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RHETORICAL USE OF LITERARY DIALECT IN ENGLISH LITERATURE: FROM CHAUCER TO SHAW

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ABSTRACT

Rhetorical use of dialect in literature is progressively more emergent phenomenon in different literatures endeavouring to situate a character within a geographical location, ethnic group, educational level, social class, and others. And so, dialectal variation has many rhetorical effects so as to show humour, degree of intimacy, age of a generation, nostalgia, solidarity of group, and belonging to a community; my concern, in this paper, is to show how can a writer of the standard deal with literature a discipline highly humane and, in the meanwhile, embrace dialectal variations in objective ways. The dilemma is set between preserving the text written in standard language and, at the same time, breaking some of the norms throughout a spelling that fits rather a character's identity, social background, and regional origins. My objective highlights the function of literary dialect technically adopted by novelists to clarify greater understanding of levels of society they strive to depict mainly during different periods in English literature.

Keywords: Dialect, literary dialect, literature, Standard

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INTRODUCTION

Dialectology research is no more restricted to collection of external data limited to old men located in rural areas. It has now a world scientific perspective, an international linguistic thought, a lifestyle; adapting linguistic behaviour to social conditions in literature to engender a new discipline discreetly called 'ficto-linguistics'¹ which means 'fictional sociolinguistics' based on

¹The term has been used by Susan L. Ferguson (1998) in "Drawing fictional lines: dialect and narrative in the Victorian novel" who says "by ficto-linguistics I mean the systems of language that appear in novels and both deviate from accepted

deviation of language from the norms of socio-linguistic patterns in the fictional world. A literary dialect is, accordingly, related to the meaning and shape of dialect systematically explored in the grounds of literature in a way that can methodically embrace the cultivation of linguistic diversity and dialect variability in the field of literature: a valuable source to examine speech patterns that represent social niches of dialect speakers in, say a literary genre, the novel.

Literary Dialect in Pre- Victorian Literature

Linguistic diversity in Great Britain is sometimes referred to the geographical mapping of the kingdom characterized by mountains, rivers and isles, categorizing distinct areas where each region knows different dialect speakers whose particular pronunciation has some historical roots that have contributed in featuring it to produce an English literature vastly heterogeneous which special writers contribute to it like the Polish J. Conrad, the Scottish R. Burns, the Irish J. Joyce, the Welsh D. Thomas, the American E. A. Poe, and the Russian V. Nabokov. This is another way to say that English literature is doubly diverse with its local writers from England and all parts of the British Isles, besides those out of Great Britain. England diversity in area and nature represented source of inspiration to many of its writers and there is no sweeter verse said about that than Shakespeare's Richard II: "this fortress, built by nature for her self. This precious stone set in the silver sea,...this blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England!". Since the times of old English texts, literary dialect has been founded because "everything scholars know about Old English, they know as a direct result of written sources. One thing we know from these sources is that for as long as there have been literary texts written in English, there has been written representation of variability in spoken language". (Minnick, 2007). Then, British literature is as varied as the multiplicity of dialects and languages spoken around the world to plunge in a literature always receptive to all forms of speech put on paper; thus, our main concern highlights the diversity of dialect speakers in literature as reported by great literary men and women who contributed energetically to the fecundity of literary language to make literary text as "almost the only context where different varieties of language can be mixed and still admitted" (Bromfit and Carter, 2000). Moreover, the phenomenon of dialect use in literature is not new since "not only do dialect forms sometimes inadvertently appear in writing, but they may also be used deliberately in literary works. Writers have attempted to portray characters through dialect for centuries. Such portrayals can be found everywhere from the daily comic strips in most newspapers to respected literary works going back as far as Chaucer". (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes, 1998). The pre-Victorian literature witnessed the time where English was described by Dryden as "extremely imperfect" (Finegan, 1992), while Johnson found it "copious without order [and] energetick without rules" (idem). There are other opposing writers about English like Defoe who is impressed by the abundance of local dialects of his country especially when he describes the dialect of Somerset (150 miles south London) "it is

or expected sociolinguistic patterns and indicate identifiable alternative patterns congruent to other aspects of the fictional world".

not possible to explain this fully by writing, because the difference is not so much in the orthography, as in the Tone and Accent; their abridging the Speech, Cham, for I am; Chil, for I will; Don, for do on, or put on; and Doff, for do off, or put off, and the like". (Idem). Literature was a linguistic means targeting at replacing Latin and Anglo-Norman literature by a Standard English and its dialects¹ to write English literature, an instrument successfully used by Chaucer, and supremely applied by Shakespeare who have prepared the ground cultivated for their successors.

Geoffrey Chaucer

Chaucer lived the period where English was preparing to shift from Middle English to an early modern English, it was also characterized by a move away from French (imposed in Great Britain since the Norman conquest) and Latin (existing since the Roman invasion to the kingdom). Though it is agreed that Chaucer wrote in the standard but the language of the period was not the standard of today English but it was the East Midlands dialect which is best known as Chaucer's Middle English covering London, Oxford and Cambridge. Furthermore, by the end of the fourteenth century "the English language had definitely asserted itself against the results of the Norman Conquest and later French influences...Finally, through the works of Chaucer it became the literary language of the country." (Doyle, 1989). Chaucer, the father of English literature, used a variety of languages in his writings basically east Midland mingled with northern and Kentish dialect; while others considered Chaucer and his fellows as the pioneers of modern English whose basic was the London dialect "by good fortune, it was in the London dialect that Chaucer consistently wrote (although he occasionally used Kentish forms), and so great was his preeminence, and that of other prominent authors like Gower and Wycliffe, who used the same dialect, that writers throughout England gradually yielded their local custom to higher authority." (Schofield, 2001). In fact, Chaucer wrote in an English differing with some of his fellow writers using French or Latin, this leads to unlock the secret behind using a language not adopted by the tradition of the time in literature of that time; this only means that Chaucer succeeded to capture the wit, vividness and humour of spoken English that he considers the production of English tongues as he says "ther is so grete diversite/In Englissh and in writing of our tonge.../That thou be understonde, God I biseche!" (Wright and Chaucer, 1998). In "Canterbury Tales", his huge work unfinished at his death, Chaucer

¹ "Before Modern English developed in the sixteenth century, most writing had been in local varieties of English. As Standard English developed, some writers took pains to maintain the importance of local or regional varieties and dialects in their writings. In the seventeenth century, Robert Fergusson's poetry brought the spoken language of Edinburgh to a wide readership. Robert Burns, clearly influenced by Fergusson's work, was equally at home in using his local southern Scottish dialect as in using English in his writing. In the nineteenth century, Tennyson used his local Lincolnshire dialect in many of his poems- although these have attended to be forgotten...Thomas Hardy acknowledged the considerable influence of William Barnes, the Dorset poet, in many of his uses of language in the Wessex novels and in his own poetry". (Carter, McRae 2001: 309)

endeavours to stir up the diversity of the English tongue in variety of tales coloured by humour and simplicity of ordinary folks.

Canterbury Tales

“Canterbury Tales”, fourteenth century series of poems, a compilation of ordinary people talking overwhelmingly reflects great enjoyment through humorous and vivid dialogues interweaving a real complex work of literature “in it Chaucer found he had an ideal vehicle, not only for either rhetoric or the plain style, but narration, description, and conveying the rhythms of ordinary talk” (ibid: xvii). The dialect is shown through two northern clerks in “The Reeve’s Tale” that mirrors Chaucer’s representation of the Norfolk dialect in his depiction of the Reeve in the “Canterbury Tales”. Dialect is easily depicted through the Reeve’s speech tinted with distinctive dialect characteristic of Norfolk dialect of ME like the verses “so myrie a fit ne hadde she nat ful yore; He priketh harde and depe as he were mad.” (4228-31). The verses replicate nearly the north dialect; this is why “in the Canterbury Tales Englishness, like mimesis, is to be found in the details and in the literary technique: one breathes it everywhere, but cannot define it.” (Boitani and Hall, 1986). Chaucer’s repertoire in “Canterbury Tales” is rich of different variables as shown in Tables One and Two about examples of the spellings of ‘though’ and ‘work’ in a variety of manuscripts¹ in “Canterbury Tales”:

Table-1-1. Forms of THOUGH across 13 manuscripts of the Canterbury Tales

MS	Dominant form	III.1327	V. 325	V. 612	III. 53
Hg	thogh, though	theigh	theigh	theigh	theigh
Ad ¹	thouh	Thouh	thouh	-	thouh
Ad ³	thogh; though	theigh	theigh	thei	theigh
Bo ²	Pogh	Peigh	thei	-	Pogh
Ch	though	theigh	though	though	theigh
Cp	Pough	Pough	Peigh	Peigh	Pough
El	Thogh,though	thogh	Though	though	thogh
En ³	Thouh	Thowh	Thouh	-	thouh
Ha ⁴	Pough	Pough	Though	Peigh	-
Ha ⁵	though	theigh	Though	-	Out
Ht	Pogh	Thogh	Though	Pogh	Poughe
Ra ³	though	They	Though	they	though
Tc ¹	though	though	Though	-	though

Source: Simon Horobin “Chaucer’s spelling” in (Taavitsainen, 2000).

Chaucer appears dominant of ‘though’ usage but “why Chaucer should have used this spelling at these particular references is more difficult to determine” (ibid: 203). Different variables are shown with the verb ‘work’ as displays Table Two:

¹ The manuscripts in the tables are symbolized through: MS, Hg, Ad, Bo, Ch, Cp, El, En, Ha, Ht, Ra, Tc, Dd, Gg, La.

Table-1-2. Forms of WORK (vb.) across 10 manuscripts of the Canterbury Tales

MS	VIII.14	VI.16	III.2114
Hg	werche	Werche	werchen
Ad ³	werche	Worke	worken
Bo ²	wirch	Wirch	werche
Cp	Out	Worche	werchen
Dd	werche	Werche	werken
El	werche	Werche	werchen
En ¹	werche	Werche	wirken
Gg	Out	Out	werke
Ha ⁴	wirche	Wirche	werken
La	werche	Werche	worche

Source: (ibid: 204).

Chaucer used different variants that many of them were lost through translation, however, many scholars credit Chaucer as the first author to display the artistic authority of the vernacular English language rather than French or Latin.

Chaucer contributed tremendously to the making of Modern English recognized through his poetry that helped “to standardize the London Dialect of the ME language from a combination of the Kentish and Midlands dialects” (idem). However, it still remains “a great deal of work to be done on the sociolinguistic significance of Chaucer’s lexis.” (Smith, 1992). Chaucer strives to institute a literary language for his country; nevertheless, this did not impede him to use many dialects in his literature “Chaucer (who wrote in the East Midland dialect, and thus helped to establish it as the vernacular of educated people) uses words from other dialects quite often; sometimes to suggest local characteristics, sometimes to secure a rhyme.” (Cuddon and Preston, 1998). The native tongue even diverse represented the magical spell to Chaucer who was not the only one to arouse the merits of local dialects verily brought together in the plays of Shakespeare.

William Shakespeare

Whatever has been said of the English playwright Shakespeare would not suffice his talent in writing, both plays and sonnets, disputed by scholars, actors, and teachers which make quite certain that the world sans Shakespeare would be tasteless. He succeeds mostly because his works are less versified and more conversational to develop common English mostly made of Shakespearian words. As for dialect use, and with reference to his birth place, Shakespeare’s Warwickshire dialect dominates his writing with other varieties mixed up with Norman French and, of course, strong Anglo-Saxon influence. Most of his plays are inspired from popular sources revealed by street pamphlets, ordinary people, traditional customs, and automatically his works escaped the academic stiffness and highlighted entertainment, cleaned the sentiment and quickened comic vitality through heroism of rascal characters, desirous of power, doubting frankness, believing in murder but could, in spite of all, appeal to the royalty. Shakespeare would have liked to teach lessons of today

discipline Pragmatics through making the characters judging each other of humour, intelligence and politeness; like he did in Love's Labour's Lost, when Holofernes seems obsessed by the spectre of obsessive misspelling of Don Armado and discusses his inferior intellect with Nathaniel "I abhor such fanatical phantasies, such insouciant and point-device companions; such rackers of orthography, as to speak 'dout' fine, when he should say 'doubt'; 'det', when he should pronounce 'debt' - d, e, b, t, not d, e, t; he clepeth a calf 'cauf'; half 'hauf'; neighbour vacatur 'nebour', 'neigh' abbreviatd 'ne'. This is abhominable- which he would call 'abhominable'." (Act V, scene 1). Shakespeare succeeds to make the regional theatre to cheer the audience through sub-literary pronunciation spoken by the dialect characters in many of his plays performed on stage, as the nurse use of dialect in Romeo and Juliet, English country dialect in Mid Summer Night's Dream, and the Celtic race in Macbeth within several dialects from the highland, north England, and Saxo-Danish. They all express the universal pervasiveness of Shakespeare and his dialect awareness exceedingly raised within his play Henry the fifth.

Henry V

To show his admiration to the king, Shakespeare wrote his play Henry V through which the character Henry is highly noble and brave to unite the nation with the Welsh, the Scots and the Irish; Shakespeare's success is rendered to his mastery of linguistic diversity of all these languages besides varied English via the English Gower, the Welsh Fluellen, the Scottish Jamy and the Irish Macmorris who lead a dialogue marked by the flavour of their different dialects –as shown in these fragments of heavy dialect in Henry V "“pray thee”, ‘he hath heard’, ‘the mines is not according’, ‘here a’ comes’, ‘in th’ aunchient wars’, ‘I say gud-day’, ‘given o’er’, ‘the work ish give over’, ‘tish ill done’, it sall be vary gud, gud faith, gud captains bath’, ‘there ish nothing done, so Chris sa’me, la!’, ‘ere these eyes of mine’, ‘and ay’ll pay’t’, ‘that sall I suerly’, ‘I wad full fain hear some question ‘tween you tway’.” (Act 3, scene 2).

This excerpt represents a kind of spelling frequently common in direct speech and in fact “Shakespeare makes a gallant attempt to suggest Welsh, Scottish, and Irish dialect pronunciations in the conversations between Fluellen, Captain Jamy, and Macmorris” (Levenston, 1992).

The dialects used in the play are in no way Shakespeare's own but “ a writer may use dialects not his own, as Chaucer does, in the Reeve's Tale or may bring several dialects together as Shakespeare does in Henry V, act III, scene 2” (Turner, 1973). Since some events took place in France, the French language also appears in the play especially when French characters communicate with English ones mainly in (Act III, scene 5) which displays a dialogue between Katherine the daughter of the French monarchs, and her old maid Alice:

- Katherine: Alice, tu as été en Angleterre, & tu bien parles le language.
- Alice : Um peu Madame.

French use in the play reflects Shakespeare's courage to venture with French for an English public practically ignoring French language; this leads to speak about multilingualism in Henry V to seek the comic effect especially when French and British characters are faced to speak to each other as in Act IV, scene 4 between the English Pistol and the French prisoner¹:

Even the hero in the play, is not left aside without charge of speaking French since his beloved is the French princess Catherine who also in her turns attempts to learn English. Marvelous is the play Henry V juxtaposing English, Welsh, Irish, Scottish, French and Latin- which is also used to announce officially peace at Troyes. Thus, Henry V is "arguably one of the most Babylonian text in the English language" (Hoenselaars *et al.*, 1999); Henry V is just a 'feast of languages', to report Moth's words in Love's Labour's Lost, actV, scene 1. Shakespeare's plays reflect dialect use simply because the playwright purposes public attention and folk speech which vapoured the perfume of regionalism that had set in motion multilingual comedy. Shakespeare has become international due to translated versions of his plays and the fame of Shakespearian idiom²s preserved in lengthy dictionaries, besides his interest in dialects that create nearness between peoples through out the world "English regional dialect was always socially marked in Shakespeare's plays, wherever or whenever they were set. This diglossic dramatic convention persisted in the distribution of the literary standard language and literary dialect in eighteenth-century prose." (Poussa, 1999). In fact, Poussa evokes the term diglossic dramatic convention that, indeed, suits the linguistic situation in the novel engendering the standard with other varieties of different prestige which is very noticeable in the Victorian era. But preceding the nineteenth century literature witnessed the epoch of Romanticism which was favouring dialect and natural language; though Romanticism was marked by poetry, this did not prevent from prose writers, sometimes considered as early Victorian, to flourish; they are valued as romantic novelists like: Jane Austin and Walter Scott.

Walter Scott

The prolific poet and novelist Walter Scott, most popular in Europe than England itself, had a keen ear to the dialect especially his own. He claims in many occasions his love to Scotland like in "The Lay of the Last Minstrel":

Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,

¹ FRENCH SOLDIER : Je pense que vous etes le gentilhomme de bonne qualite.

PISTOL: Cality! Calen o custure me! Art thou a gentleman? What is thy name? Discuss.

FRENCH SOLDIER : O Seigneur Dieu

Pistol : O, Seigneur Dew should be a gentleman. Perpend my words, O Signieur Dew, and mark: O Signieur Dew, thou diest on point of fox, Except, O Signieur, thou do give to me Egregious ransom.

FRENCH Soldier : Prenez misericorde; ayez pitie de moi!

This is my own, my native land!

With sheer intellect and witty style, Scott gained tremendous appeal that echoed the whole world; he succeeded to make his reputation based on his infallible education of formal English usage besides an exceptional command of dialects within spoken English. His effective use of the dialect contributes to make his fame as said Virginia Woolf, Scott “shown up the languor of the fine gentlemen who bored him by the immense vivacity of the common people whom he loved...always the dialogue [of the ‘common people’] is sharpened and pointed by the use of that Scottish dialect which is at once so homely and so pungent.” (Brown, 1979). Scott sticks to those Scottish forms where he opposes the Scots to the English in their culture, systems of justice, urban cities and dialects. In fact the Scottish dialect speakers still say ‘moose’ for ‘mouse’ and ‘doon’ for ‘down’ which means that languages and dialects have either a unifying or separatist function because “they help to divide the world into ‘us’ who speak alike and ‘them’ differently, it is this attitude that helps to explain the resistance to change in regional dialect.” (Macaulay, 1993). Though dialect could make of Scott lovable with his Scottish print included through popular elements in tongues, accent, beliefs and clothes, he was criticized for not enabling Standard English to be as vigorous as the dialect “Norman Page notes for example, Scott’s use of dialect for heroic and tragic effects, while remarking also that Scott fails to make of Standard English a spoken language equal in vigor to his dialect speech.” (Sabin, 1987).

Scott succeeds to portray his locality simply because he tastefully loves it as it was, “he makes a serious attempt to capture realistically the strains and tensions of the experiences of the Scottish people” (Kettle, 1962). Noteworthy, too, he invented the narrative mode known as the historical novel marked by twenty nine novels, in particular *Old Mortality*, *The Antiquary* and *Heart of Midlothian* which have represented Scotland in the eighteenth century “and what ultimately gives these books their strength is Scott’s feeling for the plight and problems of the Lowland peasantry” (idem). Scott’s use of local dialect allocates the voices of northern dialect set thoughtfully to reflect purely Scottish Highland manners, characters, scenery, superstitions and costumes; for that he is still ranked in the top of great writers; chiefly *The Heart of Midlothian* is a case in point.

The Heart of Midlothian

The finest seventh novel of Scott’s Waverley novels is *The Heart of Midlothian*, mostly comprising the dialect of the Lowland Scots which leads some editions to carry a glossary for readers. The historical element in the novel exemplifies the resentment of the Scots under English rule, after the Act of Union between England and Scotland in 1707. Midlothian refers to a prison in Edinburgh where Effie Deans was imprisoned unjustly charged of infanticide; Jeanie, Effie’s sister, traveled to London by foot to ask for official pardon from the Duke of Argyle and the Queen Caroline. Scott wants to introduce realism about popular folks and their way of wearing in depicting Jeannie that “she wore the tartan plaid of her country, adjusted so as partly to cover her head, and partly to fall back over her shoulders...The rest of Jeanie’s dress was in the style of Scottish maidens of her own

class.” (Castex and Jumeau, 1992). *The Heart of Midlothian* is an international bestseller book in spite of its folksiness and extreme use of dialect reflected through extensive plain English, various Scottish dialects, and classical Latin “Scott, like Shakespeare of the history plays, was seeking to render the totality of a society at a specific moment in time, by showing how the great events of history work through all levels of the community. In doing so, moreover, he created various levels of language and discourse...he also varied the dialect to suit different purposes and levels of intensity.” (Phelps, 1988). Scot is laudable in tracing the local Scottish tongue mingled with some prepared English of Jeannie who attempts to use the most refined expressions to the authorities in London; all the beauty lies in misdoing correctly the protocol of addressing people of high rank as shown in a dialogue¹ where even the duke uses Scottish words to accommodate the situation as to address Jeanie with ‘my bonny lass’*, and “lassie”*.

Though the Duke received in a good way Jeannie but, he was astonished in the beginning at having a country folk woman to see him; and so he says “A country girl, and from Scotland!...What can have brought the silly fool to London?” (Chapter 34); this reflects Jeannie courage to fulfill her aim further, when the duke asks her if she likes to speak to the duchess she answers “my business is with your honour, my lord” (idem). The dialect is very apparent in these expressions by Jeannie like: “a friend brought me in ane* o’their street coaches”, “your lordship’s Grace kens* her”, “I am muckle* obliged”, “and I was come up frae* the north” (idem). Because we are space tied and topic research limited, we could not give the dialogue in full, this is not to say that multiple readings have not been made to it, if not to explore the dialect, it has been at least reread enough much to appreciate Scott’s highly awareness of linguistic diversity between different classes and authorship. in *The Heart of Midlothian* Scott breaks new ground for serious use of dialect, his seriousness essentially lies in using the dialect “for purposes no longer exclusively comic and eccentric, but heroic and even tragic” (Page, 1973). Even if many literary critics as - Hazlitt and E.M. Forster-consider that Scott sometimes failed in his works but “it was a glorious failure” (Kettle: 133); he is “the only novelist to whom Balzac acknowledges a real and deep debt” (idem). Scott accomplished the artistic success to his characters, even if they were dialect speakers, which leads to ponder about suspicion in his failure. The phenomenon of dialect use in literature was made colossal in fictional characterisation, particularly after Scott, “for speech is the firmest expression of emotion,

¹ Expressions of dialogue with explanation of Scottish words refer to the book [Les Grandes Classiques de la littérature Anglaise et Américaine](#), (Castex, Jumeau 1992:145/146).

- * My bonny lass : my pretty girl, my pretty young woman
- * Lassie : an affectionate way of addressing a girl, or young woman
- * Ane : one
- * Kens : knows
- * Muckle : much
- * Frae : from

variously carried by dialect and its regional and class associations, stereotypes and emotional expectations” (Snell, 1998). Literary dialect takes other larger perspectives in the Victorian novel especially after the standardisation of English and the institutionalization of different language varieties within the development of sociolinguistics and the writing of literature in distinctive levels of language variation.

Literary Dialect in Victorian Literature

Previously dialect was used in literature fulfilling specific purposes like comedy or laughter only exploited by low characters generally fat, uneducated, miser, drunkard, or any other status that makes them in a comic and eccentric effect “for the most part, the conspicuous vulgarity of dialect-even its funny look on the printed page-disqualified it as a serious language for the representation of personality in the nineteenth-century English novel.” (Sabin, 1987). During the Victorian age, writers have become more and more aware in presenting skillfully the registers and the different varieties of speech in a standard text; accordingly the function of dialect has been thoroughly investigated and applied by novelists of the nineteenth century in the novel designed for its “artistically organized systems for bringing different languages in contact with one another” (Bakhtin, 1981). Though dialect use in Victorian literature will be thoroughly illustrated all along the coming chapters since the core of the research is the use of dialect in Victorian era by Dickens and Eliot we would like to introduce other novelists for the reason that the dialect was extensively used marking the epoch by a festival of language diversity in the literary text represented in an array of noteworthy novels. Numerous scholars, among them, Chapman and Page, remarked so heavy use of dialect in standard novels that they submitted it as a Victorian convention¹ which enables literary dialect to know its zenith in the 19th century. Victorian novelists differed in their use either to fit with the sociolinguistic patterns as age, gender, style, social context, and cultural background; or to depict various provincial and rustic characters supporting the movement of the 19th century era which was realism.

The function of dialect has been strengthened with Emily Bronte who uses the Yorkshire dialect in *Wuthering Heights* and Mrs. Gaskell who insists on her native way of speech introducing the Lancashire variety in her novels and for fear of unintelligibility she offers some aiding helps to understand it in terms of grammar and pronunciation. Great deal of dialect use is submitted to the Victorian poet and novelist Thomas Hardy who is famous for his writing of Wessex novels introducing the Dorset variety which he sees “not as a deviation from the national standard, but as a survival of the ancient speech of Saxon Wessex” (MacArthur, 1998).

¹ see Page, *Speech in the English Novel*, and Chapman, *Forms of Speech in Victorian Fiction*, P. 221-24

Bronte Sisters

It is rare when literature can witness three excellent novelists gathered by sisterhood blood in the name of the Bronte sisters: Anne, Charlotte and Emily who contributed to English narrative prose by impressive novels par excellence. Our focus is held on Charlotte and Emily, not to ignore Anne but it is so, just because the two sisters had their similar and different perspectives in including the Yorkshire dialect in their novels; and because Charlotte, after Emily's death, examines her sister's use of local dialect which means that the two sisters' awareness of dialect was highly raised.

Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*

Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* is a powerfully enigmatic work that has explored great side of the romantic passion. It is the emotional struggle of love between Heathcliff and Cathy who have been paradoxically one united soul in love; yet destined to heartbreak separation. *Wuthering Heights* reflects the opposite powers of silence and storm in its theme and the violent Yorkshire moors in its setting which help to understand the language blended together with dialect in the tongue of the people of *Wuthering Heights* namely Joseph whose speech is in the dialogue uneasy to decipher; Emily Bronte renders meticulously the Yorkshire speech based on Haworth dialect, through the loyal servant Joseph to mirror the roughness of the house in *Wuthering Heights* and its surroundings.

Joseph's heavy dialect is a metaphor to the old uncomfortable habitat, where he works, always exposed to violent tempest. The dialect is accurately used by Joseph in words like: 'neeght' for 'night', 'seed' for 'saw', 'lugs' for 'ears'. The following are typical instances of dialect in which Joseph is reporting to Nelly some of the troubles that they can encounter with the folks in the old house:

"Nelly", he said, "we's hae a crowner's 'quest enow, at ahr folks'. One on'em 's a'most gotten his finger cut off wi' hauding t'other fro' stickin' hisseln loike a cawlf. That's maister, yeah know, 'at 's soa up o' going tuh t' grand 'sizes. He's noan feared o' t' bench o' judges, norther Paul, nur Peter, nur john, nur Matthew, nor noan on 'em, not he! He fair likes- he langs to set his brazened face agean 'em! And yon bonny lad Heathcliff, yah mind, he's a rare 'un. He can girn a laugh as well's onybody at a raight divil's jest. Does he niver say nowt of his fine living amang us, when he goes to t' Grange? This is t'way on't – up at sun-dahn; dice, brandy, cloised shutters, und can'le lught till next day, at nooin- then, t'fooil gangs banning un raving tuh his cham'er, making dacent fowks dig thur fingers i' thur lugs fur varry shaume; un' th' 'knave, wah, he carn cahnt his brass, un' ate, un' sleep, un' off tub his neighbour's tuh gossip wi' t' wife. (Chapter10). Since Emily's transliterations of Joseph's Yorkshire speech is difficult to understand as clearly shown in this excerpt of chapter ten, many people, especially English, tried to translate it to modern English¹.

¹« Nelly, » he said, « we shall have a coroner's inquest soon, a tour place. One of them almost got his finger cut off with stopping the other from sticking himself like a calf. That's the master, you know, that is so set on going to the Grand Assizes

Others strongly disapprove of her use of Joseph's speech which may easily ruin the rich creation of the novel since it "is virtually unreadable on the page: most readers lose his humour through sheer exhaustion with deciphering it" (Craig, 1975). That is why Charlotte Bronte criticized her sister's use of the dialect lest it would be unintelligible; so she has changed many of the original forms of speech as used by Emily and assisted the novel by glossary of Yorkshire dialect to enable foreigners understand it. In the same spirit, Charlotte Bronte explains to the editors "it seems to me advisable to modify the orthography of the old servant Joseph's speeches; for though as it stands it exactly renders the Yorkshire dialect to a Yorkshire ear, yet I am sure Southerners must find it unintelligible; and thus one of the most graphic characters of the book is lost on them." (Gaskell, 1857). Charlotte Bronte was right that misunderstanding Joseph's speech will be a real loss to great artistic effect intentionally set by Emily, through a powerful dialect speaker to denote a class marker which is for Joseph a minor servant but "indeed, Joseph's dialect has a central role in the shaping of the fictional world and in the development of the novel's social critique" (Ferguson, 1998). However, this negative view of heavy use of dialect in the tongue of Joseph is, in itself, an advantage for the part of Emily Bronte who succeeds enormously the consistency of dialect which is viewed as source of data that show specific features of actual dialect, "while for dialect scholars and socio-linguists, Joseph's complex dialect provides a problematic but rich information about the actual Haworth dialect in the 1840s" (ibid). Though she differs from Emily in her heavy use of dialect in *Wuthering Heights*, Charlotte Bronte sustains its use in her own novels that she fearfully shivers before publishing them especially with her novel *Shirley* where dialect is beautifully handled by Yorkshire characters of different social ranks.

Charlotte Bronte's *Shirley*

There is a shining burr in the dialect used by Charlotte in her novel *Shirley*, mainly because the novelist reflects the poor status of protesting workers against machines introduced into the textile mills, which threatened many of them to become jobless. Dialect use in *Shirley* was a marker to separate between the working class: unskilled labourers, lost children, old women, abandoned mothers, distressed governesses and instructors, and the middle class basically made of arrogant and pitiless entrepreneurs. A typically dialectally varied novel aimed to confirm the Victorian's ruthless and inhumane attitude towards the defenseless. In chapter four, Mr. Yorke is described as a Yorkshire educated gentleman through whom Charlotte mirrors her use of dialect when she depicts

[courts]. He's not worried about the bench of judges, neither Paul, nor Peter, nor John, nor Matthew, not any of them. He doesn't care- he longs to his defiant face against them! And that bonny lad Heathcliff, you know, he's a rare one. He can grin and laugh as well as anybody at a right devil's jest. Does he never say anything of his fine living amongst us when he goes to the Grange? This is the way it is: up at sundown, dice, brandy, closed shutters, and candlelight till next day at noon: then the fool goes cursing and raving to his chamber, making decent folk put their fingers in their ears for the very shame; and the knave, he can count his money, and eat and sleep, and off to his neighbour's to gossip with his wife".
www.wuthering-heights.co.uk.

his “conversation, when he was disposed to please, was singularly interesting and original; and if he usually expressed himself in the Yorkshire dialect; it was because he chose to do so preferring his native Doric to a more refined vocabulary”(Shirley: Part one, chapter 4). Mr. Yorke affirms that “a Yorkshire burr was much better than a cockney’s lisp as a bull’s bellow than a ratton’s squeak” (idem). Yorkshire expressions are used with a group of fellows by the end of the chapter like: “‘nay’, ‘nob’dy staying i’ my house’, ‘Ye mun all go’, ‘clear them folk out o’ t’ kitchen, and lock t’ doors” (idem). Many other characters from lower rank used the dialect as shown in this dialogue successfully interwoven by Charlotte between educated Mr. Yorke and the poor ignorant Joe Scott “I said, “Is there aught wrong anywhere?”- “Deed is there” somebody says, speaking out the ground like. “What’s to do? Be sharp and tell me,” I ordered- “Nobbut four on us liggig in a ditch.” Says Joe, as quiet as could be. I tell’d’em, more shame to ‘em, and bid them get up and move on, or I’d lend them a lick o’ the gig-whip; for my notion was, they were all fresh- “We’d ha’ done that an hour sin’, but we’re teed wi’ a bit o’ band” says Joe.” (Shirley: chapter 3). The dialect is very visible with Joe Scott in this passage “we allus speak our minds i’ this country; and them young parsons and grand folk fro’ London is shocked at wer “incivility”, and we like weel enough to gi’e ‘em summat to be shocked at, ‘cause ti’s sport to us to watch ‘em turn up the whites o’ their een, and spread out their bits o’ hands.” (Shirley: chapter 5). Charlotte seems plunging into a broad use of Yorkshire through which she targets on portraying true scenes from the north because her “dialect is a true language far from being a mere rendering of accent for merely comic ends, or for subordination” (Craig, 1975). Indeed, Charlotte’s native Yorkshire dialect reaches its glory in *Shirley*’s setting and characters that juxtapose between the power and poverty of the dialect. She was so fascinating that Mrs. Gaskell wrote her life with all that it encountered her before and after publishing her novels. Not very different from the Bronte *sisters*, Mrs. Gaskell is good model of reporters of dialect in standard written novels especially in her first novel *Mary Barton*.

Mrs. Gaskell

Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson who married William Gaskell to spread, then, her fame under the name of Mrs. Gaskell. She is the ‘dear Scheherazade’ to Dickens who always refers to her as such; she wrote fascinating novels about the poor and several other strata of society depicted through a clear usage of local dialect that she spent her life defending in an exceptional power and beauty inspired from the industrial surroundings settled in Manchester- as the following novel *Mary Barton* should confirm.

Mary Barton

Mrs. Gaskell publishes her novel *Mary Barton* with a sub title: *A Tale of Manchester Life* which evokes that if ever the novelist should include the dialect it should be related to Manchester and should not be another than Lancashire; in the preface of the novel, Mrs. Gaskell proclaims that her novel intends to “give some utterance to the agony which from time to time convulses [the]dumb people” of Manchester(*Mary Barton*: 7). Mrs. Gaskell confines Lancashire dialect to the working

class taking particular care to use authentic Lancashire vocabulary and grammatical forms; and for that aim she assists some new versions, after she makes corrections, of the novel by two lectures on Lancashire dialect given by her husband¹ in which he declares “the first inquiry that naturally offers itself to us is, whether the dialect which we have to consider retains any relics of the old British tongue.” (Gaskell and Foster, 2006). William Gaskell means that there are many of Lancashire phrases and words that go back to older times before the Victorian age; there is an old usage in Mrs. Gaskell’s use of dialect in (*Mary Barton*: Chapter 2) in the expressions “two rude lads” cry out “Polly Barton’s gotten a sweetheart” (idem). While the verb ‘gotten’ refers to Chaucer’s “*Canterbury Tales*”, the expression “many a night at after” (idem), refers to Shakespeare’s protagonist in *Richard III* who uses the phrase ‘at after’. Moreover, very often, Mrs. Gaskell took her defense of dialect for it expresses the inexpressible in another language as the word ‘nesh’ to mean ‘soft’ used by Mrs. Gaskell in *Mary Barton*¹. Alice is a dialect speaker who seems using Lancashire speech very easily in the following passage: “so, one day, th’ butcher he brings us a letter fra George, to say he’d heard on a place- and I was all agog to go, and father was pleased like; but mother said little, and that little was very quiet. – it’s good for nought now, but I would liefer live without fire than break it up to be burnt; and yet it’s going on for eighty years old.” (*Mary Barton*: chapter 4). Another evidence of dialect is noticed with Mr John Barton who says on his death bed “lad, thou hast borne a deal for me. It’s the meanest thing I ever did to leave thee to bear the brunt. Thou, who wert as innocent of any knowledge of it as a babe unborn.” (Chapter 35). This dialect excerpt resembles in meaning too much the standard speech of Mr Carson in “let my sins be unforgiven, so that I may have vengeance for my son’s murder” (Chapter 37). In fact, Mr. Gaskell renders the use of dialect in the English novel in a way Scott did for it “she learned from him ways in which local speech can be presented and employed in the novel, and she transmits these means for other provincial writers to develop therefrom their own opportunities”. (Craig, 1975) Mrs. Gaskell considers the dialect an idiomatic language of the working class that she often plays the narrator’s voice to bridge the gap of communication between such class and other middle or upper classes among characters and readers. *Mary Barton* is really a romance of Manchester.

¹“The notes on dialect were contributed by William Gaskell, who was an able authority on the Lancashire dialect, and it is said that he never lost an opportunity of hearing it spoken by the native. One of his old pupils tells of seeing him leave a first-class compartment, in order to hear them speak in the true Lancashire dialect” Mrs Ellis H. Chadwick, *Mrs Gaskell: Haunts, Homes, and Stories*, rev. edn (London, Pitman, 1913, P210) in (Snell, 1998:78).

¹Mrs. Gaskell defends her use of dialect in a 1854 letter to Walter Savage Landor: “you will remember the country people’s use of the word ‘unked’. I can’t find any other word to express the exact feeling of strange unusual desolate discomfort, and I sometimes ‘potter’ and ‘mither’ people by using it”. Eng.Wikipedia. Org/ Elizabeth Gaskell.

Thomas Hardy

Thomas Hardy is among the vigorous writers who appears by the end of Victorian age and the beginning of modernism, famous for his humour and power of depicting the least details, mainly adapted from his first career as an architect. Thomas Hardy's novels are often famed for the name of 'Wessex', a part of southwest England including Dorset, Somerset, Cornwall, Hampshire and Wiltshire. Accordingly, Hardy is famous for the setting of his Wessex novels and short stories located in the town and countryside around 'Casterbridge' or 'Dorchester'. Through his skillful use of dialect he allows the readers to hear the voice of his characters which echoes the stark contrast between classes to suggest an English society strikingly featured by class division. As for his use of dialect in his novels, Hardy asserts "whenever an ancient and legitimate word of the district, for which there was no equivalent in received English, suggested itself...it has been made use of, on what seemed good grounds". (Morgan, 2006).

Hardy intentionally uses the dialect to remind the English people about that part of the country where he was born, and to highlight the social life of rural southern England. He particularly relies on rendering some of the old words inherited from the past which gives double flavour to his dialect usage "from the outset Hardy had always been a devout champion of dialect, as manifest in the novels, and he never ceased to perfect his skills in rendering the "ancient" words as a vibrant, salt-of-the-earth living language." (ibid: 144). Most of Hardy's characters are toned with the local accent "Hardy usually replaces the standard spelling; oi with I or y as in jine 'join', lynes-'loins' intended pronunciation with laitered in 'the Bridge Night Fie'. To this group we might add the squire's gwaine 'going' in 'The Waiting Supper' where the same diphthong is being articulated although its origin is different." (Elliot, 1984). He amazed the critics of his time by his skilful talent notwithstanding; they fear him appearing from his start an unconventional writer as seen in his novels among which *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is an example.

Tess of the d'Urbervilles

Many readers and critics taste *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* as Hardy's finest novels which engenders different themes of love, seduction, betrayal and murder; written in the dialect of the common folks increases its appreciation to the popular culture that incorporates oral ballads, superstitious beliefs, magic and folk old-style life, plus, the fascinating heroine Tess Durbeyfield, driven by her poverty to be victim of her seducer Alec and, then, cruelly thrown by her husband Clare after she confesses him the dark side of her past. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is marked by a legendary passage that evokes the gap between the uneducated mother through whom Hardy reflects the dialect and the folklore of folk people; and the educated daughter brought up with a standard knowledge from her trained national teachings. This passage, also, replicates Hardy's linguistic sense of linguistic diversity which he himself taught his readers in the novel as if we move from a work of fiction to a

noteworthy lecture in dialectology¹; since “Tess herself, like Thomas Hardy, spoke dialect as well as the standard English that was just beginning to be taught in the schools” (Berc and Spring, 1984). Also, Hardy lectures the dialect of the district especially phonetically “[Tess]...The dialect was on her tongue to some extent, despite the village school, the characteristic intonation of that dialect for this district being the voicing approximately rendered by the syllable UR, probably as rich an utterance as any to be found in human speech.” (*Tess of the d’Urbervilles*: chapter 2). Hardy assisted readership with Wessex maps that he himself drew at each writing of the novel. Hardy’s use of old country dialect words is testified in many of the characters’ speech like when one of the women said “the Load-a-Lord! Why, Tess Durbeyfield, if there isn’t thy father riding hwoome in a carriage!” (ibid). The dialect is, furthermore, mentioned when Tess’s father says “I’ve got a gr’t family vault at Kingsbere and knitted forefathers in lead coffins there!” (Ibid). The use of old dialect words purposes at a revival of old linguistic heritage from Hardy who “valued and defended the dignity of Dorset usage which he saw not a deviation from the national standard, but as a survival of the ancient speech of Saxon Wessex” (Arthur, 1996). Local folk dialect was colourful in the novel full of slang from archaic dialect – a shown in the chapters 6-17-47-from *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*²

¹ “ Mrs. Durbeyfield habitually spoke the dialect; her daughter, who had passed the Sixth Standard in the National School under a London-trained mistress, spoke two languages; the dialect at home, more or less; ordinary English people abroad and to persons of quality” (*Tess of the d’Urbervilles*: chapter 3)

² Chapter 6

“they say –Mrs d’Urberville says- that she wants you to look after a little fowl-farm which is her hobby. But this only her artful way of getting ‘ee there without raising your hopes. She’s going to own ‘e as kin-that’s the meaning o’t”

“but I didn’t see her”

“You zid somebody I suppose?”

“I saw her son”

“And did he own ‘ee?”

“Well- he called me Coz”.

Chapter 17

“You can milk ‘em clean, my maiddy? I don’t want my cows going azew at this time o’ year”...

“Quite sure you can stand it? ‘Tis comfortable enough here for rough folk; but we don’t live in a cucumber frame”..

“Well, I suppose you’ll want a dish o’ tay, or victuals of some sort, hey? Not yet? Well, do as ye like about it. But faith, if ‘twas I, I should be as dry as a kex wi’ traveling so far”.

Chapter 47

Who is that? Said Izz Huet to Marian

“Somebody’s fancy-man, I s’pose,” said Marian laconically

“I’ll lay a guinea he’s after Tess”

“O no. ‘Tis a ranter pa’son who’s been sniffing after her lately; not a dandy like this”...

“he hev left off his black coat and white neckercher, and hev cut off his whiskers; but he’s the same man for all that”

At first glance, the dialect in such excerpts from dialogue between characters reveals that Hardy is a master in nearly approaching different dialect voices to incorporate vividly in a standard novel superb for its rich linguistic repertoire “such breadth of treatment causes Tess of the d’Urbervilles to be not nearly so pessimistic and bitter as much of Hardy’s late poetry. Then, again, the style has great variety; the dialogue is life-like; the dialect is easy to understand and does not tire us.” (Partridge, 1971). Critics were stirred at Hardy’s brilliance use of dialect “Hardy’s job as an architect entailed meeting many colorful local folk who spoke the rich and rough Dorset dialect. Hardy uses this dialect in Tess to represent the common folk and lend a special, lyrical rhythm to the novel” (Berc and Spring, 1984). Hardy usually tackled contemporary problems, but he was exceptional in having dealt with hot issues considered taboo in his time like pregnancy and single motherhood. His use of dialect in his standard novels was praiseworthy; it evokes that part of eccentric and unconventional personality. Hardy is sometimes considered as half Victorian especially in poetry, since the age of modernism was just opening its doors in Hardy’s times.

Literary Dialect in 20th Century English Literature

Different literary genres, indeed, marked modernism in the 20th century from poems, short stories to novels featured by stylistic innovations and language diversity. The era was characterized by including alien elements into the English fiction crossing the boundaries of preserving and conserving that long ago the British society had struggled with the aim to prevail the pattern of English tradition. Distinct novelists rebelled against standard norms to reflect a literature of a new fashion enthralled by the writings of brave authors for their colloquial freedom like Lawrence and Shaw.

David Herbert Lawrence

Lawrence grew up in Eastwood in Nottinghamshire, and he was famed for his use of local dialect in his poems and novels because he was concerned with industrial setting to visualize Nottinghamshire folks “D.H.Lawrence, at first glance, seems a much simpler case: a genuine English novelist, right down to an intimacy with local dialect that affiliates him with a whole line of earlier English fiction.” (Sabin, 1987). The use of dialect targets at evoking the malaise of his miner’s social class as did his precedent novelists “indeed, as a novelist of the lesser ranks of English society, his working-class origins make him even better, more “natural”, than middle-class predecessors like George Eliot” (Idem). The Nottinghamshire based setting novelist whose first career as teacher shows clearly his natural inheritance of his mother who was highly educated than his heavy drinker, coal miner father whose model is highly depicted in *Sons and Lovers* which reflects extensive use of the Nottinghamshire society made up with distinctive characters of low

d’ye really think so. Then I’ll tell her” said Marian.

status which retain features of their local dialect to support actual Eastwood voices in speech carefully mingled with the Midlands accent.

Sons and Lovers

In the story of class differences of married couple where the husband speaks local dialect in contrast to his wife's refined English, Lawrence sets authentic scenes in Nottingham coalfields found in the rolling hills and coal-pitted region known as the British Midlands to interweave the plot and the theme in his novel *Sons and lovers* that brought fresh realism to literature at the turn of twentieth century; and "Lawrence makes commanding use of dialogue and dialect and arguably improves on Edwardian realism" (Becket, 2002). The language used in *Sons and Lovers* is unique because the dialect echoes in many of the characters in the novel mainly the father Morel whose Nottingham accent is easily perceived in his speech full of idiomatic expressions reflecting the mine's surrounding and low standard of life. The dialect is intentionally used by Lawrence to define the working class mining community where he was born. On this basis, Lawrence uses many of linguistic features of the nonstandard language use and local pronunciation features used in quoted dialogue "Lawrence often goes so far as to tie the destiny of his characters to their powers of vital speech; like his characters, Lawrence both strains against the confines of common English and relies on it as a resource for sanity and survival." (ibid: 8). The dialect is mainly used by Walter Morel to reflect his social background of the mining community, Paul also uses standard English, French, while the dialect with him is especially to mirror sensuous love with Clara and Beatrice. Other "minor characters are allowed to speak broad dialect; it is as if the reader is taking a tourist's interest in local colour" (Black, 1992). Lawrence's aim to use dialect is to set good dialogue that should sound real mostly in Mr. Morel – an important dialect speaker in the novel. "I've bin 'elpin' Anthony, an' what's think he's gen? Nowt b'r a lousy hae'f-crown, an' that's ivry penny"... "An' I 'aven't that I aven't. you b'lieve me, I've 'ad very little this day, I have an' all... nay, tha niver said thankyer for nowt i' thy life, did ter" (*Sons and Lovers*: chapter1). Though Mr. Morel articulated speech is often irritating to Mrs. Morel, but it is from another view dynamic and vivid energetically put by Lawrence to drive us to "that carefully constructed written dialect drew on a knowledge of, an intimacy, with the language of his father's world and his father's riends; it is a perfect example of his extraordinary intimacy with the place in which he grew up, and yet of his simultaneous and controlling detachment from it". (Worthen, 1992). The dialect is noticed with some local folks like when the pit lad complains to Morel's family his injury "your mester's got hurt... I don't know for sure, but it's 'is leg somewhere. They ta'ein' 'im ter th' 'ospital... I seed him at th' bottom. An' I seed 'em bring 'im up in a tub, an' 'e wor in a dead faint". (ibid: chapter 5). Lawrence declares his awareness of dialect use in his novel *Sons and Lovers* when he introduces Arthur coming back from the army and meeting Beatrice with whom

“he liked to lapse into the dialect when he talked to her” says Lawrence (ibid: chapter9)¹. Besides being standard and poetical Lawrence flavours *Sons and Lovers* by the zest of dialect. This enables his novel to become one of the works of modernism *par excellence* due to his unique use of language where the force of Nottingham dialect makes its power forever. In fact, “Lawrence creates in *Sons and Lovers* a feeling for the agricultural society of England which can be equaled with Hardy’s” (Niven, 1988). The dialect was forcefully heard in many of the twentieth century literature which reached its zenith thanks to skillful writers like D.H.Lawrence and Shaw whose use of dialect was exclusively inimitable.

George Bernard Shaw

The Anglo-Irish playwright G.B.Shaw uses the cockney dialect for lower class, and indeed, he was special in his view of English language² and even of his own writings that he refused to allow them appear in school textbook during his lifetime³; he often uses dialect in all his writings to provide authenticity and for that reason he renders the characters’ speech phonetically nonstandard spellings as he did in his didactic play Pygmalion.

Pygmalion

Pygmalion is one of the most esteemed of British plays where the use of the dialect adds an increase to Shaw’s talent, humour and artistic touch easily felt by any ordinary reader. He shows his awareness of honest and natural dialect by including Henry Higgins a character playing the role of phonetics teacher who listens to various speech patterns of the people; and boasts to teach Eliza Doolittle, a cockney flower girl, how to speak correctly. Eliza Doolittle is shining in the novel with her cockney accent in juicy scene when she sings “just you wait, ‘enry ‘iggins! Just you wait” (Pygmalion, act 1, scene 5). Her teacher Higgins swears to render her a society lady by teaching her

¹ « Nay, » he said to her one evening, when she reached for his cigarette. “Nay, tha doesna. I’ll gi’ e thee a smoke kiss if ter’s a mind” ... “I’ve non got it”, ... “tha tickled me, Beat”. (*Sons and Lovers*: chapter 9)

² “The English have no respect for their language, and will not teach their children to speak it. They spell it so abominably that no man can teach himself what it sounds like It is impossible for an Englishman to open his mouth without making some other Englishman hate or despise him. German and Spanish are accessible to foreigners: English is not accessible even to Englishmen. The reformer England needs today is an energetic phonetic enthusiast: that is why I have made such a one the hero of a popular play...Finally, and for the encouragement of people with accents that cut them off from all high employment, I may add that the change wrought by professor Higgins in the flower girl is neither impossible nor uncommon.”

(G.B.Shaw: Preface in Pygmalion)

³ When he was asked for permission he answers : « NO ! I lay my eternal curse on whomsoever shall now or at any time hereafter make schoolbooks of my works and make me hated a Shakespeare is hated. My plays were not designed as instruments of torture. All the schools that lust after them get this answer, and will never get any other from G. Bernard Shaw” (Pearson, 1942: 12)

the right dialect; this is why, Eliza Doolittle in Pygmalion is an example of the “many thousands of men and women who have sloughed off their native dialects and acquired a new tongue” (North, 1998). What is peculiar with Shaw in the use of literary dialect in Pygmalion is that he inserts his personal comments on the dialect speech whenever it is introduced especially by Eliza Doolittle “THE FLOWER GIRL. Ow, ‘eez yð-ooa san, is e? Wal, fewd dan y’dð-ooty bawmz a mather should, eed now bettern to spawl a pore gel’s flahrz in than ran awy athaht pyin. Will yð-oo py me f’them? (Here, with apologies, this desperate attempt to represent her dialect without a phonetic alphabet must be abandoned as unintelligible outside London)”. (Pygmalion: Act 1). Another feature of Shaw’s talent in his use of dialect in Pygmalion is the change in Dollittle speech in act three where she is supposed to master an upper class pronunciation as when she says “what become of her new straw hat that it should have come to me? Somebody pinched it; and what I say is, them as pinched it done her in.” (Act3). The shift from dialect to, say, educated vernacular by Doolittle makes us not laugh at her dialect as to do with her new form of speech “this blend of impeccable enunciation and deviant grammar and vocabulary is pure comic invention” (Levenston, 1992). Pygmalion mirrors the society in England, and in it Shaw “seriously examined the social problem of dialect” (Turner, 1973). Pygmalion is a response to all those who falsely believe that art cannot be didactic; the play, then, is purposefully put by Shaw to claim that art is supreme to cover various linguistic levels that can either impede or allow respect in society. He confesses in the preface of Pygmalion by saying that “finally, and for the encouragement of people troubled with accents that cut them off from all high employment, I may add that the change wrought by Professor Higgins in the flower-girl is neither impossible nor uncommon” (Pygmalion: Preface). He adds commenting on the modern concierge’s daughter who “fulfils her ambition by playing the Queen of Spain in Ruy Blas at the Théâtre Français is only one of many thousands of men and women who have sloughed off their native dialects and acquired a new tongue.” (Idem). Pygmalion is an attempt to tolerate phonetically untaught persons rendered to their low status in life, indeed it is a richly complex play reflecting the power of speech change to contradict the class rigidity of Victorian and modern era in British society.

CONCLUSION

Literary dialect has its relationship with real speech embodied in the characters’ talk which strongly lies in the frontiers of literature within linguistics and dialectology. Our engagement has been held to show the otherness of writing English literature and not its sameness; since literature evidently carries inevitable different elements that often put us in touch with traces of culture, society, and language; an already-heavy load taken on the back of writers *par excellence* who have contributed to pour different forms of speech in a standard context of art.

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