6-13-2023 2:45 PM

"That's the Way I Am, Heaven Help Me": The Role of Pronunciation in Billy Bragg's Music

Mary Blake Bonn, *The University of Western Ontario*

Supervisor: Mooney, Kevin, *The University of Western Ontario*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Music

Abstract

British singers do not always sound British. Indeed, it is common—and sometimes expected—for singers in a variety of styles and genres to sing with accents that do not match their speech. The specific phenomenon of British (or more precisely, English) popular musicians singing with Americanized pronunciation is so common that it was the point of departure for an entire subfield of sociolinguistics that is focused on the 'singing accent' in popular music: the pronunciation patterns that singers use in their singing and how these differ from the pronunciation patterns these singers use in speech (e.g., Trudgill 1983). Nevertheless, some English singers do sound distinctly and unapologetically English, and one example is left-wing protest singer Billy Bragg.

This dissertation explores the role of the singing accent in the music of Billy Bragg. The methodology borrows from sociolinguistics and is primarily based on phonetic analysis. Phonetic transcriptions of six songs by Billy Bragg are used to compare his pronunciation features to the norms and expectations associated with categories such as musical style, place of origin, and socioeconomic background. Bragg's pronunciation is considered in three contexts: singing his own original words and music, singing a cover, and singing his own music to words he did not write. These analyses show how pronunciation has served Bragg in creating a musical and public identity, how musical considerations can affect pronunciation (and vice versa), how pronunciation can reinforce and accentuate other musical features, and how pronunciation can be used to create a character.

While pronunciation is a part of vocal music, it has not received extensive attention from music theorists. This dissertation demonstrates the value of using

pronunciation as a starting point for musical analysis, and the value of phonetic analysis as an analytical methodology. It also provides a framework for considering Billy Bragg, a singer who has not been a frequent subject of study by music scholars.

Keywords

Billy Bragg, Pronunciation, Phonetics, Phonology, Singing Accent, Identity Creation, Sociolinguistics, Phonetic Analysis, Regional Accents, Music Theory

Summary for Lay Audience

British singers do not always sound British. Indeed, singers in general often sing with accents that do not match their speech. The specific case of British (or more precisely, English) singers in popular styles using Americanized pronunciation is so common that it is often simply perceived as normal. Nevertheless, some English singers do sound distinctly and unapologetically English, and one example is left-wing protest singer Billy Bragg.

This dissertation explores the role of pronunciation in the music of Billy Bragg. In recent decades, sociolinguists, whose research is focused on the systematic study of language variation, have taken an interest in the pronunciation features singers use in singing: the 'singing accent.' Sociolinguists such as Peter Trudgill (1983) have adapted tools developed for analysing pronunciation in speech in order to analyse the singing accent. Their work primarily uses phonetic and phonological analysis, or the study of individual speech sounds and how they fit together. In my research, I perform phonetic transcriptions of six songs by Billy Bragg and compare his pronunciation features to the norms and expectations associated with categories such as musical style, place of origin, and socioeconomic background. Bragg's pronunciation is considered in three contexts: singing his own original words and music, singing a cover, and singing his own music to words he did not write. These analyses show how pronunciation has served Bragg in creating a musical and public identity, how musical considerations can affect pronunciation (and vice versa), how pronunciation can reinforce and accentuate other musical features, and how pronunciation can be used to create a character.

While pronunciation is a part of vocal music, it has not received extensive attention from music theorists. This dissertation demonstrates the value of using pronunciation as a starting point for musical analysis, and the value of phonetic analysis as an analytical methodology. It also provides a framework for considering Billy Bragg, a singer who has not been a frequent subject of study by music scholars.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all of the faculty and staff at the Don Wright Faculty of Music for your help and guidance throughout my time here. My sincerest gratitude goes to my advisor, Dr. Kevin Mooney. Thank you for giving me the freedom to keep searching until the topic was right, thank you for helping me realize when it was, and thank you for your guidance and feedback at every step of the process. Thank you for doing all this while being Associate Dean (and before that, Department Chair). Thank you also to my second reader, Dr. Jonathan De Souza, for engaging with my work and providing your input. I would also like to thank Dr. Catherine Nolan for your mentorship and for being a role model for women in Music Theory.

Thank you to my fellow graduate students in music at Western for creating a community and for always being a team. I want to thank Chantal Lemire, Kristen Wallentinsen, Adam Roy, Steven Janisse, Martin Ross, April Morris, and all of the other friends I've made at the Don Wright Faculty of Music for being in this together. I am grateful for every walk up the hill to get coffee, every hallway chat, every conference trip, and every pint at the Grad Club; and also for every video chat, every co-working session, every text, and every meme.

Thank you to the friends I have made through my work with the TA union and the Society of Graduate Students, especially Jaime Brenes Reyes, Lola Wong, and Jessica Reilly. Serving the community is never easy, but I know and you know that we did something good together. I would also like to thank the friends I have made through my volunteer work with Citizens' Climate Lobby, especially Cathy Orlando, whose commitment to a better world is second to none and who inspires me every day.

As you come to the end of something, you often start to think about how it began, and my journey with music study started with violin lessons. I would like to thank my first teacher, Collette Wichert, for teaching me to love the instrument while challenging me every week to get better. I would like to thank my university violin teachers (Isabelle Fournier and Nadia Francavilla), and my voice teachers (Beverly Diaz and Monette Gould), and every conductor and choral director I've played or sung under. I would also like to thank Professors Richard Gibson and Roger Castonguay of Université de Moncton, whose music theory and music history courses made me want to pursue graduate studies in music.

Of course, in the end, it's all about family, and I would like to thank my family for everything. Thank you to my husband, Nick Rose, for supporting me in all of my pursuits—even the ones that are hard to understand—and for making a home together. Thank you to my father, John Bonn, the original musician in the family, who took me to see Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe* when I was three and has not stopped encouraging me since. Thank you to my mother, Christina Garvan, who only knows one response to "I can't do it," and that's "Let me help you." Thank you to my siblings, Christian Bonn and Tommy Bonn, and my cousin, Nicholas Monath, for every call, for every sing-along, for every word we invented, and for always being a squad. Thank you to all of the many, many members of my extended family for your support and encouragement and for always being there, and thank you to my in-laws for becoming my new family.

Land Acknowledgement

During my time in the doctoral program, I lived first in London, Ontario, and then in Toronto, Ontario. I acknowledge that London is located on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton Nations, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. I acknowledge that Toronto is located on the traditional territories of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples, and is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands. Both regions are now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. It has been a privilege for me to live here, first by the Medway Creek, then by the Forks of the Thames, and then off the north shore of Lake Ontario. I wish to acknowledge and pay respects to the traditional stewards of this land.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Appendices

Chapter 1

1. Introduction

"Why do you sing with an English accent?"

Singer Phoebe Bridgers asks the above question of her ex, Ryan Adams, in the 2017 song "Motion Sickness." Adams, hailing from North Carolina, presumably has no reason to sound English when singing. Bridgers is therefore insinuating that Adams, along with numerous other faults, is being fake by affecting an accent that is not his own. One could explain any discrepancy between Adams's accents in speech and in song as artistic choice, but such a choice is not neutral. Adopting a new accent in everyday speech for artistic reasons would likely be seen as a strange choice. As a chorister in high school, I was asked a similar question by a friend. My friend asked, "Why does the choir use Latin accents when you sing in Spanish?" She did not mean "Latin" as in "Latin American," but rather Latin, the language. In my choir's case, any "Latin accent" present in our attempt at Spanish likely resulted primarily from a lack of familiarity with Spanish phonology and secondarily from the convention of Italianizing certain vowel and consonant sounds in choral singing. The observations of Phoebe Bridgers and my friend from grade school, different as they may be, point to an important feature of vocal music: words are not always pronounced the same way in song as they are in speech, and listeners notice these differences.

In this dissertation, I will explore the potential of pronunciation as a primary subject of music analysis. Banal as it may seem to observe that people notice the way words are pronounced in vocal music, the significance of pronunciation as a musical feature has not typically been considered self-evident. In music theory, it is tempting to

bracket pronunciation as a feature that is somehow separate from the music. There are several reasons why it feels logical to do so. First, pronunciation is typically considered more of a feature of a musical performance than of a musical work. In addition, it is not easily described using the tools typically found in a music theorist's toolbox. Furthermore, one may feel that pronunciation is simply an incidental sound feature, like the sound of a breath or a page turn, and is not part of the music proper. Each of these is a fair point to make, but none seems to disqualify pronunciation as a musical feature. While pronunciation is typically a feature of musical performances, music theory need not be—and indeed, is not—concerned with works to the exclusion of performances. In addition, while it may be tempting to say that pronunciation is not a feature of a musical work, this is not necessarily true. One may think, for example, of Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* and the conversation about Germanic Latin that invariably goes along with performing it. Regarding the question of whether pronunciation falls within the purview of music theory from a disciplinary standpoint, I believe that music theory's rich tradition of interdisciplinary inquiry is worth mentioning. While words and their sounds, at face value, may fall more within the purview of linguistics, it is fruitful to think of vocal music as a point where music theory and linguistics intersect. Finally, to the question of whether pronunciation is simply an incidental sound feature, I would say that incidental sound features can be interesting objects of musical consideration. More broadly, though, I would ask if there is, in fact, a line delineating what is a musical feature and what is not. One can consider vocal music to be made of words and music. Is there a line between words and music? I would argue that there is not. The words are part of the music, and as such, so is the pronunciation.

In order to explore the analytical potential of pronunciation as a musical parameter, I will focus on the music of folk/punk singer Billy Bragg, who was born in Barking, Essex, United Kingdom, and who generally sings with a fairly strong accent from his home region. I have chosen Billy Bragg because pronunciation is a very salient feature of his music, and as such, pronunciation serves as a helpful tool in considering his music. Likewise, his music serves as a helpful tool in considering pronunciation. From a methodological standpoint, I will borrow liberally from another academic discipline: sociolinguistics. In doing so, I hope both to show the analytical potential that exists in considering pronunciation as a central focus, and to showcase the opportunities for interdisciplinary inquiry that exist with sociolinguistics. I will explain my methodology in detail in Chapter 2. Chapter 2 will also serve as a linguistics primer; I will provide the context necessary for a music scholar without a background in linguistics to understand the remainder of the dissertation. In what follows below, I will survey the related music literature and situate my research therein; provide biographical information on Billy Bragg and explain why he is a fitting case study; and provide brief summaries of the chapters that will follow.

1.1. Pronunciation in Music Research

It is perhaps unsurprising that the scholarly research most directly related to what I propose to do in this dissertation comes from sociolinguistics. Sociolinguists in recent decades have taken an interest in the question of pronunciation in popular music. A foundational text from this body of literature is Peter Trudgill's (1983) "Acts of Conflicting Identity: The Sociolinguistics of British Pop-Song Pronunciation." In this book chapter, Peter Trudgill investigates the question of why the Beatles and the Rolling

Stones neither sound wholly British nor wholly American when they sing. I will present Trudgill's work in detail in Chapter 3, so I will not dwell on it here. I will likewise present other sociolinguistic literature on pronunciation in popular music as it is relevant to the discussion. I choose to present this literature throughout the dissertation and not all at once here because doing so allows me to focus on the specific aspects of each author's work that relate directly to my discussion of Billy Bragg. In addition, this literature, while rich, may not be immediately accessible for an audience without a background in linguistics, and as such, I believe that it is easier to appreciate the relevance and applicability of the literature if it is presented in pieces. Therefore, for the moment, I will focus on music research that deals with pronunciation.

Pronunciation has not typically been a primary focal point in music analysis. As such, there is not a large amount of scholarly literature by music theorists or musicologists that is analytic in focus and that engages specifically with pronunciation as a musical parameter. There is nevertheless a history of music scholarship on pronunciation, which I will explore below. There is also music research that speaks more broadly to questions of voice and vocality, and connects logically with questions about pronunciation. What follows is a survey of the literature on or adjacent to pronunciation from music research, focused primarily on music theory and musicology. It is worth noting that there is music research discussing pronunciation that comes out of performance studies and is specifically targeted at singers, voice teachers, or choir directors. While this is a fruitful area of inquiry, the questions that it asks and responds to are substantially different from the questions that I ask here. As such, I have not included

it in the literature review below.[1] Similarly, I have not included musicological research that is historical in nature and is primarily focused on performance practice.

1.1.1. The Grain of the Voice

While not, strictly speaking, a music scholar, French literary theorist Roland Barthes has written about music and has attracted some degree of interest from music scholars. Notably, his signature contribution to musical discourse was the idea of "the grain of the voice," a concept he explored in his essay of the same name (Barthes 1982b). Grain is related to pronunciation, and as such, it warrants consideration here. Grain is a quality that Barthes finds pleasing in a certain kind of vocal production, exemplified in the singing of Swiss baritone Charles Panzéra. Barthes spends much of the essay discussing what grain means for him, but the oft-quoted definition is the following:

> *Le 'grain,' c'est le corps dans la voix qui chante, dans la main qui écrit, dans le membre qui exécute.*
>
> 'Grain' is the body in the voice that sings, in the hand that writes, in the performing limb.
>
> (Barthes 1982b, 243)[2]

Another frequently quoted line from Barthes's essay is the following:

> *Le 'grain,' ce serait cela : la matérialité du corps parlant sa langue maternelle.*
>
> 'Grain' would be this: the materiality of the body speaking its native language.
>
> (Barthes 1982b, 243)

From the preceding two quotations, one might conclude that Barthes's interest in vocal music is primarily about vocal embodiment. To a certain extent, this is true. Barthes does

---

[1] I do briefly refer to some published work by choral directors in Chapter 4. However, for the most part, my research here situates itself within music research that is analytical in focus.
[2] Here and in what follows, the English translations are mine.

discuss at length the importance of the singer's body and of a listener's imagined embodied experience. However, he also stresses the importance of the French language. For example, in "Music, Voice, Language," which is published like an essay but was originally a speech given in Rome, Barthes (1982a) says the following:

> *Une certaine langue française va mourir : c'est ce que nous entendons dans le chant de Panzéra : c'est le périssable qui brille dans ce chant, d'une façon déchirante.*
>
> A certain French language will die, and that is what we hear in the singing of Panzéra; it is the ephemeral that shines in this singing, in heartbreaking fashion.
>
> (Barthes 1982a, 249)

A particularly interesting example of Barthes talking about language can be found in a radio interview with Claude Maupomé (Barthes 1978).[3] Regarding French art song, Barthes says the following:

> *Ce qui m'importe dans la mélodie française, puisqu'il s'agit de ma langue, c'est précisément la langue, si vous voulez. Je ne dis pas « pas la musique » (bien sûr la musique m'importe) mais, c'est la langue en tant qu'elle est prise en charge par la musique. […] On connaît un chanteur [par] la façon dont il prononce, si vous voulez, tout simplement. Et ce qu'il y a à mon sens de très beau dans l'art de Panzéra, c'est précisément la façon dont il prononce.*
>
> What is important to me about the French *mélodie*, since we're talking about my language, is the language, if you will. I'm not saying "not the music" (of course the music is important to me) but, it's the language as it's taken over by the music. […] We know a singer [by] the way that he pronounces, if you will, quite simply. And what I find very beautiful in the art of Panzéra, is precisely the way that he pronounces.
>
> (Barthes 1978)

---

[3] This interview was part of the series *Le Concert égoïste*. It was recorded on December 12, 1977 and first broadcast on January 15, 1978. Maupomé invited Barthes back in 1979 for the series *Comment l'entendez-vous ?* Jean-Claire Vançon (2018) and Guido Mattia Gallerani (2018) have recently written about these radio interviews.

In this passage, Barthes is talking about what he enjoys about the French *mélodie.* He explains that while the music moves him, it is ultimately the French language as it is taken over by the music that he enjoys the most.[4] He says that we do not come to know singers by their voice *per se*, but by the way in which they pronounce language. He then says that this is exactly what he finds beautiful about Panzéra's art. Later in the interview, he explains that Panzéra's way of pronouncing French has fallen out of fashion:

> *Cette langue française, elle est en train de disparaître, telle que Panzéra la prononçait.*
>
> This French language, as Panzéra pronounced it, is disappearing.
>
> (Barthes 1978)

In other words, according to Barthes, Panzéra's singing preserves a way of singing French that is not often heard anymore. I draw attention to these quotations by Roland Barthes because, as I will discuss pronunciation in vocal music in this dissertation, I believe I should acknowledge that Roland Barthes was asking questions about pronunciation in vocal music fifty years ago. In addition, grain is a multifaceted concept, and has been used in music scholarship in connection to discussions of embodiment, vocal texture/timbre, and the aesthetics of imperfection. However, the parts of Barthes's comments on singing that deal specifically with pronunciation have perhaps been less fully explored by music scholars. While I do not claim to be picking up this particular torch, I do think that in situating my research on pronunciation in music, it is important to include Barthes's thoughts on the matter.

---

[4] I do choose here to translate "*la langue*" as "the language" and not "the tongue" because I think that Barthes is doing more than just making a play on words.

In addition to Barthes's own writings and comments, a few secondary sources dealing specifically with Barthes and music should be mentioned here. Jonathan Dunsby's (2009) article "Roland Barthes and the Grain of Panzéra's Voice" focuses on what Barthes is trying to communicate to his reader in "The Grain of the Voice" using the singing of Charles Panzéra and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. Dunsby carefully considers recordings by the two singers and uses them to elucidate some of what Barthes says in his essay about breath, articulation, and musical phrasing. Dunsby also takes a critical lens to Barthes's essay and makes an important observation. Dunsby points out that Barthes makes a demand of music scholars and music appreciators: he asks us to change our object of investigation (2009, 117). Also worth noting is the volume *Barthes et la musique*, the proceedings from a conference on Roland Barthes and music (Coste and Douche 2018). The essays therein touch on a variety of topics related to Roland Barthes and music.

1.1.2. Experiments in Music

Another context in which one can find pronunciation discussed in music research is in the analysis of repertory that pushes compositional boundaries. In the second half of the twentieth century, many novel musical styles emerged as composers experimented with new techniques. As composition innovated, so did music analysis, so one can find analyses from this period that focus on non-traditional musical features. A notable example is Istvan Anhalt's (1984) "Ligeti's *Nouvelles Aventures*: A small group as a model for composition." The book chapter is an analysis of György Ligeti's *Nouvelles Aventures*, a "story in music" (Anhalt 1984, 41) featuring three vocal soloists as protagonists of a story of sorts. The piece is noteworthy in that the text does not consist of

words, but simply of speech sounds. The sounds—first vowels only, and later vowels and consonants—do not appear to be random, but seem to be organized into a sort of pseudo-language. Nevertheless, they do not contain any semantic meaning. As a result, Anhalt looks to the sounds themselves for meaning. In other words, he treats speech sounds as primary material for musical analysis. He writes about phonetic properties such as the relative openness or closeness of vowels or the place and manner of articulation of consonants.[5] Anhalt's interpretation of Ligeti's text is based on the physical and sonic properties of the 'lyrics.' This treatment of speech sounds as sounds, rather than words, provides an interesting example of speech sounds being considered as part of the musical material and not as something that belongs in a separate category.

1.1.3. On Voices

Another body of work that is important to consider is scholarly literature that engages with questions of voice and vocality. Some music scholars have written about voices from a conceptual or philosophical perspective, while others have focused on the materiality of voices and the individual voices of specific singers. This literature is important to consider because pronunciation is closely connected to discussions of voice and vocality.

In his book chapter "Beyond Words and Music: An Essay on Songfulness," Lawrence Kramer (2001) writes about a quality that he calls "songfulness." In developing the concept of songfulness, Kramer draws on Barthes's grain of the voice. He describes songfulness as "a fusion of vocal and musical utterance" (Kramer 2001, 53) and an

---

[5] I will explain what is meant by openness/closeness of vowels and place/manner of consonant articulation in Chapter 2.

"abundant provision of meaningfulness [that] depends for its effect on a lack of meaning" (51). Songfulness is a kind of meaning that vocal music has by virtue of the social and cultural history and practice of song. Kramer uses a reading of Schubert's "*Heidenröslein*," done through the lens of songfulness, to show his reader what is to be gained by considering art song in this way. Kramer's essay is significant as it highlights some of the ways in which vocal music is different from instrumental music and merits analytical methodologies tailored to these features.

Another notable piece of writing on voice is Jonathan Dunsby's (2004) book *Making Words Sing: Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Song*. At the beginning of the book, Dunsby identifies "vocality" as the particular quality about which he wishes to write. He notably distinguishes his "vocality" from Kramer's "songfulness," and questions the idea put forward by some, including Kramer, that song is somehow "beyond analysis" (Dunsby 2004, 5). Through analyses of vocal music by a variety of nineteenth- and twentieth-century composers, Dunsby considers issues such as text setting, music/text relations, and what text allows music to communicate. Dunsby's book is significant in that it engages with the complexity of text. It is also an example of combining strictly musical analytical techniques with analytical techniques specifically intended to account for text.

Three authors who have weighed in significantly on voice from a conceptual perspective are Simon Frith (1996), Brian Kane (2014), and Edward Cone (1974). In particular, the three authors have all written about the complexity of where voices come from, or seem to come from. I will discuss the ideas presented in their books in more detail in Chapter 5. Others have also written about the complexity of voices, such as

Karen M. Bottge (2005) and Naomi Cumming (2000; 1997a; 1997b). In this dissertation, particularly in Chapter 5, I will show how pronunciation connects to many of the questions that music scholars have asked about the complexity of voices.

More music scholarship that should be mentioned here is scholarship that focuses on pop voices, or on the voice of a specific singer. For example, Kate Heidemann's (2016) *Music Theory Online* article "A System for Describing Vocal Timbre in Popular Music" presents, as the title promises, a system for describing vocal timbre in popular music, and uses two recordings by Aretha Franklin as examples. Steve Rings's (2013) "A Foreign Sound to Your Ear: Bob Dylan Performs 'It's Alright Ma, (I'm Only Bleeding),' 1964–2009" presents a study of Bob Dylan's performances of the song mentioned in the article's title, and vocal production is a central focus of Ring's analyses. Another article focused on particular voices is Lori Burns's (2005) "Feeling the Style: Vocal Gesture and Musical Expression in Billy Holiday, Bessie Smith, and Louis Armstrong." In this dissertation, I will similarly engage with the peculiarities of an individual singer's voice, but will focus specifically on pronunciation. I will show how considering pronunciation can enrich the discussion of a particular singer's voice or vocal quality.

Several scholars have written about voice—or at least, about song—in ways that challenge popularly held notions about disciplinary boundaries. Drew Nobile (2022) recently wrote an article titled "Alanis Morissette's Voices," in which he "shows how voice can serve a fundamentally *structural* role, one at least as powerful as harmony or melody in shaping a song's formal process" (1.1). Nobile is also writing a book to be called *Voicing Form in Rock and Pop, 1991–2020,* which will focus on the structural role

of voices, using Morissette, Beyoncé, and early-2000s indie as case studies.[6] Chantal Lemire's (2021) recent dissertation "Speaking Songs: Music-Analytical Approaches to Spoken Word" asks the question "what if I call this music?" (182) and uses music-analytical techniques to investigate spoken word performance from a musical perspective. Lemire's dissertation serves as an invitation to reconsider the mental boundary that music analysts tend to put up between speech and song. I similarly question this boundary by using analytical techniques created for analysing speech to analyse pronunciation in song. Another scholar who invites music theorists to reconsider our definition of song is Anabel Maler, who writes about signed music (see, e.g., Maler 2013; Harden Mangelsdorf, Listman, and Maler 2021; Maler and Komaniecki 2021).[7] Maler's work encourages music theorists to question our assumptions about what constitutes musical material.[8]

Another scholar encouraging music theorists to reconsider what constitutes musical material in song is Richard Beaudoin. In a very recent article, Beaudoin (2022) writes about the importance of breath in vocal music. The article features an in-depth discussion of a recording of the song sermon "He Never Said a Mumberlin' Word" by American bass-baritone Dashon Burton. Beaudoin's analysis focuses on the importance of audible breaths, and pinpoints one in particular, the "solemnizing breath," as "the

---

[6] See University of Oregon School of Music and Dance, "Drew Nobile, Faculty Profile," https://musicanddance.uoregon.edu/directory/profiles/all/dnobile (accessed April 14, 2023).
[7] Maler is also working on a book on this topic, to be titled *Seeing Voices: Analyzing Sign Language Music*. See University of British Columbia School of Music, "Anabel Maler, Faculty Profile," https://music.ubc.ca/profile/anabel-maler/ (accessed April 17, 2023).
[8] Interestingly, the branch of linguistics known as phonetics, while I will explain in Chapter 2, is not restricted to spoken languages, but includes signed languages as well (Anderson et al. 2022, 3.1). From this perspective, it is worth noting that Maler's work with signs is similar to the work with speech sounds that I present in this dissertation.

narrative denouement" (2022, 2). Beaudoin uses his analysis to make a bigger point: that sounds often reduced away as incidental are, in fact, part of the music and should be treated as such. He opens the article by declaring that "All sounds deserve recognition" (Beaudoin 2022, 1), and throughout his discussion, he encourages music theorists to cast a wide net in deciding what constitutes a musical feature worthy of analysis.[9] I believe that in focusing my analyses on pronunciation, I take Beaudoin up on this invitation.

1.1.4. Three Recent Examples

I mentioned above that pronunciation has not typically been a central point of discussion in analytically-focused music scholarship. While this is true, three recent publications serve as notable exceptions: a book by Victoria Malawey (2020), a video by Noriko Manabe (2022), and a book chapter by Jocelyn Neal (2018).

Victoria Malawey's (2020) book *A Blaze of Light in Every Word* is about analyzing vocal delivery. Malawey begins the book by highlighting the importance of vocal delivery as a feature of vocal music, both as a characteristic feature of individual singers' voices and of specific musical styles and genres. In the book, Malawey seeks to "put forth a comprehensive method for interpreting vocal delivery in popular music" (2020, 4). In order to target vocal quality in her analyses, she uses covers of popular songs as her analytical material. Her method is based on three main considerations: pitch, prosody, and quality. While pronunciation is not Malawey's primary focus, it plays a part in vocal delivery, and as such, it does come up in Malawey's analyses. For example, in

---

[9] Beaudoin is also working on a book on the topic of frequently ignored sounds in musical recordings, to be called *Sounds as They Are*. See Dartmouth College Department of Music, "Richard Beaudoin, Faculty Profile," https://faculty-directory.dartmouth.edu/richard-beaudoin (accessed April 14, 2023).

her chapter on quality, Malawey discusses the question of clarity, and points to the differences in clarity between "oh" vowels and "ah" vowels in several versions of Lady Gaga's "Bad Romance" (2020, 114–8). Similarly, in her chapter on prosody, Malawey compares the consonantal articulation in covers of Justin Timberlake's "Cry Me a River." In addition to providing a rich vocabulary for analysing vocal delivery, Malawey's book provides some examples of the direct role that pronunciation plays in vocal delivery. Combining Malawey's work on vocal delivery with a more detailed exploration of pronunciation in song would likely produce illuminating results.

Noriko Manabe's (2022) "*Abe Road*: Kuwata Keisuke's Beatles Parody" is a video published by *SMT-V*, the Society for Music Theory's videocast journal. In the video, Manabe explores a parody of the Beatles' album *Abbey Road* performed on a Japanese television show by singer Kuwata Keisuke. In his parody cover of the album, Kuwata replaced the original English lyrics with Japanese lyrics criticizing the late Abe Shinzo, who was Prime Minister of Japan at the time. However, the Japanese lyrics sound eerily similar to the original English lyrics. Kuwata accomplished this feat by, as Manabe describes it, "linguistic sleight of hand." He selected Japanese sounds that resembled the English sounds they were replacing. The differences between English and Japanese presented several challenges in accomplishing this feat. First, while the rhythm of spoken English is based on syllables, that of spoken Japanese is based on morae.[10] Second, certain consonant and vowel sounds that exist in English do not exist in Japanese, and

[10] A mora is a timing unit in phonology. While the timing unit of spoken English is the syllable, that of Japanese is the mora. While English syllables vary in length, Japanese morae tend to be shorter than English syllables and tend not to vary in length.

vice versa.[11] In her video, Manabe discusses how Kuwata manipulated sounds to accomplish the *tour de force* that is *Abe Road*. Manabe explores details such as how Kuwata used Japanese sounds that were similar in mode of articulation and/or place of articulation to the English sounds they were replacing in order to create the uncanny effect of the final product.[12] Manabe's video is significant because she goes into detail about how Kuwata created *Abe Road* by exploiting the phonology of English and Japanese. The video is an example of the rich contribution that words can make to a musical work or performance simply by virtue of the way that they are pronounced.

Jocelyn Neal's (2018) book chapter "The Twang Factor in Country Music" explores the history of the word "twang" as it relates to country music. She begins by considering the etymology of the term and its most common definition: "the ringing sound of a plucked string" (Neal 2018, 3).[13] She then considers the more specific definition of twang used in connection with country music. While certain instrumental sounds, such as that of the steel guitar, are associated with country twang, the term is also used to describe a specific vocal quality.

> Twang in a vocal utterance is generally a combination of a tight throat, a nasal whine, and diction that features a Southern drawl, a rural Southern accent, or another marked regional accent that carries associations of rurality and working-class identity.
>
> (Neal 2018, 8)

---

[11] For example, Japanese has the consonant sound [ɸ], which does not exist in English, so Kuwata pairs it with its closest English equivalent, [f]. Similarly, the English [θ] and [ð] do not exist in Japanese, so Kuwata uses [s] and [z].

[12] In the next chapter, in which I present my methodology, I will explain what is meant by terms such as "mode of articulation" and "place of articulation."

[13] The electronic copy of the chapter used here is not paginated in the same way as the print book.

Neal writes of some of the specific pronunciation features associated with twang; "*night* becomes 'naht'" and "*hell* becomes hay-yell," for example (2018, 8). Neal observes that the use of Southern and rural Midwest accents in country music began simply as a result of singers' backgrounds. Ultimately, though, specific accents became associated with the country sound. In addition, some of the specific features of these accents, such as the aforementioned vowel sounds, influenced the style of vocal production that has come to be known as twang. Neal's chapter discusses how a pronunciation style can become associated with a musical style, a subject that I will discuss as well. It also speaks more broadly to the idea that pronunciation features are part of musical sound.

I would like to draw attention to one statement in particular that Neal makes about pronunciation. On pronunciation and vocal character, Neal writes the following:

> Just as we recognize an instrument by its characteristic frequency response, we recognize the character of a voice—and thus its associations of cultural identity and genre—by the diction and pronunciation of words.
>
> (Neal 2018, 8)

This statement strikes me because of how similar it is to what Roland Barthes (1978) says in the above-mentioned radio interview with Claude Maupomé about the role of pronunciation in how we come to know, recognize, and appreciate a singer's voice. The idea that we come to know a singer—or their voice—through their pronunciation is compelling. Pronunciation plays a role in creating the sound of a singer's voice and the overall sound of their music. In the chapters that follow, I investigate the roles that pronunciation plays in musical sound and musical understanding. To do so, I have chosen to focus on an artist in whose music pronunciation is especially prominent because he has a distinctive pronunciation style: Billy Bragg.

1.2. On Billy Bragg

Born Stephen William Bragg in Barking, Essex, United Kingdom in 1957, Bragg is primarily known as a protest singer. His musical style is generally associated primarily with folk music and secondarily with punk. While not all of his music is explicitly political, Bragg is well known for his left-wing activism, and significantly incorporates his activism into his live performances. He first came to prominence in the 1980s, and, notably, performed for striking workers during the British coal miners' strike of 1984–5. Bragg still performs at union rallies to this day; for example, on October 12, 2022, while on tour in the United States and Canada, he made a layover between concerts in Troy, New York and Toronto, Ontario to join and perform for Starbucks workers striking outside of a store in Elmwood, New York (Disalvo 2022). In addition to his music and activist work—or perhaps more accurately, as part of it—Bragg is also a published author. His published books are an autobiographical exploration of national identity (2006), a reflection on his song lyrics (2015), a volume on skiffle (2017), and his most recent work *The Three Dimensions of Freedom* (2019).

Billy Bragg is a useful case study for this investigation because pronunciation is a very salient feature of his characteristic sound. Bragg speaks with an accent that bears the mark of a working-class upbringing in Southeast England. As will be discussed in detail later, British popular musicians frequently sing with accents that are notably different than their spoken accents. Bragg, on the other hand, unapologetically sings with an accent that strongly resembles his spoken accent. As such, his music presents an opportunity to consider pronunciation, a musical feature that has received limited attention from music scholars. However, I believe that the opportunity in question goes two ways; not only is

Billy Bragg useful for considering pronunciation in music, but pronunciation in music is useful for considering Billy Bragg. Just as pronunciation has received limited attention from music scholars, so too has Billy Bragg. Because pronunciation is such a noticeable part of Bragg's sound, it is a useful lens through which to consider some of his music in detail.

The main source of scholarly literature on Billy Bragg from someone whose primary academic discipline is music is the work of ethnomusicologist Aileen Dillane. Dillane's collaborations with sociologist Martin Power (Dillane and Power 2020; Power and Dillane 2019) focus on protest music and situating Bragg's work in a social and ideological context. A very recent master's thesis also addresses Bragg's work: that of musicologist Moira de Kok (2022) at Utrecht University, "Sounds of Solidarity: Music in the 1984–85 Miners' Strike." In general, scholarly writing on Billy Bragg comes from scholars who are not primarily music scholars. Martin Power (2018) has one single-authored publication on Billy Bragg, titled "Aesthetics of Resistance: Billy Bragg, ideology, and the longevity of song as social protest." Kieran Cashell (2011), whose primary academic discipline is Critical and Contextual Studies, and Mark Willhardt (2006), whose primary academic discipline is English, have both written pieces situating Bragg within a folk tradition. Willhardt (2006) situates Bragg within the folk tradition associated with Woody Guthrie, and discusses the idea of authenticity in Bragg's music. Cashell (2011) situates Bragg within the British folk tradition and writes about Bragg's creation of a public musical identity as part of his broader activist vocation. Jeremy Tranmer (2009), another scholar whose primary discipline is English, has written about Bragg's activist work in "Reclaiming England for the Left: The Case of Billy Bragg." A

recent master's thesis discusses Bragg's work: Jake Boarder's (2015) "Pop, Politics and the Music Press during the Age of Thatcher," written for a degree in History at Northumbria University. In addition, geographers Edward Jackiewicz and James Craine (Jackiewicz and Craine 2009) have written about Billy Bragg's performances through the lens of the spaces these events create. Overall, while there has been scholarly work written about Bragg, his reception among music scholars has been limited. In this dissertation, I intend to add to the scholarly conversation on Bragg by taking a music-analytical approach in considering his work and by focusing on pronunciation, a framework that is particularly well suited to his music.

1.3. Chapter Summaries and Closing Thoughts

In this introductory chapter, I have presented pronunciation and the music of Billy Bragg as the dissertation's dual areas of focus and have surveyed relevant literature.

Chapter 2 will function both as a linguistics primer and as a detailed presentation of my methodology. I have chosen to separate this material from the introductory chapter because my methodology borrows heavily from linguistics. As this is a music theory dissertation, my primary audience is music theorists, so I do not expect my reader to have a background in linguistics. As such, in presenting my methodology, I also wish to provide the necessary background information on the techniques that I will be using. It is my hope that this chapter will enable a music theorist without any background in linguistics to read the remainder of the dissertation.

Chapter 3 will be the first of three case studies, and will focus in particular on the role of pronunciation in Billy Bragg's creation of a musical identity. I will explore the significance of identity creation in Bragg's music and activist work, and how his singing

accent has aided him in creating his public identity. In doing so, I will draw on the work of sociolinguists who have written about pronunciation in popular music, such as Peter Trudgill (1983), mentioned above. The analyses in the chapter will consist of three songs considered through the lenses of pronunciation and identity creation: "Between the Wars," "To Have and to Have Not," and "The Home Front." These songs are well suited to a discussion of pronunciation and identity creation because they are all from early in Bragg's career, they all have music and lyrics written by Bragg, and they are all examples of Bragg singing in a working-class accent from Southeast England.

In Chapter 4, I will consider Bragg's pronunciation in a different context: singing a cover. In Bragg's cover of "The Tracks of My Tears" by Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, features of his characteristic singing accent are present, but to a lesser extent than in the songs considered previously. In addition, certain Americanized features are present in Bragg's pronunciation in the cover. In the chapter, I analyze Bragg's pronunciation in "The Tracks of My Tears," drawing on his comments about this cover from an interview with journalist John Lewis (2006). Ultimately, "The Tracks of My Tears" serves as an opportunity to consider the intratextual (or specifically musical) functions that pronunciation can have, as contrasted with the extratextual (or social) functions explored in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 5, I will further interrogate pronunciation's extratextual and intratextual functions in Bragg's singing. The chapter's analyses will focus on "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key" and "The Unwelcome Guest," both tracks from the 1998 album *Mermaid Avenue*. The tracks in question have music written by Billy Bragg but words written by Woody Guthrie, and hence are neither purely original songs nor covers.

I will discuss how pronunciation in these tracks relates to the creation of a character and to the complexity of where voices seem to come from as theorized by Edward Cone (1974), Simon Frith (1996), and Brian Kane (2014). I will also discuss mixed accents, how pronunciation interacts with other musical features, and how pronunciation can act as a sonic signature.

In Chapter 6, I will present my closing thoughts and consider areas for further research.

In this dissertation, I intend to contribute to the field of music theory by demonstrating the analytical viability of pronunciation as a musical parameter analogous to melody, harmony, rhythm, or timbre. I also intend to elucidate the utility of pronunciation as a framework for considering the music of an artist that has not been widely considered by music theorists, namely, Billy Bragg. I also hope to inspire general reflection on the role of pronunciation in musical understanding. Finally, I hope to provide the vocabulary and background information for interested music theorists to use principles and techniques from sociolinguistics in music analysis. I believe that there are other musicians and repertories that could be fruitfully considered through the lens of pronunciation. Music theory has a rich tradition of interdisciplinary research, and with my use of techniques from sociolinguistics, I wish to contribute to this tradition.

Chapter 2

2. Methodology

This chapter will serve two functions. First, I will provide some background information about the methodology and vocabulary from linguistics that I will use in the analyses in the succeeding chapters.[14] Then, I will present the methodology that I will use for these analyses. In introducing the tools from linguistics that I intend to use, I will begin by presenting the concepts of phonetics and phonology. I will then explain how linguists typically describe and categorize vowel and consonant sounds and will briefly explain how the International Phonetic Alphabet works. Next, I will introduce some basic concepts from sociolinguistics, and will discuss some of the research that sociolinguists have done in recent decades on pronunciation in popular music. After providing this context, I will present my methodology. It is worth noting that in this chapter and those that follow, I will use the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to represent specific vowel and consonant sounds that I am discussing. Where possible, I will attempt to use supplementary verbal descriptions. However, it is useful to be able to make sense of the

[14] For a reader desiring further general information about the field of linguistics, I recommend *Essentials of Linguistics*, 2nd edition, an Open Education Resource developed by a group of Canadian Professors of Linguistics (Anderson et al. 2022). The book is primarily intended as an undergraduate-level textbook, but also serves as a useful introduction to the discipline. I will make reference to this volume in defining several key concepts below. Another text to which I will make frequent reference is *Accents of English* by J.C. Wells (1982a; 1982b; 1982c). Wells's three-part book—which is not a textbook, but rather an attempt at a comprehensive account of how English is spoken—provides useful information about the different varieties of English that exist and vocabulary for discussing them. Volumes that give an overview of the field of sociolinguistics include *Sociolinguistics: A Reader* (Coupland and Jaworski 1997), *The Cambridge Handbook of Sociolinguistics* (Mesthrie 2011), and *The Oxford Handbook of Sociolinguistics* (Bayley, Cameron, and Lucas 2013).

IPA symbols that I use. A helpful tool for this purpose is the Interactive IPA Chart provided by the International Phonetic Association (2018).[15]

2.1. Phonetics and Phonology: Overview

Linguistics, as an academic discipline, focuses on the systematic study of how human language operates. Because my research focuses on pronunciation, I draw on methodologies from linguistics. In this section, I will provide an overview of phonetics and phonology: the study of the physical reality of language and the study of how the physical units of language fit together. I provide this overview because in my dissertation research, I use vocabulary and conventions from phonetics and phonology.

The word *phonetics* refers to the study of a language's physical reality. Because I will be writing about spoken (or more precisely, sung) language in this dissertation, this physical reality has to do with how speech sounds are produced and heard.[16] Studying a spoken language's physical reality means considering the physiology of producing speech sounds and the acoustical properties of these speech sounds. A useful concept in phonetics is the *phone*, which is a basic unit of linguistically significant sound (Anderson et al. 2022, 3.2). For example, the word "cat" has three phones: [k], [æ], and [t]. In the case of *cat*, the three phones conveniently correspond to the three letters in the word.

---

[15] The interactive IPA chart can be found at https://www.internationalphoneticassociation.org/IPAcharts/inter_chart_2018/IPA_2018.html.

[16] Note that despite what one might assume from the etymology of the word "phonetics," it is not exclusively the study of speech sounds. A language's physical reality depends on its modality, that is, how the language is produced and how it is articulated and perceived. Spoken English is an example of a vocal-auditory language because it is articulated using the vocal tract and typically perceived using hearing. American Sign Language (ASL), on the other hand, is manual-visual; it is articulated using mainly the hands and arms and typically perceived using vision. The study of phonetics does not exclude non-auditory languages like ASL (Anderson et al. 2022, 3.1). Because my dissertation will focus on spoken and sung English, I will focus only on vocal-auditory phonetics, but I do wish to acknowledge that phonetics is not limited to a single language modality.

However, this is not always the case. For example, the word “ship” also contains three phones: [ʃ], [ɪ], and [p]. In this case, the letters ‹sh› correspond to a single sound. Generally, phones are described in terms of how and where they are articulated in the mouth. Phones divide into the two familiar categories of vowels and consonants. I will go into detail about the systems for describing vowels and consonants below.

Phonology is the study of how the basic physical units of language fit together and how we make sense of them (Anderson et al. 2022, 4.1). The combination of sounds to form intelligible words is not random. Let us consider the word “cat” again. We could rearrange the phones in this word to form other words, such as “act” [ækt] or “tack” [tæk]. However, if we try to rearrange the phones in the order [k], [t], [æ], to give “cta” [ktæ], we find ourselves with something that is not a word and is very unnatural for an English speaker to try to pronounce. This is because the sounds in a given language follow a logic (or grammar) that speakers of that language follow, whether they are aware of it or not. Let us consider another word, one that many in Southern Ontario, Canada frequently append to the ends of sentences: “right.” If you watch a newscast in which the presenter speaks a fairly generic variety of North American English, they will likely say the word “right” somewhat like [raɪt]. However, someone from the American South who speaks with what we tend to think of as a Southern accent may say [raːt], sounding almost like the word “rat” with a longer vowel. On the other hand, many from Southern Ontario who end their sentences with the word “right” say something like [rəɪt], which can sound a bit like the word “rate.” We do not generally get confused by this word, though. It is typically clear to an English speaker that [raɪt], [raːt], and [rəɪt] are all the same word. It is therefore also clear to us that the vowels in these realizations—[aɪ], [aː], and [əɪ]—

somehow all represent the same thing. This "thing" is called a *phoneme*, and it is a basic organizational unit of language. While the three vowel sounds mentioned previously represent three different phones, we understand them to stand for the same underlying sound, /aɪ/ (or what we might have learned in elementary school as "long ‹i›"). This underlying /aɪ/ is an example of a phoneme. A phoneme, is , in other words, a conceptual linguistic object that can have multiple physical expressions (Anderson et al. 2022, 4.1). Another example worth considering is how a typical North American English speaker might say the letter ‹h› in the words "ham" and "humour." Normally, the ‹h› in "ham" is pronounced as [h] and the ‹h› in "humour" as [ç] (the consonant sound in the German word "*ich*"). We do not tend to think of these initial ‹h› sounds as being different, though. This is because they are essentially the same thing in our phonological grammar: realizations of the phoneme /h/. Two or more sounds that stand for the same phoneme are called *allophones*. In English, [h] and [ç] are allophones of the phoneme /h/. In German, on the other hand, they are not. German speakers are unlikely to have any difficulty distinguishing between these two phones, while an English speaker may repeatedly say the words "ham" and "humour" and still not hear the two different /h/ sounds. On the other hand, many who do not speak English as a first language have trouble producing the sound [θ] as in "think," and even have trouble hearing it as a separate sound from, for example, [s] as in "sink." For an English speaker, however, this distinction is clear; /θ/ and /s/ are separate phonemes. Phonology is thus language-specific, as are phonemes.

I have provided an introduction to phonetics because my research in this dissertation is based primarily on phonetic analysis. I have provided an introduction to phonology because my analyses are essentially organized phonologically. Much of my

research methodology is based on the different ways of pronouncing different English phonemes, and the associations that these differences have with factors such as region, class, musical style, and the constraints of musical performance. A familiarity with the basic principles of phonetics and phonology is therefore useful for understanding these analyses.

2.2. Consonants, Vowels, and the International Phonetic Alphabet

In what follows, I will expand upon the previous section's introduction to phonetics and phonology by explaining the conventions that linguists use to describe consonant sounds and vowel sounds. In doing so, I will also introduce the International Phonetic Alphabet.

For the purposes of understanding this dissertation, a deep knowledge of how linguists classify and describe consonants is not necessary. This is in part because my focus is on accents in sung English, and the accents of English are distinct from each other more in their vowels than in their consonants (Wells 1982a, 125–6). In addition, the differences in consonants that exist in different varieties of English are likely easier to hear and consider with just the understanding of English phonology that one has by speaking English than the analogous vowel differences. Nevertheless, a general understanding of how consonants are described and classified is useful for approaching the material.

Consonant sounds are described according to three parameters: where they are produced, how they are produced, and whether or not the vocal folds are engaged. Where a consonant is produced in the vocal tract is referred to as its *place of articulation*. The possible articulators are all parts of the human vocal tract. A consonant is produced by an

active articulator moving to a *passive articulator*. The constriction caused by these articulators causes a consonant sound to be produced when air passes through (Anderson et al. 2022, 3.3). While one can describe a consonant's place of articulation by identifying the active and passive articulator, in practice, one generally only needs to use an adjective that captures the necessary information. In some cases, this adjective only includes the name of the passive articulator because only one active/passive combination is possible. In other cases, the adjective captures both articulators. The following table, from *Essentials of Linguistics*, 2nd edition, shows the adjectives used to identify place of articulation, along with the active and passive articulators associated with them (Anderson et al. 2022, 3.3).

Figure 2.1. The adjectives used to identify places of consonant articulation, with the associated active and passive articulators, as shown in *Essentials of Linguistics*, 2nd edition (Anderson et al. 2022, 3.3).

place of articulation	*active articulator*	*passive articulator*
bilabial	lower lip	upper lip
labiodental	lower lip	upper teeth
dental / interdental	tongue blade	upper teeth
alveolar	tongue tip	alveolar ridge
postalveolar	tongue blade	postalveolar region
retroflex	underside of the tongue tip	postalveolar region
palatal	tongue front and back	hard palate
velar	tongue back	velum
uvular	tongue back	uvula
pharyngeal	tongue root	pharyngeal wall

epiglottal	epiglottis	pharyngeal wall
glottal[17]	—	—

The second parameter used to describe and classify consonant sounds is whether or not they are voiced. For some consonant sounds, the vocal folds are engaged while air is passing through the vocal tract to create the consonant. For others, air passes through the vocal tract without the engagement of the vocal folds. These two kinds of consonants are referred to as voiced and unvoiced, respectively. If you pronounce [s] (the sound made by the letter ‹s› in English) and then [z] (the sound made by the letter ‹z› in English), you may notice vibration in the mouth or throat that is present with [z] but not with [s]. This is because [z] is voiced, while [s] is unvoiced. You can observe the same phenomenon with [f] (the sound made by the letter ‹f› in English) and [v] (the sound made by the letter ‹v› in English); [v] is voiced, while [f] is unvoiced.

The third parameter used to describe and classify consonant sounds is their *manner of articulation*, that is, the way that the air passes through the vocal tract. A *stop* occurs when the active and passive articulator fully block the airflow. A common kind of stop in English is the *plosive*. Examples include [p], [b], [t], and [d], the sounds made by ‹p›, ‹b›, ‹t›, and ‹d› in English. Another type of stop is the *nasal stop*, which is a stop that involves airflow through the nasal cavity. Examples include [m] and [n], the sounds associated with the corresponding letters in English. The [s], [z], [f], and [v] sounds mentioned above are all examples of *fricatives*. Fricatives result from the articulators being very close but not touching as air passes through. Other examples include [θ] and

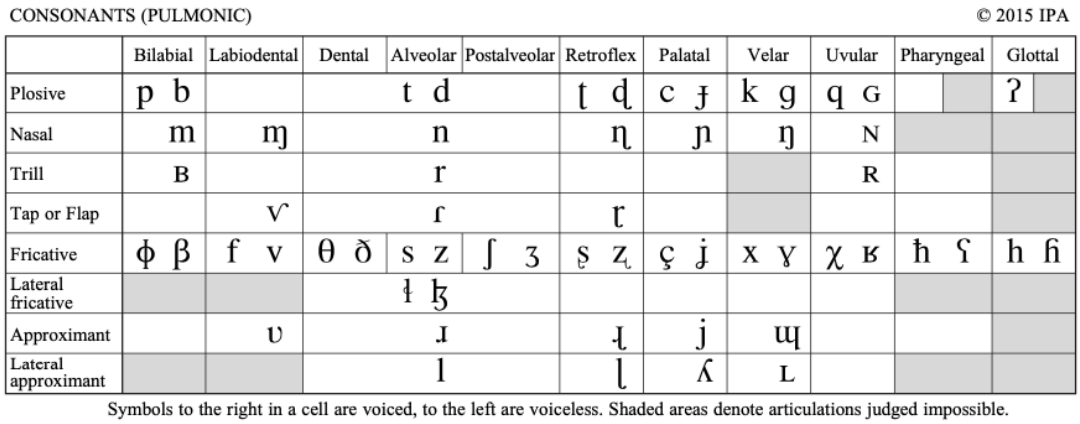
[17] The “glottal” place of articulation refers to the vocal chords themselves so it does not, strictly speaking, involve an active articulator acting on a passive articulator (see Anderson et al. 2022, 3.3).

[ð], the unvoiced and voiced sounds made by ‹th› in English. Another manner of articulation is the *approximant*, in which the active and passive articulators are farther apart than in a fricative. Examples of approximants are [ɹ] and [l], the sounds represented by ‹r› and ‹l› in English. Another manner of articulation worth mentioning in discussing English phonology is the *tap*, which is essentially a very brief stop. An example is [ɾ], the sound represented by a single ‹r› in Spanish and Italian. Notably, this sound exists in North American English as an allophone of /t/. One more manner of articulation that exists in English is the *affricate*, which is a consonant that has the onset of a plosive and the release of a fricative. Examples are [t͡ʃ] and [d͡ʒ], the sounds represented by ‹ch› and ‹j› in English.

While a detailed knowledge of consonant places of articulation, manners of articulation, and voicedness is, as mentioned earlier, not necessary to understand the research presented in this dissertation, a general familiarity with these concepts is useful for understanding the International Phonetic Alphabet consonant chart. Figure 2.2 below shows the pulmonic consonants.[18]

[18] Pulmonic, in this case, means that these consonants are created by air being pushed out of the lungs by the ribs and diaphragm, which is the most common mechanism of consonant production. Therefore, one can essentially think of the pulmonic consonants as the “basic” consonants. There are also consonants classified as non-pulmonic, such as clicks, which appear in a separate table. These consonants are not used in English. In addition, there are consonants that appear in a third table because they have more than one place of articulation. Of these consonants, only [w] and sometimes [ʍ] (explained below) are needed for transcribing English.

Figure 2.2. The pulmonic consonants of the International Phonetic Alphabet (International Phonetic Association 2015).[19]



CONSONANTS (PULMONIC) © 2015 IPA

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d		ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k g	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ		n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ		
Trill	ʙ			r					ʀ		
Tap or Flap		ⱱ		ɾ		ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative				ɬ ɮ							
Approximant		ʋ		ɹ		ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant				l		ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			

Symbols to the right in a cell are voiced, to the left are voiceless. Shaded areas denote articulations judged impossible.

The table is organized by manner of articulation, place of articulation, and voicedness. Place of articulation appears on the x-axis, with manner on the y-axis. Voicedness is shown by presenting consonants with the same place and manner of articulation as an ordered pair, with the unvoiced version on the left and the voiced version on the right.[20] For example, [p] and [b] appear where they do because they are both bilabial plosives, with [p] being unvoiced and [b] being voiced. Similarly, [s] and [z] appear where they do because they are both alveolar fricatives, with [s] being unvoiced and [z] being voiced. Where a cell is filled in white but no symbol is shown, this means that the sound is physically possible but does not have its own symbol; these sounds are generally either unattested in any known language or are relatively uncommon. Where a cell is filled in grey, this means that the theoretical sound is not physically possible.[21] Most English

---

[19] IPA Chart, http://www.internationalphoneticassociation.org/content/ipa-chart, available under a Creative Commons Attribution-Sharealike 3.0 Unported License. Copyright © 2015 International Phonetic Association.

[20] One can also think of voicedness as being shown on a z-axis that has been rotated for representation in two-dimensional space.

[21] The dental, alveolar, and postalveolar places of articulation appear as one wide column for all manners of articulation except for fricatives. This is because in European languages—on which the IPA was largely

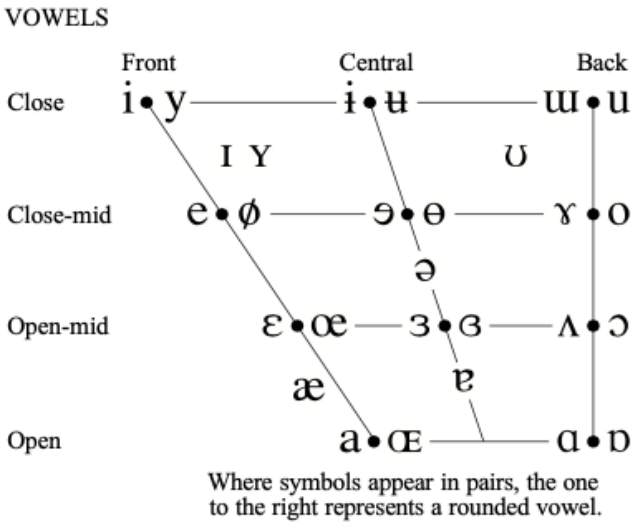
consonant sounds can be represented using the symbols in this table. Affricates do not appear in this table because they need to be formed by joining two of these symbols, such as [t͡ʃ] to represent the sound made by ‹ch› in English. In addition, [w] and [ʍ], the sounds represented by ‹w› and (if applicable) ‹wh› in English appear in a separate table because they have two places of articulation. A much higher level of specificity can be achieved using diacritics. I will make only very limited use of diacritics in my transcriptions, so I will not discuss them here.

Vowel sounds are more central than consonant sounds to the discussion here because accents of English tend to differ from each other more in their vowels than their consonants. Vowels are described and categorized according to several parameters relating to where and how they are produced: height, backness, roundedness, and (to a lesser extent) tenseness. Height and backness refer to where a vowel is produced in the mouth. As is the case with consonants, it is useful to consider the human vocal tract. To place consonants, we need to consider the full vocal tract. With vowels, on the other hand, we only need to consider the mouth. While we can describe where consonants are produced by referring to specific articulators within the vocal tract, we cannot do this with vowels because vowels, by their very nature, involve the vocal tract being unobstructed. As such, we have to be more geographic about situating where each vowel is produced in the mouth. In order to do this, we plot vowels on the IPA vowel chart.

---

based—there is some variability in where these consonants can be articulated without creating a contrastive difference.

Figure 2.3. The vowels of the International Phonetic Alphabet (International Phonetic Association 2015).[22]



This vowel chart is, essentially, a map of the human mouth in profile. We can imagine a head superimposed on this diagram, with the face on the left side and the back of the head on the right. The x-axis shows the words *front*, *central*, and *back*. These words refer to a vowel's *backness*, or how far back in the mouth it is produced. The y-axis shows the words *close*, *close-mid*, *open-mid*, and *open*. These words refer to a vowel's *height*, or how high or low in the mouth it is produced. The words *high*, *mid*, and *low* are also frequently used to refer to vowel height. Note that the x-axis is longer at the top of the diagram than at the bottom. This is because the human jaw is hinged. As such, we cannot produce a vowel all the way at the front of the mouth when the mouth is fully open. Note that height and backness are each divided into discrete regions. These regions are convenient for being able to talk about vowels. It is important to note, however, that

[22] IPA Chart, http://www.internationalphoneticassociation.org/content/ipa-chart, available under a Creative Commons Attribution-Sharealike 3.0 Unported License. Copyright © 2015 International Phonetic Association.

vowel height and vowel backness can vary within these regions. As such, vowel sounds tend to exist on continua, as opposed to consonants, which tend to operate more as discrete categories (Anderson et al. 2022, 3.5).[23]

The third quality used to describe and categorize vowels is *roundedness*. This refers to whether or not the lips are rounded when producing a given vowel. The vowel [u] in the word "goose" is made with rounded lips, while the vowel [i] in the word "geese" is made with unrounded lips. English has rounded and unrounded vowels, but tends not to make phonemic contrast strictly based on lip-rounding. For example, in "goose" and "geese," the vowels differ not only in roundedness, but also in backness, with [u] being back and [i] being front. Other languages, however, have clearer cases of roundedness being the only distinguishing feature between two phonemes. For example, in French, [y] as in "*vu*" (the past participle of the verb "to see") and [i] as in "*vie*" (the word for "life") have the same height and backness, and contrast only in roundedness. As with voicedness in consonants, roundedness in vowels is shown on the IPA chart by presenting unrounded and rounded vowels of the same height and backness as ordered pairs, with the unrounded one shown on the left and the rounded one on the right. Vowels that appear alone are all unrounded except for [ʊ], which is rounded.

The fourth quality that can be used to describe and categorize vowels in English is tenseness. *Tenseness* refers to the difference between [i] as in "beat" and [ɪ] as in "bit." On the IPA chart, the former is described as "close front unrounded" while the latter is described as "near-close near-front unrounded." However, the difference in height and

[23] Note that this distinction is not absolute. The spaces between symbols on the consonant chart are not quanta and the vowel chart is not necessarily an uninterrupted plane.

backness is very small. The most easily perceptible difference between them is the degree of tension in the mouth when pronouncing them. As such, [i] as in "beat" is often described as *tense* and [ɪ] as in "bit" is often described as *lax*. The vowels [u] as in "wooed" and [ʊ] as in "wood" have the same tense/lax relationship. English contains one other pair of tense and lax vowels: [e] and [ɛ]. This distinction can be somewhat hard to hear in isolation as in many varieties of English, [e] does not tend to occur on its own without being part of a diphthong. An approximation of this distinction for a North American English speaker is the difference between [eɪ] as in "late" and [ɛ] as in "let." While [e] and [ɛ] on their own do not generally create phonemic contrast in English, the difference between the two vowel sounds is useful to consider because while some varieties use a more lax vowel like [ɛ] in the word "let," others use a tenser vowel like [e].

The IPA vowel chart presents a number of vowel symbols plotted by height and backness, and situated in ordered pairs to show roundedness where applicable. The chart does not directly show tenseness. This chart does not show every vowel sound that can exist. One can use diacritics to show other qualities. For example, one would use diacritics to show nasality in transcribing French or Portuguese. One can also use diacritics to achieve a higher level of specificity in height and backness than the available symbols provide. I use only two vowel symbols with diacritics in my transcriptions: [ɝ] and [ɚ], which represent the /r/-coloured vowels in the typical American pronunciations of the words "nurse" and "miner."

The International Phonetic Alphabet, while ostensibly an objective and exact way to transcribe the sounds of speech and song, is in fact more imprecise and subject to

interpretation than one might think. A recent Doctor of Musical Arts monograph by Jorge Luiz Alves Trabanco Filho (2021) is titled "Re-imagining Brazilian Portuguese IPA: A practical guide utilizing Paulo Maron's new opera *Lampião*," and as its title promises, the monograph presents a new system for representing Brazilian Portuguese for singers using IPA. This monograph is not evidence of the incompetence of everybody who has ever tried to represent Brazilian Portuguese using IPA. Rather, it is evidence of the extent to which an IPA transcription is an interpretation.

IPA transcriptions can either be *phonemic* or *phonetic*. In a phonemic transcription, one symbol represents each phoneme. For example, the phoneme /t/ has several different realizations in English. It can be a [t] sound, but it can also be an alveolar tap, [ɾ], or a glottal stop, [ʔ]. In a phonemic transcription, one would represent all instances of the phoneme /t/ as /t/.[24] In a phonetic transcription, on the other hand, one would likely differentiate between [t], [ɾ], and [ʔ]. However, one can be more precise than that. In English, /t/ in certain word positions is actually aspirated, meaning that a small puff of air is released while the consonant is said. One can represent the aspiration thus: [tʰ]. However, this superscript is often not included in English transcription unless it is a specific point of discussion because the aspiration is a standard feature in English phonology and one may feel that it clutters the transcription. In addition, when the consonant /t/ appears at the end of a word, it is often not fully released. One could represent this using diacritics, but may choose not to as the diacritics similarly risk

[24] There are, however, still choices to be made in a phonemic transcription. For example, in the first chapter of his *Accents of English 1: An Introduction*, John C. Wells (1982a, 60–4) writes about the velar nasal, [ŋ], the sound represented by ‹ng› in English. Wells explains that there is a case to be made for considering this sound as its own phoneme and a case to be made for considering it simply as an allophone of /n/. Therefore, one can see that even in a phonemic transcription, a certain degree of interpretation is required.

complicating the transcription. In brief, phonetic transcriptions vary in how precise they are. Depending on one's goals, one may choose to transcribe more broadly or more narrowly.

In essence, a phonetic transcription is an interpretation. IPA allows for a higher degree of precision than, for example, transcribing using the Roman script and English phonology. Phonetic transcription is, nevertheless, a kind of analysis, and is not a purely objective visual representation of sonic reality.

2.3. Sociolinguistics: Overview

In the previous two sections, I have introduced some of the techniques and vocabulary that linguists use to describe and categorize the physical sounds of language. In this section, I will show how one can apply these techniques. Specifically, I will introduce some basic concepts from variationist sociolinguistics. This is a useful frame of reference to have because in my research, I draw heavily on methodologies from sociolinguistic research.

Sociolinguistics is, broadly, the study of how society influences language. Variationist sociolinguistics focuses in particular on how language changes depending on its context (Anderson et al. 2022, 10.1). Factors such as geographic background, socioeconomic status, age, and gender expression can all affect how individuals or groups of people use language. For example, people from different regions who speak the same language often speak with noticeably different accents. Similarly, people from the same region but from different socioeconomic backgrounds often speak with different accents. Sociolinguistic variation is not restricted to accent. It also looks at other linguistic elements, such as word use. For example, Canadian grandparents may refer to an

upholstered piece of furniture that seats multiple people as a "chesterfield," but their grandchildren are unlikely to use this word.[25] Sociolinguists look at linguistic variation and consider the intersecting social factors that contribute to this variation.

Interviews are a common method of data collection. They are often used, for example, to collect samples of the speech from a given region (Anderson et al. 2022, 10.5). However, interviews are not the only possible method of data collection. Sociolinguistic research on popular music, for example, tends to use recorded music as the starting point for gathering data. The methods of analysing this data tend to be quantitative. As a social science discipline, linguistics is focused on taking a systematic approach to human language. In analysing a data set, researchers often focus on a specific linguistic variable and account fully for all of the instances of that variable. For example, one might look at whether or not a speaker or singer pronounces final /r/, and count all the instances in which they do pronounce final /r/, as well as all the instances in which they do not. This process can, naturally, be repeated with multiple variables. This research methodology, in the aggregate, gives information about language variation.

One useful tool in undertaking this kind of research is the *reference accent*. To discuss the features of a given accent, it is helpful to have one or more reference accents from the same language with which to compare it. Because of the high degree of variability in spoken language, it is not possible to have a well-documented account of every variety of that language that exists. This is where reference accents are useful; a reference accent provides a point of comparison that one can use to discuss a specific

---

[25] While the term "Chesterfield sofa" is used elsewhere to refer to a specific kind of sofa, use of "chesterfield" as a generic term for a sofa seems mostly restricted to older Canadians (Barber 2020).

variety of the language or an individual's speech. The two most fundamental reference accents in English are called *Received Pronunciation* and *General American*. These two reference accents have been described in detail by John Wells (1982a; 1982b; 1982c) in his three-volume series *Accents of English*. A more recent volume that discusses these reference accents, as well as many more varieties of English, is *A Handbook of Varieties of English* (Kortmann and Schneider 2004). Received Pronunciation (RP) is the accent associated with the upper class and upper-middle class in England. It has several other nicknames, including "BBC English" and "The Queen's English" (or "The King's English").[26] While RP has strong class associations, it does not have strong regional associations beyond "England," or at most, "Southern England." It has historically held a degree of prestige in England—and indeed, in many other places where English is spoken—and has therefore had a high degree of influence on spoken English. Because of its lack of a specific regional association and its historic association with cultivated speech, RP is particularly well-suited to serving as a reference accent; it is well documented, it is widespread within England, and it has exerted a high degree of influence on other varieties of English speech. There is no North American accent with precisely the same status and function as RP, but there is General American (GenAm), "a term that has been applied to the two-thirds of the American population who do not have a recognizably local accent" (Wells 1982a, 118). GenAm is, in other words, a collection of features commonly found in North American English that are generally perceived as unmarked and not strongly associated with a specific region within North America. It is a

[26] It is worth noting that no name for this accent is perfect and any of them can run the risk of being misleading (Wells 1982a, 117).

well-documented collection of features associated with North American speech, and as such, it can be used in many of the same ways that RP can.

Another useful tool is the *lexical set*, a concept developed by John C. Wells (1982a) for comparing different varieties of spoken English. Lexical sets are groups of words or syllables that tend to share the same vowel sound and also share the same vowel change from one accent to another. Sharing the same vowel sound initially seems rather self-explanatory. For example, the words "flip," "grill," and "risk" are all part of the KIT lexical set because they have the same vowel sound as the word "kit." Similarly, the word "step" and the word "weather" both belong to the DRESS lexical set.[27] However, Wells developed his lexical sets to account not only for words that share the same vowel, but also to account for words that share the same vowel change. To understand this component, it is useful to consider the BATH and TRAP lexical sets. The words "trap" and "bath" are generally pronounced with the same vowel in North America, [æ]. In Southern England, however, "trap" is pronounced with [æ] while "bath" is pronounced with [ɑː]. The words "cat," "hang," and "shall" are all generally pronounced with the [æ] vowel in Southern England and in North America. Unsurprisingly, these words all belong to the TRAP lexical set. On the other hand, the words "staff," "raft," and "gasp" are generally pronounced with [æ] in North America and [ɑː] in Southern England; these words all belong to the BATH lexical set. It therefore makes sense for BATH words and TRAP words to be in separate categories. Likewise, RP speakers tend to pronounce words in the BATH lexical set and words in the START lexical set with the same vowel. However, GenAm speakers say the words in these sets very differently because they pronounce an /r/ in

[27] The second syllable in "weather" can be considered separately.

START words but not in BATH words. It therefore makes sense for START and BATH to be separate lexical sets, just as TRAP and BATH are. Because different varieties of spoken English differ greatly in their vowel sounds, lexical sets are a useful tool for comparing different varieties of spoken (or sung) English.[28]

One more concept about which it is useful to have a basic understanding is *indexicality*. Indexicality is a concept in semiotics. It is the idea that a sign can point to a meaning (Anderson et al. 2022, 10.6). In sociolinguistics, these signs are language features. For example, if somebody uses the word "yinz," one might assume that they are from the area surrounding Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in the United States. However, it is not necessarily self-evident that the word "yinz" has any association with this region (Western Pennsylvania). "Yinz" is, after all, just one of many colloquial plural versions of the word "you." The association with Western Pennsylvania comes from the fact that "yinz" is used in the region and this usage is relatively well known. As a result, many associate the word "yinz" with a social meaning—in this case, place—that has nothing to do with its semantic meaning. The process by which language features can thus come to index social information is known as *enregisterment* (Anderson et al. 2022, 10.6).

Finally, there are several frameworks that sociolinguists use to interpret the reasons for linguistic variation. One that is particularly worth considering in the context of singing is the *audience design framework*, developed by Allan Bell (1984). The general idea of the framework is that speakers tend to adjust their speech as a function of whom they are speaking to. This framework is especially useful in considering song

---

[28] Wells's system is based primarily on RP and GenAm, so his lexical sets are based on the differences between these two reference accents. However, one can introduce other lexical sets as necessary to describe other varieties of English. I will use Wells's lexical sets because they are sufficient for my analyses.

because song is often explicitly a performance, and as such, singers—and musicians in general—frequently make decisions based on their audience.

2.4. Sociolinguists on Pronunciation in Popular Music

In what follows, I will build on my introduction to the basic ideas of sociolinguistics by introducing the specific question of popular music pronunciation in sociolinguistics. I will provide a brief overview of this area of inquiry and will discuss the methodologies commonly seen in this kind of research.

Linguists in recent decades have taken an interest in approaching pronunciation in popular music using variationist sociolinguists. The first notable example is Peter Trudgill (1983), who wrote a book chapter examining why English artists from the late 1950s and early 1960s do not sound wholly English when they sing. Trudgill focuses in particular on the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. He identifies six pronunciation features that are features of American speech but not English speech, but that are especially prevalent in the singing of the English artists he is writing about. I will consider Trudgill's work in more detail in the following chapter. Other linguists have built on Trudgill's work, including Paul Simpson (1999). More recent publications have built upon the work of Trudgill and Simpson. Examples include Karen Duchaj's article "Which 'There' is There? George Harrison's Dialect Shifting in His Late 1960s Songs" (2020) and Monika Konert-Panek's writings "Americanisation versus Cockney Stylisation in Amy Winehouse's Singing Accent" (2017a), "Overshooting Americanisation. Accent Stylisation in Pop Singing—Acoustic Properties of the BATH and TRAP Vowels in Focus" (2017b), and "Singing Accent Americanisation in the Light of Frequency Effects: LOT Unrounding and PRICE Monophtongisation in Focus"

(2018). English singers who sound less English when they sing than when they speak have been a point of interest in this subdiscipline, but other accents have been considered as well. For example, Lisa Jansen and Michael Westphal have written about dialect mixing and the use of Caribbean English in Rihanna's music (Jansen and Westphal 2017).

To see the kind of methodology that is typical in sociolinguistic research on popular music, let us consider an example. Renae O'Hanlon (2006) has conducted a study on pronunciation in Australian hip hop. O'Hanlon's investigation starts from the observation that popular musicians in Australia tend to employ a degree of Americanization in their pronunciation and that this Americanization is less prevalent among Australian Hip Hop artists. To test this idea, O'Hanlon performs a corpus study using 30 Australian Hip Hop songs and 30 Australian songs from a mix of rock, pop, alternative, and punk. To compare these two corpora, O'Hanlon identifies five phonological variables, that is, five pronunciation features that have an American version and an Australian version.[29] Shown below as Figure 2.4 is a reproduction of O'Hanlon's table showing these five variables.

Figure 2.4. Renae O'Hanlon's (2006, 196) Table 1, showing the five phonological variables she uses to measure the degree of Americanized pronunciation in Australian Hip Hop.

Variable	**Variants**
(A) vowel, found in words like *can't, path, rather*	[a] – Standard AustE [æ] – AM variant

[29] Technically, O'Hanlon's five variables are slightly more complicated than this. There are three overall accent categories within Australian English: Standard, Broad, and Cultivated. As shown in Figure 2.4, in one of O'Hanlon's phonological variables, the (AY) vowel, she accounts for differences between Broad and Standard Australian English. In another phonological variable, the (OE) vowel, she accounts for overlap between American English and the Cultivated variant of Australian English. Overall, one can think of O'Hanlon's variables as five sounds that each have an Australian version and an American version, with some modification to account for variation within Australian English.

(R) post vocalic, non prevocalic, found in words like *car, bird, hear*	∅ – Standard AustE [r] – AM variant
(AY) vowel, found in words like *right, like, climb*	[aɪ] – Standard AustE [ɔɪ] – Broad AustE [a] – AM variant
(O) vowel, found in words like *got, body, song*	[ɒ] – Standard AustE [a] – AM variant
(OE) vowel, found in words like *boat, no, groan*	[ʌʊ] – Broad AustE [oʊ] – AM/cultivated variant

In conducting her corpus study, O'Hanlon counts every instance of each of these five vowel or consonant sounds, and classifies them as either the Australian version or the American version.[30] She presents her results as a tabulation of this quantitative data. In presenting her data, O'Hanlon shows the total number of times that each phonological variable appears in each corpus and the number of times that each phonological variable shows up as the American variant. She then uses these numbers to calculate the percentage of instances of each variable that are the American variant. O'Hanlon's data shows that the incidence of the American versions of the variables in non-Hip Hop songs is higher than in Hip Hop songs. In her discussion section, O'Hanlon goes into detail about what else can be gleaned from this data and about some more specific trends that she observed in her data collection. She also discusses the sociocultural ramifications of these observations.

[30] O'Hanlon mentions that she has collected her data by listening to each of the songs herself and classifying the phonological variables based on her own judgement; she acknowledges the limitations of this approach (2006, 197).

I have summarized O'Hanlon's (2006) study here because it provides a clear example of a typical methodological framework used in sociolinguistics. She has selected two corpora to compare, identified a series of phonological variables, and performed a quantitative tabulation of the appearances of these variables within her corpora. She has then situated this data within a sociocultural context and considered what information one can extrapolate from the data.

Methodologies used in sociolinguistic research on popular music can differ from the O'Hanlon (2006) example I have discussed both in corpus selection and in method of data collection. A study by Andy Gibson (2011) on New Zealand comedy duo Flight of the Conchords provides an example of a slightly different approach. Flight of the Conchords is known for a television show in which their comedy work includes song parody. Gibson selects three songs to focus his study on: "Bowie," in which the duo parodies David Bowie, "Inner City Pressure" in which the duo parodies the Pet Shop Boys, and "Business Time" in which the duo parodies Barry White. To gather his data, Gibson uses these three songs, some footage of the duo speaking normally, some footage of one member of the duo imitating David Bowie's speech, two songs by David Bowie, recordings of David Bowie speaking in two interviews, two songs by the Pet Shop boys, one recording of the Pet Shop Boys' Neil Tennant speaking in an interview, and two Barry White songs. This corpus is smaller than O'Hanlon's, so the data it generates may be less easy to generalize, but its heterogeneity allows for a wide range of ideas and observations to be presented in the discussion section. Gibson analyses this data by focusing on four vowel sounds in particular, a very similar approach to O'Hanlon's five variables. Interestingly, though, Gibson does not rely on his ears to make judgements

about how the tokens manifest, but rather uses Praat, a computer software program for speech analysis. While Praat offers certain advantages over strictly auditory analysis, it also has disadvantages for analyzing music, including complications caused by the instrumental accompaniment and by layered vocals (Gibson 2011, 610–1). It is also possible for sociolinguistic research to use a sample size as small as one song. For example, Lisa Jansen and Michael Westphal (Jansen and Westphal 2017) restrict their analysis to Rihanna's "Work" because that particular song is the subject of the article.

2.5. My Methodology

The research presented in this dissertation focuses on analyses of six songs by Billy Bragg, with five of them being studio recordings and one being a live performance. I have used methodologies seen in sociolinguistic research as a starting point for the research in this dissertation. However, I have made certain modifications that are perhaps more in line with musical analysis than with sociolinguistic research.

In the course of the dissertation, I present detailed analyses of six songs. I have selected these songs because they showcase Billy Bragg's sung pronunciation in different contexts. I have performed a phonetic transcription of each of the six songs. In performing these transcriptions, I have relied on careful listening and my own aural judgement.[31] I have not selected a defined set of phonological variables to consider in each analysis. Rather, in considering each song, I have selected one or more reference accents against which to compare Billy Bragg's pronunciation therein. For example, in

[31] In deciding which transcription conventions to use, I drew on Carley and Mees (2021a; 2021b) and Wells (1982a; 1994).

Chapter 3, I have used Received Pronunciation (RP) as a baseline of sorts.[32] In each of the three songs analysed in this chapter, I have flagged each instance of a phoneme realized in a way that is not consistent with RP. I have then considered whether each of these deviations is more likely indicative of the working-class and middle-class dialects of Southeast England, of Americanization, or of neither of these influences. In Chapters 4 and 5, I have analysed songs in which Bragg sings in more of a clearly mixed accent, and as such, I have expanded the number of reference accents at my disposal in those chapters. Specifically, I have used a kind of typical pop song pronunciation described by Peter Trudgill (1983), General American (GenAm), and Billy Bragg's own accent as points of reference to trace the different kinds of pronunciation he uses in his singing.

My approach is advantageous in that it allows me to consider every syllable of the text, but it is less quantitative than the corpus studies frequently seen in sociolinguistic research. While my methodology draws heavily from sociolinguistics, my research is, at its core, music theory. As such, it is useful to consider it in comparison to the various methods of musical analysis common in music theory.[33] I see my phonetic transcriptions as analogous to harmonic analysis using Roman Numerals. Roman Numeral analysis is a way of organizing and accounting for the harmonies present in a piece of music, in order to then analyse the music using principles like harmonic function. Similarly, transcribing

---

[32] As I mention in the chapter, I do not use RP based on any expectation that an English pop singer will sing in RP, but rather because it is an expedient starting point for considering any British-influenced pronunciation.

[33] I do not wish to suggest that corpus studies do not exist in music theory. Indeed, numerous music theorists use computational and statistical tools to analyse large amounts of data (see, e.g., Temperley 2018). However, many methodologies that exist in music theory are less obviously quantitative.

the vowel and consonant sounds in Billy Bragg's singing allows me to consider these sounds' functions, both musical and linguistic.[34]

My methodology is perhaps also worth considering in comparison with Sonata Theory, as developed by James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy (Hepokoski and Darcy 2006). The methodology was developed for analysing sonata form movements of the late eighteenth century. The comparison may therefore seem strange. However, I think that there are interesting parallels to be drawn. Sonata Theory is a methodology for analysing the form of sonata movements. However, it is not intended simply as a labelling system. Sonata Theory is based on the idea that a piece of music is created in dialogue with the norms and expectations of its time and cultural context. It is concerned with how pieces of music follow generic norms and expectations, and also how they diverge from these expectations (Hepokoski and Darcy 2006, 605–9). A key principle of Sonata Theory is the *deformation*: "the stretching of a normative procedure to its maximally expected limits or even beyond them—or the overriding of that norm altogether in order to produce a calculated expressive effect" (Hepokoski and Darcy 2006, 614). In analysing Billy Bragg's pronunciation, I similarly look at norms and deformations. In Chapter 3, I talk about how Bragg sings with a clearly marked regional accent from Southeast England. This phenomenon is interesting against the backdrop of generic and stylistic expectations; English popular musicians frequently sing with some degree of Americanization. In Chapters 4 and 5, I look at contexts in which Bragg's singing accent is somewhat more Americanized. Here, Bragg's singing accent is noteworthy in the context of the norms of

[34] I discuss the idea of musical and linguistic—or intratextual and extratextual—functions in detail in Chapter 4.

his own typical singing style. In other words, my analyses consider Billy Bragg's pronunciation in dialogue with generic and stylistic expectations.[35]

More broadly, Sonata Theory is a flexible methodology that was developed through the analysis of sonata form movements. As such, it emerges from a process of letting the music dictate the methodology.[36] I have attempted to maintain a similar degree of flexibility in analysing Billy Bragg's pronunciation. In each chapter, I have let the methodology be guided by the peculiarities of the specific songs being analysed.

Methodologies for music analysis tend to emerge in response to what is interesting about the music to be analysed. The form of sonata form movements is interesting. It is therefore not surprising that a wealth of methodologies have been developed for formal analysis of this music. Similarly, chromatic harmony involves interesting pathways through pitch space, so it makes sense that neo-Riemannian theory is about tracing these pathways. As music became more experimental in the twentieth century, contemporary music theory followed suit. In the case of Billy Bragg's music, Bragg's pronunciation is an interesting feature of the music. It follows that my analytical methodology focuses on pronunciation. In considering Bragg's music, I not only analyse the pronunciation, but I also analyse the music through the lens of the pronunciation.

---

[35] It is also worth noting that Hepokoski and Darcy draw on literary theory in a way that parallels my engagement with sociolinguistics.

[36] While Sonata Theory is not somehow uniquely inductive, it is a good example of this approach.

Chapter 3

3. Creating an Identity

In what follows, I will explore how pronunciation has helped Billy Bragg to create a musical identity. To do so, I will draw on the work of sociolinguists who have extended and modified ideas about how pronunciation functions in speech and applied these ideas to popular song. As mentioned in the previous chapter, sociolinguists in recent decades have taken a keen interest in the idea of the singing accent: the pronunciation patterns that musicians use in their singing and how these may differ from the patterns used in their speech. British singers who Americanize their sung pronunciation have been a particular point of interest in this subdiscipline. Interestingly, though, pronunciation is a salient feature of Billy Bragg's singing because he tends not to Americanize his pronunciation. Bragg's singing accent not only puts his origins in Barking, Essex on display, but it does so prominently and unapologetically. In other words, Billy Bragg typically uses a singing accent that closely resembles his spoken accent. Bragg's pronunciation has aided him in creating his public musical identity and in communicating authenticity, thereby amplifying other musical features in his body of work.

Born into a working-class family in 1957, Bragg was deeply influenced by the British Miners' Strike of 1984–1985, and left-wing politics ultimately became the centre of his creative work (Cashell 2011). However, despite public perception that often situates progressive politics and patriotism as antithetical, Bragg has maintained a love of

his country, or of what he believes it can be.[37] Perhaps because of the apparent conflict between his identities, identity creation has been an important part of his career. In creating his public identity, Billy Bragg has communicated his identification with punk, with folk music, with the labour movement, with socialism, with the working class, and with England (Cashell 2011). I will discuss how pronunciation has served as a tool in communicating these associations. I will begin with a summary of Peter Trudgill's (1983) and Paul Simpson's (1999) foundational publications as an introduction to the scholarly discussion around British popular musicians who Americanize their sung pronunciation. I will then introduce in broad terms what Billy Bragg is able to communicate through pronunciation, drawing on more recent publications in sociolinguistics that deal with these themes. I will then examine some specific pronunciation features in Bragg's music by presenting analyses of three recordings from the 1980s.

3.1. Peter Trudgill and the USA-5 Model

Peter Trudgill's (1983) "Acts of Conflicting Identity: The Sociolinguistics of British Pop-Song Pronunciation" is considered to be a foundational text among sociolinguists who write about pronunciation in popular music. The chapter is useful to consider in detail here because the music Trudgill discusses, mostly by British men from the 1960s and 1970s, provides a helpful linguistic backdrop for considering Billy Bragg, a British man who came to prominence as a singer in the 1980s. Trudgill begins the chapter by pointing out that many British rock and pop singers use different accents when

[37] This apparent conflict is discussed in Andrew Collins's (Collins 2002) biography of Billy Bragg and in more detail in *The Progressive Patriot: A Search for Belonging*, Billy Bragg's (2006) autobiographical exploration of national identity.

they are singing as opposed to when there are speaking and that their modified pronunciation appears to follow rules or tendencies. He begins his discussion with rock and pop from the late 1950s and early 1960s, presenting several pronunciation features indexed as American that were frequently used by British singers of this time (Trudgill 1983, 141–2). Peter Simpson, who wrote a notable follow-up to Trudgill's foundational work, refers to these tendencies as the "USA-5 model" (Simpson 1999, 345). The tendencies are as follows.[38]

1. Flapping
2. Absence of the TRAP-BATH split
3. Rhoticity
4. PRICE monophthongization
5. LOT unrounding
6. STRUT closing

"Flapping" refers to the way that many North American English speakers pronounce /t/ when it appears between vowels. Trudgill gives the example of the word better, in which British speakers typically pronounce the /t/ in the middle of the word as [t] or with a glottal stop. North Americans, on the other hand, often pronounce the /t/ with an alveolar flap, essentially a flipped /r/ sound, [ɾ], which is also similar to a [d] sound. The words "latter" and "ladder," for example, tend to sound much more different in British speech than in North American speech.

The TRAP-BATH[39] split is a vowel split that is characteristic of the accents of Southern England but not of those of North America. In dialects with the TRAP-BATH

[38] The summary I provide here of the "USA-5" tendencies is based on Trudgill's description of them in his chapter (1983, 141–2), Simpson's summary of them (Simpson 1999, 345), and summaries by Monika Konert-Panek in several of her writings (2018, 156; 2017a, 77–8; 2017b, 374).

[39] TRAP and BATH appear in small capital letters here as they represent lexical sets, a tool developed by John C. Wells (1982a) and explained in the previous chapter. I used the TRAP-BATH split as an example when explaining lexical sets.

split, the word “bath” is pronounced with a noticeably broader vowel sound than the word “trap,” whereas in dialects without such a split, they are pronounced with the same vowel sound.

Rhoticity refers to how English speakers pronounce /r/ at the end of a syllable when it is not followed by a vowel. In rhotic dialects, /r/ in this situation is pronounced as a consonant sound, whereas in non-rhotic dialects, such an /r/ is only pronounced in that it can change the vowel preceding it. The words “often” and “orphan,” for example, sound much more different in a rhotic dialect than in a non-rhotic dialect.

PRICE monophthongization refers to the treatment of the vowel in the words “price” or “prize,” or what is often colloquially referred to as “long ‹i›.” Trudgill observes that in song, British singers sometimes reduce this diphthong to a monophthong; they pronounce it as a single vowel sound rather than a two-part vowel sound. This monophthongization is not, however, a feature of their speech. As Trudgill describes it, “Words such as *life*, *my* tend to be sung with a vowel of the type [aˑ] although they are normally pronounced by a majority of British speakers with a diphthong of the type [aɪ~ɑɪ~ʌɪ]” (1983, 142).[40]

LOT unrounding and STRUT closing similarly refer to differences in how British and North American English speakers typically realize certain vowels, namely, those in

---

[40] It is worth noting that unlike the other USA–5 features presented here, PRICE monophthongization is not a feature of GenAm. However, it is a feature of certain American dialects, including Southern American English and African American Vernacular English. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Jocelyn Neal (2018) has written about the role of Southern American English in country music. More broadly, the origin of much of American popular music in Black performing practices is its own topic worthy of deep consideration. Matthew Morrison has recently written about this topic using the concept of Blacksound, “the sonic and embodied legacy of blackface performance as the origin of popular music, entertainment, and culture in the United States” (2020, 555).

words with the same vowel sounds as "lot" and "strut." Of the LOT words, Trudgill writes that "Words such as *body*, *top* may be pronounced with unrounded [ɑ] instead of the more usual British [ɒ]" and of the STRUT words, he writes that "Words such as *love*, *done* tend to be pronounced with a vowel of the type [ə˙] rather than with the [ɐ̈~ɐ] typical of the south of England or the [ʊ~ɤ] typical of the north" (1983, 142).[41]

Trudgill goes on to explain that these linguistic features are not associated with all American dialects. Notably, for example, many Southern American dialects, as well as African American Vernacular English (AAVE), omit pre-vocalic /r/ in the same way that many dialects from England do (Trudgill 1983, 146). PRICE monophthongization, on the other hand, is present in the speech of many Southern American and AAVE speakers, but is not widespread enough to be considered a generic feature of American English. These six features, then, do not coalesce to emulate one specific American accent. Furthermore, among recordings of British singers c.1960, use of these linguistic features is not always consistent. For example, Trudgill points to examples of Cliff Richard, the Kinks, and Paul McCartney adding /r/ sounds where they would neither be found in these artists' speech nor in American English; this is hypercorrection, a kind of imperfect imitation (1983, 149).[42] In other words, Trudgill does not assert that British pop and rock singers from the late 1950s and early 1960s sounded like Americans, but rather that they followed different pronunciation conventions in their singing than in their speech, and

[41] I should mention in passing that STRUT closing is not always included in later literature that responds to Trudgill's text. This may because it is somewhat more difficult to generalize than the other features identified by Trudgill.

[42] For example, in "'Till there was you" on *With the Beatles* (1963), Paul McCartney sings "saw them" as [sɔːɹ ðɛm] (Trudgill 1983, 149).

that these conventions appeared to be the result of an imperfect emulation of American English.

Next, Trudgill shifts his discussion to the latter part of the 1960s, focusing in particular on the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. Through a corpus study, Trudgill shows a significantly lower prevalence of USA-5 features in the second half of the 1960s than in the first half in the recordings of both bands (1983, 150–3). For example, his Figure 8.2 (Trudgill 1983, 152), reproduced below as Figure 3.1, shows the prevalence of Americanized intervocalic /t/ and non-prevocalic /r/ in both bands' recordings, plotted by year.

Figure 3.1. Peter Trudgill's (1983, 152) Figure 8.2, showing the change over time in the prevalence of /t/ flapping and non-prevocalic /r/ in the recordings of the Beatles and Rolling Stones

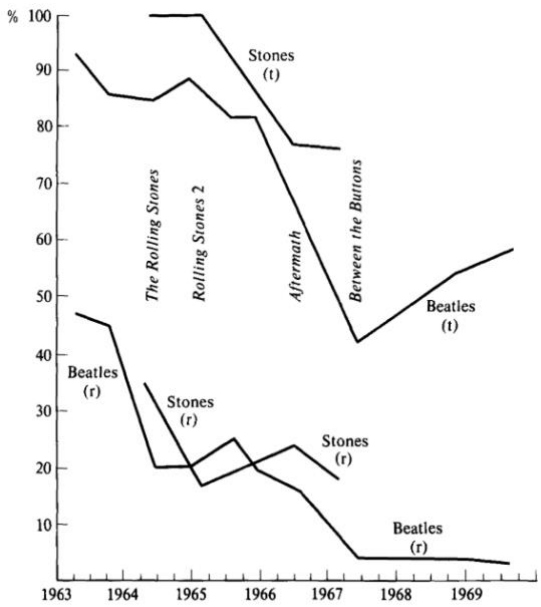


FIGURE 8.2 (r) and (t): the Beatles and the Rolling Stones

Trudgill next moves his discussion to the 1970s, specifically, punk. He observes that British punk-rock singers also alter their pronunciation when singing. These singers,

however, emulate southern English working-class speech (Trudgill 1983, 154–8). He summarizes some key features thus (155):

1. the use of wide diphthongs, as /ei/ = [æɪ] *face*, and /ou/ = [æʉ] *go*;
2. the pronunciation of /ai/ as [ɑɪ] *sky*, and of /au/ as [æu~ɛu] *out*;
3. the vocalization of /l/, as in *milk* [mɪʊk]
4. the (occasional) deletion of /h/;
5. the use of [ʔ] realizations of /t/ not only finally, as in *get*, but also intervocalically, where it is most socially stigmatized and conspicuous, as in *better*.

(Trudgill 1983, 155)

Using the Acts of Identity framework developed by Robert Le Page,[43] Trudgill seeks to provide explanations for the linguistic behaviour of the singers in question. As Trudgill describes, Le Page's framework seeks to demonstrate how speakers can be motivated to speak in a way that emulates a group with which they wish to identify (Trudgill 1983, 144). Trudgill, by extension, examines the ways in which singers may be motivated to alter their pronunciation when singing in order to identify with a target group. In the case of British pop and rock singers from the late 1950s and early 1960s, the target group is Americans, broadly conceived, because of the origins of these musical genres in American, and specifically African American, musical traditions (Trudgill 1983, 144).[44] It is logical, then, that as the global influence of British bands strengthened throughout the 1960s, this tendency toward emulation diminished. In the case of punk artists such as The Clash, the target for emulation, and therefore identification, was the British working class (Trudgill 1983,150–8).

---

[43] Trudgill cites numerous writings when he invokes the Acts of Identity framework (Le Page 1968; 1975; 1978; Le Page et al. 1974). Further information on the framework is perhaps more easily accessible in a book that was published after Trudgill's article (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985).

[44] As mentioned above, Matthew Morrison (2020) has written about the central role that appropriation of Black performing practices by white artists has played in the development of popular music in the United States.

Using Le Page's framework, Trudgill presents four reasons that linguistic emulation of this kind is often imperfect or incomplete: "the extent to which we are able to identify our model group" (1983, 145), "the extent to which we have sufficient access to [the model groups] and sufficient analytical ability to work out the rules of their behaviour" (148), "our ability to modify our behaviour (probably lessening as we get older)" (149), and finally, "the strength of various (possibly conflicting) motivations towards one or another model and towards retaining our own sense of our unique identity" (154). One of Trudgill's inspirations for writing about pronunciation in popular music seems to be the apparent conflict arising from the observation that while many British pop and rocks singers employ different pronunciation tendencies in their singing than they do in their speech, these tendencies do not necessarily match the tendencies—spoken or sung—of another group. Nevertheless, as Trudgill states in the opening sentence of his chapter, "Anyone with an interest in British rock and pop songs will have observed that there are 'rules' concerning the way in which the words of these songs are pronounced" (1983, 141). By combining his detailed observations about the pronunciation tendencies of various British singers with the linguistic theory of Robert Le Page, Trudgill is able to shed light on some of the 'rules' that are at play.

An article published sixteen years later by Paul Simpson (1999) builds on Trudgill's work. Simpson expands upon Trudgill's ideas by incorporating the ideas of register and code-switching (1999, 351–4). Drawing on work by Nikolas Coupland (1988), Simpson presents the idea that the dialect shift often observed in pop singing is connected to the fact that a singer is creating a persona, thereby presenting a different

version of the self in song than they do in speech (1999, 351–4).[45] He then extends his discussion through the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, revealing a more fragmented landscape, with British singers variously incorporating vestigial elements of the USA–5 model, their own regional dialects, regional dialects other than their own, and more standard British English (1999, 354–68). Simpson shows, however, that many of the same motivations—often conflicting motivations—that Trudgill had discussed continue to be at play.

Sociolinguists continue to grapple with questions related to singing accents, and the extent to which British singers do or do not sound British continues to be a fertile ground for discussion. In what follows, recent sociolinguistic literature on popular music performance will be discussed in tandem with discussions of Billy Bragg and how the authors' approaches can be fruitfully applied to his work.

3.2. Creating an Identity

As mentioned before, Billy Bragg is best known for his protest songs and, more broadly, his left-wing activism. Bragg was particularly marked by the coal miners' strike of 1984–5; performing for the striking coal miners solidified his desire to align himself with the working class and with socialism (Cashell 2011, 15–19). He has, however, maintained a deep and unapologetic sense of patriotism and a belief that socialists like him can reclaim patriotism from right-wing nationalists. While much of his music is not explicitly political, his values and his public persona are interconnected, and a key building block of his overall artistic project has therefore been identity creation. His

[45] The interplay between pronunciation and the creation of a musical persona will be explored in detail in Chapter 5.

pronunciation, or singing accent, is one tool that has served him in creating a public identity.[46] While an in-depth analysis of Billy Bragg's spoken accent is beyond the scope of the present study, it is nevertheless necessary to consider how one would generally categorize his spoken accent. The two most well-known accents associated with Southeast England are Received Pronunciation (RP) and Cockney, or working-class London English.[47] Another category frequently associated with Southeast England is "Estuary English." Estuary English derives its name from the region surrounding the estuary between the River Thames and the North Sea. More broadly, though, the term is typically used to refer to dialects that exist somewhere on a dialect continuum between RP and Cockney. However, there is not a clear consensus as to what, exactly, constitutes Estuary English. Therefore, while Estuary English is a tempting category in which to place Billy Bragg's speech, it is perhaps more useful to consider his spoken accent as an English accent with dialectal features associated with working-class and middle-class[48] speech of Southeast England. Joanna Ryfa (2012) has compiled much of the research on this family of dialects and has organized the results by pronunciation feature, presenting first the vowel sounds and then the consonants. Ryfa's compilation is used here as a reference point for the dialectal features associated with Southeast England. While Billy Bragg's singing accent will be examined in detail later in this chapter, for the moment, it is worth noting simply that his singing accent is typically similar to his spoken accent.

---

[46] By saying that pronunciation has served Billy Bragg in creating a public identity, I do not wish to insist that it is a tool he has used intentionally. Rather, in what follows, I will explore how pronunciation, regardless of intention, has been a salient feature of Billy Bragg's music and as such, it has played a role in his musical identity creation.

[47] These are described by John C. Wells (1982a; 1982b) in Volumes 1 and 2 of his *Accents of English*.

[48] I say "working-class and middle class" here, as I will later in the chapter as well, because the distinction between the working class and the middle class, if one insists that there is such a distinction, is not entirely clear. It follows that the distinctions between the speech patterns of these groups are even less clear.

This is a notable feature of his singing because while there are many exceptions, American-influenced pronunciation exhibiting many of the features identified by Trudgill (1983) in the music of sixty years ago has maintained a degree of dominance in popular music. In what follows, I will discuss how Billy Bragg's sung pronunciation has served as an important component of his overall identity creation.

One aspect of a singer's public identity is the musical style with which they are associated. By being considered within a given musical style, a singer can be identified with the expectations and conventions associated with that style. One such set of expectations and conventions is pronunciation. In a book chapter titled "Liverpool to Louisiana in One Lyrical Line: Style Choice in British Rock, Pop, and Folk Singing," Franz Andres Morrissey (2008) explores the question of musical styles and the pronunciation conventions associated with them.[49] In presenting his approach, Morrissey draws attention to some of the differences between song and speech. One such difference is that speech typically involves more two-way interaction than song does. Morrissey draws on Allan Bell's (1984) concept of "referee design."[50] Essentially, this model involves three parties: a speaker, an addressee, and a referee. The referee is a third party who is not present but whose influence is important enough to affect the speech of the

---

[49] In the chapter, Morrissey uses the term "musical genre" to refer to what I am calling here "musical style." In addition, Morrissey chooses not to use the term "singing accent" as sociolinguists frequently do and instead uses the term "singing style," or simply "style" (2008, 195). He makes this choice because he believes that song is sufficiently different from speech that it is appropriate to use a different term to characterize sung pronunciation than spoken pronunciation. While this is logical in the context of a sociolinguistic discussion, the term "style" is already widely used in music literature, and as such, using it here to refer to a set of pronunciation tendencies risks introducing confusion. As such, I will use the terms "accent" and "singing accent" in referring to Morrissey's work, while acknowledging that these are not his preferred terms.

[50] Bell himself, along with Andy Gibson, has since elaborated on the idea of referee design in music (See Gibson and Bell 2012).

speaking party (Morrissey 2008, 197). Morrissey applies this idea to popular song by positing that the pronunciation tendencies associated with a given musical style act as a kind of referee, or reference accent (2008, 197). For example, as discussed above, a singing accent based on some features of American English became a reference accent for British pop and rock music of the late 1950s and early 1960s, while a singing accent based on a working-class London accent became a reference style for some British punk rock singers of the 1970s. Morrissey points out that the reasons for the specific features of a given singing accent need not be purely linguistic; features such as the singability of a given vowel or consonant can also play a role (209–212). Regardless of the reasons, though, certain pronunciation features come to be associated with certain musical styles. Adopting the pronunciation features, or singing accent, of a given musical style, becomes then a way for a singer to communicate identification with this style.[51]

With respect to musical style, Billy Bragg's work is frequently associated with punk, and more specifically with The Clash (Power and Dillane 2019, 13–14; Cashell 2011, 6–7). Bragg has spoken about his admiration for Joe Strummer and The Clash. He has reflected on his admiration not only of their music, but also of what they stood for, and he has reflected on wishing that they could have achieved more on the advocacy front (Bragg 2006, 245–8; 2015, 20). As previously stated, the punk style of which The Clash is the classic example marked a departure from existing expectations regarding pronunciation in British popular music because artists incorporated elements of working-class London English into their sung pronunciation. As will be discussed in more detail

---

[51] Allan Bell and Andy Gibson (2011) have also written about musical style as it pertains generally to the sociolinguistics of performance, and Nikolas Coupland (2011) has written specifically about musical style and the sociolinguistics of popular song performance.

later in this chapter, Bragg's typical singing accent has many features in common with working-class and middle-class dialects of Southeast England. As such, it is reasonable to assume that pronunciation has played a role in Bragg's frequent association with The Clash and the British punk rock style of the 1970s more broadly, and in this association with punk becoming part of his public musical identity.

The other musical style with which Billy Bragg is frequently associated is more loosely defined and it is perhaps better described as a collection of musical styles. Broadly speaking, Billy Bragg is frequently associated with folk music. The most common connection is to Woody Guthrie and the left-wing folk music associated with him (Willhardt 2006).[52] In addition, Kieran Cashell has attempted to situate Bragg within a British folk tradition (Cashell 2011). In other words, while Billy Bragg cannot be considered clearly and unambiguously as a continuation of one particular folk tradition, he is frequently associated at least with the idea of folk music, and this association has become a part of his musical identity.

As previously stated, it is common for musical styles to be associated with singing accents that are different from the spoken accents of artists associated with these styles. In the case of folk music, however, sung pronunciation that is similar to spoken pronunciation is more common (Morrissey 2008). Billy Bragg's sung pronunciation, which often has more in common with his spoken accent than with a singing accent associated with a specific musical style, may contribute to the idea that seems to exist of

---

[52] While it may be tempting to attribute the association between Billy Bragg and Woody Guthrie solely to *Mermaid Avenue*, Bragg's 1998 collaboration with Wilco to set and record Guthrie's lyrics, associations between Bragg and various folk music do predate this collaboration, and as such, the association is worth considering separately from *Mermaid Avenue*.

Billy Bragg the folk singer. It is also worth noting that because it resembles his spoken accent, Bragg's singing accent allows his singing to move somewhat closer to speech on the continuum between song and speech. The illusion that a singer is speaking rather than singing could be considered a folk characteristic.[53] In sum, while there does not seem to be agreement on exactly which folk tradition Billy Bragg belongs to, he is associated with folk music frequently enough that this association is worth considering, and his sung pronunciation may contribute to it.

In addition to the question of association with existing musical styles, Billy Bragg's pronunciation has helped him to create a public identity simply by being regional. It may seem trite or inconsequential to say that a regional accent can communicate a regional identity. Sung pronunciation, however, does not follow the same conventions as spoken pronunciation, and as such, regional pronunciation in and of itself can be noteworthy. While the landscape of pronunciation in popular music is more heterogeneous than it was sixty years ago, during the era documented by Trudgill (1983), American-influenced pronunciation showing (at least to some degree) the marks of the USA-5 model has exerted a level of dominance that has caused it to be heard as normative, "indexed in this context as 'mainstream pop' rather than simply 'American'" (Beal 2009, 229). More regional pronunciation, on the other hand, is often heard as marked (see Gibson and Bell 2012).

---

[53] Bragg has, on occasion, played with the boundary of song and speech (if such a boundary can be considered to exist), most notably in 1986's "Walk Away, Renee (Version)," which consists of spoken text over a guitar rendition of "Walk Away, Renee," originally recorded by The Left Banke and famously covered by The Four Tops.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Renae O'Hanlon (2006) has written about Australian hip hop artists who have created a local identity by using features of Australian English in their music; O'Hanlon notes that this contrasts with the prevailing trend of using American-influenced pronunciation in popular music. Similarly, Joan Beal (2009) has written about how Alex Turner, lead singer of the northern English band Arctic Monkeys, breaks with expectation by using his Sheffield accent in singing. In both styles—Australian hip hop and British indie—regional pronunciation is more common than in popular music overall. Nevertheless, this regional pronunciation still stands out as marked and aids artists in crafting a regional identity. Similarly, artists can use pronunciation to express multiple identities. James Yang (2018) has written about accent-mixing in the recordings of Australian singer Lenka Kripac, and has proposed that this accent-mixing allows the singer to communicate belonging and allegiance with a wide variety of audiences. Similarly, Lisa Jansen and Michael Westphal (2017) have written about mixing of accents, as well as morpho-syntactic features, in Rihanna's music, focusing in particular on Caribbean English Creole features in her single "Work." Jansen and Westphal suggest that dialect-mixing in her music allows Rihanna to communicate multiple co-existing identities (2017, 50–1). Regional pronunciation can also index a kind of self-performance; Nikolas Coupland (2011) has written about his idea in connection with James Taylor.[54]

Returning to Billy Bragg, then, using regional pronunciation in singing has helped him to embed where he is from into his public identity. This is particularly effective

[54] In his discussion of the self-performance, Coupland draws on ideas presented by Simon Frith (1996). The idea of the self-performance will be explored in detail in Chapter 5.

because regional pronunciation such as his continues to be somewhat of an exception, and is particularly important because of his valuation of his own brand of national identity. Using regional pronunciation has also allowed Bragg to embed class into his public identity, which is important given his career-long alignment with socialism and the working class. Finally, using his own regional pronunciation has allowed Billy Bragg's musical persona to be a kind of self-performance, which is consistent with his goal of using music to give himself a platform for advocacy beyond his music.

3.3. Authenticity

Identity creation plays an important role in Billy Bragg's musical output, and identity creation is related to the idea of authenticity. It is no surprise, then, that authenticity is frequently mentioned in scholarly literature on Billy Bragg. In a book chapter titled "Available rebels and folk authenticities: Michelle Shocked and Billy Bragg," Mark Willhardt (2006) writes about the idea of the 'folk authenticity,' presenting Woody Guthrie as the public's idea of the prototypical folk singer (33). He presents authenticity in the context of the Woody Guthrie folk tradition as being about looking back and about making comparisons to what one already knows (Willhardt 2006, 31). He then identifies a series of moments of authenticity in Billy Bragg's career (Willhardt 2006, 39–45). In situating Billy Bragg within the British folk tradition, Kieran Cashell (2011) also refers to the question of authenticity. Likewise, in their writings on Billy Bragg, Martin Power and Aileen Dillane (Power 2018; Power and Dillane 2019; Dillane and Power 2020) discuss authenticity in the context of protest music and of how the perception of authenticity enables connection with an audience and strengthens the political message that a singer is trying to communicate. They also address criticism that

Billy Bragg has received for having accumulated wealth by commenting on class struggles and how Bragg has therefore been accused in recent years of being inauthentic. It is clear, then, that authenticity is a significant point of discussion in considering Billy Bragg's musical work.

Before further discussing authenticity in connection to Billy Bragg, it is necessary to address the problematic nature of the idea of authenticity. One must ask what authenticity means in the context of a public figure. One could assert that authenticity is connected to the idea of a public identity that is the same as—or at least reflective of—a person's private identity. However, this criterion is perhaps too difficult to verify to be applied in connection with the ways in which the word "authenticity" is typically used. In other words, one cannot truly know whether a public figure's public identity matches their private identity without knowing them personally, but the word "authentic" is frequently used to describe public figures by fans who do not know them. One could also point to the idea of being appropriately situated within a given musical style. An example will help to clarify what this means. In an article titled "Revisiting Avril Lavigne: Intersections of Subculture, Gender, Youth, and Authenticity," Mark Pepper (2019) reflects on Avril Lavigne's place as a polarizing figure with regard to the question of authenticity. Lavigne's music of the 2000s has been criticized for its tangential relation to punk, that is, for not being, in the eyes and ears of its critics, appropriately situated within an existing style. However, Lavigne's music from the 2000s has also been praised by her fans for being authentic because it expressed sentiments that they were feeling and responded to the world in a way that resonated with them. Pepper addresses this seeming contradiction by introducing the idea of a "popular authenticity," which "removes

authenticity standards from the universal or historical and into the realm of personal, local knowledge" (2019, 429). This brief excursion toward Mark Pepper's article is not intended to shift the focus of the present discussion to Avril Lavigne, or even necessarily to adopt the idea of the popular authenticity for present purposes, but rather to highlight the complexity of the idea of authenticity, and the contradictions that arise when one tries to consider authenticity as an absolute property. It is necessary to consider authenticity contextually, and to maintain a sense of positionality with respect to the "authentic" label. Authenticity in the context of a public figure can perhaps be considered as a kind of resonance created in the mind of an admirer, but this resonance will never be universal. Therefore, in the context of a public figure, any ascription of authenticity will naturally be susceptible to the accusation of illegitimacy. However, I assert that the idea of authenticity is nevertheless necessary to consider in connection with Bragg because the perception of authenticity in the eyes and ears of fans and listeners is real.

To return to the question of pronunciation, pronunciation is a tool that singers can use to index authenticity. In an article titled "You're Not from New York City, You're from Rotherham: Dialect and Identity in British Indie Music," Joan Beal (2009) writes about Arctic Monkeys lead singer Alex Turner's use of his local Sheffield English in singing. Beal draws upon the language-ideological approach developed by Michael Silverstein (1976), Lesley Milroy (2000; 2004), and Asif Agha (2003), based on "the notions of indexicality and enregisterment, whereby linguistic features become associated with social categories and can then be used to do social work" (Beal 2009, 224). In other words, the framework is based on the idea that language features can communicate social information based on what they are associated with and how they are understood. Beal

writes about how regional pronunciation is likely to be found in two kinds of British popular music from the 2000s: folk and indie. She then explains that in both styles, regional pronunciation can index authenticity. In folk, regional pronunciation tends to draw a connection to tradition.[55] In indie, on the other hand, regional pronunciation defies prevailing norms and expectations (Beal 2009, 236–8). Billy Bragg's use of regional pronunciation can be seen as indexing authenticity in both of these senses. As previously mentioned, his regional pronunciation helps to draw connections to folk and punk musical styles. It can serve to establish a connection with his audience and label him as connected to the British working class. It can also serve the function of defiance, of rejection of the American-influenced pronunciation that has remained dominant in popular music overall. This musical defiance mirrors the defiance inherent in his political music.

I have suggested that Billy Bragg's regional pronunciation indexes authenticity in part by communicating a kind of group membership, in other words, sounding authentic simply by sounding British. However, it is fair to question whether this is in fact the case, since as has been established, a constructed, American-influenced pronunciation has become normative in many popular music styles. Lisa Jansen (2018) recently published the results of a study aiming to shed light on how British audiences respond to British and Americanized pronunciation in singing. Participants in the study were asked a series of questions pertaining to their popular music preferences more generally and singers' pronunciation more specifically. Participants mostly responded neutrally to British

[55] This definition is reminiscent of Mark Willhardt's (2006) definition of "folk authenticity" in connection with Woody Guthrie.

singers using Americanized pronunciation, while a few responded negatively. On the other hand, participants tended to respond positively to British singers using their local accents when singing. Authenticity—or, on the other hand, sounding fake—was mentioned in qualitative responses as a reason for this preference (Jansen 2018, 126–9). While the scope of this study was limited, the results do suggest that British singers using their local accents in song can index authenticity to British audiences.

3.4. Analytical Examples

In order to see some of the ideas discussed above in context, let us examine a series of musical examples. What follows is a discussion of the pronunciation features of three Billy Bragg songs—one live performance and two studio tracks—and the musical ramifications of these pronunciation features. The overall analytical method involves identifying any instances of noteworthy[56] pronunciation features in Bragg's singing and considering what these features help to communicate. The songs discussed are Billy Bragg's celebrated performance of "Between the Wars" on *Top of the Pops* from 1985, the track "To Have and to Have Not" from the 1983 album *Life's a Riot with Spy vs. Spy*, and the track "The Home Front" from the 1986 album *Talking with the Taxman about Poetry*.

To perform these analyses, I began by transcribing Billy Bragg's performance of each song using the International Phonetic Alphabet.[57] Next, I selected a dialect to use as

---

[56] What "noteworthy" means in this context will be described below.

[57] The transcriptions are phonetic; I have attempted to transcribe the specific sounds that Bragg makes and not simply the phonemes that they represent. For example, the vowel sound in the word PRICE is frequently transcribed as [ɑɪ] or [ɒɪ], in keeping with Bragg's pronunciation, and not as /aɪ/, a representation of the phoneme associated with this vowel sound. However, in instances where more narrow transcription does not add significantly to the discussion, my transcription is accordingly less narrow. For example, I have not indicated aspiration of the consonants /t, p, k/ because aspiration of these consonants is more of a general

a baseline against which to compare Bragg's pronunciation. As mentioned in Chapter 2, two of the best-documented accents of English are Received Pronunciation (RP) and General American (GenAm). Even before performing any detailed analysis, one is likely to describe Bragg's singing accent as sounding overall more British than American. I therefore selected RP as the reference accent for comparison.[58] While transcribing the three songs, I noted any words that Bragg pronounced in a way that differed saliently from RP. Next, I considered whether the sound change belonged to the dialects of Southeast England as described by Joanna Ryfa (2012), to Trudgill's (1983) USA-5 model (or pop-song style), to GenAm more broadly, or to none of these categories. I then considered what Bragg's overall singing accent, as well as some of its specific features, enable from an artistic perspective.

3.4.1. "Between the Wars"

The first song to be considered here is "Between the Wars," and more specifically, Billy Bragg's performance of the song on the music chart television program *Top of the Pops* on March 21, 1985. Kieran Cashell (2011) has written about the performance's significance as a bold and defiant statement and Mark Willhardt (2006) has described the performance as a moment of authenticity for Bragg. Indeed, the performance diverged from the show's typical programming in musical style and in

---

feature of English pronunciation and less useful in distinguishing between dialects, and is thus not considered in this analysis.

[58] By using RP as a point of comparison, I am not suggesting that RP in this context is somehow normative or unmarked; indeed, as has been discussed previously, pronunciation with at least some American influence is likely to sound more normative in the context of popular singing. However, the American-influenced pronunciation described by Trudgill is difficult to use as a starting point because it is not a fully-described accent in the same way as RP or GenAm, and furthermore, Trudgill describes it by way of comparison with RP. I use RP here as a framework for describing Bragg's pronunciation, and do not treat it as a norm that I would expect him to conform to.

lyrical content. Alone on stage with a microphone and an electric guitar,[59] Bragg sang "Between the Wars," a song written from the perspective of working-class British men describing their contributions to society, such as manual labour, raising families, and voting; and their values, such as living wages, community, and the quiet of peacetime. These contributions and values are contrasted with the government's pride in Britain's contributions during the two World Wars and placed in front of the backdrop of rising uncertainty during the Cold War (2015, 61–2). My transcription of Bragg's performance follows as Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2. Phonetic Transcription of Billy Bragg's 1985 *Top of the Pops* performance of "Between the Wars."

I	was	a	miner,	I	was	a	docker	1
ˈɒɪ	wəz	ə	ˈmɒɪnə	ˈɒɪ	ˈwɒz	ə	ˈdɒkəɹ	

I	was	a	railwayman	between	the	wars	2
ˈɒɪ	wəz	ə	ˈɹæɪoweɪmən	bɪˈtwɪin	ˈðə	ˈwɑːz	

I	raised	a	family	in	time	of	austerity	3
ˈɒɪ	ˈɹɐɪzd	ə	ˈfæməli	ɪn	ˈtaɪm	ˈəv	ɒˈsteɹɪti	

With	sweat	at	the	foundry	between	the	wars	4
ˈwɪf	ˈswet	æt	ðə	ˈfæʊndɹi	bɪˈtwɪin	ˈðə	ˈwɔːz	

I	paid	the	union	and	as	times	got	harder	5
ˈɑɪ	pʌɪd	ðə	ˈjɯːniən	ənd	ˈæz	ˈtɑɪmz	gɒʔ	ˈɑːdə	

I	looked	to	the	government	to	help	the	working	man 6
ɑɪ	ˈlʊk	ˈtɯː	ðə	ˈgʌv(ə)nmən	tɯː	ˈheop	ðə	ˈwɜːkɪŋ	ˈmæn

But	they	brought	prosperity	down	at	the	armoury	7
bʌt	ˈðɐɪ	ˈbɹɔːt	pɹɒsˈpeɹɪti	ˈdaʊn	ˈət	ðiː	ˈɑːməɹɪi	

[59] The guitar used in this performance is frequently referred to as electric. However, it is, more specifically, an electric/acoustic hybrid. It has a built-in pickup and knobs, and a green finish, but it also has a sound hole, hollow body, and traditional shape (no cutaway).

We're	arming	for	peace,	me	boys,	between	the	wars 8
ˈwɪə	ɑːˈmɪn	fə	ˈpɪis	mɪ	ˈbɔɪz	bɪˈtwɪin	ˈðə	ˈwɔːz

I	kept	the	faith	and	I	kept	voting	9
ˈɒɪ	ˈkep	ðə	ˈfaɪθ	nd	ˈɑɪ	kep	ˈvɐʊtɪŋ	

Not	for	the	iron	fist	but	for	the	helping	hand	10
ˈnɒt	ˈfɔː	ðiː	ˈɑɪən	ˈfɪst	bət	ˈfɔː	ðə	ˈʔeopɪŋ	ˈhænd	

For	theirs	is	a	land	with	a	wall	around	it	11
fɔː	ˈðeəz	ˈɪz	ə	ˈlænd	wɪf	ə	ˈwɔːl	əˈɹaʊnd	ɪt	

And	mine	is	a	faith	in	my	fellow	man	12
ənd	ˈmɒɪn	ɪz	ə	ˈfɐɪθ	ɪn	ˈmɑɪ	feˈlɐʊ	ˈmæn	

Theirs	is	a	land	of	hope	and	glory	13
ˈðeəz	ˈɪz	ə	ˈlænd	əv	ˈhɐʊp	ˈænd	glɔːˈɹɪi	

Mine	is	the	green	field	and	the	factory	floor	14
ˈmɑɪn	ˈɪz	ðə	ˈgɹiːn	fɪod	ˈænd	ðə	ˌfækˈtəɹi	ˈflɔː	

Theirs	are	the	skies	all	dark	with	bombers	15
ˈðeəz	ɑː	ðə	ˈskɒɪz	ɔːo	ˈdɑːk	wɪf	ˈbɒməz	

And	mine	is	the	peace	we	knew	between	the	wars	16
ənd	ˈmɑɪn	ɪz	ðə	ˈpɪis	wɪi	ˈnuː	bɪˈtwɪin	ˈðə	ˈwɔːz	

Call	up	the	craftsmen,	bring	me	the	draughtsmen	17
ˈkɔːl	ˈɐp	ðə	ˈkɹɑːftsmən	ˈbɹɪŋ	ˈmɪi	ðə	ˈdɹɑːftsmən	

Build	me	a	path	from	cradle	to	grave	18
ˈbɪod	ˈmɪi	ə	ˈpɑːf	fɹəm	ˈkɹɐɪˌdo	ˈtuː	ˈgɹɐɪv	

And	I'll	give	my	consent	to	any	government	19
ˈænd	ˈɑːo	gɪv	ˈmɑɪ	kənˈsen(t)	ˈtuː	ˈeni	ˈgɐvənmənt	

That	does	not	deny	a	man	a	living	wage	20
ðət	ˈdɐz	ˈnɒt	dɪˈnɒɪ	ə	ˈmæn	ə	lɪˈvɪŋ	ˈwɐɪd͡ʒ	

Go	find	the	young	men	never	to	fight	again	21
ˈgɐʊ	ˈfɒɪnd	ðə	ˈjɐŋ	men	ˈneˌvə	tə	ˈfɑɪt	əˈgen	

Bring	up	the	banners	from	the	days	gone	by	22
ˈbɹɪŋ	ˈɐp	ðə	ˈbænəz	ˈfɹɒm	ðə	ˈdɐɪz	ˈgɒn	ˈbɑɪ	
Sweet	moderation,		heart	of	this	nation		23	
ˈswiːt	ˌmɒdəɹˈɐɪʃ(ə)n		ˈhɑːt	ˈɒv	ðɪs	ˈnɐɪʃən			
Desert	us	not,	we	are	between	the	wars	24	
dɪˈzɜːt	ɐs	ˈnɒʔ	wiː	ˈɑː	bɪˈtwɪin	ˈðə	ˈwɔːz		

As mentioned above, I began the process of analyzing the pronunciations in this performance by identifying each word whose pronunciation diverges from RP. I then organized the words according to the specific sound that is noteworthy. In the case of consonants, I simply grouped together words with the same noteworthy consonant sound. For vowel sounds, I used the lexical sets developed by John C. Wells (1982a), which I explained in the previous chapter. The notable words identified in "Between the Wars" are shown below in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3. Words from Billy Bragg's 1985 *Top of the Pops* performance of "Between the Wars" that diverge notably from RP.

Lexical Set or Consonant	**Sound Change**	**Approximate Realization**	**Words (line numbers)**
PRICE	backing, some instances of rounding 1 monophthongal realization ("I'll," line 19)	[ɑɪ~ɒɪ]	I (1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 9), miner (1), times (5), iron (10), mine (12, 14, 16), my (12, 19), skies (15), I'll (19), deny (20), find (21), fight (21), by (22)
FACE	lowered onset vowel, some backing of onset vowel	[ɐɪ~aɪ]	railwayman (2), raised (3), paid (5), they (7), faith (9, 12), grave (18), wage (20), days (22), moderation (23), nation (23)

FLEECE	diphthongal realization (closing diphthong)	[ɪi]	between (2, 4, 8, 16, 24), peace (8, 16), field (14), we (16), me (17, 18)
/l/	vocalization	[ʊ~ɤ~o]	railwayman (2), help (6), field (14), all (15), build (18), cradle (18), I'll (19)
STRUT	fronting, opening	[ɐ]	up (17, 22), government (19), does (20), young (21), us (24)
‹th›	fronting	[f]	with (4, 11, 15), path (18)
GOAT	lowering of onset vowel	[ɐʊ]	voting (9), fellow (12), hope (13), go (21)
GOOSE	fronting, some unrounding	[uː~ʉː~ɨː]	union (5), to (6, 6)
/t/	glottalization	[ʔ]	got (5), not (24)
/h/	dropping, glottalization	∅, [ʔ]	harder (5), helping (10)
happY	diphthongal realization (closing diphthong)	[ɪi]	armoury (7), glory (13)
MOUTH	raised onset vowel	[æʊ]	foundry (4)
‹ng›	realized as [n]	[n]	arming (8)
/j/ (yod)	dropping	∅	knew (16)

The pronunciation features in the above table are organized in descending order of frequency. The column labelled "sound change" provides a brief indication of what is notable about Bragg's pronunciation of each sound. Most of these indications relate to

where and/or how the sound is produced in the mouth, as described in the previous chapter.

The first pronunciation feature noted in Figure 3.3 is the PRICE vowel, a diphthong often realized as [aɪ]. Compared to RP, Bragg's pronunciation of this vowel shows significant backing of the onset vowel; the first vowel is produced farther back in the mouth, producing a sound more like [ɑɪ] than the [aɪ] one might expect to find in RP. In addition, in some instances, this onset vowel is rounded, producing [ɒɪ]. These tendencies are most logically explained as being associated with the dialects of Southeast England (Ryfa 2012, 50–3). It is worth noting that there is one instance of a monophthongal realization of a PRICE vowel, namely, the word "I'll" in line 19. While it could be tempting to connect this to the monophthongal PRICE vowel described by Trudgill, this instance could also be explained as a vowel merger before historic /l/ (Wells 1994).

The FACE vowel is another diphthong in which Bragg's pronunciation diverges from RP. Contrasted with the [eɪ] one might expect in RP, Bragg's lowering and backing of the onset vowel yields a realization that is frequently closer to [ɐɪ], but can also appear as [æɪ], [aɪ], or [ʌɪ]. This tendency toward lowering and backing of the onset vowel is also associated with the dialects of Southeast England (Ryfa 2012, 48–50). In the case of the FLEECE vowel, a diphthongal realization can be observed wherein Bragg realizes the vowel as something closer to [ɪi], rather than [iː]. As is the case with the PRICE and FACE vowels, this tendency can be associated with Bragg's regional dialect (Ryfa 2012, 46–8). It is worth noting that in two instances, this same phenomenon can be heard in the vowel at the end of the word happY. The happY vowel, named as such because it refers specifically to the unstressed vowel at the end of the word "happy," may behave

somewhat like the FLEECE vowel in these instances because unstressed vowels are not always as unstressed in singing as they would be in speech.

The next vowel worth noting is the STRUT vowel, associated with the sound /ʌ/. Bragg's STRUT vowel presents with fronting and opening. I have typically transcribed it as [ɐ], but one could even make the case for [a]. As with the previous vowel sounds discussed, the simplest explanation of this vowel is as a dialectal feature of Bragg's home region (Ryfa 2012, 36–7).[60] The GOAT vowel, typically [əʊ] in RP, is often closer to [ɐʊ] in Bragg's performance. This lowered onset vowel has been associated with the dialects of Southeast England (Ryfa 2012, 57–9). The onset vowel in MOUTH is raised in Bragg's singing, another feature attested in the region where he is from (Ryfa 2012, 54–6). One more vowel, that in the word GOOSE, emerges as divergent from RP. Bragg's realization of the GOOSE vowel /uː/ is typically fronted and can also be unrounded, falling somewhere within the range [uː~ʉː~i̟ː].[61] This GOOSE vowel can be traced to Southeast England (Ryfa 2012, 44–6).

With respect to consonants, the most frequent feature noted above is /l/ vocalization, which occurs when an /l/ that is not followed by a vowel is realized as a vowel sound, rather than [l] as it would be before a vowel, or as [ɫ], the so-called "dark" /l/ found in many varieties of English in non-prevocalic contexts.[62] Vocalized /l/ is best

---

[60] It should be pointed out that the typical RP realization of the STRUT vowel is not a pure [ʌ] sound and also presents with some degree of fronting and opening. However, Bragg's vowel is more fronted and open than what one would expect in RP.

[61] The choice of whether to transcribe the vowel as [uː], [ʉː], or [i̟ː] is not always clear. I have attempted to be somewhat conservative in my transcriptions; where [uː] seems adequate, I have used [uː], reserving [ʉː] for cases of clear fronting and [i̟ː] for clear fronting and unrounding. As a result, there may be instances of the GOOSE vowel transcribed with [uː] that are nevertheless somewhat fronted.

[62] In my transcriptions of Billy Bragg's singing, I have chosen to transcribe the vowel sound of a vocalized /l/ as [o], following John C. Wells (1994). However, there are other vowels that could have been used and each has its advantages and disadvantages. In addition, it is worth noting that "dark" /l/ and vocalized /l/

understood within the context of the dialects of Southeast England (Ryfa 2012, 61–2). Another regional consonant shift (Ryfa 2012, 60–1) that can be heard in Bragg's performance is ‹th› fronting, wherein /θ/ is realized as [f] or /ð/ is realized as [v]. The other consonant changes noted above that can be clearly associated with the region that Bragg is from are /t/ glottalization, the use of a glottal stop [ʔ] to stand in for /t/ (Ryfa 2012, 66–7); and /h/ glottalization or dropping (Ryfa 2012, 65–6). One more consonant that is not a feature of RP is the realization of ‹ng› as [n] instead of [ŋ]. This practice is common in many English dialects, and as such cannot in this case clearly be associated with Southeast England or with American English. Similarly, there is one instance of yod-dropping, wherein /juː/ is realized as [uː]. This happens with the word "knew" in line 16. While yod-dropping can be a feature of the dialects of Southeast England (Ryfa 2012, 64–5), it also happens in American English, and as such, does not in itself point decisively one way or the other.

From the above, one can conclude that the singing accent Billy Bragg uses in his "Between the Wars" performance is, broadly, British, and, more specifically, a middle-class or working-class accent from Southeast England. None of the noted divergences from RP point unambiguously to GenAm or the Americanized pronunciation tendencies described by Trudgill, and with the exception of ‹ng› and /j/, which cannot necessarily be categorized, all of them point to the dialects of Southeast England. We arrive then at the question of what Bragg achieves through pronunciation in this performance.

---

can coexist in a single person's speech or singing, and the boundary between them is not always clear. While I have not included [ɬ] in my transcriptions of "Between the Wars," I have included it in the transcription of "The Home Front," which appears later, because it seemed a better representation for some instances of Bragg's non-prevocalic /l/.

First, let us consider the performance's role in helping Billy Bragg to establish his public identity. The performance was unusual for *Top of the Pops*. Perhaps the most obvious divergent feature of the performance is the lyrical content; the sombre, reflective, defiant lyrics contrast with the more upbeat material one might expect. In addition, the instrumentation is noteworthy as Bragg's singing is accompanied only by his own electric guitar. The sound of one man with an electric guitar became characteristic of Bragg's early recordings and performances. Another notable feature of the performance is, of course, the pronunciation. In his performance of "Between the Wars," Bragg announced himself to the British public as a man from Essex singing in his own voice. While the idea of somebody singing in his own voice may sound trite, as has been noted by Nikolas Coupland (2011), the self-performance is a kind of performance, and in Bragg's singing, both the absence of the Americanized features described by Peter Trudgill and the presence of markers of a working-class accent from Southeast England help to communicate to the audience that Bragg's public identity is meant to be himself, and not a character that he has created.

The *Top of the Pops* performance helped to establish Billy Bragg not only as a public figure but as someone with his own musical style. As has been noted previously, Billy Bragg has often been associated with folk music, but which folk tradition he emerges from has been less clear. "Between the Wars" is an example of the kind of song that inspires these comparisons. The lyrics are reminiscent of the practice of storytelling, common in folk music, and of the kind of political content often associated with Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie, and the like. The solo guitar accompaniment also recalls a folk style, particularly Bragg's left-hand approach. Most notably here, though, Bragg's

pronunciation also serves as a connection at least to the idea of folk music, because in "Between the Wars," he does appear simply to be singing in his own accent.

Nevertheless, the idea that Bragg is singing in his own accent, or his own voice, is neither straightforward nor unproblematic, if for no other reason than that "Between the Wars," like many songs, has a narrator who is not the same person as the singer. In fact, the narrator of "Between the Wars" does not appear to be one person, but rather an amalgam of workers, announcing themselves in the first line two lines by saying "I was a miner, I was a docker / I was a railwayman between the wars." The narrator, it seems, is not meant to be one specific character, but rather any working-class British man reflecting on his contributions to society and how his values differ from those of the government. A central lyrical feature is the repetition of the word "I." The word appears nine times in twenty-four lines (including the word "I'll"); indeed, the frequent repetition of the word "I" is a reason that the PRICE vowel is the most frequent non-RP pronunciation feature in "Between the Wars." As Brian Kane notes in his book *Sound Unseen: Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice* (2014, 180–6), the ostensibly simple pronoun "I" is in fact quite complex, particularly with regards to its referent. The complexity of the pronoun "I" is useful to consider in the context of "Between the Wars" because the song has a composite narrator who sings as if he is one person. While some of the details of the narrator's life are not entirely clear because of his synthetic nature, one feature is clear: his pronunciation of the word "I." Bragg's backed and sometimes rounded realization of this word, [ɑɪ~ɒɪ], not only situates the narrator as a working-class Englishman, but also draws attention to the word "I." The emphasis on the word "I," both through its repetition and through Bragg's regional pronunciation of it, draws attention to

the importance of perspective in the song and the theirs/mine dichotomy that is established between the pride that the government takes in Britain's military accomplishments during (presumably) the World Wars and what working-class people want from the government. The emphasis on the word "I" also helps to blur the boundary between Billy Bragg and the song's narrator. Through repetition of the word in his own regional accent, Billy Bragg exploits the complexity of the word "I" and helps the listener to imagine him as the miner, docker, railwayman, or other worker taking pride in what he has accomplished between the wars and making relatively modest but still unmet demands of the government. In "Between the Wars," then, pronunciation helps Billy Bragg to create a public personal and musical identity, but also helps him in creating the identity of the song's narrator and in temporarily blending this identity with his own.

3.4.2. "To Have and to Have Not"

The next song to be considered here is "To Have and to Have Not" from Billy Bragg's 1983 inaugural album *Life's a Riot with Spy vs Spy*. The song is written from the perspective of a young person who has come to the realization that the advice he had been given in school about how to get a job was mostly useless and that upward mobility is largely illusory. He expresses his frustration with not being one of the "chosen few" who happen to be the right person in the right place at the right time. The phonetic transcription of the album version of "To Have and to Have Not" and a table showing the sounds that diverge notably from RP can be found as Appendix A and Appendix B.

Many of the pronunciation tendencies present in "To Have and to Have Not" are also present in "Between the Wars," and thus do not need to be reexplained. One lexical set that is not discussed above but does emerge as notable in "To Have and to Have Not"

is NEAR. Bragg sings the word “year” with a monophthong, rather than the diphthong one would expect in RP. This pronunciation is a feature of the dialects of Southeast England (Ryfa 2012, 59). There are also two instances of yod coalescence, which is also associated with the region Bragg is from (Ryfa 2012, 64–5). There is one pair of words that one could link to the pop-song style described by Trudgill: an instance of /t/ flapping followed by a monophthongal realization of the PRICE vowel in line 19. However, on the whole, the pronunciation features in “To Have and to Have Not” point to the working-class and middle-class speech patterns of Southeast England, as is the case in “Between the Wars.”

In “To Have and to Have Not,” the associations we tend to make between pronunciation and socioeconomic status are particularly significant. The regional identity given to the narrator through Bragg’s pronunciation tendencies is not central because the frustration that the narrator expresses is widely applicable, geographically speaking. However, the socioeconomic class that one is likely to project onto the narrator through Bragg’s pronunciation is critically important. While the song’s message could likely be conveyed through the lyrics alone, Bragg’s sung pronunciation reinforces the rigidity of class structure because accents mark us and as we navigate different situations, the associations that our accents hold often travel with us.

As in “Between the Wars,” Bragg’s sung pronunciation helps to connect “To Have and to Have Not” to an existing musical style, in this case, punk. Bragg’s use of his own regional accent in singing is ultimately reminiscent of, for example, Joe Strummer’s use of features of working-class London English in his singing. The pronunciation, then,

helps to invoke the anger associated with punk, and to situate Bragg's music, relative to the style associated with The Clash, as a descendant of sorts.

3.4.3. "The Home Front"

The next song to be considered is "The Home Front," the final track from the 1986 album *Talking with the Taxman about Poetry*. The lyrics depict a scene meant to be from everyday life in an English household, opening by invoking the image of a father mowing the lawn and a mother peeling potatoes. Through what he frames as a depiction of the quiet moments of family life, however, Bragg weaves in critiques of some of the issues that undermine this ostensible "quiet life," including domestic violence, income inequality, nationalism, the futility of war, and the hypocrisy of certain religious teachings. The phonetic transcription of "The Home Front" and a table presenting the sounds that diverge notably from RP can be found as Appendix C and Appendix D.

Most of the notable pronunciation features in the track have already been explained in connection with the previous two examples. There is one instance of intrusive /r/, which happens when speakers of non-rhotic dialects add an /r/ sound where there is not one written, by analogue with linking /r/. Intrusive /r/ can be heard in Bragg's pronunciation of the words "nostalgia is" in line 36. Intrusive /r/ is associated with regional dialects in England and with lower registers of speech (Ryfa 2012, 62–3). It is worth noting that "The Home Front" does have three instances of /t/ flapping. These could be a concession to the facility of producing /t/ in this way when singing and could also be indicative of some degree of influence from the pop-song style described by Trudgill. Such influence would be limited, though, as there are only three instances. The only other pronunciation feature noted above that may point away from the British Isles

is yod dropping, which can be heard in Bragg's pronunciation of the word "new" as [nʉː] instead of [njʉː]. While yod dropping is a feature of many American English dialects, it is also a feature of several dialects of Southeast England, and thus does not point unambiguously one way or the other. The remaining divergences from RP noted above are all attested in the dialects of Southeast England. Overall, Bragg's pronunciation in "The Home Front" follows the same patterns as in "Between the Wars" and "To Have and to Have Not." As in the previous two examples, one would describe Bragg's singing accent in "The Home Front" generally as being British, and more specifically as being a working-class or middle-class dialect of Southeast England.

Given the subject matter of the lyrics, the regional associations with Bragg's pronunciation are significant, perhaps self-evidently so. It is nevertheless worthwhile to consider briefly what Bragg is able to accomplish by singing about England in a voice that is very clearly from England. The discussions above have considered the identities of the narrators in "To Have and to Have Not" and "Between the Wars." While the latter is a composite character of sorts, both narrators do appear to be characters in the worlds created by the songs. "The Home Front," on the other hand, has a narrator who does not identify himself, and merely comments on the lives of the song's characters, as depicted through the scenes described in the lyrics. However, Bragg's singing accent and the social work it performs prevent the narrator from appearing to be wholly exterior to the world created within "The Home Front." This is significant because the narrator is openly critical of what he observes. His criticisms can nevertheless be understood as coming from within, despite coming from an omniscient narrator; this is possible in part because

of the ways in which Bragg's singing accent situates the narrator geographically and socioeconomically.

One interesting pronunciation moment, that one might perhaps consider in comparison to the idea of "text painting" in the study of text/music relations, is Bragg's realization of the words "nostalgia is the opium of the age" in line 36. Bragg's use of intrusive /r/ in singing "nostalgia is" draws particular attention to his non-rhotic pronunciation, while also drawing his pronunciation of the words away from RP and from a formal register of speech. This decidedly English realization of the word "nostalgia" provides an interesting reflection of the sometimes-problematic role that the idea of nostalgia can play in English national identity.[63] The phrase then continues with the word opium and the word age, with the GOAT and FACE vowels typical of Bragg's pronunciation in the track, reinforcing the Englishness of the particular critique being made.

The cultivation of Englishness in this track is also achieved through instrumentation. The track opens with a trumpet introduction, and the trumpet is present throughout, often approximately doubling the vocal line, taking over during interludes, and ultimately overtaking the voice at the end of the track. As Megan Lavengood (2020) has discussed in detail, timbre and instrumentation can carry social meaning in popular music. In this case, as Kieran Cashell (2011, 15) has noted, the trumpet evokes a brass band tradition with a rich history, creates an unmistakable Englishness, and perhaps even

[63] Katharine Jones discusses the relationship between nostalgia and English national identity, with a particular focus on English nationals living in the United States, in the chapter "Avoiding Extremes: Negotiating Nationalism and Nostalgia" from her book *Accent on Privilege: English Identities and Anglophilia in the U.S.* (2001, 17–60).

inspires the very nostalgia that Bragg describes. The trumpet and the pronunciation, then, amplify each others' communication of place and belonging. However, the trumpet, or more broadly, the instrumentation on this album as a whole, marks a departure from the sound for which Billy Bragg made himself known early in his career, namely, just him and his electric guitar (Cashell 2011, 10–14).[64] The sound and image of just Bragg's voice and his electric guitar contributed to the associations with the folk and punk styles that had become part of his public musical identity early on. As has been previously mentioned, however, Bragg's pronunciation may serve to connect him to the folk and punk styles. In this track, then, pronunciation not only amplifies the messages communicated by the instrumentation, but also helps to preserve connections that that same instrumentation may obscure.

Finally, it is also worth noting the role that vowel and consonant sounds can play in a piece of music not because of their ability to communicate social meaning, but simply because of how they sound. In the case of "The Home Front," the GOAT vowel, with lowered onset vowel, appears quite frequently, and therefore contributes to the overall sound of the track, which one might come to recognize as a distinctive feature of the track without paying any attention to the meaning of the words. The repetition of a given vowel sound can function in much the same way as the timbre of an instrument used in the accompaniment; it can become a characteristic feature of the music's overall sound. The GOAT vowel, appearing frequently and being realized in a manner that many would hear as marked, works its way into the mind of the listener and becomes part of the

[64] While Bragg did make some use of other instruments in his first two albums, this use was much more limited than in *Talking with the Taxman about Poetry*.

song's characteristic sound. The PRICE vowel functions in a similar way in "Between the Wars." One could also make the observation that the singing accent observed in these three examples forms part of a characteristic Billy Bragg sound that can be appreciated as a distinctive feature in the same way as, for example, vocal timbre, and can be appreciated independently of its ability to do social work.

3.5. Closing Thoughts

The preceding discussion has explored the role that pronunciation played for Billy Bragg in creating a musical identity early in his career. The discussion has focused on pronunciation and identity creation as it pertains to regional identity, socioeconomic class, the norms of given musical styles, authenticity, and the relationship between the singer and a song's narrator. Broadly, the discussion has borrowed from sociolinguistics to look at how some of the ways in which pronunciation functions in speech can be mirrored in song. Nevertheless, song is not speech, or at minimum, song exists on a continuum with speech. The next chapter will explore a context in which pronunciation can have a more musically functional role that is less directly comparable to its role in speech.

Chapter 4

4. Fitting with the Music

The preceding chapter focused on cases in which Billy Bragg's pronunciation sounds very similar to speech from his home region. It drew from research in sociolinguistics on how the ways in which pronunciation functions in speech can be mapped onto song. The present chapter will focus on a different situation with respect to Billy Bragg's pronunciation: when his sung pronunciation diverges from his regional accent. I will analyse how Bragg's pronunciation changes when singing a cover, and how pronunciation in this instance can assume more of a functional role in service to the music than a linguistic role. To do so, I will analyse Billy Bragg's pronunciation in his cover of "The Tracks of My Tears" by Smokey Robinson and the Miracles.

4.1. "The Tracks of My Tears"

While speech and song are generally not considered to be the same thing, the ways in which pronunciation functions in speech can, to a certain extent, be mapped onto song. Pronunciation conventions carry social meanings in song in many of the same ways that they do in speech. Indeed, because pronunciation can communicate so much information about, for example, regional identity or socioeconomic class, it may be tempting to consider pronunciation as an extratextual, or extramusical, feature that works in concert with an imagined 'music itself.' In the previous chapter, I focused primarily on pronunciation's linguistic functions in song. However, it is also worthwhile to consider how pronunciation in song may have a more intratextual, or strictly musical, function. Conveniently, Billy Bragg has weighed in on the matter. In a phone interview with journalist John Lewis (2006) for an article in *Time Out* magazine, Bragg stated that "You

can't sing something like 'Tracks of Your Tears' [*sic*] in a London accent […] Believe me, I've tried. The cadences, the rhythm of the speech, it's all wrong" (qtd. in Lewis 2006). In these comments, Bragg is referring to a song that he has covered, "The Tracks of My Tears" by Smokey Robinson and the Miracles. The cover, as well as Bragg's comments about his experience covering the song, will be the subject of discussion in what follows. "The Tracks of My Tears" contrasts with the examples considered in the previous chapter because Bragg's singing accent in his cover differs noticeably from his regional accent. It is somewhat unsurprising that his pronunciation may differ in this cover because he is singing a song that was written by someone else, for someone else's voice, in a different musical style from most of his body of work. However, the details of what this shift in pronunciation looks like, and the reasons for it, are far from straightforward. Bragg's comments to John Lewis suggest not a linguistic, but a musical reason for changing his pronunciation when covering "The Tracks of My Tears." The cover therefore presents an opportunity to consider how pronunciation may have more intratextual functions, in addition to the primarily extratextual functions discussed in Chapter 3.

4.1.1. Methodology

The purpose of the present discussion is to consider ways in which pronunciation can function in music that differ from those discussed previously. To do so, I have chosen a recording in which Billy Bragg's singing accent differs noticeably from his regional accent: "The Tracks of My Tears," mentioned above. The song was written by Smokey Robinson, Warren Moore, and Marvin Tarplin, and recorded by their group the Miracles in 1965. Bragg's cover is included on the 2006 reissue of his 1986 album *Talking with*

the Taxman about Poetry. The song is suitable for the present discussion because the original version is quite well-known, it is in a different musical style from Bragg's original songs, and the lead singer (Smokey Robinson) has a very different spoken accent from Bragg. Naturally, I also gravitated toward this song because Bragg has commented on his experiences covering it. However, Bragg's comments constitute only a part of the analysis at hand, and not a basis for it.

The methodology to be used in analysing Bragg's pronunciation in "The Tracks of My Tears" is more complicated than that used in Chapter 3 in considering "Between the Wars," "To Have and to Have Not," and "The Home Front." In the previous three examples, I was able to start from the observation that Bragg sounds, broadly, like somebody from Southern England. Accordingly, I was able to use Received Pronunciation (RP) as a reference accent.[65] In transcribing Bragg's singing, I flagged any pronunciation features that were not consistent with RP, and then considered whether these features most likely pointed to Bragg's regional accent, Americanized pronunciation, or something else. The vast majority ended up in the first category: Bragg's regional accent. In the case of "The Tracks of My Tears," a more nuanced approach is required.

I first tried simply using RP as a reference accent again, with the understanding that I would need to flag many sounds as Americanized. It soon became apparent,

---

[65] Received Pronunciation (RP), as explained in Chapter 2, is the accent from Southern England that has historically been treated as a prestige accent in England, "sometimes popularly referred to as 'BBC English' or even 'Standard English'" (Wells 1982a, 117). RP is frequently used as a reference accent in describing closely related accents, such as regional speech from Southern England, and in describing more distantly related accents that have nevertheless been strongly influenced by the pronunciation patterns of England, such as the accents of the Southern Hemisphere. As a reference accent for describing Billy Bragg's singing accent, I have used RP as presented by J.C. Wells (1982a) in *Accents of English 1: An Introduction*.

however, that this approach would not work. Almost immediately, I noticed that some sounds were consistent with RP but not with the patterns I had observed in the previous chapter. For example, the FACE vowel appears frequently in "The Tracks of My Tears" as [eɪ]. Based on the previous analyses, however, I would expect something closer to [ɐɪ]. This sound change seems notable, and therefore should be captured in the analysis. It could seem logical, then, to use Bragg's accent as the primary reference accent instead. Doing so is difficult, however, because the analyses in the previous chapter constitute a relatively limited sample size. I also considered trying to use General American (GenAm) as the primary reference accent.[66] This seemed illogical, however, because Smokey Robinson's pronunciation differs notably from GenAm. Trudgill's (1983) USA-5 model could be tempting to use as the primary reference accent. However, it is not a fully-described accent or dialect, but rather a set of tendencies Trudgill observed in certain British singers. In order to capture as much information as possible, I devised five categories into which to sort the sounds in Bragg's cover. I will refer to them as shown in Figure 4.1. A detailed explanation of each one follows.

Figure 4.1. Categories for classifying pronunciation features in Billy Bragg, "The Tracks of My Tears."

Category 1	Bragg
Category 2	RP or GenAm
Category 3	Americanized
Category 4	RP, not GenAm
Category 5	Other

[66] As mentioned in Chapter 2, General American (GenAm) refers to the collection of pronunciation features generally considered standard or unmarked in North American English. In *Accents of English 1: An Introduction,* Wells (1982a) presents RP and GenAm as his two reference accents for describing spoken English. However, it is worth noting, as Wells does, that GenAm is not a perfect analogue for RP; "In the United States there is no accent whose status and rôle correspond to that of RP in England" (1982a, 118).

Category 1—Bragg: This category contains sounds that are consistent with Bragg's regional accent and are not consistent with RP.[67] As in the previous chapter, the criterion for being considered indicative of Bragg's regional pronunciation is that the sound is not consistent with RP, but is consistent with a sound change that has been attested in the dialects of Southeast England as described by Joanna Ryfa (2012).

Category 2—RP or GenAm:[68] This category contains sounds that are not consistent with Bragg's regional accent and that could be considered consistent with either RP or GenAm.[69] As mentioned above, certain sounds appear in "The Tracks of My Tears" that are consistent with RP but are not consistent with Bragg's singing accent as established in the previous chapter. "Bragg's singing accent," however, is somewhat difficult to define. The analyses in the previous chapter do not constitute a fully described account of

---

[67] RP here is the reference accent described by Wells in *Accents of English 1: An Introduction* (1982a). Naturally, RP as a spoken accent does involve some degree of variation. Wells goes into more detail about the variations among RP speakers in *Accents of English 2: The British Isles* (1982b).

[68] As with RP, GenAm here is the reference accent described by Wells in *Accents of English 1: An Introduction* (1982a). Wells writes in more detail about North American English in *Accents of English 3: Beyond the British Isles* (Wells 1982c). GenAm is a collection of pronunciation features generally considered standard in North America.

[69] My own interpretation has played a role in determining whether a given sound is consistent with both RP and GenAm, or with only one, or with neither. As each reference accent describes a range of pronunciations, a given sound can easily fall within both ranges. For example, Billy Bragg frequently pronounces the STRUT vowel in "The Tracks of My Tears" as something akin to [ʌ]. While RP speakers and GenAm speakers do not generally pronounce the STRUT vowel identically, there is overlap between the two reference accents. Indeed, the [ʌ] realization of this vowel is the standard transcription in both reference accents (though this is due in part to convention). Where Bragg's realization of the STRUT vowel seems that it could be consistent with RP or GenAm, I have classified it as such. In the case of the DRESS vowel, on the other hand, I have chosen to make a distinction between [e] and [ɛ], with the former associated with RP and the latter with GenAm. While this distinction does exist in the standard transcription of the vowel in the two reference accents, there is certainly overlap in the realization of the vowel by RP speakers and GenAm speakers. However, Bragg frequently uses an [e] vowel that is close enough and tense enough to sound notably un-American to my ears. For this reason, I have placed such realizations of the DRESS vowel in Category 4 (described below). *Grosso modo*, I have attempted to maintain as open an interpretation as possible—that is, leaving the possibility of an RP reading or a GenAm reading where both possibilities could reasonably exist—while maintaining a distinction where, to my hearing, one is necessary.

Bragg's accent to use as a point of comparison. Nevertheless, they do point to certain characteristic features that one could reasonably expect to be a part of Bragg's singing accent. For the present study, I have considered the pronunciation features shown in Figure 4.2 to be characteristic of Bragg's regional accent.

Figure 4.2. Pronunciation features considered to be characteristic of Billy Bragg's regional accent for the present study.

Lexical Set or Consonant	**Phenomenon**	**Approximate Realization**
PRICE	backing (rounding also possible)	[ɑɪ~ ɒɪ]
FACE	lowered onset vowel	[ɐɪ~ aɪ]
STRUT	fronting, opening	[ɐ]
GOAT	lowered onset vowel	[ɐʊ]
MOUTH	raised onset vowel	[æʊ]
FLEECE	diphthongal realization	[ɪi]
/l/	vocalization	[ʊ~ɤ~o]

The above features were selected because of their frequency and consistency in the examples analysed previously. Certain sounds, such as the GOOSE vowel, were not included because Bragg pronounces them in a variety of ways in the previous examples. Others, such as yod (/j/) coalescence, simply do not happen frequently enough to be treated as characteristic features based on the available data.[70] The sounds in Category 2

[70] There is, of course, asymmetry between Category 2 and Category 1; any sound change associated with the dialects of Southeast England is eligible for Category 1, but only the absence of a select set of changes places a sound in Category 2. This asymmetry results from the limitations of the available data. I do not wish to overstate the scope of the analyses from the previous chapter, so in selecting pronunciation features characteristic enough of Billy Bragg that their absence is noteworthy, I have only selected pronunciation

do not exhibit the sound changes shown in Figure 4.2 and could be consistent with either RP or GenAm because their realizations in RP and GenAm are the same or very similar.[71]

Category 3—Americanized: I will categorize sounds as Americanized if they are neither consistent with RP nor with Bragg's regional accent, and are either consistent with the USA-5 model or GenAm more broadly, or appear to emulate the original version of "The Tracks of My Tears."

Category 4—RP, not GenAm: This category is for sounds that are notably not Americanized, that is, sounds that have different pronunciations in RP and GenAm, and that Bragg realizes in a manner consistent with RP.[72]

Category 5—Other: This category exists for pronunciation features that merit further discussion but do not readily fit into one of the above four categories. I therefore will place nonstandard pronunciations that do not belong in Categories 1–4 here.[73]

Having organized the sounds in Bragg's "The Tracks of My Tears" thus, I will discuss the reasons that may exist for the observed pronunciation patterns. I will then reflect on

---

features that appear frequently and consistently. In addition, more broadly, it is often easier to observe the presence of a feature than its absence.

[71] Note that had there been any sounds that did not exhibit the sound changes shown in Figure 4.2, were consistent with RP, and were not consistent with GenAm, they would have necessitated a separate category. For example, this could have happened had there been any instances of the GOAT vowel being realized [əʊ]. However, this did not happen; all of the sounds that were consistent with RP and not with Bragg's regional accent were also consistent with GenAm.

[72] The sounds in Category 1 are also, by default, not Americanized, as they are consistent with the dialects of Southeast England.

[73] Given the number of categories and the differences in their criteria, it may appear that I am attempting to analyse every vowel or consonant sound present in Billy Bragg's cover. However, many sounds are the same in RP, GenAm, and Billy Bragg's regional accent. For example, /l/ before a vowel is generally the same in all three of these accents, and is not mentioned in Trudgill's (1983) USA-5 model. Therefore, while many sounds are placed in one of the five categories above, many are not. Only those sounds that fall into Categories 1–4, and a small number of sounds that have been flagged for another reason and put in Category 5, will be the subject of discussion.

the roles that pronunciation serves here in Bragg's singing and on what this example can tell us about pronunciation more broadly.

4.1.2. Analysis

Phonetic transcriptions of Billy Bragg's recording of "The Tracks of My Tears" and the original recording by Smokey Robinson and the Miracles can be found as Appendix E and Appendix F, respectively. Figure 4.3 below shows the sounds in Bragg's recording that fall into Category 1; these sounds are consistent with the dialects of Southeast England, but not with RP.

Figure 4.3. Pronunciation features in Billy Bragg, "The Tracks of My Tears" that are consistent with speech from Southeast England but not with RP (Category 1: Bragg).

Lexical Set or Consonant	**Phenomenon**	**Approximate Realization**	**Words (Line Numbers)**
FLEECE	diphthongal realization (closing diphthong)	[ɪi]	see (6, 9, 14, 24, 28); easy (7, 15, 25, 29); me (9)
MOUTH	raised onset vowel	[æʊ]	loud (3); out (6, 14, 24, 28); outside (18); down (20)
/l/	vocalization	[ʊ~ɤ~o]	people (1); although (1, 11); you'll (6, 14, 24, 28)
GOOSE	fronting	[ʉ]	you (7, 8, 15, 16, 22); substitute (11)
STRUT	fronting, opening	[ɐ]	of (8, 16, 26, 30)
/j/ (yod)	coalescence	[t͡ʃ], [ʃ]	substitute (11); since you (20)
FOOT	closing, fronting	[ʉ]	look (7)

SQUARE	near-monophthongization	[e(ə)]	wear (22)

These sounds are likely familiar from the discussions in the previous chapter, and thus do not require extended discussion here. What is immediately noteworthy is simply the quantity; this is a shorter list of regional dialectal features than those generated for "Between the Wars," "To Have and to Have Not," and "The Home Front." Figure 4.4 below shows the sounds in Bragg's recording that are consistent with RP and GenAm and not with Bragg's regional accent.

Figure 4.4. Pronunciation features in Billy Bragg, "The Tracks of My Tears" that are consistent with RP and GenAm and not with the previously established characteristic features of Bragg's singing accent (Category 2: RP or GenAm).

Lexical Set or Consonant	Phenomenon	Approximate Realization	Words (Line Numbers)
FACE	onset vowel not lowered	[eɪ]	say (1); take (5, 13); trace (7, 15, 25, 29); hey (17, 17); masquerading (18); fading (19); baby (27, 27)
FLEECE	no diphthong	[iː]	people (1); be (3, 11); deep (4); need (8, 16); me (9); seeming (10); she (11); she's (11)
STRUT	not fronted or opened	[ʌ]	another (9); fun (10); just (11, 20); substitute (11); one (12); makeup (21); breakup (22)
/l/[74]	not vocalized	[l~ɬ]	girl (9)

[74] This includes only instances where /l/ is not followed by a vowel or another /l/.

As is shown above, the FACE, FLEECE, and STRUT vowel sounds have been identified and each occurs multiple times within the recording. Bragg's pronunciation of the FACE vowel is noteworthy because in the words identified, his realization lacks the lowering of the onset vowel that was very common in "Between the Wars," "To Have and to Have Not," and "The Home Front." Likewise, his FLEECE vowel in the words identified above lacks the diphthongal realization that was frequently observed in the previous analyses, and his STRUT vowel lacks its characteristic fronting and opening. There is one instance of a non-prevocalic /l/ that is not vocalized.

It is worth noting that instances of both the FLEECE vowel and the STRUT vowel appear in Category 1 (Bragg) and Category 2 (RP or GenAm) above. This is because Bragg's pronunciation of these vowel sounds is not uniform throughout the track. This divergence is a sign that there is a degree of dialectal mixing at play. Given that the FACE, FLEECE, and STRUT vowels in Category 2 (RP or GenAm) are consistent with GenAm, one may be tempted simply to place them in Category 3 (Americanization). I have hesitated to do this, however, because while they could be a case of Americanization, they could also be a case of Bragg attempting to sound more neutral, and drifting from his regional accent toward more of a General British accent. The sounds in Category 3 (Americanization), however, point more unambiguously toward Americanized pronunciation.

Figure 4.5 below shows pronunciation features in Bragg's "Tracks of My Tears" that I have identified as Americanized. Figure 4.6 shows a few words that have a distinct pronunciation one could characterize as Americanized, but that do not appear to indicate a broader trend.

Figure 4.5. Americanized pronunciation features in Billy Bragg, "The Tracks of My Tears" (Category 3: Americanization).

Lexical Set or Consonant	Phenomenon	Approximate Realization	Words (Line Numbers)
PRICE	monophthongization one reduction ("I'm," line 18)	Monopthongization: [aː] Reduction: [ə]	I'm (1, 4, 10, 18, 20); life (1); I (1, 3, 8, 16, 22); might (3); inside (4); my (5, 6, 8, 13, 14, 16, 19, 21, 21, 22, 23, 23, 26, 27, 28, 30); smile (6, 14, 21, 24, 28); like (10); outside (18); inside (19); clown (20)
GOAT	onset vowel backed, not lowered	[oʊ]	joke (2); although (3, 11); so (5, 13); closer (7, 15, 25, 29); hopes (19)
/t/	flapping	[ɾ]	party (1); hearty (3); out of (6, 14, 24, 28); easy to (7, 15, 25, 29)
/r/	rhotic realization	[ɹ] or [ɚ]	party (1); or (2); hearty (3); masquerading (18);[75] closer (25)[76]
BATH	BATH said like TRAP	[æ]	laughing (3)[77]

[75] One could make the case that "masquerading" does not belong in this list because the /r/ sound, being between vowels, would be pronounced in both rhotic and non-rhotic dialects. However, to my ears, the vowel preceding the /r/ in Bragg's realization is very noticeably /r/-coloured as one would expect in GenAm, as opposed to the [ɜː] followed by linking /r/ that one would likely expect in RP. For this reason, I have included "masquerading" in the list of Americanized pronunciation features. For more information about this lexical set (lettER), see Wells (1982a, 165–8) and for more information about the related lexical set NURSE, see Wells (1982a, 137–40).

[76] It is worth noting that in the transcription, the word "closer" in line 25 looks visually like an instance of linking /r/ as it is followed by the word "it's." However, Bragg audibly pauses after the word "closer," so it seems more logical to hear "closer" as rhotic than as non-rhotic with linking /r/.

[77] Because "laughing" is the only word in the BATH category, one could make the argument that it should be listed as an individual word in Figure 4.6. However, because the absence of the TRAP-BATH split is a well-documented USA-5 feature, I believe that it makes sense to consider it here as a category, albeit one with only a single item in it.

Figure 4.6. Americanized individual words in Billy Bragg, "The Tracks of My Tears" (Category 3: Americanization).

Word (Line Number)	**Phenomenon**	**Approximate Realization**
'cause (2); because (12)	THOUGHT unrounding	[kʌz], [bɪˈkɑz]
clown (20)	MOUTH monophthongization; /n/ reduction or deletion	[klaː(n)]
well (20)	DRESS backing; /l/ deletion	[wə]
baby (23, 27)	happY laxing,[78] opening	[ˈbe(ɪ)bɪ]

Because the sound changes observed here have mostly not appeared in previous analyses, they will require further explanation. PRICE monophthongization refers to the realization of the vowel in PRICE as a monophthong [aː] or similar, as opposed to the diphthong [aɪ] that one would expect in RP or GenAm. This is one of the sound changes commonly made by British singers in the 1960s Americanizing their singing (USA-5 features) identified by Peter Trudgill (1983). This realization of the PRICE vowel, while not a feature of GenAm, is a feature of Southern American English and African-American Vernacular English. PRICE monophthongization is unsurprising in this particular Billy Bragg cover because it is a USA-5 feature and because it is consistent with the way Smokey Robinson realizes the PRICE vowel in the original version of the song. The GOAT vowel is noted here because Bragg frequently realizes it in this track as

[78] What is here called happY laxing is the opposite of happY tensing, a sound change that has occurred in many accents of English and is now generally heard as normative. The final vowel in words like happY used to be realized with the lax vowel [ɪ], but the tense [iː] is now more common (Wells 1982a, 257–8). Some accents in Britain and North America have been more resistant to happY tensing than others. In this case, I have categorized happY laxing as an Americanized feature in Bragg's pronunciation because Smokey Robinson's realization of the word "baby" also exhibits happY laxing. I will further address the history of happY laxing in popular music later in this chapter.

[oʊ]. Here, the onset vowel is backed compared to the [əʊ] one might expect in RP, and is also not lowered as it is in the [ɐʊ] one might from Bragg. The [oʊ] realization is closer to what one would expect in GenAm and is also consistent with the pronunciation in the original version of the song.[79] The next sound change noted in Figure 4.5 is flapping, which occurs when a /t/ between vowels is reduced to a flipped /r/ sound, [ɾ]. This phenomenon was not entirely absent from the examples analysed in the previous chapter, and indeed, is not entirely absent from speech in Southeast English dialects. However, it is much more common in North American speech and is one of Trudgill's (1983) USA-5 features. Interestingly, while Billy Bragg consistently realises the /t/ in "easy to" as [ɾ], Smokey Robinson does not; he rearticulates after "easy" and sings the /t/ as [t]. There are a few instances of Bragg pronouncing an /r/ at the end of a syllable where one would not expect one in RP or in his accent. Rhoticity, like flapping and PRICE monophthongization, is one of Trudgill's (1983) USA-5 features. Notably, however, Smokey Robinson's singing accent in the original song is non-rhotic. There is one more USA-5 feature that appears in Bragg's cover: the vowel in BATH (in this case, the word "laughing") being realized like the vowel in TRAP, an instance of the absence of the TRAP–BATH split.[80]

In addition to the more general pronunciation features discussed above, there are several individual words that Bragg pronounces in a noteworthy way in his cover, shown in Figure 4.6. The first is the word "because," as well as its shortened form. Bragg

---

[79] For more information about the differences between the GOAT lexical set in RP versus GenAm, see Wells (1982a, 146–7).

[80] The TRAP–BATH split, as explained in Chapters 2 and 3, refers to a distinction made in certain accents, including RP, between words of the TRAP lexical set and those of the BATH lexical set. In accents that make this distinction, TRAP words are generally pronounced with a vowel similar to [æ], while BATH words are generally pronounced with a vowel similar to [ɑː]. In accents without the TRAP–BATH split, BATH words do not have the characteristic broad vowel, and are rather treated in the same way as TRAP words.

realizes the vowel in "cause" as [ʌ] and then [ɑ] instead of the rounded [ɔ]. He pronounces the word "clown" with a monophthong [aː] instead of the [aʊ] one might expect in RP or the [æʊ] one might expect from Bragg. He also barely pronounces the /n/ at the end of the word. Bragg pronounces the vowel in the word "well" farther back in the mouth than one might expect, and barely pronounces the /l/ at the end of the word. Finally, several of his realizations of the word "baby" end with a laxer and more open vowel than is typical. Bragg's realizations of the words "cause," "clown," "well," and "baby" closely resemble the pronunciations in the original recording; I have therefore placed them in Category 3.

The fourth category of pronunciation features worth noting is a set of features that are consistent with RP but not GenAm. These features are worth noting because in these instances, Bragg had an opportunity to Americanize his pronunciation, but did not. Both the presence of pronunciation changes and their absence are worth noting when considering a mixed accent. The pronunciation features that fit into this category are shown below as Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.7. Pronunciation features in Billy Bragg, "The Tracks of My Tears" that are consistent with RP but not with GenAm (Category 4: RP, not GenAm).

Lexical Set or Consonant	Phenomenon	Approximate Realization	Words (Line Numbers)
/r/	Non-rhotic realization[81]	∅	closer (7, 15); tears (8, 16, 26, 30); girl (9); permanent (12); wear (22)

[81] For the moment, I am considering rhoticity to be a yes-or-no question. As a result, I have grouped together words from more than one lexical set, united by their realization with [ɹ] or similar in GenAm. For information about vowels preceding historic /r/ and the complications of conceptualizing /r/ in non-rhotic accents, see Wells (1982a, 213–27).

DRESS	closing, tensing	[e]	tell (2); left (9); yeah (17, 20)

As mentioned above, there are instances in which Billy Bragg pronounces a non-prevocalic /r/ as a person speaking in a rhotic accent would. However, there are several instances, shown in Figure 4.7, in which his pronunciation is consistent with that of a non-rhotic speaker. The vowel in the word DRESS is worth noting because in RP, this vowel is typically a more close, tense [e], as opposed to the [ɛ] typical of GenAm.[82] Bragg's pronunciation here is more consistent with the RP realization.

Finally, the sounds placed in Category 5 are labelled as such because they do not fit into one of the above categories but also do not readily conform to the expectations one might have of RP, GenAm, or Bragg's speech. These pronunciation features are shown below as Figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8. Pronunciation features that have been flagged for another reason in Billy Bragg, "The Tracks of My Tears" (Category 5: Other).

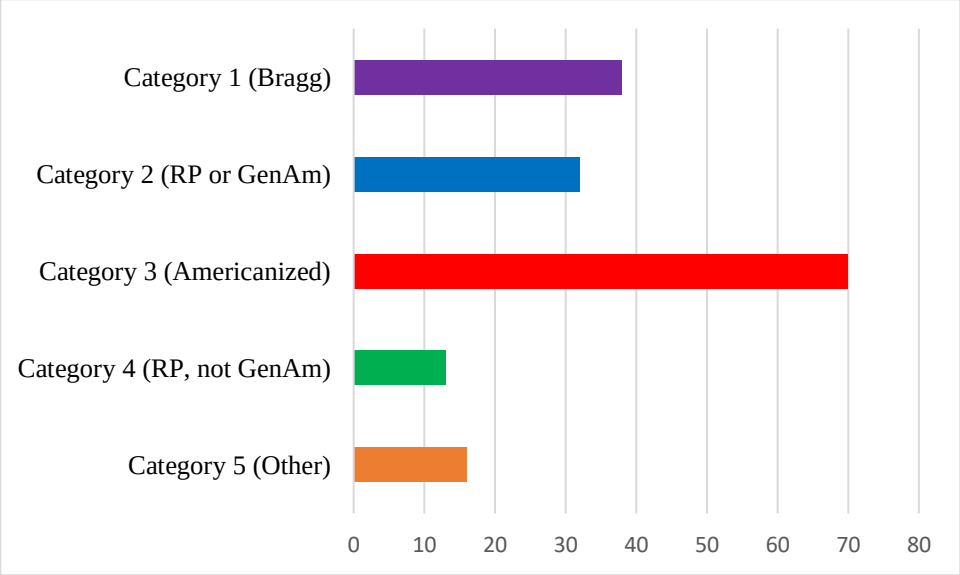
Lexical Set or Consonant	Phenomenon	Approximate Realization	Word (Line Number)
FACE	near two-syllable realization of diphthong	[ei~e.i]	face (5, 13, 23, 27); place (6, 14, 24, 28)
FACE	near-monophthongization	[e(ɪ)]	may (11); makeup (21); breakup (22); baby (23, 27); take (23, 27)
FLEECE	onset vowel opening, near-monophthongization	[e(ɪ)]	me (20)

[82] As mentioned above, I do not wish to overstate the difference between the RP DRESS vowel and that of GenAm. However, Bragg's pronunciation does sound sufficiently tense that I think it is appropriate to classify it as outside the range of what one would expect in GenAm.

Two of the Category 5 features involve the FACE vowel, which has already appeared in Category 2 (RP or GenAm) as [eɪ]. The first of the Category 5 iterations of FACE involves realizing the diphthong almost as two syllables ([e.i]). This realization occurs specifically with the words "face" and "place" at the ends of lines in the chorus. The other Category 5 version of the FACE vowel, on the other hand, involves Bragg realizing the vowel almost as a monophthong, with the second vowel sound barely present ([e(ɪ)]). These versions of the FACE vowel will both be discussed in more detail later in the chapter. The third sound in Category 5 occurs on the word "me" in line 20. Here, one would expect the FLEECE vowel, but Bragg sings this word with essentially the same vowel as his near-monophthongal realization of FACE: [e(ɪ)]. This phenomenon is likely related to happY laxing, mentioned above. Such treatments of the vowel in words like "me" and of the unstressed vowel in words like "baby" have a long history in popular music, and will be addressed later in the chapter.

Figure 4.9 below shows a graph summarizing the above data. The graph shows how many sounds from each category there are in Bragg's recording. Naturally, one should not try to extrapolate too much from data compiled thus. It would be inadvisable, for example, to claim that Category 1 is markedly more important than Category 2 because the former has 38 tokens while the latter has 32. However, the graph does provide a visual overview of the dialect mixing present in the track.

Figure 4.9. Graph showing the frequency of each of the five categories of noted pronunciation features in Billy Bragg, "The Tracks of My Tears."[83]



It is evident from the above analysis of Billy Bragg's pronunciation in "The Tracks of My Tears" that Bragg's singing accent therein is a mixed accent with some features of his regional accent, some Americanized features, and some features that are a bit more difficult to categorize. It is not surprising that some Americanized pronunciation is present in this track. The ways in which it takes form, however, are hardly self-explanatory. Below, I will discuss some of the likely reasons for Bragg's pronunciation choices.

4.1.3. Discussion

The first force that is likely at play here is replication: direct reproduction of pronunciation features from the original Smokey Robinson and the Miracles recording. This appears to be the case for the individual words that Bragg pronounces in an Americanized way (shown in Figure 4.6). For example, Bragg's distinctive pronunciation

[83] Each instance of a pronunciation feature from each category is counted as 1.

of the word “clown” (line 20), with a monophthongized vowel and with the final /n/ barely present, very closely matches how this word is pronounced by the background vocalists in the original recording. The pronunciation of this word thus is unusual in British speech and North American speech, so it seems likely that Bragg is replicating the distinctive pronunciation from the original recording, deliberately or otherwise.

In some cases, Bragg’s pronunciation matches that of Smokey Robinson and/or his background vocalists, but one cannot necessarily say that he is replicating their pronunciation because he may also be emulating a more general trend. Bragg’s monophthongization of the PRICE vowel is a useful example here. This pronunciation is consistent with the original recording and is certainly not consistent with Bragg’s typical singing accent. However, PRICE monophthongization is a USA-5 feature; there is a history of singers who do not have this feature in their speech adopting it in their singing. Therefore, one cannot definitively say whether Bragg is replicating the specific pronunciation from the original recording or emulating a more general pronunciation style.

Interestingly, emulation of a pronunciation style can go beyond emulation of what is present in the reference material. As mentioned previously, Billy Bragg sometimes realizes non-prevocalic /r/ in “The Tracks of My Tears” in a rhotic manner, despite the fact that his typical singing accent and Smokey Robinson’s singing accent in the original recording are both non-rhotic. Rhoticity, however, is one of Trudgill’s (1983) USA-5 features and, more broadly, it is a dialectal feature widely considered to be characteristic of North American English. In adopting a more American pronunciation style, then,

Bragg actually introduces an Americanized pronunciation feature that was not present in the original version of the song.

One could conclude from the above discussion that pronunciation is simply acting here as part of the musical style, as discussed in the previous chapter. However, it is worthwhile to consider whether the pronunciation here has a more intrinsically musical role. At the beginning of this chapter, I presented a quotation by Billy Bragg on changing his pronunciation while singing "The Tracks of My Tears," from an article by journalist John Lewis. Let us consider the full text of the section of this article based on Lewis's interview with Bragg.

> "There was a definite punk agenda," says Billy Bragg, "which was to regionalise yourself, to give yourself a sense of place. In my case it was the idea that Barking in Essex was somewhere worth coming from. And there was a premium in sounding awkward. I once told Paul Weller that a particular song I'd written had been influenced by Smokey Robinson – he said I sounded more like Smokey fucking Mullard!"
>
> [Singing] in a London accent certainly forces a singer to approach melody differently. "You can't sing something like 'Tracks Of Your Tears' [*sic*] in a London accent," says Bragg. "Believe me, I've tried. The cadences, the rhythm of the speech, it's all wrong. It's also difficult to sing harmonies in a London accent. And you can't sustain syllables for long. I learned that to my cost with 'Greetings To The New Brunette,' which starts with that sustained 'Shirrrr-LEY!' I sound like a fucking foghorn. So you end up with a higher density of words in a song. And I think this betokens a certain urgency. I certainly got that from seeing early Jam gigs. Weller seemed like he could hardly get his words out quick enough, as if he was just bursting with the energy of youth. You couldn't really imagine punk developing in any other accent."
>
> (Lewis 2006)

Bragg's comments in the first paragraph recall discussions of pronunciation as identity creation through the expression of regional identity, defiance, or sounding like oneself. The second paragraph, however, speaks of a different relationship between sung pronunciation and the music that it is a part of. Bragg says that attempting to sing "The

Tracks of My Tears" in his accent does not work because one's singing accent affects the text setting and how the syllables of the lyrics fit with the melody and rhythm. Essentially, he is saying that songs are not always easily separable from the accent they were written for because pronunciation affects how the text and music fit together. He goes on to say that the inherent limitations or opportunities created by a given accent can affect how music created in this accent takes shape, giving the example of a sense of urgency in punk that he ascribes in part to the difficulties of singing sustained syllables in working-class London English. The idea that pronunciation has played a role in the creation of the proverbial 'music itself' is compelling. Let us consider some moments in "The Tracks of My Tears" where this may be evident.

PRICE monophthongization comes to mind as a change in Bragg's pronunciation that could likely be ascribed to the relationship between the text and the music. It is logical to assume that words like "I" or "smile" fit better with the music when realized with a monophthong [aː], rather than the [ɑɪ] or [ɒɪ] heard frequently in "Between the Wars." It is similarly unsurprising that the GOAT vowel, as in "joke" or "closer," would better fit the music realized as [oʊ] than as the [ɐʊ] of "The Home Front." I have placed both of these sound changes under Category 3 (Americanization). In doing so, however, I do not mean to suggest that they are evidence of Billy Bragg specifically trying to sound American. Indeed, adopting a pronunciation style that fits with the existing music is a much more likely explanation for the Americanized pronunciation in "The Tracks of My Tears" than a particular desire to sound American. [84] It is, of course, curious that, as noted

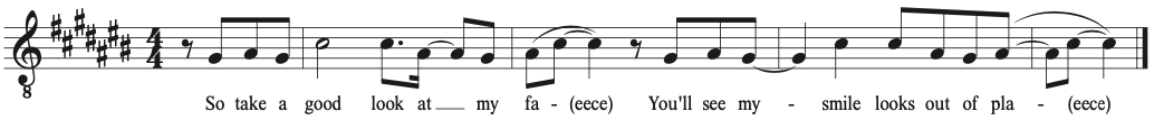
[84] In addition, it is clear from the existence of Category 1 (Bragg) and Category 4 (RP, not GenAm) that Americanization does not fully overpower Britishness in Bragg's singing in this track.

above, Bragg sings some words, such as “party” or “hearty,” in a rhotic manner as in GenAm, despite the fact that Smokey Robinson does not. The instances of rhoticity point to the danger in assuming that any Americanized pronunciation features in the recording are purely musical phenomena, divorced from any linguistic context, as dialects do not work this way. For example, singing the word “party” in line 1 with a flapped /t/ may make Bragg more likely to sing the same word with a rhotic /r/ because the two sounds are likely to be associated as American sounds. While the intratextual, musical function of pronunciation here is not fully independent of the extratextual, linguistic function, it is clear that the pronunciation is strongly linked to the music and that to consider it purely as a linguistic phenomenon would be to consider it incompletely.

Having established the existence of a musically functional role for pronunciation in “The Tracks of My Tears,” let us consider the sounds that I have placed in Category 5 (Other). The near-monophthongal realization of the FACE vowel ([e(ɪ)]) can reasonably be understood as a case of the pronunciation conforming to the music. Generally, monophthongs are easier to sing than diphthongs. In addition, as mentioned above, Bragg has spoken about the difficulties in sustaining syllables while singing with a regional accent from Southeast England. One can reasonably surmise that the distinctive diphthongs present in this family of accents contribute to this difficulty. As for Bragg’s near two-syllable realization of the FACE vowel ([e.i]) in the words “face” and “place” at the ends of lines in the chorus, it also seems related to the melody and rhythm. Bragg sings the vowel in these words (the FACE diphthong) as more or less two separate syllables. This non-standard pronunciation makes sense within the musical phrasing; each of these words falls at the end of a line and is sung over two pitches, an ascending minor

third (see Figure 4.10). It is logical, then, to interpret this situation as a case of pronunciation being altered in service to the melody, another instance of pronunciation, melody, and musical phrasing being interrelated.

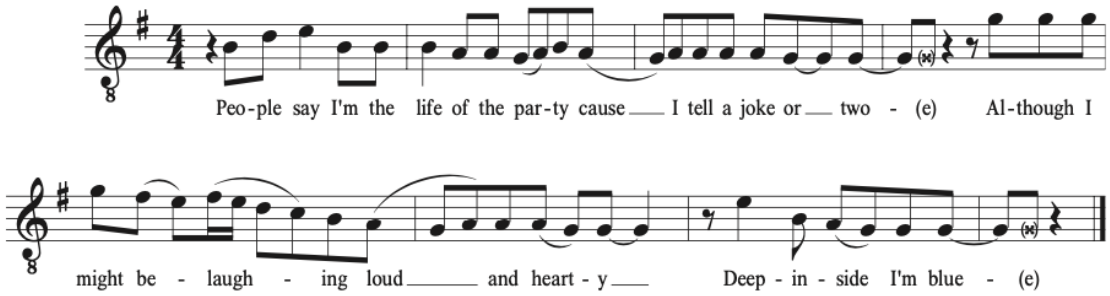
Figure 4.10. Melodic transcription of Billy Bragg, "The Tracks of My Tears," first chorus, first two lines.[85]



Bragg's pronunciation is not a replication of Smokey Robinson's pronunciation. Interestingly, however, in the original version of "The Tracks of My Tears," Robinson also adds what one could almost describe as an extra syllable to certain words. Specifically, he sings the words "two" (line 2), "blue" (line 4), "you" (line 8, 17), "masquerading" (line 19), and "fading" (line 20) with a bit of a schwa at the end of each word, creating a feint toward an extra syllable (see Figure 4.11). These words fall at the ends of lines or phrases in the same way that "face" and "place" do. One could speculate about whether Bragg is emulating Robinson's addition of extra syllables, intentionally or otherwise. Pronunciation, then, could be considered as a stylistic feature open not only to imitation, but also to modification and adaptation.

[85] In the lyrics accompanying the transcription, I have exaggerated Bragg's pronunciation of "face" and "place."

Figure 4.11. Melodic transcription of Smokey Robinson, "The Tracks of My Tears," first verse.



4.2. Further Considerations

As noted earlier, Billy Bragg pronounces the word "me" in line 20 as [me(ɪ)] and the vowel sound at the end of "baby" in lines 23 and 27 as [ɪ]. These changes are likely examples of two similar phenomena affecting the /i/ vowel in stressed and unstressed syllables in popular music. Blogger Karen Burgos has written about these phenomena in two pieces titled "Oh Babih, Babay – How one vowel one hundred years ago changed how we sing" (2017) and "It's Gonna Be May: A Historay" (2020).[86]

It is worth noting that the word "me" and the second vowel sound in the word "baby" are not part of the same lexical set. "Me" is part of the lexical set FLEECE (Wells 1982a, 140–1), while "baby" belongs with happY.[87] While FLEECE and happY are pronounced with more or less the same vowel ([i] or similar) in most accents of English today, this was not always the case. As previously mentioned, the vowel at the end of

[86] Karen Burgos has shared numerous pieces about linguistics in everyday life in her blog, titled *Ace Linguist*. While Burgos engages with scholarly literature in her essays and her work has been cited in published scholarly literature, including Lisa Jansen's (2022) recent book, *Ace Linguist* has not been held to the standard of a peer-reviewed publication and in citing it, I do not claim that it has. I do nevertheless believe that Burgos's blog is worth engaging with on its own terms, as a work of public linguistics.

[87] In developing his lexical sets, Wells designated the words happY, lettER, and commA as categories for describing the behaviour of certain vowel sounds that occur specifically in an unstressed position at the end of a word (1982a, 165–8). Strictly speaking, these weak vowel categories are not standard lexical sets, but in practice, they are used in many of the same ways as the standard lexical sets.

happY was historically a more lax [ɪ] but shifted to [i] in most accents. Wells (1982a, 257–8) speculates that this process was likely already underway in the nineteenth century. Burgos (2017) notes that the older pronunciation with [ɪ], which she labels lax-happY, is common in various genres of popular music. She attributes this in part to the fact that lax-happY has persisted much longer in a few English dialects, one of them being African American Vernacular English. The origins of lax-happY in, for example, rock music, can be traced to the origins of rock-and-roll in the blues. Burgos (2020) observes a similar phenomenon, which she calls me-breaking. This involves FLEECE words or happY words with a vowel of the /i/ type, in which the vowel is realized as something more like [ɪi~ei].[88] A famous example of me-breaking, and the basis for Burgos's (2020) essay title, is Justin Timberlake's way of pronouncing the hook from the 2000 NSYNC single "It's Gonna Be Me," frequently transcribed as "it's gonna be May." Me-breaking is a feature of Southern American English. Unsurprisingly, Burgos (2020) reports that the earliest examples of me-breaking she has found in popular song are in country music from the middle of the twentieth century.

While Burgos identifies plausible origins for singers' use of lax-happY and me-breaking in African American Vernacular English and Southern American English, respectively, she goes on to discuss how these origins have become obscured and these pronunciation features seem simply to have worked their way into the toolkit of popular song. Justin Timberlake has been asked about his famous rendering of the word "me" as something many hear as closer to the word "May," and has said that songwriter and

---

[88] Billy Bragg does have [ɪi] for FLEECE in his regional accent. The me-breaking vowel in question here tends more toward [ei] and is more easily confused with the FACE vowel.

producer Max Martin had asked him to sing the word thus. When asked to speculate about why, Timberlake said, "I think he just wanted me to sound like I was from Tennessee" (qtd. in Burgos 2020). As a songwriter or co-writer, Martin has had twenty-five *Billboard* Hot 100 number-one singles, with the first being Britney Spears's "…Baby One More Time" in 1998 and the most recent being Coldplay and BTS's "My Universe" in 2021. As a producer, "Martin is known to insist that the artists he works with sing his songs exactly the way he sings them on the demos" (Seabrook 2015). Indeed, given the sheer number of commercially successful tracks in which Martin has had a hand, it is reasonable to assume that he has played a role in spreading me-breaking in popular music. However, the practice predates Martin.

Burgos's (2017) first essay on me-breaking and lax-happY was, in part, a response to an article titled "Why Justin Timberlake Sings 'May' Instead of 'Me'" that had recently appeared in online travel magazine *Atlas Obscura* (Nosowitz 2016). In search of the answer to the question posed in his title, writer Dan Nosowitz interviewed Lis Lewis, a vocal coach who has worked with pop stars such as Rihanna, Gwen Stefani, and Britney Spears. Lewis discusses the role that vocal registration can play in a singer's choice of vowel sound. In particular, she talks about the mechanics of belting—that is, extending the chest voice into a higher register—and says that a tense, close vowel such as [i] makes this technique more difficult than a laxer or more open vowel does. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that singers may be more likely to employ me-breaking or lax-happY when singing high notes. However, as Burgos and Nosowitz both note, this correspondence is not always there.

Burgos (2020) suggests that singers' use of me-breaking and lax-happY when singing in a higher register may have led to an association between these vowel changes and a perception of intensity, and that singers may therefore be using vowel distortion to create intensity, even when the distortion is not necessitated by vocal technique. These vowel changes, then, may have taken on meaning in popular song through their relation to melody and the mechanics of singing. Max Martin's affinity for me-breaking is likely not—or not entirely—the result of a particular fondness for Southern American English. Rather, it seems likely that Martin simply contributed to the propagation of a vowel change in popular music that had already taken on meaning that had more to do with its intratextual function than its extratextual origins.[89]

At this time, I should likely address why I have just made an excursus on music that postdates Bragg's cover of "The Tracks of My Tears" by nearly twenty years. While me-breaking and lax-happY seem to have reached a zenith in the 2000s, possibly because of Max Martin, they have a much longer history in popular song. As noted previously, lax-happY is apparent in the way that Billy Bragg pronounces the word "baby" in lines 23 and 27. It makes sense that he pronounces the word "baby" in this way because Smokey Robinson does as well. Similarly, Bragg's pronunciation of the word "me" in line 20 appears to be an example of me-breaking. Smokey Robinson, however, does not pronounce the word "me" in this way. It seems, then, that Bragg has simply borrowed the

---

[89] It is interesting to note as well that Martin is Swedish and in a profile of Martin in *The New Yorker*, John Seabrook (2015) asserts that having learned English as a second language may have served as an advantage to Martin in writing songs with English lyrics. According to Seabrook, "Swedish writers are not partial to wit, metaphor, or double entendre, songwriting staples from Tin Pan Alley through the Brill Building era. They are more inclined to fit the syllables to the sounds—a working method that Martin calls 'melodic math'—and not worry too much about whether the resulting lines make sense." The idea that words consist of syllables meant to be crafted does seem consistent with the idea that a certain vowel change may be appealing for reasons entirely divorced from its linguistic origins.

pronunciation from the popular music lexicon, either for musical expediency or simply because it exists as an option. I took the time to address the question of me-breaking in pop songs of the 2000s not only because this phenomenon presents an example of a distinctive pronunciation feature in popular song becoming so well-known that an online travel magazine chose to write about it, but also because it presents a prime example of how pronunciation's intratextual function can overtake its extratextual function.

Returning once more to Billy Bragg's comments about changing his singing accent when covering "The Tracks of My Tears," it is interesting to note that his comments echo those made frequently by choral directors when discussing pronunciation choices. In an article in *The Choral Journal* titled "The Use of French Latin for Choral Music," Anthony R. Reeves (2001) laments what he sees as a lack of regional Latin pronunciation (except for Germanic Latin) in choral performances. To help rectify this situation, Reeves writes about the history of regional Latin variants, and of French Latins specifically.[90] He then provides some basic information on French Latin pronunciation and points his reader to further resources. Ultimately, Reeves advocates the wider use of French Latin(s) not only for purposes of authenticity, but also to enhance one's understanding of a piece of music and to resolve questions about, for example, text setting. In making his case for the wider use of regional varieties of Latin, Reeves argues that the qualities of Italian-influenced liturgical Latin thought to make it inherently singable, such as open vowels and unobtrusive consonants, may be disadvantageous depending on the musical context. According to Reeves, "[i]t seems logical that

---

[90] Reeves is careful to specify that there are regional variations of French Latin, and therefore prefers to refer to "French Latins."

composers determined the shapes of vocal lines based on the vowel sounds inherent to their own regional variant of Latin," and liturgical Latin runs the risk of flattening out subtleties emerging from the relationship between text and music and "the sound of the text" (2001, 12). He also asserts that liturgical Latin is not somehow neutral, but rather "is strongly flavored by the eccentricities of the Italian language" (Reeves 2001, 12). Reeves then points out that syllabic stress in French Latin, highly influenced by that of French, has affected the rhythm, phrasing, and text setting of works composed with this variety of Latin in mind, and that "when singers observe the appropriate accentuation, some of the baffling characteristics of French music […] suddenly make sense" (Reeves 2001, 13–14). Reeves then quotes conductor Andrew Parrot, who writes, in defense of historical and regional varieties of Latin, that "a correctly underlaid text will become easier to sing," that "the rhythms of the music and language are more likely to match," and that "what may appear to be merely a veneer on musical performance can shed unexpected light on the nature of the music itself" (Copeman 1990, vi–vii, qtd. in Reeves 2001, 14). Reeves asserts in conclusion that "awareness of different systems of Latin pronunciation related to geographic regions and historic periods can enhance the stylistic integrity and beauty of sung music, as they are truer to the pronunciations understood by the composers" (2001, 15).

I draw attention to Reeves (2001)—and the comments by Andrew Parrot that he quotes—as an example of an appeal to regionally-informed (and historically-informed) pronunciation choices not just in pursuit of authentic performance practices, but also in

an effort to elucidate specific features of the elusive 'music itself.'[91] The idea that using pronunciation conventions close to those that a composer would have had in mind allows for a deeper understanding and better interpretation of musical features such as melody and rhythm is common in conversations about early music, historically-informed performance, and vocal music more generally. Billy Bragg's comments that "[t]he cadences [and] the rhythm of the speech [are] all wrong" and that it is "difficult to sing harmonies in a London accent […] you can't sustain syllables for long" (qtd. in Lewis 2006) seem to express similar sentiments to those of Anthony Reeves in his appeal for French Latin in French music. The extent to which one truly can understand and execute a composer or songwriter's intentions is, of course, up for vigorous debate, as is the question of whether this should even be the goal of performance. However, the idea that lyrics shape how melodies are created, and that these melodies are therefore inextricably linked to the ways their lyrics were first pronounced, emerges as a common thread between Bragg's comments on singing covers and an explanation that choral directors often provide for their pronunciation choices. I believe that this idea is worthy of close consideration in a variety of repertories.

Choral music also presents itself as a place for discussion about the intratextual functions of pronunciation more broadly. In a brief essay in *The Choral Journal* titled "The Legacy of Choral Singing: A Directors' Choir Experience," Gene Peterson (2018) describes six schools of choral singing, as presented by Howard Swan (1973) in the textbook *Choral Conducting: A Symposium*. Two quotations stand out. In describing the

---

[91] Naturally, the question of authenticity in the context of historically-informed performance practice is no less complicated than the question of authenticity in the context of Billy Bragg's pronunciation choices, as discussed in the previous chapter.

school associated with F. Melius Christiansen and the St. Olaf Choir, Peterson quotes Swan in saying that "[e]very singer in the chorus has a primary responsibility to subordinate his own ideas concerning tone production, rhythmic stress, and pronunciation to the blended and unified sound made by the total ensemble" (Swan 1973, qtd. in Peterson 2018, 65). Similarly, in describing the school associated with Fred Waring, Peterson quotes Swan in saying that "[b]y following the natural laws of good speech which are related to proper pronunciation and articulation, a singer and an ensemble can develop a beautiful quality of tone" (Swan 1973, qtd. in Peterson 2018, 65). These quotations are compelling because they present pronunciation as a vehicle for blend and tone production. The idea of pronunciation as fundamental to creating a unified sound, and even as a basis for good tone production, involves conceiving of pronunciation in more of a musical than a linguistic sense. In an article on Latin pronunciation for singers, Leslie De'Ath invokes Steven Plank in reminding the reader of the role "of vowels as a color element" (Plank 2004, 18, qtd. in De'Ath 2016, 24). In its role in providing colour, pronunciation appears more closely aligned with musical timbre than with the meaning of the text. Similarly—or perhaps on the contrary—in a brief article on Latin pronunciation, Richard Trame (1983) makes the argument that overly strict adherence to Italianate pronunciation can create "a distinctly artificial effect for Americans," and that slight modifications can make "the sound more compatible with our American speech patterns and often with the exigencies of the music itself" (29). Essentially, Trame is encouraging conductors to allow a bit of inaccuracy if it produces a more natural and a more musical effect. Both Trame and De'Ath seem to be more interested in pronunciation as sound than

as pronunciation as a vehicle for delivering language. Overall, choral music presents a wealth of opportunity for further study on pronunciation's intratextual functions.

4.3. Closing Thoughts

In the preceding discussion, I have endeavoured to broaden my exploration of Billy Bragg's pronunciation and what it can tell us about pronunciation in musical understanding by examining an example in which his singing accent is different from his regional accent. In doing so, I have complemented my discussion of pronunciation as identity creation—which focused primarily on the linguistic, extratextual functions of pronunciation—by discussing the intratextual, more specifically musical functions that pronunciation can have. I began by presenting the pronunciation features present in Billy Bragg's cover of "The Tracks of My Tears" and discussing the likely reasons for the sound changes present. I then discussed the more musically functional role that pronunciation takes on in this context. In closing, I presented two contrasting examples of other contexts in which music's intratextual function comes to the forefront: pop songs of the 2000s and French Latin in choral music. These very different repertories provide other examples of how bracketing pronunciation as a strictly linguistic phenomenon, separable from 'music itself,' can in turn limit our understanding of that very music.

It may be tempting to conclude that pronunciation can sometimes be treated as a strictly musical feature, divorced from its linguistic context. Indeed, "The Tracks of My Tears" provides an example of pronunciation functioning in what one could describe as a more specifically musical way; it appears that one of the main reasons for Bragg's use of Americanized pronunciation is to maintain the fit between the text, the melody, and the musical phrasing. Nevertheless, his Americanized pronunciation is not a straightforward

imitation of the pronunciation in the original song. In addition, it is important to remember that one cannot simply reduce pronunciation to a part of a musical style and imagine it to be completely separated from its social functions. The fact that the "pop-song style" described by Trudgill (1983) is sometimes perceived as a neutral singing accent that can be adopted and used unproblematically is itself a product of the complex social history of American, and then British, popular music. In particular, the perception of Black music as available to be appropriated by white artists is sedimented in the prevalence of PRICE monophthongization by singers, including American singers, who do not have this feature in their speech. Billy Bragg's "The Tracks of My Tears" shows pronunciation serving a more clearly musical function, but this musical function cannot be fully separated from its linguistic function.

While it is easy to reduce these pronunciation choices to simple convention or convenience, neither the pronunciation choices themselves nor the information that they convey to a listener are neutral or uncomplicated. Pronunciation features in vocal music have both musical and linguistic functions. The musical and the linguistic exist on a continuum, work together, and are not wholly separable from each other. In the next chapter, I will look at another context in which pronunciation's functions work together: character creation. The social meanings that pronunciation choices carry, even those that have been cemented as musical conventions, allow pronunciation to serve as a tool in character creation.

Chapter 5

5. Giving Voice to a Character

In the preceding two chapters, I have explored the extratextual and intratextual roles of pronunciation by considering pronunciation in Billy Bragg's music in two very different contexts: Bragg singing his own original songs and Bragg singing a cover of a well-known song by another artist. One of Bragg's most famous pieces of work, however, is an intermediate case between these two contexts: Bragg's 1998 collaboration with Wilco called *Mermaid Avenue*. The recordings for the album were made at the request of Nora Guthrie, daughter of Woody Guthrie. Guthrie had a collection of lyrics that her father had written before his death, but had not set to music (or at least, no music was extant). The resulting recordings are therefore not fully original songs, but not fully covers either. In what follows, I will examine how pronunciation functions in two tracks from *Mermaid Avenue*. This discussion will provide an opportunity to further explore ideas considered in the previous chapters, including the role of pronunciation in creating a persona, the interplay of pronunciation with musical parameters such as melody and rhythm, and the complexities created by mixed accents. In discussing the creation of a musical persona, I will draw on music scholarship and sociolinguistic scholarship that has asked questions about where voices come from, or appear to come from. I will begin with the question of character creation, and will examine the track "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key" in this context. I will then consider the question of voices from indeterminate sources, and will discuss the track "The Unwelcome Guest" in this context. Next, I will look at how pronunciation interacts with other musical features, and how pronunciation

can add distinctive sonic character to a track. I will conclude by considering the question of what mixed accents tell us, and more broadly, what accents tell us.

5.1. The Voice as a Person and the Voice as a Character

In the next section, I will present an analysis of Billy Bragg's pronunciation in "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key," but first, let us return to an idea presented briefly in Chapter 3, namely, the idea that a singer can engage in a kind of self-performance. To do so, we will return to Nikolas Coupland's (2011) discussion of James Taylor in "Voice, Place, and Genre in Popular Song Performance." To get there, we will consider the work on which Coupland's idea of the self-performance is primarily based: the chapter "The Voice" from Simon Frith's (1996) book *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music*. In the chapter, Frith examines the complexity of the concept of "voice" in popular music. Frith begins by asking his reader, "Look at a song's lyrics on the page: whose 'voice' is there?" (1996, 183). He presents the idea that song lyrics seem to come from multiple voices, such as the songwriter, the singer, and the song's narrator. When a singer sings the word "I," it is not entirely clear who this "I" is. Nevertheless, as listeners, we tend to ascribe personhood to voices. Indeed, Frith says that in popular music, "as listeners we assume that we can hear someone's life in their voice" (1996, 185–6). In order to understand the ways in which we hear singers personified in their voices, Frith proposes that we "approach the voice under four headings: as *a musical instrument*; as *a body*; as *a person*; and as *a character*" (1996, 187).

The first category, the voice as a musical instrument, is exactly what it sounds like. Frith points to backup vocals as the quintessentially instrumental use of the voice, and also explores the idea of considering the microphone as a musical instrument. He

says, however, that as listeners, we never really hear a voice as purely instrumental. The second category, the voice as a body, could perhaps be considered the opposite of the first. Drawing on Roland Barthes, Frith writes of the physical experience of singing—real or imagined—and the idea "that the voice *is* the sound of the body in a direct sense" (1996, 192). He then writes of the ways in which we have learned to hear voices as male or female, and the idea that preferences for high voices or low voices are culturally defined and vary significantly from genre to genre and era to era. He also makes reference to Sean Cubitt's idea that technologies that emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century made listeners accustomed for the first time to hearing voices without bodies, and asserts that "in practice, we don't hear telephone or radio or recorded voices like this at all: we assign them bodies" (Frith 1996, 196). According to Frith, it is in fact quite challenging to produce a sung utterance that communicates disembodiment.

In the final section of his chapter, Frith explores the categories of the voice as a person and the voice as a character together. According to Frith, "the voice is usually taken to be the person" (1996, 197). In other words, listeners, by default, tend to equate the voice of a pop singer with the singer as a person; "[t]his is one reason why we often think we 'know' a singer as part of what we mean by 'liking' their voice" (Frith 1996, 197). However, the pathway from singer's voice to singer as a person is neither straight nor unobstructed; "a voice is easy to change" (Frith 1996, 197). Frith explores the idea that taking on others' voices has long been common in popular music; he points to the example of "the white use of [B]lack voices in rock and roll history" (1996, 198). He points out that voices can be manipulated to embody characters or to obscure singers' identities. As a result, voices can deceive; "[i]n taking on a singer's vocal personality we

are, in a sense, putting on a vocal costume" (Frith 1996, 198). As a result, singers' voices are not straightforward representations of their identities, but are in fact palettes that can be used to represent their identities, identities they wish to create for themselves, characters they wish to portray, or any combination of the preceding.

Nikolas Coupland (2011) bases much of his discussion of James Taylor in "Voice, Place, and Genre in Popular Song Performance" on the idea that Taylor is performing a version of himself in the song "Copperline." In developing this idea, Coupland draws on Frith's (1996, 183–202) aforementioned four dimensions of the popular music voice:

6. the voice as musical instrument;
7. the voice as body;
8. the voice as person; and
9. the voice as character.

(Coupland 2011, 579)

In reference to the third and fourth dimensions listed, Coupland draws a distinction between when a performer "does characterological work, projecting a persona that audiences know is a character" and when a performer is "singing *in propria persona*, as him/herself" (Coupland 2011, 580). According to Coupland, performing as a version of the self and performing as a character are not mutually exclusive, but rather are modes of expression that can work together or be set against one another; "[s]ome performances fuse character and person […] while others depend on maintaining distance between person and character" (2011, 580).

Coupland grounds his discussion of James Taylor in the idea that place in popular music is not always strictly geographical (2011, 581) and that "Copperline," the place described in the song of the same name, serves as a setting not through its (fictional)

location, but through the associations that it creates in the mind of a listener (2011, 591). Drawing again on Frith, Coupland presents the idea "that folk music is based in an ideology of timelessness, (sub-)cultural embeddedness, informality, anti-consumerism and, in a sense, a resistance to performance" (2011, 589). According to Coupland, Taylor achieves this non-performativity by blurring the identities of 'character' and 'person,' "allowing us to learn or infer details of his autobiographical 'person' through his lyrics" (2011, 591). In other words, while Taylor is not singing about an actual place from his childhood, it seems that he could be, and if he has then created a character, the character is essentially a version of himself. Pronunciation—specifically, a singing accent that resembles his spoken accent—is a tool that Taylor uses in creating this character of himself.

Just as pronunciation is a tool that singers can use to communicate the idea that they are performing themselves, it is—perhaps more straightforwardly—a tool that singers can use to communicate the idea that they are embodying characters. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Andy Gibson (2011) discusses the role of pronunciation in portraying characters in an article on New Zealand comedy duo Flight of the Conchords. Gibson discusses how singers (and actors) can use pronunciation to distance themselves from their roles. Gibson also mentions that exaggeration of pronunciation features can be a useful tool in imitation and, in particular, parody. Not only can exaggeration draw attention to specific notable features, it can also serve the purpose of deauthentication; it can emphasise to the listener that the singer is creating a character (Gibson 2011, 606). Pronunciation can also allow for layering of personas (Gibson 2011, 611). In other words,

pronunciation can serve as a tool in combining or in separating Frith's (1996) four vocal dimensions.

5.2. "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key"

The first song to be considered here is "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key," the musings of a man who, while he does not fancy himself to be particularly handsome or clever, has had success in seducing women through his singing. Bragg and Wilco welcome their listener to the narrator's home of Okfuskee, Oklahoma with a bright, upbeat accompaniment in B major, gravitating toward vi (G sharp minor) at the ends of stanzas, the promised "minor key" of the title. The accompaniment features acoustic guitar and an array of other instruments including violin, accordion, and Hammond B-3 organ. Bragg sings lead vocals on the track, with Natalie Merchant singing harmony vocals. Like the instrumentation, Bragg's vocals play a role in setting the scene for the story, and his pronunciation is a part of this.

In analysing the pronunciation features in this track, I have used the same methodology that I used in the previous chapter for "The Tracks of My Tears." I have, again, divided the pronunciation features into five categories, shown below as Figure 5.1. I have reproduced the table for reference here, but the same table appears in the previous chapter. More information about each category can be found in the previous chapter.

Figure 5.1. Categories for classifying pronunciation features in Billy Bragg, "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key."

Category 1	Bragg
Category 2	RP or GenAm
Category 3	Americanized
Category 4	RP, not GenAm
Category 5	Other

A phonetic transcription of "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key" is provided as Appendix G. The notable pronunciation features are shown below as Figure 5.2–Figure 5.6. The frequency of each category within the track is then shown as Figure 5.7.

Figure 5.2. Pronunciation features in Billy Bragg, "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key" that are consistent with a dialect from Southeast England but not with RP (Category 1: Bragg).

Lexical Set or Consonant	**Phenomenon**	**Approximate Realization**	**Words (Line Numbers)**
FLEECE	diphthongal realization (closing diphthong)	[ɪi]	tree (2); me (5, 6, 13, 17, 18, 22, 23, 28, 30, 31, 42, 43); see (6); be (15)
/l/	vocalization	[ʊ~ɤ~o]	whistle (16); Tanglewood (33)

Figure 5.3. Pronunciation features in Billy Bragg, "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key" that are consistent with RP and GenAm and not with the previously established characteristic features of Bragg's singing accent (Category 2: RP or GenAm).

Lexical Set or Consonant	Phenomenon	Approximate Realization	Words (Line Numbers)
FACE	onset vowel not lowered	[eɪ]	place (1); plain (3); ain't (4, 5, 9, 10, 13, 17, 18, 22, 23, 26, 30, 31, 35, 36, 39, 42, 43); way (11, 12, 20, 24, 25, 37, 38, 40, 41); laid (28); ways (32); days (33); stray (34); saying (35)
FLEECE	no diphthong	[iː]	Okfuskee (1);[92] see (3, 15, 19, 21); me (5, 9, 10, 19, 26, 35, 36); she (6, 28); ugly (7); be (8); key (11, 12, 24, 25, 37, 38, 40, 41); we (14); Creek (14); eat (15); east (16); free (20); tree (21, 27); bees (29)
PRICE	onset vowel not backed or rounded	[aɪ]	like (5, 10, 13, 39); minor (24, 25, 37, 40, 41); hive (29); I've (32)
/l/[93]	not vocalized	[l~ɬ]	little (2, 2, 7, 8, 19); will (19); girls (34)

[92] The vowel at the end of the word "Okfuskee" should, strictly speaking, be happY. However, because Bragg sings the word with a musical accent on the last syllable, the syllable sounds as if it also has word stress. Because happY only occurs on unstressed syllables, I thought it best to treat the syllable as FLEECE. I treat the vowel in the word "ugly" in line 7 the same way.

[93] This includes only instances where /l/ is not followed by a vowel or another /l/. In addition, while there are situations in which one is more likely to hear [ɬ] from an American speaker than from a British speaker, for present purposes, I have considered [l] and [ɬ] to be equivalent as simply a non-vocalized /l/.

Figure 5.4. Americanized pronunciation features in Billy Bragg, "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key" (Category 3: Americanized).

Lexical Set or Consonant	Phenomenon	Approximate Realization	Words (Line Numbers)
GOAT	onset vowel backed, not lowered	[oʊ]	Okfuskee (1); nobody (4, 5, 9, 10, 13, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 26, 30, 31, 35, 36, 39, 42, 43); so (7); over (11, 12, 20, 24, 25, 37, 38, 40, 41); oh (19); blows (20)
LOT	unrounding	[ɑ]	holler (2, 21); nobody (4, 5, 9, 10, 13, 17, 18, 22, 23, 26, 30, 31, 35, 36, 39, 42, 43); got (7); yonder (11, 12, 20, 24, 25, 37, 38, 40, 41); lots (29, 34)
PRICE	monophthongization	[aː]	like (4, 9, 17, 18, 22, 23, 26, 30, 31, 35, 36, 42, 43); might (8); minor (11, 12, 38); by (14); Buckeye (14); goggle-eye (15); my (19, 33); I've (34)
/r/	rhotic realization	[ɹ] or [ɚ]	girl (2, 3); girly (8); over (11, 12, 24, 25, 37, 38, 40, 41); minor (11, 25, 37, 41); worse (29)

/d/[94]	flapping	[ɾ]	had a (2); nobody (10, 13, 18, 22, 23, 26, 31, 36)
/t/	flapping	[ɾ]	little (2, 3, 7, 8, 19); cut a (27); it on (28)
"FROG" [95]	unrounding	[ɑ]	frog (15); goggle-eye (15); on (28)
THOUGHT[96]	unrounding	[ɑ]	walked (32)
CLOTH	closing	[ɔ]	long (32)
CLOTH[97]	unrounding	[ɑ]	long (32)

[94] While this phenomenon is commonly associated with /t/ and is more noticeable in the case of a /t/, it can affect /d/ as well (Wells 1982a, 248).

[95] The word "frog" is one of a collection of words that seem like they might belong to the lexical sets CLOTH, LOT, or THOUGHT, but in fact do not consistently behave like the other words in these sets (Wells 1982a, 136). Specifically, these words are hard to categorize because they have significant regional variability in North America. However, one can make the generalization that they are pronounced with a rounded vowel in RP, while an unrounded variant exists in parts of North America (Wells 1982c, 473–6). As such, while there is no standard GenAm form for words like "frog," one can consider unrounding of the vowel to be an Americanized feature.

[96] In some North American English speakers, the distinction between THOUGHT and LOT has been lost (Wells 1982a, 145). The vowel these speakers use for THOUGHT and LOT can be rounded or unrounded (Wells 1982c, 473–5). As such, unrounding of the vowel in THOUGHT words can be considered an Americanized feature.

[97] Words of the CLOTH lexical set, like words of the THOUGHT lexical set, can have an unrounded vowel in North American speech (Wells 1982a, 136–7).

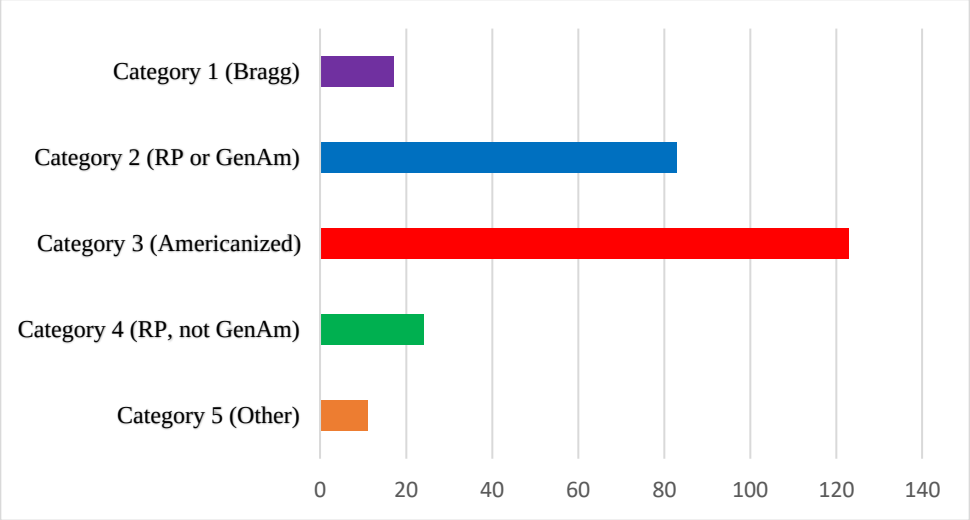
Figure 5.5. Pronunciation features in Billy Bragg, "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key" that are consistent with RP but not with GenAm (Category 4: RP, not GenAm).

Lexical Set or Consonant	Phenomenon	Approximate Realization	Words (Line Numbers)
/r/	non-rhotic realization	∅	holler (2, 21); hard (6); for (6); minor (12, 38, 34); hear (16); girly (19); over (20); yonder (20); where (20); our (21); minor (24); her (27); girls (34)
DRESS	closing	[e]	said (3, 6); yes (8); west (16); let (19); cherry (27); led (34); then (34)

Figure 5.6. Pronunciation features that have been flagged for another reason in Billy Bragg, "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key" (Category 5: Other).

Lexical Set or Consonant	Phenomenon	Approximate Realization	Words (Line Numbers)
/d/	reduction	[(d)], ∅	nobody (4, 5, 9, 17, 30, 35, 39)
PRICE	reduction (monophthongal realization with a raised, backed vowel)	[ɐ]	I (1, 2, 3); my (8)

Figure 5.7. Graph showing the frequency of each of the five categories of noted pronunciation features in "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key."[98]



In examining Bragg's pronunciation in "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key," one can see that there is a high degree of Americanization. Only two features fall into Category 1 (Bragg): diphthongized FLEECE and vocalized /l/. Similarly, only two features fall into Category 4 (RP, not GenAm): non-rhotic /r/ and DRESS as [e]. By contrast, many features fall into Category 2 (RP or GenAm) and Category 3 (Americanized). Interestingly, many sounds, and even specific words, have multiple variants within the track. The word "girly," for example, is realized both as [ˈgɝ˞li] (Category 3: Americanized) and [ˈgɜːli] (Category 4: RP, not GenAm). Similarly, the word "like," which appears frequently because of the refrain "Ain't nobody that can sing like me," is often realized monophthongally as [laːk] (Category 3: Americanized), with [laɪk] (Category 2: RP or GenAm) being present as a secondary option. I have placed two pronunciation features under Category 5 (Other). Bragg sometimes realizes an unaccented version of the PRICE vowel in the words "I" and "my" as [ɐ]. One could make

[98] Each instance of a pronunciation feature from each category is counted as 1.

a case for this pronunciation coming from either side of the Atlantic, so I have not classified it one way or the other. The other pronunciation feature I have put in Category 5 (Other) is a reduced version of /d/ that Bragg sometimes sings in the word "nobody." The /d/ in nobody takes three forms throughout the track: a traditional [d], a flapped [ɾ], and the barely-present form mentioned here.

It is not surprising that Bragg's pronunciation would be somewhat Americanized in this particular track because the narrator says in the first line of the song that he is from Oklahoma. In addition, it seems clear that this narrator is supposed to be a comical, fictionalized version of Woody Guthrie. It appears that to allow the listener to imagine this character more fully, Bragg has added some typically American pronunciation features and has softened some of the features of his pronunciation that would point clearly to Southeast England. It is worth acknowledging that Bragg's modified singing accent in "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key" may not be strictly for the purpose of portraying a character. It is also possible that Bragg alters his singing accent to avoid some of the difficulties he has described in singing with a Southeastern English accent, or that he has altered his singing accent to work better with the rhythm of Guthrie's text. While Bragg composed the music to "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key," he did not write the lyrics, and it is possible that pronunciation affects text at an early enough stage that Bragg felt he needed to use a modified accent to accommodate the text. It is also worth noting that despite the high degree of Americanization in Bragg's pronunciation, the overall effect is not necessarily that he sounds American. This happens in part because certain words remain unchanged. As mentioned before, for example, Bragg does

not add a final /r/ to all syllables that would typically have one in American speech. The result, as in "The Tracks of My Tears," is a hybrid accent.

In "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key," Bragg portrays a character. As mentioned above, the character seems to be a fictionalized version of Woody Guthrie. The fact that Bragg is portraying a character is a logical explanation for the higher degree of Americanization in his pronunciation. Bragg does not seem to use exaggeration to distance himself from or deauthenticate the character. He does, however, remove himself from the picture somewhat by not using many of the characteristic pronunciation features of his regional accent. In other words, Bragg's pronunciation in "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key" deemphasizes the voice as a person to create space for the voice as a character. Interestingly, this use of pronunciation as a characterisation technique seems to be successful whether or not it is intentional. While Bragg's altered pronunciation could simply be a matter of musical convenience, as mentioned previously, pronunciation features have intratextual and extratextual functions: musical and social meanings that cannot fully be separated from each other. Even if it is a simple musical choice, Bragg's Americanized pronunciation in "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key" serves the role of creating a character.

5.3. Who Is Singing?

Let us take another brief theoretical excursion before considering the next musical example. Simon Frith, discussed above, is neither the only nor the first music scholar to invite his reader to ask questions about where we assume sung voices to be coming from. Indeed, in his chapter, Frith draws on Edward Cone (1974), whose book *The Composer's Voice* takes as its starting point the question "If music is a language, then who is

speaking?" (1). In other words, Cone problematizes the idea, perhaps taken for granted, that in a piece of music, somebody is speaking. Often, this "somebody" manifests not as one individual voice (that of the composer), but as many different voices, including the poet, the protagonist, and the performer. He invites the reader to consider Franz Schubert's *Der Erlkönig* and *Der Tod und das Mädchen*, two Lieder whose texts contain speech from more than one character. The texts can be considered to come from multiple voices, or can be considered to come from one vocal persona (Cone 1974, 6–9). This vocal persona cannot be considered the same as the composer's voice, though, because it excludes the accompaniment (Cone 1974, 11). One can, therefore, also consider the existence of a musical persona that includes the accompaniment. One can also ascribe a persona to the accompaniment itself, an instrumental persona that can be compared to a narrator (Cone 1974, 16–18). Cone points out as well that the narrator of a song is not the same as the narrator of the poem that serves as the source text for the song because only the former is singing; the poetic persona is not the same as the protagonist of the song. Similarly, one could make the argument that the musical persona is capable of communicating even in the absence of the text (Cone 1974, 20–1). Having used Schubert Lieder as his point of departure, Cone then explores several different vocal and instrumental repertories through the lens of his personae, continually inviting his readers to consider the many voices that speak through a piece of music.

Another music theorist who has notably written about where voices come from is Brian Kane (2014), in the book *Sound Unseen: Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice*. As the title suggests, the book is about acousmatic sound, sound that does not have an immediately apparent source or cause. In Kane's framework, a source produces a

sound when activated by a cause. For example, when sound is produced by air being blown through a recorder, the recorder is the source and the air is the cause. Similarly, when sound is produced by raindrops striking a windowpane, the windowpane is the source and the raindrops are the cause. The sound that we hear is the sonic effect (Kane 2014, 7–8). In acousmatic sound, a sonic effect has been separated from its source and cause. One of Kane's main arguments in the book is that acousmatic listening is not a new phenomenon. He explores how acousmatic listening laid the pathway for technologies like the radio and the gramophone, and how these technologies brought acousmatic listening into musical practices in new ways. For example, in the sixth chapter of his book, "Acousmatic Fabrications: Les Paul and the 'Les Paulverizer'" (Kane 2014, 165–79), Kane discusses Les Paul and Mary Ford's use of recording technology to produce their peculiar signature sound, as well as the tradition of acousmatic listening that provided the philosophical backdrop for their auditory deceptions. Kane begins with the story of "an unexpected consequence of acousmatic underdetermination" (2014, 166), Les Paul's mother mistaking another guitar player's work for that of her son. Kane continues with the creation story of Les Paul's signature sound; Paul used recording technology that he had invented to play multiple tracks of himself simultaneously. Kane theorizes the public response to Paul and Ford through two lenses: imaginary sources and imaginary causes.

Kane's penultimate chapter, "The Acousmatic Voice" (2014, 180–222), begins with the tale of the Edison phonograph introducing itself by saying "'I am the Edison phonograph'" (2014, 180). Kane then explores the peculiarities of the word "I" and investigates the philosophical complexity of the Edison phonograph's apparent use of this

word. Drawing on the work of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, Kane asks questions about voice as a kind of internal soliloquy, voice as a collective consciousness, and voice as more than what can be captured using audio technology. Kane continues his exploration of what voice is, and what it is not, drawing on Slavoj Žižek and Mladen Dolar (and indirectly, Jacques Lacan) to consider voice in the context of psychoanalysis. Kane closes his chapter by reflecting on the famous image of a dog listening to "His Master's Voice" and posing questions about fidelity and obedience as they relate to the acousmatic voice.

Kane's book speaks to the complexity of where voices come from and where we think—or allow ourselves to think—that they come from. Kane and Cone are not the only theorists who have investigated where musical voices seem to come from and how this influences our reception and understanding of the music. Another example is Karen M. Bottge (2005), who has written about the role of the Mother's voice in Brahms's "Wiegenlied." In her article, Bottge considers the Lied from several perspectives, one of which is through the lens of the bond between mother and child, and the physical connection that begins before birth (2005, 186). According to Bottge, "Wiegenlied" pretends to be a simple lullaby sung by a mother to her child. However, the text of the second verse can be read as being quite dark. In the original poem, this second verse was clearly a lullaby sung by a grieving mother to her deceased child. Despite several changes that Brahms made to the text, the image of the grieving mother can still be inferred (Bottge 2005, 204–6). In addition, Bottge demonstrates that the Mother's voice is far from being a straightforward concept, so a reading through the lens of the Mother's voice will be accordingly layered and complex (2005, 186–9).

In short, numerous music theorists have taken an interest in where voices come from, or seem to come from. Pronunciation is one tool that can create meaning in this regard because listeners associate certain pronunciation features with certain sources. In what follows, I will consider another track from *Mermaid Avenue*, "The Unwelcome Guest." I will consider in particular where the narrator's voice seems to come from and how Bragg, intentionally or otherwise, introduces complexity with respect to the narrator's voice using pronunciation.

5.4. "The Unwelcome Guest"

"The Unwelcome Guest" is written from the perspective of a Robin Hood figure who has made a career of stealing from the rich and giving to the poor. The song's narrator is talking to his partner in crime (his horse) and reflecting on what they have accomplished together, the moral justification for their actions, the inevitability of eventually being caught and executed, and the hope that others will continue their work. The track features a gentle 9/8 accompaniment over a relatively simple repeating chord progression in C major (I, vi, IV, I—I, vi, V^7/V, V—I, vi, IV, I—I, vi, IV, I), with harmonica solos between each pair of stanzas. Bragg sings lead vocals, with Jeff Tweedy of Wilco singing harmony vocals. A phonetic transcription of the track is provided as Appendix H. The notable pronunciation features are shown below as Figure 5.8–Figure 5.12. The frequency of each category within the track is then shown as Figure 5.13.

Figure 5.8. Pronunciation features in Billy Bragg, "The Unwelcome Guest" that are consistent with a dialect from Southeast England but not with RP (Category 1: Bragg).

Lexical Set or Consonant	Phenomenon	Approximate Realization	Words (Line Numbers)
PRICE	backed onset vowel	[ɑɪ]	bright (1, 6); like (21, 58, 63); lightning (21); rider (26); light (29); midnight (29); my (39, 51, 52, 52); ride (42); hired (45); shining (47); Bible (58); riding (60)
/l/	vocalization	[ʊ~ɤ~o]	hold (28); unwelcome (30); they'll (48, 49, 56); kill (49); I'll (50); saddle (52); always (53); help (61); will (22, 62)
GOOSE	fronting, some unrounding	[ʉ~ɨ]	you (3, 7, 11, 12, 13, 25, 28)
FLEECE	diphthongal realization (closing diphthong)	[ɪi]	east (27); thieves (30); me (49)
FOOT	closing, fronting	[ʉ]	good (11)
yod	coalescence	[d͡ʒ]	hold you (28)

Figure 5.9. Pronunciation features in Billy Bragg, "The Unwelcome Guest" that are consistent with RP and GenAm and not with the previously established characteristic features of Bragg's singing accent (Category 2: RP or GenAm).

Lexical Set or Consonant	Phenomenon	Approximate Realization	Words (Line Numbers)
PRICE	onset vowel not backed or rounded	[aɪ]	I (2, 3, 13, 17, 19, 38); ride (2) my (3, 4, 11, 23, 38, 43, 47); shiny (4, 23, 39); riding (9, 22); midnight (10); oftimes (15); by (36, 54); lying (37)
FACE	onset vowel not lowered	[eɪ]	playhouse (5); take (6, 20, 36, 38, 56); taken (7); pace (20); overtake (25); chase (31); they (36), way (38); strangers (41); makes (43); rangers (44); day (48); always (53); brave (55); they'll (56)
FLEECE	no diphthong	[iː]	we (9, 15, 22, 33); easy (20); be (22, 48, 51, 53); stealing (36); treat (40); me (46, 46, 48); equal (57); these (61)
STRUT	not fronted or opened	[ʌ]	somebody (8); 'mongst (14); unwelcome (16, 31, 54, 63); running (42); guns (43, 52); one (48); other (55); money (56); cut (62)
/l/	not vocalized	[l~ɬ]	else (8); unwelcome (16, 54, 63); filled (53); equal (57); Bible (58)
MOUTH	onset vowel not raised	[aʊ]	playhouse (5); how (15); out (57); down (62)

Figure 5.10. Americanized pronunciation features in Billy Bragg, "The Unwelcome Guest" (Category 3: Americanized).

Lexical Set or Consonant	Phenomenon	Approximate Realization	Words (Line Numbers)
GOAT	onset vowel backed, not lowered	[oʊ]	gold (7); go (9, 15, 60); pony (11, 24); know (13, 13, 32); widows (18); so (20); home (21); no (24); overtake (25); hold (28); don't (32); won't (51)
LOT	unrounding	[ɑ]	lodges (1); not (26); potbellied (30); trot (33); robbing (34); prophets (59)
/t/	flapping	[ɾ]	not a (26); trot in (33); deputies (44); it out (57); out equal (57)
PRICE	monophthongization	[aː~ɑː]	I (32, 40, 42); I'm (41); by (45)
/r/	rhotic realization	[ɹ] or [ɚ]	hard (19); rangers (44); hired (45)
"FROG"	unrounding	[ɑ]	on (3); foggy (10)
THOUGHT	unrounding	[ɑ]	call (3); talk (43)
CLOTH	unrounding	[ɑ]	oftimes (15); gone (50)

Figure 5.11. Pronunciation features in Billy Bragg, "The Unwelcome Guest" that are consistent with RP but not with GenAm (Category 4: RP, not GenAm).

Lexical Set or Consonant	Phenomenon	Approximate Realization	Words (Line Numbers)
/r/	non-rhotic realization	∅	fortune (5); silver (6); snort (11); your (12, 20); for (13, 21, 35, 35, 52); there (15); never (17); orphans (18); hardworking (19); overtake (25); there's (26); rider (26); dark (29, 33); here (33); worse (35); or (35); strangers (41); are (45); travellers (54); other (55); poor (61); workers (61, x2)
DRESS[99]	closing	[e]	Bess (4, 23, 39, 47); else (8); best (12, 35, 43); guest (16, 31, 63); never (17, 19); oppressed (19); west (27); potbellied (30); friendly (41); deputies (44); yes (48); then (50); end (51); men (55, 60); spread (57); suggest (59); help (61)
n/a	RP pronunciation differs from GenAm pronunciation[100]	[ɒv] [fɹɒm] [səˈd͡ʒest]	of (5); from (8, 18, 27); suggest (59)

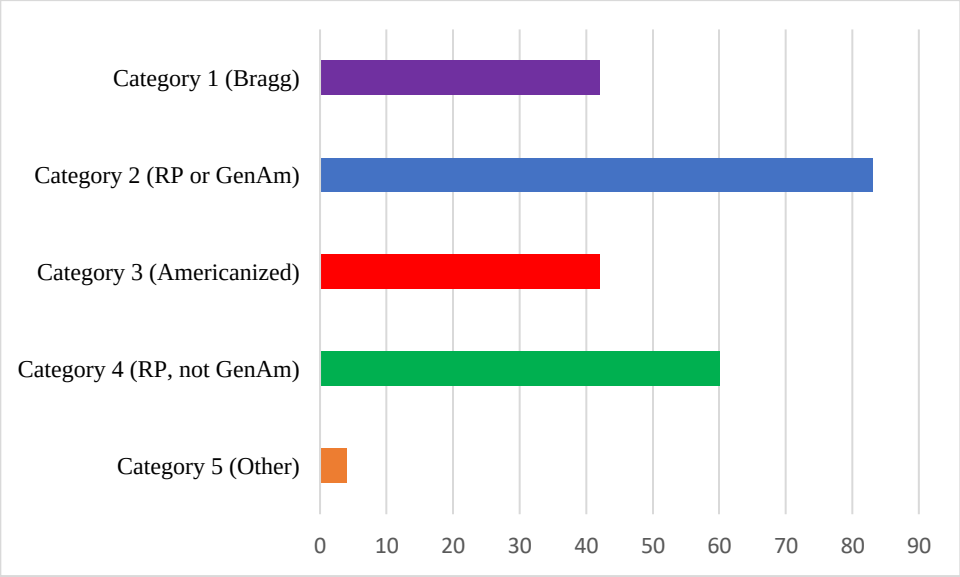
[99] I have not included the word "unwelcome" because velarized /l/ and vocalized /l/ both tend to distort the vowel that precedes them. As such, it is difficult to get a clean reading of the DRESS vowel in the word "unwelcome."

[100] A number of words simply have different pronunciations in RP than in GenAm, without following the pattern of a specific lexical set (see Wells 1982a, 127).

Figure 5.12. Pronunciation features that have been flagged for another reason in Billy Bragg, "The Unwelcome Guest" (Category 5: Other).

Word (Line Numbers)	Phenomenon	Approximate Realization
horse (3, 14, 22); horses (40)	varying degrees of NORTH vowel roundedness and openness	[ɔː~ɒː~ɑː]

Figure 5.13. Graph showing the frequency of each of the five categories of noted pronunciation features in "The Unwelcome Guest."[101]



Perhaps the first difference one might notice between the pronunciation features identified in "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key" and those identified in "The Unwelcome Guest" is that many more lyrics in "The Unwelcome Guest" end up in Category 1 (Bragg). There are also more lyrics in Category 4 (RP, not GenAm). However, there are also many sounds in Category 2 (RP or GenAm) and Category 3 (Americanized). In addition, one word (horse or horses) is difficult to categorize, so I have placed it in Category 5 (Other). Overall, Bragg's pronunciation in "The Unwelcome

[101] Each instance of a pronunciation feature from each category is counted as 1.

Guest" is Americanized, but less so than his pronunciation in "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key."

One may approach "The Unwelcome Guest" by asking the same question that Frith and Cone ask in considering voices: who is speaking? The song's narrator seems to be a Robin Hood figure who has made a career of riding about on horseback and illegally redistributing wealth. He does not seem to have any clear demographic information that one would want to communicate using pronunciation. It is therefore logical that Bragg Americanizes his pronunciation, but not to an extreme degree. Indeed, it is perhaps more accurate to say simply that he reduces away certain characteristic features of his typical singing accent.

Brian Kane (2014) states in his book that the acousmatic situation is created by separating a sonic effect from its source and cause. In "The Unwelcome Guest," and perhaps to an even greater extent in "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key," Billy Bragg uses pronunciation to create this kind of separation. While the sound's source—Billy Bragg—remains relatively clear in *Mermaid Avenue,* it is nevertheless blurred at least slightly, compared to how unapologetically himself Bragg sounds in "Between the Wars," "To Have and to Have Not," and "The Home Front." By obscuring himself as source just slightly, Bragg perhaps allows his listener to imagine a different source, either Woody Guthrie or simply a more general source, a more universal voice. Essentially, by reducing his use of his own accent in *Mermaid Avenue,* Bragg partially hides himself.

It is worth considering pronunciation in "The Unwelcome Guest" and *Mermaid Avenue* as a whole in the context of Cone's (1974) personae because—in a fashion typical for, say, a Schubert Lied, but atypical for a popular song—one can consider the

song to have a "poet" and a "composer," with Woody Guthrie being the former and Billy Bragg being the latter. One could suggest that Bragg's reduction of his characteristic pronunciation features allows his voice, as composer, to recede to the background, and creates space for Guthrie's voice, as poet. Indeed, one could say that pronunciation creates a concrete manifestation of Cone's personae (two of them, at least).

As mentioned previously, Billy Bragg may Americanize his singing accent in "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key" because the narrator is clearly American and, indeed, seems to be a fictionalized Woody Guthrie. In other words, if one were casting this character, it would be more logical to cast Woody Guthrie than Billy Bragg. In "The Unwelcome Guest," on the other hand, one certainly could logically cast Billy Bragg as the narrator. Nevertheless, Bragg Americanizes his accent in "The Unwelcome Guest." However, he does leave in British pronunciation features not present in "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key." Indeed, one could argue that of the tracks examined in this volume, the accent that Bragg uses in "The Unwelcome Guest" is the most ambiguous. It does not sound unmistakably Southeastern English, nor does it sound unambiguously like an Englishman Americanizing his pronunciation. It sounds like something in between. The ambiguity of Bragg's singing accent in "The Unwelcome Guest" adds a degree of universality to the narrator. One can hear him not as a working-class Englishman or a mischievous youth from Oklahoma, but as anybody fighting to redistribute wealth. The source of his singing, then, is indistinct, allowing a listener to hear their own interpretation and to ascribe the identity that they see fit to the narrator. If pronunciation in "Between the Wars" serves the purpose of identity creation, one could say that in "The Unwelcome Guest," it serves the purpose of identity opening.

In short, Bragg reduces away his own pronunciation features to a certain extent in "The Unwelcome Guest" and to a greater extent in "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key." The result is interesting to consider both in the context of Brian Kane's (2014) acousmatic listening and Edward Cone's (1974) personae. In discussing "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key," I considered the song in the context of the voice as a character and the voice as a person, as theorised by Simon Frith (1996). In the case of "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key," Bragg's pronunciation seems to reduce the voice as a person in favour of the voice is a character. In "The Unwelcome Guest," on the other hand, Bragg's pronunciation is not clearly creating a character to the same extent that it is in "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key." In addition, as mentioned previously, more features of Bragg's regional accent are present in "The Unwelcome Guest" than in "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key." In this sense, not only is the voice as a character less dominant in "The Unwelcome Guest," but the voice as a person is less recessive. In other words, while the voice as a person is less prominent in "The Unwelcome Guest" than it is in some of Bragg's solo work, it is still present.

5.5. Words, Lines, and Rhythm

Above, I have discussed, broadly, how pronunciation in "The Unwelcome Guest" works in service of the general. In what follows, I will discuss how pronunciation in the track, as well as in "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key," also works in service of the specific. I will consider both how pronunciation interacts with other musical features in the two tracks, and how it contributes to the distinctive sound of each track.

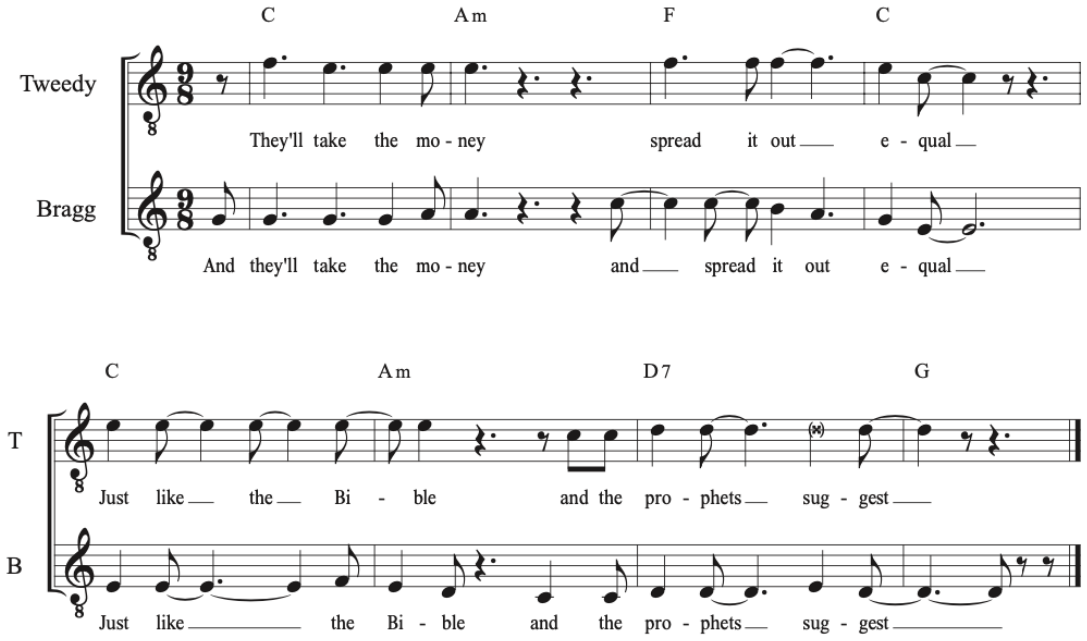
As elsewhere, certain sounds in "The Unwelcome Guest" stand out because of the frequency granted to them by the rhyme scheme, or the text more broadly. In "Between

the Wars," the PRICE vowel was especially prominent as a result of the repetition of the word "I." In "The Home Front," the GOAT vowel was especially prominent because of the frequent use of the word "home" and words that rhyme with it, approximately or exactly. In "The Unwelcome Guest," the DRESS vowel emerges as a characteristic sound because lines frequently end with the word "guest" or words that rhyme with it (again, approximately or exactly). As a result, the sound of the DRESS vowel becomes part of the overall sound of the track, similar to the melody or the repeating chord progression. Indeed, the repetition of the DRESS vowel to end every couplet is a fitting complement to the relatively simple, repeating chord progression. The familiar recurrence of the DRESS vowel, along with the repeated recurrence of the same chord progression, cultivates a sense of familiarity that pairs well with the text, sung from a seasoned criminal activist to his longtime (equine) companion.

However, if it is true that the DRESS vowel serves to communicate familiarity, it is no less true that the vowel allows Bragg to leave his mark on the track. I have placed Bragg's realization of the DRESS vowel in Category 4 (RP: not GenAm) for what I think is a defensible reason; the typical RP realization of the vowel is closer and tenser than the typical GenAm realization and I think that Bragg's realization is close and tense compared to GenAm. One could argue, however, that a range of realizations exist on both sides of the Atlantic and I have made too many assumptions. Nevertheless, I believe that I am justified in saying that Bragg's DRESS vowel is distinctive. The vowel therefore serves as a kind of sonic signature for Bragg. As much as his Americanized pronunciation may obscure his distinctive singing accent, pieces of it still come through, allowing the voice as a person to remain.

In addition to serving as a sonic signature for Bragg, pronunciation accentuates the vocal layering between lead and harmony vocals on the track. As mentioned previously, in "The Unwelcome Guest," Billy Bragg sings lead vocals and Jeff Tweedy of Wilco sings harmony vocals. As Simon Frith (1996) has noted, it is common in some popular music styles to layer multiple vocal lines such that they sound like one voice, a "group voice" (201), as Frith describes it. This is not the case in "The Unwelcome Guest." A transcription of Bragg's and Tweedy's vocal lines from an excerpt of the song's final stanza is provided below as Figure 5.14.

Figure 5.14. Musical transcription of Jeff Tweedy's and Billy Bragg's vocal lines from an excerpt of the final stanza of "The Unwelcome Guest."



One feature that makes Bragg and Tweedy sound like two separate voices rather than one blended voice is rhythm. They often sing the same word or syllable separated by an eighth note or quarter note. For example, Tweedy starts the word "spread" an eighth note before Bragg does. Similarly, they tend not to cut off at the same time at the end of phrases. For example, Tweedy cuts off the word "equal" during the second beat of the

measure, while Bragg holds it for the full measure. Interestingly, they are not singing fully independent lines with their own rhythms. They often sing more or less the same rhythm, coming in and out of unison, but their tendency toward rhythmic shifting highlights their two separate voices.

Another factor that contributes to Bragg and Tweedy sounding like two voices rather than a group voice is their pronunciation. A phonetic transcription of both singers' pronunciation in this excerpt is provided below as Figure 5.15.

Figure 5.15. Phonetic transcription of Jeff Tweedy's and Billy Bragg's vocal lines from an excerpt of the final stanza of "The Unwelcome Guest."

Lyrics:	(And)	they'll	take	the	money
Tweedy:		ˈ**ðeɪɬ**	ˈteɪk	ðə	ˈmʌni
Bragg:	ən	ˈ**ðeɪo**	ˈteɪk	ðə	ˈmʌni

Lyrics:	(And)	spread	it	out	equal
Tweedy:		ˈspɹed	ɪɾ	ˈ**æʊɾ**	ˈiːkwəɬ
Bragg:	ˈæn	ˈspɹed	ɪɾ	ˈ**aʊɾ**	ˈiːkwəɬ

Lyrics:	Just	like	the	Bible
Tweedy:	ˈd͡ʒəst	ˈ**laː****k**	ðə	ˈ**baː****bəɬ**
Bragg:	ˈd͡ʒəst	ˈ**lɑɪk**	ðə	ˈ**bɑɪbəɬ**

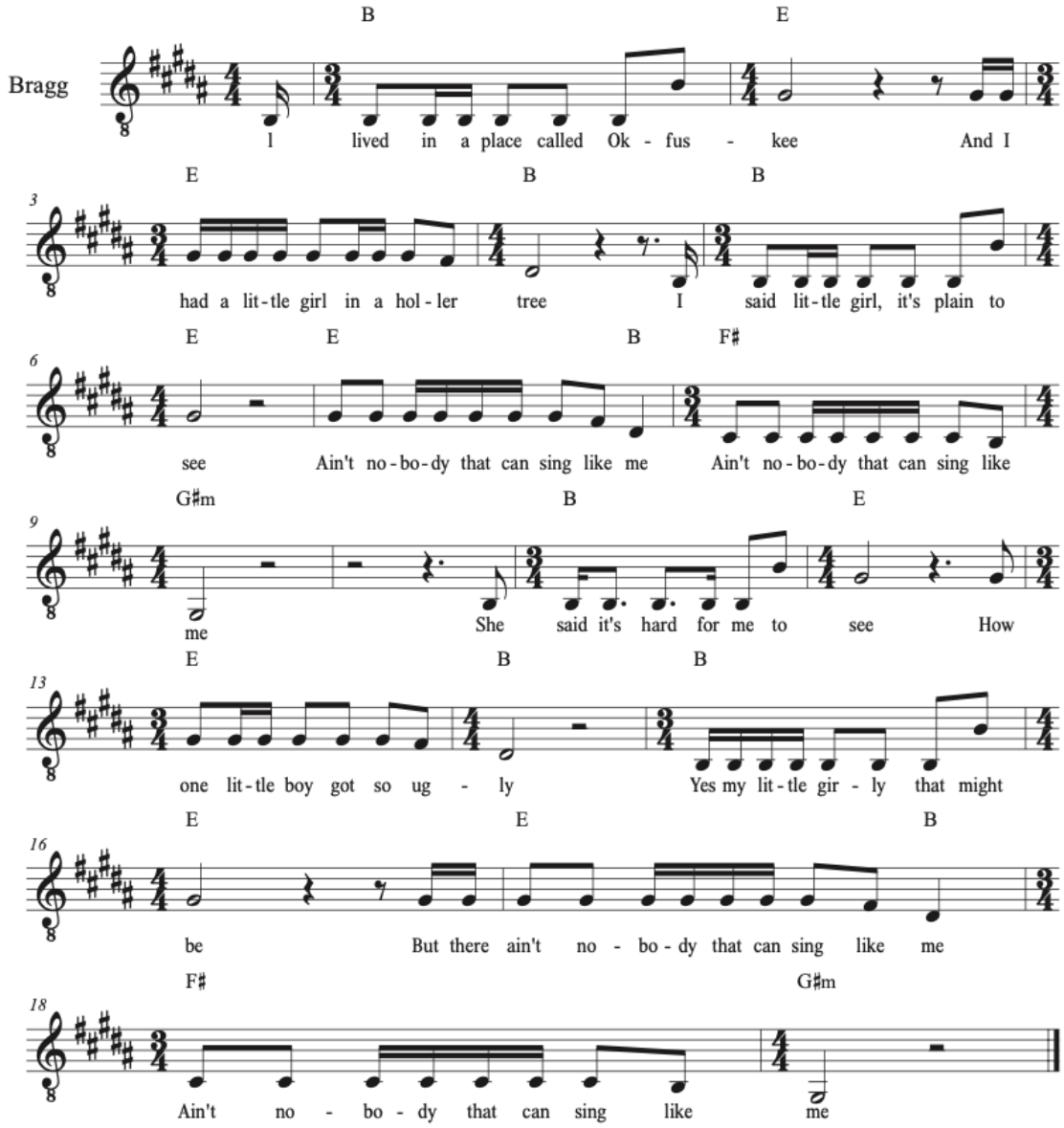
Lyrics:	And	the	prophets	suggest
Tweedy:	æn	ðə	ˈpɹɑfɪts	**s(ə)**ˈ**d͡ʒest**
Bragg:	ˈænd	ðə	ˈpɹɑfɪts	**sə**ˈ**d͡ʒest**

Words that Bragg and Tweedy pronounce notably differently are bolded above. In the word "they'll," Bragg sings a vocalized /l/, while Tweedy sings a velarized /l/. They sing slightly different vowel sounds in the word "out." In the third line of this example, the PRICE vowel appears twice, in the words "like" and "Bible." Tweedy sings a monophthongized PRICE vowel, while Bragg sings a PRICE vowel that is fairly consistent with his regional accent. This difference is salient, and is accentuated by the rhythmic

differences in the two lines in the phrase “Just like the Bible.” In the last line, Bragg sings the word “suggest” in a way that is fairly consistent with RP. Tweedy, interestingly, does not quite seem to pronounce the whole word. In the first syllable, he does not seem to say a vowel sound (or to sing a pitch). These pronunciation differences add individuality to the two vocal lines. Frith (1996) has commented on how background vocals are the most likely place to find the voice in the first of his four headings, “as *a musical instrument*” (187). The differences between Bragg’s pronunciation and Tweedy’s pronunciation contribute to the distinctly non-instrumental character of Tweedy’s voice in this excerpt. I have commented previously on how pronunciation can be used as a tool to create blend. Here, it almost seems that Bragg and Tweedy have gone out of their way not to blend and have used pronunciation to help them. One can speculate on the reasons for this stylistic choice, but regardless of the reasons, pronunciation contributes to the recognizable anti-blended vocal layering of the track, further contributing to its characteristic sound.

Another pronunciation feature that adds individuality to “The Unwelcome Guest” and “Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key” is syllabic stress. A transcription of Bragg’s vocal line from the first two verses of “Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key” is shown below as Figure 5.16.

Figure 5.16. Transcription of Billy Bragg's vocal line in the first two verses of "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key."



One word that has a noteworthy syllabic stress pattern is "nobody." Throughout the song, Bragg sings the word "nobody" with the primary stress on the second syllable, [noʊˈbɑdɪ].[102] While one could say the word this way in speech, it is more common to put

[102] As mentioned above, Bragg realizes the /d/ in "nobody" three different ways, so [noʊˈbɑ(d)ɪ] and [noʊˈbɑɪ] are also possible realizations. In all versions, though, the syllabic stress remains the same.

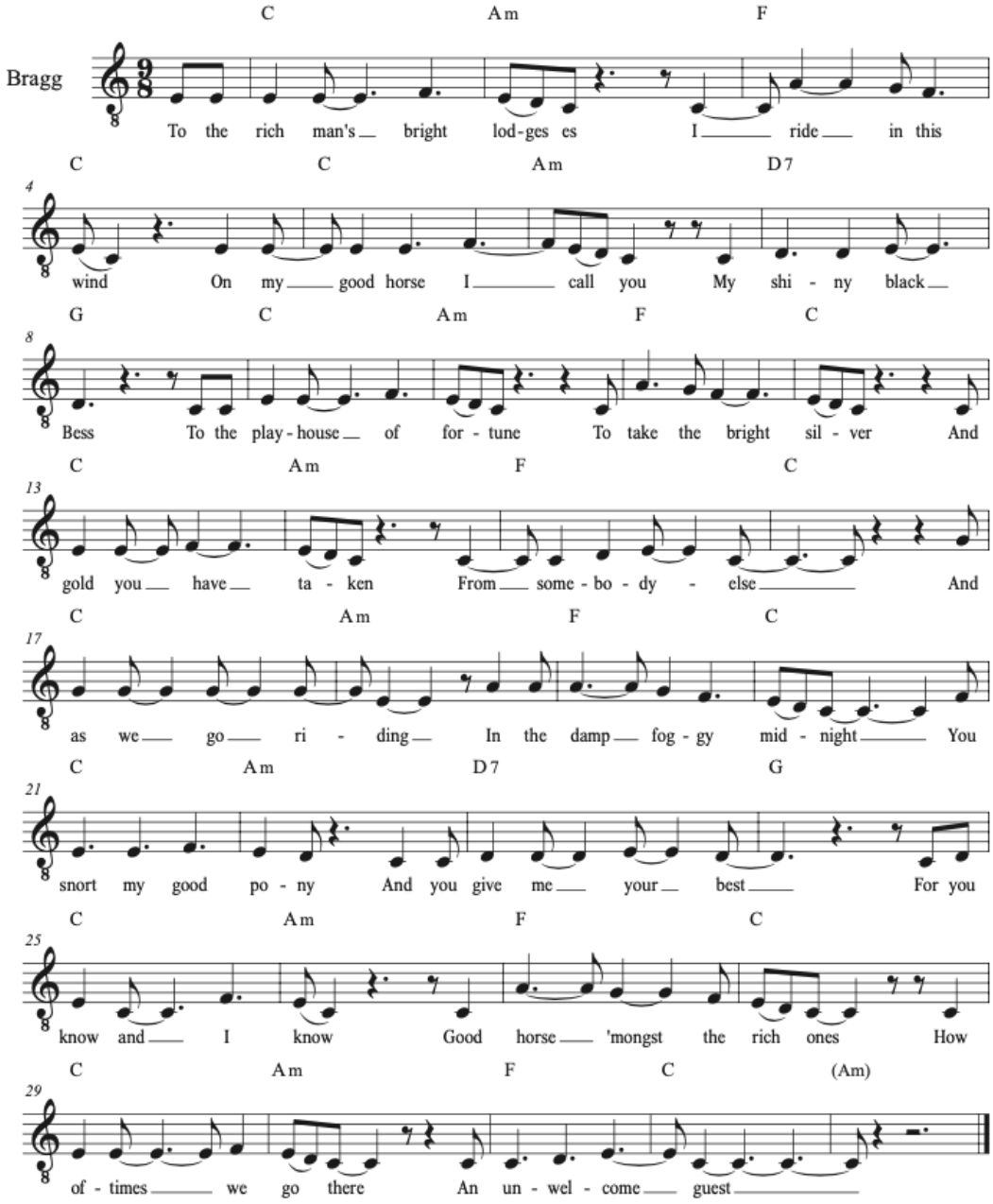
the primary stress on the first syllable, [ˈnoʊbɑdɪ].[103] One can see in the transcription that the word "nobody" always falls with its second syllable landing on beat 2 of a measure and its first syllable on the "and" of beat 1. It is therefore logical that the second syllable comes out sounding stressed. Similarly, the words "Okfuskee" and "ugly" are sung with stress on the final syllable, when one might expect the stress in "Okfuskee" to fall on the second syllable and that in "ugly" to fall on the first syllable. Rhythmically, the final syllables of "Okfuskee" and "ugly" both fall on downbeats. Indeed, the song is full of textual lines ending with an [i] sound (or, in the last stanza, an [eɪ] sound) falling on a downbeat. These [i] and [eɪ] sounds at the ends of lines help to accentuate the metrical structure, which is itself a noteworthy feature of the song. Metrically, "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key" mostly consists of an alternating pattern between groups of 3 beats and groups of 4 beats.[104] The song's rhyme scheme, with most lines ending in [i] (and some in [eɪ]) helps to bring out the rhythmical pattern. So does the fact that some words are sung with a nonstandard syllabic stress. Because Bragg sings the word "ugly" as [ʌglˈiː] rather than [ˈʌgli], the word draws attention to the song's rhythmic organization. In short, the song's rhythmic organization causes some words to be pronounced with nonstandard syllabic stress, and this nonstandard pronunciation in turn draws attention to the rhythmic organization.

---

[103] The realization of "nobody" with the primary stress on the second syllable does exist in Southern American English, and this could be why Bragg sings the word the way that he does.

[104] I have chosen to transcribe the metrical structure as alternating between 3/4 and 4/4, with some interpolated 4/4 measures. One could also interpret the metrical structure as 7/4, primarily in 3+4 but changing to 4+3 for "ain't nobody that can sing like me," with a measure of 8/4 or two measures of 4/4 between verses. Regardless, the dominant metrical feature is the alternation between groups of 3 beats and groups of 4 beats.

Figure 5.17. Transcription of Billy Bragg's vocal line in the first two stanzas of "The Unwelcome Guest."



A similar phenomenon can be observed in "The Unwelcome Guest." The first two stanzas of "The Unwelcome Guest" are shown above as Figure 5.17. In measure 15,[105] Bragg sings the word "somebody" with the primary stress on the second syllable rather than the first, [ˌsʌmˈbɑdi] rather than [ˈsʌmbɑdi]. This makes sense, as the first syllable falls on the "and" of beat 1, while the second falls on beat 2. In measure 31, Bragg sings the word "unwelcome" with the primary stress on the third syllable rather than the second, [ˌʌnwełkˈəm] instead of [ˌʌnˈwełkəm] or [ʌnˈwełkəm]. In this measure, the three syllables of the word "unwelcome" fall on beats 1, 2, and 3. The metrical placement of the syllables could contribute to their stress pattern, as beat 3 is likely to be stronger than beat 2 in 9/8. The stress on the third syllable, "come," could also be a result of the melodic contour; the line ascends from C on the anacrusis and beat 1 up to E on beat 3. In "The Unwelcome Guest," as in "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key," syllabic stress can emphasise the rhythmic peculiarities of the song. In particular, "The Unwelcome Guest" is characterised by syncopations and avoided downbeats, and syllabic stress can help to bring out these rhythmic features.

In addition to existing in a symbiotic relationship with rhythm and metre, in both "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key" and "The Unwelcome Guest," syllabic stress can serve as a distinctive feature of a song in its own right. In "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key," the word "nobody" is sung twice in each verse and at least once in each refrain. In "The Unwelcome Guest," in addition to being in the title, the phrase "unwelcome guest" appears at the end of three stanzas and functions as a refrain of

---

[105] The first measure shown here is not the first measure of the song as there is an instrumental introduction, but I have started the numbering at 1 for convenience.

sorts.[106] As such, the words "nobody" and "unwelcome" are very prominently placed in "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key" and "The Unwelcome Guest," respectively, so their nonstandard pronunciations serve as distinctive features of the two songs and contribute to the characteristic sounds of the tracks in a similar way to, for example, the DRESS vowel in "The Unwelcome Guest."

5.6. Mixed Accents

In addition to the elements discussed above, "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key" and "The Unwelcome Guest" provide examples of Billy Bragg singing in a mixed accent. Mixed accents present a curious case in that they can sound very different—and communicate very different information—depending on the background of the listener. To my (American) ears, Billy Bragg still sounds British in "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key," and even more so in "The Unwelcome Guest." To British ears, however, he might sound more American. Another curious feature of mixed accents involves their interplay with the act of imitating an accent. Overall, an incomplete imitation of an accent will often sound more convincing to a listener who has limited familiarity with the target accent. In addition, it is often the case that a small number of characteristic features effectively stand in for a whole accent, especially to a listener whose familiarity with that accent is limited. For example, rhotic /r/ and flapped /t/ may stand in for an American accent to British ears. To American ears, however, a speaker who makes only these changes but leaves, for example, the TRAP–BATH split, will not seem to be producing a

[106] "The Unwelcome Guest" does not have a verse/chorus format, but rather consists of eight paired stanzas separated by harmonica solos. The first such pair is shown in Figure 5.17. Six of the eight stanzas end with either "shiny/(shining) Black Bess" or "unwelcome guest." These two phrases therefore serve as a kind of refrain.

fully-realized American accent. Specific dialectal features can point toward whole dialects, but they do not do so uniformly for all audiences. Essentially, mixed accents paint an incomplete picture that can nevertheless appear quite convincing.

Mixed accents communicate mixed information. As such, they are susceptible to multiple interpretations. The extent to which Billy Bragg sounds British or American in *Mermaid Avenue* depends in part on the listener's dialectal background. In a way, accents can lie to us. I do not make this assertion in a negative light. What I mean, in fact, is that sometimes our enjoyment of an art form that relies on pronunciation—such as acting or vocal music—can be enhanced by the ability of the accents to deceive us. We take in the information we need to get the desired effect without a perfect replication from the performer (an exceedingly difficult feat) being necessary.

I say that accents can lie to us, but interestingly, accents and pronunciation are often called upon as an authenticity marker. Let us recall for a moment the brief discussion of French Latin from the previous chapter. French Latin is a dialect with which it is likely that nobody has first-language familiarity. Indeed, most listeners have no familiarity or passing familiarity with it. As a result, a few simple pronunciation changes can stand in for French Latin, convincingly if not correctly. This is curious given that French Latin is often advocated on grounds of authenticity. The authenticity argument does hold up, though. French Latin can give listeners an experience with a recreated authenticity, and can do so in part through the ability of accents to masquerade.

5.7. Closing Thoughts

Above, I have used two tracks from Billy Bragg and Wilco's *Mermaid Avenue* to discuss several ways in which pronunciation works in music, building on the extratextual

and intratextual functions discussed in the previous chapters. Drawing on existing music scholarship that discusses where voices come from—or appear to come from—in vocal music, I have explored how pronunciation serves as a tool for Bragg in creating a character and in reducing his own apparent presence as narrator. I have also examined how pronunciation interacts with the rhythm and vocal layering in the two tracks analysed, and have considered the role of pronunciation in creating a characteristic sound. In closing, I revisited the complexities of mixed accents. Larger questions remain regarding whether pronunciation can be considered a feature of a musical work or simply a feature of a specific performance. Nevertheless, in popular music, the album version of a given song by its original recording artist often serves as a definitive version of sorts, so it is reasonable to think that the pronunciation on this recording can be part of the definitive version. Indeed, as shown in the previous chapter, melody, lyrics, and the lyrics' original pronunciation are not always easily separable from each other. In this sense, pronunciation seems to have worked its way into *Mermaid Avenue* as a feature of the album's characteristic sound.

Chapter 6

6. Conclusion

In the preceding three chapters, I have analysed Billy Bragg's singing accent in detail in three different contexts. Chapter 3 focused on three songs from the 1980s with words and music by Billy Bragg in which Bragg uses a singing accent that is clearly from his hometown. This chapter provided an opportunity to explore the idea of creating a musical identity—and a public identity more broadly—and the role that pronunciation can play in this process of identity creation. Drawing heavily on research from sociolinguistics, I considered how the ways in which pronunciation functions in speech can be mapped onto song. The social information that pronunciation—and language more broadly—can communicate was a focal point of this discussion. In other words, I focused primarily on the extratextual functions of pronunciation. I discussed pronunciation in Bragg's creation of a musical identity as it connects to geographic region and socioeconomic class, and as it connects to musical style, with a particular focus on folk and punk. The chapter also provided an opportunity to explore how pronunciation can communicate authenticity, and the complexities of the very idea of authenticity. The three songs analyzed showcased different aspects of Bragg's process of identity creation.

Chapter 4 focused on a very different kind of song: Bragg's cover of "The Tracks of My Tears" by Smokey Robinson and the Miracles. In this musical context, Bragg sings in a more mixed dialect with a significant degree of Americanization. As mentioned in the chapter, Bragg has stated that the reason for this choice is primarily musical; his own accent does not fit well with the song's rhythm and melody (Lewis 2006). The song, therefore, provides an opportunity to consider the more specifically musical—or

intratextual—functions that pronunciation can have. In the chapter, I analyzed Bragg's pronunciation in "The Tracks of My Tears," with specific consideration for his own comments about his pronunciation in this track. I then considered two very different examples of pronunciation's intratextual functions taking centre stage: the phenomenon of 'me-breaking' (Burgos 2020) in popular music and the arguments often made by choral directors in favour of regional variants of Latin. These three contrasting examples provided three different contexts in which to consider the importance of pronunciation's intratextual functions.

Chapter 5 presented Bragg's pronunciation in a context that is perhaps situated between those of the preceding two chapters. I analysed two tracks from *Mermaid Avenue*, Bragg's collaboration with Wilco using lyrics written by the late Woody Guthrie. I therefore considered Bragg's pronunciation in a situation in which he had written the music that he was singing, but not the lyrics. In Chapter 3, while discussing Bragg's creation of a musical identity, I had briefly addressed the question of identity creation as it relates to a song's narrator. In Chapter 5, I explored this question in more detail by considering the process of character creation and the role pronunciation can play. More broadly, I considered the question of vocal personae by drawing on the work of music scholars who have theorized the complexity of voices, including Simon Frith, Edward Cohn, and Brian Kane. I considered how pronunciation plays into the many dimensions of who appears to be behind a voice. I also discussed the interplay of pronunciation with other musical features, such as rhythm, and touched on the conflicting information that mixed accents can communicate. This chapter provided the opportunity to revisit some of the questions introduced in the previous two chapters in more detail, to explore the

interplay between the extratextual and intratextual functions of pronunciation, and to connect these ideas back to existing discussions in music research.

Following my discussions of Billy Bragg's pronunciation, several questions likely remain in the mind of the reader. In the next section, I will consider three questions regarding Bragg's pronunciation. The first question that I will explore is that of what there is in common between the pronunciation in all of the examples that I have analysed. In the preceding chapters, I have focused largely on what makes Bragg's pronunciation different in different contexts, so in what follows, I will focus on the common threads. The second question that I will explore is that of intention. I have considered a number of pronunciation features in Billy Bragg's singing, so in what follows, I will consider the extent to which one can claim that these features are intentional on the part of Bragg. The third question that I will explore is that of whether one can consider pronunciation to be a part of a musical work. I will consider the extent to which one can claim that pronunciation is a feature of Bragg's songs themselves, or whether it is best considered simply to be a part of his performances. After addressing these questions, I will present areas for further research, first relating specifically to Billy Bragg and then relating to pronunciation in music more broadly.

6.1. Three Questions

The first question is which features the analysed musical examples all have in common. The songs analysed in the preceding chapters demonstrate different pronunciation patterns. While "Between the Wars," "To Have and to Have Not," and "The Home Front" all showcase Bragg singing in a working-class accent from Southeast England, "The Tracks of My Tears," "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key," and "The

Unwelcome Guest" all feature varying degrees of Americanization. It is worthwhile to reconsider, for a moment, the specifically British pronunciation features present in the latter three recordings. In other words, let us revisit the pronunciation features from Category 1 (Bragg) and Category 4 (RP, not GenAm) present in "The Tracks of My Tears," "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key," and "The Unwelcome Guest." Shown below as Figure 6.1–Figure 6.3 are lists of the Category 1 and Category 4 features in each of these three songs.

Figure 6.1. Category 1 (Bragg) and Category 4 (RP, not GenAm) features present in Billy Bragg, "The Tracks of My Tears."

Category 1 (Bragg)
FLEECE: diphthongal realization
MOUTH: raised onset vowel
/l/: vocalization
GOOSE: fronting
STRUT: fronting, opening
/j/ (yod): coalescence
FOOT: closing, fronting
SQUARE: near-monophthongization
Category 4 (RP, not GenAm)
/r/: non-rhotic pronunciation
DRESS: tensing

Figure 6.2. Category 1 (Bragg) and Category 4 (RP, not GenAm) features present in Billy Bragg, "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key."

Category 1 (Bragg)
FLEECE: diphthongal realization
/l/: vocalization
Category 4 (RP, not GenAm)
/r/: non-rhotic pronunciation
DRESS: tensing

Figure 6.3. Category 1 (Bragg) and Category 4 (RP, not GenAm) features present in Billy Bragg, "The Unwelcome Guest."

Category 1 (Bragg)
PRICE: backed onset vowel
/l/: vocalization
GOOSE: fronting, some unrounding
FLEECE: diphthongal realization
FOOT: closing, fronting
/j/ (yod): coalescence
Category 4 (RP, not GenAm)
/r/: non-rhotic pronunciation
DRESS: tensing
Individual words with different pronunciations in RP and GenAm ("of," "from," "suggest")

Two Category 1 features are present in all three songs: the diphthongal realization of the FLEECE vowel and /l/ vocalization. Two Category 4 features are present in all three

songs: a non-rhotic realization of the /r/ phoneme and tensing of the DRESS vowel. These features, in other words, are present in all six of the songs analyzed in this dissertation. One could say, then, that they form a part of Billy Bragg's signature style and signature sound. Even in songs where he Americanizes his pronunciation, some degree of FLEECE diphthongizing, /l/ vocalization, DRESS tensing, and non-rhoticity are present. These sounds can act as anchors to Billy Bragg's voice, and to his sound as a whole.

The next question is that of intention. In the previous chapters, I have written at length about what Billy Bragg achieves through pronunciation in his music. It is reasonable, then, to ask whether any of this is intentional on his part. I briefly addressed this question in Chapter 3, which focused on the creation of a musical identity and a public persona. In that chapter, I said that I was focused primarily on the effects of pronunciation in Bragg's music, not the causes. While this is true, it is nevertheless tempting to speculate about the question of intention, so I will indulge myself in the exercise for a moment. To do so, I will draw primarily on Bragg's own words, spoken and written.

A useful resource for considering Bragg's musical intentions is his autobiographical exploration of how to reconcile left-wing activism with a love of England, *The Progressive Patriot: A Search for Belonging* (Bragg 2006). The book is a detailed reflection on what it means to be English. Bragg considers the history, geography, and culture of the region where he grew up; reflects on his ancestry and family history; and recalls moments from his life and upbringing. He also writes about his journey to becoming a musician and the role that Englishness played in this journey. He makes clear the role of Englishness in his songwriting at the very beginning of the

book. In the introduction, he writes, “If Springsteen could romanticize the industrial landscape of his New Jersey home, I didn’t see why I couldn’t do the same for estuarine Essex. There was a punk perversity in what I did, but there was also a genuine pride in singing about my own manor” (Bragg 2006, 14). Bragg very explicitly puts this pride in Englishness on display in his live performances. As he describes in the book, “If you see me performing in concert, the night will invariably end with a ritual declaration of identity: ‘My name is Billy Bragg, I’m from Barking, Essex. Thank you very much. Goodnight.’” I attended a concert that Bragg delivered at the Danforth Music Hall in Toronto, Ontario, Canada on October 13, 2022, and indeed, he did end the night by saying who he is and where he is from.

The Progressive Patriot is striking because of the level of detail into which Bragg delves in interrogating what it means to be English, what it means to be a patriot, and what it means to be a progressive. This level of consideration is evident in Bragg’s live performances as well. The concert in Toronto was, essentially, an alternation of songs and speeches. Some of the speeches were lighthearted, but many covered serious and timely topics. For example, he spoke of criticism he had received following a concert in Brighton, England after performing the 1991 song “Sexuality” with altered lyrics expressing solidarity with the transgender community. In his remarks, he did not hesitate to criticize English nationals who have embraced the ideology frequently referred to by its critics as “trans-exclusionary radical feminism,” and as “gender-critical feminism” by its adherents. He also did not hesitate to criticize fellow self-identified progressives who do not yet stand in solidarity with the trans community. In other words, he discussed a

known controversial topic and showed a willingness to continually interrogate what it means to be English and what it means to be a progressive.

The content of *The Progressive Patriot* and Bragg's customs in live performances suggest that he puts a high level of thought into his identity and into how he comes across. It is therefore worth paying attention to a moment in *The Progressive Patriot* where Bragg talks specifically about pronunciation. In reminiscing about the house he grew up in, Bragg recalls his father's fondness for the poet Rudyard Kipling. Bragg mentions Kipling's use of eye dialect to portray a character with a broad Cockney accent, and mentions that Kipling was criticized for this.[107] He says, however, that Kipling's use of eye dialect helps to make the character feel real for him; "Kipling's ear for the vernacular gives the reader a sense that one is sharing a pipe and some porter with a bunch of old sweats, listening to their complaints and reminiscences" (Bragg 2006, 39). In his reflections on Rudyard Kipling, Bragg recalls being impressed at a young age by how an author's use of eye dialect can help a character come to life. It is therefore not much of a leap to assume that Bragg is aware of the work that pronunciation can do in his singing, both in establishing his musical identity and in establishing—or destabilizing—the identities of the characters in his songs.

The third question that I will consider—at greater length than the first two—is whether one can consider pronunciation to be a part of a piece of music. In the preceding

---

[107] Eye dialect is the use of alternative spellings to imitate or invoke a specific pronunciation style, such as spelling the word "about" as "aboot" or "a boat" to emulate (albeit imperfectly) the dialectal feature known as "Canadian raising." A particularly notable example of eye dialect use in literature is Mark Twain's writing style in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. In bringing up eye dialect here, I acknowledge that this practice can be deeply problematic. A discussion of the many problems with eye dialect is beyond the scope of the present document, but I wish to clarify that I mention the practice only as an example of Billy Bragg discussing pronunciation, and not as an endorsement of this practice.

chapters, I have argued that pronunciation is an important part of Billy Bragg's music. However, it is reasonable to ask whether one can consider pronunciation to be part of a song, or whether it is best considered as part of a performance and part of a singer's vocal style. This question connects to the idea of the musical work, a topic that has been deeply considered in music theory and philosophy of music.[108] It is evident from the literature that there is no easy way to delineate the point at which enough changes have been made to a musical work that it is now a different work.

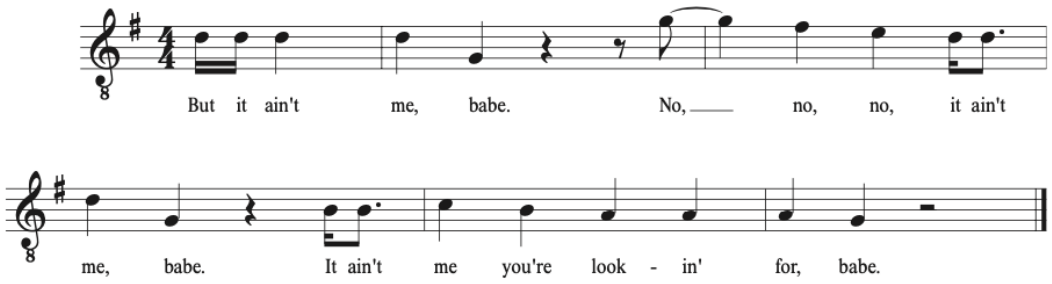
Melody instinctively seems like a relatively reliable feature in defining a piece of music. It is certainly not invariable, though. It is common for singers performing covers—or singers performing their own songs live—to make small changes to the melody. I recall an example from a few years ago of a song appearing in concert with a very different melody from its studio recording. The song was Bob Dylan's "It Ain't Me Babe" (1964), performed in concert in Baltimore, Maryland, United States on November 12, 2019.[109] The chorus from the song that one is likely to recognize from the studio recording has the melody shown below as Figure 6.4.

---

[108] See, for example, Goehr (1992), Ingarden (1989), Samson (2002), and Treitler (1993).

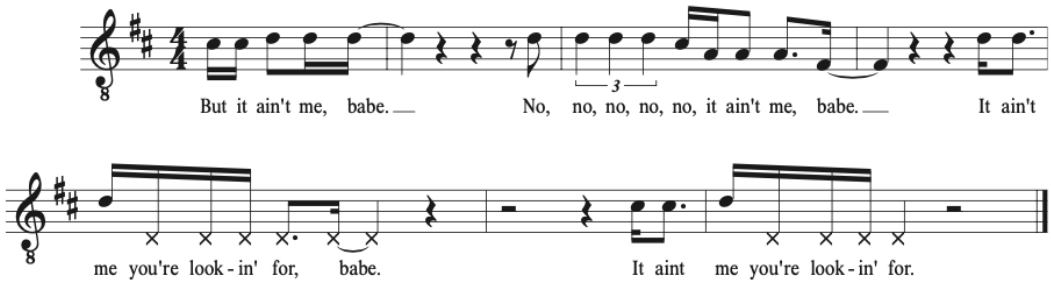
[109] This song has a long history of being performed and being covered, so it has been performed in many forms over the years, by Dylan and others. I do not mean to suggest that the 2019 tour represented some unique occurrence; I simply mention it as an example of melody not necessarily acting as a constant. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Steve Rings (2013) has written about the numerous variations in Bob Dylan's performances over the years.

Figure 6.4. Transcription of the melody from "It Ain't Me Babe" (*Another Side of Bob Dylan*, 1964).



The live performance had a melody that sounded more like the melody shown in Figure 6.5. I was unable to find a recording of the concert in Baltimore, so I have transcribed the chorus from a performance in New York City from the same tour.

Figure 6.5. Transcription of the melody from Bob Dylan's "It Ain't Me Babe," performed at the Beacon Theatre in New York City, December 3, 2019.[110]



In addition to the differences in the chorus's melody, the live version's verses were essentially a spoken word performance. While one can certainly make the case for underlying similarity between the two chorus melodies, there is a significant degree of surface-level difference between them. The change in melodic contour of the first phrase

[110] John Spoor, "Bob Dylan It Ain't Me, Babe Beacon Theatre New York 3 December 2019," YouTube, January 10, 2020, 1:27 to 1:40.

is particularly striking to me. This performance was recognizable as a performance of "It Ain't Me Babe" primarily because of the song's lyrics and because it was a Bob Dylan concert. The melody was different enough that it would not necessarily be recognizable on its own as derived from the original melody. I would argue that in this particular performance, the song was recognizable as itself in spite of, and not because of, its melody.

On the other hand, musical parameters other than melody, harmony, and rhythm are generally easier to change while preserving a sense that the song is the same. Nevertheless, they too can seem to disrupt the identity of a song. I can think of one recent example involving vocal timbre. At a holiday gathering late last year, I heard a cover of "The Chipmunk Song (Christmas Don't Be Late)," the Christmas song by animated virtual band Alvin and the Chipmunks. I recognized the song as such because it had more or less the same melody, rhythm, and lyrics as the well-known original version. However, this cover hardly felt like the same song to me because it was performed without chipmunk voices. It simply sounded like a group of women singing about being excited for Christmas.[111] The chipmunk voices are a very distinctive and memorable feature of the original version, and as such, their absence made the cover feel like a different song.

I included the above examples relating to melody and timbre to show that the question of whether any given musical feature can be considered a part of a musical work

---

[111] I do not know who recorded the specific cover version that I heard, but several cover versions without chipmunk voices are available online. See, for example, Casey Abrams, "Chipmunks Cover – Christmas Song (Acapella) Casey Abrams," YouTube, December 23, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNkLh-kpDTQ. I do not intend my comments as an aesthetic judgement on this or any other version of the lighthearted Christmas tune in question. I merely wish to highlight the role that timbre can play in the perception of a song's identity.

rather than a part of a musical performance is far from straightforward. It is not easy to state definitively the extent to which appreciators of Billy Bragg's music consider his pronunciation to be an integral part of his songs. However, one can at least speculate on the matter by observing how fans sing along with Bragg's music. A useful song for interrogating this point is "To Have and to Have Not" because Bragg makes strong use of regional pronunciation in the song (as shown in Chapter 3), he included it in the set of a recent North American tour, and he typically asks the audience to sing when he performs the song in concert.

When performing "To Have and to Have Not" in concert, Bragg typically sings the verses and asks the audience to sing the choruses. As such, casual recordings of this song being performed live provide an opportunity to listen to how an audience sings Bragg's lyrics. In what follows, I will briefly consider three audiences' renditions of the "To Have and to Have Not" chorus from Bragg's 2022 North American tour. Naturally, this approach has limitations. A phonetic transcription of the overall effect created by a group singing is going to be more of an approximation than a phonetic transcription of one person singing. Furthermore, an audience is not a choir and is not necessarily trying to create a unified sound. In addition, a recording taken by an audience member is naturally going to favour the voices immediately surrounding the person recording, and will not necessarily capture the sound of the whole audience. It is also worth noting that audience members at a concert do not necessarily speak with the accent or dialect associated with the concert's location. In addition, Bragg's 2022 tour took place primarily on the East Coast of the United States, and as such, the accents associated with the locations of the concerts discussed below share certain features with Bragg's accent, such

as non-rhoticity. Finally, a thorough study of this question would require much more data, collected using a more standardized and systematic approach.

In spite of the qualifications noted above, I believe that this exercise does provide insight into how fans are inclined to sing Bragg's music. To partially address the issue of recording the full audience versus recording somebody who happens to be near the recording device, I selected examples in which one voice is not overly prominent so that a group sound is discernible. Regarding the question of what accent one can expect the audience to have, it is true that one should not expect everybody in an audience to speak with the accent associated with the city the concert is in, but it is also true that one can expect many members of the audience to speak with features associated with the concert's general geographic region. In the case of a series of concerts in the United States, this means that one can reasonably expect many audience members to speak with fairly generic American accents. Regarding the fact that regional accents from the Eastern United States share certain features with English from Southern England, this is true, but these accents have much more in common with GenAm than they do with RP or with Bragg's accent. In addition, broad regional accents are becoming increasingly less common in the United States (Kortmann and Schneider 2004, 300–1). As such, one can expect many attendees at a concert in the Eastern United States to speak something resembling GenAm. Finally, while a systematic study would be required to examine this question in detail, I am only considering it here as an addendum to what has come before.

The first clip to be considered is from a concert that took place at the Buckhead Theatre in Atlanta, Georgia in September 2022. A transcription of the audience's rendition of the first chorus is shown below as Figure 6.6.

Figure 6.6. Transcription of the audience singing the first chorus of "To Have and to Have Not"' in Atlanta, Georgia, September 27, 2022.[112]

(Just	because)		you're	better	than	me 1
			ˈjɔː	ˈbe**tə**	ˈðæn	ˈm**ɪi**
Doesn't	mean	I'm	lazy	2		
ˈdʌzn̩t	ˈm**ɪi**n	**ɑɪ**m	l**ɑɪ**ˈz**ɪi**			
Just	because		you're	going	forwards	3
ˈd͡ʒʌst	bɪˈk**ɒ**s		ˈjɔː	ˈg**ɐʊ**ɪŋ	ˈf**o**ːwədz	
Doesn't	mean	I'm	going		backwards	4
ˈdʌzn̩t	ˈm**ɪi**n	**ɑɪ**m	ˈg**ɐʊ**ɪŋ		ˈbækw**ə**dz	

In the transcription, I have bolded all of the sounds that could potentially index Bragg's accent or the speech of Southeast England in general. In other words, I have bolded any sounds that differ from GenAm and could potentially be influenced by Bragg's pronunciation style. I have presented them below in a table as Figure 6.7.

Figure 6.7. Sounds that could show the influence of Bragg's singing accent in the audience's first chorus of "To Have and to Have Not," live in Atlanta, 2022.

Lexical Set or Consonant	Phenomenon	Approximate Realization	Words (Line Numbers)	Notes
/r/	non-rhotic realization	ø	you're (1, 3); better (1); forwards x2 (3); backwards (4)	Could also index Southern American English (Kortmann and Schneider 2004, 304–5)
/t/	no flapping	[t]	better (1)	
FLEECE, happY	diphthongal realization	[ɪi]	me (1); mean (2, 4); lazy (2)	Could also index Southern American English (Kortmann and

[112] Ferris Thomas, "To Have and to Have Not," YouTube, September 28, 2022, 0:23–0:37.

				Schneider 2004, 304)
PRICE	backed onset vowel	[ɑɪ]	I'm (2, 4) THOUGHT	
FACE	lowered onset vowel	[ɑɪ]	lazy (2)	
THOUGHT	lowering	[ɒ]	because (3)	Could also index Southern American English (Kortmann and Schneider 2004, 310)
GOAT	lowered onset vowel	[ɐʊ]	going (3, 4)	

As indicated in the table, some of these sounds—such as rhoticity—could be attributed to Bragg's singing accent or to Southern American English. However, some of them—such as the GOAT vowel—could not be easily attributed thus. Below, presented as Figure 6.8 and Figure 6.10 are similar transcriptions of the audience singing a chorus in Boston, Massachusetts and Red Bank, New Jersey. The pronunciation features that could index influence from Bragg's singing accent are bolded and presented in tables as Figure 6.9 and Figure 6.11.

Figure 6.8. Transcription of the audience singing the third chorus of "To Have and to Have Not," live in at the Wilbur Theater in Boston, Massachusetts, October 8, 2022.[113]

(Just	because)	you're	better	than	me	1
		ˈjɔː	ˈbɛɾə	ˈðæn	ˈm**ɨi**	

[113] Susie Davidson Massachusetts, "Billy Bragg, 'To Have and to Have Not,' Oct. 8, 2022, Wilbur Theater, Boston," YouTube, October 9, 2022, 1:52–2:04.

Doesn't	mean	I'm	lazy	2		
ˈd**ɐ**zn̩t	ˈm**ɪ**n	**ɑɪ**m	l**ɑɪ**ˈz**ɪ**			
Just	because		you're	going	forwards	3
ˈd͡ʒʌst	bɪˈkʌs		jɔː	ˈg**ɐʊ**ɪŋ	ˈf**o**ːwədz	
Doesn't	mean	I'm	going		backwards	4
ˈd**ɐ**zn̩t	ˈm**ɪ**n	**ɑɪ**m	ˈg**ɐʊ**ɪŋ		ˈbækw**ə**dz	

Figure 6.9. Sounds that could show the influence of Bragg's singing accent in the audience's third chorus of "To Have and to Have Not," live in Boston, 2022.

Lexical Set or Consonant	**Phenomenon**	**Approximate Realization**	**Words (Line Numbers)**	**Notes**
/r/	non-rhotic realization	∅	you're (1, 3); better (1); forwards x2 (3); backwards (4)	Could also index New England English (Kortmann and Schneider 2004, 279)
FLEECE, happY	diphthongal realization	[ɪi]	me (1); mean (2, 4); lazy (2)	
STRUT	fronting, opening	[ɐ]	doesn't (2, 4)	
PRICE	backed onset vowel	[ɑɪ]	I'm (2, 4)	Could also index New England English (Kortmann and Schneider 2004, 273)
FACE	lowered onset vowel	[ɑɪ]	lazy (2)	
GOAT	lowered onset vowel	[ɐʊ]	going (3, 4)	

Figure 6.10. Transcription of the audience singing the first chorus of "To Have and to Have Not," live at The Vogel in Red Bank, New Jersey, October 4, 2022.[114]

(Just	because)		you're	better	than	me 1
			ˈjɔː	ˈbe**tə**	ˈðæn	ˈm**ɪi**
Doesn't	mean	I'm	lazy	2		
ˈdʌzn̩t	ˈmiːn	**ɑ**ːm	lʌ**ɪ**ˈzi			
Just	because		you're	going	forwards	3
ˈd͡ʒʌst	biˈkʌs		jɔː	ˈgoʊɪŋ	ˈf**o**ːwəd	
Doesn't	mean	I'm	going		backwards	4
ˈd**ʊ**zənt	ˈm**ɪ**in	**ɑɪ**m	ˈgoʊɪŋ		ˈbækwə**d**z	

Figure 6.11. Sounds that could show the influence of Bragg's singing accent in the audience's first chorus of "To Have and to Have Not," live in New Jersey, 2022.

Lexical Set or Consonant	Phenomenon	Approximate Realization	Words (Line Numbers)	Notes
/r/	non-rhotic realization	∅	you're (1, 3); better (1); forwards x2 (3); backwards (4)	Could also index New York City (Kortmann and Schneider 2004, 288)
/t/	no flapping	[t]	better (1)	
FLEECE	diphthongal realization	[ɪi]	me (1); mean (4)	
PRICE	monophthong, back vowel	[ɑː]	I'm (2)	Unclear. Backness could index Bragg or New York City (Kortmann and Schneider 2004, 285). Monophthong could index USA-5.

[114] Philly Upstart, "Billy Bragg 'To Have And To Have Not' Live @ The Vogel, Red Bank, New Jersey 10/4/2022," YouTube, October 5, 2022, 0:21–0:35.

FACE	onset vowel backed and lowered	[ʌɪ]	lazy (2)	Could index Bragg or Philadelphia (Kortmann and Schneider 2004, 290)
STRUT	STRUT pronounced like FOOT (raised, rounded)	[ʊ]	doesn't (4)	Absence of FOOT/ STRUT split could index Northern England; STRUT raising could index Philadelphia (Kortmann and Schneider 2004, 290)
PRICE	backed onset vowel	[ɑɪ]	I'm (4)	Could also index New York City (Kortmann and Schneider 2004, 285)

As in the case of the Atlanta show, there are local dialects to consider that can complicate the matter. In analysing the pronunciation in the Boston concert, I considered New England English (Kortmann and Schneider 2004, 270–80). For the New Jersey concert, I considered New York City English (Kortmann and Schneider 2004, 284–9) and Philadelphia English (Kortmann and Schneider 2004, 289–93). While the limitations of this methodology prevent me from making sweeping claims on the matter, in analysing this data, what strikes me immediately is that each audience's pronunciation seems to be influenced by Billy Bragg's. Each audience's performance contains features that differ from GenAm and are not easily attributable to a dialect of the region where the concert takes place. In addition, even in the case of features that can be attributed to regional

accents, one would not necessarily expect them to be as strong as they are in these examples. For example, non-rhoticity is becoming less common in the Eastern United States, but all three audience performances are decidedly non-rhotic.

The glimpse shown by these three audience performances is consistent with my own experience attending Billy Bragg's concert in Toronto, mentioned above. In songs in which Bragg invited the audience to sing in his stead—including "To Have and to Have Not"— the audience seemed to sing with an accent influenced by that of Bragg.[115] I began this discussion with the question of whether pronunciation can be considered part of a song, or whether it can only be considered part of a performance. What I have presented here is perhaps more of an invitation to continue to ponder this question than an answer, but I believe I have shown that when pronunciation is a salient feature, it can start to feel like an integral part of a song.

I have suggested above that while it is tempting to view musical features such as melody, harmony, and rhythm as fundamental to the identity of a musical work and features such as timbre or pronunciation as incidental, this distinction is far from clear cut. To focus on pronunciation in particular, I have shown that audience members at Billy Bragg's concerts seem inclined to pronounce Bragg's lyrics in a way that is influenced by his singing accent. To complicate the matter further, let us consider, for a moment, where to situate the lyrics themselves in this conversation. Lyrics occupy a complicated space with regards to what one does or does not consider to be the same song. In Bob Dylan's

---

[115] I was not able to locate a clip of "To Have and to Have Not" from this concert. It is worth noting, though, that the typical accent from Southern Ontario does not have the same complicating features that some Eastern United States accents have. As such, the fact that the Toronto audience's pronunciation sounded influenced by Billy Bragg is yet more indication that, indeed, Bragg's pronunciation does affect the way audiences sing back his lyrics and melodies.

live performance of "It Ain't Me Babe" mentioned above, the lyrics function as a kind of glue and point to the performance as, indeed, a rendition of "It Ain't Me Babe," despite the melody being altered. This makes sense in the context of a Bob Dylan song because Dylan is celebrated primarily as a lyricist. An interesting example from the world of song—albeit not popular song—is Franz Schubert's "An den Mond" D. 259 and "An den Mond" D. 296, two different settings of the same poem by Goethe. These two settings are, by most metrics, two different musical works. In my mind, though, they are very clearly related, and I tend to think of them as two parts of one larger musical work. This is perhaps because I am rather fond of the lyrics, and as such, they seem to me to be a defining feature of the song. I doubt that I am alone, though, in seeing these two settings as more related than simply being two settings of the same poem. The fact that they also share the same composer gives extra weight to their perceived relatedness.[116] Returning to a decidedly pop idiom, a counterexample is a recent cover song (if one can call it that): "I'm Good (Blue)" by Bebe Rexha and David Guetta, released in 2022. The parenthetical in the title refers to the source material for much of the song's melody and rhythm: "Blue (Da Ba Dee)" by Italian group Eiffel 65, released in 1998. While there are brief musical passages in "I'm Good (Blue)" that do not refer directly to musical material from "Blue (Da Ba Dee)," most of "I'm Good (Blue)" could be considered a cover with different lyrics. However, to my ear, these different lyrics take "I'm Good (Blue)" out of the cover space and into the separate song space. When "Blue (Da Ba Dee)" came out, it was notable in part because of how unusual its lyrics are. The lyrics seem to be a combination

---

[116] Naturally, in art song, one frequently encounters the same text set multiple times and by multiple different composers. Nevertheless, the fact that one frequently sees multiple settings of the same text does not mean that these settings cannot seem somehow related to each other.

of scat singing, a description of a world where everything and everyone is blue, and an ode to the colour blue. The lyrics of "I'm Good (Blue)," on the other hand, describe the familiar experience of being excited to go out and have a good night. To my ears, "I'm Good (Blue)" sounds like a completely different song from "Blue (Da Ba Dee)" because the original lyrics—such a distinctive feature of "Blue"—are not there. On the whole, lyrics, like other musical features, do not occupy a self-evident position as either separate from or integral to the music.

In the above discussion, I have presented evidence from three audiences' renditions of a Billy Bragg chorus to suggest that in the case of an artist like Billy Bragg whose singing accent is so distinctive, it is reasonable to consider pronunciation to be a part of a musical work. To frame this discussion, I have presented examples in which melody and timbre serve to destabilize the mental categories we may hold of which musical features are integral to a musical work and which are incidental. I have then opened the discussion up by inviting the reader to consider lyrics and the position that they occupy with regards to the identity of a musical work. It is my hope that this discussion has served as an invitation to reflect on what we consider to be the defining features of a piece of music in the context of a sing-songwriter with a very distinctive pronunciation style.

6.2. Areas for Further Research: Billy Bragg

The following subsections enumerate several opportunities for further research specifically relating to Billy Bragg, primarily (but not exclusively) focused on pronunciation.

6.2.1. Discussions to Expand

There are some topics that I touched on in the preceding chapters that could certainly be discussed in more detail. One is the question of Billy Bragg's sound, generally. I have addressed the question of Billy Bragg's characteristic sound, but have focused primarily on pronunciation. There is likely room to consider this matter further with a focus on other parameters, such as timbre. Another area that could be expanded upon is the question of musical style as it relates to pronunciation. In my discussion, I focused primarily on how pronunciation serves to connect Bragg to folk and punk music. Other areas to explore include Bragg's turn toward a more pop music idiom with the 1991 album *Don't Try This at Home* and Bragg's brush with a more classical style in the track "Blake's Jerusalem" on the 1990 album *The Internationale*. Based on my observations, Bragg's pronunciation style does not seem markedly different in these examples, so it could be interesting to explore the role the pronunciation plays in grounding Bragg in the musical identity he has established for himself.

Another area that could be expanded upon is the question of authenticity. I addressed the question of authenticity in Chapter 3, as part of a discussion of Bragg's creation of a musical and public identity. Authenticity is a complicated concept, and could itself be a starting point for further investigation. As I noted in Chapter 3, authenticity as it connects to Billy Bragg has already been a point of interest for scholars such as Kieran Cashell (2011) and Mark Willhardt (2006). There is, however, more discussion to be had concerning pronunciation as it relates specifically to the question of authenticity in Bragg's music. In this dissertation, I have not performed a detailed phonetic analysis of Bragg's spoken accent. It would be interesting to perform such an

analysis and to compare the results to those of a phonetic analysis of the singing accent found in “Between the Wars,” “To Have and to Have Not,” and “The Home Front.” Certainly, there is significant degree of similarity, but there could be subtle differences, and one could consider these differences in the context of the question of authenticity. Naturally, it would also be interesting to consider any subtle differences between his spoken accent and the most regionally-marked version of his singing accent in the context of music’s intratextual functions. One could also perform phonetic analyses of Bragg’s recordings and performances spanning his entire career and see if there are changes over time that can be observed. Bragg is sometimes accused of not being authentic anymore because he has done well for himself financially while criticizing capitalism, and a study of changes in his pronunciation over time could provide an interesting corollary to a consideration of the question of whether Bragg can still be called authentic.

6.2.2. Other Methodological Approaches

I have taken one methodological approach in this dissertation, but there are certainly other approaches that could add to and augment the information and discussion that I have presented. One would be essentially to take a more zoomed out approach. In the preceding chapters, I focused in detail on six songs by Billy Bragg. This approach allowed for deep consideration of these songs, but an approach taken with a wider lens would show a broader picture of Bragg’s sung pronunciation and its ramifications. It would be useful to design a study that does not look as closely at any one particular song, but looks at the variation in a few key pronunciation features in a larger sample of Bragg’s songs. Using this approach, one could observe changes over time in Bragg’s sung pronunciation. One could also look at the differences (if any) between Bragg’s

pronunciation in studio recordings and in live performances. Another methodological approach would be to draw more on Bragg's own words. I have mentioned that Billy Bragg is the author of several books, as well as numerous articles. In addition, he has, of course, participated in many interviews with reporters over the years. In this dissertation, I have drawn on Bragg's words—most notably his interview with John Lewis (2006) in which he talks about his own pronunciation. There is, however, room for further exploration of what Bragg has to say on the subjects discussed in this dissertation, both in interviews and in his published writings. In addition, it would be interesting to attempt to interview Bragg. This approach was beyond the scope of the present study, but is likely not out of the realm of possibility. In this dissertation, I have focused primarily on Bragg's musical output and have only considered his written and spoken words to a limited extent, but these words would likely be a fitting point of departure for further study.

6.2.3. Speaking in Music

In considering Billy Bragg and the role of pronunciation in his work, I discussed the voices that Bragg creates for himself and the narrators of his songs. It would be interesting to consider cases in which the narrator is particularly unusual. "Everywhere"—written by Greg Trooper and recorded by Bragg on the album *Don't Try This at Home*—comes to mind as a track with a peculiar narrator. The first verse is told from the perspective of a young American man stationed in the Philippines during World War II. In the second verse, the narrator recalls his childhood in California and his best friend, a Japanese American boy, who was taken to an internment camp at some point after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. In the third verse, the narrator reveals that his friend

died by suicide in the years following the war, and that he himself died in the Philippines. The narrator, therefore, has the expected level of complication arising from the fact that he is American, but also has a much deeper level of complication arising from the fact that he is dead. Another song with a particularly unusual narrator is "Full English Brexit." In the song, released in 2017, the narrator bemoans the changes that he has seen in his country as a result of immigration and cites a perceived erosion of English culture and English national identity as his reasons for voting to leave the European Union. The narrator of this song is unusual because without knowing Bragg's political views, the listener has no way to know that this character is not expressing Bragg's views. Without any other context, the narrator of "Full English Brexit" seems like he could be a version of Billy Bragg. In "Everywhere," Bragg employs some Americanized pronunciation that distances him from the narrator to a certain extent. In "Full English Brexit," on the other hand, Bragg rolls out the full English pronunciation. The narrator therefore seems somehow connected, perhaps too connected, to him.[117]

Another topic that would be interesting to consider is the question of what musical techniques Bragg uses to get his desired messages across. Billy Bragg has said that music cannot change the world, but it can make us believe that the world can be changed (Puschmann 2023). This position could seem modest, or even apologetic, but one could also argue that it puts a lot of faith in what music can do. What techniques does Bragg use in working toward this goal? Pronunciation emerges as one tool that Bragg

---

[117] It is important to note in mentioning "Everywhere" and "Full English Brexit" that both songs present examples of narrators using explicitly racist language. As such, care and sensitivity would be required in studying these tracks. While the narrators' language is intended as a critique, not all listeners wish to hear a white man use racist language in song.

successfully uses in his protest music, but it would be interesting to expand this discussion. This investigation would connect to broader conversations about what makes effective protest music.

6.3. Areas for Further Research: Pronunciation in General

In addition to opportunities for further research relating specifically to Billy Bragg, there are many opportunities for further research on pronunciation in music in general. In what follows, I will present some of the thoughts that I have on topics relating to pronunciation that could be fruitfully considered through a music-theoretical or musicological lens.

6.3.1. Lyrics as Sound

The framework presented in this dissertation could be useful for considering repertoire in which more emphasis is placed on the sounds of words than on their meaning. An extreme example of this is "Prisencolinensinaiciusol," a song released in 1972 by Italian singer Adriano Celentano. The song's lyrics are gibberish; they do not constitute real words. However, they are intended to sound like American English. One could use phonetic analysis to consider the specific sounds that Celentano uses to make his lyrics sound like English. The song also presents an opportunity to consider the extent to which the sounds of words can be meaningful in and of themselves, independent of any semantic meaning.

A case somewhat related to that of nonsense lyrics is that of misheard lyrics. Misheard lyrics have a defined sematic meaning, but for reasons such as the singer's diction or confusion created by the rhyme scheme, they are often heard as different words. Misheard lyrics provide a fertile area for investigation, and it would be interesting

to analyze misheard lyrics from a phonetic perspective. In a similar way to how Noriko Manabe (2022) analyzes the phonetic tricks that allow Kuwata Keisuke to create Japanese lyrics that sound similar to the original English lyrics of *Abbey Road*, one could analyse the phonetic conditions that allow some misheard lyrics to be as common as they are. One could also consider the impact that misheard lyrics can have on songs' reception histories. Additionally, much as I have raised questions here about the extent to which pronunciation can be considered a part of a musical work (as opposed to a performance) it would be interesting to consider the extent to which misheard lyrics can be considered a part of a musical work.

6.3.2. Other Topics in Popular Music

Certainly, there are more popular musicians whose pronunciation could be considered using the framework presented in this dissertation. Any singer whose singing accent shows clear regional traces could be interesting to study using phonetic analysis and comparative techniques from variationist sociolinguistics.

Another area that could be informative to explore is not exactly about a singer's pronunciation, but more about how a singer pronounces a specific word in a specific song. For example, in the song "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road," Elton John seems to sing in a largely Americanized, USA-5-influenced accent. However, he very clearly uses intrusive /r/ in singing the words "vodka(r) and tonic." To my ears, at least, that lyric very clearly stands out for that reason. It would be interesting to consider a large number of such examples together using some of the methodology I have used in this dissertation.

In my research, I have primarily described singing accents by comparing them to existing spoken accents. This approach makes sense for talking about Billy Bragg's

singing because he uses a singing accent that is clearly regionally marked. However, not all singing accents have an obvious relationship to a given geographic region. One such example is so-called “indie voice,” which Karen Burgos (2021) has explored on her blog. Part of this “indie voice” is a pronunciation style that seems to follow a set of conventions, but does not reflect a specific regional accent, other than that it sounds generally North American. Singing accents like this that are not grounded in a regional accent could be an exciting area for further investigation.

6.3.3. Examining Our Biases

“Indie voice” is also a noteworthy example because it serves as an invitation to reflect on our own biases. Indeed, as Burgos (2021) points out in her exploration, indie voice is sometimes referred to as “indie girl voice” with a notably derogatory tone. While considering pronunciation, it is important to consider which pronunciation choices are seen as “innovative” or “authentic,” and which are seen as “annoying,” “affected,” “lazy,” and the like. It is likely the case that singers from historically marginalized groups are more prone to being tagged with pejorative adjectives.

In considering pronunciation, it is important to remember that pronunciation choices can reinscribe existing systems of oppression, as can the public perception of these pronunciation choices. It is worth asking the question of who is “allowed,” as it were, to use their own accent in singing, and who is forced to perform pronunciation. Billy Bragg’s use of his regional accent in song is interesting as a choice in itself, but it is not wholly separable from questions of privilege and oppression as they relate to identity. Bragg comes from a working-class family, and as such did not grow up enjoying the degree of class privilege that some do, but he is also a white, English-born, English-

speaking, cisgender, straight man. As such, he has experienced a degree of privilege compared to artists coming from more marginalized identity groups. It is worth noting that in their study of Rihanna's pronunciation in the song "Work," Lisa Jansen and Michael Westphal (2017) mention some of the criticisms that have been made of Rihanna's pronunciation, and it is logical to assume that her being a Black woman makes her more likely to receive such criticisms. Pronunciation and the way that it can reinscribe our societal biases and prejudices would be an important topic for further study.

Another topic for further study is which accents are perceived as up for grabs and why. In discussing Bragg's cover of "The Tracks of My Tears," I briefly mentioned the position of African American Vernacular English in the development of rock and roll and the history of popular music in the 20th century. I referred to the idea that AAVE has a long history of being perceived as free to use by white artists. Indeed, Black performance practices in general have been freely appropriated by white artists, and there has been scholarly discussion of this topic. For example, as mentioned in Chapter 3, Matthew Morrison (2020) has described this process as Blacksound, "the sonic and embodied legacy of blackface performance as the origin of popular music, entertainment, and culture in the United States" (554). AAVE continues to be an important subject of study within this conversation. More broadly, the question of which accents and dialects are seen as available for borrowing or appropriation, and which are not, remains a fruitful area for further investigation.

6.3.4. Broadening the Scope

This dissertation has focused on an artist who, in the admittedly imperfect categorization of popular music and Western Art Music, is an example of the former. Indeed, the body of literature from sociolinguistics on pronunciation in music on which I have drawn focuses exclusively on popular music. The ideas presented in this dissertation need not, however, be entirely restricted to popular music.

It is common, in considering Western Art Music, to bracket pronunciation off as convention. It is important to remember, however, that conventions have histories. The pedagogical and performance traditions that create pronunciation conventions are not somehow isolated from society, nor are these conventions somehow neutral. Indeed, pronunciation in many Western Art Music traditions can sound stilted or unnatural to those not familiar with these performance traditions. The methodology presented in this dissertation would not be immediately applicable to all kinds of music. However, the ideas presented herein could serve as a starting point for considering the role of pronunciation in a broader variety of repertories.

6.3.5. Group Voices and Short Cuts

An interesting musical question to explore with a focus on pronunciation is what happens when groups of people sing together. Linguist Edward Marshall (2020) has done research on whether choirs have accents and has shown that at least in some cases, they do. More broadly, the question of what is a singing accent when it is used by a group of people singing together, and not just by one or two vocalists, provides a fertile ground for exploration.

One question worth considering in connection to choirs and singing accents is that of the shortcuts that choir directors take to get to a pronunciation style close enough to the desired product. For example, each choir director seems to have their own way of dealing with Latin vowels when directing an amateur or student choir who may not have any experience in Ecclesiastical Latin pronunciation or in Italian pronunciation. These shortcuts, in turn, can sometimes become reified as canonical versions and associated with popular choral works, even though they may not be, strictly speaking, correct. It could be informative to investigate these shortcuts and the influence they have on how choristers come to know pieces of music and come to know languages. There is research in this area from the perspectives of performance studies and pedagogy, but it would be interesting to approach the topic from a music-analytical perspective.

Many languages have characteristic "difficult sounds," that is, sounds that are often difficult for a second-language speaker or singer to pronounce. In English, the interdental fricatives [θ] and [ð] come to mind. It would be interesting to consider the treatment of "difficult sounds" in repertoire sung by speakers from many different linguistic backgrounds. For example, one could design a comparative phonetic analysis of "The Star-Spangled Banner" by singers for whom English is not a first language. One could also look at performances of a French-Canadian folk song by primarily-anglophone choirs in Canada. An investigation could focus not only on the strategies used to realize or approximate "difficult sounds," but also the extent to which these strategies—or shortcuts—can themselves sometimes become canonical. More broadly, some sounds are difficult for L1 speakers and L2 speakers alike. In the aforementioned "Star-Spangled Banner," the word "perilous" comes to mind as one that requires careful navigation. The

perilous fight that is singing the phrase “the perilous fight” in “The Star-Spangled Banner” could be a fruitful starting point for an investigation of the process of navigating “difficult sounds” in singing and the artistic ramifications of the choices made during this process.

In addition to pronunciation shortcuts used for pedagogical purposes or ease of language production, singers and choir directors sometimes use pronunciation shortcuts for ease of vocal production or to enhance the clarity of the text. An example of the former might be using more open vowels than those suggested by the sung text when singing in a high register, and an example of the latter might be adding a ghost syllable at the end of a word to make the final consonant audible. These shortcuts present an opportunity for further study because they ultimately form their own set of conventions and have intratextual and extratextual functions.

6.3.6. The Grain of the Voice

In the introductory chapter, I mentioned literary theorist Roland Barthes and the comments he has made—in formal writing and elsewhere—about the singing of Swiss Baritone Charles Panzéra. There has been interest in these comments from music scholars, notably Jonathan Dunsby (2009). However, there is room for further study on this topic. Barthes’s comments about pronunciation in his celebrated essay “The Grain of the Voice” (1982b) are mainly about pronunciation in a somewhat broad sense, and deal primarily with “pronunciation” in the sense of “a way of producing language.” Elsewhere, however, he has spoken about pronunciation in what could be interpreted as a more literal sense, closer to the definition of pronunciation used in this dissertation. I have begun an investigation of pronunciation in Barthes’s writings on music and what his

comments on pronunciation can add to an overall understanding of the grain of the voice and of Barthes's writings on music in general. In fact, it was Roland Barthes's comments on pronunciation that made me want to write about pronunciation in the first place. The investigation of Barthes's comments on pronunciation would be a fruitful point of departure for further study. A fitting complement to this investigation would be phonetic analyses of some of Panzéra's recordings to observe the specific pronunciation features about which Barthes speaks favourably.

One feature that stands out in Panzéra's recordings, and about which Barthes has spoken, is the age of the recordings as heard through the pronunciation. Barthes praises Panzéra's voice as preserving a kind of French that is not often heard anymore. Pronunciation conventions change over time, and it makes sense that musical recordings would serve to preserve older styles of pronunciation. I have begun writing about this phenomenon, but there is much room for further investigation. Another conversation that ties in logically with that of historical recordings and historical pronunciation conventions is that of the pedagogical traditions that gave us these pronunciation conventions. In the specific case of Charles Panzéra, his own manuals on singing would be a useful source to consult in considering his pronunciation and Barthes's comments on it.

6.4. Final Thoughts

Drawing on methodology and ideas from sociolinguistics, I have studied the role of pronunciation in the music of Billy Bragg. It is my hope that I have demonstrated the viability of pronunciation as a lens through which to consider not just Bragg's music, but music of many different styles and traditions. I hope to have drawn attention to a musical feature that could be tempting to consider secondary or incidental, and to have shown

how this musical feature is useful in considering the music of an artist who has not been widely studied by music researchers. I suppose I did not directly answer the question quoted at the beginning: “Why do you sing with an English accent?” I hope that my long-form non-answer has shown that this is the kind of question worth asking more often.

Appendices

Appendix A. Phonetic Transcription of Billy Bragg's "To Have and to Have Not" from *Life's a Riot with Spy vs Spy* (1983).

Up	in	the	morning	and	out	to	school		1
ˈʉp	ɪn	ðə	ˈmɔːnɪŋ	ən	ˈæʊt	tə	ˈskuːo		
Mother		says	there'll	be	no	work	next	year	2
ˈmʌðə		ˈsez	ðeəo	biː	nəʊ	ˈwɜːk	nekst	ˈjɪː	
Qualifications,			once	the	Golden		Rule	3	
ˌkwɒʊlɪfɪˈkʁɪʃ(ə)nz			wʌns	ðə	ˈgʁʊodən		ˈɹuːo		
Are	now	just	pieces	of	paper		4		
ə	ˈnæʊ	d͡ʒʌst	ˈpiːsɪz	ɒv	ˈpʁɪpə				
Just		because	you're	better	than	me	5		
ˈd͡ʒʌst		bɪˈkɒz	ˈjɔː	ˈbetə	ˈðæn	ˈmɪi			
Doesn't		mean	I'm	lazy	6				
ˈdʁz(ə)nt		ˈmɪin	ɒɪm	laɪˈzi					
Just		because	you're	going	forwards		7		
ˈd͡ʒʌst		bɪˈkɒz	jɔː	ˈgʁʊɪŋ	ˈfoːwədz				
Doesn't		mean	I'm	going	backwards		8		
ˈdʌz(ə)nt		ˈmɪin	ɑɪm	ˈgʁʊɪŋ	ˈbækwədz				
If	you	look	the	part	you'll	get	the	job	9
ɪf	juː	ˈlʊk	ðə	ˈpɑːʔ	juːo	ˈgeʔ	ðə	ˈd͡ʒɒb	
In	last	year's	trousers	and	your	old	school	shoes	10
ɪn	ˈlɑːst	jɪːz	ˈtɪæəzəz	ən	d͡ʒʉːɪ	ˈəʊod	ˈskuːo	ˈʃʉːz	
The	truth	is,	son,	it's	a	buyer's		market	11
ðə	ˈtɪuːf	ɪz	ˈsʁn	ɪts	ə	ˈbɑɪəz		ˈmɑːkɪt	
They	can	afford	to	pick	and	choose		12	
ˈðeɪ	ˈkæn	əˈfoːd	tə	ˈpɪk	ˈæn	ˈt͡ʃuːz			
Just		because	you're	better	than	me	13		
ˈd͡ʒʌst		bɪˈkɒz	ˈjɔː	ˈbetə	ˈðæn	ˈmɪi			

Doesn't	mean	I'm	lazy	14
ˈdɐz(ə)nt	ˈmɪin	ˈɒɪm	lɑɪˈzi	

Just	because	I	dress	like	this	15
ˈd͡ʒʌst	bɪˈkɒz	ˈɒɪ	ˈdɹes	ˈlɒɪk	ˈðɪs	

Doesn't	mean	I'm	a	communist	16
ˈdʌz(ə)nt	ˈmɪin	ˈɑɪm	ə	ˈkɒmjʊˌnɪst	

The	factories	are	closing	and	the	army's	full	17
ðə	ˈfækt(ə)ɹiz	ə	ˈklɐʊzɪn	ən	ðiː	ˈɑːˌmiz	ˈfʊo	

I	don't	know	what	I'm	going	to	do	18
ˈɑɪ	dəʊn	nɐʊ	ˈwɐt	ɑɪm	ˈgəʊɪŋ	tə	ˈduː	

But	I've	come	to	see	in	the	Land	of	the	Free	19
bʌɾ	ɑːv	ˈkɐm	tə	ˈsiː	ɪn	ðə	ˈlænd	ˈɒv	ðə	ˈfɹɪi	

There's	only	a	future	for	the	Chosen	Few	20
ðeəz	ˈəʊnli	ə	ˈfjuːt͡ʃə	fɔː	ðə	ˈt͡ʃɐʊzən	ˈfjʉː	

Just	because	you're	better	than	me	21
ˈd͡ʒʌst	bɪˈkɒz	ˈjɔː	ˈbetə	ˈðæn	ˈmɪi	

Doesn't	mean	I'm	lazy	22
ˈdɐz(ə)nt	ˈmɪin	ˈɒɪm	ˈlɑɪzi	

Just	because	you're	going	forwards	23
ˈd͡ʒʌst	bɪˈkɒz	jɔː	ˈgɐʊɪŋ	ˈfoːwədz	

Doesn't	mean	I'm	going	backwards	24
ˈdʌz(ə)nt	ˈmɪin	ɑɪm	ˈgɐʊɪŋ	ˈbækwədz	

At	twenty-one	you're	on	top	of	the	scrapheap	25
ət	ˈtwentiˌwɐn	jɔːɹ	ɒn	ˈtɒp	ˈɒv	ðə	ˈskɹæpɪip	

At	sixteen	you	were	top	of	your	class	26
ət	sɪkˈstɪin	juː	wə	ˈtɒp	əv	jə	ˈklɑːs	

All	they	taught	you	at	school	27
ɔːo	ðɐɪ	ˈtɔː	t͡ʃuː	ət	ˈskuːo	

Was	how	to	be	a	good	worker	28
wəz	hæʊ	tə	ˈbiː	ə	gʊd	ˈwɜːkə	

(The)	system	has	failed	you,	don't	fail	yourself	29
	ˈsɪstəm	əz	ˈfæɪod	juː	dɐʊnt	ˈfæɪo	ˈjɔːseof	

Just	because	you're	better	than	me	30
ˈd͡ʒʌst	bɪˈkɒz	ˈjɔː	ˈbetə	ˈðæn	ˈmɪi	

Doesn't	mean	I'm	lazy	31
ˈdɐz(ə)nt	ˈmɪin	ˈɒɪm	ˈlɑɪzi	

Just	because	you're	going	forwards	32
ˈd͡ʒʌst	bɪˈkɒz	jɔː	ˈgɐʊɪŋ	ˈfoːwədz	

Doesn't	mean	I'm	going	backwards	33
ˈdʌz(ə)nt	ˈmɪin	ɑɪm	ˈgɐʊɪŋ	ˈbækwədz	

Appendix B. Table of sounds in Billy Bragg's "To Have and to Have Not" that diverge notably from RP.

Lexical Set or Consonant	**Sound Change**	**Approximate Realization**	**Words (line numbers)**
FLEECE	diphthongal realization (closing diphthong)	[ɪi]	me (5, 13, 21, 30), mean (6, 8, 14, 16, 22, 24, 31, 33), free (19), scrapheap (25), sixteen (26)
PRICE	backing, some instances of rounding 1 monophthongal realization ("I've," line 19)	[ɑɪ~ ɒɪ]	I'm (6, 8, 14, 16, 18, 22, 24, 31, 33), buyer's (11), I (15, 18), like (15), I've (19)
/l/	vocalization	[ʊ~ɤ~o]	school (1, 10, 27), there'll (2), rule (3), you'll (9), old (10), full (17), all (27), failed (29), fail (29), yourself (29)
GOAT	lowered onset vowel	[ɐʊ]	golden (3), going (7, 8, 23, 24, 32, 33), closing (17), know (18), chosen (20), don't (29)
FACE	lowered onset vowel, some backing of onset vowel	[ɐɪ~ aɪ]	qualifications (3), paper (4), lazy (6, 14, 22, 31), they (27), failed (29), fail (29)
STRUT	fronting, some opening	[ɐ]	up (1), doesn't (6, 31), son (11), doesn't (14, 22), come (19), one (25)
MOUTH	raised onset vowel	[æʊ]	out (1), now (4), trousers (10), how (28)

NORTH/FORCE	closing	[oː]	forwards (7, 23, 32), afford (12)
GOOSE	fronting, some unrounding	[uː~ʉː~ɨː]	shoes (10), few (20)
/j/ (yod)	coalescence	[d͡ʒ], [t͡ʃ]	and your (10), taught you (27)
NEAR	monophthongal realization	[ɪː]	year (2), year's (10)
/t/	glottalization	[ʔ]	part (9), get (9)
/t/	flapping	[ɾ]	but I've (19)
/h/	dropping	∅	scrapheap (25), has (29)
‹th›	fronting	[f]	truth (11)
‹ng›	realized as [n]	[n]	closing (17)

Appendix C. Phonetic Transcription of Billy Bragg's "The Home Front" from *Talking with the Taxman about Poetry* (1986).

Father	mows	the	lawn	and	mother	peels	potatoes		1
ˈfɑːðə	ˈmɐʊz	ðə	ˈlɔːn	nd	ˈmɐðə	ˈpɪɪoz	pəˈtɐɪtɐʊz		
Grandma	lays	the	table	alone		2			
ˈgɹænmɑː	ˈlɐɪz	ðə	ˈtɐɪbəl	əˈlɐʊn					
And	adjusts	a	photograph	of	the	unknown	soldier		3
ənd	əˈd͡ʒɐsts	ə	ˈfɐʊtəgɹɑːf	əv	ði	ˈɐnˌnɐʊn	ˈsɐʊod͡ʒɐ		
In	this	Holy	of	Holies,	the	Home		4	
ɪn	ðɪs	ˈhɐʊli	əv	ˈhɐʊliz	ðə	ˈhɐʊm			
And	from	the	TV	an	unwatched	voice		5	
ən	ˈfɹɒm	ðə	ˈtiːˌviː	ən	ˈɐnˌwɒt͡ʃt	ˈvɔɪs			
Suggests	the	answer		is	to	plant	more	trees	6
səˈd͡ʒests	ði	ˈɑːnsəɹ		ˈɪz	tə	ˈplɑːnt	ˈmoʊ	ˈtɹiz	
The	scrawl	on	the	wall	says	‘What	about	the	workers?’ 7
ðə	ˈskɹoːl	ɒn	ðə	ˈwɔːɬ	ˈseɪz	ˈwʌɾ	əˈbæʊʔ	ðə	ˈwɜːkəz
And	the	voice	of	the	people	says	‘More	salt	please’ 8
ən	ðə	ˈvɔɪs	əv	ðə	ˈpɪiːpo	ˈseɪz	ˈmoʊ	sɒot	ˈplɪiz
Mother	shakes	her	head	and	reads	aloud	from	the	newspaper 9
ˈmɐðə	ˈʃɐɪks	ɜː	ˈhed	ən	ˈɹɪidz	əˈlæʊd	fɹəm	ðə	ˌnjiːzˈpɐɪpə
While	Father	puts	another		lock	on	the	door	10
wɒːɬ	ˈfɑːðə	ˈpʊts	əˈnɐðə		ˈlɒk	ɒn	ˈðə	ˈdoʊ	
And	reflects upon	the	violent		times	that	we	are	living in 11
ən	ɹəˈflekts əˈpɒn	ðə	ˈvɑɪlənt		ˈtɑɪmz	ðət	wiː	ɑː	ˈlɪvɪŋ ˈɪn
While	chatting	to	the	wife	beater		next	door	12
wɑːɬ	ˈt͡ʃætɪŋ	ˈtuː	ðə	ˈwaɪf	ˈbɪitə		ˈnekst	ˈdoʊ	
If	paradise	to	you	is	cheap	beer	and	overtime	13
ɪf	pæɹəˈdɑɪs	tə	ˈjɨː	ɪz	ˈt͡ʃiip	ˈbɪəɹ	ən	ˈɐʊvətɑɪm	
Home	truths		are	easily		missed	14		
ˈhɐʊm	ˈtɹɨːðz		əɹ	ˌɪiz(ɪ)ˈli		ˈmɪst			

Something	that	every	football	fan	knows	15
ˈsʁmθɪŋ	ðət	ˈɐvɹi	ˈfʊtbɔːo	fæn	ˈnʁʊz	

It	only	takes	five	fingers	to	form	a	fist	16
ɪɾ	ˈəʊnli	ˈtʁɪks	fɑɪv	ˈfɪŋgəz	tə	ˈfɔʊm	ə	ˈfɪst	

And	when	it	rains	here	it	rains	so	hard	17
ən	ˈwen	ɪt	ˈɹʁɪnz	hɪəɹ	ɪt	ˈɹʁɪnz	ˈsʁʊ	ˈhɑːd	

But	never	hard	enough	to	wash	away	the	sorrow	18
bət	ˈnevə	ˈhɑːd	ɪˈnʁf	tuː	ˈwɒʃ	əˈwʁɪ	ðə	ˈsɒɹʁʊ	

I'll	trade	my	love	today	for	a	greater	love	tomorrow	19
ɑɪɬ	ˈt͡ʃɹɑɪd	mɑɪ	ˈlʌv	təˈdɑɪ	fəɹ	ə	ˈgɹʁɪtə	ˈlʌv	təˈmɒɹʁʊ	

The	lonely	child	looks	out	and	dreams	of	independence	20
ðə	ˈləʊnli	ˈt͡ʃɑːld	lʊks	ˈæʊt	ən	ˈdɹɪɪmz	əv	ˌɪndɪˈpend(ə)ns	

From	this	family	life	sentence	21
fɹəm	ðɪs	ˈfæməli	ˈlɑɪf	ˈsentəns	

Mother	sees	but	does	not	read	the	peeling	posters	22
ˈmʁðə	ˈsiːz	bət	ˈdʁz	nɒt	ˈɹɪɪd	ðə	ˈpɪɪlɪŋ	ˈpʁʊstəz	

And	can't	believe	that	there's	a	world	to	be	won	23
ən	ˈkɑːnt	bɪˈlɪiv	ðət	ˈðeəz	ə	ˈwɜːɬd	tə	ˈbɪi	ˈwʁn	

But	in	the	public	schools	and	in	the	public	houses	24
bəɾ	ˈɪn	ðə	ˈpʁblɪk	ˈskuːlz	ən	ˈɪn	ðə	ˈpʁblɪk	ˈhæʊzɪz	

The	Battle	of	Britain	goes	on	25
ðə	ˈbætəl	əv	ˈbɹɪt(ə)n	ˈgʁʊz	ˈɒn	

The	constant	promise	of	jam	tomorrow	26
ðə	ˈkɒnst(ə)nt	ˈpɹɒmɪs	əv	ˈd͡ʒæm	təˈmɒɹʁʊ	

Is	the	new	breed's	litany	and	verse	27
ɪz	ðə	ˈnɯː	bɹɪɪdz	ˈlɪt(ə)ˌni	ˈænd	ˈvɜːs	

If	it	takes	another	war	28
ɪf	ɪt	ˈtʁɪks	əˈnʌðə	ˈwɔː	

to	fill	the	churches	of	England	29
tə	ˈfɪo	ðə	ˈt͡ʃɜːˌt͡ʃɪz	əv	ˈɪŋgləɳd	

Then	the	world	the	meek	inherit,	what	will it	be	worth	30
ðen	ðə	ˈwɜːɬd	ðə	ˈmɪik	ɪnˈheɹɪt	wɒt	ˈwɪlˈɪt	bɪi	ˈwɜːθ	

Mother	fights	the	tears	and	Father, his	sense	of	outrage	31
ˈmʌðə	ˈfɑɪts	ðə	ˈtɪəz	ən	ˈfɑːðəɪ ɪz	ˈsens	əv	ˈaʊtɪʁɪd͡ʒ	

And	attempts	to	justify	the	sacrifice	32
ən	əˈtempts	tə	ˈd͡ʒʌstɪfɑɪ	ðə	ˌsækˈɪɪfɑɪs	

To	pass	their	creed	down	to	another	generation	33
tə	ˈpɑːs	ðeə	ˈkɪɪid	ˈdæʊn	tuː	əˈnʌðə	ˌd͡ʒenəˈɹɐɪʃ(ə)n	

'Anything	for	the	quiet	life'	34	
eniˈθɪŋ	fɔː	ðə	kwɑɪˈət	ˈlɒɪf		

In	the	Land	of	a	Thousand	Doses	35
ɪn	ðə	ˈlænd	əv	ə	ˈθæʊz(ə)nd	ˈdɐʊsɪz	

Where	nostalgia	is	the	opium	of	the	age	36
weə	nəsˈtæɬd͡ʒəɹ	ˈɪz	ðiː	ˈɐʊpiəm	əv	ˈðiː	ˈɐɪd͡ʒ	

Our	place	in	History	is	as	37	
æʊ(ə)	ˈplɐɪs	ɪn	ˈhɪst(ə)ɹi	ˈɪz	æz		

Clock	watchers,	old	timers,	window	shoppers	38
klɒk	ˈwɒt͡ʃəz	ɐʊod	ˈtɒɪməz	ˈwɪndɐʊ	ˈʃɒpəz	

Father	mows	the	lawn	and	mother	peels	potatoes	39
fɑːðə	ˈmɐʊz	ðə	ˈlɔːn	nd	ˈmɐðə	ˈpɪioz	pəˈtɐɪtɐʊz	

Oh	how	has	your	garden	grown?	40	
ˈɐʊ	ˈhæʊ	əz	jə	gɑːˈdən	ˈgɹɐʊn		

And	where’s	that	photograph	of	the	unknown	soldier	41
ən	ˈweəz	ðæt	ˈfɐʊtəgɹɑːf	əv	ði	ˈɐnˌnɐʊn	ˈsɐʊod͡ʒɐ	

In	this	Holy	of	Holies,	the	Home	42
ɪn	ðɪs	ˈhɐʊli	əv	ˈhɐʊliz	ðə	ˈhɐʊm	

(Voice fades out)

Appendix D. Table of sounds in Billy Bragg's "The Home Front" that diverge notably from RP.

Lexical Set or Consonant	Sound Change	Approximate Realization	Words (line numbers)
GOAT	lowered onset vowel 1 monophthongal realization (the word "scroll," line 7)	[ɐʊ]	mows (1, 39), potatoes (1, 39), alone (2), photograph (3, 41), unknown (3, 41), soldier (3, 41), holy (4, 42), holies (4, 42), home (4, 14, 42), scroll (7), overtime (13), knows (15), so (17), sorrow (18), tomorrow (19, 26), posters (22), goes (25), doses (35), opium (36), old (38), window (38), oh (40), grown (40)
FACE	lowered onset vowel, some backing of onset vowel	[ɐɪ~ aɪ]	potatoes (1, 39), lays (2), table (2), shakes (9), newspaper (9), takes (16, 28), rains (17, 17), away (18), trade (19), today (19), greater (19), outrage (31), generation (33), age (36), place (37)
FLEECE	diphthongal realization (closing diphthong)	[ɪi]	peels (1, 39), trees (6), people (8), please (8), reads (9), beater (12), cheap (13), dreams (20), read (22), peeling (22), believe (23), be (23, 30), breed's (27), meek (30), creed (33)
PRICE	backing, some instances of rounding	[ɑɪ~ ɒɪ]	while (10, 12), violent (11), times (11), paradise (13), overtime (13), five (16), I'll (19), my (19), child (20), life (21, 34), fights (31),

			justify (32), sacrifice (32), quiet (34), timers (38)
STRUT	fronting, some opening	[ɐ]	mother (1, 22, 39), adjusts (3), unknown (3), unwatched (5), mother (9), another (10), something (15), enough (18), does (22), won (23), public (24, 24)
MOUTH	raised onset vowel	[æʊ]	about (7), aloud (9), out (20), houses (24), down (33), thousand (35), our (37), how (40)
/l/	vocalization	[ʊ~ɤ~o]	peels (1, 39), people (8), salt (8), football (15), fill (29), old (38)
NORTH/FORCE	closing	[oʊ]	more (6, 8), door (10, 12), form (16)
/t/	flapping	[ɾ]	what about (7), it only (16), but in (24)
/h/	dropping	∅	her (9), his (31)
/t/	glottalization	[ʔ]	about (7)
/j/ (yod)	dropping	∅	new (27)
/r/	intrusive /r/	[ɹ]	nostalgia is (36)

Appendix E. Phonetic Transcription of Billy Bragg's "The Tracks of My Tears" from the 2006 reissue of the 1986 album *Talking with the Taxman about Poetry*.

People	say	I'm	the	life	of	the	party	1
ˈpiːpo	ˈseɪ	əm	ðə	ˈlaːf	ə	ðə	ˈpɑɹɪ	
‘Cause	I	tell	a	joke		or	two	2
ˈkʌz	aː	ˈtel	ə	ˈd͡ʒoʊk		ɔːɹ	ˈtuː	
Although	I	might	be	laughing		loud	and	hearty 3
ɔːoˈðoʊ	aː	ˈmaːʔ	biː	ˈlæfɪŋ		ˈlæʊd	æn	ˈhɑːɹi
Deep	inside	I'm	blue	4				
ˈdiːp	ɪnˈsaːd	aːm	ˈbluː					
So	take	a	good	look	at	my	face	5
soʊ	ˈteɪk	ə	ˈgʊd	ˈlʊk	ˈæʔ	maː	ˈfeis	
You'll	see	my	smile		looks	out	of	place 6
juːo	ˈsɪi	maː	ˈsmaːl		ˈlʊks	ˈæʊɾ	əv	ˈpleis
If	you	look	closer		it's	easy	to	trace 7
ɪf	ˈjʉː	lʉk	ˈkloʊsə		ɪts	ˈɪizi	ɾə	ˈt͡ʃɹeɪs
The	tracks	of	my	tears,	I	need	you,	oo 8
ðə	ˈt͡ʃɹæks	ˈɐv	maː	ˈtɪəz	aː	ˈniːd	ˈjʉː	uː
Since	you	left	me	if	you	see	me	with	another	girl 9
ˈsɪns	jə	ˈlef(t)	mɪi	ˈɪf	jə	ˈsɪi	miː	ˈwɪð	əˈnʌðə	ˈgɜːl
Seeming	like	I'm	having	fun	10					
ˈsiːmɪn	ˈlaːk	aːm	ˈhævɪn	ˈfʌn						
Although	she	may	be	cute	she's	just	a	substitute	11
ɔːoˈðoʊ	ʃiː	ˈme(ɪ)	biː	ˈkjuːt	ʃiːz	ˈd͡ʒʌst	ə	ˈsʌbstɪˌt͡ʃʉːt	
Because	you're	the	permanent	one	12				
bɪˈkɑz	ˈjɔː	ðə	ˈpɜːmənən(t)	ˈwʌn					
So	take	a	good	look	at	my	face	13
soʊ	ˈteɪk	ə	ˈgʊd	ˈlʊk	ˈæ(t)	maː	ˈfeis	
You'll	see	my	smile		looks	out	of	place	14
juːo	ˈsɪi	maː	ˈsmaːl		ˈlʊks	ˈæʊɾ	əv	ˈpleɪs	

If	you	look	closer		it's	easy	to	trace	15		
ɪf	ˈjʉː	lʊk	ˈkloʊsə		ɪts	ˈɪizi	ɾə	ˈt͡ʃɹeɪs			
The	tracks		of	my	tears,	I	need	you,	oo	16	
ðə	ˈt͡ʃɹæks		ˈɐv	maː	ˈtɪəz	aː	ˈniːd	ˈjʉː	uː		
Hey	hey	yeah	17								
ˈheɪ	ˈheɪ	jeə									
Outside,		I'm	masquerading		18						
æʊtˈsaːd		əm	ˌmæskəˈɹeɪdɪn								
Inside,		my	hopes		are	fading		19			
ɪnˈsaːd		maː	ˈhoʊps		ə	ˈfeɪdɪn					
I'm	just	a	clown, yeah,		well,	since	you	put	me	down	20
ˈaːm	ˈd͡ʒʌst	ə	ˈklaː(n) jeə		wə	ˈsɪnʃ	juː	ˈpʊt	ˈme(ɪ)	ˈdæʊn	
My	smile		is	my	makeup		21				
maː	ˈsmaːl		ˈɪz	maː	ˈme(ɪ)ˌkʌp						
I	wear	since	my	breakup		with	you	22			
aː	ˈwe(ə)	ˈsɪns	ˈmaː	ˈbɹe(ɪ)ˌkʌp		wɪð	ˈjʉː				
Baby		take	a	good	look	at	my	face	23		
ˈbe(ɪ)bɪ		ˈte(ɪ)k	ə	ˈgʊd	ˈlʊk	æ(t)	maː	ˈfeis			
You'll	see	my	smile		looks	out	of	place	24		
juːo	ˈsɪi	maː	ˈsmaːl		ˈlʊks	ˈæʊɾ	əv	ˈpleis			
If	you	look	closer		it's	easy	to	trace	25		
ɪf	ˈjuː	lʊk	ˈkloʊsɚ		ɪts	ˈɪizi	ɾə	ˈt͡ʃɹeɪs			
The	tracks		of	my	tears	26					
ðə	ˈt͡ʃɹæks		ˈɐv	maː	ˈtɪəz						
Baby,	baby,		baby	take	a	good	look	at	my	face	27
ˈbeɪbi	ˈbe(ɪ)bɪ		ˈbeɪbi	ˈte(ɪ)k	ə	ˈgʊd	ˈlʊk	ˈæ(t)	maː	ˈfeis	
You'll	see	my	smile		looks	out	of	place	28		
juːo	ˈsɪi	maː	ˈsmaːl		ˈlʊks	ˈæʊɾ	əv	ˈpleis			

If	you	look	closer	it's	easy	to	trace	29
ɪf	ˈjuː	lʊk	ˈkloʊsə	ɪts	ˈɪizi	ɾə	ˈt͡ʃɹeɪs	

The	tracks	of	my	tears	30
ðə	ˈt͡ʃɹæks	ˈɐv	maː	ˈtɪəz	

Appendix F. Phonetic Transcription of Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, "The Tracks of My Tears," from *Going to a Go-Go* (1965).

Note: Lyrics shown in parentheses are song by the backup vocalists only.

People	say	I'm	the	life	of	the	party	1		
ˈpiːpəɬ	ˈseɪ	ˈaːm	ðə	ˈlaɪf	ˈəv	ðə	ˈpɑːɾi			
‘Cause	I	tell	a	joke		or	two		2	
ˈkɔːz	aː	ˈtɛl	ə	ˈd͡ʒoʊk		ɔː	ˈtu(ə)			
Although	I	might	be	laughing		loud	and	hearty		3
ɔːɬˈðoʊ	aː	ˈmaːt	biː	ˈlɛəfɪn		ˈlaʊd	ɛn	ˈhɑːɾi		
Deep	inside		I'm	blue	4					
ˈdiːp	ɪnˈsaːd		əm	ˈblu(ə)						
So	take	a	good	look	at	my	face	5		
soʊ	ˈteɪk	ə	ˈgʊd	ˈlʊk	ˈæt	maː	ˈfeɪs			
You'll	see	my	smile		looks	out	of	place	6	
juːɬ	ˈsiː	maː	ˈsmaːl		ˈlʊks	ˈaʊɾ	əv	ˈpleɪs		
If	you	look	closer		it's	easy	to	trace	7	
ɪf	ˈjuː	lʊk	ˈkloʊsə		ˈʔɪts	ˈiːzɪ	tə	ˈt͡ʃɹeɪs		
The	tracks		of	my	tears	8				
ðə	ˈt͡ʃɹæks		əv	ˈmaː	tɪəz					
I	need	you,	(need you,)		need	you,	(need you)		(8)	
aː	ˈniːd	ju(ə)	(ˈniːd juː)		ˈniːd	juː	(ˈniːd juː)			
Since	you	left	me	if	you	see	me	with	another	girl 9
ˈsɪn	t͡ʃjə	ˈlɛft	miː	ˈɪf	jə	ˈsiː	miː	ˈwɪθ	əˈnʌðə	ˈgɝːɬ
Seeming	like	I'm	having		fun	10				
ˈsiːmɪn	ˈlaɪk	əm	ˈhɛəvɪn		ˈfʌn					
Although	she	may	be	cute	she's	just	a	substitute		11
ɑɬˈðoʊ	ʃiː	ˈmeɪ	biː	ˈkjuːt	ʃiːz	ˈd͡ʒʌst	ə	ˈsʌbstəˌtuːt		
Because	you're		the	permanent		one	12			
bɪˈkʌz	ˈjɔː		ðə	ˈpɝːmənən		ˈwʌn				

So	take	a	good	look	at	(my	face)	aw	13		
soʊ	ˈteɪk	ə	ˈgʊd	ˈlʊk	ˈæt	(maː	ˈfeɪs)	ˈɔː			

You'll	see	my	smile	(looks	out	of	place)	14
juːɬ	ˈsiː	maː	ˈsmaːɬ	(ˈlʊks	ˈaʊɾ	əv	ˈpleɪs)	

Yeah,	look	a	little	bit	closer	and	it's	easy	(to	trace)	15
jɛə	ˈlʊk	ə	ˈlɪɾɬ	bɪt	ˈkloʊsəɹ	ˈænd	ɪts	ˈiːzɪ	(tə	ˈtɹeɪs)	

Aw,	the	tracks	of	my	tears,	16
ˈɔː	ðə	ˈt͡ʃɹæks	əv	ˈmaː	tɪəz	

oh,	I	need	you,	(need you,)	need	you,	(need you)	17
ˈoʊ	aː	ˈniːd	ju(ə)	(ˈniːd juː)	ˈniːd	juː	(ˈniːd juː)	

Hey	hey	yeah	18
ˈheɪ	ˈheɪ	jeə	

(Outside)	I'm	masquerading	19
(ˌaʊtˈsaːd)	aːm	ˌmæskəˈɹeɪɾɪŋ(ə)	

(Inside)	my	hope	is	fading	20
(ˌɪnˈsaːd)	ˈmaː	ˈhoʊp	ɪz	ˈfeɪɾɪŋ(ə)	

(Just	a	clown)	21
(ˈd͡ʒʌst	ə	ˈklaː(n))	

Oo	yeah,	since	you	put	me	down	22
uː	ˈjeə	ˈsɪn	t͡ʃjə	ˈpʊt	miː	ˈdaʊn	

My	smile	is	my	makeup	23
maː	ˈsmaːl	ˈɪz	maː	ˈmeɪˌkʌp	

I	wear	since	my	breakup	with	you	24
aː	ˈweə	ˈsɪns	maː	ˈbɹeɪˌkʌp	wɪθ	ˈjuː	

Baby	take	a	good	look	at	my	(face)	aw	25
ˈbeɪbɪ	ˈteɪk	ə	ˈgʊd	ˈlʊk	ˈæt	maː	(ˈfeɪs)	ˈɔː	

You'll	see	my	smile	looks	out	of	(place)	26
juːɬ	ˈsiː	maː	ˈsmaːl	ˈlʊks	ˈaʊɾ	əv	(ˈpleɪs)	

Yeah,	just	look	closer	and	it's	easy	(to	trace)	27
ˈjɛə	ˈd͡ʒʌst	ˈlʊk	ˈkloʊsə	ˈʔænd	ɪts	ˈiːzɪ	(ˈtuː	ˈtɹeɪs)	

Aw,	the	tracks	of	my	tears,	baby	28
ˈɔː	ðə	ˈt͡ʃɹæks	əv	maː	ˈtɪəz	ˈbeɪbɪ	

Baby,	baby,	baby	take	a	good	look	at	(my	face)	29
ˈbeɪbɪ	ˈbeɪbɪ	ˈbeɪbɪ	ˈteɪk	ə	ˈgʊd	ˈlʊk	ˈæt	(maː	ˈfeɪs)	

Oo,	yeah,	you'll	see	my	smile	(looks	out	of	place)	30
ˈuː	ˈjeə	ˈjuːɬ	ˈsiː	maː	ˈsmaːɬ	(ˈlʊks	ˈaʊɾ	ˈəv	ˈpleɪs)	

Look	a	little	bit	closer
ˈlʊk	ə	ˈlɪɾɬ	ˈbɪt	ˈkloʊsə

(Voice fades out)

Appendix G. Phonetic Transcription of "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key," Colour-Coded to Highlight Notable Pronunciation Features.[118]

Category 1 (Bragg)
Category 2 (RP or GenAm)
Category 3 (Americanized)
Category 4 (RP, not GenAm)
Category 5 (Other)

Note: Natalie Merchant's backing vocals are not included in the transcription.

I	lived	in	a	place		called		Okfuskee		1	
ɐ	ˈlɪvd	ɪn	ə	ˈpleɪs		kɔːld		ˌoʊfʌsˈkiː			
And		I	had	a	little	girl	in	a	holler	tree	2
æn		ɐ	ˈhæɾ	ə	lɪɾl̩	ˈgɝ-l	ɪn	ə	ˈhɑːlə	ˈt͡ʃɹɪi	
I	said,	"little	girl,	it's	plain		to	see	3		
ɐ	ˈsed	lɪɾl̩	ˈgɝ-l	ɪts	ˈpleɪn		tə	ˈsiː			
Ain't	nobody		that	can	sing	like	me	4			
ˈeɪnt	noʊˈbɑ(d)ɪ		ðət	kn̩	ˈsɪŋ	laːk	ˈmiː				
Ain't	nobody		that	can	sing	like	me"	5			
ˈeɪnt	noʊˈbɑ(d)ɪ		ðət	kən	ˈsɪŋ	laɪk	ˈmɪi				
She	said,	"it's	hard	for	me	to	see	6			
ʃiː	ˈsed	ɪts	ˈhɑːd	fə	ˈmɪi	tuː	ˈsɪi				
How	one	little	boy	got	so	ugly"	7				
haʊ	ˈwʌn	lɪɾl̩	ˈbɔɪ	gat	ˈsoʊ	ʌglˈiː					
Yes,	my	little	girly,	that	might	be	8				
ˈjes	mɐ	lɪɾl̩	ˈgɝ-liː	ˈðæt	maːt	ˈbiː					
But	there	ain't	nobody		that	can	sing	like	me	9	
bʌt	ðeɹ	ˈeɪnt	noʊˈbɑ(d)ɪ		ðət	kn̩	ˈsɪŋ	laːk	ˈmiː		
Ain't	nobody		that	can	sing	like	me	10			
ˈeɪnt	noʊˈbɑɾɪ		ðət	kn̩	ˈsɪŋ	laɪk	ˈmiː				

[118] I have attempted to use colours that are distinguishable for individuals with various forms of colour-blindness. Nevertheless, the colours may not be distinguishable for all readers. However, the information communicated by colour-coding—the relative frequency of each pronunciation category—is also communicated in the chapter in a graph. The colour-coding here and in the following example is extra and is not essential for understanding the data and analysis.

Way	over	yonder	in	the	minor	key	11
ˈweɪ	oʊvɚ	ˈjɑndɚ	ɪn	ðə	ˈmaːnɚ	ˈkiː	

Way	over	yonder	in	the	minor	key	12
ˈweɪ	oʊvɚ	ˈjɑndɚ	ɪn	ðə	ˈmaːnə	ˈkiː	

There	ain't	nobody	that	can	sing	like	me	13
ðeɹ	ˈeɪnt	noʊˈbɑɾɪ	ðət	kən	ˈsɪŋ	laɪk	ˈmɪi	

We	walked	down	by	the	Buckeye	Creek	14
wiː	ˈwɔːk(t)	ˈdaʊn	baː	ðə	ˈbʌkˌaː	ˈkriːk	

To	see	the	frog	eat	the	goggle-eye	bee	15
tə	ˈsiː	ðə	ˈfɹɑg	iːt	ðə	ˈgɑgəlˌaː	ˈbɪi	

To	hear	that	west	wind	whistle	to	the	east	16
tə	ˈhɪə	ðæt	ˈwest	wɪnd	ˈwɪso	tə	ðiː	ˈiːst	

There	ain't	nobody	that	can	sing	like	me	17
ðeɹ	ˈeɪnt	noʊˈbɑ(d)ɪ	ðət	kən	ˈsɪŋ	laːk	ˈmɪi	

Ain't	nobody	that	can	sing	like	me	18
ˈeɪnt	noʊˈbɑɾɪ	ðət	kən	ˈsɪŋ	laːk	ˈmɪi	

Oh,	my	little	girly,	will	you	let	me	see	19
ˈoʊ	maː	lɪɾl̩	ˈgɜːli	wəl	jə	ˈlet	miː	ˈsiː	

Way	over	yonder	where	the	wind	blows	free?	20
ˈweɪ	oʊvə	ˈjɑndə	weə	ðə	ˈwɪnd	bloʊz	ˈfɹiː	

Nobody	can	see	in	our	holler	tree	21
ˈnoʊbədɪ	kn̩	ˈsiː	ən	aʊə	ˈhɑːlə	ˈt͡ʃɹiː	

And	there	ain't	nobody	that	can	sing	like	me	22
ɛn	ðeɹ	ˈeɪnt	noʊˈbɑɾɪ	ðət	kən	ˈsɪŋ	laːk	ˈmɪi	

Ain't	nobody	that	can	sing	like	me	23
ˈeɪnt	noʊˈbɑɾɪ	ðət	kən	ˈsɪŋ	laːk	ˈmɪi	

Way	over	yonder	in	the	minor	key	24
ˈweɪ	oʊvɚ	ˈjɑndɚ	ɪn	ðə	ˈmaɪnə	ˈkiː	

Way	over	yonder	in	the	minor	key	25
ˈweɪ	oʊvɚ	ˈjɑndɚ	ɪn	ðə	ˈmaɪnɚ	ˈkiː	

There	ain't	nobody	that	can	sing	like	me	26
ðɛɹ	ˈeɪnt	noʊˈbɑɾɪ	ðæt	kn̩	ˈsɪŋ	laːk	ˈmiː	

Her	mama	cut	a	switch	from	a	cherry	tree	27
hɜː	ˈmɑmə	kʌɾ	ə	ˈswɪt͡ʃ	fɹəm	ə	ˈt͡ʃɛɹɪ	ˈt͡ʃɹiː	

And	laid	it	on	the	she	and	me	28
ən	ˈleɪd	ɪɾ	ˈɑn	ðə	ˈʃiː	ən	ˈmɪi	

It	stung	lots	worse	than	a	hive	of	bees	29
ɪt	ˈstʌŋ	lɑts	ˈwɝs	ðən	ə	ˈhaɪv	əv	ˈbiːz	

But	there	ain't	nobody	that	can	sing	like	me	30
bət	ðɛɹ	ˈeɪnt	noʊˈbɑ(d)ɪ	ðət	kn̩	ˈsɪŋ	laːk	ˈmɪi	

Ain't	nobody	that	can	sing	like	me	31
ˈeɪnt	noʊˈbɑɾɪ	ðət	kən	ˈsɪŋ	laːk	ˈmɪi	

Now	I've	walked	a	long	long	ways	32
naʊ	ˈaɪəv	ˈwɑkt	ə	ˈlɔŋ	lɑŋ	ˈweɪz	

Still	look	back	to	my	Tanglewood	days	33
ˈstɪl	lʊk	ˈbæk	tə	maː	ˈtæŋgəowʊd	ˈdeɪz	

I've	led	lots	of	girls	since	then	to	stray	34
aːv	ˈled	lɑts	ə	ˈgɜːɬz	sɪns	ˈðen	tə	ˈstɹeɪ	

Saying	ain't	nobody	that	can	sing	like	me	35
seɪɪn	ˈeɪnt	noʊˈbɑ(d)ɪ	ðət	kn̩	ˈsɪŋ	laːk	ˈmiː	

Ain't	nobody	that	can	sing	like	me	36
ˈeɪnt	noʊˈbɑɾɪ	ðət	kən	ˈsɪŋ	laːk	ˈmiː	

Way	over	yonder	in	the	minor	key	37
ˈweɪ	oʊvɚ	ˈjɑndɚ	ɪn	ðə	ˈmaɪnɚ	ˈkiː	

Way	over	yonder	in	the	minor	key	38
ˈweɪ	oʊvɚ	ˈjɑndɚ	ɪn	ðə	ˈmaːnə	ˈkiː	

Ain't	nobody	that	can	sing	like	me	39
ˈeɪnt	noʊˈbɑ(d)ɪ	ðət	kn̩	ˈsɪŋ	laɪk	ˈmiː	

Way	over	yonder	in	the	minor	key	40
ˈweɪ	oʊvɚ	ˈjɑndɚ	ɪn	ðə	ˈmaɪnə	ˈkiː	

Way	over	yonder	in	the	minor	key	41
ˈweɪ	oʊvɚ	ˈjɑndɚ	ɪn	ðə	ˈmaɪnɚ	ˈkiː	

Ain't	nobody	that	can	sing	like	me	42
ˈeɪnt	noʊˈbɑdɪ	ðət	kn̩	ˈsɪŋ	laːk	ˈmɪi	

Ain't	nobody	that	can	sing	like	me	43
ˈeɪnt	noʊˈbɑdɪ	ðət	kn̩	ˈsɪŋ	laːk	ˈmɪi	

Appendix H. Phonetic Transcription of "The Unwelcome Guest," Colour-Coded to Highlight Notable Pronunciation Features.

Category 1 (Bragg)
Category 2 (RP or GenAm)
Category 3 (Americanized)
Category 4 (RP, not GenAm)
Category 5 (Other)

Note: Jeff Tweedy's harmony vocals are not included in the transcription.

To	the	rich	man's	bright	lodges	1
tə	ðə	ˈɹɪt͡ʃ	ˈmænz	bɹɑɪt	ˈlɑd͡ʒəz	

I	ride	in	this	wind	2
aɪ	ˈɹaɪd	ɪn	ðɪs	ˈwɪnd	

On	my	good	horse,	I	call	you	3
ˈɑn	ˈmaɪ	ɡʊd	ˈhɒːs	aɪ	ˈkɑl	jʉː	

My	shiny	black	Bess	4
maɪ	ˈʃaɪni	ˈblæk	ˈbes	

To	the	playhouse	of	fortune	5
tə	ðə	ˈpleɪˌhaʊs	ɒv	ˈfɔːt͡ʃʃuːn	

To	take	the	bright	silver	6
tə	ˈteɪk	ðə	bɹɑɪt	ˈsɪlvə	

And	gold	you	have	taken	7
ænd	ˈɡəʊld	jɨː	hæv	ˈteɪkən	

From	somebody	else	8
ˈfɾɑm	ˌsʌmˈbɑdi	ˈɛɬs	

And	as	we	go	riding	9
ənd	əz	ˈwiː	ɡoʊ	ˈɹaɪdɪŋ	

In	the	damp	foggy	midnight	10
ɪn	ðə	ˈdæmp	ˈfɑgi	ˈmɪdnaɪ(t)	

You	snort,	my	good	pony	11
jɨː	ˈsnɔːt	maɪ	ɡʉd	ˈpoʊni	

And	you	give	me	your	best	12
ænd	jʉː	ˈɡɪv	miː	jɔː	ˈbest	

For	you	know	and	I	know	13
fə	jɨː	ˈnoʊ	ænd	aɪ	ˈnoʊ	

Good	horse	'mongst	the	rich	ones	14
gʊd	ˈhɑːs	mʌŋst	ðə	ˈɹɪt͡ʃ	wʌnz	

How	oftimes	we	go	there	15
haʊ	ˈɑftaɪmz	wiː	ˈgoʊ	ðeə	

An	unwelcome	guest	16
ən	ˌʌnweɬkˈəm	ˈgest	

I	never	took	food	17
ˈaɪ	ˈnevə	t(s)ʊk	ˈfuːd	

From	the	widows	and	orphans	18
ˈfɹɒm	ðə	ˈwɪdoʊz	ən	ˈɔːfənz	

And	never	a	hardworking	man	I	oppressed	19
ən	ˈnevəɹ	ə	ˈhɑɹdˌwɜːkɪŋ	ˈmæn	aɪ	əˈpɹest	

So	take	your	pace	easy	20
soʊ	ˈteɪk	jɔə	peɪs	ˈiːzi	

For	home	soon	like	lightning	21
fə	ˈhoʊm	suːn	lɑɪk	ˈlɑɪtnɪm	

We	soon	will	be	riding	22
wiː	ˈsuːn	wɪo	biː	ˈɹaɪdɪŋ	

My	shiny	black	Bess	23
maɪ	ˈʃaɪni	ˈblæk	ˈbes	

No	fat	rich	man's	pony	24
noʊ	ˈfæ(t)	ɹɪt͡ʃ	ˈmænz	ˈpoʊni	

Can	e’er	overtake	you	25
kæn	ˈeəɹ	ˌoʊvəˈteɪk	jɨː	

And	there's	not	a	rider	26
ən	ˈðeəz	ˈnɑɾ	ə	ˈɹɑɪdə	

From	the	east	to	the	west	27
fɹɒm	ðiː	ˈɪɪst	tuː	ðə	ˈwest	

Could	hold	you	a	light	28
kəd	ˈhoʊd͡ʒ ɨː		ə	ˈlɑɪ(t)	

In	this	dark	mist	and	midnight	29
ɪn	ðɪs	ˈdɑːk	ˈmɪst	ən	ˈmɪdnɑɪ(t)	

When	the	potbellied	thieves	30
wen	ðə	ˌpɑtˈbelid	ˈθɪɪvz	

Chase	their	unwelcome	guest	31
ˈt͡ʃeɪs	ðeɹ	ˌʌnweokˈəm	ˈgest	

I	don't	know,	good	horse	32
aː	ˈdoʊn(t)	ˈnoʊ	gʊd	ˈhɑːs	

As	we	trot	in	this	dark	here	33
əz	wiː	ˈt͡ʃɹɑɾ	ɪn	ðɪs	ˈdɑːk	hɪə	

That	robbing	the	rich	34
ðə(t)	ˈɹɑbɪn	ðə	ˈɹɪt͡ʃ	

Is	for	worse	or	for	best	35
ɪz	fɔː	ˈwɜːs	ɔː	fə	ˈbest	

They	take	it	by	stealing	36
ðeɪ	ˈt(s)eɪk	ɪ(t)	baɪ	ˈstiːlɪn	

And	lying	and	gambling	37
ənd	ˈlaɪɪn	ən	ˈgæmbəlɪn	

And		I	take	it	my	way	38
æn(d)		ˈaɪ	ˈt(s)eɪk	ɪ(t)	ˈmaɪ	weɪ	

My	shiny	Black	Bess	39
mɑɪ	ˈʃaɪni	ˈblæk	ˈbes	

I	treat	horses	good	40
ɑː	ˈt͡ʃɹiː(t)	ˈhɔːsɪz	ˈgʊ(d)	

And	I'm	friendly	to	strangers	41
æn	ˈɑːm	fɹen(d)ˈli	tə	ˈstɹeɪnd͡ʒəz	

I	ride	and	your	running	42
ɑː	ˈrɑɪd	ænd	jɔːɹ	ˈɹʌnɪn	

Makes	my	guns	talk	the	best	43
meɪks	maɪ	ˈgʌnz	ˈtɑk	ðə	ˈbest	

But	the	rangers	and	deputies	44
bə(t)	ðə	ˈɹeɪnd͡ʒɚz	ænd	ˈdepjʊɾiz	

Are	hired	by	the	rich	man	45
ə	ˈhɑɪɚd	ˈbaː	ðə	ˈɹɪt͡ʃ	mæn	

To	catch	me	and	hang	me	46
tə	ˈkæt͡ʃ	miː	ən	ˈhæŋ	miː	

My	shining	black	Bess	47
mɑɪ	ˈʃɑɪnɪŋ	ˈblæk	ˈbes	

Yes,	they'll	catch	me	napping	one	day	48
ˈjes	seɪo	ˈkæt͡ʃ	miː	ˈnæpɪŋ	wʌn	ˈdeɪ	

And	they'll	kill	me	49
ænd	ˈðeɪo	ˈkɪo	mɪi	

Then	I'll	be	gone	50
ðen	ˈɑo	biː	ˈgɑn	

But	that	won't	be	my	end	51
bət	ðæ(t)	ˈwoʊn(t)	biː	ˈmɑɪ	ˈend	

For	my	guns	and	my	saddle	52
fɔː	mɑɪ	ˈgʌnz	ən	ˈmɑɪ	ˈsædo	

Will	always	be	filled	53
wɪl	ˈɑo ˌweɪz	biː	ˈfɪld	

By	unwelcome	travelers	54
baɪ	ˌʌnˈwełkəm	ˈt͡ʃɹæv(ə)ləz	

And	other	brave	men	55
ən	ˈʌðə	ˈbɹeɪv	ˈmen	

And	they'll	take	the	money	56
ən	ˈðeɪo	ˈteɪk	ðə	ˈmʌni	

And	spread	it	out	equal	57
ˈæn	ˈspɹed	ɪɾ	ˈaʊɾ	ˈiːkwəɬ	

Just		like	the	Bible	58
ˈd͡ʒəst		ˈlɑɪk	ðə	ˈbɑɪbəɬ	

And	the	prophets	suggest	59
ˈænd	ðə	ˈpɹɑfɪts	səˈd͡ʒest	

But	men	that	go	riding	60
bə(t)	ˈmen	ˈðæ(t)	ɡoʊ	ˈɹɑɪdɪŋ	

To	help	these	poor	workers	61
tə	ˈheop	ˈðiːz	pɔː	ˈwɜːkəz	

The	rich	will	cut	down	62
ðə	ˈɹɪt͡ʃ	ˈwɪo	kʌ(t)	ˈdaʊn	

Like	an	unwelcome	guest	63
ˈlɑɪk	ən	ˌʌnweɬˈkəm	ˈgest	

Discography

Bragg, Billy. 1985. “Between the Wars.” *Top of the Pops*. BBC One. March 21. Television Broadcast.

———. 1990. *The Internationale*. Elektra/Utility. 9 60960-2. Compact Disc.

———. 1991. *Don’t Try This at Home*. Elektra. 61121-2. Compact Disc.

———. 2006. *Life’s a Riot with Spy vs Spy* (Reissue, Special Edition). Outside Music (Original: Go! Discs/Utility, 1983). OUT9007. Compact Disc.

———. 2006. *Talking with the Taxman about Poetry* (Special Reissue Bonus Edition). Cooking Vinyl (Original: Go! Discs, 1986). COOKCD304. Compact Disc.

———. 2017. *Bridges Not Walls*. Cooking Vinyl. COOKCD683. Compact Disc.

Bragg, Billy and Wilco. 1998. *Mermaid Avenue*. Elektra. 62204-2. Compact Disc.

Bridgers, Phoebe. 2017. *Stranger in the Alps*. DOC142. Compact Disc.

Celentano, Adriano. 1992. “Prisencolinensinainciusol” (Rerecorded). Clan Celentano/Carrere Music. 4509 91629-9. Compact Disc.

Dylan, Bob. 2004. *Another Side of Bob Dylan* (Reissue). Columbia (Original: Columbia, 1964). CK 92402. Compact Disc.

Eiffel 65. 1999. “Blue (Da Ba Dee)” (Single). Popular Records (Original: Skooby, 1998). 623398330728. Compact Disc.

John, Elton. 1984. *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road* (Reissue). MCA (Original: DJM, 1973). MCAD2-6894. Compact Disc.

Rexha, Bebe and David Guetta. 2022. “I’m Good (Blue)” (Single). Parlophone.

Robinson, Smokey and the Miracles. 1992. *Going to a Go-Go* (Reissue). Motown (Original: Motown, 1965). 3746352692. Compact Disc.

Bibliography

Agha, Asif. 2003. “The Social Life of Cultural Value.” *Language and Communication* 23: 231–73. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0271-5309(03)00012-0.

Alves Trabanco Filho, Jorge Luiz. 2021. “Re-Imagining Brazilian Portuguese IPA: A Practical Guide Utilizing Paulo Maron’s New Opera *Lampião*.” DMA Monograph, The University of Western Ontario. https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/7795.

Anderson, Catherine, Bronwyn Bjorkman, Derek Denis, Julianne Doner, Margaret Grant, Nathan Sanders, and Ai Taniguchi. 2022. *Essentials of Linguistics*. 2nd edition. Toronto: eCampus Ontario. https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/essentialsoflinguistics2/.

Anhalt, Istvan. 1984. “Ligeti’s *Nouvelles Aventures*: A Small Group as a Model for Composition.” In *Alternative Voices: Essays on Contemporary Vocal and Choral Composition*, 41–92. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. https://doi.org/https://doi-org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/10.3138/9781442656314.

Barber, Katherine. 2020. “Chesterfield: Not Quite Dead.” https://katherinebarber.blogspot.com/2020/05/chesterfield-not-quite-dead.html.

Barthes, Roland. 1978. *Le Concert égoïste*. France Musique.

———. 1982a. “La Musique, la voix, la langue.” In *L’obvie et l’obtus : Essais critiques III*, 246–52. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.

———. 1982b. “Le Grain de la voix.” In *L’obvie et l’obtus : Essais critiques III*, 236–45. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.

Bayley, Robert, Richard Cameron, and Ceil Lucas. 2013. *The Oxford Handbook of Sociolinguistics*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199744084.001.0001.

Beal, Joan C. 2009. “‘You’re Not from New York City, You’re from Rotherham’: Dialect and Identity in British Indie Music.” *Journal of English Linguistics* 37 (3): 223–40. https://doi.org/10.1177/0075424209340014.

Beaudoin, Richard. 2022. “Dashon Burton’s Song Sermon: Corporeal Liveness and the Solemnizing Breath.” *Journal of the Society for American Music* 16 (1): 1–23. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752196321000456.

Bell, Allan. 1984. “Language Style as Audience Design.” *Language in Society* 13 (2): 145–204.

Bell, Allan, and Andy Gibson. 2011. “Staging Language: An Introduction to the Sociolinguistics of Performance.” *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15 (5): 555–72. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9841.2011.00517.x.

Boarder, Jake. 2015. “Pop, Politics and the Music Press during the Age of Thatcher.” MRes Dissertation, Northumbria University.

Bottge, Karen M. 2005. “Brahms’s ‘Wiegenlied’ and the Maternal Voice.” *19th-Century Music* 28 (3): 185–213.

Bragg, Billy. 2006. *The Progressive Patriot: A Search for Belonging*. London, UK: Bantam.

———. 2015. *A Lover Sings: Selected Lyrics*. London, UK: Faber & Faber.

———. 2017. *Roots, Radicals and Rockers: How Skiffle Changed the World*. London, UK: Faber & Faber.

———. 2019. *The Three Dimensions of Freedom*. London, UK: Faber & Faber.

Burgos, Karen. 2017. “Oh Babih, Babay – How One Vowel One Hundred Years Ago Changed How We Sing.” Ace Linguist. https://www.acelinguist.com/2017/05/oh-babih-babay-how-one-vowel-one.html.

———. 2020. “It’s Gonna Be May: A Historay.” Ace Linguist. https://www.acelinguist.com/2020/04/its-gonna-be-may-historay.html.

———. 2021. “Dialect Dissection: Indie Voice/Cursive Singing – The Definitive Post.” Ace Linguist. https://www.acelinguist.com/2021/05/dialect-dissection-indie-voicecursive.html.

Burns, Lori. 2005. “Feeling the Style: Vocal Gesture and Musical Expression in Billie Holiday, Bessie Smith, and Louis Armstrong.” *Music Theory Online* 11 (3).

Carley, Paul, and Inger M. Mees. 2021a. *American English Phonetic Transcription*. London, UK and New York: Routledge.

———. 2021b. *British English Phonetic Transcription*. London, UK and New York: Routledge.

Cashell, Kieran. 2011. “More Relevance than Spotlight and Applause: Billy Bragg in the British Folk Tradition.” In *Popular Music and Human Rights Volume 1: British and American Music*, edited by Ian Peddie, 5–26. Farnham, UK; Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Collins, Andrew. 2002. *Still Suitable for Miners: Billy Bragg, the Official Biography*. London, UK: Virgin.

Cone, Edward T. 1974. *The Composer's Voice*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Copeman, Harold. 1990. *Singing in Latin*. Oxford: Harold Copeman.

Coste, Claude, and Sylvie Douche. 2018. *Barthes et la musique*. Rennes, France: Presses universaires de Rennes.

Coupland, Nikolas. 1988. *Dialect in Use: Sociolinguistic Variation in Cardiff English*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

———. 2011. "Voice, Place and Genre in Popular Song Performance." *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15 (5): 573–602. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9841.2011.00514.x.

Coupland, Nikolas, and Adam Jaworski. 1997. *Sociolinguistics: A Reader*. New York: St. Martin's.

Cumming, Naomi. 1997a. "The Horrors of Identification: Reich's 'Different Trains.'" *Perspectives on New Music* 35 (1): 129–52.

———. 1997b. "The Subjectivities of 'Erbarme Dich.'" *Music Analysis* 16 (1): 5–44.

———. 2000. *The Sonic Self*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

De'Ath, Leslie. 2016. "The Latin Problem: How Much Does a Singer Really Need to Know?" *The Choral Journal* 57 (5): 20–39. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24883822.

Dillane, Aileen, and Martin J. Power. 2020. "Hard Hats and Hoodies: The Songs of Two Working-Class British Protest Singers." In *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Popular Music and Social Class*, 273–291. New York: Bloomsbury Academic. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781501345395.ch-014.

Disalvo, Tom. 2022. "Billy Bragg Joins Starbucks Strike Effort in Buffalo, Performs 'Solidarity Forever.'" *New Musical Express*, October 2022.

Duchaj, Karen. 2020. "Which 'There' Is There?: George Harrison's Dialect Shifting in His Late 1960s Songs." *Rock Music Studies*, 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/19401159.2020.1792184.

Dunsby, Jonathan. 2004. *Making Words Sing: Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Song*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511481703.

———. 2009. “Roland Barthes and the Grain of Panzera’s Voice.” *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 134 (1): 113–32. https://doi.org/10.1080/14716930902756869.

Frith, Simon. 1996. *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Gallerani, Guido Mattia. 2018. “Écoute et pratique de la radio : Roland Barthes à France musique.” In *Barthes et la musique*, 153–166. Rennes: Presses universaires de Rennes.

Gibson, Andy. 2011. “Flight of the Conchords: Recontextualizing the Voices of Popular Culture.” *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15 (5): 603–26. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9841.2011.00515.x.

Gibson, Andy, and Allan Bell. 2012. “Popular Music Singing as Referee Design.” In *Style-Shifting in Public: New Perspectives on Stylistic Variation*, edited by Juan Manuel Hernández-Campoy and Juan Antonio Cutillas-Espinosa, 139–64. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Goehr, Lydia. 1992. *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Harden Mangelsdorf, Heather, Jason Listman, and Anabel Maler. 2021. “Perception of Musicality and Emotion in Signed Songs.” *Music Perception* 39 (2): 160–80. https://doi-org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/10.1525/mp.2021.39.2.160.

Heidemann, Kate. 2016. “A System for Describing Vocal Timbre in Popular Song.” *Music Theory Online* 22 (1).

Hepokoski, James, and Warren Darcy. 2006. *Elemens of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late Eighteenth-Century Sonata*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Ingarden, Roman. 1989. *Ontology of the Work of Art*. Translated by Raymond Meyer with John T. Goldthwait. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press.

The International Phonetic Association. 2015. “IPA Chart.” http://www.internationalphoneticassociation.org/content/ipa-chart.

———. 2018. “Interactive IPA Chart.” internationalphoneticassociation.org/IPAcharts/inter_chart_2018/IPA_2018.html

Jackiewicz, Edward, and James Craine. 2009. “Scales of Resistance: Billy Bragg and the Creation of Activist Spaces.” In *Sound, Society and the Geography of Popular Music*, edited by Ola Johansson and Thomas L. Bell, 33–48. Farnham, UK; Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Jansen, Lisa. 2018. “Britpop Is a Thing, Damn It: On British Attitudes Toward American English and an Americanized Singing Style.” In *The Language of Pop Culture*, 116–135. London, UK: Routledge.

———. 2022. *English Rock and Pop Performances*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Jansen, Lisa, and Michael Westphal. 2017. “Rihanna Works Her Multivocal Pop Persona: A Morpho-Syntactic and Accent Analysis of Rihanna’s Singing Style.” *English Today* 33 (2): 46–55. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266078416000651.

Jones, Katharine W. 2001. *Accent on Privilege: English Identities and Anglophilia in the U.S.* Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Kane, Brian. 2014. *Sound Unseen: Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

De Kok, Moira. 2022. “Sounds of Solidarity: Music in the 1984–85 Miners’ Strike.” Master’s Thesis, Utrecht University.

Konert-Panek, Monika. 2017a. “Americanisation versus Cockney Stylisation in Amy Winehouse’s Singing Accent.” In *Ethnic and Cultural Identity in Music and Songs*, edited by Victor Kennedy and Michelle Gadpaille, 77–94. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

———. 2017b. “Overshooting Americanisation. Accent Stylisation in Pop Singing—Acoustic Properties of the BATH and TRAP Vowels in Focus.” *Research in Language* 15 (4): 371–84. https://doi.org/10.1515/rela-2017-0021.

———. 2018. “Singing Accent Americanisation in the Light of Frequency Effects: LOT Unrounding and PRICE Monophthongisation in Focus.” *Research in Language* 16 (2): 155–68. https://doi.org/10.2478/rela-2018-0008.

Kortmann, Bernd, and Edgar W. Schneider. 2004. *A Handbook of Varieties of English (Volume 1: Phonology)*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. https://doi.org/https://doi-org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/10.1515/9783110197181.

Kramer, Lawrence. 2001. “Beyond Words and Music: An Essay in Songfulness.” In *Musical Meaning: Toward a Critical History*, 51–67. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Lavengood, Megan. 2020. “The Cultural Significance of Timbre Analysis: A Case Study in 1980s Pop Music, Texture, and Narrative.” *Music Theory Online* 26 (3). https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.20.26.3/mto.20.26.3.lavengood.html.

Lemire, Chantal D. 2021. “Speaking Songs: Music-Analytical Approaches to Spoken Word.” PhD Dissertation, The University of Western Ontario. https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/7670.

Lewis, John. 2006. “Lily Allen and the London Accent in Pop Music.” *Time Out,* 2006. https://www.johnlewisjournalist.co.uk/cockney-pop.

Malawey, Victoria. 2020. *A Blaze of Light in Every Word: Analyzing the Popular Singing Voice*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190052201.001.0001.

Maler, Anabel. 2013. “Songs for Hands: Analyzing Interactions of Sign Language and Music.” *Music Theory Online* 19 (1): 1–15. https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.13.19.1/mto.13.19.1.maler.html.

Maler, Anabel, and Robert Komaniecki. 2021. “Rhythmic Techniques in Deaf Hip Hop.” *Music Theory Online* 27 (1). https://doi.org/10.30535/mto.27.1.7.

Manabe, Noriko. 2022. “*Abe Road*: Kuwata Keisuke’s Beatles Parody.” *SMT-V* 8.1. https://doi.org/http://doi.org/10.30535/smtv.8.1.

Marshall, Edward. 2020. “An Investigation of Sound Change in Historical Recordings of Glasgow Choirs.” Conference Presentation. Glasgow, Scotland: “Spheres of Singing.”

Mesthrie, Rajend. 2011. *The Cambridge Handbook of Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/https://doi-org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/10.1017/CBO9780511997068.

Milroy, Lesley. 2000. “Britain and the United States: Two Nations Divided by the Same Language (and Different Language Ideologies).” *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 10 (1): 56–89. https://doi.org/10.1525/jlin.2000.10.1.56.

Milroy, Leslie. 2004. “Language Ideologies and Linguistic Change.” In *Sociolinguistic Variation: Critical Reflections*, edited by Carmen Fought, 308–342. Oxford: Oxford University Press. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/west/detail.action?docID=279786.

Morrison, Matthew D. 2020. “Blacksound.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Western Music and Philosophy*, 554–77. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199367313.013.62.

Morrissey, Franz Andres. 2008. “Liverpool to Louisiana in One Lyrical Line: Style Choice in British Rock, Pop and Folk Singing.” In *Standards and Norms in the English Language*, edited by Jürg Strässler and Miriam A Locher, 193–216. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110206982.1.195.

Neal, Jocelyn R. 2018. “The Twang Factor in Country Music.” In *The Relentless Pursuit of Tone*, edited by Robert Wallace Fink, Melinda Latour, and Zachary Wallmark. New York: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780199985227.003.0003.

Nobile, Drew. 2022. “Alanis Morissette’s Voices.” *Music Theory Online* 28 (4). https://doi.org/10.30535/mto.28.4.0.

Nosowitz, Dan. 2016. “Why Justin Timberlake Sings ‘May’ Instead of ‘Me.’” *Atlas Obscura*. November 2016. atlasobscura.com/articles/why-justin-timberlake-sings-may-instead-of-me.

O’Hanlon, Renae. 2006. “Australian Hip Hop: A Sociolinguistic Investigation.” *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 26 (2): 193–209. https://doi.org/10.1080/07268600600885528.

Le Page, Robert Brock. 1968. “Problems of Description in Multilingual Communities.” *Transactions of the Philological Society* 67 (1): 189–212.

———. 1975. “Polarizing Factors — Political, Cultural, Economic — Operating on the Individual’s Choice of Identity Through Language Use in British Honduras.” In *Les États multilingues : Problèmes et solutions*, edited by Jean Guy Savard and Richard Vigneault, 537–552. Quebec City: Laval University Press.

———. 1978. “‘Projection, Focussing, Diffusion’ or, Steps towards a Sociolinguistic Theory of Language, Illustrated from the Sociolinguistic Survey of Multilingual Communities : Stages I, Cayo District, Belize (Formerly British Honduras) and II, St. Lucia.” In *Occasional Paper – Society for Caribbean Linguistics — No. 9*.

Le Page, Robert Brock, Pauline Christie, Baudouin Jurdant, A. J. Weekes, and Andrée Tabouret-Keller. 1974. “Further Report on the Sociolinguistic Survey of Multilingual Communities: Survey of Cayo District , British Honduras.” *Language in Society* 3 (1): 1–32. https://www.jstor.org/stable/4166741.

Le Page, Robert Brock and Andrée Tabouret-Keller. 1985. *Acts of Identity: Creole-Based Approaches to Language and Ethnicity*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Pepper, Mark D. 2019. “Revisiting Avril Lavigne: Intersections of Subculture, Gender, Youth, and Authenticity.” *Journal of Popular Culture* 52 (2): 416–35. https://doi.org/10.1111/jpcu.12782.

Peterson, Gene. 2018. “The Legacy of Choral Singing : A Directors’ Choir Experience.” *The Choral Journal* 59 (5): 65–71. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26662701.

Plank, Steven E. 2004. *Choral Performance: A Guide to Historical Practice*. Lanham, MD; Toronto; Oxford: Scarecrow.

Power, Martin J. 2018. "Aesthetics of Resistance: Billy Bragg, Ideology, and the Longevity of Song as Social Protest." In *Songs of Social Protest: International Perspectives*, edited by Aileen Dillane, Martin J Power, Eoin Devereux, and Amanda Haynes, 509–24. Rowman & Littlefield. http://hdl.handle.net/10344/8847.

Power, Martin J., and Aileen Dillane. 2019. "Transcending the Moment: Ideology and Billy Bragg." *Journal of Language and Politics* 18 (4): 491–508. https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.18060.pow.

Puschmann, Karl. 2023. "Billy Bragg Knows His Music Can't Change the World, but His Audience Can." *Stuff*, January 2023. https://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/music/131075443/billy-bragg-knows-his-music-cant-change-the-world-but-his-audience-can.

Reeves, Anthony R. 2001. "The Use of French Latin for Choral Music." *The Choral Journal* 42 (3): 9–16. http://www.jstor.org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/stable/23554078.

Rings, Steven. 2013. "A Foreign Sound to Your Ear: Bob Dylan Performs 'It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding),' 1964–2009." *Music Theory Online* 19 (4).

Ryfa, Joanna. 2012. "Englishes of London and the Southeast of England." In *World Englishes, Volume I: The British Isles*, edited by Tometro Hopkins, 29–92. London, UK: Bloomsbury.

Samson, Jim. 2002. "The Musical Work and Nineteenth-Century History." In *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music*, edited by Jim Samson, 3–28. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Seabrook, John. 2015. "Blank Space: What Kind of Genius Is Max Martin?" The New Yorker. 2015. https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/blank-space-what-kind-of-genius-is-max-martin.

Silverstein, Michael. 1976. "Shifters, Linguistic Categories and Cultural Description." In *Meaning in Anthropology*, edited by Keith H. Basso and Henry A. Selby, University, 11–55. Albuquerque.

Simpson, Paul. 1999. "Language, Culture and Identity: With (Another) Look at Accents in Pop and Rock Singing." *Multilingua* 18 (4): 343–68. https://doi.org/10.1515/mult.1999.18.4.343.

Swan, Howard. 1973. "The Development of a Choral Instrument." In *Choral Conducting: A Symposium*, edited by Harold A. Decker and Julius Herford, 4–55. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Temperley, David. 2018. *The Musical Language of Rock*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/https://doi-org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/10.1093/oso/9780190653774.001.0001.

Trame, Richard H. 1983. "A Note On Latin Pronunciation." *The Choral Journal* 23 (5): 29. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23546146.

Tranmer, Jeremy. 2009. "Reclaiming England for the Left: The Case of Billy Bragg." In *Englishness Revisited*, edited by Floriane Reviron-Piégay, 189–204. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Treitler, Leo. 1993. "History and Ontology of the Musical Work." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 51 (3): 483–97.

Trudgill, Peter. 1983. "Acts of Conflicting Identity: The Sociolinguistics of British Pop-Song Pronunciation." In *On Dialect: Social and Geographical Perspectives*, edited by Peter Trudgill, 141–60. Oxford: Blackwell.

Vançon, Jean-Claire. 2018. "Écouter Roland Barthes écouter (variations sur la moire)." In *Barthes et la musique*, 133–151. Rennes: Presses universaires de Rennes.

Wells, John C. 1982a. *Accents of English 1: An Introduction*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

———. 1982b. *Accents of English 2: The British Isles*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

———. 1982c. *Accents of English 3: Beyond the British Isles*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

———. 1994. "Transcribing Estuary English." *Speech Hearing and Language: UCL Work in Progress* 8: 259–267.

Willhardt, Mark. 2006. "Available Rebels and Folk Authenticities: Michelle Shocked and Billy Bragg." In *The Resisting Muse: Popular Music and Social Protest*, edited by Ian Peddie, 30–48. Aldershot, UK; Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Yang, James H. 2018. "'I Want to Be New and Different. Anything I'm Not.' Accent-Mixing in Singing." *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 38 (2): 183–204. https://doi.org/10.1080/07268602.2018.1400501.

Curriculum Vitae

Name:	Mary Blake Bonn (Rose)
Post-Secondary Education and Degrees:	Université de Moncton Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada 2008–2012 B.Mus.
	The University of Western Ontario London, Ontario, Canada 2012–2014 M.A.
	The University of Western Ontario London, Ontario, Canada 2014–2023 Ph.D.
Related Work Experience:	Teaching Assistant The University of Western Ontario 2012–2019
	President, Society of Graduate Students The University of Western Ontario 2017–2019