

The Transatlantic Larynx in Wartime

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The most profound societal and cultural shifts are often audible. Of the many Anglo-American exchanges that energised the period covered by this collection, one of the more notable took place within the throat, through incremental but significant divergence of accent. Through the Revolution both nations inhabited relatively parallel acoustic worlds, and into the 1790s, New York naval officers reported difficulties in distinguishing American and English sailors.ⁱ By the middle of the next century, however, resemblance had given way to discord. In the popular imagination transatlantic distinctions in accent became a matter of fascination and comment. During the 1860s, the American temperance reformer and celebrity orator John B. Gough toured Union lecture halls playing these distinctions for laughs, in a series of impersonations of voices from ‘Street Life in London’. Packed audiences across the Civil War North were reportedly transfixed by his outlandish vocal fluctuations, how his manipulations of vocal tract and articulators became resonant shorthand for recognizable places. Audiences were transported to Regent Street and Pall Mall by Gough’s soft bilabial fricatives (“vewy good”) and aspirate onset (“horator”); his dropped consonants (“appiness”) delivered them to the slums of St. Giles and Bethnal Green. In these impersonations, Gough’s throat operates as a space of transatlantic exchange: questions of affinity and dissonance were made audible in performances that thrilled wartime crowds seeking respite from harsher realities beyond the auditorium.

Gough represented the popular lecturer as metaphysical interpreter. From the 1840s on, his speeches on the evils of drink managed to “hold audiences breathless on both sides of the Atlantic for nearly half a century”.ⁱⁱ Blending emotional testimony of his own dissolute youth with dramatic simulations of states of drunkenness, his flamboyant performances afforded genteel audiences a confrontation with the threatening physicality of intoxication. They served to bridge chasms of experience and render comprehensible distinct psychological and social states: sobriety and inebriation; respectability and destitution; propriety and scandal. During the second half of his platform career, Gough also embodied a more tangible bridging of states. Kent-born and Massachusetts-raised since aged 10, he took pride in his transatlantic affiliations, and in 1860 began to directly address this dual identity in his performances.

That year, he returned to the United States after several years' residence in Great Britain, where he had toured widely as an advocate of the temperance movement. Upon his return, his career as a public speaker took a new and surprising turn. As his 1894 biographer recorded:

The professional season of 1860–61 witnessed a new departure on Gough's part. Until now he had spoken invariably upon temperance. He was suffering, in body and mind, from this 'harping on one string'. He realised the need of variety in his labours if he would preserve his health and continue his usefulness.

'After prolonged consideration', the account continues, 'Mr. Gough consented to prepare a lecture on "Street Life in London" – a taking caption, and a topic upon which he could speak *con amore*.'ⁱⁱⁱ Equipped with this new lecture, Gough presented his fresh material at the New Haven Library Society on 21 November 1860, and the following spring began to speak on 'London' throughout the cities of the North East. He had initially been sceptical of such an idea. 'Many friends', he declared later, 'were desirous that I should present in a lecture some experiences of London life', though he himself 'had little ambition [...] to take rank upon the literary lecturers of the day'.^{iv} Nonetheless, from the outset, his lectures on his British experiences proved a great success. Reporting on the Pennsylvania debut of this material in February 1861, the *Philadelphia Press* recommended that 'everybody should hear this celebrated temperance champion in his new *role*'.^v The following month, the *New York Times* recorded that his performance 'laid an Atlantic cable from the "streets of London" [...] to New York, and established a telegraph office in the heart of every listener'.^{vi}

In doing so, he went from an interpreter of mental states to an interpreter of geography and place, in an act that centered on his most potent possession: his liminal transatlantic larynx. During the decades that followed, Gough delivered these British-themed lectures hundreds of times throughout the north-east, Midwest, Canada, and California.^{vii} Like his temperance pieces, these addresses were wild oratorical showcases, offering irreverent and affectionate depictions of various aspects of British society.^{viii} They offered a light-hearted diversion from his temperance addresses, but Gough also saw them as a way to 'continue' what his biographer termed above 'his usefulness'. Crucially, he brought these pieces to the platform during the secession crisis, a period of immense strain for the relationship of Great Britain and the Union. During these years, Gough grew to conceive of his role as a bridge in the transatlantic relationship, and hoped to temper wartime Anglophobic feeling in the cities of the East Coast, persuading audiences of the goodwill and

support of the peoples of Britain. But what resonance could such charmingly irrelevant material have had in what Walt Whitman termed that ‘crashing, sad, distracted year’ of 1861?^{ix}

This essay attempts to unravel the cultural work of voice at the heart of these performances, and in doing so represents the first scholarly engagement with the transatlantic aspects of this important but neglected figure. Though recognized as ‘one of the most popular orators in American history’, Gough is rarely discussed in studies of nineteenth-century culture, and then only for his reform activities.^x David S. Reynolds notably considered his temperance career as an embodiment of the spirit of ‘dark reform’, whose ambivalent appeal lay in prurient fascination.^{xi} Recent work has also considered the influence of his temperance writings on abolitionist rhetoric and life-writing, and Thomas Augst has sensitively explored temperance lecturing’s rhetorical ‘romance of experience’.^{xii} Yet much remains to be said about Gough as writer, performer and celebrity. For one, his lyceum activities are clearly far more central to theatrical culture than current scholarship might suggest.^{xiii} Moreover, given the importance he attached in his performances to his Anglo-American identity, he provides an instructive point of entry into the debates recently re-opened by Elisa Tamarkin and others into the subtle and often unexpected dynamics of nineteenth-century transatlantic cultural relations. In what follows I use Gough’s mimicry as one means of drawing these threads together. My analysis draws upon media coverage from across the North, Midwest, Canada, and California, but focuses here on responses in Philadelphia and Brooklyn during the 1861 and 1865, locations whose ambivalence towards the conflict and the prospect of British intervention render them of unique interest.^{xiv} Documenting extraordinary scenes of audience reaction, these texts allow for a vivid glimpse of an idiosyncratic articulation of the Anglo-American exchange during this period of crisis.^{xv}

Oratory and Transatlantic Traffic

The decades of Gough’s fame coincided with the apex of a popular lecture system on which during annual seasons up to half a million citizens a week regularly attended talks in lyceums and lecture rooms throughout the republic spellbound by glamorous visiting orators.^{xvi} Among the most intriguing and popular performances were by those returning from exotic lands or distant centres of civilization, offering interpretive presentations of first-hand global experience. These ‘travel lectures’ were a diverse but distinct literary form that flourished

during the great age of American oratory, hours of speech that combined reportage, evocation and dramatic recreation in multi-faceted discursive texts. Rarely of immediate political or aesthetic value, such performances have receded from scholarly view, and their agency and complexity has been forgotten. Yet these idiosyncratic speech acts were frequently a vehicle through which cultural criticism and analysis could operate on the greatest available mass scale. As a result, mid-century intellectuals, activists and writers, from Wendell Phillips, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Anna Dickinson, to Herman Melville drew upon the form, with all its apparent evidentiary authority, to impart challenging ideas and shape understandings of global and historical forces.

Rather than ephemeral productions, the speeches of orator-travellers operated as influential dramas of appraisal. This role was particularly clear in orations which took as their subject discussion of Britain, the republic's most complicated adversary. As recent work by Tamarkin has shown, in the antebellum party-political climate one's attitude to the former colonial power sharply inflected one's positions on a range of pressing contemporary issues; the content, tone, and spirit of appraisals of British culture and society were richly significant gestures. Lectures on Britain were therefore a unique means by which the meanings, sentiments, physical and vocal properties of 'Englishness' and 'Americanness' could be articulated and debated. Lawrence Buell's preface to this volume sketches the rich textual discourse of Anglo-American commentary; in lyceum travel lectures, this literary discourse became part of show business. Immensely popular and curiously controversial, these figurative, descriptive or theatrical articulations of transatlantic experience brought the British-American relationship to life in all its vivid complexity and contradictions, performances of interpretation through which orator-travellers modelled exemplary stances and configurations of transatlantic sensibility. In the hands of a performer as idiosyncratic as Gough, they became fascinating and bizarre evenings of entertainment.

Upon their major debut in 1861, Gough's forays into this genre were described and promoted in a number of ways. First, they were praised in terms of the speaker's celebrated descriptive skills. In February 1861 the *Philadelphia Inquirer* advised attendance of lectures which abounded 'with such facts and descriptions of London scenes' that it was 'as though a listener had been on the spot and seen in person that of which he has only been told'.^{xvii} Second, they were hailed as comic events. In April 1861, a Brooklyn 'audience was "on a roar" most of the hour and half which he detained them'.^{xviii} 'His description of a London fog' in Philadelphia in February was so 'exceedingly funny, [it] repeatedly convulsed the grave clergy on the stage [...] with laughter'.^{xix} Finally, they were marketed as part of the

circulation of cultural capital, with the *Inquirer* recommending them for prospective transatlantic visitors: ‘the opportunity should not be lost to gain information of so useful a character, especially to those who design visiting the English metropolis.’^{xx} But above all, the draw was the speaker himself, one of the most singular performers on the mid-century circuit.

Gough emerged from the Washingtonian temperance movement, whose oral traditions Augst characterizes as ‘an anti-literary discourse, which bypassed conventions of both formal rhetorical education and written composition’.^{xxi} However, though reports often describe him speaking without notes, his lecture manuscripts survive, and testify to a degree of method underlying his idiosyncratic performance approach. Besides, Gough’s own scripts provide only a fragment of any given performance. As his biographer recalled, he typically ranged far beyond his original material: ‘the notes did not interfere with his delivery; because, though he spoke from them, it was *away* from them!’^{xxii} Of ‘Street Life in London’, the *Philadelphia Press* remarked in 1862 that ‘we have heard Mr. Gough deliver it three times within the last five years, never exactly in the same words, but each successive time, if anything, more truly eloquent’.^{xxiii}

Surprisingly for such a popular speaker, his orations were never published, and Gough lamented in 1868 that his words had long been ‘reported, printed and sold with no regard to my wishes, without proper revision, and often with annoying and absurd mistakes’.^{xxiv} Such errors were an inevitable result of a performance style as reliant upon physicality and gesture as to have been routinely described as ‘utterly unreportable’.^{xxv} His temperance lectures usually involved the elaborate use of physical props such as ale tankards and jugs, an aspect captured in his portrait in the Worcester Mechanics’ Hall (**Fig. 1**). Furthermore, in major cities they often featured musical accompaniment; his ‘London’ pieces were regularly accompanied at the Brooklyn Academy of Music by ‘Dodworth’s Cornet Band’, who performed before Gough took the stage and, reports suggest, periodically played at key moments during his talks (**Fig. 2**). As a result of this mixed-media emphasis, Horace Greeley once remarked of Gough’s temperance appearances that they were closer to ‘the circus’ than the Lyceum.^{xxvi}

The oratorical style at the heart of these events was a notoriously ostentatious mixture of sentimental appeals and exaggerated physical comedy. It involved a mingling of registers, moving within sentences from ‘hilarity’ to moments ‘startling in their earnestness’, a fusion which reports suggest ‘completely carried away the audience’.^{xxvii} Moreover, as a former actor, he was a gifted mimic, and his biographer recalled that his act centred on multiple impersonations: ‘in the course of an address he enacted a dozen parts, with such fidelity that

the last seemed the best.^{xxviii} ‘In *style*’, the *Philadelphia Press* recorded in 1860, ‘he can be ranked with no other living lecturer that we have heard [...] His oratory is more a succession of dramatic representations in which the author is the “star” actor of every part, than a succinct discourse.’^{xxix} His lectures thus merged essayistic cultural commentary with the contemporary stage mode of the ‘monopolylogue’, the form associated with British actor Charles Mathews, and which Charles Dickens would also bring to the post-bellum American circuit.^{xxx} For his ‘London’ pieces, this meant inhabiting the successive accents, gait, and bearing of figures as various as Gladstone and Disraeli, cockney urchins, Pall Mall gentlemen, and street singers, strung together with commentary and descriptive evocation.

Due to the physical excesses of his approach, newspaper reports acquire a fresh significance, reading more as descriptions of theatricals or interactive public meetings than pure oratorical events. As one observer simply stated, ‘Young Mr. G baffled the reporters’.^{xxxi} Textual traces of Gough’s tours represent admirable and sometimes artful attempts to render moments of elusive non-verbal or paralinguistic exchange, capturing elements of physical action, accent, and movement.^{xxxii} These revealing documents are at their most useful when documenting moments of unplanned, extemporaneous audience interaction, an element particularly central to his ‘London’ pieces, where Gough’s commentary on his own material provides a sense of his evolving self-conception of the cultural work of these lectures.

Anglo-American Unity

One repeated aim was the goal of bridging English and American culture, of promoting what a November 1861 Boston audience were assured was a ‘kindly feeling towards the motherland’.^{xxxiii} Introducing his new material in Philadelphia in May that year, he began by stating that ‘he should count himself happy if, by anything he said, these lectures he might contribute to bind England and America more closely together. He felt proud of his birth as an Englishman, and of his adoption as an American’.^{xxxiv} A report of his second Brooklyn appearance in February 1861 provides an atmospheric glimpse into how this worked in the auditorium:

He (Mr. G.) had spoken in Great Britain one hundred and fifty times, and he never spoke of Bunker Hill that it was not responded to by a cheer; he never spoke of the Declaration of Independence that it was not received with applause. There were Americans in this house who were present when in Exeter Hall he spoke of the people of these colonies who tracked the snow with their blood in their efforts to throw off

what they believed to be a thralldom from their shoulders, and that vast audience sprang to their feet and honored them with round after round of cheers (Applause).

In the troubles that now surround our country, the sympathy of England is precious; would that both countries could be brought nearer in their interests. On Friday last he felt proud of the fact that he was an Englishman born and an American by adoption, when he saw the devotion of the people to the old flag – the glorious stars and stripes. (The immense audience cheered for several minutes, and the orchestra struck up the ‘Star Spangled Banner’ when they ended enthusiasm grew wilder than ever. Some one in the body of the house shouted out, ‘Don’t be afraid, go on’, and thus encouraged, ‘Yankee Doodle’ was given....)^{xxxv}

Readers are presented with a scene rich in ritual and political theatre. Gough’s account of his British reception offers a nuanced version of nuanced British public opinion and confirms to his 3500-strong Brooklyn audience the apparent existence of substantial pockets of sympathy amongst the Mechanics’ Institutes and as his reference to Exeter Hall seems to attest, British abolitionists. His account of the republic being ‘honoured’ with applause confirms a degree of mutual respect, an account that itself elicits ‘applause’ and deftly completes a transatlantic circle of public assent and recognition.

The desire to elicit sentiments of cultural unity was clearly paramount to Gough’s overt project, yet his lectures’ most arresting moments centred on his ability to distance his audiences from his material. ‘Street Life in London’ was presented as a tableau of unfamiliar slang and dialect, bizarre occupations and scenes of suffering, and the lecturer exoticised British practices and sonic realities as those of a seemingly alien race. In each performance this work began with earnest descriptions in which he inhabited the role of British social investigative ethnographer. Reports from a Philadelphia performance on 19 February 1861 recounts how Gough’s descriptions of the poor often took the form of racial stratification. The *Philadelphia Press* recorded that

The philological and ethnological peculiarities of London were next dwelt upon. Verbal illustrations of the varieties of slang phrases in use were given, some of which were amusing enough. Taking these for a criterion, it was, he said, almost impossible to believe that the city was not composed of several nationalities, so different were the various divisions in this respect.^{xxxvi}

Reporting on the same performance the *Philadelphia Inquirer* re-emphasised this racialized rhetoric:

off those great thoroughfares in alleys, and lanes, in crowded ill-ventilated houses within sight of princely warehouses grow up the ignorant and dangerous classes – the Ishmaelites of society whose hand is raised against every man for they believe every man’s hand is raised against them. Probably in your own city of New York you may see in one day as much distress as you will see in one day in London, but the houses of the poor can hardly be described.^{xxxvii}

In both accounts, Gough recycles a form of racial stratification familiar from Henry Mayhew. In the second passage, his use of Genesis 16.4 was likely cribbed from Ritchie J. Ewing’s *Night Side of London* (1857), a work in circulation during Gough’s residence, which offered similar characterizations of the nomadic ‘alien’ race of the British poor.^{xxxviii} In this way, ‘Street Life in London’ presented not only Gough’s own experience of the city but channelled a Condition of England discourse, appropriating the rhetoric by which which urban writers exoticized the London poor in the service of casting the British people as a whole as a mystified other.

Mimicry and Divergence

With the ground laid in pseudo-ethnographic terms, Gough’s act turned to the embodiment of this alien race. A passage from the *Brooklyn Eagle* report of 26 February provides a glimpse:

Mr. G related a variety of incidents which came under his observation. His account of the habits and the ways of the little Arabs of the London streets was very racy; as a mimic, Mr. G has few superiors, and he reproduced the slang and manner of representatives of all grades of London life, singing as coster-monger, ‘cabbages, and cauliflowers’, and imitating with admirable truthfulness the language and gait of the exquisite young men who are so ‘dooedly well dwessed’ and patronize so liberally the ‘opewa.’ These are things that are not reportable, for they require Mr. G’s admirable acting to give them the piquancy they have as related by him.

On the stage of the Brooklyn Academy of Music a stratified society comes to life through a series of sonic and visual mnemonics. In terms of class, ‘all grades’ of society are rendered unfamiliar in discrete ways: the impersonations of the poor offer the physical spectacle of the grotesque body; those of the effete rich approach that of the African-American cakewalk

tradition.^{xxxix} The terminology here for what such mimicry accomplishes is telling: not just ‘imitations’ and ‘accounts’, but also ‘reproductions’, an enigmatic process of conjuring up the dynamic realities of place. We can trace this process also in the use of ‘*racy*’, which the 1828 Webster’s glossed as ‘strong, flavorful, tasting of the soil’, and numerous accounts testify to such a corporeal effect of Gough’s vocal enactments, ushering in a palpable sense of the London streets.

To be sure, this mimicry was also a matter of vaudevillian slapstick. On 19 February 1861, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* recorded how Gough imitated the “manners of the street boys. Here he was at home, and his felicitous imitations convulsed the house with laughter.”

^{xl} On 16 March, the *Philadelphia Press* reported that:

Mr. Gough next took up a Jack of all trades [...] at night he turned ‘wagabone,’ by ‘hacting hat a thehatre,’ taking the part of ‘doing the hind legs of a heliphant.’ The mode in which he did this was ocularly demonstrated by the lecturer walking across the stage *a la* the hind legs of an elephant, the audience heightening the managerial effect by roaring in the most abandoned laughter.^{xli}

However, beyond such outlandish physical feats, vocal imitations were still at the heart of these lectures. Though impossible to recreate, a sense of this phonological mimicry can be derived from passages in his autobiography where the eccentricities of British pronunciation are similarly treated:

Another chairman, who aspirated his H’s, and put them hon when they hought to be hoff, and took them hoff when they hought to be hon [...] said ‘Ladies and gentleman, hi wish to hintroduce the horator of the hevening. He comes from the hother side of the Hatlantic [...] hour transatlantic horator.’^{xlii}

His Anglicism of accent served as geographic and class mnemonics, signifiers rich in ambivalent meanings for an antebellum urban East Coast milieu in which immigration had created an enormous amount of linguistic variation. Beyond the visual comedy, therefore, lay a humor based on the violations of grammatical and phonological norms, at the broad traditional comedy of malapropisms, through which Philadelphians could measure their own vocal rectitude. Gough’s performance represented the empowerment of accent-switching, and also allowed him to act as amateur sociolinguist in ways that make it akin to the popular emerging genre of the local colour dialect sketch.

The values of reception that greeted these performances reveal them to be taken in part as theatrical events. An account in the *Brooklyn Eagle* of a performance in February 1861 sheds light on such a dramatic aspect to Gough's reception:

The speaker then gave us accounts of the different classes and seemingly different races of people who inhabit London, and also imitated their language, from the distorted use of the letter 'h' by the Bow-bell cockney, to the r-excluding exquisite of Regent and Bond streets. In thieves' slang he was at home, and showed the many of old English words have been conserved in this villainous dialect. He also described the tricks of London street merchants and thieves; and touched on fairs, holidays and amusements. He also came out strong on London criers, which he imitated with a naturalness that convulsed the house with merriment. Phases of London industry, from the 'mudlark' to the 'cats-meatman' were touched on, and the speaker gave accounts of amusing tavern signs to be seen about the city.^{xliii}

Here again we have a sense of the phonological content of his impersonations of cockney and dandies. But the reporter also conveys something of the mixed generic nature of performance under consideration, with phrases such as 'came out strong' assessing Gough using the vocabulary reserved to judge theatrical performance. Above all, the repeated use of the phrase 'at home' refers both to Gough's supposed ease with such demotic situations, but above all to the aesthetic of Mathews, who had pioneered the monopolylogue with his *At Home* (1808), in which he played multiple American parts. Like Mathew's vision of the United States, Gough's London is therefore a theatrical, carnivalesque vision of British society, and one in which sonic properties become the seat of identity.^{xliv}

Such fascination with vocal fidelity rests in part on Sigmund Freud's notorious 'narcissism of small differences'.^{xlv} It also registers the extent to which these essentially cognate dialects of English were in a process of fundamental divergence. However, by 1861, the eager reception to Gough's 'London' lectures speaks to two vocal identities in a state of flux, and we gain a sense of accent used as vocal marker and index of transatlantic otherness. The appeal of Gough's dramatizations of difference thus fed on the increasing linguistic self-awareness of antebellum society, expressed in such artefacts as John Bartlett's influential *Dictionary of Americanisms* (1848). Gough contributes in an oblique way to a broader discussion over linguistic divergence that was often framed in terms of advance, regression, and degeneration.^{xlvi} Modern linguists argue that British dialects of the period were in some senses more advanced, since settler states characteristically exhibited linguistic conservatism

and arrested development.^{xlvii} However, this is not the sense popularly understood by lecture hall audiences. As suggested in the *Eagle* report's reference to older forms of English having 'been conserved' in London street dialect, there was also the sense of British vernacular as a museum piece, an object of study for its historical idiosyncrasies. Gough presents the poor of London, and by extension British culture itself, as both fascinatingly modern, but also an ossified exhibit, a disturbing repository of the past

Through this fascination with we can trace a popular American awareness of a Britain that was increasingly distinct and distant: socially, culturally, and aurally. Gough was able to appeal to an appetite for a pseudo-scientific presentation of Britain as an 'exhibit'. His nightly reproductions of the alien sounds of London both reassured audiences that British culture was typologically graspable, and confirmed a fundamental sense of American difference. The tone of such portrayals is inevitably unclear. Though it largely elides theatrical forms, Homi Bhabha's account of the subversion involved in acts of travesty, camouflage and repetition can point us towards the way in which mimicry such as Gough's trades on the ambivalence between celebratory embrace and vicious caricature, with the mimetic performer embodying some of the behaviour of the object of aspiration and ridicule. Yet ultimately his imitations appear to us as sympathetic, not satirical. Moreover, his nightly reproductions of the alien sounds of London enacted a profound physical truth that the transatlantic transformation was reversible, a form of sonic back-migration. The effortless transition between different soundscapes burlesqued the notion of fixed states or identities, suggesting that such distinctions were mutable, artificial accidents of orality. His act affirmed the empowerment of accent-switching, and embodied an argument for transatlantic solidarity based on essential equivalence.

An Atlantic Cable of Affection

The *New York Times*'s 1861 conception of Gough as an 'Atlantic cable' of affection was therefore resonant in multiple ways. First, it suggested a value judgement on the topicality and novelty of performances that he himself had termed "an experiment" on their 1860 debut.^{xlviii} Listening to Gough lecture, and inhabit the voices of London provided a form of aural link, a telegraphic means of listening to the primal, authentic sounds of the British capital. The fervour and enthusiasm that surrounded his appearances also harked back to the wild public reaction to the opening of the cable in August 1858. Most important, the image of

the cable spoke to a contemporary sense of fractured communication. Inaugurated with the famous message of congratulations between Queen Victoria and President Buchanan, within a month the cable was rendered inoperable through excessive voltage, not to be reconnected until 1866.^{xlix} The *Times* was, therefore, wishing a channel of transatlantic traffic and exchange back into action. A re-energized, re-engaged cable was an effective figurative image for Gough's attempt to intervene in continental dislocation and stem a tide of mutual misunderstanding. As Thomas Wentworth Higginson observed, in all his speeches Gough habitually aimed to make 'laughter the ally of good morals', and through his humorous, affectionate scrutiny of British society, he seemed to hope to promote a moral stance of cosmopolitan appraisal.¹

Rather than unify through recognition, Gough's masquerades chronicled and revelled in dissonance. Audiences responded to familiar cultural references and to a particular popular understanding of a culture. But they also responded to multiple forms of misrecognition. There was the dissonance that Gough dramatized in the increasing alien quality of transatlantic realities, a popular American awareness that Britain was increasingly distinct and distant: socially, culturally, and aurally. There was also a dissonance of expectation and reality: between the imagined representation and the ultimate depiction, between Gough's own voice and those he lampooned. Equally, between the audience expectation of an earnest treatise and an actual comic romp: as Gough replayed the social-investigative encounter with the urban poor as farce. In a nation in urgent need of British recognition, the kind of dissonances that Gough traded in might be by turns cause for hilarity and for alarm. Lastly, as we return to these mid nineteenth-century performance events, there is the distance between our own assumptions and the reality of transatlantic affection that seems to overtake those attending 'Street Life in London'. As Tamarkin has demonstrated, much of the received wisdom about the automatic Anglophobia of this formative nation-building period gives way under scrutiny to a picture far more complex. Gough's milieu of the lyceum popular lecture, in all its mixed registers and contradictory pressures, provides an ideal for investigative cultural history, and one whose world remains unknown *rasa* in transatlantic scholarship.

Amidst wartime dislocation and accelerated racial and ethnic urban mixing, Gough's act operated as a model of mimicry in search of a core identity, one that might be found through relation to the sonic geography of London. His performances certainly burlesqued the genre of the transatlantic travel lecture as a myth of legitimacy and origin. But in the midst of a Civil War, with Britain once more the object of urgent curiosity, his act seems to acquire an important subtext Gough is presented in report after report as a guarantor of

transatlantic unity, in his attempt to speak across boundaries and resonate with multiple constituencies. In his impersonations, and in the texts that strove to capture them, his oral identity involved its own kind of Anglo-American traffic and exchange, summoning up an authentic inner British voice. For the hours of performance in spaces such as Philadelphia's Musical Fund Hall, the fate of the Union seemed to lie encased in Gough's voice box, in the equivocal transformations of his transatlantic larynx.



Figure 1: 'John B. Gough', oil painting, c. 1845 (Worcester Mechanics Hall)

LECTURES.

BROOKLYN YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN
ASSOCIATION.

LAST LECTURE.
JOHN B. GOUGH
Will lecture on
"LONDON STREET LIFE,"
and
"LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF LONDON LIFE."
(Two Lectures in one, with new facts and illustrations.)
AT THE
BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC.
ON
MONDAY EVENING, April 15th.
at 8 o'clock.
(This will be the last Lecture by Mr. Gough, in Brooklyn,
this season.)
DODWORTH'S CORNET BAND WILL PERFORM.
Commencing at 7 o'clock.

Figure 2: 'Brooklyn YMCA Lectures' advertisement, *Brooklyn Eagle*, 5 April 1861

ⁱ *Cambridge History of the English Language*, VI, 71.

ⁱⁱ Carlos William Martyn, *John B. Gough: The Apostle of Cold Water* (New York: Funk & Wagnall, 1894), p. xiii.

ⁱⁱⁱ Martyn, *Apostle of Cold Water*, p. 212.

^{iv} Gough, *The Autobiography of John B. Gough* (New York: Bill, Nichols, 1870), p. 525.

^v 'John B. Gough at the Academy of Music Last Evening', *Philadelphia Press*, 19 February 1861.

^{vi} 'Mr. Gough on the Streets of London', *New York Times*, 16 March 1861.

^{vii} Gough estimated that he delivered 6064 lectures between 1843 and 1869, of which one quarter were his non-temperance (i.e., mainly 'London') material, *Autobiography*, p. 544.

^{viii} Gough's repertoire included three related lectures on London, and one general lecture: 'Here and There in Britain'. The American Antiquarian Society holds manuscripts to these under the headings 'Life in London', 'London at Night', 'Street Life in London', and the general lecture entitled 'Here and There in Britain'. During the next decades, these lectures were advertised and recorded under a host of roughly similar names, including 'London Street Life', 'Lights and Shadows of London Life', and 'London by Moonlight'. Reports indicate that sections from various lecture were, on occasion, conflated into one 'London' performance.

^{ix} Walt Whitman, 'Eighteen Sixty-One', *Leaves of Grass and Other Writings* (New York: Norton, 1998), p.237.

^x David S. Reynolds, 'Black Cats and the Delirium Tremens', in *The Serpent in the Cup: Temperance and American Literature*, ed. by David S. Reynolds and Debra J. Rosenthal, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1997), p. 27.

^{xi} Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 67-69.

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- ^{xii} John W. Crowley, 'Slaves to the Bottle: Gough's Autobiography and Douglass's Narrative', in *Serpent in the Cup*, pp. 115–35; Thomas Augst, 'Temperance, Mass Culture and the Romance of Experience', *American Literary History*, 19.2 (2007), 297–323.
- ^{xiii} He is notably absent from John W. Frick, *Theatre, Culture and Temperance Reform in Nineteenth-Century America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
- ^{xiv} The main reports drawn on in this chapter are: 'John B. Gough at Musical Fund Hall Last Evening', *Philadelphia Press*, 16 October 1860; 'John B. Gough's New Lecture', *New York Daily Tribune*, 16 February 1861; 'Mr. John B. Gough's Lectures', *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 18 February 1861; 'John B. Gough at the Academy of Music Last Evening', *Philadelphia Press*, 19 February 1861; 'Local Intelligence: Mr. Gough on London Street Life', *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 19 February 1861; 'Local Intelligence: Mr. Gough on London Street Life', *Brooklyn Eagle*, 19 February 1861; 'Lecture by John B. Gough on Street Life in London – Crowded House and Extraordinary Enthusiasm', *Brooklyn Eagle*, 26 February 1861; 'Mr. Gough on the Streets of London', *New York Times*, 16 March 1861; 'John B. Gough at the Academy of Music – Lecture upon London his Experience' *Brooklyn Eagle*, 1 April 1861; 'Gough at the Academy of Music', *Brooklyn Eagle*, 16 April 1861; 'Mr. Gough's Farewell Lecture at the Academy, on Thursday Evening', *Philadelphia Press*, 16 May 1861; 'John B. Gough's Second Lecture under the Auspices of the YMCA of this City', *Brooklyn Eagle*, 6 November 1861; 'John B. Gough at the Academy of Music' – *Philadelphia Press*, 14 March 1862; 'Mr. Gough's Second Lecture at the Academy of Music', *Philadelphia Press*, 17 March 1862; 'Mr. Gough's Non-Temperance Lectures', *Philadelphia Press*, 6 May 1862; 'John B. Gough at the Academy of Music – The Great Metropolis', *Brooklyn Eagle*, 4 April 1865. Further reports are identified in subsequent footnotes.
- ^{xv} Gough's fastidious documentation of his career means that the scope for such work is immense, and his personal scrapbooks of newspaper coverage provide a record of a lyceum career almost unmatched for any other performer in its detail. In particular, 'Diary of Lecture Engagements' and 'Scrapbook of Newspaper Clippings', Worcester MA, American Antiquarian Society, John B. Gough Papers, 2 vols, both undated.
- ^{xvi} Donald Scott explains that "the figure is based on an estimate that 2000 lectures, with an average attendance of 250 people, took place each week during the season." Scott, 'The Profession that Vanished: Public Lecturing in mid-Nineteenth-Century America', in *Professions and Professional Ideologies in America*, ed. by Gerald Grierson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), p.12.
- ^{xvii} 'A Boston newspaper' quoted in *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 18 February 1861.
- ^{xviii} *Brooklyn Eagle*, 16 April 1861.
- ^{xix} *Philadelphia Press*, 19 February 1861.
- ^{xx} *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 18 February 1861.
- ^{xxi} Quoted in Augst, 'Temperance, Mass Culture and the Romance of Experience', p. 308.
- ^{xxii} Martyn, *Apostle of Cold Water*, p. 212.
- ^{xxiii} *Philadelphia Press*, 14 March 1862.
- ^{xxiv} Gough, *Platform Echoes: or, Living Truths for Head and Heart*, (New York: Worthington, 1886), p. v.
- ^{xxv} *Philadelphia Press*, 16 October 1860.
- ^{xxvi} Quoted in Augst, 'Temperance, Mass Culture and the Romance of Experience', p. 312.
- ^{xxvii} 'Gough's Lecture', *Troy Daily Times*, 12 December 1861. For Gough's mingling of registers, see also Martyn, *Apostle of Cold Water*, pp. xiii–ix.
- ^{xxviii} Martyn, *Apostle of Cold Water*, p. xiii.
- ^{xxix} *Philadelphia Press*, 16 October 1860.
- ^{xxx} See Paul Schlicke, *Dickens and Popular Entertainment* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1985), pp. 234–41.
- ^{xxxi} Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 311.
- ^{xxxii} In particular, 'Diary of Lecture Engagements' and 'Scrapbook of Newspaper Clippings', Worcester MA, American Antiquarian Society, John B. Gough Papers, 2 vols, both undated.
- ^{xxxiii} 'Here and There in Britain – A Lecture by John Gough', *Boston Journal*, 2 November 1861
- ^{xxxiv} *Philadelphia Press*, 16 May, 1861.
- ^{xxxv} *Brooklyn Eagle*, 26 February 1861.
- ^{xxxvi} *Philadelphia Press*, 19 February 1861.
- ^{xxxvii} *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 19 February 1861.
- ^{xxxviii} Ritchie J. Ewing, *Night Life in London* (London: William Tweedie, 1857), p. 200.
- ^{xxxix} Brooke Baldwin, 'The Cakewalk: A Study in Stereotype and Reality', *Journal of Social History*, 15.2 (1981), 205–10.
- ^{xl} *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 19 February 1861.
- ^{xli} *Philadelphia Press*, 16 March 1861.
- ^{xlii} Gough, *Autobiography*, p. 334.
- ^{xliii} *Brooklyn Eagle*, 19 February 1861.

^{xliv} See Don B. Wilmeth, Tice L. Miller (eds.), *Cambridge Guide to American Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 253.

^{xlv} In 'Civilization and its Discontents', in *The Freud Reader*, ed. by Peter Gay (New York: Norton, 1995), p. 730.

^{xlvi} For arguments for the advance of American English, see George Perkins Marsh, *Lectures on the English Language* (New York: Samson & Low, 1860), pp. 667–69.

^{xlvii} *Cambridge History of the English Language*, VI,74.

^{xlviii} Gough, *Autobiography*, p. 527.

^{xlix} See Tom Standage, *The Victorian Internet* (New York: Berkeley, 1998), pp. 81–84.

^l Higginson, 'The American Lecture-System', p. 630.