

Chapter I

Celts in the South

According to the standard twentieth-century historical scholarship on the South, white Southerners are culturally, and perhaps genetically, the most pure Anglo-Saxons outside of East Anglia and Kent. This is not to say that scholars of the South fail to recognize the importance of Amer-Indian peoples and those of sub-Saharan African ancestry, as well as new geographies and technologies, in augmenting and altering European cultural attitudes and perhaps patterns in the South. Rather, these scholars, many of whom, certainly over the past three decades, have searched diligently for reasons to assert that increasing amounts of Southern culture are anything but European in origin, have perceived or acknowledged virtually no significant European contributions to the development of Southern culture except by peoples they label Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman, English, or occasionally British.¹ Grady McWhiney provides the most thorough synopsis of this long unquestioned belief:

How, one might ask, could emphasizing English influence on the South be a mistake when “everyone knows” that the vast majority of southern whites are and always have been of Anglo-Saxon origins; when a distinguished southern historian can insist that the “English influence [on the South] was powerful”; or when another can state that “the South is the habitat of the quintessential WASP” and call it “the biggest single WASP nest this side of the Atlantic”? . . . “They were mostly transplanted Englishmen with a scattering of continental Europeans,” writes one author. . . . A different writer claims that both the North and the South “were peopled by Englishmen,” and two others emphasize “the gap between Anglo-Saxon and African in the South.” (*Cracker Culture* 2)

The attitude that McWhiney highlights with “everyone knows,” which waves off any need to answer objections, is common to American

scholarship on the South, and it is analogous to one operating in past decades that said “everyone knows” the English determined all of American culture, certainly all of it that matters, and “minority” groups, “ethnic” whites as well as non-whites, made precious few, if any, contributions.

The scholars to whom McWhiney refers, who range the gamut from decidedly liberal to the Anglo-American type of conservative, are among the most distinguished historians of the South, and their works among the most widely read, taught, and quoted over the past four decades: Respectively, Clement Eaton in *The Encyclopedia of Southern History*, George B. Tindall’s *The Ethnic Southerners*, Monroe Lee Billington’s *The American South: A Brief History*, I. A. Newby’s *The South: A History*, and *The South in American History* by William B. Hesseltine and David L. Smiley.

The authors of *A History of the South*, Francis B. Simpkins and Charles P. Roland, are criticized by McWhiney for failing to understand differing European ethnicities. They contrast the few German settlers in the South, who possessed “many sterling qualities,” with “the wasteful methods of the Anglo-Saxons.” Simpkins and Roland not only appear oblivious to the fact that Anglo-Saxons are culturally and linguistically Germanic, but they also label the Scots-Irish as “of the same Anglo-Saxon stock as the people of the coast regions” of the early South. “To contend that the Scotch-Irish came from the ‘same Anglo-Saxon stock’ as the English,” McWhiney continues, “indicates a profound ignorance of the most important cultural conflict in the history of the British Isles” (3). In their confusion between ethnic heritage and imperial citizenship, between folk culture and primary language spoken (especially after centuries of laws designed to destroy native languages), Simpkins and Roland highlight a recurring problem in Southern scholarship: The automatic labeling of any non-Irish-Catholic Southerner whose ancestry derives from any part of the British Isles as ethnically and culturally Anglo-Saxon. To do so means not only that an unreservedly anti-English, Scots-Irish family like that of Andrew Jackson would be lumped under the cultural heading Anglo-Saxon but so would Scottish Gaelic and Welsh speakers and any recent “converts” from Irish Catholicism to any form of Protestantism.

Over the past two decades, this view has been attacked by a few historians. Foremost among them are Grady McWhiney and Forrest McDonald, who, while working together at the University of Alabama, developed the Celtic-Southern thesis: That the primary cultural patterns

of the white South were planted and developed by culturally Celtic immigrants (peoples from Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and the English counties bordering Scotland and Wales) and their descendants, certainly not by true Anglo-Saxons, nor by Anglo-Normans, either latter-day Cavalier nobles operating plantations worked by large numbers of black slaves or yeoman farmers and merchants.

Before proceeding with a review of this and related scholarship concerning the importance of Celts to the South, it is necessary to lay a foundation by discussing the European Celts. This is especially requisite because of the glaring ignorance of, and a resulting indifference to, Celtic peoples and folkways in the American academy. In the Modern Language Association collection of essays *Ethnic Perspectives on American Literature*, a volume that does not include a chapter on Irish American literature, editors Robert Di Pietro and Edward Ifkovic declare, “until 1860 the Celtic immigrants entered America from Ireland, Scotland, and Germany” (5). Germany makes sense in this list only if Di Pietro and Ifkovic grossly misdefine “Celtic” as “northern European Catholic peasant” and ignore Lutheran Germans.

Perhaps the best definition of “Celt” and “Celtic” is that of Peter Berresford Ellis. Using the work of Eoin MacNeill, among others, he notes that the many Greek and Roman physical descriptions of ancient Celts were inconsistent. Most were said to be tall, thin, and primarily blond or red haired; a few others were seen as short, stocky, swarthy, and dark haired; still others were presented as combinations of these myriad physical traits. Therefore, Ellis concludes, there is no such group as a “Celtic Race,” not if *race* means people who possess the same physical characteristics. Glanville Price, professor of French at the University of Wales at Aberystwyth and a recognized authority on Celtic language literatures, writes, “It cannot be emphasized too strongly that this [Celtic nations and their folkways] has nothing to do with race” (1). Rather, Celts are people who share a common Indo-European language family² and a common folk culture: “a Celtic people is by definition a people who speak, or were known to have spoken, in modern historical times, a Celtic language” (Ellis, *The Celtic Revolution* 13).

Ellis’s emphasis upon Celtic languages, an emphasis deriving from his own activist work to save them from extermination and his scholarly awareness that language is essential to folk culture,³ may appear initially to undercut the Celtic-Southern thesis. After all, opponents may claim, Celtic languages being almost extinct, should not then all people in the British Isles and their American descendants be labeled culturally

Anglo-Saxon? The answer is no, for three reasons. First, the basic cultural patterns of the South were in place roughly by the beginning of the nineteenth century, and the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century immigrants from Ireland, Scotland, and Wales came from lands in which the majority of people were fluent in a Celtic language, which has not been the case since the middle of the nineteenth century.

Second, the application is inconsistently applied, for virtually no one declares that the millions of Irish Catholic immigrants to North America in the second half of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century, after the Great Famine had spurred the process of killing Gaelic as the first language of Ireland's majority rural population, were culturally Anglo-Saxon. Those Irish immigrants were rarely raised speaking Irish, and virtually none received any education in Irish, but they were culturally Irish.

Third, Ellis's definition, far from being an exclusively linguistic one, is primarily cultural, with the language as the matrix, or perhaps merely the most obvious expression, of the particular cultural patterns. But Ellis is content to include as Celts people who may not be Celtic language speakers if their land is one in which a Celtic language exists, or existed "in modern historical times." Not to acknowledge the Celticness of such people would be to exclude Dubliners of the past four or five centuries from Irish culture and to consider them thoroughly Anglo-Saxon, mere western variants of Londoners. Ellis recognizes that even when the language falls into disuse, perhaps is killed by imperial government actions, its attendant folk culture will live on, perhaps for indeterminate centuries if political and economic conditions permit or if the people in question are pugnaciously conservative in folkways.⁴

Similar to Ellis, J.X.W.P. Corcoran declares that the Irish, Scottish, Welsh, Cornish, Manx, and Bretons "are the Celts, something of whose culture, languages, law, and social institutions has survived into modern times. They would seem to be the inheritors of a Celtic way of life which originated in the prehistoric past" (17). Thomas Cahill sees Irish literature evidencing the continuing of Celtic culture across two millennia. "Her ready speech," he writes of Queen Mebh, the female protagonist of the medieval Irish epic *Tain Bo Cuailgne*, "is characteristically Irish. We can imagine her sharp first sentence ("What put that on your mind?") on the lips of many a character in modern Irish drama—and this opens up to us an astonishing continuity: From prehistoric Ireland to the present day" (76).⁵

Staying within the ancient world, we find that the Galatians of the

Bible, Celts who had entered Asia Minor at the opening of the third century B.C., were described, according to Livy, by conquering Roman general Manlius Vulso as a “degenerate, a mixed race, truly described by their name Gallogrecians” (Cunliffe 179). Like other culturally Celtic peoples, the Galatians may have been a truly mixed people in terms of bloodlines, and they certainly would have learned from both Greek and Persian civilizations, borrowing material culture from them, but they remained culturally Celtic in the heart of Asia Minor for a minimum of seven centuries, centuries during which Roman rule first destroyed their independence and then forced them to accept certain Roman practices (including the required use of either Latin or Greek for all official business and for all but exclusively local economic activities), all of which was compounded by the rise of Christianity. Barry Cunliffe writes, “The maintenance of a Celtic social structure, and indeed a sense of ethnic identity implied by the widespread use of the name ‘Galatian’, are a remarkable reflection of the deep-seated strength of the Celtic tradition.” Cunliffe observes that St. Jerome at the end of the fourth century A.D. noted that the Galatian language was similar to that of the Gaulish Trevari at Trier, and the scholar believes that Jerome was “recognizing . . . the Celtic ancestry of both people” (85). Those inclined to believe that Celtic culture could not survive in any appreciable form in America because Celts have never been the majority population of the continent, nor have they ever ruled it as a named Celtic nation, must consider Cunliffe’s assessment of the Galatians: “The Galatians [who ruled themselves only for their first century of existence] provide a fascinating example of a Celtic people who maintained a high degree of ethnic identity over several centuries, even though they must have represented a minority in their territory” (180).

Archaeologist T. G. E. Powell is another scholar of Celtic heritage who recognizes that the subject is one not of mere linguistics but of folkways and attendant philosophies. He writes of Herodotus’s discussion of Celts:

Now it is clear that when Herodotus referred to other barbarian peoples, as the Scythians or Getae, he recognized them as distinctive nations or tribal confederations. He was interested in what he could learn of their political institutions, manners and customs. Languages, other than their own, were not esteemed by the Greeks, and linguistic distinctions between the barbarians would not therefore have come into his consideration. It seems reasonable to suppose that the Celts were distinguishable to Herodotus on descriptive grounds, even if he never saw any representatives, in the same way as other barbarian peoples might be

identified. The term *Celts* is therefore justifiable in a proper ethnological sense, and should not necessarily be restricted to mean *Celtic-speaking* which is a concept of academic thought of quite modern times deriving from the pioneering linguistic studies of George Buchanan (1506-82) and of Edward Lhuyd (1660-1709). (14-15)⁶

Ancient Celts, across several centuries, Powell says, “were recognizable to their southern neighbors by their characteristic way of life” (15). This is an especially important point, for many may find it easy to dismiss studies of Celtic cultural influence, particularly in the modern world, out of the presumption the folk culture died with Roman or certainly Williamite and Hanoverian conquests. Nerys Patterson, Harvard University sociologist and Celticist, presents the most forceful proclamations of the survivals of Celtic culture across millennia and repeated conquests:

Historical-geographical studies based on early modern data, for example, reveal aspects of the rural social landscape that were continuous with the early medieval, and indeed the late prehistoric, terrain. Superb studies of folk culture by Maire MacNeill, Kevin Danaher, and Estyn Evans, also offer information on rural practices, some of which may reasonably be viewed as both indigenous and very old. (59)

“So persistent were Irish farmers’ attitudes,” Patterson writes, “that, regardless of major social upheavals, the prestige hierarchy [of stock] on the farms of Donegal in this century corresponded, roughly speaking, to that which prevailed in early medieval Ireland.” She also notes that folklorist Henry Glassie has found the basic aspects of formal medieval Irish agricultural law in folklore practice in late-twentieth-century Northern Ireland, among Protestants who are assumed by many to be not merely culturally non-Celtic themselves but the descendants of non-Celts (72, 167).

In *Race and Culture: A World View*, Thomas Sowell, through a thorough examination of cultures native to all inhabited continents, refutes claims that environment, either mere geography or favorable and unfavorable actions by governments, determines culture. Basic cultural attitudes, Sowell finds in study after study of emigrant groups around the globe, “are not erased by crossing a political border, or even an ocean, nor do they necessarily disappear in later generations which adopt the *language, dress, and outward lifestyle of a country*” (4. My emphasis). The findings of scholars such as Cunliffe and Patterson concerning the survival of Celtic culture in Europe across more than two millennia, the English Channel, and the North Sea are then evidence that the same

general cultural patterns and attitudes will be carried by Celtic peoples wherever they might migrate, and that includes the South.

To use another example from the South of the survival of folk cultures, though the pidgin Gullah survived in small enclaves and a handful of West African, or Africanized European or Arabic, words came into Southern speech; no West African language survived the process of forced economic and minimal cultural assimilation of the slaves. But certain aspects of West African folk culture did survive, and to label the descendants of the black slaves completely, or even preponderantly, culturally Anglo-Saxon and to deny categorically the validity of scholarship unearthing West African folk cultural survivals in modern African American communities because the West African languages were taken from the slaves or because they were a conquered people would be ludicrous, if not simplistically racist.

Richard Wright, writing about his first visit to Africa, to the Gold Coast as it was tossing off English colonial rule and fashioning itself a new and more southerly Ghana, says that after watching West African women swaying in a kind of religious-communal dance he had known from black churches in America he was compelled to begin to change his views of racial and ethnic characteristics. For years he had rejected the existence of such out of hand as “myths of prejudiced minds. Then if that were true, how could I account for what I saw,” which was black Americans having retained from Africa “such basic and fundamental patterns of behavior and response” (57). For Wright, this recognition was of a form of racism perhaps worse than that of white supremacy claiming sub-Saharan African traits had survived and were inherently devilish and viciously backward; it was the categorical denial of the uniqueness and the resilience of folk culture, which is a necessary tool of colonialists, both mercantilist and internationalist Socialist. The same logic applies to peoples of Celtic heritage and those who would deny the existence, or perhaps the significance, of their cultural contributions.

In a similar vein, Eugene Genovese in *Roll, Jordan, Roll* declares, “to seek, as so many have done, for European antecedents for every feature of black culture is to collapse into absurdity.” “The fact remains,” Genovese adds, “that a significant thrust in black culture emanated from the African tradition. If that thrust had European counterparts, so be it. If those counterparts reinforced or encouraged certain features of black religion, well and good” (210). I submit that Genovese’s argument is valid as much for the descendants of culturally Celtic peoples in the South, and still to some degree to Irish American communities in the

North, as for black people. Rough corollaries in English culture (which like the word *British* could be borrowings from Celtic at least a millennium old) do not prove that Celtic culture made no appreciable impact on and contributions to American and Southern cultures.

Most important to the Celtic-Southern thesis is Genovese's assertion that "no—*pace* all 'scientific' historians—it [the exact percentage of black American culture that is directly sub-Saharan African in origin] cannot be measured" (*Roll* 210). To be incapable of "scientifically" measuring Celtic cultural survivals is no more proof that they do not exist or are not important than is the similar failure in black studies. From a different angle but perhaps equally important to this study is that Genovese acknowledges, "Northern and English travelers to the South repeatedly compared the slaves to the Irish, often to the detriment of the latter, and *hardly a racial stereotype of the blacks poured forth without its being a modest modification of familiar descriptions of the Irish*" (*Roll* 298. My emphasis). Writing about the beginnings of the English part in the cross-Atlantic slave trade, Peter Kolchin acknowledges that the English regarded black Africans as inherently inferior to themselves but that the view was not strictly "racist" for they likewise viewed the Irish. "The Irish were widely perceived as wild, degraded, and of questionable Christianity," he writes, "more uncivil, more uncleanly, more barbarous, and more brutish in their customs and demeanures, then in any other part of the world that is known" (15-16).⁷ The origin of these thousand-year-old bigotries against Celts in the English-speaking world lies in Anglo-Saxon conquering of Celtic lands. Hugh Thomas, in his massive study of the cross-Atlantic slave trade, reviews ancient and medieval European slavery before plunging into the heart of his subject. As regards Celts, the most significant statement he makes is that not only did the various Anglo-Saxon leaders war continually among themselves but also against the Celts, they also continued to push westward and northward "wars that often seemed mere manhunts for Celtic slaves" (32).

Martin Bernal, whose *Black Athena* works read to me like the false etymology and wishful, fantasizing, spurious claims of Celtic origins of the Etruscans but are worse in that they are essentially roorbacks, links what he sees as the anti-black racism of nineteenth-century Classics to the racism against Celts:

It is interesting to note that [John Bagnell] Bury—like many of the leading British Classicists of the turn of the 19th century, including John Pentland Mahaffy and William Ridgeway—came from the

Protestant Ascendency in Ireland. All three men were enthusiastic about the pure northern, and possibly Germanic, blood of the Dorians. Thus, apart from participating in the general racism of the period, it is clear that they saw an analogy between the Teutonic English relationship with the Irish, whom they saw as 'marginally European', and that between the Dorians and their subject populations, the Pelasgian native inhabitants. (293-94)⁸

This awareness notwithstanding, Bernal is indirectly anti-Celtic. In his slurs on and automatic damning of all northern European peoples and their folk heritages and scholarly accomplishments, Celtic lands must be included. He says of Byron, for whom he holds a fierce contempt due to the poet's Hellenism, "It was no coincidence that he was from Scotland: the 18th century links between that *northern* country and Romanticism have already been noticed" (291). Bernal also notes as a chief sign of what he labels the scholar's "Romantic" "racism" Barthold Niebuhr's decision to attend college in Edinburgh "to learn the language of Ossian" (305). Bernal's theory that Europeans could not have been the principal architects of their own high cultures is so intoxicating that he declares James Joyce's *Ulysses*, set exclusively in Dublin, to be "about Jews, not Greeks" (382), which is yet another unintended revelation of anti-Celtic bigotry, for it suggests that Bernal cannot conceive of a world-renowned masterpiece concerned with the Irish and Irish culture and heritage even when the work is written by an Irishman and set in Ireland.⁹

That the then Marxist Genovese and the openly professed anti-Western European multi-culturalist Bernal, both of whom were at the time of writing academic insiders, could each recognize and report the deep-seated, long-standing, violent bigotries against Celts and continue with their work to advance awareness of non-white peoples they see as downtrodden shouts volumes about why Celtic heritage largely has been ignored in formal education. As the conquered by first Romans and then Germanic peoples, Celts and their cultural contributions are seen naturally as peripheral by many, those who associate war victory and empire building with all advanced or preferable culture. As bearers of fair skin, and inheritors of the most important ethnic-cultural front in the saving of early Medieval Christian scholarship, modern Celts cannot become championed by the Marxists and other anti-Western culture Leftists as victims to be advanced at all costs. In short, Celts in our postmodern world have no powerful natural allies, no special-interest group support, and therefore mere truth about their existence and unique folkways and contributions to Western European and American cultures will need to suffice.

Forrest McDonald's prologue to Grady McWhiney's *Cracker Culture* is the ideal short introduction to Celtic culture and history, certainly for anyone interested in how Celtic culture may have impacted America. McDonald summarizes key events in Celtic history, both on the continent and in the British Isles, and highlights aspects of Celtic culture such as the clan, or extended family, structure; the proclivity to enjoy, or gravitate toward when forced to fight, and to honor particularly heroic age, individual combat even in the modern world; the paradoxical emphasis on individualism in a society predicated upon the clan structure, which checks and balances the individualism, making it less likely to become extreme; the emphasis on the local to the exclusion of what many see as the national; preference for the oral word over the written, at least until the modern era when the written came to reflect more closely the oral; a heightened sense of honor imponderable to outsiders; and a preference for a herding, hunting society coupled with a disdain for a more settled, city life. McDonald also notes repeatedly that for all their many local differences from one another, and their many small-scale wars against one another, the various Celtic tribes, or nationalities, have always been much more like one another than they have been like their non-Celtic neighbors. Finally, he demonstrates the strong cultural continuity of Celtic peoples from the classical world until the early modern age and summarizes the massive migration of Celtic peoples in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to the South, noting that the preponderance were Irish Protestants, chiefly Presbyterians (xxi-xliii).¹⁰

The first work of scholarship advocating the Celtic-Southern thesis was written jointly by Forrest McDonald, a preeminent scholar of the intellectual and cultural origins of the United States Constitution, and Grady McWhiney, primarily trained as a Civil War historian and published in 1975. Rory Fitzpatrick calls "The Antebellum Southern Herdsman: A Re-Interpretation" "a landmark in Scots-Irish studies" (120). Fitzpatrick concurs thoroughly that the cattle raising and herding practices of Scotland and Ireland, which were distinct from those of England, were brought to Virginia and the Carolina Piedmont principally by emigrants from Ulster and their descendants, who then took them into and across the Appalachians and eventually across the Mississippi River into the west, where they would come to be seen as uniquely American by many scholars, as an example of frontier cultural adaptation "obviously" bereft of European lineage because no English origin could be found.¹¹ Fitzpatrick takes pains to make certain that his readers understand that McDonald and McWhiney use the term "Celtic" not in

a political sense, which in Northern Ireland may prevent anyone from seeing the obvious, but in a folk-cultural sense (123), and he declares, “the authors could have added that the seventeenth century Scots arriving in Ireland came into a native pastoral culture which could only reinforce their tribal predilections” (120). In other words, Fitzpatrick accepts that the lowland Scots, who would be the bulk and the cultural heart and backbone of the Ulster Protestant community, came to Ireland as agrarian Celts, as a Celtic tribe benefiting from the English Crown’s subordination of another Celtic tribe (Ulster Irish Catholics). By the time Fitzpatrick’s book appeared in 1989, McDonald and McWhiney had expanded the thesis both back in time and forward through the era of the War Between the States.

Perhaps the first example of the scholarship advocating the Celtic-Southern thesis that should be examined by the interested reader is “The Ethnic Origins of the American People, 1790,” by Forrest and Ellen Shapiro McDonald. The article is a critique of the American Council of Learned Societies’ study of the national and ethnic origins of white Americans as revealed by the 1790 census, the nation’s first. Published in the 1931 *Annual Report of the American Historical Association*, the work was done primarily by Howard F. Barker and Marcus L. Hansen, with Barker devising a method to calculate the numbers of immigrants and their descendants from the Germanic-speaking lands and the British Isles. The mathematical calculations made by Barker, the McDonalds, and other critics of Barker’s work are too convoluted to analyze in this work; however, the McDonalds’s reassessment suggests that Barker’s highly flawed, idiosyncratic system grossly underestimated the number of Americans of Celtic ancestry in 1790, the height of the formative period of the various American regional identities. The McDonalds’ analyses indicate that while the American North, especially New England, was overwhelmingly Anglo-Saxon in settlement, and therefore heritage, the area south and west of Philadelphia was comprised of settlers primarily of Celtic background. Acknowledging the preponderance of English on the coast, the McDonalds demonstrate that most late-eighteenth-century white Southerners were of Celtic ancestry (199).

The McDonalds also reveal the nature of the bigotries they found underlying Barker’s methodology:

Among the first kind of errors, he made clear that his interest was not in culture but in “blood,” or supposed genetic strains in the population. That approach obscures the centuries of wars, conquests, and other forms of interactions that altered the “blood” of both Celtic and

Anglo-Saxon peoples but left cultures intact and even hardened them. Consequently, Barker was led into making some strange classifications. For instance, he distinguished between “Celtic Irish” and “Ulster Irish,” as if the latter, though most were of Scottish origins, were somehow not Celtic. On the other hand, he treated the Welsh as if they were “Cambrian” English; indeed, of the twenty-two names he selected as distinctively English, no fewer than twelve were distinctively Welsh. (“Ethnic Origins” 184)

There are two essential points here that must be addressed. First, the proponents of the Celtic-Southern thesis, similar to Nora Chadwick, Myles Dillon, Peter Berresford Ellis, and other students of Celtic heritage, are not interested in race per se but in the distinctive and defining cultural characteristics, attitudes, and achievements of people. Second, though the McDonalds are loath to proclaim it, the primary bigotry underlying Barker’s distinctions that led to his underestimating the number of Celtic immigrants in America by 1790, and thereby undervaluing Celtic contributions to the early development of the United States, appears to be religious. The only possible explanation for labeling not only Irish Presbyterians but also the Welsh as non-Celtic, leaving their numbers and cultural contributions to be usurped under the ‘imperial’ heading English or Anglo-Saxon, is that both are, or in the case of the Welsh are expected to be, Protestant. Apparently, Barker equated Celtic culture exclusively with Irish Catholicism and Anglophonic Protestantism inextricably with Anglo-Saxon culture.¹²

The ease with which Barker could have thought thus may be seen in sociologist Patrick O’Sullivan’s introduction to *Religion and Identity*, the fifth volume of *The Irish World Wide*. O’Sullivan notes that Max Weber’s thesis, specifically his “Protestant Work Ethic” postulate, “supports, and draws support from, existing prejudices, especially in the English speaking world” (8). “The example Weber gives,” O’Sullivan reveals, “of Cromwell’s ‘quite specifically capitalist line of thought’ is from Cromwell’s proclamation of war against the Irish” (7). O’Sullivan then, quoting from Linda Colley’s *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, links the origin of the modern “British” nationality, an alliance of Protestants from England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland against the threats of Catholic France, with the Calvinist doctrine of Providence (9-10). As O’Sullivan asks in a note, “When Britishness is defined as not-Catholic and not-French how then will ‘Irishness’ be defined?” (20). Perhaps it could be defined most easily as the exclusively impoverished “Celtic” *other* incapable of making significant cultural contributions to

the rest of the world, which would justify to many people English colonialism in Ireland.

Whether he chose to do so because of awareness of the pitfalls of designating ethnicity and culture exclusively on surnames or because he was conditioned to select evidence that supported Protestant Anglo-Saxon prejudices, Barker decided to eliminate from his survey names of Celtic origin that were found in more than one country. He deleted Campbell because it also appears in Ireland, and he excised other such distinctively Scottish names as Bruce, Craig, Crawford, Davidson, Ferguson, Graham, Morrison, Murray, Rae, Robertson, Stewart, Thomson, and Wallace (all of which have been found across the South since the Revolutionary era) because some people in the English counties bordering Scotland also bore these names ("Ethnic Origins" 184-185). Because his analysis revealed there were more Americans per capita bearing the distinctively Scottish name (of Pictish origin) Forbes than there were Scots, Barker, who evidently could not imagine the possibility of a major clan emigration, also dropped that name from his study ("Ethnic Origins" 185). Whether they were made consciously or unconsciously, the result of Barker's exclusions was a study that vastly undercounted the number of 1790 Americans who were of Celtic ancestry and likewise declared as Anglo-Saxons many 1790 Americans who were descendants of Celtic peoples.

In 1984, the *William and Mary Quarterly* featured a symposium on the problems with Barker's work as revealed by the McDonalds. Thomas L. Purvis, though skeptical of the Celtic-Southern thesis as a whole, finds that the McDonalds' estimates are closer to his own than to Barker's (100). He also notes that in some ways the McDonalds had handicapped their own efforts by not including in their analysis any distinctively Scottish surnames retaining the Mac or Mc (Irish for "son of"). "Perhaps the most important reason for the McDonalds' exclusion of such names . . .," he writes, "was to ensure that any biases would work *against* their Celtic thesis. Counting the Macs would have increased the percentage of English in New England and of Scots in the Carolinas" (94).

Unlike Purvis, Donald H. Akenson, a recipient of Canada's Molson Prize for lifetime contribution to the nation's cultural life, finds the American Council of Learned Societies study "beyond rehabilitation." His summation of the McDonalds's analysis of Barker's wrangling with numbers to achieve answers that he believed should be correct, which lowered the estimates of Celtic immigrants in eighteenth-century America, reveals the occasionally arbitrary nature of Barker's work more

satirically than the McDonalds had done: “When Barker first applied his ethnic-name formula to the people of North Carolina, he found that 100.5 percent of them were English in 1790. Then he combined English and Welsh names and found that only 98 percent of North Carolinians were English. Finally, he decided that 66 percent was about right” (109).

Akenson makes two other worthy points, one in his article and the other in his “Commentary.” He reveals, “in a general sense, the ACLS report was occasioned by the federal government’s attempts in the 1920s to control the size and character of the stream of migrants into the United States” (103). A scholarly study so tainted by the political situation—by 1927 immigrants were to be in proportion to the “‘national origins’ of the existing population” (103)—could not help but reflect the (often viciously) anti-Catholic and anti-Celtic biases of the northern WASPs who held mandarin sway over America. Akenson then provides a story to demonstrate the ease with which an “obviously” English name could be Celtic. A Professor John Kelleher had investigated the origins of an Irish family named Oates and

discovered that their name was originally McQuirk. McQuirk in Irish is Mac Cuirc, “son of Curc,” and *curc* in Old Irish is a heroic epithet meaning “purple light.” The Old Irish word does not exist in modern Gaelic, however, and would not be understood by speakers of Gaelic. A popular etymology then mistakenly drew a derivation from the modern word *coirce*, meaning “oats,” and, by the processes of anglicization, McQuirk became Oates. (127)

Akenson’s story reveals the futility that anyone studying transplanted Celtic ethnicity must feel when relying on surnames almost exclusively. The forced Anglicization process left many completely culturally Celtic people bearing surnames that appear to mark them as being “obviously” Anglo-Saxon or Norman. And awareness of this problem is not new. In *A Literary History of Ireland*, published in 1897, Douglas Hyde, who would later serve as Ireland’s first president, laments the losses of Gaelic names, which had been spurred by English government decrees and then in his own century by U.K. economic motives, and instructs his readers: “For the wholesale translation of names, such as O’Gara into Love, O’Lavin into Hand, MacRury into Rogers, and so on, see an article by me in ‘Three Irish Essays,’ published by Fisher Unwin” (636).¹³

Others investigating name changes of peoples from Celtic lands have made discoveries similar to those of Hyde and Akenson. Padraig O Snodaigh, in a work designed to refute the prejudices that Ulster

Protestants are culturally the antithesis of Irish Catholics, discloses that in 1465 England's Edward IV legislated "every Irishman to take as surname the name of an English town, a colour, a trade or an office 'under penalty of forfeiting his goods yearly.' Similar legislation was imposed in Scotland. Hence the number of Ulster surnames which hide a Gaelic origin" (35-36). Roger Blaney, whose chief interest lies in recovering the full cultural heritage of Presbyterianism, details the process by which originally Gaelic surnames became the English sounding names common among Scottish lowlanders and Ulster Presbyterians: "Mac an Ri (McAree) became King; Mac Ruari (McRory) became Rogers; O Loinsigh (Lynch) became Lindsay; O Baoill (Boyle) became Boal; Mac Seain (McShane) became Johnston. Many apparently English surnames can, therefore, hide the [Celtic cultural, ethnic] origins of their bearers, e.g. Armstrong, Baird, Smith, Cromie, Howard, Lambe, Woods, Haire, to name a few" (17).

In their closing response to the articles and commentaries of Purvis and Akenson, the McDonalds make two significant points. First, they refute Purvis's attack on their estimations of Welsh names by noting "that the flow of migration inside the United Kingdom during that century [the nineteenth] was toward metropolitan centers . . .," meaning that "the distribution of Welsh names in England indicates . . . the pattern of migration of Welsh people during the age of industrialization" (129), rather than the fact that Welsh names are somehow not distinctively Welsh, as Purvis suggests.

Of greater importance is the McDonalds's summation of how and why certain immigrant groups retain or lose their unique identities:

- (1) If an immigrant ethnic group is sizeable and its members settle in some proximity to one another and either in separation from others or amidst members of a similar culture, retention of its identity is likely.
- (2) If such persons settle in close proximity to others in an alien culture in which they are vastly outnumbered, they are likely to be assimilated into the alien culture.
- (3) *But*, if they can live more or less in isolation (as on the American frontier), they are likely to retain their cultural characteristics no matter how small their relative numbers.
- (4) *And*, if they live in close proximity to others in an alien culture but are discriminated against (as with the Boston Irish), they are prone to retain their ethnic identity. (135)

This schema demonstrates that the McDonalds believe that Celtic folkways, altered by New World conditions, survived in the South, not

because of any alleged innate superiority of the culture over all others, but because of ideal conditions.

Akenson's *Being Had: Historians, Evidence, and the Irish in North America* (1985) is a book-length study further advocating the positions he took in the *William and Mary Quarterly* symposium on the population study. As the book focuses primarily on Canada, Akenson has little to say specifically about the South. He does declare, however, "scholars must overcome an unfortunate piece of *cultural blindness* [my emphasis] embedded in the historiography of the Irish in America, namely that the Protestants from Ireland are not part of that history" (60). Considering the mass migration of Scots-Irish to the South, such an inclusive approach would primarily benefit studies of the importance of Celts to the South. Not only does Akenson support the argument made by the McDonalds but he goes a step further:

To compare name frequencies in the early United States with those obtaining in England and lowland Scotland after the human displacements of the industrial revolution and with the names predominating in Ireland and the Scottish highlands after the Great Famine of the late 1840s is so outlandish as to be ludicrous. (23)

Akenson has continued his challenging and therefore rebarbative assaults on the prejudicial tendencies of scholarship on the emigrant Irish in *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer* (1993). In this international perspective on Irish settlers throughout the "English-speaking" world, Akenson emphasizes that "Ireland formed everyone who lived in it," and therefore all emigrants from Ireland must be studied as Irish culturally. "They could hate Ireland, love it, hate each other, it mattered not," Akenson declares. "They were of Ireland: hence Irish" (7). Especially pertinent to the Celtic-Southern thesis is Akenson's accentuation on denominational apostasy among Irish immigrants in North America. The common "folk religion" of the Irish, their "primitive Christianity" led them as emigrants to common inter-marriages and church affiliation changes (245-46). This understanding of a common Irish folk heritage that persists across time, space, and church leads Akenson to his most direct support of the tenets of the Celtic-Southern thesis:

Any serious, non-racist history of the Irish in the United States should spend as much time upon the Baptists (especially the Southern Baptists), Methodists, Anglicans, and Presbyterians, as it does upon the history of the Catholic Church. The life of William Bell Riley (the

founding father of twentieth-century American fundamentalism) should be as well known as, say, that of Cardinal Spellman. And the career of Jimmie Rodgers (the father of American country music) deserves to be as widely known as that of the great tenor John McCormack (224).¹⁴

If surname analysis, however enlightening, is ultimately flawed both by forced Anglicization and modern population shifts within the United Kingdom, which combine to lessen the numbers of Celtic names in such studies, then an examination of folk cultural characteristics is necessary to suggest whether culturally Celtic peoples have made significant, perhaps indispensable, contributions to the development of modern Anglophonic cultures such as the South's.¹⁵ The first book-length study to be published promoting the Celtic-Southern thesis was *Attack and Die: Civil War Tactics and the Southern Heritage* (1982) by Grady McWhiney and Perry D. Jamieson. Their postulate is that the strategies and fighting styles of the Union and Confederate armies reveal a significant cultural difference between the North and the South. The North, they argue, fought a characteristically English war while the South waged Celtic-style campaigns.¹⁶ Though the book's focus on military tactics may make it difficult for readers lacking such martial interests, it is challenging, especially the last chapter, in which the authors move beyond military tactics to a larger, more general comparison of folk cultures. James Michael Hill's *Celtic Warfare: 1595-1763* (1986) accepts the basic military thesis in *Attack and Die* that there is continuity in Celtic warfare from the ancient world to the modern.

McWhiney and Jamieson argue that "the majority of the white people in the South of the 1860s were of Celtic origins and most of those who were not had become culturally Celticized; the majority in the North were of English origins and many who were not had become culturally Anglicized" (178). This "cultural dichotomy," they suggest, explains not merely the fighting styles of the respective armies but also the clashes that led to war. They posit, "it was no accident that the Confederates adopted as their battle flag the Celtic St. Andrew's cross," (180) which may be seen on the Scottish flag, the colors of which are white, the cross, and cerulean blue, the field. That shade of sky blue, perhaps best known in the United States as the color of the University of North Carolina's athletic teams, is also the color of the Confederate violet and the Bonnie Blue Flag, which was raised on 9 January 1861 in Jackson, Mississippi, to honor the state's secession: "one of the witnesses to this event, an Irish-born actor named Harry Macarthy, was so inspired by the spectacle that

he wrote a song entitled ‘The Bonnie Blue Flag’ which was destined to be the second most popular patriotic song in the Confederacy” (Cannon 31). As evidence that at least some nineteenth-century Southerners recognized the basic English-North, Celtic-South cultural dichotomy, McWhiney and Jamieson quote from an orator contrasting “the Teutonic and Anglo-Saxon North with the Celtic South. . . . Only Southerners, with their Celtic ways, could counterbalance the evils of this business culture, insisted the orator” (173).

Most of the academics who have dismissed or trashed the Celtic-Southern thesis to me have insisted that it lacks merit because no one in the antebellum South recognized Celtic differences from England, much less an awareness of their own Celtic heritage, or indicated any interest in Celtic peoples whatsoever. I think it important to stress not merely this reference and the fact that Mary Noailles Murfree, who, writing as Charles Egbert Craddock, was the best-selling Southern local colorist, chose for her first pen name Robert Emmet (who was an executed Irish nationalist), but also Eugene Genovese’s observation:

Ireland especially caught the attention of southern youth. ‘Ireland’s misery,’ exclaimed Junius Irving Scales in 1853, has ever been England’s shame.’ Scales recounted the early conquest and the ruthlessness of Cromwell and concluded that, notwithstanding some reforms, the Irish peasants were still starving. (*Southern Front* 99)

Kelly J. O’Grady’s *Clear the Confederate Way: The Irish in the Army of Northern Virginia* provides numerous references that support not merely the military thesis of *Attack and Die* but the whole of the Celtic-Southern thesis. “Civil War scholars,” he writes, “may find it surprising that even obscure Southern sources often hint at Irish-Confederate alliances” (x). For example, in a note, O’Grady reveals, “Private Azariah Bostwick of the 31st Georgia despaired that the failure of the Confederacy would mean abject slavery for all Southerners. Without Southern independence, Bostwick believed, ‘We will be to the North what Ireland is to England, a slave of the darkest kind.’” O’Grady also notes that William Porcher Miles, who was once presented to me by an elderly scholar of the *Old South=Anglo-Norman* school of cultural studies as an example of the English country squire/antebellum Southern gentleman *par excellence*, wrote to Jefferson Davis and stressed the cultural differences between the Irish and the Germans in Kentucky (18-19). More important, Miles declared, “half my blood is Irish” (19).

O’Grady declares of native Irishmen who fought for the Confederacy,

“Their numbers were so great—and their stories so compelling” that he was forced to limit his study to Robert E. Lee’s Army (iv). O’Grady also emphasizes the great Irish paradox of the time: That though Irish Catholic immigrants in the north were the group most prone to opposition to the Union war effort and the draft, as well as to insubordination during military service, Irish natives in the South, who were overwhelmingly Catholic, were as wholeheartedly patriotic for their States and secession from the Union as were the Scots-Irish Protestants in the South, whose ancestors had arrived almost totally before the Revolutionary War (iv). O’Grady provides the cultural answer to the paradox: “The Northern cabal of Yankee Puritans, radical abolitionists allied with the world’s leading abolitionist state, Great Britain, and nativist [therefore stridently anti-Catholic and anti-Irish culture] Whigs and Know-Nothings [violently anti-Catholic and anti-Irish culture nativists] represented the historic enemies of the Irish people” (14). The hatred of the Irish and Irish culture, the belief that both are inherently the worst of the worst, that deeply marks WASP culture was as prominent among Antebellum Southern Liberals, who invariably saw themselves as walking in the Elected Righteous footsteps of the reforming Anglo-Saxon Puritans, as it was among Yankee WASPs. O’Grady notes, “Even avowedly egalitarian abolitionists held racially prejudiced views toward the Irish. In 1857, Hinton Helper, a North Carolina abolitionist who fled to New York during the war, wrote that the Irish ‘are a more brutal race and lower in civilization than the negro’” (14).

In contrast to the northern example of WASP contempt for and persecution of both Catholic religion and Celtic culture, the South presented immigrant Irish with a culture into which they fit naturally and were accepted.¹⁷ This is perhaps best evidenced by Irish Catholic bishops and priests in the South being unequivocally pro-Confederate while Irish Catholic bishops in the north were almost unanimous in their neutrality. In the north, Irish Catholics found a WASP culture that hated who and what they were and was dead-set on assimilating them to its values and identity, but in the South they found a similar Celtic culture:

Irish allegiance to the Southern cause was never more evident than in the actions and statements of Irish Catholic leaders. Indeed, the Irish leaders of the Church in the South were some of history’s truest Confederates. At the same time Irish Protestants in the South were apt to cleave to the Confederacy out of common religious and cultural heritage and similar political sympathies. Thus, Southern Irishmen, Catholic and Protestant, were united in their Confederate allegiance. (22-23)

Some of O'Grady's most insightful commentary concerns John Mitchel, the Young Ireland nationalist leader who had been sentenced to penal servitude in Australia and who had escaped and come to the South. Mitchel, though Protestant, is a quintessential example of the leaders of the Irish in the South who invariably "likened the American war to the Irish struggle they left behind. In their minds, the Civil War was another opportunity to win independence by dissolving a tyrannical union" (19). The cultural parallels are furthered in a note: "Mitchel saw in the Northern States just another example of that 'Anglo-Saxon civilization' which he hated and which he was convinced would end some day in disaster for those who clung to it" (309).¹⁸ Mitchel also saw the War Between the States as being just another theater of a centuries-old culture war, one driven by a complex maze of reformist religion, ethnic contempt by cultural Germans (the worst of whom to Mitchel were Anglo-Saxons) for all other European peoples leading to imperialistic wars to push them off land so that cultural Germans could control more, and economic pirating:

Mitchel believed that the Civil War, as the wars in Europe had been, was an economic and military conquest couched in religious and moral terms. In the American conflict, the North's conquest targeted the South. The result, he wrote, would be the economic, political and religious subjugation of an entire land. (45)

Thus far, the major contribution to the Celtic-Southern thesis is Grady McWhiney's *Cracker Culture: Celtic Ways in the Old South* (1988). While *Attack and Die* was restricted to military tactics, thereby leaving itself too thin to be fully persuasive in its larger cultural arguments—which, paradoxically, may be necessary to an acceptance of the specific military thesis—*Cracker Culture* approaches the thesis from a myriad of subjects. This study is a comparative examination of folkways as revealed primarily in travel accounts. In short, McWhiney presents innumerable examples from the antebellum period both of foreigners, chiefly English men and women, comparing Southern folkways to those of Celts and Northern folkways to those of the English and of Northerners responding to and condemning Southerners much as Englishmen of the era and previous ones responded to and condemned Celts.

McWhiney notes that "cracker," long a racial slur on white Southerners that in recent years has been voiced most notably by Malcolm X and other Nation of Islam leaders, is in origin a Scottish term for "boaster" (xiv), and he applies it to the Celtic South. *Cracker Culture*

begins with the statement, “historians, in their much-argued efforts to determine the extent to which the antebellum North and South were similar or different, have paid too little attention to the abundant observations of contemporaries” (1). McWhiney’s exhaustive study does just that, and through an analysis of the writings of hundreds of antebellum Americans and dozens of Englishmen, he demonstrates that the basic folk cultural patterns of the North and South were indeed different, or certainly were perceived to be different, often antagonistically so. *Cracker Culture* is divided into eleven chapters: “Settlement,” “Heritage,” “Herding,” “Hospitality,” “Pleasures,” “Violence,” “Morals,” “Education,” “Progress,” “Worth,” and “Collision.” No summary can do justice to McWhiney’s accomplishment. For 271 pages the reader is bombarded with evidence that the folk culture characteristics of the old South were largely Celtic in origin and, by contrast, those of the North, especially New England, were Anglo-Saxon.

McWhiney’s accomplishment is, I believe, no small part of the problem certain contemporary people have in accepting the fact that culturally Celtic peoples made a significant impact on Southern culture. A principle belief among modern Americans of virtually all political stripes, particularly liberals who glorify government centralization, is that antebellum white Americans North and South were, except for economics, exactly alike; therefore, the War Between the States, which began the process that governmentally culminated in The Great Society, was one between good brother with good morals (for the Union or against slavery or both) and bad brother with bad morals (for the Confederacy or against Abolitionism or for Southern culture or all three). In his study of American slavery, Peter Kolchin, who is in no wise a defender of conservative Southern culture, acknowledges that the war was one “only indirectly linked to the peculiar institution” until the Union’s leaders saw the political expediency of turning its war effort into a Holy War. “So long as the Confederates could portray their rebellion as an exercise in national self-determination,” Kolchin writes, “their cause aroused considerable sympathy abroad, but much of this sympathy would be likely to dissipate if the war could be redefined as a struggle over slavery” (201-2).¹⁹ McWhiney, by drawing attention to the fact that many antebellum anti-Southern slurs and attitudes had nothing to do with slavery and in fact were directed principally at the vast majority of white Southerners who did not own slaves, demonstrates that Northern hostilities began before the first American slavery crisis surrounding the admission of Missouri to the Union and until the 1850s focused not on slavery but on the perceived

ethnic differences and, therefore to Northerners and English visitors, the inferiority of Southerners. McWhiney's work suggests that the "exercise in national self-determination" for the South was one predicated not merely upon differing views of the Constitution, whether the focus be slavery or states' rights, but also upon differing ethnic heritages and their cultures that had come to predominate in the states roughly above and below the Mason-Dixon Line.

It is exactly this that journalist Tony Horwitz finds objectionable about the Celtic-Southern thesis. Horwitz, apparently ignoring Lincoln's First Inaugural Address reassertion that he had neither legal right nor intention to interfere with slavery already existing in sovereign states, makes it clear to his readers that to him the war was about the ending of human slavery in these United States, and he writes as if warning people that if the white South were seen as having been the cultural descendant primarily of Celtic peoples, then the war "was a cultural war in which Yankees imposed their imperialist and capitalist will on the agrarian South, just as the English had done to the Irish and Scots—and as America did to the Indians and the Mexicans in the name of Manifest Destiny" (69). As the potential political fallout from this logic frightens him, he later, without casting any doubt upon the population and folklore survival studies that underlie the thesis, slurs Southerners who accept the validity of the Celtic-Southern thesis as "romantics" whose "poster boy was the Scottish clansman played by Mel Gibson in the splatterfest *Braveheart*" (290). Note that Horwitz uses a term from Celtic heritage easily and often misused by American leftists as equating with racism and makes no mention of the film's theme: Freedom for a distinct people in national and ethnic terms from a centralized, imperially expanding government happy to obliterate them and their culture in its quest to reign unchallenged. Apparently for Horwitz, as for countless other modern liberals, freedom is too precious to be wasted on the culturally Celtic. They have no right to fight to achieve or preserve national or cultural freedom and survival.

The proponents of the Celtic-Southern thesis and revisionists of Barker's population study are not the only scholars to suggest a prominent role for Celts in the development of Southern culture. David Noel Doyle's *Ireland, Irishmen and Revolutionary America, 1760-1820* (1981) is a study of the importance of Irish immigrants to the early development of the United States. Doyle makes the connection between first generation Irish American and quintessential Southerner in his introduction:

Andrew Jackson, with piercing blue eyes, face as long as a Lurgan spade, high shock of red hair, and lonely resolution, would embark on

the career of frontier soldier, land-speculator, professional English-hater, Southern politician, and national hero that would lead him to the Presidency in 1828, and make of him a symbol of the political reconciliation of the older Ulster Irish stock in America and the incoming thousands of Catholic Irish. (*Ireland* xvii)

A professor at University College, Dublin, Doyle came to several conclusions regarding the Irish in the South that support the Celtic-Southern thesis. He notes both that “the adult generation of 1776 were acutely aware of the Irish element among them” and that regardless of the Calvinism of each, the first Scots-Irish settlers in New England received harsh ethnic-national based treatment from the Anglo-Saxon Puritans, determining that the mass of subsequent Scots-Irish immigrants would settle from Philadelphia south (*Ireland* 51, 53). Doyle, while respecting the specific Scots-Irish identity, also rejects the notion, still powerful among certain circles in both the United States and the United Kingdom, that while Irish Catholics tend to be wildly undisciplined, except perhaps as artists, Scottish Protestants and the Scots-Irish are sober, somber, and inherently pious and philosophical, a belief in antithetical philosophical bents necessary to the continuing failure to acknowledge the cultural Celtiness of the Scots-Irish. Such a view, Doyle writes, “is to ignore the record of Scottish Lowland folklore, manners, and balladry. Such creative indiscipline was quite indigenously Scottish, as witness the influence of its greatest exponent, Robert Burns, upon the weaver and farmer poets of Ulster shortly afterwards” (*Ireland* 80).

Doyle’s assessment that the Pennsylvania Scots-Irish were more easily “Americanized” than their Southern counterparts primarily due to settlement patterns is exactly that of McWhiney and the McDonalds (*Ireland* 133, 135). He concludes that the cultural differences between the descendants of the Scots-Irish in eastern Pennsylvania and those in the South were due to the easy assimilation of the former to the larger, wealthier, better established non-Celtic community surrounding it and the relative isolation of the latter, which allowed it to retain a considerably larger percentage of its Celtic folkways. “In the South, the seaboard was Anglican and semi-aristocratic, its communities running north-south, not east-west,” Doyle says. “This meant that Ulster immigrant communities in the South were probably less Americanised [by which he means a type of Anglicized or Yankeeized] in the cultural sense, while more transformed environmentally in practical matters, than were Ulster Pennsylvanians” (*Ireland* 133).

Though he is not working specifically with folk culture, Doyle establishes a link between Ireland and the South in one of the South’s most

prominent and important folk cultures that was largely ignored in *Cracker Culture: Music*. Doyle sees Southern mountain music as Celtic in origin:

Filling the Back Country, the Scottish and Irish pentatonic mode pre-empted the folk music tradition of the entire Appalachian region, as has been noted by musicologists; moreover, Ulster forms of imagery and narrative ballads shaped both the secular and sacred folk poetry fused onto those tunes. (*Ireland* 84)

Doyle also notes that Irish Catholics on the early Southern frontier tended to settle in the same areas as the Scots-Irish Protestants, which “raises the issue of their mutual acceptance which the interpenetration of their folk-music in these regions does” (*Ireland* 104).

Similar to Doyle, Patrick Blessing emphasizes the large scale pre-Great Famine Irish emigration to what would become the United States, which he dates back to the time of Walter Raleigh and therefore before Plymouth and even Jamestown. “The passage of legislation, especially in the southern colonies,” Blessing writes, “restricting the arrival of Irish ‘Papists’ as servants [indentured slaves] suggests the extent of this traffic” (12). Blessing also notes that shortly after the end of the massive eighteenth-century Irish exodus to North America, Ulster Presbyterians and other Irish Protestants and their descendants “began identifying themselves as ‘Scotch-Irish’ in a successful attempt to divorce themselves from Irish Catholics who were arriving in ever-increasing numbers” and drawing the fiery hatred of anti-Catholic Nativists such as those who founded the Know-Nothing Party that would later serve as one of the most important building blocks of the Republican Party and its Anglophilic anti-Southern animus (13).

Of even greater importance than Doyle’s work to the Celtic-Southern thesis is David Hackett Fischer’s *Albion’s Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (1989). Fischer argues in this tome that the basic regional cultures of the United States, folkways that persist to our own day, were formed by four distinct seventeenth- and eighteenth-century migrations from the British Isles. Two would coalesce to form the Northern culture: the New England Puritans, primarily from East Anglia, therefore truly Anglo-Saxon, and the midlands English and Welsh Quakers who settled in Pennsylvania. The remaining pair would determine Southern culture: Anglo-Normans from the south and west of England who settled in the Tidewater and the peoples of northeastern Ireland, Scotland, and the English border counties who settled in the Southern Piedmont and

Appalachian areas. This last group, which Fischer labels “borderers,” was the vast majority of Southern whites, “a mass migration, on a scale altogether different from the movements that had preceded it,” and would come to dominate the region in numbers and folk cultural influence (606, 615).

Albion’s Seed features but one direct comment on the Celtic-Southern thesis, and that is in a note. Referring to herding practices, Fischer writes, “here again the McWhiney-McDonald thesis grows stronger if it is recast from racial to regional terms” (742). As noted previously, the proponents of the Celtic-Southern thesis have no overriding interest in race; their interest is in folk culture transmissions. Fischer’s criticism derives from his essentially English imperial approach to studying cultures within the United Kingdom. Unless the group in question, such as most eighteenth-century Irish Catholics or Scottish Highlanders, speaks a Celtic language with only minimal use of English, Fischer labels it and its members culturally, and perhaps ethnically, English, and then in a type of circular logic he proceeds to define the specific local culture in question as English.

Though initially he may appear to stand on solid linguist, as opposed to folkway, grounds for identifying culture, Fischer evidences little knowledge of Celtic languages. He names the native languages of both Wales and Cornwall as Gaelic, though a person with the most rudimentary Celtic knowledge knows that these languages are P-Celtic or Brythonic, not Q-Celtic or Gaelic, the languages of Ireland, Scotland, and the Isle of Man (239, 620). Furthermore, Fischer’s acknowledgment of Celtic culture is so slight that he lumps Welsh Quakers in the same cultural category as English Midlands Quakers, which is analogous to declaring that Huguenots (French Calvinists), Presbyterians (Scottish and Irish Calvinists), and English Puritans belong in the same cultural grouping.²⁰ This is valid only if the grouping denotes Calvinist religion exclusively, and if true would mean that John Wesley and Desmond Tutu are both pure examples of Anglican Anglo-Saxon culture. Fischer also writes of the “English” settlement of the Tidewater, “the great majority of emigrants from Bristol . . . came from the west of England and South Wales” (237). To Fischer, as to Barker before him, even a Welshman may be declared Anglo-Saxon—because in most United Kingdom documents that is his label.

In a further effort to disprove the culturally Celtic heritage of his “borderers,” Fischer avows that in the Carolinas the Scots-Irish and Scots Lowlanders were often at odds with the Scottish Highlanders, suggesting

that this means that they were culturally distinct, the former two groups being English and the latter group Celtic (621). But Fischer's own work reveals a flaw in this logic. He notes repeatedly that in the "border" culture he describes, people, divided by family groups and local associations, squabbled and feuded with one another constantly.²¹ If "tribal" feuding between Scots-Irish and Highlanders eliminates the former from Celtic classification, then it also eliminates every family and sub-regional group Fischer cites from being "borderers." Another flaw in Fischer's logic is that he sees cultural traits as defined principally, almost exclusively, by geography, not by folk cultural groups.²² If such is indeed the case, when that geography is radically altered by migration, such as that from Europe to North America, then the basic culture should metamorphose significantly, not remain basically the same for two centuries, as Fischer argues throughout *Albion's Seed*.

Unwittingly, Fischer also strengthens the Celtic-Southern thesis in an important way. Perhaps central to the thesis's majority numbers of immigrants who brought an essentially Celtic folk culture to the South is the postulate that English citizens living in the counties bordering Scotland and Wales in the eighteenth century were considerably more Celtic than Anglo-Saxon in folkways. Because the sources used by McWhiney in *Cracker Culture* principally concern the Irish, Scottish, and Welsh, and only sporadically treat people in England's border counties, this part of his case is somewhat weak. Fischer, presumably in an attempt to further his argument that "borderers" are culturally, and perhaps ethnically, English, refers to several documents from the border counties (621-32, 662-63). What he demonstrates, at least to one versed in both Celtic culture and languages and the Celtic-Southern thesis, is that the English borderers were virtually as Celtic culturally as were the linguistic Celts, which is McWhiney's point.²³ Fischer could move these discussions of "English borderer" culture to the Scottish Highlands or to any part of rural Ireland or to a Cymic-speaking area of Wales and few, if any, readers would find them remotely out of place. Likewise, they would be seen as grotesquely out of place in London, East Anglia, or Kent. Furthermore, while these discussions could be transplanted to any part of the South and be seen as belonging, they would immediately be recognized as out of place if attributed to New England.

Arthurian scholar Geoffrey Ashe, whose focus has been on recovering the historical period of the British fifth and sixth centuries A.D., sums up the origin of the Celtic cultural traits of people in England's border counties. Rather than exterminate the native Celts from these areas as their

Germanic ancestors had done on the southeastern coast, the Saxons, moving west and north past what is now central England, slowly conquered and accepted the non-resisting natives and adopted much of their culture, especially their Christianity and its learning, though that was more from the Irish come east to teach than from British Celts. Ashe labels the scholarship at Jarrow that flowered in Bede as “Anglo-Celtic” and sees Lindisfarne’s origins through its first saints as “purely Celtic” (188). He also emphasizes the large number of English border counties place names that are either Celtic in origin or begin with “Weala,” the Anglo-Saxon word that meant foreigner or slave or Celt and would become the word *Welsh*, which indicate, in contrast to the near absence of such place names in East Anglia and Kent, that the subdued Celts in the west and north of what would be called England “were allowed to exist in organized communities” where significant folk cultural survivals would be expected (188).

In addition to the Celtic folkways of the P-Celt speakers conquered but not exterminated by the Germanic invaders, northern English borderers have folkways derived from Q-Celts. Pdraig O Snodaigh tells of Scottish national hero William Wallace, a native of Selkirk in the Lowlands “(where Gaelic was spoken as late as 1931) raiding the linguistically mixed northern counties of England in 1297 and using language as a factor of differentiation (‘he spared no one who spoke the English tongue’)” (26). Roger Blaney notes that strong cultural ties of north English border counties folk to Scotland and Ireland did not end before the Industrial Revolution. Presbyterian Reverend Caleb Threlkeld, an eighteenth-century native of England’s Cumberland County and sufficiently knowledgeable of Gaelic to include copious Gaelic phrases and words in his scholarship, “was the first person to record in print the tradition that St. Patrick used the shamrock to explain the Trinity” (39-40).

Fischer, like many scholars who do not define culture according to socio-economic class, defines culture almost exclusively according to national boundaries, and to do so all but determines that no Celtic culture can be recognized outside the Republic of Ireland. But folk culture, like nature itself, is fluid, and not determined by centralized imperial or federal governments. Scholars of the South, which is not an independent nation, should know this. In the introduction to the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris declare, “the *Encyclopedia’s* definition of ‘the South’ is a cultural one” (xv). Folk cultures, they insist, have “core zones, where the distinctive traits are

most concentrated, and margins, where the boundaries of the culture overlap with other cultural areas” (xv). Just as the Little Dixies north of the Ohio River, most areas of northern Missouri, and parts of southern California, especially Bakersfield, are very much culturally Southern, the English counties bordering Scotland and Wales appear to be the “margins” of Celtic folk culture. Therefore, people from those areas will live and transmit numerous Celtic cultural traits.

This is not the extent of Fischer’s inadvertent revelations of the validity of the Celtic-Southern thesis. In listing names of settlements in the Southern backcountry, from the beginning of the Piedmont to the west, that would demonstrate his “borderers” view of culture, Fischer chooses many that begin with “Mc” or “Mac.” As already stated, “mac” is Irish for “son,” and when used as a prefix means “son of.” Fischer also quotes English-born Gen. Charles Lee contemptuously referring to the politics of the Southern backcountry as “‘macocracy’—that is, ‘rule by the race of Macs’” (772). Of greater harm to Fischer’s anti-Celtic view is his definition of “borderer” family structures, structures that in turn determined most of the folk culture. He writes that there were two family rings “which were unique to this culture”: The *derbfine* and the clan. What he fails to mention is that both terms are taken from Gaelic, the former translating roughly as “true” or “blood family” and the latter as “child” or “family,” both meaning a particular type of Celtic extended family and its relationships. If, in order to label and define the all-important family structure of the “borderers” and the backcountry Southerners, Fischer must turn to a Celtic language, then this unique culture must be Celtic in origin. Otherwise, Anglo-Saxon terms would be fully adequate and readily available. Near the close of his study, Fischer writes, “the North British borderers who came to the backcountry were heartily disliked by Puritans, Cavaliers, and Quakers alike” (821). Though Fischer’s myopia concerning Celtic culture prevents his recognizing it, the reason is obvious: Fischer’s “borderers” are primarily Celtic in folkways, and the Puritans, Cavaliers, and Midlands Quakers, though separated by religious beliefs, political views, and class, are all English culturally.

Fischer is not the sole scholar who has set out to prove that the South is or is not something only to indicate inadvertently the indispensable importance of Celtic immigrants and their descendants to Southern culture. William R. Taylor’s *Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character* (1961) ostensibly undercuts the notion that the major difference between the antebellum North and South was that the former had been settled by Puritans, who defined its culture, and

the latter by Cavaliers, who defined its culture. As *Albion's Seed* convincingly demonstrates, the Anglo-Saxon Puritans did establish New England culture, which certainly appears to have been the stronger partner in defining the larger Northern culture, and the Anglo-Normans, many of whom could be labeled Cavaliers, did settle the narrow strip of coastal South and define much of its culture. But these Cavaliers were a minority, as Fischer acknowledges as readily as McWhiney and McDonald though under another name, to the majority Celtic immigrants in the South, both in numbers and in geographic distribution, and Taylor's work, which is primarily a reading of antebellum novels, concludes that "few, if any, Southerners, no matter what they said, really believed in the Cavalier—only in the need of him" (323).²⁴

The primary proof that Taylor produces to rebut the South's Cavalier legacy is that the Scots-Irish seemed to dominate the late-antebellum South in energy and personal accomplishment, literary as well as military, political, and educational. Taylor notes that the Anglophilic tendencies of the country's power structures (centered in New England, New York, Philadelphia, and the coastal South) were so puissant as to cause "men of such different origins as Paulding, Wirt, and Kennedy" to begin referring to themselves as "English" and "Saxon" (192-93). He also posits, through the case of William Alexander Caruthers, how the Scots-Irish, in order to escape anti-Celtic prejudices that were becoming more violent with the growth of the Irish Catholic population, began to associate themselves with the English Puritans as fellow Calvinists (208).

Taylor recounts the general depression that set in over the Tidewater after the War of 1812, "a blow from which it never fully recovered." This economic impetus induced many Tidewater Southerners to migrate west: "by 1830, it has been estimated, close to a third of those born in Virginia and Maryland around the turn of the century had crossed the Alleghenies" (155). Those Southerners native to coastal states, many of whom may have been born into culturally Anglo-Norman families, would then settle in the Celtic backcountry, which means that the process of acculturation, including marriages to peoples of Celtic ancestry, would foster their children and, especially, grandchildren to become Celticized, thereby further increasing the numbers of Southerners by the outbreak of the Civil War who would fit culturally the McWhiney-McDonald prototype. Taylor's analysis of George Tucker's *The Valley of Shenandoah* (1824) reveals that Tucker, himself no Celt, saw the Tidewater Anglo-Norman hegemony as doomed and the Scots-Irish frontiersmen as the future of the South (317). This view is also presented in Taylor's quoting

from Mary Boykin Chesnut: “Of late . . . all of the active-minded men who spring to the front in our [South Carolina] government were the immediate descendants of Scotch or Scotch-Irish; Calhoun, McDuffie, Chever, Petigru—who Huguenotted his name but could not tie up his Irish” (324).

Terry G. Jordan and Matti Kaups, in *The American Backwoods Frontier* (1989), proffer the thesis that the culture of the American frontier was determined largely by immigrants from the Savo-Karelian area of eastern Finland. Their attack on the Celtic-Southern thesis is limited but virulent: “those who seek the origins of the culture in the west, on the Scotch-Irish frontier of 1720-1780, mistake child for parent” (247). Though the Finnish migration occurred during the seventeenth century, ending more than two decades before the beginning of the greatest Celtic wave, the Finns settled in New Sweden, an area from southern New Jersey to northern Delaware. In addition to claiming that this non-Southern migration determined certain aspects of Southern heritage, Jordan and Kaups reveal that the Finnish migration numbered approximately 134 in 1655, with a few hundred more arriving before the end of the century (53, 55). The idea that this minuscule migration of “perhaps 400 or 500,” which “lasted for at least a quarter of a century” (58, 59), would culturally preclude the hundreds of thousands of Celts is ludicrous even if the Celts had a history of being pliant and changed easily to anything rather than being fiercely independent and resistant to change. Even Jordan and Kaups seem to recognize this in their conclusion. Though they cling fast to their belief that the “forest colonization techniques” of the Finns were adopted by later settlers on the frontier, Jordan and Kaups acknowledge, in language that is somewhat disparaging, that most of the Southern frontier folk culture was Scots-Irish in origin: “Emotional, atomistic dissenter Protestantism was likely their doing, as were blood feuds, British ballads, and the bagpipe-like squealing of Appalachian fiddles” (252).²⁵

Scholars of the South’s history other than those who developed the Celtic-Southern thesis also occasionally have recorded the prominence of Celts in the Old South. In *Intellectual Life in Jefferson’s Virginia, 1790-1830*, Richard Beale Davis finds that:

Scottish names are frequent in the colony from the mid-seventeenth century [my emphasis], especially among the Anglican clergy. But in the eighteenth century the several waves of Scotch-Irish and Scottish immigrants . . . came to form a recognized part of the Virginia religious and political mind. (13-14)

The frequent Scottish names among the Anglican clergy suggest that

early Southern Episcopalianism featured a strong Celtic contingent.²⁶ Davis also writes of the importance of Hampden-Sydney and Washington Colleges, “their development symbolizes the growing influence and size of the Scotch-Irish population in the South” (59), and he declares of the Scots-Irish Presbyterians, “believing in education and possessing an educated clergy, they supplied tutors to Anglicans and persuaded several of the latter to send their sons to the Presbyterian grammar schools in Virginia” (14). Davis sees Celtic immigrants as largely determining early Southern education even in most of colonial Virginia, which continues to be presented as the quintessence of unadulterated Anglo-Norman high culture in early America.

Bruce Collins in *White Society of the Antebellum South* records the anti-English sentiment found widely in the Old South, which Eugene Genovese terms “traditional Southern Anglophobia” (*World* 167), and accepts both the Southern family structure as that of Gaels and the Scots-Irish origin of white Southern folk music (71-72, 126, 153). E. R. R. Green finds that middle Georgia was quickly populated by Irish immigrants: “An estimate of the population of the settlement was made about 1770, and at that time there were supposed to be about seventy families in Queensborough and two hundred in the ‘environs,’ most of them Irish” (199). In *Origins of a Southern Mosaic*, Clarence L. Ver Steeg notes that the anti-black-slavery English Methodist James Oglethorpe “purchased” a boatload of “Irish convicts” to perform the manual labor of the colony²⁷ and that the leaders of the Georgia colony’s “dissatisfied group” were called by the trustees a “Scotch club” (83, 95).²⁸ Leroy Eid, a proponent of the Celtic-Southern thesis, reveals that “in the recent census returns an amazingly large number of Americans claimed ‘Irish ancestry.’ The sociologist Marjorie Fallows had earlier emphasized the ethnic paradox that the fiercely possessive Catholic Irish American community formed barely fifty percent of those Americans who claimed to be of Irish descent” (“Irish” 211). Eid also notes that Charles Carroll of Carrollton, the leader of the pro-revolutionary movement in 1776 Maryland, was descended from County Tipperary immigrants (216).

The two most prominent historians of the Irish in America, James Leyburn and Lawrence McCaffrey, both recognize the indispensable role of the Irish in the South. McCaffrey, whose scholarship focuses on the urban Irish Catholics in the North, declares of the predominantly Southern settling Scots-Irish, “Ulster nonconformists brought energy to their new country along with economic and intellectual skills and a commitment to democratic principles that speeded the maturation of

America" (*Irish* 59-60). His assertion that "Irish agriculture traditionally was more a cultural life-style than an economic system" supports McWhiney's definition of transplanted folk culture, and his recognition that "many Confederate officers considered the Irish the best soldiers in the Union Army" coalesces with McWhiney's military thesis (*Irish* 63, 96).²⁹ Perhaps more important to the Celtic-Southern thesis, McCaffrey notes that many eighteenth-century Irish Catholics came to the South as indentured servants or transplanted felons convicted by the imperial legal system often of little more than poverty or Irish nationalist sentiments and they and their descendants helped form Southern culture:

After servitude or sentences, both usually for seven years, spent in the plantation economy of the South, they moved to the Appalachian frontier. Because the majority of servants and convicts did not leave Ireland as informed or devout Catholics and the American church lacked the personnel and facilities to minister to people in the outer geographic and social edges of society, they melded into evangelical Protestant or Ulster Presbyterian communities. (*Textures* 11)

A superficial reading of Leyburn, the foremost authority on the American Scots-Irish, may lead a reader to conclude that the Celtic-Southern thesis has little validity. Not only does Leyburn see Scots-Irish identity as dissolving in America, but he believes that there was little cultural exchange and few marriages between the Scots planted in Ulster and the native Irish, with the Irish usually "absorbed into the Presbyterian element" (139). Contrary to the popular misbelief, the Scots-Irish did not need Irish Catholic culture to be culturally Celtic. Leyburn, though he emphasizes the Scottish Reformation and religious wars as paramount in shaping the seventeenth-century Lowland mind, declares, "one can hardly contest the predominance of the Celtic stock in the Lowlander's heritage" (66). The importance of this heritage is well stated by Roger Blaney: "These conservative estimates [of seventeenth-century Ulster Presbyterians] suggest that at least half of all the early Presbyterians in Ulster were Irish/Gaelic speakers" (19). Furthermore, Leyburn rejects the traditional British historians' designation of the Scots-Irish as Ulster Scots, by which they considered them not only non-Irish, but as British in the imperial sense, therefore non-Celtic culturally (142). The assumed loss of the specific Scots-Irish identity in the South is explained by the Celtic-Southern thesis: The descendants of the eighteenth-century Scots-Irish immigrants in the South led the formation of a Southern identity in the early national and antebellum eras. Their folkways since then have

been labeled Southern, or perhaps Appalachian and Ozark, rather than Scots-Irish. The Scots-Irish in the North, in Philadelphia and New Jersey, began to forget their actual ethnic and national ancestry before the War Between the States and assimilated to the general type of Anglophonic Yankee culture and then served as junior partners to descendants of New England Puritans and descendants of northeastern English Episcopalians in the formation of the Yankee WASP culture.

Novelist James Webb, the former Secretary of the Navy during the Reagan administration, has forayed into historical and cultural study with *Born Fighting: How the Scots-Irish Shaped America*. Webb's greatest significance, for my study, is that he unequivocally sees the Scots-Irish as being culturally Celtic. And that recognition by Webb is not due to his having focused his research on Irish Catholics and perhaps Scottish Highlanders and then simply transferring his findings to the Scots-Irish, which erroneous attack has been made on me repeatedly. Webb's research focus is almost exclusively on the Scots-Irish, and he does make extensive use of the work of Leyburn among others; unlike me, Webb is not examining how various Celtic "tribes" in the South interacted and together formed the majority white Southern culture and how that is expressed in Southern literature. Instead, Webb sees the Scots-Irish as both the majority of white Southerners and as the ethnic group that most defined, and best defines, all aspects of America's, not merely the South's, blue-collar culture and military traditions.

Nor can anyone assert that Webb unquestioningly has accepted the claims of Grady McWhiney. In fact, Webb makes the case for the Scots-Irish being culturally Celtic, and through them Southern culture being largely culturally Celtic, without a single positive reference to McWhiney's work. Nor is that due to his ignorance of McWhiney's work, for Webb does note it to correct it at one point:

One learned commentator professed that "Southerners lost the war [between the states] because they were too Celtic and their opponents too English." But in actuality the reverse was true. The South lasted for four horrible years with far fewer men, far less equipment, far inferior weapons, and a countryside that was persistently devastated as the Leviathan army worked its way like a steamroller across the landscape. (231)

Webb opens his history by tracing the Scots-Irish back to ancient Celtic tribes in Britain, and throughout the work he maintains his emphasis that the group is culturally Celtic. For example, he asks of the

Scots-Irish in the tribe's early days in Ireland, before it had any chance to intermarry with Irish Catholics or absorb Celtic cultural traits from them, "For who were the Irish but their own closest blood cousins?" (90). Of Scots-Irish Protestant and Irish Catholic immigrants in America, Webb asserts, "Once removed from Ireland, the common Celtic origins of these two groups brought many similarities, especially in their military traditions, their affinity for politics, and their literary prowess" (16). He also demonstrates how McWhiney's claim that the residents of England's northern border counties were, and are, much more culturally Celtic than Anglo-Saxon is true:

Although Hadrian's Wall had provided an emotional and historical line of demarcation, the English wanted more, and over time they succeeded, rolling back the Scottish border in the west and especially in the east. The bitter fights during these middle centuries caused many areas that were ethnically and historically Scottish to end up on the English side of the border. (77)

If people being defeated in war and forced to accept foreign rule by their conquerors makes them, *ipso facto*, ethnically and culturally the same as their conquerors, then there are no Amer-Indian cultures, and thus there is no need to study or even to acknowledge what does not exist. Though no one dares apply such absurdity to Amer-Indians or any other non-white people, that very absurdity is not merely applied to Celtic peoples and their cultural heritages but is also seen as dogmatic by many: Putative conservatives, particularly those obsessed with fiscal matters or imperial might and always those who are staunchly Anglophilic, as well as liberals and overt cultural Marxists.

Webb quotes eminent Scottish historian T. C. Smout on late medieval/Renaissance Scottish Lowland senses of kinship and place that Webb asserts survived in the Scots-Irish:

The poor man did not in fact claim the rank of an earl or a baron. What he claimed was something he valued more, to belong to a family [a Celtic clan of extended family with members of varying wealth] of incomparable nobility and martial valour, and by virtue of that to be as good as any earl, baron or commoner of different family in the land. . . . The whole atmosphere of kinship was a complex one, compounded both of egalitarianism and patriarchal features, full of respect for both while being free from humility. It appeared uncouth beyond Scotland mainly because it was a legacy of Celtic influence unfamiliar to the outside world. (80)

Professor Smout is erroneous in his assertion that such a worldview and clan structure was unfamiliar outside Scotland, for such, with local variations, was also the norm in Ireland, Wales, and Brittany, as it was in many sections of England, France, Spain, or Portugal that retained significant Celtic cultural heritage. Other than that quibble, I not only agree wholeheartedly with Smout's analysis of a cultural pattern that is simultaneously aristocratic and egalitarian marking Scotland but also that it is Celtic. Webb emphasizes that this paradoxical, oxymoronic culture, which is family based and determined and emphasizes sense of place both physical and within the clan, continues to define the Scots-Irish. I emphasize that it is necessary to understand this cultural pattern of the Celtic individual having sense of self and pride through his clan and its history of overcoming and surviving against great odds, and of the Celtic individual expecting, and if necessary demanding, that clan leaders will serve the entire clan and not merely its wealthier and more powerful members, in order to comprehend Southern social relations and Southern literature that treats social relations and class.³⁰

Webb also emphasizes that the Scots-Irish should not be lumped with either the Anglo-Normans who predominated on the narrow strip of the Southern coast or with the ethnic Anglo-Saxon Puritans of New England. He rightly delineates among various "British" Protestant groups:

Many of the most literate observers of American culture tend to lump the Scots-Irish in with the largely English-derivative New England Protestant groups and the original English [primarily Norman: my note] settlers of the vast Virginia colony as "WASPs" (white Anglo-Saxon Protestants) under the rubric of British ancestry. But these were, and are, distinctly separate and different peoples. (13-14)

Webb notes of the southerly settling Anglo-Normans, "the majority of this privileged class was originally granted huge tracts of land by royal decree" (141). He emphasizes several times in his history that the feudalistic tendencies that the most privileged of the Anglo-Normans continued to carry culturally at least through the War Between the States were devastatingly crippling of, and perhaps antithetical to, Scots-Irish culture in significant ways. This is especially true as feudalism, based on direct descent and particularly primogeniture, is erected upon *who owns what* and *holds what title* (both of which are tied to governmental favoritism for the elite, protected class), while Celtic culture, based on collateral descent, is erected upon *who is related to whom*, no matter how distantly, no matter how poor, or ethnically mixed, one branch of the clan

may be, and upon *who*, *whether as blood member or assimilated member, is willing and able to strive for the clan militarily, economically, spiritually, educationally, or artistically*. The social effects that accrue from the two systems, the two philosophies, are wildly antagonistic. Feudalism determines that the inheritor of a great estate will look down on his fifth and perhaps even third cousins and younger brothers as inherently beneath him and, depending upon their wealth, perhaps as “white trash,”³¹ while the Celtic clan system all but requires the wealthiest and most powerful clan leader to acknowledge and honor kinship across socio-economic and educational levels. The former system ossifies class (both privileged and under class), political power, and, to a slightly lesser degree, wealth, while the Celtic system ameliorates wealth and class distinctions to a significant degree, thus producing a political culture and an economic culture in which talented individuals may rise more easily and often and class warfare is next to impossible.³²

Webb even more insistently draws distinctions between the Scots-Irish and Anglo-Saxon Puritans. In addition to emphasizing that both groups having been Calvinist did not make them ethnically or culturally identical or interchangeable, Webb, like McWhiney, stresses that the Anglo-Saxon Puritans rather heartily despised as inherent ethnic inferiors the Scots-Irish who came to settle in New England: “This initial, instinctive dislike of the Scots-Irish by the Puritans was a clear harbinger of things to come in future decades and even centuries as the American colonies matured into a nation. The Scots-Irish were the cultural antithesis of those who had founded New England” (134). While McWhiney emphasizes that most of the Scots-Irish who attempted to settle in New England headed south before long, Webb emphasizes that almost all of the Scots-Irish who stayed in New England headed north, into New Hampshire and Maine, where they escaped direct Anglo-Saxon Puritan control for decades or more and created a rural, hill culture that in many ways resembled that of Ulster, southwestern Scotland, and the south’s Piedmont and Appalachian areas.³³

Webb’s study, like many produced in recent years, mixes in small discussions of his family history to emphasize key points. Most fascinating to me about these insertions are their relevance to the symbiotic nature of Southern history and literature, each of which begin not with scholars but with large numbers of folks remembering family and local histories and telling them to younger generations and perhaps, if pressed, writing them down. Webb emphasizes that though the Scots-Irish speak of their actual ethnic heritage less than any other group in America, they probably

produce more “ardent genealogists that any other cultural group in the country” (124). These amateur genealogists, many writing down the information only in condensed versions in family Bibles and letters, continue to spur the writing of both Southern history and belletristic literature. Webb’s description of his grandmother’s history-telling and then finally writing it down for him is a passage worthy of a Faulkner novel:

Still others appear in handwritten notes of people like my maternal grandmother, who when I was twelve years old finally wrote out an amazingly accurate eleven-page summary of her family’s movement from Virginia through Tennessee, then down into Mississippi and finally into Arkansas, replete with the dates of births and deaths, marriages, and military enlistments. Granny Doyle had been carrying all of this in her head, passed down from mother to daughter through each generation in singsong verse on the narrow front porch of some latest cabin as the hot summer sun gave way to a sultry, bug-filled evening, or huddled next to the fire place before there ever was such a thing as radio to fill the boredom of a winter night. (124-25)

David T. Gleeson’s *The Irish in the South, 1815-1877* focuses on the nineteenth-century immigrant Irish. Gleeson sees Irish immigrants, including Catholics, as natural Southerners. Because he wrote after the promulgation of the Celtic-Southern thesis, Gleeson had to make some acknowledgement of its existence. He dismisses it rather quickly, saying, “McWhiney and McDonald have used the term [Celtic] too broadly, lumping Irish, Scots, Welsh, and even northern English into one homogeneous group” (5). His condemnation would be more believable if he had provided a definition of *Celtic* that he asserts is the one scholars all accept and should bind upon us. That he fails to do so suggests that perhaps Gleeson is merely grappling for a way to reject a thesis with no real examination, a thesis that if not condemned could be used to tarnish or destroy an academic career in politically correct times like these. After all, rejecting a study of surviving immigrant Celtic culture because the author uses source material from more than one modern Celtic land is as illogical as rejecting a study of survival of Germanic cultural traits because the author used immigrant Germans native to Prussia, Saxony, Bavaria, Westphalia, Austria, Zurich, and East Anglia. His language does not indicate such as the source of the rejection, but if Gleeson chose to dismiss the Celtic-Southern thesis out of hand because McWhiney includes the citizens of England’s Celtic fringe counties of the north and west, then he will need to make a case why those citizens

of England cannot be labeled culturally Celtic. If he were to execute a comparative study of the basic cultural attitudes and values of Scottish Lowlanders, Scottish Highlanders, Irish Catholics, Ulster Irish Protestants, northern England's border counties folk, and East Anglians, Gleeson would find that the odd man out is the true Anglo-Saxon. Likewise, if Gleeson were to execute a comparative study of the basic cultural attitudes and values of Americans of several generations' residence in Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Missouri Ozarks, east Texas, and Wisconsin, the odd man out would be Wisconsin, and no state's decision regarding secession in 1860-61 could alter that.

The tortured logic people must adopt if they deny the Celtic-Southern thesis yet insist upon acknowledging the large number of Southerners who are of Irish, Scottish, and Welsh ancestry *and* that their ancestors made significant contributions to Southern culture, becoming quintessential and defining members, may be witnessed near the opening of Gleeson's book. He writes partly in opposition to Kerby Miller's *Emigrants and Exiles*, which paints a picture of Irish immigrants in America who are unhappy and yearn for home and would be there if at all possible economically. Miller's book focuses almost exclusively on Irish emigrants to the American north, into the heart of Yankee WASP culture. It is to be expected that even though increasing numbers became economically successful well beyond what was possible in English-ruled Ireland, most Irish emigrants into Yankee WASP cultural zones would hate the prevailing culture in which they lived, would feel depressed and miss relatives terribly, and would continue to bemoan their lot very much as their relatives and friends in Ireland had done when they emigrated—as dead in some great sense. Gleeson's point is that Miller's tome is skewed because the experiences of Irish emigrants to the South are almost diametrically opposed to those in Miller's book:

Unlike Kerby Miller, however, I believe that this feeling of exile did not hinder Irish integration into southern society. The Irish in the South did not wallow in their exile but used it as a means to an end. Initially, they used it to preserve ethnic awareness within their immigrant enclaves and to reap benefits such as jobs, housing, and social occasions, which accrued from this preservation. Later, this ethnic awareness became even more useful in building bonds with natives when the Irish recognized parallels between Ireland's relationship with Britain and the South's with the North. Paradoxically, then, their retention of a strong "Irishness" actually advanced their integration. (6)

The paradox is explained by the Celtic-Southern thesis: Irish immigrants in the nineteenth-century South, though preponderantly Catholic in a land with a large Protestant majority, literally added to Southern culture without changing it and became quintessential Southerners because the basis of Southern culture was very much culturally Celtic. Irish immigrants to the South did not face the grind of living in a local culture that was defined by all things WASP and anti-Celtic, as did most Irish immigrants in the North. Gleeson, like far too many scholars, has gone well out of his way to avoid the obvious: Irish immigrant experiences in the North and the South were radically different because the cultures that defined North and South were radically different, with the former being Anglo-Saxon and the latter being preponderantly Celtic.

Beyond that political-theoretical blindness, Gleeson's book is highly valuable to anyone interested in exploring the long ignored Irish presence in the nineteenth-century South. He notes that the ties with Protestants of Irish ancestry, who would have been the plurality in many parts of the South, allowed for cultural smoothing of any "misgivings or misunderstandings about Catholicism. In 1824, for example, the Protestant president of the Savannah Hibernian Society, John Hunter (note the non-Irish sounding name, which would lead most scholars to conclude his ancestry was pure Anglo-Saxon), solved a dispute between Irish Catholics and the Savannah Free School over compulsory readings of the Protestant Bible" (88-89). The Celtic cultural similarities combined with the Irish Catholic tendency to emphasize Thomism, which philosophy nurtured cultural, moral, and theological conservatism, led the majority of Antebellum Southern Protestants to see the Catholicism of their Irish fellow Southerners as "less 'foreign' than the abolitionist antics of their 'fellow' church members in the northern states" (92, 119).

Those who continue to bleat that the Celtic-Southern thesis cannot be true because no one in the antebellum South had any interest in, much less sympathetic view of, Irish culture need to dwell on this quote:

Southern newspapers, in fact, were sympathetic to Ireland and its efforts against English dominance. They published poetry that paid homage to "Hibernia's patriot brave" and extolled the "free fair homes of Ireland." They supported Catholic Emancipation and Young Ireland [which called for Irish national independence, through violent stand for freedom, ala the American Revolution, if necessary], hoping that the fight for Irish freedom would "engulf" the United Kingdom [which sounds like typical Celtic calls for decentralization of political power

as well as awareness that Celtic peoples other than the Irish needed to be free of rule from London by the English]. Robert Tyler, the son of Virginia-born [Scots-Irish] President John Tyler, was a great supporter of the Irish repeal movement because he “love[d] Irishmen and hate[d] tyranny in every form.” (102)

Gleeson makes certain his readers know that Tyler was far from the only prominent, well-connected antebellum Southerner to display an abiding interest in Irish issues, including seeing Ireland as paradigm for the South beleaguered by self-righteous, social-reforming, Anglo-Saxon Puritans. James Hagan, a protégé of John C. Calhoun and a well-known editor, “enjoyed equating abolitionism with Great Britain, thereby linking Ireland’s cause with the South’s” (133). Henry A. Wise, a Virginian opponent of the Know-Nothings and a pro-Confederate leader, saw the war to destroy conservative Southern culture as being ethnically born and religiously and philosophically determined: Wise “believed that Americanism [which is antithetical to Southernism] had at its core the Puritan ‘plans of Exeter Hall, in old England, acting on Williams Hall, in New England’” (111).

Scholars of the Scottish Highland immigrants in America contribute to the Celtic-Southern thesis by revealing that McWhiney and McDonald were correct in their suggestion that a significant minority of the Scots-Irish feature Highland rather than Lowland surnames. Duane Meyer avows, “Scotch-Irish names cannot easily be separated from the names of Highlanders” (27). J. P. MacLean explains, “the blood of the Highlander, to a great degree, permeated that of the Ulsterman, and had its due weight in forming the character of the Scotch-Irish” (42-43). He proceeds to list Highland surnames found among the Scots-Irish emigrants: “Campbell, Ferguson, Graham, McFarland, McDonald, McGregor, McIntyre, McKenzie, McLean, McPherson, Morrison, Robertson, Stewart, etc, all of which are distinctly Highlander and suggestive of the clans” (43). This integration of Highlanders and Lowlanders to form a new identity, a mutual assimilation leading to a new tribal identity suggested by McWhiney and McDonald, means that even if the Lowlanders had not brought Celtic ethnicity and folkways to the Scots-Irish, which according to Leyburn they did, the Highlanders would have.

Attacks on the Celtic-Southern thesis reveal a good deal about its validity. Dennis Clark’s *Hibernia America: The Irish and Regional Cultures* reviews the cultural and political accomplishments of Irish Americans in every area of the country. Clark notes that Irish-born

Virginian John Daly Burke was a popular and influential Revolutionary era patriotic poet (94). Like Doyle, Clark sees Irish Catholics and Protestants settling in close proximity in the Appalachians: “their hardy individualistic lifestyle, their racy Irish music, and their suspicious secretiveness were already a tradition in the Southern mountains from the Smokies of Virginia to the Ozarks before the Civil War” (94, 96). Though Clark is an advocate of promoting the long ignored importance of Irish Americans to the historical development of these United States, he is hostile to the Celtic-Southern thesis:

The legacy of disillusionment, poverty, and alienation in the South after [my emphasis] the Civil War is a sharp contrast to the euphoric, warlike “Celtic” spirit strangely attributed to the region in a fantasy of hyperbole by Grady McWhiney and Perry D. Jamieson. (106)

As *Attack and Die* deals with War Between the States military tactics and, to a lesser degree, cultural clashes that led to the war, not with the Reconstruction South, which, after all, was not at war, Clark’s attack has no validity. His hostility, which is partially his objection to what he sees as the McWhiney overemphasis on Celtic quickness to respond martially, which underlies many continuing prejudices against the Irish especially, is primarily regional. Clark, whose assimilation into Yankee WASP culture is evidenced by his religious moves from traditional working-class Irish Catholic to liberal northern American Catholic allied with liberal Protestants and Jews on social and moral issues to Quaker-leaning, anti-church modern, writes of Irish-born Southerners who supported the Confederacy, “such reactionary spokesmen as John Mitchel, himself a former felon and a man who had been imprisoned and exiled from Ireland by England, strongly supported pro-slavery principles . . .” (105).

Clark fails to note that the Protestant Mitchel, an acclaimed writer whose most fervent admirer in the next generations may have been William Butler Yeats, was a political prisoner arrested for supporting and promoting Irish independence³⁴ and was perhaps the nineteenth century’s sharpest, most clamorous critic of the runaway greed and sterling hypocrisy of Victorian colonialism and the feigned-paternalist racism guiding it. Clark’s primary, perhaps only, concept of the nineteenth-century South is of slavery, and therefore Mitchel, a man who became as Southern as he was Irish and who linked the English empire, its soldiers, and its repression of dissent to the Union, its soldiers, and its repression of dissent, personified in his arrest to stop his publishing and speaking against the Union, must be dismissed quickly. The Celtic-Southern thesis, then,

must be assaulted because it couples the Irish culturally to a South that Clark, a long-time Northern liberal who had imbibed all of the Yankee WASP prejudices, considers to be inherently and perhaps irredeemably immoral and politically incorrect, which in today's academic climate could abort the efforts to promote Irish and Irish American studies.³⁵

A similar attack may be found in Rowland Berthoff's "Celtic Mist Over the South" (1986). Berthoff, evidently either more an apologist for English imperialism than Fischer or merely a modern rendition of an old-fashioned waver of the Bloody Flag of the Union, does not believe that a significant Celtic culture, which he, sounding rather like a Sinophilic Marxist discussing Tibet, terms a mere "sectionalism" of the United Kingdom, survived in the eighteenth century to be transplanted. His primary opposition to the thesis, though, is that he considers it politically incorrect: "perhaps particularly in the South, the substitution, however unintended, of an immutable ethnicity, call it Celtic or Anglo-Saxon, for the old generalized racism demands most careful attention" (524-25). To Berthoff then, any study of the cultural origins and survivals of white Southerners, and by implication to a lesser degree of northern Irish Americans, is virtually taboo because he labels it "racism,"³⁶ and his flippant hostility may be due to a recognition of the fact that the Celtic-Southern thesis possesses a validity that his theory and his nationalist-regionalism require him to condemn as racism, the ultimate damning in modern academia regardless of lack of foundation.

In discussing what she sees as the loss of emphasis on facts in modern history and cultural studies, Mary Lefkowitz says debate has moved "to perceived motives . . . : if they believe that a person's motivations are good, then what they say will be right" (49). Dario Fernandez-Morera reveals that this approach, which is endemic to postmodernism, is in origin Marxist. "As in materialist [Marxist] discourse," he writes, "so in PC the search for truth is displaced from an interest in the hidden and self-serving motivations of speakers and their determining social circumstances; and therefore to an interest in the collective within which the speaker speaks and from which he presumably derives what and how he speaks" (39). If the speaker's motives are adjudged to be politically out of step or insensitive (as determined by Marxists, postmodernists, and other leftists), the work must be condemned out of hand with slurs on the motives, whether those motives are declared to be intentional or latent. Thomas Sowell writes that for many a "vision" is more relevant than facts and truth, for it, like the Inner Voice speaking to Quakers, "is a special state of grace." Believers are correct factually because within the vision

fact equals the vision. “Put differently,” Sowell writes, “those who disagree with the prevailing vision are seen as being not merely in error, but in sin” (*Vision* 3). This is Berthoff’s approach and method.³⁷

If, however, rather than objecting to studies of white Southern cultural origins for fear that they might be used by ‘racists,’ Berthoff were to consider the matter, he would realize that the Celtic-Southern thesis could be used to undercut white supremacist ideas by revealing the obvious truth that white peoples are not monolithic but are divided into a myriad of ethnic, cultural, religious, and socio-economic groups, some of whom, like Celts, have been victims of a longstanding ethnic-cultural discrimination and violence not all that dissimilar from those of Native Americans, Africans, and Jews.³⁸ But even if this argument could not be advanced, Berthoff’s desire to eliminate such a cultural study of the white South is answered by Louis Rubin in *The History of Southern Literature*: “the Southern identity is important because it is. Whether it ought or ought not to be is irrelevant” (5), and if it is important, it must be examined openly, fully, and fairly, which is impossible when the racist label is tossed rather indiscriminately to stifle research and, ultimately, teaching and publishing that fail to promote, that might thoroughly refute, the left-of-center prepossessions that define the postmodernist education establishment and its journalistic cheerleading section.

Berthoff’s attack on McWhiney’s belief that a general pan-Celtic folk culture existed at least into the early modern era may appear convincing initially, certainly to anyone unfamiliar with studies, such as that of Nerys Patterson mentioned above, that demonstrate the survival of Celtic culture across more than a millennium and a half. Impugning the concept that some sense of common Celtic folk culture led Irish Catholics and Protestants, Scottish Highlanders and Lowlanders, and the Welsh to coalesce into the predominate white Southern culture, Berthoff inveighs, “were it otherwise, someone would long since have applied the formula for Celtic community to pacifying the embattled peoples of Northern Ireland; by that formula, indeed, the troubles there since the 1650s ought never to have happened” (530). His logic is that peoples sharing a common folk culture do not engage in such blood feuds; therefore, because these groups did, and in one area still do, they could not all share a basic Celtic folk culture.

Those inclined to accept this view need only look to the former Yugoslavia. We know the Orthodox Serbs, Catholic Croats, and Moslem Bosnians have in recent years slaughtered one another at a rate never known in Belfast or Derry. Unless it applies exclusively to Celts, if Berthoff’s theoretical analysis were remotely correct all these “tribes”

would not be linguistic and cultural Slavs. To move outside the Indo-European family, we have such long-term blood feuds between Arabs and Jews (and in ancient times Hebrews and Canaanites-Phoenicians), both Semites, and South African Zulus and Xhosas, both Bantus. Just as the fights between family members are often the most vicious, and certainly do not prove that the combatants are not related, the squabbles between “tribes” of the same basic folk culture are often the most horrific, the most damaging and defeating. Frantz Fanon writes of the common pattern of the colonialist divide-and-conquer technique of prompting the conquered into fighting one another, “Tribal feuds only serve to perpetuate old grudges deep buried in the memory. By throwing himself with all his force into the *vendetta*, the native tries to persuade himself that colonialism does not exist, that everything goes on as before, that history continues,” that he is not a conquered servant of an empire (*Roll* 630). This should be kept in mind when considering the Northern Ireland problems.

The ease with which a common Celtic identity may surface once the politically pro United Kingdom Irish native has left the Northern Ireland battlefield is exhibited in social anthropologist Mary Kell’s study of Irish-born women living in London. Of one Protestant from rural Northern Ireland she writes:

Elizabeth did experience changes in self-identification. For example, she said she would never consider herself Irish in Ireland, though she did in Britain. She also felt that her attitude to the political situation in Northern Ireland had changed. Since coming to England, she said, she had “realised” that the Unionists [those supporting rule from London in lieu of the old Northern Ireland Parliament founded for a “Protestant people” and opposing a united Ireland, virtually all of whom are Protestants] were too “intransigent”. She saw things “more objectively”, she suggested, and said she could envisage a united Ireland, when in London. She also celebrates St. Patrick in London. (207)

Rory Fitzpatrick recognizes this pattern of Celts of differing religious and UK political affiliations meshing into one new identity on the colonial Southern frontier. He notes, “these Irish settlers were not exclusively Presbyterian; Catholics and Episcopalians were prominent among them if not in large numbers” (67).

In *The Uncounted Irish in Canada and the United States* (1990), Margaret E. Fitzgerald and Joseph A. King provide a different criticism of the Celtic-Southern thesis. Unlike Clark and Berthoff, they reveal no overt anti-Southern bigotries. In fact, they disclose that two prominent

Revolutionary era South Carolinians, “Edward Rutledge, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and his brother John Rutledge, a governor of South Carolina” were the sons of an Irish immigrant from County Longford, and both were members of the Charleston Friendly Brothers of St. Patrick (263). Fitzgerald and King dislike the Celtic-Southern thesis for two reasons: They see it as diminishing the importance of Irish Americans from other regions to the Celtic immigrant experience in America and as one in which Celts are stereotyped negatively (176). Their first concern is irrelevant to the thesis. Their second, while overstated, is understandable, for though McWhiney and McDonald do not mean to endorse these views uncritically, they do focus on the beliefs of many Englishmen and Northerners that the differences of Celts and Southerners make the latter groups violently, ignorantly inferior.

Historians are not the only non-creative writers to suggest that the white South’s cultural origins are Celtic. The two most controversial Southern gadflies, H. L. Mencken and W. J. Cash, both saw Southern culture as one determined considerably by Celts. In “The Anglo-Saxons,” Mencken writes that many of the South’s earliest settlers were Anglo-Saxon:

But their Teutonic blood was early diluted by Celtic strains from Scotland, from the north of Ireland, from Wales, and from the west of England, and today those Americans who are regarded as being most thoroughly Anglo-Saxon—for example, the mountaineers of the Appalachian slopes from Pennsylvania to Georgia—are obviously far more Celtic than Teutonic, not only physically but also mentally. . . . A Methodist revival is not an English phenomenon; it is Welsh. (169)³⁹

In “The Sahara of the Bozart,” Mencken reveals his thesis on the South’s cultural failures. He informs his readers that the eighteenth-century coastal South had a brilliant culture. The German Mencken’s idolization of the Anglo-Norman South is fairly predictable, as is his rationale for the later South’s alleged cultural failings: “The chief strain down there, I believe, is Celtic, rather than Saxon, particularly in the hill country.” Mencken again sees Southern religion, in his estimation the ultimate bane on the South, as Celtic: “the religious thought of the South is almost precisely identical with the religious thought of Wales” (185, 190). Mencken recognized the shift from the colonial, coastal South dominated by Anglo-Normans to the antebellum and modern South increasingly dominated by Celts and their descendants, and his pro-Germanic prejudices led him to condemn the South of his time partly because Celtic cultural traits predominated.

Like Mencken, Cash found much to criticize about the South, and he too labeled much of Southern culture as Celtic in origin. Cash's fictional portrayal of the development of the antebellum planter-gentleman, an attempt to undo the Anglo-Norman false myth, begins with a "stout young Irishman" in the "Carolina upcountry about 1800" (15). Cash writes of the average nineteenth-century Southerner:

He had much in common with the half-wild Scotch and Irish clansmen of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries whose blood he so often shared, and from whom . . . he mainly drew his tradition; but with the English squire to whom the legend has always assimilated him, and to whom the Southern Agrarians have recently sought to reassimilate him, not much. (30)

To Cash, the fierce individualism of the Southern farmer was like that of "a Gael Chieftain from his rock-ringed glen, wholly content with his autonomy and jealously guardful that nothing should encroach upon it" (34). The romanticism that Cash deemed the South's "Achilles' heel," a "romanticism" that nurtured the literary flowering of Cash's own era, writings that he largely failed to appreciate or understand, was to him Celtic in origin, except when he saw it as tied to the denial of Celtic heritage.

After reading that various writers, most of them scholars, have in a number of ways drawn attention to the importance of immigrants to the South from Celtic lands and particularly to the descendants of those Celtic immigrants, a fair reader cannot declare that Celtic heritage could not be important to Southern literature. This becomes especially obvious in light of Louis Rubin's assertion, "to all intents and purposes, and with only one or two exceptions, the literature of the Piedmont *is* southern literature" (*William Elliott* 211). For as we have seen, the Piedmont South, the South beyond the narrow strip of Tidewater and low country, is very much the Celtic South.

This lengthy review of historical scholarship has been a necessary preparation for my reading of Southern literature for four reasons. First, readers not directly associated with the world of scholarship (and perhaps many who are) may have no idea that scholars have long recognized the large emigration from Celtic lands into the South during the colonial and early antebellum eras. Without this knowledge, a reader may conclude that significant numbers of peoples of Celtic heritage emigrated only to the northern United States beginning with Ireland's Great Famine, and therefore Celtic heritage could play no significant part in Southern culture, that Southern novelistic treatment of peoples of Celtic

ancestry would be nothing more than unfounded fancy, fictional fantasy. Also, a reader aware that there is no disputing the mass emigration from Celtic lands into what would be the South well before the American Revolution and continuing throughout the antebellum era can deny the importance of studying Celtic contributions to the South only by asserting that Celtic heritage intrinsically lacks relevance or should be denied for political reasons.

Second, had I not revealed that numerous historians of the South and of Irish and Scottish America in addition to the proponents of the Celtic-Southern thesis have recognized a prominent role for Celtic immigrants and their descendants in Southern culture, readers pre-disposed against the thesis might reject my reading of Southern literature on theoretical grounds; in fact, one scholar responding to my paper at a conference did just that, claiming that the Celtic-Southern thesis was, he *knew* from a colleague whose work focused on the English yeoman image in Southern literature, theoretically untenable and therefore my reading of *Gone With the Wind* as an Irish American novel lacked foundation. Such a prejudiced, circular response is less likely when the reader knows that numerous scholars other than Grady McWhiney and Forrest McDonald acknowledge peoples living and transmitting Celtic identity and folkways to be important to the South. In brief, the South is not and never was the simplistic pattern of WASPs and blacks with a few Indians that is implied or asserted unquestioningly by the preponderance of academics; immigrants to the South from its earliest European settlement included peoples from Celtic lands who brought their non-English worldview and folkways with them.

The third and fourth reasons are closely related. Without a lengthy review of scholars acknowledging the significant presence in the South in all eras of people whose ancestries were Celtic a reader could declare that the use of characters of Celtic heritage by Southern novelists signifies nothing beyond imagination, means nothing culturally unless the reader accepts the postmodern conceit that everything is fiction. Without this review of scholarship, my cultural analysis of Southern novels might seem to some readers to suggest merely that Southern writers often have utilized characters whose ancestry is Celtic. My reading of Southern literature, however, supports the basic tenets of the McWhiney-McDonald Celtic-Southern thesis. A number of the South's novelists have portrayed characters of Celtic heritage as different from those of English heritage and as indispensable to their fictional meanings and morals. Their fiction should not by itself be called history; rather, the historical studies

demonstrate that these novelists knew their region's peoples and their folkways and heritages well indeed, much better in certain key ways than have the vast majority of scholars.

Though *Cracker Culture* is convincing, if not exhaustively inductive, it is flawed by its strength: the almost exclusive use of travel accounts relating folkways to argue its case. McWhiney ignores antebellum Southern literature because he believes that its authors, "the most cosmopolitan and learned of Southerners, were not representative of *Cracker Culture*; indeed, many of them were not Crackers at all." McWhiney notes, and I believe correctly, at least for the antebellum era, "Crackers infrequently took pen in hand, and the resulting documents seldom survived to be examined by scholars" (xviii).

Total acceptance of this view, however, creates a problem for those well versed in Southern literature. Vann Woodward, perhaps the best-known historian of the South, declares of Southern novelists, "they have given history meaning and value and significance as events never do merely because they happen" (39), and Frank Owsley, Jr. affirms, "it is the novel's social and intellectual insights that make it most useful to historians. Perceptions and ideals are difficult to capture in historical narrative, and thus we rely on the novelist to deal with these issues" (5). From the literary vantage, John Pilkington avows, "one begins to suspect that for Faulkner, historical facts tend not to explain anything. Understanding of history can only come through the imaginative reconstruction of the past, and for history to make sense to the present the historian must perform an act of the imagination" (177).

This symbiosis between Southern fiction and Southern history determines that if the Celtic-Southern thesis is valid, a number of Southern novelists will have revealed in their works the importance of Celtic immigrants and their descendants to the development, expansion, and perpetuation of Southern culture. Nor does this present the kind of problem McWhiney believes. Not only are a large number of Southern novelists of Irish and Scottish ancestry, but Southern literature is primarily one predicated on folklore. It is created "out of the rag-tag and bob-ends of old tales and talking" (Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom* 303), and if the folk culture of the white South is primarily transplanted Celtic, then the novels will reveal not only that Celtic heritage but also its significance. Readers predisposed to assume that Celtic heritage in the modern world or in America can signify nothing will be persuaded by nothing I write or anyone else may write; they will remain like those readers and teachers in, say, 1950 who believed that anyone labeled black could not be used

thematically in any significant way by major writers and therefore read Faulkner without focusing on and appreciating the thematic significance of Dilsey, Lucas Beauchamp, or Clytie Sutpen.

Before proceeding with an examination of what McWhiney might call “Cracker literature,” novels by and about Southerners of Celtic ancestry, I think it important to note briefly that black Southerners also have recognized both an awareness of Celtic heritage as something set apart and the importance of Celtic heritage to the South. Blyden Jackson reveals that Ralph Ellison’s Professor Woodridge, a teacher who focused on Irish writers, was modeled upon one of Ellison’s Tuskegee English professors. Ellison’s *Invisible Man* narrator, Jackson says, does not emphasize Yeats, Joyce, and O’Casey simply because of artistic excellence “but because they were Irish. As Irish they had own consciousness of what it meant to be a member of a minority group and to try to accommodate that when they wrote” (601).

Ernest J. Gaines’ *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* is an allegory, personified in Jane, of the survival and the thriving of black Southerners from the Emancipation Proclamation to the beginnings of the Civil Rights movement. With the freedom from slavery brought by Union troops, Jane, a child, attempts to walk to Ohio, a land that symbolizes freedom to her. On the journey, she meets an elderly white man who attempts to dissuade her from continuing her exodus. In addition to revealing to Jane that the journey to Ohio will be arduously long and dangerous, the old man warns her that to get to Ohio she must cross through the very center of white Southern culture: the “backward” Tennesseans, “still speaking Gaelic” (52). Gaines’ character believes that at the heart of white Southern culture lies the Irish language, and in keeping with Anglophonic prejudices he declares that heritage inferior.