



Acting Against Principles

**How the violation of conversation rules in dialogue
creates a clever TV character**

Gustav Hagman

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Department of Social and Behavioral Studies / University West

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Supervisor: Anna Elgemark

Examiner: Martin Dvorak

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Author: Gustav Hagman

Supervisor: Anna Elgemark

Abstract:

This paper studies the use of violations of conversation principles in the written dialogue of Tyrion Lannister in *Game of Thrones*. The aim is to establish if and how these violations aid in making him seem clever. The character's dialogues are matched against three theoretical principles: Politeness Theory, The Cooperative Principle and Turn-taking Principles. The findings suggest that by breaking basic principles of conversation, Tyrion provides entertaining dialogue and manages to create unexpected solutions to different threatening situations. Results show an even distribution of strategic violations, among the three theoretical approaches, which could suggest that the dialogue is consciously written to help make the audience feel impressed by the character's features. Tyrion's violations of conversation principles is a contribution in what makes him seem witty. This ability in the character seems to be closely linked to a lack of fear for any negative social consequences. The character's ability to act free from rules of social behavior could be considered one of the reasons behind his popularity among fans of the show.

Keywords:

politeness theory, the cooperative principle, turn-taking, drama dialogue, witty, character creation, tyrion lannister, game of thrones.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Most people have woken up the day after an argument and thought of a really witty phrase that they wish they would have said the day before. Just a few words that would have left the listener completely stunned. But would we really, even if we *had* thought of the right words, have said them? When we engage in conversations we immediately enter a silent agreement with our counterparts. This silent agreement, or “unspoken pact” as Finegan calls it (2012:307), contains rules and principles that most speakers take for granted. These rules and principles direct the words that come out of our mouths and make us want to be honest, relevant and act in a socially accepted manner. Even if we do come up with the perfect “killer” line to say in our heads, our role as social beings often stops us from uttering it.

These rules and recommendations of social interaction that most of us learn while growing up also help us interpret utterances correctly depending on context. We get a sense of “intuition” (Wooffitt 2005:19) that makes the communication between humans a very sophisticated matter. We might hesitate before asking a stranger for directions, because we do not wish to violate their privacy. But if our need for help exceeds our need to respect privacy, we most likely take the time to initiate the forced conversational event by excusing our intrusion. Because if we do not, our words might become a threat to the other person's right to freedom. This ability to express our intended message properly, is referred to as “Pragmatic Competence” (Pragmatics - Wikipedia).

In general, we often prefer to follow the principles, stick to the rules and follow the recommended guidelines that belong to conversations. This provides for smooth and effective dialogues, and we protect ourselves from the unpleasant risk of any negative social consequences. By choosing to give the expected answers we avoid surprises and conflicts while relations are maintained. It is the safest and most undramatic way.

Since we know almost instinctively how to interact without causing trouble, we also know that by breaking the rules of cooperation, politeness or turn-taking we are likely to make someone upset. Sometimes this might actually be exactly what we want. But besides personal conflicts, there is another area where conflicts and relations often play important parts: drama.

One main source for daily drama is TV shows. In *Television Dramatic Dialogue*, Kay Richardson notes that unexpected events and utterances in dialogues make them interesting and entertaining for the viewers (2010:116). One way of reaching this effect could be to let characters violate the rules and principles of conversation. The title of this essay is *Acting Against Principles*, and it examines how Tyrion Lannister (Peter Dinklage) in *Game of Thrones* (HBO, 2011-present) uses violations of conversation principles to seem clever.

1.2 Aim

This essay aims to find out if and how the character Tyrion Lannister from *Game of Thrones* uses a dialogue that breaks rules of conversation as part of what makes him look clever. To reach the aim the following questions will be answered:

- What, if any, rules or principles belonging to conventional conversation does Tyrion's dialogue violate?
- How does Tyrion's dialogue violate these rules or principles of conversation?

The fact that Tyrion is one of the most popular characters in a successful TV production and that his use of speech is one of his main distinguishing features together make an analysis of his dialogue relevant.

A study of what we expect in certain situations can hopefully also tell us something about ourselves and our society. It is worth considering how much of our daily conversations that are, in a sense, already “scripted”. By noticing how one can break some of the expectations or demands, that could be limiting us in our daily lives, this analysis of Tyrion's way of thinking, acting and speaking “outside the box” might also function as some form of inspiration in finding new strategies in conversation.

1.3 Previous Research

The research field of Television dialogue is an area often regarded as a gray-zone, or at least it has been up until the recent few years. The traditional relationship between linguistic studies and Television language could be described as slightly strained. To some extent this is probably so because TV dialogue cannot really be studied by the methods belonging to authentic speech, because (with the exception of reality shows and interviews, even though that could also be discussed) the conversations on TV are not authentic. Neither can the study of audio and visual media belong to the field of literary studies, because its form is simply not literature.

During recent years, however, a notable increase in studies related to popular and fictional TV shows has occurred. A combination of increased TV entertainment, including what some refer to as 'quality TV', can be seen happening together with this development. Bednarek (2010) mentions a few reasons as to why the study of Television, “especially fictional” (2010:16), should be encouraged and justified. The huge popularity of the medium is a reason of its own, as well as how

it can be said to reflect our society. Another important role of Television today is as a social matter, a subject for discussion and a large part of how people form their identities, i.e. you are what you watch.

The scientifically studied aspects belonging to and affecting conversations are several and their relations to each other are quite complex. Even though the dialogue written for TV characters can be considered simplified, designed or made for “easy listening” (Richardson, 2010:4), research shows that it still can and should be analyzed by using different approaches. This is described for example by Afzali (2013) in his article regarding deep analysis of characters from Woody Allen's *Death Knocks*, where Politeness Theory and Discourse Analysis are used in the study of the dialogue. By considering what sociological variables were involved when the character chose to use polite markers or not, Afzali is able to establish how the fictional character can be argued to evaluate “his/her social power” (Afzali, 2013:45).

Fairly recent articles have even been based on one single part of dialogue from TV drama, as in Michael Toolan's (2011) study of the chess-scene from *The Wire*. In this scene the characters use a lot of street slang and a certain jargon which, interviews revealed, the audience could often not fully comprehend. Toolan's study concludes that even speech that is inconceivable to the viewer plays a role in the development of an understanding of a character. Another form of character study through dialogue is Mandala's (2011) study of character development over time. Her essay is a corpusbased case study of how the dialogue from the *Star Trek* character Seven of Nine changes from one season of the series to another, based on her change of context.

Other studies of Television Language, with focus on Discourse and Ethnography, could be mentioned as well. Branström's (2013) essay examines the function of Politeness Theories and Intertextuality by the characters in *Suits*. Her findings suggest that one of the main purposes for the use of intertextuality in TV dialogue is to present certain features of the characters. If, for example, a character referred to an 80's action movie rather than a classic play in order to convey a certain point, this selection could also tell the audience something about the character. Valis (2013) examines the function of linguistic humor strategies in action movies. In his comparison of vulgarisms uttered by the movie heroes, there was a clear difference in how characters representing different “socioeconomic classes” (2013:11) used profanities. All of these works are examples of the rapid growth of studies in this specific field during the last few years. Collected essays belonging to this general theme can be found in *Telecinematic Discourse: Approaches To The Language Of Films And Television Series* (2011).

Two larger studies of dialogue in TV Shows, which are also referred to in several of the articles and essays already mentioned, are Richardson's *Television Dramatic Dialogue* (2010) and

Bednarek's *Language of Fictional Television* (2010). Richardson argues for the study of fictional conversation by stating that even though the speakers are fictional, the “eavesdropping” (2010:4) listeners, being the TV audience, are still very real, and the effect that the created dialogue has on them is as well. And, Richardson continues, according to basic conversation theories we all play “roles” and “parts” during conversations (2010:3). Through a case study of *House*, she examines how wanted effects in TV characters, such as humor, are created through the help of dialogue. In *House*, she argues, the witty lines from the protagonist during conflicts with patients or colleagues serve not only as characterization but also as a very conscious element of entertainment aimed towards the viewers (2010:170). Bednarek's study also seeks to include popular culture in scientific studies (2010:16) and argues for the important role that dialogue plays in the creation of comical as well as dramatic TV Shows (2010:70).

1.4 Theory

There are several theories and approaches belonging to dialogue analysis. Due to the limited scope of this essay, the theories regarding rules and principles in conversations that are used in this study are delimited to three. These are *Politeness Theory*, *The Cooperative Principle* and *Turn-taking*.

First, in section 1.4.1 the general ideas belonging to Politeness Theory will be presented. Then, under 1.4.2 the general principles of Cooperation will be explained. Finally, section 1.4.3 deals with what can be expected in a conversation, depending on the rules of Turn-taking.

1.4.1. Politeness Theory

The model for *Politeness Theory* was introduced by Brown and Levinson. In their explanation of what politeness is and why we use this rather inefficient or indirect way of communicating, they make use of the term *face* (Brown & Levinson 1987:61). The face notion was originally developed by Goffman (Goffman 1955, 1967, as discussed in Wardhaugh, 2010:291) and represents the face that we present to others in social interaction. Our face is connected to our basic desires, to be liked and not to be imposed on. Any communication can be considered a risk to the face of others as well as one's own face. Therefore, we are obliged to protect our own face and the faces of others when we speak and interact.

Brown and Levinson define face as the “public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself” (Brown & Levinson 1987:61). There are two kinds of face, the *positive* and the *negative*. In short, positive face is the desire to gain the approval of others and negative face is the desire for personal freedom of action. Both of these desires must be considered when interacting, and therefore there are two kinds of politeness.

Positive politeness aims to offer friendship and covers the use of compliments. It is used to preserve and strengthen positive face. An example could be: “I love your hair!”, which is expressed in order to appeal to the need of being liked. *Negative politeness* includes apologizing, being indirect and striving to mitigate possible *Face-threats*. To say for example “Excuse me, sir, could you please close the door?” instead of simply “Close the door!” shows that the speaker is actively trying to mitigate the possible threat to the listener's desire for freedom of action. According to Brown and Levinson, politeness therefore exists in order to help us perform conversations without threatening each other's faces (1987:60).

The damage to the face can be caused to both speaker and hearer in a conversation. In a *Positive Face-Threatening act*, the speaker or hearer ignores a participant's feelings or wants. When an individual is forced to be separated from others so that their well-being is treated as less important, positive face is also threatened. According to Wardhaugh (2010:299), the use of politeness assumes that the speaker and hearer are working together in harmony, both trying to save each other's faces.

1.4.2 The Cooperative Principle

As mentioned above, Politeness relies on harmony between the participants. This is closely related to what Grice calls the *Cooperative Principle* (Grice 1975:26). The concept of Cooperation in communication represents unspoken rules that speakers and hearers rely on for efficient communication and correct interpretation.

Participants in a conversational event are assumed to respect four *maxims* (Grice 1975:28), often referred to as the Gricean Maxims. These maxims, or general principles, create a basic and common scene for the participants to interact on.

The maxim of Relevance or Relation tells speakers to be organized and relevant to the current situation (Grice 1975:28). If a question is answered with a completely irrelevant utterance, the listener could start questioning the sanity of the speaker. Another reaction will be for the listener to try to understand how the answer could be relevant to the question, by considering other possible factors. Perhaps the speaker wishes to avoid the subject.

The maxim of Quality is the second general principle that belongs to the cooperative principle. It assumes that the speaker is “genuine” (Grice 1975:28) and “truthful” (Finegan 2012:310). The speaker should only provide information that he or she thinks is true. They should also be able to prove what they assert. This principle is aimed mostly at utterances that represent facts, as opposed to speech acts covering emotional reactions, which are difficult to label true or false in the same way. Finegan also mentions the fact that the very existence of this maxim is what makes lying possible, because of the assumed cooperation between speaker and listener. If the listeners did not

expect the truth, the speakers could not lie to them.

The maxim of Quantity covers the amount of information given between the speaker and the listener. The speaker is assumed to mention all the necessary information to the listener and not withhold anything relevant. On the other hand, a speaker can also flout this maxim by providing too much information. According to Finegan (2012:308), society tends to stigmatize persons who repeatedly flout the maxim of quantity. People who cannot answer a question without telling their entire “life story” as well as those who answer only in single word utterances can be considered to be breaking the norm.

The maxim of Manner tells speakers and writers to be “orderly” (Grice 1975:27). The rules belonging to this general principle aim to minimize ambiguity, thus avoiding misunderstandings. The rules of orderliness also command the speaker to give the information in the right order. In the Western society, this often means to start with the most important and basic information, instead of saving it for the very end of the message. It also covers to re-tell an event in the correct sequence of events.

1.4.3. Turn-taking Rules

Because of the cooperative nature of conversation, the participants in it must be allowed to participate. That is, when *turn-taking* is relevant. The rules of turn-taking belong to the study of Conversation Analysis. Wooffitt (2005) mentions how studies have indicated that ordinary speech also follows specific rules of orderliness. The earlier approach to normal speech was to consider it too 'chaotic' to be worthy of serious studies. No logic rules or patterns were related to it. But through works, influenced by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, among others, terms and factors of Conversations Analysis were established. Among other areas, Sacks' studies covered how the turn-taking in ordinary conversation was handled (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974, as presented in Wooffitt 2005:26).

Wooffitt refers to the turn-taking in ordinary conversations as “remarkable” (2005:26). It is remarkable because without any prior knowledge of how many turns there are going to be, in which order they will come, or how they will be allocated, the turn transfer in most conversations is likely to pass without any major interference. Sacks, together with Schegloff and Jefferson, described the procedures that participants systematically use in order to manage the turn-taking (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974, as presented in Wooffitt 2005:27f).

Wooffitt also mentions the procedures controlling who is next in turn during a conversation. The turn is allocated either by the speaker who indicates or selects the next speaker or by a *self-selected* next speaker. One of the rules regarding turn allocation is that if the speaker has indicated who is to

speak next in turn, then no other participant should speak at that turn. The easiest way to indicate the next person to speak is to address him or her by name. But *non-verbal acts* can also work, such as looking directly at the next speaker. If no clear identification of a next speaker is made, then a self-selected speaker could enter. The participant who speaks first then takes the turn (Wooffitt 2005:28).

By this principle, two or more speakers can sometimes start talking at the same time when turn is not directed. Or, the first speaker might continue with a new turn if no-one else does. If two or more self-selected persons speak at the same time, someone has to abandon their turn. *Overlapping* turns, when several speakers talk at the same time, are rare according to Wooffitt (2005:29) and so are gaps. Possible next speakers can often anticipate when turn-shifts are about to occur. However, if the next turn is not directed and no one starts to speak, the inevitable following silence can sometimes feel embarrassing.

One way of ensuring the next turn is to start talking early when a turn shift is about to begin. The self-selected speaker can anticipate what the last word will be and start the answer by a slight overlapping. The rules of turn-taking are often closely linked with body language. Wardhaugh (2010:317) mentions how some devices to keep the turn is to avoid eye-contact, pauses and what is known as *adjacency pairings*. The danger with this technique, however, is that the listeners could start to feel trapped as well as bored.

Paired action sequences or *adjacency pairs* are notions that cover conversational acts that belong to each other (Wooffitt 2005:32). Those speech acts consist of two parts, where one participant formulates the first part and then a second participant is expected to formulate the second suiting part. The existence of adjacency pairs ensures that there will be turns in conversations. Initial greetings in conversations are one example, but question and answer as well as complaint and apology also represent adjacency pairs. According to Wooffitt (2005:32), the first part of the pair *should* be met by an appropriate second part. Any other response is likely to be considered irrelevant. And participants are often sensitive to these expectations. If the right response part is missing, the first part might be repeated by the initial speaker.

The conversation principles belonging to turn-taking also involve rules about not interrupting (Finegan 2012:314), which is considered impolite. But to make these rules expressed, by asking a person 'not to interrupt' alternatively to 'start speaking', is also considered a politeness violation. We also allow for pauses before we *repair* other speakers' utterances, or else our finishing of another speaker's turn could be considered a violation of their independence.

Wardhaugh (2010:321) also mentions the rules regarding *topics* and topic-changes in conversations. The choice of topic is often a result of the cooperation in conversations. Topics are

rarely very specific and can easily change. But if most participants are engaged in a certain topic, one person is not likely able to change topic. This would demand some sort of socially accepted 'leverage', like being a teacher or the appointed leader.

To end a conversation without the proper *closing turns* is also considered impolite, and such behavior abandons the other participant in a rough way. According to Wardhaugh (2010:317), ending turns are often recognized by prolonged syllables, a waiting for a relevant transition place in the conversation and a certain body language.

2. Material

The material used in this study is taken from the first season of *Game of Thrones* (HBO, 2011-present). *Game of Thrones* is currently one of the most popular, discussed and anticipated TV Shows. According to HBO's own statistics, it is second only to *The Sopranos* in terms of viewer count (Adalian, Vulture.com). The show has also received a number of awards, including Emmy Awards and Golden Globe Awards.

Its first season aired in 2011, and the story is based on a fantasy novel series written by George R.R Martin. The show takes place mainly on the fictional continent of Westeros, and it has received a large international fan base. Due to its violent content as well as recurring nudity, *Game of Thrones* has also caused controversies. A large budget allows filming locations in several places over the world, including Iceland, Croatia, Scotland, Marocco as well as other countries.

The varying filming locations are necessary for the several parallel story-lines of the plot. One story-line follows the noble family houses' war for the power over the Seven Kingdoms, another covers the mysterious rising threat to the kingdoms coming from the uncivilized North, and a third storyline takes the viewers across the Southern sea to another realm rising up to take back the power over Westeros. Matters regarding social hierarchy, religion, loyalty, corruption, crime and punishment are all faced by the many characters of the show.

One of the most popular characters of *Game of Thrones* is the noble born dwarf Tyrion Lannister. He is played by Peter Dinklage who also has received several awards for his interpretation of the role. Tyrion is in an underdog position, because of his strained relations to his own family and the fact that he is a dwarf. Lacking in size and strength he has come to rely much on his conversational skills. This characteristic is also a reason why quotes from Tyrion are often repeated and mentioned when the show is discussed in various online forums. On the online fansite *hypable*, Alyce Adams writes the following when she gathers a collection of memorable quotes from the last season of *Game of Thrones*:

“Naturally, there are going to be a lot from Tyrion. He pretty much delivers something memorable every time he’s on screen...”

(Adams, hypable.com)

Recently George R.R Martin also released a book called *The Wit & Wisdom of Tyrion Lannister* (2013) containing some of the most noteworthy quotes delivered by Tyrion in the novels. These collected distinguishing features suggest that Tyrion's dialogue is highly appropriate to study when the aim is to see how conversation is used when creating a character referred to as “clever” (Game of Thrones - Wikipedia) and strong in “mental acuity” (HBO: Game of Thrones: Tyrion Lannister: Bio).

Season one of *Game of Thrones* consists of ten episodes, each approximately 60 minutes in length. By watching each episode carefully eight major dialogues featuring Tyrion were chosen for analysis in this essay. A common feature of these eight dialogues is some form of conflict between the participants in them. Together they also represent a majority of Tyrion's lines from the first season. These scenes, together with the transcribed versions, make up the corpus of this study. All eight dialogues, referred to as Dialogue 1 to Dialogue 8, are attached in appendix 1.

3. Method

By closely watching each dialogue scene together with the transcribed versions, each line delivered by Tyrion is matched against the rules and principles belonging to the linguistic theories of Politeness, Cooperation and Turn-taking. When rules or principles associated with these theories are violated in the dialogue, those lines are considered results and gathered under each separate theoretical label.

The general complexity of conversations makes almost any method of analysis short in one area or another. When looking only at the text versions of the dialogue, features affecting the situation could be missed out. Is one participant standing up and the other sitting down? Are they walking through a crowded street or a desert? A few words will often address this matter in the essay, but the whole complexity of relationships and backgrounds cannot be fitted into every dialogue example. This could be considered one disadvantage with this method.

Another difficulty lies in the fact that the three sets of theoretical guidelines used in this essay often share some common areas. To break a rule in turn-taking could also be considered as impoliteness, for example, or a flouting of one of the Gricean maxims. One difficulty therefore lies in how to categorize that certain type of violation. These decisions are made separately for each

presented example but the reader should be aware of this situation. Thus, the same sections of dialogue are at some points presented and discussed under several theoretical labels.

The next chapter presents examples of violations of the principles discussed in the theoretical background section, found in Tyrion's dialogue. The first examples feature situations where politeness is ignored, thereafter come examples of how the cooperation principle is exploited and finally examples of violations against turn-taking principles are presented.

4. Results

This section presents examples of where Tyrion's dialogue in *Game of Thrones* violates rules or principles of conversation. Eight dialogue sessions from the first season are analyzed in this way. The results are presented under each theoretical sub-heading, starting with violations of Politeness principles, thereafter Cooperation principles and finally violations of turn-taking principles. Each quoted dialogue, from 1 to 8, is attached in Appendix 1, together with a few words about the context. First names of conversation participants will be used when commenting on the lines in the conversations. This will hopefully make reading easier and keep characters belonging to the same families separated.

4.1 Violating Principles of Politeness

According to Politeness Theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987), participants in conversations choose to avoid speech acts that can be interpreted as attacks on the *face* of any of the participants. The term *face* represents the self-image that persons try to present to other people. In any social situation participants seek to respect and preserve this *face*, and speech acts that might damage it are called *face-threats*. When speakers are being polite they are effectively trying to evade face-threatening utterances. In this section, examples where Tyrion violates these principles of politeness will be presented (for a full description of the dialogues, see appendix 1).

The first example, taken from Dialogue 1, illustrates how Tyrion chooses to increase the level of face-threat instead of trying to evade it. This happens when he is talking to Benjen, First Ranger of the Night's Watch. Benjen enters the room where Tyrion and Yoren, recruiter for the Night's Watch, are currently laughing at the sad state of the recent recruits:

Benjen Stark :	[To Tyrion] The Night's Watch is a joke to you, is it? Is that what we are, Lannister? An army of jesters in black?
Tyrion Lannister :	You don't have enough men to be an army and aside from Yoren here, none of you are particularly funny.

(Dialogue 1)

Benjen is clearly annoyed and offended by the lack of respect Tyrion shows towards the men of the Night's Watch. He expresses this by openly confronting Tyrion, asking him if he thinks they are an "army of jesters". According to the principles of politeness, the expected response from Tyrion when he realizes he has threatened someone's positive face would be to acknowledge and express regret over the performed face-threat. But instead of stepping back and apologizing, Tyrion removes

all possibilities of Benjen's perception of the situation to be mistaken. He intentionally misinterprets Benjen's request for an apologetic and therefore his answer comes to reinforce his face-threats instead of mitigating them. Tyrion neglects Benjen's wish of keeping his face, saying that the Night's Watch, to which Benjen has sworn a life-long oath of loyalty, does not qualify as an "army" and if their aim was to be "funny", they had not succeeded in that either.

In the second example, taken from Dialogue 2, Tyrion makes face-threatening speech acts at his host and denies an attempt to tone down the hostility of the conversation. This happens when Tyrion arrives at Winterfell but is not properly received:

Tyrion Lannister:	I must say I received a slightly warmer welcome on my last visit.
Robb Stark:	Any man of the Night's Watch is welcome at Winterfell.
Tyrion Lannister:	Any man of the Night's Watch, but not I, eh, boy?
Robb Stark:	I'm not your boy, Lannister. I'm Lord of Winterfell while my father is away.
Tyrion Lannister:	Then you might learn a lord's courtesy.

(Dialogue 2)

Tyrion opens the conversation by stating: "I must say I received a slightly warmer welcome on my last visit". By doing so he questions the hospitality, thereby threatening the positive face, of his host Robb Stark. Robb's reply shows that he is prepared to let this violation slip, but his answer also includes an indirect insult to Tyrion, who only travels together with the Night's Watch: "Any man of the Night's Watch is welcome at Winterfell". This speech act could be considered a *possible* face-threat and could as such easily be avoided by not commenting further on it, similar to the way Robb ignored Tyrion's first line. Tyrion, however, immediately picks up this hinted insult when he quickly answers: "Any man of the Night's Watch, but not I, eh, boy?". This exposes an anti-social behavior in Robb, and the last word "boy" adds a remark on Robb's young age as well. By referring to Robb, currently sitting in the Lord's seat of Winterfell, as a child, Tyrion removes the part of being a 'man' from Robb's desired *face*. By now Tyrion is past possible or covert face-threats and when Robb reacts to this by saying that he is currently the Lord of Winterfell, Tyrion refers back to how his welcoming was not suiting of a Lord. Tyrion thereafter decides to ignore Robb and turns to his younger brother. When Robb finally realizes the friendly reasons behind Tyrion's visit, he tries to take back some of the hostility that has passed between them by stating: "You've done my brother a kindness. The hospitality of Winterfell is yours". Tyrion could have accepted this offer and thereby saved Robb's positive face, which would have been the expected and the requested reaction. But instead he turns down Robb's offer of hospitality and labels it "false courtesies":

Robb Stark: You've done my brother a kindness. The hospitality of Winterfell is yours.
 Tyrion Lannister: Spare me your false courtesies, Lord Stark. There's a brothel outside your walls.
 There I'll find a bed and both of us can sleep easier.

(Dialogue 2)

The next example, from Dialogue 3, shows how Tyrion quite easily ignores the positive face of the other participant in a conversation. This happens when he is talking to Theon Greyjoy, who lives in exile with the Starks, before leaving Winterfell. Instead of avoiding topics that are potential threats to Theon's face, Tyrion manages to mention several during their short dialogue. This way of ignoring the wants of the other participant directly opposes the behavior that Brown & Levinson suggest when a speaker notices certain topics that are sensitive for the listener (1987:62, 112). When Tyrion is approached by Theon, he does not avoid these areas: “Come to see me off, Greyjoy? Kind of you. Your master doesn't seem to like Lannisters”. In this line, Tyrion not only mocks Theon for seeking him out before he leaves, but also suggests that Robb Stark is his master. By referring to the Starks as Theon's “masters”, he questions his loyalty. This idea is picked up once again when Theon refers to the Lady of Winterfell as “My lady”, revealing loyalties to another House than his own. Tyrion also refers to the defeat of the presumed proud armies of the Greyjoys as a “stupid rebellion”. This choice of words also excludes any wish for respect towards Theon's family name, which no doubt is a large part of his *positive face*.

The following example comes from Dialogue 4 and shows how Tyrion uses a speech act that is a possible threat to the face of Catelyn Stark. This happens when Tyrion, now being under arrest for attempted murder, mentions the stupidity of having used his own weapon in this “imagined” crime:

Catelyn Stark: I am not a murderer, Lannister.
 Tyrion Lannister: Neither am I! I had nothing to do with the attempt on your son's life!
 Catelyn Stark: The dagger found...
 Tyrion Lannister: What sort of imbecile arms an assassin with his own blade?

(Dialogue 4)

Tyrion is being brought to the Vale, in order to be tried for his crimes. The Vale is ruled by Catelyn's sister, Arryn, who no doubt tends to support her sister more than someone of the Lannisters. Tyrion's utterance is an example of how the positive face of the Speaker as well as the Listener can be threatened. If Catelyn does not agree with his statement, this would be the same as labeling Tyrion an “imbecile”, in his own words but if she agrees, then she is the one acting against reason.

In Dialogue 5 there is another example of Tyrion violating the politeness principles. This

happens when Tyrion speaks to Queen Arryn, after he is sent back to his cell for not having confessed the murder attempt he was charged with:

Arryn: What do you think you're doing?
Tyrion: Confessing my crimes.
Catelyn: Lord Tyrion, you are accused of hiring a man to slay my son Bran in his bed, and of conspiring to murder my sister's husband Lord Jon Arryn, the Hand of the King.
Tyrion: Oh, I'm very sorry. I don't know anything about all that.
Arryn: You've had your little joke. I trust you enjoyed it.
 Mord, take him back to the dungeon. But this time find a smaller cell... With a steeper floor.
Tyrion: Is this how justice is done in the Vale? You accuse me of crimes, I deny them, so you throw me into a cell to freeze and starve? Where is the King's Justice? I am accused and demand a trial!

(Dialogue 5)

Tyrion asks: “Is this how justice is done in the Vale?”. In that utterance, Tyrion is threatening Queen Arryn's positive face in front of everyone gathered to hear his confessions. Tyrion indirectly demands a fair trial and to deny him that would make Arryn look unjust to all that are present.

Another example, taken from Dialogue 6, illustrates how Tyrion violates politeness principles by threatening Bronn's positive face. This happens when Tyrion expresses little need for Bronn's friendship. Bronn, who together with Tyrion is wandering through the dangerous hills of the Vale, is the one who first explains to Tyrion that he does not regard him a friend. In a typical conversation, a statement like that could upset the other participant to either answer back in an impolite way or to try to save the social status situation in the group by offering some sort of polite marker. Tyrion however, calmly says to Bronn that even though he would certainly prefer friendship: “I'm mainly interested in your facility with murder”. Bronn's main characteristic of interest for Tyrion is his ability to fight and protect them from hill tribes. By expressing this, Tyrion openly shows little interest in Bronn's positive face, which wants to be liked:

Tyrion: What do you want, Bronn? Gold? Women? Golden women?
 Stick with me and you'll have them all, for as long as I'm around and not for a moment longer. But you knew that. That is why you so valiantly took up arms to defend my honor.
Bronn: Fair enough. But don't go looking for me to bend the knee and "My Lord" you every time you take a shit. I'm not your toady and I'm not your friend.
Tyrion: Though I would treasure your friendship, I'm mainly interested in your facility with murder. And if the day ever comes when you're tempted to sell me out, remember this: Whatever their

price, I'll beat it. I like living.

(Dialogue 6)

In Dialogue 6 Tyrion also violates politeness principles by insulting the tribesmen of the hills. This happens shortly after his talk with Bronn. Suddenly, they are surrounded by hostile tribesmen, known as the Stone Crows, whose clear intent is to kill them. Tyrion, however, does not beg for mercy, but starts to bargain with and insults the tribesmen. The tribe leader, Shagga, is not impressed:

Shagga: We have no use for a half man's promises.

Tyrion: Half a man maybe, but at least I have the courage to face my enemies. What do the Stone Crows do? Hide behind rocks and shiver when the knights of the Vale ride by? Are those the best weapons you could steal? Good enough for killing sheep, if the sheep don't fight back. Lannister smiths shit better steel.

(Dialogue 6)

Tyrion calls the tribesmen cowards and ridicules their weapons. This is an example of a “baldly, on record” (Brown & Levinson 1987:69) positive face-threatening act, normally done when the speaker does not fear any reactions from the hearer. The fact that the tribesmen and their weapons could easily kill Tyrion in an instant is effectively ignored by Tyrion. The tribe leader Shagga, however, reminds him by swinging his axe in front of Tyrion's face, slightly cutting his cheek. Tyrion's reaction to this is to remain calm, but instead of gold, he offers Shagga control over the entire Vale provided he helps him to reunite with his father.

Tyrion also violates politeness principles in Dialogue 7, when he finally manages to reach his father's war camp. Tyrion's uncle Kevan and his father Tywin are talking when Kevan spots Tyrion entering their tent:

Kevan: Tyrion.

Tyrion: Uncle. Father.

Tywin: The rumors of your demise were unfounded.

Tyrion: Sorry to disappoint you.

(Dialogue 7)

Tywin's first words to Tyrion are a statement regarding the rumors of his death. There is no warm welcoming from the father's side, and Tyrion's response does not seek to mitigate this sign of a cold relationship between them: “Sorry to disappoint you.”. Tyrion's answer is a face-threat to Tywin,

since it exposes the father's cold personality. Tywin keeps expressing disappointment towards Tyrion when he compares him to his successful brother Jamie:

Tyrion: May I present My Lord Father, Tywin son of Tytos of House Lannister, Lord of Casterly Rock and Warden of the West? Kind of you to go to war for me.

Tywin: You left us no choice. The honor of the House was at stake. Your brother would never have submitted to capture so meekly.

Tyrion: We have our differences, Jaime and I. He's braver. I'm better looking.

Tywin: He's been covering himself in glory. Jaime smashed the River Lords at the Golden Tooth, and now lays siege to Riverrun, Catelyn Stark's homeland.

(Dialogue 7)

Instead of defending himself or being upset, Tyrion agrees that the two brothers have their differences. But his additional utterance “He's braver. I'm better looking.” reveals that he does not take his father's opinions very seriously. This lack of seriousness in his answer is also a positive face-threat to his father, since it ignores the respect that the father seeks to uphold in the current situation, surrounded by senior officers and tribesmen.

The final example of how Tyrion ignores politeness principles comes from Dialogue 8 and shows how he once again exposes anti-social tendencies with his father. This happens when Tyrion has understood that his father intends to put him in the front lines of the battle that is close at hand. Instead of obeying and acting brave, Tyrion tries to change his father's mind by exposing his possible intentions of getting him killed:

Tywin: When the battle commences, you and your wildlings will be in the vanguard.

Tyrion: The vanguard?

Tywin: Mm-hmm.

Tyrion: Me and the tribesmen on the front lines?

Kevan: They do seem rather ferocious.

Tyrion: Ferocious? Last night a Moon brother stabbed a Stone Crow over a sausage. Three Stone Crows seized the Moon brother and opened his throat. Bronn managed to keep Shagga from chopping off the dead man's cock, which was fortunate, but even still Ulf is demanding blood money, which Shagga and Gunthor refuse to pay.

Tywin: When soldiers lack discipline, the fault lies with their commander.

Tyrion: Surely there are ways to have me killed that would be less detrimental to the war effort.

(Dialogue 8)

By saying: “Surely there are ways to have me killed that would be less detrimental to the war

effort”, Tyrion is expressing his father's will to have him killed. Since Tyrion argues that his death would also happen without any particular gain to the cause, his speech act could be considered a positive face-threat since it suggests anti-social characteristics in the father.

4.2 Flouting Maxims of Cooperation

The Cooperative Principle introduced by Paul Grice (1975) refers to what Finegan calls the “unspoken pact” (2005:307) in communication. A silent agreement provides a ground for efficient communication between a speaker and a listener. The maxims of Relevance, Quality, Quantity and Manner belong to the Cooperation Principle. Together they cover the areas that participants in normal conversations generally assume are agreed upon.

If one or more of these maxims are flouted, the counterpart in the conversation must interpret the violation correctly before reacting. How to interpret the violation, often in the form of an indirect speech act, is directly depending on the context. Considering context is therefore a key feature when contemplating the four maxims of the cooperative principle. Another way of seeing it is that by *ignoring* context, the cooperation between participants is interrupted and the conversation hindered or halted. In this section, examples where Tyrion violates the principles of cooperation will be presented (for a full description of the dialogues, see appendix 1).

4.2.1 Flouting the Maxim of Relevance

The first example, taken from Dialogue 4, shows how Tyrion acts seemingly unaffected by context. This happens when he has been taken captive by Catelyn Stark, but still considers himself to be in a position where he can ask the questions and make offers to his captors: “Word's probably gotten to my father by now. He'll be offering a handsome reward. Everyone knows a Lannister always pays his debts. Would you be so kind as to untie me?”. Tyrion is in a situation where he has not got the upper hand, but that does not stop him from taking initiatives. He offers rewards for anyone wanting to help him, interrogates his captivators and asks Lady Stark, who ordered him to be placed under arrest, to free his hands. All of these acts can be regarded as behavior misplaced in the particular context that Tyrion is in.

After Tyrion's journey as a captive he is seen again in Dialogue 5, where he once more exploits the maxim of relevance. This happens when he has been brought in front of the Queen to confess to his charges of the attempted murder of Bran Stark. But instead of confessing the murder, Tyrion starts to confess a number of other, unrelated crimes of which he considers himself guilty: “Where do I begin, my lords and ladies? I'm a vile man, I confess it. My crimes and sins are beyond

counting. I have lied and cheated... gambled and whored". Tyrion's confession has nothing to do with the crime for which he is under arrest, and therefore his reply is a violation of the maxim of relevance.

Another example of how Tyrion is flouting the cooperative maxim of relevance is when he answers Bronn's question in Dialogue 6 with an irrelevant answer. During their narrow escape from the Vale, Tyrion and Bronn are still figuring out their relationship to each other. Bronn expresses annoyance with Tyrion, who is carelessly whistling while walking through the hills where hostile tribesmen might be on the lookout. Bronn suggests that he should take the food and leave Tyrion in the hills: "What would you do then?". Bronn's speech act is a possible threat and a request for Tyrion to show him some respect. Tyrion's short answer, however, is a direct answer to Bronn's question: "Starve, most likely". Had Tyrion included context in his interpretation of Bronn's speech act, then he would probably say something to gain the liking of Bronn. Now the answer he gives is already quite obvious to both of them and not what Bronn was really asking for, Tyrion is therefore flouting the maxim of relevance.

Tyrion also flouts the maxim of relevance when he is making friendly offers to the attacking tribesmen, in Dialogue 6. This happens when Tyrion is woken by Bronn who has discovered the hostile savages that are closing in on their camp from all directions. Tyrion has a look around and his immediate reaction, instead of panicking in fear for his life, is to yell: "Come, share our fire. Help yourselves to our goat". By greeting them like that, Tyrion is ignoring the maxim of relevance.

The final example, from Dialogue 8, shows how Tyrion's answer is a typical violation of the maxim of relevance. He has reached the relative safety of his father's camp and walks into the officers' tent in the middle of their strategic planning of the conflict with the Starks. By walking straight in, taking a seat and helping himself to a goblet of wine, his entrance interrupts the ongoing discussion. He pauses, looks up and says: "Oh, do continue. Didn't mean to interrupt.". This utterance is expressed after the damage to the ongoing conversation has already been done and does not aid the situation at all. Because his excuse is too late, it is irrelevant to the situation.

4.2.2 Flouting the Maxim of Quality

The definition of breaking the maxim of Quality is to tell a lie. This is actually something that Tyrion rarely does. One example, however, of when he deliberately twists the truth a bit is in Dialogue 5. Tyrion is thrown in prison when he has reached Queen Arryn in the Vale, and there he violates the maxim of quality when he asks the warden Mord to deliver a message to the Queen: "Tell her I wish to confess my crimes". He is soon brought to the Queen who asks him if he indeed

wishes to confess his crimes and Tyrion answers: “Yes, My Lady. I do, My Lady”. However, Tyrion has no intentions of confessing to the murder of which he is being accused, which is what Mord, Arryn and everyone else obviously expect. His main goal is to get out of his cell and get the chance to speak for himself in front of the Queen.

4.2.3 Flouting the Maxim of Quantity

This first example of how Tyrion flouts the maxim of quantity is from Dialogue 5 and the episode where Tyrion is confessing his crimes to Queen Arryn. Tyrion is expected to do what he has announced, which is to confess his crimes. Instead of a confession of the attempted murder, Tyrion gives a prolonged speech about every shameful act he can think of: “...When I was seven I saw a servant girl bathing in the river. I stole her robe. She was forced to return to the castle naked and in tears. ...” Tyrion continues until he is interrupted by an angered Queen Arryn. His excess of words when given the opportunity to speak is a clear and deliberate violation of the maxim of quantity. What he really seeks to do is buy himself some time to figure out some sort of exit strategy.

Tyrion also flouts the maxim of Quantity in Dialogue 6, when he gives Shagga the tribe leader an unexpected answer. Tyrion and Bronn have been surrounded by tribesmen and Shagga asks Tyrion how he wishes to die. Tyrion ignores context, and instead of begging for a swift execution, he provides Shagga with an elaborate and supposedly honest answer of how he indeed would like to die if he was able to choose: “In my own bed, at the age of 80 with a bellyful of wine and a girl's mouth around my cock”. This unexpected answer seems to amuse Shagga, who actually decides to spare Tyrion and take him back home: “Take the half man. He can dance for the children”.

4.2.4 Flouting the Maxim of Manner

Tyrion's already mentioned confession from Dialogue 5, which flouts the maxim of quantity, also flouts the maxim of manner since it saves the most relevant information until the end. That way the conversation is made highly ineffective, which goes against the very idea of cooperation in dialogue. It is only when Queen Arryn has interrupted Tyrion's elaborate life-story of crimes and confronted him with the actual accusations that he answers: “Oh, I'm very sorry. I don't know anything about all that”.

4.3 Violating Principles of Turn-taking

When conversations are analyzed, one key feature is not only to look at what is said, but also in what way the utterances are delivered. According to Woffitt (2005:22), one basic skill in a social

situation is to acknowledge when it is appropriate to speak in a conversation as well as when it is not. To not interrupt but wait for one's turn, to not suddenly change topic and to provide a question with an answer are all choices that belong to the principles of turn-taking. In this section, several examples where Tyrion violates the principles of turn-taking will be presented (for a full description of the dialogues, see appendix 1).

The first example, from Dialogue 1, shows how Tyrion provides a request made in conversation with an unwanted response. This happens when Benjen of the Night's Watch requests an apology for Tyrion's previous disrespectful behavior. By answering Benjen's question literally, Tyrion ignores the turn-taking rule of providing a suiting speech act to questions, requests or other *adjacency pairs* (see section 1.4.3):

Benjen Stark: The Night's Watch is a joke to you, is it? Is that what we are, Lannister? An army of jesters in black?

Tyrion Lannister: You don't have enough men to be an army and aside from Yoren here, none of you are particularly funny.

(Dialogue 1)

Two more direct examples of how Tyrion violates turn-taking principles come from Dialogue 2. This happens when he turns to Bran while talking to Robb, without making the proper closing speech acts or providing a pause for Robb to express any other topic that he might want to bring up. A few lines later Robb tries to ask Tyrion a question but is ignored. Tyrion Lannister has just expressed how he is unhappy with the welcoming that the Stark “boy” has given him:

Robb Stark: I'm not your boy, Lannister. I'm Lord of Winterfell while my father is away.

Tyrion Lannister: Then you might learn a lord's courtesy.
[Bran enters the hall, carried on the massive back of Hodor]
So it's true. Hello Bran. Do you remember anything about what happened?

Maester Luwin: [After receiving a nod from Robb] He has no memory of that day.

Tyrion Lannister: Curious.

Robb Stark: Why are you here?

Tyrion Lannister: [To Bran] Would your charming companion be so kind as to kneel? My neck is beginning to hurt.

Bran Stark: Kneel, Hodor.

Tyrion Lannister: Do you like to ride, Bran?

(Dialogue 2)

Another example of when Tyrion is violating principles that belong to turn-taking is when he ignores a suggested topic when talking to Theon in Dialogue 3. Theon approaches Tyrion when he is about to leave Winterfell to spend the night at the nearby brothel. Theon's opening utterance is left unanswered by Tyrion, who ignores the suggested topic and instead directs attention to Theon and his situation as exiled among the Starks:

Theon Greyjoy: Couldn't resist some northern ass? If you like redheads, ask for Ros.
Tyrion Lannister: Come to see me off, Greyjoy? Kind of you. Your master doesn't seem to like
 Lannisters.
Theon Greyjoy: He's not my master.

(Dialogue 3)

Almost immediately after that Tyrion also violates the turn-taking rule of not interrupting, by cutting in when Theon 'slips' and refers to Catelyn Stark as My lady:

Tyrion Lannister: What happened here? Where is lady Stark? Why didn't she
 receive me?
Theon Greyjoy: She wasn't feeling well.
Tyrion Lannister: She's not in Winterfell, is she? Where did she go?
Theon Greyjoy: My lady's whereabouts...
Tyrion Lannister: My lady? Your loyalty to your captors is touching. Tell me, how do you think Balon
 Greyjoy would feel if he could see his only surviving son has turned lackey?

(Dialogue 3)

Another example, from Dialogue 4, shows how Tyrion interrupts Catelyn Stark and ignores an indicated turn. This happens when he is taken captive by Catelyn. Tyrion keeps asking questions and tries to reason for the unlikelihood of him being behind such a clumsy murder attempt:

Tyrion Lannister: I had nothing to do with the attempt on your son's life!
Catelyn Stark: The dagger found...
Tyrion Lannister: What sort of imbecile arms an assassin with his own blade?
Sir Rodrik: Should I gag him?
Tyrion Lannister: Why? Am I starting to make sense?

(Dialogue 4)

Sir Rodrik turns to Catelyn when Tyrion's questions become too many and perhaps too disturbing, offering to gag him. Instead of waiting for the directed next speaker in turn, in this case Catelyn,

Tyrion jumps in ignoring the indicated next speaker. Not to oppose the actual action of gagging him, but to imply the reason for doing so: “Why? Am I starting to make sense?”.

Another example, taken from Dialogue 6, illustrates how Tyrion ignores the turn-taking principles of adjacency pairs. This happens when Tyrion and Bronn are leaving the Vale of Queen Arryn. Bronn has suggested that he should leave Tyrion in the woods and he asks him: “You don't think I'd do it, do you?”. But instead of answering, Tyrion asks Bronn a question: “What do you want Bronn? Gold? Women?”.

Tyrion also speaks up and interferes in conversations, as in this example from Dialogue 6. After their camp is invaded by the tribesmen, Tyrion manages to get himself spared from being executed. But when he understands that Bronn might not be so lucky, he immediately addresses the tribe leader, Shagga: “No no no no no! My... my House is rich and powerful. If you see us through these mountains, my father will shower you with gold”. Tyrion is really in a place where he has little place to argue, and seemingly no power to interfere with the tribesmen. But this does not stop him from suggesting an alternative solution to Shagga. This way of speaking up and interfering with what is essentially other participants' conversation is against rules of turn-taking.

Tyrion also breaks turn-taking rules by interrupting, as in the beginning of Dialogue 7. Shagga and the other tribesmen agreed to escort Tyrion and Bronn to the Lannister war camp. Upon their arrival Tyrion suggests that it might be better if he traveled the last bit by himself. This is not an idea shared by Shagga, who does not seem to trust Tyrion. Something that Tyrion has understood and clearly heard before, which becomes apparent when he interrupts Shagga and finishes his sentence:

Shagga: If the half man betrays us, Shagga Son of Dolf will cut off his manhood ...
Tyrion: ... and feed it to the goats, yes.

(Dialogue 7)

Tyrion also ignores the rules of turn-taking regarding waiting for pauses or topic-shifts before joining a group of other conversation participants. This violation can also be done by non-verbal speech acts, or extralinguistic behavior, as one example from Dialogue 8 illustrates. This happens when Tyrion, shortly after his arrival to his father's camp, marches straight into the officers' tent, immediately takes a seat and starts to eat. He ignores that doing so might interrupt any ongoing conversation. This shows an ignorance towards social rules belonging to conversations as well as rules of turn-taking. The matters discussed in the tent could very well be intended for officers only, but this does not bother Tyrion when he sits down without waiting for a pause or a topic shift:

Kevan: Our scouts tell us the Stark host has moved south from the Twins with Lord Frey's levies in tow. They're a day's march north.

Tywin: The boy may lack experience and sense, but he does have a certain mindless provincial courage.

Tyrion: [Enters, sits and immediately receives a filled cup from a servant] Ah. ... Oh, do continue. Didn't mean to interrupt.

Tywin: I do hope your savages are going to be of some use, otherwise we've wasted good steel on them.

(Dialogue 8)

Tyrion's entrance cuts the previous topic short of any closing sequences or proper pauses. When the next topic is initiated, Tyrion is directly involved and addressed by Tywin.

5. Conclusion

As shown above, the dialogue belonging to Tyrion Lannister in the first season of *Game of Thrones* includes several examples of breaking rules and ignoring principles of conversation. The findings in this study show repeated violations of politeness principles, flouted maxims of cooperation and breaking of turn-taking principles. Some dialogue sequences violate more than one set of conversation principles.

Tyrion's dialogue violates politeness principles by showing little or no interest in maintaining other participants' faces. Instead of mitigating possible face-threats, Tyrion sometimes seems to deliberately intensify them. The maxims of cooperation are flouted mainly when Tyrion's dialogue does not consider context or when it contains too much irrelevant information. Turn-taking principles are broken when Tyrion ignores adjacency pairs, interrupts or changes topic without any proper closing sequences.

A calculation of the findings in this essay shows ten violations of politeness, nine violations of co-operation and ten turn-taking violations. This shows an even spread in the use of violations against the three studied conversation principles and can indicate different things. The dialogue could be made in this way to suggest, to the audience, a depth in Tyrion's skills of different conversation techniques. However, it could also be the result of a varied use of conversation strategies, designed by an author who does not want Tyrion to be received as too repetitive. If the TV audience should find Tyrion's dialogue tedious, it would have a negative effect on how they received him. The latter interpretation corresponds to Richardson's (2010:4) idea of TV dialogue being designed for easy listening and consciously used as a tool to create entertainment.

Richardson's research also points out the real effects that fictional TV dialogue has on viewers (2010:4). This could mean that in the case of Tyrion Lannister in *Game of Thrones*, the audience is supposed to be impressed *as well as* amused by Tyrion's personality. And, similarly to Richardson's (2010:170) case study of *House*, Tyrion's dialogue plays an important part in creating that impression. This also agrees with what Toolan (2011) says about the importance of speech when developing the understanding for a character.

So why are Tyrion's unexpected conversation strategies occasionally appealing to parts of the audience? One reason for this can be that he *does* say those clever lines that we, as mentioned in the Introduction, probably would skip even if we did think of them. Tyrion seems fearless to any threat of negative social consequences, which also explains why most of his impolite strategies are aimed at the positive face. If we wanted to say something 'snappy' to our annoying boss, for example, there is also the potential loss of our job to consider before making that utterance. Or if we find ourselves

facing the sharp end of a knife, threatening to harm us, we might also try a little bit extra in order to not come out too provocative in what we choose to say. However, we can still very much like to *imagine* telling off our boss or being a hero who disarms bad-guys with one-liners. That is probably one of the reasons for the audience's appreciation of Tyrion's dialogue. He expresses parts of our beings that we often are, more or less, forced to hold back.

Tyrion's deliberate violations of conversation principles aid in making his character seem clever and witty. The fact that he quickly comes up with an elaborate answer to a tricky question, such as: "How do you wish to die?", in Dialogue 6, is of course dependent on the fact that someone had plenty of time to figure out that answer during the actual writing process. But the impact on the TV audience is, as Richardson asserts (2010:4) still quite effective. The unexpected response is appreciated and it is even more impressive if the character invented the answer while facing immediate dangers. Tyrion is in control of his emotions and does not let fear or anger take over. Another example is the discussion with Benjen in Dialogue 1. Benjen is a seasoned warrior and he is openly angered with Tyrion as he questions him laughing at the Night's Watch's expense. The TV viewer might very well imagine him- or herself in that situation, starting to excuse, rectify or explain the situation. But Tyrion, remaining calm, repeats his verbal violation, in an even more direct, clear and distinct fashion: "You don't have enough men to be an army and ... none of you are particularly funny".

Of course, simply breaking principles and rules of conversation is no guarantee to be regarded as clever and witty. Anyone can manage to be annoying by being impolite, babbling on about nothing or constantly interrupting other participants. And while Tyrion's controversial linguistic strategies indeed provide effects of entertainment, there are also often certain ends connected to them. This is a purpose or an idea, giving the audience the impression of a very analytic character that chooses the right turns in order to avoid unwanted events in the future. When Bronn is questioning their friendship in Dialogue 6, Tyrion chooses to turn focus in another direction. Likewise, the deliberate misinterpretation of Queen Arryn's wishes for justice in Dialogue 4 is not only a provocation against Arryn, but provides Tyrion with an opportunity to find a way out of an almost certain death sentence. These findings can be related to Branström's (2013:17) results regarding the use of intertextuality in *Suits*. She asserts that intertextuality in the dialogues was used in order to present certain features of the characters, which is evidently also the purpose behind some of Tyrion's use of unconventional linguistic strategies. Tyrion's ability of rapidly presenting fast responses can show a personality trait which lets him think or act without being affected by fear.

This lack of fear is another aspect of how we as an audience might appreciate, and even envy, the characteristics of Tyrion. Because in our Western society, one of our main fears is to make fools of

ourselves. We worry about what others might think of us, if we act in a certain way – or do not act in another specific manner. Tyrion, already considered a “half-man” by his society because of being a dwarf, is perhaps relieved from some of that pressure. He is constantly in the position of being alone as well as considered a bit strange. Instead of hanging his head, shutting himself away from the world, Tyrion chooses to strike back with nothing to lose. He does not seem to care if someone finds him annoying when he barges in and sits himself down at the officers' table. Neither does he care about proper appearances when he starts to bargain for his life with armed tribesmen or asks his captivators to “be so kind as to untie” him. These features can also be part of the explanation for this character's large fan-base. Tyrion is a constant underdog and his struggle serves as an inspiration, challenging the viewers to see things from a different perspective.

Tyrion's dialogue is an important factor in creating and presenting him as a character to the TV audience. The other use of a dialogue that breaks with the expected behavior is the entertainment value. Because even if “funny” is not always the same as witty, and is a very personal experience, the unexpected responses are still what makes Tyrion's dialogue so memorable. For some reason we appreciate Tyrion's annoying answer to the sell-sword Bronn, when he says: “I should just take your food and leave you here ... What would you do then?”. Facing the situation of being abandoned in the wilderness, without food or any real means to defend himself, Tyrion's pleased smile does not budge as he replies: “Starve, most likely.”.

Afzali (2013:45) and Valis (2013:11) showed that the use of certain speech acts, politeness in one case and profanities in the other, could be looked upon when defining the character's social class or social power. In Tyrion's case, his use of impoliteness is what is mainly focused on in this essay. However, when addressing for example Catelyn Stark, the use of polite markers, such as “would you”, shows that he recognizes her to be, like himself, part of the upper classes of Westeros. And even though his dialogue contains terms and phrases that cover adult or controversial areas, the use of profanities is actually limited, also reflecting his position in the upper classes of society.

This limited study, which excludes most of the non-verbal speech acts and only looks at one character from one season, does not claim to present any universal truths of how to create a clever character. What it aims to show and does claim is that a proper use of dialogue that repeatedly breaks principles of conversation can be an aid in the creation of a fictional TV character that is supposed to be regarded clever. Those violations, however, must also in some way be connected with an outcome. The impoliteness can be a tool for exposing weaknesses in your enemies, the absence of cooperation a way to take initiatives in difficult situations, and by breaking rules of turn-taking, conversations can be directed into certain topics of interest.

Further studies in the field of this essay could be made by including other elements in the

conversations, such as non-verbal speech acts. Another way to expand the research would be to add more sets of rules to the study, in order to possibly establish even more violations. Also other characters, from TV shows as well as other dramatic media, could be studied in the same way to establish a wider knowledge base in how the conversation principles are violated when the purpose is to create a witty character.

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Appendix: Dialogue Transcripts

Eight separate dialogues where Tyrion is a participant are picked from the first season of *Game of Thrones*. These dialogues cover the larger parts of Tyrion's events from the first season and all include some sort of conflicting opinions. The context surrounding each dialogue is briefly explained before the transcribed version is presented. Some non-verbal actions and other events affecting the conversation is presented in brackets. The dialogues are presented in the same order they appear on the show.

Dialogue 1

Context: Tyrion attended his family's visit to Winterfell where the King offered their Lord, Ned Stark, to be the King's First Hand and come with him to the capital. After their departure, Tyrion chose to visit the most northern part of the kingdoms before heading home. This is a place called 'the Wall', where the Night's Watch are the traditional and very real guards from the uncivilized dangers on the other side. Tyrion is having a drink and a laugh with the Night's Watch recruiter, Yoren, when Benjen Stark, First Ranger of the Night's Watch, walks in on them. He notices them laughing at the state of the new recruits. Benjen is angered and turns to Tyrion:

Benjen Stark: The Night's Watch is a joke to you, is it? Is that what we are, Lannister? An army of jesters in black?

Tyrion Lannister: You don't have enough men to be an army and aside from Yoren here, none of you are particularly funny.

(Game of Thrones, HBO, season 1, episode 3)

Dialogue 2

Context: After leaving the Wall for the long journey home, Tyrion travels together with Yoren the recruiter, despite their apparent difference in social class. On their way they stop by at Winterfell, the home of the Starks, to seek accommodation. Upon their arrival, however, they are met with suspicion since the younger Stark brother, Bran, was the victim of an attempted assassination during the last recent visit of the Lannisters. Instead of being met outside, Tyrion is presented before Robb Stark who receives him sitting down in the great hall.

Tyrion Lannister: I must say I received a slightly warmer welcome on my last visit.

Robb Stark: Any man of the Night's Watch is welcome at Winterfell.

Tyrion Lannister: Any man of the Night's Watch, but not I, eh, boy?

Robb Stark: I'm not your boy, Lannister. I'm Lord of Winterfell while my father is away.

Tyrion Lannister: Then you might learn a lord's courtesy.

 [Bran enters the hall, carried on the massive back of Hodor]

 So it's true. Hello Bran. Do you remember anything about what happened?

Maester Luwin: [After receiving a nod from Robb] He has no memory of that day.

Tyrion Lannister: Curious.

Robb Stark: Why are you here?

Tyrion Lannister: Would your charming companion be so kind as to kneel? My neck is beginning to hurt.

Bran Stark: Kneel, Hodor.

Tyrion Lannister: Do you like to ride, Bran?

Bran Stark: Yes. Well, I mean I did like to.

Maester Luwin: The boy has lost the use of his legs.

Tyrion Lannister: What of it? With the right horse and saddle, even a cripple can ride.

Bran Stark: I'm not a cripple.

Tyrion Lannister: Then I'm not a dwarf. My father will rejoice to hear it. I have a gift for you. Give that to your saddler. He'll provide the rest. You must shape the horse to the rider. Start with a yearling and teach it to respond to the reins and to the boy's voice.

Bran Stark: Will I really be able to ride?

Tyrion Lannister: You will. On horseback you will be as tall as any of them.

Robb Stark: Is this some kind of trick? Why do you want to help him?

Tyrion Lannister: I have a tender spot in my heart for cripples, bastards and broken things.

Robb Stark: You've done my brother a kindness. The hospitality of Winterfell is yours.

Tyrion Lannister: Spare me your false courtesies, Lord Stark. There's a brothel outside your walls. There I'll find a bed and both of us can sleep easier.

(Game of Thrones, HBO, season 1, episode 4)

Dialogue 3

Context: Before leaving Winterfell to spend the night at the brothel, Theon Greyjoy approaches Tyrion. Theon lives with the Stark family in Winterfell, exiled from his own family after an earlier attempt from them to seize power. The previous defeat of the Greyjoys and the fact that the exiled young man is starting to get comfortable in Winterfell are sensitive subjects for Theon, which Tyrion well has figured:

Theon Greyjoy: Couldn't resist some northern ass? If you like redheads, ask for Ros.

Tyrion Lannister: Come to see me off, Greyjoy ? Kind of you. Your master doesn't seem to like Lannisters.

Theon Greyjoy: He's not my master.

Tyrion Lannister: No, of course not. What happened here? Where is lady Stark? Why didn't she receive me?

Theon Greyjoy: She wasn't feeling well.

Tyrion Lannister: She's not in Winterfell, is she ? Where did she go?

Theon Greyjoy: My lady's whereabouts...

Tyrion Lannister: My lady? Your loyalty to your captors is touching. Tell me, how do you think Balon Greyjoy would feel if he could see his only surviving son has turned lackey ? I still remember seeing my father's fleet burn in Lannisport. I believe your uncles were responsible?

Theon Greyjoy: Must have been a pretty sight.

Tyrion Lannister: Nothing prettier than watching sailors burn alive. Yes, a great victory for your people. Shame how it all turned out.

Theon Greyjoy: We were outnumbered 10 to one.

Tyrion Lannister: A stupid rebellion then. I suppose your father realized that when your brothers died in battle. Now here you are, your enemy's squire.

Theon Greyjoy: Careful, Imp.

Tyrion Lannister: I've offended you. Forgive me, it's been a rough morning. Anyway, don't despair. I'm a constant disappointment to my own father and I've learned to live with it. Your next tumble with Ros is on me. I'll try not to wear her out.

(Game of Thrones, HBO, season 1, episode 4)

Dialogue 4

Context: Tyrion's travels continues and during a stay at an inn he spots and recognizes Lady Catelyn Stark who is also travelling towards the capital, however in secrecy. Tyrion now understands why she could not receive him at Winterfell and exposes her presence to everyone at the inn. Lady Stark has been told that the dagger used during the assassination of her son belonged to Tyrion and convinces her men and every Stark loyal fighter at the inn to arrest Tyrion on that ground. She explains that she attends to bring him back to Winterfell to let justice be done. The morning after their stay at the inn Tyrion, with his hands tied, approaches Lady Catelyn Stark during their march:

Tyrion Lannister: This isn't the Kings Road. You said we were riding for Winterfell.

Catelyn Stark: I did ... often and loudly.

Tyrion Lannister: Very wise. [Tyrion begins turning in circles, making sure to make eye contact as he speaks.] They'll be out in droves, looking for me in the wrong place. Word's probably gotten to my father by now. He'll be offering a handsome reward. Everyone knows a Lannister always pays his debts. Would you be so good as to untie me?

Catelyn Stark: And why would I do that?

Tyrion Lannister: Why not? Am I going to run? The hill tribes would kill me for my boots. Unless a Shadowcat ate me first.

Catelyn Stark: Shadowcats and hill tribes are the least of your concerns.

Tyrion Lannister: Ah ... the Eastern Road. We're going to The Vale. You're taking me to your sister's to answer for my imagined crimes. Tell me, Lady Stark. When was the last time you saw your sister?

Catelyn Stark: Five years ago.

Tyrion Lannister: She's changed. She was always a bit touched, but now ... you might as well kill me here.

Catelyn Stark: I am not a murderer, Lannister.

Tyrion Lannister: Neither am I! I had nothing to do with the attempt on your son's life!

Catelyn Stark: The dagger found...

Tyrion Lannister: What sort of imbecile arms an assassin with his own blade?

Sir Rodrik: Should I gag him?

Tyrion Lannister: Why? Am I starting to make sense?

(*Game of Thrones*, HBO, season 1, episode 5)

Dialogue 5

Context: After arriving at the Vale to ask Queen Arryn to bring Tyrion to Justice he is thrown into a prison cell, where one wall is replaced with a steep cliff. The master of the dungeons goes by the name of Mord and during their first encounter where Tyrion proposed gold for certain favors, Mord searched Tyrion's pockets and finding no gold left him in his cell for the night. Tyrion wakes up the morning after, having rolled close to the edge of the cell floor in his sleep. He decides to try to take the initiative of the situation and starts to call for the less intellectual and poorly educated prisoner guard:

Tyrion: [yells] Mord! ... Mord! ... Mord! ... Mord! ... [kicks cell door] Mord.

Mord: [storms in knocking Tyrion over] Noise again!

Tyrion: About the gold...

Mord: No gold! [punches Tyrion's pockets] No gold.

Tyrion: [still lying on the floor] Listen to me! Listen to me.
Sometimes possession is an abstract concept ... When they captured me, they took my purse, but the gold is still mine.

Mord: Where?

Tyrion: Where? I don't know where, but when they free me ...

Mord: You want free? [points towards the open wall] ... Go be free.

Tyrion: Have you ever heard the phrase "rich as a Lannister"? Of course you have!
You're a smart man. You know who the Lannisters are. I am a Lannister.
Tyrion, son of Tywin! And of course, you have also heard the phrase, "a Lannister always pays his debts." If you deliver a message from me... to Lady Arryn, I will be in your debt. I will owe you gold. If you deliver the message and I live, which I very much intend to do.

Mord: What message?

Tyrion: [rises up] Tell her I wish to confess my crimes.
[Next scene: in Queen Arryn's court]

Arryn: You wish to confess your crimes?

Tyrion: Yes, My Lady. I do, My Lady.

Arryn: [To Catelyn] The sky cells always break them.
Speak, Imp. Meet your gods as an honest man.

Tyrion: Where do I begin, my lords and ladies? I'm a vile man, I confess it.
My crimes and sins are beyond counting.
I have lied and cheated... gambled and whored.
I'm not particularly good at violence, but I'm good at convincing others to do violence for me. You want specifics, I suppose. When I was seven I saw a servant girl bathing in the river. I stole her robe. She was forced to return to the castle naked and in tears. If I close my eyes, I can still see her tits bouncing. When I was 10 I stuffed my Uncle's boots with goatshit. When confronted with my crime, I blamed a squire. Poor boy was flogged and I escaped justice. When I was 12 I milked my eel into a pot of turtle stew. [the crowd gasps] I flogged the one-eyed snake. I skinned my sausage. I made the bald man cry into the turtle stew, which I do believe my sister ate. At least I hope she did. Once I brought a jackass and a honeycomb into a brothel ...

Arryn: [rises and commands:] Silence!

Robin: What happened next?

Arryn: What do you think you're doing?

Tyrion: Confessing my crimes.

Catelyn: Lord Tyrion, you are accused of hiring a man to slay my son Bran in his bed, and of conspiring to murder my sister's husband Lord Jon Arryn, the Hand of the King.

Tyrion: Oh, I'm very sorry. I don't know anything about all that.

Arryn: You've had your little joke. I trust you enjoyed it.
Mord, take him back to the dungeon. But this time find a smaller cell... With a steeper floor.

Tyrion: Is this how justice is done in the Vale? You accuse me of crimes, I deny them, so you throw me into a cell to freeze and starve? Where is the King's Justice? I am accused and demand a trial!

Arryn: If you're tried and found guilty, then by the King's own laws you will pay with your life.

Tyrion: I understand the law.

Arryn: We have no executioner in the Eyrie. Life is more elegant here.
[To her men]Open the moon door.
[A trap door is opened in the floor, far below it the ground can be seen. Prince Robin is very excited and claps his hands]
You want a trial, My Lord Lannister. Very well. My son will listen to whatever you have to say, and you will hear his judgment. Then you will leave... By one door or the other.

Tyrion: No need to bother Lord Robin. I demand a trial by combat. [laughter can be heard

from the crowd]

Catelyn: You have that right.

Knight #1: My Lady, I beg the honor. Let me be your champion.

Knight #2: The honor should be mine. For the love I bore your Lord husband, let me avenge his death.

Different knights: I'll fight for you, My Lady. / It'll be my honor. / The honor should be mine.

Robin: [stands and yells] Make the bad man fly!

Arryn: Ser Vardis... You're quiet. Don't you want to avenge my husband?

Vardis: With all my heart, My Lady. But the Imp is half my size. It would be shameful to slaughter such a man and call it justice.

Tyrion: Agreed.

Arryn: You demanded a trial by combat.

Tyrion: Now I demand a champion. I have that right, same as you.

Vardis: My Lady, I will gladly fight the Imp's champion for you.

Tyrion: I wouldn't be too glad, Ser. I name my brother Jaime Lannister.

Arryn: The Kingslayer is hundreds of miles from here.

Tyrion: Send a raven for him. I'm happy to wait.

Arryn: The trial will be today.

Tyrion: [turns around] Do I have a volunteer? [the crowd laughs]
Anyone? Anyone?

Arryn: I think we can assume that no one is willing ...

Bronn: I'll stand for the dwarf.

(*Game of Thrones*, HBO, season 1, episode 6)

Dialogue 6

Context: Bronn chose to fight for Tyrion in his trial by combat, and succeeded in defeating the Queen's champion. Now Tyrion is free, but no longer welcome in the Vale. Together with Bronn the two are wondering away from the Vale.

Tyrion: [whistles]

Bronn: Will you shut up? There's hill tribes all around here.

Tyrion: If I'm going to die, it may as well be with a song in my heart.

Bronn: I should just take your food and leave you here.
Eh? What would you do then?

Tyrion: Starve, most likely.

Bronn: You don't think I'd do it, do you?

Tyrion: What do you want, Bronn? Gold? Women? Golden women?
Stick with me and you'll have them all, for as long as I'm around and not for a moment longer. But you knew that. That is why you so valiantly took up arms to defend my honor.

Bronn: Fair enough. But don't go looking for me to bend the knee and "My Lord" you every time you take a shit. I'm not your toady and I'm not your friend.

Tyrion: Though I would treasure your friendship, I'm mainly interested in your facility with murder. And if the day ever comes when you're tempted to sell me out, remember this: Whatever their price, I'll beat it. I like living. [continues the whistling]
[Next scene: Tyrion is asleep after having spent the night in the forest]

Bronn: [whispers] Tyrion. Tyrion.Tyrion.

Tyrion: [wakes up and spots persons closing in on their camp from all directions. He stands up] Come, share our fire. Help yourselves to our goat.

Shagga: When you meet your Gods, you tell them Shagga Son of Dolf of the Stone Crows sent you.

Tyrion: I am Tyrion son of Tywin of Clan Lannister.

Shagga: How would you like to die, Tyrion son of Tywin?

Tyrion: In my own bed, at the age of 80 with a bellyful of wine and a girl's mouth around my cock.

Shagga: [laughs at Tyrion's answer] Take the half man. He can dance for the children. Kill the other one.

Tyrion: No no no no no! My ... my House is rich and powerful. If you see us through these mountains, my father will shower you with gold.

Shagga: We have no use for a half man's promises.

Tyrion: Half a man maybe, but at least I have the courage to face my enemies. What do the Stone Crows do? Hide behind rocks and shiver when the knights of the Vale ride by? Are those the best weapons you could steal? Good enough for killing sheep, if the sheep don't fight back. Lannister smiths shit better steel.

Shagga: [cuts Tyrion's face with his sword]
You think you can win us over with your trinkets?

Tyrion: [Takes off one of his rings and gives it to Shagga] That trinket is worth more than everything your tribe owns. But if you help us, Shagga Son of Dolf, I will not give you trinkets. I will give you this. [spreads his arms]

Shagga: What is "this"?

Tyrion: The Vale of Arryn. The Lords of the Vale have always spat upon the hill tribes. The Lords of the Vale want me dead. I believe it is time for new Lords of the Vale.

(*Game of Thrones*, HBO, season 1, episode 8)

Dialogue 7

Context: After passing through the hills Tyrion, Bronn and the tribesmen reach the camp of Tyrion's father, Tywin Lannister.

Tyrion: From here it might be best if Bronn and I continue alone.

Shagga: Best for Tyrion son of Tywin. Not best for me.

If the half man betrays us, Shagga Son of Dolf will cut off his manhood

Tyrion: ... and feed it to the goats, yes.

All right then. Time to meet my father.

[All of them walks into the camp, to the officer's tent where Tywin and Kevan are gathered around a table. Kevan notices Tyrion entering the tent.]

Kevan: Tyrion.

Tyrion: Uncle. Father.

Tywin: The rumors of your demise were unfounded.

Tyrion: Sorry to disappoint you.

Tywin: And who are these... Companions of yours?

Tyrion: This is Shagga Son of Dolf, Chieftain of the Stone Crows.
Timett Son of Timett, ruler of the Burned Men.
This fair maid is Chella daughter of Cheyk, leader of the Black Ears.
And here we have Bronn son of...

Bronn: You wouldn't know him.

Tyrion: May I present My Lord Father, Tywin son of Tytos of House Lannister, Lord of Casterly Rock and Warden of the West? Kind of you to go to war for me.

Tywin: You left us no choice. The honor of the House was at stake. Your brother would never have submitted to capture so meekly.

Tyrion: We have our differences, Jaime and I. He's braver. I'm better looking.

Tywin: He's been covering himself in glory. Jaime smashed the River Lords at the Golden Tooth, and now lays siege to Riverrun, Catelyn Stark's homeland.

Tyrion: And the Starks? Lord Eddard?

Tywin: ... Is our hostage. He will lead no armies from his dungeon cell.

Tyrion: How did my sweet sister persuade the King to imprison his dear friend Ned?

Tywin: Robert Baratheon is dead. Joffrey rules in King's Landing.

Tyrion: My sister rules, you mean.

Kevan: Stark's son has called his banners. He moves south with a strong host.

Tywin: A green boy. One taste of battle and he'll run back to Winterfell with his tail between his legs.

Tyrion: Maybe. Though the boy does have a certain belligerence. You'd like him.
While we're on the subject of war, I made promises to my friends here and a Lannister always pays his debts. We shall require 3,000 helms and shields, plus swords, pikes, gorgets, maces ...

Messenger: [Interrupts] If it please My Lord, Ser Addam bids me report that the Northmen have crossed the neck.

Tywin: [rises from his table]The wolf rushes into the lion's jaws. So be it. Kevan, command the drummers beat assembly. And send word to Jaime that I am moving against Robb Stark.

Kevan: At once, My Lord.

Tywin: [Walks up to the tribesmen] It is said that the men of the Mountain clans are great warriors. Ride with me against my enemies and you shall have all my son promised you and more.

Shagga: Only if the half man fights with us. Until we hold the steel he pledged us, the little lion's life is ours.

(Game of Thrones, HBO, season 1, episode 8)

Dialogue 8

Context: At the Lannister war camp Tywin and his officers are eating and exchanging intelligence regarding their enemies.

Kevan: Our scouts tell us the Stark host has moved south from the Twins with Lord Frey's levies in tow. They're a day's march north.

Tywin: The boy may lack experience and sense, but he does have a certain mindless provincial courage.

Tyrion: [Enters, sits and immediately receives a filled cup from a servant] Ah. ... Oh, do continue. Didn't mean to interrupt.

Tywin: I do hope your savages are going to be of some use, otherwise we've wasted good steel on them.

Kevan: The great hairy one insisted he must have two battle axes ... heavy black steel, double-sided.

Tyrion: Shagga likes axes.

Tywin: When the battle commences, you and your wildlings will be in the vanguard.

Tyrion: The vanguard?

Tywin: Mm-hmm.

Tyrion: Me and the tribesmen on the front lines?

Kevan: They do seem rather ferocious.

Tyrion: Ferocious? Last night a Moon brother stabbed a Stone Crow over a sausage. Three Stone Crows seized the Moon brother and opened his throat. Bronn managed to keep Shagga from chopping off the dead man's cock, which was fortunate, but even still Ulf is demanding blood money, which Shagga and Gunthor refuse to pay.

Tywin: When soldiers lack discipline, the fault lies with their commander.

Tyrion: Surely there are ways to have me killed that would be less detrimental to the war effort.

Tywin: There'll be no more discussion on the matter.

Tyrion: It appears I'm not hungry after all. Excuse me, My Lords. [Tyrion leaves]

(Game of Thrones, HBO, season 1, episode 9)