POLITENESS IN THE GENDERED CONSTRUCTION OF CHARACTER: AN ANALYSIS OF DIALECT-USE IN D.H. LAWRENCE'S *LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER*

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1. INTRODUCTION

My aim in this paper is to show how D.H. Lawrence draws on and exploits ideologies of dialect-use and politeness to construct an idealised image of masculinity in the novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. I begin by considering the pragmatics of dialect use in relation to politeness. Then, in order to provide a context for Lawrence's use of dialect in his novel, I summarise the way that studies of the history of English have accounted for the popular perception that non-standard English dialects are inferior to Standard English. I then summarise the way that dialect has traditionally been used as a resource in literary texts in English, and how it has been associated with politeness phenomena, with the aim of showing that although there are certain ideological assumptions that are conventionally drawn on when non-standard dialects are used in literary texts, these are undermined and exploited by Lawrence in order to construct characters, develop the plot and offer social commentary. My main aim is to argue that although dialect differences can be exploited as a resource for constructing character in literary texts to the extent that they draw on a conventional set of associations between the use of the standard and politeness, the relationship between dialect-use and politeness phenomena is constructed implicitly in a range of ways and can vary markedly within and between literary texts, thus calling for an approach to politeness that is sensitive to context.

2. THE PRAGMATICS OF DIALECT-USE AS A POLITENESS STRATEGY

What is communicated by an author's attempt to capture dialect or accent in the speech of a character is quite distinct from what is communicated by a speaker's accent or dialect in naturally occurring communication. For

example, while there is clearly a connection between the inferences we are likely to make about a person on the basis of their behaviour in everyday interactions and the inferences we make when we encounter interactions between characters in literary texts, there is a significant difference. As Jonathan Culpeper points out:

> In relevance theory terms, any character behaviour is part of an ostensive act of communication between the author and the reader, and as such 'communicates the presumption of its own optimal relevance' ([Sperber & Wilson] 1986:158). In other words, we can assume that character behaviour has additional significance or relevance, so that our processing efforts will receive sufficient cognitive rewards (Culpeper, 2001: 146).

However, it is worth stressing that although a character's behaviour is indicated linguistically in a literary text, the information is not generated through explicatures. As Wilson & Sperber assert when discussing the distinction between implicatures and explicatures "[n]ot everything that is linguistically communicated is linguistically *encoded*" (Wilson & Sperber, 1993: 6). They explain this in relation to accent:

> Linguistic decoding is not the only source of input to inferential comprehension. When Peter notices Mary's accent and decides that she is Scottish, this information is not encoded in her utterance, any more than it is encoded by the fact that she is drinking malt whisky or wearing a Black Watch tartan kilt (Wilson & Sperber, 1993: 2).

Wilson & Sperber's point, in asserting that a speaker's accent or dialect might lead the hearer to draw inferences about the speaker, is to argue that although these inferences are based on linguistic information, since they are not based on information that is encoded in an utterance, they do not lead to the formation of explicatures. Although in the example, presumably we are not being asked to see the speaker's accent as being used ostensively and therefore designed to communicate some information to the hearer, this does not mean that accent or dialect can never be used ostensively in naturally occurring discourse or in literary texts in order to generate implicatures.

Brown & Levinson, in their various (1987) discussions of dialect-use in relation to politeness, propose that dialect-use can be a politeness strategy. They also see dialect-use as a measure of distance, and it would be useful at this point to consider their approach, as in contrast to many sociolinguistic studies, their account questions the assumption that speaker sex predicts non-

standard dialect-use. In suggesting that dialect-use can be a way of measuring distance between interlocutors, Brown & Levinson are proposing that it is one way of computing the seriousness of a face threat. For example if two interlocutors speak to each other in different dialects, the D (distance) variable would have a high value and this is likely to increase the weightiness of any potential face threat (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 76). The authors also propose, on the basis of network studies in sociolinguistics, that an individual's use of non-standard dialect-use is an effect of the density of the connections between the members of the community that the individual belongs to (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 31). They suggest that this link explains a recurrent sociolinguistic finding that men are more likely to use regional dialect forms, which tend to be non-standard and low prestige, while women are more likely to use prestige accents, and the standard syntax and lexicon. Their point is that it is because, traditionally, dense networks tend to be solely male, that men are more likely to use dialect forms than women. In support of this, they cite apparently contradictory evidence from Milroy's (1980) study of Belfast speech communities. The study showed that in one community the women used regional dialect forms more than the men. In this particular community, Milroy found that there was a low rate of male employment but a high rate of female employment. The claim is that it is as a result of their working relationships that in this particular community it was women who had the denser networks (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 31). In citing this finding, Brown & Levinson are foregrounding the argument that the use of non-standard forms is only indirectly related to speaker sex.

It is worth briefly highlighting this finding at this point because it has relevance for the analysis that follows. Milroy's findings are cited by Brown & Levinson because they explain gendered differences in dialect-use in structural terms: if a specific network structure holds, then irrespective of the sex of the speakers, a specific effect will be generated. This is in contrast to the early work of Labov and Trudgill, where the higher use of non-standard variants by men is explained in terms of "covert" prestige. Trudgill (1997) describes this prestige as arising from an association between working class speech, which tends to be regionally distinct, and masculinity. Working class speech, he argues, has "connotations of masculinity, since it is associated with the roughness and toughness (...) which are to an extent, considered to be desirable masculine attributes" (Trudgill, 1997: 183). Although this finding has been questioned, there are other sociolinguistic studies, such as that reported in Edwards (1997), that offer empirical evidence in support of the view that native speakers of British English associate the use of non-standard forms with masculinity.

In discussing dialect-use as a politeness strategy, Brown & Levinson refer to it as a relatively neutral resource, although there is an acknowledgement that a specific form will be associated with a specific value in a given speech community. They argue that dialect-use becomes strategic in diglossic situations. Their point is that where code switching between high and low forms occurs, and where the low form is associated with domestic and in-group values, switching to non-standard dialect forms is an indicator of common ground, and to that extent non-standard dialect-use acts as a form of positive politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 110). In contrast, switching to a high form, as for example when speakers of Black English switch to Standard English (henceforth, StE) stresses detachment. They therefore conclude that the selection of a high form is used for negative politeness. Brown & Levinson (1987: 117) also relate the use of dialect to their positive politeness strategy number seven: "presuppose, raise, assert common ground". Their argument is that by using terms only known to in-group members, the speaker is assuming that the hearer "understands and shares the associations of that code" (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 124). I would also want to argue that dialect-switches can function in naturally occurring speech and literary dialogue as an indicator of *procedural meaning* (see Blakemore, 1987 and Watts, 2003) in that it can be used to inform the hearer how to interpret a specific utterance. To the extent that the meanings generated by such an indicator are implicatures, in that they are not drawing on meanings encoded in the language, I would argue that this would predict that dialect-switching is capable of generating a far wider range of implicatures related to politeness that the Brown & Levinson model would suggest. This is because, from this perspective, differences in the significance of dialect-switches might be generated by subtle variations in the contextual assumptions about social context a hearer/reader infers are relevant. To illustrate this, it is worth building on Escandell-Vidal's (1996) argument that utterances might be construed as "politeness" if they are used to "avoid triggering unwanted implications of impoliteness" (1996: 645).

Escandell-Vidal points out that certain utterances such as "Oh! You've had your hair cut!", used by a friend you encounter just after you have had a haircut, do not appear to be relevant in that they do not communicate new information (1996: 642). She goes on to argue that from a relevance-theoretic point of view it might appear that, since the content "does not interact with one's previous assumptions: you *already know* that you have had your hair cut" (Escandell-Vidal, 1996: 642), the utterance will not generate any cognitive effects that are worth the processing effort. However, as she points out, although the utterance does not add new factual information, it does

interact with a hearer's "cultural assumptions regarding social relationships" (Escandell-Vidal, 1996: 642). Her argument is that, in a cultural context where it is expected that friends will notice and comment on a change in appearance, *not* to have made the comment, would have generated potentially impolite inferences. She draws on frame theory to make her case:

> Our frame for friends or acquaintances enables you to suppose (i.e., to predict) that your friend will say something to you. If s/he does not, given that it is overtly manifest that you have changed your looks, there must be a sufficient reason for her/him to depart from the expectations, and you would probably guess that s/he does not like your new hair-style (and, interestingly enough, without further evidence you will never know whether your guess was on the right track or not). Notice also that this is not an automatic inference, but a conscious one (Escandell-Vidal, 1996: 642).

What Escandell-Vidal is claiming therefore, is that "Oh! You've had your hair cut!" may not be relevant in its "representational" function, but it does generate cognitive effects when it is interpreted in the context of those assumptions that we have about how friends interact. This is because, she asserts, where it fits in with cultural assumptions about how friends will act, it works to "confirm or strengthen previous assumptions" (1996: 644-5). However, as she also argues, "if our expectations are not satisfied (i.e., if there is no reaction to the new hair-style), an "impoliteness effect" immediately arises" (1996: 645).

I would want to argue that the use of dialect can have a similar effect where interlocutors expect that a conversation will draw on a shared code. If, in a situation where code-switching is a possibility, a speaker elects not to use a code that is familiar to the hearer, then this may trigger an impoliteness effect. I would also want to argue that, in a social context where the election to use a strongly non-standard dialect is associated with, amongst other qualities, masculinity, dialect-use *per se* is a far from neutral linguistic resource, either in naturally occurring interactions or in fictional interactions. I will set out the implications of these arguments in my analysis of D.H. Lawrence's use of dialect in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. My aim in that analysis is to show how the author exploits expectations about dialect-use to construct situations and actions as face threatening, as well as face enhancing, and in doing so to construct a specific view of masculinity. Before doing this, however, I will contextualise my analysis by outlining some of the implications of dialect-use in English that have come into view through scholarship on the history of English, and scholarship that focuses on the expression and use of dialect in literary texts.

3. DIALECT-USE IN ENGLISH: AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

There is a strong distinction between the way that most native speakers of English perceive StE, and the way in which it is perceived in current linguistic scholarship. For example, linguists generally recognise that, as a dialect, StE has some unusual features. It is not associated with a specific geographical region within Britain, and it does not have a phonemic system: it has a grammar and semantics but because it has no regional affiliation, it is spoken in a range of different accents. Although they recognise that, as a dialect, StE is unusual because of these characteristics, linguists also tend to take the view that (a) StE is just one of the many dialects in which the English language is realised, and (b) StE is not superior to other dialects of English because all the dialects of English are equally rule-governed systems. Neither of these views is likely to be shared by most native speakers of English. For most native speakers, and even those whose native dialect is a non-standard form of English (i.e. most working class people in the UK), StE tends to have a special status to the extent that it is seen as "proper" English. Indeed, outside of linguistic scholarship, the term dialect tends to be used only to refer to non-standard varieties: the standard is not perceived as a dialect, but as "English". Moreover, non-standard dialects, particularly those that are associated with urban areas, are seen to be lazy, sub-standard forms of speech compared to StE (see Graddoll et al., 1996; Gramley & Patzold, 2003; Leith, 1997; and Watts & Trudgill, 2002 for discussions of these issues).

The distinction between the academic view and the lay view is commented on by David Crystal who makes the point that linguists should actively work to dispel the view that StE is a superior dialect:

> The view that all languages are 'equal', in the sense that they display a comparable range of structural properties and social functions, must be extended synchronically to all regions and social domains. The need to state this principle explicitly today is aimed at the popular mentality which views regional dialects as structurally or expressively inferior to the standard language; but it is a view which (...) has [also] had a dominant influence in the past (Crystal, 2002: 243).

In foregrounding the extent to which the popular perception of StE has both a historical and a current relevance, Crystal draws attention to the political impact this view has had, and continues to have, on social stratification in Britain. As Dick Leith (1997) has argued, the establishment

of a particular dialect of English as the standard form, was triggered by, and has served to perpetuate, a pre-existing set of power relations.

In particular, Leith describes the codification aspect of the standardisation process (through dictionaries, grammar books, etc.) as a mean by which class distinctions have been constructed and maintained in Britain since the seventeenth century.

> Codification could be said to have become a weapon of class. What the codifiers had done, ultimately, was to propose and cultivate a code of linguistic forms which were in some degree different from those in use among the vast majority of the population. By analysing "correct" usage in terms that only a minority of educated people could command, the codifiers ensured that correctness remained the preserve of an elite. The use of most people was wrong, precisely because it was the usage of the majority (Leith, 1997: 56-7).

He goes on to argue that this process was institutionalised by the compulsory state education system that came into force in England and Wales at the end of the nineteenth century. In pointing out that the "doctrine of correctness was preached with mechanical inflexibility" he argues that, in particular, the expressive functions of non-standard dialects were ignored, and a concern with linguistic form took precedence in education. Leith concludes that it is not surprising that as a result "millions of people left school convinced that not only were they ignorant of their own language but they were stupid as well" (Leith, 1997: 57).

The argument from this perspective then is that the promotion of the idea that StE is proper English works to devalue non-standard dialects in relation to the standard, and this has enabled class divisions to be reinforced, both because StE is associated with education and prestige, and because it is spoken natively by an elite and not by the majority of English speakers.

4. STANDARD ENGLISH AND POLITENESS

The divisive impact of the standard has been pointed to in a number of studies, but politeness has also been implicated in social stratification. For example, Sell (2005: 111) argues that in the eighteenth century politeness was used as "part of the larger ideological apparatus" by an aristocracy concerned to marginalise other potentially powerful social groups. A link between StE and politeness is made by Richard Watts in his (2002) paper "Polite language to educated language: the re-emergence of an ideology". Here Watts defines polite language, not as language designed to "reduce

friction in personal interactions" (Lakoff, 1975: 64), or language that displays "sensitivity to face" (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 6), but as "polished language". Citing an eighteenth century text that associates politeness with cultivation and refinement, Watts makes the point:

> The tell-tale word here is 'polished', which is a variant of 'polite' (from the Latin past participle *politus* meaning 'polished'), and the implication is that those who have had a liberal education and are members of the 'polite world' have carried out the polishing. The social aspirations of the emergent middle classes in eighteenth century British society were intimately linked to membership in polite society (Watts, 2002: 159).

Watts' argument in this paper is that the promotion of the standard was achieved in part through the construction, across a range of writing from the seventeenth century onwards, of a binary opposition between civilization and barbarism, with the standard being associated with the former and non standard forms being associated with the latter. In his paper he analyses a range of eighteenth century texts in English to demonstrate the extent to which they associate politeness with taste. As he asserts, "the essential condition for what is 'charming and delightful in the polite world' is good taste" (2002: 162).

Watts goes on to show that the terms "polite" and "good taste", are used to describe the natural qualities of "the true gentleman". He sums up his argument thus:

> So the eighteenth century ideology of politeness was composed of the following values: decorum, grace, beauty, symmetry and order. These values were transformed into the social symbols for membership in the class of the gentry that the upwardly mobile emergent middle classes eagerly sought to attain. In a word, they became features of the legitimate language, 'standard English' (Watts, 2002: 163).

Watts' point is that an ability to use the standard "appeared to guarantee social climbers in the eighteenth century access to the world of politeness, the result being that 'polite language' came to mean 'standard language' " (2002: 155). He goes on to assert that the ability to use Standard English continues to have this effect in that in Britain today, it is still possible to see that "the world of politeness and the world of education are presumed to provide access to the corridors of political and cultural power, although this is rarely, if ever, stated explicitly" (Watts, 2002: 155).

My point in drawing on this scholarship has been to indicate the extent to which promotion of the standard has drawn on and perpetuated ideologies that justify and maintain social stratification: if you are well bred, you are polite and since politeness is expressed through an ability to use StE, use of the standard bestows on the speaker a degree of prestige that distinguishes him or her from users of non-standard dialects, who are judged as uncivilised and lacking in politeness because they do not use the appropriate code. However, these qualities are not always entirely negative in that, as I have indicated above, there is an argument that an element of prestige can be achieved by male speakers through the use of non-standard forms in that these forms are often associated with masculinity.

5. THE REPRESENTATION OF DIALECT IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

The ideologies associated with non-standard dialect-use are evident in literary texts written since the sixteenth century. Leith (1997) argues that it is because of the establishment of the standard that authors came to be able to use social stereotypes to construct character:

> Non-standard speech is equated with simplicity or roughness; and in order to depict those qualities in literature, some form of *marking* for non-standard features is adopted. A tradition is established which has lasted until the present day, and which has been translated into cinema and television soap-opera: deviation from the norm implies social comment in the minds of author and audience alike. Acceptance of such a norm, therefore, occasions a rejection of kinds of English that are felt to be outside it (Leith, 1997: 56).

As Leith points out, writing which preceded the establishment of StE, such as Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, can use a range of dialects when portraying the speech of characters, but this did not imply a hierarchy: "dialects spoken in areas outside London were not automatically the emblems of stupid, quaint, or base-born people" (Leith, 1997: 56).

Although this evidence suggests that regional dialect has long been used in English literature to construct a sense of place, a new dimension was added to the use of non-standard forms in the construction of character when, from the beginning of sixteenth century, a hierarchy of dialects was becoming evident: attributing a character with a non-standard dialect could be used as a convention for depicting a character as lacking in intelligence, good-breeding or education. This is in part because of the ideologies referred to in the above discussion, but is also because depicting the speech of such characters

presents the author with a technical problem that tends to be resolved through the use of "eye-dialect". What this means is that dialogue attributed to characters who speak a non-standard dialect is spelled in a way that is designed to capture the way such speech would sound. An example from *Lady Chatterley's Lover* can be seen in one of the early encounters between the main characters in the book: Mellors (the game-keeper) and Constance (Lady Chatterley).

> Turning the corner, she [Lady Chatterley] saw two figures in the drive beyond her: the keeper, and a little girl in a purple coat and moleskin cap, crying [......]
> 'What's the matter? Why is she crying?' demanded Constance, peremptory but a little breathless.
> A faint smile like a sneer came on the man's face. 'Nay, yo mun ax 'er,' he replied callously, in broad vernacular (Lawrence, 1961: 60).

This convention for depicting dialect is unsatisfactory for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is problematic because it cannot render an authentic depiction of regional speech. As Crystal points out:

> Even in the best examples of the attempts to render regional or social Englishes there is an uncertainty –and usually serious inconsistency– about what they were intended to convey, as we would expect from any amateur attempt at speech transcription. Vowel variation is particularly susceptible to difficulties of interpretation (Crystal, 2002: 237).

Secondly, the use of eye-dialect to depict regional speech is problematic because it implies that there is a consistent relationship between the way words are spelled and the way they are pronounced when StE is spoken using a non-regional accent (such as RP or BBC English). This is clearly not the case. Take, for example, the StE sentence "you mustn't do it". If the way in which this is realised in BBC English was captured using eye-dialect, it would be depicted as something like: "ye mussn doowit". However, this lack of correspondence between the orthography and the pronunciation of utterances in StE spoken in a non-regional accent is rarely indicated in the dialogue of characters in works of fiction. Eye-dialect tends only to be used in the speech of characters who are using a regional dialect or accent, it is therefore marked speech in contrast to the non-regional pronunciation of StE. This indicates a third reason why using eye-dialect is problematic: it sets up a hierarchy of dialects. This is partly because its use marks regional speech as distinct from StE, the language of prestige and education, and partly because

where speech is depicted using eye-dialect, it looks to most readers like the expression of a child or an illiterate person. This way of depicting their speech therefore tends to bestow qualities of naiveté, and lack of education on the characters who use regional variants.

The association between regional speech and illiteracy is consistent with the general ideology referred to above that non-standard dialects are used by speakers who are uncivilised, unintelligent and uneducated. As a result, characters in canonical works of British literature, up to the early twentieth century, who are attributed with this type of speech, also tend to be those who are uneducated, and often unintelligent. Moreover, although there are occasional exceptions, such characters tend to be minor characters, the content of whose speech is not central to the development of plot in the novel. This is not least because sometimes it is almost impossible for readers to work out what these characters are actually saying. Because of the relative unintelligibility of the speech, and because of the status of these characters, their speech also tends to be contextualised by the discourse of the narrator, or a major character. As this example from Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, published in 1897, shows: the narrative voice of a major character, Mina Murray, both explains and situates the speech of the character described as "a funny old man", in that she glosses his response as indicating brusque scepticism:

> He is a funny old man. He must be awfully old, for his face is all gnarled and twisted like the bark of a tree. He tells me that he is nearly a hundred, and that he was a sailor in the Greenland fishing fleet when Waterloo was fought. He is, I am afraid, a very sceptical person, for when I asked him about the bells at sea and the White lady at the abbey he said very brusquely:
> 'I wouldn't fash masel about them, miss. Them things be all wore out. Mind, I don't say they never was, but I do say that they wasn't in my time. They be all very well for comers and trippers an' the like, but not for a nice young lady like you. Them feet-folks from York and Leeds that be always eatin' cured herrin's an' drinkin' tea an' lookin' out to buy cheap jet would creed aught. I wonder masel' who'd be bothered tellin' lies to them – even the newspapers, which is full of fool-talk.' (Stoker, 1993: 54).

This is typical of the use of dialect in literary works. Traditionally, eye-dialect has been used to depict the speech of minor characters, and where the content of the speech has some bearing on the plot or on the development of other, more important characters, the significance of their speech is explained using StE. It is somewhat unusual therefore that, in the novel *Lady*

Chatterley's Lover the character whose speech is most frequently realised in eye-dialect is the main character.

6. DIALECT-USE AND POLITENESS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER IN *LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER*

D. H. Lawrence's last novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, was completed in 1928, but, because of the language used to depict the sexual encounters in the novel, the first unexpurgated edition was not available in the UK until 1960, when Penguin Books were acquitted in a case brought against them under the Obscene Publications Act of 1959. In focusing on a love affair between members of two different social classes, Constance (Connie) Chatterley, the young wife of an upper-class landowner and Oliver Mellors, the landowner's gamekeeper, Lawrence brings into view a range of conflicts, but a key set of issues addressed by the novel centre on conflicts in relation to gender and class. However, the novel does not dichotomise, and neither does it set up an opposition between upper and working class, or between masculinity and femininity. Rather, it explores how both class and gender can be reconfigured in relation to each other. In doing so, the novel raises questions about what it is to be a man or a woman in Britain just after the First World War where, in Lawrence's depiction, an upper-class over-intellectualisation of sexual relations and a mindless working-class enthrallment to money, have together rendered a healthy relationship between people of different classes and sexes impossible. In foregrounding the impotence and sterility of upper-class masculinity and the difficulties of finding an alternative realisation of manhood in a context where the lower-classes have become dehumanised, the intricacies of the conflicts related to class and gender are acted out through the relationships between the characters in the novel. Lady Chatterley's husband, Sir Clifford Chatterley, is a young soldier serving in Germany in the First World War when they marry. He is wounded months after their wedding, and as a result is paralysed from the waist down, leaving him confined to a wheel chair and sexually impotent. Six years into an increasingly difficult marriage, Lady Chatterley and Mellors meet and become lovers. The novel ends with Lady Chatterley having conceived a child by Mellors, and with the lovers being temporarily separated while they wait until their respective divorces make it possible for them to live together.

Where the depiction of non-standard dialect-use has been addressed in the novel, it tends to be seen as drawing attention to the differences in class between the two main characters (see Jones, 2003: 138-40). Such analyses highlight the extent to which the use and depiction of non-standard forms in

the novel are in keeping with what would be expected from the traditional ideologies that associate lower-class speakers and the use of regional dialects. However, I would argue that Lawrence uses a regional dialect in depicting Mellors' speech to do a great deal more than this. My aim below is to illustrate how Lawrence uses the standard and a regional dialect to construct shifts in the relationship between the characters throughout the novel. I also show how these shifts are related to the use, or withholding of politeness strategies, and argue that Lawrence draws on all these elements to construct a particular configuration of masculinity that resolves both traditional class distinctions and traditional gender distinctions.

There would appear to be many instances in the text that would indicate Lawrence is drawing on the traditional ideologies that relate class, politeness and StE. For example, Mellors' dialect-use is often described as indicative of his lower class status and ill-mannered brutality. Interestingly, in the first encounter between Mellors and Connie, which occurs in the presence of her husband Clifford, there is no indication that Mellors is speaking to Clifford in a non-standard form. The syntax is that of StE, and there is no use of eye-dialect to indicate that a regional accent is being used. However, when half way through the interaction Connie addresses Mellors, his response to her is described thus:

> His voice on the last words had fallen into the heavy broad drag of the dialect...perhaps also in mockery, because there had been no trace of dialect before. He might almost be a gentleman (1961: 48).

The association between the previous lack of a regional accent in his speech, and the possibility that his class status might be higher than his role as gamekeeper would indicate, is reinforced in a description of Mellors a few lines later: "He looked like a free soldier rather than a servant" (1961: 49). This view of Mellors as "almost" a gentleman contrasts strongly with his apparent brutality in the next encounter: the meeting between Connie and Mellors discussed above. Here Mellors' speech is depicted in eye-dialect for the first time:

> 'Nay, yo mun ax 'er,' he replied callously, in broad vernacular.
> Connie felt as if he had hit her in the face, and she changed colour. Then she gathered her defiance, and looked at him, her dark blue eyes blazing rather vaguely.
> 'I asked *you*,' she panted (1961: 61-62).

From the initial introduction of the character in the story, it is clear then that Mellors is able to code-switch, and his occasional use of regional dialect in preference to the StE used by Clifford and Connie, is therefore presumably of some relevance within the narrative. That relevance could be explained by Brown & Levinson's argument that where code-switching is possible, to elect to use a higher form is a negative politeness strategy in that it implies detachment between interlocutors. If this is the case, then Lawrence's depiction of Mellors' speech as consistently StE when he speaks with Clifford could be seen as an indication that he is signalling a social distance from his employer that is appropriate to their difference in status. It is also possible to classify Mellors' use of StE as a politeness strategy using Escandell-Vidal's proposition that politeness can be a use of language to avoid an "impoliteness effect" (1996: 644-5). That StE has this function in Mellors' speech can be seen from the above account of the effect that his speech using regional dialect has on Connie, who "felt as if he had hit her in the face" (61).

The implication that Mellors' use of regional dialect should be seen as impolite in the narrative is made explicit towards the end of the novel when Connie and her sister Hilda visit Mellors' cottage after Connie and Mellors have become lovers. After Mellors has been speaking to Hilda for some time in regional dialect, she asks why he does this when previously he had spoken in what she refers to as "natural English" earlier. She goes on to comment:

> 'It would be more natural if you spoke to us in normal English, not in vernacular.'
> He looked at her, feeling her devil of a will.
> [....]
> 'Oh yes!' said Hilda. 'Just good manners would be quite natural.'
> 'Second nature, so to speak!' he said: then he began to laugh. 'Nay,' he said. 'I'm weary o' manners. Let me be!'
> Hilda was frankly baffled and furiously annoyed. After all, he might show that he realized he was being honoured. Instead of which, with his play-acting and lordly airs, he seemed to think it was he who was conferring the honour. Just impudence! Poor misguided Connie, in the man's clutches! (1961: 256).

In addition to the "impoliteness effect" that is triggered, in examples such as this, by Mellors' refusal to conform to the social expectation that a shared code will be used in interactions, the frequent use of eye-dialect to depict his speech to Connie could also be interpreted as designed to indicate a lack of politeness on his part because, as the following example explicitly indicates, Connie has to work to understand the speech.

'I mean as 'appen Ah can find anuther pleece as'll du for rearin' th'pheasants. If yer want ter be 'ere, yo'll non want me messin' abaht a' th' time.'
She looked at him, getting his meaning through the fog of the dialect.
'Why don't you speak ordinary English?' she said coldly.
'Me! Ah thowt it *wor* ordinary.'
She was silent for a few moments in anger.
'So if yer want t' key, yer'd better tacit. Or 'appen Ah'd better gi'e't yer termorrer, an' clear all t' stuff aht fust. Would that du for yer?'
She became more angry.
'I didn't want your key,' she said. 'I don't want you to clear anything out at all. I don't in the least want to turn you out of your hut, thank you! (1961: 98).

To the extent that his use of regional speech is a choice that results in an imposition on Connie, in that it makes her work harder than the use of StE would, it could therefore also be categorised as a threat to her negative face.

As well as fitting in with traditional depictions of regional dialect-use by associating it with a lack of manners and coarse behaviour, the narrative appears to conform to these associations by setting up a hierarchy of dialects: Lawrence resolves the problems of unintelligibility that face the reader, as well as Connie, by glossing the content of Mellors' speech using StE. This occurs in the extract (from 1961: 60-61) where "ax" in Mellors' speech is restated as "ask" in Connie's speech. Moreover, the previous example of the interaction between Mellors and Connie (from p.98) is typical in that the final turn of the conversation cited above captures the key propositions in Mellors' speech that the reader needs to understand in order to keep up with the plot developments: Mellors, who has previously resisted Connie's request for a key to his hut, so that she can use it to rest in when she has been walking in the forest, is now telling her that she can use his hut, but if she does use it, he will vacate it. So what he says is significant in terms of plot and character development, as it indicates Mellors' initial resistance to what he sees as Connie's intrusion, but it is glossed by both Connie and the narrative voice in StE: "... above all he dreaded her cool, upper-class impudence of having her own way. For after all he was only a hired man. He hated her presence there" (1961: 92).

As these examples indicate, there are many ways in which the depiction of regional dialect in the novel is consistent with the way that it has functioned in literature since the establishment of StE. The narrative sets up a hierarchy of dialects in that Mellors' speech, when he uses a regional dialect, is glossed by StE. Moreover, in the above examples, the use of regional

understand the character of Mellors. This would suggest that Lawrence is exploiting the ideologies traditionally inscribed in the use of regional dialect to undermine rather than to perpetuate their negative associations.

I would argue that this is achieved by Lawrence attributing regional dialect with a wide range of, often contradictory, functions in the novel. Indeed, I propose that these apparent contradictions in the functions attributed to Mellors' use of regional dialect in the course of the novel serve to empty it of its pre-existing associations, and allow Lawrence to invert the existing ideologies that imbue regional dialects with a covert prestige to the extent that they are associated with a masculinity characterised by "roughness and toughness" (Trudgill, 1997: 183). However, these functions can often only be inferred through a consideration of context, in that it is frequently through implicit connections rather than through overt explanation that the significance of the different forms of speech is expressed. To that extent, dialect switches appear to act as indicators of procedural meaning, but specifically what is indicated about the significance of a particular dialect-switch is inevitably context-specific. For example, it is not clear in the quotation above, where Mellors refuses to answer Connie's question about why the child is crying (60/61), whether it is the refusal itself that leads Connie to feel "as if he had hit her in the face" (61) or the use of regional dialect. However, there is a pattern in Lawrence's use of eye-dialect to depict Mellors' speech that would indicate that readers should see his use of regional dialect as relevant, at least at times, to the extent that it contributes to conflict between the protagonists. This is particularly evident where the use of regional dialect positions Mellors as different from and in opposition to Connie, both in terms of class and gender.

This is because the depiction of Mellors' speech using eye-dialect tends to occur only in cross-gender dialogue, and particularly when he is resisting the power imbalance inherent in his relationship with Connie. To this extent, Lawrence could be seen as drawing on the ideology that regional speech bestows a covert prestige related to masculinity: Mellors gains power in this context by foregrounding his gender status over his class and employment status. And it might also be inferred that Mellors' use of regional dialect is relevant in that it constructs him as embodying a masculinity that cannot be achieved by Clifford, both because of the latter's physical impotency and because his own language-use marks him as far from "tough". This is evident within the world of the narrative in that when Clifford and his peers over-intellectualise sexual relationships using a highly Latinate style of StE, this discourse both expresses and contributes towards these men's inability to establish a satisfactory relationship with a woman.

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However, there are also many indications that this would be a simplistic way of interpreting Mellors' use of regional dialect, in that although in scenes of cross-gender conflict his speech is often depicted in eye dialect, when he is in direct conflict with Clifford, his speech is in StE. Moreover, there are many scenes where he is portrayed as having feminine attributes that make him far from "tough". Mellors' physical weaknesses are often referred to, and even in his own descriptions of himself, he associates himself with the feminine. Here Mellors is describing, in the syntax of StE, his experience of mixing with different classes when he was a soldier, and the potential this gave him for moving away from his working class background:

> 'They used to say I had too much of the woman in me. But it's not that. I'm not a woman not because I don't want to shoot birds, neither because I don't want to make money, or get on. I could have got on in the army, easily, but I didn't like the army [....] No, it was stupid, dead-handed higher authority that made the army dead: absolutely fool-dead. I like men, and men like me. But I can't stand the twaddling bossy impudence of the people who run this world. That's why I can't get on. I hate the impudence of money, and I hate the impudence of class.' (1961: 289).

As a man who is describing himself as a woman because he does not have any desire to "get on", his point is that he lacks the ambition to improve his financial or professional status. And his reason for not being able to care about "getting on" is his unwillingness to fit into the class system.

In constructing Mellors as rejecting the existing class system therefore, Lawrence is simultaneously constructing him as rejecting the existing gender

system. This is echoed in another section where Mellors' lack of ambition is addressed as a rejection of the options that belonging to any class might offer:

> There was a toughness, a curious rubbernecked toughness and unlivingness about the middle and upper classes, as he had known them, which just left him feeling cold and different from them.
> So, he had come back to his own class. To find there, what he had forgotten during his absence of years, a pettiness and a vulgarity of manner extremely distasteful. He admitted now at last, how important manner was (1961: 147).

The point I am making is that although Lawrence sets up a potential dichotomy based on the conventional ideology that associates regionally distinct speech with coarseness, stupidity and a lack of education and status and the use of StE spoken with a non-regional accent with politeness, education and prestige, he does so only to undermine it. Lawrence systematically unpacks the association between StE, class and politeness at many points in the novel. For example, although Hilda expects Mellors to behave coarsely because of his use of regional speech, she is surprised when he does not: "Hilda looked to see what his table-manners were like. She could not help realizing that he was instinctively much more delicate and well-bred than herself" (256).

A significant point at which these conventional associations are broken down occurs when Lawrence makes it possible for Connie to use the word "gentleman" as an insult. In a scene that follows an incident where Clifford has mistreated Mellors, Connie confronts Clifford's values.

> At lunch she could not contain her feeling.
> 'Why are you so abominably inconsiderate, Clifford?' she said to him.
> 'Of whom?'
> 'Of the keeper! If that is what you call ruling classes, I'm sorry for you.'
> 'Why?'
> 'A man who's been ill, and isn't strong! My word, if I were the serving classes, I'd let you wait for service. I'd let you whistle.'
> [.....]
> 'You are very elegant in your speech, Lady Chatterley!'
> 'I assure you, you were very elegant altogether out there in the wood. I was utterly ashamed of you [...] you GENTLEMAN!' (1961: 202).

In associating elegant speech and being a gentleman with brutality and ill-manners, Lawrence sets up the conditions for the conventional ideologies related to politeness and StE to be undermined.

7. CONCLUSION

There is a great deal more to say about the use of regional dialect, politeness, class and gender in the novel, but space precludes a more extensive analysis. What I hope I have shown is that although dialect-use and politeness have a range of conventional associations, and these have been pointed to in the literature on politeness and sociolinguistics, in Lawrence's text these associations are drawn on in order to generate alternative associations and alternative ways of constructing masculinity. As Culpeper (1996: 366) suggests, "politeness theory needs to consider confrontational strategies, if it is to preserve analytical coherence. Furthermore, it is clear that in some circumstances impoliteness plays a key role, not a marginal one". In *Lady Chatterley's Lover* the use of dialect-switching to express and contribute towards conflicts related to class and gender works at the level of politeness in that the significance of the dialect choices arises from their ability to threaten or enhance each character's face. As I have shown however, although in order to generate this effect Lawrence draws on conventional associations between StE, class, gender and politeness, the narrative works to undermine the distinctions usually implied by these associations. This is partly enabled by the ability of individual language users to employ indicators of procedural meaning such as dialect-switches with a high degree of flexibility, but it is also enabled by the temporary world of the narrative that Lawrence sets up. It would be interesting to consider how far it is possible to undermine such ideologies without the construction of an alternative world.

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