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# Creative linguistic impoliteness as aggression in Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket*

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**Abstract:** Stanley Kubrick's anti-war film *Full Metal Jacket* (1987) dramatically represents US Marine Corps basic training during the Vietnam War as both gruelling and brutalising. The brutal, linguistically aggressive and physically intimidating scenes purport to detail the dehumanising process that Marine Corps recruits were put through in preparation for combat during that period. In the film, the recruits are trained by Gunnery Sergeant Hartman, played by the actor R. Lee Erney, who is himself an ex-Marine Corps drill instructor (1965–1967) and who also served in Vietnam in 1968. As a result of his experience as an instructor, Erney was given free rein by Kubrick to write his own dialogue for the abusive barrack room and field training scenes in order to lend the drama an air of authenticity (see Erney 2017). Within the fictional world of the film, the intense training and disciplinary regime ultimately causes one recruit, Private Leonard Lawrence, to crack psychologically. Private Lawrence is nicknamed 'Gomer Pyle' by Hartman upon their first meeting, this name being a direct allusion to the hapless character of the same name who was a US Marine recruit in the sitcom *Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.*, which ran from 1964–1969 – contemporaneously with the time period in which *Full Metal Jacket* is set. This insulting allusion is merely the start of a long line of linguistically impolite/aggressive and ultimately physically aggressive interactions which Lawrence/Pyle suffers at the hands of Hartman, both directly and, later in the film as a result of Hartman's orchestrations, from the other recruits. Under this unrelenting barrage of impoliteness, aggression, and abuse, Lawrence/Pyle eventually shoots Hartman dead before turning his rifle on himself and committing suicide. Thus, the film argues that the dehumanising effect of the basic training, which was ostensibly carried out to toughen up and mentally prepare conscripted recruits for combat in Vietnam, had a profound, brutalising and (potentially) utterly

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destructive effect on those subjected to it. In this article, we explore the creative linguistic aggression displayed by the character of Hartman. We focus particularly on the reasons underlying the creativity of Hartman's impoliteness and aggression, and argue that these are essentially to foreground the seriousness of the training regime which the recruits must follow.

**Keywords:** aggression, creativity, drama, film, foregrounding, identity, impoliteness, performance

## 1 Introduction

Utilising approaches from the study of impoliteness, rudeness and linguistic aggression in the analysis of characterisation and/or representations of interpersonal relations in fictional texts is not new. Culpeper (1996), Bousfield (2006; 2014), Bousfield and McIntyre (2011), Brown (2013), Dynel (2012; 2013), McIntyre and Bousfield (2017), Methias (2011), Paternoster (2012), Rudanko (2006), Simpson and Bousfield (2017) and many others have all demonstrated the value of using various models and approaches to impoliteness in the analysis and interpretation of character, characterisation, plot, and audience engagement. The benefits of these kinds of study to impoliteness theorising is that fictional texts arguably provide a laboratory-style set of conditions for researchers, analysts and theorists to test the limits of impoliteness approaches and models prior to turning those models to real-life interaction. In effect, fiction can be used as a test-bed for theories and models in order to refine them for use on naturally-occurring language. This is made possible by the degree of similarity between fictional and real-life dialogue which has been shown to be greater than previously thought (see Quaglio 2009; McIntyre 2015; McIntyre and Bousfield 2017). Indeed, this latter view is contrary to Labov and Waletzky's (1967) original thesis that a sound strategy is to look at everyday instances of spontaneous narrative before going on to examine more complex narratives (Labov and Waletzky classify literary narratives as a prime example of such complex narratives). Labov and Waletzky's view appears to be based partially on the assumption that the differences between spontaneous real-life interaction and scripted fictional discourse are marked and significant. As a consequence, their view appears to be that it is hence wiser to develop models based on the analysis of real-world discourse first, since this will allow the analyst to identify the complexities of naturally-occurring language that are assumed not to be present in fictional discourse. Following Labov and Waletzky's line of reasoning, developing a model based on the analysis of fictional dialogue would mean that much of the complexity of narratives is missed. However, more recent research

(e.g. Quaglio 2009) has systematically challenged this prevailing view. On the basis of such research, McIntyre and Bousfield (2017) argue that ‘[...] fiction has a role to play in the development of linguistic models and analytical frameworks, including, of course, theories of (im)politeness’ (McIntyre and Bousfield 2017: 761). Their position here is supported by Sinclair’s (2004) well-known statement that:

Literature is a prime example of language in use; no systematic apparatus can claim to describe language if it does not embrace the literature also; and not as a freakish development, but as a natural specialisation of the categories which are required in other parts of the descriptive system. (Sinclair 2004: 51).

Furthermore, we should remember that schematic assumptions about how the world works, or ought to work, is learned behaviour; and much of that learned behaviour is acquired from sources of information other than that garnered by personal experience. As a result, it is clear that fiction and drama – being two aspects of modes of expression reflecting the human condition – provide strong and robust data for testing the efficacy of linguistic models of human communication (see McIntyre 2015; McIntyre and Bousfield 2017; for extended discussions of this issue). In the case of the *Full Metal Jacket* scene that we analyse in this article, the actor playing the character of the drill instructor, Gunnery Sergeant Hartman, was given free rein by the director, Stanley Kubrick, to write his own dialogue. This was done in recognition of his real-life experience as a drill instructor. As a consequence, it would seem prudent not to underestimate the authenticity of the film’s dialogue.

While Culpeper (1996) and Bousfield (2008), consider the structures, forms, anatomy, and biopsies of military training discourse, none of the studies identified so far consider the highly creative instances of extended, multi-turn impoliteness in drama of the sort which typifies the linguistic behaviour of Gunnery Sergeant Hartman. This creativity is our focus in this article. Specifically, we focus on one of the early scenes in *Full Metal Jacket* in which creative linguistic impoliteness is deployed for numerous purposes.

*Full Metal Jacket* is a film about the Vietnam War. The first half of the film concentrates on the brutal training regime that US Marine recruits underwent before they were sent off to fight in Vietnam. The scene we analyse shows the first time that the recruits meet their new drill instructor, Gunnery Sergeant Hartman. Throughout the scene, Hartman engages in unpredictable linguistic strategies designed to engender creative and, as a result, foregrounded instances of impoliteness and aggression towards the recruits (both as individuals and as a group). As we show in our analysis, non-serious engagement by the recruits with the unpredictable and creative instances of impoliteness results further

foregrounds this creativity. As a result, the offensiveness, aggression, threats, and violence from Hartman are made more prevalent than is normal for the Activity Type (Levinson 1992) in which all participants are engaged (i.e. military recruit training).

Understanding the source and function of the impoliteness in the scene is at the heart of our analysis. The particular research questions that we aim to answer are as follows:

1. What is the function of the Drill Sergeant's creative and offensive linguistic behaviour?
2. What are the linguistic, paralinguistic and non-linguistic causes of face damage to the recruits?
3. What causes the recruits to register face damage when initially this was not caused?
4. What implications does this analysis have for a typology of impoliteness, and impoliteness research in general?

In the next section, we provide a summary of the relationship between impoliteness and face in an effort to define the assumptions that underpin our analysis in section 3.

## 2 Impoliteness, face and identity

Early research in impoliteness and linguistic aggression dealt centrally with the face-offending linguistic behaviour found in military training. Culpeper (1996) and Bousfield (2007; 2008) considered the linguistic output strategies used in American and British army training regimes respectively. Building on the work of Culpeper et al. (2003), Bousfield (2007; 2008) developed the study of output strategies extending them to dynamic, interactional dyadic, and multi-party talk extending over subsequent turns in interaction. Bousfield (2010) further noted that, in this interactive back-and-forth involving face-threat, face-damage, linguistic aggression and impoliteness, there is an inherent power struggle/power (re-)assertion in asymmetrical exchanges.

Culpeper (1996) first theorised that the reasons for the existence and engagement in impolite interaction in army training was, primarily, to depersonalise the recruits: to break down their personalities and rebuild them in the shape or identity of the 'model soldier'. Culpeper's notion here – that impoliteness can be used to create or reinforce schematic expectations of what it takes to be a soldier (or in our case, a Marine) – relates not only to notions of face, but also to

presumed and preferred identity. Such an observation foreshadows later work on the relationship between facework and identity, (see for example Lambert-Graham 2007; Lambert-Graham 2008; Schnurr et al. 2007, Locher 2008; Locher and Langoltz 2008; Garces-Conejos Blitvich 2009, 2010a, 2012; 2013; Angouri and Tselinga 2010; Haugh 2010; Haugh and Bargiela-Chiappini 2010; Planchenault 2010; Upadhyay 2010; Mills and Kadar 2011, Bousfield 2013; Garces-Conejos, Lorenzo-Dus and Bou-Franch 2013). In his recent exploration of the inter-relationship between these concepts, Bousfield (2013) contends that the concept of 'face' cannot be ignored at any level or stage of interaction. Further, Carces-Conejos Blitvich (2013) argues that although face and identity are distinct and discrete concepts, they nevertheless interlink and must be theorised, and the concepts applied, together. On this point Bousfield (2013) argues that both concepts, therefore, apply in instances of impoliteness, linguistic conflict and aggression. It is consequently important to define each concept, and establish the links between them.

In this article, then, 'face' is understood in the Goffmanian sense:

The term face may be defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he is taking 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 for himself. (Goffman 1967: 5)

Identity on the other hand is here understood in the sense of Joseph's (2013) approach. Joseph argues that:

Identity relates classically to who individuals are, understood in terms of the groups to which they belong, including nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender, generation, sexual orientation, social class and an unlimited number of other possibilities. (Joseph 2013: 36).

These 'other possibilities' alluded to by Joseph must also involve the notion of 'profession' included by Goffman. Hence a profession, including that of US Marine recruit, has implications for identity and schematic expectations of face for those engaged in, or training to become a member of the profession in question. Culpeper (2011) is one of the foremost proponents of the notion that schemata have a key role in impoliteness theorising, having shown that an interactant's face can be threatened or damaged via schematic expectations of their professional standing not being met in interaction (see also Bousfield 2008: chapter 3 for an early exploration of (un)met face expectations on impoliteness, offence and aggression).

As Bousfield (2013) observes, for Joseph (2013), face is 'punctual', whilst identity is 'durative'. What Joseph is arguing is that face, in his view, is only

evident and salient in interaction. Identity, by contrast, is a persistent property or aspect of individuals based on a complex mix of constitutive factors which necessarily includes sociologically constructed categories (nationality, ethnicity, gender, age and, indeed, profession, amongst others). It is here, in the differing temporal aspects of face and identity, that we see an inherent tension, which is so important to both real-life and fictional narratives (Labov and Waletzky 1967). This is clear in the *Full Metal Jacket* example below. At this stage in the film, the recruits are not yet full members of the military – not least because they have not yet adopted the behaviours and identities of ‘model’ Marines in the schematic understandings of the more experienced and longer-serving Hartman. Their non-achievement of professional Marine status means their identities are not formed in the manner and style that Hartman requires (Hartman may be seen here as a metonym for the wider US military of 1968 as fictionally constructed). Recall that identity is a durative phenomenon, persisting outside of interaction. Face, by contrast, is punctual, only existing *in* interaction. Given that face and identity are closely related, for Hartman to succeed in changing the recruits’ identities into the model Marine, he needs to impact on their face, since face being punctual is more malleable meaning it is, in effect, a route into identity.

Neither face nor identity are static entities, but rather they are transitive (in the sense that primarily through interaction they can be changed). The relationship of face to identity is that through discursive interaction, face can be threatened, enhanced, saved or damaged, resulting in longer-term impacts on identity both in terms of Self and Other construction and recognition of those identities. Essentially, then, we argue that the notions of face and identity are discrete but linked concepts. We accept that identity is durative and that face is punctual, but we also argue that face is iterative in that it needs to be made and constantly remade in interaction. Neither the in-the-moment face nor the more durative and persistent identity are immutable as both can be changed by and through interaction. This is as true for characters in literature as it is for individuals in real life interaction.

This understanding begins to explain the engagement in impoliteness by Gunnery Sergeant Hartman in *Full Metal Jacket*. Hartman is required to turn conscripted recruits into model Marines and uses impoliteness as a way of demolishing unfavourable (to the US Marines Corps) aspects of the recruits’ identities, and replacing them with favourable, and more ‘useful’ elements (thereby constructing their identities as US Marines rather than civilians).

At this point, it is worth taking account of Mills’ (2005) critique of Culpeper’s (1996) approach to the study of impoliteness in military training regimes. Mills (2005) argues that aggressive linguistic behaviour is a staple of such Communities of Practice and that, as a result, the aggressive and face-damaging

linguistic behaviour in which participants engage is normalised and therefore unlikely to be perceived as ‘impoliteness’. This is in response to the following claim by Culpeper, which Mills quotes:

[...] in the context of the army, impoliteness is not a haphazard product of say a heated argument, but is deployed by the sergeants in a systematic way as part of what they perceive to be their job.  
(Culpeper 1996: 359).

Mills then responds as follows:

However, I would argue that within this particular Community of Practice, this behaviour may or may not be classified by any of the participants as impolite. The dominant group in the interaction, the officers (sic), as representatives of the army, are drawing on ritualized and institutionalized codes of linguistic behaviour, which have made this seeming excessive impoliteness on the part of the trainers the norm. That is not to suggest that the recruits are not concerned about this language use or are not adversely affected by it [...] But they probably will not classify it as impoliteness as such, since impoliteness is only that which is defined as such by individuals negotiating with the hypothesized norms of the Community of Practice.  
(Mills 2005: 270).

As argued in Bousfield (2007: 2188–90) this aspect of the debate regarding definitions and understandings of ‘impoliteness’ may, actually, be nothing more than an argument over *nomenclature*. Essentially, what we call this sort of linguistic behaviour – whether it is ‘impoliteness’ or ‘normalised linguistic aggression’ – is hardly the point. This sort of linguistic behaviour obtaining between asymmetrical participants in US and UK military training is deployed for evidently instrumental purposes (see Culpeper 1996; Bousfield 2007): to support the training of military recruits, to test and shape the recruits’ characters, to co-construct, sometimes aggressively, the recruits’ individual and group senses of ‘face’ and hence to shape and reform identities. All this is done in order to remould them as model military personnel. However, in the *Full Metal Jacket* scene, the above point noted, both Culpeper’s and Mills’ positions are defensible: Some of the recruits do initially appear not to take Hartman’s impoliteness (whatever we term his linguistic behaviour) seriously, potentially because, as Mills (2005) suggests, it is to be expected in that scenario. This can be seen in turn 15 in the transcript, below, when the Marine recruit known as Private Joker says *sotto voce* ‘Is that you, John Wayne? Is this me?’, seemingly as an indicator of the absurdity of Hartman’s speech up to that point. However, the sheer creativity of Hartman’s linguistic behaviour is so far foregrounded from the types and operations of impoliteness found by either Culpeper (1996) or Bousfield (2007; 2008) in their studies of US and UK military training that it has



to be considered as pragmatically deviant and highly defamiliarised. The impolite intent is also supported non-linguistically, as we will demonstrate in our analysis (though we should note we do not take a multimodal approach in our analysis here; such an approach offers a rich and likely fruitful area for future research).

As the Mills/Culpeper discussion shows, debate continues over how best to define impoliteness. For the purposes of this paper, we define impoliteness as:

the issuing of intentionally gratuitous and conflictive face-threatening acts (FTAs) that are purposefully performed:

- Unmitigated (i.e. not polite), in contexts where mitigation (i.e. politeness) is required and/or,
- With deliberate aggression, that is, with the face threat exacerbated, ‘boosted’, or maximised in some way to heighten the face damage inflicted;
- [F]or impoliteness to be considered successful impoliteness, the intention of the speaker (or ‘author’) to ‘offend’ (threaten/damage face) must be understood by someone in a receiver role.

(based on see Bousfield 2010: 111–112).

Figure 1, below, summarises Bousfield’s taxonomy of ‘impoliteness exchanges’. What we are particularly interested in is:

- (i) exploring the (linguistically and schematically extractable) intentions (cf. Grimshaw 1990 for a discussion of ‘intention reconstruction’ given adequate linguistic evidence) and evident interpretations of aggressive linguistic behaviour on the part of the speaker and the hearer, and
- (ii) testing the boundaries of the taxonomy outlined by Bousfield (2010) in terms of defining and differentiating impoliteness and rudeness from other forms of linguistic aggression.

As we show in the analysis section, below, some instances of impoliteness, or linguistic aggression, appear to elicit different responses from the one’s Hartman appears to have been aiming for – precisely because, as Mills (2005) notes, they are expected. These elicited responses (Private Joker making a joke about overt masculinity and Pyle’s inability to stop smiling in the face of repeated instances of threats and insulting linguistic aggression) are not the ones sought by Hartman, hence Hartman’s use of creative impoliteness with unique, or rarely used impoliteness forms and effects to counter them. Also noteworthy is that Hartman responds quickly, decisively and often with physical as well as verbal violence when Joker and Pyle appear not to be taking the impoliteness he uses seriously. He does so first by punching Joker and second by choking Pyle, resulting in further intensely creative impoliteness to punctuate the seriousness

Scenario	Speaker (Producer) intent to threaten/	Speaker (Producer) aware of possible	Hearer (Receiver) perceives /	Hearer's (Receiver's) face	Outcome for the receiver(s)
1	+	+	+	+	<b>IMPOLITENESS</b> is successfully communicated.
2	-	+	+	+	<b>RUDENESS: INADEQUATE LEVELS OF, OR INEXPERTLY USED POLITENESS</b> which is interpreted / inferred by the receiver as <b>IMPOLITENESS</b>
3	-	-	+	+	<b>ACCIDENTAL FACE DAMAGE</b> as a result of <b>RUDENESS: INADEQUATE LEVELS OF, OR INEXPERTLY USED POLITENESS</b> , 'speaker insensitivity', 'hearer hypersensitivity' clash of interactant expectations, cultural misunderstanding, misidentification (on either part) of the type of communicative activity engaged in, etc. (see Goffman 1967: 14). <b>IMPOLITENESS</b> is inferred, however.
4	+	+	+	-	<b>IMPOLITENESS attempt fails</b> but is recognised / acknowledged.
5	-	+	+	-	<b>RUDENESS: INADEQUATE LEVELS OF, OR INEXPERTLY USED POLITENESS</b> which is interpreted as <b>AN ATTEMPT AT IMPOLITENESS</b> (actually as failed <b>IMPOLITENESS</b> ) OR <b>PATRONISING BEHAVIOUR</b> .
6	-	-	+	-	<b>ACCIDENTAL FACE THREAT</b> as a result of 'rudeness' (inadequate levels of politeness), 'speaker insensitivity', 'hearer hypersensitivity' clash of interactant expectations, cultural misunderstanding, misidentification (on either part) of the type of communicative activity engaged in, etc.... (see Goffman 1967: 14). <b>IMPOLITENESS attempt</b> is inferred.
7	+	+	-	+	<b>IMPOLITENESS attempt fails</b> as it is interpreted as <b>RUDENESS</b> .
8	-	+	-	+	<b>RUDENESS: INADEQUATE LEVELS OF, OR</b>

(continued)

INEXPERTLY USED POLITENESS.					
9	-	-	-	+	<b>INCIDENTAL FACE DAMAGE</b> as a result of perceived ‘rudeness’ (inadequate levels of politeness), ‘speaker insensitivity’, ‘hearer hypersensitivity’, a clash of interactant expectations, a cultural misunderstanding, a misidentification (on either part) of the type of communicative activity engaged in, etc.... (see Goffman 1967: 14). <b>IMPOLITENESS</b> is not inferred.
10	+	+	-	-	<b>IMPOLITENESS attempt fails</b> and is <i>not</i> recognised by the receiver(s).
11	+	-	-	-	Producer’s <b>HOSTILITY</b> or <b>AGGRESSION</b> is not communicated – it is successfully masked by <b>POLITENESS</b> or a ‘non-communication of the FTA’ for example.
12	-	+	-	-	<b>POLITENESS</b> : in that the speaker has recognised and attended to (e.g., mitigated) the potentially face damaging comments sufficiently so that face-damage is not recognised or at least, intentionality is not inferred or taken.

**Figure 1:** A prototype-based taxonomy understanding of impoliteness and rudeness. (Bousfield 2010: 122–123)

with which Hartman requires the recruits to attend to their training, and to his authority.

Beyond deploying approaches from impoliteness research to aid in the analysis and interpretation of character-to-character relations, we are adopting an analytical method inspired by both Culpeper’s and Bousfield’s approaches to impoliteness for one main reason. The discursive approaches favoured by Mills (2005), Locher and Watts (2005, 2008) and Terkourafi (2007), amongst others, prevent an analytic observer from making (or even from having the right to make; see Locher and Watts 2008) interpretative judgements if the observer is not themselves a member of the community of practice under scrutiny. Yet for fiction to work as an effective commentary on the world, its receivers (in the form of readers, theatre audiences or viewers) must in effect take the position of

ratified members of the Communities of Practice portrayed in the fiction. Following the logic of the work of scholars such as Mills (2005), Terkourafi (2007) and Watts (2003), applying a discursive approach to im/politeness to the analysis of fiction is bound to fail as a result of the inherent premises of the approach. The approaches of Culpeper and Bousfield, however, specifically allow for third party *and* interactant interpretation. This is not to say that the interpretations will always comfortably match. Indeed, a second aim of this article is to test the model outlined in Figure 1 from Bousfield (2010) – which was originally formed from analytical observation of impoliteness in a range of real-world discourse types – by exploring those instances where interactants' interpretations of what was said and what was intended do not match with what was taken and understood.

Linked to the above is the fact that one of the key questions in impoliteness research (Culpeper 1996; 2005, Culpeper 2011; Bousfield 2007, 2008, 2010; 2013) has been whether the intention of impoliteness has to be present for us to characterise an utterance as impolite. Figure 1 shows Bousfield's (2010) taxonomy of impolite exchanges. Our analysis aims to explain how a situation in which impoliteness initially fails turns into one in which it is recognised and taken seriously.

In the case study that follows, we explore the means by which the recruits in the scene move from scenario 10 to scenario 1 of the possible outcomes explained in Figure 1.

### 3 Case study: *full metal jacket*

Close to the first half of *Full Metal Jacket* concentrates on a dramatic representation of the brutal training regime that new recruits to the US Marines underwent before they were sent off to fight in Vietnam. The scene we examine is the first time that the recruits meet their new drill sergeant, Gunnery Sergeant Hartman. Below is a transcript of the scene:

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 1. HARTMAN  | I am Gunnery Sergeant Hartman, your Senior Drill Instructor. From now on, you will speak only when spoken to, and the first and last words out of your filthy sewers will be 'Sir!' Do you maggots understand that? |
| 2. RECRUITS | (in unison) Sir, yes, sir!  |
| 3. HARTMAN  | Bullshit! I can't hear you. Sound off like you got a pair.  |
| 4. RECRUITS | (louder) Sir, yes, sir!   |

5. HARTMAN If you ladies leave my island, if you survive recruit training ... you will be a weapon, you will be a minister of death, praying for war. But until that day you are pukes! You are the lowest form of life on Earth. You are not even human fucking beings! You are nothing but unorganized grabasstic pieces of amphibian shit! Because I am hard, you will not like me. But the more you hate me, the more you will learn. I am hard, but I am fair! There is no racial bigotry here! I do not look down on niggers, kikes, wops or greasers. Here you are all equally worthless! And my orders are to weed out all non-hackers who do not pack the gear to serve in my beloved Corps! Do you maggots understand that?
6. RECRUITS (in unison) Sir, yes, sir!
7. HARTMAN Bullshit! I can't hear you!
8. RECRUITS (louder) Sir, yes, sir!

Sergeant HARTMAN *stops in front of an African American recruit, Private SNOWBALL.*

9. HARTMAN What's your name, scumbag?
10. SNOWBALL (shouting) Sir, Private Brown, sir!
11. HARTMAN Bullshit! From now on you're Private Snowball! Do you like that name?
12. SNOWBALL (shouting) Sir, yes, sir!
13. HARTMAN Well, there's one thing that you won't like, Private Snowball! They don't serve fried chicken and watermelon on a daily basis in my mess hall!
14. SNOWBALL Sir, yes, sir!
15. JOKER (whispering) Is that you, John Wayne? Is this me?
16. HARTMAN Who said that? (*storms over from the other end of the barrack room*) Who the fuck said that? Who's the slimy little communist shit twinkle-toed cocksucker down here who just signed his own death warrant? Nobody, huh?! The fairy fucking godmother said it! Out-fucking-standing! I will P.T. you all until you fucking die! I'll P.T. you until your assholes are sucking buttermilk.

Sergeant HARTMAN *grabs cowboy by the shirt.*

17. HARTMAN Was it you, you scroungy little fuck, huh?!
18. COWBOY Sir, no, sir!
19. JOKER Sir, I said it, sir!

*Sergeant HARTMAN releases COWBOY and steps over to JOKER.*

20. HARTMAN      Well ... no shit. What have we got here, a fucking comedian? Private Joker? I admire your honesty. Hell, I like you. You can come over to my house and fuck my sister.

*Sergeant HARTMAN punches JOKER in the stomach. JOKER sags to his knees.*

21. HARTMAN      You little scumbag! I've got your name! I've got your ass! You will not laugh! You will not cry! You will learn by the numbers. I will teach you. Now get up! Get on your feet! You had best unfuck yourself or I will unscrew your head and shit down your neck!
22. JOKER          Sir, yes, sir!
23. HARTMAN      Private Joker, why did you join my beloved Corps?
24. JOKER          Sir, to kill, sir!
25. HARTMAN      So you're a killer!
26. JOKER          Sir, yes, sir!
27. HARTMAN      Let me see your war face!
28. JOKER          Sir?
29. HARTMAN      You've got a war face? Aaaaaaaagh! That's a war face. Now let me see your war face!
30. JOKER          Aaaaaaaagh!
31. HARTMAN      Bullshit! You didn't convince me! Let me see your real war face!
32. JOKER          Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaagh!
33. HARTMAN      You didn't scare me! Work on it!
34. JOKER          Sir, yes, sir!

*Sergeant HARTMAN speaks into COWBOY's face.*

35. HARTMAN      What's your excuse?
36. COWBOY        Sir, excuse for what, sir?
37. HARTMAN      I'm asking the fucking questions here, Private. Do you understand?!
38. COWBOY        Sir, yes, sir!
39. HARTMAN      (*sing-song*) Well thank you very much! Can I be in charge for a while?
40. COWBOY        Sir, yes, sir!
41. HARTMAN      Are you shook up? Are you nervous?
42. COWBOY        Sir, I am, sir!
43. HARTMAN      Do I make you nervous?
44. COWBOY        Sir!
45. HARTMAN      Sir, what? Were you about to call me an asshole?!

46. COWBOY Sir, no, sir!
47. HARTMAN How tall are you, Private?
48. COWBOY Sir, five foot nine, sir!
49. HARTMAN Five foot nine? I didn't know they stacked shit that high! You trying to squeeze an inch in on me somewhere, huh?
50. COWBOY Sir, no, sir!
51. HARTMAN Bullshit! It looks to me like the best part of you ran down the crack of your mama's ass and ended up as a brown stain on the mattress! I think you've been cheated! Where in hell are you from anyway, Private?
52. COWBOY Sir, Texas, sir!
53. HARTMAN Holy dogshit! Texas! Only steers and queers come from Texas, Private Cowboy! And you don't look much like a steer to me, so that kinda narrows it down! Do you suck dicks!
54. COWBOY Sir, no, sir!
55. HARTMAN Are you a peter-puffer?
56. COWBOY Sir, no, sir!
57. HARTMAN I'll bet you're the kind of guy that would fuck a person in the ass and not even have the goddam common courtesy to give him a reach around! I'll be watching you!

*Sergeant HARTMAN walks down the line to another recruit, a tall, overweight recruit who has a faint smile on his face.*

58. HARTMAN Did your parents have any children that lived?
59. PYLE Sir, yes, sir!
60. HARTMAN I'll bet they regret that! You're so ugly you could be a modern art masterpiece! What's your name, fatbody?
61. PYLE Sir, Leonard Lawrence, sir!
62. HARTMAN Lawrence? Lawrence, what, of Arabia?
63. PYLE Sir, no, sir!
64. HARTMAN That name sounds like royalty! Are you royalty?
65. PYLE Sir, no, sir!
66. HARTMAN Do you suck dicks?
67. PYLE Sir, no, sir!
68. HARTMAN Bullshit! I'll bet you could suck a golf ball through a garden hose!
69. PYLE Sir, no, sir!
70. HARTMAN I don't like the name Lawrence! Only faggots and sailors are called Lawrence! From now on you're Gomer Pyle!
71. PYLE Sir, yes, sir!

PLYE *still has the trace of a strange smile on his face.*

72. HARTMAN Do you think I'm cute, Private Pyle? Do you think I'm funny?  
73. PYLE Sir, no, sir!  
74. HARTMAN Then wipe that disgusting grin off your face!  
75. PYLE Sir, yes, sir!  
76. HARTMAN Well, any fucking time, sweetheart!  
77. PYLE Sir, I'm trying, sir.  
78. HARTMAN Private Pyle, I'm gonna give you three seconds--exactly three  
fucking seconds to wipe that stupid-looking grin off your  
face, or I will gouge out your eyeballs and skull-fuck you!  
One! Two! Three!

PLYE *purses his lips but continues to smile involuntarily.*

79. PYLE Sir, I can't help it, sir!  
80. HARTMAN Bullshit! Get on your knees, scumbag!

PLYE *hesitates, worried, but gets down on his knees.*

81. HARTMAN Now choke yourself!

PLYE *places his hands around his throat as if to choke himself.*

82. HARTMAN Goddamn it, with my hand, numbnuts!

PLYE *reaches for HARTMAN's hand. HARTMAN jerks it away.*

83. HARTMAN Don't pull my fucking hand over there! I said choke yourself!  
Now lean forward and choke yourself!

PLYE *leans forward so that his neck rests in HARTMAN's open hand. HARTMAN grips hard and chokes PYLE. PYLE gags and starts to turn red in the face.*

84. HARTMAN Are you through grinning?  
85. PYLE *(barely able to speak)* Sir, yes, sir!  
86. HARTMAN Bullshit! I can't hear you!  
87. PYLE *(gasping)* Sir, yes, sir!  
88. HARTMAN Bullshit! I still can't hear you! Sound off like you got a pair!  
89. PYLE *(gagging)* Sir, yes, sir!  
90. HARTMAN That's enough! Get on your feet!

HARTMAN *releases PYLE's throat. PYLE gets to his feet, breathing heavily.*

91. HARTMAN Private Pyle, you had best square your ass away and start  
shitting me Tiffany cuff links or I will definitely fuck you up!  
92. PYLE Sir, yes, sir!



One of the first things to note is that because this is an army training situation, impoliteness is sanctioned. But, contrary to Mills (2005), we argue, in line with Culpeper (2005) and Bousfield (2007), that ‘sanctioned’ does not necessarily equate to ‘neutralised’. ‘Sanctioned’ simply means that this is expected behaviour for the activity type and may mean that there is more impoliteness comparatively than we might find in other Activity Types. But this does not mean that what we here recognise under the definition and nomenclature of ‘impoliteness’ is without effect. As Bousfield (2007) points out, this must be the case or impoliteness in army training sessions would not be used if all it constitutes is an ignorable norm. In the case of the *Full Metal Jacket* example, we argue that any dulling effect as a result of impoliteness being expected is consequently countered through further foregrounded behaviour – such as high levels of creativity in impoliteness, as typified by the linguistic behaviour of Hartman.

Turns 1 and 5 contain typical impoliteness strategies that are unlikely to be taken as particularly creative. These include (see Culpeper 1996) the use of unmitigated imperatives (‘you will speak only when spoken to’), inappropriate identity markers (‘maggots’, ‘pukes’, ‘ladies’) and conventionally taboo language (‘fucking’, ‘shit’). Given that these are conventional and expected within the activity type, for impoliteness to have a stronger effect it needs to be foregrounded and this is done via Hartman’s creativity. In turn 5, for instance, he says ‘I am hard, but I am fair! There is no racial bigotry here! I do not look down on niggers, kikes, wops or greasers. Here you are all equally worthless!’ This is an example of the drill sergeant leading the recruits ‘up the garden path’ by making reasonable-sounding statements (‘I am hard but I am fair! There is no racial bigotry here!’) and then contradicting this with his third and fourth statements (‘I do not look down on niggers, kikes, wops or greasers. Here you are all equally worthless!’). Not only is the propositional content of statements three and four offensive to the recruits, the overall strategy – i.e. leading them to think initially that Hartman is fair-minded only to have that dashed through his evident racist language behaviour – is also face-damaging. This garden-path creativity would appear to serve two main purposes: (i) to increase face damage (as it requires recruits to expend more cognitive effort to realise the full contradictory offensiveness) and (ii) to provide entertainment for the viewer (see Culpeper 2005 on the role and nature of voyeuristic impoliteness). The impoliteness draws on conventional strategies (condescend, pour scorn and ridicule; see Culpeper 1996) but is made particularly creative by the performative contradiction (Hintikka 1962) whereby the propositional content of statements 3 and 4 contradict the presuppositions of statements 1 and 2.

As alluded to earlier, in turn 15, Private Joker makes fun of Hartman's public self-image by uttering the words 'Is that you, John Wayne? Is this me?'. In more detailed analysis and explanation then: the implicature (via flouts of the maxims of manner and quantity (Grice 1975)) arising from this is that Joker believes Hartman to be acting like the American film star John Wayne in terms of displaying a fictional (and hence, non-serious) tough-guy persona. Indeed, the very fact that Joker vocalises this – even *sotto voce* – would seem to indicate that he does not take Hartman seriously. Hartman's response to this, however, is another instance of highly creative impoliteness, here realised through an unusually lengthy adjectival string premodifying the head noun 'cocksucker' (turn 16: 'Who's the slimy little communist shit twinkle-toed cocksucker down here, who just signed his own death warrant?'). Hartman's swearing is foregrounded through his use of infixing ('Out-fucking-standing!') and the creativity of his impoliteness is further displayed through the almost entirely nonsensical threat that he utters ('I will PT you all until your assholes are sucking butter-milk'). However, the creativity up to this point has been seen by at least some of the recruits as amusing rather than (face-)threatening. This changes when Hartman, attempting to determine who interrupted him, physically confronts Private Cowboy, grabbing him by his shirt and subjecting him to a tirade of accusatory abuse (turn 17: 'Was it you, you scroungy little fuck, huh?'). Cowboy's ability to defend himself in response to Hartman's outburst is tightly restricted by the heavily asymmetrical relationship between drill instructors and recruits. Indeed, to protect Private Cowboy from unearned punishment, at this point Private Joker admits to the *sotto voce* mocking of Hartman, and Hartman responds by using another performative contradiction in turn 20: 'I admire your honesty. Hell, I like you. You can come over to my house and fuck my sister.' This time, though, the contradiction is manifested not only linguistically (contrasting with 'What have we here? A fucking comedian?') but also (and most pertinently in a foregrounded way) physically, as Hartman punches Joker in the stomach following his utterance. This physically signals an attitude in diametric opposition to liking someone. Hartman is hence challenging and attacking Joker's sense of face.

Hartman follows this in turn 21 by issuing a string of unmitigated declaratives and imperatives, culminating in the threat, 'You had best unfuck yourself or I will unscrew your head and shit down your neck!' This again is an example of Hartman's creativity, here realised through the use of deviant morphological negation and a threat that he cannot possibly carry out literally. However, since the last example of creativity, Hartman has supported his impoliteness with violence which serves to make the recruits (and, arguably, the viewing audience) re-evaluate the seriousness of his threats. While he may not mean what he says

in literal terms, the implicature (via flouts of the maxims of manner and quality [Grice 1975]) that there will be retribution of some kind if the recruits do not fall into line is made more apparent.

Turn 39 arguably also displays some degree of creativity in the mock politeness that Hartman deploys through the *sing-song* tone he adopts which conventionally conveys sarcasm, though similar phenomena have also been observed in real-life British army training data (see Bousfield 2008). More significant creativity (by virtue of its foregrounded nature) is evident in what Hartman says next to Private Cowboy. Having asked Cowboy how tall he is, and dismissing Cowboy's response as unlikely, Hartman says, in turn 51: 'Bullshit! It looks to me like the best part of you ran down the crack of your mama's ass and ended up as a brown stain on the mattress! I think you've been cheated!'. The implicature here, retrievable via recognition of a flout of the maxim of quality (Grice 1975), is that Cowboy has no more value to the Marine Corps than surplus semen mixed with excrement. That this is clearly not true arguably constitutes an incongruity from which humour might, in normal circumstances (or at least in other Activity Types), be generated (see Simpson and Bousfield (2017) for a discussion of the role of incongruity in humour creation within stylistic analyses). By this stage in Hartman's tirade, however, most recruits do not interpret this as non-serious.

Hartman continues by asking where Cowboy is from, and on receiving the response 'Sir, Texas, sir!' (turn 52), exclaims 'Holy dogshit! Texas! Only steers and queers come from Texas, Private Cowboy! And you don't look much like a steer to me, so that kinda narrows it down! Do you suck dicks?' (53). The creativity here<sup>1</sup> is evident in the unusual exclamative, the phonological parallelism between *steers* and *queers*, and Hartman's presentation of his belief about Texas as unerring fact (note that the statement is categorical rather than modalised in any way). He then uses a creative euphemism for the act of fellatio (turn 55: 'Are you a peter-puffer?'). Finally, he deploys a similar strategy to that used earlier in the scene, which essentially consists of contradicting his previous claims. In turns 53 and 55 Hartman implicates (via flouts of the maxims of

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1 The 'steers and queers' false dichotomy insult, and the 'skull fuck' threat seemingly have their origins in the dialogue of drill instructor Sergeant Emil Foley, portrayed by Louis Gossett Junior in the 1982 film *An Officer and A Gentleman*, some five years before *Full Metal Jacket*. However, in defence of the creativity argument made here for what appears to reference an earlier film, it is worth noting that R Lee Erney was technical military advisor to that earlier film and coached Louis Gossett Junior on how to play a drill instructor – a performance for which Gossett won both an academy award and a Golden Globe. Erney's own portrayal of Hartman won him both a Golden Globe nomination, and a post retirement honorary promotion to the rank of Gunnery Sergeant – identical to the rank of his character, Hartman.

quantity and manner [Grice 1975]) that homosexuality is an undesirable trait by asking Cowboy ‘Do you suck dicks?’ and ‘Are you a peter-puffer?’. However, in turn 57, Hartman partially undermines this viewpoint by implicating that it is a matter of courtesy when performing penetration during male with male anal sex to offer simultaneous masturbation to one’s sexual partner. The extreme creativity in Hartman’s phrasing is evidenced by the fact that Stanley Kubrick stopped filming at this point to ask Lee Ermei what ‘a reach-around’ actually was. What is interesting about the strategy of contradiction that Hartman uses is that, while being creative and a possible source of humour, it also has the effect of confounding the recruits, since at no point can they be confident of the validity of what Hartman says.

Hartman’s next victim is Leonard Lawrence, of whom he asks ‘Did your parents have any children that lived?’, a rhetorical question which creates an implicated impolite belief (Leech 1983) that Lawrence appears ‘dead’. This and the utterance, ‘You’re so ugly you could be a modern art masterpiece’ are again the kinds of insults that can be found in army training data generally (see the examples in Bousfield 2008). However, it is interesting to observe that Hartman then follows a similar structure to that of turn 53 (‘Only steers and queers come from Texas!’) when, on learning Lawrence’s name, he exclaims, ‘Only faggots and sailors are called Lawrence!’ This prompts Hartman to rechristen Lawrence as Gomer Pyle, the name of a hapless and naïve character from the US sitcom *The Andy Griffith Show* (CBS, 1960–1968) who himself eventually enlists in the Marines, as depicted in the spin off show *Gomer Pyle U.S.M.C.* (CBS, 1964–69). The scene then takes a dark turn as Hartman instructs Pyle to choke himself as punishment for his inability to stop grinning (Hartman continues to punish those recruits who do not take him and the training regime seriously, doing so in ever threatening and creative ways). Indeed, immediately prior to this, Hartman has warned Pyle using a highly creative threat in turn 78: ‘Private Pyle, I’m gonna give you three seconds—exactly three fucking seconds to wipe that stupid-looking grin off your face, or I will gouge out your eyeballs and skull-fuck you!’. Again, this is an example of a creative strategy where the real threat is in the implicature, given that the utterance itself is a clear flout of the maxim of quality (Grice 1975). Hartman’s final turn (91) in the scene contains a similarly outlandish threat realised as a novel metaphor: ‘Private Pyle, you had best square your ass away and start shitting me Tiffany cuff links or I will definitely fuck you up!’ The implicature here (via flouts of Grice’s (1975) maxims of quality and manner) is that Pyle must start metaphorically producing something of value – both regularly, and as a matter of course – or he will suffer the consequences of Hartman’s displeasure. At the beginning of the film, Pyle is not a particularly able recruit. However, with Hartman’s creatively impolite

‘encouragement’ he does become almost the model Marine. The irony is that, in becoming so, he is caused long term mental damage, ultimately resulting in his murder of Hartman and his suicide immediately thereafter.

## 4 Conclusion

In this article we have argued that creativity of impoliteness in an environment where impoliteness is otherwise sanctioned and expected is the mechanism for foregrounding Gunnery Sergeant Hartman’s attempts to mould the recruits into model US Marines. Hartman is creative to defamiliarise the expected offensiveness (see Mills 2005) in order to try to ensure that it is strategically effective. In so doing, it is clear that in some contexts the positions of both Culpeper (1996) and Mills (2005) – which appear to be diametrically opposed – are actually both sustainable. However, the creativity of the impoliteness is precisely what causes (some of the) recruits initially to find Hartman’s behaviour funny rather than to take it (and the training regime he represents) seriously. After all, foregrounded behaviour, being inherently incongruent, meets one of the crucial characteristics for humour to be achieved.

Our analysis explains the means by which receivers (both characters, and audience) move from Scenario 4 to Scenario 1 in Bousfield’s (2010) taxonomy of impoliteness; thereby contributing to an explanation of the dynamics of impolite exchanges. *Post hoc* processing may cause perceptual re-categorisation of an initial understanding of the outcomes of ‘face threatening’ behaviour, thus demonstrating the dynamic nature and fluidity of interactive behaviour of this nature. This provides support for the taxonomy that underpins our analysis).

Creative impoliteness, then, is one mechanism by which the mind-set required of professional military personnel can be inculcated rapidly into new recruits. By using impoliteness the military is signalling that the social mores and restrictions of wider society (and the range of protections society affords) no longer apply; though this is expected to a greater or lesser degree. By defamiliarising expected conventional impoliteness strategies, these can be foregrounded and made more memorable as a result, hence increasing the effects on the recruits’ senses of face, and therefore accelerating the remoulding of the recruits’ identities as model military personnel. One issue for our analysis, however, is why creative impoliteness is used in military training if it has the potential to cause humour rather than obedience. We would argue that causing recruits to laugh should not necessarily be seen as a failure of creative impoliteness. Rather, teaching recruits to control

themselves and respond seriously to defamiliarised situations is inherent part of learning controlled aggression and appropriate responses to unpredictable situations. Creative impoliteness can be used to identify those recruits who seem unable to control themselves in this respect.

There remains, of course, much to be done in investigating the nature of creative impoliteness, its roles and functions in a range of discourse types. In this paper we have focused on creative impoliteness in the context of military training. But creativity, as Carter (2004) has shown, is a feature of naturally occurring spoken language of all kinds. Consequently, a clear avenue for future research is to expand the range of activity types for analysis, since it is unlikely that creative impoliteness takes the same forms for the same functions in every area of social life.

Finally, we would suggest that there is considerable potential in expanding the analysis of creative impoliteness to non-linguistic communication. In the *Full Metal Jacket* scene we have analysed, in turn 5 when Hartman says ‘There is no racial bigotry here’, his gaze remains fixed on one of the black recruits, even as he continues walking, thereby implicating non-linguistically a racist attitude. There are no doubt other non-linguistic means by which creative impoliteness can be conveyed to support linguistic strategies.

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