

Talking Lawrence

Patterns of Eastwood dialect in the work of D. H. Lawrence

Hilary Hillier



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About the author

Hilary Hillier is a Fellow of the D. H. Lawrence Research Centre at the University of Nottingham. She has taught and lectured to undergraduate and postgraduate students on a range of English language subjects, particularly English social and regional accents and dialects, and on D. H. Lawrence. Her principal research interest is the grammar of the dialect of Eastwood and the Erewash Valley. She co-directed the 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' digitization project in the Centre's collaboration with Manuscripts and Special Collections and the Higher Education Academy's English Subject Centre. Her publications include *Analysing Real Texts: Research Studies in Modern English Language*, published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2004, and 'Community, family, 'Morel': a dialect approach to *Sons and Lovers*', to appear in the proceedings of the 11th D. H. Lawrence International Conference, *2007: Return to Eastwood*, forthcoming from CCC Press. She was born and brought up in Eastwood, the daughter and granddaughter of miners. In bringing together her work on the dialect of Eastwood and on Lawrence, this book represents a unique conjunction of significant professional and personal concerns.

About Nottingham Lawrence Studies

The D. H. Lawrence Research Centre at the University of Nottingham was founded in 1990 to provide a focus for research and teaching in Lawrence Studies, and to promote the Lawrence Collections. The Centre hosts conferences, symposia and lectures, as well as coordinating Lawrence-related classes and courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level. We also work closely with Lawrence Societies around the world, particularly the Eastwood D. H. Lawrence Society, and offer support for Visiting Scholars wishing to use the Lawrence Collections.

Nottingham Lawrence Studies was established in 2008 to publish work in the field. We welcome submissions, and proposals, of work of interest to academics, students and general readers. These should be sent to:

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Preface

There have been several books published in the course of the last few years that are devoted to the study of dialects, that is, to the ways in which language varies according to different speakers, different parts of the country and different social and cultural contexts. But there have been few that look specifically at how dialects can be described for the purposes of better understanding the uses of language in the work of major writers. Hilary Hillier's *Talking Lawrence* is an innovative and detailed introduction to some key patterns in the use of the regional dialect and accent of Eastwood in the early writings of D. H. Lawrence. Writing from her own direct experience as a native of the region and from many years experience as a sociolinguist, Hilary Hillier offers a framework for students and readers of Lawrence to enhance their understanding of such uses of language. It is a framework which focuses not simply on vocabulary and pronunciation, as is the case with many dialect studies, but on the grammar of the dialect too.

Standard English is the norm against which other dialects are measured and in this book Hilary Hillier shows the ways in which the grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation of the Eastwood dialect varies from standard language norms. A dialect is often understood as an inferior form of language and as somehow a series of mistakes relative to standard forms of the language. As a sociolinguist Hilary Hillier shows that standard English is a dialect too. It is a prestige dialect used for a range of social purposes and like all dialects encodes the social class, identities and affiliations of those who choose to speak it or not to speak it in particular social contexts. D. H. Lawrence is highly sensitive to the social and social class implications of (and attitudes towards) such choices and carefully weaves such understanding into the way he represents the speech of his characters. The exemplary descriptions provided by Hilary Hillier enable us to identify the subtle ways in which social positions and personal

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relationships are encoded and negotiated between the characters in many of Lawrence's most important early stories, novels and plays. The book will be of particular interest to speakers of other languages interested in Lawrence studies but it also provides an authoritative platform for anyone concerned to explore more fully and systematically the key meanings which always emerge when language and its use for literary purposes is at stake.

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