

### Western Twang

There is a western twang, but I cannot describe it phonetically or delimit it geographically. The first 'a' in 'Nevada' is generally pronounced to rhyme with 'bad'; which is bad enough, but it gets worse. There is also a Texas drawl and ditto for it. I'm not sure I can distinguish Texas from Western.

I've been to Scotland a number of times and every time I'm there I fall in love with the Scots accent. I unconsciously start speaking in what I must think is a fair imitation of Glaswegian. It must sound ridiculous in the ears of a Scotsman. One day, the last time I was there, I was telling my friend Ron about some point in applied mathematics, when quite casually and imperceptably, I slipped into my Bostonese-Scotch. Ron caught me at it. I was embarrassed and my face turned the color of the McLeod tartan that had been laundered several times. I left Scotland the next day.

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making some feeble excuse. At last it can be told: this was the real reason.

My wife's cousin Teddy who grew up in London plays the guitar and sings American folk songs. He sat in a Folly in Margate (i.e., a building constructed in the 1800's deliberately resembling a ruin of the 1500's) and sang "The Last Roundup". It was ridiculous. What should have been a Texas or Oklahoma drawl came out as pure imitation Cockney. My Scots' accent was much better but I still had to leave the country.

I have no desire either to define the western twang or to imitate it for protective coloration.

Conversation in a Taxicab, Salt Lake City

Cabbie: You from New York?

Myself: That's pretty close. I'm from Massachusetts.

Cabbie: I could tell in a minute.

Conversation in a Hotel Elevator, Albuquerque, N.M.

Bell Hop: You from England?

Myself: That's pretty close. I'm from New England.

Psychologically, we're really English.

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Bell Hop: Say, that's neat.

Conversation in an All-Nite Taco & Hoagie

Shop in Missoula, Montana

Counterman: You from North Carolina?

Myself: That's pretty close. I put in a ten  
year hitch in Washington, D.C.

Counterman: I could tell in a minute.

Conversation at a Wimpy Bar, London, England

Greek Counterman: You from the States?

Myself: That's pretty close. I'm from Rhode  
Island.

Greek Counterman: I've got a sister in Long  
Island.

Myself: Same idea. Drop by when you visit her.