

July 25, 2003

## CLASS 10: Accents and Dialects

### OUTLINE

- Standardization of English (codification, rules, printing)
- Appeal to Authority (academy, grammar, dictionary)
- American Dialect(s) (origin, vocabulary, sources)
- English as a World Language (beginnings, places, policies)
- TEXTS (speech, humour, HOTEL)

### THE STANDARDIZATION OF ENGLISH

- shift: pride in local dialect → prestige of the *dialect of London's upper classes*
- cultural supremacy → *demigration of dialects* from other regions & lower social classes
- → regional dialects cease to be written/printed
- *legacy*: three centuries of belief in "good" vs. "bad" English
- continued use of language as socioeconomic gatekeeper
- aspects of the standardization process outlined by Leith as they applied to English:

#### Selection:

*Which dialect will become standard?*

- dialect of political, social, religious, scholarly elites:  
London/Oxford/Cambridge (part of which lies in former Danelaw)

#### Acceptance:

*How will everybody accept this as the 'best' English?*

- imposition by elite authorities (scholars, publishers, educators)
- acceptance of class and regional divisions by the general public;
- social stratification as part of the belief system of the society

#### Elaboration:

- expanding this dialect for new uses
- expansion of vocabulary in 'high' domains
- some claim sentence structure also became more complex

#### Codification:

- establishing norms of grammar, word meaning, spelling
- minimizing variation
- making standardization official through published documents
- printed documents that model the standard (literature)
- or explicitly describe it (dictionaries, grammars)

### Codifying Documents

- government documents: Chancery printings
  - religious documents (government-approved):
    - 1549: *The Book of Common Prayer*
    - 1611: *The King James Bible* ('Authorized Version')
  - books about English:
    - 1755: Dr. Samuel Johnson *A Dictionary of the English Language*
    - 1762: Robert Lowth *A Short Introduction to English Grammar*  
thought the English Bible to be 'the best standard of our language'
    - 1794: Lindley Murray *English Grammar*  
educated in part at Ben Franklin's English School in Philadelphia
    - 1791: John Walker *A Critical Pronouncing Dictionary*  
disparaged dialects of regions outside London, and lower classes' English within London
    - 1828: Noah Webster *An American Dictionary of the English Language*  
commentaries by Dryden, Defoe, Swift
    - 1712: Swift *Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue*  
suggests establishing a government committee to regulate English
  - "language attitudes"
    - positive/negative judgments of language
    - based not on real functional superiority, but on associations of a language with prestige institutions (religion, scholarship, royalty or aristocracy, great literature)
    - most revered from Dark Ages through the Renaissance: Latin & Greek
  - “... as for ye Latin or Greke tonge, every thyng is so excellently done in them, that none can do better. In the Englysh tonge contrary, every thinge in a manner so meanly, both for the matter and handelynge, that no man can do worse.”  
(Roger Ascham, tutor to Queen Elizabeth, writing in 1545)
- English might not be as fine as Latin or Greek, but within English preferences were clear:
- George Puttenham, giving advice to aspiring poets in *The Arte of English Poesie*, 1589:  
“This part in our maker or Poet must be heedly looked vnto, that it be naturall, pure, and the most vsuall of al lhis country: and for the same purpose rather that which is spoken in the kings Court, or in the good townes and Cities within the land, then in the marches and frontiers ... or ... in any uplandish village or corner of a Realme, where is no resort but of poor rusticall or vnciuill people: netther shall he follow the speach of a craftes man or carter, or other of the inferiour sort ... But he shall follow generally the better brought vp sort ... men ciuill and graciously behaoured and bred ... ye shall therfore take the vsuall speach of the Court, and that of London and the shires lying about London within ix. myles, and not much aboute.”
- Samuel Johnson (1709-1784; dictionary: 1746-1755)
  - the heritage of standardization:
  - the 'good and bad English' mindset
  - traditional, prescriptive approach to teaching grammar:
    - prohibition of grammar of non-prestige dialects
    - resistance to language change
    - institutionalization of class prejudice by choice of elite English as the 'best' English

## New Grammar Rules

Some rules of English grammar introduced by scholars of the 1700s, modeled on Latin:

- 'he' is to be used as a generic pronoun instead of 'they'  
*Somebody left his/their book in class.*
- double negation is mathematically/logically 'incorrect'  
*I don't see nothing/anything.*
- sentences should not end with prepositions  
*That is the woman I spoke to/to whom I spoke.*  
*Why did you bring the book that I didn't want to be read to out of up for?*
- infinitives ('to go') should not be split ('to boldly go')
- Example: Sex-neutral 'they' replaced by 'he'

"RULE V. Pronouns must always agree with their antecedents", in gender, number, and person ... Of this rule there are many violations. "Each of the sexes should keep within its particular bounds, and content themselves with the advantages of their particular districts." 'Can any one, on their entrance into the world, be fully secure that they shall not be deceived?' [Should be] 'on his entrance' and 'that he shall'. 'Let each esteem others better than themselves.' [should be] 'than himself'.

Lindley Murray, *English Grammar*, 1795.

"The Masculine gender is more worthy than the Feminine." J. Poole, *The English Accidence*, 1646.

"Some will set the Carte before the horse, as thus. My mother and my father are both at home, even as though the good man of the house were no braeches or that the graye mare were the better Horse. And what though it often so happeneth (God wotte the more pitte) yet in speaking at the leaste, let us kepe a natural order, and set the man before the woman for maners Sake."

T. Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, 1553.

Quotations from "Androcentrism in Prescriptive Grammar", Ann Bodine, *Language in Society*, 1975

## The Effects of Printing (from Class 9)

- literacy spreads as books become cheap and accessible
- printing influences standardization:
- printed documents originate in London, home of standard dialect
- practical need to print only one version of a book (not multiple dialect versions)
- begins fixing of spellings
- the printed word gains authority over handwritten documents
- prestige of document content: religious, scientific, literary, governmental
- power of elites to control what gets printed

## APPEAL TO AUTHORITY

George Snell's proposal of 1649

- cyclical view of language
- language change is deplored and feared
- English language near perfection
- proposal for a Grammar, Dictionary, Edict of Parliament
- ambivalence toward Latin

Parliamentary Act of 1650

- legal writings in English
- tied to nationalism
- regulatory intention

## Academy

- early advocates, like Defoe
- **Swift** 1712: "A Proposal for Correcting, Ascertaining, and Improving the English Language"
- Queen Anne's death in 1714

## Grammar

- none before 1580
- earliest were modeled on Latin grammars
  - William Bullokar, 1580, *Short Introduction or Guiding 1586 Pamphlet for Grammar*
  - before 1650: five grammars published, incl. Ben Jonson in 1640
  - after 1650, another nine, incl. John Wallis, 1653

- ideals of early grammars:

1. Time and change are the enemies.
2. Permanence and perfection are the ideals.
3. Spoken language is inferior to written.

- Robert Lowth, *Short Introduction to English Grammar* 1762
- Joseph Priestley, *Rudiments of English Grammar* 1761.

## Dictionary

- earliest dictionaries specialized word lists for a specific audience
- more for self-improvement than regulation
  - Robert Cawdrey, *A Table Alphabetical* 1604
  - John Bullokar *English Expositor* 1616
  - Thomas Blount *Glossographia* 1656
  - Edward Phillips *New World of English* 1658
  - Elisha Coles *English Dictionary* 1656
  - John Kersey *New English Dictionary* 1702
  - Nathaniel Bailey *Universal Etymological Dictionary* 1721
  - *Dictionary of the English Language* 1730
  - Samuel Johnson *Dictionary of the English Language* 1755

## Language Usage Controversies

[see Baugh & Cable 2002: chap. 9, David Foster Wallace “Tense Present”]

### Samuel Johnson’s Dictionary

- summary of his procedure
- reading of literature / quotations
- definitions / idiosyncrasies

## Usage Controversies

- most trace their origins to the period from 1650–1800
- dictionaries, learned societies, and esp. grammars
- assume that given two possible usages, one must be incorrect (shall/will)
- strong analogy with Latin

### Early points of dispute

- *shall / will* (Wallis 1653)
- subjunctive mood
- *who / whom*
- superlative with two objects, “best of both worlds”
- split infinitive
- *different from / different than*
- multiple negative
- pronunciation of *-ing*
- *I had rather vs. I would rather*

### General observations

- Language Shibboleth (Judges 12: 4–6)
- Persistence of these issues
- moral tone of censure

## Early American English; Noah Webster

- Samuel Johnson’s neglect of American English; omits words included in Bailey
- trivial differences with British English, esp. in the Colonial period

## Attacks on Americanisms (see H. L. Mencken’s *The American Language* (1919))

- book reviews esp. vicious
- some Americans deplored their own English
- John Witherspoon invents the term “Americanism”

## American National Identity and Patriotism

- John Adams
- proposed American Academy

## Noah Webster (1758–1843) and Federalism

- Revolutionary, Calvinist, Federalist; rained for law at Yale; turned to teaching to earn a living
- compiled his own speller, grammar & reader
- 1783–85: *Grammatical Institute of the English Language*
- re-issued as *The American Speller* in 1788
- intention: “To introduce uniformity and accuracy of pronunciation into common schools”
- its influence on the pronunciation of polysyllabic words

## Webster and Spelling Reform

1789 *Dissertations on the English Language*; his first proposals were radical:

- *bred, hed, giv, brest, bilt, ment, relm, frend*
- *meen, neer, speak, greev zeel*
- *grief, kee, beleev, laf, dawier, plow, tuf, proof, blud, draft*
- *karacter, korus, kolic, arkitecture,*
- *masheen, shaze, shevaleer*

- dictionary of 1806 preserved only some of these
- by his 1828 *Dictionary* they had been reduced to a small number, now well known

## American Dictionary of the English Language 1828

- 25 years of intermittent labor; 70,000 entries
- many Americanisms
- antagonism toward Great Britain mellowed
- sold 2500 copies in his lifetime

**Spelling:** *color, wagon, center, ax, plow, story, jail, medieval, tire, traveler, defense*

**Pronunciation** in line with his speller

**Lexicon** Native American borrowings, and borrowings from other Euro langs.

- Joseph Emerson Worcester (1784–1865) and the Dictionary Wars

## AMERICAN DIALECT(S)

- one of the distinctly “American” aspects of Webster’s dictionary: inclusion of Americanisms
- significance of the diverse cultural influences in the population

## Native American influence

- in around 1600, population of one million
- approx. 350 languages, 25 language groups
- Algonquian language group
- unfamiliar phonemes and morphemes
- total number of words adopted into English is relatively small (not including place names)

*catawba, hickory, pecan, squash  
chipmunk, moose, muskrat, opossum, raccoon, skunk, woodchuck  
honey, corn-pone, succotash  
moccasin, tomahawk, sachem, papoose, hogan, igloo, tepee, wigwam  
caucus, mugwump, Tammany, chataqua, podunk, chinook*

- many of these transformed by **folk etymology**

### **French influence**

- geographic dispersal of the French: from the frontier to New Orleans and Canadian cities
- French still an important language for the educated
- *two main areas*: - geography, natural life & exploration  
- culture (including American monetary system)

### **Spanish influence**

- in North America longer than English-speaking colonists
- but most contact came in 19th century
- borrowings in a variety of areas, including natural life, ranch life, etc.

### **Dutch influence**

- New Amsterdam (later to become New York City)
- Dutch settlements continued speaking it into the 19c

### **German influence**

- first wave in 17th century: large population in Pennsylvania (Pennsylvania Dutch)
- later 19th century emigrations, largely to industrial cities

### **African influence**

- a large population from an early date (mid-17th century)
- yet the debilitating institution of slavery kept the influence of African languages limited
- slave traders deliberately kept language groups separate  
*voodoo, tote, banjo, juke, banana, gumbo, buckra* — perhaps *okay*

### **General American**

#### Phonological features

1. rhoticism: preservation of prenasal /r/, (usually) lack of intrusive /r/
2. voicing of post-stress intervocalic /t/
3. darker, more velar /l/ than British Received Pronunciation (RP)
4. use of /æ/ in words like *bath, dance, class*
5. phonemically different vowels in *tot* vs. *taught* (great variation in distribution of /ɔ/ & /ɑ/)
6. clearly diphthongized pronunciation of /ɑ:/ and /ɔ:/
7. use of /i:/ as final unstressed vowel in *cloudy, shiny*
8. retention of vowel in unstressed syllables and wider use of secondary stress than in RP
9. lack of the three-way phonemic distinction of /ɑ/ ~ /ɒ/ ~ /ɔ/ RP

### **Regional Variation**

Eastern New England	Western Pennsylvania	Inland North
New York City	Upper South	Northwest
Middle Atlantic	South	Southwest

### **Chicano English**

#### Phonological features

- palatal switching
- addition of schwa before s + C initially

#### Lexical features

- hard to pin down

#### Syntactic features

- embedded questions
- adj + *one*
- “I have X years”

#### Code Switching

- presence of an active bilingual community; the presence of native speakers
- not a regional dialect, or an ethnic designation; dialectal diversity *within* Chicano English

### **“Black English Vernacular” or BEV (PC: “African-American English Vernacular”/AAEV)**

- caveat about the group it identifies
- historical background of pidgin, and English spoken in and around southern plantations
- Gullah: Lorenzo Dow Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (1949); “plantation creole”

#### Phonological features

- reduction/leveling of final consonant groups
- *th* → *d*
- *-in* ending
- dropping of postvocalic *-r*

#### Lexical features:

- jazz, tote, okra, etc.

#### Syntactic features

- multiple negatives
- consuetudinal *be* (use of *be* uninflected *be* to indicate a habitual state): “*He be going to school*”
- copula deletion in places where other varieties of English allow contraction: “*He gone*”

## ENGLISH AS A WORLD LANGUAGE

### The Beginnings

- The founding of the British Empire
- Exploitation/plantation colonies:*
- purpose: extract resources (= wealth: tea, sugar, cotton, gems, minerals)
  - relatively few English (plantation owners, managers; governors, admin. & families; military)
  - English population retains English identity (England is 'home')
  - native population or imported slaves used as labor force
  - India, Africa, Caribbean Islands, American South
- Settlement colonies*
- purpose: establish a new home (escape persecution; seek opportunity)
  - English settlers come in larger numbers and multiply
  - English population shifts identity to new home (American, Canadian, Australian, New Zealander)
  - settlers compete with natives for land, resources
  - America (Canada and the USA), Australia, New Zealand

### Linguistic effects

- *exploitation colonies:*
  - English as an important second language (e.g., India, East Africa)
  - pidgins, creoles (e.g., Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad)
- *settlement colonies:*
  - English comes into a superstratum/substratum relationship with indigenous languages
  - displaces/replaces indigenous languages (Canada, USA, Australia, New Zealand)

### **Pidgins and Creoles around the World (Class 11)**

#### **English in America**

- consciousness of American English as distinct; marker of American independence and identity
- dialect areas emerge with isolation from Britain and westward spread of population
- codification of American standard English: 1828 (Noah Webster's dictionary)
- grammars: 1907 Edwin Woolley's *Handbook of Composition: A Compendium of Rules Regarding Good English, Grammar, Sentence Structure, Paragraphing, Manuscript Arrangement, Punctuation, Spelling, Essay Writing, and Letter Writing*

#### **English as a World Language**

- 18th, 19th century: French, German, Latin are important languages within the West
  - British Empire grows into superpower, increasing the prestige and spread of English
  - 20th century: Shift from Britain to America as the major English-speaking power
  - British empire contracts (continues today)
  - American economic and political influence grows
- ➔ This shift sustains the importance of English as an international language.
- English and other international languages threaten indigenous languages worldwide

### brief timeline:

- 3000 BCE: daughter languages of PIE wandering around Europe, Near East, India
- 1000 BCE: Germanic separate from other IE, but no English; tiny number of speakers
- 500 BCE: Germanic still an obscure dialect group in northern Europe
- 1 CE: Germanic still obscure
- Latin is the West's 'world language' (Roman Empire)
- English just beginning to separate from Common Germanic
- Latin Europe's 'world language' (Roman Church)
- English occupies half of Britain; tiny number of speakers;
- Latin Europe's 'world language' (Church)
- English beginning to sail around the world
- Latin Europe's 'world language' (scholarship)
- French, Italian vie with English as European 'cosmopolitan' languages (art, diplomacy, music)
- 1800 CE: English growing with British Empire; Latin still important in scholarship
- 1900: Britain a major world power; English important world language; French, German
- 1950: world power status shifting from Britain to USA, English dominance maintained
- 2000 CE: USA the single dominant world power; English most widespread world language
- 2500 CE: ???
- Latin was a Western 'world language' for over 1,500 years
- In the Far East, Chinese has dominated huge area for 2,000 years
- English has been a world language for around 150 years;
- primary international language for about 50 years

### **Language Policy: Managing Linguistic Diversity**

- language policy
- social (incl. governmental) decisions about language use in a society
- may be consciously directed or not
- with or without input from language experts
- all English-speaking nations are linguistically diverse:
  - surviving remnants of Celtic in British Isles; language of postcolonial immigrants in England
  - indigenous and immigrant languages in Canada, USA, Australia
- contrasting language policies:
  - English-only vs.
  - encouragement of linguistic pluralism
  - USA vs. Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand
- recent & current proposals for USA language policy:
  - English-as-official-language constitutional amendment:  
<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/JWCRAWFORD/home.htm>

### **Reading**

- MacMahon 1994: ch. 10

## Colonel Davy Crockett Delivering His Celebrated Speech to Congress on the State of Finances, State Officers, and State Affairs in General

“The broken fenced state o’ the nation, the broken banks, broken hearts, and broken pledges o’ my brother Congressman here around me, has riz the boiler o’ my indignation clar up to the high pressure pinte, an’ therefore I have riz to let off the steam of my hull hog patriotism, without round-about-ation, and without the trimmings. The truth wants no trimmings for in her clar naked state o’ natur she’s as graceful as a suckin colt i’ the sunshine. Mr. Speaker! What in the name o’ kill-sheep-dog rascality is the country a-comin’ to? Whar’s all the honor? no whar! an thar it’ll stick! Whar’s the state revenue? Every whar but whar it ought to be!

“Why, Mr. Speaker, don’t squint with horror, when I tell you that last Saturday mornin’ Uncle Sam hadn’t the first tip to give to the barbet! The banks suspend payment, and the starving people suspend themselves by ropes! Old Currency is flat on his back, the bankers have sunk all funds in the safe arth o’ speculation, and some o’ these chaps grinnin’ around me are as deep in the mud as a heifer in a horse-pond!

“Whar’s the political honesty o’ my feller congressmen? why, in bank bills and five acre speeches! Whar’s all thar patriotism? in slantendicular slurs, challenges, and hair trigger pistols! Whar’s all thar promises? every whar! Whar’s all thar performances on ‘em? no whar, and the poor people bellerin arter ‘em everywhere like a drove o’ buffaloes arter their lazy keepers that, like the officers here, care for no one’s stomach, but their own etarnal intarnals!

“What in the nation have you done this year? why, waste paper enough to calculate all your political sins upon, and that would take a sheet for each one o’ you as long as the Mississippi. and as broad as all Kentucky. You’ve gone ahead in doin’ nothin’ backwards, till the hull nation’s done up. You’ve spouted out a Mount Etny o’ gas, chawed a hull Allegheny o’ tobacco, spit a Niagary o’ juice, told a hail storm o’ lies, drunk a Lake Superior o’ liquor, and all, as you say, for the good o’ the nation; but I say, I swar, for her etarnal bankruptification!

“Tharfore, I move that the ony way to save the country is for the hull nest o’ your political weasels to cut stiek home instanterly, and leave me to work Uncle Sam’s farm, till I restore it to its natural state o’ cultivation, and shake off these state caterpillars o’ corruption. Let black Dan Webster sittin there at the tother end o’ the desk turn Methodist preacher; let Jack Calhoun settin’ right afore him with his hair brushed back in front like a huckleberry bush in a hurricane, after Old Hickory’s topknot, turn horse-jockey. Let Harry Clay sittin’ thar in the corner with his arms folded about his middle like grape vines around a black oak, go back to our old Kentuck an’ improve o’ lawyers an’ other black sheep. Let old Daddy Quincy Adams sittin’ right behind him thar, go home to Massachusetts, an’ write political primers for the suckin’ politicians; let Jim Buchanan go home to Pennsylvania an’ smoke long nine, with the Dutchmen. Let Tom Benton, bent like a hickory saplin with ull rollin’, take a roll home an’ make candy ‘mint drops’ for the babies:--for they’ve worked Uncle Sam’s farm with the all-scratchin’ harrow o’ rascality, ‘till it’s as gray as a stone fence, as barren as barked clay, and as poor as as turkey fed on gravel stones!

“And, to conclude, Mr. Speaker, the nation can no more go ahead under such a state o’ things, than a fried eel can swim upon the steam o’ a tea kettle; if it can, then take these yar legs for yar hall pillars.”

## Frontier Humor

William Penn Brannan (1825-1866), author of widely popular burlesque sermons, was an itinerant artist and writer for newspapers, who used the pseudonyms “Bill Easel” and “Vandyke Brown.” He was born in Cincinnati and painted portraits there in the 1840’s, exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1847, was an engraver in Chicago, and worked in river towns down the Mississippi to New Orleans. He was an associate editor of the Cincinnati Daily Union in 1865 but moved to New York where he published a volume of verse, *Vagaries of Vandyke Brown*, the same year.

Thomas Bangs Thorpe compared the steadfast in faith to the clinging opossum in his somewhat rambling essay, “Opossums and ‘Possum Hunting.” A frontier preacher warns the faithful that the world, the flesh, the devil compose the wind that is trying to blow you off the gospel tree. But don’t let go of it, hold on to it as a ‘possum would in a hurricane. If the forelegs of your passions get loose, hold on by your hind legs of conscientiousness; and if they get loose, hold on eternally by your tail, which is the promise that the saints shall persevere unto the end.”

“The Harp of a Thousand Strings” was the specialty of Alf Bunett, a comedian who became famous as an entertainer in Union army camps.

## The Harp of a Thousand Strings

I may say to you, my brething, that I am not an educated man, an’ I am not one of them as believes that education is necessary for a Gospel minister, for I believe the Lord educates his preachers just as he wants ‘em to be educated; an’ although I say it that oughtn’t to say it, yet, in the State of Indrianny, whar I live, thar’s no man as gits a bigger congregation nor what I gits.

Thar may be some here to-day, my brething, as don’t know what persuasion I am uv. Well, I must say to you, my brething, that I’m a Hard Shell Baptist. Thar’s some folks as don’t like the Hard Shell Baptists, but I’d rather have a hard shell as no shell at all. You see me here to-day, my brething, dressed up in fine clothes; you mou’t think I was proud, but I am not proud, my brething, an’ although I’ve been a preacher of the gospel for twenty years, an’ although I’m captin of the flatboat that lies at your landing, I’m not proud, my brething.

I am not gwine to tell edzactly whar my tex may be found; suffice to say, it’s in the leds of the Bible, and you’ll find it somewhar between the first chapter of the book of Generations, and the last chapter of the book of Revolutions, and ef you’ll go and search the Scriptures, you’ll not only find my tex thar, but a great many other texes as will do you good to read, and my tex, when you shall find it, you shall find it to read thus:--”And he played on a harp uv a thousand strings--sperits of jest men made perfeck.”

My tex, my brething, leads me to speak of sperits. Now, thar’s a great many kinds of sperits in the world--in the fuss place, thar’s the sperits as some folks call ghosts, and thar’s the sperits of turpentine, and thar’s the sperits as some folks call liquor, an’ I’ve got as good an artikkel of them kind of sperits on my flatboat as ever was fotch down the Mississippi river; but thar’s a great many other kinds of sperits for the tex says, “He played on a harp uv a t-h-o-u-s-and strings, sperits of jest men made perfeck.”

But I’ll tell you the kind uv sperits as is meant in the tex, is FIRE. That’s the kind uv sperits as is meant in the tex, my brething. Now thar’s a great many kinds of fire in the world. In the fuss place thar’s the common sort of fire you light your cigar or pipe with, and then thar’s foxfire and camphire, fire before

you're ready and fire and fall back, and many other kinds uv fire, for the tex says "He played on a harp uv a thousand strings, sperits uv jest men made perfeck."

But I'll tell you the kind of fire as is meant in the tex, my brethering--it's HELL FIRE! an that's the kind uv fire as a great many uv you'll come to, ef you don't do better nor what you have been doin'--for "He played on a harp uv a thousand strings, sperits uv jest men made perfeck."

Now, the different sorts uv fire in the world may be likened unto the different persuasions uv Christians in the world. In the fuss place we have the Piscapalions, an' they are a high sailin' and high-falutin set, an they may be likened unto a turkey buzzard, that flies up in the air, an' he goes up, and up, and up, till he looks no bigger than your finger nail, and the fuss thing you know, he cums down, and down, and down, and is a fillin' himself on the carkiss of a dead hoss by the side of the road, and "He played on a harp of a thousand strings, sperits uv jest men made perfeck."

And then that's the Methodis, and they may be likened unto the squirrel runnin' up into a tree, for the Methodis believes in gwine on from one degree of grace to another, and finally on to perfection, and the squirrel goes up and up, and up and up, and he jumps from limb to limb, and branch to branch, and the fuss thing you know he falls and down he cums kerflumix, and that's like the Methodis, for they is allers fallen from grace, ah! and "He played on a harp uv a thousand strings, sperits uv jest men made perfeck."

And then, my brethering, that's the Baptist, ah! and they have been likened unto a 'possum on a 'simmon tree, and thunders may roll and the earth may quake, but that 'possum clings thar still, ah! and you may shake one foot loose, and the other's thar, and you may shake all feet loose, and he laps his tail around the limb, and clings and he clings forever, for "He played on a harp uv a thousand strings, sperits uv jest men made perfeck."

### **Where the Lion Roareth and the Wang-Doodle Mourneth**

My beloved brethering: I am a unlarnt Hard Shell Baptist preacher, of whom you've no doubt hearn afore, and I now appear here to expound the scriptures and pint out the narrow way which leads from a vain world to the streets of Jaroosalem; and my tex which I shall choose for the occasion is in the leds of the Bible, somewhar between the Second Chronik-ills and the last chapter of Timothytitus; and when you find it, you'll find in it these words: "And they shall gnaw a file, and flee unto the mountains of Hepsidam, where the lion roareth and wang-doodle mourneth for his first born."

Now, my brethering, as I have before told you, I am an onedicated man, and know nothing about grammar talk and collidge highfalutin, but I am a plane unlarnt preacher of the Gospil, what's been foredananed and called to prepare a pervarse generashun for the day of wrath-- ah! "For they shall gnaw a file, and flee unto the mountains of Hepsidam, whar the lion roareth and the wang-doodle mourneth for his first born"--ah!

My beloved brethering, the tex says they shall gnaw a file. It does not say they *may*, but shall. Now, there is more than one kind of file. There's the hand-saw file, the rat-tail file, the single file, the double file, and profile; but the kind spoken of here isn't one of them kind nayther, bekaws it's a figger of speech, and means going it lone and getting ukered, "for they shall gnaw a file, and flee unto the mountains of Hepsidam, whar the lion roareth and the wang-doodle mourneth for its first-born," ah!

And now there be some here with fine close on their backs, brass rings on thar fingers, and lard on thar har, what goes it while they're yung; and thar be others what, as long as thar consiftooshins and forty-cent whiskey last, goes it blind. Thar be sisters here what, when they gets sixteen years old, cut thar tiller-ropes and goes it with a rush. But I say, my dear brethering, take care you don't find, when Gabriel blows his last trump, your hands played out, and you've got ukered!--ah! "For they shall gnaw a file, and flee unto the mountains of Hepsidam, whar the lion roareth and the wang-doodle mourneth for his first born."

No, my brethering, "they shall flee unto the mountain of Hepsidam"; but thar's more dams than Hepsidam. Thars' Rotter-dam, Had-dam, Amster-dam, and Don't-ear-a-dam"--the last of which, my brethering, is the worst of all and reminds me of a sirkumstans I onst knowed in the state of Illenoy. There was a man what built him a mill on the north fork of Ager Crick, and it was a good mill and ground a sight of grain; but the man what built it was a miserable simmer, and never gave anything to the church; and, my dear brethering, one night there came a dreadful storm of wind and rain, and the mountains of the great deep was broke up, and the waters rushed down and swept that man's mill-dam to kingdom cum, and when he woke up he found that he wasn't worth a dam--ah! "For they shall gnaw a file, and flee unto the mountains of Hepsidam, whar the lion roareth nd the wang-doodle mourneth for his first-born--ah!"

I hope I don't hear anybody larfin; do I?

Now, "whar the lion roareth and the wang-doodle mourneth for his first born"--ah! This part of my tex, my beseaching 'brethering, is not to be taken as it says. It don't mean the howling wilderness, whar John the Hard Shell Baptist fed on locusts and wild asses, but it means, my brethering, the city of New Y'Orleans, the mother of harlots and hard lots. . . ; whar honest men are scarcer than hens' teeth; and whar a strange woman once took your beloved teacher, and bamboozled him out of two-hundred and twenty-seven dollars in the twinkling of a sheep's-tail; but she *can't* do it again! Hallelujah--ah! "For they shall gnaw a file, and flee unto the mountains of Hepsidam, whar the lion roareth and the wang-doodle mourneth for his first-born--ah!"

My brethering, I am the captain of the flatboat you see tied up thar, and have got aboard of her flour, bacon, taters, and as good Monongahela whiskey as ever was drunk, and am mighty apt to get a big price for them all; but what, my dear brethering, would it all be wuth if I hadn't got religion? Thar's nothing like religion, my brethering: it's better nor silver or gold gimcracks; and you can no more get to heaven without it, than a jay-bird can fly without a tail--ah! Thank the Lord! I'm an onedicated man, my brethering; but I've sarched the Scriptures from Dan to Bersheeba and found Zion right side up, and hard shell religion the best kind of religion-- ah! 'Tis not like the Methodists, what speeks to get to heaven by hollerin' 'hell-fire'; nor like the Univarsalists, that get on the broad gage and goes the hull hog--ah; nor like the Yewnited Brethering, that takes each other by the slack of thar breeches and hists themselves in; nor like the Katherliks, that buys thre w tickers from their priests; but it may be likened unto a man what has to cross the river--ah!--and the ferry-boat was gone; so he tucked up his breeches and waded acrost--ah! "For they shall gnaw a file, and flee unto the mountains of Hepsidam, whar the lion roareth and the wang-doodle mourneth for his first born!"

Pass the hat, Brother Flint, and let every Hard Shell Baptist shell out.

## The History of the English Language by Owen Alun and Brendan O'Corraidhe

In the beginning there was an island off the coast of Europe. It had no name, for the natives had no language, only a collection of grunts and gestures that roughly translated to "Hey!", "Gimme!", and "Pardon me, but would you happen to have any woad?"

Then the Romans invaded it and called it Britain, because the natives were "blue, nasty, br(u->)ish and short." This was the start of the importance of u (and its mispronunciation) to the language. After building some roads, killing off some of the nasty little blue people and walling up the rest, the Romans left, taking the language instruction manual with them.

The British were bored so they invited the barbarians to come over (under Hengist) and "Horsa" 'round a bit. The Angles, Saxons, and Jutes brought slightly more refined vocal noises.

All of the vocal sounds of this primitive language were onomatopoeic, being derived from the sounds of battle. Consonants were derived from the sounds of weapons striking a foe. "Sss" and "th" for example are the sounds of a draw cut, "k" is the sound of a solidly landed axe blow, "b", "d", are the sounds of a head dropping onto rock and sod respectively, and "gl" is the sound of a body splashing into a bog. Vowels (which were either gargles in the back of the throat or sharp exhalations) were derived from the sounds the foe himself made when struck.

The barbarians had so much fun that they decided to stay for post-revel. The British, finding that they had lost future use of the site, moved into the hills to the west and called themselves Welsh.

The Irish, having heard about language from Patrick, came over to investigate. When they saw the shiny vowels, they pried them loose and took them home. They then raided Wales and stole both their cattle and their vowels, so the poor Welsh had to make do with sheep and consonants. ("Old Ap Ivor hadde a farm, L Y L Y W! And on that farm he hadde somme gees. With a dd dd here and a dd dd there...")

To prevent future raids, the Welsh started calling themselves "Cymry" and gave even longer names to their villages. They figured if no one could pronounce the name of their people or the names of their towns, then no one would visit them. (The success of the tactic is demonstrated still today. How many travel agents have YOU heard suggest a visit to scenic Llyddumlmunnyddthllwyddu?)

Meantime, the Irish brought all the shiny new vowels home to Erin. But of course they didn't know that there was once an instruction manual for them, so they scattered the vowels throughout the language purely as ornaments. Most of the new vowels were not pronounced, and those that were, were pronounced differently depending on which kind of consonant they were either preceding or following.

The Danes came over and saw the pretty vowels bedecking all the Irish words. "Ooooh!" they said. They raided Ireland and brought the vowels back home with them. But the Vikings couldn't keep track of all the Irish rules so they simply pronounced all the vowels "oouuo.".

In the meantime, the French had invaded Britain, which was populated by descendants of the Germanic Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. After a generation or two, the people were speaking German with a French accent and calling it English. Then the Danes invaded again, crying "Oouuo! Oouuo!" burning abbeys, and trading with the townspeople.

The Britons that the Romans hadn't killed intermarried with visiting Irish and became Scots. Against the advice of their travel agents, they decided to visit Wales. (The Scots couldn't read the signposts that said, "This way to Llyddyllwyyddymillwylld," but they could smell sheep a league away.) The Scots took the sheep home with them and made some of them into haggis. What they made with the others we won't say, but Scots are known to this day for having hairy legs.

The former Welsh, being totally bereft, moved down out of the hills and into London. Because they were the only people in the Islands who played flutes instead of bagpipes, they were called Tooters. This made them very popular. In short order, Henry Tooter got elected King and began popularizing ornate, unflattering clothing.

Soon, everybody was wearing ornate, unflattering clothing, playing the flute, speaking German with a French accent, pronouncing all their vowels "oouuo" (which was fairly easy given the French accent), and making lots of money in the wool trade. Because they were rich, people smiled more (remember, at this time, "Beowulf" and "Canterbury Tales" were the only tabloids, and gave generally favorable reviews even to Danes). And since it is next to impossible to keep your vowels in the back of your throat (even if you do speak German with a French accent) while smiling and saying "oouuo" (try it, you'll see what I mean), the Great Vowel Shift came about and transformed the English language.

The very richest had their vowels shifted right out in front of their teeth. They settled in Manchester and later in Boston.

There were a few poor souls who, cut off from the economic prosperity of the wool trade, continued to swallow their vowels. They wandered the countryside in misery and despair until they came to the docks of London, where their dialect devolved into the incomprehensible language known as Cockney. Later, it was taken overseas and further brutalized by merging it with Dutch and Italian to create Brooklynese.

That's what happened, you can check for yourself. But I advise you to just take our word for it.

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