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PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM LETRAS/INGLÊS E LITERATURA CORRESPONDENTE

AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROTAGONIST'S FACE WORK IN
"AS GOOD AS IT GETS":
FROM AN OBNOXIOUS HERMIT TO A SOCIABLE BEING

ALYSON E. R. STEELE G. WEICKERT

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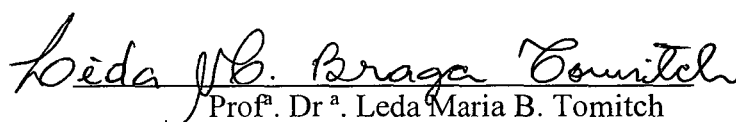
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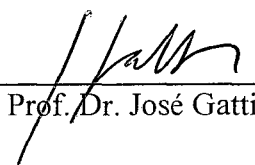
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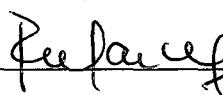
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*Whenever I walk in a London street;
I'm ever so careful to watch my feet;
And I keep in the squares,
And the masses of bears,
Who wait at the corners all ready to eat
The sillies who tread on the lines of the street,
Go back to their lairs,
And I say to them, "Bears,
Just look how I'm walking in all the squares!"*

*And the little bears growl at each other, "He's mine,
As soon as he's silly and steps on a line."
And some of the bigger bears try to pretend
That they came round the corner to look for a friend;*

And they try to pretend that nobody cares

*Whether you walk on the lines or squares,
But only the sillies believe their talk;
It's ever so portant how you walk.
And it's ever so jolly to call out, "Bears,
Just watch me walking in all the squares!"*

Lines and Squares (Milne, 1924, p.12, my emphasis)

*I dedicate this work to Mum and Dad
in gratitude for having given me
a life
and
a university education*

and to

*Jorge,
Jessyca, Lizzy Clayre, John Paul
and Fylipe
for being my life
and loving me despite
their sacrifices.*

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Inspired in my first term at UFSC by Professor Viviane Maria Heberle, at present my advisor, I began my work on politeness in preparation for a presentation at the XV ENPULI, 1999, São Paulo, Brazil. At that congress I was given tremendous encouragement from Karen Johnson, Pennsylvania University. I wish to offer her my warmest thanks for the comments she proffered.

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I find myself identifying with Melvin (and Carol, considering the length of this thank you note). There is a scene where Melvin is rejected by his Psychiatrist. As he is leaving via the waiting room he questions the other expectants – *What if this is as good as it gets?* My visits have been to my supervisor, Professor Viviane Maria Heberle, by whom I have never been rejected. Like Simon does to Melvin she always leaves me *charged* – *You can do this!* I part thinking – *I'm sure I can do better than this.* Now I have run out of time and need to say this is

AS GOOD AS IT GETS

Florianópolis, February 2001

Thank you all, Alyson.

ABSTRACT

AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROTAGONIST'S FACE WORK IN "AS GOOD AS IT GETS": FROM AN OBNOXIOUS HERMIT TO A SOCIABLE BEING

ALYSON E. R. STEELE G. WEICKERT

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA
2001

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The objective of this thesis is to offer an interdisciplinary study, overlapping discourse analysis with semiotics and film studies. The corpus for analysis is the linguistic performance of the obnoxious protagonist, Melvin in the award winning film 'As Good As It Gets'. By observation of the choice of lexicogrammatical items of verbal communication reinforced by non-verbal communication, Melvin's progressive change in politeness is examined. Semiotic signs including the enhancing of signification by film techniques are taken into consideration. However, the main focus is on the linguistic aspect of face work in a search for any alteration in Melvin's social nature reflected by these lexicogrammatical choices. Excerpts from various scenes in the film are investigated according to the parameters of discourse analysis (van Dijk, 1997). Theoretical perspectives of politeness strategies according to Goffman (1969), Brown and Levinson, (1987) and Holmes (1995), studies on semiotics including perspectives from Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) and on film including definitions based on Bordwell (1997) and perspectives on screenwriting from Howard and Mabley (1996) are considered to carry out the investigation. The results show that the

declarations Melvin makes act dialectically to reinforce his ideological position of prejudice. His reconsidering of ideals towards homosexuals and other minority groups is demonstrated by the progressive modification of Melvin's face work. The study is intended to provide awareness of the bi-directional link between language and society.

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RESUMO

AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROTAGONIST'S FACE WORK IN "AS GOOD AS IT GETS": FROM AN OBNOXIOUS HERMIT TO A SOCIABLE BEING

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O objetivo desta tese é o de oferecer um estudo interdisciplinar sob as perspectivas da análise do discurso, da semiótica e de estudos de cinema. O corpus para análise é o desempenho linguístico do protagonista, Melvin, do filme premiado 'Melhor é Impossível'. Através da observação das escolhas lexicogramaticais reforçadas com a comunicação não-verbal examino a modificação progressiva da sua maneira rude de interagir. Sinais semióticos, incluindo o realce de significação por técnicas de filmagem são levadas em consideração. Entretanto, o foco principal é dos aspectos linguísticos de trabalho de face em busca de qualquer alteração na natureza social de Melvin refletido por meio dessas escolhas. Trechos de diversas cenas do filme são investigados de acordo com parâmetros de análise de discurso (van Dijk, 1997). A fundamentação teórica de polidez (Goffman, 1969; Brown and Levinson, 1987; Holmes, 1995), estudos de semiótica (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996) e de roteiro (Howard e Mabley, 1996) ponderados para realizar a investigação. Os resultados mostram que as declarações feitas por Melvin agem dialécticamente para reforçar sua posição ideológica de preconceito. O ato de

repensar seus ideais, a respeito de homossexuais e outros grupos de minoria, é demonstrado por ^x
meio das modificações progressivas de trabalho de face de Melvin. O estudo pretende promover
uma conscientização do elo bidirecional entre linguagem e sociedade.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis offers a social semiotic view of the film 'As Good As It Gets'¹. My work is on issues of politeness and the hegemonic struggle of power relations in this multi-modal corpus, the principal focus being on face work. The hypothesis that I am putting to test is that meaning is signified by the semiotic representation of visual and oral communication. I am looking at both verbal and non-verbal communication in an attempt to show that understanding is conveyed through comportment and the social nature of human language. However my principal area of analysis is on verbal language and directed towards face threatening and face saving acts. An explanation of these terms is offered in chapter 2.

I have chosen a film for my corpus as I consider it to be a representative of a widespread cultural form, present in the lives of the majority of persons. I have chosen the film "As Good As It Gets" in particular because it has been so well received internationally and has become an award winner. The fact that Jack Nicholson, who plays the protagonist, was awarded an Oscar for the best actor of the year gives ground to my theory that his re-presentation is exceptionally convincing. I take the term re-presentation from Iedema (in press) when he says

Texts are marked off by socially recognised (that is, sanctioned and perhaps policed) beginnings and ends. In that sense, books, films, and television shows are texts, but so are birthday parties, interviews, telephone calls, and football games. But while birthday parties and telephone conversations and the like take place in ordinary or 'real' time and space and can be called *presentations*, films and television products construct times and spaces which obey and bear out those media's logic(s), and which are therefore *re-presentations* (p.6, author's emphasis)

¹ Please refer to sections 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 for a synopsis and a description of the characters.

In this case I am studying the re-presentation of face work in text constructed in time and space which obeys and bears out the logic of spontaneous language. I acknowledge that Jack Nicholson's gestures, though synthetic, are appropriate to the role he plays. I suggest that his acting is as close to being apparently natural as a performer could possibly achieve. Thus, I contend that both the verbal and non-verbal communication in the film are close enough to natural data to be considered authentic for my analysis. I deem it indispensable for the prominent visual aspects of film to be included among the attributes of language use. My analysis goes beyond the verbal, respecting what van Dijk (1997) says that "communicative events consist of more than just words" (p.6). In fact he explains that 'several types of *non-verbal activity* such as gestures, face work, bodily position, proximity ... will usually and relevantly accompany talk, and therefore need analysis in their own right as part of the whole communicative event" (ibid, p.7).

It is my belief that the changes in behaviour and personality revealed in the manifestation of Melvin's prejudices and the power relations thereby evoked are re-presented by his lexicogrammatical choices in his discourse and the non-verbal communication enhanced by film techniques.

I argue that the script is a plausible text for discourse analysis as, though it is simulated oral language, it is still valid as it resembles spontaneous speech. The language is premeditated, so the script writer had a second chance or more to decide on his lexicogrammatical choices, and so the effect of the language use, to the best of the writer's capability, was intentional and represented what he actually wished to put over. The choices have to have been made according to specific criteria of spontaneous language in order to make sense. Besides, preliminary research has revealed that

fictional language does resemble natural language regarding pragmatic perspectives (Mesquita, 1999).

How often do we wish we had said something different or wished we had thought before opening our mouths and creating some misunderstanding through expressing ourselves untowardly? “I am the author of many things I do not intend to do, and may not want to bring about, but none the less *do*” (Giddens, 1984, p.9, author’s italics). Likewise, seeming to take this view, Brown and Levinson (1987) recommend vigilance over what one says and how. The character whose discourse I have chosen to analyse in this work is very precipitous, not thinking before speaking. In my analysis I intend to point out that things he says are to him trivial, yet have a profound outcome on the resulting social situation he is in. His momentary breaches of diplomacy create deep offence towards his interlocutors. My intention is to demonstrate this in the form of a report on his rudeness by means of his *face work*.

1.1 The criteria for the choice of scenes

I used the following criteria to select the segments. The scenes had to have the protagonist, Melvin, performing face threats to others and/or himself or relating to another person or persons in a hegemonic struggle, that is to say the struggle for the more dominant position in the interaction. At times he is at an advantage, sometimes on equal grounds and other times at a disadvantage. In each scene selected his language had to reflect his politeness or the lack of it, reflecting his prejudices or the overcoming of such demonstrated by the specific lexicogrammatical choices he makes. His language also had to be a representative of a poignant phase in the unfolding of the film, to in turn relate his language use to the maturation of the intrigue as his personality changes. A number of these scenes had to show how Melvin is touched by the feedback on his

behaviour from the people he is interacting with. Examples of his use of language and paralanguage demonstrate how he realises how horrible and thoughtless he can be.

A representative percentage of the scenes had to have meaningful guises reinforcing the use of multi-modality in the form of non-verbal communication. This should include facial expressions, bodily movements and spatial positioning along with filming techniques such as lighting and *mise-en-scène*. The latter criteria were included to enable the possibility of giving an inkling to how verbal language is complemented by the symbolism behind non-verbal aspects in the attempt to portray any message, although the main focus of this research is on the use of verbal language.

1.2 Objectives and Research Questions

I intend to demonstrate how Melvin, the protagonist, abuses the use of politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Holmes, 1995) clarified in the chapter on theoretical perspectives. By identifying the protagonist's face threatening and face saving acts (Goffman, 1967) I show that his fluctuating self-identity sways away from an obsessive compulsive behaviour, emphasised by his obvious prejudices, disentangling to a less schizophrenic position. This is observed through the reversal of power relations as the plot develops. I believe that one of the pivotal scenes is where the indignant 'rock-bottom' (elaborated in the description of the film) gay neighbour, Simon, forces himself out of his wheel chair to hit out at Melvin. This sudden swing about in the power struggle prompts the awakening of Melvin's humane traits, and at last shows Melvin making an attempt at face saving. I investigate the lexicogrammatical choices Melvin makes to see how the scriptwriter's language use exemplifies Melvin's 'transmogrification', that is, his complete change as if by magic.

My aim is to underline the fact that the force of human nature influences a person's language choice. What we say affects the way we are, while the way we are affects what we say. I take power relations, hierarchical structures and skewings of the social situation into account in my analysis, paying particular attention to face work related to politeness strategies. My objective is to demonstrate that through language humans reveal, among other traits, their personality and personal view of their own identity, be that consciously or unconsciously. I argue that Melvin is unaware of his own antisocial attitude, but at a certain stage in the film he admits to his psychiatrist that he acknowledges his obsessive compulsive disorder. The home truths (to be explored in the analysis) that Carol, Simon and Frank tell him prompt him into reconsidering his identity. My hypothesis is that Melvin's efforts to make good by them are shown by a change in behavioural pattern, constituted by his dialectic revision of language use as the plot unravels and Melvin renders himself more polite. These fluctuations of politeness and application of face saving strategies are intercalated with the hegemonic struggles rendered in the scenes.

I study this film as a multi-modal corpus, thus taking into consideration dialogue, facial expressions, body movements and how they come together in the expression of politeness and power relations. By closely observing face issues within the rendition of the power struggles in the film, I believe the social nature of human language and behaviour can be exposed. Observation of details provides clues to the production of language and movement, so much so that in the script itself one of the lines reads **If you look at someone long enough you discover their humanity** (see Appendix 2.a).

In order to attain these goals my research focuses on face work presented by the protagonist of the film as I examine the following questions:

1.2.1 How does the language the protagonist, Melvin, uses demonstrate his initial lack of face saving strategies compared to a later application of such?

1.2.2 How is Melvin's transmogrification exemplified through his lexicogrammatical choices reflecting his preoccupation of the face of others as he becomes more humane?

1.2.3 Are the power relations put forward in the film exemplified by face work? If so, how does the use of face saving strategies or the lack of them demonstrate the power relations?

1.2.4 How is non-verbal communication incorporated in his face work? Is hegemonic struggle portrayed by language alone or does non-verbal communication play an important part?

1.2.5 What can be observed regarding Melvin's face work when he is confronting stereotypical characters?

1.3 Methodology

In conducting a discourse analysis of the film, I focus primarily on the concepts of face work provided by Goffman (1969) and face threatening acts according to Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987). Throughout the analysis I take into consideration the politeness strategies identified by Holmes (1995).

The data utilised in this study is drawn from the award winning film 'As Good As It Gets', the reasons for the choice of this particular film having been mapped out above.

The first procedure in this work consisted of studying the film as a whole in order to recognise the characters and their relationships and provide a general outline of the macro structure and the plot of the film. Basing my next step on the outline for script by

Howard and Mabley (1996) the second procedure involved an introductory analysis of the constitution of the script to provide a framework for my final analysis.

I myself transcribed the dialogue and interpreted the semiotic signs. As I observed semiotic signs I then advanced to the third procedure, that of an analysis of the *mise-en-scène* examining how this gives significance to the underlying nature of the characters portrayed and the context within which they find themselves. The fourth procedure consisted of selecting excerpts to include in the analysis, the criteria for such selection having been detailed above.

The study covers an investigation of face work of the protagonist looked at from the perspectives of politeness to identify if there is any change in manner of politeness of this character. To succeed in achieving this I recalled the previously noted sequence of events within the unfolding of the plot and set to investigate the lexicogrammatical items chosen by the protagonist at poignant moments of the film in an attempt to recognise some pattern of behaviour. A further investigation looked at the accompanying semiotic aspects in an attempt to identify the way lexical choice, prosody and other accompanying non-verbal aspects influence the way the discourse is ultimately interpreted and understood by the audience.

The final procedure was to arrive at some conclusions about my findings which show that the modification of the protagonist's face work, demonstrated by the change in his use of language (his lexicogrammatical choices), gives proof to how he transmogrifies from an obnoxious egocentric to a caring member of his social community.

1.4 Outline of the thesis

This thesis is divided into three main sectors:

- (a) A theoretical background sub-divided into the studies of discourse analysis and those of film.
- (b) A discussion of contextual features of the selected film, including the macro-structural elements, an overall analysis of the script, including specific lexicogrammatical features and an introductory film study discussing *mise-en-scène*.
- (c) The analysis of the protagonist's face work.

Following a top-down sequence I start with Discourse Analysis at a general organisational level (van Dijk, 1997), before concentrating on the more specific theoretical backgrounds. Hence, Chapter 2 aims at providing the essential theoretical tools for the analysis of the data: initiating with a general discussion of discourse analysis (van Dijk, 1975), then my main focus on face work (Goffman, 1969) followed by other politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1978; 1987 and Holmes, 1995). Then I continue with selected aspects of non-verbal communication (Miller, 1972, Argyle, 1972, and Lyons, 1972) before concluding this chapter with an introduction to multi-modality, semiotics and film techniques (Iedema, in press, van Leeuwen, in press and Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996).

Chapter 3 introduces a film study (Howard and Mabley, 1996, Metz, 1982, Bordwell, 1997, and Giannetti, 1972) in an attempt to furnish a description of the framework of 'As Good As It Gets'. I provide the characteristics of Melvin and the main personalities interacting with him in the chosen scenes, and a summary of the plot offering an overall view of the macro-structure as an appropriate background for the analysis, including the synopsis and the constitution of the script. Within this chapter directed towards cinematography, I conclude with an introductory analysis of the film to draw attention to the

non-verbal aspects within the film, *mise-en-scène* thus playing its part. However, I make no claim to a thorough academic attempt at the latter as the main focus of my work is on Discourse Analysis.

The initial context for the study of my corpus established, Chapter 4 proceeds with the examination of the data in relation to Goffman's (*ibid*) perspectives on face work describing the kinds of face threats and face saving acts I recognise the participants to have performed. The analysis of politeness strategies is expected to provide evidence of some kind of pattern in the lack of politeness strategies performed by the protagonist. In the same chapter I also propose that as the story disentangles the protagonist changes his strategies as he becomes personally closer to others around him, and takes some moves towards performing face saving acts. I search for the identification of any alteration in the protagonist's social nature reflected by his lexicogrammatical choices. While Chapter 5 is the concluding chapter and presents the final considerations of the study, relating what I found out and the conclusions drawn from my observations, its ultimate section imparts the limitations of this thesis and offers suggestions for future research.

In the appendices I have included firstly the transcriptions of the individual scenes selected for analysis, then secondly those for dialogues supporting comments made throughout the thesis; and thirdly a glossary of terms used in the film study and finally details of the cast and the production team.

I pursue my endeavour with chapter two, an acquaintance with the theoretical perspectives upon which I have based the analysis.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

2.1 Discourse Analysis

As an introduction to the theoretical basis of my study I offer first a preliminary discussion of Discourse Analysis.

Language users speak in order to be understood and to communicate ideas, and they do that, both as individual persons and as social group members, in order to inform, persuade or impress others or in order to accomplish other social acts in social situations, institutions or social structures. (van Dijk, 1997, p. 16)

The studies of discourse help to provide an integrated outline of three basic segments of discourse: “(a) *language use*, (b) the *communication of beliefs* (cognition), and (c) *interaction* in social situations” (van Dijk, 1997, p.2, author’s italics). The present study takes inspiration from van Dijk by looking at the way language use firstly influences beliefs and interaction, while considering, secondly, the way contact with other people affects how one speaks, and, thirdly, how one’s beliefs influence one’s language use and interaction (van Dijk, 1997).

The language use of the main character, Melvin, of the chosen film being analysed here offers examples of these three dimensions. The abusive language he uses, which shows no hint of worry for the face (detailed in section 2.2) of others, communicates his beliefs thus reflecting his opinions. The language choices he makes also offer reinforcement to those opinions, consequently providing a cyclical return to an aggressive behaviour towards discourse members he feels superior to.

Van Dijk (1997) emphasises that discourse studies should take the context of any communicative event into account as the social situation may have an influence on that event. Context is seen as “the structure of all properties of the social situation that are relevant for the production or the reception of discourse” (ibid, p.19). He also refers to the ‘co-text’, by which he means the surrounding text. Using the example of film this would refer to scenes other than the ones being observed at any independent instant. He suggests that “the serial instalments of a movie on television” is “a compound discourse” (p.4) or a “discourse complex” (p.5) and I extend this to the set of individual frames of which a film is composed. In his work Iedema (in press) uses various levels of analysis which “bring together analytical categories often used in film theory (frame, shot, scene, sequence) with categories used in genre analysis (stage, genre)” (p.8, author’s parentheses). I suggest that this discourse complex or compound discourse is therefore the whole film consisting of not just one framework but many inter-relating ones. In understanding any text one relies on the “shared meanings and world views and social contexts” (Schiffrin, 1987, p.4). As this work unravels I refer to such examples of intertextuality, moments in the film where instances from outside the film have been referred to and incorporated in the script.

Hence the intertwining itself of meaning, ideas, and related information of separate scenes gives emergence to the term intertextuality. Fairclough (1992) defines intertextuality “basically” as “the property texts have of being full of snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and which the text may assimilate, contradict, ironically echo, and so forth” (p.84). This corresponds to the notion that van Dijk (1997) puts over that there may be a need for “theoretical notions that define the beginning and the end of text and talk, their unity or coherence,

intertextual relations between different discourses ... and other aspects of the communicative context” (p.4).

As van Dijk (1997) proposes there is a necessity to elucidate on the term ‘discourse’ other than defining it as a form of language use, but instead expounding upon the components and how these are ordered or how possible combinations unite to found greater constructs. He suggests questioning “the process of communication” or “the actions accomplished when people engage in discourse” (p.5). This is comparable to analysing how a film is constructed, searching for relationships between the sequences where “a sequence is composed of a group of scenes having dramatic unity” (Oumano 1985, p.160, cited in Iedema, in press, p.11). It is, to me, as if a complete film is a compound dialogue, a sequence of inter-related frameworks making it unrealisable to escape intertextuality, the binding force between facets of the cinematography.

The question of discourse should look at the manner in which communication of beliefs, or indeed social inter-change as the way language is applied in such interplay, relates to social context (van Dijk, 1997). In this work I delve into the very language used to communicate ideas in a ritualistic way taking into consideration the question of face-work (Goffman, 1967). This author writes that “face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes” (ibid, p.5) and is a topic to be elaborated on in the ensuing section. The social nature of man unavoidably embraces those approved social attributes, politeness strategies employed for a person to be seen as sociable.

In this research I employ an analysis of face-work to determine how members of a discourse carry out these latter processes. So being, I shall take my stance on ‘face work’ as the main focus for analysis but conclude the elucidation of my overall view of discourse analysis beforehand.

Traditional linguistics is biased towards oral language ignoring visual aspects of communication (van Dijk, 1997). Yet “the sister discipline of semiotics (the study of signs)” (ibid, p. 6) makes it clear that it is indispensable to analyse the visual aspects of interaction. From this I believe that the semiotic signs of any communicative event enhance the meaning. This is expressed more clearly by van Dijk (1997) when he says:

Together with the sounds of discourse, non-verbal activity plays an important role in the interpretation of the meanings and functions of discourse in face-to-face interaction (or, of course, in understanding discourse in movies) (p.7, author’s parentheses).

In view of this, having, moreover, been enlivened by the tenet that “the gestures which we sometimes call empty are perhaps in fact the fullest things of all” (Goffman, 1967, p.90), I will, in the ensuing chapter, elaborate on the subject of semiotics and multi-modality, duly taken into consideration in the analysis of my data.

I also embody my interpretation of the macro-structure and the micro-structure of the film, inspired by van Dijk’s (1997) reflection of the semantic notion of “*coherence*”: the way “meanings of sentences ... ‘hang together’ ”. He refers to the “*micro level*” of analysis as coherence between successive sentences and the “*macro level*” as the study of the meaning of the discourse as a whole (p.9, author’s italics). These levels of analysis consider the meaningfulness of discourses as opposed to an incoherent set of utterances (ibid). My work extends this theorising to film as a compound discourse, whereby individual scenes making up micro-structures are inter-related (the ones I have selected for analysis will be delineated hereinafter), offering coherence with previous and posterior scenes combining to provide a comprehensible entirety, the macro-structure. The contemplation of coherence appertains to reference (van Dijk, 1997) where *I* say there is coherence between scenes because of reference to a happening in another one. What is more, there can be reference to life itself as

opposed to a cinematographic re-presentation. Imagery and verbal insinuation give an inkling to ideas portrayed or suggested in the film through reference to extrinsic topics.

Individuals search for order in apparently messy irregular talk, by applying rules and strategies. These rules and strategies, van Dijk (ibid) continues, “are not personal, but socially shared, implicitly known and used in a speech community” (p. 16), whereby participants succinctly make sense of any apparent inconsistencies in, deviation from or breaching of the norm, on the presupposition of common knowledge - common knowledge being the sharing of an extensive “repertoire of sociocultural *beliefs*” (ibid, p.17, author’s emphasis). Within my analysis I shall refer to the correspondence between lexicogrammatical choices and common knowledge, so inspired by van Dijk’s (ibid) view that users of language put forward their “*opinions or ideologies*” (ibid, p.17, author’s emphasis) accordingly inferred by the way they choose and in the manner they apply such vocabulary. This pertains to a constructive mental process, where mental depictions are the result of sense-making through knowledge of the context at large and personal beliefs and therefore are “*context-sensitive*” (ibid, p.18, author’s emphasis). As van Dijk (1997) implies, comprehension is a non-stop process of attempting to reinterpret understanding, where a mental analysis of part of a discourse possibly interacts with general contextual knowledge and personal opinions brought to mind. Language users do not always abide by the limits set down by the category they belong to, rather more, along with discourse, they “have a ‘dialectic’ relation with their context” (van Dijk, 1997, p. 20, author’s emphasis.) By ‘dialectic’ he refers to the manner in which participants may remain within the constraints of social dialogue and yet assist in construing or changing the social context. At this point I wish to put forward Goffman’s (1967) reflection of the dialectic relation between the individuals, the social situation and the inherent components of the actual dialogue:

As a main focus of attention talk is unique, however, for talk creates for the participant a world and a reality that has other participants in it. Joint spontaneous involvement is a *unio mystico*, a socialised trance. We must also see that a conversation has a life of its own and makes demands on its own behalf. It is a little social system with its own boundary-making tendencies; it is a little patch of commitment with its own heroes and its own villains (p.113-114, author's italics).

In a similar way Metz (1982) says that a film itself has a life and that by watching a film one helps it "to be born", one helps it "to live, since only in" a person "will it live, and since it is made for that purpose: to be watched, in other words to be brought into being by nothing other than the look" (Metz, 1982, p.93).

Discourse analysts focus not only on their discipline but also on pertinent social aspects, thus, their work becomes oriented towards issues rather than simply theories. (van Dijk, 1997).

My analysis is a discourse analysis of the film "As Good As It Gets" which I am studying as a way of portraying an awareness of politeness (or indeed rudeness) strategies, prejudices, and power relations. This is achieved through analysing the face work of the main character and the manner in which his strategies change as he demonstrates a transmogrification, an almost magical transformation, from a preposterous individual to a humane caring person.

I proceed with a description of the theoretical perspectives I base my analysis on, commencing with my main focus, that of *face work* according to Goffman (1967, my italics).

2.2 Face work (Goffman, 1967)

I would now like to elaborate on terms and themes discussed by Goffman (1967) that I shall use in my analysis of the lexicogrammatical choices in the face threats of the protagonist. They are those of line, maintaining face, to be in wrong face, to be out of

face, poise, to be heartless, savoir-faire and finally three grades of face-threatening infringements.

According to Goffman(1967) an individual acts out “a *line*”(p.5, author’s italics) in a social encounter. This anthropologist defines *line* as being the expression of a person’s view of the presiding situation through verbal and non-verbal forms of communication. At the same time that person, intentionally or otherwise, puts over his assessment of the participants, self included. The interactants perceive the stand and their response will depend on the impression they themselves have made. A person responds emotionally to the face assumed in direct contact with his co-participants.

On the basis of the rules of the social group “one’s own face and the face of others are constructs of the same order” (ibid, p.6). A person “*has, is in or maintains*” (ibid, author’s italics) face when his exposed views are consistent with the values of the other participants. However, if the encounter is with people whose paths are unlikely to be crossed again there is negligible risk to taking a line that could be discrediting in the future. That is to say a person has no worry of any posterior loss of face by way of humiliation or embarrassment in a subsequent contact.

To “*be in wrong face*” (ibid, p.8, author’s italics) means that a person’s social values are lacking the accepted integrity, that is his/her behaviour or indeed his/her language use is unacceptable. At the same time “*to be out of face*” (ibid, p.8, author’s italics) is to not take the line expected within the social contact. Goffman (1967) asserts that being in wrong face or out of face provokes feelings of shame and inferiority because of the direction that the interaction took on his/her behalf. An incidental lack of judgement can confuse a participant and render him/her momentarily incapacitated as a co-participant. An individual under such pressure may maintain “*poise*” (ibid, p.9,

author's italics) by reacting in a manner as to suppress or hide any shamefacedness manifested. Goffman defines "*poise*" exactly as the capacity to riposte so.

Apart from showing self-respect a person within any group is expected to be considerate towards other members, even going to lengths to preserve the others' feelings and face. This should be achieved with willingness and spontaneity. If these conditions are upheld there will be no inclination to deface others. Where these norms are withheld and another person is unfeelingly humiliated, the provoker is said "to be "heartless" " (Goffman, 1967, p.11, author's inverted commas).

A person's social face is one's most prized possession; however "it is only on loan to him from society" (Goffman, 1967, p.10), unworthy conduct provoking instant withdrawal. The want to save the face of others could be provoked by feelings that those others have that moral right, or the desire to avert hostility towards the offender, or to demonstrate compassion and sympathy, or perhaps to maintain poise, (as mentioned above) controlling embarrassment and henceforth others being embarrassed for the offender. Knowingly or otherwise there is a tendency for face-saving to become habitual. The capacity for face-saving "is sometimes called tact, *savoir-faire*, diplomacy or social skill" (Goffman, 1967, p.13, author's italics).

In a wholesome interaction a person has either a primarily defensive (own face-saving) or a primarily protective (other face-saving) orientation. The conversationalist must choose a path so as not to cause loss of face to any party (Goffman, 1967). Goffman (ibid) classified infringements of face-threats into three grades of responsibility. Firstly the innocent offence which is "unwittingly unintentional, the receiver perceives it as if it would have been avoided if it had been foreseen. These face threats are "*faux pas, gaffes, boners or bricks*" (p.14, author's italics). Secondly the malicious spiteful offence which is a deliberate intent to insult. Thirdly the incidental

offence, though unplanned, may be an anticipated by-product performed in oblivion to the consequential offence, and yet not out of spite (Goffman, *ibid*).

In order for the conversationalist to be polite he/she must not infringe on the above mentioned face threats, a term explored in the ensuing segment. This section introduced a fragment on the ideas on face work. The subsequent one is a preamble on face threats according to Brown and Levinson (1987) and the pursuing one further aspects of politeness in accordance with the theoretical perspectives of Holmes (1995).

2.3 Face Threatening Acts (Brown and Levinson, 1987)

Politeness is seen as awareness of another person's face according to Brown and Levinson (1987). In this section I introduce various terms including negative face, positive face, negative politeness, positive politeness, face-threatening acts, face saving acts, and a classification of face-threatening acts before pursuing with the terms off-record, bald on record, mitigating devices, pre-sequences, hedges and finally preference structure.

Brown and Levinson (1987) define "**Negative face**" as being "the want of 'every competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others" and "**Positive face**" as being "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others" (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.62, author's emphasis). At the same time *Negative politeness* is the apology for imposition while *Positive politeness* is offering solidarity.

The following criteria from Brown and Levinson (1987) are used and exemplified in my analysis. A *face-threatening act*, henceforth-denoted FTA, threatens another individual's face while a *face saving act* demonstrates concern for other people.

Determined types of acts are inherently face threatening - those, for example, that conflict with the face wants of the interactants, both speakers' and hearers'. An act is

the intention behind a verbal or non-verbal communication (Brown and Levinson, 1987). These authors separate FTAs into two divisions; firstly according to whether they threaten positive face or negative face; secondly according to whether it is the speaker or the hearer whose face is threatened.

Each classification is further divided and subdivided. Threats to the negative face of the hearer are acts which the speaker performs with no consideration for the hearer's "freedom of action" (ibid, p.65) as follows:

i) The speaker refers to an act the hearer will perform and pressures that hearer into doing or not doing such an act. For example:

- a) orders and requests
- b) suggestions
- c) reminders
- d) threats and warnings (ibid, p.66)

ii) The speaker indicates a positive act and so pressures the hearer to accept or reject this and incurring a possible debt for the hearer by doing so.

- a) offers
- b) promises (ibid)

iii) The speaker gives the impression of desire for the hearer or something that belongs to the hearer, making the hearer believe some form of protection would be advisable,

- a) compliments, expressions of envy or admiration.
- b) expressions of strong (negative) emotions toward the hearer (ibid)

The ensuing division classifies FTAs which threaten the hearer's positive face demonstrating a lack of consideration for the hearer's feelings and desires.

i) The speaker voices a negative opinion towards the hearers' appearance, belongings, beliefs or behaviour,

- a) expressions of disapproval, criticism, contempt or ridicule, complaints and reprimands, accusations, insults.
- b) contradictions or disagreements, challenges (... associated with disapproval) (ibid)

ii) The speaker shows that he does not care or is inattentive towards the hearer's positive face,

- a) expressions of violent (out of control) emotions (the speaker gives the hearer possible reason to fear him or be embarrassed by him)
- b) irreverence, mention of taboo topics, including those that are inappropriate in the context
- c) bringing of bad news about the hearer, of good news (boasting) about the speaker
- d) raising of dangerously emotional or divisive topics, e.g. race, religion (... the speaker creates a dangerous-to-face atmosphere)
- e) blatant non-cooperation in an activity e.g. disruptively interrupting ... or showing non-attention
- f) use of address terms and other status-marked identifications in initial encounters (... in an offensive or embarrassing way, intentionally or accidentally) (ibid, p.66)

Brown and Levinson point out that these divisions overlap as some FTAs are an intrinsic threat to both negative and positive face for example "complaints, interruptions, threats ... requests for personal information" (ibid).

The second main division classifies threats according to whether they are primarily a threat to the hearer's (as above) or to the speaker's face. If the hearer has made a previous FTA to the speaker's face the speaker will most likely then deal with the threat to his own face. However the choice could be to attack the hearer's face, instead of protecting his own, in order to redress his own face loss.

i) The acts that offend the speaker's negative face are classified as;

- a) expressing thanks
- b) acceptance of the hearer's thanks or apology
- c) excuses
- d) acceptance of offers
- e) responses to the hearer's *faux pas* (see Goffman, 1967, p.14. or section 2.2 this thesis)
- f) unwilling promises and offers (... if his unwillingness shows, he may also offend the hearer's positive face) (Brown and Levinson, p.67-68)

ii) The acts that offend the speaker's positive face are classified as;

- a) apologies (... especially if the apology is at the same time a confession)
- b) acceptance of a compliment
- c) breakdown of physical control over body, bodily leakage, stumbling or falling down, etc.
- d) self-humiliation, shuffling or cowering, acting stupid, self-contradicting
- e) confessions, admissions of guilt or responsibility – e.g. for having done or not done an act
- f) emotion leakage, non-control of laughter or tears (ibid, p.68).

Certain selected excerpts from the film show Melvin performing some of the threats from the above two divisions, both those towards the hearer and the speaker. The final six terms I include from Brown and Levinson's perspectives are off-record, bald on record, mitigating devices, pre-sequences, hedges and finally preference structure.

The FTA can be regarded as *off-record*, that is indirect, like a hint, in contrast to a '*bald on record*' utterance which would be a direct threat, inferring power over the hearer. *Mitigating devices* soften the impact of a FTA using for instance *pre-sequences*, or *hedges* such as hesitations, mumbling or question tags. In the *preference structure* of an adjacency pair, the first utterance can be a proposal or an invitation while the second part can be either a *preferred speech act* such as an acceptance, as opposed to a *dispreferred* speech act in the form of a refusal or rejection.

I have here attempted to clarify some terms and identify certain types of FTAs in order for my analysis to be better comprehended. I now turn to the presentation of some politeness strategies discussed by Holmes (1995) before introducing selected aspects of non-verbal communication.

2.4 Politeness strategies according to Holmes (1995)

Holmes (1995) points out that politeness means taking into account the feelings of others: "Being polite means being a considerate conversational partner or a facilitative participant in more formal contexts" (p.72).

In this section on the background of Holmes' (1995) theoretical perspectives, I discuss the politeness strategies I consider in my analysis of the film, including hedges and boosters, compliments and finally apologies. In my work I take into consideration the definition Holmes (ibid) offers for politeness. As she says the everyday usage describes it as in part formal and distancing in an attempt to neither intrude nor impose.

By being polite one expresses positive concern for the other. She points out that this definition is derived from showing concern for people's face as considered by Goffman (1967) and Brown and Levinson (1987), whose work is discussed in the adjacent sections above.

Holmes explains that focussing on linguistic behaviour the number of potential means of demonstrating concern for others is infinite and includes "a greeting, a compliment, an apology, the use of hedges around a directive, giving encouraging feedback, using first names, using formal titles, adopting a gentle tone of voice, using emphatic stress to express enthusiasm ..." (p.8). So being, I argue that the antonyms of the latter items offer face threats, examples of which I shall identify in the analysis of my corpus for this thesis.

Politeness (or the opposite) can be conveyed by lexical choice in some contexts. As Holmes (*ibid*) indicates "An appropriate intonation can reduce the apparent peremptoriness of a criticism" (p.9). I would extend this to the contrary, where the intonation and lexical choice in a seemingly innocent phrase can convey a face threat. "Selecting the appropriate general construction may convey greater or lesser politeness" (*ibid*).

However, Holmes proffers the reminder that the social context of any utterance must be given attention. The accurate meaning of any linguistic feature is only interpreted when the relationship between the interactants and the context is taken into consideration. I now continue with more specific strategies, those of hedges and boosters, compliments and apologies, beginning with hedges and boosters.

Hedges and Boosters

Holmes explains that these terms are so phrased owing to the effect they have on the enclosed utterance. Hedges soften the illocutionary impact by reducing or

weakening the force of an utterance in order to lessen a possible offence. Boosters, in contrast, strengthen the underlying illocutionary force. The latter is not intrinsically a strategy of politeness. On occasions a booster contributes to positive politeness “in utterances such as agreements, compliments and greetings” (p.77). On the other hand, it can equally be face threatening contributing to “a criticism or an insult” (ibid). Hence, depending on the effect of the hedge or booster, the utterance may be polite or impolite.

Boosting devices emphasising an issue include rhetorical devices such as repetition of a poignant word or phrase, well-placed pauses and prosodic features like strong stress and high volume adding emphasis to the utterance.

While hedging devices can occasion the main locus of negative politeness, boosters can act to reinforce politeness as opposed to merely expressing it. At times hedges (e.g. the use of the word *suppose* which weakens a commitment) comport similarly to boosters in as much as they attenuate the force of an utterance (Heberle, 1997). Holmes gives the example “that shirt is quite nice, I suppose” (p.77) where ‘quite’ and ‘I suppose’ make the phrase only mildly complimentary. In the following section I discuss compliments as acts of positive politeness.

Compliments

A positive politeness strategy Holmes details (giving credit to Brown and Levinson (1987) for their identification and discussion) is that of paying compliments. It is “one of the most obvious” as it is “a favourable comment on the addressee’s appearance” (Holmes, 1995, p.116) or behaviour, noticing and attending to the hearer’s interests, wants and needs. Holmes (ibid) gives an example “Is that a new suit?” (p.117) She explicates that this is an indirect compliment and requires knowledge of the cultural values of the community for interpretation as the concept of newness is valued in Western society.

Another example of a compliment that she exposes is of an indirect credit to the addressee in this case the conductor: "The choir was wonderful. You must be really pleased" (p.117). She explains that it appears to be a positive evaluation but it functions as a compliment.

Holmes (ibid) deduces that a compliment is primordially "affective and social" rather than "referential or informative", acting as a "social lubricant to create or maintain rapport" (p.118). Compliments are devices of positive politeness reflecting "goodwill" and "solidarity". At the same time they offer a positive evaluation of a chosen aspect of an interlocutor's comportment or looks. They may have a negative side too as "an apparent compliment may be experienced negatively, or as a face threatening" and "heard as a sarcastic or ironic put-down" (p.119). Holmes extends this by explaining that the minimal pattern used by men has a tendency to cut the strength of the compliment, attenuating the impact "e.g. *nice bike*" (p.127, author's italics).

Holmes' research leads her to believe that "women appear to use compliments as positive politeness devices" (p.126) as a means of establishing and keeping up a relationship, while for men, they have a more referential (ideational) evaluative message.

Holmes (ibid) discovered that in a situation where a male is wooing a female he has a tendency to make use of strategies she outlines as typical of females. For instance he may pay great attention to what she is saying, look for topics of interest to her in order to encourage her to talk more and will find compliments to pay her. "So some men can certainly be polite when they perceive it to be in their own interests to do so" (p.228). Having elaborated on hedges, boosters, and compliments above I wish to mention that of apologies

Apologies

These are generally negative politeness strategies (Holmes 1995) being an attempt to rebalance a relationship after an offence has been committed. As they focus on redressing a face threat, they are as a result consideration for the addressee, an attempt to counteract an imposition. Concepts of face according to Goffman (1967) and negative and positive politeness according to Brown and Levinson (1987) are discussed in the preceding sections. I proceed with the introduction of some aspects of non-verbal communication.

2.5 Non-verbal communication

Although the main body of my work is on the use of verbal language I cannot leave aside the visual aspects. Over the last twenty years communication has been considered as based more on language than on non-verbal communication. There is these days an awareness of the need to take other modes into account, which is in accordance with Miller (1972) who assumes that “verbal communication takes precedence in human discourse and that non-verbal behaviour achieves most of its communicative significance in the context of syntactically organised utterances” (p.359). Chaika (1994) says “there seem to be certain facial expressions, gestures, and body motions that generally mean the same things in all cultures” (p.124-125). “A pushing away movement of the hand accompanying a negative response, for example, may be viewed as the vestige of actually pushing away a danger” (ibid).

As Van Dijk (1997) explains,

non-verbal activity such as gestures, face work, bodily positions, proximity, applause and laughs will usually and relevantly accompany talk, and therefore need analysis in their own right as part of the whole communicative event (p.6).

The film, thus, is a multi-modal system. In fact Kress, Leite-García and van Leeuwen (1997) argue that awareness of the exigency to take other modes into consideration is bringing about texts which are “strongly *multi-modal*.” They explain that language is merely one of several representational elements in “*a range of representational and communicational modes* which occur within the one text” (p.257, authors’ italics). These authors focus on the social origins and the forms of meaning making as a social activity and “call this practice social semiotics” (ibid, p.259). In this section the behavioural non-verbal communication of social semiotics will be discussed, leaving film studies for the following section. Film studies investigate other aspects of representation such as lighting and camera action including angle, distance, movement and speed. The sum of the total parts of a film have to be taken into consideration. As a matter of fact Metz (1982) writes that “no sentence, no image is capable of saying everything that is said in it,” every fragment of a film being a contribution of “various distinct impressions” coming together “in such and such a way” (p.270). As previously stated this topic of semiotics and multi-modality will be further developed below.

Indeed Argyle (1972) acknowledges that “a new level of analysis has been opened up – the level of head-nods, shifts of gaze, fine hand-movements, bodily postures, etc” (p.243). As long ago as 1872, Charles Darwin talked about non-verbal signals and “the expression of the emotions in man and animal” (in Hinde, 1972, p.264). I believe gestures may be invented, becoming ‘in fashion’ as a type of within group code subject to modification over time. However, my focus here is on the innate bodily movements performed, (See footnote 6 on p.119, this thesis)

In the following part of this thesis I wish to elaborate on the perspectives Argyle (ibid) puts forward and classifies under ten headings: i) bodily contact, ii) proximity iii) orientation, iv) appearance, v) posture, vi) head-nods, vii) facial expressions,

viii) gestures ix) looking and x) non-verbal aspects of speech. I would like to point out that there are cultural variances in behaviour and as such to gestures. The film I have chosen for my corpus is North American, hence I shall take into consideration the perspectives in relation to traits usually stereotypically shown in the media, bearing in mind that individual differences within any one culture are unavoidable. I have included the outlines below in order to offer a theoretical basis to identify some signals. However it is important to recognise that each one can have different interpretations according to the context, and in fact each observer may also make independent interpretations. In my analysis I will define my interpretation of each non-verbal sign pointed out according to the context of the macro structure, and taking into consideration the common knowledge of the micro-structure of my corpus.

Argyle's (1972) non-verbal signals used by man.

i) Bodily contact

Bodily contact includes hand-shaking, back tapping, hand-holding, hugging and kissing, hitting, pushing, and pulling, stroking. As mentioned above these signals can be interpreted in different ways according to the situation. For example, hugging and kissing could be a welcoming greeting or occur at parting. Back tapping could be congratulating somebody, thanking or even consoling. The observer then decides the exact symbolism according to the context. This follows for other aspects defined here too.

ii) Proximity

“when a number of people are present, proximity is found to reflect and probably communicate the relations between them” (Argyle, 1972, p.247). This is in keeping with the application of filming techniques within the *mise-en-scène* (that is the film setting), for example, as Gianetti (1972) says, human beings and their problems can be

exemplified by their positioning in the frame. Returning to Argyle's orientation changes in proximity show the intention to begin or end an encounter. If someone wishes to speak to another he/she will move towards the other, typically "accompanied by appropriate gaze and conversation" (Argyle, 1972, p.247).

iii) Orientation

This refers to the angle of positioning between people ranging from face-to-face to side-by-side. Argyle says this depends on the nature of the encounter. Close friends or 'co-operative' interlocutors tend to position themselves side-by-side unless they are eating when the preference is for face-to-face. "In a confrontation, bargaining or similar situation people tend to choose head-on, while in other situations 90° is most common in England and the USA" (Sommer, 1965; Cook, 1970 in Argyle, 1972, p.247).

iv) Appearance

Argyle suggests manipulation of appearance is related to self-presentation, social status, also conveying information about personality and mood. People have a tendency to dress, do their hair and women use make-up in accordance with the contextual situation and their identification with their position. I would say that many times personal presentation is also influenced by one's disposition at that moment.

v) Posture

Argyle (ibid) suggests that although postures can vary from culture to culture, they usually convey interpersonal attitudes. He quotes Mehrabian (1968) as saying different postures show attitudes of hostility or friendliness, superiority or inferiority. Posture can be a signal for status; someone who is going to take charge of a situation tends to sit in an upright posture "and in a central position, facing the others" (Argyle, ibid, p.248). He also says postures reveal emotions, especially tension and a relaxed mood. An erect body and a raised head signal a superior attitude.

vi) Head-nods

According to Argyle (ibid) head-nods play an important role alongside speech. A head-nod seems to signal approval of another person's action, for example, giving permission to continue talking. He observes that rapid head-nods from a participant appear to suggest a desire to take the floor.

vii) Facial expressions

Small movements of the eyebrows and mouth can transmit amongst others the idea of puzzlement, surprise, disagreement, pleasure, joy, anxiety, depression, anger and haughtiness. Argyle goes on to quote Vine (1971), as noticing how people's utterances can be identified as being funny, serious, important, etc by their facial expressions. A face can be unsmiling, tense and perspiring showing anxiety through expanded pupils.

viii) Gestures

Gestures can be extremely communicative, so much so that gesture language takes the place of verbal language for deaf people. Head, feet and other parts of the body can be employed to make gestures, the most expressive being hand ones. As Argyle (ibid) says, gestures may accompany speech to illustrate what a person is saying. Gestures can reveal anxiety too by the tense clasping of objects, or general bodily activity.

ix) Looking

Argyle (ibid) reports that mutual gazing, that is, eye contact is quite short-lived, and in fact when someone is talking they spend fifty percent less time in eye contact than when they are listening. He says the facial expressions acquired while looking at a person can signal specific kinds of interest. In association with Dean (1965 in Argyle (ibid)), Argyle postulates that looking demonstrates intimacy and can substitute proximity if the participants are far apart. Gazing, short glances, or aversion of gaze may occur when interactants may try to cover up their real emotions, or may attempt to

pretend they feel differently; however, Argyle argues that it is problematic to control all these cues.

x) Non-verbal aspects of speech

Argyle (ibid) points out that there are a number of different ways to deliver an utterance varying the pitch, stress and timing used. These are the prosodic signals, while paralinguistic signals also have an effect. The latter include such qualities as tone of voice expressing emotions and quality of voice expressing personality, for example. He quotes Eldred and Price (1958 in Argyle (ibid)) as suggesting an anxious person speaks in an accelerated breathy way while a dominant or angry individual does so loudly and slowly.

These non-verbal means of communication described above are semiotic signs. I continue the topic with other ways that semiotics provides information, the emphasis now being on techniques used in the media, specifically in films.

2.6 Semiotics, multi-modality and film techniques

Inspired by Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) statement that "analysing visual communication is, or should be, an important part of critical disciplines" (p.12) I deem it primordial to include the present section. It has become increasingly important to "read between the lines" (p.13). Confirming this, Gatti (1995) determines that "there is much more dialogue going on in film than just the exchange of words between characters" (p.2). I wish to point out that the subtleties of semiotics enforce the position of social distance and power differences and the enclosed segmentation discusses this. In this section I also include the social semiotics of the visual space according to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) assigning visual elements to social relations.

An up and coming concept of communication takes into consideration the visual aspects that support any verbal text. These semiotic modes have a vital role in enabling language to be better understood. An insight to other languages brings a new perspective to one's mother tongue in the same way that semiotic modes can bring unforeseen perspectives to language itself (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996). According to these authors their work is being used "as a methodology for research in areas such as media representation, film studies..." (p.vii).

Up to now language researchers have rarely approached other disciplines. The concept of multi-modality, that is considering verbal **and** visual text, has incremented the desire to cross the border from mono-modality to multi-modality (Caldas-Coulthard, 2000). This researcher's present work, in conjunction with van Leeuwen, involves an investigation of the semiotic significance of toys, a step beyond the up to now conventional analyses of verbal conduct.

Iedema (in press) writes that "social semiotics centres on the issue of how ... the viewer" is "positioned by" a film and how he/she sees "certain social allegiances and values as being promoted over others" (p.5) and "in that sense, social semiotics denies there is a gap between text or product and audience" (p.6). He continues to say that "the claim social semiotics would make ... is that the kind of analytical reading" (p.30) they partake of gives

a means to understand and manipulate what might otherwise remain at the level of vague suspicion and intuitive response. It also claims that the ability to systematically analyse texts, whether literature (Hasan 1985 in Iedema, in press), diagrams, maps (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, *ibid*) or even children's bedroom arrangements and toy design (van Leeuwen 1998, *ibid*), provides the possibility for renegotiating the meanings inherent in such constructs, rather than seeing these as fixed, irrevocable and natural" (*ibid*).

Researchers are now theorising in an attempt to find common concepts to apply to different modes. A social semiotician is interested in meanings in culture, taking into consideration the social context and different kinds of modality (Caldas-Coulthard, 2000). In her seminar, Caldas-Coulthard questioned what makes anything a piece of communication. Verbal language she said is the prime mode but not the sole mode. She made reference to Goffman's work on framing, exemplifying that a picture frame delineates depth and lines. However, one can talk about the frame of a classroom. This is the same concept applied to an interactive formal kind of setting, the text being framed internally and extra textually. Social semioticians adapt one concept to different modes, theorising about communication and bringing concepts together. Communication thus becomes an interaction between a process and a semiotic event, both within a social context, both being articulated and interpreted through language (Caldas-Coulthard, 2000). In this manner one returns to multi-modality and social semiotics.

I now wish to place my thesis as a piece of interdisciplinary research within the fields of discourse analysis, film studies and social semiotics. I take into consideration film techniques, the verbal and visual language used in a particular social setting of Anglo-American culture. Before introducing the film techniques I take into consideration in my analysis, I introduce Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) theory of the link between the size of frame, positioning (angular and spatial) within that frame and social distance and power differences.

2.6.1 The social semiotics of the visual space

The following is an argument in favour of going beyond the analysis of lexicogrammatical elements, showing that information is conveyed by means other than

verbal ones. In this segment I relate camera techniques to the semiotics of power relations starting with a discussion of viewer distance, then of back view followed by that of vertical angles and finally an interpretation of frame.

An image producer, “in depicting ... human or quasi-human participants” (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, p.130) chooses to position these interactive participants either looking at the viewer or not. He/she also chooses the distance from the viewer. This is invariably determined in “relation to the human body” (ibid). Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), referring to distance as a continuum, say “the ‘language of film and television’ has imposed a set of distinct cut-off points on the continuum, in the same way as languages impose cut-off points on the continuum of vowels we can produce.” (p. 130, author’s inverted commas.)

The close shot is one of head and shoulders, and a very close shot is anything nearer. The medium close shot is to above waist level. The medium shot shows as far as the knees while the medium long shot includes from head to toe. When the human figure occupies half the frame height it is termed the long shot and anything wider is the very long shot (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996).

In any interaction the distance, both literal and metaphorical, between persons reflects their social relationship (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996). “ ‘Close personal distance’ ” (p.130, author’s inverted commas.) is that equivalent to the appropriate distance between intimates, which permits the touching of the other. It would appear aggressive if a “non-intimate” (ibid) stepped so near. “ ‘Far personal distance’ ” (ibid, author’s inverted commas) defines a measure just beyond easy touching distance, as in the situation of two people stretching out their arms and touching fingers. This is an appropriate distance for undertaking “impersonal business” (ibid). “ ‘Far social distance’ ” (ibid, author’s inverted commas), on the other hand, is the distance to which

you would step back if somebody said “stand away so I can look at you” (ibid) and is a suitable range for conducting business or social interaction of a more formal or impersonal quality. Finally “ ‘Public distance’ ” (ibid) is greater than that suitable for strangers, a distance at which “we can see the torso of at least four or five people” (Hall, 1964 in Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, p.131). These authors continue to quote Hall (1964) when he says that “these fields of vision correspond closely to the traditional definitions of size of frame in film and television” (in Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, p.131) meaning that “the visual system of size of frame” is derived from the “‘proxemics’ ... of everyday face-to-face interaction” (ibid, author’s punctuation). So “the distances people keep, then, depend on their social relation” (ibid). I now continue with the consideration of back view and vertical angles in relation to power.

“To expose one’s back to someone is to make oneself vulnerable, and this implies a measure of trust, despite the abandonment which the gesture also signifies” (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, p.144). What they are saying is that by turning one’s back to a person one is turning over power to that individual. Martin (1968 in Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996) puts forward the interpretation that the angle a person is sighted from reflects the power relation. For example, a low angle generates the impression of superiority by making the viewed element imposing, while a person (or object) seen from a high angle has a tendency to be reduced, thus reducing the power generated. Thus, a person at a higher level has power over another at a lower level. When the interactants are at eye level power differences are neutralised as the “point of view is one of equality” (ibid, p.146).

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), when referring to pictures, say that a dividing line forming a frame acts “literally and figuratively” (p.215) to separate elements by expressing the proclaimed gap between them. They add that “film and video” (ibid)

create a comparable effect by making a choice between a shot of the actors together or “editing between individual shots of the actors in which each is isolated from the others by frame lines”(ibid). I relate this to the implication of the shot/reverse shot pattern (Bordwell, 1997) otherwise termed a point of view shot (ibid) where the camera shoots first one character then another. This point of view shot reveals the emotions of individuals in relation to a glance at another element or character which could at the same time mirror the power relations.

Having attempted to establish a relationship between visual semiotics, meaning and social man I now take a closer look at the film.

CHAPTER 3

FILM STUDIES

In this chapter I offer a link from the theoretical perspectives to the analysis itself via an extended discussion of aspects of film studies. As pointed out by Simpson (1989, p.172)

As well as examining the interaction between the fictional characters in the play 'or film' [my addition], a discourse-stylistic analysis should encompass the interaction between writer/playwright and reader/audience ... it should highlight the roles of writer and reader as conversationalists in real-time speech events, pointing particularly to the former's ability to exploit the conventions of language use for stylistic effect and the latter's ability to recognise these exploitations and the motivations behind them.

Tudor (unknown) writes that any theory of cinematography is not simply the sum total of our knowledge on the subject, presented *ad hoc*, linked purely by the fact that they relate to cinema. He says a theory possesses a creative character of its own. Consider the classical work of Eisenstein and soviet cinema. As the various components are explicitly linked relationships and regularities emerge that would under other circumstances go unnoticed. It becomes possible to clarify the bonds of conception of montage and interpretation and their conjugal consequences in the communication of film (Tudor, *ibid*). This is what I undertake to do in my research: by observing the film I wish to be capable of pointing out the connections between the visual and the verbal, the script and the montage, the language and the meaning through the social and achieve this through the analysis of the face work (Goffman, 1967) of the protagonist of the chosen film.

Regarding the interpretation of graphic production, Pearson (2000) explains that Eisenstein, who made use of conflict within the frame, accorded that the metaphor

within the setting may or may not be read by the viewer. However the accumulation of cinematic metaphors that Eisenstein applied reflected the political and cultural issues of the time. I argue that the film I have chosen also reflects these issues, represented by the stereotypical prejudices of the protagonist, Melvin, and the values he shows. Pearson (ibid) talked on the camera techniques of Vertov (1896-1954) whose prominent feature was the use of “Life caught unawares”, meaning capturing people on film when they are unaware of the camera, that is to say they are candidly captured. This reminded me of a line of one of the characters in the film² when Simon asks **Have you ever watched somebody that doesn't know you are watching them?** Simon, as an artist, made use of this concept too. This exemplifies the argument that the film refers to texts outside the film itself.

My starting point is an analysis of the script, the founding rock of any film. I begin motivated by an outline laid down by Howard and Mabley (1996). In my introduction to the framework of the film I include *a synopsis*, a brief on *the main characters*, Melvin, Carol, Simon and Frank followed by *the unfolding of the story*. Next I go on to *the constitution of the script* by way of segments *on the protagonist and his objectives*, then *the obstacles and conflicts* he has to face before briefly describing *the opening and closing scenes*. The ensuing divisions broach *the importance of the canine figure*, *values*, *dramatic impact*, *plants and payoffs*, (defined below), and *cryptic remarks*. The final segment is divided into *repetitions* in the form of *disrespect for the protagonist*, *idiosyncrasies* and *phobias*, *home truths*, *kindnesses*, *egoism* and finally *compliments*. These segments are briefly discussed so as to offer details of language use (in bold type) to exemplify some of my findings.

This work continues with a succinct synopsis of the film.

² Please see Appendix 2.a for the adjacent script

The Framework in the film 'AS GOOD AS IT GETS'

3.1 Synopsis

This film is a politically correct comedy romance, at times infuriating, at others comic or tragic. The story takes place in New York and evolves around three main characters who are from different social classes. Whereas Carol (Helen Hunt) is a waitress, Melvin (Jack Nicholson) is a successful author of novels. Simon (Greg Kinnear) is an artist and has the misfortune of being Melvin's neighbour. Carol waits on Melvin everyday at his local restaurant in Manhattan; she is hermetically opposed to her union with Melvin right up to the last scene.

Melvin demonstrates his narcissism many times by face-threatening acts insulting the people around him, expressing himself with contortions, grimaces and shocking phrases. When Melvin voices his personal opinions this is mostly in the way of stereotypical prejudice towards minority groups. Melvin tries to be witty on many an occasion. The language used is witty and sarcastic, ironic to the audience yet overtly offensive to the characters within the film.

These three characters have one thing in common – their apparent difficulty in finding real happiness. After a series of events they find themselves figuratively and literally embarking on a journey together. On closer contact with Carol and Simon Melvin starts to let down his social barriers and becomes more polite.

Before presenting the plot I now continue with a brief portrayal of the four main characters, Melvin, Carol, Simon and Frank.

3.2 The Main Characters

Melvin

The fact that Melvin lives in Manhattan, is a successful writer and apparently intelligent puts him in a high social class. At the core of his personality is an obsessive-compulsive disorder. Melvin's disorder manifests itself in neurotic ways (described in section 3.4.1). All these idiosyncrasies are metaphors for his phobia for cleanliness and fear of social proximity.

His only contact with the outside world is his daily visit to the local restaurant. Melvin detests everybody and being somewhat acid tongued everybody detests him. His hate for Simon and his dog, Verdell, is very evident at first.

Melvin acts as if he thinks himself superior to most people. This superiority feeling towards Simon is most evident and his prejudice towards homosexuals, as well as towards Jews, ethnic minority groups including blacks, waitresses, barmen, and even the police force, is portrayed by Melvin's lexical choice. This lexical choice takes the form of direct or subtle abusive language on many an occasion.

Melvin has great difficulty in socialising; likewise, others find him equally difficult to relate to. He has very many 'hang-ups' in his relation with things and people in his everyday life. He deliberately avoids physical contact and conversation with other people. The manner in which he speaks to people whom he comes across seems to reinforce his desire to remain isolated, while his rudeness keeps people away, increasing the social distance between him and them.

His identity crisis could be a result of having a despot father who hardly ever appeared and when he did it was to rap Melvin's hands when he missed a note on the piano. He is a solitary bachelor who eats at the same restaurant everyday, where Carol is his regular waitress.

Carol

Carol is a single mother in her late thirties, outgoing and hardworking in her attempt to support and bring up her son who suffers from chronic, life-threatening asthma. While Melvin keeps to himself in his own space, Carol deals with the general public, in her role as waitress at a Manhattan restaurant. She is the only one who is civil towards Melvin except when she feels he steps beyond the limits of decent behaviour. At such moments of provocation she pours out home truths, giving him a taste of his own medicine, and even resorting to swearing at him. By and large she is the sole person who can cope with his weird antisocial neurotic manner, the only one willing to stand up to the sarcastic tirades of Melvin.

Living in Brooklyn and travelling by bus places her in the working class. This is reflected by her amazement to have a doctor pay her son a home visit. It is also reflected by her taking home of the toiletries provided by the luxury hotel Melvin invites her to.

Simon

Simon lives across the hall from Melvin and is openly gay, much to the chagrin of Melvin. He has a dog, Verdell, whom he is very attached to. At the outset of the film he holds regular parties where, with the help of Frank, his art dealer, he exhibits his work, and is thus comfortably off financially putting him also in a high social class. He is a sensitive person as when he was younger his rich father expelled him from their home having caught his mother posing nude for him.

He is hospitalised after walking in on some burglars in his flat. Owing to the exorbitant hospital expenses and his incapacity to work he becomes bankrupt. This precipitates a series of problems for him as is elaborated on in the unfolding of the film, which follows the introduction to Frank.

Frank

Frank is an African-American contemporary art dealer. At the onset of the story he shows Simon's work and later on is one of the few friends that stand by Simon when he goes bankrupt. He is concerned about Simon and tries to protect him against Melvin. He makes Melvin take in Simon's dog, asks Melvin to drive Simon to see his parents and when the film is nearing the close he moves Simon's belongings into Melvin's flat.

Having introduced the principle participants I lead on to the unfolding of the story. The adjacent section discusses in more detail the sequence of events mentioned in the synopsis above.

3.3 The Unfolding of the Story

A predominant event in the film is Melvin asking his agent to speak to her husband, a doctor, and convince him to look after Carol's son, Spencer, (as mentioned above) thus ensuring Carol's presence to wait on him at the restaurant (see Appendix 1.g). Another predominant event occurs when Simon is hospitalised after being beaten up in his own house by some intruders when he walks in on them robbing his home. As a result of this Simon goes through several problems and to come to terms with these, favours are asked. First of all his beloved dog, Verdell, has to be taken care of, so Frank asks a lady neighbour, but gets an outright refusal. Frank then insists on Melvin taking care of Verdell (see Appendix 1.h).

When Simon eventually gets discharged from hospital, Frank asks Melvin if he could keep Verdell a little longer. Melvin agrees to do the favour so enthusiastically that Frank gets suspicious and changes his mind about his request, and the dog returns to his rightful master, a fretful situation for Melvin (see Appendix 1.j). This signals a change

in Melvin as he was initially unwilling to host the dog yet now he is fond of Verdell and reluctant to give him up.

Simon loses his desire to draw, which along with his hospital expenses creates a financial problem. This critical financial situation precipitates the dismissal of his home help, a Puerto Rican lady, who, in turn, is worried about Verdell. This maid goes to Melvin's door and asks him if he could walk the dog. This provides an unconventional completion of conversation as it turns from being civil back to Melvin being uncouth, reflecting his prejudice against the Puerto Rican lady. (see Appendix 2.b). He dislikes immigrants and accuses her of being a prostitute before slamming the door in her face.

A turning point precipitating Melvin's metamorphosis takes place when he insults Simon so much that he is incited to hit out at Melvin (See Appendix 1.k). This is closely ensued by Melvin taking a peace offering round to Simon's (see Appendix 1.l), a hurdle cleared towards becoming a sociable man.

Another consequence of Simon's financial hardship is that of Frank asking Melvin to drive Simon to Baltimore to request financial help from his parents. At first Melvin refuses but then changes his mind after hearing a home truth (see Appendix 1.m) from Carol. Melvin asks her to do the favour of accompanying him on the trip, and as she has no inclination of going Melvin obliges her to on the premise that she owes him a favour. He reminds her of her eternal gratitude for his help with her son's health care. The goings-on on the trip with Simon, Carol and Melvin result in Simon's comeback to sketching and most importantly Melvin's inkling to his liking of Carol. He inadvertently offends her and she turns to Simon and she and Simon become close friends. The rebuked Melvin then realises he has fallen in love with her and tries to make amends, resulting in an inevitable happy ending.

Simon loses his flat and so Melvin, prompted by his attachment to the dog, ends up taking Simon in too, to live under the same roof, Melvin, Simon and Verdell. The beginning of the completion of Melvin the sociable man is his accepting advice from Simon and deciding to reach out to Carol.

The sequences of the film portray Melvin undergoing an identity change from an anti-social cantankerous quintessence to a sociable caring helpful humane character. This transmogrification (this magical change) can be perceived firstly through Melvin's act of succumbing to the acceptance of a dog as a guest in his flat, a remarkable feat for him considering his dread of close contact with any living being. Secondly a follow up scene actually portrays him being upset over the dog when he has to return him. Melvin finds it hard to come to terms with his fretting at the dog leaving and so asks his psychiatrist to help him. This is where the film earns its name. Having been rejected by his psychiatrist Melvin leaves via the waiting room full of expectant people and theorises: What if this is **AS GOOD AS IT GETS?** Thirdly his transmogrification can be seen in his genuine concern for the well being of Carol's son, though this is, as a contributory factor, egoistic as he enjoys being waited on by her at the restaurant. Fourthly he is brusquely awakened to his own execrable behaviour (line 17, Appendix 1.k) when Simon proclaims him **a horror of a human being**, another home truth, again mentioned below. Fifthly his change can be observed through inviting Simon to share his flat, showing the overcoming of his homophobia, and even welcoming Simon with a tap on his shoulder as he overcomes his phobia of physical closeness. Finally he also changes through his listening to Simon's advice, which in consequence unfolds the discerning of his love for Carol energising him to go to her. The breakdown of his obsessive compulsive behaviour is portrayed by his forgetting to lock the door and the

closing shot as he walks along the road arm in arm with Carol insouciantly stepping on all the cracks.

Having laid out the macro structure of the film I proceed with some details of the constitution of the script. In order to simplify this procedure I have divided it into sections following Howard and Mabley's (1996) presented above.

3.4 The constitution of the script

Protagonist and Objectives

Melvin is the protagonist. He is the one through whom the viewers obtain their laughs maintaining the audience's interest. It is Melvin's constant vivacious offensiveness and ferocity in offending people that makes him a detestable object that rouses hate, scorn or sympathy.

O público sente empatia por um personagem não porque esteja sofrendo ou se sente oprimido e sim pelo que ele está fazendo a respeito³. WALTER BERNSTEIN (In Howard and Mabley, 1996, p. 50).

Melvin is so extreme in voicing his dislikes and prejudices, by naming or classifying people. He is so far fetched in his abusive language that the audience cannot but help feel disdain towards him provoking pity for his prey.

His original objective is to write romantic novels, then the objective seems to change to him finding romance, discovering outside his books the love he describes so well within them.

Obstacles and conflicts

A fundamental conflict of Melvin's is with cleanliness. He keeps away from people because he deems them unclean. His internal conflict is his own anti social

³ The public feels compassion for a character not because he is suffering or because he feels downtrodden but because of what he is trying to do about it (my translation).

personality, his exaggerated behaviour to keep people away versus his want to be with Carol. He is passing through an identity crisis, and needs to overcome the obstacle of his obsessive-compulsive disorder to achieve a respectable social identity.

Melvin needs Carol to wait on him at his regular restaurant as she is the only person who can cope decently with him. A tremendous obstacle to this is her son's health. Melvin overcomes this by hiring a doctor, who happens to be his publisher's husband, to take care of him.

The film commences with Melvin's objective being (as stated earlier) to write books, the obstacle being continuous interruptions from Simon and his agent Frank. As the film unfolds, Melvin's objective becomes to attract Carol. The obstacle is his obnoxious behaviour in the form of face threats (explained in the theoretical perspectives, Chapter 2) often performed unintentionally. His difficulty is in friendship and love and the retribution of such.

Opening and Closing scenes

The opening scene creates audience participation by forming an opinion of disgust for the protagonist, Melvin, before he so much as comes onto the screen. This is achieved not just by words alone but by the visible change in the facial expressions of his lady neighbour.

One of the final scenes shows Melvin forgetting to lock the door, reflecting the alleviation of his obsessive compulsive disorder, while the closing scene is a shot of him walking nonchalantly over the cracks in the road reaffirming that alleviation.

The ensuing paragraphs broach the following topics: the importance of the canine figure, values, dramatic impact, plants and payoffs, (defined below) and cryptic remarks. My objective in including this analysis is to provide a clearer picture of the transformation process Melvin passes through from an obnoxious to an acceptable

member of society. Immediately following this part I continue to the stronghold of my thesis, that being the analysis of the lexicogrammatical choices demonstrating the face work of this protagonist. The latter will, I hope, convince the reader that the line of discourse a person takes (see Goffman section 2.2) reflects his own identity whereas at the same time language use constructs the subjective identity of that person. In as much as Melvin's change to softer lexical choices in the way of gentler face threats mirrors his transmogrification he becomes an acceptable member of society thus reflecting the social nature of human language.

I now proceed with an overall analysis of the film commencing with the importance of the canine character.

The importance of the dog, Verdell

The dog acts as a stepping stone in the auto-formation of Melvin's identity. Verdell is a link between Simon and Melvin. First Melvin builds up a relationship with Verdell by enticing him with bacon (see excerpts 4 and 22, chapter 4) and then this is extended to Simon and the outside world. Melvin tries to make a bond with Simon by taking him Chinese soup (see excerpt 38 and Appendix 1.1), Bacon is exotic for Verdell as much as the exotic soup is special for Simon.

The choice of a dog over another animal or object offered to symbolise the link was arbitrary. However the choice of that particular dog is significant as it is a small sweet thing, reflecting stereotypical choice for a homosexual and also the sweet side of the romances Melvin writes, further extending to the sweet side of his personality which is eventually exposed.

Values

There are moments when the film reveals certain values of social conduct. First I shall mention Carol's participation before going onto examples from Melvin's role.

Carol borrows some money from another waitress and she insists on paying it back at the time she has promised to. In another scene she is politically correct in asking Simon if he wants some of the toiletries provided for the guests by the hotel, rather than just taking them all for herself. She considers others not just herself.

Melvin reprimands Carol's son, reminding the boy of the values of social conduct saying '**You should answer someone when they speak to you.**' Carol makes it very clear by throwing him out that he was out of line to do so. Hence here there are two examples, one, that it is rude not to answer and two; that it is inappropriate and thus threatening to negative face (see section 2.2) to reproach somebody else's child.

In a physical conflict between Frank and Melvin, Melvin wishes to regain control of the situation and threatens Frank with the charge of **assault and battery and you're black** (Appendix 1.d). This reflects the value of some members of society that blacks are inferior to whites and thus they will be more heavily condemned for attacking a white man than vice versa.

Melvin becomes more amenable as the film unfolds and agrees with Frank about Simon that **If his parent's are alive they have to help. – It's the rules** (see Appendix 1.m), one more value of society. Melvin is now *in face* as he shares the same views on parental help as Frank.

The last three examples I refer to are related to the *innocent offence* (see section 2.2) towards Carol that was introduced in the unfolding of the story. Melvin gives the impression that he thinks Carol's dress to be nothing exceptional yet acceptable at the restaurant. His complaint is aimed at the norms of the restaurant as they require him to wear a jacket and tie, one of the values of high society (the first example). After Carol walks out on him because of this and his insinuation for her to sleep with Simon he sits at the bar drinking. Talking to the barman (see excerpt 8 and Appendix 1.p) he refers to

his cocktail as being a **drug**, in contrast to the legal value society (second example) puts on alcohol. Relating his problems to this complete stranger he is reluctant to say anything down grading about Carol or himself in reference to their argument. He says **Well, it's not right to go into details** (the third example).

The values above mentioned are in fact the basis for the ideology behind the film.

Dramatic impact

At the beginning of the film there is a dramatic scene where Melvin is so disgusted by the dog urinating in the hall that he picks him up and expels him down the waste disposal shoot. (see Appendix 1.a and excerpts 1 and 31). When Frank goes to take satisfaction from Melvin for doing such an act he grabs Melvin and drags him out of his apartment (see Appendix 1.d).

Another dramatic impact occurs when Simon is viciously beaten up by some people when he walks in on them robbing him, resulting in his hospitalisation and subsequent use of a wheelchair. Melvin is not present at that time but in a follow up scene Melvin riles Simon to such an extent that he forces himself out of his wheelchair and throws himself on top of Melvin (see excerpts 16, 22 and 37).

The ultimate example of dramatic impact I give here is when Carol swears at Melvin for correcting her son's behaviour (mentioned above) then brusquely pushes him out of her house.

Plants and payoffs

A plant refers to the line of a dialogue, a gesture or some accessory in the mise-en-scène. The payoff is the re-occurrence of the plant or a new significance of the plant forming a poetic metaphor. The spectator understands and retains information for later use, creating ties, so that at the moment of the payoff the story seems to become more unified and complete (Howard and Mabley, 1996).

Before Melvin is interrupted by Simon we hear Melvin say **At last she was able to define love. Love was, love was . . .** This can be considered a plant relevant to the progression of Melvin's life. Simon accuses him of not loving anybody after Melvin cynically says he loves Verdell (see Appendix 1.b). Melvin has not discovered love for himself and there are obstacles to him doing so, as mentioned earlier. The plant of Melvin 'loving Verdell' ends up with the payoff of Melvin and Verdell becoming affectionate companions.

Frank threatens Melvin for having thrown Verdell down the shoot. **I'm going to think of some way for you to repay him.** Frank keeps his promise by forcing Melvin to take Verdell in. Frank also threatens to batter Melvin unrecognisable if he is aggressive to Simon or Verdell (see Appendix 1.d). This plant modifies to a payoff referring to Simon as it is he who is beaten up.

The Puerto Rican maid, referring to the attack on Simon (see Appendix 2.b), says that things like this happen for the best. The payoff is that the happy ending of Melvin becoming a social human being was an indirect result of Simon being harmed. The last two plants I point out is where Carol says **You're my date** in one scene and **Why can't I have a normal boyfriend** in another of course leading to the concluding payoff of Carol and Melvin having a romantic relationship.

The final plant and pay off I mention is in reference to life. As Melvin is walking along the street sideways and he forces people to move out of his way a lady says to him **Get a life.** In a closing scene where Melvin is asking Simon for advice Melvin accuses Carol of **evicting him from his life. I can't get back to my own life.** The payoff being that he starts a life with Carol by his side as the final shot views him walking her down the hexagonally paved street. Now he is an integrated member of society.

I wish to point out that certain items in the following segment on cryptic remarks to which I now advance also act as plants and payoffs.

Cryptic Remarks

Cryptic remarks refer to puzzling enigmatic comments which contribute to reinforce the audience's perception of Melvin's state of being. Melvin's comment **I bet you wish you were a real dog** (see Appendix 1.a) is a reference to himself and a plant as Melvin confesses to Carol that she makes him **want to be a better man** (Appendix 1.o) the payoff being his taking pills for his ailment.

Melvin's comment to Verdell **this is New York, if you can make it here you can make it anywhere** (Appendix 1.a) brings in text from outside the film, as it is from a famous film and a reference to him too in the form of a plant. The payoff occurs when he succeeds at wooing Carol.

The remark (see Appendix 2.a) **If you look at someone long enough you discover their humanity** is another plant resulting in a closer look at Melvin becoming humane. Starting with another remark Where's **the trust?** (Appendix 1.h) although Melvin is talking to Verdell he is questioning himself advising both he and Verdell as he sings **Always look at the bright side of your life** (Appendix *ibid*) So much so that he comes to trust life and enjoy the dog's company.

Finally, I refer to the cryptic remark **Appetites aren't as big as your noses, eh?** (see excerpt 5 and Appendix 1.e) as another example of intertextuality. There is the popular saying 'Your eyes aren't as big as your stomach, eh?' which is often put to children who greedily serve themselves too much and proceed to leave food on their plates, while it is common knowledge that Jewish people have a tendency to have larger noses than Gentiles. "We match our knowledge with the situation" (Winter, 1994,

p.101) and in so doing, the incorporation of renowned concepts becomes a verbal abuse towards the Jewish customers.

3.4.1 Repetitions

Melvin does not hesitate to repeatedly throw unpleasant remarks at everyone around him (see the analysis, chapter 4). There are three pictures of the Eiffel Tower, one in the hallway, one in Simon's flat and one on Carol's wall. The symbolism of Paris is romance, reflecting that the film is a romance. Many scenes are finalised by the door being slammed. Other repetitions I point out are: other character's disrespect for the protagonist, Melvin's idiosyncrasies and phobias, home truths, kindnesses, egoism and finally compliments.

Disrespect for the protagonist

As said above the cut of the film shows a lady neighbour swearing at Melvin under her breath when she sees him thus reflecting her disrespect. Also in the local restaurant where he is renowned for his peculiarities the waitresses take on a look of exasperated horror when Carol suggests Melvin sit at one of their posts (see Appendix 1.e). And Bryan the manager says he does not care how much trade Melvin brings in if he behaves badly again he will be barred for life. This demonstrates their disrespect for him reinforced, in another scene (see Appendix 1.f) as he is leaving the local restaurant, by hecklers shouting '**See yah!**', '**Bye.**' and '**It's about time**'. Likewise Verdell barks antagonistically at him in a scene before they are forced to be companions, portraying his own disrespect.

Idiosyncrasies and phobias

Melvin suffers from an obsessive-compulsive disorder demonstrated by his locking and unlocking of the door to a count of five. As there is a shot of him throwing

his leather gloves away he must repeatedly wear a new pair each time he goes out. He washes his hands in hot water to ensure he has sterilised them, using one new bar of soap after another at that same wash. He puts on disposable gloves, which he happens to have in his pocket, before picking up Verdell in the street. He insists on taking his own plastic cutlery to the restaurant to avoid procuring germs. These actions emphasise his mania for cleanliness, as he thinks everyone and everything is dirty. He taps the floor first on one side then the other side of his slippers before putting them on, steps over not on cracks on the ground, which even the dog identifies himself with. He constantly wears the aforementioned gloves, either driving, plastic or oven gloves and walks sideways in the street to avoid people. These are all means to maintain distance from people and things.

The physical attributes of the film techniques play an important role in the background and unfolding of the plot exploiting the many 'hang-ups' protuberant in Melvin's behaviour. The dialogue in a film does not always say exactly what it appears to say. In actual fact the juxtaposition of dialogues and action seemingly contradictory offer us a clearer picture of a character's personality, an insight to their personality (Howard and Mabley, 1996). The manias that Melvin exposes are frequently revealed through visual effects offering metaphors and disclosing hidden meanings.

Home truths

There are numerous occasions when Melvin is brought down to earth by someone commenting on the reality of his comportment. For example he upsets Carol when he says her son is going to die and she calls him **a crazy fuck**. His reaction to this is shamefacedness and he is momentarily lost for words (see p.16, this thesis). On another occasion she asks him if he knows **how creepy** he allows himself to get. Another time she says **I want your life for one minute. Well my big problem is somebody offers**

me a free convertible so I can get out of this city (see excerpt 28 and Appendix 1.m). Here she is telling him how selfish he is (egoistic, see below) and later on she reminds him it is about time he sorted out his personal relationships by saying **You're not ready and you're a pretty old guy to not be ready. And I'm too old to ignore that** (see excerpt 29 and Appendix 1.s).

Simon too gives him some home truths- **You absolute horror of a human being** (see excerpt 27 and Appendix 1.k) brings him down, while telling him in an end scene that he is **willing to humiliate himself** has the opposite effect of getting him charged (see excerpt 30 and Appendix 1.t).

These home truths prompt him into action, or at least provoke a reaction that reveals he has understood that he is in wrong face (see section 2.2), a great step to developing his identity and turning more humane by reflecting on his wrong doings.

Kindnesses

Change to Melvin 's personality starts by the little things that he does for people. He arranges a doctor for Carol's son. After a fight with Simon he takes him some soup. He talks to Frank about the dog then takes him to the vet making sure he is put into a pen with a small dog to build his confidence up. This is a reference to the fact that he needs his own confidence built up. He takes Simon to see his parents and finally he invites Simon to live with him and Verdell.

Egoism

Melvin's above mentioned kindnesses lead to ensuring he is waited on by Carol and that he continues to have contact with Verdell. The script reflects Melvin's narcissism in the following lines:

You don't love anybody (Appendix 1.b)

I grew my beard two years ago, but you're not interested in me which is also a home truth Melvin's psychiatrist tells him.

I need a hand ... where'd she go? is something he says to Carol to make her feel obliged to go on the trip.

Why is it that when someone gets that they need you they threaten to walk out (excerpt 25 and Appendix 1.o)? Here he is saying that he is the important one, that he is the needed one.

Melvin makes a point of saying he cannot think of anywhere he would rather be (which could be presented as a compliment, see below) than outside Carol's flat, then he gets self centred again and says he would rather be inside so that he does not get his feet wet.

All these immediately above examples show he is very much self-centred. On the other hand the following segment shows how he learns how to give compliments. They play an important role and are pointed out various times. At the outset Melvin only has insults for people, so the compliments he comes out with show his change in politeness strategies.

Compliments

Compliments represent a sign of Melvin's changing behaviour. One of the first compliments (see Appendix 1.o) is demanded of Melvin by Carol, when she says **Pay me a compliment Melvin**. She even reminds him that a compliment is **something nice about someone else**. He forces an attempt with **You make me want to be a better man**. Carol tells him that is **maybe the best compliment of her life**.

In another scene Melvin pays Simon a compliment, which is a change from the usual insult. Melvin is meticulous about his packing and when he sees Simon's neatly packed suitcase he admires it - **Nice packing**. When the three of them are at the hotel

Simon and Carol compliment one another. Simon says **It would be very rough Carol if you weren't along** and Carol returns the compliment with a further compliment - **What a nice compliment**. Carol compliments Melvin when he comes back to the restaurant in Baltimore wearing new clothes - **You look se... You look great**.

Returning after the journey Simon is invited to stay at Melvin's and now Melvin even has a compliment for Frank and company (see Appendix 1.r). Melvin says they set up the guestroom well for Simon - **Nice, it's good, they've got your music, paints, paintings. Have to say they did a good job. It's, er, it's, er, gonna be okay, huh? Cosy, eh?**

Simon's reply to this is one more compliment for Melvin - **Yeah, Thank you Melvin. You overwhelm me. I love you** which Melvin endorses with **I tell you buddy I'd be the luckiest person alive if that did it for me**.

The last example I mention is the long-winded compliment about her being **the greatest woman on earth** (lines 11-15 Appendix 1.u) showing how he is developing social skills (see section 2.2). He still has an inkling of egoism though as in line 15 he adds that **the fact that I get it makes me feel good about me**.

This list is perhaps long enough to put over my point that Melvin is developing diplomacy (Goffman, 1967, see section 2.2) and that his transmogrification is exemplified through his lexicogrammatical choices which reflect his preoccupation of the face of others as he becomes more humane. The desire to be accepted by others has also become obvious as the compliments serve to please.

I persist now in providing examples of non-verbal communication, in terms of *mise-en-scène*, that portray the transformation of the interactive relationships of Melvin with his acquaintances. The means of showing this is achieved through an introductory analysis of *mise-en-scène*.

3.5 An introductory film analysis of “As Good As It Gets”

The predominant angle of my thesis (laid out in Chapter 1) is the use of the English language analysed through the determination of face-work (according to Goffman, 1967) and face-threatening acts (according to Brown and Levinson, 1987). As I take a film to be my multi-modal corpus and wish to give value to the semiotic aspects (see section 2.6) of such I deem it indispensable to consider film techniques. I include an introductory film analysis of my corpus ‘As Good As It Gets’. In so doing I offer the reader the opportunity to become more familiar with the film before considering my analysis of the use of language.

My main focus, that of face-work, portrays the transformation of the interactive relationships of the main character with his acquaintances. This transformation is demonstrated not only by the language use but also the visual clues and henceforth giving weight to the relevance of the incorporation of this analysis of **mise-en-scène**⁴ into my thesis.

In order to maintain a coherent flow within this chapter I have included certain details, concepts, ideas, and conclusions as a deliberate preview to the present research. I am conscious of the fact that various concepts may be restated in the primordial analysis of my corpus, that of the application of the English language to demonstrate the social nature of language through face work.

Mise-en-scène portraying the transformation of the interactive relationships of the main character with his acquaintances.

Through **eye-lines and body orientation** the editing keeps the **spatial relation** consistent, the **shot / reverse-shot** and **eye-line match cutting** being central to the

⁴ Definitions of the highlighted terms can be found in Appendix 3.

film's effect. Variations of these aspects accentuate the changes in personality of the performers that the director wishes to put over. The subtle modifications in mise-en-scène, visual, verbal and non-verbal alike express Melvin, the protagonist's transition from a high-strung eccentric to a caring, loving human being as the film unfolds.

According to Louis Giannetti (1972) "human beings and their problems can be exemplified by their **positioning in the frame**. Animals are territorial, laying claim to a given area and defending it from outsiders" (p.56). In this film Melvin lays claim to his own space perhaps more so than Verdell, the dog he adopts. The **metteur-en-scène** adjusts and redefines not only human interaction but also dog versus keeper relationships by exploiting spatial conventions. The mise-en-scène expresses shifting psychological and social nuances as the film develops, while Verdell, the dog, reflects the ongoing perspective of his current keeper. A rich source of the mise-en-scène is the body language of the performers, be they human or animal.

Melvin (as described in section 3.2) is exceptionally worried about contracting infections, going to the extreme of taking his own plastic cutlery to the restaurant and using gloves until the very end of the film. As he cannot bear physical contact, the gloves also represent a barrier between him and both the things and the people around him. Doors seem to play an important part in the film, also acting as isolation, protection to close people out or to exclude him and sometimes borderlines to think about crossing. His mania of stepping over all the lines and cracks on the floor, symbolises his difficulty to relate to the world around him and the beings in it, including the dog, Verdell. This mania is also metaphoric symbolising and thus reinforcing his stepping over the limits of expected politeness with his brusque nature. His initial hate for Simon, his neighbour and Simon's dog, Verdell, is very evident. Simon walks in on

some burglars in his flat and is beaten up by them, so while Simon is hospitalised Melvin is obliged to take Verdell in.

Doors

In the film doors are predominant semiotic signs, and as part of the *mise-en-scènes* reflect changes in Melvin's behaviour. This section establishes the relationship between doors as ***mise-en-scène*** and their symbolic significance.

The film cuts, without **an establishing shot**, to the door of Melvin's other neighbour. She, upon seeing Melvin, calls him names and slams her door shut (see Appendix 1.a). This *mise-en-scène* is the first of many settings at a door, the latter being slammed to keep out even the sight of Melvin, making the viewer perceive the loathing people feel towards him. Right from the beginning before Melvin so much as comes onto the celluloid he is perceived as being offensive. The sight of Melvin is so offensive to people that he performs a face-threatening act by his presence proper. It is as if he, as a person, is a threat without even saying anything. Obviously this is a reaction prompted through previous encounters with Melvin. As Goffman (1967) explains: "Once the person initially presents a line (a term discussed in section 2.2) he and the others tend to build their later responses upon it, and in a sense become stuck with it" (p. 11-12). Melvin seems to have labelled himself obnoxious.

In the first two minutes of the film Melvin is seen struggling with the doors of the lift, he is seen getting angry and shouting aggressively to wait. Nobody is visible, so here is a face threat to life itself, a semiotic symbolism for his continuous battle with life.

When Melvin goes inside his flat he meticulously locks his door behind him, turning the lock shut then open then shut again to the count of five and proceeds to do the same with the light switch. This is an example of his obsessive-compulsive

behaviour (talked about in section 3.4.1) and reinforces his desire for isolation. In other *mise-en-scènes* the door is slammed to end a heated conversation aggressively terminating the conversation, each account being a face threat. As the film goes on the door starts to play a different role, contact with Carol for example when she stands dripping on his doormat in the middle of the night. Although the conversation is strained there is no door slamming, a step towards reducing his high incidence of face threats.

Coming to the close of the film (see excerpt 42 and Appendix 1.t) an identifiably metaphoric door sequence represents the breakdown of Melvin's obsessive compulsive disorder as he realises he had not locked the door.

Another *mise-en-scène* (see Appendix 1.l) shows Melvin starting to lower his defences; he actually knocks on Simon's door taking him some soup. Inside Simon's place there is a shot of Melvin and Simon sitting on a bench, one at each end, thus at each edge of the frame. This **proxemic** distance shows they are not very close socially. The influential prop, the Chinese soup, brought as a peace offering is very prominent on the seat in the centre of the frame, representing Melvin's desire to make friends. A peace offering after the physical attack Melvin's abusive face threats provoked Simon to perform (see Appendix 1.k).

Approaching the close of the film, there is a view point from the inside of Melvin's flat when he invites Simon to move in with him: the audience sees them come inside. The *mise-en-scène* of Melvin closing the door, with the two of them on the interior, visually displays his overcoming of those intense territorial feelings he had. In fact when he realises he is falling in love with Carol he lets his guard down completely and, unexpectedly, forgets to lock the door. Hence it can be noticed that the progressive angles of *mise-en-scène* express Melvin's change of attitude. The following section

further emphasises Melvin's obsessive compulsive behaviour. Though not my main focus, I deem it relevant to the belief that the film techniques applied delineate changes in Melvin's character, and reinforce the importance of considering different semiotic modes.

Props as a reference to Melvin's idiosyncratic behaviour

Returning to his hang-ups about cleanliness; **props** play an important role along with camera distance. There is a close up near the start of the film where he throws his gloves away, followed by one of his hands as he washes them with one new bar of soap after another. The camera moves to his bathroom cabinet full of meticulously neat rows of boxes and packets of soap, reflecting his desire for order in and control over his world. This obsession for the excessive lining up of overlarge numbers of items can be seen again when he is writing. In fact in that *mise-en-scène* the camera shows him in the background, while the shelves of bottles and more bottles are in the foreground suggesting that his need to organise things is primordial. Going back to the soap, unbalanced as he is, he throws the first bar in the bin, reaches for another and repeats the action, rinsing his hands with boiling water to kill all the germs.

He takes plastic cutlery to the restaurant to avoid using communal silverware. At the restaurant in Baltimore Melvin is terrified at the thought of having to wear some communal suits and catching some horrendous sickness from them. He feels threatened by these communal items, so much so that he abandons Carol and rushes off to buy new clothes, but not before being rude to the doorman. These two actions both being face threats, one towards the doorman, the other to Carol.

Gloves are a very important prop, symbolising one of his idiosyncrasies: he cannot touch things with his naked hands. Just as there is a progression with the doors, so there is with the gloves. As mentioned above he even uses new gloves every time he

goes out. There is a shot of him throwing his leather gloves away. This prop is another demonstration of his desire to isolate himself from people and things around him. In the street he decides to pick Verdell up but before doing so he gets out a pair of plastic protective gloves. He lifts Verdell up to eye level, showing his acceptance of the creature, delighted that he steps over the lines too, but still not quite ready to remove the gloves. As he and Verdell become closer there is a shot at his door where he is wearing just one glove, an oven glove, but this single prop significantly shows his barriers are starting to dissolve; he is already exposing one hand. He manages to touch Simon's shoulder with gloved hands, a big step forward. While approaching the end of the film, he touches Simon's arm in a gesture of gratitude with his bare hands. He has already taken off his gloves before dining with Carol; and there are close up shots of his bare hands, in the centre of the frame, putting recognisable importance on them as he opens up to her. When she kisses him the viewer sees him intimately, though hesitantly, put his hands on her hair, this gesture represents great progress towards Melvin assuming the role of an integrated person.

Another nuance of Melvin's is the cracks on the pavements. The *mise-en-scène* of the ground shows his pet hate for stepping on lines. He walks erratically along the street avoiding the cracks and the people, he refuses to go into a Men's store because of the tiles at the entrance and ends up buying those desperately required clothes from the doorway.

A later *mise-en-scène*, where he sees the hexagonal pattern of Carol's hallway floor, it jolts him both psychologically and physically so much so that he almost topples over. Melvin invades Carol's privacy and once more oversteps the mark by trying to teach her son good manners. After she slams the door in his face we get a glimpse of the floor inside her flat and see hexagonals there too, reinforcing the fact that it wasn't time

for Melvin to be welcomed inside. Reaching the end of the film he avoids going inside by inviting her out for a stroll. This *mise-en-scène* of lines and squares provides an incredible connection between him and another performer, Verdell. Melvin is elated when Verdell is also punctiliously careful not to step on the cracks either.

Verdell, the dog, is a prominent participant in the film. He is the go between, the link between, a stepping-stone between, Melvin the gross and Melvin the caring human. Melvin's behaviour towards him is co-related to his disposition with the world. First of all he is anti-dog, a metaphor for anti-social. Later he grows fond of the dog and at the same time he grows fond of Simon and Carol. Verdell changes keeper a number of times, and has the tendency to reflect the current caretaker in numerous parts of the film. The adjacent section suggests how Verdell's movements are related to the context of the scene.

Framing, lighting and speed

The use of **camera angles**, **tracking** and **proxemic positioning** within the **proscenium arch** reflect the transfer of power in the hegemonic struggles. Once more the semiotic signs communicate great significance to the plot. I have included a scene analysis further exemplifying how camera techniques emphasise the visual clues adding greater significance to the whole. Meanwhile, I choose to present the following description as an introduction to the scene included in my analysis of the protagonist's face work (see excerpt 35) where Melvin is forced to take Verdell in (see Appendix 1.h).

In this scene Frank is temporarily in charge of Verdell. The camera follows Melvin's perturbed movements from left to right, keeping Verdell, under Frank's arm, in the centre of the frame. Verdell barks at Melvin, a sign of Frank's antagonism towards Melvin. The lady from the opening scene refuses to take on Verdell, once more

slamming her door closed. Now Frank, still with Verdell tucked tightly under his arm, is portrayed at the right side of the frame clarifying Frank's loss of power.

The continuation of the scene shows Melvin being obliged to look after Verdell thus taking the role of his keeper. Frank throws Verdell into Melvin's flat. Here Verdell desperately paws at the gap in the door, reflecting Melvin's attempt to free himself from looking after this new lodger. The proxemic pattern and camera point of view of Melvin's back at the left side of the frame passes the power back to a centralised Frank. The **lateral tracking** of Verdell desperately running around the flat gives narrative significance to Melvin's panic. As Melvin ritualistically locks his door, securing himself inside, the camera zooms into a close up shot as Verdell lies down on the floor obviously trying to come to terms with the situation, as Melvin must be doing too.

The *mise-en-scène* shows a very bare corner, with Verdell, though centralised, near the bottom of the frame, in an unprotected angle. The camera is fixed but we see the wary movement of shadows of Melvin's legs crossing the picture creating the idea of an unclear, even menacing situation. The camera follows Verdell along the skirting board, representing the fact that he and Melvin are subordinate, then summing up his keeper's restlessness as he agitatedly flops down puffing and panting. The expressions on the faces, body movements, gestures and the behaviour of the performers, both human and four-legged, all expertly hint at what is going on in the film.

Lighting plays an important part in the filming. On occasions **key lighting** is implemented. In a continuing sequel, shortly after Verdell's forced entry into Melvin's domain, a grand piano acts as a prop, placed predominantly in the frame, Melvin moving in to sit down and play it. **Key frontal lighting** draws attention to his perplexed expression. Melvin looks off screen in his dilemma with Verdell, who in turn is looking suspiciously at the food Melvin has placed for him. Here there is a change in attitude

from both Verdell and the new keeper, as Melvin starts to play the **intra diegetic** song **Always look at the bright side of your life** (see Appendix 1.h), illustrating his acceptance of the situation. Verdell reflects this by crawling closer, reducing the space between them and eating the food. This is an important occurrence for Melvin, so much so that he relates this situation to Carol in a later scene. Up to now lighting has been homogenous, a balanced three point lighting implementing key light, **fill light** and **back light**; however now there is an attached shadow shading half of Melvin's face emphasising his disbelief that he could allow another being into his territory.

In another scene the low key lighting of the *mise-en-scène* enhances a sombre Melvin lost in thought over Carol, the **sidelight** leaving his profile shadowed in his search for enlightenment. At one point he is seen inside his flat, the camera lens looking in through the window past some venetian blinds, where his anxiety and tension are expressed in visual terms by the obstruction of the horizontal bars, and the tight framing of the window expresses his sense of entrapment. His hands over his mouth suggest he does not know what to say, and his folded arms suggest he is waiting for some inspiration. What should he do about Carol? The *mise-en-scène* of the lighting, the camera view point, the gestures again offering non-verbal clues to the plot.

Carol is very special and copes well with Melvin even as she awaits him patiently. Expert editing in the form of time-lapse cinematography, juxtapositions of Carol in different positions superimposed on a long take shows her waiting and waiting and waiting for Melvin to get ready. This realistically portrays a long time span, Melvin's long exaggeration in the shower being reinforced by steam added to the *mise-en-scène*. This in turn reflects the threat to negative face towards Carol, the disrespect of keeping her waiting be it unintentional, linked of course to his exaggeration for cleanliness and his anticipation of being her date. I continue with exemplification of the use of

positioning reflecting power issues, included here as support to the understanding of hegemonic struggles (to be further commented on in section 4.2).

Carol in her professional role as a waitress is often portrayed standing by a sitting Melvin, taking his order. In their social relationship, the proxemic distance between Melvin and Carol mostly puts them on equal terms. On the whole, Melvin is in charge of the situation. In the following excerpt the roles change somewhat. In a scene (also analysed in the mainstay of this study, see section 4.2. Appendix 1.o) where Carol is offended by Melvin's comments, she modifies the positioning within the proscenium arch by standing up. Looking down at him demanding an apology, he is in the lower part of the frame in a more fragile position, reflecting his subordinate power level, while she is now in a higher dominant position, very much in control. Towards the end of the film, one specific take centralises Simon standing in a position of authority as he advises Melvin. Melvin in contrast is now in the bottom left-hand corner, vulnerable, in his quandary over Carol. The previous shot, after a telephone call to Carol, showed his sensitive profile shadowed, suggesting the idea that he is now receptive to Simon, putting himself in a position to be helped. Once again the modifications in filming techniques correspond to the development of the story. Following is an explication of the use of speed variation to reflect emotional states, delineated to provide more insight to certain circumstances Melvin suffers.

The marked changes in pace at prominent points create distinctive accented instants. After being thrown out of his usual eating place, there is a take of Melvin in a taxi speeding towards Carol's abode, demonstrating his anxiety to find her; while a wide-angled shot of interminable rows of identical buildings impresses on the viewer his difficulty in locating her. The same taxi has to rush Carol and her son to the hospital, the accelerated pace portraying the urgency of the situation. Reaching the end of the

story, Melvin can be visualised heading for Carol's again at a high velocity, reflecting his keyed up energy at the prospect of facing Carol and revealing his feelings for her.

In conclusion we can see that there are sequences of development in the use of *mise-en-scène*, especially the cracks and the props, gloves in particular, as Melvin dissolves his barricades, reducing the social distance between him and his companions. Verdell's non-verbal body language gives us an insight into Simon's (see section 3.5) and Melvin's predicaments, acting almost as their doubles. The proxemic patterns, appropriate framing and the speeded up dislocations from one place to another offer visual ideas to the personal situations of the performers throughout the film.

Lighter and darker areas within the frame help create the shot and the individual, isolated usage of contrasting lighting adds an emphasising touch to the actors' psychological states. The manipulation of lighting sets the mood for the scenes while the long shots and accelerated movement demonstrated in the shooting add urgency to life. The gradual overcoming of Melvin's fetishes are described by the visual changes in prop emphasis, *mise-en-scène* modification, lighting, framing, and predominantly reflected in the behaviour of Verdell, disintegrating the anti-social attitude of Melvin as the bad neighbour. The film comes to an end with Melvin not just a good neighbour but a welcoming host, an utter transmogrification. In the last *mise-en-scène*, Carol queries Melvin's strange behaviour of walking on the kerb along the edge of the slabs instead of along the footpath. Finally coming to terms with his relationship and overcoming his fears, he manages to walk on the cracks to be beside Carol. Now with no gloves on he holds her close and kisses her. The final extremely long shot with a wide-angled lens emphasises the rectangular patterned ground extending all down the long street, and the couple walking at leisure together, along that very street, Melvin having surpassed his hang-ups, the *mise-en-scène* serving its explanatory purpose.

This chapter was intended to give validity to the necessity for an interdisciplinary study. I attempted to show that semiotic signs in the form of camera techniques enhancing non-verbal aspects of the film augment the significance of the scenes. Still insisting that multi-modality is an essential aspect of this thesis I now move forward to further incorporate these ideas within the analysis of face work performed by means of linguistic terms.

The following chapter is the mainstay of my study and shows how the modification or the lexicogrammatical choices mirrors the modification in Melvin's relationships as he transmogrifies from a detestable hermit to an integrated person in society. This is achieved by identifying the strategies Melvin employs in his deliberate and accidental face threats. The film study above was intended to try to provide a detailed observance of the overall aspects of the visual semiotics of my multi-modal corpus and substantial insight to the background of the plot, in the hope that the text to follow will appear lucid.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE PROTAGONIST'S *FACE WORK*

In an attempt to simplify the presentation of my analysis of face work for the reader I have reduced it to four sections: firstly an observance of Melvin's habit of calling others names, reflecting his prejudices; secondly an analysis of Melvin's hegemonic struggles and his defence mechanisms to maintain power; thirdly an investigation into Melvin's behaviour when he is informed of some home truths; and finally an examination of how semiotic signs provide emphasis to the verbal language and social context.

The following excerpts have been selected to exemplify the way Melvin names people (and dogs). In so doing he shows his likes or dislikes for the beings concerned. In order to better explain how Melvin changes I would like the reader to bear in mind the dictionary definition of prejudice (Longman, 1987): "(an) unfair and often unfavourable feeling or opinion formed without thinking deeply and clearly or without enough knowledge, and sometimes resulting from fear or distrust of ideas different from one's own" (p.812). In order to exemplify Melvin's fears and distrust I first give examples of his interaction with Verdell, followed by his prejudice towards members of minority groups including ethnic groups and homosexuals.

The selected excerpts are not in chronological order as the same scene has sometimes been used in more than one section. However, the order in Appendix 1 is in chronological order. After each excerpt identification there is an indication to where the

transcript is located in the appendix. The relevant lexicogrammatical items are underlined unless otherwise identified.

4.1 Melvin's name calling of the characters

Melvin's interaction with Verdell, the dog: From hate to love

As the film commences Melvin comes across Verdell in the hall and tries to get him into the lift. After unsuccessful attempts, just as he picks him up, Verdell urinates, so Melvin dispatches Verdell down the rubbish shoot.

Excerpt one (Appendix 1.a)

1. Melvin: **Come on Sweetie. Come on Sweetie.**
2. Melvin: **Wait.** (to the lift)
3. Melvin: **Go for a little ride and then you can whiz all over the city.**
4. **Come on, come on Sweetie.**
5. Melvin: **No, freeze, freeze. Leg down, leg down. Leg down, leg down.**
6. **That's it. That's it. Come on now, come on now.**
7. Melvin: **No, No, you monkey you.**
8. **You have pissed your last floor. I bet you wish you were a real dog.**
9. Melvin: **You dog-eared monkey.**
Melvin walks towards the waste disposal shoot over which there is a prominent sign:
10. **TRASH ONLY.**
11. Melvin: **This is New York if you can make it here you can make it anywhere.**
12. **Smelly, ugly.**

At first Melvin calls Verdell **Sweetie** (lines 1 and 4) This sounds like an affectionate term but, having seen the whole film and so looking in retrospect, he seems to me to be using it sarcastically as a face threat because he dislikes the dog. In subsequent scenes Melvin is seen to have a change of heart as regards Verdell. In lines 7 and 9 he calls the dog first **a monkey**, then, **a dog-eared monkey**. Melvin is insulting the dog and accusing him of incorrect behaviour and so performing a threat to positive face by this naming. Line 8 suggests that Verdell is not able to assume the identity of any **real dog** and is again a threat to positive face, offensive to the dog's status. There is the semiotic sign **TRASH ONLY** (line 10) over the shoot where Melvin throws

Verdell, an offensive naming referring symbolically to the fact that Melvin considers Verdell to be 'trash'. At the same time this is a threat to negative face as Melvin is impeding Verdell's action. The last line (12) portrays Melvin classifying Verdell as **smelly** and **ugly**. These lexicogrammatical choices demonstrate Melvin's dislike for Verdell. Bearing in mind what was said earlier about Melvin's fear of microbes, this shows Melvin's disgust for Verdell because of the unclean behaviour of Verdell urinating inside the building. The language use is emphasising the social context of unhygienic behaviour on behalf of Verdell.

This is the first appearance of Melvin and the audience perceives him as taking the line (Goffman, 1967 see section 2.2) of 'bad guy' and observes the first example of his prejudices.

In a later scene where Melvin interacts with Verdell, a change can already be seen in his conversational strategy as he is offering a compliment instead of a face threat.

Excerpt two (Appendix 1.i)

Melvin walks Verdell everyday for Simon. This example shows how as he is walking along the pavement the dog carefully steps over not on the lines just like Melvin. Verdell now gains Melvin's approval.

1. Melvin: **Look at him.**
2. Melvin: **Don't be like me. You're a perfect man. Let's go home and do some writing.**

Contrary to the previous examples Line 2 clearly shows Melvin praising Verdell. Further on in the movie Melvin continues being very friendly to Verdell.

Excerpt three (Appendix 1.j)

This is at the end of the scene where Melvin has just been told that Verdell is leaving him.

- 13. Melvin: Hungry, I'll be right with you pooch.**

In line 13 Melvin is affectionately calling Verdell pooch. Pooch is a soft lexical choice for a dog and a demonstration of the love Melvin now has for Verdell. In the following excerpt I identify more terms Melvin uses to refer to Verdell.

Excerpt four (Appendix 1.k)

Verdell is back living with Simon but Melvin walks him as Simon is still using a wheelchair. Returning Verdell after a walk Melvin goes into Simon's flat.

1. Melvin: **What a day! Come here, come here.**
2. Melvin: **Maybe I'll bring him some food by.**
3. Simon: **Thank you for walking him. Will you excuse me I'm not feeling so well.**
20. Melvin: **D'you wanna know why the dog prefers me? It's not affection. It's er, it's a trick.**
21. Melvin: **I keep bacon in my pocket.**
22. Verdell: *yaps.*
25. Melvin: **Let's er. We'll both call him. You'll see. It's a trick. Okay?**
26. Simon: **Come here Verdell. Come on, come here.
Come here baby, no, it's okay. Come here.**
27. Melvin: **Stupid, stupid dog.**

In this segment Melvin mentions Verdell four times using **him** twice (line 2 and 25), **the dog** (line 20) and **stupid dog** (line 27). People who do not care for animals usually refer to them as 'it', whereas those who do care and know what sex the creature is use he or she, so I argue that by using the pronoun *him* Melvin is demonstrating affection towards Verdell. Melvin, in fact, offers to bring him some food (line 2). Notice, however, that he does not say Verdell but only **the dog** as a face saving act for Simon as he does not want to upset Simon, by showing he is getting fond of the dog. By calling Verdell a **stupid dog** this is also a face saving act considering Melvin's imposition of being in 'wrong face' (Goffman, 1967, see section 2.2). He is embarrassed by Verdell's attitude and accuses Verdell of being stupid as he should have gone to Simon and not to him. The fact that Verdell likes Melvin and vice versa shows Melvin has surmounted his loathing for Verdell and the choice of linguistic items places Melvin a step in the right direction towards becoming a sociable human being.

Observing the way Melvin behaves towards Verdell it can be seen that there has been an obvious turn around in Melvin's attitude. Initially he shows loathing for what he considers a smelly dog, trash to cast down the rubbish shoot. In subsequent scenes he shows respect for and then concern for the 'pooch', offering to bring him food. This reformation in Melvin's attitude reflects his move towards becoming a humane being. This attitude will be reconfirmed when I discuss semiotic aspects in the fourth section of this chapter.

Melvin's interaction with members of ethnic groups and workers

The next excerpts show face threats Melvin performs towards members of ethnic groups and workers. I have also included Frank as a member of an ethnic group.

Excerpt five (Appendix 1.e)

Melvin goes to eat at his usual restaurant and when he gets there he is indignant as there are two other diners sitting at his regular place. Melvin purposely offends them in hope that they will vacate his table.

6. Melvin: **I've got Jews at my table.**
7. Carol: **It's not your table. It's the place's table, behave. This once you can sit at someone else's station**
8. Waitresses: **Aaaghhh**
9. Carol: **Or you can wait your turn**
10. Melvin: **How much more have you got to eat? Appetites aren't as big as your noses, eh?**

In **I've got Jews at my table** (line 6) Melvin could have said 'people' instead of labelling them 'Jews'. This act of labelling is a threat to positive face, the lexicogrammatical choice shows his prejudice against the Jewish race and reinforces his perceived identity of social inequality. Melvin's deliberate attempt to vacate his regular table **How much more have you got to eat?** (line 10) is a disruptive interruption. The continued insult **Appetites aren't as big as your noses, eh?** (line 10) is a bald on

record face threat, successfully offending them so much that the couple does walk out of the restaurant. This incorporation of renowned concepts as a face threat was discussed in the section on cryptic remarks. Melvin is being downright offensive and by referring to their facial features he is in no way saving the positive face of the other diners. At the same time he is threatening their negative face, imposing upon their freedom to stay by making them feel uncomfortable and thus influencing them to leave. In this scene Melvin is uncouth enough to believe he is a step above others and he thinks he has the right to sit at 'his' table whenever he wishes, while other people do not. He is apparently even more put out over the fact that his competitors are Jewish. He goes to great lengths to offend the Jewish customers to get his own way.

The following four examples have been included to prove how offensive he is to most people around him including individuals who offer him a service, together with the police force.

The first two segments are from the same scene (Appendix 1.f) where Melvin sits in his usual place at his usual restaurant but a different waitress comes to serve him. He insists on being served by his usual waitress, Carol.

Excerpt six (Appendix 1.f)

Melvin is sitting at his table setting out his disposable cutlery.

1. New waitress: **What the heck are those for?**

Then she picks his plastic cutlery up and asks

4. New waitress: **Why plastic?**

7. Melvin: **Look, elephant girl.**

In line 7 Melvin calls the new waitress **elephant girl** which is both a threat to negative and to positive face. Negative face because Melvin wants her to be offended and leave and positive because he is referring to her stature and her behaviour. Once more intertextuality plays its role. Text from outside the film reminds us that elephants have long trunks (noses) and that nosey people poke their noses in where they are not

wanted. The waitress has questioned Melvin about his plastic cutlery which he felt was of no concern of hers. Hence he accuses her of being nose-y by using the cryptic remark **elephant girl** (see section 3.4).

The second segment shows Melvin insulting Carol's boss

15. Melvin: **I'm not a ...⁵ prick. You are. I'm not judging. I'm a great customer.**

In line 15 the threat to positive face **prick** is insulting as Melvin is complaining about the manager's comportment. Melvin realises his offence and tries to soften the impact by saying **I'm not judging** as he is at that moment in a fragile situation and not in charge of the interaction having been asked to leave. The next excerpt refers to other workers, this time the police.

Excerpt seven (Appendix 1.d)

After Frank has dragged him out of his personal space, Melvin feels threatened and shouts for help (Line 5). At the same time Melvin runs down the police

5. Melvin: **Police. Doughnut munching morons. Help me. Help me.**

The name he calls the police, **doughnut munching morons**, is a threat to positive face again referring to text outside the script. In the USA it is well known that a stereotypical conduct of policeman is one of sitting around eating doughnuts, supposedly not doing anything. So Melvin is, with this metaphor, saying well, police force here am I in trouble and where are you to rescue me?

In an another scene Melvin has had a disagreement with Carol and is pouring out his regrets to the barman.

Excerpt eight (Appendix 1.p)

As Melvin talks to the barman he is not very careful about his choice of words.

⁵ Three dots represent a short break in the flow of the utterance

4. Melvin: **Instead I'm here with you. No offence, but a moron pushing the last legal drug.**

Melvin insults the barman by calling him a moron, yet he does try to save the face of the bar tender by saying **No offence**. This is more sincere than the **I'm not judging** (Appendix 1. f, line 15) towards the manager. The bar tender is neutral having not threatened Melvin. On the contrary, the manager had been aggressive to Melvin. This shows that Melvin is beginning to choose softer lexicogrammatical units.

The sequence of excerpts now proceeds to Melvin's contact with Carol, Frank and Simon.

Melvin's interaction with Carol

Melvin has invited Carol to drive to Baltimore. When she arrives Melvin introduces her to Simon.

Excerpt nine (Appendix 1.n)

7. Carol: **Hello, hi!**
8. Melvin: **Thank you for being on time.**
9. Melvin: **Carol the waitress. Simon the fag.**

The name '**The waitress**' is not particularly offensive, rather nondescript and in as much not a compliment either. However the following example is a compliment.

Excerpt ten (Appendix 1.u)

Melvin has another compliment for Carol

11. Melvin: **J, j, j, just let me, let me talk. Just. I might be the only person on the face of the earth that knows you are the greatest woman on earth.**
14. **I think most people miss that about you. And I watch them wondering how they can watch you bring their food and clear their tables and never get that they just met the greatest woman alive.**
15. **And the fact that I get it makes me feel good about me. He laughs nervously. Is that something that's, er, bad for you to be around, for you?**

In lines 11 and 14 Melvin refers to Carol as **the greatest woman** in the world. This is a lexicogrammatical choice which shows that Melvin has changed from a mediocre person offering a neutral 'waitress' to a sociable human being volunteering compliments. I add, however, the fact that he does persist in having an egocentric streak indicated by line 15 when he says it makes him feel good to notice she is the greatest person around.

I proceed now to the insults Frank receives, firstly bald on record aggression and proceeding to off record indignity. These are face threats towards Frank.

Melvin's interaction with Frank

Excerpt eleven (Appendix 1.b)

Just after Melvin has put the dog down the shoot he meets Simon looking for Verdell in the hallway. By showing his dislike for coloured men Melvin insults Frank.

6. Melvin: **I thought it was... that coloured man.**
7. Simon: **Which colour was that?**
8. Melvin: **thick molasses with the broad nose perfect for smelling out trouble and prison food.**

Line 6 portrays Melvin referring to Frank as **that coloured man** which is not overtly aggressive until Melvin goes on to describe colour with the bald on record **thick molasses with the broad nose perfect for smelling out trouble and prison food**. Melvin is accusing Frank of being a scoundrel and a convict. This is a threat towards Frank's positive face, demonstrating Melvin's colour prejudice. This hatred is reconfirmed in the next example. Melvin has offended Simon and Frank goes to demand satisfaction.

Excerpt twelve (Appendix 1.d)

Frank grabs Melvin and Melvin retaliates by reminding Frank that he is black. He performs a face-threatening act in line 9.

9. Melvin: **Assault and battery and you're black.**

This reflects on ideological conceptions in the USA where coloured people are at times regarded by some as second class citizens and expected to be submissive. A black individual attacking a white can be taken to be more serious than vice versa. Hence Melvin is being threatening both to Frank's positive face, criticising his behaviour of attack and at the same time attempting to impede Frank's actions (a threat to negative face) by the threat of prison.

In a later scene Melvin asks Frank to meet him at his regular restaurant as he is worried about Verdell (see Appendix 1.m, lines 1 and 2).

Excerpt thirteen (Appendix 1.m)

Frank needs Melvin to take Simon to see his parents, but Melvin is not keen on doing so. As a defence mechanism he insults Frank with the tactic of suggesting the idea to be stupid.

25. Melvin: **Think white and get serious.**

39. Melvin: **Last word freak.**

Saying '**think white**' (line 25) he is refreshing the insinuation that he is superior to Frank. Though this is less direct than the insults above it is still an infraction, but, nevertheless, leading Melvin to a less anti-social position. Melvin also calls Frank a **last word freak** after Frank's leaving discourse (see Appendix 1.m, line 39). Though this is a face threat to Frank's positive face it is not vulgar but a softer threat. In fact it results in a face threat to Melvin himself as this comment is then the last word, so Melvin is the **last word freak**.

Melvin's interaction with Simon

In the ensuing segment I pursue the same line of argument, that of Melvin's transmogrification proved by the softening of lexical choices referring this time to Melvin's homophobia, more specifically shown through his interaction with Simon.

There are numerous occasions when the lexicogrammatical choices Melvin makes reflect his prejudice towards homosexuals, how he degrades this minority group as they have other principles different to his. I shall include excerpts to show how aggressive he is towards this minority group. I will then compare these to examples nearing the end of the film when, despite his continuing disrespect for such individuals, his lexicogrammatical choice is much softer.

Excerpt fourteen (Appendix 1.b)

Melvin meets Simon his neighbour looking for Verdell in the hallway.

15. Melvin: **What I know is that as long as you keep your work zipped up around me**

16. **I don't give a red crap what or where you shove your show.**

This excerpt is from one of the first scenes showing how he loathes homosexuals right from the opening. In line 15 **zipped up** refers to Simon's trouser zip, while **work** suggests that Simon performs homosexual duties for money. **Shove your show** (line 16) also refers to homosexual acts, **show** now insinuating that Simon performs for others to watch. As Melvin is using metaphors to be offensive, this could be considered as off record; however the intensity of the offence of accusing Simon of being a hustler and porno artist is vehement.

Excerpt fifteen: (Appendix 1.c)

In this scene Melvin receives a visit from Simon, Melvin's prejudice towards homosexuals performs threats to Simon's positive face as he is criticising his conduct. Melvin is inside his flat writing a novel and trying to define love when there is a knock

on the door. Melvin can hear Simon (line 6) calling him in a very demanding voice which interrupts Melvin's train of thought and infuriates him.

6. Simon: **Are you in there?**
7. Melvin: **Son of a bitch! Pansy arsed stool pusher.** Melvin opens the door.
8. Melvin: **Yes?**
16. Melvin: **Do you like to be interrupted when you're nancying around in your little garden?**
20. Melvin: **Or, if its election night and you're excited and you want to celebrate because some fudge packer that you date has been elected the first queer president of the United States and he's going to have you down to Camp David.**
23. Melvin: **Do you get me sweetheart?**

The lexicogrammatical choices show Melvin's dislike for homosexuals by using derogatory language; **Pansy** (line 7) is a reference to Simon's effeminate traits, while **Pansy arsed** and **stool pusher** (line 7) are references to anal sex. The question of Simon's effeminate qualities are redefined in terms of the stereotypical lexicogrammatical choices (line 16) of **nancying around** and the diminutive **little** emphasised by an ironic tone in his voice. These terms insinuate that Simon parades around effeminately in his garden for sissies and, as such, is offensive.

Line 20 shows Melvin emphatically going into a tirade against Simon, the lexicogrammatical choice **fudge packer** being another allusion to anal sex, while **queer** is a more direct bald on record attack. Both are threats to positive face. Melvin's final comment **Do you get me sweetheart?** (line 23), is another stereotypical reference to Simon's homosexuality which in turn alludes to Melvin's homophobia, with an ironic quality, as earlier in the film Melvin heard Simon call his dog sweetheart. Now Melvin is applying this as a face threatening term to insult Simon. Not only the lexical choices but also the prosody add force to the insinuations.

This scene emphasises Melvin's prejudicial attitude towards homosexuals by the obnoxious vocabulary he chooses to verbalise. By these choices he is continually

performing face threatening acts and behaving anti-socially. There is no explicit verbalisation to suggest intention of saving anybody's face, neither his nor Simon's.

The pursuing excerpt is the same scene as above where Melvin returns Verdell. This time I am using it to show how Melvin displays his homophobia and deeply offends Simon.

Excerpt sixteen (Appendix 1.k)

7. Simon: **Please, just leave.**
8. Melvin: **What happened to your queer party friends?**
9. Simon: **Get out of here**
10. **There's nothing worse than having to feel this way in front of you.**
11. Melvin: **Nelly, ... you're a disgrace to depression**
12. Simon: **Rot in Hell Melvin.**
13. Melvin: **No need to stop being a lady. Quit worrying. You'll be back on your knees in no time.**

When Melvin goes inside Simon's flat he sees how dirty it is and makes comments about that, not resisting the opportunity to criticise Simon's sexual comportment. Line 8 shows Melvin *criticising Simon's colleagues* for having left him alone and provoking Simon on account of his *homosexuality*. Hence, **What happened to your queer party friends?** (line 8) possesses these two aforementioned italicised insinuations. So being, they are face threatening acts towards Simon's positive face as a reference to his sexuality in **your queer party friends** (line 8) and towards his once friends, for not supporting Simon in his hour of need. Melvin further insults Simon by naming him **Nelly** (line 11), one more reference to his homosexuality. Melvin's comment **No need to stop being a lady** (line 13) also insinuates that Simon demonstrates effeminate behaviour. The insensitive Melvin continues sarcastically probing at his homosexual neighbour by saying: **You'll be back on your knees in no time** (line 13). These threats to positive face are references to Simon's sexual habits, the latter being another allusion to anal sex.

This scene again contains extremely abhorrent allusions to Melvin's prejudice reflected by his lexicogrammatical choices. At the same time Melvin is distancing himself from Simon and recreating a social imbalance in Melvin's mind because of his difficulty in accepting Simon's way of life.

The next segment portrays Melvin introducing Carol to Simon in a gross manner and blatantly demonstrates Melvin's prejudice.

Excerpt seventeen: (Appendix 1.n)

5. Frank: **Gimme a hug.**
6. Melvin: **Soak it up. It's your last chance for a hug for a few days.**
As Melvin sees Carol arriving he comes running up
7. Carol: **Hello, hi!**
8. Melvin: **Thank you for being on time.**
9. Melvin: **Carol the waitress. Simon the fag.**

Line 6 is an off record insinuation to homosexual behaviour whereas **fag** (line 9) is a bald on record face threat. Regarding social issues I would like to point out that the Motion Picture Association of America considered the word fag to be so offensive that they "consulted the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation to see whether GLAAD took umbrage" at the use of the word 'fag' in the film" (Fink, 1997, p.45). I find it interesting to discover that the lexicogrammatical choices made for the film were actually questioned and that the GLAAD society "felt the word was inoffensive in the context of the movie since the character Melvin overcomes his homophobia" (ibid).

The last example of reproach towards homosexuals is gentle compared to the preceding ones.

Excerpt eighteen (Appendix 1.t)

This segment was selected to exemplify Melvin's transmogrification to a sociable man by observation of a softer lexicogrammatical choice in respect to his insistence on the disesteem of homosexuals. Melvin decides to ask for Simon's advice.

5. Melvin: **No. And you people are supposed to be sensitive and sharp.**

In line 5 **you people** is a reference to homosexuals, though still a threat to positive face it is off record, much less offensive than the aforementioned examples. The **sensitive and sharp** is almost a compliment. Melvin is without doubt becoming less offensive towards homosexuals. The fact that he has invited Simon to live with him, though I find the need to add that there is the ulterior motive of wanting to be near Verdell, makes it evident that Melvin is undergoing changes. He is building up the social identity of a considerate caring person.

Reconsidering the definition of prejudice (this thesis, p.68) above, Melvin has now had time to think about his relationship with Simon. In line 24 of the excerpt in Appendix 1.h he questions himself and Verdell: **Where's the trust?** He must have developed trust in both Verdell and Simon proved by the transpiration of his welcoming them into his home. There are more frequent references to Melvin's homophobia than other prejudices suggesting this to be his foremost prejudice. Having overcome his prejudice towards homosexuals there is therefore great hope of his surpassing other phobias and becoming a fully integrated social member of society.

The ensuing section proceeds with a discussion of Melvin's defence mechanisms when faced with strong co-participants, exemplifying how his face work transmutes to a less aggressive style.

4.2 Hegemonic struggles and Melvin's defence mechanisms

Excerpt nineteen (Appendix 1.c)

When Melvin receives a visit from Simon he is angry at being disturbed. During this scene in blaming Simon for having interrupted him, Melvin contributes to his own face saving, and Simon's face threatening.

6. Simon: **Are you in there?**
7. Melvin: **Son of a bitch! Pansy arsed stool pusher.** Melvin opens the door.
8. Melvin: **Yes?**
13. Simon: **Uh, huh. Did you er, did you, do something to him?**
14. Melvin: **Do you realise that I work at home?**
15. Simon: **No, I wasn't aware.**
16. Melvin: **Do you like to be interrupted when you're nancying around in your little garden?**
17. Simon: **No, no, I, I, actually well, turn the ringer off of my phone and sometimes put a piece of cardboard.**
18. Melvin interrupts: **Well, I work all the time. So, never, never interrupt me. Okay?**

Melvin is inside his flat writing a romance and trying to define love when there is a knock on the door. Melvin can hear Simon (line 6) calling him in a very demanding voice which interrupts Melvin's train of thought and infuriates him. Simon sounds as though he is in control of the situation. Melvin rebukes with abuse **Son of a bitch!** (line 7) the derogatory lexicogrammatical choice showing his disdain for being interrupted. Melvin opens the door with a face threat in the form of a loud aggressive **Yes?** (line 8) portraying his annoyance and at the same time putting him, Melvin, in immediate control of the interaction.

When Melvin is accused of throwing Simon's dog down the rubbish shoot (line 13) he immediately reformulates this challenge by changing the subject to 'I work' and 'you are interrupting me' (Appendix 1.c, lines 14 -16). As such these utterances represent face threats to positive face criticising Simon's behaviour of having interrupted him as well as a defence mechanism acting as a face saver for Melvin. He does not want to talk about the dog, dismissing him completely. Melvin's tone of voice portrays his self-confidence and awareness of being in the dominant position in the interaction. Simon's hedges (line 17) put Melvin well in command. The repetition of 'never' (line 18) in this direct command reinforces his dominance showing he has no care about losing face. Not only the lexical choices but also the prosody is a face threat and adds force to the insinuations.

This scene shows Melvin to be obnoxious and self centred apart from not wishing to confess to what he did to the dog. He demonstrates anti social behaviour and takes the line of obnoxious neighbour and is clearly in the dominant position in the hegemonic struggle.

The next excerpt is a continuation of the same scene, this time Frank overpowers Melvin, but even so Melvin attempts to hold his own.

Excerpt twenty (Appendix 1d)

Back inside his flat Melvin gets down to writing again. Despite his attempts to save face and regain control of the situation Melvin loses ground to Frank

2. Melvin: **Now I'm pissed. Now I'm really pissed.**
Frank takes hold of Melvin forces him out into the hallway.
3. Melvin: **Ugh, oh. Don't touch. Don't touch. Don't touch!**
4. Frank: **Sshh ! Ssh! Shut up. You really think you can intimidate the whole world with your attitude, but you don't intimidate me. I grew up in Hell, little boy. My grandmother had more attitude.**
5. Melvin: **Police. Doughnut munching morons. Help me. Help me.**
6. Frank: **Sshh! Quiet.**
7. Melvin: **Help me.**
8. Frank: **Sshh!**
9. Melvin: **Assault and battery and you're black.**
10. Frank: **I like Simon. I like him enough to batter you unrecognisable if you verbally abuse him or so much as touch that dog again.**

Melvin is angry because he has been disturbed again. The strong timbre of aggression in his voice shows Melvin to be in control of the situation when he shouts: **Now I'm really pissed** (line 2). Just as he opens the door he is grabbed by the collar and Frank pulls him out of his apartment onto neutral ground.

This time the tables are turned, the hegemonic struggle puts Melvin at a disadvantage. The struggle commences with Frank showing physical dominance. Melvin detests physical contact, so he is thrown off balance by Frank's physical force and also the weakness he faces through his fear of bodily contact. Frank and Melvin are both strong characters fighting for control. However, this time Melvin has met his

match. Frank's threat to positive face performed by encroaching on Melvin's space puts him in the dominant position. Melvin, recognising this threat, tries to defend himself verbally: **Ugh, oh. Don't touch. Don't touch. Don't touch!** (line 3) Frank attempts to quieten Melvin (lines 4, 6 and 8) and Frank recognises his own control of the situation reflected by the bald on record **you don't intimidate me** (line 4). The lexicogrammatical choice of the phrase '*little boy*' is employed as a derogatory term, calling Melvin a milksop, a man afraid to do anything dangerous. The word "*boy*" without the little "refers to a faceless person who is there to carry out a function, but whom one otherwise barely notices" (Chaika, 1994, p.110 - 111, author's italics). This is a threat to Melvin's positive face.

Melvin realises that he is losing ground and tries to save his face by thwarting the face threat of Frank's allegation that he is a wimp by calling for help (lines 5 and 7), even though by doing so he is acknowledging this defencelessness. Melvin is losing ground and has to come up with a defence mechanism, so uses the face threat (see line 9 and also excerpt 12) **Assault and battery and you're black**. This is a threat to Frank's negative face as he threatens Frank with arrest, impeding Frank from hitting him.

Melvin loses the final round this time as he receives the last threat from Frank (line 10). In the following excerpt Melvin faces Frank again, loses once more and takes it out on Verdell.

Excerpt twenty-one (Appendix 1h)

Frank knocks at the neighbour's door, Verdell under his arm. The lady refuses to look after Verdell; this provokes laughter from Melvin, which in consequence results in Melvin being forced to take Verdell in.

- 10.** Frank: **You're taking him. Yes. Yes you are. Get the hell out of the way.**
11. Frank: **You got them books and I'm out.**
12. Melvin: **Wait, wait.**
13. Frank: **You wanna say no to me? You wanna say no to me?**

14. **You wanna say no to me?**
 15. Melvin: **No, I don't wanna say no.**
 16. Melvin: **Hey, where are you going? You can't do this.**
 20. Frank: **You don't wanna mess with me today.**
 21. Melvin: **I can't take a dog. No one's ever been in here before. Hey, Frank.**
 22. Melvin: **You're dead. We don't have no dog food. We don't want no dog food. You'll eat what we've got. What we eat.**
 23. Melvin: **Don't you do anything.**

Melvin laughs at Frank's misfortune, but soon becomes submissive, remembering the previous threats. Frank forces Verdell on Melvin (lines 10 and 11), Melvin tries to wriggle out of it by saying **You can't do this** but he gets warned by Frank (line 20). Melvin tries another defence tactic **No-one's ever been in here before**, so it wouldn't be appropriate to let a dog in. However, Frank has already put Verdell inside Melvin's flat and walks towards the lift. Melvin loses again. He goes inside and directs his anger towards Verdell, with the threat to negative face **You're dead** (line 22) as he is placing control over Verdell, threatening that if he moves Melvin will kill him. Further more **Don't you do anything** (line 23) is a threat to positive face insinuating that Verdell might urinate on the floor, an act that Melvin abhors.

Melvin grows fond of Verdell and even magnanimously takes him for walks after Simon is home. This act in itself shows Melvin is becoming less invidious. He is insecure of his new line of 'good guy' and continues being sarcastic and vulgar as it is expected of him. The following excerpt shows this, only by Simon standing up to him does he start to realise his own obnoxiousness.

Excerpt twenty-two (Appendix 1.k)

Melvin returns Verdell after walking him. Simon is initially polite and after thanking Melvin asks to be excused (line 3).

3. Simon: **Thank you for walking him. Will you excuse me I'm not feeling so well.**
 4. Melvin: **This place smells like shit**
 5. Simon: **Go away.**
 6. Melvin: **This, er, this cleaning lady, doesn't, er..**

7. Simon: **Please, just leave.**
8. Melvin: **What happened to your queer party friends?**
9. Simon: **Get out of here...**
10. **There's nothing worse than having to feel this way in front of you.**
11. Melvin: **Nelly, ... you're a disgrace to depression**
12. Simon: **Rot in Hell Melvin.**
13. Melvin: **No need to stop being a lady.** (A sarcastic tone to his voice) **Quit worrying. You'll be back on your knees in no time.**
 As he says this he turns his back on Simon and walks away.
 Simon forces himself up out of his wheel chair and smacks out at Melvin.
 Melvin raises his hands to protect himself.
15. **It's high times for you isn't it Melvin? The gay neighbour is terrified** then he screams **Terrified**. Then there is a long silence.
16. Melvin: **I was, I was just ... trying to give you a boost.**
17. Simon: **Lucky you. You're here for rock bottom. You absolute ... horror of a human being.**
18. Melvin: **The one thing I'll do for you. I er, might cheer you up.**
19. Simon: **Get out.**
20. Melvin: **D'you wanna know why the dog prefers me? It's not affection. It's er, it's a trick.** Melvin delves into his pocket and pulls out a polythene bag.
21. Melvin: **I keep bacon in my pocket.**
27. Melvin: **Stupid, stupid dog.**
28. Simon: **Could you leave now ... please.**
29. Melvin: **I don't get it. I don't get it.**

By not heeding Simon's requests to leave (lines 5, 7, 9, and 19) Melvin performs a threat to Simon's negative face as he is trespassing. Melvin becomes aware of the dilapidated state of Simon's flat and performs a bald on record face threatening act **This place smells like shit** (line 4). He makes no sign of leaving so he has put himself in the dominant role. Melvin insists on the same subject but this time the presence of the hedge `er`, twice, softens the threat of **This, er, this cleaning lady, doesn't, er...** Although this is still a reference to the sore condition of the place it is a face-threatening act towards the cleaner and not directly at Simon. The hedges indicate that Melvin is trying not to be too aggressive, perhaps he is even going to suggest another cleaner. Simon takes this as an insult and rebukes by ordering Melvin out again, justifying this by explaining on line 10 that **There's nothing worse than having to feel this way in front of him**. There is now a hegemonic struggle taking place here. Simon tries to be in control of his personal space by shouting **Get out of here** (line 9) but Melvin realising that his neighbour is vulnerable, just ploughs into him more, thus remaining very much

in control of the situation. He niggles Simon, telling him he is a weakling by the threat to positive face and inference to Simon's behaviour: **you're a disgrace to depression** (line 11). Simon gains back some control here, his tone of voice **Rot in Hell Melvin** (line 12) is very strong, determined and masculine. Melvin perceives this masculinity and uses the comment **No need to stop being a lady** (line 13) as a defence mechanism. He offends Simon even further by reverting to his stance against homosexuality **You'll be back on your knees in no time** (line 13, discussed above in excerpt 16), Simon can no longer contain himself, Melvin has riled him to such an extent that his power surges up giving him the strength to force himself out of his wheel chair and smack out at Melvin. This time Melvin is fighting to maintain control, and yet the shock of Simon's surge of strength starts to ignite some spark of conscience in Melvin. As Simon goes on to word how he feels, his fear and desolation (line 15), Melvin's humanity rises to the surface and he slowly attempts some face saving acts. My view is that this is a turning point in Melvin's life. It is almost as if Simon's radical reaction has awakened some consideration in Melvin.

First of all Melvin tries to save his own face by explaining his attitude **I was, I was just ... trying to give you a boost** (line 16), the repetition and hesitations acting as hedges to soften the language. As I said in the introduction to this segment Melvin keeps up to his expected line of objectionable offender. Melvin seems to take the attitude that once he "takes on a self-image expressed through face he will be expected to live up to it" (Goffman, 1967, p.9).

By taking no notice of Simon's soft voiced **Get out** (line 19), Melvin is performing the same threat to negative face as before by refusing to withdraw from Simon's space. However, this time it is not so threatening as he intends to do Simon a favour. He wants Simon to feel better, give him some confidence back by showing him

that the situation is not that serious. **D'you wanna know why the dog prefers me? It's not affection. It's er, it's a trick** (line 20). This refusal to leave is a virtual offence, one directed with a particular purpose and so can be considered an altruistic attitude whilst the lack of such would have been a diplomatic breach (Goffman, 1971, cited in Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.1). Again the hedge 'er' reflects Melvin's discomfort. Melvin's saying: **Stupid, stupid dog** (line 27) is a face saving act in consideration for Simon's face insinuating that Verdell is in the wrong. This time Melvin has no escape route, no defence, no face threat to retaliate to Simon's resolute **Could you leave now ... please** (line 28). He leaves on the note of an own self face saving act **I don't get it. I don't get it** (line 29), a declaration that this should not have happened.

It would seem that Melvin always insists on being the dominant one in hegemonic struggles. He does not expect Simon to literally stand up to him. He thinks over the situation, and something sparks compassion inside him, not because he is over ruled but because he sees Simon's anguish. His desire is to make Simon feel better; he ends up making him feel worse. However the important thing is that he did try to behave compassionately.

Melvin is beginning to do small things for others, even though this one back fired. In a follow up scene Frank makes a comment on those little things **You're sure making the rounds. Simon said you brought him soup last night, you help with the dog** (Appendix 1.m, line 20). It is the accumulation of these small acts that whittles Melvin's humanity. The lexicogrammatical choices he makes, especially those alluding to anal sex, are very abusive and offensive. Being told he is an **absolute ... horror of a human being** causes Melvin to reflect on his own comportment. He has not realised how repugnant he is yet, though others have.

The beginning of the scene above portrays offensive face threats but by the end of this scene there has been a fundamental change in Melvin's behaviour reflected by his language use, the move from face threats to face savers, admittedly to save his own face but those of Simon's as well. In short this particular scene seems to portray face saving acts characterising the beginning of Melvin's transmogrification prompted by some home truths. It also reflects the fact that understanding is conveyed through comportment (including canine) and the social nature of human language. It takes the exhibition of physical strength for Melvin to understand what Simon is conveying, that Melvin is beyond repugnant.

Proceeding to another subsection I talk about the way Melvin behaves in interactions with women.

4.2.1 Melvin's hegemonic struggles with women

Melvin makes it clear that he has disdain for women. The only one he respects is Carol. He remains in ultimate control over the others. Carol is an important figure in his life and somehow manages to hold her own with him.

I have chosen the ensuing scene, divided into two parts, because it presents two stereotypes, a secretary and a writer's publishing agent, that is to say two female parts which are stylised, in as much as they are represented in a typical, and hence natural manner. This is in correspondence with the following definition of gender: "Gender is the repeated stylisation of the body, a set of repeated acts within a rigid frame which congeal over time to produce the appearance of a 'natural' kind of being" (Butler, 1990, p.33). The scene reveals how Melvin perceives women, showing how he looks down upon them, using them and then dismissing them.

Excerpt twenty-three (Appendix 1.g)

The macro-structure details Melvin as a successful and famous writer. His high sales figures provide the publishers with a substantial income. This situation places Melvin in a position of power, providing a good impulse to his force of persuasion. His publisher is portrayed in a stereotypical way, firstly, according to the way she treats Melvin, in a very friendly manner, agreeing with requests, subordinate apropos his financial power. Secondly, because of her implicit social level, upper middle-class, revealed when she mentions that her son has just got accepted to Brown University, an institution with a strongly competitive entrance selection programme.

The plot of the film portrays Melvin in his publisher's lobby. Exactly what he wants is not explicit in the film, only afterwards is the favour explained. Melvin wants his publisher to ask her husband, who is a doctor, to treat Carol's son so that she can return to work immediately and serve his meals.

1. Publisher: **Yes, you're right Melvin. You write more than anybody else. Yes, you make us a lot of money. But, I think it's more appropriate ...**
2. Melvin: **Look, look, I need this. Just say Melvin I'll try.**
Melvin mouths and beckons her to repeat: Melvin I'll try, imploring her.
3. Publisher: **Melvin I'll try.**
4. Melvin: **Thank you, that's good**
5. Publisher: **Now on a pleasanter note. My son, he just got accepted to Brown University. My husband was dying.**
6. Melvin: **Well. Er. Yeah, good, nice, er thrilled, exciting.** And he waves her off:
Er, you don't have to wait with me.

The publisher is agreeing with Melvin, and at the same time granting him control of the situation. Melvin insists on reminding her that he makes a lot of money for the publishers (line 1). When she says **I think it's more appropriate** (line 1) she is conscious that they have the same status and so she can assume control. She is trying to resist Melvin's insistence, but even so she uses the hedges; **I think** and **more** (line 1) in an attempt to be delicate and reduce the force of the contradiction. This is a politeness

strategy, as she is concerned about Melvin's welfare. Melvin, however, does not even let her finish; instead he interrupts her abruptly, a strategy more frequently used by men (Holmes, 1995). He resumes control and the floor (line 2) with the command **Look, look** continuing with **I need this** to reduce the force of the direct command **Just say Melvin I'll try**. Interestingly enough here he uses the hedge **just** to soften the force of the direct command **say**. This in its turn, apart from being a means of persuasion, is a politeness strategy applied because he too is conscious of the fact that they have equal hegemonic positions, each relying on the other's performance.

Negotiations over, the publisher wishes to exchange news. This relating of intimate details shows the social distance to be small and the politeness principle assures a response from Melvin (line 6). The utterance: **Well. Er. Yeah, good, nice, er thrilled, exciting** is an automatic insincere response. It is an apparent compliment acting negatively as a face threat, an ironic put-down (Holmes, 1995). He has achieved his goal and considers further conversation unnecessary. By changing the subject he ends the interaction abruptly (line 6). Even though he uses the hedges **er** and **you don't have to** he disregards her feelings sending her away with this indirect command. Once more he is in power, considering himself superior to this woman. He realises he is imposing but sees the situation through to the end, as he desperately wants Carol's son to have the best of treatment. This is another demonstration of the lengths he is prepared to go for his own egoistic benefit, which in this case is to be served the way he likes to be served, by Carol. At this point in the film he is still primarily concerned about his own welfare.

The next fragment is a continuation of the scene from above. Melvin goes through a hegemonic struggle with his publisher's secretary.

Excerpt twenty-four (Appendix 1.g)

Melvin has just dispatched his publisher and makes for the lift. After a struggle for control of the interaction Melvin once again uses a bald on record offence and ends the discourse with a face threat towards women.

7. Secretary: **I can't resist. You usually move through here so quickly and I have so any questions to ask you. You have no idea what your work means to me.**
8. Melvin: **What does it mean to you?**
She gets up from her seat.
9. Secretary: **That someone out there knows what it's like ... to be in here.**
10. Melvin: **Oh God. This is a nightmare.**
11. Secretary: **Oh, come on, just a couple of questions. How hard is that? How do you write women so well?**
- Melvin takes a menacing step towards her, a smug smile on his face
12. Melvin: **I think of a man and I take away reason and accountability.**

The second part of the scene focuses on an extremely feminine secretary. Melvin is leaving but the broadly smiling secretary, so patiently expectant, is waiting to speak to him. At this point in the scene I would say that the film imposes a generic subjectivity. The young lady is portrayed as a blond stereotyped secretary, sensual, inquisitive, using her female attributes to persuade Melvin to talk to her. However her eagerness to ask Melvin some intimate questions gives her strength to overcome the restrictions of her subordinate position. Until now she has not interfered in the conversation, remaining silent in her place at her desk, respecting her positioning at a lower status.

In control of the interaction the secretary directs herself to Melvin (line 7). Melvin is not in his personal territory; he is at work. My reading suggests that he gives the secretary some attention for two reasons. First because he is on neutral ground and abides by the rules of politeness, thus being politically correct. Second because he is waiting for the lift and cannot escape. He asks **What does it mean to you?** (line 8) and receives the reply **That someone out there knows what it's like ...** which she

continues while delicately placing her hands in a feminine way over her heart and on her forehead ... **to be in here** (line 9) Melvin's **Oh God. This is a nightmare** (line 10) is a threat to positive face as he is criticising her thoughts, showing his dislike for her.

Another subjectivity comes into action, that of the institution of fan and idol. It seems that she gathers impetus from her identification as a fan. Her desire to get to know her idol better offers her the momentum to face him, this time not just as a woman but as a fan. It is common knowledge that fans will do almost anything for an autograph.

The secretary persists with her interrogation using politeness strategies; the hedges: **Oh, come on** and **just** within the utterance: **Oh, come on, just a couple of questions** (line 11) serve to reduce the impact of the transgression. This insistence on being the more dominant interactant is a threat to negative face as she is invading his privacy usurping his wish to leave and physically invading his personal space by running towards him. In these lines the character is overcoming the subordinate position of woman and submissive secretary and identifying with the position of fan. Her incorporation of the booster **so well** in line 11 emphasises her praising his work once more as she questions him on writing about women. With a smug smile on his face he takes a step towards her menacingly, completely lacking consideration for her and gives the dispreferred reply **I think of a man and I take away reason and accountability** (line 12). This is a very offensive threat to positive face re-establishing him to the dominant position. This shows that he considers himself superior to women or at least to this one. Warray, Trott and Bloomer (1998) point out that claims have been made to "the mental or cognitive inferiority of women" (p.147) indicating an explanation of gender difference. Melvin's attitude here reconstructs that claim. The power relation does not depend only upon the dialogue. His attitude influences the situation

Excerpt twenty-five (Appendix 1.o)

This segment is included to show how Melvin struggles for dominance when relating to Carol. While they are on their trip they go to a restaurant in Baltimore. He inadvertently insults Carol and she insists on his paying her a compliment.

1. Carol: **You wanna dance?**
2. Melvin: **Well, I've been thinking about that since you brought it up before.**
3. Carol: **And?**
4. Melvin: **No, I, I don't get this place. They make me buy a new outfit and they let you in in a housedress.**
Carol stands up to leave
5. Melvin: **Why, er, I mean, I, er I didn't mean it that way. I mean ... You oughta sit down. Just sit down. . You can still give me the dirty look just sit down and give it to me**
6. Carol: **Pay me a compliment Melvin. I need one. Quick. You have no idea how much what you just said hurt my feelings.**
7. Melvin: **It's remarkable that when someone gets that they need you they threaten to walk out**
8. Carol: **A compliment is something nice about somebody else. Now or never.**
Melvin indicates for her to sit with a downward movement of his hand
9. Carol: **And mean it!**
Melvin wipes his brow and rubs his hands together
10. Melvin: **Can we order first?**
11. Carol: (Carol nods a yes and says) **Okay.**

Carol's invitation (line 1) places her in the dominant position. In line 2 Melvin answers, in an attempt to be more polite, with a preparatory phrase, softening the dispreferred refusal **No** (line 4) with which he gains control. Melvin follows this turn-down by unwittingly threatening Carol's positive face with **They make me buy a new outfit and they let you in in a housedress** (line 4). Melvin's complaining about the rigour of men wearing a dress suit, whereas there are fewer restrictions on women's outfits. However this creates a personal insult to Carol, as by saying "housedress" it appears as if he is insinuating her dress is not up to standard for the social situation and therefore is an FTA. She takes offence, stands up and moves to walk out on him, an action in itself a face threat towards Melvin replacing her in a position of power. In line 5 he tries to reduce these face losses with an attenuating phrase full of hesitations and

mumbling **Why, er, I mean, I, er I didn't mean it that way.** He starts asking her to sit down employing the modal, **oughta**, to soften the request. As this has no result he orders her to **Just sit down**, a bald on record command.

Carol remonstrates with a domineering non-redressive order (line 6). Melvin is quite taken aback by Carol's adamant reaction and does not really know how to behave as he has lost control of the situation. The scene no longer represents male dominance. The lexicogrammatical choice of language now enforced causes a reversal of identities where Melvin employs a defence mechanism of victim to fend off Carol's female curtness **It's remarkable that when someone gets that they need you they threaten to walk out** (line 7). Melvin is once more showing his need to be dominant. It is very subtle as my analysis places him as victim here, yet analysing the micro structure, his actual words, he is saying Carol needs him, because deep inside he is not yet ready to admit that he is not self sufficient, that he needs her. This is one more proof that a film is a valid sample of language use, language portraying a particular message.

Continuing the analysis of this scene the macro structure shows that Carol is still in charge as she demands the compliment. Melvin tries to regain power by using a non-verbal command, an aggressive downward hand movement showing his irritation.

There is a continuing fight for power, where there is no apparent gender difference, except maybe a female demand for respect from a man. In an attempt to reduce his face loss in the embarrassing position he has put himself, Melvin wipes his brow and rubs his hands together, before proposing that they order first (line 10). He is conceded control again as Carol saves his face with a preferred acceptance (line 11).

Melvin passes through a situation here where he is at a disadvantage as a result of speaking unduly. Reflecting on this helps him to reconsider his line of rudeness. Carol

is assisting in his transformation. The subsequent segment has been included to demonstrate how, coming to the close of the film, he becomes more submissive.

Excerpt twenty-six (Appendix 1.s)

After their trip to Baltimore Melvin receives a call from Carol and Melvin becomes submissive showing he is without doubt becoming a co-operative considerate individual.

6. Carol: **I don't know whether I'm being sensible or hard on you.**
7. Melvin: **Maybe both. Maybe.**
8. Carol: **You see right there I don't know whether you're being cute or... crazy now.**
9. Melvin: **Cute**
Carol comes back hard on him
10. Carol: **You don't have to answer everything I say. Just listen ... to me. Okay. Listen ... to me**
There is a few moments of silence then Carol says
11. Carol: **Huh. So, anyway thanks for the trip. ... Goodnight, goodnight.**
12. Melvin: **Okay if I say ... something now?**
13. Carol: **Go ahead.**
14. Melvin: **I shoulda danced with ya.**
15. Carol: **Mmm. Goodnight, goodnight.** Carol hangs up.

At first the conversation is on equal terms of power until line 10 when she takes command and finally ends her dialogue in line 11. During her discourse Melvin has remained silent being a considerate person by allowing her to talk. He requests permission to speak in line 15, in an attempt to be dominant again, offering her an apology (line 14). She allows him to speak but not to take control finishing the conversation herself in line 15.

Melvin is now showing that he knows how to hold a civil conversation, how to admit he is wrong. He has moved away from that domineering objectionable character to a more sensitive sociable human being.

In the ensuing subsection I point out Melvin's face work regarding the way he behaves after being told how anti-social he is.

4.3 Melvin's reaction to home truths

If a person is to employ his repertoire of face-saving practices, obviously he must first become aware of the interpretations that others may have placed upon his acts and the interpretations that he ought perhaps to place upon theirs. In other words, he must exercise perceptiveness (Goffman, 1967, p.13).

By having his failure to behave socially pointed out Melvin begins to realise how rude he is to people in general.

Excerpt twenty-seven (Appendix 1.k)

This scene is the one where Melvin returns Verdell after their daily walk together and ends up offending Simon so much that Simon hits out at Melvin. It was analysed above when I was considering the face threats of name-calling. I now look at the home truth that Simon tells Melvin.

17. Simon: **Lucky you. You're here for rock bottom. You absolute ... horror of a human being.**
18. Melvin: **The one thing I'll do for you. I er, might cheer you up.**
19. Now in a very soft voice Simon says: **Get out.**
20. Melvin: **D'you wanna know why the dog prefers me? It's not affection. It's er, it's a trick.**
21. Melvin: **I keep bacon in my pocket.**

Simon begins pouring out some home truths to Melvin (line 17) doing so in a calm and determined manner making the inferences more convincing than if Simon were hot blooded about them. This reality, this revelation of Melvin's nature moves Melvin emotionally. He takes a couple of deep breaths preparing himself to say **The one thing I'll do for you. I er, might cheer you up** (line 18). The hesitation serves two purposes, one to prepare Simon for what he is about to tell him and hence is a face saving act, and secondly shows Melvin is somewhat uncomfortable in his new role of considerate companion.

Melvin realises how low Simon has reached **You're here for rock bottom** (line 17) and tries to cheer him up. However, it takes the home truth **You absolute ... horror**

of a human being (line 17) to bring Melvin round to beginning to appreciate how antagonistic he, Melvin, can be. This situation precipitates him into revealing his secret bribing, why Verdell prefers Melvin to Simon. **It's not affection. It's er, a trick** (line 20). Melvin reveals a humane trait at last, compassion for his fellow countryman.

The pursuing segment shows Carol letting Melvin know how selfish he can be. This then provokes him into agreeing to do a favour for somebody else. This stage shows him thinking not only about himself. His egoism is taking a beating.

Excerpt twenty-eight (Appendix 1.m)

30. Melvin: **He wants me to take his car and his client to Baltimore**
 31. Carol: **I want your life for one minute well my big problem is somebody offers me a free convertible so I can get out of this city.**
 32. Frank: **Atta girl.**
 Then she storms off and this behaviour of hers prompts Melvin to change his mind.
 33. Melvin: **Okay, I'll do it. I'll take him. I'll take him. Yeah, get, get him ready, packed tomorrow morning, I'll take him. Okay? I'll take him.**

Carol is very annoyed with Melvin as he does not want to read the thank you note she gave him. When he says Frank wants him to drive Simon (line 30) she gets furious and tells him he is selfish (home truth line 31). This sets him thinking and he chooses to be more helpful, a real member of society and agrees to take Simon (line 33)

Excerpt twenty-nine (Appendix 1.s)

Returning from the journey they undertake together Carol refuses to let Melvin take her home. Some while later that evening Melvin receives a call from Carol. She succeeds in making him reflect on the way he is.

10. Carol: **You're not ready and you're a pretty old guy to not be ready.**

When Carol telephones him she tells him that he is not ready to partake of a relationship with a woman (line 10). He listens submissively to what she has to say then the sequence of the film (the scene in Appendix 1.t, line 1) shows him turning to his

once rival Simon for advice – **Are you gonna talk to me or not?** By people drawing attention to his faults he succeeds in realigning his hateful personality to one of congenial identity.

Excerpt thirty (Appendix 1.t)

24. Simon: **I really think you have a chance here. I mean, the best thing you have going for you is your willingness to humiliate yourself. So go over there.**

In line 24 Simon points out that Melvin has no pride judging by the offhand way he throws uncivil comments around, so making a fool of himself over Carol should be of no great difficulty for him. This sinks in as the close of the film is imminent and prompts him towards his final steps of integrating into society. Melvin takes Simon's advice and goes around to talk things over with Carol, to consolidate a true relationship.

The above subsections discussed the lexicogrammatical features which distinguish the changes that Melvin undergoes. I subsequently proceed with an analysis of some selected semiotic signs I have chosen from various scenes in an attempt to show how they enhance the significance of Melvin's face work.

4.4 Semiotic signs emphasising Melvin's face work.

In this section I point out some visual details which offer an increment to the significance of the protagonist's face work. The first scene I choose is the one where Melvin dispatches Verdell down the shoot at the outset of the film.

Excerpt thirty-one (Appendix 1.a)

In the first scene the expression on the lady neighbour's face changes from delight to disgust as the mere sight of Melvin is a face threat. The sight of the lady returning to her abode semiotically represents her strong negative feelings provoked by Melvin.

In the same scene Melvin angrily pushes the lift door open showing that he is cross with the world, a face threat to life itself. As he calls Verdell he points to the lift indicating for Verdell to get into it. The way Melvin screams at Verdell not to urinate on the wall adds emphasis to his loathing for dogs. The way he picks Verdell up and holds him at arm's length with a look of fear and disgust on his face is a threat towards the dog's positive face. A surge of nausea and dread of contamination comes over Melvin as the dog urinates while in his hands. This provokes Melvin to commit the threat to Verdell's negative face by throwing him down the shoot. The non-verbal act of dispatching Verdell says more to Verdell than words would ever do. The blatant semiotic sign TRASH (line 10, Appendix 1.a) emphasises Melvin's opinion of Verdell, as mentioned in excerpt one, that he is trash, while the distinct sound of Verdell bumping from one place to the other as he falls is a semiotic sign confirming Melvin's brutal and physical face threat.

The next segment shows Melvin losing ground to Frank. Melvin suffers a threat to his negative face by his being forced off his home ground by Frank. In this part I also make reference to the manipulation of music on the sound track.

Excerpt thirty-two (Appendix 1.d)

The background music starts softly and is growing into a crescendo when there is a knock at Melvin's door and the music stops abruptly. The crescendo symbolises Melvin's inspiration reaching the culmination of his story; the definition of love. His train of thought is broken by that knock, the sudden cut of music on the sound track reinforces this brusque interruption. The strong timbre of aggression in his voice and the aggressive manner in which he opens the door are face threats to the visitor and both reflect his anger at being disturbed.

Melvin thinks he is in control of the situation but then the way Melvin jumps around from side to side after being dragged from his home reflect his insecurity. Frank has taken control. Movements, tone of voice and the use of music all provide semiotic clues to add significance to the scene.

Different aspects of the following two selections, where Melvin asks his publisher for a favour have been analysed above in excerpts 23 and 24, while considering hegemonic struggles between Melvin and women. I now focus on the semiotic representations present in the same scene.

Excerpt thirty-three (Appendix 1.g)

When Melvin is insisting on his publisher's promising to make arrangements for her husband to treat Carol's son (line 2) he beckons with his hands implying come on, and simultaneously mouthing **Melvin I'll try** to give more impetus. This is a face threat as he is making a request, thereby imposing on her freedom of action (see section 2.3). In adding **that's good** (line 4) to his thanks he accompanies this with a downward movement of his hand reinforcing the idea that this was what he needed to hear. This confirms that he is always thinking of himself first and that everything has to be done his way. Turning away from her means that for him, the interaction is over. The publisher wishes to engage in informal conversation (line 5) but Melvin supplements the ironic put-down (Holmes, 1995) of line 6 (see excerpt 22 above) with a wave of his hand to dismiss her, having no consideration for her sentiments.

If one considers only the written words it would seem that Melvin is showing some interest in her life and is respecting the international laws of etiquette. However, his tone of voice, along with the way he looks away from her (another non-verbal cue) implies otherwise, portraying insincerity and cynicism, confirming that he does not care about her, only about himself.

Melvin is objective, he considers himself superior to women. He is willing to treat others well until he gets what he wants, he then proceeds to end the interaction with either offensive language, offensive prosodic angles or other non-verbal cues, which serve as a strategy to maintain distance from other people.

In the following excerpt I observe semiotic signals that further demonstrate this last point. The continuation of the previous scene gives the audience a view of Melvin's antipathetic facial expressions, body movements and positioning which convey insult to his publisher's secretary.

Excerpt thirty-four (Appendix 1.g)

When the secretary addresses him Melvin's facial expressions show he will not allow himself to be overpowered by a woman. His non-verbal communication shows his self-identity to be one of superiority.

7. Secretary: **I can't resist. You usually move through here so quickly and I have so many questions to ask you. You have no idea what your work means to me.**
8. Melvin: **What does it mean to you?**
The secretary gets up from her seat.
9. Secretary: **That someone out there knows what it's like to be in here.**
10. Melvin: **Oh God. This is a nightmare.**
11. Secretary: **Oh, come on, just a couple of questions. How hard is that? How do you write women so well?**
Melvin takes a menacing step towards her, a smug smile on his face
12. Melvin: **I think of a man and I take away reason and accountability.**

When he asks: **What does it mean to you?** (line 8) his pompous face and the act of putting his hands in his pockets with conviction portray his position of power, reinforced by his raising himself up onto tiptoe incrementing his height. As mentioned in the theoretical perspectives, in the section on non-verbal communication, the spatial relationship, up or down is interrelated with hegemonic levels. It seems the secretary stands up in respect for the author when in line 9 she replies **That someone out there**

knows what it's like ... and at the same time delicately places her hands in a feminine way over her heart and on her forehead saying ... **to be in here.**

As Melvin performs the verbal face threat in line 10 criticising her thoughts he shows his dislike for her. The way he raises his eyebrows, closes his eyes, turns his back and walks off abruptly ends the conversation, and as such is a non-verbal face threat with him once more clearly in power.

The secretary's female curiosity will not let it go at that. She is portrayed here as an innocent stereotyped woman, trying to apply her charm by running after him, emphasised by the sound of high-heeled shoes on the sound track. The glimpse of her long trousers, a semiotic masculine trait offers her an extra inherent force to insist on questioning him on how he writes women so well (line 11). Before the verbal face threat of line 12 Melvin takes a menacing step towards her, at the same time he has a smug smile on his face. These semiotic signs represent a non-verbal face threat revealing his delight in belittling women.

As he leaves in the lift he appears to reposition his identity to one of a person in charge of his life, nonchalantly swaying one of his arms. Then as soon as he realises he is too close to the other occupant he takes a step away from him, physically repositioning himself, reconfirming his fear of proximity and thus returning the film to the macro-structure as this scene closes.

The non-verbal communication along with the lexicogrammatical choices reflect a relation of power between the participants. In this scene he holds clear contempt for women.

The excerpt below indicates how semiotic signalling enhances the audience's perception of Melvin's face work as he is forced to take in Verdell.

Excerpt thirty-five (Appendix 1.h)

The sarcastic tone in Melvin's laughter (line 9) makes it a face threat, as he is scorning Frank. Frank takes control of the situation and throws Verdell inside Melvin's flat. Melvin's locking and unlocking of the door once back inside his quarters reflects his desire to shut out the world. As he bosses Verdell around (lines 22 – 25) he waves an accusing face threatening finger at the dog, which is more expressive than simple words. In section 3.5 above I gave a more detailed discussion of the semiotic signs of the *mise-en-scène* from this segment.

The following inclusion is taken from a later scene (see excerpt two also) as Melvin walks Verdell. Melvin is already so fond of Verdell that he lifts him up, looks him straight in the eyes and praises him.

Excerpt thirty-six (Appendix 1.i)

In this scene Melvin is delighted with Verdell for avoiding the cracks in the pavement. Melvin takes some plastic gloves out of his pocket and puts them on before touching Verdell. As discussed in sections 3.4.1 and 3.5 gloves are a metaphor for isolation, he is isolating himself from any possible disease and signifies that as yet he does not feel at complete ease with Verdell. He picks Verdell up and raises him to eye level, this semiotically places the dog on equal power relations to Melvin. (Spatial relations are elaborated on in section 2.6.1) a step to building up his first personal relationship with the outside world.

The next excerpt presented shows how not only the audience gains greater perception of the situation from the semiotic signs but also within the scene the participants perceive messages from the signals unconsciously emitted by their co-participants. It is from the scene where Simon lashes out from his wheelchair (see excerpts 16 and 22). By the movements performed by Simon Melvin realises he has

upset Simon. The signalling Melvin does to Verdell is a conscious attempt to make him go to Simon. Although this a threat to Verdell's negative face as it is an attempt to manipulate Verdell's actions, it is both a defensive (own face-saving) and a protective (other face-saving) face saving action (see section 2.2). As Melvin does not want to be thought wrong, it is defensive, yet protective too as he wants Verdell to go to Simon to cheer him up.

Excerpt thirty-seven (Appendix 1.k)

This scene with Simon in the wheelchair was selected as it is clear by Melvin's facial expressions that he feels some remorse. The reaction of violence that he induces in Simon dumfounds him into re-thinking his own demeanour.

As Melvin is insulting Simon he moves away and turns his back to Simon. This arrangement of the character, as referred to in the section on social semiotics and the visual space, places Melvin in the inferior position, at a disadvantage, conceding power to Simon. The back angle of Melvin could well have contributed to Simon facing up to Melvin with physical aggression. Verdell barks a couple of times, reflecting the tension of the scene (also mentioned in section 3.5). This obvious presence of the dog also reminds the audience that he is, in the long run, a predominant feature in the bringing about of change in Melvin. Melvin, as has been well pointed out above, fears bodily contact and is shocked at Simon lunging himself at his person, and tries to keep him at arm's length. In the long silence, while Melvin reflects on the occurrence, Melvin's facial and body movements express that Simon's desolate message is sinking through Melvin's thick skin.

Verdell yaps with delight when he sees Melvin produce a polythene bag with bacon. One thing Melvin had not counted on is that Verdell is now conditioned to like Melvin due to the constant rewards of bacon. The bacon is no longer the bait for

Verdell; he has already built up a relationship with Melvin. The nature of Verdell discloses faithfulness towards Melvin, yet fickleness to Simon. Melvin uses non-verbal communication to indicate for the dog to go to Simon. He points surreptitiously with his finger and also pushes the inside of his cheek with his tongue, and nods his head towards Simon. But even so Verdell ignores the signalling and chooses to leap on Melvin and lick him instead, demonstrating his attachment to Melvin. Simon calmly asks Melvin to leave (line 28). Melvin and Verdell look at each other with the same stupid expression then at Simon in an apologetic face saving manner. This at the same time is an offence to Melvin, the speaker's, positive face in the form of self-humiliation, acting stupidly (see Goffman, 1967, see section 2.2).

Once more semiotic signs in the form of positioning, silence, gestures and facial expressions complement the verbal communication. On behalf of Melvin they add significance to his offensive and face saving dialogue. At the beginning of the scene he is adamant, but by the end he is more compassionate moving towards becoming a sensitive caring person. The look on his face as the scene ends has in fact a soft non-offending stare.

I have included the next segment to bring attention again to the semiotic force of *mise-en-scène* and metaphor. Melvin takes Chinese soup around to Simon. The soup is metaphor for a peace offering, being relevant as Melvin earned Verdell's confidence with bacon and is now projecting his desire for friendship with Simon.

Excerpt thirty-eight (Appendix 1.1)

As Simon answers the door and Melvin begins his sentence the door bangs open making him stop and start again. This is the door acting as metaphor reflecting Melvin's insecurity at visiting Simon, a hedge in the form of a hesitation before the apology, the attempt to make up for the obnoxious aberrations of a previous scene. The use of spatial

relations is once again applied. The two characters are sitting at opposite ends. They are at the same level and at the same distance from the pivotal soup they have the same weight and so are of equal power. There are no face threats, though, as suggested in the discussion of *mise-en-scène* in section 3.5, the fact that they are one at each end of the seat portrays that they are not socially close as yet. This scene shows Melvin's wish to make friends, a turn round from his previous discourtesy.

Below, the ensuing excerpt is from the scene where Carol and Melvin are at a restaurant in Baltimore. Melvin inadvertently insults Carol causing her to stand up ready to walk out on him (see excerpt 25). She demands that Melvin pay her a compliment.

Excerpt thirty-nine (Appendix 1.o)

Melvin wants Carol to sit down again so he performs a face threat by forcefully making a strong downward movement with his hand at the same time as grimacing. This is a direct command for Carol to sit down. This scene also shows Melvin rubbing his fingers together as if he is looking for the right words to say for a compliment. This is metaphoric once more referring to text outside the film, a scene where a burglar rubs his fingers together before attempting to open a safe. The way he wipes his forehead discloses his nervousness about the situation, as he is perspiring because of it. These visual aspects confirm that he is not in control.

In the next scene Melvin receives a call from Carol as she wants to apologise for what she said about not wanting to be with him.

Excerpt forty (Appendix 1.s)

Before Melvin speaks to Carol he smooths his hair down making himself presentable. She cannot see this but it acts as a face-saver for himself to be respectable to receive her. The silences are a form of non-verbal communication; Melvin is being respectful by not interrupting, allowing Carol to finish talking. This is a great change

from all previous interactions where he more often than not interrupts disruptively. This exemplifies his alteration in behaviour.

In the scene below Melvin welcomes Simon to his abode.

Excerpt forty-one (Appendix 1.r)

2. Simon: **Thank you , Melvin. You overwhelm me. I love you.**

This is the first time the audience sees Melvin touching Simon, though still gloved. He places his hand firmly on Simon's shoulder as a welcoming expression. This portrays Melvin's transmogrification, his overcoming of his homophobia, development of his capacity to love. It represents a response too, to Simon's comment in line 2 and recognition that Melvin is a human being and has affection for Simon in return.

The final two fragments I have selected are to confirm how Melvin has transmogrified. This is demonstrated by the use of the metaphors, doors and lines on the floor. These are in fact double metaphors as the obsessive compulsive locking and unlocking of the doors represent the process of desire for isolation, while the lines are also linked to borders to cross in order to interact with people and also to dirt which gathers inside the cracks.

This scene portrays Melvin taking Simon's advice to go around to Carol's. As Melvin leaves he pauses at the door.

Excerpt forty-two (Appendix 1.t)

30. Simon: **What's wrong?**
31. Melvin: **I forgot to lock the door**

At the end of this scene Melvin is amazed at himself and unbelievably stops short. Line 30 shows Simon questioning the pause. Melvin has forgotten to lock the door. This confirms that he has gone through a metamorphosis. He has surpassed his obsessive-compulsive disorder and is approaching the status of a normal person.

The ultimate example illustrates Melvin eventually walking ordinarily along the road.

Excerpt forty-three (Appendix 1.u)

Carol sees Melvin walking along the curb instead of by her side and tells Melvin their relationship is not going to work (line 6). He then, after a moment of hesitation, steps on the lines and squares and walks towards her. The closing frame is a long shot of Melvin hand in hand with Carol walking oblivious of any lines on the road. Finally he has become a sociable person capable of a traditional relationship symbolised by the holding of hands. He has reached normality (if that exists in reality) demonstrated by overcoming his fear of walking on infected cracks, overcoming his fear of crossing lines to meet people half way.

The excerpt above shows how meaning is portrayed by non-verbal means. The semiotic signs display a modification in Melvin's habits. They portray, along with lexicogrammatical items, that Melvin's face work has made a complete turn around as now he is socially close to people, he has friends, reflecting his acceptance by others into the realm of society.

This chapter pointed out how Melvin's lexicogrammatical choices changed from being bald on record FTAs such as **dog-eared monkey**, **fag** and **prick**, to off record FTAs, for example when he tells Frank to **think white and get serious**. Later on in the film he becomes less offensive towards people as when he says to Simon **and you people are supposed to be sensitive and sharp**. He shows affection towards Verdell by calling him **pooch**. He even comes out with compliments, for instance, he says Verdell is **a perfect man** and calls Carol **the greatest woman in the world**. The degree of offensiveness to the language Melvin uses shows how he has become less anti-social.

Melvin's interaction with other people, discussed in the section on hegemonic struggles above, shows how threatening he can be. However, the things he does after being told home truths reflect his change in behaviour. He attempts to perform some kindness after thinking about what other people think of him. His FTAs change from objectionable actions to the inclusion of face saving acts as shown by his softer lexicogrammatical choices. At the same time, he moves from his identity of obnoxious hermit to a more sociable being.

In the next chapter I present some final remarks. Next I give my conclusions to the analysis. Following this, as a closing point, I consider the limitations of the present study and make suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

I know you believe you understand what you think I said, but I'm not sure you realise what you heard is not what ... I meant (inscription on novelty mug from bric-à-brac shop, Blackpool, England) (in Simpson, 1993, p.119, author's parentheses).

5.3 Final remarks

My initial proposal in this thesis was to examine Melvin's face work to show how Melvin undergoes changes in his behaviour. This was to be achieved through the analysis, firstly of the film itself as a whole; secondly through the analysis of the lexicogrammatical choices Melvin makes. I have shown this despite all the faults which inevitably cling to such an enterprise. However, during the final phase of my reading I came across the following rules for screen writing (Howard and Mabley, 1996), bearing in mind that these are according to Hollywood norms (Gatti, 2001).

The dialogue, which carries a tremendous weight, needs to:

1. Characterise who speaks and the people who are spoken to.
2. Make use of colloquial language maintaining the individuality of the speaker, yet, at the same time blending with the general style of the script.
3. Reflect the spiritual state of the speaker, transmit his emotions or offer an insight into his private life.
4. Either reveal the reasons behind the speaker or hide such motivations.
5. Reflect the relationship between the speaker and the other characters.
6. Connect, that is flourish from a previous speech and blend into a future one. In so doing a scene links with a previous one and a following one to make a whole.

7. Carry the action forward
8. At times transmit information or expose it.
9. Very often predict what is to come.
10. Be clear and intelligible for the public.

I now conclude that I have inadvertently shown that this particular film has indeed abided by the above rules and at the same time that Melvin *has* developed from an obnoxious hermit into an integrated member of society reflected by the change in his lexicogrammatical choices of language demonstrated through observance of his face work. My final remarks are on the constitution of the film as a whole in an attempt to explicate on the intricacies of Melvin's identity construction.

I argue that Melvin's identity transmogrification is the result of a successful survival of his identity crisis. Moita-Lopes (2000) asserts that "social identities are discursively constructed" (p.199) and he takes "otherness, constitutivity and situatedness as crucial features to understand discourse" (ibid). He suggests that exchanging dialogue with others involves the establishment of power relations in a particular social context, where knowledge and power define social identities. As such, discursive interaction is a tool by which means people co-participate in an attempt to "construct meaning and knowledge" (ibid). Hence, the information passed on in a social situation constructs and legitimises the participants' social identity. This author argues that both "micro and macro socio-historical aspects" (ibid) are indispensable in diagnosing how meaning in the world is constructed, and how individual identities become part of the social surroundings.

Regarding the film analysed it can be said that Melvin initially has little contact with the outside world. Forced to take a journey with Simon and Carol he exchanges dialogue with them and passes through hegemonic struggles with Carol. This aids his

building up of a social identity. The contact he has with Carol and Simon both on and after the trip, and indeed with Verdell too, assists him to socially construct and legitimise his development into an integrated member of their social circle.

There are mediating lines between social and personal identity. Stereotyped images formed are attached to the image one has of society (Holland, 2000). The dictionary (Longman, 1987) definition of stereotype says that it is (someone or something that represents) a fixed set of ideas about what a particular type of person or thing is like, which is (wrongly) believed to be true in all cases (p.1036, author's parentheses). Melvin shows throughout the film that he certainly has a fixed idea about homosexuals. Despite Melvin's ideals he invites Simon to stay with him, so maybe Melvin realises that homosexuals, at least Simon, have a good side and are not to be feared. His constant abuse towards homosexuals is a way of maintaining distance from Simon until he is ready to consider himself mistaken and accept otherness.

The acceptance of Simon into his private sphere shows that in his intimate reign Melvin reconsiders his ideals towards homosexuals. This identity realignment lightens his prejudice towards homosexuals reinforcing the double-sided idea of identity, changing his external subjectivity pattern from repugnant oppressor to one of social man. Holland (2000) has her own ideas on the double-sidedness of identity, the two sides being first the social/ public and secondly the personal/ intimate. Social identity, she explains, provides the key means of organising, co-ordinating and controlling the collective life. She refers to Foucault's framework for tools of identity and position and those of Bakhtin and Vygotsky for theories on human sociality to support her claims. Holland (ibid), I understand, claims that 'identity' is the awareness of one's actions in the world reflected back upon one's self. Melvin survives his identity crisis by others making him aware of his anti social behaviour and his reflecting on it. It is worth noting

that the home truths proffer indications to Melvin that he should rethink his behaviour. The overall pattern appears very consistent as Melvin reacts to these home truths and performs magnanimous acts after reflecting on them.

The changes in Melvin change the ideology behind the film. His prejudices become minimised, certainly towards homosexuals. His attitude changes as a reflection of the little things he does, the small kindnesses. Reflected by the things he says, identities he gives the people around him, Jews, waitresses, policemen, and not forgetting Verdell, Melvin is at first aggressive then becomes kinder towards these beings as he becomes socially closer to them.

According to Brandão (1994) linguistic material is only a part of the utterance; there also exists another part, a non-verbal part that corresponds to the context of the utterance. Hence it is essential to focus on the social so searching for the relationship between language and ideology. Language cannot be regarded as an abstract entity, but a place where ideology manifests itself concretely. Ricouer (1977 in Brandão, 1994) is quoted as stating that the ideology of any unconquerable phenomenon of social existence, on the basis that social reality always possesses a symbolic constitution, holds an interpretation of images representing its own social connection.

Melvin changes his ideology and this has been shown through pointing out the alteration of his communication strategies, both verbal and non-verbal, as the film unfolds. As Stubbs (1996) points out the “choice of words expresses an ideological position” (p.107). The audience is subject to manipulation and construction of meanings for themselves on viewing his ideals. As he eliminates his distrust for his homosexual neighbour, Melvin modifies his conception of the world and reduces his force of arrogance towards Simon.

I align myself with Iedema (in press) when he says he makes “no truth claims” for the results of his analysis, but he does claim “to be able to support” his “claims with systematic evidence and base” his “political arguments on them” (p.6). I now proceed to conclude my analysis of the protagonist’s face work.

5.2 Findings and conclusions to the findings

In this thesis my objective has been to offer an interdisciplinary study overlapping discourse analysis with semiotics and film studies. In order to achieve this I selected the film ‘As Good As It Gets’ and attempted to analyse the way the linguistic performance of the protagonist affects his face work within his politeness strategies. I chose this extremist for his far from polite discourse, just as Goffman (1967) chose to study discourse in asylums. “For Goffman, as for Freud, the extreme cases are of interest because of the light they shed on the normal” (ibid, back cover).

After having given an outline to the theoretical perspectives upon which I based my analysis, I provided the framework of the film in order to familiarise the reader with as much background knowledge as possible in the hope that the fourth chapter, my analysis of the protagonist’s face work, would become lucid. Finally, I stated my findings.

I followed this procedure with the purpose of evaluating whether there is a social nature to language and to see if indeed Melvin has a spark of decency deep down inside and if this guides him to becoming sociable. The interdisciplinary characteristics of my approach begin to highlight some of the connections between language and the social context. By accomplishing this I believe I have demonstrated the importance of interdisciplinary studies to enable a wider understanding of the significance of the totality of all means of communication.

I *have* identified various changes in lexicogrammatical choice and now discuss them in terms of Melvin's face work. Melvin, by being face threatening, is being out of line, out of face or in wrong face (Goffman, 1967). Hence his social face is withdrawn as a result of his own behaviour. He becomes shame faced when being out of face or in wrong face, as then he realises he has spoken out of place. Pronouncing one's opinions or even downgrading others are aims customarily sought after by maintaining face (Goffman, 1967). Melvin on the contrary performs these acts with no expense economised towards his own face or the face of those he offends.

There are numerous occasions when Melvin "witnesses another's humiliation and unfeelingly retains a cool countenance" (Goffman, 1967, p.11) and as such is "heartless" (ibid) for example in his face threats towards certain women, Jews, ethnic groups and indeed workers.

By the way he uses language Melvin gives the impression that he is superior to everyone else. Chaika (1994) states that "Ideologically, the doctrine of equality amongst men has led to politeness routines that are geared to save face" (p.117). The inequality perceived by Melvin appears as a lack of such a politeness routine as is shown by his initial face threats to practically everyone around him.

Melvin's transmogrification comes to pass as a result of his intimate contact first with Verdell, followed by Carol and Simon. He overcomes his identity crisis through the experiences he is submitted to within the series of events that take place in the film. A member of society learns the "beliefs and values" of that society mainly through language, "whereby a human being becomes social man". This takes place indirectly through "small events, insignificant in themselves ... in the course of which ... personal relationships of all kinds" are developed (Halliday, 1978, p.9). Melvin's choice of lexicogrammatical language use reflects that change. Initially he is face threatening

towards everyone and prejudiced towards many. Due to the occurrence of *small kindnesses* that become inherent in his daily social life he unconsciously realigns his vocabulary use to a softer version towards the end of the film as compared to the outset.

Melvin recycles his private social image. A private social image is recycled at home, affected by those social images whereby a person is either put off by or attracted to those impressions. The latter are then worked through to build up one's own idea and as such one's individual social identity (Holland, 2000). At the start of the film he has an inherent stereotypical perception of, for example, women, ethnic groups, and workers. His anti-social attitude is demonstrated by the face threatening acts, portrayed by his lexicogrammatical choice, that he performs towards these minority groups all through the film. The declarations he makes act dialectically to reinforce his position and confirm the ideological position of prejudice he insists on.

The issue of compliments assumes an important role in his metamorphosis. His first compliment to his publisher, congratulating her on her son's achievement (see Appendix 1.g) is, as mentioned in excerpt 22, an *ironic put-down* (Holmes, 1995). His *savoir-faire* (Goffman, 1967) requires him to say something but, though spontaneous, he is not sincere; on the contrary he is patronising. The effect of compliments becomes more evident when he is demanded one by Carol (see Appendix 1.o). For him to come up with something sincere takes him a while. He even requests extra time – **Can we order first?** The resulting compliment is another hurdle cleared as it is successful, maintaining the rapport, confirmed by Melvin - **Well maybe I overshoot a little because I was just aiming at just enough to keep you from walking out** (line 22). Melvin's identity transmogrification is clearly well underway at this point; he is building up his relationship with Carol. As Holmes (1995) says, for a woman, a compliment serves for developing and maintaining a relationship.

It was my aim to show how Melvin's identity suffers a metamorphosis as seen by the change in lexical choices he applies. No matter that viewers will argue that he continues obnoxious I have demonstrated that Melvin has transmogrified into an integrated participant of the social world. The data supports my claim that the progressive change in lexicogrammatical choices reflects the change in Melvin, his identity transmogrification from obnoxious entity to a charitable social partner, confirming the social nature of the human language.

5.3 Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

I feel that the depth at which I have delved into film studies, visual language, the social context and 'micro' and 'macro' issues of the social world has been somewhat superficial. I do say though that my intention from the start was to focus on face work.

The perspectives I have used from Argyle (1972) for non-verbal communication are not the most recent, however I feel that these perspectives suffice for my purpose⁶ here. That being to introduce the idea of non-verbal signals used by man.

Kress, Leite-García and van Leeuwen (1997) say there is a wide field of concern for visual "syntax" from "the psychology of perception ... to ... theorisations of photography ... and importantly, in this century particularly, the study of film" (p.259). I think this theme could be further developed.

A more intense observation and analysis of non-verbal language would be of great interest because as van Leeuwen (in Press) says "visuals ... have a way of saying things that often outstrips the power of language" (p.4).

⁶ However, work from Adam Kendon, Frederick Erickson, Chuck Goodwin and Edward T. Hall, would have been more apt (Garcez, 2001)

For further research I suggest that the scenes not investigated under this study be looked at. This film and indeed others could be taken advantage of to investigate a) the differences between verbal and non-verbal language used by men and women, b) the use of metaphor and also c) how prejudice is portrayed.

Through my analysis I have attempted to portray how in Western society both the speaker and the hearer can be affected directly or indirectly by the language used and this could be contrasted to language use in other cultures.

This work could be of pedagogical interest to researchers of language in general. The use of politeness strategies is one of the most difficult aspects of learning a foreign language especially one from a different sociocultural background.

Regarding the application of this study for the English language classroom, a deeper study of face work, followed by reflection on one's own use of such could improve linguistic performance. When asking a favour, for example, if someone is aware of the advantage of using an off record strategy, perhaps including hedges and boosters, over a bald on record one he/she would be more likely to be granted that request.

My closing suggestion is to consider what role films do actually play in the construction of identities of the audience.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Transcription of the selected scenes in chronological order.

The titles I have arbitrarily given my excerpts and the lines of the verbal script are in bold type. The semiotic signals mentioned and the names of the speakers are in normal type.

1.a Melvin dispatches Verdell down the shoot

Lady neighbour: **I'm just going to get some flowers dear. I'll be back in twenty minutes. It's tulip season today and I'm oh, so happy.**

Her facial expression changes from that of happiness to that of disgust

Lady neighbour: **Son of a bitch** and goes back inside to avoid Melvin.

1. Melvin: **Come on Sweetie. Come on Sweetie.**

As the lift door starts to close he angrily pushes it open again saying

2. Melvin: **Wait.**

3. Melvin: **Go for a little ride and then you can whiz all over the city.**

4. **Come on, come on Sweetie.**

At the same time he is pointing to the lift, indicating for Verdell to get into it. Verdell now cocks his leg up the wall, Melvin screams at him

5. Melvin: **No, freeze, freeze. Leg down, leg down. Leg down, leg down.**

6. **That's it. That's it. Come on now, come on now.**

Pointing to the lift Melvin is trying to get the dog into it. The dog raises his leg again so Melvin pounces on him screaming

7. Melvin: **No, No, you monkey you.** He picks Verdell up angrily saying:

8. **You have pissed your last floor. I bet you wish you were a real dog.**

Melvin is horrified as the dog urinates while he is holding him

9. Melvin: **You dog-eared monkey.**

Melvin walks towards the waste disposal shoot over which there is a prominent sign:

10. **TRASH ONLY** As Melvin throws Verdell down the shoot he says:

11. Melvin: **This is New York if you can make it here you can make it anywhere.**

There is the distinct sound of Verdell bumping from one place to the other as he goes down the shoot, Melvin shouting after him:

12. Melvin: **Smelly, ugly ...**

1.b Melvin dislikes coloured men

1. Simon: **Come here sweetheart.**

2. Simon: **Have you er have you seen Verdell?**

3. Melvin: **What does he look like?**

4. Simon: **Er my dog...you know my dog, my dog with the little face with the little adorable face. Don't you know what my dog looks like?**

5. Melvin: **Oh, I got it you were talking about your dog. Oh,**

6. Melvin: **I thought it was... that coloured man.**

7. Simon: **Which colour was that?**

8. Melvin: **... thick molasses with the broad nose perfect for smelling out trouble and prison food.**

9. Simon: **Frank.**

10. Frank: Simon, you have got to get dressed.
 11. Simon: Frank Sachs, Melvin Udall.
 12. Melvin: How you doing? Sarcastic tone
 13. Simon: Frank shows my work Mr. Udall. I think you, er, you know that.
 14. Frank: People are going to be coming soon.
 15. Melvin: What I know is that as long as you keep your work zipped up around me.
 16. I don't give a red crap what or where you shove your show.
 17. Are we done being neighbours for now?
 18. Frank: Let me talk to you ...
 19. Simon: No, no, no. Not worth it. Definitely not worth it. Verdell must be in the apartment somewhere.
 20. Melvin: Hope you find him. Love that dog.
 21. Simon: You don't love anything Mr. Udall.

1.c Melvin receives a visit from Simon

Melvin: Somewhere in the dark she had confessed and he had forgiven. This is what she lived for and he said two heads on a pillow where all is approved and there is only the safety of being with each other. How she wondered could she find such hope in the most shameful part of her.

1. Simon: Mr. Udall.
 2. Melvin: And at last she was able to define love. Love was....
 3. Simon: Mr. Udall. I'd like to speak to you please.
 4. Simon: Let me do this by myself. (to Frank)
 5. Melvin: Love was.
 6. Simon: Are you in there?
 7. Melvin: Son of a bitch! Pansy arsed stool pusher. Melvin opens the door.
 8. Melvin: Yes? (in an angry voice)
 9. Simon: Maybe this can wait.
 10. Melvin: Yeah.
 11. Simon: I found, er, I found Verdell. Mr. Udall.
 12. Melvin: Well that's a load off.
 13. Simon: Uh, huh. Did you er, did you, do something to him?
 14. Melvin: Do you realise that I work at home?
 15. Simon: No, I wasn't aware.
 16. Melvin: Do you like to be interrupted when you're nancying around in your little garden?
 17. Simon: No, no, I, I, actually well, turn the ringer off of my phone and sometimes put a piece of cardboard.
 18. Melvin interrupts: Well, I work all the time. So, never, never interrupt me. Okay?
 19. Not if there's a fire, not even if you hear the sound of a thud from my home, and one week later there's a smell coming from there that can only be a decaying human body, and you have to hold a hanky to your face because the stench is so thick that you think you are going to faint. Even then, don't come knocking.
 20. Or, if its election night and you're excited and you want to celebrate because some fudge packer that you date has been elected the first queer president of the United States and he's going to have you down to Camp David.
 21. And you want someone to share the moment with.
 22. Even then, don't knock. Not on this door, not for *any* reason.
 23. Do you get me sweetheart?
 24. Simon: Yes. It's not a subtle point that you're making.
 25. Melvin: Okay. Then Melvin slams the door shut.

26. Simon: **So the theory of computations is think twice before messing with me.**

1.d Melvin loses ground to Frank

Back inside the flat Melvin gets down to writing again.

1. Melvin: **All right. Love was. What was love? Love was...**

The background music starts softly and is growing into a crescendo when there's another knock at the door and the music stops abruptly.

2. Melvin: **Now I'm pissed. Now I'm really pissed.**

Just as Melvin opens the door he's grabbed by the collar and Frank pulls him out of his apartment onto neutral ground.

3. Melvin: **Ugh, oh. Don't touch. Don't touch. Don't touch!**

4. Frank: **Sshh ! Ssh! Shut up. You really think you can intimidate the whole world with your attitude, but you don't intimidate me. I grew up in Hell, little boy. My grandmother had more attitude.**

5. Melvin: **Police. Doughnut munching morons. Help me. Help me.**

6. Frank: **Sshh! Quiet.**

7. Melvin: **Help me.**

8. Frank: **Sshh!**

9. Melvin: **Assault and battery and you're black.**

10. Frank: **I like Simon. I like him enough to batter you unrecognisable if you verbally abuse him or so much as touch that dog again. Meantime, I'm going to think of some way that you can make it up to him. *I hate doing this.* I'm an art dealer. Have a nice day.**

And then Frank walks off calling to the others

11. Frank: **Okay, party, party.**

1.e Melvin offends other diners

1. Melvin: **You people that are talking metaphors ought to shampoo my crotch.**

2. Carol: **Excuse me, Melvin. Excuse me. Pardon me. Pardon me.**

3. Carol to man at table: **There you go. You take care.**

4. Melvin: **I'm starving**

5. Carol: **Go on . Sit down. You know you're not allowed back here.**

6. Melvin: **I've got Jews at my table.**

7. Carol : **It's not your table. It's the place's table, behave. This once you can sit at someone else's station**

8. **Aaaghhh** Waitresses negative reaction of fear

9. **Or you can wait your turn**

10. Melvin interrupts the two Jewish diners : **How much more have you got to eat? Appetites aren't as big as your noses, eh?**

11. Jewish lady: **Er, what? What?**

12. Jewish man: **Let's go.** Then they get up and walk out of the restaurant.

1.f Melvin and a different waitress

Melvin is sitting at his table setting out his disposable cutlery.

1. New waitress: **What the heck are those for?**

2. Melvin: **No, no, no. Get Carol!**

3. New waitress: **Oh, I'm filling in. We don't know if she's coming back.**

You know I think she might be getting a job close to her home.

Then she picks his cutlery up and asks

4. New waitress: **Why plastic?**

5. Melvin: **What are you trying to do to me?**

He has an accusing tone in his voice, as he sees her contaminate his utensils..

6. New waitress: **What the heck do you mean?**
 7. Melvin: **Look, elephant girl.** He is beginning to lose his patience.
Just, just go. Get Carol or something, eh?
Just have her do my one meal here. I ... he takes a breath in
You know, I'll pay whatever you want. I'll wait.

After a short silence Melvin bangs hard on the table and aggressively shouts.

8. Melvin: **Do it!**

9. The new waitress screams: **Aagh!**

She rushes away from Melvin frightened and calls to the manager

10. New waitress: **Brian, Brian. Code blue, Brian.**

Melvin spots the manager storming over to his table.

11. Melvin: **Hell no. No, no.** He mutters to himself.

He bows his head and squirms in his seat as he realises things are going wrong.

12. Manager: **Out! Just shut up and get out. ... Do it!**

Melvin now uses a submissive voice his facial expressions demonstrate that he realises he's out of line.

13. Melvin: **I'll be quiet. Just let me stay here. I'll ... No problem.**

14. **Go get Carol. Get her *here* [↑]**

15. **I'm not a ... prick. You are. I'm not judging. I'm a great customer.**

16. **This day ... has been a disaster. I'm not sure if I can ... handle this too.**

17. Manager: **Get out! Get out immediately or there's gonna be trouble. Man I mean it.**

18. Policemen at another table start to get up, so Melvin is forced to leave. The other customers clap and laugh as he leaves. There are shouts of **See yah! Bye.** and **It's about time.**

As he goes out of the door he gives some money to the doorman and asks almost condescendingly

19. Melvin: **Carol's last name?**

20. Waiter: **Connelly.**

21. Melvin: **Thank you.**

1.g Melvin and his publisher

1. Agent: **Yes, you're right Melvin. You write more than anybody else. Yes, you make us a lot of money. But, I think it's more appropriate.....**

2. Melvin: **Look, look, I need this. Just say Melvin I'll try.**

Melvin mouths and beckons her to repeat **Melvin I'll try**, imploring her.

3. Agent: **Melvin I'll try.**

4. Melvin: **Thank you, that's good**

He lifts and lowers both hands, palms spread out then turns away from her ready to leave.

5. Agent: **Now on a pleasanter note. My son, he just got accepted to Brown University. My husband was dying.**

He looks away from her, a touch of cynicism in his voice.

6. Melvin: **Well. Er. Yeah, good, nice, er thrilled, exciting.** And he waves her off: **Er, you don't have to wait with me.**

The conversation having been abruptly cut off, the agent shakes her head and storms off. Meanwhile the blond stereotyped secretary has been patiently waiting her turn to talk, swinging from side to side in her swivel chair. She is now portrayed as an anxious fan waiting to speak to this famous writer. As Melvin moves towards the lift and presses the button, he flicks his collar to loosen it from his neck. The exaggeratedly female figure smiles at him.

7. Secretary: **I can't resist. You usually move through here so quickly**

⁷ *Italics* represent a prosodic emphasis, [↑] higher and [↓] lower level of voice pitch.

and I have so many questions to ask you. You have no idea what your work means to me.

Melvin pulls faces showing his impatience, I'd say his resistance to being overpowered. In a presumptuous manner he puts his hands in his pockets and raises himself onto tiptoes.

8. Melvin: **What does it mean to you?**

She gets up from her seat.

9. Secretary: **That someone out there knows what it's like to be in here.**

She delicately places her right hand over her heart and her left one on her forehead.

10. Melvin: **Oh God. This is a nightmare.**

Melvin raises his eyebrows, closes his eyes, turns around and makes for the lift again. The secretary left melting in her shoes, dying to interview her idol. She runs after him with small delicate steps, the sound of high-heeled shoes is very clear on the sound tack. There's a glimpse of her blue trousers followed by a close up of her wide-eyed feminine smile.

11. Secretary: **Oh, come on, just a couple of questions. How hard is that? How do you write women so well?**

Melvin takes a menacing step towards her, a smug smile on his face

12. Melvin: **I think of a man and I take away reason and accountability.**

Her face drops and she shrinks back demoralised. The shine goes out of her eyes. Melvin stares at her for a moment, the lift comes and he pretty well jumps in and goes to the back before turning round to face the door, one hand in his pocket the other swinging by his side. He takes a deep breath, looks at the other occupant and takes a step away from him.

1.h Melvin is forced to take Verdell in

Frank knocks at the neighbour's door, Verdell under his arm. The lady opens the door.

1. Lady neighbour: **I've been praying for him since I heard.**

2. Frank: **I'm on my way to the hospital.**

3. Frank: **Would you watch the dog just for tonight?**

4. Lady neighbour: **No,**

5. Frank: **No,**

6. Lady neighbour: **No.**

7. Frank: **No, Okay thanks** And she slowly closes the door in Frank's face

8. Frank: **Old Bitch, Damn dog.**

9. Melvin: *laughs*

His laughter attracts Frank's attention. He turns to a scorning Melvin.

10. Frank: **You're taking him. Yes. Yes you are. Get the hell out of the way.**

He pushes past Melvin and throws Verdell into Melvin's flat.

11. Frank: **You got them books and I'm out.**

12. Melvin: **Wait, wait.**

Frank leans towards him, looks him straight in the eyes, close up.

13. Frank: **You wanna say no to me? You wanna say no to me?**

14. **You wanna say no to me?**

15. Melvin: **No, I don't wanna say no.**

16. Frank: **Because I've never felt so crazy as I do right now.**

17. **I almost, I almost want you to say no.**

18. Frank: **Thanks for looking after him.** Frank turns around and walks off.

19. Melvin: **Hey, where are you going? You can't do this.**

20. Frank: **You don't wanna mess with me today.**

21. Melvin: **I can't take a dog. No-one's ever been in here before. Hey, Frank, Frank.**

Frank walks off and gets into the lift. Melvin goes back into his flat and meticulously locks himself and the dog in.

22. Melvin: **You're dead. We don't have no dog food. We don't want no dog food. You'll eat what we've got. What we eat.**

23. Melvin: **Don't you do anything.** Waving a finger at him. Melvin talks to the dog, bosses him around, offers him food.
24. Melvin: **Where's the trust?**
25. Verdell: **barks.**
26. Melvin: **Never a break. A dog.**
27. Melvin sits down to play the piano and sings: **Always look at the bright side of your life**
28. Melvin: **God.** Then he flops over on top of the keyboard.

1.i Melvin walks Verdell

As they are walking along the road Verdell takes to avoiding the cracks on the pavement too. Melvin is delighted.

1. Melvin: **Look at him.**
Melvin puts on a pair of disposable plastic gloves and picks him up
2. Melvin: **Don't be like me. You're a perfect man. Let's go home and do some writing.**

1.j Melvin is upset because Simon wants Verdell back

Frank can hear Melvin through the door talking sweetly to Verdell.

1. Melvin: **What'd you come in here for? I told you to sit.**
I can't cope with a dog in here. OK. just sit here.

Frank knocks the door. Dog barks.

2. Melvin: **We don't want any company. O.K. Have it your own way**
Melvin unlocks the door and peers outside.
3. Frank: **Hey!**
4. Melvin: **Hey!** He comes out of the door.
5. Frank: **How's Verdell doing?**
6. Melvin: smiling **Er, you know,** (he looks slyly sideways, droops his head a little and lies)
7. Melvin: **He's a pain in the arse.**
8. Frank: **Well.** (raises his eyebrows, nods yes- he's heard Melvin talking gently to Verdell and so knows he is lying.) **Simon's home.**
Melvin lifts his head up quickly and looks Frank straight in the eyes.
9. Frank: **I was kinda hoping you would keep the dog until he's had time to think and adjust.**

Melvin looks back eagerly, nods his head from side to side and with a condescending air, while rocking up and down on his heels says

10. Melvin: **It's been weeks, a few more won't matter.**
Frank catches on to Melvin and realises he's getting attached to the dog and has a change of mind.

11. Frank: **Oh, he definitely wants him back right away.**

Melvin hesitates, looks hurt, and is obviously upset.

12. Melvin: **Okay.**
He goes back inside actually closing the door slowly for a change instead of banging it.

13. Melvin: **Hungry, I'll be right with you pooch.**

The dog is running around agitatedly inside. Melvin goes back inside, locks the door breathes in deeply and (cries).

1.k Melvin returns Verdell after a walk

Melvin comments on his day then calls the dog to remove his lead.

1. Melvin: **What a day! Come here, come here.**
2. Melvin: **Maybe I'll bring him some food by.**

3. Simon: Thank you for walking him. Will you excuse me I'm not feeling so well.
 4. Melvin: This place smells like shit
 5. Simon: Go away.
 6. Melvin: This, er, this cleaning lady, doesn't, er..
 7. Simon: Please, just leave.
 8. Melvin: What happened to your queer party friends?
 9. Simon: Get out of here ...⁸
 10. There's nothing worse than having to feel this way in front of you.
 11. Melvin: Nelly, ... you're a disgrace to depression
 12. Simon: Rot in Hell Melvin.
 13. Melvin: No need to stop being a lady. (A sarcastic tone to his voice)
 Quit worrying. You'll be back on your knees in no time.

As he says this *he turns his back on Simon and walks away.*

Simon forces himself up out of his wheel chair and smacks out at Melvin. Melvin *raises his hands* to protect himself.

14. Verdell *barks a couple of times.* There is a sequence of *shot/ reverse shot* frames as Simon lets out his anguish.

15. Simon: **Is this fun for you, mm? You lucky devil. It just keeps getting better and better, doesn't it? I'm losing my apartment Melvin. And Frank, he wants me to ... beg my parents, who haven't called me, for help. And I won't and I, I don't want to paint anymore. So the life I was trying for, is over, the life that I had is gone. And I'm feeling so damned sorry for myself that it's difficult to breathe. It's high times for you isn't it Melvin? The gay neighbour is terrified then he screams Terrified.**

Then there is a long silence. The two of them sit down.

16. Melvin: **I was, I was just ... trying to give you a boost.**
 17. Simon: **Lucky you. You're here for rock bottom. You absolute ... horror of a human being.**

Melvin then *takes a couple of deep breaths* preparing himself to say

18. Melvin: **The one thing I'll do for you. I er, might cheer you up.**

19. Now in *a very soft voice* Simon says: **Get out.**

20. Melvin: **D'you wanna know why the dog prefers me? It's not affection. It's er, it's a trick.**

21. Melvin: **I keep bacon in my pocket.**

At this *he produces a polythene bag with bacon* in out of his pocket.

22. Verdell gives some *little yaps.*

23. Melvin: **See?**

24. Simon: **Oh, my gosh.**

25. Melvin: **Let's er. We'll both call him. You'll see. It's a trick. Okay?**

26. Simon: **Come here Verdell. Come on, come here. (Simon chuckles)**

Come here baby, no, it's okay. Come here.

Melvin indicates for the dog to go to Simon by *pointing with his finger* and also by *pushing the inside of his cheek with his tongue*, and *nodding his head towards Simon*. But even so the Verdell chooses to leap on Melvin and lick him.

27. Melvin: **Stupid, stupid dog.**

28. Simon: **Could you leave now ... please.**

29. Melvin: **I don't get it. I don't get it.**

There is then a point of view shot (see glossary) of Melvin and Verdell where they look at each other stupidly reflecting Melvin's expression and then at Simon, apologetically.

⁸ Three dots represent a short break in the flow of the utterance

1.1 Melvin takes Chinese soup around to Simon

Melvin knocks on the door and inside we see Simon hobbling to open it.

1. Melvin: **I took a**

The door bangs open so he stops in mid sentence then continues

2. Melvin: **I took a chance you were up. I brought you some Chinese soup. My, I've never been so tired in my life. I haven't been sleeping. Or felt like myself. I'm in trouble.**

Melvin is now sitting down at one end of a bench and Simon at the other, the can of soup between them.

3. Simon: **Sick, nauseous.**

4. Melvin: **Sleepy**

5. Simon: **And you barely find the will to complain.**

6. Melvin: **Yeah. I'm glad we did this. Good talking to you.**

Melvin stands up and leaves, Simon has a look of puzzlement on his face after such a short conversation.

1.m Melvin has to drive Simon

1. Frank: **That's why you brought me here, that's really why you brought me here?**

2. Melvin: **Well, now, it's not even mine. This guy Simon seems to have enough on his mind. But The dog did throw up twice last night, and his spark is off.**

3. Frank: **Well take him to the vet.**

4. Melvin: **I did, they say his stomach's out of whack. And they need him for a couple of days.**

5. Frank: **Well, do it. What're you waiting for?**

This is quite a heated discussion but when Carol appears Frank eases up and says

6. Frank: **Sorry (to Carol for talking too loud as Carol brings their order, she says**

7. Carol: **Excuse me and gives Melvin a thank you note this is for later.**

8. Melvin: **What's this?**

9. Carol: **It's a note**

10. Melvin: **A note?**

11. Carol: **Yeah, it's a thank you note**

12. Melvin: **A thank you note. No, no, no.**

13. Carol: **You can read it later.**

14. Melvin: **No, no thank you, no, no thank you note. No, no, no, no.**

Thank you, thank you.

Carol looks amazed, her eyes almost popping out, she turns around and walks away.

15. Frank: **She's nice.**

16. Melvin: **Yeah.**

17. Frank: **Real nice, huh?**

18. Melvin: **Really nice. He breathes in deeply, through his teeth. Sh, shouldn't that be a good thing, telling somebody no thanks required?**

Frank nods yes in agreement

19. Frank: **Sure looks like it went over too. Laughing Look at you.**

Frank gives Melvin a friendly punch on his shoulder.

20. Frank: **You, you're sure making the rounds. Simon says you brought him soup last night. Laughs some more.**

21. Melvin: **What? Look, at you. You, you, you, you think I'm a mark.**

22. Frank: **You help with the dog. Now there's other things. Hey, I'm, I'm as concerned about Simon as you are. It's, it's not just financial assistance. He's got to get to Baltimore and ask his parents for money tomorrow.**

23. Melvin: **Well yeah. I mean, you know if his parents are alive, they have to help.**

24. Frank: **It's the rules. Good. That's great. Let them help him. Okay. Only, eh I gotta high maintenance selling painter coming through so I'm out. Can you drive him?**
25. Melvin: **Think white and get serious.**
26. Frank: **Take my car, a convertible.**
Melvin looks away in disbelief that Frank should ask this favour
27. Frank: **Do you drive?**
28. Melvin: **Like the wind but I'm not doin' it.**
29. Carol: **Getting loud. Getting loud!**
30. Melvin: **He wants me to take his car and his client to Baltimore**
31. Carol: **I want your life for one minute well my big problem is somebody offers me a free convertible so I can get out of this city.**
32. Frank: **Atta girl.**
Then she storms off and this behaviour of hers prompts Melvin to change his mind.
33. Melvin: **Okay, I'll do it. I'll take him. I'll take him. Yeah, get, get him ready, packed tomorrow morning, I'll take him. Okay? I'll take him.**
34. Frank: **Fine.**
35. Melvin: **Okay.**
36. Frank: in a very happy tone of voice, as if closing a deal : **Okay**
37. Melvin: Taking some deep breaths again. **All right. I'll see you tomorrow. Er, I, let's not drag this out, we don't enjoy one another that much.** He dismisses Frank with the wave of a hand and starts to season his food, ignoring Frank.
38. Frank: **If there is some mental foundation that raises money for people like you please ... be sure to let me know.**
39. Melvin: **Last word freak.**
40. Carol reappears on the scene and says: **Bye, bye to Frank.**
41. Frank: **Good luck, lady.**
42. Carol: to Melvin: **So, want anything else?**
43. Melvin: **Yeah. I'm going to give my queer neighbour of mine a lift to Baltimore.**
44. Carol: **Okay.**
45. Melvin: **Hey. What I did for you – it's, eh, working out?**
46. Carol: **What you did changed my life**
and she goes on to read the letter she's written. Carol gets the note out and starts reading it.
47. Melvin: **No, er, no ... No thank you note**
48. Carol: **Part of what I said in this entire history of my life, which you won't read. Is that somehow you have done much more for my mother, my son and me than anybody else ever has. I'm just gonna read you this part of it. And that makes you the most important, surprising, generous person I ever met in my life. And you're going to be in our prayers, our daily prayers for ever**
49. Melvin : **Lovely.** Again he takes a deep breath.
50. Carol: **I also wrote one part of just. Where I say, where I, er, wrote I'm sorry. I'm sorry when I, when I got mad at you for, for, when you came over and you told my son that he ought to answer back. So, I wrote that I was sorry about that. And that I, I wrote that I was sorry for bustin' in on you that night and I'm sorry for bustin' in on you that night when I, said I was never ... I was sorry. And I'm sorry for every time your food was cold, or that you had to wait two seconds for a coffee fill up.**
She is almost crying. **I'm sorry for spotting right there at the table in the restaurant that human being that had it in him to do this thing for us. You know what I'm just gonna start from the beginning. I have not been able to express my gratefulness to you. Even as I look at the word grateful now it doesn't begin to tell you what I feel**
51. Melvin: **Er, that's er, nice o' y'u. Thank you.**
52. Carol: **Thank you.**

53. Melvin: **And I want you to do something for me.**
There is a long silence until Carol breaks it with
54. Carol: **I'm sorry. Didn't I say what? I thought I'd said what. ... What?**
55. Melvin: **I want you to go on this trip ...**
56. Carol: **Huh. No sir.**
57. Melvin: **I can't do this without you. I'm afraid he might pull the stiff one eye on me. I need you to chaperone. Separate everything but cars. You said you like convertibles. Now I'm on the hook.**
58. Carol: **I'm sorry. The stiff one eye?**
59. Melvin: **Two days**
60. Carol: **I can't I work**
61. Melvin: **You get off when you want to.**
62. Carol: **My son**
63. Melvin: **Beth says he's doing fine.**
64. Carol: **Melvin I'd rather not.**
65. Melvin: **What has that got to do with it?**
66. Carol: **Funny I thought it was a strong point.**
67. Melvin: **Write a note, ain't she sweet. I need a hand and where'd she go?**
68. Carol: **Are you saying accepting your help obligates me?**
69. Melvin: **Is there any other way to see it?**
70. Carol: **No.**

1.n Melvin introduces Carol to Simon

1. Frank: **I'm sorry I'm not taking you myself.**
2. Simon: **So am I Frank.**
3. Frank: **Everything's gonna be okay, right?**
4. Simon: **Yeah.**
5. Frank: **Gimme a hug.**
6. Melvin: **Soak it up. It's your last chance for a hug for a few days.**
As Melvin sees Carol arriving he comes running up
7. Carol: **Hello, hi!**
8. Melvin: **Thank you for being on time.**
9. Melvin: **Carol the waitress. Simon the fag.**

1.o Melvin has to give a compliment

1. Carol: **You wanna dance?**
2. Melvin: **Well, I've been thinking about that since you brought it up before.**
3. Carol: **And?**
4. Melvin: **No. I, I don't get this place. They make me buy a new outfit and they let you in in a housedress.**
Carol stands up to leave
5. Melvin: **Why, er, I mean, I, er I didn't mean it that way. I mean ,, You oughta sit down. Just sit down. You can still give me the dirty look just sit down and give it to me**
6. Carol: **Pay me a compliment Melvin. I need one. Quick. You have no idea how much what you just said hurt my feelings.**
7. Melvin: **It's remarkable that when someone gets that they need you they threaten to walk out**
8. Carol: **A compliment is something nice about somebody else. Now or never.**
Melvin indicates for her to sit down with an abrupt down movement of his hand
9. Carol: **And mean it!**
Melvin wipes his brow and rubs his hands together
10. Melvin: **Can we order first?**

11. Carol: (Carol nods a yes and says) **Okay.**
12. Melvin: **Now I gotta a real great compliment for you and it is true.**
13. Carol: **I'm so afraid you're going to say something awful.**
14. Melvin: **Don't be pessimistic. It's not your style.**
15. Melvin: **Ok, here I go. -Clearly a mistake I got this what ailment phew - My doctor, a shrink I used to go to all the time, he says that in 50 or 60 percent of the cases a pill really helps.**
16. I hate pills very dangerous thing pills. Hate I'm using the word hate here about pills hate.
17.My compliment is, that night you came over and told me that you would never ... Ugh mmm. All right. well you were there you know what you said.
18.Well my compliment to you is ... Next morning I started taking the pills.
19. Carol: **I don't quite get how that's a compliment for me.**
20. Melvin:Silence **You make me want to be a better man.**
21. Long silence Carol: **That's maybe the best compliment of my life**
They smile at each other **He**
22. Melvin: **Well maybe I overshot a little because I was just aiming at just enough to keep you from walking out.**
- They laugh together, he sighs, he breathes in and then out deeply with relief
23. Carol: **How's it going with those pills?** She has a dismayed look in her eye.
24. Carol: **Good ! I hope, I hope ,I hope, I ho.. humph**
25. Melvin: **Well it's, it's, it's er, it's er, little by little it's, it's, it's, it's, er, exhausting talking like this exhausting**
- He sighs sadly face buried in hands, she moves round to other side of the table
26. Carol: **Did you ever let a romantic moment make you do something you know is stupid**
27. Melvin: **Never**
28. Carol: **Here's the trouble with never.**
She kisses him, they both smile, he licks his lips, savouring the moment.
29. Melvin: **You don't owe me that**
30. Carol: **That wasn't a payment. When you first came into breakfast and when I first saw you I thought you were handsome**
- Then there is silence. He looks uncomfortable
31. Carol: **Then of course you spoke. So now that your softball under belly is all exposed.**
32. **Tell me, why did you bring me here?**
33. Silence **well I it's er . It's er a personal question I.**
34. Carol interrupts **Tell me, even if you' re scared.**
35. Melvin: **Scared?**
36. Carol: **Tell me why you wanted me here.**
37. Then she whispers **It's Ok, if you ask me I'll say yes.**
38. Melvin: **I, er I er no I,I er there er a lot of reasons I thought, one thought maybe if you had sex with Simon maybe it...**
39. Carol interrupts: **What?**
40. Melvin: **Well, that's ju, just one idea, one idea.**
41. Carol: **That's why you've brought me?**
She is angry **Like I'm ... a what? And I owe you ... what?**
42. Melvin: **I,I don't know why I brought ya. I,I, It was just one thought that I had, it came out first that's all there was to it. I thought, you kiss him, me, and er, you two seemed to hit it off.**
- She gets up angrily
43. Melvin: **No wait, wait, er, that's just, er, I didn't mean . Forget what I said about Simon**
44. Carol: **I'll never forget you said it.**

45. Melvin: **It 's a mistake.** silence
 46. Melvin: **It was a mistake.** He lowers his head in exasperation

1.p Melvin talks to the barman

1. Melvin: **The next thing I know she's, she's sitting right there next to me.**
 2. **Weil it's not ... right to go into details. I got nervous. I screwed up.**
 3. **I said the wrong thing. However, if I hadn't ... I could be in bed right now with a woman who if ... you make her laugh you've got a life.**
 4. **Instead I'm here with you. No offence, but a moron pushing the last legal drug.**

1.q Melvin gives Simon the bad news

After checking out of the hotel Simon is waiting in the car, while Melvin is on the phone to Frank. Melvin is holding the phone with just two fingers and maintains it at distance from his ear so as not to catch any germs.

1. Melvin: **No choice. Nothing like no choice to make you feel at home. Do it then. Get the dog picked up. I can't believe you let it stay there.** Then Melvin hangs up before saying: **Goodbye.**

Melvin returns to the car, with a gesture of thumbs down he continues.

2. Melvin: **Your luck's running. They sublet your place You're homeless. Frank's gonna line up a new place you can use for now.**
 3. Simon: **Another place, where?**
 4. Melvin: **Does it matter?**
 5. Simon: **No. It doesn't. Fine.**

1.r Melvin welcomes Simon

Melvin invites Simon to stay in his flat, commenting on the nice job Frank and colleagues have done in installing Simon's things.

1. Melvin: **Nice. It's good. They got your music. Have to say they did a good job. Cosy, yeah?**
 2. Simon: **Thank you , Melvin.. You overwhelm me. I love you.**
 3. Melvin: **I tell you buddy I'd be the luckiest guy alive if that did it for me. Make yourself at home.**

Melvin taps Simon on his shoulder.

1.s Melvin receives a call from Carol

1. Melvin: **Hello**
 2. Carol: **Yeah**
 3. Melvin: **How are you doing?**
 4. Carol: **Not so hot**
 5. Melvin: **Why. What's wrong?**
 6. Carol: **I don't know whether I'm being sensible or hard on you.**
 7. Melvin: **Maybe both. Maybe.**
 8. Carol: **You see right there I don't know whether you're being cute or ... crazy now.**

9. Melvin: **Cute**

Carol comes back hard

10. Carol: **You don't have to answer everything I say. Just listen ... to me. Okay Listen ... to me. It's really something that you're looking after Simon.**

And what I said on the street. That's a bad thing to say. And it made me sick to my stomach. It was a bad thing to say. And I'd be lying if I didn't say I ... enjoy your company. But the truth is you do bother me enormously. And I don't think that, I think it's better for me not to have contact with you because you're not ready and you're a pretty old guy to not be ready. And I'm too old to ignore that But there were extraordinary ... kindnesses that did take place.

There is a few moments of silence then Carol says

11. Carol: **Huh. So, anyway thanks for the trip. ... Goodnight, goodnight.**
 12. Melvin: **Okay if I say ... something now?**
 13. Carol: **Go ahead.**
 14. Melvin: **I shoulda danced with ya.**
 15. Carol: **Mmm. Goodnight, goodnight. Carol puts the phone down.**

1.t Melvin takes Simon's advice

1. Melvin: **Are you gonna talk to me or not?**
 2. Simon: **I'm coming. What did she say?**
 3. Melvin: **That I'm a great guy, extraordinary. And she doesn't want contact with me. I'm dying here.**
 4. Simon: **Because ... you love her.**
 5. Melvin: **No. And you people are supposed to be sensitive and sharp.**
 6. Simon: **Then you tell me why. You're the one who's dying here.**
 7. Melvin: **I don't know. Let me sleep on it,**
 8. Simon: **Oh, come on.**
 9. Melvin: **I'll figure it out**
 10. Simon: **Oh, please.**
 11. Melvin: **It's er, I'm, um, um, stuck. I can't get back to my own life**
 12. **She's evicted me from my life.**
 13. Simon: **Did you really like it that much?**
 14. Melvin: **It's better than this. Look you! I'm very intelligent. If you're going to give me hope you've gotta do better then you're doing. I mean if you can't be at least mildly interested, then shut the hell up. I'm drowning here and you're describing the water.**
 15. Simon: **Well picking on me won't help.**
 16. Melvin: **Well if that's true, I'm really in trouble.**
 17. Simon: **But, Melvin, do you know where you're lucky? You know who you want. I would take your seat any day. So do something about it.**
 18. Simon knocks Melvin's shoulder hard with his own.
 19. Simon: **Go over there. Now. Tonight. Don't sleep on it. I mean, I mean, it's not, not always good to let things calm down. You can do this, Melvin. You can do this. You can. Pull the stops; tell her how you feel.**
 Then Simon whispers in Melvin's ear.
 20. Simon: **You can do this. You can do this.**
 21. Melvin: **Hey, I'm, I'm charged.**
 22. Simon: **Yes you are.**
 23. Melvin: **She might kill me if I go over.**
 24. Simon: **Then get in your jamies and I'll read you a story. Listen I really think you have a chance here. I mean, the best thing you have going for you is your willingness to humiliate yourself. So, go over there. Do this. Catch her off guard.**
 25. Melvin: **Okay.**
 26. Simon: **Okay.**
 27. Melvin: **Thanks a lot.**

28. Simon: **Okay.**
 29. Melvin: **Here I go**
 30. Simon: **What's wrong?**
 31. Melvin: **I forgot to lock the door**

1.u Melvin walks along the road Melvin

Melvin pays Carol a visit at four in the morning. He does not want to go into her apartment as he feels confined in there. So he and Carol decide to take a stroll to the local bakery in the hope that it will open soon. He starts singing.

1. Carol: **What are you doing?**
 2. Melvin: **I still want you to hear part of the car song.**
 3. Carol: **You don't have to.** He whistles and sings
 4. Melvin: **And darling I'm never lonely whenever you're in sight.**
 5. Carol: **Thank you.**

At this point Melvin walks off along the lines of the curb.

6. Carol: **I'm sorry, whatever this is it's not going to work.**

He looks at the cracks on the floor, then at Carol and hesitantly takes the first step and walks over those lines towards her.

7. Melvin: **I'm feeling better Carol.**
 8. Carol: **Melvin, even though it may seem that way now, you don't know me all that well. I'm not the answer for you.**
 9. Melvin: **Hey, Got a great compliment for you.**
 10. Carol: **You know what ..**
 11. Melvin: **J, j, j, just let me, let me talk. Just. I might be the only person on the face of the earth that knows you are the greatest woman on earth.**
 12. **I might be the only one who appreciates how amazing you are in every single thing that you do. And how you are with Spencer, Spence. And in every single thought that you have.**
 13. **How you say what you mean and how you almost always mean something that's all about being straight and good.**
 14. **I think most people miss that about you. And I watch them wondering how they can watch you bring their food and clear their tables and never get that they just met the greatest woman alive.**
 15. **And the fact that I get it makes me feel good about me.**

He laughs nervously. **Is that something that's, er, bad for you to be around, for you?**

16. Carol: **No.**
 17. Melvin: **I'm gonna grab ya.**

They both laugh

18. Melvin: **I didn't mean for that to be a question. I'm gonna grab ya.**
 They kiss but Carol looks very disappointed.

19. Melvin: **I know I can do better than that.**

He kisses her again.

20. Carol: **Better, definitely better.**

They walk off hand in hand along the street to the bakery to buy some rolls. Melvin no longer worrying about any lines he is stepping on. In fact he stops and stares for a moment at those lines and cracks before following Carol through the doorway into the bakery.

APPENDIX 2

Transcriptions of two excerpts mentioned in the film analysis

2.a.

Simon: **I just watch until something strikes. What I do is watch. Have you ever watched somebody that doesn't know you are watching them? An old woman sitting on a bus or kids going to school. Or somebody just waiting and you see this flash come over them. And you know immediately that it has nothing to do with anything external because that hasn't changed and now when you see it they're just sort of realer and they're more alive. I mean if you look at someone long enough you discover their humanity.**

Vincent: **Wow! I know exactly what you mean.**

Simon: **Oh my God. Hold it!**

2.b.

Nora, Simon's maid, knocks on Melvin's door to ask him a favour. Melvin is obviously not pleased about the visit so only half opens the door.

Melvin: **Is he dead yet?**

Maid: **No! Eh! Would there be any chance that you would be willing to walk his dog for him?**

Melvin: **Absolutely!**

Maid: **You're a wonderful man.**

Melvin: laughs and circles his head around in acceptance of the compliment. He can't take compliments as it embarrasses him.

Maid: **Um, 2 o'clock would be a good time and here is the key in case he is asleep. Open his curtains for him, so he can see God's beautiful work and he'll know that even things like this happen for the best**

Melvin: **Where did they teach you to talk like this? In some Panama city cellar, in one hump-hump bar, or is this getaway day and your last shot of his whisky? Sound crazy someplace else. We're all stocked up here**

He slams the door in her face, and the maid walks away in a daze not understanding anything

APPENDIX 3

GLOSSARY

Glossary of cinematographic terms provided on jeanwoo@koreatimes.com

auteur

an "author" of a film, usually identified as the director, especially a director with a recognisable style and whose personal vision dominates the film or filmmaking process, as opposed to just a metteur en scene whose direction is considered more like craftsmanship.

backlighting

lighting cast onto the figures from the side opposite the camera. It creates a thin outline of light on the figures' edge.

body orientation

the angle at which a person leans or is placed in relation to another person or object

camera angle

the position of the frame in relation to the subject it shows. A high angle is when camera is looking down, low angle when looking up.

cutting

The selection and assembly of the various shots or sequences for a reel of film.

match cut

a cut in which two shots joined are linked by visual, aural, or metaphorical parallelism

establishing shot

a shot, usually involving a distant framing, that shows the spatial relations among the important figures, objects, and setting in a scene.

eye-line match cutting

a cut obeying the axis of action principle, in which the first shot shows a person looking off in one direction and the following shot shows a nearby space containing what he or she sees. If the person looks left, the following shot should imply that the looker is offscreen right.

fill light

lighting from a source less bright than the key light, used to soften deep shadows and illuminate areas not covered by key light. Also called filler light. See three-point lighting.

diegetic sound

any voice, musical passage, or sound effect presented as originating from a source within the film's world.

low-key lighting

lighting that creates strong contrast between light and dark areas of the shot, with deep shadows and little fill light

key frontal lighting

lighting directed into the scene from a position near the camera.

key lighting

in the three-point lighting system, the brightest light coming into the scene.

mise-en-scène

all the elements placed in front of the camera to be photographed, that is, part of the cinematic process that take place on the set, as opposed to montage, which takes place afterward. It includes the settings and props, lighting, costumes and make-up, and figure behavior

metteur-en-scène

a modest - sometimes derogatory - term for "director". see auteur.

pan

movement of camera from left to right or vice versa on a stationary tripod. On the screen, it produces a mobile framing which scans the space horizontally. Not to be confused with tracking shot.

point of view (POV) shot

a shot taken with the camera placed approximately where the character's eyes would be, representing what the character sees; usually cut in before or after a shot of the character looking.

positioning in the frame / spatial relation

a person's or object's position in relation to other people and objects in the mise-em-scène

prop

any moveable item which is included in a scene

proscenium arch

the frame which encloses the image

proxemic distance

the physical distance between people and things

proxemic positioning

spatial relationship among characters

side lighting

lighting coming from one side of a person or an object, usually in order to create a sense of volume, to bring out surface tensions, or to fill in areas left shadowed by light from another source.

shot/reverse shot

two or more shots edited together that alternate characters, typically in a conversation situation. In continuity editing, characters in one framing usually look left, in the other framing, right. Over-the-shoulder framings are common in shot/reverse-shot editing.

tracking shot

a mobile framing that travels through space forward, backward, or laterally. It could move on tracks

APPENDIX 4

Details of the cast and production team

The ensuing material about the cast and production team were obtained from internet
(July 1999) - Mike Piazza, Soundtrk50@aol.com

Directed by: James L. Brooks

Produced by:

James L. Brooks
Bridget Johnson
John D. Schofield
Kristi Zea

Screenplay by:

Mark Andrus
James L. Brooks

Cast:

Jack Nicholson as Melvin Udall
Helen Hunt as Carol Connelly
Greg Kinnear as Simon Nye
Cuba Gooding, Jr. as Frank Sachs
Shirley Knight as Beverly
Jesse James as Spencer Stone
Skeet Ulrich as Vincent