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'Voicing the Text': 'Speakers', Speakers, and the Performative Anthology

Lynda Mugglestone

A *speaker*, as the first edition of the *OED* confirmed, was 'a title of books containing pieces adapted for recitation or reading aloud'. William Enfield's *Speaker; or, Miscellaneous Pieces Selected from the Best English Writers*, first published in 1774, was used to verify its date of first use. Nevertheless, as this article explores, Enfield's work — like that of the many imitations, adaptations, and appropriations produced across Britain from the late eighteenth century onwards — was defined by its innovative structural hybridity rather than the textual features of its title. Setting up a type of performative anthology in which orality and literacy effectively combined, the assembled 'pieces' were, importantly, prefaced by elocutionary instruction that inculcated delocalized and 'standard' norms of speech. Popular educational texts, 'speakers' thereby present a notably under-investigated resource, able to illuminate the tensions between diversity (and literary inclusiveness) as set against the forces of spoken anglicization and the hegemonies of supra-local speech, as well as the arresting means by which such practical standardization was intentionally to be achieved.

In English, *speaker* was, by 1800, already densely polysemous. Used in the general sense of 'one who speaks and talks', it easily encompassed each and every user of spoken discourse.[1] The capacity of select *speakers* to speak in front of others, or to intercede or persuade, presented other well-established trajectories. Defined by their public rather than private roles, *speakers*, as the *OED* explains, had wielded power in various professional or political assemblies since the fifteenth century.

From the late eighteenth century, however, as this article explores, we can document the emergence of a new and distinctive sense-development. Spurred by the appearance of William Enfield's immensely popular *Speaker; or, Miscellaneous Pieces, Selected from the Best English Writers* in 1774 (*Fig. 1*), a *speaker* came to be a textual form rather than human subject.[2] A title of books containing 'pieces of writing adapted for recitation or reading aloud', the relevant sense in the *OED* confirms (*speaker*, sense 7). Enfield's title was appropriated as an illustrative citation. The publication of its first edition confirmed its date of first use. Enfield's use of *piece* in the sense 'A passage for recitation; a short speech' demarcated a further semiotic shift. In the modern *OED*, the first evidence of the latter is dated, erroneously, to 1822.[3] But in Enfield's title page, both *speaker* and *piece* were combined, setting out what was, in effect, a new type of educational anthology consisting of relatively short extracts intended for oral performance, and in which voice emerged as a matter of particular concern.[4]

Relevant antecedents can be traced, in part, in eighteenth-century miscellanies (and the 'sociable reading' they encouraged), as well as in the kind of popular anthologizing extensively documented by Leah Price and in which, as Andrew Piper notes, 'mixedness' is a prime characteristic.[5] Enfield's emphasis on his title page on the inclusion of 'MISCELLANEOUS PIECES' clearly draws on these heterogeneous generic forms, just as his mention of the 'BEST ENGLISH WRITERS' alludes to a form of qualitative validation for the 'pieces' thereby assembled.

Other precedents include the anthologies aimed at eighteenth-century 'spouters' in which literature and spoken performance were expressly combined.[6] There were,

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[1] See the entry 'speaker' (sense 1.a) in *Oxford English Dictionary* <https://www.oed.com> [accessed 18 February 2025].

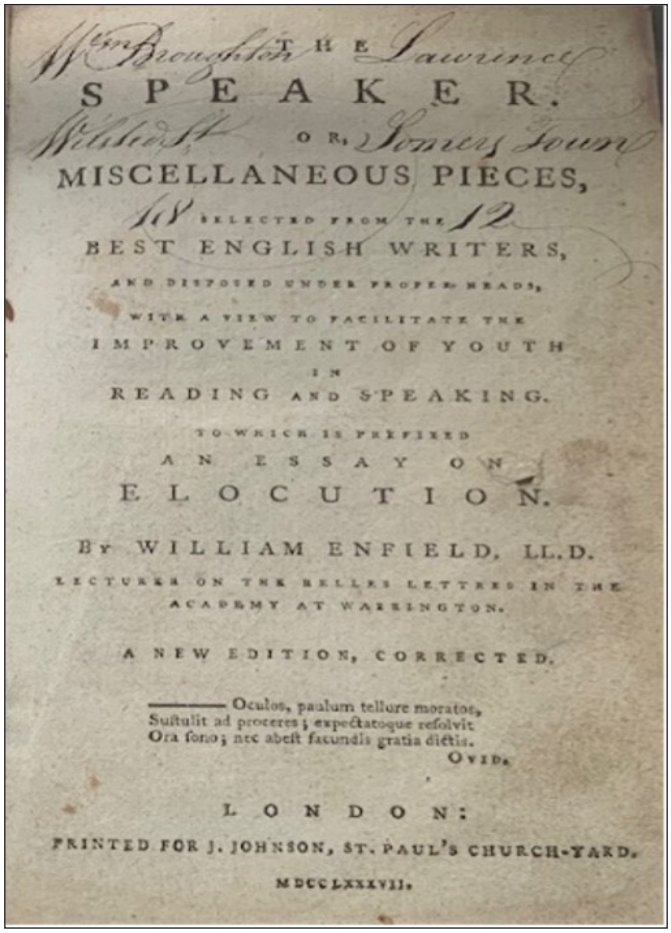
[2] William Enfield, *The Speaker; or, Miscellaneous Pieces, Selected from the Best English Writers* (Johnson, 1774), title page.

[3] See the entry 'piece' (n., sense II.14.g) in *Oxford English Dictionary* <https://www.oed.com> [accessed 18 February 2025].

[4] This article is based on a comparative examination of almost a hundred 'Speakers', identified by their structural components and intended situational use.

[5] See especially, Leah Price, *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel: From Richardson to George Eliot* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), doi:10.1017/CBO9780511484445; Andrew Piper, 'The Art of Sharing: Reading in the Romantic Miscellany', in *Bookish Histories: Books, Literature, and Commercial Modernity, 1700–1900*, ed. by Ida Ferris and Paul Keen (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 126–47 (p. 128).

[6] Abigail Williams, '"A Just and Graceful Elocution": Miscellanies and Sociable Reading', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 41.1 (2017), pp. 179–96.



THE
SPEAKER.
OR,
MISCELLANEOUS PIECES,
SELECTED FROM THE
BEST ENGLISH WRITERS,
AND DISPOSED UNDER PROPER HEADS,
WITH A VIEW TO FACILITATE THE
IMPROVEMENT OF YOUTH
IN
READING AND SPEAKING.
TO WHICH IS PREFIXED
AN ESSAY ON
ELOCUTION.
By WILLIAM ENFIELD, LL.D.
LECTURER ON THE BELLES LETTRES IN THE
ACADEMY AT WARRINGTON.
A NEW EDITION, CORRECTED.
——— Oculos, paulum tellure morator,
Sustulit ad proceres; expectatoque resolvit
Ora sono; nec abest facundis gratia dictis.
OVID.
LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.
MDCCLXXXVIII.

Fig. 1: Title page of one of the many editions of Enfield's *Speaker*, complete with user annotations.

however, key differences. Spouters, Leslie Ritchie notes, were typically 'tradesmen and apprentices who met in public houses to act favorite dramatic speeches and scenes in imitation of famous London actors'.[7] As in *The Spouter's Companion; or, Theatrical Remembrancer* (1770), the assembled extracts were to be declaimed 'in the characters of Bloods, Bucks, Choice Spirits [and] Fribbles'.[8] Their gendered bias was equally obvious. 'Speakers' in contrast, were deliberately more diverse in the extracts they included (combining prose, verse, and play-texts) while their educational remit meant that schools and seminaries rather than public houses were the prime locus of the reading to be performed as well as the speech styles to be acquired. That material should be 'suitable for repetition by pupils of both sexes in schools' was another characteristic.[9]

[7] Leslie Ritchie, 'The Spouters' Revenge: Apprentice Actors and the Imitation of London's Theatrical Celebrities', *Eighteenth Century*, 53.1 (2012), pp. 41–71 (p. 41), doi:10.1353/ecy.2012.0005.

[8] *The Spouter's Companion; or, Theatrical Remembrancer* (Cooke, 1770), title page.

[9] A. K. Isbister, *Lessons on Elocution and Good Reading for Girls* (Longmans, Green, 1870), p. iv.

'Spouting' was firmly proscribed. As a mid-century 'speaker' by Charles Richson instructed, 'Equally avoid [...] everything approaching what is termed "mouthing" or "spouting" in reading.'[10]

The status of 'speakers' as works of practical pedagogy was, as this suggests, a further distinctive component. Enfield's *Speaker* was based on the courses that, from 1770, he delivered at the Dissenting Academy in Warrington, Lancashire, and the dedicated lessons on pronunciation he introduced.[11] 'Polite Literature', as the Warrington Academy's founding *Proposals* made plain, was a key aspect of the syllabus.[12] So, too, was formal instruction in language, especially in grammar, oratory, and the arts of speech. Surviving lecture materials on oratory, transcribed by Enfield's predecessor, John Seddon, run to some seven hundred pages.[13] Material in Enfield's *Speaker* was, in contrast, condensed into a single volume, bipartite in structure, in which the chosen 'pieces' were prefaced by an expository 'Essay on Elocution' containing detailed instructions on 'reading aloud'. As both title page and advertising stressed, the volume was intended 'to facilitate the Improvement of Youth in Reading and Speaking'.[14] From the beginning, anthologized texts and articulatory instruction went hand in hand.

It was to be a highly successful format. 'The Speaker, compiled for the use of schools by the late Rev. Dr. Enfield, has obtained a circulation so extensive and so permanent, as to place it alike above the need of praise and beyond the reach of censure', Esther Hewlett stated in unqualified admiration in 1826.[15] By 1800 some thirty editions and reprints had been published in both Britain and America.[16] Other 'Speakers' continued to appear for much of the nineteenth century courtesy of a range of works in which Enfield's methods were variously adopted, appropriated, and extended. Mary Weightman's *The Juvenile Speaker [...] for the Instruction of Youth in the Art of Reading* (1787) was an early example, as was John Walker's *Academic Speaker* containing texts *Proper to be Read and Recited by Youth at School* (in its third edition by 1797). Others became institutions in

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[10] Charles Richson, *The Elements of Elocution and Correct Reading* (National Society, 1860), p. 1.

[11] The records of the Trustees of Warrington Academy note that Enfield spent 'one morning every week in PRACTICAL EXERCISES, to improve the students in reading, speaking, and composition'. See 'A Report of the State of the Academy at Warrington 28 June 1770' ([n. pub.], 1770), p. 2.

[12] *PROPOSALS for Carrying into Execution A PLAN for the Liberal Education of YOUTH by Instructing Them in the Most Important Branches of Literature* (Warrington, 1754).

[13] Oxford, Harris Manchester College, MS Lectures on Oratory by Rev. John Seddon (*c.* 1765–7). MS Seddon 2, f.3.

[14] See, for example, advertisements placed in the *General Evening Post*, 7 January 1775, and the *London Chronicle*, 14–16 March 1775.

[15] Esther Hewlett, *The New Speaker; or, Selections from the Most Esteemed Authors in Prose and Verse* (Simpkin and Marshall, 1826), p. 1.

[16] See R. C. Alston, *A Bibliography of the English Language from the Invention of Printing to the Year 1800*, 10 vols (Janus Press, 1974), VI, pp. 76–80.

their own right: David Bell's *Modern Reader and Speaker*, first published in Dublin in 1850, reached its fifty-second edition by 1879. John Carpenter's *School Speaker*, in its fifth edition by 1837, remained in print in various versions until the 1900s. Enfield's work, however, was seen as fundamental. 'The aim of the Author of the present work has been to supply a Reading Book which shall be to the present generation of students what "Enfield's Speaker" was to him in his own school-days', as another *New Speaker* by John Connery affirmed in 1861.[17] 'Reading', as for Enfield, related primarily to spoken praxis, informing both the selection of 'pieces' that Connery chose to include, as well as the expanded 'introductory Essay on Elocution' which, at over 130 pages, was, as he declared, now 'more reliable and complete than anything of the kind previously presented to the public'.

Numerous works across the nineteenth century would, in practice, replicate this distinctive binary by which, in structural terms, a recitative anthology was coupled with a didactic remit in which 'standard' authors and a 'standard' voice were made staple elements. As a result, whether *speakers* are indeed best defined, *pace* the *OED*, by the presence or absence of a particular word in the title — or instead by distinctive aspects of their form and use — prompts other aspects of critical review. Connery's *New Speaker*, for example, clearly satisfied criteria of both kinds. Conversely, Harold Ford's *The Art of Speaking and Reading* (1888) did not, even if its engagement with Enfield's principles (and practice) was overt. A lecturer in the art of elocution at St Bede's College in Manchester, Ford prefaced a lengthy selection of 'Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose and Verse' (including Shakespeare, Felicia Hemans, Walter Scott, and Thackeray) by some thirty pages of vocal instruction in which the defects of 'vicious' enunciation, alongside the remedial desiderata of a delocalized and 'received' speech, were made plain.

Richson's *Elements of Elocution and Correct Reading*, with its opening invocation to 'Avoid provincialisms, and all vulgarity and peculiarity of voice and expression' (p. 1), provides a similar example. Like Ford (and Enfield), Richson's *Elements* adopted a bipartite structure by which 'reading' (courtesy of an extensive collection of extracts) and 'elocution' (based on the provision of detailed articulatory information) were carefully combined. Further examples are easy to find, as in, for example, Alexander Isbister's *Outlines of Elocution and Correct Reading* (1870) in which a lengthy excursus on articulatory phonetics, gesture, and Victorian language attitudes coexisted with an anthologized collection of practice texts. *The Theatrical Speaker* (1840) containing 'A Selection of the Newest and Most Popular Recitations' is, in contrast, formally a

[17] John Connery, *The New Speaker: With an Essay on Elocution* (Saunders, Otley, 1861), prefatory note.

speaker in the terms specified by the *OED*. But it lacks both the binary structure that Enfield's work consolidated, along with his distinctive (and normative) emphasis on vocal instruction.[18] What a 'Speaker' is, and how they were used, in both literary and linguistic terms, is the subject of the following two sections. On one level, as we will see, 'Speakers' presented a transnational literary landscape in which Scottish, Irish, and English writings collectively evoked British heritage and identity. Yet, alongside this, was a firm insistence on unitary models of orality in which evidence of diatopic diversity was productive not only of unease but overt proscription.

'Speakers', speakers, and the texts in hand

'Speakers' might therefore be a relatively new text-type but they were swiftly imbricated in the teaching of British literature, and, above all, the spoken language in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The need for reform in both had been seen as a highly topical issue, forcefully expressed by the Irish writer Thomas Sheridan. As he pointed out in his *British Education; or, The Sources of the Disorders of Great Britain* (1756), the formal teaching of English was typically restricted to elementary instruction and matters of basic literacy while, for older students, classical rather than that British literature dominated the syllabus, especially in elite instruction. If, in consequence, 'a polished and rational people' was thereby 'at great expense of labour, time, and money to have their children instructed in languages which can never be any use to them in life', it was equally troubling that they also 'neglect entirely to have them instructed in one which would be of perpetual use and ornament to them in whatever rank or station they were placed'.[19] The result, he stressed, was a 'shameful neglect of our own language' as well as its literary heritage such that 'there are no persons trained to the art of reading well, nor have we ever an opportunity of hearing any of our own poems skilfully and gracefully recited' (pp. 201, 309).

Sheridan not only made a convincing case for educational reform but taught, extensively, by example. In his later 'Attick evenings' or in the lecture courses he delivered in London, Bath, Dublin, Oxford, and Edinburgh, vernacular literary texts were, without exception, chosen as the vehicles for exemplary vocal performance.[20] Meanwhile, in the detailed schema for education that Sheridan proposed at both

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[18] *The Theatrical Speaker: A Selection of the Newest and Most Popular Recitations of the Present Day* (printed by Caldwell, 1840).

[19] Thomas Sheridan, *British Education; or, The Sources of the Disorders of Great Britain* (printed for Dodsley, 1756), pp. 201–02.

[20] See William Benzie, *The Dublin Orator: Thomas Sheridan's Influence on Eighteenth-Century Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (University of Leeds, 1972). Sheridan's *Elements of English Being a New Method of Teaching the Whole Art of Reading Both with Regard to Pronunciation and Spelling* (printed for Dilly, 1786) offers an important guide to his reform of elementary instruction, and the teaching methods to be adopted.

elementary and higher levels, articulatory training, and access to a shared accent for all, was posited not only as an object of desire but as a way to end sociocultural division.[21] Method, information, and education were the linchpins of his intended reform such that, as he noted in relation to his later pronouncing dictionary and prosodial grammar, 'a similar uniformity of pronunciation [...] may be spread through all parts of the globe, wherever English shall be taught by its aid.'[22]

In the intellectual hinterland that gave rise to Enfield's *Speaker*, the legacies and import of Sheridan's work were palpable. As surviving manuscript materials from Warrington Academy confirm, the syllabus, even before Enfield's appointment, had formally embraced Sheridan's emphasis on vernacular literature and language as taught spheres in ways that included instruction in a normatively instituted mode of speech. 'There is every week a particular lecture on PRONUNCIATION, wherein the greatest care is taken to form the students to a just habit of reading and speaking', as the 'Report' of the Trustees affirmed in 1766. It was, however, Enfield's innovatory reframing of these ideas within the device of a performative anthology that facilitated their wider implementation across a range of educational establishments. While anthologies, as Price suggests, play a significant part in 'determin[ing] not simply who gets published and what gets read but who reads and how' (p. 3), there was, in the 'Speaker' as text, to be a new, and arresting, focus on 'how', accompanied by new and unprecedented levels of detail in relation to speech style and the individual voice.

Seen in educational terms, anthologies were, of course, works of obvious utility, not least in terms of their self-evident economies of space and expense. The advantage of a compact library, comprised within a single book, was a familiar conceit, advanced by, for example, Isbister in 1870. A collection of extracts, actively deployed, he stressed, was of far greater value 'than a whole library *un*used'. It also afforded new and important democracies of knowledge: 'I do not admit that literature, even the higher literature, belongs only to the few.'[23] Hewlett set out the virtues of her own *New Speaker*, and the extracts it contained, in similar ways: 'It will [...] prove an agreeable addition to small libraries, as it furnishes specimens of the style of authors whose whole works are too voluminous and expensive for general purchase' (p. 3). In school settings (and especially within the expanding education system of Victorian Britain), collective texts of this kind had undeniable value.

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[21] See further, Lynda Mugglestone, 'Sheridan in the Schoolroom', *The Teaching of English in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: Essays for Ian Michael on His 88th Birthday*, ed. by Frances Austin and Christopher Stray, special issue of *Paradigm*, 2.7 (2003), pp. 22–28; and Lynda Mugglestone, 'The Emerging Phonological Standard', in *The New Cambridge History of the English Language*, vol. III, ed by Joan Beal (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

[22] Thomas Sheridan, *A Complete Dictionary of the English Language*, 2 vols (printed for Dodsley and Dilly, 1780), I, preface.

[23] *Lessons on Elocution*, pp. v, vi, emphasis in original.

Significant, too, was the literary education that 'Speakers' provided. They might primarily be intended for recitation and recitation lessons but as Bertha Skeat, mistress of the County Girls School in Llandovery in Wales, made plain, recitation was an important means by which 'a taste for Literature may be [...] insinuated by the wary teacher'. Her *Public School Reciter* was a case in point. 'By exercising a judicious and careful *choice* in selecting poems', she argued, 'we can do a very great deal towards laying the foundations of a good literary training, and a real appreciation of beautiful poetry' while, 'at the same time [...] develop[ing] a talent for reciting with expression.'[24] Reading, and reading aloud, could, she emphasized, be harnessed to shared ends. 'The study of Elocution is inseparably connected with the study of Literature', as Alfred Macleod endorsed with reference to the principles (and praxis) he adopted across a range of schools in Aberdeen.[25]

What was recited, and why, is of similar interest. As Skeat affirms, choice and selectivity are typical features of anthologies. 'An anthology, in its basic understanding, is a collection of *picked* flowers, of *selected* texts', writes Barbara Korte.[26] Enfield's selection of writers included Young, Akenside, Shakespeare, Pope, Anna Barbauld, as well as, say, an extract from Dr John Tillotson's often reprinted seventeenth-century sermon 'Of Sincerity towards God and Man'. Later 'Speakers', however, tended to stress the diatopic as well as diachronic range of the extracts thereby assembled in ways that foregrounded particular readings of cultural heritage. 'Passages from the principal writers of past ages' as well as those from 'modern authors' had been carefully combined, the Dublin-based David Bell hence assured prospective readers of his *Modern Reader and Speaker* in 1850.[27] In similar ways, James Douglas (a teacher of English in Edinburgh) affirmed his commitment to 'living authors' alongside those of earlier periods, such that his *Selections for Recitation* demonstrated qualitative affinities between Shakespeare and Tennyson, or the shared dramatic potential of Robert Browning and Felicia Hemans, or the working-class poet Eliza Cook (1818–1889) alongside Byron and Scott.[28]

Patterns of this kind were common, reinforcing aspects of popular canon-building, if with some distinctive emphases. Extracts from, for example, George Eliot, the Brontës, or Gaskell remained rare. In contrast, Dickens quickly became a high-frequency source

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[24] Bertha M. Skeat, *A Public School Reciter* (Longmans, Green, 1898), pp. 1, 2.

[25] Alfred Macleod, *Macleod's First Text-Book of Elocution*, 3rd edn (Menzies, 1881), p. xlv.

[26] Barbara Korte, 'Flowers for the Picking: Anthologies of Poetry in (British) Literary and Cultural Studies', in *Anthologies of British Poetry: Critical Perspectives from Literary and Cultural Studies*, ed. by Barbara Korte, Ralf Schneider, and Stefanie Lethbridge (Brill, 2000), pp. 1–32 (p. 2), emphases in original.

[27] David Bell, *The Modern Reader and Speaker* (McGlashan, 1850), Advertisement to the First Edition.

[28] James Douglas, *Selections for Recitation* (Black, 1861).

text, with thirteen extracts in *Baynham's Elocution*, and six in John Forsyth's *Practical Elocutionist*.[29] Dickens's fondness for reading his own work aloud, and doing the voices in the act of composition, was, in effect, widely mirrored in recitative anthologies of this kind. The death of Little Nell, included in, for example, Ford's *Art of Speaking*, was particularly popular. Isbister's inclusion of a marked-up extract from Dickens's *Dombey and Son*, focusing on the death of Paul Dombey, remains illuminating in its directions for expressive reading and the effective, and affective, use of pause and emphasis (*Fig.* 2).

Other high-frequency sources included the English poet and humorist Thomas Hood whose 'The Song of the Shirt' with its motifs of social protest, as well as his 'The Bridge of Sighs' often featured in works from the 1850s onwards. Even more prominent was the Liverpool-born but Dublin-based Felicia Hemans. Hemans's work underpinned seven separate extracts in *Macleod's First Text-Book of Elocution* (first published in Edinburgh in 1877) and four in *Baynham's Elocution*. It is via the 'Speaker' as text that Hemans's 'Casabianca' — popularly known as 'The Boy Stood on the Burning Deck'

woke - WOKE *mind* and body - and sat *upright* in his bed. He saw them now about him. There was no grey *mist* before them - as there *had* been sometimes in the *night*. He *knew* them EVERY-ONE and *called* them by their *names*. 'And *who* is THIS? *Is* this my old *nurse?*' - asked the *child* - regarding with a *radiant* smile a figure coming in. *Yes* - YES. No *other stranger* would have shed *those* tears at *sight* of him - called him her DEAR *boy* - her PRETTY boy - her *own* - *poor* - BLIGHTED *child*. No *other* woman would have stooped down by his *bed* - and taken up his *wasted* hand - and put it to her *lips* and *breast* - as *one* who had some *right* to *fondle* it. No *other* woman would have *so* forgotten every-body there - but *him* and *Floy* - and been so *full* of TENDERNESS and PITY.

'Floy! this is a *kind* - *good* face - I *am* glad to see it *again*. *Don't* go away - old nurse - *Stay* here - Good-bye!'

'GOOD-BYE - my *child*' - cried Mrs. Pipchin - hurrying to the bed's head - 'NOT good-bye!'

'Ah, yes - good - bye! Where's *papa?*'

He FELT his *father's* breath upon his *cheek* before the *words* had parted from his *lips*. The feeble hand - waved - in the *air* - as if it cried - 'good-bye' *again*.

'Now lay me down - and - Floy - come *close* to me - and let me - *see* you!'

Fig. 2: Death of Paul Dombey, in Alexander Isbister, *Outlines of Elocution and Correct Reading* (Longmans, Green, 1870), p. 23.

[29] G. W. Baynham, *Baynham's Elocution: Select Readings and Recitations* (Blackie, 1883); John Forsyth, *The Practical Elocutionist* (Blackie, 1895).

— became such a well-known classic, often being memorized and recited in schools across Britain just as an extract headed 'Douglas to Lord Randolph', with its opening line 'My name is Norval' (taken from John Home's 1756 tragedy *Douglas*) was familiarized for earlier readers courtesy of Enfield's work. '*My name was Norval*, every evening of my life through one Christmas holidays', as Tom laments in Austen's *Mansfield Park*. In her novel Austen offered, in essence, a considered reprise of Sheridan's own thesis on elocution, education, and the arts of speech:

> The too common neglect of the qualification, the total inattention to it, in the ordinary school-system for boys, [...] the want of management of the voice, of proper modulation and emphasis, of foresight and judgment, all proceeding from the first cause, want of early attention and habit.[30]

Text selection, however, could display an equally active transnationalism. Across the nineteenth century, 'Speakers' routinely claimed to address the literature of 'our nation' in which *nation* was rendered in broad rather than narrow terms in an imagined community of both literary affiliation and Britishness. Isbister, as in his *Lessons on Elocution and Good Reading for Girls*, hence promised readers 'some of the most exquisite specimens of the literature of our native land' (p. iv), a commendation which drew together the work of Carlyle, Newman, Ruskin, and Tennyson among the assembled texts. Elsewhere, Britishness was made an organizing principle in its own right. David Bell's overarching aim was, he explained, 'a Selection in which elegance and propriety of thought are combined with eloquence of expression'. Nevertheless, in so doing, he also divided his chosen extracts into Scottish, Irish, and English while including, for example, separate sections on 'Irish melodies'. 'The poets and poetry of Ireland have not been forgotten', he reassured his readers.[31] Advertising for the second edition of his *Modern Reader and Speaker* emphasized the transnational basis of revision: 'The Extracts have been revised and enlarged with the greatest care [...] selected from the writings of the most popular authors in British, Irish, and American Literature.'

If less explicit, patterns of this kind were pervasive across many works such that they included, for example, specific sections on 'Scots ballads' or gave prominence to the writings of Robert Pollok, Joanna Baillie, John Gibson Lockhart, or Charles Mackay, or to Irish writers such as the poet and lyricist Thomas Moore (whose 'Go, let me Weep' became another staple extract). Other well-attested favourites included

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[30] Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*, 3 vols (Egerton, 1814), III, pp. 62–63. See also Susan Allen Ford, '"My name was Norval": Douglas, Elocution, and Acting in *Mansfield Park*', *Persuasions*, 43 (2021), pp. 128–42.

[31] David Bell, *Modern Reader*, Advertisement to the First Edition.

Robert Burns's 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' and 'Highland Mary', as well as 'To a Haggis' (often placed under 'Humorous' readings, and requiring its own distinctive declamatory style). Living in Ireland, Bell nevertheless remains in the minority (alongside Hewlett) in reassuring prospective readers of the absence of any sectarian feeling within his selected extracts. 'Every sentiment of a political or sectarian character has been carefully excluded', he affirmed.[32] Extracts in Welsh, in keeping with common Victorian educational proscriptions, fared somewhat differently while their omission affirmed other readings of nation, hegemony, and control.[33] Whether Hemans's lengthy residence in Wales might perhaps have acted as a form of token literary allegiance remains unknown, though it plays interestingly into her textual prominence in 'Speakers' from across the period.

Outside Shakespeare, the highest-frequency source was, however, unquestionably Walter Scott whose prominence reflects his striking familiarization within Victorian education, as well as a form of cultural priming which conceivably underpinned at least some of his enduring popularity at this time. As in Graham's *Principles of Elocution* (another bipartite text and a 'Speaker' in all but name) or, say, *Baynham's Elocution*, containing *Select Reading and Recitations*, multiple Scott extracts were included across the same work.[34] Extracts in Graham (complete with editorially invented titles) hence comprised Scott's 'Introduction to the Lord of the Isles', 'Hymn of the Hebrew Maid', 'The Resolve', 'Punishment of a Spy Whose Employers Had Betrayed Rob Roy MacGregor', as well as a section headed 'Interview between Waverley and Fergus MacIver' and a further extract with the title 'Rebecca and Ivanhoe'. Extracts in Baynham spanned 'A Dark Night's Work', 'Death of Marmion' (from Canto 6 of Scott's much longer narrative poem), 'Punishment of a Spy', 'The Trial by Combat', several sections from 'Blanche of Devan' and two extracts from *Guy Mannering*. A. M. Hartley in his *Academic Speaker* (1846) meanwhile selected the 'Death of Marmion' (one of the most popular extracts in extant Victorian 'Speakers') though he also included 'The Saxon and the Gael', a 'piece' headed 'Fitz-James and Roderick Dhu'(from Canto 5 of 'The Lady of the Lake'), and the dramatic 'Death of Bertram Risingham' (from Scott's lengthy narrative poem 'Rokeby', published in 1813).[35] As in a popular extract from Scott's 'Lay of the Last Minstrel' — variously retitled 'Love of Country' (in Hartley and

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[32] Ibid. See also, Hewlett: 'Care has been taken to admit no piece or sentiment of a party or sectarian character' (p. 3). The 'admission of political or other allusions' was also proscribed.

[33] See Martin Johnes, *Welsh Not: Elementary Education and the Anglicisation of Nineteenth-Century Wales* (University of Wales Press, 2024).

[34] William Graham, *Principles of Elocution […] to Which is Added a Selection of Pieces* (Chambers, 1837).

[35] A. M Hartley, *The Academic Speaker, A System of Elocution Designed for Schools […] and a Copious Selection of Extracts from the Best Authors* (Hamilton, 1846).

Richson), 'The Patriot's Song' (in Forsyth), and 'My Native Land' (in Carpenter's *School Speaker*) — Scott was repeatedly used to present, and perform, a rhetorical paean to a shared national identity: 'Breathes there the man, with soul so dead, | Who never to himself hath said, | This is my own, my native land!'. Isbister, to similar ends, included an extract from the Scottish poet James Thomson that he retitled 'The Glory of Britain' with its celebration of

> Happy Britannia! where the Queen of Arts,
> Inspiring vigour, Liberty abroad
> Walks, unconfined, even to thy furthest cots,
> And scatters plenty with unsparing hand.[36]

Titles, as this suggests, can be a productive source of intended affect within contemporary 'Speakers', and not least in the positive readings of nationhood, and unity amid diversity, that extracts of this kind affirm. We can, however, also see affect as a further significant point of differentiation between 'Speakers' and the generality of miscellanies or anthologies. If, in the latter, as Piper notes (p. 127), obvious organizing principles can be obscure, within 'Speakers' affect was often deployed in categorizing the assembled extracts while codifying a structural bridge between anthologizing and performance. Enfield divided his chosen texts into, for example, didactic, narrative, and pathetic — or, as defined by Samuel Johnson, those 'Affecting the passions; passionate; moving'. 'Before the publication of Dr. ENFIELD's SPEAKER, a methodical order in the arrangement of the pieces selected was not attempted, or even thought of', Mary Wollstonecraft commented with approbation: 'it is evidently the only way to render a book of this kind extensively useful.'[37] Later compilers followed, organizing extracts in relation to the emotional correlates they might produce, for speaker and listeners, when read aloud. Isbister's *Outlines of Elocution*, for example, placed Addison under 'Didactic Reading', Thackeray and Macaulay under 'Descriptive', while Brougham on 'The African Slave Trade' (another very popular piece) appeared under 'Vehement and Impassioned'.[38] Caroline Southey ('The Christian Pauper's Death-Bed') meanwhile appeared under 'Serious and Pathetic'. Descriptors of this kind hence routinely encompassed the compiler's assessment of the relevant 'piece', but also the tone, and style, to be achieved as printed extracts moved into active use and the demands of recitative performance.

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[36] *Lessons on Elocution*, p. 49. The real title of Thomson's poem was 'Britannia. A Poem'. See James Thomson, *The Four Seasons, and Other Poems* (Millar, 1735), pp. 63–79.

[37] [Mary Wollstonecraft], *The Female Reader; or, Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose and Verse* (Johnson, 1789), p. iii.

[38] A. K. Isbister, *Outlines of Elocution and Correct Reading* (Longmans, Green, 1870), p. viii.

Speaking the text and doing the voice(s)

While 'Speakers' were, as this suggests, primarily texts to be used, they were, in what is perhaps their most distinctive property, equipped with an extensive set of directives not only for the styles, but also the specific sounds, that were variously to be inculcated or suppressed. Both aesthetic and articulatory control were commended. 'Good reading', as a range of writers elaborated, was 'intelligent reading' — an expressive resource used in relation to both exegesis and understanding in which, as Macleod affirmed, 'the voice is the servant of the thought' (p. vi). 'We should [...] guard against that uniformity called *monotony*, which is an unvarying effort of the lungs and of the tones', Hartley warned (p. 9, emphasis in original). 'Declamatory pawing', as memorably described by Isbister, was equally disfavoured.[39]

There were, however, some notable emphases in other evaluative criteria that were commonly endorsed. Enfield's lectures in Warrington had, for example, been delivered 'with the design of assisting the Students [...] in acquiring a just and graceful Elocution' (p. iii). Yet, as he made plain, what was 'just and graceful' did not easily coexist with regionalized markers of pronunciation or what, in the *Speaker*, were dubbed the 'peculiarities and vulgarisms of provincial dialects' (p. xiv). Instead, localized features such as the zero-realization of /h/ in words such as *hat*, *happy*, or pronouncing 'ou' (as in *out*) like 'oo' (i.e. [u:]) were unequivocally proscribed. Enfield's use of <oo> referred to the monophthongization typical of Northern English (corresponding southern forms were diphthongal) but other stated infelicities included the 'confusion' of /v/ and /w/, or pronouncing <oi> as <i> in words such as *boil*, both features listed by John Walker as among the 'Faults of the Londoners' or Cockneys in his *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary* (1791). 'The practitioner should pay particular attention to his prevailing defects', Enfield urged, recommending the utility of elocutionary mentorship in the guise of a teacher or friend. A 'regular course of exercises', even if 'irksome and disagreeable', was likewise recommended (p. xxv).

From the beginning, the *Speaker* (and the 'Speakers' that followed) were thereby inscribed with particular performative ideals and aligned with prevailing models of linguistic prescription more widely.[40] 'Doing the voices' (and the diversity this implies) was thereby routinely dispelled in favour of one type of speech — supra-local rather than regionalized, and freighted with cultural capital in which elite and metrocentric identities were made pervasive reference models. 'These faults, and all others of the

[39] Ibid., p. vi.

[40] See Joan C. Beal, 'Prescriptivism and the Suppression of Variation', in *Eighteenth-Century English: Ideology and Change*, ed. by Raymond Hickey (Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 21–37.

same nature, must be corrected in the pronunciation of a gentleman, who is supposed to have seen too much of the world, to retain the peculiarities of the district in which he was born', as Enfield affirmed (p. xiv). Here, too, Sheridan's legacies were plain. His *Course of Lectures on Elocution* (originally delivered in Edinburgh in 1761) had specified the social affect that a standard spoken English might convey and the salience (both positive and negative) that particular variables — including /h/-loss — might possess.[41] The 'consciousness' that diatopic varieties, including Scots and his own Irish tones, inevitably had 'some degree of disgrace annexed to them' were further elements of the readerly re-education that Sheridan advocated. As he stressed, 'information' was the key to beneficial and normative change.[42] In elocutionary texts of this kind, transnationalism was both formally addressed and rhetorically subsumed within hegemonic prescriptions of a national voice for all.

The practical as well as ideological salience of the bipartite structure Enfield established is, in this respect, overt such that the assembled extracts offered a form of sustained praxis for the elocutionary tenets that the expository introduction set out, alongside the normative education in spoken standard English that should result. The remedial 'exercises' that Enfield commended (and the attendant reading of regionality as 'defect') were, in turn, to be subject to striking elaboration as the nineteenth century advanced. In Victorian texts, training in what was described as 'the physical side of Elocution' was, as by Charles Clegg, often presented under the heading of 'oral gymnastics', a collocation which unambiguously signals the application, and dedicated 'vocal exercise', deemed essential. 'The muscles of the tongue, lips, and other parts of the mouth, may be much increased [...] by suitable gymnastics', he instructed.[43] Here, too, practice made perfect.

Related models in which 'good' vowel sounds were presented as depending on a 'definite position of the organs of the speech' (and systematic knowledge of this) gained particular traction.[44] Localized variants — including the markers of transnational variation typical of Scots or Irish — were, in further manifestation of the standard language ideology espoused, depicted as the product of imperfect performance or, as John Millard indicated, as 'confusion' or vocal 'maltreatment'.[45] 'The pupil must [...]

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41 Thomas Sheridan, *A Course of Lectures on Elocution* (Strahan, 1762), pp. 37–38.

42 Ibid., pp. 30, 37.

43 Charles E. Clegg, *Clegg's Elocutionist [...] Including a Wide and Choice Selection of Poetry and Prose* (Philip, 1896), p. 17.

44 John Millard, *Grammar of Elocution* (Longmans, Green, 1882), p. 6.

45 Ibid., pp. 6, 18. On standard language ideology in relation to regional and national forms, see especially, Olivia Walsh, 'Introduction: In the Shadow of the Standard: Standard Language Ideology and Attitudes towards "Non-Standard" Varieties and Usages', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 42.9 (2021), pp. 773–82, doi:10.1080/01434632.2020.1813146.

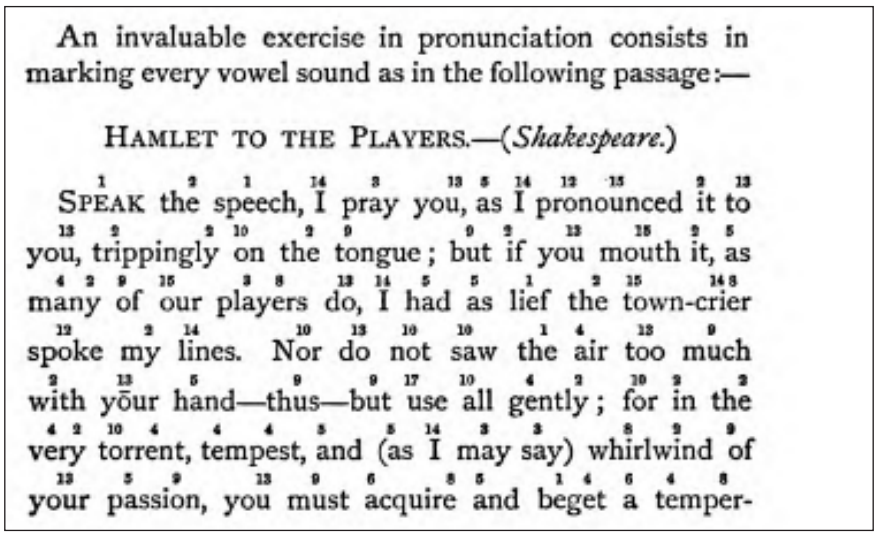
endeavour to comprehend fully the articulative mechanism of each consonant', he stressed (p. 18): 'The confusion of these related vowel sounds is one of the causes of foreign, provincial, or vulgar pronunciation' (p. 6). Clegg provided similar strictures. 'Along with the articulation exercises are given certain exercises in *pronunciation*', he stated: 'These are meant to correct the numerous blunders in vowel-quality, which are commonly called *provincialisms*' (p. 18, emphases in original). That 'national' as well as regional variation fell within this evaluative paradigm was overt. 'There are other defects which are called *national*, *provincial*, and *peculiar*', Connery directed: 'These, too, must be surmounted' (p. 13, emphases in original).

The knowledge of articulatory mechanisms that this assumed can nevertheless seem daunting. Isbister, like others, divided sounds and their production with reference to specific features of the vocal tract. This required pupils to familiarize themselves with the proper positioning of 'Lingua-dentals' ('*Formed by the application of the tongue to the fore-teeth*') or, for example, 'Lingua-palatals' ('*Formed by the application of the fore-part of the tongue to the fore-part of the palate*'). The former, Isbister elaborated, might be practised either via individual words ('*th*ane, *th*ink, *th*rough, *th*wack, *th*ousand*th*') or by means of elocutionary tongue-twisters such as '*Th*eodore *Th*ick*th*orn *th*rust *th*istles *th*rough *th*e *th*ick of his *th*umb'.[46] For lingua-palatals, the equivalent exercise was 'His sister is a thistle-sifter, and she sifts thistles with a thistle-sifter'. A form of quasi-transcription was often recommended, marking sounds in relation to their articulatory qualities in a system of numerical classification (*Fig. 3*). Numerical diacritics were familiar features in pronouncing dictionaries such as those by Sheridan and Walker. Many 'Speakers' identified works of this kind as particularly useful for classroom use, not least given the supra-local transcriptions they provided for every word.

Prescriptive and proscriptive agendas of this kind were, we should note, accompanied by a commendable diversity of author demographics. Enfield had, of course, worked in Warrington in Lancashire. Among the later exponents of practical phonetics and readerly re-education, Richson taught in Manchester, Clegg in Bradford, Alexander Hartley and John Forsyth in Glasgow, and John Millard at the City of London School. The Bell dynasty — David Bell on Lower-Abbey Street in Dublin, Alexander Melville Bell in Edinburgh, and their father, Alexander Bell in London — offer particularly eloquent testimony in this respect. Meanwhile, George Vandenhoff offered elocutionary instruction in Liverpool, and Bertha Skeat (as well as writers such as Thomas Edwards) in Wales.[47] Isbister was headmaster of the Stationers' School in London and heavily

[46] *Outlines of Elocution*, p. 5, emphases in original.

[47] Edwards taught in Cardiff and published his *Elocution and Oratory*, 'Designed for Classes and Private Students', in 1893.



An invaluable exercise in pronunciation consists in marking every vowel sound as in the following passage:—

HAMLET TO THE PLAYERS.—(*Shakespeare.*)

SPEAK the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with yōur hand—thus—but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temper-

Fig. 3: Alfred Macleod, *Macleod's First Text-Book of Elocution*, 3rd edn (Menzies, 1881), p. xliii.

involved in materials for the emergent national education system. As Alfred Macleod records, his own formal appointment by the Aberdeen School Board to the local High School for Girls (as well as the 'public schools of Aberdeen') was the impetus behind his subsequent publications. As he confirmed, 'when the School Board of Aberdeen resolved that the pupils and pupil-teachers of their schools should receive regular training in Elocution, and instructed the editor with that duty, it became necessary to provide such a text book' (p. iii). If Macleod's Scottishness was undoubted, 'training', as he made plain, was driven by the desire to displace the local affiliations that voice might otherwise reveal. That 'a correct pronunciation should be attained as early as possible in the study of Elocution' was axiomatic. So, too, was the implied equivalence of correctness with a form of speech based on strongly Anglocentric and, indeed, elite metrocentric models. 'The pupil will make every endeavour to get rid of any false or local pronunciation', he instructed. In aesthetic as well as articulatory terms, the regionalized was deemed 'offensive to the ear of [an] audience' and, Macleod added, potentially 'obstructive of their sympathetic attention' (pp. xiv–xv).

'Speakers' could, by extension, document diatopic features with marked specificity while also recommending their disuse in ways that served to place Victorian phonology and its coexisting variables in an arresting discourse of stigma as well as shibboleth. The role of *h*-fullness as a delocalized marker was a case in point. While its zero-realization in initial position typified (and typifies) a range of regional forms, its presence as a feature of 'good English', first isolated by Sheridan in 1762, prompted extensive directives. According to George Vandenhoff, it 'deserved a whole chapter [...] with a view to repairing

the neglect and outrages that are hourly offered to it'. Judged 'a gross vulgarism' (and 'a fatal blot in ordinary conversation'), habits of [h]-loss were, he added, freighted with affective stigma and 'calculated to produce a great prejudice against the offender' which the forces of education and elocutionary application could now remove.[48] Similar precepts framed the realization of *ing* which, as Connery confirmed, was a feature that 'requires particular accuracy in its enunciation'. Speakers 'in Lancashire and some other parts of England', he added, 'make the articulation too close [...] and pronounce *thing* as if it were written *think*'; those in the South meanwhile 'say *singin* for *singing*, *diggins* for *diggings*' or, still worse, '*mounting* for *mountain*' (p. 37).

Still more problematic in diatopic terms was the fact that 'Speakers' uniformly prescribed the use of /ʌ/ in *up* and /ʊ/ in *pull* — a split that marked the phoneme inventory of southern rather than northern regions (and was conventionally delimited by the Trent).[49] The lengthened vowel in words such as *bath* and *fast*, a change in progress which exhibited similar geographical diffusion, was another feature that texts of this kind sought to codify. So, too, was the ongoing diphthongization (like '*a-ee*', Alexander Bell explained) in words such as *take*. 'The omission of this final element of these beautiful vowels is a marked provincialism', Bell noted of monophthongal realizations within his *New Elucidation of the Principles of Speech* in 1849, a work which contained, as its title page affirmed, 'numerous practical exercises, for the correction of imperfect utterance'.[50] The presence of the closing vowel glide was, he emphasized, obligatory in 'good' and 'standard' speakers. Instruction even at the very earliest levels could implement strictures of this kind (*Fig. 4*). '"Prevention is better than cure"', as Bell commented on other articulatory matters which, to his mind, might require normative redress: 'such elementary disfigurements of adult speech ought to have been rendered impossible by attention in the nursery and school-room.'[51]

Readings of language and place within contemporary 'Speakers' could therefore display a marked unease. As for Alexander Bell, the 'Scotch bagpipe', and its accompanying metalanguage, might provide an evocative image in explaining the nature of articulatory mechanisms and the breath. '[It] gives an excellent and most convincing illustration of the comparative efficacy [...] of the lungs', he stated: 'See the piper, when the bag is only half-filled, tuning the long drones! how his arm jerks on the wind-bag! [...] hear the harsh and uneven notes that come jolting out from the

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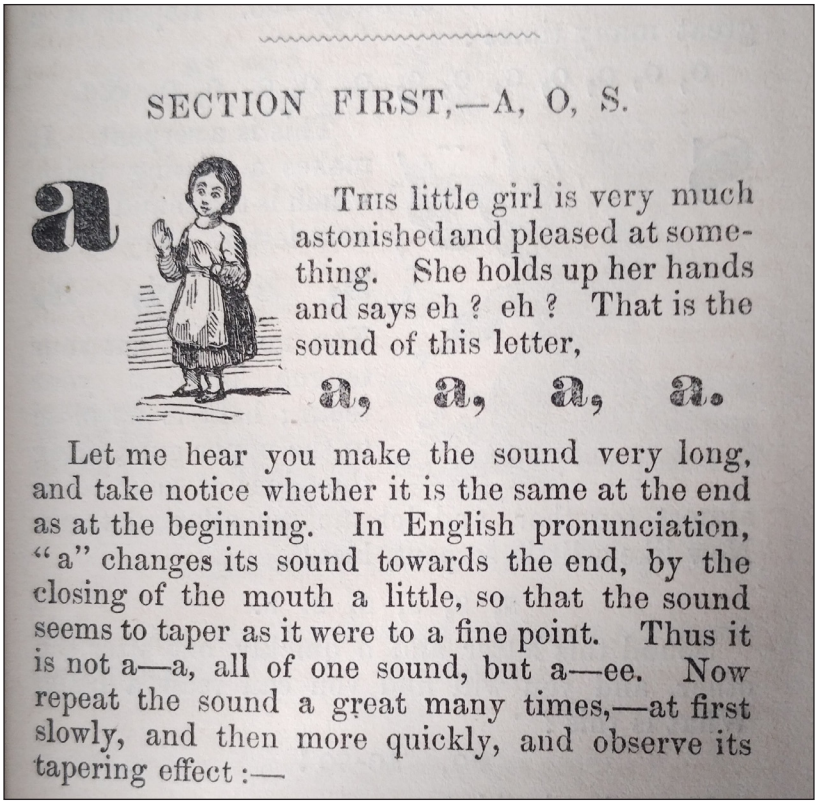
[48] George Vandenhoff, *The Art of Elocution* (Sampson & Low, 1846), pp. 32–33.

[49] See, for example, Connery, pp. 26, 30.

[50] Alexander Melville Bell, *A New Elucidation of the Principles of Speech and Elocution [...] The Whole Forming a Complete Directory for Articulation, and Expressive, Oral Delivery* (for the author, 1849), p. 25.

[51] Alex. Melville Bell, *The Faults of Speech: A Self-Corrector and Teachers' Manual* (Burbank, 1884), p. 6.



SECTION FIRST,—A, O, S.

a

This little girl is very much astonished and pleased at something. She holds up her hands and says eh ? eh ? That is the sound of this letter,

a, a, a, a.

Let me hear you make the sound very long, and take notice whether it is the same at the end as at the beginning. In English pronunciation, "a" changes its sound towards the end, by the closing of the mouth a little, so that the sound seems to taper as it were to a fine point. Thus it is not a—a, all of one sound, but a—ee. Now repeat the sound a great many times,—at first slowly, and then more quickly, and observe its tapering effect :—

Fig. 4: Alexander Melville Bell, *Letters and Sounds: An Introduction to English Reading* (Kennedy, [*c.* 1850–59]), p. 9.

pressure.'[52] Yet in other respects, anglicization remained the predominant ideological (and articulatory) frame — a reference point against which other national (and local) varieties were measured and found wanting. Scotch 'defects' and their vital remediation were, for example, discussed in detail by Graham (described in the 'Editor's Preface' as a 'successful and popular Lecturer upon and Teacher of Elocution in Edinburgh'). Rhoticity ('one of the points by which a Northern utterance is most readily detected in England', as Bell likewise affirmed), as well as the excessive contraction of the 'slender *a*', as in *made*, were presented as particular objects of concern, as was the propensity of Scotch speakers to sound the *a* in words such as *canal* as 'canawl', or to mispronounce the sound in *feel*.[53] 'The Scotch do not give this sound with the same delicate contraction as the English, and they do not dwell sufficiently on it', Graham observed: 'in pronouncing the word *feel*, an Englishman will dwell twice as long on the vowel as a Scotsman' (p. 15, note). In a similar remit, Bell could attempt to reassure

[52] Bell, *A New Elucidation*. p. 21.

[53] Ibid., p. 164; Graham, p. 14.

his own Scottish readers in relation to what he depicted as the problematic northern lengthening in words such as *vision* (pronounced *veesion*) or *condition* (pronounced *condeetion*). But such reassurance, especially for 'Northern speakers, ambitious of an English enunciation', again depended on a determined process of convergence and eradication: 'this need not any longer be a mark of Northern English, for there is no difficulty in producing the true sound of the English element once its formation is understood.'[54] As Alexander Bell expounded, 'when a defective articulation was to be corrected, [or] a dialectic vowel-habit anglicised', systematic practice should bring the desired results.[55]

Related Anglocentric strictures (and associated readings of 'defect' and remediation) were applied to Irish and Welsh English. As Alexander Bell explained (here in relation to the sounds of *a*), 'the Welsh always [...] mispronounce English; but a little elementary practice will supply the deficient power to any person who is conscious of the defect, and desirous of its correction.'[56] Irish enunciations of <ea> and <e> in words such as *tea*, *decent*, and *supreme* were likewise condemned, as by Graham, as a 'national peculiarity', as well as a 'violation' of 'proper English' (p. 15). The tendency to pronounce words such as *met* as *mit* (with a raised vowel) or *ill* 'nearly like *ale*' was presented as equally concerning, while enunciations of *great* as *greet*, also identified as typical of Irish speakers, fared no better.[57] David Bell was, as we have seen, working in Dublin but, here and elsewhere, he provided careful descriptions of the English diphthongal realization of *o* as in *old*, and of *a* as in *able*, as features that 'good readers' should strive to achieve irrespective of their place of habitation. Non-diphthongal enunciations, seen as typical of Scottish and Irish speakers, were, in contrast, to be avoided. As Macleod affirmed, a deregionalized and transnational English remained the aim — one that was, he noted, used by 'educated people — not in one particular district, but throughout the country' (p. xxiv).

'Speakers' as a textual phenomenon hence both harnessed and perpetuated a range of topicalities in relation to literary and linguistic transnationalism across this period. Paradoxically, as we have seen, they could draw together the literature of the 'nation' in ways that cemented the cultural contributions (and communality) of its component parts while also consolidating the unitary rhetoric of 'proper English' and the hegemonies of a spoken standard that normative constructions of accent increasingly involved. If, as Ankhi Mukherjee notes, 'ideological operations' are typically seen as 'unobtrusive'

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[54] Bell, *A New Elucidation*, p. 80.

[55] Ibid., p. iii.

[56] Ibid., pp. 43–44.

[57] Ibid., p. 84.

in the generality of anthologies, here, too 'Speakers' proved an exception to the rule.[58] In important ways therefore, they form a significant, if neglected, component not only within the anthology as genre, but also within the rise and formal codification of Received Pronunciation (RP) — a supra-local accent first formally identified by the phonetician Alexander Ellis in 1869 but which has important precursors in the work of writers such as Thomas Sheridan, John Walker, as well as Benjamin Smart, and the normative educational agendas that they advanced. 'Speakers', however, placed similar ideas in educational praxis across Britain from the very earliest points of instruction. 'I am', as Millard declared, 'convinced that if the organs of speech are thus early trained to the niceties of articulation, absolute perfection will reward the perseverance of the pupil' (p. x).

The contemporaneous narrowing of *elocution* to what Samuel Wood in 1833 deemed its 'modern sense' (in which pronunciation rather than gesture or stance predominated) presents a further aspect of the shifting parameters that educational praxis in this respect came to attest.[59] So, too, does the fact that teacher training, as well as school inspection (in a system established in 1839), adopted national models of evaluation that were closely aligned with the speech styles that 'Speakers' aimed to instil. Macleod's appointment as a teacher of elocution at the Aberdeen Training School for Male and Female Teachers is, in this, particularly telling, though the prevalence of elocutionary teaching at university level — Forsyth and Baynham were both masters of elocution at the University of Glasgow; David Bell occupied a similar role in Dublin — is equally significant, not least given the fact that many university-educated students went onto become tutors in both private and public schools. As Victorian school inspector reports attest, school assessments, held in person, often relied on a kind of performative orality in which 'good' delocalized reading was deemed a formal measure of success.[60] That the reading lesson was, by extension, frequently depicted as the 'hearing lesson' and 'bad pronunciation' deemed 'misspelling to the ear' played its own part in the rhetoric of the 'educated voice' that results.[61]

In wider terms, a standardized accent for all nevertheless remained elusive. John Stubbs, a working-class writer from Macclesfield, might depict the nineteenth century

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[58] Ankhi Mukherjee, 'The Anthology as the Canon of World Literature', in *The Cambridge History of World Literature*, ed. by Debjani Ganguly (Cambridge University Press, 2021), pp. 749–64 (p. 751), doi:10.1017/9781009064446.

[59] Rev. Samuel Wood, *A Grammar of Elocution* (Taylor, 1833), p. 11.

[60] See Lynda Mugglestone, *'Talking Proper': The Rise and Fall of the English Accent as a Social Symbol*, rev. and extended edn (Oxford University Press, 2007), Chapter 4, doi:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199250622.001.0001; and also, Ian Cushing and Julia Snell, 'The (White) Ears of Ofsted: A Raciolinguistic Perspective on the Listening Practices of the School Inspectorate', *Language in Society*, 52.3 (2023), pp. 363–86, doi:10.1017/S0047404522000094.

[61] On the reading lesson as hearing lesson, see, for example, 'The Recitation', *Public-School Journal*, October 1889, pp. 61–62.

as one of new elocutionary opportunities with the potential to effect wide-ranging 'reformation' in this respect. 'Were every person to pay attention to this, and practice it, all country, or local dialects would be abolished, and only one universally pure and correct language spoken in its stead', he stressed. Diversity was, as for Sheridan, presented as 'one of the most formidable barriers' in society. The positive impact of elocutionary instruction on 'the manners of that important class of society — a class, which the writer of these few humble pages is proud to say he belongs viz, — the labouring population' was, he added, undoubted.[62] Delocalization might, as here, be rhetorically affirmed, as well as educationally endorsed in establishments across England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland in relation to language and literature alike. As for Hardy's Tess, a double fluency might perhaps be acquired; the 'Sixth Standard' she attains in Marlott was, interestingly, dominated by Isbister's works in many schools.[63] Grace Melbury, in Hardy's *Woodlanders* (1887) and Hilda Lessways, whose delocalized voice (and recitation skills) appear in Arnold Bennett's *These Twain* (1916), are other literary recipients of instruction of this kind. Yet, at least outside the elocution class, the covert prestige of vernacular forms and the patterns of belonging and community that they affirm served, of course, for many speakers, to impose their own corrective measures for prescriptive narratives of this kind in which, as we have seen, a single national voice was repeatedly rendered a formal object of desire. 'Speakers' can present us with a fascinating example of intended unitary praxis in the supra-regionality and phonetic standardization that they both extolled and sought to implement. Voice nevertheless remained, and remains, an important and complex signifier of selfhood in which national, regional, and social identities audibly resisted both effacement and hegemonic control.

[62] John Stubbs, *A Treatise on Elocution with Hints on the Art of Reciting* (Stubbs, 1846), pp. 12–13.

[63] Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, ed. by Tim Dolin (Penguin, 2003), p. 21.