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The English Connection, from Cultural Survivals to Cultural Studies

Considering that the settlement and language of America owe so much to Great Britain, one would expect more communion of folklore studies between the domains. This is not to say that great achievements have not been made. Receiving persistent use in the twentieth century are Francis James Child’s catalogue of British ballads, Cecil Sharp’s harvest of British folk songs in the southern Appalachians of the United States, Ernest Baughman’s type and motif index of English-American folktales, and Richard Dorson’s encyclopedic narrative of the Victorian British folklorists. The assumption in these works was that American culture and cultural scholarship both relied primarily on English precedents. The English inheritance appeared to be outside of America’s “ethnic” traditions, and particularly after the 1980s a strong intellectual movement arose to show a multicultural society that did not have a single dominant influence. Bibliographies of American ethnic folklore, for example, often leave out an English category (although they include Irish, Scottish, Welsh, and Cornish), suggesting that English influence pervades national culture (see Georges and Stern 1982).

Although it is possible to point to a flurry of research activity across the Atlantic before the turn of the century, and again after World War II, until recently Americans like their English cousins in folklore studies mostly turned their lenses on peoples they considered more exotic—American Indians, East and South European immigrants, Africans, and Asians. Richard Dorson generalized that “in the twentieth century the links between English and American folklorists (exclusive of folksong devotees) have snapped, while ties between the United States and the continent have grown stronger” (Dorson 1973b, 16). In this chapter I explain
the transatlantic rift set against the background of intellectual history. I view the way that Americans separated in the direction of pluralist and behavioral agendas to design a discourse of culture that allowed for individual choice and creation of traditions. Finally, I consider whether the development of “cultural studies” in England has forced the paths to cross once again.

American folklorists had the best intentions for English-American study. After all, they organized the American Folklore Society in 1888 on the model the English society formed ten years earlier, whose stated object was “the preservation and publication of Popular Traditions, Legendary Ballads, Local Proverbial Sayings, Superstitions and Old Customs (British and foreign), and all subjects relating to them.” The title page of the English society’s journal showed the society’s view of folklore as remnants of the past by carrying the banner of “The Folk-Lore Society for Collecting and Printing Relics of Popular Antiquities, &c.” In a nod to the mission of the Folk-Lore (later Folklore) Society, the founders of the American society announced that their purpose was to encourage the “collection of the fast-vanishing remains of folk-lore in America.” Several examples of these remains were given including the lore of French Canada, Indian tribes in North America, and “Negroes” in the southern states, but listed first if not foremost were “relics of old English folk-lore (ballads, tales, superstitions, etc.)” (Newell 1888d). At the International Folk-Lore Congress, sponsored by the English society, three representatives of the American society participated, and two years later at the International Folk-Lore Congress in Chicago, three English society folklorists offered papers on mythology and primitive custom in Europe (Dorson 1973b, 16). The prevalent mission of applying ideas of evolution to culture in the early years of both societies fostered the attitude that folklorists revealed a natural history of civilization with attention to “folk” on the lower rungs of the ladder of progress. In short, their “folk” were exoticized, typically racialized, others, rather than familiarized selves.

RATIONALITY AND MORALITY

The most cited definition of culture used by the society folklorists was Edward Tylor’s statement drawing on natural science that “culture or civilization … 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” (Tylor [1871] 1970, 1). As Darwin explained the origin of species, so he took as his task to explain the origin of civilization, especially its most revered feature of religion. He devoted most of his magnum opus Primitive Culture (1871), in fact, to matters of the origin of religion viewed in myths, superstitions, rites, and ceremonies. In broadly conceived culture as inherited social skills and institutions, he also suggested finding the origins of other contemporary features such as art, invention, and industry. Culture was a constant of existence as much as nature, he argued,
and it equally carried authority. Tylor's call for comparative study of the traditions that made up culture was akin to finding laws of nature. It was, he said, "a subject apt for the study of laws of human thought and action."

Tylor had a conception of culture divided into "stages of development or evolution, each the outcome of previous history, and about to do its proper part in shaping the history of the future." Within the stages, Tylor suggested that great uniformity existed, and he rationally ascribed this condition "to the uniform action of uniform causes" (Tylor [1871] 1970, 1). Tylor's ideas had been shaped by travels to "primitive" Mexico in 1855, in which he found comparisons of institutions there to modern-day England, although the two were not ethnically connected. An additional influence was his Quaker faith, which had lost much of its sectarianism and had become open to liberal currents of thought.

Tylor was swept up by the English-Scottish philosophy of Hume, Locke, and Mill that emphasized empiricism of observed evidence and logical assumptions (Radin 1970, xii). He credited "our modern investigators in the sciences of inorganic nature" who "are foremost to recognize, both within and without their special fields of work, the unity of nature, the fixity of its laws, the definite sequence of cause and effect through which every fact depends on what has gone before it, and acts upon what is to come after it" (Tylor [1871] 1970, 2). The "acts that come after" in a study of culture he assumed to be an improvement over what came before. The "facts" of arts, beliefs, customs, and myths are arranged in upward evolution from the simple to the more complex much as laws of development for nature. He even made the claim that the study of traditions in culture was more on a scientific basis than natural history, because "it is an open question whether a theory of development from species to species is a record of transitions which actually took place, or a mere ideal scheme serviceable in the classification of species whose origin was really independent. But among ethnographers there is no such question as to the possibility of species of implements or habits or beliefs being developed one out of another, for development in Culture is recognized by our most familiar knowledge" (Tylor [1871] 1970, 14–15).

Evolutionary doctrine reigned in the intellectual life of late nineteenth-century Britain, and in folklore study it especially supported a search for a long-hidden past where the origins of modern institutions in pagan rituals could be unearthed. For the Victorians, the related genres of custom and belief, and their symbolic ascent from superstition to science, from rude existence to genteel manners, from the spiritual to the material, became the standard of study. Stressing the rationality of a science of culture and the global vantage of imperial Britain, they advocated a method that would be globally comparative and minutely systematic. Andrew Lang, a leading British proponent of the science, summarized its method as "when an apparently irrational and anomalous custom is found in any country, to look for a country where a similar practice is found, and where the practice is no longer irrational and anomalous, but in harmony with the manners and ideas of the people among
whom it prevails.... Our method, then, is to compare the seemingly meaningless customs or manners of civilised races with the similar customs and manners which exist among the uncivilised and still retain their meaning" (Lang 1885, 21). In this line of thinking, “The European may find among the Greenlanders or Maoris many a trait for reconstructing the picture of his own primitive ancestors” (Cox 1895, 33).

Moral judgment pervaded much of the evolutionary scholarship. The background for such judgment was the question of responsibility that higher civilization represented by England had for uplifting as well as controlling primitive cultures. Even among “civilized” nations there were judgments made about the character they showed as a result of cultural development. Charlotte Burne offered that the comparative folklore method allowed for tracing “lines of development of the several systems of civilized nations from their source, and to fathom the reasons of their strength and weakness.” She counseled, “Eventually we may hope to adjust the balance between circumstance and character, and to arrive at the causes which retain some races in a state of arrested progress while others develop a highly-organized civilization” (Burne 1913, 3). Arthur Mitchell writing in *The Past in the Present* (1881) added the warning that the comparative study of beliefs and customs isolated items that should be eradicated from modern culture, so as to maintain the
power of the British Empire. He observed, “It will scarcely, I think, be saying too much, if I say that the British Empire stands now very much where the Roman Empire stood then, and occupies a like dangerous place of breadth and prominence” (233). Britain needed to represent the model of strength and enlightenment for the world, for according to his view of cultural evolutionary theory, “in every civilized society there must be the strong and the weak, the clever and the stupid, the cultured and the uncultured, but they all share in the state of civilization and benefit by it” (Mitchell 1881, 196). British folklore study served to point out the differences from top to bottom.

Folklore study had social and political applications, for British folklorists often mentioned the need for use of folklore scholarship by religious missionaries and government officials, especially colonial governors to better administrate their subjects (Hartland [1899] 1968, 243–50; see also Brewster 1943; Asad 1975; Huizer and Mannheim 1979). Edwin Sidney Hartland proclaimed, for example, that “it requires but little insight to be assured that we might enormously strengthen our hold upon India if our Government were to take a different line, and were to encourage, instead of discouraging, civil and military officials to inquire systematically into and report upon the ideas and practices of the races of that vast continent” (Hartland [1899] 1968, 246). He considered colonialism an application of anthropological work because of its culturally modernizing and morally uplifting influence on “backward” races stuck in a lower stage of progress (see Barkan 1992, 34–37). He promoted folklore collection as a way to respond better to attitudes and practices based on native beliefs and to determine areas for administrating progress. He further urged missionaries and moralistic businessmen to take up education in folklore because it “is not less necessary to Christian enterprise than to good government and successful commercial intercourse” (Hartland [1899] 1968, 244).

The British anthropological experts in race and culture used scholarship as a pulpit from which to moralize. Their great questioning of the role of religion as a controlling influence in their daily lives, especially as science became touted as a rational formula for modern living, led them to intensely scrutinize primitive custom and belief and its replacement by religion as precedents for a late-nineteenth-century shift from religion to science. Finding order in the evolution of civilization, indeed a plan to the world’s social mysteries, carried on religious goals of explaining existence. “There is on present lines a whole world of thought between science and religion, although they both have the same object. They both seek the great unknown,” Edwin Hartland wrote, for example (1908, 138). Many cultural evolutionists proclaimed that Christian belief properly remained in the evolution of science, and justified moral judgments of those left behind by the “advance of civilization” (Clodd 1885, 222–36; Lang 1885, 11–14; Lubbock 1978, 256).

At the center of world empire, England looked upon the world as its subject and the lack of a regional modifier for the “Folklore Society” reflected this bias. The
cultures of the world were collected for the English to evaluate and interpret on a global scale. Coining the title of the American Folklore Society, founders implied that their society held to the goals of the Folklore Society within America. Even within the nation, the idea of layers of culture arranged by achievement of progress had applications. In England, the reference was often to the intersection of race and class. Englishman Edwin Sidney Hartland wrote that “the conflict of the classes and the masses about which we hear so much today is all the bitterer because of the chasm which education has opened between high and low.” Hartland opined that “the more completely you can identify yourselves with their modes of thought, the greater your influence for good upon them” (Hartland [1899] 1968, 247). As a result of the thinking that suggested social organization by class found in English society, folklore could be perceived as a distinct geological layer of culture associated with the unlettered and uncivilized. The organization also contributed to the view of ethnic groups or “races” within such layers as isolable “strains” based on visible features, including physical attributes and traditional customs (see Kingsley 1885, 1–4). The idea of folklore as an expressive process that every individual possesses as a member of overlapping and interacting groups had few advocates in England, and they, like Jewish scholar Joseph Jacobs, tended to be from marginalized ethnic backgrounds (Jacobs 1893; Fine 1987a; Maidment 1975).

Evolutionary study of folklore was particularly suited to English and American ideas of civilization during the Gilded Age. According to the predominant philosophy, the civilizing process was a moral and technological uplifting of peoples into
nations and empires. In the best-selling works of Englishman Herbert Spencer, who applied Darwin's natural history precepts to the civilizing process, and similarly minded scholar-writers in America such as John Sterling Kingsley, John Fiske, Lewis Henry Morgan, and William Graham Sumner, Victorians read of language and folklore as key evidence of the rise of civilization from savage and barbaric stages. Kingsley in his *The Standard Natural History* (1885) created an "evolution of letters" among other examples of "inventions" that showed English as the natural culmination of cultural progress. "The art of expressing words in written characters belongs to a late stage of civilization," Kingsley presumed, "and it is from this fact that we are able to trace more or less clearly and distinctly its development" (Kingsley 1885, 15). The unveiling of evolutionary connections from inventions in the industrial centers of England and America back to primitive, lower forms suggested to the Victorians a right to prominence in the world. The social ladders that civilizations climbed assured rising national powers in the West of their superiority, for they stood on the top of the ladder proud that their technology, expansiveness, and rationality marked the height of civilization.

British folklorists such as George Laurence Gomme and Andrew Lang insisted on building a "science of folklore" that would prove assertions of the evolution of nations much as Darwin's science of natural history showed the development of species. The terminology of the new science borrowed heavily from natural history as it referred to "development," "specimens," and "field collection" (Gomme 1884). Gomme's book *Ethnology in Folklore* (1892), in the series on "Modern Science" edited by John Lubbock, stood prominently among titles in natural history and botany. Gomme wrote that "the essential characteristic of folklore is that it consists of beliefs, customs, and traditions which are far behind civilisation in their intrinsic value to man, though they exist under the cover of a civilised nationality. This estimate of the position of folklore with reference to civilisation suggests that its constituent elements are survivals of a condition of human thought more backward, and therefore more ancient, than that in which they are discovered" (Gomme 1892, 2).

With so much attention to ancient relics in the folklore journals, one would expect close ties with archaeology, but folklore, its students declared, uncovers the spiritual side of culture. Especially in England, where archaeologists unearthed Roman and Saxon remains of societies replaced by imperial England, folklorists sought to mark their place in a mystery of the past that reveals the present. Writing on "The Method of Folklore," Lang made the distinction that "there is a science, Archaeology, which collects and compares the material relics of old races, the axes and arrow-heads. There is a form of study, Folklore, which collects and compares the similar but immaterial relics of old races, the surviving superstitions and stories, the ideas which are in our time but not of it. Properly speaking, folklore is only concerned with the legends, customs, beliefs, of the Folk, of the people, of the classes which have least been altered by education, which have shared least in progress" (Lang 1885, 11). *The Handbook of Folklore* published by the Folklore
Society established the scope of folklore as "the mental equipment of the folk as distinguished from their technical skill. It is not the form of the plough which excites the folklorist, but the rites practised by the ploughman when putting it into the soil ... " (Burne 1913, 1).

The separation that had occurred in England between oral and material genres in the scope of folklore also found its way into the American conception of folklore. "Lore" as the "unwritten history," the "spiritual side" of culture, offered the literary remains set against a modernizing background, as opposed to the use of "life" which assumed more integration between people and their being. Lore suggested the archaeology of past traditions while life referred to the sociology of living practice. The materials of lore were collected as specimens and classified into genres and lines of development. Evolutionary folklorists presumed that the genres could be categorized by English divisions of narrative and custom—such as myth, tale, and legend—rather than using native categories that would be culture-specific. And they supposed that the genres as well as items were comparable and part of a general theory of cultural development. This approach to organizing genres had a few detractors such as diffusionist Moses Gaster (1856–1934), a Rumanian-born Rabbi who came to England in 1885. He accepted the categorization of analytical genres but questioned the assumptions of comparability and antiquity. He wrote that

The fault inherent in every new undertaking, viz., of mixing the elements promiscuously, and attributing to every branch of the new study the same origin, was conspicuously felt in the new study of folk-lore. Once a theory was adopted, say for customs or myths, it was immediately applied to superstitions, tales, or charms, as if these were all of the same age, and derived from the same source. This general explanation is still in force, although, as I think each branch of folk-lore should be studied separately, endeavouring to prove the origin of each independently from the other; afterwards we may try to ascertain the relationship which exists between each. (Gaster 1887, 339)

He emphasized that "the knowledge of the illiterate is not a homogeneous element, but one which has been acquired during centuries, and it only appears to us to form one indivisible unity. There may be elements in folk-lore of hoar antiquity, and there may be on the other hand other elements relatively modern, which we can trace even to our own time, growing, so to say, under own eyes, as, for instance, all the popular etymologies and the stories invented afterwards to explain them" (Gaster 1887, 339). Gaster's proposal was blasphemous to the evolutionists such as Andrew Lang, Edwin Sidney Hartland, and Edward Clodd whose evolutionary writings looking for origins in the hidden past held sway in English scholarship (Dorson 1968, 273–76; Newall 1975).

The stress on analytical genre, and classification by text, rather than social group had a lasting influence in English-American scholarship. It was spread by George Laurence Gomme's standard-setting *Handbook of Folklore* published in
1890, and expanded by Charlotte Burne in 1913. Gomme's influence can be seen, for example, in *The Folk-Lore Manual* of 1892 in which its American author, Fletcher Bassett, admits that its essential contents were pulled from Gomme's work. The very name of "folk-lore" with its delineated examples of "customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs" taken from William John Thoms's coming in 1846 lent itself to textual interpretation of the materials of tradition and their classification into analytical genres.

A progression similar to the one from Thoms to Gomme and others in England can also be found in the United States. John Fanning Watson, a Philadelphia merchant, saw industrialization and urbanization taking away what he called "traditional lore" during the 1820s, and moved by Sir Walter Scott's gleanings of folklore in Scotland, made a collection which he titled *Annals of the Olden Time in Philadelphia* (1830). Although striking for its dig in the backyard for local customs, Watson's antiquarian efforts, like Thoms's, were co-opted by the rush for an anthropological science of folklore. William Wells Newell, organizer of the American Folklore Society, claimed in 1892 that "American students will prefer ... to consider the comparative examination of this material as a part of anthropological science" (Newell 1892).

Folklorists working in archaeological and natural history museums, especially, flocked to the society. Serious about the study of folklore but lacking university status, the American society sought to convey a professional image. Later, when folklorists in anthropology, language, and literature managed to establish footholds in American universities, the society became more academic. In this development is an essential difference between the American and English societies. The English society could not carry over its serious image into the universities, and instead it fostered the noble stature of the enthusiastic amateur. The emphasis on survival and custom in English folklore study continued well into the twentieth century. With this concern the English society retained an international, cross-cultural scope, owing to the days of global empire. The American society meanwhile focused more and more on its own turf, increasingly perceived as a nation of nations.

American study diverged from its British precedent largely at the behest of Franz Boas, a German-American professor at Columbia University who became president of the American Folklore Society in 1900 and served as editor of its journal from 1908 to 1924. Boas moved folklore study from its natural science model to a physical system of relativity inspired by Albert Einstein's theories. Thus the evolutionary assumption that survivals found in a culture of the present could be connected to a different culture of another time did not hold up in a perception of time and space that was heterogeneous rather than homogeneous. Boas's cultural relativism stressed the integrity of individual cultures and, often, the individual within the culture. Such a move meant a drift away from national comparisons, such as between England and America, and a move toward smaller segments of
Proceedings of the American Folklore Society meeting in Baltimore, from *Baltimore American*, December 29, 1897.
culture studied in depth. A resurgence of literary interest in folklore after World War II coupled with the simple fact that many Americans spent time in the British Isles during and after the war ushered in a wave of studies seeking British-American connections. Samuel Bayard studied American fiddle tunes of British origin, MacEdward Leach and D. K. Wilgus asked questions anew about British ballads, and Francis Lee Utley and Louis C. Jones looked at other examples of lore traveling across the ocean.

Function and the Role of Tradition

While America had its Boas, England had its Bronislaw Malinowski (1884–1942), who espoused a social anthropology revolving around the functional uses of traditions. Skeptical of evolutionary doctrine, he considered the rational system of custom in a culture and insisted on studying societies as bounded units rather than as a global development. Malinowski was educated in physics and mathematics at the University of Cracow, but during a period of ill health he set aside his science studies to read the original English version of James Frazer’s *Golden Bough* (1900), then in three volumes. He completed his Ph.D. in science but came to the London School of Economics and Political Science in 1910 to study anthropology. There he became influenced by Charles G. Seligman, one of the few anthropologists of the early period with training in psychology (Barkan 1992, 30–34). In addition, Seligman espoused diffusionism and sharply disputed racial ideas prevalent among the evolutionists, which culminated in his public outcry against Nazi uses of anthropological ideas during the 1930s.

Malinowski had an opportunity for cultural fieldwork when he became secretary to Robert Marett, former president of the Folklore Society and a colleague of Seligman who was traveling to Australia for a meeting, on an expedition to the Torres Straits near New Guinea. Malinowski carried out research in New Guinea and concentrated two one-year stays in the Trobriand Islands off the northwest coast. His experience contributed to the idea of an intensive method of field research in a single culture for an extended stay. He published his work as *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922) with a preface by the same James Frazer who had inspired him toward anthropological studies. Glimpsing through Malinowski’s narrative another exotic life in the story of global culture, Frazer complimented Malinowski’s detailed account of the whole round of Trobriand life: “Dr. Malinowski lived as a native among the natives for many months together, watching them daily at work and at play, conversing with them in their own tongue, and deriving all his information from the surest sources—personal observation and statements made to him directly by the natives in their own language without the intervention of an interpreter. In this way he has accumulated a mass of materials, of high scientific values, bearing on the social, religious, and economic or industrial life of Trobriand Islanders” (Frazer 1961, vii–viii). Although the
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evolutionist in Frazer realized that Malinowski suggested "a new vision of savage humanity" by studying "the totality of all social, cultural, and psychological aspects of the community, for they are so interwoven that none can be understood without taking into consideration all the others," Frazer still thought that Malinowski could be productively read for showing evolutionary concern for "conspicuous predominance" of magic before a stage of religion, "even in the culture of a people so comparatively high in the scale of savagery as the Trobriand Islanders" (Malinowski 1961, xvi; Frazer 1961, xiv).

Malinowski responded to evolutionary doctrine by concentrating on a traditional system of exchange and trade. Showing his concern for the rationality of economics in a society, Malinowski found that customs and "institutions" were based on rational thinking of needs and outcomes. Customs also could be understood in light of the society's particular circumstances—its islands and peoples—and interconnection with other distinctive features of the culture including "social organisation, the power of magic, to mythology and folklore, and indeed to all other aspects as well as the main one" (Malinowski 1961, xvi). Malinowski considered the problem under study to be "sociological and geographical," thus corresponding to the grounding of social conditions in space, which was common among Boas's ethnographies in America. The economic theme that was the center of his study was the Kula (the Trobrianders' name for exchange and trade). Looked at as a structured system, the exchange forms a ring among the islanders. The result is that the bonds form among the often scattered islanders; their boundaries as a tribe are measured by participation in the Kula. The system of exchange had the function of maintaining the society. It persisted, not as an anomalous "superstition," but as a functioning enterprise in an integrated whole.

What set Malinowski's ethnography apart was its emphasis, not on origin and diffusion, but on the function of customs working within a system of culture (Malinowski 1944, 67–74). He saw customs as "a blend of utilitarian anxiety about the most necessary objects of his surroundings, with some preoccupation in those which strike his imagination and attract his attention" (Malinowski 1954, 21). In contrast to the hidden past of origin and the great extent of diffusion, Malinowski's consideration of "institutions" moved ethnography to its modern meaning of the immediate present and he signaled a British social anthropological move away from preoccupations with race and civilization to society and culture (see Barkan 1992, 124–27). He called for more use of behavioral observation and less of a judgment about the superiority of civilized society. Indeed, he was especially concerned for learning primitive "wisdom" and appreciating different "worldviews" rather than levels of culture. Especially considering what he regarded as the impractical uses of modern warfare in World War I, he wrote that

we cannot possibly reach the final Socratic wisdom of knowing ourselves if we never leave the narrow confinement of the customs, beliefs and prejudices into which every man is
Nothing can teach us a better lesson in this matter of ultimate importance than the habit of mind which allows us to treat the beliefs and values of another man from his point of view. Nor has civilized humanity ever needed such tolerance more than now, when prejudice, ill will and vindictiveness are dividing each European nation from another, when all the ideals, cherished and proclaimed as the highest achievements of civilization, science and religion, have been thrown to the winds. (Malinowski 1922: 1961, 518)

Further influenced by post World War I nationalism based on the determination of cultural boundaries, Malinowski’s functionalism stressed the direct observation of how a specific culture relates to society in a present time and over a limited space.

Malinowski became the first chair in anthropology at the University of London in 1920 and as Edward Evans-Pritchard recalled, Malinowski taught most of the social anthropologists who subsequently held chairs in Great Britain and the Dominions (Evans-Pritchard 1981, 153–69). Malinowski’s prominence was a mixed blessing for English folklore studies, which did not have a university foothold. Malinowski and others espousing social anthropology, such as A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, had little to offer on English folklore. Although Malinowski had much to say on native categories of narrative, particularly myths, he rarely referred to folklore after 1926, and his concerns became more on the sociological aspects of exotic cultures in establishing his branch of social anthropology. As a result, the goal of a systematic survey of English folklore, hoped for by the anthropologically minded Victorian folklorists who issued a bookshelf of “county” studies of folklore in the English countryside, did not materialize. In contrast to the American Folklore Society, the English Folklore Society in 1959 reported that anthropologists were a “dwindling minority” and “possibly doomed to extinction” (Simpson 1989, 3). Gillian Bennett, editor of the Folklore Society’s journal, reflected that had folklore established itself as an academic subject in England or had it aligned itself more closely to the social anthropology that emerged prominently in English universities, English folklore studies would have developed well beyond the evolutionism with which it has been associated (Bennett 1994, 34–35).

Malinowski had a profound impact on the development of functional approaches in American folklore scholarship, which had a strong tie to cultural anthropology. William Bascom, an anthropologist at the University of California who had been president of the American Folklore Society, declared that Malinowski was “the most important single influence on my own study of folklore; witness my articles ‘Four Functions of Folklore’ and ‘The Forms of Folklore: Prose Narratives’” (Bascom 1983, 163). Attempting to reconcile humanistic and anthropological perspectives prevalent in the American Folklore Society, Bascom proposed that functionalism provided a general framework for interpreting folklore in both culture and literature. Assuming that folklore maintains the stability of a culture, he presented four ways in which folklore generally persists by fulfilling
roles. Through the first function of amusement, a person finds escape from the repressions imposed by the society. Thus the system continues by means of the built-in safety valve of folklore. Second, folklore validates cultural activities such as rituals and institutions for those who perform and observe them. Third, folklore educates persons in the values of the society. Fourth, folklore maintains conformity to accepted patterns of behavior. Folklore can apply social pressure and even social control, in forms such as lullabies or proverbs. A fifth function overarches the others. Folklore, Bascom summarized, integrates society and makes it cohere (Bascom 1965).

Bascom's proposal may have been appealing because of the harmony it offered of culture and text, anthropology and literature, rather than its explanatory power (Zumwalt 1988). Historian of anthropology Fred Voget speculated that Americans, working in an open society, had become skeptical of the closed system that European anthropologists had drawn. Americans tended to view cultures through the careers of typical individuals, while Bascom's functionalism described a social life that was dominated by an orderly arrangement of statuses (Voget 1975, 462). American folklorists typically replaced assumptions of a closed society with a looser social definition of community or a psychological focus on the individual. Some folklorists such as Elliott Oring further loosened the priority of social maintenance in explaining cultural production by arguing that function is logically a consequence, not a cause, of folklore's generation (Oring 1976).

Unintended effects of a cultural item cannot account for its origin, he insisted. Moreover he warned that functions that allegedly generate effects may be falsely generalized as causing all instances in which certain conditions are present.

If the line of function as explanation slackened in the United States, the reputation of Malinowski as pivotal in relativizing culture, if anything, rose. As keywords of "performance" and "context" became appealing to American scholars concerned for building a behavioral model emphasizing free will to enact traditions in an individualistic, open society, Malinowski above all became a prominent intellectual precedent (Abrahams 1968; Bauman and Paredes 1972; Ben-Amos and Goldstein 1975). An oft-quoted statement found in *Myth in Primitive Psychology* (1926) is that "the text, of course, is extremely important, but without the context it remains lifeless. As we have seen, the interest of the story is vastly enhanced and it is given its proper character by the manner in which it is told. The whole nature of the performance, the voice and the mimicry, the stimulus and the response of the audience mean as much to the natives as the text; and the sociologist should take his cue from the natives" (Malinowski 1926, 29–30; see also Bascom 1977, 13). While bristling at Malinowski's "English" tendency to generalize and pointing out that he did not fully develop the contextualist line of thinking, Bascom thought Malinowski's brand of ethnography offered an important foundation for later American efforts to describe the cultural participation of individuals in multiple communities and the rational use of traditions for social purpose.
If Malinowski and Bascom did not emphasize studying one's own culture in the "large" context of nationality, then Richard Dorson (1916–1981) at Indiana University did. He was the great catalyst to realizing the British inheritance in scholarship as well as lore. Trained in history and literature within American civilization, Dorson disagreed with anthropologists who disavowed the cultural reality of national societies. He agreed that folklorists could no longer talk of an absolute culture as did the Victorians. But his study of American folklore made the case for a distinctive national culture built on the foundation of European and especially British sources. Stumbling upon the library of the Folklore Society in London in 1948, Dorson devoted many years afterward convincing scholars, as he said, "that familiarity with the brilliant history of folklore science in England was as indispensable for the American, and indeed for the European, Asian, or African student of folklore, as for the British" (Dorson 1968, v). His monumental influence training students devoted to a separate discipline of folklore helped spread his message of nationality and cross-cultural connections. His Folklore Institute at Indiana sponsored an "Anglo-American" conference in 1969, and his students through the years were required to put The British Folklorists (1968) to memory (Dorson 1970). Dorson enabled the writings of the British folklorists prominently to come back into print with his two-volume anthology Peasant Customs and Savage Myths (1968). Greatly owing to his efforts, more university courses on British folklore sprang up in America than in Great Britain.

English-American folklore study could grow because of the kind environment to interdisciplinary study the postwar American university provided. The growth of American studies, including folklore, followed from the growth of American power and attention to the recent past. In the landscape of national knowledge, folklore was a sign of the cultural strength of a new nation derived, but also separated, from Europe. In addition, the influx of new kinds of students—immigrants, workers, women, Appalachians, Jews, blacks—created a demand for representation of their own history and culture. Faced with an intellectual legacy alien to their roots, such students turned to oral and artifactual records for verifying their cultural integrity and found folklore to be a socially and politically significant area of exploration.

Some other conditions peculiar to the American experience fostered yet another movement in American folklore studies, the embrace of folklore as performance and communication. Although not in the vanguard of the performance studies movement, Dorson as a student of American civilization recognized that the great mobility of Americans, their staunch individualism and mix of identities, called for approaches that were different from European study of rooted, homogeneous groups. Dorson himself contributed essays on the narrative style of outstanding tale-tellers, and assessed how identities were conveyed differently by individuals as they traveled in various circles (Dorson 1972e). Later articulated in the works of Roger Abrahams and Richard Bauman, among others, performance
analysis centered on the small, often temporary, group and on symbolic events which typically defied cross-cultural comparison.

Intellectual history, then, shows that American and British strands of study developed differently. The American strand went through several changes, most notably the development into an academic discipline devoted to national traditions, and came to emphasize American conditions of individuality, mobility, and communication. Although itself experiencing change, the Folklore Society did not stray far from its original mission (Bennett 1996). The opportunities for English and American cooperation were limited by the cross-purposes of the different organizations. In addition, the English inheritance representing the dominant cultural source of America was often passed over in folklore study in a search for the subcultural diversity of American life.

Americans appeared to view the stuff of folklore at the local level as a counter to the nationalization of history. Folklore was the evidence that confirmed an American pluralism, in region, ethnicity, race, and occupation. When English inheritance was noticed, it was typically in relation to regional subculture, as in Appalachia or the Ozarks. Otherwise, English influence formed the master narrative of nation-building, from old New England to the American Revolution. Emphasizing a heterogeneous conception of America open to subcultural diversity, American folklorists after World War II often looked beyond the survivals of English folklore to the living traditions of communities encompassing a folklife in Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. Instead of claiming a lineage back to Thoms, the folklife group cited Volkskunde perspectives of Germany and Scandinavia (Hines 1972). Alfred Shoemaker and Don Yoder made calls for American folklife study that reintegrates oral with material and social traditions in the consideration of the totality of traditions in ethnic-regional subcultures (Yoder 1976b). Resisting English models that implied assimilation of ethnic cultures into a dominant political system, folklife advocates in Scotland, Wales, and Ireland magnified the integrity, as well as creativity, of regional cultures, especially manifested in crafts and architecture necessary for daily living (Hines 1972; Ballard 1994).

The movement away from English models became apparent in the reintegration of material and social traditions after the 1960s. A convergence seemed to have occurred between post-1960s consideration of performance of tales and creativity in craft. Scotland's Alexander Fenton, one of the more influential figures in the folklife movement of the British Isles, observed that "just as the contextualising of a song, musical performance or tale within its social setting came to be important, so was it also with objects. The questions asked ceased to be mainly about points of origin, diffusion and continuity. They now touched on the role within a regional or local community, the function of elements of popular culture in marking social differentiation within a community, and the effects of external influences. In other words, social spread was added to geographical spread, and the present was added to the past" (Fenton 1993, 9). Showing a range of arts and their integration in a
local community underscored the vitality, indeed differentiation, of a variety of cultures as they moved, adapted, and changed across the Atlantic.

ANALYZING TRADITION ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

If the English influence receives a cold shoulder in cultural study and a warm reception as national history, then what is it that students justly need to know about the English-American connection in folklore and folklife? Henry Glassie in his important work *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States* (1968) tried to give balance to the portrayal of America by charting infusion of various European ideas into the formation of American regional cultures. Locating four major “cultural hearths” opened on the Eastern Seaboard by different European groups, Glassie showed that America’s regional development owed to the nature of original ethnic settlement and spread.

In Glassie’s overview of varied cultural diffusion, he responded to the historical and political emphasis on the spread of a unified “American spirit” from Puritan New England roots to the rest of the country. He helped to answer nagging questions about the persistence of regional cultures derived from the British cultural inheritance. Unlike historical documents that were used to emphasize change over periods and the unity of a literate class, folk materials seemed especially useful to provide cultural answers because they tended to be variable over space and stable over time and represented a wider range of people. Folk materials could be used to trace longstanding cultural traditions. Folk houses, which stood in place on the landscape, offered visible proofs of diffusion and adaptation to the new environment (Kniffen [1965] 1986). Behind this effort are basic issues of the effect on regional and national character as cultures separate, spread, integrate, settle, adapt, and change. It is essentially a search for symbols of a common and divergent heritage, an exploration for roots of a complex and diverse nation.

Maybe the hesitation to draw English-American connections in oral lore additionally stems from the international nature of many verbal forms. Indeed, the English scholarly emphasis on folklore as oral narrative had an international reach and complemented the evolutionary consideration of global convergence. The job of transporting material culture is slower and more cumbersome than diffusing oral tradition; architecture and art are often presumed to better represent cross-national, rather than broad cross-cultural, movement. These assumptions are based on the English emphasis on classifying genre according to natural history typology, and the split between material and oral genres, for the analysis is based on the separation rather than integration of forms in cultural patterning. Material traditions are expected to stabilize and harden on the landscape in a region or community. Oral traditions, being fleetingly spoken, are expected to vary and move quickly. As the experience of English settlement became more distant, American folklorists turned to the development of a distinctive
American civilization, shown in traditions peculiarly suited to the American experience. This was "American folklore," Richard Dorson claimed, as opposed to a derivative "folklore in America" (Dorson 1959a, 1978c, 1980a). Taking the idea of context influencing the generation of culture even further, many "performance-oriented" folklorists of the 1970s appeared to take the issue of national culture out of the analytic picture in favor of consideration of immediate conditions and social interactions that made the question of English-American continuities a moot point.

Another kind of question looks for continuities rather than dichotomies. Questions of structure and aesthetics, which are more common in American than English folklore studies, ask about the underlying guiding principles that direct the creation and performance of cultural traditions. Such traditions, it is often assumed, are not as subject to national histories as social and psychological patterns that influence individual choices of traditions made in certain environments. Such principles imply more personal volition in the choices of tradition and less textual fixity in the forms that tradition take than evolutionary perspectives assume. If forms emerge from individually developed aesthetics and traditional structures, then folklore is constantly being re-created rather than "surviving." The examination of culture thus necessarily de-emphasizes the historical dimension and stresses more ethnographic views of changeable cultural "scenes." Behavior accommodates the variable backdrops and actors on stages of life.

Looking at structure and aesthetics of expressions within some significant scenes—in houses, fiddle tunes, and stories—integration appears possible, indeed crucial, in the analysis of contemporary American folklore and folklife. Here I will offer some perspectives on this kind of examination by tracing base concepts of linear order, binary construction, and rectangular foundation in American traditions owing to English influence.

It is on the basis of structure, in fact, that the American argument for expanding the definition of folklore to include nonverbal forms was made. Alan Dundes in "On Game Morphology: A Study of the Structure of Non-Verbal Folklore" (1964) contended that children's games follow a linear sequence similar to one followed in most folktales. Dundes's example was the English-American game of Hare and Hounds, which he found followed Vladimir Propp's "syntagmatic" structural scheme of folktales (Propp 1968, 1984). The game contains a protagonist (hare) and antagonist (hounds), and it moves sequentially from a lack (for the hare, wanting to go home) to the elimination of a lack (returning home) with intervening moves of an interdiction (without being caught by hounds) and violation (being caught by hounds). The game then is visually shaped rectangularly with a binary pair forming the action which moves linearly through four (two pairs) moves. The rectangular shape is indeed a fundamental building block of English-American folk housing and other material forms. If the structures of
games and tales, or games and houses, are similar, they can be analyzed as part of a unified whole, that of tradition in culture.

Differences in structure are apparent in various cultures. The Western fondness for three divisions cited by Axel Olrik in his epic laws for folk narrative, and by Henry Glassie for the design of folk art, contrasts with many American Indian uses of four or Chinese uses of five. Three is a symbol of human control representing the shape of the human head in relation to two arms (Glassie 1972, 269, 273–74). Studies of American Indians have shown that the number four is often used as a natural symbol relating to four cardinal points. Many Asian cultures add one more for the self (Dundes 1980b). In these assumptions are contained different attitudes toward the landscape. Western embrace of technological progress and control of the environment are offered in the very structure of tradition based on human power (Stilgoe 1982). Similarly, the communal circle as a basis for housing is a natural symbol used in many African and American Indian cultures, but the rectangle, a technological symbol, is the primary base concept of individual expansion in Western tradition.

Structural patterns arranged geographically are used to answer the puzzle over why more British construction techniques did not cross over the Atlantic with the original settlers. Adapting to the new environment, English Americans used local forms and devised new ones based on the structuring patterns they learned as part of their culture (Bronner 1989a). Although an occasional English half-timber or wattle-and-daub house exists in America, Americans mostly constructed in log, brick, and stone. The abundance of wood and land in America, especially, made a difference in the cultural look of the countryside. Following the route of human control, the sequence in the early days of the Republic followed the clearing of the wilderness to announce ownership of property through the erection of linear fences and private outbuildings to the establishment of a new classic civilization with application of Greek Revival ornamentation. Despite the feeling of creating a new material civilization, American folk architecture owed much to the sense of eighteenth-century geometric order popularized by British thinkers and designers (Glassie 1975). The order was influenced by the spread of literacy during the period. Writing, the ultimate statement of rational human control, produced neat rows and tabular forms. Geometric order announced rational human control over nature, again well suited to American designs on its future.

The binary pair in folk architecture is an example of the structuring power of geometric order and goes beyond national boundaries of England and America (Glassie 1973). The layout of the single pen unit, the basic unit of the home, consisted of four sides, or two squared. The proportions of the room were typically four squared, or sixteen feet square. The rectangular base concept then was formed with two such units. The bodily shape represented by threes took form when the binary pair was situated around a central door. The bodily image became social in the house with the suggestion that the one to one structure of the binary pair in
the house formed from the union of man and woman. Often, in fact, two trees were planted, one on either side of the house to reinforce the visual image of union.

The so-called “English barn” is not unique to, or predominant, in England, but its typological name extended the idea of rectangular proportion associated with English form (Glassie 1974). Its doors centrally located on the non-gable end, its plan arranged in an even ratio of two-to-one, the English barn was the utilitarian extension of the social house’s structure. The grammar of construction continued to use binary pairs when the need for space increased. Rather than extend the house with three pens, builders arranged the house to rise upward with two rooms over two rooms. An indication of the persistence of this aesthetic is in the harsh conditions of the Great Plains of the American West where in the absence of trees settlers turned to sod for their building material (Welsch 1968; Barns 1930). Although circular and dugout designs might have actually proved more pragmatic, the settlers insisted on the rectangular base concept reminiscent of forms back east.

Houses are not the only keys to identifying base concepts. Gravestones, especially in New England, borrow heavily from British iconography. Cemetery design retained the ordered, linear format of British churchyards and stood in stark contrast to the nature of American Indian burying grounds. The Indian grounds fitted the cosmology of returning to the earth and establishing a cycle to life. The rectangular emphasis is a cosmological statement as well, giving emphasis to the material life spent on earth. The stones themselves showed a sense of permanence to the individual, and were shaped like the top of a body with a head and shoulders forming a binary pair around a central unit (Deetz and Dethlefsen 1982).

Perhaps most noticeable in tracing a British-American connection is the fiddled dance tune. My fieldwork in upstate New York uncovered many fiddlers who learned the tunes with transatlantic roots such as “Soldier’s Joy,” “Lamplighter’s Hornpipe,” and “McLeod’s Reel” (Bronner 1987b). These tunes have the “endless” repetitive quality arising out of an aabb form, two sets of binary pairs. In performance, the solo fiddler dominated, although I occasionally witnessed twin fiddle arrangements. I most commonly beheld an aesthetic placing value on precision and repetition in the ability to play in unison rather than in harmony. New England is associated today with the preponderance of the English line dance, and the South is especially well known for development of the basic “square” dance. The make-up of these squares is of two-by-two-by-two-by-two or four sides containing two persons on each side. In performance, the squares are arranged in lines, typically two, although it is significant to note that contextual studies have pointed out stylistic differences between southern and northern dancers and fiddlers. Bill Malone has hypothesized that the southern country music tradition—allowing for more improvisation, emotional expression, and aab lyrical forms than in the North—owes greatly to the pronounced African-American presence in the South (Malone 1968). Another explanation may be in the development of a predominant Baptist
religion among southerners that fostered an affective performance orientation in
some contrast to the Congregationalism of the North (Ellison 1995; Bronner 1987b).
In addition, the popular social dance known as the “square dance” accompanied by
a caller (shouting rhymed instructions) with fiddle, banjo, and guitar, varied from
South to North (and later East to West with the introduction of “swing jazz” beats)
especially because of southern African-American adaptations (in rhymed calling,
syncopation of fiddle tunes, and instrumentation of the five-string banjo) (see
Winslow 1972; Feintuch 1981; Bronner 1987b; Abrahams 1992b, 197–98; Bluestein
1994, 66–74). The point of delineating these contexts is to draw attention to the
complex regional-ethnic-religious mix of the United States that frequently raises
more questions of adaptation and syncretism rather than transplantation.

To be sure, a case for transplantation and eventual dominance of English tradi­
tion over American culture had its hardy advocates. Its high point may have been a
period called the Colonial Revival beginning in the late nineteenth century when
references to styles of colonial New England and Virginia came into fashion in
architecture, music, and dance. Enthusiasts for the Colonial Revival played up the
appeal of stability and solidness of old English forms and encouraged the search
for signs of English persistence in America. Led by descendants of the original set­
tlers who feared the transformation of white Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture by
waves of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, the Colonial Revival used
the ready observation by Victorian scholars that American song, tune, and dance
stemmed largely from English tradition (see Axelrod 1985).

To cite some examples of efforts to reconstruct America on an English founda­
tion: the popular magazine Harper’s launched a series of articles on the cultural
emergence of America as “An English Nation” toward the century’s close, immigrant
youngsters from southern and eastern Europe were taught English-American folk
songs and dances in schools to encourage assimilation, and the New England (some­
times called the “Old Tyme” to reinforce its traditionality in American culture)
Kitchen exhibit became a fixture of American tradition at World’s Fairs through the
Gilded Age (Higginson 1883; Rhoads 1985; Roth 1985). Responding to social changes
caused by massive immigration from eastern and southern Europe, and expressing a
perceived need for national unity based on the founding principles and English­
derived culture of the young Republic, some authors located Appalachian singers of
British ballads as America’s “genuine ancestors” (see Frost [1899] 1989). As if to rein­
force the bond of a common language, oral tradition drew special consideration in
most of these studies on the survival of English culture in America.

The Problem of Childhood

Several leaders of the American Folklore Society, most of whom came from New
England and Eastern Seaboard cities, made much of the social connection of child­
hood to the shared oral tradition of England and America. In their evolutionary
way of thinking, childhood as the beginning of cultural life became prominent to understand the English inheritance as the foundation from which American culture emerged. Two notable contributions to children’s game study in Britain and America published within a few years of each other in the late nineteenth century became classics and continued to appear in print in numerous editions through the twentieth century. Alice Bertha Gomme, wife of prominent English evolutionary folklorist George Laurence Gomme, published her first volume of *The Traditional Games of England, Scotland, and Ireland* in 1894, and William Wells Newell, a Unitarian minister and schoolmaster from the Boston area, came out with *Games and Songs of American Children* in 1883. In their evolutionary thinking, children represented an early stage of cultural development of adults much as savages related to the civilized. The origin of line games, for example, Gomme attributed to a hidden past rather than the structural or aesthetic needs of present-day children. Considering the prevalence of line games, she wrote that “it is obvious that we have elements of custom and usage which would not primarily originate in a game, but in condition of local or tribal life which has long since passed away. It is a life of contest, a life, therefore, which existed before the days of settled politics, when villages or tribal territories had their own customs differing from each other, and when not only matters of political relationship were settled by the arbitrament of the sword, but matters not considered to be of purely personal relationship, namely, marriage” (Gomme 1964, 2:489). Games played by British children represented to Gomme survivals of customs that led to the development of modern drama and even religious practice. Alice Gomme intended to bring the classification of games together with those beliefs and folk institutions investigated by her husband George to give a complete picture of layers of British historical development in a grand dictionary of British folklore (Dorson 1968, 277).

From his New England base, Newell thought that America was an even better place than Britain to view the survivals of ancient customs in game because “the New World has preserved what the Old World has forgotten; and the amusements of children to-day picture to us the dances which delighted the court as well as the people of the Old England before the settlement of the New” (Newell [1884] 1992, 3–4). He saw in games the remains of customs found among the elite that had filtered or corrupted down to folk usage. He viewed religious practice and courtly amusement in games that had been preserved in the countryside and diffused from there, rather than the evolution from peasant and savage to higher levels. “If these usages seem rustic, it is only because the country retained what the city forgot, in consequence of the change of manners to which it was sooner exposed,” he wrote, and he sentimentally commented that “now that our country towns are become mere outlying suburbs of cities, these remarks may read with a smile at the rude simplicity of old-fashioned American life” (Newell [1884] 1992, 6). There was something of an American democratic ideology implied in Newell’s comments because of his opinion that unlike England, Americans rich and poor, rural and
Cover of the first edition of *Games and Songs of American Children* (1883), by William Wells Newell, showing “London Bridge Is Falling Down,” in his view a prime example of a “cultural survival.”
urban, share in the same folklore. American schools offer a "mighty engine of equalization," he wrote, and he observed that "the English-speaking population, which imposes on all new-comers its language, imposes also its traditions, even the traditions of children" (Newell [1884] 1992, 2).

Pointing to the dramatic changes in the "motion and novelty" of industrial American life, Newell felt that the conditions of preindustrial America removed from "the currents of thought circulating in Europe" maintained the predominance of the old English traditions into the modern age, despite introductions of other ethnic influences. Although laying claims to represent American tradition widely, his sources of New England schoolchildren undoubtedly influenced his declaration that the typical games of Americans, or "usages of play" as he put it, "are almost entirely of old English origin." Newell inferred a national gaming tradition in America emerging from English origin and a separateness of childhood from adulthood borne out by the prevalence of gaming folklore (Abrahams 1988). American children's games showed a uniformity across regions, he wrote, because "the extension of intercourse between the States has tended to diffuse them, so that petty rhymes, lately invented, have sometimes gained currency from Maine to Georgia" (Newell [1884] 1992, 3). Newell encouraged collection of English-American children's folklore from his post as editor of the *Journal of American Folklore* and calls for investigation continued from his successor Alexander Chamberlain (1865-1914), editor from 1900 to 1907, who published *The Child and Childhood in Folk-Thought* (1896).

Chamberlain fixed on what he called the "child-idea" in culture, the view that children represent through folklore the vitality of a culture. Chamberlain took the vantage of "elders" who pass tradition to children and evaluate them. "Everywhere throughout the world," Chamberlain wrote, "the activities of childhood have been appealed to, and the race has wonderfully profited by its wisdom, its naiveté, its ingenuity, and its touch of divinity" (Chamberlain 1896, 403). In keeping with the evolution from simple childhood to complex adulthood, Chamberlain's impressive tome and Newell's collection give the impression that children in America primarily knew simple rhymes, games, and beliefs crafted ages before, probably by English adults. Neither Newell nor Chamberlain offered much in the way of narrative behavior given by children. Four brief paragraphs in Chamberlain's study describe "story-telling" to children, but none gives an account of what children do with this knowledge, much less recognize narrative creativity (Chamberlain 1896, 204-5).

The influences of English Darwinian philosophy and modern aesthetic values should be apparent in the assumptions of many studies of children's folklore from the nineteenth century to the present. Although Newell and Gomme argued about the direction of cultural survival and the diffusion of its forms, Darwinian influence is still present in the evolutionary premise of the "natural" movement from simple to complex forms, from children's rhymes to adult narratives. Although
Newell recognized the inventiveness of children, he and others nonetheless select­ed the "traditional" forms showing stability and distribution over generations for comparison. Scholars well after Newell chose specimens that had a completed quality to them and drew attention to themselves because of their customary or literary characteristics. Such arrangements and choices resulted in a picture of cultural stability over an extended time. Another result was a map of cultural space in which isolable groups expressed their differences through lore. Within this map, children and adults, women and men, to name some divisions, inhabit­ed separate spheres.

In a departure from Chamberlain's concern for "folk thought," one can examine a process rather than form, of thinking rather than thought. One does not collect specimens so much as recognize interactions that employ "stories," many of which may be unique but follow recognizable structures (Goodwin 1990). The question­ing is not about lines from "yesterday" into "tomorrow," but rather about the ways people express themselves taking cues from any number of simultaneous influ­ences, and indeed create themselves through expression. The breaks that this ques­tioning of expression make with English-American evolutionary approaches are evident in the emphasis placed today on the keywords of development, learning, and communication. By using development, many researchers since the 1980s drew attention to varying rates of growth and varieties of expression among chil­dren. It is granted that children strive toward the maturity of adulthood, but one also recognizes that children have distinctive behaviors that do not necessarily carry over into adulthood.

Within the broad neutral native category of "kids" lies an implication of change, physical and social—and cultural. Through the life course, individuals learn from a variety of sources about responding to different situations. The percep­tion of physical difference between children and adults, however, not to men­tion the social clustering of children in school, tempt Europeans and Americans to categorize childhood as a social unit separate from adulthood. Yet contextualizing aging with the life course as a process of structuring experience and aestheticizing expression in the investigation of children's lives offers a closer look at the ways children use lore to respond to developmental and social changes (Bronner 1990b). Addition of visual and oral recording devices, in contrast to the literary methods of Gilded Age folklorists, suggests more multidimensional consideration of movement, voice, and surroundings—recordable elements of interaction—than the one-dimensional treatment of the written page. Indeed, the activities through the life course become visual frames to be individually analyzed rather than specimens to be classified.

The notable children's folklore collecting of Peter and Iona Opie in Britain half a century after Newell and Gomme retained most of the evolutionary classificatory emphasis on custom and text. As Newell had done years before, the Opies mar­veled at the conservative retention of ancient tradition and the simultaneous
inventiveness with which children can improvise language and play. From a glance at the English-American folkloristic bookshelf from Newell to the Opies, it appears that children's folklore has been the most persistent reminder of British folkloric connections next to folk music and architecture. Perhaps the area of children's folklore most vividly reminds Americans (and Australians, judging from children's folklore work there) of the English connection because of the emphasis in children's expression on textual form (Cansler 1968). Just listen to American children singing "London Bridge Is Falling Down," which you can almost every day, or counting out "One, two, three, four, Mary's at the kitchen door." Listed and indexed in the antiquarian manner of noting anachronistic items, texts invite comparison of stability across the ocean, and the Opies were especially concerned for categorizing them and finding their provenance.

Yet a tradition such as hand-clapping games that involves performance and integration of different expressive behaviors defies easy typology. Such games combine gestures, music, and words creatively arranged in rhyme. Socially, they vary according to ethnicity and region, and, significantly, age. Typically played between two girls, each using two hands, the hand-clapping games involve speaking four-line verses usually with alternate lines rhyming. In performance, the number of verses remembered is usually two, three, or four. One common game begins "My mother gave me a nickel, My father gave me a dime, My sister gave me a lover boy, Who loved me all the time." It continues: "My mother took her nickel, My father took his dime, My sister took her lover boy, and gave me Frankenstein. He made me do the dishes, He made me mop the floor, I got so sick and tired of him, I kicked him out the door" (Bronner 1988a, 62–63; Opie and Opie 1985; Rutherford 1971, 76). Often, however, the action of giving and returning, and characterizations of mother and father, offer other binary pairs: "My mother gave me peaches, My father gave me pears, My boyfriend gave me fifty cents, And kissed me up the stairs. My mother took my peaches, My father took his pears, My boyfriend took his fifty cents, So I kicked him down the stairs." This is the contemporary form of an old skipping rhyme: "Nine (or twelve, or seven) o'clock is striking, Mother may I go out? All the boys are waiting, For to take me out. One will give me an apple, One will give me a pear, One will give me fifty cents, To kiss behind the stair." Even in the skipping version, performed between two holders of a single rope, the stress is on the construction of a rectangular base concept from the use of binary pairs.

Identifying such base concepts and the aesthetics arising from them helps to put emergent forms in cultural perspective. Culture becomes less of a form and more of a process available to individuals to enact. The identity of an American child does not refer to English precedent in this view, although questions may arise as to why the choices available to the child derive from English sources. In preadolescent play, a strong element of improvisation and fantasy that uses structures of tradition rather than texts to form play behaviors are at work (Dargan
The strength of American popular culture brings new characters and commonplaces into children's folklore. The influence, then, is moving back across the Atlantic and into other English-speaking cultures such as Australia and New Zealand. One that has attracted notice in Australia as well as the United States and England is "Ronald McDonald," the clown character in McDonald's advertising. In Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, I have collected children clapping to the words: “Ronald McDonald, a biscuit oh McDonald, A biscuit oh she she wa wa, A biscuit I got a boyfriend” (Bronner 1988a, 65–68; see also Grider 1976, 752–53; Langstaff and Langstaff 1973; "Clapping" 1985). The second verse is: "A biscuit she's so sweet, A biscuit like a cherry tree, Baby down the roller coaster, Sweet sweet babe I never let you go.” And the third verse is: "Shimmy shimmy coco pop, Shimmy shimmy pal, Shimmy coco pop, Shimmy shimmy pow!" Showing the mark of post-World War II rhythm and blues music, the clapping game is syncopated when compared to older English-American rhymes, but the routines that accompany these jive clapping verses still retain some binary base concepts. The movements are first clapping, then snapping fingers, one hand up and the other down, hitting the other person, right-hand thumb over shoulder and then left, make a fist, hug the other person, imitate a gun with hand and point at other person (at “pow”). These examples remind us that while the content and performance of lore adapt readily, the structures underlying them are slow to change (see Fine 1980a; Maranda and Maranda 1971). When they do change, signs of significant cultural shift are usually evident.

During the late nineteenth century, evolutionary doctrine led some scholars to imagine that literacy and technology naturally replace oral forms of learning. Yet it became evident that people surrounded by technology still relied on the kind of learning usually associated with folklore—by word of mouth, imitation and demonstration, custom. Indeed, literacy and technology often became tools to engage narrative behavior and make syncretic combinations of traditional structures and popular messages, as children's parodies of television jingles or personalized retellings of fairy tales indicate (Roemer 1977, 214–28; Bronner 1988a; Tucker 1992). Other examples might be the use of photocopiers for passing traditional humor and computers for folk games. The important lesson is that people use folklore for the kind of powerful learning and communication it offers and are willing to adjust it to new technology so as to engage its qualities. This lesson leads to an awareness of children's marked complexity and ability, such as the remarkable rapidity with which children learn language and the distinctiveness of the first few years of life. Within their first year, children become aware quickly of sequences of words that carry meaning and evoke responses from adults (Brown 1973). In multilingual households, children can quickly select different codes of speech and often exaggerate their styles. All too little recognized are the culturally variable developments of ordered “baby talk” and the creative uses of play languages by children (Sherzer 1976; Sanches and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1976).
Children do not simply graduate from rhymes to narrative, but employ a range of expression that in fact relies upon narrative competence early in their lives.

Explaining the mechanisms by which children recognize some word sequences as "stories" and find ways to strategically use them essentially challenges scholars to question social interaction and development (Fischer 1960; Edmonson 1971; Rayfield 1972; Nicolaisen 1990; Friel 1995). Even before language is acquired, children became aware of culturally defined spaces that suggest narrative structures in that they have directions and boundaries. In American culture, the rectangle—in the crib, the room, the play block—is a particularly ubiquitous model. In many cultures, circular spaces dominate and may be investigated for a relation to narrative structure. In one study of the Mescalero Apache, for example, Claire Farrer found that houses, dances, and children's games such as Tag showed strong circularity in contrast to English-American linearity (Farrer 1976).

Reading in lines reinforces the aesthetics of linearity in English-American societies (Sullivan 1992; Toelken 1979). Even before adults read to children, they typically use play to enumerate objects on the body as points of reference for narrative sequencing. Among the first playful performances recalled from tradition offered by adults to children are finger or toe formulas. They engage the child and repeat linguistic references—metaphors often relating the child's body to family members or animals—in a memorable way. In French a formula uses the structure of the family in a sequence from the thumb to the little finger:

Voici le père  
Voici la mère  
Voici la demoiselle  
Voici le fils  
Voici le petit rincouincouin. (Shiver 1941, 223)

And in English a similar sequence can be heard:

This is my father (hold up thumb)  
This is my mother (hold up index finger)  
This is my brother (hold up middle finger)  
This is my sister (hold up ring finger)  
This is the baby (hold up little finger)  
Oh! How we love them all (clasp hands together).  
(see Welsch 1966, 191; Barrick 1968, 45)

Some of my Pennsylvania-German neighbors recall a formula using the occupations on the farm:

Der is der Bauer [farmer]  
Der ist die Bauerin [farmer's wife]  
Der ist der Knecht [farmhand]
Der ist die Dein'rn [farmhand's wife]
Und dies kleine wutzlein in der wiegen [piglet in a cradle].
(see Stoudt 1915, 32–33)

And compare it to the sequence of:

Des iss der douma
Der shittelt de blouma
Der laist se oof
Der drawgt se hame
Oon der glay shellem fresst se oll dahame
[This one is the thumb, this one shakes the tree on which grows the plum, this one
picks them up, this one carries them home, and this little rascal eats them all up].
(See Shoemaker 1951, 3)

The most common sequence played on the toes in English and American cul­
ture is:

This little piggy went to market
This little piggy stayed home
This little piggy had roast beef
This little piggy had none
And this little piggy went (cried) wee, wee, wee (all the way home; I can’t find my way
home; give me some).
(see Barrick 1968, 45; Brewster et al. 1952, 185–87; Opie and Opie 1952, 348–50;
Northall 1892, 420)

Or one I have frequently collected is an improvisation on the formula for the
body:

What’s this? [Is this your nose?] (touches nose)
And what’s this? [Is this your chin?] (tickles chin)
And do you know what this is? [Is this your chest?] (touches chest)
For this I’ll have to come in for a closer look (looks down at navel or “bellybutton”
and then presses mouth to it and blows, making a fluttering noise).

Predominant interest in “This Little Piggy,” among the others, has been its ori­
gin in eighteenth-century English verse and its spread in American usage (see Opie
and Opie 1952, 348–50), but the reference to historical precedent does not explain
the transatlantic selection or adaptation of the tradition. It does not account either
for its function and meaning, since today’s parents do not make reference to its
English background as a reason for its enactment. Sometimes known one-dimen­sionally as “rhymes,” the gestural and verbal expressions offered by adults, usually
performed before the child is of reading age, are more in the way of verbal formu­
las accompanied by physical action that make the infant aware of itself. Because of
the playful context of the sequential activity and the often musical performance of
the text, the expressions may also be generically referred to as games (Welsch 1966;
Barrick 1968). The verbal stress and elongation in the conclusion accompanying
the grabbing of toes or fingers give the sense of an ending that relies on what pre­
ceded it. After the routines, finger formulas are introduced to children. They will
commonly later demonstrate command of the routine on themselves, essentially
narrating themselves (Brunvand 1986b, 113–14).

Are the expressions early in the child’s life recognized as stories, then? In some
German sources, they are called *Fingermärchen*, or “finger tales” (Shiver 1941). If
American children do not recognize them as stories, then they may employ their
structures in their own playful expressions using repetition and rhythm. The for­
maulic rhythm of “This Little Piggy,” for instance, relates closely to the youthful
narrative told in England and America, and identified as “In A Dark, Dark
Wood”4:

Okay, you walk down this long, black road and there’s this big, um, black house and
you go in this big black room and there’s—(speeds up) In the big black room there’s a
big black closet, in the big black closet there’s a big black tuxedo, in the big black tuxedo
there’s a big black pocket, in the big black pocket is a big black box, in the big black box
is a red jelly bean [a genie; dark, dark ghost, whooo; little tiny mouse eating cheese].
(laughs) (Tucker 1977, 209, 483, 495, 497, 502; Opie and Opie 1959, 36)

Even later in childhood, the rhythm and repetition characterizing this narrative
form appears in ghost stories often given at camps and slumber parties (distinctive
American institutions). One such story is sometimes identified as a subunit under
the heading “Johnny, I Want My Liver” (a subtype, as it has been categorized by
European-American folklorists, of Aarne-Thompson Tale-Type 366), although the
narrative technique repeats in many stories used by children.

This lady gave this boy named Johnny a dollar to go to the store to get some liver. But
he spent it on something else before he got the liver, and he had to bring this lady her
liver. So he saw this graveyard right next to the store. So he unburied a guy, and he got
the guy’s liver and brought it to the lady. The lady said, “this is a real good liver.” But that
night they heard, “I want my liver back, I want my liver back, I want my liver back.” Then
they hear, “I’m on your first step, I want my liver back, I want my liver back, I want my liver
back. I’m in the bedroom, I want my liver back, I want my liver back, I want my liver back.” (teller
grabs listener in abdomen in expectation of third repetition of “liver back”) “LIVER
BACK!” (Bronner 1988a, 158; see also Opie and Opie 1959, 36; Tucker 1977, 370–73,
495–96; Grider 1976, 197–210; Virtanen 1978, 76)

Much of children’s narration does not conform to “type” but contains familiar
incremental structures in apparently spontaneous compositions. A six-year-old
boy, for example, told this “routine” in a play setting at which several children
offered “stories”:
Once upon a time there was this girl named Lisa, and every night when she went to bed she heard this voice saying like "Lisa I’m at the first stair of the staircase," and on the second night she heard "Lisa I’m in the hall," and the next night she heard "Lisa I’m in your bedroom," and the NEXT night she heard "Lisa I’m right beside you." GOTCHA! (grabs hold of another child) (Roemer 1977, 210)

In so-called spontaneous or invented stories, one can discern similar structures and rhythms, such as this one told repeatedly by a girl from two to three years old that employs the familiar family structure along with the repetition of actions leading to a conclusion:

2/22/75

The man stayed home
the children went out
then a Cookie Monster came
then the Cookie Monster went away
and the mommy was angry
and then the father was angry
and then the children went out again
then the father went out
then the mother went out
they went to the park
then they went home
and then the father was doing work
and then it was getting late
the children went to sleep
and the mommy and the father went to sleep.

8/13/75

The mother went out
then the father went out
then the mother went out again
and then the father went out
then the children went out
then policeman came
the mother came back from the meeting
then the father came back from the meeting
then a Cookie Monster came
and the policeman came again
then the Cookie Monster went away. (Sutton-Smith 1981, 53)

With these “texts” reproduced on the printed page, the analyst of cultural “frames” longs to know the social interactions and cues that gave rise to them. One
has to wonder how participants understood their meaning. When these texts are construed as narrative, there is an assumption that they are in themselves part of a sequence. An additional assumption is that while the story draws attention to the text, “narrative” directs inquiry to the performance, some of which may be out of the awareness of the “storyteller.” The sequence around the narrative may involve conversation, or play, signals that aid in the recognition of the beginning and ending of “story” and its different meanings in various situations (Rayfield 1972; Scheub 1977; Toelken 1979; Bauman 1986; Haut 1992). And narrative construed in this way is not a separable level of culture, but a necessary, everyday behavior (or “cultural register”) in social interaction (Nicolaisen 1990). Narrative is a human way of knowing and expressing meaning.

The use of “narrative” to describe stories is more characteristic of scholarship in an electronic age than that of turn-of-the-century English-American scholarship on children. Narrative has become a technical term that refers to the result of a process (narrating in context) rather than the form of relating information in an organized way. “Narrative” is conspicuously absent in folkloristic dictionaries such as the *Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend* (1950) and *General Ethnological Concepts* (1960). American folklorist Elliott Oring, however, made the term central in his chapter on “Folk Narratives” in the textbook *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres* (1986). “Narrative,” he declared “is another word for story.” Then why not use the more familiar “story”? The answer lies in the suggestion of the process of “narrating” in narrative and its implication of behavioral interpretation (Georges 1976). Oring invoked a behavioral perspective when he proclaimed that “narrating is a method by which an experience is transformed into verbal account” (Oring 1986a, 121). The rhetoric of narrative creates a distance with “history” and the past, with which “story” has traditionally been aligned (Nicolaisen 1990). In another American source, the *Dictionary of Concepts in Cultural Anthropology* (1991), Robert Winthrop claimed that “one trend discernible, in both anthropology and folklore studies, is a concern for understanding narrative as a communicative performance, ‘a totality encompassing not only the verbal story but the entire narrative experience, auditory and visual, of spectator and actor.’” Winthrop argued that narrative essentially brings out the “expressive dimension of culture”; that is, culture is realized, and even constructed, by narrative communication (Winthrop 1991, 126; see also Edmonson 1971; Ben-Amos and Goldstein 1975; Scheub 1977; Abrahams 1977).

By insisting on processual “narrative” over the English generic distinctions of tale and custom, American researchers have favored native categories and blurred the lines between the verbal and nonverbal dimensions of culture by emphasizing the behavior of communication (Herskovits 1958; Ben-Amos 1972; Ben-Amos and Goldstein 1975; Georges 1976; Scheub 1977; Brady 1984; Stahl 1989). Narrative suggests the organization of communicated experience in a number of ways (Abrahams 1986). How, for example, does the parent’s playing of “Peek-a-boo (I
see you)," one of the first traditional forms of play experienced between adult and child in American culture, affect an understanding of narrative sequence? The structure moves repeatedly from the hidden face to the face revealed, accompanied by a rhyme, "Peek-a-boo, I see you!" or "Now I see you, now I don't." This frame around the repeated play activity causes delight in the child. Then among the first organized games played by children among themselves is Hide-and-Go-Seek (Bronner 1988a, 176–78). One can also notice that a number of spontaneously "invented" fantasies in children's story composition or pretend play involve the dramatic tension of disappearance and recovery. These examples suggest attention to a process of creativity rather than one of creations (see Crowley 1966; Briggs 1988; Jones 1989; Bronner 1992b).

Creativity is employed to bring old and new elements, as well as individual and social concerns, together in response to social situations and personal needs (Toelken 1979; Evans 1982). The "creation" of concern to Chamberlain and Newell implied the separation of folklore from new inventions. As Chamberlain and Newell used folklore research to reflect on the hierarchical industrial age rising in their Gilded Age society, so the trend represented by "narrative" contemplates the swirling social currents of an electronic era that crosses national boundaries and defies isolable levels of culture. There is a reflection with "narrative" on the tasks of being human as well as the identities that people culturally construct. Especially in the American field, one can discern more of a willingness to document the researcher's experience as well as the subject, to blur genres with attention to the framed "event," and to bring out the spontaneity and profundity of everyday behavior (Georges 1969).

The Folklore of Modernism

In a frequently encountered perspective on everyday behavior, American folklorists look for folkloric responses to similar conditions of electronic communication. The emphasis on human control and progress seen in the structure of tradition, it can be argued, is reduced or enhanced by technological change, and cultural analysts often comment on the ways that people regain or restructure lore to establish their human and group identity. American folklorists have especially commented on the process of folkloric response to technological change in new expressive forms such as photocopied cartoons and memos that declare emergent folkloric processes (Dundes and Pagter 1978, 1987; Bronner 1984c; Smith 1985, 1986; M. Preston 1996a). Much of it understated, and denying what is seen with what is said, the forms follow structural and grammatical rules. Using the standard size of paper as the base, the illustrations and satirical memos follow the rational geometric models of office communication. But oppositions and incongruities emerge from the conflict between the text and illustrations on the parodies. In "The Job Isn't Finished until the Paperwork is Done," a child is usually depicted sitting on a
Following Tradition

toilet with a large roll of bathroom tissue beside him or her. Here nature conflicts with the organization, the child with the adult message, the informal circular roll with the official rectangular paper. Analyzing the conflicts expressed in these forms, folklorists have difficulty assessing the national origins of texts. Rather, they are faced with the character of human responses to a modernizing, organizational world. Often replacing national culture is the reference to “corporate culture,” which is assumed to be multinational.

“As a folkloric mode of cultural production,” Danielle Roemer wrote of photocopy traditions, “alternative to and subversive of that produced by official corporate culture, they, like their less bawdy counterparts, are available for wider interpretation” (Roemer 1994, 121–22). The folklore of photocopying restores individuality to organizational life in her outlook: “Unofficial photocopy practice returns to the individual some sense of the authenticity of a maker. It does so through encouraging action—the duplication of a sheet—and through encouraging interpretation—the use of the sheet by employees to contextualize themselves within the workplace” (Roemer 1994, 136). The small worlds of “context” in contrast to the large global view of evolution thus often invoke human control within a mass society.

Leaving the nineteenth century behind, British evolutionary folklorists sought to comprehend the primitive roots of humankind as a way to justify and explain imperial expansion and industrial advancement centered in British experience. While heavily influenced by this view, American folklorists, “looking ahead” during the twentieth century, explored the varied American experience and expanded it into at first a national and then a contextual model of analysis that emphasized individual will in a mass society, and questioned the role of aesthetics within traditional structures. As the twenty-first century approached, folklorists depicted cultures as the humane element carved by people in an inevitable technological society.

Indeed the questioning of folklore, as several studies have suggested, refers to the qualities of “being human” (Wilson 1982a, 1982b). William Wilson expressed the humane hope that folklore studies “in a world challenged by polluted air, disappearing natural resources, a depleted ozone layer, unchecked diseases, crowded highways and airways, burgeoning crime rates, killing drugs, and rapidly shifting geo-political borders and alliances” offers “courage to face the future by learning to celebrate ourselves” (Wilson 1991, 129). Senior folklorist Archie Green reflected that he strives “for a future that is humane, a future that is small in scale, a future that is manageable, a future in which, if we cannot stop progress, we can at least retard it” (Green 1984). Others do not take a stand against progress, but for cultural conservation, and announce that folklore has an application for reform (Feintuch 1988; Baron and Spitzer 1992; Hufford 1994). Michael Owen Jones, for instance, proclaimed in a special issue on future prospects for folklore research that, “I consider some of the benefits of including
organization in folkloristics, especially those of increasing the understanding of organizations and behavior in them and of improving the conditions under which their members labor" (Jones 1991, 31).

During a sabbatical stay in England in 1987–1988, I sought out the organizational character of English folklorists as well as connections to American architecture and folk arts. I found energetic and devoted folklorists not connected to universities, but engaged in libraries, museums, and professions. The indexes and bibliographies sponsored by the English society are as numerous and detailed, maybe more so, than those for any other folklore society I have ever encountered. Indeed, the society's journal editor emphasized that "to collect and categorise is an essential activity" and, in keeping with English intellectual history from Tylor to Malinowski, she noted that interest has shifted from speculations about origins to investigations of functions (Simpson 1989, 6). The society's meetings appeared to be more social occasions than American conferences, and they were centered in London, rather than moving about from city to city, as occurs on the North American continent. English meetings occur frequently during the year and often have the feel of a club rather than an association. I vividly recall my presentation to the society in one of those semiannual meetings that occurred above a pub. It reminded me of Victorian clubs that met for evening lectures. I detected a serious commitment to collection and a willingness, even more so than in the United States, to engage in collaborative projects. And if American folklorists are characterized as ethnographic in their approach to the present, English papers I heard typically had an historical dimension to them. Jacqueline Simpson commented that much of the historical interest concerns folk memory of famous personages such as Cromwell or Nell Gwynn as well as local characters. She also hoped for more connection to oral history, especially "working class history," of special concern in class-conscious England (Simpson 1989, 5).

Although English folklore as a discipline does not have the organizational cohesion of its American counterpart, it boasts great scattered enthusiasm for the location of evidence toward a historical record of folklore. English folklorists still tend to divide their subject into textual types. Study groups had developed for material culture, legend, and music and dance apart from folklore. Beliefs and children's folklore, two areas that have been specialties in English folklore studies, continue to have strong adherents within the organization. Surveying the society journal's contents for the thirty years since 1959, Jacqueline Simpson commented that examination of modern folklore and the ways that "folklore is ever an active force affecting all levels of the community and functioning through many channels" came late to the journal's pages (Simpson 1989, 4). The continuity with the past lies with a still-steady stream of studies of customs, tales, and religion. Although the representation from the outer boundaries of the former British Empire in Africa, Asia, Polynesia, and the Middle East has been reduced, as well as relations with European peasant folklore, Simpson still noted
that social studies of English folklore have not necessarily filled the gap. “Much work remains to be done,” she observed, “on the sociology of British folklore, whether in relation to class, to occupations, or to regional, racial, and religious groupings” (Simpson 1989, 5).

In the areas of song, dance, and drama, English folklorists have had special contributions to make that have attracted attention beyond England. In summarizing folklore studies in her country, Simpson pointed to the importance of “social” as approach and the “present” as perspective, although she is unwilling to abandon evolutionism altogether. In her words,

I see in our Journal a steady broadening of the scope of the subject, a growing preference for precise documentation rather than far-flung theorizing, a more realistic appraisal of historical and social factors, a greater diversity both of the genres and of the social groups studied. Above all, I see a shifting of the time-scale. The first two or three generations of folklorists were greatly concerned with origins—generally set in the remote past—and worked from a definition of “tradition” which stressed almost exclusively the handing on of information or custom over many generations. These are valid concerns, which should not be discarded. But they need to be balanced, as they now are, by an equally strong concern with the present, as exemplified by the emergence of new genres, the updating of customs and oral lore to meet new conditions, the circulation of traditions among contemporaries and peer groups, the use of new channels of transmission, the interconnexions with other levels of culture. (Simpson 1989, 8)

The very same journal which carried Simpson’s essay featured eight articles on historic phenomena and two that were historiographical. The subjects? Dance and drama (mumming, Morris dance), supernatural belief (house charms on the Isle of Man, witchcraft in the Balkans, old superstitious uses of horse skulls), and narrative (medieval love allegory, legend of Christ’s visit to Britain, Norse Grail legends). The comparable volume for that year in the Journal of American Folklore featured a special issue on folklore of the Vietnam War and articles on tourism and cultural display, UFO abduction reports, the use of computers to organize ritual food exchange at the Jewish holiday of Purim by contemporary orthodox women in New York City, contemporary Romanian jokes, jazz and American culture, and a performance analysis of an emerging form of riddling in America. The American journal’s emphasis is decidedly contemporary and concerned with emerging or adapting, even “invented” (e.g., in tourism) forms of tradition. The problem with the self-assuredness of pronouncements in many of these articles on the state of theory oriented toward performance, communication, and process is that it purports to be international when it is decidedly American.

If the story of English folklorists has been one of “grand theorizing” on an imperial scale, and an overstatement of “survivals,” have the claims of American theorists been equally grand and more nationalistic, even as they appear multicultural? In a plea for more internationalism, or transnational and cultural studies, Sweden’s
Barbro Klein decried in the American society's newsletter "myopic Amerocentrism" that is "unreflected." Echoing Henry Glassie's declaration that "this world is one of peasants," Klein recognized the predominant interest of folklorists in Asia and Africa in "arts and traditions of the large peasant groups in their own countries" (Klein 1995). Whether it is a response to an absence of an analytical category for peasants in America or the relativistic turning away from studies of primitive and peasant survivals in the English evolutionary school, American folkloristics—as its journal contents show—tends to take as its subject contemporary performances in modernizing, multicultural society. Yet it is also true that "more folkloristic research traditions are represented in the United States than in any other single country," making easy categorization of an American perspective problematic. Moreover, the discourse on culture involving folklore has often been a heated dialogue on the role of the past, nation, and creativity in the formation of tradition.

Because of the intensity of the national discourse in the American Century, or the expectation that "North American folklore study is so interesting that there is little need to fetch inspiration elsewhere," the flow of theory, and the dialogue on it, Klein complained, is expected to move from the United States outward. When she referred to "American hegemony," she implied that this expectation of theory flow also applied to production of popular culture from movies to music disseminated from the United States to the world. "Theorizing folklore," she summarized, "unabashedly means 'theorizing American folklore'" (Klein 1995, 13). Perhaps this can be explained by noting that the small frames of ethnography employed in performance theory can sometimes minimize the political and social context of nation and state. Or the relatively large American land mass, for a nation-state, widespread use of English, and emergence of a folkloristic discipline with a number of centers has indeed convinced many American students that America is the world. Maybe Dorson's use of his impressive history of British folklorists after its publication in 1968 helped persuade American students that they were set to embark on another golden age. He implied that as England had its day of world leadership in the late nineteenth century, so America would in the late twentieth (Dorson 1980b).

To be sure, Americans have not generally had the European experience of multinational exchange, although American folklore studies have been greatly shaped by scholars born and educated abroad, including figures such as Franz Boas, Linda Dégh, Dan Ben-Amos, and W. F. H. Nicolaisen. And there has been a substantial history of foreign scholars seriously studying American folk expressions (e.g., blues music) before Americans had fully appreciated them (see Oliver 1970). Evidence for American internationalism is in the folklife movement that openly credits comparative work in Germany, Scandinavia, and the British Isles (see Yoder 1990). Revising international comparative methods, few studies anywhere can match the insights on process and symbol drawn from British social anthropology and folklife studies provided by Paul Oliver's *Dwellings: The House*
Across the World (1987). From his position at Oxford Brookes University, Oliver joined American folklorists with anthropologists, geographers, and architectural historians in other continents for the ambitious, and suggestive, Encyclopedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World (1997). Oliver’s work shows a special concern for African and Asian cultures that are on the one hand often neglected in Eurocentric historical studies, and on the other, have become more significant as Pacific Rim and Middle East countries take increasingly forceful roles in world economy and politics.

Moving beyond ethnic studies that concentrated on European groups, many American folklorists have worked on new acculturation and identity patterns apparent among immigrants from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and the Caribbean and Latin America (Almeida 1995; Koltyk 1993; Blair 1991; see also Santoli 1988). Because of the emphasis on contemporary multiculturalism, in fact, English traditions as well as scholars may be neglected. The practice of multiculturalism often involves examination of supposedly victimized racial and ethnic groups whose cultures have been dominated by hegemonic elites, associated with English colonialism (Davies 1995, 23–24; see also Feintuch 1992; Kurin 1993). Another factor in the decline of the English connection is that despite the preponderant English presence in early America (estimated at 83.5 percent of the white population and 64.2 of the total in 1790), most Americans today lack an attachment to English ancestry. Ancestry is a revealing census category because it refers to the way people identify their background. The 1990 census reported that at 11 percent of the total, English trailed well behind German (19.6) and Irish (13.1) as the most frequently reported ancestry. This statistic means that many Americans of English descent do not consider themselves as such (Waters 1990; Bronner 1996d).

One scholarly direction from England has since the 1980s taken a critical stance toward English cultural influence. “Cultural studies,” so named to differentiate it from the positivist “culture studies” of social science, often theorizes ways that cultural practices, including the study of culture, involve relations of power. British cultural studies presumably held an appeal because of its revision of contemporary consciousness for a postcolonial world that looked to break the limitations of primitivism on the one hand and aristocratic control on the other. It especially assaulted the design of culture for fostering romantic nationalism and hierarchical social division. A prime example from this movement is an analysis of the “manufacture,” as one author put it, of British folk song to serve interests of an elite (see Harker 1985). Other English perspectives on folklore using cultural studies have examined the colonizing “invention” and “marketing” of tradition in festival and tourism (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Brewer 1994).

The consideration of ways that scholarship on cultural traditions has encouraged nostalgia and nationalism in popular culture, and altered the shape of the original traditions, attracted many American intellectuals during the 1990s who sought ways to turn the popularization of cultural heritage into a subject of
inquiry. They invoked cultural studies in an effort to alter the academic separation of American popular and folk culture so as to view the political process of traditionalizing throughout contemporary culture (see Bluestein 1994). It could examine fashion as well as festival as cultural production, and cover “cultural texts” from advertisements to zoos as examples of marketing and consuming tradition.

Although cultural studies takes in an assortment of approaches and subjects under its wide umbrella, one significant contribution with ties to American folkloristics has been to demonstrate how, and interpret why, cultural images have been produced, organized, and disseminated. The term received a substantial entry by Cathy Lynn Preston in *American Folklore: An Encyclopedia* (1996), edited by Jan Harold Brunvand. “Folkloristics intersects with cultural studies,” she proclaimed, “when folklorists position folklore within the politics of cultural production—in other words, when folklorists address how folklore is shaped by, and in turn shapes, sociocultural power relations” (C. Preston 1996, 183). She recognized the development of cultural studies from British interest in class-based power relations within “modern industrialized societies,” but suggested expansion to such relations for gender, ethnicity, race, nation, and sexuality. Preston confidently predicted wider adoption of British cultural studies, “disclosing folkloristics as a politics of culture.” She cited several prominent examples of cultural studies within the theorizing of contemporary folklore studies (Stewart 1991; Briggs and Shuman 1993; Babcock 1993). She also could have shown ways that perspectives in cultural studies had long been anticipated in earlier American folklore studies (Wilson 1976; Dorson 1976a, 1978b; Oinas 1978). The converging trajectories of British cultural studies and American folklore studies, she thought, were constructions of “the dominant culture’s ‘quintessential others,’ the ‘folk,’” the evaluations of “socioeconomic politics” of folklore’s supporting institutions—universities, arts councils, and historical societies—and attention to contemporary labeling of cultural difference (C. Preston 1996, 184).

American folklorist Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett jumped on the preoccupation in British cultural studies with the “contemporary” as an ocean-wide divide from that of American folklore studies. There is truth in her keen observation that folklore’s “canonical subject” is the “contemporaneous—that which is in the present, but not fully of the present” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1996b, 251). In a presidential address to the American Folklore Society and widely noticed essays in the *Journal of American Folklore* and *Journal of Folklore Research*, she avowed the resistance of American folklore studies to bedding with British cultural studies (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1994, 1996b). She considered cultural studies to be more politically critical of tradition, or even nihilistic, while “not surprisingly, folklore is the champion of conservation.”

In its tendency to rationalize “culture,” American folklore studies appeared to her less cynical than British cultural studies. Much folkloristic effort had been to amass aggregate data of tradition—objectified “hard facts” that made a case for
the reality and artistry of subcultures. With a reorientation toward cultural studies, these collected facts, taken to be the untampered knowledge of folk groups, were threatened with charges of being power-serving illusions broadcast by scholars and elites. Indeed, the very name of tradition as “folklore” could appear suspect because it provided an invented, distorted lens on culture. The making of “culture” over into “cultural” itself was a rhetorical turn that made writers question those things that are of or like culture, rather than in it. “Cultural” suggested “devising” culture with some societal goal in mind rather than “constituting” it for localized identity, community, and tradition. Folkloristic approaches to the hard facts of expressive “folklore” as revelations of culture still summoned the social, rather than virtual, reality of tradition as a spontaneously generated event (see Oring 1994).

Although the term “cultural” should direct attention to the functioning of diverse local cultures, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett beheld its preponderant use by industrialized nations producing mass-marketed arts. While appreciating the shared sympathies of British cultural studies and American folklore studies for the postcolonial politics of difference—racial, sexual, cultural, transnational—Kirshenblatt-Gimblett argued that in the theorizing of difference, folklore and cultural studies part ways, “even as their trajectories increasingly converge.” Her argument was that cultural studies deliberated largely on the inequitable allocations of difference while folklore worked mainly on the relativism of diversity—“that is, on community, solidarity, and tradition” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1996b, 251). In the stormy political climate of America in the 1990s she saw “difference” proclaimed by cultural studies as the ready shelter to which humanists carrying the burden of social inequality ran. Whether they stayed there was in doubt. Even though American folklore scholarship had long been a haven to locate issues of cultural identity, diversity, and construction, the worry was that down the road it would have to compete rather than ally with cultural studies for the favor of scholarship.

To be sure, the work of British cultural studies engaged many American folklorists along with other students of culture during the 1990s. In 1996, the Internet buzzed with a long thread at the American studies site concerning the “Americanization of [British] Cultural Studies” (see Pfister 1991). If there was consensus from the hailstorm of messages, it was that the American interest in cultural studies reflected a renewed effort in the United States to relocate the significance of class in American culture. In positing an “underclass,” many socially minded scholars suggested that cultural characteristics arose from imposed conditions of social degradation and economic restriction (see J. Wilson 1996). The argument could be more loudly heard that although there may not be a sharp class consciousness in America, there is nonetheless an awareness of barriers and distinctions from culturally constructed, and often peculiar, perceptions of class in America. Moving away from the view of culture as naturally preexisting, cultural
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studies encouraged views of traditions being organized and generated to maintain boundaries of class in emergent settings such as suburbia, corporations, clubs, and revived regions (see Burnett 1978; Oliver, Davis, and Bentley 1981; During 1993). If class was not publicly acknowledged, whether it was nonetheless implicit, and determinative, might be asked, as well as how it intersected with public conceptualizations of race and gender.

While the questions of class raised by British cultural studies have understandably been more evident in American scholarship, they nonetheless have had to wait for response. As Nathan Glazer has sharply discerned, the multicultural movement that dominated American scholarship of the 1990s prioritized factors in cultural production first as race, ethnicity, and gender, and lastly class (Glazer 1997). In an analysis of traditional blues and bluegrass music as “tough arts of the underclass,” Joe Wilson admitted that “it is jarring to speak of an American underclass.” He pleaded his case: “We like to pretend that we have only one socio-economic group (‘middle’) structured like ancient Egypt, with upper and lower parts. This odd egalitarian myopia distorts our artistic perception and confuses understanding of why our popular culture is so strong” (J. Wilson 1996, 82). Americans have been more likely to assert organization or community than class in the production of culture. Proponents of British cultural studies might answer that the fact that citizens negate class does not mean it is not significant in power relations. The identification and role of elites, the place of occupational identity, and the influence of poverty, among other frequently raised issues of socially based class, are surely significant to an analysis of an organized American culture, but have not been easily integrated into an American conception of temporarily, and ethnically, situated tradition in which “we are all the folk.”

Since a common presumption of cultural studies has been that elites manufacture traditions in their best interests for the masses to accept, then emphasis often has been placed on popular, nationwide forms. Although American folklorists have shown that their scholarship long had been concerned with political uses of culture to induce nationalism and counternationalism, indeed predated concerns of cultural studies for cultural construction, their bibliography appeared strangely absent from major British volumes defining the field. An argument could be made that the study of American folklore since the 1930s, especially by students of American civilization such as Richard Dorson, has had to consider the ways that folklore, and the folk, in America were “discovered,” “invented,” and “popularized.” Since the United States did not have an ancient history, united racial stock, and peasant folk, which were associated with folklore in British anthropological thought, American folklorists early on had to defend the emergence of a folklore deserving the label “American.” They raised folk culture to point to people who had control of their own traditions in the face of mass culture. American folklorists had to further account for the legitimacy of tradition in a mobile and industrializing society in their claims to the authenticity of folk cultures. The nation's
mass communication has often translated to concern for “presentation” and “persuasion” of folklore in public consciousness.

As an expansion of the emergent concept of folklore as a strategically designed event, a major American folkloristic concern for the process of traditionalizing behavior has translated into closer questioning of ways that formal organizations create culture and organize symbols (see Jones 1991; Jones, Moore, and Snyder 1988). Thus folklore as staged expressions came across in interpretations of the rhetoric of tradition in the press, records, film, and stage as well as government, museum, corporation, and community. Whether looking at World’s Fairs, the New Deal, or a local festival, folklorists have brought out ways that organizations manage images of folklore for various publics as part of a politics of culture. It has often been presumed to be a special problem in a changeful, diverse nation like the United States where traditions often appeared sought and promoted rather than inherited and shared. In their efforts to find times and places where folklore sincerely functioned or somehow served organizational purposes, folklorists necessarily confronted perceptions of genuine and spurious traditions to clarify kinds of culture appropriate, and appropriated, for America.

Sewing organizational and political threads into the weave of American folklore work may have obviated the need for the kind of reflexive design offered by British cultural studies. Without making reference to cultural studies, the entry on politics and folklore in *American Folklore: An Encyclopedia*, for example, identified attention to “folk political organization and alternative social institutions,” “politics of applied folklore and folklore policy,” “politics of folklore,” and “folklore of politics” in the interest of American folklore scholarship (Westerman 1996). If convergence of American and British cultural studies with reference to folklore occurs, it probably will be along these lines. One thing for sure, the influence of British cultural studies has been more evident since the 1990s in rhetorical consideration of “invention of traditions,” “social empowerment,” and “cultural production” in settings in and out of the United States.

In keeping with trends in cultural studies generally in the United States, American folklorists have expanded from being experts on texts to analysts of social and artistic behavior, and have been more attracted to the scholasticism of the European continent. Since Richard Dorson declared that “links between English and American folklorists (exclusive of folksong devotees) have snapped,” English folklore studies have continued, but have had to deal with the tainted image of antiquarianism (Dorson 1973b, 16). Venetia Newall, a prominent present-day English folklorist, complained that “too often, I am afraid, the English folklorist has been regarded as an antiquarian romantic, who has turned his back on the contemporary situation, escaping from its pressures and its problems into an idealised Merry England filled with May poles, thatched cottages, and country folk in handmade smocks, perpetually smiling” (Newall 1973, 95). Jacqueline Simpson, a longtime editor of the Folklore Society’s journal, wondered whether “a suspicion lingers in some
quarters that this Journal is obsessed with fertility rites and secret witch-cults, or with starry-eyed idealizations of 'Merrie England'” (Simpson 1989, 4).

Another editor of the Folklore Society's journal, Gillian Bennett, announced that perception of British folklore work had improved, ironically “largely owing to the influence of the American approaches …” (Bennett 1991, 26). She saw the focus of many English folklorists adopting the American lead of analyzing “the ‘lore’ part of ‘folklore’ as a body of beliefs, activities, ways of making, saying and doing things and interacting with others that are acquired through informal, unofficial channels by the processes of socialising in family-, occupational-, or activity-related groups. In other words, they considered folklore as a ‘cultural register’—as W. F. H. Nicolaisen working on both sides of the ocean conceptualized it on the analogy of a linguistic register—one of several options available to members of a cultural grouping for thought, activity and interaction” (Bennett 1991, 26). She blamed the persistence of antiquarianism and evolutionism in English cultural scholarship on the maintenance of a national identity that stresses picturesque rurality and the glory of a distant past. She characterized evolutionism and antiquarianism as perpetuating the English belief in the wholesomeness provided by the bucolic past. Bennett emphatically added that “what perhaps now bedevils folkloristics in Britain is the result of the founders' successes and failures put together. Their success lay in establishing a theory of culture so comprehensive, elegant and satisfying that it became assimilated not only into the culture of the FLS [Folklore Society], but into everyday popular conceptions of culture and society” (Bennett 1994, 34).

The discourse of culture arising from American scholarship on folklore separated from the English pattern by stressing contemporary social conditions—urban, ethnic, and occupational. With the development of an academic base after World War II, folkloristic commentary on American culture tended to record the present for social relevance rather than digging deep in the past for origins of civilization. Its concern for the local stages on which Americans enacted their values diverged from English views of authority carried by class as well as tradition. America was not so much rooted in place or a “common heritage” as it was shifting, redefined, constructed—according to social movements and technological changes. In the United States, folklorists influenced the discourse of culture generally, and American culture particularly, by joining intellectual movements to conceive of individuals empowered to create traditions and thereby express their identities.