’ she then suggested.

‘Bite your tongue, you evil girl. Take your words back!’ shouted the cook. ‘Of course he loved her.’

‘How did the servants know, then?’

The cook thought for a bit, thought of his own wife. ‘True’, he said. ‘Nobody really knew, but no one said anything in those days, for there are many ways of showing love, not just the way in the movies – which is all you know. You are a foolish girl. The greatest love is love that’s never shown.’

‘You say anything that suits you.’

(The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:87)
Conversational Implicature

Sai is inquisitive about her grandfather; the judge’s past and asks the cook about it. In this present piece of conversation the cook and Sai are discussing the judge’s wife, Sai’s grandmother. As a teenager, Sai is very eager to know about the judge’s relationship with his wife. She asks the cook if the judge used to love his wife very much. The cook answers in a roundabout manner and affirms the judge’s love for his wife. He adds how it has not been as explicit as present day movie romances. He adds how the judge never used to express his love for his wife in public as it was not acceptable in those times. The reality is different. The cook knows how the judge used to loathe his wife but does not want to reveal the fact to Sai as it would have affected her relationship with the judge. Sai responds that she does not believe it as the judge’s servants are of a different opinion. The cook does not like Sai’s comments and calls her an evil girl and chides her for being so careless in her remarks. Although the cook knows that Sai’s remarks are not baseless, he purposely reacts to it to discourage Sai from interrogating him any further. The cook, in order to save his ill tempered master’s face, lies to Sai and violates the maxim of Cooperation. He speaks lies about his master flouting Quality but manages to maintain a clean image of his master in front of Sai.

Example 21

‘Why are you going?’
‘I would like to go as a tourist.’
‘How do we know you will come back?’
‘My family, wife and son are here. And my shop.’
‘What shop?’
‘Camera shop.’ Could the man really believe this?
‘Where are you going to stay?’
‘With my friend in New York. Nandu is his name and here is his address if you would like to see.’
‘How long?’
‘Two weeks, if that is suitable for you.’ (Oh! Please, just a day, a day. That will be enough to serve my purpose…) 

(The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:186)

Conversational Implicature
The conversation takes place between the cook’s son Biju and the official at the visa office. Biju is anxious to procure a US visa and he is telling lies to the visa officer in order to qualify in the personal interview. He lies about his family that he has a son and a wife because of whom he would not stay in the US for long. When the officer asks him about his profession, he falsely says that he owns a camera shop. When the officer wants to know about his purpose of going to the US, he lies again that he wants to go as a tourist only for two weeks. In order to get a visa Biju puts all his credentials at stake. All his answers are completely untrue. He infringes the maxim of Quality to get his work done. The only thing that matters for him is to get into the US as he is confident that once he reaches there, he would manage to stay there without any hassle.

Example 22
‘Isn’t that your Mathematics tutor?’ asked Noni.
‘I don’t think so,’ she said, scrabbling for dignity, scrabbling for sense, ‘Looked just like him, I thought it was him myself, but wasn’t…’

On their steep way back down to the Teesta, they noticed Sai had turned green.
‘Are you all right?’ asked Father Booty.
‘Travel sick.’
‘Look at the horizon that always helps.’

(The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:215)
Conversational Implicature

On one of the occasions, Sai has come to Darjeeling with her neighbours Noni, Lola, Father Booty and Uncle Potty. There they come across a rally of the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) inside the town. As they are heading back home after shopping and dining, the procession passes by once again from very close. To her astonishment Sai spots her tutor and once boyfriend, Gyan marching with the procession. Sai catches him yelling the pro-Gorkha slogans and he too catches Sai’s eyes. He gestures at Sai not to approach him. Sai’s neighbour Noni has also caught a glimpse of Gyan and she asks Sai confirm if it is Gyan who is there in the rally. Sai is in shock and is still pondering what Gyan has to do with the GNLF. She is taken off guard at Noni’s question and lies to her in confusion. She says how she has also initially thought the same, but it is someone else resembling Gyan. Sai flouts the maxim of Quality and violates the principle of Cooperation by hiding the truth but manages to avoid Noni’s further interrogation. She is still thinking about the whole incident on their journey home and it gives her a sickening feeling. Father Booty notices the changing colour of her face and asks if everything is all right. Sai lies again that she is just feeling travel sick. She flouts Quality for the second time as she is unable to share her anguish with anyone.

Example 23

‘I haven’t been coming for tuition because of all this trouble… How is Sai?’ he mumbled.

‘She is very worried about the dog. She is crying all the time.’

‘Tell her that I will look for Mutt.’

‘How will you?’

‘Tell her I promise. I will find the dog. Don’t worry at all. Be sure and tell her. I will find her. I will find Mutt and bring her to the house.’

(The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:314)
Conversational Implicature

The conversation takes place between the cook and Gyan, Sai’s tutor. It is a chance meeting after a long gap; post the riot in Kalimpong and after Mutt, the judge’s pet dog has gone missing. Gyan has stopped tutoring Sai following an emotional break up. But he still feels guilty of hurting Sai’s emotions. When he meets the cook he asks about Sai’s well-being. He comes to know about Mutt and Sai being extremely upset about it. It is the cook’s observation though Gyan knows the real reason behind Sai’s worry and grief. To make up for the lost things he indirectly sends this message to Sai and promises the cook that he would find Mutt and bring it to Sai. He wants Sai to understand the hidden agenda in his message and to keep hope in the relationship they used to share once. Though Gyan is making false promises and is flouting the maxim of Quality, he is able to express his feelings for Sai in the guise of false commitments. He lies to the cook but becomes successful in sending a message to Sai expressing his real feelings.

Example 24

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!’
(The God of Small Things, 1997:70)
Conversational Implicature

On their way to Cochin in their car, Chacko, Baby Kochamma, Ammu and the two children Estha and Rahel come across an agitated crowd of communist protesters. As they are trying every possible way not to drag their attention to the car, one of the protesters suddenly bangs open the bonnet of the car. Chacko is angry but is too scared to express it openly. Instead, he makes a demonstration of extra politeness by calling out the man and thanking him loudly. Though he utters the words of politeness, his emotions are different. He is scared of the fanatics and feels it right to soothe their agitated minds by keeping his anger in control and talking as politely as possible for his and his family’s well-being. He flouts the maxim of Quality as he is not true to his sentiments.

Example 25

The man like a knot gave Baby Kochamma his red flag as a present.

‘Here,’ he said. ‘Hold it.’

Baby Kochamma held it, still not looking at him.

‘Wave it, he ordered.

She had to wave it. She had no choice. It smelled of new cloth and shop. Crisp and dusty. She tried to wave it as though she wasn’t waving it.

‘Now say Inquilab Zindabad!’

‘Inquilab Zindabad’, Baby Kochamma whispered.

‘Good girl.’

The crowd roared with laughter. A shrill whistle blew.

‘Okay then,’ the man said to Baby Kockamma in English, as though they had successfully concluded a business deal.

‘Bye-bye!’  

(The God of Small Things, 1997:80)
**Conversational Implicature**

The Communist protesters are harassing the Ayemenem House people sitting inside the Plymouth. The present discourse happens when one of the protesters gives Baby Kochamma a red Communist flag and asks her to wave it with the slogan ‘*Inquilab Zindabad*’. The whole situation is awkward and embarrassing but Baby Kochamma has no choice but to do likewise. She repeats the words in utter disgust. She obeys them out of fear but is not loyal to her utterances. Hence she flouts the maxim of Quality and violates the principle of cooperation. She mindlessly repeats the words in order to avoid further humiliation.

**Example 26**

‘I don’t get it. How could you guys name me after someone so strange? No one takes me seriously,’ Gogol said.

‘Who? Who doesn’t take you seriously?’ his father wanted to know, lifting his finger from his plate, looking up at him.

‘People’, he said, lying to his parents.

*(The Namesake, 2003:100)*

**Conversational Implicature**

The Ganguly family is contemplating the issue of Gogol’s idea of legally changing his name from Gogol to Nikhil. The conversation takes place between Ashoke and Gogol. Gogol is not happy with his parents for giving him a strange and unusual name like ‘Gogol’. He feels that his name is the reason why no one takes him seriously. He makes this bold statement to create an impact on his parents. His parents are not in favour of a name change. Gogol is not happy with his name as he feels its uncommonness draws unwanted curiosity from his friends. He wants to have an ordinary name. But his argument baffles Ashoke and he asks Gogol to name the persons who do not take his son seriously. Gogol is not prepared for such interrogation. He wants to change his name by his own free will because he does
not like it. But this would not be a reason strong enough to tell his father. So, in his own confusion he blames ‘people’. He lacks the courage to go against the name his parents have chosen for him. Yet he cannot live with it forever. So, he lies to his father to get away with the question. Though his answer is relevant, Gogol flouts the maxim of Quality as he is not truthful about his feelings.

**Example 27**

‘Why don’t I know this about you? Gogol says. His voice sounds harsh, accusing, but his eyes well with tears. ‘Why haven’t you told me until now?’

‘It never felt like the right time,’ his father says.

‘But it’s like you have lied to me all these years’. When his father doesn’t respond, he adds, ‘That’s why you have that limp, isn’t it?’

‘It happened so long ago. I didn’t want to upset you.’

*(The Namesake, 2003:123)*

**Conversational Implicature**

The above conversation takes place between Ashoke and Gogol. One day Ashoke is driving Gogol home from station. Gogol’s train has got unusually delayed on that day which has worried Ashoke. On their way home, Ashoke tells his son the real reason behind his name ‘Gogol’. He narrates the incident of that fateful night from when he had got nearly killed in a train accident. When he had found himself in a half dead condition the only thing he was holding in his hand was the book by Russian author Nikolai Gogol that he was reading in the train. The name thus plays a significant role in his life which reminds him of the new life he got after surviving the accident and that is why he has named his son by the same name. When Gogol learns about this, he has already changed his name to Nikhil. He feels hurt and betrayed. In that overwhelming moment of emotion he accuses his father for hiding such an important thing from him and lying to him for so many years.
There is an undertone of repentance in his accusation. Though his words express a negative sentiment, they imply a positive one and Gogol justifies his hurt feelings. Ashoke has waited for the right time to share the incident with Gogol which his son now misunderstands as betrayal. The Maxim of Quality is flouted by Gogol as he chooses strong words to express his emotions. Though the principle of Cooperation is violated, the doting father understands the guilt and pain his son is going through.

**Example 28**

‘Why are you calling me here so late?’ he asks her distracted, his eyes still focused on the computer screen.

‘Because you are not at your apartment.’ His mother says.

‘You are never at your apartment, Gogol. In the middle of the night I have called and you are not there.’

‘I am, Ma,’ he lies. ‘I need my sleep. I shut off the phone.’

‘I cannot imagine why anyone would want to have a phone only to shut it off,’ his mother says.

‘So, is there a reason why you’re calling me?’

*The Namesake, 2003:143*

**Conversational Implicature**

Ashima has not been able to contact her son Gogol for a long time. He is unavailable at his apartment even late at night. One evening when Gogol is working late in the office he gets a call. He expects it to be his girlfriend Maxine’s who has been the reason behind the neglect he is showing towards his mother at present. But it is his mother instead who is desperate to talk to him. Gogol is not pleased with her to call him at work so late at night. Ashima wants to know why he has not been available at his apartment. Gogol is dating Maxine and has shifted with her to her place. But he is not able to tell his mother the truth. He is not sure
of his mother’s reaction. To sound convincing, he lies to her that he usually switches the phone off as it disturbs his sleep. Gogol flouts the maxim of Quality by lying to his mother. He does not cooperate with his mother and avoids her questions in order to keep his relationship with Maxine a secret.

Example 29

That’s no way to think,’ his mother says. ‘Please Gogol. You haven’t been home since May.’

‘I have a job, Ma. I’m busy. Besides, Sonia is not coming.

(The Namesake, 2003:144)

Conversational Implicature

The conversation takes place between Ashima and Gogol. Ashima has not met her son for quite some time and when she gets him on the phone, asks him to come home for some days. Ashima wants Gogol to be with her on his birthday which comes the following week. But Gogol has promised Maxine, his girlfriend, to accompany her to New Hampshire the same weekend. But he cannot refuse his mother as it would hurt her sentiments. To handle the situation, Gogol conveniently gives an excuse of his job and tells his mom how busy he is to take time out for a home visit. He is not true to his thoughts hence flouts the maxim of Quality. He avoids his mother’s request by lying which makes him violate the principle of Cooperation.

3.2.3 Flouting the Maxim of Relation

When the speaker’s response is not directly related to the question and looks farfetched, he seems to be flouting the maxim of relation.

Example:

Husband asks the wife-
Husband: ‘I had called up in the afternoon; you didn’t pick up the phone.’

Wife: ‘Oh! I was in the garden.’

The wife chooses not to give a direct answer. Her response, however, has a remote connection with the inquiry. She flouts the relation maxim but at the same time explains the reason of her not picking up the phone as she was not inside the house. It clarifies that she has not done it intentionally.

The fictional discourses where the maxim of Relation is flouted are discussed below.

**Example 1**

The books drew me towards them like a big magnet, but as soon as he saw me, the man sitting on the magazines snapped, ‘All the books are in English.’

‘So?’

‘Do you read English?’ He barked.

‘Do you read English?’ I retorted.

There. That did it. Until then his tone of talking to me had been servant- to- servant; now it became man-to-man. He stopped and looked at me over from top to bottom. ‘No’, he said…

*(The White Tiger, 2008:205)*

**Conversational Implicature**

Balram has been fond of learning since his childhood days. Circumstances do not favour him and he becomes a school dropout. When he becomes a driver and comes to a big city like Delhi, he occasionally likes to spend time at the footpath book shops. The conversation takes place between Balram and a bookseller on the
footpath. As Balram is going through some books out of curiosity, the book seller interrupts him saying the books are in English. The man hints that he doubts whether Balram is literate enough to understand English. His first affirmative sentence can actually be seen as an utterance in indirect speech act where presuming Balram to be an illiterate he hints at him not to waste time in checking out books. The second question asked by the bookseller can be seen as the reinforcement of his first reaction. On the contrary, Balram, chooses not to answer any of these questions directly, instead, counters the interrogation through another emphatic question. Though he flouts the maxim of Relation by not answering in relation to the question, Balram’s response is relevant in the context. As Balram counter-questions the bookseller, he also makes it obvious that the bookseller’s level of literacy is also dubious. The bookseller accepts it timidly and resumes his regular work.

Example 2

‘Sir, there has been a trouble.’…
‘What kind of trouble?’….  
There was a silence, then he said, ‘I was taking the girls home, when we hit a boy on a bicycle. He’s dead, sir.’
‘Call the police at once,’ I said.
‘But sir – I am at fault, I hit him sir.’
‘That’s exactly why you will call the police.’

(The White Tiger, 2008:306)

Conversational Implicature

The conversation takes place between Balram who now owns a car rental service and one of his cab drivers. A cycle rider has been run over by the cab driver while he is on duty late at night. He is nervous and reports it to Balram. To his astonishment Balram asks him to call the police. The cab driver is amazed at
Balram’s response. The cab driver is reluctant to call the police. Balram, is persistent that he should call the police. He does not reveal his plan of action to the cab driver. Probably he has his own tactics of dealing with the police in such matters which he does not want to reveal to the driver. In this piece of discourse, Balram flouts the maxims of Relation and Manner. The Relation maxim is violated as Balram does not give a straight answer and he does not observe the maxim of Manner as he chooses to be secretive about his future moves about dealing with the police. His response implies that he knows the trade and he has his own way of dealing with it.

Example 3

Two nights ago – after he finished his milk, I asked him ‘Don’t you ever think of your mother?’
Not a word.
‘Your father?’
He smiled at me and then he said, ‘Give me another glass of milk, won’t you, uncle?’
I got up. He added, ‘And a glass of ice cream too.’
‘Ice cream is for Sundays, Dharam, I said.
‘No, it’s for today.’
And he smiled at me. (The White Tiger, 2008:315)

Conversational Implicature

Dharam is the only surviving relative and sole confidante of driver Balram as he has started life afresh as an entrepreneur in the city of Bangalore. Dharam knows the inside story of his uncle murdering and robbing his master Mr. Ashok. Balram has brought Dharam with him as there has been a threat of Dharam being caught by the police. Now as they are settled in the new city, once in a while Dharam blackmails his uncle for a glass of milk or a bowl of ice cream. Once when Balram
asks him whether he misses his parents, Dharam does not answer his question and asks him for another glass of milk. Though Dharam does not give a straight answer to Balram’s query and flouts the maxim of Relation, he emphatically implies that his parents mean nothing to him now and he does not want to remember them and he has no wish to go back to them. His asking for a bowl of ice-cream against Balram’s wish also indicates how he wants Balram to treat him well. Dharam conveys it in a very subtle way by observing politeness yet the message is thoroughly conveyed to Balram that he should cater to his nephew’s needs and demands since Dharam is not only his nephew but also his confidante who knows about the crime.

**Example 4**

They interviewed the judge and wrote out a report to confirm a complaint of robbery and trespassing. ‘Any threats made, sir?’

‘They asked him to set the table and bring the tea,’ said the cook in complete seriousness.

The police began to laugh.

The judge’s mouth was a straight grim line: ‘Go sit in the kitchen.

*Bar bar karta rehta hai.*’

*(The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:11)*

**Conversational Implicature**

Cho Oyu, the judge’s house in Kalimpong, has been robbed by Gorkha rebels. The police come to survey the loss and inquire if those thieves made any threats. Before the judge could say anything, his loyal servant, the cook prompts that they had asked the judge to set the table and bring the tea. In a serious business like when an FIR is being documented on the robbery, the cook’s answer sounds out of place at the superficial level. His response is not in sync with the police’s inquiry, hence, it is observed that the cook flouts the maxim of Relation and does not
cooperate. However, at a deeper level the response holds a farfetched implication. As a servant it has been extremely humiliating for the cook to see his master, the judge, being forced to doing odd jobs like setting the table and bringing tea. For him it is no less than any threat and when the police start their interrogation, he considers this the most significant piece of information to be shared. Though he does not give a straight answer, the implicature which is generated from his response is relevant to the situation.

Example 5

‘Who was my grandmother?’ Sai then asked the judge sitting poised like a heron over his chessboard.

‘Did she come from a very fancy family?’

He said: ‘I’m playing chess, can’t you see?’

(The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:88-89)

Conversational Implicature

Sai is an enthusiastic teenager who wants to know her grandfather better. So, she has occasional talks with him to know about his likes and dislikes. On one such occasion, she asks the judge about his wife, her maternal grandmother. The judge clearly avoids her question as he does not want to talk about his wife. Instead, he retorts by saying that could not Sai see that he was playing chess. He implies that he should not be disturbed during his game. But his real motive was to avoid Sai’s questions about his wife. He has no answer to her questions. His relationship with Sai does not permit him to tell Sai about his troubled past with his wife. In doing so, he violates the principle of cooperation and flouts the maxim of Relation. His response is not directly related to Sai’s question though it has a farfetched implication.
Example 6

He lay there crying for three days and three nights.

‘James,’ rattled the landlady. ‘Are you all right?’

‘Just tired. Not to worry.’

‘James?’

‘Mrs. Rice,’ he said. ‘One is done. One is finally through.’

‘Good for you, James,’ she said generously, and told herself she was glad. (The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:117)

Conversational Implicature

The judge’s real name is Jemubhai Popatlal Patel. When he is in England to study for the ICS qualifying exams, he is stying as a paying guest at an old lady’s place. The landlady calls him James as the Indian name is tricky for her to pronounce. When the results come, the judge finds his name at the bottom of the page and becomes heartbroken. It is not acceptable to him as the poor result reduces his chances of getting into the core ICS (Indian Civil Service). He feels like a failure and locks himself in his room for three days. The conversation takes place between the landlady and the judge when the landlady asks him about his well-being. When the landlady asks whether he is feeling all right, he lies that there is nothing to worry and it is just tiredness. He flouts the maxim of Quality by not telling the truth as he does not want the landlady to know of his failure. However, when the landlady insists, he responds in an impersonal manner saying that one was finally through and one was done. The response is ambiguous and could have multiple meanings. The judge flouts the maxim of Manner as his answer is obscure and has left it to the landlady to comprehend in her own way. Given his stubborn and egoistic nature, he does not want to reveal his weaknesses in front of the landlady.
Example 7
If two objects, one weighing….. and the other weighing….. are dropped from the leaning tower of Pisa, at which time and at what speed will they fall on the ground?'
‘You are in an unpleasant mood,’ said Sai and yawned with luxury to indicate other, better, options.
He pretended he hadn’t heard her.
Then he yawned, too, despite himself.
She yawned again, elaborately like a lion, letting it bloom forward.
 ..........
‘Bored by Physics?’ she asked, encouraged by the apparent reconciliation.
‘No, not at all.’
‘Why are you yawning then?’
‘BECAUSE I’M BORED TO DEATH BY YOU, THAT’S WHY.’
Stunned silence.

(The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:163)

Conversational Implicature
The conversation takes place between Sai and her tutor Gyan, Sai and Gyan have developed a liking for each other over a period of time. As they are in a happy phase of their life, the judge humiliates Gyan following a conversation for no specific reason. Gyan is hurt and very soon vents his anger on Sai. One day after that incident when they are solving a problem in Physics, Sai starts showing her disinterest in studies. When Gyan asks her a question, instead of solving the problem she remarks that Gyan looks like he was in an unpleasant mood. Sai flouts the maxim of Relation by not responding to Gyan’s question. Her response on a deeper level suggests that she wants to spend some personal time with Gyan. Gyan avoids responding to Sai’s comments as he does not want to upset her with
his foul mood. But when Sai coaxes him further, he loses control on his temper and blames Sai that he was bored to death by her and not by Physics. In the first response Gyan flouts Quality as he does not speak the truth and hence is not true to his thoughts. In the second instance as he rebukes Sai, he also violates the principle of Politeness and flouts the maxim of Modesty by maximizing dispraise to his hearer.

**Example 8**

‘Where did he go so soon?’ asked the cook later that evening.

‘Who knows?’ she said. ‘But you’re right about the fish and the Nepalis. He is not very intelligent. The more we study, the less he seems to know, and the fact that he doesn’t know and that I can tell - makes him furious.’

‘Yes,’ said the cook sympathetically, having forecast the boy’s stupidity himself.

*(The Inheritance of Loss, 2006 :175-176)*

**Conversational Implicature**

The conversation takes place between Sai and the cook following Sai and Gyan’s argument. Gyan has left earlier than his usual time that day. The cook is not aware of the fight. He heedlessly asks Sai where Gyan has gone so early. The cook’s question provokes Sai and she starts venting out her anger. Sai refers to a previous discussion with the cook where the cook had commented that he did not find Nepalis intelligent. He had equated level of intelligence to consumption of fish and advocated that coastal people as they ate fish were cleverer and more intelligent than other people like the Nepalis. Sai is deeply hurt as Gyan has called her stupid during the argument. To soothe her hurt ego, she deliberately wants to believe in the cook’s amateurish observation. She tells the cook that perhaps he is right about fish and Nepalis as she does not find Gyan intelligent any more. Sai’s
present comment on Gyan is biased as she is angry with him. She may not be true
to her thoughts as she also loves Gyan. Though she flouts the maxim of Quality by
not answering the cook’s question about Gyan’s whereabouts, her reaction is in
sync with her present state of mind. Her response flouts the maxim of Relation as
it does not have a straight answer to the cook’s question but reflects her true state
of mind.

Example 9

But he could not manage to keep this up.
He now pleaded directly with the judge: ‘We’re friends, aren’t we?
Aren’t we? Aren’t we friends?’
‘Time passes, things change,’ said the judge, feeling claustrophobia
and embarrassment.
‘But what is in the past remains unchanged doesn’t it?
‘I think it does change. The present changes the past. Looking back
you don’t find what you left behind, Bose.’

(The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:208)

Conversational Implicature

The conversation takes place between the judge and his friend Bose. Earlier in the
conversation Bose had annoyed the judge and now he tries to make amends. He
talks politely to the judge and pleads with him that after all they are friends. He
repeats it to make an impact on the judge’s foul mood. But the judge is too
stubborn for reconciliation. He responds to his friend’s coaxing in a highly
philosophical manner. He tells Bose that time passes and things change. The
judge’s response may not have a direct connection with Bose’s question but the
intent is remotely connected to it. The judge had made Bose his friend not out of
choice but out of compulsion to beat loneliness in a foreign land like London.
Bose has always made fun of him. Though the judge has always wanted to avoid
him, Bose has been dragging the relationship for old times’ sake. When they meet again after so many years, the judge finds that Bose has not changed at all. In the present meeting Bose goes way too far in mocking the judge. The judge is hurt and thus his response is very subtle. Bose understands that the judge is no more interested in the friendship they have shared for so many years. The judge’s response is not direct hence he flouts the maxim of Relation and violates the principle of Cooperation. He also flouts the maxim of Manner as he sounds ambiguous when he says looking back you don’t find what you left behind, Bose. The message is not clear to Bose and the judge keeps it obscure till the end. He conveniently leaves it to his friend to make sense of it. In the process he also does a face saving act by not being explicit in his reaction.

Example 10

‘Please Sahib,’ they begged…. ‘who comes to our help? Can we live on no food at all? We will be your servants for ever… God will repay you… God will reward you…’

But the judge was adamant.

Again herded out, they sat outside the gate.

‘Tell them to go’, he told the cook.

(The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:282)

Conversational Implicature

The above piece of conversation takes place between the judge and the poor couple who come to seek help following the torture of their innocent relative. The judge does not pay attention to them. But the poor woman and the old man do not lose hope and stay persistent and start talking to the judge very politely for one last time. Their pleading gets more humble as they start praising the judge and start praying for his well-being. The poor couple is losing hope in convincing the judge as he shows no reaction to any of their tactics meant to flatter him. So, they start...
applying the Approbation maxim by maximizing praise to other in order to soften the judge’s heart. In the process, the maxim of Quality gets flouted as these expressions are hyperbolic and have been - exaggerated on purpose to draw the judge’s attention. But to their disappointment, the judge turns a deaf ear to their pleadings and instructs the cook to ask them to leave the place. Their pleading fails to convince the judge. The judge flouts the maxim of Relation as he does not cooperate with the couple and does not give any direct response to their utterances. In his response he shows how nothing can alter his decision of not cooperating with the couple. He sends the message across through the cook.

**Example 11**

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)*

**Conversational Implicature**

Jemubhai (the judge) has abandoned his wife Nimi following an ugly quarrel. He is not aware that Nimi is pregnant. As it becomes a matter of family honour, the judge’s father comes to make peace. When he accuses the judge of creating a scandal, the judge responds unapologetically. He prefers to discuss the issue without using any circumlocutory speech. He calls Nimi ‘unsuitable’ to be his
wife, and justifies his act. He flouts the maxim of Relation by not answering his father’s query directly but his response is relevant to the context. Further in the conversation his father flouts the Relation maxim 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 relevance but the interlocutors are well versed in understanding the intent. The conversation looks incoherent at the surface level but the judge and his father share a common core of understanding. The judge comments sarcastically on he has gone abroad to fulfill his father’s wishes. Indirectly he holds his father responsible for his ill fated present which is out of his control. The judge’s comment bears an undertone of irony.

Example 12

‘But when will we reach Kalimpong?’ asked Biju. ‘Will we reach it by night?’
‘Calm down, bhai.’ They didn’t seem worried….
…
….
The men got out and took down all their belongings including Biju’s boxes and cases.
‘How long are we staying?’
‘This is as far as we are going. You can walk up to Kalimpong by yourself,’ they said and pointed at a path through the trees.
‘Shortcut.’
Panic lurched in him. ‘How will I take my things?’
‘Leave them here. Safekeeping.’ They laughed. ‘We’ll send them to you later.’
‘No’, said Biju, terrified by the realization that he was being robbed.
‘Go!’ They pointed. (The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:316)
Conversational Implicature

Amidst the chaos of the GNLF riot, kidnapping of Mutt, the judge’s dog and Sai’s breakup with Gyan, Biju, the cook’s son is returning disillusioned from America. Biju had gone to the US to make a fortune. Biju could not succeed at anything despite his numerous failed attempts at holding various kinds of jobs. He is not aware of the disturbance that surrounds Kalimpong as he lands in India. In order to reach his town he gets a lift in a lorry and to his shock gets conned inside the vehicle by a bunch of Gorkha rebels. It is too late by the time he comes to know that they are not taking him to Kalimpong. When he asks if they would reach Kalimpong by night, they laugh it off and tell him to calm down. They do not feel it necessary to respond to him. The maxim of Relation is flouted as there is no direct response to the query. Further, when Biju protests how he would to walk with his luggage, they politely suggest that he could keep it in their custody as safekeeping. The response is sarcastic and has an undertone of a threatening. Biju understands the real intent behind the sweet talking and prefers to save his life and leave his belongings.

Example 13

‘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.’

(The God of Small Things, 1997:79-80)
Conversational Implicature

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 is feeling hot. Baby Kochamma comes to Rahel’s rescue and asks Rahel not to give any answer to the man and directs her to look down to avoid the protester’s attention. As they do not give any direct response to the protester’s queries, Rahel and Baby Kochamma flout the maxim of Relation and violate the Principle of Cooperation. It is a humiliating experience to cooperate with the uncouth protester; hence Baby Kochamma decides to avoid the questions. Her response *Look down!* demonstrates their disinterest in talking to him.

Example 14

‘What d’you want?’ Estha asked without looking up.
‘Nothing,’ Rahel said.
‘Then why have you come here?’
Rahel didn’t reply. There was a brief, hostile silence.
‘Why’re you rowing the jam?’ Rahel asked.
‘India is a Free Country,’ Estha said.
No one could argue with that.
You could make salt. Row jam, if you wanted to.

*The God of Small Things*, 1997:197

Conversational Implicature

The above conversation has taken place between the twins Estha and Rahel while they are playing with the equipment inside the empty pickle factory. Estha goes in and Rahel follows him inside. Estha is upset and wants to be alone. Seeing Rahel by his side he wants to know why she has come there. Rahel replies *nothing* and
starts talking to him to cheer him up. Estha is animatedly stirring an imaginary bowl of jam. Rahel asks him why he is doing that. Estha’s answer has no connection with Rahel’s question when he says India is a free country. As he is angry with something, he does not want to give a straight reply. His response could have a remote implication that as India is a free country, he can do anything he likes and he does not need anybody’s permission for that. He could also mean that he should not be questioned on his actions. Estha flouts the maxim of Relation as he does not answer Rahel properly and thus violates the Cooperative Principle but his response does carry a deeper meaning which he wants his sister Rahel to understand.

**Example 15**

When they are alone, Mrs. Lapidus asks, ‘Are you happy to be entering elementary school, Gogol?’

‘My parents want me to have another name in school.’

‘And what about you, Gogol? Do you want to be called by another name?’

After a pause he shakes his head.

‘Is that a no?’

He nods. ‘Yes.’

‘Then it is settled. Can you write your name in this piece of paper?’

*The Namesake, 2003:59*

**Conversational Implicature**

Ashoke’s son Gogol is joining elementary school and Ashoke wants Nikhil to be his ‘good name’ in school. In the Bengali culture it is an acceptable norm to keep two names for a child- one for home and one for school. The name they keep for school is what they call the ‘good name’. Ashoke fails to explain this cultural nuance to his son Gogol and Mrs. Lapidus, the Principal of the school. Gogol is
not able to identify with the new name as it sounds strange to his ears and Mrs. Lapidus does not understand the concept as this manner of giving two names to the same person is not prevalent in her culture. When Gogol and Mrs. Lapidus are alone she gets an opportunity to resolve the matter. She asks Gogol if he is happy about joining elementary school. Gogol’s response does not answer Mrs. Lapidus’s question. In his childlike innocence he tells her that his parents want him to have another name in school. Though the answer does not correspond to the Principal’s question, it remotely implies that unless he is allowed to keep his name as Gogol, he would not be happy about joining the school. Mrs. Lapidus gets the answer to her query. Although Gogol flouts the maxim of Relation, his response helps Mrs. Lapidus in solving the problem.

### 3.2.4 Flouting the Maxim of Manner

When a speaker chooses to be obscure, i.e. to be secretive, he flouts the maxim of manner.

A friend has bought an expensive camera. Other friends are eager to know the price.

   
   Friend A: ‘How much did you pay for this?’
   
   Friend B: ‘A small fortune. I spent half of my savings in this.’

Friend B, though doesn’t deny an answer, he doesn’t reveal it all either. He speaks everything except the exact answer. He avoids an exact answer to perhaps avoid envy of his friends and thus flouts the maxim of Manner

The fictional discourses where the maxim of Manner has been flouted are analyzed below.
Example 1

The judge walked over.

‘Get down.’

‘Why?’

‘It’s making Mutt nervous to see you up there.’

Mutt looked up at Sai, wagged, not a shadow crossed her eyes.

‘Really?’

‘I hope that tutor of yours doesn’t get any funny ideas,’ said the judge, then.

‘What funny ideas?’

‘Get down at once.’  

(The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:92)

Conversational Implicature

Sai has climbed up a tree at the garden edge to catch a glimpse of her tutor Gyan. The judge does not like it and asks her to get down immediately. Sai refuses to obey. The judge mocks that her gesture might give her tutor some funny ideas. The judge does not make it explicit that Sai’s childish behaviour might be misunderstood by others. The utterance also bears subtle sarcasm. When Sai wants to know what he means by funny ideas, he refuses to clarify. Instead, he repeats his command asking Sai to get down. He flouts the maxim of Manner by not being clear in his explanations. In the second instance he also flouts the maxim of Relation by not cooperating with Sai’s question. Sai is a teenager and it is inappropriate for the judge to watch Sai climbing a tree. His relationship with Sai is very impersonal which restricts him from explaining this elaborately to her. The judge’s utterances can also be considered circumlocutory as he is not able to give the exact reason why Sai should refrain from that act. As an elderly man, the judge does not feel comfortable explaining social etiquettes to Sai. As he becomes sarcastic in his remark he also violates the principle of politeness and flouts the Modesty maxim.
Example 2

‘Are you worried you will be caught by the police,’ one of them asked with a smirk next morning, ‘for sheltering us? Is that what you are worried about? The police won’t touch rich people, only people like us, but if you say anything we will be forced to take action against you.’

‘What action?’

‘You’ll find out, Aunty.’

Still, their exquisite politeness.

(\textit{The Inheritance of Loss}, 2006:240)

Conversational Implicature

After Cho Oyu, Noni and Lola’s house has also been robbed by the Gorkha Rebels. This time the thieves are more fearless and spend the night at that house. The rebels enter their house to sell calendars and cassettes of the movement. They compel them to buy those things and ultimately break in, finishing all their food and spending the night on their floor. The two sisters are in a state of shock. The next morning as they expect them to leave, one of the rebels asks whether Noni and Lola are worried about being caught by the police to have sheltered them. It sounds ironic as Lola and Noni are taken hostage. By asking so, the rebels are threatening the two women not to speak anything in front of the police or else they would take actions against them. When the sisters muster the courage to ask what kind of actions they are talking about, they ignore their question. They give a very ambiguous and shady answer that the women would find out themselves. The rebels are hiding from the police. They choose the words that would arouse fear in the lonely women and so that they would be safe from the police for as long as they could. In the process they flouted the maxim of Manner by giving ambiguous responses. Another interesting aspect of this conversation is how the rebels maintain politeness. They never fail in addressing the women as \textit{aunty}, a
honourific to maintain the strategy of negative politeness of extending deference. By doing so, they minimize verbal disrespect and assault.

Example 3

‘Estha has to be well for Sophie Mol, doesn’t he?’

Baby Kochamma said.

‘He doesn’t,’ Rahel said, but mostly to herself.

‘What did you say?’ Baby Kochamma said, getting the general drift, but not what was actually said.

‘Nothing,’ Rahel said.

‘I heard you,’ Baby Kochamma said.

(The God of Small Things, 1997:111)

Conversational Implicature

Estha falls sick just before they have to go to the airport to receive Chacko’s ex-wife Margaret Kochamma and her daughter Sophie Mol. Baby Kochamma is trying to cheer him up when Rahel interrupts. Baby Kochamma is telling Estha to get well soon for Sophie Mol when Rahel whispers that Estha would not. Sophie Mol is their age and Rahel nurtures a secret fear that all love and attention will go to her once she comes and no one will notice her and Estha anymore. This childlike fear reflects in her non-cooperative behaviour. All her responses are in the negative. She mumbles and interrupts Baby Kochamma when she is talking to Estha. Baby Kochamma does not like the interference and wants to take Rahel to task. Rahel is adamant to speak to Baby Kochamma directly. When Baby Kochamma is unable to hear what she said and asks her to repeat, Rahel is scared and answers nothing. Apart from flouting the maxims of Quality and Quantity, Rahel also violates the maxim of Manner as she keeps her answer ambiguous and
vague. To control Rahel’s adamant behaviour, Baby Kochamma threatens her that she had heard what Rahel said though it is not true.

**Example 4**

After the last few men walked past, Chacko said it was all right now to roll down the windows.

‘Are sure it was him?’ Chacko asked Rahel.

‘Who?’ Rahel said, suddenly cautious.

‘Are you sure it was Velutha?’

‘Hmmm…?’ Rahel said, playing for time, trying to decipher Estha’s frantic thought signals.

‘I said, are you sure that the man you saw was Velutha?’ Chacko said for the third time.

‘Mmm…nyes…nn…nnalmost,’ Rahel said.

‘No….It was almost Velutha,’ Rahel said. ‘It almost looked like him…’

‘So, you’re not sure then?’

‘Almost not.’ Rahel slid a look at Estha for approval.

*(The God of Small Things, 1997:81)*

**Conversational Implicature**

On their way to the Cochin airport to receive Margaret Kochamma and Sophie Mol, the passengers in the car comprising Chacko, Baby Kochamma, Ammu and her twins Estha and Rahel come across a communist rally where Rahel gets a glimpse of Velutha, the handyman and mechanic at her uncle’s pickle factory. Velutha’s family stays near the Ayemenem House and has been loyal to Chacko’s family for years. Though Velutha belongs to a caste of untouchables, Chacko has allowed him in his factory to look after the maintenance of the machines. Chacko relies on Velutha a lot. It is difficult for Chacko to imagine Velutha supporting a
Communist rally. So, when Rahel almost calls out for Velutha in the rally, Chacko gets skeptical and starts inquiring about him. By the time Chacko wants to locate Velutha, he has lost him in the crowd. He asks Rahel to confirm whether Rahel has actually seen Velutha or she has called somebody else as Velutha. Out of fear and uncertainty Rahel gives vague answers to Chacko’s inquisitive questions. She answers in monosyllables. When Chacko insists, she finally utters words like almost Velutha and almost not. She cannot avoid her uncle’s questions but fears the consequence. She and Estha are fond of Velutha and she does not want Chacko to get upset with him. As she prefers to remain obscure in her responses, she flouts the maxim of Manner. However, the ambiguity in her response has put Chacko in a state of confusion.

3.3 Non-observance of the Maxims of Politeness

According to Goffman, the verbal communication taking place during social interactions should be studied from the perspective of participants striving for stability in their relationships. Politeness is a Pragmatic phenomenon. It is a basic form of cooperation which is understood in context. It is also observed that in a given context the interlocutors’ utterances may sound impolite. It is an interesting phenomenon to study how speakers achieve the desired conversational goals by occasionally violating the basic principles of Politeness. When speakers become more self-centric and less other-centric, maxims of politeness are flouted.

Based on Geoffrey N. Leech’s maxims of Politeness, the present section analyzes the fictional data. The theoretical framework for the present analysis has been developed in Chapter II. Among all the maxims of Politeness, the maxim of Modesty, the maxim of Generosity and the maxim of Approbation have been flouted largely in the following fictional discourses.
Example 1

“You think you are the original person celebrating Christmas? Come on, don’t tell me you are as stupid as that?”

“Well if you are so clever,” she said, “how come you can’t even find a proper job? Fail, fail, fail. Every single interview.”

“Because of people like you.”

“Oh, because of me…. And you’re telling that I am stupid? Who’s stupid? Go put it before a judge and we’ll see who he says is the stupid one.”

(The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:164)

Conversational Implicature

A heated argument between Gyan and Sai ensues after the judge insults Gyan at the dinner table. In the middle of the argument Gyan changes the topic and starts criticizing Sai and her family for being slaves to the western culture and scorns her for celebrating Christmas being a Hindu. Gyan calls Sai stupid which hurts her immensely. She retorts by calling him a failure. In the whole course of accusing each other, both Sai and Gyan defy the principle of politeness. The maxim of Modesty is violated by both interlocutors as they do not leave any stone unturned to disgrace each other verbally. The whole conversation turns out to be against Modesty as instead of maximizing dispraise of self, both Sai and Gyan maximize dispraise to other.

Example 2

“Someone will have to go…” the cook said to the judge after the boys had come to Cho Oyu to make their demand of attendance at the march.

“Well, you had better go, then,” said the judge.

(The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:273)
Conversational Implicature

The GNLF has called in for a protest and demands attendance from all the families living in Kalimpong. The cook comes and informs the judge about this. He indirectly hints that someone from the family would have to go. As a servant he does not have any right to dictate to the master to go, though he hints it in his utterance. The judge ignores the hint and puts it back on the cook. The judge’s statement lacks politeness. He is not worried about how the poor cook would manage himself in the march. The judge is more concerned about his own safety. Being inconsiderate and rude to the servant the judge flouts the maxim of Generosity and thus violates the principle of Politeness. Instead of minimizing benefit to self and maximizing cost to self his act results in maximizing benefit to self. The cook is polite enough to make him aware of the trouble. As the master of the house, instead of giving a rational solution, the judge thinks only about his own safety and security.

Example 3

‘We should keep an eye on him,’ Baby Kochamma said. If he starts this union business in the factory… I’ve noticed some signs, some rudeness, some ingratitude… The other day I asked him to help me with the rocks for my scree bed and he…

‘I saw Velutha at home before we left,’ Estha said brightly. ‘So, how could it be him?’

‘For his own sake,’ Baby Kochamma said, darkly. ‘I hope it wasn’t’. And next time Esthappen, don’t interrupt.’

She was annoyed that nobody asked her what a scree bed was.

(The God of Small Things, 1997:81)
**Conversational Implicature**

The conversation takes place inside the car between Baby Kochamma and Estha on their way to Cochin. Rahel has raised suspicion over seeing Velutha in the Communist rally. Velutha works as a mechanic at her uncle Chacko’s pickle factory. In spite of belonging to a low caste, Velutha has permission to enter the Ayemenem House. The twins Estha and Rahel are very fond of him. Baby Kochamma, the grandaunt however, does not like him much. As she comes to know about his presence in the rally, she gets an opportunity to defame him and confirms that it must have been him without any doubt as she has been sensing some rudeness in his behavior lately. As she is trying to attract Chacko’s attention to it, Estha, Rahel’s twin brother interrupts her and in his childlike innocence asks her how it could be Velutha when he has seen him at home before starting for Cochin. Estha’s interrupts the chain of Baby Kochamma’s thoughts which annoys her. She scolds Estha and warns him not to interrupt her like that ever in future. Her curt remark is rude and straight. She violates the principle of Politeness, especially the maxim of Approbation. As she flouts the maxim, maximum dispraise is caused to other. Her annoyance is also directed towards Chacko and Ammu who are not paying any attention to her observations on Velutha. She makes the excuse of disciplining Estha for his bad manners of interrupting in the middle and expresses her disgust in front of the whole family.

**Example 4**

‘It’s fascist the way you deal with them,’ Chacko said. ‘Even children have some rights, for God sake!’

‘Don’t use the name of the Lord in vein,’ Baby Kochamma said.

‘I’m not,’ Chacko said. ‘I’m using it for a good reason.’

‘Stop posing as the children’s saviour!’ Ammu said. ‘When it comes down to brass tacks, you don’t give a damn about them. Or me.’
‘Should I?’ Chacko said. ‘Are they my responsibility?’ He said that Ammu and Estha and Rahel were millstones around his neck.

(*The God of Small Things*, 1997:85)

**Conversational Implicature**

The conversation takes place between Chacko and Ammu when Ammu scolds Rahel over making spit bubbles. Chacko calls her a *fascist* for rebuking such a small child. Ammu does not take it in her stride and asks him not to pose as her *children’s saviour* as he has never cared for them. Ammu is a single mother and is staying at her parental house with her twin children Estha and Rahel. As a brother and as an uncle Chacko has never shown any special affection for them. When Chacko starts acting in the children’s favour, Ammu feels hurt and shows him the real picture of their relationship. Her utterance carries unpleasantness as she is not polite in her behaviour, hence she flouts the maxim of Approbation causing maximum dispraise to other. Chacko reacts to Ammu’s accusations in a more defensive and indifferent manner. He asks whether the children or Ammu are his responsibility. The rudeness and discomfort he feels for his sister takes the shape of mockery and comes out in the form of a rhetorical question. He wants Ammu to realize that she alone is responsible for her children and she should not expect any kind of concern or sympathy from anybody in the house. More than expecting an answer, his rhetorical questions have been intended to silence Ammu.

**Example 5**

‘Why not use a cushion or a pillow or something?’ Baby Kochamma suggested in a friendly voice.

‘You’ll be able to see better.’

‘Why don’t you mind your own business, sister?’ the driver suggested in his unfriendly one.

(*The God of Small Things*, 1997:113)
Conversational Implicature
The conversation takes place between Baby Kochamma and the cab driver who is hired to get them to the hotel in Cochin. The cab driver is a short man and is struggling to see the road and the speed breakers properly. His reckless driving has become a matter a concern for Baby Kochamma. So, she politely advises him to sit on a cushion or pillow to have a better view of the road. Her suggestion does not appeal to the driver and to her embarrassment he asks her to mind her own business. The driver’s rude response implies how he does not like to be advised. In his response he flouts the maxim of Approbation by causing maximum dispraise to his interlocutor. It leads to the violation of the principle of Politeness.

3.4 Conclusion
The present chapter focuses on the violation and observance of the Maxims of Cooperation and Maxims of Politeness in the selected fictional data. The reasons behind the observance and non-observance of maxims have been dealt with taking into account the socio-cultural context and various role-relationships that the fictional characters share with other characters. In the course of the analysis it is also observed how interlocutors tend to flout more than one maxim to observe another in order to achieve their conversational goals. Overlapping of the maxims has also been taken into consideration while analyzing the data and explained appropriately. The findings of the analysis will be enlisted elaborately in the concluding chapter.