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	Sommario/riassunto	Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson have proposed that power (P), distance (D), and the ranked extremity (R) of a face-threatening act are the universal determinants of politeness levels in dyadic discourse. This claim is tested here for Shakespeare's use of Early Modern English in Much Ado about Nothing, Measure for Measure, The Taming of the Shrew, and Twelfth Night. The comedies are used because: (1) dramatic texts provide the best information on colloquial speech of the period; (2) the psychological soliloquies in the comedies provide the access to inner life that is necessary for a proper