

CONTRAVENTION OF THE COOPERATIVE IDEOLOGIES IN RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S 'PROFIT AND LOSS'

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ABSTRACT:

Cooperative Principle (CP) put forth by H. P. Grice (1975) imposes certain restrictions on speakers of any communication with its maxims, i.e., Maxim of Manner, Maxim of Relevance, Maxim of Quantity, and Maxim of Quality. The idea of this study is to examine the degree to which the conversational maxims are either violated or disregarded by the main characters in "Profit and Loss" (1891). Also, it aims to discover if there are any instances in which the addressees opt out of the discussion. A descriptive qualitative method was adopted to gather, analyze and interpret data. The results of this research show that in 18 instances (the highest), the characters violated /flouted the maxim of quality, and in 7 occasions (the least), they debased the maxim of relevance. As per the study results, it can be resolved that although cooperative principle defines the paramount practices to be followed in Communication to facilitate the smooth flow of conversation, speakers often are non-adherent to these maxims: they defy, violate, or opt-out to achieve their purposes. This study on flouting of conversational maxims in Profit and Loss also identifies Rabindranath Tagore as the trailblazer of Bengali Renaissance by his portrayal of the new woman who was not terrified to question the social norms in her struggles for freedom and equality and who remained loyal to the prototype image of the customary Indian womankind.

KEYWORDS: *Floutings and Violations, Cooperative Principles, Profit and Loss*

INTRODUCTION:

Adequate and appropriate contribution is part and parcel of effective Communication as proposed by the Cooperative Principles. (H.P.Grice, 1975) The cooperative principle is based on four maxims: the maxim of quantity, the maxim of Quality, the maxim of relation, and the maxim of manner. According to Agustina and Ariyanti (2016), non-adherence to maxims is called the breaking of maxims. To quote Cutting (2002), flouting occurs when speakers fail in observing the maxim but expect their audience to recognize the implied meaning. Violating a maxim is intended to deceive the addressees or letting the hearer know the surface meaning of any utterance.

If speakers aren't successful in observing a maxim "at the level of what is said, with the deliberate intention of generating implicature," it flouts a maxim as expounded by Thomas

(2013). He defines Flouting the maxim of quantity as “a speaker giving too little or much information.” Cruse (2000) defines Flouting the maxim of quality as “an utterance that is not literally true.” There are several strategies for flouting the maxim of quality: *banter, hyperbole, irony, metaphor, and sarcasm*. Flouting the maxim of relation occurs when the discussion is altered but still assumes the addressee to realize and know about it. Flouting the maxim of manner happens according to Cutting (2002) “when a speaker does not talk clearly, appearing to obscure and tend to ambiguity.”

Since time immemorial, communities worldwide have always assigned specific roles, codes of behavior, and morality to men and women. Women were oppressed and suppressed. As years passed by, we may say that there's a sea-change in the present-day world. The credit goes to many feminists around the world. A share of gratitude can be given to writers whose vision and mission brought forth a newer world of Gender Equality. Short story, one of the literary genres, was developed in the 19th century, and by the end of the 20th century, it evolved as one of the major literary forms. This study is about the flouting of maxims in *Profit and Loss*, a short story of Rabindranath Tagore, the first Asian Nobel laureate, who is illustrious as a poet, novelist, philosopher, painter, song-composer, and social activist, and who is also a feminist with the volume of works having gender issues as the underlying theme.

The reason for the selection of *Profit and Loss* is that it deals with one of the social evils that are prevalent in India. The protagonist is a victim of dowry. A study on the flouting or violations of conversational maxims will highlight the characters' approach to the social practice 130 years before. Moreover, there is a great chance that characters have the most talkative trait and may often either violate or flout the conversational maxims. Therefore, it is notable for looking into the conversational interactions in this theme-based story.

Profit and Loss is one of Tagore's successful experiments with his female protagonists to make them strong against trials and tribulations. With his cleverly expertized words, he makes a host of highly advanced female identities. The woman protagonist Nirupama with her floutings of maxims, raises sturdy expressions of dissent against all biases of the late nineteenth century Bengali Hindu populations specifically and the Indian Community in general.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

The present study explored *Profit and Loss*

1. To find out the number of utterances
2. To find out the number of floutings
3. To identify the maxim that is flouted the Most
4. To identify the maxim that is flouted the Least.
5. To identify the character who flouts/violates the Most.
6. To identify the character who flouts the least.
7. Is there any evidence of their character traits in the floutings of Maxims?

LITERATURE REVIEW:

The desecrations of maxims by the characters in *Desperate Housewives* (TV show) was studied by Tupan and Natalia (2008) in their research. The findings of the need to violate maxims were not to allow the addressees to take their turn. Kalliomaki (2005) & Xiaohong (2007) observed conversational interactions in exclusive films and got up with exciting outcomes.

Women are eulogized by Tagore in his essay "Woman and Home" (1922) "*What I have felt in the woman of India is the consciousness of this ideal –their simple faith in the sanctity of devotion lighted by a love which is held to be divine. True womanliness is regarded in our country as the saintliness in love*" (311). But at the same time, he portrayed characters who are modern in their thinking. Madhumita Roy (2015) focuses on *The Conclusion*, *The Wife's Letter*, and *Exercise Book* to prove that Individual Scripting of women is thwarted by a high-handedness by social interventions.

In light of the above studies, this present study deals with breaking conversational maxims by the characters in *Profit and Loss*. Tagore's short story with particular emphasis on the female protagonist, Nirupama's utterances.

METHODOLOGY:

Since the data gathered was in the form of words, the Descriptive Qualitative Method was followed. This study used the data analysis technique from Miles and Huberman (1994). Data Reduction, Data Display and Conclusion Drawing (Miles and Huberman, 1994), the three phases of inquiry into qualitative Data analysis were followed.

(Subroto Prativi, 2012, p 199) states, "data can be in the form of discourse, sentence, clause, phrase, word, or morpheme." *Profit and Loss*, Tagore's short story is the source of data of this analysis.

The researcher, the research Instrument Lincoln & Guba State (Vandersteop & Johnson, 2009), selected the source: *Profit and Loss*, read it many times, and chose the utterances by the characters.

Qualitative Data Analysis: Miles and Huberman

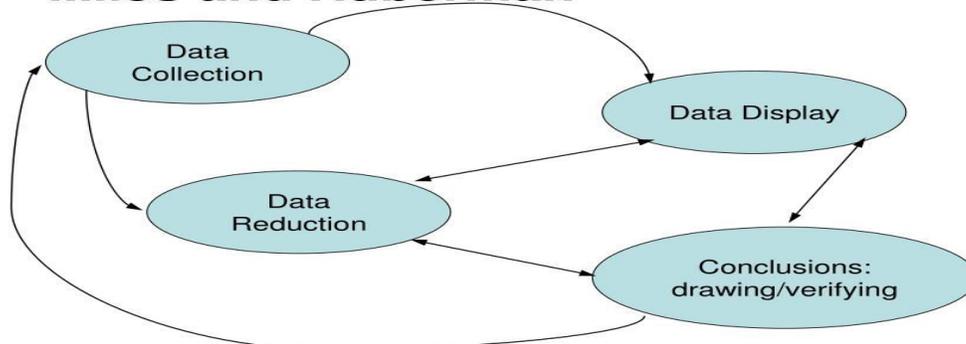


Figure 1: Qualitative Data Analysis, Miles and Huberman (1994)

The research has processed the statistics decrease by choosing the words used by the characters in *Profit and Loss*. Then, the words that contained flouting and violating conversational maxims were segregated. After which, the research streamlined the data into the groupings of each maxim. A brief description of some significant data (noteworthy floutings by 5 major characters) was also provided. Data is displayed in tables and graphs. The information was also expansively elucidated by the researcher. Conclusion drawing as per Miles and Huberman (1994) is "*also verified as the analysis proceeds.*" The conclusions are the number of floutings in each maxim and the number of floutings by each main character in their utterances. Research questions 1 to 6 will be dealt with by tabulating and using graphs. Research question 7, i.e., the how and why of the floutings of maxims, are detailed with justification to the character traits.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS:

The utterances by the characters in *Profit and Loss* (1891) are listed in the following table.

S.No	Utterances	Maxim Of Quantity	Maxim Of Quality	Maxim Of Relevance	Maxim Of Manner
1	“ if you can't hand the money to me now, the bridegroom will not be brought here.”	Follows all the Maxims			
2	“This haggling and bartering means nothing to me; I came here to marry and marry I shall.”	Flouting	Flouting		Flouting
3	“You see, sir, how young men behave these days.”	Flouting	Flouting		Flouting
4	“That because they have no training in morality or the Shastras.”	Flouting	Flouting		Flouting

5	“Will not they let me come and visit you, Father?”	Follows all the Maxims			
6	“Why shouldn't they, My love" "I will come and fetch you.”	Flouting			Flouting
7	“How pretty the girl is – it’s a pleasure to look at her.”	Follows all the Maxims			
8	“Pretty indeed! Pretty as the family she came from!”	Flouting			Flouting
9	“Father, take me home for a while.”		Flouting		
10	“Very well.”	Flouting	Flouting	Flouting	Flouting
11	"Yes, yes, brother, there's still some money owing, I know. Every day I remember and mean to come along with some of it, but then it slips my mind; I'm getting old, My friend."	Flouting			Flouting
12	"Those are no use to me."		Flouting		
13	“Not now.”	Flouting			Flouting
14	“This year, I shall bring Nirupama home for the pūjā or else!”	Follows all the Maxims			
15	"Grandpa, are you going to buy a cart for me ?"	Follows all the Maxims			
16	"This time, I shall take you, my dear. Nothing can stop me."	Follows all the Maxims			
17	"Father, have you really decided to turn us out on the streets?"		Flouting		Flouting
18	"Should I condemn myself to hell for your sakes? Won't you let me do what's right?"	Flouting	Flouting		Flouting
19	“Grandpa, Haven’t you bought me that cart?”		Flouting		
20	“Auntie, will you buy me a cart?”				
21	“Father,’ she said, ‘if you give a single paisa more to my father-in-law, I swear solemnly you will never see me again.”	Flouting	Flouting		Flouting
22	“What are you saying, child?’ said Ramsundar. ‘If I don’t pay the money, the shame will be forever on my head – and it will be your shame too.”	Follows all the Maxims			
	“The shame will be greater if you pay	Flouting	Flouting	Flouting	Flouting

23	the money,' said Nirupama. 'Do you think I have no honour? Do you think I am just a money-bag? The more money in it, the higher my value? No, Father, don't shame me by paying this money. My husband doesn't want it anyway.'				
24	"But then they won't let you come and see me,' said Ramsundar."	Flouting			
25	"That can't be helped,' said Nirupama. Please don't try to fetch me anymore."		Flouting		Flouting
26	"Let me see my father and brothers just once, Mother."	Follows all the Maxims			
27	"Nothing but a trick to get to her father's house,"	Flouting	Flouting		Flouting
28	"What a princess she is! A poor household's fare is not to her liking!"	Flouting	Flouting	Flouting	Flouting
29	"Look at her. What a beauty! She's more and more like a piece of burnt wood."		Flouting	Flouting	
30	"It's all put on."		Flouting	Flouting	
31	"I have made all necessary arrangements here, so please send my wife to me quickly."		Flouting	Flouting	Flouting
32	"Dear son, we have secured another girl for you, so please take leave soon and come home."	Flouting	Flouting	Flouting	Flouting
		15	18	7	17

Table 1: No. of Floutings in Profit and Loss

RQ 1 & RQ 2: There are altogether **57** floutings of conversational Maxims in **32** utterances since there are multiple floutings. Eight utterances follow all the maxims of H. P. Grice (1975).

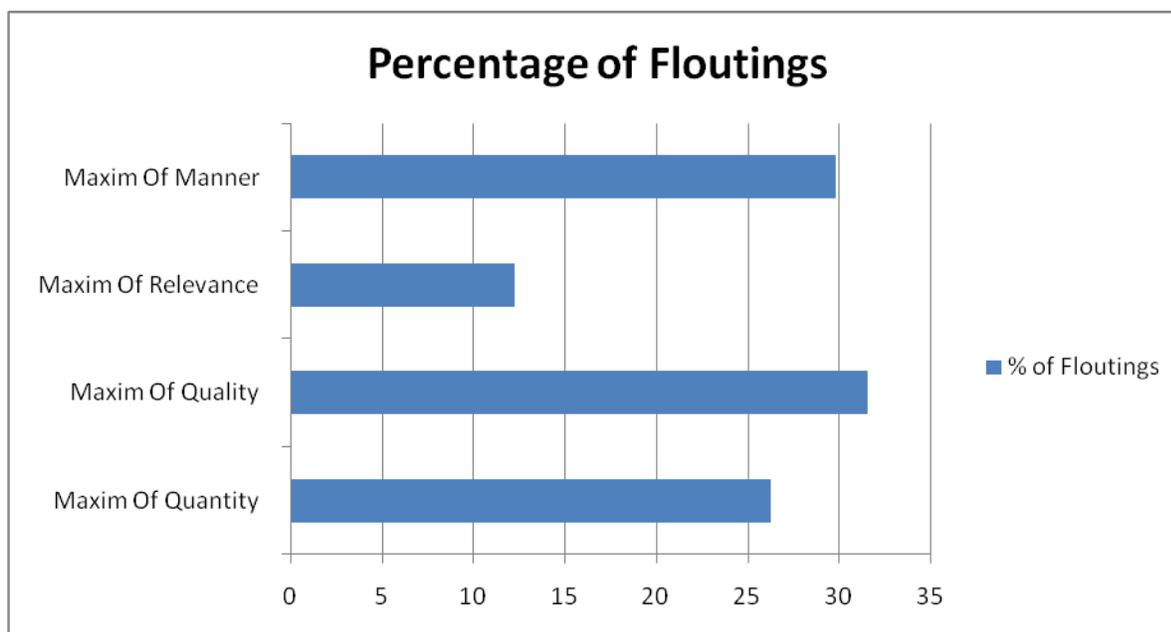


Figure 2: Profit and Loss Floutings. (adapted from H. P. Grice 1975)

RQ 3 & RQ 4: Out of the total 57 floutings, the Maxim of Quality tops the list with 31.57% of floutings. Next in rank is the Maxim of Manner, which is flouted 29.82%. Maxim of Quantity was flouted 26.31%. The least flouted maxim is the quality of relevance. (12.28%)

The number of non-adherence to floutings by the top five characters is listed below.

Characters	No.of Floutings	%
Mother-in-Law	17	29.82
Father-in Law	6	10.52
RamSundar	12	21.05
Nirupama	10	17.54
Nirupama's Husband	6	10.52
Others	6	10.52

Table 2: No. of Floutings Characterwise

There were 51 floutings by the top five characters.

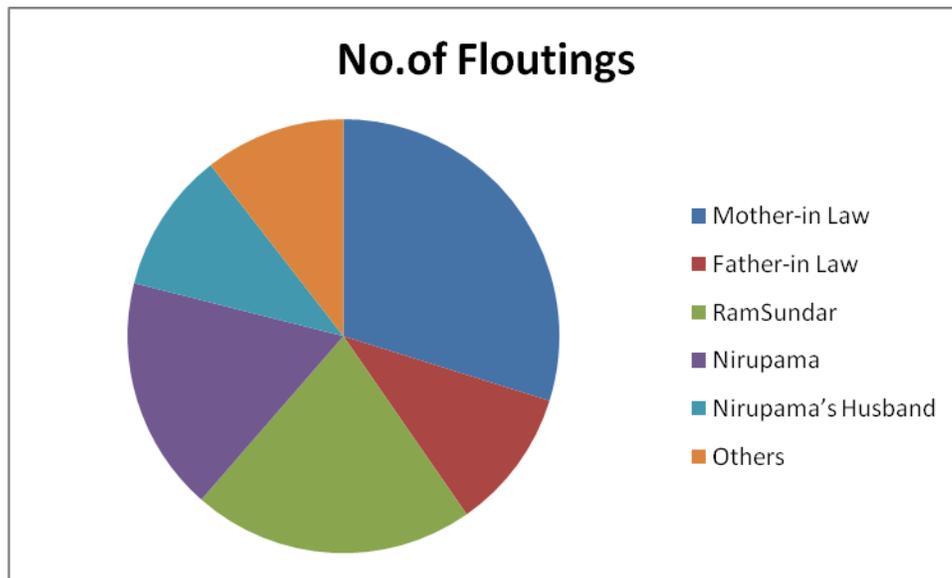


Figure 3. Percentage of Floutings-Characterwise

RQ 5 & RQ 6: Nirupama's mother-in-law flouted around 30% of the total flouting of the Maxims. Ramsundar takes the second position (21%) as he's so affectionate with his daughter and helpless in tackling the situation with pressing financial problems. Nirupama takes the third position (17.5%). She flouts the maxims to make her brother happy, and also, as Tagore has used a mouthpiece of a modern woman with progressive thought.

RQ 7: Evidence of their character traits in the floutings of Maxims

Utterances 1, 5, 7, 14, 15, 16, 22 and 26 follow all the maxims. Utterances 4, 7, 15, 17, 19 and 20, are uttered by minor characters.

2. "This haggling and bartering means nothing to me, I came here to marry and marry I shall" *Profit and Loss* (1891).

The bridegroom is flouting the maxims of Quantity, Quality, and manner (H. P. Grice 1975). Though he goes against his father's decision to call off the marriage, he doesn't favor or talk against Dowry System. He is ambiguous. He's not to the point and using ambiguous terms too.

3. "You see, sir, how young men behave these days," *Profit and Loss* (1891).

Grice's (1975) relevance maxim discusses that inputs should be relevant to the expected existing intents of the conversers. While the son decides to marry Nirupama, no matter whether they do pay all of the dowries or not, the son ignores and disobeys his father's words. The father evades the awkwardness in the situation and changes the subject by talking about the behavior of the new generation. He is changing the dialogue to another subject, which implicitly signifies that he is not happy about his son's decision, but he can't stop him. So if one thinks that his father hasn't heard him or just is ignoring him, it's wrong because he conveys his anger on his son's decision. So we can see that the father's flouting yields the implicature that he isn't happy at his son's decision. Thus, by conveying his unhappiness in a roundabout manner, the father flouts the maxims of quantity, quality, and manner.

9. "Father, take me home for a while." *Profit and Loss* (1891).

10. "Very well," *Profit and Loss* (1891).

An implicature connecting to the low end of the quantity maxim is giving too little data. The father's words though superficially sufficient reply are significantly less than what is expected because, throughout the story, her father is sad for not being allowed to see his daughter whenever he wants, they are struggling to see each other, and even if they seize a chance the visit should be short and sometimes in the outer rooms of her husband's house. Nirupama and her father have no honour in that house. The expected reaction to her daughter's request is supposed to be more enthusiastic or convincing, or consoling. On the contrary, Ram Sundar doesn't show any kind of these emotions. He also doesn't mention any time or makes any arrangements for the visit. His concise answer, which doesn't adhere to any maxim, implies that even if he wants her to go with him, the situation does not allow it. Both of the interlocutors know they are talking about impossible things. Their awareness is credited to previous similar outcomes. The daughter is fully aware of the situation. In spite, she demands to go with her father, which is impossible for him to carry out. She flouts the maxim of quality. *Profit and Loss* (1891).

6. "Why shouldn't they, My love" "I will come and fetch you." *Profit and Loss* (1891).

11. "Yes, yes, brother, there's still some money owing, I know. Every day I remember and mean to come along with some of it, but then it slips my mind; I'm getting old, My friend." *Profit and Loss* (1891).

18. "Should I condemn myself to hell for your sakes? Won't you let me do what's right?" *Profit and Loss* (1891).

24. But then they won't let you come and see me,' *Profit and Loss* (1891).

Ramsundar *Profit and Loss* (1891) in all the four utterances flout the maxim of quantity. He flouts the maxim of quantity, talking too much to his son (18). He resorts to shouting at his son and thereby flouts the maxims of quality and manner. He neither explains the situation (the dire necessity for selling the house) nor tries to convince his son. For him, his daughter's life is more important than anything. In his conversation with the Zamindar Raibhahadur (11), he wants to show his humility. Since he cannot provide him with the whole sum of Dowry amount, he talks in a roundabout manner. He flouts in this utterance, Maxim of quantity and manner. The other two utterances are with his daughter. (6 & 24) He's in an apposition to console his daughter on both these occasions. But he flouts the quantity maxim by talking less as he is aggrieved-worrying about his daughter's fate.

21. "Father,' she said, 'if you give a single paisa more to my father-in-law, I swear solemnly you will never see me again.'" *Profit and Loss* (1891).

23. "The shame will be greater if you pay the money,' said Nirupama. 'Do you think I have no honour? Do you think I am just a money-bag? The more money in it, the higher my value? No, Father, don't shame me by paying this money. My husband doesn't want it anyway'" *Profit and Loss* (1891).

In the above two utterances as Banerjee (2017) cites "Musolmanir Galpo," "Wife's letter" and or "The story of a Muslim Woman" to ascertain Rabindranath Tagore representation of his female characters as determined, strong-willed, undaunted, valiant, "and conscious of their identity," we find Nirupama though flouts the Maxim of Quantity and Manner glows with feministic thoughts. By making his protagonist Nirupama defying the patriarchal norm of her times, Tagore champions the cause of emancipation of women and sets to free women from the shackles of the Dowry system. Nirupama raises her voice against the biased patriarchal society though succumbs to it at the end.

8. "Pretty indeed! Pretty as the family she came from!" *Profit and Loss* (1891).

27. "Nothing but a trick to get to her father's house," *Profit and Loss* (1891).

28. "What a princess she is! A poor household's fare is not to her liking!" *Profit and Loss* (1891).

29. "Look at her. What a beauty! She's more and more like a piece of burnt wood". *Profit and Loss* (1891).

30. "It's all put on." *Profit and Loss* (1891).

32. "Dear son, we have secured another girl for you, so please take leave soon and come home." *Profit and Loss* (1891).

These are the six utterances by Nirupama's mother-in-law. By depicting the mother-in-law as a cruel woman who often violates the maxims, especially the maxim of quality, he presents who favor the Dowry system are negative people and inspires people to bring positive changes in their lives by creating characters like Nirupama's husband.

There are also few occasions where the addressees opt-out of a reply. For instance, Nirupama doesn't reply to her nephew asking her: 'Auntie, will you buy me a cart?' Instead, she sees the possibility of fulfilling the child's desire by forcing her father not to pay her in-laws and return home with the money.

DISCUSSION:

2. "This haggling and bartering means nothing to me, I came here to marry and marry I shall" *Profit and Loss* (1891).

The bridegroom's flouting of the maxims of quantity, quality, and manner is against being cooperative in the conversation taking place in public. But by making him flout the maxims, Tagore himself is the harbinger of tremendous reformation of late 19th century. In the 1890s, Tagore ought to have held his excessive anticipations on the Indian youth, as a forerunner of an exceptional revolution with their educational background, who would rock the Indian society and also understand the immense value of a woman and cease treating her as the potential of obtaining wealth through the social evil of dowry! Tagore's perfect groom, the Deputy Magistrate in the story, takes a stand and refuses to buckle down in the front of his conservative father's imminent threat to Ramsundar that he would call off the marriage ceremony since he is unable to provide the dowry.

31. "I have made all necessary arrangements here, so please send my wife to me quickly." *Profit and Loss* (1891). The youth of India is on the right path, according to Tagore. So making him flout the maxim of relevance. He flouts since he's ignorant of his wife's death, and he has no hand in the cruelty and injustice done to the female protagonist of the story.

The future Deputy Magistrate's ideal character is again brought out when Nirupama flouts the maxim of quantity by adding: "My husband doesn't want it anyway," when she forces her father to take the money back home. In the same instance, she earlier opines: "The shame will be greater if you pay the money," said Nirupama. "Do you think I have no honour? Do you think I am just a money-bag? The more money in it, the higher my value? No, Father, don't shame me by paying this money." *Profit and Loss* (1891)

Here, she flouts not only the Quantity and Manner Maxims but also quality and relevance maxims. There's no loss of any honor if she takes money from her loving father. Nevertheless, she knows about the dowry issue from Day 1. By making her flout all the maxims and letting her voice her opinion about dowry, Tagore praises her as a modern woman.

We see Tagore fully comprehended the innumerable torture women underwent in their in-law's house and wanted to raise his voice. His women characters evolve from passive to active and active to torchbearers for the cause of women.

CONCLUSION:

Tagore's characters in *Profit and Loss* are constantly breaching maxims of Quality, quantity, relation, and manner of H. P. Grice (1975) for various reasons. Nirupama's mother-in-law does so to shower abuses on her daughter in law who haven't brought dowry. Nirupama flouts the Maxims because she doesn't want her father and brothers to suffer for her sake. Tagore's social point of view is obvious after all. The characters like Nirupama's father in law and the person who supported him in criticizing the bridegroom on his bold decision are typical portrayals of conservative personalities who flout maxims of quality and manner to show, for instance, how greedy they are for money and how hypocrite and black-hearted without feeling sorry at Ramsundar's or the bride's pathetic situation they are since they consider that it's their bounded duty to safeguard the social practice, which is timeless evil prevalent till today in India.

It is interesting and enlightening to read Tagore from a Gricean point of view. This study casts light on the fact that Tagore's characters flout the maxims to exhibit the societal situations and conditions which were completely unfavorable for women in the 19th and early part of the 20th Centuries.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The floutings, Violations of the Conversational Maxims in different short stories or different genres can be undertaken for future study. Since there are very few comparative studies with regard to floutings of maxims, such studies are highly recommended.

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