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**Language as a Means of Distinction and Exclusion:**  
Distinction through Language in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*

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BA Thesis Literatuurwetenschap

Wordcount: 6097

First Reader: Ruth Clemens

Second Reader: Menno Lievers

Date: 12-03-2021

## Abstract

This thesis researches the language philosophy in Carry van Bruggen's philosophical work *Hedendaagsch Fetischisme* (1925). To show what the consequences of her philosophy are, I use her theory to analyse the relationship between several characters from different social classes in D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. I explain the different levels on which language can be used as a means of distinction between people and groups of people. While explaining van Bruggen's theory, I relate to the distinction between the Dutch in the early twentieth century, while the analysis of the novel relates to class distinction in early twentieth-century England. Distinction through language does not only take place because differences can be observed in the use of language, but also because different intrinsic values are incidentally and arbitrarily attributed to different kinds of language. On this incidental basis, language is judged as superior or inferior. This thesis focuses mainly on distinction on the basis of accent, dialect and national language(s). In the analysis of the novel, the different kinds of language that are present, and the way these differences in language are used as a means of distinction, are examined. This shows how these distinctions in and through language are used to preserve power relations between individuals and the social classes to which they belong. The analysis offers a new way to read the novel, for the philosophy of van Bruggen has not yet been translated in English, and therefore offers new insights about the language use in the novel.

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## Introduction

*Hedendaagsch Fetischisme* (1925), which was initially supposed to be called *De Taal* [*The Language*], is one of the two philosophical non-fiction works of Carry van Bruggen (van Bruggen 7).<sup>1</sup> The book is a critical contemplation on language and the way in which people use language to distinguish themselves from others. The title *Hedendaagsch Fetischisme* [*Contemporary Fetishism*] refers to the intrinsic value and superiority that people attribute to certain accents, dialects, vocabularies and languages (de Swaan 121).<sup>2</sup> The value that is attributed to language is what she calls "*Taal-fetischisme*"<sup>3</sup> (van Bruggen 119). For van Bruggen, one of the greatest problems in understanding language is what she calls the "*bizarre associatie*" (van Bruggen 28). This bizarre association is the ineradicable tendency of people to confuse what is put together incidentally and what belongs together essentially. The form of a word - the accent, dialect or national language that is used to express a meaning - is confused with its meaning. Combating this misunderstanding is a key point in her language philosophy (Sicking 271).

At a brief trial in November 1915, the British authorities used the 1857 Obscene Publications Act to censor D. H. Lawrence's novel *The Rainbow. Lady Chatterley's Lover*, which was first published in Italy in 1928, was only allowed to be published in Britain in 1960. The reason the publication was suppressed for over 30 years was the "obscenity" of some chapters (Parkes 3-4). The trial must be understood in the context of Modernism of the interwar period, when ideas about literature changed. During this time, authors started exploring the relation between the authority of tradition and the demands of innovation, between the endowments of the past and the imperatives of the present in and through language (Yao 27). The "obscenity" in the novel consists of the passages that are dedicated to sex and the language that is used to describe it (Karolides 375-376). This obscenity trial is significant because we think of modernism as a time of representational crisis, radical innovation, new representative strategies and a great extension of the possibilities of literary text (Williams 24). In the case of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, this innovation was met with resistance from the British authorities.

The novel, written by a British author and set in England in the early twentieth century, is about Constance Reid, a woman from the upper-middle class. She marries the aristocrat

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<sup>1</sup> Her second philosophical non-fiction work is *Prometheus*, which was published in 1919 (Fenouillet 47).

<sup>2</sup> The term "Fetishism" refers to Karl Marx's concept of *Commodity Fetishism*. This concept holds that when an ordinary item is viewed as a commodity, it is changed into something transcendent. It now has a price and value attributed to it, which is understood in relation with other commodities. Yet the value lies in the labour that was used to produce it, not its relation to other commodities (Billig 315).

Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.

<sup>3</sup> *Language fetishism*.

Clifford Chatterley in 1917. After their honeymoon, Clifford is sent to war and returns paralysed from the waist down and impotent. After a while, Clifford hires Mrs. Bolton to take care of him. When Constance starts taking long walks in the woods on their estate, she comes into contact with Oliver Mellors, the gamekeeper of the estate. They meet several times, but Mellors keeps her at a distance, constantly reminding her of their class difference. Eventually they begin an affair and Constance becomes pregnant with his child. Constance admits to Clifford that she is pregnant with Mellors' baby and he fires Mellors. Clifford refuses to allow her to divorce him. The novel ends with Constance and Mellors both trying to proceed with divorcing their spouse, hoping that after this they can be together (Lawrence).

I have chosen to analyse *Lady Chatterley's Lover* using van Bruggen's theory for two reasons. Firstly, these works are from the interwar period, a time when social attitudes in Europe were changing, and language philosophy and linguistics were expanding as disciplines. Secondly, all three different levels of distinction in language that van Bruggen speaks of - accent, dialect and national language - come forward in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. The novel's main characters all belong to different social classes and all use languages that, according to van Bruggen, signify their class. Their observation of the difference of language of the other emphasises their differences. The novel poses a juxtaposition of confirmation of the associations of language on the one hand and a rupture of the *bizarre associatie* on the other. It shows that the *bizarre associatie* is sometimes confirmed but not necessarily true. This confirms the changes in thinking about language and literature in the interwar period, a time of transition and innovation. By this I indicate the upheavals of war, new media and communication technologies and changes in social attitudes in Europe. Because of these new technologies, people could, amongst other things, suddenly hear accents and dialects from regions they had never been to before. This changed people's view on their own language but also on language in general (Williams 24).

This reading of the novel, using van Bruggen's language philosophy, will offer an original analysis, for *Hedendaagsch Fetischisme* has not yet been translated into English and van Bruggen remains a minor philosopher, even in the Netherlands. However, her writing offers a unique perspective on her time. It will also offer a new perspective on the novel by placing a Dutch text in a new transnational context. The analysis will show that, even though this philosophical text and novel are from a different national and linguistic context, these Dutch perspectives on the distinguishing character of language can be applied to several aspects of the way language is used in this novel, set in early twentieth-century England.

This thesis will be structured as follows: after a general introduction of the language philosophy in *Hedendaagsch Fetischisme*, the research will focus on distinction and exclusion

on the basis of language. After the theoretical framework has been established, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* will be analysed. During three chapters that analyse accent, dialect and national language, I will show that different language use creates a distinction between the characters in the novel and excludes them from each other's social class, maintaining power relations between them in the process. The findings in this research will come together in the conclusion.

## Chapter One: Theoretical Framework

That language can be a means of connection seems like a universal experience. We cannot deny the instant connection that we feel when we are abroad and hear another person speak our mother language. It is a tool of social cohesion (Fenoulhet 48). People can unite on the basis of their nation, and one of the characteristics of a nation is the possession of a national language. Van Bruggen goes even further when she states that "language is the entire nation!" (van Bruggen 106). By this she means that the ultimate basis of union for a modern nation state is the collective language. Yet, perhaps even more than a means of connection, language can function as a means of distinction. For van Bruggen, distinction begins with the unequal values we ascribe to different forms of language. The core of our "*Taal-fetischisme*" is the "*bizarre associatie*" (van Bruggen 28, 119). As was mentioned in the introduction, this is the urge of people to confuse what is put together incidentally and what belongs together essentially (Sicking 271). What is of significance to van Bruggen is the meaning of a word, not the word itself. However, because of the *bizarre associatie*, we attribute value to the language that is used to communicate meanings. This happens because we associate certain languages with values that incidentally find itself together with the language while they do not essentially belong to it.

The idea that the connection between a word and its meaning is arbitrary was also significant in De Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale*, which was published in 1916 (Fenoulhet 48). However, according to the Dutch linguist Frida Balk-Smit Duyzentkunst, van Bruggen was not familiar with De Saussure's work (Balk-Smit Duyzentkunst 275).<sup>4</sup> Ideas about the relationship between form and meaning fit within the time period of the beginning of the twentieth century, during which modernist writers and philologists were concerned with the way language was made to function and how it made people function. A primary idea about language was that its meaning is not inherent, but that this is socially constructed (Childs 64).

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<sup>4</sup> Balk-Smit Duyzentkunst also argues that De Saussure and van Bruggen arrived at completely different conclusions from the idea of this arbitrariness. While De Saussure emphasised the rule-governed nature of language, van Bruggen focused on the psychological and social force of language (Balk-Smit Duyzentkunst 275-78).

Wittgenstein's concept of *language games*, examined in *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), also fits within this new tradition of language investigation that examines the relation between form and meaning. Wittgenstein states that words have no meaning in themselves, but that meaning is ascribed to them through the way they are used in practice, in *language games* (Biletzki). These different ideas on language can all be connected to the *linguistic turn*; a number of phases in the development of analytical philosophy in the twentieth century (Hacker 5). This movement held, among other things, that the way we use language shapes the way we look at reality. In philosophy, language was for a long time regarded as a means to express truths. But from this turn on, language use was seen as the starting point for truth research. Philosophers focused on language as such and the idea that language is not merely a means, but that our use of language creates meaning (Valkenberg). In this thesis I locate van Bruggen's philosophy within the early part of this linguistic turn.

When we attribute different values to different uses of language, all groups of language users become distinguished from one another (van Bruggen 95). Distinction between groups or individuals either takes place on the basis of the accent that they have, their dialect or the kind(s) of language(s) that they speak.<sup>5</sup> Van Bruggen states that certain accents are presumed to belong to people who are perceived as more "beschaafd"<sup>6</sup>, such as aristocrats, while other accents belong to people who are perceived as "onbeschaafd"<sup>7</sup>, such as working-class people (van Bruggen 96). This works both ways. Accents and dialects that are spoken by the working class are labelled as uncivilised by middle and upper classes, while accents are labelled as uncivilised as soon as they begin to be spoken by working-class people. Aesthetics play no role in this (van Bruggen 96). Because the difference between language of the working-class people and the aristocracy is recognised and acknowledged by both, the associations with both are reinforced (Sicking 278). However irrational and arbitrary these prejudices about certain accents are, they do exist (Sicking 271). Because of these associations, an accent can be used as a means of distinction and exclusion.

In the same way as an accent, speaking in a dialect can make a person seem "onbeschaafd" (van Bruggen 96). Dialects spoken by the working class are perceived as uncivilised by upper and middle classes, and dialects are labelled as uncivilised as soon as the working class starts

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<sup>5</sup> Hillier unpacks the terms "accent" and "dialect" from a linguistic standpoint. She states that accents are patterns of pronunciation, while dialect is a combination of a divergent vocabulary, patterns of pronunciation and patterns of organisation of words (Hillier 22-23).

<sup>6</sup> "civilised".

<sup>7</sup> "uncivilised".

speaking them (van Bruggen 96). When van Bruggen wrote about this distinction, she for example observed that a dialect from Amsterdam was perceived as less civilised than a dialect from Rotterdam (van Bruggen 96). For this reason, it was also perceived as less valuable, while this value is not inherent. Just as with accents, aesthetics plays no role in this attribution of value, only the associations that are incidentally linked together with the language create its value (van Bruggen 96). Not speaking any dialect but only speaking a national language "properly" is another way in which the aristocracy uses language as a means of distinction (Sicking 278, van Bruggen 95). They make use of the fact that dialects are associated with so-called uncivilised people who are not able to speak the national language "properly". In contrast to the "proper" national language, the regional languages are the object of ridicule and derision (Sicking 277, van Bruggen 95).

The topic of national languages is interesting, for in contrast to accents and dialects, it is not about how the language is spoken, but what language is spoken. Distinction on the basis of national language is possible because being able to speak certain languages is seen as noble or civilised, while speaking other languages is perceived as uncivilised. This way of thinking originates in the different values that are attributed to different languages. Van Bruggen observes that one cannot be civilised without "speaking his languages", by which she refers to languages that were seen as essential for upper classes in Europe (van Bruggen 96). It is thus only considered an asset to speak several languages when these languages are valuable by association. According to van Bruggen, there are three modern languages and two classical languages that are taught as second languages to every young Dutch child that grows up in the aristocracy. These modern languages are French, English and German, and the classical languages are Latin and Greek (van Bruggen 97-98). Of these, French is known as the language of "honnêtes gens"<sup>8</sup> (van Bruggen 116). People of lower classes can attempt to learn these languages, but they will never speak them as well as the upper-class boys that are able to travel to England for a semester. An incorrect pronunciation of these modern aristocratic languages gives away that one does not belong to this group, just as using the wrong knife to cut fish does (van Bruggen 97). However, not every modern language has the same association. For example, a person could be able to speak Spanish or Russian, but this would make them rather suspicious. Someone like this could possibly trade in figs, wood or anchovies and thus be from the working class. However, someone who speaks Italian proves to be a lover of art and a reader of Dante (van Bruggen 97-98). These different associations are how languages 'give away' one's background. Of the classical

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<sup>8</sup> "decent people".



languages, Latin is characterised as the language of scholars (Sicking 278). However, van Bruggen mainly focuses on the fact that Greek is seen as such an important language while Hebrew, the original language of the Old Testament, is regarded as the language of the "poor Jew", which proves that value is not about the historical importance of the language itself (van Bruggen 99). It is about what the language says about the background of a person, what it signifies. Greek proves that one is civilised and well educated. Hebrew, in contrast, proves that one is from (poor) Jewish descent, a group of people that was already despised. (van Bruggen 99-100). These associations determine the value of the language and the way the person that speaks this language is regarded.

In the following chapters, I will show how language distinguishes people and maintains power divisions in D. H. Lawrence's novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. The novel confirms the idea that certain forms of language belong to certain classes and upbringings. However, it rejects the idea that people from different classes with different forms of language are necessarily distinguished from each other by uniting Constance and Oliver. Their relationship shows that old distinctions are disappearing and giving way to new ones.

## Chapter Two: Accent

The first level on which language can serve as a means of distinction is that of the accent. In this context, van Bruggen starts with an example from the work of H. G. Wells. In one of his later novels, he describes a butler who is in the habit of "dropping his h's" in his position, but not in his own circle (van Bruggen 96). No 'h' at the beginning of a word passes his lips in his dignified service (van Bruggen 96). He adjusts his language, speaking the accent that is associated with the group in his presence. Van Bruggen appoints a same occurrence in the Dutch language. "Ik ken het niet helpen"<sup>9</sup> characterises the proletariat, while "ik herkon hem niet"<sup>10</sup> characterises the aristocracy (van Bruggen 96). A certain accent, with its additional associations and therefore value, can thus show that a person is from a certain class or upbringing. As a consequence, people with different accents are distinguished from each other, they recognise that the other is different and can therefore exclude them from their 'group'. Their difference creates distance.

In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, this occurrence of distinction on the basis of accent can be observed in the character of Mrs. Bolton. She is the caregiver of Clifford and has a peculiar relation to the upper class. While she herself is from a middle-class family, she desperately wants

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<sup>9</sup> "I can't help it".

<sup>10</sup> "I did not recognise him".

to belong to the upper class. Yet at the same time she despises it. She "felt almost upper class; and at the same time a resentment against the ruling class smouldered in her" (Lawrence 96). She "was pining to be superior, to be one of the upper class" (Lawrence 96). Even though she wants to belong to the upper class, she could never be a part of it. The upper class is not accessible for those outside of it, how hard they might try. This can be observed in the language used by both classes. Mrs. Bolton is described as a woman who speaks in "heavily correct English" (Lawrence 94). The fact that she is from the middle class but mingles with the upper class, and thereby speaks "heavily correct English", can be interpreted as a convergence strategy. This is a strategy whereby individuals adapt their communication in terms of speech rate, accents etc. to become more similar to their interlocutor's linguistic behaviour (Giley 295). However, several tiny differences in her accent, as opposed to that of Clifford and Connie, give away her background. The fact that other characters notice the way she pronounces certain words indicates that it differs from the way they pronounce them. An example of this can be found in a conversation she has with Connie about Hyacinths that Connie wants to be taken out of her room. "'Why, they're so beautiful!' She pronounced it with the 'y' sound: be-yutiful!" (Lawrence 114). Although this is a small difference in her speech, Connie does notice it. In other passages, her different speech is presented clearly. In another dialogue with Connie, Mrs. Bolton clearly speaks with a different accent than Connie. When talking about her husband, who was present when she gave birth, she says: "I always blamed his mother, for letting him in th' room. He'd no right t'ave been there" (Lawrence 186). These small nuances in the "th" and "t'ave" are only found throughout the novel in Mrs. Bolton's speech, which shows that her use of language is distinguished from that of her upper-class employers, albeit that Connie does not comment on this. A last example of her difference in language arises from a conversation that she has with Connie about daffodils. Mrs. Bolton suggests that Connie could put some in her room because "wild daffs are always so cheerful-looking, aren't they?" (Lawrence 100). Connie "took it in good part, even daffs for daffodils" (Lawrence 100). That Mrs. Bolton uses the word "daff" for daffodil, and that Connie notices this difference in her language, shows that her language is different from Mrs. Bolton's and that they are distinguished on this basis.

Mrs. Bolton's accent differs from, amongst others, that of Clifford and Connie, even though most of the time she speaks "heavily correct English", and this shows that her social class matches the way she speaks. Connie notices this difference between them as well. The fact that she speaks in a different manner and that Connie notices this creates a certain distance between them. Mrs. Bolton is not able to live up to Connie's standard of speech and could for this reason only never completely belong in the upper class. For this reason, she is as it were excluded from

it. Their different use of language thus maintains the power divisions between them. Their ability to speak 'proper' English allows Clifford and Connie to keep on belonging to the upper class, while her inability to speak 'proper' English distinguishes Mrs. Bolton in a way that ensures that she cannot fit in with the upper class. Their language emphasises their differences and they are aware of it. The consequence of this is that Mrs. Bolton will never be regarded and treated in the same way that Clifford and Connie treat other upper-class people. Clifford confirms this when he states that "he was altogether rather supercilious and contemptuous of anyone not in his own class" (Lawrence 21). Even though Mrs. Bolton desires to transcend her class, she will not be accepted because Clifford, who together with Connie represents the upper class, will always be slightly supercilious and contemptuous towards her and will always notice her different upbringing in her language.

### Chapter Three: Dialect

In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the character of Oliver Mellors speaks in dialect, which is explicitly noted by several other character throughout the novel. Mellors is the gamekeeper of the estate of Clifford, which indicates that he is from the working class. According to van Bruggen, the vernacular that Mellors speaks is associated with the working class, but at the same time the working class is associated with his dialect. However, throughout the novel it seems as if Mellors only speaks his dialect to bring about a certain effect on the people that are in his presence or the situation in general. Mellors can speak with or without his dialect, so speaking either is his own choice. This is evident for the first time in a conversation between him and Connie but happens several times throughout the novel. After Connie asks Mellors if he likes working on the estate, he answers with "why, yes, thank you, your Ladyship!" (Lawrence 58). However, in the sentence he speaks after this, Connie notices that "his voice on the last words had fallen into the heavy broad drag of the dialect ... perhaps also in mockery, because there had been no trace of dialect before. He might almost be a gentleman" (Lawrence 58). If Connie is right, Mellors chooses to speak in his dialect to mock her, perhaps because she, as an upper-class woman, is asking him if he enjoys this job that she would never perform or have to perform herself. The fact that Connie is confused about his class identity because of his shift from "standard" English to his Derbyshire dialect also shows that she associates his "standard" English with being a gentleman, while she associates his dialect with a servant identity (Miller 8). After this "heavy broad drag of dialect", Mellors speaks to her without showing it, but after some time "his voice dropped again into the broad sounds of vernacular" (Lawrence 60). This shows that Connie is well aware of his different

use of language, which she associates with the working class. Throughout the novel, Lawrence depicts Mellors as what Michael North refers to as a "bi-dialectical shifter" (North 19). This is someone who belongs to two distinct linguistic communities and who is able to shift between dialects when he deems this necessary (North 19). That Mellors belongs to two different linguistic communities is confirmed in the novel by Clifford. Connie asks how Mellors, earlier in his life, ever could have been an officer if he speaks "broad Derbyshire" (Lawrence 108). Clifford answers: "He doesn't ... except by fits and starts. He can speak perfectly well, for him. I suppose he has an idea if he's come down to the ranks again, he'd better speak as the ranks speak" (Lawrence 108). Clifford implies that "standard" English belongs to higher ranks - the upper class -, while his dialect belongs to lower ranks - the working class. He not only confirms that certain dialects belong to certain social classes, but also that his use of language determines which associations one has with his class. When he speaks "standard" English he fits in with higher ranks, and when he speaks Derbyshire he fits in with lower social classes. By speaking in either way, he creates a distance between him and one of these two classes. Margery Sabin writes about Mellors' bilingualism that it becomes "the verbal weapon of Mellors (and Lawrence) against the sterile, hypocritical, and repressive formulae of 'correct' society" (Sabin 16). This means that Mellors' dialect is a means to oppose and discredit the entire language of "standard" English as nothing more than a bourgeois cliché (Sabin 16). In this interpretation, Mellors only speaks in his dialect to oppose the idea that "standard" English would belong to upper class and to debunk it as no more than an upper-class cliché. This would confirm that the association of "standard" English with the upper class is a *bizarre associatie*, because the fact that upper-class people do not speak dialect does not say anything about their status. Mellors is also able to speak "standard" English, even though he is from the working class, he merely chooses not to sometimes. This also demonstrates that Lawrence is trying to show that this *bizarre associatie* exists and is nothing more than a cliché created by upper-class people.

Mellors switches between his native Derbyshire dialect and "standard" English at least twenty times throughout the novel (Miller 3). He does this when he wants to distance or distinguish himself from other characters. Shifting to his Derbyshire dialect creates a certain distance between him and others because it emphasises that he has a different background, while this is emphasised less when he speaks "standard" English. A situation in which Mellors uses his vernacular to create a distance between him and Connie is when she asks him for a key to his little hut in the woods, of which she wishes to make use. Mellors talks in "standard" English, but as soon as Connie asks if he has another key he answers: "Not as Ah know on, ther' isna" (Lawrence 105). Connie notices that "He had lapsed into the vernacular. Connie hesitated; he

was putting up an opposition" (Lawrence 105). When Mellors wants to oppose himself from Connie, he shifts to his vernacular to create a distance between them. This shows that language difference works both ways; different language use creates distance and distance causes different language to be used. Mellors also explicitly expresses his difference from and indifference to the middle and upper class because he has noticed an "unlivingness about the middle and upper classes, as he had known them, which just left him cold and different from them. So, he had come back to his own class" (Lawrence 161). This not only proves how distanced and distinguished Mellors feels himself to be from the middle and upper class. It also shows that to come back to his own class to him means using his dialect again. This confirms the idea that his dialect is connected to his class and that it distinguishes and distances him from those of other classes. Power relations between Mellors and Connie and Clifford are maintained because both Connie and Mellors associate his dialect with being from the working class. This means that they do not consider him as someone that can reach their level. This is again confirmed by the aforementioned statement of Clifford who "was altogether rather supercilious and contemptuous of anyone not in his own class" (Lawrence 21). Associations exclude Mellors from the upper class.

#### Chapter four: National Language(s)

As I wrote in the introduction, van Bruggen states that there are three modern and two classical languages that all Dutch children from the upper class are taught. These modern languages are French, English, German. The classical languages are Greek and Latin (Sicking 278). Being able to speak these languages as second languages is associated with belonging to the upper class. In the novel, both Clifford and Connie speak "standard" English, - which Connie calls "ordinary" English (Lawrence 111) - French and know Latin. This would confirm the idea that these languages are taught to the upper class and that the associations that are connected to these languages are correct, namely that they are spoken only by upper-class people. It becomes apparent that Clifford and Connie speak French the first time that they casually include it in a conversation. While talking about Connie going to Venice, Clifford asks "if you go to Venice, you won't go in the hopes of some love affair that you can take *au grand sérieux*,<sup>11</sup> will you?" (Lawrence 184). Connie responds that she would "never take a love affair in Venice more than *au très petit sérieux*"<sup>12</sup> (Lawrence 184). It also becomes clear that Clifford knows at least some

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<sup>11</sup> *seriously*.

<sup>12</sup> *very seriously*.

Latin because throughout the book he uses Latin phrases such as "panem et circenses"<sup>13</sup> (Lawrence 201). He uses these sentences in conversations with Connie, which implies that she is able to understand them as well.

Yet, near the end of the novel, it turns out that Mellors is also able to speak French and even German. He went to Sheffield Grammar School and learned "a bit of French and German" (Lawrence 223). When he speaks French, he asks Connie if she is familiar with the words: "You know *auto da fé* means *act of faith*?" (Lawrence 238). This shows that this language not only belongs to the upper class and that the association of French with the upper class does not always apply. It also shows the languages one can speak do not say anything about his class, and that the association of class with certain languages is not essential but incidental, for languages can be spoken by people from every class. Mellors even knows Latin. However, it does not become clear how much of the classic language he knows from the religious phrase "te deum laudamus!"<sup>14</sup> (Lawrence 239). In his chapter "Lawrence and the politics of sexual politics", Drew Milne points out that Lawrence uses language as a marker of the conflicting classes and their language (Milne 202). This means that he uses language to point out the conflict between classes and their different uses of language. Milne also writes that at the end of the novel, "class" is abolished. The reason for this is that it is a necessary precondition for the relationship between Connie and Mellors (Milne 211). If the novel is interpreted in this sense, then Lawrence would try to bring the characters closer together and make their class seem insignificant by bringing them on the same linguistic level. Lawrence shows that class and its associations are not relevant for the relation between two people. Yet, he also demonstrates that the distinction and the distance between them can be overcome more easily when they use language in the same way. This brings them to a more equal level. However, the fact that Connie attempts to start a relationship with Mellors, and that Lawrence has attempted to bring him closer to her in sense of class, does not mean that Mellors is regarded as belonging to the upper class by others, or Connie to the working class. Even after he has shown that he knows French and Latin, Hilda, Connie's sister, explains that Connie cannot be with him, no matter what languages he speaks, because they are no proof that he belongs to 'their' class. Hilda states about their relationship that "one can't mix up with the working people" (Lawrence 257). When Clifford is thinking about the difference between him and the colliers that work for him, he considers their difference in elegance in opposition to his "well-groomed, well-bred existence" (Lawrence 181). On the basis

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<sup>13</sup> "bread and plays".

<sup>14</sup> "we praise you, oh Lord!".

of these apparently insuperable differences, he concludes that "it was the difference they resented" (Lawrence 181), and "he believed they were right to resent the difference" (Lawrence 181). From these passages it becomes clear that both the upper and working class acknowledge the differences between them, and they both resent the other or feel like they can't mix up with the other.

Thus, even though Mellors is able to speak French and Latin and would therefore be able to level with the upper class, he is not able to join them because both him and the upper class acknowledge and emphasise the differences between them. His background is still different, and his dialect still reminds them of it. This shows that the *bizarre associatie* ensures that a different language use creates distinction through associations. By creating this situation, Lawrence demonstrates that working-class people can meet upper-class linguistic standards and that the associations with class or language are not always accurate. It does not signify anything about the capabilities or disabilities of an individual. However, he also demonstrates that even though one meets the linguistic standards of the upper-class, there will still be a lot of resistance against his 'joining' of the upper class from his side as well as from the upper-class side, both due to certain associations. Outsiders are not accepted in the upper class or any class. These observations confirm the hypotheses that language is a means of distinction and preservation of power relations. Mellors is viewed by upper-class characters as someone who will never fit in and who is below them because he works for them, not with them. He is dependent on Clifford to earn a living. Because he cannot reach an upper-class position, he will stay dependent. Clifford is therefore in a more powerful position. This analysis has also confirmed that a lack of difference in language use does not ensure that power relations will be abolished. Even when the use of language is equal or could be equal, outsiders cannot "mix" with other classes.

## Conclusion

Carry van Bruggen states that language can function as a means of distinction on the basis of three language differences: accent, dialect and national language(s). These differences in language distinguish people from each other because of the *bizarre associatie* that is attached to them. This distinction excludes individuals from other social classes, which causes power relations between them to be preserved. I have situated the analysis of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in the interwar period in Europe, a time when social relations were shifting, ideas about language and literature were changing and philosophy was at the dawn of a new age. Using Lawrence's novel, I have shown that it uses language to distinguish individuals and maintain power relations

between different characters. Firstly, in Chapter Two I showed that Mrs. Bolton's accent displays that she is from the middle class. Because Connie notices that her accent stands out because of its deviation from that of the upper-class people in the novel, she distinguishes herself from them and with this emphasises that she has a different background. She is excluded from the upper class and Connie and Clifford stay on a higher level than her. Secondly, Chapter Three showed that Mellors' dialect is associated with working class people. Because of this, other characters do not consider him to be on their level and are distinguished from him. Mellors on the other hand chooses to speak in his dialect when he feels the need to distinguish himself from other classes. These differences in language causes Mellors to be unable to enter a higher class, which ensures that upper-class people stay more powerful than him. In Chapter Four, lastly, I have noted that even though Mellors is able to speak the languages that upper classes, according to van Bruggen, speak, he is still not seen as someone who would be able to fit in with the upper class. The analysis in this chapter has also shown that being able to resolve the differences in one's language does not ensure that power relations will be abolished and one will fit in with another class.

In conclusion, in Lawrence's novel *Lady Chatterley's lover*, language is used as a means of distinction. This distinction leads to the preservation of power relations between characters from different social classes. The question if language is also used in other novels to create distance and maintain power relations between characters is subject for further research.



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