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'Misery in the Moorlands': Lived Bodies in the Landes de
Gascogne, 1870-1914

William Pooley

New College

University of Oxford

In fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Michaelmas 2014

Short Abstract

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This thesis explores the embodied experiences of the rural population in nineteenth-century France. The prevailing historiography has treated rural bodily culture as a cultural survival swept away by 'modernisation' in the nineteenth century. By turning to the lives and words of rural labourers and artisans from the Landes de Gascogne, the thesis questions this account, instead showing ways that popular cultures of the body were flexible traditions, adapted by individuals to meet new needs. It does so through a close focus on the stories, songs, and other oral traditions collected by Félix Arnaudin (1844-1921) in the Grande-Lande between around 1870 and 1914. The thesis focuses on the lives of a few of Arnaudin's 759 folklore informants, showing both how their bodily experiences were changing during this period, and how songs and stories were creative interventions, designed to shape bodily possibilities from below.

The thesis draws attention to the surprising shape of rural experiences of the body, which focused on body parts such as the legs and skin for reasons specific to everyday life, while largely ignoring issues that historians might have assumed would be important, such as religion. It argues that the ordinary men and women who performed stories and sang songs were active agents in constructing their own bodies in response to material conditions of physical illness and disability, as well as a changing environment, changing class relations, or changing sexual norms in the Grande-Lande. The thesis presents an emotional and experiential view of rural bodies with a sensitivity to the different experiences of men and women, young and old, poorer and richer, but emphasizes that the body must be seen in the round, as a unifying concern that links together issues of social class, environmental change, sexual relations, work, disability, and religion.

Long Abstract

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This thesis explores the embodied experiences of the rural population in nineteenth-century France. The prevailing historiography has treated rural bodily culture as a cultural survival swept away by 'modernisation' in the nineteenth century. By turning to the lives and words of rural labourers and artisans from the Landes de Gascogne, the thesis questions this account, instead showing ways that popular cultures of the body were flexible traditions, adapted by individuals to meet new needs in a period of social, economic, and environmental change.

The first chapter provides an introduction to the existing literature on the history of the body and argues for the importance of studying rural bodies, especially using the sources and methodologies of folklore. The second chapter introduces the folklorist Félix Arnaudin (1844-1921), whose manuscripts provide the source materials for this study. The third chapter presents an overview of who Arnaudin's informants were, where they learned songs and stories, and where they performed them. The fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth chapters apply the methods suggested at the start of the thesis to a range of oral genres, such as everyday speech, legends, folk tales, and songs. The conclusion draws these examples together to make some claims about the specificity of the bodily culture of the Grande-Lande during this period, and how it relates to the history of the body in France more widely.

The first chapter argues that the historiography of the body has been curiously silent on the experiences and attitudes of the rural population in the nineteenth century. When rural bodily

cultures have been discussed, they have been seen as survivals destined to be obliterated by the changes associated with modernity. The chapter argues that this is an impoverished way of understanding rural bodily traditions, not least since folklorists today place a strong emphasis on the vitality and contemporaneity of tradition. Legends, tales, and songs collected in the nineteenth century have at least as much to tell us about the bodily lives of men and women familiar with newspapers, railways, and democratic politics, as they do about the persistence of older systems of thought. This is especially true in a region such as the Grande-Lande, which saw dramatic environmental and social changes during the second half of the nineteenth century.

The second chapter introduces the sources the thesis uses to explore these changes, exploring the life and work of the folklorist Félix Arnaudin (1844-1921). Although historians are often justifiably suspicious of the role men like Arnaudin played in shaping and editing the oral traditions they recorded, I argue there is scope for cautious optimism when dealing with a manuscript collection such as Arnaudin's, which was compiled by a local man with a deep understanding of the culture he was recording. Although Arnaudin's project to record Gascon culture was shaped by his own nostalgia and conservative social attitudes, it relied on the help of 758 other men, women, and children, who did not necessarily share his ideas about the decline of oral culture and the old ways in the face of a selfish and arrogant modernity.

The third chapter illustrates this point by exploring who exactly Arnaudin's informants were. Rather than the picture he himself presented of elderly men and women, shepherds and sharecroppers born long before the Grande-Lande was conquered by the industrial pine forest, it turns out that many of Arnaudin's informants were younger than him. His fieldwork depended on the railway and road network built alongside the forest, and many of his informants actively participated in planting pine trees or building roads. Yet, even as they became connected to wider networks in new ways, through new institutions such as the general education system, railway companies, or the army, they continued to transmit oral traditions they learned from friends, family

members, or professional contacts. Far from being a static remnant destroyed by this new mobility, oral tradition was mobile and adaptive, flowing both along older conduits, such as connections between trades, and newer ones, such as journeys on the train.

Having established some sense of the social dimensions of this oral culture, the fourth chapter attempts to provide an overview of the commonplaces of the phenomenology of the body in this culture. It asks what the dominant metaphors and language in everyday speech relating to the body were, drawing on Arnaudin's notes for a dialect dictionary. Which body parts were mentioned, and what was their significance? The chapter argues that people conceived of and experienced their body with more focus on their legs and buttocks than on their heads. Bodies were above all tools of labour, and the dominant metaphors concerned verticality, posture, stooping, and height. Rather than the triumph of medical or sexual understandings of the body, or even the persistence of a carnivalesque medieval body, ordinary people were concerned by physical exploitation in the present, an exploitation they explicitly understood in contemporary terms, through the metaphor of sapping pine trees.

The remaining chapters attempt to further historicise this schematic picture of bodily experiences, both by asking what was changing during the period when Arnaudin collected oral traditions, and how these changes were addressed by specific individuals in their performances. The fifth chapter, for instance, examines the life of a woman named Anne-Jeanne Mariolan, known as Mariane de Mariolan (1822-1916), who was one of the few Arnaudin informants to actively address the changes in the landscape of the former moorlands over the nineteenth century. It puts Mariane de Mariolan's legend about a 'wicked Lord' who was murdered by an indignant goat-herd at the end of the eighteenth century into the context of the struggles over forestation in the 1860s and 1870s, arguing that the image elites constructed of a recalcitrant and rebellious underclass of shepherds and labourers is a travesty of the complexity of local relationships to the landscape. Elites failed to understand how sheep, pines, and moors depended upon one another, just as they failed to

understand the ambivalence people like Mariane felt towards pastoralism and forestation.

The sixth chapter argues that this ambivalence was not the same thing as indifference. In fact, many local people had visceral feelings about the changes of the nineteenth century. Redrawing the boundaries of the landscape called into question the boundaries of the household, and even the boundaries of the body itself. The Grande-Lande had one of the richest traditions of stories about shape-shifters, men who turned into animals and plagued local families. The chapter provides an overview of the werewolf tradition in nineteenth-century France, arguing that it represents a domesticated version of earlier werewolf beliefs. It shows how this domesticated werewolf took a particular shape in the stories of a woman such as Jeanne Lescarret, known as Marichoun, femme Bouzats (1833-1894), who lived through the changes to physical and conceptual boundaries in the Landes in the second half of the century.

In a similar way, the seventh chapter shows how animal fables were not simply archaic remnants of medieval culture, but active interventions into social tensions over class in the nineteenth century. These tales were more popular in regions like the Grande-Lande which were dominated by the agricultural system of sharecropping, suggesting that the issues of trust and betrayal they explored were particularly resonant under this system of production. The chapter focuses on an unusual story about a fox told by a man named Jean Vidal, known as Henri (1850-1919), who was himself a somewhat unusual man, a social climber in a period of proletarianisation. The chapter explores how Henri used this story to construct a bodily and emotional identity in revolt against the ignominy of sharecropping, while many others used these stories in more conciliatory ways.

The eighth chapter turns to a slightly different question: the evolution of sexual attitudes in the region, and how these changes were explored by Arnaudin's singers, most of whom were women. The Grande-Lande had a song tradition that was relatively raunchy compared to other regions of France and relatively uninterested in questions of sexual honour. The chapter connects

this song culture to the demographic specificity of the Landes, which had both a very high birthrate and illegitimacy rate at the start of the century. By looking at how the singing tradition was changing, how younger singers preferred different songs, or inserted new words, the chapter explores the decline of marital fertility and above all illegitimacy in the Landes, arguing that the region was gripped by a new concern with gossip and sexual reputation in precisely the period that historians have argued French sexual honour was declining in importance.

The ninth chapter picks up where the eighth left off by attempting to address a biographical experience of these changes, which affected women more dramatically than they did men, but affected them in different ways depending on factors such as social class, occupation, and the visible signs of bodily difference and disability. In particular, the chapter is interested in a double absence: the absence of sexual themes from the songs sung by a seamstress named Catherine Gentes (1848-1906), and the more general, and perhaps more surprising, absence of religion from the popular culture of the body in the Grande-Lande at the time. The chapter argues that such absences speak of pain and confusion rather than indifference, as people like Catherine experienced the struggles between secularists and Catholics, or the struggles over appropriate sexual relations, in deeply personal ways. While they may not have been as idiosyncratic, the other local men and women Arnaudin collected folklore from, like Catherine, forged their own bodily identities in response to these pressures. This was as much a question of creativity as it was constraint.

The final chapter draws these themes together with an exploration of the tale of 'Misery in the Moorlands' told by Étienne Baleste, known as Noun (b.1838). Although elites, outsiders, and reformers used 'misery' to describe the material poverty and physical suffering of the population of the Grande-Lande, Noun's story belongs to a tradition of turning 'misery' on its head. By personifying 'Misery' as a hero who outwits the powerful figure of the Devil, men like Noun discussed their own bodily experiences of grinding labour, hunger, and exhaustion in more positive terms, asserting their ability to exert agency in their own lives. In some senses, this could be the

story of the whole of rural France during this period, but in other senses Noun's version of this tale is rooted in the very local struggles over the body that the rest of the thesis has explored, such as the struggles between husbands and wives and the strange silence concerning religious issues.

The thesis draws several conclusions concerning the poverty of the 'modernisation' paradigm for understanding the history of rural bodies. It draws attention to the surprising shape of rural experiences of the body, which focused on body parts such as the legs and skin for reasons specific to everyday life, while largely ignoring issues that historians might have assumed would be important, such as religion. The thesis argues that the ordinary men and women who performed stories and sang songs were active agents in constructing their own bodies in response to material conditions of physical illness and disability, as well as a changing environment, changing class relations, or changing sexual norms. The thesis presents a more emotional, more experiential view of rural bodies with a sensitivity to the different experiences of men and women, young and old, poorer and richer, but emphasizes that the body was a unifying concern, linking together issues of social class, environmental change, sexual relations, work, disability, and religion.

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Neither would this project have been possible without the support of the Parc Naturel Régional des Landes de Gascogne, and in particular Hervé Goulaze, who showed me around the Landes and introduced me to the specialists involved in editing Arnaudin's complete works, including Jean-Jacques and Bénédicte Fénié and François Lalanne. Guy Latry, who has an unmatched knowledge of Arnaudin and his manuscripts, was similarly generous with his time. I hope I have done his work justice here. I would also like to thank all of the staff of the Archives Départementales des Landes and de la Gironde, who were unfailingly helpful. My thanks to Catherine Vigneron and the Musée de l'Aquitaine in Bordeaux for giving me access to Arnaudin's digitised photographs, and for showing me the original glass plates.

I have always been a great believer in the importance of collaboration, and the people whose ideas, questions, and conversations have informed what I have tried to do are too numerous to mention here. The following friends, teachers, and colleagues have not only discussed my ideas, but also read parts of my research, and their comments over the years have been invaluable to me: Andrew Berthrong, Rory Browne, Paul Cowdell, Chloe Golden, Abigail Green, Gav Jacobson, Peter Lefort, Julia Mannherz, Stew McCain, Nick Stargardt, Jon Waterlow, and Oliver Zimmer. Eloise Moss deserves special thanks for reading the whole thesis and providing detailed comments and corrections.

My mother selflessly joined me when I was first trying to hunt down a complete copy of Arnaudin's works in southwestern France. Over the years, she has driven me to Arnaudin's home, to archives in Mont-de-Marsan and Montauban, and up the wall. I hope my connection to southwestern France allowed her to reconnect with her own memories of the Côte d'Argent. My father has always supported me, whatever I bafflingly chose to do with my life. I have fond memories of a hike we took along the banks of a stream in the Landes, and then up onto an open moor, recently cleared of trees, where we stopped to eat *saucisson* on a tree stump. I am only sorry the sausage wasn't as good when he took it back home!

This research owes its genesis to David Hopkin, who first proposed studying folklore sources to me when I was a fresh-faced Master's student, keen to do 'something on gender'. Throughout this process, David has been a model of academic generosity, rigour, and patience. He has an inspiring knowledge of social, economic, and cultural history and popular and folk cultures extending far beyond the borders of France and the period of the 'long' nineteenth century. It should be clear from the thesis itself that the methodologies and sources he has championed are fundamental to my research. It is less obvious that if it weren't for David, I wouldn't have done a doctorate at all. Instead, I'd be working in London for the law firm who offered me a training contract. But, as I always say, what use does the world have for another lawyer? The real shortage is in historians of French folklore.

Going to law school is nonetheless a mistake that I'd make every time to have the chance to meet my most important ally and champion. Cat Rutter has read more of my work than anyone else, including the whole thesis, applying to it the same attention to detail she gives to her day (and night!) job working as a lawyer. She is a frank and shrewd critic with – despite what she claims – a good deal of imagination. This thesis would be twice as good if I had taken all the advice she has

given me along the way.

It goes without saying, nonetheless, that any inaccuracies or mistakes to be found in it have nothing to do with her or indeed any of my other friends or colleagues. They are, along with the style and the heterogeneous content, my fault alone.

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List of Abbreviations

ADL – Archives départementales des Landes.

CPF – J. Bru, P. Delarue and M.-L. Tenèze, *Le conte populaire français: catalogue raisonné des versions de France et des pays de langue française d’outre-mer* (4 vols., Paris, 1957-1985).

ESI – H. Faré, *Enquête sur les incendies de forêts dans la région des Landes de Gascogne* (Paris, 1873).

JAF – *The Journal of American Folklore* (Chicago, 1888–).

NFA – ‘Notes de Félix Arnaudin: dépôt du Parc Naturel Régional des Landes de Gascogne’, Archives départementales des Landes, 2 MI 29/1-31.

OC – F. Arnaudin, *Oeuvres complètes*, J. Boisgontier, J.-Y. Boutet, B. Fénéié, J.-J. Fénéié, F. Lalanne, G. Latry, L. Mabru, J.-B. Marquette, and J. Miró (eds), (9 vols., Bordeaux, 1994-2007).

RCFTO – P. Coirault, G. Delarue, Y. Fédoroff, and S. Wallon, *Répertoire des chansons françaises de tradition orale* (3 vols, Paris, 1996-2006).

RTP – *Revue des Traditions Populaires* (Paris, 1886-1919).

Note on Translation

Translation faces special challenges when dealing with primary sources such as Félix Arnaudin's notes, which were written in a dialect with no modern standardised spelling. I have therefore translated all of the dialect quotations from Arnaudin's manuscripts, the published versions of his work, and the work of other Occitan folklorists into English, and only provided the original phrasing in a footnote when it is either important, or hard to decipher. Readers interested in the phrasing will find many, but not all, of the quotations from Arnaudin in the recent edition of his *Oeuvres complètes* (1994-2007) alongside French translations.

Arnaudin occasionally used Latin abbreviations in his notes. Since the meaning is normally clear, I have not translated these.

I have not translated French quotations from the primary sources and secondary literature.

Note on Conventions & Terminologies

A key part of my methodology has been to research the lives of the men and women who acted as folklore informants for Arnaudin. Their lives are at the centre of the story this research tells, and the thesis is partly an attempt to resurrect their opinions, feelings, and biographies. When I first mention an individual that I have identified in the Arnaudin manuscripts, I give their full name, including the name they were known to Arnaudin by, and their dates of birth and death where known, in the following format: 'Elisabeth Plantié, femme Saubesty, known as Babé (1826-1912)'. Some are listed only by date of birth ('Denis Labeau (b.1844)'), or have proved impossible to fully identify, such as: 'Charles Destouesse, known as "lou Chablan"'. Afterwards I refer to them by the name they were known to Arnaudin, a name often completely unrelated to their 'official' first name ('Babé', 'Labeau', 'lou Chablan'). There is an appendix (see p.268) which provides a cross-reference for identifying these men and women, as well as biographical sketches.

There is some confusion over the appropriate terminology to refer to the different regions of southwestern France. Some authors use the French term 'Landes (de Gascogne)', meaning moorlands (of Gascony), to refer to the entire geographical region, stretching from Mont-de-Marsan

to Bordeaux, unified by its arid, sandy soil, but this leads to confusion on two counts. For a start, this moorland disappeared during the period the thesis focuses on, as it was progressively forested. Secondly, the 'Landes (de Gascogne)' is the name of a *département*, which also includes a large, fertile area that was never moorland, called the Chalosse. For these reasons, I have used the term 'Landes (de Gascogne)' only to refer to the *département*. I use the English '(former) moorlands' to refer to the geographical region, and I use the term 'Grande-Lande' (which sometimes appears in other sources as 'Grandes-Landes') to refer to the central part of the (former) moorlands, which was the least densely populated and the last part of the region to be planted with pine trees. Arnaudin himself concentrated his fieldwork on the villages of this region – Labouheyre, Commensacq, Escource, Pissos, and Sabres – believing that these villages shared some kind of cultural unity, which seems likely given the roughly homogeneous social structures and working practices of the Grande-Lande. But, as a cultural region, it maps poorly onto the administrative boundaries of the nineteenth century, not being entirely within the *département* of the Landes. The villages of Salles and Hostens, which Arnaudin included in his research, for instance, are in the neighbouring Gironde.

Arnaudin, and subsequent authors, have been at pains to point out the differences between this area and nearby similar regions, such as the Bazadais (towards Roquefort) and the Marensin (which stretched along the coast). The Bazadais had different land-holding patterns and the Marensin had a longer tradition of forestation and resin-collecting. However, as with any blanket statement, these distinctions are too simple. They are complicated by the fact that many of Arnaudin's informants moved between these regions, and he himself travelled into the Bazadais and Marensin to collect folklore. Nonetheless, since his efforts were concentrated in the Grande-Lande, I have similarly kept my attention fairly firmly on this sub-region, affected especially dramatically as it was by the changes of the nineteenth century.

Three terms from local French and Gascon speech have been retained since English translations would not do them justice:

gemmeur – someone who works collecting pine-resin. Sources at the time also used the word *résinier*.

moussu – the Gascon equivalent of *monsieur*. During the nineteenth century, the word especially took on implications of social class. *Lous moussus* or *le moussuralhe* were,

respectively, less and more pejorative ways to refer the bourgeoisie who profited so successfully from the environmental reforms of the nineteenth century.

quartier – a hamlet or small group of houses. Most of the population of the Grande-Lande lived in small hamlets of this kind which were sub-divisions of larger villages. These *quartiers* were often quite far from the *bourg* itself, and formed the primary community for most labourers in the period before forestation. The changes of the nineteenth century saw the decline of the *quartiers* as many people moved into the *bourgs*.

Chapter One

The History of the Body from Below in the Nineteenth Century

The dumb village multitudes pass on unchanging; the feel of the spade in the hand is no different for all our talk: good seasons and bad follow each other as of old.¹

Introduction: 'Misery in the Moorlands'

Many of the outsiders who wrote about the moorlands of Gascony during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw them as a foreign land within the borders of France. These tourists, administrators, and novelists described feeling a 'sentiment d'affliction' at the sight of the flat, desolate plains that made up the landscape, going so far as to call it 'la partie la plus disgracieuse' of France.² Worse still, this strange landscape was populated by a race that seemed somehow foreign. The locals were not just 'primitive', 'savage', and uneducated, they were 'small', 'weak', and 'brown'.³ They suffered from malnutrition, malaria, and a skin condition known as pellagra, and their living conditions suggested they were more like beasts than citizens of a modern nation state.⁴ Their sexual habits were as heathen as their religious beliefs.⁵ In short, what made the inhabitants of the Grande-Lande different from Frenchmen was not just their culture or the fact that they spoke a different language: the difference was at the level of their very bodies. The word for this bodily

1 W.B. Yeats, *The Celtic Twilight* (London, 1902), 23.

2 J. Lavallée, 'Voyage dans le département des Landes', in G. Latry (ed.) *Les landes de Bordeaux: moeurs et usages de leurs habitants, suivi de Voyage dans le département des Landes* (Pau, 2004), 71; V. Gaillard, 'L'habitant des Landes', in *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes: encyclopédie morale du 19e siècle* (9 vols., Paris, 1841), II, 413.

3 Gaillard, 'L'habitant des Landes', 414; E. About, *Maître Pierre*, 2nd edn (Paris, 1862), 27; J.-P. Lescarret, *La vie dans la Grande-Lande au temps des bergers et des loups* (Pau, 2008), 82.

4 On pellagra, see: Lescarret, *La vie dans la Grande-Lande*, 85–7; J. Sargos suggests that: 'le paysan est dessiné en négatif du citoyen moderne.' J. Sargos, *Histoire de la forêt landaise: du désert à l'âge d'or* (Bordeaux, 1997), 60, 81.

5 On loose sexual morals, see for instance: About, *Maître Pierre*; On the irreligion of the population, see for instance: E Mangin, 'La situation religieuse des Landes au milieu du IIème Empire', *Bulletin de la Société de Borda* (1950), 68–73.

difference was 'misery'.⁶ The plans made by utopian reformers during the nineteenth century to tame and civilise this region duly focused on both reforming the landscape and the miserable bodies of the population. By the end of the century, both projects were hailed as successes. The swamps and barren moors had given way to an industrial pine forest, farmed for resin. With improved nutrition and the decline of endemic diseases the population had grown more vigorous and taller. Tourists were more likely to marvel at the quaintness of Landais habits than to despair of their future. At some point between the middle of the nineteenth and the start of the twentieth century, the Landais had become modern and French, not simply in a cultural sense, but in their flesh.⁷

There is an absence at the heart of this narrative of a population saved from misery: what the people who lived in the region thought about their own lives. The reformers and travellers cannot be said to be the most reliable authorities. Accounts often plagiarised earlier writers without bothering to check their claims, and many of these writers saw what they wanted to.⁸ Their pseudo-colonial accounts may tell historians more about their world-view than what the nineteenth-century Grande-Lande was really like.⁹ But 'Misery' was not just a word that outsiders used to justify reforms targeting both body and environment. 'Misery' was also a fictional character, the blacksmith hero of exactly the kind of oral tales reformers dismissed as 'superstition'.¹⁰ A man called Étienne Baleste,

6 'Misère' was the word used in official reports into living conditions. See, for instance, the *enquête* d'Orry, mentioned in: X. de Planhol, *Géographie historique de la France* (Paris, 1988), 182–3; Or P.-C. Dubost, cited in: R. Sargos, *Contribution à l'histoire du boisement des Landes de Gascogne* (Bordeaux, 1949), 36–7; E. Weber also used it in his classic study. See: E. Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford, California, 1976), 15.

7 The transition from 'peasants' to 'Frenchmen' remains a dominant narrative of nineteenth-century history. See: Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*; J. Lehnig, *Peasant and French: Cultural Contact in Rural France During the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1995).

8 For some sensible criticisms, see: G. Latty, 'Deux voyageurs de l'An VI dans les Landes de Gascogne', in G. Latty (ed.) *Les landes de Bordeaux: moeurs et usages de leurs habitants, suivi de Voyage dans le département des Landes* (Pau, 2004), 8.

9 For a colonial comparison, see, for example: M. Taussig, 'Culture of Terror—Space of Death. Roger Casement's Putumayo Report and the Explanation of Torture', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 26, no. 03 (1984), 467–97.

10 Gaillard, 'L'habitant des Landes', 414.

known as Noun (b.1838) told a version of this story to the folklorist Félix Arnaudin around 1880.¹¹ In the story, Misery and his family are on the poverty line, at risk of starving to death with every poor harvest. One day, a beggar comes to their door, and being a generous soul, Misery invites him in for dinner. The beggar is extremely grateful, and, luckily for Misery, turns out to be God. In exchange for Misery's generosity, he offers him three wishes. Misery's wife tells him to ask for riches, but Misery has other ideas, asking for three magic objects: a stool which no-one can stand up from without his permission, a pear tree which no one can climb down without his permission, and a purse which nothing can leave without his permission. His wife is furious, but Misery is stubborn. Some time later, the Devil comes to Misery's door. The Devil offers to make Misery rich in exchange for his soul, and Misery agrees. Ten year later, the Devil will return to claim his prize. But when the Devil comes back, Misery uses his magic stool. The Devil sits down, and Misery won't let him go until he promises to give him ten more years. Each time the Devil returns, with more and more of his demons, and each time Misery uses one of his magic gifts to outwit them. Finally the Devil gives up and the tale ends with a sly punchline, 'Ever since then, Misery has been among us'.¹² There is an important disconnect between these two miseries: on the one hand, material poverty so extreme that the local population suffered malnutrition and diseases unknown in modern France, and on the other a cultural creativity that allowed Noun to use 'Misery' as a hero, and to tell a joke about the underdog besting a figure of authority. This disconnect is about how bodies are represented and experienced.

Since the 1970s, there has been a growing interest in the history of the body, but this research has favoured the kinds of administrative and elite sources that saw the misery of the moorlands as a disgrace, rather than asking how ordinary people like the agricultural labourer Noun experienced and used their bodies. Oral traditions, such as the tale of the cunning blacksmith, offer

11 See Appendix II: 'Misery in the Moorlands'.

12 See: F. Arnaudin, *Contes populaires recueillis dans la Grande-Lande, le Born, les Petites-Landes et le Marensin* (Paris, 1887); The text is reproduced in: *OC:I*, 43–51.

historians an alternative. Rather than the history of the body as a teleology of reforming, improving, 'civilising', or 'disciplining' popular bodies, such folklore offers the opportunity to think about how ordinary people shaped their own bodies.¹³ Despite what writers at the time such as Yeats thought about the 'dumb village multitudes', they could have a changing sense of their own bodies. Perhaps the very feel of a spade in the hand did change, along with how the hand itself was understood.

From the Old Regime of the Body to the Crucible of the Nineteenth Century

In 2001, Roy Porter wrote with some satisfaction that the body was 'the historiographical dish of the day'.¹⁴ Historians interested in food, clothing, gender, sexuality, health, death, and religion have all contributed to understanding the 'epoch-specific' bodies of our ancestors.¹⁵ For many of these writers, the point of departure is just how different the 'very fleshiness' of past populations was from our own.¹⁶ The danger is that the history of the body becomes the uneven but steady emergence of modern attitudes. According to this account, from an old regime, where the body was both more open to its environment and less individualized, European societies have slowly moved to a closed and individualized body:

Le corps moderne est d'un autre ordre [from bodies of other times and places]. Il implique la coupure du sujet avec les autres (une structure sociale de type individualiste), avec le cosmos (les matières premières qui composent le corps n'ont aucune correspondance ailleurs), avec lui-même (avoir un corps plus qu'être son corps). Le corps occidental est le lieu de la césure, l'enceinte objective de la souveraineté de l'ego.¹⁷

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- 13 The idea of 'civilising' comes from N. Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (2 vols., New York, 1978); The idea of 'disciplining' comes from M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 3rd edn (London, 1991).
- 14 R. Porter, 'History of the Body Reconsidered', in P. Burke (ed.) *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, 2nd edn (Cambridge and Oxford, 2001), 236; The 'fuss' had been growing over the 1990s. See: C. Bynum, 'Why All the Fuss about the Body? A Medievalist's Perspective', *Critical Inquiry*, 22, no. 1 (Autumn 1995), 1–33.
- 15 I. Illich, 'A Plea for Body History (Twelve Years After Medical Nemesis)', *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, 6, no. 1 (1 February 1986), 20.
- 16 A. Mol, *The Body Multiple: Ontology in Medical Practice* (Durham, North Carolina, 2003), 25; See for instance: J. Goldstein, *Hysteria Complicated by Ecstasy: The Case of Nanette Leroux* (Princeton, 2011), 5.
- 17 D. Le Breton, *Anthropologie du corps et modernité*, 6th edn (Paris, 2011), 11.

Historians are often cautious about the chronology and coherence of the shift, but there is a general consensus that several forces combined to slowly undermine ways of understanding and living bodies that were prevalent in the early-modern period.¹⁸

According to this argument, early-modern Europeans did not have such a clearly defined sense of themselves as possessing an interiority or a body, set apart from their surrounding environment or other individuals. Instead, an 'open body schema' dominated cultural representations, and probably intimate experiences as well.¹⁹ Where the modern body is understood to be sealed, the eighteenth-century German patients studied by Barbara Duden experienced their bodies as permeable, run through by shifting forces and flows.²⁰ These lay experiences were echoed in the dominant and flexible medical theory of the humours, which held that a healthy body consisted of flows, fluxes, and emissions.²¹ As late as the beginning of the nineteenth century, medical professionals believed in sensory perception that could move around through the body, and that internal physical blockages could cause catalepsy.²² This humoral view of the body does not divide neatly into modern categories of anatomy, psychology, and sociology: the fluxes of the early-modern body were at once emotions, somatic processes, and social representations.²³ Emotions such as fright could just as well cause hysteria in a peasant girl as Jean-Jacques Rousseau's breakdown.²⁴ Beyond the medical sphere, popular beliefs in witchcraft considered the body to be highly

18 G. Vigarello, 'Introduction', in A. Corbin, J.-J. Courtine, and G. Vigarello (eds.), *Histoire du corps* (3 vols. Paris: 2005-6), I, 14; R. Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason* (London, 2004), 3-13, 304.

19 L. Stark, *The Magical Self: Body, Society and the Supernatural in Early-Modern Finland* (Helsinki, 2006); Le Breton, *Anthropologie du corps et modernité*, 35, 52.

20 B. Duden, *The Woman Beneath the Skin: A Doctor's Patients In Eighteenth-Century Germany* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1991).

21 Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason*; R. Porter and G. Vigarello, 'Corps, santé et maladies', in A. Corbin, J.-J. Courtine, and G. Vigarello (eds.), *Histoire du corps* (3 vols. Paris: 2005-6), i, 336-9.

22 Goldstein, *Hysteria Complicated by Ecstasy*, 14, 48.

23 U. Rublack, 'Fluxes: The Early Modern Body and the Emotions', *History Workshop Journal*, no. 53 (April 2002), 1-16.

24 See: Goldstein, *Hysteria Complicated by Ecstasy*, 13; J.-J. Rousseau, *Rêveries du promeneur solitaire* (Paris, 1978).

permeable to the emotions of others. The anger or envy of other villagers directly acted on the vulnerable and open bodies of the victims of witchcraft.²⁵

If witchcraft suggested the vulnerability of this open flesh, popular festivities celebrated the fragmentation of a body that was not governed by one specific locus of power, such as the head or genitals.²⁶ Instead, for Mikhail Bakhtin, the attitudes to the body in the work of the medieval author François Rabelais echoed a popular medieval culture of the marketplace and tavern:

Contrary to modern canons, the grotesque body [of Carnival] is not separated from the rest of the world. It is not a closed, completed unit; it is unfinished, outgrows itself, transgresses its own limits. The stress is laid on those parts of the body that are open to the outside world, that is, the parts through which the world enters the body or emerges from it, or through which the body itself goes out to meet the world.²⁷

Rather than the head as the seat of reason or even the genitals as the secret of sexuality, early-modern patients and doctors alike took a vivid interest in the mouth, guts, and anus as passages that opened the patient's body to the surrounding world.²⁸

Other cultural concerns suggest anxiety about the impinging environment. Wild animals, violent neighbours, or the omnipresent threat of pestilence made most people vulnerable, a vulnerability that was even more pronounced for women.²⁹ Gauging threats was difficult:

everything out of the ordinary could work as an evil coincidence: anything entering through the mouth (be it a sausage or an overripe cherry), tripping over something, a bolt of lightning, cold air blowing on the face, a damp cloth around the chest.³⁰

The weather had a more sustained impact on everyday life. In the summers, rural men, women, and

25 L. Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality, and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (London and New York, 1994); Stark, *The Magical Self*.

26 D. Hillman and C. Mazzio (eds), *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe* (New York, 1997).

27 M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1968), 26.

28 Porter and Vigarello, 'Corps, santé et maladies', 340.

29 Stark, *The Magical Self*, 66–9; L. Gowing, *Common Bodies: Women, Touch and Power in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven, Connecticut, 2003).

30 Duden, *The Woman Beneath the Skin*, 140.

children worked gruelling hours in the sun, while the cold weather in winter took a heavy toll on the elderly and young. Seasonal celebrations such as Carnival, St John's, and Christmas fitted into a calendar that was dictated by agricultural work, rather than the individual time of modern wage-labourers.³¹ The patterns of births suggest that this social calendar applied to the most intimate bodily practices of sexuality.³² Time was socially governed, rather than a personal responsibility, since few people owned watches, relying instead on church bells and the sun to judge the time of day.³³

For most of the working classes, life was nasty, brutish, and short. The body 'was rank, foul and dysfunctional; for all of medicine's best efforts, it was frequently racked with pain, disability and disease; and death might well be nigh'.³⁴ Disease 'was man's common condition', a condition probably worsened by the complete disregard of the general population for any sort of hygienic practices.³⁵ Before the 'révolution pastorienne', the popular classes washed very infrequently.³⁶ According to Guy Thuillier, this reluctance to wash the hair or body, which was characteristic of 'l'ancien régime hygiénique', continued much later than historians might expect. Despite the efforts of the Third Republic, 'la République de l'hygiène', very few people had access to or much apparent interest in dental care, regularly changed linen, or washing at the start of the twentieth century.³⁷ Poor nutrition was coupled with this poor hygiene. Most of the population depended on the 'mal

31 For the decline of these seasons, see: Y. Verdier, *Façons de dire, façons de faire* (Paris, 1979), 346.

32 S. Matthews-Grieco, 'Corps et sexualité dans l'Europe d'ancien régime', in A. Corbin, J.-J. Courtine, and G. Vigarello (eds.), *Histoire du corps* (3 vols. Paris: 2005-6), I, 186.

33 Goldstein, *Hysteria Complicated by Ecstasy*, 118.

34 Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason*, 25.

35 W. Coleman, 'The People's Health: Medical Themes in Eighteenth-Century French Popular Literature', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 51 (1977), 72-3.

36 O. Faure, 'Le regard des médecins', in A. Corbin, J.-J. Courtine, and G. Vigarello (eds.), *Histoire du corps* (3 vols. Paris: 2005-6), II, 47; N. Pellegrin, 'Corps du commun, usages communs du corps', in A. Corbin, J.-J. Courtine, and G. Vigarello (eds.), *Histoire du corps* (3 vols. Paris: 2005-6), I, 145.

37 G. Thuillier, 'Pour une histoire de l'hygiène corporelle: un exemple régional: le Nivernais', *Revue d'Histoire Économique et Sociale* 46, no. 2 (1968), 232-53.

nécessaire' of grain.³⁸ If the harvests were poor, scavenging could only partially sustain the population.³⁹ Until the end of the nineteenth century, hunger was general: 'everywhere it shaped behaviour, attitudes, and decisions'.⁴⁰ Nutrition was so poor that it stunted the growth of army conscripts up until the First World War.⁴¹ Such shortages encouraged a cultural belief in 'limited good'. According to the anthropologist George Foster, rural cultures do not simply believe that food is scarce; they extend this belief in scarcity into all domains of life. Honour, affection, health, and luck are also perceived to be limited, leading to a situation where the success of any individual is necessarily perceived to come at a cost to all of that individual's neighbours.⁴²

For historians such as Jean Flandrin, Lawrence Stone, and Philippe Ariès, early-modern people were less loving, and quicker to anger.⁴³ In the rural Finnish case studied by Laura Stark, it seems that anger was not so much an individual emotion, as an involuntary social response that suggested strength.⁴⁴ Eugen Weber argued that 'violence was a fact of everyday life, and that it receded only slowly and then selectively'.⁴⁵ The inter-village fights described in autobiographies and horrified administrative sources from the nineteenth century seem to confirm his judgement.⁴⁶

38 J. Mulliez, 'Du blé, "mal nécessaire". Réflexions sur les progrès de l'agriculture de 1750 À 1850', *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, 26, no. 1 (1979), 3–47.

39 Pellegrin, 'Corps du commun, usages communs du corps', 123–4.

40 Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 17.

41 L. Heyberger, *Santé et développement économique en France au XIXe siècle: essai d'histoire anthropométrique* (Paris, 2003); E. Le Roy Ladurie, N. Bernageau, and Y. Pasquet, 'Le conscrit et l'ordinateur: perspectives de recherches sur les archives militaires du XIXe siècle français', *Studi Storici*, 10 (1969), 260–308.

42 G. Foster, 'Peasant Society and the Image of Limited Good', *American Anthropologist*, 67, no. 2 (1965), 293–315.

43 P. Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (London, 1965); J. L. Flandrin, *Familles: parenté, maison, sexualité dans l'ancienne société* (Paris, 1976); L. Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (New York, 1977).

44 Stark, *The Magical Self*, 57, 221.

45 Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 54.

46 G. Vigarello and R. Holt, 'Le corps travaillé: gymnastes et sportifs au XIXe siècle', in A. Corbin, J.-J. Courtine, and G. Vigarello (eds.), *Histoire du corps* (3 vols. Paris: 2005-6), II, 316; Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 56–7, 385.

In this rough bodily culture, there was a widespread distrust of the disabled, which extended into neglect from carers or outright abuse.⁴⁷ This cruelty also extended to animals, who were frequently used in violent games, or overworked until they died.⁴⁸ The whole sphere of cultural sensibilities relative to the body seems to have changed since this period. This applies as much to basic material experiences such as 'light and darkness, hot and cold' as it does to the practices of sleeping, or the experience of belonging to a village based on the sound of the parish bells.⁴⁹ Where twenty-first century society has an overwhelmingly medicalised conception of the body, which lends our own flesh a feeling of transparency and legibility, early-modern Europe was obsessed with the undecipherable and unexpected body of the 'monster', a category that might include conjoined twins or the beast that ravaged the countryside of the Gévaudan.⁵⁰

For many historians, the nineteenth century was a crucible.⁵¹ As writers such as Olivier Faure and Jan Goldstein have argued, this period saw the triumph of a distinctively modern body, conceived as an anatomical object that corresponded with the increasingly interiorised concept of the mind.⁵² The rise of hygiene, the fear of degeneration, and the desire to master and measure human forces led to a body that was not simply a social problem, but also an everyday, individual

47 J.-C. Lachal, 'Infirmes et infirmités dans les proverbes italiens', *Ethnologie Française*, 1-2 (1972), 67–96; M.-C. Pouchelle, 'Représentations du corps dans la "Légende dorée"', *Ethnologie Française*, 6, no. 3–4 (1976), 297; Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 150, 175.

48 M. Agulhon, 'Le sang des bêtes. le problème de la protection des animaux en France au XIXème siècle', *Romantisme*, 11, no. 31 (1981), 81–110; R. Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*, 2nd edn (New York, 1985); B. Singer, *Village Notables in Nineteenth-Century France: Priests, Mayors, Schoolmasters* (New York, 1983), 96–7; Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 381–2.

49 A. Corbin, *The Life of an Unknown: The Rediscovered World of a Clog Maker in Nineteenth-Century France* (New York, 2001), 24; A. Corbin, *Village Bells: Sound and Meaning in the Nineteenth-Century French Countryside* (New York, 1998); G. Thuillier, *L'imaginaire quotidien au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1985), 83–98.

50 J.-J. Courtine, 'Le corps inhumain', in A. Corbin, J.-J. Courtine, and G. Vigarello (eds.), *Histoire du corps* (3 vols. Paris: 2005-6), I, 373–86; J. Smith, *Monsters of the Gévaudan: The Making of a Beast* (Boston, 2011).

51 See, for instance: J. Le Goff and N. Truong, *Une histoire du corps au moyen age* (Paris, 2009), 203; not to mention the many works of Foucault, such as: M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (3 vols., New York, 1990).

52 Faure, 'Le regard des médecins'; J. Goldstein, *The Post-Revolutionary Self: Politics and Psyche in France, 1750-1850* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2005).

psychological strain, especially for the bourgeoisie.⁵³ For some historians, this was the invention, or at least the discovery, of the body.⁵⁴ For Michel Foucault the crucial change in the first half of the century was a shift from the society of blood to one of sex, from the sovereign's right to punish to a governmental interest in reproduction.⁵⁵ The new Republican education system was at the cutting-edge of these changes. Manuals of primary education set out to 'modify the habits of bodily hygiene and cleanliness, social and domestic manners' of rural children and their families.⁵⁶ Other organs of the state also performed similar functions. In Foucault's formulation, techniques of punishment spread from the army and prisons to create bodies that were educable and docile.⁵⁷ Military training, such as gymnastics, combined with the spread of modern sports, forged the idea of a measurable body, judged by its performances and results. This might not have been the wholesale invention of the distinction between health and sickness, but sports at the very least deepened the concept and experience of health, transforming it into an ongoing, lifelong project.⁵⁸

At the same time, the increasing penetration of transport systems into the furthest flung corners of France was introducing new benefits and creating new problems. Where many peasants had previously relied on 'arrangements', or informal personal agreements, and a network of tiny debts and favours paid in kind, they were increasingly drawn in to a monetary economy.⁵⁹ The effects of these forces on rural bodies were material. The first half of the nineteenth century saw the

53 C. Forth, 'La Civilisation and Its Discontents: Modernity, Manhood and the Body in the Early Third Republic', in C. Forth and B. Taithe (eds.) *French Masculinities: History, Culture, and Politics* (Basingstoke, 2007), 85–102; R. Nye, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France* (Oxford, 1993); W. Reddy, *The Invisible Code: Honor and Sentiment in Postrevolutionary France, 1814–1848* (Berkeley, 1997); J. Surkis, *Sexing the Citizen: Morality and Masculinity in France, 1870–1920* (New York, 2006).

54 Duden, *The Woman Beneath the Skin*, 4; D. Armstrong, *Political Anatomy of the Body: Medical Knowledge in Britain in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 1983), xi.

55 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, I, 147.

56 This comes from a manual cited in: Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 330; Lehning, *Peasant and French*, 155.

57 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 136.

58 Vigarello and Holt, 'Le corps travaillé: gymnastes et sportifs au XIXe siècle', 376.

59 Corbin, *The Life of an Unknown*, 100–111.

end of the tyranny of grain over nutritional well-being, which resulted in the slow homogenization of the size of army conscripts across France.⁶⁰ As nutrition improved, even men from the poorest regions were able to grow to their full genetic potential. Although the science behind this was obscure to contemporaries, Adolphe d'Angeville's *Essai sur la statistique de la population Française* of 1836 could still recognise that France was divided into two parts, separated by a line between Saint-Malo in Brittany, and Geneva. The southern regions were characterized not only by lower literacy rates, but smaller body sizes.⁶¹ The Saint-Malo-Geneva line gradually disappeared over the course of the nineteenth century as both education and nutrition in the south and west caught up with northern France. Along with changes in food supplies, new markets introduced rural men and women to products they had not had access to before. The spread of cheap print and newspapers encouraged rural people to read more about the wider world and their place within it, and the decreasing price of photography encouraged individuals to look at themselves in new ways.⁶² The glittering opportunities of consumerism were a painful experience for some. Ruth Harris has drawn attention to the ways that the famous case of possession at Morzine between 1857 and 1870 was partly underpinned by a combination of desperation and desire for luxury on the behalf of the women in the village. With no language to express their longing, they were committed to a hopeless bodily protest, that may not have been so much a conscious strategy, as an unconscious expression of their impotence.⁶³ Similarly, the 'hysteric' peasant Nanette Leroux studied by Jan Goldstein ardently desired a watch at a time (1822) when rural women could not expect to possess such an expensive commodity. The watch was a fetish that drew its power from a

60 Heyberger, *Santé et développement économique en France au XIXe siècle*.

61 A. d'Angeville, *Essai sur la statistique de la population française, considérée sous quelques-uns de ses rapports physiques et moraux* (Bourg, 1836).

62 A. Corbin, 'La rencontre des corps', in A. Corbin, J.-J. Courtine, and G. Vigarello (eds.), *Histoire du corps* (3 vols. Paris: 2005-6), II, 177-8; M. Lyons, *Readers and Society in Nineteenth-Century France: Workers, Women, Peasants* (Basingstoke, 2001).

63 R. Harris, 'Possession on the Borders: The "Mal de Morzine" in Nineteenth-Century France', *The Journal of Modern History*, 69, no. 3 (September 1997), 451-78.

vague symbolism of time, autonomy, and menstruation in the young woman's unconscious.⁶⁴

The nineteenth century also saw a revolution in popular clothing. Where early-modern clothing had been part of a 'culture des apparences', a legible and stable system of signs that were not meant to be mere decoration, self-fashioning was becoming more and more important.⁶⁵ In the age before photography, both criminals and corpses were recognized as much by their clothing as any distinguishing physiological features.⁶⁶ The nineteenth century was a radical departure, a century that Alain Corbin called the 'grand siècle du linge'.⁶⁷ As fewer people were forced to encase their bodies in complicated and stiff outfits, and more people could afford softer materials, the very feeling of the outer surfaces of the body may have changed.⁶⁸ Rural workers were exposed to more and more choice in what they wore. At the same time, privacy was becoming a more pressing issue for rural people. Where before many people had done much of their living, even sleeping and making love outdoors, the bedroom became increasingly important.⁶⁹

The medical professions were at the centre of many of the developments concerning sexuality and hygiene. For Foucault, psychiatry, sexology, and medicine endowed sex 'with an inexhaustible and polymorphous causal power':

... sex gradually became an object of great suspicion; the general and disquieting meaning that pervades our conduct and our existence, in spite of ourselves; the point of weakness where evil portents reach through to us; the fragment of darkness that we each carry within us: a general signification, a universal secret, an omnipresent cause, a fear that never ends.⁷⁰

Where before there had been sexual practices, people now came to understand their own identities

64 Goldstein, *Hysteria Complicated by Ecstasy*.

65 D. Roche, *La culture des apparences: une histoire du vêtement* (Paris, 1989).

66 Pellegrin, 'Corps du commun, usages communs du corps', 128.

67 A. Corbin, *Le temps, le désir, l'horreur: essais sur le dix-neuvième* (Paris, 1998), 23–52.

68 Pellegrin, 'Corps du commun, usages communs du corps', 164.

69 Matthews-Grieco, 'Corps et sexualité dans l'Europe d'ancien régime', 180; Pellegrin, 'Corps du commun, usages communs du corps', 141; Thuillier, *L'imaginaire quotidien*, 83–98.

70 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, I, 65, 69.

in sexual terms. Before the triumph of sexuality, rural communities seem to have tolerated experimentation such as fellation and masturbation among heterosexual youths, and even allowed young men and women to share beds. Increasingly, sexuality was associated with risk, as syphilis and other venereal diseases began to play more prominent roles as cultural fears.⁷¹ In the place of the old pluralism and permissiveness, the binary vision of heterosexual bodily complementarity triumphed.⁷² Medicine was crucial to this emerging 'agony of experiencing an objectified body'.⁷³ At the same time as new tools such as the stethoscope, thermometer, and X-Ray began to probe and measure the interior of the body, anaesthetic allowed doctors to operate on strangely insensitive flesh.⁷⁴ In what Georges Vigarello has called 'une totale conversion de l'imaginaire' of the body, the age old resistance of the masses to washing began to crumble.⁷⁵ Hygiene evolved from merely an administrative goal to a personal, bodily responsibility. This confrontation between a rowdy and dirty rural popular culture and a reformist elite culture could be seen as the last stage of the process Peter Burke called 'the triumph of Lent'. Over the course of the early-modern period, Burke argued, elites increasingly distanced themselves from the carnivalesque cultural forms of *charivaris* and dirty songs.⁷⁶ By the end of the nineteenth century, the disdain of writers, scientists, and administrators had grown into an active movement to reform and correct the bodies of the rural poor. The body had become a battleground.

71 Corbin, 'La rencontre des corps', 187–9, 210–4.

72 T. Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1990); Matthews-Grieco, 'Corps et sexualité dans l'Europe d'ancien régime', 234.

73 Duden, *The Woman Beneath the Skin*, 178.

74 Faure, 'Le regard des médecins', 23–4, 29.

75 G. Vigarello, 'Hygiène du corps et travail des apparences', in A. Corbin, J.-J. Courtine, and G. Vigarello (eds.), *Histoire du corps* (3 vols. Paris: 2005-6), II, 303–8, 312.

76 P. Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York, 1978).

The Shortcomings of the Historiography

While much of this research has advanced our understandings of the meanings of bodies in modern history, it is clear from this schematic overview of the field that many of the same criticisms of the historiography of the body made twenty years ago by Lyndal Roper remain valid today.⁷⁷ Thus, the majority of French historians who have written about the body have explicitly drawn on the theories of Norbert Elias or Michel Foucault, theories which emphasize the steady emergence of a modern body, 'civilized' by the power of the state, or 'disciplined' by prisons, clinics, and psychiatrists.⁷⁸ Such accounts privilege urban elites, written culture, and literary sources, and rarely attempt to explore the social dimensions of representations of the body, to ask how these representations were used or refused by real people.⁷⁹ There are very significant problems with this teleology of the modern body. Religion and supernatural beliefs are obvious examples. Rather than completely eradicating traditions of supernatural belief about the body, the medical sciences of the Third Republic blended with much older currents of thought in new ways. At Lourdes, the Catholic Church gradually embraced the authority of a team of doctors whose role was to authenticate miracles that happened there.⁸⁰ If the nineteenth century saw the slow triumph of a secular republic in France, it was also the period when miracles and prophecies apparently reached their apogee.⁸¹ Even witchcraft continued to have intellectual vitality much longer than first thought by historians,

77 Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil*.

78 A particularly telling recent example is: M. Bouffard *et al.* (eds.), *Le corps dans l'histoire et les histoires du corps (XVIIe-XVIIIe siècle): travaux de jeunes chercheurs précédés d'entretiens avec Georges Vigarello* (Paris, 2013); The criticism is especially true of the book whose title promises the most in terms of the historiography of nineteenth-century bodies: C. Gallagher and T. Laqueur (eds.), *The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley, 1987).

79 For a typical collection focusing on representations, see: S. Melzer and K. Norberg (eds.), *From the Royal to the Republican Body: Incorporating the Political in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century France* (Berkeley, 1998). When historians have ventured into the realm of practices, they have tended to see these changing in response to top-down reforms. See, for example: R. Muchembled, 'Pour une histoire des gestes (XVe-XVIIIe siècle)', *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, 34, no. 1 (1 January 1987), 87–101.

80 R. Harris, *Lourdes: Body and Spirit in the Secular Age* (New York, 1999).

81 T. Kselman, *Miracles and Prophecies in Nineteenth-Century France* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1983).

and secularisation cannot be conceived of as the triumph of rational thought against the survivals of a primitive past: instead belief in sorcery retreated due to a combination of social, economic, and religious forces.⁸²

Catholicism, as several historians have pointed out, remained one of the most important dimensions of the cultural and somatic body in the nineteenth century.⁸³ At the meeting point of popular devotion and official theology was a nexus of concerns about the suffering and humiliation of humble bodies, expressed through the wounds of Jesus. In some senses, this was a denial of the body. Nuns and monks covered themselves with shapeless clothing, and kept strict silences. Sight and smell were distrusted. If the importance of Jesus was as a figure of bodily suffering, the Virgin Mary played an increasingly important role as a symbol of purity, virginity, modesty, and simplicity.⁸⁴ Beyond this cultural symbolism, which ambivalently split femininity into the good categories of virgin and mother, and the bad category of sinner or temptress, the Marian revival also actively modelled the bodies of Catholics, encouraging demure and subdued gestures. The cult of the Sacred Heart and the apparitions of the Virgin Mary fit poorly to a narrative of the modernisation and gradual civilisation of the unruly body. Rather than simple mastery of the recalcitrant body, these hybrid forms of popular and theological Catholicism drew on an effusive sentimentalism that owed more to supposedly early-modern emotional cultures than the nineteenth century.⁸⁵ Neither does the narrative of triumphant medicalisation fit the facts on the ground very neatly. Chantal Boone has described the experiences of a rural Landais doctor, Léon Dufour, at the

82 O. Davies, 'Witchcraft Accusations in France, 1850-1990', in W. de Blécourt and O. Davies (eds.), *Witchcraft Continued: Popular Magic in Modern Europe* (Manchester, 2004), 107–32; R. Porter, 'Witchcraft and Magic in Enlightenment, Romantic and Liberal Thought', in B. Ankarloo and S. Clark (eds.) *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe* (6 vols., Pittsburgh, 1999), V, 191–274.

83 A. Corbin, 'L'emprise de la religion', in A. Corbin, J.-J. Courtine, and G. Vigarello (eds.), *Histoire du corps* (3 vols. Paris: 2005-6), II, 51–83.

84 D. Blackbourn, *Marpingen: Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Bismarckian Germany* (Oxford, 1993); Harris, *Lourdes*; R. Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart: An Epic Tale For Modern Times* (Berkeley, 2000); S. Zimdars-Swartz, *Encountering Mary: From La Salette to Medjugorje* (Princeton, 1991).

85 Kselman, *Miracles and Prophecies*, 95; On this old regime of emotions, see for instance G. Thuillier's thoughts on the slow retreat of tears. Thuillier, *L'imaginaire quotidien*, 13–20.

start of the nineteenth century. More often than not, Dufour was forced to concede to the beliefs and demands of his patients, rather than the other way around, and his experience does not appear to have been atypical.⁸⁶ Both the argument about religion and the question of the influence of medicine point to ironies about the social relevance of changes to embodiment: the parts of the population that were not only numerically dominant, but were also most often thought of as mere bodies are largely absent. Peasants play little part in the volume of the multi-authored *Histoire du Corps* covering the nineteenth century.⁸⁷ Since the rise of post-modernism, too many historians have been content to think of 'peasants' and 'peasant culture' simply as inventions of the modernising state.⁸⁸

The omission of rural cultures of embodiment is not, however, simply a failure to engage with social stratification. Intertwined with this social lacuna is a theoretical one. The kinds of bodies that the existing historiography deals with are not just elite, they are worryingly immaterial, static, anaesthetised, fragmented, and strange. This is because the realisation that bodies had a history was largely propelled by a growing interest in the power of language and culture to construct reality.⁸⁹ It has taken historians longer to think about the ways that bodies are not just linguistically but materially constructed, built up out of specific objects, adornments, clothes, and food, made through gestures and movements that are learned.⁹⁰ Many theorists of the body believe that the distinction

86 C. Boone, *Léon Dufour (1780-1865): savant naturaliste et médecin* (Anglet, 2003); Faure, 'Le regard des médecins', 32.

87 There is, for instance, no section on rural life, and there are relatively few references to differences between town and country. A. Corbin, J.-J. Courtine, and G. Vigarello (eds.), *Histoire du corps* (3 vols. Paris: 2005-6), ii.

88 Lehning, *Peasant and French*; For a spirited critique of this tendency, see: D. Hopkin, *Voices of the People in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, 2012), 18–19, 186.

89 See, for example: J. Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York, 1990); These linguistic tendencies have been criticised by historians such as: Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil*; Harris, *Lourdes*.

90 Similarly, P. Connerton suggests that 'the body is seen to be socially constituted in the sense that it is constructed as an object of knowledge or discourse; but the body is not seen equally clearly to be socially constituted in the sense that it is culturally shaped in its actual practices and behaviour'. P. Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge, 1989), 104; For studies of gesture, see for instance: D. Efron, *Gesture, Race, and Culture; a Tentative Study of the Spatio-Temporal and 'Linguistic' Aspects of the Gestural Behavior of Eastern Jews and*

between biology and culture that was so fundamental to discovering the historicity of the body is no longer tenable. Rather than worrying about whether the body is governed by biological destiny or invented by culture, theorists such as Anne-Marie Mol are more interested in what bodies do.⁹¹ This interest in practices requires sources that are close to the ground, that pay attention to quotidian habits, and ordinary people, rather than only innovators and reformers. The body is an ongoing project, what Judith Butler has called 'an ageing process, a mode of becoming', or Maurice Merleau-Ponty refers to as a 'work of art... a nexus of living meanings'.⁹² Since all bodies are constructed not simply out of words, but by the things around us, it should be clear that this concept of the body as a process in no way implies that bodies in a historical situation can be anything and everything.⁹³ Like gender, bodies are made through 'a practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint', and these constraints were nowhere more obvious than in the rural society of the nineteenth century.⁹⁴

Neither can the history of the body dodge the problem of experience. The body is a unique historical topic in that it is both an object and a subject, a thing that takes up space, and the means by which all humans experience the world.⁹⁵ Along with bodies that move, grow, and grow old, it is

Southern Italians in New York City, Living under Similar as Well as Different Environmental Conditions, 2nd edn (The Hague, 1972); Verdier, *Façons de dire, façons de faire*, 216; T. Polhemus draws attention to the way that 'not only complicated, formalised and ritualised expressions, gestures, postures, etc., but also "simple" bodily activities such as the rate of eye-blinking are culturally learned.' T. Polhemus, 'Social Bodies', in J. Benthall and T. Polhemus (eds.), *The Body as a Medium of Expression* (London, 1975), 17; The point that bodies are physically constructed from food, and that historical nutritional conditions affect the kinds of bodies people had is the key claim of historical anthropometrics. See, for instance: Heyberger, *Santé et développement économique en France au XIXe siècle*.

91 Mol, *The Body Multiple*; For similar calls to go beyond this dichotomy, see for instance: L. Blackman, *The Body* (Oxford, 2008); S. Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (Berkeley, 2003); K. Canning, 'The Body as Method? Reflections on the Place of the Body in Gender History', *Gender & History*, 11, no. 3 (1999), 499–513; L. Helps, 'Re-Disciplining the Body', in J. Keshen and S. Perrier (eds), *Building New Bridges: Sources, Methods, and Interdisciplinarity* (Ottawa, 2005), 49–62; Rublack, 'Fluxes'.

92 J. Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York, 2004), 29; M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 2nd edn (London, 2002), 175.

93 Mol is the theorist who has done the most to show how bodies are assembled using things. Mol, *The Body Multiple*; Susan Bordo cautions against the 'postmodern intoxication with possibilities' which are 'fantasies of transcendence of the materiality and historicity of the body, its situatedness in time and space, and its gender.' Bordo, *Unbearable Weight*, 39, 15.

94 Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 1.

95 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*.

necessary to take the subjective dimensions of embodiment seriously, to explore what several historians have called the 'historical phenomenology of the body'.⁹⁶ The multiple ways in which people experience their own bodies might suggest at first glance that what is needed is a history of bodies rather than the body.⁹⁷ Yet there is a risk in fragmenting the study of bodies.⁹⁸ It is hard to understand one gesture on its own, for instance.⁹⁹ Gestures have to be understood as part of a cultural system of meaning.¹⁰⁰ Similarly, it makes little sense to study body parts in isolation.¹⁰¹ Theorists now tend to conceptualize the body in systematic terms, arguing that agency and feelings are distributed through a 'body that thinks'.¹⁰² The fragmented body parts and isolated experiences that historians influenced by post-modern theories have studied may have more to do with an absence of sources, and an absence of fully conscious reflection on the whole body, than with a body that was really in pieces. Based on an innovative study of how bodies are 'done' in a Dutch hospital, Anne-Marie Mol has argued that different understandings of the body somehow 'hang together', meaning that there is not so much a multiplicity of bodies, but a 'body multiple'.¹⁰³ In a similar way, one of the challenges for historians must be to understand bodies that are at once sexual, hungry, emotional, suffering, spiritual, and ageing.

96 Illich, 'A Plea for Body History (Twelve Years After Medical Nemesis)', 20; Porter, 'History of the Body Reconsidered', 236; Duden, *The Woman Beneath the Skin*; Goldstein, *Hysteria Complicated by Ecstasy*.

97 E. Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington, 1994), 19; Le Breton, *Anthropologie du corps et modernité*, 34; Porter, 'History of the Body Reconsidered', 237; Faure, 'Le regard des médecins', 49.

98 Polhemus, 'Social Bodies', 33.

99 J.A.V. Bates, 'The Communicative Hand', in J. Benthall and T. Polhemus (eds.), *The Body as a Medium of Expression* (London, 1975), 175–94.

100 Efron, *Gesture, Race, and Culture*.

101 I. Crozier and C. Forth (eds), *Body Parts: Critical Explorations in Corporeality* (Lanham, Maryland, 2005); Hillman and Mazzio, *The Body in Parts*.

102 M. Serres, *The Five Senses: A Philosophy of Mingled Bodies* (London, 2008), 326; R. Birdwhistell, 'Background Considerations to the Study of the Body as a Medium of "Expression"', in J. Benthall and T. Polhemus (eds.), *The Body as a Medium of Expression* (London, 1975), 36–58; Blackman, *The Body*, 57; Drew Leder, *The Absent Body* (Chicago, 1990), 149.

103 Mol, *The Body Multiple*, 55, 5.

These theoretical demands and the need for a more socially representative history of the body profoundly call into question the narratives of 'civilisation' and 'disciplining'. Neither can take into account the ways that ordinary people made their bodies themselves, and neither can adequately conceptualize the flow of time. Rural culture plays the role of an unchanging past, swept away by modernity.¹⁰⁴ Yet several writers have suggested that the history of the body does not flow in one direction only. For instance, gestures became more expressive over the seventeenth and eighteenth century, before becoming more demure again.¹⁰⁵ There was no simple progress towards civilised behaviour. The same could be said about the narrative of the growing health of the population. Industrialisation led to a shrinking of human bodies in the short term, rather than fuelling better nutrition.¹⁰⁶ These are not simply bumps on the otherwise smooth road of progress. It is time for historians to seriously think, for instance, about whether it makes sense to reduce the differences between embodiment between different periods to a scale of how 'closed' the body is, or how emotionally continent.¹⁰⁷ Perhaps the greatest innovation of 'modern' ways of thinking about the body is the ways in which a diverse set of concerns, such as nutrition, sex, clothing, sleeping, illness, spirituality, can be made to cohere into a narrative that makes one way of doing things seem 'modern' and its opposite seem 'backward'. The true value of studying historical bodies is not to affirm either an account of unstoppable progress or irreversible decline, but to think about the majority of culture that passes below the historian's radar, and along with it the feelings and motivations of most people in the past.

104 See I. Hull's sensitive critique of Duden: 'Review: The Body as Historical Experience: Review of Recent Works by Barbara Duden', *Central European History*, 28, no. 1 (1995), 76–7.

105 Efron, *Gesture, Race, and Culture*, 53–60.

106 R. Steckel, 'Heights and Human Welfare: Recent Developments and New Directions', *Explorations in Economic History*, 46, no. 1 (January 2009), 1–23.

107 The narrative of the closing of the body is central to L. Stark and D. Le Breton's work. Stark, *The Magical Self*; Le Breton, *Anthropologie du corps et modernité*; For the critique of the narrative of the rise of modern emotions, see: B. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (New York, 2006).

Why Folklore?

There are obvious reasons why so little has been done to correct this theoretical and social imbalance. There is a persistent belief that rural lives were boring, and rural culture relatively static over the modern period. Sources that explore rural culture from within are necessarily limited, since most of the working agricultural population remained illiterate well into the nineteenth century.¹⁰⁸ Those who did write often did so to establish their distance from a culture they no longer identified with.¹⁰⁹ Another difficulty comes from the fact that experiential sources on any kinds of body can be hard particularly hard to find. Not only were people 'in the nineteenth and even twentieth centuries... generally reticent when it came to discussing their bodies', but bodily concerns by their nature tend to recede from conscious attention.¹¹⁰ The philosopher Drew Leder has pointed out that the body is an 'absent presence', by which he means that, as the means by which we experience the world, the body itself tends not to be the focus of our attention, unless it is hungry, sick, tired, or aroused.¹¹¹ We spend most of our lives paying no attention to our innards, and we cannot feel our own bones. There are also political reasons why rural bodies have not been studied. Focusing attention on the bodies of the agricultural population runs the risk of reducing rural people in the past to their flesh, as if they were not quite human, but mere brutes.¹¹² While elites had rationality, art, and culture, the labouring poor might appear to have known only hunger, violence, and other urges. Rural people remain trapped in what outsiders thought about 'peasants'.¹¹³ Finally, there are two related problems concerning how the chronology of popular embodiment has been

108 F. Furet and J. Ozouf, *Reading and Writing : Literacy in France from Calvin to Jules Ferry* (Cambridge, 1982).

109 D. Hopkin, 'Storytelling, Fairytales and Autobiography: Some Observations on Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century French Soldiers' and Sailors' Memoirs', *Social History*, 29, no. 2 (2004), 186–98; Corbin, *The Life of an Unknown*, vii.

110 C. Heywood, *Growing up in France: From the Ancien Régime to the Third Republic* (Cambridge, 2007), 269.

111 Leder, *The Absent Body*.

112 Feminists interested in corporeality have had similar concerns. See, for instance: Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, xiv.

113 Lehning, *Peasant and French*; T. Brass, *Peasants, Populism, and Postmodernism* (Abingdon, 2000); M. Kearney, *Reconceptualizing the Peasantry* (Boulder, Colorado, 1996).

conceptualized. The first, discussed above, is the tendency to see the history of the body in teleological terms, a teleology in which the nineteenth century plays a key role, mediating between the messy, wild bodies of the pre-modern period, and more modern concerns such as race, or queer, fat, and disabled bodies. This teleology sits uncomfortably with another aspect of bodies: their apparent timelessness. Historians have pointed to long-term similarities in bodily phenomena such as pregnancy, gestures, and even sexuality.¹¹⁴ Religious traditions seem to covertly transmit medieval forms of embodiment to the population of the nineteenth century.¹¹⁵ Even the medical profession was a conduit for antique culture. The theory of the humours and medieval ideas about the internal body still lingered in medical ideas in the nineteenth and even twentieth centuries.¹¹⁶ For Paul Connerton, the body is the site of some of the most conservative elements of any given society: 'Every group... will entrust to bodily automatisms the values and categories which they are most anxious to conserve'.¹¹⁷ The question of chronology, perhaps more than any other, makes clear how paradoxical the history of the body can appear. At once timeless, bodies are also deeply personal, the scene of fleeting impressions and delicate feelings. At once unchanging, they have also been completely remade in the recent past.

Sources that deal with informal traditional culture, or folklore, have special value in addressing all of these concerns about the history of the body. First, they call into question the commonly held view that rural life was static. While nineteenth-century urban populations have been increasingly studied through the prisms of gender, sexuality, bodies, and social control, peasants have been depicted as witnesses to cultural change, but not actors. Yet there is much in the folklore record to call into question the idea of a boring, unchanging rural culture. Stories about

114 On pregnancy, see, for instance; Duden, *The Woman Beneath the Skin*, 34–7; Gowing, *Common Bodies*, 205; On sexuality, see: Corbin, 'La rencontre des corps', 156; On gesture, see: Efron, *Gesture, Race, and Culture*, 107–133.

115 See, for instance: Harris, *Lourdes*, 59, 77–8, 288–9.

116 Porter and Vigarello, 'Corps, santé et maladies', 335–9; G. Bennett, *Bodies* (Oxford, Mississippi, 2005), 23–46.

117 Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 102.

witchcraft and werewolves not only reveal an archaic culture of simmering supernatural tensions, but also speak to the concerns of the nineteenth century, and not just a timeless agrarian world of local envy, sick animals, and crop failures.¹¹⁸ Even the most 'traditional' actors, such as local handy-women, or the visionary Bernadette Soubirous, become caught up in 'modern' cultures of the body.¹¹⁹ The strangeness of supernatural bodies is an obvious point of entry into thinking about how different rural bodies in the past were from our own, but it is not a licence to imagine they were unchanging. These supernatural bodies themselves have a history.

Folklore is of prime importance because it is one of the few sources that gives any insight into rural culture from within. Instead of how reformers, administrators, and tourists imagined peasants lived, folklore collections such as the one compiled by Félix Arnaudin in the Grande-Lande between the 1870s and 1914 reveal rural people's own points of view.¹²⁰ As David Hopkin has suggested, folklorists have a fundamentally different view of culture from those historians who have stressed cultural construction, the 'invention of traditions', and a top-down model of social change. Folklorists, he writes, do not see culture 'as something that impinges on people from the outside, but as something that people do, the stories they themselves tell, the songs they themselves sing, the tools they themselves make, the rituals they themselves enact'.¹²¹ An attention to this culture does not simply reveal what rural people believed, but gives clues as to what they actually did with their lives, and why. As several folklorists have pointed out, stories are not just about how the world is, they are also 'maps for action'.¹²²

This also helps to address the concern that studying bodies risks dehumanising rural people.

118 See Chapter Six.

119 Verdier, *Façons de dire, façons de faire*, 155; Harris, *Lourdes*.

120 G. Beiner, *Remembering the Year of the French: Irish Folk History and Social Memory* (Madison, 2009).

121 Hopkin, *Voices of the People*, 6.

122 B. Ellis, 'Death by Folklore: Ostension, Contemporary Legend, and Murder', *Western Folklore*, 48, no. 3 (July 1989), 218; L. Dégh and A. Vázsonyi, 'Does the Word "Dog" Bite? Ostensive Action: A Means of Legend-Telling', *Journal of Folklore Research*, 20, no. 1 (May 1983), 5–34; Hopkin, *Voices of the People*, 172, 178.

Rather than reducing them to their bodies, records of stories, songs, everyday talk, and dances show how these people used their bodies aesthetically and meaningfully. Instead of restricting their sphere of agency, a focus on the body suggests an arena that historians have not yet explored concerning the rural population. Agricultural labourers made bodily choices, even when they could not make political ones.¹²³ Folklore sources are, after all, especially rich in the kinds of information about bodies that have been hard to find for most populations, and especially marginalised ones such as the rural working classes.¹²⁴ Two of the most important books on French folklore, Philippe Richard and Françoise Loux's *Sagesses du corps* and Yvonne Verdier's *Façons de dire, façons de faire*, take the body as their explicit theme, and the great synthesizer of French folklore, Arnold van Gennep, had a special interest in bodies, sexuality, and the 'rites of passage' between different, embodied social statuses.¹²⁵ It is not simply that folklore draws attention to the kinds of bodily experiences that are often absent from consciousness. Skill as a storyteller, singer, or dancer has long been associated with a body that is in some way marked, either as old, disabled, or feminine.¹²⁶ At the very least, folklore has always been associated with manual labour.

Finally, the materials and methodology of the study of informal traditions offer some answers to the problems of chronology in the history of the body. Like some historians today, many

123 J. Benthall has written that 'we are working on the hypothesis that, since our society uses words as its primary means of social control, all repressed groups will tend to find their most effective and confident expression through the body's wider resources rather than within the enclosure of verbal language.' See: 'A Prospectus as Published in *Studio International*, July 1972', in J. Benthall and T. Polhemus (eds.), *The Body as a Medium of Expression* (London, 1975), 11; See also: P. Willis, 'The Expressive Style of a Motor-Bike Culture', in J. Benthall and T. Polhemus (eds.), *The Body as a Medium of Expression* (London, 1975), 233–52. Both of these authors risk depicting such cultures of the body as always resisting the hegemony of written, official culture. I do not intend to imply that the neglected bodily culture of the countryside was always necessarily a counter-culture.

124 For the importance of bodies in folklore, see for instance: Bennett, *Bodies*; A. Bourke, *The Burning Of Bridget Cleary: A True Story*, 2nd edn (London, 2006), 106; D. Hufford, *The Terror That Comes in the Night: An Experience-Centered Study of Supernatural Assault Traditions* (Philadelphia, 1982); See especially: Stark, *The Magical Self*, 21; Sometimes the dynamic is surprising. Verdier, for instance, noticed that French ghosts tend to be strikingly bodily. See: *Façons de dire, façons de faire*, 138.

125 F. Loux and P. Richard, *Sagesses du corps: la santé et la maladie dans les proverbes* (Paris, 1978); Verdier, *Façons de dire, façons de faire*; A. van Gennep, *Les rites de passage* (Paris, 1909).

126 For just a couple of examples, see: Bourke, *The Burning Of Bridget Cleary*, 59; W.B. Yeats, 'Why the Blind Man in Ancient Times Was Made a Poet', in G. Harper and R. Finneran (eds), *The Collected Works of W.B. Yeats* (14 vols., Basingstoke, 1989-2006), IV, 202–4.

folklorists had a view of history as an ineluctible progression, whether for the better or the worse, they were also fascinated by the endurance of informal traditions. Children in the early twentieth century played games and used rhymes that originated hundreds, if not thousands of years before.¹²⁷ The tale of Beauty and the Beast, fresh as it might seem on the lips of a nineteenth-century storyteller, can be traced back at least as far Apuleius's *Golden Ass* in the second century AD.¹²⁸ Perhaps, as the folklorist Henry Glassie has suggested, historians need a little more sense of tradition.¹²⁹ Yet at the same time, the materials of folklore are often deeply personal. Legend-tellers do not just talk of things they have heard, they also narrate personal experiences, stories that are worth telling because they refer to an especially emotive and important thing that happened in their own lives.¹³⁰ As well as evidence of long-term continuities, folklore offers examples of the more fleeting aspects of the history of the body, the kinds of felt experience that are often missing from top-down accounts. The folklorist Barre Toelken has made the basic but important point that folklore can 'be used to enrich the [historical] record by providing that extremely important undercurrent of human thought, feeling, and expression without which the dates remain tombstones'.¹³¹ Precisely because folklore consists of informal traditions, the folklore record is a repository of seemingly trivial and unimportant aspects of bodily culture.

Methods

Noun's story 'Misery in the Moorlands' comes from the writings of the local folklorist Félix

127 I. Opie and P. Opie, *The Lore and Language of School-Children* (Oxford, 1967).

128 J. Swahn, *The Tale of Cupid and Psyche, Aarne-Thompson 425 & 428* (Lund, 1955).

129 H. Glassie, 'Tradition', in B. Feintuch (ed.) *Eight Words for the Study of Expressive Culture* (Urbana, 2003), 176–97; Hopkin agrees, and cautions against the tendency in history to see all traditions as 'invented.' *Voices of the People*, 256, 260.

130 L. Dégh and A. Vázsonyi, 'The Memorata and the Proto-Memorata', *JAF*, 87 (1974), 225–39; Hufford's book on supernatural assault traditions, for instance, is based on narratives of first-hand experience: *The Terror That Comes in the Night*.

131 B. Toelken, *The Dynamics of Folklore*, 2nd edn (Logan, Utah, 1996), 408.

Arnaudin. Collections of informal traditions such as Arnaudin's are of special value to historians who want to understand the history of the body from below, but they need to be treated carefully. Proverbs and tales are not, as an earlier generation of historians sometimes assumed, the anonymous voice of a homogeneous rural population.¹³² Folklorists today often focus their attention on performance, arguing that narratives, songs, proverbs, gestures, and games are best studied as they are used by real people.¹³³ As the folklorist Diane Goldstein remarks, similar narratives may exist around the globe, but stories 'mean at home'.¹³⁴ Folklore is not a dead culture that has 'survived' among the rural poor. It is a living culture that often displays a surprising ability to adapt to new situations.¹³⁵ Historians who want to make sensitive use of folklore sources therefore have to do their best to reconstruct how stories, and indeed songs and proverbs, 'meant' at home, which contexts people performed them in, who performed, who listened, and how they used the tradition.

A first step is to make careful use of the concept of genre. There is a rich scholarship by folklorists exploring the significance of different types of tradition, such as legends, tales, ballads, riddles, and proverbs, but many different writers have emphasized that these different genres must be studied systematically.¹³⁶ Stories, songs, and games make sense in a system of shared meanings. Different 'ways of speaking' within any culture inform one another.¹³⁷ Nonetheless, the same words

132 Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*; E. Weber, 'Fairies and Hard Facts: The Reality of Folktales', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 42, no. 1 (March 1981), 93–113; E. Weber, 'Religion and Superstition in Nineteenth-Century France', *The Historical Journal*, 31, no. 2 (June 1988), 399–423; J. Devlin, *The Superstitious Mind: French Peasants and the Supernatural in the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven, 1987); Perhaps the worst culprits in this vision of a homogeneous rural society, however, have been literary scholars. See: Loux and Richard, *Sagesses du corps*.

133 The clearest statement of this principle was: R. Bauman, *Verbal Art as Performance* (Prospect Heights, Illinois, 1977).

134 D. Goldstein, *Once Upon A Virus: AIDs Legends and Vernacular Risk Perception* (Logan, Utah, 2004), 175–6.

135 For a good historical example, see: P. Sahllins, *Forest Rites: The War of the Demoiselles in Nineteenth-Century France* (Boston, 1994), 47, 133.

136 Toelken recommends a 'healthy cynicism about generic categories.' See: *The Dynamics of Folklore*, 209; D. Ben-Amos has pointed out that academic definitions of genres must be supplemented by folk definitions: 'Analytical Categories and Ethnic Genres', in D. Ben-Amos (ed.) *Folklore Genres* (Austin, 1981), 215–42.

137 J. Sherzer, *Kuna Ways of Speaking: An Ethnographic Perspective* (Austin, 1983); A. van Gennep, *Le folklore*

spoken in a realistic legend, a fantastic tale, or a plaintive ballad clearly do not carry exactly the same meanings. Although Félix Arnaudin was not very precise in his understanding of different folklore genres, comparative work on similar traditions from around the world provides important clues about how and why traditions were performed. Historians of the nineteenth-century perceive these performances through the frosted glass of the folklorists' writings. Where folklorists today want to know about 'gestures, feelings, intentions, reception, and resulting behaviors', historians are limited to the words scribbled down by observers such as Arnaudin.¹³⁸ Yet this might not be as much of a problem as it first appears.¹³⁹ Although published folklore collections polished and purified holistic performances into literary narratives, manuscript collections such as Arnaudin's still include some of the messiness of face to face interactions. His notes are full of contradictions, crossings-out, snippets of extra information, asides, and misunderstandings, and these paratextual details help to reconstruct performances. Manuscript folklore collections have to be treated as the result of a process of negotiation between singers and storytellers and the folklorists who recorded them. However much historians may prefer to learn about popular culture than the attitudes of outsiders, the role of the folklorists themselves cannot be neglected. Why they collected and how are important factors in the genesis of the sources, but it cannot be assumed they are the only ones. Sometimes it is possible to learn about the contexts in which traditions were performed, when narrators or singers referred to specific occasions, or the folklorists asked them about where they learned and used traditions.¹⁴⁰ In a collection such as Arnaudin's, which covers many different genres, historians have a chance to explore the connotations of different traditions, the parts of the

français, new edn (4 vols., Paris, 1998-9), I, 187.

138 J. Titon, 'Text', in B. Feintuch (ed.) *Eight Words for the Study of Expressive Culture* (Urbana, 2003), 81.

139 See, for instance, Hymes' imaginative reconstruction of native American performances: 'Folklore's Nature and the Sun's Myth', *JAF*, 88, no. 350 (December 1975), 345-69.

140 Other historians have recognised the importance of thinking about where folklore was performed. See, for instance: J. Obelkevich, 'Proverbs and Social History', in P. Burke and R. Porter (eds), *The Social History of Language* (Cambridge, 1987), 48. Yet, in general, it is noticeable how few historians think very hard about the performance contexts of a genre such as proverbs. Most often, they are simply used to represent the undifferentiated view of 'the people.'

stories that no-one felt it necessary to say out loud.¹⁴¹

Fundamental to this approach is the realization that there is no one text, only variations on an illusory type.¹⁴² Folklorists employ the useful fiction of types to organize narratives, songs, or proverbs, and demonstrate their similarities and differences from other examples. From the folklorist's point of view, there is no definitive version of 'Little Red Riding Hood', but a number of different variants, which can be listed in catalogues by their Aarne-Thompson-Ûther type number, ATU 333. What unifies these similar stories is plot and motifs, the smallest elements of narratives. While the motif of the red riding hood is not present in most French versions of the story, the wolf who eats the grandmother, for instance, is almost universally central.¹⁴³ These versions of the story differ from one another because different people told the story in different ways. Perhaps part of the explanation is that storytellers inevitably forgot parts of the tale, since narrators often claim that they told their story exactly as they heard it.¹⁴⁴ Yet defective memory is not an adequate explanation in itself. It seems likely that narrators sometimes consciously manipulated stories to convey messages that were important to them.¹⁴⁵ Folklore, after all, does not belong to groups evenly, but is used by different individuals to different ends.¹⁴⁶ Even changes that came about through forgetting must appear suspicious if historians take any interest in the psychology of people in the past. Why a narrator might remember one detail and forget another, sometimes scrambling the meaning of a story, surely has something to tell us about the motivations of that individual.

These people may not have had the same sense of their lives as ongoing projects directed

141 S. Kalčik, “‘... Like Ann’s Gynecologist or the Time I Was Almost Raped’: Personal Narratives in Women’s Rap Groups”, *JAF*, 88, no. 347 (March 1975), 3–11; Toelken, *The Dynamics of Folklore*, 246.

142 Sahlins, *Forest Rites*, 161; Titon, ‘Text’, 73.

143 Y. Verdier, ‘Grands-mères, si vous saviez... Le petit chaperon rouge dans la tradition orale’, *Cahiers de Littérature Orale*, no. 4 (1978), 17–55.

144 Arnaudin’s own father, for instance, talked of storytellers who repeated tales ‘sans changer un mot ni un geste’. See: NFA, 2 MI 29/21, f.170.

145 This insight is fundamental to: Hopkin, *Voices of the People*.

146 R. Bauman, ‘Differential Identity and the Social Base of Folklore’, *JAF* 84, no. 331 (1971), 31–41.

towards definite goals, but this is not to say they engaged in no autobiographical reflection at all. As Arnold van Gennep warned long ago, writers on folk culture made a mistake by equating the absence of 'individualism' with anonymity.¹⁴⁷ Several authors have pointed to ways that fantastic tales or common legends made useful materials for individuals to reflect on their lives, and it is not impossible to study the ways that they did this.¹⁴⁸ As Carlo Ginzburg once suggested: 'if the sources offer us the possibility of reconstructing not only indistinct masses but also individual personalities, it would be absurd to ignore it'.¹⁴⁹ Understanding these motivations requires researching the biographies of the people who provided folklore to the collectors.¹⁵⁰ Records of births, marriages, and deaths, as well as notarial documents, conscription and employment records provide limited clues about the lives of the singers and storytellers, but these clues can help to make sense of the quirks of any given singer's song, or narrator's story.¹⁵¹

This is not to say that the men and women who provided folklore for Arnaudin's collection were lone individuals, whose stories and songs emphasized their unique identities. They had a strong sense of shared culture and the value of tradition and this is part of the value of studying folklore.¹⁵² Just as the tale or song indexes can be used to show some of the ways individual performers were idiosyncratic, they can also demonstrate cultural continuities across time and space. Arnold van Gennep was one of the early champions of a spatial approach, speaking of 'zones

147 Van Gennep, *Le folklore français*, I, 48–50.

148 Hopkin, 'Storytelling, Fairytales and Autobiography'; Hopkin, *Voices of the People*, 32, 179–84; P. Jones, "'There Was a Woman": La Llorona in Oregon', *Western Folklore*, 47, no. 3 (1 July 1988), 195–211; Verdier, *Façons de dire, façons de faire*, 214, 251.

149 C. Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (Baltimore, 1992), xx; For a nineteenth-century example, see the extraordinary case of Nanette Leroux, studied by Goldstein: *Hysteria Complicated by Ecstasy*.

150 David Hopkin refers to a 'point of triangulation' for studying folklore informants. See: *Voices of the People*, 31, 34.

151 W. Pooley, 'Independent Women and Independent Body Parts: What the Tales and Legends of Nannette Lévesque Can Contribute to French Rural Family History', *Folklore*, 121, no. 2 (2010), 190.

152 The concept of dynamism within tradition is the key idea in: Toelken, *The Dynamics of Folklore*, 39.

folkloriques'; areas defined neither by linguistic, geographic, nor administrative boundaries, but cultural ones.¹⁵³ A tradition such as carnival dummies is not something that existed in all parts of France alike. For whatever local reasons, some villages and towns did not perform this tradition, while others did.¹⁵⁴ One of the most interesting aspects of this spatial distribution is the concept of the ecotype, first introduced into folklore studies by Carl von Sydow.¹⁵⁵ Not only are traditions unevenly distributed between different communities in different places, but they adapt to local conditions. David Hopkin has explored the ways that these local adaptations help historians to map differences in popular culture.¹⁵⁶ And just as traditions vary over space, they also change over time.¹⁵⁷ Kathleen Vejvoda, for instance, has traced a negative shift in attitudes to women over the nineteenth century in Irish folk tales, while Tom Cheesman has tracked the popularity of shocking ballads over time in Germany to demonstrate the emergence of new forms of identity and family relations.¹⁵⁸ The dichotomy between 'tradition' and change suggested by the influential book *The Invention of Tradition* is a false one.¹⁵⁹ All traditions are constantly re-invented, and adapt to new social conditions.¹⁶⁰ From the point of view of historians, this means that some attention must be paid not only to the ways in which traditions change, but how. We need to know something about who transmitted culture to whom. The chain of performances may be lost forever, but it is important

153 Van Gennep, *Le folklore français*, I, 75, 720, 847.

154 Ibid., 848, 962.

155 C. von Sydow, *Selected Papers on Folklore* (Copenhagen, 1948).

156 D. Hopkin, 'The Ecotype, or a Modest Proposal to Reconnect Cultural and Social History', in M. Calaresu, F. de Vivo, and J.-P. Rubiés (eds), *Exploring Cultural History* (Surrey, 2010); Hopkin, *Voices of the People*, 27, 166–72.

157 Verdier, *Façons de dire, façons de faire*, 82.

158 K. Vejvoda, "'Too Much Knowledge of the Other World.'" Women and Nineteenth-Century Irish Folktales', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 32, no. 01 (2004), 41–61; T. Cheesman, *The Shocking Ballad Picture Show: German Popular Literature and Cultural History* (Oxford, 1994).

159 E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983).

160 Glassie, 'Tradition'; R. Handler and J. Linnekin, 'Tradition, Genuine or Spurious', *JAF*, 97, no. 385 (September 1984), 273–90.

to think about nonetheless. In folklore: 'the seeming reliability of the form is a deception, promising repetition yet producing evanescence... reading performances over time, we are also reading history'.¹⁶¹

Clearly, all of this work of contextualisation, researching individual lives, and tracing spatial and temporal connections would be hard to achieve for a large area, such as a whole country.¹⁶² I have preferred to focus very closely on one contained example, the manuscript folklore collection of Félix Arnaudin. All of Arnaudin's research was conducted in a small geographical area, which he referred to as the Grande-Lande, in the *département* of the Landes de Gascogne between 1870 and 1914. The depth and breadth of his collection gives insight into many different aspects of local cultures of the body, from supernatural beliefs, to dancing, singing, clothing, games, and working practices. Of course, it is not possible to cover every imaginable topic relating to bodies. Some, such as homosexuality and sleeping, were not discussed explicitly enough by people at the time to provide the evidence historians would need. Other topics, such as pregnancy and illness, have been amply studied in the fields of medical and women's history.

In some senses, this is similar to a microhistorical study. Istvan Szi­jártó has suggested that microhistorians use limited examples to explore big historical questions without underestimating the agency of ordinary people:

Microhistorians try to show the historical actors' experiences and how they saw themselves and their lives and which meanings they attributed to things that had happened to them, while they also try to point to deep historical structures, long-lived ways of thinking and global processes using a retrospective analysis – factors that were absent from the actors' own horizons of interpretation. All this can only be brought together, without running the risk of over-simplifying the past, when historians investigate a narrowly defined subject.¹⁶³

161 D. Kapchan, 'Performance', in B. Feintuch (ed.) *Eight Words for the Study of Expressive Culture* (Urbana, 2003), 122.

162 This has not prevented Tangherlini from attempting it, with the example of the massive corpus of Danish folklore collected by Evald Tang Kristensen. For an early insight into what has transformed into a huge digital project, see: T. Tangherlini, *Interpreting Legend: Danish Storytellers and Their Repertoires* (New York, 1994).

163 S. Magnússon and I. Szi­jártó, *What Is Microhistory? Theory and Practice* (London, 2013), 7, 4–5.

For many microhistorians, the most obvious subjects have been 'normal exceptions', those extraordinary individuals, such as heretics, criminals, and other outliers, or remarkable events whose uniqueness reveal the deeper structures of historical societies.¹⁶⁴ Body theorists have taken a similar approach, paying special attention to 'the extraordinary, the apparently inexplicable, the anomalous'.¹⁶⁵ This interest in the anomalous has its place in my study. Many of the chapters concentrate on individuals who did not conform to the behaviour of the people around them, men and women who refused to make love, or who transformed their own social conditions, or who engaged with environmental changes in surprising ways. Yet this not intended to be what Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon calls the 'singularisation of history', a focus only on the limited example, deliberately avoiding a larger picture.¹⁶⁶ Part of what makes these strange individuals interesting is their relationship both to a shared local culture, which can be studied through the Arnaudin collection, but also to a much wider European tradition of singing, telling stories, and using proverbs. Not all folklore deals in extreme situations. Many legends and proverbs have more to tell historians about 'the torpor of everyday existences' than astonishing happenings.¹⁶⁷ Along with the 'star' performers, a large folklore collection such as Arnaudin's deals with a range of people who might not be recognised as gifted narrators or beautiful singers, but who nonetheless transmitted informal traditions.¹⁶⁸ It gives historians some insight into the social distribution of folklore. Like microhistorians, however, I have tried to be explicit about the genesis of my sources and how I have used them.¹⁶⁹ Where there are problems of interpretation or doubts, I have tried to incorporate them

164 Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*; E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou: The Promised Land of Error* (New York, 1978); Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre*; Goldstein, *Hysteria Complicated by Ecstasy*.

165 Blackman, *The Body*, 38.

166 Magnússon and Szijártó, *What Is Microhistory?*, 107, 115.

167 Corbin, *The Life of an Unknown*, viii.

168 For similar ideas, see: Hufford, *The Terror That Comes in the Night*, xvi.

169 G. Levi, 'On Microhistory' in P. Burke (ed.), *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, 2nd edn (Cambridge and Oxford, 2001), 110.

into my account. The kind of history of the body I am advocating - bodies as lived by real people, with complicated emotions, sensations, and unconscious motivations - demands this honesty. Because feelings matter, I cannot afford to ignore them, but because their reconstruction necessarily involves imagination, I cannot be too dogmatic in my conclusions.

Conclusion

Body history must be part of big history. It must display the body as the inexhaustible generator of representations for society at large, and as a crossroads of power, the new pineal gland mediating between personal and public, private and political.¹⁷⁰

If historians want to deliver on Roy Porter's ambitions for body history, they will have to turn their attention away from top-down accounts of history that tell a story of the progressive modernisation, 'civilisation', or 'disciplining' of the body. Such accounts pay too little attention to the private, personal lives of the majority of people in the past, and do not tell us enough about humble bodies as 'crossroads of power'. Folklore sources offer an important corrective, as long as they are carefully historicised, and studied using the range of tools that folklorists have developed. To achieve this, the chapters of the thesis pay special attention to the genesis of the Arnaudin manuscripts. Chapter Two explores the life and works of Félix Arnaudin, discussing why and how he collected folklore, and what influence these choices had on the information available from the region about popular attitudes to the body. Chapter Three then turns to the question of whose point of view these sources represent, and how culture was transmitted in the region. These preliminary chapters explain the frames through which Arnaudin's collection needs to be interpreted. Chapter Four presents a blueprint of the local cultures of the body, based on the dialect notes Arnaudin collected, asking which body parts were discussed and how. Aside from this explicitly phenomenological chapter, the remaining chapters of the thesis focus on different examples, and different thematic issues, such as environmental change (Chapter Five), identity and social change

170 R. Porter, 'Body History', *London Review of Books* 11, no. 16 (1989), 11.

(Chapter Six), class and class conflict (Chapter Seven), sexuality (Chapter Eight), and religion and disability (Chapter Nine).

Despite these thematic differences, all of the chapters share certain methodological concerns. All attempt to understand how identifiable historical individuals used and talked about their bodies in traditional terms. Many focus attention on surprising bodies, or bodies that seem alien to twenty-first-century understandings. Chapter Four, for instance, finds that the very phenomenology of rural bodies was strikingly different from our own, while Chapter Six is interested in werewolves. Where possible, I have made a conscious choice to be as literal and stubbornly materialist as possible. This is most obvious in the presentation of the phenomenology of local bodies in Chapter Four, but it equally applies to the chapters on religion, environmental change, and class. The chapters are about real bodies that took up space, weighed heavy, and had experiences. Yet, at the same time, this literalism is in competition with two other preoccupations. The first is a recurring interest in the absences of the body. Chapters Four, Five, and Nine all explore examples where historians might expect to find evidence of bodily culture, but do not. Why is it that people did not discuss certain body parts, did not talk about environmental change, religion, or sometimes sex and disability? These absences are an important part of the history of the body in this region. Another challenge to the literalism with which I approach these oral traditions is the explicit interest in the power of language and metaphor, which is most obvious in Chapter Four, but common to the whole thesis. The materiality of bodies is something that I have tried to constantly keep in mind, but it is in the interactions between this materiality and oral culture that changes were happening. Stories and songs do not simply reflect a culture that is somehow independent of them: they are where this culture happens and bodies are shaped.

All of the chapters pay attention to emotions, such as anger (Chapter Four), loss and nostalgia (Chapter Five), fear, disappointment, and revenge (Chapter Six), love and jealousy (Chapter Seven), and shame (Chapter Eight). They raise questions about how much local culture

was shared (see Chapters Four and Seven especially) and some suggest that interesting cases often lie outside the norm. Chapter Six investigates a man who transcended his humble origins, while many of his contemporaries were being proletarianised, and Chapter Eight focuses on a woman who preferred not to sing of making love, despite the fact that sex and marriage were the explicit themes of most of the songs sung at the time. This attention to what is shared and what is not reflects the idiosyncrasies of individuals, but it also points to wider patterns that have to do with the geography of bodily cultures in the nineteenth century. Chapters Six and Seven, in particular, draw comparisons between local narrative and singing traditions and wider patterns of European popular culture. The Conclusion pushes this analysis even further, arguing that the local culture of the body in the Grande-Lande is a unique part of a larger picture of cultural change.

This is not just a question of the discrete topics of changing sexuality, work, landscapes, nutrition, and clothing. It is a question of a whole, interconnected body, most obvious in Chapter Four and in the Conclusion, but which underpins all of the other chapters. On the surface of things, the chapters are not only about completely different topics, but also different materials, addressing different genres of folklore. Chapter Four concerns dialect speech, Chapters Five and Six are about legends, Chapter Seven and the Conclusion both explore folk tales, and Chapters Eight and Nine are about songs. But this choice to examine different genres in different chapters is an artificial methodological choice, designed to address the paradox that Anne-Marie Mol has called 'the body multiple', how different representations and experiences of bodies seem incompatible, but nonetheless co-exist and interfere with one another. The concerns that the thesis explores in tales about social conflicts, songs about sexual anxieties, and legends about identities and local places cannot help but overlap. Genre is a way to explore this multiplicity of experiences as these ordinary people themselves organised them culturally, using everyday speech to express a loose world-view, legends to discuss fears and conflicts, tales to discuss fantasies, and songs to discuss feelings. This folk history of the body is profoundly different from studying cultural representations or medical

progress. It is interested in how ordinary people do their bodies, how they eat, dress, move, talk, and imagine, constructing themselves out of the tools and words available to them. The 'new pineal gland' of folk bodies offers an opportunity to rethink the most fundamental questions of nineteenth-century French history from the point of view of the countryside, questions of politics, class formation, demography, religion, and the process by which 'peasants' supposedly became 'Frenchmen'.¹⁷¹ 'The dumb village multitudes' were not really as silent as Yeats once suggested, nor were they just potatoes in a sack, as Marx once lamented.¹⁷² Misery speaks back.

171 Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*.

172 Yeats, *The Celtic Twilight*, 23; K. Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, new edn (New York, 2005), 84.

Chapter Two

The Life and Works of Félix Arnaudin (1844-1921)

Introduction

There is no better guide to the popular culture of the Grande-Lande in the nineteenth century than Félix Arnaudin (see figs. one and two, pp.294-5). The manuscripts he left at his death in 1921 are the result of a Sisyphean project to document local singing, storytelling, proverbs, memory, customs, and language comprehensively. What is more, there are abundant sources to explore why and how Arnaudin collected these materials. Along with a personal diary, Arnaudin left a large correspondence and an (auto)biographical note for Henri Carnoy's dictionaries of local researchers. Yet this cannot be a purely biographical account, for two reasons. First, Arnaudin was not alone in his passion for popular traditions. He lived through the period when folklore studies flowered in France, with the appearance of several academic journals and the establishment of a network of specialists who took it upon themselves to represent the vernacular traditions of their home regions. Even more importantly, Arnaudin's collection cannot be explained in purely biographical terms because it was a collective effort: aside from Arnaudin himself, 758 other people worked to record songs, stories, memories, and dialect for his collection.¹⁷³

Published folklore collections have been criticized for obscuring the dynamism of popular culture in everyday life, and there are always suspicions that folklorists were not entirely honest about the language their informants used or even who these people were.¹⁷⁴ But manuscript

173 Chapter Three explains how I established this list of contributors.

174 R. Bottigheimer, 'Fairy Tales, Folk Narrative Research and History', *Social History* 14, no. 3 (October 1989), 352; There are many famous cases of early folklorists who played fast and loose with the materials they collected. Besides James MacPherson's Ossian, there are still heated debates about Théodore Claude Henri Hersart de la Villemarqué's Breton songs, first published in 1839. Closer to Arnaudin, the Gascon folklorist Jean-François Bladé (1827-1900) is suspected by many specialists of distorting what he published. Since very few of his manuscripts survive, these suspicions are hard to answer. See the essays in: Jean Arrouye (ed), *Jean-François Bladé, 1827-1900: Actes du Colloque de Lectoure, 20 et 21 octobre 1984* (Béziers, 1985); P. Heiniger-Casteret found the only surviving notes from Bladé's fieldwork. See: 'Une collecte chez Jean-François Bladé', in *La voix*

collections such as Arnaudin's are a slightly different case. Arnaudin never published much of the material he collected, and his manuscripts provide a much less polished version of folk traditions: incomplete, sometimes confused and contradictory, but almost always attributed to named informants. This confusion is in itself productive, suggesting a culture in motion, and not simply a static view of the 'old' way of life.

Arnaudin was something of a special witness to this culture. A native of the area, he spoke the local dialect of Gascon from birth, and had many opportunities through his family and work to meet a broad range of folklore informants. Arnaudin himself sang the songs, used the proverbs, and knew many of the stories that he collected. At the same time, he read many of the new books coming out on folklore, anthropology, linguistics, and history, fashioning an identity as the local specialist. For many other folklorists at the time, Arnaudin was the folklorist of the Landes de Gascogne, and since his death his reputation has swelled to the status of a solitary hero, alone in resisting the changes of the nineteenth century and documenting popular culture.¹⁷⁵

Why Folklore?

Simon Arnaudin, known as Félix, was born to Barthélémy (1816-93) and his wife Marie-Thérèse Bacon (1823-75) in the village of Labouheyre 30 May 1844. Although Félix's mother came from a solidly bourgeois family of local notaries, his father had a more mixed background. Barthélémy Arnaudin was called a cobbler at his wedding in 1843 and an innkeeper at the birth of Félix's brother, Ariste, in 1847. Later in life, he became an agent for the local iron-works in the new railway station in the village. In 1853 he became mayor of Labouheyre, and oversaw the auctions of

occitane (Bordeaux, 2009), 599–614.

175 For an example of a researcher who has seen him as a lone hero, see: J. Sargos, 'Félix', in J. Sargos (ed), *Félix Arnaudin: imagier de la Grande-Lande* (Bordeaux, 1993), 15–29. Photographs and quotations from Arnaudin are sprinkled through every serious book on the moorlands and former moors in the nineteenth century. Yet Arnaudin was far from the only person to collect folklore from the region in the period. See, for instance: S. Trébuçq, *La chanson populaire et la vie rurale des Pyrénées à la Vendée* (2 vols., Bordeaux, 1912); V. Foix, *Sorcières et loups-garous dans les Landes*, new edn (Garein, 1988); C. Daugé, *Le mariage et la famille en Gascogne d'après les proverbes et les chansons* (3 vols., Paris and Bordeaux, 1916).

the village's communal moorlands. Barthélémy and his wife lived in ease, employing a household servant and renting out several properties in Labouheyre, but they were by no means very wealthy. Gascon was the language of everyday life, and his mother's final words – 'I am going to die' – were in the dialect.¹⁷⁶ Like many other rural notables, Arnaudin's family were 'half-peasants', neither culturally nor materially that different from the local labourers they employed.¹⁷⁷

Arnaudin wrote almost nothing about his childhood, beginning his autobiographical account for Carnoy's dictionaries with his departure for school in the *chef-lieu* of the Landes de Gascogne, where he spent:

trois années, longues à son gré, au collège de Mont-de-Marsan, mal à l'aise en cet étroit milieu au sortir des grands horizons de ses landes, dont le hantait le souvenir. Rentré dans son village sans but ni vocation arrêtée, il reprit ses études... Venu l'âge d'homme, il tenta quelques incursions sur le terrain commercial, mais toujours sans conviction ni aptitudes suffisantes, et bientôt il s'en détourna tout à fait.¹⁷⁸

Many of the key elements of Arnaudin's self-image are encapsulated in this account: the passion for his native moorlands, the dedication to learning, and the failure to secure himself a career. It also hints at the character traits that subsequent writers would emphasize: romanticism, shyness, and a nostalgia that bordered on paralysing depression. To be sure, Arnaudin was by no means the only or even the first person to take an interest in the culture of the rural folk on his own doorstep. For both Peter Burke and Giuseppe Cocchiara, the origins of this interest can be traced back to the early-modern period, when elites became interested in both the 'savages' of the New World, and the culture of antiquity.¹⁷⁹ These interests in customs and traditions were maintained in the early nineteenth century by learned societies, such as the Académie Celtique, who were equally interested

176 OC:VIII, 107.

177 Singer, *Village Notables in Nineteenth-Century France*, 6.

178 Reproduced in: OC:V, 169.

179 Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*; G. Cocchiara, *The History of Folklore in Europe* (Philadelphia, 1981).

in archaeology, local history, and folklore.¹⁸⁰ Yet for much of the nineteenth century 'the folklorists of France lagged behind those of other countries'.¹⁸¹ Unlike the splintered German lands that sought some kind of unifying cultural identity in tales and legends, or the Nordic countries in search of a vernacular that could justify resistance to occupation by Swedes or Russians, nations like France and England had less political imperative to record folklore.¹⁸² The regionalist agenda of many folklorists came too easily into conflict with the integration necessary for the Grande Nation.¹⁸³ The idea of a national folklore had none of the power it had, say, in Ireland.¹⁸⁴

Arnaudin came of age in time to profit from what Nicole Belmont has called a 'renaissance' in folklore studies in France. In 1877, Henri Gaidoz and Eugène Rolland founded the journal *Mélusine*, and in 1886, the year before Arnaudin published his first short collection of tales, Paul Sébillot established a rival journal, the *Revue des Traditions populaires*.¹⁸⁵ In the words of Charles Rearick, 'The folklorists of France, in short, were establishing new standards of scholarship, were increasingly concerned with questions of methodology, and were forming a distinct identity, a discipline of their own'.¹⁸⁶ Arnaudin was well connected to this new group of folklorists. He corresponded with Sébillot and Gaidoz, the editors of the two most important journals, as well as French folklorists such as Henri Carnoy, Achille Millien, Léon Marillier, Paul de Beaurepaire Froment, and Julien Vinson. At one point, he even engaged in a mutually confusing bilingual

180 See N. Belmont, *Paroles païennes, mythe et folklore: des frères Grimm à P. Saintyves* (Paris, 1986), 63–91.

181 C. Rearick, *Beyond the Enlightenment: Historians and Folklore in Nineteenth Century France* (Bloomington, 1974), 18.

182 J. Roper, 'England – the Land Without Folklore?', in T. Baycroft and D. Hopkin (eds), *Folklore and Nationalism in Europe during the Long Nineteenth Century* (Leiden, 2012), 227–54.

183 For similar ideas, see: S. Peer, *France on Display: Peasants, Provincials, and Folklore in the 1937 Paris World's Fair* (Albany, 1998), 138.

184 Rearick, *Beyond the Enlightenment*, 167; D. Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore: Tradition, Modernity, Identity* (Sterling, Virginia, 2000).

185 Belmont, *Paroles païennes, mythe et folklore*, 90–1.

186 Rearick, *Beyond the Enlightenment*, 164; For similar arguments, focusing on Brittany, see: F. Postic, 'Le beau ou le vrai, ou la difficile naissance en Bretagne et en France d'une science nouvelle: la littérature orale (1866-1868)', *Estudos de Literatura Oral*, 3 (1997), 97–123.

correspondence with the English folklorist Edwin Sidney Hartland. Arnaudin's qualifications and methods had much to recommend him to this new generation of more scrupulous folklorists. He was proud that his research was 'les Landes par un vrai Landais', rather than the views of an outsider:

ne sachant rien jusqu'ici de nos choses landaises, qui, au débotté, entre deux trains, aidé du premier politiqueur de hameau venu, ramasse au hasard des drôleries quelconques, les accommode à sa pauvre sauce, pour les servir sans tri ni choix au public, qui en baye d'aise!¹⁸⁷

Yet it would be a mistake to take this local pride for regionalism. The Occitan cultural revival provided a context in which Arnaudin's researches were more likely to be noticed and encouraged, but regionalism was not the primary reason he collected folklore. Arnaudin corresponded with many other specialists in the south-west, including the folklorist Camille de Mensignac, and men such as Jean-Baptiste Lescarret, Léonce Couture, Henry du Boucher, Paul Labrousche, and Serge Barranx, who wrote novels about local life, were involved in local academies in Bordeaux, and published regional journals such as the *Bulletin de la Société de Borda*, the *Rebiste gascoune*, and the *Revue de Gascogne*. But Arnaudin kept all of these men and the organizations they represented at a distance.¹⁸⁸ When a group of local writers established a Gascon branch of Frédéric Mistral's Félibrige, the organization for the promotion of Occitan language and culture, Arnaudin maintained fairly cool relations. Neither was politics an explicit motivation. Despite the folklore movement's subsequent association with right-wing politics, particularly in France after Vichy, the folklorists of the nineteenth century actually held a range of political opinions.¹⁸⁹ Many of the best known, men such as Paul Sébillot, Emile Souvestre, and François-

187 Letters from Rolland de Denus to Arnaudin, 21 January 1889, from Arnaudin to Paul Sébillot, 13 January 1902, and from Arnaudin to F. Vignau. *OC*:V, 92, 148, 174, 418.

188 See: G. Latty, 'Introduction: Arnaudin à la lettre', in *OC*:V, vii–xxxvi.

189 See the letter from Lafore to Arnaudin 11 May 1896, which stressed that a range of political positions were represented in the new *Escòla Gaston Fèbus*. *OC*:VIII, 299.

Marie Luzel, were left-wing.¹⁹⁰ Arnaudin himself never made any open political commitments. He was horrified to discover at one point that his name had been circulating on a list of possible local political candidates.¹⁹¹ Like other folklorists, it seems Arnaudin's politics were complicated, often deeply critical of rural elites and the exploitation of agricultural workers, and yet imbued with a fixed conservatism, a belief that things had been better in the past.¹⁹² Arnaudin's only political choice was a negative one: to abstain from local and national politics.

The one issue which did engage Arnaudin, and which he evoked as his motivation for collecting folklore, was the forestation of the Grande-Lande, which destroyed the open horizons of the old moorlands:

Maintenant, la lande n'existe plus. Au désert magnifique, enchantement des aïeux, déroulant sous le désert du ciel sa nudité des premiers âges, à l'étendue plane, sans limites, où l'œil avait le perpétuel éblouissement du vide, où l'âme, élargie, enivrée, tantôt débordait de joies neuves et enfantines, tantôt s'abîmait dans d'ineffables et si chères tristesses, a succédé la forêt, — la forêt industrielle! avec toutes ses laideurs (la culture intensive, “pour le maximum d'argent”, la plantation en allées, en ligne droite, écœurante de banalité, irraisonnée au surplus, violente accélératrice qu'elle peut être du feu et du vent destructeurs), dont l'étouffant rideau, partout étendu où régnait tant de sereine et radieuse clarté, borne implacablement la vue, hébète la pensée, en abolit tout essor.¹⁹³

For Arnaudin, forestation, with its attendant industrial relations and capitalism, was a key factor in the social changes that led to the decline of rural traditions, and even language:

Chez nous comme ailleurs la rupture avec le passé est un fait désormais accompli, qu'on ne s'attarde plus à constater. Rien ne reste de ce qui était notre vie ancienne et et repandait tant d'originalité, tant de simplicité primitive autour de nos vieux foyers: idées, mœurs, coutumes, à la première poussée du dehors, tout s'est obscurci, tout s'est déformé ou a sombré sous nos yeux avec une rapidité

190 Hopkin, *Voices of the People*, 36–7; Peer, *France on Display*, 2–3.

191 NFA, 2 MI 29/24, f.566.

192 See, for example, the folklorist-photographer P.H. Emerson's ‘strongly-worded attacks on the inhumanity of local landlords’ despite his reactionary politics. C. Wilkins-Jones, ‘One of the Hard Old Breed: A Life of Peter Henry Emerson’, in N McWilliam and V. Sekules (eds), *Life and Landscape : P.H. Emerson : Art & Photography in East Anglia, 1885-1900* (Norwich, 1986), 3.

193 Reproduced in *OC:III*, xx–xli, xxxiv.

stupéfiante, jusqu'à la langue elle-même...¹⁹⁴

Arnaudin pictured himself as a romantic hero, suffering from 'le mal du désert, la nostalgie du plein ciel'.¹⁹⁵ The rest of the local bourgeoisie in particular were enthralled to what he called 'le culte de Sainte-Résine'.¹⁹⁶ They were more interested in making money than in Arnaudin's efforts to salvage the last of the songs and the stories. As his friend Dupin remarked, 'la génération d'à présent ne v[ou]s en saura pas gré. Elle ne sait parler que de résine'.¹⁹⁷

Arnaudin's attitude conflated forestation, the spread of new forms of technology and transportation, and changes in civil behaviour. For him, the forest was associated with the trains, the factories, and a rise of politicking, an 'extraordinaire épidémie d'orgueil'.¹⁹⁸ He lamented the decline of moral values, and the solution he suggested was to be found in folk traditions: 'la conscience publique ne s'indigne plus d'indignes crimes... Elle leur est douce et bénigne... Si, si, plus que jamais les proverbes ont du bon'.¹⁹⁹ He hated the newspaper, 'ce grand malfaiteur'. Talking of the fires that ravaged the new forests in the late nineteenth century he wrote that 'C'est lui [le journal] qui alluma l'incendie. Et maintenant, voyant ces terribles conséquences – qu'on excuse la trivialité de l'expression – il p[isse] dessus p[ou]r essayer de l'éteindre'.²⁰⁰ Like other folklorists, Arnaudin regretted the effects on the countryside of the spread of the railways, although his harshest words owed more to the fact that the trains were responsible for killing several of his beloved hunting hounds: 'O horrible machine! détestable invention!'²⁰¹

194 Ibid, xxi.

195 NFA, 2 MI 29/17, f.413.

196 Ibid., f.103.

197 Ibid., f.216.

198 NFA, 2 MI 29/14, f.405, 2 MI 29/34, f.356.

199 Ibid., f.351.

200 Ibid., f.287.

201 See the entry for 8 January 1883: *OC*:VIII, 191; For other folklorists who disliked the railways and 'modernity,'

Much of this anti-modernism drew on wider intellectual currents at the end of the nineteenth century. Arnaudin read the works of Maurice Barrès, who championed 'la terre et les morts', particularly closely, and seems to have been strongly influenced by his ideas about belonging, nationhood, and death.²⁰² He also read books by Cesare Lombroso, the influential Italian criminologist, who suggested that criminals were individuals who belonged to an earlier stage of human development. Arnaudin was immersed in a fin-de-siècle culture that worried about degeneration and the ways that 'civilisation' was a force that corrupted the very bodies of modern citizens.²⁰³ He was also a man whose temperament was well-suited to these intellectual currents, and it is tempting to argue that more than anything else, it was his melancholy, obsessive character that explains his dedication to folk traditions. His resistance to the forestation of the moorlands developed as he himself grew older and more bitter: aged just thirteen in 1857, there is little evidence he cared very much about the new law encouraging the sale of the commons. Guy Latry has pointed out that as late as the 1860s, Arnaudin paid no attention to local social conflicts, and thought little of destroying old, ruined buildings for fun.²⁰⁴ A series of personal disappointments soured Arnaudin's view of life, and may have encouraged his growing interest in the 'old' ways, or what a group of historians have called the 'beauty of the dead', a popular culture that was no longer threatening because it was already in decay.²⁰⁵

The first of these crises was the discovery in 1874 that Arnaudin, now aged thirty, had been having an affair with the eighteen-year-old family servant, Marie Darlanne (see fig. three, p.296).²⁰⁶

see: Hopkin, *Voices of the People*, 160.

202 On Barrès, see: R. Harris, *The Man on Devil's Island: Alfred Dreyfus and the Affair That Divided France* (London, 2011), 201–213.

203 See for example: Forth, 'La Civilisation and Its Discontents'.

204 G. Latry, 'Introduction', in *OC:VIII*, 4.

205 M. de Certeau, D. Julia, and J. Revel, 'The Beauty of the Dead: Nisard', in M. de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, (Minneapolis, 1986), 119–36.

206 The story is told succinctly in: Latry, 'Introduction', in *OC:VIII*, 5–6.

Arnaudin's mother seems to have been particularly horrified, and arrangements were made for Marie to be sent away, and married to another local man. But the young servant, nourished with ideas from the novels Arnaudin lent her, refused the marriage, and attempted to poison herself.²⁰⁷ Over the next few years, Arnaudin continued to visit Marie in secret, until she was allowed to return to the family home in 1877. For some reason, she was sent away again, but she returned permanently in 1880, and remained with him until she died in 1911.²⁰⁸ They never married nor had any children.

While his diary is remarkable for the absence of emotional and personal details, focusing instead on hunting outings, the affair with Marie prompted Arnaudin to reflect grimly on his life:

Mes trente ans ont sonné. Je suis sans position, sans fortune, sans force pour en acquérir. Je n'ai plus d'amis; les quelques sympathies qui avaient entouré mes premiers pas tant que mes quelques dons naturels semblaient donner quelques espérances se sont éloignées une à une pour faire place à l'indifférence. Le vide qui s'est fait autour de moi me fait cruellement sentir mon infériorité sociale. Plus même de banales prévenances. Qui songerait à moi? ... Les souvenirs du passé m'étreignent, m'écrasent, me brisent.²⁰⁹

As if the crisis of his relationship with Marie was not enough, one necessary condition of her return to the Arnaudin household was his mother's sudden death in 1876, itself a source of great pain to Arnaudin. Just three years later this was compounded by the death of his brother, Ariste. Mortality haunts Arnaudin's diary, which is filled with references to the passing of family members and acquaintances, but also the hunting dogs of which he was so fond, and even the family cow.²¹⁰ Arnaudin spent much of his time on his own weeping.

207 NFA, 2 MI 29/18, ff.25-6; See entries on 29 September, 1 October, and 4 October 1874: Arnaudin, *OC*:VIII, 66–9.

208 Latry, 'Introduction', in *OC*:VIII, 6. As Eloise Moss pointed out to me, she was probably sent away because she had become pregnant. Arnaudin's diary certainly contains anguished notes about pregnancy scares during their affair.

209 23 September 1874. *OC*:VIII, 64.

210 With no hint of irony, Arnaudin wrote of the death of the bovine: 'Ainsi une à une toutes les choses du passé m'abandonnent.' 25 August 1875: *Ibid.*, 98.

His personal notes give some idea of his self-image: 'Qui est cet invisible Félix Arnaudin? Un attristé, un rêveur, au résumé, un peu un sauvage dont les parvenus, les arrivistes, les snobs sourient peut-être et se moquent'.²¹¹ In his obituary, the abbé Césaire Daugé certainly remembered Arnaudin as a shy and melancholy man, so timid that he would not participate in the local learned society.²¹² Instead, he preferred solitary walks on the open moorlands, and reading the works of the Pre-Romantics and Romantics, such as Alfred de Musset, George Sand, Alphonse de Lamartine, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, François René de Chateaubriand, and Johann-Wolfgang von Goethe.²¹³ For Arnaudin, folk songs, in particular, were imbued with a melancholy that echoed these romantic writers. Arnaudin wrote that the tunes of 'poésie locale' 'prennent le coeur et donnent envie de pleurer, tout cela remue des souvenirs qui sommeillaient au fond du coeur et nous font revoir le meilleur de notre passé, et qui, comme on l'a si bien dit, font rire/sourire en donnant envie de pleurer'.²¹⁴ In this way, his own personal disappointment with life was bound up with the romantic ideas about a fading past that motivated him to preserve folklore. After the crisis with Marie, he fantasised about living a joint life of simple labours, with her collecting folklore for him.²¹⁵

From this point on, Arnaudin felt like an outcast in his own class.²¹⁶ His parents' attempts to marry him to the daughter of a local bourgeois never came to much, and his tentative foray into business with his friend Henri Vidal (1850-1919) fizzled out.²¹⁷ When he was not working on his folklore collection, much of Arnaudin's energy was eaten up by a series of conflicts over family

211 NFA, 2 MI 29/12, f.68.

212 C. Daugé, 'Félix Arnaudin: 1844-1921', *Bulletin de la Société de Borda*, 1922, 2-4.

213 These are all authors he lent to Marie. See 10 April 1875. *OC*:VIII, 92.

214 NFA, 2 MI 29/12, f.156.

215 9 October 1874. Arnaudin, *OC*:VIII, 69.

216 This story of the passion for hunting and the failed family life of the folklorist is reminiscent of Peter Christen Asbjørnsen in Norway. See: M. Hult, *Framing a National Narrative: The Legend Collections of Peter Christen Asbjørnsen* (Detroit, 2003), 14.

217 On the marriage plans, see 16 November 1875. Arnaudin, *OC*:VIII, 106; On his business plans, see: Latry, 'Introduction: Arnaudin à la lettre', xi.

inheritances, which drove a wedge between him and his sister-in-law, and later his cousin, Michaël Arnaudin. Michaël was everything that Félix was not: financially successful, he had a family and made a career in local politics, eventually becoming mayor of Mont-de-Marsan, the *chef-lieu* of the Landes de Gascogne.²¹⁸ Arnaudin felt profoundly disconnected from the local bourgeois, like Michaël, who prospered in the second half of the nineteenth century. He charged them with lacking respect for the past, and privileging profits over decency in their haste to cultivate the moorlands.²¹⁹ It was Arnaudin's personal sense of disappointment, his isolation in village life, and his fascination with mortality that drew him to the study of popular traditions, but these feelings were by no means unique to him. Other writers across Europe were concerned with degeneration, the loss of traditional roots, and the hollowness of modern life. In a paradox characteristic of the early folklorists, these romantic, self-indulgent feelings were the motivation for producing an oeuvre that belonged not to one man, but to an entire region, and a particular period.

A Life of Research: the Grande-Lande, 1873-1914

For Guy Latry, the researcher most familiar with Arnaudin's life and manuscripts, Arnaudin's life project was nothing less than 'l'invention d'un pays'.²²⁰ The area around the villages of Sabres and Labouheyre known as the Grande-Lande was the part of the Landes de Gascogne with the sparsest population, the least pine trees, and the most open moorland.²²¹ Before Arnaudin, it was seen as a desert: both physically and culturally empty. Arnaudin gave this region a cultural identity, asserting its difference from other parts of the *département*, such as the fertile agricultural

218 Ibid., xi–xii; See Arnaudin's letters to Jean-Baptiste Lescarret from 9 April and some point in May 1889. Arnaudin, *OC*:V, 116, 143.

219 Latry, 'Introduction', in *OC*:VIII, 4, 10.

220 G. Latry, 'Introduction', in Françoise Morvan (ed), *Contes des Landes* (Bordeaux, 2011), 20.

221 See, for instance: U. Guérin, 'Paysan-résinier de Lévigacq (Landes)', in *Les ouvriers des deux mondes* (164 vols., Paris, 1855-1930), v (1884), 316; The map J. Thore produced at the start of the nineteenth century shows that the Grande-Lande had almost no pines. See: *Promenade sur les côtes du Golfe de Gascogne, ou aperçu topographique, physique et médical des côtes occidentales de ce même golfe* (Bordeaux, 1810), 6–7, 177–8.

lands of the Chalosse in the south, the coastal region of the Marensin, and the area further east around Roquefort, known as the Petites-Landes.²²² He wrote in his notes:

Les béarnais ont un très joli proverbe:

“Jan Petit made buttons
He didn't make very big ones, but he made very good ones.”

Or toute mon ambition est/serait de ressembler à Jan Petit. Je veux dire que, de parti pris, et dans l'espoir de mieux faire, je me suis restreint à.... une aire géographique relativ[emen]t peu étendue qui sera délimiter...²²³

In Arnaudin's thinking, the limits of this area were linguistic and geographical.²²⁴ Nearby areas that spoke a slightly different *patois* might as well be another country. Arnaudin's interest in the folklore of neighbouring regions such as the Petites-Landes or the Bazadais was to prove that the culture of the Grande-Lande was different.²²⁵ This heartland of pastoralism, the region of open skies and wild moors, was where Arnaudin collected folklore. His notes also give some idea of when he did most of his fieldwork. Although there are hints in his diary that Arnaudin was interested in folk songs as early as 1862, when he was just eighteen years old, the earliest notes in his folklore manuscripts are from 1873, when he collected songs from the shepherd Jean Saubesty, known as 'lou Patroun' (1818-1894) and his wife Elisabeth Plantié, known as Babé (1826-1912).²²⁶ Arnaudin made a point of saying in 1912 that some of his fieldwork dated back 35 years before.²²⁷ This may be true, but it certainly does not reflect when he did most of his fieldwork, if the surviving manuscript notes are to be believed. A chart of his earliest known fieldwork with his various informants gives the impression he collected most of the materials between 1885 and 1910 (see fig. four, p.297). A chart

222 For an example of Arnaudin explaining the differences between these regions, see: NFA., 2 MI 29/8, f.166.

223 NFA, 2 MI 29/34, f.363.

224 Ibid. 2 MI 29/21, f.255.

225 G. Latry, 'Une enquête de Félix Arnaudin dans le Bazadais', *Cahiers du Bazadais*, 1987, 29–41.

226 26 January 1862: Arnaudin hid by the roadside in order to listen to a man singing on his way home. *OC*:VIII, 36.

227 *OC*:III, xx.

of the latest known dates confirms a picture of Arnaudin collecting folklore right up until the publication of the 1912 edition (see fig. five, p.298). The last records of fieldwork come from around the outbreak of the First World War. While Arnaudin intended to continue, he told correspondents that he had suspended his project until the war had ended.²²⁸ By 1918, his health had declined, and there is little evidence he resumed his work.²²⁹

Over this forty year period, Arnaudin's interests and methodologies noticeably shifted. His first published piece was an article of 1873 in the *Revue de Gascogne* entitled 'Une branche des Pic de la Mirandole dans les Landes'. The article was an attempt by Arnaudin to use a local legend about a wicked feudal lord to supplement the historical record concerning the Pic de la Mirandole family. As with so many other aspects of his life, Arnaudin seems to have later abandoned this early agenda of supplementing written historical records with the evidence of popular tradition. In 1899, he admitted to the folklorist Paul Sébillot that he had perhaps neglected local legends, since his interest had been drawn to other materials.²³⁰ Magical tales, songs, and photography seem to have vied for Arnaudin's attention in this second stage, but he was much quicker to publish a selection of the tales, which appeared in 1887.²³¹ The songs and photographs were left aside for the moment, and would not in fact appear in print until 1912.

A major factor in this delay was Arnaudin's disappointment with the reception of his short collection of tales. He felt unjustly criticized by writers such as Henri Gaidoz, and the abbé Vincent Foix.²³² Partly, the criticisms were based on the nature of the materials. Few of the stories Arnaudin published were completely unknown from other parts of Europe, and he was disappointed to find

228 OC:V, 439–440.

229 Although this is what the abbé Daugé claimed in his obituary: Daugé, 'Félix Arnaudin: 1844-1921', 4.

230 Letter of 12 April 1899. OC:V, 145.

231 Arnaudin, *Contes populaires*. He bought his first camera in 1874. Latry, 'Introduction: Arnaudin à la lettre', xii.

232 NFA, 2 MI 29/20, f.518.

that the Grande-Lande did not have stories that were completely unique.²³³ But several writers also criticized Arnaudin's linguistic notes and his decisions on how to represent the Gascon *patois*. Even more disappointing for Arnaudin was how little response his collection elicited. Friends tried to reassure him that the public for folklore writings was necessarily small in any case, and Arnaudin also later discovered that his publishers had failed to send review copies to many of the journals that were meant to receive them, but the damage to his pride was done.²³⁴ The reception of the tales was just the first in a series of disappointments that convinced Arnaudin that his work was not appreciated in academic circles.²³⁵ In 1918 Arnaudin wrote to Rossat that he was 'assez détaché de la littérature populaire maintenant, en raison du peu encourageant accueil qu'autour de moi a reçu mon si pauvre chansonnier'.²³⁶ Arnaudin's disappointment with the reception of his song collection must have been even more acute than his feelings about the tales. Since his decision to abandon collecting tales, songs had been his overriding passion. He wrote to one correspondent that the songs 'me tiennent tout particulièrement au coeur', and the years after 1887 were devoured by exhaustive song-collecting campaigns, which resulted in 3,620 song texts, collected from 517 singers.²³⁷ The difference between this song fieldwork and many of the other projects Arnaudin embarked on was that he came closest to finishing it. In 1912, the first volume appeared, and Arnaudin also gathered and organized the materials for two more volumes which must have been close to completion in the year before he died.²³⁸

Throughout this period, Arnaudin's other ethnographic projects competed with the songs for his time. He took almost 4,000 photographs, of which just a few are personal. The majority are

233 See his letters to Gaidoz and Barthélémy, 23 November 1888 and 3 February 1895. *OC:V*, 67, 332–3.

234 See the letter from Landrin, 4 May 1889, and a series of letters concerning the missing review copies. *Ibid.*, 136–142.

235 See for example: NFA, 2 MI 29/12, f.67.

236 Letter of 5 January 1918. *OC:V*, 454.

237 Letter to Lafore, 27 April 1896. *Ibid.*, 297.

238 F. Arnaudin, *Chants populaires de la Grande-Lande et des régions voisines* (Paris, 1912).

landscapes, group portraits, and architectural photographs, designed to capture 'la physionomie de notre vieux pays'.²³⁹ At the same time, he was meticulously collecting proverbs, riddles, and charms, and taking notes for a dialect dictionary. Known to many people today as the photographer of the old moorlands, Arnaudin specialists such as Jacques Boisgontier and Guy Latry, on the other hand, have tended to see dialectology as his most important work. This has some grounding in his writings, as Arnaudin sometimes emphasized language as the real object of his publications.²⁴⁰ Nor did Arnaudin ever completely abandon the interest in local history that he had developed when he was researching the local legend of the wicked lord. He continued to ask his singers and storytellers what they knew about recent historical events, such as the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars, and even extended his interests to local archaeological finds, such as the haul of coins uncovered in Labouheyre.²⁴¹ Like other folklorists, Arnaudin's interests stretched beyond what specialists today might recognize as the strictly ethnological. He kept notes for a book about local hunting – a particular regional and personal passion – and even had aspirations to write the natural history of the moorlands, sending other specialists plants and insects by letter.²⁴² Yet popular traditions always came first. Most of his historical and botanical research was left unfinished, and his own notes make it clear that this was because he consciously prioritized his writings on folklore.²⁴³

Despite Arnaudin's own self-doubt, he did manage to establish a name for himself as a folklorist.²⁴⁴ In 1882, he called himself 'un simple amateur des lettres', but by 1900 Beaurepaire-Froment was doing his best to persuade Arnaudin to join the board of *La Tradition* by pointing out

239 Letter to Landrin, 8 April 1888. *OC*:V, 78.

240 Letter of 12 March 1889. *Ibid.*, 109.

241 Arnaudin became involved in a lengthy correspondence about the coins. *Ibid.*, 206–13.

242 See his letters of 7 January and 7 February 1887. *Ibid.*, 221.

243 See, for instance: NFA, 2 MI 29/24, f.359.

244 Latry stresses the transition from 'amateur' to 'expert.' See: 'Introduction: Arnaudin à la lettre'.

that he was hardly unknown in the field of folklore.²⁴⁵ Arnaudin refused, a choice characteristic of his preference to work independently. However much he railed against his isolation, it was at least partially self-imposed. Arnaudin so feared and resented other researchers, especially those who threatened to trespass on his home region, that one writer has called him 'jaloux de la lande'.²⁴⁶ He wrote to the novelist Jean-Baptiste Lescarret that he had to work in secret, 'car je veux arriver premier, et donner des choses inédites'.²⁴⁷ He especially deplored the rivalry of priests, who seemed unable to resist amateurish forays into folklore, and who he called the 'déformateurs de patois'.²⁴⁸ He was equally scathing about teachers. He met one who told him that he had helped another folklorist collect proverbs in the Landes. When Arnaudin asked him what his sources were, he replied that he had read them in a dictionary.²⁴⁹ Arnaudin constantly worried about rival folklorists such as the abbé Vincent Foix or Eugène Dufourcet, who both had projects to publish the songs of the Landes.²⁵⁰

Fieldwork Methods

Whatever advantages these rivals might have had in terms of their industriousness and ability to finish their projects, Arnaudin had the trump card: he was a local man who spoke the language and had contacts with a variety of people who could provide folklore and point him towards other informants. So how did Arnaudin go about contacting these singers and storytellers, and what did he do in order to record their songs? To some degree, his notes represent his own choices about what was important about local folklore. In the song manuscripts, he sometimes

245 See the letter to du Boucher, 3 May 1882 and the letter from Beaurepaire-Froment, 12 June 1900. *OC*:V, 74, 162.

246 Sargos, 'Félix', 26.

247 Letter of 25 March 1885. *OC*:V, 55.

248 NFA, 2 MI 29/3, f.456, 2 MI 29/8, f.34, 2 MI 29/25, ff.160-2.

249 NFA, 2 MI 29/34, f.365.

250 Latry discusses this paranoia. See: Latry, 'Introduction: Arnaudin à la lettre', xiv.

crossed texts out, writing 'nulle' across the top of the page. This might be because they were not sung in the local *patois* or because he thought they were too rude.²⁵¹ But, for the most part, these choices were aesthetic. He rejected songs that were 'informe', 'peu intéressant', 'insignifiant', or 'fort banale mais fort répandue', preferring those with tunes that were 'délicieux'.²⁵² As with other folklorists of the period, these aesthetic considerations sometimes sat awkwardly with Arnaudin's desire to be faithful to exactly what his informants said.²⁵³ Like landscape painters, folklorists wanted both beauty and precision.²⁵⁴ Arnaudin wrote that he wanted his photographs to be 'aussi exactes et en même temps aussi artistiques que possible'.²⁵⁵ In terms of oral traditions, this double imperative was a license to edit and re-work the original transcriptions for publication: the rushed and elliptical style of an oral tale or the ruder elements of a folk song would have to be polished, 'dégrossi et mis au point'.²⁵⁶

For this reason, Arnaudin's manuscripts are a much richer source than the published collections of a folklorist such as Jean-François Bladé, for instance, whose manuscripts are almost completely lost.²⁵⁷ Where many folklorists published collections to justify theoretical positions such as the idea that oral tales had their origins in India, Arnaudin resisted theoretical discussions about racial migrations or variations in local physiognomy.²⁵⁸ Instead, he wrote that 'J'ai donné ce que

251 See, for example: NFA, 2 MI 29/4, ff.9 and 226-8. .

252 See, for instance: NFA, 2 MI 29/1, ff. 427, 487, 2 MI 29/2, ff.26, 387, 2 MI 29/3, ff.100, 277, 2 MI 29/4, f.297.

253 Postic, 'Le beau ou le vrai'.

254 Hopkin, *Voices of the People*, 39–41.

255 Letter to Alphonse Davanne, 19 April 1887. *OC*:V, 16.

256 See the letter to Labrouche, 15 September 1888. *Ibid.*, 88.

257 For the importance of studying manuscript collections, see: Bottigheimer, 'Fairy Tales, Folk Narrative Research and History'; Hopkin, *Voices of the People*, 131. For what little is known about Bladé's fieldwork, see: Heiniger-Casteret, 'Une Collecte Chez Jean-François Bladé'.

258 The chief proponent of the Indo-European model in France was E. Cosquin. See: *Contes populaires de Lorraine comparés avec les contes des autres provinces de France et des pays étrangers* (Paris, 1886). For letters where Arnaudin resisted racial and other theoretical speculations, see his correspondence with J.-B. Lescarret in 1889, and with M. Dallas also in 1889. *OC*:V, 96–100, 111.

j'entendais tout autour de moi sans me préoccuper de la question d'origine. C'est tout ce que peut faire un simple collecteur, et je ne suis, hélas! rien autre chose'.²⁵⁹ While Arnaudin's attitudes to folk culture suggest he was anything but an impersonal observer, the advantage of the manuscripts is that they present a much wider range of materials than Arnaudin would have been willing to publish. In fact, there is almost a fascination with the most inappropriate materials, as Arnaudin compulsively recorded which texts he thought were useless, because too rude, too French, or incomplete. In his manuscripts, censorship is not only destructive, but also creative, eliciting the illicit.²⁶⁰ The manuscripts are a peek behind the scenes of a folklore-collecting project, revealing not only what Arnaudin wanted to collect, but the problems he had with informants who might want to provide completely different materials, or none at all.

It is nonetheless much easier to get a picture of how Arnaudin wanted to depict his encounters with his informants than how things really happened, not least since his personal diary says very little about his fieldwork.²⁶¹ The autobiographical note he provided for Carnoy's dictionaries presents a direct link between his fascination with the landscape and his folklore-collecting project:

La lande, avec l'étrange poésie de ses vastes étendues libres, restait sa vision obsédante; dès ce jour, et jusqu'à l'heure où elle disparut, envahie par la forêt, il lui appartint tout entier, coureur de lièvres sur la bruyère, guetteur de canards au bord des lagunes, enfiévré de solitude et d'espace, mais volontiers aussi recherchant la compagnie des vieux pâtres, curieux de leurs usages, des détails de leur vie semi-nomade, et recueillant leurs contes, leurs légendes, tout ce qui se répétait traditionnellement autour des parcs, – étendant en même temps son enquête aux chansons, dont les noces, les veillées d'hiver des fileuses, et surtout les réunions qu'il organisait lui-même à ce dessein lui procuraient peu à peu une abondante moisson.²⁶²

259 Letter of 6 July 1889 to the comte de Chasteigner. *Ibid.*, 196.

260 W. Pooley, 'Can The "Peasant" Speak? Witchcraft and Silence in Guillaume Cazaux's "The Mass of Saint Sécaire"', *Western Folklore*, 71, no. 2 (2012); J. Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York, 1997).

261 A point made by Latry: 'Introduction', in *OC*:VIII, 7. His diary entry for 23 September 1888, for instance, just reads 'Chanteuses Grué.' *OC*:VIII, 15.

262 Reproduced in *OC*:V, 169.

This is undoubtedly a romanticized depiction, which plays down the very considerable difficulties Arnaudin had with his informants. Guy Latry has suggested that Arnaudin developed a coherent strategy, similar to the ideal of technical control that scientists exert in a laboratory, in order to control the fieldwork situation and get the materials he wanted.²⁶³ Like a scientific experiment, Arnaudin's fieldwork depended both on technologies and personal connections, but his informants were not always easy to manipulate. They failed to show up, demanded payment and favours, sang the 'wrong' songs, or sent him unsolicited materials.

In a similar way to other folklorists, Arnaudin's project betrayed a somewhat paradoxical attitude to technology.²⁶⁴ He talked of the destruction of the old culture by the forces of modernity, railing against trains, teachers, and the newspapers, but his fieldwork was achieved with the latest technologies, such as photographic equipment, and the train. His photographs were taken at a time when the open moorlands had almost completely disappeared, but he used the new technology to recreate the landscape of his youth.²⁶⁵ The train that brought new trade and new ideas to the villages of the former moorlands, consolidating the changes of the 1857 law, was the same train Arnaudin rode to find the oldest storytellers and singers. In some ways, this anti-modernism led Arnaudin to create a static and rigid picture of how life used to be. Like his photographs, his folklore fieldwork was often staged, rather than improvised.²⁶⁶ Guy Latry draws particular attention to the example of the fieldwork Arnaudin did in Souis in 1908. Arnaudin wrote to a local baker, named Bernard Lassévils, with very specific instructions: the singers should be old, female, illiterate, and discrete. They were not required to sing, but merely to recite the songs. Arnaudin offered to pay them, as

263 Latry, 'Une enquête de Félix Arnaudin dans le Bazadais', 31.

264 Sargos, 'Félix', 25. For other folklorists with a paradoxical relation to modernity, see for example Victor Smith's use of the trains in the Velay to reach his informants, discussed in: Hopkin, *Voices of the People*, 210–252.

265 G. Latry, 'Miroirs voilés: la photographie dans l'oeuvre d'Arnaudin', in J. Sargos (ed), *Félix Arnaudin: imagier de la Grande-Lande* (Bordeaux, 1993), 146.

266 Pierre Bardou, 'Lou limajayre', in J. Sargos (ed), *Félix Arnaudin: imagier de la Grande-Lande* (Bordeaux, 1993), 142.

long as they could meet his conditions for doing fieldwork, most obviously by keeping it a secret.²⁶⁷

On other occasions, Arnaudin carefully planned his approach to informants' houses, fearful of being spotted by suspicious neighbours.²⁶⁸ As long as everything went to plan, Arnaudin would then take notes as the informant spoke.²⁶⁹ The abbé Césaire Daugé painted a colourful picture of Arnaudin slyly noting songs and stories:

Souvent le conteur ou le chanteur, désarçonné par le crayon indiscret du folkloriste incompris, se refusait à continuer. Plaçant ses mains derrière le dos, Félix Arnaudin transcrivait sur un papier collé à sa main gauche et le tour était joué.²⁷⁰

When the interaction worked well, Arnaudin could spend entire days listening to a talented storyteller or singer.²⁷¹ Towards the end of his life, however, Arnaudin reflected bitterly about the waste of time, effort, and money much of his collecting had been. He would spend up to a week at a time travelling to see informants, and estimated he had spent forty years of his life and 25,000 francs on his fieldwork.²⁷²

The first challenge was to find good informants. When Arnaudin's mentor the novelist Jean-Baptiste Lescarret tried to collect songs from women working in Bordeaux, they assumed he was teasing them, and refused to help.²⁷³ The English folklorist Alfred Williams was mistaken for a tramp on one occasion and suspected of being a German spy on another.²⁷⁴ Arnaudin's notes are filled with anecdotes about informants who he did not dare approach, or who turn out to be useless.

267 Letter of 26 March 1908. *OC*:V, 339; Latry, 'Une enquête de Félix Arnaudin dans le Bazadais'; Latry, 'Introduction: Arnaudin à la lettre', xxv.

268 NFA, 2 MI 29/1, f.148.

269 On only one occasion did Arnaudin mention that he had written his texts from memory from an earlier performance. NFA, 2 MI 29/11, ff.308, 310.

270 Daugé, 'Félix Arnaudin: 1844-1921', 3.

271 He spent the whole day with Jean Destruhaut, known as lou Mén, on 24 June 1879, for instance. *OC*:VIII, 152.

272 See his letter to Charles Schweitzer, in October 1889. *OC*:V, 125; NFA, 2 MI 29/12, f.209, 2 MI 29/21, f.168.

273 Letter of 27 January 1889. *OC*:V, 97.

274 A. Williams, *Folk-Songs of the Upper Thames: With an Essay on Folk-Song Activity in the Upper Thames Neighbourhood*, new edn (Detroit, 1968), 27–8.

His method depended on getting recommendations of singers and storytellers who were known to be talented within their communities. But when he came to record their materials, they might turn out to be dead, or unsuitable. One singer named Cataline had a 'dérangem[en]t cérébral. Pense une chose et dit une autre'.²⁷⁵ The veuve Cigrand, a singer in Mimizan, turned out to be deaf.²⁷⁶ Arnaudin's personal acquaintances, on the other hand, offered guaranteed sources of folklore, but sources that needed to be managed even more carefully. Babé Plantié was such a close employee of the Arnaudin family that it fell to her to announce the deaths of relatives to Félix's father, Barthélémy.²⁷⁷ She was also by far Arnaudin's most prolific informant, providing some 187 song texts and sixteen stories. Yet Arnaudin wanted to play down her importance in his published writings. Having initially listed her fifteenth in his list of informants, he wrote a note to himself: 'mettre plus loin... supprimer cela... ne pas lui donner plus de notoriété qu'il faut. Elle ne le vaut pas. La mettre vers no.90 ou 100'.²⁷⁸ With Babé, the motivation for this demotion is not clear. With other informants who also worked for him, the tensions were more obvious. He suspected both Jean Monicien (b.1866) and Jean Cazade (b.1850) of ripping him off, charging him too much money for the work they did for him, and stealing materials like wood and manure.²⁷⁹ During the First World War, he complained that some of his tenants had stopped paying him rent.²⁸⁰

Arnaudin did not limit himself to mining the men and women who worked for him for folklore. He also collected from personal friends, his parents, brother, and nephew, and even from his lover. These relationships could also sour. He fell out with the storyteller Henri Vidal after Henri made some ill-considered statements about a business venture Arnaudin had once undertaken

275 NFA, 2 MI 29/24, f.56.

276 NFA, 2 MI 29/20, f.311.

277 See 9 March 1876. *OC*:VIII, 121.

278 NFA, 2 MI 29/1, f.14.

279 See, for example: NFA, 2 MI 29/17, f.38, 2 MI 29/18, f.64.

280 NFA, 2 MI 29/24, f.395; *OC*:V, 434.

with him.²⁸¹ While she never appeared in any of his published writings, it is clear from the manuscripts that his servant and lover Marie Darlanne provided songs, stories, and proverbs. More troubling, Arnaudin also collected materials from at least one other lover, someone he referred to in the manuscripts as 'Uv'. Perhaps most damning of all is a short note he wrote about a 'jolie femme' named Anna Raymond, which suggests that his folklore fieldwork might have overlapped directly with his sex life: 'mariée dep[uis] 11 a[ns], *sina pueris (uno defunito)*'.²⁸² A barren, married woman would make a very convenient mistress for the ageing folklorist.

Once Arnaudin had found an informant, he still had to persuade them to perform for him. As his correspondence makes clear, he paid some in cash. Others agreed to sing in exchange for having their portraits done. The singer Catherine Brouqueyre, known as Liya de Bidau (1850-1912), had her daughter-in-law write to Arnaudin confirming she had more songs for him. After the signature, she wrote, in a mixture of polite forms with absolutely no punctuation: 'J'ai vu avec plaisir qu'au besoin vous apporteriez votre appareil photographique si cela ne vous dérange pas vous ferez comme vous voudrez'.²⁸³ For at least a few of his literate singers, there was the appeal of seeing their name in print, and possibly even receiving a copy of the *Chants populaires de la Grande-Lande et des régions voisines* in 1912.²⁸⁴

It was not unheard of for Arnaudin to completely lose patience with his informants. He wanted to delete Marie Glize, known as Marinette (1849-1916) from his list of singers:

avait une 1re fois refusé de venir – venue le 18 juill. 07, à 3 h quand je lui avais fait savoir, d'avance, de venir à 1h, que je repartais à 4h = Pas sa faute, *mandée* pr rendre une journée de battage, mais a beaucoup oublié, ne savait rien de ce qui

281 OC:V, 243–4; OC:VIII, 107.

282 NFA, 2 MI 29/24, f.56.

283 NFA, 2 MI 29/19, f.485.

284 For singers who sang in exchange for portraits, see for example the letter of 25 August 1908. OC:V, 339. The English folklorist Cecil Sharp also gave his informants copies of his published versions of their songs, and offered portraits in exchange for music. See: C. Bearman, 'Who Were the Folk? The Demography of Cecil Sharp's Somerset Folksingers', *The Historical Journal* 43, no. 03 (2000), 756–7.

avait motivé mon voyage.²⁸⁵

Like other folklorists, he had too little sense of what an imposition his fieldwork might be into busy working lives, and especially the constant work of farm women.²⁸⁶ In 1910, Jean Pabon (1838-1912) had to apologize for not responding to a letter from Arnaudin, 'car vous savez nous sommes maintenant au temps de la moisson'.²⁸⁷ Nonetheless, Arnaudin did make some effort to adapt when he did his fieldwork so that it was more convenient for his working informants. When he planned to collect songs from the 'femme Sainte-Marie' and 'Marianne' in February 1899, he agreed to write in advance and visit them on a Sunday, when they would be free.²⁸⁸ He was also willing to adapt where he would go to do his fieldwork. Sometimes he visited singers in their own houses, or the houses of friends and relatives, gathering together a group who could keep the songs coming. Like other folklorists at the time, he does not seem to have found the evening gatherings known as *veillées* especially productive for collecting folklore: informants would be too tired.²⁸⁹ Sometimes he invited them to his own house. He collected a great deal of material from men and women outside, in fields, or standing watching sheep by their sheepfolds: 'Entre les deux bords je trouve [Jean Bernède, known as] le Cantaney, qui s'assied avec moi sur la bruyère pour me chanter quelques rondes Landaises'.²⁹⁰ While the image he liked to project in his published writings of fortuitous encounters is not the whole story, neither are the planned sessions with singers reciting the words to songs. Arnaudin really did collect folklore in everyday situations, like the time a man with a rake wandering through a pine plantation gave him a couplet for a song.²⁹¹ This was carried

285 NFA, 2 MI 29 1 f.42.

286 D. Kodish, 'Absent Gender, Silent Encounter', *JAF*, 100, no. 398 (December 1987), 573–78.

287 Letter of 10 July 1910. *OC*:V, 348.

288 NFA, 2 MI 29/20, f.195.

289 Van Gennep, *Le folklore français*, I, 56–7.

290 22 or 25 September, 1879. *OC*:VIII, 153.

291 NFA, 2 MI 29/19, f. 470.

to its extreme in the fieldwork he did for the proverbs and dictionary. In his notes for an introduction to his dialect dictionary, Arnaudin wrote:

On remarquera que mes exemples sont souvent fort étendus, et que *le mot* à [blank] est noyé dans beaucoup de mots. Je l'ai fait à dessin [crossed out] Mes phrases, prises sur la bouche du peuple, et reproduits telles quelles, avec une exactitude absolue, non seulement font mieux saisir ainsi les divers emplois et les sens exacts du mot, mais elles reflètent dans leur réalité un trait de moeurs...²⁹²

He collected proverbs from people passing on the road, or from mule-drivers waiting for the train at a level-crossing, from men and women as they worked, and even from people on the train.²⁹³ The annual fairs in villages such as Labouheyre were such fertile grounds for this kind of fieldwork that Arnaudin had a whole series of notebooks entitled 'Faires'.²⁹⁴ The one place he generally resisted was local inns. Although there are some records of materials he collected from the *auberges*, he was reluctant to go into drinking establishments for his fieldwork. He was disappointed to realize that Marguerite Dubos, known as Maguide (b.1839) was an innkeeper:

elle tient auberge, toujours des buveurs, me déconseillant d'y aller, ne voudrait ni ne pourrait. D'ailleurs je suis entré là le 28 avril d[ernie]r, l'autre semaine, et la rencontre des buveurs attablé là m'en avait fait déjà repentir.²⁹⁵

It is hard to know if it was timidity or a distrust of the kinds of songs he might find in an inn that prevented Arnaudin going in.

Perhaps shyness also has something to do with the fact that a significant minority of his materials, and especially the songs, were collected by proxy, although the other obvious explanation would be the difficulties involved in travelling to meet informants.²⁹⁶ Sometimes it was singers or storytellers themselves who wrote to Arnaudin, although it was much more common for a literate

292 NFA, 2 MI 29/8, f.15.

293 NFA, 2 MI 29/10, ff. 6, 21, 22, 51, 66.

294 NFA, 2 MI 29/24, 2 MI 29/10, ff.13, 93.

295 NFA, 2 MI 29/20, f.219.

296 The practice was fairly common among other folklorists. See Hopkin's comments on the Briffaults, a family of storytellers, or Victor Smith's singers in the Haute-Loire: *Voices of the People*, 162, 212.

son or daughter to record their parents.²⁹⁷ It can be hard to tell who the 'singer' or 'storyteller' is, and whether the version Arnaudin received was a new performance by someone who was a performer in their own right, or whether men like Joseph Sart, known as Jules (1853-1921) and Henri Vidal simply saw themselves as scribes. These intermediaries tended to come from similar backgrounds to Arnaudin. Many were men, and most were fairly well-off, although Arnaudin's maid and lover Marie Darlante recorded at least one story for him.²⁹⁸ Some of the notes in Arnaudin's manuscripts came from other local folklorists, such as the abbé Vincent Foix. The presence of these literate informants and proxy-folklorists is not necessarily a weakness of the Arnaudin collection. Quite the contrary, these other writers within Arnaudin's manuscripts are a reminder that he was never fully in control of what he recorded. No matter what his aesthetic preferences, or dislike of French and rude songs, his singers could only give him what they knew and valued. When they were writing to him, this agency was simply more obvious. On one occasion, a local road-worker named Jean Pabon told Arnaudin that the singer Anne Joie (b.1843) had lost the list of songs that Arnaudin had asked for. Instead, she had sung some others, as had Pabon's own brother. Pabon concluded: 'elles sont très jolies'.²⁹⁹ In these kinds of situations, it was not the folklorist's taste, but his singers' which dictated which songs he could collect.³⁰⁰

There are other reasons to believe that Arnaudin's collection reflects much more than just the taste of one man. False modesty aside, there is a real basis to his comments to Edwin Sydney Hartland: 'à en croire mes amis, j'aurais poussé jusqu'à l'exagération, jusqu'à la manie, le souci de

297 For instance: NFA, 2 MI 29/5, f.10, 2 MI 29/19, f.485.

298 NFA, 2 MI 29/11, f.58.

299 Letter of 11 November 1896. *OC*:V, 334.

300 Another singer, Catherine Brouqueyre, known as Liya de Bidau (1850-1912), ended a letter to Arnaudin: 'Les chansons que je vous donne c'est moi qui les dicte et ma bru qui les copie. En attendant le plaisir de vous en donner de plus belles'. NFA, 2 MI 29/19, f.485.

l'exactitude dans mes enquêtes'.³⁰¹ The standards he held his proxies to suggest the strictness of his own techniques. He gave detailed instructions to Jean Barthélémy (1840-1922) for collecting songs from Marie Lorty, known as Maria, femme Dubos (b.1859):

Soyez donc assez bon de la lui faire chanter et de copier avec *une exactitude absolue tous ses moindres mots, tels qu'elle les dira*. Je ne suis pas sûr du tout que ce qui est sur ma feuille soit tout à fait exact; aussi sera-t-il bon de ne pas la lui lire d'abord, de peur d'influencer faussement sa mémoire; la plus petite différence dans un mot peut être pour moi très intéressante. Et quand même elle se souviendrait plus que de quelques bribes, quelques restes épars, prenez les soigneusement, ils peuvent m'être très utiles.³⁰²

Arnaudin, like other folklorists of the period, was a victim of what David Hopkin has called 'the obsessive nature of collecting [folklore] – the constant hope for a new song, a unique variant'.³⁰³ To satisfy this obsession, Arnaudin used checklists and questionnaires, which he would either go over with his informants, or send to them by post.³⁰⁴ He also used his most reliable and most helpful informants to go over texts, frequently noting minor variations in the versions of songs or stories they performed.³⁰⁵ Although he was never as thorough with the tales as with the songs, Arnaudin collected several stories more than once from the same narrator.³⁰⁶

Death and Legacy

During his lifetime, Arnaudin had tendencies both to play down the importance of his work

301 Letter of November 1912. *OC:V*, 373.

302 Letter of 23 December 1895. *Ibid.*, 332–3.

303 Hopkin, *Voices of the People*, 213.

304 There are a great many of these questionnaires in the manuscripts. See for example a checklist he sent to two singers in Captieux. They were meant to write whether or not they knew the song next to each title. NFA, 2 MI 29/19, f.474.

305 For instance, 'Texte revu soigneusement avec Babé.' NFA, 2 MI 29/3, f.81; He also mentioned 'reverifying' songs in two letters to Alexis de Chasteigner, 14 February and 25 July 1889. *OC:V*, 102, 199. Latty highlights Babé's role in checking texts. 'Représenter dans l'écriture: collecte et transcription chez les folkloristes à travers un exemple gascon', *Cahiers de Littérature Orale*, 52 (2002), 120. Latty also talks of Arnaudin using informants to fill in missing texts. See 'Une enquête de Félix Arnaudin dans le Bazadais', 37.

306 NFA, 2 MI 29/11, ff.380, 631.

– talking of 'mes pauvres vieilles histoires de bergers tirées du plus profond de notre Lande ignorante et simpliste' – and yet to stress how painful and time-consuming it had been.³⁰⁷ Much of his surviving correspondence is made up of apologies for not responding sooner, and for not being able to help. Partly, this may have been Arnaudin's way of avoiding collaborating on projects he did not value, but partly it reflects his own feelings about his inability to keep up with his project. He wrote to J.V. Lalanne of his 'indolence naturelle', and struggled throughout his life with overwhelming episodes of melancholy.³⁰⁸ In 1915, he wrote to Victor Dourthe:

Je traverse une crise d'insurmontable tristesse qui de plus en plus m'ôte tout ressort, toute énergie devant le plus insignifiant effort. C'est un dégoût de tout, [un dégoût de vivre] né du cauchemar de cette hideuse guerre, dont rien, jamais, ne vient nous faire pressentir la fin.³⁰⁹

In retrospect, this depression owes as much to Arnaudin's character as to the First World War and the hopeless perfectionism of his project: folklorists today would probably question whether the 'moisson complète' he dreamed of was even possible.³¹⁰ Especially towards the end of his life Arnaudin talked of the 'bien lourde tâche' 'que j'ai un peu étourdiment entreprise'.³¹¹ In 1900, he told Paul de Beaurepaire-Froment: 'je ne vis plus que pour l'achèvement de mon entreprise'.³¹² However, despite repeatedly announcing the imminent appearance of several volumes of songs and proverbs, he only managed to produce one volume of songs in 1912, some seventeen years after he had told friends it was ready.³¹³ As early as 1886, he despaired of making any other use of his life:

307 Letter to Raoul Ponchon, May 1902. *OC:V*, 150.

308 Letter of 3 October 1902. *Ibid.*, 323; Latry, 'Introduction: Arnaudin à la lettre', ix.

309 Letter of June 1915. *OC:V*, 403–4.

310 Letter to Jean Barthélémy, 3 February 1895. *Ibid.*, 332.

311 See letters to Paul Sébillot and Antoine Degert, 14 and 17 January 1888. *OC:V*, 64, 65.

312 Letter of 6 July 1900. *Ibid.*, 161.

313 See his letter to Jean-Baptiste Lescarret, 15 April, 1895. *Ibid.*, 144.

'Ah! mourir! mourir! achever mon entreprise... et disparaître! Voilà le désir où j'en suis venu!'³¹⁴

The thirty-five years he lived after this point gave him time to amass much more material, but it also gave him the opportunity to destroy personal documents, especially those concerning his unidentified lovers, but also 'beaucoup d'autres papiers et lettres'.³¹⁵

In the final years, Arnaudin suffered from nose bleeds and vertigo, and his notes suggest he had a stroke. Worried about being paralysed, he armed himself with poison.³¹⁶ On 6 December 1921, his fear was realized. Félix Arnaudin died a few hours after the paralysis set in.³¹⁷ The papers he left behind were scattered between different drawers in his house, leading one of the men charged by Arnaudin with posthumously publishing his writings to talk of 'un désordre absolu'.³¹⁸ Three of these posthumous works did appear in the 1920s. His friends published two volumes of ethnographic and historical notes entitled *Choses de l'ancienne Grande-Lande* and a photographic album entitled *Au temps des échasses*, but most of Arnaudin's papers remained unedited. There are swirling stories among regional specialists today about other researchers who plundered Arnaudin's notes, dividing them up, taking what they liked, and misplacing many documents. It took until the 1960s for any systematic attempt to publish the unedited proverbs, narratives, and songs, but even these works were based on a limited selection of Arnaudin's papers.³¹⁹ Finally, in 1979 the majority of the surviving manuscripts were donated by Arnaudin's family to the Parc Naturel Régional des Landes de Gascogne, who in turn entrusted the materials to the Archives Départementales des Landes in 1991. In 1992, Jacques Boisgontier added more documents to the collection, and in 1994 the first volume of a nine volume complete works appeared. After the final volume of Arnaudin's

314 Letter of 16 May 1886. Ibid., 206.

315 NFA, 2 MI 29/24, f.88.

316 Ibid., f.383.

317 Daugé, 'Félix Arnaudin: 1844-1921', 5.

318 Latry, 'Introduction: Arnaudin à la lettre', vii; See André Poudenx's comments in: NFA, 2 MI 29/34, f.409.

319 See: F. Galli-Dupis, 'Les fonds Félix Arnaudin (1844-1921), collecteur et photographe des "Choses de l'ancienne Grande-Lande"', 2007, www.garae.fr/spip.php?article206.

materials – his diary and natural history writings – appeared in 2003, a further index was produced in 2007. Eighty-six years after his death, the edition finally does justice to Arnaudin's life's work.

In life, as after his death, Arnaudin's research was divisive. Arnaudin himself was jealous, secretive, bitter, and obsessed, and even his mentor Jean-Baptiste Lescarret had some words of criticism for the way Arnaudin fiercely protected his project.³²⁰ After his death, other researchers inherited his painful compulsion and descended into fierce squabbling over his writings. The reason why is not hard to see in retrospect. Like other folklorists, Arnaudin's legacy is contested because it amounts to the heritage of an entire region.³²¹ This chapter has traced why and how Arnaudin collected folklore, in order to explore the influence of the man on the writings. Yet, time and time again, the evidence points towards a project initiated by one man, but sustained and executed by a whole region. Motivated by personal nostalgia, bitterness, and regret, Arnaudin's collection is nonetheless the expression of the culture of a wide range of different men and women, artisans and shepherds, farmers and road-builders, servants and soldiers. The next chapter explores who these men and women were, where they learned folk traditions, and where they performed them.

320 See Lescarret's review of the *Contes*, reproduced in *OC:V*, 105.

321 See especially the divisive legacy of Luzel in Brittany: F. Morvan, *François-Marie Luzel: enquête sur une expérience de collecte folklorique en Bretagne* (Dinan, 1999).

Chapter Three

The Singing Postman: Tradition and Modernity

The worker, the peasant, as a breed of man will eventually die out, but he will not change to suit the time.³²²

Introduction: 'Routine', 'Progress', and the Decline of Traditional Culture

In 1886, Babé Plantié told Arnaudin a humorous story about an old woman who lived on her own. When she told the story, Babé herself was 60 years old. Relatively poor, illiterate, and unskilled, her future was not bright. 'Once there was a poor old woman who lived all on her own in a little cottage'. The only thing of value she owned was a pig, but this pig was so beautiful that three local men decided to steal it. This was easier said than done. When the robbers turned up at her house, they seemed uneasy. Rather than approaching together, they decided to go and have a look one by one, leading to an amusing misunderstanding. Inside her cottage, the old woman was spinning. Just as she would every evening, she spun three spindles. As the first robber approached the door, she exclaimed 'Ah, there's one of the three!' The robber, horrified by what he took to be sure evidence of the old woman's supernatural powers, turned on his heels and fled to his companions. Of course, they both also had to try for themselves, and came to the same conclusion: the woman was a witch. The final robber decided to test this out by defecating in her garden. Having done this, he approached her door, to overhear her cooking an apple on the fire. As the old woman watched the juices squirting from the apple, she talked to it: '[Go on] shit, shit, you can shit all you want, I will devour you whole, shit and everything'. Hearing this, he ran off as if the devil himself was chasing him, and the woman's pig was safe.³²³

A few years after Babé told this story, the widow Deytz, née Bernadet appealed to the local authorities for financial aid. As the widow of a man who had worked for the Ponts et chaussées, she

322 D. Gilmore, *Aggression and Community: Paradoxes of Andalusian Culture* (New Haven, 1987), 185.

323 NFA, 2 MI 29/11, ff.608-9; OC:I, 479-481.

stood a good chance of receiving help from the state, as long as she was considered deserving. The local mayor seemed to think she was, writing that she was 'tout à fait sans ressources, elle n'a pas d'enfants ni proches parents pour avoir soin d'elle. Quant à son attitude politique elle ne s'en occupe pas. Elle est incapable de faire sous ce rapport ni du bien ni du mal'.³²⁴ The petition from the widow Deytz and Babé Plantié's story present different pictures of growing old at the end of the nineteenth century. The widow Deytz is powerless, unable to earn her own living or even depend on family. The old woman in Babé's story might seem to be in a materially similar situation, but she has cultural resources: the robbers assume she is a witch, and the story itself, told by the sixty-year-old sharecropper, is a claim for the cultural agency of vulnerable old women. Babé has the last laugh.

Contemporaries thought that the magical beliefs of people like Babé belonged to a different world to the modern state, with its growing responsibilities for, and interest in, the lives of ordinary people. Tradition and modernity were incommensurable. Edmond About's 1858 novel *Maître Pierre*, for instance, follows the exploits of a local innovator in the moorlands, loosely based on the real life figure Jules Chambrelent. Maître Pierre's projects to drain the moors and plant pine trees will make him the saviour of the region, if only 'progress' can triumph in a Manichean conflict against 'routine'.³²⁵ Subsequent historians have tended to see the nineteenth century in similar terms: railways, modern agriculture, education, and conscription supposedly swept away the old 'superstitions', 'the iron certitudes of oral wisdom'.³²⁶ Stories like Babé's were doomed to give way to supplications like that of the widow Deytz. Folklorists like Arnaudin tended to subscribe to a similar view of the battle between the new and the old, although Arnaudin, as the previous chapter suggested, took exactly the opposite position to a man like About. Reform was not saving the inhabitants of the moors from themselves, but destroying their authentic culture. Arnaudin

324 The appeal took place in 1893. ADL, 1 8 S/2, 'Ponts et chaussées'.

325 The terms appear at least once. See: About, *Maître Pierre*, 288.

326 Singer, *Village Notables in Nineteenth-Century France*, 3; Devlin, *The Superstitious Mind*.

lamented: 'Les pères sont morts, et rien de leur âme n'a passé d[an]s l'âme de leurs enfants'.³²⁷ It was a common-place for folklorists to complain that they were a generation too late, and Arnaudin was no exception.³²⁸ In the introduction to the 1912 edition, he wrote:

Qu'autrement facile et abondante eût été la moisson, attaquée une quinzaine d'années plutôt seulement!.. Chez nous comme ailleurs la rupture avec le passé est un fait désormais accompli, qu'on ne s'attarde plus à constater.³²⁹

He wrote to Lafore: 's'il me fallait recommencer aujourd'hui ma longue enquête, je ne retrouverais certainement plus le quart des choses que j'ai recueillies jusqu'ici, tant a été rapide leur disparition, dans notre pauvre lande, au contact des idées nouvelles'.³³⁰ Historians have tended to agree. Peter Burke, for instance, has written that men like Arnaudin 'snatched all they could from the burning house' of early-modern popular culture.³³¹

Yet there are good reasons to suspect that this war between routine and progress was more of a cultural trope than an accurate representation of the social transmission of culture. Arnaudin was not the first to worry about modernity sweeping away traditional culture. He was not even the first in the region.³³² Both of the novelists who wrote novels about reforming the landscape in the 1850s, Edmond About and Jean-Baptiste Lescarret, included mournful comments about 'ces vieilles coutumes locales qui coloraient autrefois la vie des provinces et qui s'effacent tous les jours sous l'uniformité de progrès'.³³³ It is possible, as Arnaudin himself believed, that these men simply recognised the first signs of a process that accelerated after 1857, and one which affected even the

327 NFA ,2 MI 29/21, f.183.

328 See, for instance: Beiner, *Remembering the Year of the French*, 314.

329 OC:III, xx–xi.

330 Letter of 27 April 1896. OC:V, 297.

331 Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, 41.

332 For Peter Burke, this process had begun long before the nineteenth-century flowering of the folklore movement. Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*.

333 About, *Maître Pierre*, 130. For a similar example from Lescarret, see Marthe's comments about old weddings. J.-B. Lescarret, *Le dernier pasteur des landes: étude de mœurs* (Bordeaux, 1858), 122.

micro-regions of the moorlands unevenly.³³⁴ Indeed, it would fit neatly with the revisionist historiography of the forestation of the region to emphasise that the changes of the second half of the nineteenth century were, in fact, amplifications of those of the first half.³³⁵ But there is a more fundamental critique to be made of the battle between routine and progress. Who actually embraced novelty, and who guarded tradition? How did culture move between people in this period? Research into the Arnaudin manuscripts suggests that the same people could work for the railways and sing songs, buy moorlands at auction and tell legends and tales. Traditional culture was not a static object swept away by modern education and the growth of a national culture: it was mobile and adaptive, and it reacted to changes during the nineteenth century. There is a case to be made that the peasants never did die out, and did in fact 'change to suit the time'.³³⁶

'Mes Collaborateurs Rustiques': the 759

Who were the singers, storytellers, and other informants that Arnaudin referred to in a letter to Jean-Baptiste Lescarret as 'mes collaborateurs rustiques'?³³⁷ Since his death Arnaudin has been seen as a model for ethnographic honesty, thanks to these lists of informants.³³⁸ Yet his published works do not tell the whole truth about his informants. Although the example discussed in the previous chapter of Arnaudin's attempt to play down the importance of Babé Plantié is quite extreme, she was not the only person whose contribution he tried to cover up: many informants were simply left out of his published lists. The key to understanding these struggles is that Arnaudin

334 See, for instance, Arnaudin's conversation with Dumora, a mason from Salles, about whether songs had disappeared in the region around Céouse, Salles, Ychoux, Belin, and Mios, or his conversation with Pallas from Saint-Symphorien about whether any of the old ways survived around Cazalis, Saint-Symphorien, and Préchacq. NFA, 2 MI 29/3, f.33, 2 MI 29/19, f.479.

335 Sargos, *Histoire de la forêt landaise*; Lescarret, *La vie dans la Grande-Lande*.

336 S. Rogers, 'Good to Think: The "Peasant" in Contemporary France', *Anthropological Quarterly*, 60, no. 2 (April 1987), 56–63.

337 Letter of 25 March 1885. *OC:V*, 55.

338 Arnold van Gennep used Arnaudin's 1912 book of songs as the example of best practice in terms of naming informants in his influential book on French folklore. See: *Le folklore français*, I, 74.

saw publishing his informants names as a favour. In his notes he wrote that 'C'est une preuve de conscience pourtant que d'avoir fait chanter *cinq cents personnes*, et une preuve de reconnaissance/gentillesse de donner les noms. Sur 230 qui y figurent, il n'y en a peut-être pas cinq qui se savent l'objet de cet honneur'.³³⁹ At least five must have known, since Arnaudin sent them copies of the 1912 edition.³⁴⁰ His notes suggest that other informants, or their close families, might also have bought the volume.³⁴¹

Why would Arnaudin exclude people like this? One reason was for their surnames: Duviella, Philibert, and Couyon were apparently too 'exotique'.³⁴² They were not typical enough of local, Gascon-sounding names. Another important reason to exclude informants was the question of which languages they sang or narrated in. French was unacceptable.³⁴³ But Arnaudin also excluded informants for a range of other reasons. He worried that both Jean Hazera and Étienne Dupouy might at different points have got in trouble for stealing.³⁴⁴ Arnaudin gave up on a man called Labadie because he was 'abruti'.³⁴⁵ But it is also important to stress that Arnaudin's informants were not powerless in this exchange. Clearly he felt pressure to include certain names, and some informants badgered him. He wrote a short note about the singer Jean Laguë: 'ancien résinier (*nunc* cantonnier), né à Geloux, au Petit-Louricat, hab[itan]t. Sabres à ... 32 ans (12-3-14) (y tient # "But I'm not in there!" – Promis'.³⁴⁶ On the other hand, sometimes he rode rough-shod over his informants. He wrote that Marie Labadie, known as Justine, femme Lahari (b.1882) was useless

339 NFA, 2 MI 29/12, f.58.

340 OC:V, 360–2. See also NFA 2 MI 29/12, f.280.

341 NFA, 2 MI 29/31, f.489.

342 Arnaudin used the word to refer to Marie Pomade, known as Trézine's married name, 'Duviella.' NFA, 2 MI 29/1, f.16.

343 NFA, 2 MI 29/20, f.294.

344 NFA, 2 MI 29/20, f.112, 2 MI 29/1, f.16.

345 NFA, 2 MI 29/19, f.192.

346 NFA, 2 MI 29/31, f.489. 'Résinier' is an alternative term for 'gemmeur'.

since she 'ne m'a rien donné de mes [chansons] demandées'.³⁴⁷ Neither did all of his informants want to figure in his published list. Arnaudin wrote that he would include Marie Dulucq, femme Denis's (b.1869) name if she sent the songs promised by her mother, but Marie herself had different ideas, writing to him 'Je ne vous donne pas mon nom [de jeune fille] je ne le veux pas'.³⁴⁸

Beyond these sometimes amusing tensions, there are clear patterns to the people Arnaudin tried to exclude: he wanted to reduce the numbers of men, to play down the social diversity of his informants, and exclude French-speakers and youths. Like other folklorists of the period, he had a vision of who the 'folk' were, and sometimes there are hints of dishonesty in how he presented his informants.³⁴⁹ Working out the identity of the 759 different people to which his manuscripts refer can be tricky. Sometimes Arnaudin simply referred to a 'pasteur', or 'maçon', met by chance on the road or at an inn. Other times, Arnaudin referred to people he knew well simply by their first name or surname. In less challenging cases, these individuals can be traced through birth, marriage, and death documents. Their lives can be pieced together through conscription and employment records, notarial documents, censuses, and the records of local councils. Combined with the information Arnaudin himself provided about his informants, this research can give some insight into the demography of his singers and storytellers.

Some remain stubbornly hard to identify, especially since many local men and women were known not by their baptismal names, but by nicknames or *chaffres*.³⁵⁰ Jeanne Barrière (b.1875), for instance, was known as 'Cérise' because her mother had craved cherries when pregnant with her.³⁵¹

347 NFA, 2 MI 29/31, f.490.

348 NFA, 2 MI 29/4, f.240.

349 For similar debates on better-known folklorists, see the work on Cecil Sharp and the Brothers Grimm. Bearman, 'Who Were the Folk?'; C. J. Bearman, 'Cecil Sharp in Somerset: Some Reflections on the Work of David Harker', *Folklore*, 113, no. 1 (1 April 2002), 11–34; J. Ellis, *One Fairy Story Too Many: The Brothers Grimm and Their Tales* (Chicago, 1983).

350 Lescarret, *La vie dans la Grande-Lande*, 59–60.

351 NFA, 2 MI 29/1 f.48.

Other people inherited a nickname from their family, so both Pierre Fronsac (b.1823) and his wife Claire Baladès (1827-1913) were known as 'Biroun(e)', even though the *chaffre* was based on a story from Pierre's mother's childhood.³⁵² At least one of the most important informants, 'Cabardès', who provided some ninety-four songs for Arnaudin's collection, is impossible to identify simply from this nickname.³⁵³ Even people who did not have a proper *chaffre*, whether based on an incident from their own life, or inherited from their family, were unlikely to use their baptismal names.³⁵⁴ In the place of the French Christian names such as 'Jean', 'Jeanne', and 'Marie' that they were obliged to write on their birth certificates, many preferred to use names with a more Gascon feel: 'Jouan', 'Maguidote', 'Marinette', or just 'Nette'. This variety of names means that it is possible that some of the 759 informants who I have not been able to verify from official sources were duplicates. Arnaudin sometimes used the maiden names, sometimes the married names, and sometimes the nicknames of his informants. On other occasions he simply referred to groups of singers from specific villages, groups that must have included the named individuals he collected from there.

There are also ninety-six 'informants' mentioned in Arnaudin's manuscripts from which no song or story texts survive. In many cases, Arnaudin recorded that these individuals knew songs and stories, but either he never got around to collecting them, or the notes have been lost. I have kept these non-informants in the database because they also represent the kinds of people who transmitted traditional culture. In some cases, the information they provided was actively negative, such as when informants told Arnaudin that all of the local songs had disappeared. The vast majority of these informants only provided a few songs or stories for Arnaudin's collection. Over

352 NFA, 2 MI 29/8, f.507.

353 It could be his or her patronym, but it seems unlikely given that no-one with this name was married in the Landes during this period. It could also be a nickname based on the *quartier* where this mysterious singer lived. Tantalisingly, there is a *quartier* in Labouheyre called 'Cabardos'. The patronym is Galician.

354 On the significance of these naming practices, see: F. Zonabend, 'Pourquoi Nommer?', in C. Lévi-Strauss (ed), *L'identité: séminaire interdisciplinaire* (Paris, 1977), 257–79.

half of Arnaudin's singers provided just one or two songs (see fig. six, p.299). Very few provided large numbers of songs.³⁵⁵ Arnaudin did not collect enough stories to come to many firm conclusions about repertoire sizes, but it is telling that over half of his storytellers told him just one (see fig. seven, p.300).³⁵⁶ The previous chapter argued that Arnaudin's fieldwork was meticulous to the point of obsession. What these charts add to this picture is the realization that traditional culture was spread very thinly between a great many people.

Age, Gender, and Family Life

Like other folklorists at the time and since, Arnaudin sought out the oldest informants, and tended to emphasize elderly singers and storytellers in his published writings. But, as Guy Latry has pointed out, the informants Arnaudin actually found did not always conform to his vision of the 'vieux pâtres' who supposedly made the best storytellers.³⁵⁷ On one occasion in the early twentieth century, Arnaudin asked a local inn-keeper in Cazalis to provide elderly singers, but when he turned up, he found two young girls, Augustine Latrille (b.1893) and Marie-Jeanne Rouchaleou, known as Marguerite (b.1895).³⁵⁸ The dates of birth of the comprehensive list of informants from Arnaudin's manuscripts tell a more interesting story than Arnaudin simply collecting from the elderly (see fig. eight, p.301).³⁵⁹ The mean birth-date falls at the end of 1848. Given that Arnaudin himself was born

355 This fits with what other researchers have found in comparable collections. See, for instance: Tangherlini, *Interpreting Legend*, 59–60.

356 Again, this is in line with what other writers have suggested, particularly about tales. Very few narrators know many tales. Most tell just a few, and are capable of remembering some that they would not often perform themselves. L. Dégh, *Folktales and Society: Storytelling in a Hungarian Peasant Community* (Bloomington, 1969), 50, 168.

357 Reproduced in: *OC:V*, 169.

358 Latry, 'Une enquête de Félix Arnaudin dans le Bazadais'. In this sense, Arnaudin was even less consistent than Cecil Sharp, some of whose singers were in their twenties or thirties. See: Bearman, 'Who Were the Folk?', 767.

359 Aside from Arnaudin's own notes, found in NFA, the charts concerning the demography of Arnaudin's informants are based on the following sources: Archives communales de la ville de Labouheyre: 'Recensements de la population' (1846-1931). Archives départementales de la Gironde: 'État civil' 4 E 15972 (Beliet), 4959-4969 (Belin), 4 E 12717 (Canéjan), 5894 and 5903 (Captieux), 6269, 6260, 16409, and 16410 (Cazalis), 16439

in 1844, most of the people he collected from were actually younger than him. Of course, he did collect from some very old informants. The oldest, Marie Duvic, was born in 1799. But he also collected from very young informants. The youngest, one of his youthful singers from the trip to Cazalis, Marguerite Rouchaleou, was born almost a century after Marie Duvic, in 1895.

No matter what Arnaudin said about the decline of singing, there were still young men and women at the turn of the twentieth century who were willing to sing songs in Gascon for him, and some of them lived into the second half of the twentieth century. The most striking is Rose Dubos, known as Marie. One of Arnaudin's youngest informants, Rose was born in 1889, and she did not die until 22 January 1983. The singing tradition had hardly disappeared before Arnaudin made his collection, nor did it vanish with the last of his singers. Other folklorists collected songs in the moorlands throughout the twentieth century.³⁶⁰ His informants were not uniformly old (see fig. nine, p.302). Nor were they all from an older generation. What the Arnaudin manuscripts do suggest, however, is that the older singers provided a disproportionately large number of songs (see fig. ten, p.303, compare fig. eight, p.301). This is hardly surprising, given what folklorists know about how people gradually build up a repertoire of stories or songs over a lifetime.³⁶¹ What should be surprising is that despite deliberately seeking out older informants, and despite repeatedly claiming oral culture was doomed in his lifetime, Arnaudin still collected folklore from individuals who lived into the

(Cérons), 8209 (Langon), 11660 (Saint-Jean-d'Illac), 12709 and 12717 (Saint-Symphorien); and 'Recensements de la population' 6 M 127 (Beliet), 148 (Captieux), 158 (Cazalis), 184 (Hostens), 279 (Salles). ADL: 'État civil' 1 MIEC and 4 E 6 (Arengosse), 9 (Arjuzanx), 32 (Belhade), 33 (Belis), 43 (Bias), 45 (Biganon), 46 (Biscarrosse), 56 (Brocas), 64 (Canenx), 85 (Commensacq), 94 (Escource), 105 (Garein), 107 (Garrosse), 134 (Labouheyre), 135 (Labrit), 152 (Lesperon), 156 (Liposthey), 163 (Luë), 165 (Luglon), 170 (Maillères), 171 (Mano), 182 (Mézos), 184 (Mimizan), 197 (Morcenx), 200 (Moustey), 210 (Onesse), 217 (Parentis), 227 (Pissos), 229 (Pontenx), 246 (Sabres), 257 (Sainte-Eulalie-en-Born), 278 (Saint-Paul-en-Born), 287 (Sanguinet), 295 (Saugnac-et-Muret), 297 (Le Sen), 302 (Sindères), 303 (Solférino), 319 (Trensacq), 323 (Vert), 332 (Ychoux), 333 (Ygos); and 'Fonds des archives communales', E DEPOT 14 1 F 1 (Arue), 64 1 F 2 (Canenx), 85 (Commensacq), 111 1 F 2 (Geloux), 152 1 F 2 (Lesperon), 164 1 F 1 (Lugaut), 165 1 F 2 (Luglon), 197 1 F 1-2 (Morcenx), 246 ES 1573 4-5 (Sabres), 278 ES 1588 9 (Saint-Paul-en-Born), 295 ES 1748 7 (Saugnac-et-Muret), 319 ES 1564 18 (Trensacq), 333 1 F 2 (Ygos); and 'Recensements de la Population', 6 M 93 (Canton de Sabres, 1819), 6 M 141 (Canton de Mimizan, 1906), 6 M 152 (Canton de Mimizan, 1921), 6 M 157 (Canton de Pissos, 1921), 6 M 159 (Canton de Sabres, 1921).

360 See for instance: Trébuçq, *La chanson populaire*; P. Lavaud, *Lo Medòc de boca a aurelha* (Bordeaux, 2011).

361 Dégh, *Folktales and Society*, 167–8.

second half of the twentieth century.

Perhaps the most striking thing about the list of informants Arnaudin produced for his 1912 edition of songs is the gender imbalance. Arnaudin presented an image of himself collecting songs from women as they spun. He also staged photographs of all-female spinning bees. In the introduction to the 1912 edition he claimed songs were traditionally led by women in the Grande-Lande, and his list of singers reflects this idea that singing was a gendered tradition (fig. eleven, p.304).³⁶² Less than a quarter of the 227 singers in his published list were men. The picture is, however, quite different if the numbers are based on all of the informants in his manuscripts (fig. twelve, p.305). This could be partly explained by the fact, noted by other folklorists, that women are more likely to sing and men are more likely to narrate, especially the complicated magical tales.³⁶³ But even when it came to the singing, Arnaudin exaggerated the role of women, and played down the importance of male singers (see fig. thirteen, p.306; compare fig. eleven, p.304). This bias towards excluding men fits into Arnaudin's concerns about social changes: men tended to be better educated, and had more opportunities to engage with print media, politics, and new forms of employment. They were, therefore, in his view, less representative of the true local tradition.

The family lives of the Arnaudin informants were conventional. Most were married, a significant minority were widowed, and relatively few were unmarried (see fig. fourteen, p.307). Those that were unmarried tended to be Arnaudin's youngest informants. Just one of Arnaudin's informants, Jean Pinchoret, known as Jouanès (1864-1900), was divorced.³⁶⁴ Most of Arnaudin's songs instead came from married individuals, with significant minorities from widowed and unmarried informants (see fig. fifteen, p.308). Interestingly, unmarried individuals tended to have slightly larger repertoires of songs than those who were or had been married (see fig. sixteen,

362 OC:III, xxvi.

363 Tangherlini, *Interpreting Legend*, 59, 68; Dégh, *Folktales and Society*, 91–2.

364 This is hardly surprising given that there were only about five divorces a year in the whole département in the period 1886-1890. By 1906-1910, the rate was about twenty-two a year. See: G. Callon, 'Le mouvement de la population dans les Landes au cours de la période 1821-1920', *Bulletin de la Société de Borda*, 1931, 25.

p.309). Very few of Arnaudin's informants were illegitimate, or closely related to illegitimate individuals, and he collected few songs from these individuals. However, this picture could be a distortion of the true state of affairs, as local officials conspired with illegitimate parents to cover up the legal status of their children. Whatever the case, the picture of fairly conventional family lives that Arnaudin's manuscripts reveal fits with the finding that his informants were neither as old nor as female as he claimed in his published writings. In fact, they were much closer to an average cross-section of local society.

Mobility, Literacy, Occupation, Class

This should not be taken to mean that the informants Arnaudin collected folklore from belonged to an immobile and static peasant society. Despite his own claims about focusing all of his attention on a limited geographical area, the official record reveals that not all of Arnaudin's informants were born in the Grande-Lande, and many of them moved around both within, and even sometimes beyond, France. At least nine of the 759 lived part of their lives in Bordeaux, and there are also more extreme examples. One of Arnaudin's closest friends and singers, Pierre Larrouy (1816-1883), was known as l'Afrique because he had served as a medical orderly in the French army in Algeria. Another singer, Jean Gellibert, known as Jouanès, Antoine, or Pouton (b.1853), also served in Africa, and the husband of yet another, 'Jeanne Latappy', worked for the administration in the Congo.

More generally, Arnaudin's informants were fairly mobile across the moorlands, due to the system of sharecropping which dominated local agriculture. Since sharecroppers owned neither their land nor sometimes even their tools or animals, it was quite common to change location regularly, in search of better landlords, or larger farms. 'Lou Patroun' Saubesty and his wife Babé Plantié, two of Arnaudin's most important informants, could be considered typical. Between their marriage in 1844 and moving to work for the Arnaudin family in 1875, Babé and Jean successively

farmed six different shareholdings around the Grande-Lande.³⁶⁵ This mobility fostered rather than hindered the transmission and perpetuation of traditional culture. It is important to question the idea that folklore thrives in static communities and to realize that the typical folklore informants are not necessarily well-rooted. Other researchers have often found that the most mobile individuals in traditional societies are also the ones best known for singing and storytelling.³⁶⁶ Craftsmen, soldiers, and beggars learned stories and songs on their travels.

Arnaudin certainly believed certain occupations were more representative of the traditional culture of the Grande-Lande. First and foremost, he was obsessed by pastoralism. In the introduction to his 1886 edition of tales, he depicted himself 'errant de lande à lande à la poursuite des vieux pâtres'.³⁶⁷ Of the six storytellers he mentioned in that book, three were shepherds. They were also a favourite subject of his photographs. Since his death these photos of shepherds have become his best-known work, appearing in history books, and even on the local road-signs in the area. But the photos were clearly staged. The shepherds represented the old way of life destroyed during Arnaudin's lifetime by the victory of the pines, so Arnaudin dressed his subjects like the shepherds of his youth, in sheepskin jackets, and had them perch on traditional stilts. Both practices were increasingly rare by the 1880s and 1890s when Arnaudin took his pictures.

In reality, just sixteen of the 212 singers in his 1912 list were pastoralists, including cow-herds and goat-herds (see fig. seventeen, p.310). Farmers and housewives were most prevalent, comprising almost three quarters of the group. There were just nine artisans, nine resin-collectors, and eight landowners. Finally there were two servants and a mid-wife, the only employee. If there were not a lot of shepherds, a more boring conclusion emerges: the vast bulk of the informants, according to the published list, were simply called farmers, whether sharecroppers or small-holders.

365 NFA, 2 MI 29/24, f.417.

366 Dégh, *Folktales and Society*, 68–9, 79.

367 Arnaudin, *Contes populaires*, 5.

Perhaps this is not surprising. On a chart for occupational sectors in 1881 in the village of Commensacq, home to many of Arnaudin's informants, the domination of farmers is even more absolute (see fig. eighteen, p.311). Most of the villages Arnaudin collected folklore in would produce similar charts. But the major, and extremely important, exception would be Labouheyre, where Arnaudin himself lived. Labouheyre is particularly important because this is also where he collected many of his materials. In 1846, two years after his birth, Labouheyre was a village with a population of just 460 people, but by his death in 1921 the total had swelled to 2,265 individuals.³⁶⁸ It had officially become a town. The reason for this dramatic growth was the creation of the Bordeaux-Bayonne railway line, which stopped at Labouheyre. As early as 1881, the railway fostered a much more diverse range of industries and occupations in the town than in the surrounding villages (see fig. nineteen, p.312). There are whole sectors which are completely unrepresented in a village like Commensacq, notably large numbers of industrial workers, tradesmen and railway and transport employees, groups that do not fit the typical image of the 'folk'.

The complete list of Arnaudin's informants occupations stands somewhere between the picture from a village like Commensacq and the nascent town of Labouheyre. The clear majority of his informants were farmers (see fig. twenty, p.313). The question of women's occupations poses a special problem here. There was a tendency to play down the importance of women's work and treat all women as housewives, although in reality women did much of the hardest agricultural work.³⁶⁹ This means that almost all of the occupational diversity comes from men. Even women married to artisans or employees would have been called farmers in official documents, since they were expected to do agricultural work alongside their domestic work. For this reason, this chart includes the occupations of Arnaudin's female informants' husbands, to give a better idea of the social diversity of the women he collected from.

³⁶⁸ See the 'Recensements de la population' from the Archives communales de Labouheyre and ADL 6 M 159.

³⁶⁹ Lescarret, *Le dernier pasteur des landes*, 102.

Along with these farmers, however, artisans, employees, and tradesmen were quite important to his fieldwork. Like the charts concerning the age and gender of his informants, this makes it clear that Arnaudin tried to play down the role of certain types of people in his fieldwork. An obvious category is tradesmen and inn-keepers, who are completely absent from his published works, but turn out to represent twenty one of the 759 informants in the manuscripts. It is helpful to consider tradesmen and inn-keepers as one category, since so many individuals were both. Romain Magnes, known as Martin (b.1861), for instance, was a some-time baker and some-time travelling fish-monger according to Arnaudin's notes, but the 1921 census called him a hotelier. Arnaudin's 1912 list, on the other hand, simply called him a land-owner.³⁷⁰ Despite the importance of bartenders, Arnaudin clearly worried about collecting songs from local cabarets. These drinking establishments were considered dangerous novelties by many of Arnaudin's contemporaries, and he balked at going into local bars to collect songs on at least one occasion.³⁷¹ In reality, these travellers, merchants, and inn-keepers were more important to his fieldwork than the shepherds (see fig. twenty-one, p.314).

As with other details about the demography of Arnaudin's informants, caution is nonetheless required. 'Shepherd' may not have been a durable and exclusive occupation. Many of the men official records called ploughmen or farmers may also have been pastoralists.³⁷² Individuals may have changed occupation over their lives as their roles within the family changed, and official records are not precise enough to capture these shifts. Many writers have noted that within families in the Landes, the responsibilities of ploughman and shepherd were divided according to seniority

370 In this way, Magnes is reminiscent of About's character the père Lafont, 'ancien soldat de l'Empire... à la fois le meunier, l'épicier, le commissionnaire et le plus gros cultivateur de la commune'. Simply because he has a cart and travels to Bordeaux, he ends up selling fish and game. About, *Maître Pierre*, 296.

371 B. Traimond, 'La sociabilité rurale landaise: histoire et structure, XVIIIème-XXème siècle' (Doctorat de 3ème cycle en anthropologie sociale et historique, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1982), 144–74; NFA, 2 MI 29/20, f.219.

372 For a longer discussion of this point, see Chapter Five.

and ability.³⁷³ Whatever the complexities of this fluid situation, people working as shepherds would have made obvious informants. Arnaudin would often meet them while out hunting or walking on the moors. Standing silently watching, they were uniquely positioned to see what was going on.³⁷⁴ Moreover, they had the leisure to talk to the folklorist.

Nonetheless, Arnaudin's manuscripts make it clear that other, more dynamic occupational groups were more important than he let on in his published writings. Another example would be artisans, who provided a significant amount of material to Arnaudin.³⁷⁵ Like shepherds, many of the men who exercised crafts may not have been called craftsmen on official documents, so their significance could be even greater.³⁷⁶ Neither did Arnaudin's professed horror of the effect of priests and school-teachers on local traditions prevent him using at least two priests and a teacher as correspondents. Again, despite the complete absence of soldiers from his published writings, it is clear from conscription records that at least fifteen of his informants had served in the army. There are also many more servants in the manuscripts than the published writings, although they were not Arnaudin's richest sources.³⁷⁷ He collected from at least fifteen, including Marie Darlante. Neither are industrial workers completely absent from Arnaudin's manuscripts. He collected materials from at least three men who worked in the local forges, and another man who he called simply a 'worker'.³⁷⁸

One of the clearest ways that Arnaudin remodelled the occupational diversity of his

373 F. Dupuy, *Le pin de la discorde: les rapports de métayage dans la Grande-Lande* (Paris, 1996), 196–7; Guérin, 'Paysan-Résinier de Lévigacq (Landes)', 328–9; Sargos, *Histoire de la forêt landaise*, 216.

374 Among many other examples, see for instance, Arnaudin coming across Jean Daurys, known as 'lou Bourit' (1813-1882) on 3 February 1876, or 28 January 1887. *OC:VIII*, 120, 207.

375 Craftsmen have often been singled out for their narrative skill. See: Dégh, *Folktales and Society*, 68–9.

376 See the comments from M. Vigier and M. Labrousse in: J. Dupâquier, 'Problèmes de la codification socio-professionnelle', in Ernest Labrousse (ed.), *L'histoire sociale: sources et méthodes* (Paris, 1967), 173, 176, 179.

377 Hopkin has drawn attention to the importance of the servant as a window into popular culture for the folklorists. See: *Voices of the People*, 160.

378 Jean Ventre (b.1823) was a smithy in the industrial forge, and Etienne Dupouy known as 'Touquet' (1848-1905) and Jean Bonnan (b.1855) both had jobs as "loaders," perhaps at the train station, or perhaps in the forges.

informants was to play down the importance of men who worked as employees of the state and the railways. Next to Marie Lalanne, the wife of Dupuch, Arnaudin wrote in his notes 'Supprimer: femme d'aoulhé [shepherd], mais mère d'officier, de "postier" et de sage-femme officière d'Acad[émie]!'³⁷⁹ Yet men like postmen were particularly useful for the folklorist. After all, postmen knew the address of every person in the area, which made them valuable resources for Arnaudin as he looked for informants and locations to photograph.³⁸⁰ Moreover, being a postman was also a role in the community, as a very literal go-between. Perhaps it should not be surprising, then, that one of the singers in the Arnaudin manuscripts who is hardest to identify was actually his neighbour, the postman Denis Labeau (b.1853). What makes this singing postman so important is that he was not an anomaly. Other employees contributed folklore for Arnaudin's collection. There were also two mid-wives, one rural policeman, a health officer, and a man described as a clerk. Another ten Arnaudin informants were road-menders or employees of the Ponts et Chaussées, the French department of transport, not to mention several more who were married to road-menders. Such individuals worked for a salary, to fixed hours, for the state. If they died, their widows had the right to expect a pension. These might sound like small numbers when compared to the mass of Arnaudin informants who were plain farmers, but how many of these farmers had brothers and sisters, children and grand-children who also took jobs as employees?³⁸¹ These jobs as local functionaries required reading skills, and different attitudes to work and leisure, and essentially made these rural men into 'Frenchmen', even as they continued to transmit traditional culture.³⁸² These men had one foot in Babé's cultural world of jokes about witches, and one in widow Deytz's

379 NFA, 2 MI 29/1, f.40.

380 NFA, 2 MI 29/19, f.479.

381 According to Guérin, these jobs were particularly prized by local young men. Young women dreamed of marrying a 'petit fonctionnaire' rather than a farmer. Guérin, 'Paysan-Résinier de Lévigacq (Landes)', 384–5.

382 Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*.

world of pensions. Perhaps 'progress' and 'routine' were not such deadly enemies after all.³⁸³

In the introduction to his collections, Arnaudin emphasized the oral transmission of folklore. It is unsurprising to find then that most of his informants were unable to sign their wedding certificates (see fig. twenty-two, p.315). However, when literacy rates are organized by date of birth a clear pattern emerges of a dramatic increase in literacy, starting as early as the 1820s (see fig. twenty-three, p.316).³⁸⁴ As the previous chapter mentioned, many of Arnaudin's informants were not only literate, they sent him materials by post. Yet those informants who could not read tended to have larger song repertoires (see fig. twenty-four, p.317). It seems the songs and stories were orally transmitted within local society, but this does not mean that the kinds of people who used them were completely unfamiliar with writing.³⁸⁵

It is much harder to use the information about literacy and occupation to draw any concrete conclusions about the social class of the Arnaudin informants.³⁸⁶ A comment that he included in the introduction to the 1912 edition of folk-songs hints that, for Arnaudin, folklore was partly a window into a past before social divisions, or at least divisions between bourgeois and workers. Presenting an example of a conversation with a shepherd-storyteller he digresses to comment on how close masters and servants used to be.³⁸⁷ When he wrote these words in 1912, he may have been thinking of the strained relationships he himself had with his employees, sharecroppers, and tenants.³⁸⁸ But he might also have been thinking of the wave of syndicalist protest that rocked the region from the

383 Hopkin points out that many of Paul Sébillot's informants also went on to get jobs for the railways or the bureaucracy: *Voices of the People*, 107.

384 This is entirely consistent with the picture presented by Furet and Ozouf of regions of poor literacy catching up with better-educated regions in the nineteenth century. See: *Reading and Writing*.

385 Other folklorists have recently stressed that literacy and literary culture is not necessarily the enemy of oral culture. See: Beiner, *Remembering the Year of the French*, 23, 76, 95, 255–6, 258, 291, 303.

386 Of course, class in the countryside is a particularly knotty problem because of the imprecision of occupational and social categories in nineteenth-century sources. See: Dupâquier, 'Problèmes de la codification socio-professionnelle', 161.

387 *OC:III*., xxiii.

388 NFA, 2 MI 29/24, f.395.

1880s onwards. The triumph of the pine was a victory for the local land-owning class, and especially the bourgeoisie, many of whom made their fortunes at the expense of the sharecroppers, who became a wage-paid 'prolétariat des forêts'.³⁸⁹ Rather than a survival of feudalism, sharecropping in the region became a tool in the arsenal of proletarianisation.³⁹⁰ Arnaudin clearly preferred to present a picture of informants that were labourers and sharecroppers, rather than land-owners or professionals. Few official documents specify the land-owning status of individuals, but the information available suggests Arnaudin collected from slightly more small-holders and property-owners than his 1912 list admits (see fig. twenty-five, p.318). Nonetheless, the majority of his informants were sharecroppers (see fig. twenty-six, p.319). Many of them were called *gemmeurs* by Arnaudin or on official documents. It seems likely that some of these men and women were involved in these first stirrings of class conflict in the region. Perhaps one of the more surprising things about this overview of the social class and occupations of the informants is how few could be considered marginal.³⁹¹ Other French folklorists found semi-professional and professional beggars to be particularly rich sources.³⁹² There is ample evidence from Arnaudin's ethnographic writings that begging was not uncommon in the Grande-Lande, yet there is only one example of a song Arnaudin collected from a beggar.³⁹³

Surprising omissions aside, this demographic overview of the Arnaudin informants has demonstrated how much variety is hidden behind the image of these 'folk', some richer and some poorer, many of whom subsisted through agricultural work, but many of whom did other kinds of work as well. Not all were old, and some could read and write, although the elderly and illiterate did

389 Sargos, *Histoire de la forêt landaise*, 205; Dupuy, *Le pin de la discorde*, 212–4.

390 See Chapter Seven for a fuller exploration of these issues.

391 Bottigheimer, 'Fairy Tales, Folk Narrative Research and History', 147–9; Dégh, *Folktales and Society*, 72.

392 For instance Victor Smith's singer and storyteller, Nannette Lévesque. M.-L. Tenèze and G. Delarue (eds), *Nannette Lévesque, conteuse et chanteuse du pays des sources de la Loire* (Paris, 2000).

393 See the material from the dictionary, discussed in the next chapter, which presents the point of view of the labouring poor: *OC*:VII, 160, 165, 310, 356; *NFA*, 2 MI 29/3, f.277.

make better informants. The performers and audiences familiar with tales, songs, and proverbs as late as 1914 might be more diverse than historians have tended to assume. They consisted not only of 'traditional' peasants, but also 'modern' road-menders and railway workers, bakers and bar-tenders, syndicalists and seamstresses, not to mention the singing postman.

'The Legend Walks': Transmitting Traditions

In the late nineteenth century, many folklorists were haunted by a quest for the origins of popular traditions. For them, the question of transmission was primarily a question of the deep cultural past. Such a view of oral culture has a tendency to overemphasize the idea that traditions 'survive', handed down unwittingly by people who do not understand their true significance. Arnaudin's manuscripts lend themselves to tracing transmission in a much more concrete sense: who did his singers and storytellers learn their traditions from?³⁹⁴ In an effort to explain the difference between fairy-tales and legends, Jacob Grimm wrote about their narrative style as if it were a means of locomotion: 'The fairy-tale flies, the legend walks, knocks at your door'.³⁹⁵ The image of the legend walking is particularly powerful because it fits so neatly with what it is possible to find out from Arnaudin's manuscripts about the everyday transmission of popular culture. The Grande-Lande was very far from the static place it was often assumed to be by outsiders. Many local men drove carts, transporting pine resin and wood from the centre of the *département* to the commercial hub of Bordeaux, and most sharecropping families moved from farm to farm several times in their life-time, sometimes even annually. The narratives and songs Arnaudin collected moved with people, and between them, and his manuscripts provided fleeting glimpses of where people learned traditions, and from whom.

For the most part, these networks were close to home; the most common sources for stories

394 Hopkin points out that similar work can be done with Paul Sébillot's networks of informants. *Voices of the People*, 50.

395 J. Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, new edn (London: Routledge, 1999), xv.

and songs were parents.³⁹⁶ On three occasions, informants mentioned learning songs from their mothers, and on two more they mentioned learning stories from them.³⁹⁷ Fillon Dumartin (unidentified) told Arnaudin she learned a story about the French Revolution from her mother-in-law.³⁹⁸ Sometimes both parents were named as sources for traditions, as when Anne-Jeanne Mariolan, known as Mariane de Mariolan (1822-1916) told Arnaudin: 'All the tales I have told you, I learned them at home, from my father, from my mother... at the evening gatherings to shuck corn'.³⁹⁹ Jeanne Durroux (unidentified) also mentioned her father as a source for a song, and Marie Baladès, known as Marichoun (1821-1895) once mentioned that her father had known a song which she could not remember.⁴⁰⁰ There is, on the other hand, very little evidence of the cultural influence of grandparents in rural society suggested by Marc Bloch.⁴⁰¹ Just one storyteller passed on a story from her grandmother.⁴⁰² On at least one occasion, the direction of cultural flow went the other way. 'Lou Patroun' Saubesty learned a story about a stolen pig from his son, who in turn had learned it from another boy.⁴⁰³ For the most part, however, informants told Arnaudin they had learned traditions when they were children, or long ago.⁴⁰⁴ Marie Ducout, known as Caroline femme Dulucq (b.1839) remarked to Arnaudin of one song: 'je la savais longtemps avant de me marier'.⁴⁰⁵

Sometimes singers and storytellers referred to unrelated acquaintances as sources, such as a

396 Linda Dégh talks of dynasties of storytellers. See: Dégh, *Folktales and Society*, 104.

397 NFA, 2 MI 29/2, f.328, 2 MI 29/3, f.27, 2 MI 29/4, f.252, 2 MI 29/17, f.87, 2 MI 29/11, f.368.

398 OC:VIII, 557.

399 NFA, 2 MI 29/11, f.368.

400 NFA, 2 MI 29/3, f.293, 2 MI 29/1, f.240.

401 M. Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (New York, 1964), 40.

402 NFA, 2 MI 29/3, f.411; Occasionally, informants also mentioned 'old' vocabulary that they remember their grandparents using. See, for example: OC:VII, 123.

403 NFA, 2 MI 29/11, f.607.

404 NFA, MI 29/2, f.328, 2 MI 29/3, f.27, 2 MI 29/4, f.134, 2 MI 29/4, f.175.

405 NFA, 2 MI 29/1, f.439.

local notary, or shepherd.⁴⁰⁶ This was markedly more common in the case of stories, with several of Arnaudin's informants referring to specialists who were known locally for their narrative skills. Almost all of these specialists were old, and Arnaudin was particularly keen to note that a man like Léonard Bonnat, who was a source for one of Henri Vidal's stories, was a 'vieillard de 74 ans, né a Trensacq, qu'il n'a jamais quitté, n'ayant pas servir, ne sachant pas lire'.⁴⁰⁷ Babé Plantié told Arnaudin she learned a tale from a woman in her home village: 'La vieille d'Ychoux qui faisait ce conte à Babé en racontait tout un hiver sans jamais répéter le même – Elle savait la Belle aux cheveux d'or, – la Lampe merveilleux'.⁴⁰⁸ There were some examples of singers who were considered specialists, such as Arnaudin's friend Pierre Larrouy, known as l'Afrique, and Antoine Bidalas (1800-1880), who both composed and sang songs. Jeanne Garbay, known as Jénî, veuve Cassagne (1850-1910) had a special role in the village of Trensacq as someone who was called upon to sing at baptisms.⁴⁰⁹

A number of different occupations were mentioned as sources for songs and stories, from workers, to tailors, to carpenters, labourers, road-menders, shepherds, and even a monk, although it is probably sensible to assume that most traditions were learned from farmers, whose occupation was simply unmentioned.⁴¹⁰ By far the commonest among occupations named as sources were servants, with two singers and one storyteller claiming they learned from domestic help.⁴¹¹ Servants were not simply a privileged point of access for middle-class folklorists into working-class culture, as David Hopkin has explored.⁴¹² Their positions as intermediaries, who moved between

406 NFA, 2 MI 29/11, f.569; OC:VII, 148.

407 NFA, 2 MI 29/11, f.458. For other examples of elderly sources, see 2 MI 29/11, ff.337, 398, 537, 666.

408 NFA, 2 MI 29/11, f.137.

409 OC:IV, 741–3.

410 NFA, 2 MI 29/1, f.81, 162, 474, 2 MI 29/3, ff.281, 287, 2 MI 29/11, ff.398, 481, 625.

411 NFA, 2 MI 29/4, f.68, 2 MI 29/5, f.285, 2 MI 29/11, f.660.

412 Hopkin, *Voices of the People*, 20; D. Hopkin, 'Intimacies and Intimations: Storytelling between Servants and

households, villages, and age-groups, also made them particularly important conduits for songs and stories. There is little evidence for the importance of more mobile occupations to the transmission of traditions in the Arnaudin manuscripts, although this may be a result of the strikingly mobile lives of local sharecroppers.⁴¹³ Informants told Arnaudin they learned their songs and stories in the villages where they were born, or sometimes where they had lived a few years before.⁴¹⁴ Sometimes they even mentioned the metropolis of Bordeaux.⁴¹⁵ Marie Destizons, known as Claudine (1848-1919) told Arnaudin she learned one song from the daughter of a policeman, who had moved to Pissos from Dax or Mugron, villages far south of the Grande-Lande, while Catherine Gentes (1848-1906) learned another 'd'une famille venue depuis longtemps de Mont-de-Marsan'.⁴¹⁶ The singers themselves were confused as to whether people carried songs, or whether songs moved in their own right: Babé Plantié told Arnaudin that the song 'Turn, sedas' 'est venue de Coums', and another informant told Arnaudin that 'In the sheepfold there are nine loaves' 'est venue de Salles', a village where dancing was very popular.⁴¹⁷

Arnaudin's informants made very little mention of learning traditions from written sources. Arnaudin sometimes noted that stories or songs had appeared in almanacs, or that tunes were similar to hymn tunes, but there is no evidence from his fieldwork of informants directly learning folklore from written sources.⁴¹⁸ Clearly, this was not because literacy was beyond them. When Arnaudin asked far-flung informants for their songs and stories, he depended on their ability to

Masters in Nineteenth-Century France', https://www.academia.edu/3010609/Intimacies_and_Intimations_Storytelling_between_Servants_and_Masters_in_Nineteenth-Century_France, accessed 14 November 2013.

413 For the importance of mobile occupations for transmitting traditions, see for instance: Dégh, *Folktales and Society*, 51; J. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, 1990). 124.

414 For example: NFA, 2 MI 29/1, ff. 204, 285, 287, 313, 372, 376, 438, 2 MI 29/2, ff.341, 347, 2 MI 29/3, ff.89, 123, 212, 329, 363, 2 MI 29/11, ff.304, 362, 537, 626. OC:IV, 484–5, 523, 608–10, 674–5, 697–8.

415 NFA, 2 MI 29/4, ff.207-11.

416 NFA, 2 MI 29/1, ff.259, 322.

417 NFA, 2 MI 29/4, ff. 13, 342 .

418 NFA, 2 MI 29/3, f.351, 2 MI 29/24, f.460; OC:IV, 491–3; Edmond About's novel depicts a local mayor learning proverbs from almanacs. See: About, *Maitre Pierre*, 161.

write them down, or have them written down. But, for the most part, this informal culture was carried on in face-to-face, oral settings. Another striking, although perhaps not unsurprising absence, is how little a source like Arnaudin's manuscripts has to say about the deep history of these transmissions. The songs and tales may have been filled with a pseudo-medieval cast of kings, nobles, and maidens, but the people who performed them learned them in a nineteenth-century world of railways and letter writing. It was not just legends that walked, but also tales and songs which were passed from person to person, village to village. As they moved, the people who told them adapted these traditions to their own lives. Fables and ballads are not as timeless as they might appear.

Against his better judgement, Arnaudin collected a whole series of *charivari* songs, designed to shame transgressive sexual and marital behaviour. These songs were not just about behaviour in general, but were targeted at specific individuals, some of whom Arnaudin was able to identify. And this personalisation of the songs was not limited to the slightly unusual *charivaris*, products of extraordinary circumstances. Whether or not it was really the truth about their origins, singers insisted to Arnaudin that songs were 'about' local people, such as lou Trounquéy, a local inn-keeper, or le Pioucote, 'une très jolie femme, 18 enfants, encore en vie peut-être'.⁴¹⁹ Sometimes singers suggested who the authors of specific songs had been. Babé Plantié had a particularly ingenious explanation for the song 'I got myself a husband', which was about a woman who marries a Tom Thumb of a husband: Janine dou Pitche came up with the song. 'Janine avait un mari de petit taille'.⁴²⁰ It is easier to notice the historical specificity of legends, which often refer to real people, events, and places, but local people also adapted other types of story and song to make them about recent times and places. Two blacksmith brothers from Lit-et-Mixte in 1870 had apparently come up with the song Arnaudin collected about resin-collecting, precisely during the period when resin

419 For these and other examples of personalised songs, see: NFA, 2 MI 29/1, ff.137, 439, 2 MI 29/3, f.223.

420 NFA, 2 MI 29/4, f.168.

prices were reaching their peak.⁴²¹ Singers sometimes referred to waging war on the *émigrés* or changed the chorus of love songs to the stirring words: 'Bibe la République! Bibe la liberté!'⁴²²

'The Moon Tricked Me': Performances

It might not seem terribly controversial to claim that the people Arnaudin collected folklore from were mobile and that the culture they transmitted was changing. Yet the idea of a fixed, static, rural culture swept away by modernity, or 'a breed of man [who] will eventually die out, but [who] will not change to suit the time' is central to most historians' understandings of modernisation.⁴²³ This battle between progress and tradition depends on a caricature of folklore best summed up in Edward Shorter's comments on the *veillée*, the evening work gatherings common across much of pre-industrial Europe:

A final common element in these *veillées* is the talk, because there was always something said. People didn't just sit in silence. And talk is important in evaluating the cohesiveness of these little villages because it reminds people of the rules of the game: the more telling of the Old Tales, the stronger the reminder of past generations to whose model the present one is obliged to adhere. The more "gossip," the stronger the obligation to conform to the expectations of others.⁴²⁴

There are many problems with Shorter's claims about the *veillée*. As other historians have suggested, silence was not just the absence of talk, but an important part of rural culture in itself. Moreover, tales, or indeed gossip and songs, were ways to explore new opportunities, and not just a cultural weight hanging around the necks of the rural population. But most importantly, the fixed image of peasants at the *veillée* itself needs to be questioned. Arnaudin's informants not only told tales and sang songs in these traditional contexts, but also in other places, in ways that suggest that

421 OC:IV, 793–4.

422 OC:IV, 60–1, 536–8.

423 Gilmore, *Aggression and Community*, 185; See, notably: Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*; Devlin, *The Superstitious Mind*.

424 E. Shorter, 'The Veillée and the Great Transformation', in J. Beauroy, M. Bertrand, and E. Gargan (eds), *The Wolf and the Lamb: Popular Culture in France, from the Old Regime to the Twentieth Century* (Saratoga, California, 1977), 133.

this culture was not as rigid as writers such as Shorter have assumed. Folklorists have presented a much more varied picture of performance contexts. In her study of tale-telling in a Hungarian village, for instance, Linda Dégh mentions stories being told at the *veillée*, after dinner, in an artisan's workshop, and also during wakes.⁴²⁵ In fact, Arnaudin's notes reveal that any situation where boredom threatened might be a good time to sing or tell a story. This matters because the same story or song performed in different situations would take on different meanings, and Arnaudin was perfectly aware that performers changed their performances to suit their audience and occasion. For instance, instead of singing of 'virgins' they replaced the word 'puncéle' with a more innocuous word for faithful people - 'fidèle' - when they were singing to their social superiors.⁴²⁶

The *veillée* was nonetheless the most common context mentioned for singing and telling stories.⁴²⁷ Many songs were addressed to the 'master' or the 'mistress' of the house. Arnaudin described how one song, a complaint from a donkey's point of view, was sung at the *veillée* and accompanied by hand gestures that threw the shadow of the donkey onto the wall.⁴²⁸ This was above all else, the place for the long tales which required concentration on behalf of both narrator and audience, although Arnaudin's informants also mentioned singing at the *veillée*.⁴²⁹ At the same time, men and women would shuck corn, spin, or mend tools. Yet it is clear that not all evening gatherings involved telling tales or singing. In his study of the village of Lévignacq in the 1880s, Urbain Guérin mentioned no storytelling or music at all. When the family he observed were not working in the evenings, they read.⁴³⁰ But an even more fundamental problem with focusing on just

425 Dégh, *Folktales and Society*, 95, 96, 98, 102, 105–110.

426 OC:VI, 402.

427 Although the word was not used by Arnaudin's informants. They instead referred to the *espelhouquéyres* or *égrenages*, the evening gatherings to shuck maize.

428 OC:IV, 623–4.

429 For two examples of narrators talking about telling stories, and one example of a singer mentioning singing songs at the *veillée*, see: NFA, 2 MI 29/11, f.368, 2 MI 29/24, 46, 2 MI 29/20, f.195.

430 Guérin, 'Paysan-Résinier de Lévignacq (Landes)', 331.

the *veillée* is that it does too little to take into account the relationship between these occasions and a wider economy of rural speech. Shorter equates culture with speaking, but several writers have pointed out that silence was an important part of rural life.⁴³¹ Arnaudin, and other writers at the time and since, have emphasized that silence was especially important for the men and women who lived in the vast and sparsely-populated landscape of the Grande-Lande.⁴³² For both Arnaudin and the novelist Edmond About, the silence of the local population was 'en harmonie avec le paysage'.⁴³³ Silence, as David Hopkin has pointed out, was an important communicative strategy in face-to-face communities where saying too much could risk alienating people whose presence was inescapable.⁴³⁴

This importance of silence is one element of thinking about 'what proportion of peasant "talk"' tales at the *veillée* represented, but it is equally important to think about the many other places where rural men and women performed traditions, whether verbal or more bodily. Dancing, for instance, was associated with the *veillée* by Arnaudin's informants, but it also took place, along with singing, in a variety of other contexts, such as organized *bals*. Dancing was primarily associated with courting.⁴³⁵ 'In Saint-Léger There are Four Beautiful Girls' was one of the most popular love songs Arnaudin collected, and one of the few to discuss courting explicitly. In the song, the four young beauties stay at a dance too long. They enlist the help of a young man named Pierrille to guide them home through a forest. When they get into the forest, Pierrille takes one of

431 Corbin, *The Life of an Unknown*, 66; Arnold van Gennep talks of the 'reticence' of the rural population. See: *Le folklore français*, I, 59.

432 Among many diary entries, see for instance, 18 September 1874. OC:VIII, 60–1; M.-D. Ribéreau-Gayon, 'Perceptions sensorielles et représentations des Landes de Gascogne', in *Le littoral gascon et son arrière pays* (Arcachon, 1993), 157.

433 About, *Maître Pierre*, 40–1; See Arnaudin's diary entry for 18 September 1874. OC:VIII, 61.

434 Hopkin, *Voices of the People*, 29, 101, 132.

435 A.-M. Sohn, *Du premier baiser à l'alcôve: la sexualité des français au quotidien, 1850-1950* (Paris, 1996), 172.

the girls and 'kisses' her. The others cry out 'Leave that one, She is my sister'.⁴³⁶ It seems very likely that at the start of the nineteenth century, this kind of pre-marital experimentation between young men and women was quite common, and an important context for singing songs about love.

Arnaudin collected a number of songs that were associated with the rites of life. There were songs to be sung at baptisms and songs that were sung on the way home from weddings, although there is no mention of a tradition of funeral laments.⁴³⁷ Weddings, in particular, were occasions to sing, dance, and play flirtatious practical jokes.⁴³⁸ A context for singing that Arnaudin was less ready to discuss was the inn, even though, as the previous chapter explored, inn-keepers were important informants and intermediaries for his fieldwork. Where the *veillée* was associated with the harmless sociability of neighbours and families, drinking establishments were a threat to the social order, and a threat which both the state and the Church repeatedly attempted to stamp out.⁴³⁹ During periods of unrest such as the rioting in Sabres in 1863, drinking establishments were obvious trouble spots.⁴⁴⁰ Much of this trouble had long been associated with singing and dancing. At the end of the eighteenth century, Jacques Grasset de Saint-Sauveur despaired of the consumption of wine in the region:

Il n'y a que les jours de fête et de dimanche que l'usage de cette liqueur leur est permis. A cette époque ils se rendent tous au cabaret, qui n'est qu'une cantine volante. Les hommes, les femmes, les garçons, les filles et les enfants en bas âge, s'y livrent, sans remords, à la joie et aux plaisirs; les vieilles femmes entonnent un air, accompagné de battement de mains, et quelquefois d'une musette: les filles et les garçons attentifs à la mesure, dansent et sautent en cadence... Après ce divertissement, chacun se met à boire, et avec si peu de retenue, que tous, jusqu'aux enfants mêmes, rentrent dans leurs cabanes dans un état complet d'ivresse.⁴⁴¹

436 OC:IV, 155–9.

437 Ibid., 113–6, 739–53.

438 See, for instance, the discussion of le Jani de Tanot singing at a wedding. OC:VII, 519; For a fuller description of jokes, singing, and dancing at weddings, see: P. Toulgouat, 'La vie d'autrefois d'après les souvenirs du "Bielhot de Sabres"', dernier tisserand des Landes', *Bulletin de la Société de Borda*, 1986, 194–7.

439 B. Traimond, 'La sociabilité rurale landaise', 146–7; Singer, *Village Notables*, 89–105.

440 P. Leshauris, 'La Révolution de Sabres (1863)', *Bulletin de la Société de Borda*, 1979, 385–410.

441 J. Grasset Saint-Sauveur, 'Les landes de Bordeaux: moeurs et usages de leurs habitants', in G. Latry (ed), *Les*

Another important, but less frequent context for socializing was the outdoor fairs, the *foires*, normally held annually. Arnaudin's notes are filled with examples of speech collected at these busy events, where locals and foreigners exchanged animals, household goods, and religious paraphernalia, such as devotional medals.⁴⁴²

Beyond the heightened occasions of *veillée*, wedding, *foire*, or *cabaret*, songs, stories, and proverbs also flourished in a multitude of more quotidian contexts. Arnaudin mentioned shepherds singing in front of their sheepfolds, or a young woman in Escource singing so beautifully that the people working around her dropped their tools to listen.⁴⁴³ He waxed poetical about 'les chansons berçants la rêverie du bouvier... cheminant sur les longs chemins de la lande, sur les pas traînants de ses boeufs, qu'égrenaient dans sa chanson les clairs tintements de leurs clochettes'.⁴⁴⁴ Comments Arnaudin recorded reveal that women sang as they washed, or as they worked in the fields.⁴⁴⁵ Such occasions were the only times women could talk to one another out of the earshot of men.⁴⁴⁶ Proverbs were used in an even greater variety of everyday situations. Arnaudin overheard them from strangers on the road, chatting around the household with Marie, or talking to people at local fairs, and even in conversations with people on the train.⁴⁴⁷ Many of his proverb notes seem to have been taken from informal conversations, perhaps sitting around 'doing the porch'. This refers to the

landes de Bordeaux: moeurs et usages de leurs habitants, suivi de Voyage dans le département des Landes (Pau, 2004), 57–8; See also: Sargos, *Histoire de la forêt landaise*, 204–5.

442 *OC*:VII, 212, 279; Traimond discusses the 'ardeur' of the local population for foires. See: 'La sociabilité rurale landaise', 277–299.

443 NFA, 2 MI 29/21, f.185.

444 NFA, 2 MI 29/19, f.320.

445 For notes on singing as women washed their clothes in the river Leyre, see: *OC*:VII, 36; Arnaudin collected a song from Marie Lescommères 'dans le champ'. See: *OC*:IV, 617.

446 On the *lavoir*, see: Verdier, *Façons de dire, façons de faire*, 125–44.

447 For notes collected from 'Gourgues' on the train, see: NFA, 2 MI 29/19, f.88 and 2 MI 29/24, f.47.

local tradition of sitting under the porch and chatting and working in the summer.⁴⁴⁸ One time, Arnaudin recorded an example phrase from Jean Tastet (b.1858) as he worked cutting branches from a tree.⁴⁴⁹

Different times might be more or less appropriate for singing or storytelling. *Veillées* were held in the evening and drinking tended to be a Sunday activity. Songs, in particular, belong to a calendar as well as a daily rhythm of making love: according to Babé Plantié, evening spinning-bees regularly transformed into dances on Thursday and Saturday evenings.⁴⁵⁰ In the annual cycle, tales were much more closely associated with the winter time, when agricultural workers had the leisure of long evenings inside, while songs were associated with summer.⁴⁵¹ As in English folk songs, courting was especially associated with May, what the songs of the Grande-Lande called 'the hot time of year'.⁴⁵² Many of the songs, perhaps surprisingly for modern audiences, take place early in the morning, 'at the break of day'. Young women excuse their roaming abroad before the day has even begun by saying 'The moon tricked me'.⁴⁵³ It is no coincidence that these outdoor spaces are also where rural people made love.⁴⁵⁴ The high point of the year was the dinner held after the threshing was completed, when men and women enjoyed 'facétieux propos' and 'chansons bouffonnes'.⁴⁵⁵

448 OC:VI, 302.

449 OC:VII, 326.

450 OC:VI, 242.

451 Dégh, *Folktales and Society*, 76; NFA, 2 MI 29/11, f. 137.

452 See, for example: OC:IV, 149, 477–9.

453 For example: *Ibid.*, 319.

454 Sohn, *Du premier baiser à l'alcôve*, 92.

455 NFA, 2 MI 29/17, f.181, 2 MI 29/21, f.151; Toulgouat, 'La vie d'autrefois d'après les souvenirs du "Bielhot de Sabres"', 197–9.

Conclusion: Modern Traditions

In the twentieth century, Claude Seignolle dedicated part of his harvest of folk tales to 'ce petit phénomène d'auto-stoppeuse bretonne de 18 ans qui, entre la Porte St-Cloud et Morlaix, me raconta plus d'histoires qu'une grande-mère de cent ans ne pourrait en savoir'.⁴⁵⁶ Similarly, in the nineteenth century, legends, tales, songs, and proverbs were not the exclusive preserve of the oldest members of rural society or the representatives of what contemporaries considered the most 'backward' groups, such as women or certain occupations, nor were they confined to specific contexts, such as the *veillée*. Instead, traditional culture was mobile and changeable. For these reasons, it has much to tell historians about how ordinary people negotiated the changes of the nineteenth century.

The same kind of person might well, like the widow Deytz, have petitioned the Ponts et chaussées for a pension, and, like Babé Plantié, talked in humourous terms about local witches. The war between reform and tradition is a battle dreamed up by people who never understood the everyday cultures of people like Babé and the widow Deytz. It reduces the choices they made in their lives to mere resistance, and leaves no space for the creativity that stories and songs are witness to. This matters most when popular culture bursts into political culture, as it so often did in the nineteenth century. Angry workers and farmers expressed their resistance to changes imposed from above in a language that looks opaque until it is reconnected to the folk traditions on which it drew.⁴⁵⁷ But the point of studying folklore as a living culture in the nineteenth century is not simply to demonstrate the roots of popular protest.⁴⁵⁸ This culture was in itself a place where things were happening. While elites were most concerned with elections, protests, and the public stage of the city, rural workers acted out the struggles of the nineteenth century against the different, more local,

456 C. Seignolle, *Contes fantastiques de Bretagne*. (Paris, 1969), 77.

457 Sahlins, *Forest Rites*.

458 Which is the only role it plays, for instance, in: M. Agulhon, *The Republic in the Village: The People of the Var from the French Revolution to the Second Republic* (Cambridge, 1982).

and more personal backdrops of the inn, the fair, and the *veillée*. The remaining chapters take these local, bodily struggles seriously, beginning with a basic outline of the everyday language of the body in the Grande-Lande during this period.

Chapter Four

'As Straight as a Sickle': Doing the Body in Everyday Speech

...there is scarcely a spot of the human anatomy to which does not cling some myth or legend of the people. No peculiarity has been allowed to go by unnoticed. From the hair of his head to the soles of his feet he has been scrutinized, and a whole library of books would scarcely contain the lore of the 'folk' regarding his every characteristic. From the dimple in his chin to the little white spots on his toe-nail, all have been noticed, thought over, and accounted for, not in exactly the same way, to be sure, all over the world, but in a manner as ingenious as it is characteristic of the 'folk'.⁴⁵⁹

Introduction: Language and Bodies

When people in the nineteenth-century Grande-Lande talked about their bodies, which body parts did they mention and what metaphors governed their understandings of their own flesh?⁴⁶⁰ This attention to everyday details reveals a range of bodily experiences that were undoubtedly changing, but it provides confusing evidence for the big narratives of the historiography of the body. There was no triumph of bio-medical understandings, no sexualisation of diverse bodily practices, no transgressive folk body civilized by elites. Instead, labourers, shepherds, and housewives talked humorously and ironically about a body threatened by violence and ground down by physical toil. If this was a step on the road towards the 'modern' body, it was only in the sense that ordinary people dreamed of growing larger and standing taller.

These changes in bodily experiences and aspirations stand in an ambiguous relationship to linguistic changes. In his unpublished notes Arnaudin wrote passionately but fatalistically about the decline of Gascon. He demanded, '*laissons les patois mourir de leur belle mort, sans se donner le plaisir bête de défigurer leurs traits à l'heure de leur agonie*'.⁴⁶¹ Historical linguists understand the passion of statements like Arnaudin's: language plays a key role in senses of identity, and especially

459 A. F. Chamberlain, 'Human Physiognomy and Physical Characteristics in Folk-Lore and Folk-Speech', *JAF* 6, no. 20 (1 January 1893), 13.

460 For similar questions, see: Porter, 'History of the Body Reconsidered', 242.

461 NFA, 2 MI 29/8, f.53.

regional identities threatened by national languages, as Gascon was by French.⁴⁶² But what historians know less about is how this sense of identity was not only conceived, but lived and performed in distinctly corporeal ways. In everyday experience there was a bond between dialect and flesh, speaking and experiencing. The men and women Arnaudin lived among transmitted their own understandings and uses of their bodies through the dialect that they spoke, a dialect that grew out of their experiences, unlike a standardised, national language, such as French. This dialect was highly localized, creating meanings that reflected the landscape, local agricultural practices, and social structures. The notes Arnaudin assembled to write a dictionary are like a template of everyday bodily meaning, both the shadow cast by countless personal experiences, and a repertoire of strategies for dealing with new situations.⁴⁶³ These notes are something between a phenomenology, an aesthetics, and a morality of local bodies.

Arnaudin had a keen sense of the rootedness of Gascon, believing that it expressed local meanings that French could not. French, in his words, was 'incolore... une lourde paraphrase' of the 'patois concis et imagé'.⁴⁶⁴ Linguistic anthropologists would probably agree with Arnaudin that these locally-elaborated meanings, the folk speech of ordinary people, were untranslatable because they expressed a whole relationship to the world.⁴⁶⁵ As a native speaker of this dialect who also spoke French, Arnaudin is a special kind of guide into the elaboration of local meanings, meanings which are complex and rich. Although bodily experiences, and especially internal processes, tend to recede from conscious perception, Arnaudin's dialect notes reveal a surprisingly subtle vocabulary of body parts, not just limited to hands, heads, and hearts, but focussing attention on lips, ankles,

462 M. Jones and I. Singh, *Exploring Language Change* (London, 2005), 85.

463 On literature as a 'strategy,' see: K. Burke, 'Literature as Equipment for Living', in *The Philosophy Of Literary Form* (London, 1957), 253–62.

464 *OC*:VIII, 551.

465 See especially: B. Whorf, *Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf* (Boston, 1956), 134–159.

necks, genitals, and the anus.⁴⁶⁶ These words do not simply reflect the biological reality of the body: they actively construct bodies, shaping what people perceive and the range of actions available to them. These dialect notes are full of bodies. The men and women whose speech Arnaudin recorded talked about their own bodies and the bodies of the people they knew. Many local terms refer to bodily skills, labour, postures, and gestures, and the notes are often closer to a choreography than a lexicon.

An approach that looks at these different body parts and different ways of using the body does not necessarily lead to a picture of the fragmentation of bodily experiences.⁴⁶⁷ As a list of words largely divorced from everyday uses, a dictionary might not seem like an obvious place to consider the underlying coherences of bodily experience. In fact, the way a dictionary works by translating meanings, cross-referencing other words, and drawing on example sentences draws connections between different body parts and activities. Neither is this simply a fiction of how dictionaries are compiled. These correspondences in the text are based on the very real correspondences between body parts in speech, which are understood in relation to one another, not simply as higher or lower, more internal or external, but even as analogous. For instance, in Gascon the 'eye tooth' is the canine, and the 'eye without the pupil' is a euphemism for the anus.⁴⁶⁸ Arnaudin's notes give insights into such metaphors that organized bodily experiences into coherent frames of reference, metaphors that the linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have argued are too often overlooked.⁴⁶⁹ Rather than a fragmentation of body parts into independent concerns, and rather than separate histories of, for instance, sexuality, working practices, ageing, nutrition, and violence, how these different domains interfere with one another draws attention to the underlying

466 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*; Leder, *The Absent Body*.

467 For approaches that have stressed the fragmentation of the body, see for example: Crozier and Forth, *Body Parts*; Hillman and Mazzio, *The Body in Parts*.

468 OC:VI, 287; OC:VII, 134.

469 G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live by* (Chicago, 1980), 3.

object that is concerned by all of them: the body.

There are aspects of how the people Arnaudin talked to conceived of their bodies that would probably appear familiar to many people today. Men and women spoke of bodies that 'wore out' like cloth.⁴⁷⁰ Much of their attention was focussed on the head, eyes, and mouth, while the interiors of their bodies receded from consciousness.⁴⁷¹ And yet this sense of familiarity is deceptive. As many historians have emphasized, we need to pay attention to how different even our recent ancestors' lives were.⁴⁷² This very different body is not just a question of vocabulary, but of the connections between speech and everyday activities. After all, to talk of bodies that wore out like cloth surely had a different meaning in a society where shepherds made many of their own clothes, and housewives were expected to mend any holes. Speech focused on body parts that might surprise us, and there were notable absences in this discourse as well, things historians might expect them to talk about which they do not. If many societies today are cultures of the hand, this was a culture of the legs and back, a world that put more emphasis on gravity, that drags the body down towards an unforgiving earth. Much of this might confirm what historians expect about the bodily culture of the rural labouring classes. There is a great concern with hunger, fatigue, labour, and clothing, which fits neatly with what previous historians have had to say about how folk cultures reflect the fairly miserable existence of nineteenth-century peasants.⁴⁷³ Nonetheless, this dark picture must be somewhat adjusted to make space for the creativity and agency of the men and women whose world-views the dialect loosely expressed and shaped. Language is not so much a trap that restricts bodily expression as a game people consciously play for their own strategic reasons. This chapter asks what the rules of this game were, and whether they might have added up to a coherent

470 OC:VI, 26.

471 See: Leder, *The Absent Body*.

472 Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre*, 4; Hopkin, *Voices of the People*, 2; Goldstein, *Hysteria Complicated by Ecstasy*, 5; Hull, 'Review', 75; Duden, *The Woman Beneath the Skin*.

473 Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre*, 9–73; Weber, 'Fairies and Hard Facts'; Devlin, *The Superstitious Mind*.

philosophy, a way of being in the world specific to this time and place.

'Prises sur la Bouche du Peuple': Arnaudin's Dialect Research

At first glance, Arnaudin's dictionary notes are an unpromising source. The fragments he recorded do not add up to a finished dictionary, and the modern edition is the result of the editorial work of a team of local specialists.⁴⁷⁴ Moreover, a dictionary might appear to be a relatively static, anonymous, and monolithic source, which gives too little insight into how ordinary people spoke and in what contexts, as well as how their speaking was changing over time. Yet the dictionary is not as motionless as it might appear. Any dictionary is a translation. Dictionaries move things, create correspondences, and are necessarily filled with a multitude of internal references between words. Arnaudin's lexicographical notes are no exception, and what is more these notes are the scene of struggles, struggles between different languages, struggles between men and women, and subtle statements about class and occupational identity.

As a native speaker of the local *patois* Arnaudin had strict ideas about its purity. For his dialect research he confined his attention to the immediate space around the town of Labouheyre where he lived his whole life. For him, villages much further away than Sabres, Commensacq, or Pissos were different linguistic regions. In particular, he felt there was a dialect specific to what he called the 'Grande-Lande', the area that was largely un-forested at the start of the nineteenth century, and dominated by agro-pastoralism. This extremely local focus has the advantage of concentrating attention on a key moment: the transition from the agro-pastoralism of the old moorlands to the mixed economy of sylvo-agro-pastoralism, combining sheep and farming with resin-farming in the industrial pine forest. Neither are Arnaudin's dictionary notes as divorced from contexts and real speakers as historians might assume. Rather than just lists of Gascon words with their French translations, his dictionary notes consisted of example phrases and ethnographic explanations,

474 J. Miró, 'Introduction: le legs lexicographique et grammatical de Félix Arnaudin', in *OC:VI*, xxii.

designed to make it easier to understand terms and ideas which lacked French equivalents. Arnaudin wrote that 'mes phrases, prises sur la bouche du peuple et reproduites telles quelles, avec une exactitude absolue, non seulement font mieux saisir ainsi les divers emplois et les sens exacts du mot, mais elles reflètent dans leur réalité un trait de moeurs'.⁴⁷⁵ Although he did write questionnaires for some informants, the evidence from his dialect notes shows that most of them were taken on the fly, from what he referred to as the 'hasard des rencontres'.⁴⁷⁶

Gascon was the language of everyday life, not just for the poorest labourers, but for middle-class families, such as the Arnaudins themselves. The local clergy even delivered sermons in Gascon.⁴⁷⁷ If *patois* can hardly be said to have been the preserve of the poor, it is nonetheless noticeable that most of the identifiable informants for Arnaudin's dialect notes were sharecroppers, labourers, artisans, and farm-wives. The names that recur most often in Arnaudin's notes are the names of his own sharecroppers, such as Babé Plantié, Jean Cazade, and Jean Monicien. The dictionary is strongly marked by the voice of these poor labourers. Many of the phrases Arnaudin included to illustrate word-meanings refer to the misery of agricultural toil:

Poor people like us, we work hard and hope things turn out all right, we have no other concern.⁴⁷⁸

[We are] several heads [people] lumped together, we live as we can, work more than we can, both mornings and nights, we aren't happy, us poor earth-scratchers.⁴⁷⁹

It must have been from these workers and shepherds that Arnaudin collected a range of derogatory terms for the local grandees, the *moussuralhe*.⁴⁸⁰

475 This unfinished note trails off. NFA, 2 MI 29/8, f.15.

476 *OC*:V, 102.

477 Lescarret, *La vie dans la Grande-Lande*, 221.

478 *OC*:VII, 176–7.

479 *Ibid.*, 78.

480 *Ibid.*, VII, 109.

Arnaudin's linguistic informants were not limited to male labourers. Michel Colin (1836-1906), a carpenter who lived next door to Arnaudin in Labouheyre, provided a lot of information concerning woodwork and building terms. Arnaudin also included notes from his own father, Barthélémy and other local bourgeois. He showed some ethnographic interest in women's work, and recorded many notes from his maid and sometime lover, Marie Darlanne as well as Babé, Catherine Laporte, known as Talinote veuve Lacave (1814-1904) and Jeanne Daugé, known as Maria, femme Monicien (b.1874).⁴⁸¹ These female informants imparted a sense of a life spent constantly patching things up, performing the 'little' jobs that had to be done around the household.⁴⁸² Arnaudin also reproduced a lot of what he called 'langage enfantin', childish terms for animals, family members, and body parts, although he did not mention any child informants in his dialect notes. Instead, he preferred the oldest speakers he could find, men and women like Babé, Talinote Laporte, Antoine Dupuch (b.1808), and Elisabeth Poudens, known as Beroun (femme) Dulas (1813-1904), born in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. This search for the oldest words extended into research in local historical documents, but Arnaudin was not interested in vocabulary that was no longer used. He worried that people might think his dialect notes were a pastiche of a dead language, but he tried to emphasize that all of the words he included were ones that had been used up until recently.⁴⁸³ His was an ethnographic and not an historical project. For instance, he came across the unfamiliar word *perpau* used in several contracts from the eighteenth century from the nearby village of Pontenx. By chance, the next day Jean Monicien used the very same word in conversation, and explained it meant a fence post.⁴⁸⁴ Only then was the word worth including in the dictionary, since Arnaudin's chief interest was language in its living context.

481 For example, see a whole range of notes Arnaudin recorded from Marie Darlanne about spinning. NFA, 2 MI 29/24, f.81.

482 On Marie's comments about patching, see 'pourpougna.' *OC*:VII, 211. On the 'little jobs,' see 'tchictchac.' *Ibid.*, 316.

483 NFA, 2 MI 29/8, f.159.

484 *OC*:VII, 176.

This means that a vivid picture emerges from the notes of a sense of place through references to local vernacular architectural forms, such as different types of sheepfold and housing, and agricultural practices concerning sheep farming and arable farming. The notes also include references to the forest fires which devastated the region in the second half of the nineteenth century, and a refined vocabulary of sticky, wet mud, lagoons, and flooding, reflecting the poorly-drained landscape of the Grande-Lande.⁴⁸⁵ The notes are also marked by the agricultural and traditional calendar of plantings, ploughings, and harvests. As throughout Europe, Saints' Days are used as reference points for changing annual contracts, finding new work, and performing specific agricultural tasks. This is not necessarily a harmonious picture, since the notes reveal the omnipresence of conflicts, not just between classes, but also within families. There is a recurring concern with the breakdown of authority in the household, with fathers who 'wear the yoke'.⁴⁸⁶ A series of euphemisms refer to conflicts within local communities. People are said to 'hardly stop' if they meet in the street, to say a 'loud Mass'. Their 'dogs don't hunt together'.⁴⁸⁷ Rather than being a static picture of the language of the old timers, the dictionary depicts a world of bitter struggles between rival factions, different families, and angry individuals.

Arnaudin himself did not think of this as a living context, since he thought of it more in terms of survival, or even the death of the language. Although some people still speak Gascon today, at the end of the nineteenth century its future looked bleak. Arnaudin believed it was in the process of becoming extinct, as his comments about the 'belle mort' of the *patois* made clear.⁴⁸⁸ Like other minority languages, such as Breton, Gascon was marginalized and made to seem 'a language

485 For references to forest fires, see: *OC:VI*, 37, 235; For references to mud, see for example 'bardis,' 'baréyre,' 'baudane,' 'desenhagna,' 'enhagna,' 'enleda,' 'hagne.' *Ibid.*, 97, 97, 106, 294, 330, 331, 462–3; and: 'tchaflic,' 'tchampoulh-tchampoulh,' and 'tcharné,' as well as example phrases which mention mud in passing. *OC:VII*, 308, 309, 312, and 37, 77.

486 *OC:VI*, 77, 185, 186–7, 219, 300, 301, 442; *OC:VII*, 86, 89, 137.

487 *OC:VI*, 50, 151, 166, 185, 500; *OC:VII*, 79, 88, 195, 252, 335.

488 NFA, 2 MI 29/8, f.53.

of the past, fit only for backward peasants'.⁴⁸⁹ Arnaudin's response to this was not that of the revivalists of the *Felibrige* literary movement, who championed Occitan languages, and he deliberately rebuffed the advances of Béarnais writers such as Miquèu Camelat who wanted to give a new life to local languages in literary works.⁴⁹⁰ Arnaudin, in typical melancholy fashion, had no interest in revitalising the language. Instead, he sought to preserve its purity, battling the influence of both French and other *patois*, and complaining bitterly about examples where old words were replaced by new ones. When a sweet-seller moved from the largely French-speaking town of Bordeaux to Mios, in the Gascon-speaking moorlands, the population of the village copied her pronunciation of the word sweet, saying 'bonbon' instead of 'boumboum'. Disgusted, Arnaudin wrote: 'Et voilà un mot de plus définitivement enterré pour faire place à une forme souverainement illogique et bête'.⁴⁹¹

In many ways, this anecdote sums up the linguistic changes that were happening in the region. As the old agricultural economy was supplanted by the trade in pine resin, the local population were confronted with new consumer possibilities. The strong links of family and village became interlaced with many weaker links which permitted dialects and languages to cross-fertilize even more easily than they no doubt always had.⁴⁹² Arnaudin may have resented this, but there was little he could do about it. In a paradox typical of the Janus-faced project of the folklorists, his obsession with the purity of his local dialect led him to pay more, rather than less, attention to loans from other languages and the changing pronunciation and lexicon. This concern with change inflects the dictionary notes with a surprisingly mobile picture of local speaking. Of course

489 L. Kuter, 'Breton vs. French: Language and the Opposition of Political, Economic, Social, and Cultural Values', in N. Dorian (ed), *Investigating Obsolescence: Studies in Language Contraction and Death* (Cambridge, 1989), 76.

490 *OC:V*, 295–327.

491 NFA, 2 MI 29/8, f.153.

492 On weak ties as the vehicle of language change, see: J. Milroy and L. Milroy, 'Linguistic Change, Social Network and Speaker Innovation', *Journal of Linguistics*, 21, no. 02 (1985), 339–84.

historians cannot simply believe, as Arnaudin did, that the *patois* embodied an 'older' or more 'traditional' attitude to the world. While *patois* songs and proverbs were often lexicographically conservative, tending to preserve words that had fallen out of everyday use, the notes Arnaudin collected suggest the *patois* was evolving to meet new demands. As an historical source, Arnaudin's dialect notes do reflect the culture and experiences of a cross-section of the Landais population in this period of change.

Body Parts: the Rise of the Head?

Which body parts did these speakers argue over and discuss? It will not surprise medical historians to find that the attention of men and women in the nineteenth century was drawn to the face and head.⁴⁹³ Yet a picture of bodily experiences which draws only on understandings of illness and health cannot do justice to the details and ephemera of quotidian body parts. The head had not won the absolute victory over the bowels that medical historians might suspect. And the meanings of the body parts on the head itself had little to do with the triumph of reason. The eyes make an interesting example, standing out both for the frequency with which they were mentioned and their symbolic polyvalence. It made sense to think of the holes and marks in everyday objects such as fountains, bread, cheese, and pine trees as having eyes.⁴⁹⁴ Since the bubbles of fat in soup were known as eyes, a 'blind soup' was one without enough fat in it.⁴⁹⁵ Eyes were everywhere, and this was not necessarily a good thing. They might carry some positive connotations, for instance being associated with talent in financial affairs. To remove the rheum from your eyes meant to become rich.⁴⁹⁶ But, in general, these omnipresent eyes were dangerous, even violent. Arnaudin did not collect much material on the evil eye, but he did record vocabulary referring to looking at someone

493 Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason*, 60; Porter and Vigarello, 'Corps, santé et maladies', 340.

494 *OC*:VII, 134.

495 *OC*:VI, 12.

496 *OC*:VII, 31.

maliciously.⁴⁹⁷ Figuratively, 'to make someone see' meant to make them suffer.⁴⁹⁸

The other parts of the head got comparatively short shrift in everyday discussions of the body. Ears were simply compared to the wattle of a cockerel.⁴⁹⁹ Noses are more popular, being associated with both pride and curiosity. A 'nosing' means a peek, or a short visit, while a 'stench' is a word for someone proud, or an *arriviste*.⁵⁰⁰ Hints from supernatural narratives suggest that, as during the medieval period, the nose was the site of identity, a target for violence, perhaps even a metaphor for the genitals, and a sign of honour.⁵⁰¹ Due to their association with the horns that identified cuckolds, foreheads are even more closely associated with such ideas of sexual honour.⁵⁰² Cheeks typically played the role of indicators of health or drunkenness.⁵⁰³ Beards, jaws, chins, and throats are all mentioned, but did not hold the interest of body parts such as the neck or the eyes. Hair, on the other hand, had many more figurative meanings. To have a tuft on the top of your head is to be proud, while hair that is too long on the nape of the neck is known as the 'chick'.⁵⁰⁴ To 'make hair' is to fight, while 'having good [body] hair' means having a resilient constitution.⁵⁰⁵

The mouth was undoubtedly the most discussed part of the head, whose symbolisms derive from violent connotations as much as the obvious importance of talking and eating. Everyday speech tended to conflate these nutritional and linguistic meanings, so a 'good mouth' meant a good

497 *OC*:VI, 46.

498 *Ibid.*, 5–6.

499 And a ploughshare. See above. *Ibid.*, 81.

500 *OC*:VII, 118, 224.

501 See especially: V. Groebner, *Defaced: The Visual Culture of Violence in the Late Middle Ages* (New York, 2004), 72–8. Also on noses, see Chapter Six, which discusses how werewolves were most frequently attacked on their nose.

502 *OC*:VII, 325.

503 *OC*:VI, 8; *OC*:VII, 203.

504 *Ibid.*, 224, 193.

505 *Ibid.*, 226; *OC*:VI, 149.

appetite, and making a 'fat mouth' at someone meant approving of them.⁵⁰⁶ A bell with a clapper made an obvious comparison to the tongue within the mouth, but local speech was most interested in lips and teeth, body parts that stood in for a number of aspects of interpersonal relations.⁵⁰⁷ Like the head, there was more than one term used in Gascon to refer to the lips.⁵⁰⁸ Lips carried a variety of meanings. They might stand for the whole face, as in the story of a man who earned himself and his house a nickname:

He gave [his wife] two slaps on the lips. "Here! Riu!" he said with the first. "Rau!" he said with the second. People found out about it and called him *lou Riu Rau*. And the name stayed with the house.⁵⁰⁹

To 'put something on someone's lips' meant to blame or reproach them, in the same way one could talk in English of throwing something in someone's face.⁵¹⁰ Lips were also associated with kissing, pouting, and laughing, and someone with thin lips was considered severe.⁵¹¹ These multifunctional, sensitive, and emotional lips are a far cry from the brutal stereotype of peasant bodily survival found in the work of a previous generation of historians. Teeth, on the other hand, were more straightforward in their meaning. Again and again, references to teeth refer to biting, and by extension, harsh words, viciousness, anger, and audacity.⁵¹² Here, as in other parts of Europe, teeth seem to have meant hardness.⁵¹³ Perhaps the large number of other words used to refer to teeth – combs, shovels, nails or keys, rakes – suggests that euphemism was necessary to avoid the

506 Ibid., 147.

507 Ibid., 105.

508 OC:VII, 205, 311.

509 Ibid., 251.

510 Ibid., 205.

511 OC:VI, 64; OC:VII, 205, 206.

512 OC:VI, 56, 177, 340, 342, 358, 440.

513 Stark, *The Magical Self*, 306.

aggression evoked by mentioning teeth.⁵¹⁴

These violent teeth have little to do with the rise of the head. In fact, when it comes to the head as a whole, the *patois* seems to have been disinterested in a similar way to much earlier periods. It is true that there were two different words for 'head', and several humorous analogies for crania, such as the pumpkin, or the spinning top, but there were actually very few symbolic associations with heads.⁵¹⁵ Arnaudin recorded no *patois* word for the brain.⁵¹⁶ Rather than talking of thoughts in the brain, local people talked of ideas weighing on the stomach.⁵¹⁷ Rather than thinking in terms of a dualism between mind and body, local speech used the same word to mean healthy and well-thought out.⁵¹⁸ As in the early-modern period, somatic feelings and specific bodily organs were strongly associated with emotions.⁵¹⁹ Jealousy was thought to keep the body warm.⁵²⁰ The heart was especially rich for thinking about these feelings. A heart that had been moved signalled surprise or worry, and reassurance meant returning the heart to its place.⁵²¹ A heart that was 'locked up' caused distress or sadness.⁵²² The liver was thought to be the seat of anger. Someone with their liver 'turned around' was furious.⁵²³ In fact, anger was the most commonly mentioned emotion, although there is no sign that in the Grande-Lande it was positively valued, as it was, for instance, in nineteenth-

514 OC:VI, 229, 366; OC:VII, 145, 186.

515 OC:VII, 108; OC:VI, 222, 272.

516 OC:VI, 266.

517 OC:VI, 387.

518 OC:VII, 280.

519 Duden, *The Woman Beneath the Skin*, 89, 91; Goldstein, *Hysteria Complicated by Ecstasy*, 13; Rublack, 'Fluxes'.

520 OC:VII, 174.

521 OC:VI, 235, 233.

522 Ibid., 229.

523 Ibid., 486.

century Finland.⁵²⁴ Anger was referred to as being like vinegar, venom, or having the devil between your eyes or in your boots.⁵²⁵ It is harder to know what to make of the attitudes to envy and jealousy which underpin so many local stories about stealing pumpkins and pigs, and cuckolding husbands. Bizarrely, to be jealous was likened to being ticklish.⁵²⁶

Everyday speech about the stomach was richer even than talk about the heart or liver. Exhaustion was felt in the stomach, and the very idea of not feeling well was expressed as a stomach out of place.⁵²⁷ The most recurrent model for internal digestion was the mill, as if human bodies ground their food internally.⁵²⁸ When it malfunctioned, the stomach might need to be washed out.⁵²⁹ The multitude of phrases referring to different types of stomach contrasts with the paucity of language to describe the trunk or torso as a whole.⁵³⁰ Arnaudin noted only one word, the 'belt'.⁵³¹ While it is true that attitudes to the internal organs and emotions owed something to old models, these feelings did not dominate everyday talk of the body.⁵³² Although organs such as the heart and stomach were thought to be able to move, there was little interest in the fluids Barbara Duden discovered in eighteenth-century women's medical complaints. Neither was the flexible and enduring language of humoralism predominant, as it was in eighteenth-century medicine.⁵³³ Dryness and wetness were only occasionally mentioned. Shepherds worried about their sheep

524 Stark, *The Magical Self*, 57, 220.

525 OC:VII, 179; OC:VI, 302, 321.

526 OC:VII, 263.

527 OC:VI, 342, 264; OC:VII, 48.

528 OC:VII, 100, 102–3.

529 OC:VI, 360.

530 Ibid., 112.

531 Ibid., 223–4.

532 Duden, *The Woman Beneath the Skin*, 107–9; Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason*, 235; For Jan Goldstein, this period extends into the nineteenth century. See: Goldstein, *Hysteria Complicated by Ecstasy*, 14, 48.

533 Porter and Vigarello, 'Corps, santé et maladies', 339; Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason*.

drying out, and dryness was associated with emaciation, and harsh feelings.⁵³⁴ Yet they do not seem to have been everyday concerns. There is just one reference to bile in the dictionary.⁵³⁵ Blood was hardly discussed in terms of illness at all, with the exception of the vulnerability of menstruating women.⁵³⁶ Instead, blood was about heredity. 'His parents keep a close eye on him, but he has mischief in his blood'.⁵³⁷ In terms of the other bodily fluids, there was surprisingly little interest in sweat, although it was referred to as 'garlic sauce'.⁵³⁸ It was not recommended to take off your clothes after sweating.⁵³⁹ Snot, on the other hand, was known by a variety of terms, including, bafflingly 'woodcock'.⁵⁴⁰ Spitting was not often mentioned, but vomiting was the source of one of the most striking word-plays of everyday speech: 'to make the arse a cuckold'.⁵⁴¹ The lack of figurative language concerning tears is also surprising, especially since it is clear from Arnaudin's own diary as well as the dictionary that tears were shed abundantly, especially when people died.⁵⁴² When Marie was sent away in 1880, not only she and Félix, but also his father and their sharecropper all cried as she was leaving.⁵⁴³ Perhaps it is suggestive that the word used for tears – *oli* – is the same word used for pine resin, and perhaps the relative absence of figurative language for tears is a testament to their straightforward, bodily significance.⁵⁴⁴ There was no need for language to explain weeping.

534 *OC:VI*, 332, 351; *OC:VII*, 12.

535 *OC:VI*, 480.

536 *OC:VII*, 265.

537 *Ibid.*, 265, 325.

538 *OC:VI*, 25.

539 *Ibid.*, 280.

540 *OC:VII*, 102–7.

541 *OC:VI*, 353, 250.

542 *OC:VII*, 599.

543 *OC:VIII*, 163–5.

544 *OC:VII*, 130.

If the head had not won the battle for supremacy, neither did the internal organs and fluids dominate everyday body talk in the way they did in early-modern experiences and descriptions of illness. Speakers were notably imprecise about specific organs, mentioning only hearts, livers, and stomachs. The lungs were not even allowed their own terminology, being instead called the 'white liver'.⁵⁴⁵ The recesses of the body were simply not as important as the face and head, nor the skin. Perhaps it is unsurprising that illness is nowhere near as important in the dictionary notes as it is in the historiography of medicine and the body. Studying the eighteenth-century notes of the physician Johann Storch, Barbara Duden found that Storch's patients did not discuss the daily grind of labour very much, but instead saw disease and poor health in terms of sudden shocks and calamities. This seems completely the opposite of Arnaudin's informants who worried about everyday work and barely discussed sudden illnesses, just as they barely discussed the internal workings of their own bodies which were so important to Storch's patients.⁵⁴⁶ Arnaudin's informants did talk of bumps and shooting pains, referred to as 'onions' and 'showers', and sometimes mentioned accidents, like a knee broken while threshing.⁵⁴⁷ The commonest complaints were coughing, rashes, and boils, but there was also mention of a range of illnesses which have now practically disappeared from western Europe.⁵⁴⁸ Pellagra, a fatal skin disease caused by malnutrition, was known as the illness of Bascons, since the fountain there was said to heal it.⁵⁴⁹ The dictionary also mentions folk remedies for conditions such as whitlows.⁵⁵⁰

But, in general, sickness and injury seem to have been taboo topics. The editors of Arnaudin's dictionary note that the very language of illness was in a sense taboo, so that it was

545 OC:VI, 486.

546 Duden, *The Woman Beneath the Skin*.

547 OC:VI, 78, 28; OC:VII, 406.

548 OC:VII, 344, 293.

549 OC:VI, 428.

550 OC:VII, 352.

dangerous to use the real names of specific conditions.⁵⁵¹ Another reason why people might not complain is that sickness was felt to be the lot of the poor. The word for ticks – *pistole* – came from the name of a small coin: ticks were the salary of the goatherd.⁵⁵² There was even a specific term for someone who complained too much about their health.⁵⁵³ There is little sense from everyday speech of a 'modern' attitude where suffering was becoming unacceptable and avoidable, and little faith was put in medicine:

“You should go to the doctor. Even if he doesn't heal you, he will relieve you somewhat.”

“Well, he will certainly relieve my wallet.”⁵⁵⁴

The figurative language of health and sickness can be hard to understand today. The idea that an old man could want a 'healthy' or 'clean' interior might be comprehensible, but why would someone be described as as healthy as a nail?⁵⁵⁵ The use of animal illnesses such as the *amourrau* to discuss human sickness might make sense, but why would being 'unbound' mean being ill?⁵⁵⁶ There is an irreducible otherness to figures of speech concerning bodies that hold no meaning for modern readers, and whose associations are forever lost. 'Making almanacs' means to faint, 'making foxes' to throw up, and 'returning to your old lips' means returning to where you used to live.⁵⁵⁷

An Unbridled Body?

If the rise of the head so apparent in medical historiography proves unsatisfying for coming to terms with the symbolic complexities of everyday rural speech about bodies, alternative themes

551 Ibid., 79.

552 Ibid., 196.

553 Ibid., 186, see also 198.

554 Ibid., 84; A. Corbin, 'Douleurs, souffrances et misères du corps', in A. Corbin, J.-J. Courtine, and G. Vigarello (eds.), *Histoire du corps* (3 vols. Paris: 2005-6), II, 273.

555 OC:VII, 22, 280.

556 OC:VI, 30, see also 68, 283.

557 Ibid., 45; OC:VII, 205, 245.

can already be discerned. There is plenty of violence here, and perhaps some evidence of the transgressive, yet fecund and joyful bodies that Mikhail Bakhtin found in the work of Rabelais.⁵⁵⁸ Like Rabelais's characters, this nineteenth-century everyday speech sometimes suggests that people inhabited a violent, drunk, and sexually-explicit body that exceeded its own limits. Everyday speech talked of the ways laughter opened the body to the world around. The obsession with the skin also suggests that the interiorisation considered typical of the 'modern' body was not yet complete.⁵⁵⁹ Like early-modern patients and magical practitioners, the men and women of the Grande-Lande lived their skins as vulnerability and experienced their bodies as open to a dangerous environment.⁵⁶⁰ This is best summed up by a phrase people would use to avoid giving offence: 'Don't think I mean to hurt you by touching you'.⁵⁶¹ To have someone's skin is to get revenge, and an 'ironing of the skin' is a beating.⁵⁶² People also talked of 'skinning' words or mispronouncing them, or used the word 'pelt' to insult women.⁵⁶³ Skin was useful for thinking about poverty, so to be skinned meant to be left penniless.⁵⁶⁴ 'Misery', people said, 'has brought him out in boils'.⁵⁶⁵

The general violence of the phrases in the dictionary is striking. There are at least forty-three different paraphrases for 'to beat'. Carding the wool, feeding the cattle, removing fleas, shaking the husk, harvesting rye, moving the wisp of straw, putting on the shirt, receiving logs, peeling, or

558 Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*.

559 The clearest statement of the 'interiorisation' hypothesis is: Le Breton, *Anthropologie du corps et modernité*. On laughter as 'opening up,' see: *OC:VI*, 345. On skin, see Chapter Six.

560 See Chapter Six on werewolf beliefs. See also: Duden, *The Woman Beneath the Skin*, 120–3; Stark, *The Magical Self*, 67, 154–7.

561 *OC:VII*, 337.

562 *OC:VI*, 243; *OC:VII*, 47.

563 *OC:VI*, 346; *OC:VII*, 179.

564 *OC:VI*, 297.

565 *Ibid.*, 266.

taking to someone's hair could all mean administering a beating.⁵⁶⁶ What stands out from these phrases is the importance of the skin as a site of violence, and the importance of agricultural metaphors for beating. Perhaps most shocking to modern readers is the casual attitude to this violence. One woman told Arnaudin: 'My husband – God rest his soul – did everything to me. He hit me, he bruised me, he slapped me!'⁵⁶⁷ Another woman who lived near Arnaudin commented approvingly about a man who beat his wife: 'It's no bad thing to give a piece of meat a good beating. Then it won't be so puffed up'.⁵⁶⁸ Interpersonal violence, and especially within marriage, seems to have been somewhat expected, even banal. Yet the proliferation of euphemisms for violence suggests it was nonetheless problematic. People needed a rich vocabulary of alternative ways to talk about assaults on their skin because even talking about violence could be seen as provocative.

Problems also surrounded the consumption of alcohol. Arnaudin, other local elites, and travel writers tended to see the question in stark terms. Either the local population were sober, as Arnaudin and the novelist Edmond About claimed, or they were unrestrainable alcoholics, as the early nineteenth-century travellers such as M.J. Thore and Jacques Grasset Saint-Sauveur maintained.⁵⁶⁹ The evidence from the dictionary tends to suggest that Arnaudin's rosy view was either dishonest or self-deluding. His notes mention at least fifty-six different phrases referring to being drunk. To talk in mixes, to raise your sail, to have a servant, to climb the vines, to load up the cart, to be fixed, or to suffer from *perpité*, a disease that normally affects chickens, can all mean being drunk.⁵⁷⁰ When Arnaudin and his friend Duport saw a man asleep under a tree on Ash

566 Ibid., 5, 19, 27, 140, 143, 146, 158, 166, 185, 198, 199–200, 219, 236–7, 369, 382, 410; *OC*:VII, 47, 67, 111, 117, 143, 157, 158, 159, 161, 166, 169, 170, 186, 204, 219, 224, 226.

567 *OC*:VII, 584.

568 *OC*:VI, 471.

569 About, *Maître Pierre*, 54; NFA, 2 MI 29/17, f.181 and 2 MI 29/21, f.151; *OC*:VII, 399, 401, 405, 407, 608, 612; Thore, *Promenade*, 189; Grasset Saint-Sauveur, 'Les landes de Bordeaux', 57–8.

570 *OC*:VI, 6, 8, 99, 100, 109, 110, 114, 119, 123, 124, 147, 168, 212, 220, 273, 294, 317, 319, 320, 324, 334, 336, 388, 428, 439; *OC*:VII, 11, 31, 60, 108, 117, 130, 157, 164, 176, 183, 191, 192, 193, 196, 202, 275, 277, 287, 291, 316, 317, 327, 343, 354.

Wednesday, Duport suggested to the folklorist that Mardigras – the personification of Carnival – had hit him on the head.⁵⁷¹ There was even a specific word for a drunk person's vomit.⁵⁷²

Drunkenness appears in unexpected examples, so the phrase Arnaudin used to illustrate 'care' was: 'Drunk as I was, I took care to look where I was putting my feet'.⁵⁷³ Figuratively, drunkenness was associated with being 'bewitched', 'ripe', and 'full'.⁵⁷⁴ In bodily terms, drinkers have 'wine noses' and rosy cheeks.⁵⁷⁵ They even 'sweat wine from [their] eyes'.⁵⁷⁶

There is more than a hint of Rabelais to this, especially considering how raunchy, even smutty, the songs Arnaudin collected were.⁵⁷⁷ Like Rabelais, there is some free play of rude and fertile images to this sexuality, but perhaps even more interesting is how different it is to a post-Freudian, genital sexuality.⁵⁷⁸ The rudeness of the body may have been distributed differently in this culture, considering that one of the longest entries in the dictionary, rivalled only by 'eye' and 'resin-collecting', is the word *cu*, a word endowed with the same flexibilities of meaning as its English equivalent, 'arse'.⁵⁷⁹ The 'farter' was used for a number of offensive phrases, such as telling people to defecate elsewhere, or to go and 'tan your arse'.⁵⁸⁰ The standard response to an uninvited

571 *OC:VI*, 277.

572 *Ibid.*, 178.

573 *OC:VII*, 291.

574 *OC:VI*, 320; *OC:VII*, 60, 202.

575 *OC:VI*, 8; *OC:VII*, 117.

576 *Ibid.*, 317.

577 See Chapter Eight.

578 For similar thoughts, heavily influenced by the ideas of Foucault, see: Goldstein, *Hysteria Complicated by Ecstasy*, 5. Of course, the 'modern' view of genital sexuality may itself never have reigned as absolutely as its critics once assumed.

579 *OC:VII*, 133–4.

580 *Ibid.*, 180; *OC:VI*, 177–8, 52.

question was 'blow in the arse', and idiots were referred to by the same phrase.⁵⁸¹ But arses were also used to refer to miserliness, and sickness. To be ill was to be 'arse in the air', and to be miserly was 'to shit with half the arse'.⁵⁸² Moreover, rather than being a rude term in itself, *cu* seems to have been adaptable. In some contexts it was closer in meaning to 'back': 'He has turned his arse to his neighbours'.⁵⁸³ A 'low-arse' was someone with short legs.⁵⁸⁴ This proliferation of anal simile suggests that arses were a common part of speech. Mouths, on the other hand, could be more obscene. Arnaudin's notes certainly include a rude word for the mouth, and the historian Anne-Marie Sohn has suggested that kissing was considered more erotic than touching someone's genitals.⁵⁸⁵

This is evidence of a different sexual toponymy of the body, not evidence of popular ignorance concerning sexual anatomy, as Anne-Marie Sohn would have it.⁵⁸⁶ On the contrary, Arnaudin seems to have had no trouble discovering words for vaginas and penises, which were respectively referred to as 'flies', and 'packets' or 'little chaps'.⁵⁸⁷ Just because this language of sexuality was often shrouded in euphemism and innuendo does not mean that people lacked knowledge about sex and sexual organs. The judicial sources Sohn relies on may produce a view of popular sexuality skewed towards people who were abnormally ignorant about bodily functions, since such individuals could be more likely to be victims of sexual attacks. And it would be in the interests of anyone who was a victim of a sex crime to downplay their sexual knowledge in order to emphasize their innocence. If Sohn's argument is not entirely convincing, neither does it make sense

581 *OC:VI*, 142.

582 *Ibid.*, 178–9, 267.

583 *Ibid.*, 266, 125.

584 *Ibid.*, 267.

585 *Ibid.*, 432; Sohn, *Du premier baiser à l'alcôve*, 94–5.

586 *Ibid.*, 11–37.

587 *OC:VII*, 110, 151, 195.

to take the view which Sohn's research aimed to overturn, that of Michel Foucault. In a sense, Sohn agrees with Foucault when he argues that the nineteenth century saw the triumph of a new way of understanding human bodies: sex. Where they part ways is in how they understand this shift. For Foucault, sex became a trap, an eternal lure at the heart of human interactions.⁵⁸⁸ For Sohn, this new sexual knowledge was profoundly liberating, giving people a language to understand and enjoy their bodies. The dialect notes, relatively isolated as they are from the clinics, sexologists, and psychologists Foucault was interested in already have their own polymorphous and omnipresent symbolism of sexuality. It was just a different one to our own. Sexual anatomy was neither the benevolent gift to the popular classes Sohn pretends, nor the poisoned chalice Foucault and his followers have tended to believe.

Sexual meaning was spread unevenly through the whole body. To say a woman fell on her back implied that she was promiscuous.⁵⁸⁹ The mouth was not only considered erotic in its own right, but likened to the vagina, which was called a 'blower'.⁵⁹⁰ But it was above all else the legs and feet that carried sexual meanings. Being married was referred to as 'having a thorn in your foot'.⁵⁹¹ Women were prized for their thighs, calves, and strong buttocks: 'She is a beautiful woman, and hard-working. What thighs she has!'⁵⁹² The dictionary mentions few other body parts admired for their beauty. There is no material on beautiful hair, and the sexualisation of the breasts does not seem to have fully overcome their association with nursing.⁵⁹³ The verb meaning to breastfeed figuratively meant 'to put up with something'.⁵⁹⁴ On the other hand, at least one song talked of the

588 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, i.

589 *OC*:VI, 378.

590 *Ibid.*, 141.

591 *Ibid.*, 67.

592 *OC*:VII, 64, 64, 65, 73, 74.

593 Corbin, 'La rencontre des corps', 192.

594 *OC*:VII, 215.

beauty of a woman with a thin waist and a raised breast.⁵⁹⁵ A throwaway comment from Ducom suggests that men may have discussed the beauty of the furrows in women's necks, and there are also mentions of the beautiful gait of a woman walking.⁵⁹⁶ There is no material about what women looked for in men in the dictionary notes, and the only hints from the songs are verses that talk of the 'darling stick' of a young soldier.⁵⁹⁷ One thing that is clear is the close association between clothing and sexuality, an association perhaps not surprising in a culture where absolute nudity was probably very rare, and certainly not considered necessary for sex.⁵⁹⁸ As one informant remarked to Arnaudin 'Clothes cover so many sins'.⁵⁹⁹ In an image combining the importance of both feet and clothing to sexuality, women who had had sex before marriage were said to be 'down at heel'.⁶⁰⁰ A thorn in the foot was also a euphemism for pregnancy.⁶⁰¹ Pregnant women were said to be 'on a trip', 'grafted', 'fat', or 'thick'.⁶⁰² What these evocative analogies and descriptions reveal is not the misunderstandings of a pre-medical knowledge of the body, as Sohn suggested, but a playful language of the body that depends on euphemisms and misdirection. Even as body parts were enumerated individually in songs involving counting, they were linked together into a coherent bodily system.⁶⁰³

595 OC:IV, 439 .Typically, the singer sang not 'breast' but 'stomach.'

596 OC:VII, 543; OC:VI, 32.

597 OC:IV, 63–5.

598 Sohn, *Du premier baiser à l'alcôve*, 84–5. And the close association between bodies and clothes is a well-established idea from many studies. See, for example: Duden, *The Woman Beneath the Skin*, 47.

599 OC:VII, 270.

600 OC:VI, 292.

601 Ibid., 119.

602 Ibid., 121, 332.

603 See, for instance: OC:III, 124.

The Earth Calls to Them: Verticality

This system of the body was organised vertically, even if it did not represent the victory of the head. High to low has always been an organizing principle for human embodiment, but it is a principle that takes on special meaning in agricultural societies that depended on back-breaking labour.⁶⁰⁴ Nicole Pellegrin has talked of a 'rêve de rectitude' that dominated the bodily experiences of eighteenth-century labourers.⁶⁰⁵ If early-modern elites cultivated an upright posture which distinguished them from manual labourers, these same labourers were still living out this bodily difference in the nineteenth century.⁶⁰⁶ For these workers the body was a burden, pulling them down ineluctably toward the ground. This helps explain why, despite being commonly mentioned body parts, arms and hands were remarkably limited in their symbolism, almost uniquely referring to labour. As in English and French a 'hand' can mean a worker or some help, and words involving 'hand' have to do with the use of tools, hand-les, and hand-ling.⁶⁰⁷ Every reference I found to arms in the dictionary was a reference to manual work. An armful also means the working capacity of a family, while 'arm oil' means labour.⁶⁰⁸ Arnaudin illustrated one word with the telling phrase: 'My arms are killing', meaning the speaker was too tired to work.⁶⁰⁹ Labourers took a necessary pride in the power of their own hands, criticizing soft hands as being 'hands of butter'.⁶¹⁰ The most common metaphors for understanding body parts were neither drawn from religion nor the animal kingdom,

604 Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live by*, 14–21. For an historical example, see for instance: Goff and Truong, *Une histoire du corps au moyen age*, 88–9.

605 Pellegrin, 'Corps du commun, usages communs du corps', 127.

606 G. Vigarello, 'The Upward Training of the Body from the Age of Chivalry to Courtly Civility', in M. Tazi Feher, R. Naddaff, and N. Tazi (eds), *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*, 3 vols. (3 vols., New York, 1989), II, 148–97; H. Roodenburg, *The Eloquence of the Body: Perspectives on Gesture in the Dutch Republic* (Zwolle, 2004).

607 *OC*:VII, 66, 67–9. An interesting exception is 'the Spanish handkerchief,' a figure of speech meaning hand. See: *ibid.*, 106.

608 *Ibid.*, 157, 130.

609 *Ibid.*, 156.

610 *Ibid.*, 66.

but tools. Some of these tools were agricultural. Teeth, for instance, were referred to as shovels or nails. Ears, noses, and bones were all likened to ploughs.⁶¹¹ Other analogies were drawn with domestic implements. The frying-pan of the knee referred to the knee-cap, and the head was called a pot or a soup tureen.⁶¹² Some body parts were compared to agricultural work. The mouth is like the hole a bean is planted in.⁶¹³ 'To clean out the stables' figuratively means to blow your nose.⁶¹⁴ Unkempt stubble is called *arpaliu*, after a tough weed that must be removed from meadows before mowing in order to prevent it spreading its seeds.⁶¹⁵ The dialect notes are filled with specific terms referring to agricultural gestures which have no modern English or French equivalent: to spread manure, or to perform the cuts in the bark of the pine tree necessary to collect resin.⁶¹⁶

And it was an agricultural tool that provided a key metaphor for the labourers' battle with gravity. People could be ironically said to be 'as straight as a sickle'.⁶¹⁷ People talked of themselves as literally 'bent', their noses to the ground. But bending was also figurative. A 'bend' meant a habit, something the very body had become accustomed to.⁶¹⁸ As they so often do, a proverb plays on the figurative implications of the literal: 'Whoever stoops too much becomes bent'.⁶¹⁹ This bent body pays attention to parts that have no equivalent in modern speech. The 'hope', for example, is the part of the back between the shoulder blades, a part especially important for

611 *OC:VI*, 81, 134, 229; *OC:VII*, 131, 145.

612 *Ibid.*, 143, 340; *OC:VI*, 139.

613 *Ibid.*, 183.

614 *Ibid.*, 356.

615 *Ibid.*, 46.

616 *Ibid.*, 356, 433–4.

617 *Ibid.*, 311.

618 *OC:VII*, 201.

619 *OC:VI*, 4.

lifting and carrying burdens.⁶²⁰ Lifting and carrying were undoubtedly important ways of thinking about the body in this rural society. In a similar way, the neck was very important in everyday speech. This importance derives from the neck's ambiguity as a body part that aspires to strength, power, and rigidity, yet reveals weakness. To be 'neck-hanging' meant to lack energy.⁶²¹ Swearing by the neck, which was also common, suggests the other aspect of this weakness, the vulnerability of the neck to injury and assault.⁶²² Uprightness was the focus of particular attention in this historical period. With advances in agricultural technology, the bent backs of rural labourers were destined to disappear.⁶²³ For the people Arnaudin talked to in the second half of the nineteenth century, however, these bent bodies were a reality, the price the elderly paid for a lifetime of labour:

“Poor Talinote, she'll soon be very old. She walks leaning on a stick, her nose to the ground.”
“The earth is calling to her.”⁶²⁴

As proverbs put it, old age is like a forty-pound weight on each leg.⁶²⁵ These physical postures carried moral and aesthetic meanings. As in many European languages, to be proud was to keep the head held high.⁶²⁶ Attractiveness was associated with an upright posture, so people could talk of 'A handsome man, and very upright'.⁶²⁷ This association of beauty and the upright posture may help to explain the great importance attached to legs in everyday speech. There are a multitude of terms and phrases which focus on thighs, feet, ankles, knees, and legs in general. In the vertical plane of the body, legs necessarily play a special role. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the word for foot is also used to

620 Ibid., 487.

621 Ibid., 238.

622 See for instance, the example from 'M[arie]': NFA, 2 MI 29/10, f.6.

623 Pellegrin, 'Corps du commun, usages communs du corps', 136.

624 *OC*:VII, 600; This is not the only example of a similar phrase. See, for instance the reference to years wearing the elderly Nirot down: *OC*:VI, 488.

625 See proverbs nos. 2042 and 2043. Félix Arnaudin, *OC*:II.

626 *OC*:VI, 4.

627 Ibid., 25.

refer to stability, solidity. To be on your feet is to be in control.⁶²⁸ This bio-mechanical experience was extended to social experiences, so 'foot' was also used to mean an individual's position in society.⁶²⁹

Legs were not only discussed in terms of solidity and sexuality. They were also surprising focus for local identities. Despite the fact that most of the labourers in the Grande-Lande were highly mobile, moving from village to village each year in search of better shareholdings, they themselves believed that the region was made of micro-regions who differed in their very bodies. People from Gastes, Pissos, Commensacq, and Trensacq were thought to have black feet, while people from Arjuzanx, Arengosse, Ygosse, and Villenave had red ones.⁶³⁰ The seasonal workers who travelled from the Limousin could be recognized by their feet.⁶³¹ Even within a large village, such as Sabres, one *quartier* might be known for having big buttocks, fat stomachs, and short legs.⁶³² Legs, more than any other part of the body, were central to rural concerns about sex, identity, and labour, and the importance of standing and bending they indicate was not limited to cultural representations. The 'rêve de rectitude' governing bodily understandings also directly affected their postures and gaits. In Arnaudin's photographs, local bourgeois appear seated in rigid positions. Many of the labourers, on the other hand, stood around, sometimes in staged portraits, and sometimes as they went about their work. They leant on tools, or other people, or stood with their hands on their hips, supporting their weight (see fig. twenty-seven, p.320). Men put their hands in their pockets, while women tended to fold theirs when their portraits were taken (see fig. thirty-one, p.324).

Ultimately, these postures always come back to the central importance of work. When the

628 OC:VII, 164.

629 Ibid., 165.

630 Ibid., 172, 176.

631 Ibid., 47.

632 OC:VI, 267.

protagonist of Edmond About's novel *Maître Pierre* was asked if his work keeps him entertained, he replied that it both does, and does not.⁶³³ His attitude seems to reflect the ambivalence most men and women in the Grande-Lande felt towards their labour. It is difficult to imagine that many people would have agreed with the phrase Arnaudin used to illustrate the word *desaneyya*, to chase away boredom: 'Work chases away boredom'.⁶³⁴ What is clear is that ordinary people worried that they might forget that they laboured under this burden. Like donkeys, they might grow accustomed to it.⁶³⁵ Far from being ignorant of the toll this took on their bodies, the phrases from the dictionary show that people worried about their physical resilience: 'She died, young as well: she was worn out by work, bad weather, rain, dew, and hard life'.⁶³⁶ Men and women wanted to be hard like iron, or at least 'well-woven'.⁶³⁷ 'I won't live long, I'm too soft', someone told Arnaudin in conversation.⁶³⁸ And yet many of the men and women who contributed materials to Arnaudin's fieldwork lived long, and extremely hard-working, lives. The storyteller Jean Pédéluc (1842-1919) retired in 1902, having done thirty-seven years of road-mending. He wrote to his employers that 'il se sent aujourd'hui très fatigué et dans l'impossibilité de fournir un bon travail'.⁶³⁹ Women rarely had the luxury of the pension men like Jean could expect. Marie Couloudou (b.1854) was still working as a day-labourer at the age of sixty-seven in 1921.⁶⁴⁰ For these workers, this resilience was not just personal, but social. Bodies were at the service of a family exploitation and subject to the demands of the greater good of the household. Bodily resources were understood in terms of a 'limited good', something

633 About, *Maître Pierre*, 218.

634 OC:VI, 289.

635 Ibid., 19. See also the material on donkeys and working in Chapter Seven.

636 OC:VII, 132; The idea that people were not aware of the toll labour took on their bodies can be found in: Duden, *The Woman Beneath the Skin*, 141.

637 OC:VI, 478, 74.

638 OC:VII, 208.

639 ADL, 1 S 10 'Ponts et chaussées'.

640 ADL, 6 M 159, 'Recensement de la Population: Labouheyre'.

that was not only expendable, but often won at the expense of others.⁶⁴¹ 'To be able' also meant to surpass, and could be used to refer to someone overcoming someone else, or being taller than them.⁶⁴² Fatigue was thought of like a physical object, that was picked up, and carried.⁶⁴³ Tiredness was not just a matter of bodily strength, but also emotional feeling. Exhaustion was a synonym for sadness or melancholy.⁶⁴⁴ The sharecroppers Arnaudin talked to had a bodily morality that could often appear profoundly negative, focusing on vices such as laziness and clumsiness, more than on positive values such as strength and skill. And laziness itself dealt in verticals. It could be read from a slouching posture, and lazy people were said to have their ribs the wrong way round. With vertical ribs, bending would be impossible.⁶⁴⁵ Clumsiness, on the other hand, was associated with injury, paralysis, and stupidity. In a culture where so much relied on physical work and so little on refined intelligence, to be clumsy was to be an idiot. There was little differentiation between physical and mental agility.⁶⁴⁶

The concern with the vertical was also associated with the growing realisation in the nineteenth century that over-worked and under-nourished agricultural labourers were shorter than the rest of the French population. Horrified visitors to the moorlands wrote of the tiny bodies of the local population, who were 'd'une stature au-dessous de la médiocre; d'une maigreur qui souvent approche du marasme'.⁶⁴⁷ But these concerns with the admittedly tiny bodies of the population were not just confined to the men who sought to reform the agriculture and health of the moorlands over

641 Foster, 'Peasant Society and the Image of Limited Good'.

642 OC:VII, 207.

643 OC:VI, 27.

644 OC:VII, 189.

645 NFA, 2 MI 29/10, f.6; OC:VI, 236–7.

646 OC:VI, 380, 418; OC:VII, 160, 165, 183, 197, 307, 320, 332, 334.

647 For a summary see: Sargos, *Histoire de la forêt landaise*, 81–2. The quotation come from Thore, as does the tradition of the tiny bodies of the Landais population. Thore, *Promenade*, 183. For another, later example, see: About, *Maître Pierre*, 27.

the nineteenth century, they also had roots in local culture. Local speech was filled with references to body sizes, people who were 'weary of growing' or 'born the year of the drought'.⁶⁴⁸ The muted but firm concern about hunger that is found in the dictionary confirms what anthropometricians know about the links between malnourishment and growth. Being hungry was such a constant that it was used figuratively to refer to any kind of desire.⁶⁴⁹ Nothing was larger than hunger.⁶⁵⁰ While it is clear that the terms referring to short people are insults, corpulence was not such a straightforward issue. Arnaudin presented beautiful and fat as synonyms, and some of the phrases in the dictionary praise women 'as fat as pears'.⁶⁵¹ But many other phrases are clearly critical of fatness.⁶⁵² At least one provides evidence of a new cult of the slim: 'She is so narcissistic that she is starving herself to remain slender'.⁶⁵³ Georges Vigarello and Richard Holt have argued that the nineteenth century was the period when the association between roundness, authority, and beauty was breaking down, so perhaps the ambivalence in Gascon speech is evidence of a period of changing attitudes to fat.⁶⁵⁴ Whatever the case, it is interesting that all of the references to corpulence concern women. Then, as now, food and body size were issues that affected women more than men.

The paradox and the potential in the dialect notes lies in the fact that these men and women, despite the difficult conditions of their lives, also turned their bent bodies to more satisfying ends. On the one hand, Arnaudin talked of the 'labeur effrayant' of threshing, and recorded grim notes from Michel Colin about the exhaustion occasioned by this annual task.⁶⁵⁵ But, on the other hand,

648 *OC:VI*, 346, 354, 471; *OC:VII*, 198, 220, 226, 275, 311, 314, 326, 332, 349, 353, 359.

649 *OC:VI*, 465.

650 *Ibid.*, 445.

651 *Ibid.*, 118; *OC:VII*, 77, 521.

652 *OC:VII*, 49, 61, 99, 120, 150, 161, 321.

653 *Ibid.*, 46.

654 Vigarello and Holt, 'Le corps travaillé: gymnastes et sportifs au XIXe siècle', 321–2.

655 *OC:III*, xxxiii; *OC:VII*, 405.

he also recorded details of the tricks men and women would play on each other during the threshing. Two men might seize a woman and pretend to thresh her instead of the crop, giving everyone involved opportunities to touch each other in ways not normally permitted in everyday life.⁶⁵⁶ Even in a region such as the Grande-Lande, where agricultural labour was especially tough, nutrition standards were especially poor, and the upright body carried extra emotional and social weight, everyday speech could express more hopeful possibilities.

An interesting and manifestly local example is the ways in which folk speech compared the human body to a pine tree. Like humans, pine trees have a trunk and a heart.⁶⁵⁷ Pine trees even have eyes, legs, and faces, words used to refer respectively to the top of the tree, its lower branches, and the surface where it was cut for resin.⁶⁵⁸ When bitten by mosquitoes, human skin becomes knobbly, like the bark of a pine tree.⁶⁵⁹ This analogy was important because it governed how both reformers and locals came to think about the possibilities of human bodies in the region.⁶⁶⁰ For the reformers, draining and cleaning up the local landscape would save the health of the population, just like draining the waterlogged roots of a tree. For the locals, however, the analogy took on slightly different implications, also linked to bodily health, but more aligned with their own experiences of ageing, exhaustion, and physical and moral rectitude.⁶⁶¹ The phrase *esta abiat a pin pérde* literally refers to the process whereby a pine tree is sapped to death, but figuratively it was used to refer to an individual who abandoned themselves to bad behaviour.⁶⁶² An analogy which, in the writings of

656 OC:VI, 111–2.

657 OC:VII, 357; OC:VI, 248.

658 OC:VII, 134; OC:VI, 425, 199.

659 Ibid., 150.

660 See, for instance: About, *Maître Pierre*, 71. Nor was About the only novelist to use the analogy of the pine tree. See: F. Mauriac, *Thérèse Desqueyroux* (Paris, 1927), 71–2.

661 The two examples the dictionary gives for the word ‘arraca,’ to not grow well, are a child, and a pine tree. OC:VI, 48.

662 Ibid., 7–8.

reformers, provided the justification for the drastic intervention in local agriculture after 1857, provided local people with another justification for experiencing their bodies as a precious and limited resource. This is partly because the pine tree was a profoundly double-edged metaphor for human bodies. The straight, tall trunks of healthy pines were consonant with everything that the labourers wanted to be, but the way the pines were sapped to death provided a powerful metaphor for the all-too human exploitation of the sharecroppers by the landowners in the region.

Like A Goose With A Flute: Language Change

This picture of a malnourished, violent, and Rabelaisian peasantry who dreamt of standing taller is not as static as it might appear. The link that bound local ways of working, moving, and experiencing to the *patois*, also meant that as bodily conditions changed, so did the language. Labourers had new ways of being smutty, which are explored in Chapter Eight, new concerns about labour and exploitation, discussed in Chapter Seven, and new concerns about their bodily boundaries, analysed in Chapter Six. Arnaudin firmly resisted the evidence before him that traditional cultures and languages too could change, complaining that the new 'bric-a-brac' spoken by local men and women 'va à leurs lèvres comme une flûte au bec d'un oie', but he was powerless to stop the transformation.⁶⁶³ He filled his notes with references to those feudal terms which, against the odds, survived into contemporary speech, such as the tax known as the *dime* or the *tape*, the grain rationing system.⁶⁶⁴ He was even interested in how ordinary people remembered the emigrations of the revolutionary years, or the drought of 1803-4.⁶⁶⁵ They still used the word *camalèt* to mean a good-for-nothing, a tribute to the fame of the brigand executed in Bordeaux in 1789.⁶⁶⁶

663 NFA, 2 MI 29/8, f.49.

664 OC:VI, 262, 302, 403, 445, 449; OC:VII, 303.

665 OC:VI, 287; OC:VII, 282.

666 OC:VI, 183.

Many people preferred the term *arché* to the modern word *gendarme*.⁶⁶⁷ Yet, clearly the *patois* had adapted and adopted new terms, including a whole range of vocabulary based around technological advances both in resin-farming, and arable farming. To 'make the resin' figuratively meant to make a fortune, a meaning that can only have developed as resin prices soared during the American Civil War.⁶⁶⁸

Much of this adaptation was forced. Gascon, after all, was a threatened language. As is so often the case, most local people learned to speak both the *patois* and French. As the status of French increased, sociolinguists would suggest that Gascon would undergo simplification, reduction, grammatical interference, phonological interference, and even lexical interference.⁶⁶⁹ It is true that Gascon was losing words, with some only conserved in songs. These tended to be words relevant to the old feudal social order, or types of textile and clothing that were no longer in use.⁶⁷⁰ It is also true that words were imported from French to fill a 'lexical gap'.⁶⁷¹ New words were needed for recent arrivals in the region, such as asparagus and mules.⁶⁷² But many of the changes to the *patois* involved a Gascon word being replaced by what Arnaudin called 'gallicismes'. Needless to say, this was not a completely new phenomenon, and Arnaudin was aware that many of the linguistic borrowings from French into Gascon dated back to the fifteenth or sixteenth century.⁶⁷³ Nonetheless, it is clear that these changes accelerated in the nineteenth century, leaving no domain of speech untouched. Mari Jones has suggested that topics such as the weather, the house, the family, and animals tend to be the most resistant to lexical imports, while technology is quite often

667 Ibid., 42.

668 OC:VII, 130.

669 Jones and Singh, *Exploring Language Change*, 84–91.

670 OC:VII, 66, 145, 211; OC:VI, 435, 436–7.

671 Jones and Singh, *Exploring Language Change*, 31.

672 OC:VI, 370; OC:VII, 111.

673 OC:VI, 219, 269, 430.

composed only of imports.⁶⁷⁴ In the case of the dialect Arnaudin was recording, this model does not seem to fit well. Terms for food were changing rapidly, as were terms for products whose production may have been moving outside the local community, such as umbrellas, candles, chairs, and clogs.⁶⁷⁵ So were religious terms, and the vocabulary used to describe local artisans and working practices.⁶⁷⁶ People no longer referred to sharecroppers as *bourdilés* but used the Gallicism *matayé*.⁶⁷⁷ Even the names for family members, and the very word for 'man' – *omi* – had been affected by French.⁶⁷⁸ As if to rub it in, the word for 'old' – *ancién* – was a Gallicism.⁶⁷⁹

There is some evidence that the *patois* was conservative when it came to the body.⁶⁸⁰ Modern French, English, and Gascon all derive their word for skeleton from the Greek, as if the meaning of bones themselves change little over millennia.⁶⁸¹ Other examples suggest Gascon words were replaced by Gallicisms except when they applied to bodies. The word for strong – *hort* – was losing ground to French in all of its figurative meanings, but remained the preferred word to describe someone who was fat.⁶⁸² The Gallicism *curt* may have replaced the Gascon word for heart when it came to card-games, but when it came to the human organ, *co* was still used.⁶⁸³ But the body was far from immune to Gallicisms. *Fésse* was imported from French to mean 'buttock', and

674 M. Jones, *Jersey Norman French: A Linguistic Study of an Obsolescent Dialect* (Oxford, 2001), 141–152.

675 *OC*:VI, 27, 114, 204, 219, 442, 470; *OC*:VII, 153, 182.

676 *OC*:VI, 33, 49, 65, 200; *OC*:VII, 98, 110, 218, 301.

677 *OC*:VI, 147.

678 *Ibid.*, 326; *OC*:VII, 130, 303.

679 *OC*:VI, 32.

680 Paul Connerton has called for historians to pay special attention to this conservatism of the body, the way it preserves historical memory. See: Connerton, *How Societies Remember*.

681 *OC*:VI, 377.

682 *Ibid.*, 488.

683 *Ibid.*, 270.

blood had changed gender in Gascon under the influence of French.⁶⁸⁴ Suffering had become inflected with French, so speakers said *soufèrt* instead of *soufrit*.⁶⁸⁵ It is not quite fair to call this language death, however. Part of the nature of the *patois* had always been their diversity. The imports and borrowings from French and other dialects that Arnaudin abhorred had always been part of how Gascon dialects developed. What is more, languages under threat may actually become richer, as speakers respond by coining new words, and displaying lexical virtuosity.⁶⁸⁶ In the case of Arnaudin's Gascon, this might involve applying old terms to new situations. The phrase *ha courre le pet* referred to the custom of taking the skin of a pest animal a hunter had killed from door to door to collect donations. In the nineteenth-century explosion of democracy, it was extended to refer to politicians canvassing voters.⁶⁸⁷ Neither was Gascon incapable of coming up with new terms, which referred to new bodily realities. The bumpy and uncomfortable local trains came to be known as the 'arse-bruizers'.⁶⁸⁸

Conclusion: Skin and Bones?

Languages do not change on their own. The abandonment of Gascon words and their adaptation depend on the choices of real speakers. Charting the identities of these individuals in Arnaudin's dialect notes, fragmentary as they are, is beyond the scope of this chapter, which has simply tried to present a holistic view of how bodies were done in everyday speech. Nonetheless, there are clear patterns of social differentiation within the dictionary notes. All of the references to

684 Ibid., 402; *OC*:VII, 265.

685 Ibid., 288.

686 S. Gal, 'Lexical Innovation and Loss: The Use and Value of Restricted Hungarian', in N. Dorian (ed), *Investigating Obsolescence: Studies in Language Contraction and Death* (Cambridge, 1989), 329–330.

687 *OC*:VII, 179.

688 Ibid., 77.

drunkenness are to men, and all of the references to physical beauty and fatness are to women.⁶⁸⁹ Gestures and postures are gendered, so a verb meaning to spread your legs in an indecent way is only applied to women.⁶⁹⁰ Everyday speech was nothing short of misogynist, filled with terms for malicious, unkempt, lazy, gossipy, or otherwise transgressive women.⁶⁹¹ The sexuality and fertility of women's bodies threatened the very social order.⁶⁹² There are other, less important differences in everyday speech, not least concerning the bodies of the elderly, thought to have been exhausted, and pulled down to the ground by labour. Children had their own language, which often focussed on rude body parts, such as the buttocks and genitals, as well as animals and family members.⁶⁹³ It is much harder to point to differences in bodily understandings between people of different social classes, and it is much easier to explore how these shared cultural meanings of the body were lived by individuals by examining the lives, stories, and songs of some of Arnaudin's most interesting informants, as the following chapters do.

It is hard to escape the suspicion that some important body issues went unmentioned in the Arnaudin notes, but harder to make sense of why this might be the case. What to make, for instance, of the almost complete absence of both sheep and stilts, symbols of the agro-pastoralist lifestyle, from everyday metaphors and discussions of the body? Why was there so little explicit consideration of corporeal beauty, beyond the importance of legs? Neither are dead bodies the central concern they had apparently been so long in western Europe.⁶⁹⁴ Even more puzzling is the relative poverty of references to religion when discussing bodies. Yet these surprises are one of the chief interests of Arnaudin's dialect notes. They present a body that took a different shape, not

689 This contrasts starkly with the wine-loving women of local songs. See Chapter Eight.

690 *OC:VI*, 357.

691 *OC:VII*, 105, 271, 294, 304.

692 Verdier, *Façons de dire, façons de faire*.

693 See, for example: *OC:VII*, 319, 322, 333.

694 Pellegrin, 'Corps du commun, usages communs du corps', 117; Bynum, 'Why All the Fuss about the Body?', 27.

simply in cultural representations, but in actual postures, and personal experiences. Informants often referred to the empirical basis of their bodily observations: 'When you have a headache, if you yawn, it will go away. I've experienced that'.⁶⁹⁵ Such everyday bodies fit very poorly into the grand narratives of the historiography of the body. Instead of interiorisation, medicalisation, or sexualisation, people discussed bodies made up of a pointillist array of body parts: legs, feet, teeth, lips, eyes, and arses. The topics historians favour, such as sexuality, were spread between these different body parts, found in odd places, and yet the changeable interior and humoural model of the early-modern period does not seem to fit the picture, either. This may be a vertical body, but this has less to do with the rivalry between the head and the stomach than with the fundamental importance of the legs, prized for their beauty and praised for their power. This was a body of skin and bones, in its obsession with the threat to integrity, its emphasis on solidity, its fear of and fascination with teeth. Above all else, talk of the body was talk of the incessant demands and exhaustion of labour, resentment of a social and physical world that pulled people down to the ground. But in the metaphor of the pine tree lies a clue that such a body was not simply a survival of a pre-modern subsistence world, but the product of a very specific squeeze: the dramatic social and environmental changes of the Grande-Lande in the second half of the nineteenth century, the arrival of the industrial forest and the consequences it had for local life.

695 *OC:VI*, 377.

Chapter Five

The Forest for the Trees: Legends and Environmental Change

On raconte qu'il y avait autrefois à Luë un méchant seigneur, fort dur aux pauvres gens. Ce seigneur-là était propriétaire d'une grande étendue de terres, de bois et de landes sur le territoire de Luë, mais il avait défendu aux bergers et aux chevriers de faire paître leurs bêtes sur son bien, et même de les y faire passer.

Un matin, il était allé voir une pièce de terre qu'il avait fait semer en pins, non loin de Hidéou, et il y trouva un chevrier qui menait son troupeau. Quand le chevrier aperçut le seigneur, il voulut faire retourner ses chèvres, mais l'autre, fou de rage, fondit sur lui, et commença à faire courir chevrier et chèvres, en faisant galoper son cheval sur les talons du pauvre homme. Le malheureux demanda vite grâce:

“Pitié, monseigneur! Pardonnez-moi, pour l'amour de Dieu...”

Mais le monsieur ne faisait nul cas des paroles du chevrier: plus l'autre priait, plus il le pressait.

“Tu y reviendras, brigand?” répétait-il. “Tu y reviendras, saccager mes semis?”

Et ainsi, sur plus d'un quart de lieue, il poussa devant lui le malheureux chevrier, au trot de son cheval. A la fin, la colère gagna l'autre: il saisit son fusil (autrefois, les bergers et les chevriers portaient toujours leur fusil sur la lande, pour se garantir des loups), et, sans sommation, il le déchargea sur le seigneur et le laissa mort sur la place.

Ensuite, l'homme, pris de peur, s'enfuit, et jamais on ne le revit dans la paroisse.

Nul ne pleura le méchant seigneur, et depuis lors, les pauvres gens de Luë furent libres de mener paître leur bétail partout où bon leur semblait, sur la lande.

À l'endroit où était mort le méchant seigneur, comme on ne lui avait pas rendu justice, la bruyère ne repoussa jamais, et le sable est toujours resté teinté de rouge.⁶⁹⁶

Told by Mariane de Mariolan a small-holder from the village of Escource (see fig. twenty-eight, p.321).

Introduction

One of the most important challenges facing environmental historians is how to recover the voices of the people most dramatically affected by top-down environmental interventions. The opinions of these humble people, many of whom were illiterate, are hard to recover from sources that reflect the views of reformers. In this context, a legend such as the one Mariane told about a goatherd murdering a wicked lord might appear to be a powerful insight into the dissatisfaction of

696 This is one of the rare occasions where the original transcription of the story does not survive in Arnaudin's manuscripts. This French version would undoubtedly have been edited by Arnaudin, and may even have been translated from Mariane's Gascon. See: *OC*:I, 295.

rural labourers at the end of a century that had witnessed a brutal conflict over the landscape in the region. As one local historian put it, discussing Mariane's story:

Une guerre se dévoile à travers cette anecdote: l'éternelle guerre entre les riches et les pauvres, si l'on veut, mais aussi, d'une façon adaptée aux Landes, une guerre qui oppose les pasteurs et les petits paysans aux propriétaires de forêts.⁶⁹⁷

This conflict came to a head in the late 1860s, when the new pine forests planted after the 1857 law were devastated by fire. Between 1869 and 1872 over 24,000 hectares burned down in the *département* of the Landes alone, and the damage was even more catastrophic in the parts of the Gironde which had also been affected by the 1857 law.⁶⁹⁸ Many of the local landowners and experts who gave evidence to the inquiry into the fires published in 1873 were in agreement about their cause, and Mariane's legend seems to confirm this consensus: the shepherds had long been sworn enemies of the pine trees. Dramatically dispossessed of their pastures by the 1857 law encouraging the forestation of the moorlands, they sought to take the land back by fire. The devastation of the 1860s was arson pure and simple.

There is evidence that disgruntled locals were responsible for some of the fires, and this has meant that the most important historians of the region have accepted the idea of a battle between pastoralism and the pine.⁶⁹⁹ Not only were some arsonists caught and many incendiary devices supposedly discovered, but shepherds would have had an obvious motive: in burning the forests they would regain the pastures they needed for their sheep. To all intents and purposes, this looks like an open and shut case: yet another example of the social conflicts aroused by the privatisation of the commons. The legend of the wicked lord of Luë would seem to fit neatly into a story of peasant resistance to forestation, the age-old struggle between customary grazing rights and private forests which intensified in the nineteenth century. However, much of the recent literature has

697 Sargos, *Histoire de la forêt landaise*, 424.

698 *ESI*, viii, 347.

699 Most importantly: Sargos, *Histoire de la forêt landaise*, 499–500.

suggested that when it comes to top-down reforms of the landscape, things are not as simple as they might seem. A first generation of historians found that direct and dramatic rebellions against state intervention into customary land uses were surprisingly rare.⁷⁰⁰ More recently, researchers have emphasized that resistance was made up of everyday acts, such as '[s]tubborn non-compliance, foot-dragging and mischief'.⁷⁰¹ Many goat-herds and shepherds, like the hero of Mariane's legend, must have illicitly grazed their flocks in pine plantations, but there is little evidence beyond the legend that any of them really murdered a local landowner over such a dispute.

One problem with this narrative of shepherds against landowners is that it oversimplifies social relations, and ignores the intricacies of individual lives. In reality, the battle-lines were not firmly drawn between reformers and resisters. Contrary to what Bernard Traimond has written about the two opposing positions concerning the moorlands – pro- or anti-pastoralist – this chapter is interested in the ways that individuals could display ambivalence about both the new pine forests, railways, and road on the hand, and also sheep and the customary agricultural practices on the other.⁷⁰² A revisionist historiography of the forestation of the moorlands has argued that the reforms of 1857 were not as extreme as has sometimes been assumed, and were in many ways anticipated by local farmers. Far from resisting forestation, many local people, according to this argument, were responsible for it well before the government became involved.⁷⁰³

This chapter also extends this argument, by suggesting that the complexity of bottom-up involvement in forestation was also compounded by the inability of reformers to understand the

700 Discussed in: J. M. Neeson, *Commoners: Common Right, Enclosure and Social Change in England, 1700-1820* (Cambridge, 1993), 260.

701 Ibid., 263; R. Guha, *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya* (Berkeley, 2000); B. McDonagh, 'Subverting the Ground: Private Property and Public Protest in the Sixteenth-Century Yorkshire Wolds', *Agricultural History Review*, 57, no. 2 (2009), 191–206; J. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, 1985); B. Short, 'Conservation, Class and Custom: Lifespace and Conflict in a Nineteenth-Century Forest Environment', *Rural History*, 10, no. 02 (1999), 127–54.

702 B. Traimond, 'Le feu est dans la lande ou l'incendie comme fait social', *Revue Forestière Française*, 32 (1980), 336.

703 The key text is: Sargos, *Contribution*; See also the extension of his argument by his grandson: Sargos, *Histoire de la forêt landaise*; See also: Lescairet, *La vie dans la Grande-Lande*.

ecology of the region and the environmental practices of the labourers. However profitable forestation might be, it could never be a viable complete alternative to sheep. Without sheep, the local population would not have sufficient manure to fertilize the crops they needed to survive.⁷⁰⁴ The reformers did not understand local cultural attitudes to the landscape, and these cultural attitudes were firmly grounded in the most basic bodily needs of the population.⁷⁰⁵ But mass forestation did not just threaten the food supply. It also put local bodies at greater risk of fire, drought, and other ecological imbalances. Reformers might have imagined that the forest would improve the health of the local population, but in fact the ways that the forest was planned did not take into account the bodies and agency of the local labourers, nor the animals and plants of the moors and pine plantations.⁷⁰⁶ When the fires broke out, landowners were quick to blame the shepherds, ignoring the ways in which poor planning and poor understanding of soil, plants, and agricultural processes contributed to the spread of fires.

For local men and women, this was not simply a question of abstract theories about progress and the French nation. This was a visceral struggle concerning food, work, and uses of space. The problem for historians is accessing the emotions that bubbled under the surface of land disputes rather than simply focusing attention on the rare occasions when outright revolts occurred.⁷⁰⁷ Official and administrative sources can help historians to deconstruct the failures of forest planning, but such sources are silent on the feelings and motivations of the locals who lived through this period. One place historians might consider looking for such evidence is in the Arnaudin collection. Legends of extraordinary local events, such as Mariane's story of the murder of the wicked lord, are

704 As some of the more perceptive respondents to the inquiry noted. *ESI*, 111–2, 198.

705 On the failure of the reformers to understand local uses of space, see: A. Garner, *A Shifting Shore: Locals, Outsiders, and the Transformation of a French Fishing Town, 1823-2000* (Ithaca, 2005), 17; Ribéreau-Gayon, 'Perceptions sensorielles et représentations des Landes de Gascogne', 153.

706 C. Griffin, 'More-than-Human Histories and the Failure of Grand State Schemes: Sylviculture in the New Forest, England', *Cultural Geographies*, 17, no. 4 (10 January 2010), 451–72; J. Scott, *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, 1998), 11–52.

707 Neeson, *Commoners*, 281.

particularly promising for understanding how ordinary people felt about forestation and the changes to their working lives. But such legends have to be placed into several contexts: what it is possible to find out about forestation, who told what kinds of legends, and finally the context of Mariane's own life and decisions. In this struggle over landscapes and bodies, people like Mariane were neither indifferent nor inflexible. Instead, they displayed a pained ambivalence. Arnaudin's informants made surprisingly little reference to these momentous environmental changes. Their involvement in them was too ambiguous, and perhaps their understanding of the complexities of the interactions of humans and the environment was more refined than the binary vision of the reformers.

Forestation, Bodies, and Legend-Telling

At the start of the nineteenth century, sixty percent of the area of the Grande-Lande was moorlands (see fig. twenty-nine, p.322).⁷⁰⁸ The sparse local population survived by farming, but only just.⁷⁰⁹ Jean Cailluyer has calculated that the wages in the village of Sore would have left the average family with an annual deficit of sixty-two and a half francs.⁷¹⁰ A character in Edmond About's 1858 novel summed up the problem this barren region posed: "C'est une mauvaise affaire pour tout le monde, pour l'État, pour le propriétaire, pour le fermier et pour les moutons!"⁷¹¹ While the most obvious motivation for the forestation of the moorlands was to reclaim a barren territory, improving the bodily health of the local population was also an explicit goal for outsiders appalled by the tiny, malnourished bodies of the locals.⁷¹² As one novelist put it at the time: 'Les filles

708 Lescarret, *La vie dans la Grande-Lande*, 18–9.

709 Ibid., 20, 111.

710 J. Cailluyer, *Regards sur l'histoire sociale des Landes* (Toulouse, 1983), 20–2.

711 About, *Maître Pierre*, 38–9.

712 The other obvious motivation would be nationalism. See: J. Aldhuy, 'Imaginaire géographique, idéologie territoriale et production régionale: réflexions autour des Landes de Gascogne (XVIIIème-XIXème)', *Hegoa*, 24

commençaient à perdre leurs dents à quinze ans. Tout ce malheureux peuple pourrissait sur pied, comme des arbres qui ont les racines dans l'eau'.⁷¹³ In this discourse, the health of the local population was a similar problem to the sterility of the landscape. The earth itself needed a doctor: 'Cette pauvre terre, abandonnée depuis longtemps comme un malade incurable, a trouvé des médecins'.⁷¹⁴ The solitary shepherd perched on his stilts would be replaced by 'une population robuste, joyeuse'.⁷¹⁵ From the 1870s onwards, some doctors were even cautiously optimistic that the reform of the landscape had benefited local health.⁷¹⁶

Whatever the truth of these claims, the effects of the landscape were certainly dramatic (see fig. thirty, p.323). Some 162,000 hectares of land were planted with pines between 1853 and 1873.⁷¹⁷ With this drastic reduction in pastures, the number of sheep in the region collapsed, from roughly 600,000 in the 1850s to just 298,992 in 1892.⁷¹⁸ The human population collapsed along with the sheep, as local agriculture could no longer support the population boom of the nineteenth century, and the children of the Landes emigrated to regions with better employment prospects.⁷¹⁹ The crisis intensified in the 1860s, as tensions grew between the *gemmeurs* and their landlords. The landowners were making their fortunes from the elevated resin prices, due to the stoppage of American resin exports caused by the Civil War, but they passed little of the money onto their workers, instead attempting to reduce the percentage they received per barrel of resin. In 1863, a minor revolt in Sabres over this question of pay resulted in the imprisonment of twelve

(2004), 113-20; M.-N. Bourguet, 'Race et folklore: l'image officielle de la France en 1800', *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 31, no. 4 (August 1976), 813.

713 About, *Maître Pierre*, 71. There was clearly some truth in this. Jean Cailluyer found that an incredible 73.5% of conscripts in Parentis in 1859 had cavities. Cailluyer, *Regards sur l'histoire sociale des Landes*, 24.

714 About, *Maître Pierre*, 13.

715 Lescarret, *Le dernier pasteur des landes*, 52.

716 *ESI*, xli; Guérin, 'Paysan-Résinier de Lévignacq (Landes)', 354.

717 *ESI*, vi.

718 Sargos, *Contribution*, 437.

719 Cailluyer, *Regards sur l'histoire sociale des Landes*, 265–84.

demonstrators.⁷²⁰ And things were only destined to get worse. With the end of the American Civil War, American pine resin flooded back onto the European market, and resin prices collapsed.⁷²¹ Unwilling to share the profits in the good times, the landowners were no more likely to protect their workers from the fall in prices. This was the context for the devastating fires of 1869-1872. When the *conseiller d'état* for the forests, Henri Faré, presented the findings of his official inquiry into the fires in 1873, it was clear that most of the contributors believed the fires were deliberately started by the shepherds to regain their pastures. But the inquiry only represented the points of view of local elites. Fourteen percent of the respondents were civil servants, eighteen percent were professionals, and thirty percent were landowners. One third of them were elected officials.⁷²² The words of these men, the very same men who organized the auctions of the common moorlands, and the same men who bought them, need to be deconstructed, to reveal the assumptions and inconsistencies in their attitudes.

The challenge is to put these attitudes into conversation with what the majority of the population of the Grande-Lande, the shepherds, labourers, and farmers, had to say about forestation. Legends are particularly rich from this point of view, since they very often deal with concerns about the local landscape.⁷²³ Moreover, as many folklorists have noticed, legends are often framed as conversations.⁷²⁴ They do not simply describe the landscape, they pose questions to their audience about what is realistic, and how the landscape should be. Is it acceptable to kill a wicked lord if you are grazing sheep in his pine saplings? Mariane's legend is not quite sure. It is true that 'Nul ne

720 Toulgouat, 'La vie d'autrefois d'après les souvenirs du "Bielhot de Sabres"'.

721 Sargos, *Histoire de la forêt landaise*, 492–8.

722 Traimond, 'Le feu est dans la lande ou l'incendie comme fait social', 335.

723 T. Tangherlini, "'It Happened Not Too Far from Here...': A Survey of Legend Theory and Characterization', *Western Folklore*, 49, no. 4 (October 1990), 371–90; T. Gunnell (ed.), *Legends and Landscape: Plenary Papers from the 5th Celtic-Nordic-Baltic Folklore Symposium, Reykjavik 2005* (Reykjavik, 2008).

724 Tangherlini, 'It Happened Not Too Far from Here...'; L. Dégh, *Legend and Belief: Dialectics of a Folklore Genre* (Bloomington: 2001).

pleura le méchant seigneur' but it is also true that the landscape is indelibly marked by this unpunished crime, and the sand remains red. As folklorists have emphasized, such legends do not thrive in an environment of consensus, where everyone accepts the supernatural implications of the legend, and neither do they rely on the audience agreeing about the moral of the story.⁷²⁵ Despite the reputation the Grande-Lande had as a region where, in the words of one nineteenth-century novelist, 'le surnaturel se mêle à tout', Arnaudin did not find supernatural narrators and supernatural narratives that common.⁷²⁶ In his manuscripts there are just fifty-five separate texts related to thirty-four different traditions. They concern magical springs, witches, werewolves, fairies, and one ghost, and were told by twenty-six different individuals. More common were short statements of belief, or snippets, not quite long enough to be called legends, but which circulated more frequently among local people. These materials, which Arnaudin collected from shepherds, *gemmeurs*, small-holders, farmers, artisans, and housewives do not present a unified voice, but a variety of attitudes to the local environment. In this situation, what his informants did not say may be just as important as what they did. Rather than a shared 'moral ecology', legends like Mariane's reveal the ambiguities of popular attitudes to forestation.⁷²⁷

'Lande Tu As Été, Lande Tu Es et Lande Tu Resteras': The Case Against the Shepherds

The secret battle between shepherds and pine trees described by the contributors to the inquiry into the forest fires was not a recent development. As one respondent put it: 'on peut dire que de tout temps les propriétaires qui ensemençaient leurs landes provoquaient de la part des

725 J. Roper, 'On Folk Scepticism' (paper presented at the 6th Nordic-Celtic-Baltic Folklore Symposium: Supernatural Places, Tartu, 2012).

726 Lescarret, *Le dernier pasteur des landes*, 69.

727 K. Jacoby, *Crimes against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley, 2001), 3.

pasteurs une résistance qui se traduisait par le feu'.⁷²⁸ One monsieur de Lacaze, a landowner in Casteljaloux, told the inquiry the story of a local moor, which the duke de Bouillon won in a court case in 1828. When the duke sold the land, the buyers planted it with pines, but they were immediately burned down. Exactly the same thing happened with the same land in 1848. Monsieur de Lacaze concluded that this showed just how much the shepherds tyrannised local landowners.⁷²⁹ Men such as Lacaze had good reason to suspect the shepherds. Arson is a crime that has long been associated with the poorest sections of society, and above all shepherds, and it would have made sense for the biggest losers of forestation to attack the pine trees.⁷³⁰

Other respondents to the inquiry quoted local proverbs to convey how conservative popular attitudes to the landscape could be: 'Lande tu as été, lande tu es et lande tu resteras'.⁷³¹ Alexandre Léon, the vice-president of the *conseil général* of the Gironde told the inquiry that the hypothesis that shepherds were to blame for the fires was 'incontestable'.⁷³² Another respondent, monsieur Boquet, who managed one of the estates owned by the industrialist Pereire family, wrote:

On en veut à la grande propriété, on voudrait la laisser pour en revenir au bon vieux temps des communaux où chaque paysan s'arrogeait le droit d'entretenir un maigre troupeau qu'il conduisait lui-même en tricotant sa chaussure. Le vieux landais est né paresseux et y reste.⁷³³

Arnaudin himself agreed that the shepherds were profoundly attached to the landscape and the old way of life, although his nostalgic attitude was the direct opposite of Boquet's strident call for progress. When another folklorist wrote to ask Arnaudin if there were any local legends explaining the barrenness of the moorlands, he replied:

728 *ESI*, 36, 18, 140.

729 *Ibid.*, 42.

730 A. Abbiateci, 'Les incendiaires en France au XVIIIe siècle. Essai de typologie criminelle', *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, 25, no. 1 (1970), 230; Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 16–7.

731 *ESI*, 126.

732 *Ibid.*, 58.

733 *Ibid.*, 115.

N'attendez rien, par exemple, qui ait trait à la *stérilité de la Lande*. Jamais le pâtre landais ne l'a considérée comme une malédiction du ciel, loin de là; il a pour son désert une passion profonde et n'est heureux que devant ses grands horizons.⁷³⁴

Part of the appeal of Mariane's legend, even though it was set in the eighteenth century, must have been that confrontations between pastoralists and landowners were a quotidian occurrence in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁷³⁵

But this is very far from confirming that all shepherds were opposed to forestation, or even that they played any role in the forest fires. Arnaudin himself maintained a skeptical attitude to stories that he heard blaming historical fires on shepherds, but this was a scepticism shared by few of the respondents to the inquiry who pointed to a number of facts that suggested shepherds were behind the fires.⁷³⁶ They emphasised that the fires only ravaged recent pine plantations, or particularly large ones, owned by foreigners to the region.⁷³⁷ They also noted that landowners who allowed shepherds to graze their flocks in their plantations were much less likely to see their trees burn.⁷³⁸ They were keen to point out that the fires had only begun after the disastrous collapse in resin prices.⁷³⁹ The fact that multiple fires broke out on the same property at different places also argued strongly in favour of arson.⁷⁴⁰ Armand Castillon, a landowner in Cestas, for instance, complained that eight different fires broke out in eight different places on his property between 8 April and 22 July 1870.⁷⁴¹ Some of these respondents had actually found incendiary devices, made

734 *OC*:V, 145.

735 See, for example, an incident related by Gaétan Thomas, a landowner in Pessac: *ESI*, 276.

736 *NFA*, 2 MI 29/19, f.235.

737 *ESI*, 8, 23, 228.

738 *Ibid.*, 42, 225.

739 *Ibid.*, 12, 351.

740 *Ibid.*, 228.

741 *Ibid.*, 131.

of slow-burning rags, which allowed arsonists hours to escape before the fire took hold.⁷⁴² Yet very few of these landowners could point to convicted arsonists. Between 28 February and 15 June there were seventy-nine fires in the Bordeaux area, thirty-eight of which were blamed on arson. Thirty-six investigations resulted, without a single conviction.⁷⁴³ The only respondent to mention any arsonists who were actually identified was a monsieur Tessier, from the Gironde. In one case some 'étrangers' were supposedly found carrying a map with local pine plantations marked on it, while the other case is the only example any of the respondents gave of a convicted arsonist. Rather than a shepherd, the guilty party was a small-holder who resented the large pine plantations.⁷⁴⁴ Many historians have remarked that arson is a difficult crime to prove, but considering the scale of the fires in the Landes and Gironde either some kind of conspiracy was at work, as the largest landowners claimed, or arson is an insufficient explanation.⁷⁴⁵

There were some respondents who were not convinced the fires really were set deliberately.⁷⁴⁶ Clearly, this was not arson of the petty revenge type, triggered by disputes over pay or unfair dismissals.⁷⁴⁷ But neither did the fires have the hallmarks of protest arson.⁷⁴⁸ There were none of the theatrics of conflicts over customary rights seen in the Ariège earlier in the century or the incendiarism of the Captain Swing riots or social protest in nineteenth-century East Anglia.⁷⁴⁹

742 Ibid., 116.

743 Ibid., 347.

744 Ibid., 269.

745 D. Jones, *Crime, Protest, Community and Police in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London, 1982), 34; K. Navickas, 'Luddism, Incendiarism and the Defence of Rural "Task-Scapes" in 1812', *Northern History*, 48, no. 1 (1 March 2011), 63.

746 *ESI*, xxv.

747 R. Schulte, *The Village in Court: Arson, Infanticide, and Poaching in the Court Records of Upper Bavaria, 1848-1910* (Cambridge, 1994), 27–31.

748 Not least since it fits poorly with the chronology of conflicts over forestation in France outlined by Eugen Weber. Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 60.

749 J. Archer, 'By a Flash and a Scare': *Arson, Animal Maiming, and Poaching in East Anglia 1815-1870*, new edn (London, 2010), 85–108; Navickas, 'Luddism, Incendiarism and the Defence of Rural "Task-Scapes" in 1812';

The shepherds did not dress up and try to scare landowners, nor did they send threatening notes. Unlike the arson studied by many historians, the fires did not break out at night, or at weekends, or during church services, when it would be harder to mount a response.⁷⁵⁰ Instead, they were most commonly discovered around eleven o'clock in the morning.⁷⁵¹ Of course, anyone convinced of the shepherd's guilt could point out that the slow-burning fuses meant that the fire could have been set many hours before. Victor Poisson, a merchant from Rion, also suggested that the fires were lit around midday because very few people would be on the roads during the heat.⁷⁵² But a more pragmatic explanation would be that accidental fires are more likely to break out during the hottest part of the day. The fires were not about explicitly threatening local landowners, and neither does a purely instrumental explanation make sense. If the shepherds hoped to regain pastures, setting fire to the trees was unlikely to be a great success. As Gaétan Thomas pointed out to the inquiry, the burning pine cones would explode, saving the landowners the trouble of replanting their forests. As the saplings appeared, the landowners could then ban the shepherds from the plantation.⁷⁵³

Nor was there a shortage of other explanations for how fires could break out. Hunters, beggars, children, and labourers were suspected of being careless with matches, a recent introduction to the countryside. Left in the sun, matches could even ignite themselves.⁷⁵⁴ Shepherds were also blamed for not taking enough care with the controlled burnings they carried out on the moors. Trains were known to send embers flying either side of the railway tracks.⁷⁵⁵ The chief engineer of the *ponts et chaussées*, Jules Chambrelent, even argued that grass could spontaneously

Sahlins, *Forest Rites*.

750 Jones, *Crime, Protest, Community and Police*, 47.

751 *ESI*, 129, 223.

752 *Ibid.*, 256.

753 *Ibid.*, 275–6.

754 *Ibid.*, 77.

755 *Ibid.*, xvi–xxiv.

combust in the heat of the summer.⁷⁵⁶ Considering how quickly the fires spread, and the multitude of ways they might have been ignited, perhaps how they started matters less than asking why they were so destructive. The problem was not that disgruntled locals might have wanted to burn down plantations, but that it was so easy to do so. The real culprit behind the devastation was poor planning.⁷⁵⁷ Like the example of the New Forest, studied by Carl Griffin, the landowners and reformers of the Landes and Gironde only saw the plantations as trees that could be exploited for resin.⁷⁵⁸ By ignoring the importance of undergrowth, soil, sheep, and the ways local men and women interacted with pine plantations, they rendered their forests more susceptible to burning. Given the multiple risks posed not simply by arsonists, but also by new machinery and matches, it could be said that the newest and largest plantations burnt not because they were hated, but because they were unsafe.

Unlike the older forests planted along the coastal regions of the Marensin, the mass forestation of the nineteenth century involved planting the trees in orderly rows. Arnaudin fumed against this blight on the landscape, but his objections were not just aesthetic. He lamented 'la culture intensive, "pour le maximum d'argent", la plantation en allées, en ligne droite, écœurante de banalité' and pointed out that this method was 'irraisonnée au surplus, violente accélératrice qu'elle peut être du feu et du vent destructeurs'.⁷⁵⁹ Not only did straight lines allow more wind to fan the flames, but the trees were planted closer together than in old plantations. This proximity not only directly increased the risk of fire, but also did so indirectly.⁷⁶⁰ With less room between the trees,

756 Ibid., 145–6.

757 For similar arguments, see: Scott, *Seeing like a State*, 11–52.

758 Griffin, 'More-than-Human Histories and the Failure of Grand State Schemes'.

759 *OC*:III, xxxiv.

760 Not to mention the fact that the soaring resin prices may have encouraged some less scrupulous landowners to plant their fire-breaks with trees. *ESI*, 35.

sheep were unable to graze in the new plantations.⁷⁶¹ And farming sheep helped prevent the spread of fires in three different ways. Sheep kept the undergrowth down, the wide paths they needed through the forest created natural fire-breaks, and the shepherds also collected brush to line their sheepfolds.⁷⁶² This helps to clear up some of the accusations against the shepherds. With one hundred thousand sheep less sheep in the Landes in 1866 than the 1850s, and 162,000 hectares more of pines, planted closer together than ever before, with much less open moorland to act as a firebreak, it is hardly surprising that fires quickly became such a problem. Landowners who noticed the difference in vulnerability between plantations where sheep grazed and those where they did not were on to something, but it was not the guilt of the shepherds. The reformers had misunderstood how forests, undergrowth, and sheep depended on one another.

They also misunderstood the effects of forestation on the soil itself. One of the key arguments in the 1850s for planting pine trees had been in order to drain the soil. Reformers anticipated that reducing the standing water on the surface of the moorland would decrease cases of malaria and other diseases. But systematically drying out the soil with a system of drainage ditches and the planting of pines also made it easier for fires to spread.⁷⁶³ Finally, reformers misunderstood the role of human behaviours depending on lived space. Older plantations were better defended from fires by the communities, because they tended to be nearer to built-up areas, and more likely to threaten houses, barns, animals, and crops.⁷⁶⁴ Newer plantations further away from where people lived would not have been visited as often, so fires would not have been spotted as quickly. Can locals really be blamed for not fighting fires ardently enough?⁷⁶⁵ For the landowners who believed in a general conspiracy on the part of the shepherds and the poorer sections of society this was

761 Sargos, *Histoire de la forêt landaise*, 142.

762 *ESI*, 13, 266.

763 *Ibid.*, 39, 52, 88.

764 *Ibid.*, 33.

765 *Ibid.*, 59–60.

tantamount to assisting in the arson. Yet fire-fighting was dangerous, and it is just as plausible that local people sometimes chose their own safety over protecting the pines of a landowner they might not even know. Cases such as the small-holder convicted of arson mentioned to the inquiry by monsieur Tessier in the Gironde prove that some of the fires were started deliberately. But the wholesale criminalisation of the shepherds is much harder to accept. The evidence that the fires were a tragedy of environmental mismanagement is overwhelming, especially considering that they continued into the twentieth century, when the appeal of pastoralism had almost completely disappeared.⁷⁶⁶ It would only take one arsonist to wreak havoc in this precarious situation, and the respondents to the inquiry rarely knew how many people were involved in supposed cases of arson, or who they were. Fundamentally, as they themselves recognised, they did not know how to penetrate 'la conscience du berger des landes'.⁷⁶⁷

Legends of the Landscape

The believable stories that local men and women told Arnaudin and the ways these stories connected to their own lives are the cultural confirmation of the ecological explanation for the forest fires. Rather than being sworn enemies of forestation, the shepherds and labourers who provided folklore to Arnaudin had more ambiguous relationships to the changes of the second half of the nineteenth century. While the men who responded to the official inquiry lamented 'la répugnance que toute innovation inspire au Landais', this was an unfair reflection of the grass-roots participation in the projects of forestation and improving transport infrastructure.⁷⁶⁸ As Chapter Three argued, many of the Arnaudin informants who knew the most about traditional culture were also actively involved in forest work and building railways and roads. The dichotomy between 'the state' and

766 See: S. Temple, 'The Natures of Nation: Negotiating Modernity in the Landes de Gascogne', *French Historical Studies*, 32, no. 3 (1 July 2009), 419–46.

767 *ESI*, 351.

768 *Ibid.*, 20, 25.

'locals' in the forestation of the moorlands does not stand up to closer scrutiny, as Samuel Temple has pointed out.⁷⁶⁹ The same men told Arnaudin supernatural legends and worked for the Ponts et chaussées or the railway companies. They were married to sharecroppers, and many of them worked as shepherds or farmers themselves at different points in their lives.

It is, after all, hard to work out who exactly was a shepherd. The men who guarded sheep were not, as Bernard Traimond assumes, all bachelors.⁷⁷⁰ They were not even all men: Arnaudin photographed women guarding sheep, and it seems probable that children were responsible for looking after some animals in the Grande-Lande, as they were elsewhere in France. Neither was pastoralism a fixed and permanent identity. Individuals might pass through a stage working as a shepherd and then find other work. It is easy to be seduced by the fictions of census recording. A man who worked for a wage as a shepherd would be called a shepherd on official documents, but a man who was a head of household whose responsibilities included shepherding might not be.⁷⁷¹ As Francis Dupuy has pointed out, the number of men in Callen in 1856 who were called shepherds in the census would only be enough to look after about 1,100 sheep, but there were five times as many in the commune.⁷⁷² One of Arnaudin's storytellers, Jeanne Dupart, known as Marianne Hailloune (1824-1886), was married to a man who official documents called a *laboureur*, yet Marianne Hailloune told Arnaudin a story about her dead husband and his sheepdog.⁷⁷³ Even if a given individual had never worked at any point during their life as a shepherd, the chances are that someone in their family contributed wages that were earned from guarding sheep.⁷⁷⁴ All families

769 Temple, 'The Natures of Nation'.

770 Traimond, 'Le feu est dans la lande ou l'incendie comme fait social'.

771 Lescarret, *La vie dans la Grande-Lande*, 135.

772 Dupuy, *Le pin de la discorde*, 142.

773 OC:VIII, 558.

774 See Sargos for the family division of labour: *Histoire de la forêt landaise*, 216, 328.

depended on sheep to fertilize their crops. Shepherds, quite simply, were not a class apart.⁷⁷⁵

Neither were the people who bought moorlands to plant them with pine trees. As historians of other environmental conflicts have recently pointed out, individuals were involved in complicated webs of dependency on other people and the landscape, and could act in contradictory ways when it came to the use of common lands depending on what stakes they held. In the case of enclosure in England, for instance, the same people might favour privatisation of the commons in one case, and resist it in another, depending on what they stood to gain or lose.⁷⁷⁶ When there was wholesale resistance to state attempts to curtail customary rights, this resistance could be fractured along social lines. Wealthier individuals sought to defend their customary rights, while denying those of their poorer neighbours.⁷⁷⁷ In the case of the moorlands of southwestern France, what would have mattered to individuals' decision-making was precisely what relationships they had to sheep, land-ownership, and wages. As at least one contributor to the inquiry pointed out, it would not make much sense for shepherds who did not even own their own sheep to destroy the forests for pasture.⁷⁷⁸

These complexities underpin the ambiguities of Mariane's legend, one of the rare examples Arnaudin found of someone willing to discuss the conflict between pines and sheep. Mariane herself embodied some of the contradictions of the competing uses of the landscape. Born in 1822 into an extended family in the village of Escource, Mariane ended up inheriting the family farm in the *quartier* of Jurman where she was born.⁷⁷⁹ Aged nineteen, she was married to Jean Bouzats, and

775 And there is no evidence that the shepherds, alone of all the local population, abstained from fighting the fires, as Traimond claims. Traimond, 'Le feu est dans la lande ou l'incendie comme fait social', 337–8.

776 McDonagh, 'Subverting the Ground', 206.

777 Short, 'Conservation, Class and Custom', 148.

778 *ESI*, 53, 275.

779 In 1819, a few years before her birth, her grandfather, mother, father, uncle Charles (a blacksmith), his wife, and several of her cousins were all living in the family house. See ADL, 6 M 93, 'Recensement de la Population: Escource'.

the couple went on to have at least six children.⁷⁸⁰ She lived in the same house in Jurman until her death in 1916. The fact is that Mariane's family bought communal moorlands themselves, and planted them with pine trees.⁷⁸¹ It is hard to reconcile these choices with the story of the goatherd driven to murder. Neither was Mariane just a silent partner in this transaction. Unlike many of Arnaudin's informants, she continued to be known by her father's name even after her marriage to Jean Bouzats, strongly suggesting that she was a powerful *daüine* or matriarch of the extended household. When the family lands were being reorganised in 1861, it was Mariane, and not her husband, who signed the notarial document.⁷⁸² In some senses, Mariane's own life was much closer to that of the wicked lord than the desperate goatherd.

This is why the story is run through with such ambiguity. It expresses a hatred of those who are 'fort dur aux pauvres gens', but perhaps it only does so to excuse the actions of those who own moorlands without displaying cruelty to pastoralists. The feudal lord makes an ideal scapegoat for a nineteenth-century 'mi-paysan, mi bourgeois' such as Mariane.⁷⁸³ The legend is an attempt to claim moral authority and solidarity with the shepherds by someone whose interests would sometimes have conflicted with pastoralists. And perhaps it is also a call for calm. The 'rage' that seizes both the wicked lord and the goatherd leaves one dead and the other banished from his homeland. Mariane's intermediary position would have encouraged her to feel ambivalent about fires. On the one hand, she would not want to risk losing her family property, and fires were always dangerous. On the other hand, if fires struck the big plantations of the industrial capitalists, the nineteenth-century equivalents of the wicked lord, small-holders like Mariane could actually stand to gain. With the big plantations gone, the smaller plantations would be at less risk from the fires that spread

780 See ADL 1 MIEC 94, 'État civil: Escource', for the births of her children between 1848 and 1866.

781 The plot was originally sold in 1836.

782 See ADL, 3 E 52/94, 'Étude notariale Dominique Bacon à Labouheyre', 3 March 1861.

783 The description is Boisgontier's. See: *OC*:I, xix.

so easily across the new forest.⁷⁸⁴ Her feelings about the competition between sheep and pines were much more complicated than Jacques Sargos understood when he talked of this legend as an expression of a war between shepherds and landowners.⁷⁸⁵

In fact, what is most striking about the folklore Arnaudin collected about this 'éternelle guerre' is just how thin it was. When Arnaudin asked other narrators if they had heard the story, he drew a blank: 'Talinote [Laporte] ignore le fait du [pasteur] tué par un seigneur rentrant de la chasse. Mais à Ygos, dit-elle, un seigneur tua ainsi un charpentier'.⁷⁸⁶ When he asked if they recalled extraordinary events, including supernatural occurrences, but also historical memories, such as the passage through the area of the English armies during the Napoleonic Wars, almost none mentioned the massive changes to the landscape. Few seemed willing, or able, to articulate a sense of the disappeared, open moorlands, and few made any explicit references to forestation, or the social conflicts it had engendered. With the exception of Mariane's legend of the wicked lord, one of the most important changes to local life went largely unmentioned.⁷⁸⁷ Neither is there much explicit evidence for the fondness Arnaudin claimed the shepherds and farmers felt for the landscape. The shepherd Jean Daurys, known as lou Bourit (1813-1882) was one of the few Arnaudin informants to echo the folklorist's lament for the open sky, telling him: 'The empty space between the heaven and the earth was free. It was really a fine thing to be able to leave your sheep to God and to the weather'.⁷⁸⁸ Arnaudin also recorded an anonymous legend that drew on this mysterious, open landscape:

On the edge of the moor at Cornalis, they used to always hear a cockerel crowing. One day, three shepherds who were next to a sheepfold heard it. One of them said: "The only thing you can see here is the sky and the moor. There isn't a tree or a

784 As monsieur Gaussens pointed out to the enquête. *ESI*, 214.

785 Sargos, *Histoire de la forêt landaise*, 424.

786 NFA, 2 MI 29/19, f.294.

787 For a parallel example, see: Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 20.

788 *OC*:VII, 414.

house less than a day on foot from here. We should look into this...”
 And he went off to try and find the cockerel. But the further he went, the further the
 sound of the cockerel grew.
 It was not him the cockerel wanted to take.⁷⁸⁹

However, as Marie-Dominique Ribéreau-Gayon has emphasised, such impressions of the strangeness of the landscape did not dominate local understandings.⁷⁹⁰ Some shepherds knew proverbs about the ways that the open landscape created optical illusions that would make the sheepfolds appear as if they were floating in the sky, but at least one flatly told Arnaudin he had never heard of that.⁷⁹¹ Arnaudin himself marvelled in his diary about the strange ways that the sound of church bells floated great distances across the open landscape, but none of his informants mentioned the auditory properties of the open moors.⁷⁹² If local men and women regretted the environmental changes, they kept very quiet about it.

It is easy to suggest why. Forestation and the fires would have been a risky topic to discuss with a man like Arnaudin. Whatever his sympathies, he came from a family who were instrumental in auctioning moorlands, planting pine trees, and working with the railways. Arnaudin's own father was responsible for auctioning the moors belonging to his home town of Labouheyre, and his cousins and uncles all played prominent roles in the local land-owning bourgeoisie.⁷⁹³ Yet his informants must have known that Arnaudin himself was strongly opposed to what he called 'la forêt industrielle'.⁷⁹⁴ Rather than reflecting any desire on the behalf of the legend-tellers to treat the subject cautiously, the absence of materials concerning environmental change is due to the everyday ambivalence working men and women felt towards the environment. The geographer Yi-Fu Tuan

789 NFA, 2 MI 29/11, f.150.

790 Ribéreau-Gayon, 'Perceptions sensorielles et représentations des Landes de Gascogne'.

791 NFA, 2 MI 29/17, f.270.

792 *OC*:VIII, 172.

793 On Arnaudin's father's role selling moorlands in 1857 and 1858, see ADL 3 E 52/93, 'Étude notariale Dominique Bacon à Labouheyre'.

794 *OC*:III, xxxiv.

has suggested that the 'complex attitude' natives have to the region they live in is rarely verbalized, but operates at the level of assumptions and unspoken orientations.⁷⁹⁵ Peasants pen no poetry for spaces they perceive as working environments. Instead of the changes to the landscape, the legends that rural labourers told were overwhelmingly about bodies, both their own at work, but also the bodies of the other people and animals they shared their lives with. Some animals made for better stories than others. It is striking, for instance, that sheep and goats play very little role in the narrative traditions of the Grande-Lande, in stark contrast to how large they loomed in the imagination of landowners, worrying about the threat they posed to their saplings. Instead, legends dealt in the everyday grind of labour, and especially women's work. Marianne Hailloune, for instance, told Arnaudin about a young servant girl who was forced to come back from the grave to work off her debt to her employer.⁷⁹⁶ When the mistress of the household realises the girl is a ghost, she takes pity on her and releases her from her duty.⁷⁹⁷ This legend was unusual in that the crux of the story concerned working. In most, work was simply the constant backdrop to every plot. In a story Arnaudin collected from the clog-maker Simon Mallié (1837-1923) a young woman's baby was replaced by changeling while she worked in the field.⁷⁹⁸ In a story Jeanne Lescarret, known as Marichoun (femme) Bouzats (1833-1894) told about a local witch, the sorceress herself was working in the fields when Marichoun's brother arrived to ask for help.⁷⁹⁹ These stories feature little nostalgia for the moorlands before the forest. Ordinary people had more pressing concerns.

When legend-tellers did touch on sensitive topics, such as the forest fires, their narratives

795 Y.-F. Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1974), 63, 68.

796 This belongs in a long tradition of revenants who come to repay a debt. See for instance: J.-C. Schmitt, *Les revenants* (Paris, 1994), 161; T. Chesters, *Ghost Stories in Late Renaissance France: Walking by Night* (Oxford, 2011), 22.

797 The most complete surviving version of this story appears in: Arnaudin, *Contes populaires*.

798 NFA, 2 MI 29/11, ff.139-41.

799 *Ibid.*, ff.82-3.

were ambiguous in similar ways to Mariane's legend of the wicked lord.⁸⁰⁰ Arnaudin collected one story about a blaze from Jeanne Larrivière, femme Cassagne, dit Gnoy (b.1834):

Between the *quartier* of Beyrié and Saint-Anthony's chapel, they tried to plant pine trees, but they burnt down as soon as they were planted, because that [land] was stolen from the church of Saint-Anthony's. The priest had to go round with the ostensorium. And it burned no more.⁸⁰¹

There is no suggestion in this short narrative that the pine trees were imposed on a resistant local population. The plantations did not burn because the land was stolen from the poor, but because it was stolen from the church. What is more, Jeanne's version differed from other versions in how it explained the fire. In other stories Arnaudin collected, the fire was the result of the blasphemy of a shepherd, and totally destroyed the chapel as well. In one version, the fire was repelled by the power of the Host, and the chapel was saved.⁸⁰² Jeanne's story is the only one to mention the idea that the land was stolen and could not therefore be planted with trees. This proliferation of similar stories concerning one chapel suggests that, much more than the landowners and reformers who submitted evidence to the inquiry, different people among the labouring population held different opinions about fires, what caused them, and how to stop them. Like Mariane, poised between agro-pastoralism and the temptations of silviculture, other labourers and shepherds could entertain conflicting views about the meanings of the local landscape. These meanings were not their most pressing concern.

Conclusion

Many of the men who contributed to the inquiry into the forest fires treated the shepherds of the moorlands as if they were rational, economic agents, who had deliberately burned the new

800 Traimond discusses the ambivalence fires could evoke: 'Le feu est dans la lande ou l'incendie comme fait social', 333.

801 NFA, 2 MI 29/19, f.210.

802 Ibid., ff.207-8.

forests for financial gain. This explanation of the fires of the 1860s is too simplistic. It relied on a misunderstanding of the local landscape, plants, soils, and animals, which all contributed to the proliferation of fires in the second half of the century, and it also oversimplified the attitudes of local men and women. Many of these people were involved either directly or indirectly in pastoralism, but many of them were also involved in other occupations that could conflict with farming sheep. The legends Arnaudin collected offer historians insight into the ambivalences of ordinary people's feelings and the complicated stakes they had in social and environmental changes. For many people, the environmental changes were a relatively unimportant subject for local memory. When forest fires or the conflict between pines and sheep were mentioned, legend-tellers used their stories to explore the complexities of blame and guilt.

In some senses, then, legends related to the changes in the environment of the moorlands are a disappointing source for historians of the body, pointing to an absence rather than a new sense of how these ecological and spatial revolutions were embodied by ordinary men and women. Reformers thought curing the landscape would cure the sickly bodies of the local population, but the themes of murder and arson in legends about the changes suggest the unsurprising conclusion that local men and women had an anguished and painful, but not simple, experience of the transition. Yet in itself, this relative absence is important. It directs attention away from the concerns of the reformers and towards what actually mattered in the everyday bodily experiences of ordinary people. The constant references to manual labour in the legends might appear to be another unsurprising finding, but there are other, less obvious messages to be gleaned, which throw light on the issues which really did matter to Arnaudin's informants. The next chapter explores some of these issues of social change, families, households, and bodies through the emblematic figure of the werewolf.

Chapter Six

The Domestication of the Werewolf: Body Problems and Social Change

Introduction: Transgressing Boundaries

In 1891, Marichoun Lescarret was fifty-eight years old, but she still vividly remembered the time she saw a werewolf as a child (see Appendix III: ‘The Werewolf’). While few of the legends Arnaudin collected voiced proletarian resistance to the environmental changes of the nineteenth century, some, like Marichoun's story of her own experience with a werewolf, did express the indirect consequences of forestation and the reorganisation of labour and family life in the region. Such stories of strange and troubling beasts were a way for local people to explore feelings of uncertainty unleashed by a period when the most fundamental boundaries of landscape, family, and identity were in flux. Marichoun's story took place one night during her childhood when she was sent to bed without her dinner for getting lost on her way to the well. From where she was tucked up in bed, Marichoun could hear her father and some men and women who worked for the family shucking maize in the kitchen, an activity traditionally associated with storytelling and other entertainments. This particular evening, however, the story was real. The workers noticed that something was bothering the dogs and, peering out through their windows, they realised it was a werewolf. The best plan the worried men and women could come up with was to shoot at the beast, but it slunk off, apparently unharmed. It soon turned out that the same werewolf was harassing some of their relatives, hanging around their house at night, and licking the trough in an outhouse. The father of this household had a better plan than simply shooting at the animal. Along with his son, he trapped the beast in an outhouse, beat it up, and burnt its muzzle. The following day, this relative came to see Marichoun's father to suggest that they go to the tavern in town to confirm his suspicion that the inn-keeper was the werewolf. Sure enough, when they got there the suspect was badly injured on his face, and very angry with the man who had beaten up the beast. They parted on

bad terms, with Marichoun's own father telling the inn-keeper he was nothing but a 'rotten werewolf'.⁸⁰³

Marichoun mentions no silver bullets, ferocious beasts, or full moons. In fact, she does not even mention wolves. Although she calls the shape-shifter a *loup-garou*, in her account the vague form he takes on is more like a large dog. Her story is set in an everyday world of family and neighbourly relationships, of mundane tasks such as fetching water and shucking corn. When the confrontation with the beast actually happens, it is something of an anti-climax. Even the final revelation of the guilty party has more of the flavour of petty village rivalries than satanic plots and incredible transformations. But seen in the context of other stories which French folklorists collected about men who changed into beasts, what is remarkable about Mariane's story is not this overwhelming banality, which is common to almost all of the stories about werewolves. Instead, what is striking is the connections between this detailed and personal account and what it is possible to discover about Marichoun's own life and the history of the moorlands. Her story, like other werewolf legends of the period, was about vague uncertainties surrounding everyday bodily life, but in the case of Marichoun it is possible to say with a little more confidence than in most cases what exactly these fleshy anxieties meant. Her story of the werewolf who threatened her family as a child was not simply a throwback to the early-modern figure of the werewolf, so closely associated with the depredations of real wolves. Instead, Marichoun's legend expressed specific concerns about social change, families, and bodies in the nineteenth century, the period when the werewolf was definitively domesticated.

Sensitive Skin: The Werewolf Tradition in the Nineteenth Century

While academic research into werewolf beliefs in modern France has been rare, popular books claiming to decode the long history of European werewolf beliefs appear with depressing

803 In her mixture of French and Gascon, Marichoun said 'un loup garou pourrit'. The text that appears in the printed edition takes considerable liberties with the manuscript original. See: *OC*:I, 280–3, and *NFA*, 2 MI 29/11, ff.86-7.

regularity. As Willem de Blécourt has recently noted, very few of these accounts actually engage with modern sources beyond the most obvious literary references.⁸⁰⁴ The nineteenth-century folklore collections and the historically-specific vision they present of the werewolf are most often neglected in favour of the more extravagant writings of the English clergymen Montague Summers and Sabine Baring-Gould.⁸⁰⁵ The work that Blécourt has done to outline the characteristics of the werewolf tradition in the area where Flemish, Dutch, and German meet has not been done for France, so, in order to understand Marichoun's story in the context of a wider tradition, this chapter explores 127 werewolf legends collected during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as well as referring to the descriptions folklorists have given of werewolf beliefs.⁸⁰⁶

The most widespread name for the shape-shifter was *le garou*, but werewolves were known by a dizzying variety of different names in different parts of France, such as *varou*, *elbrou*, *lebrou*, *lebrette*, and *birette*. And beliefs concerning these troubling beasts were as diverse as their different names. Sometimes such beliefs mingled with other similar traditions, such as the *meneur de loups*, who had the power to control real wolves, or fairies and goblins, the Devil, or the Wild Hunt.⁸⁰⁷ At least one nineteenth-century folklorist saw werewolves as a type of vampire.⁸⁰⁸ For the sake of simplicity, I have applied a basic definition of the werewolf, based on what nineteenth-century folklore informants actually said about beasts they called *garous*. The werewolf was a human who

804 W. de Blécourt, 'Monstrous Theories: Werewolves and the Abuse of History', *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural*, 2, no. 2 (2013), 188–212.

805 S. Baring-Gould, *The Book of Were-Wolves* (London, 1865); M. Summers, *The Werewolf* (London, 1933).

806 W. de Blécourt, "'I Would Have Eaten You Too': Werewolf Legends in the Flemish, Dutch and German Area", *Folklore*, 118, no. 1 (2007), 23–43. The closest thing to a survey of French folklore sources concerning werewolves is found in: L. Andries, 'Contes du loup', in J. de Nynauld, *De la lycanthropie, transformation et extase des sorciers (1615)*, M. Préaud and N. Jacques-Chaquin (eds) (Paris, 1990), 197–217.

807 Andries therefore studies werewolves alongside other phenomena such as the meneurs, and even the animal-bridegrooms found in some Märchen. See: 'Contes du loup'.

808 L. Guibert, cited in: L. Queyrat, *Contribution à l'étude du parler de la Creuse. Le patois de la région de Chavanat* (Paris, 1924), 347.

by some means or another is turned into a horrifying animal, normally at night. Most were men.⁸⁰⁹

Whatever their plot and setting, these narratives share an emotional tone. Many speak of fear, but even more often, the antipathy to the werewolf is associated with disgust. In Marichoun's father's assessment the beast is not terrifying, but 'rotten'. The most obvious point about the werewolf is that it is a human who has transgressed the boundaries of animality, and it is this transgression itself that evokes the primal feelings narrators express, rather than any violence the beast commits. Werewolves have an insatiable appetite for inappropriate food, such as filth, pig slop, or carrion.⁸¹⁰ While seven of the nineteenth-century sources refer explicitly to werewolves ravaging flocks of sheep or herds of cattle, even more suggest that they eat animals that a human never would, such as 'little dogs' and cats. In one short anecdote Arnaudin recorded, Talinote Laporte recalled a local man who had to stop threshing so that he could vomit up seven dogs he had consumed during the night.⁸¹¹ These stories are somehow disconnected from the legacy of the early-modern fear of wolves. They are not about the violence of savage beasts against grazing animals and shepherds, but are about disgust and feelings evoked by behaviour that transgresses social norms. By their very existence, then, werewolves transgress social norms about the body, but they transgress other norms as well, such as those governing space and time, wandering abroad when they should be tucked up in bed or, worse, appearing in inappropriate places, such as the liminal space of the outhouse where the beast in Marichoun's story appears. So closely associated was the werewolf with running around at night that Darryl Ogier found that locals in Guernsey used the

809 Sixty-six of the examples I have found refer explicitly to male werewolves, while just twenty-four mention women who were turned into animals. What is more, many of these women seem to have been more akin to what we would recognise as witches, individuals who deliberately use their maleficent powers to harm others. C. Joisten was adamant that most werewolves were men. See C. Joisten, R. Chanaud, and A. Joisten, 'Les loups-garous en Savoie et Dauphiné', *Le Monde Alpin et Rhodanien*, (1992), 47.

810 For pig slop and filth, see: E. Sol, *Le vieux Quercy* (Aurillac, 1930), 93–4. The example of werewolves eating carrion was collected by Arnaudin. See: NFA, 2 MI 29/11, f.88.

811 NFA, 2 MI 29/11, f.90.

term to refer to debauched behaviour, such as drinking, carousing, and fornicating.⁸¹² The position of the werewolf was the pariah of rural society, the figure into which ordinary people poured their disapproval and disgust. The werewolf was imagined in contradistinction to the household, represented as an imperfectly sealed unit, whose limits were maintained by the vigilance of both men and dogs. Many people, like the men and women in Marichoun's story, could tell the werewolf was coming because their dogs grew agitated.

Yet this was about as far as their certainty about the shape-shifter went. As one folklorist pointed out, legend-tellers were frustratingly imprecise about what he called 'la façon mécanique dont s'accomplissait ce changement de l'homme en loup-garou'.⁸¹³ Dr. Drouet, who wrote one of the most in-depth investigations of the werewolf, expressed a similar dissatisfaction: 'Sa nature même, son essence si j'ose dire, est par contre plus vaguement conçue. Au reste, les paysans répondent mal à des questions de ce genre, n'en voyant point l'intérêt'.⁸¹⁴ There was considerable confusion surrounding not just how the man became a beast, but also whether this metamorphosis was a choice or a curse. When storytellers were explicit, the most common way to become a werewolf involved putting on some kind of skin, a method mentioned in fourteen stories and by five of the folklorists. Another two stories mentioned getting undressed. In a story collected by Henri Carnoy in Picardy, a man changed himself into a werewolf by ducking himself in a pond.⁸¹⁵ Other common methods of transformation included ointments, which were mentioned by three of the folklorists and in three stories, and belts, which were used in four of the stories and mentioned by one of the folklorists.

When it came to blaming or exculpating the werewolf, legend-tellers had a very different

812 D. Ogier, 'Night Revels and Werewolfery in Calvinist Guernsey', *Folklore* 109 (1 January 1998), 53–62. The idea that werewolves lead women astray appears in at least one French folklore collection: J.-F. Bonnafoux, *Légendes et croyances superstitieuses conservées dans le département de la Creuse* (Guéret, 1867), 30.

813 H. Gelin, *Légendes de sorcellerie* (Ligugé, 1898), 5.

814 Dr. Drouet, 'Le loup-garou en Limousin.', *Revue d'ethnographie et de sociologie*, (1911), 146.

815 H. Carnoy, *Littérature orale de la Picardie* (Paris, 1883), 106–8.

attitude to the folklorists. Thirteen of the stories featured examples of individuals who were condemned to be werewolves for crimes such as stealing sticks, or having sex before marriage, but the storytellers were much less likely to talk of satanic dealings, magic books, and blasphemy than the folklorists were.⁸¹⁶ Eleven folklorists mentioned pacts with the Devil, while only five legend-tellers offered this as an explanation for metamorphosis. Folklorists such as Camille de Mensignac declared that in some villages, children who were baptised by the priest before he had said mass risked becoming werewolves. According to this logic, the priest was impure until he performed this rite, 'couchant probablement avec sa servante'.⁸¹⁷ Yet these religious explanations for the aetiology of shape-shifting were less popular with storytellers. Being the son or grandson of a priest was mentioned by a few of the folklorists but none of the legend-tellers. This was part of a wider pattern, whereby storytellers had less interest than the folklorists in how exactly the transformation occurred or why. With the notable exception of the storyteller Nannette Lévesque, who told the folklorist Victor Smith two long, fantastical, and violent stories about werewolves who seem to have represented her own repressed violent urges towards her family, most storytellers did not think about the subjective guilt or shame of the shape-shifter. Their stories were about what the werewolf's transgressions challenged: the social order, boundaries, and bodily integrity.

Four types of story addressing these problems were especially popular, although many narratives incorporated ideas from the different types.⁸¹⁸ The first two types were recorded in various parts of France, but they do not seem to have been as widespread as in other parts of Europe. These stories were either about werewolves who rode around on the backs of unfortunate

816 For the man who became a werewolf for stealing sticks, see: L. Pineau, 'Le folklore de la Touraine: le loup-garou', *RTP* 17, no. 11 (1902), 579–80; For werewolves who had sex before marriage, see: Tenèze and Delarue (eds), *Nannette Lévesque*, 85.

817 C. de Mensignac, *Notice sur plusieurs coutumes, usages, préjugés, croyances, superstitions, médailles, prières, remèdes, dictons, proverbes, devinettes et chansons populaires du département de la Gironde accompagnée d'un questionnaire*, new edn (Marseille, 1999), 175.

818 I do not mean to use the word 'type' in as strict a sense as many folklorists would. Legends are more fluid than the genres that have been successfully typologised and catalogued in France, such as songs or tales. For an attempt to loosely typologise, see: Blécourt, "I Would Have Eaten You Too".

travellers or about travellers who made the mistake of trying to ride werewolves.⁸¹⁹ With their focus on fatigue and exhaustion, these narratives explored the burdens of manual labour. An example collected by Claude Seignolle in Guyenne in 1933 is typical:

Une autre fois un homme revenait tard de la foire de Brantôme lorsque, en pleine campagne, il sentit brusquement quelque chose lui tomber sur les épaules. C'était mou, lourd et cela respirait comme un être vivant. Malgré tous ses efforts pour s'en débarrasser, il ne put y parvenir et eut bien du mal à redresser sa marche car la chose le forçait à se diriger vers la rivière toute proche. Il finit par arriver chez lui, harassé comme s'il avait couru depuis son départ. Sa femme lui apprit qu'il avait dû porter un *leberou* repu, et se signa en pensant combien la mort s'était approchée de son homme.⁸²⁰

Other stories emphasized how the werewolf was an individual who was forced to run around, and who was exhausted, sweaty, and out of breath.

The second two types of story were more popular in France. They involved either what folklorists call 'repercussion' or, alternatively, causing the werewolf to bleed and thereby breaking the spell. These narratives were often about problems of local identity, neighbourliness, family, friendship, and sexuality. Stories about repercussion are among the oldest and the most enduringly popular narratives concerning shape-shifters.⁸²¹ At least fourteen of the stories collected by French folklorists feature this detail, and several folklorists mentioned the belief independently of any specific narrative. The principle is simple: the werewolf is injured while in animal form, and is then recognized in human form when a local individual bears the same injury. The inn-keeper in Marichoun's story recognized by his burnt face is fairly typical of repercussion stories from this period, most of which feature injuries to the face, ears, forehead, or sometimes neck and shoulders. These stories were concerned with bodily identity and discovering who the werewolf is, so it should be no surprise that they focus so much attention on the face, the site of recognition.

819 Blécourt categorises the former types as 'Back Rider' legends. They correspond to Stith Thompson's motif F472. See: *Ibid.*, 26.

820 C. Seignolle, *Contes populaires de Guyenne*, 2nd edn (Paris, 1971), 224.

821 See, for instance: C. Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York, 2001), 174; Joisten, Chanaud, and Joisten, 'Les loups-garous en Savoie et Dauphiné', 119.

Stories that involved breaking the skin of the werewolf and thereby putting an end to the metamorphosis were even more common, and drew on similar concerns about faces and identity.⁸²²

Several specifically mentioned injuring the nose, such as this anonymous account collected in

Anjou:

Une femme des environs de Beauvau voyait chaque soir un gros chat noir entrer chez elle et chercher à manger la soupe qu'elle préparait à ce moment. Un jour, impatientée de l'insistance de l'animal, elle lui donna un coup de manche de couteau sur le nez, qui le fit saigner. Tout aussitôt, celui-ci prit la forme humaine, au grand ébahissement de la bonne femme, qui vit devant elle un de ses cousins habitant le bourg.⁸²³

The insistence with which storytellers return to the idea of drawing blood to cure the werewolf suggest an implicit concern not only with faces and identity, but with the problems that skin poses to identity. The psychoanalyst Didier Anzieu has described one of the functions of the skin as 'a site and a primary means of communicating with others, of establishing signifying relations'. The skin 'is, moreover, an 'inscribing surface' for the marks left by those others'.⁸²⁴ This tension between communication, identity, and marking the bodies of others is at the heart of the psychic power of werewolf stories. When people like Marichoun in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries told stories about werewolves this was not because they experienced their pre-modern bodies as fundamentally changeable, a confusion of categories, as David Le Breton suggests, but because they feared and abhorred the transgressions of skin and identity that the werewolf represented.⁸²⁵ As one nineteenth-century folklorist put it when discussing local nicknaming practices 'Autrefois nos braves cultivateurs avaient l'épiderme très sensible'.⁸²⁶

822 For the importance of wounding, see: Joisten, Chanaud, and Joisten, 'Les loups-garous en Savoie et Dauphiné', 81. Interestingly, the Joisten collection suggests feeding werewolves was a more important method for curing them than wounding them. I have found no trace of this in other sources.

823 C. Fraysse, 'Au pays de Baugé', *RTP XX* (1905), 12.

824 D. Anzieu, *The Skin Ego* (New Haven, 1989), 40.

825 Le Breton, *Anthropologie du corps et modernité*, 56.

826 C. Beauquier, *Blason populaire de Franche-Comté: sobriquets, dictons, et contes* (Paris, 1897), 5. See also

The Domestication of the Werewolf

The image that emerges of these modern werewolves shows they were clearly related to the beasts of the medieval, early-modern, and even classical periods, but not quite the same. Like the early-modern werewolves, the oral storytellers recognised that they were not dealing with wolves or dogs because the animal's body was not quite right. It was missing a tail, or was a strange colour.⁸²⁷ In human form, they had strange skin or unusual eyes.⁸²⁸ The idea found in Pliny (23-79 AD) that shape-shifting was a punishment set for a fixed number of years was still relevant enough in modern stories for eight narrators and four folklorists to mention it.⁸²⁹ Most importantly, repercussion has a very long history. It features in classical, as well as in medieval and early-modern sources.⁸³⁰ In Petronius's *Satyricon*, which dates from the first century AD, Niceros tells his companion Trimalchio how he saw his master turn into a wolf. While under this form, he was injured by another servant. When Niceros returned home he found his master 'lying a-bed like an Oxe in his Stall, and a Chirurgion dressing his neck. I understood afterwards he was a Fellow that could change his Skin, but from that day forward, could never eat a bit of Bread with him, no if you'd have kill'd me'.⁸³¹ Yet, and in spite of what has sometimes been assumed about the timelessness of shape-shifting, the nineteenth- and twentieth-century werewolves were not exactly the same as their

Chapter Four for an exploration of the importance of skin.

827 C. Oates, 'Metamorphosis and Lycanthropy in Franche-Comté, 1521-1643', in M. Tazi Feher, R. Naddaff, and N. Tazi (eds), *Fragments for a History of the Human Body* (3 vols., New York, 1989), I, 307; M. Meurger, 'L'homme loup et son témoin. Construction d'une factualité lycanthropique', in J. de Nynauld, *De la lycanthropie, transformation et extase des sorciers (1615)*, M. Préaud and N. Jacques-Chaquin (eds) (Paris, 1990), 161-2.

828 C. Otten (ed), *A Lycanthropy Reader: Werewolves in Western Culture* (Syracuse, 1986), 9; It is typical of the popular books on werewolves to note that motifs such as glowing eyes date back to the writings of Saxo Grammaticus (1150-1220 AD). See: M. Beresford, *The White Devil: The Werewolf in European Culture* (London, 2013), 73.

829 Beresford, *The White Devil*, 49-50.

830 Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity*, 174; Oates, 'Metamorphosis and Lycanthropy', 39.

831 Otten, *A Lycanthropy Reader*, 233.

ancient ancestors.⁸³² In general, the modern storytellers presented narratives that were less extravagant, less religious, and less violent, but more banal, and more intimate than the sources that survive from earlier periods. Rather than a wild beast, the werewolf was a domestic disturbance. This is not simply an illusion of the surviving sources: it is a reflection both of the changing natural environment, changing cultural attitudes to religion, and changes to the social structure of society.

There are obvious reasons why the shift could appear to be a consequence of the differences between documentary evidence from earlier periods and the modern folklore sources. Literary sources from the early-modern, medieval, and even classical periods would, like literary sources today, have had very different priorities to those of oral storytellers. Perhaps they were more likely to present outrageous and extraordinary accounts, and less interested in the often banal narratives that thrive in oral traditions of the supernatural. As one folklorist puts it, the stories of the oral tradition are 'are frequently only *slightly* dramatic'.⁸³³ The contrast between these fairly unextraordinary oral traditions and the sometimes wild theories of the early-modern demonologists and witch-hunters is striking. Jean de Nynauld, for instance, reproduced a story he claimed to have second-hand from a surgeon from Frankfurt. The surgeon's story is filled with the kinds of incredible transformations and supernatural flights through the air at night which are almost completely absent from modern folklore sources.⁸³⁴ The early-modern witchcraft trials also featured considerably more violence, 'rape, incest, murder, savage attacks, and cannibalism' than modern folklore collections do.⁸³⁵ As Marie de France put it: 'A werewolf [*garvalf*] is a savage beast [*beste salvage*]; / while his fury is on him / he eats men, does much harm, / goes deep in the forest to

832 Andries, for instance, believes werewolf traditions have changed little over time. See: 'Contes du loup', 197.

833 J. Thomas, 'The Usefulness of Ghost Stories', in D. Goldstein, S. Grider, and J. Thomas (eds), *Haunting Experiences: Ghosts in Contemporary Folklore* (Logan, 2007), 29.

834 J. de Nynauld, *De la lycanthropie, transformation et extase des sorciers (1615)*, M. Préaud and N. Jacques-Chaquin (eds) (Paris, 1990), 90–2.

835 See especially the chapbooks about Stubbe Peeter: Otten, *A Lycanthropy Reader*, 51, 69–76.

live'.⁸³⁶ But it is hard to say with much certainty how much of the information historians can glean concerning werewolves from the trials is a result of legal officials and clerics projecting their own concerns onto radically different popular traditions, transforming them into recognisable cases of witchcraft.⁸³⁷ Although the modern werewolf stories cannot be said to be unmediated, they are nonetheless much closer to what ordinary people apparently said when they talked about werewolves with family members, friends, and neighbours. The manuscript notes of folklorists such as Arnaudin and Victor Smith, for instance, contain direct transcriptions of oral narratives concerning werewolves. If the theories and methodologies of modern ethnography had existed in earlier periods, perhaps similar narratives could have been collected then as well.

While there may be some truth in this suspicion, there is also good evidence that the modern werewolf tradition reflected changing attitudes and changing conditions, dealing with concerns that were unknown in earlier periods, and abandoning elements that were no longer relevant. Most obviously, the connection between werewolves and real wolves had greatly weakened by the nineteenth century, reflecting the decreasing importance of wolves in the French countryside.⁸³⁸ Early-modern demonologists were aware that not all shape-shifters turned themselves into wolves, recognising that they could become cats, or even pigs and other domestic animals.⁸³⁹ Nonetheless, almost all of the literary accounts deal with humans who are turned into wolves, and most authors agree that real wolf attacks probably lay behind the werewolf accusations that led to the criminal trials in the early-modern period.⁸⁴⁰ In the narratives collected since the nineteenth century, the

836 Cited in: Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity*, 170.

837 See, for instance: C. Ginzburg, *The Night Battles: Witchcraft & Agrarian Cults in The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London, 1983).

838 The absence of wolves, so the argument goes, is why the British Isles have no werewolf tradition. See: Beresford, *The White Devil*, 130.

839 De Nynauld, *De la lycanthropie*, 67; Otten reproduces Henry Boguet's opinion: *A Lycanthropy Reader*, 80–1.

840 This is the argument in: Oates, 'Metamorphosis and Lycanthropy'. Meurger agrees: 'L'homme loup et son témoin'.

picture is completely different. Many narrators were uncertain about what exactly the beast was, talking of 'un animal de forme indéfinie', or 'une masse bizarre'.⁸⁴¹ Only seven of the narrators specified that the shape-shifter turned into a wolf. By contrast, the narratives mention sixteen humans who became dogs, as well as eleven cats, nine sheep, five horses, four goats, three pigs, a bull, a donkey, a rabbit, and a hare. Marichoun's story is typical in that she explicitly calls the beast a *loup-garou*, but goes on to refer to it throughout as a dog. The connection between the violence of wolves and the figure of the werewolf had been severed. In the twentieth century, Charles Joisten found there was no correlation between areas in the Alps that were still affected by wolves and mentions of wolves in the shape-shifting narratives he collected.⁸⁴² This is not to say that panics about violent beasts roaming the countryside such as the eighteenth-century beast of the Gévaudan completely disappeared.⁸⁴³ It is simply that narrators made no connection between the violence of the beast of the Cévennes (1809), or Chaingy (1814), or Cézallier (1946-1951) and the community tensions expressed in werewolf stories.⁸⁴⁴

If the modern narratives are less violent, they are also less supernatural than earlier werewolf sources. This applies as much to the method of metamorphosis already discussed as it does to the religious tone of the narratives.⁸⁴⁵ There are less bibles, and less mentions of the Devil.⁸⁴⁶ Motifs that originally had religious explanations sometimes survived into the nineteenth century, but divorced from their original logic. For instance, when wolves controlled by the *meneurs de loups*

841 Foix, *Sorcières et loups-garous dans les Landes*, 50; A. Micha, *L'Ourthe et l'Amblève* (Liège, 1919), 37.

842 Joisten, Chanaud, and Joisten, 'Les loups-garous en Savoie et Dauphiné', 50.

843 Smith, *Monsters of the Gévaudan*.

844 Andries, 'Contes du loup', 201.

845 On belts and ointments and other tools and techniques for shape-shifting mentioned in the early-modern sources, see: W. de Blécourt, 'The Werewolf, the Witch, and the Warlock: Aspects of Gender in the Early Modern Period', in A. Rowlands (ed) *Witchcraft and Masculinities in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke, 2009), 208; Oates, 'Metamorphosis and Lycanthropy', 310, 333, 353–4; Otten, *A Lycanthropy Reader*, 26–7, 89, 149–50.

846 On the 'dechristianisation' of werewolf beliefs, see: Joisten, Chanaud, and Joisten, 'Les loups-garous en Savoie et Dauphiné', 75–6.

attacked a young child in the Grande-Lande, there was no hint that the body parts they left behind had a particular connection to religion.⁸⁴⁷ Early-modern sources suggest that the beasts left only the right hand, since this was the one used to make the sign of the cross.⁸⁴⁸ There is no mention in the modern sources of a connection between alms and shape-shifting.⁸⁴⁹ Thirteen of the modern stories maintain some kind of connection between committing a sin and becoming a werewolf, but as often as not, this connection makes no reference to religion. One exception to this concerns the most devout parts of western France. The folklorists of Normandy, such as Louis Dubois and Jean Cuisenier, described an *ancien régime* tradition known as the *quérémonie*. When a crime was committed in the region and the authorities were unable to discover the culprit, the local priest supposedly had the power to excommunicate anyone who was withholding information from the investigation. These excommunicated individuals were transformed into werewolves for seven years.⁸⁵⁰ This kind of belief was echoed in other regions, such as Touraine and the Beauce and Perche.⁸⁵¹ In Picardy and Anjou werewolves were also thought to be the souls of the damned.⁸⁵² But these religious connections were much more likely to be described by folklorists than mentioned by narrators. Just four stories made any reference to the crux of the early-modern witch hunts, the sabbath.

The decline in violence and the draining of the supernatural from modern werewolf stories are part of a process of domestication. The other component of this process is the way in which

847 OC:I, 289–291.

848 M. Préaud, ‘Annexe I: Les lycanthropes de Crissier’, in J. de Nynauld, *De la lycanthropie, transformation et extase des sorciers (1615)*, M. Préaud and N. Jacques-Chaquin (eds) (Paris, 1990), 135.

849 For the early-modern period, see for instance: Oates, ‘Metamorphosis and Lycanthropy’, 334.

850 J. Cuisenier, *Récits et contes populaires de Normandie* (2 vols., Paris, 1979), I, 54–6; L. du Bois, *Recherches archéologiques, historiques, biographiques et littéraires sur la Normandie*. (Paris, 1843), 300.

851 F. Chapiseau, *Le folk-lore de La Beauce et du Perche* (Paris, 1902), 219; Pineau, ‘Le folklore de la Touraine: le loup-garou’, 579.

852 Fraysse, ‘Au pays de Baugé’, 11; A. de Loisne, ‘Superstitions et usages particuliers d’autrefois à Montreuil-sur-Mer et dans le Bas-Ponthieu’, *Bulletin de la Société d’Antiquaires de Picardie*, 22 (1904), 370.

werewolves quite literally came home. While many of the modern stories take place on the open road, a surprising number deal with werewolves who breach the boundaries of the house. At least eight tell of events that happened indoors, like the following short story collected by Jacques-Marie Rougé in Touraine:

Une bonne femme de Varennes (canton de Ligueil) trempait sa soupe au coin de l'âtre. Un grou chatte nouërre virounnait sans cesse autour de la marmite. Excédée, la femme lui donna sur le nez un coup de sa cuillère en bois. L'animal disparut et aussitôt le mari entra dans la pièce, le nez tout écorché. "Qui t'as mis en pareil état?" dit la femme. "Toi, avec ta cuillère", reprit le mari, et il ajouta: "Je courais l'El-brou."⁸⁵³

The story is surprising, but makes no mention of religious themes or wild animals, taking place in the domestic sphere around the hearth. Many other modern werewolf stories were set in liminal places around human dwellings, as werewolves probed the boundaries of the household. In one story, told by Françoise Dumont to the Breton folklorist Paul Sébillot, a farmer frees his servant from being a werewolf by poking a sharp stick out of a vent in the side of the house.⁸⁵⁴ This kind of domestic werewolf was a particular concern in the moorlands, where Arnaudin not only collected the story Marichoun told of the dog-like creature that troubled her extended family, but also noted that werewolves were reputed to habitually lick doorsteps.⁸⁵⁵ Marichoun's story of the werewolf haunting the boundaries of the household was related to the wider process of domestication the figure of the shape-shifter had undergone, but this process took on specific contours in the nineteenth-century Grande-Lande.

The ambiguities and uncertainties of the werewolf tradition are what permitted it to survive in modified form into the modern period. In the Alps, for instance, Charles Joisten and his collaborators found that the geography of werewolf narratives demonstrated connections between feudal heritages, the hunting of wolves, the ravages of the glass-making industry, and

853 J.-M. Rougé, *Le folklore de la Touraine* (Tours, 1931), 96–7.

854 P. Sébillot, *Traditions et superstitions de la Haute-Bretagne* (Paris, 1882), 292–3.

855 NFA, 2 MI 29/11, f.90.

politicisation.⁸⁵⁶ Other werewolves could take on even more modern guises. In the late nineteenth century, the villages on the outskirts of the industrial town of Saint-Étienne were plagued by a werewolf who apparently scared one woman to death.⁸⁵⁷ It is hard not to see this beast through the lens of fears about the immigrant industrial workers, or as a reflection of the resentments these workers themselves felt towards religiously-motivated social reformers. When it was finally caught and forced to confess, the werewolf revealed it was under the control of the clergy.

Marichoun's story must be seen in similar modern contexts. Rather than a throwback to early-modern beliefs, it was part of a modern tradition of domesticated werewolves, which was available for Marichoun to express her personal concerns as well as the concerns of other people in the Grande-Lande. Elsewhere in France, and in other historical periods, the symbolisms of skin in werewolf stories had been good ways to discuss the ambiguities of bodily identity, but in the nineteenth-century Grande-Lande these fleshy boundaries had become bound up with other physical boundaries: not only the walls and doors of the house which the werewolf threatens, but also the boundaries redrawn by the 1857 law. In telling her story, Marichoun self-consciously differentiated the present moment from an older time by mentioning these redrawn boundaries: 'In those days the houses weren't surrounded by big pine trees like they are now, and they had little windows' which allowed Marichoun's family to spot the werewolf as it prowled around outside.⁸⁵⁸ Her story, which appears to deal as other werewolf stories do in the transgression of bodily boundaries, is also about the remaking of spatial ones.

In Marichoun's narratives and life, this remaking of the physical environment was also associated through the remaking of families. Many of the stories Marichoun told Arnaudin evoke a bygone period of extended families. She told him about a time her brother was bewitched, or about

856 Joisten, Chanaud, and Joisten, 'Les loups-garous en Savoie et Dauphiné'.

857 A. Boissier, *Carnets d'un folkloriste, 1910-1953* (4 vols., Saint-Didier-en-Velay, 1990-7), I, 130.

858 NFA, 2 MI 29/11, f.86.

the time she herself was ridden by a hag when visiting family members, and most importantly, she set her werewolf story in the context of an extended household of family members and sharecroppers. This extended co-habiting family was rapidly becoming a thing of the past in the Grande-Lande. Where agro-pastoralism was highly labour intensive, and relied on all of the different family members to perform complementary tasks for the good of the whole household, the newer forms of employment, such as resin collector, road-mender, or railway worker paid a salary.⁸⁵⁹ The shift may not have happened overnight, but the dominant family forms in the region were undoubtedly affected by these changes in working life. What is more, the tensions such changes might have aroused are part of the subject of Marichoun's story. In both the narrative about the 'rotten werewolf' and another narrative she told about a different local shape-shifter, the guilty party was no shepherd, or farmer. They were not even the social outcasts who had most often been suspected of lycanthropy in the early-modern period, such as beggars, rag-pickers, or soldiers.⁸⁶⁰ Instead, the men suspected of being werewolves in Marichoun's stories were semi-outsiders of another kind, men who lived in the rural community but did not do agricultural work. In the story of the 'rotten werewolf', the guilty party was an inn-keeper, and in another story she told, a local carpenter turned out to be the shape-shifter. The protagonist of the story swore never to use his services again.⁸⁶¹

Such men presented a challenge to the integrity of the extended household even before the changes associated with forestation swelled the ranks of the wage-earning population. Songs such as 'Tous les artisans sont des voleurs' (Coirault 6416) suggest that artisans had long been the focus of simmering tensions. Discussing another song about the tensions between artisans and farmers, the Gascon folklorist Justin Cénac-Moncaut commented on 'la préférence que les jeunes filles

859 Dupuy, *Le pin de la discorde*, 212-3.

860 Meurger, 'L'homme loup et son témoin', 156-7, 175; Oates, 'Metamorphosis and Lycanthropy', 326.

861 NFA, 2 MI 29/11, f.88.

eurent de tous les temps pour les artisans qui jouissent d'un bien-être supérieur à celui des laboureurs'.⁸⁶² They provided ideal avatars for the concerns Marichoun expressed about the boundaries of the household, since, like the wage earners, their interests were independent of the extended family. This was a tension that affected the Grande-Lande particularly acutely in the nineteenth century, as many working men were forced into new forms of employment which paid wages, rather than working for their family. This helps to explain why Marichoun's artisanal werewolves, representatives of the breakdown of old agricultural working systems, were by no means typical of the suspected werewolves in other parts of France. While there were individual stories of legal functionaries, priests, tailors, and butchers who were suspected of shape-shifting, the vast majority of werewolves elsewhere were plain workers, farmers, or hired hands.⁸⁶³

Marichoun's concerns about changing boundaries, families, and households were deeply personal: the extended family was also a distant memory for Marichoun herself. By the time she met Arnaudin, she was widowed, and living on her own in a small house in Labouheyre. When she insisted to the folklorist that she remembered the story from her own experience, she was emphasizing that she had personally lived through the transformation of family and spatial boundaries. This close connection to Marichoun's own life makes her story unusual in the context of the 126 other werewolf narratives, many of which talked about werewolves as if they were a distant memory. Referring to the disbelief which the audience showed to a man who told a story in the trenches of the First World War about his father's experience with a werewolf, the folklorist Robert Hertz remarked:

Les autres contestent, non l'existence du *Guérou* dont ils ont bien ouï parler, mais que le père de Pannetier ait encore pu en voir. C'est des choses du vieux temps. Il y a bien soixante ou soixante-dix ans qu'on n'en voit plus.⁸⁶⁴

862 J. Cénac-Moncaut, *Littérature populaire de la Gascogne: contes, mystères, chansons historiques, satiriques, sentimentales, rondeaux recueillis dans l'Astarac, le Pardiac, le Béarn et le Bigorre* (Paris, 1868), 310.

863 I have counted seventeen examples, while the other, more specialised occupations only account for one story each.

864 R. Hertz, 'Contes et dictons recueillis sur le front parmi les poilus de Mayenne et d'ailleurs, campagne de 1915',

Just one other story referred to a personal encounter with a werewolf, and only eleven were presented second-hand. Yet, of these twelve more personal accounts, three were collected by Arnaudin in the Grande-Lande, and this in spite of the fact that he put little effort into recording supernatural narratives. Babé Plantié told Arnaudin her grandfather was involved in killing one, while Talinote Laporte claimed her mother had seen another.⁸⁶⁵ Talinote herself knew a werewolf.⁸⁶⁶ Another folklorist of the Landes, Vincent Foix, provides confirmation that werewolves were especially rife there. He claimed there were twenty-seven in the small village of Bascons where he lived!⁸⁶⁷ Even more than other parts of France, the werewolf was a meaningful experience in the Grande-Lande, one that associated social and environmental changes with shifting material and bodily boundaries. Perhaps, as Michel Meurger puts it, this interest in werewolves is the return of 'croyances archaïques', beliefs that Nicole Jacques-Chaquin points out have always thrived in periods of social crisis.⁸⁶⁸ Looking at Marichoun's own life, the changes in the moorlands, and the idiosyncrasies of her story, however, it is hard not to see this narrative as some kind of personal expression of the bodily costs and consequences of social and environmental changes.

The Decline of Werewolves?

However convincing the argument that Marichoun's werewolf story expresses modern concerns, her conviction in the existence of shape-shifters can seem something of a throwback, irrelevant to the bodily culture of most nineteenth-century men and women. Indeed, many theories have been advanced to explain the apparent decline in the werewolf tradition. Nineteenth-century

RTP 32 (1917), 89.

865 NFA, 2 MI 29/11, ff.90, 91.

866 *Ibid.*, f.90.

867 Foix, *Sorcières et loups-garous dans les Landes*, 49–50.

868 Meurger, 'L'homme loup et son témoin', 153; N. Jacques-Chaquin, 'Nynauld, Bodin et les autres. Les enjeux d'une métamorphose textuelle', in J. de Nynauld, *De la lycanthropie, transformation et extase des sorciers (1615)*, M. Préaud and N. Jacques-Chaquin (eds) (Paris, 1990), 31.

folklorists proposed the spread of the telegraph, railway and rifles killed off the belief, while more recent writers have suggested the advent of the theory of evolution made it untenable.⁸⁶⁹ One anonymous narrator told Guillaume-Michel Coissac that 'Le monde est trop fin, maintenant' for werewolves, while one nineteenth-century folklorist confidently wrote that the werewolf had 'complètement disparu'.⁸⁷⁰ Writing in 1912, the folklorist Henry Cormeau claimed that 'Les loups-garous cessent de galoper dans l'imagination campagnarde'.

Yet it is worth questioning how absolute this decline really was. In a move characteristic of many other folklorists, Cormeau went on to say that although belief in the werewolf was fading, 'la génération qui s'en va, y croyait encore'.⁸⁷¹ Perhaps, as Jeanne Favret-Saada suggested for the belief in witchcraft, reports of its demise have been greatly exaggerated, not least since wary informants tend to distance themselves from direct statements of belief.⁸⁷² After all, in 1947 Claude Seignolle was told that a local werewolf in Guyenne had only died five years before.⁸⁷³ Charles Joisten continued to collect narratives about werewolves into the second half of the twentieth century.⁸⁷⁴ Some narrators claimed that their stories dated back to the feudal period, but many more storytellers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries referred to events that had happened to their parents or grand-parents, or took place forty or fifty years before. Whether or not this can be qualified as a decline, it is hard to say with any certainty how widespread the belief in werewolves was at any point in the modern period. Many folklorists, however, claimed that it was general.⁸⁷⁵ Speaking of

869 G.-M. Coissac, *Mon Limousin*, new edn (Marseille, 1978), 295–6; Beresford, *The White Devil*, 194–235; B. Regal, 'Where Have All the Werewolves Gone?', *Fortean Times*, 2010.

870 Coissac, *Mon Limousin*, 293; P. Letuaire, *Les cahiers de P. Letuaire, 1796-1884*, L. Henseling (ed) (2 vols., Marseille, 1976), II, 49.

871 H. Cormeau, *Terroirs mauges: miettes d'une vie provinciale* (Paris, 2000), 358.

872 J. Favret-Saada, *Deadly Words: Witchcraft in the Bocage* (Cambridge, 1980), 64–5.

873 Seignolle, *Contes populaires de Guyenne*, 226.

874 Joisten, Chanaud, and Joisten, 'Les loups-garous en Savoie et Dauphiné'.

875 A.-J. Verrier and R. Onillon, *Glossaire étymologique et historique des patois et des parlers de l'Anjou* (2 vols.,

the Anjou, one went so far as to say: 'Il n'est pas de commune dans laquelle les croyances à la lycanthropie ne soient encore très ancrées, et où l'on ne raconte d'abondantes anecdotes sur ce sujet'.⁸⁷⁶ Some folklorists referred to 'une foule d'anecdotes' or 'une masse de faits' that they could have reproduced, if they had chosen to do so.⁸⁷⁷ Perhaps some serious credence should be given to these claims. Legends about werewolves would not necessarily have appealed very strongly to folklorists. They were often very short, and were not as extraordinary as the legend-collectors might have hoped. Like witchcraft beliefs, they were viewed with more suspicion than tales or songs, since the predominantly middle-class folklorists tended to disapprove of superstition. When folklorists did systematically search out werewolf narratives, as Joisten did in the Alps, they discovered large numbers of narrators willing to talk about shape-shifters.

Little is known about the social profile of the people who believed in werewolves. Thirty-three of the stories I have found were told by women while only twenty-two were told by men, suggesting there is something of a gender bias concerning who talks about werewolves. Beyond that, the only thing it is possible to hazard with much certainty is that werewolf beliefs had a rather specific geography. Very often, they were collected in the parts of France that were thought to be wildest, such as the Landes, Brittany, the Nivernais, and the Massif Central. Yet authors such as Lise Andries and even Arnold van Gennep were a little too hasty to write off regions they claimed had no werewolf tradition, such as the Dauphiné or Savoie.⁸⁷⁸ Moreover, it is clear that werewolf traditions did travel, as when they were recorded by folklorists in the industrial town of Saint-Étienne, or the metropolis of Bordeaux, or in the trenches of the First World War. There is scant evidence for how different types of story were more popular in certain regions. The sources simply

Angers, 1908), II, 477.

876 Fraysse, 'Au pays de Baugé', 12.

877 Mensignac, *Notice*, 175; L. Guibert, reproduced in Queyrat, *Contribution*, 348.

878 Andries, 'Contes du loup', 198; Arnold van Gennep, *Le folklore du Dauphiné, Isère. Étude descriptive et comparée de psychologie populaire* (2 vols., Paris, 1932-3), II, 552; Joisten, Chanaud, and Joisten, 'Les loups-garous en Savoie et Dauphiné'.

do not generally allow for the precision that Charles Joisten and his collaborators were able to deploy concerning the ecotypification of werewolf legends in the Alps.⁸⁷⁹ Repercussion and wounding legends were known throughout France, as were legends of being ridden by the werewolf or riding a werewolf. The only clear ecotypification concerns the concentration of religious legends in the west of France.

Although French folklorists were not as assiduous as folklorists in other countries, the scattered evidence suggests that wherever they tried to record werewolf legends, they met with some success. The shameful, transgressive, and horrible dimensions of the tradition must have sometimes encouraged informants to hold their tongues, not least when they were referring to relatives, neighbours, or people who were still living, so it would be fair to suspect that the tradition was even more vibrant than the folklorists themselves recognised. Although the evidence is imperfect, werewolves remained a relevant way for some people to talk about neighbourliness and bodies out of place, especially in a region like the Grande-Lande, where so many werewolf stories were related to personal experiences.

Conclusion: the Importance of the Werewolf

Marichoun's story was not a complete anomaly. It was related to the stories other people in modern France have told about identities, boundaries, and sensitive skin, but it was inflected by the concerns of working men and women in the Grande-Lande in the second half of the nineteenth century, concerns that tied together family and physical household, social change and bodily metamorphosis. These were the issues that affected Marichoun's own life, but it would be possible to investigate the personal takes on the werewolf tradition of other storytellers, such as the beggar-woman Nannette Lévesque from the Massif Central.⁸⁸⁰ The value of studying stories such as

879 Joisten, Chanaud, and Joisten, 'Les loups-garous en Savoie et Dauphiné', 44, 123–4.

880 Tenèze and Delarue (eds), *Nannette Lévesque*. For a reading influenced by psychoanalysis, see: Pooley,

Marichoun's or Nannette's is in the individual flavour they give to issues that are evident in a wider tradition. The popularity of werewolf stories directs historians of the body away from studying urban sporting organisations, the circulation of medical ideas, and other self-consciously modern developments to remind them that most French people during this period still drew on traditions of the body with very deep roots. The point is not that these rural people were credulous, since werewolf stories turn out to be considerably less exciting than historians might assume based on Hollywood films or even early-modern trial sources. Werewolves do not murder and devour as often as they unsettle and disturb. They raise issues of everyday work and family cohesion. The narratives are more realist than the interpretations folklorists and demonologists had tried to foist on them.

In some senses, the werewolf tradition only serves to confirm what historians might already have suspected. It is, for instance, well known that the western regions of France were among the most devout, and perhaps it is unsurprising that certain regions, such as the moorlands, saw more dramatic social conflicts which reconfigured the limits of families and bodies. Yet Marichoun's idiosyncratic story is also a reminder that werewolves were not just a throwback to a changeable and porous early-modern body, but could be used to discuss the problems of the nineteenth century. More than an archaic, 'open' body, her narrative is about the struggle to define new limits and to domesticate, to come to terms with a particularly historical sensitivity of the skin. This specific historical sensibility was intertwined with the kinds of questions of labour, social relations, and hidden emotions which the next chapter explores.

Chapter Seven

Foxes into Frenchmen: Tales of Emotions, Class, and the Body

It is a sign of a natural talent for democracy when the people like better to tell stories about themselves than to discuss the fortunes of prince or princess.⁸⁸¹

Introduction: *Moussu de Capet's Mouthful*

Tensions were running high in the village of Sabres in 1863. There were rumours that local landlords were planning to decrease the share that they paid to their *gemmeurs*, the men who collected resin from the pine trees. Sixty years later, a local weaver named Pierre Sourbès remembered the flashpoint that unleashed a serious social disturbance. According to Sourbès, a local landowner called *moussu de Capet* carelessly remarked that the *gemmeurs* were so stupid that they should be fed chopped straw. Later that day, an enraged crowd seized him, marched him outside, sat him down on a chair, and turned his own idea against him.⁸⁸² At first glance, *moussu de Capet's* ritual humiliation might look like a bizarre but inconsequential detail of rural protest. But this was not the only example from the nineteenth century of rural men and women who expressed resentment against exploitation by imagining social relations in terms of relationships between humans and animals. The mob of Dordogne peasants who murdered a noble in 1870 also talked of men who were force-fed animal foods, as did revolutionary crowds during the 1790s, and one of the most unsettling aspects of the young visionary Bernadette Soubirous's actions at Lourdes was the way that she ate grass 'like the animals'.⁸⁸³

The symbolisms of animal-human relationships formed part of a submerged language of social relations, especially in rural contexts, a language which only burst on stage at exceptional

881 E. Martinengo Cesaresco, *Essays in the Study of Folk-Songs* (London, 1886), 24.

882 Leshauris, 'La Révolution de Sabres (1863)', 393–4.

883 A. Corbin, *The Village of Cannibals: Rage and Murder in France, 1870* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1992), 9–10; Harris, *Lourdes*, 71.

moments of crisis.⁸⁸⁴ But this poses more questions to historians than it answers. What made animals useful for thinking about domination and social tensions? How were they used symbolically, and what relations do these symbolic uses have to real relationships with animals? In order to answer these questions historians need to know something about the feelings of everyday bodily exploitation among the rural population, and the emotional shapes of social class. By turning to a folk tale about relationships between humans and animals, this chapter shows some of the ways that these emotions and bodies were lived by historical individuals. This can hold surprises. *Moussu de Capet* was attacked in the name of the 'moral economy'.⁸⁸⁵ His comments inflamed local workers who were already agitated by the threat to their customary share of the profits from resin-collecting. But investigating the cultural roots of these emotions, bodies, and animals reveals that not all rural protest was in the name of 'custom'. The tellers of tales could emotionally project new relationships of class from below, and sometimes these new relationships came to pass. Karl Marx complained that the French peasantry had all of the political consciousness of 'potatoes in a sack', but these animal tales demonstrate ways in which rural people talked around issues of social class, without talking about 'class'.⁸⁸⁶ They may not have spoken in the language of nineteenth-century politics, but they did express some 'talent for democracy'.

Class and Emotions: A Missed Opportunity?

Much of the recent research into the history of emotions has been justifiably critical of an older paradigm, represented by Norbert Elias and Peter Stearns, which explored the history of emotions as the progressive repression or 'civilisation' of dangerous emotions, such as anger.⁸⁸⁷

884 This is part of the argument in: Corbin, *The Village of Cannibals*, 10, 75.

885 E. P. Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century', *Past & Present*, no. 50 (February 1971), 76–136.

886 Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

887 Elias, *The Civilizing Process*; C. Stearns and P. Stearns, *Anger: The Struggle for Emotional Control in America's*

Authors such as Barbara Rosenwein and William Reddy have pointed out that in this kind of history, emotions themselves are ahistorical, and the only change over time is the progressive containment of 'natural', but threatening emotions.⁸⁸⁸ Reddy and Rosenwein argue that rather than simply restricting emotions, cultures actually create them. Reddy's idea of 'emotives', the cultural expressions of personal feelings, for instance, argues that the guidelines to emotional styles found in conduct manuals or literature are not merely the faded evidence of how people felt, but actively constructed emotional cultures in the past.⁸⁸⁹ But the problem with this kind of approach, which focuses on stereotypes drawn from elite literature, is that it sidesteps the issue of social class. In a society such as nineteenth-century France, where written culture was dominated by a tiny proportion of the population, it is legitimate to suspect that the most important emotional codes were not written, but oral. And within the oral culture of the hierarchical rural societies that existed at the time, historians might also suspect that the most important emotional codes were essentially unspeakable in public contexts, except in dramatic exceptions like the riot in Sabres. Many emotions would instead have belonged to what James C. Scott has called a 'hidden transcript', the area off stage where workers and labourers talked among themselves, rather than acting for social superiors.⁸⁹⁰ For Scott, folk tales are a key example of this hidden transcript, so it is to these stories that historians can turn to in order to understand the socially repressed emotions of the rural majority.

It might not seem the best time to re-open questions of class in the French countryside. Historians have become so accustomed to refining and complicating notions of class that it almost disappears as an historical reality. The French peasantry are a particularly difficult case, since a well-rehearsed narrative holds that the economic development of France in the nineteenth century

History (Chicago, 1986).

888 B. Rosenwein, 'Worrying about Emotions in History', *The American Historical Review*, 107, no. 3 (1 June 2002), 821–45; W. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge, 2001).

889 Ibid.

890 Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*.

did not favour the emergence of a class society of the kind seen in Britain during the Industrial Revolution.⁸⁹¹ For Pierre Bourdieu, the peasants were an 'object class' in that they existed only in the definition of others, and had no consciousness of themselves as a social group.⁸⁹² Yet historians such as Andy Wood and Katrina Navickas have suggested that class is making a comeback, and one of the most interesting ways to explore it is through emotions.⁸⁹³ This possibility has been something of a missed connection. Often pleading a lack of sources, the most influential historians of emotions have claimed to be unable to penetrate the emotional cultures of working men and women.⁸⁹⁴ Since E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*, historians have become accustomed to thinking of class not as a 'structure', but as a 'relationship', 'something which... happens'.⁸⁹⁵ One of the ways that class happens is through emotions. The point is not that class creates structures of emotion, as writers such as Arlie Russell Hochschild, Richard Sennett, and Jonathan Cobb showed for the twentieth century.⁸⁹⁶ Instead, perhaps historians could think about the ways that emotional expressions build class, since this offers ways to get beyond the determinism of outdated class categories.⁸⁹⁷ What historians need is a history of emotions 'from below', that reveals how ordinary people constructed class relationships using emotional ties, rather

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- 891 K. Navickas, 'What Happened to Class? New Histories of Labour and Collective Action in Britain', *Social History*, 36, no. 2 (2011), 192–204; G. Noiriel, *Les ouvriers dans la société française*, new edn (Paris, 2002), vii, 13, 18.
- 892 P. Bourdieu, 'Une classe objet', *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, 17–18 (1977), 2–5.
- 893 See, for instance: A. Wood, 'Fear, Hatred and the Hidden Injuries of Class in Early Modern England', *Journal of Social History*, 39, no. 3 (1 April 2006), 803–26; Navickas, 'What Happened to Class?'
- 894 The question is raised, but not solved by Rosenwein's critique of the work of P. and C. Stearns. See: Rosenwein, 'Worrying about Emotions in History', 825; L. Pollock, 'Anger and the Negotiation of Relationships in Early Modern England', *The Historical Journal*, 47, no. 3 (1 September 2004), 567–90; Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, 329. For attempts to do emotions 'from below', see for example: J.-M., Strange, "'She Cried a Very Little": Death, Grief and Mourning in Working-Class Culture, C. 1880-1914', *Social History* 27, no. 2 (1 May 2002), 143–61; H. Cook, 'Emotions, Bodies, Sexuality, and Sex Education in Edwardian England', *The Historical Journal*, 55, no. 2 (1 June 2012), 475–95.
- 895 E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, new edn (London, 1991), 9.
- 896 A. Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. (Berkeley, 1983); R. Sennett and J. Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, new edn (London, 1993).
- 897 The idea that emotions reveal new ways to define communities and relationships in the past is crucial to: Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*.

than just another account of what elites thought of popular emotions.

This is particularly important in a region like the moorlands of the south west, where social and environmental changes were so dramatic in the nineteenth century and depended so heavily on the participation of ordinary men and women, in ways that the previous chapters have explored. But it is also important in terms of a larger narrative of French history, the question of why France, unlike England, did not give birth to an industrial working class until the end of the nineteenth century.⁸⁹⁸ When class conflict did come, it can seem to historians as if it sprung from nowhere. The Landes, for instance, saw one of the most violent syndicalist struggles in France at the start of the twentieth century. If historians insist that the local population were blind to their own exploitation, or at least refused to discuss it, then this syndicalism is inexplicable. Yet labour historians working on urban contexts have long known that the class conflicts of the industrializing period often drew on much older languages of *compagnonnage* and guild organisations.⁸⁹⁹ In the rural world, languages of solidarity and conflict were equally available, and one that seems particularly important is the use of animal tales, especially tales of unhappy foxes, to discuss social problems.⁹⁰⁰ In the 1970s, Eugen Weber argued that the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century effectively saw the end of 'peasant' culture. But the rural labourers of the *fin-de-siècle* did not wake up one morning after the turn of the century and realize they were 'Frenchmen'. Between thinking of themselves as peasants and as citizens, perhaps thinking in terms of foxes had its uses.⁹⁰¹

'The Fox Outfoxed': Animal Tales and Social Criticism

898 Noiriél, *Les ouvriers dans la société française*, vii.

899 W. Sewell, *Work and Revolution in France: The Language of Labor from the Old Regime to 1848* (Cambridge, 1980).

900 For a similar argument about the recycling of old languages for new conflicts, see: Sahlin, *Forest Rites*.

901 Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*.

In 1878, a young joiner named Henri Vidal (1850-1919) from the village of Trensacq told a story about a fox in conflict with a ploughman over food, housing, and agricultural tools and favours.⁹⁰² He entitled it 'Moussu Lamarque and Madame Senguinët' (see Appendix IV). Henri's tale, as scribbled down by Arnaudin, could be considered typical of the animal stories that have been recorded in many different parts of the world since Ancient Greece. It would be easy for historians to assume that this was an almost timeless allegory of the kind where animals talk and incarnate human moral characteristics, perhaps an example of a story from *Aesop's Fables*, or the *Roman de Renart*, preserved among the French peasantry, who still found its simple moral lesson relevant.⁹⁰³ Yet Henri's story is neither as simple nor as universal as the image of the cunning fox might encourage readers to assume. Both in flavour and in structure, it is related to well-known fables of the fox, but it is also noticeably different, for reasons which have to do with the difficult conditions Henri lived through. His story was not a window into what life was like for the working population, it was also a kind of manifesto, a criticism of the existing social order and a desperate account of an underdog's attempt to escape domination. His tale does not belong to the last vestiges of early-modern 'peasant' culture, but to the throes of modern social relations that rocked the former moorlands in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Henri was born to a family of fairly lowly artisans and sharecroppers in the isolated village of Trensacq, but his life was destined to take a slightly different course. When he married his first wife, Catherine Labile, he was a humble joiner, and she was simply called a farm-wife. Their marriage was cut short by her death and in 1890, when he remarried, Henri seemed to have moved into a slightly different social world. His second wife, Léonie Lagoffun, was a local teacher, and he

902 Like most local people, 'Henri' did not use the first name from his birth certificate, which was 'Jean.'

903 The oldest animal tale probably comes from the writings of the poet Archilocus around 650BCE. See: H.-J. Uther, 'The Fox in World Literature: Reflections on a "Fictional Animal"', *Asian Folklore Studies*, 65, no. 2 (1 January 2006), 133.

himself had become some kind of white-collar worker.⁹⁰⁴ In between, he went into business with Arnaudin himself, selling pit props made from local timber.⁹⁰⁵ When he died in 1919, Henri was living in Labouheyre, a former village that had become a town, a hub for the local railway network. He was part of an urban, commercial, and industrial culture instead of the village world of his youth. This was nothing less than a reinvention of Henri's self, a transformation of his own body and emotional outlook. Joiners appear at least once in local folklore as the embodiment of the crudeness of manual labour. In the song 'In the town of Salles there is', for instance, a young girl rejects the advances of a joiner because his hands are too rough.⁹⁰⁶ How did Henri manage his social ascent, and what were his emotional motivations? The story he told in 1878, before his second marriage, and before he had become a clerk, can give us some insight into his attempts to shape his own personal relations to remake class in a period of social change.

In Henri's story, the fox is a kind of hapless anti-hero whose first mistake is to be caught in a farmer's trap on his way home from stealing a chicken.⁹⁰⁷ When the farmer finds him, the fox is desperate, and promises never to steal, or allow any of his family to steal any more food from the farmer. In exchange, the farmer suggests a new place for the fox to build his den. Sadly, it soon turns out that the farmer has tricked the fox. His new home floods in the winter and the fox and his wife are almost killed. From this point on, the fox does his best to please and ingratiate himself with the farmer, but to no avail. His idea is to steal a new form of plough from a neighbouring region and give it to the farmer. At first, the farmer seems grateful, offering the fox two chickens as a reward. But when the fox goes to collect his prize, the farmer sets his dogs on him. In revenge, the fox decides to steal the plough back. Once again, the farmer outwits him. He pays a donkey to pretend to be dead outside of the fox's den. The fox and his wife cannot believe their luck: the donkey's

904 An 'employé de commerce'.

905 See the letter Arnaudin wrote to Bombaut, 10 September 1901: *OC*:V, 243.

906 *OC*:IV, 166–7. Arnaudin recorded six versions, including his own, so the song was relatively well-known.

907 The story is found in: NFA, 2 MI 29/11, ff.436–43. More precisely, the fox has stolen a cockerel or capon.

carcass would provide enough food for the winter. But when they try to use the yoke to pull the donkey inside, he jumps up and drags the fox back to the farmer and his dogs, who savagely attack him. The fox miraculously survives, and limps home to tell his wife that it is time to move on. The story ends with an abrupt formula: on their way the fox and his wife drown, and that is the end of that.

Given Henri's family background, it would be easy to assimilate this story to James C. Scott's interpretation of similar animal tales among American slaves as being expressions of a 'hidden transcript' that criticises domination. 'At one level these are nothing but innocent stories about animals; at another level they appear to celebrate the cunning wiles and vengeful spirit of the weak as they triumph over the strong'.⁹⁰⁸ Animal stories, and especially fox stories have long been used as 'allusions' to historical events and problems, deployed for 'social and moral criticism'.⁹⁰⁹ Unlike the fantasy world of the folk-tale, where lowly heroes turn out to be princes and princesses in disguise, or at least capable of winning a spouse whose worldly riches match the protagonist's moral virtues, animal tales are set in a fundamentally cynical and static universe.⁹¹⁰ There is no dizzying social rise here. Indeed, many of the stories of tricks and deceptions can be chained together, as if there is no final victory to be gained.⁹¹¹ Where the magical tales close with a marriage, animal tales often end with the different parties going their different ways, or simply dying, as in Henri's tale. The problem with Scott's model is that it both tends to romanticise the resistance of the underdog, and underplay the pessimism of these animal tales.⁹¹² Henri's fox makes use of as much cunning as he can, but there is no eventual triumph. The fox's relationship to the

908 Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 19, 162–6.

909 Uther, 'The Fox in World Literature', 136.

910 See B. Holbek's definitive analysis of 'fairy tales': *Interpretation of Fairy Tales: Danish Folklore in A European Perspective* (Helsinki, 1987).

911 *CPF*, II, 55–6.

912 L. Abu-Lughod, 'The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power Through Bedouin Women', *American Ethnologist*, 17, no. 1 (February 1990), 41–55.

farmer is a hopeless battle, and the only sensible solution is to move on. Right from the start, this is a moral universe structured around the breakdown of trust, deception, and betrayal.⁹¹³ To behave like a fox might have been a colloquial phrase for being cunning, but the fox in Henri's story, like other foxes from the tradition, is not always as successful as his cunning reputation might suggest.⁹¹⁴ The fox is often a victim, 'outfoxed', as the title of one of Aesop's fables suggests.⁹¹⁵ Out of the eight stories concerning foxes that Arnaudin collected, just two see the fox emerge victorious. When he comes up against blackbirds, dogs, squirrels, partridges, eagles, and humans his cunning serves him very poorly.⁹¹⁶ The fox does not seem to have been very successful in nearby regions either. Out of the five tales of the fox collected by another southwestern French folklorist, Jean-François Bladé (1827-1900), the fox only triumphs in one.⁹¹⁷ This is a grim, violent, and strangely realist universe.⁹¹⁸

Neither is it a timeless one, despite what Arnaudin himself thought about oral tales. The folklorist believed that his native Grande-Lande was like a museum of cultural traditions, and the folklorist Marie-Louise Tenèze later echoed this view, suggesting something about the dancing and fables Arnaudin recorded owed more to the medieval world than the nineteenth century.⁹¹⁹ It is true that the language men like Henri used to talk about social conflict has deep historical roots, but this

913 CPF, II, 54.

914 OC:VII, 245.

915 S. Handford (ed), *Aesop's Fables*, 4th edn (London, 1994), 14. For other authors who have commented on the fox's frequent failures, see: H. Schwarzbaum, *The Mishle Shu'alim (Fox Fables) of Rabbi Berechiah Ha-Nakdan: A Study in Comparative Folklore and Fable Lore* (Kiron, Israel, 1979), 42–7; Uther, 'The Fox in World Literature', 147–9; B. O'Neill, 'Social Conflict in the Galician Folktale', *Cahiers de Littérature Orale*, 14 (1984), 24; R. Boggs entitled his section in his index of Spanish folk-tales 'Fox Not Clever.' See: *Index of Spanish Folktales* (Helsinki, 1930), 30.

916 OC:I, 510–585. Manuscript versions of some, but not all, of these stories can be found in ADL 2 MI 29/11. Some of the texts not found in the manuscripts were published by Arnaudin in 1886, but others have proved untraceable in the microfilms.

917 J.-F., Bladé, *Contes populaires de la Gascogne*, new edn (Anglet, 2008).

918 CPF, II, 79; Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 163.

919 NFA, 2 MI 29/12, f.101; CPF, II, 96.

is not the same thing as saying Henri's story is simply an echo of the medieval *Roman de Renart*. The oral versions of stories found in the *Roman* that have been collected since the start of the nineteenth century are often more fully-developed, and sometimes more coherent than the medieval poems.⁹²⁰ They have a flavour all of their own, a flavour that develops out of the ways storytellers adapted them, whether consciously or not, to fit the contexts of their own lives.⁹²¹ This is particularly true of 'Moussu Lamarque and Madame Senguinët' because there is no obvious parallel written – or indeed oral – source for Henri's story. The editors of Arnaudin's tales suggest the story bears some relationship to the international folk-tale type ATU 155 'Ingratitude is the World's Reward', a story well-represented in French oral tradition by fifteen different recordings.⁹²² Jean-François Bladé collected a fairly typical version of this tale from one of his favourite narrators, a woman named Pauline Lacaze. In Pauline's story, a man discovers a wolf dangling from a tree, who begs him to set him free. The man has his doubts: won't the wolf just eat him as soon as he is liberated? The wolf promises not to, but once he is on the ground he changes his mind. The man understandably thinks this is unfair, and reflects that the proverb is true: 'ingratitude is the world's reward', or 'de bien faire, mal arrive'. Before the wolf can eat him, however, they agree to submit their dispute to judgement by a third party. First they meet a dog, who replies that his answer will not be much use. Having served his master faithfully all his life, he has been turned out on his ear now that he is too old. He concludes that the proverb is true: 'de bien faire, mal arrive'. They then meet a mare, who says the same thing. Finally, they meet a fox, who asks how the wolf was originally hanging. The wolf puts himself back in place, and the man and the fox leave him dangling there. As a reward for helping him, the man promises the fox a nice pair of fattened

920 CPF, II, 89–98.

921 M.-L. Tenèze, 'Aperçu sur les contes d'animaux les plus fréquemment attestés dans le répertoire français', in Geōrgios A. Megas (ed), *Lectures and Reports: Fourth International Congress for Folk-Narrative Research in Athens* (Athens, 1965), 569–75.

922 H.-J. Uther, *The Types of International Folktales: A Classification and Bibliography, Based on the System of Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson* (3 vols., Helsinki, 2004), I, 107–8.

chickens. When he opens the bag, however, instead of the promised chickens, two dogs jump out and kill the fox. As they say, 'de bien faire, mal arrive'.⁹²³

This chapter argues that the clear similarities between this story and Henri's tale originate in the importance in both regions of the agricultural system of sharecropping. It is perhaps no coincidence that on the scale of France as a whole, the regions where sharecropping was widely practised coincide with the regions where animal tales are most popular, with some stories only known in the south-west, the heartland of sharecropping in the nineteenth century.⁹²⁴ Arnaudin himself claimed that a tale such as 'The Fox and the Wolf' was matched in popularity in the Grande-Lande by just a few other tales.⁹²⁵ This popularity has something to do with the ways that animal tales can be used to discuss sharecropping, a system that puts heavy weight on the relations between landlords and tenants, and heads of household and their families. In other stories from Bladé's collection, for instance, the fox takes on shareholdings with other animals.⁹²⁶ Henri's story is part of this cultural tradition, and it must therefore be understood through the lens of the emotional demands of sharecropping. Yet the idiosyncrasies of Henri's story point to more personal meanings, reflecting not simply the social structure of local life, but Henri's own shifting place within it. Rather than simply calling his hero and his wife foxes, Henri's tale gives them human names, 'Moussu Lamarque' and 'Madame Senguinët', as if the story is more rooted in quotidian social encounters with real people than most animal fables are.⁹²⁷ It takes place in a realistic world of everyday labour and personal relationships specific to the agricultural system of the Grande-

923 Bladé, *Contes populaires de la Gascogne*, 462–4.

924 *CPF*, II, 103 For an example of a story only known in the south-west, see *ibid.*, 472. For stories collected by Arnaudin that were very rare in the rest of France, see for example ATU 103C, *ibid.*, 351–2, as well as the unclassified episodes *ibid.*, 470–567. For the map of sharecropping, see: Planhol, *Géographie historique de la France*, 154.

925 *OC*:I, 524.

926 Bladé, *Contes populaires de la Gascogne*, 466–7, 487–8.

927 It is entirely possible these names were chosen to satirise the behaviour of real local people, but neither Arnaudin nor Henri ever mentioned this.

Lande.⁹²⁸ Something about these fantastical fox tales makes them useful ways to think about very real bodily and emotional exploitation. Henri's story concerns the kinds of tensions that often arose between landlords and agricultural tenants in a system of sharecropping. His foxes might live in a den and get chased by dogs, but they can also talk, and their ideal diet for the winter is soup.⁹²⁹ The areas of conflict between the foxes and the farmer in Henri's story – housing, food, tools, and responsibilities – are precisely the areas of conflict in sharecropping regions.

'Let's Not Talk About It': Bodily and Emotional Exploitation

Sharecropping, like animal tales, has a long pedigree.⁹³⁰ The idea is fairly simple. Instead of renting a farm from a landlord, a sharecropper enters into a kind of agreement whereby the landlord provides the farm, often some tools, animals, seed, and other necessary supplies, and the sharecropper provides his labour and that of his family.⁹³¹ Instead of paying rent, the sharecropper shares his final crop with the landlord, according to an agreed percentage. The contract, which was normally oral in the nineteenth-century Landes and neighbouring regions, often included other obligations on behalf of the sharecropper, such as a certain number of days of work per year, some chickens, or part of a pig. This was not a new means of agricultural production in the moorlands, but it would be a mistake to think of it as a feudal survival. As several historians have emphasised, the period after the sale of the communal moorlands actually saw an intensification of sharecropping.⁹³² Sharecropping is particularly well-suited to areas where class domination is

928 Although an obvious omission is resin-farming, which is not mentioned at all.

929 See: NFA, 2 MI 29/11, f.442.

930 T. J. Byres, 'Historical Perspectives on Sharecropping', in T. J. Byres (ed.) *Sharecropping and Sharecroppers* (London, 1983), 7–40.

931 I am using the masculine pronoun because this agreement was often explicitly patriarchal. Sharecroppers were supposed to manage properties as 'bon père(s) de famille(s)'. See, for instance: Dupuy, *Le pin de la discorde*, 89, 92.

932 Sargos, *Histoire de la forêt landaise*, 212; Lescarret, *La vie dans la Grande-Lande*, 110. For the argument that sharecropping can actually be part of the transition to capitalism, see: V. Stolcke and M. Hall, 'The Introduction

extreme but direct supervision of labour would be impractical because the agriculture is already so marginal.⁹³³ The poor, sandy soil of the moorlands, which required abundant fertilisation, and back-breaking hoeing and weeding, is a textbook example where sharecropping therefore makes sense. Where wage-earners might shirk, sharecroppers have no reason to.⁹³⁴ If their harvest fails, they will starve. A figure of Gascon speech that Arnaudin recorded sums up the dilemma by suggesting that working slowly feeds your own misery.⁹³⁵ The system institutes a kind of self-supervision whereby the head of the sharecropping household must assume the psychological and physical strain of meeting both the demands of the elements and the landlord.⁹³⁶ What this creates is 'a 'web of dependency' incorporating both economic and non-economic structures of subordination'.⁹³⁷ Instead of simply paying him rent, the sharecropper's fortunes are personally tied to the figure of the sometimes benevolent and sometimes inexplicably violent and unreasonable landlord. This is exactly the situation in which the fox, moussu Lamarque, finds himself in Henri's story.

As in sharecropping, where labourers and landowners argued over agricultural products that were necessary for survival, a key source of tension in the story is food. The whole chain of events is set off by moussu Lamarque's attempt to steal a chicken to feed his wife, and the foxes remain ravenous throughout the story, 'exhausted by hunger'.⁹³⁸ Sharecroppers and their landlords often argued over petty thefts like this, whether of food, or other items. Arnaudin, for instance, kept

of Free Labour on Sao Paulo Coffee Plantations', in T. J. Byres (ed.) *Sharecropping and Sharecroppers* (London, 1983), 170–200.

933 R. Pearce, 'Sharecropping: Towards a Marxist View', in T. J. Byres (ed.) *Sharecropping and Sharecroppers* (London, 1983), 53.

934 J. Maria-Caballeros, 'Sharecropping as an Efficient System: Further Answers to an Old Puzzle', in T. J. Byres (ed.) *Sharecropping and Sharecroppers* (London, 1983), 107–18.

935 *OC*:VI, 15.

936 The idea of self-supervision comes from: A. Bhaduri, 'Cropsharing as a Labour Process', in T. J. Byres (ed.) *Sharecropping and Sharecroppers* (London, 1983), 85–93.

937 A. Cooper, 'Sharecroppers and Landlords in Bengal, 1930-50: The Dependency Web and Its Implications', in T. J. Byres (ed.) *Sharecropping and Sharecroppers* (London, 1983), 226–55.

938 NFA, 2 MI 29/11, f.438.

assiduous notes about the various tools and materials he suspected his own sharecroppers of pilfering from him.⁹³⁹ Another source of conflict in sharecropping systems which appears in the story concerns housing. Because sharecroppers do not own their houses, they are constantly at risk of losing the shelter over their heads. The foxes of Henri's story suffer from the same problem, and like sharecroppers are at the mercy of another person's benevolence when it comes to this most basic need. Like sharecroppers in search of a better situation, the foxes change house regularly and frequently, three times in this short story.⁹⁴⁰ Along with the uncertainty over the most basic necessities of food and housing, Henri's story is permeated with a sense of a body under threat.⁹⁴¹ The farmer beats the unfortunate fox whenever he is given a chance. He also sets his dogs on him, and the fox is forced to spend most of the story running around, the hounds on his heels. There is a palpable sense of physical exhaustion, as well as a thematic concern with tools, and manual labour. The fox's theft of a new form of plough from a different region relates to the real technological changes in ploughing that occurred in the nineteenth century, as ards were unevenly replaced by lighter and more reliable ploughs.⁹⁴² This was not simply a new tool for the same job, but a change in bodily dispositions, and a labour-saving device. In Henri's story, the farmer is clearly delighted with his new improved technology, which allows him to plough his field faster. But as well as speaking of this historical transition, the significance of the plough in the story is as a technology of social differentiation. A man without his own plough and team would be unable to take on a shareholding, and would instead have to work as a hired hand.⁹⁴³

The previous chapter has already introduced some of the social conflicts that gripped the

939 NFA, 2 MI 29/20, f.122.

940 Dupuy, *Le pin de la discorde*, 194.

941 Scott suggests that this body under threat occupies 'a large space in the hidden transcripts' of the victims of serfdom and slavery. See: *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 23.

942 R. Specklin, 'Les progrès techniques', in G. Duby and G. Wallon (eds) *Histoire de La France Rurale*, new edn (4 vols., Paris, 1992), III, 181.

943 Dupuy, *Le pin de la discorde*, 110–2.

moorlands, conflicts over work and group identities. When Henri told the story in 1878, many people in the region would have been more concerned than ever about the perennial problems of housing, labour, changing agricultural technologies, and social differentiation. Because of the increasing forestation of the moorlands, agriculture was in flux. Social divisions became more marked across the former moorlands after the sale of the commons in the 1860s, as the richest families came to dominate local business and agriculture, while the poorest risked proletarianisation. Like the Tuscan example studied by Desmond Gill, sharecropping in the Grande-Lande uncomfortably co-existed with new forms of wage labour. Instead of providing an economic alternative, these new forms of labour were often the desperate recourse of those whose shareholdings could not feed their families.⁹⁴⁴ In particular, men in both the Grande-Lande and Tuscany took jobs on public works, building roads and railways, and these modern proletarians were increasingly important informants for Arnaudin's folklore collections.⁹⁴⁵ The 1880s was the 'decisive period' of proletarianisation in France as a whole, and in the south west in particular, as declining resin prices fell hardest on the sharecroppers.⁹⁴⁶

Special emotional pressures accompanied these social changes because of the ways that sharecropping was framed as a personal relationship between the father of a household and a landowner. Sharecropping was, above all, about an informal system of trust.⁹⁴⁷ Similarly, Henri's story is not simply organised around trickery, what Marie-Louise Tenèze calls the defining feature of this genre.⁹⁴⁸ Instead, like sharecropping, it is organised around oral agreements, promises, and

944 D. Gill, 'Tuscan Sharecropping in United Italy: The Myth of Class Collaboration Destroyed', in T. J. Byres (ed.) *Sharecropping and Sharecroppers* (London, 1983), 146–69.

945 The railway workers provide Noiriël with one of his key examples of proletarianization in the workforce. See: Noiriël, *Les ouvriers dans la société française*, 92–7.

946 *Ibid.*, 83; Sargos, *Histoire de la forêt landaise*, 508–9.

947 E. Griffiths and M. Overton, *Farming to Halves: The Hidden History of Sharefarming in England from Medieval to Modern Times* (Basingstoke, 2009), 194.

948 *CPF*, II, 54.

rewards. The farmer's repeated failure to deliver on oral promises is the kind of deception that every sharecropper would worry about, dependent as they were on their landlords not only for employment, but also housing. At five different points, the fox and the farmer explicitly evoke 'favours', and it is hard not to see these obligations in terms of the kinds of services sharecroppers were routinely expected to provide for their landlords, such as carting and maintenance work.⁹⁴⁹ This is a social universe where the surface level of benevolent, patriarchal discourse is constantly disrupted by violence and dishonesty. Not only are all of the fox's efforts in vain, but the closing rhyming formula abruptly kills the fox and his wife: 'They packed their bags, and crossing a river they drowned'.⁹⁵⁰ The general negative trend that Hans-Jörg Uther has identified in fox tales towards the fox being duped more often is evidence from the folklore archives of a growing consciousness of proletarianisation and exploitation in the nineteenth century.⁹⁵¹ Henri's story, from this point of view, is one among many examples emphasising the growing problems of rural social relations, especially under sharecropping systems.

Recently, historians have suggested that sharecropping may not be as economically exploitative as many writers previously assumed, the 'consequence of poverty, not the cause of it'.⁹⁵² But emotional exploitation is harder to assess. On 31 December 1858, the *préfet* of the Landes wrote to the minister of the interior:

L'état de servitude dans lequel le colon se trouve vis-à-vis du propriétaire, qu'il appelle son maître, crée à ces propriétaires une véritable clientèle, qu'ils font marcher à leur guise et qui votent comme ils entendent.⁹⁵³

949 Dupuy, *Le pin de la discorde*, 87–104, 121–2.

950 The words are hard to make out exactly: 'Que [picau?] ses cliques é ses claques, en traversan uu [baiat?] aqui se soun negats'. NFA, 2 MI 29/11, f.443.

951 Uther, 'The Fox in World Literature', 147.

952 Griffiths and Overton, *Farming to Halves*, 5; A. Antoine, 'Métayage, Farm Productivity, and the Money Economy: Some Lessons from Farm Account Analysis', in J. Broad (ed), *A Common Agricultural Heritage? Revising French and British Rural Divergence* (Exeter, 2009), 68–82; Philip Hoffman, *Growth in a Traditional Society: The French Countryside, 1450-1815* (Princeton, 1996), 199.

953 Cailluyer, *Regards sur l'histoire sociale des Landes*, 31–2.

Finding out what the sharecroppers themselves thought of this social control is fraught with problems, since talking about resentments openly would have been too risky for these men and women. Someone like Henri, however, who had both experience of exploitation and the ability to escape the sharecropping system in his own lifetime, gives a rare insight into the 'emotional labour' sharecropping involved.⁹⁵⁴ There is more than a passing resemblance between the logic of Henri's fox, losing his temper with his wife when she asks him about the progress of his plans, and the logic of the working-class men Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb interviewed in Boston in the second half of the twentieth century: 'Sacrifice.. legitimates a person's view of himself as an individual, with a right to feel anger', but it also leads to men who 'are both angry and ambivalent about their right to be angry'.⁹⁵⁵ The fox is at once the hero of the tale, and yet remarkably unsuccessful and frustrated, unable to express his emotions even to his wife. Yet we know, from incidents like the ritualistic assault on moussu de Capet, that aggression seethed under the calm surface of these workers' faces.

The relationships between humans and animals had long been a ready-made way for elites to think about these social tensions.⁹⁵⁶ Not only were peasants mere beasts, but rural labourers themselves were meant to feel more compassion for animals than other humans. Ask a peasant, wrote Victor Gaillard, if he has 'des nouvelles de sa femme malade ou de sa fille phthisique; il vous répondra par des doléances sur l'indisposition d'un veau ou les digestions laborieuses de quelques moutons'.⁹⁵⁷ But this language of animals was also used in different ways by ordinary rural people to talk about authority and subjugation.⁹⁵⁸ Men who were dominated by their wives were said to

954 Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*.

955 Sennett and Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, 140, 79.

956 P. Freedman, 'Peasant Anger in the Late Middle Ages', in B. Rosenwein (ed), *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1998), 171–88.

957 Gaillard, 'L'habitant des Landes', 415.

958 Corbin, *The Village of Cannibals*, 10, 75.

wear the harness.⁹⁵⁹ Yet most of these metaphors focused on domestic animals, harnesses, straw, and beasts of burden. Foxes were slightly different. As with poaching, it is clear that there were social tensions around the hunting of foxes, which was becoming a leisure activity for the middle class.⁹⁶⁰ It seems unlikely that many agricultural workers would have had much sympathy for real foxes, yet their plights shared similarities. Like the sharecroppers and the hands, foxes lived a necessarily mobile lifestyle. They might survive off of their wits, but more than a few foxes, not to mention sharecroppers, met tragic ends. Foxes furnished a real life example of agents put in a difficult situation by the system of farming, and what made them good anti-heroes for tales such as Henri's has something to do with the ways they might express a desire for agency and freedom in mobility, even as this agency is recognised to be illusory. The point of all this is that just because the sharecroppers did not elaborate complex emotional codes which leave abundant written sources does not mean that their feelings were not important, and shared. Just because there was no legitimate place between comedy and depravity in elite culture for peasant anger does not mean it was not an everyday emotion.⁹⁶¹ Instead, it was expressed in 'cryptic and opaque' codes, of which the most important was animal symbolism.⁹⁶² In the same context, Alain Corbin talks of 'rancor that festered behind a mask of sly deference' and Andy Wood talks of 'suppressed anger, bitten lips'.⁹⁶³ When moussu Lamarque's wife asks him what the problem is half way through Henri's tale, he snaps back: 'Let's not talk about it'.

This phrase goes to the heart of how tales perform emotions. Arnaudin wrote that 'les conteurs rustiques n'y vont pas par quatre chemins', but this characteristic directness has an

959 OC:VI, 186–7.

960 On poaching, see: Lescarret, *La vie dans la Grande-Lande*, 263; and: Dupuy, *Le pin de la discorde*, 280; On fox-hunting as a leisure pursuit, the best source is Arnaudin's own diary. See: OC:VIII.

961 Freedman, 'Peasant Anger in the Late Middle Ages'.

962 Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 137.

963 Corbin, *The Village of Cannibals*, 7; Wood, 'Fear, Hatred and the Hidden Injuries of Class in Early Modern England', 808.

unexpected result.⁹⁶⁴ Rather than spelling out how characters feel, narrators such as Henri perform the story in order to elicit feelings from an audience. In its original manuscript form, Henri's story is more telegraphic than the published version. It is lighter in details, motivations, and stage directions, and less coherently stitched together with linking phrases and explanations. Much of the speech is direct, and sometimes the logic of character's actions and the development of the story are very hard to work out. These might be problems for twenty-first-century readers, but they are also reminders that the story was meant to be performed. Many of the elements that seem somehow condensed or opaque would have been clearer to an audience who shared the same assumptions, and for whom a storyteller like Henri acted out the dialogue and action. Like real life, the characters of Henri's tale do not self-narrate their emotional states, they perform them. The fox does not say that he despairs, and his wife does not have to say out loud that she doubts him. Neither does the farmer ever spell out what the real motives of his actions are. Yet underlying all of these narrative developments, there are inexplicit emotions: Henri's.

A Glimpse of the Future?

If Henri's emotions are not explicit, historians might be concerned about imagining them. After all, one of the most important ideas from the history of emotions has been that people in the past simply did not feel the same as people do today, did not feel shocked, scared, or pleased by the same things people do today.⁹⁶⁵ Perhaps Henri and his audience did not find the physical violence of the story shocking. Perhaps they did not feel any pity for the fox. Contextual evidence suggests that this image of a desensitized peasantry cannot be accurate. The issues of sharecropping and proletarianisation which the story explores allegorically led to real life dramas which could involve the active emotional participation of entire communities. In 1920, for instance, the widow Comet

964 *OC*:V, 133.

965 See, for example: Rosenwein, 'Worrying about Emotions in History', 833–4.

along with her four children was evicted from her shareholding in Sainte-Marie-de-Gosse in the south of the Landes. Hundreds of local labourers turned up to support the unfortunate woman, and many of them 'pleuraient de rage'.⁹⁶⁶ The anger in Henri's story is the same anger, expressed obliquely through the confrontation of fox and farmer. But the most compelling reason to argue in favour of reading anger between the lines of Henri's tale is the course his own life took. Henri left his first occupation as a relatively humble artisan, who would have worked with and lived among sharecroppers who were his friends and family, and this choice expressed a rejection of the social system of sharecropping. The fox in his story actively tries to re-shape his emotional relations with the farmer, trying first trust, and then open war, before giving up. He also tries to reshape his bodily exploitation. The plough which proves the crux of the story is not simply a technological innovation, but one that historians have suggested made an immense difference to body postures in the countryside, as the new technology allowed labourers to work with a more upright stance.⁹⁶⁷ Here is a narrative that explicitly invokes changes to working practices of a fundamental importance to the rural obsession with verticality.⁹⁶⁸ On the most basic level, a body that allows a subject to look his social superior squarely in the eye is a different kind of political possibility from a body ground down both in discourse and in material terms. One way for the most politically inarticulate populations to make some kind of intervention in the course of their own lives is through a revolution of bodily practices.⁹⁶⁹ Seizing the new plough is a gesture towards such a revolution.

There is much from Henri's story and his life to suggest that men like him were not the 'generally resigned creatures' peasants are sometimes assumed to be.⁹⁷⁰ Moussu Lamarque may be

966 Cailluyer, *Regards sur l'histoire sociale des Landes*, 207.

967 Specklin, 'Les progrès techniques', 181.

968 See Chapter Four, and: Pellegrin, 'Corps du commun, usages communs du corps', 127.

969 Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 10. For an example, see Ruth Harris's argument about the bodily revolt of nineteenth-century women in the case of possession at Morzine: 'Possession on the Borders'.

970 Singer, *Village Notables*, 4.

ultimately unsuccessful, but he is nothing if not determined. The deal he strikes with the farmer at the beginning may not turn out that well for him, but at the time it is life-saving. Throughout, he demonstrates intelligence and resourcefulness, as when he decides to use the plough to pull the donkey into his den. He is inquisitive and has a desire to see the world, and he is endowed with an ability to seize opportunities, such as the plough. Throughout all of this there is a kind of dogged optimism. At the end of the story, he tells his wife, “Despite all these misfortunes, I still had one piece of incredible good fortune. I pulled the yoke so hard that it broke’. Yet the fox's optimism is tinged with realism: “I won't always have such luck. We should move somewhere else’.⁹⁷¹ The fox in Henri's story is not stupid. He knows to be suspicious of the farmer when he offers him a pair of chickens, but he has no choice but to risk his chances. And when the farmer does show his true colours, the fox attempts to get some kind of revenge. Henri's tale is an explanation for the otherwise skeletal story of his life. It reveals a man struggling with the burdens of an unfair social system, and it is a glimpse of the future development of his life as someone who used his wits to free himself from the most oppressive aspects of this system.⁹⁷² Emotions, historians have emphasised, are not knee-jerk reactions to situations, they are also strategies, whether conscious or not, interventions into social life.⁹⁷³

It is in this sense that emotions create class, rather than the other way around.⁹⁷⁴ Anger is not simply a product of structures of oppression, it is also a strategy, however hopeless, to overcome this oppression. And this insight is of real importance when it comes to understanding social

971 NFA, 2 MI 29/11, f.443.

972 Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 16.

973 B. Rosenwein, ‘Controlling Paradigms’, in B. Rosenwein (ed), *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1998), 236–7; Fay Bound, “‘An Angry and Malicious Mind’? Narratives of Slander at the Church Courts of York, c.1660–c.1760”, *History Workshop Journal* 56, no. 1 (1 January 2003), 61.

974 C. Lutz and L. Abu-Lughod, ‘Introduction: Emotion, Discourse, and the Politics of Everyday Life’, in C. Lutz and L. Abu-Lughod (eds), *Language and the Politics of Emotion* (Cambridge, 1990), 14; Rosenwein, ‘Controlling Paradigms’, 244–5; Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*; Stearns and Stearns, *Anger*, 16.

conflicts in the Grande-Lande, conflicts which do not appear to divide individuals based solely on occupation, economic wealth, or landowning status.⁹⁷⁵ When the men who force fed *moussu* de Capet straw were arrested, it turned out that only two of them were *gemmeurs*. Three others were shepherds and another ten were just called farmers.⁹⁷⁶ In a similar way, the mayors of Sainte-Eulalie and Lit-et-Mixe rather surprisingly blamed syndicalist disturbances on local priests.⁹⁷⁷ In this confusing situation where economic relations do not seem to dictate class identities, it is to individual emotional relations, such as those in Henri's tale, that historians must turn in order to understand class consciousness. The value of Henri's story over, for instance, the autobiographies written by rural men who transcended their origins, is that it is still in dialogue with other rural people, who had different motivations and made different choices. Most obviously, Henri's story is a story for his family. The tale is partly about the strain of a system of agricultural labour where the power of the landlord is mediated through the institutions of the family. The few written sharecropping contracts that survive typically included injunctions to the sharecropper 'tout tenir et entretenir en bon père de famille ainsy qu'un bon collone est tenu'.⁹⁷⁸ What this means for the sharecropper is that they have to answer both to the needs of their family and the demands of a landlord.⁹⁷⁹ Moussu Lamarque enacts these conflicts with his wife, Madame Senguinët. Her only active role in the story is to question him about what has gone wrong, why he has returned yet again exhausted and bruised. His normal reply is: 'Let's not talk about it'. Later, she questions whether he will really earn the reward he thinks he deserves from the farmer. Her husband ignores her, and when she is proved right, he lies to her to save his honour. This pressure on his masculinity, his ability to provide for and protect his family does not just come at the cost of his hungry, battered,

975 See the previous chapter.

976 Leshauris, 'La Révolution de Sabres (1863)', 398.

977 Cailluyer, *Regards sur l'histoire sociale des Landes*, 166.

978 Dupuy, *Le pin de la discorde*, 89, 92.

979 Gill, 'Tuscan Sharecropping in United Italy'.

and exhausted body. In the multiple ways he tries to react, to manage his wife's expectations, to regain the upper hand, it is clear that this is a psychological strain, an everyday bodily struggle.

This struggle was not unique to Henri's life, and the themes his story explores are in dialogue with a tradition. In a sense, the story was not even 'his' anyway. When he told Arnaudin the tale in 1878, he told him he had previously heard it himself from a man named 'Dudon'. In fact, Henri attributed six of the nine tales he told to the folklorist to other storytellers, who he often emphasised were old, sedentary, and illiterate.⁹⁸⁰ This is by no means to say that Henri was simply a conduit for other storytellers. There is no indication that he wrote the stories down and gave them to Arnaudin. Instead, he must have listened to other storytellers and re-told the tales to Arnaudin. As many folklorists have noticed, no matter how faithful narrators claim to be to their source, they change myriad details and sometimes even the outcomes of the story.⁹⁸¹ The changes narrators make, whether consciously or otherwise, shape the stories to fit their own personal tastes and biographies.⁹⁸² What is more, of Henri's nine stories, six were animal tales or at least featured animals prominently. Given that Henri relayed tales from at least four different narrators, this strongly suggests that the affinity for animal tales came from Henri, rather than his sources. After all, Henri's tale is unique in the French oral tradition. What it shares with other local tales is an atmosphere of violence and oppression, the aesthetic of misery. But it differs in its forceful striving against this oppression, the hopeless efforts of the fox to please the farmer. Henri may not have been typical of local narrators, but perhaps he could be considered important precisely because he was not typical, in the same way that micro-historians talk of a 'normal exception'.⁹⁸³

This is not to say that his experience was unparalleled. Arnaudin collected stories from other

980 NFA, 2 MI 29/11, ff.330-7, 395-8, 436-443, 445-8, 475-81, 553-7.

981 See, for instance: Dégh, *Folktales and Society*, 168.

982 M. Azadovskii, *A Siberian Tale Teller* (Austin, 1974); Hopkin, 'Storytelling, Fairytales and Autobiography'; Pooley, 'Independent Women and Independent Body Parts'.

983 C. Ginzburg and C. Poni, 'The Name and the Game: Unequal Exchange and the Historiographical Marketplace', in E. Muir and G. Ruggiero (eds), *Microhistory and the Lost Peoples of Europe* (Baltimore, 1991), 8.

men who had lived similar lives. Jules Sart was also a local clerk, and also seems to have told some stories of his own and relayed others. The man Arnaudin referred to simply as 'Maumen', who told Arnaudin several legends and jokes, must have been one of the two brothers living next door to Arnaudin in the 1880s. The elder brother Jean (b.1846) had a job as an intermediary between local industry and the railway and his younger brother (b.1848) also worked for the railways. It is tempting to see Henri's tale as a glimpse not simply of an individual's future, but that of a whole group, the men who chose to reject the paternalism and seething hatred of sharecropping in exchange for a salary, the men whose transition to wage-earning was not the tragedy of proletarianisation or the disintegration of family life feared by Marichoun Lescarret, but a liberation. What makes Henri's tale valuable for understanding both his own future, and the future of the moorlands, is the way that it presents a more naked and pessimistic picture of the social situation of sharecropping than other stories from the region.

Making an Ass of Yourself

Henri's tale stands out against the background of the other stories told by a broad cross-section of local society. Arnaudin collected stories from fifty-nine narrators, although he kept notes about many more whose narratives he never got around to recording. The majority lived most of their lives in the second half of the nineteenth century, and died early in the twentieth. All saw the transformation of the moorlands and the resulting social problems, and many lived to see the dramatic labour movements of the early twentieth century. Henri was one of Arnaudin's most prolific narrators, telling him ten stories, but the folklorist's best sources tended to be long-lived working women, such as Mariane de Mariolan (told twenty stories) Babé Plantié (told sixteen stories), Beroun Poudens (told eleven stories), or shepherds, such as 'lou Patroun' Saubesty (told nineteen stories) and Jean Destruhaut, known as 'lou Mén' (b.1833, told nine stories). These men and women were often poor and poorly educated. Twenty of the narrators, including Babé, Beroun,

and lou Patroun, were unable to sign their own wedding certificates. Yet another twelve, including Mariane de Mariolan, Arnaudin's most important storyteller, and Henri himself, have left traces of their literacy in the archives. Farming was the commonest occupation, and twenty-one of the individuals were called farmers at least once in their life. When it comes to working out what class these narrators belong to, the problem is not simply inadequate sources, or a lack of information about their lives, frustrating as these puzzles can be.⁹⁸⁴ It has to do both with how individuals were moving through social categories, and how they themselves acted to construct them. Several of Arnaudin's informants were experiencing proletarianisation first-hand, or sinking down the social scale. A man like Dominique Vidal known as Menicot (1838-1901), who told Arnaudin some bawdy stories, was working for the folklorist in the 1870s but by 1883 he was sick, and dependent on the charity of the local council.⁹⁸⁵ Antoine Garbay, known as lou Pitchoun (1836-1911), a sometime farmer, shepherd and itinerant tinsmith, was rich enough in 1862 to repay his parents a loan of 1080 francs, but he died a pauper.

These poorer, less well-educated narrators told animal stories that were similar in flavour to Henri's tale, but conveyed a different message. Where Henri constructed a new identity for himself through resentment and unspoken anger, other storytellers used their stories to carve out identities as reliable and dependable workers. 'Lou Patroun' Saubesty and his wife Babé Plantié provide an interesting comparison (see fig. thirty-one, p.324). Like Henri, they knew Arnaudin well, but for different reasons. Around 1875, Jean and Babé moved to the *quartier* of Monge in Labouheyre to take up the sixth different shareholding they had farmed since their marriage in 1844.⁹⁸⁶ Their employers were the Arnaudin family. This special relationship may explain how Arnaudin was able to collect so much material from the husband and wife, including several stories that were very rare

984 Arnaudin was not very careful about recording biographical details about his narrators. When he later came to focus his attention on songs, his methods were much more precise.

985 ADL, E DEPOT 134/1 D 5, 'Archive Communale: Labouheyre'

986 NFA, 2 MI 29/24, f.417.

in the French tradition. Babé, in particular, seems to have had a fraught relationship with her employer, the folklorist. She was his most important informant, yet because of the tensions between them, Arnaudin wanted to relegate her to a less prominent place in his published works.⁹⁸⁷ Like Henri's tale, the animal stories that Babé and Jean told the folklorist revolve around the tensions between sharecroppers and employers, but they give these tensions a very different spin.

Many of the stories they told were among the most popular animal tales known in France. 'The Halfchick Tale' (ATU 716), which Jean told Arnaudin a version of, for instance, was so popular in France that the French name is often used in international catalogues to identify the story.⁹⁸⁸ The story deals with the challenges that the half-chick hero faces. When the half-chick finds some money, a passer-by tricks him out of it. He is only able to regain the money by calling on the help of other animal friends.⁹⁸⁹ A story like this uses the animal world to encourage solidarity among humans. Both Jean and Babé told versions of another extremely popular French story.⁹⁹⁰ There are eighty-eight versions of 'The Wolf and the Seven Young Kids' (ATU 123) in the French catalogue.⁹⁹¹ This familiar story of the kids outwitting the wolf who intends to eat them while their mother is away could be said to focus on family solidarity, just as 'The Halfchick Tale' focused on community solidarity. The less well-known animal tales that Babé and Jean told also fit into a model that emphasised social cohesion, rather than the social breakdown evident in Henri's tale. Babé told a story that was not classified in the international tale type system, which she called 'The Pig and the Donkey'.⁹⁹² This short story sees a new pig arrive in a mill. The pig soon begins to lord it over the old donkey who works there, pointing out that he is better fed, and does not have to

987 NFA, 2 MI 29 1, f.14.

988 CPF, II, 684–5.

989 OC:I, 185–9; NFA, 2 MI 29/11, f.512-5.

990 OC:I, 547–553; NFA, 2 MI 29/11, ff.419-425, 429-30.

991 And this does not include four unpublished versions in the Arnaudin manuscripts.

992 OC:I, 587; NFA, 2 MI 29/11, f.137.

work, or endure beatings. The donkey tries to warn him, saying that he has been there many years, and seen many different pigs, but the pig pays no attention. Sure enough, some time later, the pig is killed and eaten. There is only one other record of this tale in France aside from medieval sources, as if Babé was one of the few people to still find its conservative message relevant.⁹⁹³ Working hard and enduring beatings may be difficult, but that is the way of life, and those who expect to eat well and laze around might be in for a surprise. It is hard to say how much telling this story was simply a way for Babé to rationalise of a life of toil, and how much she used it as a veiled threat against her employer, Arnaudin.

A rare tale that Jean told makes the message of these stories featuring donkeys even clearer. 'The Donkey, the Wolf and the Lion' (ATU 103C) tells the story of how a donkey bests the other, more threatening animals, using only his wits.⁹⁹⁴ This story is only known in one other oral French version, collected by Frédéric Ortoli in Corsica.⁹⁹⁵ Jean's tale is in many ways similar to the one collected by Ortoli. By making the hero of the tale a donkey, both narrators can talk about peasant virtues of determination, cunning, and playing dumb in order to outwit those who are apparently stronger than them. The donkey outdoes the lion in various tests, sometimes using his natural strength, for instance kicking down a wall, but more often pretending his weaknesses are strengths in themselves. When he struggles to swim across a pond, he tells the lion it is because he was fishing. In the tale collected by Ortoli, the donkey is so successful that he ends up the king of the lions. The message seems to be that peasant cunning can triumph over even the most powerful adversary. But Jean's tale has an entirely different message to the one collected in Corsica, a message established at the very outset. While the Corsican tale sees the donkey choosing to set off on an adventure, Jean's donkey is kicked out of his home because he has grown too old to work.

993 *CPF*, II, 487.

994 *OC*:I, 541–7; *NFA*, 2 MI 29/11, ff.501–8.

995 J. -B. Ortoli, *Les contes populaires de l'île de Corse* (Paris, 1883), 133–7.

Both tales are about a violent world that requires wit and exhausting labour, but the Corsican tale is a challenge to this world, a claim that peasants can and will overcome. Jean's tale, on the other hand, looks much more like a veiled attempt by an old, tired man to persuade his employer that he is not only a faithful donkey, but that his talents are beyond what you might expect. In talking about donkeys, Jean and Babé play dumb, making 'creative use of the stereotypes intended to stigmatize them'.⁹⁹⁶ There was a long tradition of assimilating the local population to beasts. When Jean Thore described the inhabitants of the moorlands in 1810, he claimed they 'diffèrent peu des animaux dont ils ont emprunté la peau'. Some of the local population behaved in ways that showed they were aware of and rejected this kind of comment on their lives. When offered potatoes to improve their poor diet, the peasants of Saint-Magne asked if the reformers thought they were pigs. Other locals, it seems, had learned to use outsider's assumptions to their own advantages. Jacques Arago's first impression was the oxen of the moorlands were 'moins stupides que leurs conducteurs'. Over time, he realised, however, that:

À force d'être traités d'idiots et de brutes, les Landais sont devenus prudents, rusés, malins... Le Landais a mis à profit les leçons de l'expérience; il s'est rendu fort surtout de toute la faiblesse qu'on lui supposait.⁹⁹⁷

Babé and Jean identify with the donkeys as a way of using their only strength against their employer: their weakness.

Henri, on the other hand, presents a very unflattering picture of the donkey, whose subservience seems reminiscent of those men who give in to oppressive landlords, becoming bailiffs and working to enforce unfair conditions.⁹⁹⁸ While the fox exhausts himself struggling with the farmer, the donkey uses the simple ruse of pretending to be dead in order to trick the fox into bringing out the plough. In return, the donkey is allowed to eat as many oats as it wants. In Henri's

996 Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 133.

997 All three examples come from: Sargos, *Histoire de la forêt landaise*, 60, 86, 83.

998 Dupuy, *Le pin de la discorde*, 281.

story, it is the donkey's idea to get the plough back, as if like a bailiff he is pre-empting the landlord's desires. Once the farmer agrees to give the donkey oats for his service, the donkey promptly gorges himself and falls asleep, giving the farmer good cause not to trust him. Furious, the farmer beats him. The donkey may be relatively well-off in this system of exploitation, but only at the cost of doing whatever his master wants. Henri's tale is clear that such a position is not be envied. Babé and Jean, on the other hand, felt quite differently. The benevolence of their employer towards his ageing beasts of burden was their only hope of survival. These different animals were different ways for men and women like Henri, Jean, and Babé to imagine themselves and their work. What they imagined in turn shaped the possibilities of their own lives.

Conclusion

When thinking about the social and political changes of this period, some place needs to be made for this popular imaginary. Animal tales are one example of the 'representational and value systems developed in outlying areas' that Alain Corbin has called for historians to study.⁹⁹⁹ They give historians insight into the bodily and emotional culture of class, as it was explored through animal metaphors, discussions of violence, hunger, and labour.¹⁰⁰⁰ This should be important to historians, not only because it gives insight into the culture of the rural majority, but because it is an important part of the explanation for why France did not develop a working class as quickly as England.¹⁰⁰¹ There was no positive alternative for men and women like Henri, Jean, and Babé between the rebellion of the fox and the subservience of the donkey. Most of Babé and Jean's generation had to make the best of a bad situation, by making asses of themselves, as Jean and Babé did. Their stories were not designed to express their emotions, but to provoke certain emotions in

999 Corbin, *The Village of Cannibals*, 155.

1000 Andy Wood has pointed out that early-modern social tensions were noticeably bodily. See: 'Fear, Hatred and the Hidden Injuries of Class in Early Modern England', 815.

1001 Popular resistance is the central factor in Noiriél's explanation of this oddity of French history. See: Noiriél, *Les ouvriers dans la société française*, 44.

the people who held power over their lives, men like Arnaudin.

But the seeds of different ways of feeling about work and social relations were already present in the same tradition of animal tales. Rather than provoking emotions in others, Henri's tale was a first step towards expressing the previously unheard rage and pain of the exploited. This would make a very different 'emotive' to the kind studied by historians such as Reddy. It was less of an injunction than a code, less expressive and more suggestive. It is true that Henri was somewhat unusual in exploring these darker possibilities in his tales in a period when other individuals were still committed to a 'moral economy', a traditional way of doing things that the assault on *moussu* de Capet, for instance, was designed to protect. But he was not the only person in the region who came to feel that if he could not change the world at least he could change himself. His muted anger was symptomatic of the feelings that would erupt with the syndicalist movement at the start of the twentieth century. The oral tradition of animal tales could both act as a brake on class consciousness, as in Jean and Babé's tales, or as a safety-valve, as in Henri's. What historians need to find out is much more about who used these stories to convey which message, how individual narrators crafted emotional cultures that shaped their own life possibilities. Maybe the concerns of Henri's tale were above all those of the men whose working lives underwent such obvious changes during this period. It is much harder to find administrative sources that give any insight into how women's work was changing. Women, on the other hand, faced an upheaval in a different, but related sphere which the next chapter explores, the negotiation of sexuality.

Chapter Eight

'The Red Tempted Me': Songs and Sexuality

Introduction: The Triumph of Black?

The majority of the working women in Arnaudin's photographs were dressed as if they were in mourning (see figs. thirty-two, p.325; twenty-eight, p.321; thirty-one, p.324). Their sombre costumes suggest a society of chastity and strict social codes, similar to the other parts of the Mediterranean where the importance of honour was expressed as an overwhelming fear of the dishonourable, the shameful.¹⁰⁰² In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Like women across France in the nineteenth century, the women of the Grande-Lande may have worn more and more sombre clothing, but the songs they sang reveal that they longed to wear brighter colours.¹⁰⁰³ The comic song 'When I was fifteen or sixteen', for instance, ends with the death of the heroine's tiny husband, who was 'no larger than a bean'. She knows she should dress in mourning, but declares 'the red tempted me'.¹⁰⁰⁴ In the colour symbolism of folk culture, red was associated with sexuality and drinking, and was worn by the prettiest girls in folk songs, as well as by brides on their wedding day.¹⁰⁰⁵ When Arnaudin's singers, most of whom were women, sang of their preference for red clothing, they were staking a coded claim to sexuality.

Historians know surprisingly little about rural sexuality and the changing feelings of the

1002 The literature is extensive. See, for example: A. Blok, 'Rams and Billy-Goats: A Key to the Mediterranean Code of Honour', *Man*, New Series, 16, no. 3 (September 1981), 427–40; D. Gilmore, *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean* (Washington, D.C., 1987); J. Péristiany (ed), *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society* (Chicago, 1966).

1003 A. Corbin, "'Le sexe en deuil'" et l'histoire des femmes au XIX^e siècle', in *Le temps, le désir, l'horreur: essais sur le dix-neuvième* (Flammarion, 1998), 91–105.

1004 See 'When I was fifteen or sixteen' as well as the following song, 'I have hired an oaf', which has a similar ending where the girl 'preferred the red'. *OC:III*, 207–8, 208–11.

1005 B. Toelken and R. de van Renwick both point out that sober clothing was the norm in nineteenth-century European village life. Coloured clothes in folk songs therefore suggest coded meanings. See: B. Toelken, *Morning Dew and Roses: Nuance, Metaphor, and Meaning in Folksongs* (Urbana-Champaign, 1995), 39–40. On red as the colour for brides, see: *OC:VI*, 199. For the association of red and debauchery, see: *OC:VII*, 256. For a song that associates red with drinking, see: *OC:III*, 301–2. For songs associating red with prettiness and drinking, see: *OC:IV*, 438–41, 595–7.

agricultural labourers who made up most of Arnaudin's informants. Such people are largely absent from Anne-Marie Sohn's account of sexuality during the Third Republic (1870-1940), which she argues saw the beginnings of a first sexual revolution, less theatrical than the 1960s, but just as important.¹⁰⁰⁶ According to Sohn, men and women enjoyed increasingly free sexual relations as the old strictures of household and community control of sexuality gradually relaxed. This is at odds with what the longing for red in popular folk songs from the Grande-Lande suggests about women's feelings about their love lives. Neither does it fit well with what Bernard Traimond has written of a 'nouveau système de contrôle social' in the Landes, a system that depended on increasing control of female sexuality, and corresponds to the triumph of black clothing and chaste habits.¹⁰⁰⁷

Sohn's account of sexuality during this period depends on the explanatory power of urbanisation. As more and more young people moved to the cities for work, they discovered new economic and social freedoms that allowed them to pursue sexual liaisons that would have been unthinkable under the watchful eyes of the village. Yet urbanisation was not as rapid in France as it was, for instance, across the Channel, and the majority of the French population still lived in the countryside in 1900. The changing sexual history of this rural majority needs to be contrasted with the vision of sexual emancipation presented by Sohn. Historians have not been very interested in rural love-making for its own sake, too often assuming that while urban dwellers had sexuality, the peasants had only demography.¹⁰⁰⁸ As the novelist Edmond About put it, when it came to the rural labourers: 'L'argent est le principe et la fin de toutes leurs actions, et l'amour est un accident assez rare dans leur vie'.¹⁰⁰⁹ While the most sensitive historians have tried to emphasize that 'emotions' and material 'interests' cannot be neatly divided when studying the history of the family, the

1006 Sohn, *Du premier baiser à l'alcôve*.

1007 Traimond, 'La sociabilité rurale landaise', 227.

1008 As David Hopkin put it to me in conversation.

1009 About, *Maître Pierre*, 193; Similarly, Barnett Singer argues that rural people saw children as 'economic tools'. See: *Village Notables*, 100.

overwhelming impression remains that peasant feelings mattered less than economic strategies.¹⁰¹⁰

From this point of view, sexual desires and frustrations become unimportant, so that the most important study of rural matrimonial relations in nineteenth-century France only casts a quick 'backward glance at how the couple was constituted'.¹⁰¹¹

There is a missed opportunity here. Going by the demographic record, nothing less than a sexual revolution must have occurred in the nineteenth-century countryside, and nowhere was it more pronounced than in the south-west of France.¹⁰¹² In 1821, the Landes was one of the most fertile *départements*, with a high birth and marriage rate, and a very high rate of illegitimacy. By 1920, the marriage, birth, and illegitimacy rates had all collapsed. A lower proportion of the population were getting married each year, and married couples were having less children. Even more interestingly, the illegitimacy rate had declined even faster than the marital fertility rate, taking the Landes from one of the largest producers of illegitimate children in France, to an area that appeared to be among the chastest.¹⁰¹³ Confronted with this demographic upheaval, historians have a limited ability to explain how these changes took place. It is all very well attributing the decline in fertility to the combined factors of the changing labour demands of agricultural work, greater life expectancies, and the spread of contraception, but this does not reveal who chose to limit fertility, how they justified these choices, and what resistance there was to them.¹⁰¹⁴ The yearning for red in the folk songs of the Grande-Lande is a clue to how women were implicated in this cultural shift, and how they tried to resist it. The Grande-Lande in the Third Republic was no

1010 H. Medick and D. Sabeau (eds), *Interest and Emotion: Essays on the Study of Family and Kinship* (Cambridge, 1984); M. Segalen, *Love and Power in the Peasant Family: Rural France in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago, 1983).

1011 *Ibid.*, 11.

1012 J.-P. Bardet and H. Le Bras, 'La chute de la fécondité', in J. Dupâquier (ed), *Histoire de la population française* (4 vols, Paris, 1988), III, 351–401.

1013 Callon, 'Le mouvement de la population 1821-1920'.

1014 Bardet and Le Bras, 'La chute de la fécondité', 364–378.

case of steady sexual liberation, as Sohn would have it, but of a concerted effort by women to reclaim the relative freedoms of the early nineteenth century.

Songs: the Shared Culture of Love

Folk songs are a guide to the emotional and sexual culture of the society they come from. As one nineteenth-century folklorist put it: 'Laws may be imposed on the unwilling, but not songs'.¹⁰¹⁵ More than any other topic, folk songs concentrate on making love: early folklorists were struck by the 'quite shameless delight and interest' that folk songs demonstrate in the details of 'fornication and pregnancy', and it was above all the temptations and frustrations of courtship which songs focused on.¹⁰¹⁶ The problems and desires the songs explore were those that were most important to the majority of people at the time, since singing, as folklorists have pointed out, is an expression of shared feelings.¹⁰¹⁷ The 'cantometric' research into the relationship between songs and culture led by Alan Lomax in the 1960s, for instance, found that 'Song and dance style... symbolize and summarize attitudes and ways of handling situations upon which there is the highest level of community consensus'.¹⁰¹⁸ Tonal harmony reflects cultural harmony, and to sing and dance is to move in rhythm with the social order. This fits well with the evidence concerning singing in the Grande-Lande. Arnaudin often collected his songs from groups of singers, whether mother and daughter pairs, or simply groups of neighbours who came together to sing for him. For this reason, songs do not often speak directly of the motivations of individuals.

There is another reason why they are opaque statements of personal intentions: their symbolism, and the vagueness of their narratives and moral stances. Ideas and words seep from song to song, giving many of the different texts the same aesthetic of flowers, herbs, May mornings,

1015 Martinengo Cesaresco, *Essays in the Study of Folk-Songs*, xiv.

1016 J. Reeves (ed), *The Idiom of the People: English Traditional Verse* (London, 1958), 8.

1017 This is central to Toelken's book on folk song metaphors. See: *Morning Dew and Roses*, 28, 46, among others.

1018 A. Lomax, *Folk Song Style and Culture* (Washington, 1968), 15.

shepherdesses, and soldiers laying their heads on the young girls' laps.¹⁰¹⁹ Their meanings depended on shared understandings, performances in contexts where singers knew one another, and could read between the lines of which songs someone chose to sing, and how they sang them. If they cannot tell historians very much about individual motivations, they are, on the other hand, rich in information about collective standards.

These standards are not unchanging. It is true that the constraints of the genre – rhyme, rhythm, and tune – encourage a certain conservatism in folk singing.¹⁰²⁰ Some of the songs sung by Arnaudin's singers in the late nineteenth century can be traced back into the early-modern period.¹⁰²¹ The songs preserved a rarefied vocabulary of social relations – nobles, kings, and barons – and clothing which was no longer related to everyday life. Yet this apparent timelessness was also combined with adaptations. Some, such as the references to the republican politics of post-revolutionary France, were obvious innovations, while others, such as the changing attitudes to making love which this chapter focuses on, are harder to plot.¹⁰²² The sheer size of the Arnaudin collection, and the fact he recorded songs from many different people of different ages, are the answer to this problem, since they provide a large amount of material that can be compared. Arnaudin's manuscripts contain 3,620 different song texts, which correspond to 420 different songs in his complete works.¹⁰²³ These texts were collected from 517 singers, many of whom I have identified in documents such as birth, marriage, and death certificates. Arnaudin's collection may

1019 For the idea of the tradition homogenizing songs, see for instance: T. Coffin, “‘Mary Hamilton’ and the Anglo-American Ballad as an Art Form”, *JAF*, 70, no. 277 (1 July 1957), 210.

1020 Toelken suggests songs are more conservative than, for instance, legends and jokes, and certainly rumours and puns. See: *The Dynamics of Folklore*, 41.

1021 A sixteenth-century book entitled *S'ensuyvent plusieurs belles chansons nouvelles... et plusieurs autres qui sont en nombre cinquante et troys*, for instance, featured at least two songs sung to Arnaudin. See: B. Jeffery, *Chanson Verse of the Early Renaissance* (2 vols., 1971), I, 149–50.

1022 *OC:IV*, 60–1, 536–8.

1023 There are actually 485 songs in the complete works, but these are not all represented by texts in his manuscripts. Some manuscripts have been lost since his death, and in other cases the songs in the complete works are artificial reconstructions of confusingly diverse texts in the manuscripts.

not have exhausted local singing, but it is large enough to give some insight into the patterns of which songs were popular, and among which kinds of people.

In particular, the generational shift that the demographic record implies requires thinking about the ages of Arnaudin's informants. To use Arnaudin's collection as an archaeological source that presents different historical layers of singing it is necessary to assume that the older singers learned many of their songs when they were younger, and maintained them in a similar form to when they first sung them. But Arnaudin's notes do in fact confirm that most informants learned their songs over their lifetime. On a number of occasions, he recorded songs learned fifty or more years before. Oral songs are more conservative than narratives, and there is little evidence from folklorists that elderly singers substantially change their songs over their lifetime.¹⁰²⁴ The differences between what young and old singers sang help historians to make sense of the changing sexual culture of the region.

This song culture also has a geography. The catalogue of French folk songs begun by Patrice Coirault, and finished by Georges Delarue, Yvette Fédéroff and Simone Wallon, reveals the distribution of song types through the French-speaking world.¹⁰²⁵ Many of the songs Arnaudin collected were ecotypes, limited to the south west of France, or even just the Grande-Lande. One question this chapter addresses is how these ecotypes reflect the French geography of honour and virginity.¹⁰²⁶ And the first thing to note is that the resistance to black was specific to the Grande-Lande. Songs similar to those from the Landes which mention women choosing red over black clothing were collected by five other folklorists in the south west of France, but only one version from the nearby Ariège made any mention of the temptations of red clothing.¹⁰²⁷ The red and the

1024 In fact, to my knowledge, no folklorist has systematically explored this question.

1025 *RCFTO*, vol. 1, 3 vols. (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1996).

1026 The geography of honour and sexuality is briefly discussed, and dismissed, in: Segalen, *Love and Power in the Peasant Family*, 20–1.

1027 No. 5606, 'Le petit mari noyé' *RCFTO*, II, 215–6; L. Lambert, *Chants et chansons populaires du Languedoc* (2

black were cultural symbols that took on specific resonance in the context of the progressive sexual repression of the nineteenth-century Grande-Lande.

'They Eat the Jam, and Blame the Rats': Honour and Pleasure

On my way I met,
 The wife of a lawyer...
 I asked her gently:
 "Madam, will you let me stay the night?"
 "Yes, yes, of course, my good fellow,
 You will sleep next to me."
 When midnight struck,
 The lawyer came home.
 He knocked on the door:
 "Madam, will you let me in?"
 "How can I let you in?
 I have the baby in my arms."
 This is how women behave,
 When their husbands are away.
 They eat the jam,
 And blame the rats.¹⁰²⁸

This song illustrates one of the striking features of the songs Arnaudin collected: their disinterest in sexual honour. Instead, they are more flippant and more explicit in terms of sex than many of the songs collected in other parts of France, and they present a much more forceful female voice.¹⁰²⁹ This is especially true of Arnaudin's older singers, whose songs harked back to a period when sexual relations were more carefree. Arnaudin commented on one song that people used to say 'If twenty bastards weren't born [in the village of Sabres in] any given year, it was considered a poor year'.¹⁰³⁰ Arnaudin's father, born in 1816, claimed that 'Autrefois, on ne faisait nulle attention à ce qui se passait. Les pères n'exerçaient sur leurs filles le moindre surveillance'. Young women were

vols., Leipzig, 1906), II, 282–4.

1028 *OC:IV*, 362–4.

1029 This is a slightly different argument than the one put forward by S. Rogers and M. Segalen, who believe that rural women across France may have covertly wielded more power than public life suggests. My point is that women in the Grande-Lande claimed more power than women in other parts of France. See: S. Rogers, 'Female Forms of Power and the Myth of Male Dominance: A Model of Female/Male Interaction in Peasant Society', *American Ethnologist*, 2, no. 4 (November 1975), 727–56; Segalen, *Love and Power in the Peasant Family*.

1030 *OC:III*, 386.

free to experiment sexually on their way home from the dances, or working in the fields.¹⁰³¹ As one of the characters in a novel by Edmond About put it: 'quand on est ensemble du matin au soir, filles et garçons, perdus dans la Lande, loin des parents et de tout, au milieu du ménage des brebis, vous pouvez croire qu'on en sait long, et les malheurs sont vite arrivés'.¹⁰³² Attitudes to illegitimate children were disapproving, but not rigid. The carpenter Michel Colin reflected on the fate of an unmarried mother by referring to an anecdote about a woman called le Tchitchique de Boré:

The poor girl... she has been left hanging on the hook. Well, she only has to make an announcement in the town square like that woman from Escource (Tchitchique de Boré). She'd had a bastard. But she was a smart girl, she sold buns and chestnuts. "You haven't given me many chestnuts, Tchitchique," people said to her. "Oh, I don't know how to count that high," she would say... Someone married her.¹⁰³³

Several of Arnaudin's informants had illegitimate children and then later married.

This relaxed attitude was reflected in the songs. Few dwelt on the honour of young women. 'Le baiser de souvenance' (Coirault 407), for instance, was a song known in many parts of France, but not in the Grande-Lande, which ends with the cry 'Qu'est-ce que c'est que cent écus quand on a l'honneur perdu!'¹⁰³⁴ The sentiment expressed in 'Prends sur ma bouche un doux baiser' (Coirault 716) was similarly alien to the sexual culture of the Grande-Lande. After her father refuses to marry her, the girl tells her lover: 'Va, galant, pour te rassurer, prends sur ma bouche un doux baiser. Sur mes blancs seins couleur de rose où l'amour est triomphant, ne touche rien à autre chose car l'honneur nous le défend'.¹⁰³⁵ The difference between the version of 'Celle qu'on a trop promenée' (Coirault 801) collected by Jean-François Bladé in the Gers and the version collected by Arnaudin

1031 NFA, 2 MI 29/21, f.170.

1032 About, *Maître Pierre*, 43–4.

1033 OC:VIII, 582–3.

1034 Neither was the popular song no.3412 'Le pucelage ne se rend pas comme de l'argent prêté' known in the Grande-Lande. Coirault et al., *RCFTO*, I, 64, 353.

1035 Ibid., 1:89.

is instructive.¹⁰³⁶ The girl in Bladé's version is inconsolable about her lost honour, while the heroine in the Grande-Lande is perfectly happy to be paid off.¹⁰³⁷ She says she will tell her parents she earned the money sewing.¹⁰³⁸ Honour was not as important to the men and women of the Grande-Lande as it was in other parts of France.¹⁰³⁹ Even the landais songs known as *charivaris*, which were composed and sung to shame local sexual and marital transgressions, are light in references to proper behaviour. Just one mentions honour, while another refers more elliptically to a 'mess'.¹⁰⁴⁰

Instead, the songs of the Grande-Lande are dirtier and more daring than songs collected elsewhere in France. They appear several times in the section of the Coirault catalogue devoted to 'Graveleuses' and Arnaudin also collected versions of the obscene songs 'La fille qui veut faire la barbe à son con' (Coirault 12005) and 'Le meunier cocufié par le moine' (Coirault 12008).¹⁰⁴¹ Arnaudin's notes make it clear that many more of the songs had obscene connotations. He worried a good deal about whether it was appropriate to publish them, and how.¹⁰⁴² The version of 'La vieillard qui oblige sa femme à filer' (Coirault 5715) which Charles Guillon collected in the Ain was much more coy than the song from the Grande-Lande.¹⁰⁴³ In Guillon's version, a young girl complains to her elderly husband after their first night together that she cannot get out of bed because she has hardly slept.¹⁰⁴⁴ The version from the Grande-Lande is more direct: the girl refuses

1036 Ibid., 1:93.

1037 J.-F. Bladé, *Poésies populaires de la Gascogne* (3 vols. Paris, 1881-2), II, 242-7.

1038 OC:IV, 496-7.

1039 For other examples of songs dwelling on honour which were popular throughout France but unknown in the Grande-Lande, see, for example, 'Je te ferai prendre' (no.722), 'La belle qui fait la morte pour son honneur garder' (no.1307), and 'Les chevaux en peinture' (no.1908). *RCFTO*, I, 91-2, 141, 232.

1040 OC:IV, 760-1, 762-4.

1041 *RCFTO*, III, 221-231.

1042 See, for instance: NFA, 2 MI 29/17 ff. 61-2, 2 MI 29/5, ff. 442-54, 458-60, 529.

1043 *RCFTO*, II, 227.

1044 C. Guillon, *Chansons populaires de l'Ain* (Paris, 1883), 491-2.

to get up because her husband has not consummated the marriage.¹⁰⁴⁵

It is worth emphasising that the majority of Arnaudin's singers were women. These assertive songs allowed women to express desires and longings that they could not openly discuss with their menfolk or even with other women.¹⁰⁴⁶ 'Toutes les vaches de la lande ne sont pas au même pasteur' (Coirault: 5721) provides an example that demonstrates how different this situation was from elsewhere in France.¹⁰⁴⁷ In most versions of this song, women are compared to the sheep on the moorlands and the castles of France, the point being that they are possessions which cannot all be owned by one man. But the song from the Grande-Lande does not liken women to possessions, preferring to use an analogy that gives women more independence than sheep or buildings:

All the birds that take flight,
Are not for the same hunter,
Young girls are the same,
They are not all for one lover.¹⁰⁴⁸

This feminine assertiveness, which was not necessarily optimistic, is clearest among Arnaudin's oldest singers. Older singers were slightly more likely to sing songs that dealt flippantly with sex before marriage, such 'I Rose Early in the Morning, Before the Sun Came Up', where a young girl is whisked away by a knight, who then pays her to sleep with her on the moor.¹⁰⁴⁹ The singers born at the start of the century, like Marie Daugey, veuve Cassagne (1819-1905) were fond of singing songs declaring resistance to parents' attempts to marry girls for wealth: 'damn the money, if it comes at the price of pleasure'.¹⁰⁵⁰ As Marie Pomade, known as Trézine, femme Duviella (b.1819)

1045 *OC:IV*, 575–7.

1046 L. Abu-Lughod, *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society* (Berkeley, 1986).

1047 *RCFTO*, II, 230.

1048 *OC:IV*, 576. The only other version to mention the analogy of the birds also used the analogy of the sheep. J. Poueigh, *Chansons populaires des Pyrénées françaises* (2 vols., Paris and Auch, 1926), I, 449.

1049 *OC:IV*, 271–85. This is related to no.7211 'Les amours et le fil d'argent' but the song from the Grande-Lande has a more complex plot: *RCFTO*, II, 395.

1050 *OC:IV*, 400; This is the very popular no.5703 'Au diable la richesse III': *RCFTO*, II, 221–2.

put it: 'Papa, quand je s'rai morte, Je n'ai besoin de rien'.¹⁰⁵¹ This freedom to choose came at a high price. Young men and women could marry who they wanted, because after all, as Marie Dupiau, known as Tchignoye dou Cla (b.1827) sang, 'We will be miserable, like others are'.¹⁰⁵²

Where the heroines of folk songs in other parts of France tend to plead with their mothers that they were young once, too, the mothers in the songs of the Grande-Lande freely admit that in their time they were naughty.¹⁰⁵³ The landais version of 'Le vieillard qui ne fait que dormir' (Coirault 5704) is unique in that the mother actually suggests to her daughter that the solution to her marital problems is to commit adultery.¹⁰⁵⁴ The mother tells her:

Make him a cuckold, my daughter,
Since your father is one, too...
In the time your father has worn the horns,
He has got through seven berets¹⁰⁵⁵

Perhaps the clearest expression of this transgressive feminine agency comes from the song which Arnaudin called 'sans contredit la plus populaire des toutes [les chansons] qui se sont dansées et chantées jusqu'à nous dans notre Grande-Lande'.¹⁰⁵⁶ The song Arnaudin called 'Long live the women of Sabres' was catalogued by Coirault as 'Les femmes qui trouvent le vin bon'.¹⁰⁵⁷

Long live the women of Sabres!
To enjoy wine.
They go to mass...
Not because they are pious.
From there to the inn...
To have a party.
One has brought some sausage...
Another some ribs.

1051 *OC:IV*, 403–4.

1052 *OC:III*, 168. This is the popular no.1012 'Il est pourtant temps de me marier': *RCFTO*, I, 112–3.

1053 See, for example: *OC:IV*, 252–7; Compare to the other versions of no. 4521 'La berger qui mène la bergère au bois': *RCFTO*, II, 93–4.

1054 *RCFTO*, II, 222–3.

1055 *OC:IV*, 412–3.

1056 *OC:III*, 367.

1057 No. 11017: *RCFTO*, III, 184.

One has a pint of beer...
 They are drunk.
 They go from room to room...
 To find the horse-dealers.
 Their husbands go looking for them...
 With thwacks of their sticks.
 “What are you doing here, you wretch?..
 Off we go! To the house.
 The children are crying...
 They want to suckle.”
 “Let them cry...
 You don't have any who are crying.”
 “Whose are they, you wretch?..
 If they aren't mine?”
 “One is the vicar's...
 The other the priest's.
 The priest is a good man...
 He recognizes his children.”¹⁰⁵⁸

This song is not unique to the Grande-Lande, but the landais version is the longest, and the most transgressive. The version collected by Justin Cénac-Moncaut further east, for instance, does not include the closing section where the wife gets her revenge by revealing that her children are cuckoos in the nest.¹⁰⁵⁹ Not only was 'Long live the women of Sabres' the most popular song in the region according to Arnaudin, but he also collected a whole series of other songs which Coirault catalogued in a section entitled 'Beuveries, ripailles de femmes et filles'.¹⁰⁶⁰ The female singers of the Grande-Lande, and especially the older singers, liked to sing of debauchery and carefree love, even as their sexual freedoms were being increasingly restricted.¹⁰⁶¹

The Rise of Gossip

Just as the songs sung by older women tend to reflect a libertarian attitude to sex, those sung by the younger singers tend to place more emphasis on gossip and jealousy, suggesting that marital

1058 *OC:III*, 364–8.

1059 Cénac-Moncaut, *Littérature populaire de la Gascogne*, 335–6.

1060 *RCFTO*, III, 181–5.

1061 See Chapter Four for an exploration of local attitudes to drinking.

sexuality was policed increasingly tightly. Far from being a period when adultery became a private concern, as Anne-Marie Sohn has argued, it became a more sensitive issue than ever in the late-nineteenth-century Grande-Lande.¹⁰⁶² 'These days,' one of Arnaudin's informants lamented, 'you can't do anything if you don't want people to know'.¹⁰⁶³ Far from declining, all the evidence suggests that the *charivaris* were in rude health. Arnaudin's friend and singer Jules Sart told him that a song called 'In Canenx There is a Man' was recently composed, and the song called 'My God! What a Mess' must have detailed recent events as well, since the naughty young girl is packed off to a thermal bath to hide the fact she has got pregnant before marriage.¹⁰⁶⁴ It seems that people worried more about gossip at the end of the nineteenth century than they had at the beginning.

This would make sense, given what historians know about the relationship between social differentiation and sexual morality. In societies with strict social hierarchies, extra-marital sex is policed more stringently.¹⁰⁶⁵ The Grande-Lande at the start of the nineteenth century may not have been an egalitarian society, but the effect of the sale of the moorlands and forestation was to further accentuate existing social divisions. While men like Henri Vidal might be pulling themselves up through the social hierarchy, and many of Arnaudin's family friends were making vast fortunes, other local men and women lost their livelihoods, or were effectively proletarianised by new working arrangements. Under the old agro-pastoral sharecropping system, poverty placed no constraint on sexuality. The most successful families were those who had plenty of children, since they could be put to work young as shepherds. Once they reached their teens, they swelled the family workforce and saved the head of household from hiring outside help. In this way, children were an asset, an indispensable part of surviving the marginal economy of pastoralism. Fertile and

1062 A.-M. Sohn, 'The Golden Age of Male Adultery: The Third Republic', *Journal of Social History*, 28, no. 3 (1 April 1995), 469–90.

1063 *OC:VI*, 435.

1064 *OC:IV*, 758, 762–4.

1065 Segalen, *Love and Power in the Peasant Family*, 20–1.

promiscuous young women might not seem such a bad thing, and one contemporary even wrote that the economy depended on what local people called the 'little women', those unfortunate girls who provided labour and babies, but did not secure themselves husbands.¹⁰⁶⁶ With the triumph of forestation and the new availability of work on the railways and roads, however, local men found themselves earning a fixed salary. Men sought out the stability of employee status, and women preferred to marry postmen, road-builders, and other employees.¹⁰⁶⁷ In this new situation, more children would be no use to them, just more mouths to feed.

The relationship between the songs some of Arnaudin's singers sang and their own lives confirms that these new social relations placed increasing pressure on female sexuality. Mariouquete Labeyrie (b.1861), for instance, had a particular preoccupation with the consequences of pre-marital sex, a preoccupation that is understandable given her precarious status as a day-labourer before her marriage. Among the twenty-three songs she sang, there were at least three, fairly rare songs that worried about sex before marriage. 'Marceline the Beautiful' was a song only known by one other singer:

Marceline the beautiful,
Went to do the washing.
There was a young man,
Who saw her go.
M[arceline] looked around,
She looked in every direction.
There was no-one in sight,
Except this handsome young man.
Marceline was not scared,
At midday,
There was no-one.¹⁰⁶⁸

Unfortunately for Marceline, an old woman is actually spying on the young lovers and she runs to tell Marceline's mother. 'Young Girl of Sorrow', a song warning about the spiritual consequences of

1066 The Gascon word is 'hemnotes.' Guérin, 'Paysan-Résinier de Lévignacq (Grande-Lande)', 368–9.

1067 Ibid., 384–5.

1068 The song is not catalogued in *RCFTO*. See: *OC:IV*, 769–771. Mariouquete's version is not reproduced in the complete works. NFA, 2 MI 29/4, f.15.

pre-marital sex, was only sung by one other singer.¹⁰⁶⁹ Most dramatically, Mariouquete was one of only six singers to sing 'When Marguerite Goes to the Woods'.¹⁰⁷⁰ Although her shorter version is more ambiguous about what Marguerite does with her baby, it plays on similar themes to the version sung by Marie Deyzieux, known as Valérie (b.1854) and Anne Dubourg, known as 'la Dubourque', veuve Lantrès (b.1841):

When Marguerite goes to the woods,
 To the woods, to the woods, all alone,
 When she was in the middle of the woods,
 She was seized by birth pains.
 She cried out to the sky: "Virgin Mary!"
 Her mother heard her:
 "Daughter, pick up your creature,
 One day she will be happy."
 The poor girl did not understand,
 She took her child and killed it,
 She threw it in the street.
 The police arrived.
 They took her, they led her away,
 They put her on the scaffold.
 When she was on the scaffold,
 She cried out to the sky: "Virgin Mary!
 Give my ring to my mother.
 The necklace I have on,
 Give it to my mother,
 So that she remembers her poor daughter."¹⁰⁷¹

The songs Mariouquete sang are related to a new concern about the consequences of pre-marital sex, and a new concern with marrying, not just according to the heart's wishes, but at all. After all, the responsibility for caring for children who were no longer the household asset they had once been fell squarely on women, and above all on those who had not managed to secure a marriage.¹⁰⁷² Perhaps this explains why a song like 'I Rose Early in the Morning, In the Cool Morning' about untrustworthy fiancés jumped in popularity among the women born from the 1840s

1069 The song was not catalogued in *RCFTO*. See: *OC:IV*, 698–700.

1070 The song was not catalogued in *RCFTO*. *OC:IV*, 705.

1071 *Ibid.*, 703–4.

1072 Of course, pregnancy remained the biggest fear in illicit relationships, far more important than venereal disease. See: Sohn, *Du premier baiser à l'alcôve*, 114.

onwards. The song tells of a young girl who goes off to find her lover in the army. When she finds him, he asks:

“Who is this shepherd,
 Who has laid her apron over my forehead?”
 “I am no shepherd,
 I am your fiancée.”
 “If you are my fiancée,
 I never loved you.”
 “Lover, if it weren't for your deceptions,
 I would be married.”¹⁰⁷³

These women in the Landes, whose only wealth was in the labour they could perform for others, increasingly worried about the risk of becoming the 'little women' tossed around by economic uncertainty and unreliable suitors.¹⁰⁷⁴

But the increasing stratification of society affected women who were wealthier, as well. After all, where property and inheritances are at stake, families tend to place tighter controls on women.¹⁰⁷⁵ Marguerite Dupin-Brigailles, known as Justine, femme Bouniord (1829-1905) was a little unusual among Arnaudin's singers in that she came from a family of small-holders, and married another land-owner, Jean Bouniord. Where sharecroppers had little concern about inheritances, families like the Dupin-Brigailles and Bouniord's had an interest in preserving their holdings intact. Heiresses were under more pressure to conform both to parental wishes, and to avoid having any illegitimate children who might threaten the family line. Among the thirty-two songs Justine sang a few seem directly relevant to her life. For example she sang 'I Am Going to Take Off My Boots', the classic landais song of conflicts between parents and children over marriages.¹⁰⁷⁶ She also sang the fairly popular song 'Early in Morning, Our Ploughman Pierre

1073 *OC:IV*, 258–270.

1074 The song does not appear in *RCFTO*.

1075 Sohn, *Du premier baiser à l'alcôve*, 229–31.

1076 The song is not in the Coirault catalogue. *OC:IV*, 228–31.

Rises'.¹⁰⁷⁷ In the only other version of this song recorded in France, the conflict is between a master, his servant, and the ploughman:

Our good ploughman,
 Rises early in the morning.
 He takes his oxen, his cows,
 He leaves for the meadow to watch them.
 The cows are full.
 The oxen haven't eaten.
 The ploughman comes back,
 To shut them in.
 The cows went in.
 The oxen wander off.
 He calls the maid,
 To come and help.
 Their master watches them,
 Through the hole in the sink.
 "So then, so then, maid,
 You love the ploughman.
 When you make the soup,
 It goes to the ploughman first.
 The ploughman gets a fork,
 The master, a spoon.
 The ploughman gets a napkin,
 The master a dirty rag.
 The ploughman gets a white plate,
 The master, a bowl."¹⁰⁷⁸

But in the version Justine and other singers sang in the Grande-Lande, the conflict is not between servants and masters, but between a daughter, her father, and the ploughman. When she was an eligible young woman, Justine's parents would have worried about her carrying on with the ploughman in a similar way:

The ploughman called to Jeanne:
 "Come and help me harness the oxen."
 As he tied the first strap,
 He wanted to talk to her.
 As he tied the second,
 He tried again.
 Her father was watching,

1077 Ibid., IV:190–193; NFA, 2 MI 29/3, f.62.

1078 This is no.6315 'Le maître jaloux du bouvier': *RCFTO*, II, 308; Bladé, *Poésies Populaires de la Gascogne*, III, 360.

Through the hole in the sink.
 “So then, so then, Jeanne,
 You have been making love to the ploughman.”
 “Certainly not, father,
 He has been making love to me.”¹⁰⁷⁹

Even more interestingly, Justine slightly changed 'In My Father's Garden'. In many other versions of this song, the young girl invites her lover to come back when her father is away. In Justine's version, she invites him to come home for dinner to ask her father for her hand in marriage.¹⁰⁸⁰

Justine's family history led her to put more emphasis on the discussion of marriage partners than many of the sharecropper singers did, and this difference is the product of changing class structures.

These social changes also encouraged Arnaudin's singers to think differently about marriage. In particular, they were increasingly worried about jealousy. Jeanne Garbay, known as Nête de Penalh (b.1859) was one of only two singers to sing a song called 'Father, Marry Me Off'. It began, as so many local songs did, with a daughter pleading with her father to marry her this year. The daughter asks to be given to a young man who knows how to build a house, a house with four corners and a little window. The window is for men to come and visit her. Nête ended with a couple of violent and quite unique lines that only the other singer who knew this song, Jeanne Gellibert, femme Maurin (b.1864) did not know:

Let all those who are jealous be put in an oven
 With straw and fire around them.
 Let all those who are jealous burn.¹⁰⁸¹

Jealousy was not a novel emotion in the songs, but the emphasis and concern that younger singers expressed around it suggest it was growing in importance.¹⁰⁸² A younger singer such as the fishmonger Martin Magnes, for instance, added three verses taken from another song to 'In the

1079 In the version sang by Anne Joie the ploughman kisses the girl. *OC:IV*, 191–3.

1080 *Ibid.*, 93–4.

1081 *Ibid.*, 217–8 This song is not in *RCFTO*.

1082 For examples of songs popular across all ages that mention jealousy, see: *OC:III*, 199; *OC:IV*, 658–662.

Beautiful Village of Passage d'Agen' to make the song about jealousy.¹⁰⁸³ Marie Courréguelongue (b.1860) was the only identifiable singer of 'I Got Up One Fine Morning', a song that clearly demonstrates the distance between laughing at adultery, which was very common in songs, and taking it seriously. The refrains laments: "Oh! how my heart sighs, Oh! how my heart hurts."¹⁰⁸⁴

The point is not simply that women saw their sexual freedom limited by increasingly repressive social norms. Rather, the songs reveal the emotional ways that women both resented the men, and especially husbands, and yet also felt closer to them. The resentment is obvious in songs such as 'Je veux bien choisir' (Coirault 4905). This southwestern French song was normally sung from a man's point of view.¹⁰⁸⁵ He wants to choose a wife who will conform to his needs, and if she does not, he will beat her. Arnaudin collected five versions of this fairly misogynistic song, but he also collected six versions of a similar song with a very different conclusion. The husband confronts his wife:

I said: "Good evening, my beauty,
What are you doing?"
"I am sewing a shirt,
It is for my friend."
"You will sew one for me,
I will be your friend.
Let it not be hemp,
But soft cotton."
The mattress of hessian,
The bed sheets of tow.
Coarse tow of oakum,
To scratch the husband.
The bed canopy of straw,
The fire has caught it,
The husband has burned.¹⁰⁸⁶

At least one of Arnaudin's singers gave him reason to think that this rebellious ending was an

1083 *OC:IV*, 68–71. This song is not in the Coirault catalogue.

1084 *Ibid.*, 573.

1085 *RCFTO*, II, 139.

1086 *OC:IV*, 74–6, 76–9.

innovation, since she sang the last few verses hesitantly, to a different tune.¹⁰⁸⁷ What this innovation indicates is that, along with the rise of gossip, relations between men and their wives had become more strained. Yet, at the same time, this was also accompanied by more positive changes. The song 'Girls, Don't Love men So Much' (Coirault 5405) was among the most popular of those Arnaudin collected, and it was slightly more popular among the younger singers than most songs.¹⁰⁸⁸ It warned girls not to rush into marriage, since their husbands will gamble and drink, and beat them. But the message of the song is ambiguous. Marriage might not be all it is made out to be to young girls, but the song ends with the husband affirming that he 'loves no other more than you'.¹⁰⁸⁹ There is a hint here that marriages were becoming both more fraught and more tender. And the choice of words in the song reveals one obvious way in which the meaning of the bond of marriage was slightly different for different singers. Where Arnaudin's older informants used the formal *bous* between the husband and wife, younger singers preferred the more modern *tu*. The increasing pressure that was being felt in the marital bond was not the survival of peasant patriarchy, but the advent of ideas of gender complementarity, ideas that came at the cost of the red.

Conclusion: the Right to Choose

Different women lived these social changes in different ways. However communal or shared songs are, they are still sung by individual singers, who forget, misremember, improvise or adapt the words and tunes, as Arnaudin himself recognised to his displeasure. He noted bitterly of Nête de Penalh, the woman who introduced radical jealousy into her version of 'Father, Marry Me Off' that

1087 Ibid., 78.

1088 OC:III, 362–4. This is 'Le mari joueur', a song largely confined to the south and west of France. See: *RCFTO*, II, 189–90.

1089 OC:III, 363.

she 'altère tout à plaisir'.¹⁰⁹⁰ These changes are important, because they are a reminder of how ordinary people, and especially women, used the songs to express agency, as well as conformity. The short life of Anne Loubeyre, known as Anna de Hourrègues (1887-1907) provides a striking example. Where other singers sang 'How is Your Flock, Shepherd?' (Coirault 206) as a vague song about minding sheep, Anna's version, 'Have You Seen the Flock, Shepherd', is an optimistic love story. When the young girl's lover leaves for the army, she discovers she is pregnant. He tells her not to worry: he will write. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, given the tone of most folk songs, he actually does, and gets permission from his captain to have her come and join them: "We will make her a cook, She will accompany you to battle."¹⁰⁹¹ Sadly, things did not work out so well for Anna herself, who died aged just twenty, before Arnaudin had even finished the first volume of his folk songs. But this optimism combined with tragedy could stand as a synecdoche for the history of heterosexual relations in the region. On the one hand, there is this surprising female agency to the song. In the Coirault catalogue, the song is called 'Le refus d'être cantinière', and fits into a widely-known tradition of men abandoning their mistresses to join the army.¹⁰⁹² Anna's song is much more radical: the young woman is master of her own destiny, and she makes the best of a difficult situation. And on the other hand, the tragedy of Anna's own short life could stand for the harsh social realities that undercut the agency other women expressed in their singing.

Nonetheless, this agency is not unimportant. After all, the fate of the French nation was in many senses dependent on the fertility and sexual choices of French women, and singers were not necessarily ignorant of this fact. One of Achille Millien's informants sang him a version of Coirault 2325 'Enceinte sans l'avoir senti' with the words: 'Il a levé ma chemise, il me l'a mis tout dret... La République nous ordonne d'faire des enfants d'abord. Oh! c'est pour mettre à la place de ceux qui

1090 NFA, 2 MI 29/1, f.44.

1091 OC:IV, 538–9.

1092 D. Hopkin, *Soldier and Peasant in French Popular Culture, 1766-1870* (Suffolk, 2003).

sont morts'.¹⁰⁹³ In particular, women during this period had the ability to affect the vigour of the nation by choosing, or refusing, to use contraception. Historians could speculate from the demographic record that they did, in fact, adopt contraceptive practices, but what the songs offer is the cultural confirmation of this hypothesis. As its title suggests, most versions of 'L'herbe qui rend amoureux' (Coirault 206) deal with an aphrodisiac plant, but the version Arnaudin collected in the Grande-Lande is strikingly different.¹⁰⁹⁴ When three young Germans come across a beautiful miller's wife, they hatch a plan to seduce her: they will tell her they have discovered a herb that has contraceptive properties.

The miller's wife said,
 "So then, we can come to an agreement."
 A little time passed,
 And she said, "They tricked me!"
 Let them be damned,
 Both the herb and the lover!
 They have ruined my figure,
 For nine months or a year.¹⁰⁹⁵

There is only one other reference to contraception in the index of the Coirault catalogue, and it is to a song which is also known in the Grande-Lande, 'La fontaine qui permet de redevenir pucelle' (Coirault 320).¹⁰⁹⁶ What the Arnaudin songs confirm then is the cultural underpinnings of the demographic revolution of the nineteenth century. They reveal the strong-headed women of the region, struggling to assert themselves as their bodies were policed ever more closely. They reveal the jealousy and gossip they feared and the tenderness and resentment they felt. And finally, they suggest that the right to choose which the oldest women of the Grande-Lande nostalgically remembered and the youngest desired extended to one of the murkiest subjects of modern history:

1093 Cited in: *RCFTO*, 1:271.

1094 *Ibid.*, 1:45.

1095 *OC:IV*, 151–4.

1096 *RCFTO*, I, 57.

contraception.¹⁰⁹⁷ The triumph of black was not absolute, nor was it unresisted.

1097 For the debate on contraception, see, for instance: J.-L. Flandrin, 'Contraception, mariage et relations amoureuses dans l'occident chrétien', *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 24, no. 6 (1 November 1969), 1370–90.

Chapter Nine

'I Did Not Give Up My Body': Sexuality, Religion, and Disability

I am not getting married yet,
 Not yet this year.
 Not yet this year.
 Another year I might be dead.¹⁰⁹⁸

Introduction

The previous chapter explored the history of the shared sexual culture of the Grande-Lande in the nineteenth century, but the aims of this chapter are more biographical. If the general movement of the period was towards the containment and control of female sexuality, how was this played out in the experiences of specific women? What connection did this have to religious devotion and the feminisation of Catholicism that several historians have explored during this period? How can historians measure the deviation of individual behaviours from these general trends? This chapter explores these questions through the life of a woman who had an unusual uninterest in love and marriage, a woman named Catherine Gentes, born in the tumultuous year of 1848, and dead less than fifty years later. Where many people used songs to explore the illicit topics of sexuality and drinking, Catherine's preferences were for more chaste materials. It would be easy to assume that Catherine's choice to de-emphasize sex in her singing reflected the influence of Catholic teachings, given what historians have written about the feminisation of religion in the nineteenth century and the battle that raged between the Church and anti-clericals over sexuality and women's bodies. But a closer look at Catherine's life and the micro-geography of piety and religious scepticism in the Landes suggests that this was not the case. Despite what Alain Corbin has claimed about the continuing importance of religion to popular understandings of the body in the nineteenth century, many people in the Grande-Lande, a region of fairly moderate Catholic

1098 *OC:IV*, 454–5 2 *MI* 29/5, f.221.

belief, made little or no reference to religious ideas when talking about their bodies.¹⁰⁹⁹ Religion is one of the most surprising absences of the Arnaudin collection.

What relationship does this more general absence have to the notable paucity of sexuality within Catherine's songs? Both, this chapter argues, have to do with the fundamental paradox of the body, its status as absent presence. Religious devotion and chaste singing might appear to be denials of the body, yet this very denial draws attention to the body. Both, it also emerges, are positive absences, which Arnaudin actively noted. He found it hard to get his informants to speak of religion at all, something which seems to have slightly puzzled him. Catherine's omission of sexuality, on the other hand, was not something he noticed, but it is still fair to say that he actively recorded it since with Catherine, as with some of his other singers, Arnaudin adopted the habit of recording the songs she did not know.¹¹⁰⁰ He wrote 'Cath. Gentes: inc[onnu]' or 'Cath. Gentes: rien' when his inquiries showed Catherine was unaware of the song he was looking for. This fieldwork habit was neither systematic nor universal, and Arnaudin was most likely to record this kind of information from the singers he considered important. His interest in both Catherine's unsung songs and those of Babé Plantié comes from their status as his most trustworthy informants. He often placed versions of particular songs sung by Catherine and Babé at the head of his notes, signalling that they were standard, reliable performances. If, on the other hand, they did not know a song, this was surprising, or noteworthy.

Catherine provided seventy-seven different tunes or texts, while another eleven were 'unknown' to her.¹¹⁰¹ In the context of Arnaudin's other singers, this makes her a particularly prolific

1099 A. Corbin, 'L'emprise de la religion'.

1100 He may have got the idea from a questionnaire sent to him on behalf of the (London) Society for Psychical Research by L. Marillier. However, this letter dates from 1889, and my impression is that he had already adopted this habit before then. Since he did not consistently date his fieldnotes, the impression is hard to prove. *OC:V*, 118.

1101 Catherine sang many more songs for the second volume of Arnaudin's projected folksong collection, which he left unfinished at his death. The editors of the recent complete works gave Catherine's versions pride of place, and almost all of them appear in full. Perhaps this is because she was so faithful to Gascon, or perhaps because

informant, although Babé provided almost forty more than Catherine. The songs Catherine did not know and the verses she left out of those she did are just as interesting as what she did sing. To know a rare song suggests an individual departs in some ways from what other singers consider beautiful or true, and to be ignorant of a popular song suggests a similar idiosyncrasy, but from a negative point of view. Anthropologists, folklorists, and historians who have worked on the ethnography of not speaking agree that silence is not the same thing as absence of meaning.¹¹⁰² 'Like the zero in mathematics, [silence] is an absence with a function'.¹¹⁰³ Because singing is an aesthetic activity, something that people do because they think it is beautiful and meaningful, Catherine's failure to sing specific songs on request suggests she did not find these particular ones important or relevant to her life.¹¹⁰⁴ There is a logic to the songs Catherine never learned, or refused to repeat.

What Catherine Did Not Sing

That logic is about the rejection of sexuality. Of the seventy-seven songs Catherine sang, just four contained direct references to pre-marital sex. On the other hand, of the eleven songs which Arnaudin recorded her as not singing, six dealt with the same topic. In terms of negative evidence, this is surely a strong indication: Catherine preferred not to talk of sex. The most popular song Catherine was unaware of was 'I have a little brother' (Coirault 320). In Babé's version, as in many others, a brother returning from the war questions his sister's chastity: 'My sister, you have not

Arnaudin himself often placed her versions at the top of his sheets.

1102 R. Bauman, *Let Your Words Be Few: Symbolism of Speaking and Silence Among Seventeenth-Century Quakers*, new edn (Tucson, 2008); K. Basso, "'To Give up on Words": Silence in Western Apache Culture', *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 26, no. 3 (1 October 1970), 213–30; D. Hopkin, *Voices of the People*, 79–108.

1103 William Samarin, 'Language of Silence', *Practical Anthropology*, 12 (1965), 115.

1104 For the importance of aesthetics and the status of 'art' a keyword for the study of folklore, see: G. Pocius, 'Art', in B. Feintuch (ed.) *Eight Words for the Study of Expressive Culture* (Urbana, 2003), 42–68.

been faithful'.¹¹⁰⁵ When the young woman asks how he knows, he lists the signs of her clothing that give away her impropriety: her shoes show that she is no longer light on her feet, her stockings are no longer white, her skirt fits poorly, and her apron barely reaches around her belly. Catherine was also unfamiliar with the similarly popular 'My Lord! My beautiful cows'. In Babé's version, the song is told from the point of view of a man recently married:

The evening of our wedding
 Together we went to bed.
 I put my hand on her belly
 And felt the child move.
 I turned my back to her
 And began to cry.¹¹⁰⁶

Other songs Catherine was unaware of were slightly less popular, but also openly dealt with sexuality. 'I would like to sing you a song', which Arnaudin collected from nine singers, told the story of a valet caught having sex with the mistress. In his rage, the master wants to kill him, but his maid suggests revenge in kind instead.¹¹⁰⁷ 'There's a place in heaven' (Coirault 8112) is a lament about how parents should correct the – presumably sexual – follies of their children before it is too late.¹¹⁰⁸ Arnaudin collected seven versions. 'I got up early in the morning, the very early morning' (Coirault 2417), a song where a 'thorn' from an encounter in the garden cannot be removed for nine months, was known by just five singers.¹¹⁰⁹ So was 'My father and mother' (Coirault 4521), where a mother allows a young girl to meet with her lover because: "When mama was younger, She was worse than me."¹¹¹⁰ This song was typical of the Grande-Lande in that all of the landais versions

1105 *OC:IV*, 142–8. See 'La fontaine qui permet de redevenir pucelle', a southwestern ecotype. *RCFTO*, I, 57.

1106 *OC:IV*, 351–6 The song is not in *RCFTO*.

1107 *OC:IV*, 341–6 The song is not in *RCFTO*.

1108 *OC:IV*, 729–32. This is 'L'arbre du paradis' *RCFTO*, III, 21.

1109 *OC:IV*, 248–51. The song from the Grande-Lande is an example of 2417A 'Ce que deviennent les garçons après le mariage', but it does not, in fact, continue to describe what men are like after they are married. *RCFTO*, I, 280.

1110 *OC:IV*, 252–7.

were more direct about this sexual license than versions from elsewhere in France.¹¹¹¹ Catherine also ignored some rare songs that dealt with sex, such as 'My father and my mother' (Coirault 6219), which was known by only by three singers.¹¹¹² What all of these songs have in common, however, was a lenient attitude to extra-marital sexuality, and Catherine's inability to remember them, or disinterest in learning them, is suggestive about her attitudes to the desirability of having sex and of marrying. These songs that Catherine did not know help to understand those she did. 'On the pretty bridge of Avignon' (Coirault 1829) is a good example.¹¹¹³ Only three singers sang this song, so it was probably not a great surprise to Arnaudin that Catherine did not know it.¹¹¹⁴ But one reason he might have thought her ignorance of this song worth noting is because she did know a very similar song which she called 'On the bridge of Lyon' (Coirault 1710).¹¹¹⁵ Both feature a woman on a bridge who resists the entreaties of young men. But in the case of the song Catherine did not sing, the young woman rebuffs her admirers by saying: "I am no virgin, I have three children living".¹¹¹⁶ Catherine's song, on the other hand, describes a different situation. The young woman resists her lover for fifteen years, because she is already married to another man. The day she gives in, her husband returns.¹¹¹⁷ Her preference for the bridge of Lyon over the bridge of Avignon fits into wider patterns in her song repertoire, patterns of de-emphasizing sexuality, rejecting courtship, and using absent partners as a justification for chastity.

This is not to argue that Catherine never sang of making love. In common with many other

1111 'Le berger qui mène la bergère au bois' *RCFTO*, II, 95.

1112 *OC:IV*, 309–10. This song, 'Les gants faits de la rognure du cotillon' was much more popular elsewhere in France. *RCFTO*, II, 295–6.

1113 'Le peigne ramassé'. *RCFTO*, I, 222.

1114 *OC:IV*, 117–8.

1115 *Ibid.*, 122–123. 'Le navire qui apporte des nouvelles de l'ami' *RCFTO*, I, 199.

1116 *OC:IV*, 118.

1117 See NFA, 2 MI 29/1, f.622.

people, she sang many lyrics that evoke a romantic mood, rather than telling a story.¹¹¹⁸ But these songs were not only vague in how they dealt with love, they were also very popular. 'The young girls of *Jouan-Hau*', for instance, was known by fifteen other singers, and 'As I passed the bridge at Pau' (related to Coirault 4717) was known by another twelve.¹¹¹⁹ As mentioned above, Catherine even sang four songs that openly discuss pre-marital sex, but these also tended to be very widely-known. A song she knew as 'Jan de la Réole had three daughters' (Coirault 1115) was called 'There is a miller in Clarac' by many of the eighteen other singers who provided versions for Arnaudin.¹¹²⁰ In all of the different versions of the song a concerned father calls out the doctor to investigate his daughter's mysterious illness. The doctor's advice to the father is simple: "Father, marry her this evening, By the morning she will be fine".¹¹²¹ The only thing wrong with her is that she has become pregnant before marrying.

A couple of the songs concerning pre-marital sex that Catherine knew were slightly rarer, although none were uncommon. 'The mother and her daughter' (Coirault 2315) and 'The girls of La Réole' (Coirault 2301.1) were known by eight and seven other singers respectively.¹¹²² The first song was a conversation where a mother gives advice to her wayward daughter, while the second one features the memorable lines:

I haven't gone to bed with any man,
Nor slept with any either.
Except a school teacher,
Who came a few times.¹¹²³

'I got up early, Before the sun had risen' (Coirault 7211), on the other hand, was one of the most

1118 The distinction between 'lyrics' and 'ballads', which have more narrative structure, is made, for instance, in: Toelken, *Morning Dew and Roses*, 14.

1119 *OC:IV*, 427, 445–6. 'La cadette mariée avant l'aînée' *RCFTO*, II, 123–4.

1120 *OC:IV*, 168–173; 'Le médecin et la fille malade d'amour' *RCFTO*, II, 123–4.

1121 *OC:IV*, 169.

1122 *OC:IV:246–7*, 302–3. 'Les filles qui se lacent menu' and 'La mère, la fille et le gros marchand', neither of which were common outside the Grande-Lande. *RCFTO*, II, 262–3, 267.

1123 *OC:IV*, 247.

popular songs in the region at the time. Arnaudin collected thirty other versions, but Catherine's took pride of place in his notes.¹¹²⁴ In the song, a knight appears to carry a girl back to her homeland in which war is raging. On their journey they sleep together on the moors with nothing but a thread of silver between them. Soon afterwards, they are forced to petition the *parlement* for permission to marry. This was a rare example of Catherine singing a song that clearly explored pre-marital sexuality. It seems likely that she knew it because it was so popular in the Grande-Lande.¹¹²⁵

The songs Catherine sang about courting were similarly popular, but Catherine preferred ones that dealt with the ambiguities of the process. 'Good evening, master of the house' (Coirault 4717) was known by thirteen other singers. Although it is about a young girl being asked for her hand, the song is structured around a contrast with her older sister, less lucky: "The big sister sitting by the fireside, Cries and sighs".¹¹²⁶ Nine other singers provided versions of 'On the bridge of Toulouse, Saint John's Eve' (Coirault 4517), a song which leads from a meeting between two dancers, to a conversation about marriage.¹¹²⁷ In Babé's, as in most other versions, the woman tells her suitor her wedding will not be this year, leading him to reply: "Be quiet, my sweetheart, It will be tomorrow".¹¹²⁸ Catherine characteristically omitted this ending. She had less interest than other singers in the marriage outcome.

Catherine had a marked tendency to sing songs where marriages were frustrated, delayed, or rejected. Some, such as songs about girls refusing marriage, were fairly well-known. 'On the banks of a stream' (Coirault 1905) is about a girl who rejects the proposals of some passing soldiers, and

1124 Ibid., 71–285, see NFA, 2 MI 29/3, f.165.

1125 'Les amours et le fil d'argent' was not very popular elsewhere, and the landais version was more developed and complicated than the other French versions. *RCFTO*, II, 395.

1126 *OC:IV*, 3–4.

1127 'Les gants à porter trois fois l'an' *RCFTO*, II, 91–2.

1128 *OC:IV*, 25.

was sung by eight other singers.¹¹²⁹ Another song sung by eight other singers, 'Do not go, beautiful' (Coirault 6206) features a girl who turns down all of the army, the captains, the king's brother, and the king himself, because she does not want to marry a warrior.¹¹³⁰ Often, in Catherine's songs, an absent husband or lover provided the pretext for women to refuse the advances of other men. Some of these songs were popular, so 'Any young girl who is in love' was sung by fourteen other singers, and 'Landeridi, in my father's garden' (Coirault 1502) was sung by thirteen.¹¹³¹ Some of these songs of frustrated marriages were rarer. 'The other day as I was walking' was known in seven other versions, and 'I made myself a bunch of flowers' (Coirault 114) was known by just one other singer in the Grande-Lande.¹¹³²

Catherine also sung of more eclectic excuses. 'In the town of Salles there is' (Coirault 1803), a song sung by five other singers, tells of a woman who rejects a suitor because his hands are not as clean as her lover's.¹¹³³ 'In Saint-Léger there are four beautiful young girls' was much more popular. In the versions Arnaudin recorded from Catherine and from sixteen other singers, the conclusion is the same: "Leave that one, Pierre, That one is my sister."¹¹³⁴ The songs Catherine sung which indefinitely postponed marriage, on the other hand, were considerably rarer. The song which talked of not getting married this year, and perhaps dying instead, was called 'The girls of La Rochelle' (Coirault 1113) and was sung by just two other singers.¹¹³⁵ Arnaudin noted that Babé, who knew almost half of the songs he collected, did not know it. 'The other day as I was walking' is a

1129 Ibid., 465–7. 'Le galant inntimidé par les pleurs de la belle'. This was one of the most popular songs in French oral tradition. *RCFTO*, I, 229–231.

1130 *OC:IV*, 470–1. 'Le soldat préféré au roi' *RCFTO*, II, 290.

1131 *OC:IV*, 473–4, 498–9. 'Le prisonnier des Hollandais' *RCFTO*, I, 173–4. 'Any young girl who is in love' was not catalogued in *RCFTO*.

1132 *OC:IV*, 64–5, 113–5. See 'Le bouquet de toutes fleurs jolies' *RCFTO*, I, 38.

1133 *OC:IV*, 166–7; 'Le teinturier qui n'a pas les mains nettes' *RCFTO*, I, 212.

1134 *OC:IV*, 155–9 The song was not catalogued in *RCFTO*.

1135 Ibid., IV:454–5; 'La beauté à quoi sert-elle?' *RCFTO*, I, 122–3.

conversation between a young man out walking and a tearful young shepherdess. When he asks why she is crying she replies that her master beats her. She swears not to serve more than a year longer, and then marry. The second half of the song imagines the pleasures of her wedding day. Only four other singers, all of whom were women, sang this song.¹¹³⁶ Another rare song Catherine sang also seems to express cynicism about marriage prospects. 'When the shepherdess goes to the fields' (Coirault 102) was only sung by three other singers in the Grande-Lande.¹¹³⁷ Unusually for the Arnaudin collection, which concentrates on female singing repertoires, two of the singers who sang this were men, Jean Castaignède, known as lou Clerjé (1832-1892), and Martin Magnes. The only other woman to sing the song was another unmarried singer, Marie Duvignac (1834-1909), known as le Samioune. The message of the song is pessimistic about marriage:

They will want the handsome men.
If they want them, they shall have them...
But perhaps not the ones they want...
They will have what they can get.¹¹³⁸

In other examples, Catherine sang songs that other singers sang, but omitted the endings, as if she was not as bothered about marriage either way. Nineteen other singers sang 'I got up early, In the cool morning', a song which typically ends with the girl expressing disappointment with her soldier-fiancé, as in Babé's version: "My love, if it weren't for your deceptions, I would be married".¹¹³⁹ Catherine left off these final stanzas. She also omitted verses from the song 'My father is marrying me off, Ho Ramonet' (Coirault 5703), which was sung by twelve other singers.¹¹⁴⁰ The verses she left out dealt with the tribulations of persuading an older husband to have sex. Perhaps the best example is 'The other day as I was walking', a song sung by fifteen other singers. Babé's version

1136 *OC:IV*, 134–5 It was not catalogued in *RCFTO*.

1137 'Le canard blanc' was very popular outside the Grande-Lande, but the landais song is only related to this type. *RCFTO*, I, 32–3.

1138 *OC:IV*, 220–2.

1139 *Ibid.*, 258–270. The song was not catalogued in *RCFTO*.

1140 *Ibid.*, 398–404. 'Au diable la richesse III' *RCFTO*, II, 221–2.

was typical in describing a shepherdess who offers a passer-by bread, wine, ham, chicken, and pigeons, and finally into her bed.¹¹⁴¹ Catherine's shepherdess provides the food, but no added extras.¹¹⁴²

Although most of the songs of the Grande-Lande took little interest in preserving feminine honour, there was at least one song that was popular in the region that talked about the defence of virginity. Fourteen singers apart from Catherine knew 'When the king left' (Coirault 3809), but Catherine was alone in singing two different versions.¹¹⁴³ The fact that she sung the same words to two different jaunty tunes indicates that she found them especially meaningful:

“Your sister told me
 You are not a virgin,
 You are not a virgin.”
 “My sister lied to you,
 The false wretch!
 The false wretch!
 Between me and my sister,
 You will see a great war,
 You will see a great war.”¹¹⁴⁴

But it is a song known in its full version by Catherine alone which provides the strongest evidence of her feelings about courting and marriage. Marie Dumartin, known as Louise, femme Dupart (1841-1888) and Jeanne Lescarret, known as Janéte dou Baqué, femme Dupart (1837-1927), knew a few lines of 'Little one, do you want to come to the woods'. Babé knew parts of it, but seemed to confuse it with another song. It was not known outside of the Grande-Lande. Catherine's version is the only one that is fully-developed, and is about a suitor who invites his sweetheart to pick flowers in the woods, a well-known metaphor for making love. The woman declines in French, on the grounds that her suitor should make her a present of:

“*Quelque baguette ou quelque anneau,*

1141 OC:IV, 370–5. The song was not catalogued in *RCFTO*.

1142 OC:IV, 373–4.

1143 ‘La bergère et le roi de l’Angleterre’ *RCFTO*, II, 24–5.

1144 OC:IV, 504–5, 506.

*Ou quelque chose de plus beau.
Ou quelque bague d'alliance:
C'est pour nous marier ensemble.”*

Now it is the man's turn to refuse:

“My lord, girl, you are mistaken
To ask for things so boldly.
*Toute fille qui prend, qui donne
Se met son cœur à l'abandonne.”*

The girl defends herself against the imputation:

“I have taken, and I have given,
[But] I did not give up my body.
I have taken, and I have some left,
I am not an abandoned girl.¹¹⁴⁵

With that the girl calls off the engagement, and the song ends. Compared to many of the other dancing songs Catherine sang, the tune she sang this song to – the same one she used for 'In this canton there is a young man' – is noticeably plaintive, as if to lend more force to her statement: 'I did not give up my body'.¹¹⁴⁶

Catherine's idiosyncratic repertoire reflects her unusual biography. She never married, nor did she have any illegitimate children, and this was very rare among the other Arnaudin informants. 268 of them were married, leaving just twenty who might have remained unwed. Catherine is one of the clearest cases, since at her death in 1906 she was described as 'célibataire'. But most of the other unmarried informants almost certainly had sexual relations. It is hard to prove this when it comes to the twelve unmarried men, although the fact that Arnaudin himself, who often recorded his own versions of songs, had sex with at least two different partners suggests that bachelors may well have been able to have sexual relationships. It is easier to find out if the sixteen unmarried women that Arnaudin collected folklore from had sex. Four of them had illegitimate children, and Catherine

1145 'Jou que n'ây près, que n'ây balhat, / N'ây pa moun cos abandonnat./ Jou que n'ây près, que n'ây encare, / Ne suy pa 'u' filhe abandonnade.' *OC:IV*, 450.

1146 For the tunes, see: Association d'Étude, de Promotion et d'Enseignement des Musiques Traditionnelles des Pays de France: 'Arnaudin - Chants Populaires de La Grande-Lande 2', <http://www.aepem.com/Arnaudin2.php>. 'In this canton there is a young man' was not catalogued in *RCFTO*.

Bertrande (b.1860) probably did, as well. Marie Darlanne never had any children, but Arnaudin's diary reveals that she had a long romance with the folklorist himself. Another two of the unmarried female informants were very young and their unmarried status therefore has less in common with Catherine's.¹¹⁴⁷ This means that out of 216 female informants, just eight could possibly have been adult and celibate, and this is without considering that any of these women may, like Marie Darlanne, have had sex without having children.

Catherine seems unusual then. Not only does sex seem absent from her life, but unlike most of the singers in the Grande-Lande, she played down the importance of sexuality in the songs she sung. It is unlikely that this was simply embarrassment or prudishness. Sometimes other young female singers had qualms about singing obscene songs to Arnaudin. One refused to finish a song: 'elle est si *libre* à la fin, dit-elle, qu'elle refuse de me la donner' and another told him a lullaby he had asked for was actually obscene.¹¹⁴⁸ But there is no hint from the manuscripts that Catherine absolutely refused to sing verses that contained innuendo. She did, in fact, sometimes sing songs that discussed sex. It just seems that her preference was to downplay the important of making love.

Religion and the Body in the Grande-Lande

An obvious explanation for why Catherine might have remained celibate, and why she preferred to de-emphasize sexuality in her songs, would be piety. Perhaps Catherine was one among the many women who rallied to the Catholic Church in the nineteenth century, as their menfolk grew lax.¹¹⁴⁹ Sex, after all, was the great dividing line between Catholics and anti-clericals.¹¹⁵⁰ The

1147 Marilys Ducourneau (b.1893) may have married after Arnaudin collected songs from her (probably before 1912). Anna Loubeyre (1887-1907) died aged just 20.

1148 NFA, 2 MI 29/4, f.20, 2 MI 29/20, f.37.

1149 On the 'feminisation' of religion, see, for instance: R. Burton, *Holy Tears, Holy Blood: Women, Catholicism, and the Culture of Suffering in France, 1840-1970* (Ithaca, 2004); R. Gibson, 'Female Religious Orders in Nineteenth-Century France', in F. Tallett and N. Atkin (eds), *Catholicism in Britain and France since 1789* (London and Rio Grande, 1996), 105–13; Harris, *Lourdes*; Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart*; J. McMillan, 'Religion and Gender in Modern France: Some Reflections', in F. Tallett and N. Atkin (eds), *Religion,*

clash between the Republic and the Church was fought over women's bodies.¹¹⁵¹ It has been harder to establish what ordinary French people like Catherine themselves thought about Catholicism and embodiment. An important starting point is the realisation that the denial of the body through mortifications, fasting, and bodily control so typical of extreme forms of Catholic practice in the nineteenth century only served to draw more attention to it.¹¹⁵² In a similar way, Catherine's subtle efforts to de-emphasize sexuality in the songs she sang lead her to focus attention back on to the body, a body that has not been abandoned.

Yet Catherine's songs do not suggest that she was particularly pious. Songs are not statements of belief.¹¹⁵³ However, the evidence they provide about Catherine's cultural choices do not lend much weight to the idea that her valourisation of celibacy was inspired by the religious revival of the nineteenth century. It is true she did sing some religious songs, such as 'When Jesus-Christ was just a child' (Coirault 8805) which was only sung by four other singers in the Grande-Lande, and briefly described the sufferings of Jesus.¹¹⁵⁴ She also sang 'Up there in the heavens', which included the message: "We all come from God, We deserve to go and see him".¹¹⁵⁵ It was only sung by one other singer and does not appear in Coirault's catalogue of French folk songs. But in general, Catherine's songs display not only disinterest in the message of Catholicism, but even criticisms of piety. Her version of 'On the bridge of Lyon' (Coirault 1710) did not include the lines

Society, and Politics in France Since 1789 (London and Rio Grande, 1991).

1150 J. Faury, *Cléricalisme et anticléricalisme dans le Tarn (1848-1900)* (Toulouse, 1980), 273–8.

1151 R. Gibson, 'Why Republicans and Catholics Could Not Stand Each Other in the Nineteenth Century', in F. Tallett and N. Atkin (eds), *Religion, Society, and Politics in France Since 1789* (London and Rio Grande, 1991), 117–9.

1152 Corbin, 'L'emprise de la religion', 70–4; Burton, *Holy Tears, Holy Blood*.

1153 Hopkin, *Voices of the People*, 236; E. Badone, 'Breton Folklore of Anticlericalism', in E. Badone (ed), *Religious Orthodoxy and Popular Faith in European Society* (Princeton, 1990), 140-160.

1154 *OC:IV*, 725–6. This is the extremely popular 'La passion de Jésus-Christ' *RCFTO*, III, 52–3.

1155 *OC:IV*, 735.

sung by other singers that referred to God and the Virgin Mary.¹¹⁵⁶ Catherine sung a version of 'The girls of La Rochelle' (Coirault 2301.1), a song sung by seven other singers in Arnaudin's collection. All of the songs were critical of the wayward young girls of La Rochelle, but Catherine was the only singer to include the following couplets, which were explicitly critical of outward displays of piety in the context of courting:

Poor young men who want to marry.
 Take care not to be deceived.
 Do not trust those girls
 Who go to the priest so often.¹¹⁵⁷

There is no study of Catholicism in the Landes in the nineteenth century, perhaps because it occupies such a moderate position in the geography of piety and anti-clericalism. It was neither firmly within the belt of devout regions that stretched from the Massif Central into the Pyrenees, nor did it belong to the dechristianised regions alongside. Parents were still fairly conscientious about having their children baptised, yet local priests complained that the region was among the most ungodly.¹¹⁵⁸ What Arnaudin's folklore collection offers is some of the cultural understandings behind the religious statistics. It is not enough to know how many people went to Easter Mass; historians need to know why they went and what they thought. After all, many nineteenth-century priests felt a similar shock to the *curé* of Commensacq when they realised that their flocks did not invest the rituals they performed with orthodox meanings. Overjoyed by the enthusiasm of his parishioners for ringing the church bells after baptisms, it took him some time to realise that this enthusiasm stemmed from the belief that the bells could prevent the child from being deaf or unable to speak.¹¹⁵⁹

1156 Ibid., 122–123. 'Le navire qui apporte des nouvelles de l'ami' *RCFTO*, I, 199.

1157 *OC*:IV, 346–51.

1158 F. Isambert and J.-P. Terrenoire, *Atlas de la pratique religieuse des catholiques en France* (Paris, 1980), 34, 36, 40; G. Cholvy et al., *Histoire religieuse de la France* (3 vols., Toulouse, 1985-8), II, 46.

1159 ADL 1000 J 65, 'Monographie Paroissiale: Commensacq' (1889), 20.

Few of Arnaudin's informants provided much in the way of religious folklore. Simon Loubère (1831-1908) was a rare storyteller, in that his preferred narratives dealt with religious themes. He told Arnaudin versions of ATU 752A 'Christ and St. Peter in the Barn', ATU 753 'Christ and the Smith', and ATU 1182 'The Level Bushel', stories more associated with devout parts of France, such as the Massif Central or Brittany.¹¹⁶⁰ Perhaps Mariane de Mariolan had a pious side as well. She told Arnaudin the legend of a group of local dancers who ignored a priest passing by to bless a dying man on a Sunday.¹¹⁶¹ The dancers were punished by being turned 'as black as pure soot'.¹¹⁶² Despite being both very long-lived and Arnaudin's single most important narrator, Mariane herself sang no songs, and the story provides a credible explanation. There are other hints of the everyday importance of religion in pervasive references to church buildings and ceremonies in everyday speech. Perhaps it was no coincidence that the riot later known as the 'Révolution de Sabres' in 1863 broke out on Easter Monday. The *curé*, M. Pédégert, was the only person who could restore order once violence had erupted.¹¹⁶³ Yet these hints about the importance of religion do not add up to a coherent picture of a quotidian Christianity. The informants Arnaudin found who expressed religious devotion were not only rare: the relation between these religious sentiments and their own lives was ambiguous. One of his most apparently most devout informants, Magdelaine Lescarret, known as Babelic (1828-1901), sang a particularly gruesome religious song called 'What have you done to me':

What have you done to me!
I am without hope,
Me who so enjoyed,

1160 *OC*:I, 211, 211–3, 363.

1161 This is motif Q386, although the story has not been catalogued for France. See: Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature: a Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Mediaeval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-Books, and Local Legends* (5 vols., Copenhagen, 1955); See also: A. Arcangeli, 'Dance and Punishment', *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research* 10, no. 2 (1992), 30-42.

1162 *OC*:I, 218–9. See 2 *MI* 29/11, f.646.

1163 Leshauris, 'La Révolution de Sabres (1863)', 395, 397.

The pleasures of dancing.

He has banished me to *tihéu* [?],
From on high down to Lucifer,
Jump from the top of the sky,
To the depths of hell.

Pleasures which deceived me,
Pleasures which are so brief,
Pain which will last,
All of eternity,
Without ever seeing God,
Without ever feeling his pity.

My heart is full of fire,
One foot is attached to a chain,
The other is attacked by a serpent.
The demon, the toad,
Do not give me a moment's rest,
Night or day.

And all of us who are damned,
We will soon repent,
The drum and the fife,
Have changed their tune.
In hell, in hell,
We will burn night and day.¹¹⁶⁴

The bodily mortification of her song stands in an uneasy relationship to Babelic's own life, a life lived with more than a little familiarity with the drum and the fife. In 1898, aged seventy, she was in trouble with the police for running an illegal cabaret.¹¹⁶⁵ Her religious songs speak more of her personal sense of guilt than of a life of devotion to the church.

In general, Arnaudin found it very hard to collect any religious folklore at all. When he tried to find evidence for the religious prayers collected by the abbé Dumartin just a few years before in the village of Commensacq, he drew a blank: 'Rien trouvé. Personne ne se souvient plus de rien'.¹¹⁶⁶ Arnaudin told the folklorist Paul Sébillot that there was no popular Christian imagery in the Grande-

1164 *OC:IV*, 700–1. The song is not in *RCFTO*.

1165 Traimond, 'La sociabilité rurale landaise', 148.

1166 *NFA*, 2 MI 29/20, f.113.

Lande.¹¹⁶⁷ Statues of the Virgin Mary were so rare that the few devout Catholics that did live there would pay pedlars to let them kiss their images.¹¹⁶⁸ Coorou, a miller from Richet, apparently told Arnaudin that during the Revolution people did not find it hard to make do without priests: 'Pas de confession aux curés. Se confessait à un vieux châtaigner'.¹¹⁶⁹ This was not simply because Arnaudin was unsympathetic to Catholicism. His diary shows that he went to church fairly regularly, at least in his thirties.¹¹⁷⁰ It is true that he was suspicious of local priests, but this was largely because he resented their attempts to collect folklore, attempts which he castigated for being both amateur and inaccurate: 'le besoin de l'arrangement est instinctive chez le prêtre'.¹¹⁷¹ And there is other evidence that the Grande-Lande was not particularly devout.¹¹⁷² Some nineteenth-century authors maintained that the region had never been effectively converted to Catholicism.¹¹⁷³ When it came to spending the money they had earned from selling the commons, the villages of the Landes took a very different approach to those in the Gironde. While the Gironde spent 1,417,492 francs on churches and just 646,919 francs on schools, the Landes spend more on schools (989,453 francs) and much less on churches (974,011).¹¹⁷⁴

The reports written by the village curés of the Landes for the diocese in 1889 confirm that, in general, the clergy despaired of the piety of their flocks, but indifference and anti-clericalism

1167 OC:V, 63–4.

1168 OC:VII, 281.

1169 NFA, 2 MI 29/14, f.495.

1170 See the entries for 1 December 1861, 29 December 1861, 16 November 1862. He did not mention going later in life, but the diary became much less detailed as he grew older. OC:VIII, 26, 29, 48. Latry suggests he had relations of 'bon voisinage' with the Church. Latry, 'Miroirs voilés', 150.

1171 NFA, 2 MI 29/25, f.160.

1172 R. Magraw includes the 'south west' in his list of regions that were dechristianised in the nineteenth century. See: 'Popular anticlericalism in nineteenth-century rural France', in J. Obelkevich, L. Roper, and R. Samuel (eds), *Disciplines of Faith: Studies in Religion, Politics, and Patriarchy* (London, 1987), 351.

1173 Cholvy et al., *Histoire religieuse de la France*, II, 86.

1174 Sargos, *Contribution*, 568.

varied on a micro-geographical scale.¹¹⁷⁵ It is interesting to note that village of Trensacq was not as blighted by conflicts between the secular authorities and the Church as many of the other villages, since this was where Simon Loubère, who told Arnaudin the series of religious tales, lived.¹¹⁷⁶ There were other villages that were similarly devout, such as Garein and Le Sen, whose inhabitants were almost unanimous in asking for a priest to be established in their area in 1905.¹¹⁷⁷ According to the priests themselves, this micro-geography of devotion and anti-clericalism had as much to do with the actions of specific priests and village councillors as it did with providence. In the tumultuous period at the start of the nineteenth century Trensacq had been fortunate, the curé wrote, since a cart-driver had found a priest at the fair in Liposthey and brought him back to the village.¹¹⁷⁸ In the village of Sabres, what religion the locals still professed could be traced to the missionary zeal of the curé Pédemagnan between 1839 and 1841.¹¹⁷⁹

Commensacq, the village where Catherine lived her whole life, had not been so fortunate from a religious point of view. The abbé Dumartin complained: 'Si les habitants de Commensacq avaient autant de foi sur les vérités de la religion que sur les sorcières et les loups-garous ils fourniraient la meilleur paroisse du diocèse'.¹¹⁸⁰ Dumartin may have been exaggerating, especially seeing as many of his complaints were about the unorthodox beliefs his parishioners combined with Catholic practice. Arnaudin himself thought that Dumartin was rather credulous, and it is also hard to understand how villages could differ so much in their religious devotion given how mobile the

1175 Magraw suggests a number of reasons why this might have been the case, from the influence of monasteries on local communities before the Revolution to the deep memory of the Wars of Religion. Magraw, 'Popular Anticlericalism', 352.

1176 ADL 1000 J 65, 'Monographie Paroissiale: Trensacq' (1889), 3.

1177 ADL 1000 J 65, 'Monographie Paroissiale: Labrit' (1905).

1178 'Monographie Paroissiale: Trensacq', 10.

1179 ADL, 1000 J 65, 'Monographie Paroissiale: Sabres' (1889).

1180 'Monographie Paroissiale: Commensacq', 36.

sharecropping population was.¹¹⁸¹ The religious micro-geography of the Landes as well as the anti-clerical songs Catherine sang suggest that piety cannot be the explanation for the chastity of her repertoire. Other, more bodily explanations are needed.

'The Emotion of Multitude': Bodily Difference as Cultural Authority

The ways that Catherine played down the importance of sex and love in the songs she sang were unusual, but this is not to say that they were irrelevant or unimportant in her community. Like Greek tragedies, folk traditions express a tension between the desires of forceful individuals and a chorus. There is a synergy between the dramatic heroes and heroines or the skilled singers and narrators such as Catherine, and their audience, an audience that also participates. This is what the folklorist William Butler Yeats called the 'emotion of multitude'.¹¹⁸² Catherine's singing grew out of the texture of her personal bodily experiences, experiences which were different to many of the other people Arnaudin collected folklore from, yet this very difference was what made her an important singer. Other local people learned the bodily practice of singing from someone whose special role in the community came from her bodily difference. Catherine had a limp. It is hard to say how serious it was, since Arnaudin made no mention of it in the notes he wrote about her, but it was important enough to be recorded by the census in 1872.¹¹⁸³ Folk culture was not kind when it came to the disabled. Disability was not an aspect of an individual but their identity, so people talked of 'cripples' rather than of men and women who limped.¹¹⁸⁴ Cripples were amusing, especially since they were paradoxically thought to excel at things which their limp hindered:

1181 NFA, 2 MI 29/17, f.160.

1182 W.B. Yeats, 'Emotion of Multitude' in G. Harper and R. Finneran (eds), *The Collected Works of W.B. Yeats* (14 vols., Basingstoke, 1989-2006), IV, 159-62.

1183 ADL, E DEPOT 85/1 F 1, 'Recensement de La Population: Commensacq' (1872).

1184 The Gascon word was 'tort' or 'torte'.

“Singing should be left to stammerers, And dancing to those who limp.”¹¹⁸⁵ Arnaudin pointed out: 'C'est une opinion très répandue que les bègues excellent au chant et les boiteux à la danse'.¹¹⁸⁶ This idea was also evoked in the final verses of Pierre Sournet's (1847-1919) version of 'On the Bridge of Toulouse, Saint John's Eve' (Coirault 4517), an ending which Catherine characteristically ignored:

The men and women with limps
Will dance at the dance.
The men and women who stammer
Will sing at the dance.¹¹⁸⁷

This association between limping and dancing was sexually suggestive. No matter what the folklorists tried to pretend, the Church was right about the close symbolic relationship between dancing and sex. Early-nineteenth-century ethnographic accounts of the moorlands presented village dances as primitive match-making ceremonies where men unceremoniously chose a bride and immediately presented her to their parents.¹¹⁸⁸ Arnaudin's understanding of the links between singing, dancing, and sex were more subtle. An anonymous note he recorded remembered: “When... and ... married – what fun we had! – Jani de Tanot was there, the poor thing! She knew a thing or two! And she knew how to sing!”¹¹⁸⁹ To say a young woman 'knew a thing or two' seems to have had similar implications to saying she was *dégrossi* in other parts of France: the knowledge or skill in question was implicitly sexual.¹¹⁹⁰

The body of the female cripple was sexually marked. Her buttocks, an important part of the sexual and phenomenological anatomy of the rural body, were more pronounced than most people's:

1185 *OC*:II, 123.

1186 *Ibid.* See also the rhyme on 373-4.

1187 *OC*:IV, 27.

1188 M. de Caila, ‘Recherches sur les moeurs des habitants des landes de Bordeaux, dans la contrée connue ci-devant sous le nom du Captalat de Buch’, in *Mémoires de l'Académie Celtique*, IV (1809), 70–82.

1189 *OC*:VII, 519.

1190 Verdier, *Façons de dire, façons de faire*, 159–258, especially 204.

“A woman with a limp is cleaner than any other, With one buttock, she cleans the other”.¹¹⁹¹

Nonsense rhymes compounded the picture:

“Cripple, where have you come from

With your fat bottom?”

“I've come from Tartas,

Stick your nose up it.”

“And from Tartas to Rion,

Stick your own up there!”¹¹⁹²

Both examples are about the effect that limping had on the body. Both are explicitly about women, and both use ideas about the way a limp changes a woman's bottom, making it 'fat' or making it rub. Catherine lived with these everyday associations linking limping to dancing, sex, bottoms, and the embarrassment of the body. Because of her physical disability, Catherine was both expected to have a particular affinity to dancing and music, and was simultaneously reduced to her sexual body, a fact which goes some way to explaining the choice she made in expunging references to sexuality from her songs and emphasizing that her body was not 'abandoned'.

There was another way in which Catherine's body was marked as sexual. As a seamstress, Catherine was intimately involved with the bodies of other people, touching and measuring them, and going into their houses. This intimacy and mobility were grounds to consider the seamstress a fallen woman. But this marginal sexual status also came with a certain amount of cultural authority. The ethnologist Yvonne Verdier has pointed out the special role of the seamstress in French rural society as an educator who taught young girls 'la loi du corps féminin'.¹¹⁹³ In the Burgundian example Verdier studied, this special role was expressed in the symbolic associations between clothing, pins, sewing, the body, and menstruation. La marquette was an embroidery young girls were expected to master with the seamstress, but its name also connoted the marking of the young

1191 *OC:II*, 252.

1192 *Ibid.*, 401.

1193 Verdier, *Façons de dire, façons de faire*, 188.

girl's body by menstruation.¹¹⁹⁴ As the girls worked with the seamstress, they sang.¹¹⁹⁵ There is some evidence of similar associations in the songs of the Grande-Lande. The song 'A! Mama, are you pleased' (Coirault 902), for instance, is sung from the point of view of a young girl. She asks her mother if she is pleased with her progress in a range of areas, beginning with sewing, and ending with courting and sexuality.¹¹⁹⁶

It is possible that, like the twentieth-century seamstresses studied by Verdier, Catherine was responsible for dressing brides on their wedding days.¹¹⁹⁷ Whatever the case, Arnaudin's notes on wedding songs provide ample evidence of the importance of clothing and of dressing the bride for this most important occasion: "Look at the bride from every angle, To see if there is anything wrong [with her outfit]".¹¹⁹⁸ According to van Gennep, these wedding-day songs are one of most striking and original aspects of the folklore of the south west.¹¹⁹⁹ Other activities during the day made reference to sewing and cloth-work, and Babé told Arnaudin: 'In the old days, the bride would wear a pair of scissors on her belt'.¹²⁰⁰ Whether or not Catherine's role dressing local brides was formalized, her skills as a seamstress – skills that are bodily gestures – gave her authority in this domain. As Verdier pointed out, this authority is not without its ironies. Seamstresses may have been experts when it came to marriage, but this sexual expertise was itself the reason why they could not marry. In the Grande-Lande, professional sewing was considered incompatible with

1194 Ibid., 177–186.

1195 Ibid., 179.

1196 OC:III, 232–3. 'La fille parfaite'. In fact, the Coirault catalogue only refers to the Arnaudin version. *RCFTO*, I, 96.

1197 Verdier, *Façons de dire, façons de faire*, 246–51.

1198 OC:IV, 746–7.

1199 Van Gennep, *Le folklore français*, I, 313, 334; C. Daugé, *Le mariage et la famille en Gascogne*, 59–66.

1200 OC:VII, 582.

married life: “Married seamstress, Blunt needle”.¹²⁰¹ In this sense, Catherine's unmarried status might have been considered appropriate by the people who knew her, since it fitted with what they thought of seamstresses. Seamstresses were like other women, but quite different, and, just as Catherine's limp made her different, yet paradoxically authoritative, being a seamstress set her apart, but also gave her authority. Seamstresses were over-represented among Arnaudin's singers. In the 1861 census, just half a percent of the general population were seamstresses, while eight of Arnaudin's 286 singers were seamstresses (2.6%). This may partly have to do with Arnaudin's bias towards collecting songs from women, but even when divided by two, this would make him almost three times more likely to collect from seamstresses than their significance in the population would suggest. This is not simply a quirk of his fieldwork methodology. It is true that by activating a network of women and men in the cloth trades, Arnaudin was able to collect songs long-distance. Two of his seamstress-singers lived in Hostens, in the neighbouring département of the Gironde. It seems clear that he met Catherine Goujon (1829-1913) and Jeanne Pruzeau (b.1866), known as le Pruzoline, through the Raba-Triscos family, whose daughter Jeanne Raba, known as Anaïs, femme Triscos (b.1859) was also a seamstress. Marie Dulucq even collected songs for him, and sent them to him in letters.¹²⁰² But the reason why it was easy for Arnaudin to tap into this network of seamstresses was because local culture associated sex, sewing, and singing. He noted that Catherine learned one song from a tailor named Cousteau in Belhade.¹²⁰³ While most of his singers learned songs from family members, Catherine had also learned another song from a man who came from a different village, and whose family originated in the fairly distant town of Mont-de-Marsan.¹²⁰⁴

1201 *OC:II*, 129.

1202 *NFA*, 2 MI 29/31, f.717.

1203 *NFA*, 2 MI 29/3, f.287.

1204 *NFA*, 2 MI 29/2, f.322.

Conclusion

Catherine had cultural authority as a talented singer who learned new songs from distant places, and she also had cultural authority as a seamstress, and as someone whose body marked her out as different. But this difference had little explicit relation with one of the most obvious historical explanations for chastity: religion. Catholicism, like sexuality, is notable for being relatively, although not completely, absent from her singing. And perhaps, again like sexuality, the explanation for this absence has less to do with indifference than with conflict and pain. After all, whatever the position she personally took, Catherine's female cultural authority was accentuated in this period by the conflict between secularists and Catholics. Within her very own village this conflict took the form of a protracted struggle over the attempts to establish a Catholic girls school. When the nuns who were going to staff the school finally arrived and set about doing the good work they intended to accomplish, the abbé Dumartin remembered, 'la basse classe a regardé cette oeuvre comme le fléau le plus terrible'.¹²⁰⁵ Catherine's authority as a secular expert in techniques of the body, sewing, and singing must have taken on extra significance in this period as an alternative to the despised nuns. Her life was not one that went with the flow of the history of the body in this region. The demographic revolution had little to do with her childlessness, her work was not dependent on the environmental changes of the second half of the nineteenth century, and there is little in her life or songs that suggests she had strong feelings about class tensions. Yet Catherine's singing was in dialogue with local understandings of the body, understandings that focused on comely buttocks and legs, and that discussed women's bodies almost exclusively through the idiom of sexuality. However hard or however 'miserable' – to borrow the language of reformers and priests – her life was, she was able to make bodily choices, and ones that neither conformed to what reformers hoped for in the regenerated moorlands, nor what other local people expected.¹²⁰⁶ There is a degree of

1205 'Monographie Paroissiale: Commensacq', 15.

1206 The abbé Dumartin, for instance, talked of the spiritual 'misery' of his flock. See: *Ibid.*, 17.

freedom and choice in her unabandoned body, and a sense that she herself made her own body as she wanted it to be: not completely independent of social expectations, but by drawing on and adapting the flexible cultural traditions of folklore.

Conclusion

Misery Beyond the Moorlands

The only way to find a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular.¹²⁰⁷

The mind sees, language sees, the body visits.¹²⁰⁸

Misery's March: Poverty and Piety in French Popular Culture

Although the Landes de Gascogne were a particularly extreme case, they were not the only French region that reformers described in terms of 'misery'. As Eugen Weber put it in *Peasants into Frenchmen*, much of the population of France was thought to be 'uncivilized, that is, unintegrated into, unassimilated to French civilization: poor, backward, ignorant, savage, barbarous, wild, living like beasts with their beasts'.¹²⁰⁹ I have tried to suggest some of the ways that sharecroppers, artisans, working women, and labourers in the Grande-Lande appropriated this 'misery', remaking rather than abandoning bodily cultures in response to the changes of the nineteenth century, but this raises the question of how specific this was to the situation in the Grande-Lande with all of its idiosyncrasies as a region dominated by sharecropping, with something of a tradition of strong-headed women and indifference to religion. Historians might suspect that the bodily traditions of the Grande-Lande, revolutionised as they were by the imposition of the pine, were an anomaly.

The Grande-Lande does represent a pronounced case, but the environmental and social changes they witnessed played out across the whole of France. And, across the whole of France, one way that individuals and communities reacted to these changes was by speaking their own language of 'misery'. The tale of a smith named Misery, Arnaudin himself conceded, 'n'est pas spécial à notre

1207 D. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (London, 1991), 196.

1208 M. Serres, *The Five Senses*, 306.

1209 Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 5.

Lande'.¹²¹⁰ Neither was it new. In fact, folklorists today trace the story they call 'The Smith and the Devil' (ATU 330) back as far as the myths of Sisyphus and Hephaestus and Hera. The versions that first appeared in sixteenth-century Italian and German popular literature are recognizably similar to the story Arnaudin collected, and the tale probably burst into French culture at the start of the eighteenth century.¹²¹¹ The *Histoire nouvelle et divertissante du bonhomme Misère* published by the Sieur de la Rivière in 1719 was one of the runaway hits of nineteenth-century popular print, selling millions of copies.¹²¹² According to Champfleury's *Histoire de l'imagerie populaire*, the printed story was as popular as the enduring tale of the Wandering Jew.¹²¹³ The French catalogue of oral versions confirms that the popularity of this printed story was matched by a proliferation of oral tellings of the tale. At least one hundred versions have been recorded from all over the French-speaking world.¹²¹⁴ For an earlier generation of historians this would simply have been confirmation that life had long been tough for the rural population throughout France, as it was throughout the world.¹²¹⁵ Misery was a character because material misery was so real and so similar in the lives of so many, and all of these folk-tales spoke of the same simple wish fulfilment, whereby the lowly outdo their superiors and replace their lives of toil and hunger with leisure and feasting. As Champfleury put it: Misery embodies 'en quelque sorte la vie de tout un peuple sous la figure d'un individu'.¹²¹⁶ Yet, however constant many of these aspects of the tale were across time and space, it is nonetheless the case that Misery was not everywhere and at all times the same. The ways that the tale re-appropriated very real material misery depended not only on the socio-economic situations facing different rural

1210 *OC*:V, 195–6.

1211 Uther, *The Types of International Folktales*, I, 219–221; *CPF*, I, 346–364.

1212 *Ibid.*, 364; Champfleury, *Histoire de l'imagerie populaire* (Paris, 1869), 105–6.

1213 *Ibid.*, 105.

1214 *CPF*, I, 346–364.

1215 Weber, 'Fairies and Hard Facts'; Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre*, 9–73.

1216 Champfleury, *Histoire de l'imagerie populaire*, 146.

communities, but on how communities and individuals responded culturally to these bodily challenges.

The version of the story that Arnaudin collected in the Grande-Lande was uniquely shaped to respond to the concerns of the working population there. Arnaudin recorded the story from a man who appears to all intents and purposes quite unremarkable. Noun Baleste worked at different times as a sharecropper and as a *gemmeur*, straddling the domains of pastoralism, farming, and the forest that so many men of his generation negotiated. He was born in the village of Luë in 1838, to parents who were similarly unremarkable, and were simply called 'farmers' on official documents. Noun's conscription records reveal that he was healthy and literate, and a few years later he married a nineteen-year-old servant named Marie Dumartin. He was twenty-five. After this marriage there is little else to say about Noun's undoubtedly hard life. Unlike Henri Vidal, who transcended the class he was born in, or Mariane de Mariolan, who embodied the paradoxes of land ownership and environmental change, or Catherine Gentes, whose body and choices set her apart, Noun appears ordinary, even typical. Unfortunately Noun died soon after telling Arnaudin the story of 'Misery' and one other underdog tale about a fox and a wolf.¹²¹⁷ In 1881, his family were scraping by; his widow was working as a day-labourer and his sixteen-year-old son was a carpenter. Noun and his family must have had some first-hand experience of misery, and they were not as lucky as Henri Vidal in the crucial period following the forestation of the moorlands.

This personal experience of hardship underlies Noun's tale which, at first glance, has much in common with the other versions collected in the French-speaking world. Many versions feature a smith as the hero of the tale, playing on cultural associations between blacksmiths, strength, and pride.¹²¹⁸ Many of the stories are explicitly about misery, and many reinforce a message about the importance of being charitable to the most unfortunate members of society. Almost all of the stories

1217 Both were published in Arnaudin's 1887 edition. See: *OC:I* (Bordeaux: Confluences, 1994), 43–51, 511–525. I have not found a record of his death, but it must have been between around 1879 and the 1881 census.

1218 P. Sébillot, 'Les forgerons', in *Légendes et curiosités des métiers*, new edn (Paris, 2000), 1–2.

pitch the hero against either the Devil or Death, and a few even feature the same punchline: 'Ever since then, Misery has been among us'. Most of the tales deal with a peasant morality, where piety is less important than charity, and cheeky heroes can quite literally get away with murder as long as their heart is in the right place.¹²¹⁹ The smith is a sympathetic, and normally triumphant hero, the champion of the underdog.¹²²⁰ As Saint Peter puts it in one version: 'Ces garnements sont toujours plus fins que nous'.¹²²¹ But Noun's tale is not entirely typical of the other French versions. It is considerably longer and more complex than many other variants, and almost as complicated as the popular print versions which stemmed from the *Histoire nouvelle et divertissante du bonhomme Misère*. Cynics might suggest that Noun had read a printed version, and based his oral telling on his recollections of this written source, and that for this reason his tale has little to tell historians about the popular culture of the Grande-Lande.¹²²² In fact, it hardly matters very much where Noun got the tale, since it is what he did with it as a storyteller that provides evidence for the ongoing cultural adaptations of bodily traditions in the region. The fact that it may have come, however indirectly, from a printed source is simply an example where folk culture has adopted and embraced materials from mass culture, which is not always the case.¹²²³ And folklorists might even argue that it was mass culture which tapped into oral traditions, rather than the other way around. The diversity of different oral versions lead Marie-Louise Tenèze and Paul Delarue to speculate that there is no reason, beyond

1219 For a hero who gets away with murder, see: H. Carnoy, *Littérature orale de la Picardie*, 139–46.

1220 Sébillot, 'Les forgerons', 11.

1221 J. Cénac-Moncaut, *Contes populaires de la Gascogne* (Paris, 1861), 57–69, 69.

1222 There are well-documented cases of oral narrators getting stories from printed collections, such as: B. Almqvist, 'The Mysterious Mícheál Ó Gaoithín, Boccaccio and the Blasket Tradition. Reflections Occasioned by James Stewart's Boccaccio in the Blaskets', *Béaloides*, 58 (1 January 1990), 75–140.

1223 T. Cheesman is one of the few writers to have studied which items make the jump from mass to folk culture, and to speculate about why. Many moralising stories or songs published for the edification of the popular classes proved unappealing, while others were divested of their bourgeois morality and incorporated into traditions whose morals were far more ambiguous. See: *The Shocking Ballad Picture Show*.

the recurring problem of evidence, to suppose that the printed version came first.¹²²⁴ Wherever Misery was born, by the nineteenth century it was already clear to men such as Champfleury that Misery was adapted to local conditions. Breton songs based on the story had a much harsher tone, for instance, than the tale did in the more prosperous regions of Normandy.¹²²⁵ Some versions of the tale showed no particular concern with poverty at all. Henri Carnoy, for instance, collected three versions from the fairly affluent region of Picardy which made no particularly mention of starving or desperation.¹²²⁶ Nor do all of the stories actually feature a blacksmith. Many have soldier-heroes instead, such as la Ramée, 'the archetypal soldier'. One even follows the exploits of a miller.¹²²⁷ These were more than just minor details. The attitudes to religion, prosperity, and family life in Noun's tale set it slightly apart from the many versions collected elsewhere in France, and connect it to the cultural and bodily concerns of the Grande-Lande which this thesis has examined. Religion is an obvious example, forming a backdrop to the concerns underpinning many of the oral tellings of this tale, but not the one from the Grande-Lande. In at least thirty-seven of the other versions, another character, normally Saint Peter, advises the hero to use his three wishes to ask for a place in Heaven. The hero of a tale collected by Léon Pineau is perhaps more outspoken than most, but his sentiment is common to many of the stories: 'Ah! je me fous autant du Paradis que du Parasol!'¹²²⁸ As the title of another version makes clear, the idea that the hero refuses Heaven is central to what the story meant to many of the people who told and listened to it.¹²²⁹ In almost all of these stories, despite refusing Heaven, the hero later tricks his way in. This is not a plot device found in the printed

1224 CPF, I, 364.

1225 Champfleury, *Histoire de l'imagerie populaire*, 175.

1226 H. Carnoy, *Contes français* (Paris, 1885), 163–6; Carnoy, *Littérature orale de la Picardie.*, 67–78, 139–46.

1227 D. Hopkin, 'La Ramée, the Archetypal Soldier, as an Indicator of Popular Attitudes to the Army in Nineteenth-Century France', *French History*, 14, no. 2 (2000), 115–49; P. Sébillot, 'Contes résumés de la Haute-Bretagne', *RTP IX* (1894), 269–70.

1228 L. Pineau, *Les contes populaires du Poitou* (Paris, 1891), 145–151, 146.

1229 J. Christillin, 'Histoire d'un homme qui n'a pas voulu le Paradis', *La Tradition XVIII* (1904), 37–38.

versions, where both the refusal and the eventual triumph are completely absent. The issue, from the point of view of the moral economy of the rural population, is about a tension between material wealth and spiritual salvation. What the stories seem to say is that it does not matter if peasant heroes wish for magical gifts that provide food and money instead of wishing for their spiritual salvation. Narrators championed cunning or a religious morality emphasizing charity and good deeds rather than strict piety. Either option meant the hero could have his cake, and his place in Heaven. Fifty-eight of the versions recorded in the French catalogue end with the hero triumphant in Heaven, compared to just twenty-seven that make it more or less clear that Misery remains on earth. But Noun's version is uninterested in this dilemma between wealth and salvation. This cannot be through disinterest in material well-being, since the tale is explicitly about misery. Instead, in a move typical of what Chapter Nine found in the singing tradition and the life of Catherine Gentes, the religious charge has been left out of the dilemma in Noun's version.

What Noun's version puts in place of this religious conflict is also typical of what the thesis has revealed about the popular culture of the Grande-Lande at the time. Instead of Saint Peter counselling the blacksmith to wish for Heaven instead of riches, Noun's tale sees the hero's wife repeatedly advise him to wish for wealth. He ignores this advice, preferring to opt for magical gifts. This tension between the wife and the husband reflects the growing problems concerning marriage and sexuality that Chapter Eight explored. It is completely unique to Noun's version, and suggests that an ecotype may have been developing of ATU 330, as local storytellers adapted the tale to better fit their own understandings of misery.¹²³⁰ In a region where religion does not seem to have been extremely important, but everyday survival, class conflict, and tensions between husbands and wives were more pronounced than in other parts of France, 'Misery' adapts to these local meanings. The most similar version in the French tale catalogue is the only other one collected in the Landes, a tale published by the abbé Léopold Dardy in his *Anthologie populaire de l'Albret*. In this variant, Misery

1230 On ecotypes, see: C. von Sydow, *Selected Papers*; CPF, II, xix, 548; D. Hopkin, 'The Ecotype'.

is an old man, so there is no mention of any tension with his wife. Yet the absence of religious message is similarly striking. As in Noun's story, there is no spiritual salvation at the end, which instead pronounces darkly: 'tant qu'il y aura monde, il y aura Misère'.¹²³¹ Another similar version comes from the nearby Gers. In this tale, collected by Jean-François Bladé, the hero is hard-working and poor, there is no mention of heaven, and once again he ends up on earth.¹²³² This particularly secular and grim Misery was at home in southwestern France.

Other, more pious regions told a different story. In Brittany or the Massif Central talking of misery was impossible without also talking of charity, and faith.¹²³³ For a narrator like the beggar Nanette Lévesque (1803-1881), who was born in the strongly Catholic area near the source of the Loire, for instance, the tale takes place in a world suffused with the actions of Jesus and the Apostles.¹²³⁴ The version told by the cobbler Jean Le Person to the Breton folklorist François-Marie Luzel is even more focused on religious questions. For the hero of this tale, Saint Peter's offer of Heaven or wealth is nonsense, since no one can go to heaven if they have not earned it anyway.¹²³⁵ It would be possible to refine this geography of misery, and even to push it further, across cultural and political borders. ATU 330 'The Blacksmith and the Devil' is a story that has been recorded in Palestine, the Caucasians, and several parts of North America, as well as Europe.¹²³⁶ But there is a compelling reason to keep our attention on France for the moment, however arbitrary histories of the nation state have come to appear in recent years: the French-speaking lands are not a neutral territory in this story of the dissemination of popular culture. As several writers have pointed out, they are an especially interesting example because they are the cross-roads of Celtic, Germanic, and Romance

1231 L. Dardy, *Anthologie populaire de l'Albret, sud-ouest de l'Agenais ou Gascogne landaise* (Agen, 1891), 91.

1232 Bladé, *Contes populaires de la Gascogne*, 314–7.

1233 Hopkin, *Voices of the People*, 210–252.

1234 Tenèze and Delarue (eds), *Nannette Lévesque*, 223–8; Pooley, 'Independent Women and Independent Body Parts', 190.

1235 F.-M. Luzel, *Légendes chrétiennes de la Basse-Bretagne* (Paris, 1881), 311–333.

1236 *CPF*, I, 362.

traditions.¹²³⁷ These cultural connections across political and geographical borders deserve further study, not least since they call into question many of the cartographies of the empires which supposedly dominated the history of the body in this period.¹²³⁸ The history of the body from below does not have to follow the contours of modern states.

This history is nonetheless a 'modern' one, not simply because the context of Arnaudin's folklore collecting and the lives of his informants were bound up with new forms of labour, new relations between men and women, new politics, and new ways to intervene in the environment. The novelty, I have tried to show, was also in the traditions themselves, as singers incorporated republican verses into their songs, or narrators framed legends in terms of a revolved past. Sometimes the novelty was more subtle, as motifs that had long existed in the singing tradition took on growing prominence, or animal tales that had been used to negotiate domination were used to question it. Misery itself, as Champfleury recognised in the nineteenth century, had taken on new political and social resonances in an era of revolutions, social protests, and working-class activism.¹²³⁹ In one version of ATU 330 collected by Eugène Vivier in Brittany, the Devil threatens to send the hero to a pseudo-industrial ring of Hell: 'four 4136... chaudière 547'.¹²⁴⁰ Another version, collected by Henri Carnoy, made no mention of the religious characters, such as Jesus or the Apostles. Instead the hero of the tale was a deserter and his adversary a gendarme.¹²⁴¹ The story was about a modern social problem, conscription in the nineteenth century.¹²⁴²

Beyond Modernisation: the History of the Body from Below

The first step for historians of the body was to recognise that flesh itself had a history, which

1237 J. Swahn, *The Tale of Cupid and Psyche*, 427; *CPF*, I, xvii.

1238 M. Sappol and S. Rice (eds), *A Cultural History of the Human Body in the Age of Empire*, 2nd edn (London, 2014).

1239 Champfleury, *Histoire de l'imagerie populaire*, 177.

1240 E. Vivier, 'Petites légendes chrétiennes', *RTP XXXI*, (1916), 276.

1241 Carnoy, *Contes français*, 297–301.

1242 See: Hopkin, *Soldier and Peasant*.

saw not just changing representations of a biological constant, but also changing material bodies, changing experiences, and changing uses. The challenges that face historians now are different, but all involve, in one way or another, escaping a teleology of modernisation that sees popular bodies succumbing to reform from above. This is firstly a question of shifting focus. Having established that bodies have changed dramatically even in the recent past, historians now have to diversify the kinds of people whose bodies they historicise, turning their attention from elites and the apparent revolutions of high culture to humbler lives and less obvious transformations. This thesis has tried to do this by turning to cultural forms that grew more or less organically from below, traditions of speaking, singing, and telling stories. And this is not simply a question of social representativity. It is also a question of the kinds of culture that were in an ongoing dialogue with the quotidian uses and feelings of bodies, rather than the kinds of radically new culture apparent in medical or literary sources which had little connection to how most people lived their bodies. So alien are these often submerged currents of feeling and expression, that when nineteenth-century reformers or twenty-first century readers are confronted with realistic narratives about problems of identity, community, and skin discussed in Chapter Six, they find them incredible. But such narratives were anchored in different ways of experiencing the very shape of the body, that saw ordinary people focus attention on parts of the body that might surprise us, as Chapter Four argued.

The next challenge is how to conceive of this very different popular body, given its apparent multiplicity. What do the stories about exploitation in Chapter Seven have to do with the attitudes to making love in Chapter Eight? One point that emerges repeatedly is that, no matter how different the kinds of bodies these different genres explore, these different domains cannot help but interfere with one another, much like the 'distributed', co-existing bodies that Anne-Marie Mol found 'hang together' in medical practices.¹²⁴³ The changes in the environment explored in Chapter Five had indirect consequences for the feelings of identity and community that Chapter Six discusses, not to

1243 A. Mol, *The Body Multiple*.

mention the class relations Chapter Seven focuses on. In turn, these changes to group identities and working relationships put a squeeze on the sexual relationships explored in Chapter Eight. But Chapter Nine deals with perhaps the most acute example of these interferences, investigating how Catherine Gentes' songs were in a mutually constitutive relationship with her body, marked by disability and her occupation. She sang, in one sense, to hold herself together in the face of the competing demands of a society where the role of religion, sexuality, education, and bodies were all in flux. She did not give up her body.

These multiple, humble, messy bodies raise obvious problems for the paradigm that, whatever its shortcomings, retains its status as the foundation for studying the rural world: modernisation. If the battle over the very flesh of the population was a very real one, based around attempts from above to impose new forms of hygiene, nutrition, and bodily comportment, it was also one of almost complete mutual incomprehension. The enemy that the reformers imagined, whether they used an abstract name, such as 'routine', or a concrete image, such as the superstitious, brutish peasant, did not really exist. 'Routine' was simply a derogatory word for popular traditions which may have been conservative, but were never unchanging, and the 'peasants' were as diverse as they were numerous. As the thesis has tried to show, some of these rural people resented their lives, and some tried to change them. As Chapters Three and Five demonstrated, the same people who were involved in processes of change such as the reform of the landscape also found it meaningful to draw on traditional cultures: modernisation did not destroy tradition. This idea of a traditional body swept away by the social changes of the nineteenth century is typical of 'modern' thinking itself, which stresses 'schisms and revolutions'.¹²⁴⁴ As Bruno Latour puts it: 'Les historiens reconstituent le passé détail après détail avec d'autant plus de soin qu'il s'est englouti à jamais'.¹²⁴⁵ Popular tradition itself is not unchanging, it simply values continuities and conservatism more than the utopian visions of the

1244 M. Serres and B. Latour, *Conversations on Science, Culture, and Time* (Ann Arbor, 1995), 138.

1245 B. Latour, *Nous n'avons jamais été modernes*, 2nd edn (Paris, 1997), 93.

reformers. But this does not simply mean that what folklore sources offer historians is a kind of vernacular modernity, a watered-down version of nineteenth-century political, medical, and print cultural concerns. Instead of the sense of progress, the oral traditions Arnaudin collected dealt in crises that call into question the neat teleology of the body. These crises invite archaicisms, such as the werewolves discussed in Chapter Six, and they reveal a popular history of the body moving in the opposite direction to what historians have assumed, as with the case of sexuality discussed in Chapter Eight. When it comes to the history of the body, time sometimes 'folds or twists'.¹²⁴⁶

Many of the people whose stories and songs make the most compelling evidence for these arguments were atypical. Rare were social climbers, such as Henri Vidal, matriarchs like Mariane de Mariolan, or spinsters in the mold of Catherine Gentes. The uniqueness of their voices is, in a sense, what makes them interesting, allowing historians insight into the ordinary through the extraordinary. Yet their lives and their cultural traditions make a methodological point about how individuals adapt popular culture to their own uses which applies as much to the unremarkable Noun and all of the men and women whose lives stand out as little as his does. Ordinary these lives may have been, but they are important to historians not simply for reasons of inclusiveness. The choices of this rural majority were coming to be more and more important in new ways, with the growth of radical workers' movements, the extension of the vote, and the increasing importance of the nation as an assemblage of citizens who were meant to fight for, identify with, and even breed for France. As Chapter Eight mentioned, ordinary people were not ignorant of the role that their sexual choices played in the fate of the very nation. More than ever before, how these people chose to live their bodies was the subject of intense concern among politicians and doctors, yet so little has been written by historians about the relationship between these concerns and the bodily cultures of ordinary people.¹²⁴⁷ The history of the

¹²⁴⁶ Ibid., 58.

¹²⁴⁷ P. Gilbert, for instance, only discusses attempts to stamp out 'popular beliefs' rather than the beliefs themselves, and how they might have been changing. See: 'Popular Beliefs and the Body: "A Nation of Good Animals"', in M. Sappol and S. Rice (eds), *A Cultural History of the Human Body in the Age of Empire*, 2nd edn (London, 2014),

body from below that this thesis has proposed produces a very different vision of the nineteenth century, with little mention of topics such as sport and medicine which have been at the centre of the historiography. But, like the different bodies that interfere with one another in different genres, this different side of the period has connections to what historians already know. There is much more that could be investigated concerning environmental change and local legends, or tales and social class. The thesis has hardly touched upon what the persistence of witchcraft beliefs might have to say about the history of medicine, nor what the life of Pierre Larrouy, who served in the army in Algeria as a nurse and sung traditional songs for Arnaudin, might have to contribute to the history of the body in an 'age of empire'.¹²⁴⁸

Whatever else such a short research project focused on one corner of rural France and the ethnographic work of one odd man can achieve, it can draw attention to the absence of rural bodies from the current historiography. As the philosopher Drew Leder has pointed out, our bodies by their nature tend to recede from our consciousness.¹²⁴⁹ But absence of rural bodily experiences from the historiography does not just stem from this phenomenological disappearance. Absence itself has to be historicised. People in different cultures pay more or less attention to legs or stomachs, sexuality or work, and there is no better discipline to help historians study these lacks and absences than folklore, a field of study whose invention was based around a disappearing object: men like Arnaudin did not recognise folk cultures until they believed they were doomed. Arnaudin's great unpublished work on the traditions of the Grande-Lande was, like all works of historiography in Michel de Certeau's view, written on the condition that the bodies of the men and women that 'nourished' his enterprise remained silent.¹²⁵⁰ Investigating how the lives of these people relates to the traditions they lived can, however, go some way to uncovering these silences, and even giving voice once again to a dynamic

125–48.

1248 Sappol and Rice, *A Cultural History of the Human Body in the Age of Empire*.

1249 Leder, *The Absent Body*.

1250 M. de Certeau, *The Writing of History* (New York, 1988), 2–3.

and shifting popular culture of the body. This was a culture that struggled, as in Noun's tale, with misery, as many rural cultures do, but it was also a local and historical form of misery that grew out of the social and environmental challenges of the nineteenth century. This traditional body was not destroyed overnight by modernisation, in one step towards the individualised, sealed body of modernity. Perhaps it is still with us today.

Appendix I: Index of Arnaudin Informants Mentioned in the Thesis

- Arnaudin, Barthélémy** (1816-93). Félix's father was described at various points in his life as a cobbler, an inn-keeper, and a 'concessionnaire des Forges de Pontenx en gare de Labouheyre'. In the crucial period of 1853-9, when the communal moorlands were put up for auction, he was the mayor of Labouheyre. According to Félix, his father did his best to protect the interests of the pastoralists by lobbying to maintain key moorlands as passages that sheep could be led along, but his efforts were fruitless in the face of the greed of the rest of the *moussuralhe*. His son recorded at least twelve songs of his songs, and he was also an important informant concerning the 'old Landes', especially hunting. (pp.37-8, 56, 102)
- Baladès, Claire, known as Biroune, femme Fronsac** (1827-1913). Biroune got her nickname from her husband, the miller **Pierre Fronsac**. She sang a few songs for Arnaudin, but not as many as her sister **Marie Baladès, known as Marichon, femme Dauba**. (p.71)
- Baladès, Marie, known as Marichoun, femme Dauba** (1821-1895). Marichoun was a sharecropper, married to a shepherd named Pierre Dauba. She told Arnaudin one tale, and sang him at least eighty-four versions of different songs in his manuscripts. When he first knew her, she lived in the village of Labouheyre, but Arnaudin was careful to omit from the 1912 edition of the *Chants populaires* the fact that she had moved to the agriculturally and socially innovative Imperial domain of Solférino before she died. Diligent farmers who took leases there were awarded the land they toiled after a set period of years. Arnaudin abhorred the project. (p.84)
- Baleste, Étienne, known as Noun** (b.1838). Noun was a *gemmeur*, born in the village of Luë. According to Arnaudin, he was living in Labouheyre by 1879, along with his wife Marie Dumartin. Noun was literate, and physically fit enough to be conscripted in 1858, but by 1881, his wife was widowed. Two stories he told Arnaudin appeared in the 1887 edition of the *Contes*: a fox tale and the story of Misery. (pp.3-4, 257-67)
- Barrière, Jeanne, known as Cérise, femme Roumégoux** (b.1875). Cérise was a late discovery (c.1910) and only provided one song for Arnaudin's notes ' d[an]s le champ, faute de temps'.¹²⁵¹ Her nickname came from the fact that her mother craved cherries when she was pregnant with Jeanne. (p.70)
- Barthélémy, Jean** (1840-1922). Jean was a veteran and *gemmeur* who corresponded with Arnaudin by letter from the villages of Mimizan and Biscarrosse, on the coast. He told Arnaudin one story and sang around nine different songs, as well as providing information about other local singers. He married a servant named Catherine Barrière in 1867. (pp. 49 (footnote), 62 (footnote))
- Bertrande, Catherine** (b.1860). Catherine was a servant, who sang at least six songs for Arnaudin. She was probably the cousin of another Arnaudin informant, Jeanne Bertrande, known as Dorine (b.1868), also a servant. Catherine may have had an illegitimate son in Luë in 1893, and was probably still working as a maid in a hotel in Labouheyre in 1921. (pp.240-1)

1251 NFA, 2 MI 29/19, f.448.

- Bidalas, Antoine (Auguste)** (1800-1880). Bidalas was the son of a Béarnais veterinarian-cum-doctor. Arnaudin's interest in him came from the rumour, which Arnaudin believed was unfounded, that Antoine was the author of 'Long Live the Women of Sabres'. Like **Pierre Larrouy, known as l'Afrique**, it seems Bidalas was a singer of some local fame, who wrote songs which then entered the oral tradition. (p.85)
- Castaignède, Jean, known as lou Clerjé** (1833-1892). Lou Clerjé was a sharecropper and one of Arnaudin's most important male singers, providing fifteen different songs to the folklorist. His marriage to Marie Dubos in 1855 in Commensacq makes him the brother-in-law of another Arnaudin informant, the goat-herd Raymond Bibes (b.1830). His nickname – 'the priest' – is slightly opaque, although several other Arnaudin informants had religious nicknames, such as 'the Pardon' or 'the Prior'. Given the general local indifference, or even hostility to religion that I have suggested in Chapter Nine these nicknames could be considered examples of the irony typical to rural nicknaming practices.¹²⁵² (p.238)
- Cazade, Jean** (b.1850). Jean was a sometime 'garde cantonnier', soldier (a veteran of 1870), gemmeur, and sharecropper, who lived in the *quartier* of Monge where Arnaudin lived his whole life. He married Jeanne (Marie) Lafaurie, and their family seem to have worked for Arnaudin, leading to some tension between the men. Arnaudin complained, for instance: 'Quand fumier de reste, en a vendu la ½ Quand manque, moi payer'.¹²⁵³ Cazade was a very important linguistic informant for Arnaudin, and he also appears frequently in his proverb notes, as well as occasionally in the song manuscripts. Arnaudin considered collecting stories from his wife. (pp.56, 101)
- Colin, Michel** (1836-1906). Colin, as Arnaudin called him, was a central node of the folklorist's fieldwork. His marriage to Marie Raynaud in 1858 made him the son-in-law of the singer Pétronille Marsan, known as Filhoun, veuve Raynaud (1816-1898) and brother-in-law of the singer and narrator Catherine Raynaud, femme Barbé (b.1844), whose son and daughter-in-law also became Arnaudin informants. Colin himself was one of Arnaudin's most varied informants, telling him a range of jokes and legends, as well as singing songs. As a carpenter, Colin was uniquely positioned to explain technical terms relating to woodwork and vernacular architecture to Arnaudin, and as his neighbour, he was readily available. This proximity and expertise is reflected in his importance in Arnaudin's dictionary notes. (pp.102, 125, 215)
- Couloudou, Marie, femme Chambres** (b.1854). Marie was a day-labourer, but she could read and write. She was not a very important Arnaudin informant, singing just one song for his collection. Her son Raymond Chambres (b.1880) also sang for Arnaudin. (p.123)
- Courréguelongue, Marie, femme Cardoit** (b.1860). Marie was an important singer for the Arnaudin collection, often singing with another woman from the village of Captieux in the Gironde where she lived, named Marie Gleyze (b.1860). Aged just sixteen, Marie Courréguelongue married Jean Cardoit. In 1906, Arnaudin travelled to Captieux to photograph her with her family. (pp.225-6)
- Darlanne, Marie** (1856-1911). Marie was not only one of Arnaudin's most important folklore informants, singing songs, telling stories, and providing vocabulary and proverbs, she was also

1252 See Zonabend, 'Pourquoi nommer?', 270.

1253 NFA, 2 MI 29/18, f.64

his family maid, and, for much of her life, his lover. Their separation and eventual reconciliation in the 1870s was the subject of much angst in Arnaudin's diary, and Marie herself apparently tried to kill herself.¹²⁵⁴ By the 1890s, however, she all but disappears from the diary. Arnaudin made no mention of her death in 1911, although his letters suggest he was deeply affected by it. As the Arnaudin family maid, her domestic responsibilities included some garden work, cooking, sewing, and cleaning, but she had help for washing.¹²⁵⁵ Although it is easy to assume she was separated from the folklorist by a social divide, her family background suggests she was of a similar status. Her father was a blacksmith and her sister Marie Darlante, known as Jennie, femme Barsac (b.1863) was a midwife. Her parents probably intended for her to marry after working for a few years as a servant, but the affair with Arnaudin would have disrupted these plans. (pp. 43-4, 57, 60, 79, 102 (and footnote), 241, 296 (portrait))

Daugé, Jeanne, known as Maria, femme Monicien (b.1874). Maria sang at least one song for Arnaudin, but appears more often in his dialect and proverb notes. Rather than a talented singer or storyteller, she came on to Arnaudin's radar because, along with her husband **Jean Monicien** (b.1866), she rented a property from Arnaudin at the start of the twentieth century. It was their son Fernand, interviewed by François Lalanne, who pointed out that Arnaudin's nickname among the villagers of Labouheyre was 'lou Péc', the village idiot. (p.102)

Daugey, Marie, veuve Cassagne (1819-1905). Marie was one of Arnaudin's most prolific singers. Aged twenty-two, she married a *gemmeur* named Michel (or sometimes Bertrand), with whom she had several children, including Marie, known as Céline, femme Herran (b.1852) and Bertrande, known as Ninote, femme Boyer (b.1849), who both sang for Arnaudin. (p.154)

Daurys, Jean, known as lou Bourit (1813-1882). The shepherd 'lou Bourit' appears regularly in Arnaudin's diary. He told the folklorist three stories, and Arnaudin also collected material from his mother **Marie Duvic, femme Daurys** (b.1799) and his son-in-law Jean Dumartin (b.1846). His nickname literally means 'the boiled'. (pp. 79 (footnote), 151)

Destizons, Marie, known as Claudine, femme Ransinangue (1848-1919). Claudine sang fourteen songs for Arnaudin. She married a *gemmeur* named Pierre Ransinsangue in 1866, and they went on to have several children together, including Jeanne Rancinan (b.1877), who also sang for Arnaudin, and Pierre Victor Ransinangue (b.1875) who died in the fighting of the final months of World War One. (p.86)

Destruhaut, Jean, known as lou Mén (b.1833). Unlike some of Arnaudin's other shepherd-informants, the folklorist did not know 'lou Mén' very well. It was, rather, his reputation as a storyteller that drew Arnaudin to him. In 1879, the folklorist recorded nine stories from him, as he stood watch over his flock on the moor of Escoursolle. Although Arnaudin noted that 'lou Mén' was also a piper, it is hard to know which songs are his in the manuscripts, since Arnaudin collected songs from another 'Jean Destruhaut' as well. Both were from the region around Vert and Garein whose inhabitants were known as 'lous Méns'. (pp.55 (footnote), 201)

Deyzieux, Marie, known as Valérie, femme Mano (b.1854). Valérie married a carpenter named

1254 For the poisoning attempt, see NFA, 2 MI 29/18, ff.24-5.

1255 NFA, 2 MI 29/13, f.104. This list of responsibilities was drawn up by Arnaudin in 1911 when he was looking to replace her after her death.

Bernard Mano in 1873 in the village of Belin where they both lived, in the Gironde. She sang three songs for Arnaudin. (p.222)

Dubos, Marguerite, known as Maguide, femme Doussans (b.1839). Arnaudin never collected any songs from Maguide, because he was too worried about entering the tavern she ran. (p.59)

Dubos, Rose, known as Marie, femme Dupouy (1889-1983). Marie sang a few songs for Arnaudin. Owing to a change in recording practices, a clerk wrote her date of death onto her original birth record, which is the only reason it was possible to find out she lived so long into the twentieth century. Marie came from a dynasty of singers: her mother, Jeanne Gentes, femme Dubos, known as Jênî (b.1857) and her grandmother Jeanne Lemoine, femme Gentes (b.1838), both sang songs for Arnaudin. She married in 1907, but was widowed by 1921. (p.73)

Dubourg, Anne, known as la Dubourque, veuve Lantrès (b.1841). 'La Dubourque' was both a singer and a storyteller for Arnaudin. She lived in Belin, in the Gironde, where she married a *gemmeur* named Étienne Lantrès in 1858. (p.222)

Ducout, Marie, known as Caroline, femme Dulucq (b.1839). Caroline married a *gemmeur* named François Dulucq in 1848 in Mimizan. By 1859, they were living in Labouheyre. She sang several songs for Arnaudin, and her daughter Françoise Dulucq, known as Zélie, femme Bonan (b.1863) was an even more important informant. (p.84)

Dulucq, Marie (sometimes Marguerite), femme Denis (b.1869). Marie was something between a singer and a proxy-collector for Arnaudin, who promised to name her in the 1912 edition of the *Chants populaires* if she would send the songs her mother, Catherine Brun, femme Dulucq (b.1840) knew. Marie Dulucq declined. She was a seamstress, as was her mother, and her father was a tailor. (pp.70, 252)

Dumartin, Fillon. Nothing is known about this woman, although this may be a nickname for **Louise Dumartin**. (p.84)

Dumartin, Marie, known as Louise, femme Dupart (1841-1888). Louise was a prolific singer, but little else is known about her life. She married a farmer named Jean Dupart in 1858. Although she herself could not sign at her marriage, their son Bertrand went on to become a local teacher. (p.239)

Dupart, Jeanne, known as Marianne Hailloune, veuve Tartas (1824-1886). Marianne was the illegitimate daughter of Jeanne Dupart. She married a farmer named Pierre Tartas in 1843. Although she sang at least one song for Arnaudin, her real importance was as a storyteller. She provided at least three before she died in 1886. 'Hailloune' may be the name of a *quartier*. (p.148)

Dupiau, Marie, known as Tchignoye dou Cla, veuve Saintourens (b.1827). Tchignoye was a very important singer for Arnaudin's collection, but little is known about her life. She married a widower sharecropper named Pierre Saintourens in 1857, but there are few other details to flesh out her life. According to a man named 'Rolland' she was dead when Arnaudin was trying to do his list of singers for the 1912 edition of the *Chants populaires*. (p.218)

Dupin-Brigailles, Marguerite, known as Justine, or Catherine, femme Bouniord (1829-1905). Justine was one of Arnaudin's most important singers, but she was also slightly unusual. Unlike

most of his singers, she came from a family of small-holders, rather than sharecroppers. Her daughter Marie Bouniord, known as Vincine, femme Lasserre (1847-1919) was also an important singer for Arnaudin's collection. (pp.223-5)

Dupuch, Antoine (b.1808). Antoine was one of Arnaudin's most important male singers. According to the folklorist, he used to be an ox-driver or ploughman.¹²⁵⁶ He was excused from military service in 1828 and married Marie Paris in 1834. (p.102)

Durrous, Jeanne. Little is known about this women, who provided Arnaudin with just one song, although it is likely she was related to the army veteran and singer Jean Durrous (b.1847) and his wife Marie Gibert, known as Amélie (b. 1851) who lived in the same *quartier*. (p.84)

Duvic, Marie, known as 'le Menoutche', femme Daurys (b.1799). Although Marie only contributed one short anecdote to Arnaudin's notes, she has the distinction of being his oldest informant. She was the mother of **Jean Daurys, known as 'lou Bourit'** (1813-1882). (p.73)

Duvignac, Marie, known as le Samioune (1834-1909). Along with **Babé Plantié** (1826-1912) **Catherine Gentes** (1848-1906), and **Marichoun Baladès** (1821-1895), le Samioune was one of Arnaudin's most important singers. Her sister also sang one song for Arnaudin. It is unclear if 'le Samioune' herself ever married, and little else is known about her life. Another informant pointed out to Arnaudin that she was rather long-winded.¹²⁵⁷ Perhaps this is related to her large singing repertoire. (p.239)

Fronsac, Pierre, known as Biroun (b.1823). No record survives of the songs Biroun sang for Arnaudin and he only appears as an informant for a few legends. Arnaudin called him a 'former shepherd' but official documents suggest he was a miller. He was married to **Claire Baladès** (1827-1913) and died at some point between 1907 and 1913, although I have not found the record. (For an explanation of how he got his nickname, see p.71)

Garbay, Antoine, known as lou Pitchoun (1836-1911). Antoine was known as 'lou Pitchoun' in reference to his part-time occupation as a tinker, but according to Arnaudin he spent most of his life as a shepherd. He married Marie Grué in 1862. By the time Arnaudin was pulling together the information to publish the 1912 edition of the *Chants populaires* a man called 'Auguste' told him that 'lou Pitchoun' was begging for a living. He died a pauper in the hospice in Sore in 1911. (p.202)

Garbay, Jeanne, known as Jéni, veuve Cassagne (1850-1910). Jéni sang twenty-five songs for Arnaudin and told a story about dancing as well, which was not included in the *OC*. She apparently had an informal vocation as a singer at baptisms in the village of Trensacq where she lived. She moved there when she married aged fifteen, and told Arnaudin she learned all of her songs after moving to Trensacq.¹²⁵⁸ (p.85)

Garbay, Jeanne, known as Nête de Penalh, femme Garbay (b.1859). Nête came from a dynasty of singers. Her mother, Marie Forens (1832-1910) was an important informant for Arnaudin, and

1256 The term *oué* lends itself to confusion.

1257 *OC*:VII, 51.

1258 NFA, 2 MI 29/1 f.41.

he also collected songs from her sister, Catherine Garbay, known as le Crique, femme Décis (b.1856), and her two daughters Lucine and Mathilde (b.1884). When Arnaudin asked if he could refer to her in the 1912 edition of the *Chants populaires* as 'Néte de Penalh', she 'agreed willingly: "Yes, yes put it in. That's what everyone calls me.'" But Arnaudin had his doubts about including her at all, worrying that when it came to traditional songs she 'altère tout à plaisir'.¹²⁵⁹ (pp.225, 227-8)

Gellibert, Jean, known as Jouanés, Antoine, or Pouton (b.1853). Jean was one of the many local men and women who sang a version of the *chanson des communes* for Arnaudin, a kind of roll call of local village identities. He married a woman named Marie Dailleau in 1879, having recently returned from the army.¹²⁶⁰ (p.75)

Gellibert, Jeanne, femme Maurin (b.1864). Although Jeanne herself was not a very important informant for the Arnaudin collection, she was married to the shepherd-singer-storyteller Jean Maurin (1858-1916) and was the daughter of the singer Catherine Loubère, known as Catinoun, veuve Gellibert (1841-1917). (p.225)

Gentes, Catherine (1848-1906). Catherine's life as an unmarried seamstress sets her apart slightly from many of Arnaudin's other singers. Chapter Nine explores the themes of occupational identity, physical disability, and indifference to sexuality which make Catherine something of an anomaly, but it is worth emphasising that her status as a seamstress enmeshed her in local traditional culture, as she learned songs from other cloth-workers and participated in singing with other family members such as her niece, Juliette Gentes (b.1886). Like **Babé Plantié** (1826-1912), Catherine played a role helping Arnaudin to check and verify songs he had already collected. (pp.86, 231-55)

Glize, Marie, known as Marinette (1849-1916). Marinette was not a particularly important informant, but the frustration Arnaudin expressed with her is one of the few cases where the tensions between the folklorist and his informants were explicit. He wrote: 'Supprimer: avait une 1re fois refusé de venir – venue le 18 juill. 07, à 3 h quand je lui avais fait savoir, d'avance, de venir à 1h, que je repartais à 4h = Pas sa faute, *mandée* pr rendre une journée de battage, mais a beaucoup oublié, ne savait rien de ce qui avait motivé mon voyage'.¹²⁶¹ (pp.57-8)

Goujon, Catherine, veuve Lorty (1829-1913). Catherine was a seamstress, an example of a singer he met through the network of tailors and seamstresses. She married a servant named Étienne Lorty in 1845. She only sang one song for Arnaudin. He wrote next to her name: 'Ne m'a presque rien donné, mais garder à cause de Bougés', which was the name of the *quartier* where she lived in Sanguinet.¹²⁶² Her presence in Arnaudin's list of singers is a good example of his fetish for names and places, which perhaps held more appeal for him than the characters of his 'collaborateurs rustiques'. She does not seem to have been closely related to **Marie Lortie** (b.1859). (p.253)

1259 NFA, 2 MI 29/1, f.44.

1260 ADL, R P/307, 'Conseil de révision'.

1261 NFA, 2 MI 29/1, f.42.

1262 NFA, 2 MI 29/1, f.34.

Joie, Anne, femme Garbay (b.1843). Anne Joué (as Arnaudin called her) was an important informant for his song collection, but as with some of his other most important informants, such as **Babé Plantié** (1826-1912) or the employees **Henri Vidal** (1850-1919), **Jean Laguë** (1881-1971), and **Jules Sart** (b.1853), Arnaudin had his reservations about Anne, who had lived a slightly unconventional life. She worked for many years as a day-labourer, and married another day labourer, Grégoire Garbay in 1893, when she was forty-nine and he was fifty-two. By 1907 she was working for a grocer in Geloux. Arnaudin was concerned she would not keep quiet, writing '=loquax, le dira à tout le monde" or "le dira partout'.¹²⁶³ Some of her songs came via **Jean Pabon's** (1838-1912) son. (pp.60, 225 (footnote))

Labadie. Arnaudin never collected any songs from this sawyer and former soldier from Pontenx, writing that Clavé had called him 'abruti'.¹²⁶⁴ (p.69)

Labadie, Marie, known as Justine, femme Lahari (b.1882). None of Justine's songs survive in Arnaudin's manuscripts. He wrote that she 'ne m'a rien donné de mes [chansons] demandées'.¹²⁶⁵ (pp.69-70)

Labeau, Denis (b.1853). This singing postman took some tracking down in the archives. Named only as 'Labeau' in Arnaudin's manuscripts, it was not immediately obvious who this might be, but Denis is the only 'Labeau' to appear in the area where Arnaudin lived during the period.¹²⁶⁶ He was appointed postman in Labouheyre in 1879, having previously worked as a *gemmeur*.¹²⁶⁷ Given that Arnaudin once noted that 'Labea' knew a song from a man named 'Sabatié' and that both Matthieu Sabatié and Denis Labeau were living near the folklorist in the *quartier* of Monge at this point, the postman is the best candidate to be the 'Labeau' Arnaudin so often relied on to check songs.¹²⁶⁸ Arnaudin probably occluded his role as an informant slightly since Labeau was not very local: he was born in Lesperon (close to where **Marichoun Lescarret, femme Bouzats** (1833-1894) came from).¹²⁶⁹ Another motive for excluding Labeau might have been his abnormal status as a postman, at once someone who knows everyone, and yet belongs to none. Labeau himself never married, and an incident in 1891 suggests he was not an entirely happy bachelor. After getting drunk, he publicly assaulted his own mother, leading to a formal complaint to the postal service. Labeau was let off after the local notability rallied around the postman and his mother withdrew her complaint.¹²⁷⁰ The editors of the *OC* believed 'Labeau' was the same man as 'Louis', another unidentified Arnaudin informant, but the folklorist never wrote 'Louis Labeau' in his notes. (p.80)

1263 NFA, 2 MI 29/20, ff.147, 151.

1264 NFA, 2 MI 29/19, f.192.

1265 NFA, 2 MI 29/31, f.490.

1266 The name is not at all common in the Grande-Lande.

1267 ADL, PSS 13, 'Postes'.

1268 NFA, 2 MI 29/2, f.72.

1269 The editors of the *OC* noticed that 'Labeau' was not a local from the differences in the dialect he sang. See *OC*:III, li.

1270 ADL, PSS 16, 'Postes'.

Labeyrie, Marie, known as Mariouquete, femme Sentuc (b.1861). Mariouquete often sang songs for Arnaudin with other women from Ygos, such as her sister-in-law, Marie Sentucq, known as Catherine, femme Pécobin (1858-1927) and **Babelic Lescarret** (1828-1901). Arnaudin also wanted to collect songs from Mariouquete's mother, but he never got around to it. Mariouquete and her husband Jean Sentucq were quite poor, both being described as day-labourers at their wedding in 1887. According to another one of Arnaudin's informants, Mariouquete was a 'pailleuse', which may mean she sold straw for a living. (pp.221-3)

Laguë, Jean (1881-1971). Arnaudin called Laguë a 'former *gemmeur*', but, like many of Arnaudin's most useful contacts, Laguë worked for the Ponts et chaussées, rising to the post of 'chef cantonnier'. He probably met the folklorist when he was posted to Labouheyre in 1908.¹²⁷¹ Arnaudin clearly wanted to exclude him from the 1912 editions of the *Chants populaires*, since his occupation was too 'modern' and bureaucratic, but Laguë himself was rather attached to having his name in there, and made Arnaudin promise (see p.77). He married a seamstress named Jeanne Destizons in Sabres in 1910, fought in the First World War, and was decorated for his courage.¹²⁷² (p.69)

Laporte, Catherine, known as Talinote, veuve Lacave (1814-1904). Talinote was very close to the Arnaudin family, appearing frequently in Félix's diary, as well as providing songs and a series of anecdotes about recent historical events for the folklorist.¹²⁷³ She married a miller named Jean Lacave in 1850, but other documents referred to this man as a 'merchant'. Their son, Henri (b.1852) benefited from the expansion of the rail and road network of the Landes in the 1860s to set up a business as a wood merchant. (pp.102, 151, 159, 173)

Larrivière, Jeanne, femme Cassagne, dit Gnoy (b.1834). Arnaudin did not record much information about the woman he simply called Gnoy's wife, except the fact that she was born in Commensacq. Gnoy was the nickname for a man named Cassagne from Mimizan, and the only marriage between a Cassagne and a woman from Commensacq during the nineteenth century was Jeanne Larrivière's wedding to the shepherd Pierre Cassagne in 1854. (p.154)

Larrouy, Pierre, known as l'Afrique (1816-1883). L'Afrique earned his nickname from his connection to Algeria, a country he first visited as a medical orderly with the army. He returned to the Landes to work as a weaver, but set off for Algeria once again, this time with his sister to set up a café there. When he came back to the Landes permanently, he was described as an 'homme d'affaires' or a clerk.¹²⁷⁴ L'Afrique may not have sung many songs for Arnaudin, but his importance to the folklorist was as an example, along with **Antoine Auguste Bidas** (1800-80) of a local singer-song-writer. Like **Henri Vidal** (1850-1919) or **Jules Sart** (b.1853), l'Afrique was a friend and confidant as much as an informant.¹²⁷⁵ He lived at one point with a

1271 ADL, 1 S 11/2, 'Ponts et chaussées'.

1272 ADL, 168 W/5, 'Conseil de révision'.

1273 The editors of the *OC* rather implausibly attribute almost all of this material to Catherine Bernède, also known as Talinote (which is a nickname used by many women named Catherine in the region), veuve Fronsac (1842-1911), who lived in Saugnac. This is implausible, because the 'Talinote' of Arnaudin's manuscripts clearly lived very nearby.

1274 Most of these details come from his nephew. See NFA, 2 MI 29/2, f.451.

1275 *OC*: VIII, 73, 81.

mid-wife named Françoise Maubaret, suggesting he was part of similar networks of artisans (especially those in the cloth trades), mid-wives, and employees as **Henri, Jules, and Catherine Gentes** (1848-1906). He was also one of the few Arnaudin informants, along with **Jeanne Lescarret, known as Marichoun, femme Bouzats** (1833-1894) to talk to Arnaudin about witchcraft.¹²⁷⁶ (pp.75, 85, 267)

Latrille, Augustine (b.1893). Augustine was one of Arnaudin's youngest singers. Along with her neighbour in the village of Cazalis, in the Gironde, **Marguerite Rouchaleou** (b.1895), Augustine sang several songs for Arnaudin as he was completing his edition of the *Chants populaires* at the start of the twentieth century. She went on to marry in 1914. In 1926, she was living with her parents and her son, so her husband may have died in World War One. (p.72)

Lescarret, Magdelaine or Isabelle, known as Babelic, femme Danthez (1828-1901). Babelic was one of Arnaudin's more pious informants, although, as the thesis suggests, the relationship between this piety and her own life choices as an inn-keeper is not exactly straight-forward. Bernard Traimond found a record of her being prosecuted for running an unlicensed premises in 1898.¹²⁷⁷ She married Vital Danthez in 1848. After his death, she was sometimes referred to in official documents simply as a 'worker'. In 1896, she was sharing a house in Ygos with a man named Pierre Dupouy and a woman named Catherine Sainte-Marie.¹²⁷⁸ Neither were related to her. (pp.245-6)

Lescarret, Jeanne, known as Janéte dou Baqué, femme Dupart (1837-1927). Janéte sang several songs for Arnaudin. The folklorist had some trouble identifying her, since **Martin Magnes** (b.1861) told him she had never married. In fact, she married Jean Dupart in 1858 in Mimizan. (p.240)

Lescarret, Jeanne, known as Marichoun (femme) Bouzats (1833-1894). The woman Arnaudin consistently referred to as 'Marichoun Bouzats' was the widow of a cobbler, named Jean Bouzats, who she married in Escource in 1852. She was doubly unusual among Arnaudin's informants in that she came from the region of Morcenx, on the outer limits of the Grande-Lande, and told several highly personal accounts of supernatural events. She must have had some kind of relationship with Arnaudin's uncle. When he died in 1872, he left her a house near to the folklorist's own cottage in the *quartier* of Monge, as well as some money.¹²⁷⁹ She was living there with her daughter according to the census for the same year.¹²⁸⁰ (pp.153, 156-177)

Lorty, Marie, known as Maria, femme Dubos (b.1859). Maria married Bertrand Dubos in Sainte-Eulalie-en-Born in 1877. She provided very few songs for Arnaudin through the intermediary of **Jean Barthélémy** (1840-1922), and was not apparently related to **Catherine Goujon veuve Lorty** (1829-1913). (p.61)

Loubère, Simon (1831-1908). Simon provided five stories to Arnaudin, all of which had a religious

1276 NFA, 2 MI 29/10, f.234.

1277 B. Traimond, 'La sociabilité rurale landaise', 148.

1278 ADL, E DEPOT 333/1 F 2 'Archives communales d'Ygos'.

1279 ADL, 3 E 52/104, 'Étude notariale Dominique Bacon à Labouheyre'.

1280 This information comes from the 1872 census, still held at the Archives communales de Labouheyre.

flavour, dealing with the wanderings of Jesus on earth, or encounters with the Devil. Arnaudin called him a shepherd, but on official documents, such as his marriage to Marie Vincent in 1854, he was called a farmer.¹²⁸¹ The editors of the *OC* confused him with Girons Loubère, known as Chéri (b.1831), who provided several songs for Arnaudin. Simon did not sing for the folklorist. (pp.245, 248)

Loubeyre, Anne, known as Anna de Hourrègues (1887-1907). Anna was the source for at least eight songs in Arnaudin's manuscripts, some of which she sent by letter. She came from a veritable dynasty of singers: her mother Marie Lestruhaut, known as Noëlie, femme Loubeyre (b.1851), her grandmother Elisabeth Broustra, femme Lestruhaut (1829-1910), and her sister Marie Loubeyre, femme Damigon (b.1872) all sang for Arnaudin. (pp.228, 242 (footnote))

Magnes, Romain, known as Martin (b.1861). Like many of the men Arnaudin collected folklore from, Magnes first appears in official documents as a *gemmeur*, but he went on to practice a number of more unusual trades. Arnaudin agreed with him in 1906 that he would be called a 'fish-monger' in the 1912 edition of the *Chants populaires*, but official records called him anything from 'hôtelier' to butcher. Magnes had connections, therefore, to travellers and drinkers at his hotel, and he was himself very mobile, using first a cart, then later one of the first cars in the region, presumably to deliver fish and meat. He married Marguerite Saint-Martin, known as Rosine in 1883, and they were still living in the coastal village of Mimizan in 1921, along with various children and in-laws, two apprentice butchers, and a hotel maid.¹²⁸² Arnaudin considered Magnes a talented singer. (pp.78 (and footnote), 225-6, 239)

Mallié, Simon (1837-1923). Mallié was a clog-maker in the coastal town of Saint-Paul-en-Born who told Arnaudin a couple of fairy stories. He married Marie Fortinon in 1860 and they had three children by 1886.¹²⁸³ (p.153)

Mariolan, Anne-Jeanne, known as Mariane de Mariolan, femme Bouzats (1822-1916). Mariane was one of Arnaudin's most important storytellers, an incredibly long-lived woman who the editors of the *OC* referred to as a 'mi-paysan, mi bourgeois'.¹²⁸⁴ She grew up in an extended household that included her parents, grandfather, uncle Charles (a smith), aunt, and cousins. Many of these men were veterans of the Napoleonic Wars. Mariane went on to take over the household as the *daïne*, or matriarch, after her marriage to Jean Bouzats. The two of them had at least six children between 1848 and 1866 and she was still living in the house she was born in along with several of these children, grand-children, and two great-grand-children at the start of the twentieth century. (see fig. twenty-eight for a portrait) (pp.84, 133-155, 201, 202, 245, 258, 266, 321 (portrait))

Maumen. The man that Arnaudin called 'Momen' or 'Maumen' was working for the Arnaudin family in 1875, making it likely that he was one of the Maumens living next door to Arnaudin. Jean-Germain (b.1856) was a former *gemmeur* who later had a similar job to Arnaudin's **father, Barthélémy Arnaudin** (1816-1893) as an 'agent-receptionnaire' for the railways. His brother Pierre (b.1848) also worked for the Chemin du fer du Midi. They were **Henri Vidal's** (1850-

1281 Or 'ploughman': 'laboureur'. See ADL 1 MIEC 246/10, 'État civil'.

1282 ADL, 6 M 152 'Recensement de la population'.

1283 ADL, E DEPOT 278/ES 1588/9, 'Archives communales: Saint-Paul-en-Born'.

1284 *OC*:I, xix.

1919) nephews. (p.201)

Monicien, Jean (b.1866). Jean moved to the *quartier* of Monge to rent a property from the Arnaudin family around 1902. Along with his wife **Jeanne Daugé, known as Maria** (b.1874), he had at least three children, Jeanne (b.1897), Jean, known as Fernand (b.1900) and Berthe (b.1906). There was some friction between Jean and the folklorist, who suspected him of cheating him out of materials. Dulas once remarked to Arnaudin that Monicien was cunning: 'I think of myself as pretty sharp, but he's always right behind me'.¹²⁸⁵ Arnaudin also noted 'He sticks to his guns, in what he says'.¹²⁸⁶ Monicien had had it pretty tough: he was discharged from the army in 1890, suffering from tuberculosis, and 'considerable wasting'.¹²⁸⁷ (pp. 56, 101, 102)

Pabon, Jean (1838-1912). Pabon was an army veteran and prolific singer. He married Marie Dupouy in 1865, and they had at least two sons, one of whom corresponded with Arnaudin, providing his father's songs, as well as his own. This son worked for the Ponts et chaussées, and it seems that it was through another road-mender, **Jean Laguë** (1881-1971) that Arnaudin made contact with the Pabon family. (pp.58, 60)

Pédéluc, Jean (1842-1919). Jean was one of Arnaudin's road-mender-informants, born in the distant village of Rivière, in the Chalosse, well outside of the Grande-Lande. He moved to Labouheyre to work for the Ponts et chaussées and married a local cook named Marie Dubos in 1877. When he retired in 1902, he had done thirty-seven years of manual labour on the roads.¹²⁸⁸ He told Arnaudin a couple of stories. (p.123)

Pinchoret, Jean, known as Jouanès (1864-1900). Jouanès was a sometime miller and sometime mule-driver who sang eight different songs for Arnaudin. When he died in 1900, his death certificate recorded that he was divorced from his wife, Claire Dartigue. (p.74)

Plantié, Elisabeth, known as Babé, femme Saubesty (1826-1912). Babé was Arnaudin's most important informant by any numerical reckoning. Many of Arnaudin's informants either sang for him or told tales, but Babé was unique in providing some sixteen narratives, and versions of almost half of the songs Arnaudin collected. He also used her to check other materials, and she appears very frequently in the dictionary and proverb notes. Between their marriage and coming to work for the Arnaudin family, Babé and her husband, **Jean Saubesty, known as lou Patroun** (1818-1894) had a fairly typical peripatetic life, moving between six different shareholdings (see fig. thirty-one for a portrait of the family). Their family life was fairly 'classic' as well: they had at least seven children between 1846 and 1867, at least one of whom was also an Arnaudin informant. The fact that many of their children went on to take jobs for the railway company in Labouheyre was also typical. Babé and the folklorist had a slightly fraught relationship, reflected both in Arnaudin's desire to demote her in his list of singers for the 1912 edition of the *Chants populaires* and in the slightly pointed stories she told, discussed in Chapter Seven. After the death of Jean, she went to live with her son Bertrand, before returning to Ychoux, the village where she and Jean were both born. (pp.47, 56, 61 (footnote), 65-6, 68, 75-6, 80, 85, 86, 87, 93, 94, 101, 102, 173, 201, 202-7, 232-3, 233-4, 237, 238, 239,

1285 OC:VII, 276.

1286 Ibid., 295.

1287 ADL, R/P 386, 'Conseil de révision'.

1288 ADL, 1 S 10, 'Ponts et chaussées'.

240, 252, 324 (portrait))

Pomade, Marie, known as Trézine, femme Duviella (b.1819). Trézine was actually quite an important singer for Arnaudin's collection, providing versions of some twenty songs, but Arnaudin did not want to mention her in the 1912 edition of the *Chants populaires*, on account of the name Duviella, which he considered too 'exotique'.¹²⁸⁹ Their marriage was a little unusual as well: Trézine was forty-five. Her husband Pierre was a servant, eight years younger than her, and the marriage legitimised a daughter, Marie, born five years before. (pp.69 (footnote), 217-8)

Poudens, Elisabeth, known as Beroun (femme) de Dulas (1813-1904). Beroun never sang a single song for Arnaudin, but she was a fairly important storyteller, providing him with at least twelve narratives. Her husband, Joseph Dulas (b.1807), was a blacksmith from Belin, in the Gironde, but the two of them moved to Luë, in the heart of the Grande-Lande. According to **Babé Plantié** (1826-1912), Beroun was actually married under his sister's name since she was only fourteen at the time of the wedding.¹²⁹⁰ By the 1850s, the Dulas family were wealthy enough to own several properties.¹²⁹¹ Her grand-daughter 'Maria Dulas' also told the folklorist a story. (pp.102, 201)

Pruzeau, Jeanne, known as le Pruzoline, veuve Castera (b.1866). The seamstress 'le Pruzoline' sang four songs for Arnaudin, before selling up her house and moving to Bordeaux with her husband, a *gemmeur* named Pierre Castera.¹²⁹² (p.253)

Raba, Jeanne, known as Anaïs femme Triscos (b.1859). The seamstress Anaïs may only have sung one song for the folklorist, but she was part of a network of cloth-workers he used to find informants between villages. What is more, Arnaudin himself praised her singing, writing of her 'voix admirable' in his notes.¹²⁹³ She proved quite hard for him to accurately identify: she was the illegitimate daughter of another one of his singer, Elisabeth Raba, known as Babé, veuve Triscos (1834-1916), but both Anaïs and her mother married men named Triscos, so Anaïs ended up with the same name she would have had if she were legitimate. Arnaudin was understandably confused, not least since the Raba-Triscos clan were correspondents rather than everyday acquaintances turned informants. (p.253)

Raymond, Anna, femme Cabanac. When he saw this woman on the train in July 1907, Arnaudin apparently promised to photograph her. He seems to have been considering a romantic liaison with Anna, noting that she was both 'jolie' and childless. There is no evidence he ever collected folklore from her. (p.57)

Rouchaleou, Marie-Jeanne, known as Marguerite (b.1895). Marguerite was the youngest Arnaudin informant, born just seventeen years before he published the *Chants populaires*. Along with with **Augustine Latrille** (b.1893), her neighbour in Cazalis, she sang him a few

1289 NFA, 2 MI 29/1, f.16.

1290 NFA, 2 MI 29/17, f.129.

1291 ADL, 3 E 52/91, 'Étude notariale Dominique Bacon à Labouheyre'.

1292 NFA, 2 MI 29/20, f.297.

1293 NFA, 2 MI 29/1, f.46.

songs on a trip he specifically organised to investigate the singing tradition in the Bazadais, a region slightly outside the centre of his research.¹²⁹⁴ (pp.72-3)

Sart, Joseph, known as Jules (b.1853). Like **Jean Vidal, known as Henri** (1850-1919), or **Pierre Larrouy, known as l'Afrique** (1816-1883), Jules seems to have been as much a friend and confidant as an informant for Arnaudin's folklore collecting. Yet he was nonetheless a very important informant, singing twenty-four different songs, and telling seven stories. In a way similar to how he treated **Henri**, Arnaudin actively excluded Jules from his published list of singers in 1912, but with Jules' agreement. Instead of appearing as informants, Jules and **Henri** were recipients of dedicated copies of the book.¹²⁹⁵ Jules was the illegitimate son of the short-lived Jeanne Sart (1834-1865), who gave birth to him in Bordeaux before bringing him back to Labouheyre, aged fifteen months.¹²⁹⁶ Like **Henri Vidal**, Jules' prospects did not look good: he was described as a day-labourer. But, again like **Henri**, Jules married a local woman with a career, a mid-wife named Marie Tartas (b.1869). By 1914, he himself was being called an 'employee of the quarries'. He had a connection to the 'Filloles' or 'Filhol' family, living with Arnaud in the 1890s, and witnessing his daughter Madelaine's marriage in 1878. Both Arnaud and Madeleine sang for the folklorist. (pp.60, 201, 220)

Saubesty, Jean, known as lou Patroun (1818-1894). 'Lou Patroun' ('the Boss') worked as a sharecropper for the Arnaudin family along with his wife **Babé Plantié** (1826-1912) (see above for details of their family life, and see fig. thirty-one). He sang twenty-three songs for Arnaudin, but his narrative repertoire was even more impressive: he told the folklorist at least twenty-five. Although Arnaudin referred to him simply as a shepherd, the official record reveals considerably more complexity to Jean's working life, variously describing him as a *gemmeur*, a shepherd, and a farmer. In 1872, he owned twenty-four ewes, seven rams, three "sheep", and twenty-eight lambs. Given that he was probably paid to look after other sheep, 'lou Patroun' would have managed a fairly considerable flock.¹²⁹⁷ According to Arnaudin, Jean also had a side-line making the *prisse*, or sheep-skin vests which shepherds traditionally wore to protect themselves against the elements, and which can be seen in Arnaudin's photos (see, for instance the shepherd in the background in fig. twenty-seven). Jean and **Babé** seem to have been Arnaudin's first informants when he started recording materials around 1873, although it is hard to draw a line given that the folklorist might just as well have been noticing the stories and songs of his own parents and his family maid and lover **Marie Darlanne** (1856-1911) at the same time. Where this shifted from interest to ethnographic project is impossible to say, but both Jean and **Babé** were similarly close to the folklorist, appearing in the many quotidian anecdotes woven into his diary. Jean was an official witness for his father's death. (pp.47, 75-6, 84, 201, 202-7, 324 (portrait))

Sournet, Pierre (1847-1919). Sournet was a prolific singer, providing Arnaudin with twenty-eight versions of various songs. He was married to a woman named Catherine Barbé. He must have known **Denis Labeau** (b.1853), since the postman witnessed Pierre's death certificate. (p.250)

Tastet, Jean (b.1858). The man Arnaudin called 'Tastet [du quartier de] Péthieu' was a sharecropper

1294 Latry, 'Une enquête de Félix Arnaudin dans le Bazadais'.

1295 See NFA, 2 MI 29/12, f.299 Arnaudin planned to write: 'À Jules Sart. Bon souvenir'.

1296 See NFA, 2 MI 29/1, f.24.

1297 This information comes from the 1872 census, still held at the Archives communales de Labouheyre.

and *gemmeur*, who lived in several villages around the Grande-Lande over his lifetime. He married a woman named Marie Lalanne in 1888, and provided Arnaudin with vocabulary for his dictionary and several songs, including a page of songs Arnaudin labelled 'Nulle: obscène'.¹²⁹⁸ (p.93)

Vidal, Dominique, known as Menicot (1838-1901). Menicot provided Arnaudin with one song and a couple of stories. He worked as a *gemmeur* for the Arnaudin family as late as 1885, but he was ill and struggling to make a living in 1883, receiving a handout from the municipal council.¹²⁹⁹ His family situation was a bit unusual, in that he lived with his wife Marie Patanchon and her two children from a previous marriage. Despite coming from the same village of Trensacq as **Henri Vidal** (1850-1919), the two men were not closely related, and certainly were not the same man, as the editors of the *OC* assumed. (p.202)

Vidal, Jean, known as Henri (1850—1919). It is fitting that Henri, whose life was intertwined with Arnaudin's, should have died just a couple of years before the folklorist. Beyond Arnaudin's interest in Henri's role as a storyteller and proxy folklorist, the two men were friends and sometime business associates, and Henri even played a role as an intermediary between Arnaudin and **Marie Darlanne** (1856-1911) when she was sent away from the Arnaudin household. Henri was a joiner, and later a clerk. He married twice, first to Catherine Labile, a sharecropper, and then to Léonie Lagoffun, a local teacher. His daughter from his first marriage, Jeanne-Natalie, was a local seamstress. Her own marriage to another local clerk in Labouheyre in 1894 also makes it clear that Henri was related to the **Maumen** family who lived near Arnaudin, provided stories for his collection, and worked for the railways. A network of local employees and artisans can be discerned behind these connections. The *OC* confuses Henri with **Menicot Vidal**, the illiterate and considerably less well-off *gemmeur* who worked for the Arnaudin family. The two men were unrelated. Henri's sister, Bertrande Vidal, known as Marie, femme Barsac (b.1852), on the other hand, was also an Arnaudin informant. See Chapter Seven for a fuller exploration of Henri's life. (pp.45, 56-7, 60, 85, 178-207, 220, 258, 266)

1298 NFA, 2 MI 29/4, ff.226-8.

1299 ADL, E DEPOT 134/1 D 5

Appendix II: 'Misery in the Moorlands'¹³⁰⁰

There was once a blacksmith named 'Misery'. And how miserable he was, as poor as a judge's cat. So poor that in order to survive he often had to send his children out begging, whatever the weather, simply for lack of bread in the house. One winter evening, as Misery was sitting by his fire with his children, waiting for his wife to put the little they had for dinner on the table, an old beggar, dressed in rags knocked on the door, saying: "For the love of God, good souls, won't you make room for me in your house for the night, and give me a little piece of bread, without depriving yourselves?"

"Come in, my poor fellow, come in," replied Misery, "We always do our best."

His wife wasn't happy. She grumbled¹³⁰¹ through her teeth: "Well then! Aren't we poor enough? We are forced to send our children out, at any time, their caps in their hands, from house to house, and now you're going to start lodge passers-by!"

"Humph!" said Misery. "You have to have a little compassion! A few mouthfuls more or less, what does it matter! Bring the little we have."

And he said to the man: "You know, those who are poor are not rich. There won't be a lot to go on the bread, but we will share it with glad hearts. Come closer to the fire, you are soaked."

And he sat him down, threw a few logs onto the fire, and when the old man had warmed up a little, he had him sit at the table next to him on the stool and told him to eat, and not to deny himself. After they had talked for a while it was time to go to bed, and the blacksmith and his wife made up a bed for him next to the fire, so he could have as good a night's sleep as possible, and he lay down.

The next day at daybreak the beggar got up and got his stick ready to leave, but as he passed over the threshold he said to Misery: "Misery, yesterday evening, before I came here, I went and knocked on a rich man's door, but he turned me away without any charity. You, on the other hand, who have such difficulties just getting by, you had compassion. You won't regret it, because I am God, and in exchange for this good deed, I will let you ask me for three things. Whatever they are, you will have them."

Misery's wife elbowed him, and whispered: "Ask to be rich. We are so poor! Let us just have a bit of a good time for the rest of our days and leave a little something for the children!"

"Let me think," said Misery.

And when he had thought about it for a little, he said to God: "I have an old stool over there. I want you to make it so that anyone who sits on cannot get up without my permission."

Hearing this, his wife cursed to high heavens,¹³⁰² and whispered to him: "Are you crazy? What the devil could that stool get for you? We are dirt poor.¹³⁰³ Wouldn't it have been better to ask to be rich?"

"It's up to me to choose," replied Misery, "I'm asking for what I want."

And he thought a little while longer, and said to God: "In front of my door there is an apple tree and people always come and steal the apples: I want you to make it so that no-one who climbs the tree can get down without my permission."

His wife didn't know if she could stand it any longer.

"Have you lost your head?" she said. "You are presented with such an opportunity for happiness, and you let it get away. Couldn't you have bought as many apples as you liked, and

1300 See *OC:I*, 43-51. The tale originally appeared in the 1887 edition published by Arnaudin.

1301 'Rougnéue', literally 'scolded'.

1302 'Petesléue enter pét é couey', literally 'cursed from skin to flesh'.

1303 'Praubes gitedeys', literally 'poor enough to throw away'.

anything else you wanted, if you were rich?"

"It's up to me to choose, I'll do as I see fit."

"Well at least ask to be rich this time," replied his wife. "You only have one wish left."

When he had thought a moment longer, Misery took an old leather purse, which he rarely had any money to put in, and handed it to God, saying: "I want you to make it so that nothing that goes into this purse can get out without my permission."

"As you wish," said God.

And he left. Immediately Misery's wife kicked up a racket, piling complaints and insults onto him. Misery let her shout and started working, pretending not to hear.

After a few days, a man Misery had never seen before turned up at his house while he was at work.

"Hello, blacksmith."

"Hello."

"What are you doing?"

"I'm working,¹³⁰⁴ as you can see."

"Very good. Listen, can you tell me something?"

"If I know the answer, yes."

"Someone told me you had a guest the other night."

"They didn't lie."

"Did you get anything in return?"

"Lord, no, and I didn't ask for anything either."

"Nothing? That's very little. Well, my son, I am the Devil, and if you agree to make me a promise, I will make you rich, very rich indeed. There will be no-one luckier and happier than you."

"That sounds good. But first of all, what do I have to promise?"

"I will tell you. In ten years, to the very day, I will come back here and you will be mine, you will have to come with me. But during those ten years, all the gold and silver you want will appear in your pockets the moment you wish for it. With it, you'll be able to live like a lord, one knee upon the other, you will have everything you could want or wish for."

"I accept," said Misery.

As soon as he said these words, the Devil disappeared.

From that day forward, Misery, who had so much money he didn't know what to do with it, hadn't a care in the world except how to make up for all his previous sufferings.¹³⁰⁵ He gave himself over to the good times and led the high life, flitting from one pleasure to the next, depriving himself of nothing. There was no-one happier nor better off for twenty leagues in any direction.

When he had lived like this for ten¹³⁰⁶ years, one fine morning the Devil appeared before him again, and said to him as he passed over the threshold into the house: "Well, my friend, are you ready? I've kept my word, so you must keep yours. Today your time is up."

"Oh," said Misery. "This is very inconvenient. I hardly gave it another thought. Can't you do me a favour and give me ten more years? I'm having such fun it would really make me sad to have to stop so soon."

"No, no," said the Devil. "Don't start begging. The time has come, you must come with me."

"Let's go," said Misery, "seeing as your mind is made up. But let me just get my affairs a bit in order, and then I'll come. Here, have a seat on this stool for a moment while I get ready."

1304 'Matchi', literally 'smashing'. A colloquial term for working.

1305 'Tout ço que s'ére bis dingu'aquí', literally 'everything he had seen until then'. To see meant to suffer.

1306 As Arnaudin pointed out, other storytellers often had the Devil return after just five years. He counts the days and the nights. See *OC:I*, 50.

And he offered him an old stool, which the Devil sat down on. After a moment, Misery said: “Well then, I'm ready. Shall we go?”

“Let's go,” said the Devil.

And he tried to get up. But he was in for a shock. He couldn't move from his seat.

“Well what is this now? I can't unstick myself from this stool!”

“How funny,” said Misery. “Wait a second, I'll help you.”

As he said this, he picked up a knotted staff from behind the door, went up to the Devil and laid it into him, back and forth,¹³⁰⁷ every way possible, with all the strength he could muster.¹³⁰⁸ The Devil bellowed like a bull, asking for pardon and grace. Misery paid no attention, beating him as if he were deaf, the blows raining down. Finally, when he was out of breath, he said: “You won't get out of here, you son of a bitch, until you have promised to let me live in peace for another ten years and to give me as much gold and silver as I wish, like before.”

“I promise! I promise!” shouted the Devil. “Let me go now!”

And Misery set him free.¹³⁰⁹

So the smith went back to his old ways, living the good life as much as he could, throwing his money after whatever he fancied,¹³¹⁰ yet always finding his pockets full. Pretty soon another ten years had passed, like the first, and one day the Devil turned up again at his door! But this time he wasn't alone, he had brought a little tail of smaller devils along as well. He said to Misery: “Well then, you good-for-nothing, is that it? Today, my friend, I brought my men with me. Your stool won't be any good. Let's go, quick! See the way?”

“Oh,” said Misery. “Can't you give me ten measly years more? It would cost you so little and mean so much to me!”

“No, no!” said the Devil gruffly. “There's no time to jabber, just get going. You've had your fun, you rascal.”

“Let's go,” said Misery, “seeing as we must. But let me put my affairs in order a bit, and then I'll come. In the mean time, if you get bored, you and your men could climb that apple tree and take some nice apples. They aren't bad. Don't hold back. Seeing as I have to leave, I won't need them any more, so you might as well make the most of them.”

The little devils didn't need to be told twice. They scrambled up the apple tree as fast as they could, all together,¹³¹¹ and started eating apples, eating apples, so much so that the Devil, who had stayed at the bottom and was watching them, couldn't resist, and shouted up to them: “Throw me down one of these apples, so I can see if they are any good.”

“Oh, come on,” they said, “join us. If you want some, come and get them.”

And the Devil climbed up there as well to reach the apples.

That was all Misery was waiting for. Without saying anything, he fetched a big, sharp iron bar that he had ready, took it to the coals and heated it up until the point was red hot. Then he went back to the apple tree. When they saw that, the devils wanted to come down straight away, but they were suspended on the branches, they couldn't get unstuck. So Misery pricked them here and there with his red hot iron – zing! zing! – on their arses, running from one to the other without a pause or a break.

1307 'Au loun, é au traués', literally 'sideways and vertically'.

1308 'Stincle de cos', literally 'all the strength of his body'.

1309 'Praubéyre qu'òu balhét l'abiade.' The phrase is the same as the one used to refer to letting sheep out to graze.

1310 'Gitéue soun argèn a can i'a gat', literally 'chucking his money to cats and dogs'.

1311 'Touts en cusse', literally 'all in a pile'.

They bellowed and clamoured¹³¹² from the burns.

“Well, my friend, how do you like the apples?” he said to the old Devil, as he poked him. “You steered clear of the stool, but I got you all the same! You and your men won’t get out of this unless you promise to leave me in peace for another ten years, and to give me as much gold and silver as I wish, like before.”

“I promise, I promise,” cried the Devil, terrified. “Let us go.”

“Down you come, you pests,” said Misery. “And get out of here straight away, you stink.”¹³¹³

The Devil and the little devils jumped down helter-skelter and ran off where they had come from, rubbing their arses.

The smith went back to living as he had before, happy as could be,¹³¹⁴ giving himself over to the good life more fully than ever yet his purse was never empty. Everything he wanted, he had. But these ten years passed as well, and one day the Devil and a whole flock of little devils turned up all of a sudden without him seeing a single one coming. There were big ones, little ones, black, red, the whole place was filled with their stench.¹³¹⁵

“Ha!” said Misery. “Is that it? You didn’t leave anyone at home, this time?”

“No,” replied the Devil. “After all, with you it’s good to make sure, good-for-nothing that you are. Let’s go!”

“Yes,” said Misery, “this time it won’t pain me so much to come with you. To tell the truth, I have really had the time of my life.¹³¹⁶ I’ll leave as soon as you want... All the same, you really frightened me, you and your men, appearing in front of me, all at the same time, without warning, as if you had sprung from the earth! How did you do it? If I didn’t know you, I’d think you were more powerful than God himself.”

Puffing himself up, the Devil replied: “We don’t have more than God, but we have as much. We can change into what we want, we can enter where we please, without anyone seeing, however narrow the passage.”

“Well it’s all very well to say that,” Misery said, shaking his head. “When God was here before he told me that He could make Himself and His men so tiny, so tiny they could all fit into a purse. To do that what would you lot have to change yourselves into?”

“Ha! A nice job!” said the Devil. “Nothing is easier!”

“You are a boaster,” said Misery. “Do you really want me to believe that you and your men could all fit into this purse?”

Saying this, he got his old leather purse from his pocket and held it open in his hands. All of a sudden – whoosh! – the devils all transformed into smoke, and the smoke went into the purse, until not a whisp remained outside. And when they were all in there, the Devil cried: “Well then, are we in there, or not?”

But the smith didn’t say anything, simply closing the purse, tying the string tight and taking it to his anvil, where he beat it with his hammer as hard as he could. The devils cried out! They screamed and squawked¹³¹⁷ in the purse.

“Let us go! Let us go! You’re flattening us!”

1312 'Esmounéuen', literally 'they deafened' the surroundings.

1313 'Que pùdet a cramat', literally 'you stink so much it smolders'.

1314 'Urous coum l'arrat au palhé', literally 'as happy as a rat in the straw'.

1315 'Empousouat de diabbles', literally 'poisoned with devils'.

1316 'Que'm suy héyt pamprou de boun san', literally 'I made myself more than a little good blood'.

1317 'Auüquits' probably means the sound that geese make.

It was a mad din! But the more they shouted, the harder he hit, unmoved. When he was finally tired, he said: "I will flatten you like pennies, you vermin, if you don't promise me never to come back, and will leave me in peace as long as I want, and I like.

"I promise, I promise," cried the Devil. "Open the purse."

Now he had what he wanted, Misery opened the purse and the devils hot-footed it out of there without asking permission, nose to tail, grunting like pigs, and he never saw them again.

And that is why Misery is still among us.

I stood on a salt cod,
And went back to Luë.

Told in 1879 by Étienne Baleste, known as Noun.

Appendix III: 'The Werewolf'

Near our house there was a spring with very good water, which had its source near Santors. This spring was a little way from our house. One evening I was sent to fetch water from this spring. I don't know what I thought I was doing [I managed to cut my finger]. Imagine, I couldn't find my way home. Somewhere along the way I met our maid and told her what had happened. [We went home] and I was sent to bed without dinner. The whole kitchen was full of maize. Our sharecroppers had come to shuck it.

"Where's Marichoun?" they asked.

"Oh," the maid said, "She cut her finger, so out of concern [lit.: fear] she was sent to bed."

I heard all of that, and didn't breathe a word. In those days the houses weren't surrounded by big pine trees like they are now, and they had little windows that you could look out of. After a long time, the dogs started barking loudly. And they barked, and barked, and barked.

"Hey," said one of the sharecroppers, "The dogs are barking so much, [must be a] werewolf passing by. Want me to fire a shot at it?"

"Sure," said another sharecropper. [In front of the door.]

"Quiet, quiet, [all of you], it's coming, it's coming," he said.

Bang! He fired a shot. And the dog ran off. He hadn't hit it.

This werewolf used to go to another house and all evening they could hear it lick lick, lick lick, slobbering all over the trough.¹³¹⁸ They accused a man called Martignolles of being this werewolf. The master of the household realised this, and there was someone marrying [into] this family. One day [the master of the household] said to this [man who was marrying in] that he was going to catch the werewolf. They went and moved the trough behind the door inside the stables¹³¹⁹ and hid it there and when the wolf went to the trough they shut the door of the stable. Everything was going very well. When the dog was [trapped] the father-in-law arrived with a big resin candle.

"Ah, you son of a bitch, Martignolles, you are here, and [I've caught you, yes I've caught you.]"

And he rained down blows, punches, and kicks, hitting him with a rod.

"Ah, you son of a bitch, I'll teach you to run around at night. I'm going to grill you a little."

And with the resin candle he burned all of his beard. The [animal's] muzzle was covered in sores, it was a real mess. This dog it was howling very loudly.

"Open up," said the father-in-law, "He's blowing so hard I'm worried he'll bring the house down."

The next morning – it was a Sunday – the [father-in-law] came to our place.

"Hello," he said.

"Seeing as you're here," said my aunt, "come and have lunch with us."

"Well," said this other man to my poor old father, "Last night I gave that Martignolles a good going over."

"What did you do?"

"Oh, I trapped that werewolf and I burned his beard. They say its Martignolles. If you're willing, let's go and see after lunch if his face is covered in sores."

After lunch they set out and went to the inn, because these people [Martignolles' family] were the innkeepers.

"Hello," they said to the mistress of the house. "Where's the master?"

1318 'Tos' could mean trough, or a bench used for washing clothes.

1319 The 'estaulis'.

“Oh,” she said very quietly. “He's out with the sheep. He is sick.”

“He is sick!”

“Yes. The sheep got into the thorn bushes and when he went in to free them he cut up his face.”

At that moment, the man arrived. In fact his face was covered in sores.

“Han, han, han,” (that's how he spoke). “Han, han, han. You are a wicked man, you and your household,” he said to [the father-in-law]. “Han, han, han, the sheep got into the thorn bushes and when I went in to get them I cut up my face. Han, han, han. You're a wicked man, I don't like you.”

“What have I ever done to you [lit. when have you found me wicked], my poor man?” said [the father-in-law].

“Han, han, han, you are a wicked man. I don't like you, I don't like you.” He thought for a second. He didn't say “I was a werewolf.” He said that his woman burned his beard, and he had lied.

“Ah no,” said my poor old father, “You are a rotten werewolf.”

Appendix IV: 'Moussu Lamarque and Madame Senguinët'¹³²⁰

Once there was a fox and a vixen and they got married. They made their set next to a *quartier*. The fox was called *moussu* Lamarque and the vixen *madame* Senguinët. One day, *moussu* Lamarque set off to find something to eat for *madame* Senguinët. He came back happy, with a nice cockerel. As he went along a slope, he got his foot caught in a trap, and found himself caught, and started shouting and shouting, a farmer¹³²¹ came along.

“So then, you're here are you, fox?” he said. “Well my friend, you've found a nice pair of clogs!”

The farmer came closer, saw the nice cockerel there, beside [the fox].

“Ah! Beggar,”¹³²² said the farmer. “Ah, you've stolen my cockerel! Well then, I will make you pay for that!”

He gave him a beating until his skin was smoking. The fox wasn't too keen on this game. He asked as a favour if the farmer could free him from there.

“Oh, yes,” said the farmer. “You want me to set you free so you can go and eat all my chickens!”

“Oh, no,” said the fox. “If you let me out of here, I swear to you that neither me nor any of mine [my family] will touch any of your chickens, and if I can return the favour, I will do so.”

“Given the way things are going,” said the farmer, “I trust you, I'll teach you somewhere you can make a new set, no-one will be able to dig you out of there. Next to the stream, there's an old house, and you can dig under the foundations to make your set.”

Moussu Lamarque went off, and arrived at his set completely worn out.¹³²³ *Madame* Senguinët asked him:

“What is it? You seem a bit exhausted.”¹³²⁴

“Let's not talk about it,”¹³²⁵ said *moussu* Lamarque. “As I was going along the hill, I came across a trap, got caught. I had a nice cockerel to bring you, I started shouting, that farmer from the *quartier* turned up, so I had to give him the cockerel to set me free. But he told me a place where we can make a set and no-one will be able to dig us out.”

“Where's that?” asked *madame* Senguinët.

“Over by the riverbank/next to the stream, under that old house. No-one will be able to dig us out of there and it'll be very handy for the *quartier*.”

“Let's go,” said *madame* Senguinët.

They set about digging,¹³²⁶ and digging, and digging, right under the stream, and made themselves nice set.

A few days later, the weather turned.¹³²⁷ The water came in through the mouth of the set and

1320 A highly edited version of this tale appears in *OC*:1, 566-73. The original is found in *NFA*, 2 MI 29/11, ff.436-43.

1321 'Oué', literally a ploughman, or ox-driver.

1322 The word he used – 'guerdén' – does not appear in Arnaudin's dictionary, but a likely guess would relate it to words signifying beggar.

1323 'Ebugat', literally beaten.

1324 'Mau sisclat', literally 'badly fastened'.

1325 'M'en parlis pa'

1326 'Graupia', literally scratching.

1327 'Qui Bén un Bét éy gat', a great water came, it flooded.

filled it up. *Madame S* and *M L* couldn't get out, they were scared they would drown. They stayed trapped there 7 or 8 days, exhausted by hunger. When the flood passed, *M L* set off to find something to eat. The farmer was on the lookout, and set his dogs after him. Luckily, the fox had an empty stomach, which made it easier for him to run fast and somehow escape.

“We need to get out of here,” he said to *M S*. “The farmer wanted to dupe me, he almost drowned us, and soon he'll pull some other trick.”

They went back to their old set.

The idea¹³²⁸ came to the fox to go and see foreign parts.¹³²⁹ So he set off, on he went, on he went, and came to a nice field. He saw a farmer who was ploughing, and had a yoke that was really well-made, the oxen could easily pull it along.

“Well!” the fox said. “Those ploughs aren't made like ours back home. Maybe I'll steal one! I promised the farmer to repay the favour he did me. I haven't managed to do that yet, and maybe that's why he tried to drown us. I'll try and take him this.”

When the farmer unhitched his oxen, the fox was hidden nearby. The farmer led his oxen away and went for dinner. The fox went into the stables, took the plough, put the yoke around his neck, and set off. On he went, on he went, on he went, until he was back home. When he got there, he was sweating like a wretch.

“What do you want to do with that?” said *M S*.

“Well,” said *M L*, “I haven't yet returned the favour the farmer did when he freed me from that trap, I want to take him this plough, it is a lot easier to use than his, and make him give me a pair of chickens.”

“You think he'll give them to you?” said *M S*.

“Why, yes,” said *M L*.

The next day, he took the plough and went to find the farmer.

“Hello, farmer.”

“Hello, fox.”

“Look, I've got this plough, I stole it in a foreign country, the way they yoke their oxen there is much easier, and makes it a lot less work. I never repaid that favour you did for me, so I've brought this to give to you.”

“Well then,” said the farmer. “I thought you'd forgotten all about it. If this works well, I'll give you a nice pair of cockerels.”

The fox taught him how to yoke his oxen, and the farmer started ploughing. The first furrow was very easy, the second even more so, and so on, and so on, he got as much as he wanted done.

The next morning, he went to find the fox.

“Hello, fox.”

“Hello, farmer.”

“Listen, my friend, I'm very happy with you. You gave me a plough that is really easy. I promised you a couple of cockerels. I don't have time to get them, but go to my place, they are in the courtyard, you can help yourself, but don't take any more than that.”

“I don't want to go there,” said the fox. “You'll have your dogs slit my throat.”¹³³⁰

“No, no,” said the farmer. “They aren't there. They are out with the shepherd.”

The fox set off, went into the courtyard through a hole in the fence, and went for a nice cockerel.

“Well!” he thought to himself. “There is one!”

1328 'Iréye', idea or fancy.

1329 'Péyis', literally other countries.

1330 Or bleed me dry. The same term is used for 'bleeding' a pine tree dry. *OC*: VI, 344.

The cockerel, when he saw him, started crowing “Cock-a-doodle-do!”

The fox chased after him, and the chickens began to flutter around, and flutter, he couldn't catch them. The dogs were behind the sheepfold, and when they heard this racket/noise they came to see the fox and chased after him. The fox wanted to get away, but there was a dog by the hole in the fence and the other dog chased after him, he ran and ran, and caught him.

He took blow after blow,¹³³¹ until he could take no more,¹³³² and decided to play dead. The dogs thought they had killed him, left him there. The fox somehow got back to his set, and said to himself: “That son of a devil, the farmer, well all the same he may have duped me but it's all the same/I'll put the stones back in the bag/I'll make [illegible].”

“So then,” said M S. “Did the farmer give you the cockerels?”

“No,” said M L. “I saw him in the field. He should bring them tomorrow.”

The next day at midday the fox went to the farmer's stable, got the plough back, and took it to his set.

“Well,” said M S. “You have the plough instead of the cockerels.”

“That rogue of a farmer,” said the fox, “he didn't want to give them to me, and I stole the plough.”

When the farmer learned the fox had stolen the plough. He was mad with him. He swore and raged, promising he would get his own back. There was a donkey nearby,¹³³³ who came to see the farmer.

“What's the matter, farmer? You don't seem very happy this afternoon?”

“Let's not talk about it!” said the farmer. “There's a fox over there, under the stream, he brought me a nice plough, and then stole it back from me. And I don't know how to get it back.”

“Would you like me to bring it back?” said the donkey.

“Ha! You haven't got the cunning,” said the farmer.

“You have that big pile of oats in front of the barn. Let me eat my fill, and I'll bring you back the plough tomorrow evening.”

“Off you go,” said the farmer. “But if you don't bring it back, watch out for my rod!”

The donkey went straight for the oats, and ate oats, ate oats, fell asleep on top of them. The farmer took a metal bar and hit the donkey with it.

“Ah, you little devil/son of a bitch!” said the farmer. “Is that how you fetch my plough?”

The donkey woke up and shook himself down.

“I'm going, I'm going,” he said.

“Well, hurry up. Otherwise there's more where that came from!”

Off he went, to just outside the fox's set, and then he played dead. After a little while, M Senguinēt¹³³⁴ came out and saw this shapeless lump,¹³³⁵ she didn't know what it was. She went closer very slowly, very curious¹³³⁶ as to what it was.

“Well then,” she said. “It's the farmer's donkey, that is. How the devil did he come to die here? It doesn't matter, if I can get it inside we will have meat for the whole winter.”

M L seized it by the leg and pulled, and pulled, and pulled, couldn't move it. He said to M S:

1331 'Tan de palades', literally, 'so many shovelfuls'.

1332 'Plen de tout aco', literally 'had his fill of all of that'.

1333 'Sous plé', literally 'on the plain', which the editors of the *OC* take to be a reference to the flat area between the farm buildings known in the Grande-Lande as the *airial*.

1334 Henri seems to have become confused about “M S” and “M L” at this point, mixing them up.

1335 'Mourmoc'. This language of shapeless bodies is strikingly reminiscent of the werewolves discussed in Chapter Six.

1336 'Empipiatjat' can mean very curious about, or slightly troubled by.

“Come and help me,” he said. “I’ve found the farmer’s donkey dead in front of our set. If we can get it inside we can salt it, we can use it to make good soup for the winter.”

M S came to help, started pulling, pulling, pulling, but couldn’t move it. The donkey let them get on with it, did nothing. They were unable¹³³⁷ to get it out of there.

“Wait,” said the fox. “I have an idea. Let me get the plough and the yoke. I’ll attach it to the donkey’s head and use it to drag it in.”

Mad. S went to find the plough, attached it firmly to the donkey’s head, then the fox went on the other side and M S attached it to the donkey. The fox pulled, and pulled, and pulled, the donkey shifted slightly.

“Pull, pull!” said M S. “You made the donkey move.”

And the fox pulled.

“Humph!” he said. “I can’t do it, all the same.”

“Well then,” said the donkey. “If you can’t do it, I’ll have a go.”

He got up, pulled the fox along behind him like a devil, and M S had yoked him on so well that the donkey dragged both fox and plough off.

“Ah! My boy,” said the farmer. “Here you are! Wait! Wait! You stole the plough from me.”

The man took a metal bar. Blows [fell] on the fox. He left him for dead, and said to the donkey: “Well then, since you brought me the plough, go back to those oats.”

During the night, the fox somehow managed to get back up, crippled as he was, and go back to the set.

“Well then,” said M S. “How did you escape?”

“Let’s not talk about it,” said the fox. “Despite all these misfortunes, I still had one piece of incredible good fortune. I pulled the yoke so hard that it broke. When the farmer saw me, he set the dogs after me, and I had to go and hide in our old set... But it doesn’t matter,” he said, “I won’t always have such luck. We should move somewhere else.”¹³³⁸

They packed their odds and ends, crossing a stream, they drowned.

[Told by] H[enri] Vidal, who got it from Dudon from Trensacq, 65 years old.

1337 'Embarrassats'.

1338 'Que cau muda de péyis' literally means to change country.

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Fig. one: Félix Arnaudin (1844-1921), self-portrait c.1874.



Fig. two: Félix Arnaud (1844-1921), c.1900.



Fig. three: Marie Darlanne (1856-1911), c.1874.

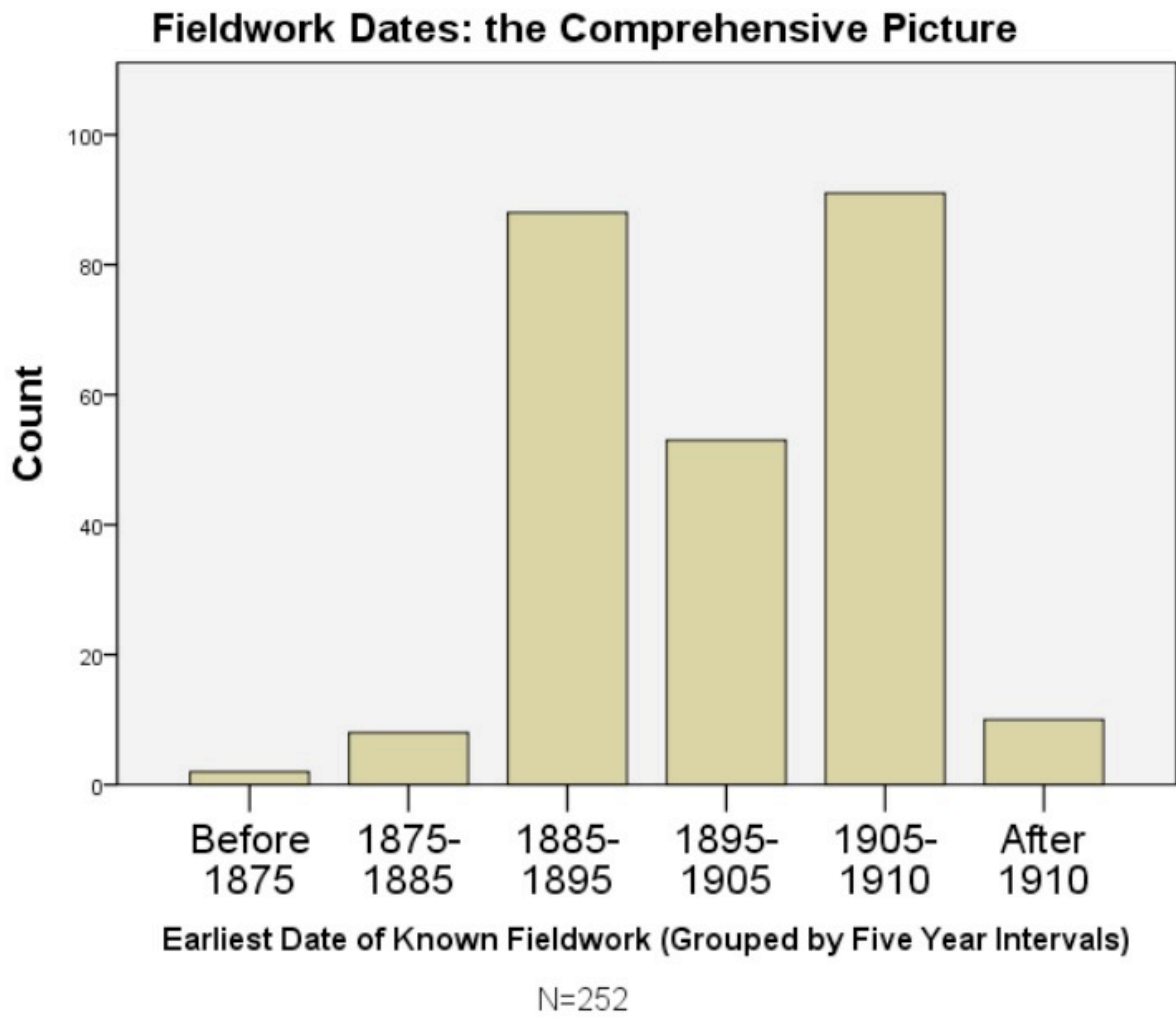


Fig. four: Fieldwork Dates: the Comprehensive Picture (Earliest Date of Known Fieldwork).

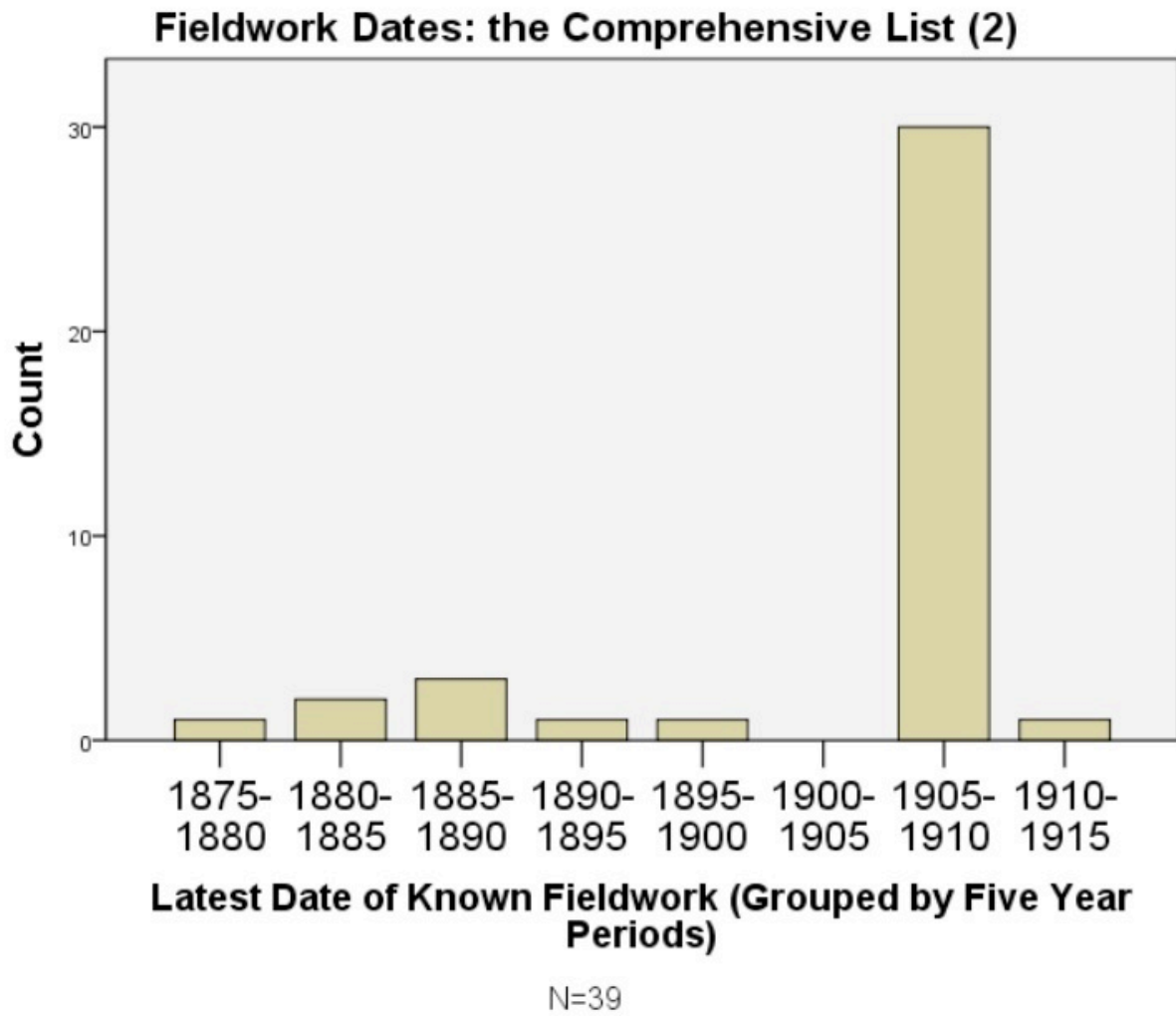


Fig. five: Fieldwork Dates: the Comprehensive Picture II (Latest Date of Known Fieldwork).

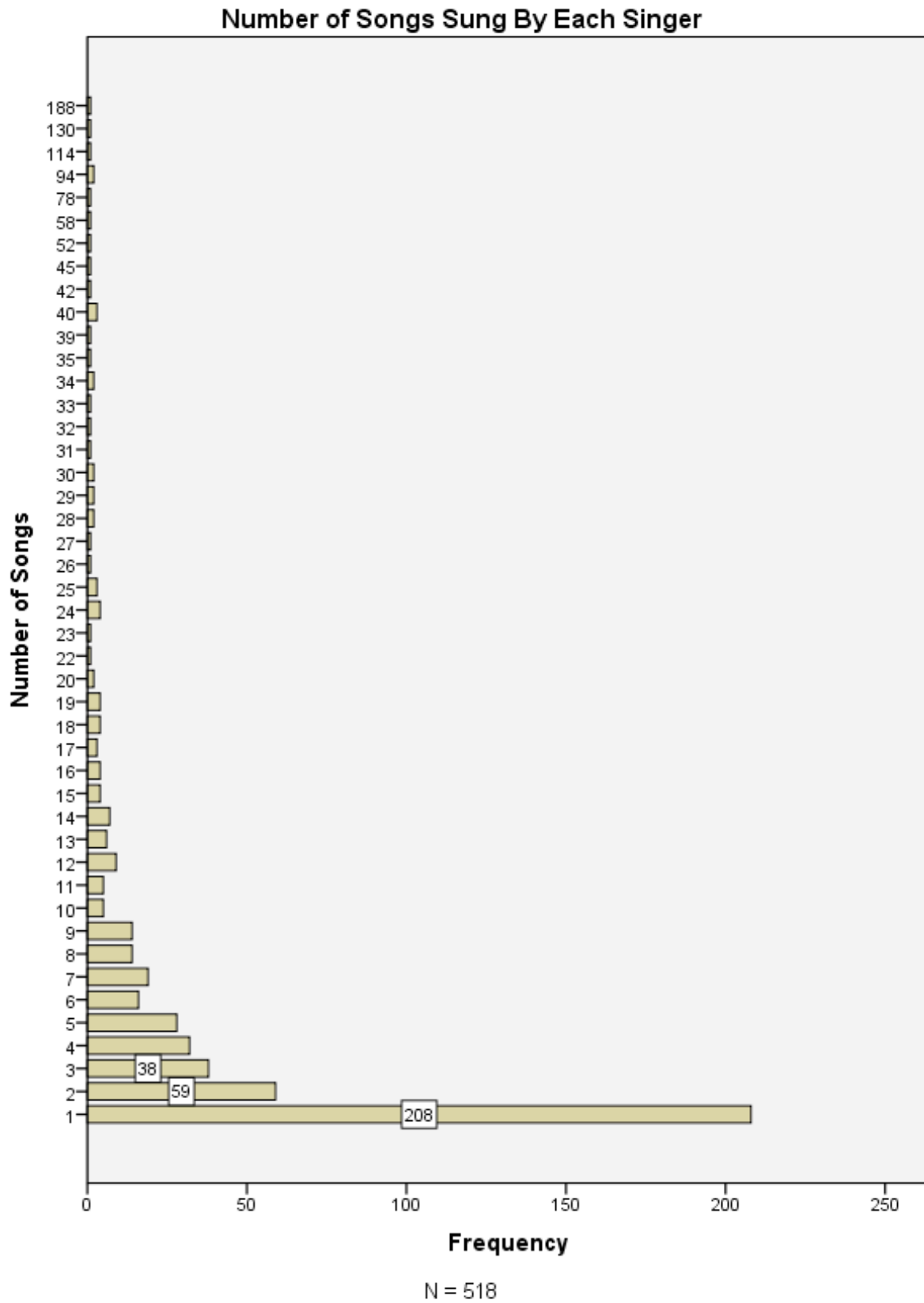


Fig. six: Number of Songs Sung by Each Singer.

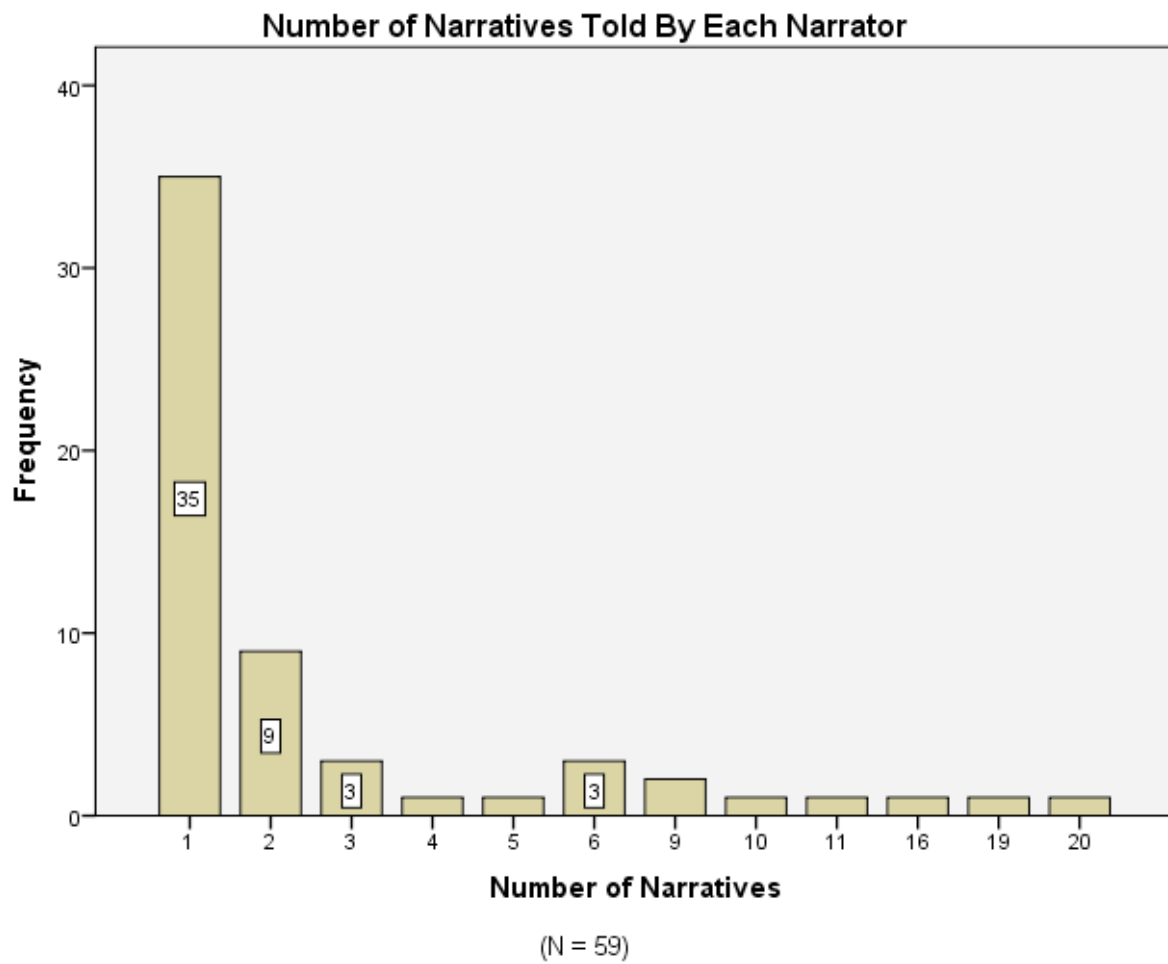


Fig. seven: Number of Narratives Told by Each Narrator.

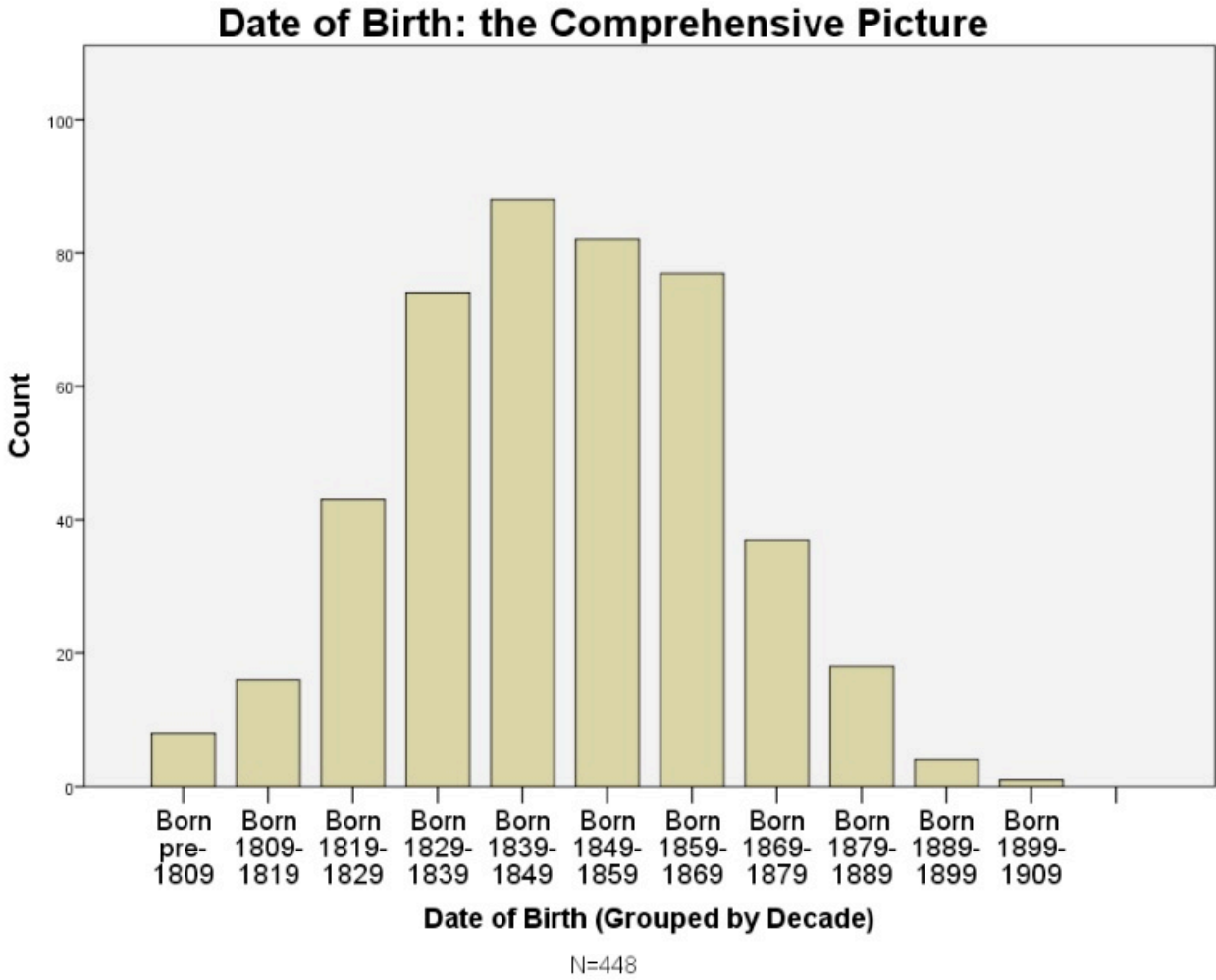


Fig. eight: Date of Birth: The Comprehensive Picture.

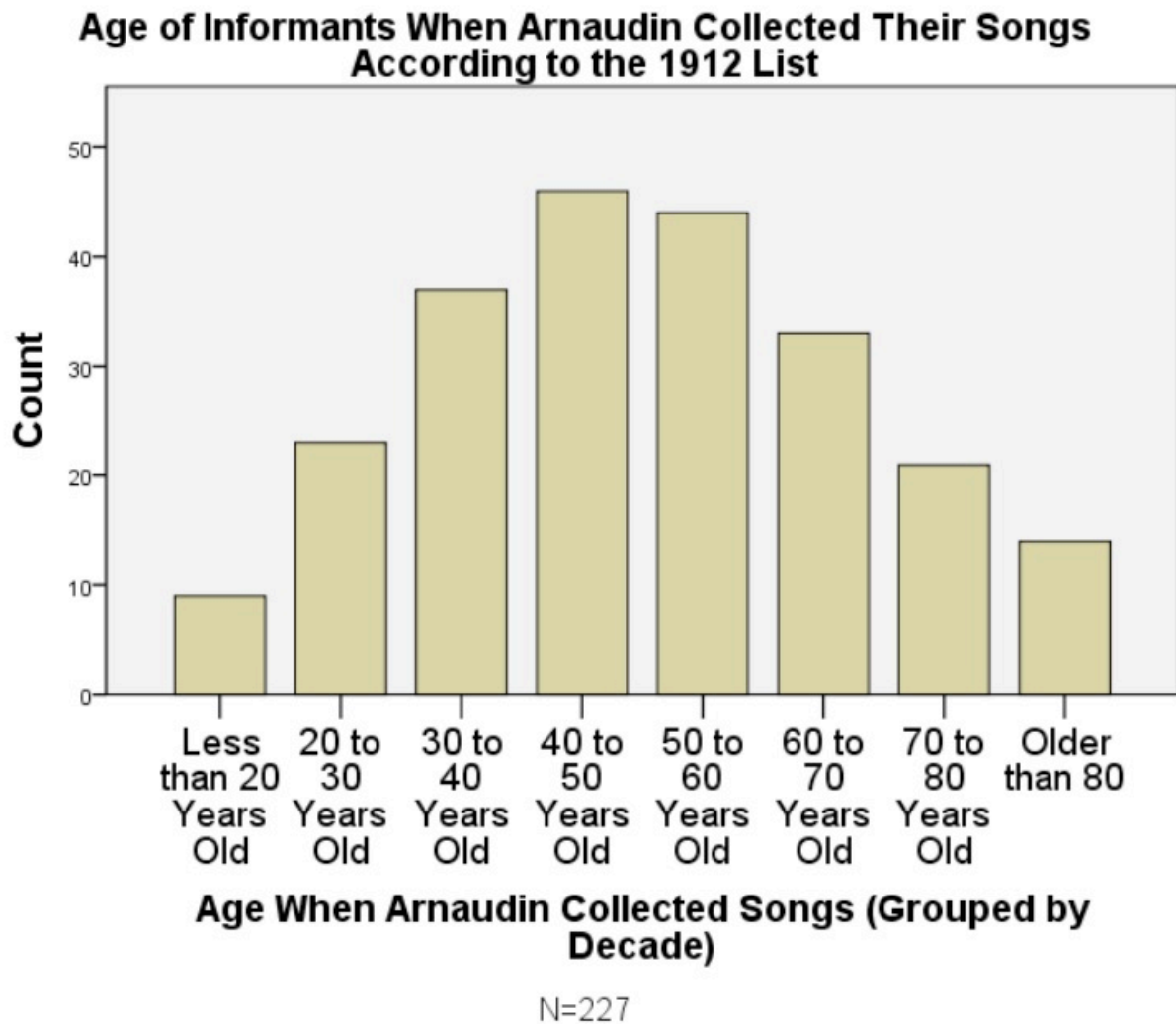


Fig. nine: Age of Informant When Arnaudin Collected Songs According to the 1912 List.

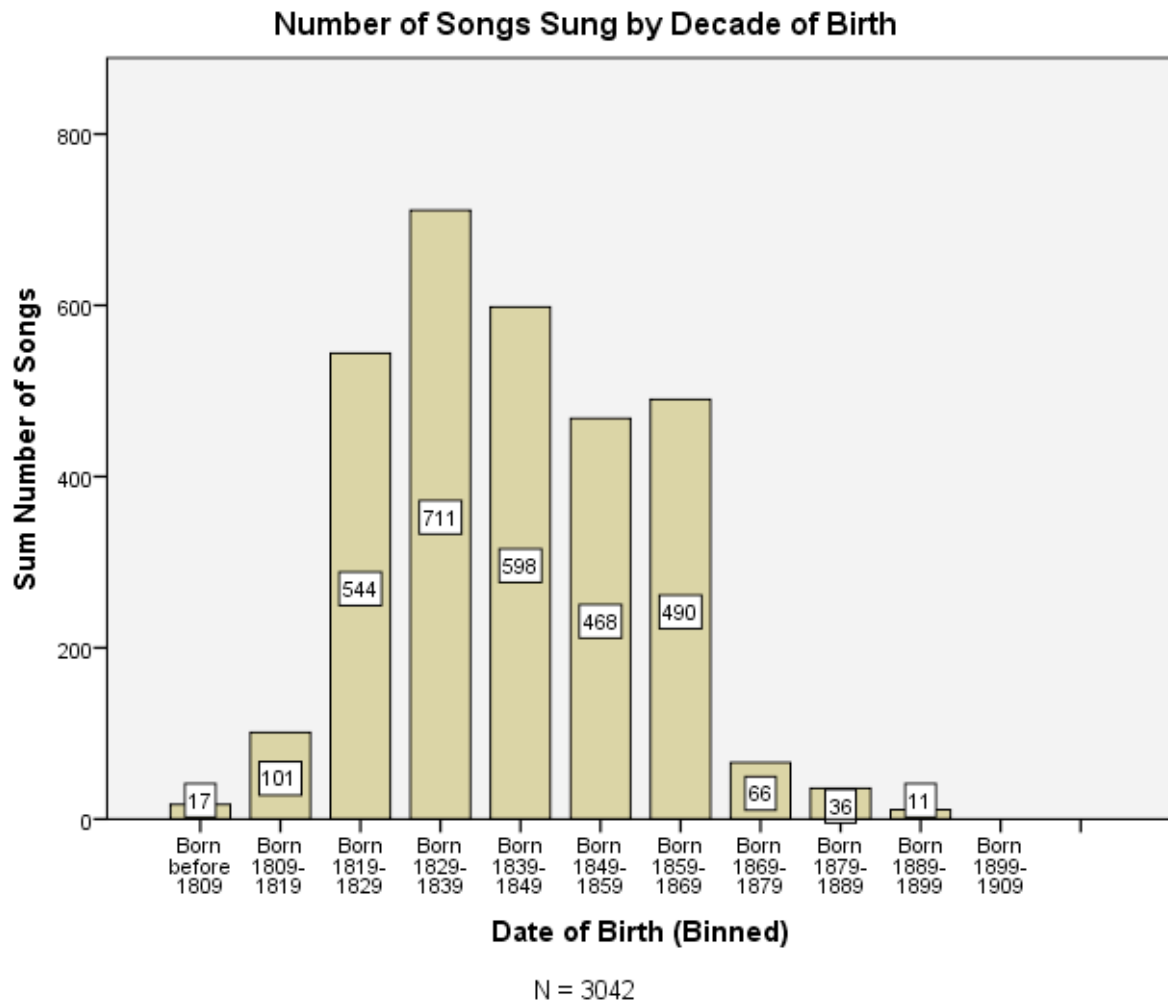


Fig. ten: Number of Songs Sung by Decade of Birth.

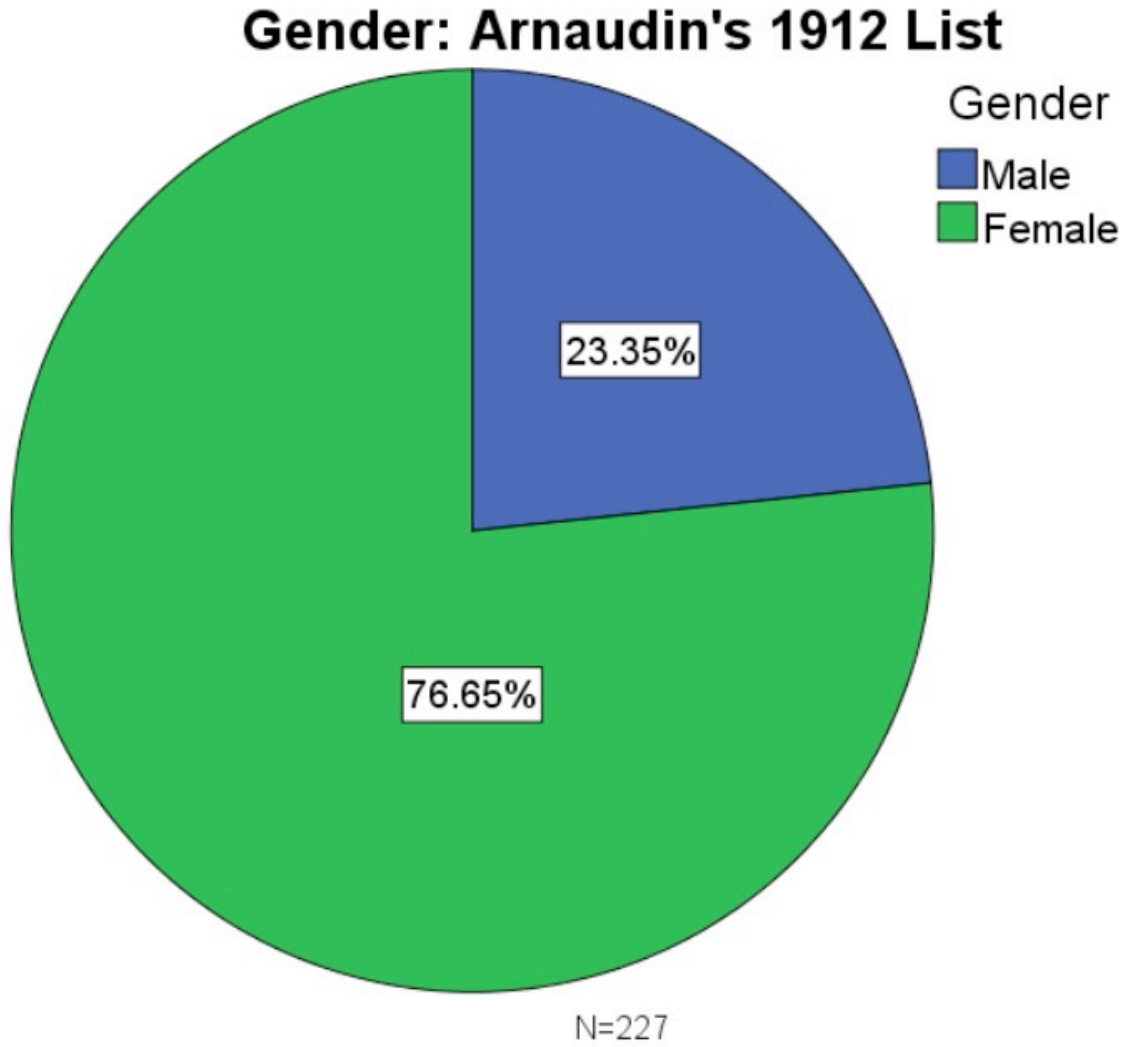


Fig. eleven: Gender of Arnaudin's Singers According to His 1912 List.

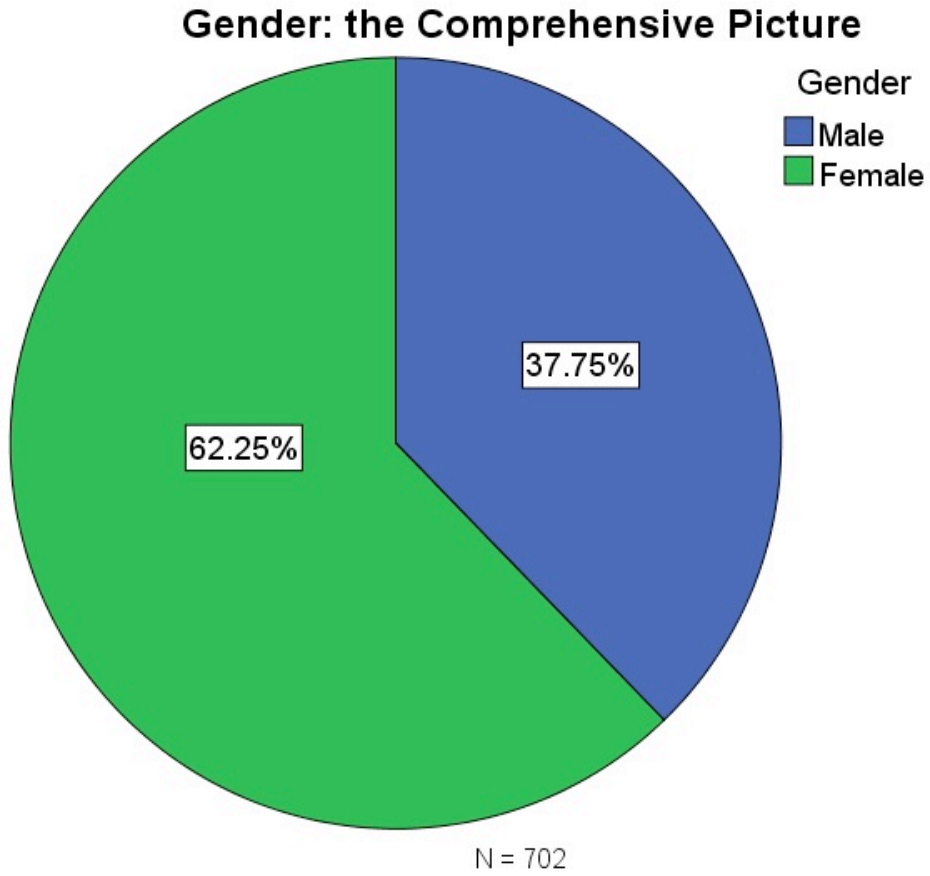


Fig. twelve: Gender: The Comprehensive Picture.

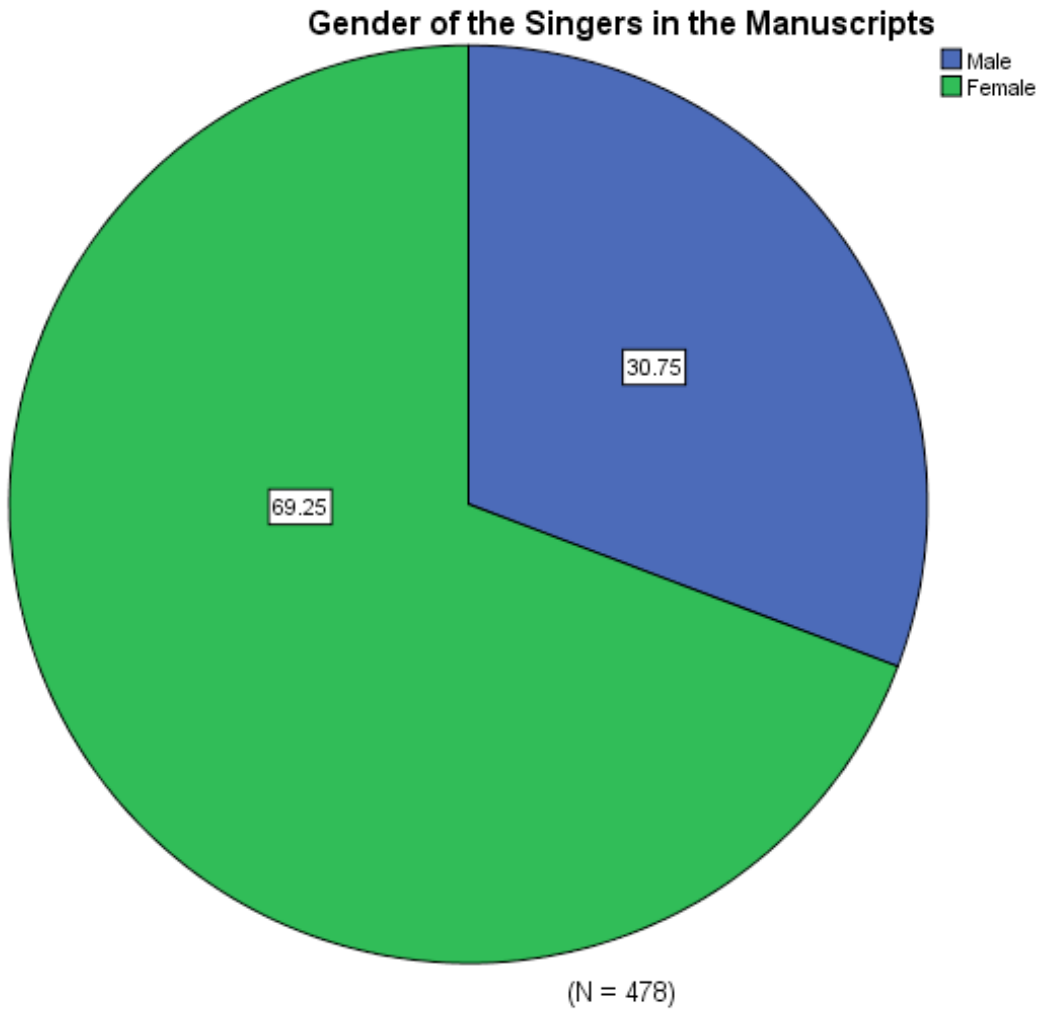


Fig. thirteen: Gender of Singers in the Manuscripts.

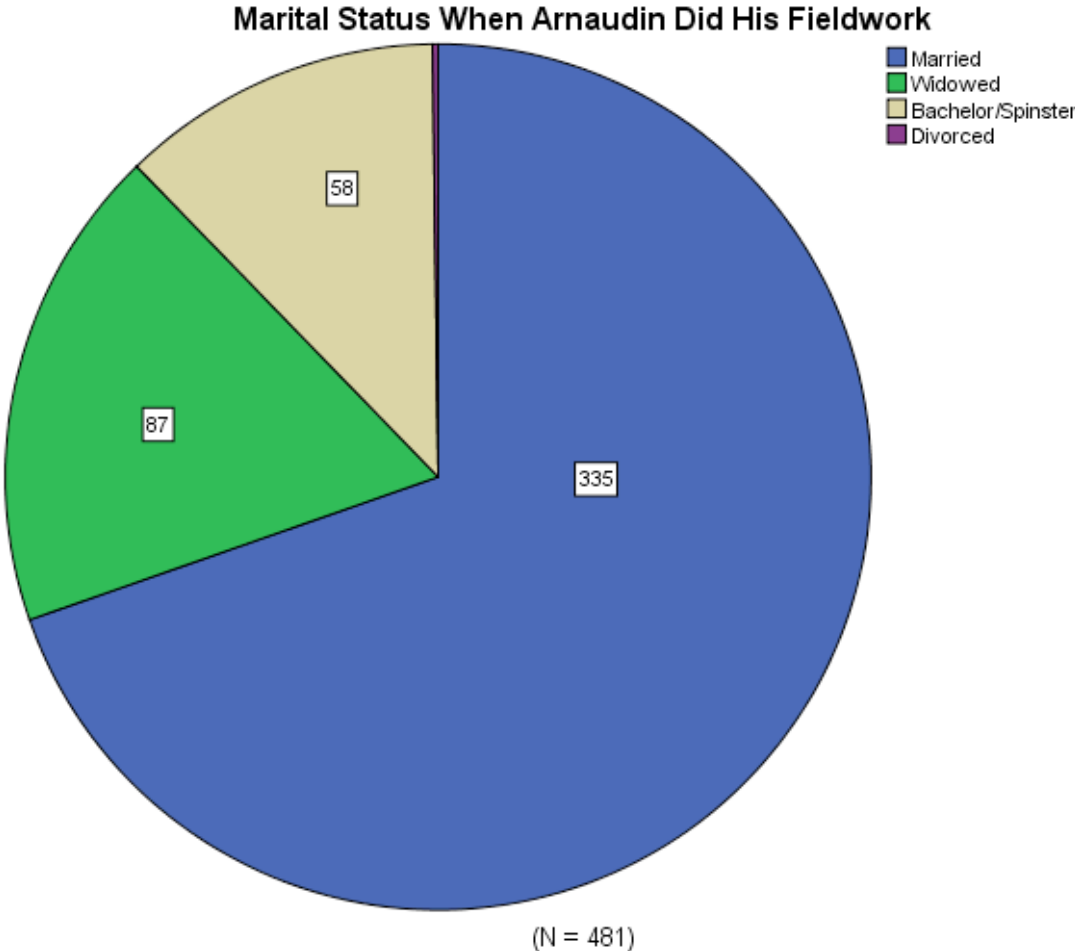


Fig. fourteen: Marital Status When Arnaudin Did His Fieldwork.

Total Number of Songs Arnaudin Collected by Marital Status of the Informants

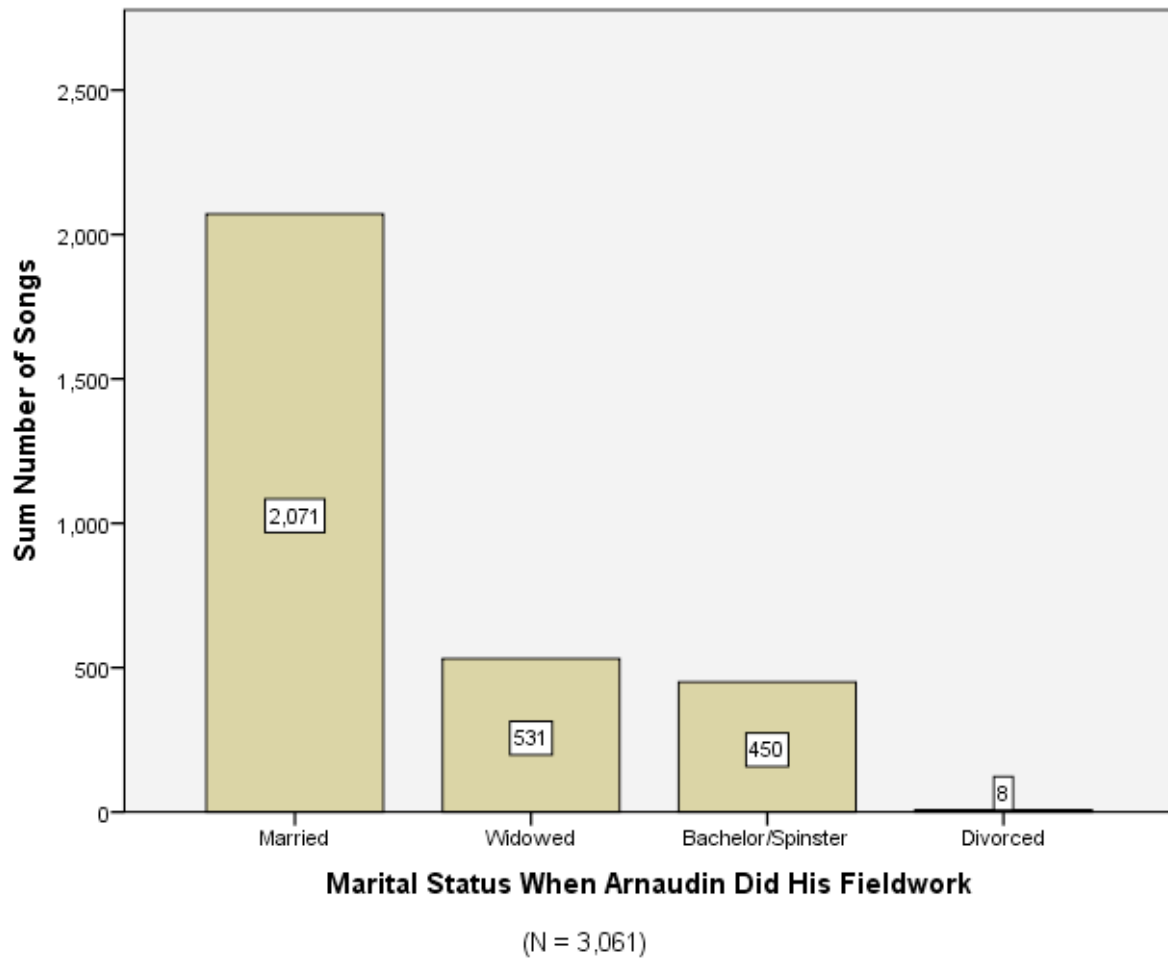


Fig. fifteen: Total Number of Songs Arnaudin Collected by Marital Status of the Informants.

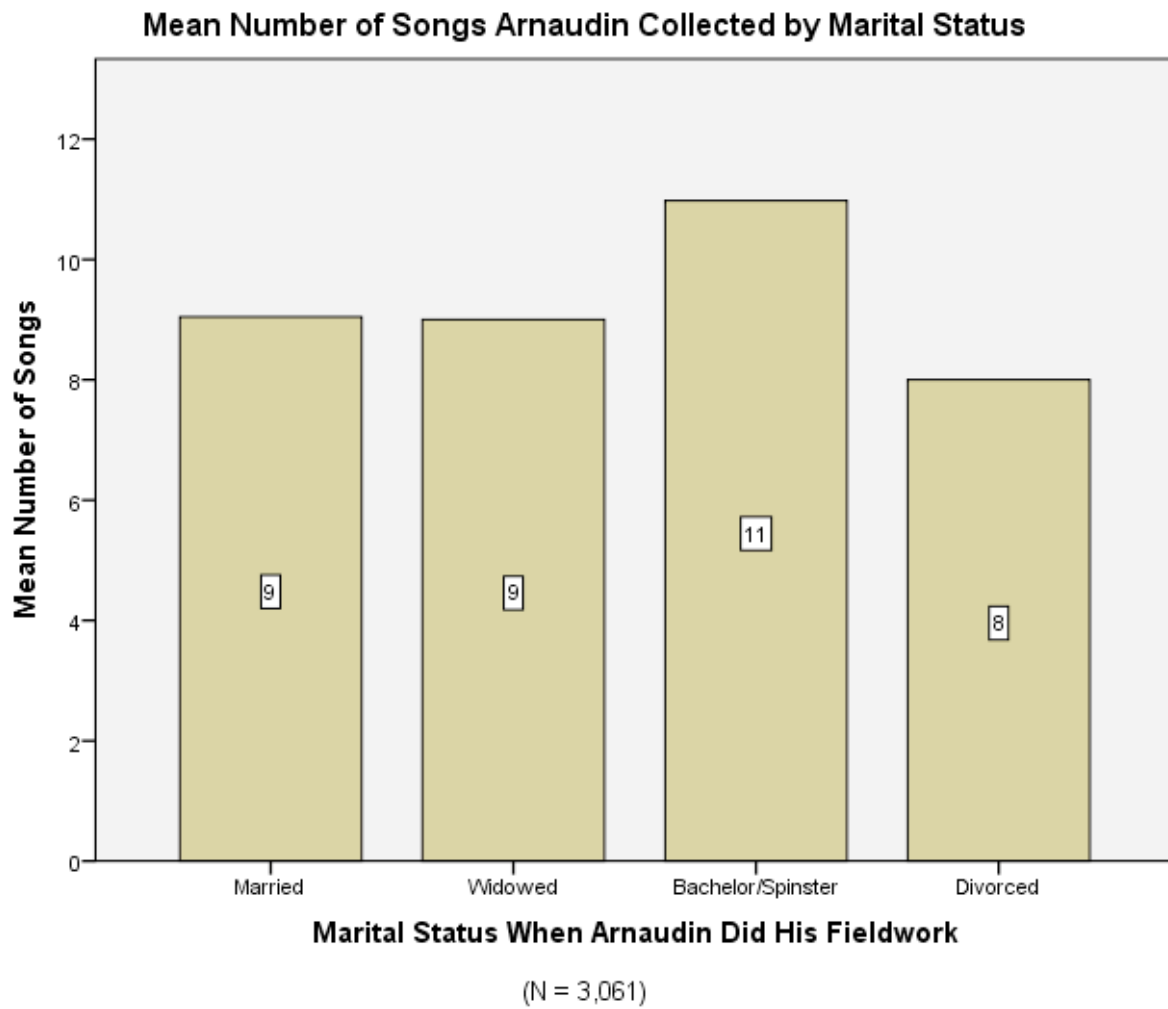


Fig. sixteen: Mean Number of Songs Arnaudin from Each Informant by Marital Status.

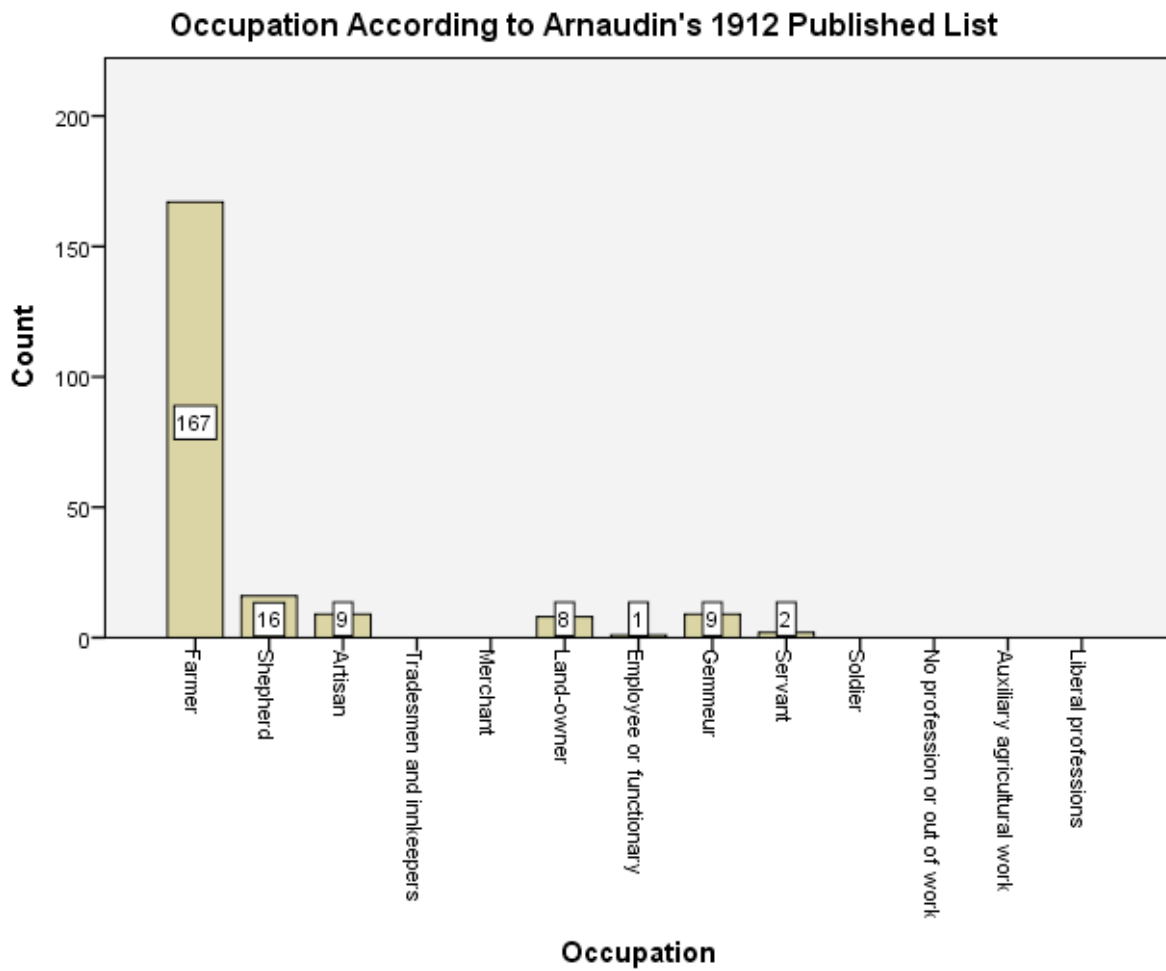


Fig. seventeen: Occupation of Arnaudin's Singers According to his 1912 List.

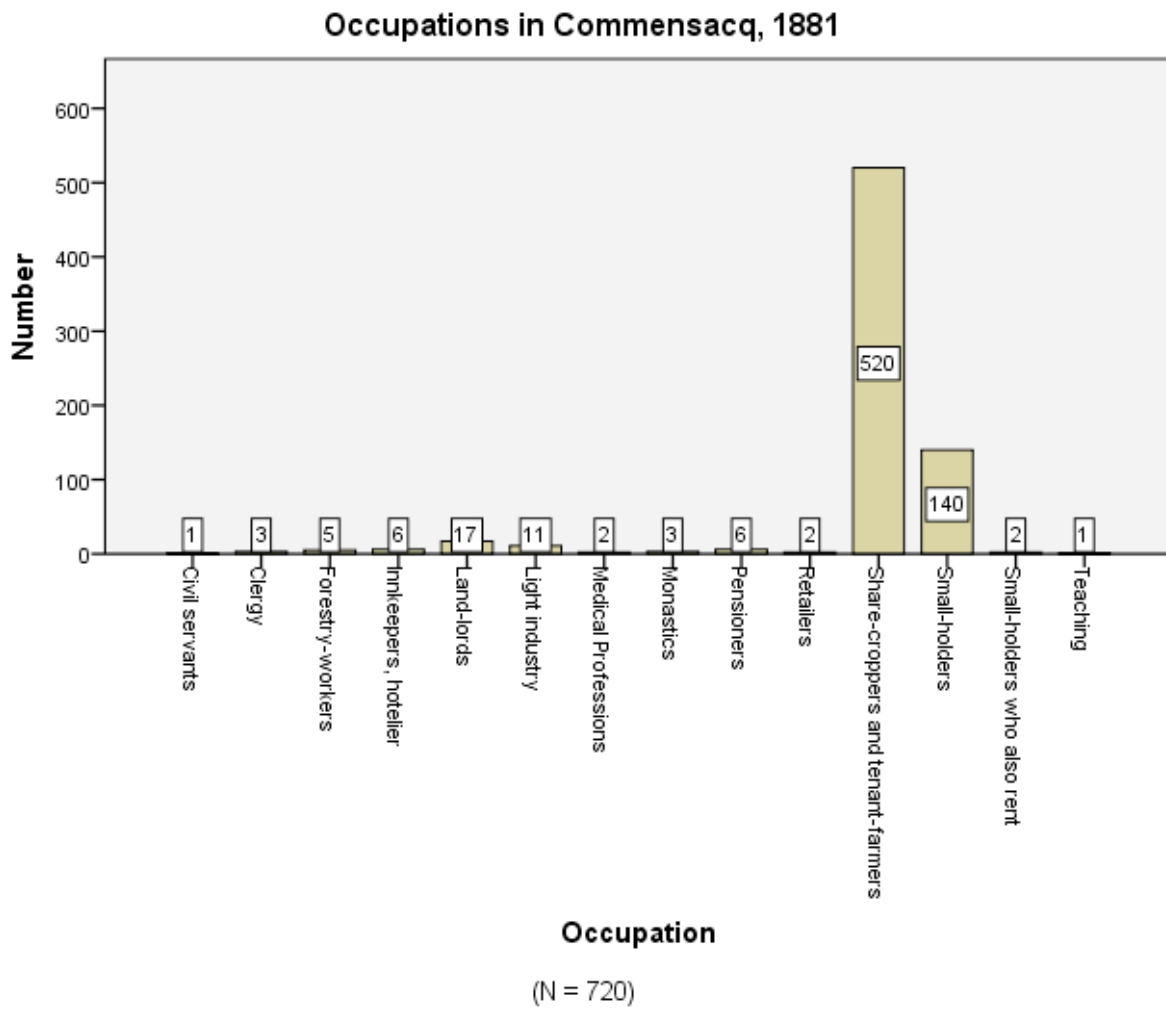


Fig. eighteen: Occupations in the Village of Commensacq, 1881.

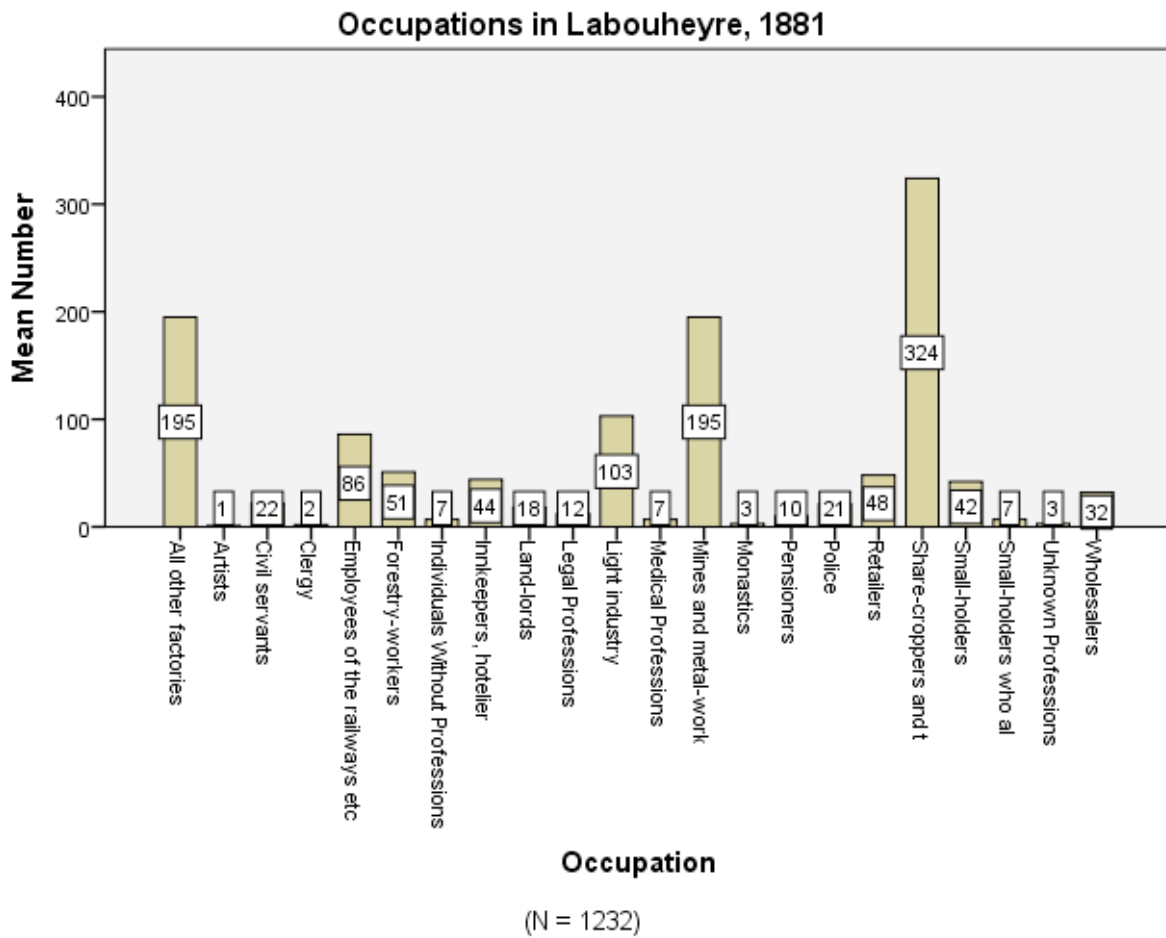


Fig. nineteen : Occupations in the Nascent Town of Labouheyre, 1881.

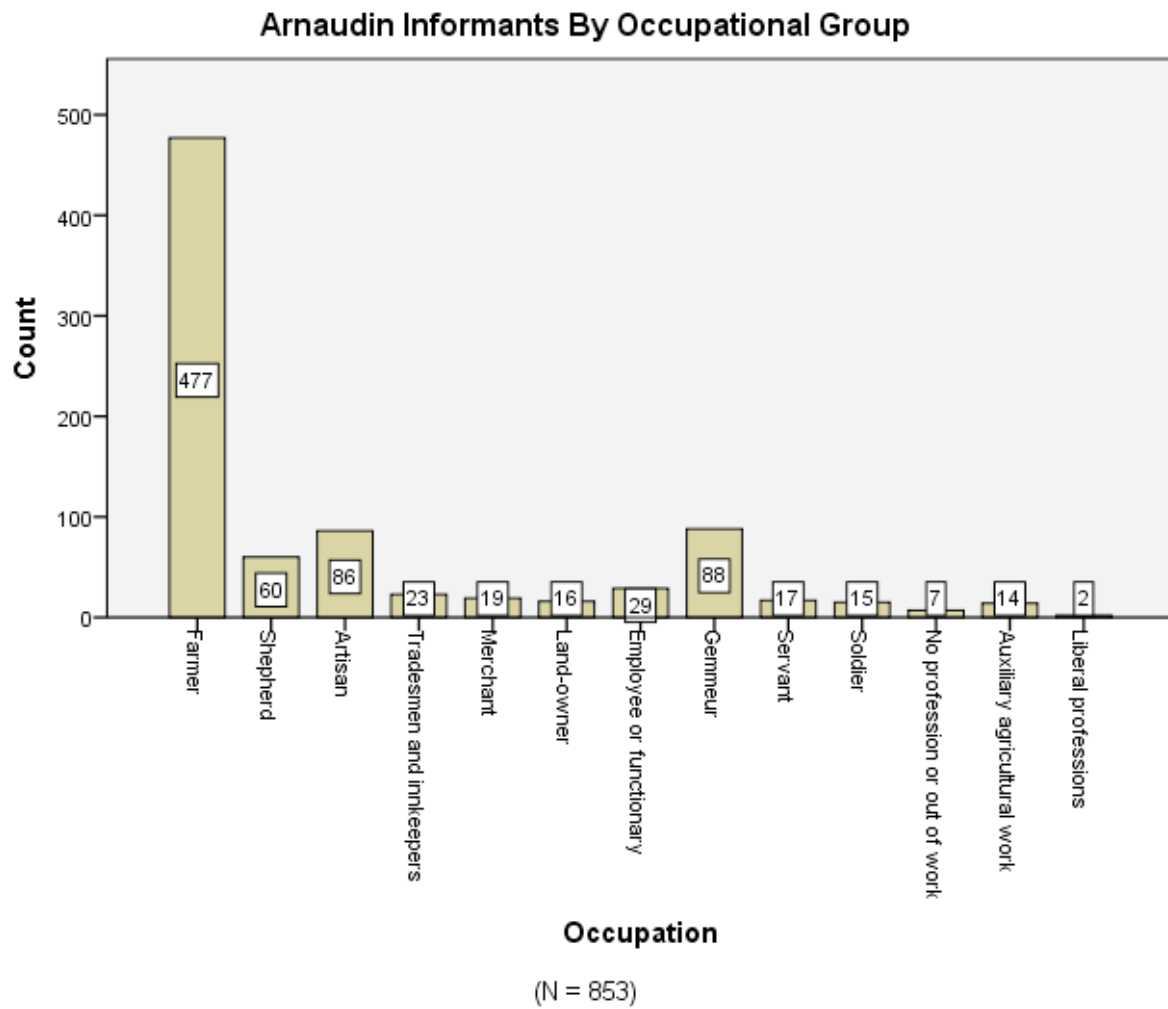


Fig. twenty: Arnaudin Informants by Occupational Group.

Total Number of Songs Arnaudin Collected from Different Occupational Groups

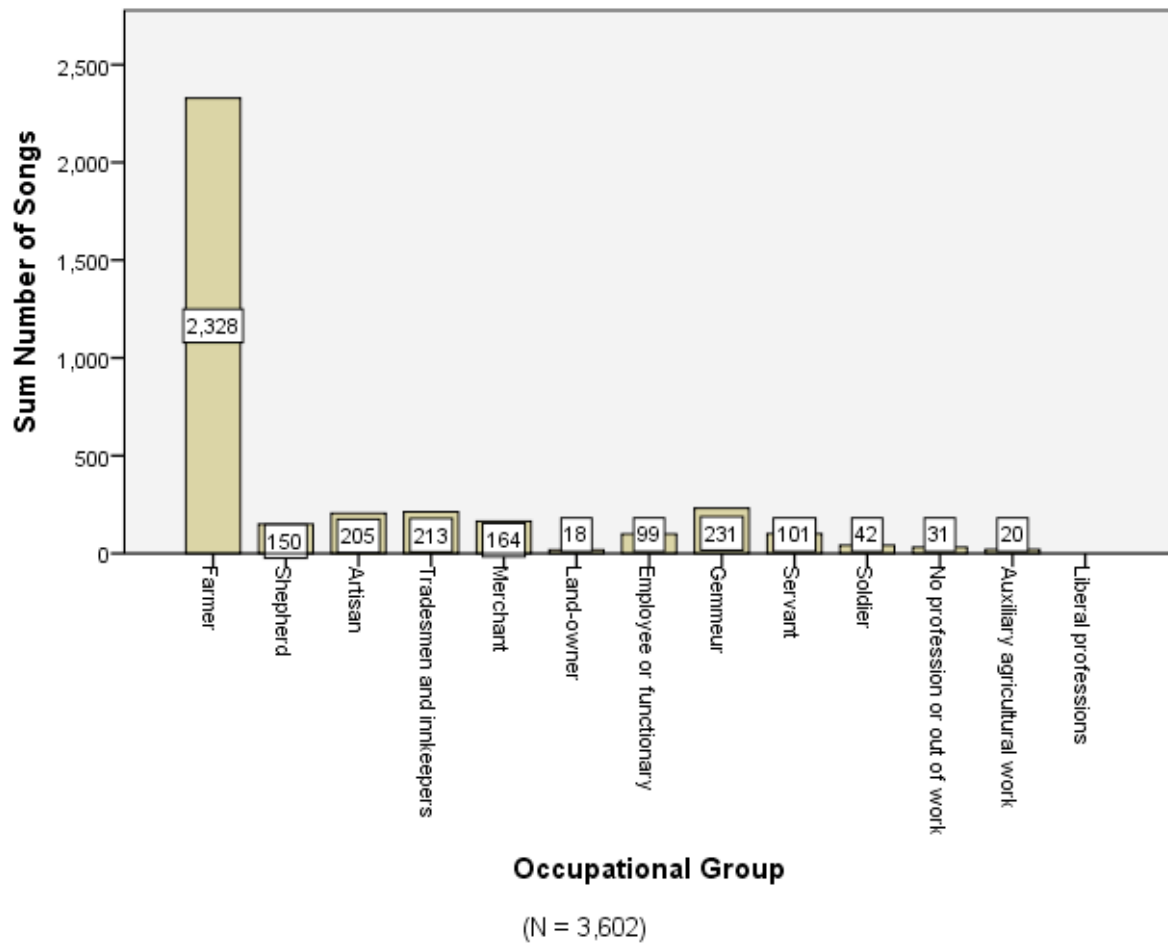


Fig. twenty-one: Total Number of Songs Arnaudin Collected from Different Occupational Groups.

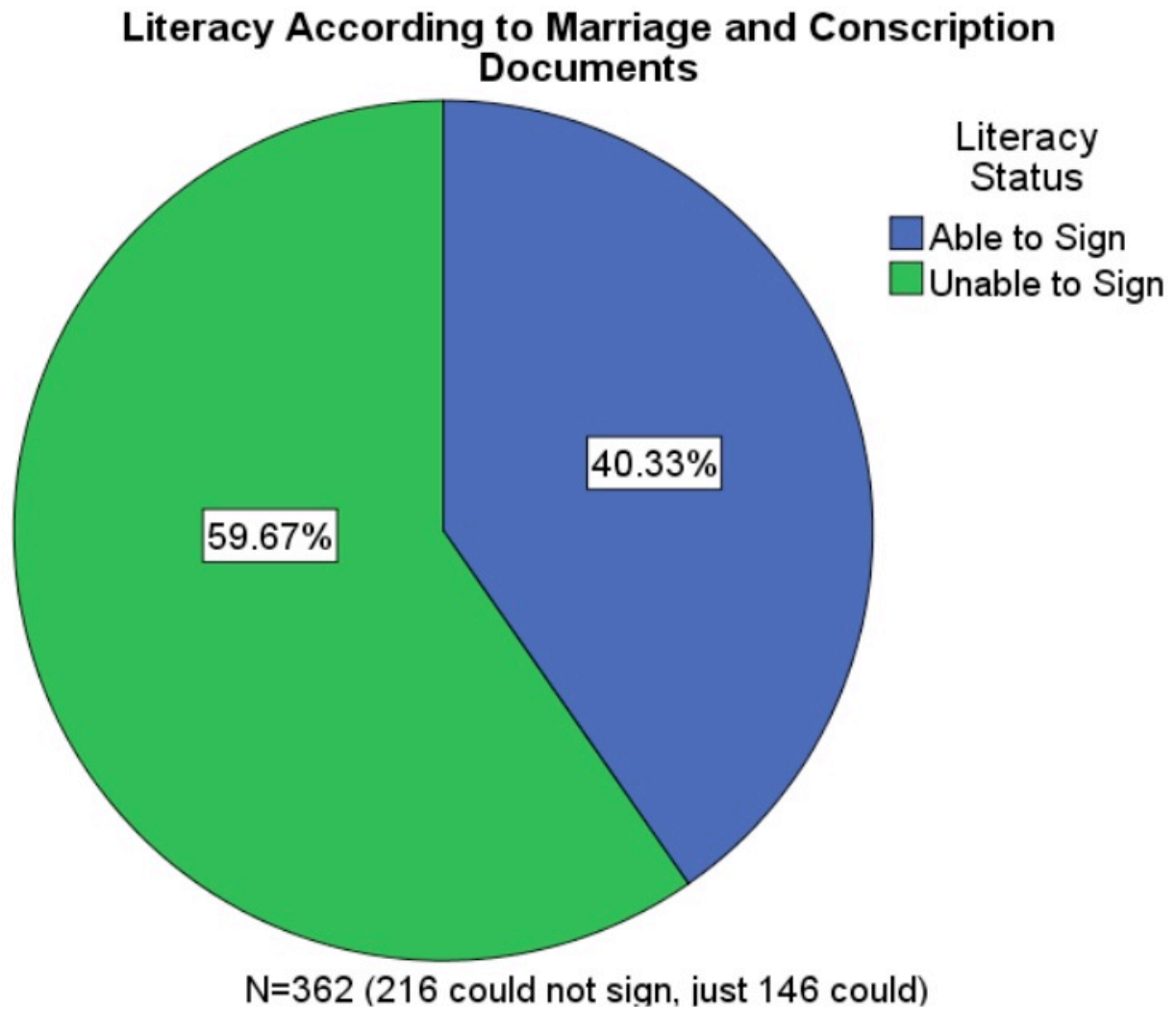


Fig. twenty two: Literacy of the Arnaudin Informants.

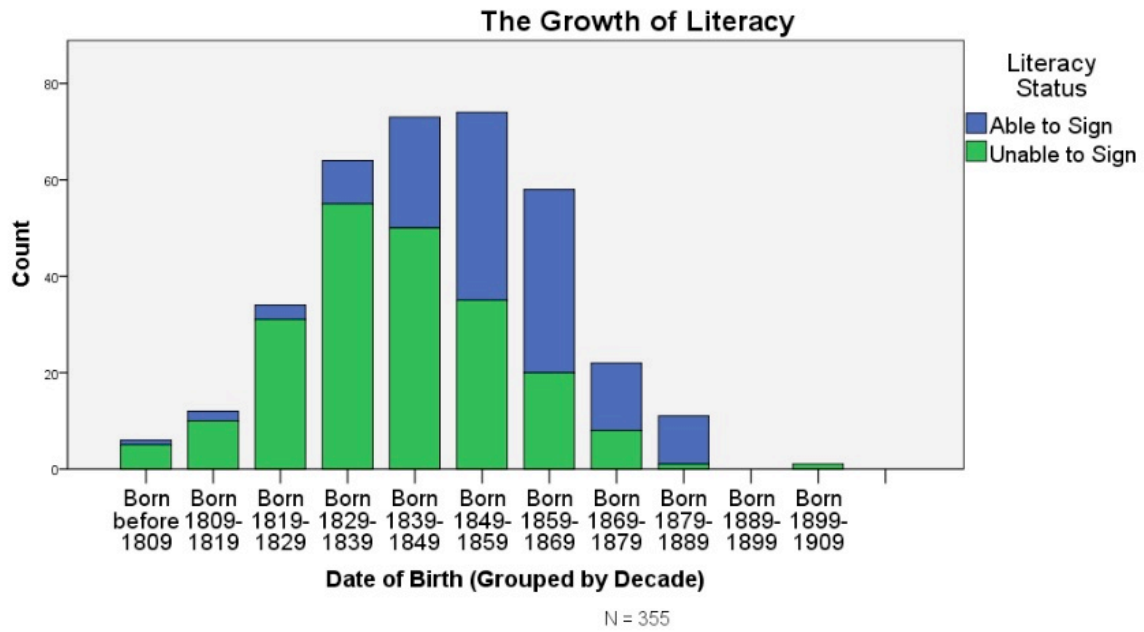


Fig. twenty three: The Growth of Literacy Among Arnaudin's Informants.

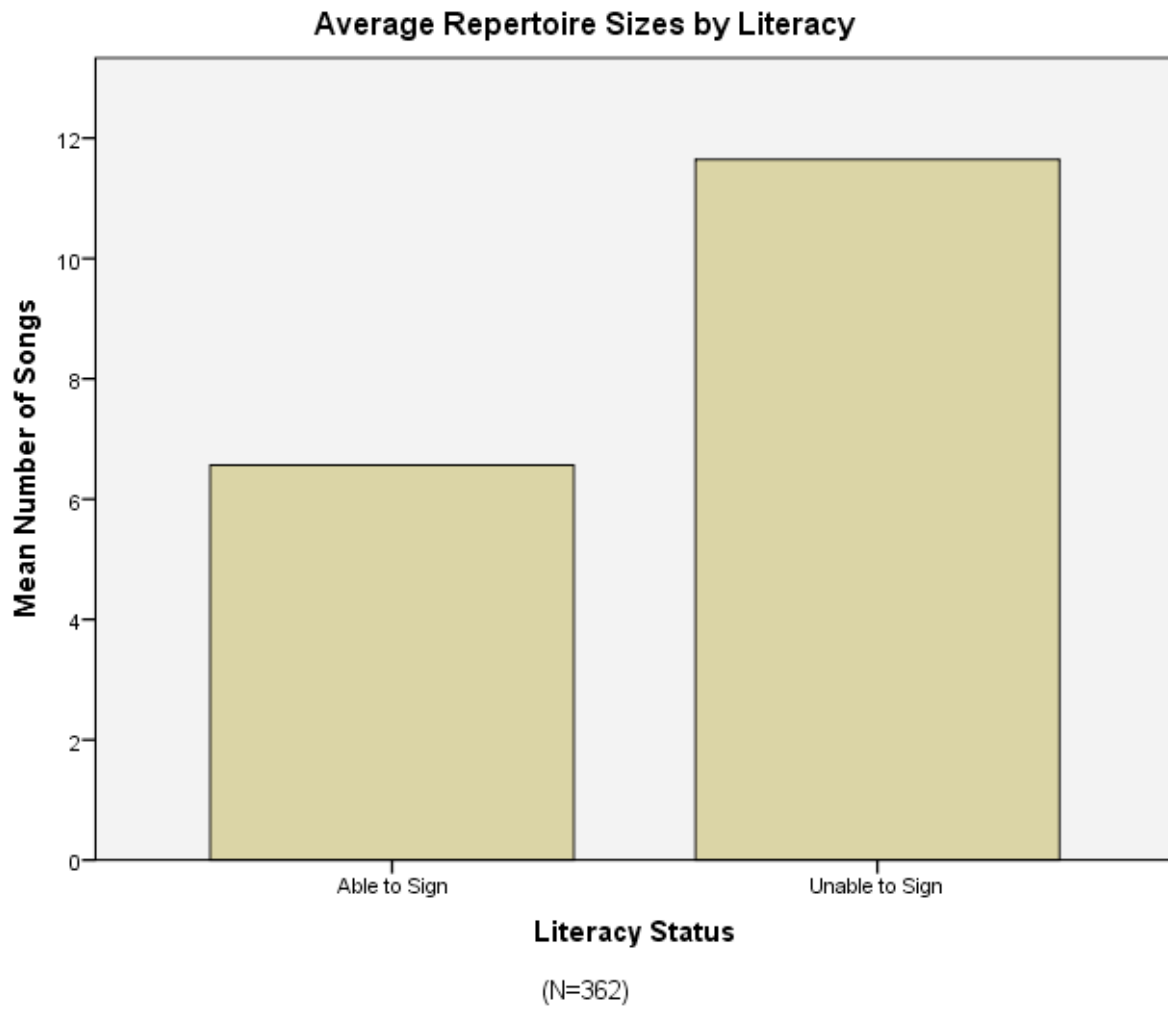


Fig. twenty-four: Average Repertoire Sizes by Literacy Status.

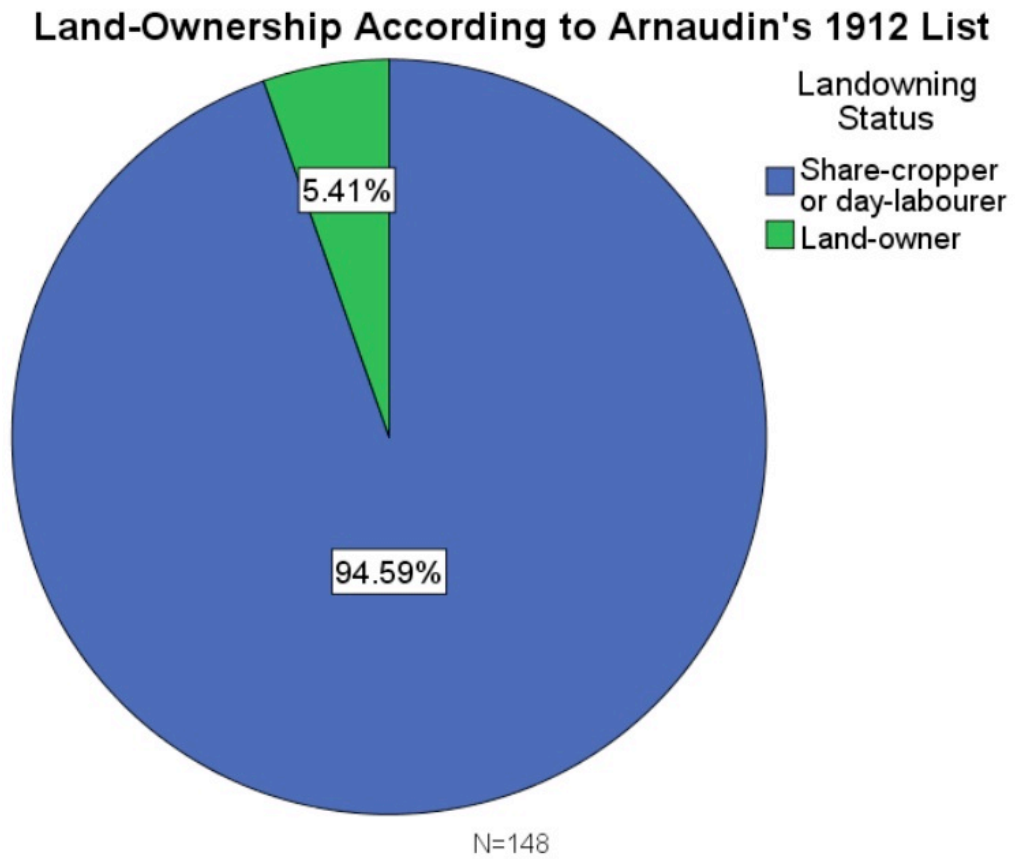


Fig. twenty five: Land-Ownership According to Arnaudin's 1912 list.

Landowning Status: the Comprehensive Picture

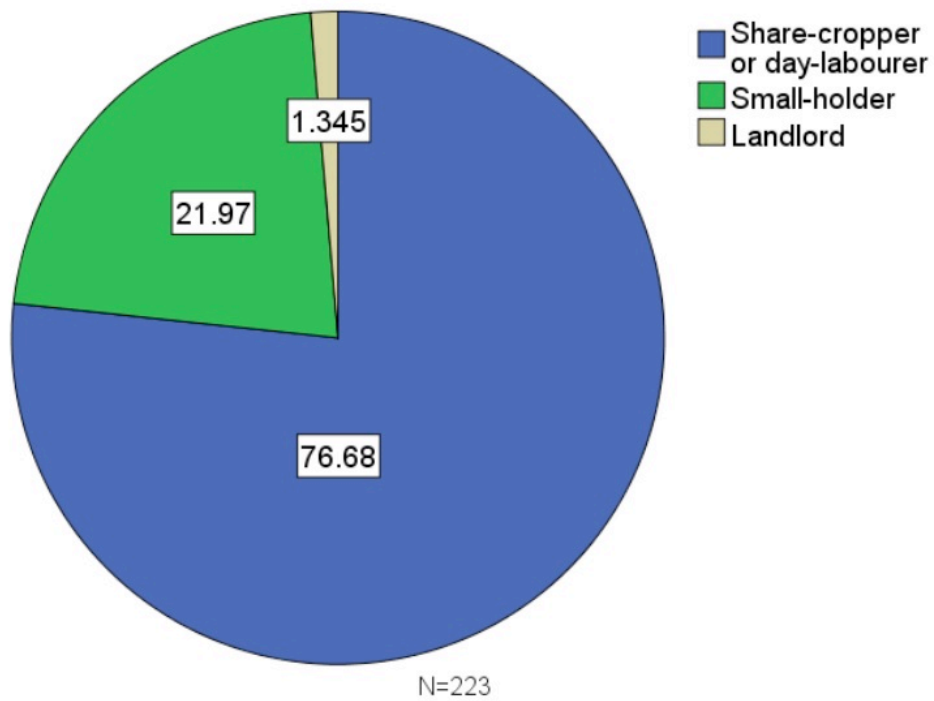


Fig. twenty six: Land-ownership, the Comprehensive Picture.



Fig. twenty seven: labourers, bent at work. Arnaudin included a shepherd on his stilts to complete the picture.



Fig. twenty-eight: Mariane de Mariolan (1822-1916), c.1900.



Fig. twenty-nine: The open moorland. Since Arnaudin's photographs were all taken after the 1857 law was passed, he had to actively seek out open moors such as this one to document the old landscape.



Fig. thirty: A pine plantation, with beehives. As a rule, Arnaudin did not photograph the newest plantations, which were much denser than this, and planted in straight lines.



Fig. thirty-one: The Saubesty family, c. 1885. Jean is on the far left and Babé on the right.



Fig. thirty-two: Women dressed in black, wading across a puddle

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