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A. LÅNGFORS

P. KATARA

Professor em. der romanischen Philologie

Professor em. der deutschen Philologie

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LINGUISTIC CLASS-INDICATORS IN PRESENT-DAY ENGLISH²

To-day, in 1953, the English class-system is essentially tripartite — there exist an upper, a middle and a lower class. It is solely by its language that the upper class is clearly marked off from the others. In times past (e. g. in the Victorian and Edwardian periods) this was not the case. But, to-day, a member

¹ See e.g. 'Tyylitaito muotivitsausko?' by Matti Hako in Issue No. 36, 1952, p. 8 — apparently inspired by Martti Rapola, 'Äidinkielen tyylitaidon opetuksesta', *Suomalainen Suomi* 7, 1951, p. 310 — and the unsigned article in *Ylioppilaslehti* 40, 1952, p. 8.

² *Phonetic notation*. Length is indicated by a suffixed colon ([ka:d] *card*), stress by a prefixed (closing) inverted comma (*increase* is ['inkrijs] as a noun, [in'krijs] as a verb). In rare cases, a difference between primary and secondary stress is indicated by two, as against one, (closing) inverted commas. Symbols: — [ŋ] as *singer*, [θ] as *thought*, [ð] as *breather*, [š] as *fisher*, [ž] as *leisure*, [j] as *yacht*, [ij] as *beat*, [ɛ] as *bet*, [ei] as *paid*, [æ] as *cat*, [ɛə] as *there*, [ɔ] as *hot*, [ɔ:] as *lord*, [ou] as *bone*, [uw] as *boot*, [a] as *cut*, [ə:] as *turn*, [ai] as *ride*, [au] as *found*, [ɔi] as *boil*, [ə] as *china*, — and the rest self-evident.

of the upper class is, for instance, not necessarily better educated, cleaner or richer than someone not of this class. Nor, in general, is he likely to play a greater part in public affairs, be supported by other trades or professions,¹ or engage in other pursuits or pastimes than his fellow of another class. There are, it is true, still a few minor points of life which may serve to demarcate the upper class,² but they are only minor ones. The

¹ It may however be doubted how far the Navy and the Diplomatic Service will in practice (in contradistinction to theory) be 'democratised', even if there should be a succession of Labour Governments; foreigners seem to expect English diplomats to be of the upper class.

² In this article I use the terms *upper class* (abbreviated : U), *correct*, *proper*, *legitimate*, *appropriate* (sometimes also *possible*) and similar expressions (including some containing the word *should*) to designate usages of the upper class; their antonyms (*non-U*, *incorrect*, *not proper*, *not legitimate*, etc.) to designate usages which are not upper class. These terms are, of course, used factually and not in reprobation (indeed I may at this juncture emphasise a point which is doubtless obvious, namely that this whole article is purely factual). *Normal* means common both to U and non-U. I often use expressions such as *U-speaker* to denote a member of the upper class and, also, *gentleman*, pl. *gentlemen* (for brevity, in respect of either sex — pl. *gentlefolk* is no longer U). Class-distinction is very dear to the heart of the upper class and talk about it is hedged with taboo. Hence, as in sexual matters, a large number of circumlocutions is used. Forty years ago, as I understand, U-speakers made use of *lady* and *gentleman* without self-consciousness; the antonym of *gentleman* was often *cad* or *bounder*. To-day, save by older people, these terms can hardly be used to indicate class-distinction, for they sound either pedantic or facetious (*you cad, Sir!*). *Lady* and *gentleman* have, of course, senses quite unconnected with class-distinction, but, to-day, the use of these words in the sense 'man' and 'woman' between U-speakers has almost entirely vanished save when prefixed with *old* (*There's an old l a d y to see you* is different from *There's an old w o m a n to see you*, for the former implies that the person is U, the latter that she is very non-U). *She's a nice lady* is non-U, *He's a nice gentleman* even more so (*man*, *woman* or *girl* being the U-use here) — landladies sometimes call negroes *dark gentlemen* or, occasionally,

games of real tennis and piquet¹, an aversion to high tea, having one's cards² engraved (not printed), not playing tennis in braces, and, in some cases, a dislike of certain comparatively modern

gentlemen of colour. But U-speakers correctly use *lady* and *gentleman* to their servants as do servants to their masters. To-day youngish U-speakers sometimes express class-distinction by such sentences as *X — is of good family* or, alternatively, *X — is rather ill-bred*, but they would perhaps be more likely to make use of circumlocutions such as *I should have thought X — was perfectly alright* (or even: *quite O.K.*); the antonymical form might be as vague as *X — is obviously awful*. In Oxford, in the late twenties, the term *not respectable* was sometimes used in this sense and intellectual Oxford of the period liked to use the German expression *rein / unrein* [ʼan'rain] — this can of course only be used to U-speakers moderately acquainted with German and these are rare (a state of affairs in contradistinction to that obtaining some seventy years ago). U-speakers might stigmatise expressions or habits as non-U by calling them *low* (more rarely, *vulgar*); at least one Public School (Bradfield) uses *pleb* in this sense. The phrase *not done*, once perhaps a U-phrase, seems to be dying out, save in schools. At the beginning of the century many slang phrases were used to designate non-gentlemen e.g. *not off the top shelf*, *not out of the top drawer*, *not one of us*, *not quite the clean potato*, *L. M. C.* [= Lower Middle Class], *a bit hairy in the heel*, *showing the cloven hoof*, *showing* [or similar introduction] *the mark of the beast*. At this distance of time it is hard to decide which, if any, of these expressions were U (*he's a bad bred 'un* and *risen from the ranks*, *I suppose?* certainly were) and which belonged rather to the extensive class of non-U-speakers trying to become U. As a boy I heard *not quite a gent*, *not (quite) the gentleman* used by non-U-speakers; to-day, *well-connected* is definitely non-U. *One of our great border families* is probably idiosyncratic. At one time *common* was used by U-speakers, though it is no longer (save of horses); the abbreviated *very comm* was apparently used by female U-speakers; *he's a commoner* is an arch U-use (implying that the person is very far from having a seat in the House of Lords).

¹ But solo whist (or *solo* as its devotees call it) is non-U, though much »lower« games (e.g. pontoon, nap and even slippery sam) are not necessarily so. Whist used to be a U-game but is, to-day, almost entirely confined to whist-drives which are non-U (*they stand up to deal, my dear!*).

² The normal U-word is *card* (though this is ambiguous

inventions such as the telephone, the cinema and the wireless, are still perhaps marks of the upper class.¹ Again, when drunk, gentlemen often become amorous or maudlin or vomit in public, but they never become truculent.

In the present article I am concerned with the linguistic demarcation of the upper class. This subject has been but little investigated, though it is much discussed, in an unscientific manner, by members of the upper class. The late Professor H. C. Wyld wrote a short article on the subject². He was well-equipped for the task, for he was both a gentleman and a philologist. To-day, his views are perhaps a little old-fashioned; for instance, the dictum »No gentleman goes on a bus», attributed to him, is one which most gentlemen have to neglect.

Both the written and the spoken language of the upper class serve to demarcate it, but the former to only a very slight extent. A piece of mathematics or a novel written by a member of the upper class is not likely to differ in any way from one written by a member of another class, except in so far as the novel contains conversation. In writing, it is, in fact, only modes of address, postal addresses and habits of beginning and ending letters that serve to demarcate the class.

Before proceeding to the detail of the present study I must

with (*playing*)-card). *Carte de visite* was apparently U but would to-day seem unbearably old-fashioned. *Calling-card* and *visiting-card* are non-U; the latter term is, in any case, an unfortunate one because of the non-U slang phrase *He's left his visiting-card* (of a dog) — foreigners would do well to beware of »idiomatic» sentences such as *The Picts left their visiting-card in the Pentland Firth* (said, in a public lecture, meaning that the name *Pict* is preserved in the first element of *Pentland*). Earlier, slang usages existed e.g. *to shoot a pasteboard 'to leave a card'*, but I do not know how far they were U.

¹ Certainly many U-speakers hunt — but hunting has for long been something that the *nouveau riche* knows he should do in order to be U; many farmers hunt too. So, to-day, hunting is not *ipso facto* a class-indicator.

² *The best English* (S. P. E. Tract, No. XXXIX); cf., also R. W. Chapman, *Oxford English* (S. P. E. Tract, No. XXXVII).

emphasise that I am here concerned only with usages which serve to demarcate the upper class. Thus the sentence *That be worse nor Dunkirk's fall* (said of the fall of Tobruk in a small Buckinghamshire town by a speaker aged about sixty) is certainly not U, but sentences of this kind fall quite outside the scope of this article; not using them in no way indicates that the speaker is U. In fact, in seeking to delimit usages, the line of demarcation relevant to this study is, often, a line between, on the one hand, gentlemen and, on the other, persons who, though not gentlemen, might at first sight appear, or would wish to appear, as such. Thus, habits of speech peculiar to the lower classes find no place here. The same is, in general, true of dialect; it is only where a definite dialect feature appears in a Regional Standard — as, for instance, the use of the phoneme [a] instead of [æ] (e. g. in *cat*) in Northern Standard, that it will require notice. I may also note here that the U-demarcation is of two types: — (1) a certain U-feature has a different, non-U counterpart as non-U *wealthy* / U *rich*; (2) a certain feature is confined to U-speech and it has a counterpart which is not confined to non-U speech e. g. the pronunciations of *girl* as [gɛl], (? [gjɛl]), [gæɪ], [gəɪ] are U, but many (perhaps most male) U-speakers, like all non-U-speakers, use the pronunciation [gə:l].

I. THE WRITTEN LANGUAGE

The following points may be considered: —

- (1) Names on envelopes, etc.
- (2) Beginnings of letters.
- (3) Names on cards.
- (4) Postal addresses on envelopes, etc., at the heads of letters, and on cards.
- (5) Letter-endings.

Of these points the first three are mutually linked and the second — beginnings of letters — is linked with the spoken language; for, in general, a person known to the writer is

written to and spoken to in the same mode of address. It will therefore be convenient to treat all modes of address together, though this means taking the spoken modes out of place.

Modes of address, particularly those used for the nobility, have always been a bugbear to the non-U. It is, for instance, non-U to speak of an earl as *The Earl of P* —; he should be spoken of and to as *Lord P* — and also so addressed at the beginning of a letter if an introduction between him and the speaker / writer has been effected¹. If the acquaintance is close, *P* — should be used instead of *Lord P* —. Letters to baronets and knights (known) should begin *Dear Sir A* — *X* —², if the acquaintance is slight, *Dear Sir A* —, if it is not slight. In speaking to one, only *Sir A* — is possible. In speaking of one, *Sir A* — should not be used unless the acquaintance is fairly close, *Sir A* — *X* — or *X* — being correct. If the acquaintance is slight or non-existent, the use of *Sir A* — in speaking of a baronet or knight is non-U and »snobbish³» as attempting to raise the social tone of the

¹ Where necessary I distinguish cases in which introduction has or has not been effected by putting *known* or *unknown* in round brackets ().

² *A* —, *B* —, *C* —, etc. are christian names (the initials being written *A.*, *B.*, *C.*, etc.); *X* — is a surname.

³ »Snobs» are of two kinds; *true snobs* (Thackeray's kind) and *inverted snobs*. Both kinds respect a person the more the better bred he is. True snobs indicate this in their behaviour to, and conversation to and about persons of good family, though they do not usually admit this. In their conversation about (but not in their behaviour or conversation to) such persons, inverted snobs indicate that they respect a person the less the better bred he is. One would expect to find a third category: those who really do respect a person the less the better bred he is, and indicate it. But this third category does not appear to exist. Nearly all English people are snobs of one of the two kinds (in this respect England differs from Finland and Iceland and resembles Spain and pre-War Hungary). And, just as it is impossible to find someone exactly half male and half female, so it is impossible to find an Englishman in whom true and inverted snobbery exactly balance.

speaker. Letters to ambassadors (unknown) should begin *Dear Excellency* and the envelope should be addressed *H. E. The P — Ambassador*. In speech, a Lieutenant-Commander is addressed as *Commander*, a Lieutenant in the Army as *Mister*. In concluding this section it may be noted that, in writing letters to noblemen of very high rank, the rules laid down in the etiquette-books¹ need not always be strictly observed. Thus an (unknown) Duke addressed as *Dear Sir* would not necessarily conclude that his correspondent was non-U; he might be a left-wing gentleman with a dislike of dukedoms.

On envelopes, gentlemen put *Esq.* after the names of persons who are, or who might wish to be considered, gentlemen, whether in fact armigerous or not. *Esq.* is however not used of oneself e. g. neither on a card (which bears *Mr.*) nor on a stamped-and-addressed envelope enclosed for a reply (which has merely *A — B. X —* or *A. B. X. —* without prefix). Knowledge of at least one initial of the recipient's name is, of course, a prerequisite for addressing him with *Esq.* If the writer has not this minimum knowledge (and cannot, or is too lazy to obtain it) he will be in a quandary. In these circumstances I myself use the Greek letter θ (as θ . *Smith, Esq.*) but this is probably idiosyncratic. But to address someone as »— *Smith,*» *Esq.* is not so much non-U as definitely rude.² Gentlemen usually address non-U males as *Mr.*; in internal circulation (e. g. in Government offices) gentlemen may address each other in this way. School-boys at their preparatory school (and younger boys) should be addressed as *Master*; at their public school, merely as *A. B. X —*, (without prefix or suffix). The non-U usually address all adult males as *Mr.*, but tradespeople have copied the use of *Esq.* from their customers. Those gentlemen who are inverted snobs dislike *Esq.*, but, since they know

¹ It is of course very non-U actually to consult these.

² I may note here that many U-speakers omit the *Esq.* on cheques.

that to address someone as *Mr.* is non-U, they avoid this also and address all adult males without prefix or suffix (like the correct mode of address for public-school boys). Intellectuals, of any class, often begin letters, even where the acquaintance is slight, with *Dear A — X —*. The correct modes of address for commoner-females offer fewer difficulties. On envelopes, wives should be addressed as *Mrs. A — B. X —*, or *Mrs. A. B. X —*, where the husband is *A — B. X —*. Widows revert to their own initials. Two (or more sisters) may be addressed collectively as *The Misses X —*; *Miss X —* correctly designates the elder (or eldest) sister, *Miss A — X —*, or *Miss A. X —* another sister.

Postal addresses. It is non-U to place the name of a house in inverted commas (as “*Fairmeads*”) or to write the number in full, either without or (especially) with, inverted commas (as *Two*, — worse “*Two*”, — *St. Patrick’s Avenue*). The names of many houses are themselves non-U; the ideal U-address is *P — Q —, R —* where *P —* is a placename, *Q —* a describer and *R —* the name (or abbreviation) of a county as *Shinwell Hall, Salop*.¹ But, to-day, few gentlemen can maintain this standard and they often live in houses with non-U names such as *Fairmeads* or *El Nido*.

Letter-endings. The U rules for ending letters are very strict; failure to observe them usually implies non-U-ness, sometimes only youth. In general, the endings of letters are conditioned by their beginnings. Thus a beginning (*Dear*) *Sir*² requires the ending *Yours faithfully*, unless the writer hopes to meet the

¹ Here I may note a curious indicator. In speaking, it is, in general, non-U to use the whole name of such a house as in *I’m going to Shinwell Hall* (the U-sentence would be *I’m going to Shinwell*) — this obtains whether the house belongs to the speaker (or his relatives) or not.

² Whether the writer is U or not, this is the normal beginning of all business letters to unknowns; the variant *Sir* is correctly used to government officials, *Sire* (or *Your Majesty*) to kings; *My Dear Sir* is felt as American.

recipient when *Yours very truly* may be used. Acquaintances who begin letters with *Dear Mr. X* — sign them *Yours sincerely* or *Yours very sincerely*; perversely, the latter ending is less cordial than the former. People who know each other really well will begin *Dear A* — or *Dear X* — (males only) and sign *Yours ever*. The ending *Yours* is often used even by gentlemen if they are in doubt as to which ending is appropriate. Of rarer endings *Yours, etc.* (used in writing letters to newspapers) and endings such as *I am Your Majesty's most humble and obedient servant* (in formal letters to kings) may be mentioned.

The name after the letter-ending offers little scope for comment. Letters are perhaps most usually signed in such forms as *A — X —*, *A — B. X —*, *A. B — X —* (the choice between the two last depending upon which christian name the writer is normally called by). If the writer is unknown (or not well-known) to the recipient, the latter cannot know whether the former is plain *Mr.* (if male), *Miss, Mrs.* or something else (if female); it is therefore usual for the writer to inform the recipient if he is other than plain *Mr.* (if male), other than *Miss* (if female). In handwritten letters, a usual way of doing this is to sign as, for instance, (*Professor*) *A — B. X —*; in typewritten letters (*Professor A — B. X —*) may be typed below the handwritten signature *A — B. X —*. I have seen long titles (e. g. *Dowager Countess of*) appended as footnotes to the signature. In concluding this section I may mention that people sometimes sign themselves (or enter their names in lists, etc.) with the surname only; this usage is very non-U, the reason for its non-U-ness lying in the fact that the correct signature of peers is of this form (e. g. the Earl of P — signs himself just *P —*).¹

¹ The correct form of postcards differs slightly from that of letters, for both the beginning (*Dear A —*, etc.) and the ending (*Yours sincerely*, etc.) are omitted. Some U-speakers feel it wrong to sign a postcard to a friend by anything save the bare initial(s) (*A.* or *A. B. X.*).

No discussion of English modes of address could be complete without a detailed commentary on R. W. Chapman's excellent *Names, designations & appellations*, published in 1946¹. The author states (p. 231) that the work is »an attempt to describe the modern use, in good society in this country, of personal names and designations, spoken or written, in the second or third person²». Chapman does not specifically deal with non-U usages but, since his enumeration is intended as exhaustive, it may be assumed that, essentially, usages divergent from those given by him are non-U, except in so far as I deal with them below.

It remains, therefore, to comment on certain points mentioned by Chapman where the usage of 1953 differs from that of a rather old-fashioned person writing some years earlier. I arrange the commentary by the pages of his book, either citing passages therefrom in inverted commas, or (where this would be too lengthy) indicating in square brackets [»] the point under discussion.

p. 233, note 1. [»I am told that some children call their mothers by their Christian names»]. In the thirties it was indeed the practice for many U (and doubtless some non-U) children to call their mothers (and also their fathers) by the Christian name. In very recent years there seems, however, to have been a reversion to earlier types of nomenclature; at all events, in 1943, a young U girl said to me »They must be fairly aged for they belong to the period in which parents allowed their children to call them by their Christian names».

p. 233. [»'Pater' and 'Mater' are obsolescent, perhaps obsolete»]. These designations were apparently once perfectly U; so also, I understand, were *The Mother* and *The Governor* (in the third person); the first three are to be found in the mouths

¹ S. P. E. Tract No. XLVII.

² By the »second person» he means speaking to a person, by the »third person», speaking of one.

of U-speakers in Mrs. Henry Wood's *Johnny Ludlow*¹. But, at a later date (c. 1910?), *Pater* and *Mater* were picked up by non-U-speakers and so became non-U-indicators. To-day, as Chapman says, they appear to be obsolete in all classes.

p. 234. [»The problem of a father-in-law or mother-in-law is solved in various ways according to age and circumstances»]. Often the Christian names are used. Again, a very frequent method is for the speaker to call his parent-in-law by a synonym of the name he uses for his own parent. Thus, if he calls his mother *Mummy*, he might call his mother-in-law *Mother*. I do not know whether the curious forms *father-law*, *mother-law* are U, Scots or neither.

p. 235. [»My (sainted) Aunt' is an invocation»]. This expression must surely be quite obsolete to-day. Many U-speakers (of either sex) often use the interjection '*Christ!*', with almost exactly the same force.

p. 235 ff. [»The family : third person»]. Within a family the use of *your* before a noun of relationship can certainly be correct e.g. *your mother*, *your father*; it has a rather formal sound. It is difficult to imagine circumstances under which *your brother* or *your sister* would be used by U-speakers within the family. *Your Aunt Jane*, preferred by Chapman, is possible but very old-fashioned, *Aunt Jane* being normal. Non-U speakers make use of this *your* rather more freely (often pronouncing it [jə(r)], as in *your auntie* [jər'ænti] — an expression which is cer-

¹ Mrs. Henry Wood (undoubtedly best-known for her melodramatic novel *East Lynne*) was born in 1814 and died in 1887. *Johnny Ludlow* is a series of stories which appeared in the journal she owned, *The Argosy*, from 1868 onwards (references given here are to the six-volume edition of 1908). The stories, which are narrated by Johnny Ludlow, are written in a colloquial style and contain many conversations. These portray the language of the squires of nearly a century ago, which is, essentially, the parent of the U-English of to-day. The differences between these two kinds of U-English are numerous and *Johnny Ludlow* is a valuable *fundgrube* for the student of the subject.

tainly non-U). U-speakers would certainly not make use of a sentence such as (to a child) »If you dont stop it, I'll ask your father to give you a good smack-bottom when he comes in».

pp. 237—8. [»Spouse : third person»]. The mode in which a speaker refers to his spouse is markedly distinct as between U and non-U speakers. A U-speaker, naming his wife to an equal, normally says *My wife* (or uses her christian name); to a very non-U person he says *Mrs. X.* —¹. Chapman says (*p. 237*) of a U-speaker referring to the hearer's wife [»'Your wife' may be over-familiar if I do not know Jones [*sc.* the hearer] very well»]. He advocates the use, then, of *Mrs. Jones*. Actually, I think that, of recent years, there has been a considerable increase in the use of *Your wife*, *Your husband* by U-speakers, even in cases where the acquaintance is of the slightest. Rank and seniority appear to have little to do with conditioning the use of the more formal *Mrs. X —*; still, there must be very few people who could speak to a king of *Your wife*. Non-U speakers do not in general make use of *my | your wife | husband*, preferring *Mr. | Mrs. X —*. Sometimes remarkable phraseologies appear in non-U use : I have heard *A —'s daddy* used by a speaker with reference to the hearer's husband (the child *A —* not being present).

p. 238. [»'What does Weston think of the weather?', Mr. Knightley asked Mrs. Weston². But I should be chary of following this precedent».] I agree with Chapman. There is, however, rather a similar case, not mentioned by Chapman (doubtless because it is a very minor one) where surnames may be used. School-boys and young men normally refer to each other by their surnames, so parents of a boy, talking to one of his

¹ There are still a few U households so old-fashioned as to use *The Master* and *The Mistress* to servants (if the servants are themselves old-fashioned enough to adopt the usage they may drop the article in replying e.g. *Master | Mistress says*). *Your mistress* was certainly once U, but is now dead.

² [»In *Emma*».]

acquaintances, often use the acquaintance's surname because they do not know his Christian name; similarly, the acquaintance may call the son by his surname to the parents. It is not until a boy gets older (c. 16?) that he realises that he must deliberately ascertain his friends' Christian names in order to be able to refer to them correctly to their parents. At Oxford in the late twenties the use of the surname in these circumstances was a known *gaucherie* and must therefore have been fairly usual.¹

p. 239. [»'Mr. William' is hardly said except by or to a servant».] *Master William*, too, is often used of adults in these circumstances, either because the servant has been with the family a long time, or, sometimes, because the usage has become part of the family tradition so that each fresh servant adopts it ².

p. 240. [»'Sir' is, of course, very often used between intimates with a slightly jocular or affectionate intention; one may say 'Good morning, Sir' to almost any intimate. 'My dear Sir, I am very glad to see you'. But 'My dear Sir' usually conveys a mild remonstrance».] These usages are, I think, obsolescent among U-speakers and young U-speakers are inclined to dislike them very much. In my experience people who use them are either non-U (very often, commercial travellers) or, if U, are elderly academics.

p. 241. [»'My dear Lady', rather than 'My dear Madam', corresponds to the 'My dear Sir' of familiar speech».] *My dear*

¹ In connection with surnames, I may mention a habit not noted by Chapman *viz.* the abbreviation of the surnames of close friends. It was apparently U and was certainly thriving in the nineties; at a much earlier period it appears in *Johnny Ludlow* where the young *Todhelly* is often called *Tod*. The custom is now obsolescent, save perhaps in the case of hyphenated surnames (*X-Y* may be called *X*) and between close women-friends (e.g. a *Miss Robinson* might be called *Robbie*).

² Servants frequently distinguish the wives of the sons of the family as *Mrs. William*, *Mrs. Thomas*, etc.

Lady was certainly once a U-usage (also, possibly, *Dear Lady?*) but it is now completely dating. It is however still possible to imagine circumstances where *My dear Madam* might be legitimate e.g. as between a solicitor and a female client.

p. 241. [»The use of 'Sir' by young men to their seniors in general is not easily defined, and the practice varies«.] This is certainly true; my own use is to reserve *Sir* for men of great age and / or great distinction. The War of 1939—45, like its predecessor of 1914—8, has brought about an enormous increase in the use of *Sir* because of Service rules. Chapman says [»Young women . . . are not expected to say *sir*«] — but now many do by reason of their having been in one of the Women's Services.

p. 241. »[But is there any alternative [*sc.* to *Miss*] if one is addressing a telephone operator or a barmaid?«.] Yes, there is: silence, perhaps the most favourite of all U-usages to-day. Indeed it is remarkable how easy it is (save when engaged in activities such as bridge or poker) to avoid the use of any appellation at all.¹ This has become increasingly the practice of shy gentlemen. The use of *Miss* in the circumstances mentioned by Chapman (and particularly to waitresses) is definitely non-U.

p. 242. [»'Master Smith' . . . imputes impudence or sharp practice«.] Obsolescent (or non-U?).

p. 243. [»Christian names«.] On this matter, as might be expected, Chapman has a point of view out of date even by the early thirties. I can only just remember the time, in the very early twenties, when a typical boy-and-girl conversation might

¹ This U-habit of silence has had a curious corollary. Most nations say something when drinking (as *Skål!* in Swedish or *Egészségére!* in Hungarian) but, until 1939, English U-speakers normally said nothing. Since then, however, the Service habit of saying something has become almost universal and most U-speakers therefore feel it churlish to say nothing; repressing a shudder, they probably say *Cheers!* (though hardly *God bless!* which, though also frequent in the Services, seems non-U).

have run : — »*He*. May I call you by your Christian name? *She*. If you like. *He*. Er — what is your Christian name?». Since that time the use of Christian names by U-speakers has been continually increasing. In the thirties, it was quite customary for a member of a *partie carrée* going to a dance who was unknown to the other three to be introduced by the Christian name alone (or, often, just as *John Smith* or *Jane Smith*, without prefix). In the War the use of Christian names increased still further; in Government offices it was often the custom for a man at the head of a large section of girls to call them all by their Christian names, while they called him *Mr. X* —.

pp. 245—6. [»since most people have two or more Christian names.»] Chapman's statement is, in general, only true of gentlemen.

p. 248. [»Use of surnames by women«]. In the third person, it is now very usual for women to use the surname only of men (e.g. of their husbands' friends); for men, or women, to use the surnames only of women in this way is less common, though in some circles (e.g. university ones) it is quite accepted. In the second person, the use of the bare surname without Christian name or prefix is rarer still. For a woman so to call a man is still either foreign, bohemian, or intellectual-left. In general, women call other women by the bare surname only in institutions for women (e.g. in girl's schools, women's colleges, hospitals, and, no doubt, in womens' prisons).

p. 250. [»Dukes : third person«]. I may add that dukes, if fairly well-known to the speaker may appropriately be referred to by Christian name and title e.g. *George Birmingham*, meaning *George, etc., Duke of Birmingham*.

p. 251. [»A facetious use«]. *His Lordship*, in facetious use, is definitely non-U and, often, inverted snob. There is a somewhat similar non-U expression : *young master* (as in *Young master's making himself quite at home!*) used of a young man considered »la-di-da«¹.

¹ For this word see p. 44, below.

pp. 251, 255. [»Abbreviations»]. *Honourable* and *Reverend* are abbreviated either as *Honble.*, *Rev^d* or as *Hon.*, *Rev.* Both usages are quite U, though the former is the more old-fashioned.

p. 262. [»Naming of famous women»]. *Garbo* is certainly possible, but *The Garbo* (not mentioned by Chapman) might well be more usual. The article is sometimes prefixed facetiously e.g. *The Smith* of a woman-professor, though I am not sure how far this usage is U.

p. 265. [»Some people say 'Miss Austen'».] In my experience, to say *Miss Austen* instead of *Jane Austen* is either precious or pseudo-intellectual¹.

II. THE SPOKEN LANGUAGE²

1) *Intonation*. There are certainly types of intonation which are recognisably non-U, but they cannot be dealt with here, for they require specialised phonetic and / or acoustic treatment.

2) *Stress*. In a few cases, a difference of stress will serve to demarcate a pronunciation as between U and non-U. Thus *yésterdáy* (level stress) is non-U as against U *yesterday*; or, again, U [ˈtɛmpərili] / non-U [tɛmpəˈræri] *temporarily*, U [ˈfəːmidəbəl] / non-U [fəˈmidəbəl], U [ˈɪntɹɛstɪŋ] / non-U [ɪntəˈrɛstɪŋ]. [ˈviənə] is old-fashioned U for normal [viˈɛnə] *Vienna*;

¹ In concluding this commentary on Chapman's work I cannot refrain from citing the following (p. 253): — »Undergraduates call each other what they choose, but never I suppose anything more formal than 'Smith', except on *delivery of a challenge* or the like» [my italics]. I feel that Chapman has slipped a century or so here, for the duel has long ceased to be a feature of undergraduate life!

² The pamphlet *The B. B. C.'s recommendations for pronouncing doubtful words* [ed. R. Bridges] (S. P. E. Tract, No. XXXII) is useful here, though some of the pronunciations advocated are not so much U as pedantic (e.g. »AERATED ày-erated» for [ˈɛəreɪtɪd], »CASUALTY cázewalty, not cázhewalty» ([ˈkæʒəlti] is normal), »CELTIC . . . initial consonant . . . s, not k»), while others are, today, definitely outré (e.g. »CULINARY kéw-» for [ˈkʌlɪnri]).

confessor is normally [kən'fɛsə] but U-Catholics use [ˈkɒnfɛsə]¹. In some cases two stress-variants may both be U as in *spónge-cáke* or *spónge-cake*² (to-day, non-U-speakers hardly use the word, substituting *sponge* for it).

3) *Phonemes*. There are very few cases in which the phonetic materialisation of an entire phoneme serves to demarcate U or non-U pronunciations. The phonemes [ei], [æu] — for normal [ai], [au] — as in [reid] *ride* and [hæus] *house* are, however, of common occurrence and are definitely non-U. Indeed [ei] — Shakespeare's version of this phoneme³ — has typified a well-marked kind of non-U pronunciation, that usually indicated by the epithet *refained*. The corresponding phoneme on the other side of the vocalism, [æu], is, however, often not a concomitant of refained speech. [ɛ] for normal [æ] has been regarded as a feature of refained speech⁴ but, in my experience, this feature hardly exists to-day. [a] for [æ] — [kat] *cat* — is, of course, a well-known feature of Northern Standard and is thus *ipso facto* non-U. A marked aspiration of the *t*-phoneme — [t'ij]⁵ instead of [tij] *tea* — is fairly frequent among non-U-speakers. Among U-speakers, the »unvoiced pronunciation» of *wh* of *which* seems almost entirely confined to women. In some cases, too, the non-entire materialisation of

¹ *Successor* as [ˈsaksɛsə] among this same class of speakers, as against normal [sək'sɛsə], is possibly due to direct analogy with *confessor*.

² *Sponge-bag* does not appear to show this variation, *spónge-bag* being normal; the difference is, no doubt, to be ascribed to the differing compositional ellipses (*sponge-cake* 'a cake [which is] a sponge', *sponge-bag* 'a bag [for holding] a sponge').

³ R. E. Zachrisson, *The English pronunciation at Shakespeare's time* (*Skripta utgivna av K. Humanistiska Vetenskaps-Samfundet i Uppsala* XXII. 6), p. 55.

⁴ Cf. the non-U character *Mr. Starky* in R. G. Woodthorpe's *Public-School murder*, who is given by his author sentences such as *There he was, like a med thing, dencing round me in the passage* (1932 ed., p. 25).

⁵ With a *t'* reminiscent of that found in Armenian and Georgian.

a phoneme may serve as an indicator. Thus many (but not all) U-speakers, but no non-U-speakers, say [git], [dzɛst], [kætʃ] instead of [gɛt], [dʒast], [kætʃ] for *get*, *just* adv., *catch* without otherwise materialising their *ɛ*-, *ɑ*-, *æ*-phonemes as [i]¹, [ɛ], [ɛ]. In some cases, U-speakers prefer long vowels, in others short (against the converse for non-U) e.g. U [spuwn] : non-U [spun] *spoon* but U [rum], [brum] : non-U [ruwm], [bruwm] *room*, *broom*. In U-speech *hoof* is usually [huf] with plural [hufs] or [huwvz]. Some U-speakers use [gɔ:n] instead of [gɔn] *gone*².

4) *Phoneme-groups*.

(i) *L-groups*.

(a) There is U-loss of *l* in [gɔf], [reif], [ˈsɔdə] as against non-U [gɔlf], [rælf], [ˈsɔldə] [ˈsouldə] *golf*, *Ralph*, *solder*. The old-fashioned U-pronunciations of *falcon*, *Malvern* were also *l*-less ([ˈfɔ:kən], [ˈmɔ:vən]) but it is doubtful how far these survive to-day.

(b) *(Re)solve* as [-soulv] is non-U (U : [sɔlv]).

(c) *Real*, *ideal* as [rijl], [aiˈdijl] are non-U (*really* [ˈrijli] being especially frequent) as against U [riəl], [aiˈdiəl], [ˈriəli].

(d) *fault* is non-U [fɔlt] as against U [fɔ:lt]; similarly, *also*, *Balkans*, *Baltic*, *halt*, *malt*, *salt*, *vault*.

(ii) »R»-groups.

(a) U-pronunciation has [a:] against non-U [ɔ:]³ in *Berkeley*⁴, *Berkshire*, *clerk*, *Derby*.

¹ At one time this [i] evidently encroached further; for instance, I believe that [ˈkimist] is still old-fashioned U for [ˈkɛmist] *chemist* (cf., no doubt, the tendency for old-fashioned chemists' shops to use an old spelling *Chymist* on their windows).

² My impression is that [dɔ:g] *dog* occurred in U-slang of about the nineties, as in *You look no end of a dawg!* (also in adj. *dawgy* 'smart?').

³ The non-U pronunciation is clearly from the spelling; cf. also p. 50, below.

⁴ Since it is definitely non-U to pronounce *Berkeley* as [ˈbɛ:kli], U-speakers get a frisson if they have to enunciate the surnames *Birkley*, *Burkly* (correctly pronounced [ˈbɛ:kli]) for, if a U-hearer

(b) As to intervocalic *r* : ['særəp] *syrrup* is non-U (against U ['sirəp]); ['stærəp] *stirrup* may be old-fashioned U; the normal pronunciation is everywhere ['stirəp].

(c) Some U-speakers attest the sound-change [aiə] > [a:], mostly in the final position as *fire* [fa:] (but even *fiery* ['fa:ri], *lion* [la:n])¹. So, to such speakers, *tyre* and *tar* are perfect homonyms.

(d) On the other side of the vocalism, most U-speakers have simple [ɔ:] in *boor* *Boer*, *moor*, *mourn* — and even in (*feather*-)*boa*, *boa*(-constrictor); *more* / *moor* and *bore* / *boar* / *boor* / *Boer* / *boa* are thus sets of homonyms to them. But few speakers, whether U- or non-U, would pronounce the poetic word *bourne* (e homonymically with *born* (though *Bournemouth*, *Southbourne* normally have [bɔ:n]).

(iii) ME. *au* + nasal.

(a) To-day, U-pronunciation normally has [a:] in words such as *dance*, *demand*, *grant*, [æ] being non-U. I am inclined to think that, in some words (*demand*?), U-pronunciations with [æ] may have survived into living memory. To-day *aunt* is U [a:nt] and *ant* is U [ænt] but some non-U speakers reverse the phoneme-rôles, calling aunts ants and ants aunts.²

(b) [a:] certainly existed as a U-pronunciation in *haunch*, *launch*, *staunch*³ until comparatively recent times⁴, but it is doubtful how far it survives; most U-speakers have [ɔ:] here.

(iv) [ɑ]

(a) U-speakers normally have [ɑ] before the nasal in *accomplish*, *Brompton*, *Conduit*⁵ (*Street*) and *constable* as against

does not appreciate the spelling of the names (rare ones), they may be suspected of using a non-U pronunciation.

¹ Also *via* [va:].

² But, until fairly recently, to make this reversal was possible U.

³ *To stanch bleeding* is hardly in spoken use to-day.

⁴ The one-time U-pronunciation [la:ndri] *laundry* (normally [lɔ:ndri]) seems to me even more old-fashioned.

⁵ non-U ['kɒndjuɪt]. Increasingly, the old U-pronunciations of place-names are tending everywhere to be replaced by spelling-

non-U [ɔ] ([ˈkɒnstəbəl], etc.). Some other words (e.g. *combat*) once had U [ɑ] too, but, in these words, the use seems obsolescent¹. [ɑ] before nasal instead of [ɔ] — indeed [ɑ] for [ɔ] in general — is felt by the non-U to be extremely U. So those anxious to »change their voices» (cf. p. 47, below) are inclined to fall into a »snob-change» of type Leeds [ˈwɛrɪ] for normal [ˈwəri] *worry*² and enlarge their [ɑ]-domain; I have even heard [dɑg] *dog*³ from this kind of speaker⁴.

(b) Some non-U-speakers use [ɔ] for [ɑ] in *none* and *one*. In origin this is probably a dialect form, springing from the Industrial Midlands⁵, a great breeding-ground of non-U speech.

(v) [ŋ].

(a) [ɪn] for [ɪŋ] in verbal forms (*huntin'*, *shootin'* and *fishin'*) was undoubtedly once a U-indicator and it still survives among a few very elderly U-speakers; among younger ones, it seems, to-day, to be altogether dead.

pronunciations of non-U origin. Thus, to-day, few railway-booking-offices understand [ˈɑksɪtə] for *Uttoxeter* ([juˈtɒksɪtə] is prevailing). *Cirencester* is interesting; the true U-pronunciation is [ˈsɪsɪtə] or, occasionally, [ˈsɪsɪstə] (U-pronunciation influenced by spelling?); the townsfolk, however, call it [ˈsairənsɛstə] from the spelling.

¹ In other words [ɑ] is universal e.g. *comfortable*; [bɑm] for normal [bɒm] *bomb* is (old-fashioned?) Army use; in any case, no doubt homonymity with *bum* has acted as a prophylactic against the dissemination of the pronunciation (cf. normal [gra:s] *grass* but [æs] *ass* to avoid homonymity with [a:s] *arse* — a point to which I called attention *TPS* 1934, p. 99).

² Discussed by me *Časopis pro moderní filologii* XXXII, 1949, 38.

³ But [ˈhævəl] *hovel* appears to be U (though [ˈhɒvəl] is also possible).

⁴ In the summer of 1951 the B. B. C. caused some amusement by habitually pronouncing the name of the cricketer *Compton* as [ˈkɑmptən].

⁵ J. Wright, *The English dialect grammar*, *Index* s. vv. *none*, *one* records »non» from Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Rutland, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire and Shropshire; »won» from each of these counties (and from others as well).

(b) [n] in *length* [lɛnθ], *strength* (and derivatives) is non-U as against U [lɛŋθ], [strɛŋθ].

(vi) *Vowel + voiceless spirant.*

(a) Some U-speakers have a long vowel in many *o*-words of this type. Thus, basing the list of examples on K. Luick, *Historische grammatik der englischen sprache* § 555, I have [ɔ:] in *off, crofter, loss, lost, frost, broth, cross, soft, soften* ['sɔ:fən]¹, *loft, froth, cost, cloth, cough, trough* but (ɔ) in *scoff, toss*², *moth, gloss, wasp* and also *dross, Ross*.

(b) On the other hand, long [a:] before voiceless spirant can sometimes be non-U; it is so, I think, in *elastic* [ə'la:stɪk] as against U [ə'læstɪk]. Probably in *drastic, graph, telegraph*, certainly in *emasculate, masculine, plastics*, the distinction [a:] / [æ] has no significance for class-differentiation.

(vii) non-U use frequently has *picture, lecture* as ['pɪkʃə], ['lɛkʃə]³ as against U ['pɪktʃə], ['lɛktʃə].

I conclude this section with a miscellaneous list of words. The entry of a pronunciation in both the U and the non-U columns indicates a clear dichotomy between the classes; the placing of a U-entry in round brackets () means that only some U-speakers use the pronunciation (often, that it is old-fashioned) while other U-speakers use that given in the non-U column.

¹ non-U-speakers have *often* ['ɔftən] as against U ['ɔ:fən] (also ['ɔfən]?).

² [tɔ:s] exists as old-fashioned U.

³ No doubt, also, *fracture, stricture* as ['frækʃə], ['strɪkʃə], though I do not remember having heard these.

Linguistic Class-indicators

	U	non-U
<i>acknowledge</i>	[ək'nəlidʒ]	[ək'noulidʒ] ¹
<i>Catholic</i>	(['ka:əlik]) ²	['kæəlik]
<i>either</i>	['aiðə]	['ijðə]
<i>extraordinary</i>	[ək'strɔ:dinri]	['ɛkstrə'ɔ:din(ə)ri]
<i>forehead</i>	['fərid]	['fɔ:həd]
<i>geyser</i>	['geizə]	['gijzə]
<i>handkerchief</i>	['hɛnkətʃif]	['hɛnkətʃijf], ['hɛnkətʃijv]
<i>hotel</i>	([ou'tɛl])	[hou'tɛl]
<i>humour</i>	(['juwmə])	['hjuwmə]
<i>mass</i>	([ma:s]) ²	[mæs]
<i>medicine</i>	['mɛdsən]	['mɛdisən]
<i>a nought</i>	[ə / nɔ:t]	[æn / ɔ:t] ³
<i>tortoise</i>	['tɔ:təs]	['tɔ:tɔis], ['tɔ:tɔiz] ⁴
<i>vase</i>	[vɑ:z]	[vɔ:z], [veiz]
<i>venison</i>	['vɛnzən]	['vɛnizən]
W.	['dæbɛlju]	['dæbiju] ⁵
<i>waistcoat</i>	['wɛskət]	['weistkɔut] ⁶

(5) *Morphology*. Oddly enough, this important philological sphere produces hardly any marks of class-difference; forms

¹ But I have not hitherto observed the non-U pronunciation [noulidʒ].

² These forms are, in the main, confined to Catholic U-speakers (cf. p. 36).

³ For 'zero' we have U *nought* as against non-U *ought*.

⁴ *Porpoise* is certainly U ['pɔ:pəs], possibly non-U ['pɔ:pɔiz]; *turquoise* is U ['tɔ:kwa:z] but I am not sure of the non-U form (['tɔ:kwɔiz]?).

⁵ W. either 'the letter W' or 'W.C.' (a frequent non-U expression for 'lavatory') — hence, no doubt, the non-U childrens' word *dub*(by 'lavatory'). (In this connection, I may mention a U-expression: *Let me show you the geography of the house* (meaning, essentially, the lavatory); the non-U have many euphemisms (e.g. *the temple of health*)).

⁶ The old U-form [weskit] is now obsolescent; the word's phonological companion *wainscot* had U ['wɛnskət] but this seems for the most part to have been replaced by ['weinskət] in all classes.

such as *childer* (dialect) for *children* and ppart. *took* (uneducated) for *taken*¹ fall outside the scope of the present study, as explained on p. 24. I have observed only two examples. (1) The omission of the genitival 's in names of shops and the like (as in *I bought it at Woolworth*); this use is confined to some U-speakers. (2) Pret. sg. *ate* which is U [et] as against non-U [eit].

(6) *Syntax*. This is always a miscellaneous and difficult philological sphere. Syntactic marks of class-difference seem very rare. Northern Standard produces two non-U usages: — (1) the use of *while* for normal *till*, as in *wait while I come* and (2) inversions, such as *He's been very decent, has John*. Some phrases with prepositions are non-U e.g. *He's at boarding-school*², *She's on holiday* and, less pronouncedly, *We were at table*.

(6) *Vocabulary*³.

Article 'chamber-pot' is non-U; in so far as the thing survives, U-speakers use ['dʒəri] (a school-boy term) or *pot*⁴.

Bath. *To take a bath* is non-U against U *to have one's bath*.

Civil: this word is used by U-speakers to approve the behaviour of a non-U person in that the latter has appreciated the difference between U and non-U e.g. *The guard was certainly very civil*.

Coach 'char-a-banc' is non-U, doubtless because the thing

¹ *Wake* has three possible past participles: *woke, woken, waked* but, apparently, these variants in no way serve to mark out classes. Indeed all Englishmen hesitate when asked what the «correct» past participle is.

² In any case, *boarding-school* is little used by U-speakers, for, to most of them, there is no other kind of school.

³ Naturally, care must here be taken to distinguish words and phrases which are U / non-U dividers from those which are dividers of other kinds. Thus the (well-known) phrase *Animals always know, don't they?* (to my astonishment still alive in 1951) does not divide those who are non-U from those who are U so much as those who are fools from those who are not fools.

⁴ But the (recent?) verb *to pot* (trans.), used of babies, is surely non-U?.

itself is. Those U-speakers who are forced, by penury, to use them call them *buses*, thereby causing great confusion (a *coach* runs into the country, a *bus* within a town).

non-U *corsets* / U *stays*.

Counterpane, bedspread, coverlet. Of these three synonyms, I think that the first is U, the second obsolete, the third non-U.

Cruet. The sentence *Pass the c r u e t, please* is very non-U; cruets are in themselves non-U. In gentlemen's houses there are, ideally, separate containers — *salt-cellars, pepper-pots* (-*castors, -grinders, -mills*) and *mustard-pots*, so that the corresponding U-expression will be *I wonder if you could pass the salt (pepper, mustard), please?*, or the like. Vinegar is a fourth constituent of many cruets but many uses of vinegar (e.g. poured on fish or bacon-and-eggs) are definitely non-U.

Crust or crumb?, used when cutting bread is (old-fashioned?) non-U.

Cultivated in They're c u l t i v a t e d people is non-U and so also is *cultured*. There is really no U-equivalent (some U-speakers use *civilised* in this sense).

Cup. How is your c u p? is a non-U equivalent of *Have some more tea?*, or the like. Possible negative non-U answers are *I'm doing nicely, thank you* and *(Quite) sufficient, thank you*. There is a well-known non-U affirmative answer: *I don't mind if I do* (but this is U at *Johnny Ludlow* v. 365)¹.

Cycle is non-U against U *bike, bicycle* (whether verb or noun); non-U *motorcycle* / U *motorbike, motorbicycle* is perhaps less pronouncedly so.

Dinner. U-speakers eat *lunch* in the middle of the day (*luncheon* is old-fashioned U) and *dinner* in the evening; if a U-speaker feels that what he is eating is a travesty of his dinner, he may appropriately call it *supper*. Non-U-speakers (also U-children and U-dogs), on the other hand, have their *dinner* in the middle of the day. *Evening meal* is non-U.

¹ Cf., here, the facetious non-U expression *Any more for any more?*

Dress-suit. This is a non-U word. A male U-speaker might answer the question *What shall I wear tonight?* in any of the following ways: — 1) *Dinner jacket*; 2) *Short coat* (? old-fashioned); 3) *Black tie*; 4) *Tails*; 5) *White tie*; Nos. 1—3 mean German *smoking*, Nos. 4—5 German *frack*. The term *evening dress* is often used on invitations but it has not a very wide currency among U-speakers (in any case, for men¹ it is ambiguous); a sentence *Shall we wear evening dress?* would not be possible, the appropriate expression being *Are we going to change?*

Excuse my glove. This expression, used when shaking hands, is (?old-fashioned) non-U; male U-speakers do (used to?) remove their glove in order to shake hands but say nothing.

Greatcoat (also *topcoat?*) are rather old-fashioned U, *overcoat* being normal. *Burberry*² and *raincoat* are of the same genre, *macintosh* or *mac* being normal.

Greens 'vegetables' is non-U.

Home: non-U *They've a lovely h o m e* / U *They've a very nice h o u s e*.

Horse-riding is non-U against U *riding*. From the non-U point of view the expression is reasonable, for to the non-U there are other kinds of riding (cf. non-U *to go for a motor-ride* / U *to go for a drive in a motor-car*). But *bicycle-ride* is normal.

Ill in *I was very ill on the boat* is non-U against U *sick*.

Jack. At cards, *jack* is non-U against U *knave*, save in *jackpot* (at poker). My son, Pilot-officer A. W. P. Ross, kindly calls my attention to the following passage from C. Dickens, *Great Expectations* (ed. of 1861, i, 126): — »He calls the knaves, Jacks, this boy! said Estella with disdain».

La-di-da is an expression with which the non-U stigmatise a U habit, speech-habit or person.

¹ For women, a *semi* [sc. evening-frock] is non-U.

² This use of *Burberry* no doubt arose because, even before 1914 (when U-speakers were richer than non-U-speakers), this was a good and expensive kind of macintosh.

Lounge is a name given by the non-U to a room in their houses; for U-speakers, *hall* or *dining-room* might well be the nearest equivalent (but all speakers, of course, speak of the *lounge* of a hotel).

non-U *mental* / U *mad*.

A matter of business is non-U (as in *Say you've come to see him on a matter of business*).

Mention: If you don't mind my mentioning it is non-U.

Mirror (save in compounds such as *driving-*, *shaving-mirror*) is non-U against U *looking-glass*.

non-U *note-paper* / U *writing-paper*¹.

Pardon! is used by the non-U in three main ways: — 1) if the hearer does not hear the speaker properly; 2) as an apology (e.g. on brushing by someone in a passage; 3) after hiccupping or belching. The normal U-correspondences are very curt viz. 1) *What?*, 2) *Sorry!*, 3) [Silence], though, in the first two cases, U-parents and U-governesses are always trying to make children say something »politer»; — *What did you say?* and *I'm frightfully sorry* are certainly possible. For Case 3) there are other non-U possibilities e.g. *Manners!*, *Beg pardon!*, *Pardon me!* Phrases containing *pardon* are often answered with *Granted* by the non-U.

To pass a (nasty) remark. He passed the remark that . . . is non-U.

Pleased to meet you! This is a very frequent non-U response to the greeting *How d'you do?* U-speakers normally just repeat the greeting; to reply to the greeting (e.g. with *Quite well, thank you*) is non-U.

Posh 'smart' is essentially non-U but, recently, it has gained ground among school-boys of all classes.

non-U *preserve* / U *jam*. But *conserve* is legitimate, though rare (I imagine there to be some culinary distinction between, for instance, *conserve of quinces* and mere *quince jam*).

¹ This distinction (as well as some others e.g. non-U *perfume* / U *scent*) is noted by N. Mitford, *The pursuit of love* (1945 ed., p. 31).

non-U *radio* / U *wireless* (but *radio* technically as in aircraft).
Rude meaning 'indecent' is non-U; there is no universal
 U-correspondent.

Non-U *serviette* / U *table-napkin*; perhaps the best known of
 all the linguistic class-indicators of English.

Sit in *He's sitting an exam.* is non-U; *sitting for* is better but
 hardly U unless used very technically.

Study in *He's studying for an exam.* is definitely non-U
 (U : *working for*).

Teacher is essentially non-U, though *school-teacher* is used
 by the U to indicate a non-U teacher. The U equivalent is
master, *mistress* with prefixed attribute (as *maths-mistress*).
 Non-U children often refer to their teachers without article
 (as, *Teacher says . . .*).

non-U *toilet-paper* / U *lavatory-paper*.

non-U *wealthy* / U *rich*.

Before concluding with some general remarks, there are
 two points which may appropriately receive mention here.

First, *slang*. There seems no doubt that, in the nineties and
 at least up to 1914, U-speakers (particularly young ones) were
 rather addicted to slang. To-day, however, U-speakers use it
 little and regard much use of it as non-U — save, of course,
 in special circumstances (e.g. in the case of young boys at
 school). American slang is especially deprecated (save, perhaps,
 for *O. K.*). The ultimate War, like the penultimate one, brought
 a flood of slang into the Services, some of it of a very vivid kind
 as, for instance, R. A. F. slang *He tore me off a strip* 'he reprimanded
 me severely', *I was shot down in flames* 'I was completely
 overwhelmed in the argument'. Since the War, there has
 been an unfortunate tendency for non-Service personnel to
 use Service slang and it is clear that Service personnel regard
 such use as in very poor taste. Nevertheless, the expressions
I've had it! (meaning, essentially, 'I have *not* had it') and

That's a bad show, have become very frequent among all classes of speakers ¹.

Secondly, *changing one's voice* ². In England to-day — just as much as in the England of many years ago — the question »Can a non-U speaker become a U-speaker?» ³ is one noticeably of paramount importance for many Englishmen (and for some of their wives). The answer is that an adult can never attain complete success. Moreover, it must be remembered that, in these matters, U-speakers have *ὄτα ἀκούειν*, so that one single pronunciation, word or phrase will suffice to brand an apparent U-speaker as originally non-U (for U-speakers themselves never make »mistakes»). Under these circumstances, efforts to change voice are surely better abandoned. But, in fact, they continue in full force and in all strata of society. On the whole, the effect is deleterious. Thus, to take only one example: in village schools, any natural dialect that is still left to the children will have superimposed upon it the language of the primary school-teacher (a class of people entirely non-U) so that the children leave school speaking a mixture which has nothing to recommend it. In concluding this paragraph, I may mention that there is one method of effecting change of voice, provided the speaker is young enough. This is, to send him ⁴ first to a preparatory school, then to a good public-school. This

¹ There are, too, things for which the Service-slang word must be used for no other exists (as, for instance, *blood-chit* 'document, signed by a non-R. A. F. passenger before a flight, which exonerates the R. A. F. in the event that they damage or destroy him').

² This phrase is my own coinage (of many years ago); I know of no other expression.

³ Logically, the converse question »Can a U-speaker become a non-U-speaker?» should also arise, but, in practice it seems not to — — even the staunchest of inverted snobs apparently draws the line here. At all events I have only come across one case of it (in Leeds).

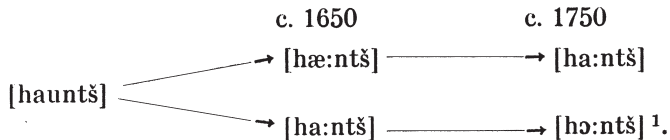
⁴ To-day similar arrangements can be made for girls; the older approved method was, of course, a U-governess.

method is one that has been approved for more than a century and, at the moment, it is almost completely effective. It is interesting to speculate upon the state of affairs which will arise when the day comes when virtually no U-speaker will be able to afford to educate his children at these kinds of schools (this day has already dawned).

If we consider the wider implications of the linguistic class-indication discussed above, two points immediately arise: the linguistic class-indicators are almost all philologically trivial and, apparently, almost all of a very ephemeral nature.

The triviality is apparent at a glance; the deepest change involved is only a differing phonetic materialisation of a phoneme e.g. [æu] for [au] of *house*. There is nothing here even of the philological calibre of Finnish alternations of type gen.pl. *opettajain* ~ *opettajien* (to *opettaja* 'teacher') -- an alternation which not only does not imply class-difference but, apparently, implies nothing at all.

With regard to the ephemerality. In passing, I have already called attention to two examples viz. 1) that Shakespeare — and Queen Elizabeth I too — certainly spoke »refained» English in that they pronounced *ride* as [reid] (p. 36) and 2) that Johnny Ludlow, a century ago, used *I don't mind if I do* quite naturally (p. 43). I am convinced that a thorough historical study of the class-indicators discussed above would reveal many present-day U-features as non-U at an earlier period, and vice versa. Such a study could be carried out. To take one example: the two pronunciations of *haunch* — [hæ:ntʃ] and [hɔ:ntʃ] — both develop from ME. *haunch* (< OFr. *hanche*) along the lines



¹ Luick, *op. cit.* §§ 520—1, 557 ff.

If, therefore, we regard [ha:ntš] as more U than [hɔ:ntš] (p. 38, above) then, if the distinction is not ephemeral, it should follow that, earlier, [hæ:ntš] was more U than [ha:ntš]. Such points could all be investigated with the aid of the »grammarians», that large body of writers, English and foreign, who, from the mid-sixteenth century onwards, poured out a stream of works setting out the »correct» pronunciation of English for Englishmen and foreigners. The investigation would, however, be very laborious and, also, rather difficult; in general, I must relegate it to my (very few) colleagues who are specialists in the grammarians, and confine myself here to an illustrative study of one grammarian.

I select J. Walker's *Critical pronouncing dictionary and expositor of the English language*, first published in 1791. I go through his chapter »Principles of English pronunciation» and give an almost exhaustive list of the passages in which he would appear to be differentiating between U- and non-U speech¹. I give his paragraph-numbers and the little commentary that is needed².

¹ I have eschewed citations such as the two following. »§ 179. There is an incorrect pronunciation of this letter [*sc.* u] when it ends a syllable, not under the accent which prevails, not only among the vulgar, but is sometimes found in better company; and that is giving the *u* an obscure sound, which confounds it with vowels of a very different kind. Thus we not unfrequently hear *singular*, *regular*, and *particular*, pronounced as if written *sing-e-lar*, *reg-e-lar*, and *par-lick-e-lar*; but nothing tends more to tarnish and vulgarize the pronunciation than this short and obscure sound of the unaccented *u*». »§ 346 *buoy*, pronounced as if written *bwoy*, but too often exactly like *boy*. This, however, is an impropriety which ought to be avoided by correct speakers». Such views are typical of many of the grammarians and are due to their trying to make the pronunciation fit the spelling. In such cases, of course, care must be taken not to interpret words such as *incorrect* (§ 179), *impropriety* (§ 346) as meaning 'non-U', 'non-U-feature'.

² Frequently the only commentary needed is my own pronunciation of the relevant word (which may be taken as normal) e.g. as in »N [ʹoudʒəs] *odious*».

»§ 92. When the *a* is preceded by the gutturals, hard *g* or *c*, it is, in polite pronunciation, softened by the intervention of a sound like *e*, so that *card*, *cart*, *guard*, *regard*, are pronounced like *ke-ard*, *ke-art*, *ghe-ard*, *re-ghe-ard*».

»§ 100. *Service* and *servant* are still heard among the lower order of speakers, as if written *sarvice* and *sarvant*: and even among the better sort, we sometimes hear, *Sir*, *your sarvant*; though this pronunciation of the word singly would be looked upon as a mark of the lowest vulgarity. The proper names, *Derby* and *Berkeley*, still retain the old sound, as if written *Darby* and *Barkeley*: but even these, in polite usage, are getting into the common sound, nearly as if written *Durby* and *Burkeley*».

»§ 101 . . . in the words, *England*, *yes*, and *pretty*, where the *e* is heard like short *i*. Vulgar speakers are guilty of the same irregularity in *engine*, as if written *ingine*; but this cannot be too carefully avoided».

»§ 104 . . . nothing is so vulgar and childish as to hear *swivel* and *heaven* pronounced with the *e* distinctly, or *novel* and *chicken* with the *e* suppressed».

»§ 101 [On *obleege* / *oblige*] . . . we not unfrequently hear it now pronounced with the broad English *i*¹, in those circles where, a few years ago, it would have been an infallible mark of vulgarity».

»§ 144. *housewife*, pronounced *huzzwiff* . . . *Midwife* is sometimes shortened in the same manner by the vulgar²».

»§ 170 . . . and, as it would be gross to a degree to sound the *a* in *castle*, *mask* and *plant*, like the *a* in *palm*, *psalm*, &c. so it would be equally exceptionable to pronounce the *o* in *moss*, *dross*, and *frost*, as if written *mauwse* [sic], *drawse* and *frawst*³».

»§ 210. *Plait*, a fold of cloth, is regular, and ought to be

¹ i.e. as in *ride*.

² But cf. N. [mid'wifəri] *midwifery*.

³ Cf. p. 40 above.

pronounced like *plate*, a dish; pronouncing it so as to rhyme with *meat* is a vulgarity»¹.

»§ 218. There is a corrupt pronunciation of this diphthong [sc. *au*] among the vulgar, which is, giving the *au* in *daughter*, *sauce*, *saucer* and *saucy*, the sound of the Italian *a*, and nearly as if written *darter*, *sarce*, *sarcer*, and *sarcy*; but this pronunciation cannot be too carefully avoided. *Au* in *sausage* also, is sounded by the vulgar with short *a*, as if written *sassage*; but in this, as in the other words, *au* ought to sound *awe*».

»§ 224. The familiar assent *ay* for *yes*, is a combination of the long Italian *a* in the last syllable of *papa*, and the first sound of *e*. If we give the *a* the sound of that letter in *ball*, the word degenerates into a coarse, rustic pronunciation. Though in the House of Commons, where this word is made a noun, we frequently, but not correctly, hear it so pronounced, in the phrase *the ayes have it*».

»§ 238. *Leant*, the past time and participle of to *lean*, is grown vulgar: the regular form *leaned* is preferable²».

»§ 241. The word *great* is sometimes pronounced as if written *greet*, generally by people of education, and almost universally in Ireland; but this is contrary to the fixed and settled practice in England. That this is an affected pronunciation, will be perceived in a moment by pronouncing this word in the phrase, *Alexander the great*; for those who pronounce the word *greet*, in other cases will generally in this rhyme it with *fate*. It is true the *ee* is the regular sound of this diphthong; but this slender sound of *e* has, in all probability, given way to that of *a* as deeper and more expressive of the epithet *great*».

¹ To-day the normal usage is *plait* [plæt] v. and sb. (as *plaits* [of hair]) and *pleat* [plijt] v. and sb. ('fold of cloth'); see further NED. s. vv. *Plait* sb., *Pleat* sb. (here — in a volume published in 1907 — NED. still records [pleit] as a possible pronunciation of *plait*).

² See p. 55, note.

»§ 247. *Cheesecake*, sometimes pronounced *chizcake* and *breech*, *britch*, I look upon as vulgarisms».

»§ 252. *Either* and *neither* are . . . often pronounced *eye-ther* and *nigh-ther* . . . Analogy, however, without hesitation, gives the diphthong the sound of long open *e* and rhymes them with *breather*, one who breathes. This is the pronunciation Mr. Garrick always gave to these words, and which is undoubtedly the true one. We sometimes, indeed, hear the diphthongs in these words sounded like slender *a*, as if written *ay-ther* and *nay-ther*, but this pronunciation must be carefully avoided».

»§ 253. *Ei* has the sound of long open *i* in *height* and *sleight* rhyming with *white* and *right*. *Height*, is indeed, often heard rhyming with *eight* and *weight*, and that among very respectable speakers».

»§ 267. *Ew* is sometimes pronounced like *aw* in the verb to *chew*, but this is gross and vulgar. To *chew* ought always to rhyme with *new*, *view*, & c.»¹

»§ 268 . . . the word *ewe* . . . is pronounced exactly like *yew* . . . There is a vulgar pronunciation of this word as if written *yoe*, rhyming with *doe*, which must be carefully avoided».

»§ 293 . . . the vulgar . . . instead of *o-je-ous* and *te-je-ous* say *o-jus* and *te-jus*»².

»§ 294. *Indian* . . . ought, though contrary to respectable usage, to be pronounced as if written *Indyan*, and nearly as *In-je-an*³».

»§ 299. The general and almost universal sound of this diphthong [sc. oɪ] is that of *a* in *water*, and the first *e* of *me-tre*.

¹ *Chaw* v. was regarded by NED. as vulgar in a volume published in 1889 (*s.v.*). To-day the verb hardly exists; in so far as it does (*the dog was c h a w i n g a bone, this lane's got completely c h a w e d u p with track-tyres* would be two possible sentences), it is perfectly U (*chaw-bacon* sb. 'a bumpkin' is surely obsolete to-day — the last occurrence in NED. (*s. v.*) is from 1880).

² N [ˈoudjəs], [ˈtɪjdjəs].

³ Is [ˈindʒən] the »respectable usage» intended?

This double sound is very distinguishable in *boil, toil, spoil, joint, point, anoint* &c. which sound ought to be carefully preserved, as there is a very prevalent practice among the vulgar of dropping the *e*, and pronouncing these words as if written *bile, tile, &c.*»

»§ 300. I remember, very early in life, to have heard *coin* pronounced as if written *quine* by some respectable speakers; but this is now justly banished as the grossest vulgarity».

»§ 309. *Soot* is vulgarly pronounced so as to rhyme with *but, hut*, &c. but ought to have its long regular sound, rhyming with *boot*».

»§ 311. *Moor*, a black man, is regular in polite pronunciation, and like *more* in vulgar».

»§ 317. To *wound* is sometimes pronounced so as to rhyme with *found*; but this is directly contrary to the best usage».

»§ 327. The vulgar . . . pronounce the *o* obscurely, and sometimes as if followed by *r*, as *winder, feller*, for *window* and *fellow*; but this is almost too despicable for notice».

»§ 333. In *Mantua*, the town of Italy, both vowels are heard distinctly. The same may be observed of the habit so called; but in *mantuamaker* vulgarity has sunk the *a* and made it *mantumaker*. The same vulgarity at first, but now sanctioned by universal custom, has sunk both letters in *victuals*, and its compounds *victualling* and *victualler*, pronounced *vittles, vittling* and *vittler*».

»§ 341. *Guild*, in *Guildhall*, is, by the lower people of London, pronounced so as to rhyme with *child*; but this is directly opposite to the best usage».

»§ 374. The vulgar drop this letter [*sc.* *ɒ*] in *ordinary* and *extraordinary* making them *or'nary* and *extr'or'nary*; but this is a gross abbreviation; the best pronunciation is sufficiently short, which is *ord'nary* and *extrord'nary*; the first in three, and the last in four syllables¹».

¹ To-day *or'nary* is an American dialect form well-known to the English from light fiction; *extr'or'nary* is a form which might well belong to the speech of a drunk gentleman (cf. also p. 41, above).

»§ 393. *Drought* (dryness) is vulgarly pronounced *drowth*».

»§ 404. L . . . is sometimes suppressed in *fault*; but this suppression is become vulgar. In *soldier*, likewise, the *l* is sometimes suppressed, and the word pronounced *so-jer*; but this is far from being the most correct pronunciation».

»§ 410 . . . our best speakers do not invariably pronounce the participial *ing*, so as to rhyme with *sing*, *bring*, and *ring*».

»§ 462 . . . the words [*sc. tutor*, *tumult*, *tumour*] ought to be pronounced as if written *tewtor*, *tewmult*, *tewmour*, &c. and neither, *tshootur*, *tshoomult*, *tshoomour*, . . . nor *tootor*, *toomult*, *toomour*, as they are often pronounced by vulgar speakers»¹.

»§ 415 . . . pronouncing it [*sc. swoon*] *soon*, is vulgar . . . It [*sc. w*] is sometimes dropped in the last syllable of *awkward*, as if written *awkard*; but this pronunciation is vulgar».

The ephemeral nature of our present system of linguistic class-indicators is very clear from the above citations from Walker. Nearly all the points mentioned by him — only one hundred and sixty years ago — are now »dead» and without class-significance, in that one of the pronunciations given is to-day no longer known in any kind of English save dialect. Only one of Walker's class-indicators (participial [in] for [iŋ], § 410) has been recognised by me as such above (p. 39) and even that one I have regarded as belonging to an era earlier than my own. In three cases of double pronunciations, to-day's U alternative is chosen by Walker as the non-U one².

¹ N : as recommended by Walker.

² Viz.: § 252 — to-day *either*, *neither* are U ['aiðə], ['naiðə] / non-U ['ijðə], ['nijðə]; § 309 — *soot* is U [sut] / non-U [suwt] ([sət] is, to-day, American); § 100 — Walker accepts ['dɑ:bi], ['bɑ:kli] *Derby*, *Berkeley* as »polite usage», although he does not regard ['dɑ:bi], [bɑ:kli] as vulgar, but, to-day, the former are

Among European languages, English is, surely, the one most suited to the study of linguistic class-distinction. I do not really know how far such a thing may exist in others. In Finnish, I have the impression that no phenomena of the sort exist. In German, there may well have been something comparable; certainly, I recall that, in good Potsdam society of the late twenties, the expression *küss' die hand* (on introduction to a female) was definitely frowned on — but this society has vanished »swā hēo nō wāre». In Russian, the distinction between the two plurals of *ofitser* 'officer' — *ofitsery* and *ofitsera* — is certainly one of class. There seems to be remarkably little literature on the subject save perhaps (rather naturally) by Russians and / or as concerns Russian¹. It is to be hoped that more studies of linguistic class-distinction in the European languages will one day be forthcoming².

However, the general concept of a certain variant of a language appertaining to a certain section of its speakers (e.g. old women, or children) is one very well-known to anthropologists and it is, no doubt, in the African jungle and among the

definitely non-U, the latter U (p. 37 above). As to further points. To-day there would not be anything non-U in making *Moor/more* homonyms (p. 38 above), though to keep them separate is legitimate; the former procedure is non-U to Walker (§ 311). In § 327, Walker stigmatises the pronunciation [ʼfɛlə] *fellow* as »almost too despicable for notice»; to me, however, [ʼfɛlə] is old-fashioned U, though I use [ʼfɛlou] myself. In § 238, Walker states that *leant* »is grown vulgar» (as against *leaned*); to-day *leant/leaned* is hardly an indicator though most U-speakers prefer *leant*. (For *chew/chaw* § 267, see my note *ad loc.*).

¹ Cf., particularly, V. Zhirmunskij, *Nacional'nyi yazyk i sotsial'nye dialekty* (and *Primechaniya*).

² In this context I must emphasise something that I said in the first *Vilém Mathesius Memorial Lecture* (Prague, 1948), pp. 8—9, viz. that studies of this kind should only be undertaken by native speakers.

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Tauno F. Mustanoja

Red Indians¹ that we shall find the generalised form of the linguistic indicators of our English class-distinction. This is a suitable point at which to end this article, for we have now reached that awkward terrain where Linguistics marches with Anthropology — and the anthropologists have, alas, not been appreciably active here.

Birmingham

ALAN S. C. ROSS

