AN EXAMINATION OF THE CELWYDD GOLAU

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Summary:

Celwydd golau, or "light lie", is the Welsh term for the tall tale. Tall tales, a genre of folklore characterized by their exaggerated qualities, are common internationally, although scholarship on the genre has focused on the American examples. The goal of this study is to provide an overview of the genre as it exists in the Welsh folk tradition, making use of the folklore archive at St. Fagans National History Museum. The first chapter of this study is a review of existing literature on the tall tale, as well as an examination of the American tall tale tradition and the history of Welsh folklore collecting. The second chapter examines *celwydd golau* about animals found in the archive at St. Fagans National History Museum, while the third chapter examines *celwydd golau* about linguistic mistakes in Welsh and English. The fourth chapter concludes the study by summarizing the previous chapters and offering any final thoughts as well as potential further avenues of study. There are also four appendices to this study. Appendix A offers summaries of the *celwydd golau* about animals, while Appendix B offers summaries of the *celwydd golau* about linguistic mistakes. Appendix C offers some brief biographical data about several of the tellers mentioned multiple times, as well as a list of *celwydd golau* associated with them. Appendix D consists of a series of maps, documenting the locations from which each example was collected.

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Introduction

Some people are known as liars. The lies they tell may be straightforward, like a small child blaming a sibling for eating the last cookie, or exaggerated stories, describing the time when the teller experienced an almost unbelievable situation. This latter type of lie is characteristic of a genre of folklore commonly known as the "tall tale", so called for the ways it stretches the truth, with common subjects being giant fish, massive storms, unusually intelligent animals, and other situations that while unlikely, always seem just within the realm of possibility. However, these exaggerations are not the only characteristic of the tall tale genre. These tales tend towards brevity, and are more often found in the context of a casual conversation than a storytelling event or formal situation. They are typically humorous, with the humor derived from the exaggerations found within the tale, which typically resemble personal anecdotes in form, particularly in their usage of first person. And when not told in the first person, these tales are almost always attributed to an individual well-known for telling lies. Indeed, the teller is a highly significant figure to consider when examining the tall tale, as these tales are almost exclusively attributed to an individual. Unlike some genres, such as the märchen or joke, the tall tale depends on a personal connection for its impact to be felt, and as such is commonly linked to someone who is known for exaggerating. This results in the tall tale being associated with local figures, regardless of whether or not they actually ever told the tale.

These figures, and the tales they are associated with, are found all around the world, and Wales is no exception. The Welsh name for these tales is *celwydd golau*, or "light lie," a term which conveys the same sense of harmlessly exaggerated truth as "tall tale." Much of the scholarship on the tall tales has focused on the American examples of the genre, while there has been little research on the *celwydd golau* tradition hitherto. That status is shared with most non-American tall tale traditions, which have historically attracted relatively little

academic interest. The goal of the study is provide a basic exploration of the *celwydd golau*, establishing some general trends in the tradition and comparing the genre to international and other Welsh folk traditions, with special attention paid to the functions of the tall tale and the role of the teller.

The first chapter of this study is a review of the literature on the tall tale, focusing on how other scholars have defined the genre and how it compares to other genres of folklore. To begin, it shall examine various definitions of the tall tale, paying particular attention to the topic of the tall tale-teller, as well as compare the tall tale to other genres of folklore which it can closely resemble, most notably the joke. After examining definitions, the chapter will discuss the functions of the tall tale, then provide an overview of the American tradition and consider why it has dominated research in the field; a few prominent non-American studies of the genre will also be considered within this review. Having looked at international aspects of the tradition, the study will then focus on an examination of the history of the Welsh folklore collection in the archive of the St. Fagans National History Museum, describing what *celwydd golau* material exists within that archive, and how the genre fits within the bounds of Welsh folklore in general.

The second and third chapters present a classification and examination of two select groups of *celwydd golau* drawn mainly from the archive at St. Fagans – tall tales about animals and about language, respectively. Tall tales featuring animals are common throughout both Wales and the world, and thus a comparison between those tale types that are particularly Welsh and those that are common worldwide can provide a useful baseline to determine the nature of the Welsh tradition. The tales relating to language, however, are less typical of the genre, and illustrate Wales' history as a bilingual nation where both Welsh and English are spoken. This linguistic nature of the exaggerations in these tales is unique, and as a result these *celwydd golau* provide a useful comparison to other tall tales. By focusing on

the unique features of the Welsh tradition, this study will discuss the relationship between it and other international traditions, as well as the attitudes of those who tell tall tales.

The discussion and analysis is followed by four appendices. The first two present an index of the tales described in chapters two and three, based upon the Aarne-Thompson-Uther Tale Type Index, with Appendix A containing the tall tales about animals and Appendix B containing the tall tales about language. Appendix C is an index of tellers to whom multiple tales are attributed, with some brief biographical information, when available. Appendix D is a series of maps, detailing the locations where each tale was collected, displayed by their tale type.

The goal of this study is to determine the nature of the *celwydd golau* and to place the tales present in the context of not only the Welsh folk tradition but also the international tall tale tradition as a whole. While examining each tale to demonstrate how it conforms to the tradition is useful, it is often the case that the exceptions prove the rule. As a result the focus of this study is often on the features of the *celwydd golau* that are unique, such as several common animal tales or the existence of the language tales, showing how those examples stand out to demonstrate what features categorize the Welsh tradition. While it is hoped that this study may one day serve as a starting point for further investigation into the *celwydd golau* and the international tall tale genre as a whole, this examination can stand alone amongst other studies of the genre, should no further investigation ever occur. This study offers an overview of the *celwydd golau* and its relation to the international tall tale tradition, establishing a definition of the genre based on the Welsh examples presented herein and providing suggestions as to further avenues of research for future scholars.

The Tall Tale and Welsh Folklore

What is a tall tale?

The tall tale is a humorous anecdote in which the humor comes from an exaggeration or lie. This deception is often good-natured and generally the audience is not supposed to believe the tale, although there are exceptions. In the Aarne-Thompson-Uther Tale Type Index,[1] tall tales are categorized under "Anecdotes and Jokes." These include the tales numbered 1875 through 1968 (Uther 2004, 469-510) with several of the types encompassing a wide range of materials, such as type 1920J*, "Various Tales of Lying" (p. 492), or type 1960, The Great Animal or Object" (498-499). However, the tall tale is not simply a tale which contains a humorous lie; if that were the case there would be a number of märchen, nonsense tales, and jokes that could also be considered tall tales. There are also certain structures, contexts, and functions which are particular to the tall tale that help define it.

At the outset, it is important to note that the tall tale has not been as intensively studied as other genres of folklore. This is probably due to many factors, ranging from the subjective nature of the tall tale, biases on the part of early scholars, and the fact that tall tale motifs often appear in other genres. This does not mean that tall tales are not a popular genre however, with literary examples ranging from Lucian's *True Stories* to R.E. Raspe's *The Adventures of Baron Münchausen* (Hansen 2002, 177). The tall tale's history as a form of literature stretches from the classical era to the modern era, presented by authors such as Lucian, Raspe, and, perhaps most famously, Mark Twain. These exaggerated tales obviously have some sort of appeal to the human psyche in order to have been so popular for so long.

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[1] The Aarne-Thompson-Uther index, also known as the tale type index, is an index used by folklorists to categorize folktales by type. The categorization not only serves as a common way to categorize tales, but also as a research aid, listing examples of each type by nation, with citations. The original system of classification was published by Antti Aarne in 1910, and revised by Stith Thompson in 1928 and 1961, and by Hans-Jörg Uther in 2004.

In order to attempt a narrower definition of the tall tale, there are two important works of scholarship to consider. The first is Gerald Thomas' *The Tall Tale and Philippe d'Alcripe: An Analysis of the Tall Tale Genre With Particular Reference to Philippe d'Alcripe's "La Nouvelle Fabrique des Excellents Tratis de Vérité" together with an Annotated Translation of the Work* (1977); the second is Carolyn Brown's *The Tall Tale in American Folklore and Literature* (1987). Both undertake an analysis detailing the exact nature of the tall tale, with each author establishing a working definition before moving on to his or her main focus – a collection of French tall tales and American literary tall tales, respectively.

Thomas establishes not merely a definition of the tall tale, but also defines the relationship between the tall tales and several other folk genres – the märchen, the saint's legend, giant lore, the nonsense tale, the lying song, children's lore, and folk speech – before moving on to his translation and analysis of Philippe d'Alcripe. Thomas argues that relying on exaggeration alone cannot define the tall tale, and he discusses functional and structural elements important to the genre, ultimately suggesting a number of traits that a tall tale must have:

> the tall tale is based on the humor of lies and exaggerations; its narrative content is traditional in nature. It exists in certain contexts or traditional situations and serves certain functions within those contexts; it is characterized by certain formal patterns which reinforce the functions it serves; one may consider both context and function as part of a traditional performance. The tall tale is a genre which relies on dramatic presentation and is thus normally told in the first person. Characteristically, tall tales tend to gather around certain "hero" figures -- the protagonists of their own tales, active transmitters of traditional matter, as opposed to the passive recipients, the traditional audience. (Thomas 1977, 7-8)

While Thomas never goes into fine detail on the functions, contexts, or patterns of the tall tale, his traits present a useful starting point for a discussion of the genre. He identifies that exaggerations are key, and that those exaggerations are based in real life actions. Thomas' definition omits one important aspect of the tall tale however, its credibility. While this aspect

of the tall tale will be dealt with by Brown in her definition, the tall tale can only be truly

effective if the audience at least pretends to believe that the tale being told is the truth.

Rather than audience reaction, Thomas is more concerned with the transmission of the

tall tale, clearly dividing those involved in the tale telling event into two groups – the "hero"

or original teller and the audience. Thomas defines the tall tale hero as someone who "is

usually a gifted raconteur whose artistry is recognized as a rule within the occupational group

in which he moves" (1977, 17). It is important to note, however, that the hero and teller do

not necessarily have to be the same person, as quite often people will repeat tales originally

told by others. Indeed, an individual deemed a tall tale hero is usually described as such

because he[2] "so dominated storytelling in his area that even after his death, 'his' stories are

still told about him by others" (1977, 17). Such heroes often serve as focus points not only for

local tall tale traditions, with any and all tall tales ending up attributed to them regardless of

their origin, but also for collectors and scholars, as demonstrated by perhaps the most famous

European tall tale hero, Baron Münchausen.

Hieronymus Karl Friedrich, Freiherr von Münchausen, was a German nobleman who

lived in the middle of the eighteenth century and served in the Russian military. He was

known for the fanciful tales he would tell and developed a reputation as a tall tale teller. His

stories inspired Rudolph Erich Raspe who wrote *The Surprising Adventures of Baron

Münchausen* (1785), which immediately became a bestseller with "ten editions and

translations" being produced before Raspe's death in 1794 (Orly 2002, 53-55). While Raspe's

use of the Baron's name has overwhelmed the real figure, his book:

> bears little or no resemblance to that of the tall-tale hero of oral tradition. Anyone
> familiar with the style of anecdotes collected from oral tradition is due for a serious
> shock if he reads the famous Baron's adventures for the first time, expecting to find a
> collection of oral tall tales. The *Adventures* are written in a most high-flown

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[2] It is important to note that the typical tall tale teller is male. While female tellers have been presented in Mark 1987 and McAndrews 1999, tall tales have typically been studied as a genre dominated by men, as discussed in those articles as well as in Henningsen 1965.

eighteenth century manner, as a parody of travelers' tales. The literary Münchausen is artificial in both style and presentation. (Thomas 1977, 20)

Despite Raspe's work not being a faithful representation of Baron Münchausen's tales, it became the standard by which the tall tale was judged. Even today, the Aarne-Thompson-Uther index notes when a tall tale type occurs in Raspe's work, and tale type 1889 is named "Münchausen tales" (Uther 2004, 473), and functions as a sort of catch-all for numerous different tall tales. The literary tradition of tall tales is a major complicating feature in the study of tall tales, as most literature on the topic focuses on the literary versions of the tradition. Carolyn Brown's *The Tall Tale in American Folklore and Literature* (1989) is one such work, although unlike most she gives full consideration to the genre as folklore.[3]

In place of Thomas' concern for the tall tale hero, Brown focuses on the functions and structures of the tall tale genre. She provides a summation of her ideas at the end of her discussion of the tall tale as folklore, stating:

> The tall tale has neither a simple definition nor a single function: in its finest manifestations it is too complex a work of art and artistry. But it can be described more fully and accurately and be recognized more confidently than it often has been. How can a Kansas City newspaper editor, a young camper's mother, or even a folklorist distinguish fact from fantasy, personal narrative from tall tale? He or she cannot, always. But if there is a certain sense of outlandishness; if there is a movement from the realm of the realistic and probable to the improbable, a dalliance at that hazy border between the credible and the incredible; if there are tall tale conceits and exaggeration through understatement; if there is a sense that the tale delineates an "in" group and challenges the listener to prove himself clever or dull, in or out of that group through his response to the tale; if the narrator seems to relish the role of comedian, social deviant, or mocker of hardship and danger, and seems to be manipulating the bizarre happenings of real life to make them his comic servants; if these are the traits of the story and the atmosphere of the storytelling event, then the narrative had best be considered a tall tale. (Brown 1987, 38)

Brown identifies that it is not simply exaggeration that characterizes the tall tale, but that the exaggeration has to be grounded in the real world – if it is not, the tale is a nonsense tale rather than a tall tale. Furthermore, the characters in the tall tale have to act in an exaggerated,

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[3] Brown's work is primarily concerned with literary use of tall tales, with only two chapters dedicated to the folkloric tradition. Those two chapters are the focus for the discussion that follows.

although realistic, fashion. To return to Thomas' idea of the tall tale hero, while giant animals and abnormal weather may be an exaggeration, sometimes the main exaggeration of the tale is the actions of the hero or some other character. He proves himself abnormally clever, or abnormally strong, or exemplary in some other way. And in other tales, the hero is reacting to the stupidity of someone else, typically someone from outside the community. As will be discussed later, these types of exaggerations are particularly common in the *celwydd golau* involving language. Regardless, the exaggerations of the tall tale must always remain within the realm of belief, without ever breaking the audience's credulity.

Furthermore, while tall tales cannot discuss the blatantly impossible, the point at which suspension of belief is broken is dependent upon each individual audience member's understanding of the subject, which underlines the importance of the social group to the tall tale. Because tall tales are dependent on the audiences recognizing the exaggeration, they tend to occur in specific folk groups, (farmers, say, or oilmen) who will have the knowledge to recognize what is being presented in the tale – those who are members of the same group as the teller will have a far greater ability to understand the teller's exaggerations than those who are not. This recognition is key to the tall tales' role in group identification. By recognizing the exaggeration, members of the audience prove themselves as members of the group who know the standards and realities in which they live. Ultimately, the label of the tall tale is a personal one, depending on the reaction of the person hearing the tale. Non-members who lack the necessary contextual knowledge to appreciate the exaggeration, such as the camper's mother mentioned by Brown in her definition, who believes the camp counselor's tale about how the camp does not have a snake problem because the mountain lions take care of them (1987, 19), will believe the tale is true, and likely not find it entertaining. Those who recognize the tall tale, however, can appreciate the humor not only in the tale itself, but also in the reaction of those who do not realize that the tale is an elaborate fiction. Sometimes, this

dichotomy can even occur in the tall tale itself, with the tale involving a contest of exaggerations or, as in many Welsh examples, a second character reacting in a humorous manner to another character's mistake or exaggeration.

It is important to spend a moment discussing what is meant by the term folk group, due to the importance of the concept to the tall tale. As stated above, tall tales are more dependent on context than most genres of folklore – if someone does not understand that they are being lied to, they will not understand that they are hearing a tall tale, which may then provide amusement to the group members who realize what is occurring. As defined by Elliott Oring, a folk group is a group "based upon characteristics that create a *consciousness of kind*. This consciousness produces a new dynamic which not only allows for the definition of a population category, but also conditions the possibility of activity by the group based upon this consciousness" (1986, 25). This consciousness can exist within all kinds of groups, but the two most important for this study are ethnic groups and occupational groups. Ethnic groups are typically delineated by ancestry – someone is born Welsh vs English, for example – and thus identified with that group by both themselves and others. Occupational groups however are chosen by the individual, and are delineated by what they do for a living, such as the aforementioned farmers and oilmen. While fishermen may be the stereotypical profession associated with the tall tale, most occupational groups use joking behavior, such as tall tales, in social encounters. As Robert McCarl states when discussing firefighters, "to be joked with, or "messed with" is a sign that the other members of the trade know you well enough to kid you or play pranks on you. These jokes and pranks create and reinforce a sense of community" (1986, 78). This is equally true in other professions as well, and a tall tale can serve as way to joke with a new worker about the dangers and troubles he or she may face on the job. While tall tales can certainly move beyond occupational groups, as in the case of stories surrounding Paul Bunyan, for example, they likely originated in such a context. This

movement is obviously true in the Welsh examples – the tales discussed in this study do not

all belong to the profession of the tale's hero; but to what extent we cannot be sure, as the

collections give very little information about the original audiences for the tale. Even so, that

original audience probably had a similar background, whether by ethnicity or job, to the

original teller, and transmitted the tale because of that connection.

Elsewhere, Brown discusses something just as important – the structure of the tall

tale. She describes it as having:

> three plot stages, with an optional prologue and coda. Often a tale begins with a claim
> that it is true or a statement expressing the narrator's distaste for liars...The tale itself
> generally begins with realistic detail designed to establish the credibility of the story.
> The second major stage describes a series of events increasing in absurdity or in their
> distance from ordinary life. Finally, the tale reaches its climax and, in some tales, a
> resolution. Many yarns end on their impossible point – "the Injun killed me" or "so I
> went home and got a shovel to dig myself out." Sometimes the climax will be
> followed by another formulaic assertion of truth. (Brown 1987, 20)

This structure, while very general, provides a useful way of breaking the tall tale down into

its constituent parts. The teller must first create a scenario that the audience can imagine, then

provide a situation which may lead to the exaggeration. This structure aids in the connection

of the tall tale to the real world, building up to the fantastical elements rather than presenting

them to the audience from the beginning, which not only makes a more interesting story but

creates the possibility of deception, as non-members of the in-group may not know exactly

where the tale went astray.

As Brown states, there is no simple definition of the tall tale (1987, 38). While the

main characteristic of the tall tale is the exaggeration, said exaggeration cannot be too wild,

as it must have the possibility of deceiving those without sufficient knowledge.

Simultaneously, the exaggeration is meant to amuse the audience members who can

recognize it. Tall tales are frequently short narratives, often in the first person, and are

typically told in informal situations. They will naturally coalesce around certain figures,

called tall tale heroes by Thomas, who during their lives were known for telling tales, and

who survive in those tales after their deaths, becoming more like fictional characters than historic figures. Indeed, as the tall tale is typically an etic classification, it can be helpful to examine several similar genres in order to draw distinctions between them.

Parameters of the Tall Tale

The closest genre to the tall tale is perhaps the joke – both are used to entertain the audience by deploying humor. However, there are some clear distinctions between the genres. In his book *Ethnic Humor Around the World* (1996), Christie Davies defines an ethnic joke as "short narratives or riddles with comic endings which impute a particular ludicrous trait or pattern of behavior to the butts of jokes" (1996, 1). While not all jokes are ethnic jokes, it is still useful to compare this definition with that of the tall tale, since both genres are connected with folk groups, such as the farmers and oilmen mentioned earlier. Just as with jokes, tall tales are frequently short narratives whose endings are comic, although in the tall tale the comedy comes from some sort of exaggeration, while in the joke the humor can come in a multitude of forms. In that sense, the tall tale is a more restricted form of the joke, as the tall tale depends on a specialized type of humor.

The more restrictive nature of the tall tale is also reflected in the fact that it is far more dependent on context than the joke. Davies states that:

> Jokes differ from comedies, cartoons, caricatures, and humorous essays in that, especially when taken in aggregate, they are authorless and it is pointless to look behind them for the kinds of motives, purposes, and feelings that characterize a single author. Jokes also differ from wit in that the humor they convey is not tied to a particular context but is self contained thus enabling a joke to be performed successfully on a quite different occasion. (Davies 1996, 3)

While he does not mention the tall tale, it could easily be included amongst the "comedies, cartoons, caricatures, and humorous essays" he cites. For a tall tale to be effective, it cannot exist independently – it depends on being connected to a figure and a place, on being connected to a folk group. As noted in Thomas' definition, tall tales are typically told in the

first person – and, as Brown argues, the audience of the tall tale requires special knowledge to notice the exaggeration, meaning that the tall tale requires a certain context to be effective. Jokes can migrate relatively easily from community to community, simply changing to fit the context of the community, but this is not true of the tall tale. A tale about a skilled hunting dog or an inventive way of killing rabbits only makes sense in a community where hunting with dogs and catching rabbits are important; it would not have the same effect in an urban community that does not hunt. There is no way to change such a tale to fit its new context without fundamentally altering it to the point where it no longer resembles the original tale, while jokes making fun of an ethnic group, for example, can float between communities, with little change other than what group is the target of ridicule.

Furthermore, the joke is a far less personal genre. Tall tales naturally associate themselves with certain individuals, namely Thomas' tall tale hero, while jokes rarely become the domain of one person. This impersonalization aides the joke in its more widespread transmission, although it must be noted that the tall tale is able to transfer between similar cultural contexts just as well, with probably only a change in attribution to a local teller. Finally, the tall tale is required to straddle the line between fact and fiction, while the joke has no such burden. A joke that concludes in the clearly impossible can still be a good joke, while a tall tale that no one can believe loses its power immediately.

However, it is important to note that there is a definite grey area in-between the joke and the tall tale. What may be a joke in one context could become a tall tale in another. For example, jokes involving linguistic false friends, words that sound the same in two different languages but have different meanings, can have different meanings in different contexts. Such a tale could be told as a funny incident that happened while abroad, mixing up the teller's native language with that of the place he or she visited, or as a sign of the tensions between two different groups occupying the same space. In such a case, the former example

would be a joke, as it could easily move between contexts, while the latter would be a tall tale, not only because of its dependence upon the specific relationship between the two groups, but also because it is far more likely to be told for a specific purpose by an original teller. This aspect of the relation between the joke and the tall tale is an important one to consider in regards to the *celwydd golau*, especially those concerning the relationship between the Welsh and English languages. What might be a joke coming from an English speaker might be more properly considered a tall tale when coming from a native Welsh speaker.

In a similar way to the joke, nonsense tales can be as strange and illogical as the teller wants. While nonsense tales and tall tales may well be classified together in *The Types of the Folktale* (2004), they are indeed different genres. As Gerald Thomas states, "If we examine the content of tall tales and nonsense tales, it is clear that the only link between the two genres is the notion of impossibility" (1977, 36-37). While the nonsense tale depends upon "normal logic being reversed" (Thomas 1977, 37), tall tales depend on misuse of normal logic. As Brown states, there are rules to the exaggerations in tall tales:

> the tall tale does not simply exaggerate … but concretely and comically compares … or it anthropomorphizes animals in comically absurd detail, comparing them to the most clever and mischievous of humans … or it more directly transforms one object into another. (1987, 25-26)

The tall tale must remain within the realm of possibility, while the nonsense tale is free to describe any sort of situation, no matter how impossible.

A far clearer distinction is apparent between the tall tale and the märchen, the legend, and the myth. While each of these genres may borrow tall tale motifs and types they are always clearly distinct. The märchen lacks any grounding in reality and is not meant to be taken seriously, unlike the tall tale which occurs in the real world and is narrated as if it were true. However, the tall tale is not meant to be *taken* as truth, unlike legend and myth which are often meant to be regarded as factual accounts of real events. While the tall tale, given

enough time and repetition, may fix itself in local memory and take on legendary characteristics, at that point it stops being a tall tale and becomes a local legend, as has happened with events surrounding American heroes such as Paul Bunyan and Johnny Appleseed.

Both these heroes, commonly associated with tall tales, provide a useful demonstration of this phenomena. While Bunyan was mostly a creation of the American media, he has become a part of American pop culture ("Paul Bunyan"), and the tales surrounding him far more resemble märchen or legends then tall tales. The tales surrounding Bunyan have a common tendency to describe the origins of natural features, such as Lake Michigan (Schlosser 2014), a tendency that is more often a feature of a legend or myth than a tall tale. Furthermore, the tales that surround Paul Bunyan operate in a much more heroic tradition than the tall tale, even in the literary tradition, with his exploits more closely resembling those of heroes such as Hercules than other literary tall tale heroes, such as Baron Münchausen.

If Paul Bunyan represents the relation between the tall tale and the heroic, serving as an American Hercules, then Johnny Appleseed is his saintly cousin, an American St. Francis of Assisi. Tall tales about the real life John Chapman and his adventures in the American wilderness have transformed, thanks in part to Chapman's strong religious beliefs, into an almost hagiographical tradition. These tales often demonstrate Chapman's saintly abilities of endurance and fortitude, presenting a hero more akin to an ancient saint than other American tall tale heroes such as Davy Crockett. And while Chapman may have been a very unique figure during his lifetime, and likely contributed to the stories that eventually transformed him into Johnny Appleseed, much of the work was done by later authors. As stated by Howard Means, "Part of [the growth of tradition surround Chapman], of course, is the work of later chroniclers, who rarely resisted embellishment when they got around to the future

Johnny Appleseed. Part is attributable to Chapman's own self-mythologizing: He seems to have been perfectly willing to spread a tall tale about himself" (2011, 175). While Bunyan and Chapman may be opposites in some manners, they share many distinct similarities, not least of which is their positions as figures that glorified the men who tamed the American frontier. As such, the tales surrounding them gain same title as the tales surrounding those figures, the tall tale, while in fact reflecting entirely different traditions.

To summarize, the tall tale is a complicated genre. It contains humor, but not in the same way as a joke. It requires exaggerations, but those exaggerations cannot depart from the realm of the logical or the possible. The genre depends upon the audience knowing enough to realize that the tale is indeed fiction, while pretending that it is fact. However, more than any of these criteria, the tall tale is defined by the function it plays in social groups.

What are the functions of the tall tale?

While the tall tale is primarily intended to amuse an audience, it has several other functions. The tall tale is inextricably linked with group dynamics, as it creates a clear dichotomy between those who know enough to spot the exaggeration and those who do not. Those who understand that the tall tale is a fiction earn the right to laugh along with the teller, while those who do not understand are clearly marked not only as outsiders but as objects of derision. Brown discusses this in her attempt to define the tall tale, with one of her suggested traits being "if there is a sense that the tale delineates an 'in' group and challenges the listener to prove himself clever or dull, in or out of that group through his response to the tale" (1987, 38). Because tall tales are dependent on recognizing exaggerations, they tend to occur in specific folk groups, such as farmers or oilmen, who will have the knowledge to recognize what is being presented in the tale. By telling the tale, the teller is asking the audience to

recognize that they are being lied to, and that recognition demonstrates their membership in the group.

One examination of this process is Richard Bauman's "'Any Man Who Keeps More'n one Hound'll Lie to You' A Contextual Study of Expressive Lying" (Bauman 1986). He examines a dog market in Canton, Texas where tall tale telling is used both to pass the time and to sell dogs. The men tell tales about the dogs and their hunting capabilities, making them seem far more impressive than they really are. As Bauman states, "dog trading is a form of play, a contest of wits and words. Some men actually keep one or two dogs around at any given time just to trade and, not surprisingly, there are usually rather "sorry" dogs, "old trashy dogs that ain't worth a quarter for nothin'" (1986, 14). So while there are occasionally good trades for skilled dogs, most of the time the trade is the secondary purpose of the encounter. The goal is actually to see who can most skillfully stretch the truth about the dog they are trying to sell. Traditional tall tales, those that clearly fit into the ATU index,[4] are saved for the newcomers as a way of initiating them into the group, with the tales functioning as a test of their knowledge. Despite this, lying and telling tales is an integral part of the experience, with conversations centering around who is the most capable liar. And when these interactions occur, the tellers repeatedly begin and end tales with statements of their own honesty – the prologue and coda of Brown's structure – as well as tell other tales about times when they were duped, which not only allow the tellers to engage in exaggerations that make themselves look stupid, but also often serve as a demonstration that they would not do the same thing to someone else.

This tension between truth and lie is a key feature of the tall tale. In order to demonstrate real comprehension of the tall tale, audience members must realize that it *is* a lie,

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[4] Tale type 1920F* "Skillful Hounds" (Uther 491-492) is the most common type at the dog market, based on the tales provided by Bauman.

yet react as if it were true. This separates the audience in to two different groups – those who realize what the exaggeration is, and those who do not. Each of these groups can be further divided into two subgroups. For those who realize what the exaggeration is there are those who will play along with the tale and pretend to believe it, enjoying the skill of the teller and justifying their membership in the folk group, and those who will call the teller a liar. Those who feel a need to call the teller a liar misunderstand the role of the teller – while bragging is certainly a part of telling tall tales, it is primarily about telling an entertaining story, based on, but not grounded in, reality. Indeed, those who feel a need to label the teller liar figure into two tall tale types – type 1920C, "That is a Lie!", and type 1920F, "He Who Says, "That's a Lie" Must Pay a Fine," (Uther 2004, 487-488) – both of which feature the person who accuses the tale teller of lying suffering some sort of punishment, frequently financial. Tales such as these recognize the tension between truth and falsehood in the genre, and use this recognition to amuse the audience, demonstrating the teller's mastery of the genre, while criticizing those who do not see the humor in the tales.

Those who do not realize what the exaggeration is also fall into two separate subgroups – those who do not realize they are being lied to and those who realize there is an exaggeration, but do not know what it is. While the former demonstrate that they are not members of the in-group, and their reactions may be a source of amusement to the in-group, the latter represents a liminal stage in between out-group and in-group. They know enough about the reality on which the tale is based to know that there is something odd about it, but they do not know enough to react as a member of the in-group. For this group of people, the tall tale can serve as a form of initiation. As Bauman notes, these tales can serve as a kind of test to the new dog traders, testing how well they can discern the truth about a dog's worth against the exaggerations told by the owner. Once they prove that they can understand the

group and the stories it tells, they can join in with testing the other newcomers and duping outsiders.

Group identification also plays a role in the context in which the tall tale is told. As Bauman's dog market demonstrates, tall tales tend to occur in situations where the teller is attempting to impress people, with the activities surrounding the tale telling providing a pretense to swap stories. Thus they occur in the dog market, amongst the traders attempting to convince people to buy their dogs; in bars in frontier cities, amongst the guides and riverboat men attempting to convince the travelers to follow them; and at summer camps, where counselors are attempting to entertain the children and terrify the parents. Brown, as mentioned earlier, tells of a camp counselor who when asked if snakes were a problem at the camp by an unsuspecting mother, described how the mountain lions took care of them with their extra-long claws, terrifying the unsuspecting parents, while also entertaining his fellow counselors and demonstrating his skills at telling tales (1987, 19). Showing off is key to the tall tale, and as a result the tall tale is most often told in situations where the teller can gain some benefit for demonstrating their skills at telling tales.

Sometimes, however, the function of the tall tales is to "provide a means of controlling threatening situations by reshaping them into fantasy" (Brown 1987, 33). This is not unlike what Davies describes in *Ethnic Humour Around the World* (1966) when discussing Jewish jokes being told by Jews. He states that he is more convinced "that "self-disparaging" jokes told by Jews in the face of both external hostility and internal division are ways of coping with a harsh reality by making it temporarily appear less threatening" (Davies 1996, 122), rather than any sort of self-hatred. Both jokes and tall tales allow the teller to capitalize upon stereotypes in order to recognize them as ridiculous and minimize their negative effects. Furthermore, when a non-member of the group is in the audience, the joke and tall tale can serve as a test of knowledge. If the listeners can recognize that the stereotype

promoted by the tale is fiction, then they prove that their intelligence, while if they *believe* the tale they expose themselves as fools.

There are also a number of functions beyond these. In William Bascom's "Four Functions of Folklore" (1954), he states that folklore:

> is used to inculcate the customs and ethical standards in the young, and as an adult to reward him with praise when he conforms, to punish him with ridicule or criticism when he deviates, to provide him with rationalizations when the institutions and conventions are challenged or questioned, to suggest that he be content with things as they are, and to provide him with a compensatory escape from "the hardships, the inequalities, the injustices"[5] of everyday life. (1954, 349)

Indeed, tall tales have all of these functions. By exaggerating real life, they can be used to provide unusual solutions to a problem, teaching younger generations what to do in similar situations. By presenting obvious lies, the tales can be used to shame liars, exposing how they twist the truth to tell the story. But most of all, the marvelous world of the tall tale, in which most situations will turn out for the better, no matter how convoluted the route, serves as a way to relieve stress and remind the audience that no matter how bad a situation seems, there is always a solution, provided they are clever enough to see it.

The American tall tale

Before focusing on the Welsh tall tales it is important to discuss the American tradition. The tall tale has typically been identified as an American folk genre, more common in the United States than anywhere else in the world. While it is certainly true that the tall tale is common in America, it is by no means unique to that country, with tall tales being a common, but understudied genre throughout the rest of the world. In his "The Art of Perpendicular Lying: Concerning a Commercial Collecting of Norwegian Sailor's Tall Tales"

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[5] Herskovits, M.J. *Man and his Works*. (New York, 1948), p.421.

(Henningsen, 1965), Gustav Henningsen argues that the tall tale is so noticeable in the

American tradition because of its association with American politicians, stating:

> While the European hunter, fisherman, and skipper stories (and whatever else they may be called) have led a decidedly unnoticed existence – with the exception of the small selection which attracted the notice of the world with Münchausen – the genre in the U.S.A. has been an object of attention and of study without parallel right from 1829*[sic]* when the tall-tale teller and hero Davy Crockett was elected to Congress; and while all of Münchausen's undiscovered cousins at home in Europe sat entertaining a small local audience, Abraham Lincoln as president in the 1860's could illustrate the political situation with tall tales which he had learned in his youth in the Midwest, an activity which only added to his popularity. (181)

In the United States, tall tales not only became linked with political figures such as Crockett

and Lincoln, but also with American folk heroes such as Paul Bunyan, Johnny Appleseed,

and Pecos Bill. While commonly characterized as tall tales, the stories surrounding these

figures are more akin to myths or legends, and are frequently based more in literary traditions

than oral one. Richard Dorson, for example, said of Paul Bunyan that "journalism, not

folklore, has nourished Old Paul in the hearts of his countrymen" (1956, 261). The growth in

popularity of these figures was a result of "the maturing of American society, and the

crystallization of American nationalism, [which] generated the desire for a New World Thor,

or Hercules, or Gargantuas, with no taint of foreign genesis. And so Paul Bunyan, breaking

out into public view in the 1920's, filled the bill" (1956, 261). In tall tales, Americans found a

genre of folklore that seemed particular to their nation and their leaders, as not only was it

used in political discourse, but it was ubiquitous throughout the frontier, and thus served as

expression of American equality, as a form of folklore told by both the high and the low.

Thus when Americans went looking for folk heroes to valorize, figures such as Paul Bunyan

with their larger than life adventures and traits were the natural choice, connected as they

were with the tall tale.

However, while these tales flourished in America, tall tales certainly existed in

Europe, as demonstrated by the Baron Münchausen tales, as well as Henningsen's work on

the Jotun collection of Norwegian sailor's tales (1965) or Thomas' work on Philippe

d'Alcripe (1977), both of which discuss how it is more a matter of scholars choosing not to

examine the material than any sort of legitimate lack. Furthermore, a great number of tall tale

types existed in Classical literature, ranging from the histories of Herodotus to the satires of

Lucian (Hansen 2002, 176-187), demonstrating that these types have existed and likely been

in tellers' repertoires for ages. And while natural histories may have been considered by

many at the time as fact, their descriptions of far off places and exotic animals resemble tales

told by American frontiersmen in the 19th century, and Lucian's admission that "he is

parodying the descriptions of exotic places that various writers have published" (179), is a

clear demonstration that at least some people at the time viewed such works as fanciful and

untrue.

However, while the tall tale may exist outside the United States, that does not change

the fact that it has a special place in both American folklore and literature, as explored by

Brown. She explains that:

> Although [the tall tale] was neither invented in nor restricted to North America, the
> tall tale has held a place of special significance in American life. From almost the
> beginning, the incomprehensible vastness of the continent, the extraordinary fertility
> of the land, and the variety of natural peculiarities inspired a humor of extravagance
> and exaggeration, while the American's need to affirm the value of a culture in many
> ways independent of European refinements, constraints, and mores engendered a
> humor that was clubby, exclusive. The vast difference among America's geographic
> sections, too, gave impetus to comic exaggeration. Thus the tall tale became a tool
> and emblem of national and regional identity. (Brown 1987, 2)

While it is certainly true that America is much larger than Europe and that the plants,

animals, and spaces encountered on the frontier were different from anything in Europe or the

urbanized East coast of nineteenth-century America, the tall tale, and by extension, American

humor, was by no means exclusive. The writings of Mark Twain, which make extensive use

of American humor and tall tales, have been popular in European countries such as Germany

since their publication (Warner 2013). Similarly, the popularity of R.E. Raspe's *The*

Adventures of Baron Münchausen (1875), shows that native tall tales were just as popular. Brown's argument that American humor was "exclusive" seems off-base, given the popularity of the Münchausen stories, but that does not diminish the importance of the tall tale and its form of humor to the American identity.

Regardless of the tall tale's international presence, it does remain that scholarship on the tall tale has focused particularly on the American material for quite some time. Brown provides a rough timeline of tall tale collection in America in her work (1987). The first collectors were the various travelers of the nineteenth century, people who traveled the American frontier and heard these tales from the guides and hunters they met along the way. This casual, unsystematic method of collection[6] eventually developed to the point where American folklorists were collecting tall tales, talking to those who had known long-deceased tellers such as Abraham "Oregon" Smith and Gib Morgan, as well as collecting from their contemporaries. Vance Randolph's *We Always Lie to Strangers: Tall Tales from the Ozarks* (1951) is perhaps the most famous of these contemporary collections, but there are a number of other collections and articles on the topic.[7]

Perhaps the most comprehensive study of a deceased American tall tale teller is William Jansen's "Lying Abe: A Tale-Teller and His Reputation" (1948). Jansen examines the life and tales of Abraham "Oregon" Smith, who was born in 1796 in Tennessee, but spent most of his life in Indiana and Illinois, with the exception of a brief period in Oregon in the 1850s, from which he got his nickname. He died in 1893, leaving behind a vast collection of tall tales. Jansen visited the places he had lived and collected what remained of his tales by

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[6] C Grant Loomis discusses the collections of Fred Hart, a traveling journalist in the late 19th century, in his articles "Hart's Tall Tales from Nevada" (1945) and "More Hart Tall Tales from Nevada" (1945), as well as the collections of Dan DeQuille, miner and writer of the same period (Loomis 1946).

[7] For example, "Montana Cowboy Folktales" (Halpert 1945), "Tales Told by Soldiers" (Halpert 1945), and "Tall Tales and Other Yarns from Calgary, Alberta" (Halpert 1945) all concern contemporary material collected by Herpert Halpert, while Levette J Davidson's "Western Campfire Tales" (1943) examines tales by Jim Bridger and his contemporaries.

reading through newspaper archives and talking to those who had heard him tell his stories. Jansen discusses how Smith became a part of the local vernacular, with variations of "You lie like Oregon Smith" (Jansen 1948, 113) being a common way of calling someone a liar. He also discusses how Smith's life story has been reshaped to better fit the tales, as people associated his tale telling solely with the period after he returned from Oregon, when in reality "Abe was a renowned tale-teller before he went to Oregon" (111). Furthermore, Jansen examines the differences in how people remember him, with a number of the informants emphasizing how, despite the tales he told, Smith was an honest man who meant no harm by his lies, while others in the community remember him as a no-good scoundrel, causing people who share the name "Smith" to distance themselves from his memory. Jansen closes with a discussion of how and where Smith told his stories – holding court in various stores and farms in the county where people would come just to hear him tell his tales – which he always swore were true. Jansen's focus on a particular tall tale hero is typical of other articles written on the tall tale in the 1940s, such as Mody Boatwright's study of Texas oilman Gib Morgan (Boatwright 1945).

Randolph's *We Always Lie to Strangers: Tall Tales from the Ozarks* (1951) established the other major format for tall tale collections – a collection based not in one certain teller, but rather a specific region. The introduction serves both as an introduction to the region and a theoretical grounding in the material, as the book is not aimed at an academic audience. As indicated by the title, group dynamics are the main theme of the book, with Randolph looking at how the tales are used by the locals to confuse and deceive visitors and to form an exclusive identity. As discussed earlier, by using stereotypes, the teller can more successfully trick the outsiders into believing the tall tale, exposing their ignorance and making them a laughing stock. However, the majority of the volume is dedicated to presenting the tales and traditions that Randolph himself has collected, while also presenting

enough contextual information for the reader to understand the stories. This contextual information is valuable to any folklorist looking at the material, and Randolph notes that he is "content to record the tales as they were told to me, and leave the consideration of provenance to the folklorists who spend their lives in libraries" (Randolph 1951, 13). As a result, the publication is a valuable resource on the tall tale tradition of the region.

While the tall tale may have been perceived as a particularly American genre, in part because of how Americans used the genre as a way to solidify a sense of national identity, and also in part because the European material simply went uncollected. However, as Henningsen's collection shows, there certainly are European examples of tall tales waiting to be examined, and Wales is no exception to that.

The Tall Tale in the context of Welsh Folklore

As a result of the American focus of tall tale scholarship, as well as the way folklore studies developed both in the United Kingdom, in general, and in Wales specifically, very little work has been done on Welsh tall tales. In Britain, folklore studies grew out of popular antiquities, which was concerned with physical ruins and remains, ancient writings, as well as oral traditions (Dorson 1968, 3). Scholars believed that these traditions represented survivals of ancient pagan beliefs and practices, which led to a focus on customs and genres such as märchen, legends, myths, and ballads.

Wales, however, lacks märchen in its post-medieval tradition (Gwyndaf 1992/1993, 215), which meant that early scholars did not focus on the contemporary Welsh narrative tradition, paying more attention to customs and physical culture. Furthermore, in part because of the lack of contemporary märchen, Welsh scholarship has always had an overriding emphasis on medieval material. Indeed, Juliette Wood states there was a "tendency to downgrade contemporary oral testimony in favor of manuscripts which enshrine a distant,

and therefore purer, oral culture" (1997, 48). While this bias has diminished, and an increasing amount of research is now undertaken on modern Welsh material, the scholarly focus remain on the medieval period.

Examinations of Welsh folk traditions trace their origins to the late seventeenth century, with British antiquarians such as Edward Lhuyd examining Welsh folklore to further their own philological and historical interests. It was not until the nineteenth century, however, that folklore was collected for its own sake. Preachers, educators, and other educated men in Wales began to collect folk material, publishing it in journals such as *Y Brython*[8] as well as in essays at the National Eisteddfod (Wood 1975). Some of these works later developed into longer pieces, such as Rev. Elias Owen's *Welsh Folk-lore* (1896), which began as an essay for the 1887 Welsh National Eisteddfod, or David Jenkin's *Bedd Gelert, its Facts, Fairies, & Folk-lore* (1899), which was "based upon the articles by Mr. William Jones (*Bleddyn*) in *Y Brython*, 1861" (Jenkins 1899, vii). Other major works on Welsh folklore include John Rhŷs' *Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx* (1901), and T. Gwynn Jones' *Welsh Folklore and Folk-custom* (1930). Each of these collections present tales collected by the authors from their own fieldwork, correspondence with other scholars, and literary sources; much of the material is comprised of migratory legends, fairy lore, superstitions, and customs – all genres and traditions which conform to the romantic idea that "the study of folklore was part of a process of cultural reconstruction, a way to illuminate the past for the Welsh people and for others" (Wood 2005, 330). However, tall tales are few and far between in these works, and are not present in any appreciable measure.

Such is the case, too, with periodicals, which continue to be a valuable source for Welsh folklore. *Llafar Gwlad,* a quarterly magazine published by Gwasg Carreg Gwalch on

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[8] *Y Brython* was published in Tremadog and edited by Alltud Eifion and D Silvan Evans (Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru 2007*).*

folk customs, folklore, and humor, regularly has articles on folklore, while folkloric material

can also be found in the *papurau bro*, or local community papers.

Another major source for Welsh folk narratives is St. Fagans National History

Museum. St. Fagans Museum, founded in 1948, was modelled on the open-air museums of

Scandinavia, and as such has always placed more emphasis on material culture, as

demonstrated by Iorwerth C Peate, keeper of the Department of Folk Life in the National

Museum of Wales from 1948 until 1971, who classified the Department's collections as

follows:

> (1) Material illustrating Domestic Life: (a) The House, its fabric and fittings,
> cooking utensils and appliances, dairy utensils, furnishing fabrics, furniture, laundry
> appliances, lighting appliances, ornaments and tableware; (b) Dress.
> (2) Material illustrating Corporate Life: (a) Civil, including all forms of the
> Civil Service, commerce, arms, heraldry, law and order, medicine, and personalia of
> eminent Welshmen; (b) Ecclesiastical; (c) Fighting Services; (d) Transport of all
> kinds.
> (3) Material illustrating Cultural Life: (a) Educational; (b) Entertainment; (c)
> Folklore and Customs; (d) Institutions such as the Eisteddfod; (e) Musical
> Instruments; (f) Sports and Games.
> (4) Material Illustrating Crafts and Industries: (a) Agriculture in all its aspects;
> and (b) the numerous country and urban crafts such as clock-making, corn-milling,
> hat-making, iron-working, leather work, textiles, woodwork, etc. (Peate 1945, 247-
> 248)

Tall tales, as well as other folklore genres such as the märchen or fairy lore, would be

included under points 3a through 3c, which is a small portion of the Museum's collections.

Peate also admits that folklore studies have not been a focus for the department and museum,

stating "through the period of the existence of the former Department of Folk Life and of the

Welsh Folk Museum itself, it has been felt that folklore studies in Wales should be given the

same status that has been given to folk life in general, but for several years the research staff

of the Museum was too small to give these studies the attention they deserved" (Peate 1957,

471). Peate, too, mentions a desire to found an institute for "dialectology and folklore

studies" (Peate 1957, 472) in partnership with the University of Wales, a desire which

ultimately led to the founding of the Language Research Unit in the then Department of

Welsh at University College, Cardiff in 1967 by A.O.H. Jarman and led by Ceinwen Thomas (Roberts 2007). While Thomas' leadership of the Unit saw a number of studies undertaken on various Welsh dialects (James 2008), the Language Unit did not set out to collect folklore, and whatever folk materials they collected were incidental to their main research goals. There was, however, a Department of Oral Traditions and Dialects at St. Fagans, which grew out of the same sentiment, and which did indeed undertake research into Welsh oral traditions. However, the study of folklore did not become an established academic subject in Wales until the creation of Cardiff University's MA in Welsh Ethnological Studies (under the aegis of the School of Welsh), which ran until the spring of 2012; undergraduate and postgraduate modules on folklore are still available at the School.

Material for these studies comes in part from the Welsh folklore archive, which is housed at St. Fagans. The main collector of the material is Robin Gwyndaf, who collected from 1964 until 1990, interviewing over 3000 informants and resulting in around 600 hours of recordings (Gwyndaf 1992/1993, 215). The archive is an extensive collection of Welsh folk narratives, containing material on topics including supernatural events, mythological creatures, historical figures, place names, physical features, and tall tales.

Gwyndaf's other major contribution to the study of Welsh folktales is his *Chwedlau Gwerin Cymru/Welsh Folk Tales* (1999). This booklet, intended for general reading and popular interest, is in both English and Welsh, and presents not only tales from sixty three areas of Wales, but also a variety of Welsh customs common throughout the nation, as well as including a comprehensive bibliography. Also invaluable is Gwyndaf's introduction, which discusses not just the basics of the Welsh folk tradition but also the transmission of the tales. He presents nine occasions at which folk narratives would transfer between people:

i. The family circle – in the company of close neighbors on the hearth. (The most important channel.)
ii. The company of well-known characters and storytellers in towns and villages.

iii. The every-day company of fellow-workers. For example, agricultural workers, coalminers, quarrymen and fishermen.
iv. Workshops and craft centres. For example, the smithy, the flour and woolen mill, the carpenter's and cobbler's workshop.
v. Occasions of social co-operation between farmers. For examples, sheep-shearing day, hay and corn harvest, threshing day, and pig-killing day.
vi. Occasional communal gatherings, pastimes and recreation and the celebration of folk customs and festivities. For example, *yr wylfabsant* [patron saint festival], *noson lawen* (merry evening), *noswaith wau* [knitting evening], *noson wneud cyflaith* (toffee-making evening), May and Winter's Eve.
vii. The company of fellow-travellers, for example, the drovers.
viii. Fairs and markets.
ix. Inns and taverns. (Gwyndaf 1999, 12)

While these features are by no means unique to Wales, or the transmission of folklore in Wales, when those occasions are observed with the knowledge that "generally speaking, Wales was a nation of small closely-knit communities, in which there was constant reciprocity between individuals, affecting the swiftness with which any new story or anecdote spread like a rumor from person to person," (1999, 13) it presents Wales as a land where folk traditions and narratives would prosper, despite the lack of attention paid to collecting and documenting them.

Gwyndaf shows, too, that there is a tendency in the Welsh tradition to localize tales and to excise fantastical details. By linking stories to familiar locations, the tales become more believable, and while this trend is hardly new in folklore, it is important to keep in mind when examining the material as it exists today. Gwyndaf also notes that the modern Welsh material is often quite short, and that "some narratives are little more than extended statements or remarks and they remind us of proverbs and proverbial sayings" (1999, 16-17). Both this conciseness and tendency to localize the tale are present in the *celwydd golau* tradition.

Gwyndaf does not include any *celwydd golau* in his collection however, a decision he explains, as follows:

> One obvious omission are items relating to the colorful characters who recited white-lie tales, for example, Shemi Wâd (James Wade), Goodwick, near Fishguard, and the

equally picturesque characters well known for their wit and humor, for example, Twm Weunbwll (Thomas Phillips), Glandŵr, Pembrokeshire. These two characters could easily have been included but for the existence of other important traditions close by associated with the landing of the French at Fishguard (46) and the Rebecca Riots at Yr Efail Wen, Pembrokeshire (49). (1999, 22)

So although much of what he says remains relevant to the *celwydd golau* tradition, Gwyndaf never directly addresses it. This tradition, fortunately, is most certainly present in the Archive at Saint Fagans National History Museum.

This Archive houses the largest and most complete collection of *celwydd golau*. The term *celwydd golau* translates to "white lie," and the term is used frequently by informants in the tapes. There are also three specific publications dedicated to the topic. The most recent is Mary Medlicott's *Shemi's Tall Tales* (2008), an English language publication with ten tales told by Shemi Wâd, the Welsh tall tale-teller mentioned by Gwyndaf above. Medlicott is a professional storyteller who grew up in Pembrokeshire and heard some of Shemi's tales as a child, which inspired her to write this volume. Unfortunately, it is unclear to what extent Medlicott altered Shemi's stories. In the cases where her tale varies from what is present in the archive, it is impossible to know if that is due to her editorial changes or if she simply heard a different example of the tale. Similarly, due to her presentation of the tales as a narrative – with her father hearing the tales from an old woman who knew Shemi when she was a child – we are not hearing the tales directly from Shemi himself, even within the text. While this presentation mirrors the nature of tall tale transmission, with many informants relaying the tales as originally told by someone else, its usage as a framing device for a literary text diminishes the publication's use as a scholarly source.

Medlicott does, however, provide valuable biographical information about Shemi, who was baptized in November of 1814 (2008, 8) and died in 1897 (2008, 7). He lived in Goodwick, on the opposite side of the bay from Fishguard, Pembrokeshire (2008, 8), and was known for telling his tales to anyone who would listen – "the local children in the seaside

town where he lived; the neighbours and friends for whom he did odd jobs; the sailors and fishermen in his two favourite pubs, the Rose and Crown and the Hope and Anchor" (2008, 7). Medlicott also gives her readers a sense of how Shemi was perceived by the community, stating "although Shemi was definitely odd, no-one hated him, no-one made fun of him, and no-one was afraid of him either...Even if his stories were terrible fibs, he only told them to entertain his listeners and make them laugh" (2008, 10). Another measure of just how popular Shemi was is that after his death:

> his friends got together to pay for him to have a decent burial and a proper stone tombstone on his grave. He'd never had any money himself and there's no evidence that he had any family still living when he died. But Shemi Wâd was loved nonetheless. The words carved on his tombstone were apt: '*Cyfaill i bawb, a hoff gan bawb*'. A friend to all, and loved by all. (2008, 15)

Such a reaction is markedly different to that shown to "Oregon" Smith, who was a much more divisive character in the community. Regardless, Shemi seems to have been a popular figure in the community, perhaps explaining why the archive has a number of tales attributed to him, as noted by Gwyndaf.

More comprehensive than Medlicott's work are Arthur Tomos' two Welsh language collections, *Straeon Celwydd Golau* (1992) and *Celwydd Golau!* (1999). Tomos does not restrict himself to a single teller, presenting the material first by subject and later by teller. He presents tales on a variety of subjects, ranging from the weather to wild animals to foreign countries to traveling. While each of these sections are comprehensive, Tomos rarely names his informants or states where they were from, stating: "Mae'r straeon eu hunain yn ddigon heb orfod nodi'r awdur neu'r cyfrannwr. Gofynnodd ambell un imi beidio ag enwi'r cymeriad a luniodd y stori ac er mwyn arbed ei groen mi wnes innau gadw at y dymuniad" (Tomos 1999, 16).[9] While it is certainly important to respect the wishes of the informants, the

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[9] "The stories themselves are enough without having to identify the author or the contributor. One or two asked me not to name the character who created the story and to save his skin I have respected their wishes."

reader's inability to trace the tales or discover the context in which they were told limits the collections' use as a primary source.

Tomos has also published several articles on the topic in *Llafar Gwlad*. Tomos wrote two pieces[10] on *celwydd golau*, although the material for both was drawn from his books. Several other authors have also published *celwydd golau* in the magazine, such as Eric Williams, T. Llew Jones, and Olwen Hills.[11] Each of the articles presents a tale known to the author, and attributed to some known tale teller. Few other details are given, however, which means that the articles, while useful for comparative purposes, do not offer the interpretive value of the material in the archives.

The last major resource on *celwydd golau* is Jerry Hunter's "'Traddodiad y Celwydd Golau': The Welsh Tall Tale Tradition" (1992), which is the sole academic analysis of the tradition. Using sixty different tales by thirteen different tellers, all drawn from the archive at St. Fagans National History Museum, Hunter begins by providing an overview of the genre, joining in Gerald Thomas' call for further examination into "the tall tale's status in the international tale type and motif indexes." (54), as well as examining Thomas' conception of the "tall-tale hero" in the context of the Welsh tradition. Hunter observes that a large number of *celwydd golau* are told by someone other than the hero of the tale, and that the stories can be transmitted to people who did not know the original teller, yet who continue to attribute it to them, albeit a highly fictionalized version of the original teller.[12]

Another of Thomas' foci is narrative voice, of which he identifies three categories amongst the material:

> First of all, there are tales told entirely in the third person. The second category involves tales with a central core of first person narrative framed in the third person

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[10] "Straeon Celwydd Golau" (Tomos 1991) & "Straeon Celwydd Golau a Geirio'n Gam" (Tomos 2011).
[11] Respectively, the articles are titled: "Straeon Celwydd Golau" (Williams 1996), "Celwydd Gole" (Jones 2006), and Straeon Celwydd Golau o Ddyffryn Ogwen (Hills 1992).
[12] Hunter observes this phenomena with Gruffydd Jones, known as *Y Deryn Mawr* – "The path of transmission which brought tales of the Deryn Mawr to [the informant] has seen to it that the historical Gruffydd Jones is eclipsed entirely by the *celwydd golau* persona of Y Deryn Mawr" (Hunter 1992, 56).

narrative voice. In these tales, the voice of the tall tale hero usually enters when dialogue appears. The third category is for tales told entirely in the first person voice of the protagonist. (57)

He suggests that further study of "the social and conversational contexts in which such narratives are performed" (58) could better explain some of the reasons why tales are told in certain categories. Hunter also stresses that tall tales occur in conversational contexts, and are dependent on other speech acts (59). Hunter's article is a useful starting point for any examination of *celwydd golau* but is constrained by its length – a result of its origin as a paper given at the Harvard Celtic Colloquium – necessitating a fuller examination of *celwydd golau* as well as leaving plenty of room for future scholars to examine the topic.

Methodology

It is the intent of this study to rise to this challenge. I intend to examine the *celwydd golau* tradition and establish what traits characterize the genre in Wales, as well as what traits or types seem particularly Welsh, either due to their absence from cultures or because of their links to other parts of Welsh folk culture. The material on which this study is based has been drawn from the St. Fagans National History Museum Archive.[13] The form and content of the discussion that follows owes much to Henningsen's "The Art of Perpendicular Lying: Concerning a Commercial Collecting of Norwegian Sailors' Tall Tales" (1965), discussing the material based upon their Aarne-Thompson-Uther[14] tale type number.[15]

The appendices contain summaries of the tales presented in this study, once again organized by ATU tale type number. Each example's entry begins with listing the tape number in the St. Fagans National History Museum Archive,[16] its location on the tape, its

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[13] The material was located in the archive through Juliette Wood's Welsh tale type index (as yet unpublished).
[14] Hereafter abbreviated to ATU.
[15] The ATU index is used as the material in Saint Fagans has never been systematically organized. There were two proposals to do so, but they never were completed.
[16] Hereafter the NHM archive.

page in the tape's transcript, the name of the informant, and where he or she lived, followed by a summary of the example. Each example is also numbered, and will be referenced in the discussion by that number, with the material in Appendix A preceded by an A, e.g. [A1], and the material in Appendix B preceded by a B, e.g. [B3].

As a complete examination of the tall tales in the NFM archive is outside the scope of this study, it has been decided to focus upon two categories of tall tales – tales about animals and tales about language. Tales about animals have been chosen because of how numerous they are. In the NHM Archive there are a number of *celwydd golau* involving animals, providing a wealth of examples to examine. This wealth is mirrored in the international tall tale tradition, as evidenced by the ATU Index. Because of how common these types of tales are, they are useful in determining which characteristics or types are uniquely Welsh and which are found in multiple traditions. This in turn provides the opportunity to discern what defines the tall tale in the Welsh tradition as opposed to the tall tale tradition internationally.

On the other hand, the tales about language are more unique to Wales. These tales belong to ATU type 1699, which does not fall under the category of tall tales. Indeed, while tales such as these, which often involve linguistic false friends, often appear as jokes in other cultures, the Welsh examples seem more in line with tall tales than jokes. Due to Wales' situation as a bilingual nation, one would expect to find folklore about misunderstandings between the two languages. And while similar jokes may be able to be made in other locations, the specifics of the relationship between the Welsh and English languages means that knowledge of not only the Welsh language but also of Welsh culture is required to fully understand these tales, making them tall tales rather than jokes. And while only 19% of people in Wales currently speak Welsh, according to the last census (United Kingdom Office for National Statistics 2012), that percentage was historically much higher, especially in the North and West where many of these tales were collected. As a result, the tales document not

only a part of the *celwydd golau* tradition that is not shared with other tall tale traditions, but also provide a glimpse of how people viewed their relationship with members of the English speaking community.

My analysis largely follows Henningsen's example of discussing how the material fits into the international tradition as well as the traditions from which the material originated. Various theories such as performance and postcolonial theories shall be used in passing to enhance certain discussions, but they are not a focal point for the work as a whole. This is consistent with much of the literature on tall tales, which, as mentioned, has largely been descriptive, more concerned with definitions and functions than any sort of detailed analysis. Another focus in the scholarship of non-American material has been its comparison to the American tradition, which as mentioned has tended to dominate scholarship in the field. There has been no rhetorical analysis of tall tales, such as the work undertaken on the proverb by Wolfgang Mieder, and as such there is no theoretical work specific to the tall tale to inform the analysis in this study.

There are a number of topics outside the scope of this study that would be interesting areas for further analysis. A complete study of the tall tales contained within the archive would be invaluable, as would a stylistic analysis of the tales. Furthermore, an in depth comparative study between the Welsh and other tall tale traditions would be invaluable in further defining not only *celwydd golau* but tall tales in general. While international examples shall indeed be used for comparison purposes, a detailed analysis is outside the focus of this present study. A rhetorical analysis of how *celwydd golau* work would also be interesting, but lies outside of both my theoretical and linguistic backgrounds. Finally, as Hunter suggests in his article, an analysis of why some tellers tell the tale in third person while others in first might help illuminate the methods of tall tale transmission (Hunter 1994, 58).

Terminology

There are several terms that need careful definition before beginning the discussion.

Each individual tale will be called an "example," with the examples being organized into "types" by the ATU Tale Type Index. In cases where there are clear differences in examples categorized into the same type, "variants" will be used to differentiate between similar examples. In determining a variant, structural differences between the examples as well as differences in distribution throughout Wales will be given more weight than details such as differences in animals or wording.

The term "hero" will be used in a more limited fashion than that used by Thomas. In this study it will be used to signify the main character in the tall tale, while the term "teller" shall be used for the original source of the tale. While the "hero" and "teller" are frequently the same figure, the use of "hero" will be limited to discussion of the actions within the tales, while "teller" will be used to describe those outside the tales, in order to keep the distinction clear. The term "informant" shall be used for the person who provided the tall tale to the Saint Fagans National History Museum Archive. In the Archive, there are a few cases in which the teller and the informant are the same person. In those cases the term informant will be used, but the fact that they are the original source for the tale will be noted.

Celwydd Golau Concerning Animals

While many tall tales, especially in the American tradition, are based on the unknown, and take place on the frontier, there are also a number of tall tales concerning animals, places, and events with which an audience would be intimately familiar. In Wales, where there is no equivalent to the American West, there are a number of recorded tall tales about animals, both domestic and wild. As a result, there are many *celwydd golau* that impute fantastical qualities to various animals. In these tales, the humor comes less from the ridiculous adventures of the teller, but rather from the incongruity between the tale and reality. In these tales, birds rip trees out of the ground, dogs continue to hunt after dying, and cabbages grow large enough to shelter a whole family of cows.

The NHM Archive contains eighty-one tales involving animals, which may be categorized into fourteen different tale types. These tales include domesticated animals such as dogs, pigs and sheep, agricultural pests such as crows and foxes, game animals such as fish and rabbits as well as a few more unusual animals such as whales. This chapter will present these tales by their ATU numbers, examining them in order to uncover what they demonstrate about the *celwydd golau* tradition.

Type 1881: Man Carried Through the Air by Geese [pg 117-118]

This type is one of the more common tall tales both in Wales and internationally; indeed, it is fairly common in all the areas included in the ATU Index (Uther 2004, 471). There are nine examples of this tale type in the NHM archive, which may be divided into three variants. The first variant, consisting of examples [A1–A6], describes a man being carried to Ireland by a bird, then returning to Wales in some other exaggerated manner, often by being fired out of a cannon. The most detailed example of this first variant is example [A5], told by Reverend D. Lloyd Richards of Betws Ifan, Pembrokeshire. Of the six examples

of this variant, five are from northern Pembrokeshire and southern Ceredigion, with examples [A1-A3] being attributed to Shemi Wâd of Abergwaun, who is the subject of Mary Medlicott's *Shemi's Tall Tales*.[17] The two examples of the second variant [A7–A8] are both attributed to Gruffudd Jones, nicknamed *Y Deryn Mawr* [the large bird] as a result of this particular tale. In this variant the hero is in a foreign country where he catches an ostrich and rides it across the ocean, either from Africa to Wales [A7] or from Australia to America [A8]. The third variant [A9] takes place during a voyage to America. The hero's wife is thrown overboard during a storm, only to be rescued by the hero riding on a heron. They then complete the journey on the back of the heron.

In each variant, the main exaggeration of the tale lies in the strength of the bird. Four species of birds are identified in the tales – a heron, a snipe, a cormorant, and an ostrich – with the first three of these being native to the western coastline of Wales. In the second variant, the ostriches are used to emphasize the exotic location of the tale, while the use of native birds in the other variants allow the teller to emphasize the local connections of the tale. This connection supports Gwyndaf's observation that the Welsh tradition tends to localize material.[18] Localization aids not only in committing the tale to memory, but also assists the audience with visualizing the tale, allowing them to think of familiar places and animals. By using details with which the audience is familiar, the teller ensures that the tale is remembered and passed on to the next generation. Indeed, many of the informants tell this tale after being asked if they know any stories about birds, demonstrating that they associate this tale with birds rather than any other exaggerations in the tale.

The most prominent example of further exaggerations is the return journey in the first variant – as mentioned above, the hero's return is most frequently accomplished by cannon,

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[17] Medlicott includes two versions of this tale, the first entitled "Stale Currant Bun" (Medlicott 2008 17-28), featuring a return by cannon, as in most of the examples, and the second entitled "Crab Meat for Supper" (35-40), featuring a return by a giant crab.
[18] See page 28.

and while humans can actually be shot out of specially designed cannons, the hyperbole is clear. It is possible that this detail was inspired by a real human cannonball, the first of which was in London in 1877 (Hooper 2013). And while the choice may have been inspired by real events, there is clear evidence that the motif of traveling by cannon predates any successful attempts, most notably in R.E. Raspe's *The Surprising Adventures of Baron Münchausen* (1785). Indeed, the motif is so common it is included in the ATU Index as its own type, ATU 1880. There is no evidence either way to say what influenced the tellers to include the return by cannon; given the early date of both the inclusion in the Baron Münchausen material and the real life fairground stunt, both are possible sources for the idea.

However, it is not only by cannon that the hero may return – see example [A3] which features Shemi returning on the back of a giant crab. Regardless of the mechanics of the hero's return in the first variant, it is always as exaggerated as his original journey. The reason for this second exaggeration is that the hero's return must be as interesting as his outward journey. Any normal method of travel would surely be a disappointment to the audience who would be expecting another exaggeration. By making the return by cannon or on the back of a giant crab, the teller not only provides that second exaggeration, but also sets the tale up to finish at the beach where it all began, adding one final piece of implausibility to the tale. This conforms to Brown's analysis of the structure of the tall tale (1987, 20) – the tall tale must end on an exaggeration, which may also function as a resolution. Indeed, the exaggerated return does just that. To end the tale with the hero simply finding a boat to return home in would be an anti-climax, going against the nature of the tall tale. So while in terms of the audiences appreciation of the tale, the initial voyage may be seen as the primary exaggeration, its presence at the opening of the tale means that there must be another exaggeration with which to end the tale, even if its purpose is simply to provide an answer to how the hero returned home to tell the tale.

Given the limited distribution of each of the three variants, together with the strong personal connection each has to one teller, it seems likely that each originated with an individual teller. The first variant probably began with Shemi Wâd as three examples all cite him as the source, and the other three examples of the first variant all match the details found in example [A5]. While it is the examples attributed to Shemi that vary the most, that can be explained by Shemi having told the tale multiple times in his life, with one example spreading outside his community and being retold by other tellers. Shemi could have changed the details of his retellings based on his location or audience, while the other tellers associated with the first variant simply retold the version they had heard. It is also possible that the tellers may never have told the tale, but rather had it associated with them by others – as Gwyndaf notes, "if a tale is told about a character from outside the locality, it is usually easily recognized as a white-lie, but if such a tale is told about a noted witty local character, what seems to be a lie to one listener may be but an extension of the truth to another" (Gwyndaf 1999, 16). Because the person involved in the events of the tale is known for telling tall tales, the tale becomes more believable than if the teller were an unknown, since it grounds the tale more firmly in reality for the audience. As they know the hero, or at least know *of* him, they can more easily imagine the story as truth, rather than fiction. The other two variants share the strong personal connection to their teller, and probably represent a version, albeit on a smaller scale, of the same process.

These tales can also have a variety of functions apart from entertainment. Each tale provides an example of someone fighting back against nature, with improbable results. The first variant could also function as an excuse for a long night out; each example of the tale includes a reference to the hero spending the night in Ireland, only returning to Wales in the morning. The tale could thus be used as an excuse for a night spent away from usual haunts, whether as an excuse to friends as to why the teller was missing one night or to a wife who

wants to know why the teller did not come home the previous evening. By describing a wild adventure, the teller can explain his absence through humor and attempt to defuse the situation.

The second and third variants also serve to impress listeners upon the teller's return from overseas, demonstrating the adventures that can happen when someone leaves Wales. Beyond simply impressing people at home, however, the tales serve as a humorous way of demonstrating the dangers of travel abroad. The third variant is the most explicit in this, with the teller saving his wife from danger by using the bird. The second variant also serves as a warning that other places may not be as expected – as in example [A8] where Jones leaves Australia because he discovers that the jobs are in America, despite what he has heard. Regardless of whether the tale is expressing the dangers of travel or dealing with unmet expectations, both the second and third variants serve to warn the audience of the potential dangers of leaving home just as the first variant functions as a humorous excuse.

1881*: Parrots Fly Away with Tree [pgs. 119-122]

Birds can also fly away with objects other than people. ATU tale type 1881* has only five entries in the ATU Index (Uther 2004, 471), indicating that it is not well attested in international traditions. Even so, there are eighteen examples [A10-A27] of the type in the NHM Archive, most of which come from North Wales. This in itself serves to demonstrate the danger of relying too heavily on international type indexes in order to understand the distribution of tales. Indeed, Stith Thompson believed that tall tales about people being fired from cannons were limited to the Baltic region (Hunter 1992, 55), while the examples above show that is not true. The presence of these tales is a further demonstration of the limitations of the current tale type indices when it comes to the tall tale.

The first variant consists of sixteen examples [A10-A25]; the variant begins with a farmer's crops being eaten by crows, and the farmer placing birdlime on a nearby tree. The crows stick to the tree and then fly off with it, which is the key exaggeration in the tale type. While the plant that the crows are eating varies, and in example [A16] jack daws are substituted for crows, there is little variation in the tales, each following the pattern described above. There is an added note at the end of examples [A23] and [A24], stating that the tree with the crows eventually landed somewhere, and in example [A23] it is also stated that a table was made from the tree,[19] but these additions are not a major change to the tale and as such do not warrant being considered a distinct variant. Furthermore, the striking uniformity amongst the examples, despite their various locations across North Wales, demonstrates that this tale lacks the strong local connection that exists in most Welsh tall tales. While most of the examples are attributed to a local teller, there is no single teller to whom most of the tales are attributed, as is the case with tale type 1881 and Shemi Wâd. It is possible that the spread and uniformity of the tale is due to a popular literary version of the tale, but there is no evidence of such a literary version. In addition, there is the question of why the tale was disseminated across the North but not in the South. Regardless, this type seems to be a core element of the *celwydd golau* tradition, at least in North Wales, given its popularity throughout the region.

The birdlime that is mentioned in a majority of the examples is a real adhesive product that, while mostly illegal nowadays, was a common way to trap birds in the past. The key exaggeration in the type is the ability of the birds to lift the tree out of the ground – while birds can easily lift things off the ground, the idea of a sufficiently large and strong enough group of birds to lift a tree is implausible. The implausibility of this is the source of the

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[19] The version of this tale presented in Tomos' *Straeon Celwydd Golau* (1994) also features this coda, with the tree landing in Y Felinheli and used in the construction of ships (20).

humor in the tale, with the act being so strange and so out of place, it provokes laughter in the audience as well as a sense of relief because the birds are gone and no longer a danger to the teller's crops.

However, the humor of the tale stands in contrast to the realistic context of the tale. The disappearance of a farmer's crops is something that is a matter of life and death, even today. Birds cause agricultural damage of nearly three hundred million Australian dollars annually in New South Wales alone (*Managing bird damage to fruit and other horticultural crops* 2007, 2), even with modern techniques to decrease the damages.[20] The audience of the tale, which in North Wales would have been primarily rural agricultural workers, would be familiar with such problems, and would probably have experienced a similar situation at some point, resulting in them easily sympathizing with the hero's dilemma at the beginning of the tale. This once again points to the importance of the audience and their lived experiences to the tall tale. A tale like this is significantly less harrowing to someone from an urban environment as issues such as crop damage would not be a common concern. Since they cannot directly relate to the situation, they may not grasp exactly what the teller is exaggerating or why it is important.

There is a second variant which consists of two examples, namely [A26] and [A27]. In this variant, the hero is using the birdlime to trap birds to sell for a profit, with no mention made of crops or agricultural damages. The birds involved are no longer crows, but rather goldfinches, which can be sold as pets. In both examples, the hero is extraordinarily successful, covering the tree in the birds, but because he waits until the tree is so full, the birds manage to escape when he goes to collect them, flying away together and preventing the hero from gaining anything. Judging by the summary of the type given by Uther (471),

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[20] Such techniques include acoustic and visual deterrents, mesh netting, and chemical poisons and repellents (*Managing bird damage to fruit and other horticultural crops* 2007, Table 1.2).

this variant may be exclusive to Wales, although given the general paucity of examples of this type in the index, it is impossible to claim this with any certainty. A closer examination of the type in the international tradition would be needed in order to properly assess whether or not type 1881* is particularly Welsh, as well as if this variant is exclusive to the Welsh tradition or not.

In the first variant, the type relies upon a common problem, exaggerating it in order not only to create a humorous situation, but also to remind the audience of a potential solution to a problem. As birds in real life are unlikely to rip a tree out of the ground, using adhesive to trap the birds is a useful strategy to minimize the damage they cause to crops, while the subsequent shooting of the birds at the farmer's leisure could allow a sense of satisfaction that in the tale is denied due to the exaggeration.

The second variant replaces the fear of crop ruination with a cautionary note. If the hero had been more proactive and less greedy and gathered the birds while there were less on the tree, he would have still made money. But since he waited, he lost all the birds and any possible profit, rendering the tale a Welsh example of the English phrase "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." While still humorous, the audience laughs at the hero, who has been made to look like a fool, rather than at the situation, as in the other variant. While many tall tales portray the hero as someone capable of almost superhuman feats of strength or wits, or with an unusual amount of luck, this tale does the opposite, turning the hero into a fool. This transformation mirrors the clowning aspects of the tall tale, as while the teller often portrays himself as a hero by linking himself with the aforementioned virtues, there is always an element of the teller playing the fool, due to the exaggerations and the implied belief on the part of both the teller and the audience. This variant plays with that reality, bringing it to the fore by making the hero into a fool, and therefore showing that the teller is aware of how foolish he may appear when he tells these tales.

1889B: Hunter Turns Animal Inside Out [pg. 123]

There are four examples [A28-A31] of this tale type in the NHM Archive. In each, an animal charges at the hero, and the hero saves himself by reaching inside the animal and pulling it inside out. In examples [A28] and [A29], the hero is charged by a wild animal while out hunting, while in the other two examples, [A30] and [A31], the hero is charged by a domesticated animal in a familiar environment. Despite this difference in setting and animal, however, the tales remain fairly similar in form, and as such do not warrant consideration as two separate variants of the same type.

Dafydd Evan Evans' example [A31], attributed to Huw Dafis of Hirros, Montgomeryshire, is interesting, as it is explicitly identified as *celwydd golau* by both the collector and informant.[21] Dafis was courting a girl, and to avoid her father's dogs he would give them crusts of bread. On one occasion, one old dog refuses the bread, and in order to save himself Dafis reaches inside the dog's mouth and turns the animal inside out. The tale follows the structure described by Brown fairly closely,[22] opening with a realistic detail, the man courting a girl and her parents setting the dogs on him. As the tale develops, it slowly becomes less realistic, resulting in the climax where the dog is turned inside out, leaving the audience with a grotesque image. While this example lacks the assertions of truth that often precede and follow a tall tale, this could be due to hearing the tale from an informant other than the original teller. If Huw Dafis himself were telling the tale, then one might very well hear him asserting the truth of the event.

Indeed, these assertions are missing from the *celwydd golau* in the NHM Archive as a whole, possibly due to the fact that the material is being collected from informants other than

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[21] RG: Ie. Wel, dyne gelwydd gole.
    DEE: Wel, ie, rhai gole odde nw, yntê, gole iawn hefyd, 'te! (Dafydd Evan Evans, SFNHM recording 3136, recorded 1971).
[22] See page 10.

the original tellers. The NHM collection of tall tales in general has typically depended upon what could be considered passive tradition bearers, those who simply heard the tales at some point in their life and had them in their memories, rather than individuals who have been telling these tales for years. Furthermore, tall tales are a good example of what Kenneth Goldstein terms "postponement" (Goldstein 1971, 64), as someone is unlikely to tell the tale if the original teller is present. This leads tall tales to remain inactive in people's repertoire, emerging at specific times, such as when specifically prompted by a collector. In such a context, there is no presumption of fact, and therefore the assertions of truth are deemed unnecessary and therefore omitted, or simply forgotten by an informant who has not repeated the tale for some time.

However, it is possible that the Welsh tradition considers the absolute truth of the tales to be little import, and therefore such assertions would have less value. If the tale-teller does not need an air of credibility surrounding him in order for his tales to have the desired impact, then the assertions have no value. Regardless of the explanation for the absence of the assertion of truth, more examples of the tales heard directly from the tellers would be needed in order to come to a conclusion on this issue.

While the grotesque image of the animal's innards is certainly key to the tale's effectiveness in entertaining the audience, this type also provides an example of the hero overcoming nature. In all four examples, the hero is trapped in a situation where he only has his own wits and strength on which he can depend. He is forced to improvise a solution to his problem, and in doing so, demonstrates both of those qualities. By making himself the hero of his own tale, the teller can link such qualities to himself, and ensure that the story will remain in the minds of the audience by ending it with the grotesque image of the "inside-out animal." Such images can function in place of the normal localization of the tale, as they both act to provide some vivid image for the audience to remember. While tales such as 1881 depend

upon linking the adventure with animals known to people doing unexpected things, tales such as these depend upon providing a memorable image, inverting the normal order of the world by making the internal external and exposing it.

1889C: Fruit Tree Grows From Head of Deer [pgs. 124-125]

The five examples, [A32-A36], of this type in the NHM archive are all from Gwynedd. In variant one, examples [A32] and [A33], a mammal is shot with a seed which grows into a tree. In variant two, examples [A34-A36], the subject is a salmon with a tree growing out of its back. Variant one is the typical form of the tale type in the international tradition, as evidenced by the name of the type in the ATU Index. Variant two however, which varies dramatically in both details and form from the other variant, is not present in the ATU Index, which may indicate that it is unique to Wales. Indeed, since all three examples of variant two seem to originate from the same teller, it is highly probable that the tale is uniquely Welsh.

The mammals involved in the first two examples are a mule and a stag. The former example is discussed by Jerry Hunter (1992, 51-54), and also includes ATU type 1882, while the latter, which takes place in the forests of Germany, is also found in Arthur Tomos' *Straeon Celwydd Golau* (1992, 60), attributed to the same teller as in the NHM Archive.[23] The exaggeration is the ability of the seed to grow in something other than soil, in this case an animal. As stated earlier, this variant is common in the international tall tale tradition, and demonstrates a certain amount of ingenuity on the part of the hero for making use of the available resources, while showing how such ingenuity is ultimately impractical. The tree

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[23] The Tomos version of the tale was discussed in (McMullen 2012, 23-24), but in connection to the exaggeration of the forest being larger than Caernarfonshire.

growing out of the animal reinforces the absurdity of the hero's idea, making the shot life-bringing instead of life-ending.

For variant two, two examples [A35] and [A36] are attributed to William Jones of Bwlch y Rhaeadr, Merionethshire, with example [A34] being so close in certain details that it seems clear that he was also the teller. In each, Jones is fishing for salmon and one gets away. Somehow, a sprig from a tree is attached to the salmon, either by Jones throwing it or the salmon dragging it away while escaping. Later, when Jones returns to the area, he notices a tree growing on an island in the river, only to discover that it is actually growing from a salmon. The exaggeration is twofold, as there is the element of the tree growing where no tree could grow, as well as the exaggerated size of the fish.

Large fish are a standard of the tall tale genre internationally, and these tales could be compared to 1960B. The primary exaggeration in these tales, however, is the motif of the tree growing from the fish, and as a result the tale has been categorized as type 1889C instead. One could even suggest that this is could be regarded as a separate type, 1889C* Tree Grows from Fish, due to the clear differences between these examples and the others listed under this tale type. While Uther states that part of his criteria for inclusion into the tale type index is that the tale "has been documented among at least three ethnic groups or over a long period of time," (2004, 12) there is evidence that a similar tale type has been present since the medieval period in European traditions.

A number of medieval bestiaries ("Whale" 2011) and Saints' Lives, such as *The Voyage of St Brendan* (*The Voyage of St Brendan* 1965, 40-41), describe whales that are so large they are mistaken for islands, and the whale islands are often described as having trees on them. Jasconius, the whale in *The Voyage of Brendan* (1965) is said to have "only an occasional tree here and there," (41), while the medieval scholar Bartholomew Anglicus described the whale as follows.

On his ridge powder and earth is gathered, and so digged together that herbs and small trees and bushes grow thereon, so that that great fish seemeth an island. And if shipmen come unwarily thereby, unneth they scape without peril. For he throweth as much water out of his mouth upon the ship, that he overturneth it sometime or drowneth it." (Steele 2002, chapter VI)

There is a similarity between the Welsh examples and these medieval accounts of sailors mistaking whales for islands. In both, there is the impossibility of a tree growing on an animal and, as in both *The Voyage of St Brendan* (1965) and the Welsh examples, the hero escapes unharmed. And while a fish is certainly not a whale, such a substitution makes sense with the tale being located in a river rather than an ocean, as well as due to the fact that many cultures have considered whales as fish. While the medieval examples are not tall tales in themselves, their presence shows how various motifs can have different functions in different genres – in the tall tale, the fish with a tree in its back is a source of amusement, while in the medieval bestiary material the whale "signifies the devil, who deceives those he drags down to hell." ("Whale" 2011). There is no explicit link between these two traditions, but the parallels are striking, and there is a clear precedent for tales about people being deceived by false islands in the Western European Christian tradition. Indeed, the tale also appears in the Middle Eastern tradition surrounding Sinbad the Sailor. In his first voyage he happens to find himself on an island that turns out to be a sleeping whale, and when it wakes, he is trapped on its back, while the other sailors escape (Lang 1951, 99), demonstrating that that this tale type is not limited to Western Europe. Between the Welsh tradition, the medieval Christian tradition, and Middle Eastern traditions, there is evidence of this type in both three cultures and during multiple time periods, suggesting that this is in fact a possible new type, drawing upon an older and widely-used motif.

The functions of these tales vary dramatically. As mentioned, the medieval Christian examples were used as a way of moral instruction, viewing the whale dragging the sailors into the ocean as an allegory for Satan dragging sinners down to Hell ("Whale" 2011), while

in the story of Sinbad the whale sinking and leaving Sinbad adrift in the sea is simply a narrative device to isolate Sinbad for the next part of his journey. The Welsh examples differ significantly from both of these however, as the hero is able to realize that the island is in fact a fish before any harm, or humiliation, may come to him. The salmon is in no way associated with anything more than being a salmon, unlike the examples in the bestiaries, and the idea of a fish being mistaken for an island forms the entire content of the narrative, unlike in the Sinbad tale. Tall tales are not for preaching traditional morals, as in medieval Christian literature; indeed, their dependence on the teller being able to tell a convincing lie indicates quite the opposite. And while the teller's ability to lie may mark them as immoral, as documented by the community's reaction to Abraham "Oregon" Smith,[24] the tales generally praise those with positive attributes such as intelligence or strength, while exposing the folly of various vices such as greed, as in the second variant of 1881*. While the tall tale may not preach the same moral lessons as Christian allegory, it still can show the value of certain personal abilities and skills.

It is important to keep in mind however that the Welsh examples seem to suggest a single origin, as in the case of the variants of 1881. For these examples, the original teller seems to be William Jones, who lived at Bwlch y Rhaeadr, near Y Bala, Merionethshire. Jones is noted as the teller in examples [A35] and [A36], and while [A34] does not name him, it states that the hero lived at Bwlch y Rhaeadr. Furthermore, all three examples state that the event occurred along the Tryweryn river in Cwm Celyn, with only example [A35] being so specific as to state that the salmon was seen by the Tryweryn bridge and Goronwr's [sic] Stone. These shared details, along with the fact that the tale is not found outside the area

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[24] "Many considered [Smith's] stories as harmful, purposeless lies and Abe as an immoral person for telling them" (Jansen 1949, 115).

surrounding Y Bala, suggests that this variant of the tale in Wales was created by William Jones himself.

These examples also provide another example of the localizing tendency in Welsh folklore as discussed by Gwyndaf. By placing the tale so specifically in a particular location, any local audience would know where the tale was supposed to have happened. This not only allows the audience to better picture and remember the tale, but also presents an opportunity for the audience to contribute. Listeners may have their own tale in which they saw the fish island, or had some other strange experience while fishing on the same river. This localizing tendency also serves to make the tall tale seem more realistic, basing it in places and experiences with which the audience and the teller would be familiar, adding to the air of credibility that is essential to the tall tale. And since the exaggeration in question is a fish with a tree in its back, should anyone try to argue that there is no island where the teller claimed there was one, he can always reply that the fish swam away, and then tell a tale about a further encounter with the fish somewhere else along the river.

But ultimately it is the image of the tree growing out of an animal that makes the tale most memorable, not just the localization, as demonstrated by the examples [A32] and [A33]. Neither of these tales contain any memorable local elements. Indeed, example [A33] occurs in Germany, utilizing a foreign location to not only prevent anyone objecting but also to make the tale seem more possible. Tall tales depend upon vivid imagery or actions for their transmission, and as such exaggerations tend to concern physical size or unusual events that lend themselves to creating memorable images. Whether it is the sight of a flock of crows ripping a tree out of the ground, a boar turned inside out, or a tree growing out of a salmon, the key exaggeration is a scene that would be difficult to forget if someone actually saw it. And in the hands of a skilled teller, the recounting of the event would be just as memorable to the listeners, allowing the tale to be repeated after the tale teller himself has left.

1889L: The Split Dog [pg. 126]

There are three examples [A37-A39] of this tale type in the NHM archive, all from different parts of Wales. In each, a dog is split in two, catches a rabbit, and is then put back together, without any long term damage. The exaggeration is obvious in the tale, especially in examples [A37] and [A38], in which both halves of the dog manage to catch a rabbit each.

This tale is another that features the grotesque imagery that is so often apparent in the tall tale. The image of the split dog is memorable, as is the detail of sewing the dog together again. The tale is a memorable way of demonstrating how unfortunate accidents can happen, although sometimes they can turn out for the best. Losing a valuable hunting dog to an accident would be a tragedy in a rural community, and this tale serves to make the incident humorous, as in type 1881*, although it cannot provide a solution as in that tale. Sometimes, problems cannot be solved, only dealt with after they occur, and this tale reflects that reality, albeit through the logic of the tall tale.

1889L: Mittens Chase Deer [pg. 127]**

Four [A40-A43] of the five examples [A40-A44] of this type are attributed to Huw Davies of Hirros, near Llanfair Caereinion, Mongomeryshire. In each, the hero has a dog who is an excellent hunter. After its death, the skin is used to make gloves or a waistcoat. One day, either a fox or a hare goes by, depending on the example, and the dog-skin clothes chase after the prey, just as the dog did in life.

Although most of the examples in the NHM archive are attributed to Huw Dafis, it is important to note that this tale may be more widespread in Wales. Example [A44], the one example not attributed to Huw Dafis, was collected in Llansannan, Denbighshire.

Furthermore, Arthur Tomos places it in his category of tales that appear throughout Wales (1992, 17), and cites a variant in Eldra and A.O.H Jarman's *Y Sipswn Cymreig* (1979, 174).[25] These details suggests that this tale type probably has a wider presence in Wales than is attested by the examples in the archive.

As in the previous type, this tale takes a negative, but inevitable, situation – that of the loss of a prize hunting dog – and minimizes its impact, as the dog retains its ability to hunt even after its death. No solution as to the loss of the dog is provided, or indeed is any solution provided for the occasional loss of mittens, although the tale could act as an excuse for a misplaced pair. It is important to keep in mind that tall tales are above else concerned with entertainment and memorable images, and this tale provides both with the image of the mittens chasing after the hare.

1891: The Great Rabbit Catch [pgs. 128-129]

There are three variants of this type in the NHM archive. The first variant, example [A45], is from Llandudno, Denbighshire, and describes how Ifan Michael once caught over a hundred rabbits by catching one, giving it a note written in Welsh inviting its family out for food, and releasing the rabbit back into its burrow. The rabbit returns, followed by its family, which Michael is able to catch. The second variant, example [A46], is attributed to Daniel y Pant, of Pembrokeshire, who uses a ferret to catch rabbits. On one occasion, the ferret refuses to come back out of the rabbit hole, so Daniel gathers crabs from the beach, puts them into the hole, and they chase both the rabbits and the ferret out of the burrow. After this

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[25] It is also interesting to note that *Y Sipswn Cymreig* states that the tale was first recorded in England, a fact that Tomos omits. However, the ATU Index entry for the type refers the reader to Earnest Baughmann's *Type and Motif-Index of the Folktales of England and North America* (1966), which in turn refers the reader to James Carew Hazlitt's *Shakespeare Jest-Books* (1864). While the interrelationship of Welsh and English tall tales, and especially the relationship between the written and oral traditions of the two countries, is outside the scope of this study, it is a topic that deserves further consideration.

experience, the ferret refuses to enter any more rabbit holes. Due to the broad nature of this tale type, these tales have little in common other than being about hunting rabbits.

The third variant is the most common in the NHM archive, consisting of examples [A47-A51]. Indeed, in the Aarne-Thompson Tale Type Index, these tales would be considered their own tale type, 1891B* or Rabbits (Hares) Caught by Making them Sneeze. However, in his update of the tale type index, Uther combined all the various subtypes of type 1891 into one, as most of the types contained very few examples, which violated his criterion of "three ethnic groups or over a long period of time" (Uther 2004, 12). While the existence of the Welsh examples is not enough to justify returning to Thompson's classification, it is still an important data point to consider in any further reevaluations of the Index, as other examples could be found in other ethnic groups. In this variant, pepper is placed by a rock, and when the rabbits approach the rock they begin to sneeze, hitting their heads on the rocks and killing themselves, allowing the hunter to gather them up without any problem. All five examples come from Pembrokeshire, with four of the five, [A48-A51], being attributed to Daniel y Pant.

Daniel y Pant is another known tale-teller, similar to Shemi Wâd. According to the data in the NHM archive, both tellers are linked with one type in particular – Shemi with 1881 and Daniel with 1891. It is possible that this type was invented by Daniel in Wales, just as 1881 may have been invented by Shemi, although it is impossible to say for certain.

The interesting thing about this tale however, is that the situation described is actually possible and is based on real events. Pepper can be used to deter rabbits from eating vegetables in garden, as it causes them to sneeze, so they learn to avoid areas where there is pepper (Lovgren 2010). While this use of pepper as a deterrent is very different to the use found in the tall tale, there is a potential connection. On a gardening forum hosted by the

Royal Horticultural Society, one person going by the username *buttercup* posted the following tale:

> My father used to tell me of this way to get rid of rabbits. Obviously one needs a large pinch of salt. In the veg garden plagued with rabbits - find a brick and wrap it in lettuce, place on ground and sprinkle pepper on the top of the lettuce covered brick. Along hops Mr rabbit, he sees the lettuce and starts to eat it, the pepper sets off a terrific sneezing fit, then Mr rabbit gives one enormous sneeze and bangs his head down on the hard brick!! Which kills him outright! Well it will give you all a laugh anyway (buttercup, 2005).

This example, while not necessarily from Wales, combines the truth of pepper being used to protect a garden with the tall tale's exaggeration of the rabbit sneezing so badly that it hits its head and dies. And once that connection is made, it is easy to imagine someone becoming proactive with the pepper and taking it to where the rabbits are, rather than just waiting for the rabbits to come to them, as in these examples.

Furthermore, *buttercup* states that his or her father used to tell them this tale, indicating that they likely heard it as a child, just as James Varney, the informant in example [A51], states he heard the tale as a child. This tale, while clearly being used to amuse children both in Wales and beyond, could also have several other functions. The use of the pepper shows the hunter as being clever enough to figure out a way to hunt the rabbits with minimal effort. Example [A50] begins with the hero being questioned on the viability of the method, only to be vindicated by filling a three-horse cart with all the rabbits he catches. And while none of the examples from the NHM archive mention using pepper to protect a garden, the use of a common household item to deal with a common agricultural pest occurs in other tale types such as 1881*. Given the statement about hearing the tale as a child, this tale, and others like it could be seen as an amusing way of passing down agricultural and hunting skills to the next generation, preserving these methods for future use.

There is also a link in this example to the idea that tall tales are used to define social groups. As Brown states, "the [tall] tale delineates an "in" group and challenges the listener

to prove himself clever or dull, in or out of that group through his response to the tale"

(Brown 1987, 38). To an outsider, the examples here seem false for two reasons – the method

of killing the rabbits and how many rabbits were killed – just as in the case of type 1881*,

causing them to doubt both components of the tale. However, to someone who knows that

glue and pepper are efficient ways of dealing with pests such as crows and rabbits, they will

understand that the exaggeration lies in the second part, and react accordingly. Thus a

distinction is drawn amongst the audience members, determining those who are members of

the "in group", and thus able to separate fact from fiction in the tale and understand the tale

as humor, and those who are in the "out group", and may either fall for the "lies" and believe

the story is true or believe the opposite, and think the entire tale is fiction.

Tall tales can also be used as a way to induce members into a group, as seen in the

dog market at Canton (Bauman 1986). Several of the informants for this tale note that when

they heard the tale as children they believed it, but as adults realized that it was false. This is

because children occupy a liminal position between "in group" and "out group" in regards to

their response to the tall tale. While a child may not be completely confused by a tale, as

outsiders sometimes are (Brown 1987, 19), they still might mistake the exaggeration in the

tale as fact. Thus, these tales can play a role in the education of children, one of William

Bascom's four functions of folklore (Bascom 1954, 345). Tall tales cannot only entertain

children or transmit knowledge of agricultural or hunting techniques, but also provide them

with a way to demonstrate their grasp of reality and the culture in which they live. The

moment that a child realizes that the tale is not real, and that the fiction is where the humor

come from, marks a moment of inclusion into the group as a full member. The possible

educational value is on display in *buttercup*'s example, with the tale being presented as both a

tall tale and a solution to a problem reflecting both the educational value of the tale as both a

piece of advice and as a test of cultural competency of fellow gardeners.

However, not every variant is intended to educate. Some, such as the first two examples, are more concerned with demonstrating the ingenuity of the heroes. Not only could they invent a clever way to hunt a large number of rabbits in a short time, they are also able to demonstrate their creativity by inventing the tale. By telling the tale, the teller shows just how clever the hero, often the teller himself, can be, not only as concerns his supposed exploits but also the tales he tells.

1894: A Man Shoots a Ramrod Full of Ducks [pg. 130]

Example [A52] is the only example of this type in the NHM archive, and was told by Thomas Goronwy Davies, of Llangammarch, Brecknockshire, and attributed to Ivy Penlanwen of Tir Abad, Brecknockshire. Ivy was out hunting when he saw a row of partridges and shot every one of them by moving the gun as he pulled the trigger. While this example does not match the tale type exactly, the exaggerated element of killing multiple birds in a single shot is similar. This suggests that this version of the tale may be a local Welsh variant of the tale type. This example also demonstrates the skill of the teller, reflecting Ivy's shooting skills, showing that he is capable of the seemingly impossible.

1896: The Man Nails the Tail of the Wolf to the Tree [pg. 131]

There are only two examples [A53-A54] of this tale type in the NHM archive, despite its popularity around the world. In both, the hero is out hunting using nails or tacks rather than shot, and manages to trap an animal by its tail. Similar to type 1889L**, the hunted animal is either a fox or a rabbit, with the fox being branded as a thief. Both examples demonstrate that the hero is a great shot, and show his resourcefulness in coming up with tacks or nails as ammunition. This type and type 1889C show how hunters can be creative with their ammunition, using everything from seeds to nails in place of shot. Due to shot

being expensive and limited, such creativity is to be expected, and tall tales such as this allow the teller to demonstrate his own creativity while challenging the audience to be clever enough to realize that the tale, while based in reality, is in fact fiction.

Indeed, the theft detail in these two examples is unique. Typically, the fox is shot with a nail during a hunt, as shown in Tomos (1992, 56), as well as international examples, such as the one from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan provided by Dorson (2008, 144). This tale, told by Finnish immigrants and set in Finland, tells how they would hunt foxes by nailing them to trees, cutting their noses, and beating them until the fox ran out of its skin. Said actions not only kept a bullet hole out of the pelt, but also kept the fox alive to regrow its fur. Examples such as these show the variety inherent in the tale type system, demonstrating how various tales all have the same base elements.

This type also appears in other genres, most notably with trickster heroes. This same motif of the fox getting trapped due to a nailed tail also occurs in a Brer Rabbit tale, titled, "Brother Rabbit gets Brother Fox's Dinner" (Harris 1983, 338-341). In the tale, Brer Rabbit agrees to help Brer Fox nail down his roof, only to nail down his tail so that he could steal his dinner. The Brer Rabbit tales are not tall tales, but rather animal tales, with Brer Rabbit serving as a trickster hero. While such tales have no pretensions towards reality, as the tall tale does, both genres depend upon a hero who is clever and manages to think his way out of dangerous situations. The idea of nailing a fox's tail in order to prevent the animal from escaping shows the same clever thinking as the trickster hero. Regardless of the use of the motif however, it is found across the United States and Wales, as well as in eight other countries, according to the ATU Index (Uther 2004, 482) which shows a clear distribution of the tale internationally.

1920F*: Skillful Hounds [pg. 132]

The one example of this type [A55] comes from Trefdraeth, Pembrokeshire. The

example describes a greyhound who fetches a lump of hot iron for his master to make a new

horseshoe. This is, however, not the only instance of this motif in British lore. The most

prominent example would be that of St. Asaph, who fetched hot coals for St. Kentigern

without being burnt (Jocelyn of Furness, 1998). The presence of this motif echoes the

presence of the whale island motif, indicating the close relationship between the tall tale and

miraculous literature. The close relationship between these two genres is perhaps best

explored by C. Grant Loomis in his article "The American Tall Tale and the Miraculous,"

(1945) where he states, "The belief of one age becomes the tall tale or bald lie in another era"

(109). As Loomis argues, many of the motifs were brought by early colonizers, "particularly

those from Celtic and French countries" (112), and these motifs subsequently made their way

into the tall tale:

> Against a background of strange worlds to conquer, a new use for the Old-World
> miracles found place. The novelty of fresh lands to conquer encouraged imaginative
> beliefs. Always there was the possibility of marvels in some undiscovered tomorrow.
> The potential bigness inherent in a landscape of the size presented in America
> dwarfed little man [*sic*] and made him whistle in the dark. The bases of exaggeration
> under these conditions was not alone contained in a desire to escape from the
> commonplace, but were also stimulated by the need of self-inflating courage in the
> face of dreadful odds. The growth of the American cult of wonder had a good deal of
> prayerful hardihood and teeth-gritting cheerfulness. In time, however, the success of
> improbables and imponderables left a lingering unacknowledged premonition of
> successful impossibilities. In the forward thrust of adventure, many were lost, but
> always some won through. The vaunting and boasting cry from the wilderness had a
> forgivable justification. An imminent death tomorrow allowed some breast beating
> and ground thumping today." (110)

While Loomis' analysis is about the tall tale in the New World, the basic principles would

remain the same in the Old. Motifs from religious traditions would get brought into the

secular one, as demonstrated by this motif and that of the whale island earlier, and reused in

other genres, like the tall tale. As Thomas notes "the basic difference between the saintly

miracle and its milieu and the tall tale is clearly that of the attitude of narrators and audience"

(Thomas 1977, 34). The saintly miracle depends on existing within a religious context, shared by both the teller and the audience, and implies a certain level of belief by them both. However, the same event in a secular context could easily be a tall tale, used not only to amuse an audience, but also to express fears about what may come and what has happened.

While there may be only one example of this type in the NHM archive, it is unlikely that it is the only example in the Welsh tradition. There are a number of tall tales about extraordinary dogs in Arthur Tomos' *Straeon Celwydd Golau* (1992), featuring dogs who can stop mid-jump on a barbed wire fence (42), puppies who can herd sheep as soon as they are born (42), dogs who can cross tremendous distances to find lost sheep (45), and even one who can sing and play the piano (63-64) reflecting the variety of tall tales that can be told about man's best friend. Just because the type is not present in the NHM collection is no reason to believe it does not exist in Wales.

1960: The Great Animal or Great Object [pg. 133]

Extraordinarily large animals are a staple of the tall tale genre. Example [A56], attributed to Shemi Wâd, tells of a giant crab[26] whose shell is large enough to serve as the roof for a pigsty. Tales such as this are more easily disproved, as an audience member could point out that the pigsty roof is not actually a crab shell, but they still demonstrate the skill of the teller in inventing an interesting lie.

There are also two examples [A57-A58] about whales affecting the tides. Both are attributed to Daniel y Pant, and although they vary dramatically they agree on the tidal effect of the whales. In example [A57], told by Joseph Thomas of Trefdraeth, Pembrokeshire, the tide simply varies every March because a giant whale is swimming by, while in example

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[26] While example [A4] featured Shemi returning to Wales on the back of a giant crab, the two tales have different tellers. The teller of this example, James Mathias, also told example [3], which featured Shemi returning by cannon. In *Shemi's Tall Tales* however, Medlicott combines the tale of the crab roof and the return by crab (2008, 35-40).

[A58], told by the Reverend D Lloyd Richards of Betws Ifan, Pembrokeshire, the whale is

taking a nap, creating a dam in the bay. Richards says that Daniel claimed the whale was a

"blue nosed bottle" (D Lloyd S Richards, SFNHM tape 2592, recorded 1969) which is

probably a combination of the blue whale and the bottlenose whale. The idea of a giant whale

once again calls to mind the medieval tradition of the whale island ("Whale" 2011), although

there are no instances of whales acting as dams.

There is one more example of a giant animal other than a fish. Example [A59] tells

the tale of Siwsan the Sow, who grows to an enormous size thanks to a diet of sour beer and

milk, but eventually goes crazy and starts attacking people. In the end, Siwsan is lured to the

water and drowned, while the fish flee the water and cover the beaches. The tale is one of the

longer and more developed examples of *celwydd golau* in the NHM archive and has been

published outside the archive in volumes such as *Wês Wês* (Gwyndaf 1976, 46-50) and

Straeon Celwydd Golau (Tomos 1992, 64-65). The tale ends with the Reverend Lloyd stating

that there was more money in the fish found along the shore than in ten years of farming,[27]

meaning that Siwsan more than paid for any damages caused. By stating this, the tale moves

from being a narrative about the tragedy of losing the pig and people being trapped in their

houses to a comedy about a drunken pig who caused some trouble, but made everyone money

in the end. Siwsan acts like a belligerent drunk, and the association of such human actions

and behaviors with an animal is an easy way to create laughter in the audience. In addition,

the fact that the informant of this tale is a preacher adds a further element to the tale, with

Siwsan's drunkenness being potential fodder for a sermon. Indeed, one reason that preachers

were major collectors of Welsh folklore[28] was not just because of their position as educated

men in these communities, but because using folktales was one way to ensure an interested

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[27] "'Nes i mwy o arian mâs o'r digwyddiad bach yna mewn deg mlyne(dd) o ffarm(i)o." (D Lloyd S Richards, SFNHM tape 2591, recorded 1969)

[28] See page 25.

audience, providing material that was not only familiar but also entertaining. Furthermore, the image of the pig ending up in the bay while the fish are scared onto the land is a humorous inversion, inverting the behavior of two animals to show the bizarre nature of the situation.

This tale is reminiscent of earlier Welsh traditions. The medieval Welsh tale of *How Culhwch won Olwen* contains the story of the hunting of the Twrch Trwyth, a monstrous boar who, after rampaging through South Wales and Cornwall, is ultimately "chased out of Cornwall and driven straight into the sea" (Davies 2007, 212), just as Siwsan is chased into the bay. Furthermore, both the Twrch Trwyth and Siwsan have certain human features. The Twrch Trwyth was originally a king, and was transformed into a pig because of his sins (Davies 2007, 209), while Siwsan is drunk, an undeniably human state. This attribution of human skills or traits to animals is occasionally seen in tall tales, such as in example [A45].

Siwsan also functions as an inversion of the sow Henwen from Triad 26 (Bromwich 2006, 50). Henwen goes into the sea at the beginning of her rampage, crossing from Cornwall over to Wales, and when she emerges she brings wealth with her, with the triad stating that she "brought forth a grain of wheat and a bee … and there she brought forth a grain of barley and a bee" (Bromwich 2006, 50), but she later gives birth to monsters in the form of an eagle, wolf, and cat. Siwsan is an inverted Henwen, bringing forth danger before causing prosperity. The parallels between these stories are striking, and indicate that the idea of a great boar hunt of some sort is a common motif in Welsh lore, arising in both medieval traditions and the more modern *celwydd golau* tradition.

Furthermore, the motif of the drunk pig continues to exist in the modern world, as shown by the story of Swino from Australia (Foley 2013). The wild pig "got into 18 beers, ransacked the campsite's garbage bins and got into a fight with a cow...then it went into the river and swam across to the middle of the river" (Foley 2013). While Swino survived his

drunkenness and briefly became a viral hit on the internet, unlike Siwsan, the case shows that

such tales not only still exist, but thrive because of how unlikely they seem, appealing to

some innate taste for the wild and unbelievable.

This ATU type is flexible, able to accommodate tales about animals as diverse as

crabs and whales, as seen in the Welsh examples. One could classify the examples into

variants based upon the type of animal that is being exaggerated, but the more useful

distinction in these tales is the size of the animal, not the species. In some tall tales, such as

example [A56], the exaggerated size of the animal is the whole point of the story. The animal

is large, and that exaggeration is meant to entertain the audience as they imagine the

ridiculous situation. In other variants however, the size of the animal is secondary to its

behavior, such as in examples [A57-A59], where the size of the animal is emphasized to

explain how dangerous the situation was. In these examples, the great size of the whale or

sow is secondary to the effects of the animal. In [A57-A58] the most important detail is not

the size of the whale but its effect on the tide and in [A59] Siwsan's size is simply a detail

added to make her rampage seem more dangerous. Many tall tales feature animals that are

oversized, either explicitly, as with the stag in [A33], or implicitly, as with the birds in [A1-

A5] or the salmon in [A34-A36], due to a normal sized animal being incapable of the deeds

attributed to them. In cases such as these, it is preferable to categorize the examples in the

tale types relating to the action of the story. However, there is not always a type that the tale

resembles, and when that is the case, ATU 1960 exists for a convenient typing. As ever, it is

important to keep in mind the limits of the tale type index, as it is impossible to ever fully

create a comprehensive archive to classify everything.

1960B: The Great Fish [pgs. 134-135]

Tale type 1960B is perhaps the most well-known tall tale type, or at least the most referenced in popular culture. There are eight examples, [A60-A67], in the NHM Archive. The size of the fish in the tale varies from slightly above average to gigantic. In example [A60], the fish is so large that it takes two men to reel it in, and it kills a rabbit when thrown on the ground, while in example [A66] the audience is given the exact weight of the fish, namely forty-five pounds. On the other end of the spectrum, in examples [A63] and [A65], both told by William Williams and attributed to the same source, the fish is so large it requires a quarry train to pull it out, and in example [A65] even that is not enough to bring up the fish. The specificity in these stories makes them seem more realistic by providing concrete metrics by which the fish's size can be judged.

Indeed, this type, and examples [A63] and [A65] specifically, bring to mind the story of the *afanc*. As related by Rhŷs, the *afanc* was a giant creature, sometimes assumed to be a beaver, which lived in a pool on the River Conwy, which could only by pulled out of its pool by a pair of giant oxen called the *Ychain Bannog* (Rhŷs 1901, 130-131). However, the *afanc* legend is associated with other lakes throughout Wales, most prominently Llangorse Lake in the Brecon Beacons (134). While examples [A63] and [A65] come from Llanberis rather than Conwy or the Brecon Beacons, this idea of dragging something out of the water is remarkably similar, with the tall tale being updated with the introduction of modern technology. Just as with Siwsan the Sow, the *celwydd golau* demonstrate connections to other parts of the Welsh tradition, referencing traditions that date back to the medieval period or before, or from the other end of the country.

Example [A67], told by Thomas Morgans, stands out, not just among the Welsh examples but in the tradition as a whole. When a boy throws back a large fish, he is asked why he did so. He responds by saying, "naw modfedd yw ffreipan Mam, 'neith 'im byd â rai

mowr" (Thomas Morgans, SFNHM tape 3761, recorded 1973).[29] The fish is no use to him, since his mother does not have a frying pan large enough to cook it. Indeed, in that one line the teller not only indicates how big the fish was, but subverts the humor of the type in general. After a certain point, a fish becomes too large to be easily cooked, and this story invites the audience to consider that fact. By allowing the fisherman to catch the fish, only to release it, the teller draws attention the absurdity of the tale type, pointing out the practical problems involved in catching too large a fish.

Indeed, the self-reflexivity of this example is reminiscent of types 1920C, "That is a lie!" and 1920F, "He who says "That's a lie" must pay a fine." In these types of tales, the tension between fact and fiction in the tall tale is laid open for the audience to see by placing a skeptical audience member inside the tale. While the person who reacts to the lie in these two types is ultimately made to pay for exposing the truth of the tale, in example [A67] the tale ends with the statement pointing out the absurdity of the typical tale. While the tale is a tall tale, it works to subvert the conventions of the genre, using the narrative to point out the fiction of the tales.

While these tales contain a clear element of bragging, with various fishermen trying to outdo each other, inventing larger and larger fish to be caught, they are still an important part of the tradition. The self-promotion in the tales is part of why they are so common, as tall tales are a way for tellers to demonstrate their skills as well as save face. A fisherman returning without a single catch is bound to be mocked by his friends, but if he can provide an entertaining story about the massive fish that escaped he can save face and demonstrate his value to the community, not as a provider but as an entertainer. And examples such as [A67] serve to show how the traditions can be manipulated by a skilled teller. By taking a tall tale

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[29] "Mom's frying pan is only nine inches, she can't do anything with the big ones."

and changing it in such a way as to point out how ridiculous the exaggeration is, the teller can subtly make fun of anyone else telling similar stories.

1960D: The Animal in the Great Vegetable [pgs. 136-138]

This type is the second most common in the archive, with fourteen examples, [A68-A81], and is found throughout Wales. The examples may be divided into two variants. In the first variant [A68-A72], the teller simply says that he had a vegetable so large that an animal could hide inside or under it. In the second variant [A73-A81], it is stated that an animal has been lost, often over the winter, and is found inside a giant vegetable. Each teller varies what animal and vegetable feature in his example: the animals include three pigs, seven sheep, three cows, and one horse, all animals that are common in agricultural Wales; the vegetables are mostly swedes or cabbages, with one turnip and one mangelwurzel.[30] Regardless of the details, the exaggeration lies in the size of the vegetable. This tale type is easy to localize – even when the tale takes place in other countries such as America, as in three of the examples,[31] animals and vegetables known by the audience will still be used, so as to let them feel more connected to the tale.

At one level, the tale is the typical size exaggeration tall tale, but the tale also taps into the constant fear of a lost animal in an agricultural community. The discovery of the animal inside the giant vegetable is then a twofold salvation – a giant vegetable will sell better than a normal sized one, and the rediscovery of the animal negates the earlier fear of an animal lost to the elements, predators, or thieves, with the additional fact that the animal is typically found to have had children over the winter. While most stories about a farmer losing an

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[30] A type of beet used as a fodder plant.
[31] [A69], [A71], and [A73].

animal would not have this happy ending in real life, giving the tale such an ending allows

the audience to hope it might happen, making the real life situation less stressful.

Conclusion

There are several themes that run through the entire collection of animal tales. One is

the local aspect of the tales. Many of the tales are based in the Welsh landscape – local rivers

and lakes are fished, local bays are affected by whales and pigs alike, local fields and

mountains have hunting dogs running through them. Indeed, while these stories may not be

the source of place names, they often have much in common with onomastic lore as described

in W.F.H. Nicolaisen's "Place Name Legends: An Onomastic Mythology" (1976). Most

strikingly, Nicolaisen states that onomastic lore:

> very seldom refer[s] to major geographical features and hardly ever man-made ones
> but usually to minor configurations of the landscape, at least in terms of absolute size
> or importance. Undeniably such relatively minor features must, however, have excited
> disproportionate local interest and demand a convincing explanation, but not in the
> way in which the scientist convinces. (146)

While other types of tall tales will be about exaggerated features, both natural and man-made,

as seen in the tales of American frontiersmen such as Jim Bridger (Davidson 1943, 77-78) or

in the Welsh tradition (McMullen 2012, 21-24),[32] tall tales about animals are rarely

dependent upon fixed locations. By placing the tale in the local landscape, these tales can

"excite local interest," increasing not only the chance of the audience enjoying the story but

also remembering it.

Other features of onomastic lore mentioned by Nicolaisen are also relevant to *celwydd*

golau, namely the method of transmission. Nicolaisen states

> Although now, of course, told in the third person, the story is implied to have
> originated as a first-person narrative recounting something that actually happened to
> the teller who is occasionally identified by name. Indeed, the setting and the stylistic

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[32] In cases where the Welsh tradition discusses exaggerated places, the place in question is typically outside of
Wales, as with the German forest in example [A33].

> trappings of this story are such that those who hear it confidently believe in its
> veracity and do not even think of challenging its truthfulness (147-148).

Just as with *celwydd golau*, onomastic lore is frequently attributed to some other teller in the past. For both genres, this is in part due to the methods of collection – as noted in the previous chapter, the material for this study comes from the Archive of St. Fagans National History Museum, and was collected by Robin Gwyndaf from 1964 until 1990 (Gwyndaf 1992/1993, 215). In none of the examples presented in this chapter does the informant claim to be the original teller of the tale: he either states who told him the tale or that he simply heard it somewhere. As Gwyndaf himself has remarked, "those men and women in Wales today who still recite memorates and legends relating to the supernatural have by now become passive or occasional tradition-bearers" (Gwyndaf 1992/1993, 223). While it is probable that people are still inventing new tall tales in Wales, the examples discussed in this dissertation are not newly told tall tales, with each informant crediting the tale to some other figure, the "tall-tale hero" of Gerald Thomas.

Thomas defines the "tall-tale hero" as "a gifted raconteur whose artistry is recognized as a rule within the occupational group in which he moves … telling his yarns to tease and entertain his charges" (1977, 17). In the context of the Welsh tradition, occupational group should be replaced by community, as while the tales do certainly concern professions such as farming, the tales do not seem typically constrained by profession, as they occasionally are in the American tradition.[33] The Welsh tradition seems to have several of these "heroes", foremost of which in the collected material is Shemi Wâd. Shemi is not the only Welsh tall tale teller however, as evidenced by the tales surrounding characters such as Daniel y Pant, Huw Davies, William Jones, etc. Many tellers seem particularly associated with one type, such as in the case of Daniel y Pant and ATU 1891, although this does not prevent them from

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[33] By this I mean the association of certain professions, such as frontier guides, oil men, river boat men, etc, as tellers of tall tales seems absent in the Welsh tradition.

being remembered for telling any number of tales. This is consistent with the international tall tale tradition, judging by tellers ranging from Germany's Baron Münchausen to the United States' "Oregon" Smith. In their areas, these tellers have eclipsed any others, and tales end up associated with them, even if they may have their origins elsewhere. For instance, example [A6] is attributed to Daniel y Pant, while most of the other examples of the first variant of type 1881 are associated with Shemi Wâd. If Shemi is responsible for the creation of that variant as it exists in the Welsh tradition, it is likely that the tale spread from Shemi to Daniel's area, and was either picked up by Daniel himself or simply attributed to him, because people in the area associated such tales with Daniel.

It is important to note however, that none of the Welsh tellers have developed the elaborate tale cycle of a Münchausen or Smith or have been elevated to the cultural hero level of Bunyan or Johnny Appleseed. The closest any individual comes to being displaced by his identity in tall tales is *Y Deryn Mawr*, from examples [A7] and [A8], but he does not have the same recognition as the major American tellers. This is most likely due to the strong tendency of the *celwydd golau* tales to remain in the area where they were originally told, rather than being to be disseminated across the country. The fact that very few variants have a wide geographic spread seems to indicate that *celwydd golau* tend to remain local and, as a result, there is not an influx of tales to be attributed to local tellers, increasing their posthumous fame in the manner demonstrated by most major tall tale heroes.

There are, however, some exceptions. For type 1960D, which is found throughout Wales, the explanation seems clear in that the type is a common one internationally; the tales are also often quite short and therefore easily remembered and retold. Type 1881* is fairly evenly distributed throughout the North. While there are a few areas with multiple examples, in these cases each examples is attributed to a known tall tale-teller. The number of instances of this tale, especially compared to its relative rarity around the world according to the ATU

Index, may indicate that this type is particularly Welsh. No other type in the NHM archive displays the same level of uniformity over such a large part of the country, and as no literary antecedents are known, it suggests that this tale developed out of the oral tradition of Wales, although likely some time ago in order for it to spread throughout North Wales. There is also the question of type 1889L**, which Tomos states is found throughout Wales (Tomos 1992, 17), although in the NHM Archive it is only found in Montgomeryshire and Denbighshire. Examples such as this show that it is important not to be too reliant on one source; they also suggest that further collection of the *celwydd golau* tradition could prove valuable in order to discover tales that are not included in earlier collections.

Regardless of how far the tale has been disseminated, there are several functions that are shared by the examples. All the tales are meant to amuse, in part because if people do not like the story, then it is not going to be effective. Some of the tales are meant to be impressive, showing off either the teller's strength or cleverness, such as in type 1889B, 1891, 1894, or 1896, or the skill of an animal he owns, such as 1889L, 1889L**, or 1889N. And no matter what else is on display, the tall tale itself is a demonstration of how skilled a liar the teller is.

Some of the tales also have explanatory functions. Whether the tale is explaining why the tides are a certain way during a certain time of the year, as in example [A57], or why the teller did not return home the previous evening, as with the first variant of type 1881, tall tales can be used as a way to explain and educate on any number of topics. Indeed, those same explanations and excuses could also be repeated as a critique, repeating a tale told by someone else as a way of satirizing him for his excesses. Furthermore, as shown by type 1891, tall tales can be used to educate children both on methods of hunting and cultural values, with the tale serving as a test to determine their cultural competency. These tales can act as a repository of knowledge, passing down useful advice to future generations in a way

that is both amusing and vivid, increasing the chance that the information will not only be retained, but repeated. This transmission of knowledge does not depend on the belief of the audience; indeed, it rather depends upon the ability of the audience to discern the difference between fact and fiction, as well as their ability to enjoy the tale. The use of the tall tale eludes both those who ignore the tale as pure fiction and those who accept the tale as fact. The former group is made to look overly serious, by refusing to engage in the tall tale, while the latter proves itself to be foolish by believing the tale.

There is also a certain therapeutic effect to these tales. They frequently deal with fairly serious topics, but they turn those situations on their heads and make them humorous. Not only does this help defuse the situation, as discussed above, but also may help the victim see a possible solution. And while sometimes there is no solution in real life, in the world of the tall tale there can be. Dogs can be sewn back together, or continue to hunt after their deaths, while lost animals can be found inside giant vegetables, and rampaging pigs can actually make more money than any alternative. While none of these events are actually possible in reality, hearing about them and letting oneself believe in the tale for just a moment could be a comfort during difficult times.

Both these functions connect to the role the tall tale can play in forming group ties. *Celwydd golau* are grounded in life as experienced by the tellers, just as with the Canton Dog Market (see page 8-9), where tall tales are used to test newcomers. Used in this way, tall tales give people an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and creativity by recognizing the tall tale and giving them a chance to create their own. Similarly, for tales that have therapeutic functions, the audience is given the opportunity to commiserate with the teller and learn from his experiences. By their reaction to the tale, the audience demonstrates their membership of the same social group as the teller.

There is, however, one missing piece that would greatly aid in making claims about the functions of *celwydd golau*. Due to the way the material in the NHM archive was been collected, there is little information regarding how audiences reacted to the tales, except for when the informants discuss how they themselves reacted to the tales. Such information would be useful in any analysis of the tradition. However, given that it has not been supplied, it cannot be examined.

An examination of *celwydd golau* shows gaps in the ATU Index, just as Henningsen's study of the Norwegian sailor's tall tales showed gaps in the Aarne-Thompson Index. In both cases, new material has been found that augments the material in the Index. For example, tale type 1881* is the most common type in Wales, while it is barely present in the ATU index. Similarly, Uther's combination of all the rabbit tales into one type does not reflect the Welsh material. Thirdly, there is the possible tale type of the whale island, which is attested not only in medieval literature from Europe and the Middle East, but also in Welsh oral tradition. Each of these facts is a reminder that creating a completely comprehensive index is an impossible task as there will always be more material to examine.

For the most part, *celwydd golau* involving animals are largely consistent with the international tradition as portrayed within the ATU Index. There are some features which seem particularly Welsh – the prevalence of type 1881* and the fish variant of type 1889C – but that could simply be a result of the general lack of study of tall tales at the international level. The forms of *celwydd golau* conform to Brown's structure (see page 5), with the tales typically beginning with an ordinary situation which escalates into absurdity.

As shown by these examples, *celwydd golau* is a multi-faceted genre, with its humor resulting from the impossible and the grotesque. Returning to Brown's definition of the tall tale, *celwydd golau* certainly exhibit "a certain sense of outlandishness" (Brown 1987, 38), with people and events that are larger than life. Moreover, their use of real places and

problems, along with solutions to those problems leaves the genre "at that hazy border between the credible and the incredible" (1987, 38). *Celwydd golau* serve to demonstrate the various problems faced by the community and the teller and describe how they triumphed over those problems in a comic fashion. However, these triumphs are not mean to be taken entirely seriously, neither is the teller. These stories exist because sometimes people need to laugh, and *celwydd golau* exists to create that laughter.

Celwydd Golau Concerning Language

While Wales is officially a bilingual nation, with Welsh and English sharing official

status, only nineteen percent of people in Wales claim to speak Welsh today, according to the

latest census (Office for National Statistics, 2012), raising questions about the long-term

sustainability of Welsh-speaking communities and their traditions. The reasons for the

decline are numerous, and

> are a combination of historical conquest, political and economic and deep
> psychological hurt whereby a former relatively autonomous group are subjugated into
> a dependent people whose prime markers of distinction, such as language or religious
> differentiation are eroded, made illegal or otherwise eradicated from formal public life
> (Williams 2014, 242).

Centuries of disadvantageous policies and situations are difficult to overcome quickly, but

there are efforts to do so, particularly through legislation passed by the National Assembly

for Wales, such as the Welsh Language Measure (2011) which places a duty on the Welsh

Government to take responsibility for the language as an important area of policy

development. More recently, an independent Welsh Language Commissioner has been

established to promote and protect the use of Welsh. However, it is not only governmental

institutions that have pushed to strengthen the Welsh language, as demonstrated by the

movement to provide Welsh-medium education – this movement is largely a result of

parental, not governmental power (Williams 2014, 248). While the movement began as a

push to provide elementary education, its scope has expanded to all levels of education.

Moreover, institutions all over Wales deliver Welsh for Adults provision, teaching Welsh to

professionals looking to enhance their careers as well as the general public, while *Y Coleg*

Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (a virtual Welsh-medium College) is dedicated to improving access to

Welsh language resources and instruction at universities in Wales, promoting continued

usage of the language by students. Reforms and organization such as these are intended to

promote and strengthen the place of Welsh in the public sphere. All this provides an

important context to the current chapter. Tall tales, and humor in general, can arise out of conflict, and the relationship between the Welsh and English languages has been marked by a number of difficulties and challenges up until the modern day. Because of this, one would expect there to be humor and tall tales related to such linguistic conflict.

One form of this humor manifests itself in one of the efforts to strengthen Welsh and make Wales accessible to both English and Welsh speakers – its bilingual signs. While this effort is important in establishing the language as a presence in the daily lives of the Welsh, it can often have humorous manifestations, when the translation is less than accurate, a phenomena that has come to be known as *sgymraeg*. Some of these errors were published in *Sgymraeg* (2011), a short book that presents images of inaccurate Welsh signage. In one example, a store sign claims that it is open "Mon-Sat", which a careless translator has translated to "Llun – Eisteddedig" (pg 20), using a strange variation of the word *eistedd*, which means sit. Another sign warns English speakers of wet paint, while the translator uses *peint* rather than *paent*, switching the topic of discussion from paint to pints (53). Many signs reflect a lack of careful editing and could have serious results, such as a road sign that says "look right" in English but "look left" in Welsh (68); others reflect translations by non-experts with an inability to use a dictionary correctly as demonstrated by a sign in a Tesco supermarket store in Penarth which translates the household cleaner polish as Welsh *Pwylaidd*, the adjective for objects and people from Poland (Williams 2013). Not only are there news articles and publications discussing these errors, there is even a group on Flickr, an image sharing website, called "Scymraeg" that is dedicated to taking pictures of them, with over seven hundred and fifty pictures posted ("Scymraeg").

While these errors and mistranslations may not be tall tales as such, they are a good example of the sense of playfulness that can exist towards the relationship between the Welsh and English languages. Of course, confusion between the two languages did not begin with

bilingual signage. It is therefore not surprising that folk traditions have developed

surrounding the transmission of information between both languages, with *sgymraeg* simply

being the latest manifestation of a desire to find amusement as words and phrases are

mistranslated and misunderstood. Indeed the NHM Archive contains a number of tales

involving linguistic humor, frequently occurring at a moment where speakers of the two

languages are forced into some sort of interaction. Of these humorous tales, I would

categorize eleven of them as tall tales, a group which is significantly smaller than that

analyzed in the previous chapter. The reasons for this are unclear – it may be due to language

not being a common tall tale topic or may simply be a result of the nature of the collection.

A note on the differentiation between tall tales and jokes

Tall tales are a special subset of the joke, distinguished by the context in which they

are told and by a sense of outlandishness that pervades the tale. In many tall tales, the

exaggerated features are plainly obvious; however, the humorous features of the tall tale are

more subtle when language itself is the exaggerated feature. This leads to the tales being

incredibly similar to jokes, especially those involving linguistic false friends[34] and those

involving puns. Such jokes delineate an in group (Brown 1987, 38) of bilingual people, based

on their understanding of the wordplay, just as the tall tale delineates an in group of those

who are capable of identifying the exaggeration. Many of these tales, however, are blatant

manipulations of "the bizarre happenings of real life" (Brown 1987, 38), and while they are

not wholly impossible, they share the same "sense of outlandishness" (Brown 1987, 38) as

the animal tales. What sets the tall tales apart from the puns and false friends, besides their

more exaggerated qualities, is the fact that the confusion in the tale serves to "concretely and

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[34] Linguistic false friends are when two words are homophones across languages, yet have wildly different meanings. They typically lead to a humorous misunderstanding in tall tales and jokes.

comically compare" (Brown 1987, 25-26) those who speak Welsh, those who speak English, and those capable of speaking both language. Members of the first two groups are made to look like fools in these tall tales, allowing those who speak both languages not only to feel that they are insiders, but also to share in the ego-boosting of the more traditional tall tales. While the exaggerated exploits of the tall tale hero often serve to promote the teller, they are not exploits the audience can easily claim as their own; these tales, however, allow the audience to identify with the cleverness of the hero, secure in the feeling that if they were ever in the exaggerated circumstances of the tale, they would be capable of living up to the larger-than-life example of the hero.

It is also instructive to return to Christie Davies' *Humor Around the World* (1996). As with ethnic jokes, these tales depend upon two groups, one of whom is being stereotyped. Davies argues that often members of the stereotyped group will tell ethnic jokes about themselves, as a way of minimizing the hostility of the jokes (Davies 1996, 122), and this behavior can be seen in the Welsh examples, many of which feature monolingual Welsh speakers being made to look foolish. The telling of such tales by bilingual Welsh speakers not only allows them to reclaim and minimize English hostilities against Welsh speakers, but also allows them to feel superior to the monolingual population.

Davies refined this thesis in his more recent work, *Humor and Targets* (2011). There he argues that groups who tell jokes about themselves do so as a result of tension between their minority culture and the larger, majority culture. His main example consists of jokes told by American Jewish men about the supposed sexual frigidity of Jewish women, as compared to the attractiveness of shiksa, or non-Jewish, women. These jokes arise, not out of any real life circumstances, but rather "a tension between the traditional Jewish world … who … saw arranged marriage as natural and the modern western individualistic view of marriage, where mutual choice based on affection is supposed to be the norm" (119). He sees this same

tension beginning to develop in a similar joke cycle amongst Indian Americans (122-123), due to similar pressures to marry a chosen partner from within the group conflicting with American ideals of free choice regarding romantic partners. These ethnic jokes then serve as a way to vent not only any possible hostility by the dominant culture, but also as a way of navigating the expectations placed upon the ethnic group by the dominant culture in order to conform to their standards. While both of Davies' examples center upon tensions in the process of choosing marriage partners, humor would certainly arise out of other similar conflicts.

The conflict between the desire of the community to continue to speak Welsh primarily, and the societal need to speak English, is certainly ripe for this kind of humor. One of the features of these tales is the degree to which they are rooted in Welsh culture and the Welsh language; while similar linguistic false friends may be possible between other languages, several of these tales are dependent on similarities between the Welsh and English languages and would not make sense outside the context of this relationship. Furthermore the subjects of several of these tales feature elsewhere in the Welsh tradition, demonstrating how they relate to other Welsh folk traditions – one example features the ravens eating a farmers crops, just as in type 1881* discussed in the previous chapter, while several others feature preachers, a common figure in Welsh folklore. The tales that follow represent a Welsh version of this phenomena.

While the Jewish jokes explored by Davies may filter out to gentile culture, they remain deeply linked to Jewish culture. As Davies says, "The gentiles have learned the jokes from Jewish joke tellers, have come to enjoy them and indeed to tell them, but they do not transfer the jokes to their own womenfolk. The joke remains external to them" (2011, 116). These jokes have managed to retain their impact and humor even when divorced from their original context, demonstrating Davies' assertion that "jokes also differ from wit in that the

humor they convey is not tied to a particular context but is self-contained thus enabling a joke to be performed successfully on a quite different occasion" (1996, 3). This feature of the joke is the best way to distinguish it from the tall tale which cannot have its full effect outside the context in which it was born. While ethnic jokes are easily transferrable, as no matter where they travel, there will always be some group that is being stereotyped as stupid or greedy, or having to navigate the tension between its values and those of the dominant culture, tall tales are fixed in a time and place, and are dependent on the audience having some knowledge about the material described in the tale. The eleven tales considered in this chapter are tied to the context of English intrusion into Welsh areas, and the disruption that can happen because of that intrusion. Without a similar history of linguistic intrusion, these tales would not make sense – despite the presence of English in the tales they would not make sense in England, for example – and the specific exaggerations would not work in other language pairings. These tales only make sense in the context from which they originated, and they cannot float freely to a different environment, as many jokes can.

One final distinction is that several of these tales lack the "authorless" quality described by Davies (1996, 3). Example [B4] is the only case in this study in which the informant and the teller are the same person, allowing a firsthand glimpse at the creation of a tall tale. While these tales are meant to entertain, there are "motives, purposes, and feelings" behind these tales that allow an audience to understand that something more than laughter is the motivator behind the telling of the tale. This motive helps mark them as tall tales, as does the outlandish circumstances described in the tales themselves. Even more important than purpose or outlandishness of the tales, however, is their inherent connection to the Welsh context from which they arose. Finding humor in these tales requires a knowledge of that context, namely that combination of features identified by Williams as responsible for the decline of the Welsh language and the conflicts between the English and Welsh that

characterize the relationship between their nations. A closer analysis of these 11 tales reveals many of the factors discussed in this introduction, identifying them as tall tales rather than jokes.

Linguistic Misunderstandings in Tall Tales

Before discussing the following tales in detail, it is useful to discuss some of the trends found throughout the group. Perhaps the major commonality is the nature of the confusion between the languages. Unlike the similar dialect tales examined by Richard Dorson in "Dialect Stories of the Upper Peninsula: A New Form of American Folklore," where the mistakes "derive from the inapplicability of grammar and alphabet structure in the mother tongue to American English forms" (Dorson 1948, 115), most of the mistakes are based on homophones, words that sound the same but have different meanings in Welsh and in English, leading to a number of tales centering on "linguistic false friends," as evidenced in some of the *sgymraeg* examples noted earlier. This preference for humor based on multiple meanings rather than some deeper grammatical or structural level is examined in the article "Polysemy: A Neglected Concept in Wordplay" (Garcia 2007).

The article describes an experiment undertaken by four teachers with their students – they compared the students' reactions to the Amelia Bedelia series, where the humor is based on polysemy (the ability of a word to have multiple different meanings) to their reactions to Fred Gwynne's books, which base their humor on the misinterpretation of homophones; they then asked the students to make up jokes similar to those found in the books. Not only did the students prefer the latter form of humor, but when asked to create their own jokes, "about two-thirds of the "jokes" – including the ones that students thought were the funniest – were based on two words that sounded the same but differed in meaning" (Garcia 2007, 53). While the humor enjoyed by modern American high school and college students may differ

substantially from the informants of the following Welsh examples, the sense that linguistic humor is best manifested in what are essentially puns is essentially the same. The exaggerations and humor in these tales is based upon the confusion that arises when both languages have words that sound the same yet have drastically different meanings.

Example [B1] resembles type 1881*, Parrots Fly Away with Tree, one of the most common tale types discussed in the previous chapter. It tells of a Welshman, Robat Jones, who lives next to the farm of an Englishman, old Graves. When he sees crows eating Graves' crops, Jones goes to talk to his foreman, a Welsh speaker. Unfortunately, Graves is alone at the farm so Jones, who only speaks Welsh, must communicate with Graves, who only speaks English. Graves grows frustrated with Jones' attempts to communicate in Welsh, and tells him to "go to hell". Jones responds by saying, "Dos i hel nw dy hun y diawl... Ma'n o lew (i) mi ddeud 'that ti fod nw yna"[35] (John Thomas, SFNHM recording 1992, recorded 1969). While the NHM does not contain an example of 1881* from the area around Pwllheli, where this tale was collected, it was documented at both ends of the Llŷn Peninsula, and given its wide distribution throughout the North it is likely that the teller knew type 1881*. Therefore, it is likely that not only the teller and audience would be familiar with that tale, but that the teller is using it to inspire this example, mentioning key details such as the trees in the area that otherwise play no role in this example, but would in 1881*.

However, since the humorous image of the usual form of this narrative has been removed, as the crows never fly off with the tree due to Graves' inability to understand Jones' warning, the humor derives from other sources. One of these sources is the bilingual pun of English "hell" versus Welsh *hel*, meaning to shoo away.[36] As Jones and Graves are mutually unintelligible to each other, they would naturally focus on the one word they could

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[35] "Go and drive them away yourself, you old devil… It's good of me to let you know that they're there."
[36] *Hel* can also mean to gather or to scold (*Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* 2006, 3448). Given the context, to shoo seems like the most likely meaning/translation.

both understand, which would be the one word that exists in both languages. Jones would hear Graves' insult as telling him to go and shoo the crows away himself, while Graves would interpret Jones' response as telling him to go to hell. In each case, they are repeating what they believe they heard, while the bilingual audience would understand what each was actually saying and recognize the humor in the mutual misunderstanding.

The tale also has undertones of class conflict, and is an example of the use of humor to neutralize a difficult situation. Graves, as an English landowner, is more powerful and wealthy than Jones, despite not being native to the area. While it is not stated that the crows ate Graves' crop, it is a reasonable assumption, and seems like a fitting punishment for his rudeness. Given that birds eating a crop is a common experience in agricultural communities, an audience would be able to relate to wanting to help one's neighbor. However, Graves' rude response justifies the loss of his crops and while such a result is regrettable, it is also emotionally satisfying for the audience as Graves is punished not only for his rudeness but also for his refusal to assimilate linguistically in a part of the country where Welsh speakers are in the majority. The fact that the problem is happening to a rude Englishman surely makes the tale more amusing to the Welsh audience. Compounding this is the idea that it is the poor underdog who not only has the knowledge necessary to save the rich man's farm, but also seems more interested in taking care of his land than the landowner. It seems as if the ravens have been eating Graves' seed for a while, but no one from Graves' farm has noticed, giving the impression that Graves does not carefully manage his land and is instead dependent upon the goodwill of his neighbors, goodwill which he squanders when insulting Jones. Indeed, the tale substitutes the humor deriving from the birds flying away with the tree with amusement and comfort at Graves' discomfiture. While this is by no means a focus of the tale, as whether or not the crows actually eat his crops is never mentioned, there certainly is an element of

inverting the usual order, making the English speaker, rather than the Welsh speaker, the ultimate victim.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the source of the tale, John Thomas of Pwllheli, Caernarfonshire, says it actually happened. He says that it happened in 1905 or 1906 (John Thomas, SFNHM recording 1992, recorded 1969). So the account is presented as an event that actually happened, at least according to the informant. This, more than simply resembling a common tall tale type confirms the example as a tall tale. Since the tall tale depends upon the event being perceived as true, it has to be based in real life. The tales in the previous chapter were all about various facets of rural life in Wales and this tale is similar, drawing its background from the realities of life.

Example [B2] also involves an unpopular figure who makes a mistake when conversing in Welsh. This tale features an exciseman looking to buy a greyhound from a local man. Along the way, he asks two Welsh farmers if the man does indeed have a greyhound. The two farmers do not understand his question, so the exciseman, who is part Welsh, attempts to translate *milgi* into English, asking "Do - that gentleman over there, has he got a thousand dog?" (Thomas Morgans, SFNHM recording 3761, recorded 1973). The Welshmen understand this, and respond with, "No, no … about five hundred" (Thomas Morgans, SFNHM recording 3761, recorded 1973), as the dog in question is only half greyhound. While his mistake of confusing the Welsh syllable *mil* for English "thousand" is understandable, due to it meaning both "thousand" and "beast", with the word *milgi* using the latter definition (Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru 1998, 2457), it is nevertheless amusing to the Welsh speaking farmers, who are able to take advantage of the man's mistake to humiliate him while still answering his question.

Indeed, this humiliation functions as a test of initiation, a common feature of the tall tale. The exciseman is, in the words of Brown, asked "to prove himself clever or dull,"

(Brown 1987, 38) with the proof being his recognition of his own mistake. And while the exciseman in this tale is more sympathetic than Graves in the previous example, being part Welsh himself and knowing at least some of the language, he is still a member of a group that is disliked, namely tax collectors, thus making him fair game for mockery and testing. Indeed, tax collectors figure into Welsh folklore in other ways, for example in tales surrounding the Rebecca Riots (Gwyndaf 1999, 83).[37] The informant for this tale, Thomas Morgans, is from Carmarthenshire, which was one of the centres of the riots, and the district retains folktales surrounding the historical events. With the wordplay employed by the farmers, they are simultaneously mocking his grasp of the Welsh language while giving him the information he asked for, provided he is clever enough to understand what is being said.

Thomas Morgans is also the source of example [A67], the tale in which the fish is thrown back for being too large. This is notable as Morgans is the only informant in this sample to tell examples of *celwydd golau* that are found in both categories. In truth, neither tale is told particularly well, with multiple repetitions and clarifications, something that is common across many of the tellers, especially when narrating the tales about language. As a result, some of these tales may often seem jumbled or the situations contrived. While it is possible that these contrived situations are how a tale was originally told, as it is rare for the situation described by the tall tale to not seem engineered by the tellers for the purposes of the tale, some of these tales seem too artificial for that to be the case. One argument in favor of this is the often stilted nature of the mistaken phrase. Indeed, this can be seen in this example, where Morgans' repetition causes confusion as to whether the farmer's response to the exciseman is literal – calling it a five hundred dog because it is half greyhound – or figurative – that the man in question has five hundred dogs. Either way, it is clear that in this

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[37] The Rebecca Riots were a series of riots featuring men, dressing as women and calling themselves the "Daughters of Rebecca", tearing down toll gates in protest of high highway taxes. The riots lasted from 1839 until 1843, and occurred primarily in West Wales.

tale the situation and set of events are being manipulated by the teller to construct not only the events that lead to the mistake, but also the mistake itself. If the exciseman knows the meaning of the word *milgi*, then why would he ask for "a thousand dog". The only reason the exciseman asks as he does is because the tale demands it, and the informant is simply trying to recreate the tale as he remembers it.

Example [B3] shows the other side of this however, as it is the only tale in the selection examined in this study in which the informant is the teller. Mary Thomas of Meidrim, Caernarfonshire, tells a story about her school days as a way of demonstrating how little English she or her classmates knew. In the tale, the teacher asks a student to get the key for him, and the student goes and fetches the vicar's dog, mistaking the English word "key" for the similar sounding Welsh word for dog, namely *ci*. The tale is presented not during the tale-telling part of the conversation, but rather during the biographical section in which Thomas is describing her childhood. The tale is not identified as a *celwydd golau*, which is to be expected as the tall tale label is one that is typically affixed by scholars or the audience, rather than the teller, who is presenting the incident as an autobiographical anecdote. This appearance of truth is key to the tall tale, and this tale also features several other key features of the genre. As Gerald Thomas notes in his definition of the tall tale, they are frequently in the first person (Thomas 1977, 7), as is the case here. The tale also demonstrates the "certain sense of outlandishness" (Brown 1987, 38) identified by Brown, and it also exemplifies what Brown calls a "dalliance at that hazy border between the credible and the incredible" (Brown 1987, 38). Furthermore, this kind of personal remembrance is exactly the form the tall tale tends to take, with fictional events being grounded in realistic stories in order to make them more convincing. Indeed, if this tale had been told in some context other than an interview with a folklorist, there is a chance that it would have been passed on.

The context of this tale not only presents an opportunity to understand the complex and varied conditions under which *celwydd golau* are told – normal conversations where personal stories are recounted – but also how they may function. The tale teller can use the tall tale to criticize society by exaggerating and showing how ridiculous something is; indeed, that is what Thomas is doing in this particular example. By using a tall tale to prove her point of how little English the schoolchildren understand, Thomas is implicitly criticizing the way society forced the children to use English, when Welsh, as the commonly understood language, would have been preferable and more natural.

Also of interest is the fact that the informant is a woman. The tall tale is a genre that is predominantly told by men, both internationally and in Wales, as noted by Jerry Hunter and Gustav Henningsen (Hunter 1992, 56). Indeed, of the tales selected for this study, only five informants are female, four of whom tell tales about language, each of which only tells one tale. Thus, Thomas is set apart not only because she is the original teller of her tale but also because of her gender. Kristin McAndrews explains the gender split by arguing that women were excluded from telling tall tales due to gender norms – women were expected to be docile and moral, while men were expected to be adventurous and competitive. She states, "If we apply this dichotomy to the realm of the tall tale, male spiritual 'inferiority' would seem to provide a license for lying, whereas women would remain as non-participants, because intellectually, culturally and morally such high spirits are 'beneath' them" (McAndrews 1999, 65). While some of the details discussed by McAndrews, such as the tall tales' association with frontier areas in particular, do not apply, the general features of the argument are applicable. As Jane Aaron says in her article "Finding a voice in two tongues: gender and colonization" (1994), "Welsh culture has frequently been represented as one which is particularly repressive of women… Fear and loathing of uncontained female sexuality, if not outright misogyny, are often assumed to have been of the essence of nineteenth-century

Welsh Nonconformity" (184). While Aaron ultimately argues that much of that perception and misogyny is due to English influence, and that modern Wales is moving past that, it does place Wales in a historical context similar to that of the American West. Women did not tell tall tales because they are not supposed to lie; rather, they are in pursuit of the idealized image of docile and domestic femininity.

While recent scholarship – such as that by McAndrews – shows that women do indeed tell tall tales, there are very few female informants in most collections. Indeed, it is possible that Wales and tensions between the Welsh and English cultures could be a fertile ground for not only tall tales, but humor of all kind, going by Davies' assertion that humor can arise out of these cultural tensions. Welsh women were under a number these pressures, since, as stated by Jane Aaron:

> the late-nineteenth-century Welsh woman seems, then, to have been presented with three possibilities in terms of choosing an identity. Either she abandoned her Welsh allegiances and adopted the English middle-class model of refined femininity, however inappropriate it may have been to her cultural roots and her social positions; or she defensively asserted her Welshness in the face of insult, and, to prove its virtues, clad herself in an armour of strict propriety which would inevitable have entailed self-suppression on a larger scale than mere sexual self-control; or she accepted the English definition of herself as the libidinous hoyden of primitive Wild Wales. None of these possible identities afforded her a voice of her own: the English model was unauthentic and mismatched in terms of class identity, the Welsh 'respectable' model entailed severe curbs on her freedom and self-assertive capacities, and the 'wild' model had no place in civilized society. (1994, 188)

Each of these identities bears very little relationship with how Welsh women may have wanted to act, and this conflict likely lead to humor and jokes amongst women. The fact that the female tellers in the Welsh tradition seem to tell language rather than animal tales could be a result of the language tales' more domestic nature, as that is one of the few areas that women had more freedom to act and talk. This more domestic focus also extends to the environments in which female characters may find themselves in a tall tale, even when that tale is told by a male teller. Thomas is not an active participant in the tale she tells, and this

trend continues with many of the women characters in tall tales; on the other hand, there are several examples of women who actively participate in the exaggeration.

To examine the passive females first, example [B4] provides us not only with an example of a female character as a passive figure to enable the linguistic false friend, but also serves as an example of "male spiritual 'inferiority'" (McAndrews 1999, 65), with the linguistic false friend in question arising from the confusion between the English word "menu" and the Welsh *menyw* meaning "woman". The tale concerns two Welshman from Cardiganshire visiting Cardiff for the day. While at lunch they are asked by a waitress if they would like to see a menu, to which one of them responds, "O gan ni ga'l y bwyd gynta, gewn ni amser i chwilio am menyw wedyn"[38] (John Emrys Jones, SFNHM recording 1441, recorded 1967). The waitress in this tale occupies the same passive role that women typically play in the tall tale; her presence in the tale serves solely to set up the punchline as the confusion between "menu" and *menyw* would not work as well had a waiter asked the question. This mirrors the position of women in the animal tales, where they frequently serve as little more than motivation for the male hero, as Serah does in example [A9]. This emphasis on the male is another component of the genre – historically tall tales have been associated with the frontier and male dominated spaces and activities which is necessarily going to produce more examples of men's rather than women's lore. Tall tales involving language, however, are far less exclusive, and provide equal opportunities for both female heroes and female tellers. It is possible that due to the initial focus of tall tale collectors on frontier areas and activities, tall tales were constructed as a male genre, due to the typically male association of these activities and the domestic angel stereotyping of women. Later collections, such as the fisherman's tales described by Henningsen, continued this gender bias, focusing on male dominated professions rather than more inclusive categories. It is

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[38] "Oh, let's have the food first, we'll have time to look for a woman afterwards".

possible that these issues of collection have biased scholar's view of the genre, as McAndrews notes, "many studies suggest women would presumably have different speaking/joking communities than men, then certain lying tales would be shared with only a few women – and certainly not men" (McAndrews, 72). If this is true, it certainly leaves space for further exploration into the genre.

The practice of women being the set up for the punchline continues in example [B5]. This tale features a woman unsuccessfully calling for her dog, named Mozart, who is playing with another dog. Moc, the owner of the other dog, gets up to leave and successfully summons his dog with, "Dere 'ma Bach"[39] (Wynne Lloyd, SFNHM recording 1415, recorded 1966). The humor here derives not only from the fact that Moc's old dog is more obedient than the lady's dog, but also from the confusion between the composer Bach, and the Welsh word for little, *bach*. While Moc may simply be referring to his dog as "little" or "small", others, such as the upper class lady in the tale, would recognize the word as the name of the composer, especially after hearing the woman call for Mozart. This tale is similar to another one found in the Welsh tradition, ATU 1540, The Visitor from Paradise (Paris). In the typical version of the tale, as presented by John Jacob's in his *Europa's Fairy Book* (1916, 159-64), an old woman mishears a visitor who says he is from Paris, and thinks he is from Paradise. She then gives him extravagant gifts, to take to her first husband who the visitor, capitalizing on his host's mistake, claims to know. The tale then has the woman's second husband chasing the visitor, only to be tricked into further loss.

However, women are not always simply passive features in these tales. In some, such as examples [B6], [B7], and [B8], women are the ones who get to deliver the punchline or make the mistake. Example [B6] describes an elderly woman standing in a tub of water as she drinks medicine since the bottle says, "to be taken in water" (Margaret Ann Evans,

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[39] "Come here, little one."

SFNHM recording 1452, recorded 1967). This joke is an example of the polysemy jokes mentioned above. Since this kind of mistake is common enough even when only one language is concerned, the occurrence of this mistake in the context of the Welsh-English relationship emphasises the fact that such mistakes would be even more common amongst those who speak both languages. It is not simply that the wording on the bottle is ambiguous or the implication that old people are foolish, but rather it emphasizes a problem for people who grew up monolingual in a bilingual society.

This continues in example [B7]. The tale involves a woman from Carmarthenshire who has to go to London for a wedding. She tells her husband she does not want to go on the train because she does not know how to ask for a ticket, but he tells her to simply ask for the same thing as the person in front of her. At the ticket office, the man in front of her says, "Single, Seven Sisters," which causes the woman to say, "Married, two children" (Mari James, SFNHM recording 1452, recorded 1966). The woman misunderstands the man's request for a single ticket to Seven Sisters, which may be either the village in Glamorgan or the train station in London, as a statement concerning his marital status and siblings. In another context, it could easily be a joke about women or about people from the country, and while there are those dimensions to it, the critical fact here is that the tale is about a Welsh speaker operating in an English speaking world. This tension may not be present in all the language tales, but it is certainly an important theme that is found throughout the category. Tales such as these, which often depict the Welsh speakers as foolish or at least naive, exemplify Davies' idea that minorities may tell jokes about themselves as a way to deal with anxieties (1996, 122). Appearing foolish in these tales reflects real anxieties about being embarrassed by a lack of knowledge of the English language, something that is still necessary to function even in entirely Welsh speaking communities.

Example [B8] is an example of a situation in which a monoglot Welsh speaker is disadvantaged due to not being able to speak English. This tale concerns two girls in a hospital, one who speaks a little English, and another who speaks none. As the matron only speaks English, one girl must translate for the other. She mistakes a reference to the drink Ovaltine for an entirely different phrase, "afal o dy dîn"[40] (John Emrys Jones, SFNHM recording 1441, recorded 1967). The tale ends with the misunderstanding, but one can imagine the confusion of the girl who only speaks Welsh. This tale demonstrates the helplessness of those who cannot speak English, and the burden that that helplessness places on those who are bilingual. Another component of this tale that has not been seen in the other language tales is the scatological humor which is more in line with the occasionally grotesque imagery from the animal tales, as well as being a common motif found in jokes in general. The tale combines the scatological with the idea that women are supposed to be daintier than men, contrasting the girl's mistake with the proper reputation of both little girls and hospital matrons to make the audience laugh.

However, it is not only monolingual Welsh speakers who are the subjects of these tales. Example [B9] features a bilingual Welsh woman, Mrs. Vaughan Jones, making a fool of the new English speaking curate by providing him with a nonsensical translation of a Bible verse from Welsh into English. In the example, the curate is anonymously given a Welsh bible verse and is asked to give a sermon on it. Not knowing Welsh, the curate goes to Mrs. Jones, who in fact gave him the verse, and asks for a translation. The Welsh verse she originally provided is nonsense, "dadl fy nadl, o Dduw" (Elinor Ball, SFNHM recording 5209, recorded 1976), and she provides him with an equally nonsensical translation of "Doodle me dadl, o Lord," (Elinor Ball, SFNHM recording 5209, recorded 1976).[41] It is not

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[40] "An apple from your arse".
[41] The Bible verse in question seems to be Psalm 43, "Barn fi, O Dduw, a dadlau fy nadl" (Psalm 43:1, Beibl William Morgan), which in English is rendered, "Vindicate me, my God, and plead my cause" (Psalm 41:1, New International Version).

entirely clear whether the original Welsh verse provided to the curate is intentionally nonsensical or simply a confused retelling by the informant. Regardless of the original Welsh, Mrs. Jones intentionally provides a nonsense translation of the verse into English, with the intention of making a fool of the curate.

This example is reminiscent of example [B1], featuring an outsider who is victimized by his inability to speak Welsh. While Graves' victimization is more severe, losing crops rather than just being embarrassed as in the case of the curate, both tales depict the other side of the previous two examples. Rather than the inability to speak English proving disadvantageous and making someone look like a fool, it is the inability to speak Welsh that is the problem. This is an interesting variant on the idea that tall tales can be used to combat anxieties. As opposed to the earlier tale, involving Welsh speakers making mistakes so exaggerated that they are humorous, the teller transfers the burden of the mistake to an English speaker, frequently of high status. Making him seem foolish is satisfying not only at a class level, as emphasized in [B1], but also functions as an inversion of the typical relationship between the languages, especially when the mistake has been set up purposefully by a Welsh speaker, as in the case of Mrs. Jones.

In this tale, Mrs. Jones is inhabiting the trickster role that the tall tale hero can sometimes fill, using her wits in order to make a fool of someone, demonstrating that they are not yet a part of the community and the idea that the tall tale can be used to subtly mock outsiders for their lack of understanding. Her role in the tale is at odds not only with the typical conception of the trickster figure, which within the western traditional is typically a male figure, but also with traditional female behavior. While the female trickster figure has been examined in other traditions, such as by Margaret Mills in "The Gender of the Trick: Female Tricksters and Male Narrators" (2001), it is still a relatively unexplored phenomena. Mills divides the female tricksters she has studied into two different types: "the one whose

sphere of action is domestic, private, and female … and the one who ventures as well into the male sphere of martial endeavor and quest" (241). Mrs. Jones is an example of the first type, with this tale placing her in the position of the church-going Welsh woman, but she uses her knowledge and position to hoodwink the new preacher, following the trickster tradition of using her wiles to dupe the powerful. Just as the role of women in the tall tale is a topic deserving of more research, women as trickster figures is equally an area that needs to be explored.

Religious figures can often be the subject of humor, as the previous example shows. A preacher is at the center of example [B10], in which a preacher mistranslates his sermon on the Devil, causing him to ask the congregation "Who in the devil is he?" and "What in the devil is he doing?" rather than "Who is the Devil?"[42] and "What is the work of the Devil?" [43] (Dafydd Evan Evans, SFNHM recording 3137, recorded 1971). Typically, the tales involving Welsh speakers making errors in English involve people of lower perceived status – old women or young girls – making the mistakes in question. This tale inverts that tradition, with the comic figure being an individual of higher status, more typically associated with the English speaking world. While this tale is probably better viewed with the other tales involving religious figures or along the lines of class difference, when viewed through the lens of the language difference, it serves as a reminder that such mistakes can effect even the educated and that even those who are relatively privileged can be made to look like fools for not knowing English.

The final example, [B11], returns to the tension between the Welsh and English but, unlike the previous examples, does not present anyone as clever, or as making an honest mistake. An Englishman is traveling to Aberystwyth and asks a Welshman how much further

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[42] "Pwy yw y Diafol?" &
[43] "Beth yw gwaith y Diafol?"

he has to go until he arrives there. The Welshman responds, in English, "Oh, ten," prompting the Englishman to reply, "Ten miles? No more?" The Welshman then responds, "Na, pwy fôr, bachan, a tithe'n mynd lawr i gyfeiriad y dre?"[44] (John Richard Jones, SFNHM recording 1417, recorded 1966) Once again, the misinterpretation of one word causes confusion, in this case the English "more" being interpreted as the Welsh *mor,* meaning "sea". Given Aberystwyth's position on the Welsh coast, the mistake is more understandable than those in some of the other tales, but still requires a suspension of disbelief. The Welshman clearly understands English, judging by his first response to the Englishman, yet he switches to Welsh for his second response. As the man's reply is somewhat garbled and does not make a lot of sense, it is possible that the informant, who states that he heard this tale from his parents, is simply not remembering it particularly well. This may be true of several tales discussed in this dissertation; however this does not mean that the tales are not worthy of examination. In fact, the less polished the presentation, the more representative it is, perhaps, of the genre since not every person telling a tale would be a natural storyteller.

Furthermore, this particular tale encapsulates several of the themes associated with language tall tales. The humor is frequently based on bilingual homophones, or linguistic "false friends". Their more personal nature differentiates these tales from jokes as they not only depend upon the context of the relationship between the Welsh and English languages, but they are also typically personal narratives, just as in the case of the animal tales. Additionally, the fact that none of these tellers identify these stories as jokes, referring to them instead of as tales or stories does indicate a clear difference on an emic level and thus begs the question of how to classify these tales. If these tales are not jokes, I would argue that there are enough parallels to the *celwydd golau* to place them firmly within that tradition.

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[44] "No, what sea, and you going down in the direction of the town?"

Conclusion

While the exaggerations in these languages tales is of a very different character than to be found in the tales about animals, it is still consistent with the *celwydd golau* tradition. There is nothing impossible here – in example [B3] David could very well have fetched the Vicar's dog, or in example [B6] the old woman could have misunderstood the label. There are no giant animals or improbable deaths, just people acting strangely. Puns are common, unlike in the animal tales. There is, however, the same spirit of exaggeration – all the mistakes people make seem possible, although not plausible, due to the way the language is distorted by the tellers to make the tale work, or because the way the characters switch between languages. The tellers manipulate the language of the tale to suit the tall tale tradition, to depict a reality that while based in truth, is exaggerated in certain ways so as to become fiction.

Even so, exaggeration itself is not enough to define these tales as tall tales. The added dimension of the historical and cultural specificity in these tales defines them as tall tales rather than jokes. While in many other cultures, tales such as this could easily be regarded as jokes about immigrants making linguistic errors, here the tales are more personal, arising out of people's memories, and not a result of some abstract sense of humor. The tall tale is always ultimately grounded in the lived experiences of the people who tell them. The fact that these tales and these linguistic misunderstandings could happen in a bilingual country, would have happened, and continue to happen means that tales such as these will continue to be told. To return to Davies' description of ethnic jokes, these tales lack the authorless quality of the ethnic joke (Davies 1996, 3), being limited by the cultural specifics of the Welsh-English relationship. While some of these tales may exist in other contexts as jokes, such as example [B6], the added layer of the Welsh/English mistake transforms the tale into something more

believable and more grounded than the typical joke. All these tales feature a level of specificity that jokes as a genre lack.

One of the standout features of these tales, that separates them from both the animal tales discussed in the last chapter and the general tall tale tradition, is the increased prominence of women. Several of these tales are told by female tellers, female characters have an increased presence in the tales, and Mrs. Vaughan Jones is even presented as the same kind of trickster figure as other tall tale heroes are. Indeed, Mrs. Jones seems like the kind of person who would become a tall tale hero in time, someone who has a number of stories attributed to her, regardless of whether or not she told them. Only one thing sets her apart – her gender. Tall tale heroes do not seem to feature in the language tales, which possibly represents the more domestic and urban nature of these tales than the animal tales. In a small community, people could be expected to be at least familiar with a tall tale hero, if only by reputation, allowing the growth of a tradition surrounding the hero. However, in a more urban environment, the tales can more realistically and easily be told in a friend of a friend manner, similar to urban legends. The tales are more generally relatable, and could happen to anyone, and thus do not need the same association with a known tale teller as the animal tales, with their more exaggerated features.

To close, it is interesting to return to where the chapter began – with the transmission of material over social media. The mistranslations listed on the Flickr page "Scymraeg" present an interesting modern facet of folklore, and an example of the ever-evolving nature of folk traditions. The electronic posting of these signs could not have happened twenty years ago, while it is extremely likely that new forms of folklore will have developed twenty years from now. Similarly, the relationship between the Welsh and English languages will continue to develop, and people will continue to make errors when translating. While new forms of

folklore may come into existence, the old ones will not disappear, and tales about people making these kinds of linguistic mistakes will always be around, as will tall tales as a genre.

Conclusion

This survey of the *celwydd golau* tradition has focused on tall tales concerning animals and linguistic misunderstandings in an attempt to define the Welsh tall tale tradition and place it in the context of the international tall tale tradition. It has also examined the importance of the teller and the context in which the tale is told. The history of collecting and analyzing Welsh tall tales inevitably places some limits on what can be said, but a number of general observations on the internal dynamics of the *celwydd golau* and the ways the tradition fits into other tall tale research can be made.

While there are vast differences between animal tales and language tales, both belong to the *celwydd golau* tradition, depending upon taking normal situations and exaggerating them just far enough to stretch, but not break, the listeners' belief. These exaggerations place the *celwydd golau* within the international tall tale tradition, which is defined by these same exaggerations, and stretches from antiquity to modern times, although scholars have, until recently, focused on 19th century American examples of the genre. As with the tall tales of other groups and nations, understanding any given *celwydd golau* depends upon the listener understanding the context of tale; rural Wales for the animal tales, while the language tales are based on the relationship between the Welsh and English languages in Wales. The humorous nature of the tall tale is only truly apparent to someone who is cognizant of the cultural context in which the tale is told, and removing the tale from that context robs the tale of much of its meaning. As has been discussed, the listeners finding the tall tale humorous is dependent upon one of two things – either they recognize the exaggeration and find the tale humorous, or they find humor in the reactions of those who do not recognize that the tall tale is in fact fiction. When the entire audience believes the tale, the only person who can be amused is the teller himself or herself; the tale then loses much of its meaning when there is no one to understand the joke the teller is playing. In order to get the desired reaction, the

audience must be fully aware of the context of the tale, as only then will they properly react. And while academics certainly can examine the text of the tall tale without the tales' original context, its meaning and function can be impossible to discern without it.

Removing the tall tale from its context also strips the tales of their more spontaneous nature. Tall tales are an informal kind of folklore, more likely to be told as a part of a conversation around a campfire than in a formal storytelling event, and are typically presented as personal anecdotes, with the teller testifying to the tale's veracity. While only one tale in this study, example [B3], is narrated by the original teller, the informal transmission of the *celwydd golau* is documented in Medlicott's *Shemi's Tall Tales*, where she describes how she learned the tales from her father, who told them to her as some event triggered the memory of the tale in his head (2008, 90). It is during these kinds of storytelling events that tall tales get transmitted, and these more informal events are key to understanding the tall tale.

The importance of cultural context, and the more informal context of the tale telling event are both important to understand the functions of the tall tale and *celwydd golau*. Tall tales can be told for any number of reasons other than simply to entertain. As argued above, bluffing strangers or newcomers who cannot or will not recognize the exaggeration is a common function of the tall tale as explored by Richard Bauman in the dog-markets of Texas or evidenced by the various language tales of Wales. The latter make this facet of the tall tale part of the event itself, frequently introducing people who are unable to fully operate in both Welsh and English, and who are thus unable to recognize the ways in which people are playing with language in order to make them look foolish. These tales can also serve as a way to demonstrate the teller's own intelligence, by making some clever bilingual pun or wordplay that leaves others confused. The animal tales can also contain the same self-valorization, depicting how clever or strong the teller proved himself or herself to be in

escaping some impossible situation. The tales can also serve to pass along useful knowledge in an exaggerated fashion, such as the use of birdlime to trap crows eating a farmer's crops or using pepper to keep rabbits out of the garden, as well as stressing the importance of being bilingual. Any given tale can have any number of reasons behind the telling, but these functions are some of the most common behind the tall tale.

Celwydd golau, like other tall tales, occur naturally, growing out of a teller's attempt to embellish the truth to entertain an audience. This is most notable in the animal tales which share and adapt motifs about animals' appearance and behaviors found in other genres of folklore. The most prominent example of this in the Welsh tradition would be examples [A34-36], which resemble medieval tales of whale islands, or example [A59] where the rampage of Siwsan the sow resembles the rampages of the legendary Henwen and Twrch Trwyth. Indeed, the animal tales tend to lend themselves more easily to a literary tradition, with many of the stories included in Medlicott's work being tales about animals, a trend which continues in Tomos' collection. The exaggerations in these tales are manifold, whether it be the unnatural size, strength, or aggression of the animals, or some exaggerated behavior on behalf of the characters in the tale. And while some of these exaggerations seem to be particular to Wales – the fish island, killing rabbits with pepper, and, most obviously, the ravens that fly away with the tree – they nevertheless fall within the bounds of the tradition as they occur internationally, demonstrating the degree to which the *celwydd golau* conforms to the tall tale gene.

The language tales, on the other hand, are significantly less exaggerated and diverge more widely from the international tall tale tradition. However, the situations presented in the tales still defy the rules of normal logic in the same manner as the tall tale, exaggerating the commonplace language errors that can occur in a bilingual society such as Wales. While these tales have much in common with ethnic jokes, such as their tendency to repackage

cultural fears about conforming with the dominant culture, as discussed by Davies in relation to Jewish humor (2011 119), these tales do not single out one group for ridicule, mocking both Welsh and English speakers alike, nor are they likely to be appropriated by another group, even one as closely related as English speakers in Wales. These tales are dependent upon the context of the relationship between the Welsh and English languages in Wales, as viewed by the native Welsh population. One key feature of the joke is its ability to cross cultural borders and to be altered to its new context, a prominent feature of the ethnic jokes that these tales most closely resemble. However, as these tales lack that ability, they are best considered as tall tales, and thus *celwydd golau*, despite their unique quality amongst the international tall tale tradition. Another key factor in this distinction is the potential use of these tales to define groups rather than to exclude them. Only those who are bilingual will understand the exaggeration in the tale – others are excluded, likely to the amusement of the teller – a process which illustrates Brown's idea that the tall tale "delineates an 'in' group and challenges the listener to prove himself clever or dull, in or out of that group through his response to the tale" (1987 38). Ethnic jokes are not intended to define groups, simply to make fun of them, while the *celwydd golau* concerning language clearly ask the listener to identify himself/herself as someone either in or out of the group.

The tales examined in this study generally conform to the structure identified by Brown (1987, 20), presenting first a relatable situation – crops being eaten by pests or Welsh speakers being required to communicate in English, for example – followed by an increasingly absurd situation and a final exaggeration – birds flying off with a tree, fish being scared out of the water by a giant pig, responding in an inappropriate manner to an innocent question, and so forth. While the tales generally lack the assertion of truth that Brown argues frequently accompanies the tall tale, and demonstrated by Bauman's dog markets, this can likely be attributed to the second-hand nature of the collection. The only tale in this collection

that is told by the original teller is tale [B3] which Mary Thomas directly relays as an incident from her childhood; this functions in the same way as the typical protestation of truth or disdain for liars by assuring the audience that the tale must be true. While the second-hand nature of these tales may strip them of this feature, it makes them a wonderful example of the importance of the tall tale teller, and how tales will come to center around certain figures known for their tales.

Tellers and Informants

The Welsh folk tradition has a strong tendency to localize tales, as evidenced by Rhys' examination of the Lady of the Lake (Rhys 1901), identifying that wherever such tales are told in Wales, they are always about a local lake and a local family, rather than using the details from the most well-known version "The Physicians of Myddfai," even when the teller is aware of the literary version. The same is true about the sleeping hero waiting to return to save Wales whose identity changes from King Arthur to Owain Glyndŵr to Owain Lawgoch, depending on location. *Celwydd golau* exhibit this localizing tendency in many ways, most prominently with the idea of the tall tale hero. As demonstrated by Medlicott, while Wales may not have any teller as prominent as the American Davy Crockett, it does have a number of local figures such as Shemi Wâd whose tales survive them. Furthermore, *celwydd golau* seem to easily associate themselves with new tellers, whenever they are transferred to a new location in Wales. This practice demonstrates the important relationship between the *celwydd golau* and their context, showing just how central the tall tale teller is to the tradition. Whether the switch from a presumed "original" teller to the new teller is a result of the teller himself retelling the story with himself at the center of the tale, or by later tellers attributing the tale to a local figure – as with Abraham Smith (Jansen 1948) – to make the tale more entertaining and realistic, is impossible to say given the limits of available material in Welsh,

but both represent the localizing tendencies of the Welsh tradition, and the tall tale in general.

This localizing tendency also provides an example of Gerald Thomas' tall tale hero, in prominent tellers such as Shemi Wâd or Daniel y Pant. These figures, while not as well documented as their American counterparts, are a key part of the *celwydd golau* tradition, dominating the tales told in their areas. For example, with tale type 1881, tale [A6] is attributed to Daniel y Pant while the same tale, told just 10 miles down the coast, will be attributed to Shemi Wâd, as in tales [A2-5] and in Mary Medlicott's work.

One other feature that is not included in Thomas' notion of the tall tale hero is an identification of a hero with one particular type of tale. While Daniel y Pant may get to ride a bird to Ireland, most of the tales attributed to him describe his efforts in hunting rabbits with pepper (Tales [A48-51]). We see something similar with Shemi Wâd and *Y Deryn Mawr*. While there are multiple tale types attributed to them, they are mostly associated with tales of type 1881, man carried through the air by geese. We can see this in Mary Medlicott's *Shemi's Tall Tales* (2008) too, as she includes two separate versions of Shemi's trip to Ireland by heron, one of which features his return by cannon while the other features his return by crab, the two modes of his return reflected in the tales found in the archive. This pattern of being primarily associated with one tale type is true of almost all of the tellers for whom there are multiple attributed tales. This suggests that while any individual *celwydd golau* teller probably told a number of tales in his/her life, tellers are usually associated with one particular tale which is thus better preserved within their community. This stands out from the international tradition, where tellers such as Abraham "Oregon" Smith and Gib Morgan have entire tale cycles attributed to them, covering any number of topics.

A side effect of this strong association with a single teller is that while tales can migrate, many *celwydd golau* seem to remain near where they were originally told, and associated with a single teller. As mentioned above, Daniel y Pant is strongly associated with

the hunting rabbits with pepper tale, with four of the five examples of the tale attributed to him. The one instance in which the example is not attributed to Daniel is instead attributed to a local teller in Carmarthenshire. Similarly, the fish island tale is strongly associated with William Jones, with only one example, [A34], not specifically attributed to him. The only animal tale that is particularly diffuse in Wales is type 1881*, namely parrots fly away with tree. The tale is well distributed throughout North Wales, with each example associated with a local tale teller. While many tales seem to remain primarily in their area of origin, this tale clearly spread around the region, becoming associated with local tellers as it travelled, demonstrating the localizing tendency of the *celwydd golau*. This demonstrates that the *celwydd golau* is not a particularly mobile form of folklore in Wales, although when a tale is transmitted to another village or region, it is appropriated and assigned to a local teller, even if he or she may never have told the tale.

It is difficult to argue whether this trend continues with the language tales as they are generally unattributed to any teller due to the informants never citing one. The style in which the language tales are told is typically less polished than the animal tales, with the informants repeating themselves, correcting themselves, or being generally unclear on the details of the story they are telling. It is entirely possible that the informants of the language tales are less used to telling tales, and as a result do not tell them as well. This, among other things, could cause them to leave out the attribution that is so present in the animal tales. Even in the more urban setting of the language tales, it would make sense for the tradition to center around a figure known for telling tales, although it is possible that the language tales are simply unattributed because the teller's identity is considered less of a factor by the audience.

Finally, it is important to note that many of the informants in the NHM archive should be considered passive tradition bearers, especially in regards to the *celwydd golau*. These tales are not often performed and all the informants are relying on their memories of the

telling. Therefore, it is natural that some of the tales would be poorly remembered, and thus told poorly. If one wanted to reconstruct all the details of the *celwydd golau*, having access to the actual tale tellers would be invaluable, as demonstrated by the American tall tale tradition, where many tales were documented by both journalists and scholars, thus providing a wealth of first-hand material for scholars to study. While the material in the archive is highly important, any analysis of its material to form an idea of the *celwydd golau* is only as good as the informant's memories. The archive only contains one example in which the informant is also the teller of the tale, example [B3], although Mary Thomas does not position herself as the hero of the tale. This tale is told to prove a point, serving as a humorous demonstration of how little English the teller and her peers knew when they were in school. This provides proof for the idea that the tall tale can be used as an explanatory tool, while simultaneously testing the listeners to prove themselves clever by understanding where the children went wrong. This example is interesting not only because the informer and teller are one and the same – also of import is the gender of the informant.

Celwydd Golau and Gender

As discussed in the previous chapter, tall tales have typically been considered a predominantly male genre and the informants for the animal tales are, with only one exception, male. However, four of the eleven informants for language tales are female, including the teller of example [B3]. Six of the tales center around women, with example [B8] featuring only female characters, while Mrs. Vaughan Jones of example [B9] is a trickster figure who causes the linguistic confusion in the tale. It is possible that the greater presence of women in the second category is because tales about language by and large do not happen in wild or rural environments. These tales happen in cities and villages and homes, and center around conversations and social interactions, settings and actions deemed

more acceptable for women not only to discuss but also to participate in. Thus, because of the Welsh ability to make tall tales out of domestic issues and concerns, the genre was opened up to female tellers and documented, albeit sparsely, unlike in other international traditions.

As shown earlier, the language tales feature significantly more women than normal in *celwydd golau*, let alone tall tales as a whole. Women are a rarity in the *celwydd golau* about animals, frequently serving as damsels in distress – Serah in example [A9]. On other occasions they are included to facilitate the story, such as the boy's mother in example [A67], while women are active figures in several of the language tales. This may sometimes make them the butt of the joke, as in examples [B5-7]; but, it also allows them to be the hero of the tale, such as in example [B9]. The hero(ine) of that tale, Mrs. Vaughan Jones, seems straight out of a tall tale, tricking the new preacher with an exaggerated form of Welsh, and while no other adventures are attributed to her, the character she demonstrates in that tale is not very far removed from what is known about other Welsh tall tale tellers, such as Shemi Wâd.

Celwydd Golau and Tale Types

While this study has been organized by ATU tale types, primarily due to the convenience they offer organizationally and the influence of Henningsen's "The Art of Perpendicular Lying: Concerning a Commercial Collecting of Norwegian Sailor's Tales" (1965), the tale type method also provides an easy way to compare the tales found in Wales to those in the international tradition. While in several areas, *celwydd golau* conform to international standards, such as the popularity of big fish tales (Type 1960B) or the animal lost inside the giant vegetable (Type 1960D) there are several types that stand out due to their relative rarity in the ATU index.

Perhaps the most obvious is Type 1881*, "Parrots fly away with tree". The ATU Index lists 6 nations in which it is documented – England, Australia, America, Nicaragua, and

Argentina. The presence of the tale in Wales, and with such numerous examples, adds a new reference for study of this tale type. Indeed, type 1881* is the second most common animal tall tale in Wales, and is one of the few tales that does not seem particularly associated with any one teller or location. Rather than a big fish tale, or something of that nature, this type seems to be the main – if such a designation can be made – *celwydd golau* involving animals. As discussed above, other tales tend to be more strongly connected to certain tellers, and lack the widespread dispersal of this tale. That the examples of this tale type lack these elements makes the tale type stand out among the others in the Welsh tradition.

Indeed, this tale even manages to cross over to the language tales, unlike the other animal tales. Example [B1] closely resembles type 1881* in its setup and central problem. The initial situation in both is the problem of crop loss to birds, a concern in any agricultural community; but the tales diverge in their way of dealing with the problem. The heroes of the animal tales get birdlime to deal with the situation which causes the story to end with the exaggeration of the birds flying away with the tree; but when the hero of example [B1] goes to advise his neighbor, Graves, on how to deal with the birds, he cannot do so due to Graves' inability to understand Welsh, resulting in an implied loss of his crop. While example [B1] can be understood without knowledge of type 1881*, understanding its place in the broader context of not just the *celwydd golau* tradition but Welsh folklore in general, is dependent upon not only being familiar with type 1881* but also with its numerous occurrences throughout the North. Graves' inability to understand Welsh and respond properly makes him stand out not only in the tale, but within the larger tradition of *celwydd golau*.

Another tale type that stands out is type 1891, "The great rabbit catch". This tale stands out not because it is unusually common; rather, it stands out for the opposite reason. Examples [A48-51] are all attributed to the same teller, Daniel y Pant, and an incredibly similar tale, [A47], while not attributed to Daniel is from western Carmarthenshire, close to

where Daniel lived. By the Aarne-Thompson tale type index, these five examples would be a separate type from examples [A45-46], namely type 1891B*, "Rabbits (hares) caught by making them sneeze". Thompson only gave one example of the tale, from Finland (Thompson 1995, 513), and as a result, Uther combined the type with other similar rabbit hunting tales to create a more general type 1891 on the basis that "except when they have reached a significant temporal, ethnic, or geographic distribution" (Uther 2004, 8) tale types should not be considered unique types. While five additional examples from Wales hardly meets Uther's criteria, even including the example of *buttercup*'s forum post (buttercup, 2005), this case demonstrates the importance of regional tale type indices and the dangers of relying too much on one method of classification.

Another clear example of a Welsh variation of a type is in the case of type 1889C, "Fruit tree grows out of the head of an animal". While two of the examples, [A32-33], conform generally to the international tradition, examples [A34-36] involve a fish rather than a mammal. Indeed, these examples also call to mind the medieval motif of the whale island, with the hero mistaking the fish with a tree on it for an island. The whale island is not a tale type in the index, despite featuring prominently in both medieval Christian belief and literature, as well as in the Arabian tales surrounding Sinbad the sailor. While this probably does not meet Uther's criteria either, as the last two examples are primarily literary, and the Welsh examples all originate with the same teller, William Jones, the idea as manifested in the *celwydd golau* has parallels in other traditions.

While much of the Welsh material involving animals indeed has parallels in other traditions, the tales about language are more unusual. The ATU type to which they conform is type 1699, "Misunderstandings due to ignorance of a foreign language"; yet that particular type is classified under jokes. And, indeed, in many circumstances the tales that appear in the Welsh tradition would be considered jokes. However, the tales not only reference one of the

animal tales – example [B1], as mentioned above – but also closely mirror tall tale telling event (see example [B3]). They feature conceits too dependent upon knowledge of both Welsh and English to be successfully removed from the context of Welsh culture, just as a tall tale cannot be, and for these reasons they must be considered *celwydd golau*, rather than jokes.

Further Research Possibilities

This study merely scratches the surface of the *celwydd golau* tradition, and there are numerous details of the tradition that could and should be studied in the future. The most obvious is a more detailed study of the archive's collection on topics other than animals or languages – *celwydd golau* include a number of topics other than animals or language, and those other categories are just as deserving of examination. Furthermore, new fieldwork to collect contemporary Welsh folklore would be invaluable to see how the tradition stands today, especially in urban areas, both to encompass a wider selection of materials and to test my hypothesis that the language tales are a more urban phenomena than other types of tall tales. Such a collection should not be limited merely to Welsh language material, in order to fully display the breadth of folk traditions occurring in Wales today, and should also examine Welsh internet sources, such as "Scymraeg". An in-depth academic study of the repertoire of one of the tall tale tellers would also be valuable, allowing for a more detailed analysis of not only his/her tales but also the contexts in which they were told. And as discussed, much work remains to be done on the role of women in tall tales, both as tellers and figures within the tale. Finally, a comprehensive analysis of all the texts on *celwydd golau*, including Arthur Tomos' publications, would be invaluable in developing a definitive view of the genre.

Concluding Thoughts

Whether the tale is about ravens flying away with a tree, drunk pigs rampaging through villages, or schoolchildren mistaking English words for Welsh ones, there is an unmistakable undercurrent of humor throughout the *celwydd golau*. Regardless of other factors, these tales are intended to amuse those who listen to them, to provoke laughter at what predicament the hero has himself into. A key characteristic of tall tale tellers is that they do not take themselves too seriously and that everything they say should not be taken at face value. While the tales themselves may be lies, there is always a core of truth at their center.

The goal of this study has been to attempt to uncover some of those truths. As Carolyn Brown states, the tall tale "is too complex a work of art and artistry" (1987, 38) for a simple analysis to adequately explain. The *celwydd golau* tradition is the same as its international cousins in that respect, and while it can be loosely defined and identified by its exaggerations, these tales are much more than simple lies. These tales are meant to bring people together through a humor that everyone in the audience can relate to and understand, knowing that "celwydd bob gair odd honno" (Dafydd Jones, SFNHM recording 2445, recorded 1969).

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William John Jones, SFNHM recording 4368, recorded 1974

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Wynne Lloyd, SFNHM recording 1415, recorded 1966

Appendix A: *Celwydd Golau* Concerning Animals

Tale Type: 1881 - Man Carried Through the Air by Geese
Description of Tale Type: By some contrivance, a man is carried by a bird to a foreign location.

Examples of the Tall Type:
[1]   Tape: 1418
         Location on Recording: 19:55-20:25
         Location in Transcript: pg 13
         Informant: Thomas Williams, Pwll Deri, Pembrokeshire
         Summary: A man was fishing with a long line one day, using beans for bait. A hungry bird ate the beans and swallowed the line, and when the bird flew off, the man refused to let go of his fishing rod and was dragged away. The bird flew to Ireland, where the man eventually let go.

[2]   Tape: 2631
         Location on Recording: 31:45-33:48
         Location in Transcript: pg 5-6
         Informant: Roscoe Lloyd, Llannon, Cardiganshire
         Summary: Informant did not tell the story, just summarized it. Dafydd made a stile one morning and a giant bird came by. While scaring the bird off, it grabbed Dafydd and carried him to Ireland. Once there, he fell asleep in a cannon and was shot back to Wales when it was fired in the morning.

[3]   Tape: 1876
         Location on Recording: 23:40-24:55
         Location in Transcript: pg 12
         Informant: James Mathias, Trefin, Pembrokeshire
         Summary: Attributed to Shemi Wâd. Shemi jumped on a giant heron that had swallowed his line, and flew across the sea to Ireland. He slept in a cannon that night, and returned to Wales when the cannon was fired in the morning.

[4]   Tape: 1879
         Location on Recording: 15:00-16:05
         Location in Transcript: pg 11
         Informant: David Williams, Abergwaun, Pembrokeshire
         Summary: Attributed to Shemi Wâd. Shemi rode a snipe over to Ireland, and returned to Wales on the back of a crab.

[5]   Tape: 2593
         Location on Recording: 21:00-24:00
         Location in Transcript: pg 16-17
         Informant: D Lloyd S Richard, Betws Ifan, Pembrokeshire
         Summary: Attributed to Shemi Wâd. Shemi was fishing one day. He caught a fish, and as he was reeling it in, a big cormorant grabbed the fish. Shemi held onto the line, but the cormorant was strong, and Shemi was left dangling. He was taken over the sea and there was nothing he could do. Whenever the bird would start tiring and dipping he would clap and cry to get it going again. Eventually they came to land in Ireland, and Shemi let go. He could not see anything other than a giant pipe, so he climbed into the pipe and went to sleep. The pipe

was actually a cannon and in the morning it was fired, and he landed back on the beach where he started his journey.

[6]   Tape: 2891
        Location on Recording: 27:05-29:55
        Location in Transcript: pg 11-13
        Informant: William Daniel Jenkins, Trefdraeth, Pembrokeshire
        Summary: Attributed to Daniel y Pant. He was fishing and caught an eel. As he reeled it in, a heron swallowed the eel. Daniel was pulled after it and there was nothing he could do until he arrived in Ireland. He went to sleep in a cannon, and when it was fired in the morning he arrived back in Wales.

[7]   Tape: 4368
        Location on Recording: 7:40-13:05
        Location in Transcript: pg 5-8
        Informant: William John Jones, Drws Y Coed, Caernarfonshire
        Summary: Attributed to Gruffudd Jones (*Y Deryn Mawr*). He was lost in the Sahara Desert for three weeks, until he found an ostrich. He jumped on its back and it flew into the air and took him home.

[8]   Tape: 3515
        Location on Recordings: 24:30-26:15
        Location in Transcript: pg 16
        Informant: Thomas John Jones, Llanrug, Caernarfonshire
        Summary: Attributed to Gruffudd Jones (*Y Deryn Mawr*). He had gone to Australia as a stowaway, but realized that America was the place to be, since there was plenty of work there. While figuring out how to get there, he saw a flock of ostriches. He hopped onto one of the ostriches and held an apple in front of its face and the bird began to run, taking him all the way to New York.

[9]   Tape: 2445
        Location on Recording: 13:30-15:00
        Location in Transcript: pg 10
        Informant: Dafydd Jones, Rhosygwaliau, Merionethshire
        Summary: Attributed to Harry Lloyd. He had just got married to Serah, and they were on their honeymoon on a boat. A giant storm started, and the wind threw Serah off the boat, but Harry got on a big blue heron that was on the boat and rescued her before she fell into the sea. They then flew until they made it to dry land in America.

Tale Type: 1881* - Parrots Fly Away with Tree
Description of Tale Type: A farmer is attempting to get rid of the crows that flock to his farm, and tries gluing them to a tree. When he begins to shoot, they take off and lift the tree out of the ground.

Examples of the Tall Type:
[10]   Tape: 2428
        Location on Recording: 20:25-22:03
        Location on Transcript: pg 14-15
        Informant: John Rowlands, Y Bala, Merionethshire
        Summary: Attributed to William Jones. Crows were eating his potatoes and whenever he tried to shoot them, they flew into an old tree. He bought some birdlime and put it on the tree branches, so that whenever the crows landed on the branches they would get stuck. Once stuck, they begin to fly in unison and when they take flight, the tree goes with them.

[11]   Tape: 1999
        Location on Recording: 28:20-29:33
        Location in Transcript: pg 15
        Informant: Evan & William Williams, Aberdaron, Caernarfonshire
        Summary: Attributed to Sion William Dafydd. While he was working in Sir Fôn, the crows were stealing all of the potatoes. He put birdlime on the tree and when the crows took off, they tore the tree out of the ground.

[12]   Tape: 3521
        Location on Recording: 25:40-26:55
        Location in Transcript: pg 22
        Informant: Herbert Evans, Llanllechid, Caernarfonshire
        Summary: Attributed to John Pritchard. Crows were eating the seed on the farm, so he covered the tree in birdlime. In the morning they put down more seeds and the birds were screeching because they were stuck to the tree. They began to fly together and took the tree with them.

[13]   Tape: 1029
        Location on Recording: 25:45-29:45
        Location in Transcript: pg 22-24
        Informant: William Iorwerth Edwards, Ruthin, Denbighshire
        Summary: In Tre'ngharad. Crows were eating all of the swedes, and the people of Sir Fôn wanted to keep the crows where they were from in Sir Gaernarfon. They had never seen crows as large as these. Wân Willias bought a bunch of birdlime and put it on one of his trees. After breakfast he went to look at the tree and it was black with crows. When they started flying the tree went with them.

[14]   Tape: 2191
        Location on Recording: 17:35-20:20
        Location in Transcript: pg 16-18
        Informant: John Jones, Llangranog, Cardiganshire
        Summary: Attributed to Dafydd Ifans. A farmer was harvesting grain, but having problems with crows. So he covered a tree in coal tar. The next morning the tree was clouded with crows, screeching and trying to take off. Eventually the crows tore the tree out of the ground, taking it and a large group of rocks in the roots with them. They eventually got tired somewhere in Oxford.

[15]   Tape: 3530
        Location on Recording: 22:55-23:42
        Location in Transcript: pg 11-12
        Informant: Thomas Richard Hughes, Tregarth, Caernarfonshire
        Summary: Attributed to John P. The crows were destroying a farmer's corn field. He got some birdlime and put it on the tree, and the crows got stuck. They began to fly together and tore the tree out of the ground.

[16]   Tape: 3532
        Location on Recording: 19:15-20:00
        Location in Transcript: pg 17
        Informant: Hugh Hughes, Tregarth, Caernarfonshire
        Summary: Attributed to John P. The jack daws were eating a farmers beans. He got some birdlime and put it on the tree. The jack daws got stuck and when they flew off the tree went with them.

[17]   Tape: 4368
        Location on Recording: 24:45-28:35
        Location in Transcript: pg 15-18
        Informant: William John Jones, Drws-y-Coed, Caernarfonshire
        Summary: Ŵan Wmffras was having problems with birds eating his fields and then flying off whenever he tried to shoot them. *Y Deryn Mawr* told him to leave it to him and went to Caernarfon and bought some birdlime. He returned and covered the big tree with birdlime. After waiting a while, Ŵan and Y Deryn went out and the tree was covered in birds. They started shooting and shooting, but the birds tore the tree out of the ground and flew away, leaving only a ton of earth in its place.

[18]   Tape: 2452
        Location on Recording: 9:10-10:30
        Location in Transcript: pg 5
        Informant: Robert Morris Roberts, Llanuwchllyn, Merionethshire
        Summary: Explicitly identified as a *celwydd golau*. The crows were bothering a farmer, but every time he went out with his gun they would fly to the top of a big tree by the field. He got some birdlime and covered the tree in it. The next day when he went out he saw the crows going to the tree. They flew away and the tree went with them.

[19]   Tape: 3131
         Location on Recording: 14:40-15:30
         Location in Transcript: pg 7-8
         Informant: David Watkins, Llanfair Caereinion, Montgomeryshire
         Summary: Told by Huw Dafis. Identified as a *celwydd golau*. The crows were
bothering him. He had some wheat fields on the Hirros and he could not do anything to keep
the crows out of them. He put glue on a tree and the crows flew away with the tree!

[20]   Tape: 3134
         Location on Recording: 12:05-13:00
         Location in Transcript: pg 7
         Informant: Edward Roberts, Llanerfyl, Montgomeryshire
         Summary: Attributed to Huw Dafis. He had a field of wheat and put sticky stuff in the
tree. The crows descended on the tree and were stuck. The crows then tore the tree out of the
ground.

[21]   Tape: 4720
         Location on Recording: 3:45-6:30
         Location in Transcript: 4-5
         Informant: Meurig Jones, Croesoswallt, Montgomeryshire
         Summary: Attributed to Austin Lloyd, who heard it from William Owen. William
Owen was on the prairie in America, and the crows were bothering him. There was a big tree
on the stretch of land and he got birdlime and put it on the tree. The next morning thousands
of crows were in the fields, and he went out with his gun. He began firing at the crows, who
flew to the tree, where he shot at them. When he fired at the tree the crows flew together and
took the tree into the air with them. Neither the crows nor the tree was seen again.

[22]   Tape: 2006
         Location on Recording: 3:00-3:40
         Location in Transcript: Transcript unavailable
         Informant: Lewis T Evans, Ffestiniog, Denbighshire
         Summary: Attributed to John Celwydd Golau. While walking around in Australia,
John saw a tree full of crows. He shot at it, and the crows flew off, ripping the tree out of the
ground.

[23]   Tape: 1938
         Location on Recording: 2:00-4:45
         Location in Transcript: pg 1-2
         Informant: John Price Jones, Cefnddwysarn, Merionethshire
         Summary: Doesn't remember where or when he heard it, but does explicitly state that
it is a *celwydd golau*. A man who had thousands of crows in his corn field says something in
the dry goods shop will get the better of them. He got stuff to cover the tree with and when he
saw the crows were in the field he ran to the tree and put the stuff on it. He then went to the
field and scared the crows. The crows went into the tree, and when they flew away, the tree
went with them. And where they arrived, the tree and crows were made into a table.

[24]   Tape: 3136
        Location on Recording: 19:10-20:15
        Location in Transcript: pg 13
        Informant: Dafydd Evan Evans, Llangadfan, Montgomeryshire
        Summary: Attributed to Huw Dafis. His field was full of crows, and at the center of
the field was an old oak tree. Every time he began shooting at the crow they hid in the tree.
So he got a tank of glue and covered the tree in it. The crows ended up ripping the tree out of
the ground, and the tree ended up near Melingrug.

[25]   Tape: 1428
        Location on Recording: 20:05-20:35
        Location in Transcript: pg 14-15
        Informant: Henadur Owen Griffith, Pentraeth, Anglesey
        Summary: Attributed to Owan Wilias (Pwll Coch). The crows were causing havoc on
the fields, so Owan got some birdlime and used it to cover the tree in the middle of the field.
The birds went to land on it, and in the morning when Owan looked to see them stuck, the
tree was gone. The crows had left with it.

[26]   Tape: 3545
        Location on Recording: 29:30-31:50
        Location in Transcript: pg 24-26
        Informant: Thomas Lewis Williams, Garndolbenmaen, Caernarfonshire
        Summary: Attributed to Robert Jones. He was collecting canaries and goldfinches for
money in Canada and he covered an old tree in birdlime. There were so many birds on the
tree that it looked like an orange blossom. When he approached with a bag, the tree began to
shake, and when he got to it the tree came out of the ground. He got taken for a ride over the
Rockies, and none of the birds got off the tree.

[27]   Tape: 3534
        Location on Recording: 17:50-19:15
        Location in Transcript: pg 12-13
        Informant: Owen Griffith, Tregarth, Caernarfonshire
        Summary: Attributed to John Pritchard. He was trying to catch goldfinches, so he put
birdlime on the tallest tree in the area. He kept female finches under the tree to lure the other
birds in. The other birds descended onto the tree. Eventually, the birds began to fly away, and
the tree flew out of the ground with them. The farmer lost all his birds.

Tale Type: 1889B - Hunter turns animal inside out
Description of Tale Type: A hunter reaches down an animal's throat, grasps its tail and turns it inside out.

Examples of the Tall Type:
[28]   Tape: 4368
        Location on Recording: 18:20-21:00
        Location in Transcript: pgs 11-12
        Informant: William John Jones, Drws-y-Coed, Caernarfonshire
        Summary: *Y Deryn Mawr* was hunting in Africa and came upon a lion. The lion
leaped at him with its mouth wide open. *Y Deryn Mawr* stepped to the left, put his hand in the
lion's mouth and reached through until he grabbed the tail and pulled, turning the lion inside
out.

[29]   Tape: 3552
        Location on Recording: 25:00-26:10
        Location in Transcript: pgs 18-19
        Informant: Jane Roberts, Rhoslan, Caernarfonshire
        Summary: Attributed to Robert Jones. He met a wild pig in the woods, and when it
charged at him, he stuck his hand in its mouth and turned it inside out.

[30]   Tape: 2000
        Location on Recording: 4:40-5:35
        Location in Transcript: pg 3
        Informant: Evan & William Williams, Aberdaron, Caernarfonshire
        Summary: One morning, a farmer (Morris Pen Goppa (Morris Williams)) was
walking through his fields and saw that his cow had escaped. He sent his dog to herd it back,
but the cow charged at him instead. The farmer stuck his hand in the cow's mouth, grabbed
its tail and turned it inside out.

[31]   Tape: 3136
        Location on Recording: 23:00-23:45
        Location in Transcript: pgs 15-16
        Informant: Dafydd Evan Evans, Llangadfan, Montgomeryshire
        Summary: Attributed to Huw Dafis. When he was young he was courting a girl who
lived on a big farm, with five or six dogs, which her parents always set after him. He kept
bread in his pockets for the dogs. One time, one of the old dogs did not want bread and came
after him with his mouth open. He reached into his mouth and grabbed his tail and turned the
dog inside out.

Tale Type: 1889C – Fruit tree grows out of the head of an animal
Description of Tale Type: Hunter is out of bullets so he shoots an animal with fruit seeds. Animal escapes, but when he sees it later there is a tree growing from it.

Examples of the Tall Type:
[32]   Tape: 2589
        Location on Recording: 3:05-6:37
        Location in Transcript: pgs 3-5
        Informant: W R Evans, Abergwaun, Pembrokeshire
        Summary: A man went hunting with nuts instead of bullets, but found nothing except a mule, which he shot in frustration. Later, he found the same mule, which had a massive tree growing out of it. The man climbed the tree and met an old woman, who let him down on a rope she knitted. He fell and got his head trapped in between two rocks, and went home to get his shovel to dig himself out, only to find the crows had eaten his eyes.

[33]   Tape: 3545
        Location on Recording: 1:35-6:50
        Location in Transcript: pgs 2-5
        Informant: Thomas Lewis Williams, Garndolbenmaen, Caernarfonshire
        Summary: Attributed to Robert Jones. Jones was in Germany, visiting a baron, and they went into the forest to hunt deer. Jones got lost, but eventually found a giant stag. He did not have any shot on him, so he shot it with cherries, but the stag survived. After the stag fled, he reunited with the others in the hunting party. Later Jones returned and found the deer with a cherry tree growing out of it.

[34]   Tape: 2428
        Location on Recording: 21:30-22:30
        Location in Transcript: pgs 11-12
        Informant: Robert Thomas, Y Bala, Merionethshire
        Summary: An old man was fishing for salmons one day in Cwm Celyn along the Tryweryn River, at a lake under a waterfall. The old man went there, and put his line through the crook of the willow tree into the water. A salmon got on the line, but pulled so hard it took the hook and the tree into the center of the lake. The next year, the old man went back to the lake, and he saw an island with a willow tree growing on it, in the middle of the lake. He jumped over to the island and realized it was the old salmon, with the tree growing on its back.

[35]   Tape: 2428
        Location on Recording: 11:05-15:20
        Location in Transcript: pgs 8-10
        Informant: John Rowlands, Y Bala, Merionethshire
        Summary: Attributed to William Jones. He was terrible at hunting salmon, but he went out to the lake where he saw 5 salmon. He hid the hook in the water with the bait, and got all of them, but they all got off, including the old salmon. One morning, heading back to the lake, he saw the old salmon and stuck it with a branch from a willow tree. Later, while walking along the river he noticed a tree by Goronwr's [sic] Stone, and went up to it, and it turned out to be on the back of the fish.

[36]   Tape: 2432
        Location on Recording: 10:55-11:30
        Location in Transcript: pg 8
        Informant: William Roberts, Llidiardau, Merionethshire
        Summary: Attributed to William Jones. He had gone to the river Tryweryn to fish for salmon, and he put a sprig of willow on the hook. When the salmon got away, the sprig ended up on the salmon's back. When he went back years later, a willow tree had grown on the salmon's back. (Informant heard the tale from other people in the area, not William Jones himself.)

Tale Type: 1889L - The Split Dog
Description of Tale Type: A dog is cut in half somehow and later put back together.

Examples of the Tall Type:
[37]   Tape: 1029
           Location on Recording: 31:30-32:40
           Location in Transcript: pg 26-27
           Informant: William Iorwerth Edwards, Ruthin, Denbighshire
           Summary: Attributed to Wil Hughes. Hughes went hunting with his greyhound by someone's field. The greyhound saw two rabbits, and ran through the gate. There were shears hanging on the gate which cut the greyhound in two. Each half of the greyhound then caught one of the rabbits.

[38]   Tape: 1456
           Location on Recording: 14:15-15:05
           Location in Transcript: pg 12
           Informant: W R Evans, Abergwaun, Pembrokeshire
           Summary: Attributed to Wil Canan. While Wil was out hunting with his greyhound, the greyhound went chasing after a rabbit and ran under a scythe. After doing that, it saw a second rabbit, and the dog split in two, catching both rabbits.

[39]   Tape: 1876
           Location on Recording: 12:00-13:20
           Location in Transcript:pg 7
           Informant: James Mathias, Trefin, Pembrokeshire
           Summary: Attributed to Shemi Wâd. Shemi was working in the fields when a dog chased a rabbit by Shemi's scythe. Shemi accidentally split the dog from nose to tail, but put it back together before the owner could see.

Tale Type: 1889L** – Mittens hunt deer
Description of Tale Type: Hunter's best dog dies and he makes mittens out of it. One day while in the woods he sees a deer and the mittens come off and catch the deer.

Examples of the Tall Type:
[40]   Tape: 3131
         Location on Recording: 12:45-13:45
         Location in Transcript: pg 7
         Informant: David Watkins, Llanfair Caereinion, Montgomeryshire
         Summary: Told by Huw Dafis. He was in a field on the top of the mountain, with a mitten on one hand and one on the gate post when he heard hunting dogs off in the distance. His mittens were made of foxhound skin, and he felt a bit of a pull in the mitten he was wearing, while the one on the gatepost went after the dogs and was never seen again.

[41]   Tape: 3134
         Location on Recording: 10:55-11:55
         Location in Transcript: pgs 6-7
         Informant: Edward Roberts, Llanerfyl, Montgomeryshire
         Summary: Attributed to Huw Dafis. Huw had a sheep dog who was also a foxhound, and a good one. After the dog died, he made a pair of mittens from its skin and one day he was wearing them when the hunting dogs were chasing a fox. The mittens pulled off Huw's hands and went after the fox.

[42]   Tape: 3136
         Location on Recording: 28:30-29:20
         Location in Transcript: pg 19
         Informant: Dafydd Evan Evans, Llangadfan, Montgomeryshire
         Summary: Attributed to Huw Dafis. Huw had a greyhound which could catch every hare, they say. Dafydd saw it when it was old and after it died it was made into mittens. And one day Huw stopped on the top of Hirros, and he saw a hare. His mittens came off and went after the hare, catching it and returning to Huw.

[43]   Tape: 3128
         Location on Recording: 21:55-23:15
         Location in Transcript: pgs 15-16
         Informant: David Evans, Llanfair Caereinion, Montgomeryshire
         Summary: Attributed to Huw Dafis. He had an excellent hunting dog, and when it died he had its skin made into a pair of gloves. One day, while hunting, the gloves pulled themselves off and chased after a rabbit.

[44]   Tape: 3894
         Location on Recording: 20:45-21:45
         Location in Transcript: pg 10
         Informant: John Jones, Llansannau, Denbighshire
         Summary: Attributed to Dafydd Dafis. There was a good dog for catching hares, and when he died his skin was made into a waistcoat. One day, while walking in the field, the waistcoat came off and chased after a hare, wrapping around it and catching it.

Tale Type: 1891 - The Extraordinary Rabbit Catch
Description of Tale Type: Rabbit catch ends in some fantastic way.

Examples of the Tall Type:
[45]   Tape: 2606
         Location on Recording: 8:15-9:05
         Location in Transcript: pg 8
         Informant: John Alun Roberts, Llandudno, Denbighshire
         Summary: Attributed to Ifan Michael. Ifan was out ferreting, and he caught a small
rabbit. He let the rabbit go, and gave it a note, written in Welsh, which invited its family to
come out. The rabbit went into its hole, and one hundred rabbits came back out. Rabbits can
read Welsh very well.

[46]   Tape: 2592
         Location on Recording: 13:50-16:50
         Location in Transcript: pgs 9-11
         Informant: D Lloyd S Richards, Betws Ifan, Pembrokeshire
         Summary: Attributed to Daniel y Pant. One night he was out ferreting on Sheep Hill
when he lost his ferret. He went down to the beach and got a bunch of crabs and put them in
front of the rabbits' hole, which they went in. This chased out all the rabbits and the ferret.
The ferret refused to go into holes after that.

[47]   Tape: 2585
         Location on Recording: 8:40-9:45
         Location in Transcript: pgs 5-6
         Informant: Benjamin Reynold Evans, Hendy Gwyn-ar-Daf, Carmarthenshire
         Summary: Attributed to Tom Nee, an Irish/Englishman who spoke English. He went
out to get some rabbits with a bucket of ashes and two traps. When his neighbor asked how
he is going to get them with ashes, Tom said he will cover the traps with the ashes and get the
rabbits when they go to look. The neighbor says not to be silly and to take the pepper box and
put that under a rock so the rabbits will sneeze and hit their heads on the stone killing them.

[48]   Tape: 2891
         Location on Recording: 14:55-18:05
         Location in Transcript: pgs 6-7
         Informant: William Daniel Jenkins, Trefdraeth, Pembrokeshire
         Summary: Attributed to Daniel y Pant. He did not have a greyhound, so he would trap
the rabbits. He noticed the rabbits liked to dance under a big rock in the morning, so he put a
pound of pepper under the rock. The rabbits would sneeze and hit their heads on the rock,
killing them. He took away 12 wheel barrows of rabbits. Informant tells the tale twice.

[49]   Tape: 2899
        Location on Recording: 13:30-14:25
        Location in Transcript: pg 9
        Informant: Joseph Thomas, Trefdraeth, Pembrokeshire
        Summary: About Daniel y Pant. One day, someone saw him putting pepper around a rock and asked him why. He said that rabbits lived under the rock and this was his way of getting them. The next morning people saw him collecting rabbits from under the rock - he needed a three horse cart to take them all to Abergwaun to sell.

[50]   Tape: 2592
        Location on Recording: 9:00-12:10
        Location in Transcript: pgs 6-8
        Informant: D Lloyd S Richards, Betws Ifan, Pembrokeshire
        Summary: Attributed to Daniel y Pant. Daniel was having problems with rabbits, and he had tried everything - shooting them, trapping them, hunting them with ferrets, and nothing worked. Finally he went and bought a load of bricks and several pounds of pepper. He covered the bricks in pepper and put them around, and as rabbits are curious they would come up to the bricks, sneeze, hit their heads and die.

[51]   Tape: 2897
        Location on Recording: 17:45-19:05
        Location in Transcript: pg 9
        Informant: James Varney, Trefdraeth, Pembrokeshire
        Summary: Attributed to Daniel y Pant. Daniel would say that he caught rabbits who lived under a rock by placing pepper just outside their burrow, so when they came out they would sneeze, hitting their heads on the rocks and allow him to raise them up. Informant states that he heard the tale as a child and that all the kids believed Daniel's stories.

Tale Type: 1894 - Man shoots a ramrod of ducks
Description of Tale Type: Man hits several ducks at once when he fires his ramrod.

Examples of the Tall Type:
[52]   Tape: 5013
         Location on Recording: 0:00-0:55
         Location in Transcript: pg 1
         Informant: Thomas Goronwy Davies, Llangammarch, Breconshire
         Summary: Attributed to Ivy (Penlan Wen, Tir Abad). He was out shooting one day,
without much luck, until he saw a row of partridges, 15 of them. He loaded his old muzzle
loader and when he pulled the trigger he moved it around like a machine gun, and shot every
one.

Tale Type: 1896 - Man nails tail of wolf to tree and beats him
Description of Tale Type: A man is out hunting and nails the tail of a wolf to a tree. Man beats wolf and wolf runs away, leaving his skin/fur nailed to the tree.

Examples of the Tall Type:
[53]   Tape: 5012
        Location on Recording: 28:20-29:15
        Location in Transcript: pg 13
        Informant: Thomas Goronwy Davies, Llangammarch, Breconshire
        Summary: Attributed to Ivy Penlanwen. Part of a longer narrative. The cattle drover heard a screech and realized it was a fox. He took his old muzzle loader. He had already put the powder in place, but he had no lead, so he used tin tacks instead. The fox was taking two cans of milk through the gap in the fence. The man shot and the fox could not move, as a tin tack had gone through the fox's tail and fixed him to the post.

[54]   Tape: 1876
        Location on Recording: 13:50-15:30
        Location in Transcript: pgs 7-8
        Informant: James Mathias, Trefin, Pembrokeshire
        Summary: Attributed to Shemi Wâd. He was out hunting rabbits, but the rabbit was too fast for his dog to catch. So he shot at the rabbit with a nail, which nailed its tail to a bush.

Tale Type: 1920F* - The Skillful Hounds
Description of Tale Type: A hunting dog of extraordinary abilities.

Examples of the Tall Type:
[55]   Tape: 2901
         Location on Recording: 6:30-7:40
         Location in Transcript: pgs 4-5
         Informant: Joseph Thomas, Trefdraeth, Pembrokeshire
         Summary: Attributed to John Phillips. His father had a great greyhound. One day
while out riding, his horse lost a shoe. The greyhound ran back to the blacksmith and ate a
lump of hot iron and brought it back to his master, who made the iron into a shoe and
continued on his way.

Tale Type: 1960 - The Great Animal or Object
Description of Tale Type: Animal that is impossibly large.

Examples of the Tall Type:
[56]   Tape: 1876
         Location on Recording: 7:30-7:55
         Location in Transcript: pg 5
         Informant: James Mathias, Trefin, Pembrokeshire
         Summary: Attributed to Shemi Wâd. He once caught a crab so large that he used the
shell as a pigsty roof.

[57]   Tape: 2899
         Location on Recording: 24:35-25:20
         Location in Transcript: pg 15
         Informant: Joseph Thomas, Trefdraeth, Pembrokeshire
         Summary: The tide was bigger in March, and Daniel y Pant said that this was because
there was a giant whale swimming past from Pen Dinas to Pen y Morfa then.

[58]   Tape: 2592
         Location on Recording: 1:00-4:40
         Location in Transcript: pgs 1-3
         Informant: D Lloyd S Richards, Betws Ifan, Pembrokeshire
         Summary: Attributed to Daniel y Pant. One time, when he was young, the tide was
incredible. People thought there as an eclipse, but eventually someone took a boat out into the
bay and found a giant whale sleeping in the bay. It was so large it could stretch from Pen y
Morfa to Pen Dinas and was damming the bay. Eventually they got a giant hoop around the
whale and managed to move it, and the resulting wave threw the boat close to Spring Hill.

[59]   Tape: 2591
         Location on Recording: 10:35-19:36
         Location in Transcript: pgs 8-10
         Informant: D Lloyd S Richards, Betws Ifan, Pembrokeshire
         Summary: Attributed to Daniel y Pant. Daniel had a bunch of sour beer which he
mixed in to Siwsan the sow's feed. She grew massive and one day went crazy and started
attacking people, until Daniel tricked her into the bay where she drowned overnight. The next
morning all the beaches were filled with fish she had scared out of the water

Tale Type: 1960B - The Great Fish
Description of Tale Type: Protagonist encounters a massive fish.

Examples of the Tall Type:
[60]   Tape: 2585
         Location on Recording: 14:50-16:40
         Location in Transcript: pgs 8-10
         Informant: Benjamin Reynold Evans, Hendy Gwyn-ar-Daf, Carmarthenshire
         Summary: Attributed to Dr. Rowley Thomas. He was fishing in the river when he
caught a large salmon that was too big for him to pull out by himself, so he called his partner
Dai to help him. Dai help him pull in a 22 pound salmon, then gave the doctor another fly.
The Doctor caught another salmon, which when Dai threw it onto the ground, was so large it
killed the rabbit on which it landed.

[61]   Tape: 3515
         Location on Recording: 11:50-13:15
         Location in Transcript: pg 8
         Informant: Thomas John Jones, Llanrug, Caernarfonshire
         Summary: A man was fishing off a bridge, and a friend of his was in his boat fishing
in the lake. The man on the bridge caught a large fish, but couldn't reel it up all the way
because the fish was flopping too much. He told his friend to hit it with the boat. He did, and
when the fishermen start pulling up, the boat came up.

[62]   Tape: 2604
         Location on Recording: 29:05-30:10
         Location in Transcript: pgs 27-28
         Informant: John Alun Roberts, Llandudno, Denbighshire
         Summary: According to Sion Ceryn Bach, his father once caught two salmon so large
that after he caught them, the river Ogwan was dry for two days.

[63]   Tape: 3513
         Location on Recording: 25:00-26:15
         Location in Transcript: pgs 21-22
         Informant: William Williams, Llanberis, Caernarfonshire
         Summary: Attributed to William Jos. He was fishing on the side of Llyn Padarn. One
day, he hooked something, but he was having problems reeling it in. He went to get the
quarry train to pull it out and it was a giant fish.

[64]   Tape: 3513
         Location on Recording: 26:15-28:05
         Location in Transcript: pgs 22-23
         Informant: William Williams, Llanberis, Caernarfonshire
         Summary: Attributed to William Jos. One time he went out early in the morning to
fish, and caught nothing until he switched to his special flies and caught 7 or 8 nice fish.

[65]   Tape: 3513
        Location on Recording: 28:05-28:25
        Location in Transcript: pg 23
        Informant: William Williams, Llanberis, Caernarfonshire
        Summary: Attributed to William Jos. Another version of the first William Jos, but the
fish is so large the quarry train cannot get it out

[66]   Tape: 4624
        Location on Recording: 3:40-5:00
        Location in Transcript: pg 3
        Informant: Emrys Jones, Cricieth, Caernarfonshire
        Summary: Attributed to John Jones. Biggest fish he ever saw was a salmon. Its back
was as big as a heifer. He put a trident in its back, but it was so strong it got free, but he knew
it did not live long after that. He followed and found it in Llyn y Gwaragadd and it weighed
45 lbs.

[67]   Tape: 3761
        Location on Recording: 28:30-29:20
        Location in Transcript: pgs 20-21
        Informant: Thomas Morgans, Cwm Bach, Carmarthenshire
        Summary: A boy and a man were out fishing. The boy caught a massive fish, but let it
go. The man asked the boy why he would do that, to which the boy responded that his
mother's frying pan was only nine inches long, and the fish was bigger.

Tale Type: 1960 D - The Animal in the Great Vegetable
Description of Tale Type: Farmer has a massive vegetable, inside of which is found a lost animal.

Examples of the Tall Type:
[68]   Tape: 1999
        Location on Recording: 29:35-30:30
        Location in Transcript: pg 15
        Informant: Evan & William Williams, Aberdaron, Caernarfonshire
        Summary: Attributed to Robat Williams. When asked about the story of the big
turnip, Williams responds "What came out of it? Sow and Pig"

[69]   Tape: 3521
        Location on Recording: 25:00-25:20
        Location in Transcript: pg 21
        Informant: Hebert Evans, Llanllechid, Caernarfonshire
        Summary: Attributed to John Pritchard. While he was in American he worked on a
farm with a cabbage so big a cow could use it as a shelter.

[70]   Tape: 2432
        Location on Recording: 15:30-16:10
        Location in Transcript: pg 11
        Informant: William Roberts, Llidiardau, Merionethshire
        Summary: Attributed to John Gittins. Describes a cabbage so big cows could hide
under it.

[71]   Tape: 2452
        Location on Recording: 10:30-13:10
        Location in Transcript: pg 5
        Informant: Robert Morris Roberts, Llanuwchllyn, Merionethshire
        Summary: Heard it from John Gittins. John talked about a cabbage he grew while he
was in America. It was big enough for a hundred cattle to hide underneath it. They eventually
made a big tent out of it, big enough to fit two hundred people.

[72]   Tape: 1876
        Location on Recording: 9:00-10:00
        Location in Transcript: pg 5
        Informant: James Mathias, Trefin, Pembrokeshire
        Summary: Attributed to Shemi Wâd. He had a cabbage so large, sheep could hide
under it for months.

[73]   Tape: 1413
         Location on Recording: 28L05-28:30
         Location in Transcript: pg 17
         Informant: John Lewis, Llanbedr Pont Steffan, Montgomeryshire
         Summary: Someone returning from America told the story. The turnips in America
are so large that the sheep eat into them and stay there, and when the snows come, not a
single sheep can be found on the face of the earth, because they are all in the turnips.

[74]   Tape: 1428
         Location on Recording: 20:05-18:55
         Location in Transcript: pg 14
         Informant: Henadur Owen Griffith, Pentraeth, Anglesey
         Summary: Attributed to Owan Wilias (Pwll Coch). Owan and his brother were out
looking for some lost sheep. On their farm they grew giant cabbages, and they found the lost
sheep in one of the giant cabbages.

[75]   Tape: 3546
         Location on Recording: 0:30-1:15
         Location in Transcript:pgs 1-2
         Informant: Thomas Lewis Williams, Garndolbenmaen, Caernarfonshire
         Summary: Heard it from his mother, who learned it from her father. A farmer lost his
sow. He searched all over for her, and finally found her in a giant swede. She had made a
burrow in it and had had 10 piglets in the swede.

[76]   Tape: 2987
         Location on Recording: 15:40-16:20
         Location in Transcript: pgs 7-8
         Informant: Daniel Jones, Tregaron, Cardiganshire
         Summary: Attributed to Morris Jones. He had giant swedes on his farm that he took to
the fair in Bryn Tewyll, and one year he had lost a yearling in the fall. In the spring, they
found the yearling in one of the swedes, where it had lived through the winter.

[77]   Tape: 1416
         Location on Recording: 10:30-11:00
         Location in Transcript:pgs 9-10
         Informant: Mari James, Llangeitho, Cardiganshire
         Summary: Attributed to John Defis. He had lost a sheep, and found it inside a giant
swede.

[78]   Tape: 2584
        Location on Recording: 21:05-22:00
        Location in Transcript: pgs 22-23
        Informant: Thomas Morgans, Cwm Bach, Carmarthenshire
        Summary: Attributed to Lewis Glandŵr. He was working on a farm in Ireland, and there was a hard winter, and they lost a sheep. In April, when they were harvesting the swedes, they found a giant one. When they opened it, they found the lost sheep and two lambs inside.

[79]   Tape: 4049
        Location on Recording: 8:45-9:25
        Location in Transcript: pgs 5-6
        Informant: Evan Davies, Llidiart y Parc, Merionethshire
        Summary: Once, when Wil Jonah was talking about a giant cabbage, Edward Williams said that George Dafis once lost a sheep, and found it in a giant turnip.

[80]   Tape: 2191
        Location on Recording: 20:40-21:15
        Location in Transcript: pg 18
        Informant: John Jones, Llangranog, Cardiganshire
        Summary: Attributed to Dafydd Ifans. They had lost a sheep in the spring, looked for it all summer, and found it in the fall, in a swede. It had lived there through the summer!

[81]   Tape: 4354
        Location on Recording: 8:50-9:30
        Location in Transcript: Transcript unavailable
        Informant: Edward Hughes, Bethel, Anglesey
        Summary: Attributed to Robin Owen. A sow had gone missing, and they found it in a mangelwurzel with a troop of piglets.

Appendix B: *Celwydd Golau* Concerning Language

Tale Type: 1699 - Misunderstanding because of ignorance of a foreign language
Description of Tale Type: A humorous misunderstanding occurs because of a language mistake

Instances of the Tall Type:
[1]   Recording: 1992
        Location on Recording: 16:20-18:00
        Location in Transcript: pgs 11-12
        Teller: John Thomas, Pwllheli, Caernarfonshire
        Summary: Attributed to Robat Jones. He lived in Pengroes (Llanstumdwy), on the edge of an estate (Y Wern, owned by Graves), by one of the big fields. There were trees nearby, from which ravens would descend and eat the seed. Robat did not like this, so one morning he went to Y Wern to see the foreman, another Welsh-speaker, and tell him about the ravens. But when he arrived, there was no one but Graves sitting in the middle of the yard, so Robat went to him and attempted to tell him the problem, but as Graves did not speak Welsh, he couldn't understand Robat, and told him to go to hell.

[2]   Recording: 3761
        Location on Recording: 24:30-26:00
        Location in Transcript: pgs 18-19
        Teller: Thomas Morgans, Cwm Bach, Carmarthenshire
        Summary: A man, looking to buy a greyhound asked two farmers if a man nearby had a greyhound to sell. When he discovered the two men only spoke Welsh, he attempted to mix Welsh and English, asking "Does that gentleman have a thousand dog?" The men then responded by saying, "No about five hundred."

[3]   Recording: 4239
        Location on Recording: 11:00-12:35
        Location in Transcript: pgs 9-10
        Teller: Mary Thomas, Meidrim, Carmarthenshire
        Summary: When talking about her school days, Mary remembers how none of the children knew very much English, even though that is what they spoke in school. One time, the teacher asked one student to bring him the key and the student ran to the vicarage and came back with the Vicar's big dog, mistaking the English key for the Welsh *ci*.

[4]   Recording: 1441
        Location on Recording: 20:30-21:05
        Location in Transcript: pg 11
        Teller: John Emrys Jones, Aberdâr, Glamorganshire
        Summary: Two young men from Cardiganshire went to Cardiff for the day. They went to a restaurant, and the waitress asked them if they would like a menu. They responded, "O gad ni ga'l y bwyd gynta, gewn ni amser i chwilio am menyw wedyn" ("Oh, let's have the food first, we'll have time to look for a woman afterwards").

[5]   Tape: 1415
        Location on Recording: Recording unavailable
        Location in Transcript: pg 17
        Teller: Wynne Lloyd, Aberaeron, Cardiganshirn
        Summary: A woman came to town to pick up a delivery, and with her was her little dog, which was named Mozart. Mozart stopped to look at Moc's old mongrel, ignoring the woman's repeated commands to follow her. When Moc went to leave, and said "Dere 'ma Bach," which caused his mongrel follow after him.

[6]   Recording: 1452
        Location on Recording: 21:30-22:25
        Location in Transcript: pg 3 (pg 12 of the transcript overall)
        Teller: Margaret Ann Evans, Capel Iwan, Carmarthenshire
        Summary: An old couple lived together, and one time the old man went to town to get some medicine for them. When he got back, Mari looked at the bottle and filled a tub with water, got in it, and told her husband to get in too. When her husband asked why, she said the directions on the bottle said "To be taken in water."

[7]   Recording: 1416
        Location on Recording: 20:35-21:30
        Location in Transcript: pg 19-20
        Teller: Mari James, Llangeitho, Cardiganshire
        Summary: There was a woman from the countryside in Carmarthenshire who was going to London for a wedding. She told her husband that she did not like trains because she could not understand how to order tickets, so he told her to do like the person in front of her did. When buying the train ticket in Carmarthen, the man in front of her asked for "Single, Seven Sisters" so when her turn came, she said, "Married, two children."

[8]   Recording: 1441
        Location on Recording: 30:30-31:10
        Location in Transcript: pgs 16-17
        Teller: John Emrys Jones, Aberdâr, Glamorganshire
        Summary: There were two girls in the hospital, one of whom did not speak any English and one who spoke a little. The one who did not speak any English was dependent on her friend, because the Matron only spoke English. She came in one day, asking if they had had their ovaltine, and when asked to translate, the girl who knew both languages said, "O cymer afal o dy dîn" ("Take an apple from your arse").

[9]   Recording: 5209
        Location on Recording: 28:30-31:00
        Location in Transcript: pgs 16-17
        Teller: Elinor Ball, Borthygest, Caernarfonshire
        Summary: Mrs. Vaughan Jones was a lady with a great sense of humor. A curate named Mr. Jones moved to Talsarna, and he did not speak any Welsh at all. Mrs. Vaughn Jones left an anonymous note for him, asking him to preach on the verse "dadl fy nadl, o Dduw." He went to her to ask for a translation, and she said it meant, "Doodle me dadl, o Lord."

[10]   Recording: 3137
        Location on Recording: 1:25-3:15
        Location in Transcript: pgs 1-2
        Teller: Dafydd Evan Evans, Llangadfan, Montgomeryshire
        Summary: There was a chapel with two preachers, one who gave the sermon in Welsh in the afternoon, and one who gave the sermon in English at night. One day, the English preacher asked if the other would do the English sermon. The Welshman said he did not know much English, but agreed to do it. The sermon was supposed to be about "Pwy yw y Diafol" ("Who is the Devil?") and "Beth yw gwaith y Diafol" ("What is the work of the Devil?"), but he ended up saying "Who in the devil is he?" and "What in the devil is he doing?"

[11]   Recording: 1417
        Location on Recording: 15:20-15:50
        Location in Transcript: pg 13
        Teller: John Richard Jones, Aberteifi, Cardiganshire
        Summary: The informant heard the tale from his parents. His father met an Englishman on the road to Aberystwyth and the Englishman asked his father how many miles to Aberystwyth. His father said it was ten miles, and the Englishman asked "Oh, ten? No more?" which caused the Welshman to say "Na, pwy fôr, bachan, a tithe'n mynd lawr i gyfeiriad y dre?" (No, what sea, and you going down in the direction of town?").

Appendix C: Welsh Tall Tale Tellers

Shemi Wâd (James Wade)

Born in or before November of 1814, when he was baptized as Rhos-y-caerau chapel in Goodwick. He was born on a farm named Trenewdydd Fach, somewhere on the Strumble Head peninsula, but lived most of his life in Goodwick, Dyfed. He is listed as a 'labourer' in the census of 1851, and as a 'fisherman' in the census of 1861, and is also known to have been a manservant at Treseisyllt, another nearby farm, as well as something of an official pig-killer to many of the homes in the Goodwick area. He is also attributed a number of other skills, such as being an excellent gardener and handyman, as well as an excellent shot, but descriptions of his abilities are often intertwined with his tales to such a degree it is impossible to ascertain their veracity. He was illiterate, but known for going to chapel, as well as his drinking and smoking, the latter of which was often employed to emphasize his tales. Shemi died in 1897, and was buried in the Rhos-y-caerau cemetery (Medlicott 2008, 7-15).

In addition to his stories, Shemi is known for a photograph that was used in a series of postcards about local characters. The image is included in Robin Gwyndaf's *Chwedlau Gwerin Cymru/Welsh Folk Tales* (1989, 23) and in Arthur Tomos' *Straeon Celwydd Golau* (1992, 139). He is also the subject of Mary Medlicott's *Shemi's Tall Tales: Fine Welsh Fibbing* (2008).

Examples attributed to Shemi Wâd by Tale Type

1881—Man carried through the air by geese
    [A3]—James Mathias, SFNHM recording 1876, recorded 1968
    [A4]—David Williams, SFNHM recording 1879, recorded 1968
    [A5]—D Lloyd S Richards, SFNHM recording 2593, recorded 1969
1889L—The split dog
    [A38]—James Mathias, SFNHM recording 1876, recorded 1968
1896—Man nails tail of wolf to tree and beats him
    [A54]—James Mathias, SFNHM recording 1876, recorded 1968
1960—The great animal or object
    [A56]—James Mathias, SFNHM recording 1876, recorded 1968
1960D—The animal in the great vegetable
    [A72]—James Mathias, SFNHM recording 1876, recorded 1968

Daniel y Pant (Daniel Tomos)

Daniel at some point lived on a homestead called Pant, outside of Trefdraeth, Dyfed, hence his nickname, although he no longer lived there by the time he was known by D Lloyd S Richards, the primary informant on Daniel. He was married, with his wife appearing in his story about Siwsan the sow, and was known to have kept cows, chickens, and pigs. He was known for telling his tales at a tavern called Y Parog in Trefdraeth (D Lloyd S Richards, SFNHM recording 2591, recorded 1969). Daniel died in 1930 (Hunter 1992, 55).

Examples attributed to Daniel y Pant by Tale Type

1881—Man carried through the air by geese
    [A6]—William Daniel Jenkins, SFNHM recording 2891, recorded 1970
1891—The extraordinary rabbit catch
    [A46]—D Lloyd S Richards, SFNHM recording 2592, recorded 1969
    [A48]—William Daniel Jenkins, SFNHM recording 2891, recorded 1970

[A49]—Joseph Thomas, SFNHM recording 2899, recorded 1970
[A50]—D Lloyd S Richards, SFNHM recording 2592, recorded 1969
[A51]—James Varney, SFNHM recording 2897, recorded 1970
1960B—The great animal or object
[A57]—Joseph Thomas, SFNHM recording 2899, recorded 1970
[A58]—D Lloyd S Richards, SFNHM recording 2592, recorded 1969
[A59]—D Lloyd S Richards, SFNHM recording 2591, recorded 1969

Y Deryn Mawr (Gruffudd Jones)

Jones was from the area surrounding Bethel, Gwynedd, and is most associated with type 1881, and it is from that tale that he got his nickname. He died in the 1880s (Hunter 1992, 55-56).

Examples attributed to *Y Deryn Mawr* by Tale Type
1881—Man carried through the air by geese
[A7]—William John Jones, SFNHM recording 4368, recorded 1974
[A8]—Thomas John Jones, SFNHM recording 3515, recorded 1972
1881*—Parrots fly away with tree
[A17]—William John Jones, SFNHM recording 4368, recorded 1974
1889B—Hunter turns animal inside out
[A28]—William John Jones, SFNHM recording 4368, recorded 1974

Siôn Ceryn Bach (John Pritchard)

John Pritchard was from Bethesda, Gwynedd and died in 1927 (Hunter 1992, 55).

Examples attributed to Siôn Ceryn Bach by Tale Type
1881*—Parrots fly away with tree
[A12]—Herbert Evans, SFNHM recording 3521, recorded 1972
[A15]—Thomas Richard Hughes, SFNHM recording 3530, recorded 1972
[A16]—Hugh Hughes, SFNHM recording 3532, recorded 1972
[A27]—Owen Griffith, SFNHM recording 3534, recorded 1972
1960B—The great fish
[A62]—John Alun Roberts, SFNHM recording 2604, recorded 1969
1960D—The animal in the great vegetable
[A69]—Herbert Evans, SFNHM recording 3521, recorded 1972

Dafydd Ifans

Examples attributed to Dafydd Ifans by Tale Type
1881*—Parrots fly away with tree
[A14]—John Jones, SFNHM recording 2191, recorded 1969
1960D—The animal in the great vegetable
[A80]—John Jones, SFNHM recording 2191, recorded 1969

Huw Dafis
   He lived near Hirros, where many of his tales take place, in Llanerfyl, Powys.

Examples attributed to Huw Dafis by Tale Type
   1881*—Parrots fly away with tree
      [A19]—David Watkins, SFNHM recording 3131, recorded 1971
      [A20]—Edward Roberts, SFNHM recording 3134, recorded 1971
      [A24]—Dafydd Evan Evans, SFNHM recording 3136, recorded 1971
   1889B—Hunter turns animal inside out
      [A31]—Dafydd Evan Evans, SFNHM recording 3136, recorded 1971
   1889L**—Mittens hunt deer
      [A40]—David Watkins, SFNHM recording 3131, recorded 1971
      [A41]—Edward Roberts, SFNHM recording 3134, recorded 1971
      [A42]—Dafydd Evan Evans, SFNHM recording 3136, recorded 1971
      [A43]—David Evans, SFNHM recording 3128, recorded 1971

Owan Wilias

Examples attributed to Owan Wilias by Tale Type
   1881*—Parrots fly away with tree
      [A25]—Henadur Owen Griffith, SFNHM recording 1428, recorded 1966
   1960D—The animal in the great vegetable
      [A74]—Henadur Owen Griffith, SFNHM recording 1428, recorded 1966

Robert Jones

Examples attributed to Robert Jones by Tale Type
   1881*—Parrots fly away with tree
      [A26]—Thomas Lewis Williams, SFNHM recording 3545, recorded 1972
   1889B—Hunter turns animal inside out
      [A29]—Jane Roberts, SFNHM recording 3552, recorded 1972
   1889C—Fruit grows out of the the head of an animal
      [A33]—Thomas Lewis Williams, SFNHM recording 3545, recorded 1972

William Jones

Examples attributed to William Jones by Tale Type
   1889C—Fruit grows out of the head of an animal
      ([A34]—Robert Thomas, SFNHM recording 2428, recorded 1969)
      [A35]—John Rowlands, SFNHM recording 2428, recorded 1969
      [A36]—William Roberts, SFNHM recording 2432, recorded 1969

Ivy Penlanwen

Examples attributed to Ivy Penlanwen by Tale Type
    1894—Man shoots a ramrod of ducks
        [A52]—Thomas Goronwy Davies, SFNHM recording 5013, recorded 1976
    1896—Man nails tail of wolf to tree and beats him
        [A53]—Thomas Goronwy Davies, SFNHM recording 5012, recorded 1976

William Jos

Examples attributed to William Jos by Tale Type
    1960B—The great fish
        [A63]—William Williams, SFNHM recording 3513, recorded 1972
        [A64]—William Williams, SFNHM recording 3513, recorded 1972
        [A65]—William Williams, SFNHM recording 3513, recorded 1972

John Gittins

Examples attributed to John Gittins by Tale Type
    1960D—The animal in the great vegetable
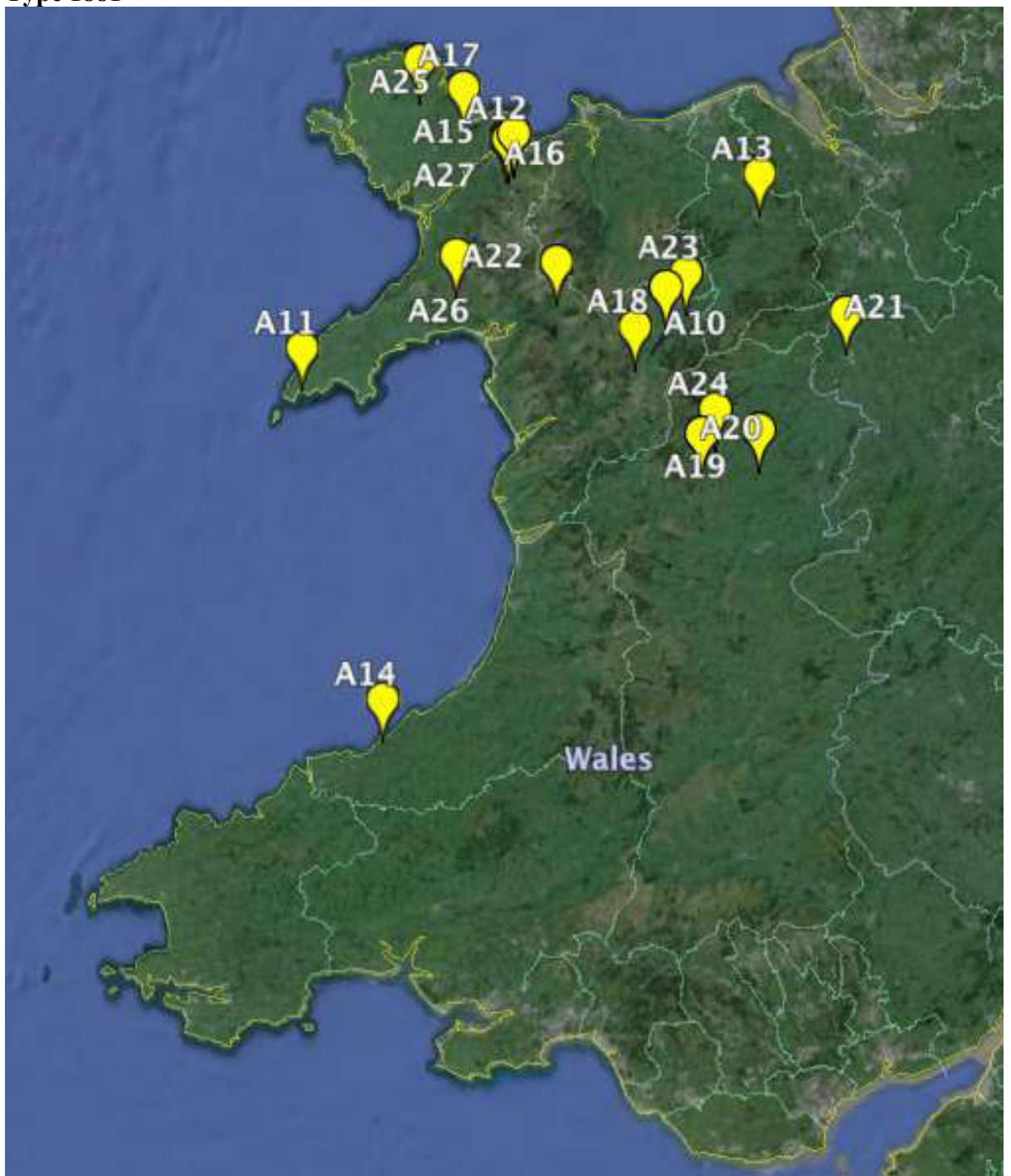   [A70]—William Roberts, SFNHM recording 2432, recorded 1969
        [A71]—Robert Morris Roberts, SFNHM recording 2452, recorded 1969

Appendix D: Distribution Maps

Type 1881

Type 1881*

Type 1889B

Type 1889C

Type 1889L

Type 1889L**

Type 1891

Type 1894

Type 1896

Type 1920

Type 1960

Type 1960B

Type 1960D

Type 1699