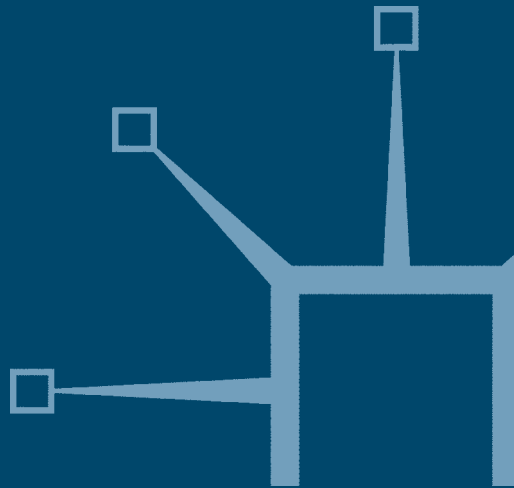


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English Pronunciation in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

Charles Jones



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Also by Charles Jones

GRAMMATICAL GENDER IN ENGLISH 950–1250

A HISTORY OF ENGLISH PHONOLOGY

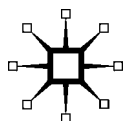
A LANGUAGE SUPPRESSED: The Pronunciation of Scots in the Eighteenth Century

THE EDINBURGH HISTORY OF THE SCOTS LANGUAGE

English Pronunciation in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

Charles Jones

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*For Derek Britton
Scholar, Colleague and Friend*

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Preface

This writer has been reminded on several occasions of his claim that the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries represent ‘the Cinderella of English historical linguistic study’ (Jones 1989: 279; Beal 2004: 83). Such a claim is, of course, a considerable underestimation of the depth of scholarship devoted to the period in the past and, increasingly, at the present time. In many respects the claim arose from a perception that there was, in the second half of the twentieth century, something of a falling away of interest in matters philological in favour of what has become almost an industry devoted to theoretical issues in general and language specific linguistics. What contribution such a concern with models for phonological change has made to the study of the English language as it has changed through time, only time will tell. Although the phrase is a well-worn cliché, there can be no doubt that the modern scholar of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century phonology stands on the shoulders of some of the greatest giants in historical English language endeavour, as the references in the body of this work well testify. In particular, without the ground-breaking scholarship of A.J. Ellis, E.K. Sheldon, H.C. Wyld, K. Luick, H.T. Kökeritz, O. Jespersen, W. Horn and M. Lehnert as well as E.J. Dobson, a work like this would have been impossible. At the same time, a study so heavily reliant on original source materials owes everything to the foresight and endeavour of R.C. Alston’s *English Linguistics 1500–1800*. In addition to the illustrious scholarship devoted to the period in the last two hundred years, it is good to see that tradition survive and grow in the twenty-first century, with the study of Late Modern English currently undergoing something of a renaissance with the appearance of important specific and general research in the field, aided by the establishment of a series of international conferences on the subject.

This work is concerned primarily with the word-level phonology of English in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While I cannot claim to have read every primary source dealing with pronunciation in the two centuries under consideration, I do attempt to provide as detailed as possible a description of what is an enormous quantity and diversity of surviving evidential writing; works ranging from school textbooks, major pronouncing dictionaries, grammatical treatises, lists of vulgarisms, pamphlets on usage, and guides to foreigners for proper English pronunciation, all demonstrating in differing ways the various forms through which contemporary observers describe and characterize the sound systems of their language, at a moment in history when a knowledge of grammatical structure and pronunciation ‘propriety’ were seen, not merely as important educational accomplishments, but as real, pertinent and relevant facilitators of social identity and advancement. At the same time, this study attempts to investigate the large number of experiments made, particularly between 1750 and 1800, at achieving orthographic change, manipulation and even large-scale reform, attempts which very often provide the modern researcher with unique and invaluable information

relating to contemporary pronunciation. This study is divided into three parts – 1700–1750, 1750–1800 and the nineteenth century. Temporal divisions of this type are, of course, quite arbitrary, although the rationale for the splitting of the eighteenth-century materials into two parts stems from the fact that it is in the second where sociophonetic observations on pronunciation tend to become prominent. The overriding interest of nineteenth-century observers in the classification of ‘vulgarisms’, and attempts at wholesale spelling reform might justify its treatment as a coherent entity. But there is much cross-reference between the three ‘periods’ throughout this work, while the parallel arrangement of vowel and consonantal typologies should enable the reader to compare contemporary descriptive techniques as they evolve and, perhaps most importantly, to witness the degrees of phonological innovation and change which were in progress in the period, as well as the reaction of language users to them.

I wish to thank the Trustees of the Leverhulme Trust for their generosity in awarding me a Major Research Fellowship, without which this study would not have been possible, and certainly not completed before my recent retirement as Forbes Professor of English Language at Edinburgh University.

CHARLES JONES
Laggan Cottage
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Part I

1700–1750

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1

Background

1.1 Grammar and education in the first half of the eighteenth century

One reason, and it is perhaps the principal one, why we are fortunate in having so much material relating to language in all its forms in the eighteenth century, is the contemporary concern for establishing the worth of linguistic knowledge in the school and university curriculum. Knowledge of language and its structure (be that language English or Latin) was viewed throughout the century as an essential component in the educational attainment of the scholar, resulting in a proliferation of handbooks and textbooks on language serving this end (Michael 1993). Yet despite the centrality of such a language component (sadly lacking in much of today's educational curriculum), many of the authors of works concerned with pronunciation, spelling, reading and general treatises on grammar in the first half of the eighteenth century show a certain ambivalence towards the worth of their undertakings in the eyes of their readership. On the one hand there is a recognition that their efforts are a response to a general, public concern at the poor standard of reading and writing ability in society at large: 'I need not inform the World of its miserable Ignorance, and Want of good Instruction in this Case: the constant Complaints of People plainly shew, that they are sensible of both, it being justly grown a common Cry' (Jones 1701: *Preface*). On the other, they are very often almost obsequiously defensive about the intellectual and social worth of the exercise they have taken upon themselves. Jones (1701: *Preface*), for instance, laments that his 'general Motive to condescend to the Undertaking; [is] mean, and despicable as to its subject (in common Estimation) ...', while the anonymous author of *The Many Advantages* (1724: 5) apologizes to the Lord High Chancellor that the 'low parts [of his study] are but like cleaning the Streets, or mending the High-Ways'; any recommendation to the study of words and grammar to those who are already 'learned' is 'but advising Eagles to spend their Time in catching Flies' (1724: 35). This schoolmaster describes the work of compilation as tedious, laborious and long and, as a practitioner himself, his appreciation of the

difficulties of grammar teaching are heartfelt (1724: viii–ix):

Both Masters and Scholars in all the European Schools, are so miserably toil'd and perplex'd in teaching and learning [Latin] Grammar, that almost all learned and ingenious Persons shun to be School-masters, but whom necessity drives to those Workhouses for the necessary subsistence [*sic*] of Life ... The Author, who has been long chain'd to these Gallies, and tugg'd at the Oar for many years, having a Fellow-feeling, and being a Fellow-sufferer with his Brethren in this kind of Calamity, is willing, among others, before he go off the Stage of this World, to cast his Mite into the common Treasury; which he hopes will contribute more to the ease and comfort of his Fellow-labourers, and their Scholars, than any thing that has ever yet been attempted, to alleviate their Bondage, and sweeten their Lives while they grind in those Mills.

Yet such a level of self-deprecation may well simply reflect a deference to patrons and potential supporters in high places, as in Tuite's obsequious *Dedication* to the young Prince William Augustus in his *The Oxford Spelling Book* (1726): 'there is not, in all the Dominions of Your Royal Grandfather; a Subject, who more zealously prays to God, to shower down all manner of Blessings on every Protestant Branch of Your Illustrious Family'.

At the same time, however, writers of grammars and spelling books in the period are also in no doubt about the ultimate value of their enterprise, one which encompasses education, religion, literacy and self-expression (Aarsleff 1983; Michael 1970, 1993). Indeed, the views of the author of *The Irish Spelling Book* (1740: *Preface*) could profitably be heeded by course organizers in some of today's university English departments:

The Children of Ireland are generally train'd up in reading idle Romances, which fill their Heads with wild, and unnatural Fancies, and corrupt their Morals also. And, whereas Books, furnish'd with Observations and Rules, setting forth the Nature of the English Language, would, with Certainty and Expedition, carry them on towards the reading and understanding of it; in the Romances they have no such Instruction: they have nothing at all to help them, but only the Voice of the Teachers, who themselves are mostly very ignorant and unskilful; and hence their Progress in Learning is very often slow, and tedious, and they scarcely ever arrive at any tolerable knowledge in the Language.

Nearly all writers on language issues recognise the difficulty of the task they face, stressing that the teaching of grammar and knowledge of language structure in general is both time-consuming and intellectually challenging. Not surprisingly, therefore, almost all claim that their own work provides a simple, quick and effective method to grammatical knowledge and its application. John Jones is in no doubt about the virtues of his undertaking, and none too subtly advocates the

advantages of his printed *Tutor* (1701: *Preface*):

Now, if I save Millions much trouble and Time, that may be otherwise beneficially bestowed; it must be a very considerable Advantage to the Nation, as well as Ease to the Learner; which, I perceiving, thought it not only worthy my Undertaking, but my utmost Care, Diligence and Contrivance, to make it answer those great Ends. What is the Labour and Time of one for some Months, to be compared with that of innumerable Persons for a much longer Time?

Often too there are high intellectual and even moral claims made by many authors of grammatical treatises. One common, shared aim is that grammar books (both for Latin and English) should be simple and clear and based on rational and rule-governed principles, and 'aimed at our English Youth who have for a long time esteemed the study of this useful Art very irksome, obscure and difficult' (Greenwood 1711: *Preface*). Treatises on grammar and spelling should be 'made familiar and easie to the meanest capacity' (Sproson 1740). Yet writers like Lane and Mattaire also see the production of grammar books as serving a high and important social and intellectual goal: 'To write an *English Grammar for English Youth*, may seem to many, at first view, a very superfluous and ridiculous thing; but if the Reader have a little patience, I hope to make it appear to all the World, that it is so far from being superfluous, that on the contrary it is the most necessary, and best Expedient to promote all good Learning that ever was thought of since the dissolution of the *Roman Empire*'; 'this noble Art that so much improves and refines humane Understanding, and is the Golden Key to unlock all other Liberal Arts and Sciences' (Lane 1700: *Preface* viii); 'this Art, which is the Key to all Learning; the necessity of which was never call'd in question but by the Ignorant; which none ever neglected, but who sometime or other paid very dear for't by betraying the want of that sound either in writing or common discourse' (Mattaire 1712: *Preface* i). Other writers view the function of general grammatical knowledge and, in particular, the rules of correct spelling, as simply utilitarian: 'A Child, or any other Person, who cannot read or write, may by the Help of this Book ... learn perfectly to spell and write ... and so render himself a compleat Clerk ... and thereby fit the Person for any writing Employment' (Jones 1701: *Preface*). But for many commentators more exalted, even virtuous effects could be achieved. A common theme throughout the period is that the knowledge of the workings of an internalized grammar acts not only as a pragmatic, social advantage but is also a primary means whereby a case can be made for humans to claim a unique status, distinguishable from that of the animals. Likewise it is through grammatical knowledge that individuals are better able to express their innermost thoughts and feelings. Perhaps it is the author of *The Many Advantages* who takes the most utopian position as to the essential, inherently social and moral value of the study of language (1724: 36–7):

We doubt not but many wise Men have too mean an Opinion of the Power of Words, and take too little care about them: For though the Words of a Fool are

little, the Words of a wise Man are wonderful. Words are the images of our Thoughts, the Landmarks of all Interests; and the Wheels of our human World are turned by them. They move Interests that are greater than Mountains, and many a time have subdued Kingdoms; Riches and Poverty, Love and Hatred and even Life and Death are in the Power of the Tongue.

He goes on to make an impassioned plea for the production of ‘good dictionaries’ the lack of which means that ‘our best words lie scattered in dark corners ... That makes us difficult and slow of Speech, as if we had a Padlock on our Tongues; and Silence, and Roughness, and Spleen, are a kind of Character upon our Nation; and the Air and Soil bear the Blame of it’ (1724: 24). But it is not merely the lack of dictionaries which causes this defect, it is the lack of attention paid in the educational system and, indeed, in society at large, to the knowledge of grammatical structure. He paints an image of the phlegmatic, tongue-tied Englishman whose lack of structural linguistic knowledge deprives him of communicative skills (although, he hints, there are also negative consequences arising from the British weather!) (1724: 32–3):

Nothing is more common amongst us, than false grammar in English; and even our learned Men who can write it true, yet come to the Knowledge of it slow, and write it true with Difficulty. In Conversation, silence and difficulty of Speaking, and fewness of Words, are a kind of national Characters [*sic*]. Though we love Society as well as others, and are glad when we have spoken a civil Thing rather than a disagreeable, and are angry with ourselves when we have been in Company without bearing Part in the Conversation; yet Words come slow, and with Difficulty, and a fluent extemporary Speaker is a kind of Wonder amongst us. This makes Conversation the less pleasant to us; and in Solitude, Silence and Spleen gain ground; and they who observe it, lay the blame of it upon our Air and Climate.

Yet the grammar book is not by itself the only means of gaining social and intellectual improvement; with the notable exception of Jones (1701: *Preface*) [‘it will (*without* a Teacher) ... perfect the Learner who can read and write, in the Art of spelling English’] a *personal* tutor is also a prerequisite, a fact perhaps reflecting the need of the authors of these works to find paid employment: ‘as for those who think to become good Grammarians by the book alone, without a Master, they will find themselves mistaken, and lose their Labour: for the art of Grammar, tho in plain English, is no less a mystery to the unlearned, than a Mechanick Trade in plainer English, which yet requires a Master, and seven years Apprenticeship’ (Lane 1700: *Preface* xviii).

It is perhaps Lane and the anonymous author of *The Many Advantages of a Good Language to Any Nation* (who very much follows the line taken by Lane and often utilizes his descriptive and metaphorical terminology) who make the clearest statements concerning the usefulness of a knowledge of grammatical structure in the broadest sense. Lane, for instance, praises what he considers to be the unique

facility of English for the borrowing of foreign vocabulary as a means of ‘enriching our Mother-Tongue with all manner of good Literature’; such would improve the minds of the English ‘having such an easy and native Vehicle as the Mother-Tongue’ (*Preface* xix). Likewise, the teaching and learning of grammar would enable the formation of clearer Laws since the clarity of language thus produced would lead to a reduction of ‘Ambiguities’ (*The Many Advantages* 1724: 4), and it would facilitate as well ‘the spread of Christianity among non English-speaking people’ (a central theme as well of *A Needful Attempt*). Behind this endeavour too would be a ‘more effectual means to reform the corruption of Manners, so much complain’d of among us’ (Lane 1700: *Preface* xix).

There are a few places where ease of acquisition of foreign languages is held up as an advantage to be gained in a speedier and more effective knowledge of the workings of grammar: ‘a rational Education in the Mother-tongue ... is the true Standard and Measure of all our Attainments in Forein Languages’ (Lane 1700: *Preface* xiii). But most of these occur in contexts, as we shall see below, where principled positions are taken concerning the primacy of Mother-tongue grammatical knowledge in language teaching in the English classroom. Perhaps surprisingly – given the contemporary recognition of the philosophical position of the Port Royal grammarians – there is little mention made in the period of the usefulness of grammatical knowledge as a means of creating a universal language. Jones (1701: *Preface*) claims that ‘Any Nation may (because I shew which are the easie, and sweet simple sounds in Speech) sweeten their language thereby, or one may easily invent an universal Language, that may excell all others in Easiness and Sweetness; which I would do (by God’s Help) if I knew, that People could be induced to use it’. *The Many Advantages* (1724: 30) takes this argument a stage further:

All the essential parts of Grammar are the same ... in all Languages: and since the Characters of the Letters have now that great Convenience of being alike, I think, in all Countries in Europe, one good Grammar well learnt with a little Observation, will be a key to unlock them all with greater Ease.¹

1.1.1 Latin or vernacular grammars?

As in the majority of instances in the previous century, grammarians in the eighteenth viewed the acquisition of the ‘noble Art’, ‘the useful Art’ of Grammar as dependent upon the educational system, who it was able to reach, how it presented the subject and – above all – the relative primacy it gave to the teaching of the vernacular language over Latin and Greek. Two dominant themes appear in the writings of many grammarians in the 1700–1750 period: the poor quality of grammar teaching in schools and the detrimental effect of the precedence given by educational institutions to the teaching of Latin grammar over that of the vernacular.

We recall how the author of *The Many Advantages* complained of being ‘long chain’d to these Gallies’ of the teaching of grammar in schools, schools which, for Lane, were ‘those Workhouses for the necessary subsistance [*sic*] of Life’. In his

Letter to a Friend, while passionately commending the study of grammar as a vehicle for moral and cultural enlightenment, Lane recognizes that the endeavour, as currently undertaken, might well be open to criticism (1700: 84):

Or if you had rather exercise our Talent in Satyr, ridicule the Faults and Defects of our Language that want mending. Collect our deep Gutterals, our comical Abbreviations, our twenty Diphthongs; and run a prong into the Backside of our Schoolmasters, that keep their Schollers seven Years under their Rods and Axes, and then send them home without being able to write English. That is a subject that will bear Satyr, and deserves it.

As a schoolmaster himself, Lane's voice perhaps carries the most conviction (1700: viii): 'generally all Children are utterly averse to go to the Schools, where they find nothing for several years together, but a constant series of insuperable Difficulties, like one Wave upon the back of another, ready to overwhelm their weak Understandings'. Twelve years earlier, Mattaire too was concerned about the off-putting effects of poor teaching on the student of grammar (1712: *Preface* iii–iv):

It is now a-days the miserable Fate of Grammar to be more Whip't than Taught: and the Children, like Slaves, are bred up into the hatred of it: Many fancy, that there needs but a small stock of learning to set up a Grammarian; and both the Esteem and Freedom of the profession is debased: the Pedant values himself for handling best the weapon of the Beadle: and the poor Boy is made dull, and then beaten for being so; because the duller Master knows neither what to teach, nor how to suit himself to the several Capacities of Children, which are as different as their Features.

And he, like many contemporaries, sees this as a consequence of children 'being hurried into Latin, before they are well able to read English ... The ignorance of English can never be a good Foundation or ingredient towards disposing of Youth for the Learned Language' (1712: *Preface* iv). Lane (1700: iv) takes an especially strong 'vernacular grammar first' line: 'it seems to be contrary to Sense and Reason, as well as to Antiquity, to put English Youth to toil in any Foreign Tongue whatever for the attainment of good Learning, while their own excellent Language lies neglected and uncultivated'. It is, he claims (1700: viii–ix), the fact that children 'are forc'd to cleave the Block with the blunt end of the Wedg' – 'like an Error of the first Concoction' – that there is so little success in grammar teaching in schools. Both metaphors are picked up and used in a similar context by the author of *The Many Advantages*, an admirer of 'Honest Mr Lane, an ancient School-Master', although he is not always as sympathetic to the lot of the schoolteacher (1724: 26): 'That of the Toil and Labour of the Masters is considerable, but they deserve not to be pitied, because they make it their Choice, when they might have the Pleasure of doing otherwise'. No disadvantages accrue for foreign language learning if a vernacular is taught first, claims Lane, justifying his stance with an appeal to the force of rationality and language universals (1700: *Preface* x): 'the

true End and Use of Grammar is to teach us how to speak and write well and learnedly in a Language already known, according to the unalterable Rules of Right Reason, which are the same in all Languages how different soever they be'. Brightland and Gildon² take a very similar position (1711: *Preface* vi): 'The difference, the Living and Dead Languages especially, is so great, that the former has very little to do with the latter, and so vice versa ... I believe it is pretty plain, that the Rules of our Tongue are only to be drawn from our Tongue itself, and as it is already in Use.' They commend the efforts of Wallis, whose terminology is 'Entirely English', but even the anti-Latin Lane whom (1711: *Preface* viii):

we have read over more than once ... has done as Ben Johnson [*sic*], and most others who have attempted English Grammars, that is he has extended and tortur'd our Tongue to confess the Latin Declensions, Conjugations and ev'n Construction ... and this has involved him in so many Latin Terms, that he is not to be understood without a Dictionary by those, whom he should instruct; that I, such who know nothing of Latin, Greek, or any but their Mother Tongue.

Still, they concede: 'yet it must be allow'd that his [grammar] is the best'.

1.1.2 Grammar and female education

Commentators throughout the eighteenth century³ often claim that among the benefits to be gained from an education which includes the study of grammar is one which might enhance the abilities and status of female members of society. Only occasionally are claims of this kind expressed in terms which nowadays might be regarded as patronizing or condescending. In his *Approbation* to Brightland and Gildon's *A Grammar of the English Tongue* (1711), Isaac Bickerstaff recommends the work in the following terms: 'I therefore enjoin all my Female Correspondents to Buy, Read and Study this Grammar, that their Letters may be something less Enigmatic'. Yet he is not entirely prejudiced against the female writer, and his strictures are directed as much at male as they are against female written usage (1700: *Preface* vi): 'We need not here discourse of the Usefulness of Grammar, since every days experience shows the Effects of the Ignorance of it; as the Letters and writings not only of the Fair Sex, but of much of the greater part of the Men, to their Scandal, discover.' Worthy of notice in this early part of the eighteenth century is the liberal attitude taken towards female education and the important part played in it by the teaching of grammar (in particular, vernacular grammar). The author of *The Many Advantages*, while beginning in a vein not unlike that of Bickerstaff ('many a pretty Lady by the Silliness of her Words, hath lost the Admiration which her face hath gained'), proceeds to see such 'failings', not as some inherent lack of intelligence, but as the result of poor educational opportunities (1724: 37): 'Nature hath doubtless been as bountiful to that Sex as our own, those Improperities in Words, Spelling and by Writing, for which they are usually laugh'd at, are not owing to any Defect in their Minds, but the Carelessness, if not Injustice to them in their Education.'

Rejecting too Martial's principle of *Sit non doctissima conjunx*, he goes on to make an impassioned plea, not just for female education but for something approaching a universal right to it across the social divide (1724: 74):

You may write an Essay upon this Question, which historical Examples of Illustrious Women, who have not only been Encurragers, but Instruments in promoting Learning, and restoring many wasted Estates by their Conduct. And in the same Essay you may take notice, that these Instructions, at least as far as the Foundation of an English Grammar, should not only be communicated to the Female Sex, but extended to the inferior Schools of common People. For Language, as well as Religion, Liberty and Civility, is of that Sort, that it cannot be enjoyed as a National Benefit without leting [*sic*] the Common people have their Share in it.

Lane too, although in our eyes perhaps somewhat patronising ('the more nice and Tender Constitutions of [young Gentlewomen] not being able to those rugged and thorny Difficulties in the Methods hithertoo practised'), seems to be genuinely offended by the fact that women 'have generally been discouraged from good Learning', the provision of which will 'contribute much more to the good of their Children and Families afterward, than all those inferior Attainments which take up so much of their best time, and which are generally useless to them in the remaining part of their lives'. Such sentiments are repeated by Buchanan later in the century (1762: *Preface* xxix): 'It is greatly to be lamented that the Fair Sex have been in general so neglected with regard to a proper English education. Many of them, by the unthinking Part of the Males, are considered and treated rather as Dolls, than as intelligent social beings'. Lane, indeed, is happy to have his work judged against its value as an educational and social asset for women: 'And if the Author has found out the true Secret of an early and rational Education, that may prove to the Advantage of the Fair Sex, who have so many Sights and Affronts put upon them for Want of Learning, he thinks all his Pains and Labour happily bestow'd' (1711: *Preface* xvi–xvii).

1.2 Usage versus prescription

In comparison with the situation in the second half of the eighteenth century and much of the nineteenth, commentators in the 1700–1750 period show little by way of interest in language planning and, in particular, in proposing recommendations for linguistic propriety. There is little of a prescriptivist 'feel' about whatever comments that are made on usage, and those that are put forward are often balanced by a strong support for whatever is meant by Custom and Usage (Dunlap 1940). The author of *The Many Advantages* seems to be one of the few writers making language-evaluative judgements and recommending the establishment of institutional means for language purification. He criticizes the use of language which is 'uncouth', 'ambiguous' and 'imperfect', a 'sure Sign of a slothful or low Genius in the People', and makes a formal proposal for linguistic regulation

(1724: 4–5) couched in language very reminiscent of that used by John Dryden (1679) (whom he cites) or Swift in his *A Modest Proposal* some twelve years previously:

There are several of us, not altogether Strangers to your Lordship [the Earl of Macclesfield], who have agreed to spend upon this Subject as many spare Hours as our several Professions will allow; and as perfecting this Work will require both Time, and a general Inclination of Men's Studies that way, we hope we shall hear of others in other Places, both Single and in Societies, who will help to carry it forward.

That which we propose to ourselves, is, to examine the present State of the Language, to fix what is right by Grammars and Dictionaries, to fill up what is wanting, straighten what is crooked, and make it easy to be learnt by Youth and Strangers.

We recall too Swift's 'our language is extremely imperfect; that its daily Improvements are by no means in proportion to its daily Corruptions; that the Pretenders to polish and refine it, have chiefly multiplied Abuses and Absurdities' (Swift 1712). Like Swift, the author of *The Many Advantages* attributes this to the fact that language 'is in a perpetual Motion', a process which can only be stopped or at best retarded by the use of Grammars and Dictionaries; he criticizes those who feel language development and advancement can be left to their own devices: 'many of them tell us, There is no need of it: Living languages do best for themselves; Help spoils them' (1724: 6). While he is happy to concede that current English usage 'is better than the Welsh and Scotch; It is to be preferred before the Dutch, and better than it was two Hundred Years ago' (1724: 25), he takes pains to point out that had the Ancients neglected 'their speech as a low Thing, not worth their study ... we may say, it would be narrow, and confused, and base as that of the West-Indies is now, even to this Day; for it is not Time, but Care that brings forth Things that are excellent' (1724: 14–15). The *Project* envisaged by the author of *The Many Advantages* (1724: 42–3) was to be ongoing, one which

might encourage ingenious Men to turn their Thoughts this way, and join their Assistance to carrying the Work forward, the Project may be enlarged, and the Work divided as shall be thought convenient for the hastning and perfecting of it. For as the Subject thoroughly executed will afford great variety of critical and very curious Questions, the Difficulties as they gradually arise, will naturally lead to the discussing of them; and either Monthly or Weekly Essays may be put out in way of Dialogue.

In this year, too, the same author proposes that the educational establishment should undertake an 'Abridgement of the History of the French Academy, and of the Methods which they took to refine their Language' (1724: 79). However, he is not at all convinced of the efficacy of the French institution, questioning its conservatism, and urging caution since 'Under this may be considered, how far it is

true that they have been so far from making their Language better, that they have spoiled it. Let it be considered whether the Judgment of these good Men, be not a little like that of some of our own, who from an over Fondness for old Things think we have spoiled ours by leaving out our deep Gutterals, and calling a *Plough* a *Plow*' (1724: 79–80). Nevertheless, he still argues for the setting up of 'an Enquiry by what means the Grecians fixed their Language so steadily ... And as we know no Means that can be used but good Grammars and Dictionaries, and Encouragement of it from the Government, and Use of it in our Schools and Universities; you may easily demonstrate that those, like Anchors, would most certainly keep it stedfast, if it was but once brought to a just Standard' (1724: 80–1). All this because, as he vehemently asserts, the study of language, in particular the vernacular, is so neglected (1724: 6):

The Instructors of our Youth care not to trouble themselves with it: our Clergy think it doth not belong to their Care, though it be the true Key to Knowledge: our Universities suffer it not to be spoken in their Schools and Theatres; nor hath any Patron of Learning provided one single Professor, who should turn his Thoughts and Care towards that.

Oldmixton (1712: *Preface*) has little confidence in any 'Society that shall make us as Polite as that of Reformation has made us Godly', and his views of Swift's proposal are unflattering:

'Tis probable, our late Correspondence with France put such a Whim into some Folks Heads, and because they have an Academy for the Use at Paris, we forsooth must have one in London. The Foreign News, which sometimes tells us more Truth of our doings here than our own, has the very Names of the Members of the Academy which the Doctor speaks of. I do not find that it is come to any thing more yet than meeting over a Bottle once a Week, and being Merry: At which Times People mind talking much more than talking well.

There is little in the grammatical treatises of this half-century to suggest what any model of propriety for current English might be, or against what set of principles it ought to be 'fixed'. One of the few explicit (albeit conventional) statements regarding pronunciation exemplars is made by John Jones (1700: *Chapter One* i): 'English Speech is the Art of signifying the Mind by humane Voice, as it is commonly used in England, (particularly in London, the Universities, or at Court)'.

In sharp contrast to comments appearing in grammars, pronouncing dictionaries and the like composed in the later part of the century, between 1700 and 1750 we find very little reference to social class as a determining factor in linguistic usage. Only rarely do we find statements like: 'Lastly, I have added a Short and Compendious Grammar of the English Tongue, for the help of the lower class of our Youth, that they may attain to a competent Knowledge in the Propriety of Speech, without Assistance of the Learned Languages' (Owen 1732: *Preface* iv).

James Greenwood's *An Essay Towards a Practical English Grammar* (1711) appears just about as prescriptive and judgemental as writers get in this early period. A major concern of his *Essay* lies, of course, with syntactical and morphological description and some of his concerns about correct usage are specifically aimed at these areas (*Preface* i): 'I do not see how [a Young Gentleman and Lady] should write anything with a tolerable Correctness, unless they have some taste of Grammar, or express themselves clearly, and deliver their Thoughts by Letter or otherwise, so as not to lay themselves open to the Censure of their Friends for their blameable Spelling and false Syntax.' For Greenwood, a grammar is 'the Art of Speaking rightly' (1711: 34): 'those persons who are desirous to speak and write clearly and correctly in any Language, ought to study Grammar'. He defines *Orthoepy* as 'the Art of true Speaking', giving rules for the 'right pronouncing of Letters' (1711: 38) and even sets out 'non-standard' samples: 'we must not pronounce *stomp, shet, sarvice, tunder, gove, eend, ommost*; but *stamp, shut, service, tinder, gave, end, almost*'. Even his strictures against false spelling reveal a concern for pronunciation standards (1711: 38): 'we must write, *Bishop*, not *Bushop*; so *did, foot, might, neither, frumenty*; not *dud, fur, mought, or med, nother, furnity*'. His attachment to pronunciation norms based upon the habits of 'the best Speakers' perhaps more than anything else reflects his adherence to the views of that 'judicious Roman Author' Quintillian whom he quotes at some length regarding his view of the 'Custom of Speech' as 'the Agreement of the Learned' and not that which has 'corruptly prevail'd among the Multitude' (1711: 37).

Throughout the *Essay* we come across Greenwood's prejudices against what he sees as 'bad' pronunciation. Recommending a 'small and slender' realization for the sound of the vowel A, he stipulates that (1711: 236): 'we must not pronounce it like the fat or gross A of the Germans', so that '*walk, talk, &* are more rightly pronounced by the English (A); which words are very carelessly sounded by some *wauk, tauk, &*. In which sound we imitate the French ... and so do the Scotch'. Likewise, he points to unacceptable pronunciations of his (O) vowel: 'it is sometimes sounded like obscure U, as when we carelessly pronounce *Condition, London, Compasse*, as if they were written *Cundition, Lundon, Cumpasse, &*. And so likewise some pronounce *come, done, some, Son, Love, Dove*, as if written *cume, dune, sume, &c.*' (1711: 241). His *Essay* is peppered with prescriptive, recomendatory comments like this, as: '*Eu, ew, eau*, are sounded by clear *e* and *w* ... as in *Neuter, few, Beauty* ... But some pronounce them more sharp, as of they were to be written *Niewter* ... But the first way of pronouncing them is the better' (1711: 246), while 'in *Could, would, should, course, court, ou* is negligently pronounc'd as *oo*' (1711: 247). In much the same way we find Brightland and Gildon in their *Grammar of the English Tongue* (1711) inserting at various points in their discussion observations of a negative evaluative kind concerning pronunciation. In their treatment of the (ai) 'double vowel' in words like *again* and *villain*, they observe (1711: 28): 'The finical Pronunciation of some Part of this Town of London has almost confounded the sound of (ai) with (a), the Master and Scholar must therefore take a peculiar Care to avoid this Error.' Again, in their discussion of the 'obscure' (o) and (u) sounds, which they claim to be close in articulation to the French 'e feminine'

in the final syllable of words like *serviteur*, they point to the fact that: ‘The English express this sound by short (*u*) in *turn, burn, dull, cut* &c. and sometimes by a Negligence of Pronunciation, they express the same Sound by (*o*) and (*ou*), as in *come, some, company, country, couple, covet, love*, &c. and some others, which they ought more justly to give another sound to’ (1711: 22). Likewise, the use of an (*a*) long pronunciation [possibly [æɛ]: CJ] in words like *there, were* and *where*, although ‘different’ is ‘yet Wrong’ (1711: 7). But a more typical approach is taken by Bailey who claims – in the advertisement for his *An Introduction to the English Tongue* (1726) – that his lists of words of various syllable length are presented in such a way as ‘to prevent false Pronunciation’; yet the body of his work contains little reference to pronunciation evaluation, save for a few statements like ‘according to the vulgar pronunciation ... the words *perfect, perfected, perfection* [are] pronounced *perfit, perfited, perfitness*’ (1726: 98).

Indeed one has to trawl through the many and various spelling books, grammars and treatises of the period to find statements which can be interpreted as commenting upon the social value of pronunciation.⁴ The density of such statements is, as a whole, extremely low, and there is no suggestion that the principal aim of the works in question was the achievement of any kind of wholesale change to national pronunciation habits in the direction of some socially accepted norm. Yet it is important to stress too that on those occasions when recommended pronunciations are put forward, there is also significant recognition of the need and advantage of considering ‘custom’. That such ‘custom’ may even be stigmatized presents no barrier for Brown as a tool to promote ‘real spelling’ (1700: 78):

There being such Variety of irregular Pronunciations in our English-Tongue, perhaps what I have hithertoo done may be insufficient for the compleating of a young Scholar in true Spelling; wherefore, I have annex’d an Alphabetical Collection of Words that are not sounded (exactly) according to their manner of writing; which is done in two Columns, the first shewing how they are writ, and the other how they are ordinarily pronounced; So that the teaching thereof may be of very great use, provided, the Learner be discreetly managed; and the best way (in my Judgment) is, to propose every particular word, in the subsequent Table, not as they are writ, but as they are commonly spoke: By which means, a young Scholar will the better understand how to spell from vulgar and erroneous Sounds.

Likewise, while the author of *The Many Advantages* unequivocally states that ‘an uncouth, ambiguous, imperfect Language, is a sure Sign of a slothful or low Genius of the People’ (1724: 4), his admiration for the educational stance taken by Martial and Quintillian still predisposes him to take seriously the language of the common people (1724: 74):

For Language, as well as Religion, Liberty and Civility, is of the Sort, that it cannot be enjoyed as a National Benefit without letting [*sic*] the Common People have their Share in it. The Language of a Nation is the *Vox Populi*, the Speech of

the People; and in spite both of the Great and Learned, it will be very much what they make it.

Nevertheless, although he professes that 'that Custom which is the true Law of Language, is the Practice of Learned Men' and that this 'True Maxim' should make Learned Men 'not suffer themselves to be too easily drawn after, either the vitious Spellings or Pronunciation of ignorant or affected People', he seems to be almost resigned to the inevitability of 'change from below' (1724: 74–5): 'But for all that, the Custom of the People will have a large Share of Power in this Case. The Children of both the Great and the Learned take their Speech from their Servants and Companions; and in this Matter, the Instructions in the lowest Schools are the great Influence.'

It is Watts' *Art of Reading and Writing* (1721) which perhaps goes furthest in this early period in promoting 'Custom' as a factor in both pronunciation and spelling habits. This is perhaps unexpected, given his recommendation to his readers of Greenwood's *A Practical English Grammar* ('I know none equal to that' (1721: xx)), a work not known for its adherence to custom over authority, since it is aimed at the improvement of the language of 'those Persons, who talk for the most Part just as they have heard their Parents, Nurses, or Teachers (who likewise may happen to be none of the best speakers) talk' (1711: *Preface*). Watts' admiration for Greenwood may stem, however, not from the latter's views on language propriety, but more likely from the shared passion of both writers for the primacy of English over Latin grammar education – a prejudice which also explains Brightland and Gildon's rejection of contemporary concerns for the correct forms of Latin pronunciation. Although one should 'proceed from having a regard to them', one should rather direct one's attention to 'the Inviolable Laws of the Custom and Usage or our own people' (1711: *Preface* vi–vii). Begging the pardon of critics, Watts apologizes for the fact that 'I have allowed my Readers to spell several English Words rather according to Custom, and the present Pronunciation than in the Etymological and Learned way; and that I have advised them sometimes to spell words of the same Sound, and the same Derivation, two different ways, as if they have a different Meaning, as *Practise*, when it is a Verb, with an *s*; and when it is a Noun, with a *c*,' an example of that customary eighteenth-century mantra: 'For 'tis the Happiness of any Language to distinguish the Writing, and (if possible) the Sound also of every Word which has two distinct Senses' (1721: xviii).⁵ He goes on to assert how 'Custom, which is, and will be, Sovereign over all the Forms of Writing and Speaking, gives me Licence to indulge my Unlearned Readers in this easy Practice' (1721: xviii–xix). Part of the attractiveness of the 'Custom' argument for Watts seems to rest in his feeling that some of the rules set out for both pronunciation and spelling in treatises of the period are too complicated to remember, and too full of exceptions to be useful to the learner (1721: xix):

The English Tongue being composed out of many Languages, enjoys indeed a Variety of their Beauties; but by this means it becomes also exceedingly irregular, that no perfect Account of it can be given in certain Rules, without such

long Catalogues of perpetual Exceptions as would much exceed the Rules themselves. And after all, too curious and exquisite a Nicety in these minute Affairs is not worth the tedious Attendance of a reasonable Mind, nor the Labours of a short Life.

His *Chapter xxiii* is devoted to ‘Observations concerning the various ways of Spelling the same Word’, ways which he admits are not necessarily ‘right or critically true’, but – despite the consequence of the loss to the user of an ability to reconstruct derivations – he sees no great advantage in dictating a standard system of spelling. Yet, and this is perhaps where Watts is most atypical of his period, he places only a limited value on rule-governed systems for the acquisition of spelling and pronunciation habits: ‘In learning to read and write English, we shall find several Words, whose Accent, Pronunciation, and Spelling, are not easy to be brought under certain Rules; and these can only be learnt by long Observation, or by Tables or Catalogues drawn up for this End’ (1721: 99–100). His own *Table of Words accented on different Syllables according to the Custom of the Speaker, even when they are used to signify the same Thing* has a footnote which would look somewhat out of place in the usually prescriptive academy of speech description in the later part of the century (1721: 101–2).⁶

I do not suppose both these Ways of Pronunciation to be equally proper; but both are used, and that among Persons of Education and Learning in different Parts of the Nation; and Custom is the great Rule of Pronouncing, as well as Spelling, so that everyone should usually speak according to Custom.

It is in respect of the rules governing stress assignment (or, perhaps more especially, the rules of Latin stress placement) that we probably find most appeals made to custom against the dictates of authority. Lane (1700: 16) is particularly emphatic on the issue:

Q. What is the principle thing in learning any Language?

A. The first and principle thing in learning of any Language, is to get the true Pronunciation of the words; for he that accents a word contrary to the Custom of the Language, speaks barbarously, and makes himself ridiculous to the Hearers.

But we should perhaps not put too liberal an interpretation upon Watts’ acceptance of alternative spelling forms. While he suggests that non-conformity and variety in spelling might be acceptable and become ‘common and tolerable’, such variety has nevertheless undoubtedly arisen through the ‘Negligence of the Learned, and through the Prevalence of Custom’. He quite clearly stops well short of accepting pronunciation characteristics associated with the ‘non-standard’ orthography (1700: 137):

Here I would have it observed also that all three foregoing Tables ... were not written so much with a design to teach how to *read*, as how to *write*: not to tell

how such Words ought to be *pronounced*, because some of those Pronunciations are corrupt and too vulgar; but the Design is rather to show how those Words ought to be *spell'd*, which have obtained by Custom so different a Pronunciation.

A quarter of a century later, the author of *The Many Advantages* takes a similarly liberal line as regards alternative spelling (and, to some extent at least, pronunciation) forms. In a discussion of the two or three syllable alternants in words such as *dexterous/dextrous* and *blustering/blustring*, he comments: 'different Ways of spelling and using Words, provided they are natural, are not to be esteemed Faults, but are rather desirable: they please with their Variety; and either in Poetry or Oratory, they help the Measure by their different Number of Syllables'. He even goes as far as to assert that (1724: 55): 'wherever any Town or Country hath particular Way of Speaking that is more natural and grammatical than others, they ought to keep it, as an Ornament and Proof of their good Judgement'. But what does he intend by 'natural' – is it usage, or phonetic naturalness, or both?

Still, we should bear in mind Greenwood's cautions – so eagerly taken up by Watts – concerning the wisdom of attempting to produce a system of acceptable pronunciation through the medium of grammars and spelling books utilizing complex rule systems. The *Introduction* to his treatment of *Orthography and Orthoepy* shows none of the certainty and confidence of writers on such subjects later in the eighteenth century, a reticence partly the result of his recognition of the effects of usage upon regulation (1711: 231):

I cannot dissemble my unwillingness to say anything at all on this Head; *Firstly*, because of the irregular and wrong Pronunciation of the *Letters* and *Words*, which if one should go about to mend, would be a Business of great Labour and Trouble, as well as Fruitless and Unsuccessful. Many have been the Endeavours of this kind, but it has been found impossible to stem the Tide of prevailing Custom.

He goes as far as to say that 'Pronunciation [is] such a Thing ... which can neither be written nor painted, but must be learnt by use, and the hearing of others pronounce', recommending that the student acquire due pronunciation through a process of osmosis, the correct sounds 'first read by the Master to the Scholar, and then repeated by him' (1711: 232). It is, of course, only his contemporary, the author of *The Needful Attempt*, who seems prepared to reinforce rule-governed attempts to achieve spelling to sound correspondence, by means of the 'painting' of sounds themselves through the medium of a specialized phonetic alphabet: 'Whaut Rûl kan bee given faur pronouncing *th*? When, az in, *then* and *the*, *thee* and *thou*? And when, az in, *thank* and *theft*, *three* and *thousand*?' (1711: 11). Indeed, this writer's sympathy for the plight of the foreign learner of English shows his open-mindedness as regards the role of custom and usage in the acquisition of 'right' pronunciation, in arguing that Foreigners (1711: 2–3):

Are moreover so often confounded ... at seeing the written or printed Words so vastly differing from those (accounted the same) which they hear and speak,

that they can scarce ever learn, either to speak rightly the printed Words, or to spell rightly the spoken ones, but are apt both to spell too much according to the usual way of speaking (which has hitherto been accounted, tho indeed unreasonably, wrong spelling) and to speak too much according to the present usual way of spelling, which is very foppish and ridiculous.

No surprise from an author whose goal is to compose an English grammar ‘With the spelling agreeable to our speaking’ (1711: 8), and not too far removed from the position held by the author of *The Many Advantages*, who claims that ‘Speaking and Writing, as far as can well be, should go together; yet both affected and clownish Pronunciations are to be disregarded’ (1724: 50).

2

Sound/Symbol Representations: The Case For and Against Manipulation of the Orthography

2.1 The case anti-

It has been noted on several occasions (Scragg 1974; Jones 1995: chapter 3; Beal 1999: 80ff) that, while large-scale and wholesale attempts at reformation of the standard orthography are a characteristic of the latter part of the eighteenth-century orthoepistic tradition (Matthews 1936a) (and one which continued, as we shall see in Part III, into the nineteenth and even into the twentieth century), early eighteenth-century writers on grammar and spelling take little or no interest in the subject. With two or three possible major exceptions, this observation is probably well justified, although it would need to be refined quite carefully in the light of how one might define 'spelling reform'. Writers in the first half of the eighteenth century repeatedly claim that the source of nearly all 'wrong' pronunciation lies with poor spelling or, probably most frequently, with an inability to follow explicitly the dictates of the standard spelling system itself. They suggest that the main solution to the problem of the low standards of pronunciation which result from this, lies in the promotion and teaching of the standard orthography through some of the means we have discussed in the previous chapter. As Watts (1721: xvii) observes: 'when [people] have learn'd the Use of a Pen, they make such a hideous Jumble of Letters to stand for Words, that neither the Vulgar nor the Learned can guess what they mean'. The type of solution he proposes to correct this state of affairs is at once conditioned by his insistence upon the primacy of the vernacular and spoken form of the language in educational matters, and by the reservations he shows – as we have already noted, and will return to below – on any *total* reliance on a rule-governed method of acquiring a competence in the standard orthography: 'the Art of Reading is best begun like the Art of Speaking, and that is, by Rote; tho' 'tis best improv'd and perfected by Rules' (1721: xv).

In the first half of the eighteenth century we find a wide range of opinion concerning the need for, or desirability of, any form of manipulation of the standard spelling system either as a means of making the learning of spelling more easy or as a mechanism for the improvement of pronunciation. This range encompasses several writers totally opposed to any kind of spelling reformation, through those who see the advantages of keeping some kind of mixture of both standard

and ‘introduced’ orthographies, with a few others advocating a complete overhaul of the current system. Brightland and Gildon are fully conscious of the desirability, at least, of having an orthography which minimizes the lack of match between spelling and sound. Indeed, they state the case for a sound/symbol correspondence very much in the same terms in which Sheridan sets it out fifty years later (1711: ii–iii *footnote*): ‘tho’ every Sound ought to be mark’d with a proper and peculiar Character, yet by the Corruption, or primitive Ignorance of the first Writers of our Modern Tongues, the same Sounds are often express’d by different Characters; and different Sounds are mark’d by one and the same Character’. Discussing the ‘Analogy’ the sounds of language bear to their Signs, Brightland and Gildon uncompromisingly state that (1711: 56):

Four Things are necessary to give [spellings] their Perfection in the first State.

- (1) That every Figure or Character mark or denote some Sound: That is to say: That no Character be set down in any Word, but what is pronounc’d.
- (2) That every Sound, which is express’d in the Pronunciation, be mark’d with some Figure: That is to say, we pronounce nothing but what is Written.
- (3) That every Figure mark only one simple, or compounded Sound.
- (4) That one and the same Sound, be not mark’d by more Figures, than one.

They recognise, though, that there are many instances, especially in foreign vocabulary items, where there will be a mismatch between sound and symbol and that such a lack of correspondence might have its advantages in indicating a word’s etymological source and even pronunciation history. Nevertheless, they complain that the current situation produces anomalies which can affect a reader’s ability to arrive at a true pronunciation from the spelling (1711: 57): ‘it is a certain Abuse to give the Sound of (s) to (c), before an (e) and (i), and of pronouncing (g) before the same Vowels, otherwise than before the others, or having soften’d the (s) between two Vowels; and of giving the (t) the Sound of (s) before (i), follow’d by another Vowel, as *Gratia, Action, Diction, &c.*’. But, needless to say, any attempt to create a one-to-one sound/symbol correspondence will have serious consequences for the standard spelling system, and to this they are categorically opposed. They note how Lodwick for English and Ramus for French have attempted to ‘correct this Fault ... by inventing new Characters ... by retrenching every Letter that was not pronounc’d, and writing every Sound by that Letter, to which the Sound to be express’d was proper’. But they suggest that any writers wishing to do this now ‘would attempt an Impossibility’, language users being too conservative to accept such a level of innovation. They are willing, however, to accept some degree of invention – although the current system needs ‘not to be remov’d but by Degrees, and in many Years’, otherwise (a refrain heard again later in the century) since ‘all the chief Books in the Language are without these Marks or Alterations. ... so many People must be oblig’d to learn their Alphabet over again’ (1711: 58). For instance, they allow the use of points above certain letters, and ‘when (c) is pronounc’d like (s), it may have a tail added [following French custom]; and when

the (g) is pronounc'd like (j) Consonant, its Tail need not be quite clos'd' (1711: 58). But, in general, their hearts are set against anything suggesting wholesale spelling reform (1711: *Preface*: v): 'We are not to alter the Orthography now in Use and settled by Custom, the Jus & Norma Loquendi, since that cou'd be of no use to either those, who are to Teach, or those, who are to Learn, and then wou'd have nothing to do with the Whimsical Invention.' Still, they are prepared to admit (1711: 2) that: 'if the various Sounds were constantly express'd by the same numerical Letter' much confusion in learning both the pronunciation of English and foreign languages would be avoided, nevertheless 'we are not here to reform, or indeed make a new Alphabet, as some have vainly, against the Stream or full Tide of Custom, attempted, but to explain and deliver Rules ... which Use, the inviolable Rule, and Right of Speaking, and Writing, has consecrated'.

It is perhaps Tuite, above all, who almost completely avoids any alteration to standard orthographic practice. Despite the considerable depth of description and exemplification he provides for his contemporary sound-system in his *Spelling Book*, he very rarely as much as tinkers with current orthographic custom. His sole concessions to modification are limited to a single diacritic: 'in words of several syllables [E] commonly sounds é, as *adhere, austere, blaspheme ... hence, thence, pense, verse*' (1726: 23–4); 'Ei sounds é or ai, in *veil, vein, reign, fein*' (1726: 35). Elsewhere, variation is limited to a few re-spellings: 'O is lost in *carrion, cushion, fashion, chariot*, which are pronounced *carrin, cushin, fashin* or *fashun, charit*' (1726: 30); 'O is transplac'd, and sounded before r in *apron, iron, invirn, citren, saffron, chaldron, squadron*, which are pronounc'd *aporn, i-orn, inviorn, ci-torn, chaudorn, squadorn*' (1726: 30). Minimalist orthographic variation is also a characteristic of Mattaire's *English Grammar* (1712). In his discussion of the Alphabet, he compares the Greek and English versions, distinguishing the Figure, Name and Power of individual graphs. He claims (1712: 3) that the Latin alphabet (he is an ardent supporter of classical grammar teaching in the classroom) fails to show a long/short distinction in mid vowels, a distinction he sees relevant for English and one which he marks as 'è or e short; ē or e long; ô or e short; ò or o long'. But this modest set of innovations is as far as he is prepared to go in symbol manipulation.

2.2 The case pro-

There can be no doubt, though, that writers in this period did recognise the imperfections of their standard orthography as a vehicle for the expression of the actual sounds of their language, an imperfection very often associated in particular with reference to the ways in which digraphs like *ea, eo* and *ie* did (or did not) express the phonetic value of their individual components or that of some other (perhaps 'mixed') entity. Brightland and Gildon highlight the problem in their discussion of *Double Vowels* (1711: 26): 'What we call Double Vowels, is when the Sound of two Vowels are mixt perfectly in one Syllable, and indeed make a distinct Sound from either and all the other Vowels, and merit peculiar Characters, if we were to form an Alphabet, and not follow that which is already in use'. Earlier, Lane too had lamented the fact that even the names of the letters of the alphabet which

children have to learn show a discrepancy between their symbol names and the sounds they represent (1700: 4–5): ‘Since different Sounds should in Reason have different Names leading to those Sounds, it would be much for the ease of young Scholars and their Teachers, to call *c* hard *kee*; *c* soft, *see*; *g* hard *ghee*; *g* soft *jee* ... and *qu quee*, since it is but one single Consonant under two Characters. And if the Printers did also distinguish them by some Point, it would make them much more easie; for it is a great Oppression of Children, to force them, contrary to Reason, to give different Sounds to the same Characters, without the least Mark of Distinction’. The use of a superscripted point is also recommended by Greenwood as a means of distinguishing [d₃] from [g] (1711: 252): ‘But as often as *g* is to be pronounced with a softer sound, it would be convenient always to have it mark’d with a Point plac’d over the head of *g*, to distinguish it from the hard *g*. Which would be of great Advantage to Foreigners’.

In this early period, however, there are only two writers who advocate and describe relatively full-blown systems for spelling reform (or at least orthographic emendation): the authors of *The Many Advantages* and (especially) *The Needful Attempt*. In his *Letter to a Friend*, the author of *The Many Advantages* prefaces his ‘little Dictionary’ with a discussion of the Alphabet and of the advantages to trade and learning of a shared European set of alphabet symbols. However, he cautions that the communicative advantage thus gained ‘will be lost, unless they keep the Letters to the same Power with one another. Without that the Likenes [*sic*] of Letters will rather confound Learners than help them’ (1724: 72). Yet he points out that while an alphabet which accurately represents the sounds of speech is an important and useful commodity, readers do not necessarily read language as if it were an actual representation of speech forms. Rather, he claims, the orthography is treated as if it were some kind of what he calls a ‘Philosophic Character’ (1724: 72):

if the Words were such as no Tong could speak, the Eye however would go on with the Sense. The Eye could do well enuff with a Language that had neither Vowel nor Diphthong in it; but the ear and Tong ought to have easy, and musical and well-tuned, and true spelt Words; and the great difficulty of adjusting the Spelling of any Language lies in dividing rightly betwixt your Care of the Eye and Ear, and you must take heed that while you teach one, you do not confound the other.

But adjusting the spelling is precisely what he attempts, although his approach is less radical than others we shall examine below and, in effect, merely represents a kind of tinkering with the standard orthography. In a lengthy section, he provides a set of *Maxims or Rules to be observed in Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the Spelling of our Language* (1724: 50–63). His approach is essentially conservative, arguing that ‘unnecessary Innovations’ should be avoided, his overall aversion to new alphabet symbols showing in his comment that: ‘As Letters and Distinctions cannot be so numerous, as to paint all the Divisions of Sounds which all Tongues strike, small Differences are not to be minded’. Yet, despite the fact that the

drawbacks associated with the position must have been obvious to him, he still maintains a 'one symbol/one sound' ideal (1724: 51):

That every Letter should be considered as Owner or Proprietor of its own Sound, and should neither be robbed of it, nor be put to other Uses than sounding its own Power. If Alphabets were perfect, and this maxim was observ'd, no other Rules would be wanted; for every judicious Ear would spell right by using those Letters that express the true Sound; and where that cannot be done, there is some Defect that ought to be considered and mended, if there be not some just Reason for the contrary.

But his attempts to 'paint' the orthographic picture along these lines are quite limited, his emendations confined to: (1) a rejection of the need to distinguish orthographically synonyms like *mote/moat* (1724: 52): 'No body can mistake a *Mote* in the Sun, for a *Moat* about a House; and therefore we might very well spell them alike without putting the *a* to an unnatural task of continuing the sound of *o*'; (2) introduced foreign words should appear with English spelling, so there is no need to add symbols 'to make them different', and he rejects spellings like *honour*, *favour*, *Creatour* and the like, on such grounds; (3) he is especially concerned about what he, and many contemporaries, see as the 'Harshness of the Number of Consonants' the English language is willing to tolerate in clusters; the French too, he observes, being 'remarkable for Clusters' which they regard as 'the Delicacies of their Tongue'. Words such as *Ask't*, *trust'st*, *scratch't*, *damn*, *twitch*, *thwack*, *strength* don't need spelling reform, he suggests, rather 'the only way I know of curing [this fault] is to leave such words out of the historical and grave Stile, and by Degrees introduce others that are better' (1724: 56) – lexical substitution (following Jones 1701: 13) seen as a preferred stratagem to orthographic innovation; (4) on the analogy of noun-verb pairs like *a sheath/to sheathe*; *a belief/to believe* where the 'lengthening' of the vowel and concomitant change in the voice characteristic of the consonant is orthographically expressed through the addition of the 'final -e', he argues for spellings like *a house/to houze*; *a mouse/to mouze*. (5) on the analogy of present/past ablaut contrasts like *lead/led*; *breed/bred*, he proposes innovations like *heal/helth*, *steal/stelth*, *please/pleshure*, *heave/heavy*, *fear/ferful* [sic] and so on; (6) he wants too to 'simplify' the digraphs in words like *moat*, *goat* and *throat*, not merely by deleting the *a* graph, but by the use of a superscripted mark over the first vowel, thus *môt*, *ôke* for 'moat' and 'oak', although even here, he argues: 'The Apostrophe after a little time might be left off, if not from the Beginning' (1724: 59); (7) he suggests too the loss of the *i* in words like *fruit*, the *o* in *double*, *court* (with *courteous* as *cûrteous*), the replacement of *u* by a *w* symbol in items like *language*, *quarter*, *squire* (his *langwage*, *qwarter*, *sqwire*) on the analogy of *dwel* and *swine* spellings; and, 'since *w* is not sounded, why is it written in *Knô*, *Blô*, *Bestô*, *Knolledge* [sic]?'; (8) The use of what he sees as unnecessary double consonants leads him to propose spellings like *to compas*, *to trespas*, and since he wishes to use double consonants as a signal for where the main stress in a word is placed, he allows the use of double *ll* in *canall*, *to caball*, *to excell*, *to extoll*, and in *a well*: 'how ill would it be, if we did

the same in *Channel, Duel, Festival, Criminal, Wel*. In much the same fashion he allows the double *ll* digraph in words like *full* and *fully* 'because the tongue dwells upon the *l*', while he advocates a single *l* in words like *Manfully, Wofully, usefully*, where, presumably, he feels it does not; (9) not untypical of the period, he wishes to see the loss of the *gh* digraph in words like *knight, daughter* and *slaughter*, preferring *knît [sic], daûter* and *slaûter*. He also prefers *ff* in *enough, rough* and *laugh* words, although 'in the word *through*, we cut off too much, and write only *thro*'; but I take that to be as great a Fault, and to mislead Strangers as much as the other; for the *u* is sounded, and should be written as well as it is in *thou, throu*' (1724: 62). He promises that more changes will be made to his spelling system in addition to 'these few' once his 'Vocabulary' has been completed. Indeed, in a century which was to become notorious for the strength of its prescription in all things relating to language, it is refreshing to read the author of *The Many Advantages* recommend the judgement of the user as a criterion for the selection of 'correct' spelling forms (1724: 85):

And there is one thing which I will recommend to you particularly, and I wish all writers of *Weekly News* would be so kind as to do the same; and that is, where any Words under Consideration are to be used twice in the same Sentences, or near one another, when they have first used the common Spelling, to let the Reader see that they know it; then to put that which is proposed in its stead, that all People [*sic*] may see and judge which they like best. Such a Course would soon bring the Matter to a Crisis; and altho' it is not to be expected, that People should like a new Spelling at first Sight as well as they do an old one that they are used to, yet a little time would bring them to a Habit of judging freely; and if the general Judgment should approve of any considerable Number of these that are here offered, a few more may be laid before them after some convenient time; and there are already prepared such Emendations of all the irregular confused parts of the Alphabet, as will, if I judge right, make ours as natural and easy, and as well agreeing with the Ancients as any Alphabet in Europe. There must be none expected that shall be perfect and without Faults, but it is hoped that ours will have as few as any.

We can but speculate as to the extent to which the author of *The Many Advantages* has adopted such a liberal attitude to spelling as the result of any influence upon him of Watts' *Art of Reading and Writing* (1721). We have already commented upon Watts' (somewhat world-weary) view of spelling formats; commenting on the '*pretious/precious*' spelling variant, he bemoans the fact that 'in several of these Instances, the criticks themselves are a great Variance, tho the Matter is of too trifling Importance to be the subject of learned Quarels ... I'll never contest the Business of Spelling with any Man, for after all the most laborious Searches into Antiquity, and the Combats of the Grammarians, there are a hundred Words that all the Learned will not spell the same Way' (1721: xviii–xix). Thus, in an appeal to Custom 'sovereign over all the Forms of Writing and Speaking' he sets out to 'indulge' his 'Unlearned Readers' by allowing or recording

variant spelling forms for the same word. There are two places in his work where Watts provides samples of words which 'admit of two Manners of Spelling': his *Chapter xxiii Observations concerning the various Ways of Spelling the Same Word* and *Chapter xxiv, Table vi: A Table of Words that may be spelled different Ways, which are not easily reduced to any Rules*. Although he is concerned that some of these spellings will result in the derivations of the words being lost, he is prepared to admit them, even though they are neither 'learnedly right or critically true', and he emphasizes that 'Let it be observed here ... that both these ways of spelling all these words, are not the original and proper Composition of them; but thro the Negligence of the Learned, and thro the Prevalence of Custom, both these Ways become common and tolerable' (1721: 124–5 *footnote*). His Table VI words are, of course, of considerable interest to the historical phonologist, since many of the 'non-standard' spelling forms appear not only to represent orthographic 'custom,' but such custom based upon actual usage, and we can recall his comment that 'Custom is the great Rule of Pronouncing; as well as of Spelling' (1721: 102 *footnote*).

Alongside the usual *Accompt/Account*, *Becken/Beckon* and *Clark/Clerk* types which typify many of the lists of words 'Similar in Sound but different in Spelling' of the period, we also find what appear to be purely orthographic variants like *Country/Country*, *Biscuit/Biscket* and *Chear/Cheer*. But we find too what appear to be non-standard orthographic forms pointing to genuine pronunciation alternants: *Orchard/Hort-yard*; *Halsen/Hawser*; *Emerods/Hemerods*; *Tach/Tack*; *Thirsday/Thursday* and several others we shall have reason to discuss further below. Watts' *Chapter xxiii* lists some of the words in English 'which admit of two Manners of Spelling', and there are a few overlaps with the *Maxims of The Many Advantages*. Watt's list of acceptable orthographic innovations includes the first in pairs like: *Niece/Neece*; *ingage/engage*; *imbattle/embattle*; *public/publick*; *cattell/cattle*; *cole/coal*; *labor/labour*; *presumption/presumption*; *fancy/phancy*; *bark/barque*; *center/centre*; *scixars/scissors*; *sence/sense*; *antient/ancient*; *thro/through*; *plow/plough*; *controll/controul*; *ground/grownd*; *fly/flye*; *lion/lyon*; *array/array*; *sum/summ*. Of course, Watts at no point goes as far as to even suggest that there should be any overall reform of the spelling system on the basis of any one symbol/one sound paradigm, but at least he is not set against spelling variation *per se*, and is even prepared to accept a modicum of change (although not new alphabets) where that change reflects a 'true pronunciation' however uncertainly he defines that concept.

Greenwood's attitude to the possibility of 'avoiding the production of the irregular and wrong pronunciation of the Letters and Words' is, as we have already seen, steeped in pessimism, something 'Fruitless and Unsuccessful'. Yet he is prepared to make an attempt to 'mend' the problem, since he accords so much importance to the primacy of speech over writing – even apologizing for leaving his chapter on *Orthography*, or *Orthoepy*, till last in his grammar. He expresses the desideratum of the production of a grammar which will 'contain all the variety of Pronunciation ... that are pronounc'd according to the most simple and natural Sound of the Letters', progressing 'gradually to Syllables and Words, that are pronounc'd other than they are written' (1711: 232). Yet he still seems lacking in

confidence that even this would improve matters, recommending that the best way to improve pronunciation is by having the Master read the book to the pupil and the pupil repeating the words, since ‘Pronunciation being such a Thing ... which can be neither written nor painted’ (1711: 232). We might expect, therefore, that Greenwood would be unsupportive in principle of alphabet manipulation. Yet, while any efforts he makes in this direction are hardly thoroughgoing, he nevertheless is prepared to attempt to capture the ‘true’ pronunciation of vowel and consonant sounds by the device of diacritic marking.

Noting that ‘Our Alphabet wants a Letter to express the Sound we give *A* in the words *Hall*, *Wall*, etc’, a sound he characterizes as ‘broad’, Greenwood ‘would advise that the words were mark’d with a Circumflex (ˆ) to denote the broad sound’ (1711: 236). Unwilling to accept the commonplace stratagem (he claims following Ray) of *final e adding* to denote what in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is called vowel length (the *bad/bade*) contrast, he records a preference for the use of a diacritic bar to signal this kind of alternation: ‘The Production or lengthening the Syllable ought to be signified by a Mark over the Vowel to be made long, thus \bar{a} , \bar{e} , &c.’ (1711: 240): ‘The same thing may also be said against the adding of *a* to signify the Production of a Vowel, as in *great*, *bead*, *stroak*, *broad*, *beat*, which, as we said just now, ought to be signify’d by a Line over the Vowel to be produc’d thus *brōd*, *grēt*, *bēd*, *bēt*, &c.’

Likewise, he wants to distinguish the short *u* (as in *but*, *cut*) from the long (as in *lute*, *mute*) – ‘a Sound as it were made up of *I* and *W*’ – by using ‘a Point or Accent plac’d at the top of *U*; thus \acute{u} ’ (1711: 242). Again he wishes to differentiate ‘*y* consonant’ from ‘*y* vowel’ by the use of a point over the latter – \acute{y} ; the *ou* symbol in *house/would* contrasts by placing an accent over the digraph in *would*; the ‘softer’ *g* (in *gender*, *ginger* words) should also show a superscripted point to distinguish it from its ‘hard’ congener in words like *game*, *gone*, ‘which would be of great advantage to Foreigners’ (1711: 252). He is prepared as well to distinguish symbolically his ‘soft’ (in *cement*) from his ‘hard’ *c* (in *can*) by following French orthographic custom, although even here he prefers to recommend his spelling ‘rule’ as preferable: ‘The French express this soft *c* by this figure ζ to distinguish it from the hard *c*: Which Character might be of Service, if it were made use of among us. Tho’ there is the less need of a new Character, because the Rule we have laid down hardly admits of an Exception’ (1711: 249). His other recommendations for change are mainly cosmetic – *honor* for *honour*, the use of the ‘short’ single *s* symbol in voiced contexts (*his*), the double long *ff* in voiceless ones (*hiss*). His use of respellings, however, is rare and only really appears in: ‘[the vowel *O*] is sometimes sounded like the obscure *U*, as when we carelessly pronounce *Condition*, *London*, *Compass*, as if they were written *Cundition*, *Lundon*, *Cumpasse* &c., And so likewise some pronounce *come*, *done*, *some*, *Son*, *Love*, *Dove*, as if they were written *cume*, *dune*, *sume*, &c.’ (1711: 241).

Perhaps it is John Jones in his *Practical Phonography* (1701), evolved from his earlier *The First Speculative Tract* (1698), who makes the most sustained attempt to represent his contemporary sound system through a manipulation of the standard alphabet set. He achieves this principally through respelling stratagems, plus the

addition of a very few diacritic markings.⁷ The objective of the *Practical Phonography* is twofold: (a) to 'shew any Beginner (who must without Instruction sound Words according to the visible Letters; and therefore very often falsly) to sound all words rightly, neatly, and fashionably (how different soever they are, by view of the Letters, from the right Sound) at first sight, without a Teacher'; and (b) to 'instruct any Person that can read, and write rightly, to spell and write most words in any Language that he can speak, and uses to read, in a few Hours (if not Minutes) by a general Rule contained in two or three Lines, and the Use of a *Spelling Alphabet*, which may be carried in one's Pocket' (1701: *Preface*). Jones is therefore advocating a twofold approach to what he sees as the social and educational disadvantage resulting from poor spelling: he composes what is, in effect, a pronouncing dictionary which, he claims, will improve spelling by paying attention to the sound, and enable the user to sound words by their sight alone. He makes the customary noises about the humble nature of such an endeavour (a 'mean' and 'despicable' subject) yet – in his usual self-promoting way – sees its end as enormously significant in that it will 'assist Millions with the utmost Ease and Speed to attain a neat, and necessary Accomplishment'. His self-confidence as to the value of his system is everywhere made explicit, the title page, for instance, claiming that his book 'will not only answer Men's wishes, but exceed their Imaginations, that there could be such a mighty Help contrived for Reading, Spelling and Writing', and elsewhere he claims that while it has previously been thought 'impossible as 'tis inestimable, that Children should at first sight (without a Teacher) sound all Words rightly, which may be scarce credible to such as read it in the *Preface*, yet it is now demonstrated' (1701: 18).

He makes the usual observation that any child faced with the standard orthographic representation, may be inclined produce the wrong phonetic result (1701: *Preface* 2–3): 'The visible Letters of Aaron, bought, Mayor, Dictionary, paies, Worcester *positively inform the Beginners that they are to be sounded, A-a-ron, bogt, May-or, Dic-ti-o-nary, pai-es, Wor-cestor which are far from being their right fashionable Sounds.*' His system, he asserts, will overcome this problem by providing two reference points – *An Alphabetical Spelling Dialogue* in conjunction with a *Spelling Alphabet* – against which the user can compare the spelling alongside (whatever he intends by) a 'fashionable' pronunciation:

Yet shall the Beginner (conditioned he learns to read in the Alphabetical Spelling Dialogue of this Book) readily at first Sight (as shewn in Chap. III.) read, and sound them rightly, viz.

He shall at the first Sight say, Aron, baut, Mair, Dixnary, pais, Wooster, Which are the customary and fashionable Sounds; according to which they are to be sounded: So it will help them readily to sound all other Words, as they should be sounded.

He attributes the current mismatch between many spellings and sounds to the consequences of phonological change, seeing this as a gradual 'ease of articulation' phenomenon (1701: 6): 'Easiness, which is the leading Cause of change in the

Sounds of Words, as the main Thing that causes the Alteration [in spelling]'. The terminology he uses to describe this kind of phenomenon is one where 'harder, harsher, longer' sounds mutate into 'easier, pleasanter, shorter' sounds, and 'it is the desire of Speed in speaking, that has caused Men to sound Words short, which are really long'. Although his reasoning is not always easy to follow, he seems to be suggesting that the standard orthography generally represents the longest, harshest and 'most unusual' sounding of any individual word. To assist the 'Beginner' to recognise the longest, harshest spelling form and to equate this with the 'easier', 'shorter' and 'fashionable' pronunciation, he provides a list of the simple and compound sounds of speech together with a *Spelling Alphabet*. His 'simple sound' inventory represents the main vowel and consonantal phonemes of his phonology: 'a in *all*'; 'a in *an*'; 'b in *bib*'; 'sh in *ash*' and so on, with 'g in *age*'; 'i in *die*'; 'u in *due*' instances of the 'compound sounds'. In general he is content to use the symbols of the standard alphabet set, with the addition of a few diacritic forms such as \check{u} \check{i} \bar{u} . His *Spelling Alphabet* (with which comes a set of mnemonic *Memorial Verses* to assist its users' recall) is meant to provide a template which matches the simple sounds against some of their 'harsher' equivalents (Figure 2a).

Sometimes he has to conclude that the number of graphs and simplicity/easiness of sound do not always equate, and that there are cases where representations using more graphs are 'easier'/'shorter' than those employing less, notably: *bül* than *bl* in *abl*; *güm* than *gm* in *syntagm*, *rüm* than *rm* in *alarm* as well as in what appear to be pre-[r] and [l] *Breaking* instances where *aier* is easier to sound than *air* in *fair*, *ier* than *ire* in *fire*, *bould* than *bold*, *boult* for *bolt*, *could* for *cold* among others (1701: 9–10). He has reluctantly to concede that, despite his overriding confidence in his system, there will be occasions when the user will be 'in Doubt of Spelling a Word rightly', in which cases he advises a 'Shift' – the use of an alternative lexical item: 'as suppose, that you cannot, or are in Doubt of spelling the Word *Affection*, write *Kindness*, *Love*, *Favour*, &c. instead thereof' (1701: 13). Turning a blind eye seems to be his reaction to other instances when his system fails – i.e. in those instances where 'more letters are sounded than are written; as in *houge* for *huge*, *wanst* for *once*, &c. which are not to be minded' (1701: 10).

Jones strongly emphasizes the importance of his *Spelling Alphabet* as a means of gaining the greatest advantage from the core of his work – the *Alphabetical Spelling Dialogue*. In much the same way as grammarians later in the century stress the importance for the user of pronouncing dictionaries of committing to memory the various *Schemes of Vowels and Consonants* to be found in their introductory sections and repeated in helpful points within the works themselves, so too Jones recommends to his reader (1701: 11): 'That you may have the Spelling Alphabet, or Table alwaies ready upon a bit of Paper in your Pocket till you have got the memorial verses, that contain it ready by Heart'. Indeed, he offers a novel method whereby speakers might bring to mind the orthographic shapes, what he calls the *Visible Letters*, of the words they are attempting to spell correctly (1701: 12):

That to call to Mind how Words are printed (or written), it will be (next to actually seeing them in a Book) a ready Way to shut your Eyes, and firmly imagine, that

The New Art of Spelling

The easier and pleasanter Sounds spoken.		The harder and harsher Sounds written.	
A Spelling ALPHABET.			
a		e, o —	as in Clerk, Wagon —
b		p —	as in Cupid, Deputy —
d		t, th —	as in Hatton, Murderer —
e		i, o, ū —	as in Girl, Fagot, injure —
ee		e, i, o —	as in he, Shire, Women —
g		c, ch —	as in Clyster, Norwich —
m	somewhat like to	n —	as in Banbury —
ng		n —	as in Ink, sink —
oo		o, ū —	as in to, Buu —
sh		ch, f —	as in Bench, Issue —
t		th —	as in Thomas —
v		f, pb —	as in Face, Nephew —
ū		a, e, i, o —	as in Euan, even, Sir, Son —
z		f —	as in Ease, cause —

a
b
d
e
ee
g, ge
m
ng
oo
sh
t
v
u
z

which are
Sound, d
as

Which for *Memory's sake* are reduced to these *Verses*.

A is much easier than *E* or *O* :
B than *P* : *D* than *T* : or *th* in *tho* : }
E than *I*, *O*, *U* : *EE* than *E*, *I*, *O* : }
G than *C* (for *K*) or *Ch* in *Chew* :
M, *ng* than *N* : *Oo* than *O* or *u* :
Sh than *Ch* or *S* : *T* in *Toe*
 Than *Th* : short *U* than *A*, *E*, *I*, *O* : }
V than *F* or *Pb* : *Z* than *S* in *so*. }

Which should be got readily by *Heart* for the *aforsaid Use*.

Figure 2a

you distinctly see the Word in all its Parts in some printed Book, that you familiarly use, particularly in the upper line of the same to avoid Confusion, and Distraction, take exact Notice of all its Letters during that imaginary View, which (as I have experienced in several Persons) will help you to spell most words, that you are well acquainted with the Sight of by often reading them, even to the Amazement of Standers by, that otherwise knew your Inability of Spelling.

His second chapter is devoted to a discussion of the value and method of using the *Alphabetical Spelling Dialogue*. This alphabetical list is a device, he claims, which any child can use without ‘the stupidity of the master’ and ‘without the Help of a cross-grain’d Pedagog, who seldom does the Business rightly or perfectly, after all his Pother and Noise’ (1701: 18). The Dialogue is set out in three columns, the first of which identifies particular phonetic entities, with the second column listing the various orthographic guises the sound can take: ‘When is the sound of *a* (Column One) written *aa* (Column two)?’ The third column contains the answer to such questions, providing examples of lexical items where the pronunciation of the graph(s) occur, often citing phonological and morphological contexts, listing sets of exceptions, and offering cross-reference to related materials, thus:

When is the sound of *a* written *ay*? When it may be sounded *ay* before a Vowel, or in the End of Words, as *lay, laying, say, saying*, etc. Except where the Sound of *ai* (or *ay*) is written *eygh*, or *ey*, which see in their Places. Note. That such as sound *a* in the end thereof, and can not be sounded *ai* (or *ay*) are always written with an *a*; as the Names of Women, Places, &c. that we have for other Languages. Such are *Abba, Africa, America, Asia, Anna, Diana, Martha*, &c. which cannot be sounded *ai*. (1701: 23)

Although Jones claims that the alphabetical layout of this part of his book ‘supplies the Place of a Dictionary’, he is careful to point out that in many respects it has several advantages over that genre. Mainly, he argues, dictionaries are limited since as they have ‘The Word only as it is written, or printed, and not as sounded; it is very often impossible to find out Words in the Dictionary by their Sound’; thus, for instance, it is impossible to find words like *dellium, larum, lembick* and *potecary* whose ‘usual sounds’ do not appear so listed in the dictionary, surfacing instead under their standard written forms: *bdellium, alarm, alembick* and *Apothecary*. Using his system, he claims, it is possible to identify these words by the nature of their ‘usual and fashionable’ and current sounds. Jones’ method is, of course, to ‘proceed from the sounds to the letters’ (1701: 17):

As suppose the Word be *Aaron*, the Child will of himself certainly sound it *A-a-ron*, sounding *a-a* as two distinct Syllables, but let him cast his Eye on the first Column, and he instantly sees, that according to the usual and fashionable sound (which the Letters of the Column signifie) only one *a* is to be sounded, and immediately reads it *Aron*; so finding *ai* in that Column over against *Mayor* it tells him, that *ayo* must be sounded *ai*, and reads *Mair* without any Hesitation, or Doubt.

Always assuming that Jones’ observations concerning a child’s response to spelling forms is accurate, the system he has devised is only useful as a guide to the orthographic equivalences of sets of phonetic/phonological classes, and would not readily enable a user to discover easily the pronunciations of individual words themselves.

<i>Words spelled</i>	<i>1st, by the common sounds</i>	<i>2nd, by the altered sound</i>
BOW	Bee-o double-yu	Bě-O-U
CENT	See-e-n-tee	ěS-E-ěN-T
COVE	See-o-uconson-e	Kě-O-ěV-E
GAGE	Ghee-a-ghee-e	G(hard)ě-A-G(soft)ě-E
HOT	Each-o-tee	Hě-O-Tě
JIG	J consonant-i-ghee	Jě-i-G hard
POD	Pee-o-dee	Pě-O-Dě
QUIT	Cu-yu-i-tee	QUěIT
WRY	Double yu ar-wy	őőě-ěR-I
YEW	Wy-e-double yu	Yě-E-U
BUZZ	Bee-yu-uzzard-uzzard	Bě-U-ěZ-ěZ

Figure 2b

The Irish Spelling Book also attempts a diacritically enhanced alphabet system, but mainly as a means of naming individual letters of the alphabet as an aid to better spelling (1740: 22): ‘I do not see why (notwithstanding Custom, and the Antiquity of it) I may not offer some Alterations, for the benefit of Spelling’. Its author does not see his scheme as either ‘fanciful’ or ‘bold’ but feels that it is ‘not irrational, not quite unuseful’ which ‘I shall, out of Zeal for the Public Good, venture, notwithstanding my Apprehensions of some Danger, to take my Chance’. His dissatisfaction with the traditional *bee*, *cee*, *dee* alphabetic names, leads him to propose emendations as shown in figure 2b (1740: 29).

By means of the innovatory symbolic representation in the third column, spelling for schoolchildren, he claims, will become ‘more easy, and practicable’ (1740: 31):

You see here, that (tho’ contrary to the common Way of Writing) the substantial or fundamental Letters of each Word, are mixed in Roman Capitals, and the short Vowels, which help out the Sounds of those fundamental Letters, are in small Characters; so that you may, by bare Inspection, discover the Body of each Word separately from the little and short auxiliary Vowels, which are to perish in the pronunciation of the Word; and so, you may very easy obtain the due Sound of it.

However, one can but speculate that spelling – ‘a greivous Torture to young Beginners’ – can only have had that status exacerbated by a system like this.⁸

The methods of sound/symbol representations found in the minor spelling books in the first half of the eighteenth century are hardly innovative. Sproson’s *Art of Reading* (1740) sets out to diminish the number of the ‘so many drawling, blundering readers, not only among children, but adult persons’ (1740: vi). His long lists of words occasionally admit alternant spellings such as *grey/gray*; *oil/oyl*; *blue/blew* and a few others, and he is content to see the omission of the final *-e*, which ‘serveth only to lengthen the tone, in those instances where it does not

serve this purpose' (although he gives no actual instances). Otherwise, the only orthographic innovation he is happy to accept are on occasions like those when 'p is not sounded in these Words, *tempt, prompt, exempt, contempt, sumptuous*, nor in those words derived or compounded of them, and therefore should be left out in the writing of them [sic]: especially as the learned are of the opinion that p is corruptly wrote in their originals' (1740: 34). On the other hand, in his *The Young English Scholar's Guide* of 1744, Hammond uses a great deal of respelling as a means of representing the types of pronunciations he seeks to describe: *suttle* 'subtil'; *num* 'numb'; *krowd* 'croud'; *kristian* 'Christian'; *woollen* 'woolen'; *pictur* 'picture'; *wedj* 'wedge'; *dauns* 'dance'; *jinjer* 'ginger'; *couf* 'cough'; *gerdle* 'girdle'; *wumb* 'womb'; *natiun* 'nation'; *miscion* 'mission'; *desier* 'desire' and many other such. The reluctance of both Hammond and Sproson to use diacritic markers of pronunciation characteristics is odd, in view of their prominence in one of their most popular predecessors in this genre – N. Bailey's *An Introduction to the English Tongue: Being a Spelling Book in Two Parts* of 1726. While Bailey also very occasionally indulges in respellings such as *Dimond* 'diamond', his main method of sound symbolism centres around an extensive use of superscripted diacritic marks, especially in vowel contexts. For instance, we find representations such as *foôd, moôd, broôd, boôk, broôk; coól; foól; woól; boôr, doôr; floôr*, as well as *foôt, hoôt, roôt*, with his 'broad' *a* sound shown throughout as *â*: *Bâld, bâll, wâlk, wâr, swân*. In a work otherwise almost totally devoid of anything resembling sociolinguistic comment, Bailey considers items marked thus: *pêrfit; pêrfited* and *pêrfitness* as 'vulgar pronunciations'. What he describes as 'short' and 'long' syllables are likewise accorded a diacritic mark over their vowel: *măd-man; făr-ther; sîn-ful* as against *âh, sîgh, phlêgm, recâll, arîse*. Bailey is also given to the use of square brackets 'to include a Word or two of the same Value or Signification with those with which they stand, and may be used in their stead', thus: [sene] *scene*; [bitt'n] *bitten* and some others.

Interestingly, it is in their discussion of the *th* digraph that Brightland and Gildon introduce observations concerning orthographic reform in the light of historical practice and derivational relatedness. They note (1711: 49) how the Anglo-Saxons distinguished the [ð]/[θ] contrast expressed by the ambiguous *th* digraph by the characters *ð* and *þ* ('tho' they sometimes confounded these characters') and how such graphs were subsequently, and for a variety of reasons, expressed by *y*, *y^t* or *y^e*. However, although they also observe the derivational affinity and phonological relatedness of fricatives and their obstruent counterparts, they only suggest the possibility of orthographic reform:

But we (as I have observ'd) express both Sounds by by (*th*), but erroneously, since neither of them is a compounded Sound, but evidently simple, varying or descending almost in the same manner from the Sounds of (*d*) and (*t*); as (*f*) and (*v*) do from the Sounds of (*p*) and (*b*). I grant, that by the same Reason, that (*ph*) is written for (*f*), (*bh*), (*th*) and (*dh*), might also be written, that is in some measure to shew the Affinity and Derivation of the Aspirate Letters, to those from whence they draw their Original.

But, perhaps surprisingly, appeals to reinstate earlier forms of spelling, even when they appear to disambiguate, are strictly a minority taste, only Tuite (1726: 56) observing: ‘Some are of the opinion, that many words, which now begin with *ge*, were originally spelt with *je*, as *jentleman*, not *gentleman*, and ought to be still so written, which wou’d avoid confusion in spelling’.

2.3 A balanced debate

1753 saw the anonymous publication in London of a pamphlet entitled *An Account of the Trial of the Letter γ alias Y*. This short work takes the form of an appeal to the God Apollo from several members of the Commonwealth of Letters concerning the perceptions they have of their misuse in the contemporary orthography. Arguments and counter-arguments are put by various letters of the alphabet either justifying their current use as the best means of expressing their ‘powers’, or protesting against what they see as the usurpation of their proper functions by other graphs. The flavour of the piece is not at all unlike the ‘Poor Letter R’ and ‘Poor Letter H’ monologues found in the mid-nineteenth century. In the *Preface*, the author stresses the importance of ‘settling the orthography of our language’, despite the fact that ‘our language is perhaps past it’s [*sic*] highest pitch of perfection, before we have any certain rule or manner of writing it’. Yet he is careful to stress that any kind of reform should be guarded and certainly not based entirely upon current pronunciation (*Preface*: vi):

The French have settled their spelling; but in doing it, they by too great a regard to their pronunciation have, I think, disfigured their language, and in numberless instances lost all traces of the Etymology of their words. Sir Roger L’estranger imitated their manner; and had his licentious way of spelling been generally followed, our English had not been now a language, but a jargon. The two chief things hinted at in this piece are, Uniformity in spelling, where the reasons from derivation are the same; and, Preserving, as much as possibly may be, the marks of our Etymology; both which I apprehend are necessary to the rendering of any language fixed and easily intelligible. Modes of pronunciation may vary; but orthography settled upon true principles will last as long as the language continues.

A majority of the personified Alphabet letters are willing to support the claim of the letter *I* that its function has been usurped by the Greek incomer *Y*, indeed some of the Letters (‘the most public spirited among them’) feel that ‘such a remonstrance might be very advantageous, as it would open the way to a general reformation, and be a means to settle their respective powers’. However, others feel that any move to a wider review of ‘power’ to graph correspondence might be disadvantageous: ‘*H* was not very much inclined to have matters examined into, for fear least he should be degraded into a simple aspiration’ (1753: 4).

The appeal of the Letter *I* to Apollo has only a mixed success. The judge agrees that *Y* can be used in ‘Greek words made English’, thus *Style*, *System*, *Hypocrite*,

Hypothesis; it may be retained too in words like *York, you*, despite the Letter *I*'s assertion that in such instances *Y* was 'the real power and office of *I*; that *year, yoke, you, Yorke, &c.* were pronounced, and ought to be written, *iear, ioke, iou, iorke, &c.*'. But Apollo decrees that *Y* has not usurped *I*'s power in such cases, rather it is a 'deputy' to *I*, a different 'character' for *I*, whose power nevertheless remains in these word-initial cases. Indeed, he accepts *Y*'s case that 'Custom the great Arbitrer of languages had established him in those rights and privileges which he enjoyed'. Nevertheless, Apollo accepts that *Y* can be used as a substitute for *IE* 'to prevent the unsightly clutter of vowels which would be huddled together in *dieing, flieing, &c.*' (1753: 12).

Apollo also recognises appeals that *gh* should be restored at the end of the words *Tho'* and *Thro'* allowing 'a censure passed upon Sir Roger L'estrage, who in a foolish imitation of French introduced their new-fangled way of leaving out such letters as are not pronounced, whereby language is maimed and disfigured, and the Etymology of words in danger of being lost' (1753: 14–15). At the same time too, the God agrees to the suggestion that the 'improper diphthongs' (although he does not use this term) *EA* and *AI* be discarded in favour of *E* and *A* in words like *extream, supream, claim, prevail*, with a 'double power' of the Letter *E* used to capture the vowel quality: *extreme, prevale*. Other changes he countenances are the 'restoration' of *S* in words like *defense* and *pretense*, with the Letter *U* to be discarded from items such as *honour, labour, superiour*.

Appeals made to literary authority meet a mixed response from the arbiter Apollo. The argument that the Letter *G* should be abolished in words like *foreign* and *sovereign* is reinforced with the claim that no less a literary authority than Milton 'rationalizes' the spelling of the latter to *sovrán*. While deferring to the status of the great poet, Apollo wishes to 'take time to consider the case', though 'in the meanwhile people should be at liberty to spell those words which way they liked best' (1753: 19). However, Apollo is fussy about the status of the authority he is willing to accept. When the Letter *U* defends his use in the word *Further*, he takes refuge in the observation that this is a neologism and 'that he did it upon the Authority of some celebrated modern Authors, and he hoped their Authority would be allowed by the Court'. However, his hopes are to be dashed: 'I will never, said Apollo with some indignation, allow of the Authority of men who write before they can spell'.

Apollo's mixture of conservatism and appeal to Custom is again seen in the complaint by *TH* that he has been supplanted by *S* 'in the end of the third person singular of verbs' (1753):

Apollo declared 'that he thought this a very great irregularity, as it added very much to that hissing which is so much complained of in the language by foreigners; that he wished Custom would entirely abrogate it'; in the meantime he ordered *TH* to keep possession in all Prayers and solemn acts of Worship, and censured those young Divines who not withstanding Mr. Addison's reproof will continue to read *pardons* and *absolves* instead of *ardoneth* and *absolveth*.

Interestingly, the recommended action to be taken in response to the 'Cross-petitions of *D*, and *TH*, each side complaining that the other had wrongfully taken

his place in the word *Murder* or *Murther*', has the appearance of an appeal to an Academy, the dispute being: 'Referred to a Committee of Anglo-Saxons to determine the rights of each Complainant' (1753: 14). Yet alongside this judgement the God juxtaposes a pragmatic, *laissez-faire*: 'and in the meantime the Poets had liberty given them to use either, as would best suit their rhyme'.

2.4 Some radical orthographic innovations

The early years of the eighteenth century see the production of two important works concerned to alter radically standard orthographic practice in an attempt to produce an alphabetic symbolism of a type where spelling and sound were matched in as close a one-to-one relationship as possible. These works set out to be *bona fide* attempts to overhaul the entire spelling system, rather than promote the production of minor, and relatively *ad hoc* changes to the standard spelling made for the specific purpose of exemplifying a particular set of phonetic characteristics. The earliest of these are two works by the schoolmaster John Wild of Littleleek in Nottinghamshire. In 1703 appeared Wild's *Magazine, or Animadversions on the English Spelling* (Jones 2001). In this work Wild outlines the 'Contradictions of the English Letters Warring against themselves, and one with another' for which he offers an 'Ammendment'. He bemoans the fact that, as regards the current spelling system 'things are too much amiss to be excus'd' (1703: 3), so that schoolchildren are bemused by and their progress stilted by it: 'Our Children are not Witches, that they should guess to Read right by the Letter ... and Masters are no very great Conjurers, to perceive nothing; what contradictions they make 'em swallow' (1703: 5), and 'how can Ladies be blam'd for Writing bad English, when Scholars spell no better?' (1703: 6). He acknowledges the usual complaint that spelling changes and simplifications might affect the ability to trace derivational history, but he dismisses it as an irrelevance (1703: 6): 'why should *phrase* be spell'd with *ph* and *s*, and not *f* and *z*? Because you say its Original is a Greek word: But it hath been long enough freely us'd amongst us, that it may claim prescription for a Licence to put on the English garb'. Anyway, he argues, scholars are quite capable of working out etymologies, even with minimal assistance from the spelling 'when scarce one Letter remains of their original, more than James from Jacob ... As for changing the Letters, I shall hope they will put the devines in; I fear not that they can put the Lawyers out' (1703: 10). But his experience as a schoolmaster has clearly left him with a strong sense of the enormous difficulty any attempt at spelling reform will bring and the huge resistance and inertia it will encounter (1703: 7):

What's learn't in Childhood is uncontrollable, as good as prescription of an hundred years, and a School-Dames authority is irrefragable, as the proverb says, *Early crookes the Tree, that will good Cambrill be*: That to unlearn a Youthful Error is more than to serve an Apprentiseship, or to take the Degree of a Doctor or Serjeant. For these are deaf and dumb to Learn the contrary, though I am loath to compare them to the English Doctor Burnet's *Antidiluvian People* in the Alps, which he saw in his Travails.

Wild concedes that some writers have attempted to rectify the situation in the past, but they 'have bin so little taken notice of by the publick (tho there is some small amendment made, that can scarce be perceiv'd). The latter Authors mentioning the former, all Men of no small Note'. As for himself, he is prepared to take up the cause of a reformed spelling regardless of the opposition and ridicule it may engender from the Establishment (1703: 11): 'But now to strike at the root of so many errors begotten by false Letters, besides a false finical speech according to the Letters, being illiterately litterate, as calf, haut, goust.' Wild reserves most of his vitriol – 'what ails you to be so bitter against the Letters?' (1703: 26) – for the conventions governing the expression of the 'improper diphthongs' in which, in his view, false cambrills abound. He notes the inconsistency of the function of the *a* graph in words like *bear*, *broad* ('to make the *e* or *o* long') against *Beatrice* and *creator* (where it has no such function), while in *heaven*, *earth* and *bread* the *a* symbol is 'standing for nothing'. Using his usual pictureque language he concludes (1703: 12): 'when a person is in Commission, he should wear the livery of his Office; but when he signifies nothing, he should not put it on, nay rather, he had better keep at home'. In his view, the custom of the use of digraphs for single vowel sounds should be abandoned, certainly any extension of the habit should be resisted (1703: 12): 'In a Rail of Pales, if one be out to let in one Hog, 'tis enough to let in the whole Herd into the Close'. His censure is often quite blunt (1703: 15): 'But alas it is objected lately within this seven years by G.B. that Compositors leav out *E* in *days* and *ways*, and such like; Garamercy for that! But why do they not leav out *y* also, which signifies not more, but less than *e*: And why is not *i* and *e* cast out of *praise* and *raise*, and *e* from *wife* and *strife*, which adorn the words no more than Beauty-spots do a Whore's face: and why is not *w* for a black Patch, cast awa from *know* and *blow*, as well as *day*, and *way* hav cast awa their Pock arr-y'; 'Methinks the dead Letters should not be coye on what Cambril they're hang'd on' (1703: 14–15).

Although his aim is to to see 'Babbling Babel undermin'd; the Eyes submitting to the Ears' (1703: 20), at least in *Magazine*, his reformed system ('not altering a tittle of the known Pronunciation of the words, but only of the spelling') is not particularly radical. Perhaps – despite his disclaimer – this is because, as a working schoolmaster, he has an eye to the practicalities (1703: 11): 'What advantage or disadvantage it may be to Booksellers or Printers, as none of my business, I leave to their consideration'. The customary 'long'/'short' vowel contrast in *danger/anger* types, he proposes to indicate through the use of a cambrill, a circumflex in this instance, over the 'long' vowel: 'Make a Cambril over the vowels to make 'em long; and this will cure innumerable errors, and there will be no more mistakes or abuse of the vowels, and this will save a world of trubl' (1703: 19). So too he suggests that the *E* long/short distinction in the word *cement*, might be captured by the use, on the long vowel of an Acute mark, which would be 'a great ease and comfort to the Reader and Teacher, and no great trouble to the Printer' (1703: 13). But a solution involving diacritic markings is difficult for 'i long' (the [ai] diphthong), he claims, since 'the titl of *i* stands in the way' and he suggests instead a 'dash' for the *i*-long, with a 'low Apostrophe, as high as the bodies of the Letters' to represent 'i short'.

But, perhaps owing to the constraints set by the compositor of *Magazine* (although these are much less in evidence in *Nottingham Printing Perfected*), some of these typographical innovations (notably the low apostrophe and the ‘sign Taurus with a Football between his horns is the Trifthong’) never appear in his text. Despite these innovations, he is still confident of success: ‘Then ask the Printer whether a Cambril set over the vowels, be not as good, and cheap as an *e*, *a*, *o*, or *gh* at the end’ (1703: 19), setting out his system as:

Mal, mel, mil, mol, mul
 Mâl mêl mîl môl mùl

But, and certainly as far as vowel representation is concerned, he would perhaps be willing to accept a compromise, assigning novel orthographies to marginalia (1703: 12):

If it would please the wisdom of foolish custom (in whose errors of this kind (though in nothing else) all Religions meet) being long enough advised in time, to think fit to amend in the Copy, or at least in the Margin, where words are far otherwise spell’d, than they are pronounc’d ... I believe our Printers could as easily Cambril our English vowels, as Circumflex the Latin, which would be a sure guide for reading.

Wild’s suggestions for consonantal graph reform are much more radical, however, and involve considerable use of novel symbol shapes, his *battledore* containing inverted and reversed upper case graphs. Complaining that the pronunciation of items like *heap*, *God*, *thy*, *thigh*, *hang*, and *shame* is wholly inadequately represented in their spelling: ‘neither can any Englishman for his ears, eyes and wits, spell any of these words, and MILLIONS more like ‘em, more by his 24 English Letters, while *England* is *Ingland*, and have both Universities, CAMBRIDGE and OXFORD to help him, and all the Universities beyond the Seas to help them’ (1703: 23). The solution he offers is shown in Figure 2c, utilizing a set of symbols apparently representing voiced/voiceless contrasts such as shown in Figure 2d. His ‘compleat Alfabet’ is set out as shown in Figure 2e.

Wyld’s confidence in his innovations is high: ‘if Books were begun to be all printed by these directions, they would make all other old books easier read, and more truly pronounced, the false spelling being discover’d and amended’ (1703: 25). No system invoking such addition to and alteration of the standard alphabet set receives such justification and detailed exemplification in the eighteenth century before the coming of Thomas Spence’s *New Alphabet* of 1775. Indeed, the parallel may not end there, since it now seems that Spence’s *Grand Repository* was as much a guide to prestigious (North East of England) regional rather than London Court pronunciation of his day (Beal 1999: 181–4; 1996: 363–82), lacking the over-riding prescriptive focus of many of its contemporaries in so doing; so too Wild stresses that the aim of his innovative system is to have a variety-inclusive

A Rule useful for School-Teachers, for short Tongu'd Children, for easy Utterance use the upper Letters for the neather.

B O D V G J Z O A Y
 For
 P C I F H [S L K R

Figure 2c

[b]	[g]	[d]	[v]	[dʒ]	[ʒ]	[z]	[ð]	[h]	[r]
[p]	[k]	[t]	[f]	[ʒ]	[ʃ]	[s]	[θ]	?	[ʃ]

Figure 2d

But premisses rightly understood deser the exhibition of a compleat Alphebet, to read English as easily as Greek; therefore I shall end this Book wi' the first Letter ou the ensuing Batl-dur.

V B Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yyz &. †

Figure 2e

function (1703: 26):

But Letters are neither here nor there, for all this, in every circuit there is something of a particular dialect, differing from the common English, though the Western and Northern differ most.

Now when we speak of altering the Letters, we alter not, but establish and settle the known speech, which is no more that to alter or remove the sign when it directeth to the wrong house, but the Inn all the while is the same. If one be in the North or West, he had best speak as they do, that he may be readily understood, which is the end of speech.

Yet considerable as the alphabetic manipulations are in *Magazine*, they cannot match those in Wild's *Nottingham Printing Perfected: Spelling Consumat, Grammar*

Complete which appeared as a single MS page dated 31 July 1710. In this somewhat gloomy text *The Happiness of Death, a Satire of Life*, Wild uses a quite innovative set of vowel and consonantal graphs in an attempt at a near one-to-one correspondence of sound and symbol. Among his renderings are forms like *w!!* 'we'; *s!!k* 'seek'; *pləz'd* 'pleased'; *difəviλ* 'deceiving'; *təʃiλ* 'teaching'; *rər* 'rare'; *Sətr* 'satire'. He also systematically distinguishes the [w]/[ʍ] contrast through the use of *w* and *ʍ*, using the inverted, reversed *T* for [θ], as well as other innovations like reversed upper case open *o* shapes and horizontally placed upper case *P* symbols. He employs the symbols *λ* and a reversed *h* for [h] in *Nottingham Printing Perfected* and *Magazine* respectively, with *ʃ* reserved for [tʃ], as in *w!! ad betr ləv of təʃiλ* 'we had better leave off teaching' of *Nottingham Printing Perfected*. Such a level of orthographic innovation could only have been possible given the high standards of printing characteristic of Nottingham in the early eighteenth century, but even then, the compositor sometimes struggles with his font: *ked* for *ked* 'head' and a few others but, on the whole, the rendering of the text is remarkably accurate, despite the considerable difficulties in setting and character formation involved. That this complex system was seen by Wild as an aid to classroom reading is remarkable.

For the author of *The Needful Attempt* the customary list of disadvantages inherent in the standard orthographic system are all too obvious: the time taken to learn it, the adverse effects its non-mastery has on commerce and the propagation of religious ideas; it makes even the educated 'loth to write' for fear of mis-spelling, while it has a whole set of detrimental effects on foreigners wishing to learn English (1711: 2–3): 'Foreigners are apt to spell too much according to the usual way of speaking (which has hitherto been accounted, tho indeed unreasonably, wrong spelling) and to speak too much according to the present way of spelling, which is foppish and ridiculous.'

Indeed, he claims that the situation is so bad that 'we have two different Languages ... in common Use; one that is spoke (which indeed I count is alone properly to be call'd Language, from the word *Lingua*) and another (improperly so call'd) which is writ and printed, in most Words so unlike, that we may call it another Language' (1711: 1–2), one that eventually leads to 'a confus'd Jargon, not properly a Language, because never to be spoke as 'tis spelled'. He sees the solution to such issues in the setting up of a new orthographic system, the basic tenet of which is 'To Spell as we Speak' (1711: 3). Such a system should, he argues, match as closely as possible the characteristics of 'the best and commonest way of speaking', the speech used by 'such as speak most leisurely and, in probability, most rightly', although he never at any juncture pinpoints any particular social group other than in general terms such as these. The underlying philosophy of *The Needful Attempt* lies in its denial that the setting out of and learning complex rules for the peculiarities of English orthography is a worthwhile exercise, and large sections of his *The English Grammar* over and over again sceptically raise the question 'For what Rule can be given for ...?' the use of individual orthographic forms for the sets of sounds they set out to represent (1711: 11): 'What Rule can be given for pronouncing *th*? When, as in, *then* and *the*, *thee* and *thou*? And when, as in, *thank* and *theft*, *three* and *thousand*?' Of course, there are no easy and systematic answers

to such rhetorical questions he poses (1711: 12):

Now, without saying any more, I suppose it sufficiently appears how very faulty and irregular our present way of spelling is; and how impossible thereupon to compose any Grammar, to purpose, for it; and that there is, as it appears, no way to learn, so much as to read (readily and rightly) our present Prints and Manuscripts, according to the present way of teaching and learning, without so long and so well observing most Words how they are spell'd, as to remember exactly how.

It is in *The English Grammar* section of this short work that the author of *The Needful Attempt* puts into practice what he envisages as a spelling system – one where there is a transparent interconnection between sound and symbol. It is worth quoting the first part of his *Preface* to the *Grammar* to provide a flavour of the system he proposes (1703: 8):

Grammar beeing to teatsh, az spedili az kan bee, dhe art of speling, spéking, ríting, and reeding a Languaj rítli; and if it bee a spóken languaj, akaurding to dhe móst usual wai of spéking it; mi Bísnez dherfor I kount iz, to teatsh, az breefli and plainli az I kan, whaut iz nesasari to dhe rít speling, and spéking and ríting, and reeding English az tiz spók. And dhat, I think, iz, furst, to teatsh dhe Leters (bóth Vouels and Kaunsonants) and dhe rít pronounsing auf dhem.

Such a system – ‘With dhe spelling agreeabul to our spéking’ – avoids the use of highly specialized innovative alphabet symbols of the type favoured by Wild (and, much later in the century, by Thomas Spence), relying instead upon a liberal use of diacritic marks and new combinations of the standard alphabet set, a system not unlike that of Elphinston in his *A Minniature ov English Orthoggraphy* (1795). This approach avoids criticisms of difficulty of familiarization as well as expense in the setting of new symbols with its accompanying risk of proof-reading error – although even in the system under discussion here, inconsistencies in setting and proof-reading seem to occur, with apparently unmotivated alternants like *teeatsh/teatsh* and what would appear to be a typesetting error in *mi Bísnez*. We are, however, repeatedly reassured that this new system will be more efficient and more easily learnt than the standard model (1711: 12): ‘I beeleev móróver, dhat hoosoever, shal lairn, in dhe furst plâs, dhis wai dhat I now propôs ... beecóm ábul, mutssh sooner dhan Peepul hidherto hav bin, to reed wel ani odher Book aulso auf dhe present speling’. The author is conscious too that any success of adoption his new system might have will depend not just on the speed of its acquisition, but on the availability of samples of works printed in it; a lack of these he recognises, but promises to rectify: ‘Anf faur dhe jeneraliti auf Peepul (hoo hav naut tím naur need to reed mutssh) a veri fú gwud Books, in dhis nu wai of speling mai bee sufishent, which I shal endeavor dhai shal naut want’. And given the importance for the historical phonologist of a representational system like this, it is unfortunate that this promise was not kept or, if it has, no other materials exploiting it have come down to us.

The Needful Attempt proposes a number of reforms and refinements to current orthographic practice – ‘these few little Alterations’ – which, as far as the vowel sounds are concerned, fall into two distinct types: (1) the use of diacritic marks; and (2) respellings. A priority is seen as the distinguishing of ‘long’ versus ‘short’ vocalic segments (usually a quality rather than a quantity contrast for eighteenth-century observers). This is to be done by placing an acute and other types of marks over the vowel graphs: ‘tiz absolùti neseari to ... distingwish dhe long fraum dhe shaurt’, the short vowels to be pronounced ‘shaurt and quik, and with az litul Breth az kan bee’. In this way his short/long ‘single’ and ‘compound’ vowels are marked as *á, é, í, ó, ú, aí, à, eé, eeí, oí, oó, oú* (1711: 13), enabling him to distinguish *lame/can; penal/penance; pint/print; pork/work; puny/punish* contrasts. While he claims that the ‘compound vowels’ are always long, he asserts that ‘onli dhe *a*, in *ea* iz to bee spók az shaurt and quik az kan bee, az in dhe Words, *beeat, seeat, heeat, wheeat*, &c. Dheez dherfor need seldom aur never to bee markt; (bekauz lairnt to be spók onli long) but dhe odher too kompond wonz, and dhe fív singul wonz, when dhai ar to bee spók long ar alwai to bee markt; dhus, *á, é, í, ó, ú, aí, aú*’ (1711: 14). An important innovation is his suggestion that the vowel value ‘*o* short’ (presumably [ɔ]) should be represented orthographically by *au*, thus in those cases where ‘either *a* or *o* are spoke as *au* short, that *au* be used instead thereof thus *cauld* ‘called’; *haul* ‘hall’; *faul* ‘fall’... And so too for *o*: as in the Words *or, for, God, Lord*; and in a multitude the like, where the *o* is spoke as *au* short, and therefore should be so spell’d’. He wishes to see the orthography simplified in words like *trouble*, *vertuous*, where for the *ou*, ‘only short *u* is spoke’.

Several changes are also proposed for the representation of consonantal sounds. The *c* symbol comes in for particular criticism, especially the difficulties of determining whether it is [s] or [k] and what its pronunciation is in *ch* digraphs – ‘hou hard it iz faur Lairners’; so ‘Seeing dherfor dhe Leter *c* iz auf so veri mischeevus Kaunsequens, and naut at aul neseari; *k* and *s*, and *ts*, without ani Inkaunveniens dhat I kno auf, dooing aul dhe Bisnes auf it, whi shud it stil bee retain’d?’ (1711: 11). So too the ambiguity of the *g* symbol in items like *Genesis* and *getting* is highlighted and the recommendation made that *j* should always be used in the former case: ‘whi dherfór shud wee yúz it faur *j* ani longer? And whi naut kaul dhe *j jee*, and dhe *g gee*; az tiz spók in dhe Word *Gees*?’ (1711: 11). Another recommendation is the use of the digraphs *dh* and *th* for [ð] and [θ] respectively (a convention much used later in the century). Consonantal clusters which are syllabic when syllable final should be spelt with a vowel, thus ‘fiddle’ as *fidul* and the like. Since he claims that *tion* terminations are ‘spoke as one syllable’, that should be reflected in their spelling, so *generashon*, *commishon*, etc. Not surprisingly, he observes that ‘*gh* [is] very often used to no purpose; as, in the Words, *high, mighty, through*, &c.’.

Although there appears to be no evidence that the system it utilizes was ever put to any practical use, Alston records the existence of *Two Tables Illustrating Pronunciation*, dated 3 June 1749, signed by one ‘Edward Capell’. This system is a complex one, heavily reliant both upon new symbols, or at least heavily modified versions of the standard alphabet set, used in conjunction with diacritic markings of various kinds. The *Tables* consist of four columns, headed *Letters or Characters of*

Letters, or characters of sounds	Express'd by other characters	Their power, or name	Exāmples
ā	ah au	ah	cōmmānd, pāth fāther
ai	ay, ei, ey	aɪ	arraign, dayly, cōnveyance
â	au, aw, ô, ôa, ôu	au	tâlk, cōst, clāuse
a'		a	mare, man'd, aping
a		a short	man, manners, arab
è	ea, ee, eo, æ, œ, î	è	crèatE, eat, heed, pèople, capricE
i	y	ɪ	find, wine, riot, lyre
ı	y	ɪ short	inhibit, visit
o	oa	o	fore, holy, mōan
o	œa	o short	none, fort, wholly
ö	ã	o or au short	wrot, rod, closet
oi	oy	oi	exploit, cōin
oi	ow	oi	fōul, fōwler, untoward
ow	oi	owe	low, fōur, sōul
œ	ō, ōu,	œ	wōed, prōve, mōver
oo	ō, ū	oo short	wool, wood, wōman, pūsh
u	eau, eu, ew	u	Truth, youthfūl, beauty, feud
u	ö	u short	Sun, cunning, cōvetousness, Lōndon, mōther

Figure 2f

Sounds; Express'd by other characters; Their power, or name; Examples. However, the whole issue is complicated by the fact that Capell can use different (even additional) diacritic marks in his *Letters, Express'd by* and (especially) *Examples* columns. A sample of his representations is given in Figure 2f.

It is difficult to know whether Capell's second column symbols represent his own alternatives for those in the first column or those he has come across in his reading of contemporary grammar books. His use of the strikethrough seems to correspond on occasion with the identification of 'improper' diphthongs and, on others, with the particular part of the word in which they are to be found in the *Examples* column. While none of the symbolic innovations in Capell's first *Table* are particularly unusual, in his second there are instances where Capell uses at least one convention not regularly found until the nineteenth century. He supplements his representational set of consonantal sounds *b, p, f, g, t, d* and so on, with a corresponding set with the 'power' of *fye, lye, gye, bye, cye*, a power which he says is evident when these consonants appear 'with *e, i, y*, before a vowel'. In such instances he uses a symbolism whereby a superscripted comma is placed to the right of the consonant in question, thus: *t', d'* and so on. The *Examples* he gives are enlightening. For instance, he cites as possibly equivalent renditions such as *endurE* or *end'ure*, *ref'utE* or *refutE*, *annual* or *ann'ual*, while instances of *bye, lye,*

mye, nye, dye and *pye* are provided by *amphibious, malleable, abstemious, fastidious, recipient*. In other items, apostrophied forms are used with consonants preceding 'long u' (i.e. [ju]) as well as in contexts where we might at this period expect phonological change to occur such that, for instance, the *i* of the *ious* and *ient* terminations was coming to be devocalized to [j]. Indeed, Capell gives under his *Express'd by other characters* column in his first table, the apostrophe symbol itself as a possible version of *y* in items such as *beyond, young, universe, use* and *usual*. Although his system never appears to have been actively used, for example as an aid to spelling and reading, it is of some interest for the historical phonologist, not least in its recognition of what appears to be some kind of BATH/TRAP contrast, and its suggestion that a short *u* (in *sun, London*) might be representable by *ö*, at least hinting at a FOOT/STRUT split.

Unsurprisingly it is the writers of shorthand, 'quick writing' and secret writing systems (where there was neither room nor need for superfluous symbols in sound representation) who saw the greatest gain in alphabetic innovation. Shorthand systems have a long history in English, some of the earliest dating from the beginning of the seventeenth century, notably John Willis' *The Art of Stenographie* of 1602. In the early eighteenth century there were several works of this kind which appear to have had a wide public currency, notably Elisha Coles' (1674: 1707) *The Newest, Plainest, and Best Short-hand extant*, Peter Annet's (c1750) *Expeditious Penmanship, or Shorthand Improved* and, perhaps most important of all, William Tiffin's (1751) *A New Help and Improvement of the Art of Swift Writing*.⁹ Tiffin (Kökeritz 1944) sets out to invent an orthography which will show a 'philosophical Exactness' in the relationship between sound and symbol, ensuring that his innovatory system of symbols gives 'every Character one power of its own, in which no other Character is allow'd to interfere' (1751: 6), since "'Tis well known that in writing English, we use the same Letter sometimes for one Sound, and sometimes for another, and now and then a Letter for no Sound at all; the same Sound is sometimes written by one Letter. Sometimes by another, and sometimes by two together'. Such defects his 'Alphabet truly Philosophical' would set to rights. His new alphabet, however, seems to have presented too many problems for learners, users and publishers to master and it never gained any measure of success, as might be appreciated from the short sample given in Figure 2g (Kökeritz 1944: 89).

There was also a tradition of orthographic innovation among Continental grammarians in the period, a tradition which would merit further research (Gabrielson 1909). One such which has merited considerable study (Kökeritz 1944) has been the system employed by Mather Flint in his *Prononciation de la Langue Angloise* of 1740. The representative system employed by Flint appears to have been based (at least roughly) on that found in Guy Miège's *Nouvelle Grammaire Angloise-Françoise* (1685) (Kökeritz 1943: xxvi) and in the main uses a fairly straightforward method (at least compared to the eccentricities of John Wyld) based on superscripted diacritics. Flint arranges his materials in three columns, providing the English word, its French equivalent and an *imitation*

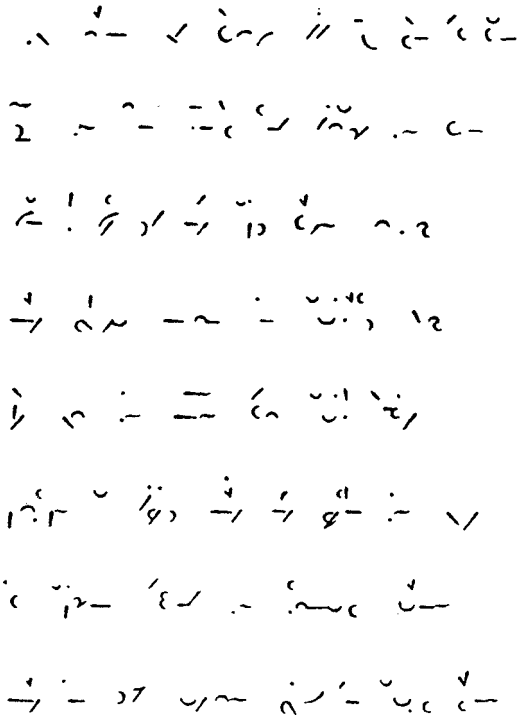


Figure 2g

	Front	Back	Central	Diphthongs
High	i/ī 'bit'; 'build' î 'scene'	oū 'who' oũ 'pull' oû 'too'/'foot' ou 'do'/'to'/'two'	ø 'glove', 'love'	aī 'my' âou 'house' âi 'choice' ioû/iu 'acute'/'issue'
Mid	aī 'made' e, ê 'met' é 'certain' è 'e long' 'where'	ô 'hope' â 'hop'		
Low	aī 'can' ă 'arrest' ā 'hard'	a 'coffer' â 'tall'		

Figure 2h

Françoise, the last where 'Flint selected such French symbols (single letters or digraphs) as might convey most clearly to a Frenchman the nature of the English sound in question ... Diacritics – breves, macrons, circumplexes and diæreses – are used freely' (Kökeritz 1944: xxxvi–xxxvii). Figure 2h attempts to give an overview of Flint's representational set, tentatively allied to generalized phonetic characteristics. A representational system not unlike that of Flint's is to be found 41 years later in the *Dictionnaire de la Pronunciation Anglois* (1781), where we find respellings such as: clåg (*clog*), Pēstriř coũc (*pastry cook*), Guĩbridg) and Tô lăinin (*toe lining*)

3

The Sound System: Description and Classification

3.1 Major class distinctions

Following on from the practice of orthoepists of the previous century, early-eighteenth-century grammarians usually make a primary classificatory distinction between vocalic and consonantal phonological segments. For most observers at this time this distinction represents a discrete, binary opposition, and not one seen as the endpoints on a scale or cline, a concept embraced by some commentators later in the century. Most early commentators take a minimalist view of the degree of componentiality of phonological structure, individual sounds being seen as atomic, indivisible units. For instance, Jones (1701: 1–2) divides the phonological inventory into two main components, comprising simple and compound sounds, where ‘a *Simple Sound* (in general) is one uniform undivided Sound, having but one beginning, and one Ending, without any difference of Parts, being (as Men use to say) all of a Piece; as a single knock of a Hammer upon an Anvil; a single touch of a musical String; or the Sound of *a, e, o, &c.*’, a definition prescient of that for the phoneme. Jones also recognises a *Compound Sound* which ‘is such as consists of two, or more of those Simple Sounds’; as examples of this type he includes: *g* in *age*; *J* in *Joy*; *I* in *die*; *u* in *due* and *x* in *ax*. Simple Sounds are exemplified by *a* in *all*; *b* in *bib*; *k* in *kick* and he lists 28 in all, including those where digraphs are involved: *au* in *Saul*; *aw* in *awl*; *oo* in *too*; *sh* in *ash* among others. Along very similar lines too we have Brightland and Gildon (1711: ii *note*): ‘A Letter may be said to be a simple uncompounded Sound of or in the Voice, which cannot be subdivided into any more simple, and is generally mark’d with a particular Character’. Definitions of vowel-ness are fairly standard in this period, such segments characterized as having ‘a perfect Sound’, ‘standing by itself’, typically: ‘a Vowel is a Letter that marks a full and perfect Sound of itself, without the help of, or joining with any other Letter to it’ (Greenwood 1711: 233); ‘A Vowel is a Letter that makes a full and perfect Sound of itself; without which there can be no syllable’ (Tuite 1726: 2). Consonantal segments, on the other hand, demonstrate contrasting characteristics and are viewed as essentially combinatorial in nature: ‘A consonant is a letter that makes no sound or syllable, without the help of a vowel, either before or after it’ (Tuite 1726: 3); ‘a Consonant is a Letter that

cannot easily be sounded without the Sound of a Vowel, and therefore are always sounded with some Vowel, and for that Reason call'd Consonants' (Jones 1701: 3), likewise Watts (1721: 3), Mattaire (1712: 6) and Owen (1732: 6) and almost all other commentators. It is Brightland and Gildon who perhaps best express the notion of the primacy of the vocalic against the derived/dependent status of consonantal segments (1711: 3):

A Vowel therefore is a Letter denoting a full Sound made in the Throat, and can be pronounc'd without the help, or joining any Letter to it; but a Consonant, which derives its name from sounding with another, cannot be sounded without adding a Vowel before or after it. Vowels, or perfect Sounds, being by Nature of greater excellency than Consonants, since they perform that by themselves, which the other cannot do without their Assistance.

Indeed, their definition of the vowel/consonant dichotomy is perhaps the most inclusive in the period, seeing it in multifaceted terms, involving articulatory characteristics such as the absence/presence of constriction in the vocal tract, relative structural complexity as well as centrality versus peripherality (1711: 3 *note* 6):

It is of use to observe, that the several Sorts of Sounds us'd in Speaking, which we call Letters, are form'd in a very natural Manner. For first, the Mouth is the Organ, that forms them, and we see, that some are so simple, and unmix't, that there is nothing requir'd, but the opening of the Mouth, to make them understood, and to form different Sounds. Whence they have the Name of Vowels, or Voices, or Vocal Sounds. On the other side we find, that there are others, whose Pronunciation depends on the particular Application and Use of every Part of the Mouth, as the Teeth, the Lips, the Tongue, the Palate; which yet cannot make any one perfect Sound but by the same opening of the Mouth; that is to say, they can only Sound by the Union with those first and only perfect Sounds, and these are call'd Consonants, or Letters sounding with other Letters.

There is much discussion concerning the status of segments represented by the graphs *y* and *w*, almost all of which arises from a failure by commentators to distinguish sound from symbolic function. Some observers characterize the graphs as having vowel, others consonantal status, typically Mattaire (1712: 11):

The Letters *w* and *y* are Consonants in the beginning of a syllable; as *ware*, *beware*, *year*, *beyond*: else Vowels; and then *w* is pronounced like *u*, *y*; like *i* or *ie* final; as *vow*, *by*, *they*, *mercy*, *byass*. *Y* in Greek words is always a Vowel; as *hymn*, *cypress*. *W* beginning a syllable, in some words, supplieth the room of *gu*; as *ward* for *guard*, *war* from the French *guerre*.

Watts (1721: 2 *note*) takes a more sophisticated stance on the issue: 'I have here followed the old and usual custom of making Twenty-four Letters, and distinguishing the *u* and *i*, into Vowels and Consonants afterwards; tho it had been

much more proper and natural, if our Fathers had made the *v* and *j* Consonants, two distinct Letters, and called them *ja* and *vee*, and thus made Six-and Twenty'. There is some debate too concerning the value of 'the Letter *h*' – in particular as to whether or not it can claim consonantal status. Lane (1700: 2) defines a Letter as 'a mark of an individual or single sound', a definition which seems to exclude *h*: 'Q. Is H a Letter? A. *H* is a Note of Aspiration or Breathing rather than a Letter; and therefore the Aspirants, *ch, gh, ph, rh, sh, th*, are but single Consonants, expressed by two Characters'. For Mattaire (1712: 2) 'Letters are ... Elements of human speech' and, as such, '*h* is no letter'. Brightland and Gildon (1711: 41) take the opposite view, claiming '*H, tho*' excluded the Number of Letters by Priscian and some of our Moderns on his Authority ... and beside some obscure sound of its own, it mightily enforces that of the Vowels, and is manifestly a Consonant'. This position is taken up almost verbatim by Tuite (1726: 3) who asserts that '*H* is manifestly a consonant; tho' excluded the number of letters by Priscian, and some others, on his Authority. It has much force before a vowel, as any other consonant'.

Following some commentators in the previous century, early-eighteenth-century observers allow for a subdivision between consonantal types which leads to the perception that the vowel/consonant contrast is best viewed as scalar, rather than as a set of discrete oppositions. In effect, they seem to be proposing the existence of a kind of 'sonority hierarchy'. For instance, consonantal segments are in general typologized as to their degree of vowel-ness – those showing vocalic attributes classified as liquids or semi-vowels, those showing purely obstruent-like features labelled mutes. Perhaps the most sophisticated classification and description is to be found in Tuite's *Spelling Book* (1726). There he labels the sonorant consonants [l], [m], [n] and [r] as liquids largely owing to their vowel-like status (the 'half-vowels') (1726: 2): 'Liquids are also call'd semivowels, or half vowels because (as some hold) they have some sort of obscure sound of a vowel in their pronunciation, which is likewise imitated in their names, *el, em, en, ar*'.¹⁰ His characterization of such sounds, while it has an almost phonaesthetic flavour, is also made with reference to morphophonemic constraints: 'They are called liquids, because they are of such an easie motion, that they nimbly guide away¹¹ after a mute in the same syllable, without any stand; and a mute can be pronounc'd before a liquid in the same syllable, when a vowel follows the liquid, as *blast, probable, gnash, knave*'. So too Mattaire (1712: 9) 'Four of the Semi-vowels are Liquids, *l, m, n, r*: whose sound melts, and softly glides after the Mutes; as *blind, brim, clay, cry ...*'. In Tuite's view, such constraints give a special status to both [s] and [f] (1726: 4): 'tho' *m* be reckon'd a liquid, it follows no mute in the same syllable; nor any consonant but *s*, as *smart*: Neither does *n* follow any other mute than *g* and *k*, and very seldom *c*, as *gnaw, kneel, Cnidos*,' although it is always possible that these last instances may be purely made with reference to orthographic rather than pronunciation custom. Lane too, wishes to exclude *m* from the liquid category, for similar, largely combinatorial, reasons: '*M* is not a Liquid because a Mute before it cannot, without force, be sounded with it in the same Syllable with the Vowel after it'. Yet Tuite's definition of the semi-vowels as having 'some sort of obscure sound of a vowel in their pronunciation' leads him to include the possibility of [f] among this group 'tho'

not among the liquids; it being used as a mute, as *flat, from*'. Tuite also proposes a third consonantal category, the *neuter* (1726: 3): 'Note, that *h, s,* and *w* may be call'd neuters, as not strictly adhering to either mute or liquid', although he does not elaborate on what he intends by 'not strictly adhering to'. Greenwood, however, despite allowing for an extensive class of semi-vowels (viz *f, h, l, m, n, r, s, x*) is uncharacteristically non-committal on the status a further sub-division of the category (1711: 249): 'all the other Consonants are called Semi-Vowels, as *f, h, l, m, n, r, s, x*. Four of which Consonants, namely, *n, m, l, r,* are called Liquids. But we shall not insist upon this Division, it being sufficient just to have mention'd it'.

3.2 Vowel description

Nearly all the descriptive terminology relating to vocalic segments in the early eighteenth century is heavily influenced by that used in (perhaps especially the second half of) the previous century, a central influence being Wallis' *Grammatica* of 1653. In particular, parameters of vowel height and horizontal position are described almost exclusively in Wallis' terms of degree of oral cavity opening and the place of occlusion in the vocal tract itself. By far the most detailed descriptive treatment of vocalic segments between 1700 and 1750 is that to be found in Brightland and Gildon's *A Grammar of the English Tongue* (1711) whose debt to earlier grammarians and, in particular, Wallis, is clearly acknowledged (1711: *Preface*): 'The Messieurs of Port-Royal; the Grammaire Generale & Raisonne, an admirable piece, and wrote by the famous and Celebrated Dr. Arnauld; the excellent Royal Grammar, and that of the great Dr. Wallis, and some anonymous Authors of great Value, paid all they had to the Compleating this [little Discourse]'. Brightland and Gildon follow Wallis in providing detailed articulatory descriptions of the major classes of vowel types, thus, for the Palatine (1711: 23):

The Palatine Vowels are form'd in the Palate, that is by moderate Compression of the Breath betwixt the middle of the Palate and Tongue; that is, when the Hollow of the Palate is made less by the raising of the middle of the Tongue, than in the pronunciation of the Throat, or guttural Sounds. These Sounds are of three Sorts, according to the lessening or enlarging of the said Hollow; which Difference may be produc'd two several Ways, either by contracting the Mouth or Lips, the Tongue remaining in the same Position; or by elevating the Middle of the Tongue higher to the fore-parts of the Palate, the Lips, or Mouth, remaining in the same state.

The two-dimensional parameters of articulatory place of occlusion and degree of vocal cavity opening, which they advocate as a model for vowel description, can be illustrated (with some tentative pronunciation values) as shown in Figure 3a.

This type of descriptive profile is more or less standard among all commentators in the period, although the degree refinement of and comment upon it varies widely. While Greenwood, *The Irish Spelling Book* and Tuite show as much terminological detail as Brightland and Gildon, Mattaire, Lane and Watts are content

	<i>Greater</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>Less</i>
PLACE OF OCCLUSION			
<i>Guttural</i>	<i>a</i> and <i>o</i> open [ɔ]/[ɒ]	<i>e</i> feminine [ɛ]	<i>o</i> obscure [ʌ]
<i>Palatine</i>	<i>a</i> slender [a]	<i>e</i> masculine [ee]	<i>ee</i> or <i>i</i> slender [ii]
<i>Labial</i>	<i>o</i> round [ɔ]	<i>oo, u</i> fat [u]	<i>u</i> slender [ü]

Figure 3a Degree of oral cavity opening

merely to mention the Guttural, Palatine and Labial division. Indeed, Brightland and Gildon demonstrate a quite sophisticated and detailed level of discussion of vocalic classification (Sheldon 1938: 216–22). For instance, they list three different levels of lip rounding, round, middle and slender, and – even more importantly – they do not see either the degree of occlusion or place of articulation characteristics in terms of fixed positions, but rather as relative points on a continuum or scale (1711: 24):

I allow these nine sounds to be Vowels, that is, distinct unmixt Sounds, nor do I know any more (for the English broad (*i*) does not seem to be a simple Sound); yet I do not deny, but that there may now be in some Part of the World, or Posterity may discover more vocal Sounds in the Seats of Voice, than those nine which I have mention'd; and so 'tis possible that there may be some intermediate sounds, (such as perhaps is the French (*e*) neuter, betwixt the Palatine Vowel (*a*) slender, and (*e*) masculine); for the Aperture or Opening of the Mouth is like the continu'd Quantity, divisible *in infinitum*; For as in the numbering of the Winds, first there were four Names, then twelve, and at last thirty two. Thus, whereas the Arabians, and perhaps the ancient Hebrews, had only three Vowels, (or one in each seat) now in our Times we plainly discover at least three in every Seat; perhaps our Posterity may interpose some betwixt each of these.

But few commentators go far beyond the Wallis model of vowel description. Only Brightland and Gildon, Greenwood and, to a lesser extent, Tuite elaborate with additional descriptive terminology. This terminology is largely based upon metaphorical expressions of the 'small', 'fat', 'broad', 'slender' variety and is often used in a non-consistent fashion, making the assignment of phonetic values difficult. Likewise, precise values for those sounds which in varying phonetic contexts are described as 'obscure' (Brightland and Gildon's 'not plainly pronounced') are hard to come by. However, as a generalization, we can say that front vowels like [a], [i], [ɛ], and [ɪ] are accorded titles such as 'small, slender, clear, acute' and 'sharp', while back vowels like [ɔ] and [ɑ] are labelled as 'broad', 'full' 'open' or – very commonly – as like the 'fat or gross German *a*'. [u] is generally seen as 'obscure', although some commentators note a 'slender', 'lesser opening', French sound in 'long *u*' contexts where, presumably, in the second segment of the [ju] or [iʊ] diphthong some fronted [ü] sound is being characterized.

Despite their inheritance from the previous century of a relatively sophisticated set of models for the articulatory mechanisms involved in the production of speech sounds, most commentators in the first half of the eighteenth century have only the most rudimentary (and usually downright mistaken) notion of what constitutes the relative length of vowel segments. Almost all observers recognise that vowel sounds can vary in their duration, but what this actually means in descriptive terms or what constitute the phonetic environments which might control vowel temporal duration is never fully addressed. Jones' (1701: 3) comments are almost frivolous: 'A Long Sound is that which, passing off slowly, takes more time in sounding it, as *a* in *hate, hating* &c.'; 'a Short Sound is that which passing off nimbly, takes up less time, as *e* in *let, or let-ter, &c.*'. His 'long sound' definition shows, of course, the classic misunderstanding in the period, one which conflates duration increase with vowel quality change, and many commentators supply long lists of lexical items where vowel quality contrasts such as *pin/pine; lick/like; sat/sate* are put down to variation in vowel length (for example, Owen 1732: 17), an increase signalled (and even promoted by) the presence of the 'final *e*'. Much space is devoted to the 'final *e*' phenomenon in this period, typically as in Brightland and Gildon (1711: 6): 'But the sound of (*e*) is differently express'd; and of various and great Use in the Pronunciation of the other Vowels, all which it lengthens (when silent itself) in divers Manners, but is seldom long itself', and Greenwood (1711: 238):

But tho this silent *E* is now not always sounded, yet it is not altogether useless; for besides its discovering to us, that those Words, to which it is added, were formerly pronounced with more Syllables than they are at present; so it likewise serves to three uses: First, it serves to preserve the Quantity of the foregoing Vowel, which if long, remains so, although the silent *E* be not now pronounc'd; So the Words *Bat, Mat, Hat, Fil, Mil, Wil, &c.* are short; but the Words *Bate, Mate, hate, File, wile, are long ...*

The 'final *e*' (Lane's 'e subjunctive' (1700: 10)) takes up an inordinate amount of discussion in the literature of the period, although not all commentators are seduced by its value as a marker of length. Greenwood, for instance, notes how some commentators see the effect of the final *-e* as diphthong producing (1711: 241):

It is the receiv'd Opinion, that in the Words *miner* and *mine, &c.* *E* is there as a Note of Production, signifying, that the Letter *I* is to be pronounced long; but Mr. Ray says it signifies that the Character *I*, is there to be pronounc'd as a Diphthong. That it is a Diphthong is clear, because in pronouncing of it, you cannot continue the entire Sound, but must needs terminate in *Iota* or *ee*.

Even the inconsistency of final *-e* as a 'length' marker is pointed out by the author of *The Needful Attempt* (1711: 4), who asserts that since 'in all Languages (particularly the *English*) where there are not long vowels and short ones' [i.e. indicated by the orthography: CJ] it is necessary to 'teach how to pronounce the same Vowels

long, and how, more especially, to pronounce them short; and in Writing and Printing to mark them that are to be spoke long, thus, á, é, í, ó, ú, aí, aú &c. and to give one or more Examples to each'. He advocates too that the teacher 'leave out the *e* in the middle and end of Words, where 'tis not to be pronounced, but only to signify that the foregoing Vowel is to be spoke long; because 'tis of no Certainty ... in very many it does not make the foregoing Vowel long: as in *came* [*sic*], *have*, *accurate*, *were*, *give*, *live*, *infinite*, *requisite*, *gentile*, *come*, *home*, *some*, *one*, *done*, *gone*, *none*, *liberal*, *literal*, *love*, *lovely*, *loveliness*, &c.'

On occasion, and to the modern reader's relief, the argument surrounding final *-e* and its function becomes somewhat more sophisticated. Many observers note that the *e*-final is, in fact, a historical relic, one which may well explain its retention and use in the contemporary language. Brightland and Gildon perhaps express this most clearly (1711: 8 *note* 11):

The use of this (*e*) is the lengthening of the Sound of the foregoing Consonant; and a very learned Man is of Opinion, that it had this Original, That it was of old pronounc'd but in obscure manner, like the (*e*) Feminine of the French; so that the Words *take*, *one*, *Wine*, &c. which are now Words of one Syllable, were formerly Dis-syllables, or Words of two Syllables, *ta-ke*, *o-ne*, *Wi-ne*; so that the first Vowel terminating the first Syllable, was therefore long; and that obscure Sound of the final (*e*) by little and little vanish'd so far, that in the end it was totally neglected (as the (*e*) Feminine of the French often is) the Quantity of the foregoing Vowel being preserv'd, and all the other Letters keeping their Sounds.

While we should be a little hesitant in reading into this statement some kind of recognition by its authors of the existence of a phenomenon like *Middle English Open Syllable Lengthening*, there is nevertheless some hint in it that there is a phonological connection between syllable reduction and stressed syllable length. That we may be justified in such a reading is perhaps supported by the comments of Mattaire (1712: 19) on the characteristics of *syllable* length:

The Time, measure or quantity of a syllable is either Short, or Long ... One long syllable is equivalent to two short.

Syllables monophthongs are most commonly short; as *any*.

By Nature or reason, which requires a longer space of time to utter a mixt sound than a single one; Diphthongs and Triphthongs are long; as *air*, *heir*, *beauteous*.

By the same reason every Contraction is long, when two syllables are made one; and therefore a syllable, which of itself would be short, often becomes long before a quiescent vowel; as *hat hate*, *mad made*; because, though *e* be mute, yet that defect is made up by an addition of time to the foregoing vowel; as if *a* and *e* made one diphthong.

In this last observation there appears to be some suggestion of a notion like *Compensatory Lengthening*, an inference perhaps reinforced by Lane's (1700: 10)

insight that *pre-[r] Breaking* is itself a response to syllable reduction:

- Q. How can *e Subjunctive*, after a single Consonant, make the single Vowel before it long?
- A. *E subjunctive* is really sounded with the single Vowel before the Consonant, and so makes the Subjunctive, or latter Vowel of a Diphthong; otherwise it could not make the Syllable long, as in the words *Fire, more, pale, Fier, moer, pael*.

More importantly perhaps is the fact that at least one treatise recognises the inappropriateness – both observational and terminological – of equating contrasts of the *sat/sate* and *lick/like* variety with considerations of vowel length. Brightland and Gildon describe vowel contrast in words such as *cause* and *cost*, *sawd* and *sod* purely in terms of durational difference ‘since there is the same Sound of the Vowels in both Syllables, only in the first it is long, and in the last short’. They recognise that such a long/short nomenclature expresses something quite different from the many occasions when they have used it to describe *sat/sate* type alternations (1711: 22):

And this perhaps might bring our former Division of Sounds into doubt, since that supposes the Difference to arise from their Length or Brevity; whereas here we make the Sounds the same. But this must be here understood of the Formation of the Sounds; that is, the short and long Sounds are produc’d in the same Seats or Places of Formation: but in the former Rule the Hearing only is the Judge of the Sounds as they are emitted, not as to the Place of their Formation.

3.3 Diphthongs and double vowels

Perhaps in no other area of the description of phonetic constructs do we find such confusion and complexity, a situation which in many instances arises from a systematic failure (that blight of almost all eighteenth century language treatises) to distinguish sound from symbol, although other factors intervene as well. Indeed, definitions and descriptions of what a modern phonetician might recognise as a diphthong are few and far between in the period, only exceptionally do we find comments like those of Tiffin in 1751 (Matthews 1936: 98): ‘A simple Vowel may be distinguished from a Diphthong by the Ear, by this Rule. The Sound of a single Vowel continu’s the same from first to last if drawn out never so long: therefore, if before you have done you hear yourself making a different Sound from what you begun with, then you have sounded at least a Diphthong, which takes two Sounds into one Breath, or perhaps a Triphthong which takes three’. In general, though, most commentators focus upon the *Proper/Improper Diphthong* distinction current in the previous generation, although there are some idiosyncratic interpretations when it comes to the detail of definition and exemplification. Perhaps the discussion is seen at its simplest in Watts who asserts (1721: 20): ‘It has been usual in

Writers on these Subjects, to distinguish the Diphthongs into two sorts, (*viz*) *proper* and *improper*: they call those proper where both Vowels are pronounced, and improper, where one only is sounded'. But this clarity is muddled by some commentators through the conflation of diphthong and double vowel, a conflation clearly brought about by matters orthographic. Brightland and Gildon recognise the problem caused by the classifying together under a Double Vowel nomenclature of whatever phonetic values might be ascribed, for example, to *oi* and *oo* (1711: 26): 'What we call Double Vowels, is when the Sound of two Vowels are mixt perfectly in one Syllable, and indeed make a distinct Sound from either and all the other Vowels, and merit peculiar Characters, if we were to form an Alphabet, and not follow that which is already in use; by which we express these distinct sounds by the two Vowels, whose Sound composes them; as (*ai*) in *fair*, (*au*) in *laud* or *applaud*, (*ee*) in *bleed*, *seed*, &c. (*oi*) in *void*, (*oo*) in *food*, and (*ou*) in *house*'. Their Double Vowel classification clearly conflates sets of segments whose diphthongal status is not always clear, even though they state (1711: 26 *footnote*) that 'These Double Vowels are commonly call'd Diphthongs, or compounded Sounds, and sharing in or blending the Sound of two Vowels in one'. There is little difficulty in accepting their claim for proper diphthong status for the (*ow*) digraph in items like *our*, *out*, *house* and so on, nor for an assignment of improper status to the digraphs in words such as *soul*, *snow* and *know*, where 'the Sound of the (*u*) being entirely sunk', or in words like *shallow*, *swallow*, 'where the (*w*) seems only put for Ornament sake, and merely to cover the Nakedness of the single (*o*)'. Yet basing their Double Vowel classification primarily on orthographic considerations compels them also to treat *oo* as a proper diphthong. It is assigned its proper status on a different basis from the 'distinct sounds by the two Vowels' criterion they use elsewhere, a basis which seems to rest on orthographic distinctiveness. For instance in the case of (*au*), even although that digraph can have the same value (as in *bawl*) as that expressed by other vowels (the (*a*) in *small*, for example), the use of the digraph for (*a*) is justified, and its proper status determined by the fact that it 'is different from the common and more general Sound of that Letter'. On the same basis of orthographic uniqueness they seek to include *ee* as a 'proper Double Vowel', even though that digraph had previously 'been excluded from the Number of proper Double Vowels, because (*ee*) sounds like (*i*) in *magazine*, *shire* and *machine* ... I have thought it just to restore (*ee*) to its Right, since it is a very distinct Sound both from the long and short Sound of (*i*)'.

The type of classificatory difficulty their system throws up is perhaps best seen when they attempt a general Rule to distinguish the proper from the improper double vowel (1711: 32):

In short, this is a general Rule, That when ever a proper *Double Vowel* loses its native Sound, and varies to any other simple Sound, it ceases to be a proper, and becomes an improper Double Vowel, as having only the simple and uncompounded Sound of some one single Vowel. There is but one Exception to this Rule, when it wanders to the Sound of another Double Vowel, which is only done by (*ou*), when it sounds (*oo*), in *could*, *would*, *should*, &c.

There appears to be a great deal of confusion and inconsistency concerning the general issue as to the value of digraphs at this period (and, indeed, subsequently). Greenwood (1711: 244), for instance, is happy to define a Proper Diphthong as one 'where both the Vowels are Sounded', yet – and on the following page – he assures the reader that 'Au or Aw rightly pronounced, would give us a Sound made up of the English short *a* and *w*; But it is now adays simply Sounded like the fat *a* of the Germans: Namely the sound of *a* being express'd broad, and the Sound of the *w* quite suppress'd'. Diphthongal status appears to be ascribed by several commentators to *ai* graphs as well. For Greenwood (1711: 45) 'Ai or ay, expresses a sound compos'd of our short *a* and *y*: as in *day*, *praise*', yet while 'In the middle of a Word it (*ai*) generally has its full Sound. At the end of a Word it is sounded like *a*, as in *may*, *pay*, &c.'. Watts (1721: 19) confidently asserts that 'A, i, are both pronounced in the Word *Pain*; o, u, in *House*'. Yet, before jumping to the conclusion that we have very early evidence of front mid-vowel diphthongization in [ei], we should bear in mind the additional complication brought about by contemporary views on diphthongs/double vowels in general as well as the vocalic/consonantal status of *i/j* and *u/w* and the value such segments show in *ai/aw* digraphs and the like. Yet Brightland and Gildon's view that 'the Consonants (*y*) and (*w*) do not at all differ from (*i*) and (*u*), or (as we write them) (*ee*) and (*oo*), very swiftly pronounced', together with their contention that in digraphs like *ai* and *aw*, 'they have the very same effect on the Organs as (*i*) and (*u*) have' (1711: 45), suggests that we should not dismiss the possibility of an [ei] diphthong in *day* and *may* items completely out of hand in this period.

Unsurprisingly, there emerges a feeling for a need to introduce some kind of orthographic innovation to resolve the proper/improper diphthong conundrum. Writers recognise that the problem stems from an inherited orthographic patterning, thus Brightland and Gildon (1711: 32: *note*): 'Tis probable that when this Spelling [of improper diphthongs: CJ] prevailed, each Letter had a share in the Sound, but Negligence, and Corruption of Pronunciation has wholly silenc'd one. 'Tis remarkable, that in most of them the first Vowel prevails, and gives the Sound'. Greenwood (1711: 246) observes that Ray 'says we want a Letter to signify the Sound we give to *oo* in double *o*, as in *good*, &c. And he says it is a simple Vowel, because the entire Sound of it may be continued as long as you please; which is the only certain Note of Distinction between a Vowel and a Diphthong'. It is the author of *The Many Advantages* (1724: 58–9) who would resolve the problem by orthographic innovation, reducing markedly the number of 'diphthongs' marked by digraphs: 'where *ea* is short, had we not better write *e*, or *e* with an Apostrophe; as *Perl*, or *pérl*, *Steddy*, *Brêst*. May not the last seven Diphthongs [*ua*, *ue*, *ui*, *uo*, *eo*, *ia*, *oa*: CJ] be very well thrown out of the Language? Why may not *a* be left out of *Moat* – *môte*, *Goat* – *Gôte*, *Throate* – *Thrôte* ... The Apostrophe after a little time might be left off, if not from the Beginning.' But, in the end, it is Watts who finally despairs of a solution (1721: 20):

It has been usual with Writers on these Subjects, to distinguish the Diphthongs into two Sorts ... But there are so many Instances wherein one of the Vowels is

not sounded even in those which they call Proper Diphthongs, as in *Aunt, grow, flow, cough, rough, neuter*, &c. that I chuse rather to make no such Distinction between them; for 'tis nothing but Practice can teach us how and when one or both Vowels are to be sounded.

3.4 Consonantal segment description

In many respects quite unlike their counterparts in the latter half of the century, writers on pronunciation between 1700 and 1750 continue the tradition of seventeenth-century phoneticians in offering fairly detailed and accurate descriptions of the articulatory mechanisms which go to make up the formation of consonantal sounds. In particular, Tuite, Greenwood, Brightland and Gildon all offer detailed descriptive insight into consonantal (notably mute consonant) formation. Tuite (1726: 5), for instance, records that '*b, p, m, f, v* and *w* are call'd labial or lip letters; for *b, p* and *m* occasion the lips to shut; *f* and *v* send the lower lip to the upper teeth; and *w* is form'd, when both lips are extended towards the cheeks. Secondly, the lingual or tongue-letters are *d, l, n, r, s, t, j, ch, sh, th, y*, and *z*; for *d* and *t* are made by the tongue being fix'd to the upper teeth; *th* by the tip of the tongue betwixt the teeth; *n* by its being fix'd to the upper gums; *l* by its being fix'd to the foremost palate; *r* by its being plac'd in the middle palate; and *y* by the middle of the tongue being mov'd to the middle palate', and the like. Recall too Brightland and Gildon on the oral/nasal distinction (1711: 36 *note*): 'we may observe a triple Division of the breath. For (1.) it is all directed wholly to the Mouth; that is, seeking its Way or Outlet through the Lips; or (2.) it is almost wholly directed to the Nostrils, there to find a Passage out; or (3.) it is as it were equally divided betwixt the Nostrils and the Mouth. But I believe this Diversity of the Direction of the Breath wholly proceeds from the various Position of the Uvula'. They also describe the stop/fricative contrast in articulatory terms, careful to stress the derived status of the latter at the shared place of articulation of the former (1711: 47):

These nine Consonants which I have discours'd of, are formed by the total Interception of the Breath, so that it has no manner of Passage through the Mouth, which therefore I call clos'd: But the same Formation remaining, if the Breath hardly press'd, yet (tho' with difficulty) find an Outlet, those Consonants are form'd, which I call open'd, which are the Aspirates of all those (except the half vowels) from whence they are deriv'd; More *subtle* and *thin*, if the Breath goes out by an oblong Chink, Slit or Crevice; or more *gross*, if it goes out by a round Hole. They are referr'd to the same Classes as there *Primitives* were, as being near a-kin to them.

Greenwood is particularly anxious to promote an understanding of the 'difficult' 'consonants join'd together' – the fricatives [θ], [ð] and the affricatives [tʃ] and [dʒ] (1711: 254):

These Letters are framed by a percolation or straining of the Breath through a kind of Chink betwixt the Tongue and upper Teeth, the first with some kind of

vocal Sound, the other wholly mute: But to conclude: That which doth generally seem most difficult to Strangers in our English Tongue, is the pronouncing these aspirations, (as they are called) which are very frequently and familiarly used amongst us, but hardly imitable by others, tho' these are but few; these five Words, as it is said, comprehending all of them. *What think the chosen Judges?* Which a little practise might overcome.

Otherwise, descriptive terminology relating to features such as voicing and continuancy is fairly bland and traditional. Voiced consonants are generally characterized as *hard* or *strong*, voiceless as *soft*. Tuite describes [s] as *softer* or *thinner* than its voiced counterpart; [k] as *harsher* and *thicker* than its voiceless counterpart, while [tʃ] 'hisseth thick', [ʃ] 'hisseth thicker' and [θ] 'hisseth its labial Sound thro' the Teeth'.

4

The Vowel Phonology

4.1 Palatal or front vowel segments

4.1.1 High front vowels

The main points for discussion in this area of the vowel phonology are: (1) to establish the phonetic nature of the high front palatal vowel space itself; (2) to ascertain the extent to which the *English Vowel Shift* has affected those words showing stressed vowels originating in Middle English [ee]; in particular, to assess whether there has been a true MEAT/MEET merger; and (3) to determine whether there exists some kind of tense/lax [i]/[i] contrast of the type found in modern Standard English between items such as *beat*, *beet* on the one hand, and *bit*, *hit* on the other. In particular, under (1) and (2) we shall try to assess whether we are dealing in *beet/beat* words with a non-merged, phonetic contrast something like [i]/[e̞], while we shall examine evidence which suggests that, for this period at least, there was no lax, centralized [i] vowel in the phonology for *hit*, *bit* words; rather the vowel space in such items was seen as 'close' to that in *beet/beat*, and may have been something like [i̞], as Wyld observes (1953: 207): 'the long forms with [i] were far commoner during the first four centuries of the Modern period than at present. 'Peety' [pīti] for *pity* was occasionally heard until quite recently, and 'leettle' [lītli] is still used facetiously in the sense of 'very little', while on the other hand, Ekwall (1975: 36 *footnote*) is uncompromising in claiming that 'ī must have been open [i] in Middle English and throughout the Modern English period', so too Horn and Lehnert (1954: 128) and MacMahon (2001: 138). The problem is that there is little by way of incontrovertible evidence to suggest that some lowered/centralized and lax [i] segment existed in *bit/hit* words in this period, a problem arising, perhaps as much as anything else, from the inability of observers to 'hear' what might have been a very fine phonetic distinction at this time between such vowel segments, as well as from the difficulties commentators faced in finding a suitable description for such a segment.

The articulatory characteristics of high, front vowel sounds are set out in Brightland and Gildon (1711: 23) as:

The Palatine Vowels are form'd in the Palate, that is, by moderate Compression of the Breath betwixt the middle of the Palate and Tongue; that is, when the

Hollow of the Palate is made less by the raising of the Middle of the Tongue, than in the pronunciation of the Throat or Guttural Sounds. These Sounds are of three Sorts, according to the lessening or enlarging of the said Hollow; which Difference may be produc'd two several Ways, either by contracting the Mouth or Lips, the Tongue remaining in the same Position; or by elevating the Middle of the Tongue higher to the fore-parts of the Palate, the Lips, or Mouth, remaining in the same State. This is done either Way, and it is the same thing if it were done both Ways.

Discussion of the phonetic values for high front vowels in the period are usually treated by commentators under their descriptions of the graphs *e* and *i*, a stratagem which leads both to confusion and difficulties of interpretation. In many respects, Jones' (1701) descriptions of palatal vowel values, and the contexts in which they are to be found, are the most detailed (certainly as regards lexical distribution) and his marking of what are apparently two segments distinct in quality in this area of the phonology may be unique. Although all contemporary discussions of vowel length are to be treated with suspicion, that involving the long and short *i* sound can best be put aside at an early stage, since it is almost always the case that the description 'long *i*' refers to a diphthongal segment, whose value we shall discuss below. Jones' *A Spelling Alphabet* lists, under his 'easier and pleasanter sounds spoken, *e* and *ee*'. The former is pronounced 'as in *Girl*' 'which [is] Sounded as *e*', the latter 'as in *be, Shire, Women*' ('sounded *Weemen*') which are Sounded as *ee*'. Under his list of 'simple sounds', he includes the sounds of *ee* in *see* (or *i* in *it*; or *y* in *Lydia*) and *ÿ* in *bit, hit*. On the face of it this could point to the existence of a [i]/[i] contrast in his contemporary phonology, but with what looks like a tense vowel in *it* and *Lydia*. Indeed, a contrast like this is again suggested in his first *Note* to his section on the sound (*I*), where he claims that '*I* has three Sounds, that of *i* in *it, pit, &c.* which is handled under *ee*; *i* in *bit, fit, &c.*, *i* in *fie, tie, &c.* handled here' (1701: 58), again suggesting what looks like a tense value for *it, pit*.

One of several problems with Jones' *Alphabetical Spelling Dialogue* lies in its failure (although, as we shall see, there are some exceptions) to distinguish graphically the vowel values he intends in his lexical lists. For instance, under *I*, the reader is left to decide whether the graph in question is the diphthongal 'long *i*' or some monophthongal shape, since he does not set apart symbolically those items which might be thought to show [i], his *ÿ*. While one might not hesitate to assign such a value to items he lists like: *bit, hit, devil, England, yes* ('sounded *is*'), *him* (as in *take 'im*'); *his* (as in *stop 'is*'), *biscuit* and *conduit*, we can perhaps only assume that it is his failure to identify the 'long *i*' separately that causes him to list together under 'when is the sound of *i* written *ui*?', items such as *biscuit, beguil, build, circuit, conduit, disguise, guide, guil*. Likewise, he answers the question: 'When is the Sound of *i* written *ie*? As When *d* or *s* is added to Words that end in *y*, as *dy died, dies; try tried, tries; &c.*' and in '*fiend, friend, griest, Priest, wield*'. However, there is one instance where he uses diacritic marks in an attempt to distinguish a diphthongal from a monophthongal outcome. The sound of *it*, is clearly differentiated by Jones (1701: 62) as being either *ÿ* or *ī*, setting apart items such as *victuals*

(sounded *vittuls*) from *indict*, *indictment*, *verdict* ‘sounded without the *c*’. In response to ‘When is the Sound of *īt* written *ite*?, he responds: ‘When it may be sounded long at the end of Words, tho’ sounded short most commonly; as in *parasite*, &c.’. That Jones recognises a more central, lower and lax version of [i], perhaps – and we can only speculate – something like [i] or even [i̠] – might just be suggested by the fact that he identifies *ī* with a lower front vowel: ‘When is the Sound of *e* written *i*?’: ‘When it may be sounded *I*, which happens generally in Words of three or more Syllables of a *quick Run*, as in *ability*, *activity*, *Admiral*, *levity*, *vanity*, *purity*’ (even though his derivational morphology is not always correct).¹²

Capell (1749) also seems to recognise what is often assumed to be a lax/tense distinction in this area of the phonology. Listing a set of orthographic alternants for his letter *é* as *ea*, *ee*, *eø*, *æ*, *œ*, *LÆ* as in *creatE*, *eat*, *heed*, *peoplE*, *Ænæs*, *Phœbus*, *caprLÆcE* (where Gothic graphs in his system [represented here by upper-case bold] denote non-pronounced segments), he nevertheless is careful to keep distinct a symbol *i* for his ‘*i* short’, and there is no suggestion in his list of items with this value – *inhibit*, *visit*, *lyric*, *satyrical* – to tempt us into assuming that it is anything other than the lax [i], although his rendering of *nunnery* as *nunnéry*, might just point to the possibility of the segment having a higher and tenser value.¹³ And while Kökeritz (1944: 110) is bemused by Flint’s failure to make a similar distinction: ‘Flint equates his short *i* with the Fr short *i*, thus overlooking or ignoring (for practical purposes) the qualitative difference between the two sounds that must have existed in these days to judge, for instance, by Tiffin’s coupling of *i* in *it* with the long vowel for ME *ē*’, we have on the one hand to bear in mind Flint’s Scottish (certainly Northern) connections as well as the fact that Tiffin is writing somewhat later. The author of *The Needful Attempt* may also be trying to signal what is now a tense/lax contrast, since, as we shall show below, almost all his representations for vowels which appear in the modern language as high and tense, he signals through the use of various *e* graphs: *appeear*, *easi*, *fever*, etc. (with the possible exception of *hes bin* ‘has been’), all those which now show [i] he is careful to distinguish with *i*: *imaj*, *thing*, *visit*, *iniquiti*, *giltless*.

Tiffin (1751) seems unique in the early eighteenth century in keeping distinct high front vowel pronunciations in items like *beet* and *beat*, which he distinguishes in terms of vowel height. His vowel 3 is described, for example, as: ‘Advance the Swelling of the Tongue about half Way forward under the Bone of the Roof, and let the Edges press the upper Jaw-Gums a little; and there you meet the Vowel spelt with *ea* in *meat*; and, as I think, that spelt with *i* in *it*.’¹⁴ He sees what he characterizes as a long and short version of this vowel in items like *beat*, *sea* and *bit*, *sieve* and *breech* respectively. His vowel 4 he characterizes as: ‘Bring the Swelling as near as ever you can to the Roof of the Mouth and fore Gum, hold the Edges of the Tongue somewhat stiff against the upper Jaw-Gums; and so you may pronounce the fourth vowel, as in *See*, *see*, *eel*, etc.’ (Matthews 1936: 99). He only sees this vowel as being long, as in *beet*, *grief*. It is difficult to give a precise value to these two vowels (recall Walker’s (1791: §246) ‘very trifling’ *meet/meat* difference) but we might speculate, in the light of the fact that he sets *meet* against *it/meat* examples, that a contrast in relative height is involved, something like [i]/[i̠] (or

perhaps [i̥]), with *bit* and *it* showing the latter value, rather than some kind of [i]. Such a conclusion is perhaps re-inforced by his comment (1726: 20) that ‘*T* sounds *ee* before one, or several consonants, in the end of a word, or syllable, as *rib*, *ribs*, *flint*, *flints*, *bit-ter*, *win-ter*’. But the phonetic nature of short *i* is one we shall have difficulty in pinning down wherever we come across it in both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and we should be ready to question any assumption that this vowel was unequivocally [i] in this period.

There is not, in fact, all that much by way of direct, incontrovertible and unambiguous evidence from the early decade of the eighteenth century, that observers universally intend *ee* spellings to be interpreted as some kind of high front tense [ii] segment, rather than, say, as [ee]. Not all observers, for instance, regularly and directly equate the digraph with pronunciations in foreign languages which are unambiguously front and high. Perhaps the convention of using an *ee* digraph for such a segment was so well established in the works of earlier writers, that no further comment on it was thought necessary. The existence of what looks like a highly symmetrical height-step system like that proposed by John Wild of Littleleek (1701) might just, by implication at least, argue for the existence of such a raised Middle English [ee] → [ii] segment: *w!!r* ‘we are’; *w!!* ‘we’; *sw!!t* ‘sweet’/*complat* ‘complete’; *pləz’d* ‘pleased’; *fə* ‘fear’/*well* ‘well’; *fret* ‘fret’/*rər* ‘rare’; *mæx* ‘makes’; *təst* ‘taste’/*ar* ‘are’; *land* ‘land’; *marid* ‘married’ (Jones 2001: 33). John Jones confines his ‘sound of *ee*’ types (presumably some kind of [ii]) to several well-defined contexts. He cites a small list of monosyllables: *be*, *he*, *me*, *she*, *we*, *ye*, *here*, *Crete* together with a smaller number of words of two or more syllables: *chesel*, *England*, *English* and *metre*; he is careful to include in this list too those vowels occurring in both pre-[r] and [v] contexts, thus: *cheer*, *clear*, *dear*, *ear*, *gear*, *near* and *Evan*, *Eve*, *even*, *every*, *evil*, *ever*, *Leverpool*. Included with this segment too are ‘all Words that come from the French’, including, *Bastile*, *Cashire*, *fatigue*, *gentile*, *magazine*, *oblige*, *shire* and some others. But Jones’ vowel descriptions are often downright confusing, perhaps no less so in the values he ascribes to the digraph *ie*. We have already noted how he fails to indicate clearly which version of a particular graph is being illustrated in his *Spelling Dialogue*: ‘When is the Sound of *i* written *ie*? As When *d* or *s* is added to Words that end in *y*, as *dy* *died*, *dies*; *try* *tried*; *tries*; &c.’ and in *fiend*, *friend*, *griest*, *Priest*, *wield*. In this case, we have to assume that the version of *i* in the first set of items must be the ‘long’ diphthongal version, with the *fiend* set showing a high, front monophthong. Yet, in response to the question: ‘When is the Sound of *ee* written *ie*?’ we have: ‘When single *d* or *s* is added to such as end in *y*, as *dy*, *died*, *dies*; *try*, *tried*, *tries*; *spy*, *spies*, &c.’ Yet again (1701: 121): ‘When is the Sound of *y* written *ie*?’: ‘When *d* or *s* is added to a single *y* that has no Vowel before it in the same syllable; as *dy*, *died*, *dies*; *try*, *tried*, *tries* &c.’, all in a context where Jones informs us (1701: 120) ‘That *y* has at divers times the Sound of *ee*, *ī* [sic: CJ] long in *die*, and *ī* short in *bit*, *hit*, &c.’ This obviously leaves us with the problem of deciding whether or not Jones is evidencing a diphthongal/monophthongal alternation possibility in this *English Vowel Shift* context.¹⁵

It would appear, though, that commentators following Jones do not appear to recognise – or hear – a clear phonetic contrast of the modern *bit/beet* type. Rather,

the evidence they present seems to suggest that the vowels in *bit* and *beet* are ‘near alike’, with the former showing no clear signs if any kind of centering whatsoever. Dobson (1968: 570 *note*) is adamant that Middle English [i] is maintained throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: ‘The orthoepists normally say that ME *ī* is the short equivalent of ME *ē* and often identify it with French, Italian and German *i*; these are of course inexactitudes, and do not show that ME *ī* was close in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries’. In addition to failing to describe what he means by ‘close’ in this context, Dobson provides no direct evidence for his claim that the observations of foreign observers are ‘inexactitudes’, while he seems willing to accept the evidence of foreign-language equivalences on many other occasions. Brightland and Gildon note that the vowel (*I*) has a long and short sound. The former is the diphthong in *side*, *hide*, etc., the latter, short version they claim appears in items such as *bib*, *bid*, *did*, *will*, *still*, *fill*, *win*, *pin*, *guild*, *build*, *quilt*, *mint*, *fit*, *thing*. They state (1711: 17 *note* 12) quite unequivocally, however, that ‘When (*i*) is short, it sounds most commonly like the (*i*) of the French and other Nations, with the small Sound’. They also identify another version of the vowel (*I*) ‘besides its long and short sound’, which it has ‘in a few words’. This sound, ‘which tho’ long, is pronounc’d with a very small opening of the Lips, like (*ee*), as in *Magazine*, *Machine*, *Shire*, etc.’ (1711: 17) and they are at pains to point out (1711: 29) that this (*ee*) sound ‘is a very distinct Sound both from the long and short Sound of (*i*), which are native; that in *Shire*, &c. is borrow’d from this Double Vowel’. Perhaps the implication here is that while ‘long *i*’ is in a separate category, where ‘long’ makes no reference to actual durational contrast, there is, in their phonology too, a genuine length contrast of an [i]/[ii] type. Again, following their discussion of French (*e*) Masculine, they point to another sound ‘In the same Place, but with a lesser Opening of the Mouth, (*i*) slender is form’d, which is a Sound very familiar with the French, Italians, Spaniards and most other Nations’. They identify (1711: 23) two versions of this sound an *i* short and an *i* long, the latter ‘generally written with (*ee*) not seldom with (*ie*)’ with the alternation exemplified by short/long pairs such as *sit/see’t*; *fit/feet*; *fill/feel*; *still/steel*; *ill/eel*; *sin/seen*; *friend/fiend*. Tuite (1726: 32) too seems to recognise a tense, raised quality for short *i* vowels, since he claims that ‘*y* has two sounds in English words, viz *i* long, and *ee* short, as *Hymen*, *Dryden*, *cypher*, *Cyrus*, *Cyclops*, *cypress*, *Cypros*, *type*, *tyrant*, *Babylon*, *Egypt*, *Apocrypha*, *physick*, *mystery*, *martyr*’ etc., and while he does not specify which items correspond to the description, it is not too fanciful to suggest that the long versions are restricted to the first nine examples.

Matters are further complicated when we examine Brightland and Gildon’s discussion (1711: 6) of the Vowel (*E*) which, they claim is ‘twofold long’¹⁶ and pronounced with ‘with an acute and clear Sound, as in *even*, *be*, *me*, *we*, *he*, *evil*; or short and clear in *whet*, *let*, *best*’. In a *Note*, they describe this vowel as ‘pronounc’d with a clear and acute Sound, like the French (*e*) Masculine [i.e. [e]]; but it scarce ever has the obscure Sound of the French (*e*) Feminine [i.e. [ɛ]]; unless when short (*e*) goes before (*r*), as in *Vertue*, and *Stranger*’. This comment might suggest that items such as *even*, *be*, *me* and so on are heard as having some kind of [e] or perhaps a more raised [ɛ] value, rather than one with [ii].¹⁷ Brightland and Gildon

(1711: 6–7) seem to include here ‘final –e lengthened’ items like *Bede, Ere, Glebe, Here, Mede* (they cite precisely 16 such examples) plus 26 polysyllabic instances including *Adhere, Blaspheme, Extreme, Intervene*. While ‘To these, in my Opinion, we may add *there, were, and where*,¹⁸ tho’ by a different, yet wrong, Pronunciation, some sound the first (*e*) in these words like (*a*) long’ – the vowel value in a word like *rate*. Indeed, given the universally claimed tendency for syllable final [r] to lower and centralize preceding vowels in this period, such examples may well reinforce our interpretation of a high mid, rather than a high, vowel value for the ‘long *e*’ vowel space in the period. This conclusion is perhaps reinforced by Tuite’s (1726: 14–15) observation that the very set of polysyllabic words¹⁹ Brightland and Gildon suggest have an *e* long pronunciation, for him are quite unequivocally shown to ‘sound *é*’ (his vowel in items like *bed, men, lent, etc.*). What appears to be a high mid front vowel is claimed by Brightland and Gildon for items like *Conceit, Deceit* (and others with *ei* graphs) as well as *Atchievement [sic], Belief, Brief, Field, Friend, Thief, Shield*, while (1711: 8) ‘In all other Words – those with the distinctive *ee* spelling – the Sound of (*e*) long, is express’d by the *double Vowel (ee)*, as in *Bleed, Creed, &c.*’ and may be interpreted as [i(i)].²⁰

Greenwood (1711: 236) follows Brightland and Gildon almost to the letter in his description of the nature and lexical extent of the sound represented by the Vowel *E* (acute and clear; ‘just like the *E* Masculine of the French’) but his treatment of this sound is less detailed, since he devotes an almost inordinate amount of space to the origins and functions of ‘the Silent *E*’. He too seems to suggest that there is a separate and distinct ‘Third Sound of *i*’ ‘like *ee* as in *Oblidge* [obleege] (his respelling: CJ) &c.’ (1711: 240). This ‘Third Sound’ is that of his ‘short *i* lengthened’ where for him (like Brightland and Gildon) ‘When the Vowel *I* is short, it is sounded most commonly like the *I* of the French and other Nations with a small Sound, as in *bit, will, still, win, pin, fin, fill, &c.*’, so that ‘if at any time the Sound of the short *i* is to be lengthen’d, it is not always writ with *i*, but sometimes with *ee*, as in *Steel, seen, feel*, sometimes with *ie* as in *field, shield*’.²¹ For Greenwood this sound is not identified with the French *e*, nor is it ever described by him as ‘acute and clear’, perhaps once more allowing us to tentatively propose (even in the face of a real possibility that the entire issue is clouded by concerns about spelling shapes) that his ‘short *i* lengthened’ is a true high(ish) front [i]-type segment, one recorded in a limited (but different) set of lexical items by both commentators.

The degree of lexical distribution of what appear to be vowels with a raised F_2 characteristic in the period is further described by Tuite who otherwise offers a very conventional categorization of this area of the vowel space (1726: 13, 19): ‘*E* has two sounds in English words, viz. *É* and *ee*, as in *led, be*’; ‘*I* has two sounds in English words; viz *i* and *ee*, as *bribe, bit*’. Tuite lists words where ‘*E* commonly sounds *ee*’ as those where there is a ‘final –*e*’ element, as in *here, Eve, these, Bede*, but – unlike Jones – excepts *there, were* and *where*. He sees the distribution of the two *e*-types very much in terms of syllable structure, the higher vowel manifested when *e* is syllable final and (in his model) immediately followed by a single onset initial consonant, thus: *e-ven, Ste-phen, Le-verpoole*. However, in monosyllables ending in a single consonant or nasal initial homorganic clusters like *bed, men, lent*

and *spend*, then the preceding vowel is his *é*. Likewise, this vowel is realized in bi-syllabic words where the second syllable onset is geminate, as in *spend*, *let-ter*, *end*, except, he claims, in items like *pret-ty*, *jen-net*, *Jen-ny*, *Jen-kin*, *yes*, *yet* – although he gives no value for the vowels in these instances – and *yel-low* ‘which sounds *yallow*’. Seeing only two possible values for the graph *i*, he again describes the constraints upon its pronunciation in terms of his views on syllable structure. For instance (1726: 20): ‘*I* sounds *ee* before one, or several consonants, in the end of a word, or syllable, as *rib*, *ribs*, *flint*, *flints*, *bit-ter*, *winter*.’ Constraints of this kind lead him to propose a high front vowel in a word like *children*: ‘*I* sounds *ee* in *children*, because *ild* is not in the same syllable, being divided *chil-dren*, and pronounc’d *chil-dern*’, while no such justification is given for ‘But *I* sounds *ee*, in words deriv’d from *Christ* [which has the diphthong], as *christian*, *christianly*, *christianity*, *Christendom*, *Christmas*.’ As if to confuse matters still further, he introduces the notion of ‘*ee* short’ (1726: 22): ‘*I* often sounds *ee* short in the end of a syllable, if the following syllable begins with two consonants, as *Bi-shop*, *pi-stol*, *ci-tron*, pronounce *citorn*, *gib-let*, *si-ster*, *bli-ster*, *ba-ni-ster*, *Chri-stopher*, *di-staff*, *hi-story*, *hi-ther*, *thi-ther*, *whi-ther* &c.’ But whether it is as a result of his overzealous application of his rules for syllable boundary placement, or the result of genuine observation, we find Tuite claiming short *ee* vowels (1726: 22): ‘in the end of a syllable, if the following syllable begins with a consonant that sounds double, as *ci-ty*, *pi-ty*, *li-ber-ty*, *wi-dow*, *i-mage*, *spi-rit*, *li-mit*, *Phi-lip*, *li-very*, *pri-vy*, *princi-pal*, *princi-ple*, *di-vide*, *di-vine*, *di-vin-ity*, *tri-ni-ty*, *vir-gi-ni-ty* &c. which are pronounc’d as if written *cit-ty*, *pit-ty*, *lib-berty*, *wid-dow*, *im-mage*, *spir-rit*, *lim-mit*, *Phil-lip*, *liv-very*, *priv-vy*, *princip-pal*, *princip-ple*, *div-vide*, *div-vine*, *div-vin-nity*, *trin-nit-ty*, *vir-gin-nit-ty*’. Perhaps such manipulations could have been avoided were he to have claimed, as other commentators hint, that there is no lax [i] in his phonology, and that the palatal vowel space is comprised of some kind of contrast between relatively high and front palatal vocoids such as [i], [ɨ], [ɪ]. It is not as if Tuite does not recognise the existence of centralized, lowered *i* sounds, since he admits that ‘*I* has an obscure sound in *evil*, *devil*; but is not quite silent, as some think (for instance, Watts (1721: 17)): ‘*i* is not pronounced in *Evil*, *devil*, *Venison*, *Marriage*, *Carriage*, *Business*, *Cushion*, *Fashion*, *Parliament*’; for *evl*, or *devl* cannot be pronounc’d, because *vl* cannot end a syllable’.

The evidence for this area of the phonology provided by the author of *The Needful Attempt* is once more rather complex and difficult to interpret with any certainty. The innovative orthography used in this treatise – ‘To Spell as we Speak’ – would seem to offer the promise of a more phonetically detailed account both of vowel value and lexical distribution. And, in a sense, this is what it achieves but, in so doing, it also throws up several new problems. What are we to make, for instance of his observation (1711: 9):

And so too faur dhe Vouel *e*, whaut Rúl kan bee given faur teeatshing when it shud bee pronounst az wee spêk it? Az in dheez Words *Phenice*, *Female*, *fever*, *hêbrew*, &c. and when az *e* shaurt? Az in dheez Words, *venom*, *venerable*, *feminine*, *very*, &c. and when as *ee*? Az in dheez Words, *be*, *he*, *we*, *me*, *begin*, *behold*, *between*, *here*, *there*, *were*, *these*, &c.

ea	eea	ee	é	ê	e	i
Appearz	Appeear	Appeerz	étsh	grêter	Beneth	hes bin
Easi	Deealings	Bee	Féver	Hêbrow	Jesus	
Read	Deear	Beecaus	Grét	Spêking	Me	
Teatsh	Displeeasing	Beeing	Hébru	Wee spêk	Remember	
Teatshing	eear	Beleev	Hédhen		speking	
	Eeasi	Breefli	Kaunsév		We	
	Eeaz	Cheef	Méne			
	Feear	Dheez	Obé			
	Leead	Freed	Phébe			
	Leeaving	Gees	resév			
	Near	Heed	Rézon			
	Peear	Heer	Spék			
	peeasabli	Indeed	Spékabul			
	Pleeas	Jee	Spéking			
	Pleeasing	Keep	Spéling			
	Teeatsh	Meek	Stéling			
	Teeatshing	Need	Too é-z			
	Yeear	Needless	'two ees'			
		Peepul				
		Reeding				
		Seeing				
		Speedili				
		Three				
		Wee				
		wheerauf				

Figure 4.1

Such rhetorical questions are not to be answered by merely providing spelling contexts where certain sound values are met, but in his view by inventing a symbolism from which pronunciation values can be read directly from the orthography itself. If this is, indeed, the case, then it would appear that this observer is suggesting that for lexical items in Modern English showing high front tense vowels, his contemporary pronunciation shows several possible variants: *teeatshing*, *wee spêk*. Throughout the work, the author uses no less than seven different symbols in contexts where we might expect a high front tense vowel in Modern English: *ea*, *eea*, *ee*, *é*, *ê*, *e* and *i*. Their distribution is as shown in Figure 4.1.

To make the historical phonologist's task harder still, the author suggests (1711: 10) that the *ea* graph '(naut az *ea*, faur, so I think, it never *iz*) but az *e long*, az in dheez words, *eat*, *great*, *meat*, *neat*, &c. and when az *e shaurt*, az in dheez Words, *bread*, *dead*, *dread*, *read*, *stead*, *tread*, &c. and when as *eea*; az in dheez Words, *ear*, *dear*, *fear*, *hear*, *near*, *year*, *beat*, *feat*, *heat*, *seat*, *teat*, *wheat*, &c.'. The precise phonetic relationship between *e short* and *e long* (the latter introduced for the first time at this point) is not made clear, while – we recall – the claim is made that 'onli dhe *a*, in *ea iz* to be spök az shaurt and quik az kan bee, az in dhe Words, *beeat*, *seeat*, *heeat*, *wheeat*, &c.', suggesting some kind of falling diphthong status for the vowel space in such items. Such a diphthongal interpretation is perhaps reinforced by the observations

of Brightland and Gildon (1711: 22) to the effect that ‘those words, which are written with (*ea*) wou’d really be more rightly pronounc’d, if to the Sound of the (*e*) long [probably, for them, a high mid front segment: CJ] the Sound of the English (*a*) (justly pronounc’d) were added, as in all probability they were of old, and as they are still in the Northern Parts.²² And thus those written with (*ei*) wou’d be more justly spoke, if the Sound of each Letter were mixt in the Pronunciation’. And again (1711: 23–24) and less surprisingly, when discussing items with syllable final [r] such as *near*, *dear*, *hear*, which they claim are ‘spelt with (*e*) Masculine, adding to it the Sound of the (*a*) slender, very swiftly pronounc’d’. Flint too shows evidence of diphthongal pronunciations in this context with his *îer*, *dîer*, *nîer*, *bessmîer* renderings for *ear*, *dear*, *near*, *bessnear* ‘Remarquez qu’en prononçant la terminaison *ear*, *ier*, on sent devant l’r un *e* sourd & sur lequel la voix s’affoiblit’ (Kökeritz 1944: 25). For a fuller discussion of *pre-[r]* Breaking, see Part II 4.3.3 and Part III 2.3.2 below.

Almost all the items with *ea* and *eea* spellings cited in *The Needful Attempt* occur in phonetic contexts where the syllable final consonantal element is relatively high on a scale of vocalicness, [r], [rz], [tʃ], [z], [l] (in addition, of course, to what might be a limited lexical set in *beeat*, *seeat*, *heeat*, *wheat*), an environment which would at least not preclude the possibility of stressed vowel lengthening or, for that matter, diphthongization. On the other hand, *ee* items can regularly occur before syllable final obstruents, like [d], [p] and [k], voiceless fricatives and at morpheme boundaries and syllable finally. *é* types too appear before syllable final obstruents, but also before sonorant consonants such as [l], [m] and [n]. The *ê* symbol is very highly constrained, appearing only with three items *spêk*, *hêbrew* and *grêter*.

It is difficult to know what to make of all this, and we can only offer very tentative suggestions. While there is, of course, no *prima facie* evidence whatever in *The Needful Attempt* to support Dobson’s categorical assertion (1968: 651) that: ‘In ME the vowel *ē* was pronounced as tense [e:], but already by 1500 it had been raised to [i:]’, we can perhaps safely assume that the text’s *ee* spelling do indeed represent some kind of high front and tense vowel. On the other hand, given that the author contrasts short/long vowel versions of *e* (1711: 13): ‘Dhe *e*, naut az in *vén* and *pén*, but az in *fen* and *pen*; nautt az in *sézun*, but *sekund*; naut az in *vénéreus*; but azin *veneri*; naut az in *Fémal*, but *Felon*, &c.’, we might suggest (especially in the light of the *pain* and *vein* examples) that this graph represents some kind of high mid, unshifted [e] vowel.²³ The limited use of the *ê* symbol to a small lexical set might well point to it having a special phonetic status – however, all the items with which it occurs in the text also appear with *ee* (not, of course, a reason to totally reject its claim to a special status). Perhaps the best one can say is that, since the author’s (and printer’s) use of diacritic marks is so irregular in many places, we should perhaps simply treat *é* and *ê* as equivalent markers for [e].²⁴

There is little in the way of firm evidence from the orthographic system deployed in *The Needful Attempt* to suggest a phonetic value for ‘short *i*’ (in *print*, *promise*, *widow*, *finical*). Under the discussion of the *ui* graph, it is claimed that it can represent whatever is the (presumably diphthongal) value of ‘long *i*’ in words like *buy*,

guid, guil, while ‘it is shaurt, az in the Words, *guild, guilt, guilty, guiltless*’. However, the author claims that in items like *build* and *Buildings* ‘som spék dheez too last az with *ee*’ might at least tentatively enable us to suggest that, for him, ‘short *i*’ itself had some kind of tensed, raised value. There is little doubt too, as we shall see below, that later in the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth, such a raised and high value for the vowel in words like *sit* and *fit*, was commonplace, and not merely perceived as a non-standard, and certainly regional pronunciation, one particularly characteristic of the ‘Scotch’ dialect (Jones 1995: 113–20). By the 1770s we find Buchanan pontificating (1770: 45): ‘I shall adduce but a few examples, out of a multitude, to shew how North-Britons destroy just quantity, by expressing the long sound for the short, and the short for the long ... as *ceevil* for *čivil*’. Nevertheless, what evidence we have from the early eighteenth century does little to suggest unequivocally that the vowel space in words like *bit*, *hit* and the like was anything other than ‘close to’ [i], rather than to any lowered, centralized [ɪ] output.

It is only later in our period that we begin to find stronger evidence for the high ‘pure palatal’ status of those front vowels which in Middle English were in the low- and high-mid range; in particular from the evidence of writers like Flint and the author of *The Irish Spelling Book* who claims (1740: 197): ‘What is the proper Sound of *ee*?’: ‘It is sounded like the French *i*; as *see, seek, seem*. Doth it always retain its long sound? It does; as, in *Creed*.’ Indeed, Flint does not appear to record the tensing development we describe in the next section under HAPPY TENSING: ‘*ey* prend le son d’*i* bref sourd’, thus ‘journey *voyage* djorni’ and ‘honey *miel* honi’ among others (Kökeritz 1944: 27). His short *i* is usually marked diacritically by *ÿ*, thus ‘live *vivre* lÿv’, while [i] values attract his *î* symbol. Even in those cases where the standard orthography shows a final *ee*, Flint does not register a high front vowel (‘il paroît *i* fr. Bref, à cause de l’accent qui précède’), showing ‘coffee *caffé cãfî*’ and ‘committee *commité cõmitî*’ (although other MS versions show *cãfî* and *cõmitî*) (Kökeritz 1944: 26). We can but speculate that his ‘*i* bref sour’d’ terminology suggests that his short *i* may well have had a more centralized [ə] or [ɪ] realization in this type of context.

4.1.2 Happy tensing

Wells (1982: 257) records the increasing tendency in speakers of both modern British and American English to give a tensed, close high [i] value to the final vowel in words like *happy, lucky* and *coffee*, observing that ‘Where and when the [i] pronunciation arose is not certain. It has probably been in use in provincial and vulgar speech for centuries’ (Beal 2000). The phenomenon seems to be clearly (if not regularly) attested by several observers in the first half of the eighteenth century, although without comment as to any sociolinguistic status it might have. Brightland and Gildon (1711: 14), in the midst of their discussion of long (*e*), note that, at the end of words, this sound is variously expressed, by (*ee*) as in *Pharisee, agree*, and by (*ea*) as in *sea, flea, pea*. Another ‘expression’ of this sound, they claim, is ‘first and most commonly by (*y*), as *happy, holy, mercy*; these Words may be writ (*ie* or *y*), as the Writer pleases’. But elsewhere they assert that ‘At the end of all Words of one Syllable (*y*) has a sharp and clear Sound, as *by, dy, dry, sly, shy, thy, &c.*

But at the end of Words of more than one Syllable it generally sounds obscure, like (e), as *eternally, gloriously, godly, &c.*’; a view echoed by Sproson (1740: 3): ‘At the end of Words of one Syllable *y* hath a sharp and clear sound, like the Vowel (*i*), but hath a more obscure sound, like (*e*) at the end of Words of more Syllables, some few Words excepted.’ Likewise Hammond (1744) ‘*Y* at the ends of words, mostly sounds like *e*; *miscarry, bonny, charity*’ which he respells as (miscar-re), (bon-ne) and (chari-te), although his descriptions of the value for (*e*) are unenlightening, save for comments such as the sound of (*i*) is like (*e*) in items like *machine* (mashene) and *magazine* (magazene), which are themselves open to various interpretations. *The Irish Spelling Book* is somewhat ambivalent on this issue. On the one hand it seems to suggest quite explicitly that HAPPY TENSING occurs (1740: 192), since, in answer to the question ‘Does *y* ever change its sound?’, the response is ‘Sometimes it sounds in the End of words like *ee*, without the Accent upon it; as, *Ally, Body, holy, Mercy, Money, formerly, Liberty, Dorothy, Normandy, &c.*’, although (1740: 208): ‘*Ey*, in some words, sounds like final *y* short; as *Anglesey, Balconey, Honey, Ramsey*. And hence it is customary in many such words to omit the *e*: as, *Country, Hony*’. Yet Bailey’s (1726: 56–8) *Table of Words written different from their Pronunciation* seems to suggest rather strongly that HAPPY TENSING is at least being introduced into the phonology at this date, since he provides respellings like *hunnee* ‘honey’; *jepurdee* ‘jeopardy’; *luckee* ‘lucky’, *mellancollee* ‘melancholy’, *munnee* ‘money’ and *munkee* ‘monkey’. Likewise Owen (1732: 101–6), in a similar list, shows pronunciations like *furmetee* ‘frumenty’; *hunnee* ‘honey’; *jepurdee* ‘jeopardy’; *lackee* ‘lackey’; *mallancollee* ‘melancholy’; *munkee* ‘monkey’, but also *bamberry* ‘Banbury’; *belcony* ‘balcony’; *bizzy* ‘busy’; *buty* ‘beauty’; *dixnery* ‘dictionary’, *emty* ‘empty’ and several others like this. Dilworth’s (1751: 77) *Table of Words, the same in Sound, but different in Spelling and Signification* contains what appear to be considered as homophones *Bettee* ‘flask of Wine’ and *Betty* ‘Elizabeth’, while Watts’ (1721: 11) *Table of Words written very differently from their Pronunciation* has *Furmittee* ‘Frumentary’; *Jepurdee* ‘jeopardy’; *Mastee* ‘Mastiff’; *Munkee* ‘monkey’; *Thustee* ‘Thirsty’.²⁵ Tuite too (1726: 33, 43) suggests HAPPY TENSING is a feature of his phonology: ‘*Y* sounds *ee* short in the end of words, as *duty, holy, happy, happily, constantly, &c.*’ and ‘*ie* sounds *ee* short [his vowel is *see, seek, meet, etc.*: C] in *bountie, busie, gypsie*; because *y* sounds *ee* short in *bounty, busy, gypsy*’. Indeed, as we have already seen, for Tuite the short *i* vowel tends to have a close, high value anyway: ‘*I* sounds *ee* before one, or several consonants, in the end of a word, or syllable, as *rib, ribs, flint, flints, bit-ter, winter*’ (1726: 20).²⁶

4.1.3 Mid front vowels

The historical evolution of the Middle English long and short low mid front vowels presents an extremely complex picture in the first half of the eighteenth century, partly as the result of terminological inconsistency, inappropriateness and confusion, but also related to difficulties of observation and the complex effects of lexical diffusion. The main problem arises when we come to try to assess the extent to which low mid [e] values (usually represented graphically by *e* or *ea*) have been raised to [e] or even ‘leapfrogged’, to appear with high front [i] values

(Harris 1985: 241–8). Much recent sociolinguistic and historical phonological research has suggested that mechanistic interpretations of *The English Vowel Shift* tend to impose upon the available data a ‘regularity’ which they do not necessarily show (Stockwell and Minkova 1988; Johnston 1992). Indeed, such generalized rule processes like *The English Vowel Shift* are now seen by some as less universal in the way in which they operate; instead, they show extensive ‘exceptional’ behaviour, and are governed by complex sets of influences including the effects of lexical diffusion and sociolinguistic behaviour. In all, globalist interpretations of what appear to be large-scale regularities in phonological change are perhaps now seen as too powerful and unconstrained to be valued as wholly effective models for innovation in this area of the grammar. Instead, the ‘messy’ nature of the data and its failure to conform to overarching, generalizing frameworks for evolutionary change needs to be given a more central place in model-building, and we should resist the temptation to shoe-horn the complex and often contradictory data and data observation into one ‘catch-all’ framework. And for ‘messy’ data it is difficult to beat the descriptions offered for front mid vowel behaviour in the early eighteenth century.

Any attempt to assess the extent to which vowel space of Middle English low mid origin has become raised either to [e] or (directly) to [i] is hampered by the descriptive terminology employed by contemporary observers who, as is well known, too often rely upon spelling forms for their phonetic judgements. Discussion of mid front vowel segments is usually to be found in most commentators under sections dealing with the *Letters (A)* and (*E*) as well as the digraphs (Proper and Improper Diphthongs) *ea*, *ie*, *ai* and *ei*. Once again it is Brightland and Gildon who perhaps present the most detailed (and, in many ways, the most confusing) account. They make a general classification of Palatine vowels under three categories, each defined by the degree (great, less or lesser) of opening of the mouth. The vowels in question appear to share the same articulatory place, distinguished only by these three degrees of mouth opening. The problem arises from the fact that in each slot, we have pairs of items used as exemplification. Thus, in the Greater Opening category (the *English slender a*) we find pairs like *bat/bate*; *Sam/same*; *dam/dame*; under the Lesser Opening type we have the ‘French *e* Masculine ... with an acute Sound’, exemplified by *the*, *there* and *these*, but also through pairs like *sell/seal*; *tell/teal*; *set/seat*; *best/beast*. Again, their Smallest Opening category is *slender (i)* ‘very familiar with the French, Spaniards, Italians, and most other Nations’ and exemplified – again by pairs of words – as *sit/see’t*; *fit/feet*; *still/steel* and *ill/eel*. At the same time, in their account of the sound values of the *Letter A*, they appear to suggest that there is a single phonetic entity which is ‘small and slender’ with a long and a short variant. Now, it would perhaps seem obvious to interpret this phonetic organization not as suggestive of a single value for each of the stressed vowels in their appropriate slot, but to assume that within each there is something like a lax/tense sub-division, yielding pairs like [e]/[a]; [ɛ]/[e] or – as we have already seen – [i]/[ɪ] or [i]/[i̥]. And we might recall here their important observation that: ‘And this perhaps might bring our former Division of Sounds into doubt, since that supposes the Difference to arise from their Length or

Brevity; whereas here we make the Sounds the same. But this must be here understood of the Formation of the Sounds; that is, the short and long Sounds are produc'd in the same Seats or Places of Formation: *but in the former Rule the Hearing only is the Judge of the Sounds as they are emitted, not as to the Place of their Formation* [italics CJ]. Greenwood, that avid follower of Brightland and Gildon, confidently asserts that (1711: 245): 'Ea is now pronounc'd as the long e, the Sound of a being quite silenc'd or suppress'd, and the Sound of e lengthened. For the chief use of a is, that it makes the Syllable to be counted long: So *met, meat; set, seat*, &c. have no difference in Sound, only the Vowel in the former is short, and in the later [sic] it is long.' Unfortunately, Greenwood never refers elsewhere in his treatise to a 'long e' segment or what its value might be, while, as we have seen, for his mentors it represents the sound of 'the French (e) masculine', a sound somewhere in the high-mid front range. Is he here abandoning a criterion based upon 'Hearing only is the Judge of the Sounds', appealing instead to one where temporal durational is the only factor in the contrast? Is he, in fact, suggesting some kind of [mɛt]/[mɛt] alternation? But early-eighteenth-century observers rarely show any sophisticated understanding of what vowel duration actually consists (or whether it directly or indirectly influences or is influenced by other phonetic factors). Thus, on occasions like this we might be tempted to read, for 'no difference in Sound' between the exemplificatory pairs, something like 'closeness or alike in Sound'; that is, some kind of qualitative 'closeness' – something possibly resembling [mɛt]/[mɛt].

The problems raised by Brightland and Gildon's interpretation of 'long/short' terminology as either duration or quality signalling can be seen in their discussion of the values to be assigned the *ea* digraph. They claim four distinctive values for this entity ('sounded four several ways', 'has four sounds') which they characterize as (1) '(e) short' (*already, ready, bread, heard, bread, dead, dread, deaf*); (2) 'a long' (*bear, swear, tear, wear, break, great*); (3) '(ee)' or '(e) long': *dear, appear, clear, year, instead*; (4) 'a short': *heart, hearth, hearken, serjeant*. The *a* short/long contrast would hardly seem to constitute one where a simple durational alternation was involved (*a* long in the literature normally signalling the vowel is *rate, mate* and the like: some kind of mid rather than low vowel). Do we treat the *e* short/long alternation in the same way, that is one where there is perhaps a lax/tense [ɛ]/[e] contrast? Or is it one where vowel duration alone is the determining factor – 'So *met, meat; set, seat*, &c. have no difference in Sound, only the Vowel in the former is short, and in the later [sic] it is long.' If the latter is indeed the case, then it would appear that, for the items selected, at any rate, no *English Vowel Shift* raising of the low mid vowel has occurred. Some support for such an interpretation comes from Jones (1701: 41), who provides a long list of items showing an *ea* graph which he claims has 'the sound of e', described under his list of 'simple sounds' as that in *ell, the, beard, bread, breadth, breast, breath, dead, heard* and many others, including among them *dear, leap, reach, reath*. He also specifically mentions ten items where the *ea* digraph, in word final position, has 'the sound of e': *blea, flea, Guinea, Marshalsea, pea, plea, sea, thea, brea, yea*. He is careful to mention too that an *e* graph in a word position where one would expect it to 'lengthen' ('final – e' contexts) need not indicate whatever is meant by 'long ee' values, but a 'short e': *deacon, eager, eagle,*

early, earnest, Easter, eaten, Reading, reading, reason, season, seamstress. Again, he answers the question 'When is the sound of *e* written *ea*?' by 'In all Words or Syllables, that are, or may be sounded long. (1) Except twenty Words of one Syllable, where of ten are English Words, viz: *eke*, *e'er* (ever); *e're* (before); *mere*; *rere*; *the*; *there*, *these*, *were*, *where*. And ten from other Languages, viz. *Glebe*, *Medes* (a people), *mete* (to measure), *nepe*, *scene*, *scheme*, *sphere*, *Swede*, *Thebe*, *Theme*. Items like these, presumably showing 'long *ee*', are also signalled by an *e* graph in words (again mainly from foreign sources) such as: *adhere*, *blaspheme*, *cherub*, *cohere*, *complete*, *credit*, *female*, *frequent*, *negro*, *nephew*, *pedant*, *tenet*, *treble*. Although their real significance is often difficult to assess, the near-alike lists of most observers in this early period tend to suggest that Middle English [eɛ] has not been everywhere raised to a high front value, thus Bailey *ear/e'er*; *early/yearly*; *leg/league*; *greave/grave/grieve* (also *lest/least*; *nether/neither*); Hammond: *rare/rear*; *leper/leaper*; *near/ne'er*; *easter/esther*; Harland: *bacon/beakon/becken*; *retch/wretch/reach*; *reason/raisin/raising*; *rare/rear*; *fair/fare/fear/phare* 'lighthouse'; *hearing/herring/heron*; *Venus/Venice*; *wary/weary*; *daign/dane/dean*; *fear/Phare/fare*; *lade/laid/lead*; *great/grate/greet*; *share/shear*; *same/seam/seem* and many others.

But what is the phonetic value of 'long *ee*'? Is it a high mid vowel like [e] or a high front [i] value? The author of *The Irish Spelling Book* recognises (1740: 58) a short and long version of (e), the first exemplified (1740: 205) in *dread*, *death*, *earl*, the second through *bead*, *beam*, *deal*, *conceal*, *retreat*, with *flea*, *pea*, *tea* sounded *flé*, *pé* and *té* [with *yea* sounded *yé*]. There is no evidence to suggest anything other than a high mid [ee] realization for this long (e) in this treatise, and we might expect as much from an Irish context. However, it is interesting to observe that its author specifically mentions (1740: 206) that the *ea* digraph 'changes its sound' on certain occasions (strangely in pre-[r] environments) to *ee*, as in *appear*, *clear*, *swear*, *year*, *bear*, *shear* and *tear*, where *ee* is sounded like the French *i* (1740: 197). And it is this identification of long *ee* with high front vowels from foreign language sources which is the main reason for Dobson (1968: 651) to assign to it such a value: 'In ME the vowel \bar{e} was pronounced as tense [e:], but already by 1500 it had been raised to [i:]. There is almost complete unanimity among the orthoepists on this development. ME \bar{e} is identified with *i* in foreign languages throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries'.

Famously, Jones (1701: 47) cites 24 cases where 'the sound of *ee* is written *ea*', the majority of which occur where the post-vocalic segment is [r], [m], [st] or word final: *chear*, *clear*, *dear*, *ear*, *gear*, *hear*, *mear*, *near*, *year*; *appear*, *Beadle*, *Beaw*, *instead*, *stead*, *steam*, *team*, *yea*, *yeast*. Indeed, almost all commentators give witness to lexical variation in the extent to which *English Vowel Shifting* has occurred to items of Middle English low front mid vowel origin, Hammond (1744), showing under *Ea*: 'double e': *meat* – with his respelling (*meet*), *reading*, *sea*; 'e short': *meadow* – respelling (meddow) – *sheath*, *breadth*, *sweat*; 'a long': *swear* – respelling (sware) – *rear* – respelling (rare) – *wear*, *bear*, *great*, *break*, *to tear*. Such *Vowel Shift* discrepancies are well-known and documented, of course – even by the late nineteenth century, Ellis (1869: 89) records the relatively recent survival of [griit], [stiik] forms: 'all those sounds might have been heard from elderly speakers some thirty years ago, and

those which have remained to the present day, are accounted *old* pronunciations'. Any sociolinguistic motivations for such distributional effects are not always recorded, although even in the previous century Gill had noted the 'advanced' nature of vowel raising in such segments amongst his 'Mopseys' (Horn and Lehnert 1954: 286–7). While more detailed comment on the [εε]→[ii] change is available for the latter part of the eighteenth century,²⁷ it is important to notice that there is some evidence, in addition to that of Jones', for a more or less wholesale shift of height from low-mid front to high-front provided by one observer contemporary with him. Although strictly speaking just one of them just falls outside the range of our investigation, three important (if minor) treatises are of considerable interest in this area of the phonology: *The Writing Scholar's Companion* (1695), *Right Spelling Very Much Improved* (1704) and, with the same date, *The Expert Orthographist*. These works are heavily dependent upon Cooper's *The English Teacher* (1687) but, as Dobson (1968: 363) observes, they depart significantly from his observations in their comments upon the extent to which raising of Middle English [εε] had taken place. The author of *The Writing Scholar's Companion* (1695) comments that (Ekwall 1911: 24): 'The sound of (e) is twofold: 1. Short and clear, as in *let, best*: 2. Long, like (ee), in *be, even, sincere, mere, here, mete*, where (e) at the end makes the foregoing (e) long; but this is very seldom with Words of one Syllable. For most commonly the Sound of long (e) is supplied with a Diphthong, either (ee) as in *need*; (ie) as in *brief*; (ea) as in *read*.' Of greatest significance for our present discussion is the assignation of an [i] pronunciation (if, indeed, we can interpret (ee) as such in this case) to an item where the vowel space is historically (and even in some contemporary manuals) described as low-mid [ε]. The author of *The Writing Scholar's Companion*, describing the 'improper diphthong' (ea), observes how 'this Diphthong sounds (e) drawn out long, in *bead, beam, cheap, cheat*' and 'Observe generally to write (ea) if the sound be drawn out long, as in *beast, feast*; but if short with a single (e), as in *best, chest*', where we might interpret 'drawn out long' as 'e long'. More revealing, however, are his Tables, where in Table XIII he lists 45 words with '(ea) sounding (e) short: *Already, behead, bread, breath, breakfast, etc*', while in Table XII there are in excess of one hundred items with '(ea) Sounding (ee) or (e) long', including *break* and *great* as well as *appeal, appear, appease, arrear, beach, beacon, heal, hear, heat, heath, sea, seal, seam, fear, squeak, weal, wean, wheat* etc. suggesting that in the usage of this author, all words with Middle English [εε] origins, are now heard as high and front, a manifestation of *The English Vowel Shift* which, according to some modern scholarship, does not appear in such a complete shape until later in the eighteenth century. A similar situation exists for *Right Spelling Very Much Improved* where included among items with 'long *ee*' are *break, deaf, deafen, ere, greaten, leasee, weapon, endeavour, pear, yea, yearn, zealous, zealot* (Kern 1911: 43). But the problem of a precise interpretation of what is meant by 'long *ee*' still remains. Ellis (1869: 91) points out how the anonymous instructor of the Palatines in *A Short and Easy Way for the Palatines to learn English. Oder eine kurze Anleitung zur englischen Sprach* (London 1710) writes *me, he, we, she, be* in German letters *mi, hi, wi, schi, bi* as particular exceptions, and gives us examples of *ea* sounding sometimes almost (*bisweilen fast*) as German *i* (ii), the

words *heap, heat, cheap, clean, clear*. Does the *bisweilen fast* suggest a segment like [ɛ] or [i]?

Some modern scholars have called into question whether high front pronunciations are typical of London 'standard' English of the period, seeing in them merely as evidence of regional or special social group characteristics. Ellis (1869: I:89), for example, commenting upon the assignment of high front vowels in items like *deaf, pear, yearn* and so on, asserts: 'It is impossible to believe that this represented the generally-received pronunciation of the time.' Such pronunciations, he claims, are more likely to be found among Gill's *Mopsae*. So too, Ekwall and others have seen in the 'advanced' nature of the extensive realization of Middle English [ɛɛ] as a high front vowel, evidence of a sociolinguistic influence. Though little is known about the author of *The Writing Scholar's Companion*, it has been assumed that he was a Londoner and a schoolmaster, his work 'Composed for the Benefit of all such as are Industrious Ambitious of so Commendable an Ornament, as Writing True English is generally esteemed. Recommended especially to the Youth of both Sexes, and to be Taught in Schools.' If, as this statement would suggest, he is aiming his work at some kind of 'upwardly mobile' class of 'middleocrats' so much the object of concern of writers of pronunciation manuals and dictionaries later in the eighteenth century, then we might not be surprised were his pronunciation recommendations affected by hypercorrection factors. They may well represent socially significant innovations coming to be generalized into areas of the phonology where either they were etymologically unjustified, or their progress through the lexicon differentially accelerated. Commenting on the difficulty of acquiring the correct pronunciation of vowel sounds, he asserts (Ekwall 1911: 12): 'they are so ready to be mistaken, particularly in London, where to avoid a broad clownish speaking, we are too apt to run into the contrary Extream of an affected way of speaking perhaps too fine'.

In his description of the *ea* diphthong, Tuite (1726: 40) claims that it represents 'four sounds in English words, as in 1 *bread*, 2 *bear*, 3 *dear*, 4 *heart*'. The precise value of his third sound is very difficult to determine. Nowhere does he cite examples of his *ee* diphthong (which 'has its proper sound in *see, seek, meek*, etc') in items with *ea* digraphs, so there is at least no *prima facie* evidence for a high front interpretation of his third sound in such cases. That he hears a fourfold contrast seems to be clear, but it does not follow that he infers an [ɛ]/[i] alternation between types two and three, rather than, say, one between [ɛ] and [e]. Importantly, though, he observes that the assignment of words containing this digraph to one of the four pronunciations is open to some, clearly sociolinguistic (or even perhaps purely geographical) factors. His statement is worth quoting in full (1726: 41):

Ea in most words has the second sound [ʔ[ɛ]: CJ] according to some, and the third sound [[e]: CJ] according to others, especially *Londoners*, as in the following words, *flea, plea, pea, sea, tea, pease, beans, please, veal, meat, eat, ear, fear, neat, reason, season, seam, stream, lean, to breath, creature, feature, beat, beast, beard, feast, beadle, speak, shear, spear, seat, conceal, deal, glean, reap, to steal, meal,*

wheat, sheaf, leaf, cease, ease, easy, dean, to lead, cheap, cheat, leave, heathen, preach, teach, each, peace, &c.

It is worth noting that, like Jones, he restricts the number of items showing the alternation to a limited set (and not the whole lexicon with *ea* stressed vowel digraphs), although he doesn't tell us precisely which items show a given alternation and it would be good to know precisely who the 'some' and 'others' are.²⁸ Brightland and Gildon too seem to suggest that, for them, 'advanced' forms of mid vowel raising are also acceptable in certain lexical items (1711: 26): '(*ea*) is everywhere pronounc'd (*e*) long, the Sound of the (*a*) not mingling at all with it, is entirely suppressed; as in *meat, pleasure, treasure* &c.'. Tuite too suggests that 'advanced' vowel shifting of low mid to some higher value is also a feature of speakers in the capital (1726: 35): '*Ei* sounds as a small *e* [his *é* in *led*, since he only recognises a *led/be* contrast (1726: 13): CJ], or according to *Londoners* as *ee*, in *deceit, conceit, receipt, conceive, deceive, perceive, receive, seize, inveigle*', while (1726: 36) '*Ey* sounds *ee* in *key*, according to *Londoners*'. However, in general, their remarks on *Ei* and *Ey* are otherwise unenlightening: '*Ei* sounds *é* or *ai*, in *veil, vein, feign, neighbour, heir, eight, height, sleight, weight, their*', leaving unspecified the items associated with each pronunciation, with *ai* itself described (1726: 34) as 'sounds as *a* in *made*, as *fail, fair, pair* ... sounds *e* in *again, fountain, mountain* ... sounds *a* in *plaster*'. Brightland and Gildon (1711: 28) hint at the possibility of unraised front low mid vowel segments when they comment on the fact that there are some items, although they 'have the sound of (*ai*) ... are spelt ... by (*ei*) for (*ai*), as *conceipt, receipt, deceipt, heir, reign, vein, weight* &c.' That (*ai*) might be best viewed as low mid (even [ɛ]) is suggested by the possibility of its being interpreted as low and front. Recall their remark (1711: 28): 'The finical Pronunciation in some parts of this town of London has almost confounded the sound of (*ai*) and (*a*)', where 'finical' seems to have a meaning of 'affected' or even 'effeminate' in the period. *The Irish Spelling Book* has low-mid value, *e* short, for *Breadth, breast, dead, death, earl, head, lead, leap*, but with the high-mid *e* long in *bead, beam, deal, heath, heathen, retreat, seam*.²⁹

Bailey (1726: 19) seems to be fairly consistent in his use of the diacritic marks \sim and $\hat{\sim}$ to differentiate low and high mid vowels respectively. If, indeed, his system is consistent, his entries show *Vowel Shift* anomalies like: *dêaf, stêak, pêar, wêar* and *sêarch* with low-mid vowels raised to high values. But in general it is perhaps best to conclude that in the early-eighteenth-century canon, evidence in support of a wholesale raising of low mid vowels to high front versions is relatively rare. Near-alike pairs are especially troublesome to interpret, since (in many instances) an *ea* spelt vowel space is rhymed with one which might represent any of [ɛ], [e] or even [i], thus Hammond: *stead/staid/steed; sweat/sweet*; Bailey: *bread/breed*; Harland *grate/great/greet; red/read/reed; chair/cheer*; Tuite: *grace/grease/Greece*. It is really only when we come to examine Flint's observations that we see what would appear to be a wholesale merger of MEET/MEAT and FIELD types under a high front [ii] vowel. '*E* suivi d'une consonne & d'une *e* muet est long, & se prononce comme *i* dans les

mots françois *gîte, vite* (Kökeritz 1948: 8, 24–5):

EE se prononce toujours e Ang. Long, c'est-à-dire î Fr. Long: bee abeille bî; see voir sî; keep garder kîp.

EI accentué est î Fr. Long dans les mots finissans par un e muet: conceive concevoir cōnncîve; seize saizir s îze.

EA: le son propre & le plus ordinaire de la diph. Ea est î fr. Long: flea *puce* fli; meat *viande* mît; read *lire* rîd; lead *lire* rîd; lead *mener* lîd; breath *respirer* briç. While with 'breaking' diphthongs, he records: ear *orcillevîer*; dear *cher* dîer; near *proche* nîer; besmear *barboüiller* bessmîer.

However, even Flint (Kökeritz 1944: 25) shows what would appear to be a long low-mid front monophthong for *ea* spellings in (but not exclusively) pre-[r] contexts. Thus we have 'Voici les mots exceptés, c'est-à-dire où ea ne se prononce point î. EA est é fr. Long & fermé dans break *rompre*. Great *grand*; quean *coquine*; sweal *se fondre*; bear *porter*; early *matinal*; earn *gagner*; earnest *pressant*; learn *appren-der*; pear *poire*; searse *tamis*; search *chercher*; swear *juror*; tear *déchirer*; wear *porter* and yearn *ému de compassion*', a value also given by him for the vowel in *there, were* and *where* (Kökeritz 1944: 25).

4.1.4 Mid front diphthongs

The monophthogal/diphthogal status of the *ai/ay* graph makes the assessment of the phonetics of MEAT/MEET more complex still. While Greenwood subscribes to the 'proper/improper', 'double vowel/diphthong' distinction of Brightland and Gildon, he quite specifically appears to accord to these digraphs a diphthogal value (1711: 245): '*Ai* or *ay*, expresses as Sound compos'd of our short *a* and *y*: As in *day, praise*.' While his use of 'compos'd of' might merely reflect Brightland and Gildon's 'mix't' terminology and consequently have no significance for diphthongization,³⁰ we have to note that he goes on to at least suggest the possibility that two different values for *ai* are involved: 'In the middle of a Word it [*ai*: C] generally has its full sound. At the end of a Word it is Sounded like *a*, as in *may, pay, &c*. Also before *r* it has the Sound of *a*, as in *hair, fair, &c*.'. And there is also at least the possibility in his characterization of *ey* that a diphthogal/monophthogal contrast is to be heard (1711: 246): '*Ei* or *ey*, is Sounded by clear *e* and *y*; or else simply by *e* long, the Sound of the *y* being suppressed; as in *receive, seize, deceit*; or else like *ai* or *a* long in *reign, feign, eight, &c*.'³¹ And we might even speculate further that their observation (1711: 28): 'The finical Pronunciation of some Part of this Town of *London* has almost confounded the Sound of (*ai*) and (*a*), the Master and Scholar must therefore take a peculiar Care to avoid this Error, by remembering that (*a*) ends no English Word, except before excepted, and however you pronounce, write always *day*, not *da*.' Spelling and pronunciation are clearly kept apart here, and with Brightland and Gildon's exemplification of (*a*) sounds restricted to *rat, rate* and *all* types, it would appear that they are observing a *dai/da* alternation

and, given that they also equate *ai* with the ‘long *a*’ of *rate*, perhaps a diphthongal interpretation of that digraph may not be too far fetched.

But, as usual, the descriptive terminology often leaves the issues difficult to interpret, as can be seen from the description of the ‘Proper Diphthongs (ai) and (ay)’ from the *The Writing Scholar’s Companion* (Ekwall 1911: 34): ‘Observe 1. That as (ai) ends no English word; so (ay) onely ends a Word, as *clay, dray, fray*. 2. (ai) is strongly or fully sounded in *brain, frail*; but otherwise more gently, (1.) like (a) in *cane*; (2.) like (ay) at the end, as *day, say, &c.* (3.) (ai) sounds more soft; in *affair, air-y, debonair, despair, fair-y, hair, repair, stair*.’ Whether the ‘strongly’/‘gently’/‘more soft’ contrast infers diphthongization/monophthongization can only be a matter of conjecture. However, like Brightland and Gildon a decade later, the author of *Right Spelling Very Much Improved* (1704) also sees sociolinguistic implications in any such alternation (Kern 1913: 51): ‘Take special notice that the Diphthong (ai) and the Vowel (a) are very apt to be mistaken. The Londoners affecting (as they think) a finer pronunciation, would quite lose the sound of the proper Diphthong *ai*, as too broad and clownish for their fine smooth Tongues; but the honest Countryman, not to say our Universities will (by no means) part with authentic Custom, time out of mind, according to its natural sound; however to reconcile this difference, You must be sure to keep close to the orthography, which that you may the better do; always remember that the single (a) must end no English word; but if they will speak fine, yet be sure that you write true by adding *y*, not *da* but *day*.’

It is Watts who is perhaps the most explicit in according diphthongal pronunciation to *ai* digraphs (1721: 18–19):

Of the Sound of Diphthongs

Q. Are both the Vowels in a Diphthong plainly pronounced?

A. In some Words they seem to be both pronounced, in some they are not, and in other Words they have a peculiar Sound by themselves.

Q. Give some Instances of Words where both Vowels seem to be pronounced.

A. *a, i*, are both pronounced in the Word *Pain, o, u*, in *House; o, i*, in *Point; o, w*, in *Cow*.

While there is always the possibility that he was influenced by the phonology of his own Norfolk dialect in this regard, Tiffin seems to suggest a diphthongal interpretation of the digraphs in words like *play* and *plain*, digraphs which, he claims, ‘are more agreeably pronounced with [his Vowels] 2–4, or defectively with 2 only’ – a diphthongal/monophthongal [eɪ]/[e] contrast, while ‘his Countrymen in Norfolk, and very impolitely I confess, especially when with too much of 1, in Syllables spelt with *ai, ay*, as *play, plain*’. Whatever is meant by ‘too much of’, Tiffin is clearly stigmatizing [æi] pronunciations for this digraph. Monophthongal pronunciations are, for Tiffin, regional and to be avoided, Leicestershire speakers using ‘3 only’ [the vowel in *eat/it*] and ‘by some People, in some Words, as *Faith*’ the Vowel 5 is used [as in *all, of*], ‘a Sound improperly called a Diphthong’. He notes too how items like *Bay, Day, lay, pay*, are ‘emphatically pronounc’d’ with his

Vowel 4 'only' [his vowel in *Beet, grief, see*] by speakers in Leicestershire (Kökeritz 1944: 97). Recognising that earlier orthoepists like Cooper also heard *ai/ei* graphs as diphthongal, Matthews (1936: 103–4) observes how 'some modern students believe that ME *ai* preserved its diphthongic character throughout the modern period, and that long *a* only fell in with *ai* when it diphthongized. It is possible, of course, that in regarding *play, plain*, as diphthongic and *bate, late* as monophthongic, Tiffin may have been influenced by the spelling; but one cannot help feeling that Tiffin was too acute an observer and too much on his guard against spelling to have been deceived in this way.'

4.1.5 Low front vowels

The phonetic value of segments in this area of the phonology of the eighteenth century is notoriously difficult to assign with any certainty. Nearly all discussion by contemporary observers is set out under *The Letter A* to which most commentators assign three apparently separate values: long, short and broad. The long *a* is, of course, customarily accepted to be kind of tense [e] sound, one which we have come across in several places above, although – as we have argued – it may, in fact, be more sonorant and show something like [ɛ̃] or even a raised version of [ɛ]. Indeed, some further evidence for this might come from Tuite's (1726: 10–11) assertion that *ay* (his long *a* sound) is to be found in words such as *catch, Walsh* and *than* and in *chastity, fabrick* and *Athens*, and 'in *wary* to distinguish it from *weary*', the latter assigned his 'second sound' of *EA*, as in *bear, swear* and *tear* (1726: 40).

The broad *a*, which we shall examine further below, is exemplified by the vowel in words like *all* and *fall*, and would appear to be some kind of low mid back segment such as [ɔ] or even [ɒ]. Short *a* is, on the other hand, defined both positively and negatively. Many observers see the vowel exemplified in words like *Sam, can* and *rat* (where the syllable ends in a single consonant), *cannot* (where it ends in a double consonant – even in those cases where their syllable division methodology requires geminate intervocalic consonants, as in *dragon* and *habit*). So too, in syllables terminated by consonant clusters of a type which, in Modern Received Standard English, would trigger a low back [ɑ] segment – *past, blast, smart* – a short or slender *a* vowel is assumed (Strang 1970: 113). The phonetic detail of the vowel itself is often given with reference to foreign exemplars, notably to the French (Brightland and Gildon 1711: 22): 'The French express this Sound when (*e*) goes before (*m*) or (*n*) in the same Syllable, as *entendement*, &c. The Welsh and Italians pronounce their (*a*) with this Sound', likewise (unsurprisingly) Greenwood (1711: 235–6): 'A is generally pronounc'd with a more small and slender sound than among many other Nations. Much after the same manner as the French pronounce their *E* when follow'd by *N*, in the Word *Entendement*, but something sharper and clearer, as the Italians do their *A*', all suggesting some kind of unrounded low front [a] segment (Pope 1952: 173). On the other hand, the extensive evidence from near-alike lists relating to this short *a* segment suggests, if anything, that the vowel has a raised F₂ quality with the concomitant possibility of a MAT/MET-type merger. Although many of the instances cited involve syllable final [r], where a lowering of [ɛ] to [a] might be assumed, not all cases are by any means like this and the [a]/[ɛ]

equivalence can be seen in many different environments. Thus, for example, Bailey's lists contain: *yarn/earn; earth/hearth*, Harland shows: *aliment/element; assay/essay; apologue 'a fable'/epilogue; assart 'to lop trees'/assert; waist/wast 'has been'; waste/west; allective/ellective*. Harland shows *fallow/fellow*, Hammond *reddish/raddish; then/than*, Watts: *belcony/balcony; rack/wreck; vassal/vessel* and Owen: *channel/kennel; mash/mesh*. Evidence like this might suggest that the early-eighteenth-century value for short *a* is something like [æ] or even [ɛ]. The earlier evidence from Brown's 'near alike' lists seems to suggest too that a MAT/MET merger was in operation in his (?Northern) dialect. Nearly all his 'long *a*' including Middle English [ai] diphthong varieties are equated with 'short *a*' types: *dam/dame; lace/lash; past/paste; back/bake; fair/far/fair; ran/rain; wan/wain/wane; may'st/mast* (Brown 1700: 62–72), suggesting that the shared vowel space was perhaps at the [æ]/[ɛ] interface, a suggestion perhaps reinforced by his *break/brack* 'equivalence'.³² Wyld too sees a dialectal origin for the fronted sound (1956: 200): 'From the lower and middle classes in London the new ([æ]: CJ) pronunciation passed during the sixteenth century to the upper classes, and even into the English of the Court. Among the latter sections of the community the fronted sound may quite possibly have been at first an affectation adopted from some feeling that it was more 'refined' than the 'broader [a]', and he claims that the front pronunciation was 'universal among fashionable speakers by the end of the sixteenth century. If the professed writers on English pronunciation are so slow to recognize and admit the existence of [æ], this is due partly to their inadequate observation and incapacity for phonetic analysis, partly to their dislike of new departures in pronunciation, and their reluctance to admit these, especially when there was no traditional symbol ready to their hand to express the new sound' (Ekwall 1975: 23; MacMahon 1998: 143).

However, it is important to emphasize how contemporary observers stress what this sound is *not*, as much as what it is. Over and over again we are warned: 'But we must not pronounce it like the fat or gross *A* of the Germans, which we generally express, if long, by *au* or *aw*, or if short, by short (*o*)' (Brightland and Gildon 1711: 5 *note* (9)) – 'When the Breath goes out with a full Gust, or larger Opening of the Mouth' (Brightland and Gildon 1711: 22), suggesting a vowel shape in the [a]/[ɔ] (or even [ɑ]) region. Although we have noted in our opening section that commentators in this period are rarely prescriptive in their attitude towards pronunciation, we might just speculate here that this warning against equating short *a* with the German fat or gross equivalent, stems from an observation that (perhaps in certain contexts) just such a low back type vowel was, in fact, being used in England, and that its use (much as it was to become in the nineteenth century) was highly stigmatized.

Tuite (1726: 10–12) identifies a *short a* vowel in several unstressed contexts, notably in items ending in *-ace*, *-ate* and *age*, as in *Boniface, Eustace, climate, private, desolate, intimate, palace, pinnace, surface, baggage, message, cabbage, voyage*. But perhaps the most interesting observations concerning the status of low front vowels come from the *Tables* of Edward Capell (1749) already referred to above. Recall that Capell paints the customary threefold division of sounds normally

accorded this symbol, viz, a long – his *a'* in *mare*, *man'd*, *aping* – and in its 'diphthongal' form *arraiGn*, *dayly*, *cónveyance*. He also illustrates what is probably an *a broad* in *â* (graphically *au*, *aw*, *ô*, *ôa*, *ôu*) in items like *tâlk*, *côst*, *clause*. But it is important to notice how he (perhaps uniquely in this early period) is careful to distinguish graphically an *a short* where the *a* vowel is not only separately diacritically marked as *â*, but has assigned to it a separate power – that of *ah*. Interestingly, the contexts in which this last sound of *a* occurs – pre nasal-initial homorganic clusters, and interdental fricatives – are precisely those in which the [a] of Standard English is perhaps most likely to surface (Wells 1982: 153ff). While these data might well be interpreted as a sign that only a durational [a]/[aa] distinction was involved, the use of the separate power nomenclature might just allow us to treat Capell's data as constituting some of the earliest evidence from eighteenth-century observers of the BATH/TRAP split, a process first evidenced one hundred years earlier in the work of Daines' *Orthoepia Anglicana* of 1641 (Beal 1999: 107ff). Perhaps the phenomenon is captured too in Bailey (1726: 56) where in *A Table of Words written different from their Pronunciation*, he uses *a* to represent the gasp 'ah', 'wrath' as *rauth* (at least suggesting a low round segment like [ɔ]) and, perhaps most revealingly, 'psalm' as *saam*. But for a process which is allegedly in the language's phonology for a century, the paucity of its mention in the early part of the eighteenth century must surely suggest that any [a]→[ɑ] change was largely peripheral (or very highly stigmatized) and well below normal observational criteria. But for an early-eighteenth-century Scot's observations and comments on the innovation, see Part II 4.1.7 below.

But evidence for any lengthening of a low front [a] segment, far less any qualitative change to [ɑ], in the early part of the eighteenth century is sparse, and it would be dangerous to draw too many concrete conclusions from it. Flint, for example, seems to differentiate in his *Prosodie* and in his description of the sound *A* several possible values for the segment: (1) French *e*, 'ouvert et bref' (as in *tête*): *crab*, *clap*, *cat*, *bat*, *can*, *camp*, *can*, *man*. (2) French *ê* but 'moins bref' in a range of contexts, but especially preceding [tʃ], [ft], [lt], [sk], [sp], [s] and [θ]: *detach*, *craft*, *halt*, *task*, *grasp*, *mass*, *path*. (3) French *ê* 'ouvert' (as in *crainte*), preceding nasal initial clusters: *branch*, *band*, *bark*, *cant*. (4) French *a*, where the *r* is 'adouci', preceding [r], [rk], [rl], [rp], [rf], [rt]: *bar*, *dark*, *carl*, *harp*, *harsh*, *mart*. (5) a French long 'sans être ouvert' preceding [r] + consonant – [r] here being 'toujours adouci' – [rb], [rtʃ], [rd], [rm], [rn], [lm]: *garb*, *march*, *card*, *arm*, *barn*, *calm*, a sound also described as 'un peu long sans être ouvert & l'r est prononcé moins rudement qu'en françois' with illustrative items including *warm*, *war* and *quart*. Types (1) and (3) appear to represent some kind of [æ] vowel, or perhaps a vowel somewhere between that sound and [ɛ]. Type (2), being 'moins bref' seems to represent a lengthened value for this same sound: [æ̃]. The remaining two possibilities are likened to an unspecified French *a* sound (the *dark*, *mart* cases) and one which is specified as 'un peu long sans être ouvert' (*bard*, *barn* types), otherwise only differentiated by the level of syllable final [r] effacement – 'adouci'/'toujours adouci'. These last are kept distinct – both descriptively and symbolically – from those words Flint claims show a French 'â long et ouvert' (exemplified by the French

word ‘flâme’), a sound whose value Kökeritz (1944: 83) suggests is [ɒ] – the *bald, all, talk* type. The problem to be answered is whether Flint hears a purely durational (quantitative) distinction between Types (1) and (3) and those of Types (4) and (5). That is, is Flint hearing [bæg]/[tææsk]; [dark]/[baard] contrasts reflecting both quantitative and qualitative oppositions? Kökeritz (1944: 83) seems to think that this is, indeed, the case, going even further to suggest (based it seems more or less solely on a second edition revision of a transcription of *regard* from to *regard* (the latter showing the vowel for *reward*)) that Flint’s \bar{a} symbol did not merely reflect a lengthened version of [a], but some retracted and more open [a] or even [ɑ] pronunciation (1944: 87): ‘In the latter part of the eighteenth century, ME \bar{a} r was consequently [ɑ] in London; and it was [a] and [a:] or [ɑ:] in Flint’s pronunciation’.

Tiffin does not appear to recognise anything other than a durationally short or long [a] or perhaps [æ] value for words of Middle English short *a* origin. His First Vowel long ‘in *Arm*, short in *am*, and the second long in *Ale* are all spelt with an *a*, but if you pronounce those Words right with Deliberation, the Vowel in *Arm* and *am* will be found to be the same, and that in *Ale* to be different enough’ (Matthews 1936: 101). Matthews goes on to claim, however, on the basis that since in his dialectal descriptions Tiffin shows [æ] vowels in dialects which at that time seem unequivocally to have a retracted [a] or even [ɑ] sound, then he ‘is really using two values for his No. 1 vowel, one [æ] and the other an open more retracted vowel, either [a] or [ɑ]. If this view is correct, it is possible, though not necessarily probable, that his pronunciation of the first vowel long in *half, laugh, aunt*, was the same as ours’. But one would need more substantial evidence than this to support such a claim. Indeed, Tiffin’s evidence in this area is much more complex and detailed than Matthews seems to allow. Tiffin’s Vowel One short manifestations include *am, batt, at, ant*, while his long include *half, heart, laugh, aunt* and *arm*. He comments that this vowel ‘is hardly ever essentially long except before an *r*; but in other situations it is pronounced long or short in the same word, according to the Fashion of Places, or Humour of particular Persons’ (Kökeritz 1944: 92). He points to what are probably [εε] pronunciations for *laugh* and *half* in Nottinghamshire, for the first vowel in *father* by rustic speakers in Norfolk and for *water* in Leicestershire. But he intriguingly adds ‘these four Examples [*laugh, half, father, water*: C] being pronounc’d each with three different Vowels in different Places, 1, 2, 5’. It is the inclusion of his Vowel 5 in this context which is perhaps most interesting, since for Tiffin that vowel (in items like *bought, thought, George, sort* etc.) seems to have had an [ɒ] value, perhaps just hinting at the possibility of a retracted long [ɑɑ] vowel in his Vowel 1 long contexts. Notice too how he suggests that ‘For the second Vowel (his [εε]) the Northern are apt to sound the First (his [a] or [æ]) and sometimes the Fifth (his [ɒ]). ‘*Great* is pronounc’d by some in the Midland with the third (his [ii]), as in *beat, bit, sea, sieve, breech*), by others with the fourth long (*war, fault, saw* types) and others with the third short (*bit, sieve, breech* types)’. He records [i] pronunciations for *head* in the Midland and Norfolk areas, while ‘more northerly’ speakers have *had* with a Vowel 1 short pronunciation, as in *batt, at, ant*.

4.2 Labial vowels

4.2.1 High back rounded vowels

Even contemporary observers regard vowel sounds in this area of the phonology as ‘difficult’. For example, very late in the eighteenth century we find Walker commenting on the vagaries of pronunciation in the stressed vowels of words like *bull* and *pull* which, he claims, are (1791: 173): ‘sufficient to puzzle Englishmen who reside at any distance from the capital, and to make the inhabitants of Scotland and Ireland ... not infrequently the jest of fools’. On the surface, at least, most contemporary observers point to a by now expected ‘long’/‘short’ division in their ‘Sound of *U*’. The issues we shall see which arise most clearly from their statements relate to three main areas: (1) the extent to which (if any) a FOOT/STRUT split has taken place through a lowering and centralizing of a short [u] labial segment; (2) whether the ‘long *u*’ has monophthongal or diphthongal status or is in the process of changing from one to the other in the early part of the century; and (3) the phonetic shape of the high back labial vowel itself, whether it was durational long or short or had more than one qualitative value (Ekwall 1975: 50–1; Wyld 1953: 234–6).

Brightland and Gildon seem to point confidently to the existence in their contemporary phonology of a high, back and rounded [u] segment. This they describe under their discussion of lip rounded sounds, likening it to the ‘fat German (u)’ (1711: 24):³³

The German fat (u) is form’d in the Lips, by a more moderate or middle degree of opening them. The same Sound is used by the Italians, Spaniards, and not a few others. The French express this Sound by (ou), the Welsh by (w); the English generally by (oo) (more rarely by (u) or (ou)), as *Foot, shoot, full, fool, pool, good, stood wood, mood, mourn, course, source, could, would, should, &c.* But *do, move,* and the like, are better expressed by round (o), than fat (u).

They comment too (1711: 30) that ‘the Proper Double Vowel (oo)’ is chiefly to be found as a graph in the middle of words, as in *loom, aloof, boom, reproof, broom, room, food, fool, tool, cool, goose*, where the true and proper Sound of this Double Vowel is express’d’. But of any length or quality contrast in items like *fool/full*, they make no mention.

Jones’ observations on high labial vowels (Ekwall 1907: §§335–50) are, by contrast, extremely complex, detailed and often difficult to interpret. His ‘Sound of oo’ is ‘an easie, sweet sound’ found in a number of contexts in which it no longer occurs in the modern standard language. Notably, he records instances where the *English Vowel Shift* diphthongization of high back labial sounds does not appear to have occurred:³⁴ *couch, croud, gouge, slouch, souse, vouch*, together with cases where there appears to be an ‘advanced’ realization of the shift, affecting the raising of high mid [oo]: *course, court, courteous, forth, mourn* – even in pre-[r] contexts: *door, floor* (which he respells as *dooer* and *flooer*) – as well as in items such as *afford, bomb, comb, ford, more, Rome, gold* and *Monday*. He also records items in ‘which *u* has the

real sound of *oo'* like *anguish* and *guilt*. Importantly, Jones seems to recognise a length contrast of some kind in this segment. For instance, he notes that following 'lip consonants' the '*u* is sounded short' and that this '*u* is sounded *oo'*', as in words such as *bull*, *pull*, *full*, *vulgar* and *Mulgrove*. Again, he stresses that the *oo* graph is never used when a 'short' vowel is intended, as in *bull*, *pull* and *courage*, with the exception of items like *book*, *brook*, *cook*, *foot*, *good*, *wood* and *wool*. It would appear, therefore, that Jones is recognising a [u]/[uu] distinction of some kind, and not – as we shall argue below – a long/short dichotomy where only vowel quality and not vowel length is intended, as is the case in most eighteenth-century use of this nomenclature.³⁵ That there may indeed be a quality contrast possibility as well seems, on the other hand, to be signalled by his *ū/oo* graphic alternation, reflected in his vowel inventory mnemonic *Mad Bat Gūvee – shooting a Bee – amazed me* (1701: 9). Jones' *Spelling Alphabet* also distinguishes *ū* in the unstressed syllables in *Evan*, *even*, and in the vowel space in *Sir*, *Son* from the *oo* in *to*, *Bull*, sounded *ū* and *oo* respectively (even though the waters are muddied by his inclusion of *ū* as a vowel possibility for *bull*).

Although Tuite's (1726: 30) analysis of the values for the vowel *U* seem simple enough: 'The Vowel *U* has two sounds in English words, viz. *u* long, and *oo* short, as in *cure*, *cut*', closer attention to his discussion reveals that, in fact, he appears to distinguish four or five different phonetic values in this area. While it is, of course, impossible to give precise values for these, it is interesting to note that, with one exception, all types are characterized as being some version of *oo* and not, say, of *u* (see Figure 4.2). This might suggest that several items (certainly in the first three columns there) are produced in the [u]/[ū] area of the vowel space (that is with relatively lowered F₂ characteristics). The items in the first two columns are also distinctive in terms of the nature of the post-vocalic segment: sonorant and fricative in column 1, obstruent in column 2. At first sight this might be reconciled with a simple durational long/short alternation, but the fact that column 3 types are also characterized as *oo*-like,³⁶ might just suggest that a qualitative difference of some kind is also involved. In other words, items in columns one, two and three might respectively

<i>oo</i> proper	<i>oo</i> shorter	<i>oo</i> short	<i>oo</i> long	broad <i>u</i> (<i>oo</i> short)
Fool	Blood	Burst	Could	Couple
Goose	Foot	But	Course	Cousin
Loom	Good	Cut	Should	Famous
Moon	Look	Drum	Source	Favour
Room	Soot	Run	Would	Journey
Soon	Stood	Study	You	Labour
Soothe	Took	Up	Youth	Portsmouth
Stool				Saviour
Tool				Touch
Tooth				

Figure 4.2

show an [ʊʊ]/[y]/[ɔ] alternation, much like that identified by observers later in the eighteenth century. The *oo* long types, as we shall argue below, are perhaps equivalent to those *u* long instances which are said to show the 'French *u*'. On the other hand, the orthographically and derivationally distinct items in the last column (given that the vowel space is often unstressed in terminations) might best be seen as showing a lowered and centralized vowel. But they too (like those in column 2) are described as being *oo* short, perhaps suggesting that both are close to [ə] or even [ʌ].

Edward Capell's *Two tables illustrating pronunciation* (1749) show no less than four separate symbols for vowels in the high back position: *u*, *u'*, *œ* and *œ'*. The two last are especially interesting, since Capell describes 'Their Power or Name' as *oo* and *oo* short respectively, the first in *woo'd*, *prōve*, *mōver*, *wōunded*, *uncouthness*; and the second in *wool*, *wood*, *woman*, *push* and *pulpit*. The derivational history of the two sets of lexical items would seem to suggest that there is a [u]/[uu] durational contrast being observed by Capell, a conclusion perhaps reinforced by the graphic symbolism he employs, with *ō* for the former and *ō* for the latter. Interestingly too, Capell's diacritically unmarked *u* symbol (the diacritically marked version being probably 'long *u*') he characterizes as *ō* and names '*u* short', illustrated by *fun*, *cunning*, *cōvetous*, *Lōndon*, *mōther*, maybe indicating lowering and centralization to something like [ə]/[ʌ]. Perhaps a durational [uu]/[u] contrast is also implied by the author of *The Needful Attempt* who distinguishes '*oo* as we speak it alone' in *food*, *fool*, *tool*, as against '*u* short' in *hood*, *stood*, *wood* and *blood*.³⁷ So too Tuite (1726: 44) records that 'The diphthong *oo* has its proper sound in *fool*, *stool*, *tool*, *moon*, *noon*, *soon*, *tooth*, *broom*, *loom*, *room*, *goose*, *sooth* &c. *Oo* has its shorter sound, in *foot*, *soot*, *flood*, *good*, *blood*, *look*, *took*'.³⁸ But the evidence for any length discrepancy is often very difficult to interpret. Bailey's *Introduction to the English Tongue* (1726) shows a wide use of diacritic marks to distinguish vowel quality and, perhaps, quantity. For instance, under his discussion of the *oo* graph, he seems to distinguish three categories of words showing it: (1) *blood*, *good*, *hood*, *stood*, *wood*, *boot*, *coot*; (2) *fōôd*, *mōôd*, *rōôd*, *broôd*, *hōôf*, *lōôf*, *rōôf*, *prōôf*, *wōôf*, *boôk*, *coôk*, *hōôk*, *lōôk*, *noôk*, *rōôk*, *toôk*, *broôk*, *croôk*, *shoôk*, *snoôk*; (3) *coól*, *foól*, *poól*, *woól*, *schoól*, *stoól*. The third category, with its post-vocalic [l], might suggest that the vowel space is durationally extended – [uu], while, given the large number of syllable final obstruents in the second group, we might there suggest a shorter [u] segment. Some support for this interpretation might be had from Bailey's distinction of long and short syllables (which we have already noted), whereby the former 'is pronounced in a longer Tone' and the context for which is usually defined in terms of the syllable final consonant or consonantal group (as *gm*, *gn*, *ll*), 'and final *e*', diacritically marked by a superscripted *ˆ*. On the other hand, a short syllable is 'one pronounced in a shorter Time', one which he usually marks with a superscripted *˘*. About category (1) types we can only speculate, but given the subsequent history of the vowel space in such words, we might just be justified in claiming that Bailey's *oo* graph in these cases is a mark of a quality, rather than quantity difference, and may represent a segment such as [y]. But, Bailey's use of diacritics does not always appear to be systematic, since we find representations like: *fōôt*, *hōôt*, *rōôt*. *Soôt*, *boôth*, *smooth*, *sooth*, *tooth* and even *boôr*, *doôr* and *floôr*.

4.2.2 Short *u* and the FOOT/STRUT split

The most detailed discussion of the short *u* segment is to be had in Brightland and Gildon and in Greenwood, who rather slavishly follows their comments. The short *u* of Brightland and Gildon is characterized as being ‘more obscure and lingual’, not unlike the French *e Feminine*. This last sound they characterize also as an ‘obscure’ sound, sharing the place of articulation of open *o* [some kind of [ɔ]: CJ] but with a ‘more contracted’ gesture of the mouth and lips (1711: 22; Ekwall 1907: §335): ‘This is a Sound, that the English scarce anywhere allow, or know, except when the short (*e*) immediately precedes the Letter (*r*), as *liberal, vertue, liberty* &c.’. Their obscure short (*u*) sound appears, they claim, in a number of different contexts, especially in the vowel space preceding syllable final [r] (‘by the Corruptness of our Pronunciation’), as in *bird, dirt, shirt, anchor, ambassador, favour, honour, anchor, oppressor* and, perhaps surprisingly, in *adventure, architecture, conjure, creature, picture, pleasure, tenure, tincture, treasure, verdure* and many other items ending with the *-ure* suffix.³⁹ In the instances of items like *bury, buried* (which nearly always elicit special mention for their vowel quality) and *study* ‘the (*u*) is shortened [i.e. it is not ‘long *u*’: CJ] and falls into the sound of (*o*) short or obscure’.

Jones’ discussion of ‘the Sound of *U*’ is complex. He recognises what he too calls a long and short version of the vowel, the former, for him at least, probably diphthongal, since he classifies it as a ‘compound sound’, one which, recall, ‘consists of two or more simple sounds’. As we have already seen above, he, almost uniquely among his contemporaries, marks the long and short versions of this vowel diacritically as *ū* and *ŭ* respectively. The short version of the vowel he sees (1701: 110) as ‘the Sound of the natural humane Voice, and therefore the easiest of all the Sounds that are made by the humane Voice’, while ‘it is like the Sound of other Vowels; and therefore being easier is very often sounded for most other Vowels; so that its Sound is most deceitful of any, because most *easy* and *like* others’. Comments like this, coupled with the fact that this vowel is perhaps most often illustrated in unstressed syllable contexts, together with its perceived likeness to French *e Feminine*, might all suggest some kind of low, central schwa value in [ə]; certainly it represents an unlikely scenario for a pure labial [u] vowel. It is interesting to observe too that he characterizes the diphthongal vowel space in words like *cow, bough* and *now* as composed of ‘the true sound of *ū* short, in *but, cut* &c. and *oo* joined together in one Syllable’ – some kind of [əʊ] diphthong. But Jones is careful to limit this short *u* sound to a very small set of lexical items: *but, cut, come, done, some, son* and in unstressed contexts (spelt with *o*) like *gambol, symbol, kingdom, income, fulsome, kingdom, martyrdom* and (spelt variously) *Evan, even* and pre-[r] *Sir*.⁴⁰ Perhaps the most extensive list of items he provides with this short *u* sound, are those (many of foreign origin) where the stressed vowel space is spelt with *ou*, as in *adjourn, attournment, Attourney, bloud, Bourdeaux, country, courage, courteous, cousin, doublet, floud, flourish, scourge, sojourn, touch, trouble*, and including *uncouth, young, your* and *youth* (1701: 114). However, since Jones fails to distinguish in any consistent way short and long *u* variants in his Tables, it would be quite unsafe to assume that any *u* failing to show a diacritic mark of ‘shortness’ is to be interpreted as ‘long’: as *huh! Puh! Tuppence, ansur* ‘answer’, and in the ‘syllabic’ *bl, dl* clusters *able, cable, addle*. In his *General Rules* he concludes (1701: 9): ‘Thus it is much easier

to sound *bŭl, gŭm, gŭn, lŭn, rŭm, rŭn, sŭm*, &c. Than *bl* in *able*, *gm* in *syntagm*, *gn* in *benign*, *ln* in *stoln*, *rm* in *alarm*, *rn*, in *worn*, *sm* in *chasm*. Because it is much easier to sound those Consonants with *ŭ* which is the easiest of Vowels; than without any Vowel.⁴¹

It seems clear that by the early eighteenth century some kind of [u] → [ə]/[ʌ]; change was at least under way, not only producing innovative pronunciations, but sets of individual lexical items showing the alternation. Yet there is remarkably little overt comment upon it, and what comment there is does not come with sociolinguistic censure. At the very beginning of our period, *The Writing Scholars Companion* (1695) seems to suggest the existence of the alternation in what look like well-defined (mainly in continuant consonant) positions (Ekwall 1911: 28):⁴² 'O is obscure, like (oo) or short (u): And that, (1) Before (m), as *come, kingdom, pommel, company, some*. (2) before (n), as *London, conduit, beyond*, (3) before (l) as *colour, colander*. (4) before (p) as *bishop*; but not in words of one syllable, as *shop, slop* (5) before (th) as *Brother, Mother, smother, doth*. (6) before (ve) as *above, dove, love, move*; so in *plover, shovel, lover*. (7) after (w) as *woman* (but sounds (i) in *women*), *world, worship, sword*, &c.'. Although, no separate description of 'short u' seems to be given in the text, that it is equated with the *o* graph in items like *Apron, Citron, Iron*, etc., suggests at least a segment lower than [u] or one even lower and centralized like [ə]. We might, therefore, just be entitled to interpret comments like '(oo) sounds like (u) short, in *food, flood, good, hood, foot, stood, wood, wool*' as evidence for a nascent FOOT/STRUT split (Dobson 1968: 360; Beal 2004: 142–5), perhaps through some intermediate [ɤ] stage. Jones, for instance, observes that, in response to the Question (1701: 114): 'When is the Sound of *ŭ* written *oo*? When it may be sounded *oo* rather than *ŭ*, as in *foot, forsooth, good, hood, look, foot, stood, took, wood, woof, wool*; which some sound with *ŭ*. viz. *wŭd, wŭll*, &c.' (Ellis 1921: I: 183). While Brightland and Gildon (somewhat laconically) observe (1711: 22: *note* 15):

This same Sound the French have in the last Syllable of their Words *serviteur, sacrificateur*, &c. The English express this Sound by short (*u*), in *turn, burn, dull, cut* &c. and sometimes by a Negligence of Pronunciation, they express the same Sound by (*o*) and (*ou*), as in *come, some, done, company, country, couple, covet, love*, &c., and some others, which they ought more justly to give another Sound to.

And they note too how – according to their view of the need for double consonantal segments at certain syllable boundaries (1711: 20) – 'when the Sound of the following Consonant is doubled, as in *bury, buried, study*, &c. ... the (*u*) is shortened, and falls into the sound of (*o*) short and obscure'.

Later in the half-century evidence for a FOOT/STRUT split is becoming clearer. *The Irish Spelling Book* (1740: 61) describes the 'short *u*' as being 'form'd in the Throat, by the Larynx vibrating the Breath, and, with a moderate opening of the Lips, making a bare Murmur; as, in *Nut*'. A description perhaps more evocative of [ʌ] than [ə]. Its author makes the claim too (1740: 199) that 'the sound of *oo*' ('express'd in the words *cool, fool*') is 'sometimes changed into *u* short; as in *foot, blood, flood* sounded *fut, blud, flud*'. And again (1740: 202): '*Ou* sometimes sinks its *o*, and sounds the remaining *u* short; as, *adjourn, country, couple, courtesan, cousin*,

piteous, touch sounded *adjurn, country, cuple, curtesan, cuzin, piteus, tuch*'. Flint recognises a lowered and centralized version of 'short *u*', not only equating the sound with French short *o* (in *tonne*) but also refining his description, labelling it as 'encore plus sourd' and 'plus obscur' than French short *o* (Kökeritz 1944: 119), suggesting [ʌ]/[ə]. Tiffin (1751) seems unequivocal about the existence of some kind of lowered, centralized [ʌ] type. Distinguished from his Vowel 8 (in words such as *good, boot, Tomb*, etc.) – where 'Do but advance the Lips forward from the fore-Gums, affecting the form of a Spout' – is his Vowel 7: 'Advance the Rising or Swelling of the Tongue somewhat forwarder, let the Lips open again towards but not quite, not quite so near the Corners of the Mouth as in the first four Vowels [[æ], [ɛ], [i] [ɪ]: CJ], the tip of the Tongue stand sloping downward with some little hollow space under it; and the Vowel so sounded, will be the seventh, as in *up, but, curl, come* &c.'. Tiffin presents as well what looks to be concrete evidence for the lowering and centring of the Middle English [i] vowel in Northern dialects. Discussing the sound of his seventh vowel, that in *but, rub, one, son*, he asserts (Kökeritz 1934/35: 94): 'The Sound of the Seventh, Mr Kirkby say's [*sic*], is scarce known to the Inhabitants of the North, who always use the short Sound of the eighth Vowel [as in *boot, shoe, you*: CJ] in stead of it. But I have often heard North Britons pronounce it, though not in its own Place; as *stuff* for *stiff*, *Tuffin* for my name *Tiffin*; and more southerly *furty* for *forty* is sounded by the same Persons, who contrarywise sound *thorty* for *thirty*'. For a full discussion of this process in Scottish English, see Jones (1995: 147ff.) and see too Flint's use of an *e* feminine sound for the *i* graph in items like *hither, thither* – an [ə] sound probably again showing 'North British' influence (Kökeritz 1944: xlii).

There appears, indeed, to be a case to be made that some kind of neutralization of the vowel space – under short or obscure *u* – in well-defined phonetic contexts was occurring in this period. Brightland and Gildon (1711: 19), for instance, note how (*o*) sounds obscure, like (*oo*) [surely a misprint for (*ou*): CJ], or short (*u*) in (1) pre-nasal, lateral and voiced fricative contexts: *colour, colony, combate, comfort, come, fathom*, ('except commonly'), *brother, mother*; (2) [w]–[r] environments: *world, work, wonder* (3) in what appear to be unstressed syllable contexts, as in: *Hatton, Hutton, button, parson, capon, falcon*, 'But these are rather silent or quiescent, (*o*'s) than obscure (*u*'s), the second Syllable being so suppress'd, that it seems no more than the second in *heaven, even*, &c. which Use has now made but one', illustrating – we might very tentatively suggest – some kind of [ʌ]/[ə] contrast. We can see too from Greenwood's (1711: 241) observations (like those of Brightland and Gildon above), that there were some sociophonetic constraints on the lowering process: '[the vowel O] is sometimes sounded like the obscure U, as when we carelessly pronounce *Condition, London, Compasse*, as if they were written *Cundition, Lundon, Cumpasse* &c. And so likewise some pronounce *come, done, some, Son, Love, Dove*, as if they were written *cume, dune, sume*, &c.'

4.2.3 Long *u*

The 1700–1750 period manifests considerable controversy (or, perhaps, observational confusion) over the precise phonetic nature of 'long *u*', the descendant of

Middle English [eu] and [ɛu], especially as to whether it is diphthongal (with yod onset) or monophthongal, a controversy which appears also to have been current in the previous two centuries (Dobson 1968: 700–13; Kökeritz 1944: xliii–xliv). Brightland and Gildon provide a range of contexts where stressed and unstressed (*u*) is to be treated as ‘long’, notably, of course, in final –*e* contexts: *cube*, *ruse*, *muse* as well as in initial syllables of polysyllabic words like *curious*, *union*, *purity* and the like, so too in *ui* environments: *cruise*, *fruit*, *pursuit*. They appear to be uncompromising in their description of this sound as monophthongal (1711: 20; *note* 14),⁴³ describing it as follows: ‘The *u* long is pronounc’d like the French (*u*), small or slender’ and (1711: 30) ‘(*u*) sounds long in *you*, *your*, *youth*’. They elaborate upon their description of this slender *u* which is ‘so much in use with both French and English, is form’d in the same place [as the German fat (*u*): CJ], but with a lesser opening of the Lips. This sound is everywhere express’d by the English as their long (*u*) ... as *Muse*, *tune*, *lute*, *dure*, *mute*, *new brew*, *knew*, &c.’ (1711: 24). But, critically, although they appear to admit that this slender (*u*) may well appear to be diphthongal, in fact it is not (1711: 24):

Foreigners wou’d obtain the Pronunciation of this Letter, if they wou’d endeavour to pronounce the Diphthong (*iu*), by putting the slender (*i*) before the Letter (*u*) or (*w*), (as the Spaniard in *Ciudade*, a *City*); but this is not absolutely the same Sound, tho’ it comes very near to it: For (*iu*) is a compound Sound, but the French and English (*u*) a simple.

Tuite (1726: 31) too sees the long (*u*) as a segment which ‘sounds ... somewhat like the French *u*, in the end of a syllable, if the sound of the following consonant be not doubled, as *fu-ry*, *pu-rity*, *cu-rious*, *mu-sick*’. Perhaps some kind of monophthongal status for this vowel is also suggested by Owen who, in his Section dealing with ‘Words differently wrote from what they are pronounced’, lists under Written forms, items like *adieu*, *beauty* and *eschew* which he respells as pronounced as *adu*, *buty*, *eschu*.⁴⁴ But there seems to be little agreement amongst contemporary observers. Greenwood, for instance, normally a slavish copier of Brightland and Gildon, seems to suggest unequivocally that long (*u*) is diphthongal.⁴⁵ His initial description quite clearly echoes that of Brightland and Gildon (1711: 242): ‘The long Vowel *U* is pronounc’d like the French *U*, with a small or slender Sound; as *lute*, *mute*, *muse*, *cure*, &c.’ and he recommends marking it off diacritically from short and other versions of (*u*) by ‘a Point or Accent plac’d at the Top of *U*’. However, Greenwood adds the important observation that this small or slender sound is one ‘as it were made up of *I* and *W*’. Indeed, he goes on to claim that ‘*Eu*, *ew*, *eau*, are Sounded by clear *e* and *w*; or rather *u* long. As in *Neuter*, *few*, *Beauty*, &c. But some pronounce them more sharp, as if they were to be written *Niewter*, *fiew*, *bieuty*, or *niwter*, *fiw*, *biwty* &c. especially in the Words *new*, *few*, *snew*. But the first way of pronouncing them is the better’. Now, of course, much depends on what he means by ‘made up of’. That he means *composed of two temporarily sequential segments* seems clear from his description, on the same page, of the phonetic value of the *Ei* or *ey* graph, ‘which is sounded by clear *e* and *y*; or else simply by *e* long,

the sound of the *y* being suppress'd, as in *receive*, *seize*', inferring, it would seem, a monophthongal/diphthongal alternation. In other words, we might be justified in treating his *Niewter*, *fiew*, *bieuty*, or *niewter*, *fiw*, *biwty* cases as evidence for diphthongal/monophthongal outputs, his social comment referring to his preference for one of the diphthongal shapes.

Jones is not very helpful in this debate, since he fails, as we have already observed, to distinguish in any systematic fashion his short and long *u* vowel sounds, although, he insists that long *u* is one of his Compound (i.e. diphthongal) Sounds (Ekwall 1907: §§262–80). Likewise, the author of *The Needful Attempt*, while diacritically distinguishing short and long *u* (the latter by *refúse*, *trúly*), gives little in the way of phonetic description for this vowel 'as wee spék it'. In the body of his text where he employs his reformed spelling system, we find spellings such as *krúsifid* 'crusified'; *yúzd/yúz* 'used'/'use', *fú* 'few', *nú* 'new', *mút* 'mute', but also *usual*, *nu*, and even *dú* 'due' showing the 'long' alternative to *dust*, but his typesetter is too unreliable on too many occasions for us to draw any concrete conclusions concerning lexical distribution.

The evidence from Capell's *Tables* is likewise difficult to interpret unequivocally. We have already seen how he probably recognises a [uu]/[u] contrast in the labial vowel space, where he also produces a special dotted *u* symbol (whose 'power' is *u*) exemplified in items such as *truth*, *youthful*, *beauty*, *feud* and *fewness*. At the same time, he uses a *y* symbol to represent what would appear to be the palatal glide [j], in items like *beyond*, *young*, *universe*, *use*, *usual*. In addition to this *y* graph, Capell also makes use of a superscripted *,*, representing an item like *usual* as *u'su'al*, a graphic device which he explains as 'with *e*, *i*, *y* before a vowel'. Indeed, he is prepared to see this superscripted comma used with nearly all syllable initial consonants when they preceded his long *u*, so that we find it appearing in items like *accurate*, *tribune*, *endure*, *refute*, *figure* (although here the *g* is rendered as *ĝ*), *value*, *commune*, *annual*, *pure*, *nature*, *azure*, *pleasure* and several others. However, there are several occasions where Capell uses the long *u* graph (his dotted *u*) as what appears to be an alternative for the superscripted comma with the same lexical item. Thus we find in his *Examples* column as an entry for *pure*: *púrE*, or *p`urE*. Now there are at least two ways one can interpret entries like this (and there are several of them, including *endure*, *refute*, *figure*); on the one hand, we can argue that Capell is merely providing alternative and equivalent graphic representations for the pronunciation of individual words. On the other hand, it may well be the case that he is signalling a different pronunciation for segments marked with the dotted *ú* and one where it is preceded by a consonant bearing a superscripted comma. There are a number of arguments against the former. Capell has available to him (as can be seen in his 'Expressed by other characters' column) a fairly wide range of graphic possibilities for each segment, possibilities and alternatives he regularly utilizes in his 'Examples' columns – for instance, the character *â* can be expressed by other characters like *au*, *aw*, *ô*, *ôa*, *ôu* as in *tâlk*, *clâuse*, *clawing*, *côst*, *brôad*, *wrôuGHt*. However, he rarely – if ever – uses characters for one power or name, for those of another. His 'Letters or characters of Sounds' tend to be unique and specific to particular sound values. If this is indeed the case, then we may have to conclude that

dotted *ú* and an undotted *u* preceded by a consonantal graph with a superscripted comma are not, in fact, phonetically equivalent. We might therefore very tentatively suggest that items like *truth*, *youthful*, *beauty*, *feud* and *fewness* with his dotted *ú* graph represent a monophthongal vowel space, perhaps that of the French [ü], and that [ju] pronunciations are only signalled by the presence of *ý* or where a preceding segment shows a superscripted comma.

At the close of the half-century, Flint sees the 'long *u*' as diphthongal, using a transcription in *ioü*, described as '*iou* Fr bref', exemplified by *europe/Europe/yoürop*; *beauty/beauté/bioüiti*; *dew/rosée/dioü* etc., according [ju] pronunciations to items like *plume*, *rheum*, *lewd* but not in *blue*, *true*, *accrue*, *fruit*, *bruit*, *recruit*, *bruise*. 'In addition he refers to the wavering usage in *blew*, *brew*, *clew*, *crew*, *drew*, *grew*, *slew*, *screw*, *threw*, *brewer*, which were obviously pronounced with and without [j], the latter variant being the more common one' (Kökeritz 1944: 109). It is odd that Kökeritz, always careful to point to the possible effects of Northern and even Scots pronunciation on the French grammarian, fails to mention the high prevalence of [ju] manifestations of 'long *u*' in the phonology of Scots as a possible influence on Flint (Jones 1995: 151ff), where [hjük] 'hook' and [bjük] 'book' forms are still common in some regions. Tiffin points to the tendency among Norfolk vulgar speakers to pronounce his Vowel 8 long as his seventh short, i.e. *room*, *you*, *too* as *rub*, *sun*, *son*. These speakers also tend to pronounce the long Vowel 8 as 'the Diphthong (but commonly reputed Single Vowel) *u* long; which Scottish [*sic*] Men often use for the Eighth short [as in *good*!': again '3–8 is the genuin [*sic*] English of *u* long, which some Persons not able to hit upon pronounce 8 only, and others add too much of it. There are some in Norfolk (*Lyn*) that use this diphthong instead of 8, as in *Spoon*, &c.' (Kökeritz 1934/35: 97).

It is very clear that linguistic change is taking place in the long high back labial vowel space. It is interesting to note how observers qualify their observations concerning this segment: 'as the Spaniard in *Ciudade*, a *City*; but this is not absolutely the same Sound' and 'sounds ... somewhat like the French *u*'. This hesitancy may arise from the perceptual difficulties observers may have had in characterizing and describing it. However, it is interesting to note how often they perceive and describe it as a 'mix' or 'mixture' of the vowels *i* and *w*, since it can be argued that the internalized structure of [ü] is precisely that – a (simultaneously uttered) complex of [i] and [u] (with the palatal element predominant in the mix). It is that internalized (non-temporarily distinct) structure which observers are coming to interpret as a linear, temporarily distinct, sequence of sounds, which gives rise to the [ü]/[ju] alternation (Jones 1989: 6–7).

4.2.4 Low mid back vowels

Vowels in this area of the phonology of modern British English are probably best exemplified through the LOT/THOUGHT set. Such vowels derive from Middle English [ɔ] and the Middle English [au] diphthong respectively (itself often the result of a 'breaking' of Middle English short [a] in pre-[l] and pre-[x] contexts). The latter is, in most regions, monophthongized in the early Modern period to a low-mid back rounded vowel via a process which is the mirror image of that we

suggested above for the [iu] to [ju] innovation, although even in 1751 the shorthand writer William Tiffin can still claim (Kökeritz 1934/35: 93): ‘To pronounce *thought*, *brought* and the like, with the fifth Vowel onelie [his vowel in *broad*, *sort* and *what*, etc.: CJ], seems to be a modern fashion; there being some Persons in almost all Places, that continue to pronounce such Words with a Diphthong compounded of the fifth and eighth’ [where his eighth Vowel is as in *boot*, *tomb*: CJ]. However, by the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, most speakers interpret the original sequence of [a] and [u] as a single, complex entity containing both elements of the diphthong. The result is a monophthong whose internal structure is not only composed of a mixture of both these elements, but one which manifests the quality of the predominant vowel in the diphthong – the sonorant [a] vowel – resulting in a low-mid, rather than a high-mid vowel (Jones 1989: 255–62).⁴⁶ In current RP, however, LOT/THOUGHT types show a vowel contrast, the former characterized as long and relatively lower and round – an [ɔɔ] vowel – while the latter, also round, has a somewhat higher F₂ feature – [ɔɔ] (Wells 1982: 130–1, 144–6); this clearly represents an oversimplified picture, since there is much regional and socioregional contrast in outputs for both vowels. Discussion of these vowel values in the early part of the eighteenth century is usually to be found under treatments of the letters (*a*) and (*o*) as well as under the improper diphthong (*ou*). Nearly all observers describe vowels in the low mid back region as ‘broad’ and will use (following a convention favoured in the previous century) a digraph *au* or *aw* spelling to represent them, especially clear in the observation by the author of *A Needful Attempt* (1711: 7):

In all [words] where either *a* or *o* are spoke as *au* shaurt, that *au* be used instead therof; as, *cauld*, *cauls* (and the *k* being used instead of the *c*, *kauld*, *kauls*) so too to be written *au* instead of *a*, in the Words, *ball*, *fall*, *gall*, *hall*, *tall*, *wall*, and many more the like. And so too *au* for *o*; as in the Words *or*, *for*, *God*, *Lord*; and in a multitude the like, where the *o* is spoke as *au* short, and therefore should be so spell’d.

But the evidence provided is often quite difficult to interpret, some observers apparently witnessing a LOT/THOUGHT merger, while others see the vowels as distinct, at least in their degree of lengthening. Brightland and Gildon (1711: 5), for instance, distinguish (1) Broad, Open, Full (*a*) sounds in items (mainly showing syllable terminations in [l]) such as *bald*, *scald*, *fall*, *call*, *all*, *shall* with backing and rounding of [a]; (2) Broad, short types in *shallow*, *tallow* (where the *ll* is ‘parted in the middle’); and (3) Broad or Open types (mainly post-syllable initial [w]) such as *war*, *ward*, *warn*, *water*, *wrath* and many others.⁴⁷ The broad sound ‘as in *all*, *shall* etc’ they describe (1711: 5; *Footnote* (9)) as being like ‘the fat or gross (*a*) of the Germans, which if long, we express by (*au*) or (*aw*), or if short by short (*o*)’. We have already conjectured that this German vowel is relatively low and back – certainly more like [a] than [æ] – so that Brightland and Gildon’s Broad *a* possibly represents, therefore, a vowel shape more like [ɔ] than, say, [ɔ]. These commentators crucially make a distinction concerning vowel length. While they see Middle

English short *o* derivatives as sharing the pronunciation of *all*, *call*, *fall* types, they are careful to point out (possibly following Wallis (1653)) that while vowel quality is shared, there is an observable duration difference between relatively short vowel space, as in items such as *folly*, *collier*, *loss*, *cost*, *sod* as against relatively durationally extended vowels in *fall*, *call*, *laws*, *cause* and *saw'd*. While we might have some reluctance to accept comments on vowel length at their face value from commentators in this period, it is worthwhile reiterating Brightland and Gildon's observation (1711: 22):

In many other Words like these there is the same sound of the Vowels in both Syllables, only the first is long and the last short. And this perhaps might bring our former Division of Sounds into doubt, since that supposes the Difference to arise from their Length or Brevity; whereas here we make the Sounds the same. But this must be here understood of the Formation of the Sounds; that is, the short and long Sounds are produc'd in the same Seats or Places of Formation: but in the former Rule the Hearing only is the Judge of the Sounds as they are emitted, not as to the Place of their Formation.

especially when it is made with reference to contrasts such as *fall/folly*; *call/collar*; *laws/loss*; *cause/cost* and *saw'd/sod*. Indeed, Brightland and Gildon seem to be suggesting that there has been a LOT/THOUGHT merger for vowel quality, derivatives of the latter (and those in pre-[l] contexts) being long, those of the former,⁴⁸ short; while both, since they are likened to the fat German *a*, are possibly nearer to [ɔ] than to [ɔ̄].⁴⁹ However, they seem to show a qualitative difference in items such as *shallow*, *tallow*, where [a] pronunciations are recorded throughout the seventeenth century (Dobson 1968: §60) and 'when (*e*) is added to the end of the single (*l*)' in *tale*, *male*, such items are labelled broad and short (despite the fact that in the previous paragraph they describe the vowels in *make*, *fate*, *take* as 'long, small and slender'). This development too is recorded in the previous century – Spenser rhymes *all* with *tale* – but was 'evidently always vulgar' (Dobson 1968: §(3) and note 4). Although Dobson (1968: 604) is also disposed to see such usage as 'vulgar' or 'dialectal', Brown (1700: 70), in his list of words that 'agree (somewhat) in Sound', shows *Tail of a Beast/Tale that is told/Tall of Stature* and *Wast thou good?/Waist or Middle of the Body/Waste not your Money/Washt hands*; again in his list of 'irregular Pronunciations' where respellings are provided for 'commonly spoke' versions, Brown shows variants for the item *psalm* in *salm*, *same*, *saum* and *sawm*. Jones too records such a 'long *a*' pronunciation for the stressed vowel in *gauging*, *halfpenny* and, possibly, *almoner* (Ekwall 1907: §§106–7).

Greenwood apparently sees a LOT/ALL/THOUGHT merger under a vowel which is like the gross German *a*. He specifically states, perhaps with an eye to etymology, that (1711: 45):

Au or *aw* rightly pronounced, would give us a Sound made up of the English short *a* and *w*: But it is now always simply Sounded like the fat *a* of the Germans: Namely the Sound of *a* being express'd broad, and the Sound of *w*

quite suppress'd. For they do with the same Sound pronounce *all, aul, awl; call, caul, cawl*.

While he states too that short (*o*) has the same sound as *call/cawl* types, like Brightland and Gildon he claims a vowel length distinction between short vowel space in *mollify, fond, folly, fall* and a long vowel in words like *fawn*. It is interesting to note his assertion that while 'I would advise that the Word were mark'd with a Circumflex ($\hat{\ })$ to denote the broad Sound. But *walk, talk, &c.* are more rightly pronounc'd by the English (*A*); which words are very carelessly sounded by some *wauk, tauk, &c.* in which Sound we imitate the French, who for *al* sometimes, before a Consonant, substitute or place *au*; and so do the Scotch when a Consonant does not follow' (1711: 236), an observation remarkably similar to Gil's '*walk, talk, &c.* rectius per *a* Anglicum [i.e. ME \hat{a}] efferuntur; quae tamen neglegentius loquentibus sonatur *wau'k, tau'k, &c.*' (Dobson 1968: §60 (3)).

Tuite (1726: 13) recognises what he describes as a broad version of the (*a*) vowel, one which 'sounds like *au*'. The list of items he provides as showing this sound are mainly those where the syllable terminates in [l] or [l] plus consonant (*bald, scald, talk, walk, all, fall* 'except *pall-mall, shall*'), but also where the vowel is in a [w] – [r] context, as in *war, warrant, ward, warm*. He also describes an 'o short' sound as occurring in words like *cozen, mother, smother, cover, money, honey* and *poverty*, while other items derived from Middle English short *o*, he categorizes as pronounced as *au*: *body, copy, word, for, stop, storm, short*. Importantly, he specifically tells us that the word *poverty* has *o* short, and is not 'as some pronounce it' what he respells as *pau-verty*. He consistently sees a difference in pronunciation between *o* short and *au* (1726: 28): 'O sounds *au*, when a consonant, or consonants follow it in the same syllable, as *for, stop, storm ...*'; 'O sounds *o* short in *money, honey*'; 'O sounds *o* short, but not *au* in *Jordan*'. Given the lowering and centring subsequent history of the vowels in the items he lists as showing *o* short, it might not be too wayward to suggest that this vowel may well be a lowered version of [ɔ] in [ɔ̄], and so represent a precursor of the modern RP shape for this vowel, a shape which, for Jones at least, may have had negative sociolinguistic values (1701: 79): 'When is the sound of *o* written *a*?' with 'In *chaps, Sabbath, stamp, tabaco*, abusively sounded sometimes with an *o*, as *chops*' (Ekwall 1907: §60, §§282–3).⁵⁰ Flint, it would seem, sees the short *o* as a relatively low sound, possibly [ɒ], rendering *not/ne, pas/nåt* and *rob/voler/råb* (Kökeritz 1944: 8, 111), where 'Ce son est celui d'un *â* françois ouvert qui seroit prononcé brièvement'. While Tuite gives us no real indication of the phonetic value of either short *o* or the monophthongized version of *au*, he does indicate that (as in the preceding century) this monophthongization could go (in certain phonetic contexts) to [a(a)] as well as [ɔ], thus (1726: 34–5): 'The diphthong *au* has its proper sound in *Paul*,⁵¹ *fraud, austere, august, laurel, vault, sauce, not sace. Au* sounds *a* in *aunt, daunt, gauge, Laurance, jaundice, draught, sausage*' (Dobson 1968: §238).

The author of *The Needful Attempt* also appears to suggest that, at least in certain contexts, short *o* and *au* pronunciations are distinct (1711: 9):⁵²

And so too faur the Vowel *o*: whaut Rúl, or Rúls kan bee given when 'tiz to bee pronounst az we spék it? Az in dhe Words, *móst, póst, ghóst, sóber, sóberly, &c.*

and when az *o* shaurt? Az in dheez Words, *long, song, tongue, word, sword* &c. and when az *au*? az in dheez words, *lost, tost, frost, gospel, god, lord, torn, shorn, lock, or, for, nor* &c.

Yet in his *English Grammar* section where we are presented with 'dhe spelling agreeabul to our spéking', he tends to spell vowels from Middle English [au] and short *o* almost indiscriminately with *au* or *aw*: *aul, whaut, auf, aurdr, kaunserning, impausibul, kaunsequentli, haloed 'hallowed', taut, faulti, aut, faulo, aurder*, and so on. We even find the digraph in a context where pre-[r] breaking seems to operate: *I doo réauli think*, perhaps suggesting a lowered value for *au* in this kind of non-prominent position in the vowel space. Exceptions to this are few: *smal, alteráshons, dhai shal naut want, on whitsh, upaun/whereupon/where-up-aun*, while we also find him use *wàter*⁵³ and *Dater* 'daughter', suggesting, perhaps, stressed vowels in [a]. Capell (1749) is perhaps more explicit in assigning separate values to the descendants of Middle English short *o* and *au* diphthong sources. Under his symbol *â* (expressed by other characters *au, aw, ô, ôa, ôu*) he groups items like *talk, clause, clawing, cost, brôad*,⁵⁴ *wrought*, the power, or name ascribed to them being *au*. However, he makes a clear distinction between these and items such as *wrot, rod, closet, wantonness* and *quarrel*, for which he uses the symbol *ö* (expressed by a distinct symbol *ä* – using a kind of superscripted tick) with a 'power or name of *o*, or *au* short'. At the very least, his use of *au short* for the latter set and *au* for the former, suggests a durational difference, while the number of these in pre-[r] contexts might suggest that the vowel quality is lower, perhaps even at this date, at the level of [ɒ] rather than [ɔ], although for some speakers of RP the values for *cost, broad* and *quarrel* might be the opposite of those suggested here, as there is variation within RP itself for these items (Wells 1982: §§2.2.4; 2.2.8; 2.2.13).⁵⁵

While Jones offers little in the way of vowel quality information concerning his *au* sound (1701: 20): 'A has two Sounds, that of *a*, in *an, as, at*, &c./*a*, in *all, ball*, &c. That the last being the Sound of *au* in *Paul, Saul* &c.', his *Alphabetical Spelling Dialogue* is replete with contexts where this sound is less frequently, if at all, used in the modern language. In particular, he shows the use of what is probably a low mid round back vowel in items where the stressed syllable terminates in (1) nasal initial clusters: *ambs, dance, enhance, slant, aunt*; (2) [l] + consonant: *balm, palm, psalm, qualm, almond, salmon, calve, halve, calf, half* and others, with *fallow/follow* and *hallow/hollow* recorded as homonyms;⁵⁶ (3) before syllable final [f(t)] as in *draught, laugh, laughter, drought*; (4) in *father*, many of which are recorded by observers in the preceding two centuries as well (Ekwall 1907: §§282–3; Dobson 1968: §238).

In his section dealing with *Words Differently Wrote from what they are Pronounced*, Owen (1732: 101) records what appear to be monophthongal low mid round pronunciations for Middle English diphthongal forms: *Aukard* 'awkward'; *awt* 'ought'; *caushun* 'caution'; *chawk* 'chalk'; *dawter* 'daughter'; *faukner* 'falconer'; *hawty* 'haughty'; *nawty* 'naughty'; but also *altar* 'altar/alter'; *ary* 'awry' and *larrans* 'Lawrance' suggestive of [ɒ]/[a] stressed vowels, although his *yot* for 'yacht' might be interpreted as an attempt to suggest an [ɔ] pronunciation rather than one nearer [a] which a *yat* rendering might have elicited.⁵⁷

Flint represents the majority of items derived from Middle English [au] (*tall, bald, salt, pause, slaughter*, etc.) with his *â* symbol (open French *a* in *pâte*), probably representing [ɔ] (Kökeritz 1944: 100ff), but reserving *ă* for *shall* and *mall* an [æ] sound, which Kökeritz sees as ‘dialectal’ in these items.⁵⁸ In pre-fricative contexts (presumably post-[l] effacement) Flint sees the French ‘*a bref*’ (symbolized by his *ai*) in items like *calf, half* and *laugh*. However, stressed vowels contextually preceding [l] + [m]/[n]/[v] clusters, Flint represents as having his ‘*a Fr. Long sans être ouvert*’ sound (symbolically *â*) as in *balm, calm, palm, qualm, salve, calve*, although *psalm* merits both *sâm* and *saîm* representations, suggesting a vasilation between [ɔ] and [a] pronunciations. Kökeritz (1944: 103) is given to interpreting the former as [ɑ], controversially claiming that this ‘is by far the earliest unquestionable evidence of the modern [ɑ:] or closely related sound in these words’.

4.2.5 High mid back vowels

Contemporary descriptions of this area of the vowel space suggest a vowel quality in [o]. The segment described, of course, as the ‘long’ version of short *o*, is by several observers characterized as being like the French *au* or the Greek ω , and is usually treated under discussions of the Letter *O* and the improper diphthongs *Ou* and *Ow*. Throughout the period, vowels associated with both digraphs are usually seen as monophthongal, although – even as early as 1751 – Tiffin (Kökeritz 1934/35: 95) claims that ‘*Know, low, Bow* i.e. the Instrument, are mostly sounded 5–8 [*thought, broad – shoe, two*], more agreeably with 6–8 [*boat, comb – shoe, two*], or perhaps as by some with 6 only’, suggesting diphthongal shapes in either [ɔu] or [ou], alongside a monophthongal [o]. More typical perhaps is Greenwood (1711: 247): ‘*Ou* and *ow*, have two Sounds, one more clear, the other more obscure [i.e. as the first element of the proper [ou] diphthong: CJ]. In some Words the Sound is express’d more clear by the open *o* and *w*. As in *Soul, snow, know, sow; ow, bowl*, &c. With which Sound the simple *o* is sometimes express’d, namely before *ld*, as in *Gold, scold, hold, cold, old*, &c. and before double *ll*, in *Poll, roll, toll*, etc. But all these Words are pronounc’d by some by full *O*, as if they were written *Sôle, Sno* [sic: CJ] etc.’ Greenwood (1711: 241) also argues that ‘This [long *o*] vowel for Distinction might be mark’d with a Circumflex ^.’ As we might expect, the description provided by Brightland and Gildon (1711: 18–19) is more detailed and more complex. Their long *o* (‘the Mouth opening round’ and ‘rarely short’) is the result, they claim, of a lengthening of its short congener in several sets of phonetic contexts. Principally, they assign long *o* status to vowels in pre-[l] and [l] plus consonant environments, thus *old, scold, hold, poll, toll* as well as lexical items showing [oo] in Middle English: *bone, stone, hope* and the like. This vowel they claim preponderates preceding [r]-initial clusters such as [rd, rm, rn, rt] (all classic vowel lengthening contexts in the historical phonology of English), exemplified in *ford, gor’d, forge*, but also in items such as *George, gorge, conform, deform, storm, scorn, torn, forlorn, corn, born, morning, short, extort, resort*. Data like these seem to suggest that a FORCE/NORTH merger (Wells 1982: 234–5) has not yet occurred, although its beginnings may well be signalled by their comment that ‘the long *o*’ has a ‘softer and more obscure [sound] in *fort, comfort, effort, purport, transport* &c.’. While

we can only speculate on the precise phonetic value of this 'obscure and softer' version of long *o*, such a value is also accorded it in (non phonetically prominent) contexts suggestive of lowering (1711: 31): 'This proper Double Vowel (*ou*) or (*ow*) [has a Sound: CJ] which is improper to its Nature, the Sound of the (*u*) being entirely sunk, as in *Soul, snow, know, &c.* Thus, in Words ending in (*ou*) obscure, (*o*) is only sounded, as in *Shallow, sorrow, arrow, billow,*⁵⁹ and where the (*w*) seems only put for Ornament sake, and merely to cover the Nakedness of single (*o*). This holds of most Words of more than one Syllable'. Interestingly too, they claim that the long *o* is the value in *ough* (lengthening and diphthongizing) contexts in items like *bought, brought, ought, nought, thought, wrought* – recall that they suggest *o* short or *au* (ɔ) for *fraud, gaudy, jaunty* types – perhaps an early indication of the modern closer manifestation of the back round mid vowel typical of many London speakers – the THOUGHT split (Wells 1982: 310–11).⁶⁰ Again, although their terminology is not always consistent, they observe that while the *o* is long in items such as *ghost, most, host*, in this pre-[st] context the vowel has 'a sharper tone in *frost, lost, tost, cost, &c.*',⁶¹ perhaps suggestive of a closer mid vowel value.⁶²

On the face of it, Capell appears to use two distinct symbols for what one presumes is a 'long *o*' sound – one is *o* ('expressed by other character *oa*) where the *o* shows a single superscripted dot. Items showing such a sound are *fore, nonE* ('noon'), *holy, moan, hoar, soaring*. He also appears to distinguish *ow*, again the *o* showing the superscripted dot, in items like *low, lowest, owner, sour, soul* and *controulment*. Yet again, he distinguishes an *o* symbol with no diacritic in items such as *none, forE, wholly, only, hoarse, sources*, describing it as *o short*. Indeed, Capell seems to provide us with a set of contrastive pairs in *none* [?'noon']/*none*; *holy*/*wholly*; *hoar*/*hoarse*; *soaring*/*sources*. What is the nature of the contrast he apparently intends to show in such cases? It is, of course, difficult to answer such a question with any degree of certainty, but some indications perhaps exist in the many (and often identical or near-identical) contemporary lists of sound-alikes or near-alikes typically seen in, for instance, *A Table of Words, the same, or nearly alike in Sound, but different in Signification and Spelling* (Watts 1721: 105–21). These lists are notoriously difficult to interpret, not least because it is often hard to know which of the pairs of words cited is the 'head' or target pronunciation item (items are often arranged alphabetically, for example). One of the most common characteristics of these lists is the grouping together as 'alike in sound' words whose stressed vowel space is in the high mid position, rhymed against one which is round, high and back. Instances abound: *boar, boor, bore*; *home, whom, holm*; *doer, door, more, mower, moor*; *pore, poor*; *Rome, room, roam*; *comb, come*; *course, coarse, curse*; *rough, roof, ruff*; *to, toe*; *shew, shoe*; *blow, blue* and many more such.⁶³ It could be argued, of course, that evidence like this suggests a lowered value for the high back round [u] vowel. However, there is little in the individual descriptions of this sound by contemporary observers to suggest this – *u* short and obscure seemingly used with reference to lowered and centralized types (as *cut, burst, curst*, etc.) derived via Middle English [u] and not Middle English [oo]. All we can perhaps tentatively suggest on the basis of evidence of this type is that Capell's dotted *o* types represent a more close, i.e. [o] value for (many) items derived from Middle English [oo]. At least the

possibility of an [u]/[o] alternation is suggested by Jones (1701: 80): ‘When is the Sound of *o* [his [oo]: CJ] written *ew* [his [(j)u]: CJ]? When it may be sounded *ew*, as in these five, *chew*, *eschew*, *shew*, *shrewd*, *Shrewsbury*, sounded *cho*, *shrode*, *Shrosbury*, &c.’. If indeed, we might interpret the long [oo] vowel at this period as perceived as at the [oo]/[uu] interface, then at least some of Ekwall’s doubts concerning Jones’ values for *ough* spellings might be answered.

4.3 The diphthongs

4.3.1 The PRICE diphthong

The evidence from almost all commentators in the early eighteenth century shows a situation where the ‘upper half’ of *The Great Vowel Shift* had been completed, with the more or less wholesale diphthongization of long high front and back Middle English vowels. The diphthongal status of ‘long *i*’ is everywhere confirmed – although *The Irish Spelling Book* (1740: 59) characterizes it as ‘by some reckon’d to be a kind of Diphthong; as if (ei) or (ee)’ – and treated as a Proper Diphthong, although the precise nature of its composition is not always made clear. Both Greenwood and Brightland and Gildon seem to suggest a first element which is in the low-mid area, a diphthong like [eɪ] (although the status of the second element is conjectural). Greenwood’s description is the fuller (1711: 240):⁶⁴

When *i* is long, it is most commonly pronounced like the ϵi or $e i$ of the Greeks, as in *bite*, *wile*, *stile*, *wine*, *pine*, almost after the same manner as *ai* in the French words *Main*, a hand, *Pain*, bread, &c. For it hath a Sound made up of the *E* feminine, and *I* or *Y*. It wou’d not be amiss if the long *i* were always mark’d with a Circumflex at the Top, to distinguish it from the short *i*, thus \hat{i} .

Where the vowel in French *main/pain* appears to have been a long monophthong in [ɛɛ] in this period (Pope 1952: 244). Flint too uses a French comparison for this diphthong (Kökeritz 1944: 110–11):

I suivi d’une consonne & d’un *e* muet est long, & se prononce *ai* comme dans les mots François *hair*, *hai*.

bite	mordre	baïte
fine	beau	faïne
ripe	mûr	raïpe

Kökeritz argues that equating the diphthong with the French *ai* suggests that the first element was, in fact, low and central, pointing to a diphthongal shape like [ʌɪ], ‘perhaps even [ai]’. Tiffin’s observations seem to bear this first interpretation out (Kökeritz 1934/35: 117–18, 97) describing long *i* as follows:

Sounding first, 7 [the vowel in *up*: CJ] as short as possible, add to it in the same Breath 4 long [the vowel in *eel*: CJ], and that will prove the genuin [sic] English

Sound of *i* long, which among us commonly passes for a simple Vowel. All Foreigners pronounce that Letter with the simple Vowel 4, and they that pronounce this Diphthong write it with other letters. Many of our Nation instead of this Diphthong pronounce 1–4 [*arm – eel*: CJ], others 5–4 [*all–eel*: CJ], and North Countrymen as Foreigners do, 4 only; as for *Christ, Chraist, Chroist, Chreest*.

Flint (Kökeritz 1944: 75) records long *i* pronunciations peculiar to Scotland where, he claims, Scottish speakers pronounce ‘L*i* Ang.long comme un Fr. prononceroit *éi*: *fine, mine* comme s’ils étoient imités *fěine, mēine*. *I, by*, ils les pron. *âi, bâi, mâi, l’a ouvert*’. Such a contrast may well record an early instance of *The Scottish Vowel Length Rule* as it affects diphthongs in such contexts (Aitken 1981), where for many speakers of Modern Scottish Standard English there can be an [œ]/[ʌ] contrast in items like ‘by’ and ‘fine’, alternations well attested in the eighteenth century as well (Jones 1995: 187). John Wild of Littleleek uses the inverted *i* symbol to express this diphthong, thus *!!f* ‘life’, *!s!t* ‘eye sight’, and it has been speculated that his *!!* digraph in items such as *w!!* ‘we’, *s!!*, ‘see’ and *b!!* ‘be’ might point to a diphthongal interpretation of these as well, to something like [əi] or the like (Jones 2001: 30–1).⁶⁵

There are very few ‘exceptions’ to the diphthongization of Middle English [ii] recorded in the period, and those that are are clearly stereotypes. Flint, for instance, records ‘short *i*’ in items like: *fivepence, sevennight, servile, licentious* with Tuite claiming the same pronunciation in *sennight, wind, climb, Christ, servile* and *volatile*. Like most other observers as well, *The Irish Spelling Book* (1740: 181) records an undiphthongized form in ‘oblige’ *obleege*.

Middle English [uu] also appears to have been everywhere diphthongized in the early eighteenth century, and it is *ou/ow* digraph is almost universally listed among the Proper Diphthongs as having a diphthongal pronunciation as its ‘proper’ sound. However, there is some lexical discrepancy in its distribution, the author of *The Writing Scholar’s Companion*, for instance, observing that (Ekwall 1911: 38): ‘(ou) and (ow) keep their full sound, in *boul, coulter, flout, gout, house, moulter, poultrice, poultry, pout, our, out, rout*: *shoulder, shout, stout, Mould, or Type*, in which things are Cast; distinct from *Mold, or Earth*, that is brittle, or easie to crumble: so *bow, how, now, &c.*’. Among many other examples, his *Table XV – ‘(ow) Sounding (ou)’* – includes among more expected types like *allowance, bowels, brown, brow, etc.*, words like: *mow, owze, rowen*. Detailed descriptions of the internal composition of the diphthong are infrequent in the period and what descriptions there are can be somewhat bland, as Brightland and Gildon (1711: 30): ‘This proper Double Vowel (*ou*) or (*ow*), has two Sounds, one proper to it as a Double Vowel, or as compos’d of both (*o*) and (*u*), as in *House, mouse, lowse, owl, fowl, town; to bow, fowl, bough, our, out, &c.* and another, which is improper to its Nature, the Sound of the (*u*) being entirely sunk, as in *Soul, snow, know, &c.*’. Greenwood, however, adds some detail (1711: 247): ‘*Ou* and *ow*, have two Sounds, one more clear, the other more obscure. In some Words the Sound is express’d more clear by the open *o* and *w*. As in *Soul, snow, know, sow ...* In other Words *ou* and *ow* are pronounc’d with a more obscure

Sound; namely with a Sound compos'd of the obscure *o* and *u*, and *w*. As in *House*, *mouse*, *our*, *out*, *foil*, *fowl*, *bow*, *bough*. *Sow*, &c.'. While he never appears to describe specifically the quality of an 'obscure *o*' sound, Greenwood (1711: 241) does claim that the 'sound of *o* ... is sometimes sounded like the obscure *U*, as when we carelessly pronounce *Condition*, *London*, *Compass*, &c. as if they were written *Cundition*, *Lundon*, *Cumpasse*, &c.' suggesting a value for *ow* of something like [ʌʊ] or, if he is referring to the 'short Vowel *o* is sounded like the German *a*, or open or fat *o* ... as in *mollify*, *fond*, &c.' then he may see a value for the descendant of Middle English [uu] in [ʊʊ]. Flint describes the *OU* diphthong as: 'Le son propre de ces diptongues, est *aou* Franç. Comme dans les mots *aoust*, *mois d'a-oust* prononcé en 2 sillabes, & *Raoul* nom d'homme, exemplified as:

thou	<i>Tu, toi</i>	ζaou
cloud	<i>nuée</i>	claudd
mouth	<i>bouche</i>	maouθ
scoundrel	<i>Un coquin</i>	scaoundrel

And, in some of the items he chooses for illustration, a diacritic mark is used: *doubt*, *foul*, *our*, *hour*, *abóut*, *withóut*, *allów*. Kökeritz (1944: 121) interprets Flint's *aou* as signifying either [au], [äʊ] or [ʌʊ]. Tiffin's description of the diphthong is complex (Kökeritz 1934/35: 97): 'Town, down, mount, our, hour, proud, round, sound, pound, Cow, how, now, bough, bowe, i.e. the Body, are commonly pronounc'd with 2–8, but unpolitely if with too much of 2; northerly with 8 only.' A vowel 2 to 8 movement refers to a *Ale/Ell* – *ooze/good* internal composition, i.e. [eʊ] for the diphthong. The significance of the 'with too much of 2' stricture, is difficult to interpret with Kökeritz seeing it as signifying a genuine [e] first element and not one which is too centralized, like [ɛ̃], since an [eʊ] diphthong would have been too much like a local, Suffolk version of the segment. But this is not entirely convincing, since 'too much' may well have a bearing on the quantity rather than the quality of the first element.

4.3.2 The CHOICE diphthong

Tuite's bland observations only hint at the range of pronunciation for this descendant of Middle English [ui]/[ɔi] in our period: 'The sound of *oi* is heard in *toil*, *oil*, *noise*, *voice*, *rejoice*, *choice*, &c. But *boil*, *broil*, *spoil*, have a smaller sound ... *Oy* sounds like *I* in *voyage*' (1726: 37). For Greenwood, *oi* is, of course, a proper Double Vowel, composed of two discrete components: 'express'd by open or clear *O*, but short, and *y*'. Although he never separately defines what he means by 'open or clear *O*', it seems that he intends some low mid round back vowel, giving a combination in [ɔi]. However, he goes on to observe that this diphthong can be pronounced with an 'o, or obscure *u*, as *oyl*, *oil*, or *tuyll*, *uyll*, &c.', his re-spelling suggesting a lowered starting point for the diphthongal onset, thus [ʌi] (pronunciations common in many Scottish communities today). He points to the possibility too that the diphthong can be pronounced 'In some Words ... like *I* long, as in *join*, *point*, *anoint*', his definition of *I* long suggesting, as we have already noted,

a diphthongal shape like [ɛi], a value for *oi* which suggests a precursor of the TOIL/TILE merger⁶⁶ so commonly observed in the later part of the eighteenth century. Tiffin too sees a threefold output in [ɔi]/[oi]/[ɹi] (Kökeritz 1934/35: 97): '5-4 [fault/see] is a Diphthong commonly pronounc'd in Syllables spelt with *oi*, *oy*, which sounding somewhat broad is sometimes evaded by pronouncing 7-4 [but, rub/grief, see]; some Persons endeavour to make a Diphthong of 6-4 [comb, door/grief, see]'. However, in the absence of any obvious conditioning phonetic contextualizing factor, for these writers the use of [ɛi]/[ɹi]/[ɔi] would appear to be a matter of lexical preference. The sets of items in *Table of Words, the same, or nearly alike in Sound, but different in Signification and Spelling* give much witness to a TOIL/TILE merger, and we find 'near alike's' such as *Bile/boil; imploy/impoly; nice/noise; pint/point; kind/coin'd; choicest/jice 'joyst'; isle/I'll/oil; hie/high/hoy*. Owen too lists in his 'Words differently wrote from what they are pronounced' (1732: 104) the spelling *joyst* as pronounced *jice*, while Watts provides re-spellings for 'jointure' and 'joist' as (Jinecture) and (Jice) and Tuite showing *Twilight* 'toilet'. Among Brown's 'near-alikes' is the pair *noise/nose*, explained – somewhat arbitrarily by Dobson (1968: 419) – as a Northern monophthongization of Middle English [ɔi] to [ɔ]. Brown also shows a similar pairing in *austere/oyster*, while in *The Irish Spelling Book* (1740: 198) we see this diphthong with 'the sign of *i* long' in items like *join, point* and *amount*. Hammond sounds almost reconciled to the merger (1744): 'O,*i*: Custom reconciled with that of *i* spoke long, for Instance, *toils* (tiles)'

4.4 Vowel neutralization in pre-[r] contexts

The evidence for any vocalic merger under some lowered/centralized vowel in pre-[r] contexts is extremely complex and difficult to interpret. The very orthographic problems presented by vowels in pre-[r] contexts are highlighted in *The Writing Scholar's Companion* (Ekwall 1911: 30):

Now one of the greatest Difficulties which the English Scholar, can meet with, is, how to Express the sound of (*ur*) at the end of words in Writing, when it is so variously written; and so alike sounded; as *ar, er, ir, yr, or, our* and *ure*; all seven sounded short, as (*ur*).

All that can be done in this Case, is when you have consulted the Final Tables of this Book, to take particular notice how you find this sound of (*ur*) severally expressed in the latter and most refined Prints and Authentick Manuscripts; and write them down as you find them; For (indeed) we have generally such treacherous Memories, that unless we write down our Mistakes as we find them Corrected in our Reading, we shall presently forget them: therefore I would advise such as strive to write English exactly (if they can spare time) to keep a kind of small Blank Paper-Book, to write down such difficult Words as they commonly meet with in ther Reading; and place them under such like Heads as I have done in my Tables at the end of this Book. And frequently have recourse to them in such Cases, especially as this before us, of the varying writing of this sound of (*ur*) always Remembring, the most difficult Attainments have the greatest Commendations.

Early in the century Brown (1700: 9) seems to suggest a merger of vowels under whatever is intended by ‘almost like *u*’ in this kind of context: ‘Is not the *u* vowel sometimes sounded, when another vowel is writ?’ ‘Yes; very frequently’. When? ‘When words of many syllables end with *ar*, *er*, or *or*; as in *scholar*, *vulgar*, *softer*, *anchor*; so *yr* in *satyr*, and *ir* in *birth*, *bird*, *first*, *fir*, *mirth*, *shirt*, *sir*, *stir*, *third*, *thirst*, *virgin*, and *whirl*; in all which, they are sounded almost like *u*, thus *scholur*, *vulgur*, *softur*, *anchur*, *satur*, *burth*, &c.’ How is *e* sounded in *her*? ‘Like *u*; thus, *her*, *hur*, are almost of one sound’. Indeed, in his lists of ‘irregular Pronunciations’ he seems to point to a low front as well as an [ʌ]/[ɛ] possibility in this context, citing *cherp* ‘chirp’; *serk’l* ‘circle’; *merr* ‘myhrr’; *sur* ‘sir’; *surch* ‘search’; *serkit* ‘circuit’; *fur fir*’; *furst* ‘first’; *flurt* ‘flirt’; *thurd* ‘third’; *thurst* ‘thirst’, while giving alternatives in some instances as well: *berch* or *burch* ‘birch’; *berd* or *burd* ‘bird’; *berth* or *burth* ‘birth’; *ferm* or *firm* ‘firm’. Tuite paints a rather similar picture of this neutralization of the vowel space in pre-[r] contexts, especially as it affects high front vowel segments (1726: 20): ‘*Ir* in the same syllable sounds *ur*, as *bird*, *birch*, *dirt*, *shirt*, *third*, *thirst*, *sir*, *stir*, &c.’. But that this phenomenon was clearly lexically specified, and perhaps even only in its early stages, is suggested by his long list of exceptions to the process: *birth*, *mirth*, *firm*, *girl*, *gird*, *girdle*, *girt*, *Kirk*, *skirmish*, *shirk*, *firkin*, *chip*, *circle*, *circuit*, *Virgil*, *virgin*, *virginity*, *virginal*, *virtue*, *smirk*, *irksome*. It is Flint, though, who provides what is perhaps the most insightful view of the kinds of developments undergone by non-low vowels in this environment. In many words of Middle English short *e* origin, Flint proposes a value of ‘Fr *e* bref’ – some kind of low mid front [ɛ] vowel – as in items like *earl*, *earth*, *pearl*, *beard*, *servant*, *certain*, *German* (although Kökeritz sees this as a retracted [ɛ̠]). On the other hand, Flint claims to hear a sound which is ‘Fr long et fermé’ in *early*, *earn*, *learn*, *search*, *yearn* (specifically stating that ‘learn and earn sont ê ouvert’ (Kökeritz 1944: 60)). Kökeritz interprets this sound as either [ɛɛ] or [ææ], although he is of the view that such a pronunciation reflects that recommended by the sources Flint was using (or his own dialectal pronunciation) rather than the contemporary metropolitan norm. Words like *sir*, *stir*, *third*, *first* present particular problems. Flint recognises two possibilities for the vowel in such cases: (1) he uses the è symbol – his ‘*e* fermé’ – showing an [ɛ] value, for items like *sir*, *stir*, *girl*, *firm* and *mirth*; (2) he uses the ő symbol (possibly [ʌ] from Middle English short *u* sources) in *return*, *surlly*, *worms*, *work*, *cur* – but also in *bird*, *dirt*, *shirt*, where the sound ‘aproche plus du son d’o Fr. mais un peu serré entre les dents’ (Kökeritz 1944: 18). (3) On that same page, however, he is careful to show yet another value for *ir* shapes, one spelt with his *eũ*. The distribution of his è and *eũ* types is illustrated in Figure 4.3.

The precise value of Flint’s *eũ* is difficult to determine: ‘her *prononcez* heũr bref’, but that it is close to a centralized and lowered shape is clear from (Kökeritz 1944: 10):

L’u bref Anglois approche beaucoup de l’o bref François, mais il a un son plus obscur, dit le même auteur que je viens de citer, c’est le son d’*eu* bref dans le mot *Serviteur* prononcé négligement. Vous aurez le son d’*u* bref Anglois, si vous prononcez l’o François extrêmement bref & serré, & vous verrez qu’en le prononçant ainsi, vous donnez presque le son de l’*e* féminin François c’est a dire, d’*eu* bref.

Sir	<i>Monsieur</i>	Sèr	Shirt	<i>Chemise</i>	cheŭrt
Stir	<i>Bouger</i>	Stèr	Third	<i>Troisièmr</i>	θeŭrd
Girl	<i>Fille</i>	Guèrl	First	<i>Premier</i>	Feŭrst
Firm	<i>Ferme</i>	Fèrm	thirst	<i>soif</i>	θeŭrst
mirth	<i>gaieté</i>	mèrθ			

Figure 4.3

Indeed Kökeritz sees the items marked by Flint as showing his *è* and *ø* as being largely 'conventional' or representative of earlier pronunciations. It is 'the four words given with *eu*, [which] shows what had actually happened', that is a leveling, merging of *er* and *ir* pronunciations under whatever *eu* represents – for Kökeritz the RP [ɜɜ]. Such (or a similar) vowel value existed for Tiffin apparently only for the items *bird* and *sir*, and he gives the following description of it as his 9th Vowel (Kökeritz 1944: 94): 'The ninth Vowel being of small Concern in swift Writing is therefore the less necessary to be nicely describe'd [*sic*]; however, if the Learner is willing to give so much Attention, he may hit upon the true Pronunciation of it, by placeing [*sic*] his Lips and Ball of his Tongue as for the first Vowel [*half, heart, am: CJ*], and the Tip of his Tongue as for the seventh [*but, rub, rough: CJ*]', and he goes on to characterize it as:

The ninth is a Vowel hardly ever heard but before an *r* accented: in which Situation the first [his [æ]: CJ] is often pronounced instead of it; though the seventh [his vowel in *up: CJ*] in the same Situation is much more like it. There is a Vowel commonly pronounced very indistinctly between two Consonants, whereof the latter is a liquid, the Accent lying upon the next foregoing Vowel; as in *Bottle, Schism, Button, Butter*. Perhaps 'tis the ninth, perhaps only the proper Vocality of the subsequent Liquid: make what you can of it; though if you make nothing of it, the Loss is but small.

5

Non-Vowel Phonology

5.1 [ti]/[tj]/[tʃ] and [di]/[dj]/[dʒ] alternations

That there is probably more comment upon pronunciation alternants involving *ti* and *du* in items like *action* and *duke* in the eighteenth century than in the two preceding, would seem to suggest that an active and salient phonological change is taking place. Indeed, some early-eighteenth-century observers not only see sociolinguistic significance in innovative pronunciations in this area, but see them as much more advanced in the lexicon than do others. The changes under discussion here typically involve voiced and voiceless dental obstruents in syllable-initial position, preceding a vowel or semi-vowel segment with a high F_2 (palatal) configuration – [i]/[j]. In such palatal environments the change itself seems to have a diachronic sequence something like [ti] → [tj] → [tʃ] → [ʃ], alongside the corresponding [dj] → [dʒ] → [ʒ]. It would appear that a two-element unit ultimately becomes perceived as a simplex. The progress of the changes is, however, phonologically quite transparent. We see a movement away from a segment characterized by a relatively high degree of obstruency to one where a more vowel-like configuration – in terms, at any rate of formant structure prominence – is produced. The linear combination of obstruent and palatal [i] vowel comes to be perceived and interpreted as a single segment, whose internal structure is composed of precisely these two units. The segment so produced is more ‘vowel like’ (i.e. the palatal vowel element is perceived as the more prominent in the ‘mix’), resulting in a segment higher up on the sonority scale – i.e. some kind of fricative. A temporal process such as [ti] → [tj] → [tʃ] → [ʃ] seems to suggest that hearers come to interpret [ti] as a single, unique (chord-like) phonetic entity (composed of a vowel and consonantal element). In turn, this single entity evolves in such a fashion that the vocalic component in the ‘mix’ comes to dilute the consonantal. As a result the new, complex single consonantal segment becomes, in its turn, more vowel-like, progressing up the sonority scale/hierarchy from obstruency (no acoustic vowel-like characteristics) to fricative-ness (where there is at least some evidence for acoustic banding in the signal, especially in voiced contexts) (Jones 1989: 5–6).

One motivation for a process like this may well be a consequence of the ways in which speakers perceive and process syllable structures. In an item like *condition*,

for example, if we are to take the spelling at its face value, speakers in the early eighteenth century may have internalized its syllable structure as follows:

[₁kɔn [₂d₁] ɪ [₃t₂] ɪ₃] [₄ən₄]

Notice how at all syllable boundaries – except that between 3 and 4 – there is an overlapping segment. That is, the coda to syllable 1 – [d] – is simultaneously the onset to syllable 2; likewise for the [t] at the syllable 2/3 interface. However, the syllable 3/4 interface shows a ‘proper bracket’, one where there is no overlapping interfacing segment. It has been argued in several places that the syllabic phonology of English ‘prefers’ overlapping segments at syllable interface, and seeks stratagems to avoid proper bracketing in such contexts (Jones 1989: 182–90; Hooper 1976; Anderson and Jones 1974: 105–6; Jones 1976). Notably (although it is by no means the only stratagem) we can find consonant cluster simplification driven by such concerns: witness the Middle English alternants such as *empty/emty*, *godsib/gossip*; *seldkup/selkup* where such cluster simplification achieves the preferred syllable interface overlap. Again the Middle English alternations like *nennen/nemene*; *chemne/chemene*; *remnant/remenaunt* witness the same effect achieved through vowel epenthesis. A stratagem for achieving an overlap (the *ambisyllabicity constraint*) at the proper bracket context in our *condition* instance, could be the deletion of one of the vowel segments in either syllable three or four. What appears to have occurred, however, is that the first of these vowels has seen its vocalic status weakened to that of the semi-vowel [j], a mechanism which, of course, will provide the desired effect of overlap at syllable boundary – since [tjən] constitutes a well-formed syllable – thus:

[₁kɔn [₂d₁] ɪ [₃t₂]j ən₃]

What occurs next is that the ‘weakened’ [j] segment is merged with, incorporated into, the syllable-initial [t], producing a single consonant with a complex internal structure of both segments. In this ‘mix’ the palatal vowel element comes to predominate, resulting ultimately in a fricative segment like [ʃ] (Britton 1991):

[₁kɔn [₂d₁] ɪ [₃ʃ₂] ən₃]

The recognition that what are apparently discrete phonetic units may, in fact, have an internal or complex structure, is by no means new, of course. For instance, Brightland and Gildon (1711: 54–5) seem to recognise the internal complexity of a segment such as their ‘soft *g*’ or ‘*j* Consonant’: ‘As I have said something of the Compound Sounds of the Vowels, I shall add a Word or two here of the Compound Consonants; the English (*j*) Consonant, or soft (*g*), or (*dg*), are compounded of (*d*) and (*y*), as is plain from *Jar*, *joy*, *gentle*, *lodging*, which sound *Dyar*, *dyoy*, *dyentle*, *lodying*, &c.’. Such comments suggest that, in word initial contexts at any rate, the palatal glide [j] has yet to be incorporated into the internal structure of a complex consonant containing [d] and [j]. That this is indeed the case can be

deduced from their observation that ‘The English (*ch*) or (*tch*) sounds (*ty*), for *Orchard*, *Riches*, etc. sound *Ort-yard*, *Rit-yes*, &c. ... If before the *English* words *yew*, you severally put *d*, *t*, *f*, *z*, it will be made *dyew*, *tyew*, *syew*, *zyew*, which is the *English Jew*, *chew*, *shew*, and the *French Jeu*, *Play*’. For them too, the English (*sh*) ‘sounds (*sy*) with “shame” sounded *Syame*’. Greenwood seems to support a view like this (1711: 252): ‘We pronounce the *J* Consonant harder than most other People. Dr. Wallis says that this Sound is compounded of the Consonants *Dy*, as, *Dyoy* for *Joy*. But Bishop Wilkins says it is a compounded Sound of *D* and *Zh*. That it has the Sound of *D* is plain, for bid a young Child that begins to speak to say *John*, it will say *Don*’. He observes too that ‘*Ch* is pronounce’d like the Italian *c* before *e* and *i*; namely with a sound compounded of *ty*: But Bishop Wilkins says, *Tsh*, *Tshurtsh*, *Church*’. *The Irish Spelling Book* (1740: 232) also takes the Wallis line on this subject, adding an ‘N.B. In Ireland, many Persons are apt to pronounce *due*, *duty* as if *jew*, *jewty*’, where his syllable initial *j* ‘has an unvaried sound, as being pronounced everywhere as soft *g*, in *Ginger*’, perhaps suggesting a regional origin for the change.

Yet it appears that Brightland and Gildon observe ongoing phonological changes occurring in this area, although for them such change seems to be a negative development and to constitute: ‘A certain Abuse to give the Sound of (*s*) to (*c*), before an (*e*) or (*i*), and of pronouncing (*g*) before the same Vowels, otherwise than before the others, of having soften’d the (*s*) between two Vowels, and of giving the (*t*) the Sound of (*s*) before (*i*), followed by another Vowel, as *Gratia*, *Action*, *Diction*, &c.’⁶⁷ Again (1711: 41), although without sociolinguistic comment, they claim: ‘when (*t*) comes before (*i*), follow’d by another Vowel, it sounds like the acute or hissing (*s*), as in *Nation*, *potion*, *expatiate*, &c., but when it follows (*s*) or (*x*), it keeps its own sound, as in *Bestial*, *question*, *fustian*, &c.’⁶⁸ Indeed, they provide extensive lists of items where [t] has been fully fricativized to [ʃ] in *ian* environments, with the sound of (*shal*) given for (*ti*) in *Credential*, *Essential*, *Nuptial*, *Impartial*, *Artificial*, *Beneficial*; (*shan*) for *cian* in *Grecian*, *Logician*, *Magician*; (*shate*) for *ciate* in *Gratiate*, *expatiate*, *negotiate* (‘except *emaciate*, *Associate*, *Nauseate*’); (*shent*) for *cient* in *Ancient*, *Proficient*, for *tient* in *Patient*, *Impatient*, for *scient* in *Omniscient*. Likewise, the Sound of (*zhin*) or (*shin*) appears at the end of words in (*tion*) and (*sion*): *Allusion*, *Ascension*, *Aversion*, *Circumcision*, *Confusion*, *Decision*, *Mansion*, *Decision*, *Pension*, *Reprehension*, *Revulsion*, *Version*, *Admission*, *Commission*, *Compression*, *Profession*, *Session*, *Succession* and many others.

Watts (1721: 10) provides less extensive discussion and illustration, suggesting only that ‘*ti*, *ci*, and *si* in the Middle of a Word, sound like *sh*, when another Vowel follows them, as *social*, *vision*, *action*, *relation*’ with the exception, again, of *st* clusters, where [st] remains, as in *Christian*, *question*.⁶⁹ Brightland and Gildon’s ‘A certain Abuse’ attached to [ti]/[tj]/[tʃ] alternants in words like *condition* is echoed by Watts in his *A Table of Words written very differently from their pronunciation*. There, we recall, he records what would appear to be non-prestigious usage, concerning which he claims (1721: 130): ‘I have therefore chosen out chiefly those words which are written different from their common and frequent Pronunciation in the City of London, especially among the *Vulgar*’. Among such items he selects: *ainchunt* ‘ancient’, *conshunce* ‘conscience’, *conshenshus* ‘conscientious’, *fashun*

'fashion', *dunjun* 'dungeon', *gorjus* 'gorgeous', *oshan* 'ocean', *rashunal* 'rational', *ri-chus* 'righteous', *fizzishun* 'physician', *cooshen* 'cushion'.⁷⁰ But even as late as 1744, Hammond is recording in his respellings forms like *actiun* 'action'; *natiun* 'nation'; *satisfactiun* and *elevatiun*, where 'in the *ion* termination *o* is pronounced like *u* spoke short'. He notes too that in *sion* endings, 's sounds like z', providing respellings like *persuazion*, *circumcizion*, *confuzion*, with no suggestion that [j] effacement has occurred. Likewise, while his *sc* digraph might be interpreted as [ʃ] in his respellings *miscion* 'mission' and *comprehenscion* 'comprehension', the termination still looks likely to be [ʃɪən], although he elsewhere records *celestyal* 'celestial' and *crityan* 'Christian' (and other items with syllable final *st*) suggesting a [stɪ] to [stj] change. Sproson sums up the discussion of the item *action* (1740: 76):⁷¹

Note that *ti* before a Vowel, is generally sounded soft like *si* or *sh*; as *action* is formed *acsion*, or *acshun*. Except in such Words as have *s* just before *ti*, and then the sound is hard, as in *question*, *celestial*, *combustion*, and the like. And also in those Words formed of those ending in *ty*, as *mighty*, *mightier*, *mightiest*, and the like.

Tuite (1726: 23) also takes up a similar position, though he seems to suggest that the phenomenon is lexically constrained: 'Note, that *ci*, *si*, *ti*, before a vowel, sounds like *sh*. And *xi* before a vowel, sounds like *ksh*, as *magician*, *musician*, *mathematician*, *logician* ... &c. Yet *ci* has its own sound before the termination (*ation*) as *annunciation*, *pronunciation*'. Part of the uncertainty as regards the pronunciation to be accorded to *tion* types, may stem from both perceptual and (especially) representational problems. For instance, Tuite admits to some difficulty in this area in representing what is presumably the voiced [ʒ] sound (1726: 24): 'But if *sion* follows a vowel, it has a sound to be learn'd better from the living voice, than from the pen, as *evasion*, *vision*, *delusion*, &c.' Perhaps it is this sound too that he means when he says (1726: 67): '*Zi* sounds like the French *j*, in *brazier*, *glazier*, *Frazier*'. One might speculate that the high level of alternation between [tj]/[tʃ]/[ʃ] types and the like, stems from observational difficulties as much as anything else.

5.1.1 Glide insertion

Although the phenomenon is often noted in grammars and pronouncing dictionaries in the latter half of the eighteenth century, insertion of [j] and [w] word initially after obstruents is only very occasionally recorded by observers pre-1750. Brightland and Gildon recognise the phenomenon, attributing it to some kind of assimilatory process (1711: 55):

But this is worthy of our Observation, That the Consonants (*y*) and (*w*), tho' it be not minded, most commonly are subjoin'd to kindred Consonants before kindred Vowels; that is, (*y*) is often subjoin'd to the guttural Consonants (*c*) (*g*), when a Palatal Vowel follows; for *can*, *get*, *begin*, &c. sound as if they were

written *cyan, gyet, begyn*, &c. for the Tongue can scarce pass from these guttural Consonants, to form the Palatine Vowels, but it must pronounce (*y*). But it is not so before the other Vowels, as in *call, gall, go, gun, goose, come* &c. (*W*) is sometimes subjoin'd to the Labial or Lip Consonants (*p*) and (*b*) especially before open (*o*), as *Pot, Boy, boil*, &c. which are sounded as if spelt thus, *Pwot, Bwoy, bwoil*, &c. but this is not always done, nor by all Men.⁷²

In what, one supposes, is a reference to the same kind of phonological event, the author of *The Needful Attempt* accords to the 'sound of *u*' one value which is described as (1711: 9): 'when az *w* and *u* short; az in dhe Words, *bull, pull, bush, push*, &c.', suggesting pronunciations like [bwul] and [bwuʃ]. In much the same way, he describes one of the possible pronunciations of *oo* (1711: 10): 'az *w.u.* az in *good* &c.'. Indeed, in his text he has the phrase (1711: 12): *a veri fú gwud Books*', although he does not seem to show any parallel instances of [j] insertion of this type.⁷³

5.2 Syllable onsets in [gn-]/[kn-]

Lexical items showing [g]/[k] obstruent plus nasal clusters in initial position at word beginnings are, of course, a commonplace in the phonology of both Old and Middle English, where in the latter, for example, *gnatt, gnauen, gnauing* forms are to be found. Syllable initial [gn-]/[kn-] clusters appear to have survived into the first half of the eighteenth century,⁷⁴ although the evidence suggests that, as a whole, the initial obstruent is coming to be effaced. The author of *The Many Advantages*, for instance, seems to suggest in some of his respellings that the initial obstruent no longer survives (1724: 60): 'Since *k* is not sounded, why is it still written in *Knô, Blô, Bestô, Knôlledg*?' Yet Tuite seems to support the retention of [kn- and [gn- clusters when, in his discussion of the sonorants [l], [m], [n], and [r], he comments (1726: 2): 'They are call'd liquids, because they are of such an easie motion, that they nimbly glide away after a mute in the same syllable, without any stand; and a mute can be pronounc'd before a liquid in the same syllable, when a vowel follows the liquid, as *blast, probable, gnash, knave*. Note that tho' *m* be reckn'd a liquid, it follows no mute in the same syllable; nor any consonant but *s*, as *smart*: Neither does *n* follow any other mute than *g* and *k*, and very seldom *c*, as *gnaw, kneel, Cnidos*'. That, for him, the cluster initial obstruent has some phonetic value (at least in specific lexical items) is clear from (1726: 56): '*K* is written before *n*, in the beginning of a word, and has a sound to be heard in *knack, knell, knife, know, knuckle*'. However, Tuite also observes change taking place here, one of which he disapproves, defending the *status quo* on the basis of analogy (1726: 52):

'Tis become common not to pronounce *g* before *n*, in the beginning of a word, as in *gnash, gnat, gnaw*; which is a great mistake, as it appears by the sound of the second syllable, (*gni*) in *magnitude*; for none that understands the Division of an English word into syllables, will, nor can deny, that (*gni*) is the second syllable; now if *gnat* spells *nat*, *gni* spells *ni*; and therefore *magnitude* ought to be pronounc'd *ma-nitude*, if *g* be not pronounc'd before *n*.

But perhaps the most common observation by writers in the early eighteenth century avers that these clusters are not simplified by the deletion of the initial obstruent, rather that the sound of that obstruent is in some way ‘weakened’, notably to ‘the sound of *h*’. This observation is most clearly expressed by Watts (1721: 9): ‘When *g* comes before *n*, in the beginning of a Word, it sounds like *h*, as *gnaw*, *gnash*, *gnat*’; ‘*K* before *n*, in the beginning of a Word, is pronounced like *h*, as *knock*, *Knife*, *Knowledge*’, while in his *Table of Words written very different from their Pronunciation* (1721: 128), he shows *Knowledge*, *Knop*, *Knuckle* and *Knight* respelled as pronounced *Hnollege*, *Hnob*, *Hnukk'l* and *Hnite*. Brightland and Gildon too comment on this phenomenon (1711: 43): ‘(*K*) begins all Words of a harsh sound before (*e*), (*i*) and (*n*), as *keep*, *kill*, *know*, *knack*, &c. nor is it ever put before any Consonant but (*n*), and then with so much constraint, that it almost loses its sound for that of (*h*)’. *The Irish Spelling Book* confidently attesting a ‘strongly pronounced’ syllable-initial [h], claims that (1740: 230–1): ‘*k* borrows its sound; as, *knave*, *knight* sound *hnave*, *hnight*’, while its author, in his observations on the *K* consonant (1740: 233) – clearly following Brightland and Gildon – seems to suggest that a [kn]/[hn] alternation represents an ongoing change in his phonology: ‘Q. What is observable of *K*? It begins all Words of a hard Sound before *e*, *i*, and *n*; as *keep*, *kill*, *knock*, *knife*, *know* &c. – And, it is never put before any Consonant but *n*, and even that with so much Constraint, that it always changes its Sound for that of *h*, as before *hnight*, for *knight*’. Even as late as 1751, Tiffin (Kökeritz 1934/35: 90) records the phenomenon as well: ‘Words also that are commonly spelt beginning with *kn*, are generally pronounced as with *hn*; though sometimes with *n* only: this I have used myself to neglect, though perhaps worth regarding’.

The phonetic/perceptual motivation for such a development is far from obvious, some scholars suggesting that the *h* is an orthographic device to signal the devoicing of the following nasal. Matthews (1936: 112) is of the view that Tiffin’s (1751) identification of syllable initial *kn-* with *hn-* means that, since he uses *hw* as a signal for voiceless [w] in *where*, *whether* items, then *hn-* signifies that the [n] is voiceless in words like *know*, *knave* and *knight*; similar views are espoused by Kökeritz (1944: 134–9; 142–52). However, one might have doubts that contemporary observers could have identified such a fine level of phonetic detail as sonorant devoicing. We can perhaps suggest that since, in all likelihood the [gn-] initial cluster is syllabic – i.e. [gən-] – then hearers re-interpret the CV cluster as a single phonological entity, whose internal structure is composed of both vowel and consonantal components, realizing a vowel-like segment like [h], a segment characterized by its sharing of the phonetic properties of surrounding segments (Maddieson 1984: 57). It would appear to be a mistake to dismiss the innovatory *h* as merely a graphic convention, since its use is very widespread and consistent in contemporary commentaries. Brown (1700), for instance, gives the alternation considerable prominence among his ‘irregular pronunciations’, citing *nash/hnash* ‘gnash’; *nat/hnat* ‘gnat’; *naw/hnaw* ‘gnaw’; *nak/hnak* ‘knack’; with ‘knave’, *knight*, *knowledge* and *known* likewise shown with the opposition. Not only that, but he also records *rite/hrite* ‘write’; *raut/hrawt* ‘wrought’; *rap/hrap* ‘wrap’ and *rath/hrath* ‘wrath’ suggesting that – rather than a process of [w] effacement – we are witnessing a change whereby the semi-vowel [w]

is perceived as a more ‘vowel-like’ segment, one sharing the acoustic characteristics of the contiguous sonorant segment, and thus manifested as [h]. Such a development might even be interpreted as an acoustic assimilation, whereby contiguous segments opposed in sonority value, come to have the value of one (the more sonorant) spread across the cluster.

However, this is not the only innovatory development recorded in respect of these clusters. Mattaire, for example, notes how (1712: 8): ‘*G* and *k* before *n*; as *gnat*, *knife*, *knot*: in which sort of words if the *k* sounds at all, it is somewhat like a *t*’. Examples of this place of articulation assimilation are to be found as well in John Wild of Littleleek’s *Magazine* (1703) where forms like *tlox* ‘clocks’, *tnav* ‘knave’ are recorded, a phenomenon fairly commonly observed by Scottish grammarians from the eighteenth century onwards, thus Alexander Scot’s (1779) *tnoan* ‘known’, *tnoledge* ‘knowledge’ (Jones 1995: 221; Jones 2001: 25), with pronunciations like [tni:] ‘knee’ and [tnɔɪf] ‘knife’ recorded as late as the 1920s in Forfar and East Perthshire (Grant and Dixon 1921: 8).

5.3 *H* dropping and adding

Despite the extensive nature of the record for the loss of word-initial [h] and its hypercorrect insertion in the latter half of the eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century, there is almost total silence on the phenomenon by most observers between 1700 and 1750, and what little comment there is comes almost entirely free of sociolinguistic constraint.⁷⁵ Even the ‘irregular pronunciations’ of Brown (1700: 83) show few signs of the phenomenon, only *mannud* as a respelling for ‘manhood’ bearing witness to it in this northern orthoepist, while his ‘near-alikes’ only evidence *alter/halter*; *otter/hotter*; *hiccough/echoe* and *ozier/hosier*. Brightland and Gildon’s observations on the matter are typically brief, commenting that [h] (1711: 41): ‘Tis indeed sometimes near silent, as in *honour*, *hour*, &c. but so are many other Consonants in particular positions’. Likewise, Mattaire (1712): ‘In some words the *h* is not pronounced; as *honour*, *schism*, *John*, *Thomas*’, indeed he seems to suggest, even by default, that word-initial [h]-loss is rare (1712: 16): ‘The Aspiration *h* is to be consider’d, with respect to its place, and the letter, which affects, in the syllable. Its place may be in the Beginning, Middle, and End of a syllable or word; as *ha*, *eight*, *ah*, *behalf*. Sometimes it has more places than one in the same syllable; as *high*, *height*, *heath*. It affects both Vowels and Consonants; going before or sometimes after the Vowels; as *ho*, *oh*’. For Tuite (1726: 5): ‘*h* is made by an aspiration only in the throat’ and (1726: 54): ‘has its proper sound in the beginning of a word, as in *hand*, *hen*, *hid*, *hope*, *hurt*. Yet *h* is mute in the beginning of several words, as *herb*, *heir*, *heiress*, *honest*, *honour*, *hour*, *hospital*, *humble*, *Humphrey*’. The *Irish Spelling Book* (1740: 231) only singles out five items with syllable initial [h]-loss: *Heir*, *Honour*, *honest*, *humble*, *humour*. Owen’s (1732: 73–4) *Table of Words alike in Sound, but different in Signification and Spelling* contains the usual suspects such as *air/heir*, *all/awl/hall*; *arras/harrass* and *asp/hasp* ‘of a door’, with *osher* for ‘hosier’, with Harland’s list of 1719 recording pairs like *asp/hasp*; *amelet/Hamlet*; *ability/hability*; *horizon/orizon*. Watts (1721: 11) states that ‘*h* is

hardly sounded in these Words, *Honour, honest, Heir, Herb* &c.,⁷⁶ while he claims (1721: 126–31) that homophones such as *e'er/heir, arras/harrass, earth/hearth* (and perhaps *Cornhill/Cornwall*) are all examples of 'common and frequent Pronunciation in the City of London, especially among the Vulgar'. Jones (1701: 58, 22) gives a more extensive list of items showing [h]-loss, including many items of Classical origin – *Hector, halleluia, Hebraism* – *hour, humble, humility, humour, hedge, hood, umble bee* 'humble bee' and *hemorrhoids*, 'sounded *emerods*,' and several others. He notes too the preservation of syllable initial [h] in those contexts where the preceding item ends in a vowel, as in *a hat* (Ekwall 1907: §560). Perhaps all we can conclude in this area is that syllable- and word-initial [h]-loss was not a salient characteristic of the phonology of English of this period readily observable by commentators; that its occurrence is strictly lexically constrained and apparently without any widespread or significant sociolinguistic salience.

5.4 [hw]/[w] alternations

Syllable initial clusters in [hw-] show a number of different developments in the historical phonology of English. In many instances where the [hw-] cluster precedes a rounded vocalic segment, the [w] is absorbed into the following vowel, thus we find *who* forms in [hu] from at least the middle of the seventeenth century (Dobson 1968: 981).⁷⁷ Such a development is, of course, recorded in the early eighteenth century and we find Brown's (1700) near-alikes *weather/whether/wether-mutton* and Watts (1721: 130) listing *Hoordum* 'whoredom'; *Holesum* 'wholesome'; *hurtle-berry* 'Whortle-berry'; *Hooz* 'whose' as London vulgarisms. Flint shows *whore* as *hōre*, while in his *Liste de Mots qui se ressemblent quant au son*, there are near-alikes such as *Hoop cerceau/Whoop! Ho! Cri*.⁷⁸

Perhaps it is the second development affecting syllable initial [hw-] clusters which attracts the greater attention in our period, the development whereby [hw] alternates with, and is being supplanted by, [w]. [hw]/[ʍ] initials in words like *what, why, which* and the like show a change (fricative to semi-vowel strengthening) to [w] quite early in the history of English, a change which is seen by some commentators as originating in non-prestige dialects (Dobson 1968: 974). Certainly by the late eighteenth century the [hw]/[w] alternation was markedly sociolinguistically salient in many parts of Britain as a sign of both social status and gender (Jones 1995: 225–226; Jones 2001: 139; Mugglestone 1995: 199–201). That such an alternation exists in the early eighteenth century seems to be recognised explicitly only by Jones whose *An Alphabetical Spelling Dialogue* claims (1701: 58): 'When is the sound of *h* written *wh*? When it may be sounded *wh*; as in *who, whole, whom, whoop, whore, whortle, whose, whow, whowp*', showing what is perhaps a conservative [hw-] syllable initial cluster in some of these items. However, in answer to the question (1701: 118) 'When is the Sound of *w* written as *wh*?', we have the response 'When it may be sounded *wh*, as in *what, when, &c.*, sounded *wat, wen, &c.* by some', although he does not elaborate on who these 'some' might be. Other observers seem sure that [hw] pronunciations prevail, notably Greenwood (1711: 251): '*W* likewise comes before the Letter *H*, tho' it is really sounded after it,

as in *when, what, which*, are sounded *hwen, hwat, hwich* and so our Saxon ancestors were wont to place it', possibly following Brightland and Gildon who have (1711: 41, 44): 'after *w* [*h*] is pronounc'd before it, as *when, white*, sounds *hwen, hwite*', and Mattaire (1712: 17): '*W*, though placed before, yet seems to be pronounced after the *h*; as *who, why*'. Capell suggests what looks like a [hw] to [w] change, positing a 'power' of *we*, for the initial cluster in *whine*. Sproson (1740: 76ff) provides something approaching a 'near-alike' list: *An Explanation of several Words, which are apt to be misapplied upon account of the likeness of sound, or by being pronounced differently from their true orthography*, and all perhaps that we can glean from it in this area of the phonology is that an [hw]/[w] alternation existed, as he cites pairs like: *were/where; weather/whether; whither/wither; wey/whey*. It is Owen's *Alike in Sound* list, though, which probably provides the greatest number of pairs (1732: 72ff): *hoop/whoop; wails/Wales/whales; weal/wheel/wheel; wey/whey; wen/when; wat/what; while/wile; whoes/woes; Wight/white/weight; wist/whist; woe/who*. Perhaps, given his northern origins, it is not surprising to find that Flint maintains the [hw]/[w] contrast, rendered as *hou* and *h* respectively, thus: *houile wheel; houère where; houënn when; houäilst whilst; houiss'l whistle; houaï why* and *hoümm whom*. *Wen guëtire/When quand*. *The Irish Spelling Book* records only [hw] outputs: '*WH* (that is *W* consonant) rapidly expressed, sounds (Höö)⁷⁹ thus; *When*, or as formerly written, *Hwen*, sounds Hööen', and again (1740: 261): How is *wh* sounded? With *w* after *h*; as, *what, wheel, where* sounded *hwat, hweel, hwere*'. It is difficult to assess precisely how advanced any change of [hw] to [w] had become, since even late in our period Tiffin (Matthews 1936: 112) only hints at such a contrast: 'Words that in common Spelling are begun with *wh* are in universal Pronunciation, if the *h* be pronounc'd at all, begun with *hw*'.

5.5 Syllable final [r] loss and insertion

Dobson's (1968: 992–3) view that 'there is no evidence at all of the StE vocalisation and loss of [r] in stressed syllables in any of [the] fifteenth to eighteenth century sources which are alleged to show it' seems to be borne out from a close inspection of the early-eighteenth-century materials (Hill 1940). Greenwood and Mattaire have nothing at all to say on the phenomenon of [r]-loss, while the near-alike lists of Owen and Watts only show the stereotypical *Harsh/Hash* and *Marsh/Mash* alternants, although the former's list (1732: 105) also records *sasnet* for 'sarsenet'.⁸⁰ Brightland and Gildon (1711: 51) merely describe what appears to be a trilled segment in the phonaesthetic terms so familiar in the later part of the century: 'The Letter (*r*), which is generally call'd the Dog Letter, is likewise form'd in the Palate; that is, if when you are about to pronounce (*d*) or (*n*), the Extremity of the Tongue being turn'd inwards by a strong and frequent Concussion, beats the Breath, that is going out: from which Conflict that horrid or rough Sound of the (*r*) proceeds'. One recalls Elphinston's later 'harsh guttural', 'canine guttural' description of this 'horrid, dog-like sound' (1786: 136, 284, 302). It is only Mather Flint who seems to record the loss of post-vocalic [r] as an observable, active phonological process, suggesting that the sound is often pronounced 'more softly' (*adoucir*) or

'less distinctly' (*foiblement*) than its French equivalent. In items like *hard, harm*, Flint observes how 'A suivi de *r* est un peu long sans être ouvert, & l'*r* est prononcé moins rudement qu'en français' (Kökeritz 1944: 11). Not only that, but Flint seems also to suggest that the loss of [r] postvocally is, in fact, some kind of [r] vocalization, which brings with it a lengthening of the preceding vowel segment: 'l'*r* devant une consonne est fort adouci, presque muet & rend un peu longue la voyelle qui le précède, *barb, guard, arm, tarn*' (Kökeritz 1944: 41). An observation like this might point rather to a change from a trill [r] to an approximant in [ɹ], as well as to a full effacement of the segment. Flint's list of items showing what appear to be [r] 'weakening' or effacement is quite extensive, occurring mainly in those contexts where the [r] is the first element of a consonantal cluster such as [rd], [rt]; [rθ], [rs], [rtʃ], [rdʒ], [rl], [rm], and [rn], clusters traditionally associated with vowel lengthening in the history of English phonology.⁸¹ Some examples he cites (where he shows [r] loss/weakening by italicization) include: *hard, regard, retard, award, reward, wizard, bastard, vineyard, third, bird, yard, lord, guard; quart, shirt, flirt; mirth, birth, hearth; parcel, first, thirst; arches, starched, urged; parliament, girl; harm, barn, warm, firm, form, storm; servant, cork*. It is hard to see why it should be Flint who is such a detailed recorder of this phenomenon. Perhaps it is because, as a native of Tyneside, his regional [r] sound may well have been some kind of retroflex of uvular [ʀ]/[ʁ] variety, making him conscious of both the difference between it and the southern [r] or [ɹ], and so conscious of the salientness of the 'weakening' or loss of the latter. There is one other observer, Watts, who stands out from the way he recognises the existence of post-vocalic [r] loss, a phenomenon to which he accords low social status. Several examples of the phenomenon appear in his *Table of Words written very differently from their Pronunciation* – a list of items which, recall, Watts (1721: 126–31) sees as pronounced 'according to the dialect or corrupt Speech that obtains in several Counties of England' especially those which are frequent in London 'among the Vulgar'. His list includes examples such as *fust* 'first'; *nus* 'nurse' and *pus* 'purse'. Intrusive [r] phenomena are, not unexpectedly, equally rare, with only Bailey (1726: 58) and Jones (1701: 91) showing *handkercher* 'handkerchief', and Tuite (1726: 37) who claims that '*curfew* ... is pronounc'd *curfer*', although in both instances something other than [r]-insertion may be involved. Harland's (1719) near-alike list only includes: *death/dearth* and *partition/petition*.

On the other hand, the record of pre-[r] diphthongization – 'breaking' – is quite strong in the period, with Lane (1700: 10) commenting that '*E* Subjunctive is really sounded with the single Vowel before the Consonant, and so makes the Subjunctive or latter Vowel of a Diphthong; otherwise it could not make the Syllable long, as in the words, *Fire, more, pale*, read *Fier, moer, pael*'. Jones (1701: 91) observes that 'it is sometimes easier to sound *e* before *r* than not hence it is that we sound *ier* for *ire*, *ouer* for *our*, *uer* for *ure*, &c.', while Hammond (1744: 60) re-spells *desire* as (desier). So too Brown (1700: 9) 'How is the Vowel *e* sounded when *r* precedes it? 'Tis then pronounced before it somewhat like the *u* Vowel; as, in *Acre, so, inspire, desire*, &c. are sounded as if wrote *Acur, inspiur, desiur*, &c.' But it is Owen's (1732: 101ff) lists of *Words differently wrote from what they are pronounced*

which produce the largest number of pre-[r] *Breaking* instances, including: *acquiur*; *admiur*; *attiur*; *conspiur*; *desiur*; *enquier*; *enviurn* ‘environ’; *quier* ‘quire’; *inspiur*; *conspiur*; *miur* ‘mire’ and *fiur*.

5.6 [l] vocalization; [n]/[ŋ] alternants; palatal and velar fricatives

Most commentators in the early part of the eighteenth century are strangely silent on the phenomenon of [l] vocalization. While an early commentator like Brown (1700) shows a few near-alikes such as *boaster/bolster* and *walter/water*, those most observant writers, Brightland and Gildon, have nothing to say on the subject whatever, and merely provide an articulatory description of the [l] sound itself (1711: 51):⁸² ‘The Letter (l) is form’d if when you are about to pronounce the (d) or (n), you gently send out the Breath from one or both sides into the Mouth, and by the Turnings of the Mouth to the open Lips, with a Trembling of the Tongue’. Tuite and Owen say only that ‘l is not pronounced’ in items like *Bristol*, *Holborn*, *falcon*, *soldier*, *almost*, *chalk*, *falconer*, with Owen alone providing *cafe* ‘calf’, *fokes* ‘folk’. Hammond (1744): appears to be almost unique in making any connection between the [l]-loss and vocalization: ‘When double l ends a syllable after a, the first l sounds like u; and when lk end after a, l sounds the same, as shall be shewn in *Walker* (wauker); *Chalk* (chauk); *recalling* (recauling); *fall* (faul)’, although very early in the century we find Brown, in his section dealing with ‘Consonants writ and not sounded’ (1700: 11–12) asking the question: ‘Where is l writ and not sounded?’ The answer being: ‘In *almond*, *calf*, *chaldron*, *chalk*, *half*, *halm*, *falconer*, *qualm*, *psalm*, *salmon*, *salve*, *stalk* and *walk*’. ‘Is the Consonant l useless in these words?’ ‘No; for it causeth the Vowel a to be sounded like the Diphthong au’.

Hammond claims that [l] is ‘not pronounced’ in items such as: *balm*, *palm*, *Holborn*, *calf*, *psalm*, *qualm*, *vault*, *salve* (save), *alms*, *ralph*, *half*, where the respelling of *salve* would suggest that [l] effacement has occurred there without vocalization to [u], the latter perhaps being constrained to a small lexical set of the *Walker*, *chalk*, *recalling*, *fall* type. A few examples of [l]-loss are provided by Watts in his list of London vulgarisms (1721: 126–30): *amun* ‘almond’; *occamy* ‘alchemy’ and *vawt* ‘vault’, rather colourfully recording (1721: 13) how ‘The Sound of l is almost worn out toward the end of a Syllable in many Words; as *Psalm*, *half*, *Fault*, *Talk*, *Salmon*, *Faulcon*’. Greenwood (1711: 38), in his *Orthoepy, or Rules for the right pronouncing of Letters*, dictates that ‘we must not pronounce *ommost*, but *almost*’ and we have already recorded his observation how (1711: 236): ‘*walk*, *talk*, & are more rightly pronounced by the English (A); which words are very carelessly sounded by some *wauk*, *tau*k, &. In which sound we imitate the French ... and so do the Scotch’. Only the *Irish Spelling Book* (1740: 234) somewhat later in the period provides an extensive set of items showing [l] loss, but whether this suggests that the process develops late or that its originates in regional contexts is uncertain.⁸³

Nor is there much discussion of the [n]/[ŋ] alternation, particularly in *ing* suffixes. Dobson (1968: 369) sees in Brown’s (1700) ‘irregular pronunciation’ respellings *fardin*, *herrin*, *puddin*, *shillin* as well as near-alikes such as *begin/biggin/begging*;

coming/cummin; jerkin/jerking; beholding/ beholden and coughing/coffin, the ‘first full and clear evidence’ of the velar to dental nasal change. Most commentators, of course, clearly distinguish the nasal phonemes involved, as Brightland and Gildon (1711: 47). Tuite observes (1726: 57) that ‘g after n at the end of a word is not pronounced, but gives a sharper sound to n, as *finding, long, strong, young, length*’, while Brightland and Gildon (1711: 15): ‘c and g are always sounded hard, unless (e) or (i) soften them; as *sing, singe, swing, swinge &c.*’ suggesting a contrast like [sɪŋ]/[sɪndʒ]. Tuite goes on to state that ‘yet g has a harder sound in *long-er, strong-er, young-er*’,⁸⁴ distinguishing syllable onset and coda (ng) variables. He specifically tells us that ‘g does not sharpen the sound of n in *shilling, stocking, Fleming*’, perhaps pointing to a syllable final [n], rather than [ŋ] in such items, and it is interesting that he selects these nominals as exemplifiers of the [ŋ]/[n] interchange, rather than present participle *ing* suffixes where one might expect the effects of allegro speech to have made the phenomenon more obvious. It is only in his *Table of Words the same, or nearly alike in sound* (1726: 80–108) that he includes pairs like: *coffin/coughing; coming/cummin* ‘a herb’; and, perhaps, *jerking* ‘a whipping’/*jerkin* ‘a garment’. Owen’s (1732: 102) list of *Words differently Wrote from what they are Pronounced* gives *cunnin* ‘cunning’.

The post-vocalic palatal and velar fricatives – [ç] and [x] – in items like *night, cough, brought* and the like – are generally seen in the period as having been effaced or, in cases like *cough, rough*, the subject of a [x] to [f] change, one already in operation in the Middle English period (Dobson 1968: 946–7), with Hammond even recording a respelling of *thoroughly* as (throuf-ly).⁸⁵ Under his discussion of ‘Some Consonants join’d together’ Greenwood (1711: 253) notes that (*gh*) ‘In some few Words ... is pronounc’d like double ff; as *Cough, trough, tough, rough, laugh*, are Sounded *Coff, troff, tuff, ruff, laff*’, perhaps suggesting a restricted lexical range for the change. But he goes on to say that although (*gh*) is ‘very seldom us’d: By some it is pronounc’d by the soft aspiration h: as in *Might, light, night, sigh, weigh, weight, though, thought, wrought, taught, &c.*’ showing that in some items at least there is a residual use of the velar/palatal fricatives. Mattaire’s views are less easy to interpret. He sees the ‘Aspiration h’ as giving consonants (1712: 16) ‘a sound either Guttural from the throat, or Sibilant’, while (*gh*) ‘In the end of a syllable ... loses its own sound [“a harder and somewhat guttural sound; as *ghost*”] to give more room to that of the guttural aspiration; as *sigh sighing*: and after a diphthong in some words it has a sound mixt of guttural and labial; as *laugh cough rough, laughter coughing roughness*’. Brightland and Gildon, however, only see the fricatives as occurring regularly in Northern regional contexts:

If when you are about to pronounce ... the hard (g), the Breath being more hardly compress’d, goes out by a more subtle Chink, as I may say, or Slit, that Sound is form’d which is express’d by (*gh*). The English seem formerly to have had this Sound in the Words, *Light, Night, Right, Daughter*, &c. but now they only retain the Spelling, entirely omitting the Sound; but the North Country people, especially the Scots almost retain it still, or rather substitute the Sound of (*h*) in its room. The Irish in their (*gh*) have exactly this Sound, as in *Logh, a Lake*, &c.

Observations like this are to be found too, not unexpectedly, in *The Irish Spelling Book* (1740: 35): ‘The Greek (χ) *Chi* ... is, by some pronounced hard, as in *Chorus*. But, by others as a double aspiration (*hh*), Thus *Buchánan*, is, in *South Britain*, sounded *Bukánan*; but, in *North Britain*, *Buhhánan*’. But there is no evidence in the period that velar and palatal fricatives are realized as their stop equivalents, the kind of process common today in working-class Scottish speech where items like *loch* and *Sauchiehall* are realized as [ɫɔk] and [sɔkɪɔ]. In keeping with the general observational ambiance of the early eighteenth century, commentators rarely, if ever, assign social comment to alternant fricative forms, certainly hardly ever seeing these as in any way stigmatized. Among the very few exceptions are the comments of Tuite under his discussion of the [ʃ] fricative, and even here we have the impression that the seriousness of the fault lies in the failure to observe morphophemic constraints (1726: 61):

’Tis too common a Fault of some, who affect an over and above nicety (forsooth) in speaking, to pronounce *sh*, in the beginning of a word before *r*, like *s*; and accordingly pronounce *shred*, *sred*; *shrill*, *srill*; *shrimp*, *srimp*; *shrink*, *srink*; *shrine*, *srine*; *shrub*, *srub*; *shrewd*, *srewd*; *Shrewsbury*, *Srewsbury*; *Shropshire*. *Sropsire*, &c. which is unreasonable, as to pronounce *sharp*, *sarp*; *shell*, *sell*; *shin*, *sin*; *shop*, *sop*; *shut*, *sut*. And moreover *sr* begins no word or syllable in English.

He also condemns what would appear to be a [tʃ] rendering for [ts] (1726: 67): ‘*Piazzas* is pronounc’d *piaches*, in the common English way of speaking; *piazzas* is an Italian word’.

Part II

1750–1800

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1

Background

1.1 Attitudes to pronunciation and the establishment of pronunciation norms

We have already seen in Part I (1.2) above how, for most of the first half of the eighteenth century, writers of all kinds of works relating to language rarely took a normative or prescriptive approach to the data they set out to describe. Any effect of Swift's interventions and suggestions for a Royal Academy (Read 1938) seem to have been short-lived and do not appear to have made any widespread impact on the mindset of contemporary grammarians in either England or (but with some reservations) in Scotland. It is true that, alongside a few others, the author of *The Many Advantages* (1724) takes a stand against 'imperfect language', but he, as well as luminaries like Watts, is prepared to stress the importance of 'Custom' against regulated pronunciation norms or standards. Indeed, the concept of a prescribed spoken standard is one that rarely achieves any major prominence at all in the early part of the century.

But between 1750 and 1800 (and even more so post-1800) there is a sea-change in the way linguistic usage is perceived to relate to criteria such as social status and place of geographic origin (the two often vitally interconnected) (Bailey 2003; Baugh and Cable 1991: 253–93; Leonard 1929; Sheldon 1938: 412–20; 1946; Wyld 1953: 14–23). Certainly by the 1780s and 1790s it is difficult to find writers dealing with pronunciation characteristics who do not address them in a judgemental, prescribing or attitudinal fashion. Precisely why such a shift in the treatment of pronunciation typology should occur is not entirely obvious, although societal changes – notably the rise of a monied, non-aristocratic middle class – must have played an important part (Smith 1984). The values of the late-eighteenth-century Enlightenment in England and Scotland emphasized the virtues of Improvement – notably Erasmus Darwin's views that competition laws brought a general amelioration of the human condition and that population growth was a cause for social advancement rather than Malthusian misery. Such perceptions reflected a view widely held in the period by philosophers, social and political commentators that a betterment of society was possible through the rational framework of science, education and hard work. Mary Wollstonecraft saw mankind's primary duty as

improving the world – ‘all will be right’ – with education, endeavour and critical analysis the tools for achieving such an end. The values of the past were set aside. It was the future and what it promised by way of improvement which held centre stage, especially in the late Enlightenment period. While John Locke saw economics as an activity governed by natural law and reason, Adam Smith saw in the profit motive ‘a desire for the bettering of our condition’; the entrepreneur was seen as the social improver, one of the best examples of which was Robert Owen’s management of the New Lanark Mills on the Clyde, where education was used as a tool for social engineering and social improvement.

The linguistic observers in this period in many ways reflect (as well as occasionally contradicting) the views of contemporary philosophers and economists. On the one hand, there is clearly a desire for improvement and betterment in native language use and description, the old Classical models being increasingly set aside. Linguistic improvement is itself seen as an adjunct to economic and social advance – Elphinston’s ‘Harmonised Lands’ – while the linguistic proclamations of the *Select Society* of Edinburgh go hand in hand with Adam Smith’s (1776) view that ‘opulence and freedom’ are ‘the two greatest blessings that men can possess’. Linguistic improvement was viewed as nurturing economic and political development and progress. Yet there is not much by way of concrete evidence in the period to suggest that linguistic improvement *per se* (other than as part of enhanced educational attainment) was considered as a means of alleviating the economic plight of the poorest in society. Few commentators on such issues are as outspoken as the Newcastle radical reformer Thomas Spence; commenting on the viability of his *New Alphabet* he states (1775: *Preface*): ‘So I cannot but think it possible such a method of spelling may take place, especially among the laborious part of the people, who generally cannot afford much time or expense in the educating of their children, and yet they would like to have them taught the necessary and useful arts of reading and writing’. Yet Thomas Bewick the engraver who made Spence’s *New Alphabet* system possible (Bewick 1862; Robinson 1887), although like Spence a liberal and radical whose workshop motto was *Veritas, Libertas, Bonum Publicum*, was no ordinary artisan and in many ways can be seen as an exemplar of Adam Smith’s ideal entrepreneur: ‘It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest’ (Brewer 1997: 513). Bewick became rich as well as famous, the cumulative earnings from his books, combined with income from his workshop’s job work, making him much wealthier than most skilled artisans. He calculated the net profit on the second volume of his *History of British Birds* at £1,312 on an expenditure of £600 in printing and paper costs. By 1810 he had several thousand pounds invested in government stock and a further £2,000 lent on mortgage to a local landowner. In 1827 he was able to transfer large sums of government stock to his children. His investment ledger is not that of an ordinary provincial engraver (Brewer 1997: 518). In many respects the two men (although they eventually came to blows) characterize the twin objectives of the late Enlightenment – ongoing, rational, boundless improvement coupled with an entrepreneurial system which promoted not only wealth, but well-being and a secure political constitution.⁸⁶

The Enlightenment gave birth to national as well as local bodies among whose functions was the regulation and categorization of scientific and political ideas (Crowley 1991: 1–13; Haas 1982; Leonard 1929; Milroy and Milroy 1985). At a local level, philosophical and debating societies were formed in many major cities of the kingdom, notably Glasgow, Edinburgh, Newcastle and Birmingham as well as in the Metropolis itself. In addition to the *Royal Society*, we find the establishment in London of the *Linnean Society* (1788) and the *Royal Institution* (1799). Provincial societies included *The Royal Society of Edinburgh* (1783), the *Royal Irish Academy* (1785) and the *Lunar Society* in Birmingham (1765). Yet despite the popularity and prestige of these mainly scientific societies, there is only a muted enthusiasm for the setting up of a regulatory body such as a British Academy (Emerson 1921) to promote a standard of linguistic propriety. Elphinston is perhaps the most prominent among those who support the establishment of such an overseeing institution, seeing excellent models in both French and Italian Academies, the former having ‘rendered France the admiration of the world’ (1786: 346). Indeed in his *Dedication to Propriety Ascertained in her Picture* (1786), he lavishly praises the King for ‘the institution of a British Academy ... by fixing English speech in English orthography to secure the unfading lustre of Truth, and the unfailling succession of a Horace, a Boileau, and a Pope’; where the ‘Truth’ is the ‘purest living practice’, something which can be ‘fixed’ for all time through the establishment of a suitable orthography. He singles out the Italian Academy in particular because it has ‘fixed the orthography beyond the power of change ... English orthography must pass like fiery trial. The obstinacy of Prescription must also give way, Etymology’s awe⁸⁷ must fly before her’ (1786: vi). So too does he extol the virtues of the French Academy,⁸⁸ summarizing its achievements in some detail, especially those involving orthographic innovation (1786: 342–3; Robertson 1910). As English is only a ‘harsh, rude barbarous jargon, a provincial gibberish’, he stresses the need for a ‘national establishment’ to restore and maintain its purity of expression. Not unexpectedly, too, a radical orthographic initiator like Joshua Steele sees a role for the setting up of some kind of regulatory body, although he eschews the notion of an Academy, *per se* (1775: xiii):

Some very useful alterations and additions might be made among the consonants, towards attaining a rational orthography. But I forebear to go further here, on this head, than just to throw out these hints, from whence it may be judged, that very great advantages might arise to the lingual and literary commence of the world, by a set of men sitting down, under some respectable authority, to reform the alphabet, so as to make it contain distinct elementary marks for expressing all the lingual sounds of the European languages at least; in doing which, the difficulty would be over-balanced by the great and general utility.

Yet the efficacy of academies in setting and maintaining standards of pronunciation or orthography is not universally recognised in this period. Although he is an advocate of ‘fixing a standard of the language, in order to prevent its future

corruption', Solomon Lowe is uncertain that an overarching authority would produce the desired result (1755: 11 *Footnote*):

An academy, or institution for this purpose, for aught I find from the higher powers, is what we have little reason to expect; how much soever it may have been desired (V. Addis. Spec. n. 135) though 'tis well known that Lewis the 14th of France, however infamous, as a prince, will be dear to the latest posterity, as a patron of learning. – And yet, such an institution might not answer the end. The ceremony and form which reigns in such assemblies, with the jealousies and disputes which arise in them from different systems and ways of thinking, have been found to defeat, in great measure, the intention of them; so that their works have gone heavily on, and with great interruption; and, after all, have balkt the public expectation.

Instead, he makes the customary appeal (recall Bewick's *Veritas, Libertas* motto) to what he considers to be the anti-institutional nature of the English race: 'So that the only method, adapted to the temper of the English, who love to pursue their speculations more at liberty, as well as with less parade, seems to be that of voluntary or occasional communications; where public spirited persons at their leisure, and agreeably to their taste, furnish intelligence to the undertakers of useful design'. A sentiment perhaps echoed in Elphinston's (uncustomary) modesty in his *Dedication to Propriety Ascertained in her Picture*: 'If a humble individual has presumed to attempt a task, hitherto held arduous for Academies, he hopes for pardon.'

While Sheridan sees the need for the establishment of an academic institution for language correction (1756: 368), 'The only scheme hitherto proposed for correcting, improving, and ascertaining our language, has been the institution of a society for that purpose', he is very conscious of the complexity of the task facing those attempting it (1762: 3):

They were deterred from that part of the work [orthoepy: CJ] by the immense difficulty of their undertaking; and as there has never been any publick encouragement to such a work, either by Societies, or Royal munificence (means which produced the regulation and refinement of their several tongues in neighbouring countries) there has been no one hardy enough to engage in the task.

Indeed, Sheridan is of the view that any establishment of a language society would be 'liable to innumerable objections'.⁸⁹ He feels, for instance, that there is no set of individuals sufficiently well trained to be members of such a society. Their lack of qualification could bring with it 'fixed and rooted errors' leading to the production of false grammatical rules. He objects to the invention of new alphabetic systems (which he feels any Society might well promote), and concludes that no single organization would be able to establish propriety of pronunciation, since this can only be garnered through an exposure to actual speech. Finally, like

Solomon Lowe (1755: 369), he is of the opinion that academies offend the English national character: 'the society would find it difficult to get their self raised authority, had it even the sanction of the highest powers, acknowledged by a stubborn free people, ever jealous of their rights'. Perhaps the most outspoken critic of linguistic regulatory schemes of all kinds was Joseph Priestly in his *Rudiments of English Grammar* (1761) and *A Course of Lectures: On the Theory of Language and Universal Grammar* (1762). Priestly denies that regulation either in the spoken or written form can have any effect in 'fixing' the language, and concludes (1761: 60) that the 'schemes of some still more modern wriers, to add something considerable to the perfection of the English language, in order to contribute to the permanency of it, cannot, according to the course of nature, produce any effect'. The 'slow and sure ... decisions of Time' are, for Priestly, the best and only satisfactory guarantors of linguistic usage and propriety, while the decisions of 'synods' are 'hasty and injudicious'. Usage and custom in the context of an ever-changing linguistic milieu are, for him, the main, and essentially non-judgemental, criteria for language description and use (1762: xviii): 'a language can never be properly fixed, till all the varieties with which it is used, have been held forth to public view, and the general preference of certain forms have been declared, by the *general practise* [*italics: CJ*] afterwards'.

1.2 Usage versus prescription

To fix two anchors to our floating language in order to keep it steady against the gates of caprice, and current of fashion.

Thomas Sheridan: *A General Dictionary of the English Language* (1780: 6)

Low as the state of written language is, that of the spoken is infinitely worse, nothing has been done even to render a right pronunciation.

Thomas Sheridan: *A General Dictionary of the English Language* (1780: 4)

Q. What does the English Grammar teach?

A. To speak and write English properly and truly.

Q. What is meant by properly and truly?

A. Speaking and writing as the best Speakers and Writers do.

John Carter: *A Practical English Grammar* (1773)

Sheridan's remarks well summarize the general attitude of many observers in the late eighteenth century. The language has 'gone to the dogs' in some way, with Sheridan, for whom 'nothing can be a greater national concern than the care of our language' (1756: 228), lamenting that 'the present state of things [is] almost insuperable' (1756: i). Indeed, Sheridan is among the first to highlight contrasting, socially evaluated pronunciations in the metropolis itself (1762: 30): 'in the very Metropolis two different modes of pronunciation prevail, by which the inhabitants of one part of the town, are distinguished from those of the other. One is current

in the city, and is called the cockney; the other at the court-end, and is called the polite pronunciation. As amongst these various dialects, one must have the preference, and become fashionable; it will of course fall to the lot of that which prevails at court, the source of fashions of all kinds'. Stigmatized pronunciations, he complains, are finding their way into the language of polite society: 'many pronunciations, which thirty or forty years ago were confined to the vulgar, are gradually gaining ground; and if something be not done to stop this growing evil, and fix a general standard at present, the English is likely to become a mere jargon, which everyone may pronounce as he pleases' (1756: 6). Not only this, but if a settled, unchanging standard is not arrived at, there will be a loss to posterity of the works of great writers. Without such a 'fixing' it will be impossible to prevent such a loss, since preservation 'can never be the case in a fluctuating language' (1756: viii); how many 'great British Heroes' have been lost to us, he asks, while those of Greece and Rome are still accessible 'preserved and embalmed in those ever living languages'. The concern is not just to see an avoidance of low-prestige pronunciation, but to establish a standard of propriety in pronunciation, a 'perpetual standard of pronunciation' which is somehow to be fixed, a major (positive) result of which will be the arresting of language change. The current prestige usage Sheridan sees as representing the acme of good taste: 'it is surely a point to be wished, that a permanent, and obvious standard ... should at some certain period be established; and, if possible, that period should be fixed upon, when probably they were in the greatest degree of perfection' (1756: 5).⁹⁰ From Sheridan's viewpoint, the current situation is dire, where 'even a tolerable speaker is a prodigy' and 'low as the state of the written language is, that of the spoken is infinitely worse; with regard to which, nothing has been done, even to render a right pronunciation' (1756: 3). This Irishman unselfconsciously claims that matters are made even worse by provincial speakers who, not only pronounce the language in an unacceptable fashion, but are even (and here he takes a swipe at contemporary Scottish and Irish writers of grammatical treatises⁹¹) encouraged to use their own regional speech variants (1756: 5):

The natives of Ireland, Scotland and Wales who speak English and are taught to read it, pronounce it differently, but each county in England has its particular dialect, which infects not only their speech, but their reading also.

Sheridan's commitment to see the establishment of 'one common tongue' both in Britain and among the English-speaking community abroad, means that he is particularly harsh in his judgements of regional pronunciations (1756: 216): 'persons born and bred in different and distant shires, could scarce anymore understand each others speech, than they could that of a foreigner', while 'The great difficulty of the English tongue lies in the pronunciation, an exactness in which, after all the pains they can take, is found to be unattainable, not only by foreigners, but Provincials (all British subjects, whether inhabitants of Scotland, Ireland, Wales, the several counties of England, or the city of London, who speak a corrupt dialect of the English tongue)' (1762: 2).

By late in the eighteenth century such condemnatory and normative views concerning what was perceived as vulgar or inappropriate usage were gaining ground among many observers, their criticisms and censure by no means restricted to regional 'deviations', but more and more to the usage of those who were seen as of a lower socioeconomic status, as witnessed by the observations of Charles Coote in his *Elements of the Grammar of the English Language* (1788: *Preface* iii):

Persons of vulgar breeding, instead of exhibiting any traces of improvement derived from the frequent hearing of such as excel in this respect, invariably pursue the same routine of barbarism and inaccuracy in their expression, neglectful of every opportunity of rectifying their taste in that particular.

Coote argues that even those in this group who have mastered reading and read the best authors fare little better in this regard: 'We have more reason to be surprised at the carelessness of such as have not only learned to read, but cultivate that pursuit as an interesting amusement; and yet, in spite of those opportunities which the perusal of literary productions cannot but afford for the improvement of their discourse, make little, if any, proficiency in this department.' Yet he is equally troubled by the lack of grammatical propriety among the artisan 'middleocrat' groups as well:

Among the middling ranks of life, grammar appears to be too much disregarded. Those who are occupied in trade or manufactures, are, for the most part, so intent upon the consideration of Things, that they regard words as almost unworthy of attention, being satisfied with rendering themselves barely intelligible.

While he agrees that 'the learned professions' are somewhat less blameworthy in this respect, the fact that they have had their initial linguistic training ('improperly') in Latin grammar means that they are 'too much inclined to torture the English language into a compliance with the Roman idiom' (1788: *Preface* v). And despite the fact that he wants to model his grammar on 'the best established practice of the best speakers and writers', such are not necessarily always to be found among the upper echelons of society (1788: *Preface* v): 'Persons of rank and fashion, though they generally speak with ease and elegance, are not remarkable for being models of accurate expression.' Recall too how Sheridan bemoans the loss of the high standards of usage he claimed existed during the reign of Queen Anne:⁹² 'from that time the regard formerly paid to pronunciation has been gradually declining; so that now the greatest improprieties in that point are to be found among people of fashion' (1780: *Preface* 6).

In his *Propriety Ascertained in her Picture* (1786), James Elphinston everywhere extols the virtues of 'proper pronunciation'. His orthographic inventiveness is primarily aimed at the representation and, ultimately, the preservation of the pronunciation habits of the 'best speakers'. His aim is to provide the 'proper image of proper sound', so that 'the purity of our speech be preserved in the truth of her picture'; 'the purest living practice' must form the basis of his reformed orthography.

His ‘mission statement’ captures all the contemporary concerns with linguistic purity, its current level of attainment, and its fixing in this state (in this case through orthographic convention) for all time and without change (1786: *Preface ix*):

It becomes the duty of man to perform his part ... in the ascertainment of human speech; that of first investigating from the purest living practice, the whole system of real or audible propriety in his language; and then representing that propriety, by the most expressive system of literary symbols; so to picture speech, as nearly as possible, in the exact state of perfection she may have attained, so that he may propagate abroad, as well as perpetuate at home, the purity he has been at length so happy to compass, may secure alike the purified language from relapsing into barbarity, and from degenerating into corruption; may raise her to her just rank among polished languages, while he renders her the worthy vehicle of his nations wisdom and attainments, to remotest age.

Elphinston is adamant that it is the duty of the grammarian, once a recognised level of excellence has been achieved, to arrest language change: when language ‘has achieved her Summit, it then becomes [man’s] province to preclude, if he can, further change; nor can such preclusion be effected but by fixing her in Orthography’ (1786: *Preface x*). He rejects out of hand any claim by others that language is ‘all chance and caprice’ – ‘Directly the reverse is Language: ... Opposite again to vulgar idea, so steady is living language. Once matured by Time, and deposited in Orthography, that it afterwards admits very little variation: witness the Latin tongue, from the days of Augustus; and the French, from the reign of Lewis XIV’ (1786: *Preface xi*). For Elphinston, corruption of pronunciation can be placed at the door of orthographic failure (1786: 94):

Shall London who talks fairly as naturally, of her *Bednal-green*, and *Bedlam*-hospital, pretend with her pen to exhibit either, in the semblance of *Bethnal* or of *Bethlehem*? Can the once pious Capital persist in profaning a name, which she questionless meant to honour? ... Yet nothing militates against the London-suburb *Rodderhith*, though the rif-raf do name it *Redrif*.

Buchanan’s *British Grammar* (1762) extols in its *Dedication* the virtues of ‘enditing elegantly’, praising the ‘Manly Diction of Britain’, and dismissing ‘the Corrupt Dialects of the several Counties of England’. He sees his work’s principal task as ‘perfecting the Flower of our Youth in speaking and writing in that language, in which alone they are to serve their King and Country, and become the Mouths of the People’ (1762: *Preface xxxvi*). Perhaps we might interpret his ‘How dear then ought the Honour of the English language to be to every Briton’ (1762: *Preface xxxiv*) as an expression of a thinly disguised political purpose to use language as a cement binding the two Britains into a single linguistic/economic community – Elphinston’s ‘Harmonised Lands’.⁹³ The close connection between a universal linguistic propriety and a furtherance of political – and especially economic – interests between the two parts of the kingdom is perhaps well illustrated by the

appearance in Edinburgh in 1761 of a publication by one of its most influential Debating Clubs – the *Select Society* – of a special set of Regulations ‘for promoting the reading and speaking of the English Language in Scotland’ (Jones 1995: 9):

As the intercourse between this part of GREAT-BRITAIN and the Capital daily increases, both on account of business and amusement, and must still go on increasing, gentlemen educated in SCOTLAND have long been sensible of the disadvantages under which they labour, from their imperfect knowledge of the ENGLISH TONGUE, and the impropriety with which they speak it.

Experience hath convinced SCOTSMEN, that it is not impossible for persons born and educated in this country, to acquire such knowledge of the ENGLISH TONGUE, as to write it with some tolerable purity.

But, with regard to the other point, that of speaking with propriety, as little has been hitherto attempted, it has generally been taken for granted, that there was no prospect of attempting any thing with a probability of success; though, at the same time, it is allowed to be an accomplishment, more important, and more universally useful, than the former.

The *Select Society* included among its members such Scottish Enlightenment notables as Hugh Blair, William Robertson, John Adams, Adam Ferguson and Lord Alemoor⁹⁴ This Edinburgh group may have come closest to the realization of a scheme to establish a Scottish Academy in the image of that proposed by Swift (in his letter to Lord Oxford) for the ‘refinement and establishment of the English Language’ (Sheridan 1780: 229). The *Select Society’s* aim was to ensure that ‘a proper number of persons from ENGLAND, duly qualified to instruct gentlemen in the knowledge of the ENGLISH TONGUE, the manner of pronouncing it with purity, and the art of public speaking, were settled in EDINBURGH: And if, at the same time, a proper number of masters, from the same country, duly qualified for teaching children the reading of ENGLISH, should open schools in EDINBURGH for that purpose.’⁹⁵

But linguistic regulation was not always as authority-driven or rule-governed in the late eighteenth century as the picture painted by the likes of a major figure like Sheridan would suggest. It is interesting to note, for instance, how Bell (1769), while agreeing that the English language ‘is of all other living languages, susceptible of the greatest propriety, regularity, brevity and energy of expression’, is in his day ‘at the height of its propriety and elegance’ (1769: 7–8), still feels able to state that many of the prescriptions he will provide stem from his own personal preferences (1769: 6):

If, therefore, my endeavours in prescribing rules, either according to my own judgement, or that of others, be conducive to regulate and methodize the language, in order to bring it nearer to a standard of perfection, I presume that, instead of condemning my freedom in that respect, they will own it was not only doing them justice, but doing a service to the public.

Kenrick’s approach to matters prescriptive is somewhat more subtle and broad-minded than many of his contemporaries. It is true that he advocates, as we shall

see, a Metropolitan London pronunciation standard, yet he is also very conscious of the relativity of the perception as to what constitutes the best pronunciation (1784: 3): ‘A very little acquaintance with the dialects, will serve to prove that sounds, which appear very uncouth and barbarous to some people, are easily uttered and pleasant enough to the ear of others’.⁹⁶ And we can recall too here his famous *footnote* (1784: 56):

By being properly pronounced, I would be always understood to mean, pronounced agreeable to the general practice of men of letters and polite speakers in the Metropolis; which is all the standard of propriety I concern myself about, respecting the arbitrary pronunciation or quality of sound given to monosyllables. Setting this caution aside, I know of no rule to determine, whether the provincial method of pronouncing such words [*put, pull, pool*: C] be not as proper as that of the Metropolis.

Kenrick seems to propose a ‘middle way’ between the excesses of mindless prescription and the ‘caprice’ of usage: ‘We cannot indeed new model our language, but we need not aggravate its imperfections. Nothing has contributed more to the adulteration of living language, than the too extensive acceptance of Horace’s rules in favour of custom’,⁹⁷ while ‘We ought by no means to shut the door against the improvement of our language; but it were well that some criteria were established between improvements and innovation’. He seems willing to strike a balance between the importance for speech regulation of the facts provided by usage and custom as well as the rule systems which underlie and underpin them (1784: 9): ‘Custom is undoubtedly the rule of present practice; but there would be no end in following the variations daily introduced by caprice. Alternations may sometimes be useful, may be necessary; but they should be made in a manner conformable to the genius and construction of the language’. Indeed, he stresses the strong interdependence of rule system and usage, giving the latter an inherently systematic status often denied by some of his contemporaries. Following on from his observations on the complexities of stress placement in native and foreign words (assigned through a torturous combination of factors ranging from vowel ‘length’ to syllable structure) he concludes (1784: 18):

It may be conceived that languages are not improved in such regular and rational methods; seeming to be governed more by accident and caprice. But necessity and convenience insensibly operate in practice to effect what theory deduces from a studied plan. Systems are founded on facts much oftner than facts on systems. There are many customs, thought to be the effect of caprice, that are the work of nature; which always operate with a truly philosophical and unerring regularity. It is indeed an easy way, that blockheads have got, of solving all difficulties by referring to the criterion of custom; but though custom be admitted the arbiter of speech, caprice is by no means the arbiter of custom.

For Kenrick, it is ‘distinct articulation’ which lies behind propriety of pronunciation – subtlety, diversity and niceties of fine distinctions (even those of ‘the best speakers’)

only serve to hinder this, for him, paramount aim of good pronunciation (1784: 55):

Thus, although there be more clearness and precision in the articulation of polished tongues, notwithstanding their increase of vowels, than in the imperfect guttural languages; yet the nicer vocal distinctions, affected by fine speakers, tend not only to render their language enervate but indistinct. In the volubility of conversation, the vowels are frequently confounded with each other, by the best speakers. Nothing, therefore, can tend more to correct the present errors, establish a criterion, and make future improvements in speech, than the pointing out the natural distinctions, and our endeavour to keep their number as small, and their quality as precise as possible.⁹⁸

But, in the end, Kenrick seems to be content, especially in those instances where neither custom nor regulation seems to be well-motivated, to give the benefit of the doubt to the former (1784: 57):

Bull and *trull*, *could* and *cud*, *good* and *blood*, being no rhimes in London; where they have very different and distinct quality of sound. I have said that this sound is only a contraction of the following long sound; by which it may be better distinguished; though I know of no rules whatever that determine polite speakers to give this sound to some words, and the former sound to others of the like orthography. If appears to be the effect of capricious and arbitrary custom, like that of annexing the aspirated *h* to some words, and not to others of like spelling; which is done, as well in English as in other languages, merely according to custom; has its local distinctions, and is, I believe, to be learned only by attention to practice.

Even at the end of the eighteenth century there are writers who profess a less than heavily normative approach in their description of contemporary pronunciation. The anonymous author of *A Vocabulary of Such Words in the English Language as are of Dubious or Unsettled Pronunciation* (1797), while following Sheridan as his norm and mentor ('it would have been fortunate had the publick determined to elect him dictator'), is often more inclined than the great Irishman to stress the 'unsettled' state of pronunciation, rather than settle on one particular variety: 'To bring into one view the several ways, in which a number of words, in the English language, are pronounced by good speakers, our best orthoepists, is the object of the following work', while, 'Let it not be thought, however, that I mean to advance arrogant opinions of pronunciation; in a case of such difficulty, where men of the first talents disagree, far be it for me to presume to decide; but the seeming necessity of giving a preference has often led me to declare my sentiments' (1797: Preface i–iii). With reference to the contrasting pronunciations provided by Walker⁹⁹ and Sheridan for the item ARCHITECTURE, he comments (1797: 6): 'Though [Mr. Walker] is pleased to regard Mr. Sheridan's pronunciation in this instance as vulgar, yet as the design of this work is not so much to point out what *should be* as

what is the prevailing accent, I am led to prefer the former as the most usual'. This concern for current usage, and even for changes in propriety, can be seen in many of his entries, not least in that for ENSURE. Commenting on Sheridan's pronunciation, he states: 'In sounding the *e* in the first syllable like *i*, there is little doubt that such was the best usage at the time he wrote; but as I take it the pronunciation of this word is much changed of late, I have followed Mr. Walker'. In his *A Plain and Complete Grammar of the English Language* (1772), Bayly too stresses the importance of language change and viscosity: 'living language, which is subject to continual variation', and he is very aware of the factors, articulatory and social, which can bring it about (1772: 9–10):

It may seem to be a very just maxim in theory, that each letter should always preserve its own sound; but in practice this has never been the case in any language: Natural defects in the organs of speech, or a misuse of them; an affectation of what is falsely called a fine and polite way of speaking; a short and quick, or its opposite extreme, a heavy, drawling, whining, canting pronunciation, these and many other methods contribute to a change of sound between the letters.

And his attitude to regional variation and change is everywhere non-condemnatory, indeed, by many eighteenth-century standards, it is quite enlightened (1772: 6):

People inhabiting different parts of a nation are apt to differ in their manner of speaking and writing ... Every language by the interchange of sounds, which inavoidably happen in speech, will, without more wisdom to prevent it than human, have its differences in writing, and consequently in its dialects.

Even Nares, that stickler for analogy and reason as the twin foundations of orthoepy, is content to allow his readers some leeway in judging what constitutes good pronunciation (1784: xxiii): 'There is not perhaps any person who has not, in his own mode of pronunciation, some deviations from general and even from better usage, which have constantly missed correction by escaping suspicion. It would be highly arrogant in any author to set up his own pronunciation as the invariable and standard.' Indeed, he seems quite content to let his personal recommendations be overridden: 'What then has the Author of this Treatise performed? He has presented to the Public the opinion of an individual, namely, his own, to be discussed, and controverted, if occasion be, at the Pleasure of his Readers'.

It is surely Peter Walkden Fogg (1796: 168–9) who, at the conclusion of a fascinating section on regional pronunciation variants, best points to the pitfalls awaiting those intent on 'correcting' their mistakes and falling into the trap of an overzealous accommodation to some supposed presumably social (as well as regional) norm:

Those who speak provincially are apt to mispronounce excepted words [for instance in the case of the *ea* graph, *bear*; as *bair*; *break*, *braik*; *great*, *grait* as *meet*,

cheap, tsheep, etc.: CJ], and the less extensive general exceptions, in reading, though perhaps they observe them in conversation. The reason is plain. They are sensible of the deficiency of their pronunciation, but uncertain as to the particulars in which it consists. As a remedy they fix upon general sounds for their letters in certain positions, and to these they too tenaciously adhere. To refer them for the propriety of exceptions to common discourse is vain; for they find in general, the farther they depart from their common discourse, the purer their English. When an exception is once adopted by them they extend it too generally, and draw new mistakes from it. Causes of this kind, especially too strict an adherence to what has become superantiquated, seem to have formed the greatest part of our dialects. Let him who would polish his pronunciation be very attentive to these remarks; for, as, without abiding by the regular sound of letters, when that is right, his discourse will appear vulgar; so, and much more, without complying with established exceptions, will it seem unsufferably stiff, affected, and even senseless.

1.3 Setting a standard: *Il più bel fior ne coglie*

We have tried to demonstrate that the reputation of the eighteenth-century grammatical tradition as unbendingly normative, regulatory and prescriptive is undeserved. We have seen, for instance, how in particular in the early part of the century, there was a general reluctance to accept either the establishment of, or the norms set by language academies. The Petracchian motto of the *Accademia della Crusca* fell on relatively infertile soil in Britain, at least in England. Even by late in the eighteenth century it is far from the case that all commentators embrace an unreservedly normative view on pronunciation usage. There are those, of course, who take a condemnatory stance over what they see as vulgarisms among all classes in society, yet there are many others who accept the respectability of custom and usage and who hold back from overtly prescriptive recommendation. While language ‘fixing’ has support among those who see the current state of their pronunciation as ideal, there are others who recognise that language change and innovation is ongoing and probably unstoppable. Even regional pronunciations are treated by some observers as nothing more than linguistic varieties. Indeed, there is hardly anything in the eighteenth century to rival the output characteristic of many writers in the following century, where we find explicitly normative and condemnatory productions such as *Common Blunders in Speech and How to Avoid Them* (1884), *Errors of Pronunciation and Improper Expressions* (1817), *Vulgarities of Speech Corrected* (1826), *Popular Errors of Grammar Particularly of Pronunciation Familiarly Pointed Out* (1830), *Everyday Blunders in Speaking* (1866), *The Vulgarities and Improprieties of the English Language* (1833), *Vulgarisms and Other Errors of Speech* (1868) and many others like them.

Nonetheless, in an attempt to eliminate what was seen by many late-eighteenth-century observers as an undesirable regional and social heterogeneity of pronunciation, proposals surfaced for the recognition and even the establishment of a form of pronunciation which could be seen as a (national and international)

prestige target or standard. Such a proposal was advanced by several observers, notably, as we have already seen, by Thomas Sheridan (1780: 5): ‘It must be obvious, that in order to spread abroad the English language as a living tongue, and to facilitate the attainment of its speech, it is necessary in the first place that a standard of pronunciation be established, and a method of acquiring a just one should be laid open’ and ‘it is surely a point to be wished, that a permanent and obvious standard be established’. Among the advantages accruing from the establishment of such a standard, Sheridan claims, would be the facilitation the teaching of English to schoolchildren and, more importantly, a loss of regional diversification: ‘to have one common tongue’. All members of society could have an ‘improved’ linguistic usage, not just a few; and foreigners would not longer feel ‘inhospitably shut out’. Presumably what Sheridan intends by the ‘establishment’ of a standard in no way infers that a prestige model did not already exist, rather that formal recognition has to be accorded such a model. In addition, it is his concern – and that of other observers – that not only should there be a formal endorsement of such a prestigious pronunciation, but its characteristics should be identified, a means of proselytizing them devised with the ultimate aim of ‘freezing’ the result for all time, thus nullifying the effects of language change, a phenomenon still regarded by many as retrogressive. But what of the prestige model itself? Which members of society could be identified as being associated with it and what advantages might accrue to those individuals who successfully accommodated to it? In several respects Sheridan approaches the problem of prestige model selection on a very non-late Enlightenment way, that is, by appealing to the past, in particular to the pronunciation of ‘the Augustan age of England, I mean during the reign of Queen Anne, when English was the language spoken at court [Boyle 1792]; and when the same attention was paid to propriety of pronunciation, as that of French at the Court of Versailles. This produced a uniformity in that article in all the polite circles; and a gentleman or lady would have been as much ashamed of a wrong pronunciation then, as persons of liberal education would now be of misspelling words’ (1780: *Preface* v). But while it has, he argues, been more or less all downhill from that time onwards, he claims that all is not beyond salvation, suggesting that despite intervening changes the ‘highest state of perfection’ of that very court English could be re-created: ‘Nor is it yet too late to recover it in that very state’.

Such comments place Sheridan in a backward-looking camp, one which sees the acme of any pronunciation standard being set (within rigorous constraints) by the higher echelons of society and, in particular, by the Court (1762: 17):

The standard of pronunciation is affixed to the Custom which prevails amongst people of education at Court, so that none but such are born and bred up amongst them, or have constant opportunity of conversing with them, and that too in early years, before the pliant organs have taken their bent, can be said to be masters of it; And these are but few compared to the millions who speak the same tongue, and cannot have such opportunity.

Indeed, he claims that this Court Standard arises from some kind of linguistic ability, inherent in such speakers, to arrive at a refined usage through the elimination of phonetic features which offend some kind of 'ease of articulation' principle. The 'settling of pronunciation' he argues (1762: 34):

Which province, by the power of fashion, fell to the lot of people of education at Court: who having no bias of particular or partial rule to misguide them, were governed by one general rule, the very best by which the pronunciation of any tongue could be regulated, which was that of gradually changing the sounds of words from those which were most difficult, to those which were most easily uttered by the organs of speech.

Yet, despite the fact that 'the more universally ... a language is well and uniformly spoken by any people, the more likely it is to acquire permanence as to pronunciation' (1756: 243), he admits of the possibility (indeed, the certainty) of language change 'if the natural mutability of things were a sufficient argument to deter us from endeavouring to fix them, the same would hold good in regard to everything else as well as language, and we might sit down for ever in a state of inaction' (1762: 258). But change can only be permitted to the standard under very limited sets of conditions (1762: 33–4):

When a certain standard of pronunciation is in everyone's hands, men in general will find the benefit of it too great readily to admit of any alteration but such as shall appear absolutely necessary. Thus will our language be resumed from that worst of evils, a continual fluctuation in which state it has been from the time of the Saxons to this day.

He is forced to admit of the force of innovation and change in language, but to allow it only when it serves the purposes of 'improvement' (1761: 33): 'For tho' in a living tongue changes are not to be prevented, whilst any plausible colour can be given that such changes are made for the better', 'And such alterations only, as shall be judged by common suffrage necessary to promote order and regularity in our tongue, will, by common suffrage, be admitted'. It would seem, though, that his appeal to 'common suffrage' is made not in any Horacian mindset, but to those who he sees as suitable 'arbiters' of pronunciation norms. On occasion, his stance is somewhat uncertain on the 'standard' variety issue, and he infers that not only are there perhaps different typologies of standards, but that some of those which might be regarded as prestige norms, are themselves tainted (1780: *Preface* iv–v):

But, it may be asked, what right the Author has to assume to himself the office of a legislator on this occasion, and what his pretensions are to establish an absolute standard, in an article, which is far from being in a settled state among any class of people? It is well known, that there is a great diversity of pronunciation of the same words, not only in individuals, but in whole bodies of men.

That there are some adopted by the universities; some prevail at the bar, and some in the senate-house. That the propriety of these several pronunciations is controverted by the several persons who have adopted them; and what right has this self-appointed judge to determine which is the best?

Certainly, Sheridan is not sparing in his criticisms of some areas of the Establishment where one might expect to hear the standard pronunciation used (1756: 249): ‘we may hear English spoken in the churches in as many various dialects as there are shires in this island; and there may be as many singularities in particular words as there are individuals of that order’. His criticisms of the language of the Forth Estate are total (1756: 263–4): ‘the great source of all corruptions in our language’.

It can hardly be surprising, given the overtly normative nature of his mission statement in the *Frontispiece* to his *A Critical Pronouncing Dictionary* (1791), that John Walker should promote the notion of a ‘correct’ language standard at the expense of any deference to custom and usage. Walker fully appreciates the difficulties of fixing a standard pronunciation, citing, among other complicating factors, that ‘the fluctuation of pronunciation’ is ‘so great’, that pronunciation will probably change after a few years and that even different speakers of equal reputation will pronounce some words differently. Yet, he argues, such factors can be greatly exaggerated, as he admits to only minor pronunciation change (in particular, the lowering of the stressed vowels in items like *merchant* and *servant*) and even these could have been avoided had sufficient effort been made to ‘fix’ the language in previous generations. Linguistic variation across time he treats as is if were some kind of Original Sin: ‘Indeed a degree of versatility seems involved in the very nature of language, and is one of those evils left by Providence for man to correct’, a kind of ‘caprice’ which the essentially Enlightened outlook will quell by an appeal to Reason: ‘a love of order, and the utility of regularity, will always incline him to confine this versatility within as narrow bounds as possible’ (1791: *Preface*: vi *footnote*).¹⁰⁰ A ‘diversity of pronunciation, which is at once so ridiculous and embarrassing’, whose ‘impropriety is gross and palpable’ and which ‘disgust every ear not accustomed to them’ may well be cured by the logical application of analogical and other rule systems. Even so, such an enlightened endeavour can be turned on its head by what he at least infers is the school of ‘caprice’ and linguistic anarchy which espouses Horace’s (for Walker, perhaps notorious) maxim that *usus/Quem penes arbitrium est, & jus et norma loquendi*. Walker does not seek to deny that ‘Custom is the sovereign arbiter of language. Far from it, I acknowledge its authority, and I know there is no appeal from it’. Yet this acceptance is grudging and the vocabulary used to describe it hardly commendatory: ‘I wish only to dispute where this arbiter has not decided; for if once Custom speaks out, however absurdly, I sincerely acquiesce with its sentence’ (1791: *Preface* vii). Walker is unhappy too with the two extremes of view as to what constitutes Custom (he never uses the term ‘usage’ in this context, it seems) – on the one hand, it is the usage of the majority of speakers, ‘whether good or bad’, on the other ‘Is it the majority of the studious in schools and colleges, with those of the learned professions, or of

those who, from their elevated birth or station, give laws to the refinements and elegancies of a court?' While the College, the Court and the Bar he claims are worthy of emulation as representatives of a 'standard', neither on its own can be considered its single and sole manifestation, each having sets of drawbacks. The Court is often a source of 'caprice': 'The polished attendants on a throne are as apt to depart from simplicity of language as in dress and manners; and novelty, instead of custom, is too often the *jus et norma loquendi* of a court'. On the other hand, the usage of the majority of speakers has 'never been asserted by the most sanguine abettors of its authority'. Walker's prescription¹⁰¹ for a standard pronunciation model is presented as an amalgam of all three definitions of what constitutes Custom (1791: *Preface* vii–viii):

Perhaps an attentive observation will lead us to conclude, that the usage, which ought to direct us, is neither of these we have been enumerating, taken singly, but a sort of compound ratio of all three. Neither a finical pronunciation of the court, nor a pedantic Græcism of the schools, will be denominated respectable usage, till a certain number of the general mass of speakers have acknowledged them; nor will a multitude of common speakers authorise any pronunciation which is reprobated by the learned and polite.

Even then there will be disputes concerning 'proper' pronunciation, disputes which can be resolved, he claims, by way of unconcealed self-advertisement, by reference to 'an exhibition of the opinions of Orthoepists about the sound of words', a stratagem which 'always appeared to me a very rational method of determining what is custom'.

Many observers make no more than very general remarks concerning what might form the basis of a national standard of pronunciation (William Smith's (1795: iv) 'according to the approved method of the best speakers'; James Buchanan's (1757: ix): 'after the manner of the best speakers'), unless also to recommend some kind of London model; recall how Buchanan claims that those who use his work 'may in a short time pronounce as properly and intelligibly as if they had been born and bred in London' (1757: xv *footnote*). James Beattie, on the premise that the finest language will reside where the highest levels of culture prevail, is even inclined to widen the geographical catchment area a little (1788: 121): 'The language ... of the most learned and polite persons in London, and the neighbouring Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, ought to be accounted the standard of the English tongue, especially in accent and pronunciation.' Typical of the London prestige school is William Johnston (1764: 1): 'The standard of these sounds which we would all along keep in view, is that pronunciation of them, in most general use, amongst the people of elegance and taste of the English nation, especially of London'. For Elphinston too 'LONDONS language' is in 'prime polish' and some of its speakers, at any rate, can be seen as speaking his *English Truth*: 'such members ov dhe Metroppolis, az hav had dhe good-fortune, (hweddher from delliate edducacion, or from incorruptibel taste) ov keeping equally free from grocenes, and from affectation; hav doutles a chance, if stil but a chance, for

purity' (1786: xiii).¹⁰² Yet it is surely Walker who holds up the London standard as *non pareil* and whose support for it might well be based on the fact that it is perceived as such beyond its geographical confines (1791: xiii):

For though the pronunciation of London is certainly erroneous in many words, yet, upon being compared with that in any other place, it is undoubtedly the best: that is, not only the best by courtesy, and because it happens to be the pronunciation of the capital, but best by a better title; that of being more generally received: or, in other words, though the people of London are erroneous in the pronunciation of many words, the inhabitants of every other place are erroneous in many more.

Nevertheless, his contempt for what he considers London's own linguistic failings is palpable, and for him there is no vulgarism worse than a London vulgarism (1791: xiv):

But though the inhabitants of London have this manifest advantage over all the other inhabitants of the island, they have the disadvantage of being more disgraced by their peculiarities than any other people. The grand difference between the metropolis and the provinces is, that people of education in London are free from all the vices of the vulgar; but the best educated people in the provinces, if constantly resident there, are sure to be strongly tinctured with the dialect of the country in which they live. Hence it is, that the vulgar pronunciation of London, though not half so erroneous as that of Scotland, Ireland, or any of the provinces, is, to a person of correct taste, a thousand times more offensive and disgusting.

Needless to say, such Metropolitan-centred prejudices were vigorously contested by language commentators from the 'provinces' and especially those writing in and from Scotland.¹⁰³

In the late Enlightenment period it is perhaps a little odd to find so much official deference to the standards of pronunciation of those classes of individuals who belong to such highly elevated social standing as the Court, the Pulpit and the Bar. Not only was this an era of considerable political and social change, much of it of a radical nature, but one where a new social class was emerging, one which was not reliant upon the old measures of wealth, like land inheritance, formal title or birthright, but one which was based increasingly on the generation of wealth through commerce and industry. The rise of such a new 'middle' class – the *middleocrats* – brought with it an attitude to wealth which was one of (often ostentatious) display, together with vastly enhanced opportunity for social mobility. A social group which was becoming assertive and aggressive in its socioeconomic aims was coming to prominence. In its turn, this led to a change in the self-perception of many in the lower classes, leading to 'uppishness' – 'the world turned upside down' (Smith 1984; Corfield 1984). The *Elementa Anglicana* by Peter Walkenden Fogg (published in two volumes at Stockport in 1792 and 1796) seems

to be one of the few works in this period which overtly reflects such societal innovations. Fogg appears to be concerned especially to see due regard given to usage itself and not necessarily to one associated with the usual suspects of the Court, Bar and Pulpit. Recognising 'the difficulty and incertitude of pronunciation. So fleeting, so evanescent are sounds; so easily do they glide, in their transmission, from less to greater aberrations', Fogg still sees a need for some kind of rule system for pronunciation norms: 'some inveigh against all exactness in speaking; and, though professing to be scholars, never think of rules of pronunciation. Could such a doctrine obtain general assent, there would soon be an end of all extensive colloquial intercourse; and new languages would be springing up by dozens a century' (1796: 164). He rejects orthographic-based rules – presumably like those of John Jones – 'the pronunciation being adapted to the orthography'. But, he asserts: 'This is reversing the order of things. Letters are to be considered as merely the instruments of speech; or as signs by which it can be transmitted. To adjust then the sound to the manner of writing appears like adjusting the country to the map, the machine to the model, or the meaning to the expression'.

Fogg gives a detailed discussion of the standards proposed by Quintillian 'reason, antiquity, authority, custom'. He rejects each of these in turn; *Antiquity* because 'pronunciation being improvable, and what is in mode being more generally acceptable, and more easily understood'. *Authority* 'is better ... though something more than the authority of a single great name is desirable'. *Reason*, he claims, is a useful arbiter only in very limited circumstances, such that unstressed syllables are to be considered 'unemphatical', while 'words ... that from harshness offend the ear, or from awkward combinations pass with difficulty over the oral organs are to be altered'. For Fogg, 'the best regulator is CUSTOM', which he defines as:

Not the custom of those who are totally void of care or elegance; nor of those who are ever hunting after modish innovations; but of that middle class of men who unite the advantages of learning, good sense, and access to polite company.

He is unimpressed by the pronunciation models presented by the Court,¹⁰⁴ Pulpit and Stage¹⁰⁵ and his reservations are worth citing in full (1796: *Dissertation VII* 166).

The court-dialect is always held up as the model of pronunciation: the fashion of language like that of dress certainly originates there. But fashion is ever liable to extremes; and in language as in dress it may be prudent not to be totally behind the mode, nor with the very first in it. Next to the court, the stage must be allowed the resort of polished expression; and hither we have all access. Where it errs it will be too modish. The bread of actors depends on applause; but the middle, modest, unassuming path does not lead to applause though it may to esteem. The bar too exhibits the customary pronunciation, and perhaps most justly of all.¹⁰⁶ The pulpit is the most accessible and frequent place of

public discourse, but, unfortunately, and culpably, it is the least to be relied on. Preachers, I could name, who attend to all the justness and all the graces of delivery. But this will not justify a general recommendation of orators by whom every absurd, every antiquated, and every vulgar form is, at one time or other, authorized. Happily they appear to be improving; and as the theory of pronunciation becomes more fixed, and more obvious, they probably may attain that decent uniformity, that euphony, and grace, which will make them proper models for the middle and inferior orders.

It is important to recognise Fogg's perception that a new model for pronunciation-norms was now seen as stemming from 'that middle class of men who unite the advantages of learning, good sense, and access to polite company', reflecting, perhaps for the first time, the importance being accorded to the usage of the emerging middle class of speaker – an individual who was neither very rich (as the recipient of inherited wealth) nor yet too poor to exclude indulging in the pleasures of a cultured society. The habits and tastes of such an individual can perhaps be seen from the diaries of Anna Larpent (1773–1828), a woman from a moderately wealthy (but non-aristocratic) family. She frequented the Ranelagh Pleasure Gardens, regularly attended Drury Lane and other theatres and was to be seen at many of the important Fine Art exhibitions in the capital, notably the Royal Academy and the Shakespeare Gallery. Indeed, she was an individual who enjoyed most the company of intelligent and clever people (recall Walker's 'people of education in London'), rather than that of the genteel and noble (Brewer 1997: 56–8). It was perhaps the linguistic characteristics of this kind of speaker which were coming to be regarded as constituting the prestige norm in the Capital itself as well as its equivalent among similar classes of individuals in large provincial centres such as Edinburgh, Newcastle and Birmingham. However, we perhaps see evidence of Defoe's (1705) social distinction between 'the middle sort who do well' and 'the working Trades, who labour hard, but feel no want' (quoted in Smith 1984: 46) by recalling Coote's (1788: iv) observation that some of this 'middle class of men' are, late in the eighteenth century, still beyond the linguistic pale:¹⁰⁷

Among the middling ranks of life, grammar appears to be too much disregarded. Those who are occupied in trade and manufactures are, for the most part, so intent upon the consideration of *Things*, that they regard *Words* as almost unworthy of attention, being satisfied with rendering themselves barely intelligible.

2

Sound/Symbol Representations

Mansuram rudibus vocem signare figuris
Lucan

2.1 Spelling change: a means to the preservation of linguistic propriety

The concern to invent and thereafter establish an orthographic system more able to 'paint' actual pronunciation than the inherited model was one which, as we have seen, was active and ongoing throughout the first half of the eighteenth century. The problems faced by the schoolmaster in trying to teach pronunciation through the 'stumbling block' of the standard spelling system is nicely captured by Solomon Lowe (1755: 3): '*ea in leaf is the common sound of this diphthong; yet, in heart, it sounds like a; in head, like e, &c. Which is much the same as to tell him [the student] (and inculcate it also) one minute, that the paper (this book is printed upon) is white; and, the next minute, that it is red; the minute after that it is green; and then yellow, and blue, &c.*'¹⁰⁸ In the early part of the century, methods employed to achieve a closer match between sound and symbol ranged across the elaborate new symbolism of John Wild of Littleleek, through the 'alphabet scrambling' of *The Needful Attempt*, to the use of fairly conventional diacritics (such as acute and grave accent marks) and straightforward re-spellings. The rationale behind such orthographic innovation seems to have centred around a genuine desire to rectify what was seen as a fossilized system, where sound and symbol showed minimal co-relation, any improvement of which would facilitate reading both for the educated adult and (more especially) for schoolchildren, whose progress in reading skills would be enhanced by a spelling system which more closely resembled the characteristics of spoken language (although the problems regional pronunciation variance was rarely taken into account). There was a feeling too that since alphabet reform had taken place (it seemed successfully) in many countries in Continental Europe, then the English should follow suit, one major advantage of which would be the facilitating of English-language learning by foreigners. But the argument for an innovative orthography rarely went beyond such considerations. In the second half of the century, however, there is a marked

shift of emphasis on the central purpose of spelling reform, one which was inextricably linked to the contemporary fixation for purifying and standardizing pronunciation across the country (now Britain – recall Buchanan’s ‘manly diction of Britons’ (1762: *Dedication*)) as a whole. Indeed, Sheridan is of the view that the study of Oratory itself would serve to achieve such a goal (1780: 4):

Would it [oratory: CJ] not greatly contribute much to the ease and pleasure of society ... greatly contribute to put an end to the odious distinction kept up between the subjects of the same king; ... [make: CJ] the English tongue in its purity ... rendered easy to all inhabitants of His Majesty’s dominions, whether of South or North Britain, or Ireland, or the other British dependencies.¹⁰⁹

The growing consciousness of a united British state was a factor which even led many writers in what were previously seen as the ‘provinces’ to attempt orthographic innovation in an endeavour to promote national pronunciation hegemony. We have already seen too that a major motivation of those who advocated orthographic change was that a reformed alphabet could play an important role as a means of ‘fixing’ or preserving the pronunciation of the best speakers in perpetuity – recall Joshua Steele’s (1775) *Essay towards Establishing the Melody and Measure of Speech to be Expressed and PERPETUATED* [emphasis: CJ] *by Peculiar Symbols*. The ready accessibility of the ‘best’ pronunciation in a ‘visible’ form would enable the non-standard, vulgar or even the ‘polite’ provincial speaker to ascertain the characteristics of high prestige usage directly from the orthography itself, without the need to live in London, or to socialise with those who spoke it there. William Johnston (1764: *Preface* viii) captures such notions well in his description of the aims of his own innovative spelling system:

to adorn the language of youth, in the counties more remote from London, with a proper and acceptable pronunciation; and to render strangers as agreeable and useful in England, as may be expected from such as acquisition; I herein offer a help to the right pronunciation of the English Language, whereby those who generally speak well, may with great facility, rectify their particular improprieties; and by which, I sincerely think, the youth of Cornwall and Cumberland, of Scotland and Ireland, of our remotest colonies, who have any competent knowledge of our language, may learn by themselves to pronounce English tolerably well; and by which, were they, after this, to reside for some time in London, their pronunciation might soon, become hardly distinguishable from that of the inhabitants.

It is perhaps James Elphinston – particularly in his *Propriety Ascertained in Her Picture* (1786), and its abbreviated versions *A Minniature ov Inghlish Orthograpphy* (1795) and *Inghlish Orthoggraphhy Epittomized* (1790) – who best verbalizes the interconnection between a transparent correlation between symbol and sound and the fixing or setting in perpetuity of a prestige form of speech. More than any other writer in the period, Elphinston is insistent upon this point. Spelling is to be a ‘mutual guide ... secure alike from distant and from domestic errors’; an accurate

orthography the best guarantee of *English Truth*. The current spelling regime, far from being a model promoting good pronunciation, he sees as leading to corruption and vulgarity, it is one that 'tempts ignorance to' speak, az blind habbit spels; radher dhan to' dream ov spelling, az propriety exhibbts her unremittd harmony, hweddher in word or writing? For propriety, hwarevver herd, can be seen onely in her picture: nor can dhis be duly drawn, but from dhe oridginal; or dhe likeness long prezerved, in dhe coppies ov vulgarity' (1795: 1–2). The false literary picture he decries as *Hetteroggraphy*. His mission is to see the 'fixing of English speech in English Orthography', the 'first axiom of Orthoggraphy' being that 'A Picture must reflect its original. In oddher words: Orthoggraphy iz dhe mirror ov Orthoeppy: propper immage, ov propper sound' (1786: *Preface* iii). The connection between the purity of the picture and propriety of pronunciation is everywhere laboured: 'So shall the purity of our speech be preserved by the truth of her picture'. Indeed, he sees the accomplishment of his axiom as approaching a moral obligation, one which will accomplish – through a new spelling system – all the objectives of the prescriptive orthoepists of the age: purity of pronunciation, permanence of proper usage and a status for English raised to that for French and Italian (1786: *Preface* ix):

It becomes the duty of man to perform his part ... in the ascertainment of human speech; that of first investigating from the our best living practice, the whole system of real or audible propriety in his language; and then representing that propriety, by the most expressive system of literary symbols; so to picture speech, as nearly as possible, in the exact state of perfection she may have attained, so that he may propagate abroad as well as perpetuate at home, the purity he has been at length so happy to compass, may secure alike the purified language from relapsing into barbarities, and from degenerating into corruption; may raise her to her just rank among polished languages, while he renders her the worthy vehicle of his nation's wisdom and attainments, to remotest age.

Indeed, he calms the fears of those who claim that the ever-changing character of language must always leave it exposed to 'chance' and 'caprice'; the precise opposite is the case, he claims, asserting that 'so steady is living language, once matured by Time, and deposited in orthography' that afterwards it will admit of very little by way of variation. Once a language 'has attained her Summit, it then becomes [man's] province to preclude, if he can, further change; nor can such preclusion be effected but by fixing her in ORTHOGRAPHY' (1786: *Preface* x).¹¹⁰

2.2 The case for orthographic reform

that intricate, knotty, perplexed, yet necessary branch of learning – orthography
Fogg: *Elementa Anglicana* (1796)

The chorus of complaint regarding the various inadequacies of the standard spelling system as a vehicle for sound representation rises to a crescendo in the

second half of the eighteenth century, and brings in its train yet more sets of innovative graphic solutions to the problem (some of them long lasting) (Observator 1789). Almost all commentators favour some kind of reorganization of the spelling system, dissent arising mainly as regards the means though which it can best be achieved. The conservative stance taken by the author of *A Vocabulary of Such Words in the English Language as are of Dubious or Unsettled Pronunciation* (1797) is not entirely representative of contemporary viewpoints on the subject (1797: *Preface* i–ii): ‘since it is admitted that, to alter the spelling of words, so as to correspond with the pronunciation, would be impossible with our present alphabet, it surely is a compliment we owe to Dr. Johnson to abide, in orthography at least, by the standard he has given us’. Indeed, he even sees severe drawbacks in any deviation from Johnson’s methodology, as in his comments under his *DRAUGHT* entry: ‘The authorities are all in favour of sounding this word as if written *draft*; and this pronunciation has been the cause of a vulgarism in the orthography among the illiterate and trading part of the nation, who fancy themselves particularly correct in spelling it exactly as they hear it sounded’. However, in most other cases, the cry is for a more transparent alignment between sound and symbol, motivated – in Elphinston’s case – by an attempt to fix a standard pronunciation norm as well as by a need to have a system suitable for use in pronouncing dictionaries and other works of pronunciation reference. Sheridan’s twin aims ‘to facilitate the Attainment of the English Tongue, and establish a *Perpetual Standard of Pronunciation*’ are set out in various places but notably in the *Dissertation on the Causes of the Difficulties, which occur, in Learning the English Tongue*, published as part of his *Course of Lectures on Elocution* in 1762. His *Scheme* was to be based on four major principles, the aim of which was to produce a system of phonetic representation where the standard of ‘one symbol, one sound’ predominated, and where ‘the four following rules should be strictly observed’ (1762: 239–40):

1. No character should be set down in any word, which is not pronounced.
2. Every distinct simple sound, should have a distinct character to mark it; for which, it should uniformly stand.
3. The same character should never be set down, as the representative of two different sounds.
4. All compound sounds, should be marked only by such characters, as will naturally, and necessarily produce those sounds, upon being properly pronounced, in the order in which they are placed.

Such concerns obviously also underlie the system of Elphinston’s *picturage*, where ‘the eye may be ... tickled’ (1786: 82), so that ‘exces, defect, and false image, might be alike precluded; Orthogography must hav stippulated for all human diccion, dhe preliminary: *Won sound shal hav but won symbol, and won symbol shal hav but won sound*’. For Elphinston, this is orthography’s ‘goolden law’ (1786: 49), ‘dhe now adjusted compas ov sound and symbol, non need hencefoarth mistake dhe navigacion; hware steer so istinct, Rote from Rezon, Affectation from Ellegance; Semblance from Substance, dhe indispensabel from dhe impossibel’ (1786: 295); and ‘won symbol must not pretend to’ paint anodddher, unles by

distinctive substitution' (1795: 9). Many other observers take a similar stand, Johnson (1764) stating in his *Advertisement* that he will offer 'A Discourse on an Important Subject. Wherein The Right Sounds of the Words are so intimated by the Notation, that a Stranger to the English Accent, after carefully perusing the Introduction, may be able to pronounce them properly'. Rejecting what he sees as Dr Johnson's principle ('with his ponderous authority') that the best guide to pronunciation lies in the spelling, Fogg declaims (1796: 165):

Others ... insist on the pronunciation being adapted to the orthography. This is reversing the order of things. Letters are to be considered as merely the instruments of speech; or as signs by which it can be transmitted. To adjust then the sound to the manner of writing appears like adjusting the country to the map, the machine to the model, or the meaning to the expression. If either must give way let it be that which is less noble ... It would be better that the spelling should be adjusted to the sound; but neither can that be easily or speedily effected.

He is conscious that 'Orthography cannot soon be brought exactly to agree with pronunciation' and sets out some of the disadvantages of a new orthographic system, while at the same time admitting that 'The present orthography has its uses. It frequently distinguishes words that are alike in sound ...' (1796: 169–70). Unsurprisingly, Sayer Rudd's (1755) *Prodromos: or Observations on the English Letters. Being an Attempt to reform our Alphabet and regulate our manner of spelling* makes much of a need for spelling/sound transparency. He is careful to distinguish concepts such as the *powers* and names of letters, asserting that those letters which are 'absolutely different in their powers, it follows of necessity, that they ought likewise to be distinguished by *character*, and to the eye, because they would be then immediately known by *inspection* only; which is certainly preferable to their being learned by rule, however certain and short the rule might be', echoing the sentiments of *The Needful Attempt* in rejecting orthographic rules for orthographic transparency.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, he claims, at present some rules for spelling convention are still necessary (1755: 43) 'because it is, at present, *the only relief* the learner can be furnish'd with, till we may be so happy, as to obtain *a distinction of character* for these letters; which will render their *true, different powers visible by inspection*'.¹¹²

2.3 Schemes for orthographic innovation

On account of such confusion and difficulty, all our Orthoepists, or teachers of pronunciation, have been obliged, either to change the orthography of the language, or to invent a sufficient number of arbitrary markers to be placed over every syllable, in each word in all their dictionaries.

William Smith (1795: xxvi): *An Attempt to Render the Pronunciation of the English Language more easy for Foreigners*

As was the case in the first fifty years of the century, one-solution to the one-symbol–one-sound equation was sought through a more or less radical manipulation

of, as well as addition to, the symbols of the traditional alphabet. Such a solution was, of course, not universally seen as appropriate and we shall see that there were serious and well-founded objections laid out to some of the more radical systems which were advanced. But the period does see the repetition and development of many of the schemes suggested in the first half of the century (many of these, of course, themselves modelled on earlier attempts), notably in the use of re-spellings, diacritic marks of various kinds, and even (notably in the case of John Wild) models which involved very radical departures from the standard alphabetic symbol set itself. Yet it is true to say that the period 1750–1800 shows a more carefully thought out set of proposals for alphabet manipulation, some of which are still to be found used (notably in dictionary contexts) in the twenty-first century. We shall examine such proposals under three general heads: (1) diacritic guides; (2) alphabet re-scramblings; and (3) radical symbol re-design.

2.3.1 Diacritic marks used to differentiate vowel and consonantal contrast

Perhaps in many ways the simplest system of diacritic marking is that employed by James Buchanan in both his *British Grammar* (1762) and *Linguae Britannicae Vera Pronuntiatio* (1757). Indeed, Buchanan seems to be averse to any major restructuring of orthographic marks, content instead to utilize elaborate rule systems as a means of defining, teaching and fixing spelling and pronunciation. Commenting on the innovative attempts of Smith, Gil and Wilkins in the previous century, he observes (1762: 5):

But the reception these Schemes met with will, I suppose, deter others from such vain Attempts. The same fate would attend the Invention of a New Alphabet, or introducing a character for every simple sound, however useful and advantageous it might prove in rendering reading and Spelling easy tasks, and establishing a fixed and uniform pronunciation. For few of any nation would be prevailed upon to learn their Letters over again, or part with their Books in the present Character, which by such an Innovation would become altogether useless.

Yet he is clearly not enamoured either of the current state of affairs (1762: 4): ‘Did no Character stand sometimes for one, and sometimes for another Sound, nor any Sound be represented sometimes by one and sometimes by another Character, the cause of false Spelling and vicious Pronunciation in the present Living Language would be entirely removed.’ Orthographic rules should, he claims, solve such discrepancies, and be introduced ‘as the impetus and prevailing Tide of Custom will admit’. Any diacritic markings he does use are, in general, very simple, serving in the main to distinguish whatever he means by a long and short quality of vowel sounds. Thus he has ‘long’ and ‘short’ vowel contrasts represented as *cāme*, *fāme*, *glōbe*, *rōbe*; and *bād*, *băt*, *rōb*, *cūt*.¹¹³ On occasion he will also use re-spellings and diacritics within a square bracket notation to indicate those instances where the pronunciation is ‘quite different’ from the spelling, thus [bō] ‘beau’, [flambo]

'flambeau', [enuff] 'enough' and [jail] 'gaol'.¹¹⁴ He is also happy to use superscripted dots as a means of indicating where consecutive vowel graphs show a genuine diphthongal vowel contrast, in cases like *idea* and *theatre*. He employs this technique to indicate the separate components of the [au] diphthong, 'the proper sound of *ou*, *ow*' as in *louse*, *mouse*, *fowl*, which is 'not parted into two syllables ... but discover[s] a sound of *o-oo* pronounced quick'. A relatively simple system, not unlike that of Buchanan's, is that produced by one of his admirers and fellow Scot – William Johnston – in his *A Pronouncing and Spelling Dictionary* (1764). Johnston, endeavouring to provide 'a right pronunciation by the letters', uses a system of superscripted macrons, italicized letters and gothic font to effect a sound/symbol correspondence. His system is described in his *A General View of the Notation*, as shown in Plate 2a.



A GENERAL VIEW of the NOTATION.

In Black Print, are

The quiescent, or silent letters, as in
lamb, cólumn.

In Roman letters, are,

1. The consonants.
2. The short vowels.
3. \bar{a} \bar{e} \bar{o} for the long sound of these short vowels.
4. \bar{e} for short *i*.
5. \bar{o} for short *u*.
6. *ai*, *ay*, *au*, *aw*, *ee*, and *oo*, double vowels, having single sounds; and
7. The diphthongs.

In Italic letters, are,

1. French *cb* for *sh*.
2. *c*, *g*, *s*, and *tk*, when their sounds are irregular.
3. The long vowels.
4. \bar{a} for broad *a*.
5. \bar{e} for long *a*.
6. \bar{i} for *ee*.
7. \bar{i} and \bar{y} for unaccented long *i* and *y*.
- and 8. \bar{o} and \bar{u} having the sound of *oo*.



Plate 2a

SCHEME OF THE ALPHABET.

Number of simple Sounds in our Tongue 28.

9 Vowels,	ā	á	ǎ	ê	õ		
	hall	hat	hate	beer	note		
	ò	é	í	û			
	noose	bet	fit	but			
		w		y			
		short oo		short ee			
19 Consonants,	eb	ed	ef	eg	ek	el	em
	en	ep	er	es	et	ev	ez
	eth	eth	esh	ezh	ing.		
2 Superfluous,	c,	which has the power of <i>ck</i> or <i>cs</i> .					
	q,	that of <i>ck</i> before <i>u</i> .					
2 Compound,	j,	which stands for <i>edzch</i> .					
	x,	for <i>ks</i> or <i>gz</i> .					
1 No letter,	h,	merely a mark of aspiration.					

Plate 2b

And is used throughout his *Preface*: 'Mány whō lābour únder the dífadvántages of a wrong pronunçiátion'.

But undoubtedly the most effective, influential and long-lasting system of alphabetic innovations which involved superscripted marks – in this instance, numerical marks – was that of Thomas Sheridan in his *A Rhetorical Grammar* (1781). Bemoaning the 'deficiency' of the current alphabet, and decrying previous attempts at rectification which involved 'clumsy contrivances' and 'irregularity of marking', he offers a way through 'this intricate labyrinth'. Retaining the traditional alphabetic letters for the vowels,¹¹⁵ for instance, he offers examples of the various pronunciations accorded to them, classifying them under a tripartite division, signalled by superscripted numerals, as displayed in Plate 2b.

He is conscious that such a system may well be yet another 'clumsy contrivance', of course, and he attempts to mollify potential users by reassuring them that (1781: 4): 'Till they shall have got it by heart, the best way will be, that each reader should copy the above scheme, and hold it in his hand, in order to be sure he does not mistake the marks'. He also recognises that even in such a system, his 'one symbol one sound' dictum will be transgressed (1781: 4): 'there are several duplicates of the same sounds, only differently marked. Thus the second sounds of *a* and *e*, as in ha²te, be²ar, are the same. The third sounds of *e* and *i*, be³er, fi³eld,

A Table of the Simple and Diphthongal Vowels referred to by the Figures over the Letters in this Dictionary.

ENGLISH SOUNDS.	FRENCH SOUNDS.
1. \hat{a} . The long slender English <i>a</i> , as in <i>fâte</i> , <i>pâ-per</i> , &c. (73) - - -	\hat{e} in <i>fée</i> , <i>épée</i> .
2. \hat{a} . The long Italian <i>a</i> , as in <i>fâr</i> , <i>fâ-ther</i> , <i>pa-pâ</i> , <i>mam-mâ</i> , (77) - - -	<i>a</i> in <i>fable</i> , <i>rable</i> .
3. \hat{a} . The broad German <i>a</i> , as in <i>fâll</i> , <i>wâll</i> , <i>wâ-ter</i> , (83) - - -	\hat{a} in <i>âge</i> , <i>Châlons</i> .
4. \hat{a} . The short found of this Italian <i>a</i> , as in <i>fât</i> , <i>mât</i> , <i>mâr-ry</i> , (81) - - -	<i>a</i> in <i>fat</i> , <i>matin</i> .
1. \hat{e} . The long <i>e</i> , as in <i>mê</i> , <i>hêre</i> , <i>mê-tre</i> , <i>mê-dium</i> , (93) - - -	<i>i</i> in <i>mitre</i> , <i>epitre</i> .
2. \hat{e} . The short <i>e</i> , as in <i>mêt</i> , <i>lêt</i> , <i>gêt</i> , (95) - - -	<i>e</i> in <i>mette</i> , <i>nette</i> .
1. \hat{i} . The long diphthongal <i>i</i> , as in <i>pine</i> , <i>ti-tle</i> , (105) - - -	<i>ai</i> in <i>laique</i> , <i>naif</i> .
2. \hat{i} . The short simple <i>i</i> , as in <i>pîn</i> , <i>tît-tle</i> , (107) - - -	<i>i</i> in <i>inné</i> , <i>titré</i> .
1. \hat{o} . The long open <i>o</i> , as in <i>nô</i> , <i>nôte</i> , <i>nô-tice</i> , (162) - - -	<i>o</i> in <i>globe</i> , <i>lobe</i> .
2. \hat{o} . The long close <i>o</i> , as in <i>môve</i> , <i>prôve</i> , (164) - - -	<i>ou</i> in <i>mouvoir</i> , <i>pouvoir</i> .
3. \hat{o} . The long broad <i>o</i> , as in <i>nôr</i> , <i>fôr</i> , <i>ôr</i> ; like the broad \hat{a} , (167) - - -	<i>o</i> in <i>or</i> , <i>for</i> , <i>encor</i> .
4. \hat{o} . The short broad <i>o</i> , as in <i>nôt</i> , <i>hôt</i> , <i>gôt</i> , (163) - - -	<i>o</i> in <i>hotte</i> , <i>cotte</i> .
1. \hat{u} . The long diphthongal <i>u</i> , as in <i>tûbe</i> , <i>cû-pid</i> , (171) - - -	<i>iou</i> in <i>Cioutat</i> , <i>chiourme</i> .
2. \hat{u} . The short simple <i>u</i> , as in <i>tûb</i> , <i>cûp</i> , <i>sûp</i> , (172) - - -	<i>eu</i> in <i>neuf</i> , <i>veuf</i> .
3. \hat{u} . The middle or obtuse <i>u</i> , as in <i>bûll</i> , <i>fûll</i> , <i>pûll</i> , (173) - - -	<i>ou</i> in <i>boule</i> , <i>faule</i> , <i>poule</i> .
$\hat{o}\hat{i}$. The long broad \hat{o} , and the short \hat{i} , as in <i>ôil</i> , (299) - - -	<i>oi</i> in <i>cycloïde</i> , <i>heraïque</i> .
$\hat{o}\hat{u}$. The long broad \hat{o} , and the middle obtuse \hat{u} , as in <i>thôd</i> , <i>pôund</i> , (313) <i>aoû</i> in <i>Asôit</i> .	

Plate 2c

are also the same. The sound of *o* in *not*, is only the short sound of *a* in *hall*. The second sound of *u*² in *bu²sh* is only the short sound of *o* in *noose*' and so on. A decade later, John Walker too favours such a representational scheme for his *A Critical Pronouncing Dictionary* ('I have endeavoured to unite the science of Mr. Elphinston, the method of Mr. Nares, and the general utility of Mr. Sheridan'), although his subdivision of the sounds represented by each traditional alphabet symbol is a little more detailed than that of Sheridan's, and he also adds (not always helpfully) exemplification and comparison with individual sounds in foreign languages like French and German: 'the broad German *a*; the Italian *a*' and so forth. He too recognises the mnemonic difficulty faced by the dictionary user that such a system might entail, consequently placing an abridged version of his scheme at the top of each dictionary page, difficult – or controversial – interpretations being signalled by cross-reference to appropriate paragraphs in the *Principles of English Pronunciation* section of the *Dictionary* (1791: 1–71) (Plate 2c).

Given the observation by Kenrick (1784: *Introduction* i) that: 'It has been remarked as a phaenomenon in the literary world, that, while our learned fellow subjects of Scotland and Ireland are making frequent attempts to ascertain, and fix a standard, to the pronunciation of the English tongue, the natives of England themselves seem to be little anxious either for the honour or improvement of their own language', it is unsurprising that we find orthoepists and language commentators in North Britain engaged in the construction of sound/symbol transparent schemes for orthography. One of the more elaborate systems of superscripted diacritic marking was that produced by the Scot William Perry. Originally 'Master of the Academy at Kelso', Perry produced there a fairly typical late-eighteenth-century Tyro's guide to accountancy and business method, *The Man of Business and*

Gentleman's Assistant (1774), a work heavily subscribed to by local businessmen, farmers and landowners. However, on moving to Edinburgh, Perry produced two major works on the pronunciation of contemporary English: *The Only Sure Guide to the English Tongue* (or *New Pronouncing Spelling Book*) (1776) and the *Royal Standard English Dictionary* (1775) ('Designed for the use of schools, and private families'). The latter, dedicated to the Duke of Buccleuch, is 'intended to fix a standard of the pronunciation of the English Language, conformable to the present practice of polite speakers in the city of London'. It is in the *Only Sure Guide* that we see Perry's representational system at its most developed. There he provides a *Key* to 'the different sounds of the vowels', where numerical and alphabetic superscripts are simultaneously employed. However, such a system shares the disadvantages of Walker's and Sheridan's in being unable to produce an unambiguous 'one symbol/one sound' mapping, a problem explicitly admitted by Perry in his footnotes to the *Key*, where he observes 'the *o* in *lost* has the sound of *a* in *hall*', and that '*a* in *wash* sounds like *o* in *not*'. Indeed, so concerned is he with this shortcoming, that he is forced to turn to an even more elaborate system of representation:

Having found it difficult to convince several teachers in this country of the propriety of giving the various sounds to the Vowels, as mentioned in the *Key*, and particularly that the vowels *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u* and *y* in the following words: *liar*, *her*, *shirt*, *done*, *buck*, *hyrst*, have all one and the same sound, viz. like *ũ* in *buck*, I thought it proper to add the following scheme of the vowels, in which those that have the same sound have the same figure over them.

The *Scheme of the Vowels* which Perry produces (see Figure 2.1) has all the combined complexity of the Walker/Sheridan and Buchanan models, and it is even more difficult to interpret and use owing to the complex detail of phonetic

Vowel 1	Vowel 2	Vowel 3	Vowel 4	Vowel 5
ā	ǎ	â	à	á
hate	hat	hall/wash	part	war
ē	ě	è	é	
mete	met	there	her	
ī	ĩ	î	í	
pint	pin	field	shirt	
ō	ǒ	ô	ò	ó
note	not	prove	book	done
ū	ũ	û		
duke	buck	bush		
ȳ	ÿ	ý		
by	beauty	hyrst		
w̄	ŵ			
new	now			

Figure 2.1 Perry's Scheme of the Vowels

representation it sets out. In addition to the common custom of representing 'vowels not sounded' by italicization, thus *lâboŭr*, *prêach*, etc., he attempts to mark 'indistinct vowels' by the same method: *âble*, *pârson*, *fât'ten*, while he takes special care to try to show durational differences: '*a*, *e*, and *o* without any of the above characters either alone, or before or after a consonant, are the same in quality as *a*, *e* and *o* in the words *hate*, *mete*, *note* but different in quantity; that is, they are the long sounds contracted' (1776: x).

It should be stressed, though, that many schoolteachers and other observers recognised the inappropriateness and impracticality of such descriptive detail in a classroom and even in a dictionary context. The author of *The Instructor, An Introduction to Reading and Spelling the English Language*, published in Glasgow in 1798, while admitting Perry as 'pre-eminent' among contemporary grammarians, recognises that

many of his observations, though in themselves very just and highly beneficial for persons of advanced years, cannot be comprehended by juvenile minds ... An idea was once entertained of distinguishing the different sounds of the vowels, in every word, by visible marks; but after diliberate [sic: CJ] reflection this plan was wholly laid aside. The shades of difference in the variation of the vowel sounds are frequently so slight, and the marks necessary to discriminate them so numerous, that to instruct children in the knowledge of the one, by initiating them in the other, becomes a work of immense labour, and the greatest difficulty. (*Preface* 2–3)

Such views are expressed by many English orthoepists of the period as well, notably Nares (1784: xx):

Articulate sounds can be formed by imitation alone, and described only by similitude; This must be understood with limitation. The sounds of some letters may, with tolerable exactness, be ascertained by rules for the management of the organs of speech in pronouncing them. The consonants more readily admit of such description; but the nice discrimination of vowel sounds, on which the principle harmony of language depends, will generally elude the efforts of the most subtle definer.

Yet, nevertheless, Scottish commentators in particular were quite profligate in their use of revised orthographies dependent upon superscripted numerals and other diacritic marks. Alexander Barrie ('Teacher of English, Writers Court, Edinburgh') was one of the most prolific and successful writers of pronouncing dictionaries and pronunciation guides in Scotland in the second half of the eighteenth century. In his popular *A Spelling and Pronouncing Dictionary of the English Language for the Use of Schools*, published in Edinburgh in 1794, he utilizes a descriptive system very much after the fashion of Sheridan's, although enlarging it to include more vowel values, especially those indicating what might be length and lowering in pre-[r] contexts (1794: v) (Figure 2.2).

a	ha ¹ te	ha ² t
e	the ¹ se	the ² m
i	pi ¹ ne	pi ² n
o	no ¹ te	no ² t
u	cu ¹ be	cu ² b
w	w ¹ e	few ²
y	try ¹	hy ² m ⁿ
a	ha ³ ll	la ⁴ rge
e	the ³ re	he ⁴ r
i	si ³ r	gi ⁴ rd
o	do ³	do ⁴ ne
u	bu ³ sh	

Figure 2.2 Sounds of the vowels

First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	
a	hāte	hāt	hāll	a lārgē	
e	thēse	thēn	thēre	e hēr	
i	pīne	pīn	sīr	i gīrd	
o	nōte	nōt	stōrm	dō	dōne
u	cūbe	cūb	būsh		
w	we	fēw			
y	trȳ	hȳmn			

Figure 2.3

However, reflecting a trend in many of the Scottish spelling book and dictionary writers in the latter part of the century, Barrie's subsequent works, notably *A Spelling and Pronouncing Catechism* (1796) and *The Tyro's Guide to Wisdom and Wealth* (1815: 9th edition) prefer a diacritic method which employs superscripted accents, graves, acutes, cedillas, etc. in place of numerals. Compare the system he favours in both the *Tyro's Guide* and the *Spelling and Pronouncing Catechism* (Figure 2.3).

In such a system, items such as *daughter*, *heinous*, *down* and *outward* are realized symbolically as dāugh^htèr, hèinoùs, dōwn, òüt'wārd. We should note too the addition of grave accent marks to denote stress placement, underlined consonantal components to denote non-realization and perhaps the inadvertent retention of the standard orthography in the *u* symbol in *daughter* and the *i* in items like *fruit*: frūit. From time to time too, Barrie will use 'respellings' to re-inforce his symbolic representations as in èigh^hth with the addition of 'pr. èigh^hth'. To enable the user of *The Spelling Catechism* effectively and easily to utilise this rather complex system of diacritic symbols, each recto and verso page is headed by the *hāte*, *hāt*, *hāll*, *lārgē*, etc. set.

By the very end of the eighteenth century, perhaps the most developed Scottish system is to be found in the various writings by William Angus, notably in his *An English Spelling and Pronouncing Vocabulary on a New Plan* (1814: 5th edition) and

VOWELS	
NAME SOUNDS	
SHORT OR LONG QUANTITY	
a or ā, as in vacate vāk'at	
è or ē, as in revere – rè-vēr,	
ï or í, as in finite – finit'	
ó or ö as in promote – pró-mōt'	
ú or ū as in future füt'úr	
GENERAL SHORT SOUNDS	
UNMARKED	
a e i o u as in fan fen fin fon fun	
OCCASIONAL SOUNDS	
SHORT QUANTITY	LONG QUANTITY
ǎ as in pass	ã as in all
ě as in her	â as in arms
ũ as in bush	û as in rule
diphthongal sounds	
oy – toil, toy ow, noun, town.	
w as in wet	y as in yet

Figure 2.4

A Pronouncing Vocabulary of the English Language (1800) both published in Glasgow. Angus' method of representing the vowel system is in some ways more elaborate than Barrie's, more regularly marking as it does stressed and unstressed variants and in attempting to show differences in vowel duration (Figure 2.4)

However, it was the difficulties inherent in the production of such systems as well as the complexities arising from actually using them in practice, which perhaps led to their abandonment in favour of more accessible types. Certainly, Duncan Mackintosh's *A Plain, Rational Essay on English Grammar* (1797),¹¹⁶ perhaps an extreme example of the type, clearly points to the 'messyness' of the numerical superscript system in full bloom (Plate 2d).

Yet, despite the problems it produced for both the printer and the reader, the diacritic method of providing as close as possible a match between symbol and sound remained something of a Holy Grail throughout the latter half of the eighteenth century. Several attempts were made at orthographic reform which restricted diacritic marking to the use of superscripted graves, acutes and other symbols, many familiar from their use in French and German. Perhaps one of the more successful of these attempts was that of Abraham Tucker (*aka* Edward Search) in his *Vocal Sounds* of 1773, a study in what he calls *Philophony*. His mantra – 'English not spelt as spoken' (1773: 3) – he illustrates through a discussion of various orthography/pronunciation mismatches, leading him to conclude (1773: 4–5) that: 'For this reason it seems necessary to rectify our alphabet, not that I mean to alter the common manner of writing, but only to gratify the curiosity of such as may be desirous of analysing our language into its constituent elements.' This was a venture triggered, at least in part, by his realization that 'how much our connoisseurs of language judge of sound by the sight' (1773: 43). The current system is, for him,



GRAMMAR.

G^I **R**⁴ **A**² **M**² **M**^I **A**^I **R**³ **A**^I **R**^I **A**³ **R**^I
 is the a'rt of speak'ing and writ'ing
 with propri'ety.

An a'rt i's a rational meth'od—a system of ru'les and
 exam'ples, dige'st'ed in'to conven'ient o'rder, for the
 teach'ing and lea'rning of som'e'thing: a'nd the method'
 ical collec'tion of ru'les and observa'tions mad'e on
 the geni'us of a na'tion, in the institu'tion, o'rder and
 use of their words, is what' is meant' by Gram'mar.

Gram'mar is com'monly divid'ed into four pa'rts, viz.
 orthog'raphy, prof'ody, etymol'ogy and syn'tax.

1: Orthog'raphy teach'es the rig'ht combina'tion of
 let'ters in'to syl'lables, and of syl'lables into word's; the
 true pronuncia'tion of which' is call'ed orth'o'epy.

The language drawn from every day's discourse,
 "ðī languedj draun fraum everi déz discōrs,"
 But cull'd with judgement from that turbid source :
 "But culd uīð djudjment fraum ðat turbid furs :"
 No low-bred phrase, nor incoherence rude,
 "Nō lō-bred fréz naur incohirens rūd,"
 Nor ungrammatic structure may intrude :
 "Naur ungramatic strūctiur mé intrūd :"
 Nor affectation spread her tawdry paint,
 "Naur afectéhvn spréd hvr táudri pént,"
 Nor pedantry with musty dulness taint :
 "Naur pedantri uīð mūsti dvlnes tént :"
 Yet knowledge or of science, or of men,
 "Iet noledj aur avv sviens, aur avv mén,"
 Itself unseen, may prompt the tutor'd pen.
 "Itself unfin mé prāumpt ðī tūtārd pen."
 If argument be needful, let it press
 "if arguiment be nidful let it pres"
 With inborn weight, not urg'd with eagerness :
 "uīð inbāurn uēt, naur vrdjd uīð igvnes :"
 If kind professions, fetch them from the heart,
 "if kvind profesjonz, fetšī ċem fraum ðī hārt,"
 Nature's pure growth, unfabricate by art.
 "Nétjurz piur grōp, unfabricéte bvi árt."

Yet

Plate 2e

patently inadequate, since, 'I can tell that "oats" are called "wuts" by the farmers in my neighborhood by writing, but cannot tell how they pronounce "draw" unless by word of mouth. I can explain how the ladies speak "none" by writing it "nun", but I cannot describe by writing in what manner I speak it myself, because if I leave out the "e" you will change my "o" into quite another vowel.' Yet the emendations to the standard alphabet which he proposes are quite limited, there being only '6 new letters': *þ, ð, ŋ, h, v* and *αω* (1773: 5) (Plate 2e).

Even in the samples he gives, he still provides a standard orthography 'translation', and he is careful (in his usual non-prescriptive fashion) to reassure his audience that he does not wish to make too great a demand on their forbearance (1773: 49):

perhaps the gentle reader will be frightened at reading such uncouth characters as I present him with, but I do not desire he should accept them for common

use, nor do I wish to have him alter his usual manner either of writing or speaking; I only mean to supply him with a method whereby he might ascertain the true sound of the letters, and not fancy himself saying ‘o’ where he really uses the French ‘a’, nor ‘u’ when he adopts the French ‘e’ feminine ... nor give implicit faith to the old woman who taught him that ‘t’ assumes the voice of ‘s’ before ‘ion’.

While he does concede that his system is aimed at ‘such as are desirous of improving their language, and not satisfied with barely discharging their thoughts from their own mouths’, such an improvement in the ‘confusedness and uncertainty in the connection between sounds and characters’ can only be gained through alphabet reform and not through the learning of those orthographic rule systems (1773: 106): ‘taught us with the first rudiments of our language by the schoolmistress, and afterwards confirmed by the schoolmaster, so that our vowels change their nature according as they come after or before a consonant, and the syllables change again in all arbitrary variations upon their junction into words’. For Tucker, the case for spelling reform is strong: ‘why need we to persist obstinately to write in a manner that nobody speaks?’ Spelling variation was common in earlier times, he argues, but now any attempt to ignore the slavery of orthographic conformity is seriously disadvantageous: ‘In our own language I believe our ancestors endeavoured to write as they talked, as may be gathered from old manuscripts varying successively in every age, and sometimes different persons used different ways in the same age; but since reading has become more general we scruple to depart a tittle from that, to escape the shame of being counted illiterate’. But a reformed spelling system ‘tho in the hands of only a few’ might have the advantage not only of being able to describe precisely the nature of regional and social variants: ‘the Yorkshire man’s “iū” for “iū” and “saudjer” for “sojer”’, ‘the school-boy’s “scrudjd” for “cruded”’, but such a ‘visible speech’ may well have a dialect-levelling function as well: ‘they might improve their pronunciation at a distance by corresponding with one another, for your friend would read your letter in just the same sounds as you would have delivered the contents by word of mouth, whereas now it is possible that two persons in very distant parts might correspond together currently and yet not be able to understand each other in discourse’ (1773: 119). Tucker is adamant that there should be no ‘sudden and violent changes’ to the standard spelling system – any alteration was to proceed by ‘gentle steps’ and only when ‘judged important enough’. He suggests a pedagogic method whereby words are compared against each other using side-by-side comparison (a respelling system), a methodology he suggests which might be followed by Pronouncing Dictionary compilers ‘so they might after every English word spelt the common way parenthesize the same again in other characters. By this method our language would be transmitted down entire to future generations’ (1773: 124).¹¹⁷

2.3.2 Alphabets rescrambled

There can be little doubt, though, that the reformed systems most amenable to reader and (especially) publisher were probably those of the ‘alphabet rescrambling’

type, where traditional alphabet signs were rearranged in a type of respelling procedure, and where there was a minimum use of symbolic idiosyncrasy. We have already noted the 'goolden law' of James Elphinston – perhaps the most famous practitioner of this type of orthographic reform – where 'one sound shall have but one symbol, and one symbol shall have but one sound' (1786: 48). The eye must be 'tickled' by 'picturage', a visible speech mechanism which will produce a transparent relationship between sound and symbol, based largely for vowel sounds on a distinction between those which he defines as 'open' and those which are 'shut' (1795: 24–5):

How (alas!) wil British Libberty moarn her novvel chains, hwen she must not onely speak az she thinks, but write az she speaks; hwen *rove*, *lov* and *moov*, can chime no more togueddher; hwen *lead* and *led*, *read* and *red*, *live* and *liv*, *tear* and *tair*, ar found oppozite, az East and West; nay, az open and shut vowels!

Elphinston's reforms (Müller 1914: 36–46) are perhaps in part motivated by an attempt to solve the common eighteenth-century concern over the distinction between proper and improper diphthongs (Jones 1991: 89 *footnote* 62). The latter represent digraphs whose original purpose of marking vocalic transition has been overtaken by phonological processes involving monophthongization, or – notably in the case of the *ea* and *ie* graphs – which were introduced by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century orthoepists for the purpose of differentiating monophthongal vowel values which had become conflated under single graphs; the *meet/meat* contrast being an obvious example. The major characteristic of Elphinston's reform lies in the way in which it 'simplifies' and modifies the 'improper' group. To understand Elphinston's representational method we must first appreciate his concern for the distinction between *open* and *shut* vowels. The former (which generally occur as the peaks of syllables which are coda empty) he sees as having some kind of intrinsic length characteristic. The latter, he claims, show 'A stoppage ov vocallity, by clustering consonants; [which] must retard, if it compres, dhe emmision ov dhe vocallity' (1786: 117–18); in other words, vowel peaks whose codas are filled by a consonant or consonantal cluster. 'No vowel iz more different from anodder, dhan dhe same vowel, open and shut; respectively, from its seeming self: dhus *a*, *an*; *me*, *men*; *I*, *in*; *O*, *on*; *u*, *un*; az in *unit*, *under*' (1786: 117–18).¹¹⁸ Central to Elphinston's reformed spelling system is the concern to mark unambiguously vowels as open in contexts where the standard orthography would suggest them to be shut. That is, while a graphic combination CV would indicate one of the open vowel set at V, one like (C)VC would mark a closed version at the same spot. Clearly, however, there are many lexical items where the set of open and shut vowels can appear with an orthographic consonantal mark immediately to their right; items, for instance, such as [miit] '*meat*' and [met] '*mate*'. It is cases like this that Elphinston's system brings into play a set of vowel graphs which act as 'distinguishers', 'associates', 'quiet friends' and, in his favoured terminology, 'serviles' rendering an 'essential az vizzibel service, boath to' vowels and consonants. Hware such gards ar wanted, dhey doutles wil atend; and hwen dhey proov

superfluous, az reddily widhdraw' (1795: 3). Indeed, the overriding principle of Elphinston's system is perhaps best summarized in his own maxim: '*Servants, wanted, must attend; unwanted, must widhdraw*' (1786: 120). He spends considerable time setting out the serviles which, in his system, best show the open values for the vowels represented under the graphs *a*, *e*, *o* and *u*: the resulting 'preferred' combinations are *au*, *ai*, *ei*, *oa* ('*o* loves *a*' (1786: 138) and *ui* (1786: 117–60)). These graphic combinations, together with the use of the 'final *e*', act to denote the set of open phonetic segments in stressed position in monosyllables. A typical statement is (1786: 124):

E, effectively (az in *Europe* and *few*) associating *u* and *w*; assumes evvery oddher vowel in dhe capacity ov a servile: *a*, az *heal* or *meat*; anodddher seeming self, az *heel* and *meet*; boath dhus occularly clear: *i*, in *receiv* and *receit*, widh dheir cognates (or cozzens); in *teil* dhe tree, not entangling *teal* dhe fowl: in certain English surnames, identic widh oddhers, or widh common appellacions; az *Keil* widh *keel*, *Leigh* widh *Lee*, and *lea*; in dhe Scotch names, *Keir*, *Weir*, *Keith*, *Leith*, and dhe like: *O*, at least in dhe English town ov *St. Neots*.

The importance of this quotation is that while it apparently shows a classic failure of a system like Elphinston's to mark one symbol with one sound, it is a deficiency of which he is fully aware, and one which he attempts to motivate. He freely admits that there are graphic correspondences for the same phonetic entity which are 'coincident'. 'Vocal Substitution' is allowed: 'Dho won semblance may exhibit, not onely two' senses, but two' sounds; won symbol must not pretend to paint anodddher, unles by distinctive substitution' (1795: 8). While he allows *e* to be 'dhe lawfool substitute ov *a*, in ... *weigh*, *wey*, *hwey*, *prey*, *dey*' (1795: 9); '*e* cannot be *a*, widh dhe servile dhat distinguishes *e*: *tear* cannot be clas-mate, at wonce to' *fear* and *fair*' (1795: 10). Elphinston's main motivation for permitting such 'vocal substitution' is his desire to see orthographic elements 'occularly clear'; '*Soll*, spiritit avoids ocular union with *sole*, alike, and *soal*, by adopting the servile of *poll*, *boll*, *toll*, *roll* (widh *controll*) *scroll*, and *droll*' (1795: 6). Thus such orthographic shapes are set the task of visually differentiating otherwise homophonous items. As always, such concepts can receive Elphinston's wry comment (1786: 138): 'Whore haz but to' drop dhe false iniscial, and turn onnest in (hore) dhe uncontamminating coincident ov hoar'.

What probably makes Elphinston's reformed orthography most distinctive is the way it treats many of the digraphs which surface in the standard spelling system as fossilizations of historical diphthongs or the efforts of earlier spelling reformers. He is particularly concerned to rectify those situations where a syllable peak showing a vowel of a quality he describes as shut, is expressed through a digraph shape or exists in an orthographic syllable terminated by a final *e*. The 'superfluous' second component of such digraphs, Elphinston calls 'falsifiers' or 'id'lers': 'If dhen no vowel can claim a servile, but to' gard its opennes; shal shut vowels be belied by pretended serviles?' (1786: 162). In particular, he is concerned by the role played by *a* as a falsifier (particularly when it is in a digraph combination with *e*),

and he cites many instances of the ‘fallacious ... idel *a*’ in items like *realm*, *earl*, *mearl*, *pearl*, *earn*, *yearn*, *learn* and several others (1786: 162–3), preferring to see them rendered as *reIm*, *erl*, *merl*, *perl*, etc. In the same way, he classifies *a* as a falsifier in items like ‘cease’ *cese*, ‘lease’ *lese*, ‘crease’ *crese* and ‘peace’ *pece*, where the servile *a* is redundant owing to the use of the final *e* which marks the open phonetic quality of the syllable peak. Yet he is also open to alternative representational solutions (1786: 157): ‘Dhe *i* or final *e* of *seize*, must vannish in *seiz* or *seze*’. On the other hand, ‘preceding falsifiers’ are to be strongly discouraged in shut vowel contexts, notably *friend* for *frend*, *heart* for *hart*, although he sees in the last a case for a ‘special pleader’ since it enables one to ‘distinguish dhe *dear heart* ov man, oddher animal, or aught else; from dhe unfalsifying *hart*, dhe *deer*’ (1786: 170). Elphinston is particularly outraged by the ‘damage’ he sees done to the speech habits – especially of the uneducated – by the presence of such falsifiers (‘Falsehood can doo noothing but evil’) especially in the items *either* and *neither*, the spelling of which with digraphs containing a falsifier ‘tempted dhe untaught in England, az dhe first dhoze ov dhe same clas in Scotland, to’ open dhe subjunctive vowel, by a preceding servile: an inversion ov all litterary law, precluded (widhout dainger) by ... *edher* and *nedher*’ (1786: 171).

Elphinston provides his own summary of his spelling method (1786: 239) in a piece entitled ‘Serviles Rectified’ where the principles of his representational method are set out (see Figure 2.5, where E represents ‘final *e*’) (Figure 2.5).

	Orthography: including ‘co-incidents’	OPEN
A slender	ai, ei, aE	[e]
A broad	au, Wa	[ɔɔ]
E	ea, ie, ei, ee, eE	[i]
O direct	o# oE,oa	[o]
O depressive	oo	[u]/[ɔ]
U	uE	[ju]
I	iE	[ɪ]
	Orthography: including ‘co-incidents’	SHUT
A slender	aC	[a]
A broad	oC	[ɔ]
E	eC	[e]
O direct	oC	[ɔ]
O depressive	ooC	[ʌ]
U	uC	[ʌ]
I	iC	[i]

Figure 2.5 Elphinston’s Vowel System

Dhe vowels cood not be rectified, unles dheir serviles were so. Secured waz dhus: 1. A *Braud* in *braud* itself and *graut*; 2. A *Slender* open, in *grait*, *wair*; *peir*, *beir*; and dhe rest: 3. A *slender*-shut prolonged in *sahce*, and *sahsage*, better *sahcage*: 4. O *direct* in *soll*, *roll*, and *controll*; *dore*, *flore*, and *more*; or *doar*, *floar*, *moar*: in *foar*, *foarten*, *soarce*, *coart*, *goard*; *coarse*, *coarce*; *moarn*, *boarn*, *foarm*: 5. O *depressive*, in *doo*, *shoo*, *canoo*, *Room*; *moov*, *proov*, *behoov*, *looz*; *yoo*, *yooth*, *uncouth*, *goold*; in *toor*, *amoor*, *acooter*; and in dhe shut or short *soop*, *groop*; *cood*, *shood*, *wood*; with *pool*, *poot*, and dhe rest: dhus *e* no more attending the depressive, *o* the direct, *u* edher emission.

It is important to bear in mind how seriously Elphinston valued his reforms not just as a means of representing the ‘Truth’ of current pronunciation (‘dhe hoal System ov English Harmony’), but also as a means of preventing ‘error’ as well as a mechanism for identifying the same in non-standard dialect forms:

If writing dhen must repprezent utterance; prezerv it to’ natives, and convey it to’ strainers; if proze must be pure and melodious az verse; dho it cannot alike ascertain edher dhe quallity or dhe quantity ov sound; purity ov speech wil dictate purity ov picture, and dhe genuine picture wil reflect dhe genuine oridginal. Dhus dhe unvisciated ear furnishes rascional entertainment to’ dhe eye, and dhe unvisciated eye returns dhe mellody ov dhe ear. On dheir mutual dependance, depends human language; and, on dheir adjustment, dhe language ov Propriety. edher, erring, must injure dhe oddher; but dhe error ov dhe ear, dho striking for dhe moment, iz les consequentially, and les extendedly, fatal.

Although there is nothing to suggest that Elphinston knew of it, there appeared, a few years before the publication of *Propriety Ascertained in Her Picture*, another important Scottish attempt to achieve the ‘ocularly clear’ by means of a ‘re-scrambling’ of the available alphabet set. This appears in the short text known as *The Contrast: A Specimen of the Scotch Dialect, In Prose and Verse, According to the Latest Improvements; With an English Version* (1779) composed by Alexander Scot.¹¹⁹ This text takes the form of a letter to a noble family, commenting upon the changes brought about in Scotland through contemporary ‘improvements’ to religious, political, economic and agricultural life and values, as noted by Scot on his return to his native country after a sojourn abroad, in his case, most probably in France (Jones 1993). For the student of the phonology of English in Scotland in the eighteenth century, the main interest of this short letter arises from its claim to ‘paint the present Caledonian English of the college, the pulpit and the bar’ (1779: 6). While *The Contrast* itself runs to only some 658 words, it presents us with what in fact turns out to be a carefully worked out and phonetically detailed description not of the ‘poalisht *lengo*’ of London speech, but of the characteristics of late-eighteenth-century upper-class, educated Edinburgh Scots pronunciation:

Oy haiv bin cradeblay enfoarmed, thaut noat lass auz foartay amenant samenaaurays oaf lairnen enstruck cheldren en ainay laungage boot thaut

whoch auloanne ez nidful, aund nurter tham en ainay haibet oonlass thaut oaf civeeletay. Oy haiv massalf tnoan dip-lairned profassours oaf fowr destengueshed oonavarsetays, caupable oaf coamoonicatten airts aund sheences* auss w-al auz laungages auncient oar moadarn, yet endeffereent auboot, aund froam thance oonauquant woth thaut sengle laungage which ez auboov ainay laungage alz; aund en which auloanne thase maisters ware tow empairt tnoalege. Foar moy share, oy moast aunoalege oy caunnoat winder ev Cauladoneaun paurents sand cheldren tow Yoarksheir foar leeberaul adecatione, aund paurteekelarlay foar thaut poalisht *lengo*, which ez noat spoc en Scoatlaund.

Scot's system of vowel representation is a genuinely innovative attempt at creating a phonetic alphabet capable of reflecting subtle nuances in vowel and diphthongal variation. Indeed, Scot's representational system for vowels is remarkably simple and involves no complex manipulation of symbol combinations or orderings; a tentative value system for his orthography might be as shown in Figure 2.6.

We should bear in mind too that there were other and somewhat less formal attempts made in the period to represent spelling (and even perhaps pronunciation) anomalies which took the shape of exercises for students deliberately constructed to contain errors in syntax and orthoepy. Perhaps one of the best developed of these in the late eighteenth century was the *Praxis* system used by Carter (1773: 121) 'Wherein the Rule of *Syntax* and *Orthography* are violated':

Remember, dere Pupil, that Human Life is ther Jorney of a Day. We rise in Vigor and full of Expectashon, we set forward with Sperit and Hoap, with Gayety and with Diligence, and Travel a while in the strate Road of Piety, toward the manshon of Rest; in a short Time we remit the Fever, and endeaver to find some Mitigashon of our Dutee, and some moar easy Means of obtaining the same Ends; we then relaks our Vigor, and resolves to be no longer terrifi'd with Crimes at a Distance, but relies on our Constancy, and venture to approach what we resolves never to touch. Thus we enters the Bowers of Ease, and resposes in the shades of Security.

<i>Orthography</i>	<i>Phonetic value</i>	<i>Examples</i>
i	[ii]	<i>mean, speak</i>
ee	[iː]	<i>visit, British</i>
e	[iː]	<i>sit, liberty</i>
o	[o]	<i>those, spoke</i>
oa	[ɔ]	<i>Scot, not</i>
au	[ɑ]/[a]	<i>that, as, and</i>
a	[eː]	<i>education</i>
ai	[eː]	<i>many, learn</i>
ee/é	[e]	<i>paper, entertain</i>
u	[u]	<i>prove, book</i>
oo	[ʊ]	<i>could, would</i>

Figure 2.6 Alexander Scot's system

Again, too, in Gough (1754: 36ff), *A Collection of Exercises for a Praxis on Orthography; being Sentences or Pieces abounding in false Spelling*:

A gud boy learns, but noaty boys play
 I bôte the book witch I gave the for sippens
 Men air cott with pleshur as fishes air with a huck
 The Cunstubble seasd a por Hankitcher-wever for a Dett of hafe a Gimnny and
 ledged him in the Marshals
 Tis sartenly far more prudent for peepel to live on mean Fair by their own
 Harths, than to squander
 every Haipenny they get in All or Spiritiwass Lickers.

2.3.3 New alphabets for old

While, as we have seen, there was considerable interest in orthographic manipulation as a tool in the quest for symbol/sound identity, almost all of the attempts we have been discussing so far were of a type which made little or no demand on the printer or typesetter. Most reformers were content to use forms of respelling or (and sometimes in combination with) a limited use of diacritic marks of a type which were well-known from foreign-language orthographies. The exception to this tendency was, of course, the system proposed by John Wild of Littleleek in 1703. This system involved the use (and indeed the generation) of new character sets, although standard alphabet letters were still used, albeit in reversed and/or inverted format. Such a system would have made great demands of an uninitiated reader, so it is all the more startling that Wild saw in it a useful tool for the teaching of spelling and reading to young children ('useful for Schoolteachers and short Tongu'd Children'). Radically innovative systems like Wild's are also far from the norm in the second half of the eighteenth century, and there are probably only two or three which approach the levels of uniqueness and sophistication he employs. One of these, and it is not altogether unlike Wild's, is that proposed by (the much-neglected) observer Peter Walkenden Fogg in his *Elementa Anglicana* (1792, 1796). Fogg's *Dissertation VII – On Pronunciation* – is one of the most interesting and detailed in the period on the subject of sound/symbol correspondence. Much in favour of 'that desirable measure of literal reform', Fogg sees the description of language itself as a scientific endeavour and, in the light of the rigorous method of classification in 'Dr. Darwin's great work', he claims: 'Language will become more perfect when it has been determined what is a separate substance deserving of a name; or a distinct act or state attended with sufficient circumstances to be worthy of a distinct term for expressing it', while for him 'universal Grammar [is] the science of those things which belong to languages in common' (1796: 145). He laments the fact that 'As the perfection of speech requires one certain and fixed word for each idea, so that of writing demands one character to be uniformly applied to each primary sound', ambiguities, 'irregular inflexions' and exceptions have led to a situation where 'various schemes have abounded with characters denoting different sounds, and different characters for the same sound' (1796: 147): 'Thus what, if founded on scientific principles, would have been the

clearest subject in the world, is now that intricate, knotty, perplexed, yet necessary branch of learning – orthography.’

On many occasions throughout his work, Fogg¹²⁰ uses a reformed alphabet style very much after the fashion of Elphinston’s, but simpler, where the standard alphabet is re-ordered and few, if any, diacritic marks are utilized (1792: 30):

Stinking weeds and poisnus plants hav ther yoose. Thi Christyan religyun gives us a moar luvli ydeea of God than ani religyun ever did. Stand yn au and syn not. Thi ooeb of our laueef is of a mingled yārn, gud and ill tugethur. Hwen a man yaunith hee cannot heer soa oell. Auiee am a wurm and no man.

But he remains unconvinced that such a system will serve the purpose of ‘reforming the orthography’ (1796: 177): ‘If it would be so difficult to effect this by a combination of learned men, a new alphabet, and a scientific plan, let none attempt, with the present imperfect characters, to spell just as he speaks, any more than to speak as he spells’. With an eye to the problems faced by publishers, printers, typesetters and any public resistance to change, he proposes instead (1796: 178): ‘a plan of an alphabet which would be quite novel, yet already in our possession. There should be no need of new characters cast (Tucker’s *uncouth characters*), nor any risk of property incurred’. In this way his new characters would be the same in size as the old (and thus ‘symmetrize with them’). ‘The characters that are wanting should be supplied by a simple inversion of such of the present letters, as are not already inverted, and as will be altered by inversion’; so there would be no need for ‘other new-invented characters [which] have generally disfigured the page by having too little similarity’. He argues that since the short vowels *o*, *a*, *e*, *i*, and *u*, and the consonants *b*, *p*, *v*, *f*, *d*, *t*, *z*, *g*, *k*, *l*, *r*, *m*, *n*, and *h* are already ‘fixed to their proper sounds’, he sees a need for only six new characters (Plate 2f).

Despite his efforts at flattery, one wonders whether his optimism regarding the success of his new alphabet – even though it is considerably more simple than Wild’s – is well founded (1796: 179):¹²¹

When this, or any similar improvement, takes place, the greater part of the writers of genius then living must agree to promote it by publishing their original works in this manner. The editors of the amusing periodical works must likewise join their aid. This would soon induce all who possessed either taste or curiosity to learn the twelve new characters; and in this, and in acquiring the new habit of spelling, the whole of their talk is comprised.

The *cause célèbre* of new alphabet construction in the late eighteenth century is, of course, Thomas Spence’s *New Alphabet*, associated mainly with his *The Grand Repository of the English Language* (1775), in which we are provided with ‘the most proper and agreeable Pronunciation of the Alphabetic Words denoted in the most intelligible manner by a New Alphabet’. Spence’s claim is that ‘To read what is printed in this alphabet, nothing is required but to apply the same sound immutably to each character (in whatever position) that the alphabet directs’

A SPECIMEN.

HĪr rests hiz hed sux on ðe lap uv erȝ
 A iwȝ tu Fłstiu and tu Fəm un-nm̄n
 Fər foȝens frłwnd not on hiz umbl burth
 And Melankoli mēkt him for hur m̄n.

Lērdš woz hiz blwnti and hiz fml sinsȝr
 Hevn did a rekompens az lērdšli send
 Hĭ gəv tu Mizri łl hĭ had a tȝr
 Hĭ gənd from Hevn twoz łl hĭ askd a frend.

Nm̄ fēaur sȝk hiz merits tu disclm̄z
 Or drł hiz frēltiz from ðer dred abm̄d
 Łər łə aloȝk in trembliw hmp rȝpm̄z
 Łi bwzum ov hiz Fēaur and hiz God.

* * * * *

Ʒvn from łi twm łi vłis uv nētiur Kroyz
 Ʒvn in łwr aȝiz. liv ðer wuntid foȝr.

Plate 2f

(1775: *Advertisement*). His system of representation of his *New Alphabet* (at least in its 'printing characters' format) is indeed a radical one and, although he admits that it may 'perplex a careless reader', he reassures that 'it should be easy enough to know it by a little application and practice' (Beal 1999: 81; Shields 1974). The majority of innovative symbols affect the 'short' and 'broad' *a* sounds, short *e*, *i*, *o* and *u*, long *o* and the diphthongs in items such as *oil* and *house*. Consonantal innovation particularly effects fricative sounds in items such as *shell*, *vision*, *child*, *think* and *they* as well as the *wh* in *which* and the velar nasal in *sing*. Characters are truncated in various ways, merged and overlapped to achieve the effect desired. Like many orthographic innovators before him, Spence recognises both the pedagogic and financial risk he runs in introducing such a system ('however right the design might appear in theory, it would be impossible to carry it into execution'). He expresses anxieties about difficulties of learning and acquiring the system by schoolchildren and their masters, the difficulties of persuading publishers to produce books written in the new system, coupled with the financial losses they might suffer as a result. These Spence pushes aside: 'For who would suppose anybody would throw the books he has at present into the fire because there were new editions of them in a new method of spelling?' The *New Alphabet* (Plate 2g) would surely not have been possible without the outstanding woodcutting skills of Thomas Bewick, whose pragmatic, entrepreneurial spirit is perhaps to be seen in 'whereas the loss to proprietors of such newly printed works is no more than the consequence of any

The N E W A L P H A B E T.

Capi- Small Names.
tals. Letters.

A	ā	as in mane, (MĀN)
Λ	ā	as in man, (MΛN)
Δ	ah	as in father, (FΔHĪR)
Α	au	as in wall, (WΑL)
B	b	ib or bĭ
D	d	id or dĭ
E	ē	as in mete, (MET)
Ǝ	ē	as in met, (MƎT)
F	f	if
G	g	ig or gĭ
H	h	hā
I	ī	as in fite, (SIT)
Ī	ī	as in fit, (SĪT)
J	j	idge or jĭ
K	k	ik or kĭ
L	l	il
M	m	im
N	n	in
O	ō	as in note, (NOT)
Ɔ	ō	as in not, (NƆT)
P	p	ip or pĭ
R	r	ir
S	s	is
T	t	it or tĭ
U	ū	as in tune, (TUN)
Ʈ	ū	as in tuu, (TƮN)
V	v	iv
W	w	wĭ as in way, (WA)

Capi- Small Names.
tals. Letters.

Y	y	yĭ as in young, (YĪNG)
Z	z	iz
⊙	oo	as in moon, (M⊙N)
⊙	oi	as in oil, (⊙L)
⊙	ou	as in house, (H⊙S)
⊙	ish	as in shell, (S⊙L)
⊙	izh	as in vision, (VĪZĪN)
⊙	itch	as in child, (⊙ILD)
⊙	ith	as in think, (HĪNK)
⊙	ith	as in they, (HĪ)
⊙	why	as in which, (WĪ⊙)
⊙	ing	as in loving, (LUVĪNG)

•• The vowels in this alphabet are A Λ Δ Α E Ī I Ō Ɔ U ⊙ ⊙ ⊙; and the consonants B D F G H J K L M N P R S T V W Y Z ⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙.

gō: To read what is printed in this alphabet, nothing is required but to apply the same sound immutably to each character (in whatever position) that the alphabet directs.

N. B. In the following work, n. stands for name, or substantive;—q. for quality, or adjective;—v. for verb;—part. for participle;—ad. for adverb;—conj. for conjunction;—prep. for preposition;—interj. for interjection.

Plate 2g

new book or new edition being more generally liked than a former one on the same subject'. The political radical Spence, on the other hand, takes the high moral ground on the issue: 'And as Baron says: "In those grand undertakings, on which the happiness of nations depends, we should not be impeded in our operations by a trifling spirit of oeconomy ..."'.¹²²

Spence also developed a reformed alphabet in 'writing characters', one which utilizes re-spellings and diacritic markings much after the fashion of Tucker and others like him. Such a scheme is used in his *Crusonia: or Robinson Crusoe's Island* ('A Supplement to the *History of Robinson Crusoe*') published in Newcastle in 1782. The *Crusonia* uses a mixture of a limited set of superscripted accent marks with some 'respelling' of the standard orthography, what Spence describes as the 'Kruzoneĭn Mănĭr' (1782: *Preface*):

I Hav printĭd this lĭtĭl Pes ĭn thĭ Kruzoneĭn Mănĭr (se thĭ Postscript) fōr thĭ Ez ōv Fōrnĭr ānd ōrdĭnare Redĭr. I tharfor ādjur aul Krĭtĭks and Skōĭrĭz nōt too aprĭhēnd thar Librarez ĭn Danjĭr, ōr thĭngk I ĭntēnd too kōmpēl ĭthĭr thēm ōr

thar Chıldrĭn ĭntoo Kõnsĭstĭnsez. No, I onle ĭntĕnd too fre thĭ Poor and thĭ Stranjĭr, thĭ ĭndŭstreŭs and thĭ ĭnĭsĭnt frõm vĕksashŭs, tedeŭs, ānd rĭdĭkĭlĭs Absŭrdĭtez: and aulso too mak Chāřĭte Skoolz, and in a grat Mĕzhĭr, aul Skoolz fõr techĭng ĭnglĭsh ũnnĕsĭsare, thĭs Mĕthĭd being so eze and rāshĭnĭl.

The *Postskript* (1782: 42–52) contains a key to the symbols it uses ('We Crusonians [are: CJ] not only far above you in Politics but in Literature. Our Language is the best English, but you must not expect us to spell so absurdly as you do. It would be reckoned very barbarous indeed here, to beat Children for not comprehending the greatest Inconsistencies' (1782: 42)). The vowels and diphthongs in the *Crusonian Alphabet* might somewhat speculatively, perhaps, be characterized as in Figure 2.7.

But hostility to radical schemes such as this was strong among the more 'main-line' commentators in the late eighteenth century. Thomas Sheridan's hostility to any kind of alphabet reform like Spence's, involving 'the darkest hieroglyphics or most difficult cyphers', is well documented in almost all his writing. Although he praises the orthographic transparency of Hebrew, he nevertheless holds back from advocating any radical orthographic reform for English (1762: 26):

To follow the example of the latter Hebræans, the whole graphic art must be changed; that new characters must be introduced into the alphabet, to mark all the differences of the vowels, both in quality and quantity; that there would be no use of this if they were not transferred into our books, which must all be reprinted according to the new alphabet; that people must be taught anew to enable them to read such reprinted books; that it would be the height of absurdity to suppose such measures practicable, and therefore that the whole scheme, as chimeral, must fall to the ground.

<i>Capitals</i>	<i>Names</i>	<i>Tentative value</i>
A	a	[e(e)] gratĭst
Á	ă	[a] āmõng
Â	â	[ɑ] fāthĭr
E	e	[i] delit
Ĕ	ě	[ɛ] ĕkspĕkt
I	i	[ɑɪ] delit
Ī	ĭ	[i] ĭz
O	o	[o] onle
Ó	õ	[ɔ] nõt
U	u	[ju] kõntĭnuĭle
AU	au	[ɔ] aulmost
OO	oo	[u] too
Ū	ũ	[ɣ]wŭd: stŭde

Figure 2.7

Indeed, as we have seen, Sheridan's *Scheme* is essentially characterized by its overall reliance upon the symbolic content of the standard orthography, for while he had clearly become more than despondent over its ability to reflect spoken usage, in the *Rhetorical Grammar* we still find more than a hint of disapproval of the efforts of earlier scholars to remedy this defect by parting too radically from any in-use system of orthography (1780: 13):

Such indeed is the state of our written language, that the darkest hieroglyphics, or most difficult ciphers which the art of man has hitherto invented, were not better calculated to conceal the sentiments of those who used them from all who had not the key, than the state of our spelling is to conceal the true pronunciation of our words, from all except a few well educated natives.

But, in addition to his *Scheme*, we must bear in mind that his *General Dictionary* is prefaced, not just by a grammatical description of English, but by a *Rhetorical* grammar, the intention of which is not only to be for 'teaching propriety of pronunciation', but – and equally – 'Justness of Delivery'. Indeed, certainly in his early work, Sheridan sees oratory and rhetoric as the main mechanisms for the promulgation of proper speech habits: the study of eloquence did this for Latin,¹²³ so, he claims, 'the same cause could infallibly produce the same effect with us' (1756: 70). Proper pronunciation could then be acquired by a process of osmosis, with language users as 'rational enquirers' producing rules for pronunciation founded upon rhetorical principles, principles which could be arrived at 'by common suffrage, in which everyone has a right to give his vote'. Sheridan never attempted to go beyond the osmosis principle to provide any kind of notation which might attempt to capture some of the characteristics – especially the suprasegmental characteristics – of rhetorical delivery.¹²⁴

The lack of a formal notation for such purposes was addressed by Joshua Steele in his *An Essay Towards Establishing the Melody and Measure of Speech to be Expressed and Perpetuated by Peculiar Symbols* (1775). Much influenced by James Burnet's *The Origin and Progress of Language* (1774), Steele's work sets out to remedy (1775: Preface viii):¹²⁵

The puzzling obscurity relative to the *melody and measure* of speech, which has hitherto existed between modern critics and ancient grammarians, [which] has been chiefly owing to a want of terms and characters, sufficient to distinguish clearly the several properties or accidents belonging to language; such as *accent*, *emphasis*, *quantity*, *pause*, and *force*; instead of which five terms, they have generally made use of *two* only, *accent* and *quantity*, with some loose hints concerning *pauses*, but without any clear and sufficient rules for their use and admeasurement; so that the definitions required for distinguishing between the expression of *force* (or loudness) and *emphasis*, with their several degrees, were worse than lost; their difference being tacitly felt, though not explained or reduced to rule, was the cause of confounding all the rest.

3

The Sound System: Description and Classification

3.1 Major class distinctions

It is perhaps just to claim that commentators in the latter half of the eighteenth century are less concerned than their predecessors with the criteria to be applied for differentiating vowels, consonants and diphthongs and the various subdivisions into which they could be placed. The influence of Wallis' *Grammatica* (1653) is still strong, although it would appear that commentators in this period placed a somewhat greater emphasis on the mechanics of articulatory production in their description of both vowel and consonantal segments. Tucker, under his discussion of the *Formation of Sounds*, agonizes over finding any justification for the entire descriptive and classificatory process (1773: 23–4):

One would think there could be nothing curious in telling people what they do every day, and every hour of the day; but experience testifies that we do not always advert upon things we perform by constant habit and in a manner mechanically; I have found difficulty in examining my own motions exactly, and have met with people who would hold an argument in what manner we both performed the same operation; others, when I have been so lucky to find their ready concurrence with my observations, still mortify me with a question, 'What need tell us of all this? Does not everybody know we make an *l* with our tongue, and an *m* with our lips?'

Walker's account of the vowel/consonant dichotomy reflects the conventional wisdom of many observers earlier in the century (1791: 2): 'A vowel is a simple sound formed by a continued effusion of the breath, and a certain confirmation of the mouth, without any alteration in the position, or any motions of the organs of speech, from the moment the vocal sound commences till its ends.'¹²⁷ A consonant may be defined to be, an interruption of the effusion of the vocal sound, arising from the application of the organs of speech to each other'. The tradition of classifying vowel segments themselves into the *guttural*, *palatal* and *labial* is also continued (probably best exemplified in its standard form by Buchanan) corresponding to 'a larger, a middle, and a less Opening' (1762: 7),¹²⁸ a classification

favoured too by Fogg (1796: 157–9). Tucker's ideas are perhaps more innovative and sophisticated. He sees the entire vowel inventory as comprised of two core components: one is an *h* element 'a blowing noise something like that of a bellows' produced by 'raising up the hinder part of the tongue near the bone which terminates the roof of the mouth', the other – expressed by his innovative symbol *v* – some kind of schwa sound – formed by a 'straitning ... made at the throat by drawing back the root of the tongue as far as you can'. He labels these *spirate* and *sonorous* sounds respectively. These, he claims, are 'the roots whereout [*sic*] by the aid of three stops, all our other vocal sounds are made to spring'. Sonorous sounds are produced as follows (1773: 28):

If on pronouncing *v* you change to *av* you will find your under jaw, and your lips expand in a nearly circular form; if from thence to *o*, you will find the corners of your lips draw in so as to turn into an oval; if to *u*, you will find the orifice still more contracted, and the lips a little thrust forwards, the tongue in all these operations lying close at the bottom of the mouth; if from thence you pass to *a*, the lips at the corners will widen so far as to form the long diameter of the elipsis, the jaw remaining as before, and the tongue raising and spreading a very little; the transition from thence to *e*, is effected only by raising the hinder part of the tongue in the manner you did for an *h*, and that to *i* by throwing the tongue into a convex, corresponding with the hollow roof of the mouth.

This kind of description is particularly interesting in the way that it appears to treat vowel sounds as non-discrete entities, but rather as components in a continuum of relative sonority. Kenrick seems to be suggesting something similar as well. Criticizing the customary vowel/consonant dichotomy, and the division of consonants into semi-vowels, liquids and mutes, he appears to propose that, rather than acting as a set of discrete units, vowels and consonants are best seen as existing on some kind of scale of relativity (1784: 39):

If we attend to the operations of nature in the process of articulation, we find that our nominal consonants and vowels have not that essential difference which is usually imagined. The most vocal of all vowels and the mutest of all consonants may possibly agree with the above definitions; but the forms of articulation proceed gradually from the most surd of consonants to the most vocal of vowels, passing through all the intermediate degrees of the aspirate, the hiss, the mutter, the snarl, &c.

Kenrick also evokes a painting/colour metaphor as an appropriate descriptor of the diversity of vowel sounds (1784: 54):

vocal distinctions are by no means so forcible and precise as the consonants. As in the mixture of colours in painting, there are many artificial varieties to be made, sufficiently distinguishable from each other by connoisseurs and

artists; but the strongest and most precise distinctions of coloured lights and shades, do not come up to the full partition of black and white, or the divisions marked out by the primary colours of light.

This relativistic approach is seen most clearly in his *The Alphabet of Speech* or *The Oral Elements of the English tongue* (1784: 41–2), where phonetic entities are arranged in such a fashion as to ‘begin with the most surd of the mute consonants and proceed gradually, through the different degrees of sound, till I arrive at the most clear and sonorous of the vowels’. Thus we find a sequence of ever more vowel-like categories such as mutes, aspirates, sibilants, liquids or semi-vowels, and vowels themselves, a sequence not at all unlike that we have already described as the *Sonority Hierarchy*. His arrangement of vowel sounds from the least to the most vocal is, perhaps, a little less convincing, since it suggests a scale sequence like: [ʌ]:[ʊ]:[ɔ]:[ɪ]:[i]:[a]:[ɛ], where it is difficult to see how one could justify in such a sequence any increased level of vocalicity (as characterized by well-defined formant structure and high levels of energy).

4

The Vowel Phonology

4.1 Palatal or front vowel segments

4.1.1 High front vowels

Discussion of palatal vowels is usually to be found under descriptions of the values and functions of the graphs *e*, *i* and the digraphs *ea*, *ee*, *ie* and *eo*. The issues raised in these discussions in part reflect the concerns and observations provided by grammarians in the earlier part of the century, although there are some interesting refinements as to the possibility of ascribing different values to the [i] segment, as well as to further controversy over whether the phonology at this period supported a tense/lax [i]/[ɪ] contrast between lexical items such as *beet/bit*. Addressing this last issue first, we find that the evidence for the existence of such a contrast and for any lowering and centring of a Middle English ‘short *i*’ vowel to [ɪ] is inconclusive and difficult to interpret, some commentators providing strong evidence for the existence of some type of contrast, some inferring its existence without concrete identification, while others seem to deny its existence at any level. In this last camp seems to be Joshua Steele (1775: x) who identifies the italicized vowels in English items such as *evil*, *keen*, *it*, *be*, *iniquity* with their French counterparts *Paris*, *habit*, *ris*, *dît*, *il*, suggesting a lack of any tense lax contrast in the palatal vowel area. Yet one might argue that such pronunciations reflect the special nature of Steele’s work, namely as a guide to the pronunciation of the stage, a context where one might expect these pronunciations to occur, much as they still do in some *bel canto* singing styles. Ash’s (1763: xv) three-way classification of vowel types under Broad (or full), Middle (or intermediate) and Narrow (slender) might at first sight suggest a possibility for the existence of a tense/lax alternation. BROAD types are exemplified by items like *bind*, *bite*, *sight*; MIDDLE by *bird*, *third* (such a pre-[ɹ] pronunciation, he argues ‘occurs but seldom’) while those in the NARROW category include *pin*, *sin*, *mill*, *till*. Nevertheless, in his list of sounds exhibiting similarities (e.g. *i* broad in *bind*, and *y* broad in *by*) he includes as what might even be considered as ‘near alike’s’ items such as *me* (his *e* narrow), *Bill* (his *i* narrow) and *Bully* (his *y* narrow), the last perhaps showing HAPPY TENSING. The situation for Entick (1795) is very much the same – he too sets out a list of what he calls ‘co-incident’s’ where *ee*, *ei* and *ie* (in *see*, *thee*; *deceit* [and, for him, *weight*];

chief) coincide with what he classifies as narrow *i* and narrow *e*, the vowels in *meet*, *me* and *deceit*, *Caesar*, *Phoebe* respectively. All of these, he states, co-incide with items such as *mill* and *Bill*. It is not as if he is unaware of a phonetic segment close to [i], since he provides a good working definition of something like a centralized vowel in unstressed syllables in an item like *heaven* (1795: ii): ‘best distinguished by that kind of uncertain sound which any of the vowels may acquire in a short or insignificant syllable’. Fogg (1796: 28), although his evidence is perhaps a little less explicit on this subject, distinguishes an 8th Sound for the vowel in items like *bit*, *pick* and a 7th Sound for the vowel in an item like *feel*. Bearing in mind the quantity/quality confusion surrounding the use of the long/short terminology throughout the eighteenth century, we might nevertheless treat his observation that the 8th vowel is the ‘much shortened version of the 7th’ as inferring a quantity-only contrast. This is reinforced by his observation (and by that of many others) that the composition of the [ju] diphthong is ‘*ee* or *γ* followed by *oo*’ a sound ‘so frequently marked by the single character *u*’, with the important qualification regarding *ee* (his 7th vowel in *feel*) and *γ* (his 8th vowel in *pity*) ‘for their difference is trivial’. But the commentator most likely to show high, front and tense values for the vowel in words like *bill* and *sit*, is undoubtedly Buchanan (1762, 1757), his preference for such a value possibly a reflection of his own Scotch standard pronunciation. His long/short contrast between the different sounds represented by the *i* graph is clearly qualitative, the latter exemplified through *piety*, the former in *divisibility*. However, Buchanan is careful to observe that his short (*i*) ‘is almost (*ee*)’, recommending that the *divisibility* item be pronounced as *deëveeěeěbeěleěty*; again he stresses that for him (1757: 8–9), ‘short (*i*) is almost full (*ee*), and (*i*) short which is like (*ee*) in *did*, *will*, *in*, *which*, *bid*’ (and also *guild*, *build*, *conduit*), while under his description of *ee*, he claims it to be a sound the same as the French give to (*i*) – ‘i.e. our short (ǎ), as *see*, *seen*, *beer*’.¹²⁹ But after all, this is no different from the position spelt out by Kenrick (1784: 61):

Grammarians have usually annexed two sounds to the *i*, which they have called the long and the short; but the sound given to the short *i*, for instance in *fit*, *give*, etc. is by no means a mere contraction of the sound given to the long *i* in *mine*, *life*, &c. It is a sound of very different quality; being a contraction of the long sound of *e* or *ee*, in *me* or *meet*. This is plain by repeating the words *fit* and *feet*, *pit* and *peat*, *mit* and *meat*; in which the similarity of sound is very perceptible

Although, as we shall see, the evidence of Batchelor twenty years later suggests that the qualification ‘similarity’, rather than ‘identity’ may be significant. For William Johnston too there would appear to be no centralized and lowered version of the pure palatal [i]. While his descriptive terminology of accented/unaccented and long/short vowels is not always easy to interpret, he sees his ‘short *i*’, in items like *this* and *skin*, as ‘the short acute to the English long *e*’, as in *eel* and *steel*. While, as we shall discuss below, like Walker, he may be signalling a difference between different kinds of [i] sound in his contemporary phonology, he still describes his

'accented short *i*' as having, before a single consonant, the sound of the accented long *e*, 'pronounced short' as in *image*, *idiom*, *ability*, *civility*. Yet it is difficult to know what to make of his comment that:

Short *i* in monosyllables, or accented at the end of words, or before two consonants unapt to begin a word, is quite sharp; as in *fin*, *skin*, *ring*, *sing*, *commit*, *omit*, *cinder*, *tinder*, except in the word *king* and its derivatives where *i* sounds like long *e* perhaps to give a grandeur to the word, suitable to its signification.

Does he infer a qualitative contrast by the term 'sharp', or merely one of durational extension? Terminology, or, rather, the failure to define what it actually represents, very often prevents us from making definitive decisions in this area of the phonology. For instance, while Bayly (1772: 10) seems to make a purely quantitative distinction between his *e* in items like *me*, *he*, *she*, *be*, where he says it is 'very short', as against his '*i* long' in items like *keep*, *field*, *fear* and *dear*, his description if *i* in words like *ill* and *him* as 'narrower' as well as 'shorter than *e*', leaves us to wonder whether 'narrower' has any qualitative significance.

However, there do appear to be commentators who, more or less unambiguously, suggest a lowered and centralized value for 'short *i*'. One says more or less, because the existence of a lax palatal segment has often to be assumed by default. Sheridan's *Scheme of Vowels*, for instance, shows a three-way contrast for the graph *i* in *fit/fight/field* (1780: 4). Recognising that his schema is less than unambiguous, he agrees that 'there are several duplicates of the same sound, only differently marked', instancing the *beer/field* homophony. However, while he could have equally well have done so, he does not include *i*¹ and *e*³ as a possible 'near alike' pairing, and we are left with the possibility that he sees them as distinct vowel qualities, especially since he lists under his 'Same Sounds of Vowels marked in a Variety of Different ways' (1780: 14) items showing *i*¹ like *fit*, *courage*, *captain*, *marriage*, *college*, *breeches*, *forfeit*, *foreign*, *sieve*, *women* and *busy*, where [i] is, to say the least, a unlikely pronunciation for the *ain*, *eign* and *age* elements. At first sight, the evidence provided by William Smith in his *An Attempt to Render the Pronunciation of the English Language More Easy* (1795) seems to argue against any lax interpretation of vowels in *sit/bit*. His is a three-way classification of vowel segments: short *nick*; long *machine*; intermediate *lovely*, *clarity*. He consistently uses French words to illustrate the vowel values he is describing for English; thus for the English *nick*, he cites French *nique*, while *he*, *pease* are likened to the French *lie*, *bise*, with his 'tenth sound, as in *fit*, *pill*, the same (although "a small degree shorter") as the French sound in *vîte* (quick,) *rite* (rite,) and *mille* (thousand,) or the German, in the words *ritt* (ride,) *pille* (a pill)' (1795: 43). It is perhaps in his discussion of his intermediate *i* that we see the possibility of his recognising a lax palatal segment (1795: *Introduction* xxvii): '*i* intermediate, as in *charity*, pro. Nearly as in fr. Word *charité*' with the *Footnote*:

Mr. Walker, the author of the *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary*, invariably marks this sound of the *i* and *y*, with the long *e*. I think he must be in the

wrong; for, surely, there is an evident distinction between the first and last syllable in the word *ea-sy*: nor could *vanity*, I apprehend, with any degree of propriety, be written *vanitee*, as he says, if sound alone were consulted – *pleurisy*, *pleurisee*. Dr. Kenrick, and Mr. Scott, mark it with the short *i*; which seems, at least to my ear, nearer the truth. But I humbly think that Mr. Sheridan has the advantage of all his predecessors and followers, in making it a distinct sound.

At a period where HAPPY TENSING (see 4.1.2 below) is very much in evidence, this assertion is an important one, and the claim for an ‘evident distinction’ between long *e* and short *i* – while it could, of course, merely reflect a quantitative contrast – seems more likely to be pointing to something involving vowel quality. That the contrast is ‘evident’ clearly suggests that it is well within the range of perceptibility and rather more likely to be a contrast like [i]/[ɪ], than one involving a small height or length contrast such as [ii]/[i]/[i] which, it might be argued, is less of an ‘evident distinction’. Indeed, Smith’s Vowel 10 seems most commonly to be assigned to unstressed syllable contexts – *engage*, *tragic*, *racket*, *bracket* and so on – just suggesting perhaps that the lax [ɪ] originated in this environment (as well, as we shall see below, in pre-[r] contexts) generalizing to stressed environments in the course of the eighteenth and especially later in the nineteenth century.

However, some more detailed light may be shed on the problem by a closer look at the evidence from Scottish observers. The fact that the palatal vowel area was one showing very marked Scots regional characteristics, which are commented upon by observers on both sides of the political border, may cast some light on the precise nature of the phonetics of the segments in that very area and the kinds of changes to which such segments were being subjected. Despite the fact that we have suggested the possibility of the ‘near-alike’ nature in polite London speech of *bit/beet* types and the general paucity of evidence from contemporary observers that the former had undergone any kind of lowering and centring process, it is remarkable how so many English and Scottish commentators see the conflation of *bit/beet* as a Scotticism. Recall how Buchanan (1770: 45) criticizes Scots’ pronunciation for the way in which ‘confuses’ short for long, and vice versa: ‘I shall adduce but a few examples, out of a multitude, to shew how North-Britons destroy just quantity, by expressing the long sound for the short, and the short for the long; ... as *ceevil* for *čivil*’. Again, the anonymous Scots author of *A Spelling Book upon a New Plan* lists under a ‘long sound, like *ee*’ a restricted set of lexical items which includes: *click*, *crick*, *drill*, *drip*, *gig*, *king*, *pig*, *pill* (1796: 9). It is unsurprising, therefore, that Walker, in his ‘Rules to be Observed by the Natives of Scotland for attaining a just Pronunciation of English’ in his *A Critical Pronouncing Dictionary* (1791: xi–xii) condescends: ‘if I am not mistaken, they would pronounce ... *sinner*, *see-ner*’. The Scots commentator, Sylvester Douglas, in his HIS entry (Jones 1991: 202), suggests a similar close to pure palatal realization of the item’s vowel space: ‘At Edinburgh, and in the adjoining counties, this pronoun instead of being made to rhyme to *is*, is pronounced as if written *hees*’. This phenomenon is one of the most common Scotticisms observed by Douglas, although it is often characterized as ‘vernacular’

rather than 'vulgar'. Again, his LIBERTY entry recommends an 'i short', with 'The Scotch are apt to give it the long vocal sound of *e*, or *ee* as in *leer*, *leave*'; *sieve* 'rhymes to *give*. This is the vernacular Scotch pronunciation [sic: CJ]; but many people make it rhyme to *receive*'. So too under SICK: 'The *i* has its short obscure sound as in *thick*. The Scotch make this the same word, to the ear, with *seek*'; WHIM: 'In this word and in *swim*, the Scotch give the *i* its long vocal sound like the *ee* in *seem*. But it should be pronounced short as in *him*'; WICK: 'pronounce like *lick*. The Scotch make this, to the ear, the same word with *week*'. What is interesting here, of course, is that this Scottish observer is concerned to project a 'polite' pronunciation based – not upon a London model – but upon what he perceived to be the standard Scottish version used by speakers associated with the Pulpit, the Bar and the Universities. It is important to bear in mind too that his repeated use of 'to the ear' in this context may possibly imply near, rather than total homophony, although his use of the description 'short obscure sound' for the vowel in *thick*, does suggest a qualitative contrast with the vowel in *seek*.

Sensitivity to slight phonetic contrasts in this area of the phonology is a strong feature of many of the Scottish observers in the eighteenth century. For instance, Alexander Geddes (1792: 431, 434) perceives a contrast between what for him are apparently distinguishable palatal segments: His '*e* long as in *scene*: The sound of this letter is hardly distinguishable from that of *i* or English *ee*' which he represents by the *è* graph and exemplifies in items such as *apèr* 'appear', *bèch* 'beech', *drèkhli* 'dreichly', *très* 'trees' etc. (Jones 1994: 79). At the same time he appears to recognise and distinguish (by means of an *ì* graph) another entity, the '*i* Italian, or English *ee*'; this is the true original sound of *i*, and the only one the Italians, Spaniards and Germans know' (1792: 423). This sound, he claims, is 'equivalent to our *ee*'. The set of items he indicates as showing this '*i* Italian' are *city* 'city', *citizens* 'citizens', *civil* 'civil', *Britain* 'Britain', – the 'short *i*' types (although he also includes *inspiran* 'inspiring' in this list). But we might be tempted to treat Geddes' observation that *è* and *ì* are 'hardly distinguishable' as an admission of close identity, rather than one of homophony. It is important to recognise too how that extremely careful observer Alexander Scot (Jones 1993: 109–11) differentiates *ee* spelt words such as *mischeevous*, *civeeletays*, *veezet*, *leeberaul*, *ooteeletay*, *eemaugenatione* and *Breetish* from those spelt with *i*, such as *min* 'mean', *spic* 'speak', *rid* 'read', *swit* 'sweet', etc. Certainly Scot's representations involving such close proximity of the two symbols within a single lexical item such as *civeeletays* 'civilities' and in a phrase like *swit freendship* 'sweet friendship' suggest that some kind of qualitative distinction was observable. That one can perhaps argue for the existence of a palatal segment 'intermediate' between [i] and [j] in the phonetic inventory of late-eighteenth-century Scots and standard English speakers (but see McMahon 1998: 117) is at least implicit in Sylvester Douglas' observation (Jones 1991: 193) that: 'In *is*, which the Scotch pronounce in the same manner with the English pronunciation of *fit*, *wit*, *fin*, something nearer the *i* in *caprice*'. Sylvester Douglas is notorious for his use of a descriptive nomenclature dependent upon phrases such as 'a shade of', 'close to', 'nearly', but we would be rash to dismiss his 'something nearer' attribute as insignificant.¹³⁰

Several English observers note that the Scots ‘short *i*’ has a quality distinct from their own usage and often tend to parody it or, we might suggest, exaggerate certain aspects of its phonetic composition. We have already seen how William Tiffin (1751: 92) laments that ‘The Cause of the greatest Difficulty lies in this, that the different pronunciations of the same Word in different parts of the Nation, may cause what is mean’t [*sic*] of one Vowel or Diphthong by the Writer, to be understood of another by the Reader’. Tiffin (perhaps like Walker and others later) sees a vowel difference between *beat* and *beet* types, the short version of the former, not the latter, being *bit*. For this short sound, he too claims that Northern speakers often substitute the long vowel in *beet*: ‘as *seek* for *sick*’. Tiffin’s Seventh Vowel – that in *but* – he notes is not a characteristic of Northern dialect speakers (who have yet to produce the FOOT/STRUT split), ‘But I have often heard *North Britons* pronounce it, though not in its own place; as *stuff* for *stiff*, *Tuffin* for my name; and more southerly *furty* for *forty* is sounded by the same persons, who contrarywise sound *thorty* for *thirty*’. In other words there seems to be a ‘double Scotticism’ whereby ‘short *i*’ can be either a ‘near’ pure palatal sound or, it would seem here, some kind of segment closer to [ʌ], perhaps the precursor of the Modern Scots [ɛ̃] in *bit*, *hit* types.

But before we can assign any value to the ‘short *i*’ in standard London usage, we need to assess Sylvester Douglas’ complex observations in a little more detail. Douglas (Jones 1991: 129) recognises several different kinds of *i* sounds (in addition to the ‘long’ diphthongal type). The ‘first sound of *e*’ he identifies as the ‘universal sound in Italian’, which is ‘not found in many English words’, except *Eloisa*, *Clementina*, *Virginia*, *Racimne*, *marine*, *magazine*, and *caprice*. Secondly, he identifies the ‘short close’ version of this – in *picture*, *fixture*, *sin* – a sound which, he claims, ‘is almost peculiar to our language’. This sound, he avers, has ‘two different shades’ which are ‘easily perceived by an attentive ear’. The first is in pre-[r] contexts, where the vowel sound ‘approaches near to’, ‘but seems not entirely the same with, the short *u*’. One might argue that for items like *first*, *thirst*, Douglas hears a vowel sound like [ə] rather than [ʌ]. The other shade of this short close sound ‘approaches’ a shortened version of the ‘first sound of *e*’, perhaps interpretable as [i]. But in what he describes as the ‘pure’ (metropolitan) dialect there are two separate types of this *short close sound* (Jones 1991: 129ff). Under his FILL entry (Jones 1991: 193–4), he makes an important further distinction between two different ‘shades’ of short close sounds in non-rhotic contexts. He claims that in the ‘pure’ dialect there is a special type of palatal vowel (his *obscure short i*) to be found where syllables terminate in voiced obstruents and voiced fricatives, i.e. in items like *is*, *big*, *live*, *crib*, *smithy*. Yet another, and separate, type surfaces where syllables end in a variety of shapes, including voiceless obstruents, lateral sonorants and dental nasals: *kick*, *kill*, *ship*, *Liffy*, *skim*, *kin*. He notes that ‘In *is*, which the Scotch pronounce in the same manner with the English pronunciation of *fit*, *wit*, *fin*, something nearer the *i* in *caprice*. But this I believe is owing to a property common to all the softer semivowels and mutes (viz. this soft *s*, *v*, the soft *th*, the *b*, the *d* and the *g*) by which they reflect back, as it were, a sort of hollowness on a preceding obscure and short vowel’. Thus, when the syllable coda is of the ‘class’

voiced fricative or voiced obstruent, an 'obscure' *i* is realized, contrasting with what is described as a more 'hollow' version, where the syllable is terminated by 'the softer semivowels and mutes (viz. the soft *s*, the *v*, the soft *th* the *b* the *d* and the *g*)'. Lexically, the contrast is to be seen in *fit*, *wit*, *fin*, *is*, *skim*, *Liffy*, *lizard*, *women*, *kick*, *kill*, *kit*, *ship*, *pith* as against the 'more hollow' *big*, *bid*, *crib*, *smithy*, *live*.

We might therefore speculate that for Douglas, the Pure (Metropolitan) dialect shows a pure palatal 'Italian' vowel space in [i], in addition to vocoids which, while palatal, are not so palatal as [i], and might therefore be treated as [ɨ], or even as some slightly lowered version like [ɨ̞]. This group of items has stressed syllable codas which are either voiced fricatives or voiced obstruents. A third group, in a variety of post-vocalic contexts, show a vowel space which is perceived as more 'hollow', where the codas 'reflect back as it were, a sort of hollowness on a preceding obscure and short vowel', a 'hollowness' illustrated by Douglas as typical of the stressed vowel space in items like *drum*, *sullen*, *dub* and *tub*. This second set might therefore be interpreted as showing a more sonorant (more central and lower) segment than [ɨ], perhaps [ɨ̞], the retracted front unrounded vowel. We might be tempted, therefore, to interpret such 'hollow' *i* sounds as identical to those found in pre-[r] contexts, where the *i* 'approaches nearly to, but seems not entirely the same with, the short *u*' – we have suggested some kind of [ə] vowel sound. But Douglas recognises a distinction between this and the 'obscure' *u*, in those contexts where hollowness is produced by the 'softer semivowels and mutes' and elsewhere: 'What I mean will be manifest by attending successively to the sound of the obscure *u* first in *luck*, *skull*, *burr*, *but*, *buss*, *sup*, *scum*, *bun*; and then in *tug*, *bud*, *tub*, *buzz*', a distinction he sees reflected too in a comparison between *kick*, *kill*, *kin*, *kit*, *ship*, *skim*, *pith*, *Liffy* on the one hand, and *big*, *bid*, *crib*, *smithy*, *live* on the other. There is perhaps to be read into this some sense of a 'relative hollowness' where the short *u* types in *first*, *thirst* are to represent [ə], and a 'less hollow' vowel space in *kick*, *kill*, *kin*, *kit*, *ship* on the other, where some kind of less centralized [ɨ] is perceived. In other words, this Scots observer claims that London English has a three-way (and possibly phonetically conditioned) contrast in the palatal vowel space: on the one hand between (1) the Italian [i], (2) an [ɨ]/[ɨ̞] segment, and (3) a more centralized [ɨ]. The fact that he recognises such a range of contrasts perhaps stems from his own Scots pronunciation characteristics:

As there is only a slight shade, or gradation, between the Scotch method of sounding the *i*, in *fill*, *fit*, *wit* &c. and the English, the difference generally escapes the attention of Scotchmen who are endeavouring to mend their pronunciation [*sic*: CJ]. It is however so sensible to the English, that when they mean to ridicule the Scotch dialect they frequently lay hold of this circumstance ... Indeed, as caricature adds to the ridicule in all sorts of mimicry the English in their imitation exaggerate the Scotch pronunciation of the short *i*, and turn it into the obscure *u* or *a*. 'What's your wull?' 'You have a great deal of wat'. (Jones 1991: 194).

Clearly in this *obscure/hollow* alternation we are dealing with a phonetic opposition which for Scottish speakers apparently involved only a slight acoustic contrast, and one they claim to be also extant in London 'polite' speech.

Yet there is little to show from the orthoepical evidence of most English commentators that for Metropolitan speakers an opposition like one between *fill/big* was heard, suggesting that it was below the level of conscious recognition, a suggestion re-inforced by the general lack of comment on any sociophonetic significance for any BIT/BEAT split there.¹³¹ Certainly, Fogg's (1792: 19) evidence seems to support any suggestion that this split was, if anything, initiated in Northern dialect speakers. For instance, this Lancastrian schoolteacher (Verrac 2000, 2002) still seems to make a distinction between his 8th Sound – *γ* or *i* in *pity* – and his 7th – *ee* in *feel* (likewise his 12th, the second component in his diphthongal *auee* in *find*), despite his claim that 'their difference is trivial'. The 8th sound he says is found in items like *bit* and *pink* ('before one or more consonants not followed by silent *e*'), although in his *Exceptions*, the *i* graph is represented in his re-spellings by *ee*, as in 'accipien', *akseepyunt*, 'alliciency', *aleeshunsy*; 'comitial', *coameeshal*; 'disme', *deem*; 'equilibrium', *eekwyleebryum* and several others.¹³² Likewise, under his discussion of *γ* (1792: 9), he contrasts 'synod', *sinod*; 'system', 'myriad', *meryud*; 'tyranny', with the *Exceptions*: 'abysm', *abeem*; 'collyrtium', *colleeryum*; 'Elysian', *eleeyzun*; 'empyrium', *empeeryum*; 'Strygian', *steedzhun*. We shall explore below the possibility that the emergence of an [ɨ]/[i] and [i] component to the phonology of late-eighteenth-century English might well constitute a 'compromise' or 'fudge' between the pure palatal [i] and whatever is represented by the graph *i* in pre-[r] contexts.

4.1.2 Happy tensing

The tendency to give a tense high value to the final syllable in items like *happy* and *city* was one which we saw to be pretty well advanced in the early part of the eighteenth century. In the following half-century the tendency is, if anything, reinforced with the bulk of major commentators attesting to its existence, although there is some evidence to suggest that its use is *passé*, even lacking in propriety, with a tendency to supplant the tense by what might be some shortened (or even lax) version of the vowel. Walker's observations unambiguously illustrate the phenomenon (1791: 23): 'The unaccented sound of this letter [Y final: CJ] at the end of a syllable, like that of the *i* in the same situation, is always like the first sound of *e*. Thus *vanity*, *pleurisy*, &c. if sound alone were consulted, might be written *vanitee*, *pleurisee*, &c.' and so throughout his *Dictionary*, in items such as *dirty*, *indulgently*, *propriety* and so on. Sheridan takes a similar position: 'the first [sound of *y*] perceived in the last syllable of *lovely*, is only the short sound of *e*³ in *beer*'. Johnston too records (1764: 46) his 'long *e*', spelt *ey* in items like *attorney*, *honey*, *journey*, as well as in proper names such as *Kelley*, *Kearsley* and *Wheatley*. Buchanan quite categorically states (1762: 13) that *γ* at the end of words is like his (i), a 'short sound', as in *duty*, *certainty*, *prosperity*, *delicacy*, his short (i) being 'almost full (ee)'. Coote (1788: 25) declares that 'In *cruelty*, *parsimony*, *godly*, *happy*, *thirty*, &c. *γ* receives a short sound, resembling that which it has in *patriot*', the value of this short sound described as (1788: 22): 'In *patriot*, *warrior*, &c. it sounds as the *e* in *me*, but is short. In *magazine*, *machine*, &c. it assumes the sound of *ee*'. Thomas Spence (1775) too seems everywhere to prefer a tense high front vowel,

represented by his upper-case *E* symbol, in items like *divinity*, *diversity*, *heady*, *intimacy* and many others, especially interesting since it appears that his system also seems to witness a genuinely qualitative BIT/BEAT contrast, with a modified upper-case *ɜ* symbol for the former; *divinity* thus realized as (dɪvɪnɪɛ). But such an interpretation of the value for the *y* in unstressed syllables at the end of the eighteenth century is not universally accepted, and there is some evidence that whatever is meant by a ‘short *i*’ vowel is being used in these contexts, although we have already tentatively suggested that such a vowel may, in fact, itself be tense rather than lax in value. Smith is particularly emphatic on the subject (1795: xxvii *Footnote*):

Mr. Walker ... invariably marks this sound of the *i* or *y* [his *i* and *y* ‘intermediate’ as in *charity*, *marly*: CJ] with the long *e*. I think he must be in the wrong; for, surely there is an evident distinction between the first and last syllable in the word *ea-sy*; nor could *vanity*, I apprehend, with any degree of propriety, be written *vanitee*, as he says, if the sound alone were consulted – *pleurisy*, *pleurisee*. Dr. Kenrick, and Mr. Scott, mark it with short *i*; which seems, at least to my ear, nearer the truth. But I humbly think that Mr. Sheridan has the advantage of all his predecessors and followers, in making it a distinct sound.

Is the ‘evident distinction’ involving this ‘intermediate vowel’ one of quality or quantity contrast? Kenrick (1784: 50) takes the position that *y* has what he describes as ‘the slender sound it has in *Phyz*, and at the end of polysyllables, as in *charity*, *divinity*, &c.’ Rudd (1755: 55) goes a little further still in his description of the value of *i* in *ti*- combinations, appearing to suggest an ‘obscure’, perhaps schwa-like value, one accorded its own new, diacritically marked, symbol: ‘*Ti* has its proper sound when *Ti*, or, doubling the *i*, *Tÿ*, ends a word, whether substantive or adjective; as *Pitÿ*, *loftÿ*’ going on to claim ‘*Ti* takes the sound of *Te*, in pronouncing the word *Celestial*, called *celesteal*: unless we choose to consider the *i* (which I take to be the real fact) as having it’s [sic] true sound, only in a faint, obscure way’. We have already seen how for Fogg (1796: 157), his seventh and eighth sounds appear to be distinguished purely by quantity – his *feel/pity* stressed vowel contrast. It is interesting to note, however, that under his discussion of his seventh sound – the *ee* in *feel* – he lists a number of exceptions – such as *cheerful*, *e’er*, *breeches*, *cleanly* and *leap*, among others – where an [ii] value is not used. Among these exceptions he also lists *committee*, *levee* and *trochee*, respelled as *comity*, *levy*, *trochy* (later also respelling *honey* and *money* as *hony*, *mony*), suggesting a value other than [i]. The Scot Bell’s evidence is difficult to interpret; he notes how ‘*i* or *y* change its sound for *e* also, in almost all syllables, having no accent on them’, while ‘[*y*] changes its sound for that of *e*’, at the unaccented end of polysyllabic words: respelling *busy*, *directly* and *body* as (biz-se), (de-reck-le) and (bo-de), and *truly* and *liberty* as (trule) and (liberte); although he also respells *city* and *cypher* as (si-ty) and (sy-pher). But it is difficult to know what his *e* symbol stands for in such instances; it may be his *e* or *i* short as in the second syllable of *fountain*, or it might just as well be interpreted as a durationally shortened version

of his ‘e long’, variously rendered as (quēn) for *queen* or (macheen) for *machine*, and even, apparently (beety) for *beauty* (1769: 44). That the presence of *Happy Tensing* is, as much as anything else, lexically constrained is clear from the observations of Solomon Lowe. Lowe (1755: 36, 55) assures us that *bury* in *Canterbury* sounds *berreë*, with his *ĭ* or *ee* short in non-accented syllables as in *finely* and *mystery*. On the other hand (1755: 75), he appears to suggest that there is a set of exceptions to this value for *γ*, in that he respells *Abergavenny* as *ab-er-ghe-nee*; *already* as *a-red-ee*; *China* as *chey-nee*; *furmenty* as *fur-men-tee* and *Salisbury* as *saulz-bur-ee*.

4.1.3 High and mid front palatal vowel values in the late eighteenth century: high vowel diphthongization and a MEAT/MEET non-merger

In the previous section we have been making the, perhaps unwarranted, assumption that the tense component of the tense/lax contrast in the high front vowel area was one describable in terms of an opposition between [i] and whatever value we came to assign to the lax variant. And while we have had occasion to question the precise phonetic value of the latter, we have taken it for granted that the raised version of Middle English [ee] was some kind of [ii] (but see Gabrielsson 1930–31). However, there is some evidence to suggest that this is an oversimplified interpretation of the contemporary phonetic facts, and that observers were able to distinguish between the vowel sounds in items like *beet* and *beat*, even though both were in the same general high front palatal area. For instance, as early as 1751, we see Tiffin inferring a phonetic contrast between his long Vowel 3 in *beat*, *sea* and long Vowel 4 in *beet*, *grief* and *see* (Kökeritz 1944: 92–3). Given their derivational histories, there is perhaps nothing unexpected in positing a phonetic contrast between such sets of items, nor in the fact that Tiffin should tell us that ‘For the third Vowel long the Northern (for instance Lancashire) frequently sound the second long’ while ‘In Leicestershire, *Bay*, *lay*, *may*, *Tail*, &c. are commonly pronounc’d with the third Vowel, but more emphatically with the fourth’. Certainly, Tiffin’s articulatory description of the two sets of sounds is quite distinctive: his Vowel 3 is described as (Matthews 1963: 42–6): ‘Advance the swelling of the tongue about half way forward under the Bone of the Roof, and let the Edges press the upper Jaw-Gums a little; and there you meet the vowel spelt with *ea* in *meat*.’ while his Vowel 4 is: ‘Bring the swelling as near as ever you can to the Roof of the Mouth and Fore Gum, hold the edges of the Tongue somewhat stiff against the upper Jaw-Gums; and so you may pronounce the fourth Vowel, as in *See*, *seem*, *Eel*, &c.’ Although it is difficult to assess the precise nature of the contrast he describes, that some kind of contrast did exist is supported by Entick’s observations of a few years later, in 1765 (and repeated by Ash (1763: 3)):

I cannot be persuaded to think, that the *e* in *the* and *me*, and the *e* in *thee* which is the same thing, are to be sounded exactly alike. It is confessed that among fine speakers, especially in London, there is a prevailing affectation of confounding these two sounds, or rather of losing the second in the last; and this,

perhaps, may be considered (pardon the expression) as one of the provincial modes of pronunciation in the metropolis. For want of this distinction, however, many words are confounded in the English language, which seem to have a sufficient claim to be distinguished: such as *thee, the; meet, meat; beet, beat*; and many others that might be enumerated.

Walker too (1791: 5) hints at such a distinction (Horn and Lehnert 1954: 235–6) in his description of the *e* in *equal*, which ‘is formed by dilating the tongue a little more [than for the slender *a* in *lane*: CJ] and advancing it nearer to the palate and the lips, which produces the slenderest vowel in the language: for the tongue is, in the formation of this letter, as close to the palate as possible, without touching it; at the moment the tongue touches the palate, the squeezed sound of *e* in *thee* and *meet* is formed, which by description, must partake of the sound of the consonant *y*’. His description of this last being that (1791: 7): ‘formed by placing the organs in the position of *e*, and squeezing the tongue against the roof of the mouth, which produces *ee*, which is equivalent to initial *y*’. Indeed, this ‘squeezed’ sound he sees as the characteristic of the onset glide to the diphthong in items like *unit*: ‘The *u* in *u-nit*, is formed by uniting the squeezed sound *ee* to a simple sound, heard in *woo* and *coo*’. But, it seems, Walker is not altogether convinced of the lack of merger between *meet* and *meat* (1791: XX)

In all words, except those that end in *r* [the digraph *ee*: CJ] has a squeezed sound of long open *e*, formed by a closer application of the tongue to the roof of the mouth than the vowel simple, which is distinguishable to a nice ear, in the different sounds of the verbs, *to feel* and *to meet* and the nouns *flea* and *meat*. This has always been my opinion; but upon consulting some good speakers on the occasion, and in particular Mr. Garrick, who could find no difference in the sounds of those words, I am less confident in giving it to the public.

In his *An Essay on Grammar*, William Ward, Master of high school at Beverley, East Yorkshire, appears to recognise a similar contrast between different types of high, front vowel segments, stating that (1765: 305): ‘*Ea* has the sound of *e* long and open, as *dream, stream*; or of *ee*, that is, of *e* long and close, as *dear, fear* but in *bread, stead, sweat*, and some other words, *ea* has the sound of *e* short and close’. He is prepared to make what seems to be a third phonetic contrast when he claims that (1765: 306): ‘*Ei* has a sound which is intermediate between the open and close sounds of *ea* long, as in *tieze, perceive, yield* and *believe*’. While it is difficult to determine what actually constitutes his open/close contrast – and those of the latter he chooses to cite are all in pre-[r] contexts which might just suggest a lowered, mid [e/ɛ] value¹³³ – the fact that he sees a phonetic difference between *dream, stream* on the one hand and *perceive, yield* on the other might just suggest a genuine qualitative distinction, since a purely length contrast would be unlikely as both syllable terminations are traditional ‘lengthening environments’ anyway.

While the exact nature of any such opposition is hard to specify, it may well represent observers’ sensitivity to fine phonetic detail. Walker’s observation, for

instance, that a ‘squeezed’ sound is involved, one which is equated with the first element of the [ju] diphthong and typified as a γ vowel, might just suggest that in the English of the late eighteenth century, there had developed for some items with vowel space descended from Middle English [ee], some kind of [j] glide, so that instead of realizing [ii], these items showed something like [ji] or [iɪ]. Such a development has been noted by Wells (1982: 306) and described as *Diphthong Shift*. Such a phenomenon, Wells argues, is typical of London speech today, specifically Cockney usage, where the first element may be as low and central as [ə] as in [bəɪbəɪsəɪ] for *BBC*. However, Wells suggests that the first recorded instance of this diphthongization is to be found in Bernard Shaw’s ‘representation of the alphabet in Cockney as “I, Ber-ee, Ser-ee, Der-ee, Er-ee”’. If our comments on the usage of Entick, Ward and Walker’s bear scrutiny,¹³⁴ then the usage is to be found at least a century and a half earlier and, indeed, if we can interpret the inverted *i* symbols *!//* used by John Wild (1703) in items like *life*, *sight* and *we*, *see* respectively as evidence of diphthongization in the latter (to something like [əi]) (Jones 2001), it can be witnessed earlier still. That late-eighteenth-century observers as Ward and Tiffin recognise such a diphthongization may just suggest that its origins lie outside the metropolis. The Northerner Fogg (1796: 166), for instance, notes what looks to be a similar phenomenon in ‘Derbyshire, and the borders of the neighbouring counties, they substitute for *ee* a sound unknown to the pure English and compounded of \bar{e} and *ee*, pronouncing *mē-ee* for *me*’. While such speakers also ‘share in several of the errors before ascribed to Cheshire. They would pronounce “Hē-ee is ai fē-ool, whoa gyives up his moind entoirly to my-ooisic, and is plē-eesed with nothing bet-ther than ai swē-eet sā-oond”’.¹³⁵

4.1.4 Mid-front palatal vowel values in the late eighteenth century

We have seen how many observers in the late eighteenth century witness a merger under some kind of [i] vowel of segments which in Middle (and some early Modern) English varieties showed either [ee] or even [εε]. Nevertheless exceptions (and many of them seem to be lexically rather than phonetically determined) to this part of the *English Vowel Shift* attract much comment in the period, some of it of a sociophonetic nature. Much of the contemporary discussion centres around the phonetic value represented by the *ea* digraph, usually whether that value is high or mid-high.¹³⁶ Walker has an extensive discussion of this issue (1791: 28–30), arguing that the digraph has a ‘regular sound ... of the first sound of *e* in *here*’ arguing for a raising to some kind of [ii] from a low-mid Middle English value in [εε], a MEET/MEAT merger. However, he shows that the regular value – ‘like open *e*’ – contrasts with one for this digraph which is ‘the irregular sound of short *e*’, which is so frequent a value for *ea*, as to make ‘a catalogue of both necessary’. The words are listed respectively in his sections 227 and 234 and contain the expected entries such as *beaver*, *defeat*, *gleam*, *heal*, *hear* in the former, and *death*, *leather*, *meant*, *spread* in the latter. However, Walker lists anomalies, especially among items in the first set, where alongside high front values for *beard* and *bearded*, he observes that such words are sometimes ‘pronounced as if written *berd*

and *berded*', although he is careful to disassociate himself from such pronunciations as, he claims, 'this corruption of the diphthong, which Mr. Sheridan has adopted, seems confined to the Stage'. He also 'rationalizes' alternate pronunciations, assigning different lexical values to each, such that '*Ea* in *fearful* is long when it signifies *timorous*, and short when it signifies *terrible*, as if written *ferful*'. He notes too that alternation exists in individual lexical items, seeming to reflect language improvement based upon some kind of analogy. Listing *zealot*, *zealous*, and *zealously* in his 'short *e*' catalogue, he nevertheless observes (1791: 29): 'I have given [these words: CJ] compounded of *zeal*, as instances of the short sound of the diphthong, because it certainly is the more usual sound; but some attempts have lately been made in the House of Commons to pronounce them long, as in the noun. It is a commendable zeal to endeavour to reform the language as well as the constitution; but whether, if these words are altered, it would be a real reformation, may admit of some dispute'. Yet the situation is more complex than this. Walker claims, without sociolinguistic comment, that his 'open *e*' (as in *ahead*, *already*) is the vowel sound in items like *cleanly*, *seamstress* and *uncleanly*, yet the use of a high front vowel in the past tense of the verb *hear*, 'is sometimes corruptly pronounced with the diphthong long, so as to rhyme with *rear'd*; but this is supposing the verb to be regular; which, from the spelling, is evidently not the case'.¹³⁷ Still, his concerns for analogy and regularity seem to give way to usage, when he observes (1791: 29):

Beat, the preterimperfect tense, and participle to *beat*, is frequently pronounced in Ireland like *bet* (a wager): and if utility were the only object of language, this would certainly be the preferable pronunciation, as nothing tends more to obscurity than verbs which have no different form for their present and past times; but fashion in this, as in many other cases, triumphs over use and propriety, and *bet*, for the past time and participle of *beat*, must be religiously avoided.

Walker assigns pronunciations to items deriving from low mid Middle English values which are themselves apparently unraised; thus for words such as *bear*, *break*, *forbear*, *forswear*, *great*, *pear*, *swear*, *to tear* and *wear*, he argues for a 'long slender *a*' like the *a* in *bane*, which – as we shall argue below – is probably something in the region of [eɾ] or [eɹ] – perhaps reflecting the lowering influence of the rhotic syllable termination in many of the items he cites.¹³⁸ Famously, *great* and *break* have attracted much comment both by contemporary observers and modern critics. Walker records a [grit] pronunciation 'generally by people of education, and almost universally in Ireland; but this is contrary to the fixed and settled practice in England', where mid vowel manifestations are the norm, especially in a phrase like 'Alexander the Great'. His criterion for judging the mid vowel pronunciation as acceptable in this last instance, is purely phonaesthetic, since it is 'deeper and more expressive of the epithet *great*'. A similar rationale is proposed for preferring [bre/εk] rather than [brik] for *break*, the former 'much more expressive of the action when pronounced *brake* than *breek*, as it is sometimes affectedly pronounced'

(1791: 30). Provincial and other kinds of constraints on the extent of any MEET/MEAT merger are well highlighted by Kenrick (1784: 64):

It may here be necessary to advertise the speaker again of the mistaken practice of the provinces, in using the long sound of the *e*, or slender sound of the *a*, instead of the protracted sound of the short *i*, No. XIV of the Dictionary [his [i]: CJ]: and the rather because I observe that Dr. Bayly, and others, seem to authorise this corrupt method of pronunciation; 'In words, says this last mentioned writer, having an *e* final, the *e* is mute, and serveth only to lengthen another vowel, thus *make* and *take* are pronounced as if written *meak* and *teak*, as in *eat*, *break*, *speak*'. I can yet hardly conceive, that this learned writer meant to say that *make* and *take* have the same quality of sound as *eat*, *break*, *speak*: and yet there must be some misconception, as the three words last exemplified are not usually pronounced by good speakers in the same manner. *Break* is generally sounded like *brake*, *make*, *take*, but few, except the natives of Ireland and the provinces, say *ate*, *spake*, but *eat*, *speak*, agreeably to the 14th sound of the Dictionary [*meet*, *meat*, *deceit*: CJ].

But this is indeed what Bayly at least superficially seems to suggest. In his *Plain and Complete Grammar* (1772) he provides various values for orthographic *i*, *e* and *ea*. Crucially he makes a distinction between 'i long', 'e long' and 'ea long'. The first he claims appears in items like *dew* and *chief*, the former showing the customary late-eighteenth-century interpretation of the modern [ju] diphthong; an item like *dew* being rendered 'as if written *diew*'. However, and perhaps crucially, he also respells the item *keep* as *kiep*, suggesting perhaps that, like Walker and others, he hears something akin to the the *Cockney Diphthong Shift*,¹³⁹ thus claiming what we might tentatively suggest are diphthongal values for his other 'long i' items like *view*, *chief*, *field*, *bee*, *knee*, *sheep* and so on. Bayly is careful to distinguish at least three different types of *ea* improper diphthongal value. In the first place, in pre-[r] environments the 'e is changed into i long', as in *dear*, *fear*, *ear*, with the *a* represents a close *u*; clearly some kind of falling diphthong. Secondly, *ea* can be 'long' as in items like *mary*, *make*, and *take* which, Bailey claims, not very helpfully, are pronounced as if written *meary*, *meak* and *teak* (1772: 17). Otherwise, the *ea* digraph, along with *e + i* as well as *e* in 'final -e' contexts, is to be treated as 'e long', as in *beam*, *deceive*, *glebe*. What all this might suggest is that Bayly recognises values like [ji] or [iɪ] for his 'long i'; [i] (or even [e-]) for his 'long e'; while the 'ea long' in *mary*, *make* items could be construed as [e]. Thus his 'e long' examples in *dare*, *fare*, *mare*, *share* represent high mid front values unless we want to see in Bayly's system a greater degree of sophistication, where 'ea long' and 'e long' have different phonetic values in [e] and [e-] respectively. At any rate, Kenrick's anxieties seem to arise purely from a confusion of Bayly's interpretation and use of the *ea* digraph.¹⁴⁰

From the extensive evidence of Smith's *An Attempt to Render the Pronunciation of the English Language More Easy to Foreigners* (1795) it would appear that for that author, the MEET/MEAT merger was complete,¹⁴¹ his long lists of words with his 'fourth sound, as in *he*, *pease*, ... exactly the same with that in the French words *lie*

(dregs) and *bise* (north east wind) and the German fem. Article *die* (the) and *kies* (gravel)' encompassing *he, me, free, tree, sneak, squeak, deal, heal, ween, wean, clean, glean* and so on. However, the precise value his third sound 'as in *aye, vain*' is worthy of comment. Smith describes this sound (1795: 9) as having the same vowel as *aye, vain* and as 'nearly the same with the French sound in the words *ais* (board), *veine* (vein), or rather an intermediate sound between these two words, and exactly the German *a*, with two dots over it thus, *ä*; Ex. *gähm*, (thou shalt gape)'. Indeed, he appears to equate this vowel with the traditional 'short *e*', his Ninth Sound (1795: 37): 'Ninth sound, as in *bet, bell*, exactly the same as that in the French words *dette* (debt), and *belle* (handsome); and the German words *bette* (bed), *bäll* (imp. howl).' It would appear, therefore, that for Smith at least, long low vowels in Middle English had been raised to only a low-mid value (perhaps [ɛ] or even [ɛː]) in whatever dialect of English he is describing, although it is difficult to determine what he means by an 'intermediate sound' here. Items listed for his Third Sound are many, and have both monophthongal and diphthongal derivational sources: *ale, bale, hail, frail, trail, wage, sage, cage, weighed, wade, plain, stain, range, change, grange, strange, paste, waste* and many others. That the value of the segment is somewhat lower than [ɛ], is perhaps suggested too by the fact that for some speakers it was interpreted as [a]: '*slake*: This word is pronounced as I have classed it by all our respectable Orthoepists: nevertheless bricklayers, and their labourers, universally pronounce it with the short *a*, as if written *slack*' (1795: 11 *Footnote*).¹⁴²

4.1.4a Exceptions

It is perhaps not too great an exaggeration to claim that almost every student of the historical phonology of English knows that items like *break, great* and *steak* and some others fail to conform to the dictates of the *English Vowel Shift* by remaining in a mid-vowel state in the modern language, even though some observers in the eighteenth century, as we have already seen, record [brik], [grit] manifestations (Wyld 1937: 172–3; Ellis 1869: 88–9), classically exemplified in Walker's observations on *break* and others cited in the previous section. Indeed, it is possibly not too great a claim to make that one of the most salient vowel alternations throughout the century was that between such mid and high vowel contrasts; the vowel segments involved, it should be noted, were not always derivative from Middle English long vowel sources (and thus be treated as *English Vowel Shift* anomalies), but on a great many occasions their historical origins were short. In many ways the contemporary discussion of the acceptable pronunciation of the item *beard* encapsulates the various issues and value judgements involved. Walker, as we have already seen, supports a high vowel for this item, commenting that any [berd] pronunciation is a 'corruption confined to the stage'; the Sheridan-following author of *Vocabulary*, on the other hand, comments (1797):

I have pronounced this word after Mr. Walker [i.e. as *bee³rd* [bird]: CJ], though it certainly is very difficult to express its true sound by letters. An anonymous critic says, it should be pronounced the same as *d* added to *bear*; and I much doubt if he is not right. Mr. Sheridan has given it a shorter sound than Mr. Walker, and

marks it be¹rd; this, the latter thinks, is confined to the stage; but I believe it is rarely so pronounced any where, and I remember a few years ago, a celebrated actress was much ridiculed in the morning papers, for sounding it in that manner.¹⁴³

Again, his observations on the pronunciation of *break* (justified by tradition and literary example) record contemporary prejudices for the [ɛ]/[i] alternation: 'I have followed Mr. Walker in the pronunciation of this word, in preference to Mr. Sheridan, who pronounces it *breek* (bre³k). But notwithstanding custom being at present in favour of Mr. Walker, I am led to think Mr. Sheridan's pronunciation was the usage formerly, however affected it may sound to a modern ear; for it is a common rhyme to *speak*, as may be seen in Dr. Johnston's *Dictionary*, where there are four instanced from Dryden; and from Tickell, Swift and Prior, one each'. And again, under *cheerful*, he observes: 'I have followed Mr. Sheridan in giving the *ee*, in the first syllable of this word, the short sound of the *e* in *bet*; and though Mr. Walker has marked it both long and short (leaving the student to his choice), yet he observes, that "custom has given the short sound considerable currency", and I believe it is supported by the best usage everywhere'. A very similar recognition of variation in these items is recorded by Smith (1795: 127) who records *cheerful* and *fearful*¹⁴⁴ with his Vowel 9, some kind of [ɛ]: 'This, I believe, is the most general pronunciation, and I have joined the following word [*fearful*: CJ] to rhyme with it, although the first syllable be more frequently pronounced with the long *e*. Mr. Walker has marked *cheerful* both ways, and remarks upon the word *fearful*, that the first syllable is long when it signifies *timorous*, and short when it signifies *terrible*'. Individual items, such as *weapon*, also attract attention for an [i]/[ɛ] contrast, with *Vocabulary* commenting: 'This word is sometimes pronounced with the *ea* long, as in *heap*, *reap*, etc. and this is the manner in which it is sounded by Mr. W. Johnson; but all our other orthoepists pronounce it as marked above [with e¹: [ɛ]: CJ] and this is assuredly the best usage'. So too Smith (1797: 66) observes how 'W. Johnston, and almost all the citizens of London, pronounce this word as if marked by our fourth sound, and arranged with *deepen*, *cheapen*'.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the detailed descriptions given in the *Vocabulary* word lists is the information they provide as to the extent of [ɛ]/[e]/[i] alternations across the lexicon in general in vowels from a diverse set of historical origins. Items showing this alternation in a wide range of orthoepist sources include *cecity*, *cenatory*, *evangelical*, *evanescent*, *pedals* ('organ pipes'), *elixir*, *enfeof*, *fetid*, *legend*, *legislature*,¹⁴⁵ *lest*,¹⁴⁶ *metonymy*, *splinish*, *tenour*, *tenure*, while the contrast is also active in items with *pre*-affixes: *prefecture*, *presage*, *prescribe*. Given the vagaries of the MEAT/MEET merger, it is perhaps unsurprising that we find commentators in the period noting idiosyncratic [e]/[i] alternations. Items such as *quean* ('a barren cow'), *raisin* and *obsolete* are characterized as showing [i] by Walker, [e] by Sheridan, while Sheridan allows [i] for *heimous*, with Walker preferring [e]. Items like *tea* and *sea* with mid vowel manifestations attract comment for regional¹⁴⁷ and sociophonetic reasons only – the former affirmed by *Vocabulary* as 'in many counties it is improperly pronounced as if written *tay*', while for the

latter we are assured that ‘Our orthoepists are unanimous in sounding this word as if it were written *see*; but there is a vulgar pronunciation which prevails in some counties of sounding it *say*, rhyming with *day*, which should be carefully avoided’, a caution expressed by Walker as well for high vowel pronunciations of *plait* (‘to weave’). Elphinston comments on the alternation in a dialectal context (1786: 228–9): ‘In the Western British counties, where *e* so generally opens into *a*, we need not wonder if *key* (at London heard *kee*) be even affected *cay*, when so countenanced by the parent *quay* or *quai*. But, if the hwarf or *key* of the shore may be so warpt; clef or *clé* may, with equal reason, say I am dhe *key* of the door’.¹⁴⁸ Ellis (1869: 89) notes how, even in the mid-nineteenth century, [grit], [stiik] pronunciations ‘might have been heard from elderly speakers some thirty years ago, and those which have remained to the present day, are accounted *old* pronunciations’.

4.1.5 Low vowels

Our discussion of low vowels in the early eighteenth century suggested that this is perhaps the single area of late Modern English phonology where there is the greatest controversy and, indeed, uncertainty concerning the precise phonetic nature of a stressed vowel segment and its evolution. In particular, we are confronted with the difficulty of determining whether there is some kind of BATH/TRAP split in progress or existence and, if there is, what is its precise phonetic nature and set of contextual triggers (Beal 1999: 105–19; Horn and Lehnert 1954: 336–46; MacMahon 1998: 1143–6; Wyld 1953: 194–207). We have already noted in section 4.1.5 in Part I, how comment on low front vowels is relatively sparse in the 1700–1750 period, with little, if any evidence (at least amongst the English – with the possible exception of Tiffin – commentators) for either quantitative or qualitative contrasts in this area of the phonology. However, in the quarter-century or so following 1750, several observers begin to record oppositions, if not conclusively of a qualitative kind, but certainly of a contextually determined lengthening alternation. Neither Scott (1784) nor Entick (1795) show anything other than ‘short *a*’ – presumably [a] – values for items such as *cat*, *bat*, *alm*, *balm*, *dance*, *rather*, *fall* and even *haunch*. Likewise Bell (1769) claims ‘*a* short’ values in such items as *chance*, *lance*, *charge*, *large*, *farce*, *parse*, *relapse*. Yet he does appear to distinguish words showing what he marks as having *â* long (in *ããron* and *Bããl*), *ă* short (in *Isaac* and *Canaan*) and *ā* long in *fail*, *nail*, but the precise values for the first two are hard to determine from the limited data he supplies, while his inconsistent use of diacritics also seems suspect. Fenning (1771) is equally unhelpful, providing ‘*a* open’ descriptions for items such as *father*, *rather*, *blast* and *mast*, but – annoyingly – failing to mention *bat*, *cat* types at all. What might be a hint that at least some kind of quantitative contrast is emerging is provided by the observation of the Scot Mitford (1774: 34) that ‘*A* open is the usual sound of short *a*. It is long in *father*, *after*, *slander*, and in *dance*, *enhance*, *advance*, and some other words formerly spelt with *au*’. But it is the observations by William Johnston in his *A Pronouncing and Spelling Dictionary* (1764) which seem to record unequivocally, for the first time in the period, a set of alternations, phonetically conditioned, affecting the outputs of

‘short *a*’. Indeed, he offers a detailed articulatory description of the segment:

As there is no sound in the Scotch or French languages exactly like the English short *a*, as in *at*, *act*, *ádam*, so to convey some conception of it, I observe, that in sounding this letter, the root of the tongue presses downward, so as to open the mouth a little wider, than for sounding long or broad *a*, and the tip of it gently touches the inside of the under fore-teeth: a very short sound of the voice with the organs in this position, is that of short *a*; and as long *a* sound of it, in the same position, as that of a long vowel, is the sound of the long acute *a*, as in *fáther*, *grānt*, *lārgē*, &c. hereafter to be mentioned.

Such a description would suggest an air flow passing through a resonator showing a large followed by a narrow opening, a configuration suggestive of [a] rather than [a] or [ɒ]. On the other hand, the description is confusing, stating as it does that the mouth cavity is ‘a little wider’ than that for ‘broad *a*’, a sound he lists in items like *malt*, *pall*, *all*, *altar*, *bald* and many others (1764: 45).¹⁴⁹ Yet his assertion that ‘there is no sound in the Scotch or French languages exactly like the English short *a*’ is worth exploring a little farther, given the wealth of evidence we have for the pronunciation of English in Scotland throughout the eighteenth century (Jones 1995). Now, if it is the case that in the London dialect there was developing some contextually conditioned contrast between not only quantitatively different low vowels, but also one which involved some kind of qualitative distinction as well, say between [a] and [a], then it is one which might be most salient for those regional speakers, like the Scots, for whom any such distinction did not exist, or was in some way different (McKnight 1928: 453ff).

4.1.6 A Scotch digression

Much of the evidence from Scottish sources in the eighteenth century seems to suggest that for speakers of prestigious forms of Scottish English, there was no BATH/TRAP contrast, such items sharing a vowel segment which was relatively retracted, say [a̠] or even [a]. By the very late eighteenth century we find from the evidence in a much-neglected treatise (*Three Scottish Poems, with a previous dissertation on the Scoto-Saxon dialect*), by the Scot Alexander Geddes (1792) that a ‘short *a*’ of the [æ]/[a] type was at least uncommon in many kinds of Scots speech. Geddes utilizes an *á* graph which he describes as: ‘*a* Italian, as in *father*. The Scots seem formerly to have known no other sound of this letter, which is indeed the general sound all over the world, except in England.’ He exemplifies this sound in a variety of phonetic contexts in the ‘Edinburgh dialect’ items such as: *ábsint*; *admárâshon*; *áft* ‘oft’; *ál*; *áltar*; *áromátick*; *árun* ‘around’; *bárbàrian*; *bárran* ‘barren’; *blástit* ‘blasted’; *dáms* ‘ewes’; *drág*; *fár*; *fátlins*; *fáttist láms* ‘fattest lambs’; *fávrán* ‘favouring’; *Gálatea*; *gáng* ‘go’; *gráff* ‘graft’; *háng*; *háppi*; *huáre’r*; *huát*; *inhábit*; *invád* ‘invade’; *kám* ‘came’; *kráp* ‘crop’ vb; *láms*; *láng* ‘long’; *lángan* ‘longing’; *lángir* ‘longer’; *lást*; *mán*; *márvat*; *náti* ‘native’; *Oáxis*; *Párthians*; *plánt*; *proláng*; *quáff*; *rápíd*; *sákred* ‘sacred’; *sáng* ‘song’; *shál*; *táp* ‘top’; *thrádom*; *tráks* ‘tracks’; *unháppi*; *wárlđ*; *wát* ‘know’. Indeed, he goes as far as to assert that even the Scots ‘*a* short’ in *hand* is only ‘nearly so’, and that ‘This is not entirely the English *a* short, as in

hand, a sound not known in Scotland, till very lately'. For Geddes, the Scotch short *a* looks to have been something like [a].

As early as 1740 we find another Scot – James Douglas – in his important *On English Pronunciation* (Holmberg 1956) identifying what appears almost certainly to be evidence for a BATH/TRAP split in metropolitan English usage. Although he was born in Scotland, Douglas lived for the greater part of his life in London, 'he moved in the highest circles of society and ... as a doctor he was in contact with the Royal family ... The London pronunciation he considered good at the end of his life must evidently have the speech of these aristocratic circles as its mode ... He may still have spoken a kind of modified Scots, or he may have used a mode of pronunciation that was practically identical with the fashionable London English of his time apart from minor divergences' (Holmberg 1956: 20). Douglas recognises four different types of *A* vowel in London English, of which the second, third and fourth are of particular interest to us here. He contrasts an *A4* vowel in items like *hard*, *glass*, *fast* and *advance* with an *A2* in *mad* and *bad*. Like Geddes, he sees his *A2* in terms of an English equivalent: 'The Vowel *A* is pronounc'd with a Short, soft and slender Sound which may [be] called the true English *a*' (Holmberg 1956: 34). On the other hand, the 'Genuine Scotch *A*' ('a Broad, open full kind of sound' – his *A3*) is to be found, he argues, in words like *call*, *scald*, in contrast to the 'Short, acute and Guttural' sound in words such as *can*, *mad* – his *A2*. Furthermore, he claims that there is 'a Kind of Middle Sound between the broad Scotch *A* and the Short Guttural *A* which may be call'd the Scotch *A* short' as in *chaff*, *chance*. An appeal to a 'middle sound' between what looks like an [a]/[ɔ] opposition, is one which we shall come across in several places below, and which, although it could probably fit the description of several phonetic entities, might just best be seen as that segment which combines unrounded front raised qualities, with rounded raised back qualities, perhaps something like [a]. The distribution of Douglas' *A2*, 3 and 4 types is as follows:

A2 Short, acute, guttural	A3 Broad, full Genuine Scotch <i>A</i>	A4 Middle Sound Scotch <i>A</i> Short
Căn	All	Chance
Măd	Alms	Dance
ăct	Ant	Glass
Dăd	Ark	Calve
Păt	Arm	Chance
Săt	Art	France
Vălve	Asp	Staff
Bădġe	Ass	Calf
Hăve	ball	Barb
Căt		Palm
Făt		Barge
Măr		Large
Păr		Blanch
Stăr		flask
Crăb		
Băġ		

The A2 types appear in contexts where the syllable coda is a voiced or voiceless obstruent; [r]; and the fricatives [dʒ], and [lv]. A3 types, on the other hand, frequently occur in pre-[lC], [nC], [rC] and [sC] environments, with A4 varieties predominantly before dental nasals and co-articulating (af)ricatives, [f] and [r] plus [dʒ] clusters. A3 and A4 types, therefore, look the most likely to provoke lengthening in the preceding vowel environment. But it is also important to recall Douglas' description, in the first draft of his thesis, of his A2 vowel: 'The Vowel A is pronounc'd with a short, soft and slender Sound which may [be] called the true English a' (Holmberg 1956: 34). The fact that he draws attention to a specific English characteristic would strongly suggest that A2 Scotch and A2 English are heard as separate sounds, the former almost certainly in the [a]/[ɑ] area, the latter (supported by evidence from other commentators described below), some kind of front, raised [æ] sound. Certainly a *prima facie* case can therefore be made to treat Douglas' A2, A3 and A4 contrast as representing something like an [æ]/[a]/[ɑ], and while there is no mention at all of an A4 type in the first draft of Douglas' treatise, it would seem that we are witnessing his observation that an innovatory [ɑ] pronunciation – a 'middle sound' – has become current in the best London English during his lifetime. Douglas' work is important in that it is one of the few pieces of evidence from the early part of the eighteenth century to show unequivocally that a BATH/TRAP split was at least in progress: 'Douglas' A4 is remarkable as an early proof of the separate development of a in the positions concerned' (Holmberg 1956: 42). It is interesting to notice how a comparison between Douglas' early draft of *On English Pronunciation* and the final printed version shows him recommending A4 pronunciations more and more in preference to A2 types:

He may not have been able to discern the fourth A-sound at the time when he was making his earlier draft but before he wrote the definite text he may have become a better phonetician, and as a result of this, realized the existence of A4 ... The A4 pronunciations may have become more and more frequent in Douglas' lifetime and may have spread more and more in the 'polite' circles which Douglas made his models in questions of pronunciation. (Holmberg 1956: 43)

4.1.7 The emergence of a BATH/TRAP split

Whatever precise phonetic value for an *a* vowel is intended,¹⁵⁰ it seems clear that for William Johnston there is only a quantitative contrast affecting this segment, long and short *a* having the same qualitative value: 'These long vowels ā, ē, ō, thus marked in Roman letters, which may properly be called long acutes, have each a long sound of its short vowel. In respect of their length, they might have been placed amongst the long vowels; but they are here placed amongst the short, and signified like them, by Roman letters by way of remembrance, that they have a long sound of their short vowels.' Yet what is important about Johnston's observations is the way in which he is careful to identify the phonetic triggers for the long values (1764: 26): 'I find this long acute ā seldom occurs but before *l, m, n, r*, followed by some other consonant; and before soft *th, u*, and *w*; and when accented at the

end of words: as in *ālms*, *ālmond*, *psālms*, *chāmber*, *sāmp̄le*, *heārt*, *hārt*, *lārge*, *bārge*, *āh*, *fāther*, *āunt*, *jāunt*, *jāundice*, *sāuce*, *sāwcer*, *papā*, *mamā*.' To which set he later adds (1764: 44): *hālf*, *cālf*, *pālm*, *pāths*, *slānder*, *cālve*, *āalves*, *stāves*, *āunt*, *drāught*, *dāughter*, *lāunch*, *laugh lāff*, *flaunt*, *sāuce* 'also sauce'. We should hesitate, however, whenever we read contemporary accounts of vowel duration contrasts. Differences in vowel length are notoriously difficult to hear, certainly to quantify, and often what are perceived as manifest differences in duration between individual vowel segments in different words and phonetic contexts very often appear, under instrumental analysis, to comprise timing margins of a few hundredths of a second. On the other hand, it has been suggested that there is an inherent co-relation between perceived vowel length and vowel height; hearers assigning longer values to vowels which are low, shorter to those which are high (Petersen and Lehiste 1960). This phenomenon can be demonstrated under experimental conditions when low vowels are instrumentally produced as short, high as long – hearers will tend to override the physical evidence in favour of a perception that high means short, low, long (Jones 1989: 114). Certainly since vowel duration and timing is far from being a simple matter for the modern instrumental phonetician, we can only regard observations on the subject by eighteenth century observers as anecdotal at very best. But observations there are, and they are often made with some sophistication, as Tucker (1773: 10):

Nor will it do to take out your watch and try how many short syllables are equal to a certain number of long ones, for this is an uncertain way of measuring, the consonants will interfere and a man may speak quick or slow without changing the quantity of his vowels, which depends not so much upon their absolute length, as their comparative among one another. You will discover it easiest by drawing out your vowels a little beyond their usual length, which you will find more disgustful in the short than in the long, as in 'ha—and' than in 'comma—and'; or by transposing them into each other's places, as in this sentence, 'I shall obey any commānds that come from your hānds', speaking the 'a' in 'commands' as you do in 'man', and that of 'hands' as you do in 'half'; your ears will soon convince you of a faulty pronunciation.

Indeed, he goes on to claim (1773: 12) 'some words of different signification are distinguishable to the ear only by the quantity of their vowels, as in these sentences, "Would you *have* me *halve* this orange?" "I *can't* endure this *cant*". "None that are *known* to me". "Sam, sing a *psalm*". "Mary be *merry*". "Look at *Luke*". "A fool is *full* of himself". "He has *been* dissecting a *bean*".¹⁵¹ Tucker's sample texts also show, by means of superscripts, a contrast which may well reflect such relative vowel length (as well as possible qualitative) differences: *naretive*, *aptli*, *rafi*, *dispatfit*, *fiā* 'shall', contrasting with *pāst*, *hārt*, *ārt*, *ungārded*. But we are still left with the problem of assessing the extent to which length differences infer, or even evoke, qualitative ones, a difficulty perhaps only partially resolved by Tucker's statement: 'speaking the "a" in "commands" as you do in "man", and that of "hands" as you do in "half"; your ears will soon convince you of a faulty pronunciation'. Vowel quality identification

in this area of the phonology is notoriously difficult, the low vowel space being relatively cluttered with segments distinguished by relatively small shifts in the Hz value of F₂. [æ], [a], [ɐ], [ɑ] among unrounded variants, with rounded forms in [ɔ] and [œ]. Even for the trained modern observer, it can be difficult without instrumental analysis to be certain about the precise phonetic values of segments like this, especially in connected allegro speech contexts, so that assessing their actual shape from written historical evidence is well-nigh impossible with any degree of certainty. That contemporary observers experienced difficulties in such matters too is clear from the comment of John Ash (1775: 3): ‘Sounds are fugitive things, hard to catch, and difficult to retain; and therefore it is no wonder so much should have been said, with so little agreement, by those learned writers who have professedly treated on this subject’. Indeed, we can see such a difficulty in the struggle to identify and define the AUNT vowel in the entry for that item in *A Treatise on the Provincial Dialect of Scotland* (1779) by the Scot Sylvester Douglas:

AUNT

In the vernacular Scotch pronunciation [*sic*] of this word, the *au* is sounded like the open *a* but short. Nearly as the *a* in *ant*; but more open. Those who try to catch the English method sound it long and broad, like the *a* in *all*, or, as the English pronounce it in *haunt*. But in this word *aunt*, and several others, it has the long open sound of *a* – yet, less open, than in *father*. Indeed it appears to my ear, that not only this long open sound of the *au* differs from that of the *a* in *father*; but that the short open *a*, as in *ant*, *scant*, *scar*, *cant*, *fast*, &c. is not only, not the same in quantity, but also differs in quality, from the long open *a* in *father*. That it is, in short, a shade lying between that last-mentioned sound, and the slender *a*. This, I think, will be manifest to any one who will carefully attend to the English and Scotch modes of pronouncing the word *ant*. The difference between them will be very perceptible, and in the latter the sound of the *a*, seems exactly the same in quality, but shorter, than in *father*.

Here we see a sound in *aunt* which is less open than the *a* in *father*, which in its turn is different in both quality and quantity from the *a* in *ant*, evidence surely suggestive of a BATH/TRAP split in the Pure (metropolitan) dialect, while it would appear that Scots speakers accommodate to something close to [ɔ] or [ɐ] when attempting to produce the standard English form in words like *aunt* and *father*. Perhaps something of this complexity is recorded by Buchanan (1762: 7) describing his *A* sound, which ‘has a more slender sound still than long (a) which is like French (e) Masculine, and is expressed in *late*, *plate*, *rate*, &c. It also has an open Sound, which approaches to its broad sound, and is expressed in *Wrath*, *Rather*, *Father*, *Glass*, and some others. But as these two Sounds occur but seldom, the former has been confounded with the slender long (a), and the latter with the less open short (a). The French express our long (a) in the word *Laquais*; the open (a) just mentioned is the Italian *a*; and the broad (a) is the (a) of the Germans’.¹⁵²

Sheldon (1938: 289) claims that it is in Bellamy’s *A New, Complete and Universal Dictionary* (1760) that the earliest mention of what might be an [ɑ] value in items

like *aft* and *laughter* is attested: '[Bellamy] distinguishes between the *a* broad before *ll*, *lt*, *ld* and between *w* and *r* (*hall*, *bald*, *war*, etc.); the short *a* as in *man*, *and*; and another *a*, which is neither of these but is heard before *ft* (*aft*, *haft*), *lf*, *lm* and *nce*, – also in *laughter*, *daughter*, *father*, which he respells to *dahter*, *fahther*. He also respells *dance* as *dahnce*'. But few eighteenth-century observers are able to give any convincing articulatory description of what might constitute a front/back low vowel contrast, and those like Johnston's (1764: 23) are, as we have seen, somewhat vague and even contradictory. However, there is an important exception in the writing of Walkenden Fogg, whose *Dissertation V (On Sounds)* attempts to provide some kind of articulatory description of vocalic segments. For instance, in his description of his four sounds – (1) *au* in *laud*, (2) *o* in *not*, (3) *ā* in *father*, (4) *a* in *man* – he makes the following observations (1796: 156):

In the *first*, the lips are rather pushed forward, the upper and under lip is distant as they ever are in speaking, the voice directed so as to strike upon the upper part of the mouth near the throat, and the sound prolonged. The *second* is the same sound shortened. In the *third*, the lips are rather pulled back, and brought nearer, the voice proceeding from a smaller aperture; this shortened is the *fourth*.

Here the lip rounding characteristic of the *laud/not* vowels is captured, their low F_2 feature perhaps also expressed by 'the voice directed so as to strike upon the upper part of the mouth near the throat'. The third and fourth sounds appear to be distinguished by Fogg merely by durational contrast (perhaps not surprising since he is a Northerner), and there is no suggestion at all that there is any kind of qualitative contrast. It would seem that the smaller aperture characteristic coupled with a spread configuration of the lips is suggestive of [a] or [æ] rather than, say, [ɑ], an interpretation reinforced by Fogg's failure to show any relationship between his first and second and third and fourth sounds.

It might seem, therefore, that were there to be developing in the phonology some kind of phonetically conditioned contrast of a BATH/TRAP kind, then we might expect the identifying characteristics of the vowel segments involved to be clearly observable, the acoustic features of the vowels involved becoming, as it were, polarized. We might expect to see compensatory movements to F_2 : one would involve an increase in the frequency of F_2 , simultaneously increasing its distance from F_3 and closeness to F_1 (making the sound more [ɛ]-like), the other could see F_2 decrease its frequency, reducing its distance from F_3 , thus making it more sonorant, or [ɑ]/[ɒ]-like. We might therefore interpret the BATH/TRAP split, not merely as an innovation involving the introduction of an [ɑ]/[ɒ] vowel segment, but one which was a double-action process, whereby low vowels are polarized, becoming 'fronter' or 'backer' under what seem to have been well-defined phonetic conditioning factors.

4.1.8 Short *a* values

What comment there is in the late eighteenth century upon the value of the 'short *a*' in a word like *cat* suggests that it had, if anything, a relatively front, indeed

raised value such as [æ]. In addition to his claim (1772: 16) that the ‘mixed’ vowel ‘A is generally narrow, approaching near to E short; *bad, had, fan, man, lamb*’, we have also Bayly’s (in)famous (1772: 10) description of the vowel sound in *man* and *bath* as having ‘in English generally a short mixed sound of *ae*’.¹⁵³ We have already suggested in several places in Part I that the concept of ‘mixed sounds’ in this period may well be a sophisticated one, one which captures the notion that individual phonemes are not discrete, but composed of mixtures of internalized elements.¹⁵⁴ It is worth repeating the observation of the Scottish observer, Sylvester Douglas writing in his *Treatise on the Provincial Dialect of Scotland* at the end of the eighteenth century (1779), suggesting an analogy between sound and colour description: ‘It might perhaps be called a whimsical refinement were I to carry the analogy still further, and say that, although the sound of *a* in *all*, is certainly simple, and not diphthongal; yet it is, in a manner, formed of a mixture of the long open *a*, and the *o*; in like manner as green, one of the simple primitive colours, is formed by the mixture of blue, and yellow’ (Jones 1991: 118).¹⁵⁵ If such an interpretation could be attached to Bayly’s description, we would be dealing with a sound which showed characteristics of both low and mid front vowels, a mixture of sonority and palatality, suggestive of [æ]. Smith (1795: 32) also suggests what might be interpreted as a relatively high value for the vowel in items such as *hat, lad, mad, jack, lack, ham, jamb* and many others. Here he sees his Eighth sound ‘as in *hat*, a small degree narrower than the French *date* (date), and not quite so narrow as the German *hätte* (would have)’. But it is Buchanan who makes the most overt and sustained claims as to the relatively high palatality value of the low vowel in this period. In his *British Grammar* (1762: 7), he claims a short *a* value for ‘*bād, bāt* which words are pronounced but a little more open than *bēd, bēt*’. A low-mid value might also be deduced from his comment that the short *a* vowel ‘has also a more slender sound still than long (*a*) [his [e]: CJ] which is like French (*e*) masculine, and is expressed in *late, place, rate*’. This sentiment seems to appear yet again in his *Vera Pronunciatio* (1757: 8–9) where he claims that the ‘short sound of (*a*) is expressed in *bad, bat, band, &c.* which words are pronounced nearly *bēd, bēt, bēnd*’. Yet again he sees it as a shorter version of the long *e* sound: ‘the short sound of (*a*) has the same opening that the long sound has, only it requires but half the time to pronounce it; as *fait, bait, baind*, if pronounced quick, or in half the time they naturally require, will be *fat, bad, band, &c.*’. Under his discussion of short (*e*), he also concludes that this vowel ‘differs little from short (*a*), as *fet, set, bed* differ little from *fat, sat, bad*, only those with (*a*) have a little more opening’. Perhaps the use of the descriptor ‘a little more open’, together with the fact that he seems to equate short (*a*) with long (*e*) – some kind of high mid front vowel – might suggest that, for Buchanan, there was not only a MET/MAT merger, but that the shared vowel was something like [ɛ̃]. With Buchanan the main source of such a merger, we might not unreasonably put down the phenomenon to the fact that he was a Scot, yet we have Walker’s evidence too that the effect was known among London speakers which, while ‘received’, fails to achieve his approval (1791: 12): ‘There is a corrupt, but a received, pronunciation of this letter in the words *any, many, catch, Thames*, where the *a* sounds like short *e*, as if written *enny, menny*,

ketch, Tems' – presumably the same habit indulged in by Kenrick's 'flirting females and affected fops' who 'pronounce *man*, and *Bath*, as if they were written *maen*, *baeth'* (1784: 63). Nares (1784: 10) seems to echo such sentiments, suggesting both lexical and social constraints on the phenomenon: 'ä sounds like *e* short in *catch*, *gather*, *January*, *jasmin*, *many*, *radish*, *thank*; and of these some are disputable, or certainly confined to colloquial use, as *gather* and *thank'*. Fogg too (1796: 168) criticizing Londoners for adopting 'new modes that incline to feebleness and sweetness; and articulate with a rapidity necessarily indistinct', includes among several of their faults that where 'Short *a* is often confounded with *e*; *man* pronounced as *men*; *fat* as *fet*; *sand* as *send*: this is objectionable both as emasculating the language, and unfortunately obscuring its sense, making more equivocal words than any other corruption would'. Walker himself admits as well as disapproves of the Scottish propensity for conflating [æ]/[ɛ], noting that in the Scottish dialect (1791: xi): 'the short *e* in *bed*, *fed*, *red*, &c. borders too much upon the English sound of *a* in *bad*, *mad*, *lad* &c.'.¹⁵⁶

4.1.9 More on long *a*

Although we cannot be completely certain as to its precise phonetic nature, there can be little doubt that some kind of innovative low-back vowel segment was gaining ground in the late eighteenth century in what appear to be well-defined phonetic contexts, notably pre-[r] and pre-fricative + consonant. We have already seen how the Scot James Douglas, as early as 1740, records a 'fourth sound of *a*', described as 'a Kind of Middle Sound between the broad Scotch *A* and the Short Guttural *A* which may be call'd the Scotch *A* short' as in *chaff*, *chance*. We have seen evidence too of what seems to be an early English record of the same sound given by Daniel Bellamy in his *A New, Complete and Universal Dictionary* of 1760. Bellamy claims that in specific contexts – notably pre-[ft], [l] + consonant, [ns], and [ð] – a sound distinct from those in *man* and *hall* is to be found, to capture which he employs respellings such as *dahnce* 'dance' and *fahther* 'father'. But it is Stephen Jones in his *Sheridan Improved* (1798) who makes one of the strongest and clearest claims for the existence of a fourth *a* sound. His remarks are worth quoting at length. Recounting his attempts to simplify the number of vowel sounds he wishes to categorize, he confesses failure (1798: *Preface* ii–iii):

My design of reduction, however was defeated, for I found it necessary to accuracy of pronunciation, that I should introduce a fourth (the Italian) *a* (*a*⁴): for though I have not been implicitly guided by any of my predecessors, I have occasionally been indebted to them all: but chiefly (I gratefully acknowledge it) to Mr. Walker. In the use of the 4th *a* I have differed materially from those who have gone before me. Mr. Sheridan, indeed, has not in any one instance introduced this 4th sound of *a*, and Mr. Walker has, I think, been too sparing in the use of it.

The former gentleman must certainly have felt the want of this sound in words as *half*, *calf* *psalm*, *ah*, *father*, &c. which it is impossible to pronounce accurately with the same *a* that is used in *hat*, *camp*, *man* &c.

Mr. Walker's more correct ear led him to admit this fourth sound of *a* (which, indeed ranks second in his scheme); but seems to have employed it with too much timidity: I hope it will not be found that I have been too prodigal in the use of it. It occurs in this *Dictionary* in such words as *lass*, *last*, *past* &c. and I must venture to express my humble opinion, that giving to those and similar words the flat dead sound of *a* in *lack*, *latch*, *pan* &c. is encouraging a mincing modern affectation, and departing from the genuine euphonical pronunciation of our language.

Let it be asked, for instance, if a difference of sound be not required in the two words *pa⁴ssable* and *pa¹ssible*? Yet Mr. Walker makes none; or in the words *fa¹t*, *fa⁴ther*; *ba¹rren*, *ba⁴rter*; *ca¹rrot*, *ca⁴rman*? Yet all are marked alike by Mr. Sheridan. If the decision be against me, I have egregiously erred, and shall bow to correction. If otherwise, I shall take credit for no small portion of courage, that could lead me, in a point of such importance, to try a fall with so able a rhetorician as Mr. Walker. I beg, however, to be allowed to repeat, that though I have in very many instances used this sound, I have not done it licentiously or indiscriminately; but have restrained myself in every instance wherein a shadow of doubt as to its propriety presented itself to my mind. I consider it as a legitimate English sound; and believe its unmerited degradation and disuse to be of very recent date. To prevent, however, any misconception of my meaning in the use of this sound, let it be observed, that my 4th *a*, though it is more open than the *a* in *hat*, stops considerably short of the broad protracted pronunciation so commonly heard among the vulgar, who say, *fááther*, *caáálf*, *háálf*, &c.

This quotation sums up the main concerns (both contemporary and modern) surrounding the use of this fourth vowel: (1) its extent in the lexicon and the nature of the phonetic contexts which trigger it; (2) its phonetic nature; and (3) its sociolinguistic distribution. Perhaps the best way of approaching the concerns under (1) is to consider what is possibly the most extreme use in the late eighteenth century of the low back form of this vowel. William Smith's *An Attempt to Render the Pronunciation of the English Language More Easy* (1795) identifies, as we have already seen, what he calls his Eighth Vowel 'as in *hat*, a small degree narrower than the French *date* (date), and not quite so narrow as the German *hätte* (would have)'. In direct contrast to this, he describes a Second Sound (1795: 5): 'met with in the words *ah!* (exclam.) and *hart*' (hard). This second sound is to be found, he claims, in a wide variety of phonetic contexts, notably where the syllable peak in which the vowel occurs is terminated by segments and groups of segments like the following: *-[r]* *car*, *far*, *jar*; *-[r] + consonant*, where the consonantal segment ranges from obstruents such as [k], [d] and [p] *ark*, *hard*, *carp*; through affricatives such as [tʃ] and [dʒ] *arch*, *barge*; to nasals *harm*, *charm* and [s] *parce*, *farce*. The vowel is also found preceding single [s] *ass*, *pass*, as well as [s] initial groups such as [sp], [st], [sk] *clasp*, *blast*, *task*; preceding [θ] *bath*, *path*, *rath*; [f] *quaff*, *staff* and [ʃ] initial groups such as [ʃt] *shaft*, *haft*. This second vowel is also to be found before dental nasal initial clusters [nt], [ns] and [nʃ] *plant*, *flaunt*; *France*, *prance*; *branch*, *launch*, the last in particular where monophthongization of an historical [au] diphthong is involved.

Such a contextual set mirrors almost exactly that for present-day southern British English 'broad *a*' ([ɑ]) distribution (Wells 1982: 135), although the modern language still allows for [æ]/[ɑ] contrasts in some of these, especially the pre-nasal types. The student of historical English phonology will immediately recognise such syllable final segments as triggers for vowel length. One rationale for such lengthening might well lie in the concept of ranking phonetic segments along a *Sonority Hierarchy*, segments placed according to the level of vowel-like qualities they show (as defined in acoustic terms – well-defined formant structure and relatively high levels of energy). Such a hierarchy might be portrayed as (Jones 1989: 57ff):

Sonority hierarchy

In order of Decreasing Sonority

Vowels	Glides	Sonorants	Fricatives	Obstruents
[i], [u], [a]	[j], [w]	[r], [l], [m], [n]	[ç][x][ʃ][ʒ] vsl vd	[t] [k] [d][g] vsl vd

The relatively high levels of vowel-ness inherent in sonorants and fricatives may mean that when they occur in rhyme-final position, they impart – as it were – additional vocalicness to the peak area, resulting either in vowel lengthening or diphthongization. We have already seen, from observers in the early part of our period, how new diphthongs are created in pre-[r] contexts, recall Jones (1701: 91) who observes that 'it is sometimes easier to sound *e* before *r* than not ... hence it is that we sound *ier* for *ire*, *ouer* for *our*, *uer* for *ure*, &c.', while Hammond (1744: 60) respells *desire* as (desier). So too Brown (1700: 9) 'How is the Vowel *e* sounded when *r* precedes it? 'Tis then pronounced before it somewhat like the *u* Vowel; as, in *Acre*, *so*, *inspire*, *desire*, &c. are sounded as if wrote *Acur*, *inspiur*, *desiur*, &c.' If there is any relationship between the physical qualities of phonetic segments and the ways in which they change, or affect change through time, then we might expect that the introduction as well as the constraints upon the spread of the innovation we are discussing here would be sensitive to the acoustic characteristics of the affecting environment. A 'strong' context – such as pre-sonorant – is one where we might expect the change to originate and spread through the lexicon most vigorously, while weaker environments (like those before voiceless fricatives, for instance) would see the change arrive late and spread less evenly across the lexicon, allowing for greater numbers of 'exceptions'. On the whole, Smith's evidence appears to suggest that some kind of [ɑɑ] vowel can occur across the entire range of environments showing vowel-like syllable terminations. However, he draws attention to the fact that he might be 'advanced' in taking this position, noting that other observers, notably Walker and Sheridan, place considerable constraints upon the introduction of this vowel, particularly in the weaker affecting contexts – preceding clusters like [sk], [ft], [st], [sp], [ntʃ], [ns] and [nt] – so that a vowel segment more like [a] (short *a*) is heard by many observers in items such as *ask*, *aft*, *cast*, *clasp*, *ass*, *branch*, *chance*, and *aunt*. Although even amongst these, Smith notes that observers hold different views on the pronunciation of individual

items; Sheridan, Scott and Kenrick, for instance, allowing – like Smith himself – an [ɑ] vowel in *plant*. Walker too famously records variation in weaker environments (1791: 10): ‘this sound of the *a* ([ɑ]: CJ) was formerly more than at present found before the nasal liquid *n*, especially when succeeded by *t* or *c*, as *grant*, *dance*, *glance*, *France*, *chance*, *prance*, &c.’. Indeed, he records there the fact that ‘the long sound of the middle Italian *a* is *always* [italics CJ] found before *r* in monosyllables, as *car*, *far*, *mar*, &c., before the liquids *lm*; whether the latter only be pronounced as in *psalm*, or both, as in *psalmist*; sometimes before *lf*, and *lve*, as *calf*, *half*, *calve*, *halve*, *salve*, &c. and lastly before the sharp aspirated dental in *bath*, *path*, *lath* &c. and in the word *father*’. Only in the strong context, pre-[r] situations is the use of the vowel robust, almost everywhere else it appears only ‘sometimes’ and even – as in the case of *father* – is identified with specific lexical items. Yet the historic [au] diphthong in nasal initial, homorganic clusters is, for Walker, ‘inviolably’ monophthongized to [ɑ] in items such as *command*, *demand*, &c., ‘formerly written *commaund*, *demaund*’.

It is in this pre-nasal context that Walker (1791: 10) makes a very interesting observation, noting that there has been in such cases a recessive shift from [ɑ] back to some kind of more front low vowel shape, a development closely tied to extra-linguistic factors: ‘The hissing consonant *s* was likewise a sign of this sound of the *a*, whether doubled, as in *glass*, *grass*, &c. or accompanied by *t*, as in *last*, *fast*, &c. but this pronunciation of *a* seems to have been for some years advancing to the short sound of this letter, as heard in *band*, *land*, *grand*, &c. and pronouncing the *a* in *after*, *answer*, *basket*, *plant*, *mast*, &c. as long as in *half*, *calf*, &c. borders very closely on vulgarity’. There are several points of interest here. One is that whatever the sound of *a* in *last*, *fast* is ‘advancing to’, it is not that in the list of words Walker provides for his ‘short *a*’ – *man*, *pan*, *tan*, *hat*, &c. Rather it seems quite specifically and intentionally to be that sound in words whose syllable rhyme terminated in a nasal-initial *homorganic cluster*. Is Walker suggesting the existence of a vowel for these type of items which is neither [a] nor [æ]? We shall return to this issue below. Secondly, Walker introduces a sociophonetic constraint upon the use of the low back vowel in *after*, *plant* and so on, to the effect that such a pronunciation would verge ‘closely’ on vulgarity. The use of ‘closely’ is important, since it suggests Walker is not issuing an outright condemnation of such a pronunciation, perhaps hinting instead that its use is to be found among both upper- and lower-class speakers. That the sociophonetics are complex is clearly suggested in Walker’s famous footnote added to later editions of *A Critical Pronouncing Dictionary* in which, in addition to criticizing Smith’s too generous an acceptance of the long back low vowel in all affecting contexts, he offers some comments upon ongoing change and its relation to extra-linguistic factors (1809: 21).¹⁵⁷

Since the first publication of this Dictionary the publick have been favoured with some very elaborate and judicious observations on English pronunciation by Mr. Smith, in a Scheme of a French and English Dictionary. In this work, he departs frequently from my judgement, and particularly in the pronunciation of the letter *a*, when succeeded by *ss*, *st*, or *n* and another consonant, as, *past*,

last, chance, &c. to which he annexes the long sound of *a* in *father*. That this was the sound formerly, is highly probable, from its being still the sound given it by the vulgar, who are generally last to alter the common pronunciation; but that the short *a* in these words is now the general pronunciation of the polite and learned world, seems to be candidly acknowledged by Mr. Smith himself: and as every correct ear would be disgusted at giving the *a* in these words the full sound of the *a* in *father*, any middle sound ought to be discountenanced, as tending to render the pronunciation of a language obscure and indefinite.

It is important to observe how Walker's judgement on the non-prestigious use of the low back vowel in certain contexts has become more extreme, 'bordering very closely on vulgarity' has now become straightforwardly 'vulgar' and a cause of 'disgust'. It is interesting to see too how Walker attributes the wide generalization of the low back vowel, in 'weaker' affecting contexts, to lower-class speakers, evidencing its subsequent infiltration to social classes above – the phenomenon of 'change from below'.¹⁵⁸

But there is no doubt that this well-known footnote, with its reference to a 'middle sound' – somewhat muddies the waters as to what value to assign Walker's long *a* ('we seldom find the long sound of this letter in our language' (1791: 10)). Recall how Walker distinguished three sounds for the latter *A*: (1) *a* long slender; (2) *a* long/short middle Italian; (3) broad *a*. Now, we could interpret the attribute 'middle' simply to the fact that the sound in question is second in a sequence of three, the term having no significance for any relationship the sound might have with the other two in the set. However, recall how the Scot, James Douglas in his *On English Pronunciation* (Holmberg 1956) had claimed some fifty years earlier that there is 'a Kind of Middle Sound between the broad Scotch *A* and the Short Guttural *A* which may be call'd the Scotch *A* short' as in *chaff, chance*. His namesake at the end of the century seems to make a similar claim: 'the short open *a*, as in *ant, scant, scar, cant, fast, &c.* is not only, not the same in quantity, but also differs in quality, from the long open *a* in *father*. That it is, in short, a shade lying between that last-mentioned sound, and the slender *a'*, and again (Jones 1991: 52): 'Thus we may consider the long open *a* in *father* as a sound placed between *o* and the strong slender *a*, or Scotch *Eta*'. We might argue for a value for 'long open *a'*' based upon its relationship with whatever Sylvester Douglas means by *o* and the Scotch eta (possibly [oo] and [εε] respectively (Jones 1991: 176)), since we have already seen how some observers are given to characterizing certain vowel segments in relative terms. If this is what Walker means by the 'middle Italian *a'*', then he too – it might be argued – sees the vowel as occupying the phonetic space between [æ] and what we might at this point speculate as a value for his 'broad' *a* as [ɒ]. While several phonetic possibilities exist for such a slot, something like [ɑ] would not be entirely out of place. But Walker at least appears to use the term 'middle sound' in yet another context. We saw above how he disparages the attempt by Smith to assign low back values – [ɑ] – to items like *past, last, chance* – 'the full sound of the *a* in *father*' to be avoided, yet at the same time 'any middle sound ought to be discountenanced, as tending to render the pronunciation of a

language obscure and indefinite'. Now, it is unlikely that Walker is here using the term 'middle sound' to describe his 'middle or Italian *a*', since this would seem to be what he is describing under 'the full sound of the *a* in *father*'. Perhaps we might suggest that what Walker intends in this case by a 'middle sound' is some kind of a compromise, intermediate segment lying between the short and long *a*, perhaps a segment like [a] or [a̟]. It is surely unsurprising that such a compromise, levelled form might surface in an environment where two relatively similar phonetic entities existed side by side in contexts where lexical variation was large and degree of phonetic predictability relatively low. Levelling of this kind is a well-recorded phenomenon in the modern language where dialect contact (either regional or social) occurs and where phonetic and other cues for precise identification have become blurred. An instance of this phenomenon surfaced in Kerswill's (1994) study of working-class Milton Keynes young adolescents, who leveled or sought compromise pronunciations for their various TRAP/BATH vowel realizations under a near-to-Standard English [a] shape, even though they had little or no face-to-face contact with speakers of this dialect.

In the end we may simply have to conclude that, even early in its evolution, and most particularly when it involved the weaker triggering contexts, the BATH/TRAP split was manifested primarily through lexical distribution. The phonetic signals offered by the triggering cues associated with the weaker affecting contexts (the nasal sonorants and fricatives in particular) were perhaps not sufficiently robust for language acquirers to assign vowel quality with much certainty. Morphological cues do not appear to have played a significant role in the decision either, despite such claims by Walker (1791: 11) that 'when, by impatience, that grand corrupter of manners, as well as language, the *no* is cut out of the word *cannot*, and the two syllables reduced to one, we find the *a* lengthened to the Italian or middle *a*, as *cannot*, *can't*; *have not*, *han't*; *shall not*, *shan't* &c.' or again, even in strong affecting environments like pre-[r], where 'the long sound becomes short, as *mar*, *marry*; *tar*, *tarry*; *car*, *carry* where we find the monosyllable has the long, and the dissyllable the short sound'. The overall situation in the late eighteenth century appears to be much as Labov suggests it is in modern British English (Labov 1994: 334):

no phonological, grammatical or etymological rule will tell the second dialect learner that broad *a* [our long *a*: Cɹ] is used in *class* but not *mass* 'substance, crowd' both of French origin ...; in *pastor* but not in *pastern*, both of French origin; in *plaster* from Old English but not *plastic* from Latin. A very adroit language learner may attack the situation before nasals by deducing that broad *a* occurs only before clusters, never before a single final nasal. If the cluster begins with /m/, it must further be specified as /-mpl/, which yields a broad *a* in *sample*, *example* but not *camp*, *lamp*, etc. Unfortunately, the learner must then learn to say *ample* as /æmpl/ and not /ahmpl/. The /n/ clusters are even more difficult, with broad *a* in *demand*, *command*, *slander*, but not in *land*, *grand*, *pander*. In each case, there is a tantalizing suggestion of an explanation – in some cases a hint of high style for broad *a* versus a low style for short *a* – but these tendencies are only tendencies, explanations after the fact. The only true

path for learning the broad *a* class is to absorb it as a set of brute facts as a first language learner, or failing that, to be enrolled in a British public school in early childhood.

4.2 Labial vowels

4.2.1 High back rounded vowels

We have already seen how, in the first half of the eighteenth century, high back labial vowels show what appeared to be a phonetically as well as lexically conditioned *length contrast*, gave witness to a development which emerged as the FOOT/STRUT split, as well as the birth of a new levelled phonetic labial output in something like [ɤ]. Many regional varieties of Modern English maintain a vowel length contrast in *fool/full* words (a reflection of their etymological length and height differences), a contrast often realized as [ʊ]/[ʊʊ]. In several regional variants (notably some in Scotland and Ulster), this contrast has been neutralized, merged under [ʊ], or [ü] (Wells 1982: 133). Such a neutralization is among the most salient features of vernacular Scottish English recorded by eighteenth-century commentators. For example, Walker (1791: xi) comments under his *Rules to be observed by the Natives of Scotland for attaining a just Pronunciation of English*: 'In addition to what has been said, it may be observed, that *oo* in *food, mood, moon, soon*, &c. which ought always to have a long sound, is generally shortened in Scotland to that middle sound of the *u* in *bull*'.¹⁵⁹ Drummond (1767: 21) sees such a length neutralization as one of the major pronunciation deficiencies of his countrymen:

The sound of every vowel may be made long or short, either by continuing to emit the breath for a longer or shorter time, presenting the articulation of the vowel unchanged; or we may change the articulation, while the breath continues to pass; and this change may be sooner or later. But to ascertain the time of pronouncing them is the greatest difficulty to the Scots, in the English tongue.

It is, perhaps, this characteristic of the Scotch dialect which makes the observations of Scottish commentators of great value in the period. Conscious of what may well have been a *pool/pull* merger as a salient characteristic of that dialect, their observations on Metropolitan usage might well be all that more precise. Sylvester Douglas (Jones 1991: 138) records the following items with stressed [ʊ]/[ʊʊ] contrasts in the Pure, Metropolitan dialect: showing vowel length are: *fool, foot, pool, boot*, while with [ʊ] he has *full, bull, pull, put* and *pulpit*, claiming that all these lexical items are characterized as showing a short, 'unsustained' vowel in the Scottish vernacular. Perry (1776: ix) observes that those vowel sounds his system marked *without diacritics* 'are to be uttered quicker, that is, they are the long sounds of *a, e, o* &c. contracted, and are in the same proportion to each other, as *gòod* is to *fòod* or *hòok*, to *ròok*, which have the same *quality* of sound, but differ in *quantity* or *length* of time.' Adams (1799: 76) too appears to suggest a length contrast under his

discussion of the ‘false diphthong’ *oo*: ‘No, 1. *oo* French – *food, fool, moon, ooze, &c.* No. 2. *oo* is a little shorter before *d* and *l*, formerly doubled in the words – *good, hood, stood, wood, wool*: and before *k*, – *book, cook, rook*.’

Buchanan’s observations (1762: 13) on length are sparse indeed, restricted to comments to the effect that while the *oo* in items such as *hood, fool, food* is ‘like German *u* ... when a short quantity is over it, thus *oō* &, it must be rapidly pronounced’. William Scott (1796: vi *footnote*) lists under his Vowel 13 items such as *full, bull, bush, push, food, full*, while ‘in *hood, good, wood, stood, wool* the vowel sound is quite short’. These observations are not unlike those provided by contemporary English writers such as Kenrick who observes (1784: 58): ‘The sound at present in question [the “long *ou, oo, o*”: CJ] is generally expressed in English writing by the double *oo*, as in *boot, fool, food*, where it is long, and also in *stood, wood, wool*, where it is short’.

Beattie (1788: 28: *footnote*) claims that the vowels in *bull, wolf* and *push* and those in *pool* and *troop* are ‘the same in the sound, and different only in the quantity; the former short, and the latter long’, and while Bayly (1772: 11) straightforwardly gives as with the short sound *full, pull, bull*, and with the long *woo, fool*, and *pool*, he is at pains to point out (1772: 18) that there are instances where the digraph *oo* represents a short vowel, as in *good, hood, wood, stood, took, book, foot, proof*. W. Johnston too points to a length contrast (1764: 17): ‘Besides the long *u* already described [his [ju] in *usury, usage, etc.*: CJ] there is another that sounds *oo*, though rather shorter, as in *fūll, pūll, būll, būllion, būshel*. This *u* is pronounced by uttering the English long *u* without the sound of the *e*, which accompanies it. ... The same sound is denoted by *o*, as in *dō, tō, twō*: ... The same sound, only somewhat longer, is signified by these double vowels *oe, oo, ou, ue, ui*, and by *o* and final *e* after an intervening consonant, as in *shōe, too, yoū, trūe, frūit, sūit, mōve, prōve*’. He emphasizes the point several times, suggesting (1764: 48) that his *oo* and *ū* ‘only differ in length, the former being longer’, his ‘long *oo*’ appearing in items like *gold, removal, tomb, womb, lose, brood, food, pol, tool, crude, intrude, prude*, etc., the ‘shorter sound of *oo*’ in *do, who, to, whom, book, good, foot, look, could, should, tour, you, bull, bullion, full, pull, push* and many others.

Yet Sylvester Douglas typically paints a more complex picture, seeing some relationship between the lack of durational extension of the vowel in *full, pull* as in some way connected to ‘syllable length’, manifested by ‘protracted stress of the voice on the *ll*’.¹⁶⁰ Consider his entries for PULL and PULLY (Jones 1991: 217):

PULL

The *u* as in *full, bull* (vide supra). The *u* in *pull*, and *full* has the same sound, in quality with that of the *oo*, in *pool*, and *fool*, and they are all four long syllables. Yet every body perceives, that *fool* and *full*, and *pool* and *pull*, are not, to the ear, the same words. They differ in two respects. First, the vocal part in *pull*, and *full*, is short; in *pool*, and *fool*, long. Secondly, *pull* and *full* are long syllables by means of a protracted stress of the voice on the *ll*; which does not take place in the pronunciation of *pool*, and *fool*.

PULLY (One of the mechanical powers)

Here the *u* is to be sounded both in quality, and quantity as in *pull*, *full*. But this word does not rhyme exactly to *fully*. In *fully* the same stress is laid on the *ll*, as in *full*, and accordingly the first syllable is long; in *pully* there is no such stress laid on the double liquid. The voice hurries over the *ll* and the first syllable is short. *Bully* rhymes exactly to *pully*.

while again in *Of the Provincial Accentuation* (ff. 41–2), he claims:

Let any one compare the three following words *foolish*, *fully* and *pully*. In each the accent is upon the first syllable and that syllable in each (as it seems to me and to others whom I have consulted) to be always, and necessarily uttered in a somewhat sharper tone than the other. But in *foolish* and *fully* the accented syllable is long, in *pully* short. Again in *foolish* the length of the accented syllable arises from our protracting the vocal part, in *fully* we hasten over the *u* and rest upon and protract the *ll* which being a liquid is capable of being lengthened, but in *pully*, no such stress is laid on the *ll* nor is there any difference between the manner of sounding this consonantal termination of the syllable single *l* in *foolish*.

Douglas appears to argue that while there is a long/short difference in the Pure dialect in items like [pʊʊl] *pool* versus [pʊl] *pull*, that contrast is not simply one of stressed vowel duration: items such as *full* and *pully*, while they have short vocalic segments nevertheless manifest, he argues, long syllable characteristics, realized – in his view – through the temporal extension of the highly sonorant labial coda. Thus in his eyes, the phonetic contrast between *full* and *fool* is one of [fʊll]~[fʊʊl]. Indeed, Douglas claims to observe a rather complex situation where there are contrasting outputs such as *fool* [fʊʊl]/*foolish* [fʊʊlɪʃ], *full* [fʊll]/*fully* [fʊlli] and *bull* [bʊl] *bully*/[bʊli]. Kohler (1966: 39) is almost certainly correct in his assertion that such contrasts are a function of the productive versus the non-productive morphological status of the unstressed syllable; the *fully* and *foolish* cases with their meaningful accretions correlate with long accented syllables, while items like *pully* and *bully* – showing no productive morphological relationship with *pull* and *bull* – are associated with the short accented syllable. A relationship like this (Rohlfing 1984: 144) is apparently observed too by Elphinston (1790: 49; 1786: 236):

Dhe shut vowel keeps distinct from dhe open, by shortnes and shutting: *fool* (filled) *foolling*, from *fool* (unwise) *fooling*; *foollish* from *foolish*, and dhe like.

Dhis *oo* shut and short, must questionles, hware possibel, appear so. Sense wil secure dhe short *pool* and *fool* from dhe long: *pooling* and *foolling*, like *pooting* and *footting*, wil secure dhemselves. Dhus *wooman* and *human* can no more chime dhan *footting* and *hooting*, or *foot* and *hoot*; dho the vowels differ but in degree. Dhe short *fool* iz obvioius in *Foolham*, now strikingly oppozite (to') *Putney*; hware may be dhe *contry-put*, and hiz coinciding game.

Yet we might speculate that Sylvester Douglas' observations concerning syllable length may indeed bear some direct relationship as to what he sees as vocalic length proper. We might just suggest that contrasts such as [pʊl]/[fʊl] versus [fɔl]/[fɔlɪ] versus [bʊl]/[bʊlɪ] have something to tell us about *relative* stressed vowel length, such that

- [pʊl] represents full vowel length
- [pɔl] represents relatively full vowel length
- [bʊl] represents relatively short vowel length

The *pool/pull* length contrast is based, of course, on the etymological history of the items themselves, stemming as they do from Middle English [oo] and [u] sources (Luick 1921: §281); but if it is the case that some items showing historically short vowel origins were coming to be merged with those with a long vowel ancestry, and where that merger was incomplete, then a form such as [fɔl] *full* as an approximation to or compromise of [fʊl] might well result. Certainly, it would appear from Douglas' evidence, that lexical diffusion was prevalent in the Pure dialect in this area of the phonology, some historically short vowel items like *full* being merged (perhaps only partially) with *fool* types, others like *bull* retaining their short vowel characteristic.

4.2.2 The FOOT/STRUT split

It is very clear, from any examination of the available sources, that in the late eighteenth century two important events were occurring in the phonology of labial vowel segments, both of which are reflected in the modern language. The first of these sees a re-enforcement of a process which we have already noted in our 1700–1750 account – namely, the lowering and centring of short, high and back labial vowels like [ʊ], to some kind of entity like [ʌ], [ə] or [ɐ], although it is very difficult to gauge its precise phonetic shape from the available data. Some of the evidence for the existence of such an entity is indirect – commentators observing that 'we have it, but others (usually provincials) do not', thus Walker, recounting the 'Faults of Londoners', observes that although linguistic propriety can be seriously offended in the Metropolis, things only get worse the further from the Capital one travels (1791: xiii): 'Nay, harsh as the sentence may seem, those at a considerable distance from the capital do not only mispronounce many words taken separately, but they scarcely pronounce with purity a single word, syllable, or letter. Thus, if the short sound of the letter *u* in *trunk*, *sunk*, &c. differ from the sound of that letter in the northern parts of England, where they sound it like the *u* in *bull*, and nearly as if the words were written *troonk*, *soonk*, &c. it necessarily follows that every word where that letter occurs must by those provincials be mispronounced'.¹⁶¹ While the claim in the last phrase is an extreme one – Walker is himself adroit at pointing to lexical constraints on phonological alternants – it is clear that some kind of regionally distinct phonetic contrast is involved between the *u* in *bull* and the 'short sound of *u*', although we are still unclear as to what precisely Walker's 'short sound of *u*' represents, since he only defines it contrastively

(1791: 21) as ‘the short sound, which tallies exactly with the *o* in *done, son, &c.* which every ear perceives might, as well as for the sound’s sake, be spelt *dun, sun, &c.*’ Buchanan’s description of the sound is somewhat similar (1762: 13): ‘Its short sound, which is very like short (*o*), only a little more guttural, is expressed in *Büt, cüt, gün, rüb, süp, drüb, &c.* (where short (*o*) is found in words like *lot, got, rot*)’. But very often, the nature of the short *u* vowel is left more or less to inference. William Johnston (1764), for instance, states only that it is to be heard mainly in pre-[*r*] contexts: *heard, early*; pron *hurd, urly*; *bird, dirt, fir, firm, first, shirt, suirt, third, thirty*, pron. *Burd &c bomb, borage, brother, colour, mother, nothing, etc*; *come, dove, love, etc.* And *blood, flood* and *soot*, as well as the second element in falling diphthongs, again in pre-[*r*] contexts, thus *heur* ‘here’, *fiur* ‘fire’, *desiur* ‘desire’, and as the vowel in unstressed syllables, as in *common, future* ‘as if spelt *cómmun, fútur*’. Bayly’s (1772: 12) description is perhaps a little more detailed, suggesting that short *u* ‘hath a peculiar kind of exceeding short sound, an obscure, indistinguishable vowel, as in *sun, murmur*: Let this be called *u* very short, or the close *u*. Note, the other vowels fall into this last sound, and become very short when pronounced quick, as *a* in *aver, general, fear, dear, hear*; *e* in *manner*; *i* in *bird, o* in *some*’. And he also records this close sound in *blood, double, trouble, nourish, flourish* and *touch*. Kenrick also attempts a description: ‘The indistinct *a, e, i, o, u, oo* or *ou*, are as in *earth, her, Sir, won, cur, blood, scourge*’ with a French parallel, noting the regional disparity in its distribution (1784: 56): ‘the full sound of the vowel ... in the words *Sir, bur, cur &c.* is always short and bears a near, if not exact, resemblance to the sound of the French *leur, cœur, &c.* if it were contracted in point of time. It is further observable of this sound, that the people of Ireland, Yorkshire, and many other provincials mistake its use; applying it to words which in London are pronounced with *u* full ... as *bull, wool, put, push*; all which they pronounce as the inhabitants of the Metropolis do, *trull, blood, rut* and *rush*’, a distribution contrary to that observed by Walker seven years later. With the Scot Mitford, we get a little closer to a more precise phonetic description (1774: 36), and it is worth quoting his observations on this ‘bastard sound’:

U, beside the proper long sound contracted, as in *full, put*, has a short sound to which we have no correspondent long one, as in *dull, but*. It is a common remark that all northern people use a closer pronunciation than those of the southern countries [*sic*: CJ]. The English in particular ... greatly affect short [sounds]. Now this particular short sound of the *u* is produced with the least opening of the mouth, and the least effort of the voice of any genuine vowel sound whatsoever, and it seems to be on this account that we give it, on certain occasions, to all the other vowels, *particular, perverse, her, stir, son, word*, to the three first before the letter *r* only, but to the last before many others, *come, cover, mother, son*.

Interestingly too, we saw how he seems to suggest that this sound is quite different from another, but close, phonetic segment, some kind of contrast, we might

speculate, involving [ə]/[ʌ] or [ʌ]/[ɛ]:

There is another, a kind of bastard sound, very nearly resembling this, which we very frequently give to the letter *a*. It may be remarked in the following words in the syllables distinguished by particular characters, *separate*, *syllable*, *capable*, *mortal*, *acute* ... The vowel sound which we use in syllable composed of *le* and a preceding consonant, is nearly of the same kind, but degenerated to almost nothing.

Steele typically sees this sound as a *diphthong*, a segment-internal combination of his $\alpha\omega$, where α is given as the first vowel in the diphthong in *fine*, *fly*, and ω the second component in the *how*, *hour* diphthong. The sound as some kind of phonetic amalgam or complex (1775: *Preface ix*): ‘The other English sound of *U*, as in the words UGLY, UNDONE, BUT and GUT, is composed of the English sounds *AU* and *OO*; but they require to be pronounced so extremely short and close together, that, in the endeavour to prolong the sound for this experiment, the voice will be in a continual confused struggle between the two component sounds, without making either of them, or any other sound, distinct; so that the true English sound of this diphthong can never be expressed but by the aid of a short energetic aspiration, something like a short cough, which makes it very difficult to our Southern neighbours in Europe’. The ‘two component sounds’ – [ɔ] and [ʊ] – are heard, not as two sequentially identifiable components, but rather as a musical ‘chord’ comprised of two simultaneously expressed entities, resulting in a unique ‘note’, in this instance a segment simultaneously exhibiting characteristics of both [ɔ] and [ʊ] which, we might argue, can be interpreted as [ʌ] or [ə]. The Northerner, Fogg suggests that for him, the FOOT/STRUT split is still a novelty, an innovation conditioned largely by social class and breeding; describing his tenth and eleventh sounds – *oo* or *w* in *woo*, *u* in *bud* – he claims that (with acknowledgement to Steele) (1796: 157):

For the *tenth*, the mouth must be nearly shut, the lips protruded and almost closed, and the voice lengthened out. The *eleventh*, as commonly pronounced, is the short sound of this; but is now changed, in the genteeler circles, for one of the most difficult sounds that we utter. In this, the aperture of the mouth and the protrusion of the lips are to be in a medium between the sounds *au* and *oo*; but the voice impelled with extreme suddenness so as almost to resemble a short cough. Its great singularity, brevity, and indistinctness have caused it to be mistaken for several other short sounds. For *a*; affectedly pronouncing ‘*Sam* people learn *nathing*, they so soon *anderstand* everything’: for *e*; *Sem*, *nething*, and *enderstand*: for *o*, *Som*, *nothing*, *onderstand*. It is of all vowels most difficult to be described, or denoted by other letters; is generally mispronounced; and seems invented for a test of breeding. In a few words, the rustic sound of this vowel is authorised by Mr. Sheridan.

Fogg’s comments would seem to suggest that several variants of this sound were possible, although – despite his notation – it is surely unlikely that he heard [sem],

[nɛθɪŋ] pronunciations, and we can but speculate that his notation infers different heights and levels of centralization for [ʌ]-like vowel sounds. But the existence of a high back [ɔ] vowel alongside a range of lowered and centralized variants, might be said to constitute fertile breeding ground for ‘compromise’ or levelled forms between such alternatives.

4.2.3 The emergence of compromise or levelled forms

We have seen how the evidence from many commentators in the latter half of the eighteenth century suggests that there exists some kind of *short u* variety of sound, exemplified in items such as *run, cut, us, buck, done*, a segment which might be interpreted as one produced in the mid to low central region of the vocal tract. Two important characteristics of the description of this ‘short *u*’ segment emerge from contemporary commentators: (1) their relativistic nature; and (2) the possibility that there exists more than one phonetic value for the segment itself both in the standard (and, as we shall argue, Scots) versions of English in the later eighteenth century. We have seen, for instance, how Buchanan (1762: 8), assures us that ‘The short sounds of (o) [possibly [ɔ]/[ɔ]: CJ] and (u) – his [ɔ] – are *pretty* [italics: CJ] similar; as *ūnder, ūnto: ōnder, ōnto*; and are so quick and obscure, as to make no motions in the parts of the mouth,’ and how, in the *British Grammar* (1762: 13), he interprets the short sound of *u* as ‘very like short (*o*), only a little more guttural ... expressed in *Būt, cūt, gūn, rūb, sūp, drīb*’. The Scot Cortez Telfair (1775: 151 *Footnote*) describing the pronunciation of ‘the best speakers in London’ asserts that his ‘second short *o* is the same with *ou* in *double*; and is a sound approaching very near to the first short one’ where the first short is exemplified by *box*. Other Scottish observers paint a similar picture, Dun asserting too, under his *o* discussion, that the sound ‘is sometimes sounded *almost* [italics: CJ] as a short *u*, as in *Dove, love, dost* ... pronounced *Duve, luve, dust*’, where his short *u* is exemplified in the item *Cur*. James Robertson’s (1722: 41ff) ‘pronounced alike’ lists include as ‘similarly pronounced’ the items *Hot* ‘with heat’ and *Hut* ‘a little house’. John Drummond’s assertion (1767: 29) that ‘*o*¹ [his [o]: CJ] in some words must be pronounced nearly as quick as *u* in *run*’ might point to the fact that his high mid vowels were, in fact, somewhat (and Scottishly) lowered to a value nearer [ɔ]. However, spellings like *shud* ‘should’, *wood* ‘would’, *boot* ‘but’, and *rabook* ‘rebuke’, from such a meticulous observer as Alexander Scot (Jones 1993: 113) suggest that we are dealing in this area of the phonetics with a rather complex problem and not merely with some binary [ɔ]/[ʌ] alternation. For instance, James Douglas recognises a *short obscure lingual u* in items such as *urn, us*, a segment he specifically labels the ‘*Scotch u*’ (Holmberg 1956: 185–6): ‘It is sounded Short, Obscure & Lingual like the Sound of *ōo* Short which may be call’d the Scotch *U*, as *ūlcer, ūnkind*. What are the Improper Sounds of the Vowel *U*? 1. It has a kind of *intermediate sound* [italics: CJ] between the Scotch *U* & the Short English *U*, as, *būll, pūll*.’ James Douglas’ *ōo* short is equated with his *ū* short and exemplified by items like *blood, flood, forsooth* and *soot*, while items like *book, crook, wool* and *stool* – which we might associate with a durationally extended [ʊ] – are described as ‘like *U*

short ... tho' something Broader than the Foregoing [*blood, bloody, flood, forsooth, soot*: CJ] (Holmberg 1956: 214–15). It is, of course, extremely difficult to ascribe a definite phonetic value to a term like 'broader' in this context, but at the very least we might conclude that James Douglas hears the vocalic segment in items like *blood, flood, up, udder*, on a scale somewhere between a low unrounded and central [ʌ] and a rounded close back [ʊ] – perhaps a segment like [ɤ] or [ɔ]. In other words, a classical case of a phonetic compromise, levelling or fudge.

There appears to be a considerable amount of evidence in the period to suggest that, not only was there a perceived vowel length contrast in pure labial vowel segments of an [ʊ]/[ʊʊ] type, but that there was evolving too a new labial vowel segment which was neither of these nor the short *u* itself. Tucker in particular stresses quantitative contrasts in this area (1773: 12): 'some words of different signification are distinguishable to the ear only by the quantity of their vowels, as in these sentences, "A fool is full of himself" ', while at (1773: 30) he differentiates *uūd* 'would' from *uūd*. 'woo'd'. William Johnston too sees just such a durational contrast in his Table Five (1764: 50) where he contrasts 'the Sounds of *oo* and *ū*, which only differ in Length, the former being the longer'. Under his 'long sound of the *oo*' he lists: *lose, move, prove, brood, food, pool*, while under the shorter sound of *oo* or *ū*, he has *book, foot, good, loose, too, wood, wool, būll, būsh, pūll, pūsh, blūe, dūe, sūe, rūe, brūise, brūit, frūit, jūice, sūit* and others.¹⁶² Bayly too makes what appears to be a purely durational contrast, describing the *U* vowel as one whose 'true simple sound seems to be that short sound expressed in the words *full, pull, bull*' in contrast with his *U* long which is '*oo* generally' as in *boot, too, booth, fool*. Yet he includes a very long list of exceptions to this value for *oo*, where it is for him the same as *u* short, as in *good, hood, wood, stood, brook* and many others. It must be stressed that this *u* short is to be distinguished from his '*u* very short' which he describes, as we have seen above, as 'a peculiar kind of exceeding short sound, an obscure, indistinguishable vowel, as in *sun, murmer*'. This seems to point to some kind of [ʊ]/[ʊʊ]/[ʌ] inventory in this area of the phonology. All this is very similar to the stance taken by Kenrick (1784: 56) who distinguished short vowels in *bull, could* and *good*, against long in *soup, noon* and *who*, both distinct from the vowel in *tub, cub, cur*. The last, he is careful to point out, 'is not of the same quality as the former ...: *bull* and *trull, could* and *cud, good* and *blood*, being no rhimes in London; where they have a very different and distinct quality of sound'.

At this point it is worthwhile noting the comments of Kenrick on the problems associated with [ʊ]/[ʊʊ]/[ʌ] alternations. Commenting on [ʊ]/[ʌ], he complains (1784: 56):

I know of no rules whatever that determine polite speakers to give this sound [[ʌ]: CJ] to some words, and the former sound to others of the like orthography. It appears to be the effect of capricious and arbitrary custom, like that of annexing the aspirated *h* to some words, and not to others of like spelling; which is done, as well in English as in other languages, merely according to custom; has its local distinctions, and is, I believe, to be learned only by attention and practice.

We might therefore perhaps expect, in the context of such a relatively unmotivated phonetic alternation, not only that lexical criteria might well predominate, but also that some sets of speakers may attempt to solve the dilemma of choice by innovating a compromise form as a resolution of the problem. Indeed, we might argue that this is precisely what Walker's lengthy discussion of the pure labial vowel suggests. Walker proposes three separate versions of the labial vowel: (1) a short *u*, which would appear to correspond to the central, lowered form we have been discussing; (2) a 'regular sound' he considers to be long and occurring in items like *moon*, *soon*, *fool*, *room* and *food*. Indeed, he sees in the *oo* representation in words like *woo* and *coo* 'the true short sound' of the vowel, and sees a phonetic contrast between *woo* and *wool* (1791: §306); (3) a 'shorter' sound appears in a carefully defined restricted set of lexical items, such as *bull*, *pull*, *full*, *butcher*, *cushion* and a few others. This shorter sound goes by a number of different names and descriptions. It is designated as 'obtuse', 'vague and desultory', and is the cause of 'whimsical deviation'. Above all, it appears with the appellation 'middle' on several occasions¹⁶³ in the introduction to *A Critical Pronouncing Dictionary*. On the one hand, this sound is described (1791: 22) as characteristic of the second component of the 'long diphthong' [ju], whose second element 'is not quite so long as the *oo* in *pool*, nor so short as the *u* in *bull*, but with a middle sound between both, which is the true short sound of the *oo* in *coo* and *woo*, as may be heard by comparing *woo* and *wool*; the latter of which is a perfect rhyme to *bull*'. Walker is careful to provide a phonetic context for the occurrence of this middle sound: word initial [b], [p] and [f], word final [l], [s], [ʃ], [d] and [t] – items like *bull*, *full*, *push*, *put*, *pudding*. Walker also claims that many words with *oo* digraphs are to be seen as having vowels 'corresponding' to the *u* in *bull*, and he lists *wool*, *wood*, *good*, *hood*, *foot*, *stood*. However, the vowel space in *prove*, *move*, *behave*, *Rome*, *who*, *whom*, etc. also 'corresponds to' *oo*, but is nowhere classified as 'middle'. Walker stresses a number of characteristics of this middle sound – the words which show it are few in number and it has a very limited lexical set specification (whose phonetic conditioning is not altogether of the most obvious): '[the diphthong *oo*: CJ] has a shorter sound corresponding to the *u* in *bull*, in the words *wool*, *wood*, *good*, *hood*, *foot*, *stood*, *understood*: and these are the only words where this diphthong has this middle sound' (1791: 35). Any extensions to a limited lexical set meet with Walker's disapproval – 'Some speakers, indeed, have attempted to give *bulk*, and *punish* this obtuse sound of *u*, but luckily have not been followed'. Indeed, Walker seems to suggest that the vowel quality of the middle sound is non-prestigious, and certainly exceptional in its representational form: 'The words which have adopted it are sufficiently numerous; and we cannot be too careful to check the growth of so unmeaning an irregularity'. Perhaps above all, Walker sees in the limited distribution of this 'difficult' middle sound ('this sound of *u* never extends to words from the learned languages; for *fulminant*, *fulmination*, *ebullition*, &c. sound the *u* as in *dull*, *gull*') a potential cause of linguistic anarchy and uncertainty, the vacillating lexical distribution of the sound being 'sufficient to puzzle Englishmen who reside at any distance from the Capital, and make the inhabitants of Scotland and Ireland (who, it is highly probable, received a much more regular pronunciation

from our ancestors) not infrequently the jest of fools', an echo of Kenrick's (1784: 56): 'effect of capricious and arbitrary custom'.¹⁶⁴ Again, we might ask whether the relatively complex task of differentiating regular and consistent contexts for a binary [ʊ]/[ʌ] opposition, might have given rise to a compromise, levelled form encapsulating the lowness and roundness characteristics of each in a segment like [ɤ].

It is when we turn to the evidence provided by the Scots King's Council, Sylvester Douglas, that we see the variation in this area of the contemporary phonetics in its greatest detail. Douglas identifies 'smothered' (and sometimes 'obscure') labial vowels exemplified in items like *rut*, *dub*, *love*, *luck* and many others. However, he is careful to provide both lexical and phonetically contextualized information which he sees as distinguishing at least two sub-types of this *smothered u* vowel. Much like Walker, the number of items identified by Douglas as showing a 'smothered' or even 'obscure' *u* in his *Pronouncing Dictionary* section (his *Table of Words Improperly pronounced by the Scotch, showing their True English Pronunciation* (Jones 1991: 158ff) is extremely small. Again lexical items proposed in his *Observations on the Alphabet* as showing this vowel shape are strictly confined to *Tully*, *scut* and *rut*. It is most difficult to ascribe any precise phonetic value to this 'smothered vocal' labial, mainly as a result of the problems which arise from the uncertainties involved in the interpretation of what Douglas means by the term 'smothered' and 'obscure' with which he sometimes appears to equate it. He uses this terminology in a variety of contexts: for instance, the Scotch pronunciation of the second syllable in *Sunday* is described as showing an 'obscure *a*' (Jones 1991: 226); unaccented syllables 'are always pronounced in an obscure, indistinct manner, so as to be scarcely distinguishable' (Jones 1991: 140); there is a version of an *e* sound 'which has a sort of obscure and smothered sound not unlike that of the French *e* in *le*, *ce*, *que*' (Jones 1991: 123); the obscure *j* or *y* in the pure, Metropolitan dialect pronunciation of *calf* ([kja(l)f]: CJ) is said to be a 'smothered sort of *y*' (Jones 1991: 180). Under his *FILL* entry too we are invited to contrast an 'obscure *u*' in the Pure dialect in items like *luck*, *skull*, *bur*, *but*, *buss*, *sup*, *scum* and *bun* with the 'hollowness' characteristic of the *u* sound in *tug*, *bud*, *tub*, *buzz*. Scottish speakers are said to substitute this obscure *u* for the palatal [ɪ] in items like *fill* and *will* and Southern English speakers, conscious of the salientness of this Scottish characteristic, mimic it by producing the obscure *u* or obscure *a* in expressions like '*What's your wull*' for '*What's your will*' (Jones 1991: 194).

While none of this points to any unambiguous or obvious value for Douglas' 'smothered vocal' *u* sound, his tendency to equate it with some kind of highly sonorant vowel quality, together with the suggestion that it has a 'more hollow' version and (less obviously, perhaps) its likeness to the French unstressed vowel in *le*, *ce*, may indicate a vowel with a low F₂ feature, one which is rather sonorant and perhaps even central: obvious candidates would be [ʌ] or [ə] with the more 'hollow' version in the not quite fully open, central unrounded [ɐ] vowel (Holmberg 1956: 78–83).

Yet Sylvester Douglas also proceeds to identify what he describes as 'another shade' of the smothered *u* vowel. From the number of lexical items

Douglas associates with this labial, it would appear to be for him the most common type in this area of the vowel space in the pure (his London Court) dialect. The only clue we have to the phonetics of this segment is Douglas' statement in his *Observations on the Alphabet* to the effect that it 'approaches nearer to the first [sound of *u*: CJ] in such words as *punt, hulk, rump, dub, mud*' (Jones 1991: 139). If we may assume that the first vocal *u* represents a relatively pure labial [ʊ] sound, while the 'smothered' *u* is a relatively sonorant [ʌ] or [ɐ], then a *u* type vowel 'approaching nearer' the pure labial than the latter, may suggest a segment mixed for both sonority and labiality with the latter predominating; perhaps some kind of [ɤ] (a back upper mid unrounded vowel) or [ɔ] (high back unrounded) vowel space – corresponding to James Douglas' 'broader' version of *u* short in *blood, bloody*. And it is interesting to note that Sylvester Douglas specifically mentions that 'in the North of England' *oo* is always heard as this 'second shade' of *u*, in items such as *stood, good, flood, blood* as well as *scull, Tully* and *rut*. The difficulty with Douglas' methodology is that he rarely (if ever) distinguishes in the *Table* these two 'shades' of the second sound of *u*, so that it is extremely difficult to decide whether he is referring to [ʌ] or [ɤ]-type vowels in those items showing the second *u* vowel. However, it is perhaps reasonable to interpret all his references to the second sound of *u* (unless they are actually accompanied by terms like 'obscure', 'smothered' or 'hollow') as if they are the latter, a stance also prompted by the small lexical set accorded the smothered type in Douglas' *Observations on the Alphabet* section.

Perhaps the two 'shades' of the *smothered u* are in Douglas' mind in his discussion under his *FILL* entry (Jones 1991: 193) their phonetic contexts reminiscent of those for Walker's 'middle' *u*:

But this I believe is owing to a property common to all the softer semivowels and mutes (viz. this soft *s*, the *v*, the soft *th*, the *b*, the *d* and the *g*) by which they reflect back, as it were, a sort of hollowness on a preceding obscure and short vowel. What I mean will be manifest by attending successively to the sound of the obscure *u* first in *luck, skull, bur, but, buss, sup, scum, bun*; and then in *tug, bud, tub, buzz*.

Our claim that the phonology of late-eighteenth-century English had a labial inventory of vowels showing three main phonetic manifestations ([ʊ]/[ʌ]/[ɤ]) perhaps adds some support to Luick's (1921: 529–30) view that the original Middle English [u] vowel developed between the late sixteenth and early eighteenth centuries into a slightly unrounded [ɤ] sound, before becoming completely unrounded to [ʌ], a view it seems accepted by Wells (1982: 197):

The split of the old short /u/ into two distinct qualities seems to have been established by the middle of the 17th century. It may well have originated as an allophonic alternation, with unrounded [ɤ], the forerunner of the modern /ʌ/, in most environments, but a rounded quality (modern /ʊ/), retained after labials.

Our suggestion that the innovatory [ɻ] vowel shape was a compromise or fudged form reacting to the presence of what appears to be a mainly lexically distributed and socially sensitive [ʊ]/[ʌ] contrast is not without parallel in the modern language where, in dialect contact situations (of both a geographical and social kind), levelled [ɻ] vowels can still appear (Trudgill 1986: 60–1; Chambers and Trudgill 1980). Indeed, under such circumstances, hypercorrect forms are liable to surface – *vide* some Modern English Midland pronunciations with [ʌ]-like vowels in items like *butcher* and *cushion*, which should show an historical and Standard English [ʊ] vowel; but such a vowel sound is so associated in some sociogeographic contexts with low prestige speakers, that [bʌtʃə] and [bʌʃən] pronunciations are heard, perhaps especially from those groups of speakers who are most socially conscious of the social value of language.¹⁶⁵

4.2.4 Long *u*

Concerns about the nature of this segment in the latter part of the eighteenth century are largely those of the preceding fifty years, although there is probably much more evidence to be gleaned from commentators as to the lexical distribution of [ʊ]/[jʊ] alternants. Walker's descriptions of the sound are perhaps the best known (1791: 6.22): 'The *u* in *unit*, is formed by uniting the squeezed sound *ee* to a simple vowel sound, heard in *woo* and *coo*; the *oo* in the words is formed by protruding the lips a little more than in *o*, forming a smaller aperture with them, and instead of swelling the voice in the middle of the mouth, bringing it as forward as possible to the lips'; 'The first sound of *u*, heard in *tube*, or ending an unaccented syllable, as in *cubic*, is a diphthongal sound, as if *e* were prefixed, and these words were spelt *tewbe* and *kewbic*'. Nares (1784: 35) observes that:

This sound certainly is a compounded one; it is the very same as is also expressed by the combination of three letters in the words *you* and *yew*. Yet that this is the regular long sound of the *u* with us is evident, by the manner in which we pronounce the vowel when we mean to name it alone, *u*. Dr Wallis says that this sound is compounded of *i* and *w*; but since, in English, the proper representative of the simple sound of *u* is the reduplication or false diphthong *oo*, I should rather say that it is compounded of *y* and *oo*.

Kenrick too offers a similar kind of description (1784: 62): 'This sound, variously denoted by letters, by *u*, *eu*, *ue*, *ew*, and even *eau*, as in *duty*, *feud*, *true*, *new*, *beauty*, when slowly uttered, is evidently a compound ... of the long *i* [his vowel in *hear*: C] and short *u*'. But he immediately proceeds to raise the issue, in vogue with observers in the first half of the century, as to whether one is dealing in this vowel sound with a genuine diphthongal transition or with a simple monophthongal segment: 'but when pronounced sharp and quick with a single effort of the voice, is no longer a diphthong, but a sufficiently single and uniform syllable, whose quantity is distinctly heard in the words above mentioned; as also in the words *du*, *une*, *unir*, *prune*, *eu*'. There are a few voices raised in favour of interpreting long *u* as a 'mixed' segment, a simultaneous amalgam of [i] and [ʊ], realizing something of

the quality of French [ü], perhaps including that of William Johnston (1764: 17), who describes the English accented long *u* itself as sounding 'exactly like *eu*, in *Europe*, or as the Scots would pronounce *ew*, or the French, *eou*'. At the same time describing (1764: 28) 'sounds which should be avoided in speaking English,' Johnston includes the 'Scotch or French *u* in their common word *union*, or in the Scotch word *brue*'.¹⁶⁶ Steele seems fairly unambiguously to interpret long *u* as a 'proper' diphthong (1775: ix):

a diphthong sound is made by blending two vocal sounds, by a very quick pronunciation, into one. So that to try, according to the foregoing definition, to continue a diphthong sound, the voice most commonly changes immediately from the first vowel sound, of which the diphthong is composed, by a small movement in some of the organs, to the sound of the vowel which makes the latter part of the said diphthong, the sound of the first vowel being heard only for one instant. For example, to make this experiment in the English sound of *U*, as in the word *use*, which is really a diphthong composed of these two English sounds *EE* and *OO*; the voice begins on the sound *EE*, but instantly dwindles into, and ends in, *OO*.

Yet, when listing his long *u* sound in items like *superfluous*, *tune*, *supreme*, *credulity*, he stresses that not only is it 'very rare in English', but he equates it with French items like *du*, *plus*, *une*, recalling Kenrick's interpretation of the segment as something like [ü]. This is hardly surprising, given Steele's propensity for treating 'diphthongs' as simultaneously expressed complex internal structures; in this instance, one structure composed of labiality and palatal components. Such a 'mixed' segment might well be 'heard' as a fronted version of [u], viz. [ü].

Many of the commentators writing in Scotland in the late eighteenth century attempt, with varying degrees of success, to provide phonetic descriptions for this diphthong. Sylvester Douglas' is perhaps the most attractive to the modern phonetician, in its attempt to capture his intuitions concerning the relative prominence between the vocalic items which go to make up the complex vowel space, as well as pointing to the fact that the highlighting of one element brings about a concomitant reduction in vowel-ness in the other (Jones 1991: 139):

The third sound of *u*, and that from which it takes its name in England, is diphthongal; consisting of the first sound of the *e* followed by the first of the *u*; but so that the *e* is hurried over, and leaves the *u* to predominate. Of this we have examples in *usage* (which some old authors have written *yeusage*) *curious*, *unity*, *pure*.

In this he follows Sheridan's definition very closely (1791: 20): 'To form it [long *u*: CJ] properly therefore, a foreigner is to be told that it is composed of the sounds e^3 [[i]: CJ] and o^3 [[u]: CJ], the first sound not completed but rapidly running into the last.' Elphinston (1765: 14) is his usual enigmatic self, with 'The diphthongs inverted make *liquefactions*, where *y* and *w* become prepositive, and melt into

vocal articulators of the subjunctive vowel. The former thus virtually articulates *oo* in *u*, equal to *you* for *yoo*, as also to *yew* the tree.' Cortez Telfair's (1775: 152) 'first long *u* is a sound compounded of first short *i* [as in *in*: CJ]¹⁶⁷ and second long *o* [his *oo* in *doom*: CJ]; and is the same as *ew* in *few*'; Barrie (1815: 14) represents the item *scripture* as *scrip'tyūr*. Perhaps emulating Dun's (1766: 25) description of these improper diphthongs as 'the united sound of *e* and *u*', the anonymous author of *A Spelling-Book Upon a New Plan* comments upon the diphthong that, in words such as *blew*, *dew*, *mew*, *pew* 'Eu and *ew* have the united sound of both vowels' (1796: 17) – a not very helpful distinction since he lists three different phonetic values for the *e* symbol. However, he goes on to claim that 'The vowel *u*, in the terminations *ure* and *ute*, though marked with a circumflex accent, has not exactly the sound of *ew*: – It sounds rather like *y*, as *creature*, (*creatyūr*); *leisure*, (*leisyūr*) &c.' (1796: 26 footnote), where his *ū* symbol, *u* short, is manifested in *adult*, and might represent some kind of centralized [ʌ] segment, perhaps the product of a process of pre-[r] lowering and centring. James Douglas' comments on this segment are not always straightforwardly interpretable either, although his descriptions seem to infer a durational difference between different types of 'long *u*' segments. He distinguishes a 'Vowel *U*' which 'is sounded Long like its Common Name which may be called the true English *ū*, as *ūnion*, *cūrious*' (Holmberg 1956: 185).¹⁶⁸ He also describes a 'Vowel *U* ... sounded short like its Common Name' in items such as *absolūtion*, *constitūtion*, *infūtion*, *exclūtion*, *altitūde*, *amplitūde*, *creatūre*, *natūre*, *picūre* (Holmberg 1956: 189–90), a segment Holmberg interprets as [ju] contrasting with the [juu] of the Long Vowel *U* (1956: 76–77). Indeed, some further justification for the recognition of a length distinction in this diphthong might be produced from Sylvester Douglas' EXCUSE entry: 'The *u* has its diphthongal sound, but is short, and the *s* hard [voiceless: CJ]. So that this word rhymes to *use* a noun, or *Bruce*, *spruce*, *truce*' (Jones 1991: 192).

Commentators say very little¹⁶⁹ concerning the phonetic contexts which might trigger a [ju] response. William Johnston (1764: 50) asserts that *ū* long appears following consonants like *d*, *j*, *l*, *n*, *r*, *s* and *t* as in *dūrable*, *Jūne*, *lūminous*, *nūtrition*, *rūral*, *sūperb*, *tūlip*, citing also *būgle*, *cūrate*, *fūture*, *argument* [sic], *hūman*, *mūtual*, *pūpil* 'and generally when long, after *b*, *c*, *f*, *g* hard, *h*, *m*, *p*'. However, his printer seems to have considerable difficulty with diacritic marking, since we see *prodūce*, *magnitūde*, alongside *mūltitūde*, and Johnston himself is very conscious of the perceived randomness of some of the triggering contexts themselves (1764: 50 footnote): 'Yet I think the *u* in the unaccented termination *lue*, *tue*, *ture*, sounds rather *u* than *ū*, as in *value*, *virtue*, *nature*'. Indeed, he goes further to assert (1764: 18 footnote):

Both accented and unaccented *u*, seem most commonly to be sounded *eu*, after *b*, *c*, *f*, *g*, *h*, *m* and *p*; as in *būgle*, *cūrious*, *fūture*, *argue*, *hūman*, *mūral*, *pure*; *bucolic*, *cutaneous*, *futuruty*, *argumentative*, *humane*, *musician*, *pudicity*: but they are frequently sounded *ū*, or *oo*, though shorter, after *d*, *l*, *n*, *r*, *s*, and *t*; as in *dūrable*, *lūminous*, *nūmerous*, *rūral*, *Sūsan*, *tūtor*; *duration*, *lunation*, *nutation*, *rubiginous*, *superior*, *tuition*; yet as many who speak well pronounce the *u* differently in

these situations, I shall generally excuse myself from giving any other notice of its sound in them, than these rules, which, if I mistake not, are founded on the more easy, and genteel way of speaking.

Late-eighteenth-century commentators in general seem to see a lexically specified distribution for the [ju] entity, allowing it in some items, debarring it in others: thus Elphinston (1786: 154) suggests *buty* as a respelling for *beauty*, criticizing those ‘monstermongers’ who seek to create triphthongs out of *beauty*, *view* and *lieu*. Carter (1773: 12) has *u* as long in *tube* and *tune*, but not in *creature*, *gesture*, *future*, *lecture*, *rupture*. Likewise, Lowe (1755: 51) excludes [ju] – ‘*E* lengthens not’ – in the *-ure* termination set *mixture*, *moisture*, *nurture*, *jointure*, *rupture*, *scripture*, etc. A similar set is recorded by Bell (1769: 34), who also (1769: 40) claims that ‘*U* sounds like *e* in some positions, without an accent: as *vir-tu-ous* (*vir-te-ous*); *com-pen-du-ous* (*com-pen-de-ous*); *ar-du-ous* (*ar-de-ous*)’. Rudd (1755: 34) argues that the *eu* graph denotes an ‘improper’ diphthong – ‘it unites the sound of both vowels’, as in Greek proper names such as *Atrous* and *Theseus*, ‘tho’ in vulgar use, the *e* and *u* are generally separated: as, *E-pi-me-the-us*; *Pro-me-the-us*. Nor do I, indeed, see, could we get the better of *Custom* or *Prejudice*, why several English words, where the diphthong occurs, might not be admitted on this list. Such, particularly as *Feud*, *grandeur*, *pleurisy*, *pleuritic*, *rheum*, *rheumatism*, *rheumatic*, &c.’ Fogg (1796: 17) respells *feud* as *fyood*, *new* as *nyoo*, but takes care to point out that *chew*, *Jew* and *shrew* are not *tshyoo*, *dzhyyoo*, *shryoo* but are to be pronounced as *tshoo*, *dzhoo*, *shroo*. At the other extreme is Smith, who appears to have the widest tolerance for [ju] in the period, and his Fourth Diphthong is cited for an extremely large set on monosyllabic and polysyllabic items: *cue*, *dew*, *mew*, *knew*, *pew*, *abusive*, *allusive*, *exclusive*, *peruser*, *refuser*, *introduce*, *reproduce*, *curiousness*, *punitory*, *beautifully*, *urinary*, *mutually*, *temperature*, *literature*, *duplication* and many others. But he too hints that there are at least sociophonetic constraints on the use of the diphthong, noting (1795: 92 footnote) the items *blue*, *due*, *sue*, *stew*, *new*, *clew*, *flew*, *flue*, *glue*, *slew* ‘are pronounced by a great part of the citizens of London, as if spelt *bloo*, *doo*, *noo*, &c.’, while observing too that ‘The common London pronunciation [for *tune*: CJ] is as if spelt *toon*’, echoing Walker (1791: 32): ‘*EW*. This diphthong is pronounced like long *u*, and is almost always regular. There is a corrupt pronunciation of it like *oo* chiefly in London, where we sometimes hear *dew* and *new* pronounced as if written *doo* and *noo*’. But even Smith admits to variation in this area, the *u* in *enthusiastic* ‘Mr Walker marks this as a diphthong, but the general pronunciation, I apprehend, warrants the sound of the long *u* [his *woo*: CJ]’.

4.2.5 Low mid back vowels

While observers in the latter part of the eighteenth century are as involved as their immediate predecessors with issues such as the extent of any LOT/TAUGHT merger, there seems to be an even greater degree of concern as to the outcome of the earlier monophthongization of Middle English [au], the relationship between that and the development of Middle English short *o*, and the effects of these on lexical distribution and sociophonetic sensitivities. As expected, discussion of sounds in this

area of the phonology occurs under descriptions of the letters *a*, *o* and the improper diphthong *au*, the generic sound labelled *a* broad, *a*³, or *o* short. The ‘broad *a* or *aw/au*’ is often described as ‘the true English sound’, the sound which occurs ‘in old English words’ (Johnston 1764: 17), and that ‘which we more immediately derive from our maternal language the Saxon’ (Walker 1791: 11). There is considerable debate concerning the degree of similarity which exists between the LOT/TAUGHT types, some observers seeing them as identical in quality and quantity, others seeing a quantitative difference only, while yet others at least infer a purely qualitative contrast. There exist in the period no wholly clear descriptions of the articulatory characteristics of the broad *a* vowel sound, Johnston offering the negative suggestion that the vowel in *father* shows a ‘wider’ configuration than that in *awe* and, like Kenrick, identifies it with the French or Scotch *a*. Smith too, in describing this – his First Vowel – appeals to foreign parallels (1795: 1): ‘The first, and most open sound, is to be met with in the words *awe*, *law*, *all*, *wall*. There is no sound exactly similar to this in any foreign language: the vocal part of the French word *ange* (angel) cometh nearest to it; also in the German word *aal* (eel)’. On the other hand Kenrick (1784: 60) claims that ‘This sound is common in many languages; although the distinction of long and short, is preserved in few or none but the English. The French have it exactly in the words *ame*, *pas*, *las*, &c.’ Tucker compares the degree of lip rounding in this segment between French and English versions (1773: 136):

The greatest elongation of an English mouth appears in ‘*a*’ and ‘*au*’, where it forms an elipsis, the longest diameter lies horizontal in ‘*a*’ and perpendicular in ‘*au*’, but the Frenchman’s ‘*a*’ preserves both diameters in their full length, thereby throwing his mouth into a circle like the mouth of a trumpet; [while] a person well versed in both languages ... in passing from the true English ‘*a*’ to the French ‘*a*’ ... will make no other alteration than by the fall of his jaw bringing the whole aperture to a perfect circle.¹⁷⁰

There is some difference of opinion among contemporary observers as to whether the LOT/TAUGHT vowels are, in fact, identical. That they are, both in quality and quantity, is a view espoused by Mitford, Sheridan (who lists under his *a*³ as having the same sounds, all of the following: *call*, *talk*, *laud*, *taught*, *claw*, *broad*, *George*, *form*, *ought*), Bayly, and Rudd, while Walker states clearly that ‘the second sound of this letter [O: CJ] is called its short sound, and is found in *not*, *got*, *lot*, &c. [and: CJ] corresponds exactly to that of *a* in *what*, with which the words *not*, *got*, *lot*, are perfect rhymes. The long sound, to which the *o* in *not* and *sot* are short ones, is found under the diphthong *au* in *naught*, and the *ou* in *sought*; corresponding exactly to the *a* in *hall*, *ball*, &c.’. Such an identical coincidence is not shared by all observers, however, and writers like Buchanan, Coote, Tucker and Johnston use phrases like ‘approaches to’, ‘resembles’, and ‘almost like’ to capture the LOT/TAUGHT relationship. Certainly, many observers note that there is a clear length distinction between the pairs, Kenrick insisting that ‘thus *nought* is in quality the long sound of *not* and is uttered twice as long’.¹⁷¹ Describing his first sound

(*au* in *laud*) and its relationship to his second (*o* in *not*) Fogg (1796: 156) observes: 'In the *first*, the lips are rather pushed forward, the upper and under lip as distant as they ever are in speaking, the voice directed so as to strike upon the upper part of the mouth near the throat, and the sound prolonged. The *second* is the same sound shortened'. Elphinston's observations on this issue must be treated with some care, however. While he appears to see the '*o* of *cord* [as] perfectly co-incident or unison, with the *a* in *ward*' (1795: 14), and claims that 'perfect is the rime ov *ward* and *cord*', nevertheless this co-incident is between A braud *shut* and A braud *open*, the former seemingly constrained to occur post syllable-initial [w], the latter in items like *fawn*, *all* and *ball*. Buchanan (1757: 9) seems at least to infer an *awe/pot* contrast, the former 'the broad sound in *aw*, that is, as foreigners pronounce it', while 'short (*o*) and (*u*) are "pretty similar" – as in *űnder*, *űnto*, *onder*, *onto* – and are so quick and obscure as to make no motions in the parts of the mouth'. Bayly's *aw*, 'whose native sound is broad deep and long' is contrasted (1772: 10) with his short *o* which is '*a* broad, but shorter than *all*, as *lot*, *for*; this is properly *a* short', while Fogg's respellings like *bauld* and *kwolity* might also suggest a qualitative contrast. Certainly, there does appear to have been a distinct qualitative contrast in post-[w] environments, Coote, for instance, stressing that 'this broadness of sound is less strong in *wander*, *watch*, *swan*, *water* in which words the pronunciation of the *a* resembles [italics: CJ] that which the *o* has in *pot*' (1788: 21).¹⁷²

Perhaps the general problem is best addressed by considering the lexical and phonological distribution of words with vowels which in Modern English appear in the general area of the low mid back as exemplified in the description of them given by W. Johnston in his *A Pronouncing and Spelling Dictionary* (1764). Johnston describes such words as falling into four main classes, as shown in this table.

Long acute \bar{a}	\bar{a} Broad/ <i>aw</i> Broad	Long acute \bar{o}	Short o
<i>Jaundice</i>	<i>Draw</i>	<i>George</i>	<i>Odd</i>
<i>daughter</i>	<i>Claw</i>	<i>Broth</i>	<i>On</i>
<i>Sauce</i>	<i>Clause</i>	<i>Cloth</i>	<i>Song</i>
<i>Alms</i>	<i>Brawl</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>throng</i>
<i>Almond</i>	<i>broad</i>	<i>Croft</i>	<i>Cough</i>
<i>Launch</i>	<i>all</i>	<i>Lost</i>	<i>Bought</i>
<i>Jaunt</i>	<i>ball</i>	<i>Moth</i>	<i>Fought</i>
<i>flaunt</i>	<i>call</i>	<i>wroth</i>	<i>nought</i>
<i>Aunt</i>	<i>alder</i>	<i>order</i>	
<i>Sauce</i>	<i>quart</i>		
<i>Saucer</i>	<i>want</i>		
	<i>wate</i>		
	<i>wrath</i>		

We have already argued that Johnston's 'long acute \bar{a} ' is some kind of [aa] vowel restricted in its occurrence to a well-defined phonetic context, namely where the syllable coda is highly sonorant in nature, either in the shape of [l] and [r] plus (often homorganic) consonants, or fricative segments. Broad \bar{a} , Johnston argues, is confined to 'Old English words' and has the characteristics of either the French or

the Scotch *a*. It too has a fairly restricted *opus operandi*, appearing mainly before heavily sonorant syllable codas, as well as in post-syllable onset [w] environments. Long acute *ō*, which Johnston claims is ‘almost like *au*’, appears mainly in pre-[rC] and pre-fricative contexts, while his Short *o* appears in a variety of environments, some of them obstruent or nasal, and it goes without saying that many of the vowels in items in columns one, two and four derive historically from diphthongal sources in [au] or [ou] either in Middle English itself or in French. But it would seem, from a *prima facie* interpretation of Johnston’s data, that he sees the items in each column as phonetically distinct in some way. The diphthongal origins have clearly been subject to monophthongization, whereby a vowel area characterized by a transition from one value to another, has been reinterpreted as one where only a single entity is involved. Now, while vowel to diphthong changes are in many ways simple to explain in terms of an affecting phonetic context – very often as some kind of ‘breaking’ – the opposite phenomenon is less easy to account for. What could motivate a language user to reinterpret a two-vowel value, such as that in [au], as a single entity like, say, [ɔ] or [ɒ]? We have already hinted above that one explanation may lie in the way individual speakers ‘hear’ diphthongs; they may perceive them as two separate segments appearing discretely in time, or as two separate segments which are co-terminous. That is, as well as hearing the individual vowels as (in musical terms) two individual, temporarily discrete ‘notes’, speakers hear them as a ‘chord’. In addition to this, hearers are given to assigning greater or lesser ‘weight’ or prominence to the individual segments which compose the chord itself, thus determining the nature of the single entity they end up recognising. We might argue, for example, that mid vowels such as [e], [ɛ], [o], [ɔ] are not phonological primes, but are, rather, complexes composed of various combinations of primary phonological entities like *Palatality* ([i]-like vowels), *Labiality* ([u]-like vowels) and *Sonority* ([a]-like vowels). Between these extreme points there exists a scale of vocalic entities, composed of various ‘mixtures’ of these primary components (Anderson and Jones 1974). Thus, in the present instance, a mixture of labiality and sonority types will produce a range or scale of internally complex vowels spread between [o], [ɔ] and [ɒ] and even, with lip-rounding modifications, [ɤ] and [ʌ]. Indeed, the fact that we are evoking the notion of a scalar relationship in such a set infers that a considerable amount of fine phonetic detail can be expected to surface. In effect, the scale we are considering here reflects the relative position of F₂ to the high and low Hz values of the other two prominent and well-defined formant markers in the vowels’ make-up. Most obviously, a diphthong with a low, prominent (i.e. stress-bearing) segment such as [au] can be expected to show that element as the more perceptible in the ‘mix’, resulting in a lower, more sonorant monophthong than say the output of an [ou] diphthong, whose less sonorant stressed element might well predispose the recognition of a monophthong further away from a pure sonority value. Perhaps the importance of emphasizing as we are the relative, scalar nature of the results of [au] monophthongization lies in the possibilities it suggests for the likelihood of mergers, hypercorrections and lexicalization in an area of the phonology where the space is ‘crowded’ by components which show a relatively small degree of phonetic distinctiveness.

Walker's (1791: 10ff) discussion of his 'third long sound' raises many issues addressed by nearly all observers in the period. Identifying the vowels in *fall*, *ball*, *gall* as 'correspondent' to those of the improper diphthong *au*, he claims: 'we have improved upon our German parent, by giving a broader sound to this letter in these words than the Germans themselves would do, were they to pronounce them'. The 'deep broad German *a*' he sees as occurring mainly in pre-[l], [lC] environments. Although it is recorded in the previous two centuries (Dobson 1968: 717), such a 'broadening' effect [to something like [ɔ] perhaps: CJ] Walker claims is also to be found in post-[w] contexts, although he hears the resulting vowel as shorter. Thus, he suggests that the *short* broad *a* is the vowel associated with items like *want*, *wast*, *wasp* and *wallow*, although when the syllable is terminated in [l] or [r], it is the long broad sound which surfaces, as in *walk*, *swarm*. Coote, for instance, stresses that 'this broadness of sound is less strong in *wander*, *watch*, *swan*, *water* in which words the pronunciation of the *a* resembles [italics: CJ] that which the *o* has in *pot*' (1788: 21). If we take Fogg's distinction between his first (the *au* in *laud*) and second (the *o* in *not*) sounds at their face value, then he too might just be suggesting such a contrast. While he assigns (1792: 10) his first sound to items like *quart*, *quatrain* and *squadron* (respelled with *au* graphs), he indicates that the majority of post-[w] vowels show his second: *quality*, *quandry*, *quarantine*, *quarrel*, *quash*, *squalid*, *squander* and many others. There seems little doubt, though, that the quality of the post-[w] vowel where it is rounded, is different from the monophthongized version of [au] in *awe* and *ball* types, as Elphinston appears to suggest in his *a* broad open for *fawn*, *all*, *ball* items, against *a* broad shut for *wallet*, *war*, *quality*, *want* and so on.

Again from evidence from the preceding century's observers, it would seem that the 'double articulation' characteristic of [w] segments (Ohala and Lorentz 1977) is compromised when there is a closure at the end of the vocal tract, as in *wag*, *swank* types. Thus, for Walker the 'broadening' effect is nullified when the syllable in question is terminated by a velar obstruent such as [g] or [k] or by the fricative [f], thus *wag*, *swag*, *waggon*, *wagtail* and *waft* show his *a*⁴ as in *fat*. So too Elphinston in his *English Orthography Epittomized* (1790): 'But *a* ... retains the slender sound it has in *shal*, *shallow*, *bac* or *bag*; when shut by a palatal (*c*, *x* or *g*), as in *twang*, *swang* and *swank*; broad when it be, in *wan* and *swan*'. Yet phonetic conditioning seems to be relatively weak for this effect and Walker (1791: 12) observes how the rounding is inoperative in several lexical items, a situation which he finds lacking in propriety: 'The *q* including the sound of the *w*, and being no more than this letter preceded by *k*, ought, according to analogy, to broaden every *a* it goes before like the *w*; thus *quantity* ought to be pronounced as if written *kwontity*, and *quality* should rhyme to *jollity*; instead of which we frequently hear the *w* robbed of its rights in its proxy; and *quality* so pronounced as to rhyme with *legality*' a pronunciation he dismisses as 'affected' (as does Nares (1784: 9)), although the fact that he claims the usage is 'frequent' might suggest that failure to round low vowels following [w] was becoming an established characteristic among certain social groups in the period (Wyld 1937: 202). But there is considerable lexical conditioning, as the author of *Vocabulary* observes under his *WASP* entry: 'I have followed

Mr. Sheridan in the pronunciation of this word [with a^1 : CJ], though Mr. Walker says he never heard it so sounded. The latter marks it wo^1sp' . In the same vein, *Vocabulary* observes under WAFF how 'Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Walker pronounce this word as I have marked it [wa¹ft: CJ], but the latter says it is sometimes erroneously pronounced so as to rhyme with *soft*'.

But for Walker (and Sheridan) it would seem that the long broad *a*, as in *ball*, is identical in quality with his long broad *o* 'like the broad a^3 ' in *not*, *for*, *or*, themselves identical to the 'broad German *a*' in *broad*, *thought*, *taught*, suggesting a merger between the historical derivatives of Middle English [ou]/[au] diphthongs and Middle English 'short *o*'. But Walker is careful to exempt a set of words containing what were originally Middle English [au] diphthongs originating in Old French borrowings. These appear to have arisen as a result of breaking of back vowels in pre-nasal plus homorganic consonant clusters: *aunt*, *haunt*, *daunt*, *askaunce*, *askaunt*, *flaunt*, *haunt*, *gauntlet*, *jaunt*, *haunch*, *launch*, *craunch*, *jaundice*, *laundry*. In such items, monophthongization results in low front vowels of the [a]/[a] type, a process recorded in the late sixteenth century (Dobson 1968: 790) and perhaps even earlier. Whatever the phonetic/acoustic/perceptual motivation for such a monophthongal outcome (although it may well be related to the acoustically 'noisy' nature of the nasal plus consonant termination) it would seem that any [a]/[ɔ] alternation in such words was no longer phonetically conditioned in the eighteenth century, the affected items being treated as lexical residues of a once-active phonological contrast. And with this lexicalization comes, as we might expect, much 'exceptional' behaviour, as well as much sociophonetic alternation and comment. For Walker (1791: 27), for instance, the vowel in items such as *daunt*, *paunch*, *gaunt* and *saunter* has the value of 'the second sound of *a*, heard in *far*, *father*, &c.' despite Sheridan's claim that they be pronounced as if written *dawnt*, *pawntch*, &c. Indeed Walker's record of the divergent views of his contemporary observers on this vowel quality perhaps best serves to reinforce our claim that a considerable degree of lexical rather than phonological classification for the contrast is involved:

Maund, a basket, is always pronounced with the Italian *a*, and nearly as if written *marnd*; for which reason *Maundy* Thursday, which is derived from it, ought, with Mr. Nares, to be pronounced in the same manner, though generally heard with the sound of *aw*. To *maunder*, to grumble, is neither in Sheridan nor Kenrick: and though generally heard as if written *maunder*, ought certainly to be pronounced as Mr. Nares has classed it, with the Italian *a*. The same may be observed of *taunt*, which ought to rhyme with *aunt*, though sounded *tawnt* by Mr. Sheridan.

Bearing in mind that we have suggested above how the Italian or Middle *a* sound is perhaps a segment like [a] or [a̠], Walker is unwilling to accept such a sound in a very restricted lexical set like *vaunt* and *avaunt*, recommending the acceptance of the a^3 vowel in such items since 'as these words are chiefly confined to tragedy, they may be allowed to' (1791: 27) ' "fret and strut their hour upon the stage" in

the old traditional sound of *awe'*, suggesting an ongoing phonological change with a segment like, or close to, [a] supplanting whatever is the phonetic value of the broad *a*. Perhaps this is happening as a result of 'change from below', given Walker's condemnation of its use among the lower social classes: 'There is a corrupt pronunciation of this diphthong amongst 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'*. Now it is difficult to determine whether Walker's objections to pronunciations like *darter* has to do with the 'intrusive [r]' or the vowel quality (or both), or whether his re-spelling with *r* is merely a device to show vowel length, perhaps the latter since he condemns the short vowel in *sassage*.

It is probably true to say that it is the output of the Middle English [au] diphthong before nasals – the HAUNT vowel – which causes the most sociophonetic comment of any alternation in the late eighteenth century. For Smith (1795), items such as *daunt*, *haunt*, *taunt* all show his first 'most open' vowel, while *haunch*, *paunch*, *launch*, *craunch*, *blanch*, *branch* and *stanch* show his vowel two – his long *a* – as in items like *car*, *hard*, *card*, *charm*. His comments on the last set clearly illustrate the degree of what is surely lexically motivated divergence in their pronunciation (1795: 7 footnote): 'I have classed these seven together, and put them under this sound (his second sound: CJ) of the *a*, notwithstanding Mr. Sheridan has marked them all, except *paunch*, with the short, *a*; and Mr. Walker has marked *blanch*, and *branch* with it. Dr. Kenrick agrees with me entirely, and Mr. Scott in every word but *paunch*, which, with Mr. Sheridan, he places among those of our first sound'. The anonymous author of *Vocabulary* (1797) discusses this variation in several of his entries often (but not always) it has to be said, without sociophonetic comment of a severely condemnatory kind. Thus, under DAUNT, he opines: 'Though Mr. Sheridan has very properly pronounced the verb *to haunt* as if written *hant*: yet he has marked the *au*, in this word, like *au* in *caught*. Mr. Walker, on the contrary, has dropped the *u* and pronounced the *a* like the *a* in *hat*, in which I have followed him. He also pronounces in the same manner the *au* in *paunch*, *gaunt*, *taunt* and *saunter*, in which (as in *daunt*) he is supported by Dr. Kenrick; while Mr. Sheridan preserves the broad sound, as if written *pawnych*, &c.' So too in FLAUNT: 'Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Walker pronounce this word as I have written it [with his *a*¹: CJ]; but we often hear it sounded with the *au* like *a* in *hall*, a pronunciation unsupported by good usage'. But he reserves his opprobrium for *sausage* and *saucy* mispronunciations: 'SAUSAGE: Mr. Walker pronounces this word, first as I have marked it, [with *a*³ as in *hall*: CJ], and then *sa*¹*s*-*si*¹*d**je* (the latter is the same sound as Mr. Sheridan's pronunciation)'. He then adds 'This word is pronounced in the first manner by the correct, and in the second, by the vulgar speaker'; 'SAUCY: Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Walker agree in pronouncing this word as I have marked it [with *a*³*w*: CJ]; the latter subjoins, "The regular sound of this diphthong must be carefully preserved, as the Italian sound of *a* given to it in this word, and in *saucer*, *daughter*, &c. is only heard among the vulgar"'.¹⁷³ But for Elphinston the HAUNT

words are all to be treated (it seems as a matter of principle) as ‘A slender shut’ – some kind of low frontish [a] vowel. His observations are worth quoting in full (1786: 171–2):

U merritoriously distinguishes *aunt*, dhe parent’s sister, from *ant* dhe *emmet*; and guivs *A slender shut*, dhe servile ov *A braud open*. Yet, widhout pretence ov so daingerous, or ov anny, coincidence; in defiance ov boath sisters, haz *aunt* had power to retain company ov *jaunt*, *haunt*, *vaunt*, *taunt*, *daunt*, *gaunt*, *gauntlet*; in all ov which *u* doz precisely dhe same duty, it formerly did in *chaunt*, *graunt*, *maund*, and *commaund*; in *saunter*, and *Saunder*; az wel az in *braunch*, *haunch*, *paunch*, *launch*, *staunch*; all now justly az gennealodgically, *chant*, *grant*, *mand* (dhe old basket), *command*, *santer*, *Dander*; *branch*, *hanch*, *panch*, *lanch*, *stanch*. *Jaundice* alone pleaded *u* raddical; and yet waz found mere *jandice*. So, widh *ant*, must return to’ Truith and Ettymollogy (hoo doo not always join issue) *jant*, *hant*, *vant*, *tant*, *dant*, *gant*, *gantlet*; and even dhe vennerabel *Mandy-Thursday*, widh her *mand* (or basket) in her hand. She had indeed almost left dhe language, dho *Astrea* had not left dhe land, hwen Analogy (or Harmony) enacted; *A braud* (AU) *shal not, in English, precede N, followed edher by a dry dental, or by a sibbilacion*: dhat iz, *Au* shal not be followed by *nt*, *nd*, *nce*, *nch* or *nge*. No such sounds being sufferable in dhe English system, az *aunt*, *aund*, *aunce*, *aunch*, or *aunge*; dhare shal be no such semblances. Alike ar dherefore indispensabel *chant*, and *jant*, *hand* and *mand*, *chance* and *lance*, *branch* and *lanch*, *banter* and *santer*, *Sander* and hiz fool self *Alexander*. In all such *a*, far from broad and open, iz slender and shut; yet hardly shorter than if dhe silent aspiracion interpozed in *ahnt*, *sahnter*, *lahnce*, *lahnch*, and dhe rest.

Even *sausage* has to conform to this principle: ‘*A slender shut* prolonged in *sahce*, and *sahceage*’ (1786: 239).

The kind of condemnation Walker gives to the [a] vowel in an item like *sausage*, is also assigned to other instances of [ɔ]/[a] alternation in the period. The author of *Vocabulary* (1797), discussing the item CADGER, questions Walker’s observational adequacy: ‘I have ventured to differ, both from Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Walker, in the pronunciation of the *a* in the first syllable of this word, being persuaded, that it is seldom sounded otherwise than if written *codger*; and this Mr. Walker acknowledges to be the case among the vulgar in London; though he rarely ever heard any one, who condescended to use the word, pronounce it otherwise. The two gentlemen alluded to have marked it as if pronounced ka¹d’-ju¹r’. However, the same writer observes how, in an item like BEYOND, ‘the Cockneys, and many provincials, are apt to give the *o*, in the last syllable, the sound of *a*, as if the word were written *beyond*’. So too, he claims, for YONDER where ‘there is a vulgar way of sounding it among the Cockneys as if written *yander*, which should be carefully avoided’. While Walker allows for an [ɔ]/[a] stressed vowel possibility in *slabber*, his preference for the former stems from his concerns for orthographic equivalence: ‘The second sound is by much the most usual; but as it is in direct opposition to the orthography, it ought to be discontinued, and the *a* restored to its true sound. Correct usage

seems somewhat inclined to this reformation, and every lover of correctness ought to favour it'. And again for WRATH, the author of *Vocabulary* notes how 'Mr. Walker marks this word as above [*ro¹th*: CJ], or *ra¹th*; and though he acknowledges the first pronunciation to be by far the most usual, and supported by all our orthoepists, except Mr. Perry; yet, as the latter is more analogical, he thinks Mr. Perry's authority ought to out weigh the others'. However, for the item *wrap*, although Walker and Sheridan both agree to a stressed [a] vowel, Walker also comments on the fact that the word 'is often pronounced *rop*, rhyming with *top*, even by speakers much above the vulgar'. But there appears to be a general consensus in the period that in many words of this type – e.g. in *tassel*, *valet*, *wan*, – an [ɔ]/[a] stressed vowel alternation was at least socially acceptable, nonetheless vehement condemnation of [ɔ] versions can still be found, as in *Vocabulary*'s entry for JALAP: 'Mr. Sheridan pronounces this word dzho¹-lu¹p; Mr. Walker marks it as I have [ja¹'-lu¹p: CJ] and thinks that the sound given the word by Mr. Sheridan is now confined to the illiterate and vulgar'.

4.2.6 [o]/[ɔ] alternations

This alternation is one of the best in the period for illustrating not just the effects of lexical diffusion, but also as serving to illustrate what appears to be an active and ongoing pronunciation change; a change closely tied to normative evaluation as well as one which seems to illustrate the impetus for innovation as originating in the lower, rather than the higher echelons of society. Most of the major orthoepists in the latter half of the eighteenth-century record (with varying degrees of acceptance and rejection) an alternation between back high-mid and back low-mid vowel segments in words such as *knowledge*, *notable*, *revolt*, *produce*, *perform*, *sort* and many others. The vowels in question come from a variety of Middle English sources in both [o] and [ɔ], short and long. In an item like *soporific*, for instance, Walker suggests the latter for the first vowel, Sheridan, the former, while for *mobile*, Sheridan, Walker and Dr Johnson show [o], Ash and Entick have the vowel as [ɔ]. Likewise, for *revolt*, Sheridan, Kenrick, Perry and Buchanan suggest [ɔ], with Nares, Scott, W. Johnston promoting [o], with Walker suggesting both pronunciations, but favouring [o]. It is usually the case that the alternation provokes comments of various kinds, some sociolinguistic, others lexical and analogical. Walker, for instance, notes how the value of the stressed vowel in *knowledge* has been the subject of considerable speculation: 'Scarcely any word has occasioned more altercation among verbal critics than this'. While his dictionary entry gives both [ɔ] and [o] as possibilities, his preference for one pronunciation over another is based, typically for him, on an appeal to analogical criteria, criteria which, not for the first time, he is willing to override in favour of usage:

A great appearance of propriety seems to favour the second pronunciation, till we observe a great number of similar words, where the long vowel in the simple is shortened in the compound, and then we perceive something like an idiom of pronunciation, which, to correct, would, in some measure, obstruct the current of the language. To preserve the simple without alternation in the compound is

certainly a desirable thing in language; but when the general tune of the language, as it may be called, crosses this analogy, we may depend on the rectitude of universal custom, and ought to acquiesce in it.

He makes a similar observation concerning the *cone/conical* contrast: ‘The *o* in the first syllable of this word [*conik*: CJ] is pronounced short, though it is long in its primitive *cone*’, but even then he is tempted to seek out for the primitive a Latin/Greek ancestor whose main vowel is ‘short’, so that there is, in fact, no vowel quality effect resulting from the morphological accretion.

While derivation is often proposed as a mainstay of pronunciation propriety, it sometimes comes associated with the effects of lexical rarity. Thus, for the item *coffer*, the author *Vocabulary* claims:

Mr. Sheridan stands alone in pronouncing the *o* in this word long; at least that is the only dictionary in which I find it so marked. Mr. Walker, Mr. W. Johnston, Messrs. Perry, Scott, and Buchanan, as also Dr. Kenrick agree in sounding it short, which I have followed. There is very respectable authority, however, for Mr. Sheridan’s accentuation; and I take the fact to be, that *his* was the ancient pronunciation; but that since *coffers* have given place to *bureaus*, *secretaries*, *scrutoires*, &c. the word has seldom been heard, and from thence, the regular sound has assumed its proper station, with those who first became acquainted with the word from books.

The author of *Vocabulary* views an [o] vowel in an item like *apostle* as ‘affected’, in *hostler* as ‘very improper’ although in *droll* it is a sign of ‘best usage’, while Walker describes those who use the [o] vowel in *produce* as ‘wonderfully accurate’ in coupling it with the accent on the first syllable. On the other hand, an [ɔ] vowel in *shone* is, for *Vocabulary*, a mark of ‘polite speakers’ and Walker, while allowing [ɔ] in *soft*, warns against any ‘lengthening’ of it to the vowel sound heard in *hall* and *awe*: ‘When this word is accompanied by emotion, it is sometimes lengthened into *sawft*, as Mr. Sheridan has marked it; but in other occasions such a pronunciation borders on vulgarity’. However, we should not be too surprised to find, in the context of eighteenth-century ‘rationality’, that in an alternation such as this, where phonetic cues to one pronunciation against another are minimal, that a distinct lexical value may be assigned to each variant to avoid lexical ‘ambiguity’. Thus for *notable*, while Walker’s dictionary allows for both [o] and [ɔ] values, he comments: ‘When this word signifies *remarkable*, it ought to be pronounced in the first manner; and when it means *careful* or *bustling*, in the last. The adverb follows the same analogy; nor ought this useful distinction to be neglected’.

It is undoubtedly the case, however, that the bulk of normative comment in this area of the phonology occurs with respect to those items where the back mid vowel appears in a pre-[r] environment. In almost all occasions, a failure to show a low mid vowel is stigmatized, with the [o] output regarded as not the ‘best usage’ by almost all observers. Walker sees the use of an [o] in the second syllable of *resort* as ‘not the most usual pronunciation, so it is not the most agreeable to analogy’,

while *Vocabulary* notes how, for *forlorn*, ‘our orthoepists are unanimous in pronouncing it as I have marked it [with his *hall* vowel: CJ], but some very improperly sound it so as to rhyme to *mourn*.’ Walker, in his customary attempt to disambiguate lexical items through vowel contrast, assigns to the item *form* ‘a seat’ a stressed vowel in [o],¹⁷⁴ while the other meanings of the word should, he argues, show an [ɔ] vowel. Yet for *perform*, Walker observes, ‘Pronouncing the last syllable like *form*, a seat, is a gross departure from analogy; as will appear by comparing it with the same syllable in *reform*, *conform*, *inform*, *deform*, *transform*, &c. This error seems chiefly confined to the stage, where it probably originated.’ Despite the almost universal criticism of the use of [o] in such pre-[r] environments, Walker is at pains to point out that although the ‘best usage’ shows an [ɔ] vowel in *remorse*, ‘several of our orthoepists, and some respectable speakers, pronounce the *o* in this word with the first sound [his *o* in *no*: CJ]’. Perhaps, as the entry for SORT in *Vocabulary* suggests, despite Walker’s view of linguistic change as a ‘top-down’ phenomenon, the stigmatized form is spreading from the lower to the higher social orders, at least in individual lexical items:

Both Mr. Walker and Mr. Sheridan agree in sounding this word as I have marked it [with the vowel sound in *not*: CJ]: The former adds, ‘There is an affected pronunciation so as to rhyme with *port*. This affected pronunciation, however, (continues he) seems confined to a few in the upper ranks of life, and is not likely to descend to their inferiors, as it does not appear to have made any progress among correct and classical speakers’. I have often heard it, however, pronounced in the last mentioned manner by the lower class of people, so that it seems to belong to the *low*, as well as the high, vulgar.

4.2.7 Scotch peculiarities of the mid back vowels

It is worthwhile looking briefly at the alternation between high and low mid back vowels in eighteenth-century Scots, since it is without doubt one of the most salient phonetic and sociophonetic characteristics of its phonology. The ‘Scotchness’ of the phenomenon is clear from the ready supply of anecdotal observation on the phenomenon. The following from Sylvester Douglas (Jones 1991: 85) and the Englishman, James Adams (1794: 21) are fairly typical:

COAST, COAT, COAX

The *oa* as in *boat*. Not long ago, a Scotch Gentleman, in a debate in the House of Commons upon the Affairs of America, began a speech, in which he proposed to examine whether it would be more advisable to adopt compulsive, or soothing measures towards the colonies. Unfortunately instead of *soothe*, *coax* was the word that had presented itself to his mind. And he pronounced it as if written *cox*. This, added to several other peculiarities of manner and dialect, tickled the House extremely, and produced a general laugh. The Gentleman was unconscious of the false pronunciation into which he had fallen. His speech had been premeditated, and *coax* was, it seems, a sort of cue, or catch word. Every time therefore that the silence of his hearers permitted him to resume his

harangue, he began by repeating this unlucky word. But every fresh repetition of it occasioning a louder burst of laughter, he was obliged at last fairly to give the matter up. And break off his oration in the middle.

In 1775 I lived in the Scotch College of Doway in Flanders, having learnt as good English and Latin as St Omers afforded to moderate proficient. The old Scotch gentlemen soon began to fear I should spoil the accent of their pupils, who endeavoured to imitate my pronunciation. Our table wanted not the better store and seasoning of instructive reading during meals. A young reader (Clearly Cameron) lighting on these words, *the body of his father*, read them according to the English way, upon which the presiding old Gentleman's ears being shocked, he cleared his mouth as fast as possible, and dropping his spoon and hands on the table, made him repeat the words several times, and spell them again and again. Still the youth read *bâddy*; then the old gentleman ordered each letter to be named and counted, which being done, and repeated again and again, he fixed his eyes on me, and with triumphant smile, mixed with a good Scotch grin, rebuked the reader sharply for spoiling the *a*, and introducing a second *d*, then ordered him to sound it *bô-dy*.

Buchanan's list of eminent Scotticisms includes what he styles as 'confusions' of long and short vowels, such that 'North-Britons destroy just quantity, by expressing the long sound for the short, and the short for the long; as *abhôr* for *abhôr*, *abhôrrence* for *abhôrrence*, *abôlish* for *abôlish*, *thrôn* for *thrône*' [sic: CJ]. In much the same fashion, William Scott (1807: xxvi *footnote*) in his list of words in which 'the Natives of Scotland are very apt to err' – tells us that 'These two sounds of the vowel [represented by *o* and probably his [o] and [ɔ]/[ɒ]: CJ] are particularly difficult to North Britons when occurring in the same word or near one another; as in *post-office*, *coach-box*, *a long story*, *I thought so*, *not only*, *go on*, &c.'

The Scotch, after they get rid of the more barbarous pronunciation in which the *gh* is pronounced as a strong guttural, generally fall into the mistake of using the long close sound of *o*, and making (for instance) *bought*, and *boat*, the same word to the ear. And this they do so generally that in endeavouring to mimic the Scotch pronunciation I have observed that the English are apt to hit upon this particular way of sounding this class of words. Yet this, in truth, is not part of the vernacular pronunciation of Scotland.

The evidence provided by Alexander Scot's *The Contrast*, which attempts to portray the presumably prestigious language of 'the present Caledonian English of the college, the pulpit and the bar' (Jones 1993: 102), seems to offer information regarding the sociophonetic significance of the Scots [ɔ]/[o] alternation. Using the *oa* digraph to characterize [ɔ] pronunciations, we find Scot realizing: *poalesh* 'polish', *proaper* 'proper', *Scoat* 'Scot', *foar* 'for', *noat* 'not', *bayoand* 'beyond', *aupoastles* 'apostles', *foarty* 'forty', *oad* 'odd', *oar* 'or', *poands* 'ponds', *poassebly* 'possibly', *froam* 'from'. Using *o* for [o(o)], he includes: *notted* 'noted', *spoc* 'spoke', *promoted* 'promoted', *hopful*, *pronunsatione*, *obadiant*. However, there are four (and only four) instances where *oa* is used where etymologically a high mid vowel might be

expected: *soajurner* 'sojourner', *auloanne* 'alone', *tnoan* 'known' and *prevoack* 'provoke'. While there is nowhere evidence in the text of *The Contrast* for Scottish [o]/[oo] forms for etymological [ɔ], the presence of the opposite phenomenon, albeit in only a few items, suggests that, for speakers of the kind of language Scot is describing, so stigmatized was the substitution of [o] for [ɔ], that a limited 'hypercorrect' accommodation to stressed [ɔ] vowels in some items with etymological [o] is to be found.

4.2.8 Some vowel shift irregularities

In what looks to be a highly constrained set of lexical items, there is considerable evidence in the latter part of the eighteenth century to suggest that Middle English [oo] vowels either reflect an *English Vowel Shift* to [uu] values in items where the standard language shows a failure to so do, or vice versa. Perhaps one explanation for the former state of affairs is to be found in Smith's (1795: 20) description of the English 'long o', his Fifth Sound – that in *oh!*, *boat* – as 'The English long o has in it a shade towards the oo or Sixth Sound'. This might serve to suggest, as we have already hinted earlier (I: 4.2.5), a raised value of [oo], one which might conflate, or even merge with [uu] itself as, indeed, it appears to do in a number of lexical items. Walker's third sound of o – its long slender sound – is to be found spelt with o in a small set of words, including *prove*, *move*, *behave*, but also in *Rome* and *gold*, the latter 'pronounced like *goold* in familiar conversation; but in verse and solemn language, especially that of the Scripture, ought always to rhyme with *old*, *fold*' (1791: 21). The quite specific social ramifications of the [oo]/[uu] alternation are detailed by Smith (1795: 61): 'GOLDEN: The pronunciation of this word and its primitive *gold*, is much disputed. Almost all the citizens of London pronounce them with long o, our own fifth sound; but at the west end of the town, and by most polite speakers, they are generally pronounced with long u, or our sixth sound, as if spelt *goold*, *goold'n*'. Smith's assertion that [oo] and [uu] are phonetically close is echoed by Kenrick (1784: 54) who denies that there is any social disadvantage in the interchange: 'some [sounds] are so nearly allied, as to be interchangeably made use of, and that by the best speakers, without any sensible impropriety: thus No 4 and 6. of the Dictionary resemble each other so much, that the words *shoe*, *do*, *rue*, *rule*, *tune*, and many others, may be pronounced after either manner without impropriety. The same may be said of No. 4 and No. 8 and the words *door*, *floor*, *gold* may be either pronounced DOO⁴R, FLOO⁴R, GO⁴LD, or DOO⁸R, FLOO⁸R, GO⁸LD, without any imputation of a foreign or even provincial accent'. A little later (1784: 60) he asserts too that 'The word *court*, for instance, is in London indifferently pronounced COU⁴RT or COU⁸RT, in which latter case it differs only in time from COU³D, WOU³D, &c.'. For Elphinston (1786: 147–8), as ever, the issue is as much a matter of orthographic appropriateness as anything else:

Better no servile, dhan a false. If *door*, *floor*, *moor*, cannot now pretend to' paint *dore*, *flore*, and *more*, (dho *doar*, *flaar*, and *moar* might); dhe general attendant, which did ainciently confound o direct and depressive, must not continue to' bely dhe later, even in *shoe* or *canoe*; far less, imperial *Rome*; hware *shoo* and *canoow*, az wel az *Room*, so ezily speak dhe truth. Dhe cunning eye cannot much

dred dhe Citty's coincidence with anny common term, ov like sound; but aught to' dred hwat dhe innocent ear must hav had, and may hav, to' undergo from dhe apparent identity ov *Rome* and *room*. So *move*, *prove*, *behoove*, and *lose*, wil no more delude; hwen *moov*, *proov*, *behoov*, and *looz* (like *proof* and *behoof*) remoov dhe possibility. Nor, widhout dhe peculiar servile, can *bomb*, *womb*, *tomb*, or *gold*, be known ov different vocallity from *comb* and *cold*; or secure dhemselves in dhe verry cappital, hwat dhey ar *boomb*, *woomb*, *toomb*, and *gould*.

Yet some concern is expressed by several orthoepists over any [uu]/[oo] merger. Although Walker allows for the use of both in *moor* and *gold* (where he thinks [guuld] versions are coming more into use) and other items, he is concerned that the raised value is becoming so popular, that its 'true pronunciation' in [oo] is being lost. In particular, he claims that, given the preference for [oo] in words like *gold* in Scriptural and formal speaking contexts, 'it is a disgrace to the language to suffer indolence and vulgarity to corrupt it into the second [i.e. [guuld]: C] sound'.¹⁷⁵ Walker, unlike Sheridan, also considers a [uu] vowel in items such as *loam*, *gome*, to be 'vulgarly sounded', while the author of *Vocabulary*, on occasions agreeing or disagreeing with both observers, considers that while *sew* is correctly sounded [o], 'some affected speakers sound it as if it rhymed to *Jew*', and that, even though Walker and Sheridan both recommend an [o] vowel in *STREW*, 'it is often sounded *stru*³, when written *strew*, a pronunciation carefully to be avoided'.

The opposite phenomenon also attracts analogical as well as sociophonetic comment: *Vocabulary*, for instance, noting that *BEHOOVE*, while 'sometimes, though very improperly, written *behoove*, [is] corruptly pronounced as rhyming with *rove*; but this is contrary to the analogy of words of this form, which preserve the same sound of the vowel, both in the noun and verb; as *proof*, *prove*'. Again, he claims that *WHOM* is 'often erroneously pronounced the same as the word *home*, but this should be carefully avoided'. Even the famous philosopher of the Scottish Enlightenment – David Hume – changed his name from its usual form *Home*, to *Hume* as a result, he claimed, of the incompetence of 'thae glaekit English bodies, who could not call him aright'. But the controversy surrounding what is a very limited lexical set is perhaps best summed up under *Vocabulary*'s *EWE* entry:

Mr. Walker pronounces this word yo^3o^3 , which is like *yew*, a tree, and observes: 'There is a vulgar pronunciation of this word as if written *yo*, rhyming with *doe*, which must be carefully avoided'. Now what Mr. Walker looks upon to be so vulgar, is the very sound Mr. Sheridan has given the word, and which I have followed, as I believe it to be the best usage. Besides, it marks the difference between *Ewe* and *yew*.

4.3 The diphthongs

4.3.1 The PRICE diphthong

There is a considerable – and quite specialized – debate among late-eighteenth-century observers concerning the nature and extent of any [i]/[ai] variation in

PRICE words; specialized because the debate centres around either a very small set of individual lexical items such as *oblige*, or deals with a larger set which, at best could be described a low frequency items in terms of the lexicon as a whole. There are several attempts to show the nature of this 'proper' diphthong, the majority suggesting a shape like [ai] or [aɪ]. For Fogg (1796: 159) the eleventh sound in his Scheme – the *au* in *find* – 'the *au* is little dwelt upon, the organs simply preparing to utter it change immediately for *ee*, on which they dwell a considerable time'. For Walker (1791: 14), this 'perfect diphthong' is 'composed of the sound of *a* in *father*, and *e* in *he*, pronounced as closely together as possible', and he is voluble in his criticism of Sheridan for the latter's description of the diphthong as

a compound of our fullest and slenderest sounds *a*³ and *e*¹; the first made by the largest, and the last by the smallest aperture of the mouth. Now nothing is more certain than the inaccuracy of this definition. The third sound of *a*, which is perfectly equivalent to the third sound of *o*, when combined with the first sound of *e*, must inevitably form the diphthong in *boy*, *joy*, etc. and not the diphthongal sound of the vowel *i* in *idle*, and the personal pronoun *I*; this double sound will, upon a close examination, be found to be composed of the Italian *a* in the last syllable of *papa*, and the first sound of *e*, pronounced as closely together as possible; and for the exactness of this definition, I appeal to every just English ear in the kingdom.

Smith (1795: 75) makes a very similar observation, declaring that the *i* in *strike*, is made up of 'the broad sound of *a*, as in *father* or *far*, and the long sound of *e*, usually marked by *ee*, so quickly and forcibly united, as each of them, in a manner, to lose their own sounds, and produce another compound of both', and again (1795: 79): 'Analyzing this sound, we shall find that it is composed of our second and fourth sounds, so rapidly pronounced together, as that they take up but the time of one of them when sounded separately. Observe also, that the first sound in the composition (or broad *a*) is only one fourth of the length of the second (*ee*) and you will have its true sound, and in every respect a proper Diphthong'. Johnston (1764: 16) states simply that: 'The accented long *i* and *y* have one and the same sound, as in *ídol*, *ísland*, *cýder*, *cýpher*; and sound exactly like the pronoun *I*, both English and Scotch; or as the English pronounce *eye*; having a diphthongal sound of short *a* and long *e*'. But Kenrick is his usual ebullient self in describing the diphthong in *why*, *nigh*, etc. (1784: 65):

As at present uttered by the best speakers in the Metropolis, it is the sharpest, shrillest, and clearest vowel in our language; altho' *i* has the appearance, when slowly pronounced, of being a compound of the *a* or *e*, and *i*. I do not know that any other language has it equally clear, single and distinct. I have elsewhere observed that our Scottish linguists say it has the sound usually denoted by *awe* [Buchanan 1752: 11], but the error of this is obvious to every Englishman. The French, however, come near it in the Interjection *ahi!* Which they pronounce quickly as one syllable, without the nasal twang, that attends the words *fin*, *vin*, and some others, bearing a near resemblance.

Yet for Kenrick (1784: viii) a value like [ei] seems a possibility as well: ‘Thus *I* or *Y* [as in *hire*, *lyre*: CJ] appear to be a commixture of the long *e* [in *mate*: CJ] and short *i* [in *hit*: CJ]’.

There can be no doubt that an [ai]/[i] contrast was, for many of the major commentators in the period, one where sociophonetic evaluation in the broadest sense played an important role. *Vocabulary*, for instance, records as ‘vulgar’ what appear to be [i], or even ‘short *i*’ stressed vowel pronunciations in CLIMB: ‘Though all the authorities and the best usage agree in pronouncing this word as I have marked it [with *i*² as in *fight*: CJ], yet the vulgar are given to sounding it *clim* as if it rhymed to *Limb*’, while for GYVES he notes: ‘The authorities accord in giving the *y*, in this word, the sound of *y* in *lye*; but there is a vulgar way of pronouncing it *geeves*, too commonly followed’. That such an alternation is essentially lexically determined is clear from the fact that contemporary observers tend to concentrate comment on a small set of individual items, especially OBLIGE and, in general, the majority of items they choose for discussion are of very low frequency and, in the main, derived from foreign lexicons. Among those items which could be regarded as in more or less everyday usage, and for which an alternative pronunciation exists, it would appear that some writers – especially Sheridan – favour diphthongal pronunciations, while others – notably Walker – recommend the monophthongal [i]. As *Vocabulary* notices for CZARINA: ‘Mr. Sheridan marks the *i*, in this word, long, like *i* in *fight*; Mr. Walker makes it short, like the *e* in *me*, which I take to be the best usage’, while under CYLINDRICAL, CYLINDRICK, he observes ‘Though Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Walker agree, in the pronunciation of the word *cylinder*, to make the *i* in the first syllable short; yet in the above words they differ considerably: Mr. Sheridan, whom I have followed, making the *y* in the first syllable long, and Mr. Walker short. I take Mr. Sheridan’s to be the usual pronunciation’. On the whole this pattern of monophthongal Walker, diphthongal Sheridan appears to be the norm whenever the alternation appears – as in *privacy*, *empire* and *vertigo* – but it is the specialized nature of the items involved which has to be stressed, thus: *binocle*, *chimera*, *cicatrization*, *cinerulent*, *hypochondriak*, *videlicet*, *vimneous*, *imbibition*, *pulorous*, *pyrites*, *serpigo*. Walker’s position is set out in his §§187–188 and for ‘this most uncertain part of pronunciation’ he argues that ‘Scarcely any reason can be given why custom prefers one sound to the other in some words; and why, in others, we may use either one or the other indiscriminately’. He argues that the monophthongal form is an innovation whose popularity is based on ease of articulation and analogy:

It is strongly to be presumed that the *i* and *y*, in this situation [immediately before the accent: CJ] ... was generally pronounced long by our ancestors, but that custom has gradually inclined to the shorter sound as more readily pronounced, and as more like the sound of those letters when they end a syllable after the accent; and perhaps, we should contribute to the regularity of the language, if, when we are in doubt, we should rather incline to the short than the long sound of these letters.

Discussion of the [ai]/[i] alternation is particularly prominent in recommendations for the proper pronunciation of the *bi*- and *di*- morphological elements in items

like *disect*, *bisect* and many others. Smith, for instance, records a three-way pronunciation of the first syllable of *direct* (1795: 128):

Messrs. Sheridan, Kenrick and Scott have marked the first syllable of this word with short *i*; Mr. Walker with long *e*; Mr. Buchanan with our twelfth sound, or first diphthong [as in *pie*: CJ]. This last pronunciation is countenanced by some of our first speakers in parliament and at the bar. Nevertheless the current pronunciation, I think, is such as to warrant me to place it here, and so as to rhyme with the preceding word [*erect*: CJ].

While for the item *bisect*, he advises (1795: 136): ‘I have followed Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Buchanan in the pronunciation of this word, and put it to rhyme with the succeeding’ [*dissect* – where the first syllable contains his Vowel Ten, as in *fit*: CJ]. Mr. Walker says that the first syllable should be pronounced like the word *buy*; and he is supported in this assertion by Dr. Kenrick and Mr. Scott. I should pay more attention to their authority were not the accent always put upon the last syllable.’ Walker struggles to provide a phonological rationale for this alternation, asserting – for instance in the case of *sheer* pronunciations for *shire* – that the former derives from its use in compounds like *Nottinghamshire*, where it ‘is highly probable that the simple *shire* acquired this slender sound from its tendency to become slender in the compounds, where it is at a distance from the accent, and where all the vowels have a natural tendency to become short and obscure’. His long account stresses ‘how little regularity there is in the sound of this letter’ and ‘how careful we ought to be to preserve the least trace of analogy, that “confusion may not be worse confounded” ’ and he concludes with: ‘The sketch that has just been given may, perhaps, afford something like a clew to direct us in this labyrinth, and it is hoped it will enable the judicious speaker to pronounce with more certainty and decision.’ But, in essence, his account boils down to the listing method – ‘the very laborious one of classing such words together as have the *i* pronounced in the same manner’, a method followed too in *Vocabulary* under the DIGEST entry.¹⁷⁶

But sociophonetic concerns are also involved in the alternation, and one cannot help feeling that Walker’s concerns for its vagaries stem at least in part from the fact that the sound in question is ‘chiefly found in words derived from the French and Italian languages: and we think to show our breeding by a knowledge of those tongues, and an ignorance of our own’. Such feelings are reinforced by a consideration of the extensive contemporary discussion of the item OBLIGE. Perhaps the best summary of the life cycle of the social significance of the monophthong/diphthong contrast is that provided by *Vocabulary*, where – closely following Walker’s (1791: 15) observations – we see the former considered as the polite form, then assigned by the authority of Lord Chesterfield to the status of ‘affected’, subsequently into general usage. The diphthongal form, has in the meantime become associated with ‘the lowest vulgar’, only in its turn to be assigned prestige status:

Both Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Walker pronounce this word with the *i* long (as I have marked it after the former), and also with the same vowel short; but they

give precedence to the former; and the last of these gentlemen tell us, that when Lord Chesterfield wrote his letters to his son, it was, by many polite speakers, pronounced as if written *obleege*, to give a hint of their knowledge of French; but it was so far from having generally obtained, that Lord Chesterfield strictly enjoins his son to avoid this pronunciation as affected. It soon became so general, however, that the long *i* was heard only from the lowest vulgar; but no sooner had this nobleman's letters appeared (which was about twenty years after he wrote them), than his authority had such weight with the polite world, that a change was soon perceptible; and we not infrequently hear the word now pronounced with the open sound of *i* in *fight*, in the very circles where, a few years ago, it would have been an infallible mark of vulgarity.

Elphinston (1786: 228) welcomes the 'recovery ov *oblege*, so long, so egregiously perverted; dho *obligatory* and *obligacion*, havving vocally never gon astray, can hav no need ov return', listing amongst 'such horrors' a spelling like *oblige*, and in his usual dramatic fashion excoriating diphthongal pronunciations and their spellings in both *vaunt* and *oblige* (1786: 293): 'Hence the prezent labors for *vaunt*, *oblige*, and oddher sounds which grate all English ears, dhat hav yet dhe sense ov hearing; or turn all English stommacs, dhat stil pozes dhe power ov sickening'. We should not be surprised to see that, in the context of such an active alternation, attempts are made by observers to lexicalize the monophthongal/diphthongal contrast. Thus Walker assures us that TIER is 'universally pronounced like *tear* a drop from the eye', suggesting it even be re-spelled as *tier*, when it signifies 'a rank' or 'a row'. However, he recommends a pronunciation with [ai] when it signifies 'a head-dress' and in that circumstance 'be spelled like the word *tire*, "to fatigue" '.

It is important to stress how few English commentators show any evidence for the salient contemporary Scots contrast between 'short' and 'long' *i* sounds. Many varieties of modern Scots are characterized by a FIVE/FIFE contrast – an [æ]/[ɹi] alternation conditioned by both phonological and morphological factors. The phenomenon is known (not always helpfully, since vowel quality rather than length is often its distinguishing characteristic) as *The Scots Vowel Length Rule* (Aitken 1981; McMahon 1991). The process, as it affects the 'long *i*' diphthong, is characterized as showing durationally extended first component [a'ɛ] shapes before voiceless fricatives (as in *rise*, *ties*), [r] and word boundaries, while a short and qualitatively contrastive transition, (usually) [ɹi], appears before voiced obstruents and [l] (*ride*, *tide*, *tile*). Morphological factors apply as well, and can result in a *tied/tide* opposition for many modern speakers of English in Scotland. That this phenomenon is a feature of late-eighteenth-century Scots is clear from Sylvester Douglas' distinction between a short *i* diphthong in words like *dice* and a long type in *wise* (Jones 1991: 129). The existence of the phenomenon is hinted at too by Smith (1795: 87) in his footnote to his RISE entry ('a source'): 'Mr Perry is singular in making this substantive with the soft *s*, as he calls it, or as if spelt *rize*. I believe it is very seldom pronounced so, unless by the natives of Scotland. It is pronounced exactly as the forgoing word [*rize*: C]'. Alexander Scot's spellings such as *foive* 'five', *proivat*

'private', *moy* 'my' and *oys* 'eyes' against *daleited* 'delighted', *mein* 'mine', *leik* 'like' and *Cleid* 'Clyde' (Jones 1995: 187) bear evidence to a similar phenomenon.

Discussion of the MOUTH diphthong is extensive in the period, with some controversy centring around the nature of the diphthong's starting point as well as the nature and extent of any LOW/PROW merger. Although many commentators are content to describe this diphthong simplistically as the 'sound of the diphthong *ou* and *ow*,' others try to capture its phonetic shape by attempting to describe its starting and finishing points. Although he views the 'improper' version of this diphthong as appearing in 'the most irregular assemblage of words in our language', Walker describes the first of what he sees as its seven sounds as: 'the proper sound of this diphthong is composed of the *a* in *ball*, and the *oo* in *woo*, or rather the *u* in *bull*, and is equivalent to the *ow* in *down*, *frown*, &c.' (1791: 36). We have argued above that Walker's *bull* vowel – his 'middle' sound of *u* – and seems to be a compromise or levelled form, perhaps [ɥ]. His 'third long sound' of *a* 'is that which we most immediately derive from our maternal language the Saxon, but which at present we use less than any other' (1791: 11), is almost certainly a durationally extended vowel close to [ɒɒ] or [ɑɑ]. We might therefore tentatively represent his MOUTH diphthong, the *English Vowel Shift*-ed version of Middle English long [uu], as [αɥ]. Such a description follows very much along the lines of that proposed a decade earlier by Sheridan (1780: 10): 'The diphthong *ou* or *ow* is composed of the sounds *a*³ [the *hall* vowel: CJ] and *o*³ [the *noose* vowel: CJ]; and is formed much in the same manner as *i*² [the *fight* diphthong: CJ] the mouth being at first in the position of sounding *a*³, but before that sound is perfected, by a motion of the under jaw and lips to the position of sounding *o*³, from which results the diphthong *ou* or *ow*, as in *thou*, *now*'. Kenrick (1784: 58) illustrates his description of the diphthong by suggesting that it 'greatly resembles the barking of a full mouthed mastiff, and is perhaps so clearly and distinctly pronounced by no nation as by the English and Low-Dutch'. However Buchanan (1762: 17–18; Meyer 1940) provides a description of the diphthong, where the first element appears to be some kind of [o] (or perhaps [ɔ]) element:

How many sounds have *ou* and *ow*? *Ou* and *ow* have four; the first Sound is composed of both (*o*) and (*uw*), and if we Sound *o-oo* extremely quick, it discovers this Sound exactly; as *louse*, *mouse*, *fowl*, *town*, &c. which are sounded quick, *lo-oo*s, *mo-oo*s, *fo-oo*l, *to-oo*n.

Again in his *An Essay* (1776: xviii) he describes *ou/ow* as 'a mixed sound, composed of both (*o*) and (*uw*), and if we sound (*o-oo*) extremely quick, it discovers this mixed sound exactly, as *louse*, *mouse*, *fowl*, *town* rapidly pronounced as one syllable, *lo-oo*ss, *mo-oo*ss, *fō-oo*l, *to-oo*n &c; this sound is denoted by a dieresis thus, *lōüs*, *mōüs*, *fōwl*, *tōwn* &c'. Despite his claim that this technique describes the sound of the diphthong 'exactly', we are still left with the problem of the phonetic nature of the diphthong's starting point. It may be that Buchanan means the (*o*) to be his *short o*, and we recall that he confidently assures us (1777: 8) that: 'The short sounds of (*o*) [his [ɔ]/[ɒ]: CJ] and (*u*) are pretty similar; as *ünder*, *ünto*: *önder*, *önto*;

and are so quick and obscure, as to make no motions in the parts of the mouth'; and in the *British Grammar* (1762: 13) he once more asserts that the short sound of *u* 'is very like short (o), only a little more guttural. ... expressed in *Bút, cút, gŭn, rŭb, súp, drŭb*'. If this is indeed the case, his *ou/ow* diphthong might be interpreted as showing some kind of [ʌʊ]/[ɔʊ] transition. Of course, in the light of Buchanan's evidence we might regard such central starting points for the MOUTH diphthong as typically Scottish regional characteristic. Such a conclusion seems to be supported by Sylvester Douglas' treatment of this diphthong in the Pure dialect (Jones 1991: 133): 'The combinations of *o* and *u*, and *o* and *w* very frequently represent a proper diphthong (as in *foul, howl, now*) composed of the close *o*, and the simple vowel sound of the *u* in *full, pull*', perhaps influenced by the characteristics of the diphthong in his own Scottish usage. Yet some English observers also seem to suggest that this diphthong's starting point is nearer [ɔ] or [ɒ], rather than [ʌ], with Smith defining the transitions as (1795: 81): 'This diphthong is composed of our first and sixth sounds, or those commonly represented by *awe* and *oo*. The mouth is at first put into the position and act of sounding *awe*, but just as the voice is coming out, the under jaw and lip are quickly raised and put into the position and act of sounding *oo*', not at all unlike the description offered by the Scot Elphinston in his *The Principles of the English Language, Digested for the Use of Schools* (1766: 4) where he describes the '*ou* or *ow*' combination as one 'where shuts a broad by the sound of *oo* or *w*', some kind of [ɔʊ] value (Rohlfing 1984: 166–8). Although we might once again attribute it to his Scottish connections, W. Johnston (1764: 30) describes the diphthong in items such as *count, mount, crown, town* as 'beginning with short *o* and ending with *ū*'.

Considering how salient a regional and social characteristic in the modern language is the failure of high back vowels to undergo the *English Vowel Shift* to some kind of diphthong – notably in Northumbrian and Scots – there is remarkably little comment on the phenomenon in the eighteenth century record and what comment there is not always what we might expect. For instance, one surprising feature of Alexander Scot's characterization of *prestigious* Scottish English is his representation of the items *round, about* and *however* as *roond, aboot, whoever*, all showing a non-*English Vowel Shift*-ed monophthongal [ʊ]/[ü] stressed vowel shape, rather than some expected [ɔʊ] type (Jones 1993: 115). On the other hand, more along the lines we might expect, the *Spelling Book upon a New Plan* assigns *oor* and *oot* realizations of *our* and *out* to the 'Commonly Pronounced' category (1796: *Preface* vii) under its list of 'those words in which the Natives of North Britain are most apt to err, in order that the teacher may be particularly on his guard to prevent the children from falling into these common errors'. Yet it would seem that for Alexander Scot such undiphthongized vowels were not – *for polite Scots speakers* – examples of any kind of 'barbaric' usage, but part and parcel of a local prestige standard, perhaps the kind of *vestigia raris* characterized by Sylvester Douglas. The picture painted by Alexander Geddes is a more complex one. Among his labial sounds Geddes recognises, through his *ù* graph, a vowel he designates: '*oo*, or *u*, Italian; This is the genuine sound of *u*' (1792: 438). Instances showing this *ù* graph are plentiful in Geddes' materials, and appear to represent some type of pure labial

[ü] sound. The following represent some of the occurrences he cites from his Edinburgh dialect:

arùn 'around'; *brùk* 'brook'; *bùr* 'bower'; *devùrs* 'devours'; *dù* 'do'; *dù* 'dove'; *flùr* 'flower'; *flùrs* 'flowers'; *ghù*; *ghùr* 'you(r)'; *ghùth* 'youth'; *hù* 'how'; *krùds* 'curds'; *kùrs* 'course'; *lù-lorn* 'love-lorn'; *nù* 'now'; *prùn* 'prune'; *rùth* 'grief'; *thù* 'thou'; *tùn* 'tune'; *tùns* 'towns'; *unpù'd* 'unpulled'; *wù* 'woo'.

The *arùn*, *bùr*, *devùrs* and *flùr* types show retarded *English Vowel Shift* characteristics with no subsequent diphthongization to some kind of [ɔʊ] vowel space. There is a tendency, of course, on the basis of modern usage (Macaulay 1991: 41–4) to associate undiphthongized labial vowels in items like these as evidence of stigmatized or 'broad' usage, and it is difficult to know precisely the usage of which socioeconomic class Geddes intends under his 'Edinburgh dialect' label. There is a further problem arising from the fact that Geddes also uses a distinct *ou* digraph in contexts where *English Vowel Shift* diphthongs might be expected to surface. On the whole he confines the use of this particular digraph to the *Epistle* (where there is nowhere near the same degree of symbol differentiation found in his translation pieces), although there are a few Edinburgh and Buchan dialect instances as well. Commenting on his choice of spelling forms in the *Epistle*, he tells us that 'I have ventured, however, to make the orthography a little more uniform, and more agreeable to the Scottish idiom, than the orthography of the present day. Thus *ou* and *ow* are never confounded, the former is equivalent to the English *oo*, the latter to *ow* in *town*, or *ou* in *loud*' (1792: 438). While it is difficult to know precisely what Geddes means by 'the Scottish idiom' in this context, the fact that his *Epistle* is addressed to 'the President, Vice-Presidents, and Members of the Scottish Society of Antiquaries' (1792: 441) might suggest that it is not some kind of 'gutter Scots' close to the 'broad' end of the sociophonetic scale, but perhaps a variety closer to Scot's 'present Caledonian English of the college, the pulpit and the bar'. That he sees the *ou* graph as equivalent to *oo* is reinforced by his description in the *Observations* of *u* Italian as *oo*: 'How we came to express it by *u* is not easily conceived. The Scottish combination *ou* was much nearer the sound' (1792: 437). Although this digraph is used in the *Epistle* with segments which would appear to be unequivocally pure labial: *you*, *boussom* 'buxom'; *routh*, its principal occurrence is with vowel space which has in most other contemporary English dialects, *English Vowel Shift*-ed to a diphthongal output, thus: *outlandics* 'outlandish'; *hou* 'how'; *around*; *flours* 'flowers'; *pouder* 'powdered'; *ours* 'ours'; *nou* 'now', suggesting perhaps once more that these undiphthongized varieties were not seen as stigmatized in certain Scots social contexts.¹⁷⁷

Lexically marked constraints on the *English Vowel Shift* effect are relatively few, Walker noting variation and social correlation (1791: 36): 'To *wound* is sometimes pronounced so as to rhyme with *found*; but this is directly contrary to the best usage; but *route*, (a road, as to take a different *route*) is often pronounced so as to rhyme with *doubt* by respectable speakers'. Smith (1795: 91 *footnote*) comments regarding *to wound* how: 'The common pronunciation of this word is as if spelt

woond'. Many observers (including Scots like Sylvester Douglas) list items like *cucumber*, *pronunciation*, *wound* 'lesion', *mow* 'of barley' and *low* ('as a cow'), as appearing with diphthongal [aʊ]/[ɔʊ] stressed vowel space. The CUCUMBER item is the subject of much comment, Walker, for instance, noting both variant monophthongal as well as a diphthongal pronunciation of the vowel in the first syllable, seems to reject his customary appeals to etymology and orthographic analogy in favour of usage: 'In some counties of England, especially in the west, this word is pronounced as if written *Coocumber*: this though rather nearer to the orthography than *Cowcumber*, is yet faulty, in adopting the obtuse *u* heard in *bull* rather than the open *u* heard in *Cucumis*, the Latin word whence *Cucumber* is derived; though from the adoption of the *b*, I should rather suppose we took it from the French *Concombre*. But however this may be, it seem too firmly fixed in its sound of *Cowcumber* to be altered'.

Vocabulary notices how the item TO LOW 'to bellow like a cow' attracts pronunciation variants like this: 'Both Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Walker sound this word as I have marked it [lo²: CJ], yet it is often pronounced as if it rhymed to *how*; and the latter of these gentlemen, in his *Rhyming Dictionary*, published in 1775, followed that pronunciation, though he has since, with much propriety, changed his opinion'. Examples of what appear to be LOW/HOW mergers are quite common in the contemporary records, Walker and Kenrick rhyming *prow* with *now*, while Sheridan sees it as homophonous with *go*. Likewise, Sheridan and Walker rhyme *prowl* with *owl*, Kenrick relating it to the pronunciation of *soul* and *stroll*. It would seem somewhat unlikely that diphthongal [ɔʊ] pronunciations of words like *prowl* and *low*, showing Middle English [o] and [a], should result from any extended application of the *English Vowel Shift*. Perhaps in offering an explanation for the diphthongs, we might just take refuge in the concept of orthographic influence. Scots observers note similar effects, Sylvester Douglas, for instance, recording [prou] 'prow' and [droot] 'drought', although Douglas observes that 'Formerly perhaps this word (*drought*) was pronounced in England as in Scotland, with the diphthongal sound of the *ou*' (Jones 1991: 189). Such a pronunciation perhaps attests a survival of the thirteenth- to fifteenth-century Middle English diphthongization ('*Breaking*') in velar fricative environments. Douglas also records the Scottish dialect as showing a diphthongal stressed vowel space in the item SHOULDER (an item with the long close *o* sound in the Pure, metropolitan dialect): 'The Scotch are apt (when they aim at propriety) to give it the diphthongal sound as in *foul*' (Jones 1991: 223). On the other hand, Scots speakers are claimed to make the item *frown* rhyme to *shown*, i.e. with [oo] stressed vowel space, where the Pure dialect 'has its diphthongal sound as in *cow*, *vow*' (Jones 1991: 176–7).¹⁷⁸

One would expect, in a situation where the *ow* graph triggered pronunciation alternatives in such relative abundance, that we might find much recourse to the kinds of arguments which seek to assign distinct lexical meanings to the alternative pronunciations themselves. For instance, Kenrick (1784: 59), commenting on the monophthong/diphthongal alternative for the item *bowl*, criticizes Ward for following Dr Johnston's claim that 'a *bowl*, meaning an orbicular body, requires a close sound; but a *bowl*, meaning a vessel, requires a more open sound. The people

of Ireland, and perhaps those of some counties of England, do indeed pronounce *bowl*, meaning a vessel, in the same manner as we in London pronounce the words *howl*, *scrowl*, &c. but polite speakers in the metropolis pronounce the word *bowl*, whether meaning an orbicular body or vessel, exactly in the same manner; both long and open, as in the words *toll*, *hole*, *roll*, &c.' The Scots observers, in particular, are sensitive to the lexical disambiguating potential of the phonetic alternation. The *bow* item, lexically representing 'arcus' (OE *bōga*) or 'to bend' (OE *būgan*) shows, according to Douglas, both [bo] and [boo] manifestations in the Pure dialect. However, the [bou] pronunciation is restricted, he claims, to the 'to bend' interpretation, the [boo] to the 'arcus' (Jones 1991: 177): 'But Scotchmen, who have acquired a good and ready pronounciation in other respects, often find themselves puzzled and confounded between the different pronounciations of this word'. This tendency in the Pure dialect to differentiate lexical contrasts phonetically is also noted by Douglas for the item *sow*; when referring to a female pig, the pure dialect realizes an [ou] vowel, the 'act of sowing' with [oo], Scotch speakers pronouncing the latter as [sʊʊ] (to rhyme to *shoe*), but they 'often pronounce it with the diphthongal sound so as to rhyme to *Now*, *cow*'. In the same way, *BOWL* 'a basin' and *bowl* 'ball in the game of bowling' are distinguished as [bool] and [boul] respectively – only the Scotch pronunciation of the former as [boul] is recorded by Douglas. Yet both the Pure and the Scottish vernacular dialect treat the two lexical specifications of *row* ('a line', 'to paddle') as homophones, the former dialect in [roo], the latter in [rou]. But it seems in general that the Scotch vernacular treats *row*, *bow* and *sow* items homophonously, generally under [ou], and does not reflect the lexical/phonological matching that Douglas claims to exist in the Pure dialect.

4.3.2 The CHOICE diphthong

For many commentators in the late eighteenth century this diphthong is of especial interest, since they see it as having an almost 'pure' or typological status among the entire set of diphthongs, a status they fear is being lost owing to the propensity of the diphthong to merge with another. Buchanan's comments are typical (1762: 14 *footnote*): 'It must be confessed that (oi) approaches the nearest of any Combination in our Language to the Nature and Design of a Diphthong, as Diphthong imports the Coalition or Mixture of two Sounds in one.' Mitford (1774: 252) is among many to lament the possible passing of this diphthongal sound: 'We are in great danger of losing ... the noblest and most musical diphthong our pronounciation possesses, the *oi*, which in the great scantiness of our long and open vowel sounds, we can very ill spare. I am by no means the first to make this observation, but in my zeal for the honour of our language, I cannot help reporting it'; and again (1774: 37): '*oi/oy* have only one sound, peculiar to themselves, and the most musical, the noblest and the longest vowel sounds in our language'. Kenrick's antipathy to diphthongal sounds in general stems from his view that (1784: 52): 'the beauty and propriety of articulation consist in the clear and precise utterance of sounds, which are distinctly audible and intelligible in proportion as their different qualities and modes of articulation are clearly distinguished, even a diphthong is a vice in speech and should be corrected'.¹⁷⁹ But even he is forced to admit that

the diphthong in *joy, boil*, etc. ‘approaches the nearest to a practical diphthong of any in our language’ (1784: 61).

Several descriptions of the phonetic nature of the component parts of the diphthong are provided in the period, many stressing the relative amount of time spent on the first and second components, for instance Smith (1795: 79): ‘*Oi, oy*, as pronounced in *loin, boy*. This combination is nearly allied to the preceding [the diphthong in *smile, high, lie, might*: CJ] and it hath every property of a true Diphthong ... It is formed from our first and fourth sounds, or those in the words *awe* and *he*; only observe, that the first sound, or *awe*, is dwelt upon 3–4ths of the time, and the latter, or *ee*, only 1–4th, to make up the syllable. There is no sound in French similar to this; the German *greuel* (horror) contains it nearly’. In this Smith is, as usual, following Sheridan (1780: 16) who sees this diphthong composed of the same elements as that in *time, mine*, etc., but with a discrepancy in the duration of the first component, although he sees the *ae* as somehow affected by not just its length, but by its contiguity with the high front vowel which follows it: ‘The diphthong *oi* or *oy* is formed by a union of the same vowels as of *i*²; that is *a*³ (the vowel in *hall*: CJ) and *e*³ (the vowel in *beer*: CJ); with this difference, that the first vowel *a*³, being dwelt upon, is distinctly heard before its sound is changed by its junction with the latter vowel *e*³; as *oi, noise*.’ Johnston though (1764: 28) sees the diphthong as [ɔi], beginning with ‘short *o* ending with long *e*’.

Yet despite the ‘true’ diphthongal status [ɔi] seems to enjoy, there is a general concern among observers that its value is being compromised through some kind of TOIL/TILE merger, typically Nares (1784: 73–4): ‘This diphthong (*oi*) has a full, rich, and masculine sound, peculiar to itself, and its substitute *oy*. It is distinctly heard in *noise, voice, rejoice*, &c. Those who are zealous for the harmony of our language, have lamented that this sound has been in danger of being lost, by a corrupt and vicious mode of pronunciation. It has been, indeed, the custom to give to this diphthong, in several words, the improper sound of the *i* long; as *boil, broil, choir, join, joint, point, poison, spoil*. The banished diphthong seems at length to be upon its return; for there are many who are now hardy enough to pronounce *boil* exactly as they do *toil*, and *join* like *coin*, &c.’ Elphinston too is acutely aware of such a development (1786: 279): ‘Boath master and scollar had herd, no les dhan seen, dhe difference between *oil* and *isle*, az boath doutles painted our *ile*: for dhe good rezon, dhat French (our parents and parragons) had not entirely cesed so to’ paint dheir *île*. Yet nedher harmonist had conceived dhe suspiscion dhat won diphthong might not chime widh anoddher, compozed ov so cognate partikels’. For Elphinston the *oi* diphthong is composed of ‘dhe second *a braud* long, to’ *e*’ (1790: 49): ‘But *Ay*, not being now (az it wonce waz) a substitute ov dhe interjeccion *Yes*; cannot picture *Oy*, its prezzent varriacion’ (1786: 156) and again ‘So dhe interjeccion *Oy!* haz, in spite ov Nature and dhe Greek, too long assumed dhe semblance ov *Ay*, dhe true picture ov *A* slender, in dhe old acceptation ov *always*’. For Walker (1791: 35) the component parts of this diphthong are: ‘*a* in *water* and the first *e* in *me-tre*’, and he too sees the conflation as something to be avoided: ‘This double sound is very distinguishable in *boil, toil, spoil, point, anoint*, &c. which sound ought to be carefully preserved, as there is a very prevalent practice

among the vulgar of dropping the *o*, and pronouncing these words as if written *bile*, *tile*, *spile*, &c.'. Indeed, for many observers, the TOIL/TILE merger is a strong signal of impropriety, Kenrick (1784: 61), for example, complaining that:

oil, *toil*, are frequently pronounced exactly like *isle*, *tile*. This is a fault which the Poets are inexcusable for promoting, by making such words rhyme to each other. And yet there are some words so written, which by long use, have almost lost their true sound, such are *boil*, *join*, and many others; which it would not appear affectation to pronounce otherwise than *bile*, *jine*. We find, indeed, that this mode of pronunciation becomes every day more general; a striking proof, among others, of the antipathy, if I may so call it, of speech to the use of diphthongs, or the utterance of the two sounds of different qualities, with one impulse of the voice.

Thirty years earlier, similar sentiments are expressed by Rudd (1755: 35–6): '*i* long *join* (pronounced *jine*). Tho' I take this to be intirely a corrupt pronunciation, borrowed from vulgar use; and therefore cannot but think, it would be much better to give the *oi*, or *oy*, in these words the full sound of A PROPER DIPHTHONG'.

The Scotch observers share concerns like these and attempt to provide their own definitions of the phonetic parameters of the diphthong. It would appear that Sylvester Douglas saw the value of this diphthong as [oi] rather than [ɔi]. This emerges from his description in the *Observations on the Alphabet* (Jones 1991: 133) where he contends that: 'The combinations of *o* and *u*, and *o* and *w* very frequently represent a proper diphthong (as in *foul*, *how*, *now*) composed of the close *o*, and the simple vowel sound of the *u* in *full*, *pull*. *O* and *i* also form a proper diphthong composed of the same sound of the *o*, and the first sound of *e*, as in *boil*, *foil*.' His *close o* ('usually long') sound we noted earlier to be some kind of [oo] segment, so that the *boil* diphthong would appear to represent [oi]. Under his BOIL entry (Jones 1991: 175), Douglas stresses that 'there are great disputes among the English about the proper method of pronouncing the *oi* in this and many other words, *foil*, *oil*, *anoint*, *point*, *void*':

The vulgar pronunciation makes the sound the same as that of the *i*, in *bile*, *file*, *pint*. Those who are admirers of a full and solemn manner of speaking sound the *o* long, and very distinctly; and hurry over the *i*, as is always done in the word *noise*, or as the *oy* is pronounced in *boy*, *employs*. But this method is generally thought too stiff and formal. There is a middle way which is practiced by some of the best speakers, in which the *o* in the diphthong is sufficiently uttered to be distinguishable from *a* but yet the two vowels are compressed together, if I may so speak, in the same manner as the sounds of *a* and *e* or *i* are in the diphthongal *i*.

For Douglas the long *i* in *bile*, *pint* is composed of short open *a* (as in *hat*) and the first sound of *e* – a combination something like [ai/æi]. What is probably a hyper-correct pronunciation of those 'admirers of a full and solemn manner of speaking,

(who: CJ) sound the *o* long, and very distinctly: and hurry over the *i*, suggests pronunciations like [noojz] ‘noise’ and [boojz] ‘boys’: ‘But this method is generally thought too stiff and formal’. It is difficult to determine precisely what he intends by his ‘middle way’ where ‘the two vowels are compressed together’, indeed even what two vowels he has in mind is not clear. Does he mean a ‘mix’ of [a] and [i] (i.e. some kind of [e] or [ɛ] vowel) as the diphthong’s first element so that for the ‘middle way’ pronunciation we can only hazard something like [ei]? Alternatively, does he mean a mix of whatever is the ‘*o* in the diphthong’ and [a], some kind of [ɔi]. Alexander Scot’s evidence is not of much help either, since there are not sufficient data in *The Contrast* text to enable us to come to any certain conclusion as to the behaviour of this diphthong in any late-eighteenth-century Scottish Standard. Scot’s spelling system distinguishes between items such as *rajoayz’d* ‘rejoiced’, *joayful* ‘joyful’ as against *sebjine* ‘subjoin’. In general, he utilizes *oa* digraphs to represent what are in all likelihood [ɔ] outputs, as in *Scoat* ‘Scot’, *oad* ‘odd’ and so on. An *oay* cluster might therefore be taken to signify [ɔi]. However, it is the *subjine* stressed vowel *i* which is the more difficult to interpret within the terms of Scot’s overall spelling representations. Scot uses the *i* graph, to denote [i] or [ii], as in *mit* ‘meat’, *spik* ‘speak’, and it would seem unlikely that this is the value he expects to be read for the graph in *subjine*; perhaps, for once, Scot is using the traditional *i* for ‘long *i*’: [aɪ]. It is worth noting that Scot includes the item *boy* alongside others with an *oy* digraph, such as *moy* ‘my’, *oys* ‘eyes’ etc., showing a value for its diphthong which might be [æɪ] (Jones 1993: 104). His evidence would suggest, therefore, that rather than a straightforward JOIN/TOIL merger in his dialect, he sees a contrast whereby *moy* ‘my’ and *boy* ‘boy’ could merge under some kind of [æɪ] diphthong, with [ɔi] appearing in items like *joayful*.

For James Douglas certainly, the TOIL/TILE alternation appears to have become lexicalized (Holmberg 1956: 213–14):

Oi

How is this double Vowel Sounded?

1. This double Vowel is a true diphthong uniting part of the Sound of both Letters into one, in the Beginning & middle of Words, as,

OISTER NOISE MOI-ETY COIN CLOISTER

2. In the following Words it is sounded like *I* Long, or *Ei*,

BOILE BROILE TOILE ANOINT JOIN JOINT JOICE OINTMENT POISON JOINTURE OIL POINT

Perhaps of all the Scots commentators, it is Robertson (1722: 10–18) who sees the *oi* and *long i* diphthongs as merged. In response to the Lady’s question: ‘What Sound hath (i)?’ the Master responds ‘This Letter and (y) have both one sound, and what’s said of one, may be said of both ... *my, by, duly, mighty*.’ When asked about the value of *oi* and *oy*, the response is ‘They have the Sound of *y*, pronounced long, as in *Joy, Joint, Choice, Voice, Oy, Spoil, Foil*’. This identity, or near-identity – if we are to give any significance to the distinction hinted at in ‘pronounced long’ – is highlighted in the many instances cited in his list of words ‘sounding alike’, such

as *High* 'lofty': *Hoy* 'a ship'; *Kind* 'discreet or civil': *Coyned* 'as money'; *Line* 'to fish with': *Loyn* 'of a Man': *Lyon* 'a ravenous Beast'; *Mighty* 'powerful': *Moiety* 'a Sum paid by Parcels'; *Viol* 'for Musick': *Viol* 'a Glass' and others. But the picture is complex, with his *Joyst* 'a Beam': *Jest* 'a merry Tale' pair – we might very tentatively suggest – pointing to some kind of [d₃ɪst] realisation for both words.

4.3.3 Pre-[r] breaking

There is considerable evidence that, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, stressed vowels of all frontness values could be diphthongized before [r], a phenomenon common throughout the history of the English language (Jones 1989: 45, 160, 293). Perhaps the best evidence for the phenomenon is provided by Smith's *An Attempt to Render the Pronunciation of English More Easy for Foreigners* (1795). Smith sets much store by arranging his lexicon by syllable length, and he is forced to confront contexts where the monosyllabic/disyllabic contrast appears to be fudged (1795: 58):

In every word hitherto introduced we have found the simple vowels, whether long or short, uniting with the consonants in such a manner as to produce in one word, but one pure and distinct syllable. When endeavouring to join these vowels to the letter *r*, I found that my 3^d, 4th, 5th, and 6th sounds [as in *aye*, *ye*, *oh* and *woo*: CJ] did not so coalesce as to make on simple and pure syllable. In the common pronunciation of the words *mare* and *mayor*; *seer* and *see-er*; *soar*, and *sew-er*; *poor* and *doer*; I see so little difference as at least they may be said to meet half way between words of one and two syllables.

In such instances he considers the words to be 'of a syllable and half'. It would seem, therefore, that in such pre-[r] contexts, the stressed vowel space was perceived as bi-moric, the principal vowel followed by some kind of [ə] component, realizing a falling diphthong. Items of this type in his lists include *air*, *bare*, *lair*, *rare*; *boar*, *bore*, *gore*, *roar*; *boor*, *moor*, *sure*, *tour*, *your* and many others. Smith claims too that this diphthongal process is triggered even when the stressed vowel itself is a 'proper and pure' diphthong, in items like *dire*, *hire*, *ire*, *mire*, *fire*, under SPIRE commenting (1795: 94 footnote): 'All the words from *dire*, including this, are, in the general mode of pronunciation, so exactly sounded like *dier* ("teinturier"), *liar* ("menteur") &c. that I should certainly class them with the words of two syllables, were it not for the appearance of affected singularity'. He makes a similar judgement concerning items like *flour* and *sour* (1795: 95):

A similar observation may be made upon the classes in which both these words [*flour*, *cure*: CJ] are found, with that under the word *spire*, that could we get over the appearance to the eye, and follow the guidance of the ear only, we should arrange them both, with the words of two syllables. By the most accurate attention to the best pronouncers, I could never distinguish *flour* ('farine') from *flower* ('fleur'), nor even at all times *your* ('votre') the pronoun, from *ewer* ('aiguière') the substantive. Perhaps it is owing to this circumstance that two of our best Orthoepists, Messrs. Sheridan and Walker have made *skewer* (brochette) a word of one syllable, and *hewer*, *ewer*, &c. words of two.

Twenty or so years earlier, Tucker records a similar ‘breaking’ phenomenon, suggesting quite specifically that the ‘epenthetic’ vowel is some kind of schwa (1773: 14): ‘The short *v* is easiest pronounced of all the vowels for reasons that will appear hereafter ... it is commonly inserted between \bar{e} , \bar{i} , \bar{o} , \bar{u} and r , as in *there, beer, fire, more, poor, pure, our*, which we pronounce $thev\bar{r}$, $biv\bar{r}$, $fviv\bar{r}$, $mov\bar{r}$, $puv\bar{r}$, $vuv\bar{r}$ ’. Kenrick (1784: 12) claims that words like *mare, mere* and *mire* ‘are still pronounced quick as monosyllables, though they have evidently two or three sounds of different qualities; one of which being distinct and long, it is impossible to pronounce such words, strictly speaking, as monosyllables. The word *hire*, for instance, is pronounced exactly like *higher*, which is allowed to be a word of two syllables; for a versifier cannot make one of it, though he would be condemned for making two of the same sounds in the former word’. Bayly’s (1772: 17) comments attest to this diphthongization as well: ‘*EA* – wherein the *e* is changed into *i* long, and the *a* into the close *u*, *dear, fear, ear, hear*, etc.’ So too Johnston (1764: 4): ‘When *r* follows long *e*, or *i*, in the end of words, it sounds *er* or *ur*; as in *ear, hear, here, shiire, fire, desire*; as if they were spelt *eer, heer, heer, shiier, fier, defier*; or *eur, heur, heur, shiur, fieur, desieur*’. Yet Smith might be hinting too at an innovative, ongoing and non-standard process of monophthongization in such a pre-[*r*] context: ‘As an exception to both these notes, however, I am constrained to mention several speakers now living, who, by rapidly passing through the Diphthong, and forcibly seizing upon the *r*, do really make but one syllable of all these words [like *dire, hire, ire, mire, fire*: CJ]; but I apprehend such a mode is neither general nor authoritative’.

4.4 Vowel neutralization in pre-[*r*] contexts

Wherever we encounter it, the nature and extent of front vowel lowering and centring in pre-[*r*] environments is difficult to interpret, not least because of the descriptive problem facing commentators in relation to the resultant ‘obscure’ and/ or ‘indistinct’ vowel. However, a number of points seem to emerge (Gabrielson 1913; Horn and Lehnert 1954: 480–505; MacMahon 1998: 127–9; Sheldon 1938: 369–70; Wylde 1937: 212–22). In general, it appears that any lowering/centring effect is particularly strong on palatal vowels; the effect itself varies in degree of centring and lowering (probably especially the former); the effect is lexically conditioned. It appears too, that there is little evidence to suggest that wholesale vowel neutralization took place in the pre-[*r*] context in this period, rather that a variety of vowel shapes could surface there. These points seem to hold for the evidence from both halves of the eighteenth century, although there is, if anything, more of an attempt made to characterize the qualities of the ‘obscure’ vowel itself in the later period, while there is too a stronger sense that the process was sensitive to extra-linguistic issues at that time. That the shape of the pre-[*r*] vowel was subject to some kind of lexical conditioning is suggested by Fogg’s (1792: 19) description of the phenomenon. For Fogg, only the items showing ‘short *i*’ in *birth, berth; circle, serkl; dirge, derdzh* show his sixth sound – the *e* in *men*. On the other hand, there is a much longer list where the vowel appears as his eleventh sound (the *u* in *bud*): *birch, burtsch; bird, burd; dirt, durt; fir, first; slirt, shirt*;

sir, sirup; third, thirst, and he makes the observation shared by most of his contemporaries that '*sirrah* is *sara*'. This lexically conditioned arrangement holds good too for the realisation of [ɛ] vowels in pre-[r] contexts. For Fogg (1792: 13) and most eighteenth-century observers, this sixth sound appears marked by whatever is intended by his *a* graph in *clerk, klark; merchant, martshant; serge, sardzh; sergeant, sardzhant; wreck, rak*, but by *u* in *her, hur*. William Johnston (1764: 50) sees the pre-[r] vowel as having a quality he characterizes as 'short *u*', as in items like *heard, early; pron. hurd, urlly; bird, dirt, fir, firm, first, shirt, squirt, third, thirty; pron. burd* &c. Like Fogg, he too appears to suggest what would seem to be lexically conditioned pronunciations of etymological [ɛ] and short *i* vowels in the pre-[r] environment. On the one hand, he allows for alternative pronunciations (1764: 24): 'Short *er* and *ir* in old English words, as in *her, fir*, and when followed by some other consonant, may almost always be pronounced *ur*, as well as *er* or *ir*; as in *sérvice, sérmon, hérmite, éarnest, héard, first, third, thirty, firm, thirst*; which may be sounded as if spelt *survice, surmon, hurmite, urnest, furst, thurd, thurdy, furm, thurst*; except in a few words, where *e* has a long acute sound, hereafter taken notice of, as in *sérge, sérjeant, vérjuice*: yet if another *r* follows, or is understood to follow, the *e* and *i* retain their acute short sounds, as in *érrant, sérenade, irrigate*'.¹⁸⁰ He is careful to insist (1764: 2627) that although his 'long acute *ē* occurs with these items it is 'but rarely even then' and the vowel is, in general 'seldom met with'. His long acute vowels 'have a long sound of their short vowels' and are quite deliberately kept apart from his long vowel classification (1764: 26). Such vowels are, by implication at least, merely the durationally longer equivalents of their short counterparts; thus, a 'long acute *ē* might be treated as if it were something like [ɛɛ]. The fact that he so distinguishes the 'long acute' types might just suggest that he sees their pre-[r] outcomes as different as well; perhaps as a segment more like [ə] rather than, say, [a]/[ɛ].

That indeed some kind of phonetic contrast could be heard by contemporary observers in the kinds of context we have been describing seems clear from the not inconsiderable amount of sociophonetic comment the phenomenon attracts in the period. This is perhaps most comprehensively seen in William Smith's *An Attempt to Render the Pronunciation of the English Language More Easy* (1795). An avowed follower of Sheridan, Smith provides much comment on 'preferred' forms of the vowel in this context as set out by various dictionary makers and spelling reformers. Under his Ninth sound (the *e* in *bell*), Smith provides a long list of what he claims are homophones, such as *herd, heard, gird* and many others of this type (1795: 39–41). However, he is careful to isolate out and comment upon individual items where disagreement exists among contemporary observers and to express his own views upon those he sees as representing best pronunciation. For instance, for the item *myrrh*, he comments: 'This, and the two foregoing words [*err, were*: C]], are marked with short *u*, by Dr. Kenrick and Mr. Scott; but I choose rather, with Messrs. Sheridan and Walker, to place them here', i.e. under the *e* in *hell*. Likewise, for *her, kerb* and *verb*, he comments: 'The same observation may be made with respect to these words ... with this additional one, that both Dr. Kenrick and Mr. Scott seem confused in their marking of most of the following words as far as

squirt [items like *term, firm, earn, fern, heron, learn, stern, yearn, perch, search, earth, birth, dearth, mirth, Perth, girth, pert, girt, skirt, squirt*: CJ]; the one representing *girt* and *girth* by the short *i*, and *girl* by the short *u*; and the other describing the sound of *i*, in *mirth*, by *u* in *cub*'. His animus towards Walker surfaces when he cannot resist the temptation to show inconsistency in the dictionary-maker's recommendations: 'Mr. Walker marks this [*squirt*: CJ] with the short *u*, according to a rule which he gives in his 108 section, "that when *i* comes before *r*, followed by another consonant in a final syllable, it acquires the sound of *u* exactly"'. He, however, marks *girt* and *skirt* as placed here [i.e. with *e*: CJ]'. Smith's eleventh sound ('as in *, but, dull*') is given for items like *fir, her, sir, stir, bird, third* and is much less frequent in his lists than vowel Nine. Again, he cannot resist the opportunity of questioning the judgement of Walker (1795: 53): 'Mr. Walker makes this word [*fir*: CJ] with the short *e*, and says it is perfectly similar to the first syllable in *ferment*; but I think all good speakers pronounce it in the same manner as *sir* and *stir*' which he confidently claims 'are universally marked by the short *u*'. His comments upon *servant* are interesting too, in as much as they could be taken to hint at the possibility that 'change from below' may be occurring in this area of the phonology (1795: 129): 'The vulgar always, and even polite people sometimes, pronounce this word as if spelt *sar-vint*. Dr. Kenrick and Mr. Scott pronounce the first syllable with short *u*. I have followed Mr. Sheridan [Smith's vowel Nine: CJ] because I think his pronunciation the most correct'.¹⁸¹

Perhaps in part because of his Scottish origins, Elphinston is in no doubt concerning the social unacceptability of the entire lowering/centring processes (1786: 231):

Ov dhe shut vowels, E iz not dhe least impoartantly endaingered; dho, like *a*, perhaps onely by *r*. Dhis ruf licquid, shutting dhe moast delilicate vowel, may ezily coarsen it into' dhe cognate *u* shut: a sound, az peculiarly English, peculiarly indulged in dhis sittuacion. Hence dhe truly vulgar confuzion ov *her* and *Hur*, *verse* and *vurse*, or even worse; *berth* (bairing) ov a ship, and *birth* (vertually *burth*) nativvity or ofspring. No wonder we see and hear such combinacions az *erth* and *worth*, *verse* and *curse*, from the suppozed happy versifiers. Dhus haz *vertue* herself been visciated, widhin dhe prezzent century, into' *virtue*, dhat iz *vurtue*; by such speakers az, perceiving no difference, took *virtus* to' be dhe parent, for want ov knowing *vertu*; dho equally unacquainted widh dhe native sound ov edher, had edher French or Lattin been annithing to' dhe purpose.

Elphinston is unapologetic in his condemnation of lowering/centring before [r], a consonant which – like many contemporary observers – he describes (1786: 231) in derogatory terms as 'this rough liquid, shutting the most delicate vowel, may easily coarsen into cognate *u* shut, a sound, as peculiarly English, peculiarly indulged in this situation. Hence the truly vulgar confusion of *her* as *Hur*, *verse*:*vurse*, or even worse; *berth* (ship) and *Birth* (vertually *burth*). No wonder we see and hear such combinations as *erth* and *worth*, *verse* and *curse*, from some supposed happy versifiers'.¹⁸² Likewise, the anonymous author of *A Vocabulary of Such Words in the*

English Language as are of Dubious or Unsettled Pronunciation (1797) everywhere sees the pre-[r] lowering/centering as non-prestigious. A *marchant* pronunciation for 'merchant' he claims is 'rarely so sounded but by the vulgar', while in his CLERK entry he informs us that:

This word is, by some, pronounced as it is written, sounded like the *e* in *bet*; but these are few in comparison of those who pronounce it as I have marked it, and Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Walker are in support of sounding the *e* like *a* in *mark*. The latter observes 'There is a remarkable exception to the common sound of this letter in the words *clerk*, *serjeant*, and a few others, where we find the *e* pronounced like the *a* in *dark* and *margin*. But this exception, I imagine, was within these few years, the general rule of sounding this letter before *r*, followed by another consonant. Thirty years ago (continues he) everyone pronounced the first syllable of *merchant* like the monosyllable *march*, and as it was anciently written *marchant*. *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'.¹⁸³

Entick goes further and sees such a process as specific to the Metropolis, 'another corrupt mode of pronunciation in London' (1795: i):

It is that in which the first sound of this letter [*E*: C] is converted into that of the broad *u*, as though the sound of the *e* in *her*, and that of *u* in *cur*, were exactly coincident. I will only add, that the middle sound of the *e* [his [ε]: C], for which I have been contending, is, or at least ought to be, retained in the words *herd*, *rebuild*, *refrain*, *adhesion*, *cohesion*, and others of a like formation. Would it not be best, likewise, to retain the *first* and *proper* sound of the *e* in *hermetical*, *hernia*, *hermaphrodite*, and many others.

Yet, only a page later, he is happy to describe the vowel in *bird* as 'coincident with that of the full *u*'. Ash (1795: ii) in describing the sounds expressed by the graph *i* (broad in final *-e* contexts as in *pine*, and preceding *gh* in *sight*, *light*) also includes a 'middle' sound value in pre-*r* contexts, such as *bird*, *third*, but with the caveat that this 'occurs but seldom'.

It is quite difficult to determine from the evidence of observers like these, what precisely were the values of short front vowels in such rhotic environments. Indeed, can we be confident that contemporaries actually heard a perceptible difference, or were their observations coloured by difficulties in finding an adequate descriptive terminology for the segment(s) they were endeavouring to describe? The entry for MIRACLE in *A Vocabulary of Such Words in the English Language as are of Dubious or Unsettled Pronunciation* (1797) is interesting in this respect: 'I have marked this word like Mr. Walker [mi¹r-a-kl: i.e. [mɪrəkəl] C]. Mr. Sheridan pronounces it me¹r-a¹kl [[merəkəl]: C], which Mr. Walker thinks vulgar; but the difference assuredly is very little, and but just perceptible.'

It is this ‘just perceptible’ difference allied with the difficulty of finding an adequate descriptive terminology for the pre-[r] vowel sound, which makes our task of interpreting the contemporary evidence a daunting one. Most eighteenth-century descriptions of the vowel sound are unhelpful, as Solomon Lowe’s ‘an obscure easy sound between *u* and *a*’ or, a little more useful, the description of ‘*u* short’ by Bayly (1772: 12) which ‘hath a peculiar kind of exceeding short sound, an obscure, indistinguishable vowel, as in *sun*, *murmur*. Let this be called *u* very short, or the close *u*. Note that other vowels fall into this last sound, and become very short when pronounced quick, as *a* in *aver*, general, *fear*, *dear*, *hear*; *e* in *manner*, *i* in *bird*, *o* in *some*’, thus equating with the pre-[r] segment, vowels in unstressed syllables and the off-glide of ‘breaking’ diphthongs. Tucker (1773) makes a similar set of observations, but the detail he provides in his ‘The language drawn from every day’s discourse’,¹⁸⁴ perhaps provides the most insightful account of the nature of ‘short *u*’ in the period. Commenting that the short *u* ‘is easiest pronounced of all the vowels ... and therefore is a great favorite with my countrymen, who tho not lazy are very averse to trouble, wishing to do as much work with as little pains as possible’, he characterizes the sound as appearing in pre-[r] *Breaking*, while (1773: 14):

It is almost always turned into *ur* as ‘*fir*, *fur*; *dirty*, *durty*’; *ř* is so like to ‘*ur*’ you cannot distinguish them unless when accented, for if one was to say ‘*prospur*, *advurse*, to join the friendly *convurse*’ you would not perceive the changes, but ‘*prospurity*, *advursity*, to *convurse* as friends’, would offend your ear grievously: and there are none of the vowels but what are often changed into ‘*u*’ in common talk, tho preserving their genuine sound in a grave discourse, as in this sentence, ‘*Tis* frivolous to endeavour putting man or woman upon never stirring in London for fear of their cloaths being covered in soot’, which at tea-table we should probably deliver thus, ‘*Tis* *frivulus* to endeavur putting man *ur* *womun* *upun* *nevur* being *cuvur*’d with *sut*’ the very small particles spoken hastily scarce ever retain their original sound, a farmer will tell you ‘*u* hog wont stray so far frum home *uz un ox ur u* flock *u* sheep’.

He shows too how this sound can be drawn out ‘to a great length upon particular occasions, as when the watchman calls “Past ten *u-u-u* clock”, or when a man hesitates till he hits upon some hard name, as “This account was sent by Mr. *u-u-u* Schlotzikoff, a Russian”’. But, for most observers, the difficulties of description and homophony persist. Recall Colonel Mitford’s description of this ‘bastard sound’ (1774: 34):

It is a common remark that all northern people use a closer pronunciation than those of the southern countries. The English in particular ... greatly affect short [sounds: CJ]. Now this particular short sound of the *u* is produced with the least opening of the mouth, and the least effort of the voice of any genuine vowel-sound whatsoever, and it seems to be on this account that we give it, on certain occasions, to all the other vowels, *particular*, *perverse*, *her*, *stir*, *son*, *word*, to the three first before the letter *r* only, but to the last before many others, *come*, *cover*,

mother, son. There is another, a kind of bastard sound, very nearly resembling this, which is very frequently given to the letter *a*. It may be remarked in the following words in the syllables distinguished by particular characters, *separate, syllable, mortal, acute* ... The vowel-sound which we use in syllables composed of *le* and a preceding consonant, is nearly of the same kind, but degenerated to almost nothing.

All commentators seem agreed that, in pre-[r] and unstressed vowel contexts, we are not merely dealing with a single 'obscure' sound, but with a set of sounds which are not quite identical to the ear, or whose distinguishing characteristics are difficult to separate. But when distinctions can be heard, it would appear that there was some kind of correlation between input and output vowel in pre-[r] environments, such that [i]→[e] (or more probably [ɛ̃]), while [e] inputs seem to surface as [a] or even [ɐ]/[ə] (perhaps Johnston's 'long acute ē'), although we have noted that there is also considerable lexical conditioning. While many commentators see pre-[r] vowels as close to short *u*, few are totally committed to complete vowel neutralization in this context, while the value of vowels in unstressed syllables and the 'cluster busting' vowel in syllable final [bl] combinations¹⁸⁵ seem to be something else again. In other words, the evidence from the late eighteenth century does not point unequivocally to the appearance of a single (schwa-like) segment in these contexts. Indeed, the picture is far more complex than Wells would suggest in his description of the NURSE Merger (1982: 199–200): 'the merging of these various Middle English vowels seems to have started in northern and eastern districts of English in the fifteenth century; by the sixteenth it had spread to popular London speech, and by the seventeenth to the precursor of RP. The vowels in question, Middle English /ɪ/, /ɛ/ and /ʊ/ were centred and merged as [ə] in the environment of a final or preconsonantal /r/, as in *sir, bird, err, fern; spur, church*'. It would not appear from the materials we have examined that any single-step change to a schwa sound had occurred by the late eighteenth century, while any claim that such a change originated in the north seems contradicted by Fogg's observations that items such as *birth, berth; circle, serkl; dirge, derdzh* show his sixth sound – the *e* in *men* – while he gives a much longer list where the pre-[r] vowel is his eleventh sound (the *u* in *bud*): *birch, burtsh; bird, burd; dirt, durt; fir, first; slirt, shirt; sir, sirup; third, and thirst*. There is no suggestion in the Lancastrian Fogg – who is a very close observer – that a complete merger of vowels had occurred in such an environment. While the history of the evolution of [ə] in unstressed and rhotic contexts remains to be written (but see MacMahon (1998: §5)), we might speculatively suggest here that by the late eighteenth century a variety of centralized outputs (while close, but still distinct) could be perceived – [ɛ̃], [ʌ], [ə] and [ɐ]. Perhaps as a result of factors such as regional and/or social dialect contact, speakers may ultimately have opted for a 'fudged', compromise or 'neutral' form between these in the shape of [ə] or even [ɜ], a compromise perhaps not unlike that enacted today – under accommodation pressures – at the [ʊ]/[ʌ] boundary, where 'compromise, socially and dialectally near-neutral forms like [ɝ] are produced' (Trudgill 1986: 59).

But what of ‘short *i*’ itself in rhotic and non-rhotic contexts? We have seen that there is considerable evidence to suggest that this segment had not undergone any extensive centring or lowering in the period and that there was little to suggest a clear BEET/BIT split in the phonology. Perhaps we can tentatively argue that the eventual lowering and centring of this segment to something like [ɪ] came about through the generalization of the type of ‘short *i*’ which was evolving in unstressed, rhotic and *bl* contexts – leading to some kind of BITCH/BIRCH merger. There is certainly some evidence to suggest ‘near-alikeness’ between [i], [ɛ] and [ɪ]/[ĕ] as we have already noted in the MIRACLE entry in *A Vocabulary of Such Words in the English Language as are of Dubious or Unsettled Pronunciation* (1797):

MIRACLE, mi¹r-a¹kl. I have marked this word like Mr. Walker. Mr. Sheridan pronounces it me¹r-a¹kl, which Mr. Walker thinks vulgar; but the difference assuredly is very little, and but just perceptible. In *miraculous*, *miraculously*, and *miraculousness*, Mr. Sheridan makes the *i*, in the first syllable long, like *i* in *fight*; while Mr. Walker pronounces it short, like *e* in *me*. I prefer the latter.¹⁸⁶

Notice too how Smith lists the item DIRECT as rhyming with *eject*, *reject*, *select* and many others, all showing in their first syllable his vowel Nine (as in *met*), commenting that (1797: 128) ‘Messrs. Sheridan, Kenrick, and Scott, have marked the first syllable of this word with short *i*; Mr. Walker with long *e*; and Mr. Buchanan with our twelfth sound, or first diphthong [his *pie* diphthong: CJ]. This last pronunciation is countenanced by some of our first speakers in parliament and at the bar. Nevertheless the current pronunciation, I think, is such as to warrant me to place it here, and so as to rhyme with the preceding word [*erect*: CJ]’. If indeed there is to be seen some kind of conflation in the area of the phonetics embracing [i], [ɛ] and [ɪ]/[ĕ], then we might just expect to see mergers and interchanges between items historically marked by either high or mid front vowels. *Vocabulary* seems to suggest that there is indeed evidence in the period for such phenomena. For instance of *elixir*, we are told that ‘there is a corrupt way of pronouncing it, even among the upper ranks of people, which changes the *i*, in the second syllable, to *e*, as if written *elixir*. This I regard as improper, notwithstanding Mr. Walker’s thinking it may be so sounded when the accent is on the *i* followed by *r* and another consonant’. Again, under *ridicule*, he recommends short *i* for the first syllable vowel (as do Sheridan and Walker), but ‘it is frequently mispronounced as sounding the first syllable like the adjective *red*, an inaccuracy which cannot be too carefully avoided’. After much the same fashion, he records various authorities for favouring an alternative [ɛ]/[i] versions for syllable-one vowels in items like *pedal*, *record*, *tenour*, *tenure*, *fetid* and *lest*, and the uncertainty of the sociophonetic and lexical status of the interchange is captured in Walker’s (1791) comment on the item *yet*. Assigning his *e*² to the vowel in this word (the vowel in *met*), he observes ‘the *e* in this word is frequently changed by incorrect speakers into *i*; but though this change is agreeable to the best and most established usage in the word *yes*; in *yet* it is the mark of incorrectness and vulgarity’.¹⁸⁷

5

Non-Vowel Phonology

5.1 [ti]/[tʃ] and [dj]/[dʒ] alternations

In the late eighteenth century, the level of interest and controversy in this area of the debate equals that in the early part of the century. On the one hand, that controversy again centred around whether *-ion*, *-iate*, *-ium* terminations comprise a single- or two-syllable structure and, on the other, the extent to which dental obstruents in *tion*, *dion* terminations and the like (as in items like *condition*, *medium*, *invidious*) could show a continuancy shift towards fricativization (Jespersen 1909–49: 333; Sheldon 1938: 342). Buchanan (1757: 13) unequivocally considers such terminations to be ‘pronounced as one syllable’ in items such as *tertial*, *partial*, *ancient*, *patient*, which he respells as *tershal*, *parshal*, *anshent* and *pashent*: ‘the terminations *sion* and *tion* have generally the same sound, viz. *shun* or *shon* and pronounced as one syllable’. Johnston (1764: 34) makes a similar claim: ‘Unaccented terminations with *ia*, *ie*, and *io*, the *i* being Roman [i.e. to be pronounced: CJ], after *d*, *l*, *n*, and *t* proper, sound, *ya*, *ye*, *yu*, short’ and he respells items such as *obedience*, *soldier*, *indies* and *filial* as *obedyence*, *soldyer*, *indyees* and *filyal*, adding that ‘the *d* and *y* in these and such like words, sounding like soft *g* [his [dʒ]: CJ]’. Walker (1791: 33) refines the contextual factors: ‘In the very numerous termination *ion*, these vowels [*io*: CJ] are pronounced in one syllable like short *u*; but when they are preceded by a liquid, as in *million*, *minion*, *clarion*, &c. the two vowels are heard distinctly: the same may be observed when they are preceded by any of the other consonants, except *s* and *t*; as *champion*, *scorpion*, &c. where the vowels are heard separately: but the terminations, *tion* and *sion*, are pronounced in one syllable, and exactly like the verb *shun*’. However, Walker hints that some flexibility in these constraints may be allowed (1791: 16): ‘when the *i* precedes another vowel in an unaccented syllable, and is not preceded by any of the dentals: thus we hear *iary* in *mil-iary*, *bil-iary*, &c. pronounced as if written *mil-yary*, *bil-yary*, &c. *Min-ion* and *pin-ion*, as if written *min-yon* and *pin-yon*. In these words the *i* is so totally altered to *y*, that pronouncing the *ia* and *io* in separate syllables would be an error the most palpable; but where the other liquids or mutes precede the *i* in this situation, the coalition is not so necessary; for though the two latter

syllables of *convivial*, *participial*, &c. are extremely prone to unite into one, they may, however, be separated, provided the separation be not too distant’.

Under an extensive list of items containing *three* syllables, Smith (1795: 190) includes items such as *abbreviate*, *alleviate*, *appreciate*, *immediate* – with the *i* symbol italicized to show that it is ‘mute’; yet he adds in a footnote that ‘I have marked this, [*alleviate*: CJ] and such like words, as trisyllables, because I think the making of them words of four syllables, as Mr. Walker [who has a⁴l-le¹ve¹-a¹te: CJ], Dr. Kenrick, &c. have done, has a tendency to lead foreigners into a drawling pronunciation. The *v* coalesces perfectly well with the long sound of *e*’, suggesting, perhaps, a pronunciation like [alivjet]. But Smith’s evidence is confusing, and one has to wonder whether his typesetter is given to errors, for while he uses the mute-marking italic for *i* in items such as *appreciate*, *depreciate*, *immediate*, it is not so marked in *accretion*, *concretion*, *secretion*, *cohesion*; likewise we find italicized *i* in *malicious*, *delicious*, *religious*, but not in *ambitious*, *propitious*, *factitious*, *addition*, *ambition*, *condition*, *tradition* and many others. If, on the other hand, his transcriptions are accurate, we have evidence for extensive lexical diffusion for some kind of [i]/[j] alternation in items of this type. Tucker is very conservative on this issue, his system representing items like *structure*, *nature* as (structu^r), (netu^r); *discretion*, *affection* and *profession* as (discre^su^vn), (afectes^su^vn) and (profes^su^vn), warning his readers (1773: 50) ‘not to give implicit faith to the old woman who taught him that “t” assumes the voice of “s” before “ion”’. Still, he respells *allusion* as (alu^jvⁿ). However, Carter (1773: 30) gives respellings for items like *surgeon*, *artificial*, *musician*, *vicious*, etc. as *sur-gon*, *artifish-al*, *musi-shan*, *vi-shus*, noting the sociophonetic significance of the vowel loss in the final syllable: ‘We cannot find any instance in *Poetry*, where any of the Terminations above is esteemed more than one Syllable, except in Doggerel Rhyme, and I judge the *Standard* for *proper Pronunciation* is not to be taken from thence’. So too Ward (1758: 16) who under his discussion of ‘False and imperfect sounds corrected’ dictates that *courteous*, *courtier* and *creature* are to be correctly realised as *curtshus*, *cortshur* and *cretshur*, with Ash (1763: xxi) observing that the *-tion* termination sees the *t* ‘softened to *sh*, as *station*, in which the sound of the *i* is nearly, if not quite lost’. Not unlike this is the observation by Rudd (1755: 56) that ‘*Ti* takes the sound of *Te*, in pronouncing the words *Celestial*, called *celesteal*: unless we choose to consider the *i* (which I take to be a real fact) as having here it’s [*sic*] true sound, only in a faint, obscure way’. Bell (1769: 59–60) seems willing to accept a one or two-syllable interpretation of these types of terminations, although he seems to favour the latter. He renders, for instance, *soc-ial* as either *so-shal* or *so-she-al*; *partial* as *par-shal* or *par-she-al*, *musician* as *musi-shan* or *mu-sish-she-an*, while commenting on the spelling of *righteous* he asserts: ‘The reason of *e* after *t*, and before *ous* is plain (since the *ti* before a vowel sounds like *sh*) for if *i* was written in these positions, the words would want a syllable, which is contrary to the customary pronunciation’.

Nares (1784: 129) describes the [ti]→[tʃ] innovation as a ‘pronunciation which has been creeping in upon us very perceptibly for some years past’, but even only a few years later, Coote (1788) is sceptical concerning the propriety of such developments: ‘*T* when it precedes *ion* ... has the sound of *s* (unless the *t* follow *s*

or *x*); as *creation, nation, repletion, transition, notion, ablution*. The sound of the *ti* in these words is corrupted by custom and rapidity of utterance into *sh*.' One of the longest discussions of the topic is provided by Kenrick who is, at the very least, uncertain about the propriety of some types of affricative usage. Kenrick seems willing to accept fricativization of [t] in *ion*, but not in *ure* contexts: a *nation/nature* contrast. The status of the etymological *t* in *ion* contexts is, for him, a function of how he perceives syllable boundary placement (1784: 50–1): 'it is indeed generally said that the *ti* and *te* have the force of *ch*: thus *question, christian* are divided and pronounced thus, *Ques-chon, chris-chan*; but the effect would be exactly the same, if the words were more etymologically divided thus, *quest-ion, christ-ian*.' He comes down to preferring the division whereby he considers 'the *e* or *i* as γ consonant; and that not merely for etymological reasons, but because a very general custom prevails, even among the politest speakers, of giving the *t* alone (i.e. apart from *ion* contexts) the force of *ch* in many words, such as *nature, creature, &c.* which are pronounced *nachure, creachure*, and that too *euphoniae gratia*'.¹⁸⁸ The parallel between the two sets is one he does not accept, and he seems to be more willing to allow for *nature* and *creature* without a change of [t] to [tʃ] even though this 'mode be reprobated as vulgar, by certain mighty fine speakers, I think it more conformable to the general scheme of English pronunciation'. But he asserts too that although the pronunciation difference between *min-i-on* and *min-yon, court-e-ous* and *cour-chous/court-yous* is 'but little' in fast speech contexts, then

why the *t*, when followed by neither *i* nor *e*, is to take the form of *ch*, I cannot conceive: it is in my opinion, a species of affectation that should be discountenanced; unless we are to impute it to the tendency in the metropolitan pronunciation of prefacing the sound of *u* with a γ consonant; or, into *ch* or *zh*, as in *nature, measure, &c.* These are niceties, however, that foreigners and provincials need not give themselves much trouble about, though professors of English and public pleaders ought to get them ascertained.

The Scottish observers also comment on this phenomenon, typically Cortez Telfair (1775: 127): 'In such words as *medium, genius, Indian, i* may either make a diphthong with the next vowel or not, in poetry; But in prose, it makes always a diphthong; and then those words are pronounced as if written *meed-yum, geen-yus, Ind-yun*'. The author of *A Spelling-Book Upon a New Plan* (1796: 26 footnote) makes a similar observation, simultaneously introducing the interconnected effect on the continuancy of preceding consonants. Commenting on the pronunciation of *lenient*, he observes:

Though *i*, in the terminations beginning with a consonant and in *ia* or *ie*, is marked as silent [italicized: CJ], it is not *wholly* so: – its effect is twofold. 1. It carries the preceding consonant, by a soft, and almost imperceptible transition, to the following vowel. 2. It affects the sound of the preceding consonant, if it be *d, l, n, s, or t*; making *d* to sound somewhat like soft *g*, as in *sol-dier* (sol-gier); *In-dia*, (In-gia): it makes the sound of *l* and *n* more liquid, as *valiant, lenient*;

gives *s* a kind of musical sound, between that of *z* and hissing *s*, as in *transient*; and makes *t* soft like *sh*, as in *quotient*, *partial*: But a good teacher would do more to describe its power by one word of his mouth, than five pages in writing.

Like Walker, James Adams (1799: 114–15) appeals both to syllable structure and phonaesthetics to explain the phenomenon: '*T* preserves its sound when it forms a radical syllable, for, on examination, it will appear not to be part of an expletive: as – *bast-ion*, *combust-ion*, *christ-ian*, *fust-ian*: Hence by strict rule (contradicted by use) *Egypt-tian* should be sounded, *Egypt-ian*, because the root *Egypt* is closed by *t*, and *ian* is the expletive; custom has made it yield to the rule of finals, *teon*, *tian*, *sion*, &c. which the above and similar words do not so readily admit, on account of a singular harshness they would thus produce'. In a typical anecdote, he goes on to illustrate the English tendency to fricativize the [t] obstruent in such contexts through what he sees as its almost parodied use in Latin pronunciation:

This hissing English contraction extended to Latin words, shews another absurdity in our pronunciation of Latin. In the year 1755, I attended a public Disputation in a foreign University, when at least 400 Frenchmen literally hissed a grave and learned English Doctor (Mr Banister) not by way of insult, but irresistibly provoked by the quaintness of the repetition of *sh*. The Thesis was the concurrence of God in *actionibus viciosis*: the whole hall resounded with the hissing cry of *sh* (*shi*, *shi*, *shi*) on its continual occurrence in *actio*, *actione*, *viciosia* – *ac-shio*, *vi-shi-osa*.¹⁸⁹

It is not always a simple matter to decide from the late-eighteenth-century evidence whether we are witnessing a temporal sequence of change in this area of the phonology such that [ti] → [tj] → [tʃ], or even whether contemporary observation was sufficiently sensitive to distinguish the second from the third 'stage' in the process. Walker (1791: 34) perhaps hints at such when he contradicts Sheridan's perceptions: 'Nor can I conceive why he should spell *melodious*, *me-lo-dzhus*, and *commodius*, *comm-mo-dyus*, as there can be no possible difference in the sound of the terminations. If the *γ* is distinctly pronounced, it sufficiently expresses the aspiration of the *d*, and is, in my opinion, the preferable mode of delineating the sound, as it keeps the two last syllables from uniting too closely.' Walker describes the mechanism for the production of what he calls 'semi-consonant diphthongs' produced by the contact between [t] and a subsequent mainly palatal vowel as follows (1791: 55): 'Now the vowel that occasions this transition of *t* to *s* is the squeezed sound of the *e*, as heard in *γ* consonant: which squeezed sound is a species of hiss; and this hiss, from the absence of accent, easily slides into the *s*, and the *s* as easily into *sh*. Thus mechanically is generated that hissing termination *tion*, which forms but one syllable, as if written *shun*.' Walker provides extensive exemplification of this alternation, relating its occurrence to the placement of the accent: 'This pronunciation of *t* extends to every word where the diphthong or diphthongal sound commences with *i* or *e*. Thus *bestial*, *beauteous*, *righteous*, *frontier*, &c., are pronounced as if written *best-cheal*, *beaut-cheous*, *right-cheous*, *front-chier*, &c.',

although he roundly criticizes Sheridan for generalizing the phenomenon to what he describes as 'non-accented' contexts: 'he has extended the change of *t* into *tch*, or *tsh*, to the word *tune* and its compounds, *tutor*, *tutoress*, *tutorage*, *tutelar*, *tutelary*, &c. *tumult*, *tumour*, &c. which he spells *tshoon*, *tshoon-able*, &c. *tshoo-tur*, *tshoo-tris* ... the words ought to be pronounced as if written *tewtor*, *tewmult*, *tewmour*, &c. and neither *tshootur*, *tshoomult*, *tshoomour*, as Mr Sheridan writes them, nor *tootor*, *toomult*, *toomour*, as they are often pronounced by vulgar speakers'. The same set of speakers, claims Walker (1791: 34) go even further in their error, especially after the fashion in which they pronounce words like *odius* and *tedious*: 'the vulgar who, in this case, are right by instinct, not only indulge the aspiration of the *d*, which the language is so prone to, but are apt to contract the succeeding syllable too closely, and instead of *o-je-ous*, say *o-jus* and *te-jus*'. But even for Walker alternative pronunciations are acceptable, so that, for instance, he allows for [di]/[dʒ] possibilities in items like *medium*, *invidious*, *incendiary*, *insidious*, but only [dʒ] for *odious*. But for Elphinston (1786: 243), for whom *t* is a 'magic mute' (1786: 77), any change from obstruent to the affricate is considered unfortunate: 'Licquefaccion and aspiracion being so nearly allied, we cannot now wonder at dhe (truly vulgar) interchainge we hear ov *Indian* and *engine*; more dhan at dhe groce emission ov *crecher* and *verger*, for *creture* and *verdure*; or ov *soljer* and *granjer* for *soldier* and *grandeur*: nay dhe onnest (unpolished) *solger* haz blust it in a ballad'.

A very similar set of observations and constraints applies to the level of palatalization of voiced and voiceless dentals in pre- 'long *u*' – [ju] – environments, well attested in Walker's *DUKE* entry, although there is once more a suggestion that the distinction is one which involves a rather fine phonetic contrast: 'There is a slight deviation often heard in the pronunciation of this word, as if written *Dook*; but this borders on vulgarity; the true sound of the *u* must be carefully preserved, as if written *Dewk*. There is another impropriety, in pronouncing this word, as if written *Jook*; this is not so vulgar as the former, and arises from an ignorance of the influence of accent.' We have seen above how Walker appeals to a criterion which looks rather like 'ease of articulation' to account for the fricativization effect, and how he rationalizes that it is the 'squeezed sound of *e*, as heard in *y* consonant', 'a species of hiss' which 'easily slides into the *s*, and *s* easily into *sh*'. This same *y* consonant produces 'the small hiss ... which may be observed in the pronunciation of *nature*, and borders so closely on *natshur*, that it is no wonder that Mr. Sheridan adopted this latter mode of spelling the word to express its sound'.¹⁹⁰ It is the (over) generalization of the [tʃ]/[dʒ] affricatives by Sheridan to which, as we have seen above, Walker objects so strongly (and mainly on the basis of his own model of stress placement¹⁹¹), echoing his strictures on the pronunciation of *duke*: 'Mr Sheridan's greatest fault seems to lie in not attending to the nature and influence of the accent; and because *nature*, *creature*, *feature*, *fortune*, *misfortune*, &c. have the *t* pronounced like *ch*, or *tsh*, as if written *creat-chure*, *fea-tshure*, &c. he has extended this change of *t* into *tch*, or *tsh*, to the word *tune*, and its compounds'. Nevertheless, it is Walker who, while often simultaneously giving obstruent pronunciations, allows for affricatives in items like *incestuous*, *incredulous*, *indenture*,

individual, perdulous, unctious, medium, odius, pendulus, primordial, presumptuous, regarding the last declaiming: ‘We frequently hear this word pronounced in three syllables, by corrupting and contracting the last two syllables into *shus*, as if written *prezumshus*; but correct speakers carefully preserve these syllables distinct, and pronounce them like the verb to *chew*, and the pronoun *us*’. Sheridan, on the other hand, recommends *pre*²-*zu*¹*mp*-*tu*³-*u*¹s.¹⁹² Yet, although in general he avoids affricative forms in such contexts, he too nevertheless recommends them in items such as *invidious, jointure, legislature, ligature, mediocrity, radiance, sardius, schedule* among others.

Continuancy alternations involving [k]/[tʃ], [d]/[dʒ] and even [g]/[ʒ] are also common characteristics of the period. *Vocabulary* gives a long discussion of contemporary views on the pronunciation of the digraph *ch* in *architecture*, settling – on the basis of various kinds of analogy – on the [k] form. [k]/[tʃ] versions of the onset consonant in *chart, chasm* and *chalice* are variously recommended. *Vocabulary* observes how for *chart* both Walker and Sheridan accept either pronunciation ‘as if they knew not what to choose. The best usage is undoubtedly to pronounce it *kart*, and Mr. Walker acknowledges it is most frequently, if not universally, so sounded’. *Vocabulary*’s author asserts strongly too that the [tʃ] onset in *chasm* is to be found ‘but among the illiterate’, while for *chalice*, ‘some people (very improperly) pronounce it *kallis*’. He notes too how for the word *fugue*: ‘Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Walker pronounce this word as I have marked it [fe¹wg: Cj]; but it is often very improperly sounded as if written *fuje*’. [θ]/[d] oppositions are less well recorded in the period, despite the relatively high level of discussion of the phonetic characteristics of the continuant form, described by Adams (1794: 81) as ‘TH, La Gloire, et L’Opprobre de Notre Alphabet’. Many observers comment upon the uniquely English-language status of the interdental fricative, with Elphinston (1795: 141) describing it as a ‘lipping aspirate ... which the English alone have practiced and preserved’, noting the difficulty it produces for the non-native speaker: ‘This double Consonant [*th*: Cj] and our manner of pronouncing *ch, j*, or soft (*g*), makes the Pronunciation of our Language very difficult to Foreigners; all the Difficulty is contained in these Words, *What think the chosen Judges?* which Foreigners pronounce, *What dink de shosen shudges?*’ (1786: 27 *footnote*). Walker has a long entry on *Authority*, describing the [t] realization of the [θ] as an ‘affected’ and ‘traced to a gentleman, who was one of the greatest ornaments of the law, as well as one of the politest scholars of the age. No wonder then that that such an authority should influence the bench and the bar, though insufficient to corrupt the actors of Drury-lane and Covent-garden, who may justly be considered as the best standards of pronunciation.’ Yet he observes of the [t] pronunciation that, ‘though it may be with security, and even approbation, be pronounced in Westminster hall, it would not be quite so safe for an actor to adopt it on the stage’. Walker points to the possibility that such [t] pronunciations are the result of analogical formation based on Latin correspondences like *auctor* and *auctoritas*. Indeed, he seems contemptuous of the entire controversy regarding this word and, by implication, other kinds of what we might consider as relatively non-salient contemporary oppositions, which ‘the public ear ... is not so far vitiated as to acknowledge’.

'The truth is,' he claims, 'such singularities of pronunciation should be left to the lower order of criticks; who, like coxcombs in dress, would be utterly unnoticed if they were not distinguished by petty deviations from the rest of the world'. Certainly, Elphinston for one, sees the voiced [ð]/[d] as characteristic of London deviation, both in 'true' spelling and, possibly, in pronunciation (1786: 94): 'Now it haz been poot; shal London, hoo talks fairly az naturally, ov her *Bednal*-Green, and *Bedlam*-ospital, pretend widh her pen to'exhibbit edher, in dhe semblance ov *Bethnal* or of *Bethlehem*? Can dhe wonce pious cappital persist in profaning a name, which she questionles ment to' onnor? Can she knowingly emplkoy it, az dhe vehikel ov falsehood? Inghland, ardent to' prezerv and to' proppagate Truth, wil find Scotland first her scollar, and dhen her rival. *Lethington* and *Nithsdale* wil soon blush dhey evver personated *Ledington* and *Nidsdale*'.

5.2 Glide insertion

We noted in Part I, section 5.2 how uncommon, between 1700 and 1750, was the record of both palatal and velar glide insertion of the [kjart] *cart* and [bwɔɪ] *boy* types. In the second half of the eighteenth century, however, the phenomenon is fairly widely recorded. No less than Walker (1791: 13) highlights the fact that 'When *a* is preceded by the gutterals, the 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*. This sound of the *a* is taken notice of in Steele's Grammar ... which proves it is not the offspring of the present day'. And again (1791: 21) he records how *sky*, *kind*, *guide*, *guise*, *disguise*, *guile*, *beguile*, *mankind* 'are pronounced as if written *skey*, *ke-ind*, *gue-ise*, *disgue-ise*, *gue-ile*, *begue-ile*, *manke-ind*'. Interestingly, he claims that such a phenomenon is not to be unexpected since – and here he probably follows Steele's analysis – '*i* is really composed of *a* and *e*' so that in such pronunciations 'we are pleased to find the ear perfectly uniform in its procedure, and entirely unbiased by the eye', consequently disapproving of Nares' (1784) judgement that '*ky-ind* for *kind* is a monster of pronunciation, heard only on our stage'. *Vocabulary* (1797) offers *mankind* as *ma¹n-kyi¹nd* without comment, while Smith (1795: 6 *Footnote*) records not only some constraints on the phenomenon noted by different observers, but also its increasing generality of acceptance: 'Mr. Walker pronounces this word (*guard*: CJ) like *yard* preceded by *g* hard, (thus *gyard*) and observes, that the same sound of *y* consonant takes place after hard *g* and *c*, before *a* in other words; as *card*, *cart*, *regard*, &c. Mr. Sheridan only allows of this liquefaction when *i* follows hard *g* or *k*; Ex. *Guide*, *kind*, pronounced *gyide*, *kyind*. Mr. Nares calls this a monster of pronunciation: but it is certainly become too general to be discarded.' He goes even further in his characterization of the item *guile*, to claim social respectability for the inserted [j] form: 'The citizens of London pronounce this word with the *g* hard, and as spelt *gile*; but all polite speakers use the liquefaction, and as if spelt *gyile*', a sentiment which may well underlie Smith's preferred pronunciation of *pierce* (1795: 40 *footnote*) 'as if pronounced *pyers*'. *Vocabulary* notes how, for the item SPANIEL, both Walker and Sheridan see the last syllable as *yel*, though 'it is much

pronounced by sportsmen, I believe, as if written *spannel*; but care should be taken, to guard against this error'. As ever, while Elphinston's concerns (1786: 111) lie mainly with the problem of orthographic representation, he does imply that the [j] insertion represents what is, perhaps a very small phonetic contrast. This 'slender licquefier after a pallatal ... iz a *stil smal voice* ... which iz indeed dhe sole English emission, dhat proofs too suttel for symbol. Delicate ears alone can discern, hwat onely dellicate organs can convey: dhat nice licquefaccion, widh which dhe pallatals articulate *i* open ... in dhe *kind guide*, *dhe card* or *gard*, in *skirt* or *guird*: hware we must hear, dho we cannott see, dhe *kyind gyide*'.

Fogg has little to say on [j] insertion – although he records (1792: 27) *gyaueed* as a respelling for *guide*. His observations in this area are limited to [w] insertion and loss; he records, for instance, a pronunciation of *poignant* as *pwoinunt* (1792: 34). Many observers comment on the variants for the item *buoy* 'a floating ball'; *Vocabulary* sums up the possibilities (1797: 89 *Footnote*): 'Mr. Walker marks this word *bu³o³e¹*, and says it should be pronounced as if written *bwoy*. Mr. Sheridan¹⁹³ marks the substantive *bwe³*, and the verb *bwa³y¹*; but Dr. Kenrick, Mr. Perry, Mr. Scott, and I think the generality of good speakers agree with me in giving it the same sound as the preceding word, *boy*'. Elphinston (1786: 111) seems to suggest that forms like *gwardian* 'guardian' and *gwarrantee* 'guarantee' were possible 'in remote parts', but not in London, at the same time recording [w]-loss in items like *banket* 'banquet', *conkest* 'conquest', *markis* 'marquess', *ekipage* 'equipage', *liccor* 'liqueur' and in *swoon*, *swoop* and *hwoop*. Fogg (1792: 39) too claims [w]-loss in his respellings of the following: *banket* 'banquet'; *koaket* 'coquette'; *harlikeen* 'harlequin'; *harkibus* 'harquebus'; *paroaket* 'parquet'; *kaudril* 'quadrille'; *kaitur cuznz* 'quater cousins'; *kai* 'quay'; *koat* 'to quote'; *koath* 'quoth'; *koatidyun* 'quotidian'; *koashent* 'quotient'; and *rokloa* 'roquelaure'. While Walker is happy with *tu²r-ke¹e¹ze* for 'turquoise/turkoiis', and *toard/toards* for 'toward(s)', he claims that 'in the adjectives and adverbs *toward* and *towardly*, *froward* and *frowardly*, the *w* is heard distinctly'. Yet he condemns (1791: 57) *akard* 'as a pronunciation for *akward*' as vulgar. Likewise, he condemns as vulgar, any pronunciation of 'swoon' as *soon*.¹⁹⁴

5.3 *H* dropping and adding and [hw]/[w] alternations: 'dhe deceitful fantom'

There is a continuation of the anxieties expressed in the early half of the eighteenth century as to the phonetic status of the aspirate [h] and its propensity for omission and unetymological addition. As then, many commentators see this segment as in some way 'not a real' sound, Nares (1784: 108) typically claiming: '*H* is a mere note of aspiration'. For Walker (1791: 46), [h] is 'no more than breathing forcibly'; for Sheridan (1780: 16) it is 'no mark of any articulate sound, but is a mere sign of aspiration, or effort of the breath', while for Ward (1758: 6), the segment 'has no sound, but is merely an aspiration of the breath', several other commentators making similar remarks. But for Bell (1769: 5) '*H* is said to have only an aspiration in many words, yet its proper articulate sound is evidently

heard in *hat, heat, hall, hen, him, &c.*' Fogg's (1796: 161 *Footnote*) anecdote is to the point: 'In some periodical print, a few days ago, I met with a *bon mot* of Mr. Hill, who, hearing its claim to be a letter denied, observed, "Then I shall be ILL all my life"'. Rudd (1765: 46) claims that *h* is indeed a genuine 'letter' as well as being subject to syllable-initial loss 'because it has a *power*, in the formation of syllables, *peculiar to that character*. This is evident in such words as these: *Heat, hand, howl, here, hide, &c.* notwithstanding *the obscure, or almost silent manner*, in which it is pronounced in some other words, such as *Honour, hour, &c.*'¹⁹⁵ [h]-loss is recorded by most commentators, typically Nares, who notes how the sound 'is irregular only in being sometimes without effect; as in these initials, *heir, honest, hospital, herb, hour, humour, hostler*. In *herbage* I think it is usually pronounced, though suppressed in *herb*: nor is it dropped in *horal, horary, &c.* though it is in *hour*, the origin of which is the same'. Walker (1791: 46) too notes that 'At the beginning of words, it is always sounded, except in *heir, heiress, honest, honestly, honour, honourable, herb, herbage, hospital, hostler, hour, humble, humour, humourous, humoursome*'. It is important to notice how, for Walker at least, this is not an unconstrained phenomenon, but one restricted to a specific lexical set to such an extent that 'there are so very few words in the language where the initial *h* is sunk, we may select these from the rest'. Indeed, Walker's list is repeated with very few additions, by most other observers, only *hour, heritage, homage, herbalist, Foolham, Durham* and *Branham* being added by Elphinston, *Humphrey* by Lowe, and *annihilate* and *vehement* by Johnston.¹⁹⁶ The Scot Sylvester Douglas describes [h] effacement (and addition) as a 'most capricious defect' in some English individuals, one which is apparently randomly spread throughout the lexicon as well as inter-regionally, some people pronouncing the '*h* in as complete a manner as other people, in words where it should be mute and not written. Yet such is the power of habit that if you desire them to try to pronounce the *h* in *hungry* or any word of that sort, they cannot do it, nor avoid doing it in *heir*, or adding it to *air*'; he goes on to recount his hairdresser anecdote (Jones 1991: 128):

In the speech of some individuals in England there is this most capricious defect, that in words where others pronounce the *h*, at the beginning, they do not; and where others suppress it, or where it is not written, they pronounce it. This is one of the most unaccountable singularities I have ever observed. It does not seem to arise from imitation for I have not been able to trace it as a general habit among all the inhabitants of any place or district [It is however pretty universal among the lower ranks of people in Staffordshire, and some of the adjoining counties: *footnote*]. Neither can it be attributed to any particular configuration of the organs of speech, because these persons pronounce the *h* in as complete a manner as other people, in words where it should be mute or is not written. Yet such is the power of habit that if you desire them to try to pronounce the *h* in *hungry* or any word of that sort, they cannot do it, nor avoid doing it in *heir*, or adding it to *air*. I know a hair-dresser who has this singularity of pronunciation [*sic*], and who often lays it down as a maxim to his customers, that nothing is so destructive to the *air*, as exposing it too much to the *hair*.

I likewise know a Portuguese Lady who has been long enough in England to speak the language with great fluency, and to pronounce it in general tolerably well; but who has this extraordinary habit with respect to the *h*.

In common with most other observers in the period, Sylvester Douglas highlights the lexical sensitivity of this alternation, in the Pure dialect recording [h] as ‘mute’ in the item *herb*, but ‘pronounced’ in *hero*, and although he avers that the [h] is mute in the Pure dialect in *abhor*, *humble*, *humility* and *humbly*, he claims it is realized in the same items in the Scotch vernacular. Douglas presents a picture of wholesale lexical diffusion with insufficient data to point to real conditioning factors or lexical trends in either the Pure or the Scotch dialect, a characteristic of several other observers, notably Kenrick (1784: 45): ‘The H indeed is sometimes totally mute ... and this is likewise the case with this letter both in French and in English; it being pronounced in both languages in the same manner when audible, and both frequently, and to all appearance arbitrarily, mute: so that the words, in which it is audible, and in which silent, can be known in both languages only by practice’.¹⁹⁷

Elphinston complains (1786: 254–5) how at least ten words in both French and English ‘hav hugged, widh like servility, in boath moddern diccions, dhe deceit-fool fantom’ – *hour*, *heir*, *heritage*, *herb*, *homage*, *honour*, *honest*, *humble* and *hospital*, all of which, he asserts, must ultimately ‘settel in dhis dheir just picture; dhat ignorance may no more pant after dheir aspiracion’: *erritage*, *erb*, *ommage*, *onnor*, *onnest*, *umbel*, *osteller*, *ossipital*, thus putting an end to what he calls ‘Dhis barbarous interchainge ... common to’ all dialects.’ Yet his ‘*Dhe umbel petiscion ov H*’ surely smacks of parody:

manny Ladies, Gentlemen and addhers, to’ hoom *H* uzed to’ find fair az free acces; hav now edher totally discarded dhat aspiring iniscial, or ridiculously associated him widh a company ov strainers. A yong Lady, to’ dhe grait mortification ov *H*, obzerved dhe oddher day, dhat *ils* made a pretty *contract* widh dhe valleys below; dhat dhe *ouzes* wer butifoolly dispersed among dhe woods, and dhat she waz fond ov *earing* dhe *howls* in dhe *hevening*. From dhe verdant *harbor*, hware dhe birds chant so sweetly; she can admire dhe capacious *arbor*, hware so many ships flote so safely. She trembels at dhe prancing ov a *orse*, but fears him not drawing dhe *arrow*. She lovs dhe *harts*, az wel az dhe sciences; but iz constantly shooting *harrows hat* susceptibel *arts*. In summer preferring *hale* to’ wine, she *heats hartichokes*; and in winter swallows *ot ashes*, widhout receiving anny *arm*. She *ates* warm weddher, yet likes verry wel a clear *evven*, *hespecially wen* santering among dhe *hashes* and dhe *hoaks*. So hamiabbel how-ever iz dhis yong Lady, dhat, widh her fine *air*, sweet *hies*, quic *hears*, delicate *harms*, above all her tender *art*, she wood giuv anny man a *ankering* to halter iz condiscion. She even toasts a *andsom uzband*, next to’ *elth* and *appines ere* and *erafter*; and dhis verry morning, perhaps meaning no *arm*, she made a gay yong fellow blush, by telling him he waz verry *hairry*.

Still, compared with the situation in the following century, any adverse sociophonetic consequences of [h]-dropping and adding are, if anything, relatively unstressed by late-eighteenth-century observers. Walker, who sees the phenomenon as one of the faults of Londoners (although he does see it as more reprehensible than others, notably [w] for [hw] word initially) it is a 'vice', a 'worse habit' he claims to be particularly common among children, but not one which merits the fullest level of condemnation he can summon for other 'vulgarisms'. *Vocabulary* too shows only muted criticism of unetymological [h] usage, under HOSPITAL: 'Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Walker sound the *h* in *hospitable*, *hospitably*, and *hospitality*; and suppress it in this word, which is the best usage; though we certainly often hear the *h* pronounced in *hospital* also, but improperly'.

We have already seen too, in our discussion of the phonology of the first half of the eighteenth century, how commentators at that time observed a word-initial [hw]/[w] alternation, one still evident in the modern language; compare Standard RP [waɪt] 'white' with colloquial Scots [hwʌɪ?]. As we might expect, there is a similar regional contrast in the late-eighteenth-century record as well, although there is much to suggest from English observers that the alternation was also to be found south of the border with, possibly, evidence that [hw-] initial types were being lost there. Like many observers, William Smith claims (1795: li–lii) that 'WH, going before any vowel, except *o*, forms a double consonant, including the powers of *h* and *w*; Ex. *What*, *whale*, *why*', similarly Bayly (1772: 5) '*h*. A mere aspiration at opening the mouth, or gentle breathing; as at *hat*. In some words the *h* aspiration is made before the vowel though written after; as before *w* in *who*, *whom*, *what*, *which*, *whip*'. Elphinston (1795: 36) sees the [hw-] onset as the norm in most instances: 'allow dhe aspiracion (h) to articulate dhe braud vocal licquid (w)' as in *hwat*, *hwale*, *hwich*'. He devotes the entire Section VI of *Propriety Ascertained in Her Picture* to the *Inversion ov dhe braud licquid aspirate* (1786: 124–7). He is, as usual, concerned with the appropriateness of the orthographic representation: 'Hence dhe preposterous *which* and *what*, for *hwich* and *hwat*; *who* and *where*, now *hoo* and *hware*'. However, he claims that [hw-] onsets should be retained for the purpose of disambiguating minimal pairs such as *witch* and *which*, *Wat* and *what*, although he points to a [hw-] to [h] change in 'pre-*o*' environments: 'But dhe licquefaccion sinks in dhe aspiracion before *O* direct or depressive: in *whole*, *whore*, *who* and *whoop*; for *hwole*, *hwore*; *hwoo*, and *hwoop*; which dherfore becom, by dhe absorpcion ov affinity, *hole* (distinguishingly *hoal*), *hore*, *hoo*, and *hoop*; dhe latter stil properly *hwoop*, az longer dhan *hoop*, dhe guirder'. Tucker (1773: 42) seems to make a similar kind of distinction: 'We speak *wh* by the figure "hysteron proteron", anglice, preposterously, a cart before the horse, as in *when*, *huñ*, *whim*, *huim*; before my *u* the *w* is dropt, as in *who*, *hū*. For *who are* spoken quick so as to make it one syllable sounds the same as *where*.' Coote (1788: 25) [who may have been Irish, his work dedicated to 'the Rev. C. Coote, Dean of Kilfenora in the Kingdom of Ireland', possibly his father], seems dedicated to [hw-] types: 'When *a*, *e*, or *i*, are preceded by *wh*, the sound of the *h* is removed before the *w*; thus *whale*, *whence*, *whip* are pronounced *hwale*, *hwence*, *hwip*'. Fogg too seems to follow this line (1796: 29): '*W* written before *h* is sounded after it, and the following vowel is

pronounced as if immediately preceded by *w*. So *whim*, *hwim*, or *hooim*, *what* *hwot*'.

It is Walker (1791: 46), however, who stands out by viewing any kind of [hw-] to [w-] change with concern: 'This letter [*h*: C] is often sunk after *w*, particularly in the capital, where we do not find the least distinction of sound between *while* and *wile*, *whet* and *wet*, *where* and *were*. Trifling as this difference may appear at first sight, it tends greatly to weaken and impoverish the pronunciation, as well as sometimes to confound words of a very different meaning ... we ought to breathe forcibly before we pronounce the *w*, as if the words [*what*, *while*: C] were written *hoo-at*, *hoo-ille*, &c. and then we shall avoid that feeble, cockney pronunciation, which is so disagreeable to a correct ear'. Such a phenomenon he lists as the *Third Fault of Londoners* (1791: xiii): 'The aspirate *h* is often sunk, particularly in the capital, where we do not find the least distinction of sound between *while* and *wile*, *whet* and *wet*, *where* and *were*, &c.', a fault which for him is only exceeded in awfulness by the loss of syllable initial [h] in words like *heir*, *herb*, *honest*, etc. But for Lowe, [w] forms seem to be acceptable, if the evidence of his list of *Alike (or Not-Much-Unlike) Sounds, with Different Spellings* is to be believed (1755: 111ff): *the common weal/A wheel; He has a wen on his neck/When did you see him?; A weel, or net for fish made of twigs/the wheel of a cart; They were here, What cloaths does he wear/When, and where? Let him beware.*

What seem to be [hw-] syllable onsets appear universally in the materials provided by Scottish observers in this period; *vide* Alexander Scot, whose *The Contrast* has items such as *whoch* 'which', *whother* 'whether', *why* 'why' and *whoa* 'who'. However, there is no way of discovering to what extent his *wh-* graph represents the Scots use of a more fricativized onset suggested by *A Spelling-Book Upon a New Plan* (1796) – a [x], rather than a [hw] – onset. There we find the 'Commonly Pronounced' *chot* 'what' and *chuen* 'when' for what is considered to be the 'True Pronunciation' *what*, *when* – where italicized *h* signifies non-realization. This phenomenon is highlighted too by Sylvester Douglas (Jones 1991: 141), who also sees [w-] only onsets as stigmatized in speakers of the 'pure' London English dialect: 'For by the true English method of sounding these words [*what*, *whelp*, *why*: C] the *h* is first heard ... The Scotch pronounce the *wh* like their guttural *ch* [[x]/[ç]: C] followed in like manner by a *u*, losing itself in the succeeding vowel. When they endeavour to correct this fault they are apt to omit the *h*, so as to pronounce *whit*, and *wit*, *whig* and *wig* in the very same manner. Careless speakers among the English very commonly fall into the same error'. Holmberg (1956: 111) comments that 'For words like *when* James Douglas has a consonant combination which he transcribes *hw*. There can be no doubt that this is the same pronunciation as the [h_Λ] or [hw] naturally used in the North of England and Scotland now ... It is of course possible to consider Douglas' *hw* a Northern trait, but it must be borne in mind that even at the present time some people in the south of England consider [hw] a superior pronunciation. In Douglas' circles in London [hw] may have been general, but Douglas may also – like Elphinston and many Scotsmen speaking Standard English today – be anxious to teach this [hw]'. The characteristic modern Scots habit of realizing an aspirated onset in items like 'why' and 'where' seems to

be typical of Geddes as well, as is suggested by his spellings like *huyl* 'while' (457/1/1); *hua* 'who' (457/2/3); *huilk* 'which' (458/2/3) and many others. The fact that, as we have seen, Elphinston spells *which*, *hwat* and *hwen* throughout, may also be a reflection of his Scottish dialect: 'That the *w* was subjunctively aspirated in them all ... appears not only from the surviving pictures, but from the real aspirations being yet preserved by the ancient Britons, the Welch, Scotch and Irish; who, later in receiving, must be later in refining, the English articulations; while the language of London (in general the best) has lost the power with the practice' (Rohlfing 1984: 339).

5.4 Syllable final [r] loss and insertion

Throughout the eighteenth century, the [r] segment receives what can only be called a bad press. There seem to be inherent objections to its 'foreign-ness', 'rough-ness' and the like, while any evidence that it may be effaced in post-vocalic environments appears to be met with universal disapproval on the relatively rare occasions on which it is mentioned. Phonaesthetic descriptions of the segment abound; it is viewed as the 'harsh guttural', the 'canine guttural', a 'canine barbarian'. Elphinston (1786: 136, 284) typically sees the segment as stemming from an 'irritated throat' and having an effect on the ear which is 'rough, harsh, horrid and grating' (1786: 302), and characterized by (1795: 30) an 'innate rufness'. Walker too (1791: 50) perceives the sound as 'but a jar of the tongue' and 'the most imperfect of all the consonants', while no less an observer than Buchanan (1762: 22 *footnote*) comments: 'R, a palatal; it is expressed by a Concussion, or Quivering of the Extremity of the Tongue, which beating against the Breath as it goes out, produces this horrid dog-like Sound'. A similarly negative interpretation is produced by Kenrick (1784: 48): 'the quibble of Abel Drugger in Ben Johnson's *Alchemist*, respecting the last syllable of his name, serving to shew that our ancestors considered it in the sense represented by Perius, who calls it *litera canina*; as bearing a resemblance to the snarling of a dog.' Perhaps the strongest dislike for the sound is expressed by Adams (1794: 330): 'Lettre infame! Le chien enragé et affame, dont elle emprunté le nom, et s'appelle canine, ne fait pas plus de dégât dans les troupeaux que cette lettre parmi les voyelles'.¹⁹⁸ Elphinston sees as one of the virtues of modern prestigious pronunciation that 'dhe old aspirate ov R' has been replaced (1795: 29): 'Som Greeks, followed by som Lattins, fancied to' ad rufnes to' dhe licquid R, or to' paint its innate rufnes more foarcibly, by subjoining aspiracion ... til at length harmonious *rezon* introduced *rime*, boath into' French and English ... Dhe very *rinosceros* disdains now alike to' ruffen hiz horn widh adscitious snorting, and to' stifel even hiz moddern sibilacion'. Fogg's articulatory description is, as ever, helpful, his 31st sound (*r* in *ray*) being produced 'by pointing the tongue towards the place of *d* or *z*, and suddenly producing a rattling vibration like the snarling of a dog', suggesting some kind of voiced apico-alveolar trill – [r]. The perception of 'roughness' may arise from the fact that the segment in question is not the 'tap' or even the voiced alveolar approximant [ɹ], but the voiced uvular fricative [ʁ] (as in use in some varieties of French and German). Certainly what

regional comment is available in the period points to the existence of some kind of [ʁ] segment: for example, Adams observes (1799: 49): ‘R: this letter is singularly rough in the mouths of Normans, and the inhabitants of the county of Durham, who cannot pronounce these words, without a disagreeable rattling of the throat, *Rochus Rex Maurorum*’, with Kenrick claiming (1784: 49): ‘In the northern parts of England, particularly in and about Newcastle, we find the *r* deprived of its tremulating sound, and awkwardly pronounced somewhat like the *w* or *eau*. *Round the rude rocks the ragged Rachel run*, is a line frequently put into the mouths of the Northumbrians, to expose their incapacity of pronouncing the *r*, as it is sounded by the inhabitants of the southern counties’ (Pahlsson 1972). In his *Observations to the Table* Alexander Geddes (1792: 423) records the fact that: ‘In some parts of Scotland this letter is pronounced with an aspiration, though not so hard as that of Northumberland. The Greeks seem to have given it the same sound’, and what we might therefore interpret as some kind of frictioned, uvular [ʁ] can perhaps be seen in his *trhein* spelling for *train* (459: 1/4). The fact that some variety of [ʁ] or perhaps [R] segment exists in his contemporary phonology is also recognised by Sylvester Douglas is suggested by his statement (Jones 1991: 134) that: ‘What by the French is termed *grassayment*, in England the *burr*, and by the Scotch a *rattle* proceeds from pronouncing the *r* in the throat, without applying the tongue to the upper jaw, as must be done in the proper pronounciation. This guttural *r* it is that resembles the snarl of a dog.’ But it is possible that yet another [r]-type is being recorded in the period. Sylvester Douglas’ comment that the English pronounce this sound ‘the harshest of all letters ... more softly’ than do the Scotch (Jones 1991: 135) might infer a greater degree of voicing, but it is very likely that Douglas uses the hard/soft distinction on this occasion not in its usual sense of indicating voicing co-efficient, but as a signal of obstruancy versus (mainly affricative) continuancy. If this is at all a possible interpretation, then we might see his two [r] sounds as a ‘hard’ obstruent like [r] as against the ‘softer’ alveolar voiced approximant [ɹ] (Anderson and Ewen 1987: 159–60; Laver 1994: 263–4).

Loss of syllable final [r] appears to be recorded only intermittently throughout the late-eighteenth century record. For Smith (1795: xliii) ‘R has uniformly one sound, as in the English word *rear*; and it is pronounced exactly as the French word *rare*, and German *rar* (rare). It is never silent’. It would seem that for Johnston as well, [r]-loss is not characteristic of his phonology, since he does not include it among his ‘quiescent consonants’. Fogg’s re-spellings (1792: 40) suggest post-vocalic [r] loss in a small (and specialized) lexical set: ‘It is silent in *roquelaure*, *rokloa*; *worsted wustid*’, yet in his DISSERTATION XI *On Prosody* he might just be suggesting that the phenomenon is more widespread (1796: 183): ‘In terrible descriptions the *r* should be lengthened; but in all soft or cheerful sentences must be very slightly touched’. Indeed, he appears to suggest that, among Londoners at least, [r]-vocalization rather than loss occurs (1796: 168 *footnote*): ‘final *r* as *terrow* for *terror*’. Walker (1791: 50) makes a distinction (he claims ‘never noticed by any of our writers on the subject’) between a rough and smooth *r* sound, the former produced ‘by jarring the tip of the tongue against the roof of the mouth near the fore teeth’, the latter being ‘a vibration of the lower part of the tongue, near the

root, against the inward region of the palate, near the entrance of the throat', claiming that the latter is the typically English version of the sound, the former, the Irish. Condemning the phenomenon, Walker famously claims that the latter sound is subject to post-vocalic loss, notably in the Metropolis: 'In England, and particularly in London, the *r* in *bard*, *lard*, *card*, *regard*, &c. is pronounced so much in the throat as to be little more than the middle or Italian *a*, lengthened into *baa*, *baad*, *caad*, *regaad* ... But if this letter is too forcibly pronounced in Ireland, it is often too feebly sounded in England, and particularly in London, where it is sometimes entirely sunk.' But perhaps the most forceful advocate for post-vocalic [r] loss is Tucker (1773: 35–6) who sees it as some kind of articulatory necessity. Describing the mechanics of what would appear to be trilled [r] production, he says that the speaker:

rendering the end of the tongue limber, so that he will shake it like a rag with the bellows, it will rattle our 'r', but this requiring a strong stream of breath to perform, makes it the most laborious letter of all, and consequently as much out of our good graces as I said 'v' was in them; you shall find people drop the 'r' in 'fuz, patial, savants, wost, wosted, backwad' and many other words, and whenever retained we speak it so gently that you scarce hear a single reverberation of the tongue. It would make an Englishman sweat to repeat this line of Ennius in the manner he ought:

Africa terribili tremit, horrida terra tumultu
Thro Afric drear terrific turmoils ran

But a Welchman would rattle it off manfully, till he made the sound an echo to the sense.

Few other commentators are as forthcoming as this, suggesting that post-vocalic [r] loss was very much a minor characteristic of the phonology of late-eighteenth-century English, although Lowe (1755) sees the [r] as 'silent almost' in two items – *harsh* and *marsh* – with his list of *Equivocals* equating *Harsh* with *To hash*, or *cut small*; *to cork a bottle*, *to calk a ship*.

We have seen how Sylvester Douglas claims that *r* 'In England it is pronounced more softly in general than by the Scotch', a statement which might just be used as evidence for his recognition of syllable final [r] effacement/vocalization in the Pure – and to a lesser extent in the Scotch – dialect. Yet the same observer disavows *verse/success* as a perfect rhyme: 'although the sound of the *e* in *verse* and *success* is not the same, the most offensive circumstance in this passage is the disagreement of the terminating consonants' (Jones 1991: 152). In actual fact, he rarely makes anything which amounts to a direct comment upon the possible effacement of syllable final [r] in the Pure dialect. The only lexical context where he does appear to recognise the potential for post-vocalic [r] effacement (albeit by 'the English' only) appears under his observations on the item *ASS* (Jones 1991: 165):

This word is not inserted on account of any provincial manner of pronouncing it, but to illustrate the pronunciation of another, which the English sound so

very like this, as to give occasion to numerous ambiguities of a very coarse nature. I remember a popular ballad several years ago, which was in great vogue for some time in the streets of all the great towns of the kingdom, and which was not deficient in humour. The burthen of it was this word *Ass*. But it was only used for the sake of an indecent equivocation in the sense, by its similarity in point of sound to the other word to which I allude. In Scotland, where I then happened to be, the joke was scarcely understood, because in that country, the sounds of the two words differ nearly as much as those of *pass*, and *pairs*.

Clearly, for some London speakers of the Pure dialect at least, [r] effacement has occurred in the item *arse*, an effacement which – although now a characteristic of North American English – has not survived into the Standard dialect, while it seems to be coming increasingly common in British English as a whole, presumably under the influence of the US form. Elphinston (1786: 141) notes syllable final [r] effacement for the item '*Marlborough*': 'Nay *marl* wood yield to *maul* ... and show herself onnestly *Maulburrough*; but for fear ov dhe learned laffers ov London, hoo so duly decide in difficult cases.' James Douglas appears to have only a single instance of deleted post-vocalic [r] in *woosted* for *worsted* (Holmberg 1956: 109). Other evidence for the effacement of [r] is difficult to come by, although George Fisher's *The Instructor or Young Man's Best Companion* (1789: 12ff) under his list of 'Words of the Same Sound' records the usual: *Harsh* 'sever'/*Hash* 'minced meat'; *Marsh* 'low ground'/*Mash* 'for a horse'/ 'of a net', while Robertson (1722: 47) has the pair *Torn* 'rent'/*Tun* 'of wine'. In his *Grammar and Rhetoric* ('being the First and Third Volumes of the Circle of Sciences') (1776: 14) Smith claims: 'The letter *r* has no variety of sound, is commonly pronounced, except in the first syllable of *Malborough*. Some people sound it obscurely, or quite omit it, in the words *marsh*, *harsh*, and a few others.'

At the close of the eighteenth century, the use of the 'epenthetic' or 'intrusive' [r] at syllable boundaries is advanced unhesitatingly by several observers (including Sheridan) as the salient characteristic of Londoners, 'at least many of them, [who: C] make a very extraordinary use of this letter' (Jones 1991: 134–5; Matthews 1936a; Flasdieck 1936; Sheldon 1938: 255). Observing that [r] is inserted between vocalic syllable terminations and initials at syllable and word boundary points, Sylvester Douglas assures us that 'the general use of the *r* to prevent the hiatus is confined to the vulgar dialect of London, every man who wishes to speak with propriety will carefully avoid it'. The Londoners – 'at least a great many of them' – he claims

make a very extraordinary use of this letter. They introduce it in their pronunciation at the end of almost every word with a vocal termination, when such word is followed by another that begins with a vowel. Thus they say 'that is not my *idear* of the matter'; 'I shall be obliged to take the *lawr* of you'; 'That *fellow* ought to be punished'; 'I could a tale unfold whose lightest word/Would *harrow* up thy soul'. I have been astonished to hear this barbarous pronunciation in the

mouths of some persons of education. One particularly occurs to me at present who has a critical knowledge of his own and several other languages, and yet who constantly inserts the *r* in this manner, between two concurring vowels. I remember when I first read Pope and Swift's *Miscellanies* I could not understand the reason why the old Woman in the humorous account of the madness of Dennis is made to call *Cato Cator*: but when I came to be acquainted with the Cockney dialect, I discovered that the author's meaning was to turn this barbarous habit into ridicule.

A phonological 'sandhi' stratagem of this type is well attested by other contemporary grammars, notably Elphinston (1786: 264) who records that it is not merely to be associated with non-prestigious speech in the Capital, 'But, natural az it iz for a low Londoner to' shut dhe febel vowel ov *fellow* or *window*, in *fellor* or *windor*; so natural iz it for an Eddinburrougher ov like (almoast ov anny) rank, to' warp dhe idea widh dhe sound (or dhe sound widh dhe idea) of *callow*, from warm, to' fresh, and even cool, in *callor oaster* (oister) or a *callor eg'* (1786: 35). While we might see at least some of these 'intrusive [r]' instances as mechanisms for achieving ambisyllabicity in syllable interface contexts (Jones 1989: 300–1), others may be attributable to speakers' 'knowledge' of the propensity for syllables to show a vowel-level reduced 'fade' at syllable boundaries (Jones 1989: 270), what Elphinston perhaps intends by his 'Dhe same cauz (febel vocalility in dhe end) haz made Grocenes assume *r* in (dhe colloquial) *idear* and *windowwr*, for *idea* and *window*.' Walker's (1791: 37) condemnation of the phenomenon is total, commenting on items like *fellow* and *window* he thunders: 'When this diphthong [ow: CJ] is in a final unaccented syllable it has always the second sound, like long *o*, and sometimes as if followed by *r*, as *winder* and *feller*, for *window* and *fellow*; but this is almost too despicable to notice'. Elphinston (1786: 20) too complains of 'dhe grating *Arburthnot* for *Arbuthnot*, at Eddinburrough'. Phenomena like these are, of course, well attested, perhaps most especially in modern London and South East England dialects: cf [læst tæŋgər in pæris] '*Last Tango in Paris*', expressions like *Cool Britannyer*, and not least *Engerland*, in an otherwise non-rhotic phonology (Wells 1982: §§3.2.3, 4.1.4), with the item *drawing* almost canonically now pronounced as [drɔrɪŋ]. Note too expressions like *your will be pleased* and *we hear your are among the best people in England* in the late-eighteenth-century Black American English recorded in the *Sierra Leone Letters* (1793–98) (Fyfe 1991). We shall see below how an almost obsessive interest in this phenomenon is to be found in nearly all grammars and related materials throughout the nineteenth century, perhaps most typically in the complaint of 'Poor Letter R; its Use and Abuse' in *Mistakes of Daily Occurrence of Speaking, Writing, and Pronunciation Corrected* (1885: 6ff).

5.5 [l] vocalization

We have already seen how the effacement of syllable final lateral sonorants is a relatively common characteristic of early-eighteenth-century phonology. The acoustic characteristics of [l] segments in general (with their relatively low F₂

frequency, and their highly periodic shape expressed in a well-defined formant structure) often mean that they are perceived as though they were themselves ‘full’ vowels, and full labial vowels at that. The phenomenon is well established in modern British English, although it is often regarded as non-prestigious. Wells (1982: 315) shows how Cockney speakers conflate the pronunciation of *rill*, *reel* and *real* under [rɪɹ], *will* and *wheel* under [wɪɹ], while we also find the anecdotal *psychopath/cyclepath* homophony. For many modern Glaswegian speakers, the [ɪ] seems to be realized as a full high mid [o] vowel, with items like *Channel Tunnel* and *well* as [tʃæno^w tʌno^w] and [wɛo^w]. Walker (1791: 47: §§401–5) shows sets of items with [ɪ] effacement, claiming that ‘*l* is silent likewise between *a* and *m* in the same syllable, as *alms*, *balm*, *calm*, *palm*, *psalm*, *qualm*, *shalm*’. In general, he appears to claim that [ɪ]-loss is characteristic in syllable final position, when it is the initial segment of a consonantal cluster closed by a non-obstruent; thus in *almond*, *half*, *calf*, *salmon*, *salve*. While [ɪ]+obstruent clusters can also trigger the phenomenon, as in *balk*, *chalk*, *talk*, *stalk*, *walk* and *falcon*, *falconer*, it is less consistent in such cases, with [ɪ] apparently retained in *fold*, *falconet*, *faldstool*, *caldron*, *salt*, *malt*, *halt*, *halter*, *calculus*, *calculus*, *calx*. Likewise, it could be the case that [s] environments were weaker contexts for the effacement, since Walker has [ɪ] pronounced in *calcination*, *calceated*, *calcine*, *false*. However, for Walker (as well as some other observers) there are constraints operative for [ɪ] retention which appear to hinge upon what he perceives to be the mechanics of syllable ‘division’: ‘but when the *m* is detached by the *l* by commencing another syllable, the *l* becomes audible. Thus, though the *l* is mute in *balm*, *palm*, and *psalm*, it is always heard in *bal-my*, *psal-mist*, *psal-mody*, and *psal-mistry*.’ It would seem that he is arguing for [ɪ] retention when the following consonant can act as coda to the first and simultaneously as onset to the next syllable, thus [₁sal₂m₁l_{ist}]. But this is counter-exemplified in his *embalm/embalmer* pair, where the first item shows [ɪ] retained, while it is effaced in the second. [ɪ]-loss would appear for Walker to be subject to much in the way of lexical labelling, although alternations can attract social stigma (1791: 47): ‘*L* ought always to be suppressed in the auxiliary verbs *would*, *could*, *should*: it is sometimes suppressed in *fault*: but this suppression is become vulgar. In *soldier*, likewise, the *l* is sometimes suppressed, and the word pronounced *so-jeer*; but this is far from being the most correct pronunciation: *l* ought always to be heard in this word, and its compounds, *soldierly*, *soldiership*, &c.’. Most observers are content to give lists of words (none of them particularly extensive) where [ɪ]-loss occurs: Carter (1773: 23): *yoke*, *psalm*, *salmon*, *chalk*, *walk*, *calf*, *half*; Smith (1795: xxxix): concedes that ‘the *l* is often [italics: CJ] silent before *m*, *k*, *f*: *balm*, *balk*, *calf*, but always before *d*, in auxiliary verbs as in *would*, *could*, *should*’. Yet, under his SOLDER ‘soudure’ entry, he intimates what is the common ‘professional’ pronunciation (1795: 116): ‘Mr. Walker sounds the *l* in this word, but every workman pronounces it as rhyming with the foregoing and following words’ [*fodder*, *plodder*: CJ]. Elphinston, predictably, argues for an orthographic ‘reformation’ after the French fashion, by losing the *l* in the spelling of words like *fault* and *vault*. Yet he too suggests lexical contrasts (1786: 16): ‘Since, however, we followed dhe French so implicitly into’ error, shal we not az fondly copy dheir reformation? ... Oppozite dhen az ar *fault* and *assault*, how shal dhe

opozision be prezerved at home; or believed abraud, if dhey appear not *faut* and *assalt*; won dropping dhe perniscious, dhe odher dhe useles raddical?' Elphinston's clearest discussion of the phenomenon is to be found under his long treatise on the characteristics of the Scotch dialect. Under his section dealing with *L MELTED OR DROPT*, he spells out the rationale for the vocalization as well as its popularity among contemporary Scots speakers (1786: 34): 'Next to' dhe vocal ar dhe articulating licquids meltabel; hweddher into' cognate effiscience, or into' quiescent gard ... Effective or servile, *l* final, somtimes medial, melts in dhe Scottish dialect. Dhus *ball* and *boll*, *pool* and *fool* (boath short) *bulk* and *sculk*, *allum* and *Allardice*, wer *bow* and *bow* (diphthong), *poo* and *foo*, *book* and *scoog*, *awm* and *Airdice*: *all won woll*, *aw*, *é*, *oo*, a figgurative Scotticism for *All won thing*'. The 'meltabel' liquid 'ov *bal* and *dal* feble' also 'Scottishly sinks in such names az Balfour (Frenchly Balfour) or Dalkeith' (1786: 35), and among a set of similar examples he notes: 'If we cannot now wonder at dhe contest between *faucon* and *falcon*, *Fawkenner* and *Falconer* or *Falconar*; we may ezily reconcile *hawker* and *Halkerton*' (1786: 141). Nares (1784: 111–12) lists the same set of [l] effaced items as Walker, suggesting too that lexical diffusion as well as syntactic function is an important factor, since: 'In *fault*, the *l* is sometimes pronounced and sometimes dropped', while in the nominal forms of the items *vault* and *salve* the '*l* is sometimes suppressed' it is never so when they are used as verbs. Sylvester Douglas' remarks on [l] effacement as the first element in [lk], [lm], [lf] and [lp] syllable final clusters are disappointingly brief and fairly conventional. 'This semivowel and liquid' he regards as 'the most pleasing to the ear of all consonants' (Jones 1991: 132) and records it as 'mute' in items like *half*, *walk*, *stalk*, *talk*, *salmon*, *psalm*, while it is 'generally sounded' in the Pure dialect in *scalp*, *calm*, *balm* and *psalmody* (Jones 1991: 221). He makes comment neither upon the peculiarities of the stressed vowel under conditions of [l] deletion/vocalization nor of any idiosyncratic Scotch behaviour. He seems to suggest sociophonetic constraints too in that, in a Pure dialect context, he comments under the *ALMOST* entry: 'most good speakers sound the *l* in *almost*. In familiar conversation there are some who do not', a phenomenon that is also commented upon by Elphinston (Rohlfing 1984: 312) – [l] effacement being denied in 'solemn language' – and by others, such as James Douglas (Holmberg 1956: 108).

Although simple effacement of syllable final [l] is well recorded in the period, commentators are rarely specific concerning the degree of 'residue' left behind as a result of the sonorant's disappearance; perhaps what Elphinston intends by [l] sounds being 'meltabel ... into' cognate effiscience'. Of the Scotch observers it is perhaps Drummond who (if only to disown it) most explicitly points to a genuine vocalisation of the lateral sonorant in syllable rhyme position (1776: 23): 'some pronounce this letter [o: Cj] like the diphthong *ou* in *croud*, in the words *old*, *cold*, *scold*, *hold*, *molt*, *bolt*, *colt*, a practice not general, and therefore not to be imitated'. At the beginning of the next century, the English grammarian Smith (1816: 16–17) seems to suggest too that [l] vocalization brings with it the 'addition' of extra vocalic weight to the syllable in which it occurs, either in the form of stressed vowel or even lengthening of the sonorant itself. This careful observer identifies two types of [r] segment, the *rough*; as in *rogue*, and what he calls the *smooth*, which

he associates with the sound of the last syllable of *Messiah*, and therefore probably as some kind of centralized [ə] vowel. His comments on [l] effacement are very significant in this light: ‘*L* is changed into *m* in *salmon*; into smooth *r* in *almond*, *alm*, *calf*, *psalm*, &c., but in *could*, *should*, *would*, &c. it is entirely silent’, suggesting possible pronunciations as [aəm]/[aam] ‘*alm*’ and [kæəf]/[kaaf] ‘*calf*’, and so on. Although it is obviously difficult to be certain precisely the kind of phonetic value he intends, Alexander Geddes’ description of *l* at least suggests the possibility that it is readily vocalizable: it is ‘the softest of all the liquids’ and one which ‘the Scots make ... still more liquid than the English by retaining its Gaelic or Celtic sound; which is also common in Spanish, and expressed by *ll*. It is nearly the *ll* in French, and exactly the *gl* in Italian.’ His use of spellings like *goudin* ‘golden’, *fouk* ‘folk’ and *gowd* ‘gold’ might suggest that just such an [l] vocalization has taken place, leaving outputs such as [gʊdən] and the like.¹⁹⁹

5.6 [n]/[ŋ] alternants

Almost all eighteenth-century commentators see a tripartite bilabial, palatal and velar nasal segment distinction in [m], [n] and [ŋ]. Walker (1791: 48: §409; 44: §381) uses the terminology ‘finished, complete or perfect sound of *g*’ and ‘unfinished, incomplete or imperfect sound of *g*’ for [n] and [ŋ] respectively. He argues that the ‘ringing’, ‘compounded, or mixed’ sound of *ng* (as in *hang*, *thank*) – i.e. [ŋ] – only appears when the accent is upon the syllable in which it occurs: ‘Thus, though *congress* and *congregate* are pronounced as if written *cong-gress* and *cong-gregate*, yet the first syllable of *congratulate* and *congressive* ought to be pronounced without the ringing sound of *n*, and exactly like the same syllable in *contrary*.²⁰⁰ For Walker, any [ŋ]/[ng] alternation is a function of morphological factors, ‘Thus a *singer* (one who sings) does not finish the *g* like *finger*, but is merely *er* added to *sing*; the same may be observe of *sing-ing*, *bring-ing* and *hang-ing*’. So too, he claims: ‘adjectives formed by the addition of *y* have the imperfect sound of *g*, as in the original word. Thus *springy*, *stingy* and *wingy*, are only the sound of *e* added to *spring*, *string* and *wing*; but the comparative and superlative adjectives, *longer*, *stronger* and *younger*; *longest*, *strongest* and *youngest*; have the *g* hard and perfectly sounded, as if written *long-ger*, *strong-ger*, *young-ger*, &c. where the *g* is heard, as in *finger*, *linger*’. However, Walker concedes that in ‘unaccented’ situations an [n]/[ŋ] alternation may occur, one which – despite his almost Johnsonian advocacy of spelling/sound correspondence – he admits popular usage may be establishing (1791: 48–9); but the alternation is subject to both syntactic as well as phonaesthetic constraints:

We are told, even by teachers of English, that *ing*, in the words *singing*, *bringing* and *swinging*, must be pronounced with the ringing sound, which is heard when the accent is on these letters, in *king*, *sing*, and *wing*, and not as if written without the *g*, as *singin*, *bringin*, *swingin*. No one can be a greater advocate than I am for the strictest adherence to orthography, as long as the public pronunciation pays the least attention to it; but when I find letters given up by the public,

with respect to sound, I then consider them as cyphers; and, if my observation does not greatly fail me, I can assert, that our best speakers do not invariably pronounce the participial *ing*, so as to rhyme with *sing*, *king* and *ring*. Indeed, a very obvious exception seems to offer itself in those verbs that end in these letters, as a repetition of the ringing sound in successive syllables would have a very bad effect on the ear; and therefore, instead of *singing*, *bringing* and *flinging*, our best speakers are heard to pronounce *sing-in*, *bring-in*, and *fling-in*; and for the very same reason that we exclude the ringing sound in these words, we ought to admit it when the verb ends in *in*; for if, instead of *sinning*, *pinning*, and *beginning*, we should pronounce *sinn-in*, *pinn-in*, and *begin-nin*, we should fall into the same disgusting repetition as the former case. The participial *ing*, therefore, ought always to have its ringing sound. Except in those words formed from verbs in this termination; for *writing*, *reading* and *speaking*, are certainly preferable to *writin*, *readin*, and *speakin*, wherever the pronunciation has the least degree of precision or solemnity.

Thirty years earlier, Johnston (1764: 35), in his *Table of Right Sounds for the Following Unaccented Terminations*, notes the same syntactic point, claiming that the participial *ing* is realised as *in*, in items like *reading*, *hearing* and *writing*, otherwise, he claims, (1764: 54): 'Hard *g* in the end of words, having a termination beginning with *e*, *i* or *y*, added, remains hard; as in *bring*, *bringest*, *bringer*, *bringing*, *string*, *stringed*, *stringy*'. Fogg (1796: 38) makes a similar observation, although he sees the alternation affecting nouns proper, rather than verbal nouns: 'This sound [[ŋ]: C] is changed for the thirty-third [his *n* in *no*: C] in the termination *ing* by many speakers, and some grammars, *loving* pronounced *lovin*. It would be proper to follow them only in substantives, as *morning* maurnin, *stockings*, *stockins*'. Carter's observations are a little more difficult to interpret (1776: 21); he states that *g* is hard or guttural and 'heard at the end of a word' as in *hug*, *hag*, as well as *sing*, *ring*, *singing*, *ringing*, although in response to the question: 'What observe you on the Termination *-ing*?', the reply is given as: '*G* is scarcely heard in *parting*, *giving*, *loving*, *wanting*, &c.'. All of which might suggest an [ŋg]/[ŋ] as well as an [ŋ]/[n] contrast, but it depends on how one interprets his 'guttural'. Lowe's *Near Alike* list includes the pair '*Is he coming/Mint and cummin*' (1755: 125), while Bell's (1769: 116) have the (laboured) pair *marking* 'to make a mark'/*merkin* 'counterfeit hair'.

5.7 Palatal, velar and other fricatives

Not surprisingly, late-eighteenth-century comment on palatal and velar fricatives is relatively sparse and confined to a combination of adverse value judgements and provincialisms. Nares is quite typical in this respect both in noting the Northern-ness of these 'guttural' sounds as well as the 'difficulty' encountered in their pronunciation by those in whose phonological inventories such sounds do not appear (1784: 105–6):

many words terminate in *gh*, in which situation those letters doubtless were originally the mark of the guttural aspirate, a sound long lost entirely among

the inhabitants of the southern parts of Britain. It is still retained by our northern neighbours, who utter these letters, especially when followed by *t*, with a sound which we cannot readily imitate. For this reason, *gh* is wholly silent with us in general, as in *daughter, dough, high, night, slough, taught*, etc.

All observers view the phonaesthetic status of these ‘guttural semi-vowels’ or ‘strong gutturals’ as low; even for a Scot like for Sylvester Douglas, they are ‘so disagreeable to the English ear’ (Jones 1991: 160) and represent a ‘barbarous pronunciation’ to be ‘got rid of’ (Jones 1991: 175). Yet Adams’ often proclaimed Scoto-Saxonophilia precludes any attempt at their modification or condemnation. For him, these (1799: 153) ‘hard and remarkable gutturals’, are a mark of the Scot (1799: 30): ‘Polydore Virgil, in the remote reign of Henry VII, marks this difference even betwixt the English of those days and the Scotch, by the distinction of labial and guttural. English abounding in labial sounds, the Scotch with harsh gutturals, spoke their respective character to an Italian ear’ (1799: 133–4). Adams is unrelenting in his support for the retention of such sounds: ‘[the English] suppress the harsh gutturals, or convert them into single consonants. The Scotch retain them; and when they affect to soften them, the articulation or sound resembles that of a deep asthma, or last rattling of a fatal quinsy’. But Elphinston (1795: 5) reflects the almost otherwise universal distaste for the ‘guttural’ segments: ‘Dhe guttural aspirate (*ch* or *gh*), essential to evvery primitive language, haz lost dhe aspiracion in dhe smoohdnes (or dhe softnes) ov dhe French and Inglish tungs’. Yet his criticism is more muted than some: ‘Dho dhe old guttural aspirate retain dhe direct foarce and form in dhe Scottish *loch*, and dhe depressive form (at least) in dhe Irish (az wonce Inglish) *lough*’ (1786: 242–3), and there is no outright condemnation of its occurrence in Scots (1786: 23): ‘hav not all Inglish, az all French, organs lost dhe power ov dhe guttural aspirate; saying *Baccus* and *Buccan*, for dhe old *Bacchus* and *Bucchan*? ... and if manny livving languages preserv it inviolate; dhe Scotch and Irish ar dubbly interested to’ gard dhe power dhey yet pozes, in dhe bold guttural emission ov at least dheir primitive names: *Drogheda*, *Auchtermuchty*, and dhe rest’. He notes as well the tendency in English to vocalize this fricative (perhaps in the voice inducing intervocalic context), a tendency resisted (as it still is) in Scots (1786: 66): ‘dhe Welch, like dhe Inglish, hav smoothed dhis guttural away; and so’ retain onely *Bauan* and *Vauan* (or *Bawan* and *Vawan*) ov *Baughan* and *Vaughan*; hwich dhe Scottish *Strachan* (az if *Straughan*) joins Inglishly in *Strawan*; dhe oddher remnants ov dhe Gaulic tribes can stil, becauz dhey doo stil, emit dhe fool guttural, in such names az *Bucchan*, *Brechin*, *Drogheda*; *Lough-Ern*, *Loch-Lomond*, *Auchindinny*, *Auchtermuchty*, and dhe rest: dhe Scotch havving evver preffered dhe direct, az dhe just picture ov dhe guttural sound’. Never apologetic for the characteristic marks of Scotch pronunciation, Callander comments (1782: 11): ‘The German guttural pronunciation of *ch*, *g*, *gh*, is quite natural to a Scotchman, who forms the words *eight*, *light*, *sight*, *bought*, &c. exactly as his northern neighbours ... How much the English have deviated ...’. Sayer Rudd’s (1755: 47) observations can only be described as puzzling: ‘This letter [*gh*: CJ] hath a remarkable influence in roughening the syllable, where it stands, whether in the beginning, or in the middle of words, truly pronounced; as, in *Rhetoric*, *Rhine*, *daughter*, *slaughter*, &c.’

Beattie is unusual in explicitly recognising the existence of both [ç] and [x] palatal and velar fricative types. Noting that the letter *C* has two sounds (1788: 34 and *footnote*): ‘the one is heard in *came*, and the other in *come*’, he postulates the existence of two related gutturals:

while we articulate *K*, we let our breath pass with a pretty strong compression between the middle of the tongue and throat, there is formed that guttural sound, which in Scotland (where it is very common) is supposed to express the Greek *C*, and in the vulgar dialect of that country is annexed to the letters *gh* in the words *might*, *light*, *bright*, *sigh*, &c. In the same manner, by permitting the simple sound of *G*, as it is heard in *go*, to escape from between the tongue and throat, in the form of an aspiration, we pronounce another guttural, not unlike the former, which in Scotland makes the final sound of the word *lough* or *loch*, which signifies a lake. These two gutturals were certainly heard in the Anglo-Saxon (or one of them at least), but have been long disused in South Britain; and an Englishman finds it difficult to pronounce them; though to Scotchmen, who are inured to them from infancy, nothing is more easy,

a description he further exemplifies in his accompanying footnote. However, for Tucker (1773: 39) all is not lost for those wishing to hear such fricative sounds: ‘These will not now pass for articulate sounds, being wholly disused among us: should we go about to pronounce them we should be charged with speaking in the throat, but if any body has a mind to learn, I would recommend him to take a pretty Dutch girl for his schoolmistress, perhaps he may find them not so ungraceful in the mouth of a fair speaker’.

[θ]/[ç] alternation appears to be a common phonological phenomenon throughout the history of English phonology, evidenced from such Middle English spellings as *michty/mithty* ‘mighty’, and presumably arises from the similarity between the acoustic ‘fingerprint’ of the two noisy segments. Nares (1784: 105–6) notes both the Northern-ness of the ‘guttural’ as well as its association with the interdental fricative: ‘*Sigh* is by some persons pronounced as if written with *th*; a pronunciation which our theatres have adopted. Spenser has written it *sythe*, and rhymed it to *blythe*’. The Scot Burn (1766: 12) records the fact that *gh* sounds like ‘the *th* in *drought*, [drouth]’, with Sylvester Douglas noting [ç]/[θ] contrasts under the item TECHNICAL, where the pure dialect [k] for *ch* is realized as [θ] in the Scotch dialect, a fact Douglas sceptically (but probably correctly) surmises arises from a ‘resemblance between the Scotch guttural sound of *ch*, and the English sound of *th*’ (Jones 1991: 227). Walker’s (1791: §393) observations are in a similar vein: ‘*Gh* in this termination is always silent, as *fight*, *night*, *bought*, *fought*, &c. The only exception is *draught*; which, in poetry, is most frequently rhymed with *caught*, *taught*, &c. but, in prose, is so universally pronounced as if written *draft*, that the poetical sound of it grows uncouth, and is becoming obsolete ... *Drought* (dryness) is vulgarly pronounced *drowth*; it is even written so by Milton; but in this he is not to be imitated, having mistaken the analogy of this word, as well as that of *height*, which he spells *heighth*, and which is frequently so pronounced by the vulgar’. Sayer Rudd, concerned we recall, with spelling as an accurate measure of

speech, is once more somewhat cryptic on this issue, commenting on the pronunciation of *sigh*, he observes (1755: 47 *footnote*): ‘Here the final *gh* seems principally designed to lengthen and roughen the syllable where it is found, for the manner of spelling, it must be either thus, *s, i* [ghee]gh *sigh*; or, joining the *aspirated* letter with the vowel, thus: *s, igh*[ih] *sigh*’.

Most observers record the [x]/[f] alternation, Walker (1791: §391) typically claiming ‘*Gh* is frequently pronounced like *f*, as *laugh, laughter, cough, clough, slough, enough, rough, tough, trough*’, although it is interesting to note how Rudd (1755: 48 *footnote*) claims that, for him, the process is rare enough not to be dealt with through a rule system, but through the making up of lists of items affected, lists which, he recommends, have to be learnt by heart. Unsurprisingly, the alternation is of importance for Scottish observers. The ‘list of words in which the Natives of North Britain are most apt to err’ of the *Spelling Book upon a New Plan* (1796: vii) includes *roch, coch* and *lach* which are described as ‘commonly pronounced’ versions of the ‘true’ *rough, cough* and *laugh*, with syllable-final [f]. The [x]/[f] alternation is also recorded by Sylvester Douglas, especially under his observations on the pure dialect syllable final [f] in items like *rough, cough* and *laughter*: ‘while it is a provincial pronunciation in some counties of the west of England to say *oft*, and *thoft*, for *ought*, and *thought*. I know one instance of a man of education and eminence in a learned profession who retains this mode of sounding these words’ (Jones 1991: 127): an observation typically illustrated by the anecdote under *BUFF* (Jones 1991: 176):

I know a schoolmaster in Scotland who was fond of general rules, and thought because *tough* was pronounced like *stuff, ruff, huff*, that *bough* should be pronounced likewise. He taught his schoolchildren to pronounce it in that manner. But this sounded so ridiculous, even in their ears, that they gave him the nick-name of *Buff*, which, if alive, he probably retains to this day

It is important to note that Alexander Scot in his *The Contrast* text shows spellings such as *meght* [mɛçt] and *reght* [rɛçt] representing ‘*might*’ and ‘*right*’, in an orthography which represents what the author claims ‘fairly paints the present Caledonian English of the college, the pulpit, and the bar.’ Clearly, for speakers of prestigious varieties of Scottish English in the late eighteenth century, such pronunciations were not considered ‘barbaric’ in any way – indeed, their prescription by other Scottish commentators may merely serve to demonstrate their disregard for regional linguistic norms in their overriding concern to promote a standard based on some southern, metropolitan model.

Part III

The Nineteenth Century

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1

Background

1.1 The source materials

In some ways there is a very different ‘feel’ to the types and range of materials which can be used in the reconstruction of the pronunciation habits of the nineteenth century from those of the eighteenth. Publication and revisions of major pronouncing dictionaries like those of Walker and Sheridan continue to appear throughout the nineteenth century, alongside newcomers, among them B.H. Smart’s *A Practical Grammar of English Pronunciation* (1810) and *Walker Remodelled: A New Critical Pronouncing Dictionary*, J. Knowles’ *A Pronouncing and Explanatory Dictionary of the English Language* (1835) and A.J. Cooley’s *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1861). Yet the days of the comprehensive, word-by-word guide to ‘proper’ pronunciation through the pronouncing dictionary seem to have waned, and no other major, completely new pronouncing dictionary appears in Britain between 1800 and 1850. Indeed, there seems to have been a wholesale shift of emphasis in the area of linguistic description, away from pronunciation-centric concerns to those focussing on the forms (and particularly the classification) of syntax, morphology as well as issues relating to vocabulary (Bailey 1992; Görlach 1998). As far as publications specific to pronunciation are concerned, these are more and more inclined to concentrate specifically on listing and identifying what are seen as negative pronunciations, vulgarities, rather than propitious forms; in many instances they are essentially treatises on linguistic ‘don’t’s’ rather than ‘do’s’ (Eastlake 1902). There is probably more of an emphasis too on the perceived faults of provincial speakers, in addition to the eighteenth-century concerns with those of the metropolitan vulgar. On the other hand, the nineteenth century sees a continuation – indeed a strong revival – of the eighteenth-century concern to see a transparent relationship between orthography and pronunciation, one which, in its turn, would enable the reader to relate ‘Visible Speech’ to what were perceived to be prestigious and – almost peculiarly in this period – ‘received’ forms of pronunciation. There is a continuation and enlargement of the focus on this ‘received’ form of the type identified by Walker (Sheldon 1938) in his observations on the superiority of the pronunciation of London (1791: xiii):

For though the pronunciation of London is certainly erroneous in many words, yet, upon being compared with that in any other place, it is undoubtedly the

best: that is, not only the best by courtesy, and because it happens to be the pronunciation of the capital, but best by a better title; that of being more generally received: or, in other words, though the people of London are erroneous in the pronunciation of many words, the inhabitants of every other place are erroneous in many more.

By far the greatest source of information concerning the pronunciation characteristics of nineteenth-century English is to be found in the pages of A.J. Ellis' five-volume *On Early English Pronunciation* (1869–1889), an unsurpassed masterpiece of philological scholarship, a work equally indispensable for information on period data, the direction of phonological change, sociolinguistic and regional distribution, and, perhaps above all, a work noted for its attention to real, observed data analysed through highly pragmatic eyes (1869: 23):

What sounds did Goldsmith, Pope, Dryden, Milton, Shakespere, Spenser, Chaucer, Langland, call the English language? Or if we cannot discover their own individual peculiarities, what was the style of pronunciation prevalent at and about their time among the readers of their works? The enquiry is beset with difficulties. It would be almost impossible to determine the pronunciation of our contemporary laureate, but surely with our heap of pronouncing dictionaries, it would seem easy to determine that of his readers. Yet this is far from being the case. It is difficult even for a person to determine with accuracy what is his own pronunciation. He can only at best give an approximation to that of others.

1.2 Orthographic innovation and spelling reform

The nineteenth century sees several major attempts to provide alphabets from whose form and composition can be read off the actual speech sounds of the language (indeed, of any language). The efforts to produce such alphabets faced the same kinds of problems as those in the previous century; mainly how to strike a balance between readability, accessibility and transparency. Was a reformed spelling system to look like that devised by Thomas Spence – with its plethora of new symbolic representations – or one more like that of Tucker, where most of the standard alphabet set was retained, specialized symbols being kept to an absolute minimum. Or again, was Elphinston's the best model, where idiosyncratic symbols were abandoned altogether in favour of a 'rescrambling' of the standard set. Nothing so radical as Spence's system was attempted for a very long time, although twenty or so years after his *The New Alphabet*, we find another, symbol-modified alphabet produced in Thomas Batchelor's *A New Orthoëpical Alphabet* in his *An Orthoëpical Analysis of the English Language* of 1809, 'Designed for the Use of Provincial Schools' (Zettersten 1974).²⁰¹ Batchelor eschews any claim to the radical or to novelty of representation for its own sake (1809: vi): 'With respect to the New Orthoëpical Alphabet, it may be here observed, that it is not proposed with a

view to overturn the orthography of the English language, but merely to supply a desideratum in the literary world, namely, a convenient medium, by which not only words, but their pronunciation (whether solemn, colloquial, affected, or provincial) may be intelligibly explained, with scarcely any circumlocution'. The use of diacritics so favoured by Sheridan and Walker, he seeks to avoid: 'Is it not, therefore, more proper to use real letters for every sound, than to mark common letters with figures, some of which can scarcely be read, and sometimes to use such letters as are not or cannot be pronounced? If a depraved pronunciation deserves correction, should it not be first intelligibly explained?'²⁰² Batchelor's new alphabet is very straightforward and involves little in the way of radical symbol invention or alteration (1809: 37): 'I have ... endeavoured to invent such new letters as shall retain as great a resemblance as possible to those which they were derived, and by this means the trouble of learning to read, or even to write orthoepical characters, is reduced to a mere trifle'. His innovations amount to the addition of 'curls' to the *u*, *o* and *a* graphs, a subscripted dot to the *u* graph, the coalescing of *n* and *g* graphs to represent [ŋ], a completely new graph for [θ], an incomplete *o* graph for the [ɔ] vowel, together with a tittle-less *i* graph. He provides a useful articulatory display of the *Positions of the Tongue, Lips, & Uvula* (Plate Ia).

It was to be much later in the century before more innovative systems of orthographic representations were to appear. The inventor of one of the best-known modern shorthand systems – Sir Isaac Pitman – founder of the Phonetic Institute at Bath and the *Phonetic Journal* – invented (in collaboration with A.J. Ellis) systems called *Phonography* and *Phonotype*, the latter containing around 38 different characters, almost half of which were innovations (Scragg 1974: 106). At the other end of the spectrum, Ellis (1869: 607) invented a system he called 'historic orthography', whereby there is the 'possibility of altering our spelling so as to more or less indicate our pronunciation, but without altering our alphabet', a scheme he called *Glossotype*. Such an alphabet, because of its relative paucity of new symbols, Ellis claimed to be unsuited for 'the purposes of science' or for the recording of hitherto unrecorded languages in any 'missionary enterprise'. This system was to be an attempt to indicate sounds 'to purely English readers by combinations of the letters with which they are familiar', and 'should be legible to the mere English reader almost without instruction'. It is a system intended to be used 'concurrently with English orthography in order to remedy some of its defects, without changing its form, or detracting from its value'. A weekly newspaper *The Phonetic News* was written entirely using this system.²⁰³

But not all new orthographies were based upon such relatively simple principles. The *Visible Speech Alphabet* proposed by Melville Bell made claims to linguistic universality and was therefore able to represent 'exotic' sounds, such as Xhosa 'clicks', which in consequence necessitated the generation of many non-standard graphs. Melville Bell's system was perhaps too difficult to read, use and interpret ever to gain wide acceptance. A.J. Ellis himself produced a system more complex than his *Glossotype*, one which was to become the best-known and accurate new orthographies of the nineteenth century – *Paleotype*. Ellis (1874: 106) was very conscious of

Positions of the TONGUE, LIPS, & UVULA.

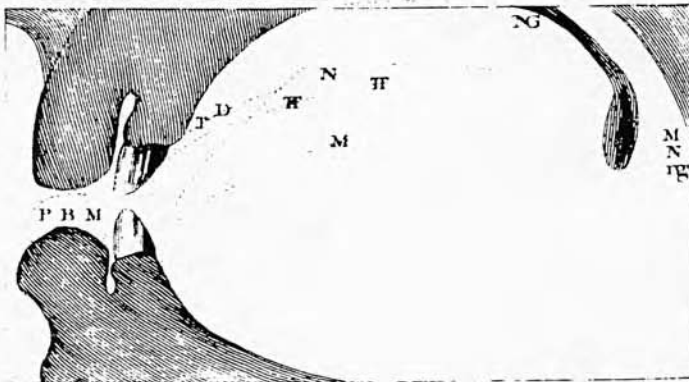
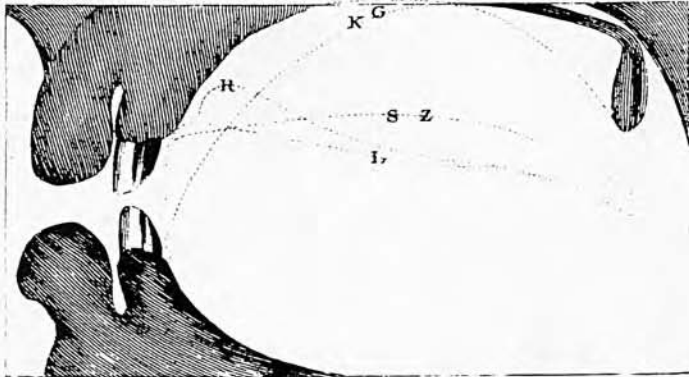
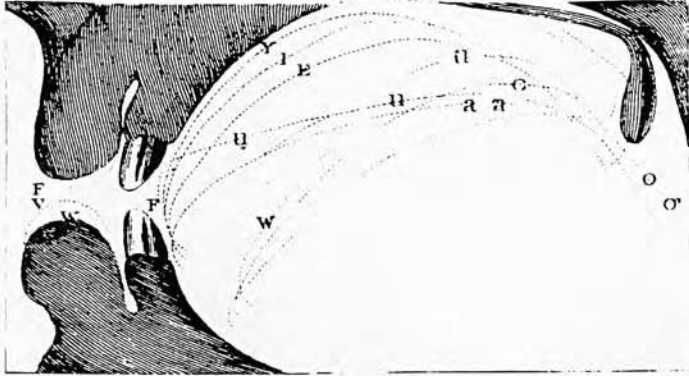


Plate 1a

the limitations of both historic and modern orthographies in capturing the finer nuances of speech sounds:

It is indeed remarkable how unconscious the greater number of persons appear to be that any one in ordinary society pronounces differently from themselves. If there is something very uncommon, it may strike them that the speaker spoke 'strangely' or 'curiously', that 'there was something odd about his pronunciation', but to point to the singularity, to determine in what respects the new sound differs from their own, baffles most people, even literary men, even provincial glossarists, who apply themselves to write down these strange sounds for others to imitate. At any rate there has been hitherto evinced a general helplessness, both of conception and expression, that shows us how much special education is necessary before we can hope for real success in appreciating diversities of utterance.

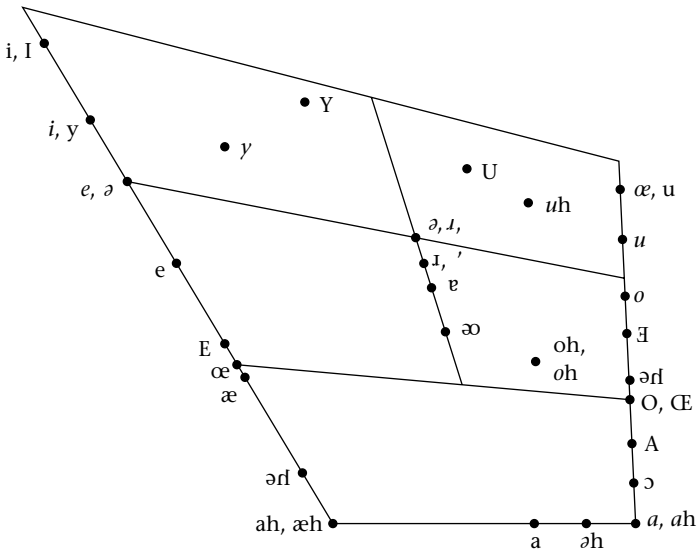
While this is perhaps a somewhat unfair assessment of the achievements of new alphabet inventors like John Wild of Littleleek and Thomas Spence, among others, Ellis (1869: 3–4) – in his *On Paleotype* – nevertheless recognised that 'an entirely new system of letters, such as those of Mr. Bell, is indispensable for a complete solution to the problem²⁰⁴ ... It appeared to me desirable to have an alphabet consisting entirely of those types which we may expect to find in every printing office, and hence consisting only of Roman and *Italic* letters, without any superadded accent marks whatever, and employing them in such a way, that all the most usual characters should be Roman, while the *Italics* should be used for modifications of occasional utterance. Such an alphabet would be in a certain sense a *makeshift*, and hence convenience, rather than any strictly consistent use of Roman letters according to any one European custom. Nevertheless the old Latin pronunciation should give the tone to the whole scheme, which, in contradistinction to the many *neotypic* alphabets in existence, I term *paleotype*'. Ellis's system is intended to enable the user to represent and differentiate 'the minutest shades of sound heard in dialect speech' with all the sounds represented in the 'old letters' – hence PALEOTYPE – yet, he has to admit that 'in order to obtain signs enough these ancient types embrace: *direct* small or lower case roman as (e); the same 'turned', as (ə); the direct italic and small capital (ē, ē) and their inversions (ḡ, ḟ), and sometimes even black letter ... A few "digraphs" are also admitted ... and "modifiers" are extensively employed'. This system Ellis saw (1866; 1869: 630) as a 'historical phonetic spelling ... as a means at hand for writing the English language without any new types, with as close an adherence to the old orthography, as much ease to old readers, and as much correctness in imitating the sounds used by the writer at any time, as we could hope to be generally possible'. Ellis refined his *Paleotype* system in several ways during his lifetime, but one of its central tenets is described in his article on *Speech Sounds* in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1888: Volume 22). There he outlines what he describes as is 'partial scheme' of vowel representation – a *Vowel*

Trigram – modified from his *Speech in Song*.²⁰⁵

Vowel Trigram

1 i	2 i	3 e	4 e	5 E	6 æ	7 ah	
	16 y	17 ə	18 œ	19 ɐ	20 ə	21 ɜ	8 = 22a
15 u	14 u	13 o	12 o	11 ɔ	10 ʌ	9 a	

Ellis describes this system as follows: ‘The meaning of this arrangement is that, if we pronounce the vowels in the order of the numbers, they will form a sufficiently unbroken series of qualities of tone, or, if each line be so pronounced leading to 8 = 22a, three series of the same kind are produced, and also that the speaker feels that that the vowels in the middle line lie “between” the vowels in the first and third lines between which they are written’. It seems clear that Ellis’ view of the vowel space (certainly between 1 and 15) represents some kind of progressive scale, and not a set of discrete vocalic entities, and where the rounded vowels in the middle row are aligned with their unrounded variants in rows one and three. This *Vowel Trigram*²⁰⁶ can perhaps be expressed in terms of the familiar *Cardinal Vowel Chart* diagram as follows (where the peripheral vowels are represented as somewhat higher and less central than their ‘tense’ counterparts (Speitel 1969: 27)):



so that for some of these vowels a very approximate range of IPA values may be assigned, thus (see *Appendix* for a more detailed set of suggestions for *Paleotype* vowel values):

<i>Paleotype</i>	IPA	<i>Paleotype</i>	IPA	<i>Paleotype</i>	IPA
i	[i]	E	[ɛ]	o	[ɔ]
i	[ɪ]	æ	[ɛ̃], [ɛ], [ɛ̄]	u	[u], [ʊ]
e	[e]	a	[a], [ɑ]	ɜ	ʌ
e	[ɛ̃], [ɛ̄], [ɛ̅]	A	[ø], [ɔ̄], [ɔ̅]	ɐ/ə	[ə], [ɜ]

To these, the addition of diacritic marks allows for raised and lowered vowel values, thus *Paleotype* (e¹) might represent [ė], (e₁) represent [ẹ] and so on, resulting in a system which, while difficult in the first instance to use, is ultimately capable of providing fine and detailed phonetic descriptions of individual vowel (and consonantal) segments. That it is considerably easier to use and interpret than Melville Bell's (1867) *Visible Speech Alphabet* can be seen in the comparison of the two systems in Plate 1b, cited in James Murray's *The Dialect of the Southern Counties of Scotland* (1873: 99), a work throughout which Ellis' *Paleotype* is used successfully and revealingly.²⁰⁷

MR. MELVILLE BELL'S VISIBLE SPEECH ALPHABET
COMPARED WITH MR. ELLIS'S PALAEOTYPE.

THE VOWELS.

CLASS.		(PRIMARY).			WIDE.		
(PRIMARY) Langual.	POSITION.	BACK.	MIXED.	FRONT.	BACK.	MIXED.	FRONT.
	HIGH.	l œ	I Y	I i	l v	I y	f i
	MID.	J E	l ø	l e	J a	l ah	l e
	LOW.	J œ	I øh	l E	J a	I æ	l æ
(ROUND) (Labio-Labial)	HIGH.	f u	f u	f i	f u	f uh	f y
	MID.	f o	f oh	f ø	f o	f oh	f œ
	LOW.	f A	f ah	f øh	f o	f oh	f æh

THE GLIDES, ETC. (IN PART ONLY.)

Voice Gl. Round. Front. F. Rnd. Lip Rnd. Point. Back Gl. Catch. Whisper. Aspirate.

I	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
u	y	i, J	y	u, w	r	r	;	'	H ^c

THE CONSONANTS.

QUALITY.	POSITION.	PRIMARY.	MIXED.	DIVIDED.	MIX.-DIV.	SHUT.	NASAL.
(PREGNANT)	BACK (Guttural)	C kh	C kwh	E lh	E lwh	C k	C qh
	FRONT (Palatal)	O jh	O s	O ljh	O th	O tj	O njh
	POINT (Dental)	O rh	O sh	O lh	O th	O t	O nh
	LIP (Labial)	O ph	O wh	O f	O fh	O p	O mh
VOICE.	BACK.	E gh	E gwh	E l	E lw	E g	E q
	FRONT.	O J	O z	O lj	O dh	O dj	O nj
	POINT.	O r	O zh	O l	O dh	O d	O n
	LIP.	E bh	E w	E v	E vh	E b	E m

One of the distinguishing characteristics of Ellis' observations and recordings of speech sounds is his consciousness of the importance of what modern sociolinguists call 'the observer's paradox'. Ellis is acutely aware that the validity of observed data is subject to many complex constraints: 'mere observation is beset with difficulties. The only safe method is to listen to the natural speaking of some one who does not know that he is observed. If possible the pronunciation should be immediately recorded in some phonetical system intelligible to the listener, as in paleotype, and the name of the speaker and date should be annexed'. He argues that while this can be conveniently done while listening to sermons and lecturers, the deliverers of these, conscious that they are being listened to, 'may therefore indulge in rather a theoretical than a natural delivery', a fault, he claims, to be especially associated with 'professed othoepists, whose pronunciation will necessarily labour under the suspicion of artificiality'. Even the evidence from the speech of educated speakers should be viewed with caution (1874: 1086–8): 'It is never safe to ask such people how they pronounce a given word. Not only are they immediately tempted to "correct" their usual pronunciation, to tell the questioner how they think the word ought to be pronounced, and perhaps to deny that they ever pronounced it otherwise.' Again, he claims that the use of 'word lists' with requests for the pronunciation of individual words is unhelpful since 'the fact of the removal of the word from its context, from its notional and phonetic relation to preceding and following sounds, alters the feeling of the speaker, so that he has much difficulty in uttering the word naturally'. The only reliable data come from 'persons of phonetic training who have lived long among the people, and spoken their language naturally, such as Mr. Murray for Scotch, that have a chance of acquiring a correct conception of the sounds by hearing them unadulterated'. Nevertheless, like many of his contemporaries and predecessors (and, indeed, like many modern observers), Ellis is suspicious of the phonetic judgements of the Scotch: 'there is a danger of their not having been able to throw off their former habits enough to thoroughly appreciate the received English sounds with which they should compare them',²⁰⁸ a prejudice not altogether unlike that levelled against the Irishman Sheridan in the eighteenth century.²⁰⁹ Ellis shows an almost missionary zeal in promoting the adoption of a system of phonetic spelling: 'founded not only on philological grounds, but upon philanthropical, educational, social, and political considerations', a system whose advantages are many and long lasting.²¹⁰ The way forward for improved observation skills lies, in Ellis' view, in the introduction – almost as a *pro bono publico* – of phonetic training in schools (1874: 1089): 'Hereafter, perhaps, when phonetic training is a part of school education, – as it should be, and as it must be, if we wish to develop linguists or public speakers, or even decent private readers, – ears will be sharpened, and distinctions about which we now hesitate will become clear.' Ellis' contempt is reserved for those eighteenth-century observers who are not only unwilling to recognise the need for innovative orthographic systems to overcome deficiencies in the standard model, but who will, on occasion, actually recommend speakers to produce a pronunciation based upon the conventional spelling shape of the word. While he admits that Walker recognises the imperfections of his contemporary

orthography – in failing to distinguish, for instance, the two pronunciations of *bowl* (a ‘container’, a ‘ball’), he roundly (and perhaps somewhat unfairly) condemns him for concluding (1869: 153–5 *footnote*) that ‘altering the sound of a word, without altering the spelling, is forming an unwritten language: The orthoepist the orthographer, the word pedlar is here shewn to life. It is a horror to him, a monstrosity, this formation of an ‘unwritten language’. As if all languages were nor formed unwritten, were not to the great majority of present speakers, unwritten. As if all those who made languages, who altered their sounds, who brought them to their present speech-form, knew or cared about writing ... No it is not the language, or the speakers who are in fault in obeying and carrying out the organic laws of speech and word formation. It is those word pedlars, these letter drivers, those stiff-necked, pedantic, unphilosophical, miserably-informed, and therefore supremely certain, self-confident and self-conceited orthographers who make default, when they will not alter the spelling after the sound has changed, and maintain that though their rules must be right, it is only the exceptions which prove them, – forgetting that as some foreigner pithily said, ‘English orthographical rules are all exceptions’”. Yet Ellis is still very hesitant about the future prospects of a phonetically based orthography (1874: 1185):

A revision of our orthography is probably imminent, but no principles for altering it are yet settled ... I know that the phonetic feeling is at present far too small for us to look forward to anything like a perfect phonetic representation. We are indeed a long way off being able to give one, as already seen by the contrast of the pronunciations given by Mr. Bell and myself ... very few people of education in this country have as yet the remotest conception of what is meant by a style of spelling which shall consistently indicate pronunciation. I have found many such writers commit the most absurd blunders when they attempt an orthography of their own, and shew a wonderful incapacity in handling such a simple tool as Glossic.

Other (more or less) innovatory spelling systems appeared throughout the nineteenth century, many based upon the schemes of Pitman and Ellis. Henry Freeman’s *On Speech Formation* of 1886 uses a modified version of Pitman’s *Phonetic Alphabet*, keeping new graphs to a minimum and using an ‘alphabet rescrambling’ system not unlike that of James Elphinston in the previous century: *Sum Dzhiougrafikul Neimz* ‘some geographical names’: *Thi Inglish Kauntiz* ‘the English Counties’ and the like. W.R. Evans’s *A Plea for Spelling Reform* of 1877 (a work edited by Pitman and a product of his Phonetic Institute at Bath) illustrates several *vairiys modifikaishonz ov the Fonetik Alfabet*, including what he calls *Semiphonotypy* and – while he is in general enthusiastic about the retention of ‘old letters’ – at least two innovative versions of his own making are replete with specialized symbols (1877: 47–8). Bridges’ scheme for a *Literary Phonetic Alphabet* (1910) stems from his belief that the modern language is in a state of terminal decline and that pronunciation standards are beyond the pale; in particular – in what is surely a *tour de force* – he blames the widespread use of the indeterminate vowel [ə] (especially

in unaccented syllables) for the demise of a large part of the full vowel set, a situation he seems to blame on the work of Daniel Jones in his *Phonetic Transcriptions of English Prose* (1910: 42): 'Our unaccented vowels, which have for centuries been losing their distinction, are coming now perilously near to being pronounced alike, i.e. with the sound of the second syllable of the word *danger*, wherein neither the *e* nor the *r* is sounded, but in their place a sort of indeterminate vowel, which may be for identification denoted by a reversed *e*, thus ə'. For Bridges, decay and corruption in pronunciation are everywhere evident and need to be halted. However, like many commentators before him, he sees that corruption as its most pronounced in London, while provincial speech still retains its original 'purity' (1910: 46): 'We have only to recognise the superiority of the northern pronunciation and encourage it against London vulgarity, instead of assisting London jargon to overwhelm the older tradition, which is *quite as living*'. In addition to the advance of unstressed [ə], Bridges lists among other 'degradations': '*Nature*, for instance, is now always *Neycher*. *Tuesday* is generally *Cheusdy*, and *tune* will very soon be *chiune*', examples, he claims, all gleaned from Daniel Jones' work. He strongly advocates that the language be 'fixed' in the shape of the true pronunciation, that is, how it as it *should* be pronounced, and not as we see or guess it is *coming to be* pronounced, and he despairs that 'A friend tells me that he knows a professor in Germany who is now actively teaching his pupils to pronounce English in the extreme cockney dialect; because he is convinced that that is the pronunciation of the near future'. The solution to the problem, Bridges argues, despite his feeling that 'phonetic spelling is full of horrors' (1810: 49–50) is that since 'the process of decay is daily removing the pronunciation further and further from the spelling' the only answer is to produce a form of phonetic writing which will reflect and fix the true pronunciation: 'the *litera scripta* has an enormous power; and compulsory education is a modern engine that is still waiting for its tasks'. The form of that phonetic writing should not only reflect some kind of agreed standard, but should equally importantly for Bridges, be aesthetically pleasing (1810: 53), with *All Mankind are Slaves* rendered as:

Ał mankiŋd ar slavs

1.3 Attitudes to pronunciation and the establishment of pronunciation norms

The very titles themselves of some of the most popular language books and pamphlets of the period suggest nothing less than an obsession with the highlighting of vulgarisms and inappropriate usage. Many of these works comprise catalogues of various kinds of usage (syntactic and morphological as well as phonological) which the reader is exhorted rather than invited to avoid at almost any cost, should he or she wish to be considered members of what was considered to be polite society (Bronstein 1949). Works of this type (which enjoyed a considerable popularity in the period) include such as *Everyday Blunders in Speaking* (Routledge 1866),

Anecdotes of the English Language (Pegge 1814), *Errors in Pronunciation and Improper Expressions* (Anon 1817), *Popular Errors of English Grammar, Particularly of Pronunciation* (Jackson 1830), *Errors in Speaking and Writing Corrected* (Anon 1830), *Never Too Late to Learn: Mistakes of Daily Occurrence in Speaking, Writing and Pronunciation Corrected* (Anon 1855), *The Vulgarities of Speech Corrected with Elegant Expressions* (Anon 1826), *The Vulgarisms and Improprieties of the English Language* (Savage 1833). The general tenor of such works can perhaps best be summarized in the opening remarks of one of the most influential of the group – *The Vulgarities of Speech Corrected*, a work dedicated to Maria Edgeworth ('whose works on education have had so much influence on the spirit of the age'):

Good breeding and gentility are sooner discovered from the style of speaking, and the language employed in conversation, than from any other circumstance. You may dress in the first style of fashion (that the tailor or milliner can do for you), and you may, with a little attention, learn to imitate the lounge and swagger of those in high life; but if you have not attended to your manner of speaking, and the selection of your words, the moment you open your lips you will be discovered, like the daw in the fable, that was tricked out in peacock's feathers – to be the mere ape of gentility, assuming airs to which you have no right, and intruding into ranks where you cannot maintain your ground.

The financial and material gains made by the socially aspirant are in themselves no guarantee of entry into upper-class society, 'new money' is not in itself a passport to the elite social club, linguistic habits need to be attended to as well:

This is a very common mistake among many who have, by industry or good fortune, risen above their original station and prospects, and therefore imagine, very mistakenly, that they are entitled to take their place with the well bred and well educated. They may do so, without doubt, on the influence of their money or property, but they will infallibly expose themselves to be laughed at and ridiculed, by those whose breeding and education enable them to see their low expressions, vulgar pronunciation, and continual blunders in grammar, every time they join in conversation.

Linguistic habits are the clearest and surest markers of social class and status, failure to achieve the appropriate usage brings with it social and personal ostracization: 'Of the accomplishments which do entitle to respect, there are none ... that rank higher than correct speaking, and the avoiding of vulgarities'. It is not surprising, therefore, that books and pamphlets providing recommendations for usage to be avoided as well as adopted were extremely popular in the first half of the nineteenth century, many of which were very inexpensive to purchase, while others underwent much reprinting and re-issuing. Indeed, they achieved the same level of popularity as the similar kinds of publication recommending appropriate social behaviour in general, such as *Advice to a Young Gentlemen on Entering Society* (1839), *Etiquette for the Ladies* (1837), *Hints on Etiquette and the Usages of Society* (1836) and

How to Shine in Society (1860) and many others (Mugglestone 1995: 331 ff). Works like these were, in many ways, a continuation of the eighteenth-century tradition of providing 'Tyros' Guides', especially *The Instructor* (Anon 1798) and *The Tyro's Guide to Wisdom and Wealth* (Barrie 1800) in which there were, in addition to guides to spelling and pronunciation, instructions in bookkeeping and other practical crafts and skills. But by the nineteenth-century works like these had become focussed almost entirely on social etiquette, especially as it involved language.

Yet a closer examination of the views of the authors of such works on what constitutes 'best usage' and language standards shows that the picture is more complicated than it might at first sight appear. The author of *The Vulgarities of Speech Corrected*, for instance, criticizes what might be considered (certainly in light of eighteenth-century views) the well-head of linguistic propriety itself: 'It is painful to think, that even at the highest seminaries of education in this country, correct or elegant speaking so far from being studied, is held unfashionable; and an unintelligible jargon is affected by those youths whose money and influence enable them to take the lead at Harrow and Eton, as well as at Oxford and Cambridge' (1826: 7); such 'mised young gentlemen' will benefit as much as the lowest class of person from a perusal of the treatise. The author of *The Vulgarities of Speech Corrected* identifies several different types of vulgarisms – the genteel, the awkward, the slovenly, the vulgar and those associated with London and the Provinces in general. The awkward type (1826: 47ff) is characterized mainly by 'singular forms of expression, the vulgarity of which is striking enough' and which can be compared 'to nothing more appropriate than the stumbling gait of one who walks awkwardly'. This group comprises a variety of syntactic and morphological usage, such as pronoun first/referent second constructions such as 'he is a worthy man, is Mr. Howard'; 'it looks towards the South, the garden does'; subject-verb inversion: 'pass we now to another subject'; 'true it is'; sentences completed by question echo forms: 'it freezes hard today, don't it?', 'Mrs. A makes it excellent, don't she?' as well as others. In this category too is placed what we might now recognise as 'fillers' of spontaneous conversation – 'it is a very common habit of awkward speakers to interlard what they say with *ha* and *hm*, and other unintelligible and foolish sounds. You may hear this every day, even among those whose education ought to have rendered them more polished. For example, "As I was – *hm* – passing Hyde Park corner – *ha* – my horse – *hm* stumbled and *a-a* nearly threw me."'

The opposite of those who are 'pedantically precise' are speakers who indulge in slovenly vulgarities. Picked out for particular criticism is the habit of contracting common lexical items, such as *yes* (1826: 60):

We hear in this manner the word 'yes' pronounced with every shade of slovenly indistinctness from the 's, or half-hiss, as it may well be called, to the grating 'ns, pronounced with the teeth shut, as if it were too much trouble to open the mouth in speaking. One of the worst forms of this vulgarity is peculiar to Ireland, consisting of the French *u*, or the Scotch *u* in 'guse' before the *s*, as if written 'us', a sound which is extremely offensive to an English ear.

There are also groups of speakers who, denied access to pronouncing dictionaries, the instruction of good masters and exposure to those who speak the most elegant language, still attempt to speak with a refined voice. Such speakers 'are certain to make more mistakes, than if they were contented to speak plainly, without endeavouring to do what they are altogether unfit to accomplish, from deficiency of education' (1826: 8). Indeed, the claim is made that 'in order to sound words properly, it is indispensable that you hear some good speaker pronounce them', but for country dwellers such a pronunciation target may not always be available and those which are, are 'very seldom to be trusted to as correct models'. It is such 'country-fine' speakers who produce the 'vulgar genteel' which is described as a 'stiff, starched, precise way of speaking, and of mouthing and mincing their words, which is exactly the very character of the vulgar-genteel; and extremely different from the easy flow of polite conversation'. These 'provincial' speakers (their stigmatized usage described in sections dealing specifically with Irish and Scotch pronunciation) are denied access to those speaking the metropolitan standard and are therefore, presumably, open to hypercorrection and misinterpretation, among other faults. But it is important to recognise that the author of *The Vulgarities of Speech Corrected* is not a downright prescriptivist, but capable of providing pragmatic, commonsense advice as well. He asserts that breaches of propriety can be mitigated if a speaker steps 'as little out of the common path as correctness will sanction, that you may not attract observation by singularity. For example, if a word is pronounced in two different ways by good speakers, such as the word 'wind', – rather adopt the more usual than the more rare pronunciation, that you may not be pointed out as affecting to speak fine'. Indeed, advice like this – one which recommends linguistic compromise – is not uncommon in the writings of observers like Smart and others in the period.

Concerns of this kind are, not unsurprisingly, characteristic of observers of the English spoken in Scotland. Should the broad variety of the vernacular be replaced entirely by a London metropolitan standard, or can some compromise form be acceptable? Such concerns, we recall, lie behind James Adams' promotion for Scots speakers of a form which, while it was recognisably still Scottish, nevertheless had 'ironed out' its broader regional characteristics, leaving a 'tempered medium'. While asserting that the 'broad dialect rises above reproach, scorn and laughter', he claims that there is another form of the Scots language, this 'tempered medium' which is 'entitled to all the vindication, personal and local congruity can inforce, by the principles of reason, national honour, and native dignity' (1799: 157). He argues that 'refined English is neither the received standard of that country, and its most eminent scholars designedly retain the variation; retain it with dignity, subject to no real diminution of personal or national merit' (1799: 158). The 'refined' metropolitan standard of London, advocated by so many contemporary commentators as the linguistic paragon, is not – Adams argues – the only 'standard' available to the Scots speaker, since the Scots 'dialect manifests itself by two extremes. The one is found in the native broad and manly sounds of the Scoto-Saxon-English; the terms of coarse and harsh are more commonly employed. The other is that of a tempered medium, generally used by the polished class of society' (1796: 156–7).

Such a view is also held by the author of *The Vulgarities of Speech Corrected*: 'Many educated Scotsmen, who move in the most polite circles in their own country, take a pride in speaking the Scots dialect blended with English, and when this is not done from affectation, and a love of singularity it can scarcely be reckoned vulgar'. Certainly, the author of *The Vulgarities of Speech Corrected* is capable of recognising that, in cases where pronunciation variation exists: 'A good ear in such cases is the best guide, and is seldom at variance with the practice of elegant speakers' (1826: 33).

Although there is some evidence which might suggest that W.H. Savage, author of *Vulgarities and Improprieties of the English Language* (1833), is also responsible for *The Vulgarities of Speech Corrected*, given that the 'mis-pronunciations' of [w], [h] and [hw] are among the most commonly commented upon as susceptible to vulgar and low-class realizations, it would seem likely that he writes under a *nom de plume*. Savage's work, as we shall see, provides what is probably the most detailed commentary on standard and non-standard usage in the early nineteenth century and the work abounds with his views on what constitute linguistic appropriateness and language standards. He is totally dismissive of all earlier attempts to provide models for improvement: 'systems upon systems have been published as correctives of the evil, but they have only added mazes to labyrinths ... The tendency of all that has been written upon the subject, instead of relieving the difficulty, has shewn beyond all doubt the utter impossibility of remedying the evil, and the perfect impracticability and inutility of all the ingenious schemes that have been laid before the public for that purpose' (1833: ii–iii). Perhaps echoing the sentiments of the *Accademia della Crusca*, he proclaims that (1833: xxix): 'In agriculture it is of consequence to eradicate weeds from the soil: in conversation it is equally important to expel barbarisms of vulgarity ... He who interlards his language with low and vicious phraseology is like a man who picks up withered leaves when he might gather flowers'. He stresses too what he believes to be the inherent connection between linguistic usage and social and intellectual advancement (1833: v): 'A good orthoepy and a careful and appropriate diction are the primary signs of something that is cultivated and worthy; and in any man be he old or young, whatever be his station in society, these will never fail of producing impressions in his favour'; a good orthoepy 'will encourage the mind to consider greater things'.

Savage²¹¹ is at pains to stress that vulgarisms are not the property of the lower social classes alone, but are to be found at every level in society (1833: vii): 'carelessness pervades the higher branches of society, and we know many who would feel ashamed of a false quantity in Greek and Latin that are absolutely incapable of reading with propriety an English newspaper', while the example set by actors – those 'knights of the unknown tongue' – is beyond the pale (1833: vii): 'The stage has little authority with regard to pronunciation, and its affectations will be carefully avoided by every person of good taste', and he has a long discussion of how *Rome* is falsely pronounced *Room* 'by the players' (1833: xiv–xv).²¹² Savage's view of what constitutes the standard of best orthoepy is not unlike that of several commentators in the previous century. He claims (1833: xxiv) that 'The custom of

good society is therefore the only standard: the *jus et norma loquendi*, and that 'good society' is only to be found in the Metropolis itself: 'Entitled to the same privilege we claim regal dominion for the parlance of the metropolis, and totally denigrate the capability of any man to decide upon the enunciation of the English language; unless he not only have been bred in London,²¹³ but circulated also in good society' (1833: xxv). Any appeal to the judgements of teachers, dictionary makers and the like as to what might constitute best usage is useless, he claims, bringing to the surface yet again all those eighteenth century concerns for an end to language variation both in time and at different social levels (1833: xxxii):

Custom alone is the arbiter, and without regard to systems, dictionary makers, teachers of elocution, or *histrions*, we pronounce *refined and educated society*, the sole criterion of that which is most generally approved and spoken. To attempt the disturbance of a language by finical coxcomry; or by *patois*, which has as much relation with metropolitan language as it has with the Slavonic, is not only ridiculous but injurious; inasmuch as it is subversive of conformity, deranges the determinations of good society, and impedes that which it would be so desirable to obtain, a fixity of pronunciation.

The audience which Savage addresses does not appear to be the lowest social classes, but those who for some reason or another 'lack education'. His appeal seems in the main to be towards the newly socially aspirant (1833: v): 'A good orthoepy and a careful and appropriate diction are the primary signs of something that is cultivated and worthy; and in any man, be he old or young, whatever be his station in society, these will never fail of producing impressions in his favour'.

Interestingly, too, the author of the anonymous *Errors of Pronunciation and Improper Expressions* (1817) seems to be describing the speech habits of a social group of a type similar to those targeted by Savage for their use of 'vulgarisms' (1817: Preface 2):

It is not the Author's object to point out every Vulgar Expression, nor to enumerate all the Cant Words which are daily used by the lower class of People in this Metropolis ... but to note some of those Faults which are continually committed, by what is termed Good Company, in familiar Conversation.²¹⁴

In other words what we perhaps might describe as 'non-standard' spoken forms of the type found in unselfconscious and spontaneous style contexts of 'Middle Class' speech. It is in such contexts where evidence of ongoing linguistic change is perhaps most likely to be readily observed and in which the presence of what for Savage are vulgarisms, might well represent residues in the speech of the new 'Middle Class' of forms found more frequently in 'Working Class' sociolinguistic contexts in the period.

For Smart, the view of what constitutes the best pronunciation and the group which should be looked to for exemplification of what he calls 'received pronunciation' (1810: 150) is more complex and somewhat less prescriptive in tone than

that of Savage. Smart is especially suspicious of attempts by the authorities to promote particular pronunciations which conflict with actual usage: 'No well-taught person, except of the old school, now says *cow-cumber* or *sparrow-grass*, although any other pronunciation of *cucumber* and *asparagus* would have been pedantic some thirty years ago'. He styles those who might promote such pronunciations as 'the smaller literati of the country, – they who attend more to manner than to matter, and love to lead the fashion in words, as others love to lead it in dress'. Still, while he recognises that pronunciation change does, indeed, occur, Smart (1810: xxxiv–xxxv) is conservative with neologisms: 'But, while it becomes every sensible speaker to adopt all changes for the better, as soon as he safely may, it equally becomes him to oppose such as have no recommendation but caprice and fashion, and which would injure instead of improve the audible structure of our language. What, for instance, would the language gain by narrowing the *a* in *quantity* and *quality*, of lengthening the vowel-sound in the first syllable of *knowledge*?' Smart's views of 1810 as to the importance of Metropolitan usage as a mark of the standard are not, at first sight, much different from those of Savage, although it is important to recognise his rejection of any *intrinsic* value of the metropolitan standard (1810: 8–9):

Imitation of a native of London, or a person who pronounces like one, is the only method by which a true utterance of the vowel sounds can be acquired. Not that, as pronounced by a Londoner, they are intrinsically more harmonious and euphonical than as they are heard in some of the provinces: very plausible assertions may be made to the contrary. But while it is necessary that there should be a standard pronunciation, and while the courtly and well-bred conform to it, that the inhabitants of the metropolis will always claim the preference, and every deviation will be looked upon, if not as illiterate, at least as uncouth and inelegant.

But by 1836 and *Walker Revisited*, while he is not in any way reluctant to admit to the concept that there are 'defects of utterance', notably among provincials like the Irish and the Scots, yet there has been a considerable shift in his definition of what kind of dialect constitutes an ideal standard. The type he recommends as worthy to be fixed, is far from Savage's promotion of anything emanating solely from the Metropolis (1836: xl):

The dialect, then, which we have here in view, is not that which belongs exclusively to one place – not even to London; for the mere cockney, even though tolerably educated has his peculiarities as well as the mere Scotchman or Irishman; – but the common standard dialect is that in which all marks of a particular place of birth and residence are lost, and nothing appears to indicate any other habits of intercourse than with the well-bred and well-informed, wherever they may be found.

Smart is of the view that there ought to be recognition of a relatively regionally 'neutral', yet national, pronunciation standard, one which does not entirely suppress local characteristics, but which allows them in a non-extreme form,

especially when they come from the mouths of those who are seen as 'well-educated' and 'well-informed', echoes again of the 'tempered medium' so favoured by James Adams: 'A person needs not blush because he cannot help betraying he is a Scotchman or an Irishman; but it may nevertheless be an object of ambition to prove his circle of intercourse has extended much beyond his native place. Accordingly, a Scotch or Irish accent is grating on polite ears only in excess, and has nothing disagreeable in it, if individual words are sounded according to common usage, and the broadness of the accent has evidently been reduced by intercourse with varied society' – a far cry from Walker's and Sheridan's *Rules to be observed by the Natives of Scotland (and Ireland) for attaining a just Pronunciation of English*.

Perhaps most typical of Smart's views are his insistence on a pragmatism based upon general usage and – as we shall see in several places in our descriptions of vowel sounds – a strong emphasis on the virtues of *linguistic compromise* – i.e. the avoidance of extremes either in the 'polite' or the 'vulgar' realizations of any particular sound where there is an alternative pronunciation. This notion of 'compromise' fits well with his view that a standard pronunciation can be considered to be one where the 'broadest' of regional forms are eliminated, thus producing a kind of national 'Estuary' standard. For instance, in the much-discussed controversy concerning the nature of the vowel in pre-[r] environments, as in *mercy, prefer, herd* etc., Smart claims that any differentiation between *ir* and *ur* pronunciations 'are delicacies of pronunciation which prevail only in the more refined classes of society. Even in these classes, *sur, durt* and *hurd* &c. are the current pronunciations of *sir, dirt* and *herd* and indeed, in all very common words, it would be somewhat affected to insist on the delicacy referred to' (1836: vii). Another such case relates to his discussion of what would appear to be an [ɔ] versus some kind of 'broad' [ɒ] pronunciation of the vowel in words like *moss, gloss, cost, broth*, etc. His comments on the variation reflect something similar to the notion of the *Vulgar Genteel* in *The Vulgarities of Speech Corrected* as well as illustrating the necessity in any standard pronunciation of avoiding extremes in such contrasts, where the polite speaker will opt for a 'fudged', 'intermediate' or compromise form (1836: vi): 'though the broad sound is vulgar, there is affectation in the *palpable* effort to avoid it in words where its use seems at one time to have been general. In such cases a medium between the extreme is the practice of the best speakers'. Remarks which, as we shall see below, have considerable relevance for the contemporary nature of the BATH/TRAP split.

It is Ellis, almost half a century on, who gives what is probably the most enlightened picture of contemporary attitudes to non-standard speech habits and, in particular, a rounded discussion of what might constitute a norm or standard – a 'received' – form of pronunciation, where it might be found, how it might be promulgated and, if possible, preserved. In principle Ellis seems to oppose any notion that there is one, immutable, invariant form (prestigious or otherwise) of pronunciation (1874: 1089): 'Every speaker has individualities, and it is only by an intimate acquaintance with the habits of many speakers that we can discover what were individualities in our first instructor. Not only has age and sex much influence, but the very feeling of the moment sways the speaker.' He strongly criticizes

the societal and other touchstones of propriety put forward by eighteenth-century orthoepists 'those orthoepical oracles' (1869: 628), and 'pronunciation prophets' (1874: 1216). Samuel Johnson's view that pronunciation rectitude is to be found among 'the most elegant speakers who deviate lest from the written words', he dismisses as 'entirely theoretical, and ... penned in ignorance of the historical variations of the orthoepical significance of the "written words"' (1869: 627). But his opprobrium is reserved in particular for Walker and Smart. Walker's suggestion that a standard rests in a 'compound ratio' of the usage of the best schools, the Bar and the Court, he claims not to understand – 'how does Mr. John Walker, of Colney Hatch, determine the usages of each of the three classes he has named, but certainly not defined?' Ellis sarcastically dismisses Smart's claim that the best usage is that found 'in the mouth of a well-educated Londoner' as 'presumably his own', while his use of terminology like 'vulgarism', 'current pronunciation', 'affectation' and so on is dismissed as comprising only 'words and epithets implying theories or foregone conclusions, but not greatly advancing our knowledge'. Ellis is of the firm view that variation rather than uniformity is the most important characteristic of pronunciation; he admits, though, that greater amounts of contact between city and rural dwellers might produce a greater degree of uniformity, as may education which 'rubs together the different dialects of England in a classical mortar'. In addition, the teaching of pronunciation in schools itself promotes uniformity. Yet, despite all this, 'nothing approaching to a real uniformity prevails' (1869: 626–7) and every utterance is different on each occasion on which it is pronounced, while a speaker 'in the habit of using an orthography which not only does not remind him of the sounds of words, but gives him the power of deducing great varieties of pronunciation for unknown words. What chance then have we of a uniform pronunciation?' Indeed, even 'among educated London speakers, meaning those who have gone through the usual course of instruction in our superior schools for boys and girls'... illustrate 'a large number of words ... pronounced with differences very perceptible to those who care to observe' (1869: 629).

Such differences widen when geographical ('educated provincial speakers'), educational and social factors are taken in to account. Ellis is conscious of the effects of regional and social dialect contact on the typology of contemporary data: 'the present facilities of communication are rapidly destroying all traces of our older dialectal English. Market women, who attend large towns, have generally a mixed style of speech. The daughters of peasants and small farmers, on becoming domestic servants, learn a new language, and corrupt the genuine Doric of their parents'. Still, he recognizes the purity of 'educated London English' and the unique linguistic value to the contemporary observer of the pronunciation of 'Resident Clergymen, Nonconformist Ministers, National and British Schoolmasters, and Country Gentlemen with literary tastes' (1869: *notice* vi). Nevertheless he is surprisingly sceptical about the possibility of language change driven by upward social mobility. He admits that (1869: 629):

the respect which the inferior pays to his superior in rank and wealth makes him generally anxious and willing to adopt the pronunciation of the superiorly

educated, if he can but manage to learn it. How can he? Real communication between class and class is all but impossible. In London, where there is local proximity, the 'upper ten', the court of nobles, 'the middle class', the professional, the studious, 'the commercial class', the retail tradesman, the 'young men and young ladies' employed behind the counter, the servants, porters, draymen, artisans, mechanics, skilled and unskilled labourers, market men and women, costermongers, 'the dangerous classes', – all these are as widely separated as if they lived in different countries.

The only hope for a uniform and prestigious pronunciation lies, not unsurprisingly given Ellis' orthography-reforming zeal, in printing newspapers (hence his *Fonetic Nuz*) in a spelling system which actually reflects the pronunciation of 'the educated editor' (even if there were to be several versions of this). Over time, Ellis claims, the printers of newspapers would arrive at the adoption of 'some special form' of representation which, 'in a few years the jolting of these forms together would yield some compromise which would produce the nearest approach to an orthoepical standard we could hope to attain'. Even then, pronunciation would not remain monolithic 'and consequently spelling considered as the mirror of speech, would probably have to be adjusted from generation to generation' (1869: 629).

Ever the pragmatist, however, Ellis is prepared to admit of typological differences such as *Vulgar and Illiterate English*, *Educated English* and *Natural English* (1874: 1243–4). – 'by "natural" as distinguished from "educated" English pronunciation, is meant a pronunciation which has been handed down historically, or has changed organically, without the interference of orthoepists, classical theorists, literary fancies, fashionable heresies and so forth, in short "untamed" English everywhere, from the lowest vulgarity, which ... is often merely a cast-skin of fashion, to the mere provinciality, which is a genuine tradition of our infant language.' In general, it would seem that he does not favour any suggestion that there yet exists in his day some kind of national received standard (1869: 1215): 'In the main the most educated pronunciation in English is local, with its corners more rubbed off than it was fifty or a hundred years ago, but still essentially local, using that word as applicable to all limited environment', and it is important to notice his recognition that change from below is not only possible, but commonplace, and that the standard pronunciation of the past is just as subject to change and mutation as any other register of the language (1874: 1086): 'for the 'polite' sounds of a past generation are the *bêtes noires* of the present. Who, at present, with any claim to 'eddication', would 'jine' in praising the 'pints of a picter'? But certainly there was a time when 'eddjucation, joyn, poynts, pictsher', would have sounded equally strange'.

It is important to recognise how Ellis is very careful to assess the status of the data he uses, especially as regards the effects upon it of the constraining factors of what he describes as the 'unstudied' nature (i.e. the spontaneity level) of the materials on which he bases his observations. He is concerned, if possible, to avoid what he sees as the drawbacks of earlier data collections where

specimens of pronunciation labour under the obvious disadvantage of being the result of deliberate thought. Mr. Bell's and Mr. Smart's, like those of

all pronouncing dictionary writers and elocutionists, give rather what they think ought to be than what they have observed as most common ... I have therefore endeavoured to catch some words which were not given as specimens of pronunciation, but, being uttered on public occasions, were, I thought, fairly approbriable. (1874: 1208)

He recognizes the immense practical difficulties of recording speech sounds in 'live' situations, pronunciations 'noted on the spot'. Some speakers, he feels, are of more use than others, the gentlemen whose names he provides as sources in his samples 'have certainly a full right to say that their pronunciation is a received English pronunciation – at least as much so, I think more than as much so, as any professed elocutionist' (1869: 1209). Ellis claims that such a 'received pronunciation' (1869: 23) is recognised 'all over the country, not widely differing in any particular locality, and admitting a certain degree of variety. It may be especially considered as the educated pronunciation of the metropolis, of the court, the pulpit, and the bar. But in as much as all these localities and professions are recruited from the provinces, there will be a varied thread of provincial utterance running through the whole'. But the very mainstays of pronunciation propriety among eighteenth-century observers – the stage, the pulpit and the bar – he nevertheless rejects as suitable as records of spontaneous speech – 'unstudied pronunciation' – since 'all these classes labour under the disadvantage of making speech a profession. I have an idea that professed men of letters are the worst sources for noting peculiarities of pronunciation; they think so much about speech, that they nurse all manner of fancies, and their speech is apt to reflect individual theories'. The language of the stage he rejects too as 'archaic and artificial' 'except in the modernist imitations of every day life' (1869: 23 *footnote*), that of the bar has 'hereditary pronunciations', while that of the pulpit is 'full of local pronunciations'. Parliament too 'is far too local' as are many country gentlemen. On the other hand 'men of science' are favoured as 'a large and influential class at the present day', while 'the general Londoners in public meeting assembled seemed to me a good source for general varieties'. Ellis (1869: 1209), of course, admits to using examples based upon his own pronunciation, but this, he argues, is no disadvantage, since: 'The general speech of educated London differs only in certain minute points, and in a few classes of word, so far as I have hitherto observed, from that which I have given as my own. Even in the cases cited, where I have put down my own for contrast, the differences are seldom such as would strike an observer not specially on the look-out for individualities of pronunciation'. But his overall attitudinal view is perhaps best captured in his statement (1874: 1152) that 'I can only say what I observe, and what best pleases my own ear, probably from long practice. Neither history nor pedantry can set the norm'. Observation of the habits of 'real' speakers is the principle upon which he selects his data, and he fully recognises the difficulties of such an enterprise (1874: 1088–9): 'But, even with phonetic training, and willing and competent teachers, it is difficult to hear the sounds really uttered, if only a short time is at command', that 'every speaker has individualities... age and sex has much influence,' while 'the very feeling of the moment sways the

speaker'. He even makes some kind of attempt to capture what he perhaps sees as the internalized workings of the speaker's sound system itself: 'We want to find out not so much what he *does* say, as to what it is his *intention* to say, and that of course implies long familiarity, to be gained only by observation'. Yet it is Murray (1873: 108 *footnote*) who perhaps best sets out the cautionary observation about the complex nature of data collection itself: 'the truth is people's habits of hearing get into grooves, as well as their habits of utterance, so that neither hears sounds exactly as the other gives them, but as sounds in his own groove, more or less near them; and attaching as they do still more distinct values to the letters, the result is that the sound, after being, first, not quite accurately heard and described, and, secondly, still more inaccurately realized in the description, comes back to the speaker with an appearance, at which he kicks, as a wretched travesty'.

2

The Vowel Phonology

Following on his discussion of John Dryden's pronunciation and the phonetic transcription he supplies for the poet's description of the character of a good parson, A.J. Ellis (1874: 1039) offers a summary of the differences between what he sees as 'the transitional character' of that pronunciation compared with that of 'our modern pronunciation'. Among the issues he raises are the less advanced nature of the *English Vowel Shift* in Dryden's speech, where pronunciations like [hææt], [sææt] for *hate*, *seat* are still recorded as against the modern raised and (as we shall see) diphthongized [eɪ] vowel space. He notes too the presence of post-vocalic [r] as a still salient feature, its loss in Ellis's pronunciation accompanied by vowel lowering: 'the pure (iir, oor, uur) in place of our modern (ii, ooi, uui)'. In addition, Ellis records the fact that Dryden's failure to unround the vowel in post-[w] contexts, as in *war*, *quality*, is no longer characteristic, while the low and back [ɑ] vowel in items like *last*, *fast* has replaced Dryden's [a], although this usage is still 'often used by refined speakers in the north'. He records too how the common eighteenth-century raising of [oo] to [uu] in an item like *golden* is 'still heard from elderly speakers', while long *u* ([ju]) in items like *true* and *rule* is found not infrequently 'at least in intention, provincially'. Ellis admits that this set is incomplete and he does not seem to imply that any one of the features he lists are more salient than any of the others, although, as we shall see below, he spends a great deal of time in illustrating developments such as syllable final [r]-loss and its consequences as well as the diphthongization of long mid front and back vowels.

2.1 Palatal or front vowel segments

2.1.1 High front vowels

Interest in this area of the vowel phonology is considerable in this period, argument centring around three main topics: (1) the possibility of a BEAT/BIT vowel contrast of a high versus lowered/centred type; (2) the extent to which 'long *ee*', i.e. [i(i)] could be considered diphthongal; and (3) whether there was any evidence for the continuation of the phenomenon of HAPPY TENSING. It is perhaps the evidence of Thomas Batchelor²¹⁵ which forces us to confront all three issues. Batchelor's *Orthoepical Alphabet* has at least four distinct symbols for the representation of

high front vowels in items like *meet* and *sit*: y , i , and iy . In his scheme for the *Positions of the Tongue, Lips and Uvula* (Plate Ia, p. 276), he shows an articulatory gesture for y where the front of the tongue is pitched reasonably far forward, and is almost in contact with the soft palate. For the tittle-less i , on the other hand, the tongue is slightly more retracted and at a greater distance from the palate surface: configurations which would seem to point to some kind of [i]/[i] contrast, one he illustrates in his orthoepical representations of *utility* and *ordinary* as *utulti* and *ordineri* respectively. Batchelor sees the letter *I* itself as belonging to his class of semi-vowels, representing a sound which is 'very short as well as slender'. The vowel in items like *swim*, *wit*, he describes (1809: 6) as:

the sound of this letter is weak, but sufficiently distinct. It seems generally to admit of a greater quickness in pronunciation than any other English vowel. The position of the tongue, in sounding this letter is nearly the same as in the case of y (consonant), which is the common term for y , as an initial. The distinction consists in the descent of the tongue, about an eighth of an inch, by which means probably three times as much air is permitted to pass in the same time, and the strength of the tone is at least tripled, without being materially altered in character. The similarity of sound will be sufficiently obvious to those who consider how frequently grammarians have asserted that y is, or is not, similar to *ee* pronounced hastily. The distinction between y and short i is of much importance: the latter often marks an audible syllable, but the former never does.

The distinct tongue positions would at first sight suggest a qualitative height contrast of an [i]/[i] variety, but the fact that the tone is not 'materially altered' might also infer something less by way of auditory contrast and could well signify a contrast like [i]/[i]. Any 'similarity in sound' seems to raise in observers an uncertainty as to whether quality alone or quantity is characteristic of any contrast. An attempt to characterize the value he assigns to the 'pure' palatal itself is further complicated by Batchelor's use of the *iy* digraph in items like *heat*, *meat*, *beat*, *tree* and so on, represented (1809: 109) as *hiyt*, *muyt* and *biyt*. That we are indeed dealing here with a 'proper' diphthong, and not merely a simple vowel-representing digraph, is clear from Batchelor's remarks (1809: 96): 'A proper English diphthong consists of either (y), or (w), joined to any of the simple vowels; and in these combinations the two sounds are so completely blended together, by the sliding of the tongue from one position to the other, as to require some attention to distinguish them from simple vowels' – a description suggesting (depending on one's interpretation of the tittle-less i graph) an entity such as [ii], a type of *High Vowel Diphthongization*. Yet this digraph is, on occasion, equated with 'long e '.²¹⁶ Batchelor paints a very complex picture of the nature of the palatal vowel space in general. In addition to an *iy*/ y / i contrast, he also proposes, as we have seen, the use of the tittle-less i in certain words, notably *zigzag*, *thinking*, *christian*, *merciful* and many others. Batchelor takes much exception to the use of long e pronunciations when they are suggested for unaccented syllables and final syllables, satirizing Walker's position by claiming it would result in an expression like *thee deegree of thee veelosetee*

of *eelecktriseetee*, and he also criticizes Lindley Murray (1804) for doing much to promote such pronunciations, as where the *i* graph in items like *furniture*, *diligence*, *merciful*, *plentiful* and the like, are given long *e* values.²¹⁷ For Batchelor, the first two vowels in *diligent* and *difficult* ‘appear to me in every respect similar’ and ‘how the first can be pronounced short and the last long, without disgusting and English ear, I am at loss to conceive’; so too, the final *y* in *plenty* and *beauty* is the same sound as the unaccented *i* in *plentiful* and *beautiful* – ‘a change of letters, but not of sounds’ (1809: 74), while he satirizes those ‘who would discover a tittle of difference in the three vowels in *diminish*’ (1809: 77).

Importantly, however, he seems to make a further distinction, one which is constrained by the relative solemnity of the speech act itself:

In the present system, the unaccented *e* and *y* must be represented by the *i*, as in *pin*, but regulated by the general observation, that, when such words as *elicit* and *polity* are very deliberately spoken, the initial *e* and terminative *y* are something longer, and perhaps something different from the short *i* in the second and third syllables of *elicit*. This slight and accidental variation may be commodiously represented by the common *i* with the tittle, which ought to be omitted in all other cases.

So too, in a word like *pity*, he argues that the (i) ‘is rather prolonged, and perhaps depraved, by a deviation towards a terminative *y*, whence such words as *pity* occur at the *end* of a sentence; but the deviation is of that trivial kind which must be generally left to description, as the use of the long *e* (*ty*) would indicate such sounds as *pitee*, *deevout*, *beauteeful*, and thus cause an error of much magnitude, in the attempt to correct a very trivial and accidental anomaly’.

It is difficult to arrive at any concrete conclusion as to the precise phonetic values referred to in this discussion. That Batchelor uses three separate symbols for palatal vowels suggests a tripartite division of sound, one of which is ‘trivial’, the other perhaps representing a genuine qualitative contrast. While the *y/i* opposition may be indicative of a small durational contrast, with the tittled *i* explicitly constrained to such ‘a depraved deviation’, on the other hand the untittled graph may well represent a qualitatively different vowel sound, one which gives witness, at least by implication, to the emergence of a BEAT/BIT split. That this ‘short’ *i* has, indeed, a distinct phonetic value is perhaps suggested by its comparison with the French [ü]: ‘The sound of the French *u* is unknown in England, though it is said to be common in Scotland, in such words as *geud* (good). It is a slender sound, and possesses some alliance with the English *i* in *pin*, and the unaccented *u* ... It is said to require a considerable pouting of the lips, to pronounce it properly’ (1809: 24). In other words, the short – untittled – *i* may well represent the close central unrounded [ɨ] a segment which has clearly ‘some alliance’ with its rounded [y] version. But Batchelor seems also to suggest that the tittle-less, short *i* has an even less ‘pure’ palatal characteristic than this and is, indeed, considerably centralized and lowered. Although he does not go quite as far as to equate the two vowel sounds, he does suggest an affinity between short *i* and the unaccented *u*; both, he asserts,

'are more easily pronounced than any of the other simple vowels, and are consequently almost the only vowel-sounds that are heard in final unaccented syllables'. While it is this short *i* which is characteristic of the last syllable of items like *habit*, *active*, *women*, *wicked* and *carnage*, etc. (contexts where any kind of high, front segment would be highly unlikely to occur²¹⁸) the unaccented *u* 'is more easily pronounced before *r* than any other vowel ... this slender sound also precedes *r* in items like *nectar*, *rider*, *manor*, *dolour*, etc'. This kind of statement at least infers not only a qualitative contrast between short *i* and other pure palatal vowel sounds, but also brings with it a suggestion that there is a phonetic similarity between short *i* and short *u* and even, perhaps, that such a similarity arises in the first instance from the shape of both vowels in pre-[r] contexts.

Unfortunately, Batchelor uses an upper-case font for his *i* graph in the *Positions* diagram, so we are not able to say whether its lowered/retracted position with respect to *γ*, signifies that it represents (iy), (i) or even (ɪ). But we may suggest tentatively that the three distinct graphs represent genuine phonetic contrasts, albeit of a fine phonetic detail type. We might very cautiously argue that we are witnessing here a description of an [i], [ɨ]/[ɪ], [ɪ] (or even [ə]) opposition, with the tittled *i* form representing a compromise, 'fudged' version of the two 'extremes'. Batchelor rejects any suggestion that there is a vowel distinction between *beet/beat* types (1809: 63): 'As to Mr. Walker's fanciful distinctions between ... the long *e* in *meet* and *meat*, it is unnecessary to remark further, than that they have no other foundation than what was suggested by a different orthography'. It may, of course, arise simply from a typesetter's carelessness, but on at least one occasion Batchelor (1809: 53) represents *seen* by (siyn) despite asserting that 'I know not of any instance in which the sound of *ee* is spelled [i.e. orthoepically: CJ] with (iy)'.

The evidence from later commentators like Smart, Cooley and Knowles is, as we might by now expect, complex and not always easy to interpret. Smart (1810: 108) avers that the sound of *e* in *me* in 'a good pronunciation requires that it should be a narrow squeezed sound', one which is protracted and long. However, in unaccented contexts, while the sound is still protracted [his ē: CJ], it is not to be pronounced as long: 'nothing is more common than to hear foreigners protract the sound in *de-vout*, *clarity*, &c.: *dēe-vout*, *charēe-tēe*'. This unprotracted version of the sound is, he claims, to be heard in the second element of the [ai] diphthong (which he claims is his *e*¹ as in *me* (1810: 133)), surfacing in items such as *abstinence*, *accidental*, *admiral*, *charity*, *constitute*, *quality*, etc. Likewise he claims that the graph *y* has such a value, as in *ably*, *dainty*, *easy*, *greasy*, *sanity* and many others, suggesting the possibility of HAPPY TENSING. The same point is raised when he discusses emphatic and unemphatic contexts in which the palatal vowel might occur, as in *give it mé*, versus *give me your hand* (1810: 11), and he seems to hold unequivocally that the vowel in *me* is merely a lengthened version of that in *glebe*: 'If [the student] is told that the *y* in *truly* is pronounced as the *e* in *me*, his natural habits induce him not to protract the sound so long as *e* in that word itself, or emphatically in a sentence, but only as long as when it occurs in a familiar phrase as in *unemphatical*'. What he calls this *open/shut* distinction is one which foreigners ought to be careful to observe, he claims (1810: 5 *footnote*), since the shut type is so frequent in their

own languages 'they are apt to pronounce ours open, as *bate* for *bat*, or *feet* for a *fit*, &c.', as well as rendering *a little bit* as *a leetle beet*²¹⁹ ... 'The Scotch not infrequently fall into the same error' (1810: 139).²²⁰ But such observations raise once more the problem of what commentators mean by open/shut, long/short, especially when exemplified through *bate/bet* pairs where a qualitative contrast would seem to be as likely as a purely quantitative one. Of course, the short *i* does have a distinct qualitative entity in pre-[r] contexts, Smart noting (1810: 140) how the pronunciation *sperrit*, *merricle* 'is not only contrary to polite usage, but to analogy. And hence too we perceive that the pronunciation of *panegyric* and *squirrel*, *pannegerric* and *squerril* is contrary to analogy, though it is a deviation to which, in both instances, custom obliges compliance'. We might once more tentatively suggest that it is with this presumably lowered version of short *i* which the unemphatic, unprotracted and shut *i* is becoming likened, to realize a BIT/BEAT contrast where the short *i* is pronounced something like [i] or [ɛ̃]. So too we might argue that Savage's readiness to see extensive interchange between whatever is the value of his *i* graph and etymological [ɛ], might well suggest that such a graph represents a segment which is, at least lower, and possibly more central than [i], namely [i]. Savage cites as 'vulgarisms' those items showing the more palatal vowel as in; *agin* 'again'; *dippo* 'depot'; *gineral* 'general'; *git* 'get'; *indive* 'endive'; *invellup* 'envelope'; *instid* 'instead'; *kinnel* 'kennel'; *kitchup* 'ketchup'; *kittle* 'kettle'; *klif* '(treble) clef'; *lidge* 'ledge'; *rim-miniscence* 'reminiscence'; *stiddy* 'steady'; *trivvit* 'trivet'. Alternating with these are items showing the lower vowel (yet noting here too the frequency of pre-dental contexts) represented by: *cestern* 'cistern'; *consperacy* 'conspiracy'; *gred* iron 'grid iron'; *led* 'lid'; *peth* 'pith'; redgimental (orthoepy *ridg-ment-al*) 'regimental';²²¹ *redicule* 'ridicule'; *sets* 'sits'; *sperret* 'spirit'; *wedth* 'width'.

Cooley's (1861) phonotype system distinguishes long or open vowels, from stopped or derivative types, an instance of the former being the open *ē* in items like *beat*, *eel*, contrasting with the stopped *ĭ* in *ill*, *pit*, *him* types. This latter version, Cooley claims, is heard 'pure' only when the vowel is completely stopped (1861: xxvii: *footnote* 75): 'the preservation of this sound pure ... is one of the leading characteristics of refined taste, education and polished life; just as allowing it to degenerate into the deeper sound of *ě* is a mark of illiteracy and vulgarity'. While this degeneration is illustrated by Cooley principally in pre-[r] environments, we are left to wonder to what extent Cooley sees it as an ongoing change affecting the stopped *ĭ* in general, although we have to bear in mind his assertion (1861: xxvi *footnote* 74) that 'In reality, the "short" or "stopped" sound corresponds to *ē* and not to *ī*, as the name implies', this in its turn perhaps pointing to a lowered version of [i] in [i], rather than a lowered and centralized form in [i].

The contributions of Ellis and Sweet in the latter part of the century are central to this debate. Ellis (1874: 1280–7) (and Sweet perhaps to a lesser extent) sees the vowel inventory in terms of a scale, rather than as an accretion of individual, discrete elements. While he recognises that English shows a high front [i] segment in its inventory, it is in some way not as 'pure' a sound as its equivalent in Italian and Castilian, and does not 'exist in any great perfection in English. There (ii) is frequently obscured, or has its quality deteriorated, by widening of the pharynx,

descending to (*ii*), or, by slightly lowering the tongue, to (*ee*¹, *ee*¹). This clearly suggests that he hears of some kind of [i] sound, a confirmation of which is his statement (1874: 1284): 'Thus let (*i*) be developed and distinguished from (*i*). These two stages are by no means co-existent; for example, (*i*) has long been developed in English, but phonologists have only quite recently distinguished it from (*i*). Dr. Thomas Young having been one of the first to do so'. Indeed, Ellis (1869: 106) goes as far as to claim that 'My own belief is that short *i* was (*i*) from the earliest times to the present day', while he concedes that historically 'orthoepists ... constantly confuse (*i*,*i*) both in closed and open syllables, so that any real separation of (*i*, *i*) is hazardous' (1869: 598). But Ellis confesses to his own shortcomings in recognising whatever this contrast amounts to (1866: 65): 'The present writer should be the last to throw stones at those who do not hear the difference between (*i*, *i*) for in his *Alphabet of Nature*, the first work on phonetics which he published, he objected to Knowles's assertion that (*i*) was an independent vowel sound'. In his *On Paleotype* Ellis seems quite confident that such a contrast does indeed exist: 'Distinguish English *finny*, French *fini* (*fini*, *fini*)' (although Eustace doubts whether 'the English vowel was as close as the French' (1969: 54)). It is perhaps significant that Ellis sees in his (*i*) sound a capacity to be prolonged, especially in singing: '*ii*, long of *i*, often heard in singing, as *happy* (*Hæpii*), the first syllable being sung to a short accented note, and the second prolonged'. One is left to wonder just how a vowel sound like [i] would fare in this kind of situation, whereas a prolongation of [i] would be unproblematic.

Ellis' evidence never really allows us to say with complete certainty that he sees in the (*i*)/(*i*) contrast a phonetic opposition of a tense/lax variety, rather than one of height or quantity. Ellis finds something non-English about (*i*); commenting on the vowel sound in *six*, he avers (1874: 1105): 'No Englishman naturally says (*siks*); it would sound to him like (*siiks*) *seeks*; and few are able to produce the sound without much practice. It is best reached by pronouncing *see*, *teat*, *peep* with great rapidity. This (*i*) is the touchstone of foreigners, especially of Romance nations'.²²² Ellis claims that the 'bright primary sound' of (*ii*) is 'not so common in English as I had once thought it to be. Men with deep voices find it difficult to produce. The wide (*ii*) seems much more usual, and is especially frequent after *r*', and he recommends a means of making the distinction between the (*ii*, *i*) pair (1874: 1098): 'I have found such combinations as the following, in which (*i*, *ii*) follow each other, useful in drawing attention to the difference; the (*i*) should be much prolonged in practicing them. "Let baby be, with ugly glee, and glassy sea, worthy thee" etc and also of a verity (*veriti*) "'tis very tea (*veri tii*) and a *trusty trustee* (*træsti træstii*)".' Ellis (1869: 105) defines his short *i* as one which 'lies between (*i*) and (*e*) [the stressed vowel in *aerial*: CJ] ... The position of the tongue is the same as for (*i*), but the whole of the pharynx and back parts of the mouth are enlarged, making the sound deeper and obscurer'. He suggests too (1869: 271) that the best way to teach the (*i*) sound to a foreigner, is to point out that they 'most generally confuse it with (*e*): 'any living Frenchman will prove that the best way to teach him to pronounce *pity* (*piti*) is to tell him to consider it as written, in French letters, *pété* (his *pete*)' and, as if to emphasize the lowered quality of the (*i*) vowel he points to the

fact that 'in Scotland the short *i* in closed syllables is almost invariably pronounced (e) [his [ɛ̃]], our words *ill*, *pit*. *bid*. *bit*, becoming (el, pet, bed, bet), but are saved from any confusion with *ell*, *pet*, *bed*, *bet* because a Scotchman calls the latter (ɛl, pɛt, bɛd, bɛt)', where his (E) represents some kind of low mid [ɛ]-type vowel. Again he notes too how in Scotland (as in Holland) the short *i* has 'passed into (e)', perhaps indicating the Scotch lowered and centralized [ɛ̃] in words like *hit*, *sit*, etc.²²³

Nonetheless, he still claims that although there are two different front palatal sounds involved which are easily confounded, the fact that he can see short *i* as in some way a temporarily shortened version of [i], perhaps suggests that we are not dealing with a segment which has been observably lowered and centralized as far as [ɪ]. That the (*i*) vowel has not yet lowered that far is perhaps also suggested by Ellis' claim (1874: 1098) that the final long vowel in *trustee* is interpretable as a diphthongal (*ii*), 'which may be the first step from (*ii*) to (əi)'. But the problem remains as to whether it is best to interpret such a 'first step', 'intermediacy' segment like (*i*) in terms of lowering or centring or both, i.e. whether it is [i], [ɪ] or even [ə]. But perhaps the strongest argument against accepting any kind of [ɪ] interpretation for short (*i*) lies in Ellis' claim that it may be *prolonged*. While, for Ellis, there is no 'true' long (*i*) in his English, it is 'in frequent use among such singers as refuse so say *hapee*, *steal*, *eel*, when they have to lengthen *happy*, *still*, *ill*. They say (Hæpii, stiil, iil) although some may prefer (still, ill) which has a bad effect'. He claims too (1869: 599) that the long (*ii*) is 'heard in Scotch in the 19., where a short (*i*) is accidentally lengthened as: gi'e, wi. In English it is an unacknowledged sound often heard from singers who lengthen a short (*i*), as (stiil) for (stil) still, as distinct from (stiil) steal'.²²⁴ Murray (1873: 104) recognizes that for his Southern Scotch dialect at least, there exists some kind of [ii] sound as in *sweep* (swiip), (tshiip) *cheep*; however, 'in deference to the opinions of Mr. Ellis and Mr. Melville Bell, I identify the unaccented *ie*, *i*, in *bönnie*, *märriet*, *fyttit*, *lassies*, *lassies*, with the English short *i*, *y*. in many, *married*, *benefit*, *Harris*, *mercies*. My own appreciation of the sound would lead me to refer it rather to the short No. 1, the French *i* in *fini.*, and the Scotch *ei* in *feit*. At least when the sound is emphasized or artificially prolonged, it seems to become pure *ee*, as *cun-tree* in singing, which is different from the English coun-try.'

Sweet divides his vowel types according to tongue shape – narrow/wide – and tongue height – high/mid/low. There is, he claims (1877: 11), in addition to wide and narrow types, 'a third class, the "mixed" (gutturo-palatal) vowels, which have an intermediate position, such as the English (æh) in "err", the German (eh) in "gabe". Mixed vowels are indicated by the diacritical (h)'. In this way he distinguishes three palatal vowel types: a narrow, high front [i] in French *fini*; a wide high-front *i* in English *bit*, and a wide high-mixed 'occasional English' in both vowels in the word *pretty*. But, for Sweet, not only does there seem to be a BIT/BEEF contrast, but for English, both vowels are 'diphthongic' (1877: 18): 'In English, North German, and many other languages, short and long vowels differ not only in quantity but also in quality. If we compare the nearest conventional shorts and longs in English, as in *bit* and *beat*, *not* and *naught*, we find that the short vowels

are generally wide (*i,ɔ*), the long narrow (*i,ɔ*), besides being generally diphthongic as well. Hence originally short vowels can be lengthened and yet kept quite distinct from the original longs; (*bit*), for instance = *bit*, is quite distinct from (*bit*) = *beat*. In the broad London pronunciation this lengthening of originally short vowels is extremely common'. But by 'quite distinct' does he mean a qualitative or quantitative contrast? For Sweet – who typifies his own pronunciation as 'entirely natural and untaught – as much so as that of any savage. I never was taught either English pronunciation or English grammar at school' (1877: 112) – the lowering, tendency of the short *i* is one of its defining characteristics (1877: 110–11):

As regards position, (*i*) is often lowered, and regularly becomes (*e*¹) in unaccented syllables, which before consonants, as in *fishes*, interchanges with (*ih*). (*ih*) is not uncommon in accented syllables also in careless speech and is especially common in certain words, such as *pretty* (*prihte*¹), just as an adverb, as in 'just so'. (*ih*) seems to preponderate over (*e*¹) in rapid and careless speech. It is, however, difficult to separate them with certainty', for (*e*¹) naturally passes into (*ih*), if raised a little while the front of the tongue is kept down, and not allowed to rise quite into the (*i*) position.

And (1877: 27): 'It must be noted that the English (*i*) is slightly lower than in the other languages, verging towards (*e*). The unaccented vowel in "pity" seems to be decidedly (*e*¹). Since (*e*¹) represents a 'raised tongue position' in something like [ɛ], it is hard to see how this can easily be equated with centring or with the claim that it is 'difficult to separate [*ih* and *e*¹] with certainty'.²²⁵ Sweet's evidence might just be interpreted as suggesting a contrast which purely involves height, perhaps pointing to an (*i*)/(*i*) distinction is something rather like [i]/[ī], rather than [i]/[ī].

From this we can see that much of the observation concerning the relative values of sounds like Ellis' (*i*) and (*i*) is complex, making precise phonetic identification well nigh impossible. Among the most frequent observations available from the late-eighteenth- and nineteenth-century evidence are that (1) the two sounds are 'easily confused'; (2i) that the (*i*) was capable of prolongation in singing styles – an unlikely scenario for [i] or [ɛ]. This would suggest that we are dealing solely with a relative height-only contrast something of the nature of [i]/[ī]. However, some aspects of Sweet's evidence do seem to suggest that the *hit* vowel could also be closer to [ɛ] than [ɛ̄], and this, taken together with his assertion that while *narrow* sounds like (*i*) [French 'fini': CJ] produce 'a feeling of tenseness in that part of the tongue where the sound is formed', while *wide* vowels like (*i*) show a 'more convex' tongue shape in which that organ is 'relaxed and flattened', might just suggest a value closer to [i] for the latter. That his (*i*) does indeed represent [i] might be deduced from his placing it on a non-peripheral height-trajectory, such that (1877: 23) 'starting from (*i*), if the jaw is lowered continuously, while the current of voice is maintained, an indefinite number of vowel-sounds is produced till a broad (æ) is [as in *man*, *hat*: CJ] reached; if the tongue is stopped half-way, we have (*e*)', suggesting a sequence like [i], [ɛ], [a], whereas, were (*i*) to have a more

tense [i] value, then we might expect it to be presented in a sequence (i), (e), (æ) – [i], [e], [æ].

2.1.2 Front mid vowel raising

One of the more noticeable features of Savage's description of the vulgarities affecting front mid vowel usage, is the extent to which many vowels in this area of the phonology are realized as more front and more high than we might expect. Almost all nineteenth-century observers of the 'Vulgarities' school report the tendency, at least among the 'vulgar genteel' in London, to raise – make more palatal – a low mid vowel like [a] to both [ɛ] and even [e] values, a kind of MAT/MET/MATE merger. Indeed, this may reflect a more general process, since Savage's data appear to suggest, at least for the non-standard language, the existence of some kind of *Short Vowel Shift*, one where front vowel outputs, of whatever historical length value, tend to show a general increase in their palatality (an enhanced F₂ characteristic) – not unlike some versions of modern Australian and New Zealand English (Wells 1982: 592–608). Savage's observations also suggest (to a degree probably unrivalled by his contemporaries) a considerable level of sociophonetic contrast in the palatal vowel area, and he provides much evidence of alternations involving palatality-increase for vowels such as [e] and [ɛ]. Almost all such instances of front vowel raising Savage treats as evidence of 'vulgarism'. Most notably, he records the following as showing the high front [i] vowel (which his crude respelling system usually manifest as *ee* or, less commonly, as *ea*) among non-standard speakers: *beasteal* 'bestial'; *crease* 'cress'; *fleem* 'phlegm'; *heelots* 'hellots'; *heerd* 'heard'; *koaleesd* 'coalesced'; *leegate* 'legate'; *leegends* 'legends'; *leezure* 'leisure'; *meermaid* 'mermaid'; *peedant* 'pedant'; *prelude* 'prelude'; *teenet* 'tenet';²²⁶ *teepid* 'tepid'; *threets* 'threats'; *treemor* 'tremor'; *weepon* 'weapon'. However, Savage also records a few items where vulgar speakers – perhaps hypercorrecting – substitute a low mid vowel for [i], as in: *pennal* 'penal'; *rekd* 'wreaked'; *pelled* 'pealed'; *bet* 'beat' and *pressidence* 'precedence'. Such a raising of mid vowels to [i] in non-prestigious speech is not confined to the low mid vowel, but also involves [e] as well, although there is considerably more evidence in Savage's materials of what is an ongoing [e]/[i] alternation rather than just an occasional [e] to [i] raising. For instance, with [i] for a 'standard' [e] vowel we find: *reasons* (pronounced *rayzuns*) 'raisins'; *pleeted* 'plaited'; *Cheering Cross* 'Charring Cross'; and *keer* 'care', although the 'vulgarism' is recorded significantly more frequently in the reverse direction, with [e] for [i]: *haynous* 'heinous';²²⁷ *hayther* 'either' (pronounce *ee-ther*); *railised* 'realised'; *railly* 'really'; *raired* 'reared'; *Rale/ralyal* 'real'; *rares* 'rears'; *wailed* 'wealed'; *whale* 'weal'.

2.1.3 Mid vowels and new diphthongs

We have seen in our discussions in Parts I and II, how there is very little by way of evidence in the works of eighteenth-century commentators to suggest any kind of diphthongal value for mid front and back vowels, certainly nothing corresponding to modern outputs like [feɪs] *face* and [goʊ] *go*. Such a development is often referred to as *Long Mid Diphthongization* 'involving as it does the addition of a closing off-glide to long mid vowels. In the precursor of RP it seems to have happened

around 1800' (Wells 1982: 210), although the evidence presented here suggests that such an early recognition of the phenomenon was sporadic and uncertain, and that diphthongal forms were only firmly established in prestige speech by the middle of the nineteenth century at the earliest. We have already seen how Bayly distinguishes at least two different types of phonetic values for the improper *ea* diphthong. Phonetically conditioned breaking in pre-[r] environments was one of these – the 'e is changed into i long', as in *dear, fear, ear*, where the *a* represents a close *u*; clearly some kind of falling diphthong. A second instance occurs where *ea* can be 'long' as in items like *mary, make, and take* which, Bayly claims, not very helpfully, are pronounced as if written *meary, meak* and *teak* (1726: 17). Kenrick should not be alone in being sceptical about assigning diphthongal values to the latter representations, rather it is more likely that Bayly's *ea long* in such instances should be interpreted as a graphic device for the representation of a phonetic segment with mixed high and mid vowel characteristics, some kind of [e] vowel. Walker's comment on the pronunciation of the item *eight* at first sight seems to suggest the possibility in the 1790s of a diphthongal output: 'The genuine sound of the diphthong [is] a combination of the first sound of *a* and *e* pronounced as closely together as possible. But this distinction is very delicate, and may not be more easily apprehended than that between *meat* and *meet*'. Two interpretations of this statement are possible. The first is that Walker (Horn and Lehnert 1954: 329) does not mean any kind of temporal contrast between the two elements of this 'improper' diphthong, but a single vowel comprised of a 'mixture' of the two elements he suggests, perhaps some kind of [e] vowel. However, if we are correct in assuming that Walker's 'squeezed' *meet* vowel²²⁸ is indeed an instance of *High Vowel Diphthongisation* (Horn and Lehnert 1954: 325–7), then he may indeed be suggesting an [et]/[et] contrast for the vowel space in *eight* and *weight* – although we might notice that, in the *Dictionary* proper, the vowel in the former is marked as *a*¹, in the latter as *a*¹*y*. Indeed, a few years later in the 1797 edition of his *A Critical Pronouncing Dictionary* (1797: 40), under a discussion of the 'diphthong' *ei* (normally assigned a value of 'long slender *a*' as in *deign, reign, vain*, etc.), Walker comments that when it is found in historical pre-[ç] contexts in items like *eight, weight, 'ei*, followed by *gh*, sounds both vowels like *ae*; or if we could interpose the *y* consonant between the *a* *t* and in *eight, weight, &c.* it might perhaps convey the sound better. The difference, however, is so delicate as to render this distinction of no great importance'. But whether such a diphthong represents an innovatory development or merely a residue of the Middle English diphthongal output in this context is difficult to determine. Anyway, this diphthongization may be lexically confined to a few words such as *weight* and *eight*, and Walker's comments tend to suggest too that any [e]/[ei] contrast may well be below the range of observability. Yet the author of *A Caution to Gentlemen who use Sheridan's Dictionary* seems to be quite certain that a diphthongal pronunciation surfaces. He comments (1790: 21–2) that there is 'a corruption which pervades every page of Mr. Sheridan's Dictionary', the monophthongal pronunciation of the *ai* graph: 'People of rank and education always pronounce – AI – as a diphthong ... We have PAINS in the body, but not PENS (for writing) not PANES (of glass) in it'. The author concludes

that 'In pronouncing – AI – in MAID, for example, avoid the acute sound in – MET – and do not stop at the simple sound in MADE – but make a soft and easy diphthong of – E – and – I – MAID'.

Batchelor's system of diphthongal representation through the addition of 'y consonant' to simple vowel graphs, clearly indicates his range of 'proper' diphthongs (1809: 44), suggesting too perhaps, that diphthongal status of vowels in *maid/take* items has been of some temporal long-standing, missed through the lack of careful observation of earlier commentators: '(iy) as in *tree*; (ey) as in *hey*; (uy) as in *buy*; (oy) as in *boy* and (ay) as in *ay*'. His view of this 'two vowel' status is unambiguous:

The radical vowels of the diphthongs which end in *y* consonant, as it is termed, are heard in the syllables *sin*, *bel*, *wed*, *but*, and *hot*; and the insertion of a *y* between the vowel and the last consonant produces the sounds heard in *seen* (siyn), *bail* (beyl), *wade* (weyd), *bite* (buyt), and *hoyle* (hoyl). The motions of the tongue can neither be seen nor felt, in some cases, without more attention than grammarians generally think proper to devote to that purpose, and to this cause only must be ascribed that uniformity of error so regularly transferred from one author to another, which respects the simplicity of the sounds of the long vowels in *seen* and *bail*. For the fact of their being diphthongs, which cannot be properly pronounced without moving the tongue towards the palate before they are completed, admits of proofs which are not short of demonstration.

Batchelor (1809: 62) records too how Enfield (1807) comes to a similar conclusion: 'Mr. Enfield writes the pronunciation of *eight* and *weight*, *eyht*, *weyt*, which, with the exception of the *h* in the first word, is according to the system explained in these pages', and he records Walker's 1807 observations as well (1809: 62–3): 'Even Mr. Walker agrees that *y* is sounded in the word *eight*, which he spells *ayt*, the *a* being the same as in *fate*'. Yet his contemporary Smart (1810: 94) sees the vowel in *fate* as monophthongal, commenting that foreigners sound it too narrowly, giving a pronunciation between *feet* and its true sound, suggesting a raised value. The Scots, he claims, make the sound 'too broad' (like the French *être*), although, when they try to correct it, they make the vowel 'too narrow'. But 26 years later he seems to have changed his mind, proposing a diphthongal quality for the vowel space in items like *gate*, *gait* and *pay*. Under his *Principles of Pronunciation* (1836: iv) he asserts: 'ā, āi, āy. The English alphabetic accented *a*, in the mouth of a well-educated Londoner, is not exactly the sound which a French mouth utters either in *fée*, or in *fête*, being not so narrow as the former, nor so broad as the latter. Moreover, it is not quite simple, but finishes more slenderly than it begins, tapering, so to speak, towards the sound of *e*¹ ... This tapering off into *e*¹ cannot be heard in the unaccented alphabetic *a*¹ owing to its shorter quantity' (i.e. in items like *aerial*, and *retail*: CJ).²²⁹ But perhaps the more common observation on mid vowel diphthongization is, unsurprisingly, when it appears in pre-[r] environments, well illustrated by Cooley's (1861: xvi) observation that a diphthongal status of the vowel in words like *bare*, *fare* and *pain* is the norm: 'its sound is so

lengthened by the guttural vibration of the *r*, and the “radical” and “vanishing” movements of the voice become so apparent, that though organically the same as the *a* in *fate*, the effect on the ear is more or less diphthongal – a fact which, in careless and affected speakers, frequently induces the error of breaking up the vowel into two distinct parts, and thus imparting to syllables in which it occurs, a disyllabic character’.

The views of Batchelor and Smart as to whether there is any observable diphthongal value to the vowel space in items like *say*, *day*, *may* and *go*, *so* are echoed and refined in Ellis’ long discussion of the issue (1874: 1108–9). Ellis claims (1869: 294) that ‘At the present moment the (*ee*, *oo*) of the South of England are actually changing into (*ei*, *ou*)’. Again, in his *On Paleotype*, under his italicized *ee*, he comments: ‘English *ale* [*eel*] (*eeil*), long of [*e*], French *fée* (*fee*) ... Usually replaced by (*eei*) or (*eei*) in England’, while

In the North of England, in France, and Germany, no difficulty is felt in prolonging the pure sounds of (*ee*) and (*oo*), but in the South of England persons have in general such a habit of raising the tongue slightly after the sound of (*ee*), and both raising the tongue and partly closing the lips after the sound of (*oo*), that these sounds are converted into the diphthongs (*ee’j*, *oo’w*), or (*eei*, *oou*) where the (*ee*, *oo*) parts are long and strongly marked, and the (*i*, *u*) terminals are very brief and lightly touched but still perceptible, so that a complete diphthong results, which however is disowned by many orthoepists and is not intended by the speaker. (1869: 234)

On this ‘hotly disputed point’, Ellis questions Smart’s claim that the diphthong has some kind of (*eei*) – [*ɛɛi*] – shape ‘this I do not at all recognise’. Yet he does concede that a diphthongal version is to be heard ‘especially from Essex people’, while ‘there are, however, Londoners, persons living in London, who dispute the possibility of prolonging (*ee*), and who certainly immediately glide away towards (*i*)’. That, for him too, the glide element is perhaps just at the level of observability, is suggested by his comment that ‘the audibility of this (*-i*) differs with different speakers, and even with different words for the same speaker’ (1874: 1109). This suggestion is perhaps reinforced by his observation on (*eej*): ‘the London (educated) long (*ee*) with the “vanish”, the diphthong ending in an indefinite approach to (*i*), which is not of constant value’. He cites there too a diphthongal (*éei*) shape ‘more distinctly ending with (*i*) than London (*ee’j*)’, although whether this has any sociophonetic implication is not clear. The claim by Murray (for Ellis, ‘such an accomplished northern phonetician’) to hear Ellis himself produce a diphthongal vowel space in items like *day* and *say*, he rather haughtily sets aside as being purely ‘subjective’. Murray (1873: 107) had claimed that any front, high-mid diphthongization was a highly salient feature distinguishing southern English from Scotch, whose vowel ‘is perhaps an opener variety of (*e*) than the English vowel in *sail*, *say*, or the French *jai été aidé*, approaching to (ɛ); but its chief difference from the former lies in the fact that it is a uniform sound not gliding or closing into *ee*, like the English – at least the English of the south; thus Scotch *day*>_{ee}

Scotch day-ay'. Ellis insists that 'I am not only familiar with hearing (*éei*) and even (*éi*), but I know precisely what movements are requisite to produce them, and I have very carefully and frequently examined my pronunciation of this letter'; [he asserts] 'I am also able to prolong an (*ee*) without change, as long as my breath will last'. But in the end Ellis admits that the *day/say* vowel space does involve some kind of transition, although 'I seldom or never say (*eei*) or (*ei*) ending with a perfect (*i*) ... at the most, I seem to reach (*ee + e¹*), shewing a glide, and that in the process of "vanishing" the force of the voice decreases so much that it is very difficult to say what sound is produced'.

Ellis lists sets of contexts where, he senses, a diphthongal rather than a monophthongal sound is produced: 'In the case of a following pause, it is the most marked; but if a vowel or consonant follows rapidly, as *play or pay, pay me now*, I do not hear this 'vanish' at all. I think also that I am inclined to this vanish before (t, d, n) in *eight, weight, plate, paid, pain*, but not so decidedly nor so regularly as in the former case. I am not conscious of the vanish before (p, b, m; k, g)', while, one senses almost in frustration, he concludes 'the vanish vanishes when the utterance is rapid, as in *aorta, aerial*'. Despite the fact that he admits to the existence of '(*eei*) ... a sound almost identical with a pronunciation of long *a* now much in use in London' (1869: 272), he insists that few speakers employ a full (*eei*) diphthong, claiming that for some speakers 'in whom it is marked', it only regularly appears in the pre-pause context. Indeed he goes so far as to 'deprecate much Mr. Melville Bell's insisting on (*éi*) universally as a point of orthoepy, making the sound approach to one of the diphthongal *i*'s, for such a pronunciation is so rare as always to be remarkable and generally remarked' (1874: 1111).²³⁰ Perhaps this reluctance to accept the widespread use of the diphthongal forms²³¹ owes something to the set of speakers who appear most to use them (1869: 294): 'At the present moment the (*ee, oo*) of the South of England are actually changing into (*ei, ou*), and these sounds have been developed by the less educated, and therefore more advanced speakers, the more educated and therefore less advanced having only reached (*eei, oou*) although many of them are not conscious of saying anything but (*ee, oo*)'. Sweet (1877: 70) has no doubt that an [eɪ] diphthong is involved, and even sees a 'near' MAY/MY merger: 'Thus the first element of "long *a*" in English, as in *take*, is generally (e) or (e), but in Broad Cockney pronunciation it is (æ), and the resulting diphthong is not only heard as belonging to the (ai) type, but actually passes over into it, the first element becoming the mid-mixed (eh), as in the ordinary pronunciation of "eye".'

Since a change where [e] diphthongizes to [eɪ] involves, among other things, an addition of more palatal colour to the overall vowel space, we might very tentatively argue that this new diphthong-forming process is not unrelated to, and indeed may be an alternative manifestation of, the strong tendency we have outlined above (see III: 2.1.2 and further below) for mid front vowels in general to raise in a kind of *vowel shift* process.²³²

Although there is a small amount of evidence from commentators in the late eighteenth century that mid back vowels undergo a similar process of diphthongization to something like [oʊ], the development is almost entirely

context-sensitive – occurring in pre-sonorant contexts as a kind of ‘breaking’ (Horn and Lehnert 1954: 329–30). It is really only with Smart that we see what might be a context-free development of this kind. Describing his ‘long *o*’, he claims that it is ‘like the French *ô*. In a Londoner’s mouth, it is not always quite simple, but is apt to contract toward the end, finishing almost as *oo* in *too*’. Yet, in parallel with his comments upon the diphthongal value for the front mid vowel, he claims (1836: v) that ‘in unaccented contexts [*o*: C] preserves its specific quality, with no liability to the diphthongal character to which the accented sound is liable. The *o* in *to-bac’-co*, *o-pin’ion*, *fel’low* &c. is corrupted only by vulgar speakers’. That the diphthongal usage is, in fact, generally non-prestigious seems to be supported by his observation on the *ou*, *ow* digraphs (1836: vii): ‘It is true that the same letters are sometimes sounded *ô* or *o*¹; as in *soul*, *blow* and *follow*; but in this case the proper pronunciation will be indicated by omitting the *w*, or else marking it as silent’. Twenty-five years earlier Thomas Batchelor liberally records diphthongal values for mid back vowels, observing (1809: 9), for instance, how the *o* sound in items like *rogue* and *broke*, ‘is not similar to that heard in the words *tone*, *moan*, &c. The latter will be found to be true diphthongs; but the simple sound is heard only in the instances which are given, and a few others when pronounced short, in the provincial manner’. Although inferring that the usage is widespread, Batchelor makes few comments either on the social status of such diphthongal forms, or on any constraints on their usage dictated by accentual factors. He records what looks like an [ou] diphthong (graphically represented by an incomplete *o* + *w* combination) in items like *cwbey* ‘obey’, *wincwing* ‘winnowing’, *dcwminyun/dcminyun* ‘dominion’. It would appear that his criteria for monophthongal versus diphthongal selection are based as much on rhetorical than socio-phonetic considerations (1809: 72–3). Commenting on the *dcwminyun/dcminyun* alternation he avers:

In the instances in which the words are spelled two different ways, the first mode of spelling is that which appears to be recommended by modern orthoepists and grammarians [the *dcwminyun* type: C]. The last mode of spelling consists of a slight mutilation of some of the diphthongs, particularly in the middle of words, the nature and merits of which cannot be appreciated by such as will not maturely consider the subjects of this essay. The colloquial or hasty pronunciation of such words as *dominion*, *renovate* [*rencwveyt/rencveyt*: C], and *solutive*, is constantly attended with the use of the feeblest vowel in the English language (*u*), in the first and second unaccented syllables; but the mutilated diphthongs I have used in these cases, preserve the true tone of the vowel, and are imperfect only in the want of a final *w*, the presence of which is said to be superfluous, by many modern writers. The (*w*) is rejected, because a long vowel in the unaccented syllable, in the middle of a word, seems to my ears extremely heavy; neither are they often perfectly articulated by the most slow and solemn speakers. It happens that these diphthongs may be represented by common words, as *dough-minion*, *ren-oh-vate*, *sol-you-tiv*. I shall therefore submit it to the reader’s consideration, whether a full pronunciation of *dough*, *oh*, and

you in these cases, does or does not render the words which contain them insupportably monotonous.

Ellis is, perhaps surprisingly, rather ambivalent when it comes to admitting the presence of this [oo] to [əʊ]/[ou] diphthongization process, one so salient a feature of modern Standard English (Wells 1982: 146–8). In his *Speech Sounds* entry for the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1888: Volume 22: 387), he describes how Melville Bell hears the long version of this sound ‘only with the vanish (*oo’w*) in the pause, but otherwise generally (*oo*), and (*óou*) is always erroneous’, suggesting the same kind of ‘preferred’ context for front mid vowel diphthongization. He makes the same point in his *Expression of Sounds* section of *Early English Pronunciation* (1869: 602) under (*oou*): ‘Some speakers distinguish *no*, *know*, as (*noo*, *noou*), orthoepists generally confuse them as (*noo*) ... others again confuse them as (*noou*). Mr. M. Bell states that every long *o* is (*ou*), meaning the same as I mean by (*oou*). Some Englishmen say that it is not possible to lengthen (*o*) without adding (*u*), and pronounce nearly (*ou* (*oou*)).’ That he is conscious of ‘the controversy respecting (*ou*, *oo*)’, and that it is similar to that concerning the diphthongization of the high front mid vowels, is clear from Ellis’ (1874: 1152) admission that, ‘As regard my own pronunciation, I feel that in *know*, *sow* etc, regularly, and in *no*, *so*, etc., often, I make this labial change, indicated by (*oo’w*) ... Wherein does this sound consist? In really raising the back of the tongue to the (*u*) position, and producing (*oou*) or (*óou*)? Or in merely further closing or ‘rounding’ the mouth to the (*u*) degree, thus (*óo-o_w*)?There is no intentional diphthong, but a diphthong results so markedly, especially when the sound is forcibly uttered, that I have often been puzzled and could not tell whether *know*, *sow* serere; *no*, *so*; or *now*, *sow*, sus, were intended; I heard (*nóu*, *sóu*). But these are exaggerations, and I believe by no means common among educated speakers. Whether they will prevail or not in a hundred years, those persons who then hunt out these pages will be best able to determine’.²³³ It would seem that Ellis is not altogether happy with the diphthongal form (1889: 84; Eustace 1969: 56): ‘(*oo’w*) or (*oo*) with the vanish, that is, with a tendency as it is lengthened towards (*u,u*) ... conceived as (*óou*) and often written (*óu*) which to me altogether perverts the sound’. Indeed, Ellis has a distaste for mid vowel diphthongal outputs (‘The sound (*bóut*) is not only strange to me, but disagreeable to my ear and troublesome to my tongue’) and he is unprepared to accept Bell’s widespread use of diphthongized mid vowel forms (1874: 1152):

Mr. M. Bell’s consistent use of (*éi*, *óu*) as the only received pronunciation thoroughly disagrees with my own observations, but if orthoepists of repute inculcate such sounds, for which a tendency already exists, their future prevalence is tolerably secured. As to the ‘correctness’ or ‘impropriety’ of such sounds I do not see on what grounds I can offer an opinion. I can only say what I observe, and what best pleases my own ear, probably from long practice. Neither history nor pedantry can set the norm.

Sweet (1877: 72) writes *ou* and analyses (*óow*) = (*oo_w*), and sees a parallel with mid back diphthongization and its front equivalent: ‘Just as there is a broad (ai)-like

form of (eɪh), so the regular (oɪu) varies as (ou) and (ɔu), which last has very much the effect of (au), so that (noɪu) = “no”, seems really to pass into (naɪu)’. However, he claims that ‘In the pronunciation of those who seem to make “no” into “now”, the first element of “now” becomes distinctly (æ), so that the two diphthongs are kept perfectly distinct’. Certainly for Murray (1873: 111), the diphthongal effect appears to be canonical for southern English dialects: his mid back wide round (Paleotype o) ‘is also a uniform simple sound [in Scotch], and not a diphthong or quasi-diphthong, like the o of the South of England, which begins with o, but tapers off into oo, thus nō→oo, rō→ood (Pal. noou, rood), while the Scotch sound is nō-ō, rō-ōd (noo, rood)’. His fellow Scot Melville Bell (1867: 117) comes to a similar conclusion, noting as an ‘English characteristic’ a ‘tendency of long vowels to become diphthongs: ‘This is illustrated ... in the regular pronunciation of the vowels in *aid, ail, aim, ache, &c. (ei), ode, oak, globe, &c. (ou)*’. The same tendency leads to the ‘Cockney peculiarity of separating the labio-lingual vowels (u, o) into their labial and lingual components, and pronouncing the latter successively instead of simultaneously. Thus we hear (œu, vu, yu) for (u), and (o’w, ah’w) for (o)’.

2.1.4 Low vowels: MAT/MATE/MET mergers and the BATH/TRAP split

While much of the comment relating to this area of the phonology in the early nineteenth century reflects that of the preceding half-century, there are nevertheless to be found among the views of some of the later observers much that is descriptively of a very detailed nature, together with what are at least hints of emergent developments and their sociophonetic effects. Yet what are by now very familiar problems remain, especially regarding what might be considered to be the precise phonetic nature of the low vowel segments discussed, as well as the extent to which their alternation is a matter of phonetically conditioned predictability or rests more at the whim of lexical assignation. We saw in Part II (4.1.7) that there was some evidence to suggest the appearance of a contrastive qualitative difference between BATH and TRAP type vowels, one where the vowel (under different phonetic contextual influences) was seen as further back in the case of the former and further front (and perhaps even raised) in the latter. Very late in the eighteenth century we see that close observer James Adams distinguishing three types of *a* vowel: A ‘clair Italien’ (*man, sad, can*); A ‘ouvert’ (*war, water*) and A ‘Petit’ (*jack, fact*). He notes how the digraph *au* in *aunt, laugh* represents the ‘petit’ sound, although *aunt* and *laugh can*, on occasion, have the ‘ouvert’ manifestation – i.e. a vowel which is more retracted. However, the *ouvert* forms are socially stigmatized (1794: 93): ‘Laugh (laf) de même par ê ouvert et grand, est trop dur, et grossier, etimite plutôt le ris paysans, ou des ivronges, qui le ris doux et polit du beau monde, car c’est un mot autophone, ou onomophone come, *rifus, gelas, ris, riso, &c.* ce mot semble plutôt peindre la suffocation, que le ris dand la bouche des Ecosais’. We might conclude from this, perhaps, that Adams hears two low vowel sounds in pre-fricative contexts, one like [a], the other, a more retracted [ɑ] type, although the latter is, at best, rustic. A decade later, Thomas Batchelor (1809) presents, in

embryonic form, many of the problems associated with both the interpretation of the value and the distribution of vowel sounds in this area of the phonology. Batchelor claims (1809: 8) that the vowel sounds in the pairs *mat*, *pan* versus *bard*, *task* 'are justly considered by modern grammarians to differ only in length'; his articulatory description of the *bard*, *task* vowel is hard to interpret but, if anything, it is suggestive of a segment which is at least relatively low, and perhaps back: 'the middle of the tongue is slightly depressed below its position in sounding the *u* in *but*, and the sound becomes perceptibly more sharp and clear'. Yet his *Orthoepical Alphabet* seems to distinguish two different types of *a* sound, one represented by an arabic *a* graph, the other by the same graph but with a hook on the ascender. That these two sounds are not distinguished merely by durational contrast, is strongly suggested by his statement that although (1803: 18): 'the vowels in *task* and *order* are perceptibly longer than the similar ones in *pan* and *top*' nevertheless, 'the longer sound [of the *a*: C] sometimes receives a tinge of the *o*, as in *order*, as in the following examples (1809: 23): *Ardor/order*; *hard/hord*; *garden/gordon*; *part/port*; *cards/cords*. The impropriety of mingling the long *a* with the long *o*, as above, must be sufficiently obvious'. The broad and hollow sound of *o* Batchelor (1809: 8–9) describes as one where the 'the tip of the tongue is considerably depressed; the middle of it is also lower than in pronouncing *a* in *mat*, and *bard*, and the hinder part appears to be retracted towards the throat'. But perhaps the clearest evidence that Batchelor in fact recognises a qualitative difference between his short and long *a* sounds is to be seen in his diagram depicting the *Positions of the Tongue, Lips and Uvula* – see Plate Ia – where the 'long' version is placed in a position nearer the back of the mouth than the short, although both are depicted as relatively central and high in the mouth cavity. For Batchelor, the 'long' version of the *a* sound is mainly, if not even canonically, confined to pre-[r] and [r] + consonant environments although, as we shall see below, syllables terminating in [l], [s] plus consonant, and the vowel outcome of the Middle English [au] diphthong are also candidate contexts for this vowel. The examples cited in his *Vocabulary, Consisting Principally of Accidental Errors in Pronunciation* (1809: 119–47) containing the long *a* symbol include *narrow*, *arbor*, *argue*, *largess*, *learning*, *service*, *storm*; *daughter*, *drawn*, *jaundice* and *saucer* (with intrusive [r]). Short *a* values appear mainly in pre-obstruent contexts: *aks* 'asks', *skrat* 'scratch', *stab* 'stob', *krap* 'crop', *backard* 'backward', although syllables terminating in sonorants also appear to favour this 'less broad' vowel sound: *hangkitur* 'handkerchief', *gangin* 'gangrene', *saluri* 'celery', *gal* 'girl', *marukl* 'miracle' and *vamit* 'vomit', while the 'short'/'long' contrast is to be seen in the successive syllables of an item like *blackguard*.

An observer such as Smart (1810, 1836) appears to distinguish separate, but closely related 'short *a*' and 'long *a*' vowel types, typically illustrated through the *fat/far* contrast. Smart asserts (1810: 16) how some orthoepists 'do indeed reckon the *a* in *far* to be the open sound of the *a* in *fat*, but to pronounce the former, the mouth is opened rather wider than to pronounce the latter; and therefore, however small the difference may be, they must be considered as essentially two distinct sounds'; his *a*³ in *far*, *hard* 'is an open sound which is broader than the closed *a*² (as in *fat*)' (1810: 63). For Smart, the vowel in *far* is the 'Italian *a* finishing with

guttural vibration'. This Italian *a* is 'The easiest vowel' and 'is produced by emitting the voice when the organs are in the position they most naturally take if the mouth be open. Such we call the Italian *a*; the sound we give to that letter in the last syllable of the words *papá* and *mamá*' (1810: 5). His *a*², as in *fat*, is not, he claims, to be found in neighbouring languages, although it is like the French vowel in *fat* 'coxcomb', but even here 'delicate ears will discern a difference' (1810: 96): 'This sound, which is properly deemed the second sound of the letter *a*, differs in quality as well as quantity both from *a*¹ and *a*³, although it is much nearer the latter than the former – indeed, so near, that in theory they are considered identical, but it is not, practically so broad as *a*³. The word *fat*, in a Londoner's mouth has even a narrower sound than *fat* (a coxcomb) has in a Parisian's (1836: v)'. That neither his *a*³ or *a*² have recognisably front/high characteristics of a segment like [æ], is just perhaps suggested by his claim that 'Provincialists of the North give it (his Italian *a*) a false sound, which cannot be specified on paper, but which seems to be something between *a*¹ [his vowel in *face*: CJ] and the true sound; as may be observed in their pronunciation of the words *bar*, *father*' (1810: 101). Yet, whatever value we might assign to his Italian *a*, Smart is adamant that 'A too broad, drawling utterance of the sound, common among the vulgar, must be carefully avoided' (1810: 101).

Cooley (1861) paints what appears to be a more complex picture, one deriving in part at least from the descriptive mechanisms he uses for vowel classification. Cooley's phonotype system, with its use of italicized, bold-italicized, roman and arabic alphabetic symbols, reflects a division of vowel sounds not just along a long and short parameter, but one where the short types are subcategorized. Long vowels are seen as open, accented and having their 'full alphabetic values': as in the stressed vowels in items such as *basis*, *bone*, *me*, *mete*, *so*, *hopeful*, etc. Short (Derivative) vowels, on the other hand, are divided into a *Brief* category, where the sound 'terminates rapidly but not abruptly', as the *y* in *happy*. These are said to differ from open vowels chiefly in their length. There is also a *Stopped* category, where the sound terminates abruptly or is 'sudden arrested and, as it were, 'cut off' by a following consonant', as in *cot*, *hat*, *pit* (1861: xv). This last type he calls the 'true' short vowels, and while the Brief Short vowels are interpreted as identical to their Long congeners, Stopped types (even where they share the same symbolic representation) are regarded as qualitatively different. But his descriptions are often difficult to interpret:

In sounding *ǎ* or *ǒ*, etc. the organs assume the same forms and position as for the correspondent 'long' or 'open' vowels, but they are more rapidly pronounced, and the sound is suddenly 'stopped' or abruptly cut off and, as it were, modified by the following consonant, in a manner, and in a degree as to completeness of effect on the ear, varying with the class to which a particular consonant belongs. (1861: xxii).

Cooley would appear to be arguing for a tripartite, long/short/stopped realization for vowel sounds in general, so that, for instance, there is an Italian *a*²³⁴ with a

durationally long and short version, and an Italian *a*, in a 'stopped' version. Thus, Cooley describes the vowel sound in *fat* and *hat* as 'the short or stopped sound of the Italian *a*, though usually confounded with that of the long or slender *a'* [in *fate*, *pate*: CJ] (1861: xxii), suggesting, perhaps, a raised, front manifestation for the stopped version.²³⁵ Thirty years earlier, this was the description given by Smart for the provincial pronunciation of the Italian *a*, one which might just be a frontier, more palatal [æ]-like segment.²³⁶ Perhaps this is another manifestation of what we suggested is a MAT/MET merger, seen in Walker (1791: 12) and Kenrick's (1784: 63) 'corrupt', 'flirting females and affected fops' and the 'new modes' of Fogg's Londoners (1796: 168) who, we recall, adopt 'new modes that incline to feebleness and sweetness; and articulate with a rapidity necessarily', where 'short *a* is often confounded with *e*; *man* pronounced as *men*; *fat* as *fet*; *sand* as *send*: this is objectionable both as emasculating the language, and unfortunately obscuring its sense, making more equivocal words than any other corruption would'. Savage (1833) too records instances of what look like MAT/MET mergers, but they are not nearly as extensive as one might have expected from him had they been a serious infringement of linguistic propriety: *ketch* 'catch'; *reddishes* 'raddishes'; *thenky* 'thank you'; *threshed* 'thrashed'; *gether* 'gather', alongside what may well be hyper-corrections including: *sallary* 'celery'; *grannydeers* 'grenadiers'; *drags* 'dregs'; *mashes* 'meshes, of net'; *asplenade* 'esplanade'. Such a merger may be what the author of *The Vulgarities of Speech Corrected* (1826: 20) sees as a 'miserable and disgusting affectation':

The letter 'a', for example, when pronounced short, has properly a sound intermediate between 'e' in 'fell', and 'a' in 'fall', but a Scotsman endeavouring to speak English almost uniformly mistakes it for the first, and pronounces, 'bad' – 'bed', 'tax' – 'tex', 'lamb' – 'lemb' ...

Despite the problem of interpreting the value of his vowel in *fall*, as well as knowing precisely what he means by 'intermediate', it seems that non-standard speaking provincials heard the London polite MAT vowel as possibly fronted and raised to [e] or even as [æ].

More than any other contemporary commentator, it is Savage who stresses the salience of what was to his ear one of the most 'vulgar genteel' pronunciations of the day: the raising of a low front vowel, possibly [a], to [e]. Savage gives many examples of what he sees as vulgarisms with the high vowel: *air* 'are'; *Aithens* 'Athens'; *baide* 'bad'; *chairwoman* 'charwoman'; *faybric* 'fabric'; *Haive* 'have'; *kayprice* 'caprice'; *malecontents* 'malcontents'; *naytional* 'national'; *payjuntry* 'pageantry'; *paytent* 'patent'; *paytriot* 'patriot'; *paytron* 'patron'; *paytronage* 'patronage'; *phaylanx* 'phalanx'; *playcards* 'placards'; *playgerism* 'plagiarism'; *rayshures* 'rashers'; *rayther* 'rather'; *saykrilige* 'sacrilege'; *sayterist* 'satirist'; *saytern* 'Saturn'; *sayture* 'satire'; *taykel* 'tackle',²³⁷ while with the low vowel on these occasions as the 'vulgar' sociophonetic marker are: *babby* 'baby'; *garla* 'gala'; *garp* 'gape'; *granery* 'granary' (orthoepy *grainary*); *matron* 'matron'; *parentage* 'parentage'; *plantiff* 'plaintiff'; *plat* 'plait'; *rallery* 'raillery'; *sakkred* 'sacred'; *sakrament* 'sacrament' (orthoepy *saykrament*).

Adams (1794: 57) also comments on the fact that in *ance* instances ‘the *a* foreign is often turned into *ai* (*ei*) by our Londoners, and very *fine* [italics Adams’: CJ] speakers – *France, dance, Fraince, daince, etc.*’

It is interesting to note how this [a]/[e] alternation (as well as the [a]/[ɛ] type – the *ketch* ‘catch’ variety) is recorded in both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a distinct *Scotticism* (Jones 1995: 132–7).²³⁸ However, it is not always necessarily considered there as an exemplification for low, vernacular Scots, but often as an instance of ‘refined’, standard Scots pronunciation – the pronunciation of what Alexander Scot defines as ‘the Colledge, the Pulpit and the Bar’. The significance of this fact may lie in the speculation that for Scottish social aspirants wishing to accommodate to what they saw as London standard norms, the [a] and [ɛ] vowels of the latter may have been perceived as being more palatal than metropolitan speakers themselves recognised. Although some forty years previously the Scot, Sylvester Douglas claims to have heard[e] pronunciations for the vowel in an item like *have* but only among ‘the ill educated among the Londoners’, he nevertheless observes that in the Pure dialect – the usage of London Court circles – the sound in *hat* ‘approaches to the limits of, and begins to mix itself with, the short and slender sound in *better*’ (Jones 1991:118), recording items like *apple, rather, master, Harry, large* with low, mid front [ɛ] vowel realizations. Indeed, in items like *dragon, rather, ravish* and many others he records a mid high [e] vowel as used by Scots speakers but, crucially, particularly by those who ‘aim at propriety’ or who are ‘aiming at the improvement of their pronunciation’ (Jones 1995: 133–5). *The Vulgarities of Speech Corrected* under its section on *Provincial Scotch Vulgarities* cites the ‘mistake’ of the Scotch in pronouncing ‘Latin’ as *Laytin* and ‘sacrifice’ as *Saycrifice* (1823: 225).

If anything, sociophonetic comment on the salience of the BATH/TRAP split itself is even more pronounced in the nineteenth century than it is in the eighteenth. Nearly all commentators assert that (in the words of Smart) the ‘guttural vibration’ of a syllable final [r] (especially, but not exclusively) in monosyllables, will trigger the broader *a*³ sound – perhaps some kind of [ɑ] (or [ɒ] in Batchelor’s case). Other affecting contexts (notably the ‘weaker’ variety we referred to earlier in II: 3.2.4 above), such as pre-[f], [s] + consonant, pre [l] + consonant, [n] and [θ]/[ð], in items like *glass, band, path, calf* and *father*, although they might also trigger this vowel, do so less frequently, are more subject to temporal and sociophonetic change, and are often constrained by factors which appear to be purely lexical. Batchelor seems to suggest that his short *a* is low in value, perhaps at [a]. He argues very forcefully against any acceptance of a MAT/MET merger (1809: 22) claiming that the *a* sound in

had is a sound very distinct from all the others, but is more sharp and harsh among country people than among those of polished manners. The broad and long sound which this letter generally receives among foreign nations, may leave some room to doubt whether the polite, soft *a* is not exactly the creature of modern refinement. *A* is softened by raising the tongue a little towards the forepart of it, by which means the tone approaches, in some measure, towards

the *e* in *met*. Refinement should be kept within very moderate bounds with respect to this letter, as the real exchange of *a* for *e* is the result of ignorance or affectation, by means of which certain words will cease to be distinguished in pronunciation: *had/head; lad/led; man/men* etc.

He seems to argue too (1809: 18–19) against any tendency to ‘shorten’ (i.e. retract) the *a* vowel both in pre-[r] as well as in the other, weaker lengthening contexts: ‘The vowels in *task* and *order* are perceptibly longer than the similar ones in *pan* and *top*, yet, in these instances, two opposite errors should be guarded against: they should neither be pronounced with the tedious provincial drawl, nor according to what Mr. Jones terms ‘a mincing modern affectation’ by which *lass*, *palm*, *part*, *dance* &c. are passed over as hastily as *pan*, *mat*, *lack* and *fan*’. Perhaps a plea for Walker’s compromise, ‘middle’ sound of the *a* vowel. Certainly Batchelor seems to regard as stigmatized any attempt to ‘broaden’ (i.e. lower, retract towards [ɑ] or [ɒ]) either his short or long *a* sounds (1809: 81): ‘In the pronunciation of the simple vowels there is no remarkable deviation from the polite standard in Bedfordshire, unless in the case of long and short *a*, as in *pan*, and *part*, which are deemed too broad and sonorous among the lower classes’.

Smart (1810: 97) records an ongoing change away from a broader low vowel in many instances, claiming that ‘It was formerly usual to give the third sound to this letter, when succeeded by the consonants that close it in the following words. But elegant pronunciation now disowns this utterance: *slander*, *plant*, *brass*, *grass*, *mass*, *glass*, *fast*.’ He observes too how the broader vowel is used in *plant*, *fast*, *castle*, *basket* and *mastiff*, but is growing daily less frequent in ‘well-bred society’. Likewise, he seems to suggest *a*² (his *fat* vowel) rather than the broader *a*³ (his *far* vowel) for items like *castle*, *basket*, *bastion*, *caster*, *clasper*, *mastiff*, *master*, *nasty*, *rascal*, *alabaster*, *bombastic*, *fantastic*, *masculine*, *exasperate*, yet there are lexical considerations at work too, since ‘The words *comma*³*nd*, and *dema*³*nd* seem, however, still to retain *a* in the old sound’.²³⁹ By 1836, Smart is, typically, appealing for some kind of compromise between a ‘vulgar’ and too broad vowel, and an affected (perhaps hypercorrecting) spread variety, a compromise form which again may in fact echo Walker’s earlier ‘middle *a*’ sound:

Among speakers of the old school, this is yet the mode of sounding *a* in such situations [*a*³ in *pass*, *path* and *father*: CJ]; but metropolitan usage among educated people has for a long time inclined to change a practice, where the orthography of the words manifestly does not warrant; and as, of two opinions or tastes, it was necessary to embrace the one, the author of this dictionary takes, with Walker, the side of regularity. But Walker is a bigot; he allows of no compromise between the broad *a*³, with which a vulgar mouth pronounces *ass*, and the sound, narrower, if possible, than *a* in *at*, with which an affected speaker minces the same word. Surely, in a case like this, there can be no harm in avoiding the censure of both parties by shunning the extreme that offends the taste of each; and this medium sound in the case in question, may safely be affirmed to be the one actually in use by the best speakers wherever letter *a* is marked in this dictionary, as in Walker’s, to be pronounced *ă*, once had *a*³.

Cooley allows for his 'long Italian *a*', not only in pre-[r] environments, but also before [l] + consonant, in [au] monophthongizing contexts, and before 'th sharp', as in *calm, psalm, aunt, launch, saunter, half, calf, salve, bath, father, lath, path*. But his 'long Italian *a*' ('always heard in monosyllables before *r*') is described as 'sometimes called the middle *a*' (1861: 20), and may well therefore represent a relatively spread segment like [a]. However, whatever its value for Cooley, the long Italian *a*, while 'formerly' found in items like *dance, glance, lance, chant, grant, plant, slander* and *command*, is 'now regarded as a vulgar pronunciation', replaced by his *ǎ*, 'except in a very few words', while in *command, demand, remand*, etc. usage is divided, the Italian *a* being even now used in these words by many good speakers'.

We saw earlier (II: 4.2.5) how the output of the Middle English [au] diphthong before nasals – the HAUNT vowel – caused considerable sociophonetic comment in the late eighteenth century. Smith (1795), for example, shows his first 'most open' vowel in items such as *daunt, haunt, taunt*, yet *haunch, paunch, launch, craunch, blanch, branch* and *stanch* show his vowel two – his long *a* – in items like *car, hard, card, charm*, an alternation which is possibly lexically motivated as much as anything else (1795: 7 *Footnote*): 'I have classed these seven [the *launch* type: CJ] together, and put them under this sound (his second sound, the vowel in *ah*: CJ) of the *a*, notwithstanding Mr. Sheridan has marked them all, except *paunch*, with the short, *a*; and Mr. Walker has marked *blanch*, and *branch* with it. Dr. Kenrick agrees with me entirely, and Mr. Scott in every word but *paunch*, which, with Mr. Sheridan, he places among those of our first sound [the vowel in *awe*: CJ]'. For Elphinston the HAUNT words are all to be treated as 'A slender shut' – some kind of low front [a] vowel. Yet twenty or so years later, Smart is content to allow the broader *a*³ as the monophthongization of the Middle English [au] diphthong in nasal + consonant environments, showing *a*³ [his [a]: CJ] in *aunt, haunt, flaunt, jaunt, haunch, paunch, launch, jaundice, laundry, daunt, saunter*; while 'vaunt, avault' are generally heard on the stage with *au* in the fourth sound of *a*' [his *a* in *fall*: CJ]. Cooley (1861: xxi *footnote* 9) allows his long Italian *a*,²⁴⁰ in *aunt, launch* and *saunter*, but not in *vaunt* or *avault* and two or three others ('nor in *Maundy* or *maundrill* 'in which it is regular' (1861: xxxvi)) which have the German *a* (*aw*) or the common sound of the diphthong *au*'. And for Cooley too (1861: xxi), the preservation of a broad Italian *a* in items like *ask, class, glass, grasp, craft* and *graft* represents 'a practice now regarded as vulgar or provincial'. Like most of his contemporaries Cooley sees the long Italian *a* as more or less canonical in pre-syllable final [r] contexts. While the short *ǎ* predominantly appears in words like *fat* and *hat*, he claims it is also to be found in those pre-[r] contexts where the [r] is ambisyllabic, as in *arid, carry, marry* and *tarry*: 'but owing to the peculiar nature of the consonant, the sound is scarcely so suddenly or abruptly arrested to the ear as it is by the other consonants, particularly the pure mutes. Any utterance of this sound which destroys its stopped character or which approaches even in the smallest degree to the *a* in *far*, is a decided vulgarism' (1861: xxii *footnote* 20). On occasion, too, Savage's comments on vocalic values and their sociophonetic status can be tantalizingly vague. Decrying the observations of 'a teacher of elocution' – most probably Sheridan – who recommends pronunciations of *basket, castle, grant* and

sample by whatever is signified but the notations *bas-ket*, *cas-tle*, *gr-ant* and *sam-ple*, Savage (1833: xxvi–xxvii) becomes quite aggravated, declaiming: ‘What if a *Fribble* should say to us, I put the *plant* with the *glas* into the *bas-ket* which was *gr-anted* me and carried it as a *sam-ple* to the *cas-tle*. – We ask of every man if it would not disgust him to sickness.’

But there is perhaps some evidence to suggest that among some speakers in the Metropolis at least, a variety of lengthened (but not necessarily broadened) *a* was appearing in certain contexts, notably in syllables terminated by fricatives and nasals. Smart (1836: v) notes how: ‘At the same time it must be confessed that when *f*, *s*, or *n* follow the letter, we are apt, even in London, to give a slight prolongation to the vowel, which would, in other cases, be quite rustic; as in *graft*, *grass*, *plant*; which slight prolongation was once universally accompanied by a decidedly broader sound, such as might be signified by *gra³ft*, *gla³ss*, *pla³nt¹*. So too Cooley (1861: xxii): ‘In many words in which *ǎ* occurs before *f*, *s*, *st*, or *n*, there is a slight tendency to broadness, which is not quite intrinsic with the mode of indication; as may be perceived in an elegant and unaffected pronunciation of *craft*, *graft*, *staff*, *clasp*, *grasp*, *grass*, *last*, *past*, *chant*, *plant*, *command*, *demand*, *remand*’. Yet that the situation is a very fluid (if not an entirely lexicalized one) can be seen when he nevertheless concludes that: ‘many speakers substitute the “brief” sound of *ā* (i.e. *ǎ* or *ǎh*) and even *ā* itself, for the “stopped” one, in all or nearly all these words’, citing Smart’s view that such a broadness is (in England) ‘a *decided vulgarism*’ [italics Cooley].

Ellis’ evidence for the shape of the vowels in BATH/TRAP words in the late nineteenth century is detailed and revealing. Recall how he views vowel segments, not as individual, unique contrastive entities, but as positions on a *scale* of vocal-icness, so that his (æ) → (ah) → (a) → (*a*) → (A) → (ɔ), represents a seamless move from low front, through low central to low back vowels in a progression something like [æ]→[a]→[ɐ]→[ɑ]→[ʌ]→[ɔ]. For Ellis, the vowel quality of words such as *father*, *alms* and *aunt* is undoubtedly back and unround, and represented typically by his (aa) symbol (1869: 93):

In the nineteenth century the indication of length and quality is variously made according to the origin of the word in: *father*, *are*, *seraglio*, *ah*, *alms*, *Malmesbury*, *éclat*, *aunt*, *barque*, *clerk*, *heart*, *guard*, but its principle indication is a before r = (ɪ) professedly, but intended to be omitted by those persons who write *larf* to indicate (laaf). In London, *ar*, when not followed by a vowel, may be regarded as the regular sign for (aa), and is so used by many writers.

Ellis recognizes too a sound he symbolizes as (æ), one which, in his system, is closer to [ɛ] than to [a] and may, given its non-peripheral status in the vowel space, be characterized as something like [ɛ̥]: ‘This vowel, as I pronounce it, is very thin, and foreigners have told me that I make no distinction between *man* and *men* (mæn, men), according to Mr. Bell.²⁴¹ ... Many persons, however, seem to me to use (ah), even now for (a)’. Such a vowel sees in items like *sat*, *Isaac*, *Mackay*, *drachm*, *have*, *bagnio*, *salmon*, *harangue*, *Clapham* and others. It is one which he

claims is now characteristic of English, and which 'is the despair of foreigners', where his 'now' might just suggest that the value is a recent innovation. Ellis asserts that 'This vowel has a very thin sound, almost as in English *hat*, the tongue being considerably advanced in the mouth, but without the front being raised'. Any long version of such a sound he claims to be restricted to the west of England,²⁴² 'Twenty years ago it was, and probably still is, a fashionable long sound of A in Copenhagen' (1869: 94).

But both (aa) and (æ) are, for Ellis, the subject of sociophonetic constraint, a constraint involving gender as well as geographical location. Certainly his remarks suggest considerable variation in the BATH/TRAP set – 'the words *class*, *staff*, *demand*, are pronounced with (aa, a, ah, æ, ææ) by different careful speakers, and even (ah, əh) [[æ] or [ɔ]: CJ] are in occasional use by others' (1869: 68 *footnote*). The monophthongization of the Middle English [au] diphthong Ellis claims has become 'a rather thin pronunciation at the present day, which some ladies even still further this to (ænt, dænt)' (1869: 148). And while polite Londoners might use the low retracted vowel in items such as *basket*, *staff*, *path*, *pass* and *aunt*, 'very delicate speakers, especially educated ladies in Yorkshire', utilize the [ɛ̃] pronunciation. On the other hand, a lengthened version of the former – (aah) a 'delicate sound' – he claims is 'occasionally heard from 'refined' speakers, as a variety of (aa), which they consider 'too broad', while the (ææ) used by others is too 'mincing'. Ellis notes too what may well be age and gender constraints in his section dealing with the speech of *Young Educated London* (1874: 1214) – in a transcript provided by Henry Sweet 'of rather a broad London pronunciation of a girl of about twenty', we find a contrast like (aask) *ask* versus (ææd) *add*. Again, under his discussion of Bell's Key Word *Cart* (1874: 1152–3), Ellis speaks out strongly against any (a) [a] vowel as too 'broad': the sound of (a) is, so far as I know, quite strange to educated organs, though common in Scotland.' He cites Murray (1873: 110) 'the Scotch *a*, when most broadly pronounced, is only equal to the common Cockney *pass*, *ask*, *demand* (paahs, aahsk, demaahnd), and I have heard a London broker pronounce *demand drafts* with an *a* which, for broadness, I have never heard bettered in the North'.²⁴³ For Ellis, such pronunciations are to be studiously avoided, since 'It is the repulsion of such sounds which drives the educated, and especially ladies, into the thinness of (ah, æ)' (Fudge 1977; Henton 1983).

Late-nineteenth-century variations in this area of the phonology, we might speculate, show an alternation like (aa) [aa/ɑɑ], (aah) [ɐ̃], and (æ) [ɛ̃], but the fine phonetic detail must remain a matter of speculation.²⁴⁴ As Ellis himself comments (1874: 1147): 'Really to distinguish (a, ah, æ) becomes very difficult, and few ears are to be trusted'. But perhaps what is most clear from Ellis' evidence is that, in London at any rate, the distribution of [a], [æ] and [ɑ] vowels was open to considerable variation, even in the traditional vowel-lengthening contexts, such as in items like *bar*, *car*, *garb*, *carve*, *starve*, *balm*, *calm*, *chaff*, *staff*, *ask*, *bask*, *path*, *chance*, *dance* (1874: 1148):

Now in London I constantly hear (aa) in all these words from educated speakers ... on the other hand, I have heard (æ) in every one of the words also²⁴⁵ ... I have

also heard (a) short in every one ... Again, in those words which have no *r*, I frequently hear (ææ), and more frequently (ah), both short and long, especially from ladies, and those who do not like broad sounds. Apparently this dread arises from the fear that of they said (aask, laaf), they would be accused of the vulgarity of inserting the *r*, and when *arsk*, *larf*, are written, they 'look so very vulgar'.²⁴⁶

He concludes that 'the tendency seems to be towards (baa, paak, baahm, saahm,²⁴⁷ Haaf, tshæf, stæf, bahth, lahth, raath, tshæns, dæns), but the words vary so much from mouth to mouth, that *any* pronunciation would do, and *short* (a) would probably hit a mean to which no one would object'.²⁴⁸ He continues: 'In a performance of *King John*, I heard Mrs. Charles Keane speak of '(kææf) skin' with great emphasis, and Mr. Alfred Wigan immediately repeated it as '(kaaf) skin' with equal distinctness. Both were (I am sorry to use the past tense, though both are living off the stage) distinguished actors. Mr. Bell hears (aɪ) in *part*, but I do not know (a) [his [a]: CJ] as a southern English sound'. The shape of the original pre-nasal diphthong [au] in items like *command*, *demand*, *romance* among others, shows a similar level of variation, according to Ellis' evidence. While he argues (1869: 568) that in the nineteenth century (as in the previous two) the monophthongization went to his (A) (for Eustace (1969) either [ɔ] or [ɒ]) there is 'a tendency to fall, on the one hand into (aan), on the other into (an), with their various refinements. Thus *romance*, *romantic* have now generally (æɛ), but (AAɛ) is occasionally heard, and forty years ago I was familiar with (romAAɛs, romaans). In *command*, *demand*, etc. the contest is among (an, aan, an, an, æɛ, ææɛ, ahɛ, aahɛ). In *daunt*, *gaunt*, *haunt*, *gauntlet*, *jaunt*, *taunt*, *vaunt*, all the last named sounds may be heard, and also (AAɛ), but never (An)'. And he concludes that: 'It would be convenient to use (aan) for (an) in all words where it corresponds with French (aA)'. But one can almost sense Ellis' frustration at what looks more and more like an 'anything goes' situation in this area of the phonology when he writes (1869: 68 *footnote*): 'The words *class*, *staff*, *demand*, are pronounced with (aa, a, ah, aah, æ, ææ), by different careful speakers, and even (ah, əh) are on occasion used by others'.

2.2 Labial vowels

2.2.1 Mid back vowels: FLAT–CLOTH developments

Cooley (1861: xxx 17) observes an ongoing development of his short *o* vowel (in *not*, *lot*, etc.) whereby 'when this short sound of *o* comes before *ss*, *st*, *th*, or a liquid (except *r*) followed by a mute, as in *cross*, *dross*, *loss*, *moss*, *cost*, *frost*, *broth*, *cloth*, *solve* ... there is a slight tendency to "broadness", which, when exaggerated or even perceptibly increased, becomes a decided vulgarism ... This broadness of the *o* is often, by the illiterate particularly in the provinces, extended to the vowel before other consonants than those mentioned above, and this to a degree which converts *cõffee* into *cawffee*, *õff* into *awf*, *frõst* into *frawst*, &c.; a perversity and vulgarity of utterance easily acquired, but, in the adult, usually very difficult to eradicate'. He goes on to cite Walker's (1791: §170) observation: 'it would be

equally exceptional to pronounce the *o* in *moss*, *dross*, *frost*, &c. as if they were written *mawse*, *drawse*, *frawst*, &c.'. In this Cooley (1861: xxx) largely follows Smart (1836), like him seeing an analogy between the broadening of short *o* and *a*:²⁴⁹ 'It is further observable that before *ss*, *st* and *th*, letter *o* is frequently sounded \bar{a}^4w ; for example, in *moss*, *gloss*, etc, *tost*, *cost*, &c., *broth*, *cloth* &c. This practice is analogous to the broad utterance which letter *a* is liable to receive before certain consonants, and the same remarks will apply in the present case as to the one referred to, namely, that though the broad sound is vulgar, there is affectation in a palpable effort to avoid it in words where its use seems at one time to have been general. In such cases a medium between the extreme is the practice of the best speakers'.²⁵⁰ For Smart, such a compromise is defined as: 'The exact sound, in every instance, lies between the one indicated (by \bar{o} or \bar{a}) and the vulgar corruption'. Perhaps we are witnessing here an early manifestation of the broad-/flat-CLOTH variation (Wells 1982: 136) whereby 'within the memory of many people' the prestige metropolitan accent has changed from the [ɒ] vowel associated with LOT words to the [ɔ] of THOUGHT types. Wells notes that this change is observable by London speakers and that 'it tends to be formulated in terms such as "saying *crawss* instead of *cross*"'. It is interesting to note too, how the parodyist Leigh Hunt characterizes the speech of an early-nineteenth-century lower-class London woman as containing *craws* 'cross', *cawf* 'cough' and *hawse* 'horse' pronunciations (Jones 2001: 159).

Ellis recognizes at least three short and long segments in the general low/mid back vowel regions, symbolized by (A), (ɔ) and (o). These symbols are given various interpretations by modern observers; Eustace assigning (a) values like [ɔ], [ɒ], MacMahon (1998) [ɔ]; (o) values in [ɔ]; (ɔ) as [ɐ] (MacMahon) and [ɒ] or [ɔ] (Eustace), while Ellis's vowel scale, where (a) → (A) → (ɔ) itself suggests a progression with decreasing sonority such that [a] → [ɒ] → [ɔ]. The contrast between these segments Ellis himself finds difficult to perceive clearly on all occasions while, although 'short o is (ɔ), the distinction [between it and (A) in *squash*, *what*] is delicate, but may be rendered appreciable by drawling *odd* into (ɔɔ) which will be found to be different from *awed* (AAd), or by shortening the vowel in the latter word, producing (Ad), which is different from (ɔd) *odd*.' He certainly implies that there is considerable variation in usage, such that 'a after a (w) sound, as *what*, *watch*, *squash* (what, watsh, shwash), is the sole representative of this sound, and even here most speakers use (ɔ)' (1869: 593). Again in *On Paleotype* (1866: 10), Ellis sees the (A) in *what* as 'theoretically perfectly distinct from (ɔ) with which, however, it is constantly confused', while the relative sonority of the two segments is signaled by his claim that '(A) is always an altered (a) sound, and (ɔ) an altered (o) sound', the two sets differing by 'the depression of the back of the tongue' (1874: 1116). Yet it is, he claims, only in 'delicate discussions' that it is possible to distinguish the two sounds. Ellis recognises that while the rounding effect of a preceding [w] has effectively realized an (A)-type vowel (1869: 188): 'It is by no means general in the provinces, where (water, waim, warm, war'm) etc. still exist. I have heard (waati, kwælititi, kwæntiti) from even educated speakers'. Once more he asserts there that the contrast is clearer in 'drawled' as against short versions of these sounds: 'English *awn*, distinct from (ɔɔ) or drawled *on*. Preachers often say

(Gɔɔd) *gawd* instead of (Gɔd). ... and the Londoners say (ɔɔf, kɔɔfi, krɔɔs) rather than (AAf, kAAfi, kTAAS), *off, coffee cross*; the (oo) sound is ‘Sometimes heard before *f, s, th*, as: *off, cross, broth* (oof, croos, brooth), where it is apt to degenerate into (AA, ɔɔ), or sink into (ɔ)’; ‘the two sounds are difficult to separate’ (1869: 602). He suggests too that in pre-[r] contexts, there is a tendency to lowering among certain groups of speakers: ‘But when (or) is followed by a consonant, Londoners much more frequently pronounce it (AA) than (ɔɔ) its theoretical value, so that *lord, laud*, became identically (lAAɔ), and *lorn, lawn*, both sound as (lAAɔn), and even *court, caught*, are both apt to fall into (kAAɔt); but these pronunciations, though common, are by no means universal’.²⁵¹ ‘Elderly people’, he asserts, produce (ooɔ, glooɔri) [with [ɔ]: CJ] for *oar* and *glory*, while now, ‘the action of the glide from (oo) to (ɔ) [probably an [ə] vowel: CJ] having resulted in widening of the vowel’ (1865: 95). Indeed, Ellis (1888: 387) points to the fact that, in London at any rate, high mid vowels are being further lowered in this context: ‘(o) ... long in English *ore* (ooɔ), which is fast degrading in London to (AAɔ)’; and again ‘It is quite true that Londoners have a difficulty in distinguishing *saw, sore, law, lore, maw, more*, generally saying only (sAA’, lAA’, mAA’), for (sAA soo’; lAA, loo’, mAA, moo’) and that the principal difference to them is that the first words may not, and the last words must have an epenthetical *r* before a vowel’ (1865: 1122). But, in general, (ooɔ) is the only recognized combination in which (oo) [[ɔɔ]: CJ] remains, but it is rapidly disappearing. ‘A few use it in (*doog, oofis*), but here it is more often (ɔɔh, ɔɔ, AA [[ɔ]: CJ]), and is intended for (ɔ)’ . Indeed, Ellis (1874: 1099) asserts that instead of (ooɔ) ‘it is extremely common to hear (AA) ... if the speaker is very “correct”’. He records too (1869: 95) how ‘the long sound (oo) [some kind of [ɔɔ]: CJ] is also sometimes heard from those London speakers who wish to prolong the sound of (o) ([ɔ] or [ɔ]:CJ) in *dog, cross, off, office*, without degenerating into (dAAg, krAAAs, AAf, AAfis), or being even so broad as (dɔɔg, krɔɔs, ɔɔf, ɔɔfis), a set of alternations for *dog*, like [dɔɔg], [dɔɔg] and [dɔɔg].

2.2.2 Labial vowels and the FOOT/STRUT split

By the nineteenth century most observers clearly record a FOOT/STRUT split at least in metropolitan usage, and they regularly comment upon the failure of [ʊ] to lower and centralize in provincial, particularly Northern, dialects. Batchelor’s (1809: 23) comments are fairly typical: ‘The three kinds of *u*, as in *but, pull*, and *rostrum*, are seldom pronounced incorrectly; but in several parts of England, the sound of *u*, as in *but*, is exchanged improperly for the soft *u* in *bull*; as in the following instances: *Come, some, pump, jump, rum*.’ Batchelor provides articulatory (as well as somewhat fanciful) definitions for both the *bull* and *but* vowels (1809: 9), curiously omitting any reference to lip rounding: ‘*U*, as in *pull, bull*, &c. This sound occurs but seldom in English, unless when it makes the radical part of a diphthong [the long *u*: CJ] ... It may be readily distinguished from the *u* in *but*, by the peculiar softness of its tone. To pronounce this vowel, the tip of the tongue must continue nearly in the same retracted position as in the last instance [as for the *o* in *rogue*: CJ], while the middle of it is raised something higher, and brought forward nearly to the centre of the mouth’. His articulatory description of the vowel in *but* is not particularly revealing

either (1809: 8): 'U, as in *but, run*, &c. This is a common and well-known sound: it is clear and distinct, and its tone is apparently near the medium between the soft and harsh sounds. In its pronunciation, the tip of the tongue is near the lower teeth, but the middle is nearly in the same position, as when the letter is unaccented'. But it is when we consider his characterization of the *u* vowel in *rostrum*, that we recognize a segment of the [ʌ]/[ə] variety (1809: 7): 'U, as in *rostrum, honour*, &c. This may be called the unaccented *u*, as it is commonly heard, whenever *u* is considered, as a short vowel, in any accented syllable, except the first. It is indeed a common substitute for most of the vowels, in such cases, as in *venal, butter, carol, somebody*, &c. and was formerly termed the guttural *e*, though without any apparent reason. Modern orthoepists have scarcely noted this sound, but it is easily known by its slender, feeble tone, and its short duration, when compared with the *u* in *burden, purse*, &c. In pronouncing this sound, the middle of the tongue is more depressed than in pronouncing the *e* in *met*, but the tip of it is but little below the gums, which accounts for its shortness, and ready junction with most of the succeeding consonants'. Batchelor's *Orthoepical Alphabet* shows special, distinct symbols (u) and (u) with a curled descender for the stressed vowel in *church* and the second syllable vowel in *Christian* respectively; his *Positions of the Tongue, Lips and Uvula* diagram (Plate Ia, p. 276) having the latter with a tongue tip position lower and, apparently, fronter than the former. His representation of the *ooze* vowel shows a dot over the ascender.

Smart and Cooley show a three-way contrast for the high labial exemplified through a *pool, book, but* contrast. The last, a short sound, he sees as the 'regular' sound of *u* (his ũ), existing alongside yet another 'short' labial entity, (his öđ) in words like *hood, good, look, took*. Smart claims a 'long' *u* (his õō) for items like *pool, bull, full* and the like (1836: vi): 'there is a great probability that ... [the *u*: CJ] in *düll* and that in *büll* (böđl), the latter was once as frequent as the former: in the provinces it is much more frequent even to this day. But, since in London, this sound of the short *u* is now limited to a few words, the best way of signifying its sound in those few will be to spell them on the same principle as *good, wood, wool, took*, etc. and signify the essential shortness of the sound by the appropriate mark'. Echoing Batchelor's observation that this short *u* sound 'occurs but seldom in English', Smart concedes that there may well be, an albeit limited set, of phonetic conditions (mainly involving syllable final obstruents) which trigger it (1836: xxiii):

Nor are the words exceptive under any general principle, save those only in which *oo* are followed by *k*, which consonant uniformly shortens the sound: as in *book, look, took*, &c. The other words in which the short sound is denoted by the letters *oo* in the ordinary spelling of the language are *wool, wood, good, hood, stood, foot*, and their compounds; to which we may add *soot*; for though this word, probably from being confounded with those which are spelled with *u*, long exhibited the anomaly of being pronounced *sūt*, it is now, by the best speakers, classed with the words preceding it.

It is important to note that for Smart, the contrast between long and short versions of *oo*, is just that – length. There is no suggestion whatsoever that the vowels in

look, took, etc. are qualitatively distinct, certainly none to infer that they represent some kind of [ɣ] value, of the type we saw in the observations of Sylvester Douglas and Walker in the previous century, all the more surprising given Smart's propensity for suggesting compromise or 'fudged' forms between phonetic extremes. Cooley's treatment of the high labial segment corresponds closely to that of Smart. Like him, Cooley places lexical and phonetic constraints upon the occurrence of the short *ōđ*, describing it as 'a sound of the vowel chiefly confined to words beginning with one of the "mute labials" *b, p*, or the "labio-dental" semi-vowel *f*, and which end with the "liquid" *l*, or the "dentals" *s, sh, t* and *d*, as heard in the words contained in the following *List*, which embraces almost all those in the language in which *u* has this sound', his list containing *bull, bullace, bullary, bulchin, bulletin, bullock, bully, bulwark, bush, pudding, pull, pully* and others (1861: xxxiii–xxxiv). But again he is at pains to stress that this short sound of *u*, corresponds to the long (*ōđ*) as well as the short (*đđ*), even though he asserts (albeit in a footnote), that the lexically and phonetically constrained version is the same as Walker's *middle* or *obtuse u* (1861: xxxiii footnote 113). Yet the lack of a distinctive symbol for the vowel in *look, good* types, and the outright assertion that their vowel sounds are identical to those in *pool, bull* and the like, suggests either that our claim that there existed in the late eighteenth century some kind of distinct [ɣ] value for the former is a misinterpretation of contemporary observation, or that the phonetic skills of nineteenth-century orthoepists in this area of the phonology were not as well developed as those of their predecessors.

Ellis distinguishes at least two kinds of high back labial sound: his (*u*) and (*u*) (see Figure 2.1). The former found in the vowel space of *Louisa*, the latter in *pull, cook* (1869: 9), although he claims (1869: 604) that 'it is not easy to distinguish (*u*, *u*) as short sounds before the nineteenth century, and even then few persons acknowledge that *pool, pull*, have vowels of different quality, as well as length (*puul, pul*)'. Eustace (1969: 39) characterizes these vowels as high back narrow [u], and a lowered, wider [ʊ] respectively, a *boom/book* contrast in modern Standard English. Ellis claims that both of these vowels, during the seventeenth century, 'lost the sound, and were pronounced generally with (ə)', recording the Midland hypercorrection whereby lowered and centralized values are found where an etymological [u] should surface: 'There is still a fight between (*u*, ə) and in some of the Midland counties the usage is just reversed from that now accepted, thus (*but, kut, rub*) = *but, cut, rub*, and (fət, pət, fəl, bəl) = *foot, put, full, bul*', where, recall (1869: 163) 'Roughly, we may say that (ə) is (*u*) deprived of its labial character', suggesting a value closer to [ɣ] than to [ʊ]. There is certainly no doubt that a qualitative distinction exists between his (*u*, *u*) pair, since Ellis quite forcefully states that 'This vowel [*u*: Cj] differs from (*u*) as (*i*) differs from (*i*)'. He notes (1874: 1114) how 'just as an Englishman finds (*bit*) very difficult and (*bit*) easy, so (*buk*) is to him easy, and the Scotchman's (*buk*) so difficult that he puts it down as (*buuk*), heard in Yorkshire', and his comments on the complexities of recognition of the values of the labial reflect those of Walker (1791: 173) a century earlier; complexities which, we recall are: 'sufficient to puzzle Englishmen who reside at any distance from the capital, and to make the inhabitants of Scotland and Ireland ... not

		Front		IPA		Central		IPA		Back		IPA	
		Paleotype				Paleotype				Paleotype			
High	CLOSE	i	ɪ	[i]	[y]	Y	U	[i]	[ʉ]	æ	u	[u]	[ʊ]
	OPEN	i	y	[i]	[Y]	ɣ	uh	[ɜ]	[ɜ]	ɐ	u	[u]	[ʊ]
Mid	CLOSE	e	ə	[ɛ]	[ø]	ə	oh	[ɜ]	[ɜ]	ɜ	o	[ɜ]	[ɔ]
	OPEN	e	œ	[ɛ]	[œ]	ah	oh	[ɛ]	[œ]	a	o	[ʌ]	[ɔ]
Low	CLOSE	E	əh	[æ]	[œ]	əh	ah	[ɐ]	[ɐ]	ɛ	A	[ʌ]	[ɔ]
	OPEN	æ	æh	[a]	[æ]	əo	ɔh	[a]	[ɔ]	a	ɔ	[a]	[ɔ]

Figure 2.1 Ellis' vowel symbols and their tentative values (after Eustace 1969 and Speitel 1983)

infrequently the jest of fools'. For Ellis (*u*) can also represent 'a deeper sound, which may be (*u*) with an (o) position of the lips' (1869: 1107), sounds of which type 'To a southern Englishman are riddles; at least very thick, fat clumsy pronunciations of his (*buk*), which, to a Scot, is itself a thick, fat, clumsy pronunciation of (*buk*). Refinement of pronunciation has entirely local value'. This (*u*) Ellis carefully distinguishes from (*ə*), although he does admit that for some speakers at least they are interchangeable (1869: 175–6): 'The two sounds co-exist in many words. Several careful speakers say (*tu pət, bətsh'er*), though the majority say (*tu put, butsher*). All talk of a *put* (*pət*)'. Claiming that the change from (*u*) to (*ə*) – Walker's middle, obtuse sound of *u* – is a 'modern encroachment', Ellis seems to suggest that it is in his day lexically specific in southern England and, even though it is gaining in popularity, it is still seen as falling short of propriety:

But if the territories of (*u*) and (*ə*) can be so strictly defined in the south of England, in the middle and north the war is still raging, and though education has imported large quantities of (*ə*) from the south, even magnates in the north often delight to use their old (*u*). That there is nothing intrinsically pleasing in the sound of (*ə*) may be seen at once by calling *good, stood* (*gɔd, stɔd*) to rhyme with *blood, flood*, (*blɔd, flɔd*). Those speakers to whom (*wu*) presents a difficulty are apt to change it into (*wə*) as (*wɔd, wɔmən*) for (*wud, wumən*), and the effect is anything but pleasing.

Ellis uses two symbols (ɜ) (his 'turned E') and (ə) for those vowels which are unrounded and back: the former he illustrates as found in 'occasional English *but*', the latter in *nut* and defined (1889: 80) as: the fine *u* of an educated Londoner in closed accented syllables as *cut up*, replaced provincially by (ɜ). Bell conceives it to be French *que*, which I take as (ə). Sweet has German *Gabe*, which I conceive as (ɐ). Eustace (1969: 52–3) characterizes these vowels as IPA [ʌ] (or [ɜ]) and [ɜ] respectively while, he argues, in unstressed syllables 'stricter analysis now seems to show that the sound is now rather (ɐ)', his [ɜ]. Ellis stresses the similarity between (ɜ) and (ə), observing how (1894: 1094): 'The habits of English speakers vary with respect to [them], and no one would be remarked for pronouncing either in a syllable under accent or force. But to my ear, (ɜ) often has a thick, deep effect, naturally unpleasant to one accustomed to (ə), which, probably, to the other speakers is fully

unpleasantly thin and high. The position of the tongue for (ə) is much higher, and its form flatter, than for (ɜ), in which the tongue lies in precisely the same position as for (a, o, ɔ), all mid back vowels. However, Ellis seems to conclude (1869: 162) that ‘few English ears would readily distinguish (ɜ, ə) in conversation’. And he again raises the issue as to whether the lower or higher centralized vowel is the prestige form (1889: 80): ‘(ɜ) ... the ordinary deep provincial form of the natural vowel in accented closed syllables, as *cut*, *bud*, but Bell and Sweet consider it to be the received form, which I take as (ə)’.

2.2.3 Long *u*

Nineteenth-century commentators make almost as much of an issue of this segment as do their predecessors in the previous century, and the relationship between this diphthong and the phenomenon of CH-ING is a matter of almost obsessive interest throughout the century. For Batchelor (1809: 87) ‘the true pronunciation of the long *u* has been the subject of some dispute and much misrepresentation among modern grammarians’, their various attempts at definition of the segment showing ‘the unaccountable manner in which grammarians bewilder their readers on this point’ (1809: 94). Batchelor treats ‘long *u*’ as a diphthong composed of an initial *y* consonant, followed by his long *oo*, the latter accorded a separate symbol – *ú* – and represented in his *Positions of the Tongue, Lips and Uvula* as a high, back vowel, and illustrated in his *Orthoepical Alphabet* by the item *ooze*. His *Table of Diphthongs* (1809: 72) shows this [ju] diphthong in items such as *fugastity*, *solutive* and *volumes*. Batchelor is especially critical of the description of the segment provided by Brightland and Gildon (1711: 24):

Foreigners wou’d obtain the Pronunciation of this Letter, if they wou’d endeavour to pronounce the Diphthong (*iu*), by putting the slender (*i*) before the Letter (*u*) or (*w*), (as the Spaniard in Ciudadé, a City); but this is not absolutely the same Sound, tho’ it comes very near to it: For (*iu*) is a compound Sound, but the French and English (*u*) a simple.

This, he claims (1809: 89), contains some mistakes of a remarkable nature; indeed, these ingenious authors seem ‘“to mean not but wander round about a meaning”, which is composed of a variable mixture of the genuine English triphthong (*yúw*) and its provincial substitute (*iw*), and such has been the case with most of their successors to the present time’. Indeed, Batchelor is quite insistent that the first element of the long *u* diphthong is not the ‘common vowel *i*, as in *pin*’, but the ‘*y* consonant’ (1809: 86): ‘I am not aware that any author has pointed out the true nature of the long *u*, which is the third *u* of Mr. Sheridan’s dictionary, and the first of Mr. Walker’s; but the difference which exists between the true pronunciation of the English pronoun *you* (*yuw*), and the vulgar name of *yew* (*yúw*), a tree, is probably known to every inhabitant of London, or the country, who has bestowed a single thought on the subject’. Whatever the phonetic value of the title-less *ı* graph, Batchelor want to dispel any suggestion that the first element of the [ju] diphthong resembles anything like [i] or [j], severely criticizing Walker on this point: ‘Mr. Walker

uses no *e* but that in the word *me* (mɪy), and consequently (tɪwn) is the orthoepical representation of *tewn*, which, he says, shows the proper pronunciation of *tune*. This sound is, however, so far from the genuine long *u* (yúw), that it is much more depraved than the vulgar (ɪw) of Bedfordshire'. Indeed, he sees the initial 'y consonant' element as quite distinct phonetically, distinct enough to warrant (albeit in a particular context) a special graph (1809: 79): 'the extreme slenderness of the (y), which forms the initial, or first sound of the long *u* (yuw), when it follows *d, t, s, &c.* may be commodiously represented by omitting the curl and dot at the bottom of the common (y)'. We shall see below how a similar interpretation is given for the phonetic value of the 'intrusive *j*' in items like *cart*, and the lenition of the final syllable *i* in items like *million, filial* by observers such as Cooley and Smart.

Batchelor (1809: 88) provides *A Tabular View of the various Ways of pronouncing the long u after the Consonants*, claiming that the diphthong is favoured when preceded by consonantal elements such as *p, b, k, g, m, n, f, v, q, x,* and *z*: *beautiful, pew, putrid, kew, mew, mule, view, exude, azure* and so on. He claims that the long *u* is 'difficult to pronounce' in the case of items such as *blew* and *flew* (those with 'a consonant preceding *l*'), claiming that 'the initial *y* is generally omitted, or nearly so, in these combinations by even good speakers, and, consequently, *blew, flew, glue, clue, &c.* are pronounced *bloo, floo, gloo, cloo*'. However, 'in defence of this pronunciation, no plea is advanced but that of necessity ... as the (y) cannot coalesce with *r*, without an hiatus or an intervening vowel'. Yet he is of the view (1809: 91) that 'even in these cases, our ancestors pronounced *ew* in the provincial manner (ɪw), as that diphthong follows *r* as easily as any other letter, and is invariably used by the common uneducated people, and not unseldom by the superior classes'.²⁵² In fact, he claims that 'good speakers' often utilize the 'provincial' (ɪw) version of the diphthong, prefixing a (y) to it, so that *beauty, view* and *jew* can be pronounced as (byɪwti), (vyɪw) and (dyɪw), in what looks like a classic case of a compromise or 'fudged' form between alternatives with sociophonetic significance. Savage (1833: xxvii) is uncompromisingly hostile to [j]-insertion wherever it occurs: 'The following belong to the most wretched absurdities of the stage, and even there to the most low and uneducated. The *dyuke* made a *nyew tyune* upon the *tyulip* covered with *dyew*, and brought it to the *tyutor* on *tyuesday*. He was in the *kyar* with the *gyuide* whose *dyuty* it was to be *kyind* to the *gyirl* who had bought the *kyaf*'.²⁵³ We shall return to such issues under our discussion of CH-ING below.

By 1836, Smart appears to be adding further refinement both to the phonetic nature and distribution of the long *u* sound. He sees this sound as a diphthongal (yuu) with a long vowel for its second component, although he argues that it is in the nature of long vowels that they can be shortened. Thus he claims that, without losing its diphthongal characteristic, the highlighted syllables 'may be as short as it can be made in mon-*u*¹-ment, ed-*u*¹-cate, res-*i*-du¹e etc, provided it lose it in no other respect, for the smallest corruption of its sound in such situations, carries with it an impression of negligent vulgarity. Yet there are situations in which the full sound both of *ū* and *u*¹ cannot be preserved without an appearance of pedantry'.²⁵⁴ He goes even further (1836: x:§69): 'To say *lūte, lū-cid, lū-na-tic*, with the *ū* as perfect as in *cūbe*, is northern, or laboriously pedantic in effect, and the

practice of good society is *l'ōōt*, *l'ōō-cid*, *l'ōō-natic* &c., avoiding at the same time the vulgar extreme *lōōt*, *lōō-cid*, *lōō-natic* &c.'. His 'slight sound' [represented by a superscripted': C]] the 'practice of good society' is 'a slight semi-consonant between e^1 and y consonant'; it is a sound which is 'so short and slight as to be lost altogether in the mouth of an unpolished speaker, who says, *loot*, *joo*, *na-choor*, *garment*, *kind* &c., for *lute* ($l'oot$), *jew* ($j'oo$) &c. On the other hand, there are persons who, to distinguish themselves from the vulgar, pronounce y consonant distinctly on the occasions which call for this slighter sound of y or e^1 . This *affected* pronunciation ... be it observed, is to be avoided with as much care as the slight sound, which in the mouth of an elegant speaker *naturally* slides in between the consonant and the vowel, is to be imitated'.²⁵⁵ Likewise Cooley (1861: xlv §27): 'The peculiar slight sound, as of a faint or partially suppressed e' , again indicated in the 'notation' of this Dictionary by (') written before the following vowel, occurs after j and l before the sound of $ōō$, as in *Jew* ($j'ōō$), *jury* ($j'ōōr-e$)' as well as in the onsets of words like *card*, *guard* and *kind*. While he says his *Dictionary* does not always show this notation on every occasion it is warranted (1861: xlv *footnote* 176):

As, however, it is organically, and almost of necessity inserted in a clear, easy and elegant pronunciation of all words of the classes referred to, the speaker has only to be careful to avoid giving it too much distinctness, or, by exaggeration, to allow a grace of elocution to degenerate into vulgarity and affectation. Affected speakers often substitute \bar{e} for ('), and say *kē-īnd*, *gē-īde* &c., an error not infrequently perpetrated on the stage.

2.3 The diphthongs

2.3.1 The PRICE, MOUTH and CHOICE diphthongs

Descriptions of the PRICE diphthong vary somewhat as to how they characterize the degree of separation between the two components; in particular, there is some debate on the precise nature of the diphthong's starting point, although all observers see the endpoint as [i]. Cooley it is who perhaps sees the starting point as a more front segment than the other commentators in the period. He describes the diphthong as comprised of his \check{a} or \check{a} , the stressed vowel in *hat*, *fat* and *abacus*, *papa* respectively, the latter being 'more close' than the former, suggesting a composite like [ai], or even [æi]. But all other commentators suggest a first element which is considerably more sonorous. Knowles (1835: xviii), for instance, suggests a combination of his a^1 and e^4 a movement 'from the largest to the smallest aperture in the mouth', while Smart (1810: 173) sees his 'broader' a^3 as the starting segment. But by 1836, he dismisses as non-metropolitan any version of the diphthong which commences with his a^3 or a^4 (his *far*, *fall* types): 'in the mouth of the well-bred Londoner [this diphthong: C]] starts with *ur*, but without sounding the r , tapers off in to e^1 '. He claims (1836: iv) that some observers see the diphthong as composed of \check{a}^3 and e^1 'but this is northern', while others suggest that it is $\check{a}^4w + e^1$, (\check{a}^4w as in *jackdaw*) 'which is still more rustic'. Even as early as 1809, Batchelor too

favours a starting point in the general area of [ʌ] or [ə] (1809: 54):

the long *i* in *mine*, has been supposed by Mr. Sheridan to consist of an union of the sounds of *au* with *ee*, as they are generally written in English. Mr. Walker considers it as an union of the *a*, in *father*, with *e*, and appeals to every English ear. Yet the *u* in *but* is obviously the genuine radical of the long *i*, and the sound is exactly shown in *buy* and *guy*. If the pronunciation of *buy* were spelled (boy), according to Sheridan, or (bay) according to Walker, they would serve to recommend very gross provincialisms.

Ellis (1869: 596) spends a great deal of time in describing the various shapes which the PRICE diphthong took in his day. He claims in several places that, in his own pronunciation, the first element of the diphthong is his (ə), a low, central vowel in the region of [ɜ] or [ə], a shape which, he argues, has been the value for 'long *i*' since the time of Gil. Yet he admits that the first element can, on occasion, be further back: 'when I try to lengthen it [the PRICE diphthong: CJ] for analysis, I seem to take (ah), which has the same position of the tongue, but a wider opening behind. I certainly do not say (ái, áí). I occasionally but rarely hear (ái) from educated people, and have never noticed (áí) from them' and he draws our attention to variants associated both with age and gender: 'As a greybeard, I am constantly asked by children in Kensington Gardens, to tell them the 'time'. From them I frequently hear (ái, ɛí), and I have heard the last from educated women'. He seems to conclude that the sound of the first element 'is indeterminate', a conclusion reinforced by the variation observable in regional dialects and historical forms (1869: 108): 'Thus it may be that the whole series of sounds (ɔ-ɔhæa-ahæei) may be heard in this diphthong, all gliding into each other with immense rapidity'. Nevertheless, he admits to hearing two common and different variants (1869: 107): 'In England we have only one recognized pronunciation of *i* long, but we have also two recognized sounds which may be heard in *Isaiah*,²⁵⁶ or in the usual English pronunciation of *χερ χαιρ*, and the distinction is, or used to be, strongly insisted upon at Eton', for him apparently some kind of (Ai)/(ai) contrast. He claims too that those who 'have learned Greek generally distinguish two values, high and low. The high one is *ει*, one of the forms (ə'i, áhi, ɛí); the low is *αι*, one of the forms (ái, áí). The words *eye*, *aye* are now so distinguished (əí, áí), but the pun on the "noes and the ayes, – the nose and the eyes" sufficiently shews that the distinction need not be insisted on now, as Shakespeare's pun on *I, eye, aye*, shews that he also heard them much alike' (1874: 1101). Ellis disagrees with Bell's assertion (accepted by Sweet (1877: 184) who has [ai], the [a] the stressed vowel in *father*) that the first element of the diphthong is (a) – some kind of [a] shape – hearing his own first element as more central, and is inclined to assign any hint of an (æ) – i.e. [ɛ] – value, albeit used by 'many Londoners', as 'rather cockneyfied' (1869: 291 *footnote* 2).

There is, as we might expect, still some controversy in the nineteenth-century stemming from [ai]/[i] alternations. While only the (non)-diphthongal realizations

of *either/neither* are commented upon with any regularity by the majority of the 'authorities', Savage has more to say on the issue, recording 'vulgar' diphthongal pronunciations for items such as: *demyse* 'demise'; *die-suntry* 'dysentery'; *kwarran-tyne* 'quarantine'; *nyther* (also vulgar *nayther* 'neither'); *profyle* 'profile', with all standard forms represented with the *ee* graph: *de-meez*, *neether*, etc. 'Failure' of the high front vowel to diphthongize he claims to be a feature of 'vulgar' speakers in a fairly large selection of items such as: *heelander* 'highlander'; *heelands* 'highlands'; *mariteem* 'maritime'; *pirracy* (standard *pye-rer-cy*) 'piracy'; *profficee* (standard *proffes-sigh*) 'prophecy'; *profyle* (standard *profee* [sic]) 'profile'; *sinnycure* (standard *sigh-ne-cure*) 'sinecure'; *trib-unal* (standard *try-bunal*) 'tribunal', and some others. But, after a long and tortuous attempt to produce some kind of rule-governed system for this alternation (variously ascribed to predictability through accent, stressing etc.), Smart takes a more realistic view of the contrast by stressing its essentially lexical status (1836: iv and *footnote* 6; 1810: 110): 'the words which escape the operation of this special or exceptive rule as regards the letter *i* or *y*, are however so numerous as to render the point not a little puzzling ... we come to a difficulty which no rule can remove; and the inquirer must be sent to the dictionary to learn, in each particular instance, what is conceived to be the practice of the best speakers'.

The HOUSE diphthong is described with remarkable consistency by the majority of observers as having an *all/foot* structure. Batchelor (1809: 84–5) claims that 'the proper sound of *ow* seems rather difficult to acquire, as there are several substitutes for it in use, in various parts of England'. He claims, moreover, that the diphthong is 'never pronounced with propriety by the peasantry of this county [Bedfordshire]; and even some of a higher class, who were not early habituated to the sound in question, pronounce the *o*, as in *not*, too long, and the succeeding *w* too slightly or not at all; by which means, *now* too much resembles (*no*'), which is *gnaw*, in common English. *Pound* (*pownd*), is made to resemble *pawn'd*, in the same manner'. Although in 1810 Smart recommends an *a*⁴ starting point for this diphthong, by 1836, he is suggesting something 'nearer to' *a*³ – a *far* rather than a *law* vowel. There is little sustained comment in the literature on any [au]/[u] alternation in this area of the phonology. Although Savage refrains from wheeling out the stereotypical eighteenth- and nineteenth-century examples of [au]/[u] contrasts like cucumber '*cucumber*' and *pronunciation* 'pronunciation' so typical of many observers (Jackson (1830) showing stigmatized forms like *wownds* 'wounds'), he does cite 'vulgar' *sowthern* (standard *suthern* 'southern') and *he's gone on a tower* for standard *toor* 'tour'. Savage also provides a list of what are probably lexical item-specific [au]/[o] contrasts: most often the vulgar form shows diphthongization, with *bowl* (standard *bole*) 'bowl'; *power out your tea* (standard *pore*); *Showlders* (standard *sholeders* [sic]); *bouler* (standard *boler*) 'bowler'; *rowled* 'rolled': but occasionally it is the monophthongal form which is cited as the non-standard: *fondling* 'foundling hospital'. Occasionally too Savage cites sociophonetic contrasts arising from the (non-)monophthongization of Middle English [au], with non-standard *howdacity* 'audacity'; *chawdron* 'chaldron' and *haulternate* (standard *al-tur-nit* 'alter-nate'). For Ellis (1874: 1153; 1869: 597), the nature of the first element in the HOUSE

diphthong is as variable and difficult to pin down as that for PRICE: 'it is subject to at least all the varieties of those of long *i*. But owing to the labial final, the tendency to labialize the first element is more marked. Our ($\exists u$, $ah u$, $\text{ə}u$) must be considered as delabializations of (*ou*, *ou'*), and he claims that Sweet's interpretation of the diphthong is ($\text{ə}\text{ə}\text{ə}'\text{o}$) or ($\text{ə}\text{ə}\text{ə}'\text{h}w$) (perhaps some kind of $[\text{ə}\text{u}]$ diphthong) (1874: 1153). Eustace (1969: 59) observes how 'Sweet, born 1845, was 31 years younger than Ellis, and may therefore have spoken in a more modern way; thus his *houses* vowel may have approached the [a] of [Daniel] Jones (born 37 years after Sweet), in the form of [ɐ].'

Compared with eighteenth-century sources, comment of any kind on the BOIL diphthong is extremely sparse from nineteenth-century observers, and there is not the usual hand-wringing over the inappropriateness of the BOIL/BILE merger. While Smart (1810: 173) comments on the fact that *bile*, *ile* and *jine* are vulgar forms which must be 'carefully avoided', only Savage gives such forms real prominence, citing as 'vulgar' examples such as: *hyst* 'hoist'; *embrydered* 'embroidered'; *nyneted* 'anointed' *the whole biling was spylt* 'whole, boiling, spoilt', *pised* 'poised', *kine* 'coin', *disappynted* 'disappointed', *myst* 'moist', *rekile* 'recoil', *hile* 'oil', *lighter* 'loiter', *jyner* 'joiner', *rekonnyter* 'reconnoitre'. Almost all commentators see the diphthong's structure as *all + feet*. Knowles strongly criticizes Walker's suggestion that the second element in an item like *coin*, is the *i* in *pin* (1835: 9): 'to signify that it had the same sound as in *pin*, surely any man whose ear was capable of distinguishing one sound from another, would immediately perceive that, in order to preserve the short sound marked by *i*², he must make two syllables of the word, and pronounce it *ca*³-*i*²*n*: or pronounce the word as one syllable, and give to the *o* the sound of *a*³ in *fall*, and to *i* the sound of *e*¹ in *me*, *co*³*i*¹*n*, *co*³*i*²*n*, or as two, thus, *co*³*i*²*n*'. Knowles analyses *both* diphthongs in *eye* and *oy* as comprised of (A) [his [a]: CJ] and (i), but distinguished somehow by the duration allowed to the first element in the combination. He describes the mechanism in the production of the former as 'before the voice can get a passage through the lips [to utter (A)] the under jaw is drawn near the upper, in the same position as when the vowel (i) is uttered, while for that of *oy* he suggests 'the first vowel (A) being dwelt upon is distinctly heard before its sound is changed by its junction with the latter vowel (i)'. Ellis, in his long essay 'On the Diphthong *oy*' (1866: 63–4 *footnote*), dismisses this merger: 'Knowles was an Irishman, and Irishmen are noted for giving to *eye* a shade of *oy*, so that Knowles' very careful distinction may be founded rather on an Irish than an English custom'. Ellis gives an [ai] interpretation to *oy*, tracing the diphthong from *ui* sources, while any derivation it may be shown to have from an *ai* source 'is so seldom that this may be considered an accident' (1866: 59): '[oi, oi] approach to (ai, ai) so that there is a possibility of the two original diphthongs [ai, ui] degenerating into the same sound [oi] ... But the general source of the English diphthong (ɔi) I believe to be [ui]', and he represents it in *joined* as (dzhoind), suggesting a fairly low and back start around [ɔ]. In items such as *noisy*, *poignant*, *boy*, *enjoyed*, *bourgeoise*, etc. he claims that the pronunciations (Ai) and (ɔi) 'prevail' (1869: 602), although he does hint at some kind of (ai, ɔi, oi) variation as well, the last being 'provincial'. That there has indeed occurred some kind of TOIL/TILE merger

is perhaps suggested by his observation (1874: 1011):

Now by a converse assimilation, educated English, orthographically misled no doubt, has, within the last hundred years, reduced all the original (*úí*) set of (*ái*) sounds to (*ɔ'i, A'i*) which is far worse than the derided Irish or provincial pronunciation of *i* as one of this series, because the educated pronunciation is simply an orthographically superinduced mis-pronunciation, and the other is an organic development; yet one is upheld and the other ridiculed. Educated ignorance is always absurd.

2.3.2 Pre-[r] breaking: [r] vocalization

We have already seen how, throughout the eighteenth century, the phenomenon of vowel epenthesis in pre-syllable-final [r] contexts had a near canonical status. While the phenomenon continues to be well represented in the nineteenth century, there are additional factors to be taken into account, especially those involving the phonetic status of syllable-final [r] itself, and its potential for both deletion and unetymological insertion. Batchelor's observations encompass both these considerations. On the one hand, he notes (1809: 99) how 'Sheridan and his successors' are mistaken in thinking that 'long vowels are pronounced in the same manner before *r*'. On the contrary, he points to the fact that there is a 'variety' of pronunciation in such cases, a variety he expresses as follows:

<i>English spelling</i>	<i>Regular orthoepical spelling</i>	<i>Variety</i>	<i>Provincial sounds</i>
Tear	tɪr	tɪyʊ,r	tɪʊr
Fair	fɛr	fɛyʊ,r	fɛʊr
Fire	fɛr	fɛyʊ,r	

The 'breaking' itself Batchelor (1809: 99) justifies in articulatory terms: 'In pronouncing *r*, the tremulous motion of the breath does not take place instantaneously, and, consequently, that letter cannot be pronounced immediately after (*y*), in the same syllable, without the aid and intervention of the unaccented *u* (*u,*)'. But Batchelor adds important caveats to these observations. Dismissing the 'tedious provincial drawl' of vowel lengthening in pre-[sk] and [rd] contexts, as well as the opposite tendency to treat the vowels in *lass*, *palm*, *part* and *dance* as short as a 'mincing, modern affectation', he is careful to direct our attention to what he, and other observers, sees as the special phonetic status of the semi-vowels *l* and *r* and the effect they have on the vowel segments which precede them (1809: 19): 'It will be observed, that the long sound of these letters occurs, mostly, before double consonants, and particularly before *l* and *r*; as in *balm*, and *born*. In the former word, the *l* has been gradually softened till it has entirely vanished, and the *a* is sounded long to supply its place. The *u*, as in *but*, has been always supposed to maintain one uniform length; but this also appears to be somewhat longer when preceding *r*, as in *burn*, than in other cases. It is difficult, however, to ascertain what portion of the sound belongs to *r*, as both this letter and *l* seem to be but slight alterations or additions to the unaccented *u* in *nostrum* &c.' And again

(1809: viii): 'Of this blending of the *r* with the previous vowel, it is further to be observed that the union is so smooth in polite utterance as to make it imperceptible where one ends, and the other begins; while in vulgar pronunciation the former vowel breaks abruptly into the guttural sound or into the vowel *a*³ [as the final vowel in *papa*: CJ] used for the guttural', perhaps pointing to [r]-effacement, a phenomenon we shall discuss in some detail below in section 3.3.2. Batchelor would seem to be suggesting that *l-Vocalisation* involves some kind of compensatory lengthening, with [r] itself on occasion subject to a similar vocalization process. Smart (1810: 64–5) also records the 'breaking' process, but warns against its potential for producing vulgarisms: 'When the first sound of any of the vowel letters comes before *r*, from the peculiar nature of this letter, the single syllable sounds as if it were two', and he cites examples such as *ba'ur* 'bare', *va'-urius* [*sic*: CJ] 'various', *he'ur* 'here' and many others. However, he adds the following caution: 'At the same time, it is proper to notice, that here also, in *bare*, *here*, *hire*, &c. there are two methods of pronouncing, distinguishable in the well-bred and the vulgar; the former dwell longer on the vowel, and interpose the sound *u*² in a less sensible manner'. This caution is reiterated by Cooley (1861: xx), who claims that the long *a* sound in items like *bare*, *fare* and *pain* 'is so lengthened by the guttural vibration of the *r*, and the "radical" and "vanishing" movements of the voice become so apparent, that though organically the same as the *a* in *fate*, the effect on the ear is more or less diphthongal – a fact which, in careless and affected speakers, frequently induces the error of breaking up the vowel into two distinct parts, and thus imparting to the syllables in which it occurs a disyllabic character'. Such 'errors, or rather vulgarities, which cannot be too carefully avoided', he exemplifies as including *bā'-ēr* 'bare', *fā'-ēr* 'fare' and *pāe'-rēnt* 'parent'. So too Smart (1836: viii §54): 'Among mere cocknies this substitution of *a*³ for *ar* or *ur*, is a prevailing characteristic, and should be corrected by all who wish to adapt their habits to those of well-bred life'. For Ellis, the effect of the (ɪ) [for Eustace an [ə] value: CJ] on the preceding vowel is twofold: on the one hand it can cause that vowel to diphthongize; however, when that vowel is one of (a, A, ə), the effect is one of lengthening, such that the diphthongs (aɪ, əɪ) 'are heard almost as the long vowels (aa, AA)', so that, for him, '*farther*, *lord* scarcely differ from *father*, *laud*'. Ellis recognizes four different (but stigmatized) 'breaking' diphthongs in (ɪ) contexts (1874: 1099) in '*ear*, *air*, *oar*, *oor*, which are, I believe, in the pronunciation of strict speakers (ii'ɪ, eeɪ, ooɪ, uuɪ), that is, (ii', ée', óo', úu') and, although he claims that there is no tendency to form two identifiable syllable in such cases, 'I have heard (foo,ɛɪ, koo,ɛɪ) from old people'. He disagrees with Smart's assertion that there is a diphthongal/non-diphthongal contrast in London in the items *payer* and *pair*, and although he claims to hear the diphthongal form on occasion, he regards it as an archaism (1874: 1099): 'the diphthongs (eɪ, əɪ) are very difficult to separate from each other and from (əə). But the slight raising of the point of the tongue will distinguish the diphthongs from the vowel in the mouth of a careful speaker, that is, one who trains his organs to do so. No doubt the great majority of speakers do not make any difference'.

3

Non-Vowel Phonology

3.1 CH-ING

The discussion of the nature and extent of obstruent affricativization in pre-[j] contexts in items (famously) such as *tune* and *tutor*, which was of such concern to eighteenth-century observers, continues with almost as much intensity in the nineteenth. While the general term CH-ING seems to have been the invention of Cooley (1861: liv *footnote* 64), almost all observers have some (usually extended) comment to make on this phenomenon. Batchelor (1809: 67–8) illustrates the phenomenon through continuous speech examples such as: *I wis you would* and *Are the fis your own?*, observing how ‘the omission of *h* in *wish* and *fish*, is so far supplied by the following initial *y*, that the defect would not be perceived in common conversation. In the following instances, it will be obvious that the contact of the contiguous words, presents instantly the idea of *usher*, *glazier*, *notcher*, *badger* and *ledger*, especially of the accent be laid upon the words which precede *your*. *Tell us your will; Glaze your window; 'Tis not your horse; So bad yourself; He led your nag*’. While he admits that *d*, *t*, *s* or *z* plus (*y*) consonant ‘makes a hissing combination’, ‘this hissing is considerably diminished if the distance between *d*, *t* etc and the teeth is increased’. Indeed, affricativization of the dentals seems to be at very best a rare phenomenon: if *d* and *t* are produced in this soft manner the ‘rushing of the breath will scarcely be perceived and the (*y*) will be pronounced as slenderly as possible so the hissing will be entirely lost’. The use of [tʃ] and [dʒ] onsets for items like *tune* and *duel*, he places at the door of Sheridan as a usage he, like Stephen Jones,²⁵⁷ condemns (1809: 92): ‘This mode of pronouncing *u* (*yuw*) after *d*, *t* and *s*, is common in Ireland and some parts of England, and has at least the merits of regularity, though it obtains no reputation among polite speakers’. We have already noted how Batchelor sees the need for a new graph ‘not only to distinguish the difference between (*i*) and (*y*), but also to give some other mark to distinguish the initial *y* of the pronoun *you* (*yuw*) from a still more short and feeble sound of the same kind, which is the initial of the long *u* when it follows any of the consonants in the same syllable; but more particularly when it follows *d*, *t*, or *s*’. His *Tabular View of Various Ways of pronouncing the long u after the Consonants* suggests a binary contrast between long *oo* [uu] forms and (*yuw*) types only, and he proclaims that

'on the whole, the pronunciation of the third columns, viz, *doo*, *dooil*, *sooil*, *sootur*, and *toon*, will be esteemed to deviate less from the polite standard than the provincialisms of either Mr. Sheridan or of Bedfordshire', while 'in *dew* and *tune*, the (y) is so very slightly pronounced, that its entire omission would be scarcely noticed by an ordinary observer; but, to effect this, it is necessary to pronounce the *d* and *t* more softly than in other cases'. It is very difficult to know what Batchelor means, in this context, by 'more softly', and we can only conjecture that it may well relate to the 'feeble whisper' he associates with word final obstruents and pre-(y) environments (1809: 67): 'The consonants (t and d), like the other mutes, are followed at the end of words by the unaccented *u* (u.), spoken in a feeble whisper, as *bat* (batu.), *mud* (mudu.): now when these letters are followed by (y), as in *your*, the tongue is placed in the proper position to sound (y), before the imprisoned breath is liberated; and the rushing of the breath through the narrow passage causes a perceptible sibilation, which is in fact a (y) forcibly pronounced'. Batchelor seems to be arguing that in *due* and *tune*, the level of fricativization is relatively low, [dju-] types are best pronounced as [du] or even [d^hu], a shape which, he seems to suggest is nearer the 'standard' [dju] than what for him is the provincial [dʒv]. Perhaps we might even interpret his preferred form as some kind of compromise, fudged candidate.

Like Batchelor, Smart (1836: xxix) uses continuous speech examples to demonstrate the fricative effect of obstruents in long *u*, as well as in *iate*, *ion*, and *ious* contexts:

Let any English mouth fluently pronounce the phrase *I'll meet you* without accent or emphasis on *you*, and there will be heard, in the transition from the *t* in *meet*, to the *y* in *you*, a slight interposed sound of the vocal *sh* ... The cause is, that the speaker having to touch the upper gum with the tongue in sounding *t* or *d*, and then to utter the *y* lightly, is more negligent in the transition than he would be if the word *you* were accented or emphatic; and the sound *sh* or *zh* in consequence slides in.

He goes on to argue that this is, in fact, the practice of 'the best and most careful speakers' who demure from the 'pure' *d* and *t* in such cases.²⁵⁸ Smart proposes that items such as *nation*, *nauseate* and many others were originally *nāte-yun* and *nā⁴wse-yāte* and now have, 'in English mouths', a tendency to be pronounced *nā-shūn*, *nā⁴wsh-yāte*. He is far from convinced as to the propriety of such renderings and, as is his custom, proposes a compromise, middle way (1836: xxix):

Admitting the tendency, then, to these corruptions, the question occurs, is a speaker justified in yielding to this tendency? In many words, it cannot be doubted that he must yield to it, if he wishes to escape the ridiculous effect of pronouncing as nobody else pronounces; in other instances, he may decidedly adopt the more regular sounds; but in the majority of cases his best course will be neither to yield decidedly to the practice, nor very carefully to avoid it, this being one of the cases in which the extreme either way has a bad effect.

But he notes too how, in cases like *ocean* and *nation*, a double pronunciation is possible (he cites as alternatives, for instance, *osh-yan* and *o-shun*) (1810: 70): 'It may be observed, that slightly introducing the sound *y*, instead of sinking it, has a neatness in it, where custom has not absolutely decided that it should be sunk' and again (1810: 212): 'unless custom has absolutely decided that the sound of *y* should be sunk, a slight sound of it seems agreeable to the ear'.

For Cooley (1861: liv *footnote* 64), 'pure' *t* sounds are fricativized in pre-*ion* and like contexts, although he balks at allowing the process where, he claims, the *t* forms part of a word's accented syllable, thus disclaiming as proper [tʃ] realizations in items like, *frontier*, *celestial* and *admixture* 'but this pronunciation, although still heard among ordinary speakers (who in four cases out of five follow Walker, right or wrong) is scrupulously avoided by the educated and polite'. Furthermore, he treats *tshoon* and *tshootur* pronunciations as 'Barbarisms of pronunciation which never became general, and which now long since have fallen into entire disuse'.

From Savage's materials, though, we get again what is a much more complex picture, one which shows much evidence of lexical diffusion. Lack of palatalization to some form of [tʃ]/[dʒ] he regards as a 'low' vulgarism – recording what he regards as stigmatized forms in: *fixters* 'fixtures'; *feeturs* 'features'; *juncture* 'juncture'; *venter* 'venture'; *futur* 'future'; *literatoor* 'literature'; *creetur* 'creature'; *natur* 'nature'; *premature* 'premature'; *stature* 'stature'; *signature* 'signature'; *fortin* 'fortune'; *texter* 'texture'; *natteral* 'natural'; *jester* 'gesture'; *minniture* 'miniature'; *lectur* 'lecture', the orthoepy form of all of which Savage indicates with a *tch* graph. Certainly his evidence suggests that distribution of the palatalizing innovation is lexically motivated as much as anything else, since he records as vulgarisms shapes like:²⁵⁹ *aitches* 'aches'; *Archipelago* 'archipelago'; *artchives* 'archives'; *artshitecture* 'architecture'; *chasm* (standard *kazm*); *distitch* 'distich' (pronounce *distik*); *krystshul* 'crystal'; *Magna Charta* (standard *karta*); *matchinations* 'machinations'; *mewtshal* 'mutual'; *paroatchal* 'parochial'; *perpetchally* 'perpetually'; *presemitchus* 'presumptuous'; *Portchmouth* 'Portsmouth'; *tchaos* 'chaos'; *tshyle* 'chill in the stomach' (standard *kyle*).

For Ellis this palatalization is no more than a 'tendency' (1869: 203):

T,D have now a tendency, ignored by most orthoepists, under particular circumstances to pass into (tsh, dzh); thus *nature*, *verdure* are, perhaps most frequently, pronounced (neetsh, vɪdzh), the last word being in that case identified with *verger* ... It is a fashion in modern English to resist, or to believe that we resist, this tendency in the especial case of *-ture* and *-dure*, but we have given in to it completely in *-tion* ... A similar change is recognized in *-cious*, *-cial*. And it is in vain to protest against *-ture*, *-dure* becoming (-tsh, -dzh), at a time when even (-tju, -dju), though far less pedantic than (-tiu, -diu), have a singularly orthoepistic effect.

But it is clear from Ellis' comments that the palatalization is uneven and socially sensitive,²⁶⁰ as can be inferred from his account of *Dj* under his *Expression of Sounds* section (1869: 595): 'an unacknowledged English sound, common in speech in the 19., and represented by *d* before *u*, as: *verdure* = (vɪdju), when the speaker wishes

to avoid (vɪdʒhɪ). It is palatalized (d), a transition sound between (d) and (dʒh), and is distinct from (dj). Vulgar speakers do not change *would you?* into (wudʒhɪ), but into (wudjɐ). Some even say (wud, dʒhɪʔ)'. Likewise (1869: 604), he views (tj) as an 'unrecognised English sound, generated by the action of a following (iu), when the speaker avoids the stiffness of (t,j), and wishes also to avoid (tsh), as: virtue, lecture, (v.tju, lektju), commonly (vɪtshu, lektshɪ)'.

3.2 Glide-insertion

This phenomenon continues to be well represented in the discussions of nineteenth-century observers. Batchelor (1809: 59–60), appealing to ease of articulation criteria, notes how '(y) is often subjoined to the guttural consonants (c) (g), when a palatine vowel follows; for, *can, get, begin*, &c. sound as if they were written *cyan, gyet, begyn*, &c. for the tongue can scarce pass from these guttural consonants to form the palatine vowels, but it must pronounce (y)'. He is careful to constrain the [j] insertion to such contexts, noting how 'it is not so before the other vowels; as, in *call, gall, go, gun, goose, come*, &c.'. He observes what seems to be a less common phenomenon where 'W is sometimes subjoined to the labial or lip consonants, especially before (o), as *pot, boy, boil*, &c. which are sounded as if spelt thus, *pwot, bwoy, bwoy, bwol*, &c. but this is not always done, nor by all men'. He explains the [j]-insertion phenomenon by claiming (1809: 60): 'if any breath, that passes immediately after the tongue leaves the back part of the palate, produces an audible sound, it will bear some resemblance to the (y) consonant. It may be heard as audibly in *back* and *bag*, as in *can*, &c.; but the pronunciation of these sounds in an audible manner is an obvious deprivation of speech, and should be carefully avoided'. Smart (1836: 2) equates this inserted [j] – 'a slight semiconsonant between e¹ and y consonant, heard in the transition from certain consonant to certain vowel sounds; as in *lute* (l'ōōt), *jew* (j'ōō), *nature* (na-ch'ōōr) *g'arment*, *k'ind*' – with the first element of 'long u'. He compares it too with the lenited vowel element in items like *million*, *filial*, marking it with ('), a 'sound so short and slight as to be lost altogether in the mouth of an unpolished speaker' (1836: viii). However, we have already recorded his views on the social pitfalls in this area of the phonology, views which are expressed again at (1836: xi): 'but tho, on the other hand, the entire omission of this sound [y consonant: Cj] gives a harshness and a vulgarity to the utterance of such words as *card, kind, kerchief*, on the other, so decided an introduction of the e or y consonant signified by *k_yard, k_yind, k_yerchief* carries with it an affected air, and must be avoided'. Perhaps this is what Cooley refers to when observing how (1861: xlv *foot-note* 176): 'Affected speakers often substitute ē for ('), and say *kē-īnd, gē-īd* for *kind, guide*, an error not infrequently perpetrated on the stage. Rigidly speaking this added sound after *k*, and *g* and *c* hard, belongs to the consonant, and not to the vowel'. Yet the author of *The Vulgarities of Speech Corrected* is in no doubt as to the inappropriateness of any kind of [j] insertion (1826: 13–14):

In some measure, misled by the authority of Walker, and other writers, we often hear book-speakers pronouncing stiffly and affectedly, the words in

which *a* follows *c* and *g*, by introducing *e* or *y* where they have no business. In opposition to this authority, I would bring the example of our best speakers, who, with a very few exceptions, pronounce these words plainly according to the spelling. That it is a vulgar pronunciation, I have no doubt, from its being a common provincialism. In other words, where there is no *a*, as in the words *county*, *counter*, *account*, *cows* &c. which are vulgarly sounded *Kyounty*, *Kyounter*, *Kyounsel*, *Ackyount*, *Kyows*, &c. Neither Mr. Walker nor Mr. Sheridan would defend his vulgarity, which is sometimes even affectedly extended to *common*, pronounced *Kyimmon*, *copy* pronounced *Kyippy*, and the like.

He goes on to make a long list of ‘these errors of the “vulgar-genteel”’, almost all of which contain an *a* vowel terminated by an [r] initial cluster: *guard*, *garden*, *guardian*, etc. However, he excludes those items where the vowel is ‘short’ (1826: 15): ‘In all the short sounds, however, of *a* after *c* or *g*, this pronunciation which we have been reprobating, is indispensable, as the words cannot be sounded in any other manner, as in *captain*, *cannot*, *candle*, *cant*, &c. which are correctly pronounced *kyaptain*, *kyannot*, *kyandle*, &c.’; and, seeing short vowels in items like *garret*, *garrison* and *gambler*, he considers forms like *ghyarret*, *ghyarrison*, etc. as ‘correctly pronounced’, noting that this association of [j] with the ‘length’ of the following vowel, ‘is a very singular omission’, one not marked ‘in any of our pronouncing Dictionaries; not even in Walker’s’. Ellis (1869: 206) suggests that [j] insertion ‘is now antiquated in English’ but that while ‘the custom is now dying out’, although ‘antiquated’ it is ‘still heard’ (1869: 600). Yet he records his own pronunciation of the item *girl* as (gʝæɫ), something like [gʝɜɜɫ] (1874: 1156).

3.3 [r] developments

3.3.1 Pre-[r] lowering and centring

Throughout the eighteenth century, almost all observers comment on syllable final [r] from a number of different perspectives. There is, as we have seen, considerable discussion of the nature of the perhaps levelled, unstressed vowel form which precedes it, as well as its potential to diphthongize and lengthen the preceding vowel space itself. There appears to be too what seem to be the beginnings of the loss of syllable final – or ‘sunk’ – [r], as well as a contrary tendency to insert it unetymologically in syllable-coda positions. We have already observed the extent to which the pre-[r] breaking phenomenon was widespread in the nineteenth century as well, but the outstanding characteristic of consonantal change in that century is perhaps the firming-up and salientness in the public eye of post-vocalic [r] insertion and deletion as a widespread phenomenon (with sociophonetic consequences) alongside what appears to be a relatively new alternation involving an [r]/[w] interchange. Batchelor (1809: 106) criticizes Jones’s *Sheridan Revisited* for suggesting that there has been no pre-[r] vowel merger under something like [ʌ] in words such as *circle*, *person* and so on. For Batchelor, unstressed vowels preceding [r] plus consonant show the ‘*u* in *but*, or the unaccented *u* in *rostrum*’, and he is dismissive of any attempt to realise whatever vowels the spelling suggests: ‘The

pronunciation of the *e* in *met*, in such words as *pert*, and *bird*, is tinged with the *u* in *but*, in the mouths of good speakers. Perry and Enfield call it the obscure *e*, as in *her*, or *i*, as in *shirt*. There is, however, no obscurity in these sounds, as they are similar to the *u* in *sun*, &c.' Indeed, he categorically states that the true pronunciation – the merger under something like [ʌ] – is to be found among the lower, rather than the upper classes in society: 'in these and many other cases the true pronunciation has been depraved by the capricious affectation of fashion, while it has been tenaciously retained by the vulgar'. Smart (1810: 63) claims that *e* preceding [r] is 'differently pronounced by different speakers' and he even allows for an *a*¹ ([e]: C]) pronunciation in an item like *herd*, which he represents as *haird*. But, he claims, 'the usual sound is *u*², so *mu*²*rcy*. But with polite speakers, we hear a deviation from the latter pronunciation, which approaches the former, and is, in fact, a compromise between the two'. Even if we can interpret his *a*¹ as nearer [ɛ] than [e], then we might see his comments as suggesting a levelled, fudged lowered and centralized segment like [ə], although like Batchelor he seems to be criticizing some 'good speakers' for producing 'spelling pronunciations' in such words. Indeed, he ends up being quite dogmatic on the subject claiming that the *i* before *r* is exactly like *e* before *r* with the same difference between different speakers (1810: 63): 'But to foreigners, it is advisable to lay down as a rule, that *e* and *i* followed by *r*, ought wholly to have the sound of *u*²; because they are already too liable to pronounce these letters, so situate, wholly *a*¹: *mairth*, *defare*, for *me*²*rth* (*mirth*), *defe*²*r*; and because they will, by this means, more readily catch the proper medium'. Smart suggests that the *ar/er/ir* distinction in stressed syllables is one which 'in mere theory' would not be distinguished. He sees *er/ir* as lying between his *āre* (his *gate* vowel) and *ur*, and is 'an element in syllables which, orally, the vulgar-bred Londoner never uses: – he is 'your sarvant' or 'your survant'; he speaks of 'murcy' and of 'vurtue'; and says 'it is urksome to be restrained from murth'; but *servant*, *mercy*, *virtue* (*vertue*), *irksome* (*erksome*), and *mirth* (*mirth*) are delicacies of pronunciation which prevail only in the more refined classes of society. Even in these classes, *sur*, *durt*, and *burd*, &c. are the current pronunciation of *sir*, *dirt*, *bird* &c. and indeed in all very common words, it would be somewhat affected to insist on the delicacy referred to' (1810: vii–viii). By 1836 he claims that any attempt to distinguish the vowel space in the unaccented syllable of a word like *dollar*, where the sound 'verges towards unaccented *ur*', would be a 'puerile necessity'.

The existence of any *er/ur* alternation is denied by Ellis thirty years later where he displays his usual antipathy to theoretical observers in favour of real speech data, dismissing Smart's conclusions as 'orthoepical fancy' (1869: 201–2):

Another point on which Mr. Smart insists is the distinction between *serf*, *surf* ... I write either (sɪf, sɪf) by preference, or (seɪf, səɪf), or else, sinking the distinction, as is far the commonest practice, write (sɪf) for both words. A distinction of course can be made, and without much difficulty, by those who think of it, and is made by those who have formed a habit of doing so; but the distinction is so rarely made as to amount almost to pedantry when carefully carried out, like so many other distinctions insisted upon by orthoepists, but ignored by

speakers whose heart is in the thought they wish to convey, not in the vehicle they are using.

Ellis notes how the *ir/er* distinction tends to be maintained in Northern and Scotch speech (in many varieties of English spoken in Scotland there is today a clear vowel distinction between items like *word*, *bird* and *heard*), and points to the fact that Bell too makes such a distinction, assigning [ə] in *bird* and [ʌ] in an item like *curd*. Ellis claims that in his own speech he has for both items a common (ə) vowel, perhaps (at least in Eustace's interpretation of *Paleograph* script) something close to [ɜ]. Yet Ellis clearly has difficulty in settling upon a pronunciation for the item *girl* (1874: 1156): 'I have never been able satisfactorily to determine how this extremely common word *girl* is actually pronounced'. He claims to be offended by [gʌʌ] or [gʌrʌ] pronunciations which he heard as a child, while [gæ] he regards as 'vulgar'. His own pronunciation he says is [gʝɜ], although he also suggests he can as well say [gʝəl] (gʝɪl), where the (x) shows 'an (ə) sound interrupted, if descried, with a gentle trill. I trill a final *r* so easily and readily myself with the tip of the tongue, that perhaps in avoiding this distinct trill I may run into the contrary extreme in my own speech. Yet whenever I hear an approach to a trill in others, it appears strange.'

3.3.2 Syllable final [r] loss and adding: vocalization and epenthesis

By the nineteenth century, the [r] sound seems to attract less and less criticism for what had earlier been seen as its inherently unpleasant characteristics; the 'horrid, dog-like sound' is by and large treated in a more neutral way. Batchelor appeals, like many of his eighteenth-century predecessors, to the rough/smooth [r] contrast (the *Rome/bard* contrast), ascribing a vowel-like quality to the latter where, in an item like *burn*, 'It is difficult ... to ascertain what portion of the sound belongs to *r*,²⁶¹ as both this letter and *l* seem to be two slight alterations or additions to the unaccented *u* in *nostrum*' (1809: 19). In general, Batchelor's comments on [r] loss/adding are relatively sparse (1809: 195): 'When *r* precedes *s* and *e* final, or *s* and any other consonant, it is frequently not pronounced; as *horse*, which is called (hos). Words that terminate in *o*, or *a*, are commonly ill-pronounced, and *r* is often used as a final letter in such cases; as *elbow* is called (elbur), &c.' That he regards both tendencies as stigmatized is clear from the inclusion of the following forms in his *Vocabulary, consisting principally of accidental Errors of Pronunciation* (1809: 117–25): *habur* 'abor'; *eam* 'arm'; *bust* 'burst'; *folur* 'follow'; *gal* 'girl'; *masi* 'mercy'; *nohun* 'northern'; *odur* 'order'; *wos* 'worse'. Smart promotes the rough/smooth contrast as well, providing detailed articulatory descriptions for both types.²⁶² The smooth form he too sees as being effaced, especially in London (1810: 237–8): 'In London we are too liable to substitute the smooth *r* for the rough, and even in the proper situation, we often pronounce the smooth *r* with so little exertion of the organs as to make it scarcely anything more than the vowel sound *a*³ [as in *Messiah*: CJ]. He observes too how: 'In Ireland, on the other hand, *r*, where it ought to be smooth, receives too strong a jar of the tongue, and is accompanied with too strong a

breathing. We hear *storm*, *farm*, &c. pronounced something like *staw-rum*, *far-um*', with *cluster-busting* affecting double sonorant groups as it does there, and in many parts of Scotland to this day (Jones 1995: 248–53). Smart makes a similar set of observations (1836: vii §33) when describing the combination *ar*: 'ā³ terminating in a guttural vibration', arguing that the use of trilled or rough *r* form in smooth contexts carries with it 'to correct ears an impression of peculiar habits in the speaker – either that he is foreign or provincial, Irish or Scotch, a copier of bad declaimers on the stage, or a speaker who in correcting one extreme has unwarily incurred another. The extreme amongst the vulgar in London doubtless, is to omit the *r* altogether – to convert *far* into *fā³a¹* ... extreme which must be avoided as carefully as the strong trill of the *r* in an improper place'.

For Ellis (1869: 196) what appears to be *r-vocalization* is a major characteristic of his contemporary phonology²⁶³ (1874: 1153): '(park, kart) with a genuine short *a*, and trilled *r* sound to me thoroughly un-English, and (park, kart) are either foreignisms or Northumbrianisms'. He equates the process directly with the vocalization of syllable-final [l]. For Ellis, syllable final [r], especially when preceding a consonant, 'is a vocal murmur, differing very slightly from (ə)', a sound he represents throughout by (ɪ), claiming (1869: 196) that 'in the mouths of by far the greater number of speakers in the South of England the absorption of the (ɪ) is as complete as the absorption of the (l) in *talk*, *walk*, *psalm*, where it has also left its mark on the preceding vowel.' The (ɪ) is an 'indistinct murmur, differing from (l) by not having any contact between the tongue and the palate, but similar to it, in absorbing a variety of other vowels' (1869: 197). The precise value of the vocalized (r) lies, for Ellis, anywhere between (ə, ɛ) and (ɐ) – 'the physiological difference between (ɛ) and (ɪ) is very difficult to formulate' (1869: 603) – yet it is clear that for educated Londoners the vocalization represents a conscious effect (1869: 603): 'In London, *father*, *farther*, *laud*, *lord*, *stalk*, *stork*, *draws*, *drawers*, are reduced to (faadhɐ, lAAɪ, stAAk, drAAz), even in the mouths of educated speakers. I have usually written (ɪ) final in deference to opinion, but I feel sure that if I had been noting down an unwritten dialectic form, I should frequently write (ɐ, ə, ɛ). Careful speakers say (faadhɐ, lAA'd, stAA'k, drAA'z) for *farther*, *lord*, *stork*, *drawers*, when they are thinking particularly of what they are saying, but (fardher, lɔrd, stɔrk, drAAerz) is decidedly un-English, and has a Scotch or Irish twang with it'.

Smart records several instances of [r]-insertion (1810: 107–8): 'There is a cockney pronunciation of the following, and other, words in which the sound *a⁴* occurs, and which consists in pronouncing *r* after the sound, though this letter is not present. Such a blemish must be carefully avoided'. He claims that items like *jaw*, *paw*, *law*, *thaw*, *claw*, *law*, *gnaw*, *withdraw*, *bawl*, and *straw*, can appear with such an unetymological post-vocalic [r]. Like Batchelor, he too notes this intrusion occurring word-finally after a vowel. Discussing items like *fellow*, *window*, *willow*, he notes (1810: 151) that: 'The unprotracted, but open *o¹*, in these words, is often corrupted by the vulgar into *er*. This blemish must be carefully avoided'. Similar observations, often accompanied by long lists of examples, are given considerable prominence in works like *The Vulgarities of Speech Corrected*, Jackson's *Popular Errors* (1830), *Mistakes of Daily Occurrence* and *Errors in Speech and Writing Corrected* (1817)

where, under the *Idea* entry in *Vulgarities*, we find the observation: 'IDEAR, for *Idea*. Many people are guilty of this error, when the following word begins with a vowel: as, *I have not the least idear of it*. For the same reason, they sound an *r* at the end of all Christian names ending in *a*, as, *Is Mariar out? Is Lousiar at home?* Great pains should be taken to avoid this error'. The phenomenon takes on almost mythic status in the much-published *Poor Letter H* and *Poor Letter R* pamphlets, where [r]-insertion is likened to 'the murdering of the Queen's English' and should be protested against 'even were it only on the grounds of philanthropy': 'When looking for a residence in the neighbourhood of Kilburn, the house agent, Mrs.—, informed me of two localities, both of which were celebrated for the salubrity of their situations. *Maida Hill* and *Maida Vale* were the names of those places as set down in the best map of London, but the house agent called them *Maidier Ill* and *Maidier Wale*, the former of these localities I at once repudiated as unhealthy, as I understood my informant to say that it *made her ill*, and took a house in the latter, which I now find to be low and damp, because I supposed her to say that it *made her well*'.²⁶⁴

Savage's observations in this area are once more of a highly detailed and complex nature and serve to supply the historical linguist and sociolinguist with an intricate view of not only the typology of phonological change in the period, but also in providing a picture of the extent to which individual changes were being transmitted across the lexicon. Under his 'vulgarism' column he includes a very large number of instances where [r] has been unetymologically inserted syllable finally (with instances at word and morphological boundaries being relatively rarely exemplified): *advartage* 'advantage'; *arskes* 'asks'; *boerth* 'both'; *bonnerfider* 'bona fide'; *circumstarnce* 'circumstance'; *contrarst* 'contrast'; *darter* 'daughter'; *debburty* 'deputy'; *diermunt* 'diamond'; *disadvartageous* 'disadvantageous'; *drawing* 'drawing'; *duberous* 'dubious'; *fantarstical* 'fantastical'; *five and ort* 'five and nought'; *frenetic* 'frenetic'; *garp* 'gape'; *hakmer* 'acme'; *hampertated* 'amputated'; *harer one* 'either one'; *harnch* 'haunch'; *harnselled* 'hanselled'; *harsp* 'hasp'; *hollor* 'halloo'; *horsler* 'hostler'; *jarnders* 'jaundice'; *jarnt* 'jaunt'; *Jennerwery* 'January'; *larder* 'lather'; *larnch* 'launch'; *marscopyne* 'masculine'; *mourn* 'moan'; *lorth* 'loath'; *mezzertint* 'mezzotint'; *parnch* 'paunch'; *pillor* 'pillow'; *porched* 'poached'; *porlt* 'pelt'; *Portergee* 'Portuguese'; *pruherns* 'prunes'; *rathier* 'rather'; *romarnc* 'romance'; *sarce* 'sauce'; *sarsepan* 'sausagepan'; *sarser* 'saucer'; *sarsy* 'saucy'; *shadder* 'shadow'; *shrorft* 'shrove'; *St Petersburrer* 'St Petersburg'; *starnch* 'staunch'; *substarncial* 'substantial'; *torsels* 'tassles'; *trarnsaction* 'transaction'; *trarnsient* 'transient'; *yaller* 'yellow'.

For all these items Savage marks the [r]-less version as true *Orthoepy*; all [r]-full pronunciations, where they appear as residues of or influences from lower-class speech, are to be avoided by the socially aspirant. The same social constraint holds for what are considered to those 'vulgar' pronunciations involving syllable-final [r]-loss: *Buggumy* 'Burgundy'; *bust(ed)* 'burst'; *cust* 'cursed'; *fominted* 'fermented'; *gal* 'girl'; *gallish* 'girlish'; *goggle* 'gargle'; *hash* 'harsh'; *hennivated* 'enervated'; *high-un* 'iron'; *mash* 'marsh'; *mashmallows* 'marshmallows'; *petikler* 'particular'; *thust* 'thirst'; *wosship* 'worship'. Interestingly, these are considerably less common and include the well-worn eighteenth-century *hash*, *mash* types. While it is obviously

difficult to generalize from such a small data sample, it might be relevant that the loss of syllable-final [r] seems to be affected by phonetic conditioning: the loss is most likely to occur, on this evidence at least, when the segment right-contiguous with the [r] is a continuant of some kind, most commonly [j], [st], [l], [m] or [v].

But one of the most interesting aspects of the data Savage offers in this area – which he claims to represent the speech habits of ‘the custom of good society’, ‘the custom of educated society’ (1883: xxiv) – is the extent to which they show evidence for a phonological change in progress whereby both unetymological [r]-adding (in particular) and [r]-loss are beginning to penetrate ‘polite’ usage. For the former he offers examples of *Orthoepy* showing [r]-full shapes: *aie-re-ur* ‘area’; *arnt* ‘aunt’; *arsk’d* ‘ask’d’; *aie-re-ur* ‘area’; *apertheosis* ‘apotheosis’; *blorn-mornje* ‘blancmange’; *charldrous* ‘chauldrous’; *enigmer* ‘enigma’; *eperlets* ‘epaulettes’; *eye-dear* ‘idea’; *frakar* ‘fracas’; *garstly* ‘ghastly’; *grenerdeers* ‘grenadiers’; *Hamburrer* ‘Hamburgh’; *harer one* ‘either one’; *Indier* ‘India’; *lin-ne-ar-ment* ‘linament’; *mirrarkel* ‘miracle’; *orgust* ‘august’; *ordashus* ‘audacious’; *ornkore* ‘encore’; *paragararf* ‘paragraph’; *partition* ‘petition’; *purtaytuz* ‘potatoes’; *pye-rer-cy* ‘piracy’; *rerkonnatrer* ‘reconnoitre’; *stigmer* ‘stigma’; *vorze* ‘vase’. ‘Vulgar’ forms for such items are recorded by Savage as being [r]-less, for example *stigmy* ‘stigma’, *hangkore* ‘encore’; *hairy* ‘area’ and so on.

It is important to observe, however, that Savage’s data suggest that orthoepically acceptable instances of unetymological [r]-loss are few and far between: *hawkwud* ‘awkward’, vulgar *hawkerd*; *subbeltun* ‘subaltern’, vulgar *subhaultern*. But possibly the most interesting feature of Savage’s data concerning [r]-adding, lies in the several instances where he shows it to appear unetymologically in *both* ‘vulgar’ and orthoepy contexts, suggesting that the items in question have been relexicalized to show syllable-final [r]. Any inappropriateness they show stems from characteristics other than those associated with the [r] segment:

<i>Vulgarism</i>	<i>Orthography</i>	<i>Orthoepy</i>
baggurnets	bayonets	bay-yur-nets
debbertchee	debauchee	deb-ber-shee
drott	draught	drafft
garla	gala	gayler
grart	groat	grort
harnted house	haunted	hornted
larfture	laughter	larfter
larndry	laundry	lorndry
ordossity	audacity	ordassity
salliver	saliva	sa-ly-ver
serpeeny	subpoena	subpener

A few points need to be stressed concerning these data: (1) only two instances of [r]-adding appear in word-final slots; (2) there are two cases where the [r]-adding context is different in the *Vulgarism* from the *Orthoepy*: *garla/gayler* and *serpenny/subpener*, which might just suggest that word-final [r]-insertion was viewed as less ‘vulgar’ than the syllable-final context. But the situation is clearly more complex,

since although *ordassity* shows a non-vulgar [r] added, the entry for *audacious*, while its Orthoepy is given with an [r]-added *or-da-shus*, its corresponding Vulgarism is [r]-less in *howdacious*. Taken as a whole, Savage's data on *r* seem to suggest that in the early part of the nineteenth-century [r]-loss was not yet an active, ongoing change (even among 'vulgar' speakers, and certainly not in the *Orthoepy*). On the other hand, syllable-final [r]-adding was ongoing and active and gaining ground everywhere, not least in socially acceptable contexts. It needs stating too that Savage's evidence is relatively short on what might be interpreted as 'linking-[r]' cases – with *harer one* 'either one' and *I saw rim* 'I saw him' (1833: 15) the only unambiguous examples he cites. It is impossible to determine too just how many of Savage's word-final [r]-adding types are a consequence of 'linking' at syllable interface – the *haller* 'halloo', *yaller* 'yellow', *shadder* 'shadow', *pilller* 'pillow', *saliver* 'saliva' and *gayler* 'gala' (Jones 1989: 301; Wells 1982: 284–5) – or whether they should be treated as instances whereby speakers have entered this set of items into their lexicon with an [r]-final shape, perhaps reserving them in particular for those contexts where they may well have been maximally conscious of being observed for their pronunciation usage.

For Ellis, intrusive ('vanish') [r] is a phenomenon to be avoided and one which may well, in fact, result from faulty observation. He cites Rush as claiming that an item like *awe* shows just such an additional [r]-final component (1869: 61): 'A-we has for its radical, the peculiar sound of 'a' in *awe*; and for its vanish, a short and obscure sound of the monophthong *e-rr*'. He claims (1874: 1122) that 'It is quite true that Londoners have a difficulty in distinguishing *saw*, *sore*, *law*, *lore*, *maw*, *more*, generally saying only (sAA', IAA', mAA'), for (sAA soo'; IAA, mloo', mAA, moo') and that the principle difference to them is that the first words may not, and the last words must have an epenthetic *r* before a vowel'. Seeking a solution to the problem by suggesting a nomenclature change, he consequently recommends that 'it is therefore best to avoid this 'vanish', and say (sAA) without relaxing the position for (AA) ... We also find *mæmmaa'*, *pæppaa'* in the same way. The only objection is to the interposition of a trilled *r*, as *saw-r-ing* (sAA'riq). But the Basques interpose a 'euphonic' *r* in the same way, and if we could only persuade grammarians to call the cockney interposition of *r* 'euphonic' also, the custom, which is a living reality, however unsavoury now, would be at once disinfected'. Ellis (1869: 603) seems to suggest that the epenthetic [r] may, like its 'vanish' version, result from observational difficulties, particularly in the case of dialectal representations: 'there is no doubt that in many cases, where writers put *er*, *ur*, to imitate provincial utterances, there neither exists or ever existed any sound of (r) or of (ɪ), but the sounds are purely (ə, ɜ). Thus *bellows* in Norfolk is not (belerz) but rather (bElɜz). There also exists a great tendency among uneducated speakers to introduce an (r) after any (ə, ɜ, a, A) when a vowel follows, as (drAAriq, sAAriq) *drawing*, *sawing* in Norfolk, and this probably assisted in the delusion that they said (drAAɪ mi, sAAɪ wud) and not (drAA mii, sAA wud)'. It is the similarity of the (ɪ) sound to (ə), as well as the tendency to realize an [r] at syllable/word interfaces involving two vowels, which Ellis feels may be one factor promoting a generalization of the intrusive [r] phenomenon (1869: 201): 'It is on account of the resemblance of (ɪ) to (ə),

a sound to which all unaccented vowels approximate in the mouths of so many southern speakers, and also because when (ɪ) is followed by a vowel, it is usual to interpose (r), thus (Heeri, Hiiiriq), *hairy, hearing*, illiterate speakers – those who either do not know how to spell, or ignore the rules of spelling in their speech – usually interpose an (r) between any back vowel as (a, A, ə) and a subsequent vowel, thus (drAAriq, IAAɚ ə-dhə-lænd, windər ov dhi æus) for (drAAiq, IAA ov dhe lænd, windo ov dhe Hæus) *drawing, law of the land, window of the house*. From this habit, a very singular conclusion has been commonly drawn by a great many people, namely, that such persons habitually say (drAAr, IAAr, windər) when not before a vowel, – a feat which they are mostly incapable of performing. They will rhyme *window, cinder*, not because they say (windər, sindɪ) as generally assumed with a trilled (r), but because they say (wində sində) or (windɪ, sindɪ), omitting to trill the *r* in both cases'. Certainly, Ellis nowhere suggests the degree of lexicalization of intrusive [r] suggested by Savage, who would appear to be one of the 'great many people' who have arrived at that 'very singular conclusion'.

3.3.3 [r]/[w]/[v] alternations

Edmund Routledge's *Everyday Blunders in Speaking* (1866: 9–10) captures some of the social significance of this alternation in its discussion of 'non-U' pronunciations. One of his students – one Robert Rochdale – complains how another 'says that I can't pronounce H, but he can't pronounce the letter R. Why, he's always calling me *Wobert Wochdale*.' To which his tutor responds: 'That s a very common mistake, too, which London people particularly are supposed to make. Indeed, if an empty headed, over-dressed young man ... is depicted in a novel or a play, he never opens his mouth but to make a *howid wow*. A little book called, I believe, 'The Complaint of Poor Letter R', has the following choice passage: 'I sat down to *wite*, when Jane *wushed* into the *woom*, *winging* her hands, and exclaiming that there was so much *wangling* and *wong* going on below, that she must *wap* her *shawl* about her, and call a policeman.' The cure the tutor offers for such a 'defect' is the repetition, twenty times per day, of the sentence: 'Round the rugged rocks the ragged rascals ran to see the rural races'. Indeed, the *Poor Letter R* pamphlet gives a long list of such a usage, including: *Wichawd* 'Richard', *Waw* 'war', *Woost* 'roost', *Pokaw* 'poker', *Awow* 'arrow', *Buttaw* 'butter', *Bwandy* 'brandy', in reaction to such the *Poor Letter R* complains to *Poor Letter H*, that 'I have never felt more offended in my life on this occasion; and I am sure I need adduce no further proofs of the ill treatment I meet with, to excite your sympathy'. *The Vulgarities of Speech Corrected* (1826: 257) claims that this interchange is not confined to London: 'Natives of London are supposed to make the greatest mistakes with regard to the sounds *v* and *w*, and in sounding or not sounding the letter *h* properly; yet these mistakes are by no means confined to London, but may be met with in every part of England. A person who is in the habit of making such mistakes will talk of a *Wery igh vinder*, for 'a very high window''. For Batchelor (1809: 24), though, the pronunciation of 'willing nearly like villain' is one in which 'the Cockney dialect abounds'.²⁶⁵ Smart (1836: xl §179) under his *Hints to Cockney Speakers*, while seeing the [w]/[v] interchange as an 'extreme vulgarism found only the lowest classes of the metropolis', nevertheless

interestingly suggests that the phenomenon although persistent, is somewhat *passé*: ‘Few persons under forty years of age, with such a predilection for literary nicety as will lead them to these pages, can be in much danger of saying, that they like *Weal and winegar wery well*; or that they are going to *Vest Vickham in a po chay*; and with regard to men who, in spite of their intelligence and information, retain the habits of a more distant generation of cocknies, it is doubtful whether, at their age, a reformation could be promised without an expense of time and labour they would be willing to bestow’. Pegge too (1814: 76) had made similar observations thirty years earlier: ‘Citizen: *Villiam, I vants my vig*. Servant: *Vitch vig, sir?*. Citizen: *‘Vy, the vite vig in the vooden vig-box, vitch I vore last Vensday at the westry’*’.

3.4 [h]-loss and adding; [hw-]/[w-] alternations

Despite the role it plays as a marker of social class and gender in both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Mugglestone 1995: 107–50; 282–8), there is remarkably little by way of sustained comment on what Ellis describes as ‘the fatal letter’ – [h] – from the more ‘linguistic’ observers like Smart, Batchelor, Cooley and Knowles. Routledge (1866: 8), as we might expect, pays considerable attention to the phenomenon of [h]-loss/adding, citing a verse he ascribes to one Miss Fanshaw: ‘Twas whisper’d in heaven, ‘twas mutter’d in hell,/And echo caught faintly the sound as it fell’, and providing numerous anecdotes illustrating the fault, including: ‘a fiery old gentleman, asked by a waiter, what he’d take with his ‘am, shouts out “The letter H, sir”’. Indeed, his condemnation of [h]-dropping has an almost moral flavour: ‘It is almost distressing to hear a man drop and add H’s; and yet, go where you will, you are almost sure to find some delinquent. Why, even in the House of Commons, country members, may be heard talking about the *Hindian Hempire*, and agitating their honourable friends to give their attention to some *hateful* violation of the *hancient* rights of the ‘ouse’. Likewise the author of *Never too late to learn: Mistakes of Daily Occurrence* recounts a similar anecdote (1855: 12–13): ‘Then I have heard a person, who was very well dressed and looked like a lady, ask a gentleman who was sitting by her, if he knew whether Lord Murray had left any *Heir* behind him: – the gentleman almost blushed, and I thought stopped a little, to think whether the lady meant a *Son* or a *Hare*’. Much in the same vein is Smart (1810: 177): ‘a very bad habit prevails, chiefly among the people of London, of sinking it at the beginning of words, where it ought to be sounded, and of sounding it, either where it is not seen, or where it ought to be silent.’ Batchelor (1809: 5) revisits the eighteenth-century controversy concerning the status of *h* itself as ‘a letter’: ‘It has been contended that *h* is no letter, but merely a mark of aspiration; yet as there is no person of common intelligence, who would mistake the words *ham, has, hat, hit* and *his*, for *am, as, at, it* and *is*, the impropriety of excluding it from a regular alphabet must be extremely obvious’. Loss of syllable-initial [h] he lists only among the *Provincial Errors* committed by ‘the peasantry of Bedfordshire’ (1809: 113): ‘*H* is seldom aspirated when it is not accented; thus, *he* is often called (iy), when it occurs in the middle of sentences which are hastily

pronounced. On the other hand, as *h* is occasionally prefixed to nouns, &c. which begin with vowels, as *owl* is called (hewl), &c.²⁶⁶

For Ellis (1869: 221) 'At the present day great strictness in pronouncing *h* is demanded as a test of education and position in society', noting that thirty years earlier Smart had allowed [h]-loss to a small lexical set which included *heir, honest, honour, hostler, hour, humble, and honour*, for Ellis the last two are in its time generally [h]-full, with any attempt a [h] suppression interpreted as 'social suicide'. But he claims that 'in practice' even among the speech of 'esteemed' speakers, [h]-loss is common in place names containing *-ham*, in items like *exhaust, exhibit, exhibition*, while '*his, him, her*, etc. after an accented consonant when perfectly unaccented, drop their *h*. It is extremely common in London to say (v too'wm) for *at home*.' Ellis makes the customary noises about the frequency of [h]-loss among the 'vast majority of the less educated and refined in London, and a still greater majority in the Midland Counties', while what would appear to be a hypercorrection 'in the form of a very strong (H) [where (H) plus 'turned comma' represents a 'jerked whisper'], is also a remarkable phenomenon, not so common, and still more illiterate', suggesting an alternation which was clearly at the level of observability as a measure of social standing (1869: 222, 598):

In England the use of the (H) among the illiterate seems to depend upon emphatic utterance. Many persons when speaking quietly will never introduce the (H), but when rendered nervous or excited, or when desiring to speak particularly well, they abound in strong and unusual aspirations. It is also singular how difficult it is for those accustomed to omit the *h*, to recover it, and how provokingly they sacrifice themselves on the most undesired occasions by this social shibboleth. In endeavouring to pronounce the fatal letter they generally give themselves great trouble, and consequently produce a harshness, quite unknown, to those who pronounce (H) naturally.

Yet despite all this, Ellis (1869: 223) is somewhat reluctantly forced to concede that some kind of ongoing change from below is actively in progress, one perhaps most closely associated with the newly aspirant lower middle classes of his day: 'it must be owned that very large masses of the people, even of those tolerably educated and dressed in silk and broad cloth, agree with the French, Italians, Spaniards, and Greeks, in not pronouncing the letter H'.²⁶⁷ He stresses how (1869: 222, 598) 'The Scotch never omit or insert it'; 'No Scotsmen omit the aspirate', while 'The Germans are equally strict'.

We saw how, in the course of the eighteenth-century, syllable-initial [hw-] in items like *what, which, who* and so on, was becoming 'simplified' to [w] through loss of the initial aspiration. Nineteenth-century observers also record this phenomenon, Batchelor (1809: 105) seeing it as a provincial deviation: 'In such words as begin with *wh*, as *when*, the *h* ought to be softly pronounced before the *w*; as (hwen), (hwot); &c; but the *h* is, in such cases, constantly and entirely omitted among the peasantry in Bedfordshire'. Smart (1810: ix) sees the aspiration as always present: '*w* is aspirated in *wheat, whig* &c. which are pronounced *hwheat, hwig*, &c.'

and again (1836: 180): 'both letters should be heard' in *whale* (hoo-ale); *what* (hoo-at), *when* (hoo-en), Smith (1816: 17) too observing that the *h* 'has a weak sound in *where, when, &c.*, as if written *hwere, hwen, etc.*' *The Vulgarities of Speech Corrected* (1826: 258) is quite explicit in listing *Wat* 'what', *weet* 'wheat', *wen* 'when', *wist* 'whist', *wite* 'white' and many others as 'vulgar sounds', the 'correct' versions being *hwot, hwen, hwist* and so on. While Ellis (1869: 188) sees (wh) as 'uncertain in the south' (1869: 573), he suggests some ambivalence in the social significance of the alternation: 'Although in London and the south of England (wh) is seldom pronounced, so that (wAt) is the usual sound for both *Wat* and *what*, yet to write *wot* for *what* is thought to indicate a bad vulgar pronunciation', while (whoo, whuu) for *who*, 'is heard from elderly provincials' (1869: 580). He may even be suggesting that the [hw/w] contrast is, for many speakers, below the level of observation (1874: 1144–5): 'If asked what is the sound of *wh* in *wheat*, I reply, that *I* say (wh), others say (whw), and by far the greater number of educated people in London say (w). These speakers are mutually intelligible to each other. Perhaps the (wh) and (whw) people may mark the (w), and think that '*h* is dropped'. Perhaps the (w) may think the (wh) folk and (whw) folk have an odd northern pronunciation, but generally they will not notice the matter. The (wh) and (hwh) people might converse together for hours without finding out that there was a difference between their habits'.

But, as Mugglestone (1995: 225–7) convincingly shows, it is probable that, even in the Metropolis and among the upper echelons of society, the aspirate-less form of *wh* was being widely used, and she shows how Smith (1866), while condemning the omission of the '*h* after *w*' as a 'fault highly detrimental to correct pronunciation' allows that it is nevertheless one which is 'committed by the majority of educated people'. Perhaps, like the [w]/[v] alternation, the maintenance of the aspirate was the preserve of the older speaker, [w-] initial types everywhere else becoming predominant.²⁶⁸ Yet it is interesting that Jackson (1830), shows no example of the [hw]/[w] alternation despite Mugglestone's claims for its salientness as a marker of femininity among other things. Even Savage (1833), who has perhaps the most extensive list of consonantal alternations of any handbook in the early part of the nineteenth century, only records *wailed* 'whealed'; *whale* 'weal' and *whon* 'wan, all pale and'

3.5 [n]/[ŋ] syllable final alternations

Thomas Batchelor's *Orthoepical Alphabet* depicts a special graph for the velar nasal segment (1809: 38): 'the simple sound *ng* may be turned into a nasal *g*, and cannot be more eligibly represented than by combining the essential parts of *n* and *g*, which may be done in two forms: but, perhaps, the first stroke of the *n*, joined with the last stroke of the *g*, as in Dr. Franklin's alphabet, may be the best manner, as it is very easily written, and not inelegant'. He describes the sound as (1809: 13): 'In pronouncing *ng*, the uvula descends to its natural unconstrained position, and the tongue is made to press against it, by elevating it something less than in pronouncing *g* and *k*, but the difference is very small'. It is a sound which he claims

that foreigners find difficult to pronounce (1809: 25–6): ‘If a Frenchman, after residing many years in England, continues to pronounce *bring*, *sing*, and *king*, as if they were written *brin*, *sin*, *kin*, it is obvious he must pay less attention to the subject than any English infant of three or four years old’. Yet he has nothing at all to say on [ŋ] for [n] terminations in participial contexts like *going*, *coming*, although he does note a tendency, especially among provincials, to see [ŋ] replaced by [n] in pre-[l] and pre-fricative contexts, word internally (1809: 26): ‘The transition from *ng* to *g* is so easy, and the difference of sound so apparently trivial, that some provincials pronounce *single*, &c. as if there were no *g* after the *ng*, though it should always be pronounced *sing-gle*. Indeed, so little attention is thought advisable with respect to pronunciation, that many of the Scotch,²⁶⁹ Welch, &c. will pronounce such words as *kingdom*, *strength*, &c. as if written *kindom*, *strenth*, *lenth*, after a residence in England of twenty years, and would apparently persist in the error for as many centuries’. Smart is among the few commentators to mention (and, of course, condemn) [ŋg] for [ŋ] syllable finally (1810: 178): ‘Hence we may see the absurdity of that pronunciation, which, from an affectation of correctness, sounds *g* at the end of *king*, *song*, &c., *king-g*, *song-g*’, although he does allow (1836: x §72) that ‘this is a practice common in the north-west of England, where they say *king-g*, *long-g*, &c.’ Ellis (his (q) symbol representing [ŋ]) adds little of interest to this debate, suggesting only that (1874: 1124): ‘sometimes the nasality is dropped and then simply (qg) results, as (lɔqg). This cannot be reckoned as a received form, although it may be historical. On the other hand, the voice is occasionally dropped with the nasality, and the result is (lɔqk), which is reckoned vulgar, as in (thiqk) for (thiq)’.²⁷⁰ In the *strength* and *length* instances, Ellis suggests that since the transition from the guttural (q) to the fricative is ‘violent’, ‘many speakers, especially of the older class, and Irishmen, bridge over the difficulty by changing (q) into (n), thus (strength, length)’. He claims (1874: 1124) that his own pronunciation of *strength*, *anxious*, *monk* and *winked* is (streŋth, æqʃhəs, məqk, wiqkt), while ‘when a voiced consonant follows, there seems no tendency to introduce (g), thus *tongs*, *winged* are (tɔqz, wiqd), not (tɔqgz, wiqgd), which would be difficult to English organs’. Pronunciations with ‘dropping of the *g*’, such as *evenin* ‘evening’, *gnawin* ‘gnawing’ and so on are, he asserts, Irish (1874: 1241).

3.6 Miscellaneous vulgarisms

Lists of vulgarisms like those of Jackson (1830) *Popular Errors of English Grammar, Particularly of Pronunciation* and Pegge (1814) *Anecdotes of the English Language* throw up, in addition to the kinds of vowel and consonant variations we have described above, instances of other types of pronunciation which are to be regarded as stigmatized, even when (in Pegge’s words) they are characteristic of the ‘lower order of Cockneys who possess any tolerable degree of decency’. Many of these involve nasal initial homorganic clusters, such as [mb], [nd], which have either been simplified through having their final obstruents deleted, or have an unetymological obstruent component added; thus, from Pegge: *gownd* ‘gown’; *sermont* ‘sermon’; *verment* ‘vermin’; *scholard* ‘scholar’; *margent* ‘margin’; *regimen* ‘regiment’.

Often, many of the irregularities are based on metatheses, contractions, or look to be 'slip of the tongue' types: as, from *Errors of Pronunciation and Improper Expressions* (1817): *Herkerlis* 'Hercules'; *Losenger* 'losenge'; *alablaster* 'alabaster'; *preambulate* 'perambulate'; *handkerchur* 'handkerchief', with Pegge showing: *vulgularity* 'vulgarity'; *nessesuated* 'necessitated'; *bacheldor* 'batchelor'; *palaretick* 'paralytic'; *Portingal* 'Portugal'; *howsomdever* 'howsoever'; *taters* 'potatoes'; *frags* 'fragments' and the like. But, as we might by now expect, it is Savage who provides the greatest number of examples of such types, some apparently contractions, such as: *bewtitude* 'beatitude'; *cirkitus* 'circuitous'; *colition* 'coalition'; *consillytory* 'conciliatory'; *conspikkus* 'conspicuous'; *contempory* 'contemporary'; *cursorly* 'cursorily'; *detterated* 'deteriorated'; *fortusly* 'fortuitously'; *incenderies* 'incendiaries'; *incongrus* 'incongruous'; *karun* 'carrion'; *mashated* 'emaciated'; *morfrodite* 'hermaphrodite'; *ornary* 'ordinary'; *quivvicates* 'equivocates'; *tempory* 'temporary'; *vitrul* 'vitriol'. He includes other instances, explanations for which we can only surmise: *barrowmite* 'baronet'; a *hedgebone of beef*, 'ache-bone' (standard *aytchbun*); *hinjers* 'engines'; *insinnivating* 'insinuating'; *lemon-tations* 'lamentations'; *livelivood* 'livelihood'; *loowarm* 'luke warm'; *sturrupatriped* 'stereotyped'; *widow-wood* 'widow-hood'; *wine worts* 'wine vaults'.

Afterword

There is, perhaps, an unwritten assumption among many historical linguists that the further removed the linguistic data from the present day, the more revealing it is of the general principles of language change. Perhaps it is a prejudice of this kind that has led some scholars to feel that materials from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are 'too close' to the present day to tell us anything meaningful about language change processes. Yet the vast extent and complexity of the data available from these two centuries has the advantage of presenting us with materials which, in many ways, are rather like those we encounter in any study of the modern language: 'law'-like generalizations are difficult to justify, exceptional and even apparently random behaviour is everywhere evident. What appear to be well-established 'principles' like, say, 'h-loss', present a picture which suggests fluidity rather than conformity, 'messiness' rather than 'neatness'. Such materials lead us to an understanding of language change as more complex and subject to several influences outwith the domain of the internalized processes of language themselves. Perhaps for the first time too, the materials from the late Modern period make us conscious of individual rather than merely group usage, a situation which seems if anything to highlight the sensitivity of the data to lexical constraint as well as phonetic conditioning.

Our investigations are considerably enabled by the finesse of contemporary description, both articulatory-phonetic as well as phonological. Above all, perhaps, our understanding of the very surface nature of the phonetic entities we discuss are made clearer by the range of innovations in orthographic representations so characteristic of the period: innovations ranging from those with exotic character sets, through those employing standard alphabet 'scrambling', to formulations which are the precursors of the modern IPA system itself. It is interesting to note, however, that despite such widespread and sophisticated experimentation with new orthographic systems, how well the traditional spelling system has stood up, remaining relatively unchanged since the sixteenth century. Its robustness continues despite what in many ways is its increasing lack of appropriateness as a model for pronunciation – as English increasingly becomes a world language – and as it comes under pressure from abbreviated and mutated usage in internet and text messaging contexts. All attempts to 'spell as we speak' seem to have been very short-lived and ended in failure.

It is, of course, possible to see major pronunciation changes developing across the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, almost all of which show their inception

in the seventeenth and very early part of the eighteenth century. The *English Vowel Shift* appears to have been completely worked through, what variation there is confined mainly to regional and sociolinguistic factors. Yet we seem also to witness what may well be its counterpart in short vowel contexts 'a short vowel shift' in the raising of such vowels in both front and back contexts throughout the period. Indeed we might even more controversially see the later BIT/BEAT de-merger and the earlier FOOT/STRUT split as in some way 'equivalent' to the lowering and centring of the first element in the long high, front and back, vowel space which gave rise to the MY and HOUSE diphthongs. Again too we might interpret what is probably one of the most marked innovations in the long vowel set in the later part of our period 'the new diphthongs in SAY and GO words in Metropolitan usage at least' to be a working out of the *English Vowel Shift* process itself. Such rising diphthongs can be interpreted as showing a partial reduction in the sonority (lowness) of the overall vowel space and therefore as a (partial) raising.

Prominent among innovations originating in our period and surviving to the present day in many regional and social dialects are the BATH/TRAP and POOL/PULL splits. So too the effects on the preceding vowel space of syllable final [r] (as well as the phonetic make-up of that 'horrid, dog-like' sound) are the focus of much contemporary comment: we see diphthongization effects, vowel neutralizations, as well as [r] suppression and unetymological insertion, among other developments. Yet the consonantal inventory remains remarkably unchanged throughout the period. We do witness what becomes the almost canonical fricativization of voiced and voiceless obstruents in *ion* environments, much by way of syllable-initial [h]-loss, as well as [hw]/[w] alternation in WHICH/WITCH words.

It is the 'prescriptive' reputation of writers and observers in the late Modern period which is surely its most characteristic feature. Yet over the entire piece one is left with the impression that the 'prescriptive' label is not altogether justified or deserved. Of course, there is much by way of mainly negative sociolinguistic comment in the later part of the period at least, but one is always conscious of the fact that even the most severe critics of perceived pronunciation impropriety are in almost every case prepared to defer to notions of 'custom' and 'usage'. And while many of those writing from a Metropolitan perspective cast a baleful eye on the usage of the Scotch and other provincials, the substantive writing and observation emanating from these benighted areas show that there too commentators were conscious of standard and non-standard pronunciation, pointing indeed to the existence of localized, non-Metropolitan prestige usage. However, it is clear enough that what must rank as one of the major and most sustained attempts ever proposed to achieve national linguistic homogeneity based upon a Metropolitan norm has achieved little, if any success. An important message, perhaps, for those who still cling to the desirability of achieving such an aim.

We should recognise that the efforts made, throughout the period, in both school and university environments, to promote the study of English grammar at the expense of the Classical languages, did produce generations of individuals who were competent in native language description and analysis as well as orthographic propriety. However, these efforts too seem to have remained unfulfilled since, across a wide body of the British population, such skills are now increasingly nothing more than a distant memory.

Notes

- 1 So too the author of *The Irish Spelling Book* (1740: iv): ‘Grammar, in general, is Suitable to all Languages; and, tho’ the Nature of this or that particular Language, may Occasion some Idiomatical Differences in the manner and Circumstances of some Things; yet, in Substance, the general contents of Grammar, are the same in all’.
- 2 There is some controversy over the actual authorship of *A Grammar of the English Tongue*, with some authorities suggesting that Brightland was only the book’s publisher (Sheldon 1938: 216). We shall use Brightland and Gildon throughout this book.
- 3 Discussion of female education is more to the fore in the later part of the century – recall John Rice’s (1773) *A Lecture on the Importance and Necessity of Rendering the English Language a Peculiar Branch of Female Education*, and several important grammars – notably those of Devis (1777) and Fisher (1754) – were produced by women (Birmingham 1995; Miller 1972; Mitchell 2001; Percy 1994, 2003; Skedd 1997; Tieken-Boon 2000).
- 4 Some prescriptions are quite frivolous, thus, in *The Irish Spelling Book* (1740: 235–6): ‘No Word of two or more Syllables ends in *um*; and yet, by an odd Affectation, many Persons pronounce some Words in *em*, with a corrupt shortening to *um*; as, instead of “correct *them*”, “bless *them*” they say “correct *um*”, “bless *um*”, which is an absurd, and abominable way of Expression, as, sounding like *Latin Words*’.
- 5 A position not at all unlike that expressed almost 150 years later by Ellis (1869: 155), who criticized Walker for his unwillingness to alter the orthography in order to cater for such lexical ambiguities.
- 6 William Tiffin (1951) is another good example of the general lack of enthusiasm for linguistic prescription in the early eighteenth century. Commenting upon his lists of dialectally specific pronunciations, he comments (Matthews 1964: 105):

When the Pronunciation of particular Counties, of Rustics, of the Polite, or illiterate is mention’d, it is not with Intention either to recommend or censure; but in Compliance with the Opinion of the Public; the Purpose and End of every Remark being to give the Reader Opportunity to discern the Description of his own Pronunciation and what Likeness or Unlikeness it bears to that intended by the Author.
- 7 While they generally accept Jones’ observations on spelling rules and pronunciation, Brightland and Gildon (1711: 78) have some reservations: ‘Dr. Jones, who (as we may guess by his Name) being a Welsh-man, may, in some particulars of his Book, be mis-led by the Pronunciation of his own Tongue’.
- 8 *The Irish Spelling Book* (1740: 210–11) also commends minor alterations such as ‘*Oe*, as an English Diphthong, is generally final, and sounds *o* long; as *Doe*, *foe*, *sloe*, *toe* with final *e* silent. And sometimes like *oo*; as *shoe*, *woe* (to make Love) which last word some write with *oo*; as *woo*; But, for Distinction, it wou’d be better to add *e* silent to both in *oo*; as *shooe*, *wooe*’.
- 9 This work has one of the longest titles of any language book in the period: *A New Help and Improvement of the Art of Swift Writing: Being an Alphabet not only contriv’d to be convenient for that purpose, but correspondent also in its Elements, especially the Consonants, to the several Articulations and Utterances that compose the English Language. Also Suitable Rules and Expedients of joining Letters, and abridging Words. With an Appendix, containing Characters and Instructions for the Use of a larger Sett of Vowels, in Which a philosophical Exactness is farther pursu’d*.
- 10 Note too the similar remarks by the author of *The Irish Spelling Book* (1740: 35–6): ‘*PH* is no more than the Semivowel *ēf*: and so the other two *R* and *S* in *RH* and *SH* having, as Semivowels, an obscure Sound of a Vowel before them, are naturally express’d by *ēRH*,

and ěSH; and this appears, even when they are in Syllables, if pronounced deliberately; as *Rhodes, Sham* sound ěRHODES ěSHAM’.

- 11 Cf *The Irish Spelling Book* (1740: 7): ‘A Liquid is a Consonant, which, after a Mute in the same Syllable, does, without any Stand, nimbly glide off; and therefore because of its easy Motion, doth as it were melt away in Pronunciation’.
- 12 Bailey’s (1726) *An Introduction to the English Tongue* provides lists of words which show final *e* ‘generally lengthening the foregoing vowel’. Under those containing an *i* he cites: *knives, lives, wives; drive; five; hive; rive; shrive* and *give* and *live*. The crucial point here is whether he intends three different values since he is fairly (although not completely) consistent in his use of diacritic marks. If his circumflex denotes a ‘lengthened’ diphthongal sound like [ai], then it is perhaps not too unreasonable to conclude that *knives* and *lives* show [ii], with *give* and *live* showing [i] or even perhaps even [i].
Hammond’s *The Young English Scholar* (1744) recognises an ‘*i* short’ in words like *filthy, win, gift*, and claims that the graph *i* ‘sounds like *e*’ in items such as *machine* (mashene), *mirth* (merth) and *girdle* (gerdle) although he is non-specific as to the value of ‘the sound of *e*’, being content to list items where it ‘lengthens’ the preceding vowel. However, he claims that *e* ‘sounds like *i*’ in *sudden* (suddin), *chicken* (chikin), *woollen* [sic] (woollin) and *garden, warren* and *limen* likewise, where the items in brackets represent his attempts at re-spelling. Perhaps further evidence for treating his *e* sound as either [i] or [i] is his assertion that ‘*Y* at ends of words mostly sounds like *e*; *miscarry* (miscar-re), *bonny* (bon-ne) and *charity* (chari-te)’, but see the discussion of HAPPY TENSING below.
- 13 This possibility might be strengthened on the evidence of near-alike lists, thus Harland shows pairs like *bean/been/binn; crick/creek*, while Harland, Owen and Tuite have: *pick/pique/peak; sheep/ship*.
- 14 This ‘short *i*’ sound is characterized in *The Irish Spelling Book* (1740: 59) as: ‘*I* is formed by the tongue higher raised, and more expanded; whence the hollow of the Palate is made narrower, and the Sound thinner than *E* in *Ken*, or *A* in *Cane*, and is *Palatine*’.
- 15 Interestingly, *The Irish Spelling Book* (1740: 59) characterizes ‘long *i*’ as ‘by some reckon’d to be a kind of Diphthong; as if (ei) or (ee)’. Its author also claims (1740: 208) that the digraph *ie* is sounded like his *e* short – a value like [e] – citing as examples items like *fierce, pierce* sounded *ferce, perce*. However, he gives a long list (it seems taken directly from Brightland and Gildon (1711: 8)) where the digraph has a high front [i] value: *Achievement, belief, believe* &c.
- 16 This phrase seems merely to connote the fact that there are two contexts (mainly orthographic, like final –e) where the stressed vowel may be long rather than short.
- 17 But, under their discussion of the Proper Double Vowel (*ee*), they claim (1711: 29): ‘The single (*e*) in Words of one Syllable, often sounds (*ee*), as *me, he, be, here*, &c.’, and they claim in a footnote on the same page that (*ee*) or (*ie*), is ‘sounded like the French long (*i*), that is, slender (*i*); for the French give the same sound to *fin, vin*, as we should do to *feen, veen*, or perhaps, *fien, vien*, as we do in *fiend*’.
- 18 This list is reproduced in *The Irish Spelling Book* (1740: 172–3).
- 19 *Adhere, austere, blaspheme, cohere, extreme, supreme, interfere, obscene, complete, concrete, convene, impede, precede, recede, replete, revere, severe, sincere, supercede*.
- 20 Their Note 15 (1711: 22) is even more explicit on this issue. There the French (e) Masculine is described as pronounced in ‘the same Seat’ as ‘the English slender (a)’, exemplified by *pale, same, dame*, etc., and with ‘the middle Opening of the Mouth, with an acute Sound – for it is a middle sound betwixt the foregoing vowel [in *pale*: CJ] and that which follows [the [i] vowel: CJ]’, pointing again, we might tentatively suggest to an [e] value, one which is here ascribed to items like *these, seal, teal, steal, seat, beast, read, receive, deceive*.
- 21 His (ee) description is identical to that of Brightland and Gildon: ‘*Ee* or *ie*, is Sounded like the French long *i*, that is, slender *i*; For the French give the same Sound to *fin, vin*, as the English do to *feen, ven* [sic], or perhaps, *sien, vien*, as we do in *fiend, seen*. Single Words of one Syllable in *e*, often Sound *ee*, and ought therefore to be written with double *ee*; as in *Bee, hee, mee, wee, shee*, &c.’.

- 22 Mattaire (1712: 14) also appears to have observed this phenomenon: 'It is observed, that some Countries Dialect or particular way of speaking utters the vowels of some Diphthongs very broad and distinct, almost as if the Diphthong was two Syllables; as *me-at, lo-ad*'.
- 23 Harland's *The English Spelling Book* (1719) seems also to provide instances of unshifted high mid vowels, in that he claims *ea* and *eo* 'is sounded like *e* in *ease, pea; people*', while *ie* 'is sounded like *ee* in *fiend, thief*'.
- 24 Flint is unhelpful in this complex area, assigning nearly all ME mid vowel values to [ij], symbolized by *î*, thus *hî* 'he'/'il'; *mît* 'meat/viande' (Kökeritz 1944: 108–9). However, the conservative (or, as Dobson would have it, 'vulgar') Brown (1700: 62ff) suggests unraised values for Middle English [ɛɛ] in his 'near-alike' equivalents such as: *beast/best; reach/wretch; league/leg; lest/less*.
- 25 Watts (1721) may just be witness to this phenomenon as well: 'y is a Vowel whensoever it sounds like *i*, as *Type, Rhyme*; and it is often written instead of *i*, at the end of a Word, as in *Fly, City, Mystery*'.
- 26 At the very beginning of the century we have Brown (1700) recording 'irregular' pronunciations such as *Wensdee* 'Wednesday'; *autoritee* 'authority'; *bodee* 'body'; *chimnee* 'chimney'; *curtesee* 'courtesy'; *hacknee* 'hackney' and *hevee* 'heavy'. Consider, too, Brown's 'near-alikes' such as *keel/kill/kiln; keen/kin; steel/still*.
- 27 Wyld is sceptical of the generality of any 'leapfrogging' effect, whereby Middle English [ɛɛ] directly raises to [ii] (1953: 211): 'This is the proper place to emphasise the fact that our modern usage with [i] in *heat, meat, &c.*, is not in the nature of a sound change as some writers seem to suggest, but is merely the result of the abandonment of one type of pronunciation and the adoption of another, a phenomenon which, as we know, is of the commonest occurrence in the history of received Standard Colloquial English'. He sees the phenomenon as a form of 'dialect borrowing', from 'a small and obscure community' (1953: 212): 'To make the matter more concrete for those unused to this kind of discussion, we may say that in the dialect from which is derived the present pronunciation of *mead*, this word must have been approaching that pronunciation before *made* and *maid* had reached the [mēd] stage and while they were both pronounced [mēd], and he sees the pronunciation of items like *great, break* and *steak* as 'simply survivals' (Sheldon 1938: 245; Strang 1970: 114).
- 28 His contemporary Brown (1700: 7–8) suggests four values for vowels spelt as *ea*: *e* short, *e* long, *ee*, and as '*a* alone, having the *e* lost'. Short *ea* examples include: *head, bread, breast, cleanse, dead, dearth, death* and several others. *Ea* is 'sounded long' in *bead, beam, bean, beast, beat* &c. *ea* is 'sounded *ee*' in *appear, besmear, dear, ear, fear, &c.*, while *ea* is sounded 'only as *a*' in *heart* and *hearth*. The phonetic value of *ee* is difficult to specify. That it is [ee] rather than [ii] is suggested by the pre-[r] contexts of Brown's examples, although a high, front interpretation might be read into his comments: '*E* ending a Monosyllable, How is it pronounced?' 'As *ee*, thus *be, he, me, she, we*, except *the*'. 'How is *ie* sounded, when they come together in a word; as in *shield, field, yield, &c.*?' 'Like *ee*'.
- 29 Tiffin (1751) seems to suggest a low value for 'long *a*' vowels as well: 'The second Vowel long in *Ale*, and short in *Ell* being spelt with different Letters may be fancy'd to be different Vowels, but if you pronounce *ELL* clearly and with Deliberation, it will be found to be the same except in Length only' (Matthews 1964: 98). Such a 'conservative' pronunciation might be seen too in Brown's (1700: 2ff.) 'near-alikes' such as *reign/rein/wren; ran/rain; wan/wane/wain; fain/feign/fan*.
- 30 But in other places, Brightland and Gildon seem more specific about a possible diphthongal status for some of their Double Vowels (1711: 32 Note 18):

The Diphthongs or Double Vowels *ai, ei, au, eu, ou* or *ay, ey, oy, aw, ew, ow* when they are truly pronounc'd, are compounded of the foregoing or prepositive Vowels, and the Consonants *y* and *w*, which yet are commonly taken for subsequent Vowels: For in *ai, au* or *ay, aw*, the (*a*) slender is set first; in *ei* or *ey*, the (*e*) Feminine; in *eu* or *ew*,

the (e) Masculine: *in oi, ou, or oy, ow*, the open (o) is sometimes set first (as in the English Words, *boy, toy, foul, bowl*, a Cup).

- 31 *The Irish Spelling Book* claims that the *ei* digraph has its ‘proper sound’ (left unspecified) in items such as *eight, height, sleight* and *hey day!* However, in response to the question ‘Are they always sounded so?’, we have the response ‘No, in most cases *ei* and *ey* are sounded like *e* long [his [ee]: CJ]; as *deceit, feign, either, veil, key, convey, obey*. His *ai* (as in *aim, aid, brain, frail*) seems to have a low-mid ‘short *e*’ value, since in response to the question: ‘Doth *ai* or *ay*, always keep a mixed sound?’ There is the response ‘No ... Sometimes [it is turned into] *e* long [his [ee]: CJ] as: *airy, dairy, despair, delay, stay* [are] sounded *é-ry; dé-ry; de-spére; de-lé, or de-léa; sté* or *st-éa*’, although the last two instances might well hint at a diphthongal rendering of some kind.
- For Flint, ‘La Diphtongue *ai* a le son de l’a Anglois long’; ‘AI & AY ont le même son que l’a Ang. Long c’est à dire ai long représentant l’é Fr. Fermé & long’ (Kökeritz 1944: 57, 24), a value usually interpreted as low-mid [ɛɛ]. His ‘EI & EY ont le même son que la diphtongue Ang. *ai* c’est à dire é Fr. Long & fermé’ (Kökeritz 1944: 27) which he illustrates through *they, grey, eight, weight, reign, vein, heir, their* and which seems to represent a value like [ee].
- 32 Ellis (1869: 77) summarizes what he sees as the general eighteenth-century situation as: ‘The recognised pronunciation in the XVIIIth century sees then to have been, short *a* = (æ) ([a]: CJ) in all cases, long *a* generally = (ee) ([ee]: CJ), the exact quality (ee, ee, EE) ([ii], [ee], [ɛɛ]: CJ) being doubtful, and in those cases in which (aa) ([aa]: CJ) is now frequently heard, as in *dart, father*, etc., long *a* was = (æ æ) ([aa]: CJ) as it always was in the XVIIth century’.
- 33 They also observe a similarity between this vowel and the semi-vowel [w] (1711: 44 footnote 24): ‘The (*w*) is sounded in *English* as (*u*) in the Latin Words *quando, lingua, suadeo*, and others after *q, g, s*. We generally make this Letter a Consonant, yet its Sound is not very different (tho’ it does something differ) from the German Vowel, the *fat* or *gross* (*u*) very rapidly pronounc’d’.
- 34 This failure to diphthongize [uu] (at least in some lexically specific instances) seems to be suggested by some of the near-alike pairs in Tuite: *pour/power; souce* ‘pork’/*sous* ‘French penny’/*sowse* ‘a box in the ear’; *tour/tower; Tours/Towers*, with Hammond also citing: *lower/lowr* ‘to frown’, and Bailey: *floor/flower/flour; pour/power; sound/swoon*.
- 35 John Wild in *Nottingham Printing Perfected* (Jones 2001: 34) is careful to distinguish graphically those items derived from Middle English [oo], producing forms like *fuul* ‘fool’, *buuks* ‘books’, *tuu* ‘too’ and *suuner* ‘sooner’ as distinct from *luv* ‘love’, *sumer* ‘summer’ and *cum* ‘come’.
- 36 Tuite lists a rather motley set of words where, he claims, the symbol *o* ‘sounds *oo*’ and where, presumably centring and lowering of a high back round segment has yet to occur (1726: 28): *wolf, tomb, womb, conjure, constable, conduit, London, Monday, month, Monmouth, attorney, sponge, wonder*.
- 37 He also records the fact that *oo* is to be pronounced as *wu*; see his representation of ‘a very few good books’ as *a veri fū gwud Books* (1711: 12).
- 38 Tuite also claims *oo* for the *o* graph in *wolf, tomb, womb, conjure, constable, conduit, London, Monday, month, Monmouth, attorney, sponge, conger, wonder*. While ‘the second *o* sounds *oo* short in *comfort, Holborn*, and in *dost, doth*’, although ‘*oo* short’ may well be a misprint for ‘*o* short’ here. Tiffin (1751) asserts that ‘In many Places, *Door, poor, goe, smoke, &c.* are affected to be pronounced with the eighth (vowel)’, where this vowel is explified through items such as *room, you, good*.
- 39 Such environments are also seen as exceptions to the use of ‘*u* long’ by Tuite (1726: 31) and by *The Irish Spelling Book* (1740: 187) where no less than 36 exceptional *-ure* items are listed.
- 40 Even much later in the eighteenth century, a careful observer like Sylvester Douglas only provides an extremely limited set of lexical items which he claims show his ‘obscure’ or ‘smothered’ *u* sound: *Tully, rut* and *skull* (Jones 1995: 149).

- 41 Tuite (1726: 30) suggest the possibility of a lower/centralized vowel in *whom*: ‘*Om* in the same syllable sounds *um*, as *companion*, *commission*, *command* ... *random*, *pommel*, *whom*, &c.’.
- 42 Yet Ellis (1869: 184) observes how ‘The Anonymous instructor of the Palatines ... gives the pronunciation of the English words *church*, *much*, in German letters as *tshurtsch*, *mutsch* = (tshurtsh, mutsch), so that he does not acknowledge (ə) at all. This may have been designedly, because (ə) would have been so difficult to the Palatines, and because (u) would be intelligible to the English.’
- 43 Tiffin’s (1751) observation concerning the treatment of his Vowel 8 (his *too*, *you*, *good*) in vulgar Norfolk speakers as the 7th short (*rub*, *but*, etc.) is worth bearing in mind here: ‘for the eighth long, these speakers pronounce the Diphthong (*but commonly reputed single Vowel*) [italics mine: CJ] *u* long’ (Kökeritz 1934/35: 94).
- 44 That Owen’s respelling system is capable of showing diphthongal pronunciations is clear from his written/spoken alternation *desire/desiur*, *cowcumber/cucumber* and many others. Bailey also suggests monophthongal status in his *Table of Words written different from their Pronunciation* (1726: 56–8) with *Adu* ‘adieu’, *buty* ‘beauty’, *unuke* ‘eunuch’, *juce* ‘juice’, *nusance* ‘nuisance’, *Uu* ‘view’, *U* ‘you’; Sproson (1740), Hammond (1744) and Harland (1719) have homophone pairs like *Dew/due*; *Hew/hue/hugh*; *manor/manure*; *message/messuage*; *pastor/pasture*; *saviour/savour*; *valley/value*; *booty/beauty*; *blue/blew*; *dissolute/desolate*; *dual/duel/doill*; *sculptor/sculpture*. Owen’s (1732) list adds: *frute* ‘fruit’, *nevu* ‘nephew’, *puer* ‘pure’; *eschu* ‘eschew’, *u* ‘you’.
- 45 Yet note, under his description of an (orthographic) triphthong (1711: 244), ‘A Triphthong is when three vowels meet together in one Syllable; as, *eau* in *Beauty*; but this we pronounce *Buty*’.
- 46 Such a notion is not entirely new. The Scottish observer Sylvester Douglas, writing in his *Treatise on the Provincial Dialect of Scotland* at the end of the eighteenth century (1779), suggests an analogy between sound and colour description and states: ‘It might perhaps be called a whimsical refinement were I to carry the analogy still further, and say that, although the sound of *a* in *all*, is certainly simple, and not diphthongal; yet it is, in a manner, formed of a mixture of the long open *a*, and the *o*; in like manner as green, one of the simple primitive colours, is formed by the mixture of blue, and yellow’ (Jones 1991: 118). And notice too how Ellis, following Grimm, makes a similar suggestion for vowel description in the following century (1874: 1269): ‘Now vowels ... may be to a certain degree arranged according to natural pitch; and in this case (i) is the highest, (a) medium, and (u) lowest. Hence the physical analogies of vowel and light are (i) *blue*, (a) *green*, (u) *red*’. However, he sees disadvantages in Grimm’s proposals, notably in any inclusion of the colours *white* and *black* in the scheme: ‘physically *white* would be analogous to an attempt to utter (i, a, u) at once, producing utter obliteration of the vowel effect; and the sole analogue of black would be – silence!’ If such views were at all prevalent in the eighteenth century, then perhaps one needs to bear them in mind when interpreting definitions and descriptions of diphthongal space of the type given by, among others, Brightland and Gildon (1711: 20): ‘What we call Double Vowels, is when the Sound of two Vowels are mixt perfectly in one Syllable, and indeed make a distinct Sound from either and all other Vowels ... These Double Vowels are commonly call’d Diphthongs, or compounded Sounds, and sharing in or blending the Sound of two Vowels in one’. Are we to interpret such ‘mixtures’ as, for instance, (ei) as, say, [eɪ], or a single vowel segment composed of a mixture of low mid and high vowel internal components, i.e. [eɪ]? Something of this might also be read into the definition of Proper Diphthong status given by the author of *The Irish Spelling Book* (1704: 4): ‘Two Vowels in One Syllable, so mix’d together in Sound, that, tho’ both are heard, yet their Sound is distinct from either of the single ones, and from all other Vowels’.
- 47 Watts (1721: 15), however, suggests that the extent of this rounding after [w] may be lexically constrained: ‘*a* is often pronounced broad, when it comes after a *w* in the same

- Syllable, as *War, was, Water, Swan, Swallow* and some *few other Words* [italics CJ]'. Flint shows [æ æ] (his French *a* 'un peu long sans être ouvert') with illustrative items including *warm, war* and *quart*, although he also shows *quart* with [o] as too *thwart, wart, water, was*. A vowel sound in a long [ee] is claimed for the items *wasp, wrath* and *wash* (Kökeritz 1944: 55, 91).
- 48 Notice again, Brightland and Gildon (1711: 18): 'The Vowel (*o*) expresses three several sorts of Sounds, as (*o*) in *rose*, or *go*, the Mouth opening round, and (*a*) long or (*aw*) in *folly, fond*, which is the same Sound with (*a*) in *fall*, and (*aw*) in *fawn*, only the last is long and the former short'.
- 49 Perhaps supported by the existence of alleged homophones by commentators like Harland, Sproson, Hammond, Tuite, Bailey and Watts such as: *Ammlet/aumelet 'pancake'/ Hamlet; valley/volley; hallow/hollow/halloe; mop/map; pall/Paul/Poll; rot/rat; fallow/follow; lance/launch; vat/vault; chap/chop*.
- 50 Jones' 'Sound of *O*' is exemplified by *no, so* (1701: 2), but he refers to an otherwise undefined short *o* in response to his question: 'When is the Sound of *au* written *o*? – 'When it may be sounded as short *o* before *l*, or *r*, as in these six, *collow, follow, hollow, scollop, Solomon, trolop*. And in *borrow, morrow, sorrow, sort*' (1701: 31).
- 51 So too *The Irish Spelling Book* (1740: 196–7): *Au* 'sounds *ou* in *Paul's Church*, (i.e.) *Poul's*; which word elsewhere has the natural Sound of its Diphthong; as, *Paul* – and so, *Saul*'.
- 52 The distinction seems to exist too for the author of *The Irish Spelling Book* (1740: 57) for whom 'The Vowel, *A*, hath four several Ways of Pronunciation: 1st, *ā* short, 2ndly *ā* long, 3rdly, *â* broad (or *au*), 4thly *ō* short as in *Man, Mane, Call, Folly*'.
- 53 This author nowhere else uses the grave accent on this vowel. There is considerable and apparently random variation in his use of diacritic marks as a whole, probably the result of poor proof-reading or typesetting.
- 54 Cf Greenwood (1711): '*Oa* is Sounded like *o* long, the *a* being added only to make the Sound long, and is neglected in the Pronunciation: As in *Boat, float, goat*. But it is Sounded like *au* in *broad, abroad, groat, &c.*'
- 55 Again, although we must treat such evidence very cautiously, it appears from many near-alike lists that the value of the low-mid back vowel is relatively low in the period. Indeed, items spelt with *oa* vowel space seem particularly resistant to raising to high mid values in general, thus Harland: *boarders/borders; cost/coast; want/wont; coat/quote/cot*; Watts: *loath/Loth; road/rode/rod*; Tuite: *groat/grot*; and Watts: *coat/cot; grot/groat; toast/tost; oat/ought*.
- 56 'Flint couples *fallow* and *follow, hallow* and *hollow*, as do Watts, Dyche and others. This coupling is inexact, for Flint had [ɒ] in *follow, hollow*, and should have had [a] in *fallow, hallow*, unless he had adopted another pronunciation; he may have felt, however, that the similarity between the vowels was close enough to permit the inclusion of the two pairs of words. Originally, the equation of *fallow* and *follow*, etc., must have been exact, for in the dialects of the Midlands and the South *fallow* is still pronounced with [ɒ]' (Kökeritz 1944: 89). Tiffin (1751) also suggests an [ɒ] (or perhaps even an [ɑ]) value for his Vowel 5 (in *all, of*): 'Sink the upper Surface of the Tongue all the Way below the level of the under Lip, as low as ever you do (supposeing you to be an Englishman) when you speak, and (the Mouth being closed a little at the Corners) the fifth Vowel will be sounded, as in *all, Saul, trott, &c.*'. Under this vowel he also includes items such as *Bot, sot, what, cough, long, Tongues* (with a short version of the vowel), and with a long version: *bought, War, fault, George, thought, broad, Sort*.
- 57 Tuite (1726: 50): '*yacht* which [is] pronounc'd ... *yaut*, or *yet*'.
- 58 Tiffin also comments on this dialectal possibility: '*All, call* and some more such are sounded in the West with the first (vowel)' – his [a]/[æ] (Kökeritz 1944: 93).
- 59 Tuite too makes a similar observation (1726: 39): '*Ow* sounds *o* short in the end of a word of several syllables, as *window, willow, arrow, marrow, narrow, sorrow, borrow, billow, &c.*'
- 60 Jones may well suggest such a development even earlier in the century. In a context where he is describing an [o] value for his *O* vowel ('*Pharaoh*, sounded *Pharo*'), his *Dialogue* asks 'When is the Sound of *o* written *au*?' The reply is interesting: 'When it may

be sounded as *au*, as in *auburn, auction, audit, author, fault, jaundice, fraud* and many others. But these, he also claims, ‘may sound as with an *o*’, suggesting an [ɔ]/[o] alternation for these items. At the same time, in answer to the question (1701: 82): ‘When is the sound of *o* written *ough*?’ he offers the response: ‘In thirty [*sic*] Words, viz. *although, besought, borough, bough, bought, brought, cough, dough, doughy, drought, enough, fought, hiccough, hough, lough, Lougher, mought, nought, ought, plough, rough, slough, sought, though, thought, tough, trough, whough, wrought*’, suggestive again of a high-mid back round value for vowels historically diphthongized/lengthened in pre-velar fricative contexts. But Ekwall (1907: §§ 316–24) is doubtful that such *ough* spellings can represent [oo]. Pointing out that the possible manifestations of Middle English [oo] preceding voiceless velar fricative are varied: [ou], [ō] as *dough*, [ō̄] as *bought*, [əu] as *bough*, [ɔf] as *rough*, [ū] as *through*, [of] as *cough*, he observes: ‘We should expect to find words of this kind fully dealt with by Jones. That is not the case ... In our opinion the list is not a list of words pronounced with [ō] spelled with *ough*, but of words spelled *ough*. Jones found it sufficient to collect the words in one place, and then to give references in the other places ... The rule, in our opinion, tells us nothing about the pronunciation of the words.’

- 61 Tuite (1726: 29) also singles out lexical exceptions in this group: ‘*O* sounds long in (*ost*) as *ghost, host, most, post, rost, tost*. Except *cost, frost, lost*’.
- 62 The term ‘tone’ is not commonly used in this period as a vowel quality descriptor, although it is occasionally used as nomenclature for whatever is meant by vowel length. Thus Sproson (1740): ‘final *–e* – which serveth only to lengthen the tone’ and cf. Bailey’s distinction of long and short syllables whereby the former are ‘pronounced in a longer Tone’. The author of *The Needful Attempt* fairly consistently distinguishes ‘dhe too óz in dónor’ as we can see in spellings like *spóken, mór, supóz, kompóz, móróver*, although there are some inconsistencies both in marking and type of diacritic used: *alôn* ‘alone’ alongside *alón*. Bailey too relies heavily on diacritic marks to distinguish the short/long *o* contrast, and we find him using representations like *sört, wört, shört, snört* for the former and *hóst, móst, póst, ghóst* for the latter, although he records ‘long’ versions in *förm, shôm, wörn, nône, sôme*.
- 63 Indeed, this is one of the areas most prominently mentioned in near-alike lists in the period in general, with Owen showing: *more/moor; through/throw; comb/come; course/coarse/curse; to/toe*, Harland: *hose/whose; loam/loom; porcelain/purslain* ‘herb’; Tuite: *home/whom; doer/door; tomb/tome; pore/poor*.
- 64 Brightland and Gildon (1711: 240) have: ‘The long (*i*) of the English is plainly compounded of the Feminine (*e*) and (*y*), or (*i*), and has the same Sound entirely with the Greek (*ει*)’.
- 65 Nevertheless, it is worth noting how Tiffin (Kökeritz 1934/35: 98) is careful to comment on the fact that ‘I know no Diphthong beginning with the 9th (vowel)’, where his 9th vowel is that in *sir*, and *bird* only. So perhaps appeals to a low centralized vowel for this diphthong are inappropriate for this period.
- 66 The sets of items in *Table of Words, the same, or nearly alike in Sound, but different in Signification and Spelling* give much witness to this merger, and we find ‘near alike’s’ such as *Bile/boil; employ/imply; nice/noise; pint/point; kind/coin’d; choicest/jice* ‘joyst’; *isle/I’ll/oil; hie/high/hoy*.
- 67 *The Irish Spelling Book* (1740: 217–19) shows little evidence of the affricativization of [ʃ] in contexts preceding front vowels, since the ‘the sound of *s*’, ‘a soft Sound, like *S*, in *Cedar*’ is found ‘in the middle of Words’ in the following items: *concession; deception, ancient, artificial, associate, audacious, capacious, deficiency, especially, excision, excruciate*, etc. Likewise, it appears to suggest that [t]/[ʃ] alternations were yet to enter the phonology in such contexts (1740: 247–8) since the ‘Consonant *X*’ is expressed ‘By *ct*, in words ending in *ction*; as, *extraction, perfection, prediction, concoction, destruction, compunction*’.
- 68 Not surprisingly, this view is also supported by Greenwood (1711: 250): ‘When *T* comes before *I*, another Vowel following it, it has the Sound of the hissing *S* (When *S* keeps its natural Sound, it is pronounc’d with an acute, (sharp) or hissing Sound): [his [s]: CJ], otherwise it keeps its own Sound. As in *Potion, Nation, Meditation, expatiate*, &c. are

- sounded *Posion, Nasion, Mefitasion, expasiate*, &c. But when *T* comes after *S* or *X*, it keeps its own Sound: As in *Question, Fustian, Combustion, Bestial, Mixture*, &c.’.
- 69 Brown’s interesting *Alphabetical Collection of Words that are not sounded (exactly) according to their manner of writing* (1700: 78–86) provides considerable insight into what would appear to be ‘non-standard’ usage at the beginning of our period. It is clear from his respellings, for instance, that *ier*, *ion* and *iate* suffixes show monosyllabic pronunciations through the reduction in vocalicness of [i] to semi-vowel [j] status, thus: *farryer* ‘farrier’; *champanyon* ‘champion’; *brazyer* ‘brazier’; *companyon* ‘companion’; *enthuzuyasm* ‘enthusiasm’ and many others. (Although he also records instances where the [j] glide has been effaced: *bulen* ‘Bul-li-en’ and *ruffin* ‘Ruf-fi-an’ along with near-alikes such as *cholier* ‘choleric’; *mellon/million*; *saviour/savour*.) However, his data suggest strongly that [tj] clusters were by his time, at least in the ‘vulgar’ language, changed to [ʃ] thus: *akshon* ‘ac-ti-on’; *anshent* ‘ancient’; *assoshate* ‘associate’; *ashure* ‘assure’; *avershon* ‘aversion’; *condishon* ‘condition’; *fracshon* ‘fraction’; *sashate* ‘sati-ate’ and others. Yet, in this list, as well as in his *Collection of Polysyllables that agree in sound*, he keeps the status of the item *picture* outside this development: thus its re-spelling as *pikter* in the former and *picture of a Man* described as agreeing in sound with *Pick’t her Pocket* in the latter (1700: 76). *The Irish Spelling Book* (1740: 182) some forty years later records similar phenomena, but makes no comment upon sociolinguistic status: ‘How is *i* pronounc’d before *er, on*? Generally like *y, ie (ye)*; as, *Collier, Bullion, Question*. So *Onion, Union* sounded *Onyon, Unyon*. And in *Poniard*.’
- 70 Owen too has a long list of items of this type under his table of *Words differently wrote from what they are pronounced* (1732: 101ff): *absolushun, acshun, ambishus, anchent* ‘ancient’, *ankshus/ankxiety, apparishun, apposishun, artfishal, assoshate, avarishus, benefishal, capshus* ‘captious’, *caprishus, caushun* ‘caution’, *circumsishun, collecshun, manshun, musishun*, *fashion* (‘written fa-shi-on’), *osher* ‘hosier’ and even *Byzanshun* ‘Byzantium’. However, he also records *riteous* ‘righteous’, *questyun* ‘question’ and *misprisyum* ‘misprision’. Capell’s (1749) evidence is more difficult to decipher in this area, but seems to represent, even at this relatively late date, a stage where [ti] groups are perceived only as [tj], and without fricativization of the consonantal element. He uses two diacritic marks to represent what appears to be a palatal semivowel [j] – *v* and [?] – their ‘power or name’ being *ve*, exemplified by the *y* and *u* graphs in items like *beyond, young, universe, use* and *usual*. The superscripted [?] is found with *p, r, m, n, z* and *th* in items like *recipient, delirium, abstemious, biennial, glazier, vision, pythian*, suggesting that *ian*-type suffixes are perceived as [jæn]. Under his letter *s*, ‘express’d by other characters as “*t*, before *i*, a vowel following”’ he lists *nation* and *position*, with no diacritic mark on the *t* symbol, perhaps suggesting a pronunciation like [pozisjən] – an interpretation perhaps supportable by his *x* entry, whose ‘power’ is *ec.s*, illustrated, among other items, by *complection*, where the *tion* appears to represent [ksjən], with no suggestion of an [j] fricative. His *s*’ graph seems to have a value of either [j] or [sj], the latter in *sure, assure, luxury*, the former in *blushing*.
- 71 Fricativization of [t] and [s] in pre-palatal vowel contexts is recorded by Flint as well, where we can find alternations like *resignation/résignnaïchionn* as against *christian/chrétien/cristienn* (Kökeritz 1944: 17), while Tuite can even suggest a *dic-so-na-ry* pronunciation for *dictionary*, with [s] for [j] or [sj].
- 72 Kökeritz (1944: 117 footnote) seems uncertain whether or nor Miège (1685) shows such a phenomenon: ‘Miege teaches a very strange diphthong [oaï] for ME *oi*. Is it possible that modern [wai, woi, wai], which are found in certain southern and south-western dialects after labial consonants, e.g. in *boil, spoil, moist, voice*, could have been used in *oil, joy, etc*?’
- 73 While Flint records pronunciations like *guiestt* ‘guest’, *guiãrd* and *guiss* ‘guess’, Kökeritz (1944: 133) interprets the italicized *i* forms as indicators of the palatalization of the word initial [g] rather than as evidence for the presence of a palatal [j] glide (MacMahon 1998: 160–3).
- 74 For a long and detailed discussion, see Kökeritz (1944: 136–52); Chance (1872: 187); Sergeant (1872); Tolman (1887); MacMahon (2001: 159–60). Some evidence for [kn-]

pronunciations in such words is perhaps given in *The Irish Spelling Book*, where in answer to the question (1740: 222): ‘How is the hard *c* [[k]: CJ] written before *e, i, n,* and *o*?’ The response is ‘Always with *k*; as *keep, kill, knack, know*’. However, (1740: 229) ‘Is *g* anywhere else silent?’ ‘*G* is silent in *gnat, gnaw, gnash, gnomon, phlegm* sounded *nat, naw, nash, nomon, flème*’.

- 75 However, there is much discussion concerning the status of [h] itself, especially as to whether (following Priscian) it merits inclusion as a ‘letter’ at all, given that it is seen as a ‘mere’ aspiration. *The Irish Spelling Book* (1740: 230) summarises contemporary views on the issue:

Because it is only a push of the Breath from the Throat, through the Mouth, without striking upon any of the Organs therein, they [Authority and ‘some of our Moderns’: CJ] say it is a mere Aspiration (or Breathing only) and not a Letter at all.

They might perhaps, with as good reason, say, that the broad sounded *a* (*aw*) is no Letter, because it also is formed only in, and proceeds from the Throat, and does not strike any other Organ.

And, altho’ this [letter] hath not a Sound so clear and distinct, as those of other Consonants, yet, it certainly hath an obscure Sound of its own; since it is plain, that it mightily enforces that of each Vowel.

For, being placed after *w*, it is strongly pronounced before *w*; thus, *when, white* sound *hwen, hwite*.

And, *k*, before *n*, borrows its Sound; as, *knave, knight* sound *hnave, hnight*.

- 76 That ‘hardly sounded’ means complete effacement might be inferred from his comment on *ps, pt* clusters (1721: 12): ‘*p* can hardly be sounded in such Words as these, *Receipt, Psalm, tempt, empty, Redemption*’.
- 77 Brown’s (1700) near-alikes appear to suggest quite strongly that a [hw]→[h] change had occurred, since he pairs: *hoar/whore; wool/whole; who* ‘is that’/wo ‘to court’/wo ‘to the wicked’; *whoop/woop; whom/womb*, while Owen’s (1732: 72ff) list contains the homophones: *hoar/hour/whore*. Jones also records (1701: 58) ‘*whoop* (a bird) sounded *hoop*’. In similar vein Tuite (1726: 64) claims: ‘*W* is not sounded before *ho*, as *who, whose, whom, whole, whore, wholesome*’.
- 78 There are other, well-attested contexts both in the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries for [w] effacement, particularly in historical [wr-] syllable and word-initial clusters like *wrap, wretch, sword, swooning, answer*, to which set Tuite (1726: 64): adds ‘*W* is often not sounded in the beginning of a syllable, if the foregoing syllable ends in *r*, as *Ber-wick, War-wick, for-ward*, &c. And sometimes when the foregoing syllable does not end in *r*, as *Ed-ward, Green-wich, back-ward, penny-worth*, which is pronounced *pennorth*. Some omit *w* in *midwife*, which they pronounce *midif*’.
- 79 *The Irish Spelling Book* (1740: 245) characterizes ‘*W* Consonant’ as having ‘the Sound of *ö*, swiftly pronounced; as in *want, went, wipe* sounded *öänt, öönt, ööipe*’.
- 80 The phenomenon is recorded by Brown (1700) as well, but infrequently, and he shows ‘near-alikes’ such as *Hose/Whose/Hoarse; odour/ordour/order; partition/petition; portion/potion* and *Hurl/Hull/Hul*, with re-spellings of ‘charter’ *chauter*; ‘harsh’ *hash* and ‘sarfenet’ *safnet* among his ‘irregular’ pronunciations.
- 81 Consonantal clusters comprised of two sonorant elements can, of course, have other phonological outcomes in English phonology, both past and present. In particular ‘cluster busting’ is well recorded in such contexts (Jones 1989: 169–72), whereby such clusters are given syllabic status. Thus, in Middle English we find alternants such as *erl/eryl; carl/caryl; wylf/wylif*, while several modern regional and social variants (such as Modern Scots) show outputs like [warʌm] ‘warm’ and [harʌm] ‘harm’. The author of *The Irish Spelling Book* notes this process as a characteristic not only of certain Irish regional variants, but also of general English:

Liquids, being comprised under the Semi-vowels aforesaid, have an imperfect Sound of a Vowel before them in Pronunciation; as *ĕL, ĕM, ĕN, äR*: Hence it is, that,

in *Connaught*, it is usual in pronouncing RM final, to insert (U) as, CHARM – CHARÛM, HARM – HARÛM, tho' very quick. And, even in *England*, to pronounce ALARM–ALARÛM. Hence also the Criers of the publick Papers in *Dublin*, naturally sound GÖREAT NEWÛS, for *great News*'.

He even GOES as far as to suggest that items such as *lad*, *print* and *blow* 'sound as ěLAD, PĚRINT and BĚLOW, claiming that 'the little (ě) in such words, is sounded very rapid and quick, and somewhat like the Hebrew Vowel *Sheva*'.

- 82 Although they do recognise that the process has occurred at an earlier date in certain lexical items (1711: 31): 'in *could*, *woud*, *should* and a few others it [the double vowel *ou*: C] sounds (*oo*). But in the modern Way of spelling and sounding, the (*l*) is left out, and *cou'd*, *wou'd*, *shou'd*, sound *cood*, *wood*, *stood* [*sic*], &c.' Mattaire (1712: 8) notes how 'Several Consonants are sometimes wholly quiescent in the end, middle, and beginning of many words: as, *l*; as *half*, *halves*, *qualm*.'
- 83 The examples cited there are: *almost*, *baulk*, *Bristol*, *calf*, *calk*, *chalk*, *chaldron*, *Chelmsford*, *falconer*, *folk*, *Holborn*, *Kenelm*, *Lincoln*, *Malkin*, *Malmsey*, *Norfolk*, *Psalm*, *qualm*, *Salmon*, *Salve*, *stalk*, *talk*, *Suffolk*, *walk*, *yolk* all respelled with *l* omitted, thus *amost*, *bauk*, etc. Tuite notes an instance of [l]-intrusion (1726: 48): "'*Eau* sounds like final *le* or '*l*, in *portman-teau*, which is commonly pronounc'd *portmantle*.'"'
- 84 Greenwood (1711: 252) makes a similar point: 'Words derived from *long*, *strong*, *big*, *sing*, *bring*, and in others whose Primitives (or the Words they come from) end in hard *g*', but on the phonetic status of [n] in these cases he is silent. Sproson (1740: 39) sees [ŋ] in 'tongue': 'when *g* is sounded hard with a long vowel, *ue* is added, and sounded in the same syllable, as in *rogue*, *league*, *tongue*, *intrigue*, *prologue*, *dialogue*, &c.'. Hammond (1744) assigns the 'hard *g*' in some syllable final instances: *leg*; *sing*; *dig*; *belong-ing*; *ring-er*. Similar instances are cited in *The Irish Spelling Book* where we also find 'g hard' in *Tongue*.
- 85 Although Hammond (1744) also records *neighbour* with a respelling (*naghour*).
- 86 Recall Sheridan's (1780: *Preface*) response to the 'utter neglect of examining and regulating our speech; as nothing has hitherto be done, either by individuals, or societies, towards a right method of teaching it ... This is the more surprising, as perhaps there never was a language, which required, or merited cultivation more; and certainly there never was a people on earth, to whom a perfect use of the powers of speech were so essentially necessary, to support their rights, privileges, and all the blessings arising from the noblest constitution that ever was formed'. And again: 'If it could be made to appear probable, that were our language once fixed upon just and certain rules, it would in all likelihood continue in the same state, at least as long as our constitution remained, since no one would think any pains too great to accomplish so desirable a point' (1756: 258). Indeed, he claims, the corruption of the Roman and Greek constitutions was a direct consequence of the corruption in their languages. It is true to say, too, that for some commentators at least (and probably especially those from North Britain at what was a time of considerable political upheaval there) language was seen as a form of political cement: 'How dear, then, ought the Honour of the English Language to be to every Briton' (Buchanan 1762: xxxiv).
- 87 James Adams, however, is deeply sceptical of the power of etymology and those who advocate its use. Under his discussion of the vowel in *women*, he scoffs (1794: 50): 'Au reste ce mot *woman* fournit aux amateurs de l'Étymologie, et des bagatelles litteraires beaucoup d'amusement'.
- 88 Yet he is not always uncritical of some of its recommendations, especially those which might have a bearing on English orthography (1795: 24): 'But the French Academy, so exemplary in every exhibition of its language, set nowhere so fatal or so followed an example, as pretending to conjure *ti* into *si* before a vowel: a combination indeed! Which English picturage ventured only to constitute, rather substitute, a sibilant aspirate; the same group *condition* presenting in one picturage *condicion* and thence in the other *condiscion*'.

- 89 There seems to be a slightly higher degree of enthusiasm for the establishment of an Academy in the anonymous pamphlet *An examen of Mr. Sheridan's plan for the improvement of education in this country. By a set of gentlemen associated for that purpose* (1784), a work seen as a follow-up to Sheridan's *A plan of education for the young nobility and gentry of Great Britain* (1769) and possibly even largely composed by Sheridan himself.
- 90 Sheridan seems to be of the view that he is in the vanguard of those concerned with the description of English grammar at all levels: 'all this apparent difficulty [of describing English pronunciation: CJ] arises from our utter neglect of examining and regulating speech; as nothing has hitherto been done, either by individuals, or societies towards a right method of teaching it'. He is equally scornful too of the state of Latin teaching and study: 'Nothing worthy the name of a grammar has hitherto appeared'. One wonders what many of the grammarians writing in the early part of the century would have thought of such observations.
- 91 Kenrick (1784: i), however, sees the situation in the provinces somewhat differently: 'It has been remarked as a phaenomenon in the literary world, that, while our learned fellow subjects in Scotland and Ireland are making frequent attempts to ascertain, and fix a standard, to the pronunciation of the English tongue, the natives of England themselves seem to be little anxious either for the honour or improvement of their own language'.
- 92 Sheldon (1938: 298–9) notes the contrast between the standard selected by Sheridan and that favoured by Swift: 'It is interesting to note that Swift looks back to the courts of Elizabeth, James I, and Charles I, as the Golden Age and Place of the English language, just as Sheridan looks back to Swift's own time. Swift's opinion of the court language of his day is extremely contemptuous – "the worst school in England" '.
- 93 His argument for a commonality of language propriety throughout North and South Britain is a common theme: 'Edinburgh will henceforth vie with London in the natural and undoubting excellence of language; and in all the harmony that can endear or empower the pulpit, the bar and the press' (1762: 267). Sheridan too sees the possibility of dialect levelling – achieved through the power of oratory – as capable of achieving a similar (though geographically wider) effect: 'Would [oratory] not greatly contribute much to the ease and pleasure of society ... greatly contribute to put an end to the odious distinction kept up between the subjects of the same kingdom ... [and provide a method of making] the English tongue in its purity ... rendered easy to all inhabitants of his Majesty's Dominions, whether of South or North Britain, of Ireland, or the other British dependencies' (1780: *Preface* v). This 'odious distinction' is much noted by Sheridan (1756: 217): 'even in England itself ... there were such various dialects spoken, that persons born and bred in different parts and distant shires, could scarce any more understand each others speech, than they could that of foreigners'.
- 94 Of Lord Alemoor Sheridan rather condescendingly observes (1781: 142): 'And yet there was still a more extraordinary instance which I met with at Edinburgh, in a Lord of Session (Lord Aylmoor), who, though he had never been out of Scotland, yet merely by his own pains, without rule or method, only conversing much with such English men as happened to be there, and reading regularly with some of the principal actors, arrived even at an accuracy of pronunciation, and had not the least tincture of the Scottish intonation'.
- 95 But there were possible pitfalls in such endeavours. Recording (Hill 1891: 182) how Johnson concedes that a Scotsman's pronunciation is 'not offensive', Boswell cautions: 'let me give my countrymen of North Britain an advice not to aim at absolute perfection in this respect; not to speak *High English*, as we are apt to call what is far removed from the Scotch, but which is by no means *good English*, and makes fools who use it truly ridiculous. Good English is plain, easy, and smooth in the mouth of an unaffected English gentleman. A studied and factitious pronunciation, which requires perpetual attention, and imposes perpetual constraint, is exceedingly disgusting. A small

intermixture of provincial peculiarities may, perhaps, have an agreeable effect, as the notes of different birds concur in the harmony of the grove’.

- 96 Yet he still considers Italian to be the most pleasing of languages and does not hesitate to criticize German and French since their ‘guttural and nasal mode of enunciation are less pleasant than the labial and lingual’. Yet such disadvantages can, for Kenrick, be overcome through the employment of a ‘distinct articulation’ which ‘is the first and most essential part of speech’. In this way, he argues, ‘the dental hiss of the English, the guttural growl of the Dutch, and nasal twang of the French, are greatly diminished by a quick and sharp pronunciation; while they are most abominably increased by a slow and flat one’ (1784: 6).
- 97 But it is not always a simple matter to see what is meant by the ‘bad’ versus ‘good’ side of custom itself as, for example, Bell (1769: 90): ‘There are several other words, and even modes of construction, over whose improprieties, custom has drawn a veil, which when discovered, the mind thus prejudiced (by custom) pronounces or imagines the real right to be wrong; so prejudicial is bad custom and (what is as bad,) so dilatory is the prejudiced mind in rectifying errors for the sooner we follow a good custom, it is the better’.
- 98 ‘The propriety of speech consists therefore in the preservation of their [the vowels] most striking and characteristic differences, and not in multiplying nice distinctions, or blending them confusedly together’ (Kenrick 1784: 60).
- 99 By the mid-nineteenth century, Walker’s reputation has suffered somewhat, if Ellis is to be believed (1869: 625): ‘in almost every part of his “principles” and his “remarks” upon particular words throughout his dictionary, [one: CJ] will see the most evident marks of insufficient knowledge, and of that kind of pedantic self-sufficiency which is the true growth of half-enlightened ignorance, and may be termed “usherism”. Walker has done good and hard work; he has laid down rules, and hence given definite assertions to be considered, and he has undoubtedly materially influenced thousands of people, who, more ignorant than himself, looked upon him as an authority. But his book has passed away, and his pronunciations are no longer accepted’. For a more recent assessment of Walker’s work, see Beal (Dossena and Jones 2003: 83–106).
- 100 Walker (1791: *Preface* vi) makes a similar appeal to the rational use of analogy in determining both the direction of change and the settling of disputed pronunciations: ‘the same may be observed of those words which are differently pronounced by different speakers; if the analogies of the language were better understood, it is scarcely conceivable that so many words in polite usage would have a diversity of pronunciation, which is at once so ridiculous and embarrassing; nay, perhaps it may be with confidence asserted, that if the analogies of the language were sufficiently known, and so near at hand as to be applicable on inspection to every word, that not only many words which are wavering between contrary usages would be settled in their true sound, but that many words, which are fixed by custom to an improper pronunciation, would by degrees grow regular and analogical; and those which are so already would be secured in their purity, by a knowledge of their regularity and analogy’.
- 101 Sheldon (1938: 380–1) rejects Wyld’s assessment of Walker’s prescriptions as ‘The style of pronunciation [Walker] recommends seems to be a perfectly natural and easy one, and the *Rhetorical Grammar* is probably a much safer guide than the works of Elphinston’. She claims instead that ‘even more than most of his contemporaries Walker *does* set up an artificial and pedantic pronunciation’ and that ‘In his readiness to use the word “vulgar” to condemn accepted pronunciations of which he personally disapproved, he is much more inscrupulous than any of his fellow reformers’. A more balanced view of Walker both as prescriptivist and innovator is given by Beal (2003: 93–103).
- 102 We have already seen, of course, that the pronunciation of London was not treated as a homogeneous mass, and that there were several versions of it which attracted opprobrium as well as praise. Discussing what he sees as a lack of merger between the vowels in *me* and *thee*, Entick (1795) recognises the existence of variant high prestige London

types: 'It is confessed that among fine speakers especially in London, there is a prevailing affectation of confounding the two sounds, or rather of losing the second in the last; and this, perhaps, may be considered (pardon the expression) as one of the provincial modes of pronunciation in the metropolis'.

- 103 However, it is probably true to say that in many instances the notion of a 'standard' is one often defined in terms of what it is not, as much as for what it is. Several writers – and there are Scots amongst them – are given to producing diatribes against what they see as the viciousness of the 'vulgar' (often defined as regional) pronunciation; James Buchanan (1757: xii), for instance: 'but the pronunciation of a great many, and especially the illiterate, is in most parts woefully grating and discordant, and differs so much from the pure and proper idiom of English pronunciation, that the greatest part of it cannot be represented in writing'. For Perry, even the educated speaker can commit follies of impropriety, although for him there is a place for 'custom' (1775: *Preface*): 'That there is a difficulty in fixing a standard for pronunciation, is evident from what follows. The *literati*, who make etymology the invariable rule for pronunciation, often pronounce words in such a manner, as to bring upon themselves the charge of affectation and pedantry; and, though custom, in a great measure, is the rule of present practice, we should by no means follow the daily alterations introduce by caprice: in particular cases, however, it is necessary that they should mutually give way to each other. Mere men of the world, notwithstanding all their politeness often retain so much of their provincial dialect, or commit such gross errors in speaking and writing, as to exclude them from the honour of being the standard of accurate pronunciation. Those who unite these two characters, and with the correctness and precision of true learning, combine the ease and elegance of genteel life, may justly be styled the only true standard of speech. It is from the practice of men of letters, eminent orators, and polite speakers in the metropolis that the "Author" has deduced his Criterion'.
- 104 He is not drawn either to London speech as a model (1796: 68): 'The Londoners (for THEY likewise have a dialect) adopt those new modes that incline to feebleness and sweetness; and articulate with a rapidity necessarily indistinct'. Notice too how Solomon Lowe's *The Critical Spelling Book* (1755: 12–13) 'Specifically designed for a standard of the language' and as a 'method of fixing a standard of the language, in order to prevent its future corruption', evokes a London standard as the only appropriate model for a standard. Yet it still sees flaws in the language of the Metropolis:
- In fixing ... the Pronunciation of words ... I have formd my rules upon what I conceive to be the most common way of pronouncing them among the better sort of people at London. Though, even among them, we find not only a difference in some instances, in which it is hard to say which is preferable, but also corruptions, which one may venture to declare inexcusable.
- He is, however, content to be 'better informd, in any particulars, by such as have had more opportunities of knowing what is polite or courtly, or most generally prevailing'.
- 105 Given that his highly innovative system is based on, as well as designed for, the use of public speakers and actors, it is unsurprising to find Joshua Steele (1775: 48) extolling the virtues of the language of the stage: 'There is a perfection in the pronunciation of the best speakers (which was remarkable in the late Mrs. Cibber, and is the same in Mr. Garrick): they are distinctly heard even in the softest sounds of their voices; when others are scarcely intelligible, though offensively loud'. Smith (1795: 8) too observes 'In almost all the words which are the subject of the seven foregoing notes, the pronunciations of Messrs. Sheridan and Walker are daily gaining ground; from its being adopted by the best Actress, which this, or perhaps any age ever produced, as well as by some of our first-rate speakers in both Houses of Parliament'.
- 106 Adams, while seeing the ultimate linguistic perfection in the usage of lawyers and barristers, nevertheless argues for a local, rather than a national standard of pronunciation (1799: 160): 'The many eloquence of the Scotch Bar affords a singular pleasure to the

- English hearer, and gives merit and dignity to the noble speakers who retain so much of their own dialect, and tempered propriety of English sounds, that they may be emphatically named *British Orators*. In fine, there is a limited conformity in the present union of heart and interest of the two great kingdoms, beyond which total similarity of sounds would not be desirable, and dissonance itself has characteristic merit'.
- 107 For Coote (1788: iv), even an exposure to the language of the best speakers and writers has no effect on certain classes of speaker (despite Sheridan's assertions that the osmotic effects of Arts of Rhetoric and Oratory provide the best mechanisms for promoting acceptable pronunciation): 'persons of vulgar breeding, instead of exhibiting any traces of improvement derived from the frequent hearing of such as excel in this respect, invariably pursue the same *routine* of barbarism and inaccuracy in their expression, neglectful of every opportunity of rectifying their taste in that particular'. These same individuals 'in spite of those opportunities which the perusal of literary productions cannot but afford for the improvement of their discourse, make little, if any, proficiency in this department'. Yet, for some, there is still hope (1788: 18): 'many of my readers may have imbibed, in their earlier days, an erroneous pronunciation, which the subsequent instructors, derived from the practice of the most accurate speakers, may probably be efficacious in correcting'.
- 108 It is worth noting that Lowe is one of the few observers in the late eighteenth century to criticize overtly the value of 'Near Alike' parallel word-lists as aids to pronunciation. He argues (1755: 8): 'the learner is left under an absolute uncertainty about the sounds of the words in both of them'. However, he is not against using the same device himself in his examples of *Equivocals* – 'A Like (or Not-much-unlike) Sounds with Different Spellings' (1755: 99, 111ff). Lowe is not entirely against spelling reform, recommending minor changes to spelling custom under his list of *Preferables* (1755: 90ff): *lovd; herd; battel, cattel; crucifie; smoke; gratiuous, vitious* and others commonly suggested by several writers in the period.
- 109 Sheridan is quite patronizing in his view that non-standard speakers seek linguistic betterment (1761: 16): 'Is there a man deficient in this respect, either foreigner, who is desirous of speaking it, or native, who uses it as his mother tongue, in the corrupt state [i.e. Irish, Scotch, Welsh, several counties of England: CJ] which custom has established, in the place of his birth or education, that does not wish the means of acquiring the polite and most approved pronunciation were in his power?' But he is particularly adamant on the ineffectiveness of schoolteachers in providing a model for what he sees as the best pronunciation, describing them as 'some of the most ignorant' and the 'lowest of mankind', while 'it is universally allowed that there are hardly any who speak or write [English] correctly'. Although most of these criticisms probably stem from his regret that Latin receives dominance over English (for schoolteachers, 'the language of the illiterate vulgar') in the classroom. He even goes as far as to claim (1756: 197): 'If any one among us have a facility or purity more than ordinary in his mother tongue, it is owing to chance, or his genius, or anything, rather than his education, or any care of his teacher'. So too Thomas Spence, much influenced by Sheridan, argues that his *New Alphabet* will be of help 'especially for those who are but indifferent readers, from not having been taught to pronounce properly' (1775: *Preface*). Buchanan's view of schoolteachers are on the one hand positive: 'the most necessary and useful Members of Society' (1762: xxxv), but still he notes that (1757: 6): 'Great numbers set up for teachers of English (when they fail in the business they were brought up to) without a preparative education, or being the least qualified for the execution of such an important trust', and that 'It is common with the vulgar and illiterate to imagine, that anyone who can read tolerably well, is surely a person proper enough to teach little children. But the learned and judicious part of mankind know better; and that it requires the utmost skill and ability in a teacher, to lay the foundation of a child's education'. He is full of praise for the excellence of teachers 'north of the Tweed', who have had the benefits of a liberal education 'a qualified teacher of English being as much esteemed as

- those who teach Latin or Greek' (1757: 6). Solomon Lowe comments upon the lot of the female schoolteacher (1755: *Preface* ii): 'those *dames* (many of them, in the decay of life, or distress of fortune) are too much criticized, he claims, both by parents and other 'masters of a little higher class (though a great deal of their trouble is taken-off by these good women)'. Indeed, he argues that 'she that teaches, has greater cause of complaint against him that writes: since, whatever book she makes use of, she is (every now and then) oblig'd to correct it by her own observation'.
- 110 The long-term survival of languages without an appropriate orthography must be in doubt: 'what shall be held the dialect (and what the practitioners?) where every picture continues to blaspheme?' (1786: 148); 'in a land where forgery of all crimes, is never venial, shall the language (of a sensible, thinking people) continue in representation, an almost constant forger?' (1756: 158).
- 111 Rudd gives the usual set of reasons why such transparency is desirable, notably how a 'lack of ocular distinction' is bad for foreigners and language learners, who are otherwise subjected to 'the most barbarous confusion of sounds'. He praises the French use of the cedilla to distinguish the 'hard' and 'soft' *c*: 'And what would be the additional expense to the printer, or the extraordinary trouble to the letter founder, if the like propriety were, at last, submitted to by both [the French and the British]?' (1755: 6). Nor is he against the introduction of new symbols, claiming that it would provide a 'visible distinction' were the *y* in instances such as *burying* and *cry*, to be accorded a special symbol \ddot{y} or even Υ (1755: 44).
- 112 Elphinston (1786: 311ff) cites at some length Benjamin Franklin's case for and against spelling reform. Franklin objects that any new system might not just leave the reader confused concerning the etymological history of individual words, but that, unless new books were to be published, homophones could prove to be problematic, so he concludes that we should allow people to 'spell in the old way, and, as we find it easier, do the same ourselves'. Yet, he argues to – in his 'Reply to a Lady' – that the difficulties posed by a new orthography are not insurmountable 'we might get over it in a week's writing'. Teachers would find a new, more phonetically based system more easy to teach, since students' current 'bad spelling' would be close to their pronunciation, so that 'contrary to the present bad rules, under the new rule it would be good'. Etymologies, he argues, tend to be uncertain anyway, and readers could always consult books spelt in the old way were they in any doubt on such matters. He recognises the homophone problem: 'the distinction between words of different meaning and similar in sound would be destroyed', but can always rely on the sense of the text to solve such problems. While there would indeed be a need to re-write all the books written in the standard orthography, this need not prove to be an insurmountable problem either, since such any innovation could be introduced gradually and people would eventually be able to learn both systems.
- 113 A system like this is favoured by several writers in the period, notably Bell (1769), although there is not always agreement or consistency as to what the superscripted marks signify. Bell, for instance, has his '*a* short' and '*a* broad' with the same marker: *băd*, *băll*, with 'long *i*' variously as *münd* or *münd*.
- 114 Despite his general dislike for the method, Solomon Lowe also occasionally uses square-bracketed re-spellings like this (1755: 128): [foarm] 'form'; [greace] 'grease'; [led] 'lead', the metal; [meel] 'meal'.
- 115 Although he follows some seventeenth-century orthoepists in using a specialized *h* symbol to denote the voiceless interdental fricative [θ].
- 116 Written in Martinique, this work was intended for 'British and American Ladies and Gentlemen' with its main object 'to point out a plain, rational and permanent standard of pronunciation'.
- 117 Needless to say, Tucker (1773: 125) also advances the advantage of a reformed alphabet system like his for the acquisition of foreign languages: 'there are many syllables of French and English corresponding in sound tho written differently, but we cannot find

them for want of knowing the powers of our letters. If an Englishman could be persuaded to read “Ollom ode dep orry” or “E nem on au dee re-eng” a Frenchman would take him for a brother “Monsieur” and think he said “A la mode de Paris” or “Il ne m’en a dit rien”’.

- 118 In common with those of many other contemporary observers, Elphinston’s principles of syllable division can sometimes appear to have little consistent motivation: for while items like *paper* and *favour* are divided *pa-per* and *fa-vor*, the vowel in *fanning* is regarded as shut, on the analogy of *fan* (a syllable division like *fan-ing*). On the other hand, the *l* in an item like *bawling* he sees as a marker of openness in syllable one, while in *ballot*, where the phonetics of the stressed vowel suggest that it is shut, Elphinston proposes a syllable division like *bal-lot* (1795: 17).
- 119 Of Alexander Scot (1776, 1777, 1779, 1781, 1792) little is known. He may be the author of *An Exercise for Turning English into French, with Grammatical Rules* (1776) and the *Fables Choisies a l’usage des Enfants; Nouveau Recueil ou Melange Litteraire, Historique, Dramatique, et Poetique* (1777). Both works are described as being ‘par A Scot, AM, Membre de L’Université de Paris’.
- 120 Fogg also includes what he calls A SCHEME OR SCALE OF SOUNDS, essentially a numbered list of ‘thirty six primitive sounds’, such that (1792: 8):

1. au in <i>laud</i>	13. oi in <i>foil</i>	25. s in <i>so</i>
2. o in <i>not</i>	14. yoo in <i>use</i>	26. zh in <i>fusion</i>
3. ā in <i>father</i>	15. ou in <i>noun</i>	27. sh in <i>shy</i>
4. a in <i>man</i>	16. b in <i>by</i>	28. g in <i>go</i>
5. ai in <i>pain</i>	17. p in <i>pay</i>	29. k in <i>key</i>
6. e in <i>men</i>	18. v in <i>vain</i>	30. l in <i>lo</i>
7. ee in <i>feel</i>	19. f in <i>foe</i>	31. r in <i>ray</i>
8. y or i in <i>pity</i>	20. d in <i>doe</i>	32. m in <i>me</i>
9. oa in <i>doat</i>	21. t in <i>tea</i>	33. n in <i>no</i>
10. oo or w in <i>woo</i>	22. dh in <i>thy</i>	34. ng in <i>song</i>
11. u in <i>bud</i>	23. th in <i>thin</i>	35. nk in <i>ink</i>
12. auee in <i>find</i>	24. z in <i>zeal</i>	36. h in <i>ho</i>

- 121 However, he is also careful to retain a use for the traditional dictionary (1796: 179): ‘A dictionary would likewise be required, in which the old spelling with the derivations must be put between crotchets; and, for etymology, reference must be had to the dictionary, not to the reformed orthography’.
- 122 Many reformers, even mild dabblers like Bayly (1772: 9), were conscious of the disadvantages of orthographic innovation: ‘the corrections above hinted at, if they were all to be made, it is true, would considerably alter the face of the English language, but if some of them were judiciously introduced and familiarised by custom, they would soon appear very rational, and contribute greatly to brevity and ease for learners both native and foreign’.
- 123 Claims to the importance of Classical linguistic models in this and other regards, are often fiercely contested, while appeals to the importance of Latin rhetorical models are often confused with attempts by schoolteachers to teach English grammatical structure through the prism of Latin syntax and morphology. Typically Buchanan (1762: xvii–xviii), while agreeing that a study of the Classics is useful for ‘some Professions in civil life, as well as for Persons intended for the Service of the Church; and ought to be the study of every Gentleman, as he cannot be said to have a liberal Education or a Place among the Learned, who is a Stranger to them’; nevertheless ‘I cannot give my assent to the whole of a young Gentleman’s Time being engrossed and sacrificed to a dead Verbalty’.

- 124 Many eighteenth-century grammar books contain sections dealing with rhetorical delivery and the conventions of public speaking – Fogg (1796: 185–7): Buchanan (1762: xvii–xviii) – but there is little more than perfunctory attempt at representing these such niceties as pitch and loudness variation or the speeding up or slowing down of delivery rate.
- 125 Steele is, however, somewhat condescending – in our eyes at least – to the main audience he proposes for the utilization of his system (1775: *Preface* xvii): ‘may we not still hope, that the system proposed in this *Essay* may be patronized by the ladies. The study of music being almost universally thought a necessary part of their education, they will find no difficulty in understanding the subject of this treatise; and if they should make the care of their nursery their principal amusement, as all the best of them do, may we not expect to see the rising generation instructed by their fair mothers in the joint knowledge of letters and music, and our typical marks of ACCENT, QUANTITY, EMPHASIS, PAUSE, and FORCE, added to their spelling book (which will then be a compleat *Gradus ad Parnassum*), and as familiarly known as the alphabet’.
- 126 His comments upon regional intonational differences are interesting (1775: 34–5):
- Take three common men; one a native of Aberdeenshire, another of Tipperary, and the third of Somersetshire; and let them converse together in the English language, in the presence of any gentleman of the courtly tone of the metropolis; his ears will soon inform him, that every one of them talks in a tune very different from his own, and from each other; and that their difference of tone is not owing merely to loud or soft, but to a variety both of melody and of measure, by a different application of accents, acute and grave; and of quantity, short and long; and of cadence, light and heavy. Every one of the four persons will perceive the other three have very distinct tones from each other, and that the tone of each is plainly distinguished by the *alto* and *basso*, though each in particular may fancy his own tone to be quite uniform, and in the union with itself.
- 127 Joshua Steele’s (1775: ix) vowel definition is also fairly typical: ‘simple sound capable of being continued invariably the same for a long time (for example, as long as the breath lasts), without any change of the organs; that is, without any movement of the throat, tongue, lips, or jaws’. His definitions of diphthongal sounds are, however, quite unique.
- 128 Buchanan presents a robust defence of the consonant (1762: 19 *footnote*): ‘Though these Characters called Consonants have been reckoned forms of a more ignoble Nature than the Vowels, because without the Conjunction of some Vowel, they lead rather to silence than to produce a Voice; yet it is evident, that they distinguish rational beings from the brute Creation in a more peculiar Manner than the Vowels, as several Brutes utter at Times, these vocal Sounds in common with us. But Man only is endowed with these noble Faculties or Organs, which produce such Variety of Contacts and Configurations by which the Sounds of the Vowels are variously directed and determined’.
- 129 A century later, E.J. Ellis, conscious of both the strengths and pitfalls attendant upon citing foreign exemplars for English sounds, notably short/long vowel differences, concludes (1869: 58): ‘If a foreigner neglects this distinction [when he speaks English: CJ] we, in the ignorance of our ears, often accuse him of lengthening the vowel, thus we write his *pity* ... as *peetee* ... and we make a Scotchman speak of his *meenister*’.
- 130 Notice how the Scottish observer, Colonel Mitford, in his *An Essay upon the Harmony of Language* (1774), comments upon the pronunciation of the English short *i* in Scots contexts: ‘We pronounce the acuted syllable in *Festivity*, short. A Scotsman lengthens it, not by using the English long sound of *i*, but by producing the English short sound of *i*, pronouncing the word as if written *festeevity*’. He also claims that, in standard English, items like *being*, *bidding*, *hinder*, *seeming* and *seemly* are pronounced ‘with the same

- vowel sound' – 'the long sound of *e* shortened, which is the common short sound of *i*' (1774: 77). But, if he is identifying the Scots pronunciation as something different from the English, then the Scots and English short *i* cannot be homophonous.
- 131 A not dissimilar set of comments earlier in the century can be found in the treatise *On English Pronunciation* (1740) by the Scotsman James Douglas. Douglas distinguishes for London speech two versions of what is traditionally described as 'short *i*'. The first 'is sounded with a very small sound very Short and Aspirate as if it were written *ih*' (Holmberg 1956: 154). The second is characterized as being 'sounded Short and Guttural in the Beginning of Words'. Other than the feature of being restricted to onset empty environments, there is little we can glean from the examples cited by Douglas to ascertain a possible phonetic context distinguishing the aspirate from the guttural types. That the distribution may be entirely lexically conditioned is suggested by the very large number of items showing the aspirate form (Holmberg 1956: 157–60). The number of lexical items containing the guttural restricted to *in, is, ill, if, itch, illiterate, immodest, imperious, innate, imbibe, immoderate, impetuous, intimate, innocent, internal, ignorant, idiot, intend, issue, ignoble, Italy* (Holmberg 1956: 154–5). All of the aspirate types occur in onset-full syllables, and none is to be found in morphology contexts of the *immodest* type.
- 132 Although the fact that the majority of his 'exceptional' lexical items are low-frequency, latinate items may be of some significance (Beal 1999: 116). Indeed, Fogg is almost inordinately given to citing such low-frequency polysyllabic items throughout his treatise: *pharmacopoeia, escargotoire, profopoeia*.
- 133 As in the *cheer/cheerfully; fear/fearfully* contrasts, alongside items like *fierce, pierce* and *tierce* which are cited by many observers in the period as showing what are probably low-mid front vowels.
- 134 And they are perhaps just supported too by the observations of Fenning in his *A New Grammar of the English Language* (1771) where it is claimed that items like *dream, cream, bean* have 'e long and open', while those like *near, dear and rear* have 'e long and close', although in view of the pre-[r] environment of the latter, we may be dealing in such cases with an [ii]/[ee] contrast.
- 135 What appear to be examples of *North Eastern Diphthongization* (Wells 1982: 358) are to be found in Fogg's fanciful derivations (1796: 170): 'Each syllable in which a diphthong occurs I imagine to have been originally two; the former a long one, but the latter being very short was at length disused; yet both letters were left in writing, and the long sound of the former in speaking. Many colloquial barbarisms confirm this account, as *too-ad, coo-et* for *toad, coat; ee-as, clee-an* for *ease, clean*'.
- 136 Although there is a general assumption among the vast majority of commentators in the late eighteenth century that mid front vowels in items like *say, they*, etc. are *monophthongal*, a rare exception to this position appears to surface in Entick (1795: 6) who declares that the *ai* digraph in *praise, frail* and *quail* 'seems to be one of the proper diphthongs as comprising the sound of two vowels'. While it is just possible that, in such contexts, the stressed vowel is subject to some kind of 'breaking' diphthongization, Entick never elaborates on this issue and, given the general confusion in the period as to the status of 'proper' and 'improper' diphthongs, we might not wish to lay too much stress on his comments on this matter, were it not for the similar observations made by Thomas Batchelor at the very beginning of the nineteenth century.
- 137 The Scot, James Douglas, also lists *hear* and *heard* as showing 'E long', his [i] (Holmberg 1956: 202).
- 138 Unsurprisingly, he assigns (1791: 30) the value of the long Italian *a* as in *father*, to items like *heart, hearty, hearken, hearth, hearken*, the phonetic value of which we shall examine below.
- 139 We might just argue that James Adams hears such a contrast as well, given his clear distinction between his *EE, î étranger* as in *heed, breed, sweet* and *I étranger* in items like: *read (je lis) breach, tear (lacrima)*.

- 140 But we must bear in mind that some kind of [e]/[i] merger is a real possibility here, given Walker's (1791: 27) remarks that '*plait*, a fold of cloth, is regular, and ought to be pronounced like *plate*, a dish; pronouncing it so as to rhyme with *meat* is a vulgarism, and ought to be avoided'. It is perhaps worth recording here too the observations of Anselm Bayly (1772: II:3) capturing 'affectations' involving the pronunciation of whatever is meant by the *ea* graph: 'Affectation, which not only a little occasioneth indistinctness, is the improper changing of open and long vowels into narrow and short; the dropping of consonants, or sounding them very soft, and with imaginary politeness. Thus *commandment*, *God*, *salvation*, *pardoneth*, *absolveth*, *my lord*, *madam*, *your ladyship* some pronounce *commeanment*, *gad*, *salveation*, *pardons*, *absolve*, *meam*, *your ledyship*'. Sheldon (1938: 288) sees the *ea* graph as representing a sound 'still more narrow' than the [e] in the stressed syllable of *salvation*, 'perhaps a sound approaching [i]'.
 141 Buchanan unequivocally states that although the *ea* digraph can represent no less than four separate sounds (1757: 10): 'It sounds like long (*e*) i.e. (*ee*) in *appear*, *arear*, with many others, *this being its general sound*' [italics CJ].
 142 Observational difficulties in the front mid vowel area are well illustrated in Smith's (1795: 149) *Footnote*:

I cannot help introducing here a criticism of the Author of *A Caution to Gentlemen who Use Sheridan's Dictionary*, p. 19. 'Mr. Sheridan', says this Author, 'establishes a general rule that *ai* should be sounded like an *e*, or as the *a* in *hate*: and it is diverting enough to hear those who follow his directions speak to the waiter of a coffee-room or inn – *Wettur*, bring me the *Del-ly* Advertiser: and when you have *led* the cloth, tell the *med* to fetch *her-dres-ser*, &c.'. The fact is, Mr. Sheridan says, as Mr. Walker has since said, that *ai* is the sound of the second *a*, as in *hate*, *pale*; a very just rule, and most unjustly turned into ridicule by the silly wit of this author. Had he quoted Mr. Sheridan rightly, the words would have stood thus – '*Wáter*, bring me the *Dá-ly* Advertiser; and when you have *láde* the cloth, tell the *máde* to fetch a *hár-dresser*'.

- 143 Smith (1795: 60) makes a similar observation: 'This word [*beard*: CJ] is marked by Mr. Sheridan with short *e*, as if spelt *berd*; and there are many persons who pronounce it thus, especially upon the stage'. Fogg (1792: 15) has *klenly* 'cleanly' and *tsherful* 'cheerful' as well as *lep* 'leap', although he also records exceptions to his expected Seventh Sound (*ee* in *feel*) in the items *mere* ('a pool') *mair* and *thesis*, *thaisis*, where his Fifth sound (*ai* in *pain*) is regarded as appropriate, although in this case it may well be a North Western characteristic.
 144 *Fierce* and *pierce* likewise show alternate [e]/[i] pronunciations, the entry for the former in *Vocabulary* reading: 'I have followed Mr. Sheridan in giving this word the short sound; Mr. Walker has marked it double, fe^3e^3rse , or fe^1rse , and says the first mode of pronouncing it is the most general, but the second is heard chiefly on the stage'. We might note here too the entry in *Vocabulary* for *CHAIR*: 'All the authorities pronounce this word as I have marked it [tsha²re: CJ], and this is certainly the best usage; but we too often hear it sounded as if written *cheer*'. On the other hand, the *Vocabulary* compiler scolds Sheridan for assigning a pronunciation of *RAISIN* as *ray-sin* which not only destroys Shakespeare's *reasons/raisins* pun in *HIV* Part 1, but is 'contrary to the most settled usage,' which he claims is [rizn].
 145 *LEGISLATURE*. Mr. Walker blames some respectable speakers of the House of Commons, for sounding the *e* in the first syllable long, as if written *Leegislature*. This long sound of *e* is only supported by Mr. W. Johnson, Dr. Kenrick, Mr. Scott, and Mr. Perry, make the *e* short, like Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Walker.
 146 *LEST*: Most of our orthoepists pronounce this word two ways, le^1st , or le^3e^3st . Mr. Walker however gives a preference to the former (which I have followed), and thinks the second should be exploded. Mr. Sheridan sounds it both ways also; but by giving precedence to the first, we may fairly infer he preferred it, and this seems to be the best usage.

- 147 And we recall here Kenrick's (1784: 64) observation that '*Break* is generally sounded like *brake, make, take*, but few, except the natives of Ireland and the provinces, say *ate, spake*, but *eat, speak*, agreeably to the 14th sound of the Dictionary [*meet, meat, deceit: CJ*]'.
- 148 The evidence of the Scot Bell's *A Precise and Comprehensive System of Grammar* (1769) is interesting in this area of the phonology. For instance, under his discussion of the improper *ea* diphthong, he lists with his *ĕ* short *break, breast* and *death*, while his *ē* long embraces *deceit, receipt, seize* and *neigh*; he accepts an *ē* long or *ĕ* short for *oeconomy* and *Phoenix*. His lists of 'near alike' include sets such as *eel* (*ēle*) 'fish' and *ell* (*ĕl*) 'of cloth'; *head* 'of the body', *heed* 'to take care'; *near* 'nigh', *ne'er* 'at no time'; *key* (ka or ke) 'for a lock', *kay* or *quay* (ka) 'for ships'; *beer* (*bēre*) 'to drink', *bear* (*bere*) 'to carry', *bier* (*bere*) 'to carry the dead'; *bean* (*bēn*) 'grain', *been* (*bene*) 'to have been' and even *farce* 'a play' and *fierce* (*ferce*) 'cruel'.
- 149 Smetham's *Practical Grammar* roundly condemns the use of a 'broad' *a* sound – 'the German *a*' – in items like *father, fancy, glass*, a sound in the [ɔ] or even [ɑ] region (1774: 37): 'Great differences have arisen among grammarians and teachers, concerning the proper manner of pronouncing the latter *a*. Many insist that it ought to be pronounced broad, according to the Scotch manner of speaking; though contrary to the practice and opinions of the best orators, and most elegant speakers; when, if they did but examine into the matter, they would find, that the broad sound of the vowel *a* is the very thing which appears so disagreeable to the ear of such as converse with the Scotch', and *caundle* for *candle* is regarded as the 'Scotch drawl', 'a disagreeable, pedantic and ridiculous manner of speaking'.
- 150 We must always bear in mind, of course, the difficulties faced by eighteenth-century observers in actually hearing contrasts between phonetic segments of this kind which were hardly maximally distinct. Sylvester Douglas well expresses the dilemmas faced in interpreting the relativity existing between phonetically related components (Jones 1991: 118):

But the broad and open are only to be considered as shades and gradations of the same sound like the lighter and darker shades of the same colour; and the same is true, in a still stronger degree, of the two sorts of the slender. Some philosophers think, notwithstanding the received opinion to the contrary, that there is an analogy between the laws of motion and communication of light, and of sound. There is certainly such an analogy in the manner in which they are perceived by our organs of hearing and of sight. For, as in the rainbow, although the pure middle part of each of the different stripes of colours is clearly distinguishable from the others, yet, while the eye gradually passes outwards, to the edge of each stripe, on either side, it seems to die away insensibly into the neighbouring tint, and is at length so like it, that it is impossible for the mind to draw the line, or fix the limit where the one ends, and the other begins; so the same thing is observable in our perception of vocal sounds. Thus we may consider the long open *a* in *father* as a sound placed between *o* and the strong slender *a*, or Scotch *Eta* (probably [ɛ]: CJ) But its sound in *all* gradually approaches and seems, in some measure, to confound and lose itself in that of *o*, as, on the other side, in *hat*, it approaches to the limits of, and begins to mix itself with, the short and strong slender sound in *better*.

- 151 He goes on to tell us of his pedagogy regarding vowel length: 'Therefore I would begin with my scholars by making them pronounce the single vowels long and short' *ā, ă, aū, aŭ, &c.* leading them thereinto by proper example of words wherein they are so spoken, though perhaps written with other characters [despite some typographical mistakes: CJ], as 'ā ant; ă and; aū all; aŭ on; ē were; ĕ end; ī machine; ī chin; ō old; ō only'. He also claims that such length contrasts were known to and utilized by classical authors (1773: 67): 'Why should we imagine Horace or Ovid did not know these words from one another when spoken singly, as well as we do "halve" from "have", "Psalm" from "Sam" without standing to spell them?'

- 152 Notice how Alexander Geddes (1792: 423) most strikingly illustrates the Scots tendency to favour the ‘broad *a*’:

Fourthly, it is my opinion, that even the vowel sounds that predominate in the Scottish dialect, are of themselves more harmonious than those which are the most prevalent in English. That the open or broad *a*, for example is one of the most harmonious vocal sounds, is clear both from its being the most common, in almost all known languages, European or Asiatic, from the Italian to the Hindoo. Yet this sound very rarely occurs in English, but in Scots is extremely common, even now, and was formerly still more so. Not only did it take place of the English open short *a*, as in *grass, hand, man, mass*, &c. but even of the long slender *a* as in *same, dame, spake, awake, brake, take, nation, consideration*, &c. It was also retained in a number of Saxon words, in which we have gradually changed it into *o* long, as *snaw, knaw, craw, blaw, thraw* for *snow, know, crow, blow, throw*, &c.

- 153 Sheldon’s observations are worth noting in this context (1938: 278–9): ‘neither of Bayly’s descriptions in this instance is particularly clear. He may not be trying to describe the sounds minutely, but he may be simply grouping the front *a*’s together as distinct from the back *a*’s. On the other hand, for *man, bath* he may actually be intending to indicate a fairly high [æ] sound, as Kenrick seems to interpret it. The Southern British [æ] is today quite close to [ɛ], in comparison, say, to American [æ]; Bayly may be recording the beginnings of this raising.’ Interestingly, though, James Adams (1794: 45) respells *chamber* as *tchaember* and *tchember*.
- 154 Notice too how Melville Bell (1867: 78–9, 117) appeals to similar concepts in his description of the new [ou] diphthong which appears in the mid-nineteenth century onwards in southern English. He claims as an ‘English characteristic’ a ‘tendency of long vowels to become diphthongs. This is illustrated ... in the regular pronunciation of the vowels in *aid, ail, aim, ache*, &c. (ei), *ode, oak, globe*, &c. (ou). The same tendency leads to the “Cockney peculiarity of separating the labio-lingual vowels (u, o) into their labial and lingual components, and pronouncing the latter successively instead of simultaneously. Thus we hear (*vu, eu, yu*) for (u), and (*o’w, o’w, ah’w*) for (o)”’.
- 155 That there is nothing whimsical about such a suggestion can be seen from the comments of Joshua Steele who, as a musician, would appreciate the ways in which individual notes could combine to form sounds which were amalgams of their component parts. For instance, he regards ‘The English sound of *E*, in the words *met, let, get* is a diphthong composed of the vocal sounds of *A* and *E* ... and pronounced very short’. Indeed, he includes *ae* in these words under his ‘*Diphthong Sounds in English*’, alongside those in *fine, life, new, due, how, bough* and it is most likely that he is describing ‘internalized’ versus ‘sequential’ diphthongal constructs in this instance. This would appear to be a correct interpretation, since he also includes as a *diphthong* the sound of the *u* in words such as *undone, begun, ugly, but, shut*, describing this a combination of his $\alpha\omega$, where α is given as the first vowel in the diphthong in *fine, fly*, and ω the second component in the *how, hour* diphthong. Such an internalized construct comprised of both low front and high back might well be interpretable as a centralized [ə], [ɜ], or even [ʌ]. Tucker (1773: 136), discussing the contrasts between the French and English *a* sounds, describes the former as: ‘The French “*a*” seems to be made up of our “*au*” and “*a*”, and their “*e*” masculine of our “*e*” and “*a*” compounded together, not in a diphthong but as the sound of two instruments playing unison in a concert’. Telling too in this context, is Fogg’s (1796: 157–8) description of the ‘proper diphthongs’: ‘A compound sound or proper diphthong is two vowels coalesced, so as to form but one sound. The organs are disposed so as to pronounce the first vowel, but before that comes to a close, or that vocal impulse is finished, they are immediately and insensibly removed to the proper position for the other; and as, in the rainbow, it is not possible to say, where this colour ends, or there the other begins, though in the middle of any streak a definite hue may be perceived; so here, the junction between

the sounds must be concealed, though the actual expression of both be obvious to the delicate ear'.

- 156 The Scottish propensity for raising [a] to [æ] or [e] values is well attested throughout the late eighteenth century. Sylvester Douglas' APPLE entry states how: 'The *a* must be pronounced short and open as in *tap, rap, happen*. By the common Scotch pronunciation this word should rhyme to *Kepple*. According to the proper sound it rhymes to *grapple*' (Jones 1991: 164). Indeed, he records low-mid front values for items such as *chariot, rather, master, napkin, yard, Saturday, Harry, harvest, large*, among many others. In the same vein, he claims that the sound in *hat* 'approaches to the limits of, and begins to mix itself with, the short and strong slender sound in *better*' (Jones 1991: 118). Other Scottish observers follow suit, with Cortez Telfair (1775) describing his 'first short *e* in *end*' to be 'the same with *a* short', a sound he represents in the item '*star*', while Elphinston (1786: 4) records 'broad' and 'true Scotch' *sax, stap, wat* for 'step' and 'wet', with his *sax* for *sex* appearing to show a subsequent 'lowering' of the common Scots [ɛ] vowel to some kind of [a]. An [a]/[e] alternation is also suggested in many Scottish 'sounding-alike' lists, notably Warden's (1753), where we find equated *catch/ketch, lattice/lettuce, rack/wreck, vassal/vessel*, while Robertson (1722: 41ff) shows *Reddish* 'inclining to that colour': *rhaddish* 'a root'; *ketch* 'a ship': *catch* 'to lay hold'; *said* 'spoke'; *sad* 'melancholy'. Geddes (1792) uses his *a* slender, possibly [e], with items such as *apils* 'apples', *banist* 'banished' and *shados* 'shadows'. Scot too records this Scottish tendency in his renderings like *haibit* 'habit', *pairts* 'parts', *airts* 'arts' – where his *ai* represents a slightly raised [ɛ] or even [e] – but as instances of the prestigious 'present Caledonian English of the college, the pulpit and the bar' (Jones 1991: 102). Other writers regard any [e] usage as vulgar, notably Sylvester Douglas under his entry for ART, ARTIST (Jones 1991: 164–5):

Pronounce the *a* short and open, as in *start*. The Scotch commonly give it its long slender sound ([ɛɛ]: C]) As in *fares, pared*. They commit the same error in most other words of this sort; as *cart, dart, hart, part, party, smart*. In avoiding this false pronunciation [*sic*: C]), care must be taken not to substitute the long open *a* [ɛɛ: C]) as the inhabitants of the north of England particularly do, in the word *cart*.

Such an [a]/[ɛ]/[e] alternation can be seen as the origins of some Modern Scottish prestige dialect pronunciations, notably those of Edinburgh Morningside and Glasgow Kelvinside, where there are anecdotes concerning (the now-receding) homophonous *sacks/sex*, the latter being the objects in which coal is kept.

- 157 Walker's pompous and barely disguised sarcasm perhaps results from Smith's suggestion for a low back vowel in items like *plant, chant, jaunt* (1795: 7) on the recommendation of other 'accurate' and 'good' judges and observers: 'I have adopted this pronunciation, although Messrs. Sheriden, Kenrick and Walker, mark it with the short *a*; because Mr. Nares, who is a good judge, Mr. Scott who is in general very accurate, and all the natives of London pronounce it so'.
- 158 Perry records the existence of a fourth *a* vowel, connecting it with social factors (1775: Preface iii): 'With the profoundest respect for Mr. Sheridan's superior abilities, I appeal to him and the public ... whether he has not omitted several sounds ... and particularly the sound of *a* as heard in the words *part, dart, &c*. This sound occurs frequently in our language, for besides that it is very often found in words of polysyllables, there are no less than 145 words of monosyllables, which if pronounced in any other manner than as *a* in *art, charm, &c.*, the speaker would betray a contemptible singularity of accent' (Sheldon 1938: 282).
- 159 Kenrick (1784: 57) considers the [ʊ]/[u] contrast to be a peculiarly *English* phenomenon: 'I conceive, however, that neither the French nor the Italians make so great a difference in the long and short sound of this vowel as the English do; nor indeed have I met with an Italian or a French linguist, who has paid sufficient attention to this circumstance to be able to inform me; and, though I can trust my own ear with respect to this difference

- in words of my own language, I cannot trust it sufficiently to determine between words of other languages’.
- 160 Perhaps it is this kind of phenomenon to which Ellis (1874: 1145) is referring in his discussion of vowel/consonantal length: ‘in English [final consonants] length varies, the general rule being that they are long after a short, short after a long vowel; *tell* (tELL), *bin* (binn), *tale* (teil), *been* (bin) ... liquids and nasals coming before another consonant follow the same laws ... In short we may say that short accented monosyllables do not exist in English. Either the vowel or the consonant must be long (tELL, teil). In the ordinary London pronunciation, the quantity of original short vowels seems to be perfectly indifferent, the only limitation being that a short vowel and a short consonant must not come together. No Englishman ever says (tEl). He must either lengthen the consonant (tELL), or else the vowel, in which case the consonant becomes short (tEEl). I have often heard the latter from people of every rank, but chiefly among the vulgar’.
- 161 A similar condemnation is made by Kenrick (1784: 54 *footnote*): ‘The natives of Ireland and our northern countrymen go so far as to use indifferently No 1 and No 3 and No 12 and 14, saying bu¹l for bu³ll, and pla¹²ys for ple¹⁴ase: but by this they betray their provinciality’.
- 162 Tucker seems careful to distinguish his long [u:] from the diphthongal [ju] by the use of a separate diacritic for the latter: *túlip*, *rúral*.
- 163 Adams (1794: 18) sees the English *u* sound as ‘middle’ in perhaps a different sense: ‘l’u Anglais est un son moyen entre ú Italien [in English *mood*, *food*: CJ], qui exprime très bien le cri lugubre du hibou, et l’U délicat des Français, qui ne signifié rien, et que personne, ne peut prononcer excepte le Français’. However, he also recognises ‘in words ending in *K* [for “D”? CJ]’ a version which is ‘un peu plus bref’ in *wood*, *hood*, *stood*.
- 164 Although he is principally complaining about the ‘insidious semblance’ of the *u* graph for *oo*, Elphinston’s remarks on FOOT/STRUT contrasts are not unlike these (1786: 236): ‘Can it be doubted, or denied, dhat dheeze falsifiers hav beguiled all Scotland, grait part ov Ireland, no small parcion ov England; *put* and *butcher* at least, especially the former, thousands in the very cappital ov dhe united kingdoms?’
- 165 It is interesting to note how Steele and some others identify what looks like a fronted labial in [ü] (1775: xii): ‘The English seldom or never sound the *u* in the French tone ... except in the more refined tone of the court, where it begins to obtain in a few words’, a fact perhaps noted in Walker’s (1791: 35) observation on *manoeuvre*: ‘This diphthong is from the French, in the word *manoeuvre*; a word, within these few years, of very general use in our language ... the *oeu* is generally pronounced by those who can pronounce French, in the French manner; but this is a sound of the *u* as does not exists in English, and therefore cannot be described. The nearest sound is *oo*; with which, if this word is pronounced by an English speaker, as if written *manoovre*, it may, except with very nice French ears, escape criticism’. Perhaps this is the sound which Buchanan (1762: 16) classifies as his ‘Fat (*u*)’ which, he claims, ‘is scarcely now used by the English, its sound being expressed by *oo*; yet it is in use amongst the Scots, who pronounce *unrighteous*, *understood*, *university*; thus *oonrighteous*, *oonderstood*, *ooniversity*, &c.’ A claim supported by Sylvester Douglas when he tells us that ‘The true provincial sound of the *u* in the southern counties [of Scotland: CJ] ... is like the French *u*’, as well as by Elphinston (1786: 4) when commenting upon the Edinburgh pronunciation of *shoe* as ‘*chu* “Frenchly”’. Wiliam Johnston even goes so far as to equate the vowel in *full*, *pull*, *bull* etc., ‘with that of the Scotch name of the vowel *u*, or with the sound of the French *ou* in *pour*, *tour*’.
- 166 And we might note here the Scot Bell’s (1769: 43) rendering of *beauty* as (*beety*), showing his ‘ō [sic] long’; indeed he seems to equate ‘double ōō’ and ‘double ēē’ throughout his treatise.
- 167 For a discussion of the relative palatality of this ‘short *i*’ segment in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see especially III: 2.1 below.
- 168 To confuse terminology still more, James Douglas also describes a sound called *u* Long (perhaps [u:]) to be found in items like *boot*, *broom*, *brood*, *cuckoo*, *shoo* (Holmberg 1956: 214).

- 169 Even then, many observations are enigmatic, to say the least, thus Ash (1763: xvi) ‘*u* is narrow after *r* and not immediately joined to the following consonant: *rude, ruby, ruin*’.
- 170 His advice to his pupils learning French sometimes verges on the comical (1773: 135–6): ‘Therefore our masters are continually plying us with “Ouvrez la bouche, Monsieur, ouvrez la bouche:” we laugh at them for cutting faces, and they in turn charge us with mumbling and whispering. For certainly the French have a greater agility and wider stretch of the cheeks than we, so that you may often look down their throats, as they seem to confess by their phrase “rire à gorge déployée”, laugh with a throat displayed’.
- 171 Sylvester Douglas (Jones 1991: 47) (under his BOUGHT entry) perhaps paints a slightly clearer picture:

In this and similar words, as *sought, thought, fought, drought*. The *ough* has the long open sound of the *o* in *corn*, or of *oa* in *broad*. This sound, if at all, is but just distinguishable from the long broad *a* in *all, malt* or *au* in *Paul*. Some writers on pronunciation consider them as entirely the same. They are generally made to rhyme with such words as *taught*, and *fraught*, but that is no proof that their sound is exactly the same.

- 172 Coote (1788: 23) somewhat enigmatically describes the vowel space in items like *off, aloft, offer, cost, frost, cloth* as ‘pronounced in a short and broad manner, with some degree of aspiration between the *o* and the following consonants’.
- 173 The author of *Vocabulary* catches the essence of the controversy under his HAUNT entry: ‘Mr. Sheridan seems to doubt the pronunciation of this word, by marking it *ha^hnt* or *ha^hnt*, though from his giving precedence to sounding the *a* in *hat* ... it is clear he preferred the pronunciation I have given it. Mr. Walker does not hesitate to sound it as I have’, and adds, ‘This word was in quiet possession of its true sound till a late dramatick piece made its appearance, which, to the surprise of those who had heard the language spoken half a century before, was, by some speakers, called the *Hawnted Tower*. This was certainly the improvement of some critick of the language: for a plain common speaker would have undoubtedly have pronounced the *au*, as in *aunt, jauunt*, &c. and as it had always been pronounced in the *Drummer*, or the *Haunted House*’.
- 174 In which pronunciation, the author of *Vocabulary* observes, he ‘seems to stand alone’.
- 175 Presumably too it is the solemnity of the context which drives Walker’s recommendation for the pronunciation of *bourne*: ‘I have differed from Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Kenrick in the pronunciation of this word. They make it sound as if written *boorn*; but if my memory fail me not, it is a rhyme to *mourn* upon the stage; and Mr. Garrick so pronounced it’.
- 176 *Vocabulary* is on occasion unwilling to accept authoritative views on the alternation with equanimity, appealing to revisions and typographical incompetence on several occasions, as under DIGEST: ‘There are several other words, to which, Mr. Sheridan has given the long sound of the first *i*; but as I find this is not the case in the second edition of his Dictionary, I presume Mr. Walker must refer to the first edition, since the printing of which Mr. Sheridan may have perceived his error and made the alteration’. Again, under SERPIGO, he claims ‘I have marked this word after Mr. Sheridan, who accents it on the second syllable, and makes the *i* long, like *i* in *fight, light*, &c. Mr. Walker marks it in the same manner in his Dictionary; but this seems to be an error of the press, since, in his introduction, he tells us the *i* ought to be pronounced like *e* in *me*’.
- 177 Elphinston too records many instances of undiphthongized labial sounds, although it is difficult to decide from the context in which he presents them whether they represent stigmatized or prestige usage in his contemporary Scots. Under his description of *Dhe interchainge ov open vowels* (1786: 2) we find ‘loose, *louse*, and *louse loose*; brew *brow*, and brow *broo*, like *dhoo dhoo*, or fowl and fowl, *fool* ... chew (Scottishly *chow* widh the diphthong); rendering of the ‘French *dur* hard, hard-harted, sends *door*’ (1786: 167); the Scots ‘equivalent’ of the English phrase *Hwen yoo doo com into’ dhe garden, I hope yoo wil remember to’ pluc* (or, *pic*) *nedher fruit nor flowers*, Elphinston (1786: 124) claims to be: *Hwan ye doo com into’ dhe yaird, I houp ye wol meind, ta poo nadher froot* (u French) *nor floores*; and for *Yoo know wel how to’ dres insinnuacion* as *Ye ken weel hoo to’ butter a hwiting*

- (1786: 122); *Syne driv'n frae hoose and hald* representing *Driven from house and hold* (1786: 83); *I think ye'r oot o' yer judgement for I think yoo ar out ov yoor mind* (1786: 119); under a section dealing with 'Scottish idioms' we find too: *From dhe time ov dispensing, dhe eleven-ours (eleven-ours) or twal-ours (twelv ous) after dhe French iddiom for 11 and 12 o'clock, iz named dhe Scottish luncheon; so dhe four-ours (foar-ours) dhe afternooning or bever: dhe former and latter collacion or refreshment'* (1786: 207) and many others (Rohlfing 1984: 172).
- 178 Douglas records how (Jones 1991: 229): 'The Scotch in general, pronounce this word [touch: C] properly, so as to rhyme to *such, much*, But I know a Scotchman who from the rule of analogy has persuaded himself that it should be pronounced so as to rhyme to *crouch, pouch*: and constantly did pronounce it in that manner. The reader will judge of the ridicule this necessarily brought upon him.'
- 179 He states his principle of vowel typology again at (1784: 60): 'The propriety of speech consists therefore in the preservation of their [the vowels': C] most striking and characteristic differences, and not in multiplying nice distinctions, or blending them confusedly together'.
- 180 This is echoed in Elphinston (1786: 234) under his *U* shut discussion: 'Reppitiscion spoils past, Anticipacion future plezure. Yet here it may be hinted, dhat *U* shut haz indisputabel az indispensabel proxies in a *hwirling world*. If we know dhen dhat *ir* iz vertually *ur*, unles the *r* be repeated by such an irrevocabel spirit az *Pyrrus (Pyrrus)*; or by such a mirrakel az *Myrrha (Myrra)*'. Solomon Lowe (1755: 36) describes the unaccented vowel in the final syllable of items like *general, bedlam, german* as 'an obscure easy sound between *u* and *a*'.
- 181 Walker (1791: 29–30), of course, defines his 'short *e*' interpretation of the *ea* diphthong as 'apt to slide into the short *u*, which is undoubtedly very near the true sound, but not exactly. Thus pronouncing *earl, earth, dearth*, as if written *url, urth, durth*, is a slight deviation from the true sound, which is exactly that of *i* before *r*, followed by another consonant, in *virtue, virgin*; and that is the true sound of the short *e* in *vermin, vernal*, &c.'. Solomon Lowe (1755: 43) gives a rather longer list of *i* in pre-[r] contexts 'sounded as *e*' as in *fir, third, virgin, fir, firkin, irk, kirk, smirk, girl, twirl, whirl, firm, skirmish, chirp, squirt, stirrup, skirt, thirteen, virtue*. While his list with 'sounded as *u*' is markedly shorter: *stir, birch, bird, dirt, flirt, shirt, first, thirt*.
- 182 He does, however, refine his criticisms of the lowering/centring effect, claiming (1786: 257) that '*ir* (or *yr*) haz, for distinccion or descent, been a hiddherto' undisputed representative ov *ur*: unles dhe *r* be repeated, az in *irascional, irradiate, mirror and pyramid ... stir*, wonce az duly seen *stur*: and *myr*, which (in *mur*) iz not dhe prior part ov *Myrrha*. Followed we dhus find it by anny oddher consonant: in *guirl, pirn, firm, chirp; shirt, squirt, spirt, blirt, flirt, dirt, birt, bird, third, and guird*', seemingly arguing that in certain phonetic and orthographic contexts (his syllable division principles) the lowering effect fails.
- 183 Smith (1795: 129) ascribes his vowel 9 – his [e] – to the first syllable in this word, and comments: 'The vulgar always, and even polite people sometimes, pronounce this word as if spelt *sar-vint*. Dr. Kenrick and Mr. Scott pronounce the first syllable with short *u*. I have followed Mr. Sheridan because I think his pronunciation the most correct.'
- 184 Tucker (1773: 3) is almost unique in the period for the emphasis he lays upon sounds found in real discourse situations: 'I have determined ... to listen to the voice of nature, or custom, our second nature, in order to catch and mark down all the minute variations of sound she leads us through in our discourses familiar or solemn, together with the motions of our organs in producing them'. Indeed, he seems quite conscious of what we now recognise as the *Observers Paradox* and the effects of situational formality. Claiming that the national English 'spirit of opposition' makes his task of speech observation difficult, he notes (1773: 40) that this characteristic 'will often beguile a lively young fellow insensibly to eat his words and alter his language: for upon saying "yis" instead of "yes", he has denied the fact, facing me down that he always speaks it "yes"'

and has actually done so during the course of our dispute, but upon occasion afterwards, when not biased by his eagerness to confute me, he has returned to his “yis” as currently as the rest of the world.’

- 185 Smith (1795: 62) waxes quite lyrical on what Walker describes as this ‘monster in grammar – a syllable without a vowel’: ‘For my own part, I am so far from looking upon this combination as a defect in our language, that I regard it as one of those beautiful links, by which the works of art, as well as nature, are joined together; and gradually ascend from what is low and simple, to what is more noble and complicated in its nature. In creation we have the fossil, the vegetable, the animal, the human, the departed spirit, and the angelic nature; with the several almost imperceptible links that may be said to tie them together. In the English language we have the seven following words, of different lengths, or number of syllables. *Soft, ar-ab, change-ab-ly, fash-ion-ab-ly, un-fav-our-ab-ly, un-in-tel-li-gib-ly, un-phil-os-oph-ic-al-ly*; with these other six, which serve as intermediate links to join them together, *soften, ar-able, change-able-ness, fash-ion-able-ness, un-fav-our-able-ness, un-in-tel-i-gible-ness*. These last words are made longer only by the addition of *en*, or *le*, forming a short indistinct sound ... This sound cannot surely be called a full syllable. May we then not denominate the words where such a combination takes place, words of one syllable and a half.’
- 186 Notice too his *TEAT* entry: ‘te³te. I have marked this word after Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Walker; Dr. Kenrick pronounces it with the *e* short, *tit*.’ Here [i] pronunciations exist alongside whatever is meant by *e short*, respelled with an *i*.
- 187 There is considerable comment in the period on the precise phonetic value of the *e* graph in pre-nasal contexts, especially as to whether it is the *e* in *met* or whatever is meant by short *i*. Under his *RINSE* entry, for instance, the author of *Vocabulary*, while recommending the latter, nevertheless points out that the word ‘is often corruptly pronounced as if written *rense*, rhyming with *sense*; but this impropriety is daily losing ground and is now almost confined to the lower order of speakers’. Walker’s observations on the phenomenon are well known, and relate to stress placement considerations. Under his *EMBALM* entry he points to ‘the affinity between long *e* and the short *i*, when immediately followed by the accent’, an affinity which is ‘no where more remarkable than in those words where the *e* is followed by *m* or *n*. This has induced Mr. Sheridan to spell *embrace, endow, &c. imbrace, indow, &c.* and this spelling may, perhaps, sufficiently convey the cursory or colloquial pronunciation; but my observation greatly fails me if correct public speaking does not preserve the *e* in its true sound, when followed by *m* or *n*. The difference is delicate, but, in my opinion, real’. While ever a follower of Sheridan, the author of *Vocabulary* allows for Walker’s view in the case of the item *ENCONIUM* as a result of ‘the slow manner in which it is pronounced’. Walker’s argument rests on the rhetorical distinction between cursory and formal speaking contexts and, while he is happy to allow an [e]/[i] interchange in items like *encamp* and *enchant*, when pronouncing low-frequency words like *enconium* or *encomiast*, he can also argue that to do so ‘is not only a departure from propriety, but from politeness’. He cannot resist a sideswipe at Sheridan by pointing out that ‘it is not a little surprising that Mr. Sheridan should have adopted [the short *i*: CJ]. The truth is, preserving the *e* pure in all words of this form, whether in rapid or deliberate speaking, is a correctness well worthy of attention’. But there seems to have been no general agreement concerning which sound to use in these pre-nasal contexts, as Smith puts it (1795: 135) in his description of *enthroned/inthroned*: ‘These two words are pronounced exactly alike; and whether I have done right in giving them a different explication must be left to others to determine.’ A similar level of contrast exists for the vocalic value for *re-* and *pre-* prefixes, some commentators suggesting [i], others, the short *i*. Perhaps the tendency is best summed up by the author of *Vocabulary* in his *RECEPTACLE* entry: ‘I have marked this word after Mr. Sheridan, with the accent on the first syllable, in which he is supported by Mr. Entick. Dr. Johnston and Dr. Ash lay the stress on the second syllable. Mr. Walker pronounces it re¹s-se¹p-ta¹-kl, or re³s-se¹p-ta¹-kl; the first, he says, is by far the most fashionable, but the second most agreeable to analogy and the ear’.

- 188 Recall too how (1784: 51) describing the item *fascination*, he asserts: ‘the letters *TI* in the last syllable being also printed in italics, it is plain from the same table that they have the usual power of *sh*; so that the word must be pronounced as if it had been printed F¹A¹S-S¹I⁵-N¹A²-SHO¹N’.
- 189 Kenrick (1784: 47) asserts that the [ʃ] sound is ‘familiar to the English by the frequent use of the auxiliaries *shall* and *should*, and the noise they make to frighten away birds or chickens from the grain’.
- 190 Fogg (1796: 162) sees the [dʒ] affricate as derived from ‘*j* consonant’: ‘*J*, *jai* or *jod* was formerly called *i* consonant. It appears to have ben derived from the *i*od (*yod*) of the Hebrews, misspelt by the moderns *jod*, and from the Greek *iota*. Conceiving these to stand for our short *i*, they would express what some call *y* consonant before vowels, as *yeowa* for *Jehovah*, &c. This would by a more forceful utterance, produce a hiss; which with *y* is *zy* or *zh*, and this is the present French sound, as in *jardin* (zhardtin). The blunt British ear could not reject the addition of *d* to the before corrupted sound; and thus it became what it now remains, and cannot be restored, without incurring the contempt bestowed on all supposed affectation’.
- 191 Walker’s (1791: 55) concerns stem from what he sees as analogical ‘anomalies’ in the ‘tendency of *s* to aspiration before a diphthongal sound’. He claims that it is the fact that the [t] in items such as *fountain*, *mountain* is preserved in its ‘true sound’, i.e. remains unfricativized, is a direct consequence of the fact that it belongs to the syllable bearing the main stress: ‘hence the difference between the *x* in *exercise*, and that in *exert*; the former having the accent on it, being pronounced *cks*, as if the word were written *ecksercise*; and the latter without the accent, pronounced *gz*, as if the word were written *egzert*. This analogy leads us immediately to discover the irregularity of *sure*, *sugar*, and their compounds, which are pronounced *shure* and *shugar*, though the accent is on the first syllable, and ought to preserve the *s* without aspiration and a want of attending to this analogy has betrayed Mr. Sheridan into a series of mistakes in the sound of *s* in the words *suicide*, *presume*, *resume*, &c. as if written *shoo-icide*, *pre-zhoom*, *re-zhoom* &c. but if this is the true pronunciation of these words, it may be asked why it is not *suit*, *suitable*, *pursue*, &c. to be pronounced *shoot*, *shoot-able*, *pur-shoo*, &c. If it be answered custom, I own this decides the question at once ... but those who see analogy so openly violated, will be assured of the certainty of the custom before they break through all the laws of language to conform to it’.
- 192 Contemporary Scottish observers are conscious of these developments as well, Barrie (1796: 3–5) asserting that ‘Italic *e* and *i* sound like initial *y*, as in *hideous*, *filial*’, while ‘Italic *ce*, *ci*, *cy*, *si*, and *ti* sound *sh*, as in *ocean*, *social*, *halsyon*, *pension*, *action*; Roman *si* sounds *zh* as in *conclusion*, also Italic *s* before *u*, as in *pleasure*’. McIlquham (1781: 18) produces the customary modification of such a generalization: ‘*T*, when followed by *i* and another vowel, sounds as *sh* as; *nation*, *motion*, *satiat*e, *satiety*; except when it is preceded by *s* or *x*, and derivatives from words ending in *ty*: as *suggestion*, *commixtion*, *mighty*, *mightier*’. The monosyllabic nature of the termination is categorically shown by Drummond’s (1777: 66) extensive lists of words showing *sh* for *c*, *t* and *s*; for instance ‘Words where *c*, *t* sound *sh* before the diphthong *ia*, which sounds *a*¹ [[e]: C]]: *Graciate*, *emaciate*, *affeciate*, *depreciate*, *officiate*, *vitiat*e, *initiate*, *negotiate*’, etc. Likewise, ‘*c t s* sounding *sh* before the diphthong *ie*, which sounds *e*² [[e]: C]] *Ancient*, *omniscient*, *efficient*, *proficient*, etc.’; ‘*c t* sounding *sh* before the triphthong *iou* which sounds *o*² [[o]: C]]: *adventitious*, *audacious*, *atrocious*, *pertinacious*, *malicious*, *fictionous* etc.’. Burn (1766: 13) too seems to hear terminations in *-tion*, *-tial*, etc. as monosyllabic, respelling *condition*, *partial*, *tertian*, *Grecian*, *coercion*, *halcyon*, and *division* as [condishun], [parshal], [tershan], [Greshan], [coershun], [halshun] and [divishun]. However, Fisher (1789: 20) in his list of ‘words of the same sound’ records *Gesture* ‘Carriage’ and *Jester* ‘a merry Fellow’ as homophonous. Elphinston (1786: 45–6) is his customarily expansive self on the issue:

Into’ won absurdity, however, dhe French hav not led us; nor hav dhey led us into’ manny, or ever committed won equal to’ dhat (we hav hiddherto’ practised) ov

presenting before dhe aspirate licquefaccion, *i* occularly (az etymologylogically) open, for *i* really (az auriccularly) shut! True it iz dhat, before *ti* belying *si*, or *ci*, no shutting dubbler cood be vizzibel; an irrefragabel argument, wer dhare no odher, against any such substitucion. Dhus dubbly impossibel iz dhe continuance ov anny such picture az *ambition*, *ambitious*; *propitious*, *propitiate*, *propitiation*; *initial*, *initiate*, *initiation*; or az *Titian*, *Politian*, *Domitian*, or *Domitius*; for (dhe indispensabel az unexcepcionabel) *ambiscion*, *ambiscious*; *propiscious*, *propisciate*, *propisciacion*; *iniscial*, *inisciate*, *inisciacion*; hware dhe preceding *ci* remains dhe simpel sibbilant, atricculating dhe febel vowel. Nor iz *inisciate* more clearlly a word ov three syllabels, *i-nis-ciate*; dhan *inisciacion*, ov five: *i-nis-ci-a-cion*: dhe last being vertually *shate* and *shon*.

- 193 Sheridan (1781: 74 *footnote*) condemns [bw-] pronunciations as archaic: ‘The players say *bwoy*, a pronunciation mentioned by Wallis, but said by him to be neither the constant nor universal’. He goes on to reject any appeal to antiquity: ‘It is not any defence of this mode of pronouncing, to say that it was prevalent formerly. Public speakers should conform to the usage of their times and adapt their words to the ears of the living, not of the dead. The ambition of preserving the tradition of old speech, is in them very much misplaced.’
- 194 Bell (1769: 51) notes [w]-loss in items such as *Alnwick* (Alnick); *Fenwick* (Fe-nick); *Greenwich* (Green-age); *Woolwich* (oolage).
- 195 Tucker’s (1773: 45) comment on what looks like some kind of post-[p]/[k] aspiration is puzzling. Commenting on the cluster simplification of [pt] and [kt] in syllable final position in such words as *dropt* and *fact*, he asserts: ‘It seems extraordinary that we should have words ending with “*ct*”, “*pt*”; one would think one silent stop could not be produced immediately after another; indeed when followed by an open letter as in “prompts”, the “*s*” shows from what stop it took its rise, and at the end of a sentence perhaps when we have done speaking, the muscles of the tongue may relax a moment sooner than the breath ceases to push against the stop, whence issues forth a very faint blowing which might be called the ghost of an “*h*”, or the drawing the lips asunder, or hind part of tongue from the roof of the mouth in order to pass from “*p*”; or “*c*” to “*t*”, may produce a little faintish smack’.
- 196 *Vocabulary* provides (following the *HYSSOP* entry) a list of items for which both Sheridan and Walker agree that [h]-loss never occurs.
- 197 James Douglas (Holmberg 1956: 282) relates the appearance of [h] in pronominal forms to what is probably sentential stressing: ‘The Consonant *H* is not sounded in the Beginning of the Pronouns, HE HER HIM HIS when they come in the middle of a Sentence in Common Discourse unless the Emphasis lies upon them’.
- 198 Such was the contemporary dislike of the uvular *r* sound, that at least one observer saw the potential (when inventing alphabet systems for languages with only oral traditions) for eliminating its use in ‘primitive’ languages. Writing to Zachary MacAuley in 1802 on the subject of a friend’s attempt to create an alphabet for the African Susoo language, the slavery abolitionist Granville Sharpe comments: ‘*The deep guttural sound which the people of Northumberland give to r, and which (says he) is very common in the Susoo country, is expressed by an italic h*’. But I must protest not only against this perversion of the proper sound of *h* to represent a rough *r*, but also against his attempt to represent such a *deep guttural sound* at all. His own example of the *Northumberland Men* demonstrate [*sic*] that it is not at all necessary to do so; because such a ‘*deep guttural sound*’ is certainly neither graceful nor useful in any language and therefore the *Northumberland* sound of *r*, surely deserves not to be carefully inculcated and taught by rule and the more especially as our *Northumberland Men* can sufficiently understand the sound of *r*, when expressed, *without the guttural sound*, by other people. And therefore as all Languages are capable of gradual refinement and Melioration it must certainly be as improper to express the *guttural sound* of *r* in the *Susoo* Language in writing, as it would be to express the *Guttural* sound of the *Northumberland Men* in writing. But if on the

contrary, we should attempt to teach and enforce that “deep guttural sound” by substituting and even perverting a very different and well known character (h) to express it, we should certainly Multiply the *difficulties* as well as the *defects* of the Language.’ This material was pointed out to me by the late Professor Paul Edwards and Dr Christopher Fyfe.

- 199 Murray (1873: 123) observes ‘So regular was this elision of *l* after *a*, with lengthening of the vowel, that the combination became a mere orthoepical device to express the long and broad *a*; and an intrusive *l* is thus found in words where it has no etymological *raison d’être*, as *walter, chalmer, bald, awalk, walkin* for *water, chamber, bad, awake, waken*’. Elphinston records (the still current) [n]~[l] alternation in the item *chimney*, where ‘Vulgar English turns ... *chimney*, into ... *chimley*’ (1786: 19), while Sylvester Douglas states (Jones 1991: 182): ‘This word by many vulgar people both Scotch and English is pronounced (very unaccountably) as if written *chimley*’. Note too Beattie’s (1788: 33) comments on this kind of phenomenon: ‘The liquids L and R are acknowledged by Wallis to be anomalous. He is inclined to derive them from D and N. He mentions a tribe of American Indians adjoining to New England, who cannot articulate R or L; but when they attempt either, fall into N, and instead of *lobster* say *nobsten*: I have met two persons, natives of Scotland, who did the same’. Interestingly too, in his list of ‘Words like in Sound but different in Spelling’, Robertson (1722: 62) has as homophones: *appear/appeal* and *ail/aim*.
- 200 Smith’s observations on NG are not unlike Walker’s, he too emphasizing regional shortcomings in this context (1795: xli): ‘Before *c* (sounded like *k*) and *g* hard, with *k, q, x*, in the same syllable, and when the accent is upon it, it has a nasal sound, usually marked by *ng*, over and above the regular sound of these letters. Thus, for example, *anle, languish, rankle, conquest, lynx*, are pronounced as if spelt *ang-kle, lang-guish, rang-kle, cong-cord* [sic: CJ], *cong-quest, lingx*. In all other cases *n* has its natural sound; Ex. *Singer, bringest, ringing, hanging*. There are some, however, with a provincial dialect, who pronounce these, and such like words, according to the former rule, and as if spelt, *singer, bring-gest, &c.*’ So too Nares (1784: 113–14): ‘In some provincial dialects, this final *g* is more distinctly spoken than it is among correct speakers; which mode of pronunciation sounds as if the *g* were doubled, thus, *sing-g, bring-g.*’ Sylvester Douglas claims that late-eighteenth-century Scotch vernacular usage seems to have been considerably at variance with London norms in this area: ‘In almost all cases where *ng* is found in the middle of a word, the Scotch sound it as in *singer*. Thus they make *finger* and *singer* a perfect rhyme, and *anger* and *hanger*’ (Jones 1991: 163). Again, he claims that in the Scotch vernacular *longer* is pronounced as the pure, London dialect *singer*, i.e. with [ŋ], not [ŋg] (Jones 1991: 207). Grant (1913: 32) avers that such pronunciations ‘are probably derived from Scotch dialect and should be avoided’, yet in other places his observation on a similar phenomenon is neutral: ‘*ng* in the middle of a word is a simple sound – no *g* follows it; hence we say – ‘*sing-l, lang-er, hung-ry*’, just as in Standard English we pronounce ‘*sing-er*’ (Grant and Dixon 1911: xiv). Under his discussion of the LENGTH, LENGTHEN items Sylvester Douglas observes an [ŋ]/[n] contrast. The pure dialect he records as showing [ŋ], but the Scotch ‘and inaccurate speakers among the English sound both words as if written *lenth, strenth*’ (Jones 1991: 205). Elphinston (1786: 15–16) waxes quite lyrical on this Scots characteristic: ‘Dhe Scots must howevver be owned inclinabel to’ suppres dhe guttural after dhe dental, and so to’ simplify away dhe nazal sound. Dhus hear we *Launton* and *Monton* (*Munton*) for *Langton* and *Monkton*; *moarnen* and *murnen*, for *morning* and *moarning*: hwence dhe Scottish Shibboleth ov *lenth* and *strenth*, for *length* and *strength*. Nor can aught proov more sallutary to’ Caledonians, boath for sense and for sound, dhan dhe frequent and attentive reppetition ov dhe awfool cupplet: *Dhe yong diseze, dhat must subdue at length,/Grows widh our growth, and strengthens widh our strength*’. The devocalizing of the nasal in the morphological *ing* to [ŋ] as a Scottish characteristic is also prominent in the contemporary literature: ‘*G ...* is often dropped in the termination *ing*, as *hearing, speaking, working, smelling* whereby

- they are liable to be mistaken for *here in, speak in, work in, smell in'* (McIlquham 1781: 16) and Elphinston's (1786: 41) 'az in dhe addage *A wollen meddher maks a daw dochter*: A willing (or An active) moddher makes a lazy daughter'.
- 201 The extended title of the work includes 'On the Nature of Simple and Combined Sounds; The Manner of their Formation by the Vocal organs; the Minute Varieties which constitute a DEPRAVED OR PROVINCIAL PRONUNCIATION and the Inadequacy of attempting to explain them by means of the *ENGLISH ALPHABET*. The Whole Illustrated and Exemplified by the use of A NEW ORTHOEPICAL ALPHABET OR UNIVERSAL CHARACTER, Which (with a few additions) furnishes an easy Method of explaining every Diversity of Language and Dialect among civilized Nations; to which is added A Minute and Copious Analysis of the Dialect of Bedfordshire. Designed for the Use of provincial Schools'.
- 202 Zettersten notes (1974: xxxvii) how, in the Bedford County Record Office copy of Batchelor's work, there is an insertion which reads: 'The author of this book is unacquainted with the orthoepical and orthographical works of Mr. Elphinston.'
- 203 It should be borne in mind too that the spelling reform movement laid considerable emphasis on the usefulness of new alphabets in educational contexts. *The Reading Reform Association* (whose Honorary Secretary was A.J. Ellis) had the aim of supplying an English orthography which was 'phonetic, that is to represent the sounds of words. The introduction of a few auxiliary letters enables us to make the English alphabet strictly phonetic, and hence to use a phonetic orthography as a first approximation to that in ordinary use. Children are taught to read in this phonetic spelling with ease and pleasure; for its rules are simple and have no exceptions. *It is a proven fact that children can be taught to read the ordinary print in one year by this means as well as in two years on most of the methods generally employed*'.
- 204 'For my own part I do not see the value of a standard orthography, but I do see the value of an orthography which reflects the pronunciation of the writer. Our present standard orthography is simply typographical; but in that word lies a world of meaning. It is a tyrant in possession. It has an army of compositors whom live by it, an army of pedagogues who teach by it, an army of officials who swear by it and denounce any deviation as treason, an army, yea a vast host, who having painfully learned it as children, cling to it as adults, in dread of having to go through the awful process once more, and care not for sacrificing their children to that Moloch, through whose fires themselves had to pass, and which ignorance makes the countersign of respectability' (1869: 623).
- 205 Henry Sweet (1877: 173) saw the introduction of *Visible Speech* alphabets as inappropriate as a consequence of a lack of development in the phonetic sciences in general. Although such alphabets have the ability to show a connection between sound and symbol 'so intimate that the one can never be separated from the other', the system they use is 'dependent on our knowledge of the formation of sounds, and until our knowledge is perfect, which it is as yet far from being, we have no guarantee that further discoveries may not oblige us to modify the details of our symbolisation'.
- 206 Ellis has a long discussion on *Vowel Scales* and *Triangles* in (Ellis 1874: 1284–90).
- 207 A key to the various Ellis and Pitman systems can be found at (1874: 1183).
- 208 'Buchanan was a Scotchman, and his dialect clung to him; Sheridan was an Irishman, teaching English men to speak, and Johnson, from the first, ridiculed the idea of an Irishman teaching Englishmen to speak. Sheridan was an actor, so was Walker, but the latter had the advantage of being an Englishman' (1869: 624).
- 209 Ellis' observations often sound very modern (1874: 1087–8): 'When a stranger goes among the country people, they immediately begin to "speak fine" or in some way accommodate their pronunciation to his, in order to be intelligible, or grow shy and monosyllabic. An attempt to note their utterances would drive many to silence.'
- 210 He lists (1869: 631 *footnote*) advantages such as: renders reading very easy; forms the best introduction to romanic reading; is as easy as correct speaking; renders learning to read even romantically a pleasant task; affords an excellent logical training to a child's

mind; would induce uniformity of pronunciation; and many others. Such arguments were also put forward in support of the introduction into British schools in the 1960s of *The Initial Teaching Alphabet*, which was little more than a reform of the standard orthography along *International Phonetic Alphabet* lines.

- 211 Savage (1833: ii–iii) is very conscious of the difficulties and limitations of the representational system he is using:

Casualty, azure, menagerie are words of a like kind. How shall we shew in writing the sound of these words? Neither *kash, kazh, kajh, kadj* nor any combination will effect the object. The difference of sound in *row* ‘to row a boat’, and *bow* ‘to make obeisance’, it is impossible to define to a foreigner by writing. The tendency of all that has been written on the subject, instead of relieving the difficulty, has shewn beyond all doubt the utter impossibility of remedying the evil, and the perfect impracticability and inutility of all the ingenious schemes that have been laid before the public for that purpose.

Although he makes no explicit statement concerning his arrangement of items, in his section dealing with the ‘Vulgarisms and Improprieties of the English Language’ (1833: 1–89) they appear to be set out under three ‘heads’: (1) Vulgarism; (2) Standard Orthography; (3) Orthoepy (1833: 71 *footnote*):

Vulgarism	Orthography	Orthoepy
The texter is very fine	texture	tecks-tshur

- 212 Not unlike Elphinston, he is sceptical of the value of poetic rhyme as an indicator of good orthoepy: ‘There is nothing more idle than an endeavour to extract from the poetical authors authority for the proper orthoepy of words; they seek harmony from the most palpable discordances’ (1833: xxiii), while ‘besides, times past cannot be permitted to dictate time present’.
- 213 So favoured in Savage’s eyes is the usage of the Metropolis that he is willing to excuse in its speakers, on phonaesthetic grounds, one of the otherwise most stigmatized vulgarisms – [h]-loss and adding:

If the Metropolitans drop a sound so inimical to that softness which constitutes a peculiar beauty in speech, they are justified in so doing upon all the principles of good taste: they reject a harshness to adopt an excellence. A native of London would make no difference in the sound, were he to say ‘she is artless’, or ‘she is heartless’, fully persuaded that the context and spirit of the discourse would exhibit the sense without the possibility of perversion or the chance of misunderstanding. But the Provincials, accustomed to a harsh determination of the voice regard this nonaspiration as the most unvenial of sins. Habituated to the halloo of the chase, to speak against the roaring of the wind, to call from hill to hill, to vociferate in the forests, they acquire a peculiarity of intonation by which they are instantly recognised ... We thus hear of *H-India, h-orthography, h-ell-wide, h-ebony, h-instinct, h-oxen*, lacerating at the same time their own larynx and afflicting the more delicate tympana of their metropolitan auditors by a cacophonous pseudology as ridiculous as it is fairly imagined to be proper.

- 214 Perhaps it is this kind of speaker in this type of speech context which the author of *The Vulgarities of Speech Corrected* refers to as the ‘vulgar genteel’ (1826: 228). In any event it should be stressed that not all authors of prescriptive Pronouncing Dictionaries targeted their work at lower-class speakers, aiming instead for those who had already some status in society and who sought even more. Denying any intention of treating of the ‘grosser barbarisms of the vulgar Scotch jargon’, Sylvester Douglas prefers ‘to treat expressly of the impurities which generally stick with those whose language has already been in a great degree refined from the provincial dross, by frequenting English company, and studying the great masters of the English tongue in their writings’ (Jones 1991: 101).
- 215 It is interesting to notice how Batchelor (1809: 61) appeals to colour terminology in much the same way as Sylvester Douglas especially in those areas of the phonology

where small phonetic differences are involved: ‘some deviations from propriety are extremely slight, and must, of course, be left to description, like the various shades of colours. A sound may, perhaps, in some cases, appear to be an exact medium between two, as green is between blue and yellow; but it is more frequently slightly tinged, as it were, with the surrounding tones, as may be described by a reference to the simple sounds which have been considered, though nothing appears more impracticable, if reliance be placed in the common system of orthoepy, or the use of the regular alphabet be rejected.’

- 216 Ellis too, some 45 years later, seems to suggest a diphthongal output for [ii] (1874: 1098) in word final contexts, the final [ii] vowel in a words like *trustee* showing a ‘tendency’ to what his notation captures as (ii), which may be the first step to (ai).
- 217 Certainly in the very popular *Errors in Pronunciation and Improper Expressions* (1817: 19), a pronunciation like *leetle* for ‘very little’ is condemned.
- 218 Recall (II: 4.1.1. above) how Sheridan also (1780: 14) advocates a short *i* in *courage*, *captain*, *marriage*.
- 219 Savage’s data might also shed some light on this area of the phonology. For instance, he cites as ‘vulgarisms’ forms such as *leetel* ‘little’; *breeches* ‘britches’; *reteena* ‘retina’ and *fameelyar* ‘familiar’, while with with what looks like [i] for [ii] are: *chiscake* ‘cheesecake’; *polis* ‘police’; *ship* ‘sheep’; *tits* ‘teats’.
- 220 By 1836, Smart’s views seem unchanged. He distinguishes two types of high front vowel sound through a graphic contrast in \bar{e} and e^1 , the latter differing ‘from the preceding by its short quantity. The quantity, however, is not always equally short: – in *pedigree*, for instance (pronounced ped – e^1 – gre¹e) it is not so short in the third syllable as in the second. Generally, it is as short as \bar{i} , with which it is identical, except that \bar{i} is essentially short’. We are left to ponder whether ‘essentially short’ has any implications for qualitative contrast, while the possibility of such is perhaps again hinted at in Smart’s (1836: 15) definition of \bar{i} as ‘in theory this is reckoned the same as e^1 and that it does not *much* [italics CJ] differ in quality, may be perceived by the word *counterfe*¹it, in which e^1 in the last syllable shortens itself into \bar{i} ’.
- 221 But notice *ridgment/redgment* are both given as the ‘vulgar’ and prestige forms of this item. The anonymous *Errors of Pronunciation and Improper Expressions* (1817) lists the alternatives: *Chisscake/Cheesecake*; *Imminent/Emminent*; *instid/instead*; *Kittle/kettle*; *set/it*; *sperrits/spirits*.
- 222 ‘Almost every English man pronounces French *il* as English *ill* (*il*), and almost every Frenchman pronounces English *ill* as French *il* (*il*), French *île*, English *eel* being identically (*iiil*)’ (1869: 106). Ellis uses this (*i*) as the second element in his mid-vowel diphthong, in what is presumably [ei].
- 223 Murray (1873: 105) notes how: ‘the Scotch *i* or *y*, in *fyll*, *pyt*, is a very different sound from the English *i* in *fill*, *pit*, to which it answers etymologically. As generally pronounced it appears to be identical with the English *e* in *bless*, *yes*, *yet*, as pronounced in London and the south of England, but not as heard from educated speakers in the North, where (E) is used. In some parts of Scotland, I believe that the “high mixed” and “mid mixed” vowels are used instead, and towards the west and centre, the “mid front” takes its place, *hyll*, *myll*, *mylk*, being pronounced *hull*, *mull*, *mulk* ... as in the well-known *snuff-mull*’.
- 224 Ellis (1869: 106 *footnote*) cites the observations of Dr Young to the effect that ‘When *lip* is lengthened in singing it does not become *leap*’. Ellis observes too how the ‘singing of “still so gently oe’er me stealing” ... becomes (*stiil so dzheentlii ooar mii stiiliq*)’.
- 225 Sweet (1877: 23) again points to the closeness of (*i*) and the high mid [e] vowel (his ‘close e’): ‘It is also important to observe that such pairs as (*i*) and (e), (*u*) and (o), are as near in sound as (*i*) and (*j*), (*u*) and (*u*), which differ only in narrowness and wideness. The explanation is precisely analogous to that of the similarity of (*ih*) and (*y*), namely, that the pitch of (*i*) can be deepened either by widening into (*i*) or lowering to (e), the result being nearly the same in both cases, as shown by the French imitation of English (*i*) by (e). Hence we get the following pairs of words extremely alike in sound, and

- consequently very liable to be confounded (*i*) and (*e*) ...'. Yet, in another place, he likens (*i*) to the low-mid front (*e*): 'It must be noted that the English (*i*) is slightly lower than in the other languages, verging towards (*e*). The unaccented vowel in "pity" seems to be decidedly (*e*) [English *head, end*: CJ]' (1877: 27).
- 226 Walker's (1791) long footnote under the item *tenable* points to substantial variation among polite speakers between 'long' (presumably high front) and short (presumably low-mid) vowels for the stressed vowel in this word and in *tenet*, *tenot* and *tenure*. Walker shows *e*¹ (his [i]) for *leisure*.
- 227 That there was some argument about the prestigious realization of this item can be deduced from Walker's *footnote* to it: 'Mr Sheridan gives the long sound of *e* to the first syllable of this word, contrary to every Dictionary, to analogy, and, I think, to best usage; which, if I am not mistaken, always gives the first syllable of this word the sound of the slender *a*'.
- 228 Batchelor (1809: 63) is, however, somewhat sceptical as to the accuracy of Walker's observations in this instance: 'As to Mr. Walker's fanciful distinctions between the long *a* in *eight* and *fate*, and between the long *e* in *meet* and *meat*, it is unnecessary to remark further, than that they have no other foundation than what was suggested by a different orthography'.
- 229 Perhaps we should be cautious in too readily accepting claims by the likes of Batchelor and Smart that this diphthongization has occurred in any general way in the early part of the century, since the evidence of Ellis and Murray suggests that the change was only becoming well established in the 1870s and later.
- 230 Ellis (1869: 295) sees sixteenth-century diphthongal vowel space in items like *change* and *range* as surviving into nineteenth-century renderings like (ts^heeindzh) and (reeindzh), although his general view (1869: 597) seems to be that the diphthongization of high mid front vowels is, indeed, specifically an eighteenth- and especially nineteenth-century innovation, albeit a 'patchy' one: '(*EE, ee*). This sound was not consciously separated from (*ee*) till the end of the 18. or til 19. Even now many persons do not perceive the difference (*ee, ee*), or, if they do hear the sounds they analyse as (*eei, ee*) ... Some assert that (*ee*) is never pronounced, but only (*eei*), with which they would write the words *mate*, *champagne*, *dahlia*, *pain*, *campaign* ...'.
- 231 Always somewhat reluctantly and defensively (1874: 1315): 'The development of (*éi*) from (*e*), which has taken place in almost received speech, at any rate in the speech received by Mr. Melville Bell ...'.
- 232 Batchelor (1809: 97) also notes instances of what are regional (presumably Midland or Northern) diphthongal forms in this area of the phonology: 'The combined sounds in *pear*, *bane*, &c., appear to consist of the *e* in *bell*, followed by the *a* in *pan*. Thus, if the syllables *may*, *an* (*meyan*) are closely connected by omitting the (*y*), the sound will be similar to that which is heard in *mane* (*mean*), *pear* (*pear*) &c.; but the true pronunciation of these words is spelled, orthoepically, (*meyn*), (*peyr*), &c.' Again (1809: 102–3): '*Sale* and *sail*, *tale* and *tail*. *Male* and *mail*, *pale* and *pail*, are not distinguished in polite conversation, but they are very different sounds in the country; and the persons who would say (*a peal feas*) (*a pale face*), are never heard to say (*a peal ov weatur*) for (*a pail of water*)'.
- 233 Ellis' acceptance of the mid-vowel diphthongizations is ever reluctant: 'Mr. Bell's consistent use of (*éi, óu*) as the only received pronunciation thoroughly disagrees with my own observations, but if orthoepists of repute inculcate such sounds, for which a tendency already exists, their future prevalence is tolerably secured. As to the "correctness" or "impropriety" of such sounds I do not see on what grounds I can offer an opinion.'
- 234 Cooley's description of the long Italian *a* sound (his (*āh*)) – which he claims (perhaps following Walker) is 'sometimes called the middle *a*' – suggests that it is something more front and less round/open than his *ā* or *āw* (as in *ball*, *fall*, etc.): 'In sounding *ā* (*āh*) the tongue is slightly widened, and much advanced toward the teeth, at the same

- time that it is raised toward the palate, by which the space between the two is considerably diminished; the mouth is closed a little more than for \bar{a} ; and the stroke of the voice is less full, and somewhat more advanced along the palate' (1861: xiv).
- 235 On the other hand, the 'brief Italian *a*', his \bar{a} or $\bar{a}h$, is 'merely the faint or obscure sound of long $\bar{a}h$, more less shortened' (1861: xxiii).
- 236 Smart (1810: 62) complains about the provincial mispronunciation of the *hat*, *fat* vowel: 'In the mouths of provincials, both north and south, the present sound mostly acquires too broad an utterance, and with those wholly uneducated, it is often widened to o^2 [his *not*, *got* vowel: CJ]. Thus we hear mo^2n for ma^2n , co^2n for ca^2n . The Scotch often confound it with e^2 ; as ba^2d for be^2d ; he^2bit for ha^2bit '.
- 237 Recall here the observation some forty years previously by the Scot, Sylvester Douglas, under his discussion of the item HAVE to the effect that: 'the *a* has its short open sound as in *hat*, *hard*. The ill educated among the Londoners, and many of the Scotch, make it long and slender as in *save*. This is to be avoided' (Jones 1991: 200).
- 238 Ellis (1869: 74) recounts the anecdote: 'The story that King James I, wishing to bestow the bishopric of Bath or Wells on a west country divine, asked him which he would have, and on being told Bath (Bææth), replied "Baith (bææth) say ye, then baith ye shall hae", and united the bishoprics, although it labours under the historical difficulty of uniting the sees 500 years after their union, serves to shew the near coincidence of the sounds'.
- 239 By 1836 Smart claims that his Italian *a* 'finished with guttural vibration' (the *ar* in *ardent*) 'generally occurs instead of \bar{a} , when followed in the same syllable by *th* or *dh*, as in pa^3th , fa^3th -er: and it used to occur instead of the same short sound in such words as *fast*, *mass*, etc, but the practice as regards the class of words last alluded to, is almost lost in well-bred society. In a few words, however, it still decidedly keeps its place in the situation referred to, as in $galia^3nt$, $commanda^3nt$ ' (1836: vi–vii).
- 240 On his 'long Italian *a*', Cooley (1861: xxi footnote 12) remarks: 'This sound of the *a*, derived from our ancestors, is still retained in America in many words in which it as long been obsolete or vulgar among ourselves. Thus, we have been unable to discover, except by the context, whether an American speaker alluded to his *aunt* or to an *ant*'.
- 241 'My own pronunciation of *man* he [Bell] finds frequently the same as his pronunciation of *men*, so that to him I pronounce *men*, *man* as (men, MEN). To me, (E) is a much deeper sound than (e, e), and is heard in the French *meme*, German *spräche*' (1869: 106).
- 242 'It is a remarkable fact that in Somersetshire where the sound of (ææ) is very common, replacing all sounds of (ææ) in use in the east of England, as (Bææth, bææsket, ææsk, kæærd, hæærd) = *Bath*, *basket*, *ask*, *card*, *hard*, the sound of (aa) or (ɔ) degenerates into (aa) or (aa), as (laa, draa, kaaard) = *law*, *draw*, *cord*' (1869: 67).
- 243 Murray's (1873: 108 footnote) views on dialect variation are enlightening: 'when Englishmen mean to represent broad Scotch vernacular, they write the Scotch pronunciation of *man* as *mon*. Scotchmen, with their Continental idea of short *o*, seeing this spelling read *mon* as (mon) or (mon), and laugh at it as a pitiful caricature of their utterance, due either to Cockney ignorance or to a desire to cast ridicule upon the Scotch. But the English writer has no idea of suggesting the sounds (mon) or (mon) which he would probably express by *morn*, *moan*; what he means is (mɔn), as in his own *on*, the Sc. *A* that he hears, being so much broader than his *a* in *man*, or indeed any English short *o*, that he appreciates it only as a "Scotch variety" of (mɔn), and writes it *mon*'.
- 244 Ellis observes too how there still exists 'a rather rare pronunciation' of the vowel in items like *ask*, *staff*, *command*, *pass* and similar words, where the graph *a* represents his (a), i.e. some kind of [ɔ] sound.
- 245 Eustace (1969: 47) notes how his 'own /æ/ is sometimes mistaken for /e/ on the telephone; and in casual speech, between velars, I have heard myself saying [ɪgʒɛklɪ] exactly. At other times, however, I drop towards the modern [a]. When I hear my /æ/ recorded the effect is a little old-fashioned, but something yet closer sounds yet more so'. Ellis (1869: 71) is quite explicit on this point, insisting that 'English *hat*, *cap*, *mad* were

- never, and are not now, called (HET, KEP, MĒD) ... Indeed, the true sounds (Hæt, kæp, mæd) only differ from the former by the widening of the pharyngeal aperture. My own pronunciation of (æ) has been constantly misunderstood, and considered as (e) or (Ē)'.
 246 Ellis gives a detailed account of the distribution under AF (1869: 567) in his *Value of Letters* section, suggesting the lexical and social factors determining the range of vowel shapes used: 'AF, this combination presents nothing peculiar till 18. or 19. and then only in certain words: *graff, staff, distaff, quaff, aft, after, abaft, haft, shaft, raft, craft, draft, graft, waft* and *laugh, calf, half*, which must be considered to have the same combination. Here usage differs. The common southern pronunciation is (aaf) (a slightly fronted [a] sound: CJ), and even (*aaf*) (probably [a]: CJ) may be heard: the fine, educated northern pronunciation is (æf) ([ɛ]: CJ). Ladies in the South and many educated gentlemen say (ahf) or at most (aahf) (possibly [aa]: CJ). But (af) is also heard. Those who use the finer sounds ridicule the others as vulgar, and write them *larf*, etc., declaring that an *r* is introduced, but this arises from their own omission of (r) and preservation of (aa), in: *barm, starve*, etc.'
- 247 Ellis suggests that in the vowel plus [l] instances, the [l] was first labialized into [lʷ] before vocalization. He claims that although the usual resolution of the resultant diphthong was to (A) – his [ɔ], – in some words, notably *palm* and *calm* to (*palm*) and (*calm*), the output was (*a*), some kind of [a] vowel.
- 248 Ellis seems to emphasize in particular, the wide range of vowel values (mainly ranging between [ɛ] and [a]) tolerated for historical [au] diphthongal vowel space, especially in pre-nasal contexts – with [a], it would appear, lexically constrained (1869: 190): 'Levins, 1570, spells *daunce, glaunce, launce, prauunce, vaunt* ... the pronunciation of such words is still marked by many speakers. And although some, especially ladies, say (dæns, glæns, læns, præns, vænt), others lengthen the vowel at least to (dææns) etc., while many say (dans, glans, lans, prans, vant), and others lengthening this vowel way (daans) etc., and the intermediate sounds (dahns, daahns) are not infrequent; but although some say (vAAnt), no one perhaps will now be heard to say (dAAns, prAAAns).'
- 249 Recall Smart (1836: v): 'At the same time it must be confessed that when *f, s, or n* follow the letter, we are apt, even in London, to give a slight prolongation to the vowel, which would, in other cases, be quite rustic; as in *graft, grass, plant*; which slight prolongation was once universally accompanied by a decidedly broader sound, such as might be signified by *gra³ft, gla³ss, pla³nt'*. The author of *The Vulgarities of Speech Corrected* (1826: 256–7) condemns out of hand the 'Provincial English Vulgarity' occasioned by the use of the 'broader' *a* vowel: 'Another vulgar English pronunciation, and common in London, is that of sounding *a* long, as in the word *far*, instead of a short, as in *man*, in such words as *chawnce* for "chance"; *dawnce* for "dance"; *pawst* for "past"; *bawsket* for "basket"; *awfter* "after"; *awnsver* for "answer"; *plawnt* for "plant"; *mawst* for "mast"; *grawss* for "grass"; *glawss* for "glass"; *cawn't* or *can't* for "cannot", &c.'
- 250 Smart (1810: 152) notes too how foreigners use the open sound *a*⁴, instead of short *o* in nearly all contexts, including *not, top, moth, broth, cloth, tost, lost*, etc.
- 251 Recall too the large range of possible variants in the *caught, cot, quart* types in W. Johnston's 1764 account (p. 215 above).
- 252 Yet Smart (1836: x) states categorically how *r* 'entirely refuses to take *y* after it in the same syllable', so *rue, rude* and *brew* for him are *roo, rood* and *broo*.
- 253 George Jackson (1830) condemns *Tooesday*, while Pegge (1814) rejects *sittiation* 'situation'.
 254 Perhaps this is what is meant by Cooley (1861: xxxiii footnote 107) who, while condemning *dooty, tootor* pronunciations, remarks that 'while avoiding this error, the *u* must not be broken up into *e-oo*, as is often done by affected speakers, who pronounce these words as if spelt *dē-ū'ty, tē-ū'tor'*.
- 255 Even in 1810, Smart (1810: 69) claims that for items like *ocean nation, Persia*: 'It may be observed, that slightly introducing the sound *y*, instead of sinking it, has a neatness in it, where custom has not absolutely decided that it should be sunk', while his opposition to monophthongal long *u* is absolute (1810: 160): 'Perhaps it is necessary to notice

a vulgar pronunciation of the *u*, which takes place in many words, and which may be instanced by *duty*, *lucid*, *tune*, *tube*, *new*; pronounced *dooty*, *loocid*, *toon*, *toob*, *noo*. This very gross error cannot be too carefully avoided'. Recall Ellis' anecdote (1869: 139 *foot-note*): 'In 1849 the present writer published a newspaper called the *Phonetic News*, printed phonetically, and therefore bearing the title (*Fonetik Niuz*). "Why di you write (*niuz*)?" asked a newsvender, "we always call it (*nuuz*)".'

- 256 Although both Ellis and Murray give detailed accounts of Scotch manifestations of long *i*, it is Ellis who seems to suggest the existence there in the late nineteenth century of the modern [œ]/[ɛ] contrast between items like *five* and *Fife*, a phenomenon (rather confusingly) associated with the *Scots Vowel Length Rule* (McMahon 1991: 160–9). The alternation is sensitive to the voicing co-efficient of the syllable-terminating element as well as its morphological status. Ellis (1869: 290–1) observes how 'The *two* sounds, that is the (ei, ei, ɛi, ə'i) series, and the (æi, ai, ai, əhi) series, attributed to the Scotch long *i*, are strongly insisted on by Scotchmen, and in 1848 when I was printing much English in a phonetic form, the Scotch always exclaimed against the use of one sign for the two forms. The late Professor W. Gregory, of Edinburgh, divided the sounds into (ai) and (ai), in which case they answer to the two sounds heard in *Isaiah* in England'. And in a footnote he provides what is at least a partial context for the alternation: '(ai) is used when not followed by a consonant and before the inflexional (d, z), and also before (v, z), but otherwise (əi) is more common'. Perhaps it is a phenomenon like this which Ellis is also highlighting when he comments on the relative length of high front Scots vowels (1874: 1275): 'Hence we hear the Scot say [meet] = (miit), and when he really lengthens, as in *thieves* [theevz] = (thiivz), we almost seem to want an extra sign, as [theevz] = (thiivz)'.
- 257 'This system has corrupted the pronunciation of one of the more famous comedians of the day, who, I observe, whenever *tutor* occurs in his part, pronounces it *tshooter*'.
- 258 Perhaps it is not too fanciful to argue that Smart is adopting the kind of 'mix' terminology we have seen above in the description of what are internally complex vowel sounds: 'the *y* which enters into the composition of *u*¹ is absorbed by (or perhaps it should be said, enters into the composition of) the new formed element'.
- 259 This palatalized/non-palatalized contrast as a signal of 'vulgarity' can be seen too in Savage's treatment of the [s]/[ʃ] and [g]/[dʒ] variables. [ʃ] pronunciations are stigmatized in: *nonplushed*; *caroushel*; *cutlash* 'cutlass'; *hoyshters* 'oysters'; *inshuing* 'ensuing'; *negoshiashun*; *overplush*; *peninshula*; *pershoot* 'pursuit'; *perushal*; *purshued*; *purshuent*; *rashioshination* (standard: *ras-e-os-e-na-shion*); *refushal*; *shizzum* 'schism'; *shuperintended*; *sloshed* 'sluiced'; *substanshit* 'substantiate'. On the other hand, he condemns are [g] for [dʒ] in: *bellygerant* 'belligerent'; *exaggerated*; *ghist* 'just'; *plaggerist* 'plagiarist'; *playgerism* 'plagiarism'.
- 260 That for some speakers the palatalization was below the level of observability on many occasions, is perhaps shown by his anecdote (1874: 1087): 'A dear old friend of mine called me to task many years ago for saying (*lektshu*), she had "never heard" (that's the usual phrase, and this lady, who was far from being pedantic spoke with perfect sincerity, though in obvious error) "any educated person use such a pronunciation; she always said (*lektjuur*) herself". Of course, as we were talking of lectures, in the next sentence she forgot all about orthoepy, and went on calmly and unconsciously talking of (*lektshuz*) herself.'
- 261 Batchelor (1809: 14) characterizes [r] as: 'produced by elevating the tip of the tongue and withdrawing the middle of it from the palate so as to afford a small passage for the breath, which is made to acquire a jarring sound by the tremulous motion which the tongue obtains by the rushing of the air across the end of it'. This 'rough' *r* sound is not found in many English words, he claims (1809: 15), although 'In Scotland, Ireland and several nations on the continent, it is sounded in a very distinct and rough manner'. Smart (1810: 229) recommends a method (albeit somewhat extreme) whereby a correct pronunciation of the rough [r] (one presumably avoiding a uvular type) might best be

- achieved: ‘the student may insert, at one corner of his mouth, a piece of strong gold or silver wire, so bent as to keep that part of the tongue which makes the improper jar at a distance from the palate ... Demosthenes is said to have cured a defect which he had in pronouncing *r* by endeavouring to sound it with pebbles in his mouth.’
- 262 The smooth type he describes as: ‘curling back the tongue til its tip almost points towards the throat, while the sides lean against the gums of the upper side teeth, and leave a passage in the middle for the voice, which, in coming from the throat, slightly agitates the lower part of the tongue’. The rough type is characterized as: ‘placing the tongue nearly in the same position as in pronouncing *s*; but at such a slight distance from the top part of the tongue to jar against them, making a noise which may be compared with the rolling of a drum’. Smart (1810: 229) devotes much space to the pronunciation of this sound, drawing attention to [l]/[r] substitution as well as uvular versions: ‘every good speaker must be able to pronounce the rough *r* with energy. Many persons, from the force of habit, are however, utterly incapable of doing this; but substitute a weak sound, not unlike *l*, or something like *dh*. Others pronounce it with sufficient strength, the jar is formed in the wrong place, by the lower part of the tongue against the palate, not far from the entrance to the throat, while the tip remains inactive. This erroneous formation is sure to produce, at the same time, a disagreeable noise or *burr*’.
- 263 Without further elaboration, Ellis claims (1869: 577) that ‘there is no mention of any such sound as (*ɹ*) till 19., but there is reason to think (*ɹ*) may have existed in 16. and still more that it existed in 17’. In the context of his discussions of regional variation, Ellis is, however, careful to note the observational difficulties involved in assessing the presence or absence of a vocalized syllable final [r] sound. ‘The habit of writing, and moreover the habit of *not* trilling final *r*, nay, the incapability of trilling it, which is often experienced by English men, and, finally, the habit of assuming the long vowel glide in (bæd) to be the representative of an existing *r*, because it is felt to be so different from the stopped-vowel glide in (bəd, bədd), are all so misleading to an English observer, that I frequently mistrust the accounts given to me, thinking them open to these sources of unconscious error. People seem to be afraid of admitting that *r* is not sounded’ (1874: 1328). Notice, however, his admission that: ‘I trill a final *r* so easily and readily myself with the tip of the tongue, that perhaps in avoiding this distinct trill I may run into the contrary extreme in my own speech. Yet whenever I hear an approach to a trill in others, it appears strange’ (1874: 1156).
- 264 Anecdotes like these are still a part of linguistic lore. When a resident of Birmingham is asked whether he should like a *kipper tie*, he responds, ‘yes, with two sugars’.
- 265 Hugh Jones (Sheldon 1938: 238–9) records this interchange as early as 1724: ‘many pronounce (w) instead of (v), as *winegar* for *vinegar*, *wery* for for *very*, only because they begin the Sound of (v) with Lips too open, and so sound (w)’, while Wyld sees evidence for the phenomenon from the fifteenth century (Wyld 1937: 292). Sheridan too (1762: 30) notes the alternations: ‘How easy it would be to change the cockney pronunciation by making use of the proper method! The chief difference lies in the manner of pronouncing the *ve*, or *u* consonant as it is commonly called, and the *w*; which they frequently interchangeably use for each other. Thus they call *veal weal*, *vinegar winegar*. On the other hand they call *winter vinter*, *well vell*. Tho’ the converting the *w* into a *v* is not so common as the changing the *v* into a *w*’.
- 266 It is difficult to know what Batchelor means by his observation (1809: 67) that ‘The consonants (*t* or *d*), like the other mutes, are followed at the end of words by the unaccented *u* (*u*), spoken in a feeble whisper, as *bat* (*batu*), *mud* (*mudu*), though it would be absurd and puerile to use that letter, orthoepically, in such cases, as it is to pronounce it in an audible manner’. Perhaps some kind of obstruent aspiration is what he has in mind.
- 267 ‘both (H, H’) are frequently omitted, by a much more educated class than those who insert (H’), and in the provinces and among persons below the middle class in London,

the use and non-use of (H,H') varies from individual to individual, and has no apparent connection with writing. Hence its pronunciation has become in recent times a sort of social shibboleth' (1869: 598).

- 268 As early as 1722, the Glaswegian James Robertson's *The Ladies Help to Spelling* (Taught to Ladies and Gentlewomen by the Author, in Gibson's Close in the Salt-Mercat, betwixt the Hours of 4. And 6. At Night) gives the following pairs as 'almost equal in sound': *wail/wale/whale; wet/whet/what; way/why/whey; while/wile; whore/woer; white/Wight; who/woe*. These would suggest that (unless we are prepared to accept the widespread use of unetymological [hw] forms in items like *Wight, way*, etc.) that for socially aspirant Glasgow Ladies so stigmatized was the [xw-] cluster, that even [hw-] was perceived as too 'close' to it, leading to the use of an aspirant-free, [w] onset.
- 269 Elphinston (1786: 15–16) waxes quite lyrical on this Scots propensity: 'Dhe Scots must howevver be owned inclinabel to' suppres dhe guttural after dhe dental, and so to' simplify away dhe nazal sound. Dhus hear we *Launton* and *Monton* (*Munton*) for *Langton* and *Monkton*; *moarnen* and *murnen*, for *morning* and *moarning*: hwence dhe Scottish Shibboleth ov *lenth* and *strenth*, for *length* and *strength*. Nor can aught proov more salutory to' Caledonians, boath for sense and for sound, dhan dhe frequent and attentive reppeticion ov dhe awfool cupplet: *Dhe yong diseze, dhat must subdue at length,/Grows widh our growth, and strengthens widh our strength*'.
- 270 Ellis (1874: 1124) also records the modern lower class London interchange of [f]/[θ]: '(nəthin, nəthen, nəfin, nəfen) are not uncommon vulgarisms for *nothing* (nəthiq)', an interchange now apparently spreading in working-class usage in cities as far from the metropolis as Glasgow and Derby (Macafee 1983).

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