

EL4222 Stylistics and Drama

Session 8

Test:

- Strive for a systematic and organised account. Ensure there is sufficient depth of analysis. Tease out the pattern to draw a conclusion.
- Evidence for what is said is important. Don't just make claims.
- Various analyses are possible – particularly in relation to speech acts. You can focus on the superficial or underlying speech acts.

Organisation: Lecture + Analysis and Activity

Part I

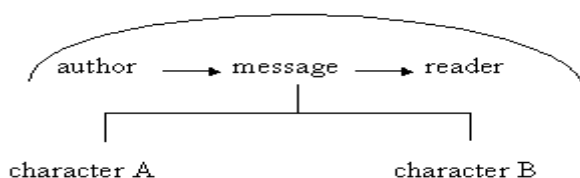
How do we interpret rudeness and politeness in a play? Does it show context? Is it to aid characterisation?

1. A more recent formulation from Leech:

<i>Generosity/Tact</i>	Place a high value on <i>other's</i> wants a low value on <i>self's</i> wants
<i>Approbation/Modesty</i>	Place a high value on <i>other's</i> qualities a low value on <i>self's</i> qualities
<i>Agreement</i>	Place a high value on <i>other's</i> opinions a low value on <i>self's</i> opinions
<i>Sympathy</i>	Place a high value on <i>other's</i> feelings a low value on <i>self's</i> feelings
<i>Obligation</i> [= indebtedness]	Place a high value on <i>other's</i> actions a low value on <i>self's</i> actions

Leech (2000), *International Journal of Pragmatics* 10: 101–124

2. Unlike the notion of *co-operation*, the notion of *politeness* seem to be a less useable one in relation to author-to-reader/audience relationship, except perhaps
- in relation to self-censorship or 'hinting at' potentially offensive subjects rather than portraying them openly.
 - in political or satirical plays, the object of criticism might be made obliquely (more 'polite') rather than directly (less 'polite'). (For example, *Every good boy deserves favour* is partly about how political dissidents in the old Soviet bloc could be sent to lunatic asylums; and *Professional foul* is set in a Czechoslovakia where academics critical of the state could face serious disadvantages.)
 - in situations when the author is seen as being 'patronising' (*how?*) or 'assumes' things – for example, in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* Stoppard assumes that the audience/reader will be familiar with not only *Hamlet* but also *En attendant Godot* (*Waiting for Godot*) – would those who aren't be made to feel stupid and ignorant and uneducated?



3. Another approach to politeness, this time with reference to 'face'. By 'face', we mean 'reputation' or 'good name'.

Goffman's definition of face

... the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes — albeit an image that others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing of himself.

4. Further distinctions made by Brown and Levinson

Brown and Levinson (1987), p. 66

We make the following assumptions: that all competent adult members of a society have (and know each other to have)

- (i) 'face', the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself, consisting in two related aspects:
- (a) negative face: the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction – *ie*, freedom of action and freedom from imposition;

- (b) positive face: the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by the interlocutors;
- (ii) certain rational capacities, in particular consistent modes of reasoning from ends to the means that will achieve those ends.
5. Positive face and negative face seem to 'play off' each other. For example, if a stranger talks says you at the bus stop, 'Hallo, how are you?', you can think:
- ♦ 'How rude! Why can't he leave me alone?' → your NEGATIVE FACE THREATENED
 - ♦ 'How friendly! He goes out of his way to talk to me' → your POSITIVE FACE SUPPORTED
- You can also make the same speech act (in this case, asking for a lift home) differently:
- ♦ 'Would you be able to give me a lift home *whenever* you're going? *Only if it is not too much trouble.*' → takes into account the hearer's NEGATIVE FACE
 - ♦ 'I *really* love your car and the way you take charge of the steering wheel. I'd *really* enjoy a lift home from you.' → takes into account the hearer's POSITIVE FACE
6. Certain illocutionary acts can damage a persons face — these are *face-threatening acts* of FTAs. The extent of the FTA depends on **three variables**:
- ♦ *power* (cf. Leech's 'authority'),
 - ♦ *distance* (cf. Leech's 'horizontal distance'), and
 - ♦ *imposition rating* (cf. Leech's 'costliness').
7. The seriousness of the FTA will (among other things) determine the strategy used. These are the strategies listed according to the seriousness of the FTA, from *non-serious* to *very serious*.
- (1) Performing an FTA without any redress.
 - (2) Performing an FTA with redress – positive politeness.
 - (3) Performing an FTA with redress – negative politeness.
 - (4) Performing an FTA using off-record politeness – *ie* using hints.
 - (5) Don't perform FTA — *ie*, self-censorship.
8. Exceptions:
- (a) Urgent need for an FTA to be performed quickly – opt for lower-numbered strategy despite seriousness.
 - (b) Intention to insult – opt for lower-numbered strategy.
 - (c) There are situations when you are expected to say something (eg contradicting a negative evaluation; offering condolence; expressing thanks) – strategy 5 can therefore be potentially serious FTA.

Aston was a senior research fellow at Corpus Christi, Oxford. He was subject to bouts of drinking and severe depression; he could be difficult to work with and was something of an embarrassment to the College. At a meeting between President and Fellow, Aston said to the President, Sir Kenneth Dover:

'You're trying to push me out of the College!'

In Dover's autobiography (Marginal comment: a memoir, 1994), he comments:

'... this was so obviously true that I didn't say anything.'

A few days later Aston killed himself.

However, many have called into dispute that **face maintenance** is relevant to all contexts, and in some contexts such as the army or in disputes the aim might be to be impolite. ('I take **strategies** to be ways of achieving particular goals in interaction that are conventional for a particular community', Culpeper 2016: 424)

Jonathan Culpeper¹ ('Impoliteness strategies', [2016]; 'Towards an anatomy of impoliteness', [1996]; 'Impoliteness in *The Weakest Link*' [2005]) suggests impoliteness strategies:

- Bald, on-record impoliteness**: 'clear, direct, unambiguous and concise' (2016: 425), typically employed when there is much face at stake, and there is an intention to attack the face of the hearer, or where the speaker does not have the power to (safely) utter an impolite utterance, or both.
- Positive impoliteness**: 'the use of strategies deployed to damage the recipient's positive face wants' (2016: 425) such as snubbing, ignoring, excluding, use inappropriate identity markers, be unsympathetic, etc.
- Negative impoliteness**: attacking the freedom of action of the hearer, such as by frightening, ridiculing, etc.
- Off-record impoliteness**: the offence is conveyed indirectly by way of an implicature and could be cancelled.
- Withhold politeness**: keeping silent or not acting where politeness is expected.

Derek Bousfield in his book *Impoliteness in Interaction* (2008) prefers to reduce the five superstrategies to two:

¹ Culpeper moves away from this position in 2011 and instead suggests that impoliteness is a matter of *perlocution* – how behaviour is perceived by the addressee, rather than on the addresser's intention.

- **On-record impoliteness:** the use of strategies designed to *explicitly* (a) attack the face of an interactant, (b) construct the face of an interactant in a non-harmonious or outright conflictive way, (c) deny the expected face wants, needs, or rights of the interactant, or some combination thereof. The attack is made in an unambiguous way given the context in which it occurs.
- **Off-record impoliteness:** the use of strategies where the threat or damage to an interactant's face is conveyed indirectly by way of an implicature and can be cancelled. Two sub-strategies:
 - **sarcasm:** constitutes the use of individual or combined strategies which, on the surface, appear to be appropriate but which are meant to be taken as meaning the opposite in terms of face-management.
 - **withhold politeness:** do this where politeness would appear to be expected or mandatory.

Part 2

Questions

Consider Higgins's statement to Eliza Doolittle 'Be off with you: I don't want you' (see below)

- (a) What is the speech act being performed? Is it polite? Is it face-threatening? Why?
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- (b) Higgins could have chosen silence (and ignoring Eliza Doolittle) instead of saying what he did. Is this more polite or less; more or less face threatening? Why?
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- (c) What about more indirect ways of performing the same speech act, eg 'I'm afraid we shan't be able to make use of your voice'. Is this more or less face threatening? Why?
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- (d) How are the following related to each other: 'goodwill towards men'; maintaining speech etiquette; producing courteous speech acts; employing politeness formulae?

9. Back to rudeness in *Pygmalion* (Act 2) – how would you characterise Higgins's, Eliza's and Pickering's styles in terms of face and politeness?

- (1) HIGGINS [*brusquely, recognising her with unconcealed disappointment, and at once, baby-like, making an intolerable grievance of it*] Why, this is the girl I jotted down last night. She's no use: I've got all the records I want of the Lisson Grove lingo; and I'm not going to waste another cylinder on it. [*To the girl*] Be off with you: I don't want you.
- (2) THE FLOWER GIRL. Don't you be so saucy. You ain't heard what I come for yet. [*To Mrs Pearce, who is waiting at the door for further instruction*] Did you tell him I come in a taxi?
- (3) MRS PEARCE. Nonsense, girl! what do you think a gentleman like Mr Higgins cares what you came in?
- (4) THE FLOWER GIRL. Oh, we are proud! He ain't above giving lessons, not him: I heard him say so. Well, I ain't come here to ask for any compliment; and if my money's not good enough I can go elsewhere.
- (5) HIGGINS. Good enough for what?
- (6) THE FLOWER GIRL. Good enough for yə-oo. Now you know, don't you? I'm come to have lessons, I am. And to pay for em too: make no mistake.
- (7) HIGGINS [*stupent*] W e l l ! ! ! [*Recovering his breath with a gasp*] What do you expect me to say to you?
- (8) THE FLOWER GIRL. Well, if you was a gentleman, you might ask me to sit down, I think. Don't I tell you I'm bringing you business?
- (9) HIGGINS. Pickering: shall we ask this baggage to sit down or shall we throw her out of the window?
- (10) THE FLOWER GIRL [*running away in terror to the piano, where she turns at bay*] Ah-ah-ah-ow-ow-ow-oo! [*Wounded and whimpering*] I won't be called a baggage when I've offered to pay like any lady. [*Motionless, the two men stare at her from the other side of the room, amazed.*]
- (11) PICKERING [*gently*] What is it you want, my girl?
- (12) THE FLOWER GIRL. I want to be a lady in a flower shop stead of selling at the corner of Tottenham Court Road. But they won't take me unless I can talk more genteel. He said he could teach me. Well, here I am ready to pay him—not asking any favour—and he treats me as if I was dirt.
- (13) MRS PEARCE. How can you be such a foolish ignorant girl as to think you could afford to pay Mr Higgins?
- (14) THE FLOWER GIRL. Why shouldn't I? I know what lessons cost as well as you do; and I'm ready to pay.
- (15) HIGGINS. How much?
- (16) THE FLOWER GIRL [*coming back to him, triumphant*] Now you're talking! I thought you'd come off it when you saw a chance of getting back a bit of what you chucked at me last night. [*Confidentially*] You'd had a drop [1] in, hadn't you?
- (17) HIGGINS [*peremptorily*] Sit down.
- (18) THE FLOWER GIRL. Oh, if you're going to make a compliment of it—
- (19) HIGGINS [*thundering at her*] Sit down.

- (20) MRS PEARCE [*severely*] Sit down, girl. Do as you're told. [*She places the stray chair near the hearth-rug between Higgins and Pickering, and stands behind it waiting for the girl to sit down*].
- (21) THE FLOWER GIRL. Ah-ah-ah-ow-ow-oo! [*She stands, half rebellious, half bewildered*].
- (22) PICKERING [*very courteous*] Won't you sit down?
- (23) LIZA [*coyly*] Don't mind if I do. [*She sits down. Pickering returns to the hearthrug*].
- (24) HIGGINS. What's your name?
- (25) THE FLOWER GIRL. Liza Doolittle.
- (26) HIGGINS [*declaiming gravely*]
Eliza, Elizabeth, Betsy and Bess,
They went to the woods to get a bird nes':
- (27) PICKERING. They found a nest with four egg in it:
- (28) HIGGINS. They took one apiece, and left three in it.
They laugh heartily at their own wit.
- (29) LIZA. Oh, don't be silly.
- (30) MRS PEARCE. You mustn't speak to the gentleman like that.
- (31) LIZA. Well, why wont he speak sensible to me?
- (32) HIGGINS. Come back to business. How much do you propose to pay me for the lessons?
- (33) LIZA. Oh, I know what's right. A lady friend of mine gets French lessons for eighteenpence²[2] an hour from a real French gentleman. Well, you wouldn't have the face to ask me the same for teaching me my own language as you would for French; so I won't give more than a shilling. Take it or leave it.
- (34) HIGGINS [*walking up and down the room, rattling his keys and his cash in his pockets*] You know, Pickering, if you consider a shilling, not as a simple shilling, but as a percentage of this girl's income, it works out as fully equivalent to sixty or seventy guineas from a millionaire.
- (35) PICKERING. How so?
- (36) HIGGINS. Figure it out. A millionaire has about £150 a day. She earns about half-a-crown.
- (37) LIZA [*haughtily*] Who told you I only—
- (38) HIGGINS. [*continuing*] She offers me two-fifths of her day's income for a lesson. Two-fifths of a millionaire's income for a day would be somewhere about £60. It's handsome. By George, it's enormous! it's the biggest offer I ever had.
- (39) LIZA [*rising, terrified*] Sixty pounds! What are you talking about? I never offered you sixty pounds. Where would I get—
- (40) HIGGINS. Hold your tongue.
- (41) LIZA [*weeping*] But I ain't got sixty pounds. Oh—
- (42) MRS PEARCE. Don't cry, you silly girl. Sit down. Nobody is going to touch your money.
- (43) HIGGINS. Somebody is going to touch you, with a broomstick, if you don't stop snivelling. Sit down.
- (44) LIZA [*obeying slowly*] Ah-ah-ah-ow-oo-o! One would think you was my father.
- (45) HIGGINS. If I decide to teach you, I'll be worse than two fathers to you. Here [*he offers her his silk handkerchief*]!
- (46) LIZA. What's this for?
- (47) HIGGINS. To wipe your eyes. To wipe any part of your face that feels moist. Remember: that's your handkerchief; and that's your sleeve. Don't mistake the one for the other if you wish to become a lady in a shop.
Liza, utterly bewildered, stares helplessly at him.
- (48) MRS PEARCE. It's no use talking to her like that, Mr Higgins: she doesn't understand you. Besides, you're quite wrong: she doesn't do it that way at all [*she takes the handkerchief*].
- (49) LIZA [*snatching it*] Here! You give me that handkerchief. He give it to me, not to you.
- (50) PICKERING [*laughing*] He did. I think it must be regarded as her property, Mrs Pearce.
- (51) MRS PEARCE [*resigning herself*] Serve you right, Mr Higgins.
- (52) PICKERING. Higgins: I'm interested. What about the ambassador's garden party? I'll say you're the greatest teacher alive if you make that good. I'll bet you all the expenses of the experiment you cant do it. And I'll pay for the lessons.
- (53) LIZA. Oh, you are real good. Thank you, Captain.
- (54) HIGGINS [*tempted, looking at her*] It's almost irresistible. She's so deliciously low—so horribly dirty—
- (55) LIZA [*protesting extremely*] Ah-ah-ah-ow-ow-oo-oo!!! I ain't dirty: I washed my face and hands afore I come, I did.
- (56) PICKERING. You're certainly not going to turn her head with flattery, Higgins.
- (57) MRS PEARCE [*uneasy*] Oh, don't say that, sir: there's more ways than one of turning a girl's head; and nobody can do it better than Mr Higgins, though he may not always mean it. I do hope, sir, you won't encourage him to do anything foolish.
- (58) HIGGINS [*becoming excited as the idea grows on him*] What is life but a series of inspired follies? The difficulty is to find them to do. Never lose a chance: it doesn't come every day. I shall make a duchess of this draggie-tailed guttersnipe.
- (59) LIZA [*strongly deprecating this view of her*] Ah-ah-ah-ow-ow-oo!
- (60) HIGGINS [*carried away*] Yes: in six months—in three if she has a good ear and a quick tongue—I'll take her anywhere and pass her off as anything. We'll start today: now! this moment! Take her away and clean her, Mrs Pearce. Monkey Brand, if it won't come off any other way. Is there a good fire in the kitchen?

2[2] Pre-1971 British currency: ¼d (quarter penny = farthing); ½d (ha'penny); 1d (penny); 2d (tuppence); 3d (thruppence); 6d (sixpence; coin called *tanner*); 12d = 1/- (one shilling *or* one bob); 2/- (two shillings *or* two bob; coin called *florin*); 2/6 (two and six; coin called *half crown*); 5/- (five shillings) = crown; 20/- = £1 (one pound *or* a quid); 21/- = one guinea. (1971 was the year of the decimalisation of currency.)

- (61) MRS PEARCE [*protesting*]. Yes; but—
- (62) HIGGINS [*storming on*] Take all her clothes off and burn them. Ring up Whiteley or somebody for new ones. Wrap her up in brown paper til they come.
- (63) LIZA. You're no gentleman, you're not, to talk of such things. I'm a good girl, I am; and I know what the like of you are, I do.
- (64) HIGGINS. We want none of your Lisson Grove prudery here, young woman. You've got to learn to behave like a duchess. Take her away, Mrs Pearce. If she gives you any trouble wallop her.
- (65) LIZA [*springing up and running between Pickering and Mr Pearce for protection*] No! I'll call the police, I will.
- (66) MRS PEARCE. But I've no place to put her.
- (67) HIGGINS. Put her in the dustbin.
- (68) LIZA. Ah-ah-ah-ow-ow-oo!
- (69) PICKERING. Oh come, Higgins! be reasonable.
- (70) MRS PEARCE [*resolutely*] You must be reasonable, MR Higgins: really you must. You can't walk over everybody like this. Higgins, thus scolded, subsides. The hurricane is succeeded by a zephyr of amiable surprise.
- (71) HIGGINS [*with professional exquisiteness of modulation*] I walk over everybody! My dear Mrs Pearce, my dear Pickering, I never had the slightest intention of walking over anyone. All I propose is that we should be kind to this poor girl. We must help her to prepare and fit herself for her new station in life. If I did not express myself clearly it was because I did not wish to hurt her delicacy, or yours.
Liza, reassured, steals back to her chair.
- (72) MRS PEARCE [*to Pickering*] Well, did you ever hear anything like that, sir?
- (73) PICKERING [*laughing heartily*] Never, Mrs Pearce: never.
- (74) HIGGINS [*patiently*] What's the matter?
- (75) MRS PEARCE. Well, the matter is, sir, that you can't take a girl up like that as if you were picking up a pebble on the beach.
- (76) HIGGINS. Why not?
- (77) MRS PEARCE. Why not! But you don't know anything about her. What about her parents? She may be married.
- (78) LIZA. Garn!
- (79) HIGGINS. There! As the girl very properly says, Garn! Married indeed! Don't you know that a woman of that class looks a worn out drudge of fifty a year after she's married.
- (80) LIZA. Who'd marry me?
- (81) HIGGINS [*suddenly resorting to the most thrillingly beautiful low tones in his best elocutionary style*] By George, Eliza, the streets will be strewn with the bodies of men shooting themselves for your sake before I've done with you.

10. Assess the **impoliteness strategies** used here, where two friends fool around and tease each other and enjoy a game of word play (Act 2, scene 3).

<i>Mercutio</i> . Signior Romeo, bonjour! There's a French salutation to your French slop. You gave us the counterfeit fairly last night.	1	<i>I bonjour</i> , French for 'good day' – <i>Mercutio</i> has
<i>Romeo</i> . Good morrow to you both. What counterfeit did I give you?	2	been attacking the use of foreign phrases
<i>Mercutio</i> . The slip, sir, the slip. Can you not conceive?	3	<i>2 French slop</i> , loose French trousers
<i>Romeo</i> . Pardon, good <i>Mercutio</i> . My business was great, and in such a case as mine a man may strain courtesy.	4	<i>2 fairly</i> , completely
<i>Mercutio</i> . That's as much as to say, such a case as yours constrains a man to bow in the hams.	5	<i>5 the slip</i> , (a) escape, (b) false coin (hence
<i>Romeo</i> . Meaning to curtsy?	6	<i>counterfeit</i> in l. 3)
<i>Mercutio</i> . Thou has most kindly hit it.	7	<i>5 conceive</i> , understand (the pun)
<i>Romeo</i> . A most courteous exposition.	8	<i>7 strain courtesy</i> , show less politeness than he
<i>Mercutio</i> . Nay, I am the very pink of courtesy.	9	should
<i>Romeo</i> . Pink for flower?	10	<i>8-9 constrains ... the hams</i> , forces a man's legs to
<i>Mercutio</i> . Right.	11	bend. <i>Mercutio</i> puns on <i>courtesy</i> and <i>curtsy</i> .
<i>Romeo</i> . Why, then is my pump well-favoured.	12	<i>13 pink</i> , perfection. <i>Pink</i> is also a flower, and to
<i>Mercutio</i> . Sure wit! Follow me this jest now till thou hast worn out thy pump, that when the single sole of it is worn, the jest may remain, after the wearing, solely singular.	13	<i>pink</i> is to cut ornamental holes in cloth or
<i>Romeo</i> . O single-soled jest, solely singular for the singleness!	14	leather. When <i>Romeo</i> says that his <i>pump</i>
<i>Mercutio</i> . Come between us, good Benvolio; my wit faints.	15	(single-soled shoe) is <i>well-favoured</i> , he means
	16	that it has been <i>pinked</i> in this way.
	17	<i>17 Sure wit!</i> <i>Mercutio</i> mockingly praises
	18	<i>Romeo</i> 's wit as unerring
	19	<i>19 solely singular</i> , absolutely unequalled (also
	20	pun on <i>sole</i>)
	21	<i>20 single-soled</i> , therefore thin and weak
		<i>20 singleness</i> , (a) uniqueness, (b) bizarre quality

David Crystal, in his play *Language Play* (1998), refers to this as the *ludic function* of language, where he used the following example on p. 2

A domestic sitting-room. Evening. Janet and John are in the middle of a conversation with Peter and Jane. Janet is telling a story about what happened when their respective cats met in the street.

Janet. ... And so there was a sort of confrontation between Crumble and Splash –	
Janet. Catfrontation, you mean. (<i>Laughs.</i>)	1
Janet. Well, all right, catfrontation, if you insist – and they stood by the –	2
Peter. Near cat-astophe, if you ask me. (<i>Groans all round.</i>)	3
Janet. I wasn't asking you, Peter!	4
Peter. Sorry, I didn't mean to be categorical. (<i>More groans all round.</i>)	5
Jane. This sounds like it's becoming a catalogue of disasters. (<i>Pedals of laughter.</i>)	6
Peter. I don't think John approves of all this jocularly, when Janet's trying to tell us a perfectly seriously story.	7
Janet. You know what John's being, though, don't you.	8
Janet. What?	9
Janet. A catalyst! (<i>More laughter all round.</i>)	10
Peter. I thought that was what happened to moggies when they'd drunk too much. (<i>Further groans.</i>)	11
Janet. Oh, that's Christmas-cracker standard.	12
Peter. Of course, you know what Splash would get if he stayed outside for too long?	13
Janet. What?	14
Susan. Catarrh. (<i>More laughter all round.</i>)	15
Janet. Anyway, to get back to the point ...	16
John. Yes, get on with your catechism, Janet. (<i>Mock cheers.</i>)	17
	18

11. How does Hesther get Dysart to take on Alan Strang's case? Were politeness and face strategies used? Which ones? Why? Do you think Dysart's and Hester's relationship (from the way they interact) is unusual?

Hesther enters the square: a woman in her mid-forties.

- (1) HESTHER. Hallo, Martin.
Dysart rises and kisses her on the cheek.
- (2) DYSART. Madam Chairman! Welcome to the torture chamber!
- (3) HESTHER. It's good of you to see me right away.
- (4) DYSART. You're a welcome relief. Take a couch.
- (5) HESTHER. It's been a day?
- (6) DYSART. No – just a fifteen year old schizophrenic, and a girl of eight thrashed into catatonia by her father. Normal, really ... You're in a state.
- (7) HESTHER. Martin, this is the most shocking case I ever tried.
- (8) DYSART. So you said on the phone.
- (9) HESTHER. I mean it. My bench wanted to send the boy to prison. For life, if they could manage it. It took me two hours solid arguing to get him sent to you instead.
- (10) DYSART. Me?
- (11) HESTHER. I mean, to hospital.
- (12) DYSART. Now look, Hesther. Before you say anything else, I can take no more patients at the moment. I can't even cope with the ones I have.
- (13) HESTHER. You must.
- (14) DYSART. Why?
- (15) HESTHER. Because most people are going to be disgusted by the whole thing. Including doctors.
- (16) DYSART. May I remind you I share this room with two highly competent psychiatrists?
- (17) HESTHER. Bennett and Thoroughgood. They'll be as shocked as the public.
- (18) DYSART. That's an absolutely unwarrantable statement.
- (19) HESTHER. Oh, they'll be cool and exact. And underneath they'll be revolted, and immovably English. Just like my bench.
- (20) DYSART. Well, what am I? Polynesian?
- (21) HESTHER. You know what I mean! ... (pause) Please, Martin. It's vital. You're this boy's only chance.
- (22) DYSART. Why? What's he done? Dosed some little girl's Pepsi with Spanish Fly? What could possibly throw your bench into two-hour convulsions?
- (23) HESTHER. He blinded six horses with a metal spike.
A long pause.
- (24) DYSART. Blinded?
- (25) HESTHER. Yes.
- (26) DYSART. All at once, or over a period?
- (27) HESTHER. All on the same night.
- (28) DYSART. Where?

- (29) HESTHER. In a riding stable near Winchester. He worked there at weekends.
 (30) DYSART. How old?
 (31) HESTHER. Seventeen.
 (32) DYSART. What did he say in Court?
 (33) HESTHER. Nothing. He just sang.
 (34) DYSART. Sang
 (35) HESTHER. Any time anyone asked him anything.
 Pause.
 Please take him, Martin. It's the last favour I'll ever ask you.
 (36) DYSART. No, it's not.
 (37) HESTHER. No, it's not – and he's probably abominable. All I know is, he needs you badly. Because there really is nobody within a hundred miles of your desk who can handle him. And perhaps understand what this is about. Also ...
 (38) DYSART. What?
 (39) HESTHER. There's something very special about him.
 (40) DYSART. In what way?
 (41) HESTHER. Vibrations.
 (42) DYSART. You are your vibrations.
 (43) HESTHER. They're quite startling. You'll see.
 (44) DYSART. When does he get here?
 (45) HESTHER. Tomorrow morning. Luckily there was a bed in Neville Ward. I know this is an awful imposition, Martin.
 Frankly I didn't know what else to do.
 Pause.
 (46) DYSART. Can you come in and see me on Friday?
 (47) HESTHER Bless you!

(Act I, Scene 2)

Consider this interaction against what we know of Dysart and his wife from Scenes 17 and 18.

From **Scene 17**

ALAN. Do you have dates?
 DYSART. I told you. I'm married.
Alan approaches him, very hostile.
 ALAN. I know. Her name's Margaret. She's a dentist! ... Do you have girls behind her back?
 DYSART. No.
 ALAN. Then what? Do you fuck her?
 DYSART. That's enough now.
He rises and moves away.
 ALAN. Come on, tell me! Tell me, tell me!
 DYSART. I said that's enough now.
Alan rises too and walks around him.
 ALAN. I bet you don't. I bet you never touch her. Come on, tell me. You've got no kinds, have you? Is that because you don't fuck?
 DYSART (*sharp*). Go to your room. Go on: quick march.

From **Scene 18**

DYSART. ... she sits beside our salmon-pink, glazed brick fireplace, and knits things for orphans in a home she helps with. And I sit opposite, turning the pages of art books on Ancient Greece. Occasionally, I still trail a faint scent of my enthusiasm across her path. I pass her a picture of the sacred acrobats of Crete leaping through the horns of running bulls – and she'll say: 'Och, Martin, what an *absurd* thing to be doing! The Highland Games, now there's *normal* sport!' Or she'll observe, just after I've told her a story from the Iliad: 'You know, when you come to think of it, Agamemnon and that lot were nothing but a bunch of ruffians from the Gorbals,³ only with fancy names!' (*He rises*) You get the picture. She's turned into a Shrink. The familiar domestic monster. Margaret Dysart: the Shrink's Shrink.
 HESTHER. That's cruel, Martin.
 DYSART. Yes. Do you know what it's like for two people to live in the same house as if they were in different parts of the world? Mentally, she's always in some drizzly kirk of her own inheriting; and I'm in some Doric temple – clouds tearing through pillars – eagles bearing prophecies out of the sky. She finds all that repulsive. All my wife has ever taken from the Mediterranean – from that whole vast intuitive culture – are four bottles of Chianti to make into lamps, and two china condiment donkeys labelled Sally and Peppy.

³ *The Gorbals* was a working-class slum area in the centre of Glasgow in Scotland, although today it is becoming gentrified.

12 and 13 are additional texts for reference which we will probably not have time to go through. Please read them because they are funny and interesting, as well as useful for considering in relation to politeness and face.

12. Edward Albee, *Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

- (1) GEORGE: Well, just stay on your feet, that's all ... These people are your guests, you know, and ...
- (2) MARTHA: I can't even see you ... I haven't been able to see you for years ...
- (3) GEORGE: ... if you pass out, or throw up, or something ...
- (4) MARTHA: ... I mean, you're a blank, a cipher ...
- (5) GEORGE: ... and try to keep your clothes on, too. There aren't many more sickening sights than you with a couple of drinks in you and your skirt up over your head, you know ...
- (6) MARTHA: ... a zero ...
- (7) GEORGE: ... *your heads*, I should say ... (*The front door-bell chimes.*)
- (8) MARTHA: Party! Party!
- (9) GEORGE: (*murderously.*) I'm really looking forward to this, Martha ...
- (10) MARTHA: (*same*) Go answer the door.
- (11) GEORGE: (*not moving*) You answer it.
- (12) MARTHA: Get to that door, you. (*He does not move.*) I'll fix you, you ...
- (13) GEORGE: (*fake-spits*) ... to you ... (*Door chimes again.*)
- (14) MARTHA: (*Shouting ... to the door.*) C'MON IN (*To GEORGE between her teeth.*) I said, get over there!
- (15) GEORGE: (*moves a little towards the door, smiling slightly.*) All right, love ... whatever love wants.

Later on, after the arrival of Nick and Honey:

- (16) HONEY: (*rising quickly*) I wonder if you could show me where the ... (*Her voice trails off.*)
- (17) GEORGE: (*to MARTHA, indicating HONEY.*) Martha ...
- (18) NICK: (*To HONEY*) Are you all right?
- (19) HONEY: Of course, dear. I want to ... put some powder on my nose.
- (20) GEORGE: (*As MARTHA is not getting up.*) Martha wont you show her where we keep the ... euphemism?
- (21) MARTHA: Huh? What? Oh! Sure! (*Rises.*) I'm sorry, c'mon. I want to show you the house.
- (22) HONEY: I think I'd like to ...
- (23) MARTHA: ... wash up? Sure ... c'mon with me. (*Takes HONEY by the arm.*)

13. David Lodge, *The Writing Game: A Comedy* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1991)

- (1) JEREMY (*off*) Here we are.
JEREMY, wearing cardigan and corduroy trousers, comes in, carrying a suitcase, followed by LEO, in sports jacket and lightweight trousers, carrying a portable computer in a case. JEREMY is a middle-aged bachelor, slightly fussy in manner. LEO is about fifty, American-Jewish, quite handsome in a frizzled, furrowed way. He looks somewhat depressed and apprehensive.
- (2) JEREMY It's a converted barn, as you can see. (*He puts down the suitcase*) There are two bedrooms, one up, one down. (*He points*) Bathroom and loo in here. (*He indicates the second door on the ground floor*) Maude hasn't arrived yet, so you can take your pick of the bedrooms.
- (3) LEO Which one do you recommend?
- (4) JEREMY Well, some people in the upstairs room do complain of the birds in the eaves.
- (5) LEO I'll take the downstairs one. (*He puts the computer on the coffee table, and picks up suitcase*) It's a pretty old building, isn't it?
- (6) JEREMY Seventeenth-century. Like the farmhouse.
- (7) LEO Stone floors. Must be cold as hell in the winter.
LEO carries his case into the ground-floor bedroom. JEREMY follows him to the door, and leans against the door frame.
- (8) JEREMY Ah, we close from December to March.
LEO throws case onto bed, opens it and unpacks a few items.
- (9) LEO (*projects voice*) So what do you do then, Jeremy?
- (10) JEREMY I usually go to Morocco. I sit in the sun and write poetry.
- (11) LEO You're a poet, huh? As well as running this place?
- (12) JEREMY Well, I have published a slim volume or two ... I could show you some of my work if you're interested.
JEREMY takes a slim volume from the bookshelf.
- (13) LEO I don't know anything about poetry. I don't really understand why people go on writing the stuff. Nobody reads it anymore, except other poets. (*Comes to the doorway*) I don't mean to be personal.
...
- (14) LEO Where do I eat, since we're on the subject?
- (15) JEREMY In the main house. You forage for breakfast and lunch. The students take turns to prepare the evening meal, and wash up afterwards. You and Maude don't have to, of course.
- (16) LEO I'm glad to hear it.

- (17) JEREMY Though some tutors muck in and the students rather like it if they do.
A pause. LEO does not rise to the hint... LEO begins unpacking the word processor.
- (18) JEREMY I see you've brought your typewriter with you.
- (19) LEO It's not a typewriter, it's a portable word processor. Where can I plug it in?
- (20) JEREMY There's a socket over there. I may have to get you an adapter.... Were you hoping to do some writing yourself, then?
- (21) LEO You mean I won't have time?
- (22) JEREMY Well the students *will* bring their unpublished novels with them, though we tell them not to, and expect the tutors to read them. (LEO *looks unhappy*) You just have to be firm.
- (23) LEO Firm?
- (24) JEREMY Ration them. Only one *magnum opus* per person.
- (25) LEO I'm beginning to think this was a very bad idea.
- ...
- (26) LEO I'm leaving.
LEO goes back into the bedroom, and begins hastily repacking his case. JEREMY follows him to the bedroom door.
- (27) JEREMY (*aghast*) Leaving? But why? You can't.
- ...
- You can't ask Maude to do the whole thing on her own.
LEO has both cases in his hands, ready to go.
- (28) LEO Oh, I'm sure she can handle it. A woman who has brought up four children, writes a weekly book review in *The Times*, seems to be on TV or radio every other day, and has published ten bestselling novels —
During this speech, MAUDE appears at the door, suitcase in hand. She is a good-looking, confident woman in her forties, dressed casually but expensively.
- (29) MAUDE Nine, actually.
- ...
- (30) JEREMY Maude, Leo says he's leaving. Do persuade him to stay.
MAUDE looks enquiringly at LEO, who is already beginning to change his mind.
- (31) LEO Well, the more Jeremy told me about the course ...
- (32) MAUDE Goodness, Jeremy, whatever did you tell him?
- (33) LEO He said it was a pressure cooker.
- (34) JEREMY That was just a metaphor, for heaven's sake!
- (35) LEO It sounds too intimate. A class is a class as far as I'm concerned, not an encounter group.
- (36) JEREMY (*plaintively*) You don't *have* to be chummy with the students. As long as you comment on their work.
- (37) MAUDE That's right. It might make us a rather effective team. You could be very mean and hard on them, and then I could come along and be constructive and sympathetic. Isn't that how interrogators work?
LEO looks uncertain whether she is mocking him or not.
- (38) JEREMY Oh, do please stay. Everybody will be so disappointed if you don't.
- (39) MAUDE There's no point forcing Mr Rafkin, Jeremy. If he doesn't feel up to it ...
- (40) LEO (*bridling*) It's not a question of being 'up to it'.
- (41) JEREMY Give it a trial, at least. One day.