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Face, linguistic (im)politeness and polyphony in Thomas Hardy's Far from the Madding Crowd

Abstract. Thomas Hardy's novel *Far from the Madding Crowd* provides a stark contrast in how the characters project their *face* (Goffman 1967) and how they seek approval from others. Such a contrast can be analysed in terms of Bakhtin's polyphony – the many voices found in a text which includes the author's portrayal of his protagonists and how they interact with each other. In order to highlight this contrast and its way of coming across, I examine how three key characters in the novel, Gabriel Oak, Sergeant Frank Troy and William Boldwood, present themselves interpersonally. I use the concept of linguistic (im)politeness to demonstrate how the protagonists try to further themselves, especially in their pursuit of Bathsheba Everdene. I argue that a linguistic (im)politeness approach can also be applied to other novels of Thomas Hardy and indeed to a wider range of literature.

Keywords: impoliteness, polyphony, face, Thomas Hardy.

1. Introduction

Traditional rational social behaviour is pitted against the discursive and evolving construction of relationships in *Far from the Madding Crowd* as protagonists present contrasting conceptions of their *self* (Cupach & Metts 1994: 3) or what Goffman terms *face* (1967). *Face* potentially reflects three aspects of interpersonal interaction: how a participant wants to come across, how a participant interacts with others and how a participant expects to be treated by others. An author has the choice of conveying the *face* that his/her protagonists want to project and highlight how they seek to come across or, alternatively, he/she can let the characters speak for themselves and claim their own *face*. The latter choice reflects Bakhtin's concept of polyphony as the protagonists find their own voice and thus enabling "characters and narrator speak on equal terms" (Vice 1997: 6). Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd* offers a wide range of contexts for studying face and polyphony.

The concept of *face* is intimately related to linguistic (im)politeness. (Im)politeness, the accepted term for referring to politeness and impoliteness, is a key concept and refers to those strategies that aim to enhance, preserve, undermine or damage the *face* of other interactants. Whether intentional or unintentional, (im)politeness involves interpersonal work as interactants construct, develop, maintain or terminate a given relationship.

A writer can allow the protagonists to engage in (im)politeness and *facework* – "the actions taken by a person to make whatever he is doing consistent with face" (Goffman 1967: 12) by allowing them to speak for themselves (without authorial interference) or he or she can explain the characters' motives, pretensions and objectives to his/her reader. In this paper, the concepts of *face*, polyphony and linguistic (im)politeness are examined to see whether they help the reader understand both authorial intent and protagonists' motives in the novel.

2. Positioning the novel

The novel's title supposedly portends a quiet pastoral narrative, but as Kramer argues "[t]he opening chapters of the first of the major Wessex novels, *Far from the Madding Crowd*

(1874), present a pastoral world and simultaneously invalidate the myth" (1979: 20). Any possible idea of rustic tranquillity is quickly undermined by Bathsheba's rejection of Oak's marriage proposal, the dramatic loss of his flock of sheep and his subsequent unemployment. Also referring to possibly dashed reader expectations, Nemesvari notes that "a novel like *Far From the Madding Crowd*, with its allusive title and early, literal representation of a shepherd and flock, prepares its audience for a pastoral idyll but then juxtaposes this with the harsh materialism of agricultural economics and a sensational love triangle resulting in murder and madness" (2009: 102). Focusing on changing economic realities, Page argues that "the contrast is between worlds and epochs, the Industrial Age represented by the steam-train, the Agrarian Age that has preceded it: in other words it embodies an idea as well as an image" (2001: 111). On a symbolic level, Oak represents tradition and stability whilst Troy reflects change, manipulation and new ways of interacting.

At an interpersonal level, *Far from the Madding Crowd* portrays contrasting norms and patterns of behaviour as Gabriel Oak, Sergeant Frank Troy and William Boldwood attempt to woo Bathsheba Everdene. Regan argues that:

[a]t one level, the narrative structure of *Far from the Madding Crowd* seems very bold and simple. Three suitors compete for the affections of Bathsheba Everdene: a shepherd, a gentleman farmer, and a soldier. The narrative progresses according to three aspirations of each of these lovers, and much of the drama in the novel ensues from the overlapping and competing interests of the three, as well as from Bathsheba's fluctuating responses. (2009: 249)

Therefore, the whole plot of *Far from the Madding Crowd* reflects a continual sea of change. Regan goes on to argue that "this stark outline, however, is given a highly elaborate design by the repeated emphasis on visual codes of conduct and by the shifting degrees of visual attention and discrimination with which the principal characters regard each other" (2009: 249). I wish to further pursue this idea of 'codes of conduct' by arguing that the suitors reflect three contrasting ways of presenting their *face* and interacting with others in terms of linguistic (im)politeness.

3. Putting on a good face

Before discussing 'codes of conduct' regarding key protagonists from *Far from the Madding Crowd*, I examine the concepts of *face*, *facework* and linguistic (im)politeness as part of a possible framework for understanding how Hardy himself describes and portrays the protagonists and also how they express themselves.

The term *face* is a key concept when trying to understand interpersonal behaviour. Goffman argues that in a given interaction a participant will act out a *line* "that is a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which he [*sic*] expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself" (1967: 5). As participants express their view of the situation, they want to present themselves in a positive light which is achieved through *face* which Goffman argues:

may be defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes – albeit an image others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing for himself. (Goffman 1967: 5)

Participants want to establish a *face* that makes them 'feel good' as they seek support and approval from others which in the context of this paper means other protagonists in the novel. In contrast, if an interactant's "ordinary expectations are not fulfilled, one expects that he will 'feel bad' or 'feel hurt'" (Goffman 1967: 6). The concept of *face* therefore reflects an interactant's identity in a given interaction as he/she attempts to come across in socially sanctioned ways. In a novel, this will often mean a character presenting himself or herself in a recognisably acceptable way to other characters and also to the reader and subsequently following established norms and patterns of behaviour. Gabriel Oak, Sergeant Frank Troy and William Boldwood, the three suitors in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, try to make a positive showing by highlighting their 'approved social attributes' especially in the eyes of Bathsheba Everdene, the object of their love.

Gabriel Oak projects himself as responsible and dependable. He is *self-effacing* as he quickly gives up his attempt to marry Bathsheba on hearing that she had other suitors: "I'm only an every-day sort of man, and my only chance was in being the first comer... Well, there's no use in my waiting, for that was all I came about: so I'll take myself off home" (Chapter 4). And, after being rejected by Bathsheba, he finally says "Then I'll ask you no more" (Chapter 4).

In contrast, Boldwood is persistent and tries to project himself in a positive light:

"I am now forty-one years old," he went on. "I may have been called a confirmed bachelor, and I was a confirmed bachelor. I had never any views of myself as a husband in my earlier days, nor have I made any calculation on the subject since I have been older. But we all change, and my change, in this matter, came with seeing you. I have felt lately, more and more, that my present way of living is bad in every respect. Beyond all things, I want you as my wife." (Chapter 19).

He attempts to make a good showing for himself as reflective and flexible by saying he is willing to change his lifestyle in order to accommodate a wife. His persistence continues throughout the novel through to his eventual killing of Troy. Meanwhile, Troy does not court in any conventional or expected way:

"I've seen a good many women in my time" continued the young man in a murmur, and more thoughtfully than hitherto, critically regarding her bent head at the same time; "but I've never seen a woman so beautiful as you. Take it or leave it – be offended or like it – I don't care." (Chapter 24)

Troy presents the *face* of someone who speaks their mind and supposedly does not care what the other person thinks about him. In reality, he very much cares as his *facework* is a carefully crafted strategy to entice his intended 'victim'.

The process or result of *facework* may either help or undermine a character's attempt to portray himself or herself in a positive light, as Shimanoff argues:

facework may be defined as behaviors which establish, enhance, threaten, or diminish the images/identities of communicators. The images/identities of communicators have been linked to the basic needs of approval and autonomy (Brown and Levinson, 1978). Facework may be directed toward oneself or another. (1994: 159-160)

In the case of Oak, he diminishes his *face* by withdrawing from his pursuit of Bathsheba. Whilst only focusing on his own face, Boldwood persistently undermines Bathsheba's face by only considering his needs rather than her feelings. Meanwhile, Troy focuses on the face of his victim making her feel special and consequently enhances his own

face in her eyes. This politeness strategy has variously been described as face boosting acts (FBAs) (Bayraktaroğlu, 1991, 2001), intimacy enhancement (Aston, 1989), face enhancement (Sifianou, 1995) and rapport enhancement (Spencer-Oatey, 2008). They all roughly cover the same area of usage.

4. Linguistic (im)politeness

Linguistic (im)politeness is closely related to the concept of *face*, and Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that polite behaviour tries to avoid attacking the *face* of other interactants or refraining from face threatening acts (FTAs) (1987: 60). Lakoff (1973: 298) argues that there are rules of politeness for participants to follow (*Don't Impose; Give Options; and Make A feel good – be friendly*) and Leech (1983) outlines maxims that should be adhered to such as those of Tact and Modesty. However, in this paper, politeness is studied from the point of view of expected and unexpected behaviour. Consequently, I adopt Watts's (2003) terms: *politic* and *polite* behaviour. *Politic* reflects accepted forms and codes of conduct whilst *polite* behaviour reflects behaviour that goes beyond expected behaviour. *Politic* behaviour is predictably courteous and respectful as can be seen in Oak's abandonment of the idea of marrying Bathsheba as he complies with her wishes. In contrast, polite behaviour reflects the unexpected and reflects interpersonal risk-taking when interacting with others as reflected by Troy's attempt to win over Bathsheba e.g. *Take it or leave it -- be offended or like it -- I don't care* (Chapter 24). Watts distinguishes between *politic* and *polite* conduct in the following way:

linguistic behaviour which is perceived to be appropriate to the social constraints of the ongoing interaction, i.e. as non-salient, should be called *politic behaviour*. Linguistic behaviour which is perceived to be beyond what is expectable, i.e. salient behaviour, should be called *polite* or *impolite* depending on whether the behaviour itself tends towards the negative or positive end of the spectrum of politeness. (Watts 2003: 19)

Since linguistic (im)politeness is a way of initiating, advancing, upholding or ending a given relationship, interactants face choices regarding how they want to come across or be evaluated by others. They can follow pre-determined, stereotypical and appropriate norms of interaction as outlined by politic behaviour i.e. "that behaviour, linguistic and non-linguistic, which the participants construct as being appropriate to the ongoing social interaction" (Watts 2003: 20). Such behaviour can be seen in Gabriel Oak's conduct and his way of being and his actions reflect traditional norms and practices. In the following extract, Wotton contrasts Oak with Joseph, a farm worker:

It is with Oak that the reader identifies, Oak who here represents the voice of respectability, duty, the work ethic. He is the *responsible subject*, the centre of initiatives, author of and responsible for, his actions, who works by himself and wishes that Joseph would also show himself 'a man of spirit'. (1985: 66)

By contrast, polite behaviour "will therefore be behaviour beyond what is perceived to be appropriate to the ongoing social interaction, which says nothing about how members evaluate it" and "the definition implies that linguistic structures are not, *per definitionem*, inherently polite" (Watts 2003: 21). For instance, Troy takes a risk when courting Bathsheba with his outspoken, potentially rude and discourteous language which may be evaluated as either polite or impolite by her. On the surface, Bathsheba appears to see Troy's behaviour as impolite but immediately asks Liddy, her trusted servant, for information about him.

There are occasions when girls like Bathsheba will put up with a great deal of unconventional behaviour. When they want to be praised, which is often, when they want to be mastered, which is sometimes; and when they want no nonsense, which is seldom. Just now the first feeling was in the ascendant with Bathsheba, with a dash of the second. (Chapter 24)

Just as Troy shows, Watts' category of *polite* behaviour can come across as impolite, e.g. "*I've never seen a woman so beautiful as you. Take it or leave it – be offended or like it – I don't care*". Whilst complimenting Bathsheba on her beauty and presumably wanting her to feel good, Troy displays impoliteness by saying that he does not really care how she feels. Boldwood also demonstrates that *politic* can also have the same impoliteness effect, especially as he relentlessly pursues Bathsheba after she turns down his offer of marriage:

"Say then, that you don't absolutely refuse. Do not quite refuse?"

"I can do nothing. I cannot answer.

"I may speak to you again on the subject?"

"Yes."

"I may think of you?"

"Yes, I suppose you may think of me."

"And hope to obtain you?"

"No -- do not hope! Let us go on."

"I will call upon you again to-morrow."

"No -- please not. Give me time."

"Yes -- I will give you any time," he said earnestly and gratefully. "I am happier now."

(Chapter 19)

Whilst following the protocol of courting with "*I may speak to you again on the subject?, I may think of you?*" and "*I will give you any time*", Boldwood comes across as face-threatening and potentially impolite. This can especially be seen when he renews his attempt to marry Bathsheba after Troy's disappearance on a beach on the south coast and despite her reluctance to admit that her husband may be dead:

"Bathsheba, suppose you had real complete proof that you are what, in fact, you are -- a widow -- would you repair the old wrong to me by marrying me?"

"I cannot say. I shouldn't yet, at any rate."

"But you might at some future time of your life?"

"Oh yes, I might at some time."

"Well, then, do you know that without further proof of any kind you may marry again in about six years from the present -- subject to nobody's objection or blame?"

(Chapter 51)

Boldwood's superficial demonstration of politeness, e.g. "*you might at some future time*", indirectness, e.g. "*would you repair the old wrong*", and conjecture, e.g. "*suppose you*" hides his underlying insensitiveness to Bathsheba's loss of her husband and Boldwood's self-serving motivation. His supposed *politic* behaviour demonstrates, as Watts argues, how polite behaviour can be evaluated as rude:

Positively marked politic behaviour is open to an overt interpretation as polite. Hence only a relatively small subsection of politic behaviour is likely to be explicitly evaluated by participants as 'polite'. Marked behaviour, however, can be noticed in two difference ways. It may be perceived as negative either if it is open to an interpretation as impolite (or as downright rude), or if it is perceived as over-polite, i.e. both kinds of negatively

marked non-politic behaviour tend towards similar kinds of affective reaction on the part of co-participants.

(Watts 2005: xliii- xliv)

To reiterate, Boldwood's use of formulaic politic language such as "*suppose you*" and "*but you might*" thinly veil his true intentions, i.e. pressuring Bathsheba into remarrying.

Just as behaviour may be categorised as being politic and polite, I will argue that behaviour may also be impolitic and impolite within Watts's framework. Impolitic behaviour reflects explicit and expected ways of being impolite. Meanwhile impolite patterns of interacting can be categorised as unexpected and salient examples of impoliteness or rudeness.

5. Polyphony

Face can be seen as individual possession or a negotiated position as interactants support each other in the way they want to come across. In the process they may lose a degree of independence as they accommodate to others. Bakhtin's concept of polyphony restores individuality and independence to the protagonists: "The essence of polyphony lies precisely in the fact that the voices remain independent and, as such, are combined in a unity of a higher order" (Bakhtin 1984: 21). The author has a choice when conveying linguistic (im)politeness, especially when it is analysed in terms of politic and polite behaviour. He or she can speak for the protagonists and explain their motives or they can be allowed to speak for (and between) themselves. Bakhtin describes this choice in terms of polyphony: polyphony "refers to the 'many-voicedness' of texts in which characters and narrator speak on equal terms" (Vice 1997: 6). Therefore, a reader of *Far from the Madding Crowd* needs to balance Hardy's authorial voice and the voices of the protagonists. Morson and Emerson argue that polyphony is Bakhtin's "most original and counterintuitive concept" (1997: 258) as "the reader is asked to engage directly with the ideas of characters, much as the reader engages with the ideas of the author" (1997: 259). Therefore, polyphony potentially liberates the reader from only following the writer's interpretation of the text and allows him/her to construct his/her own understanding free from the monologic narrative of the author.

The novel *Far from the Madding Crowd* may not be considered to be a polyphonic novel since the author as narrator attempts to maintain full control of the story or, as Mallett argues, "Hardy's narrator typically retains the telling voice of the traditional story" (2004: 10). However, the protagonists' voices, to varying degrees, come through in their interactions with each other. Therefore, polyphony may still emerge as the reader navigates his/her way through the author's interpretation of events and the actions and dialogues of the characters themselves or, as Bakhtin argues: "novels usually present completely final arguments summarized from the author's standpoint (if there are arguments at all) [...] But any novel is generally filled with dialogic overtones (not always with its heroes, of course)" (1986: 112).

Therefore a novel is filled with different characters' revelations regarding their motives, their perspectives and their justifications. To fully appreciate the characters' motivations in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, the reader needs to understand, for instance, the primordial importance of Troy's undying love for Fanny, who dies carrying his baby. In the same vein, Boldwood's obsession with Bathsheba can only fully be understood in terms of the total abandonment of the economic wellbeing of his farm whereas before, his whole character was built on "dignity" (Chapter 12) since he "was tenant of what was called Little Weatherbury Farm, and his person was the nearest approach to aristocracy that this remoter quarter of the parish could boast of" (Chapter 18).

Bakhtin would argue that polyphony goes much further than just revealing the author's descriptions vis-à-vis characters' own version of events since it provides a "unity of higher order" (Morson and Emerson 1997: 261). Morson and Emerson add that

we might explain [polyphonic unity] this way: because each character is in a position to the author of a monologic work, each could in principle supply a monologic order to the whole. Hence the polyphonic unity of all these characters is a unity of potential unities, which is to say, is unity of a second (or higher) order. In this sense, the "unity of the event" is a unity of co-being (1997: 261)

Therefore polyphony is not an optional extra which provides an alternative reading of a text. It is a fundamental part of appreciating and valuing the novel. The author and the characters, whether they be heroes or villains, all contribute to the overall cohesiveness and coherence of the text.

6. Codes of conduct

The reader is faced with two codes of conduct, *politic* and *polite*, in *Far from the Madding Crowd* which are displayed by the author and in the interaction between the protagonists. The reader engages directly with the (im)politeness of the protagonists, just as much as he or she does with the author's descriptions of (im)politeness. *Far from the Madding Crowd* reflects both Hardy's perceptions of Gabriel Oak, Sergeant Frank Troy and William Boldwood and the protagonists' own inner speech and thoughts. Hardy maintains full control of the story and his voice 'tells' the story but his characters display their own thought processes.

6.1. Oak: politic behaviour

Hardy strongly underscores Gabriel Oak's *face* and says that he should be seen as 'a young man of sound judgment, easy motions, proper dress, and general good character' (Chapter 1). However, this description is possibly contradicted later on in the chapter, when Hardy physically describes him as follows:

He had just reached the time of life at which "young" is ceasing to be the prefix of "man" in speaking of one. He was at the brightest period of masculine growth, for his intellect and his emotions were clearly separated: he had passed the time during which the influence of youth indiscriminately mingles them in the character of impulse, and he had not yet arrived at the stage wherein they become united again, in the character of prejudice, by the influence of a wife and family. In short, he was twenty-eight, and a bachelor. (Chapter 1)

Whether Oak should be described as a young man or not, he is portrayed as sound, proper and guarded. In terms of *face*, Oak does not appear to be interested in gaining the approval of others since he speaks his mind throughout the novel and does not mind upsetting others. For instance, he tells off Joseph Poorgrass, Jan Coggan and Mark Clark for getting drunk instead of making sure that Fanny Robin's corpse is taken directly to Weatherbury for burial:

"Upon my soul, I'm ashamed of you; 'tis disgraceful, Joseph, disgraceful!" said Gabriel, indignantly. "Coggan, you call yourself a man, and don't know better than this." (Chapter 42)

Page describes him as

a working man who will turn out to be the hero of the story, but this time he is presented as a solitary figure rather than a member of a group (2001: 41 - 42).

At the same time, Page argues that Hardy's description of Oak reflects a stereotypical character:

Though Gabriel is depicted as an individual, there is in this passage a strong sense of community[...] He is defined partly in terms of his status as a farmer, with the social and economic implications carried by that status; this is a point of considerable importance since Gabriel's fortunes in the course of the novel are to fluctuate dramatically and his status and occupation will undergo dramatic changes. (Page 2001: 44 - 45)

The question then arises concerning what Oak stands for. As Page indicates, Oak's usefulness throughout the novel is largely connected with his knowledge, skills and experience of farming rather than in any ability at successfully undertaking interpersonal relationships. This assertion can be seen in his original marriage proposal as he calls at Bathsheba's house and talks to her aunt, Mrs Hurst:

"Yes, I will wait," said Gabriel, sitting down. "The lamb isn't really the business I came about, Mrs. Hurst. In short, I was going to ask her if she'd like to be married."

"And were you indeed?"

"Yes. Because if she would, I should be very glad to marry her. D'ye know if she's got any other young man hanging about her at all?"

(Chapter 4)

Oak is only willing to do the proper and correct thing if she has no other suitors. This is a display of politic behaviour which can be seen throughout the novel since "life and work for most of the characters embody continuity and tradition" (Page 2001: 85).

However, the reader may decide that Gabriel does not always conform to the politic behaviour that Hardy carefully projects. His interactions with other characters do not always reflect the *face* that the author intended. Oak occasionally engages in Watts' polite unexpected and salient behaviour. For instance, when he playfully hints about marriage with Bathsheba

"My name is Gabriel Oak."

"And mine isn't. You seem fond of yours in speaking it so decisively, Gabriel Oak."

"You see, it is the only one I shall ever have, and I must make the most of it."

"I always think mine sounds odd and disagreeable."

"I should think you might soon get a new one."

"Mercy! -- how many opinions you keep about you concerning other people, Gabriel Oak."

"Well, Miss -- excuse the words -- I thought you would like them. But I can't match you, I know, in napping out my mind upon my tongue. I never was very clever in my inside. But I thank you. Come, give me your hand."

(Chapter 3)

Oak can be seen to be playing with language e.g. "*it is the only one I shall ever have*" and hints at her possibly getting married i.e. "*I should think you might soon get a new one*" and breaks politic behaviour by saying "*Come, give me your hand*".

In certain passages, Gabriel comes across in very rustic ways as opposed to one that shows 'proper dress'. For instance, in the following dialogue which takes place at the Malthouse, Oak, who has just been hired as the new shepherd on Bathsheba's farm, gets to know the other farm labourers, including Jacob Smallbury:

"A clane cup for the shepherd," said the maltster commandingly.
"No -- not at all," said Gabriel, in a reproving tone of considerateness. "I never fuss about dirt in its pure state, and when I know what sort it is." Taking the mug he drank an inch or more from the depth of its contents, and duly passed it to the next man. "I wouldn't think of giving such trouble to neighbours in washing up when there's so much work to be done in the world already." continued Oak in a moister tone, after recovering from the stoppage of breath which is occasioned by pulls at large mugs.
"A right sensible man," said Jacob.

(Chapter 8)

Gabriel conveys a practical and unassuming attitude regarding politeness and interacting with others. He does not maintain his sense of decorum and demureness that characterise his behaviour in much of the novel. He is quite willing to drink from a dirty cup that the others are drinking from rather than from a 'clane' one. His down-to-earth behaviour gains approval from Jacob, who calls Gabriel 'a right sensible man'.

6.2. Boldwood: impolitic behaviour

Boldwood is another loner in *Far from the Madding Crowd* and, like Oak, Hardy projects him as aloof and distant:

He saw no absurd sides to the follies of life, and thus, though not quite companionable in the eyes of merry men and scoffers, and those to whom all things show life as a jest, he was not intolerable to the earnest and those acquainted with grief. (Chapter 18)

Hardy portrays Boldwood as someone who can easily become focused on one desire: "His equilibrium disturbed, he was in extremity at once. If an emotion possessed him at all, it ruled him; a feeling not mastering him was entirely latent. Stagnant or rapid, it was never slow. He was always hit mortally, or he was missed" (Chapter 18). Indeed, the only object of his desire is Bathsheba whom he relentlessly pursues and who becomes his obsession which eventually puts him in prison and "confinement during her Majesty's pleasure" (Chapter 55).

Boldwood employs both politic and polite behavioural strategies to try to achieve his objectives. As Watts points out, politic and polite behaviour may be linguistic and non-linguistic. Boldwood engages in a range of non-linguistic strategies to win over Bathsheba including trying to bribe Troy into not marrying Bathsheba and his eventual murder of the Sergeant when he surprisingly returns after being presumed drowned, thus thwarting Boldwood's wedding plans. He tries to bribe Troy in the following way:

"So all I ask is, don't molest her any more. Marry Fanny. I'll make it worth your while."
"How will you?"
"I'll pay you well now, I'll settle a sum of money upon her, and I'll see that you don't suffer from poverty in the future. I'll put it clearly. Bathsheba is only playing with you: you are too poor for her as I said; so give up wasting your time about a great match you'll never make for a moderate and rightful match you may make to-morrow; take up your carpet-bag, turn about, leave Weatherbury now, this night, and you shall take fifty pounds with you. Fanny shall have fifty to enable her to prepare for the wedding, when

you have told me where she is living, and she shall have five hundred paid down on her wedding-day."

(Chapter 34)

Boldwood engages in direct and unambiguous (bald on record) impoliteness which Culpeper defines as impoliteness "in the most direct, clear, unambiguous, and concise way possible" (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 69) (1996: 355). Boldwood attacks Troy's "reputation, prestige and self-esteem" (Culpeper 2011: 24) which Culpeper closely associates with offence and loss of face.

So whilst Boldwood appears to reflect politic behaviour, his interaction with other protagonists reveals that he is willing to use a wide range of impolitic and impolite resources to achieve his goals.

6.3.Troy: dangerous politeness

Hardy claims that "idiosyncrasy and vicissitude had combined to stamp Sergeant Troy as an exceptional being" (Chapter 25) as he paints a negative picture of Bathsheba's future husband who seems to be constantly changing course:

Troy was full of activity, but his activities were less of a locomotive than a vegetative nature; and, never being based upon any original choice of foundation or direction, they were exercised on whatever object chance might place in their way. Hence, whilst he sometimes reached the brilliant in speech because that was spontaneous, he fell below the commonplace in action, from inability to guide incipient effort.

(Chapter 25)

Troy's casual ways also appear to extend to his treatment of women:

He had been known to observe casually that in dealing with womankind the only alternative to flattery was cursing and swearing. There was no third method. "Treat them fairly, and you are a lost man." he would say.

(Chapter 25)

Just as Boldwood uses politic and polite behavioural strategies to achieve his objective, Troy uses (im)politeness to satisfy himself and to not cater to the needs of his women: Fanny and Bathsheba.

With regards to stereotypes, Troy contrasts strongly with Oak: Oak, the farmer and shepherd, represents tradition and predictability. Troy, the soldier, reflects the opposite: aggression and change. As Page argues, "the glamorous and somewhat exotic figure of Sergeant Troy is a disturbing factor. But at the outset the emphasis is on stability and conformity" (2001: 45). Troy upsets this emphasis with his demonstrations' of military prowess and seductive way with words.

Troy also represents a different way of engaging in social relations and boosting the *face* of others (Bayraktaroğlu, 1991, 2001) as can be seen in the following excerpt when his military attire becomes caught up in Bathsheba's dress and he tries to untangle his spurs:

His unravelling went on, but it nevertheless seemed coming to no end. She looked at him again.

"Thank you for the sight of such a beautiful face!" said the young sergeant, without ceremony.

She coloured with embarrassment. "Twas un-willingly shown," she replied, stiffly, and with as much dignity -- which was very little -- as she could infuse into a position of captivity.

"I like you the better for that incivility, miss," he said.

"I should have liked -- I wish -- you had never shown yourself to me by intruding here!" She pulled again, and the gathers of her dress began to give way like liliputian musketry.

"I deserve the chastisement your words give me. But why should such a fair and dutiful girl have such an aversion to her father's sex?"

"Go on your way, please."

"What, Beauty, and drag you after me? Do but look; I never saw such a tangle!"

(Chapter 24)

Troy's use of language contrasts heavily with the self-effacement of Oak and Boldwood's direct face-threatening act i.e. bald on record impoliteness. He can react to (im)politic and (im)polite remarks through face boosting acts (Bayraktaroğlu, 1991, 2001), which aim to make the addressee feel good. For instance, Troy deftly deals with Bathsheba's reprimands and reproaches by employing humour (e.g. "*Thank you for the sight of such a beautiful face*" when Bathsheba cannot untangle herself), language play (e.g. the use of *drag* and *tangle*), and enjoyment ("*I like you the better for that incivility, miss*").

In one sense Troy adds a breath of fresh air and a certain degree of comic relief to the staid and predictable interactions of the protagonists of *Far from the Madding Crowd* but it turns out to be a dangerous and destructive breath of fresh air.

7. Conclusion

An understanding of *face* offers the reader a way of appreciating how Hardy as the author and the protagonists, such as Gabriel Oak, Sergeant Troy, and Boldwood attempt to engage in interpersonal relationships in *Far from the Madding Crowd*. In projecting their *face*, the protagonists demonstrate how they want to come across in the novel and they interact with others. Linguistic (im)politeness offers one way to appreciating how the protagonists project their *face* and undertake *facework* in *Far from the Madding Crowd* and can be described in terms of *politic* and *polite* behaviour: *politic* representing ordinary manners and conduct and *polite* reflecting behaviour that goes beyond the expected. The analysis shows how the protagonists use *politic* and *polite* behaviour to come across in their own way and to achieve their interpersonal aims: the courting of Bathsheba Oak and Boldwood reflects *politic* behaviour and gives each man different results; Troy, on the other hand, uses *polite* and potentially *impolite* behaviour to win Bathsheba's hand.

An understanding of both *politic* and *polite* and *impolitic* and *impolite* behaviour allows the reader to examine not only the author's portrayal of the characters but, through polyphony, to examine for himself or herself how the protagonists interact with one another. This approach helps the reader develop multiple interpretations of the novel. As Regan argues:

what Hardy's novel repeatedly suggests is the fallible, tentative nature of human perception. This abiding interest in multiple perspectives and different angles of vision has a powerful impact on Hardy's understanding of what constitutes realism. Instead of an authoritative, single-minded account of what is true or real, we are much more likely to encounter a conflicting and competing series of impressions (2009: 249).

This paper has tried to demonstrate that the author may have extreme difficulty in controlling how the reader interprets events and the characters involved in them. The reader will often make his/her own judgements and therefore reach his/her own conclusions regarding how the protagonists of the novel, Gabriel Oak, Sergeant Frank Troy and William Boldwood construct, develop, maintain or even destroy their interpersonal relationships.

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