

As Cooperative as Class Allows: The Application  
of Grice's Maxims in ITV's *Downton Abbey*

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### **Abstract**

Grice's Cooperative Principle and the corresponding maxims are at the foundation of pragmatics. They show how language is used in everyday practice and they can be applied to a wide range of studies across various fields. In this thesis, I investigate the application of Grice's theory to the field of historical fiction in combination with the notion of social class, since this has not received much attention in recent literature. I investigate how Grice's maxims can help analyse class-based implicatures from the script of two characters from ITV's *Downton Abbey*. The analysis shows that Grice's maxims are useful when analysing class-based implicatures and any inferences that may follow. The findings show that class has the power to influence or even govern one's language use. This can be made evident in historical fiction, especially those works that are concerned with times in which class and class membership were more notable and value-laden than they are in current times.

*Keywords:* cooperative principle, maxims, implicature, inferences, class, historical fiction, *Downton Abbey*

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## 1. Introduction

In this thesis, I will investigate the workings of the Cooperative Principle in ITV's *Downton Abbey* (Fellowes, ITV, 2010-2015). This thesis is specified to the application of pragmatics in historical fiction. This thesis aims to show how the application of pragmatics to historical fiction can help analyse class-based implicatures. The Cooperative Principle (henceforth CP) was developed by Grice (1967) and forms the foundation of pragmatics. The CP states that, in a conversation, one should be as cooperative as possible. The four corresponding maxims (Quality, Quantity, Relation, and Manner) elaborate on this by showing how.

ITV's *Downton Abbey* was selected for analysis as a work of historical fiction. This drama series, created by Julian Fellowes, is one of the most popular British drama series to date, both in the UK and overseas. The complete series has six seasons, which aired between 2010 and 2016. The series is not an adaptation of any existing literature, and this gave the producer space to explore various topics that are still relevant today. Examples of these include feminism, homosexuality, the horrors of war, and the struggles of adapting to a continuously changing world. Investigating the language use in *Downton Abbey* can grant an extensive view on the characters and the class they represent.

## 2. Theoretical Background

The CP states that the one's addition to a conversation should have the necessary value to the interlocutor(s) and serve the purpose of the conversation. It is generally assumed that everyone who participates in a conversation is attempting to adhere to the CP. The four corresponding maxims elaborate on this: say enough, but not too much (Maxim of Quantity); Say what you believe to be true or for which you have enough evidence (Maxim of Quality); Say what is relevant (Maxim of Relevance); and be as clear and concise as possible (Maxim of Manner). These rules can be honoured in various manners. They can be observed, violated (done deceptively and stealthily), flouted (done obviously and purposefully), or one can opt out of the maxims (refusing in any way to cooperate in the conversation). There can also be a

clash, where observing one maxim can only be done by violating another. Implicatures always follow from an utterance, but this does not count for inferences. Flouting or opting out of the maxims is enough for inferences to be drawn. Violations of the maxims, on the other hand, are meant to be carried out deceptively and stealthily. The addressee can only draw inferences from a violation of the maxims if the addressee realizes that the maxims have not been observed (Grice, 1967). These implicatures and inferences can be calculated based on how the maxims are honoured or not, the context of the utterance, and the utterance itself. In this thesis, conversational implicature is investigated based on these three aspects as they are applied in historical fiction. Although Grice's CP was developed in 1975, there are also recent studies that are focused on the maxims. For instance, Avenia-Tapper (2015) uses the maxims to illustrate how one's explicitness, as used in conversation, links to the knowledge of one's interlocutor. I will elaborate later on this study, when I also discuss this topic in combination with the notion of class. Ephratt (2001) elaborates on the maxims, arguing that silences in conversation can have a communicative purpose, and can honour the maxims in different manners, as well. For example, he shows that verbal silence can observe the maxim of Quantity, and even provide information "at a level beyond speech" (p. 72).

There are also studies in which pragmatic theories such as the CP are applied to a particular work of fiction. For example, Viridis (2009) analysed the script of the pilot episode of ABC's *Desperate Housewives*. She investigated how one of the main characters, Bree van de Kamp, honours Grice's CP and Leech's Politeness Principle in her conversation. In her analysis, Viridis discusses the relevant implicatures that are made in the corresponding scenes. The first scene she analyses is between Bree and her husband and contains five strings of speech. Bree's husband tells her that he is in want of a divorce. What follows, is shown below:

[1.4] Bree. Um, I think I'll go get your salad for you.

[1.5] Bree. Okay, well I got you the honey mustard dressing. The ranch looked just a little bit suspect.

Then, she analyses for each string whether the maxims are observed, flouted or violated. She also discusses the implications corresponding to each string and the following reaction. A part of this analysis is viewed below:

As a result, in her turns 1.4 and 1.5, Bree actually flouts the Relevance maxim in order to observe the Agreement maxim (minimise disagreement between self and other, maximise agreement between self and other), and triggers the implicature that not only does she disagree with Rex [...], but also her opinion is so different from his that she does not even refer to the subject of divorce (Virdis, 2009)

This illustrates how the implicatures made can be inferred and analysed through the maxims. Analysing the script provided Virdis with elaborate information about Bree van de Kamp's character. Ajtony (2013) also demonstrated the effectiveness of this type of method. With her analysis of *Downton Abbey's* script, she was able to study both how stereotypical Englishness is reinforced through the characters and provide additional information about the characters themselves. Apart from this research, studies that investigate the application of the CP to historical fiction remain absent. For this gap in the literature, *Downton Abbey* could prove to be an apposite example of historical fiction. That is what I will provide in this thesis.

The notion of class is a reoccurring topic in literature, and there are also many studies on the interface between class and language. Also, as Ponton (2018) shows, class can be inseparably connected to dialogue, suggesting that an understanding of the role of class is necessary to be able to interpret such a dialogue. He illustrates this by analysing an episode of the BBC sitcom *Whatever happened to the likely lads?* In this episode, a character named Brenda wants to show to her old friends how she has climbed up the social ladder in the past

years. She does this explicitly by showing her possessions, highlighting her husband's achievements, and denying her past in the working class. One of her friends, Thelma, judges and faces Brenda with her pretentious behaviour and points out the virtues of members of the working class, such as Terry, who is also present at the dining table. Ponton shows with his analysis of this episode how the class of fictional characters can show why they behave and speak in the manner that they do. In another study, Avenia-Tapper (2015) shows, using Grice's maxims, how different levels of explicitness in language use are related to differences in social position, especially in terms of acquired capital. Explicitness, she argues, comes from the assumed knowledge of one's interlocutor. When one's interlocutor has equal or more knowledge than oneself, one is more likely to act in a more obedient manner towards the interlocutor. When one's interlocutor has less knowledge than oneself, one is more likely to act in a more dominant manner towards the interlocutor. Capital is, according to Siisiainen (2000), the "ability of an actor to advance his/her interests" (p. 184). The usage of this ability is then an actor acting in such a manner, that, as a result, the world is in accordance with his/her interests. This implies dominance, as well as submission, of which obedience is a subset. She concludes that differences in explicitness are a symptom of differences in capital.

Apart from the literature discussed above, any research explaining how class can shape inferences remains absent. In this thesis, the topic of these class-based implicatures will be explored through an analysis of how the class-based implicatures made through the utterances of two characters in *Downton Abbey* can be inferred using the maxims. Such an analysis could provide useful information about the characters themselves and the class they represent. However, there is a lack of literature on how class can affect implicatures. Any literature on the application of Grice's maxims on *Downton Abbey* as a work of historical fiction remains absent. That is the gap that this thesis will aim to fill. My research question is

as follows: How can Grice's maxims be used to analyse class-based implicatures in *Downton Abbey*?

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Corpus

The interface between pragmatics and fiction has been explored before. Pratt (1977) demonstrates the range of all the things to which Grice's CP can be applied, mostly to literature. She argues that "the function of language in literary works is indeed not primarily communicative (whereas its function elsewhere is)" (p.199). She further adds this means that explicatures and implicatures have more value in literature than they do elsewhere. It seems safe to assume that this also counts for written historical fiction. The value of implicature in written fiction, then, ensures the relevance of the analysis of *Downton Abbey*'s script. The choice for written historical fiction was made due to the prominence of class in 20<sup>th</sup> century society. As Ponton (2018) argues, identifying one's class was easier in the previous century, "during the period when Marxist philosophy dominated global events, and 'proletariat' and 'capitalist' were more recognisable identity labels" (p.227). Written historical fiction, such as *Downton Abbey*'s script, appears to be a suitable corpus for analysing class-based implicatures.

One of the reasons for selecting *Downton Abbey*'s script as a work of written historical fiction is the prominence of language in the series. The dialogue is a prominent aspect in the series. For the aristocrats, all the relevant events are discussed in detail during breakfast, luncheon, dinner, and afternoon tea. The servants fill their time conversing with each other while doing their daily chores and duties. They discuss relationships, stories they hear from upstairs, and everything that is slightly out of the ordinary. A great many events do not even appear on screen, but only receive reference in conversation.

Another reason for choosing this series is its representation of class. The concept of class and its intricacies is also at the heart of *Downton Abbey*. There is a clear dichotomy at

play in the series. On one side, there is the basement of the servants, who spend their days in service of their masters, with limited freedom and privacy. On the other, there is the luxurious world of the aristocrats, who spend their days dining, getting dressed, and occasionally paying a social call. However, these worlds meet and intertwine in various manners. From the extensive literature on *Downton Abbey*, there are two findings that need to be mentioned here. Byrne (2014) investigated the notions of class and conservatism in *Downton Abbey*. She shows that class is presented as more contemporary than it was in early 20<sup>th</sup> century. She illustrates her point by referring to a scene in the pilot episode, Matthew, a modern, middle-class lawyer, discovers that he will inherit the estate of the aristocratic family. Matthew is uncomfortable with the aristocrats and their customs and doubts if he could ever fit in. The current owner of Downton Abbey, Robert Crawley, then implies that aristocracy is not innate, and that Matthew could learn to become one of them by adjusting to the new role he is given and allowing others to play theirs. This is a more modern view on aristocracy instead of a truthful representation of aristocracy in the Edwardian period (p. 318). The depiction of class on television has also been investigated by Deery (2017). She argues that it is generally accepted that the portrayal of the class-based system in *Downton Abbey* is a romanticized version of the real situation in which the servants lived (p. 63). She also points out that the series is set in a time where the system and the lifestyle the aristocrats have loved, cherished, and protected, is slowly fading away and making place for the modern world. One of the main themes throughout the series is the struggle of trying to adapt to the constantly changing world while also trying to preserve what remains of the old, familiar system (p. 64). Among the aristocrats, there are characters such as Martha Levinson, Sybil, and Edith, who show willingness to adapt to the modern world, whereas characters like Robert Crawley and Charlie Carson remain conservative in this matter. It is evident that in the series, class is presented in a somewhat modern and romanticized fashion. This implicates that the notion of

class that will be discussed in this thesis, will be the notion of class as it is portrayed in *Downton Abbey*.

### 3.2 Method of Analysis

Similar to Ajtony (2013), I will analyse the script of *Downton Abbey*. The current method, however, will be similar to the approach used by Virdis (2009). She analysed the script in terms of speaking turns and speech strings. For each string, she analysed how the maxims were honoured and the corresponding conversational implicatures. This is the part of the method that I will adopt as well. Where Virdis also investigated how the Politeness Principle is honoured (in the breach or in the observance of the principle), I will instead investigate how these maxims can help analyse the class-based implicatures that are made. Each selected utterance will be analysed based on the manner in which the maxims are honoured, what implicatures the utterance makes salient, and any following reaction.

For this study, I chose to investigate the script of two characters, one from each side in the dichotomous class system of the series (i.e. the servants and the aristocrats), Lady Mary Crawley and her lady's maid, Anna. Both are prominent characters who appear steadily throughout the series. These characters are often in scenes together as well, which means that certain scenes can be used for analysis twice. Each episode, even though it is a small part of an entire series, still aims to tell one story or a separate part of it. The episode also had to include a decent amount of screen time for Lady Mary and Anna. With these criteria in mind, the fourth episode of the fifth season was selected.

For the sake of clarity, I define class-based implicatures as those implicatures that rely on knowledge about the social class of the speaker(s), addressee(s), and/or referent(s). Since it is not possible to analyse and discuss every class-based implicature, I will be discussing two utterances for both Lady Mary and Anna. From all the utterances and class-based implicatures in the episode, the ones that showcase the workings of the maxims the best were

selected. The relevant context for each utterance, including any following reaction or response, will be discussed, as well.

## **4. Analysis**

### *4.1 Introduction*

This section will first give a short summary of the relevant events that occurred prior to the episode in question (i.e. concerning Lady Mary and/or Anna), followed by a series of analyses of the scenes with Lady Mary. Then, there will be a discussion of Lady Mary's script in general. After this, there will be a series of analyses on the scenes with Anna, followed by a discussion on her script in general, as well. Not every scene in which Lady Mary or Anna appear will be discussed. The scenes in which Lady Mary or Anna have little to no noteworthy text have been disregarded.

In *Downton Abbey*, we follow the story of the Crawley family, who spend their days at the Downton Abbey estate with their servants. The owner of the estate is Robert Crawley (also referred to as Lord Grantham). He and his wife, Cora Crawley (Lady Grantham), have two children, Mary and Edith. These two sisters have been despised each other since the pilot episode. Robert and Cora used to have a third child, Sybil. She died shortly after her son was born. Her husband, Tom Branson, takes care of the child while remaining at Downton. Tom used to be a chauffeur and therefore one of the servants. His marriage to Sybil made it possible for him to stay at Downton as one of the aristocrats. At this point in the series, Tom, Robert, Cora, and their children are regarded as aristocrats.

The estate is designed to maintain the dichotomy of class. The servants spend most of their time in the basement. The aristocrats occupy the rest of the estate and barely visit the basement downstairs. Among the servants are lady's maids and valets, who take care of a specific member of the family. The lady's maid who takes care of Lady Mary is called Anna. Anna has been raped by Tony Gillingham's valet, Mr. Green, who stayed with the servants during Tony Gillingham's visit. Anna has not told her husband, Mr. Bates (also one of the

servants) who did this to her. Anna has only told him that it had happened, and that it was a random stranger. She did this, because she was afraid that Mr. Bates would kill Mr. Green and receive the death penalty as a result. However, Mr. Bates appears to slowly uncover the truth. In one of the previous episodes, it has been revealed that Mr. Green was found dead in London. Mr. Bates happened to be near London on that day. A sergeant arrives at Downton to investigate the death of Mr. Green, who stayed at Downton shortly before he died.

Lady Mary is in search of a new spouse, after her husband Matthew died at the end of season three. There were two men who wanted to marry her: Charles Blake and Tony Gillingham. She refused Charles Blake and accepted Tony Gillingham. Before announcing the engagement, she and Tony spent a week in a hotel in Liverpool for a tryst. Afterwards, she decided to forfeit her plans to marry him after all and travel with Anna to London to deliver the bad news to Tony. In this episode, she also runs into Charles Blake, who appears to have taken her refusal quite well and is in the company of Mabel Lane Fox, who Tony had agreed to marry before he left her for Lady Mary.

Lady Mary also meets with Rosamund, who discusses the wellbeing of Lady Mary's sister Lady Edith with her. Lady Edith had sexual intercourse with her boyfriend while she stayed at her aunt Rosamund's house. Aunt Rosamund promised to not tell anyone that Lady Edith had had sexual intercourse out of wedlock. After Lady Edith had realised she was pregnant, she only told this news to aunt Rosamund, who proceeded to help her with orchestrating a situation in which the child would be adopted by one of the nearby farmers. By doing this, Lady Edith would be able to visit her child without anybody knowing that the child was hers.

Apart from the meeting with her aunt, Lady Mary discusses the future of the estate with Tom and Robert. They are aware of how rapidly the world is changing and how the aristocracy as they know will not remain unaffected indefinitely. If Downton Abbey is to

survive, serious changes must be made. Lady Mary and Tom seem to disagree with Robert about the possible changes. They argue about whether they should expand by building houses in the nearby village.

#### *4.2 Analysis: Lady Mary*

For two scenes in which Lady Mary has a noteworthy contribution to the conversation, Lady Mary's most notable utterance will be analysed, focussing on the class-based conversational implicatures that she makes. These will be calculated by analysing the utterances themselves, how her statements honour Grice's maxims, and the context of her utterances.

##### *4.2.1 Breakfast Scene*

In this scene, the family is gathered at the breakfast table. Rose MacClare, daughter of Robert Crawley's cousin Susan, is currently staying at Downton Abbey and also present at the table. She has volunteered to help Russian aristocrats who have fled their home country after the Russian Revolution of 1917, during which the Tsarist aristocracy was overthrown and ushered in the Soviet Union. These Russians are in poor condition, and Rose helps them by bringing them clothes and serving them food. When asked about this, Rose replies:

*(6) [Rose MacClare] Oh, it's so sad. They talk about the old days – dances at the Winter Palace, picnics on the banks of the Neva – but there are holes in their shoes, and they've got no money for food.*

Robert then replies as follows:

*(2) [Robert Crawley] This is where Tom says it serves them right.*

Tom Branson, the chauffeur who married into the family, has been known for his aberrant socialist views. His perspective on politics is not shared by any member of the household. Now that he is part of the family, his views towards the aristocrats are more nuanced. Robert, however, still believes that Tom is a radical socialist. With this comment, Robert claims to know what Tom's opinion on these Russians is. Tom's nuanced political view is evident in his response:

(3) *[Tom Branson] Well, I don't approve of how things were managed in Russia, but I'm still sorry for people who have to make a new life in a foreign land, from scratch.*

Then, Lady Mary says the following to Robert:

(4) *[Mary Crawley] Honestly, Papa, every time you challenge Tom, you sound much more unreasonable than he is.*

Lady Mary's comment in (4) requires thorough analysis. Tom and Robert have argued many times about politics, and Tom is, in this respect, seen as the outsider, and not just by Robert, but by the rest of the family and the servants as well. Since most socialists are against the notion of hegemony, and therefore, against the social class that the family represents, Lady Mary and Robert judge socialists, including Tom, as unreasonable. However, Tom's position as a socialist aristocrat is complicated and can appear confusing. He is a socialist, but he loves the aristocratic family that welcomed him after the death of his wife. At this point in the series, Tom himself struggles with his seemingly paradoxical position, as well, constantly wondering where he belongs. Robert still believes that, deep down, Tom is a radical socialist. By uttering (4), Lady Mary implicates that, every time Robert challenges Tom concerning their opposing political views, 1) Robert sounds unreasonable, 2) Tom is characteristically unreasonable, and that 3) Robert sounds more unreasonable than Tom is characteristically unreasonable. While Lady Mary is aware of Tom's revised and nuanced political views, she violates the maxim of Quality. She does not believe Tom is unreasonable, she merely implicates this, because she wants Robert to realise how unreasonable he appears himself by criticizing Robert's manner of discussion. She points out that what he says sounds even more unreasonable than the person who has, throughout the series, been presented as the one with the divergent views. By uttering this, Mary observes the maxim of Quality by saying what she believes to be true (i.e. that Robert sounds unreasonable). She observes the maxim of

Quantity by mentioning that Robert merely sounds unreasonable, with which she implicates that she is only judging his manner of speaking and not his character. However, Lady Mary criticizes Robert to make him realise that Tom's radical, rigid, socialist ideas have become more nuanced and that Robert is the one who sounds the most unreasonable. Robert's response is fairly brief:

(5) *[Robert Crawley]: Do I? How is your old beau managing, Mama?*

After a brief comment that questions what Lady Mary said to him, Robert quickly changes both the subject and the addressee by asking his mother a question about a completely different topic. This is evidence that Robert has drawn the inferences that Lady Mary intended. Robert believes that Mary observes the maxim of Quality, because she implicates that Tom is unreasonable, which he agrees with. This makes it highly likely for Robert to assume that Lady Mary also observes the maxim of Quality with the implicature that Robert sounds unreasonable. With his response in (5), he does not object to or contradict Lady Mary's utterance, but questions what she said in a brief manner, meaning that he acknowledges the possibility that her entire utterance observed the maxim of Quality, and that she, therefore, made a solid point. By changing the subject and his interlocutor, he avoids having to admit defeat.

#### **4.2.2 Dinner Scene**

Lady Mary has just returned from her trip to London (where she met with Tony to break off the engagement and the relationship altogether) and is asked by her uncle, Hugh MacClare, if she enjoyed it. The exact exchange is captured in (6) and (7) below.

(6) *[Hugh MacClare]: Did you have a good time in London?*

(7) *[Mary Crawley]: Quite good. I set myself rather a difficult task, and it's always a relief when it's done, isn't it?*

Mary responds to the question appropriately. The answer to the question can be either positive or negative. Questions such as the one in (6) generally implicate an invitation to

elaborate on the subject of the question, rather than respond with a simple yes or no. This is an example of what is termed as *generalized conversational implicature* (Birner, 2013). In this case, Hugh MacClare wanted to know what she had been doing in London. After answering in the affirmative, she continues to elaborate. However, with her utterance in (7), she also violates the maxim of Quantity and the maxim of Quality. She violates the maxim of Quantity by not saying enough. The statement she makes is rather general, applicable to an infinite number of possible situations. It does not provide any information about her activities in London. The reason why she violated the maxim of Quantity is retraceable. As mentioned above, Lady Mary had been dating Tony Gillingham and had accepted his proposal. The two spent a week in a hotel in Liverpool, because Lady Mary believed that having coitus with Tony would help her test if they were meant to be together. After this week, she admitted that it had confirmed the validity of their relationship and that they could soon announce their engagement. However, in the weeks following these events, she changed her mind and wanted to break off the entire relationship. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, or at least in the semi-fictional world of *Downton Abbey*, it was not deemed appropriate for a woman of her class to have sexual intercourse out of wedlock with a man, only to reject him afterwards. She hopes she can avoid sharing her controversial decision by making a general statement. It is probable that her reason for not giving more details supersedes the need to be as cooperative as possible. She hopes the others at the table will assume that if there was anything noteworthy about her visit to London, she would have said so. This happens to be the core of the CP. However, her statement in (7) is far too general and vague. It does not provide any useful information that her uncle asked for. Even though her uncle's reaction is not shown, Lady Mary receives a questioning and bewildered look from her grandmother, Violet Crawley, implicating that Violet realised that Lady Mary was deliberately withholding information. The smile with which Lady Mary uttered (7) suddenly disappears as she sees Violet's look,

meaning Lady Mary realised that she did not manage to hide her secret completely. She did not fail completely, as she did not have to tell her secret to the others at the table. Only Violet knows that Mary had something to hide about her visit to London. This manner of conversing is not uncommon for the aristocrats in the series. Discussions and conflicts are often avoided as soon as possible. In the context of the series, it is not surprising that Lady Mary does not start or attempt to continue the topic of her controversial behaviour.

Another result is that the others present at the table only know that she has carried out a difficult task. This is where she violates the maxim of Quality. The difficult task was breaking up with Tony Gillingham. However, Tony simply refused to be rejected, stating that they would get through it together. This means that she did not complete her task at all. She does not say this explicitly, but by making the general statement that “it’s always a relief when it’s done” in (7), she implicates that she did complete her task successfully and that the resulting relief is the reason why her time in London was good. Her reason for doing this is retraceable as well. If she observed the maxim of Quality and stated that she had not completed her difficult task, questions concerning as to why she had not completed her task would have followed logically. As mentioned earlier, Lady Mary does not want to continue talking about her time in London, as her business there is not regarded as appropriate for a woman of her class. Her violation of the maxim of Quality is based on class, but not directly. She implicates not wanting to observe the maxim of Quantity by violating the maxim of Quality.

#### ***4.2.3 Discussion: Mary***

As mentioned earlier., the CP states that every participant is expected to be as cooperative as possible and observe the four maxims with every utterance. Implicatures always from an utterance, but this does not count for inferences. Inferences can only follow when one flouts or opts out of the maxims. In this section, I will discuss the implicatures and inferences that follow from the selected utterances.

Lady Mary's comment in (4) makes a handful of implicatures that are based on class and worth analysing. She violates the maxim of Quality by implicating that she thinks Tom is unreasonable, which is not true. She also criticizes Robert's manner of discussing. She hopes he will infer this by implicating that she and Robert have the similar opinions on Tom. She violates the maxim of Quality, but hopes Robert believes that she observes the maxim of Quality, making her other implicature, namely that Robert's manner of discussing is unreasonable, Lady Mary appears to achieve her goal, as Robert responds briefly and quickly changes the subject in (5). He obviously inferred what Lady Mary wanted him to infer, and quickly changes the subject and addressee to avoid the confrontation. As mentioned earlier, the residents of *Downton Abbey* tend to avoid any conflict or confrontation as much as possible. Robert's comment in (5) illustrates this perfectly.

Lady Mary's comment in (7) violates the maxim of Quantity, because she is not being as informative as required. She implicates that she wants to keep whatever happened in London a secret. Her reason for her uncooperative behaviour is that her business in London (i.e. her relationship with Tony Gillingham, including all that happened between them prior to this episode) is not appropriate for a person of her class. Therefore, for the script of Lady Mary, the communicative guidelines described by the maxims help retrieve the implicatures, along with the underlying class-based reasons for her uncooperative behaviour. It is evident from her language use that although Lady Mary is endowed with luxury and other upper-class privileges, her position among the aristocratic family also comes with the corresponding responsibilities, expectations, and a reputation to maintain.

### 4.3 Analysis: Anna

#### 4.3.1 London Scene

In this scene, Lady Mary and Anna have just arrived in London. While Lady Mary is preparing to meet her Aunt Rosamund for a dress show, Anna is helping her by dressing her and unpacking her belongings. The complete exchange is as follows:

(8) *[Mary Crawley]: I'm fearfully late. Where are my gloves?*

(9) *[Anna]: Don't worry. It will all be unpacked and shipshape before you get back.*

(10) *[Mary Crawley]: You're a dream. I must run. Oh, wait a minute. Could you post this? Or give it to Mead if he hasn't emptied the box in the hall. I never said where to meet me, and Kensington Gardens would be nice and neutral.*

(11) *[Lady Mary Crawley]: I thought about dining with him tonight, but midday seemed more appropriate for bad news.*

(12) *[Anna]: Very good, m'lady.*

In this scene, Lady Mary gives Anna a letter that she is to deliver to Tony Gillingham's house. The letter contains the time and place where Lady Mary and Tony are going to meet the next day. During that meeting, Mary will end the relationship with Tony.

Anna's utterance in (12) appears to be most relevant in this scene. One of the implicatures is relatively simple. Anna accepts the request to post the letter and observes the maxim of Manner and maxim of Relation by confirming that she understood her message. However, Anna might not agree with Lady Mary's decisions concerning Tony Gillingham. If this is the case, she would be violating maxim of Quality. Considering that Anna is aware of the details of Lady Mary's controversial choices concerning her love life, it is highly likely that Anna does not approve of this. In fact, it seems safe to assume that, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, no one would deem Lady Mary's actions as being appropriate for a lady. It should be noted that the camera is pointed at Anna between (10) and (11), even though Lady Mary is

talking, and Anna is viewed sighing silently. This can be considered evidence for Anna's disapproval. Since Anna's actual opinion is more elaborate than this, she violates maxim of Quantity, as well. Also, her actual thoughts are likely to be more nuanced and elaborate than her utterance in (12) implicates. Her response does not appear to match her actual thoughts on the matter. However, since lady's maids are not supposed to comment in any unsupportive manner, it is likely that Anna's position with respect to Lady Mary constrained her to respond positively and with that, violate the maxim of Quality. Her class obliges her to respond with an utterance such as the one in (12) and with it, violate the maxims of Quality and Quantity, and observe the maxims of Manner and Relation. It is true that a response such as the one in (12) is not uncommon to be said by servants to their masters. However, the audience have known Anna from the beginning of the series, and I argue that most of them will admit that Anna does not approve of Lady Mary's choices in this episode and scene. In addition, Anna's is shown sighing while Lady Mary is speaking to her about her plan. Lady Mary does not appear to infer anything, and this is not surprising. After all, she is used to servants giving her responses such as (12). With all of this in mind, the audience can infer what Anna implicates in (12).

#### ***4.3.2 Basement Scene***

The events that occurred prior to this scene is quite relevant for this analysis. Tom Branson had invited Miss Sarah Bunting to dinner. She had been giving one of Downton's undercooks a rudimentary education and is, similar to Tom, a socialist. At the dinner table, Miss Bunting accused Robert of not approving of her lessons and of not knowing the undercook's name. After this, the undercook was called into the dining room, and she expressed her gratitude towards Miss Bunting. After this, Robert had to admit his defeat. Apparently, this was not enough for Miss Bunting, who continued to goad Robert. He then shouted at her, demanding that she had to leave the house and never return, and left the room. This conflict causes commotion among the servants in the basement. Mrs. Hughes (the head housekeeper) and

Mr. Carson (the butler) are discussing the dinner quarrel in the basement as Anna joins the conversation. After Anna has taken a seat, the conversation continues as follows:

(13) *[Anna]: It's true, then? I thought Mr. Barrow might be exaggerating.*

(14) *[Mrs. Hughes]: It seems he wasn't, for once.*

(15) *[Mr. Carson]: Mr. Branson must be horrified to have brought her here.*

(16) *[Anna]: I don't know.*

(17) *[Anna]: I like him, but sometimes I think we've forgotten the Mr. Branson that was down here with us, spouting Keir Hardie between every mouthful.*

(18) *[Anna]: They've made him one of them in a way, but it's not who he really is.*

(19) *[Mr. Carson]: Then it makes me wonder whether Downton is the place for him.*

(20) *[Mrs. Hughes]: A question I'm sure he's asked himself many times.*

With (16), Anna violates the maxim of Quality. What she goes on to say in (17) and (18) is evidence that she knows Mr. Carson is not right with his utterance in (15). This is not without reason. Mr. Carson is her superior, and even though they are both servants, Mr. Carson is in a higher position than she is. Moreover, Anna's position forces her to tread carefully with her opinions, especially if they oppose Mr. Carson's. With that in mind, she carefully expresses her doubts about Mr. Carson's statement while she knows she does not agree with him. She does not contradict or challenge him, but first gives a subtle indication that she is not of the same opinion. Then, she speaks her mind about the situation with (17) and (18). Mr. Carson appears to agree with her about this, as Mr. Carson continues her line of thought. He starts his utterance in (19) with the word "then". By uttering "then" in this context, Mr. Carson agrees with what Anna says in (18). She claims that Tom does not belong among the aristocrats, even though they have changed Tom in certain manners. The following comment of Mr. Carson elaborates on this, because he wonders if Tom should stay at Downton Abbey if he does not belong. Anna's response in (17) and (18) to Mr. Carson's statement makes the

following implicatures: 1) The aristocrats have changed Tom since he joined the aristocratic family, 2) Tom's true self does not belong among the aristocrats, 3) Tom is deep down still a socialist, and that is why he invited someone who shares his beliefs (Miss Bunting). By uttering (19) and (20), both Mr. Carson and Mrs. Hughes appear to infer these implicatures, questioning whether Downton Abbey is the right place for Tom.

#### **4.3.3 Discussion: Anna**

It should be noted that Anna generally makes fewer class-based implicatures than Lady Mary does. However, the class she represents limits what she can say immensely, which often forces her to respond in the briefest manner possible, observing the maxim of Manner, but sometimes violating the maxim of Quantity and/or Quality. In these instances, she would only be violating the maxim of Quantity and/or Quality if she wanted to communicate her opinions. She is only allowed to give her opinion when she is asked to do so. Her response in (12) illustrates this adequately. Her full opinion on the matter is likely to be more elaborate than the affirmative comment in (12). Her position as a lady's maid obliges her to answer briefly, and in accordance with Lady Mary. In these cases, she is often forced to observe the maxim of Manner, but violate the maxim of Quantity, as well. In addition, since she might not always agree with Lady Mary's choices and utterances, Anna's class often requires her to violate the maxim of Quality. Analysing Anna's comments in (16), (17), and (18) with the maxims proves informative, as well. Her violation of the maxim of Quality in (16) showed that she has to tread carefully when arguing with her superior. Taking into account how Anna honours the maxims constitutes a large part of the analysis of her class-based implicatures, especially those that illustrate the limitations of Anna's position as a servant.

### **5. General Discussion and Conclusion**

Lady Mary and Anna have different positions in the social hierarchy of *Downton Abbey*, and Lady Mary and Anna both represent their own class with their language use. Anna's life as a lady's maid is dedicated to the service of the Crawley family. This means that her freedom is

limited, including her freedom of speech. While she can phrase her opinion gently to her superior Mr Carson, as she does in (16) up and until (18), she cannot speak her mind to Lady Mary without being asked, which is evident in (12).

Lady Mary's position gives her more freedom of speech, but she is expected to remain loyal to the family and act in a manner that is appropriate for a lady. This is visible in her language use. In (4), even though her aim is to criticize Robert's manner of discussing political views, she also needs to criticize Tom's political views. In (7), her awareness of the class she represents obliges her to withhold certain details about her trip to London. For both Lady Mary and Anna, the analysis above shows how the maxims can aid in retrieving and understanding class-based implicatures.

In this thesis, I have investigated the application of Grice's maxims on historical fiction. I chose to analyse the class-based implicatures from utterances of two characters from ITV's *Downton Abbey*, using Grice's maxims. From the analysis, I was able to conclude that both the classes that Lady Mary and Anna represent come with responsibilities and constraints. Although these are expressed differently for the two characters, it is evident in their language use and in the implicatures made.

For the study of pragmatics, these findings implicate that class can influence or even govern one's language use. This is evident in historical fiction, especially the works that focus on times in which class membership was more important, less fluid, and was, as Marshall, Newby, Rose, and Vogler (1988) put it, "lived only as a 'contingent and meaningless fact.'" The scope of the analysis presented was limited in the interest of time. This means that, with related research questions, the niche can still be filled in future studies. For example, analysing the script with Leech's Politeness Principle in mind could provide relevant additional information for pragmatics, historical fiction, and class.

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