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Introduction

The Northern English dialect has been discussed extensively in literature¹. Most of this research, however, has focused on the linguistic aspects of the dialect. Much less research has analysed social attitudes towards the use of Northern dialect from a diachronic perspective.

Discussions of attitudes towards different dialects as represented in literary works and the writings of contemporary scholars are particularly thin on the ground. Katie Wales discusses the cultural and social implications of the Northern dialect in Britain, from the fifth to the twenty-first century in her book *Northern English: a Cultural and Social History*.

Unfortunately, her discussion of social attitudes towards Northern dialect as expressed in literature is not very extensive.² Wales' perspective is similar to most of the secondary literature on the topic. Most research only briefly discusses literature and the focus seems to be on linguistics or on socio-economic and political circumstances³. Therefore, the attitudes towards Northern dialect as depicted in literature has been more of a secondary concern. The Northern dialect is, however, a dialect that has triggered responses in literature over a vast amount of time: reactions towards Northern dialect and its use are found in literature from the fourteenth century to the present day. Consequently, this thesis will focus on attitudes towards Northern dialect in literature from the Middle English period to the Late Modern English period.

To properly examine the attitudes towards the Northern dialect in literature over such a large time period, this thesis will be divided into three main periods: the Middle English period, the Early Modern English period and the Late Modern English period. Attitudes towards the Northern dialect found in literary works taken from each time period will be

¹ See for example *The Cambridge History of the English Language Volume 2*, 1992 ed. Norman Blake and *The Origins and Development of the English Language*, 2010 by John Algeo.

² The term *literature* is used here to refer to both literary works and the social commentaries of contemporary scholars.

³ See for example *Language in History*, 1996 by Tony Crowley and *English Dialects and Accents*, 1987 by Hughes and Trudgill.

discussed, and commentaries on the Northern dialect by contemporary witnesses will be used as well. The contemporary witnesses provide the social historical setting and express the overall attitude towards Northern dialect in each time period. This will help explain the attitudes expressed in the literary works. It should be borne in mind that most of the contemporary witnesses are educated, upper class people from the South, because until the late twentieth century it was mainly the wealthy upper class who had the opportunity to attend the prestigious Southern universities (Wales 145).

The primary literature that will be examined for the Middle English period is Chaucer's *The Reeve's Prologue and Tale* and *The Second Shepherds' Play* by an anonymous writer. Contemporary medieval witnesses comprise the works of John Trevisa and William Caxton. The Early Modern English period will examine Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender*, Brome's and Heywood's *The Late Lancashire Witches*, Deloney's *Thomas of Reading* and Brome's *The Northern Lass*. Social commentary will be provided by Alexander Gill, Edmund Coote and George Puttenham. Lastly, the Modern English period will look into the opinions of a variety of contemporary scholars and writers including Thomas Sheridan, Samuel Johnson, A.J. Ellis, W.W. Skeat and Peter Trudgill, among others. Literary works that will be discussed are Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, Gaskell's *North and South*, Rowling's *Harry Potter series*, Martin's *A Game of Thrones*, the *Yorkshire Dialect Classics Anthology* and Paul Walker's work. All of these texts display or represent, in some way or another, attitudes towards the Northern dialect and are therefore suitable for the purposes of this examination.

It will be seen that attitudes towards Northern dialect and its use have been represented in literature of the British Isles from the late Middle English period to the present day, but that the status of the dialect has varied over the years.

Chapter one: the Middle English period (1100-1500)

“Fer in the North; I kan nat telle where”

- Geoffrey Chaucer

Many regional variations and dialects were documented in Middle English. The major dialects were the Northern, East-Midland, West-Midland, Southern and Kentish dialects (Wales 36). The diversity in language can be attributed to the absence of a standard form of English, which only started to emerge by the end of the Middle English period (Algeo 119). However, there already seemed to be a North-South divide (Wales 25). As early as the fourteenth century attitudes towards Northern dialect can be found in works of literature, for example, in *The Reeve’s Prologue and Tale* and in *The Second Shepherds’ Play*, and in the commentaries of contemporary witnesses such as Trevisa and Caxton. Therefore, this chapter will examine what the attitudes are towards Northern dialect in *The Reeve’s Prologue and Tale* and in *The Second Shepherds’ Play*, and if these works reflect the overall attitudes towards Northern dialect in the Middle English period, expressed by the contemporary witnesses John Trevisa and William Caxton.

The contemporary witness John Trevisa explained why he believed that Southern speech was superior to Northern speech. Trevisa translated Ranulf Higden’s *Polychronicon* in 1387 (Mossé 285). In this translation he added some remarks regarding his attitude towards Northern speech. Trevisa, schooled at Oxford and born in Cornwall, was a *souperon [man]* ‘southern man’⁴ (285). His own Southern dialect could have made him prejudiced against the Northern dialect. In 1387 he declared that Northern and Southern speech differed in such a

⁴ Modern English translations of Middle English words and phrases are my own, unless otherwise indicated, and rely on the *Middle English Dictionary (MED)*.

way that Northern and Southern men could barely understand each other. He referred to Northern speech as *scharp, slytting and frotyng, and unschape* ‘sharp, cutting and grating, and unshaped’ (Mossé 289). In other words, Northern speech was a badly-constructed and rough variety of English. Besides, Northerners were close to *strange men and aliens þat sprekeþ strangelych* ‘foreign men and outsiders that speak strangely’ according to Trevisa (289). During the Scandinavian settlements Northerners came into contact with Old Norse (Wales 53-4, 57). Old Norse had an influence on Northern English and this fact may have determined Trevisa’s comments about the foreign sound of Northern English (57). Moreover, until the eighteenth century the North was “relatively inaccessible” for travellers from the South and was considered an uncivilised area (Wales 26, 49). For these reasons the North was often called alien and strange (26). Nevertheless, Trevisa’s description suggests the superiority of Southern speech over Northern speech. This is further reinforced when Trevisa mentions that the Kings of England reside more in the Southern countries and that this is also a reason for the rough speech of Northerners (Mossé 289). Trevisa’s comment indicates that the Kings of England speak with a Southern dialect and that it is therefore the proper dialect as well. Trevisa’s value judgement thus seemed to be based on the association of the Southern dialect with the upper classes. Trevisa’s comments show that even as early as the fourteenth century a favourable bias towards Southern speech existed.

Another contemporary witness, William Caxton, commented on language change in the prologue of his translation of *Eneydos*, published in 1490. He mentioned the difficulties of communication between regions in the Middle English period, because every region had different *maners & termes* ‘manner and terms’ (3). Caxton also made critical comments about his own Kentish dialect. He reasoned that it was just as broad and coarse “as in any place of England” (Eliot 6). This indicates a positive bias towards the dialect he used in his works, which was based on the emerging London standard (“Caxton’s English” par. 9). According to

Caxton, the London-based variety was thus superior to any other variety, including the Northern dialect. In addition, it is possible to argue that Caxton's choice of variety indicates a correlation between the London dialect and the educated moneyed classes. Caxton stated that his *Eneydos* was meant for clerks and noble gentlemen and not for *euery rude and vnconnyng man* 'every vulgar and unlearned man' (3). There is a possible economic reason for this comment. Caxton's audience consisted of members of the upper classes and they would be able to afford early printed books, which were expensive. Writing in a London-based variety made it more likely that the educated wealthy classes would read and buy his books. Moreover, it is possible that Caxton's preference for the London-based variety was also influenced by his patrons. Caxton's patrons were of a higher social standing, some of them were members of the nobility, and spoke with a London dialect, now referred to as Chancery English ("Caxton's patrons"). In 1345 Chancery, "the agency which produced most of the official proclamations and parliamentary records", was already associated with Westminster, London, and "must have reinforced the impression of an official class dialect" (Fisher 872-4). The patrons provided Caxton with financial and political support. Writing in their dialect would thus be a well-considered and logical choice. One of these patrons was Margaret of York. She revised Caxton's Kent based English, as he states in his prologue to *The Recuyell of the Histories of Troy*. She noticed "default[s]" in Caxton's English and told him to mend them (Eliot 7).

In literary works of the time, attitudes towards Northern dialect can be found as well. In *The Reeve's Prologue and Tale* it may be argued that the Northern dialect is represented as inferior to the Southern dialect. Geoffrey Chaucer was the first attested writer to differentiate between speech varieties in a work of English literature. Chaucer wrote *The Reeve's Prologue and Tale*, part of *The Canterbury Tales*, in the late fourteenth century. In this tale two characters, the Northern students John and Aleyn, have a Northern dialect. One of the most

famous discussions on the use of Northern dialect in *The Reeve's Prologue and Tale* is that of Tolkien. He calls the use of Northern dialect in the tale "a linguistic joke" (110). Tolkien argues that "easy laughter [...] is roused by 'dialect' in the ignorant or the unphilological" (111). The dialect is thus deemed funny according to Tolkien, because the speech of people from areas other than yours sounds odd. For instance, when the scholars first arrive at the Miller's, John explains that they have come to let the Miller grind their corn, because their manicle is sick and cannot do it. John says: *Oure manicle, I hope he wil be deed/ Wa werkes ay the wanges in his heed* 'Our manicle, I expect he will be dead / So continually ache the teeth in his head'⁵ (Chaucer 80; lines 4029-30). As Wales and Tolkien point out, the Southern meaning of *hope* is exactly the same as the modern one, namely 'a wish'. The Northern meaning, however, was 'expect, suppose, think' (Tolkien 141; Wales 71). The Miller, and Southern audiences, would have understood that John hoped that his manicle would be dead soon. What John actually meant was that their manicle was expected to be dead soon. This might have aroused laughter from Southern audiences. It is thus indeed a bit of a linguistic joke, but it may also indicate an idea of superiority of the Southern language. Wales argues against this idea of superiority and inferiority in *The Reeve's Prologue and Tale*, because she thinks it is an "anachronistic reading of attitudes to regional speech" (70). While this is true, Chaucer, himself a Southerner, chose to portray Northerners and joked about their speech habits.

Although there are no socio-economic differences between the Southerners and the Northerners in the *The Reeve's Prologue and Tale*, the Northern dialect is represented as different. The Northern students are educated and the Southern Miller is not. Besides, the Northern students dupe the Miller. These elements rule out socio-economic differences between the Northerners and the Southerner in the tale. However, the fact that Chaucer

⁵ Translation by Benson (lines 4029-30).

portrayed the Northerners as *the other* implies that there was a preconception against this *other*. The idea of *the other* is most famously described in Said's *Orientalism*. According to Epstein, Chaucer plays the role of the Orientalist in *The Reeve's Prologue and Tale* (114). An Orientalist "can imitate the Orient without the opposite being true. What he says about the Orient is therefore to be understood as description obtained in a one-way exchange: as *they* spoke and behaved, *he* observed and wrote down" (Said qtd. in Epstein 114). In the case of *The Reeve's Prologue and Tale*, *the other* is embodied by the Northern students and Chaucer describes the Northern dialect from his point of view, portraying it as odd, foreign, and different from his own Southern dialect. From this perspective, the Southern dialect is portrayed as superior to the Northern dialect in *The Reeve's Prologue and Tale*.

However, the Northern dialect in *The Reeve's Prologue and Tale* is not class based nor is it connected to stupidity or bad character. John and Aleyne are students while Symkyn is a Miller. Nevertheless, John and Aleyne speak with a Northern dialect. This immediately rules out class-based prejudice. Besides, foolishness or unpleasant characteristics do not correspond with the Northern dialect either. Taylor describes the students as violent, because they have sex with the Miller's daughter and wife; he even describes it as rape (485). However, *The Reeve's Prologue and Tale* is a fabliau and is supposed to be a humorous story that "illustrate[s] true qualities and true tendencies in universal human nature" (Canby 200). Besides, according to Farrell, sex was not restricted to the "institution of marriage" in a fabliau and characters are especially rewarded when they "act for their own interests" (773). In other words, stupidity is punished and cleverness is rewarded. In the tale, the students are tricked by the Miller but avenge themselves and eventually outwit the Miller. Therefore they are rewarded with sex and cake, while the Southern Miller has to pay for his stupidity. As the Reeve points out: *And therefore this proverbe is seyde ful sooth / 'Hym thar nat wene wel that yvele dooth.'* 'And therefore this proverb is said entirely true / "He who does evil should not

expect good” (84; lines 4319-20). Moreover, The Miller’s daughter does not act as a rape victim: she reveals the hiding place of the cake to Aleyn, calls him sweetheart, and does not want to say goodbye (83; lines 4240-8). Placing *The Reeve’s Prologue and Tale* in the framework of a fabliau tale excludes the presumption that the sex act is rape. Furthermore, Taylor does not discuss the Miller with regard to personality (482-5). Chaucer portrays the Miller as an unpleasant and cunning man who unties the students’ horses and tricks them by stealing their corn. Moreover, violence “almost inevitably privileges individual vindictiveness (or whim) over social order” in a fabliau (Farrell 773). Wretched characteristics, or elements of violence, are thus not connected to the Northern dialect in the tale, because it is obvious that neither party is supposed to be virtuous.

The Southern dialect in *The Second Shepherds’ Play* portrays the inferiority of Northern speech and is used as a class marker. *The Second Shepherds’ Play* is set in the North but contains a passage in which a local thief, Mak, poses as a Southerner and tries to trick three shepherds. The shepherds immediately recognise Mak. Nevertheless, Mak is keeping up appearances and even threatens the shepherds with flogging. Eventually he succumbs and the story proceeds (Mossé 324). At first sight, as Epstein also points out, it is tempting to see Mak’s Southern imitation as a joke that ridicules the speech of Southerners (118). For instance, Mak does not use the Southern dialect correctly. He forgets to say “Ich” instead of “I” a couple of times (Mossé 325; lines 201-7). “Ich” is the Southern dialect form used in the play and “I” is the Northern form (“The Second Shepherds’ Play.” 122-4). This could have some humorous effect. In addition, Mak is the odd one out in the play: he uses a dialect which is different and strange for the Northern shepherds. Therefore, Mak is ridiculed and the Southern dialect could be seen as a joke, and as inferior to Northern speech. However, the reactions of the shepherds suggest otherwise. Mak demands reverence from the shepherds and states [*w*]hy, who be ich? ‘why, who am I?’ (Mossé 325; line 207). The shepherds then ask

why Mak is putting on such airs (325; line 208). They accuse him of wanting to play the saint and ask him to *take outt that sothren tothe, And sett in a torde* ‘take out that Southern tooth, and put it in a turd’ (325; lines 209-16). The Southern dialect is thus seen as pretentious.

However, portraying the Southern dialect as pretentious suggests that the Southern dialect is superior to the Northern dialect. As Epstein states “the shepherds [...] are actually affirming their recognition and even acceptance of the relationship between Northern and Southern dialects and the gradations of status that they symbolize” (121). The Southern dialect in the play is namely also used as a class marker. Mak imitates an important person from the South with a message from the King. This indicates that the important, upper classes of society live in the South and that these speak with a Southern tongue.

However, the Northern dialect in *The Second Shepherds’ Play* does not convey ignorance or poor personality, which is in line with Chaucer’s *Reeve’s Prologue and Tale*. Neither the shepherds nor Mak are portrayed as stupid characters in *The Second Shepherds’ Play*. It is possible to argue that the Northern shepherds are a bit foolish, because they keep complaining about their lives and are quite comical characters overall. However, the Northern shepherds do not fall for Mak’s Southern impersonation trick nor for the trick in which Mak disguises a sheep as a baby: when the shepherds see the supposed baby, they immediately recognise it as their stolen sheep (“The Second Shepherds’ Play.” 135). The shepherds eventually punish Mak for deceiving them and for stealing the sheep. Their punishment is, however, lenient and proof of their forgiving personality. The shepherds decide only to toss Mak around in a blanket (136). After this episode the Northern shepherds fall asleep and are rewarded for their kind, forgiving, and virtuous nature when an angel appears to announce the birth of Christ. They go to Bethlehem and, after seeing Christ, are redeemed (136-40).

In conclusion, the attitudes expressed towards Northern dialect in *The Reeve’s Prologue and Tale* and in *The Second Shepherds’ Play* mostly reflect the overall attitude

towards Northern dialect in the Middle English Period, expressed by John Trevisa and William Caxton. Both Trevisa and Caxton thought that the Northern dialect was inferior to the Southern dialect. Caxton even goes as far as to say that London-based English is superior to all other dialects. Trevisa commented on Northern speech, stating that it is a badly-pronounced, coarse, and vulgar variety. Moreover, both Trevisa and Caxton seemed to base their preference for the Southern dialect on class. The Kings of England and other members of the upper classes lived in the south, so Southern speech was deemed more acceptable, according to Trevisa and Caxton. Besides, Caxton's choice of variety may have been influenced by economic reasons: his audience and patrons were the wealthy upper classes that spoke in a London-based variety. The idea of superiority versus inferiority may also be found in *The Reeve's Prologue and Tale* and in *The Second Shepherds' Play*. In *The Reeve's Prologue and Tale* there are no socio-economic differences between the Southerners and Northerners but the Northern dialect is portrayed as different. Consequently, Chaucer displayed the Northern students as *the other*. He described the Northern dialect from his Southern point of view, portraying it as odd, foreign, and different and therefore as inferior to the Southern dialect. The Northern dialect is, however, not related to the lower classes in *The Reeve's Prologue and Tale*. Class does play a role in *The Second Shepherds' Play*. Mak's imitation of a Southerner shows the superiority of the Southern dialect, because the Southern dialect was associated with the upper classes of society. This equals Trevisa's and Caxton's comments. However, Trevisa and Caxton did not think that ignorance or terrible personalities were distinct aspects of the Northern dialect. Neither did Chaucer and the author of the *Second Shepherd's Play*. In *The Reeve's Prologue and Tale* the Northern students outwit the Southern Miller and neither party is virtuous. In *The Second Shepherds' Play* the Northern shepherds cannot be fooled by Mak's tricks and are rewarded for their compassionate nature.

Chapter two: the Early Modern English period (1500-1800)

“This man barkes out his English Northern-like”

-Thomas Wilson

By the end of the Middle English period a standard form of English had started to emerge: Chancery English. It was the language of the court of Chancery, “the Secretariat of State in all departments of late medieval government”, based in Westminster and retained by the King (Fisher 872). Shakespeare was the first attested writer to use the term *King’s English* in 1597, in other words, “standard or correct English, usually as written and spoken by educated people in Britain” (King, n.; Shakespeare 49). It would soon replace the term *Chancery English*. Consequently, the Early Modern English period saw the incipient emergence of pronunciation guides, dictionaries, prescriptive grammars, and spelling books. Attitudes towards Northern dialect and old forms of English were expressed by contemporary witnesses, such as Alexander Gill and George Puttenham. Attitudes towards Northern speech and older English were also found in literary works such as *The Shepheardes Calender*, *The Late Lancashire Witches*, *Thomas of Reading* and *The Northern Lass*. This chapter will examine what attitudes were like towards Northern dialect in the Early Modern English period, as expressed by contemporary witnesses, and will investigate whether *The Shepheardes Calender*, *The Late Lancashire Witches*, *Thomas of Reading* and *The Northern Lass* express similar attitudes.

Contemporary witnesses such as Alexander Gill and Edmund Coote believed that the use of dialect, other than the Southern, was not suitable for refined, upper class, educated people. Gill, a spelling reformer born in Lincolnshire, was educated in the South and lived in

London for many years (Dobson 131). His speech would have been the standard of the time and the speech of the educated class: the King's English. In 1619 he published the *Logonomia Anglica* in which he introduced a reformed spelling system (131). In this book Gill makes clear that "all people who are well born and well educated use a common form of speech" (Dobson 142). Gill elaborated and stated that in writing and pronunciation, the standard, and thus correct, speech should "conform not to the pronunciation of ploughman, working-girls or river-men but to that used by learned and refined men" (qtd. in Blank 25). In other words, Gill believed that the standard should be based on the dialect used by educated and cultivated people of higher social standing, the King's English. Other dialects were thought to belong to lower class, poorly educated, uncivilised country people. Edmund Coote had already voiced similar opinions in his spelling book *The English Schoole-Master* in 1597. He stated that learned men should use the King's English in writing and should not be deceived by other, barbarous, dialects of country folk (Dobson 34).

However, according to Gill and Coote, old, archaic or unusual dialect words could be used by poets. Coote accepted dialect writing if "peculiar termes" were used that did not corrupt words or if they were used in a private letter (qtd. in Dobson 34). For Gill, the Northern dialect used by poets in written works was allowed (Blank 30). Gill called the Northern dialect "the most delightful, the most ancient [and] the purest" (qtd in Blank 100). It is also attractive and rhymes easily (100). Moreover, according to Gill, the proximity of the Northern dialect to old forms of speech or archaisms was important, because it constituted a purer English (100).

George Puttenham indicated that he favoured the King's English above all other dialects, especially above Northern speech. In 1589 he stated that Southern English was the "most usual of all [the] country" and "the usual speech of the court" and that other dialects, including Northern speech, were inferior, uncivilised and of lower social status (Puttenham

156-7). Puttenham denounced any use of the old and archaic (Northern) forms in poetry and literary works in *The Arte of English Poesie* (157). He argued that poets should use the “naturall, pure, and the most [usual]” form of English: the King’s English (156). On the Northern dialect he stated: “[poets] shall [not] take the termes of Northern men, such as they use in daily talk” (157). Puttenham declared that the speech of people “beyond the river of Trent” was a purer form of English (157). However, he still argued that it was not so refined as the speech of London and the court, because that was the speech of “men [civil] and graciously behauoured and bred” (157). He even put a restriction on the area which he considered to have proper Southern speech, which was sixty miles (96.5 km) around London (157). He did realise that there were people beyond this border that spoke his form of proper English. However, these were not the “common people of euey [s]hire” but educated and civilised men (157). Country people were considered to be “of the inferiour [s]ort”, because they had ill-shapen speech and were “poor, rustical or uncivil” (157). Puttenham thus portrayed a positive bias towards Southern speech: it belonged to the educated, upper classes. Other dialects were inferior and uncivilised and pertained to the lower classes. However, even within Puttenham’s dialect border around London, Northern pronunciation occurred in the speech of the educated. Richard Mulcaster, born in Cumberland in 1530-31, received a Southern education and then became the first headmaster of the Merchant Taylors’ school near London (Dobson 117-18). At the Merchant Taylors’ school, he must have, perhaps accidentally, taught the students some northernisms (125). This was not appreciated as it was reported after a visit of the Merchant Taylors’ school that “being northern men born, they had not taught the children to speak distinctly, or to pronounce their words as well as they aught” (qtd. in Dobson 125). This shows that the King’s English was indeed upheld as the standard form of English and that other dialects were considered incorrect.

In works of literature, such as in the *The Late Lancashire Witches* by Heywood and Brome, the North is a strange and foreign place and the Northern dialect is strongly associated not only with people of lower social standing but also with witchcraft. In 1612 twelve people from Pendle Hill in Lancashire were accused of witchcraft and went to trial at Lancaster Assizes (Sharpe 2-3). These trials came to be known as the Lancashire Witch Trials (30). In 1933 and 1934 another twenty people were tried at Lancaster Assizes. All, but one, were found guilty (Findlay 146). Four of the suspects were sent to London for examination (Swain 82). The accused witches from the North were a tourist attraction: people paid money to see them in prison (82). A play was even produced and performed in London in 1634 called *The Late Lancashire Witches* (Swain 82). *The Late Lancashire Witches* simultaneously conveyed an image of witches and Northerners. Armitage mentions that “Londoners could go to the jail in the morning, to gawp at a witch, or a Northerner, and then go and see a play about them in the afternoon. It was the complete entertainment package” (Docufans1 47:30).

In the prologue of the play it is said that Lancashire is a *forraine State* ‘foreign state’ (Quarto Text A4; line 2). The word *forraine* has several connotations. It could mean that the witches were from the North. It can also mean, however, that Lancashire is “[a]lien in character” (*OED* foreign, adj. and n). This may indicate that the North was seen as foreign place; it was strange and a “region to be feared” (26). It is also mentioned that the plot, the accusation of witchcraft, is “so thin” (Quarto Text A4; line 9). Ostovich, the editor and translator of the play states that “[the] London attitude, expressed here, is amusement. Only northerners would believe there were such things as witches” (Heywood and Brome, Modern Text). These lines in the prologue thus indicate that the North was seen as a foreign, strange place where people lived who believed in witchcraft. Furthermore, the prologue states that the accused witches who were brought to London were “persons so low” (Quarto Text A4, line 9). This indicates that the playwrights associated people who practiced witchcraft with the

lower social classes. The Northern dialect is subsequently used as a marker for the lower class in the play. Although the play is set in Lancashire, only two characters are represented with a Northern dialect: the servants Lawrence and Parnell (Heywood and Brome, Quarto Text). Lawrence and Parnell want to get married so they can take over the Seeley family. The social norms in the play have namely been turned upside down for the Seeley family, so this is the servants' chance to assume control. Once the witches in the play are prosecuted, however, the social norms revert back to normal and Lawrence and Parnell are forced to resume their old lives. Lawrence states *[we] han pit on our working geere, to fwinke and ferve our Mafter and Maifstreffe like intill painfull servants agone, as we shudden* '[we] have put on our working gear to work and serve out master and mistress just like painstaking servants again, as we should'⁶ (Quarto Text: L, lines 2487-89). Blank argues that "these provincials return, at last, to the station in life to which their language properly conscribed them" (109). It seems that the playwrights wanted to reinforce the fact that Lawrence and Parnell belonged to the lower classes of society and thus characterised them with a Northern dialect.

In Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender* the use of the Northern dialect is considered archaic and authoritative but at the same time it is rough, low and foreign. Edmund Spenser was born in London in 1552. He used archaic language in *The Shepheardes Calender* that has also been identified as Northern English (Draper 556). In the prologue and glosses an unidentified person called E.K. describes what motivated Spenser to use these archaic words. However, E.K. does not offer a satisfactory explanation (Spenser). In his discussion he uses contradictory terms. On the one hand, he deems the old, archaic words *rude* 'coarse', 'rough', 'ragged' and 'harsh' and associates them with shepherds and "country folke" (Spenser). On the other hand, the old and archaic terms are called "rusticall" and "naturall" and bring "great grace [...] and auctoritie to the verse" while displaying an "eternall image of antiquitie"

⁶ Translation by H. Ostovich (Heywood and Brome, Modern Text).

(Spenser). As Blank points out, “E.K.’s characterization of Spenser’s language as at once majestic and low, authoritative and rude, points obliquely to the contemporary association of old words and words from the provinces” (115). It thus seems that E.K. wanted to defend Spenser’s use of old words by highlighting their purity and antiquity. Furthermore, the proximity of the Northern dialect to these old, pure words might have been a reason why E.K. defended Spenser’s use of the Northern dialect as well. However, as seen in the commentaries of contemporary reformers, dialect and provincial speech was related to the lower social classes; the uncivilised country people. Consequently, E.K. is “compelled to characterize Spenser’s archaisms as ‘rough’, ‘base’, and ‘rude’” (Blank 116). In the play itself Spenser seemed to unify dialect with an image of foreignness. His “September” includes a character called Diggon who is a shepherd that *droue his sheepe into a farre cuntrye* ‘drove his sheep into a far country’ (Spenser). Moreover, Diggon speaks a dialect of English that is different from the common speech, according to E.K. (Spenser). So an opposition can be found between a common, correct form of speech and a foreign form of speech, a dialect, in *The Shepheardes Calender*.

As in *The Shepheardes Calender*, conflicting attitudes towards the Northern dialect are also found in other literary works in the Early Modern English period. Wales argues that in sixteenth- and seventeenth- century literature regional dialects were associated with the lower social classes “i.e. provincial boorishness and country bumpkins” (77). However, this boorishness had affiliations with “simple plain speaking and honesty” (Wales 78). This notion of dialect being on the one hand associated with people of lower social status and on the other hand with honesty and simplicity is demonstrated in Deloney’s *Thomas of Reading*. It is stated that all clothiers from across the country gathered in London, because King Henry “sought the fauour of all his subjects, especially of the Clothiers” (Deloney 214). A Northerner called Hodgekins explains to the King that he has difficulties with local thieves

back in the North. The King assures him that measures will be taken against these thieves but Hodgekins is not convinced. Deloney states:

with that Hodgekins vnmanerly interrupted the King, saying in broad Northern speech, Yea gude faith, mai Liedge, the faule eule of mai saule, giff any thing will keepe them whiat, till the karles be hanged by the cragge [...]. The King smiling to heare this rough-hewen fellow made this reply [...] (227).

The clothier is of lower social status than the King but yet the King is not insulted by this “broad Northern speech”, nor by the interruption (Deloney 227). The rough hewn Northerner is honest and plain in his speech and that seems to justify his uncouth interruption of someone with higher social status and authority. Another example of the plain, honest speaking provincial is shown in the 1632 play *The Northern Lass* by Richard Brome. Constance, a Northern girl, speaks with a Northern dialect in the play. In a dedication Brome states: “[a] country lass I present you [...] She came out of the cold north, thinly clad [...] She is honest, and modest, though she speak broad; and though art never strung her tongue, yet once it yielded delightful sound” (Brome, Textual Introduction). Again, a contradiction is found in this statement regarding the Northern dialect. It is considered honest and delightful but at the same time Constance is a Northerner, a girl from the country, and thus speaks *broad* ‘coarse’. According to Blank, Brome “sell[ed] the novelty of ‘northernness’ itself to its audience, exploiting the fact that the dialect [...] was foreign in the eyes of most London readers” (111). The Northern dialect is thus interpreted as provincial and foreign but at the same time plain and sincere in *The Northern Lass*.

The contemporary witnesses Gill, Coote and Puttenham agreed on most points regarding their attitudes towards the use of Northern dialect in the Early Modern English period. The Southern dialect, or the King’s English, was considered to be the usual, or

common, dialect used by learned, civilised and well-born men. Other dialects, especially the Northern dialect according to Puttenham, would only be used by the lower classes of society: the unsophisticated, uneducated, country people. *The Late Lancashire Witches* propagates these ideas and portrays the North as a foreign place where people believe in silly things such as witchcraft and where people who speak with a Northern dialect have a lower social status. Nevertheless, the contemporary witnesses displayed conflicting attitudes towards the use of old words and dialects by poets. While Puttenham denounced the use of dialects and old words, Coote made an exception for peculiar terms and Gill thought poets should be allowed to use the Northern dialect in their works, because it is pure and close to old forms of speech. These conflicting views can also be found in *The Shepheardes Calender*, *Thomas of Reading* and *the Northern Lass*. The language in the *The Shepheardes Calender* is regarded as authoritative and representative of the purer, older forms of speech. However, it is also seen as low, coarse and foreign: the complete opposite of the common form of English. In *Thomas of Reading* and *The Northern Lass* the Northern dialect is associated with foreign people of lower social status but the dialect is also an indicator of modesty, straightforwardness and plainness. The Northern characters in the texts are delightful and honest, but they are people of lower social status from the far North and therefore their speech is still regarded as coarse.

Chapter Three: the Late Modern English period (1800-present)

“Such harsh and jarring sounds as none but a Northern ear could endure”

- Thomas Sheridan, 1756

In the Middle English period and the Early Modern English period “standard [English] meant that which was uniform and common” (Crowley 162). In the Late Modern English period it referred to “a level of excellence which was to be achieved: a *social* target for the speaker” (162). Dialects were still stigmatised and Standard English became a tool that allowed people to be socially accepted by the Southern educated and higher social classes of society (166,169). On the other hand, “the dialect-speaking peasant stood for continuity, purity and an important link to the rural past”, especially after the industrial revolution (167). Such attitudes towards Northern dialect can be found in literature of the Late Modern English period, for example in the novels *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë and *North and South* by Elizabeth Gaskell. Over the course of the twentieth century positive attitudes towards dialect start to unfold and the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century witness a positive change in attitudes towards regional dialects in general, including the Northern dialect. In late twentieth- and twenty-first-century literature, such as J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter series* and George R.R. Martin’s *A Game of Thrones*, there is little attempt to convey Northern dialect. The Northern dialect is, however, found in local works and anthologies such as the *Yorkshire Dialect Classics Anthology* and Paul Walker’s work. This chapter will examine whether the attitudes expressed by contemporary witnesses concerning the Northern dialect in the Late Modern English period reflect the attitudes found in literary works of the time.

The nineteenth century was “a repetition of the process [...] identified in the eighteenth century: the hailing of one form of speech as superior, and the relegation of the other as stigmatised, socially disadvantageous, and *intrinsically* inferior forms” (Crowley 166). In view of this analysis, this chapter will begin by discussing the attitudes towards dialects expressed by late eighteenth-century contemporary witnesses. Like his predecessors from the Early Modern English period, Sheridan argued that the dialect of the court of London was the polite pronunciation and that other dialects were of a “provincial, rustic, pedantic, or mechanic education; and therefore have some degree of disgrace annexed to them” (*A Course of Lectures* 30). In 1756 he wrote that British people left their “children to be vitiated [concerning language] by committing them to the care of some of the most ignorant and lowest of mankind” (*British Education* 147). This prejudice against the dialect of the lower classes was also expressed by Philip Withers. He mentions that certain “vulgarisms may be expected from Domestic, and from the lower Orders of Society; but they are a Reproach to People of Education” (Title page, 41). Moreover, Sheridan argued that Northerners have a “harshness to their speech” due to the rough nature and manners of Northerners in general (*British Education* 221). Besides, the Northern dialect differed most from correct English and therefore it would require “more pains to correct it” (*A General Dictionary* 61).

The seemingly contradictory attitudes towards dialects and provincialisms, as expressed by Early Modern English contemporaries, can also be found in the late eighteenth century. On the one hand, the Northern dialect was archaic and plain whilst, on the other hand, it was low and uncultivated. Dialects and provincialisms were not common or correct, because “rustic’s speech [was considered] not so much ‘pure’ as ‘purified’” from defects (Wales 113; Coleridge 52; Wordsworth 7). Coleridge even stated that rustics were in a lower state of cultivation and therefore couldn’t think as well about the “connections of things” as learned men do (52-53). However, Johnson believed that the Northern dialect was “not

barbarous but obsolete”; Northern English might sound harsh and rough but it was used by “our ancestors” (*A Dictionary* 34). Moreover, Wordsworth reasoned that lower and provincial people speak a “plainer” language (7). As a result of their low social status, Wordsworth explained, they are “less under the influence of social vanity [and] they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions” (7).

Nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century contemporary attitudes echoed the late eighteenth-century attitudes: dialects and provincialisms were considered inferior, unrefined and lacked social status. In 1890 A.J. Ellis stated that standard speech was the “received educated London pronunciation” (Ellis xiii). Consequently, the standard of English pronunciation was ascribed to Southern educated people of higher social standing (Crowley 164), which characterised the speech of this group as more valuable than that of others. Regional or provincial dialects were looked down upon if they were used in polite circles, because “pronunciations which belong typically to a Provincial Dialect [were] out of place” there (Wyld, qtd. in Crowley 169). However, Wyld also stated that vulgarisms were “importations, not from a regional but from a class dialect, in this case from a dialect which is not that of a province, but of a low or uneducated social class” (qtd. in Crowley 169). Regional or provincial dialects were thus deemed more socially acceptable, on the condition that they were only used in lower social circles, than the dialects of the lower social classes that were considered vulgar. Alford made a similar statement declaring that a particular vulgarism was “common throughout England to persons of low breeding and inferior education” (Alford 40). The solution proposed by Wyld and his contemporaries was the acquisition of Standard English by the low and uneducated classes (qtd. in Crowley 169). J. Wright exemplifies how this was executed in daily life when stating that “the working classes speak quite differently among themselves, than when speaking to strangers or educated

people” (vii). Adopting Standard English thus meant creating an opening to the world of the Southern educated and higher social classes of society.

However, at the beginning of the twentieth century, contemporary witnesses also started to refute the mainstream notion that dialects were inferior and depraved. E.M. Wright disagreed with other contemporaries who declared that deviations from Standard English were the result of “ignorance” and “vulgarity” (E.M. Wright v-vi). Besides, a “common error still prevailing in the minds of educated people”, E.M. Wright stated, is that they see a dialect as an “arbitrary distortion of the mother tongue” (xix). Moreover, Skeat mentioned that the attitude of superiority over dialect speakers voiced by the Standard English speaker is nothing but ignorance (2). Furthermore, Skeat stated that dialect forms are not corrupt forms but are instead “remarkably conservative and antique” (9). In other words, dialects are archaic, pure forms of English.

However, the North was still seen as *the other* and the industrial landscape after the industrial revolution only intensified the “perception of the foreign-ness of the North” (Wales 124). The dialect of the working classes “almost unintelligible to outsiders, merely reinforced the image of barbarousness” argues Wales (124). The North was still a strange country in the eyes of Southerners.

In the late twentieth century and in the twenty-first century the attitudes towards dialect took a positive turn. Wales states that “deviations from the standard spellings are not shied away from” and that dialect is no longer “an object of shame, but cherished as an emblem of local identity” (129). Especially after World War II when “post-War realistic fiction, drama and films” appeared which focused on the North and its “working class urban landscape” (Wales 161). Moreover, Northern English became more popular because of The Beatles in the 1960s and the Northern dialect was used in popular media (163). Identity and

dialect became indistinguishable and by the late twentieth century “it was fashionable to proclaim one’s working class (and also Northern) origins” (151). Consequently, it was socially acceptable to speak with a Northern dialect: dialect was something to be proud of. This attitude persists until today. The “Yorkshire Dialect Society”, for example, has “encourage[d] the study and recording of dialect” since 1897 and still does (Home).

However, as Wales suggests, “Northern’ and ‘working-class’ remain a strong collocation” in the twenty-first century and accents do matter (167). Stereotypes of Northerners as plain and honest whilst also of a lower social class persist. In modern advertising, Wales points out, the Northerner is “hard-working [,] humorous [and] straightforward” but a tone of condescension can also be found (28-29). The speech of Northerners seems to define their personality. Northern celebrities are represented in media, for example, with exaggerated Northern features and the Northern working class is presented with “cultural artefacts such as [flat] caps and braces” to “[match] their ‘flat’ vowels” (Wales 28,30). Moreover, in 1987 Hughes and Trudgill showed the relationship between class and accents. They concluded that Received Pronunciation is at the top of the social scale while “people at the bottom of the social scale speak with the most obvious, the ‘broadest’ regional accents” (6). They also concluded that people that want to get on in life “tend to modify their accent in the direction of RP” (7). Accents thus still matter: the pressure to speak RP may have been reduced but it is still present.

Literary works, such as Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*, also express attitudes towards the Northern dialect. In *Wuthering Heights*, Northern dialect is associated with coarseness and people from the lower classes who are also straightforward. Moreover, the Northern dialect is used to distance those who speak non-standard speech from those who speak Standard English. Joseph, the servant of the protagonists’ family, speaks with a Yorkshire dialect in the novel. The first impression of Joseph is not good. He is “very old” and “looked so sourly” (4).

Besides, he is described as “vinegar-faced” (9). In emphasizing his sullen countenance, Joseph is already portrayed as different from the rest of the household. A couple pages later it is said that Joseph “in cracked tones, grated out: [...]” (15). The words “cracked” and “grated” indicate that the Northern dialect is considered coarse and rough. Moreover, it is said that Joseph “croaked [...] catching an opportunity from our hesitation, to thrust in his evil tongue” (93). Not only is Joseph’s dialect scraping and bad, but his character itself is “shown in a negative light” (Schubert 81). Joseph’s bad personality is reflected in his grating and unmannerly dialect. Furthermore, the fact that Joseph is a servant, and the only character in the novel that continuously speaks in a Northern dialect, indicates that the Northern dialect is strongly associated with lower social classes. In other words, the realistic Victorian novel “[tends] to see ‘non-standard’ language as a ‘class-marker’, and indicative of ‘moral coarseness’ (Ingham qtd. in Wales 120-121). However, Joseph is straightforward and honest. In *Wuthering Heights* Joseph is described as a “rascal, but no liar” (111). Besides, Joseph seems to be the only character that truly speaks his mind. This might come across as rude, for example when he bluntly disapproves of Catherine for running after Heathcliff, but at least he is absolutely honest (93). In addition, Joseph’s dialect “has the function of isolating him from the other characters” (Schubert 82), because the other characters mostly speak Standard English. Joseph’s Northern dialect thus creates a “distance between speaker and recipient” (82): the other characters cannot identify with Joseph. Consequently, the Northern dialect is seen as inferior to Standard English. Brontë’s own concern that Joseph’s Northern dialect was unintelligible to educated influential Southerners reinforces this idea (Wiltshire 26-27).

In Gaskell’s *North and South* the Northern dialect is associated with the lower working classes from the North. Besides, their dialect is regarded as inferior to that of Southerners who speak Standard English. As the title suggests, a contrast between Southerners and Northerners is displayed in the novel. The working classes in Milton,

especially the Higgins family, represent the Northerners in the novel. The wealthy, upper class Southerners are represented by the protagonist's family, the Hales. The Southern moneyed classes in the novel speak Standard English and are condescending about, and to, the working class Northerner. Mrs. Hale, for example, when talking about "these factory people" states "almost indignantly": "who on earth wears cotton that can afford linen?" (51). Later, when Margaret Hale tells Mr. Higgins where she comes from, it is stated: "I come from the South- from Hampshire,' she continued, a little afraid of wounding his consciousness of ignorance, if she used a name which he did not understand" (83).

However, Gaskell promotes "the positive images of honesty, hard work and plain-speaking" of Northerners (Wales 123). Nicolas Higgins, for example, is portrayed as an honest, kind man that works hard to support his family (271-280). He is very straightforward when he tells Margaret that he is not fond of inviting strangers into his house, plainly rejecting Margaret's offer to come and visit (85). Moreover, Nicolas is completely honest about his daughter's illness. He does not want to hope in vain for a recovery and argues that "a man mun speak out for the truth [...] leave a' this talk about religion alone, and set to work on what yo' see and know" (107). Margaret is also positive about the straightforwardness of the working classes of Milton. She describes the girls who complement her as "loud spoken and boisterous", but does not mind meeting them (82). Besides, when admired by the workmen in an "open fearless manner" she is hesitant as first but then states: "the very outspokenness marked their innocence of any intention to hurt [my] delicacy" (82). Moreover, the wealthy industrial Thornton family is Northern as well. Although their speech is represented as standard, Mr. Thornton is displayed as an honest man. He, for example, expresses his feelings freely and sincerely and is truthful in his discussions with Margaret (235,142-8).

Although dialects are socially accepted in the late twentieth and twenty-first century, there is little attempt to convey Northern dialect in literature. In texts such as the *Harry Potter*

series and *A Game of Thrones*, characters that are from the North are not represented with Northern dialect features in written form, even though large parts of the stories are set in the North (Rowling and Martin). The reason for this lack of dialect is, however, not because the Northern dialect is thought of as inferior, uncivilised or unusual. Namely, in the film and television adaptations of the *Harry Potter series* and *A Game of Thrones*, most characters that are Northern speak with a Northern dialect and this is absolutely ordinary. Moreover, nowadays most dialectal or regional speakers follow the grammar and vocabulary of Standard English, because their speech is influenced by Received Pronunciation speakers and, unintentionally or deliberately, modified in the direction of RP (Hughes and Trudgill 7-8). As a result, disparities between standard and non-standard speakers may not be striking enough to demonstrate in writing. The use of the Northern dialect in modern society and media is thus acceptable and common, it is however not explicitly used in British literature: except in local works and anthologies such as the *Yorkshire Dialect Classics Anthology* and in Peter Walker's work. *The Yorkshire Dialect Classics Anthology* is an anthology that includes "traditional rhymes and sayings [...] comic verse [,] modern love poems and prose" in the Yorkshire dialect (Yorkshire Dialect Classics). Peter Walker is a member of the Yorkshire Dialect Society and has written some material in the Yorkshire dialect (Walker). He states that "dialect is alive and I think it's important that we try and keep it alive" (Walker). This seems to be the main purpose of these local works and anthologies: to revive, and protect, the Northern dialect that has been mostly degraded for over nine centuries.

The attitudes found concerning the Northern dialect in literary works of the Late Modern English period reflect the attitudes towards the Northern dialect expressed by contemporary witnesses. The late eighteenth-century contemporaries Sheridan and Withers argued that dialects, besides the polite London dialect, were inferior and low. The Northern dialect was considered to be even worse: it was harsh and rough and the most difficult to

correct. However, contradictory attitudes were also expressed: dialects were admired for their archaic and plain nature, especially the Northern dialect. Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century attitudes reflected late eighteenth-century attitudes towards dialect: they were regarded as uncultivated, low and inferior. The speech of the Southern educated upper classes became the standard and dialect speakers had to adjust their speech to this standard. Only then would they be socially accepted by the Southern and educated higher social classes. However, new positive attitudes also started to emerge. The idea of superiority of the Southern dialect was gradually rejected, although the notion of the foreignness of the North and its unintelligible language still remained. Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Gaskell's *North and South* are good examples of these conflicting attitudes. In both novels, the Northern dialect is affiliated with the lower social classes that are uncultivated and, withal, inferior to the upper classes that speak Standard English. Moreover, Joseph is not accepted by the educated upper classes in *Wuthering Heights*, because he is a servant. On top of that he speaks in a dialect which is described as coarse and rude, just as his personality. However, the Northern dialect is also seen as reflecting the honesty and straightforwardness of its speakers in both novels: Joseph speaks his mind in *Wuthering Heights* and the inhabitants of Milton are hard-working honest people in *North and South*. In the late twentieth century and the twenty-first century the contemporary attitudes towards the North and its dialect improved. It has become more socially acceptable to speak with a Northern dialect and people are proud of their dialect, although stereotypes of the North and the Northern dialect as inferior but plain still remain. Nevertheless, Standard English continues to be the prestige dialect and even in the twenty-first century, people are still condemned on the basis of their dialect. The literature of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries mostly reflects these contemporary attitudes. Northern dialect forms are lacking in literature but this is not due to attitudes of superiority of Standard English. Besides, dialects and regionalisms have become homogeneous to Received

Pronunciation: their grammar and vocabulary follows the standard. Differences between standard and non-standard speech may thus not be big enough to exhibit. The Northern dialect is thus considered common and socially acceptable but it is not excessively displayed in literature. However, the Northern dialect can be found in local works and anthologies where the main purpose of the use of Northern English is to preserve and revive the dialect that had been treated with contempt until the late twenty and twenty-first century.

Conclusion

This thesis set out to explore how the Northern dialect has been represented in literature of the British Isles from the Middle Ages to the present day using commentaries by contemporary witnesses and the representation of the Northern dialect in literature over three time periods, namely the Middle English period, the Early Modern English period and the Late Modern English period.

The attitudes expressed towards Northern dialect in the Middle English period were mostly negative. According to contemporary witnesses, the Northern dialect was thought of as inferior to Southern speech and was associated with the lower social classes. Besides, the inaccessibility of the North created an image of the North as strange and foreign. Middle English literary works further reinforced the idea of inferiority, oddity and otherness of the Northern dialect. The *Second Shepherds' Play* even strengthened the class based prejudice. The Northern dialect was, however, not affiliated with ignorance or bad character by contemporary witnesses or in literary works.

In the Early Modern English period a Southern-based Standard English, referred to as the King's English in 1597, emerged. The King's English became the common dialect used by educated, refined and high-born men according to contemporary witnesses. The Northern dialect, and other dialects, were regarded as incorrect and unsophisticated and were used by the poorly-educated lower classes. However, for some contemporary witnesses the Northern dialect in particular stood for pure, distinctive and archaic English. Consequently, poets were allowed to use particular Northern English words in literary works. The attitudes towards Northern dialect in literature reflected those of contemporary scholars. The Northern dialect was, on the one hand, low, foreign and coarse, but on the other hand, it demonstrated authority, honesty and sincerity and was considered to be a purer, older form of speech.

The Late Modern English period witnessed positive changes in the attitudes towards Northern dialect. In the late eighteenth century, any dialect, other than the London dialect, was stigmatised and seen as inferior, vulgar and rough, whilst also antiquated and plain. In the nineteenth century, the Standard of English pronunciation was once more ascribed to the Southern educated higher social classes when A.J. Ellis coined the term *Received educated London Pronunciation*. Dialects continued to be devalued as inferior, uncultivated and low varieties. Non-standard speakers were expected to adjust their speech to Standard English to get accepted by the Standard English speaker. However, as in the Early Modern English period, some contemporaries also believed that dialects were pure and conservative. Nevertheless, images of the North and its dialect as foreign and strange still prevailed. Nineteenth-century literature shared these assumptions: the harsh Northern dialect was used by the working classes, who were uneducated and inferior to the upper class standard speaker. However, dialect speakers were also depicted as straightforward and honest.

The late twentieth and twenty-first century sees a positive change in attitudes towards Northern dialect. It is now socially acceptable to speak with a Northern dialect and dialect is something to be proud of: it has become an important part of people's identity. Stereotypes of the North and its inhabitants as blunt working-class types still remain however. Moreover, the dialect speaker is still criticised for his or her dialect. In literature the Northern dialect is not always displayed but this is not due to feelings of superiority regarding Standard English. The grammar and vocabulary of dialects increasingly follow the standard, making the differences between standard and non-standard speech perhaps not striking enough to display in written form. The Northern dialect is thus common and accepted in modern society it is however not always represented in literature. The Northern dialect does thrive in local Northern works and anthologies where the dialect is preserved and cherished.

In conclusion, from the Middle Ages to the present day, attitudes towards the Northern dialect in literature of the British Isles have varied from the negative to the positive. The Middle English period already witnessed a sense of a dialectal North-South divide which continued into the Early Modern English period. The Northern dialect was shown in a negative light. However, Early Modern English literature also exhibited positive images of the Northern dialect. These positive images persisted into the Late Modern English period and triumphed over the negative images of the Northern dialect that existed concurrently. Consequently, the Northern dialect is completely common and accepted in modern society and the twenty-first century is experiencing a revival of the Northern dialect.

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