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Traces of the Ordinary: The Guthrie Brothers and the Voices of Victorian "Nobodies"

"In more ways than one", John Picker writes in *Victorian Soundscapes* (2003), the "Victorians were hearing things".[1] In fact, noise was inescapable; from the chug of the railways to the songs of the music halls, contemporary citizens were forced to pay attention to the symphonies circulating their world. This interest in understanding noise extended, perhaps unsurprisingly, to an investment in listening to (and replicating) voice; indeed, technologies such as the phonograph, the electric telegraph, and the microphone, for example, offered ways of accurately hearing, recording, and transcribing speech. Such devices were, as Ivan Kreilkamp has pointed out, "seen as the means by which writing might move one step closer to orality and the presence of voice", reproducing speech as animated, imperfect, and authentic as the sounds articulated amongst the streets.[2] The sounds of spoken speech were also recorded by urban journalists archiving the soundscape of the city; Charles Dickens, for instance, is even described by Steven Marcus as "a kind of written recording device for the human voice".[3] Late-nineteenth century writers similarly employed linguistic representation and experimentation to demonstrate the intricacies and imperfections in speech uttered by contemporary Londoners; or rather, the voices of Victorian "nobodies", as one contemporary reviewer in *The Academy and Literature* chose to describe them.[4]

"The nobodies", the author writes, "have come greatly to the front in literature of late years. In life they remain nobodies, in literature they are somebodies with a following".[5] These alleged nobodies – those living in the suburbs, bustling through the streets, lost within the crowds – can be, according to this article, defined as the "men and women who can be lumped together by the hundred thousand".[6] Texts concerned with the lives of these people serve as examples of "honest reporting": a phrase devised by Harold Biffen, the unsuccessful writer

1 Picker, 2003, 6.

2 Kreilkamp, 2005, 72. For more on the phonograph, see: Rubery, 2014; Read and Welch, 1976. For Victorian auditory technologies and earlier shorthand systems, see: Gitelman, 1999.

3 Marcus, 1972, 192.

4 "The Nobodies", 1902, 247.

5 "The Nobodies", 1902, 247.

6 "The Nobodies", 1902, 247.

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from George Gissing's *New Grub Street* (1891).[7] While this ostensibly "sordid and dull" subject seems far removed from iconic accounts of the heroic, the famous, or the marginalised, Gissing's novel – just like the fictitious record of a London clerk and his family in George and Weedon Grossmith's *The Diary of a Nobody* (1892) – exemplifies a recurring interest in listening to and documenting the voices, indeed the lives, of contemporary "nobodies".[8] As the anonymous author of "The Nobodies" goes on to suggest, Thomas Anstey Guthrie ("F. Anstey") and Leonard George Guthrie ("Lucas Galen") similarly commit themselves to the reproduction of the voices of ordinary Victorians.[9] Although the familial connection between the two men appears to have bypassed the author of "The Nobodies," the reviewer praises both the Guthries for their ability to capture everyday situations, characters, and conversations and imaginatively recreate them in print. "F. Anstey's" *Voces Populi*, an assortment of dramatic dialogues originally printed in *Punch* and featuring turn-of-the-century Londoners *in medias res*, is commended for striking a "new note of observation".[10] Similarly, a series of scenes produced by "Lucas Galen", called *Hospital Sketches* (1902) – the title itself evoking Dickens's journalistic *Sketches by Boz* (1833–1836) – is credited for its dedication to "honest reporting".[11] The reviewer therefore inadvertently gestures towards the Guthries' shared interest in realistically reproducing the voices of so-called nobodies residing in the metropolis.

The urban spectatorship conducted by the brothers emerges from different locations in London: for "F. Anstey", a name which swiftly rose to fame following the immediate success of Thomas Guthrie's first novel, *Vice Versâ; or, a Lesson to Fathers* (1882), speakers are found in public spaces such as parks, streets, and museums, but for Leonard – by the end of his medical career an established paediatrician and neurologist – inspiration strikes at the Paddington Green Children's Hospital.[12] By observing their subjects in these environments and recreating them in their respective writing through a combination of imitation and imagination, the Guthries provide

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7 Gissing, 1891, 265.

8 "Recent Fiction", 1891, 473.

9 Thomas Anstey Guthrie was a popular Victorian writer. He published several novels as well as a handful of collections comprising of shorter contributions originally printed in *Punch* and other contemporary periodicals.

10 "The Nobodies", 1902, 247. Guthrie published two series of *Voces Populi*, the first in 1890 and the second in 1892.

11 "The Nobodies", 1902, 247. Many of the scenes found in *Hospital Sketches* were originally published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* and *Budget* in October and November 1892.

12 Leonard worked at the Paddington Green Children's Hospital until his death in December 1918. *Hospital Sketches* was his only fictional collection. For Leonard's medical career, see: "Obituary", 1919, 28–29.

their readers with studies of a range of typical late-Victorian voices. In the 2015 colloquy, "Why voice now?", Martha Feldman suggests that "voice [. . .] may reveal us".[13] Certainly, for the Guthries, the ascription of voice to their characters serves to reveal such ordinary speakers to their contemporary world. It is this which transforms them from a "nobody" into a *somebody*; indeed, by exposing these characters not for their uniqueness but for their familiarity, the Guthries recognise and explore the existence of the individuals that constitute a vast proportion of the contemporary metropolis. In examining the work of these neglected writers, then, and bringing to light the notebooks through which snippets of overheard conversation made their way into *Voces Populi*, this chapter investigates how "F. Anstey" and "Lucas Galen" sought to reproduce the voices of their fictitious "nobodies" (and, of course, the people who inspired such subjects), thereby granting the speakers a value which their comparative invisibility previously eclipsed. In doing so, I examine how the Guthries similarly experiment with dialogue and language in an effort to record and replicate contemporary voiced speech. To an extent, the Guthries' interest in the representation of voice served to entertain and amuse their audiences. At the same time, though, this chapter also suggests that the Guthries – in their attempt to document and reproduce ordinary voice – conceptualise the metropolis socio-linguistically, consequently positioning, even pinpointing, particular voices (and people) in certain places of the city.

It is worth bearing in mind that, while often inspired by real situations and conversations, the scenes collected in *Voces Populi* and *Hospital Sketches* and the voices contained within them were manipulated by the Guthries. This combination of invention and imitation was employed – in part, at least – for the reader's entertainment. At the same time, though, the Guthries – in listening to the familiar sounds of the streets and reproducing voice and speech – bring with them specific class filters which influence their ability to faithfully represent the voices of their contemporaries in print. Consequently, we must acknowledge how Thomas and Leonard Guthrie's conceptualisations of the streets of London are neither wholly accurate nor reliable. This is not to imply their irrelevance, though. After all, the sketches – albeit filtered by their respective author's own motivations and preconceptions – highlight the ordinary voices of those living in the metropolis, thereby providing us with an important auditory illustration of late-Victorian London.

13 Feldman, 2015, 658.

"Unseen lives": Observing London(ers)

In a re-examination of late-Victorian and early-Edwardian slum writing, Oliver Betts considers how the nineteenth century became preoccupied with "seeing and the visualisation of Victorian society".[14] While a number of genres and texts emerged from this contemporary interest in the observation of London and the translation of its sights into the visual imagination, one literary output – one with which both *Voces Populi* and *Hospital Sketches* bear some similarities – consisted of a stream of comic monologues delivered by a middle-aged, lower middle-class woman called Mrs Brown.[15] Written by George Rose under the pen name "Arthur Sketchley", and published from 1866 to 1882, these monologues see Mrs Brown offer readers her thoughts and opinions on Victorian customs, contemporary fads, and tourist hotspots, almost as if she were a socio-cultural guide to nineteenth century England. In his posthumously published autobiography, *A Long Retrospect* (1936), Guthrie recalls the pleasure he felt on reading Sketchley's work in *Fun*, acknowledging the "uproarious delight with which [. . .] I first made 'Mrs. Brown's' acquaintance".[16] Influenced by the work of writers like Rose, the Guthries similarly present their readers with typical scenes from London, often poking fun at both the ignorant observer (or, in Leonard's case, the problematic hospital patient) as well as the affectations of Victorian society. Nevertheless, their humorous conceptualisations of London differ from Rose's as the Guthries remove the narratorial reporter from their sketches and instead position their *readers* as witnesses to these scenes. In their reproduction of real characters and conversations, then, these scenes can be best understood as "footage" which unfolds before the reader's eyes.

The scenes compiled in *Voces* and *Hospital Sketches* relied upon the Guthries' ability to record the details of their chosen speakers and conversations, albeit selectively, before imaginatively reconstructing them in print. Such a process might be recognised, then, as one that, in many cases, moved from imitation – using someone or something as a model – to mimicry: imitation intended for entertainment (that which, for example, superficially emphasises a speaker's mannerisms or dialect, and not necessarily accurately). The difference lies in the reworking of the subject; for the Guthries, it is upon the introduction of invention, inserted for the purposes of amusement, that the scene distances itself – to some degree, at

14 Betts, 2017, 259.

15 A variety of writing emerged from this interest in the documentation of London and the translation of such sights into the visual imagination, including slum fiction, social investigations, and the "Condition of England" novel.

16 Anstey, 1936, 26.

least – from its original form and moves towards a less accurate representation of reality. While both brothers reproduce the city and its inhabitants in this way, only "F. Anstey" describes the method by which he composed his "Voces" series. Recalling the first "Voces" article in his autobiography, Guthrie noted how he happened upon "a meeting of the Unemployed in Trafalgar Square", which provided him with a topic.[17] This random encounter inspired Guthrie to regularly search for a subject for his sketches. Of course, this tactic was not always successful: in a diary entry from June 1907, for example, Guthrie wrote that, while ambling around Earl's Court, he found "no peg to hang a sketch on".[18] Nonetheless, Guthrie employed this method so frequently that M. H. Spielman called attention to it in *The History of Punch* (1895), to date one of the most authoritative texts on the magazine and its staff. Guthrie, Spielman writes, would visit "the needful spot, where he would try to seize the salient points and the general tone, the speakers and the scene", sometimes combining "hints and anecdotes received from his acquaintance with his own experience and invention; on rarer occasions he would happen upon an incident which could be worked up into a sketch very much as it actually occurred".[19] This process of imitating and reinventing characters and conversations is also mentioned in Guthrie's autobiography. Recalling a business partner of his father's friend, a Cockney man named Robert Pirie Shiell, Guthrie writes "[i]t was he from whom in one of my 'Voces' I borrowed the comment on a clock elaborately chiming the half-hour, 'And all that for only half-past five!'", a phrase that eventually works its way into the sketch "At the Military Exhibition", delivered almost verbatim ("all that for on'y 'alf-past five!").[20]

This example crucially gestures towards Guthrie's recreation of the local and the common, of ordinary speakers and their conversations. Such reconstructions were similarly recognised by contemporary critics; indeed, in a review of one of Guthrie's earlier novels, *A Fallen Idol* (1886) – a fantasy narrative in which the ill-fated protagonist's life is chaotically interrupted by the arrival of a supernatural Jain idol – *The Times* wrote that "[o]ne of Mr. Anstey's special gifts [. . .] is his extraordinary knowledge of the humours of the humbler classes of Londoners".[21] Guthrie's reproduction of Londoners in *Voces* similarly illuminates his ability to chronicle the lives of the masses; the ordinary men, women, and children whose "invisibility" was not to one another but to those from a more privileged socio-

17 Anstey, 1936, 179.

18 Diary of Thomas Anstey Guthrie.

19 Spielman, 1895, 398.

20 Anstey, 1892, 69. All subsequent references to the second series of *Voces* (1892) will be from this edition and will be given in parentheses following quotations.

21 "A Fallen Idol", 1886, 10.

economic background. A reviewer in *The Speaker* shares this sentiment, commending Guthrie for acting as a "guide" to the city's inhabitants.[22] For this author, Guthrie's *Voces* enables readers to observe the interactions and dialogues of those concealed by their numerical vastness. The speakers and the people whom they represent are, therefore, individualized and imagined as "characters" with histories, feelings, and lives of their own. Rather than simply vanishing into obscurity, the speakers are instead identified as integral to the landscape. By revealing their "unseen lives" (as Guthrie puts it in a diary entry in 1907), *Voces* consequently transforms ordinary citizens from "nobodies" into "somebodies".[23]

Capturing the speaker's personality, their idiosyncrasies, and their humour were significant details in the composition of Thomas Guthrie's characters. A great deal of time was therefore dedicated to recording the most striking characteristics of those whom Guthrie encountered, and his notebooks certainly testify to this investment. On a page of a largely undated notebook, Guthrie provides a list of character sketches, jotting down observations about the ordinary men and women whom he encounters on his travels. A "[s]eedy person at restaurant", "[t]he drunken snob in Oxford St, 19 July", and "the communicative passenger [. . .] going to Scotland" are amongst those who catch his attention.[24] One note, however, must have stuck in Guthrie's memory more than others. So much so, in fact, that an argument between "[t]he drunken old gentleman & the cabman" on 20 March 1888 evolved into a "Voces" sketch called "The Cadi of the Curbstone", eventually published in *Punch* in January 1890.[25] "The Cadi of the Curbstone"– a dialogue between an elderly drunken man, his cabman, and a police officer – is recalled in *A Long Retrospect* and described as an "absolutely unexaggerated description" of the event.[26] Guthrie opens by locating the men near Hyde Park, where an elderly gentleman

> suddenly stopped the cab in which he has been driving, and, without offering to pay the fare, has got out and shuffled off with a handbag. The [cabman] has descended from his seat and overtaken the old gentleman, who is now perceived to be lamentably intoxicated. The usual crowd springs up from nowhere, and follows the dispute with keen and delighted interest.[27]

22 "First Impressions", 1892, 360.
23 Diary of Thomas Anstey Guthrie.
24 Notebook of Thomas Anstey Guthrie.
25 Notebook of Thomas Anstey Guthrie.
26 Anstey, 1936, 182.
27 Anstey, 1890, 76.

Guthrie could well be a member of this crowd, observing – with his fellow witnesses/readers – the drama as it develops. This example not only demonstrates how Guthrie’s *Voces* were inspired by everyday realities, but the attempt to reproduce the scene additionally speaks to his interest in capturing and reproducing typical encounters with ordinary Londoners.

The verisimilitude of *Voces Populi* can be further identified in “At the British Museum”, a scene in which readers “overhear” a selection of conversations taking place in various exhibitions of the museum. In the Ancient Egypt exhibit, an exchange occurs between a frightened governess and a young boy. After recording the attendance of these characters in his notebook, Guthrie jotted down the following snippets of speech, “I don’t like seeing people so dead as that” and “[n]ot a place to bring a little boy to”.[28] Guthrie’s *Voces* sketch later incorporates these scraps of dialogue into the conversation; as Miss Goole, the governess, and Harry, the small child, enter the exhibit, Harry is visibly disturbed by the mummies. Shaking, he says “[n]o, I’m not frightened, Miss Goole – only if you don’t mind, I – I’d rather see a gentleman not *quite* so dead. And there’s one over there with a gold face and glass eyes, and he looks at me, and – please, I don’t think this is the place to bring such a little boy as me to!” (55). Guthrie’s notebooks and diaries consequently reveal how “F. Anstey” sought to employ a significant amount of imitation in the imaginative reconstruction of the *Voces* dialogues – like those conducted in Trafalgar Square, Hyde Park, and the British Museum – arguably establishing this collection as a study into and a (re)presentation of the lives of ordinary late-Victorians living in London.

What’s more, using his contemporaries as subjects in this examination of late-Victorian voice assigns the individuals who inspired the sketches a place within Guthrie’s vision of London. Indeed, by observing, recreating, and pinpointing the sounds and dialogues heard throughout different locations in London, *Voces* presents itself as an aural cartography of the city – one which seeks to linguistically locate real citizens amongst the panorama. There is, of course, something strikingly Dickensian about Guthrie’s mapmaking; as Alice Turner argues, *Sketches by Boz* charts the voices of London “onto a soundscape of the city”.[29] “F. Anstey” demonstrates a similar interest in providing readers with an “audial map” of the metropolis, crucially employing voice to capture and record a variety of human encounters taking place throughout the city and thereby positioning his fictional “nobodies” within a dialogical map of London.[30] While it is beyond the scope of this chapter, it might well prove

28 Notebook of Thomas Anstey Guthrie.

29 Turner, 2020, 59. Picker also discusses Dickens’s use of voice in *Dombey and Son*, see: Picker, 2003, 15–40.

30 Turner, 2020, 74.

worthwhile, in time, to compare an audial map of Dickens's London to one of Guthrie's London. Such an investigation might help us to better understand the city through the changes to its soundscapes; indeed, it might signal the movement of voices (and people) throughout the metropolis and raise questions about the changing demographics of the city as the century progressed.

"Verbal photography": Linguistic Representation and Experimentation

Sound, Walter J. Ong argues, "is related to present actuality rather than to past or future".[31] The visual reproduction of sound – or, rather, the *illusion* of sound – similarly intends to generate such a response. Reviewers praised *Voces* for this very reason, likening Guthrie's written sketches to "a humorous verbal photography of extraordinary vividness".[32] The suggestion that Guthrie's transcriptions offered as much immediacy and realism as an image of the actual scene speaks to Guthrie's interest in recording and reproducing the familiar sounds of London's streets. Simultaneously, though, this comment points towards the reviewers' desire to recognise such sounds as accurate. Throughout the scenes in *Voces*, Guthrie attempts to mimic the dialect heard in late-Victorian London, paying particular attention to those with a Cockney accent. Consequently, such speakers are no longer dismissed by their comparative vastness, nor are their voices tuned out and absorbed into the city's soundscape. This sentiment is expressed in a contribution to *The Saturday Review*, as the author recognises how "familiar do they [the voices] sound as the oft-heard yet unregarded humours of the crowd".[33] Highlighting the attention afforded to the reproduction of (somewhat ironically) underheard dialogue, this reviewer commends Guthrie's ability to replicate the ordinary, disembodied voices of London.

Phonetic representations of the Cockney dialect were well-established during the Victorian era; in fact, one of the most influential fictional Cockneys, Dickens's Sam Weller – appearing in *The Pickwick Papers* (1836) – is described by John Forster as "being as ordinary and perfect a reality [. . .] as anything in the London streets".[34] Dickens's efforts to replicate non-standard speech – his memorable substitution of the letters *v* and *w*, for example – were applauded in the mid-Victorian era for revealing the "impropriety, ungrammaticality, and

31 Ong, 1967, 111–112.
32 Spielman, 1895, 398.
33 "Voces Populi", 1890, 465.
34 Forster, 1872, 110.

energy" of voice.[35] Yet by the last two decades of the century, the writer and publisher Andrew Tuer observed just how outdated Dickens's voices had already become.[36] Cockney, Tuer claimed, was "constantly in a state of evolution", and contemporary writers needed to keep up with these changes.[37] Instead of employing earlier conventions, then, Tuer presented some alternative ways of phonetically reproducing the Cockney dialect: a long *a* pronounced long *i;* a long *i* pronounced *ah* or *oi*; a long *o* pronounced *ow*; *ow* pronounced *ah* or *aow*; and a short *u* pronounced like a short *e*.[38] It was Guthrie's experimentation with Tuer's new phonetics and the amalgamation of old and new forms of representation for which he was given credit by his contemporaries and critics; in fact, George Bernard Shaw even goes so far as to describe "F. Anstey" as "the first author to give general literary currency to Mr. Tuer's new phonetics".[39]

This phonetic representation of dialogue, described by Peter Ackroyd as the "graphic embodiment of speech", is demonstrated throughout both *Voces Populi* and *Hospital Sketches*.[40] In "Bank Holiday", for example, published in the second series of *Voces*, Guthrie employs linguistic experimentation to replicate the dialogue he overhears on his return journey from the Crystal Palace. In his autobiography Guthrie recalls the inspiration for one of the characters featured in the sketch, a "fellow [traveller], a noisy and far from sober ruffian, whose ditties and remarks I noted down under his drunken nose".[41] The return journey documented in "Bank Holiday" does indeed feature an "Old Gentleman", who "has come out with the object of observing Bank Holiday manners" – arguably bearing some similarities to "F. Anstey" himself – and a drunken man called "Ole Fred" (150). As Ole Fred bustles into the carriage, he causes quite the stir, and subsequently the Old Gentleman asks him to quieten down. Ole Fred replies:

> OLE FRED. Shet up, old umbereller whiskers! (*Screams of laughter from women and children, which encourage him to sing again.*)
>
> [. . .]
>
> THE MAN BY THE WINDOW. 'Ere, dry up, Guv'nor – 'e ain't 'ad enough to urt 'im, 'e ain't!

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35 Kreilkamp, 2005, 77.
36 Kreilkamp, 2005, 77.
37 It was not until the 1880s, Peter Ackroyd argues, that modern Cockney emerged, flourishing in venues like music halls, where songs and ditties offered descriptive accounts of Cockney jaunts and excursions. See: Tuer, 1890, vi; Ackroyd, 2000, 165.
38 Matthews, 1970, 65.
39 Shaw, 1898, 170.
40 Ackroyd, 1990, 125.
41 Anstey, 1936, 181.

> CHORUS OF FEMALES (*to* O[ld]. G[entleman].). An' Bank 'Oliday, too – you orter to be ashimed o' yerself, you ought! 'E's as right as right, if you on'y let him alone!
>
> OLE FRED (*to* O. G.). Ga-arn, yer pore-'arted ole choiner boy! (*sings dismally*) [. . .] Any man 'ere wanter foight me? Don't say no, ole Frecklefoot! (151–152)

Readers hardly need to strain to see Guthrie employ phonological deviations to replicate the Cockney accent. Amongst other conventions, he includes the omission, and, in an earlier interaction between Ole Fred and the Old Gentleman, the acquisition of the letter *h*, "'e ain't 'ad enough to urt 'im" and "heverythink", respectively (151). At the same time, Guthrie also replaces vowels with the letter *i*, represented in "ashimed". Tuer's new phonetics are scattered throughout this piece, too; here, Guthrie includes a long *i* pronounced *oi*, seen in "choiner" and "foight"; a short *u* pronounced *e*, in "shet up"; and – earlier in the scene – a long *a* pronounced like a long *i*, "dyes"/days (151). Alongside these phonetic deviations, Guthrie also introduces non-standard syntax, such as the inclusion of multiple negatives ("'e ain't 'ad enough [. . .] 'e ain't!"). The combination of phonetic and syntactical experimentation crucially ascribes the characters in this scene with humour, vibrancy, and energy: they are animated by Guthrie's representation of voice. This ascription of voice signals Guthrie's attempts to highlight the familiar presence of (often overlooked and ignored) speakers like Ole Fred. Simultaneously, though, Ole Fred is positioned amongst Guthrie's sociolinguistic cartography of late-Victorian London as his movement from the Crystal Palace is recorded and charted in the final scene of Guthrie's sketch.

Although laughter, singing, and speech present a disruptive cacophony to the ears of the Old Gentleman, these noises contribute to the soundscape of London. Similar aural landscapes are highlighted at the beginning of "In a Fog". At a thoroughfare near Hyde Park, at approximately eight o'clock in the evening, readers learn that there is "*[n]othing visible anywhere, but very much audible; horses slipping and plunging, wheels grinding, crashes, jolts, and English as she is spoke on such occasions*" (original emphasis, 127). Without their sight, the individuals lost in the fog rely upon their ears to construct their environment, and in doing so, they overhear the sounds of animals, of vehicles, and of speech. The details recorded in this chaotic, everyday scene demonstrate Guthrie's conceptualisation of a city "alive with sound".[42] This interest in documenting the soundscapes of the city is also found throughout Leonard Guthrie's *Hospital Sketches*. Reading rather like a diary, beginning as the doctor arrives in the morning and finishing at the end of a very arduous day, "Lucas Galen's" fictitious sketches are grounded within Leonard's

42 Preece, 1878, 209, quoted in Picker, 2003, 4.

daily experiences as a member of staff at the Paddington Green Children's Hospital. "Olla Podrida", the first of the collection, captures the soundscape of the waiting room. Recalling the name of a Spanish stew, "Olla Podrida" – translated as "rotten pot" – suggests that the waiting room comprises of an assortment of sounds, just as the dish itself contains an assortment of ingredients. "There is a constant buzz of conversation", "Lucas Galen" writes, "with a chorus of coughs and infants' wails, and the crash of bottles on the floor. [. . .] Scraps of conversation such as the following may be overheard".[43] Here, the choral coughs and cries of the infants contribute to the melody of the hospital, almost musicalizing the waiting room. Crucially, though, just as the streets of London offer "F. Anstey" numerous opportunities to record "scraps of conversation", so too does the hospital for "Lucas Galen".

In its recreation of a series of scenes from the Hospital, Leonard's sketches – some of which evoke pathos and some of which evoke humour – also commit themselves to the reproduction of ordinary voice. In "Free of the Place", for example, the scene opens as a young boy strolls into the doctor's consultation room:

> *Doctor* (with extreme politeness). "Good morning, sir; can I cut off one of your feet?"
> *Very Small Boy* (with a still broader grin). "Noa, yer just carn't."
> *Doctor*. "Well, kindly tell me who you are, and what's the matter with you."
> *Very Small Boy*. "I'm Georgie – that's 'oo I am, and there ain't nuffin the matter with me, there ain't – I've come to help nurse. [. . .] I rolls the bandages for her, and she've asked me to tea this afternoon, and sometimes I sings her songs. I'll sing yer one now, if yer like. [. . .] Yes, I'm a foine singer, I am." (41–42)

Non-standard linguistic representations are similarly scattered throughout this extract. Tuer's new phonetics make another appearance; indeed, the scene includes a long *i* pronounced *oi*, for instance, as the child says "foine". The boy also substitutes the dental *th-* for the letter *f*, changing 'nothing' into "nuffin" – a phonetic deviation which, according to Raymond Chapman, is one of several markers of the Cockney accent.[44] Leonard additionally employs eye dialect within his collection, substituting 'wos' for 'was' in a sketch called "The Hooligan-Bud" (44). It has been pointed out that eye dialect can be "socially offensive", with "such spelling act[s]" serving as "unambiguous markers of intended deviation; they are, in the representation of direct speech, thus overtly made to suggest corresponding failings in utterance, their connotative values establishing a highly effective subtext and marking out the intended divisions in social space".[45] While Leonard's

43 Galen, 1902, 11. All future references to the text will be from this edition and will be given in parentheses following quotations.
44 Chapman, 1994, 43.
45 Walpole, 1974, 191; Mugglestone, 2003, 76.

use of eye dialect likely serves to demonstrate this social division by highlighting the child's lack of education – a social issue reappearing throughout his collection – his employment of this convention nevertheless speaks to his desire to replicate the boy's speech. Crucially, though, this reconstruction of voice is necessarily mediated by Leonard: he replicates the sounds of the child's speech as *he* hears them. Thus, Leonard's use of established vocal stereotypes – just like his brother's – reproduce vocal sounds grounded in their understanding of the communities whose speech they recorded. While Thomas and Leonard (and their readers) might have considered their representations to be accurate illustrations of the speakers contained amongst the scenes, such depictions of late-Victorian Londoners cannot be considered entirely faithful or accurate because they were inevitably filtered by the selective and subjective interests of those who recorded them. Their itinerant recordings of speech and voice tell us something about ordinary Londoners' everyday speech, but say just as much about who was listening.

Conclusion: The Guthries as "Earwitnesses"

The Victorian era, Picker notes, was one fascinated by listening.[46] The Guthries, with their respective attempts to record and reproduce the voices of ordinary Victorians, certainly attest to this statement. Their imitations and imaginative reconstructions of contemporary voice crucially serve to individualize their characters (and the people they represent) and simultaneously recognise them for their familiarity, thereby revealing to audiences the overwhelming presence of these ordinary speakers. Thus, the voices of those featuring in *Voces Populi* and *Hospital Sketches* are imagined as integral to the landscape of the contemporary metropolis, ultimately transforming them from "nobodies" into somebodies. The respective conceptualisations of London created by the Guthries not only reveal the underheard voices of the city, but they also seek to map the metropolis linguistically. In their representation of ordinary citizens, both brothers position their characters (and the individuals who inspired such subjects) amongst a sociolinguistic cartography of the capital. *Voces* undeniably provides readers with the most expansive map, as "F. Anstey" covers a greater area of London, while "Lucas Galen" offers a more site-specific set of recordings within a single institution. Thomas and Leonard Guthrie might therefore be described as "earwitnesses", writers seeking to capture the soundscapes of their own places and times.[47] Indeed, by

46 Picker, 2003, 6.
47 Schafer, 1993, 8.

listening to, recording, and reimagining the voices of everyday citizens and the sounds of their environments, "F. Anstey" and "Lucas Galen" manage to provide readers with their own – albeit significantly filtered – audial illustrations of the voices of the late-Victorian capital.

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