

enhance good human relations. Failure to greet someone who expects to be greeted, in the Yoruba society, may engender malice, hatred or social conflict. As submitted by Odebunmi (2013& 2015), it is the major means by which the Yoruba express respect and thus achieve bonding. Important as greeting is to the Yoruba people in particular and Nigerians in general, its cultural realization goes beyond the routine expectation of the interactants as its pragmatic contexts play significant roles in its natural and mediated construction. Most of the previous works on greetings are based largely on the socio-cultural and institutional dimension to the phenomenon within the ambits of sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, stylistics and pragmatics, they do not largely examine the socio-pragmatic mechanisms of greetings in dramatic works influenced by Yoruba culture, particularly, Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to blame* with its abundant instances of greetings. For instance, Adeyanju (1989) is strictly sociolinguistic and it does a comparative sociolinguistic analysis of the form and function of greetings in Yoruba and English, Akindele (1990) does a sociolinguistic analysis of Yoruba greetings and Adegbija (1993) compares the greeting norms in Nigeria and Germany. Adeyanju (2003) is stylo-semantic, using Halliday's meta function and Adegbija's layers of meaning, it identifies the two socio-religious themes that run through and brings out the stylistic features of the poem in the greeting card Pastor E. A. Adeboye, the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, used to send New Year message to the Church members in the year 2003, and Odebunmi (2013) is pragma-discousal. Adegbija (1989), Akindele (2007) and Odebunmi (2015) that are socio-pragmatic differ significantly from the present work. Adegbija (1989) examines the politeness phenomena in Nigerian English, Yoruba and Ogori, Akindele (2007) dwells on the analysis of Sesotho greetings, while Odebunmi (2015) establishes the concept of Omoluabi, but sees greeting as one of the major attributes of Omoluabi. This work is therefore out to examine the construction of greetings in *The gods are not to blame* with the objectives of identifying the types of greetings in it, considering their pragmatic functions as well as accounting for their contextual implications. It is believed this study will be of immense benefit to scholars working on greetings as well as those who may want to know the pragmatic functions that greetings perform in drama texts in particular and Yoruba society as a whole. It can also help students and general public to have a clearer and better understanding of the text.

Previous Works on *The gods are not to blame*

The bulk of the works on Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to blame* (henceforth *The gods*) are studied from the literary (e.g. Dasyuva 2004) and sociological (e.g.

Green/Korubo- Solomon 2002) perspectives respectively. The major linguistic works on *The gods* (e.g. Monye 1995, Oloruntoba Oju (1998), Dairo 2001, Ogbulogo 2002, Odebunmi 2008) and Odebode and Eke-Opara (2015) are completely different from the present work. For instance, Dairo (2001) and Ogbulogo (2002) only made mention of *The gods* in their discussion of other works of Ola Rotimi, while Monye (1995) identifies all the fifty-three proverbs in the play and discusses each in relation to the contexts in which it appears without using any theoretical framework. Oloruntoba-Oju (1998) does a stylistic analysis of *The gods*, Kurunmi and Ovonramwen Nogbaisi, while Odebunmi (2008) does a pragmatic analysis of the crisis- motivated proverbs in it using Jacob Mey's theory of pragmatic acts and comes out with the findings that crisis-motivated proverbs in the play are social and political, and are characterized by practs like those of counselling, cautioning, challenging, veiling, persuading, prioritizing, encouraging, threatening and admitting, psychological acts which exploit contextual features like reference, metaphor and inference, among others.

Odebode and Eke-Opara (2015) analyze the play anchoring it on SPEAKING, the key concept in Dell Hymes' ethnography of communication. "S" means Setting which could be physical temporal or psychological. "P" stands for Participants, meaning the participants in the speech event. "E" stands for Ends and it has to do with the purpose of the event, i.e. aims of the participants. "A" stands for Acts, which has to do with the form and content of the message or text i.e. the speech acts which the events are made to perform. "K" stands for Key which refers to the tone or manner in which a text is delivered. This may be serious or unserious, formal or informal, ironic or sarcastic etc. "I" stands for Instrument, which refers to the different channel of speech transmission such as spoken or written, telephone or email, fax or text messages. "N" stands for Norms, which indicates the speech behaviour which could be linguistic or paralinguistic, universal or cultural, general or specific. "G" stands for Genre, meaning the linguistic form employed such as poem, letter, story and proverb. Ogunsiji and Sonde (2016), bringing out all the sixty-seven characters in the text, demonstrate how proverbs are used to develop the characters in the text. They discover that because Odewale is a round and dynamic character, he uses 38 of the 67 proverbs, which constitutes 56.7% while the fifteen other characters, being flat and static, use the remaining 29 proverbs which constitutes 43.3%.

From all the works mentioned above, it is clear that this work is different from theirs because it out to consider the construction of greetings in the play with the goals of identifying the greeting types in it, examining the speech functions they are used to perform as well as accounting for their contextual implications.

Ola Rotimi and *The gods are not to blame*

Olawale Gladstone Olarotimi, popularly known as Ola Rotimi who was born in 1938 and died in 2002 was an acclaimed Nigerian playwright. He had his primary and secondary education in Port-Harcourt and Lagos respectively before leaving for Boston University for his degree in Fine Arts and Yule School of Drama for his master in Dramatic Arts. He taught in several universities which include University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University and Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. He was a man of many parts: an actor, a director and a lecturer. He had seven plays to his credit, namely, *Our Husband has gone Mad Again* (1966), *The gods are not to blame* (1971), *Kurumi* (1971), *Ovonramwen Nogbaisi* (1974), *Holding Talks* (1979), *If* (1983) and *Hopes of the Living Dead*. Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to blame* is a story that dwells on fatalism. Odewale, the hero of the play, was born into the family of King Adetusa and Queen Ojuola. Baba Fakunle, an Ifa priest is invited to divine his future. It is revealed that he will kill his father and marry his mother. To avert this, he is given to a king's bodyguard, Gbonka for destruction in the forest. Gbonka, rather than kill the child gives him to a barren hunter, Ogundele that he meets in a forest at Ijekun-Yemoja, who with Mobike, his wife brings him up as their child. At Ijekun- Yemoja, Odewale is told that he is willed to kill his father and marry his mother. This prompts him, contrary to the warning of the gods, to leave the village for Ede where he unknowingly kills his father and eventually runs to Kutuje where he, after being made the king, marries his mother to fully complete the prediction.

Methodology

The choice of *The gods* was informed not only by the fact that it is based on Yoruba culture and traditions but also because it has abundant instances of greetings and no attention has been paid to their analysis. The text was thoroughly and critically read to identify all the greetings in it. These greetings, based on what informed their constructions, were divided into two broad categories namely: i. culture-informed greetings and ii. Situation- informed greetings. The culture-informed greetings further bifurcate into routine and culture-constrained greetings. They were then subjected into analysis.

Theoretical Framework: The Theory of Pragmatic Acts

The fact that one of the goals of this study is to examine the speech functions that greetings in *The gods* are used to perform informs the choice of this theory. It is believed that greetings in a dramatic text are better analysed using the theory of action. The theory of pragmatic acts came into being because of the deficiencies

in the theory of speech acts, especially because it is considered atomistic and non-situated (See Fairclough 1989 and Mey 2001). Mey (2001) explains the concept of pragmeme using the model below:

PRAGMEME
ACTIVITY PART
TEXTUAL PART (INTERACTANTS)
(CO (N) TEXT)
SPEECH ACTS
INF REF REL VCE SSK MPH 'M'...
INDIRECT SPEECH ACTS
CONVERSATIONAL ('DIALOGUE') ACTS
PSYCHOLOGICAL ACTS (EMOTIONS)
PROSODY (INTONATION, STRESS...)
PHYSICAL ACTS:
BODY MOVES (INCL. GESTURES)
PHYSIOGNOMY (FACIAL EXPRESSIONS)
BODILY EXPRESSIONS OF) EMOTIONS
...
0 (NULL)
PRACT
ALLOPRACT
PRAGMEME, PRACT, ALLOPRACT

Figure1: A Model of Pragmatic Acts (Mey 2001:222)

The theory of pragmatic acts, according to Mey (2001: 222), focuses on “ the environment in which both speaker and hearer find their affordances, such that the entire situation is brought to bear on what can be said in the situation, as well as what is actually being said”. Pragmatic act is regarded as “the only force associated with making utterances” (Odebunmi, 2008). A pragmatic act, in the words of Odebunmi (2008) is instantiated through an ipra or a pract, which realizes a pragmeme. As posited by Mey (2001:221), “Every pract is at the same time an allopract, that is to say, a concrete instantiation of a particular pragmeme”. The only thing that determines a pract is the participants’ knowledge of interactional situation and the potential effect of a pract in a context. Practing thus provides solution to the problem of telling illocutionary force from perlocutionary force.

As shown in Figure 1 above, pragmeme has two parts: activity part, meant for interactants and textual part, meant for the context within which the pragmeme

functions. To communicate, the interactants resort to the use of speech act types such as indirect speech acts, conversational (dialogue) acts, psychological acts, prosodic acts and physical acts. These are put into contexts, which include INF representing “inference”, REF, “relevance”, VCE, “voice”, SSK, “shared situation knowledge”, MPH, “metaphor”, and M, “metapragmatic joker”. The interaction between activity part and textual part results in a pract or an allopract. Central to metapragmatic joker is “indexicality” which at the pragmatic level, requires good knowledge of the context of the utterance made. Mey (2001) illustrates the metapragmatic nature of indexicality with structural repetitions such as words of the Biblical Pilate “What I do, I do” (John 19; 22) and Bakhtin’s (1994:108) “Sentences are repeatable, sentences are repeatable”, whose meanings do not depend on the repetitions made, but rather on the indexical context. The indexicality here, according to Mey (ibid) can only “be brought out by an analysis of the discourse in which the utterance takes place”. Mey finally stresses that the metapragmatic indexicality plays a very vital role in understanding how pragmatic acts develop discourse.

Analysis: Our analysis of greetings in *The gods* shall be based on Figure 2 below which is a modified version of Mey’s (2001) model of pragmatic acts adapted by Odeunmi (2008) in his analysis of the proverbs in *The gods*.

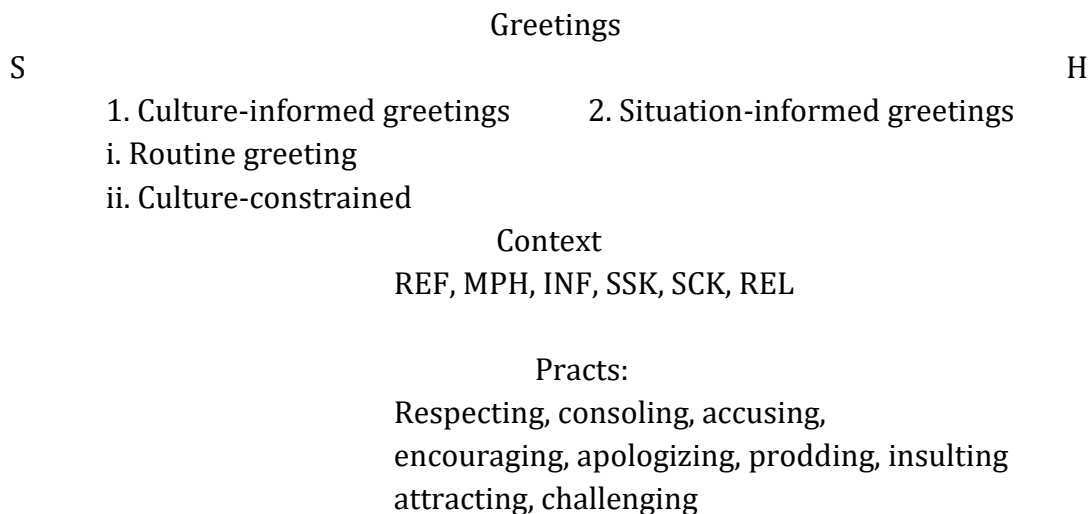


Figure 2: a modified version of Model of Pragmatic acts in *The gods* are not to blame

As shown in Figure 2, greetings in *The gods* are used between a speaker and at least a hearer (listener), and two types of greetings are identified in the text namely: i. Culture-informed greetings, which is again sub-divided into routine

and culture-constrained greetings and ii. Situation-informed greetings. These are explained and analysed in turn below:

Culture-informed Greetings: As conceived here, these are greetings that are culture- demanded or culture-required, and sex-determined. For instance, culture demands that female Yoruba girls should kneel down to greet their parents or elderly person while the male children are to prostrate themselves, male chiefs are to prostrate to greet a king while the female chiefs are to kneel when greeting a king. They may also be non-verbal, verbal, or a combination of the two. As said earlier, culture- informed greetings are of two types. These are discussed in turn below.

Routine greetings are the ordinary, regular, day-to-day greetings usually used to show respect or honour to people. They can also be connected with the periods of the day, such as morning, afternoon, evening or night. They are physical acts and interact mainly with shared cultural knowledge to respect and attract the attention of others to discussion. Instances of routine greetings can be found where reference is made to when Aderopo returns from the farm and meets his mother Queen Ojuola in the palace (p.5), where Odewale is made a king (p.7), where Odewale's children run to meet him (p.8), where Odewale explains the effort he has made to find solution to problem in the land of Kutuje (p.10), where Aderopo returns from Ile- Ife and meets the Odewale and his chiefs in all seated in council (p.18) and where Baba Fakunle appears before the chiefs in Odewale's palace. Many examples of this type of greetings abound in the text in the contexts of cultural hierarchy, protest and argument. They are reported through the narrator. Some of them are considered below.

Example 1

Background: Aderopo, Queen Ojuola's second son returns from the farm with a hoe in one hand and a bundle of yams slung over his shoulder. He prostrates himself before Ojuola who takes the yams from him. (Prologue p.5)

Example 2

Background: Odewale's four children run to him to greet him when he enters the palace. The girls kneel and the boys prostrate. (p.8)

Example 3

Background: Aderopo on returning from Ile-Ife meets Odewale and his chiefs seated in council and he prostrates himself, and the dialogue below ensues between him and the council of chiefs.

Aderopo: Your highness...

King's bodyguard: The king greets you.

Aderopo: (To chiefs). Fathers of our land--

Odewale: Aderopo, lover of our kingdom, your reign will be happy.

Priest: We greet you, son, you have come well.

Aderopo: (rising). I thank you all, my fathers. (Act One Scene 2, P.18)

In the examples above, the greetings are used to practice respecting. In example 1, in the context of maternal hierarchy, Aderopo, being a male son of Ojuola, prostrates himself to greet her on returning from the farm and Ojuola is able to infer that he is greeting her working on shared situation knowledge (SSK) and shared cultural knowledge (SCK) since they share the same culture, in example 2, the girls among Odewale's children, in the context of paternal hierarchy, kneel while the boys prostrate to greet him to practice *respecting* and Odewale is able to appropriately interpret their physical action because they share the same culture, while in example 3, Aderopo, now in the context of royal hierarchy, prostrates to Odewale and his chiefs to practice *respecting* not only because they are elderly but also because they are in authority. And they, hinging on SSK and SCK are able to infer that he greets them while King's Bodyguard's "The King greets you" refers to the king's unexpressed but implied greeting. Also, "Fathers of our land" in example 3 is a metaphor referring to the chiefs. In all the examples, the greetings are initiated by the younger interactants. That those being greeted in the examples above clearly interpret the actions of those that greet them reflects in the appropriate responses given to them. In example 1, Ojuola takes the yams Aderopo brings from the farm from him, in example 2, Odewale does not rebuff the children's greeting, and in example 3, Aderopo gets appropriate responses from both the king (Aderopo, lover of our kingdom, your reign will be happy.) and his chiefs (We greet you, son, you have come well.). In example 1, the greeting is initiated by Aderopo, in example 2 it is initiated by Odewale's children while in example 3 it is initiated by Aderopo. This is in consonance with the observation of Adegbija (1989), Akindele (2007) and Odebunmi (2013) that the greetings must be initiated by the younger interactants, especially when relating with elderly people.

The greetings in the first two examples are constructed non-verbally while that of the third one is constructed both verbally and non-verbally. Also in example 3, Aderopo uses honorifics ("Your highness" and "Fathers of our land") to address both the king and the chiefs, and he does not rise until he is replied by them, and the priest addresses him as "son". This makes reference to the hierarchical

structure of the Yoruba community. It indicates that they are of different statuses. This is in support of Odebunmi's (2015) submission that a female child is schooled to kneel down while the male one is expected to prostrate himself in greeting, and no Yoruba child is expected to stretched out his hand to an elderly person for a handshake, a younger person is to address an older one with honorifics and a younger person should not look an elderly person in the face. The bodyguard's and the priest's greetings also have illocutionary force indicating devices ("The king *greet*s you" and "We *greet* you son."). More examples of routine greetings can be got on pages 25, 37, 43, 67 70 and 71.

Culture-constrained Greetings: These are the greetings dictated or demanded by culture irrespective of whether the circumstances involved are positive or negative. For instance, the custom demands that the children should prostrate themselves to greet their parents, younger persons should greet their elderly people, and townspeople should greet their chiefs or king even when there are disagreements between them. They differ from the ordinary, regular or habitual ones of "Good morning", "Good evening", "well done" and "well come". Some instances of culture-constrained greetings are found when Aderopo returns to Ile-Ife with Baba Fakunle (p.25) and when Odewale wrongly suspects and accuses Aderopo (p.32) among others. In the text, they appear in the contexts of royal hierarchy and disagreements. Let us consider some examples below.

Example 4

Background: Aderopo has returned from Ile- Ife with Baba Fakunle. After introducing him to the chiefs, Odewale enters and Aderopo prostrates himself to greet him. (p.25)

The greeting in the example above, in the context of royal hierarchy, constructed non-verbally, is custom-constrained. Undoubtedly, Aderopo is already aware of the truth at Ile- Ife that Odewale is the killer of King Adetusa, his father that the townspeople are looking for, because he has been to Ile- Ife twice. Normally, there will be that anger in him that the king is the person who killed his father. But he is constrained by the culture to still prostrate himself to greet him to pract *respecting*. Odewale does not attach any evil intention to Aderopo's greeting since they share the same situational and cultural knowledge, and that Aderopo prostrate himself to greet Odewale emphasises the social structure of the Yoruba community.

Example 5

Background: Odewale has been told that he is the killer of King Adetusa, and he is a bed sharer. He now invites Aderopo to the palace.

Odewale: [irked]. Aha! I said if you think you can uproot a tree that has been planted by the gods...hmm...my brother... [Gestures at his head to imply madness in the other's.]

Aderopo: So be it, I shall greet you in the like manner then... [Prostrating himself.] Your highness, if you think to have heavy suspicions is wisdom, then your head is not well.

Act 2 Scene 2, P.32

Aderopo's greeting (that is constructed non-verbally and verbally, i.e. prostrating himself and issuing an utterance) is culture-constrained done in the context of argument. The culture demands that he should prostrate himself when greeting the king, Odewale, even when there is a heated argument between them. With the proverb; "...if you think you can uproot a tree that has been planted by the gods...hum...my brother..." (taken by Aderopo as a form of greeting) Odewale wrongly violently suspects and accuses Aderopo of planning to overthrow him. That Aderopo greets him prostrating before accompanying it with the utterance; "Your highness, if you think..." indicates that he practs *insulting*. Odewale is able to interpret it appropriately working on SCK and SSK. Odewale's "a tree that has been planted by the gods" is a reference to himself being enthroned by the gods and that it will be a futile effort trying to overthrow him" and Aderopo's "in the like manner" refers to the unpleasant way Odewale greets him.

Example 6

Background: After Odewale has explained to the townspeople that he does not fold his hands doing nothing to get solution to the problem, they prostrate themselves and say "We beg for forgiveness. (p. 10).

The greeting here is culture-constrained; the people are constrained to do it after Odewale has reprimanded them for accusing him wrongly of doing nothing to get their problem solved. The greeting here is constructed both non-verbally and verbally. It starts with prostrating and ends with the words: "We beg for forgiveness". Here, the townspeople greet to pract *apologizing*. And Odewale, relying on SSK and SCK interprets it correctly, thus he replies them appropriately: "No, no-do not beg..."

Situation- informed Greetings: This form of greetings is called for by a situation. The normal rules of greetings may therefore not be strictly followed and the greetings may be done for some other purposes other than for showing respect to an interactant. Many examples of this form of greetings feature in the text within the contexts of protests, tradition and altercation.

Example 7

Background: There is an outbreak of epidemic in Kutuje. The townspeople are at the palace to protest against the assumed non-challant attitude of the king to their plight. The king, to show that he cares for them, appears to them flanked by his chiefs, stops on the topmost step, scanning them and the conversation below ensues.

First Chief: Enough! People of our land! People of our—the king stands before you in greeting.

First Citizen: What use are greetings to a dying body?

Chiefs: [shocked]. Aha! (Act one Scene 1 p.9)

Ordinarily, the culture demands that the townspeople should all bow down and shout “Kabiyesi o” on seeing a king standing before them. But in the example above, the townspeople do not care to greet King Odewale. This forces First Chief to make reference to the king standing before them and introduces the proxy greeting; “...people of our—the king stands before you in greeting.” The greeting is done in the context of protest, people protesting against the assumed carefree attitude of the king toward their plight. The greeting is constructed verbally—“The king stands before you in greeting”, and it is used to both *draw the attention* of the people to “the King who stands in greeting” and *encourage* them to respond to the king’s greeting. But rather than respond as culture demands, going by the reaction of First Citizen (what use are greetings to a dying body), their response is withdrawn. The greeting also has an illocutionary force indicating device (IFID) “stand” to indicate that the king greets.

Example 8

Background: Baba Fakunle has been brought before King Odewale but instead of greeting him as the custom demands, he remains crouched over his stick. This leads to the conversation below.

Odewale: Baba Fakunle—

Bodyguard: Baba, the king greets you.

(Act 2 Scene 1 P.25)

Odewale’s implicit greeting reported by Bodyguard: “Baba, the king greets you” is situation-informed. Ordinarily, it is Baba Fakunle that is supposed to initiate the greeting because he is of a lower status than the king. His refusal to follow the norm forces Odewale to say: “Baba Fakunle-“, a form of greeting, reformulated by Bodyguard to make it clearer to Baba Fakunle. Expectedly, the greeting is not responded to by Baba Fakunle because he has discovered that Odewale is the killer of the former king, King Adetusa, and the cause of the suffering being

experienced by the people. Odewale does the greeting here to *encourage* Baba Fakunle to speak, yet he refuses to speak. The greeting is done in the context of disagreement/ confusion.

Example 9

Background: Alaka is brought to the palace to see Odewale, at Kutuje, Odewale appears at the top of the step, all the men prostrate themselves greeting, but Alaka remains standing, grinning broadly at Odewale. The dialogue below thus ensues between them.

Alaka: Scorpion! My child, Scorpion!

Odewale; [Recognising him] A-ah! Alaka, son of Odediran!

Alaka: Scorpion! One that must not be vexed...

[Prostrating himself]

Son of my master the hunter

Who squats playfully

to kill a lion

[Odewale hurries down arms outspread. They embraced].

Odewale: My master. Alaka son of Odediran, son of Ijekun Yemoja.

Alaka: This is me.

[They embrace again]. (Act 3 Scene 1, P.43)

The norm is for any man who appears before the king to prostrate himself to greet. This informs all men prostrating themselves to greet Odewale on his appearance to them. But Alaka's form of greeting: "Scorpion! My child, Scorpion..." done in the contexts of reunion and royal hierarchy, is situation-informed. The two, Odewale and Alaka, have separated for long; they are now reuniting. But while every other person there prostrates themselves, Alaka remains standing. And, on recognizing him, Odewale working on SSK and SCK, also responds enthusiastically: A-ah! Alaka! Son of Odediran. It is after this that Alaka prostrates himself after reiterating his former utterance. Alaka's utterance: "Scorpion! My child, Scorpion" refers to life at Ijekun and the word "scorpion" is a metaphor pointing to the character of Odewale (the type that stings to death). Similarly, Odewale's reply (My master. Alaka, son of Odediran, son of Ijekun Yemoja) refers to their relationship - master-servant- at Ijekun-Yemoja. The greeting here is done to *prod* Odewale's mind to aid his recognition of Alaka. The greeting is constructed both verbally and non-verbally.

Conclusion

So far, we have shown that there are two types of greetings in *The gods*; the culture-informed greetings which bifurcates into routine and culture-constrained greetings, and situation-informed greetings. We have equally shown, using the theory of pragmatic acts that the greetings in the text pract respecting, consoling, encouraging, prodding, apologizing and insulting, and that while some of the greetings are constructed non-verbally, some are constructed both non-verbally and verbally. It is believed that this work will be resourceful to scholars working on greetings and their functions.

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