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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 <i>Much Ado about Nothing</i> , <i>Measure for Measure</i> , <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> , and <i>Twelfth Night</i> . 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