INTRODUCTION

After all that can be obtained from other realms of knowledge, it is seen that there is a large gap left still – a gap in the heart of things, a gap waiting to be filled by all that can be learned about the thought, ideas, beliefs, conceptions, and aspirations of the people which have been translated for them, but not by them, into the laws, institutions, and religion which find their way so easily into history.[1]

What is folklore? This disarmingly simple question has never elicited a simple answer, and throughout centuries of interest in the vernacular, the popular, and the traditional, the definitions of it as both an object of study and a framework for examination have remained of critical importance without ever being wholly solidified. The stakes inherent in this question were apparent to the early nineteenth-century British antiquarians inspired by Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm's work on German traditional lore, and it remained a central issue for the men and women who founded the Folklore Society in 1878 and attempted over the following decades to solidify the scientific credentials of their study in the face of increasing discursive and methodological synchronicity with the Anthropological Institute. For modern folklorists the question remains, touching research horizons which have expanded beyond the nineteenth-century boundaries of traditional oral lore to include the vast and ever-growing corpus of tale and ritual generated in twentieth- and twenty-first century culture. Both a discipline and a body of evidence, the conceptual, ideological, and political boundaries of the deceptively compact concept of folklore have shifted enormously over the past two hundred years and have rarely remained entirely stable.

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[1] George Laurence Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science* (London: Methuen, 1908), 3-4.

Folklore, though not always under that name, has been an object of inquiry since the early modern period, and the antiquarians who championed the newly rediscovered vernacular hunted out "popular antiquities" – customs, traditions, ballads, and legends – and printed them in their heterogenous collectanea alongside engravings of ruined castles, passages of poetry, and genealogical tables. Amateur and antiquarian interest in vernacular and popular culture began to develop into scholarly pursuit by the end of the eighteenth century, and Henry Bourne, John Brand, and Thomas Percy published semiprofessional collections of popular antiquities that were indeed popular, particularly with the emerging community of scholars interested in the vernacular history of Britain.[2] Thus at the beginning of the nineteenth century, interest in folklore was often couched within an antiquarian interest in architectural ruins, medieval literature, and art, all of which continued to be collated and published in collections of regional curiosities and "relics" of the past; much like the eighteenth-century collectanea, these volumes were less interested in the analysis of their material than in the production of an archive of curiosities evocative of an ancient, often idealized, era. In the mid-nineteenth century, however, interest in traditional culture and narrative underwent a definite shift, and the potential of this material to respond to systematic and scientific treatment became of paramount interest. When William John Thoms, under the pseudonym Ambrose Merton, coined the term folklore in the pages of *Athaneum* in 1846, his intention was to replace

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[2] Henry Bourne, *Antiquitates Vulgares; Or, The Antiquities of the Common People, Giving an Account of Several of Their Opinions and Ceremonies, with Proper Reflections Upon Each of Them; Shewing Which May Be Retain'd, and Which Ought to Be Laid Aside* (Newcastle: Printed by J. White for the author, 1725); John Brand and Henry Bourne, *Observations on Popular Antiquities: Including the Whole of Mr. Bourne's Antiquitates Vulgares, with Addenda to Every Chapter of That Work: As Also an Appendix Containing Such Articles on the Subject, As Have Been Omitted by That Author* (Newcastle upon Tyne: J. Johnson, 1777); John Brand and Henry Ellis, *Observations on Popular Antiquities: Chiefly Illustrating the Origin of Our Vulgar Customs, Ceremonies, and Superstitions. Arranged and Revised, with Additions, by Henry Ellis, F.R.S*, 2 vols (London: F. C. and J. Rivington, 1813); and Thomas Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English poetry : Consisting of Old Heroic Ballads, Songs, and other Pieces of our Earlier Poets, (Chiefly of the Lyric Kind.) Together with Some few of Later Date*, 3 vols (London: J. Dodsley, 1765). See also David Matthews, "Scholarship and Popular Culture in the Nineteenth Century," in *A Companion to Arthurian Literature*, ed. Helen Fulton (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009): 355-367 and Matthews, *The Making of Middle English, 1765-1910,* vol. 18, Medieval Cultures (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

the unwieldy older terminology – "Popular Antiquities, or Popular Literature" – with an English name that could equal the German *Volksmärchen*, and perhaps therefore signal the birth of an English tradition of scholarship equal to that of Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm's hugely influential studies on German popular tradition.[3] Hence "folk-lore", a "good Saxon compound," which inscribed a national boundary around this newly reconstituted body of material and gestured towards Thoms' ambitions for the future of the study.[4]

Roughly thirty years later, when the Folklore Society of London was founded in 1878, Thoms' national but still largely antiquarian vision for the Society was further modified to harmonize with emergent discourses on human and social origins; primarily through the efforts of Laurence Gomme, the Society was successfully reconstituted as a scientific and increasingly anthropological enterprise, one cast in the mould first formally articulated in Sir Edward Burnett Tylor's seminal *Primitive Culture* (1871).[5] *Primitive Culture* is known to modern scholarship as the text from which the discipline of anthropology emerged; in it Tylor first advanced the cause of the comparative method – a geologically informed paradigm for the study of human culture that imagined the ephemera of human society as relics, or "survivals," to use Tylor's term, suspended in the layers of time.   In the comparative method, materials from across temporal and

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[3] Wilhelm (1786-1859) and Jacob Grimm (1785-1863) were German scholars known primarily for their critical collections of German traditional tales and, in the case of Jacob Grimm, for work on the history of language development and the discovery of "Grimm's Law," which described word change over time. See especially Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Berlin: Realschulbuchh, 1812), Jacob Grimm, *Deutsche Grammatik* (Göttingen: Bei Dieterich, 1819), and Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsche Sagen* (Berlin: Nicolaischen Buchhandlung, 1816-1819), 2 vols. For an introduction to German folklore studies and its influence on Britain see Archer Taylor, "Characteristics of German Folklore Studies," *The Journal of American Folklore* 74 (1961): 293-301.

[4] William John Thoms, "Folk-Lore," *Athenaeum* 982 (1846): 862-863.

[5] Edward Burnett Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom* (London: J. Murray, 1871). Edward Burnett Tylor was not only a founding member of the Folklore Society, but served as vice-president from 1880 till his death in 1917.

geographic spans could be collated and used to construct a cohesive and universal picture of human society and its development.[6] This approach to the study of human culture depended on the intellectual framework of uniformitarianism, the revolutionary theoretical dictum formalized by Charles Lyell in his *Principles of Geology* (1830-33), a text that forms a discursive watershed in the history of science generally and was particularly critical to the formation of the human sciences.[7] The principle of uniformitarianism dictated that causes operative in the modern world can be assumed to have been operative throughout history and vice versa; the development of geological formations, therefore, could be diagnosed with references to contemporary climatic and geological conditions. When translated to the sphere of human history and activity, this principle was redeployed to allow for the comparison of widely disparate cultural ephemera under the assumption that all human development proceeded along the same immutable lines, and that material could be used therefore to reconstruct a linear history of the universal development of culture. Within the discursive boundaries of the Folklore Society, this principle was further distilled to focus its attention on the delineation of the history of British and European culture, and material gathered across the globe provided a means by which the full significance of the archaic fancies of the folk could be supplemented and expanded:

> Dealing with thought in its primitive forms, it [folklore] traces it
> downwards from the higher civilizations where it is exhibited in the
> conscious logic and historical religions, institutions, arts, science, and

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[6] For further reading on Tylor see George Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (London: Macmillan, 1987), Stocking, "Animism in Theory and Practice: E. B. Tylor's Unpublished 'Notes on 'Spiritualism,'" *Man* New Series 6 (1971): 88-104, Alan Barnard, *History and Theory in Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), and Margaret Hodgen, *The Doctrine of Survivals: The History of an Idea* (London: Allenson, 1936).

[7] Charles Lyell, *Principles of Geology: Being an Attempt to Explain the Former Changes of the Earth's Surface, by Reference to Causes now in Operation*, 3 vols. (London: J. Murray, 1830-33). See James Secord's introduction in Lyell, *Principles of Geology*, ed. James Secord (London: Penguin, 1997), ix-xlv and Rachel Laudan, *From Mineralogy to Geology: Foundations of a Science, 1650-1830* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

literature of the progressive races, to its earliest and lowest manifestation in the fore-fathers, not only of the Indo-European, but also of the Semitic and Turanian tribes and in the barbarous and savage races of to-day . . . Its business is with mankind in its infancy and childhood, when the untrained imagination was dominant and knowledge was purely empirical.[8]

Through a close reading of the theoretical work of three prominent folklorists – Sir George Laurence Gomme (1853-1916), Sir John Rhŷs (1840-1915), and Alfred Nutt (1856-1910) – and extensive research into the discourses of human and social origins in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this thesis examines the use of folklore as a tool for the scientific interpretation of the history and identity of the national body. I have concentrated in particular on the emergence of indigeneity as a central concern for folklorists working on the traditional lore and custom of Britain and, through an extended examination of the intellectual relationship between Gomme, Rhŷs, and Nutt, traced the ways in which each identified and delineated a particular source for the national self. My thesis will demonstrate the extent to which ethnological discourse, often considered solely in a colonial context, was central to late nineteenth- through early twentieth-century interpretations of Britain's national genealogy and historical identity. Thus, the goal of this thesis is to reconsider the role played by the folklore paradigm in late nineteenth- through early twentieth-century discourses on human history and culture, particularly those concerned with delineating national and ethnological origins, and through an examination of the folklore work of Gomme, Rhŷs, and Nutt to reevaluate the role of the Folklore Society during this period and to indicate its central position in its contemporary intellectual sphere.

This thesis will be engaged primarily in the close reading of the theoretical texts produced by these scholars in their context as members of the Folklore Society and will

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[8] Edwin Sidney Hartland, "The Science of Folk-Lore," *Folk-Lore Journal* 3 (1885): 118.

concentrate on material published between the founding of the Society in 1878 and the second decade of the twentieth century. Because one of the primary goals of this thesis is to relocate the FLS and its members at the forefront of the scientific discourse of its period, it will be necessary to involve a certain amount of parallel contemporary material to establish both the relevance and the influence of the scholars and texts under consideration. It is also a goal of this thesis to deal with the complex scholarly interactions taking place both within the Folklore Society and broader intellectual circles; far from an isolated or insular discipline, the science of folklore was a part of the vibrant and active world of late nineteenth-century scholarly societies, and it is vital that the work of its folklorists be assessed in this context. I intend to focus my research on a close reading of the narratives in operation in the work of Gomme, Rhŷs, and Nutt; by tracing the language and structure of these texts in the context of their disciplinary and cultural inheritances I hope to uncover some of the more subtle connections that form the discursive structure of folklore.

This thesis is obviously indebted to the method of inquiry developed in Michel Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, but Pierre Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice* has proven an equally instructive text for my research into the history and development of the intellectual boundaries of the Folklore Society, and Bourdieu's illumination of the role played by cultural and symbolic capital in the development of social institutions has provided an excellent point of departure for my analysis of the inner life of the Folklore Society.[9] I have also drawn on Thomas Kuhn's innovative work on the history of science as detailed in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*; I have employed Kuhn's concept of the paradigm throughout my thesis, and his framework for

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[9] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982); Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

the emergence of interregnums and shifts in the development of scientific discourse has proved readily applicable to the history of folklore as a science struggling to assert itself as a paradigm for the study of human origins.[10]   I am also indebted to George C. Stocking's extensive research into the history of anthropology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and to Richard Dorson's similarly unparalleled research into the history of folklore studies in Britain from the eighteenth through the twentieth century.[11]

1. Sir George Laurence Gomme, Sir John Rhŷs, and Alfred Nutt

Sir George Laurence Gomme's work as an innovative administrator in the London County Council and as a champion for the preservation of historic buildings in London has earned him a place in the histories of conservation and city planning, but his folklore work has largely escaped the attention of modern scholarship. He was, however, one of the prime instigators for the founding of the Folklore Society in 1878, its several-times president and vice-president, and editor of its journal. Further, Gomme was the primary theorist of the FLS' early decades; as will be shown, his reorientation of the anthropological paradigm formulated by Tylor in his *Primitive Culture* formed the discursive core of the practice of folklore through the early twentieth century, and even as late as 1957 Sonia Rose Burstein cited Gomme's work in her Presidential Address to the Folklore Society as her first inspiration to become a folklorist.[12] His major writings

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[10] Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[11] George C. Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (London: Macmillan, 1987); Richard Dorson, *The British Folklorists: A History* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968).

[12] Sonia Rose Burstein, "George Laurence Gomme and the Science of Folklore," *Folklore* 68 (1957): 321-338.

on the subject include *The Village Community* (1890), *Ethnology in Folklore* (1892), and *Folklore as an Historical Science* (1908), and his extensive contributions to the Society journal and particularly his Presidential Addresses supplemented and extended his work on folklore theory.

Sir John Rhŷs is best known to modern scholarship as the first philologist to occupy the Chair of Celtic at Oxford – the position famously proposed by Matthew Arnold in his 1867 *On the Study of Celtic Literature*. Rhŷs' work on the history of Celtic languages constitutes one of the bases upon which modern historical linguistic research into Celtic has proceeded; he not only coined the terms Goidelic and Brythonic to identify the two major branches of the Celtic language family, but also discovered that the Celtic *i* transforms into the Welsh *dd*, a rule known in modern linguistics as Rhŷs' Law. Quite apart from his role as a successful academic, Rhŷs was also an active and respected folklorist; though not a key player like Gomme in the administrative life of the Folklore Society, he was a member from 1888 and a vice-president from 1893 until his death in 1915. Rhŷs' folklore research followed suit with his academic interests and dealt mainly with the reconstruction of early Celtic history by means of epigraphic, manuscript, and folkloric evidence. Like Gomme, Rhŷs followed an anthropological method in his research and focused much of his attention on delineating the ethnographic history of the Celts, both in Britain and on the continent. His most lengthy contributions to the subject include his six-part contribution to the Rhind Lecture Series entitled *The Early Ethnology of the British Isles* (1891), *Celtic Britain* (1884), *Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx* (1901), and *The Welsh People* (1900), which he co-authored with Welsh politician and barrister David Brynmor-Jones. Indeed, Rhŷs' work with folkloric data met with such success that it earned him a commission with the British government in

1893, and he contributed sections on the ethnology, literature, and early Welsh history to the *Report of the Royal Commission on Land in Wales and Monmouthshire* (1896), which were later republished as chapters of the aforementioned *The Welsh People.*

Alfred Nutt has remained a central figure in the discursive genealogy of Grail studies, and is particularly associated with the modern popular interpretation of Arthurian legends as concealed pagan narratives of fertility and renewal. Remembered primarily as the publisher and mentor of Jessie Weston, whose 1920 *From Ritual to Romance* is credited as a primary source of inspiration for T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land,"[13] Nutt is cited by Weston and others as the first scholar to argue for the essentially Celtic and insular British origins of Grail legend. It will be shown that this perspective on Nutt's intellectual context is somewhat limited, and that Nutt was in fact not only a folklorist in the vein of Gomme's anthropological approach, but also deeply indebted to both contemporary philological paradigms and also to an essentially eighteenth-century Romantic nationalist approach to vernacular lore and culture. His major contributions are twofold: having inherited his father's publishing company, David Nutt, he worked throughout his professional life to advance public awareness of folklore research, publishing not only the Folklore Society's journals, but also its full-length texts, along with reprints of antiquarian, medieval, and foreign language material connected with the project of folklore research. He was, however, also a scholar of Celtic lore in his own right; while not a philologist, nor even a reader of Celtic texts in the original language, he nevertheless produced a solid corpus of interpretation that sits firmly within the anthropological aims of the FLS during this period. His *The Voyage of Bran* (1895-1897

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[13] Jessie Weston, *From Ritual to Romance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920). For further reading on Eliot's use of anthropological concepts see Frank Kermode's introduction to T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land and Other Poems*, ed. Frank Kermode, 2nd ed. (London: Penguin, 2003): vii-xxxii.

with Kuno Meyer), *Studies on the Legend of the Holy Grail, with Especial Reference to the Hypothesis of its Celtic Origin* (1880), and numerous contributions to both the FLS journals and those of other societies concerned with the Celtic, form a substantial corpus of influential folklore scholarship.

While I hope in this thesis to demonstrate the centrality of the discourse of folklore in the period in question, it is not my intention to provide a comprehensive study of the Folklore Society, nor to write a history of its formative years.[14] Rather, the focus of this thesis is the isolation and examination of a specific strand of folkloric research and theorization – that which was concerned with the discovery and delineation of British origins, or indigeneity. It is for this reason that the work of Gomme, Rhŷs, and Nutt has been chosen – both Gomme and Nutt are key players in the formation and growth of the FLS, and their work charts the ambitions and intellectual concerns of the FLS during this period.   Gomme and Nutt also occupy a central position in this investigation because while they worked within the same field of inquiry and toward largely the same goal, their conclusions were distinctly and even combatively different. Whereas Gomme's research concentrated on identifying the origin of the modern British institutional character, and located it in the relationship between the non-Aryan population and its Aryan overlords, Nutt focused his attention on medieval Celtic legend, and favored the poetic Celtic genius as the primary source of the modern British self. This divergence of interpretation within the discursive boundaries of their discipline was unsurprisingly caustic, and the pages of the Society's journals record the often vehement debates between these two scholars over the critical issue of national-cultural origins. The extent to which this question occupied both their own research and their public

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[14] For a history of the FLS see Dorson, *The British Folklorists*.

arguments with each other's conclusions highlights the centrality of aboriginality as a key focus of the discipline's intellectual activity. A juxtaposition of their work and a detailed analysis of its implications provides therefore a key point of access into the more subtle aspects of the folklore paradigm's life during this period.

It is worth noting at this stage why Rhŷs has been included rather than another perhaps more active Society folklorist. By comparison with such luminaries in the FLS as Edwin Sidney Hartland, Edward Clodd, and Andrew Lang, he does not rank among the most active scholars *within* the Society itself, although he served as its vice-president for more than a decade. The decision to include Rhŷs in this examination was based on several factors; first, Rhŷs' election to vice-president of the Society appears to have occurred at the point when highly respected members were being honored by this title and Rhŷs seems to be no exception. Rather than detracting from his role in contemporary folkloric and anthropological discourse, however, his intellectual influence, indicated by his honorary title, places him squarely inside the discursive boundaries of the Society as a respected practitioner of the science. That his academic duties (as the first Chair of Celtic at Oxford) may have kept him from a more active participation is also to be considered. Further, Rhŷs occupies a critical position between Gomme and Nutt; his work and his vision of the British past were cited often and with concurrence by both of the latter folklorists – Gomme's own theories of the aboriginal past of the nation were largely parallel to Rhŷs', and he cites him often in support of his own arguments, while Nutt makes frequent use of the distinguished philologist's work on the history of the Celtic languages. That Gomme and Nutt disagreed so vehemently over the originating source of modern Britishness can to a certain extent obscure their shared methodological assumptions and paradigmatic boundaries; their common respect for and

use of Rhŷs' work highlights this important point. Thus Rhŷs' work not only marks a critical point of agreement between the two other folklorists, but also, in doing so, provides a key enrichment of the more subtle aspects of the discourse in question.

2. Folklore's Disciplinary Histories: Problems and Prospects

Scholarship concerned with late nineteenth- through early twentieth-century folklore discourse can be divided into roughly two major areas – disciplinary histories of folklore, anthropology, and archaeology, and colonial studies broadly concerned with the production and dissemination of anthropological taxonomies during the period. It is from these two areas that the majority of my own intellectual inheritance, in terms of this thesis, has been gleaned; the conclusions of this thesis have, therefore, a role to play in both fields of inquiry. Modern scholars such as Richard Dorson, and more recently Gillian Bennett, Juliette Wood, Francis de Caro, and Georgina Boyes, have traced the history of the early decades of the Folklore Society; Bennett and Wood have provided excellent revisions of the intellectual and social contexts within which folklore as a science constituted itself, while Dorson's 1968 text *The British Folklorists* remains to date the only survey of the history of British folklore from its early modern antiquarian

beginnings through World War I.[15]   Dorson's text has remained an invaluable contribution to the history of folklore; it is important to note however that the narrative in which he presents his material can at times be misleading; his intention to chart the tale of the rise (and fall) of folklore leads him to approach various folklorists' contribution to the science based on their relative merit, in his eyes, as members of the national "cause" of folklore. His history is, therefore, often frankly hierarchical, denigrating the work of folklorists such as Gomme, for example, in favor of Andrew Lang, whose "psychological" approach to the science, coupled with his celebrity, appealed to Dorson's desire to chart a linear and uninterrupted narrative of the progression of the folklore paradigm.   Fin de siècle British folklorists who worked within the predominant ethnological paradigm do not fit with Dorson's twentieth-century vision of folklore as the investigation of the universal psychological phenomena of man, and so important scholars, including Gomme, Nutt, Edward Clodd, and Alice Bertha Gomme, are largely relegated to the sidelines of extremism and obsolescence in his text, painting an unbalanced portrait of the period.[16]

A related issue presented by Dorson's account of the FLS is the problem inherent in an apologist reading of the history of folklore, the stakes of which are particularly evident in his interpretation of the decades between the inception of the Folklore Society

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[15] Dorson, *The British Folklorists*; Dorson, ed., *Peasant Customs and Savage Myths: Selections from the British Folklorists* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968); Gillian Bennett, "Geologists and Folklorists: Cultural Evolution and 'The Science of Folklore,'" *Folklore* 105 (1994): 25-37; G. Bennett, "The Thomsian Heritage in the Folklore Society (London)," *Journal of Folklore Research* 33 (1996): 212-220; G. Bennett, "Review Essay: Folklorists and Anthropologists," *Folklore* 108 (1997): 120-123; Juliette Wood, "Perceptions of the Past in Welsh Folklore Studies," *Folklore* 108 (1997): 93-102; Wood, "Folklore Studies at the Celtic Dawn: The Rôle of Alfred Nutt as Publisher and Scholar," *Folklore* 110 (1999): 3-12; Wood, "The Holy Grail: From Romance Motif to Modern Genre," *Folklore* 111 (2000): 169-190; Francis A. De Caro, "Concepts of the Past in Folkloristics," *Western Folklore* 35 (1976): 3-22; Georgina Boyes, "Alice Bertha Gomme (1852-1938): A Reassessment of the Work of a Folklorist," *Folklore* 101 (1990):198-208.

[16] See Boyes, "Alice Bertha Gomme," 198-208 and G. Bennett, "Folklorists and Anthropologists," 120-123.

in 1878 until the advent of World War I – the twilight of folklore studies according to Dorson's narrative. Contemporary considerations of Dorson, such as William A. Wilson's 1989 retrospective, have noted the scholar's discursive kinship with the Romantic nationalism of folklorists such as Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm,[17] and indeed in Dorson's narrative, the Britishness of British folklore is inextricably linked to its success as a pursuit and a science. Folklore is an eminently nationalist project in *The British Folklorists*, and scholars in the FLS are evaluated according to the extent to which they are considered contributors to, or detractors from, the national project. Thus the early twentieth-century development of Irish folklore studies within the context of Irish literary and cultural revival meets with Dorson's condemnation and figures in the concluding passages of *The British Folklorists* as the direct catalyst for the extinction of British folklore: with the "efforts" of Irish folklorists "the independent history of the Irish folklore movement begins," but consequently "the long exciting history of English folklore theory and collection ends in rejection and darkness."[18]

The limitations of this reading of the history of folklore are quite apparent, and Dorson's text highlights many of the problems that can plague apologetic disciplinary histories such as his. Fortunately, while *The British Folklorists* highlights several of the problems facing cogent and critical evaluations of Victorian and early twentieth-century folklore, recent work on the history of folklore studies has brought to the fore some of the prospects towards which research like mine is aimed. As mentioned above, Gillian Bennett, Wood, Boyes, and de Caro have produced incisive revisions of the history of the discipline and have begun the critically important task of relocating late nineteenth- and

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[17] William A. Wilson, "Richard M. Dorson as Romantic-Nationalist," *Journal of Folklore Research*: *Special Issue: Richard M. Dorson's Views and Works: An Assessment* 26 (1989): 34-42.

[18] Dorson, *The British Folklorists*, 439. Dorson's perspective on early twentieth-century Irish folklore will be discussed more fully in the following chapters.

early twentieth-century folklore scholarship in its contemporary intellectual and cultural milieu. Boyes has successfully shown the problematic nature of Dorson's evaluation of the period, while both Wood and de Caro have approached individual folklorists – Nutt and Gomme respectively – from new contexts. Wood identifies the importance of Nutt's publishing career to any consideration of his work as a scholar of folklore, while de Caro's essay on Gomme argues for the latter's position in the disciplinary history of modern ethnography.[19] Bennett, in her "Geologists and Folklorists," has reconnected folklore with its inheritance of the geological paradigm upon which so much of its methodological philosophy depended and has also sketched the extraordinary interconnectivity of discourses of human origins in the period.[20] This emphasis on the complex interactions, intellectual osmosis, and interrelation of discursive structures is one of the primary innovations of the disciplinary histories presented by these scholars. This thesis is indebted to these invaluable revisions of the history of folklore as a critical discipline in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain; it is my intention to follow the example provided by this research on the subject and to provide a more in depth and detailed examination of the folklore paradigm through my reading of Gomme, Rhŷs, and Nutt's texts.

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[19] Wood, "Folklore Studies at the Celtic Dawn," 3-12 and de Caro, "G. L. Gomme: The Victorian Folklorist as Ethnohistorian," 107-117.

[20] G. Bennett, "Geologists and Folklorists," 25-37.

3. Colonial Studies: Problems and Prospects

It is also my intention to reevaluate these scholars and their research in the broader cultural context within which they operated, and while the influence of earlier paradigms for the practice of scientific investigation, geology in particular, has been noted by modern scholars, my own investigation into the period will demonstrate the extent to which colonial discourses also formed a crucial aspect of the epistemological structure of the science of folklore. That the disciplinary structure of folklore was very closely akin to that of anthropology was clear even from the beginning of the Folklore Society, and throughout its early years scholars in the FLS struggled to distinguish their science from its discursive twin. Even the staunch apologist and founding member of the Folklore Society, Alfred Nutt defined folklore in 1884 as "anthropology dealing with primitive man," qualifying his use of "primitive" to mean "an essentially low stage" in which "the dominant characteristic . . . is at once empirical and traditional."[21] Nutt's use of "primitive" in this sense was meant to sharpen the focus of folklore, to reposition its boundaries inside those of anthropology but also, crucially, to "claim" a temporally and geographically distant stage of man's development as folklore's sole intellectual province. Folklorist C. Staniland Wake was quick to retort, however, and decried what he considered to be the broadness of Nutt's definition, remarking that it "appears to me to be very undesirable that the scope of the Folk-Lore Society should be so extended as to take in so large a portion of the subjects embraced by Anthropology, especially as the Anthropological Institute is doing such good work in the same direction."[22] And while Nutt sought to refine folklore's scope, and Wake imagined Nutt to be overextending the

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[21] Alfred Nutt and George Laurence Gomme, "Folk-lore Terminology," *The Folk-Lore Journal* 2 (1884): 311.

[22] Edwin Sidney Hartland et al, "Folk-Lore Terminology," *The Folk-Lore Journal* 2 (1884): 345.

discipline, Gomme felt the need to intensify what he considered to be Nutt's weak attempt to shore up the specifically scientific credentials of folklore:

> I strongly urge that Folk-lore is a science by itself, with distinct work of its own to accomplish, but I must protest against it being only another name for anthropology. The sanction at the back of folk-lore is *tradition*. Thus *traditional* custom, *traditional* belief, *traditional* stories - and no custom or belief originating now, whether in civilized or savage races - can be defined as folk-lore. There can be no modern folk-lore, whereas the psychological phenomena with which anthropology deals exist now, and new facts will present themselves as society progresses.[23]

The ultimate goal was, as Henry Wheatley noted in the same issue of *The Folk-Lore Journal*, "to give a reason for the *separate existence of folk-lore*,"[24] a problem inextricably linked with the kinship of both method and archive between folklore and anthropology. Not only did both sciences inherit the sanction of Edward Burnett Tylor's scheme for the practice of comparative cultural analysis, they also shared an interest in deeply interconnected archives. Both folklorists and anthropologists considered the cultural materials and traditions of so-called savages to be critical to the prosecution of their research, and for both disciplines the excavation and analysis of "the primitive" in all its various temporal and geographic incarnations was of primary importance to their reconstruction of human and cultural history. A shared archive, however, not only suggests a shared method, it also instigates the potential for paradigmatic instability – if both disciplines work under the same discursive framework and investigate largely the same human phenomena with only minor differences of focus (anthropology on the geographical primitive, folklore on the temporal) the possibility that one might eventually absorb the other within its own discursive framework becomes very real. Hence the extended anxiety in the Folklore Society over the solidification of discursive

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[23] Hartland et al, "Folk-Lore Terminology," 348.

[24] Hartland et al, "Folk-Lore Terminology," 346.

boundaries and, crucially, discursive originality. The late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century pressure to individualize folklore as a discipline distinct from the methods and aims of anthropology has, I believe, led to a somewhat artificial reading of folklore and the Folklore Society as somehow intellectually divorced from the colonial taxonomies in which its contemporary – anthropology – was so immersed and in which it shared from its inception.

What has been overlooked, and one of the issues this thesis will address, is the extent of the interrelationship of folklore and colonial discourse during this critical period in the development of anthropological inquiry. While interest in the rhetoric of empire has focused to great effect on the denial of coevalness, to use Johannes Fabian's phrase, within nineteenth- and early twentieth-century anthropological and administrative approaches to the indigenous populations of the colonies, the same degree of investigation has not taken place in the context of what could be called the internal colonialism of the folkloric discourse.[25] It has been suggested that "History was to the modern metropolitan state what anthropology was to the colonial state, reflecting both the similarities and the differences between state systems at home and in the colonies."[26] But while this statement remains largely true, especially for the anthropological discourse that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century, it does not account for the position occupied by the Folklore Society within the dichotomy of national/colonial, historical/anthropological, and internal/external. Rather than force folklore to occupy a position on either side of this largely synthetic divorce, I argue that the science of folklore in fact directly complicates the division of intellectual labor supposed to have

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[25] Johannes Fabian. *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

[26] Nicholas B. Dirks, "The Crimes of Colonialism," in *Colonial Subjects*, ed. Peter Pels and Oscar Salemink (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999),174-175.

existed at the close of the century. As a discipline engaged in a broadly anthropological project, folklore concerned itself primarily with material gathered inside the boundaries of the nation; while folklorists in the FLS also produced collections and analyses of material drawn from the colonies and other external sites, this was most often done with a view to using contemporary "savagery" as a means of comparison by which the full analysis of British folklore might be effected. And while folklore's subject was ostensibly prehistoric, it gathered its artifacts from a contemporary body – the so-called peasantry of the nation – whose discursive position was ideologically and discursively intertwined with that of the populations of England and Europe's colonies. Folklorists of this period, along with historians and anthropologists, diagnosed and delineated their national histories in formulae clearly in conversation with a colonial model; as the paradigm most concerned with the anthropological evaluation of Britain's history, folklore occupied a position at the center of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century investigations into human origins and history.

4. Outline of Chapters

In Part One I examine the work of Sir George Laurence Gomme, with a particular emphasis on his role in the formation of the methodological framework of the discourse of folklore. Through an analysis of Gomme's work, this part delineates the ethnological genealogy of the folklore paradigm within which folklorists prosecuted their investigations into human and cultural origins, as well as the larger discursive inheritances that informed the theoretical structures behind their production of folklore

texts. This examination is necessarily focused on the work of Gomme because of his formative role in the Folklore Society; as a founding member, secretary, and several-times president his work shaped the discursive framework of folklore arguably more so than any other single member, and his texts constitute therefore an invaluable archive for any assessment of folklore's position within late nineteenth- through early twentieth-century Britain's climate of research into human history and ethnology.

Part One is divided into two chapters; in Chapter One I reassess the reasons for Gomme's relative absence from the disciplinary history of folklore studies and suggest a reevaluation of his position in both the formation of a folkloric paradigm and within the period's wider discourses on human origins. Further, I outline Gomme's vision of the method of folklore, tracing in particular its discursive debt to both Lyellian geology and Tylor's formula for anthropological inquiry. I show that Gomme's folklore method also shared much in common with developments in archaeological excavation exemplified in the revolutionary stratigraphical method of A. H. Lane-Fox (later General Pitt-Rivers), and that both of these forms of "culture excavation" drew their notion of a matrix of interrelated artifacts preserved *in situ* from the Lyellian geological paradigm. Finally, this chapter provides a detailed survey of Gomme's method in practice, showing how he employed concepts typically associated with anthropological thought – kinship and totemism – to map a racial stratigraphy of Britain within which an Aryan and an aboriginal "pre-Aryan" race were preserved in successive layers formed by the forces of human migration and conquest.

In Chapter Two I proceed from the conclusions of Chapter One and examine in detail Gomme's theory of the influence of the aboriginal, pre-Aryan race, considering in

particular the narratological presentation of the Aryan/pre-Aryan relationship in Gomme's work. The epistemological genealogy of Gomme's pre-Aryan is traced from its origins in mid-nineteenth-century philology and colonial administration through Friedrich Max Müller's Turanian race and into fin de siècle notions of the aborigine. His theory of the so-called "mythic influence" of this conquered pre-Aryan race is examined, as are the larger implications of his contention that the relics of demonism, fairy faith, and witchcraft signaled the living presence of an antagonistic, non-Aryan racial inheritance in Britain. Finally, this chapter argues that the stratigraphical approach to race and a consequent emphasis on the aboriginal stratum evident in Gomme's texts provide a critical insight into the extent to which a colonial model for the rhythm of human history informed the practice of investigation into the national past.

Part Two moves forward to consider the work of Sir John Rhŷs and Alfred Nutt, both scholars of Celtic folklore and traditional narrative whose relatively different approaches to their subject – Rhŷs was a philologist and Nutt a folklorist – belie the extent to which they shared the methodological structures formulated by Gomme and demonstrated in Part One. This part concentrates on expanding the scope of my inquiry to include both apparently divergent methods for the practice of folklore and also varying interpretations of the material at hand. I begin this part with a brief reevaluation of the intellectual stakes at hand in late nineteenth- through early twentieth-century folklore studies; the details of a debate between Gomme and Nutt provide a means of access into some of the more pressing issues with which folklore studies concerned itself and indicate the importance of the intellectual conversations between the three scholars. Through a close reading of Rhŷs' and Nutt's folklore research, I trace some of the more subtle characteristics of the folklore paradigm formulated in Gomme's texts, uncover the

critical role played by the concept of a British indigeneity in the prosecution of folklore research, and discuss the extent to which folklore as a science involved a nationalist or even an imperialist agenda.

Chapter Three provides a reevaluation of the work of Rhŷs and Nutt within the context of Gomme's paradigm for the study of folklore and outlines the parameters within which their work will be considered. Chapter Four focuses on Rhŷs' folklore work; while Rhŷs is best known in modern circles for his role as a historical philologist and as the first occupier of the Chair of Celtic at Oxford his career was framed by his interest in the use of folklore to complement linguistic inquiry. This chapter introduces and examines his use of medieval inscriptions, medieval Celtic manuscripts, and Welsh and Irish folklore toward the reconstruction of a history of the Celtic languages and, through them, the Aryan language family as a whole. I focus in particular on Rhŷs' conflation of language and race in history; terms such as Goidelic and Brythonic – the names of Celtic language families – in Rhŷs' work are also the names of distinct racial groups whose histories are written from the linguistic traces of their migration, interaction, and hybridization. Finally, this chapter considers Rhŷs' vision of the pre-Aryan, both in British and in European history, and the significance of his contention that this non-Aryan substratum formed the dominant element in the cultural and racial identity of Western Europe.

Chapter Five traces the work of Alfred Nutt, a publisher and scholar of Celtic narrative. An extraordinarily active member of the Folklore Society, Nutt was not only a member from the year of the Society's inception in 1878, but also, through his firm David Nutt, the primary publisher for the FLS' journal and full-length texts, as well as a

prolific and dedicated author of his own research, which dealt primarily with traditional Celtic narratives.   This chapter reevaluates Nutt's position in these disciplinary histories, arguing that the presentation of Nutt as the original source of Celtic Grail scholarship is skewed, and repositions him within the context of nineteenth-century British and continental Arthurian and Celtic scholarship.   I also provide an introduction to Nutt's program for the analysis of folk narrative and show how both a philological and an evolutionist discourse informed his approach to the relics of traditional narrative he excavated from the stores of medieval Irish and Welsh manuscripts.   This chapter also considers in some detail Nutt's intellectual relationship with Gomme; following on from the debate noted in the introduction to Part Two, this chapter discusses the reasons behind Nutt's vehement criticisms of Gomme's (and to a lesser extent Rhŷs') contention that a non-Aryan race formed a significant element of the modern British national character, arguing that Nutt's overtly Arnoldian presentation of Celtic literature as the originating source of British national genius informed his need to reject alternate visions of a British aboriginality.   Finally, through a reading of Nutt's critical edition of Matthew Arnold's *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, this chapter considers the extent to which an imperial vision of the British past was involved in Nutt's work, and the larger implications of such an agenda for any consideration of early twentieth-century folklore.

In my Conclusion I consider some of the broader critical implications of my reevaluation of folklore as distinct and influential discourse on human, racial, and national origins.   I suggest the need for a more sustained analysis of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain's ethnological approaches to the national past, and argue that the interaction between folkloric and colonial discourses formed a key aspect in the development of ethnological approaches to the past.   I also point to the non-Aryan as a

critical conceptual category in this period's approach to an ethnologized vernacular history and call for a more exhaustive and detailed genealogy of the European aborigine as a means of enriching our understanding of the development of inquiry into human and social origins in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

CHAPTER ONE

SIR GEORGE LAURENCE GOMME AND RACIAL STRATIGRAPHY

In 1917 Robert Ranulph Marett delivered a Presidential Address to the Folklore Society calling for renewed attention to the founders of the science of culture study. Entitled "The Psychology of Culture-Contact," his mid war obituary and retrospective highlighted two prime movers in the genesis of the discourse within which the Folklore Society had emerged – Sir Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917) and Sir George Laurence Gomme (1853-1916) whom Marett eulogizes as a "master mind" of folklore.[1]   Indeed, remarks Marett, though Tylor "was perhaps more widely known to the world" as the "chief exponent of a method known as the psychological or evolutionary," Gomme's "sociological, ethnological, or historical" approach made him to folklore what Tylor was to anthropology.[2]   Marett goes on to reverently catalogue Gomme's many contributions to the science of folklore, noting that the FLS of 1917 was "proud to remember" that it was "under Gomme's Presidency [that] this Society was to the fore in promoting an ethnological survey of Britain,"[3]   that Gomme's argument for an Aryan institutional system was "a perfect specimen of a theory of culture-contact,"[4] and that in the 1890s, "in the course of several Presidential Addresses," Gomme "developed, for the lasting benefits of this Society and of our science in general, his conception of the fundamental importance of the study of institutions, or, as he otherwise phrases it, of social

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[1] Robert Ranulph Marett, "Presidential Address: The Psychology of Culture-Contact," *Folklore* 28 (1917): 13.

[2] Marett, "The Psychology of Culture-Contact," 13, 16.

[3] Marett, "The Psychology of Culture-Contact," 26.

[4] Marett, "The Psychology of Culture-Contact," 27.

organization."[5]   Indeed, Marett declares, Gomme "laboured to form our scientific methods, as did no other of our leaders with such conscious intent,"[6] and "just as we think naturally of Tylor in connexion with the evolutionary method, so the historical method ought to be for all time associated with the name of Gomme, who, while others groped, lit a lamp, and so lighted himself and the rest of us along a sure way."[7]   Marrett, who was a Reader in Anthropology at Oxford, founder of the Oxford Department of Sociology, and President of the Folklore Society, occupied a unique position at the center of the intersecting disciplines of culture study that had, by the early twentieth century, begun to differentiate themselves from one another and to establish the contemporary form of their discursive boundaries.   That his multidisciplinary retrospective identifies not only the well-known anthropologist Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, but also a folklorist and civil servant relatively forgotten by modern scholarship is provoking, and highlights the necessity for a major reevaluation of Gomme's intellectual role in late nineteenth-through early twentieth-century culture study.

1. The Archaeological Method

Throughout his work, Gomme argued for a geologically influenced study of racial history, one that read the narrative of human origin and development in the so-called strata of successive migration, invasion, and colonization in any given area.   He was certainly not alone in this approach to the remnants of human history; late nineteenth-

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[5] Marett, "The Psychology of Culture-Contact," 25.

[6] Marett, "The Psychology of Culture-Contact," 22.

[7] Marett, "The Psychology of Culture-Contact," 27.

century archaeological discourse, exemplified by General Pitt-Rivers' excavations at Cranborne Chase in the 1880s, had developed its approach to the past along similar lines, and the discursive structures of anthropology followed a similar approach.[8] All of these paradigms depended on an artifactual characterization of human ephemera; whether pottery or traditional custom, these materials were imagined as essentially static, preserved, and fragmented, awaiting the critical eye of the scientist beneath undisturbed layers of historical deposits.   Equally essential was the notion that these steadily inflowing deposits, whether composed of silt from a riverbed or of the ephemeral cultural materials of an invading race, would lock the lower strata in place, fossilizing the evidence in situ.   Thus throughout Gomme's work the fossilized artifacts of folklore are mined from the map of Britain, revealing discrete strata produced by the invasion of successive races, events that established the invader as the dominant conqueror and also effected the "fossilization" of the lower conquered.

What this meant for Britain was, according to Gomme, that the lowest folkloric layer in Britain preserved the cultural remnants of what Gomme called the aboriginal pre-Aryan race, and that subsequent strata contained the cultural materials of the Aryan invaders.   For Gomme, the primary division was between this so-called "pre-Aryan" indigenous stratum and the successive deposits of the various branches of the Aryan race. While other folklorists, ethnologists, and archaeologists made much of the distinction between Aryan varieties, most notably between Celtic and Teutonic, Gomme's work is

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[8] A. H. Pitt-Rivers (Col. Lane Fox), *Excavations in Cranborne Chase, near Rushmore, on the borders of Dorset and Wiltshire*, 4 vols. (London: Harrison and Sons, 1887-1898). See also Edward Burnett Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom* (London: J. Murray, 1871) and Tylor, *Anthropology: an introduction to the study of man and civilization* (London: Macmillan, 1881). For further reading on the development of archaeological method in the nineteenth century see Bruce Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) and Glyn Daniel, *150 Years of Archaeology* (London: Duckworth, 1975). On the history of anthropology see Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (London: Macmillan, 1987) and Alan Barnard, *History and Theory in Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

characterized by his insistence on the essential polarity of Aryan and non-Aryan, to the point that he insisted that no demonstrable difference could be discovered between the Aryan strata. For Gomme, the crux of his work lay in the emphasis on the Aryan and pre-Aryan binary; the whole of his research was, in a sense, dedicated to unravelling the relationship between these two racial-cultural units, and it is from their interrelationship that he traced the origin of Britain's modern institutional character.[9]

Gomme was born in London in 1853 and entered into a career in civil service in 1869, moving from work at a railway company to the board of works at Fulham; in 1873 he joined the Metropolitan Board of Works and remained in its employ through its absorption by the London County Council in 1889 until his retirement in 1914. Gomme's professional life within the Metropolitan Board of Works, later the London County Council, was marked with advancement and distinction; his formidable ability as an administrator and statistician led to his promotion to statistical officer in 1893 – "effectively the head of policy formulation and development"[10] – and until his retirement in 1914 he proved himself to be an influential city planner. It was his further promotion to the position of chief clerk to the LCC in 1900, however, that granted him the degree of administrative clout sufficient to his desire "to make London's administration a model for the nation," a mission he attacked with zest, according to his contemporaries.[11] Gomme saw "the civilisation of our future in our cities,"[12] and the preservation and archivization of the city's architectural and cultural heritage was, in his vision, as

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[9] Gomme's delineation of the relationship between the Aryan and non-Aryan is discussed in more detail at the end of this chapter and in Chapter Two.

[10] Robert Gomme, "Gomme, Sir (George) Laurence (1853–1916)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[11] R. Gomme, "Gomme."

[12] George Laurence Gomme, *LCC Staff Gazette* (March 1914).

essential to the success of Britain's civilization as effective transport and a practical planning policy. Most notably, Gomme spearheaded the LCC's assumption of responsibility for the Survey of London and served as the general editor of its publications. He was also involved in securing for the Council legal rights to purchase threatened historical buildings in 1898 and played a leading role in the Council's commemorative blue plaque scheme for historic buildings of London. Gomme is thus remembered particularly in the disciplinary histories of conservation and heritage management for his dedication to the preservation of London's architectural and cultural legacy.

Gomme's career as a folklorist and historian followed suit with his professional life in the London County Council, and the administrative philosophies that guided his ambitions for London were central to his work in the Folklore Society. As a founding member of the FLS he was uniquely placed to influence its discursive direction, and he was from its inception in 1878 a champion for folklore as a cohesive and collective project grounded in a vision of its potential to generate a complete statistical archive, both typological and geographical, that could lend unique insight into the history of human and social origins. His influence over the FLS' discursive direction was not, however, due to mere coincidence; as the folklorist and disciplinary historian Gillian Bennett has noted, it was Gomme who not only orchestrated the foundation of the Society and recruited high profile and respected members such as Andrew Lang, but also steered the FLS away from its antiquarian heritage and towards the anthropological aims that would characterize it for the next thirty years.[13] Both Glyn Daniel and Margaret Hodgen rank him among the most influential anthropological authors of the period;

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[13] Gillian Bennett, "Geologists and Folklorists: Cultural Evolution and 'The Science of Folklore,'" *Folklore* 105 (1994): 30.

Daniel calls him "the great exponent of survivals in folklore as a source of information about the past"[14] and Hodgen characterizes him as a "vigilant and intrepid . . . scholar," who spent his life in a "classificatory and bibliographical effort to correct the taxonomic short-comings of antiquarians and folklorists, and to prepare folklore for the use of the modern historian."[15]   Richard Dorson, to date the only historian of British folklorists, calls him "the organization man"[16] of the Folk-Lore Society, and Sonia Burstein, president of the Folklore Society from 1957-58, insists that "it was he who put his heart and soul and labour into bringing system and method into the study of folklore and making it a science."[17]   As R. R. Marett has noted, it was Gomme's vision of folklore's scientific potential that remained the dominant paradigm for the society until well after the end of the century, making the in-depth examination of Gomme's emphasis on collection, tabulation, and geographically delimited comparative analysis particularly important to the history of folklore as a discourse.[18]

Dorson also makes clear Gomme's central role in the collection and tabulation of historical materials; he notes that he "was extremely active with editorial and bibliographical projects"[19] serving as general editor for *The Gentleman's Magazine Library* from 1886 – 1905, producing an extraordinary compendium of material from the popular publication's 1731 – 1868 run.   Gomme was also responsible for the *Index of Archaeological Papers, 1665-1890,* which was published for the Congress of the

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[14] Glyn Daniel, *150 Years of Archaeology*, 184.

[15] Margaret Hodgen, "Survivals and Social Origins: The Pioneers," *The American Journal of Sociology* 38 (1933): 591.

[16] Richard Dorson, *The British Folklorists* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), 220.

[17] Sonia Rose Burstein, "George Laurence Gomme and the Science of Folklore," *Folklore* 68 (1957): 324.

[18] See G. Bennett, "Geologists and Folklorists," 120-123, Hodgen, "Survivals and Social Origins," 583-594 and Margaret Hodgen, *The Doctrine of Survivals* (London: Allenson, 1936), 109-110, 161-174.

[19] Dorson, *The British Folklorists*, 222.

Archaeological Societies in cooperation with the Society of Antiquaries in 1907, as well as annual indexes of archaeological papers between 1891 and 1908 and a *Bibliography of Folklore Publications in English*.[20]   Along with these projects, he also served successively as Honorary Secretary, Director, and President of the FLS (1891 – 1894) while simultaneously editing the society's publications[21] and contributing over fifty articles to these and other scholarly journals.[22]   Significantly, it was Gomme who was approached by the Council of the Folk-Lore Society to compose an official practical manual for folklore collectors, which he produced in 1890 as the *Handbook of Folklore*.

Gomme's emphasis on the need for a complete and fully tabulated folklore record was certainly not unique. The demand for the systematization of archives in the mid to late nineteenth century is well documented, as is its dissemination into the philosophical practices of contemporary sciences, [23] and as the chief statistical officer of the London County Council, Gomme was well aware of both the practical and the symbolic importance of coherent records. In his 1891 address to the FLS, he described precisely what he meant by the project of systematization, and how it was to be enacted:

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[20] George Laurence Gomme, "Bibliography of Folk-Lore Publications in English (A-B)," *The Folk-Lore Record* 5 (1882): 55-80; Gomme, "Bibliography of Folk-Lore Publications in English (Part II)," *The Folk-Lore Journal* 1 (1883): 77-84; Gomme, "Bibliography of Folklore Publications in English (Part II) (Continued)," *The Folklore Journal* 1 (1883):344-350; Gomme, "Bibliography of Folk-Lore Publications in English (Part II) (Continued)," *The Folk-Lore Journal* 1 (1883): 387-394; and Gomme, "Bibliography of Folk-Lore Publications in English [Continued]," *The Folk-Lore Journal* 2 (1884): 197-206.

[21] Gillian Bennett suggests he also founded the short-lived *Archaeological Review* (1888-1889), which was later amalgamated with *Folk-Lore*. See Bennett, "Geologists and Folklorists," 32.

[22] For a full bibliography see Mrs. (Alice) Gomme, "Bibliography of the Writings of the Late Sir Laurence Gomme on Anthropology and Folklore," *Folklore* 27 (1916): 408-413; also Edward Brabrook, "Bibliography of the Writings of the Late Sir Laurence Gomme on Anthropology and Folklore," *Folklore* 28 (1917): 106, which gives an additional citation.

[23] See Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London: Verso, 1993) Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1995), and T. Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory: Evolution, Museums, Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 2004). The Public Records Office Act of 1838 and subsequent moves to systematise its legendarily flawed system is a particularly good example. See Philippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England 1838-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 101-124.

We want to get at the statistics of folk-lore. We want definite plans laid down upon every branch of work which needs to be done, the order in which it is required, the form which it is to take . . . I am in earnest in my contention that it is essential to accomplish a certain amount of dry work before we can get folk-lore fully recognised, as it should be, in the historical sciences. Folk-lore has suffered by being studied in piecemeal . . . Only the Society, in its collective capacity, can prepare for the student what he requires all along the line; the Society should always be scientific, let its individual members work as they may."[24]

His exhortations for the realization of a statistical ideal within the FLS were couched within a larger goal: to establish "once and for all" the scientific credentials of folklore. This vision of the complete archive formed a significant and even foundational facet of Gomme's characterization of folklore as a science; throughout his work as a folklorist he remained insistent that the compilation of an accurate and exhaustive database was the absolute first step to be taken before any truly scientific research could be conducted. But Gomme's invocation of the archive was not only a gesture to the larger development of systematization in governmental records, it was also a conscious appropriation of methodological revolutions taking place in both archaeology and anthropology. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the call for detailed and coherent investigative formats became increasingly more audible, along with the insistence that scientific investigation should take care to establish at the outset the limits of its inquiry, in particular the boundaries and nature of the unit under examination.

But folklore was not purely a statistical affair, and Gomme's desire to make the study of its archive scientific involved a shift from the perceived "piecemeal" antiquarianism of the eighteenth century and toward the rigorous methodologies of the new human sciences. Gomme was a key player in this project and was primarily responsible for repositioning the Society firmly within the discursive boundaries of the

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[24] Gomme, "Annual Address to the Folk-Lore Society," *Folklore* 2 (1891): 27-28.

emergent sciences of culture and human development, which it will be useful to sketch here. In the field of culture research, Sir Edward Burnett Tylor was a leading advocate for a new mode of inquiry into human society, one founded on the importance of a vision of human society as a cohesive and multifaceted unit of investigation. Tylor famously declared in the first paragraph of *Primitive Culture* (1871) that the definition of a "Culture, or Civilization," in its "wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."[25] For Tylor, the "first step in the study of civilization was to dissect it into details, and to classify these in their proper groups,"[26] a project that was best understood by its deep kinship to the natural sciences:

> The ethnographer's business is to classify such details with a view to making out their distribution in geography and history, and the relations that exist among them. What this task is like, may be almost perfectly illustrated by comparing these details of culture with the species of plans and animals as studied by the naturalist. To the ethnographer the bow and arrow is a species, the habit of flattening children's sculls is a species . . . The geographical distribution of these things, and their transmission from region to region, have to be studied as the naturalist studies the geography of his botanical and zoological species.[27]

Thus the various productions of culture – morals, law, custom – were not only positioned in interrelationships within the "complex whole" of a given culture system, but also in a universal whole, wherein atemporal and geographically unlimited typologies contained and defined all the manifestations of all culture systems throughout time. All cultures and their productions were therefore not only cross-comparable, but ranked along a linear and evolutionary progression. It is for this reason that vocabulary designating the stages of mankind's development over time became so essential to discourses on human origins;

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[25] Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 1:1.

[26] Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 1:7.

[27] Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 1:8.

terms such as savage, barbarian, civilized, even totemism and kinship described definite and universal stages through which all of humankind had passed or was currently passing.

Just as Tylor occupies a central position in anthropology's disciplinary history, so Col. Augustus Henry Lane Fox, later General Pitt-Rivers (1827-1900), has remained a vital figure in the disciplinary genealogy of archaeology precisely because he was among the first to stress "the importance of the ordinary artifact, and the necessity of collecting complete collections of the material culture of contemporary or prehistoric societies."[28] Philippa Levine notes his extraordinary contribution to the recognition of archaeology as a science, calling him "perhaps the most important pioneer of the techniques which were to accompany archaeology into academic respectability."[29] In terms of divorcing the "science of prehistory" from the antiquarian inheritance that geared excavation toward the recovery of primarily aesthetic objects,[30] Pitt-Rivers was among the first to insist that "tedious as it may appear . . . to dwell on the discovery of odds and ends, that have no doubt, been thrown away by their owners as rubbish . . . it is by the study of such trivial details, that Archaeology is mainly dependent for determining the dates of earthworks."[31] Indeed, Glyn Daniel identifies him as one of the "leaders of the revolution in archaeology which led it away from the contemplation of *art* objects to the contemplation of *all* objects," thus effecting a "transformation of the archaeological outlook from one of curiosity to one which was frankly sociological."[32]   Pitt-Rivers stressed the critical

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[28] Daniel, *150 Years of Archaeology*, 171.

[29] Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional*, 34.

[30] Daniel, *150 Years of Archaeology*, see especially chapters 3-5, 7.

[31] A. H. Pitt-Rivers (Col. Lane Fox), *Excavations in Cranborne Chase*, 3:9.

[32] Daniel, *150 Years of Archaeology*, 171.

importance of comprehensive and complete excavation, in which close attention to the stratigraphical location of all artifacts, in the form of detailed plans, was of paramount importance.[33]

Gomme's program for the practice of folklore followed suit with Pitt-Rivers' stratigraphical approach to archaeology; he was certain that the adoption of a strict archaeological paradigm would provide the much-needed scientific framework from which folkloric analysis could begin in earnest. In his 1891 address to the Society, he lamented that, unfortunately, "we have been eclectic rather than syncretic . . . [and] have not often enough insisted upon the absolute necessity of precision in the arrangement of our material when collected, and we have not insisted upon correct and complete collection."[34] For folklore to provide successful and scientifically relevant analysis, it was of crucial importance that it dissociate itself from piecemeal antiquarianism, and instead approach its archive as the complex whole of culture, noting the location of each element in the given excavation:

> Not only is it necessary to ascertain the proper position of each item of folklore in the culture area in which it is found, but it is also necessary to ascertain its scientific relationship to other items found in the same area.[35]

> Just as in excavations of prehistoric tumuli, or in geologic formations, it is necessary to notice the strata and exact position of the various objects as they come to light, so it is necessary in every excavation into human society to note the strata and exact position of the various phenomena as they are brought into prominence.[36]

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[33] See Daniel, *150 Years of Archaeology*, 172-173 and A. H. Pitt-Rivers (Col. Lane Fox), "The Principles of Classification," *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 4 (1875): 293-308 and Pitt-Rivers, "On the Evolution of Culture," *The Royal Institution* (1875): 496-520.

[34] Gomme, "Annual Address to the Folk-Lore Society," 4.

[35] George Laurence Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science* (London: Methuen, 1908), xiii.

[36] George Laurence Gomme, "Recent Research on Institutions," *Folklore* 2 (1891): 487.

For Tylor and Pitt-Rivers, as well as for Gomme and the emerging disciplines of archaeology, anthropology, and folklore, a rigorous adherence to the dictum of complete stratigraphical analysis was of critical importance. The precise location of each artifact, and the interrelationship of the entire matrix of artifacts was crucial to the final reconstruction of the idealized final project: the pure, indivisible, organic whole. Whether the archive was conceived of in terms of a geographical location or a taxonomical position within a progressive sequence of types, however, remained flexible and dependent on the mode and desired outcome of investigation. Both means of examination were popular, and, at base, not essentially contradictory. In an 1875 discussion of his method of classification, Pitt-Rivers made a fascinating argument for the necessity of *both* forms of organization to the production of a complete record:

> This is the distinctive difference between my collection and most others which I have seen, in which the primary arrangement has been geographical, that is to say, all the arts of the same tribe or nation have been placed together in one class, and within this, there may perhaps have been in some cases a sub-class for special arts or special forms. Both systems have their advantages and disadvantages. By a geographical or racial arrangement the general culture of each distinct race is made the prominent feature of the collection, and it is therefore more strictly *ethnological*, whereas in the arrangement which I have adopted, the development of specific ideas and their transmission from one people to another, or from one locality to another, is made more apparent, and it is therefore of greater *sociological* value. Different points of interest are brought to light by each, and, in my judgment, a great National Anthropological Collection, should we ever possess such a desideratum, can never be considered complete until it embraces two series, arranged upon these two distinct systems.[37]

In this remarkable call for parallel exhibitions of exactly the same archive, it is easy to identify the intersection of parallel facets of discourse – both hierarchical taxonomy and stratigraphical mapping were approaches geared toward the same project, and often

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[37] A. H. Lane Fox (General Pitt-Rivers), "On the Principles of Classification Adopted in the Arrangement of His Anthropological Collection, Now Exhibited in the Bethnal Green Museum," *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 4 (1875): 295.

involved the same materials. The deep discursive overlap of these approaches should not, however, be mistaken for interchangeability, and certainly in the Folklore Society the more subtle distinctions of methodological philosophy inherent in these variations produced increasing levels of debate over the direction the society was to take in its early decades.[38] However, it is important to note that in 1875, Pitt-Rivers was optimistic about the success of this idealized double museum; in much the same way, the related fields of anthropology, archaeology, philology, and folklore understood themselves to be complementary practices, all piercing the same unexplored fog from different directions by means of their variously interrelated methodologies. Typological sequences of a specimen's progressive development through time and descriptive accounts of a particular geographic and/or ethnological stratum were both involved in the reconstruction of a complete record, whether conceived across spatial or temporal lines.

Determining the size and shape of the field of investigation and excavating it toward the goal of a completed archive was however by no means the final project, but rather the essential first step, in which the typological purity of the selected specimens and/or the scientific validity of the delimited area of investigation were confirmed. As Gomme remarked in 1891, upon "having got all folk-tales grouped together, either in story-types or in geographical order, the next step is analysis."[39] The form of analysis necessarily depended on the methodological assumptions by which the archive had been generated, and the structure that presentations of a given project's conclusions took reflected these discursive perspectives. For materials-based examinations of human and social origins such as archaeology and physical anthropology, the museum exhibition

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[38] An issue that will be considered more fully in the following chapters.

[39] Gomme, "Annual Address to the Folk-Lore Society," 13.

was the dominant format, while folklore and, to a lesser extent, anthropology, were necessarily more reliant on text to perform the function of the exhibition. It was for precisely this reason that Gomme, in the introduction to his seminal *Ethnology in Folklore*, directed vehement criticisms toward amateur folklore collections, or texts which he argued "contain nothing but collected examples of tales, customs, and superstitions."[40] The flaw of these publications was not, for Gomme, a problem of authenticity; at no point does he suggest they do not contain "real" examples of folklore. Rather, his issue was with their generic form: unlike the "true" scientific text, they are "arranged for no purpose but that of putting the facts pleasantly before the reader."[41] That is, while they are collections of *facts*, their organizational raison d'être is unfocused, amateur enjoyment, not instruction. In a similar vein, Tylor's *Primitive Culture* makes clear at the outset the distinction between the amateur collection and proper anthropology:

> At all times historians, so far as they have aimed at being more than mere chroniclers, have done their best to show not merely succession, but connexion, among the events upon their record. Moreover, they have striven to elicit general principles of human action, and by these to explain particular events, stating expressly or taking tacitly for granted the existence of a philosophy of history. Should anyone deny the possibility of thus establishing historical laws, the answer is ready with which Boswell in such a case turned on Johnson: 'Then, sir, you would reduce all history to no better than an almanack.'"[42]

Tony Bennett, in his examination of the history of museums, has noted a similar preoccupation amongst museum curators and exhibitors in the later decades of the nineteenth century, for whom the concern was likewise to avoid their own perceived antiquarian heritage, in their case the eighteenth-century cabinet of curiosities which, as

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[40] George Laurence Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore* (London: Trübner, 1892), v.

[41] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore,* v.

[42] Tylor, *Primitive Culture* 1:5.

Krzysztof Pomian notes, "spontaneously fixed on all that was most rare and most inaccessible, most astonishing and most enigmatic," acting as an organ for surprise and pleasure, rather than instruction. [43] By contrast, the driving methodological impetus of museum organization and especially of ethnographic collections in the later half of the century was geared toward the informative visualization of the overarching "reality" of evolutionary principles. Likewise for Gomme, the amateur folklore anthology, a relic of the antiquarian chronicle, did nothing more than passively enclose a given set of data. The true folklore text, by contrast, organizes and narrates its collection, transforming each static, isolated fact into dynamic evidence within an interrelated and overarching scheme. Just as evolutionary exhibits depended on the relocation "into proper order"[44] of each separate artifact in order to reveal the invisible laws of progress,[45] the folklore collection, by relocating the "true fact . . . discoverable in each traditional item"[46] to its appropriate place in the narrative analysis is able to act as a textual exhibition of its author's interpretation.

It is important to note, of course, that for folklorists, the concept of the excavation and the completed archive was heavily metaphoric. Except insofar as the geographical location of specific traditional materials could be recorded, discussions of folkloric "excavations" served the discursive function of conceptualizing the ephemeral field of traditional material. Due to the nature of its subject, folklore was, more so than its complementary disciplines, constantly beset with the problematic need to isolate individual types and artifacts within unedited and often pronouncedly amateur

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[43] Krzysztof Pomian, *Collectors and Curiosities* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 77-78. See also T. Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 1-41.

[44] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, v.

[45] See T. Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum.*

[46] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science,* 12-13.

collections. A single recorded example of a folk-tale might be classed as a single artifact, but it could also be considered an amalgamation of two distinct traditions, one ancient, one modern, and would thus need to be properly dissected. The importance of purity of type and accuracy of sequence was paramount for folklore, a fact especially visible in the importance folklorists like Gomme placed on the process of archivization. The location of each folklore artifact's position within the two dominant theoretical matrices was of critical importance for its significance as an historic and cultural relic, whether it was recorded in the evolutionist and largely diachronic progression of type or in the synchronic and stratigraphical culture-matrix, or both.

While, like Pitt-Rivers, Gomme argued for the equal and complementary value of both of these organizational mechanisms, his own mode of inquiry certainly favored the geographically delimited investigation, what in his more substantial works might be characterized as the exhaustive classification and analysis of material delimited by geographical boundaries. The body of a given society's culture, he argued, "must be treated as an organism and not as a bundle of separable items . . . That which is anthropological evidence is the *indivisible organism*" (emphasis added).[47] Throughout his work Gomme remained insistent that a primary source of folklore's significance rested in its ability to effect the scientific "consideration of whole human groups, of the whole corpus of social, religious, and economical elements residing in each human group," and while he conceded that the arrangement of artifacts in typological sequence was certainly a valuable exercise, his own work dealt almost exclusively with the history of individual human groups in Britain. For Gomme, the temporal sequence of materials was of secondary importance, significant only insofar as it provided a rough template

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[47] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science,* 234.

within which racial groupings could be identified. In his vision the method of folklore, in order to "be of service to the historian of our country and people," must take "each floating fragment of ancient custom and belief," identify it as "ancient," and ultimately return it to "the system from which it has been torn away." [48] The eventual result of this method, according to Gomme, would be to successfully "restore an ancient system of culture, even if the restoration be only a mosaic and a shattered mosaic;" ultimately, Gomme's ideal for the project of folklore was "to bring into evidence the pre- historic race of people to which it [folklore] belongs."[49]

Gomme produced his first major text, *Primitive Folk Moots*, in 1880;[50] in it, he traced evidence of an ancient form of open air assembly in Britain from legal records, folklore, and philological traces. *Primitive Folk Moots* received high praise in a number of publications; *The Manchester Times* hailed the volume as "a work which is likely to prove valuable to the archaeologist and interesting to the general reader,"[51] while *The Graphic* gave a detailed account of Gomme's impressive scholarship, celebrating that he "has gathered not only the evidence of early records but the cases of survival . . . and also other traditional and philological evidence."[52] Indeed, the author of the latter review went so far as to argue that Gomme's text had gone beyond the research into early institutions of seminal scholars such as Sir Henry Maine, who had "laid the foundation of this knowledge."[53] Going further, the reviewer praises Gomme's thoroughly researched

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[48] Gomme, "Ethnological Data in Folklore: A Criticism of the President's Address in January, 1898," *Folklore* 10 (June 1899): 134.

[49] Gomme, "Ethnological Data in Folklore," 134.

[50] George Laurence Gomme, *Primitive Folk-Moots; or, Open-air Assemblies in Britain* (London: S. Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1880).

[51] "Art and Literary Gossip," *Manchester Times*, 24 January, 1880.

[52] "The Reader," *The Graphic*, 6 November, 1880, Issue 571.

[53] Henry Maine, *Ancient Law* (London: J. Murray, 1861).

and valuable contribution: "the subject is of immense importance to those who care to know something about the old village communities of England, as well as all other Aryan lands [and] Mr. Gomme has given us a most fascinating book, as well as a valuable contribution to a very important branch of history."[54]

Gomme's later publications met with similar receptions; in 1883 a reviewer for *The Graphic* remarks, "We had such a pleasing remembrance of Mr. Gomme's work on Folk Motes [sic] that we were prepared for a treat in his volume on "Folklore Relics of Early Village Life;" nor were we disappointed."[55] Gomme's particular insistence on the visible presence of a pre-Aryan stratum within the boundaries of Aryan [i.e. English] civilization and, significantly, within Aryan political, legal, and social institutions caused hesitation, however, and a reviewer of Gomme's *The Village Community* (1890)[56] in *Science* put it very clearly in a special section written "to present the author's theory as to the origin of British village communities:"[57]

> [Gomme] rejects the view most commonly held, that they are exclusively
> Aryan institutions, and particularly repudiates the theory of their Roman
> origin, and endeavours to show that they date back to prehistoric times,
> when the British Isles were peopled by Iberians. He admits, of course, that
> there is no direct evidence to support this view, but attempts to prove it by
> reference to India, where village communities are known to have existed
> before the advent of the Aryan conquerors . . . The evidence he adduces in
> support of this view is by no means sufficient to make it an established
> theory, though it does show that such an origin of the British communities
> is possible. [58]

[54] "The Reader," *The Graphic*, 6 November, 1880, Issue 571.

[55] "The Reader," *The Graphic*, 4 August, 1883, Issue 714.

[56] George Laurence Gomme, *The Village Community. With Special Reference to the Origin and Form of its Survivals in Britain* (London: W. Scott, 1890).

[57] Unsigned Review of *The Village Community* by George Laurence Gomme, *Science* 15 (1890): 347.

[58] Unsigned Review of *The Village Community*, 347.

While this reviewer remains ambivalent about Gomme's argument for the non-Aryan source of British social institutions, he admits that "the subject, as everyone who has even a slight knowledge of it knows, is a difficult one," and that any kind of "general agreement" on the subject will require further research.[59] Of one thing the reviewer is certain, however, and that is the value of Gomme's work toward that end: as it is "necessary to consider the question in all its aspects," all "students of the subject will take a good deal of interest in reading Mr. Gomme's work."[60]

Gomme's non-Aryan thesis provoked hesitation from reviewers, but was ultimately left to be proven by future scientific endeavour. For Gomme's scholarly contemporaries, in particular Alfred Nutt, it was specifically the concept of a visible and modern folkloric presence, as opposed to the material archaeological evidence, of a non-Aryan race in Britain that sparked controversy. In his 1898 Presidential Address to the Society Alfred Nutt responded directly to Gomme's pre-Aryan theory, maintaining that while "it is very probable that the Celts found non-Aryan-speaking peoples in these islands," no one could be "absolutely certain"; in any event, he asks, "how are we to distinguish them? Is it really likely that the [pre-Aryan cultural] philosophy differed so markedly from that of the Celts that we can detect traces of it after 2,500 years?"[61] Significantly, while the reviewer in *The Village Community* identified the theory of an exclusively Aryan basis for British social origins as dominant in 1890, discourses had shifted such that by 1910 Alfred Nutt wrote with evident distaste in his critical edition of Matthew Arnold's *Celtic Literature* that "it is now claimed that the terms Celt and Teuton

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[59] Unsigned Review of *The Village Community*, 347.

[60] Unsigned Review of *The Village Community*, 347.

[61] Alfred Nutt, "Presidential Address: The Discrimination of Racial Elements in the Folklore of the British Isles," *Folk-Lore* 9 (1898): 51. See also Richard Dorson, "Nutt Versus Gomme," in *Peasant Customs and Savage Myths*, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1968), in which Gomme and Nutt's debate is organised chronologically.

as applied to inhabitants of a particular area comprise a number of persons belonging to stocks older than either Celt or Teuton," and both Celt and Teuton are now held to include "a larger amount of older pre-Aryan blood"[62] – an indication perhaps of the influence which Gomme's work as folklorist and ethnographic historian had exerted on the field of culture study.

Further, while Gomme's lifelong insistence that a non-Aryan indigenous stratum formed a critical element in the ethnographic history of England and was furthermore still visible in the customs and thought of the contemporary peasantry was contested by some, his claim was certainly not as unique as scholars such as Richard Dorson have suggested. In fact, the theory of an indigenous and non-Aryan race within Europe had been brought to the attention of the British scholarly field as early as 1846, when Anders Retzius, the prominent Swedish anatomist and creator of the cephalic index, gave a paper to the British Association in which he argued that the " original British population, like that of Europe generally, had not been Celtic long-heads, but a broad-headed 'Turanic' race whose remnants were to be found among the Basques and Lapps."[63]   Soon after, William J. Thoms translated Danish archaeologist Jens Jacob Worsaae's seminal *Danmarks Oldtid Oplyst ved Odsager Gravhöie (The Primeval Antiquities of Denmark),* a text Glyn Daniel identifies as among "the most important archaeological works produced in the first half of the nineteenth century."[64] The publication of this translation, which made Worsaae's conclusions available to the English-speaking world, also introduced Worsaae's theory that the archaeological remains of a "Stone Age folk,"

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[62] Matthew Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, ed. Alfred Nutt (London: David Nutt, 1910), 15.

[63] Anders Retzius, "On the Ethnographic Distribution of Round and Elongated Crania," *Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* 16 (1846): 116. See also George Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, 65.

[64] Daniel, *150 Years of Archaeology,* 45-46.

which he "distinguished as the first inhabitants of Denmark," were not to be identified with any named modern race, but rather with "an older and still unknown race who in the course of time have disappeared before the immigration of more powerful nations."[65]

The Orientalist Robert Caldwell was probably the first to employ the actual term "pre-Aryan" in his 1856 grammar of Indian languages; in the course of his analysis of the indigenous languages of India, he identified a discordant element, and claimed to have isolated an ancient, non-Aryan linguistic substratum that stretched beyond southern India and into northern Europe. "How remarkable," Caldwell exclaims, "that the closest and most distinct affinities to the speech of the Dravidians of intertropical India should be those that are discovered in the languages of the Finns and Lapps of northern Europe;" and declares the "Pre-Aryan inhabitants of the Dekhan" to be "proved by their language alone, in the silence of history . . . to be allied to the tribes that appear to have overspread Europe before the arrival of the Goths and the Pelasgi, and even before the arrival of the Celts!"[66] In the later decades of the nineteenth century, Gomme also identified several of his contemporaries who argued for the presence of a non-Aryan race in the history of Europe; in *Folklore as an Historical Science* he lists John Beddoe,[67] William Boyd Dawkins,[68] and Sir John Rhŷs,[69] among others, as proponents of the non-Aryan theory of British indigeneity, and while the theory of a purely Aryan origin for European nations

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[65] Jens Jacob Worsaae, *The Primeval Antiquities of Denmark*, trans. William John Thoms (London: J. H. Parker, 1849), 133. See also Daniel*, 150 Years of Archaeology,* 49-50.

[66] Robert Caldwell, *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South-Indian family of Languages* (London: Harrison, 1856), 46. Cited in Edward Webb, "Evidences of the Scythian Affinities of the Dravidian Languages, Condensed and Arranged from Rev. R. Caldwell's Comparative Dravidian Grammar," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 7 (1860-1863): 296.

[67] John Beddoe, *The Races of Britain* (London: Trübner, 1885), ii and Beddoe, "Colour and Race," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* 35 (1905): 236-7.

[68] William Boyd Dawkins, *Early Man in Britain* (London: Macmillan, 1880), xii.

[69] John Rhŷs, *Celtic Britain* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1882), 271; Rhŷs, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by Celtic Heathendom* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1888), and Rhŷs and David Brynmor-Jones, *The Welsh People* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1900), i.

continued to predominate, arguments for a non-Aryan substratum gained support throughout the nineteenth century despite the objections of some scholars. That the notion of a non-Aryan cultural presence in European history met with objections from Worsaae through to Gomme does not preclude it from having been a visible theoretical presence within the scientific field, and as will be shown in Chapter Two, this version of Europe's racial past was in fact an increasingly influential perspective. Indeed, Gomme himself made the shrewd observation in *Folklore as an Historical Science* (1908) that the ambivalent reception of both his and other texts that "tell of a condition of savagery" within the political boundaries of Europe was perhaps because they "offend against the national pride," rather than because their evidence was untenable.[70]

2. *Discovering the Pre-Aryan*

It has been shown that Gomme was identified by many later scholars of human culture as the great proponent of the "historical," or the "anthropological" method of folklore, a form of enquiry often put in contrast, even conflict, with the "evolutionary" method, and it will be useful at this stage to consider the implications of this distinction. In histories of late nineteenth-century human sciences, particularly those concerned with folklore and anthropology, a plethora of terminology for the various facets of discourse abounds; while R. R. Marett identifies Gomme as an historical folklorist, by contrast with scholars of literary evolutionism such as Joseph Jacobs and Andrew Lang, Gillian Bennett calls him an historical evolutionist, as distinct from the psychological

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[70] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science* , iii.

evolutionistism of Edwin Sidney Hartland, Lang, and Jacobs.[71] And according to Francis

A. de Caro, Gomme's interest in the localized study of folkloric material should not be

considered in this context at all, and in fact "Gomme is most correctly viewed, not as a

folklorist with an interest in history, but as an early ethnohistorian."[72] Marett, Bennett,

and to a lesser extent de Caro are, in fact, identifying the same discursive frictions under

different guises; what Marett calls the historical school of folklore shares the disciplinary

philosophies of Bennett's historical evolutionism and even de Caro's more radical re-

classification of proto-ethnohistorian.

The most critical element of all three of these diagnoses, and indeed of late

nineteenth-century culture sciences in general, is their emphasis on a deep discursive

distinction between scholars concerned with the universal (the evolutionary) and with the

local (the historical, or anthropological). What Marett and others have identified

variously as the evolutionist, or literary evolutionist perspective, is that form of inquiry

most commonly associated with Sir Edward Burnett Tylor and Andrew Lang, both of

whose anthropological publications were primarily concerned with establishing the so-

called "psychic unity of mankind."[73] The universalist assumptions inherent in this

approach disseminated into the various disciplines concerned with human and social

origins as a uniform and universal framework within which all evidence, regardless of

temporal or geographical position, might be categorized and ranked. The assumption of

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[71] Marett, "The Psychology of Culture-Contact," 32; G. Bennett, "Geologists and Folklorists," 31-35.

[72] Francis A de Caro, "G. L. Gomme: The Victorian Folklorist as Ethnohistorian," *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 19 (1982): 1.

[73] See Edward Burnett Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, Tylor, *Anthropology: an introduction to the study of man and civilization*, Andrew Lang, *Custom and Myth* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1884), and Lang, *Myth, Ritual and Religion* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1887). While Tylor's ultimate concern was to establish the so-called psychic unity of mankind, linking him most definitively with the psychological and universal approach, his comparative analysis of the materials of culture also links him with the development of the historical paradigm of inquiry.

the essential unity of mankind meant that not only could comparisons be made across time and space but also, crucially, that all human development occurred along a universal line and could therefore be classified using a single set of terminologies. For scholars working within this paradigm, *all* human societies could be ranked along a single linear progression by the same vocabulary – as variously savage, civilized, totemic, or kinship-based.

If this form of inquiry is to be characterized as the evolutionist perspective, the historical or anthropological paradigm associated with Gomme was grounded in an emphasis on the limits of universalism. In Marett's words, "Gomme's special merit . . . consists in having formulated the principle of method that [social] institutions need, first and foremost, to be studied in their local context."[74] While Gomme did not question the validity of an evolutionist focus, one that drew on a typological framework for the sequencing of the materials of human culture by type, his own research demanded a moderation of the universalism that characterized the more classically Tylorian approach, one that limited the range of cross-comparison to geographically or ethnologically bounded sets of material. Thus in setting out his methods of investigation in *Folklore as an Historical Science*, Gomme expresses his frustration with the universalist terminology in use for the delineation of human groups; indeed, "only under protest," he says, has he "admitted the terms used by the authorities."[75] "One of our greatest difficulties," he declares, "is the indiscriminate use of kinship terms by our descriptive authorities."[76] Gomme objected in particular to what he considered to be both the gross misapplication and overuse of "tribe," which lost its scientific specificity by being "used to denote

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[74] Marett, "The Psychology of Culture-Contact," 26.

[75] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science,* 234.

[76] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 235.

peoples in all degrees of social evolution," causing it to "merely stand for the group which is known by a given name, or roams over a given district."[77] For Gomme, however, the dangerous misuse of "tribe" was nothing compared to the harm caused by the overuse of "family;" as he says, "the universal application of this term . . . has lead to false conclusions as to the evolution of the family, conclusions which seem to entangle even the best authorities in a mass of contradictions."[78]

In arguing for a decisive modification of the universalist paradigm, in which all human groups could be ranked according to the evolution of society from the family, Gomme writes against the broadly evolutionist approach associated with Tylor, in which all societies and all times are infinitely cross-comparable. Of course, the universalist paradigm for the study of human institutions, in which civilization was imagined as developing in gradual succession along definite and universal stages, was certainly not Tylor's invention; not only was this vision of history and historical change typical of the so-called Whig historical narrative, but mid-century research into British and European history often proceeded along broadly comparative and evolutionist lines.[79] Sir Henry Maine's seminal *Ancient Law: Its Connection with the Early History of Society and its Relation to Modern Ideas* (1861)[80] was among the many texts to employ a comparative approach for the reconstruction of the progressive stages of the history of civilization, an approach now often associated definitively with Tylor but prosecuted before *Primitive Culture* had formalized a paradigm for the anthropological invocation of those methods.

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[77] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science,* 234.

[78] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science,* 235.

[79] For further reading on Whig historiography see Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), John Burrow, *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983) and Christopher Parker, *The English Historical Tradition Since 1850* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1990).

[80] Henry Maine, *Ancient Law: Its Connection with the Early HIstory of Society and its Relation to Modern Ideas* (London: J. Murray, 1861).

Indeed, when Gomme identifies those scholars guilty of the misuse of terminology, he names Maine, along with "Grote, Niebuhr, Mommsen, Thirlwall . . . and others" as the target of his criticism, not Tylor, whose approach he demurs to attack beyond offering the suggestion that moderation was needed.[81]   Certainly the publication of Maine's text is cited by many scholars, including Alan Barnard, as an event which "led ultimately to a host of vehement debates about the prehistory of the family,"[82] and clearly Gomme, in 1908, still considered Maine to be the primary instigator of the misuse of terminology.

Crucially, Gomme never disputed that in certain circumstances the terms "tribe" and "family" could and should be used, and he emphasized the appropriateness of these terms when used to describe "the Semitic and the Aryan-speaking peoples," wherein "both the family and the tribe have assumed a definite place in the polity."[83]   However, "with savage society, the terms family and tribe do not connote the same institution" as their rough equivalents in "higher forms of civilisation;"[84] there may be "something roughly corresponding to these groupings in both systems, but," he makes clear, "they do not actually equate."[85]   Gomme goes on to state definitively that he "cannot think of a family group in savagery with father, mother, sons, and daughters, all delightfully known to each other, in terms which also belong to the civilised family."[86]   In short, he takes as an absolute that "the term 'tribe' is not applicable to savage society."[87]

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[81] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 237.

[82] Alan Barnard, *History and Theory in Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 30. See also Adam Kuper, *The Invention of Primitive Society* (London: Routledge, 1988), for a more detailed account of the debate over the primacy of patrilineality and primitive forms of kinship.

[83] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science,* 236.

[84] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science,* 236.

[85] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science,* 236.

[86] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science,* 235.

[87] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science,* 234.

In the same vein, Gomme's work involves a substantial revision of the concept of totemism, a structure for social organization that formed one of the major stages in human social development according to the evolutionist paradigm. Totemism, as a subject of inquiry for nineteenth-century anthropologists, ethnologists, and sociologists, generated an almost unparalleled level of scientific enquiry, primarily because it was, as a "stage" of society, commonly imagined to embody the most basic, the most primitive form of human institutional structure. The conceptual complexity of discourse on totemism demands much more detailed examination, but several definitions from those prominent in the field will give some idea of its ever-shifting meaning: Sir John Lubbock described totemism as "Nature-worship . . . in which natural objects are worshipped,"[88] Andrew Lang called it "the name for the custom by which a stock (scattered through many local tribes) claims descent from some plant, animal, or other natural object,"[89] and according to James Frazer, totemism was "nothing more or less than an early theory of conception, which presented itself to savage man at a time when he was still ignorant of the true cause of the propagation of the species."[90] While Gomme's contemporaries were largely agreed upon totemism's connotations of absolute primitivism and its importance as potentially the original state of human social, religious, even sexual organization, Gomme instead directly challenged the notion that a system of social organization based on anything other than blood descent could be included in the line of evolutionary progression leading up to modern (Western) civilization. Rather, Gomme characterized the totemic, or "non-tribal", as "essentially a system of social grouping, whose chief characteristic is that it is kinless – that is to say, the tie of totemism is not the tie of blood

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[88] John Lubbock, *The Origin of Civilisation* (London: Longmans, 1875), 5:199.

[89] Andrew Lang, "The Early History of the Family," *Contemporary Review* (1883): 414.

[90] James Frazer, "The Beginnings of Religion and Totemism among the Australian Aborigines," *Fortnightly Review* 78 (1905): 455.

kinship, but the artificially created association with natural objects or animals."[91] Unlike tribal society, wherein relations between members were reckoned and regulated by familial relationships and blood descent, in the non-tribal society it is "the association with animal, plant, or other natural object"[92] that forms the basis of totemic social structure, not human kinship or genealogy. Essentially, Gomme excised the totemic "stage" from its position in the line of social evolution, arguing that because totemism was, "in origin and principle, a kinless, not a kinship system," it could not be grouped typologically with later (and higher) social forms.[93] The difference between totemism and all later stages was, according to Gomme, one of kind and not of degree, a fact which necessarily negated the evolutionist argument that all human society has progressed from an original, totemic state.

The critical point Gomme drew from this conclusion was his assertion that "the great European civilisations are not totemic, nor are they to be seen passing from totemism."[94] This theory was, for Gomme, an absolute, and he highlighted the work of several scholars, Andrew Lang in particular, in which he saw the "danger" inherent in the "futile" and misguided "attempt to discover totemism in impossible places in civilisation," or even "to apply the principles of totemic society to the elucidation of societies that have long passed the stage of totemism." [95] While Gomme gives the work of these scholars as examples of flawed investigation, his reason for dismissing their research was not simply because they appeared to have identified relics of the absolute

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[91] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 256.

[92] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 256.

[93] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science,* 256.

[94] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science,* 275.

[95] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science,* 274.

primitive within the geographical boundaries of Europe, and in fact while he disputed absolutely the idea that "the relics of a living totemism" can be shown to obtain within "the civilised races of Europe,"[96] Gomme was similarly adamant that those same relics did in fact exist within geographical areas occupied by those civilized races. According to Gomme, his own research demonstrated "that [European] folklore contained some remarkably perfect examples of totemic belief and custom, and also a considerable array of scattered belief and custom connected with animals and plants, which . . . when classified, undoubtably led to totemism."[97] His argument was not with the discovery of totemism in Europe, and he makes clear that "the whole associated group of customs" identified in his and others' investigations constituted an unquestionable mosaic of prehistoric social life, one which "received adequate explanation only on the theory that it represented the detritus of a once existing totemic system of belief."[98]

The flaw in others' research was, according to Gomme, their (incorrect) premise: that only one racial inheritance obtained in Britain and western Europe and that the existence of totemic survivals within the historic borders of Aryan races meant therefore that totemism must be an Aryan survival. Rather, Gomme argues, it follows from his own investigation that "the relics of *different* races are to be found in the folklore of countries whose chief characteristics have up to the present been identified by scholars as belonging to one race."[99] Previous investigations were misguided, Gomme insists, because while the history of "the advanced part of nations" is commonly known, "very

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[96] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 275.

[97] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 276.

[98] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 276.

[99] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 109-110.

few people have any adequate idea of the unadvanced lines of European life,"[100] and indeed, the "native uncivilization" is so decisively "marked off from the political and social surroundings in which it is embedded" that distinguishing it from the more prevalent Aryan stratum requires dedicated and detailed examination of the archive at hand, beginning with a thorough and geographically delimited analysis of the varieties of custom previously considered purely Aryan.[101]

Gomme argued that the first and most easily identifiable point of difference between the Aryan and non-Aryan strata in Britain rested in the structure of Aryan society which, unlike the non-Aryan, was grounded in interpersonal ties. Whereas totemic society derived identity from association with the natural world, the Aryans possessed "a social organization founded definitely upon kinship," a fact demonstrated by the evidence of "the Celts and Teutons of Britain." [102] Gomme conflates the arrival of the Aryans in Britain with the first migration of a kinship-based social structure into the nation, and insists that the very fact that it was advanced beyond the level of kinless, or totemic society, meant that it would have been impossible for the Aryans in Britain to have regressed, so to speak, and organized themselves in any way other than by blood-descent. The tribe, "that grouping of men with wives, families, and descendants, and all the essentials of independent life, which is found as a primal unit of European society in a state of unsettlement as regards land or country,"[103] represented for Gomme the starting point of modern social formations and is one of the crucial instances wherein he exhibits a clearly evolutionist approach to his work, and he presents the familial, patriarchal

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[100] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 3.

[101] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 7.

[102] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 307.

[103] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 308.

Aryan tribe as the generative source from which the evolution of the stages of civilization began. That he excises totemism from this linear progression but continues to involve it in the ethnological and cultural constitution of the nation serves to highlight the difference he imagined to have existed in the prehistory of British society, and the extremity of that difference is a fact he makes very clear:

> The first point in the argument for ethnological date being discoverable in folklore is that a survey of the survivals of custom, belief, and rites in any given country shows one marked feature, which results in a dividing line being drawn as between two distinct classes. On one side of the dividing line is a set of customs, beliefs, and rites which may be grouped together because they are consistent with each other, and on the other side is another set of customs, beliefs, and rites which may be grouped together on the same ground. But between these two sets of survivals there is no agreement. *They are the negations of each other.* They show absolutely different conceptions of all the phases of life and thought which they represent, and *it is impossible to consider that they have both come from the same culture source* (emphasis added).[104]

Gomme's emphasis on the opposite and crucially oppositional relationship between Aryan and non-Aryan social formations is a critical element in his diagnosis of British institutional prehistory, and involves a conscious deviation from anthropological and historical-comparative arguments for the totemic stage as the immediate predecessor of all succeeding stages. By contrast, Gomme argues for the totemic, or non-Aryan society as not only unrelated evolutionarily to the more advanced kinship structure of Aryan society, but also for its absolute difference from the latter. Gomme identifies the marks of difference and opposition in the deepest and most essential aspects of each group's set of customs; those which, he contends, articulate the cultural spirit, or identity, of the people who produced them. As he says, "the subjects which show this antagonism are all

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[104] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 340.

of vital importance," and he draws out the oppositional relationship between Aryan and non-Aryan life in a daunting recitation of parallels:

> They include friendly and inimical relations with the dead; marriage as a sacred tribal rite and marriage as a rule of polyandrous society; birth ceremonies which tell of admittance into a sacred circle of kinsman, and birth ceremonies which breathe of revenge and hostility; the reverential treatment of the aged folk and the killing of them off; the preservation of human life as part of the tribal blood, and human sacrifice as a certain cure for all personal evils; the worship of waters as a strongly localised cult, preserved because it is local by whatsoever race or people are in occupation and in successive occupation of the locality; totemic beliefs connected with animals and plants contrasted with ideas entirely unconnected with totemism . . . all this, and much more which has yet to be collected and classified, reveals two distinct streams of thought *which cannot by any process be taken back to one original source*"(emphasis added).[105]

Gomme traces through these varying cultural approaches to the basic elements of individual and social life the thread of absolute difference and opposition. His emphasis on kinship and familial ties as present in the one, absent in the other is not, however, simply a means of jettisoning all that is antagonistic to the idea of Aryan kinship; within the distinction between the two modes of intra-social existence he locates a further area of investigation: conscious interaction between the two streams of culture, between the two distinct racial strata. As he says, it is a given that "the family as seen in savage society and the family as it appears among the antiquities of the Indo-European [Aryan] people" are "totally distinct in origin, in compass, and in force," but "welded *between* the two kinds of family is the whole institution of the tribe" (emphasis added).[106]

The full importance of this argument is traceable throughout Gomme's work, receiving its most detailed explication in *Ethnology in Folklore* (1892) and in *Folklore as*

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[105] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 341.

[106] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 236-237.

an Historical Science (1908). While it would seem that his contention – that the interrelationship between the kinless and kinship systems of non-Aryan and Aryan within the zone of conquest and colonization is directly involved in the genealogy of tribal institution – implies an amalgamation-on-conquest of the two into a new social unit, this is in fact not the case. The "institution of the tribe" remains exclusively that of the conqueror; the element of its history involved in the relationship between the tribal and the kinless is the history of the dominant Aryan race's experience of (and in) its colonial environment, including its experience of the indigenous and kinless non-Aryan. As Gomme indicates, a "primary subject" within "the question of race distinctions in folklore" is "the fact of conquest," and with it "the relationship of the conqueror to the conquered."[107] This relationship was, in Europe and in any area "over-lorded by an Aryan people, and still occupied by non-Aryan indigenes,"[108] distinguishable by the "opposite phases of primitive thought . . . represented in folklore as savage or as Aryan culture,"[109] but it could not be characterized as an equal opposition. Rather, the system of inter-racial communication and experience within the Aryan colonial space was grounded and defined by the Aryan tribal system, which, uniquely among institutions, possessed the facility of amalgamation without the erasure of racial distinction:

> [T]he tribal system of the advanced races included provision for non-tribesmen, provision which kept non-tribesmen outside the tribal bond, and at the same time kept them tied to the tribe by using them as the necessary dependent adjunct of the tribe, using them as bondmen and serfs.[110]

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[107] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 345.

[108] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 21.

[109] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 170.

[110] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 318.

As Gomme goes on to note, this system of inter-culture interaction was a "definite" and institutionalized "relationship," one "so definite that the conquered, as we have seen, formed an essential part of the tribal organization – the kinless slaves beneath the tribal kindred. There was a place for the kinless in the tribal economy and in the tribal laws. There was also a place for them in the tribal system of belief."[111]

The ability of the Aryan race's social matrix to sustain the colonial institution, and specifically its ability to oversee and regulate the non-Aryan population while at the same time maintaining its cultural and racial distinction was, for Gomme, the primary distinguishing characteristic of "progressive races" throughout history. Indeed, while all tribal systems were inherently "fashioned for conquest," only the "two great civilising peoples . . . the Semitic and the Aryan," were capable of "settlement and resettlement, and perhaps again and again conquest and resettlement."[112]   It was the regulation of society by means of a matrix of blood kinship that, for Gomme, constituted the basis of kinship societies' ability to migrate without threat to their social systems, unlike the anarchic kinless social formations. Because, Gomme argues, in the Aryan culture-system "the tie which bound all together was personal not local, kinship with a tribal god, kinship more or less real with fellow-tribesmen, kinship in status and rights," tribal society was therefore independent from its environment, inherently more secure and thus adapted for movement and progress. [113]   Thus, while the localized totemic societies remained embedded in their environment, dependent on it as an integral element and source of their cultural and racial identity, "Tribesmen," the inner cohesion of whose society stemmed from its independent, internal signification, were "capable of retaining

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[111] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 345.

[112] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 312.

[113] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 312.

the tribal organization during the period of migration and conquest," and "did not lightly lose that organisation when they settled."[114]

According to Gomme, the record of tribal conquest in the traces of folkloric strata revealed that the migration of "advanced races" left traces "not only [of] the element of conquest, but the definite aim of conquest," which, according to Gomme, "is to retain the aboriginal or conquered people as part of the political fabric necessary to the settlement of the conqueror, and at the same time to keep intact the superior position of the conqueror."[115] The conquering race's ability to institutionalize difference and to incorporate the indigenous outsider into the social structure was of paramount importance to the preservation of blood-kinship; only races able to maintain this conglomerate structure would be able to remain "free from the perils of dissolution"[116] and the taint of amalgamation. In short, it was the ability of the conquering races to institutionalize the "outside" within, while yet preserving its essential externality and opposition, that directly contributed to their success as colonizers and their progress into civilization.

In *Folklore as an Historical Science*, Gomme employs two major case studies in order to prove this relationship, one drawn from India, the other from ancient Welsh law. He first cites Maximilian Duncker's *History of Antiquity*, whose account of the Aryan invasion of India serves an analogic function in Gomme's text, and whose parallel between Britain and India's racial histories is employed to further illuminate the inter-racial relationships of prehistoric Britain. Duncker's text, which describes the state of

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[114] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 309.

[115] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 219.

[116] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 219-220.

India immediately following an ancient Aryan invasion, functions as a further means of accessing the historical character of the Aryan/non-Aryan relationship in Britain, and crucially, in this case, as a means of insight into the experience of the Aryan conquerors when they encountered an indigenous population:

> The ancient population of the new states on the Ganges was not entirely extirpated, expelled, or enslaved. Life and freedom were allowed to those who submitted and conformed to the laws of the conqueror . . . But though the remnant of this population was spared, the whole body of the immigrants looked down on them with the pride of conquerors . . . and in contrast to them they called themselves Vaiçyas, i.e. tribesmen, comrades, in other words those who belong to the community or body of rulers . . . he [the immigrant] regarded the old inhabitants as an inferior species of mankind . . . In the new states on the Ganges therefore the population was separated into two sharply divided masses. How could the conquerors mix with the conquered? - how could their pride stoop to any union with the despised servants?[117]

To ensure the analogic function of this passage within his own text, Gomme remarks categorically that the "two divided masses thus so clearly described were, in fact, tribesman and non-tribesman, just that distinction which we meet with in Celtic and Teutonic law."[118] Ancient history in India is thus transformed into British prehistory.

Gomme's second piece of evidence is drawn from historian Frederic Seebohm's research in British institutional history, a scholar he lauds as "the best authority for the importance of the non-tribesman in Celtic law."[119] While Gomme footnotes, but does not

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[117] Maximilian Duncker, *The History of Antiquity*, trans. Evelyn Abbot (London: Bentley, 1877-1882) 4:116-117. On the role of India in discourses on racial history, particularly the so-called Aryan races, see Joan Leopold, "British Applications of the Aryan Theory of Race to India, 1850-1870." *The English Historical Review* 89 (1974): 578-603.   See also Joseph Lennon, *Irish Orientalism: A Literary and Intellectual History* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004) for an account of the history of scientific and popular comparisons between Ireland and India's racial and cultural identities and Julia M. Wright, *Ireland, India, and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[118] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 309.

[119] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 344.

quote from Seebohm's *The Tribal System in Wales*, it is worthwhile to investigate a short passage from the section which Gomme cites as of particular value:

> Broadly, then, under the Welsh tribal system there were two great classes, those of Cymric blood and those who were strangers in blood. There was a deep, if not impassable, gulf between these two classes quite apart from any question of land or of conquest. It was a division in blood. And it soon becomes apparent that the tenacity with which the distinction was maintained was at once one of the strong distinctive marks of the tribal system and one of the main secrets of its strength.[120]

Like Gomme, Seebohm argues for the primacy of kinship by blood as the most distinctive feature of Aryan races, as well as for its critical role in the preservation of Aryan cultural superiority and distinction from the surrounding indigenous mass. As he says, the "tenacity" exhibited by the Celts in defending their cultural and racial purity was both a distinguishing mark of racial identity and also among the primary means by which that purity was upheld. That is, the distinctive tendency of Aryan races to prefer cultural and ethnic purity was not only a racial trait, but also and ultimately integral to their success as a colonizing force and a progressive civilization. To return to Gomme, it was "the larger kinship of the tribe," [121] or consciousness of the division in blood, that served the protective and preservative function identified by Seebohm; larger, that is, connoting not a census of kinsmen (particularly within a colonial geography, in which the tribal was surrounded by the larger mass of non-tribal), but rather the infinitely expandable taxonomy of its institutions, the capacity of which to incorporate and define "outside" races, customs, and beliefs was infinite. As Gomme says, not only was this "larger kinship" the "primary unit of ancient [as distinct from savage] society," it was also the primary agent of differentiation and opposition, that "which thrusts itself

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[120] Frederic Seebohm, *The tribal system in Wales* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1895), 55.

[121] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 237.

between the savage family and the civilised family."[122] It is in this aspect of the Aryan institutional character that Gomme locates the answer to the critical question posed by the "large residuum of manifest inconsistencies"[123] to be found in the folklore record of Europe, that which had led so many scholars to assume erroneously an ancient Aryan totemism. Only by diagnosing an absolute racial difference between Aryan and non-Aryan, Gomme argued, could one account for the difference in types of folklore found in Europe, and explain "how two such opposite streams can have been kept flowing" and found "existing side by side in the same culture area:"[124]

> If items of it [savage culture] are found to exist side by side with Aryan culture in any country, such a phenomenon must be due to causes which have brought Aryan and savage races into close dwelling with each other, and can in no sense be interpreted as original forms [of Aryan savagery] existing side by side with those which have developed from them. *I put this important proposition forward without hesitation as a sound conclusion to be derived from the study of human culture.*[125] (emphasis added)

Of course, Gomme does not contest the notion that Aryan culture itself subsequently underwent a process of arrestment and fossilization-by-conquest; the existence of static remnants of Aryan culture, distinguishable among folkloric survivals, is a "fact" wholly integrated and integral to the advancement of his hypotheses, and he makes clear, in *Ethnology in Folklore*, that "there will be as many stages of arrestment" in culture as there are "incoming civilisations flowing over lower levels of culture."[126]   In Britain, therefore, Gomme argues that it is possible to sketch, albeit roughly, an exhaustive geography of successive fossilizations: "true ethnic distinctions, Scandinavian, Teutonic,

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[122] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 237.

[123] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 8.

[124] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 307.

[125] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 14-15.

[126] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 12.

Roman, Celtic, overflowing each other,"[127] and each immobilising the culture of its immediate predecessor. In short, the corpus of heterogeneous survivals evident in Britain would certainly not "have been produced by one arresting power."[128] But, while he argues for a broadly Aryan culture, visible within the later British folkloric strata, Gomme calls for caution in analysis, arguing that "the limits of "present knowledge" make it practically "impossible . . . to discriminate to any great extent between the several branches of the Aryan race."[129] The close resemblance of these "branches," or "ethnic distinctions" (divisions which are certainly not equal to his differentiation of races elsewhere) to one another, perhaps more than the limits of scholarship, is to blame. Ultimately, Gomme makes clear that with the current limitations of scholarship and extant evidence, it is possible to make only one important distinction: "even with our limited knowledge of Aryan culture," it is still "possible to mark in folklore traces of savagery, side by side with a further development which has not been arrested until well within the area of Aryan culture."[130]

That a rough mosaic of Aryan culture, although not sub-divided by branch, could be successfully constructed indicates the degree to which Gomme assumed of "the Aryan" a basic coherence with respect to culture and institution; that its positive identification and characterization is bound up with the project of uncovering the ethnological source behind inconsistencies in the folklore record further refines its position within Gomme's work. The identity of both the Aryan and of the "original

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[127] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore, 12.*

[128] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 13.

[129] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 13.

[130] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 13.

uncivilization of the prehistoric races,"[131] simultaneously coalesce the moment that the inconsistency of the archive is redefined as a duality in which "the clash of these races is still represented."[132]   The concept of an Aryan race and racial personality existed prior and external to Gomme's work as a cohesion of popular and scholarly characteristics, and a major element of his project was to overturn the (mistaken) inclusion of savage survivals from within areas of Aryan rule in the biography of the Aryan race itself. His emphasis on this racial duality preserved through an institutionalized antagonism and perpetuated by the Aryan cultural structure served directly to reinstate what he considered to be the true boundaries of the Aryan social organism. At the same time, Gomme's defence of the Aryan cultural identity through the excision of non-Aryan folkloric survivals from its biography brings to life the Aryan's opposite, endowing it with an entirely "negative" personality, that is, one constructed to stand in as the essential opposite of the former.   The names variously deployed by Gomme to isolate this essentially static, oppositional force – pre-Aryan, non-Aryan, pre-Celtic, non-Celtic, kinless, uncivilization – are by no means unique to his texts; all of them, with the possible exception of uncivilization, had a life within contemporary discourses of history, anthropology, and colonialism.   However, Gomme's tendency to employ *all* of these terms, often within the same text, indicates the extent to which his narratives and his research were dependent upon and focused on a sustained dichotomy between (Aryan) race and pre-/non-/un- (Aryan) race.

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[131] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 12.

[132] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 13.

CHAPTER TWO

GOMME AND THE PRE-ARYAN

It will be useful at this stage to examine more closely the concept of indigeneity as well as the cluster of terminology used to define it, as it emerged within the discourses of mid-to late nineteenth-century British colonial administration, ethnology, and folkloristics. In order to arrive at an understanding of the means by which the indigene was first classified (and distinguished from the immigrant), both a scientific category and a contemporary political identity, it is important to first investigate the kind of language used to express ideas of racial-cultural origin and nativity, beginning with the ways in which temporal language began to be used in an ethnographic context. The units "non-/ pre-/ and un-Aryan" emerged at first as narrowly linguistic descriptors within the context of colonial administration and ethnographic surveys in British India; first employed within philological taxonomies designed to describe the "native" populations, this set of designations functioned in the main to identify and distinguish racial-linguistic units within the overall ethnic topography. The development of satellite designations, so to speak, clustered around the term Aryan developed from a necessity to distinguish between it (the Aryan) and a perceived indigeneity; these pre-/non-/un- designations did not, however, at this stage in their connotative life, indicate any single or stable racial "type," but were rather employed largely to define an administrative category within which a large variety was admitted. Like the concepts "aboriginal" or "indigenous," rather than indicating a specific race or racial type, they defined a spectrum of nativities and a multiplicity of types, whose internal linguistic and physical coherence was often notably less stable than the overall difference of the group from the well-defined and

delimited "Aryan," or colonizer. It was only in the latter half of the nineteenth century that pre-/non-Aryan became a stabilized racial category independent from its descriptive function within British Indian colonial philology and administration.

1. A Genealogy of Terms

The use of "pre" as a temporal modifier did not begin until the mid-nineteenth century; during this period it began to be used as a qualifier in order to designate positions in a much-expanded chronology of history. By the late nineteenth century the 4,004 B.C. timeline for history first formalized by Archbishop Ussher in 1650 was defunct in scholarly circles and the need to inscribe the newly opened space of deep time drove the disciplines concerned with it to generate a startling new array of vocabulary.[1] The *Oxford English Dictionary* records a vast dissemination of new chronologically focused terminology during the latter half of the century; designations including but not limited to History, Religion, Aryan, Celtic, Hellenic, and Medieval, to name a few, were modified to form new temporal positions grounded in their relational position to the older concepts.   These new entities – pre-History, pre-Vedic, pre-Celtic, etc.[2] – derived definition in a negative sense; that is, their semantic boundaries were constructed based on their status as previous, and at times antithetical, to the contained positive term. The use of linguistic, cultural, and racial terminology as the basis for the formation of these new distinctions is also indicative of the disciplinary context in which these new terms

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[1] James Ussher, *Annales Veteris Testamenti, a prima mundi origine deducti : una cum rerum asiaticarum et aegyptiacarum chronico, a temporis historici principio usque ad Maccabaicorum initia producto*, 2 vols. (London: J. Flescher, 1650-1654).

[2] First recorded usages of several of these terms: Pre-Celtic (1854), pre-Hellenic (1859), pre-Medieval (1859), pre-Aryan (1860, although in use as early as 1854, as will be discussed), pre-Islamic (1861), pre-Saxon (1869), pre-Norman (1869), pre-Religious (1870), pre-History (1871), pre-Vedic (1872), pre-civilized (1876).   See entries "pre-, prefix" and "prehistory" in *OED Online*, Draft Revision June 2010 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

were forged – classification of deep time was prosecuted almost exclusively by archaeological, philological, and anthropological inquiry, whose subjects were centered on diagnosing the movement and development of people through time by means of their cultural productions – languages, artifacts, and lore. Thus the designation of temporal positions and eras in mid-nineteenth-century scientific discourse was voiced through a new scientific vocabulary generated to describe human society and its productions from a very particular discursive perspective, one heavily invested in the notion of successive racial-cultural strata as the framework for human history, and the emergence of pre-Celtic, pre-Saxon, pre-Aryan, pre-Hellenic, and pre-Roman illustrate the extent to which space in time was humanized, and ultimately racialized.

The first recorded use of pre-Aryan in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is in Edward Webb's 1860 essay "Evidences of the Scythian Affinities of the Dravidian Languages," published in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*.[3] It was, in fact, the Rev. Robert Caldwell who first made use of the term, and whose 1856 text [4] Webb distilled and reworked into his 1860 publication. It is in the concluding paragraph of the latter that Caldwell, quoted later by Webb, coined "pre-Aryan" as a philological designation for a linguistic and racial substratum reaching across Europe and Asia:

> How remarkable that the closest and most distinct affinities to the speech of the Dravidians of intertropical India should be those that are discovered in the languages of the Finns and Lapps of northern Europe . . . How remarkable that the Pre-Aryan inhabitants of the Dekhan should be proved by their language alone, in the silence of history . . . to be allied to the tribes that appear to have

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[3] Edward Webb, "Evidences of the Scythian Affinities of the Dravidian Languages, Condensed and Arranged from Rev. R. Caldwell's Comparative Dravidian Grammar." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 7 (1860-1863): 296.

[4] Caldwell, *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South-Indian Family of Languages* (London: Harrison, 1856).

overspread Europe before the arrival of the Goths and the Pelasgi, and even before the arrival of the Celts![5]

Caldwell's "discovery" of the pre-Aryan takes place within the sphere of mid-nineteenth century British Indian colonial philology, but the framework of his taxonomical revelation provides a fair sketch of the function the term(s) would continue to play in the following decades. His focus on performing a taxonomical survey of India is particularly in keeping with the trend towards statistical observation identified by Peter Pels in mid-nineteenth century British colonial administrative discourse; Pels notes that in this period "the classification and counting of space (topography, administrative divisions, cultivated versus waste land) is followed by the same operation performed on bodies . . . the statistical arrangement of colonial knowledge had become a privileged means of supervision and control in India."[6] Like the "pan-Indian" surveys noted by Pels, Caldwell's (and Webb's) examination is geared towards the ideal of a "complete" linguistic (and ultimately racial) geography of the overseen space and population. Likewise Caldwell's assumption of the inherent "truth" of philological evidence and therefore its ability to manifest, "in the silence of history," the ancient racial origins of contemporary populations echoes the paradigmatic rupture Pels notes between an earlier, Orientalist focus on Indian literature and the later, "scientific" format of the statistical survey generated by privileged, colonial observation.[7] Thus while Caldwell and Webb announce the "discovery" of a new "pre-Aryan" racial stratum running parallel to the European and east Asian geographical spread of the Aryan, that discovery is couched entirely in linguistic proofs, and without the proliferation of cultural and physical

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[5] Caldwell, *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South-Indian Family of Languages,* quoted in Webb, "Scythian Affinities of the Dravidian Languages," 298.

[6] Peter Pels, "The Rise and Fall of the Indian Aborigine," in *Colonial Subjects*, eds. Peter Pels and Oscar Salemink (University of Michigan Press 1999), 90. See also Eric T. Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 248.

[7] Pels, "The Rise and Fall of the Indian Aborigine," 84-88.

ethnographic evidence that would later be involved in the construction of this particular racial type. Questions of indigeneity, or "original" inhabitants, under this mode of examination and control were directed and defined to a large extent by the degree to which such evidence might prove useful to the success of the colonial administration. Scientific interest in identifying and mapping the contours and developments of indigeneity in an Indian context was ultimately dependent on the administrative value of such an act.[8]

George Campbell (1824-1892), a colonial administrator and ethnologist in India, was likewise intrigued by the question of aboriginality, and his contributions on the subject follow much the same formula as Caldwell and Webb's earlier accounts. As with Caldwell and Webb, classification based on proximity or distance from Aryan-ness is confined to discussions of language, but he further grounds his examination by providing a geographical taxonomy of the subject, delimiting the pre-Aryan influence to the "centre and south of India," existing in "scattered form" in the south but forming the "predominant population" in the center. [9] While his investigations push farther into the realms of physical ethnographic description, his ultimate investigative goal was self-evidently administrative, and in describing the racial "personality" of the non-Aryan, he runs through commonplace physical and materialist descriptors of savagery:

> They may be generally characterised as small, slight, and dark, with very thick prominent lips, and faces which to the most casual observer cannot for a moment be mistaken for those of Hindoos or other Aryans . . . many of the tribes [of non-Aryans] are in the very lowest stage of barbarism; in fact, are modern representatives of one of the earliest phases of the history of mankind . . . [they] live in the woods almost without civilised arts . . .

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[8] Pels, "The Rise and Fall of the Indian Aborigine," 83.

[9] George Campbell, "On the Races of India as Traced in Existing Tribes and Castes," *Journal of the Ethnological Society of London* (1869): 128.

without clothing of any kind beyond the occasional use of a vegetable tassel.[10]

However, Campbell frames his tally of physical and cultural ethnographic shorthand for savagery by declaring that while these "black aboriginal tribes"[11] generally exhibit characteristics of the lowest level of civilization, "others, again, have become comparatively civilised," and have "risen to a position of dominance over fruitful countries;" indeed, he notes, some have "acquired the art of agriculture and the habits of industry, and make the best labourers and colonists in the country."[12] For Campbell, the usefulness of information about indigenous populations and races in India was ultimately grounded in the degree to which such information might contribute to the success of the project of colonial rule.

Sir Walter Elliot's (1803-1887) pan-Indian ethnological surveys chart much the same territory as Campbell's; like the former, his administrative position within India dictated to a large extent his conception of valuable ethnographic and linguistic data, and his examinations of the population of India are less interested in the construction of larger racial theories and more involved in providing a practical manual of race and racial characteristics. Elliot concurs with Campbell and Caldwell's general sketch of the non-Aryan, calling them a "semi-nomad race," while arguing, like Campbell, for their potential as colonial subjects, a conclusion that for him was based on the "personal observations" of officials. He quotes one Captain Sherwill, who describes the indigenous tribes of the Rajmahal Hills as "quiet, inoffensive, and cheerful . . . with the physiognomy of the Koles and other hill tribes . . . intelligent and obliging . . . timid . . .

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[10] Campbell, "On the Races of India," 128.

[11] Campbell, "On the Races of India," 128.

[12] Campbell, "On the Races of India," 129.

but brave when confronted with wild animals . . . [and] unfettered by caste."[13]   He likewise mentions with approval the observations of Reverend Batsch, who noted that the "character of these people is naturally mild and submissive, and more simple and upright than that of the Hindu or Mussulman."[14]   Elliot presents an image of a noble, albeit naïve, Indian indigeneity, but one that is crucially focused on the determination of its racial potential for compatibility with the effects of civilization:

> The larger acquaintance we are obtaining of the pre-Aryan population, ought to have an important bearing on the destinies of our Indian empire. It is an imperative duty to elevate these long-oppressed races, to enable them to assume their just position in the regeneration of their country. Meantime they are more open to the reception of Christianity, the surest road to civilisation, than any other section of the population. They would then prove the most assured supporters of the present state of things. The truthfulness, honesty, and bravery of some of the races afford the best materials for useful administrators and faithful soldiers.[15]

In Elliot's text, and in mid-nineteenth-century Indian colonial surveys generally, the pre-Aryan racial population became visible within a very strictly oriented discourse: philological distinctions and racial "personalities" emerged within a practical administrative taxonomy that determined the value of information based on its usefulness to the project of empire. Elliot's comparison of the indigenous races – childlike, honest, and brave – with the more "developed" but culturally impervious "Hindu or Mussulman" serves only to emphasize the desirability of the former as a malleable colonial subject and the degree to which classification was grounded in the discovery of desirable racial traits.

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[13] Sir Walter Elliot, "On the Characteristics of the Population of Central and Southern India," *Journal of the Ethnological Society of London* 1 (1869): 106.

[14] Elliot, "Central and Southern India," 106.

[15] Elliot, "Central and Southern India," 128.

In the broader context of nineteenth-century British philological discourse, "pre-Aryan" operated as a minor term within a much larger spectrum of language and race based designations for what was to become a significant discursive fracture in the construction of a universal racial map: the indigenous stratum of European racial geography. The first half of the century saw the gradual disintegration of Ussher's Biblical chronology as a the temporal framework for geological and human development, but before its eventual dissolution its strength as a discursive framework ensured that racial history was often tabulated and understood within its boundaries. Theorizations of racial origins and development were most often primarily concerned with the problem presented by the possibility of a "pre-Adamite" racial period, or the suggestion that human origins ante-dated the 4000 year old "birth" in Eden of the original human pair. While the term itself had been in use since at least the seventeenth century, its linguistic function shifted dramatically in the mid to late eighteenth century, when it began to connote an actual "scientific" possibility rather than a predominantly theological concept. David Livingstone's delineation of the controversies and ruptures in this potent moment in nineteenth-century historical and racial politics provides a detailed account of its discursive history; crucially, he notes that during the early half of the century, the "pre-Adamite" theory tended to be the focal point for other related issues of human origins: the debate over polygenism, arguments concerning the relative age of various linguistic and racial groups, and questions of "original" or primeval races were all involved to a certain degree in the question of pre-Edenic possibilities.[16] Anxieties over the possibility of a pre-Adamite human presence were thus imminently bound up with implicit questions about the racial continuity of the human species; it is significant to note that in discussions of the pre-Adamite a different racial group from that associated with the

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[16] David Livingstone, "The Pre-Adamite Theory and the Marriage of Science and Religion," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, New Series 82 (1992): 12-58.

modern population of Western European was overwhelmingly favored as the main contender for the position, highlighting the tendency, even in these early racial mappings, towards the propensity to collate indigeneity with "other" races.

It is in this context that the first set of distinctive terminologies for previously un-categorized racial elements began to develop; in his "Letter to the Chevalier Bunsen on the Classification of the Turanian Languages" in Bunsen's *Universal History* (and again in his later *The Science of Language)*, the eminent philologist Friedrich Max Müller provided a detailed genealogy for what he himself came to call the Turanian language (and race) family:

> The first, however, to trace with a bold hand the broad outlines of Turanian, or, as he called it, Scythian philology, was Rask. He proved that Finnic had once been spoken in the northern extremities of Europe, and that allied languages extended like a girdle over the north of Asia, Europe, and America . . . According to Rask, therefore, the Scythian would form a layer of language extending in Asia from the White Sea to the valleys of Caucasus, in America from Grönland southward, and in Europe (as Rask accepts Arndt's views) from Finland as far as Britain, Gaul, and Spain. This original substratum was broken up and over-whelmed first by Celtic inroads, secondly by Gothic, and thirdly by Slavonic immigrations; so that its traces appear like the peaks of mountains and promontories out of a general inundation.[17]

Max Müller's sketch of the ethnological position of the Turanian follows comfortably from the earlier pre-Aryan framework developed by Caldwell, Prichard, and others; while he coins the term Turanian to describe the racial strata under question, Max Müller makes clear that he also inherited an earlier ethnological delineation and geographical

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[17] Friedrich Max Müller, "Letter to the Chevalier Bunsen on the Classification of the Turanian Languages" in Charles Bunsen, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Universal History applied to Language and Religion* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1854), 272-273. Rasmus Rask (1787-1832) was a Danish scholar and philologist known for his work on the reconstruction of the ancient Aryan or Indo-European parent-language.

framework for the discovered indigenous strata. In later remarks he repeats and refines the genealogy of what he classified as Turanian:

> Though I am responsible for the name *Turanian*, and for the first attempt at a classification of the Turanian languages in the widest sense, similar attempts to comprehend the languages of Asia and Europe, which are not either Aryan or Semitic, under a common name had been made long ago by Rask, by Prichard and others. Rask admitted three families, the *Thracian* (Aryan), the *Semitic*, and the *Scythian*, the latter comprising most of what I call the Turanian languages . . . The name *Allophylian*, proposed by Prichard, is in some respects better than Turanian. Rask's Scythian and Prichard's Allophylian race was supposed to have occupied Europe and Asia before the advent of the Aryan and Semitic races, a theory which has lately been revived by Westergaard, Norris, Lenormant, and Oppert, who hold that a Turanian civilisation preceded likewise the Semitic civilisation of Babylon and Nineveh.[18]

There are several significant taxonomical distinctions contained in these parallel disciplinary histories, the first of which is the equation of the so-called Turanian with absolute indigeneity, or as Max Müller noted in an earlier edition of *On the Science of Language*, that "long before the first waves of the Aryan emigrants touched the shores of Europe, Turanian tribes, Finns, Lapps, and Basks, must have roved through the forests of *our* continent"[19] (emphasis added). The second critical element of the Turanian "personality" to emerge from Max Müller's delineation is the acknowledged difficulty of arriving at a satisfying and appropriately scientific name for the racial stratum under consideration. Max Müller himself mentions a wide spectrum of taxonomical possibilities, even going so far as to suggest that Prichard's "Allophylian" could potentially be more appropriate than his own. Mid- to late nineteenth-century attempts at naming a pan-Eurasian indigeneity – variously Scythian, Turanian, Allophylian, Iberian,

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[18] Friedrich Max Müller, *National Religion: The Gifford Lectures Delivered Before the University of Glasgow in 1888* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1889), 324.

[19] Friedrich Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language Delivered at the Royal Institute on February, March, April and May 1863* New Series (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1875), 236.

and pre-Aryan – reveal the frustrated inability of scholars to settle on a "true" taxonomical distinction.

To return to Caldwell, in whose Dravidian grammar the Turanian was identified by the name of Scythian, it can be seen that not only is a nearly identical terminological genealogy acknowledged, but also, crucially, the same concerns over the taxonomical position of the elusive racial stratum are central to the narrative:

> The term "Scythian" was first employed by Professor Rask to designate that group of tongues which comprises the Finnish, Turkish, Mongolian, Tungusian, and Samoïedic families. This great kingdom of speech, as it has been termed, includes all those languages spoken in Asia or Europe (excepting only the Chinese) which are not embraced in the other two great divisions, the Aryan and Semitic. They have by some been designated the "Tartar," by others the "Finnish," "Ural-Altaic," "Mongolian," and "Turanian." The objection to these terms is that, having been often used to designate one or more species, to the exclusion of the rest, they cannot properly be employed as common designations of the genus. But the term "Scythian," having been used in the classics in a vague, undefined sense, to denote generally the barbarous tribes of unknown origin that inhabited the northern part of Europe and Asia, seems to be appropriate, convenient, and available.[20]

Rather than a true name, Scythian is merely convenient due to its lack of connotational adhesions. This use of positive terminology for the sake of convenience rather than scientific truthfulness echoes the more developed usage of the cluster of pre-/non-/un-Aryan designations for the same set of racial evidence; there is a sense among these investigations into European indigeneity that proper identification is limited by the very nature of the subject under study. As Max Müller notes, one of the fundamental tenets of his classification of the Turanian group is that it "comprises in reality all languages

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[20] Caldwell in Webb, "Evidences of the Scythian Affinities of the Dravidian Languages," 272.

spoken in Asia and Europe, *and not included under the Aryan and Semitic families*"[21] (emphasis added). Thus while he is emphatic that "the Turanian family is of great importance in the science of languages,"[22] he is equally clear that "the name Turanian is used *in opposition to Aryan*, and is applied to the nomadic races of Asia as opposed to the agricultural or Aryan races"[23] (emphasis added). It is critical to note that this diversity of terminology is not grounded in arguments for or against the conflation of the indigenous stratum with a previously identified race; that is, the scholarly inability to positively name this racial stratum is unlike, for example, contemporary debates over the question of the "Mongolian," or "Negro" origin of Indian indigenous races. Whereas the latter involved a specific racial possibility, the former attempts centered on the naming and categorization of a previously unidentified and un-allied racial group.

The proliferation of various terminologies, all of which concerned the same nebulous and racialized archive, highlights a crucial element of the pre-Aryan taxonomical anxiety: the sense, as seen in Max Müller, that the lack of cohesion was part of the basic nature of the racial strata under consideration:

> No doubt if we expected to find in this immense number of languages the same family likeness which holds the Semitic or Aryan languages together, we should be disappointed. *But the very absence of that family likeness constitutes one of the distinguishing features of the Turanian dialects* [emphasis added]. They are *Nomad* languages, as contrasted with the Aryan and Semitic languages.[24]

21 Friedrich Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language*, 2rd ed. (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1862), 294.

22 Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language*, 2rd ed., 294.

23 Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language*, 2rd ed., 295.

24 Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language*, 2rd ed., 294-296.

Remarkably, in his "Letter to the Chevalier Bunsen," Max Müller also identifies an essentially neither-nor method of classification for the Turanian race and language as the most appropriate means of identification; while he admits that "some scholars would deny it [Turanian] the name of a family" due to the lack of "dialects so closely connected among themselves as the Aryan or Semitic,[25] he argues for the appropriateness of his classification precisely because incoherence is basic to the nature of the Turanian language family. Crucially, this multiplicity of incoherence is evident not only in Max Müller's characterization of the Turanian's internal structure, but also in his method of examination, for which an "identification by elimination" is suggested as the best means of discovery:

> In answer to your kind queries, I should rather have adopted the negative method of arguing . . . and proved that these same languages cannot be referred to any other race from which, as far as history and geography go, they might possibly have sprung . . . that they are neither Semitic, nor Chinese, nor Indo-Chinese, nor Malay, nor idioms transplanted from the east coast of Africa."[26]

The Scythian/Turanian/Allophylian/pre-Aryan indigenous stratum developed in mid- to late nineteenth-century British ethnographic discourse, to a certain extent, as an opposite to the Aryan, and as a taxonomical position wherein disruptive statistical and geographical material could be safely contained. Max Müller himself defined his version of this stratum – Turanian – in terms of its oppositional relationship to the later, civilized Aryan stratum; his pre-Aryan not only derived definition from its distinctiveness from Aryan and (to a lesser extent) Semitic, but also ensured the internal coherence and purity of the latter by acting as a means for the excision of dissonant, racially "troubling" evidence. It is no coincidence that a map of the most commonly identified pre-Aryan

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[25] Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language*, 2rd ed., 294-295.

[26] Max Müller, "Turanian Languages" in Bunsen, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Universal History*, 268.

racial enclaves highlights many of the contested ethnic and border areas of European nations;[27] within the United Kingdom, the Highlands, Wales, and west Ireland[28] were locations that had from the early eighteenth century been associated with an ethnically-based difference. Eighteenth and early nineteenth-century antiquarian and ethnological discourses on prehistory classified the Celtic as the earliest racial-cultural presence in Britain; while not predominantly concerned with questions of indigeneity – a theoretical issue that only surfaced in the latter half of the nineteenth century – these accounts popularized the notion of the Celtic in Britain as a distinct element and, critically, one differentiated in terms of race. The gradual relocation of Celtic into the Aryan language and race family was largely the result of the development of comparative inquiry into the history of languages and, as Anna Morpurgo Davies has noted, it was philologists such as J. C. Prichard, Adolphe Pictet, Johann Zeuss, and Franz Bopp who, between the 1830s and 1850s, finally proved the Aryan, or Indo-European origin of Celtic.[29] By the end of the nineteenth century the Celtic language was re-categorized as Aryan, but its associated geographical locales and those within it remained differentiated, remaining non-Aryan, aboriginal and other.[30]

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[27] The Basques, Finns, and Dravidians are among the populations which were at one time or another classified as non-Aryan.

[28] On eighteenth-century conceptions of "Celtic" spaces see Gerard Carruthers and Alan Rawes, eds., *English Romanticism and the Celtic world* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) and Katie Trumpener, *Bardic nationalism: the romantic novel and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997). Yorkshire, Devon, and Cornwall were also, albeit to a lesser extent, figured as ethnically distinct enclaves.

[29] Anna Morpurgo Davies, *Nineteenth-Century Linguistics*, History of Linguistics, vol. 4 (London: Longman, 1992), 56.

[30] For further information on the history of the "Celt" in Britain see Carruthers and Rawes, eds., *English Romanticism and the Celtic World*, Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire* (London: Routledge, 1995), Young, *The Idea of English Ethnicity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), Lewis Perry Curtis, *Anglo-Saxons and Celts: A Study of Anti-Irish Prejudice in Victorian England*, Studies in British History and Culture, vol. 2 (New York: New York University Press, 1968), and Curtis, *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature*, 2nd revised ed. (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997).

2. *The Pre-Aryan Debate*

Gomme's career as a folklorist was characterized by his deep investment in the project of mapping the development of modern British social institutions; while he focused the majority of his research on delineating the respective Aryan and non-Aryan elements of British prehistory, his ultimate goal was not the recovery of non-Aryanness, but rather the recovery of and explanation for the originating form of modern society in Britain, which he identified as the single "political unit" comprised of *both* the Aryan conquerors and their conquered non-Aryan subjects. [31] It is also important to note that while Gomme supported and employed the argument that the folklore record could be used to extract respective Aryan and non-Aryan intra-cultural formations, for him, the greater significance of the folklore record as the preserved racial-cultural strata was that those relics were fossilized in their *inter*-racial state, That is, that they were preserved in an antagonistic relation to each other, a relationship that furthermore provided the deepest source of their true meaning. Before turning to a reading of Gomme's narration of this heterogeneous Aryan polity, it is necessary to briefly re-examine the larger discursive context of Gomme's research in order to arrive at a more detailed sense of his intellectual role, and to finally determine the extent to which his paradigm for the science of folklore can be used to reread late nineteenth-century discourses on prehistory, colonialism, and race.

While Gomme's theory of a non-Aryan inheritance in contemporary British institutions has largely vanished from the disciplinary histories of both anthropology and

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[31] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 220.

folklore, it would be a mistake to conclude that he was either marginal or extremist with respect to his contemporary intellectual climate. It is certainly the case that Gomme's methodology and also his particular take on the "pre-Celtic theory"[32] were met with some resistance, but it is equally evident upon closer inspection that he was not the sole occupant of his intellectual position by any means. The development of the non-Aryan as a conceptual category in nineteenth-century human science has already been demonstrated; consensus among Gomme's contemporaries can likewise be traced in the work of prominent figures in the spheres of archaeology, anthropology and history. Respected scientists and historians such as John Beddoe, William Boyd-Dawkins, Charles Elton and William Skene espoused not only a similarly invasionist and racially stratified view of British prehistory but also, crucially, the existence of an indigenous race anterior to the so-called Celtic invasion. [33] Likewise within the ranks of the FLS the work of Sir John Rhŷs, Joseph Jacobs, and A. W. Buckland, among others, accorded with Gomme's argument for a non-Aryan aboriginal population.

It is critical to note that while modern disciplinary genealogies, most notably Glyn Daniel's *150 Years of Archaeology*, George C. Stocking's *Victorian Anthropology*, and Margaret Hodgen's *The Doctrine of Survivals* identify Gomme as an influential and respected figure in the formative decades of human and cultural science, only recently has the prevailing representation of Gomme's position within folklore studies itself come up for reevaluation. In Dorson's *The British Folklorists*, published in 1968, Gomme figures primarily as a hard-working soldier for the cause, earnest but lamentably stubborn

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[32] Gomme, "Recent Research on Institutions," 495.

[33] William Skene, *Celtic Scotland: A History of Ancient Alban*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: Edmonstone and Douglas,1876-1880); John Beddoe, *The Races of Britain; A Contribution to the Anthropology of Western Europe* (London: Trübner, 1885); Sir William Boyd-Dawkins*, Early Man in Britain* (London: Macmillan, 1880). See also Charles Issac Elton, *Origins of English History* (London: Bernard Quartrich, 1882).

when it came to his "most cherished hypothesis,"[34] and ultimately condemned to obsolescence by his refusal to accept the "closely reasoned argument[s]"[35] of contemporaries such as Alfred Nutt, Andrew Lang, and Edwin Sidney Hartland:

> The climactic work of Gomme, his *Folk-Lore as an Historical Science*, instead of convincing his critics, led to further jabs. In a six-page review in *Folk-Lore*, Lang raised a series of pernickety questions . . . In his review in *Man*, Hartland challenged Gomme's theory of totemic origins being connected with primitive agricultural institutions . . . Not his enemies but his friends levelled Gomme's proud edifice.[36]

Dorson also cites a debate that took place between Gomme and Nutt in 1898 and 1899 over the existence of a non-Aryan population as evidence of Gomme's increasingly marginal role in the Society; it will be shown that Dorson misrepresents this debate for the same reasons that Nutt attacked Gomme, his methods, and his findings in the first place – the need to solidify disciplinary boundaries. Just as Dorson's project in *The British Folklorists* was to trace a continuous methodological genealogy for folklore, necessitating the elimination or trimming of those who did not fit the narrative, Nutt's attack on Gomme in 1898 reveals a need to formally defend a divergent methodological approach to the folklore archive. Indeed, Dorson glosses the bulk of Nutt's polemical and apologetic Presidential Address, focusing on his vehement critiques of Gomme while largely ignoring Nutt's ultimate goal: to establish his own approach to folklore as the sole means by which the ethnological significance of folklore strata might be identified and evaluated.[37] Effectively, Nutt was campaigning to undercut the dominance of institutionally-focused folkloristics by denying its effectiveness at pursuing its

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[34] Dorson, *The British Folklorists,* 227.

[35] Dorson, *The British Folklorists,* 227.

[36] Dorson, *The British Folklorists*, 229.

[37] Nutt's vision of the discourse of folklore will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

fundamental project.   Nutt's Address, which will be discussed more fully below, is a study in disciplinary crisis, and his attack on Gomme a crucial signpost that in the battle to attain disciplinary control and with it the claim to be the true practitioner of the science of folklore, Gomme was marked as the primary target not because, as Dorson contends, of his marginality, but in fact because of his central position.

In his inaugural Presidential Address in 1890, Gomme remarked with some ambivalence that the members of the FLS "certainly seem to be divided into two camps – the anthropological and the literary: just those two camps which existed at the beginning of the Society."[38]   Gomme was later to mourn a lukewarm reception for his *Ethnology in Folklore* (1892), protesting in 1899 that within the FLS "Ethnology is out of fashion; so my book was received with only moderate acceptance by my folklore colleagues."[39] His concern over the apparent lack of interest in his hypothesis of pre-Aryan survivals in British social institutions reflected a growing apprehension over a disciplinary rupture that had been fomenting within the FLS since its inception, one which indeed, as he had presciently noted in 1890, again divided folklorists into historical, or anthropological and literary evolutionist factions.   Gillian Bennett, in her incisive re-evaluation of the early years of the FLS, makes clear that Gomme, "the single most influential figure in the development of the FLS,"[40] was instrumental in re-orienting the nascent Society towards an explicitly anthropological perspective.   While early sketches of the Society's manifesto echoed William John Thoms' "original literary/antiquarian aims," a sudden shift, which Bennett colourfully describes as a "take-over bid by anthropologically-

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[38] Gomme, "Annual Address to the Folk-Lore Society," *Folklore* 2 (1891): 2.

[39] George Laurence Gomme, "Ethnological Data in Folklore: A Criticism of the President's Address in January, 1898," *Folklore* 10 (1899): 132.

[40] Gillian Bennett, "Geologists and Folklorists: Cultural Evolution and "The Science of Folklore"," *Folklore* 105 (1994): 30.

minded folklorists," sharply re-configured the emerging disciplinary boundaries and aims of the FLS. "Ironically," Bennett notes, "this take-over bid was probably orchestrated by Thoms' own protégé, the ambitious twenty-five-year-old George Laurence Gomme."[41] Through his work as editor, president, and recruiter of members, Gomme effectively re-cast the society as thoroughly anthropological; it was under his direction that the "cultural evolutionists completed their mastery of the FLS."[42]

The firm grip of what Bennett calls cultural anthropology over the disciplinary structure of the FLS was not permanent, however, and the end of the 1880s saw the emergence of an evolutionist "literary" paradigm, reformulated under the auspices of psychical, or psychological anthropology. Hodgen describes this as a new development from within the fold of the classically Tylorian anthropological approach which had been so crucial to the early development of the FLS' disciplinary self-conception. A new take on the old concept of the evolution of culture in stages, psychological folkloristics "employed it [the survival] to arrive at a reconstruction of social origins, primarily religious, in terms of individual psychology."[43] While folklorists such as Andrew Lang, Edwin Sidney Hartland, and to a lesser extent Alfred Nutt reemployed the survival in order to "peer back into the philosophy and cosmology of primitive man . . . particularly as expressed through myth," the stakes for those who, like Gomme held a preference for the localized reconstruction of prehistoric "institutional forms of political and social life" were high.[44] A shift away from the complementary relationship with anthropology that

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[41] G. Bennett, "Geologists and Folklorists," 31.

[42] G. Bennett, "Geologists and Folklorists," 31.

[43] Margaret Hodgen, "Survivals and Social Origins: The Pioneers," *The American Journal of Sociology* 38 (1933): 583.

[44] Dorson, *The British Folklorists*, 226.

had characterised the early 1880s of the FLS could potentially negate the role folklore had sought to play as the anthropology of ancient primitive life.

Thus, in the final years of the nineteenth century, the FLS became the sparring ground for the aforementioned debate between Gomme and Alfred Nutt, one which on the surface turned on the question of "the pre-Aryan hypothesis,"[45] but ultimately involved the eruption of much deeper conflicts within the Society. In the pages of the FLS' journal, *Folklore*, in 1898 and 1899, a sequence of presidential addresses and replies penned by Nutt and Gomme respectively brought to the fore the disciplinary fault-lines upon which Gomme's pre-Aryan thesis was precariously balanced. Disciplinary divergences had been developing in the FLS for at least a decade, however this particularly acrimonious exchange appears to have been formally initiated by Nutt's presidential address to the FLS in March of 1898: "The Discrimination of Racial Elements in the Folklore of the British Isles."[46] The bulk of this address concerns an apparent rejection of the archive of purely anthropological (or cultural) folklore as a means of delineating race distinctions within Britain in favour of what Nutt calls literary, or artistic folklore, which he champions as the only means by which the true spirit of the race which produced it might be diagnosed and preserved. Unsurprisingly, Gomme issued a formal reply to this attack on his preferred archive, and in Nutt's heated reply to Gomme's response it is made clear that despite Nutt's "keen appreciation of the value and interest of Mr. Gomme's work in the field," he believed it would be "uncandid to conceal my doubts as to the validity of some of his assumptions, and as to the security of

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[45] Alfred Nutt, "Presidential Address: The Discrimination of Racial Elements in the Folklore of the British Isles," *Folk-Lore* 9 (1898): 50. See also George Laurence Gomme, "Recent Research on Institutions," *Folklore* 2 (1891): 495.

[46] Nutt, "The Discrimination of Racial Elements," 30-52.

certain results which he claims to have reached."[47] Those "certain claims" to which Nutt

took such great exception were not Gomme's discursive aims, which argued for a reading

of folkloric strata as complex wholes, but rather his consequent belief that the

inconsistency of the folklore record betrayed a record of race antagonism preserved

between the distinct strata of Aryan conqueror and non-Aryan aborigine. In short, while

Nutt took pains to stress that he would not "deny that Mr. Gomme's conclusions may be

correct," he was equally and perhaps more deeply adamant the "evidence upon which he

relies is insufficient to demonstrate their [his hypotheses'] correctness:"[48]

> In any case it will be agreed that, great as are the difficulties of
> discrimination when dealing with Aryan-speaking communities, they
> increase tenfold when we essay to determine the share of our pre-Aryan
> forefathers. In the former case we are guided and controlled by recorded
> history, by recorded literature; in the latter we are working almost entirely
> in the dark, with, at the best, the dubious, scanty, and conflicting evidence
> provided by the archæologists. The very method by which such an inquiry
> must be prosecuted seems to me questionable in the extreme . . . The Celtic
> record, sociological and literary, teems with examples of the enigmatic, the
> savagely archaic, the apparently misinterpreted.   It greatly simplifies
> matters if in each case we can invoke the pre-Aryan hypothesis, but does
> our present knowledge of Celtic and Aryan antiquity justify our doing so?
> I think not so.[49]

Unsurprisingly, Nutt argued that whereas the sociological, or "philosophical"[50] folklore

that was Gomme's focus was untenable as a means of insight into race distinction in

history, his own area of expertise, "the artistic productions of folk-fancy,"[51] was the best

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[47] Alfred Nutt, "Ethnological Data in Folklore: A Reply to the Foregoing Criticism," *Folklore* 10 (1899):
147-148.

[48] Nutt, "Ethnological Data in Folklore," 149.

[49] Nutt, "The Discrimination of Racial Elements," 50.

[50] Nutt designated cultural or ritualistic folklore as philosophical, by contrast with "artistic, or "literary"
folklore. See Nutt, "The Discrimination of Racial Elements," 38. Nutt's view of folklore and its subject
will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Five.

[51] Nutt, "The Discrimination of Racial Elements," 38.

and indeed the sole means by these important differences might be delineated.[52]
Gomme's so-called philosophical folklore, which was "designed for severely practical purposes,"[53] could betray no unique racial trace precisely because it reflected only primitive human needs, which were by their very nature universal. Artistic folklore, by contrast, was not only "a form of artistry in words and ideas that only awaits the discovery of the written sign to become literature,"[54] but also "the most profound and permanent source of literary achievement . . . the legends that humanity tells us in its childhood," which "not only survive, but are a living inspiration, whilst the beliefs [of folk-philosophy] dwindle down to mere museum specimens."[55] Race, which for Nutt meant a "community which for a definite number of centuries has manifested itself in clearly defined products of the mind" and "has set upon the universal human material of speculation and fancy its special stamp and impress,"[56] was only visible in his own branch of the folklore record; all attempts to locate and delineate it in other areas were doomed to failure.

In his first address, Nutt does not name Gomme as the object of his diatribe and protested, in his 1899 reply, the suggestion that he intended his paper to involve a personal attack; the major points of his critique, however, are an obvious parallel of key elements in Gomme's methods and theories, particularly the argument that cultural, or institutional folklore could be used to reconstruct the history of British prehistory anterior to the arrival of the Celtic race.[57] Dorson argues persuasively that Gomme was

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[52] Nutt, "The Discrimination of Racial Elements," 41.

[53] Nutt, "The Discrimination of Racial Elements," 38.

[54] Nutt, "The Discrimination of Racial Elements," 38.

[55] Nutt, "The Discrimination of Racial Elements," 38.

[56] Nutt, "The Discrimination of Racial Elements," 50-51.

[57] Nutt, "Ethnological Data in Folklore," 144, 147.

"clearly the target" of Nutt's apology for literary folkloristics,[58] and while it is fairly obvious that Gomme was a primary target of Nutt's address, Dorson's tendency to downplay Gomme's intellectual position within FLS consequently ignores the larger consensus his theories and methods had attained among his colleagues: John Rhŷs, A. W. Buckland, and Joseph Jacobs were all proponents of the "pre-Aryan hypothesis," and while for the latter two the idea was not central to their theoretical concerns, Rhŷs' work was grounded in the belief that a non-Aryan element could be traced in the linguistic and folkloric record of Celtic Britain.[59] Indeed, Dorson's analysis of this sequence of polemic and rebuttal provides a limited and at times misleading picture of both the intellectual climate and the stakes surrounding Gomme and Nutt's vigorous exchange. Driven by the need to establish disciplinary continuity for the mid-twentieth century FLS, Dorson's text exhibits a persistent tendency to laud the successes of those folklorists such as Andrew Lang and Alfred Nutt whose psychological, or literary leanings ultimately overtook the earlier cultural anthropological method as the dominant philosophical framework for folklore analysis. It is precisely because of the narrative needs of his history that folklorists like Gomme, but certainly not limited to him,[60] are figured in terms of obscurity incongruent with their actual contemporary position. Indeed, Georgina Boyes, in her revisionist account of the contributions of Gomme's wife, Alice Gomme, suggests in tones of incisive sarcasm that her absence from *The British*

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[58] Dorson, *Peasant Customs and Savage Myths*, 2:403.

[59] Rhŷs' work will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three. See also John Rhŷs, *Celtic Britain* (London: SPCK, 1884) and David Brynmor-Jones, "Pre-Aryan Syntax in Insular Celtic," in John Rhŷs and David Brynmor-Jones, *The Welsh People* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1900), 617-641.

[60] Regional collectors of folklore during the mid to late nineteenth century generally fared badly under Dorson's treatment, but the role of other influential figures in the field such as, Charlotte Burne (the first female president of the FLS in 1910), Eliza Gutch (founding member of the FLS) and Alice Gomme (founding member and wife of Laurence Gomme) are notably underplayed. In her examination of the contributions of the latter, Georgina Boyes makes the scathing but unfortunately sound observation the "Dorson's condescension and lack of recognition of her [Gomme's] contribution to the study of folklore is . . . a considerable fault, for which little can be offered in mitigation." See Boyes, "Alice Bertha Gomme (1852-1938): A Reassessment of the Work of a Folklorist," *Folklore* 10 (1990), 198.

Folklorists (except as a wife in "'perfect conjugal accord' with her husband's theories")[61] was due to "her own lack of foresight in dying after the theories she had espoused . . . had fallen out of fashion."[62]

From this perspective it is possible to re-approach the circumstances surrounding Nutt's attack on cultural folkloristics and "the pre-Aryan hypothesis;" rather than a critique of a marginal and obsolete individual from a position of disciplinary power, Nutt's address can be read more accurately as a polemic levelled at a methodological and theoretical position that was not only professed by a notable number of folklorists, but also occupied a position of great disciplinary sway, one that needed to be undercut if Nutt's own variant of the paradigm was to emerge successfully. That Nutt aimed his critique primarily at Gomme further indicates the degree to which Gomme occupied a powerful role as a leading, and by no means the sole proponent of his position, making the need for a re-evaluation of Gomme's theory of the formation of Aryan/non-Aryan society all the more pressing.

3. Human Migration and its Productions

Gomme's reconstruction of the prehistoric institutions formed by race contact in Britain took place within wider discursive contexts than the Folklore Society, which it would be useful to sketch here. Consensus throughout nineteenth- and early twentieth-

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[61] Dorson, *The British Folklorists*, 279 quoted in Georgina Boyes, "Alice Bertha Gomme," 198.

[62] Georgina Boyes, "Alice Bertha Gomme," 198.

century discourses on the patterns of and reasons for human migration saw invasion as the primary means not only by which mankind moved, but also by which progress, both cultural and material, was effected. This particular means of diagnosing apparently abrupt shifts in prehistoric culture within a given area was first formally articulated in early nineteenth-century Danish archaeology, first by Sven Nilsson,[63] and later and in more detail by Christian J. Thomsen and J. J. A. Worsaae, whose three-age system (Stone, Bronze, Iron) was, as Glyn Daniel has suggested, not "primarily an evolutionary" formula for history, but rather an invasionist one, in which the beginnings of successive ages were understood to have been instigated by the forceful migration of a higher race into the territory of a lower.[64]

In 1966 Grahame Clark diagnosed late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century British archaeology with an "invasion neurosis," suggesting that archaeologists during this period "went out of their way to ascribe every good thing about their early past to foreign influences, if not indeed to foreign conquerors."[65] While Clark's examination focuses on the patterns and the effects of this "neurosis" in twentieth-century British archaeology, his terminology and characterization are equally apt for the previous century's dominant paradigm for human movement. Like their twentieth-century successors, nineteenth century prehistorians were possessed of an overwhelmingly invasionist structure for human development; as Clark perceptively notes, "in the final stage of the neurosis hypothetical invasions became so real that they, instead of the

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[63] Sven Nilsson, *Primitive Inhabitants of Scandinavia* trans. Sir John Lubbock (London: Longmans, Green & Co.,1868).

[64] Christian Jurgensen Thomsen, *Ledetraad til Nordisk Oldkynidghed* (Copenhagen: National Museum, 1836) and Jens Jacob Worsaae, *The Primeval antiquities of Denmark*, trans. William John Thoms (London: J. H. Parker, 1849) cited in Daniel, *150 Years of Archaeology*, 45.

[65] Grahame Clark, "The Invasion Hypothesis in British Archaeology," *Antiquity* 40 (1966): 173.

archaeological material itself, were actually made the basis of classification."[66]   Indeed,

the nineteenth century in Britain saw the proliferation of classification structures for

human prehistory, all grounded in the fundamental principles of the three-age system:

John Lubbock (Lord Avebury), in his immensely popular *Prehistoric Times*, [67] suggested

a further materials-based division of the Stone Age into Palaeolithic and Neolithic,[68]

craniologists proposed to classify successive invasions by means of "brachycephalic"

and "doliocephalic" skull shapes, and barrow-archaeologists traced migration patterns in

the geographical distribution of "long" and "round" barrow monuments.[69]   Gomme's

own version of progression-as-invasion, in which races/social institutions were conflated

with successive savage, barbarian, and political ages, [70] was likewise a variety of the

"invasion neurosis" paradigm; whereas other manifestations of the three-age system

classified distinction in time / distinction of race in terms of modes of subsistence, use of

stone/bronze/iron tools, or skull shapes, Gomme grounded his own system in the more

ephemeral "materials" of civilization.   Gomme's paradigm accounted for the succession

of prehistoric ages in terms of races' increasing ability to successfully achieve the

highest, or most progressive state – colonization, in which the aboriginal conquered were

preserved as subservient outsiders – a state only achieved by the political societies of the

Aryan and the Semitic races. Only the Aryan and the Semitic races, he argued, were

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[66] Clark, "The Invasion Hypothesis," 173.

[67] Daniel, *150 Years of Archaeology,* 79.

[68] Lubbock, *Pre-historic Times.*

[69] See Bruce Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Glyn Daniel, *150 Years of Archaeology* (London: Duckworth, 1975), Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1995), and T. Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory: Evolution Museums Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 2004).

[70] Gomme uses political, a term he confesses is "a little awkward, owing to its specially modern use," to indicate "the stage of social development represented by a polity as distinct from a mere localization" (Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science,* 221).

capable of generating the racial-cultural tools needed to succeed in a world where the "essential condition of life" was "constant movement in face of antagonistic forces."[71]

As demonstrated in Chapter One, "progressive" societies represented, for Gomme, the originating stage of modern civilization because of their ability to maintain a sustained habitation in a foreign space with the conquered people preserved as subjects *within* the tribal society but at no threat to the cultural and racial integrity of the conqueror. The raw materials needed for this were, according to Gomme, the ability to generate an idealized abstraction of the cultural system as the mythologized source of social organization, one able to preserve meaning once uprooted from the original homeland. Totemic society, by contrast, in which the social system was localized and derived meaning through association with local flora and fauna, was therefore unable to migrate without the immediate dissolution of communal and individual identity. For Gomme, the materials of progress were bound up with the ability to colonise, which meant not only the conscious ability to distinguish insider from outsider, but also, crucially, the ability to enclose the aboriginal within the social system of signification – to capture and re-present the conquered populace as a contained and controlled entity. In Britain, Gomme's Aryans were successful because their mobile and elastic matrix of social signification was able to enclose a territorial and racial-cultural outsider within itself and yet at the same time hold it apart as opposite, distinct, and outcast. In order to succeed, they not only incorporated the aborigine without assimilation or hybridization but also neutralized the indigenous threat through the fossilization of its culture.

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[71] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 217.

It is telling to note that in Gomme's precise and detailed delineation of the history of human migration he only makes mention of extermination as an unsuccessful form of migration: only in the secondary, or "barbarian" migrations,[72] when the resistance "is that of humanity to humanity," rather than humanity against "the resistance of the lower animals" and "physical obstacles," does genocide enter as a possible outcome of invasion.[73] The extermination of the conquered aboriginal is crucially, however, a lower and unsuccessful means of migration, a second possible outcome of the barbarian age categorically linked with the similarly unsuccessful eventuality of assimilation with the conquered aboriginal race. Neither outcome involves the "definite aim of conquest," or the conscious act of invasion and colonization, but are rather simply evidence of what Gomme calls "the essential condition of life:" "constant movement in face of antagonistic forces."[74] Savage races were impelled to migrate against the forces of nature during what Gomme calls the primary migrations, when mankind spread slowly and painfully across the earth as a result of economic pressures such as the need for space and sustainable food supply. Barbarian invasions, though their migration was that of man against man, only exhibit the first stirrings of the use of blood-kinship as a "social force:" while prosecuted by societies in the tribal stage, they are still in a nascent form, and are capable only of beginning, but not sustaining the conquest of another race. Like the savage races, they are impelled to migrate, this time by the external pressures of overcrowding, and are likewise, therefore, not committing a conscious act, but are rather engaged in a forced movement with only the basic tools of social progress.

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[72] The so-called "barbarian" stage is considerably less developed in Gomme's work, and is only really invoked in *Folklore as an Historical Science*. It is clear, however, that it was meant to be akin to the more developed Aryan tribal social stage, albeit much more primitive.

[73] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 216.

[74] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 217.

It is no coincidence that Gomme accounted for the genesis of a mythic patriarch, or

an idealized source of law and originator of custom, in terms very similar to those used to

describe the symbolic capture of the pre-Aryan. In fact, he developed his formula for the

mythologization of original historical persons and events very early in his career, the first

evidence of which surfaces in a paper delivered at The Royal Historical Society in 1877.

In a discussion of the history of sovereignty, Gomme argued for the genesis of the

symbolic patriarch as the source for all later social development, yet another divergence

from the literary/psychological paradigm, in which religion was most often the originator

of social institutions:

> This is the period [the development of sovereignty] at which customary law
> grew up, at which the internal will of mankind began to exert itself. The form
> of general utility [of custom] which I have noticed as existent among the
> earliest of mankind was, of course, an *unconscious* form of it – the result
> merely of the external factor. Its exertion was spontaneous as the command
> which generated it, namely, the pressing need of the moment. When we
> arrive at a conscious form of general utility, or as we may now call it,
> conscious morality, we arrive at that form of society where the religious
> conception ultimately formed itself into a power.[75]

The development of a conscious morality, or idealized higher custom, was the direct

consequence of larger human groups requiring a broader conception of social structure; it

was also the source of the authority of the patriarch, who originally possessed no higher

position other than that of the ruler of a congregation of tribes. But, Gomme adds,

because "the authority of this chief was based upon a wider groundwork than the

authority of the natural father [or individual tribal chieftain]," his "authority formed a

new phase of society which was larger, more complete, more capable of progression,

than the separated units."[76]   It was from this watershed moment in the prehistory of

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[75] George Laurence Gomme, "Sovereignty in Relation to the Origin of Social Institutions," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6 (1877): 142.

[76] Gomme, "Sovereignty," 143.

society that "the author of its [society's] governing power, the recipient of its obedience" was gradually invested with "a positive and conscious morality which should descend to later times," a conflation of individual with law which at the same time relocated the historical person outside of natural time and within the world of a mythic taxonomy.[77] This re-conception of the father, Gomme adds, "did not assume what we may more correctly term its religious aspect" until sufficient generations separated the historical figure from its descendant society, at which point the "traditionary respect" of the tribe for its ancestral leader and lawgiver transmuted and "gradually went beyond tradition into the domain of mythos."[78] Thus the communal social mind of the primitive tribal society "connected the first chieftain with an ideal deity, personifying the human superior," "connected the judgements of the present chieftain with the divine wisdom," and "it was thus that the notion of *priest* became encircled round the power of every generation of chieftain."[79]

Again, in later works, this notion of the sacralization of social formations played a key role in Gomme's account of progressive, or "political" societies. In *Folklore as an Historical Science*, Gomme locates a similar watershed moment in the history of social development in the abstraction of blood-kinship as a form of social organization; just as with the relocation of the historical lawgiver to an external mythic taxonomy, this shift developed in tandem with an expansion of social and cultural consciousness and directly resulted in an increased ability to progress and, thus, to possess "the definite aim of conquest."[80] For Gomme, the savage races' "society and religion are based on locality,"

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[77] Gomme, "Sovereignty," 143.

[78] Gomme, "Sovereignty," 143.

[79] Gomme, "Sovereignty," 143.

[80] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 219.

and they are thus unable to uproot and migrate without the immediate dissolution of their communal and racial identity.[81] Barbarian races, while they show "the first sign of the element of kinship *consciously* used in the effort of conquest" (emphasis added), likewise succumb to the effects of sustained foreign habitation, the act of conquest exhausting the strength of kinship as "conqueror and conquered become merged into one people."[82] The progressive, or political races, however, succeed where others fail precisely because their "kinship is elevated into a necessary institution, is made sacred to the minds of tribesmen, and becomes an essential part of the religion of the tribe in order to keep the organisation of the tribal conquerors intact and free from the perils of dissolution when conquerors and conquered become members of one political unit."[83]

Central to Gomme's delineation of the cultural tools necessary for successful migration is that the inclusion of the conquered race in the conqueror's political unit holds an equally critical position with the mythologization of the patriarch as lawgiver and the idealization of blood kinship into a sacred institution. Because the aim of conquest is "to retain the aboriginal or conquered people as part of the political fabric necessary to the settlement of the conqueror, and at the same time to keep intact the superior position of the conqueror,"[84] the conscious deployment of the tools of abstraction – the ritualizing of blood kinship and the taxonomical isolation of the aboriginal – guarantee that "when conquerors and conquered become members of *one political unit*" (emphasis added), the "perils of dissolution" will be neutralized.[85]

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[81] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 219.

[82] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 219.

[83] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 219-220.

[84] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 219.

[85] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 220.

4. Narrative Ruptures and Non-Aryan Agency

There is, however, another side to Gomme's theory: while the repossession of the non-Aryan indigeneity as a taxonomically stable and contained unit within the Aryan social unit was fundamental to the success of Aryan colonization, Gomme puts forward a further strand to his portrait of the pre-Aryan in Britain – that the non-Aryans were active agents in the creation of their new status, and introduced mythic conceptions of themselves into the cultural matrix of the Aryan conquerors. Furthermore, Gomme argues, those new ideas, or "influences," were generated specifically by "the fear which the conquered have succeeded in creating in the minds of the conquerors."[86] Thus Gomme delineates the genesis of superstitions concerning fairies, trolls, giants, and witches as the product of "the effects of a permanent residence of a civilised people amidst a lower civilisation, the members of which are cruel, crafty, and unscrupulous,"[87] and he puts forward as "one of the axioms of our science that the hostility of races wherever they dwell long together in close contact has always produced superstition," and superstition in its "most marked form" at that.[88]

In order to illustrate his contention that it is the "tendency of race-distinctions to create new forms of social phenomena,"[89] Gomme, in *Ethnology in Folklore*, cites a

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[86] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 41.

[87] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 41.

[88] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 42-43.

[89] Gomme, "Presidential Address," *Folklore* 5, no. 1 (1894): 53.

paper by the anthropologist M. J. Walhouse, which he declares contains "the whole of the evidence" for his characterization of the mythic influence of non-Aryans:

> The contempt and loathing in which they [the aborigines] are ordinarily held are curiously tinctured with superstitious fear, for they are believed to possess secret powers of magic and witchcraft and influence with the old malignant deities of the soil who can direct good or evil fortune.[90]

This fear, generated by the contact between the Aryan and non-Aryan races, centers on the Aryan belief in the supernatural power of the aboriginal, a fear that is furthermore actively cultivated by those outcasts who were, according to Gomme, "powerful enough to introduce mythic conceptions concerning themselves into the minds of their conquerors:"[91]

> Witchcraft has been explained as the survival of aboriginal beliefs from aboriginal sources. Fairycraft has been explained as the survival of beliefs about the aborigines from Aryan sources. The aborigines, as is proved from Indian and other sources, not only believed in their own demoniacal powers, but sought in every way to spread this belief among their conquerors. Thus, then, the belief of the aborigines about themselves and of the conquering race about the aborigines would be on all material points identical; and by interpreting the essentials of witchcraft and of fairycraft as the survivals in folklore of the mythic influence of a conquered race upon their conquerors we are supported by the facts which meet us everywhere in folklore, and by an explanation which alone is adequate to account for all the phenomena.[92]

It is tempting to dismiss these apparent contradictions out of hand as either a mistake or as Gomme's attempt to have it both ways, as it were: to both assert the dominance and progressiveness of Aryan society while simultaneously arguing for an ancient, pre-Aryan genealogy inherent in modern British social institutions. It would be possible to suggest

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[90] M. J. Walhouse, "Some Account of a Leaf-Wearing Tribe on the Western Coast of India," *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 4 (1875): 371-372 cited in Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore,* 46-47.

[91] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 55.

[92] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 63-64.

that Gomme was patriotically attempting to establish the earliest possible origin for national institutions, a cause that caught the imagination of many a prehistorian in nineteenth-century Europe. However Gomme's opinion, for want of a better word, of the non-Aryan element of the British institutional character and population suggests that this is not the case. A rough portrait of the pre-Aryan in any of his texts reveals a kinless, savage, and cannibalism-prone horde, one whose legacy in contemporary Britain Gomme reads as "little patches of savagery beneath the fair surface which the historian presents to us."[93] To them he ascribes all that is horrid, violent, "nasty and disgusting"[94] in the British folklore record, and while he argues for their critical influence on the shape of modern British social institutions, he sees in their enduring influence "the root cause of some of the lunacy and much of the crime which apparently exists as a necessary adjunct of civilisation."[95] The legacy of the pre-Aryan is read not only in the history of the village community, but also in its descendants: "people whose minds are not attuned to the civilisation around them; people, perhaps, whose minds have been to an extent stunted and kept back by the civilisation around them."[96] Certainly Gomme was convinced that there is "not continuity between modern and primitive thought," but rather "strong antagonism, ending with the defeat and death of the primitive survival."[97] Clearly, Gomme's argument for pre-Aryan agency, at apparent cost to his theory of Aryan colonial dominance, was not the manifestation of a nationalist sentiment, conscious or not; his work can in no way be read as the propagandizing illumination of an ancient race as the glorious originator of modern Britain. Nor is his seeming self-

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[93] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 192.

[94] Gomme, "Annual Address by the President," *Folklore* 4 (1893): 16.

[95] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 180.

[96] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 180.

[97] Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 156.

contradiction an isolated incident of scholarly error; both strands of his diagnosis – Aryan colonial control *and* the antagonistic agency of the pre-Aryan – are present throughout his work from an early stage and in roughly the same form.[98] The centrality, then, of both elements to his account of British institutional history is quite apparent and thus demands further examination in order to unfold the deeper significance of the apparent contradiction.

However, any investigation into this critical rupture must be prosecuted carefully. It is neither intellectually useful nor academically sound to attempt too much of a retrospective psychological deconstruction of his motives, conscious or unconscious, for arguing as he did.   While Gomme occupied many varied positions in his lifetime, nothing in his work suggests that he was either a propagandist or apologist except for the cause of the science of folklore itself. It would not, ultimately, be useful to diagnose the significance of his theoretical rupture as merely the manifestation of an internalized imperialist and/or racialist paradigm, and to thus read Gomme as a passive mouthpiece of contemporary discourse who consequently formulated arguments irrespective of the evidence, and even possibly in contradiction to it.   As an engaged and conscious individual in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Britain, Gomme's significance as a theoretician of prehistory and race cannot be found in regarding his work as the mere rearticulation of contemporary assumptions. Rather, his own active engagement with and reinterpretation of both inherited discourse and contemporary conceptions of race, national history, and social institutions serves to illuminate the richness and complexity of these concepts during his period, as well as to reorient any investigation

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[98] The only notable changes to his position occur very early; in 1877 he still argued that totemism represented a universal stage in social development and professed a much more concrete spatial conception of the stages of civilization (See Gomme, "Some Considerations on the Origins of Monarchical Government," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5 (1877): 1-27 and Gomme, "Sovereignty," 131-146).

into their twentieth-century forms. It is, however, important to recognize that an argument against the psychological deconstruction of Gomme does not necessarily negate the possibility of diagnosing important contemporary and inherited discourses within his work. Indeed, that his theorizations contain significant ruptures speaks to the importance of recognizing the genealogies of larger (and often contradictory) paradigms in his own formulations of prehistory, race, and society in Britain. Thus without performing retrospective surgery on Gomme's subconscious, or regarding him as simply a vehicle of cultural assumptions, it is still critical to acknowledge his position as one in conversation with a vast and variegated discursive field of contemporary theory, preconception, prejudice, and "fact."

Returning therefore to the rupture in Gomme's account of British institutional origins, it is evident that larger discursive formations at play within his work must be taken into context in order to diagnose both the overarching nature and also the deeper significance of both Gomme's theorizations as well as his contradictions. Rather than approach Gomme's theoretical disconnect directly, it will be useful at this stage to consider in some depth his representation of the non-Aryan presence itself as a force of antagonistic savagery hidden beneath and within the progressive story of British civilization. While Gomme's account of the Aryan originating force behind the development of British institutional character forms a cohesive and uncomplicated narrative throughout his work, it is the periodic interruption of this account with evidence of non-Aryan antagonism and agency that consistently transgresses the harmony of his overarching narrative. And not only is this transgression enacted in the original prehistoric state of colonizer/colonized, it also continues to resurface as Gomme systematically problematizes the notion of unilateral progress across the body of British

national space. These non-Aryan descendants, who Gomme argued survived in an unchanged and savage state within the temporal and geographical boundaries of the modern British nation, provide a critical insight into precisely what Gomme meant when he insisted that "the condition of these modern descendants" will "help us to grasp the fact that non-Aryan races are in Britain, as in India, a living factor to be reckoned with in discussing the problem of origins."[99]

Ethnology in Folklore contains Gomme's most detailed and eloquent exposition of the unwritten history of the non-Aryan; in it, Gomme carefully interlaces selections from Roman histories, early modern travellers tales, antiquarian local curiosities, and contemporary ethnological data in order to lay bare the silent yet vital aboriginal presence beneath the strata of progressive civilization. In the texts of Gaius Julius Solinus, Strabo, and Diodorus Siculus, he finds evidence of "tribes of Ireland" who "drank the blood of their enemies," and the "tribes of Britain" who nailed their enemy's heads to "the porch of their houses."[100] In the work of Gerald of Wales he reads of naked Irishmen rowing animal skin canoes, in which description he finds proof of the "little patches of savagery . . . in the midst of the more fertile fields of civilisation."[101] The suggestive power of these interwoven accounts, coupled with a rich mosaic of further citations that carry the narrative of internal savagery into the eighteenth century is very great, but Gomme does not leave their analogic potential at rest, and makes certain that the final significance of his narration is heard: "a traveller among people thus described," he writes, "is exactly on a par with the modern traveller among native races of

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[99] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 176.

[100] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 158.

[101] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 178.

uncivilised lands."[102]   To effect a further level of emphasis, he interlaces contemporary anthropological details of so-called savage behaviour and custom with his historical accounts, constructing an emphatic and repetitive mirroring of historical and modern savagery; thus the nakedness of Irish women in seventeenth-century traveller Fynes Moryson's *A History of Ireland*[103] and Edmund Spenser's *View of the State of Ireland*[104] is conjoined, by its "unmistakable resemblance," to that of "the Toda women of the Nilgiri Hills in India."[105]

Throughout Gomme's narration of the pre-Aryan, he is at great pains to underscore the importance and indeed the potential horror of the proximity of savagery to civilization within the national and racial boundaries of the latter. While he conceded in his preliminaries to *Ethnology in Folklore* that he did consciously "accentuate the contrast between civilisation and uncivilisation in the same area," he insisted that such an accentuation was necessary because of the crucial importance of the "significant difference in origin" between the former and the latter, a difference that he perhaps felt his readers might not be prepared to accept in all its implications.[106]   For Gomme, the point of physical coevalness and cultural opposition could not be over-laboured; throughout his work he highlighted the multiple points of contrast between "our" civilization and its silent, internal opposite, and in so doing formed a sustained narrative shock grounded in savagery's proximity to civilization:

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[102] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 178.

[103] Fynes Moryson, *An History of Ireland, from the year 1599, to 1603 with a short narration of the state of the kingdom from the year 1169. To which is added, a description of Ireland*, 2 vols (Dublin: S. Powell, 1735), 2:372, 377.

[104] Edmund Spenser, "A View of the Present State of Ireland," in *The Historie of Ireland, Collected by Three Learned Authors* (Dublin, The Society of Stationers, 1633). Gomme cites Edmund Spenser, *View of the State of Ireland*, 47 but it is unclear to which edition he refers.

[105] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 179.

[106] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 3.

There must have remained little patches of savagery beneath the fair surface which the historian presents to us when he tells us of the doings of Alfred, Harold, William, Edward, or Elizabeth. It seems difficult, indeed, to understand that monarchs like these had within their rule groups of people whose status was that of savagery; it seems difficult to believe that Spenser and Raleigh actually came into contact with specimens of the Irish savage; it is impossible to read the glowing pages of Kemble and Green and Freeman without feeling that they have told us only of the advanced guard of the nation, not of the nation as it actually was.[107]

Gomme carefully employs these temporal and geographical juxtapositions in order to fold the traditionally external savage into the temporal and geographical territories of Civilization and National History proper; the horror of the aboriginal British savage is not simply its original existence, nor even its survival into history as the economic and cultural dependent of the Aryan colonizer, but rather that it survived both invasion and the progressive efforts of civilization and remained a degenerate and antagonistic force surrounded and controlled, but neither penetrated nor exterminated, by the Aryan institution. It is for precisely this reason, perhaps, that Gomme chose to end his *Ethnology in Folklore* with a warning that rests uncomfortably at the end of a scientific text:

It would appear, then, that cannibal rites were continued in these islands until historic times; that a naked people continued to live under our sovereigns until the epoch which witnessed the greatness of Shakespeare; that head hunting and other indications of savage culture did not cease with the advent of civilising influences . . . The examples of rude people which have escaped the fatal silence of history show at least that, if there is evidence of savage usages and beliefs in folklore, there is evidence also of savage people who are capable, so far as their standard of culture shows, of keeping up the usages and beliefs of savage ancestors.[108]

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[107] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 192.

[108] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 193.

This declaration brings into sharp focus precisely what he considered to be the final relevance of ethnological inquiry into the folkloric record of Britain: the importance of his work on the non-Aryan presence lay not only in the richer elucidation of the origins of British institutions, but also and crucially in its consequent demand for the acknowledgement of the non-Aryan racial inheritance that was a "living factor to be reckoned with" in addressing the policies and problems of the contemporary nation.[109]

Following on from his narration of the history of the non-Aryan element in Britain, Gomme traces the presence and personality of the race's descendants within the contemporary population; he cites folklorists, historians, and antiquarians, whose texts give evidence of instances of lawlessness, aberrant physique, and cultural difference from the surrounding (Aryan) populations.   In particular, he pays great attention to several localities whose histories he adopts as emblematic of the effects of the non-Aryan inheritance.   He quotes Thomas Pennant's account of Threapwood, a Cheshire town that, he argues, survived into the modern era as an extra-parochial enclave of degeneracy, whose inhabitants "considered themselves as beyond the reach of the law, resisted all government, and even opposed the excise laws."[110]   He finds further evidence for his characterization of the non-Aryan inheritance in the Northumberland town of Redesdale, which he describes as "a community of men, ignorant, dissolute, accustomed to crime, debarred by laws made specially against them from mixing freely with their neighbours, having only slight connection with the world beyond their own morass-girt vale."[111]   While these two accounts form a solid characterization of precisely what

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[109] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 176.

[110] Thomas Pennant, *Tours in Wales* (London: Henry Hughes, 1778-1783), 1:290 cited in Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 181.

[111] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 185.

Gomme considered to be the relics of the non-Aryan within the institutional and cultural territory of civilization, his final and most detailed case study provides an even richer formulation. Material concerning a "certain red-haired, athletic race [in Wales] . . . called *Cochion* (the Red ones)" is related by Gomme second-hand from a letter written to the *Gentleman's Magazine* (of which Gomme had been both a contributor and, later, an editor).[112] These so-called "Gwyllied Cochion" were once "a tall, athletic race, with red hair"; their descendants however are described by Gomme's informant as "peculiar," and mentally "very much below the average," with one particular individual possessing "dark, lank hair, a very ruddy skin, with teeth much projecting, and a receding brow."[113] These "Welsh Kaffirs,"[114] as Gomme suggestively calls them, had in earlier times inhabited Coed y Dugoed Mawr (the Greater Dugoed Wood) near the town of Mallwyd, where they "built no houses, and practiced but few of the arts of civilised life," preferring the spoils of sporadic plunder to a secure pastoral existence.[115] Their contemporary presence, however, due to their violent and unstable ways, was largely dispersed into the surrounding population, but not without leaving the unmistakable traces of racial difference, as is the case with all of Gomme's case studies, in the form of a stereotypically "mongoloid" appearance, low intelligence, proclivity for violence, and a general tendency to be "much less industrious and respectable" than their civilized Aryan neighbors.[116]

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[112] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 186.

[113] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 187.

[114] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 189.

[115] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 187.

[116] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 191.

It has already been shown that Gomme's pre-Aryan inherited much of the earlier

formulations of the aboriginal as developed in both philology and colonial surveillance;

it was, however, also interwoven with both scientific and popular discursive formations,

in particular those of anti-Celtic racialist typology, exemplified by the work of

ethnologist Robert Knox,[117] and larger contemporary anxieties concerning interracial

mixture, or hybridity. That the so-called Celtic populations of Britain and Ireland,

identified mainly with Wales, the Scottish Highlands, and west Ireland were the subject

of often intense prejudice before and throughout the nineteenth century is well known; as

ethnological and racial sciences proliferated this prejudice entered another phase, one in

which previous stereotypical traits such as drunkenness, violence, and feminine hysteria

were transferred into the development of the Celt as a scientifically identifiable racial

type. The tradition of anti-Celt polemic, whether advocated within or without the mid-

to late nineteenth-century scientific community, hinged on an essentialist, even

polygenetic notion of race-as-type and thus the belief in an unbridgeable gap between the

(Aryan) Saxon and its neighbour – the lower Celtic race. That this is strongly echoed by

Gomme's later formulation of Aryan/non-Aryan relations highlights the extent to which

this prejudicial consensus was geographically oriented, tending to problematize border

areas and rural enclaves in Britain by means of the language of difference, whether of

race or class, whether Celt/Saxon or non-Aryan/Aryan. This emphasis on difference also

often served to suggest the futility of any attempts to civilize, progress, or otherwise

include the border populations in the British economic and social hegemony. Thus, the

socioeconomic ills of the rural poor, whether racialized or not, could be successfully

excised from the sphere of English responsibility. As Knox declares in reference to the

suggestion that Irish poverty might be due to English rule: "the source of all evil lies in

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[117] Robert Knox, *The Races of Men* (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1850).

the race, the Celtic race of Ireland. Look at Wales, look at Caledonia, it is ever the same"[118] (emphasis in original).

Gomme's non-Aryan descendant, with his inferior intellect, clumsy physique, and penchant for lawlessness echoes many earlier formulations of the savage Celt; as Robert J. C. Young notes, even though by the end of the nineteenth century the Celtic language, and to a lesser extent the Celtic race, had been proven a member of the Aryan family, "racialized cultural assumptions about the Irish as simian or black lingered on," with many ethnologists, including Gomme, describing them as Africanoid or Mongoloid.[119] Gomme may have transferred these characteristics back in time, so to speak, from the taxonomical position of the Celt onto that of the newly formulated pre-Celtic and pre-Aryan aboriginal, but the geographical territory of the characteristics remained the same and crucially so did the contemporary population at whom they were principally directed. The modern rural poor remained aboriginal, Mongoloid, and inferior; whether classed as of pre-Aryan or Celtic extraction their discursive position was consistently that of outsider and primitive, and indeed it is telling to note that Gomme transferred the racial genealogy of these subalterns to a new, aboriginal source precisely at the point when the Celt was gradually being incorporated into the Aryan language and race family.

Gomme's theorizations of British prehistory can therefore be understood in part as sociological, in which research into the origins of institutions and racial geographies has a very deep resonance with his own contemporary realities. Quite apart from the

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[118] Knox, *The Races of Men,* 379. See also Young, *Colonial Desire*, 72.

[119] Young, *Colonial Desire*, 72. See also Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, 296.

clear kinship with colonial discourse evident in his interpretation of Aryan invasion, Gomme's contention that the non-Aryan's descendants were racially incapable of progress in any real sense speaks to what he believed the context and the relevance of his own work to be. Not unlike the mid-century colonial philologists, for whom research on the aboriginal populations of India was always prosecuted towards an ultimately administrative goal, the rupture between Gomme's interlaced arguments for Aryan dominance and non-Aryan agency becomes much more easily understood when one considers that Gomme was in some sense attempting to account for the apparent inability of British social institutions to raise the rural and urban poor to the level of civilization expected of a powerful, imperial nation. As a high-ranking official in the London County Council, whose groundbreaking work included both improvements to working men's trains and the preservation of historic buildings in London, Gomme was constantly faced with the pressures of social inequality and poverty, problems exacerbated by the increased migration of poverty-stricken rural populations to the cities of Britain in search of work. The issues of urban poverty, human migration, and overpopulation were certainly a central feature of nineteenth-century discourses on culture and society, and it is suggestive to imagine that Gomme's portrait of the non-Aryan as an issue to contend with in both the rural and the urban enclaves of Britain is due in part to the major movements of the national population during this time.

For Gomme, as for many of his contemporaries, the civilized sphere of Britain was centred on London, and progress was the fundamental heartbeat and the overarching scientific paradigm within which social phenomena might be observed and understood. But, as Gomme writes, "with uncivilisation the case is very different."[120] Uncivilization

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[120] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 4.

was governed not by progress but by tradition, or the blind preservation of custom and culture "for antiquity's sake."[121]   Tradition was also the force behind the non-Aryan resistance to change and was thus wholly in conflict with progress, making those for whom tradition was the rule at absolute odds with the formula of modern life.   If progressive evolution, for all intents and purposes, represented the evidence of time, or change over time, tradition in Gomme's sense – the racially prescribed resistance to progress – was antagonistic atemporality, and linked the descendants of the pre-Aryan with those external savages who were commonly understood as living prehistory, who were "dateless and parentless when reckoned by the facts of civilisation."[122]   It is interesting to note that Gomme ascribed to the non-Aryan the honour of having safeguarded the preservation of Britain's priceless ancient monuments – that while "abbeys and churches . . . have been destroyed and desecrated, these prehistoric monuments have remained sacred in the eyes of the peasantry" and therefore survived under the guardianship of tradition and its essential intolerance of change in any form.[123] And yet as he asserts, the fundamental ambivalence of the non-Aryan inheritance is written in those "other marks of their savagery," their eternal antagonism to the civilization that bounds them but in whose fruits they share in only the most tenuous and fractured way.[124]

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[121] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 5.

[122] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 6.

[123] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 177.

[124] Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 177.

CHAPTER THREE

GOMME, RHŶS, AND NUTT IN CONTEXT

In an 1889 issue of *The Archaeological Review*,[1] Alfred Nutt remarked that the past decade had witnessed a heated debate over the discursive boundaries of folklore; this dissension, Nutt emphasized, was neither semantic squabbling nor an indication that folklorists had "little to do;" rather, the discussion of apparently basic issues of definition marked a debate that touched "the very essence of the study."[2] "During the last five years," he said, "folklorists, at least in this country, have been largely occupied in the endeavour to define the scope and nature of their study, and in framing methods of work by means of which the results of research may be more readily co-ordinated than has hitherto been the case."[3] One of the most pressing concerns was the object of study itself: when and where the appropriate archive might be located or, as Nutt put it, "what is the *folk*?"[4] Was it "primitive man," or "not absolutely the first stage of culture, but an essentially low one,"[5] as Nutt himself proposed earlier, or was fellow folklorist Stuart Glennie right in identifying the folk with those "unaffected by culture, whether relatively, like the uncultured classes of a civilised state, or absolutely, like savages, unvisited as yet by missionaries"?[6] That is, was the science of folklore the study of the culture of

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[1] A short-lived journal (1888-1890) published by Nutt's publishing firm – David Nutt – and edited by Gomme. *The Archaeological Review* was incorporated, along with *The Folk-Lore Journal* into *Folklore*.

[2] Alfred Nutt, "Recent Archaeological Research," *Archaeological Review* 3 (1889): 74.

[3] Nutt, "Archaeological Research," 73.

[4] Nutt, "Archaeological Research," 74.

[5] Nutt, "Archaeological Research," 74.

[6] Nutt, "Archaeological Research," 74.

prehistoric man, or was it the study of the contemporary primitive, or could it potentially be both?

Following on, Nutt voiced another question inextricably linked with the first: was the goal of folklore "the study of certain psychical phenomena of man in a particular stage of culture without special reference to its bearing upon the question of his origin or the story of his earliest growth," or was it "the reconstruction of particular chapters in the past history of the race"?[7] The ultimate question for folklorists during in the 1880s and 1890s was, "in a word, was folk-lore to be ethnological or archæological?"[8] By ethnological Nutt meant the paradigm commonly associated with anthropology, which had emerged in the last decade, was increasingly focused on the cultural productions of contemporary populations, and aimed almost exclusively at the discovery and delineation of universal "psychical" (psychological) phenomena. This paradigm also, as Nutt remarked, had begun to show markedly less interest in the questions of racial origins and historical investigation that had so occupied anthropologists of previous decades.[9] The alternative, archaeological discourse, in Nutt's sense, meant the historical paradigm associated with Gomme's approach: the stratigraphically focused excavation of the past, in which analysis as the notation of artifacts' interrelation to each other within any given stratum was undertaken towards the ultimate goal of illuminating the successive strata, or stages, in the history of "the race." As Nutt put it:

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[7] Nutt, "Archaeological Research," 74.

[8] Nutt, "Archaeological Research," 74.

[9] See George C. Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (London: Macmillan, 1987) for an account of the historical comparative paradigm in British anthropology.

Archæology seeks to recover the past of man under all its aspects, and investigates with equal curiosity the record of speech and custom, of myth and handicraft, of ritual and literature, comparing and controlling the one by the other.[10]

While Nutt later suggested that folklore might perhaps be more productively allied with the discipline of archaeology,[11] he admitted that a continued harmony between the two methods – anthropological and archaeological – remained the prevailing and even the "orthodox doctrine of folk-lorists at the present day."[12] He emphasized the shared paradigm of the archaeological and the ethnological folklorist, arguing that both began with the assumption that "the belief and fancy of the relatively uncultured European peasant are substantially of the same *essence* as those of the absolutely uncultured savage, and that observations made in the one case may profitably be used to supplement and to control observations made in the other case" (emphasis added).[13]

Nutt's attempts to both relocate folklore within the bounds of archaeology and yet at the same time continue its relationship to anthropology appear at the outset to be contradictory, and indeed as previously discussed, his later ambivalence, in 1898 and 1899, to Gomme's institutionally-focused approach to folklore also appears incongruent with this statement of preference for the so-called archaeological approach. His motivations are more clearly understood, however, when framed by the larger context of culture research and discourse, within which dramatic shifts had recently taken place. Gillian Bennett has provided a detailed account of the effects of paradigm shifts in anthropology on the discursive stability of the FLS; she notes in particular the

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[10] Alfred Nutt, "Recent Research in Folk-Lore," *Archaeological Review* 3 (1889): 87.

[11] Nutt, "Research in Folk-Lore," 87.

[12] Nutt, "Research in Folk-Lore," 75.

[13] Nutt, "Research in Folk-Lore," 75.

disciplinary changes taking effect in anthropological and archaeological circles, with the former moving towards what Nutt had identified as the universalist model, and the latter away from the classic comparativist approach that had formerly linked it to contemporary culture research. This division of the sciences meant that the previous overarching paradigm, which had equated distance in space and distance in time within the larger structure of Lyellian uniformitarianism, and thus permitted cross-comparison between ancient and modern "primitives," was no longer tenable. As Bennett says, "Classic cultural evolutionists had changed space into time in order to make the "primitive" people they studied relevant to prehistory . . . "psychological" evolutionists reversed that process – distance in space reverted to being simply distance in space – and the temporal component was dropped from the equation."[14] What this meant for folklore during the period was a radical change in the larger context and potential significance of their discipline as a whole.

What makes this period in the history of British culture-study fascinating is that between the 1880s, when questions of disciplinary focus came to the fore, and the early decades of the twentieth century, work on racial-cultural origins undertaken within the bounds of folklore research exhibited the subtle spectrum of conflicting interpretation and ideology characteristic of paradigm interregnum, reorientation, and theoretical shift. This period of discursive restructuring produced a rich variety of closely related, yet divergent discourses aimed at the potential resolution of paradoxes and rifts within the philosophy and practice of the science of folklore. These varied narratives, when examined for both their consensus and their dissent, exhibit a rich and at times surprising portrait of the issues at stake during the period, and the ways in which both the study of

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[14] Gillian Bennett, "Geologists and Folklorists" *Folklore* 105 (1994): 32.

the past, and the past itself, were conceived and narrated. Such an examination also yields indications of the subtle ideological inheritances of many modern discourses, particularly those inheritances which have been obscured by exactly those shifts which moved the paradigm of culture study away from the late nineteenth-century form in which folklore as a science was practiced.

The first section of this thesis focused on Sir Laurence Gomme because he is marked out by his activity within the Folklore Society, the contemporary reception of his research, and by later historians of nineteenth-century culture study as singularly influential on the formation of folklore's disciplinary practice and ideology. A clear example of this can be found in one of the immediate results of the debate over definitions cited above by Alfred Nutt. In 1889 the Folklore Society published its "Annual Report," in which the need to resolve issues of disciplinary boundaries was clearly at the forefront of official concerns. The report called for immediate and concrete measures to be taken in order to solidify the boundaries and goals of the discipline, and outlined "three important sections of work" to be undertaken to ensure that the Society, which "has taken an almost entirely new departure" from its original form, might "best advance the study" and "seriously commence the work of sifting and examining the great body of already-collected Folk-Lore."[15] These areas were "(1) Bibliography of Folk-Lore; (2) Handbook for Collectors; (3) A systematic arrangement of existing collections."[16] Of the three proposed areas of work, the first two were completed by Gomme (and indeed were already in production when the Report, which was also co-written by Gomme as the Director, was published). Between 1882 and 1884 he had

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[15] Andrew Lang and George Laurence Gomme, "Annual Report of the Council," *The Folk-Lore Journal* 7 (1889): 2.

[16] Lang and Gomme, "Annual Report," 2.

already published five bibliographies of folk-lore publications in English,[17] and his *Handbook of Folk-Lore*, which had "been in preparation for the past two years," was published by the FLS in 1890.[18] Finally, while he does not appear to have individually undertaken the task of "examining and sifting . . . existing collections of Folk-Lore," it was his scheme for the collection and classification of folklore that was both approved and printed by the Council in the same volume as a guide for interested members.[19]

One further indication of the critical influence Gomme had over the formation of the folklore paradigm can be traced in the history of the *Handbook of Folk-Lore.* His text was published in 1890, an event which caused Nutt to remark with some ambivalence that "a quasi-official sanction" had thus been given "to his [Gomme's] view of the study."[20] The *Handbook* was revised and re-issued in 1914 by Charlotte Sophia Burne, president of the FLS (1909-1910) and editor of *Folklore* (1900-1908); while Burne made amendments to Gomme's material, she deliberately did not alter the "scheme of classification . . . for the original edition," only making "such modifications of detail as experience and extended knowledge have shown to be desirable."[21] She was furthermore quite clear about her reasons for retaining the essential theoretical structure of Gomme's original text: "That its retention should have been found possible, in spite of the great development of the study during the last quarter of the century, is no small

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[17] George Laurence Gomme, "Bibliography of Folk-Lore Publications in English (A-B)," *The Folk-Lore Record* 5 (1882): 55-80; Gomme, "Bibliography of Folk-Lore publications in English (Part II)," *The Folk-Lore Journal* 1 (1883): 77-84; Gomme, "Bibliography of Folk-Lore publications in English (Part II) (Continued)," *The Folk-Lore Journal* 1 (1883): 344-350; Gomme, "Bibliography of Folk-Lore Publications in English (Part II) (Continued)," *The Folk-Lore Journal* 1 (1883): 387-394; and Gomme, "Bibliography of Folk-Lore Publications in English [Continued]," *The Folk-Lore Journal* 2 (1884): 197-206.

[18] Lang and Gomme, "Annual Report," 3.

[19] Lang and Gomme, "Annual Report," 3.

[20] Nutt, "Archaeological Research," 75.

[21] Charlotte Sophia Burne, *The Handbook of Folklore* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1914), v.

testimony to the prescience of its author."[22]   Indeed, Burne's opinion of Gomme's view was largely unaltered from her comments of 1885 during the debate over definitions and disciplinary boundaries:

> If I were asked the question, "Which of the proposed schemes would prove the most useful in practice?" I should answer without hesitation, Mr. Gomme's.   I read his paper on "The Science of Folk-Lore" in the last number of the *Journal* with feelings something like those of a student who, after painfully striving to master some difficult language with the aid of a dictionary alone, suddenly finds a grammar put into his hands. Mr. Nutt's and Mr. Hartland's vast "Redistribution Bills," on the other hand, I am sorry to say, roused a feeling of bewilderment.[23]

Burne, writing twenty-four years after the original publication of Gomme's Handbook, still found Gomme's paradigm of folklore and its classification not only relevant, but instructive for future generations of folklorists – a telling indication of the degree to which Gomme shaped the discursive boundaries of folklore for nearly the entirety of his professional life.

Of course this is not to suggest that Gomme's paradigm for the science of folklore ever exercised absolute dominance over all work undertaken in the field; rather, precedence is given to Gomme in this examination because not only is his work, on the whole, exemplary of the complexities of folklore discourse in this period, but it also provides a perspective from which dissensions, variations, and alternative narratives may be better contextualized towards a fuller realization of the issues at stake in late nineteenth-century investigations into racial, cultural, and national history. As Bennett makes clear, the work of late nineteenth-century folklorists, perhaps due to the instability of their own disciplinary form, did not ultimately succeed in founding an academic

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[22] Burne, *The Handbook of Folklore*, v.

[23] Burne, "The Science of Folklore," 97.

discipline, but they did produce "a theory of culture so comprehensive, elegant and satisfying that it became assimilated not only into the culture of the FLS, but into everyday popular conceptions of culture and society."[24]

From this perspective I will move forward to consider the work of two other researchers into Britain and Ireland's prehistoric origins: Sir John Rhŷs and Alfred Nutt. Both were members of the Folklore Society and shared the discursive boundaries exemplified by Gomme's work; that is, both tended to research and analyze within the so-called archaeological, or historical paradigm, and their work is in many ways similar to Gomme's insofar as both Nutt and Rhŷs aimed at the reconstruction of an original, racialized stratum in the prehistory of the modern British nation. Rhŷs and Nutt, however, not only focused on different material – both from Gomme and from each other – they also produced very different narratives of national origin from within their largely shared discursive context. The purpose of this examination is not to provide an exhaustive account of ethnological research in the early decades of the Folklore Society, nor is it to give a complete intellectual portrait of any of the three scholars discussed. While conceptions of race and nation were critical tools in the methodologies of Gomme, Rhŷs, and Nutt, it is not nineteenth-century ethnology per se that is the focus of this investigation. Rather, attention is paid to the theoretical and methodological consensus that bounds the work of these three scholars in order to provide a means of entry into the complex divergences within that consensus. It is these divergences which reveal a critical point in the rich and complex cultural and intellectual genealogy of notions of racial-cultural and national identity as they clustered around the twin concepts of origin and aboriginality.

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24 G. Bennett, "Geologists and Folklorists," 34.

CHAPTER FOUR

SIR JOHN RHŶS: OXFORD PROFESSOR OF CELTIC

According to Richard Dorson, Sir John Rhŷs (1840-1915) was the "most eminent spokesman" for "the cause of Welsh folklore" of his time,[1] an accolade even more striking given that Juliette Wood, in her review of the history of Welsh folkloristics, suggests that "Dorson rather underplays the importance of John Rhys."[2] Glyn Daniel cites Rhŷs' work on the history of the Celtic language as an "excellent example" of late nineteenth-century investigations into prehistory;[3] in the eyes of his fellow folklore scholars, he was not only "one of the foremost philologists of his day," but also "an authority whose reputation was everywhere recognized as of the highest rank."[4] John Fraser, in his entry on Rhŷs for *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, highlights in particular his "substantial contribution to the history of the Celts in Britain" and notes that Rhŷs was, in his own time, regarded as "foremost among the scholars" of philology, Celtic language and culture.[5] Throughout his work Rhŷs made extensive use of folklore to supplement and expand his linguistic research, and it is this aspect of his career that will form the focus of this chapter. This chapter will examine in particular the ethnological approach to folklore evident in Rhŷs' narration of the history of Britain and Europe and consider the ways in which it impacted his reading of languages and their movements. In consequence, I will draw out Rhŷs' sense of the ultimate function of his

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[1] Richard Dorson, *The British Folklorists* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), 419.

[2] Juliette Wood, "Perceptions of the Past in Welsh Folklore Studies," *Folklore* 108 (1997): 94.

[3] Glyn Daniel, *150 Years of Archaeology* (London: Duckworth, 1975), 184.

[4] Edwin Sidney Hartland, "Rt. Hon. Sir John Rhŷs," *Folklore* 27 (1916): 110.

[5] John Fraser, "Sir John Rhŷs," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

own discipline within contemporary research into human and social origins, his methodological approach to language and culture as scientific materials, and his conclusions about the racial and linguistic history of Britain and Western Europe.

1. *Philological Uses for the Folklore Archive*

Any appreciation of the significance of Rhŷs' work to the development of folklore's discursive boundaries is necessarily dependent on a consideration of its primary intellectual context, which was the philological paradigm within which Rhŷs both trained and worked. Rhŷs spent his summers while at Oxford studying philology in Leipzig and Göttingen (1870-71), instructed by such scholars as the eminent classicist and Indo-Europeanist Georg Curtius and the Slavic linguist August Leskien. German philology, as a form of language and culture study, was in the nineteenth century characterized, as R. H. Robins has noted, by a "comparative and historical" approach; its discursive concerns centered on "the study of culture and civilization through literary documents," and it was often styled as "the aesthetic and humanistic study of literature" as the deepest expression of the human group that produced it.[6] Importantly, as Robins makes clear, "it is a commonplace in linguistics to say that the nineteenth century was the era of the comparative and historical study of languages, more especially of the Indo-European [Aryan] languages,"[7] and Germany, unlike Britain wherein the study of language was only beginning to gain an academic foothold, possessed a long tradition of

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[6] Robert H. Robins, *General Linguistics: An Introductory Survey* (London: Longman, 1964), 6.

[7] Robert H. Robins, *A Short History of Linguistics*, 3rd ed. (London: Longman, 1990), 180.

university-supported linguistic research and education. Thus, in the nineteenth century, "linguistics was almost the preserve of German scholarship, and those working in it were either trained in Germany . . . or were German expatriates."[8] Further, as Robins, Anna Morpurgo Davies, and Tuska Benes emphasize, the presence of Georg Curtius and August Leskien in Leipzig in particular had earned it an extraordinarily high reputation as a center for the study of language; that Rhŷs trained not only in Leipzig but under both of these scholars locates him squarely in the center of his field.[9]

Rhŷs' sense of the scientific function of comparative philology changed steadily throughout his career and moved toward a conception of the discipline as the precise delineation of the history of discrete human groups by means of their linguistic traces. His early contributions to the field, such as *Lectures on Welsh Philology* (1877) and *On the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by Celtic Heathendom* (1888),[10] operated well within the discursive boundaries of a mid-century paradigm for philological inquiry, and focused on the systematic reconstruction of language relationships and descent within the Aryan, or Indo-European family.[11] These texts echoed the prevailing tendency of the period to regard the reconstruction of the original Aryan parent-language, or *ursprache*, as the primary goal of all philological investigation, and were consequently structured as contributions toward that goal.

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[8] Robins, *A Short History of Linguistics*, 187.

[9] Robins, *A Short History of Linguistics*, 180-217; Anna Morpurgo Davies, "Karl Brugmann and Late Nineteenth-Century Linguistics," in *Studies in the History of Western Linguistics*, ed. Theodora Bynon and F. R. Palmer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 150-171; Davies, *Nineteenth-Century Linguistics*, vol. 4, History of Linguistics, ed. Giulio Lepschy (London: Longman, 1992), 228, 270 and Tuska Benes, *In Babel's Shadow: Language, Philology and the Nation in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008), 241.

[10] John Rhŷs, *Lectures on Welsh Philology* (London: Trübner, 1877) and Rhŷs, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by Celtic Heathendom* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1888).

[11] For further reading on mid-century Indo-European philology see Davies, *Nineteenth-Century Linguistics*, especially 165-189, and Robins, *A Short History of Linguistics*, 180-202.

Further, as Davies notes, while "the desire to use linguistic facts to reconstruct prehistoric events" was not new to mid-century linguistics, it was "strong and was soon yielded to," and the research of scholars in the field quickly began to "move from words to *realia* or to *spiritualia*, i.e. to cultural facts in general."[12]   This approach was exemplified by the work of Friedrich Max Müller, who declared confidently in 1861 that the testimony of language "will serve as evidence as to the state of civilisation attained by the Aryans before they left their common home;"[13] this vision of philology is apparent in Rhŷs' early work as well, and in *Lectures on Welsh Philology*, he "discovers" a primitive religious and ordered society from the presence of certain word forms in Celtic. He also in this text finds evidence that the original Aryan "seems to have been a master of his house," existing in a "patriarchal system of government" and professing a belief in a god who reigned supreme over other gods.[14]   In his later research, however, Rhŷs' philological approach moved toward the historical reconstruction of Celtic language and culture; in this he followed the shift in German philology during the 1870s away from the reconstruction of the *ursprache* as the ultimate goal and toward a more uniformitarian and geological paradigm, in which the structures of ancient languages might be reconstructed using the example of living dialect and speech.[15]   The result of this shift is particularly apparent in the focus of Rhŷs' later texts such as *The Welsh People* (1900), but the historical-ethnological approach that characterizes his *Celtic Britain* (1882) and *Rhind Lectures* (1890-1891) indicates that he moved away from the classic Indo-Europeanist focus early in his career. Thus, in these later texts, Rhŷs concentrated on the delineation of language history from the evidence of folklore and contemporary dialect

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[12] Davies, *Nineteenth-Century Linguistics*, 174-175.

[13] Friedrich Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language Delivered at the Royal Institution of Great Britain in April, May, & June 1861*, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, Green Longman and Roberts, 1862), 235.

[14] John Rhŷs, *Lectures on Welsh Philology*, 11-14.

[15] See Robins, *General Linguistics*.

rather than on the reconstruction of the prehistoric state of the Aryan parent language and race. Whereas in his early research folklore, and the remnants of language were used in order to establish the place of Celtic language and legend in the pantheon of Aryan descendant languages, Rhŷs quickly began to make use of largely the same archive but toward the goal of delineating the historical evolution of the varieties of Celtic in Europe and Britain.

Rhŷs argued that major linguistic shifts within Celtic tended to be the product of contact between the given language and another language group. Thus, changes in language structure that could not be explained as internal developments did not necessarily indict language as an unscientific and therefore uninterpretable phenomenon, a potential threat to the discipline that had emerged in the 1870s, and was grounded in the problem of exceptions to sound change rules. The question of whether the laws of linguistic development admitted exceptions had been in effect since the beginning of the century, but it was during this period that the question of exceptions to linguistic laws began to be linked to questions about the scientific validity of contemporary approaches to the study of language. The emergence of the *Jungrammatiker* (or Neogrammarian) movement in Leipzig during this period was, as Davies has noted, a direct result of this paradigm crisis; their reorientation of philology toward a more overtly geological and uniformitarian paradigm was, in many respects, an attempt to address the problems posed by the notion that the laws of language-change admit exceptions.[16] The *Junggrammatiker* movement is associated most closely with Karl Brugmann and Hermann Osthoff, who co-wrote the 1878 preface to *Morphologische Untersuchungen* that is generally cited by modern scholars as the self-conscious "manifesto" of the new

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[16] See Davies, *Nineteenth-Century Linguistics*, 226-278; Davies, "Karl Brugmann," 154-162, and Robins, *Short History of LInguistics*, 201-211.

approach.[17]   In it, Brugmann and Osthoff directly challenged the prevailing mode of philological approach that saw language as a phenomenon unrelated to either its speakers or its historical and cultural context; as Davies makes clear, the *Junggrammatiker* movement was emphatic that "language cannot be an organism which develops according to laws of its own independently of the speakers . . . we can understand how languages change only if we observe how change occurs in present-day languages and assume the same types of development apply to all phases of linguistic history."[18]   This overtly uniformitarian revamping of philological practice also extended to the material of language itself, and one of the most critical demands made by these scholars was that philology recognize as an absolute principle that "sounds change [in a language] according to 'mechanical' laws which in principle suffer no exception."[19]   This discursive revolution emphasized the critical importance of establishing the scientific quality of the linguistic archive; like folklorists of the same period, the *Junggrammatiker* were intensely concerned with the problem of inconsistency, a problem that could potentially disqualify their material and hence their study as a true science.   Like folklorists, they reoriented their approach to the archive and re-characterized the archive itself as *in principle* consistent and scientifically viable.   Reasons for apparent exceptions to the laws of sound change had therefore to be discovered, and one of the primary means for this was a renewed interest in the human and cultural context within which languages developed and interacted.   Hence, to return to Rhŷs, contact between human groups forms a central feature of Rhŷs' paradigm for the history of the Celtic language and interracial interaction appears at key moments in his work as the kinetic force behind the

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[17] Hermann Osthoff and Karl Brugmann, "Vorwort," *Morphologische Untersuchungen auf dem Gebiete der indogermanischen Sprachen* 1 (1878), iii-xx.

[18] Davies, "Karl Brugmann," 154-155.

[19] Davies, "Karl Brugmann," 155. See also Robins, *Short History of Linguistics*, 202.

movement and development of language itself. These movements, amalgamations, and divergences are also the ultimate focus of his investigations, and he employs linguistic traces to reconstruct the map of the Celtic migration into Western Europe that eventually produced the modern populations of Britain.

Thus, in Rhŷs' paradigm, language change produced an eminently scientific archive, one that admitted no exceptions and proceeded along quantifiable lines. The mutations of a language formed a readable narration of a racial history of which it was the expression or trace, whether preserved in the speech of the isolated rural poor, on an early medieval border stone, or in a Welsh manuscript. As races migrated, came into contact with each other, and formed new and hybrid races, so language, the scientifically observable production of a race, retained signs of that history:

> Skulls are harder than consonants, and races lurk behind when languages slink away. The lineal descendants of the neolithic aborigines are ever among us, possibly even those of a still earlier race. On the other hand, we can imagine the Kynesian [non-Aryan] impatiently hearing out the last echoes of palæolithic speech; we can guess dimly how the Goidel gradually silenced the Kynesian; we can detect the former coming slowly round to the keynote of the Brython; and lastly, we know how the Englishman is engaged, linguistically speaking, in drowning the voice of both in our own day.[20]

While language might not be the mirror of a race, it was certainly the record, and it transmitted through manuscript, folklore, and dialect the spirit of the people that produced it.

During the years following his studies in Leipzig, Rhŷs (who changed the spelling of his name from Rees during this time) began to publish his findings on the

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[20] John Rhŷs, *Celtic Britain* (London: SPCK, 1904), 278.

Celtic language; he contributed to the *Revue Celtique* as early as 1870,[21] published

descriptive linguistic research in both *The Academy*[22] and *Archæologia Cambrensis*,[23]

and finally cemented his reputation as a Celtic scholar of the first rank with the

publication of his 1874 *Lectures on Welsh Philology*,[24] a text which by all accounts won

him the prestige of being the first occupant of the Jesus Professorship of Celtic at

Oxford, [25] a post he held from 1877 till his death. Throughout his academic career Rhŷs

continued to publish extensively; his contributions to the study of language and the past

ranged from broad and historically-minded philological tomes such as the highly

respected *Rhind Lectures*,[26] to descriptive linguistic research, as exemplified by his

lifelong contribution to the epigraphical study of British and continental Ogham stones.

Rhŷs also contributed to the growing body of critical editions of medieval texts; he

collaborated with the Welsh paleographer J. Gwenovgyryn Evans to produce a series of

critical editions of early Welsh manuscripts, including material from the *Red Book of*

Hergest and the Gwysaney manuscript. [27] It was his more wide-reaching texts, however,

rather than his specialized contributions to the nascent field of British linguistic research,

that ultimately earned him his reputation as a front-ranking scholar of the British and

especially the Celtic past; texts such as *On the Origin and Growth of Religion as*

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[21] John Rhŷs, "The Luxembourg Folio," *Revue Celtique* 1 (London: Trübner, 1870-72): 346-375.

[22] John Rhŷs, "Latin Words in Welsh," *Academy* 2 (1871): 255.

[23] John Rhŷs, "On Some of our British Inscriptions," *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 4 (1873): 74.

[24] John Rhŷs, *Lectures on Welsh Philology*.

[25] John Fraser, "Sir John Rhŷs," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

[26] Rhŷs' six-part contributions to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland's Rhind Lecture Series was first published in *The Scottish Review*. See Sir John Rhŷs, "The Early Ethnology of the British Isles," *Scottish Review* 15 (1890): 233-252; "Traces of a Non-Aryan Element in the Celtic Family," *Scottish Review* (1890): 30-47; "The Mythographical Treatment of Celtic Ethnology," *Scottish Review* 16 (1890): 240-256; "The Peoples of Ancient Scotland," *Scottish Review* 17 (1891): 60-82; "The Spread of Gaelic in Scotland," *Scottish Review* 17 (1891): 332-349; and "Certain National Names of the Aborigines of the British Isles," *Scottish Review* 18 (1891): 120-143.

[27] John Rhŷs and Gwenogvryn Evans, eds., *The Text of the Mabinogion* (Oxford: J. G. Evans, 1887) and *The Text of the Bruts* (Oxford: J. G. Evans, 1890).

Illustrated by Celtic Heathendom,[28] *Studies on the Arthurian Legend,*[29] *The Welsh People,*[30] *Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx,*[31] and *Celtic Britain,*[32] are not only exemplary of the ethnological interests apparent in his philological approach to the British past, but are also those which were of particular and enduring interest to both the Folklore Society and a wider readership.

Rhŷs' first appearance in the member lists of the Folklore Society occurs in 1889, although Allan Gomme indicates that he joined the society in 1887,[33] and he first contributed to *Folklore* in 1892.[34] While he appears to have published in the journal on no more than five occasions during his long membership (c.1887-1915), he served as vice-president from as early as 1893 until his death in 1915, read papers at Society meetings, and maintained close friendships with prominent and active folklorists such as Alfred Nutt and Edwin Sidney Hartland. Unlike both Gomme and Nutt, whose administrative and intellectual influence on the FLS is visible throughout the Society's publications, Rhŷs' presence and role is harder to identify; while it is clear that he was both a contributing and a respected member, it is likewise apparent that the Society was not his primary intellectual locus. This in all probability stemmed from his vast catalog of outside responsibilities: he was not only Professor of Celtic but also official Fellow and Bursar of Jesus College from 1881 until 1895 when he was elected Principal of the

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[28] Rhŷs, *Celtic Heathendom.* See page 119, footnote 10.

[29] John Rhŷs, *Studies on the Arthurian Legend* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891).

[30] John Rhŷs and David Brynmor-Jones, *The Welsh People* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1900).

[31] John Rhŷs, *Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1901; reissued by London: Wildwood House Limited, 1980).

[32] John Rhŷs, *Celtic Britain*.

[33] Allan Gomme, "The Folklore Society: Whence and Whither," *Folklore* 63 (1952): 6.

[34] John Rhŷs, "Manx Folklore and Superstitions. II," *Folklore* 3 (1892); 74-88.

college, an appointment he held until his death. He furthermore served on many official committees throughout his lifetime, working "tirelessly in the cause of educational and social progress" both at Oxford and in Wales.[35]

However much his activities and responsibilities outside the Folklore Society occupied his time, Rhŷs' fellow folklorists counted him among their most respected colleagues, acknowledging him as not only a gifted linguist, but as one who succeeded in the "attempt to unravel the early history and prehistory of a country by means other than archaeological ones."[36] Glyn Daniel not only calls Rhŷs the "great Welsh scholar" in his *150 Years of Archaeology*, but also cites him as an exemplar of late nineteenth-century attempts to "equate linguistic groupings with archaeological facts," noting that Rhŷs' work exercised "considerable influence" on the study of Celtic prehistory in Britain.[37] In particular, Daniel highlights *Celtic Britain* and *The Welsh People* as having shaped research into prehistoric Celtic language and race in Britain. Thus while Rhŷs was not involved in the life and administration of the FLS to the extraordinary degree of either Gomme or Nutt, it is clear that he gained a great deal of respect as both a linguist and as a folklorist, not only from members of the Society, but from the scholarly community at large. Beyond the reception of both his linguistic and more generalist historical linguistic publications, his appointment to the Chair of Celtic at Oxford, to the Presidency of the Myth, Ritual and Magic Section at the International Folklore Congress

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[35] Fraser, "Sir John Rhŷs," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. A partial list of the committees of which Rhŷs was a member includes: Lord Aberdare's Committee on Education in Wales (1881), Secretary of the Commission to Enquire into the Tithe Troubles in Wales (1887), Secretary of the Commission to Enquire into Sunday Closing in Wales (1889), Member of the Commission on Land in Wales (1893), Member of the Commission on University Education in Ireland (1901), Member of the Commission on the University of Wales and its Constituent Colleges (1907), Member of the Commission on a National University for Ireland (1908), and was at his death in 1915 Chairman of the Commission on Ancient Monuments in Wales.

[36] Daniel, *150 Years of Archaeology*, 184.

[37] Daniel, *150 Years of Archaeology*, 184.

of London in 1891, and to the Presidency of the Anthropological Section of the British Association in 1900 speak to his standing and reputation within the wider scholarly community and public readership; that he both received a knighthood in 1907 and an appointment to the Privy Council in 1911 further underscores his position in late nineteenth-century discourse as an authority on the British racial and linguistic past.

Rhŷs' work as a philologist concerned with the history and development of the Celtic language, coupled with his training in the newly emergent methods of the field, particularly those concerned with the use of living dialect as a means for effecting that reconstruction, ensured that folklore would form a central part of his archive, and it is critical to consider precisely how he imagined that source should be used toward a philological end. For this purpose, I will consider the account of the method and project of the science of folklore that he gives in the pages of *Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx*. From this context it will then be possible to move more clearly through his contributions to British ethnology and prehistory, to tease out his position within the broader paradigm of culture-research, and to illuminate the implications of his perspective on the aboriginal element of the national population.

Part of Rhŷs' goal in *Celtic Folklore* was to provide for Welsh folklore what the collector John Campbell of Islay had done in his vast bibliography of Scottish folklore and custom, published in 1860 as *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*.[38] Rhŷs' effort toward the collection and classification of Welsh folklore never quite matched in quantity the massive catalogue of Campbell's, but according to Rhŷs he was not "wholly unprepared" to find an incomplete and fragmentary record, and spent the majority of his

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[38] John Francis Campbell, ed., *Popular Tales of the West Highlands Orally Collected. With a Translation by J. F. Campbell*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglass, 1860-62).

work in the two volumes piecing material together in order to "fit them [the fragments] into their proper context."[39]   While Dorson presents Campbell's and Rhŷs' texts as identical attempts at identical projects, and concludes simply that against "the overflowing abundance" of Campbell's collection *Celtic Folklore* makes a sorry showing,"[40]   this account of Rhŷs' text misconstrues Rhŷs' own motivations for undertaking his project.   Rhŷs himself makes clear in the opening pages of *Celtic Folklore* that while he was inspired by Campbell's efforts, his own reason for researching the folklore of Wales was to "open up a considerable vista into the early ethnology of these islands," to illuminate the "variety of questions bearing on the fortunes here of other races," including such "subsidiary questions" as "the origin of Druidism," "the intimate association of the Arthur of Welsh folklore," and "Arthur's attitude towards the Goidelic population in his time."[41]   His intent in publishing *Celtic Folklore* was not to replicate Campbell's fieldwork, but rather to perform an act of classic philological research and delineate diachronically the racial-cultural context of the linguistic evidence at hand, which is precisely what his text does.

Celtic Folklore, as Rhŷs most self-consciously "folkloric" effort, also provides a clear insight into his sense of the discourse of folklore.   In the opening paragraphs of a chapter entitled, appropriately enough, "Difficulties of the Folklorist," he voices a classic apologia for the cause of folklore as a viable and important science, calling attention to assumed critiques of folklore's "trivial" subject matter.   While this formal defense of the science echoes the spirit of passages to be found in the texts of the majority of folklorists

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[39] Rhŷs, *Celtic Folklore*, 1:[i].

[40] Dorson, *The British Folklorists*, 420.

[41] Rhŷs, *Celtic Folklore,* 1:[v-vi].

working during this period, in Rhŷs' reasons for defense some of his more subtle ideas about the benefits of the science to his own work can be traced:

> At first sight, some of the superstitions seem so silly and absurd, that one cannot wonder that those who have not gone deeply into the study of the human mind should think them trivial, foolish, or absurd. It is, however, not improbable that they are the results of early attempts to think out the mysteries of nature; and our difficulty is that the thinking was so infantile, comparatively speaking, that *one finds it hard to put one's self back into the mental condition of early man.*[42] (emphasis added)

It is telling to compare this perspective with Gomme's explanation for the apparent irrationality of the folklore record; whereas for Rhŷs the barrier is psychological, Gomme was clear that it was the extinction of the original culture system and the resulting incomplete record that was the cause for folklore fragments to appear incongruous. While Gomme concurred that a vast gulf of psycho-cultural progress separated the authors of tradition from the scientist, it was not empathy with an original state of mind that would reveal original meaning. Rather, for Gomme, the recovery of meaning resulted from the assiduous docketing and analysis of the folklore record toward the construction of a "shattered mosaic," or rough replica of the original system. With this facsimile to hand, individual folkloric remnants might finally be interpreted against the patterns made evident in the replica of the institutional frame. For Dorson, Rhŷs' tendency to identify the function of folklore with the reconstruction of the whole "history of the human mind and the record of its development,"[43] marked him as an Aryan-focused psychological folklorist, one only superficially committed to the historical reconstruction of racial and cultural history. Indeed, Dorson somewhat simplifies the issue by declaring flatly that "although a comrade in arms of the anthropological

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[42] Rhŷs, *Celtic Folklore,* 2:571.

[43] Rhŷs, *Celtic Folklore*, 2:559.

folklorists, by intellectual predilection Rhŷs would have favoured the companionship of Max Müller. He did indeed have solar sympathies."[44] While Rhŷs did dedicate his 1877 *Lectures on Welsh Philology*[45] to Professor Max Müller (along with Whitley Stokes), there is no indication that his early respect for Max Müller (an admiration which Gomme also shared in his youth) continued into his later academic career. In fact, the sustained and heated polemic against both solar mythology and classic Indo-European philology voiced in his *Welsh Folklore* indicates that Rhŷs' mature intellectual predilections were far from the earlier Aryan-centric model of philological and mythological research:

> You might, one was told, compare the myths of the Greek and Teutons and Hindus, because those nations were considered to be of the same stock . . . This kind of mythology was eclectic rather than comparative, and it was apt to regard myths as a mere disease of language . . . At one time the student of language was satisfied with mummified speech, wrapped up, as it were, in the musty coils of the records of the past: in fact, he often became a mere researcher of the dead letter of the language, instead of a careful observer of the breath of life animating her frame.[46]

By contrast to this paradigm, vilified as both outdated and limited, Rhŷs presents a new and more progressive method, in which a union between the study of custom and the study of language is at the fore: "the study of language has been inseparably accompanied with the paying of increased attention to actual speech," and "the student of mythology now seeks the wherewithal of his comparisons . . . not from the *Rig-Veda* or the *Iliad* alone, but from the rude stories of the peasant, and the wild fancies of the savage from Tierra del Fuego to Greenland's icy mountains."[47] Pushing his parallel

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[44] Dorson, *The British Folklorists*, 423.

[45] Rhŷs, *Lectures on Welsh Philology*.

[46] Rhŷs, *Celtic Folklore*, 2:639-640.

[47] Rhŷs, *Celtic Folklore*, 2:640-641.

further, Rhŷs argues that between the methods of the researcher of myth, or folklore, and the researcher of language there is no real divide at all:

> Just as the glottologist, fearing lest the written letter may have slurred over or hidden away important peculiarities of ancient speech, resorts for a corrective to the actuality of modern Aryan, so the mythologist, apt to suspect the testimony of the highly respectable bards of the *Rig-Veda*, may on occasion give ear to the fresh evidence of a savage, however inconsequent it may sound.[48]

Rhŷs saw his own research as proceeding very much in tandem with the work of the folklorist and advocated what Dorson has called a "marriage" between "mythology and 'glottology,' what for Rhŷs constituted the practice of comparative philology."[49] Rhŷs was clearly conscious of the fact that discursive shifts in both philology and in folklore had brought the two disciplines into a potential intellectual partnership, and while others of his publications do not address so explicitly as *Celtic Folklore* the scientific usages of custom and legend, he not only made substantial use of the folklore archive throughout his academic career, but also continued to perform his investigations very much within the context of the comparative and historically focused discourse on culture origins so evident in this text.

3. The Evidence of Race in Language

Before proceeding into a more detailed examination of Rhŷs' research, it is critical that the connotative context of his terminology, and particularly his use of race

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[48] Rhŷs, *Celtic Folklore*, 2:641.

[49] Dorson, *The British Folklorists*, 423.

and language, be addressed. While in *Celtic Britain* he laments that "the influence of glottology [philology] has probably done more harm than good [for ethnology] . . . since it has opened up a wide field for confounding race with language,"[50] it would be misleading to assume from both this and other instances of Rhŷs' hesitation to equate language and race absolutely that his work had nothing to do with the extrapolation of racial history from the evidence of language. Quite the contrary. Rhŷs' objection, in *Celtic Britain*, was with the work of those scholars for whom the history of language and the history of race were absolutely synonymous, *not* with the use of language as a means by which ethnological research might be complemented and enlarged.   Indeed, the reconstruction of the history of the Celtic race was one of Rhŷs' primary intellectual ambitions; that he demurred to translate the historical presence and/or movement of a language as immediately indicative of an associated race's presence does not mean that he opposed the use of linguistic research towards the goal of proving exactly that kind of conclusion. Indeed, that the reconstruction of a race's history, identity, and movement was one of the central aims of the historical comparative paradigm of the German school of philology within which Rhŷs had trained is indicative of his own assumptions about the goal of his science and the appropriateness of its employment towards ethnological conclusions.

It is also important to note that in Rhŷs' work, and indeed throughout nineteenth- and early twentieth-century discourse concerned with human groups, the term "race" did not carry the biological and rigidly deterministic connotations now linked with it; rather, the connotative capacity of the term was extraordinarily broad, and it was used to differentiate and describe any variety of human groups, from European nationalities to

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[50] Rhŷs, *Celtic Folklore*, 2:641.

London's poor.[51] The kaleidoscope of terminology for the classification of human groups that developed in the mid-nineteenth century often hinged on underlying discursive instability, as in the case of the debate between the polygenists and the monogenists, wherein both developed a practical lexicography specific to their argument. One of the most telling outcomes of this debate was indeed the critical importance placed on the distinction between inter and intra species crosses – a taxonomical product of the attention paid to questions over human groups. Thus Thomas Henry Huxley emphasized in 1863 that the "mongrel," or the cross between races, must *never* be confused with the "hybrid," which was a cross between species.[52] Similarly the association of language with race, and indeed the use of language as a measure of racial presence and racial identity, had long been a part of discourse on culture and social origins, and questions about the specifics of this connection generated by increased attention to the history of language development in the mid-century resulted in an increased sensitivity to the use of the terms in connection with one another. While the subtle distinction between the interpretative implications of twin terms such as these was insisted upon by scholars at the height of the polygenist/monogenist debate, Robert J. C. Young has pointed out that "the irresolvable nature of the dispute meant that the terms 'hybridity' and 'mongrelity,'" like race and culture, or culture and language, "tended to be used interchangeably, particularly by those who wanted to confuse the distinction."[53] Not only that, the conceptual implications of the terminology generated during the debates of the 1860s survived their context and enjoyed new life in work undertaken at the end of the century.

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[51] See Nancy Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain, 1800-1960* (London: Macmillan, 1982); George Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (London: Macmillan, 1987) and Robert J. C. Young, *The Idea of English Ethnicity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004).

[52] Thomas Henry Huxley, *On the Origin of Species: Or, the Causes of the Phenomena of Organic Nature, A Course of Six Lectures to Working Men* (New York: D. Appleton, 1863), 423-424.

[53] Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1994), 10.

Rhŷs' own sense of the connection between language and race was developed early in his career, and in his *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by Celtic Heathendom* (1888), Rhŷs described what he considered to be the appropriate process of interpretation for the linguistic archive. When confronting the evidence of epigraphical artifacts or Roman records of Celtic names, Rhŷs emphasized that the traces of an Aryan language should not necessarily be assumed to have been made by Aryans themselves. Rather, Rhŷs suggests, one must "regard the original Aryans as having spread their language and institutions among other races by conquest," and so "the various nations of the world speaking Aryan languages are not all equally Aryan in point of blood."[54] While Rhŷs emphasizes that an awareness of the difference between language and race is of paramount importance to any serious scientific interrogation, he certainly does not argue for the absolute lack of connection between the two. It is important to note that while he suggests that the Aryan language may have been spoken by less than full-blooded Aryans (or hybrid Aryan/non-Aryans), he does not give any indication that he believed non-Aryans, utterly unrelated to the Aryan racially, would speak an Aryan language. The reason for this is Rhŷs' insistence that language and institutions were transmitted by means of racial contact between the Aryans and those they conquered. If language, like culture, was a manifestation of racial identity then it could not move in isolation, but transmitted the spirit of the race as a consequence of amalgamation, an event that necessarily passed on the capability to produce the unique speech of the conquering race. Rhŷs' use of Aryan in this sense presents the term, in both the racial and the linguistic sense, as epistemologically elastic – just as the Aryan language in Rhŷs' formulation is capable of remaining Aryan with an influx of non-

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[54] Rhŷs, *Celtic Heathendom*, 634.

Aryan syntax, so the Aryan race remains Aryan even after an amalgamation with a non-Aryan race.

In order to more fully grasp the role played by race and racial hybridity in Rhŷs' work, it will be necessary to consider the structure for the history of the Celtic language that developed throughout his work. *Celtic Britain* provides one of his most detailed delineations of this history, beginning with the life of the Celtic race after it had migrated into Britain, which will be addressed here:

> At first the Goidel probably drove the Ivernian [non-Aryan aborigine] back towards the west and the north, but, when another invasion came, that of the Brythons, he was driven back in the same way; that is, he was, forced, so to say, into the arms of the Ivernian native, to make common cause with him against the common enemy. Then followed the amalgamation of the Goidelic and Ivernian elements; for wherever traces of the latter are found we seem to come upon the native in the process of making himself a Goidel, and before becoming Welsh or English in speech he first became Goidelic, in every sense south of the Clyde. This means, from the Celtic point of view, that the Goidelic race of history is not wholly Celtic or Aryan, but that it inherits in part a claim to the soil of these islands, derived from possession at a time when, as yet, no Aryan waggoner's team had approached the Atlantic.[55]

The earliest inhabitants of Britain were non-Aryan aborigines, whom Rhŷs associates most often with the Picts, but also calls the Ivernian[56] and the Kynesian;[57] their immediate successors were the two major divisions of the Celtic people, the Goidelic and the Brythonic, with the former taking in the Gaelic of Ireland, the Isle of Man and Scotland and the latter Welsh, the dialects of Brittany, and Old Cornish.[58] The Celtic migrations into Britain Rhŷs therefore divided into two main invasions, which he

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[55] Rhŷs, *Celtic Britain*, 276-277.

[56] Rhŷs, *Celtic Heathendom*, 528.

[57] Rhŷs, *Celtic Britain*, 278.

[58] Rhŷs and Brynmor-Jones, *The Welsh People*, 2.

diagnosed by means of distinctive language variations; hence Britain was invaded first by the Goidelic Celts and later by the Brythonic Celts. Further, according to Rhŷs, "it is hardly open to doubt that the Goidelic race was profoundly modified in many respects by its absorption and assimilation of the indigenous element," and he cites with approval Charles H. Read's contention that "the term Goidelic should strictly be confined to the mixed population in possession of the country when the Brythons arrived."[59] The Goidelic migration into Britain was followed at a later stage by the invasion of the Brythonic Celts, who not only caused the further hybridization of the non-Aryan and Goidelic populations by forcing them into closer quarters, but also themselves mixed with the latter; an event that Rhŷs clearly imagines as effecting the transmission of a lineal inheritance of the "claim to the soil of these islands" from the original non-Aryan inhabitants to the Brythonic Celts.

According to Rhŷs, "conscious distinction of race [in Wales] had probably been obliterated before the eleventh century,"[60] and in any case the period after the major Teutonic invasions is of little concern to Rhŷs, whose portrait of Welsh identity is wholly non-Aryan, Goidelic, and Brythonic. He makes clear that while the Romans, Scandinavians, and scattered other races invaded Wales occasionally, the Romans only mixed with the Brythons in select Romanized towns, "the Scandinavians must have lost their idioms and distinctiveness in the languages and nationality of their Celtic neighbors," the Normans "were eventually absorbed in the body of the Welsh people and adopted the Welsh language," and the Flemish, because they "partly resisted the

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[59] Rhŷs, *Celtic Britain*, 264. Rhŷs is almost certainly citing Charles H. Read, *A Guide to the Antiquities of the Bronze Age in the Department of British and Mediæval Antiquities* (London: Order of the Trustees, 1904), 22, which Rhŷs reviewed favorably in the same year *Celtic Britain* was published. See Rhŷs, "British Museum: A Guide to the Antiquities of the Bronze Age in the Department of British and Mediæval Antiquities, *Modern Philology* 2 (October, 1904): 225-229.

[60] Rhŷs and Brynmor-Jones, *The Welsh People*, 35.

temptation to merge his [their] national individuality in the amalgam," played no role in the "composition of the Welsh people."[61] Further, any intermixture between the Welsh and English (or even Irish) could not dramatically alter the racial composition of the former, "for the average Englishman is at most not much more Aryan than the average Welshman,"[62] and in both "the Aryan element forms, as it were, a mere sprinkling."[63]

Rhŷs' contention that the majority of the racial make-up of the populations of Wales, Britain, and Ireland was non-Aryan followed from his larger vision of Celtic migration across Europe, which he argued was characterized by the invasion of small, warlike forces who established a small "ruling class" over a larger native population. To support this, Rhŷs refers to Caesar's census of the continental Gaulish tribes, noting that according to this evidence the "Gaulish aristocracy formed a surprisingly small proportion" of the population,[64] one that acted as the aristocratic elite within a much larger body of non-Aryan natives.   From this, he argues that "the French of the present day," like the modern British, Welsh, and Irish, are "in the main, neither Gauls nor Aryans of any description so much as the lineal representatives of the inhabitants whom the Aryans found there."[65]   "The original Aryans," Rhŷs argues, "spread their language and institutions among other races by conquest" and amalgamation, rather than extermination, and thus "the various nations of the world speaking Aryan languages are not all equally Aryan in point of blood."[66]

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[61] Rhŷs and Brynmor-Jones, *The Welsh People*, 31, 35.

[62] Rhŷs and Brynmor-Jones, *The Welsh People*, 31.

[63] Rhŷs and Brynmor-Jones, *The Welsh People*, 32. See also Rhŷs, *Celtic Britain*, 218.

[64] Rhŷs and Brynmor-Jones, *The Welsh People*, 32.

[65] Rhŷs and Brynmor-Jones, *The Welsh People*, 32 and see also 13 and Rhŷs, *Celtic Britain*, 214.

[66] Rhŷs, *Celtic Heathendom*, 634.

5. Racial Hybridity and its Productions

Crucially, Rhŷs' theory of the early history of Britain was grounded in the delineation of the interaction and fusion between language groups, and in the extent to which these changes could be read as the register of racial movement and interaction. He was intensely interested in the historical emergence of linguistic composites, that is, in the hybridization of language and its function as an expression of racial hybridity, and focused much of his energy on unravelling the influences of older races and languages in later human groups, particularly in his native Wales. Thus his portrait of modern Britain was one that imagined race, language, and culture as the product of sustained interaction and hybridization between successive racial strata, but one whose ethnic core was the pre-Aryan. Unlike Gomme, for whom the relationship between the Aryan and the non-Aryan was always antagonistic and ultimately destructive, Rhŷs imagined the history of the Celtic language, and by implication race, to have been characterized by osmosis and modification, so much so that his extensive delineations of the historical variations of Celtic are grounded in an economy of hybridization that imagines Aryan and non-Aryan alike as fluid entities commingling within the larger narrative of British and European racial history. As he declared in his address to the British Association in 1900:

> I have proceeded on the principle that each successive band of conquerors has its race, language, and institutions eventually more or less modified by contact with the race, language, and institutions of those whom it has conquered . . . I have endeavoured in this address to substitute for the rabble of divinities and demons, of fairies and phantoms that disport themselves at large in Celtic legend, a possible series of peoples, to each of which should be ascribed its own proper attributes.[67]

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[67] John Rhŷs, "Address of the President of the Anthropological Section of the British Association," *Science* 12 (1900): 516.

Not only does this vision of British history make clear the overtly ethnological aim of Rhŷs' philological work, which sought to extract a succession of discrete human groups from the parade of legendary peoples, it also underscores the critical role played by racial and linguistic hybridity in his vision of the evolution of national identity. Indeed, while he traced the development of modern Britain from successive events of conquest and intermixture, he also imagined this model to be applicable to the history of all Aryan languages and races within Europe. Hence, while in texts that focused specifically on the *British* history of Celtic Rhŷs used the terms Goidelic and Brythonic to differentiate variants of the language, when the scope of his research extended into Europe a broader taxonomy was required to cope with the continental variants, which he identified as Gaulish and Celtican. Because "the Celts of the Continent, in ancient times, were similarly distinguished among themselves, the Gauls being of the same group as the Brythons and the Celticans of the same group as the Goidels," a new framework was required to account for the whole history of the Celtic language and people, both in Britain and Europe; for this Rhŷs chose to differentiate language variants as either Q or P, a distinction grounded in their respective uses of those consonants.

Significantly, this linguistic taxonomy was not merely tenable in the history of Celtic; rather, Rhŷs notes, the classification "of the Celts into a Q and a P group is not to be dismissed without reference to the like classification of certain other Aryans of Europe."[68] Thus, for Rhŷs, the migration of the Q Celts followed by the advance of the P Celts is paralleled in the linguistic and racial histories of both Italy and Greece, and Rhŷs is emphatic that one can "with certainty infer" that "the same division into a Q and

[68] Rhŷs, "The Early Ethnology of the British Isles," 243.

a P group once obtained in the Hellenic world."[69] That this distinction is an ethnological one is also clear and particularly evident in his extraordinary anthropomorphization of the linguistic variants of Aryan when explaining their historical movements:

> But what I want you particularly to notice is that the Q people, the Quintiuses, came into Italy first, and that the P people, the Pontiuses, arrived later, just as the Celtic people of the Q group, the Goidelic *macs*, arrived first in the Celtic lands, while the P Celts only came some time later.[70]

Within each Aryan branch the same pattern of movement, contact, and hybridization is repeated, with the Q variant of the language followed in turn by the P, but it is also critical to note the reasons Rhŷs imagined were behind this split of Aryan languages and races into Q and P variants in the first place. Just as in Britain, where the influence of a non-Aryan linguistic and racial presence directly influenced the development of a Celtic and eventually British population, so the language and race history of Europe was similarly grounded in Aryan and non-Aryan interaction. Hence Rhŷs argues for a further distinction to be made between the Q and P groups, one which he imagines provides the necessary impetus for the sudden and forceful invasion into the territory of the Q group by the members of the P. While, he says, "the Q peoples . . . the Goidels, the Latins, and the others in point, were simply Aryans, and all that is vaguely connoted by that term," the P group exhibits a more problematic set of characteristics. As Rhŷs has it, "the Aryan of the P group is the ancient Aryan *plus something else*, in other words the term Aryan is here modified by an *unknown quantity*, which unknown quantity makes itself felt linguistically in such changes from original Aryan speech as have already been specified" (emphasis added):[71]

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[69] Rhŷs, "The Early Ethnology of the British Isles," 245.

[70] Rhŷs, "The Early Ethnology of the British Isles," 244.

[71] Rhŷs, "The Early Ethnology of the British Isles," 251.

What does this mean when translated into ethnology? I cannot exactly say, but one could hardly be far wrong in assuming it to imply a mixture of race, whatever else it may have involved. The Aryans conquered or assimilated and subdued another race in the neighborhood of the Alps: the subject race learned the language of the conquerors while retaining its own inherited habits of pronunciation, and those habits of pronunciation in some cases prevailed . . . Thus arose a modified form of Aryan language spoken by a Neo-aryan [sic] people of mixed origin, partly Aryan and partly something else.[72]

Just as in Britain, when the so-called Q Celts incorporated the British non-Aryan aborigine into their racial and linguistic matrix in order to become the Goidelic variant, so the P languages are the evidence of ancient intermixture between the ur-Aryan and a non-Aryan substratum. Nor does Rhŷs appear to make any real distinction between British and ancient continental non-Aryan; while he delineates the aboriginal races in Britain to varying degrees of specificity elsewhere, he makes his position on the British aborigine clear in *The Welsh People:*

Was it [the non-Aryan population of Britain] a single race or several? This cannot be answered, but it would clearly be a waste of conjecture to suppose the pre-Goidelic inhabitants to have belonged to more than one race, until at any rate evidence is found to compel us to that conclusion. So we rest satisfied for the present to assume that they belonged to a single race.*[73]*

 In the case of continental Celtic history, Rhŷs maintains this vague sense of non-Aryan, and it functions in his accounts of language development as the generalized label for a "something else" that "penetrated the fabric" of the Aryan language and race.[74]   The homogeneity of the generic non-Aryan substratum, by contrast with the specificity of historic non-Aryan races such as the Picts, who are evaluated in more detail in Rhŷs'

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[72] Rhŷs, "The Early Ethnology of the British Isles," 251.

[73] Rhŷs and Brynmor-Jones, *The Welsh People*, 12.

[74] Rhŷs, "Address of the President of the Anthropological Section of the British Association," 512.

narratives of British history,[75] allows for Rhŷs to both consider all intermixture of Aryans and non-Aryan (in the singular) under the same rubric of racial composition and linguistic pattern, and also to employ the non-Aryan, and fusion with it, as the crucial impetus for racial migration and language change throughout the history of the continental and British Aryans.

It is important to note that discourses of hybridity formed a central feature of mid to late nineteenth-century sciences concerned with race; because the ability to produce fertile offspring was often taken as an indication that the crossed parents were of the same species, practical questions surrounding so-called human hybrids rose to prominence during the mid-century height of the debate between the monogenists and the polygenists. Young has amply demonstrated the significance of this discursive development in *Colonial Desire* and makes the important point that anxieties about human hybridity not only lingered on after the monogenist/polygenist debate was largely resolved, but also dispersed into wider discourses on race origins and types. Thus terminology associated with race in mid-century discourse came, by the time of Rhŷs' writing, to have a much broader semiotic life; within the study of language in particular, analytic language based on contact and intermixture tended overwhelmingly to carry with it implications of race.[76] Certainly the use of language as a tool for the reconstruction of race history was not always carried out credulously; Max Müller famously recanted the equation of race and language when it became clear that his analyses were being put to exactly that use, but the correlation between the life and

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[75] See especially Rhŷs, *Celtic Britain*; Rhŷs, "Traces of a Non-Aryan Element in the Celtic Family," *The Scottish Review* (1890): 30-47; Rhŷs, "The Mythographical Treatment of Celtic Ethnology," *The Scottish Review* (1890): 240-256; Rhŷs, "The Peoples of Ancient Scotland," *The Scottish Review* (1891): 60-82; and Rhŷs, "Certain National Names of the Aborigines of the British Isles," *The Scottish Review* (1891): 120-143.

[76] Young, *Colonial Desire*, 5.

movement of a language and a race was, however, largely accepted, and while the discursive boundaries of the paradigm included an absolutely essentialist equation of language and race in history, it was equally the home of the more moderate "metaphoric extensions" of language as the trace of racial presence. As Young notes, both the physical and the linguistic "models of cultural interaction . . . merge in their product which is characterized by the same term: hybridity."[77]

In order to more fully contextualize Rhŷs' sense of hybridity as a vehicle for race and language change, it will be useful to examine an event in his history of Britain to which he himself gave extended critical attention: the contact and eventual hybridization between the non-Aryan aborigine of Britain and the first wave of Aryan invasion represented by the Goidelic Celts. His characterization of the life of the non-Aryan within the political boundaries of the Goidelic Celt following the hybridization is typified by his treatment of Druidism, which is elaborated to its fullest in his *Celtic Britain.*[78] Within his archive of evidence, intermingled with folkloric remnants and traces of the "elastic system of polytheism"[79] practiced by the Celtic Britons, Rhŷs identifies a discordant and autonomous religious element, "namely, druidism, which may be surmised to have had its origin among them [non-Celtic natives]."[80] The reason for the survival of a pre-Aryan religious system was, significantly, because "Druidism possessed certain characteristics which enabled it to make terms with the Celtic conqueror, both in Gaul and in the British Islands."[81] Within the hybrid racial-cultural system, the non-

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[77] Young, *Colonial Desire*, 6.

[78] Subsequent interpretation of this subject appeared in *The Welsh People* and *Celtic Folklore*, but is in the main a reiteration of his earlier conclusions in *Celtic Britain*, the third edition (1904), of which is used in this analysis.

[79] Rhŷs, *Celtic Britain*, 68.

[80] Rhŷs, *Celtic Britain*, 69.

[81] Rhŷs, *Celtic Britain*, 69.

Aryan held control over what Rhŷs imagined to be potent cultural capital, and which he grounds in precisely the same discourse of fear and awe that Gomme employed to explain the relationship between his Aryan and non-Aryan:

> Whatever else druidism as a system may have been, magic doubtless constituted one of its most important elements in this country, and the chief means of enabling it to hold its own; for the well-known tendency of higher races to ascribe magical powers to lower ones serves, so far as it goes, to make the position of the latter more tolerable than it would otherwise have been in respect of the treatment dealt to them by their more powerful neighbors.[82]

Thus Rhŷs' non-Aryans, like Gomme's, are not only conscious of their position in the interracial hierarchy, but are able, unlike Gomme's non-Aryans, to make use of their role by entering into a productive cultural exchange with the Aryan invaders, from whom they ultimately receive entrance into Aryanness. As Rhŷs notes, the non-Aryan aborigines of Britain employed their so-called magical status in order to make their position with respect to the Celts more "tolerable," and used it to "make terms with the Celtic conqueror," who according to Rhŷs adopted the indigenous religion as its own in exchange for the Aryanizing of the aborigines.

Another important effect of this hybridization was the production of a hybrid speech: the language of the Goidelic Celts. Rhŷs finds the evidence for a non-Aryan element in Goidelic speech in what he characterizes as a grammatical anomaly; like the presence of Druidism, the "syntactic peculiarity" of non-Aryan reveals a dual inheritance within an apparently homogenous language:

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[82] Rhŷs, *Celtic Britain,* 69.

The normal syntax of the Neo-celtic [Q and P after migration to Britain] languages requires the verb to precede its subject, and the question arises how this important difference began. It might be suggested as an explanation that the earlier Celts mixed with a non-Aryan race, whose language had this syntactic peculiarity of Neo-celtic as regards the position of the verb, and that they [Celts and non-Aryans] thus evolved the Goidelic language. [83]

This process of intermixture carried on, Rhŷs emphasized, with the invasion of the Brythonic Celts, who through contact with the Goidels "indirectly acquired some of the linguistic peculiarities of the Aboriginal inhabitants." [84] Rhŷs characterizes the pattern of hybridization as "racial amalgamation on a considerable scale," one which eventually produced a dual-voiced modern Welsh language, evidence of an Aryan body "profoundly modified by the pronunciation and syntax of the non-Aryan language of the Aborigines."[85]

6. Rhŷs' Non-Aryan

In 1900, Rhŷs delivered a Presidential Address to the Anthropological Section of the British Association in which he painted a rare portrait of the non-Aryan population that figured throughout his work as the agent of migration and mutation. This address, the bulk of which presented the research he would publish the following year as *Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx*, distills Rhŷs' vision of the racial history of Britain as visible through the medium of folklore, medieval manuscripts, and linguistic traces. It is quite

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[83] Rhŷs and Brynmor-Jones, *The Welsh People*, 22.

[84] Rhŷs and Brynmor-Jones, *The Welsh People*, 22.

[85] Rhŷs and Brynmor-Jones, *The Welsh People*, 19.

clear that the goal of such an investigation meant, for Rhŷs, not only the delineation of the progression of the Celtic language in Britain, but also the discovery of the historical presence of an aboriginal non-Aryan in the fairies, demons, and divinities extant in the heterogenous relics of the British past:

> We have also to exercise a sort of double vision if we are to understand the fairies and see through the stories about them. An instance will explain what I mean: Fairy women are pretty generally represented as fascinating to the last degree and gorgeously dressed . . . On the other hand, not only are some tribes of some fairies described as ugly, but fairy children when left as changelings are invariably pictured as repulsive urchins of a sallow complexion . . . there we have the real fairy with the glamor taken off and a certain amount of depreciatory exaggeration put on.[86]

Following this extrapolation of an historical people from the narrative tropes of Celtic myth and legend, Rhŷs goes on to delineate the ethnographic data that can be distilled from the evidence of these narrative and linguistic artifacts; his description of the "actual" fairy race hidden beneath the glamour of fiction and ancient language is an astonishingly detailed portrait, one which not only imagines the aboriginal race in terms of contemporary colonial analogues, but also relies heavily on its relationship with the invading Celtic Aryans to round out the characterization:

> The fairies, as a real people, consisted of a short, stumpy swarthy race . . . They seem to have practiced the art of spinning, though they do not appear to have thought much of clothing. They had no tools or implements made of metal. They appear to have had a language of their own, which would imply a time when they understood no other, and explain why, when they came to a town to do their marketing, they laid down the exact money without uttering a syllable to anybody . . . they were consummate thieves; but their thievery was not systematically resented, as their visits were held to bring luck and prosperity. More powerful races generally feared them as formidable magicians who knew the future and could cause or cure disease as they pleased . . . Their family relations were of the lowest order; they not only reckoned no fathers, but it may be that, like certain Australian savages recently described by Spencer and Gillen, they had no notion of paternity at

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[86] Rhŷs, "Address of the President of the Anthropological Section of the British Association," 504.

all. The stage of civilization in which fatherhood is of little or no account has left evidence of itself in Celtic literature . . . but the other and lower stage, anterior to the idea of fatherhood at all comes into sight only in certain bits of folklore.[87]

Not only does this formidable portrait of the non-Aryan racial presence in Britain and its relationship to the Aryan clearly call on prevailing contemporary stereotypes of the savage, it is also heavily indebted to the language of physical anthropology; indeed, elsewhere in *The Welsh People* Rhŷs also referred to the heterogeneity of skull shapes found in barrows as evidence of intermarriage between multiple races at an early date,[88] and his translation of narrative imagery into physical and historical reality follows with the discursive interests of descriptive anthropological research into the human form, which tended overwhelmingly to diagnose, for example, intellectual capacity from skull size and cultural progress from archaeological remains.[89]   While Rhŷs was cautious about the use of physical anthropological conclusions as a means of identifying racial types in the modern European population,[90] and preferred to argue that "all conscious distinction of race had probably been obliterated before the eleventh century,"[91] he was clearly unperturbed by its application to the archaeological evidence of racial difference.

[87] Rhŷs, "Address of the President of the Anthropological Section of the British Association," 504. Baldwin Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (London: Macmillan, 1899). Spencer and Gillen's text was a seminal ethnological survey and formed the basis for many early twentieth-century enquiries into the origin of religion and particularly totemism.

[88] Rhŷs and Brynmor-Jones, *The Welsh People*, 1.

[89] See for example Anders Retzius, "On the Ethnographic Distribution of Round and Elongated Crania." *Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* 16 (1846): 116; Robert Knox, *The Races of Men* (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1850); Joseph Barnard Davis and John Thurnam, *Crania Britannica. Delineations and Descriptions of the Skulls of the Early Inhabitants of the British Islands, Together with Notices of Their Other Remains* (London: Taylor, 1856); Robert Dunn, "Civilisation and Cerebral Development: Some Observations on the Influence of Civilisation upon the Development of the Brain in the Different Races of Man," *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London* 4 (1866): 13-33; and H. J. Fleure "Some Early Neanthropic Types in Europe and Their Modern Representatives," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 50 (1920): 12-40.

[90] Rhŷs, *Celtic Folklore*, 2:665-666 and Rhŷs and T. W. E. Higgens, "'First-Foot' in the British Isles," *Folklore* 3 (1892): 253-264.

[91] Rhŷs and Brynmor-Jones, *The Welsh People*, 35.

Like Gomme, Rhŷs' intellectual interest in the non-Aryan hinged on its relationship to the Aryan and in particular how that relationship affected the development of the latter. But whereas Gomme's focus was the history of institutions, Rhŷs' interest lay in the development and character of the Celtic languages in Britain and Ireland. However, while Rhŷs located his non-Aryan almost exclusively by means of linguistic traces, it is critical to note that he certainly possessed a clear impression of the physical characteristics of his non-Aryan race, and as his portrait of the true face of the fairy people shows, that sense was heavily indebted to prevailing contemporary ideas of the physical and cultural characteristics of the primitive. That he references Spencer and Gillen's profoundly influential argument that Australian aboriginal culture lacked any sense of the biology behind human reproduction immediately highlights his connection to contemporary anthropology, particulary its colonially-sourced discourses.[92] That his non-Aryan is a short, dark-skinned thief without civilization or indeed the capacity to make tools only furthers this connection, and while Rhŷs' work was not primarily concerned with either descriptive anthropology or the diagnosis of *contemporary* racial identity, his assumptions about the physical and cultural personality of the non-Aryan are substantially drawn from precisely that discursive field.

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[92] See Peter Pels and Oscar Salemink, eds. *Colonial Subjects: Essays on the Practical History of Anthropology* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), especially Pels, "The Rise and Fall of the Indian Aborigines: Orientalism, Anglicism, and the Emergence of an Ethnology of India, 1833-1869"; Young, *Colonial Desire*; and Ian J. MacNiven and Lynette Russell, eds., *Appropriated Pasts: Indigenous Peoples and the Colonial Culture of Archaeology* (New York: Altamira Press, 2005).

7. The Extinction of the Aryan Race

One of the most striking features of Rhŷs' ethnohistory of Wales, Ireland and Britain is its suggestion that the Aryan represented only a minor element of the racial identity of the contemporary population. Further, Rhŷs' contention that the Aryan was *never* in the majority, but rather migrated from the start in small, warlike bands which overtook aboriginal populations and ruled in the manner of feudal aristocrats, is a dramatic reorientation of contemporary consensus regarding the role played by Aryans not only in prehistoric events but also in the racial-cultural composition of the modern population. In an essay published in *Folklore* in 1892, Rhŷs refers with approval to the opinions of a correspondent and cites the unnamed contributor's argument for the eventual decline and extinction of the Aryan race as an inevitable fact:

> The writer is by no means alone in his idea, that the purer Aryan element in Celtic countries is decreasing numerically. [Karl] Penka for instance, gives his readers reasons for believing that the tall, blond, blue-eyed Aryan has lost ground since the early Middle Ages in North Italy, in France, and one might probably add Spain . . . *he regards the Aryans as a northern people who in the long run have no chance in the competition for existence in certain tracts of Europe, as against the smaller and duskier aborigines, with thousands of years more of acclimatisation to the credit of their race.* I have been for some time of the opinion that in the population of Wales we have, at the present day, but a very small Aryan element.[93] (emphasis added)

Not only was "the predominant element" of European racial composition "the substratum contributed by the earliest lords of the soil,"[94] but the minute Aryan element itself was in

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[93] Rhŷs and Higgens, ""First-Foot" in the British Isles," 260. Dr. Karl Penka (1847-1912) was an Austrian anthropologist largely responsible for reintroducing the hypothesis of the Scandinavian origin of the Aryans, and of the modern Scandinavian "type" as most closely analogous to the original Aryan "type" to late nineteenth-century academic debate. See Benoit Massin, "From Virchow to Fisher," in *Volksgeist as Method and Ethic*, ed. George Stocking (University of Wisconsin Press 1996), 127-128.

[94] Rhŷs and Brynmor-Jones, *The Welsh People*, 35.

the process of continuous and unavoidable decay; in the face of the adaptive ability of the "smaller and duskier inhabitants" of Britain, the "northern" Aryan could stand no chance.

Rhŷs' representation of the fate of the Aryan race is heavily indebted to contemporary discourses on extinction, the major features of which have been discussed at length by Patrick Brantlinger in his *Dark Vanishings*,[95] but of particular interest is the degree to which Rhŷs' representation of the Aryan, in personality as well as in fate, conforms to contemporary tropes regarding the unavoidable extinction of so-called savages:

> The sense of doom has often been rendered all the more powerful by the combination of three elements: belief in the progress of at least some (chosen) peoples from savagery to civilization; the faith that progress is either providential or natural - God's or Nature's wise plan; and the idea that the white and dark races of the world are separated from each other by biological essences that, translated into Darwinian terms, equal "fitness" versus "unfitness" to survive.[96]

For Rhŷs, significantly, it is the apparently progressive Aryan race that is marked "unfit" and doomed to eventual extinction rather than the savage non-Aryan; not only is the Aryan doomed by its minority status and inability to adapt to the climate of its new home, a trope often repeated in reference to Eruopean colonists in the tropics, but also with respect to the unadaptability of so-called savages when faced with civilization, Rhŷs also indicates that the Aryan of his narrative is complicit in its own extinction. It is, to use Brantlinger's phrase, "self-exterminating."[97]

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[95] Patrick Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings: Discourses on the Extinction of Primitive Races, 1800-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

[96] Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings*, 190.

[97] Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings*, 3.

The notion that so-called savages were so unavoidably unfit for civilization that they would eventually bring about their own demise, whether through wild and destructive behavior or simply through an innate inability to remain even proximate to civilization is well documented in Brantlinger's text, but one particular element that is of interest in connection with Rhŷs is the former's extensive catalogue of contemporary narratives of savage self-extermination.   Brantlinger highlights Reverend John George Wood's 1872 publication *Uncivilized Races of Men in All Countries of the World* as an exemplary text precisely because as a popular survey it communicates "perhaps more reliably than works that aim to be original . . . widely held assumptions and beliefs about race, culture, and progress."[98]   In this context, the passage in Wood's text marked by Brantlinger poses an interesting question about Rhŷs' motivations behind his representation of the Aryan:

> Instead of seizing upon these new [European] means of procuring the three great necessaries of human life, food, clothing, and lodging, they not only refused to employ them, but did their best to drive them out of the country, murdering the colonists, killing their cattle, destroying their crops, and burning houses . . . the cause of extinction lies within the savage himself, and ought not to be attributed to the white man, who comes to take the place which the savage has partially vacated.[99]

When compared to several passages scattered throughout Rhŷs' work, this roughly contemporary pronouncement on the fate of the savage introduces a new level of significance to Rhŷs' characterization.   While in his earlier work he represented the Aryan as an essential contributing factor to the greatness of modern Europe, declaring in 1888 that "no one can forget that all the great states of modern Europe, except that of the

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[98] Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings*, 7.

[99] John George Wood, *Uncivilized Races of Men in All Countries of the World*, 2 vols (Hartford: Burr and Hyde, 1872), 791-791 in Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings*, 8.   See also J. E. Calder, "Some Account of the Wars of Extirpation, and Habits of the Native Tribes of Tasmania," *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 3 (1874): 7-29.

Sick Man,[100] trace their history back to the conquests of the Norsemen who set out from the Scandinavian land,[101] his later presentation of the Aryan complicates the picture. In the same essay for the Folklore Society cited above, Rhŷs makes this fascinating aside regarding the character of the Welsh Aryan in history:

> Our Aryans in the Principality [of Wales] were very lively in the time of Sir John Wynn of Gwydyr: one of their amusements appears to have been *to burn one another's houses about their owners' ears*; but they fared badly in the days of Cromwell, and ever since they seem to have been dwindling in numbers and importance in proportion to the representatives of the aboriginal race. I picture to myself the Welsh Aryan as a fine tall fellow with a somewhat aquiline nose, and a complexion rather less blond that I should expect in the case of a Teutonic Aryan. He has a landed estate or traditions about one that ought to be his, and he boasts a long pedigree. (emphasis added)[102]

In this context, the Aryan appears less the essential ingredient in the creation of the successful modern nation-states of Europe, and rather more an effete remnant of a once violent and despotic ruling class. It is significant to note that the only physical evidence for the demarcation of Aryanness in Wales that Rhŷs would admit was that of the difference between the landed classes and the peasantry:

> If a competent ethnologist were to be sent round Wales to identify the individual men and women who seemed to him to approach what he should consider the Aryan type, his report would probably go to show that he found comparatively few people, and that those few belonged chiefly to the old families of the land-owning class: the vast majority he could only label as probably not Celtic, not Aryan.[103]

And yet it is critical to contextualize this apparent disregard for the Aryan within his larger presentation of the ethnohistory of Europe, in which Aryans are represented as

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[100] Rhŷs refers to the Ottoman Empire.

[101] Rhŷs, *Celtic Heathendom*, 636.

[102] Rhŷs and Higgens, ""First-Foot" in the British Isles," 260-261.

[103] Rhŷs and Brynmor-Jones, *The Welsh People*, 34.

innately progressive and certainly superior to the so-called "dusky" aborigines,[104] at least insofar as Aryan political institutions were above the level of anything attained in Britain before the invasion of the Romans.[105] Indeed, it would be a mistake to characterize Rhŷs as a simple contrarian, whose texts represent merely a rebellion against over-Aryanizing tendencies in historical scholarship in favor of an appeal to the eighteenth-century notion of the noble savage.   While Rhŷs objected to the mid-century tendency to derive all cultural and social progress in Britain from the influence of the Anglo-Saxon at the expense of the Celtic contribution,[106] his lifelong interest in the history and development of the latter simply underscores the fact that his presentation of the non-Aryans as both "lords of the soil" but also savage and swarthy thieves is neither credulous nor propagandizing.

Rather, Rhŷs' texts sit at an extraordinarily vibrant nexus of contemporary anxieties, assumptions, and paradigms for the investigation of the past, its relevance to the present, and the means by which its evidence should and could be collected.   His well-known tendency to forestall opinion in favor of absolute certainty is not only touched upon throughout reviews of his work, but also surfaces in his own texts; Alfred Nutt's review of *The Welsh People* protests "that the author so frequently leaves us in doubt as to which of the alternative hypotheses he provides is really favoured by him,"[107] and a reviewer of the third edition of *Celtic Britain* expressed the hope that "many of the hard-driven words *probably*, *possibly*, and *perhaps*, for the frequent appearance of which

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[104] See Rhŷs, *Celtic Heathendom*, 635-637, on his belief in an Arctic homeland for the Aryans. See also Rhŷs, "The Early Ethnology of the British Isles," 234: "The Great European Race is of European Origin and not an immigrant from the stagnant East."

[105] See Rhŷs, *Celtic Britain*, 57-60.

[106] See Rhŷs, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion*.

[107] Alfred Nutt, "Review of *The Welsh People,* by John Rhŷs," *Folklore* 11 (1900): 400.

Professor Rhŷs apologised in the preface to his first edition, will crystallise into greater certainties."[108]   In the face of this, it is clear that Rhŷs' work, like that of Gomme, involves the incorporation of a variety of assumptions generated in the potent interaction of contemporary discourses on the genesis and nature of human and social origins. This is not to suggest that Rhŷs simply repeated prevailing tropes credulously and without revision; it is, however, evident that Rhŷs communicated his groundbreaking linguistic work through the medium of a larger consensus, borrowing and reorienting the narrative tropes of his own larger academic and popular discursive field to communicate the genealogy of the modern Welsh, British, Irish, and Western European heritage, both linguistic and racial.

8. Rhŷs' Work in Context: Contemporary Receptions of his Portrait of British History

In the 1905 issue of the journal *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, Rhŷs' *Celtic Britain* received this extensive and glowing review, the content of which clearly locates Rhŷs at the center of academic and popular inquiry into the ethnological history of Europe:

> In the domain of Welsh historical literature Professor Rhys's little book has long ago established for itself a foremost place. There is, probably, no other book that has been so frequently referred to by scholars of the past quarter of a century who have written about, or have had occasion to deal with, the subject of Celtic Britain . . . Stick to *Celtic Britain* as closely as a befitting fear of plagarism will permit, so long as it will help you out . . . Let any one who wants to estimate the difference between the manner in which our pre-Norman history is now treated by scholars compare some of the historical books written before the appearance of the first edition of *Celtic Britain* with others written since, and he will have to acknowledge that whereas the information afforded by the former is little less vague than

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[108] Anonymous, "Reviews and Notices of Books," *Archæologia Cambrensis* 5 (London, 1905): 313.

were it actually concerned with the battles of kites and crows to which Milton not unnaturally likened the racial and dynastic struggles of our early history, the latter give a fairly comprehensive and reasonable account of the gradual development and building up of a nation. Much of this improved presentation is directly attributable to *Celtic Britain*.[109]

Not only does the reviewer suggest that those interested in the field of Celtic history should follow Rhŷs' work up to the point of plagiarism – an astonishing compliment that implies a degree of perfection nearly insurmountable by those who would follow in his footsteps – the reviewer is sure that "Professor Rhys's views upon the debateable points of our early history deservedly carry such weight that their slightest modification is of importance to Welsh historical students."[110] Indeed, the bulk of this review is merely an account of the minute revisions which had been made to the text between its second and third editions, and concludes with admiration for the fact that Rhŷs was so up-to-date in the text of the third edition that he had included archaeological findings published less than two years previously.[111]

The high esteem in which Rhŷs was evidently held by the wider public, however, did not extend to his fellow Folklore Society member and Celtic specialist Alfred Nutt. While they worked on remarkably similar subjects and were both longtime members of the Folklore Society, they also shared a fundamental difference of opinion over the originary state of the British nation. Like the volatile debate between Gomme and Nutt detailed in Chapters Two and Three, Rhŷs and Nutt clashed over the issue of the non-Aryan presence in Britain, and over the consequent belief shared by Rhŷs and Gomme in its influence on the composition of the modern British population. In his review of *The*

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[109] "Reviews and Notices of Books," 313.

[110] "Reviews and Notices of Books," 314.

[111] "Reviews and Notices of Books," 321-322.

Welsh People for *Folklore*, Nutt details his objections to Rhŷs' outline of British prehistory, declaring finally that "the chronological postulates of this scheme seem to me extremely questionable";[112] Nutt demurs to comment on the appendix by the grammarian John Morris-Jones – "Pre-Aryan Syntax in Insular Celtic"[113] – suggesting only that "to a non-philologist like myself" its principles "appear rash and unsound in the last degree." However, he notes, because "Rhys is one of the few men living who are competent to express an opinion in this matter," it fell to him to give the "expert lead"[114] and final opinion on the matter. Significantly, in the postscript attached to this review, Nutt made this comment:

> P.S. - Since writing the above, I have received from Principal Rhys a copy of his Presidential Address to Section H at the Bradford meeting of the British Association. In this he commends Professor Jones' researches in warm terms. In other respects the Address follows the lines of the book. On re-reading the author's summary of his theory, my admiration of the ingenuity of his hypothesis is increased as also my doubts of their validity.[115]

Nutt's tribute to Rhŷs' imaginative faculty notwithstanding, the tone carried over from the suggestion that he would demur to Rhŷs' opinion in philological matters, as "one of few men living" able to speak with authority, and the final declaration of continued disbelief after receiving the requested "expert lead," provides a clear indication of the interpretative gulf between these two scholars of Celtic folklore and history. Like Nutt's criticism of Gomme detailed earlier, this review does not impugn the overall value of Rhŷs' scholarship, and notes that his chapters "give a more faithful and scholarly record

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[112] Nutt, "The Welsh People," 401.

[113] John Morris-Jones, "Pre-Aryan Syntax in Insular Celtic," in *The Welsh People*, 617-641.

[114] Nutt, "The Welsh People," 401.

[115] Nutt, "The Welsh People," 401.

of Welsh events than can be found elsewhere."[116]   It is Rhŷs' interpretation of the evidence, rather than his ability to glean information, that Nutt attacks precisely because of his suggestion that non-Aryan physical and imaginative influence could be detected in Celtic and contemporary British life.

A final indication of Rhŷs' status and the wide acceptance of his interpretation of British history is found in his employment by the Royal Commission in 1893 to produce practical documentation on various facets of the history and population of Wales.   The Commission published its findings in 1896 as the *Report of the Royal Commission on Land in Wales and Monmouthshire;*[117]   alongside detailed statistics concerning the average diet, land holding, and education of the Welsh population is Rhŷs' own research, which touches upon both the linguistic history of Wales and also its ethnological inheritance, the latter in a chapter entitled, appropriately enough, "Racial Conditions."[118] This chapter was later reprinted in Rhŷs and Brynmor-Jones' *The Welsh People* as "The Ethnology of Ancient Wales," along with other revised material from the original *Report.*[119]   What is fascinating about the addition of this chapter, which has formed a central element of my examination of Rhŷs, to an official report commissioned by Parliament is that its inclusion, not only as accepted fact, but as *practical* fact intended to

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[116] Nutt, "The Welsh People," 399.

[117] Royal Commission on Land in Wales and Monmouthshire, *Report of the Royal Commission on Land in Wales and Monmouthshire* (London: HMSO, 1896).

[118]   John Rhŷs, "Racial Conditions," in *Report of the Royal Commission on Land in Wales and Monmouthshire*, 65-78. Rhŷs is not cited as author within the chapter; however the text was republished in *The Welsh People* with only editorial revisions, and Nutt addresses his review of the same directly to Rhŷs, indicating the latter as the author of this chapter. See Nutt, "The Welsh People," 399-401.

[119] Rhŷs also almost certainly authored the *Report*'s chapter, "Language Conditions: Welsh and English," which likewise reappeared in *The Welsh People,* but its content insofar as it refers to ethnological history is primarily a repetition and elaboration of "Racial Conditions" and is thus not addressed here.   Other chapters reprinted from the *Report* are "Early History of the Cymry," "The Religious Movement," "The Educational Movement," "Language and Literature of Wales," and "Rural Wales of the Present Day." It is not clear which of these are of Rhŷs' sole composition, but it seems very probable that "Early History" was also produced by him.

assist in the administration of Wales marks Rhŷs' work as an official word on the early ethnological history not only of Wales, but of the British nation and of Western Europe. That Rhŷs' interpretation of the non-Aryan population of early Britain, its relationship to the successive waves of Aryan invasion, and its status as the predominant element of the modern racial composition was entered into the official annals of late nineteenth-century Parliament makes abundantly clear the degree to which not only he, but also his vision of British prehistory, were respected and accepted by his contemporaries.

Throughout their academic careers, both within and without the Folklore Society, Rhŷs and Gomme remained convinced of the critical role played by an aboriginal non-Aryan population; likewise it will be shown that Nutt stayed firm in his conviction that the originary source of modern Britishness was wholly and exclusively Celtic. Their sustained debate over the originating source of the nation, however, should not undermine the degree to which each respective author gained esteem and respect within the discourses of racial and literary origins. Rather, the controversy over a non-Aryan inheritance serves to illustrate the critical importance of this concept within anxieties about national and ethnological origins and marks Gomme, Rhŷs, and Nutt as key figures in the development of the discourse itself.

CHAPTER FIVE

ALFRED NUTT AND THE ARTISTIC PRODUCTIONS OF FOLK-FANCY

Alfred Nutt (1856-1910) is remembered by modern scholarship primarily for his role as a publisher, Celtic scholar, and founding member and president of the Folklore Society from 1897-1899. Nutt left a legacy of "solid and substantial folklore" publications - both his own and those produced under the auspices of his publishing company, David Nutt - and indeed, Richard Dorson has called his work a "unified achievement" for the fields of folklore and Celtic scholarship in particular.[1] He was not only among the original members of the Folklore Society, but was also one of its most tireless contributors and administrators; his record of activity is unbroken from the inception of the society in 1878 until his accidental death by drowning in 1910. Council member, folk-tale committee member, president and subsequently vice-president until his death, Nutt also published an astonishing array of Folklore Society and folklore-related material. Having inherited David Nutt, his father's eponymous publishing firm, Nutt proceeded to transform what had begun as a small firm specializing in continental works on the classics and religion into a vehicle for the dissemination and popularization of folklore and related scholarship. [2] Along with publishing *Folklore,* the society's journal, from 1890,[3] his firm also produced an extensive series of companion texts to the journal; new material authored by FLS members, previously unedited medieval manuscripts, and

[1] Richard Dorson, *The British Folklorists* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Limited, 1968), 234.

[2] Juliette Wood, "Folklore Studies at the Celtic Dawn: The Role of Alfred Nutt as Publisher and Scholar," *Folklore* 110 (1999): 3.

[3] Upon his death, his wife M. L. Nutt succeeded him as head of David Nutt Publishing and continued to publish *Folklore* for only two more years, suggesting that the publication of the journal had been an act of enthusiasm rather than financial acumen on Nutt's part, a possibility in keeping with folklorist Edward Clodd's remarks.

out-of-print or otherwise scarce antiquarian and folklore texts were edited and published by Nutt's firm for the benefit of folklore enthusiasts and scholars.[4] In his 1910 obituary for Nutt, longtime FLS member, president, and friend Edward Clodd remarked that Nutt often had to accept a "debit balance against books on folklore . . . and recoup the losses that the publication of his own works and those of fellow folklorists" incurred "in the other branches of his business,"[5] an indication that the publication and popularization of the science of folklore was among the driving ambitions of Nutt's intellectual and professional life.[6]

1. *Nutt's Scholarly Contexts: A Reevaluation*

 In her obituary for her mentor and publisher, Jessie Weston summarized Nutt's contribution to Celtic and Arthurian scholarship thus:

> The great value of Mr. Nutt's work has been his appreciation of the fact that the progress of Arthurian romance has been along the road of evolution, that direct literary invention has played but a secondary part in the growth of this wonderful body of romance, and that the study of folklore might, therefore, aid us in distinguishing the elements of which that body was composed; further, he pointed out the part which specifically Celtic tradition had played in this evolutionary process.[7]

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[4] Among the most notable series published outside of the auspices of the Folklore Society by David Nutt during this time were the *Waifs and Strays Series*, *The Northern LIbrary*, *The Tudor Library*, and *Tudor Translations.*

[5] Edward Clodd, "In Memoriam: Alfred Nutt (1856-1910)," *Folklore* 21 (1910): 336.

[6] For a partial list of Nutt's contributions to the field, both through his own research and through his publishing company see Wood, "Folklore Studies at the Celtic Dawn," 4.

[7] Jessie Weston, "Alfred Nutt: An Appreciation," *Folklore* 21 (1910): 512-513.

More recently, folklorist and Celtic scholar Juliette Wood has identified Nutt's work as central to the genesis of modern, popular discourses on the Grail legend, those in particular which imagine a lost or obscured Celtic and often pre-Christian tradition as the direct source of medieval Grail and Arthurian romance.   In her 1999 Presidential Address to the Folklore Society, she remarked that "Nutt's thesis that a grail myth existed in early Celtic culture and that medieval romance authors reworked material trying to make sense of an ancient myth which they no longer understood" was in many ways both the catalyst and the popularizer of this particular interpretative stance.[8]

Nutt's intellectual opinions have already been touched upon insofar as they have informed my examination of the debates surrounding the question of method in the Folklore Society and the concept of British aboriginality, but it is important to consider Nutt's work as a folklorist holistically and within its own context in order to arrive at a full realization of his role in late nineteenth-century discourse on national and cultural origins.   Nutt's own philosophy of folklore must necessarily be considered from within its discursive relationship to both the wider folklore paradigm and also the larger discursive formations associated with the study of culture. It will therefore be useful to first consider Nutt's vision for the science of folklore in his own words; it will be seen that he was quite aware of the multiplicity of discursive trends in operation in the Folklore Society, and consequently made a conscious effort to establish the validity of his own approach over and against those with which he considered it to be in conflict. While folklorists had since at least the inception of the Society in 1878 striven to nullify the problem of an antiquarian heritage by discrediting its scholars and methods (and indeed Andrew Lang's folklore work attained great notoriety for its insistent and unrelenting

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[8] Juliette Wood, "The Holy Grail: From Romance Motif to Modern Genre," *Folklore* 111 (2000): 180-181.

attack on the mythological theories of Friedrich Max Müller),[9] it is interesting to note that in both these cases the perceived threat was a party outside and often previous to the Folklore Society itself. By contrast, Nutt's own methodological writings and especially his contributions to the Society journal make clear that he identified not only antiquarianism or solar mythology as the primary challenge to his discursive ambitions for the Society, but rather rightly traced the multiple trends apparent in FLS practice as a potential challenge to his own view of the science of folklore.

Nutt's awareness of the need to police his own discursive boundaries is evident also in accounts of his own research, which was concerned almost exclusively with the analysis of Celtic folklore, or material gathered in or traditionally associated with the so-called Celtic fringe of Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, Ireland and Brittany. Within that field Nutt further specialized in what he called the narrative, or imaginative class of folklore, a class he specifically contrasted with the field of institutional custom that was Gomme's speciality. This focus, while he characterized it in his 1899 presidential address to the FLS as a "personal" choice, was in fact grounded in much more than aesthetic preference; in both his 1898 Presidential Address to the FLS and in a 1904 essay in *The Celtic Review*, he specified that in his view it was *only* by means of the imaginative remains of folklore that the true identity of the originating race could be reconstructed. By contrast, practical folklore, the relics of everyday customs and social institutions, might give evidence of an extinct and universal stage of culture, but could never be used to the same effect as the products of imagination:

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[9] See especially Andrew Lang, "Mythology and Fairy Tales," *Fortnightly Review* (1873), 618-631; Lang, *Custom and Myth* (London: Longmans, 1884); and Lang, *Myth, Ritual and Religion* (London: Longmans, 1887).

> The details of archaic social organisation have, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, what may be termed museum interest pure and simple. Valuable, infinitely valuable, as they may be to the student seeking to reconstruct the past, they are valueless, as a rule, for the practical man shaping the practical life of the present.[10]

When directly addressing the problems and prospects of the study of Celtic folklore, Nutt was even more specific; in an essay printed in *The Celtic Review*, he addresses his call for the segregation of practical Celtic lore to the museum directly to the (presumably predominantly Irish) readership of the journal, asking them to appreciate the incontrovertible inferiority of prosaic Celtic chronicle when compared with the breadth and vibrance of European history and development, and to follow him in his "preference of the intellectual, the artistic, aspects of Gaelic [Celtic] culture-evolution over the political:"[11]

> I have argued hitherto *a priori* for the intrinsic inferiority of the political to the artistic element in the history of Gaelic culture. But I would ask you for one moment to consider the historic element, banishing from your minds such prepossessions as may legitimately exist, because it is ancestors of your own whose actions we are considering, banishing also that student, that museum interest in Gaelic history, which none of you, I think, can feel more keenly than I do.[12]

To legitimate the painful but necessary banishment of Celtic history to the museum shelf and the removal of his Irish readers' ancestors from the scope of valuable investigation, Nutt narrates a vision of the "reality" of Celtic history, illuminating its clear inferiority to the historical life of Roman, continental, and even English political culture. Whereas archaic Celtic political culture developed "in a backwater" and produced only "simple

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[10] Alfred Nutt, "The Critical Study of Gaelic Literature Indispensable for the History of the Gaelic Race," *The Celtic Review* 1 (1904): 50.

[11] Nutt, "Gaelic Literature," 51. Nutt employs the term "Gaelic" to mean all elements of Britain traditionally associated with a Celtic heritage, e.g. Scotland, Wales, Cornwall and, particularly in Nutt's case, Ireland.

[12] Nutt, "Gaelic Literature," 50.

incidents . . . destitute of permanent significance," continental Europe and Britain developed in the "main stream of human progress," and even the "market place squabbles of early Athens" and the "bloody and dreary scufflings" of Spain, France, Germany, and Germanic Britain "have a weight, an import, they have not got in the case of Ireland:"[13]

> Whether O'Neill succeed in levying, or O'Donnell in refusing, tribute; whether O'Conor or O'Brien make good his claim to provincial or head-kingship . . . this warfare of kite and crow, to use the Miltonic phrase, what is it, you may say, but the staple of all early, all mediæval history?[14]

And yet, while the Gaelic stratum of European political history might be incontrovertibly "sterile,"[15] it was not the entirety of the Celtic inheritance that Nutt imagined should be relegated to the archive shelf; its literary and imaginative influence, by contrast, was as vital to the development of the European genius as its political element was irrelevant. The "detail of archaic emotion or fancy," declared Nutt, "is no dead and dried museum specimen; it lives, it throbs, and in creative hands it may assume new and more deeply significant forms of beauty."[16]   Further, it was specifically the Celtic branch of imaginative folklore that formed the purest exponent of European artistic genius; the "special evolution of Irish culture"[17] ensured that it not only "grew up wholly unaffected by classic culture,"[18] but indeed surpassed the latter in both age, artistry, and influence. The value of Celtic narrative, Nutt declared in *The Voyage of Bran*, was incalculable;

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[13] Nutt, "Gaelic Literature," 49, 51.

[14] Nutt, "Gaelic Literature," 50-51.

[15] Nutt, "Gaelic Literature," 51.

[16] Nutt, "Gaelic Literature," 50.

[17] Alfred Nutt, "The Happy Otherworld in the Mythico-Romantic Literature of the Irish. The Celtic Doctrine of Re-Birth. An Essay in Two Sections," in *The Voyage of Bran Son of Febal to the Land of the Living; an Irish Saga*, with Kuno Meyer (London: David Nutt, 1895), 2:211.

[18] Nutt, "Presidential Address: The Fairy Mythology of English Literature: Its Origin and Nature," *Folklore* 8 (1897): 53.

"fragmentary as may be the form and distorted as it may be by its transmission through Christian hands," the preservative action of early medieval redactors meant for Nutt that "we thus owe to Ireland the preservation of mythical conceptions and visions *more archaic in substance* if far later in record than the great mythologies of Greece and Vedic India."[19]

Clearly the antiquity of the Celtic folk-narrative was of preeminent importance to Nutt's discursive formulations; his method for determining the relative age of folk literary artifacts is therefore of central concern, providing as it does a key insight into his vision of the origin and development of narrative, culture, and race.   While Nutt concerned himself almost exclusively with the study of narratives gleaned from medieval Irish and Welsh manuscripts, he was dependent upon scholars of Celtic language to provide him with critical translations upon which to base his arguments, not being able, or perhaps willing, to learn the language himself to the extent needed.   His dating and classification of the medieval material that formed the basis of his research was thus largely borrowed, either from the scholars with whom he collaborated to produce critical editions of medieval texts (as in *The Voyage of Bran*, with Kuno Meyer), or from those whose editions proved the most recent, the most scholarly (as with Heinrich Zimmer and Sir John Rhŷs).   In the dating of genre, content, and style, however, Nutt was able to work more freely and to introduce his own scheme for classification, one in which the delineation of narrative antiquity was grounded in an overarching evolutionist paradigm. Hence after addressing "the original written form of certain tales" and establishing the chronology of their respective redactions, Nutt proceeded into the more potent aspect of his research and could finally "discuss the oral traditions underlying that written form" in

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[19] Nutt, "The Happy Otherworld. The Celtic Doctrine of Re-birth," 2:281.

which they had been preserved.[20] Significantly, Nutt sorted the relics of ancient Celtic legend and belief into chronological order based not on the evidence of linguistic age, or the relative "archaic nature of the language," but on the close analysis of the "internal evidence" – that is, by means of a critical literary approach in which genres, narrative forms, and content were the primary indicators by which one might reconstruct the evolution of the Celtic imaginative tradition.[21] For Nutt, Celtic narrative developed in clear stages, which were traceable by means of definite generic and stylistic changes. Thus narrative began in a primitive "mythic" stage, one characterized by atemporal accounts of the gods, and gradually became the "heroic," a stage in which legendary material was gradually associated with individual gods, who were humanized into heroes and gradually accumulated narratives (hence the heroic cycle). Finally, narrative reached the "historical" stage, in which late medieval antiquaries reworked the legends of the heroic genre to provide a chronicle of racial history. Thus, for Nutt, the archive of Celtic narrative could be dated with reference to this framework for its historical evolution; antiquity was proved not by the age of the manuscript in which the narrative was transmitted, but by means of generic antiquity – whether the text betrayed the "sense" of the mythic, the heroic, or the historicized stage of imaginative evolution.

Nutt's main revision of Gomme's historical-comparative paradigm for folklore was not his clear sense that true folkloric investigation sought the recovery of a racialized spirit or *volksgeist*; indeed, this notion had occupied a central role in discourses on national origins from at least the eighteenth-century pronouncements of Johann Gottfried

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[20] Nutt, "The Happy Otherworld. The Celtic Doctrine of Re-birth," 2:132.

[21] Nutt, "The Happy Otherworld. The Celtic Doctrine of Re-birth," 2:158-159.

Herder,[22] and both Gomme and Rhŷs were equally interested in locating the presence and character of a particular racialized identity. Gomme and Rhŷs were, however, much more interested in diagnosing a stratified history of Britain, one in which the successive layering of migration and conquest was of preeminent importance for the historical development of their archives. Nutt, by contrast, imagined the result of racial-cultural interaction to be the production of a sustained and largely linear evolution of culture, with the imaginative artistry of traditional narrative acting as its purest expression throughout the process. For him, "the significance of literature" was precisely its ability to act as the "index of culture" and as "the most faithful exponent of the changes through which every culture necessarily passes"; imaginative lore was therefore the most potent archive any student of the past could hope to possess.[23]

2. Continental Scholarship and the Invention of a British Tradition

While later scholars, including Jessie Weston and Juliette Wood, have positioned Nutt at the beginning of the tradition of associating Arthurian legend with Celtic tradition,[24] the notion that grail legend was to a greater or lesser extent a Celtic production formed a central element of its characterization throughout the nineteenth century, and the association of Arthurian narrative with traditional lore and legend was likewise evident from at least the beginning of the same period. Beverly Taylor and

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[22] For Johann Gottfried Herder's nationalism see Anthony D. Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), 236-258. For Herder's use of language as a manifestation of race see Anna Morpurgo Davies, *Nineteenth-Century Linguistics*, vol. 4, History of Linguistics, ed. Giulio Lepschy (London: Longman, 1992), 73-97.

[23] Nutt, "The Critical Study of Gaelic Literature," 52.

[24] Weston, "Alfred Nutt," 512-513 and Wood, "The Holy Grail," 180-182.

Elizabeth Brewer have identified an early nineteenth-century "grand structure of Arthuriana," one built on the "foundation laid by eighteenth-century antiquarianism" and generated by the "editing zeal" of antiquarians and scholars alike,[25] and David Matthews has argued that the renewal of interest in Arthurian romance began as early as the 1760s, proceeding in tandem with the eighteenth-century fascination with literary relics as typified by the publication of Macpherson's Ossianic poems (1760-63),[26] Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765),[27] and culminating in the rapid production of three separate editions of Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur* between 1816 and 1817.[28] Coinciding with the expansion of interest in scholarly editions of medieval and vernacular texts, the publication and popularization of Arthurian legend proceeded rapidly throughout the first half of the century, marked by the publication of Nennius' *Historia Britonum* in 1819,[29] Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Brittaniae* in 1844 (by David Nutt),[30] and Lady Charlotte Guest's seminal edition of *The Mabinogion* in 1849.[31] Indeed, interest in the vernacular remnants of the national past, the desire to tabulate and historicize them, and an especial interest in a perceived fragmentary Celtic

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[25] Beverly Taylor and Elizabeth Brewer, *The Return of King Arthur: British and American Arthurian Literature since 1800* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1983), 28.

[26] James Macpherson, *Fragments of Ancient Poetry, Collected in the Highlands of Scotland, and Translated from the Galic or Erse Language* (Edinburgh: G. Hamilton and J. Balfour, 1760), Macpherson, *Fingal: An Ancient Epic Poem, in Six Books: Together with Several Other Poems, Composed by Ossian the son of Fingal. Translated from the Galic language, by James Macpherson* (London: T. Becket and P. A. De Hondt, 1762), and Macpherson, *Temora, an Ancient Poem, in Eight Books; Together with Several Other Poems / Composed by Ossian, the Son of Fingal; Translated from the Galic language by James Macpherson* (London: T. Becket and P. A. De Hondt, 1763).

[27] Thomas Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English poetry: Consisting of Old Heroic Ballads, Songs, and other Pieces of our Earlier Poets, (Chiefly of the Lyric Kind.) Together with Some few of Later Date*, 3 vols (London: J. Dodsley, 1765).

[28] David Matthews, "Scholarship and Popular Culture in the Nineteenth Century," in *A Companion to Arthurian Literature*, ed. Helen Fulton (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), 355.

[29] Nennius, *The "Historia Brittonum"*, trans. William Gunn (London: John and Arthur Arch, 1819).

[30] Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Galfredi Monumetensis Historia Britonum*, ed. J. A. Giles (London: David Nutt, 1844).

[31] Charlotte Schreiber Guest, *The Mabinogion. From the Llyfr Coch o Hergest, and other ancient Welsh manuscripts, with an English translation and notes*, 3 vols. (London: Longmans, 1849).

tradition were fundamental characteristics of the late eighteenth through early nineteenth-century antiquarian and scholarly world.[32]

Likewise, the potential of Arthuriana as a source for scholars of folklore and myth was evident from the beginning of the subject's nineteenth-century revival. As early as 1828, a connection between Arthurian legend and folkloric relics was made in Thomas Keightley's *The Fairy Mythology*, which drew parallels between Arthurian narrative and popular myths concerning fairy kings and queens.[33]   John Francis Campbell's enormously influential *Popular Tales of the West Highlands, Orally Collected* (1860) echoed that association by recording a Scottish parallel to Geoffrey of Monmouth's tale of Arthur and Merlin's adventure on the Fortunate Island,[34] and a few decades earlier, the publication of Edward Davies' *Mythology and Rites of the British Druids* (1809)[35] has been noted by Inga Bryden as signaling the beginning of the trend toward a systematic and specifically Celtic approach to Arthurian narratives. Bryden emphasizes that "in the view of early nineteenth-century scholars and antiquaries who consulted the Welsh chronicles Arthur was a *Celtic* hero," (emphasis added)[36] and according to Matthews, the appeal of newly rediscovered vernacular romance was grounded in the contemporary assumption that "romance as a literary form [grew up] in the margins, [far] from the edge

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[32] See David Matthews, *The Making of Middle English, 1765-1910,* vol. 18, Medieval Cultures (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999) and Matthews, "Scholarship and Popular Culture."

[33] Thomas Keightley, *The Fairy Mythology* (London: W. H. Ainsworth, 1828).

[34] John Francis Campbell, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands Orally Collected*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1860), 152. Cited in Alfred Nutt, *Studies on the Legend of the Holy Grail, with Especial Reference to the Hypothesis of its Celtic Origin* (London: David Nutt, 1888), 102-103.

[35] Edward Davies, *Mythology and Rites of the British Druids, ascertained by national documents and compared with the general traditions and customs of heathenism, as illustrated by the most eminent antiquaries of our age* (London: J. Booth, 1809).

[36] Inga Bryden, *Reinventing King Arthur: The Arthurian Legends in Victorian Culture* (London: Ashgate, 2005), 34-35.

of the cultured world."[37]   Indeed, Matthews notes that the typical view of vernacular romance as "other" to the neoclassical tradition characterized its reception and popularization throughout the first half of the nineteenth century.   Arthurian legend, therefore, occupied a central position in the British revival of interest in insular literary and popular tradition as an exemplar of archaic and primitive border lore, one most often typified as Celtic in both provenance and spirit, and one which evolved into its late nineteenth-century incarnation as the deepest expression of national genius.

However, Alfred Nutt's position in nineteenth-century Arthurian and Celtic scholarship cannot be fully characterized without reference to the large body of work produced outside British borders, as both Weston and Wood have rightly noted.   Nutt spent three formative years in apprenticeships in Leipzig, Berlin, and Paris, returning in 1878 to take over his father's firm and found the Folklore Society with Gomme; the firm which he inherited was, prior to his introduction of a folkloric and Celtic interest, geared almost exclusively to foreign language bookselling, and both his experiences in the intellectual centers of Germany and France and his role as the head of a foreign language publishing house ensured his familiarity with continental scholarship, particularly in Celtic studies, and it is clear that throughout his career he stayed in close contact with the intellectual currents of folklore, Celtic, and grail scholarship in both Britain and on the continent.   Interest in the grail legend was not only evident on the continent from the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was also, according to Arthurian scholar Janet Grayson, "overwhelmingly German,"[38]   and indeed Grayson remarks of Nutt's early intellectual experiences that "it was during the years spent in Germany [in his business

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[37] Matthews, "Scholarship and Popular Culture," 358.

[38] Janet Grayson, "In Quest of Jessie Weston," *Arthurian Literature* 11(1992): 26.

apprenticeship] that his fascination for Celtic myth was aroused."[39]   Like John Rhŷs,

Nutt received his first taste of the systematized study of Celtic language and lore in

German philological circles, and his own disciplinary self-awareness reveals the extent

of the German influence in his own work. As late as 1910 Nutt still referred to the work

of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm as foundational, both in terms of methodological

innovation and ideological ambitions, to the British study of folklore:

> By their labours [the Grimms] constituted folklore [as] an independent
> branch of study with aims and methods of its own. Now Jacob Grimm was
> essentially a historian; he always sought to replace every fact he studied in
> its historic setting, to determine its historic relations, and to utilise it for a
> constructive view of historical development. A right and sound decision
> led him to work thoroughly a definite linguistic or racial area.[40]

This historical-linguistic approach, which had characterized German philological inquiry

from the beginning of the century, has already been briefly sketched in connection with

Sir John Rhŷs' continental training, and while Nutt was neither a linguist nor even a

fluent reader of the medieval Celtic manuscripts upon which he staked his claims, his

approach to the (albeit translated) narrative material he investigated followed a broadly

similar pattern. Working within a definite "culture-ground," to borrow a phrase from

Gomme, Nutt practiced the comparative historicism of philology, except that in his case

the materials in question were the narrative productions of language rather than the

structure of language itself. In this respect, Nutt's approach to language, which saw it as

the transmission of communal self-expression and racial spirit, echoes a far more

eighteenth-century and Romantic sense of language, one closely allied with the

ideological paradigm of philologist and German nationalist Johann Gottfried Herder.

Indeed, in the same text in which he noted the centrality of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm to

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[39] Grayson, "In Quest of Jessie Weston," 27.

[40] Alfred Nutt, "How Far is the Lore of the Folk Racial?" *Folklore* 21 (1910): 380.

British folklore, Nutt identified Herder as a key player in the early history of folklore science; of particular interest for Nutt was Herder's "brilliant but premature" ambition to "elaborate a racial psychology on the basis of material for the most part of a popular nature" in *Stimmen der Völker*;[41] not only does Nutt praise Herder's influence as "wide and stimulating," but he goes so far as to claim that the German philologist "may truly be regarded as one of the founders of our study."[42]

Indeed, Nutt was preeminently concerned with establishing a linear tradition of scholarship to back his own discursive approach to Celtic folklore, one that took in the vast catalogue of continental research but ultimately positioned late nineteenth-century Britain at the fore. In *Studies on the Legend of the Holy Grail* in particular, an extended intellectual genealogy works to identify those elements of earlier scholars' work that could be styled in line with his own conclusions, and he traces a history of scholarship with which he associates himself as recipient. Nutt therefore opens his account of nineteenth-century grail studies with the work of French philologist Theodore de la Villemarqué, whose 1842 *Contes populaires des anciens Bretons précédés d'un essai sur l'origine des épopées chevaleresques de la Table Ronde* (Popular Tales of the Ancient Bretons Preceded by an Essay on the Origin of Chivalric Epics of the Round Table)[43] he locates at the methodological and ideological origin of scientific grail criticism. Nutt notes the "convenience" of beginning a survey of grail scholarship with Villemarqué, not only because of "the influence they [his works] exercised upon later investigation," but also because Villemarqué was the "first to state with fulness and method the arguments

[41] Johann Gottfried Herder, *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern* (Tübingen: J. G. Cotta, 1804). This edition, to which Nutt refers, is a posthumously published and retitled edition of Johann Gottfried Herder, *Volkslieder*, ed. Johannes von Müller (Leipzig: Weygand, 1778-79).

[42] Nutt, "How Far is the Lore of the Folk Racial?," 380.

[43] Theodore de Villemarqué, *Contes populaires des anciens Bretons précédés d'un essai sur l'origine des épopées chevaleresques de la Table Ronde* (Paris and Leipzig: Jules Renouard et Compagnie, 1842).

for the Celtic origin of the legend."[44]   Villemarqué's main contention – "that the Welsh storytellers received from the ancient bards a pagan tradition, which, changed in character and confounded with the Mystery of the Sacrament, they handed on to the romance writers of Northern France and Germany, who gave it a fresh and undying life"[45] – was made available to an English readership when his text was partly translated and published by Sabine Baring-Gould in his 1866 *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*.[46] This event is given special notice by Nutt, who saw the publication of Baring-Gould's text as an event that brought about the "wide acceptance" of Villemarqué's ideas in Britain and established the translated text as "the authoritative exposition of the Celtic origin of the cycle."[47]   That Nutt was intent on establishing a linear tradition for a specifically British school of Celtic and Arthurian studies is clear, and his extensive account of the century's scholarship in that area is conditioned throughout by his earmarking of concepts and arguments that fall in line with his own opinions on the subject.

The title page of his seminal *Studies on the Legend of the Holy Grail* is particularly evocative of this ambition; before embarking on his extensive examination of grail legend, Nutt provides his reader with a multi-lingual list of "motto[es]"[48] for his study, one cited from a German source and the final two quotations from Scottish folklorist Joseph Campbell:

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[44] Nutt, *Legend of the Holy Grail,* 97.

[45] Nutt, *Legend of the Holy Grail,* 98.

[46] Sabine Baring-Gould, *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages* (London: Rivingtons, 1866).

[47] Nutt, *Legend of the Holy Grail*, 98.

[48] Nutt, *Legend of the Holy Grail*, 103.

Welchem Volke das Märchen (von Parzival's Jugendigeschichte) angehörte, welches die schriftliche oder mündlich Ueberlieferung mit der Gralsage in Verbindung brachte, ist schwer zu bestimmen, doch würde dasjenige Volk den meisten Anspruch darauf haben, bei welchem sich dies Märchen ausserhalb jenes Zusammenhangs nachweisen liesse. (K. Simrock)

The Celtic Hero who in the twelfth century became Percival le Chercheur du basin . . . in the end became possessed of that sacred basin le Saint Graal, and the holy lance which though Christian in the story, are the same as the talismans which appear so often in Grail tales . . . the glittering weapon which destroys, and the sacred medicinal cup which cures." (J. F. Campbell)

In all the Fenian stories mention is made of Fionn's healing cup . . . it is the same as the Holy Grail of course. (J. F. Campbell)[49]

Nutt begins with a substantial passage from German mythologist Karl Joseph Simrock's 1842 edition of Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* and *Titurel* (later translated in-text);[50] the use of Simrock's text not only makes clear the implication that Nutt's text possesses a German inheritance, it is also deployed by Nutt for the "suggestion" contained within it – namely, that von Eschenbach's *Parzival* contained "a variation of the Great Fool folk-tale" brought into contact with the grail story and, finally and most importantly, that the "people . . . among whom it is found in an independent form [i.e. The Celts]" would "have the first claim."[51]   The final two passages are drawn from Campbell's 1862 *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, of whose author Nutt wrote that "of all the masters in folk-lore Jacob Grimm not excepted, none had a keener eye or surer, more instinctively right judgement."[52]   This was high praise indeed from a scholar for whom the mid-century German school of folklore studies was almost paradigmatic,

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[49] Nutt, *Legend of the Holy Grail*, title.

[50] Nutt translates Simrock thus: "It is hard to say what people possessing this tale brought it into contact, either by tradition or in writing, with the Grail story, but that people would have the first claim among whom it is found in an independent form." Nutt, *Legend of the Holy Grail*, 101.

[51] Nutt, *Legend of the Holy Grail*, 101.

[52] Nutt, *Legend of the Holy Grail*, xv.

but Campbell, whose extraordinarily systematized method of field collection was unequalled in practice in Britain until the beginning of the twentieth century, occupied a foundational position in the self-composed intellectual histories of many folklorists. Particularly for late nineteenth-century British folklorists intent on solidifying disciplinary professionalism and aware of the woeful absence of a systematized method of collection in Britain by contrast with the imposing edifice of the Grimms' scholarship, Campbell represented the possibility that real fieldwork might be undertaken inside British borders. That Campbell argued for a connection between grail legend and Celtic popular tradition as early as the 1860s is also clearly critical to Nutt's narrative of his discursive genealogy, and while Campbell could not be given temporal precedence in the narrative of a gradual intellectual revelation of Arthurian legend's essential Celticity, he could be credited as the inspiration for Nutt's own scholarly work:

> I have taken these words as a motto for my studies, which are, indeed, but an amplification of Mr. Campbell's statement. Had the latter received the attention it deserved, had it, for instance, fallen into the hands of a scholar to whom Simrock's words . . . were familiar, there would, in all probability, have been no occasion for the present work.[53]

Nutt's contention that his own work represented merely the "amplification" of Campbell's was, of course, rhetorical and intended rather to amplify Campbell's centrality to the history of grail studies, the majority of which had been undertaken in Germany and France. The further implication is, of course, that Nutt's own text represents exactly that combination of "Simrock's words" and "Campbell's statement," and is therefore both the descendant and long-expected fusion of continental and British research into the Celtic sources of Arthurian narrative.

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[53] Nutt, *Legend of the Holy Grail*, 103.

Nutt's delineation of the narrative behind his chosen "mottoes" for *Studies on the Legend of the Holy Grail* further emphasizes his intention to both establish a genealogy of international scholarship and also to mark the future importance of a newly emergent British school, one supplemented by the extensive (British) publication of essential Arthurian sources: "Up until 1861 all writers upon the Grail legend were under this disadvantage, that they had no complete text of any part of the cycle," that is, until Fredrick James Furnivall, under the auspices of the Roxburghe Club, produced a reprint of François Michel's 1841 edition of Robert de Borron's Arthurian poems.[54]   It is significant that Nutt cites the reissue of a text that had already been collected and edited as a groundbreaking moment for grail scholarship, and while Nutt argues that Furnivall's 1861 text represented the first complete Arthurian text, it is critical to remember that even within Britain, as previously noted, Malory had already been published in several editions, and Thomas Warton's *History of English Poetry* (1774-81),[55] which David Matthews cites as hugely influential on the development of Arthurian studies, had unearthed "dozens" of previously unknown medieval manuscripts, many of which were subsequently reprinted in the work of later antiquarians.[56]   While, as Matthews makes clear, Warton's and subsequent antiquarians' anthologies were not "scholarly in the modern sense of the word," they did however make a "claim on scholarship" in that they exhibited the first move towards standardized and critical editions of manuscripts.[57] Inspired by the work of Warton, antiquarians like Thomas Percy produced editions of newly discovered vernacular literature that spoke to the growing interest in the textual

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[54] Nutt, *Legend of the Holy Grail*, 102. Robert de Boron, Frederick James Furnival, et al., *Seynt Graal, or the Sank Ryal. The History of the Holy Graal, Partly in English Verse*, 2 vols. (London: J. B. Nichols and Sons, 1861-63).

[55] Thomas Warton, *The History of English Poetry: From the Close of the Eleventh to the Commencement of the Eighteenth Century*, 3 vols (London: J. Dodsley, J. Walter, T. Beckett, J. Robson, G. Robinson, and J. Bew, and Messrs. Fletcher, 1774-1781).

[56] Matthews, "Scholarship and Popular Culture," 356.

[57] Matthews, "Scholarship and Popular Culture," 356.

history and heritage of the nation. Percy's *The Reliques of English Poetry* (1765)[58] proved popular with both a general and an antiquarian readership, and Matthews cites it as a key element in the late eighteenth- through early nineteenth-century impetus to locate and publish new Arthurian material. The publication of John Pinkerton's 1792 edition of Scottish alliterative Arthurian verse,[59] Joseph Ritson's 1802 *Ancient Engleish Metrical Romanceës*,[60] and Walter Scott's seminal 1804 edition of *Sir Tristrem*[61] are likewise traceable to the growing demand for readily available copies of vernacular textual history and also to the eventual professionalization of its study. [62] While it is clear that early nineteenth-century Arthurian material was not always available in the format that late nineteenth-century scholars came to expect, Nutt's contention that Furnivall's edition of de Borron in 1861 represented, to all intents and purposes, the first *usable* Arthurian text is unsupportable. Nutt, crucially, omits entirely Lady Charlotte Guest's edition of *The Mabinogion*, which appeared in 1849 and which he himself would eventually re-publish in 1902. While it is unclear why precisely he chose to champion Furnivall in particular as the exemplar of a new era of critical British editions of Arthurian manuscript evidence, his ultimate intention in providing such a detailed intellectual genealogy in *Holy Grail* immediately before delineating his own interpretative stance is almost certainly to emphasize a specifically British role in the discovery and explication of grail legend. Like his aesthetic centering of Campbell on his title page, Nutt's gesture towards Furnivall and to English editions of medieval manuscripts generally underscores the importance for Nutt of the establishment of a

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[58] Thomas Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English poetry.*

[59] John Pinkerton, "The Awntyrs off Arthure, Gawan and Golgras*," Scotish Poems, Reprinted from Scarce Editions*, 3 vols. (London: J. Nichols, 1792), in Matthews, "Scholarship and Popular Culture," 257.

[60] Joseph Ritson, *Ancient Engleish Metrical Romanceës*, 3 vols. (London: W. Bulmer and Co., 1802).

[61] Walter Scott, *Sir Tristrem: A Metrical Romance of the Thirteenth Century, by Thomas of Ercildoune, called The Rhymer. Edited from the Auchinleck MS. by Walter Scott* (Edinburgh: A. Constable, 1804).

[62] Matthews, "Scholarship and Popular Culture," 357.

secure British tradition of scholarship within the international community of grail scholars, one in which he could secure a position for his own folkloric discourse within which Arthurian lore represented the height of Celtic literature's imaginative capability.

Further, while considerable attention is paid in Weston's retrospective of Nutt's career to the revolutionary quality of his "evolutionist" approach to grail legend, it is limiting to imagine that Nutt alone saw grail legends as the product of the progressive development of traditionary materials in a constantly evolving narrative tradition. Rather, it is clear that while Nutt may have been among the first to implement a consciously Tylorian approach within an Arthurian context, he was by no means the first to argue that the doctrine of a progressive evolution of type was the key to understanding the development of a given tradition. Rather, this approach to Arthurian manuscript and popular tradition further exhibits his inheritance of the methodological orientation of German historical philology; just as German philology concentrated on outlining the historical development of word forms within a larger sense of language as an essential expression of the soul, or *geist* of a people, Nutt's own investigation of Celtic and Arthurian tradition adapted this discursive structure toward his own evocation of a Romantic and Herderian sense of *volksgeist*. For Nutt, the progression and development of language systems was paralleled in the development and evolution of narrative forms; whether in manuscript or oral form, the individual elements of a given narrative contained kernels of their true temporal origin and significance.

Nor was Nutt's use of a biological analogy for the development of the so-called body of narrative his own invention; as historians of nineteenth-century linguistics have shown, the use of anatomic analogy for the so-called body of language had been in use

since the beginning of the century. Indeed, the biological concept of language was, by the end of the century, largely superseded by geological metaphor, further emphasizing Nutt's ties to an older Romantic discursive vision of language and national origin. Whereas for Gomme the geological metaphor provided not only the method, but also the historical pattern, Nutt's geological influence was tempered, perhaps by his cognizance of earlier German philological discourse, and he envisioned the movements of both cultures and narratives across time and space in terms more fluid and mutually interactive than the rigid fossilization of Gomme's more classically Tylorian formulation. Indeed, the mutual interaction of discrete narrative traditions was, for Nutt, one of the primary causes of narrative progression; the enormous influence of Christianity on Irish tradition, for example, is in Nutt's work primarily productive, by contrast with Gomme's account, in which Christianity's entrance into Britain resulted in the immediate fossilization of all independent tradition.[63] For Nutt, however, the catastrophic events of migration, contact, and conquest were essential to the continuous evolution of any race's self-expression in the form of its narrative tradition, and were essentially productive, rather than destructive, historical moments:

> These [artistic] elements of the lore of the folk are, in a very special sense, the products of racial self-consciousness . . . it is in times of racial stress and shock that these bodies of belief and legend, - the racial mythology, the racial heroic saga, - emerge sharply, and identify themselves most closely with the racial consciousness . . . Considerations such as these have always led me to seek for the remains of what is racially distinctive among the artistic rather than among the practical elements of the lore of the folk.[64]

Nutt's Herderian vision of the revelatory capacity of narrative as the manifestation of "racial self-consciousness" is not simply fascinating because of his integration of

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[63] Excepting of course the production of superstition and mythic forms of race-antagonism, but these are, as discussed in Chapter Two, primarily figured by Gomme as mutations, random off-shoots of contact rather than true manifestations of a complete Tylorian culture.

[64] Nutt, "How Far is the Lore of the Folk Racial?" 384.

typically Romantic tropes of narrative-as-*volksgeist* into the comparative methodological

practices characteristic of late nineteenth-century culture science, and it will be seen that

the idea of narrative as the spirit of the race was, for Nutt, not at all confined to the

sphere of intellectual speculation. Thus, through a more detailed examination of his

points of friction with the pre-Aryan hypothesis, I will provide a clear outline of the

stakes inherent in the history of what, for him, involved the progressive revelation of the

British national self-consciousness.

3. Nutt's Objections to the Pre-Aryan Hypothesis

In "The Celtic Doctrine of Re-Birth," the second part of an essay included in his

and Kuno Meyer's *The Voyage of Bran*, Nutt outlined in detail his objections to the

conclusions of those "distinguished scholars," namely Gomme, Rhŷs, and others, who

argued that a pre-Aryan stratum was evident within the folkloric, archaeological, and

racial record of Western Europe.[65] While he claimed to have no *a priori* "prejudice

against the theory of pre-Aryan survivals"[66] and concurred that the European record of

tradition exhibited a demonstrable level of inconsistency, he demurred to translate that

evidence into an argument for a heterogenous racial inheritance. For Nutt, "this

inconsistency does not necessarily imply the presence of alien racial elements. There

have been, apart from the introduction of Christianity, mighty changes in the Aryan

world," and there "may have been changes of an equally far-reaching character in the

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[65] Including but not limited to David MacRitchie, Joseph Jacobs, and the philologist J. Morris Jones whose "The Pre-Aryan Syntax in Insular Celtic" was included in Rhŷs and David Brynmor-Jones, *The Welsh People* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1900)*,* 617-641.

[66] Nutt, "The Happy Otherworld. The Celtic Doctrine of Re-birth," 2:255.

unrecorded past of the Aryans."[67]   Further, Nutt insisted, inconsistencies within a given

culture ground were the necessary by-product of gradual evolution, and "religious,

social," and "philosophical" change over time, whether gradual or sudden, produced

diachronic inconsistency, not the catastrophe of racial invasion so central to Gomme's

and Rhŷs' arguments.[68]   "The Brahmin of to-day represents the Aryan of three thousand

years ago scarce more faithfully than does the Christian priest," Nutt argued, but this

difference was due not to the presence of discrete racial strata, but was instead the result

of the gradual evolution over time of a predominately insular and homogenous

tradition.[69]   Unlike Gomme, for whom institutional survivals were the signposts of racial

difference, Nutt's paradigm for folklore rejected cross-comparison between cultural

institutions as a means of diagnosing race; for Nutt, "identity of rite cannot prove identity

of race between the peoples practising those rites," and ultimately "difference of rite does

not necessarily betoken difference of race."[70]

While in "The Celtic Doctrine of Re-Birth," as elsewhere, Nutt conceded that the

historical existence and even influence of a pre-Aryan population in Europe and Britain

was "not impossible,"[71] he was always clear that his concession to this possibility came

with an extreme caveat:

> In general I am disinclined to rely upon differences in religious ideas and
> practices as a means of discriminating race. And in this special case I can
> but note that even if the conceptions and rites we have studied in the
> foregoing pages had their origin among pre-Aryan-speaking races, yet we
> know of them from Aryan records, we investigate them in connection with

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[67] Nutt, "The Happy Otherworld. The Celtic Doctrine of Re-birth," 2:255.

[68] Nutt, "The Happy Otherworld. The Celtic Doctrine of Re-birth," 2:254.

[69] Nutt, "The Happy Otherworld. The Celtic Doctrine of Re-birth," 2:254.

[70] Nutt, "The Happy Otherworld. The Celtic Doctrine of Re-birth," 2:256.

[71] Nutt, "The Happy Otherworld. The Celtic Doctrine of Re-birth," 2:182.

> Aryans, *they have been assimilated by Aryans and become Aryan for all purposes of historical inquiry.* Their ultimate origin is a matter of comparative indifference (emphasis added).[72]

According to Nutt, the event of encounter and interaction so critical to both Gomme's and Rhŷs' interpretation of Aryan/non-Aryan intercultural genealogy should in fact be read as the moment of extinction for the latter, that is, if it ever occurred in the first place. Nutt argued not only that the incorporation of any potential non-Aryan element would necessarily have meant its racial extinction, but also that the translation of its cultural and imaginative ephemera into the Aryan *volksgeist* would necessarily eradicate all scientifically readable indications of its non-Aryanness. The racial-cultural identity, or "ultimate origin," of institutional and narrative relics would be necessarily erased by their translation into the Aryan racial-cultural body, within which they would have been reconstituted as Aryan cultural productions. Nutt's Aryan race automatically asserts itself as the original and originating inhabitant of whatever land it colonizes, and while Nutt nowhere concedes definitively the historical existence of a pre-Aryan race, he does make clear that *if* it existed, it never could occupy a position within the racial, cultural, or national genealogy of the modern state precisely because of its inevitable assimilation on contact with the Aryan race.

It is essential to note that while Nutt polemicizes so intently against the translation of institutional similarity into potential racial similarity, or rather against an ethnographic implementation of the comparative method, his own practices tend to produce precisely this kind of conclusion, albeit grounded in the material of narrative rather than of cultural institutions. In "The Celtic Doctrine of Re-Birth," he juxtaposed both Greek and Celtic folkloric archives in order to determine by means of comparison

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[72] Nutt, "The Happy Otherworld. The Celtic Doctrine of Re-birth," 2:256-257.

across generic type which tradition represented the oldest, the most pure form of Aryan lore. Unsurprisingly, Nutt argued from stylistic parallels between the archaic Greek Dionysiac cult and medieval Irish and Welsh narrative traditions that the latter represented not an equal, but rather a purer and more archaic stage of Aryan culture. Purer, crucially, because while the ancient Greek literary tradition represented, for Nutt, a paragon of Aryanness, its historical contact with alien culture-systems and races such as "the East" resulted in the pollution of its internal form, illustrated for example by the "degradation of women" found in Aryan-Greek culture but not in the Aryan-Celtic – clear evidence of the influence, for Nutt, of an outsider race.[73] This interpretation of racial-cultural form and purity is clearly grounded in the discursive structure propounded by Gomme, and it is critical to fully delineate the implications of and the rationale behind Nutt's simultaneous disavowal of and sustained dependance upon a racialized delineation of culture-elements toward the isolation of the "pure" Aryan.

While Nutt employed Aryan/non-Aryan contact to disqualify, so to speak, the Greek-Aryans as the possessors of the oldest and purest Aryan tradition, the majority of his investigative work was grounded in the assumption that the interaction between races and their narrative traditions would result in mutual influence and continued development. His account of the history of myth, legend, and saga in Britain incorporates both the Viking invasions of the ninth century and the Norman invasion of England in the eleventh not as moments of racial and cultural extinction, but rather as key events in the mutation and evolution of insular literary and popular tradition. Thus in the "Celtic and Mediæval Romance" issue of his *Popular Studies in Mythology Romance & Folklore* series, he declares unreservedly that a direct result of the Norman

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[73] Nutt, "Cuchulainn, The Irish Achilles," *Popular Studies in Mythology Romance & Folklore* (London: David Nutt, 1900), 34-35.

conquest was the revival of Arthurian heroic traditions, previously the exclusive possession of the culturally isolated British Celts:

> I have shown that the development of Western Christendom during the late eleventh and twelfth century inevitably threw older literature - in this case the *Matière de France* [French popular tradition] - into disrepute, and created the demand for a new literature. I have shown that one of the most important events of this period, the Norman French conquest of England, forced to the front a body of heroic fiction, the legend of Arthur and his knights, and gave it the advantage of powerful and fashionable patronage.[74]

According to Nutt, the survival and indeed the popularity of Arthurian heroic legend after the Norman conquest was directly due to the Norman experience of Celtic legend in Brittany, albeit in a bastardized and impure form. Hence when the Normans arrived in Britain as a "new race of kings" anxious to conjure a national mythology to support their new position as overlords, they naturally tended toward a tradition that transmitted the undiluted original spirit of that with which they were already familiar. "[M]uch as the new family might welcome the old portraits, long relegated to the attics, of a yet earlier race,"[75] so the genuine *volksgeist* of Celtic tradition revealed its truest form to the Normans. "Undoubtedly," as Nutt remarks, "the fact that the stream of tradition ran deeper and purer in Britain than in Brittany" had much to do with the appeal of the Arthurian cycle; in Britain, Nutt notes, "it had retained a closer touch with historic reality" than in Brittany, and this variation "had much to do with the vast and sudden outburst of the legend" under Norman rule.[76] Rather than imagine the conquest of Britain by the Normans as the catastrophic extinction of indigenous culture, as it might have figured in Gomme's eyes, Nutt interpreted colonization as an influential stage in the

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[74] Nutt, "Celtic and Mediæval Romance," *Popular Studies in Mythology Romance & Folklore* (London: David Nutt, 1904), 30.

[75] Nutt, "Celtic and Mediæval Romance," 15-16.

[76] Nutt, "Celtic and Mediæval Romance," 16.

evolution of Celtic narrative tradition, in which Norman patronage expanded and popularized the insular genre.

By contrast, Nutt's assertion that the Aryan invasion of a non-Aryan Britain would beget only the absolute racial and cultural extinction of the latter is not only a more extreme version of Gomme's own interpretation (in which the effect of conquest was fossilization rather than complete obliteration), it is also a critical subsidiary of his assertion that the Celtic, and not the non-Aryan, be counted as the most ancient stratum of the British nation. While elsewhere and throughout his work, *inter*-Aryan cultural and narrative interaction is characterized by production and progress, contact across the insurmountable racial gulf separating the non-Aryan from the Aryan is on principle impotent; successive Aryan races and cultures might complement and enlarge upon each other, but the introduction of a non-Aryan basis for modern Britain denies the central tenet of Nutt's thesis: that is, an Aryan-Celtic origin for the nation.

4. *Shakespeare and the Body of Celtic Narrative*

In his 1897 Presidential Address, Nutt traced the Celtic influences upon Shakespeare's interpretation of fairies, arguing for the playwright's position as perhaps the purest modern transmitter of revealed Celtic-Aryan genius. His presentation of Shakespeare is overtly nationalist and hagiographic, and after denigrating the fractured and therefore unusable line of Aryan spirit in Greek tradition, which suffered its irreparable break thanks to the expansion of its horizons following its adoption by Rome,

Nutt illuminates the isolated and therefore untouchably pure Celtic-Aryan tradition as the sole bearer of the genuine Aryan imaginative spirit, with Britain figuring as its destined guardian:

> The old gods, themselves an outcome of the primitive agricultural creed, were transformed into the wizard champions and enchantresses of the romances, but they remained in touch with their earliest forms; the link between the fairy of the peasant and the fairy of literature (for heroic saga *is* literature although traditional literature) was never wholly snapped; and when the time came for the highest imagination of the race to turn to the old pre-Christian world for inspiration, in these islands alone was there a literary convention which still led back to the wealth of incident and symbol preserved by the folk. In these islands alone, I say, and why? Because the Arthurian romance, that form of imaginative literature which revealed Celtic Mythology to the world, although it entered English later than it did either French or German literature, although France first gave it to all mankind, and Germany bestowed upon it its noblest medieval form, yet here it was at home, on the Continent it was an alien. When the destined hour struck and the slumbering princess of Faery should awake, it was the youngest quester who gave the releasing kiss and won her to be his bride; if we seek their offspring we may find it in the English poetry of the last three centuries.[77]

This extraordinary delineation of Celtic legendary history provides an invaluable means of access into Nutt's vision of both its character and specifically its role in the generation of British culture, and it is critical that its implications are drawn out. That Nutt imagined the Arthurian narrative tradition to be the purest exemplar of Celtic folklore has been previously touched upon; it is however important to note the full significance of this notion within the context of his work. For Nutt, the Celtic folk tradition was uniquely in possession of an unbroken line of descent from a pan-Aryan originator, a parent figure not unlike the mythical *ursprache* of mid-century Indo-European philology. The Celtic element of Britain was therefore of immeasurable value as a means by which the nation could connect, artistically and racially, to the supposed source of modern Europe. It was,

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[77] Nutt, "The Fairy Mythology of English Literature," 51-52.

however, equally critical for Nutt to establish the specifically *British* Celtic tradition as the most ancient among the Celtic strata of Europe, and he therefore necessarily denigrates the continental Celt as an "alien," an astonishing claim given that he elsewhere supports the generally accepted contention that Brittany at least was counted among the Celtic nations. That the continental Celtic tradition is elsewhere described as polluted by contact with the Greco-Roman culture makes his above assertion more clear; the notion that the British Celt survived in absolute isolation from the influence and effects of all other human culture is absolutely central to Nutt's thesis and also, crucially, allows him to nullify any potential claims by other groups to be in possession of the so-called oldest Celtic archive. He is thus able to claim that while the Celtic Arthurian tradition "entered English later than it did either French or German literature," it was only in England that it was "at home." Further, Nutt presents Shakespeare in much the same vein as he does the development of Arthurian tradition, and records him as one of the critical stages in the gradual revelation of the Celtic spirit, further emphasizing Nutt's desire to establish a linear evolution with an insurmountably ancient origin, existing within an undoubtably English tradition. Thus England, uniquely, can lay "claim to the sole body of mythology and romance, the Celtic, which grew up wholly unaffected by classic culture" and "is destined to drink deeply of it in the future as in the past."[78]

Throughout Nutt's work, a critical influence upon the body of Celtic tradition was its productive interaction with the successive influxes of other Aryan cultural bodies, the result being the mutual causation of simultaneous generic mutation. For Nutt, the influence and interaction between Aryan racial-cultural formulae took on a multiplicity of forms, all of which are demonstrably evolutionist in their vision of the progress and

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[78] Nutt, "The Fairy Mythology of English Literature," 53.

mutation of forms, whether by environment or contact. In "The Celtic Doctrine of Re-Birth," Nutt imagines the history of the legends of both Finn and Arthur as characterized in part by the "constant struggle between romantic tradition and pseudo-historic record," or rather between two distinct "stages" of narrative genre;[79] in the introduction of Christianity to Ireland, Nutt identifies a sustained "mutual action and reaction of pre-Christian and Christian mythic romance" as the originating source for the revision of both "the champion and the wizard" and the "peasant's ideal of the saint."[80] Finally, in tracing the history of ancient Greek insular tradition, Nutt suggests that the late presence of so-called primitive forms of traditional cultural rites and narratives might be due to the resurgence of the more primitive varieties of the traditions found in borderlands and isolated rural enclaves. That is, that while the philosopher "class" in Greece may have developed the tradition into the lofty heights of intellectual investigation, the peripheral peasant tradition would have continued parallel to the evolution of the former, and that "it is quite possible that such traces of primitive barbarism as lingered in Greek usages should be reinforced during times of closer contact between the more and less advanced peoples."[81]

That an inter-Aryan "mutual action and reaction" should be so deeply ingrained in the discursive structure of Nutt's history of Aryan generic development further emphasizes the critical importance of his sustained and vehement contention that any Aryan/non-Aryan contact would be necessarily and absolutely sterile. His conclusion to "The Celtic Doctrine of Re-Birth" illuminates the significance of this distinction; at the close of his sustained diatribe against the so-called historicizing impulse of scholars such

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[79] Nutt, "The Happy Otherworld. The Celtic Doctrine of Re-birth," 2:28.

[80] Nutt, "The Happy Otherworld. The Celtic Doctrine of Re-birth," 2:209.

[81] Nutt, "The Happy Otherworld. The Celtic Doctrine of Re-birth," 2:156.

as Gomme, who would suggest a non-Aryan presence in Britain's past, Nutt communicates exactly what he considers to be the stakes in the non-Aryan debate:

> Here I leave the question. It is, I trust, set forth clearly and unambiguously. It is important, involving, as it does, the larger one, whether the religious beliefs and practices of our Aryan-speaking forefathers are, in the main, a product of the same intellectual, artistic, and moral capacities which have given to the world Greek poetry, philosophy, and art, Roman law, Indian religious metaphysic, or whether they must, in the main, be assigned to the influence of *other races*, of *alien cultures* (emphasis added).[82]

The "correct answer," according to Nutt, depends "upon the weight and import of evidence afforded by the myths and customs of peoples, who once dominated these islands, and who still form a most important element, alike physical, intellectual, and artistic, of our mixed population."[83]   This population, mythologized in Nutt's presentation as the cultural and moral Prometheus of Britain, is *definitively* not the non-Aryan indigeneity of Gomme's and Rhŷs' characterization but rather Nutt's Celtic race figured as the originating *volksgeist* of the modern British nation. Crucially, the mutual interaction between it and later Aryan races arriving in Britain is figured as interaction within a group rather than across either racial or cultural boundaries; unlike the sterile intermixture of Aryan and non-Aryan, contact between the aboriginal Celtic-Aryan and later Aryan varieties is represented as not only viable, but fertile both racially and imaginatively. This reading of the fundamental difference between intra-Aryan and inter-Aryan/non-Aryan interaction clearly hinges on the use of tropes concerning human hybridity developed during the polygenicist/monogenecist debates discussed in Chapter Four; thus Nutt's reading of the history of the Aryan varieties, evolutionarily speaking, not only leaves the Celtic tradition unpolluted, but actively serves to perpetuate it. By

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[82] Nutt, "The Happy Otherworld. The Celtic Doctrine of Re-birth," 2:276-277.

[83] Nutt, "The Happy Otherworld. The Celtic Doctrine of Re-birth," 2: 277.

contrast, any contact with an "alien," or non-Aryan influence, the effect of which effectively nullified the Greek-Aryan tradition's right to absolute antiquity, produces what Nutt can only classify as "abnormal development caused by the intrusion of alien conceptions."[84] Indeed, the danger of the alien and non-Aryan influence is such that the even the continental Celt's contact with Greco-Roman tradition and hence, by proxy, with the polluting effects of the latter's contact with "the East," also voids its connection to the original and pure Celtic tradition. Only an isolated, unblemished racial-cultural tradition could be counted as the carrier of "mythical conceptions and visions more archaic in substance if far later in record" than either Vedic or Greek mythological formulae.[85] Thus the British Celtic heritage is envisioned by Nutt as an unbroken line of racial descent, in which the essential genius of the Celtic, and therefore Aryan, race is gradually revealed through the productive effects of successive contact with other Aryan races.

5. *Folklore's Duty: Matthew Arnold's* On the Study of Celtic Literature *and England's Imperial Responsibility*

Shortly before his death, Nutt was in the process of editing *On the Study of Celtic Literature,* one of Matthew Arnold's most enduring and controversial sets of critical essays, originally delivered as lectures at Oxford in 1865 and later collected for publication in 1867.[86]   In this collection, Arnold employed recent philological and anthropological research in order to address what he considered to be a central problem

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[84] Nutt, "The Happy Otherworld. The Celtic Doctrine of Re-birth," 2:209.

[85] Nutt, "The Happy Otherworld. The Celtic Doctrine of Re-birth," 2:281.

[86] Matthew Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1867).

for the future of British literature: the role of the so-called Celtic element in the nation as both a political and an artistic body. Arnold called for the Celtic element of the British national inheritance to be recognized as essential to its history and artistic nature, and demanded that the English people not reject their Celtic inheritance but rather work with it toward its full assimilation into the national body, an act which would eventually produce a more perfect and harmonious whole. Arnold's text, as Young has demonstrated, is modeled primarily on the work of the linguist Ernest Renan, whose "The Poetry of the Celtic Races" (1854) Young suggests formed the basis for Arnold's own meditation on the artistic capabilities of the Celtic people.[87] Arnold was not solely indebted to Renan for his characterization of the Celtic race as essentially effeminate, prone to imaginative distraction, and ultimately incapable of political autonomy; such a vision of the so-called Celt had been in effect since at least the eighteenth century, and had likewise been traditionally opposed to the other primary racial category in Arnold's treatise – the Teuton, or Anglo-Saxon. The latter as a favored racial-cultural stereotype for the English and often used in opposition to the Celt had developed throughout the nineteenth century, aided by the revival of interest in insular literary tradition and abetted by the growing popularization of racialist typology.[88] Arnold's characterization of the Teuton as the element of the British population generally understood to be racially Germanic and therefore steadfast, practical, and hardy was not the product of a single influence but rather the incorporation of contemporary assumptions redeployed toward his own discursive goal. Arnold's text has come to occupy a central position in modern examinations of Victorian attitudes to race and culture, particularly with respect to the relationship between Ireland and England during the latter half of the nineteenth century;

[87] Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire* (London: Routledge, 1995), 70.

[88] See L. P. Curtis, *Racism and Anti-Irish Prejudice in Victorian England* (New York: New York University Press, 1968), Gerrard Carruthers and Alan Rawes, eds., *English Romanticism and the Celtic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) and Young, *Colonial Desire.*

that Alfred Nutt chose to celebrate it as a viable contribution to Celtic scholarship as late as 1910 is critically important to an understanding of the latter's own sense of national identity and political responsibility. While Nutt's death in 1910 prevented the completion of his edition, his material was evidently in enough of a finished state to be published in the same year as the "Authorized Edition" of Arnold's text, and his notes to Arnold's evocation of the Celtic genius provide a remarkably clear insight into his sense of the role of the Celtic within the composition of the British national character.[89] Further, Nutt's commentary provides, particularly through his retrospective of the fortunes of "the Celtic" in the period between Arnold's nineteenth-century publication and his twentieth-century edition, a clear sense of his imperialist vision for Britain and its national culture.

Nutt's introduction to Arnold's text celebrates the spirit of its author's mission to uncover the influence of the "Celtic genius" on the British literary and cultural spirit and to highlight the "results of signal excellence" that accompanied contact between "Celt and Teuton."[90] While praising Arnold's "æsthetic theory" and prescient grasp of only partially examined material, Nutt was, however, careful to caution against the perils of a too-credulous reading of Arnold's diagnosis of the essential characteristics of Celtic literature. "His analysis of the facts before him is imperfect," Nutt warned, and while "his intuition is frequently right," his "neglect of historic conditions" constitutes the "main defect" of his otherwise masterful treatise on the Celtic genius.[91] Ultimately, however, Nutt maintained that despite the "yawning lacuna" in Arnold's text, the

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[89] Matthew Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, ed. Alfred Nutt (London: David Nutt, 1910).

[90] Nutt, "Editor's Introduction," in Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, xxvii.

[91] Nutt, "Editor's Introduction," *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, xxiv-xxv.

"essential truth of the Arnoldian doctrine" remained unaffected, and its flaws figure as mere "'accidents' with which he [Arnold] has associated it."[92]

Nutt's introduction to Arnold also contains a substantial meditation on the continued relevance of the latter's plea for a united and harmonious relationship between Britain's Teutonic and Celtic elements. In 1867 Arnold wrote of the "beautiful and admirable force" of the essential Celtic "sensibility" – its "nervous exaltation," "feminine" sense of chivalry and romance, and "intimate feeling of nature" lent itself to the productions of artistic fancy while simultaneously denying it the capacity to exist successfully on the level of "material civilisation."[93] When isolated, the Celtic genius, with its "audacious, sparkling, and immaterial manner" was unavoidably "lamed" by its essential "rebellion against fact;"[94] when brought into contact with the "steadiness" of the Germanic genius and the "talent for affairs" characteristic of the Norman, however, the "composite" of the three yielded, in Arnold's vision, the unparalleled literary and cultural potential of the English genius.[95] In his 1910 meditation on this vision of the British national character, Nutt remarked that Arnold's call for harmony between the "racially akin" Celt and Teuton, and especially for increased sympathy on the part of the latter for their essential debt and connection to the Celt, occupied an unexpected position thirty-odd years after its initial proclamation:

> What would Arnold answer *now*, now that the compromise he advocates on pp. II and xli-ii has broken down; now that it is patent how powerful a factor in the Neo-Celtic movement is the passion of aversion from and opposition to England, whether considered as a political, an intellectual, or

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[92] Nutt, "Editor's Introduction," *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, xxvi.

[93] Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, 91-92.

[94] Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, 88-92.

[95] Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, 97-98.

a moral entity; how keen and widespread is the hope of an entire divorce, not alone material but intellectual and spiritual, between the two races whose joint work in the complex fabric of English literature he traced so acutely, and from whose close and more sympathetic mingling he anticipated so much good?[96]

This "wise and noble"[97] compromise – Arnold's call for "the Celtic members of this empire" to "consider that they are inextricably bound up with us [Englishmen]," and for the Englishman to likewise adopt a "new type, more intelligent, more gracious, and more humane" with respect to his Celtic partner[98] – sat uneasily in the political climate of the early twentieth century, and Nutt pondered whether Arnold would have, in 1910, "denied the god whose shrine he had so laboured to raise."[99] While Nutt determined that Arnold would not have rejected this unexpected, though unfortunately caustic manifestation of his cherished Celtic genius, he did suggest that Arnold would have "wondered, as some other Englishmen wonder, at the short-sightedness with which . . . the *friendly* section of Ireland has allowed so mighty an instrument as is the cherishing of native speech and art to fall so largely into the hands of the *unfriendly* section" (emphasis added).[100] But it was not simply the possibility that an "unfriendly" Irish contingent might attempt to possess Ireland's folklore for its own that concerned Nutt when speaking of the future of Celtic studies. Indeed, Nutt's vision of the evolution of Celtic narrative and his lifelong Arnoldian insistence that the best of English literature originated in the Celtic genius sat uncomfortably close, for Nutt, to the tenets of the Celtic revival, and it was critical for Nutt to maintain distance from what he considered to be the vulgar and unscientific employment of folklore toward a propagandist and nationalist end. "Believe me," he

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[96] Nutt, "Editor's Introduction," *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, xiii.

[97] Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, xlii.

[98] Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, xli-xlii.

[99] Nutt, "Editor's Introduction," *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, xxiii.

[100] Nutt, "Editor's Introduction," *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, xxiii.

warned the readership of *The Celtic Review*, "if the creative genius of your race is to find sustenance in your past, it must know that past for what it is."[101]   In the same essay, Nutt worked to nullify modern Ireland's claim to the ancient Celtic inheritance that was so essential to his vision of the British genius and objected in extreme to what he imagined was the Irish revival's desire to claim sole inheritance: "it cannot be maintained that up to now *Irish* legend, *Irish* romance, have yielded the same artistic results as have the legend and romance of *Celtic* or Teutonic Scotland, of Scandinavia, or Germany, or even Finland" (emphasis added). [102]   Nutt's fascinating temporal surgery makes an absolute distinction between Celtic, a British possession and protectorate, and Ireland, a modern construct, which he further divorces from the role played by ancient Ireland - the means by which the pure Celtic genius had been preserved. By reimagining historical Ireland as a passive vehicle of ancient culture, and the Celtic *volksgeist* as the protectorate of the British empire under the special jurisdiction of folklore, Nutt's imperialist vision of his science emerges, a vision which also necessitated the denial of Ireland's status as a "genuine" nation and inheritor of an ancient tradition in order to preserve a Celtic originary genius for Britain.

It is clear that Nutt's remarks were made in the context of an increasingly unstable and uncertain political relationship between England and Ireland, one characterized by increased agitation for Home Rule and the emergence of the Celtic Revival, the artists and scholars of which were increasingly unwilling to imagine their work fitting comfortably into the imperial boundaries of the British Empire.[103]   Nutt's

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[101] Nutt, "Gaelic Literature," 63-64.

[102] Nutt, "Gaelic Literature," 64-65

[103] See Gregory Castle, *Modernism and the Celtic Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

apologia for Arnold's stubbornly naïve text (which would itself later become synonymous with a mid-nineteenth-century racialist and typological approach to national culture and identity) voices a consistent and often vehement polemic against the so-called "unfriendly" Celtic agitators who were stubbornly deaf to Arnold's "wise and noble" words of compromise and union. Indeed, his introductory remarks to his 1895 *The Voyage of Bran* are a strong echo of Arnold's patronizing plea for an increased sympathy for the Celt on the part of the Englishman. Noting, like Arnold, the "presence of a common Celtic tone" throughout the history of British literature, Nutt also calls for the increased study of that precious inheritance on grounds of national duty:

> I would urge the increased study of the Celtic past by the English-speaking communities. They are pledged to it alike by filial piety and by political expediency, for the Celtic element in their civilisation is considerable . . . I believe it to be a task, patriotic in the highest sense of the word, as tending to sympathetic appreciation of a common past, to sympathetic union in the present and future of all the varied elements of a common nationality.[104]

Nutt's own sense of the role of the Celtic in Britain is grounded in an Arnoldian reading of Celtic literature's feminized and dependent relationship to the British "type"; Nutt is, like Arnold, insistent on the political and national stakes inherent in the need to properly investigate and preserve the Celtic element of the nation and, crucially, in the need to preserve its status as a possession of the empire against the threat of Irish national autonomy.

Dorson hit the mark when he described Nutt's 1899 "Presidential Address to the Folklore Society" as proceeding in "an eloquent vein of sophisticated nationalism"; certainly Dorson admired Nutt's contention that "the British Isles were favoured by a

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[104] Nutt, "The Happy Otherworld. The Celtic Doctrine of Re-birth," 2:viii.

variety of circumstances," and that part of their cultural bounty resulted from "their imperialist position," which "brought the savage races of the world under the same rule as the peasant at home."[105]   Like Nutt, Dorson lamented (in 1968) the tendency of late nineteenth- through early twentieth-century Irish folklorists to abandon the cause of the British folklore movement for the apparently misguided cause of Irish revivalism and independent national culture.   While Dorson's epilogue to his voluminous history of folklore studies in Britain laments the failure of folklore to attain professionalization as "one of the collateral tragedies of the Great War," this conclusion is immediately preceded by a perhaps more telling summary of the life of folklore in Britain as he saw it:

> Lady Gregory wrote and compiled in the first two decades of the twentieth century memorable books of folk-lore, cherished and sometimes expanded by Yeats. [Douglas] Hyde often joined their circle at Coole, and the three gave leadership to the cause of casting out the imposed culture of England and reasserting the traditional culture of Ireland.   In this cause folklore proved one of their most powerful assets.   With their efforts the independent history of the Irish folklore movement begins *and the long exciting history of English folklore theory and collection ends in rejection and darkness.*[106] (emphasis added)

It is unsurprising, given this extraordinary portrait of the irreparable damage of Irish nationalism to the cause of British folklore, that Dorson would have applauded Nutt's imperialist vision for the collection and interpretation of folklore as well as his conglomerate yet ultimately English vision of the British national identity.

The goal of stabilizing the position of the Celtic within the intellectual, cultural, and imperial boundaries of Britain was for Nutt a guiding force throughout his work. His sense of the so-called Celtic inheritance in Britain was essentially Arnoldian; he

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[105] Dorson, *The British Folklorists*, 233.

[106] Dorson, *The British Folklorists*, 439. Douglas Hyde (1860-1949) was an Irish folklorist, linguist, and founder of the Gaelic League.   See Hyde, *Beside the Fire, A Collection of Irish Gaelic Folk Stories* (London: David Nutt, 1890).

imagined it to be the purest, most potent source of artistry and artistic inspiration and therefore an enduring and unique element in the British national self. Not only that, his historical evolutionist vision of Celtic narrative history read the successive interaction of Aryan forms as the gradual revelation of the ancient Celtic *volksgeist*, of which certain productions, namely Arthurian legends and Shakespeare's oeuvre, were the ultimate manifestation.   Significantly, Nutt's Celtic Aryan narrative tradition was simultaneously universal and unique; in his paradigm, the Celtic was invaluable precisely because it was both an evocation of universal imaginative themes and also the purest, most finely tuned of all evocations:

> The mythic heroic literature of all races is in many respects alike. The sagas not only of Greek or Persian, of Celt or Hindu, of Slav or Teuton, but also of Algonquin or Japanese, are largely made up of the same incidents set in the same framework. But each race stamps this common material in its own way, sets upon it its own stamp. And no race has done this more unmistakably than the Celtic . . . What stamps the whole of it [literary and popular tradition, ancient and modern] is the prevailing and abiding spirit of romance. To rightly urge the Celtic character of the Arthurian romances would require the minute analysis of many hundred passages, and it would only be proving a case admitted by everyone who knows all the facts.[107]

This revealing passage speaks to what might be considered the essential hybridity of Nutt's position in folklore discourse; both a universalist and a passionate advocate of independent invention, Nutt's sketch of the metahistory of the national epic gestures to both a worldwide pattern but also to the transcendent capability of racial difference to stamp the "common material in its own way." More crucially, it was the Celtic race that had, in Nutt's eyes, achieved the highest level of self-differentiation, of imaginative self-expression; while all (Aryan) races are equally possessed of the "materials" of narrative self-evocation, no other races were able, historically, to achieve the heights of Celtic

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[107] Nutt, *Legend of the Holy Grail,* 230.

heroic and romance narrative. "The raw material is the same everywhere," says Nutt, but "the Aryan weaver has been more skillful than any of the others,"[108] and the Celtic, as the exponent of Aryan genius, more skillful than any other branch. Thus, "however much it may be regretted in certain circles" by those who would see the contemporary Celtic element of the empire jettisoned from within its borders, "the Celt is an abiding element in the imperial life of the British race . . . Upon hearty sympathy, upon cordial co-operation between the Celtic, the Teutonic, and what other elements there may be found in the fabric of our civilisation, depends more than upon aught else the continued existence, stability, and growth of that fabric."[109]

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[108] Nutt, "Recent Archaeological Research, No. II. - Folk-Lore," *Archaeological Review* 3 (1889): 83.

[109] Alfred Nutt, "Introduction," in James MacDougall, *Folk and Hero Tales* (London: David Nutt, 1891), xviii-xxix.

CONCLUSION

I began my examination of Sir George Laurence Gomme with R. R. Marett's 1917 presidential address to the Folklore Society, in which the ethnological paradigm elaborated by Gomme, Sir John Rhŷs, and Alfred Nutt was invoked as the definitive ideological core of the science.[1] As has been shown, the history of folklore in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries does not quite follow the account provided by scholars such as Richard Dorson, for whom this form of the discourse was extinguished definitively before World War I. It is clear that genesis of twentieth-century folklore and culture research is much more complicated, and that paradigms for the study of folklore developed in the late nineteenth century have played a much more critical role in the formation of modern discourses than has previously been assumed. This thesis has therefore highlighted further potential avenues for research; the genealogy of the concept of the pre-Aryan in nineteenth- and twentieth-century discourse deserves particular interest, and while I have traced the life of this concept in the work of Gomme, Rhŷs, Nutt and several contemporary ethnological texts, further analysis will provide an invaluable contribution to the field and effect a reconsideration of the way British history was constructed in the period. The literary dissemination of ethnological frameworks for the characterization of indigeneity is another fruitful avenue for further research; late Victorian gothic and science fiction narratives abound with the threat of a savagery closely akin to that described by Gomme, and it is even possible to locate, as in science fiction writer Grant Allen's 1892 short story "Pallinghurst Barrow," non-Aryans lurking at the threshold:

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[1] Robert Ranulf Marett, "The Psychology of Culture-Contact," *Folklore* 28 (1917): 13-35.

'It's curious,' Professor Spence put in, with a scientific smile, restrained at the corners, 'that all this should have happened to Joyce and to our friend Reeve at a long barrow. It has been shown conclusively that long barrows, which are the graves of the small, squat people who preceded the inroad of Aryan invaders, are the real originals of all the fairy hills and subterranean palaces of popular legend.[2]

In Allen's text, protagonist Rudolph Reeve is lured into the bowels of Pallinghurst Barrow on the autumnal equinox by the ghosts of its non-Aryan inhabitants. He eventually escapes the cannibalistic intentions of their king through the aid of a sympathetic sixteenth-century ghost, who speaks to him in an "English voice"[3] wholly unlike the barrow-dwellers' "monosyllabic tongue," which is "like the bark of jackals."[4] The inhabitants of Pallinghurst Barrow are clearly deeply akin to the non-Aryans in Gomme's, Rhŷs', and many nineteenth-century ethnologists' notions of the ancient aboriginalities of Europe. Significantly, the protagonist Reeve reads folklorist Joseph Jacobs' notes to the folk tale "Childe Rowland" before embarking on his adventure, and Jacob's interpretation, which argued that the tale was a record of non-Aryan savagery, is described in-text.[5] Nor was the conversation between folklorist and artist one sided; in the third edition of *English Fairy Tales*, Jacobs noted with approval that Allen had employed both his translation and his interpretation of the narrative for his story, writing, "Mr. Grant Allen has made an ingenious use of Childe Rowland in one of his short

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[2] Grant Allen, "Pallinghurst Barrow," in *Late Victorian Gothic Tales*, ed. Roger Luckhurst (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2005), 157. Originally published in *Ivan Greet's Masterpiece* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1893), 67-89.

[3] Allen, "Pallinghurst Barrow," 168.

[4] Allen, "Pallinghurst Barrow," 166.

[5] Allen, "Pallinghurst Barrow," 160. Allen's protagonist describes reading Jacob's notes to the folk tale, found in Joseph Jacobs, *English Fairy Tales*, 3rd ed. (London: J. P. Putnam and Sons, 1898), 244-251. See also Jacobs, "Childe Rowland," *Folklore* 2 (1891): 182-197, which provides further clarification of Jacob's interpretation of the folk tale.

stories."[6]   The interchange between scientific and literary discourse on ethnological concepts of aboriginality deserves extended examination, and the fact that fear of the primitive continued to be a potent theme in late nineteenth- through early twentieth-century science fiction and horror writing, as the work of H. G. Wells and H. P. Lovecraft demonstrates, only serves to emphasize the need for further study.[7]

Over the course of this thesis I have reconsidered the role of folklore within the context of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century discourses on human and social origins; it has been shown that far from a marginal or obsolete endeavor undertaken beneath the coat-tails of anthropology, the science of folklore was every bit as critical and influential a player in the formation of an ethnological paradigm for investigations into the origins of racial-cultural identity. I began with an extended reevaluation of Sir George Laurence Gomme's position in late nineteenth- through early twentieth-century ethnology, and showed the extent to which his paradigm for the prosecution of folklore research in Britain dominated scholarly spheres in the period. Through a reading of his most influential texts, I then traced the genealogy of geological and colonial structures in his folklore paradigm, as well as some of the more prominent aims and issues of folklore to be discussed in the work of Sir John Rhŷs and Alfred Nutt. It was seen that indigeneity, and the means by which it could be discovered, delineated, and archived, proved a pressing issue for both Gomme and for folklore generally; indeed, by tracing the centrality of this project in mid- to late nineteenth-century philology, colonial administration, and anthropological scholarship, I have shown that to a certain extent folklore as a science was constituted on the basis of its ability to perform this function for

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[6] Jacobs, *English Fairy Tales*, 244.

[7] See in particular H. G. Wells, *The Time Machine*, ed. Stephen Arata (London: Norton, 2008); H. P. Lovecraft, *The Thing on the Doorstep and Other Weird Stories*, ed. S. T. Joshi (London: Penguin, 2001); and Lovecraft, *The Call of Cthulu and Other Weird Stories*, ed. S. T. Joshi, 2nd ed (London: Penguin, 2002).

Britain. I then extended my examination to the work of Sir John Rhŷs and in particular his use of folklore as a means by which he supplemented his philological research into the racial and linguistic history of Celtic. An extended reading of Rhŷs' conflation of language and race in his narration of the Celtic in Britain and on the continent provided an enriched understanding of the geological paradigm for folklore research first traced in Gomme's work, and Rhŷs' work was further employed to show the way that this paradigm operated outside the boundaries of folklore proper. Finally, I traced the role of indigeneity in Alfred Nutt's folklore writings and showed how his approach to Celtic narrative was grounded in an Arnoldian sense of the exemplary authenticity, creativity, and aboriginality of the Celtic as the imaginative essence of the British national self. A consideration of the discursive context within which Nutt undertook his research followed, and an extensive discussion of his debates with Gomme and Rhŷs over questions of the racial make-up of Britain's indigeneity provided a valuable means not only to understand the significance of Nutt's protest against the pre-Aryan, but also of the critical importance of ethnological approaches to national origins within folklore discourse.

Alfred Nutt's career was cut short some years before either Gomme's or Rhŷs', but his posthumously published notes on Matthew Arnold's *On the Study of Celtic Literature* are in a way the most suggestive of the character of the science of folklore in Britain at the beginning of the twentieth century. More so than either Gomme's vision of an ancient Aryan colonial state, or Rhŷs' history of the hybrid Celtic race, Nutt's ambivalent retrospective of Celtic folklore studies since the publication of Arnold's text brings to the fore the underlying structures of contemporary political and cultural realities underlying the project of decoding and cataloguing the British national and

racial past. His pessimistic review of the emergence of Irish folklore as a distinct discourse with its own nationa(ist) agenda not only recalls the imperialist language of *On The Study of Celtic Literature* itself, but carries that text's construction of Ireland, Wales, and Scotland as Celtic repositories of artistic genius under the guardianship of the more capable British empire into the twentieth century.

While on one level Nutt's objections to the credulous and propagandist employment of Irish folklore toward an overtly nationalist objective echo Gomme's complaint about the unscientific and antiquarian spirit fueling what he considered to be unprofessional collections of folklore, there is a more telling thread to Nutt's, and perhaps folklore's, objection to the use of its archive in the service of either the national or the political. The appropriation of Irish folklore and custom by Irish national revivalism in the early twentieth century was perceived by Nutt as a threat to the cause of the FLS not solely because it might tarnish the scientific credentials of the society and its members, but also because British folklore was in itself an eminently national project. In an essay published in *The Celtic Review* in 1904, Nutt pleads with the journal's Irish readership to reject what he considers to be the "emasculated" and "prettyfied" monstrosities masquerading as genuine Irish legend and to break away from the "false and enfeebling methods of presentment which prevailed among those who first made Irish antiquity known to the present world."[8] This implication is clear: Nutt projects his analysis of the antiquarian spirit, which "overlaid" the legends "with a varnish of unreal pseudo-medievalism,"[9] onto those trends in twentieth-century Irish folklore studies that he felt had the potential to move away from the "pure" science of the London based FLS.

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[8] Alfred Nutt, "The Critical Study of Gaelic Literature Indispensable for the History of the Gaelic Race," *The Celtic Review* 1 (1904): 63-64.

[9] Nutt, "Gaelic Literature," 63-64.

Nutt makes clear gestures throughout his work toward the role that he imagined folklore above all other sciences could play for Britain – as a science, certainly, but as a science with a very particular and unique set of ideological goals. "I believe it [folklore] to be a task, patriotic in the highest sense of the word," Nutt writes in *The Voyage of Bran*; "the English-speaking communities" have a duty, to which they are "pledged . . . by filial piety and by political expediency," to preserve and interpret the folkloric strata within their national boundaries.[10] In his last presidential address to the Folklore Society, Nutt delineated precisely what he meant by filial piety and why "we as Englishmen, as Britons, should cherish and foster our study."[11] He speaks first of the "unique importance of modern English literature for mankind," which he traces from "its being the inheritor of archaic traditions and conventions"[12] from within its own national space; as a "mixed strain of Teutonic and Celtic blood, with its share in the mythologies of both these races, and in especial with its claim to the sole body of mythology and romance, the Celtic, which grew up wholly unaffected by classic culture,"[13] England, and English literature are uniquely gifted in their folkloric inheritance. With this immeasurable benefit, however, comes a high level of responsibility; "English letters" is pledged to its role "as guardian, transmitter, and interpreter of Celtic fancy," and Nutt makes explicit folklore's duty as an imperial archive:

> We island-dwellers have brought under our sway many lands, many
> peoples; we claim, whether rightly or wrongly need not here be inquired,

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[10] Alfred Nutt, "The Happy Otherworld in the Mythico-Romantic Literature of the Irish. The Celtic Doctrine of Re-Birth. An Essay in Two Sections," in *The Voyage of Bran Son of Febal to the Land of the Living; an Irish Saga*, with Kuno Meyer (London: David Nutt, 1895), 2:viii.

[11] Alfred Nutt, "Presidential Address: Britain and Folklore," *Folklore* 10 (1899): 72.

[12] Nutt, "Britain and Folklore," 72.

[13] Alfred Nutt, "Presidential Address: The Fairy Mythology of English Literature: Its Origin and Nature," *Folklore* 8 (1897): 53.

that we have given them peace and prosperity, that we are enabling the races we have subjected to enter in upon the heritage of the highest civilisation. This is much, but it is not enough. Every race, no matter how backward, has a special cry - a special vision of its own. Upon us, upon our oversea kindred, rests the responsibility that these shall not be lost, but shall contribute their note, howsoever feeble it be, to the great concert of humanity. It is the privilege of English literature to enshrine utterances of countless races of men which otherwise must wholly perish, to make them part of the world's thought and fancy.[14]

Only English literature is able to "enshrine utterances of countless races of men," and Nutt clearly imagines the science of folklore to be a key part of the project of literature; while not the voice itself, folklore nevertheless occupied a key position because of its role as the guardian of the so-called primitive utterances enshrined in the folklore record – those embryonic stirrings, of which literature proper was the ultimate exemplar. In his vision, the science assumes a vital role because of its ability not only to discover, but to catalogue and preserve, and it is precisely and indeed only through the twin vehicles of folklore and literature that Britain's position as cultural and racial guardian of its colonial protectorates can be achieved.

While it would be a gross simplification to map the specifics of Nutt's folklore ideology uncritically onto the work of Gomme, Rhŷs, or indeed the scholarly body of the Folklore Society, Nutt's call for folklore to fulfill its role as the steward of the empire's imaginative archive resonates with the ideological undercurrents of folklore's discursive formations traced throughout my analysis of Gomme, Rhŷs and the broader paradigms of ethnological inquiry. Nutt's imperialism brings to the fore one of the most important contentions of this thesis – that a deep sense of contemporary colonial and imperial discourse informed the project of folklore in its method, its disciplinary ambitions, and delineation of its archive. While Nutt's vision approaches propagandist levels in its

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[14] Nutt, "Britain and Folklore," 72.

nationalist sentiments and in its characterization of folklore as the spiritual guardian of racial essence, Gomme proposed a much more ambivalent reading of the originary state of Britishness – one in which the essence of the modern state was derived from the "race antagonism," to use Gomme's phrase, of Aryan and non-Aryan, or colonizer and colonized. Similarly, while Rhŷs' work focused on the history of the Celtic race and language, his vision of Britain's aboriginal essence saw a vast pre-Aryan substratum across Britain and Europe as the defining racial and cultural source of the modern population. Like Gomme, Rhŷs punctuated his history of the Celtic in Europe by marking the events of its contact and hybridization with the non-Aryan indigeneity, but departed from Gomme's ambivalent portrait of the kinless native, imagining a progressive intermixture rather than an immemorial clash of race.

It is critical to note that while the readings of British history in Gomme and Rhŷs' work do not follow suit with Nutt's open apology for an imperialist agenda, they are not therefore to be read as fundamentally dissonant or essentially opposed in discursive structure. Both Gomme and Rhŷs prosecuted their research within a paradigm developed in conversation with colonialist structures for the understanding of human culture and development, in which migration and colonization were largely conflated, and change in culture was diagnosed as the product of the arrival of a new race. The addition of racial units to a given national space over time was also, as in Nutt's work, not read as the erasure of difference, but rather as the production of discrete or possibly hybridized strata; indeed, the goal of folklore in all three scholars' work was to a very large extent the recovery of those important racial differences by means of the archive of traditional material. Nutt's project for folklore may have been consciously imperialist – a goal that cannot necessarily be claimed for either Gomme or Rhŷs – but all three folklorists' work

exhibits the same sense, both in agreements and disagreements, that the discursive uniqueness of folklore hinged on its ability to trace the ethnological essence of Britishness back to its origins, a project that distinguished it from anthropology's universalist investigations into human culture and could potentially stabilize it as a distinct science.

The relative success of folklore's bid to separate itself from anthropology and establish itself as an autonomous discipline is a subject for another inquiry, but the intellectual products of its struggle to do so have provided an invaluable means of access into the discursive texture of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century assumptions about the character of history, the sources of national identity, and the political stakes inherent in the study of vernacular culture. The critical role of indigeneity in Gomme, Rhŷs, and Nutt's work is not tempered by their relative disagreement about its ultimate character; rather, the kaleidoscope of histories produced by these and other scholars evokes through both the disagreements but also, crucially, through the more subtle concordances, the fabric of a discourse on human and social origins that was deeply intertwined with colonial taxonomies in both structure and sentiment. The work of Gomme, Rhŷs, and Nutt demonstrates one of the most critical undercurrents of the discourse of folklore: that of the deep kinship between methods for the examination of national history and for the prosecution of colonial ethnology. It might be said that folklorists viewed their subjects with a colonial lens, and delineated the identity of the nation through ethnological taxonomies developed to categorize and police colonial territories; to limit the relationship between folklore and colonial discourse in this way would be, however, to simplify what was in fact a deeply symbiotic discursive interaction. While one of the primary goals of this thesis has been to demonstrate the

extent to which folklore invoked colonial taxonomies, it is perhaps more accurate to say that the paradigm for the study of human and social origins which developed in late nineteenth-century Britain was the product of many discursive strains working in tandem and effecting consistent and constant influence upon each other. The formative decades of the Folklore Society have provided a new means of critical access into this potent period of disciplinary development and have demonstrated the extent to which ethnological discourse during this period was supremely concerned with an internal subject, at least as much if not more so than with any external populations. Sciences concerned with national history reconstituted both the archive of vernacular tradition and the people with whom it was associated as not only scientifically observable, but also as the products of successive colonization, reimagining national history through structures developed in conversation with colonial taxonomies, thus rendering the people whom it described as the living artifacts of Britain's racial past.

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