

Regionalism and Folklore

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INTRODUCTION: ORIGINS AND DEFINITIONS OF FOLKLORE STUDIES

According to the American Folklore Society, 'Folklore is the traditional art, literature, knowledge, and practice that is disseminated largely through oral communication and behavioral example'.¹ The term embraces genres of oral literature such as folktales, folksongs, legends, proverbs and riddles, but it also extends to practices such as traditional drama, dance and costume. It is not unusual to encounter terms such as folk medicine, folk religion and folk belief... and one can also include other traditional aspects of everyday life such as food, vernacular architecture and handicrafts, if they 'are generally maintained without benefit of formal instruction or institutional direction'.²

Over the course of the twentieth century scholars have sometimes distinguished between oral lore and belief — that is folklore — and the more material aspects of tradition which were termed either 'ethnography', 'ethnology' or 'folk life'. In Finland and Estonia, for example, the two subjects have their own university chairs, departments and journals.³ The shift from folklore studies towards ethnology can be seen in other countries, for example in Lamberto Loria's Museo di Etnografia italiana founded in 1906 in Florence and the French Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires founded in 1937.⁴ Their instigators criticized folklorists as amateurs who cherry-picked the most digestible elements of tradition and failed to contextualize oral culture within other aspects of folk life. Ethnography often had closer ties to state institutions, compared with the local participatory enthusiasm which characterizes folklore studies.⁵ However, in practice the fields overlap, as do their practitioners and their publics.

If 'man is... a storytelling animal'⁶ then folklore has existed throughout human history, but the separate study of folklore is a more recent innovation. The term itself was only coined in 1846 by the English antiquarian and admirer of the Grimm brothers William Thoms as a replacement for the phrase 'popular antiquities'.⁷ Early modern antiquarians had already engaged in activities that look like folkloric research, such as recording superstitions, calendar customs and historical legends associated with landscape features,⁸ but consistent scholarly attention to oral culture can be dated to the ballad revival of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, exemplified by James Macpherson's *Fragments of Ancient Poetry, collected in the Highlands of*

¹ <http://www.afsnet.org/?page=whatisfolklore>. Accessed 27 March 2017.

² U.S. Congress, American Folklife Preservation Act, Law 94-201, 2 January 1976.

³ See Matti Räsänen, *Pioneers: The History of Finnish Ethnology* (Helsinki: Studia Fennica, 1992).

⁴ Sandra Puccini, *L'itala gente dalle molte vite: Lamberto Loria e la Mostra di Etnografia italiana del 1911* (Rome: Meltemi, 2005); Daniel Sherman, "'Peoples Ethnographic': Objects, Museums, and the Colonial Inheritance of French Ethnology", *French Historical Studies* 27:3 (2004): 669-703.

⁵ In Russia, for example, ethnography received state support: Roland Cvetkovski and Alexis Hofmeister (eds), *An Empire of Others: Creating Ethnographic Knowledge in Imperial Russia and the USSR* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2014).

⁶ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011 [1981]), p. 250.

⁷ Jonathan Roper, 'Thoms and the Unachieved "Folk-Lore of England"', *Folklore*, 118:2 (2007): 203-16.

⁸ Alexandra Walsham, 'Recording Superstition in Early Modern Britain: The Origins of Folklore', *Past & Present* 199 Supplement 3 (2008): 178-206.

Scotland (1760) and Johann Gottfried Herder's *Volkslieder* (1778/9).⁹ Interest grew in the Romantic period and beyond, in part because of the influence of the brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, who largely initiated the fashion for recording folktales.¹⁰ However, the emergence of folklore as a fully-fledged scholarly activity, with the panoply of national and international societies, learned journals and international conferences, is almost contemporaneous with the start of the 'long twentieth century' covered in this volume.

Folklore societies were set up in Britain in 1878 (The Folk-Lore Society), in Denmark in 1883 (Folkemindesamfundet) in Paris in 1885 (Société des traditions populaires), and in Switzerland in 1896 (der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde). Journals soon followed: the Italian journal *Archivio per lo studio delle tradizioni popolari* first appeared in 1882, the Dutch journal *Volkskunde* in 1888, and the Jewish folklore journal *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Jüdische Volkskunde* in 1898.¹¹ The first official university position in folklore was given to Moltke Moe at Christiania (now Oslo) University in 1886; the next was awarded to Kaarle Krohn at Helsinki in 1898.¹² The first international congress took place in Paris in 1889; the second in London in 1891. It is possible that, as an academic subject, folklore may not survive the 'long twentieth century', for it has disappeared or been subsumed in many universities that were once leading research centres.

THE RISE OF THE REGION AS FOLKLORE'S DEFAULT GEOGRAPHY

Given that folklore, according to the definition given above, relies on face-to-face communication and directly observed performance, one might imagine that its territorial frame is necessarily local. However, it is inherent in the concept 'tradition' that the elements of lore – such as a riddle or a proverb – have been repeated, and these iterations spread not just through time but also space. Establishing the geographical and temporal limits of a tradition was one of the concerns of academic folklore, though in works meant for popular consumption both are often taken for granted. In the first half of the nineteenth century Romantic writers usually took the nation as their given frame of reference. Herder's influential *Volkslieder* was republished in 1807 as *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern* (Voices of Peoples [or Nations] in Song), and many of the song collectors that followed referred, implicitly or explicitly, to a nation, albeit sometimes one which had yet to establish full territorial sovereignty. Claude Fauriel's *Chants populaires de la Grèce moderne* (1824-5) was an influential trend-setter.¹³ Although the Grimms were willing to identify the regional origins of their stories, in general the first generation of folktale collectors they inspired tended to invoke the national in their titles, for instance Georg von Gaal's *Mährchen der Magyaren* (Folktales of the Hungarians, 1822), Peter Asbjørnsen's and Jørgen Moe's *Norske Folkeeventyr* (Norwegian Folktales, 1841-44), and Alexander Afanasyev's

⁹ William Wilson, 'Herder, Folklore and Romantic Nationalism', *Journal of Popular Culture* 6:4 (1973). 819-35; Renate Schellenberg, 'The Impact of Ossian: Johann Gottfried Herder's Literary Legacy', in Matthew Campbell and Michael Perraudin (eds), *The Voice of the People: Writing the European Folk Revival, 1760-1914* (London: Anthem, 2013), pp. 9-20.

¹⁰ See Tom Shippey, 'A Revolution Reconsidered: Mythography and Mythology in the Nineteenth Century', in Tom Shippey (ed.) *The Shadow Walkers: Jacob Grimm's Mythology of the Monstrous* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), pp. 1-28.

¹¹ See Jean Baumgarten and Céline Trautmann-Waller (eds), *Rabbins et savants au village: L'Étude des traditions populaires juives, XIXe-XXe siècles* (Paris: CNRS, 2014).

¹² Dag Strömback (ed.), *Leading Folklorists of the North* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1971).

¹³ Fañch Postic (ed.), *La Bretagne et la littérature orale en Europe* (Brest: CRBC, 1999).

Narodnye russkie skazki (Russian Folk Tales 1855–67). Of course neither Hungary nor Norway were then independent states, but this romantic ‘cultivation of culture’ helped develop a national consciousness in the book-buying public.¹⁴

Hence, in histories of the long nineteenth century, folklore is often depicted as a handmaiden of nationalism, particularly in new nations.¹⁵ Folktales were to be basis for a revived national literature, folk song the basis for a revived national music, and the two would come together in national dramas staged at new national theatres such as The National Theatre of Norway (founded in 1899) or the Abbey Theatre in Dublin (founded in 1904). In histories of the long twentieth century the connection between folklore and militant nationalism turned even more sinister, due to the dominance of German *Volkskunde* and its ready collaboration with National Socialism.¹⁶

The ‘phantoms of romantic nationalism’¹⁷ are difficult to exorcise from folklore. Yet in Western Europe, which will be focus of this chapter, the region or province soon emerged as the more appropriate framework within which to collect and publish popular traditions. The earliest collections of folktales in France, such as Emmanuel Cosquin’s *Contes populaires de Lorraine* (1876), Paul Sébillot’s three volumes of *Contes populaires de la Haute-Bretagne* (1880-2), and Jean François Bladé’s three volumes of *Contes populaires de la Gascogne* (1886) all lay claim to a province. The same was true of folksong collectors in Italy, starting with Costantino Nigra’s influential *Canzoni popolari del Piemonte*, first published in the *Rivista Contemporanea* from 1858 to 1862. It is perhaps worth noting, given the otherwise apparent weakness of regionalism in Italy, that Italian folklorists almost invariably use such provincial titles. Given Imperial Germany’s federal constitution it is perhaps less surprising that the German association concerned with folklore, the Verband der Vereine für Volkskunde founded in 1904, also had a federal organization. Yet the same was also true of the more unitary Spanish monarchy where El Folk-Lore Español was made up of regional societies in Andalusia, Castile, Galicia, Extremadura and the Basque Country.¹⁸

The name of the Folklore Society in London placed no territorial limits on its intellectual jurisdiction, and the ‘anthropological’ interpretation of folklore which its leading figures promoted was aligned to Britain’s role as an imperial power, because it relied on the comparison of European data with that supplied by administrators and missionaries in the colonies.¹⁹ Nonetheless, one of the Society’s first initiatives, after the success of the 1891 Congress, was to

¹⁴ Marte Hvam Hult. *Framing a National Narrative: The Legend Collection of Peter Christen Asbjørnsen* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003). See also Terry Gunnell, ‘Daisies Rise to Become Oaks: The Politics of Early Folktale Collection in Northern Europe’, *Folklore* 121 (2010): 12-37. The phrase ‘cultivation of culture’ was coined by Joep Leerssen, ‘Nationalism and the Cultivation of Culture’, *Nations and Nationalism* 12:4 (2006): 559-78.

¹⁵ Tim Baycroft and David Hopkin (eds). *Folklore and Nationalism in Europe during the Long Nineteenth-Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2012). See also Michael Herzfeld, *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology, and the Making of Modern Greece* (New York: Pella, 1986);

¹⁶ James Dow and Hannjost Lixfeld (eds), *The Nazification of an Academic Discipline Folklore in the Third Reich* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

¹⁷ Roger D. Abrahams, ‘Phantoms of Romantic Nationalism in Folkloristics’, *Journal of American Folklore* 106 (1993): 3-37.

¹⁸ Mercedes Gómez-García Plata, *Le Folklore d’Antonio Machado y Álvarez: un cadre scientifique transnational au service d’un projet national (objet, méthode, discours et enjeux)* (Paris: Les Carnets de Berosé, forthcoming).

¹⁹ Chris Gosden and Chris Wingfield, ‘An Imperialist Folklore? Establishing the Folk-lore Society in London, in Baycroft and Hopkin (eds) *Folklore and Nationalism*, pp. 255-74.

sponsor a series of County Folklore volumes covering the United Kingdom.²⁰ This unfinished project was revived in a more commercial guise in the 1970s by the publisher Batsford, demonstrating that there remained a public appetite for folklore when it was regionally packaged.

Such book series, which are fairly common in this field, can reaffirm the nation and the region simultaneously because they present the latter as a building block of the collective culture and identity of the former. This is explicit, for example, in the general introduction to the series of legend volumes, the *Deutscher Sagenschatz* edited by Paul Zaunert, which ran to fifteen volumes between 1917 and 1944, and which opened, provocatively given that the German army was then occupying Flanders, with *Vlämische Sagen, Legenden und Volksmärchen*.²¹ It is explicit also in the introduction to Paul Delarue's catalogue of tale-types, *Le Conte populaire français* (1957), just as it is implicit in the series of folktale books he edited in the 1950s, *Contes merveilleux des provinces de France*. The publisher Gallimard would revive the idea in the 1970s and 80s with its series of *Récits et Contes*. The same logic is still at work in Stefaan Top's more recent collection, *Op verhaal komen* (2004-8), a legend collection with a volume dedicated to each Flemish region (though not the French-speaking provinces of Belgium).

Throughout the twentieth century the region has remained folklore's preferred geography in most Western European countries. National folklore societies used the region as their primary organizing principle both in collecting and cataloguing traditions. The Belgian Commission nationale de la vieille chanson populaire, for example, sponsored its members to produce regional publications such as Lambrecht Lambrechts' *Limburgsche liederen* (1936-7), Albert Libiez's *Chansons populaires de l'ancien Hainaut* (1939), Theophiel Pieters' *Oude Kempische liederen* (1951), and Roger Pinon's *Chansons populaires de la Flandre Wallonne* (1965). Even when the national framework provides the first order of organization, as in the national tale and legend type catalogues published by Folklore Fellows (an international organization with a Finnish base), the region usually provides the internal second order.

By and large, few folklorists offer an intellectual justification for this allegiance to the region, and beyond the title they seldom attempt to demonstrate that the recorded tales and songs were the exclusive cultural property of, or express something particular about, the region. One might argue that their regional remit was purely practical: it would have been hard enough to record the songs of Limburg or Hainaut, for a single collector to extend his or her search to the entirety of Belgium would have been impossible. However, practicalities are not really the issue, as the choice of historical, as opposed to actual administrative units makes clear. There is, in terms of local government, no such place as Walloon Flanders or the Campine, so Pieters' and Pinon's purpose by using these titles was to imply that they have a reality as cultural, if not political units.

Of the French folktale collections mentioned above, one was made entirely in a single locality, the other two extended their range to include a second village. Rather than *Contes populaires de Lorraine*, what we have are the tales told in Montiers-sur-Saulx, a commune which, when Cosquin was active, was home to a little over a thousand inhabitants. Why, then, ascribe the contents to 'Lorraine'? At the time Cosquin was writing, the province of Lorraine had not formally existed for nearly a hundred years: administratively speaking Montiers was a

²⁰ Stephen Miller, 'The County Folk-Lore Series (Volumes 1-7) of the Folk-Lore Society, *Folklore* 124:3 (2013): 327-44.

²¹ Hermann Bausinger, *Volkskunde ou l'ethnologie allemande* (Paris: MSH, 1993), pp. 66-7.

commune of the department of the Meuse. Cosquin was an arch-royalist and may have balked at invoking a revolutionary territorial unit such as the department, but his contemporary Paul Sébillot, a committed Republican, likewise eschewed departmental titles, ascribing his tales to Upper Brittany (rather than the hamlet of Isle de Saint-Cast where he had in fact recorded the bulk of them, which was in the department of the Côtes-du-Nord).

In both cases the titles inferred that there existed distinct cultural regions called ‘Lorraine’ and ‘Upper Brittany’. But in fact both of these authors knew that there was little that was particularly Lorrainer or Breton about the tales they published. Cosquin provided notes to all eighty-four texts to show that the same tale had been recorded elsewhere across the Eurasian landmass. His theory was that the tales had mostly originated in India and been diffused from there along routes of war, trade, migration and religious evangelism. This diffusionist model was extremely influential in the early years of academic folklore, but its logic undermined claims to cultural difference, whether national or regional.²²

Folksongs, because of their reliance on rhyme, are not quite so universal in their distribution; nonetheless, almost all the folksongs that Libiez collected in Hainaut and Pinon in Walloon Flanders could also have been heard in the other French speaking regions of Belgium as well as France, Quebec and the Suisse Romande, a point that both authors actually made themselves. As the scholarly apparatus of folklore grew, so claims to national or regional cultural exceptionalism weakened. The process of cataloguing folklore iterations according to internationally accepted criteria really took off with the folktale classification system, initiated by the Finn Antti Aarne in 1910,. All of the many national folktale catalogues apply this system so in a matter of minutes one can establish that there is really no such thing as a Lorrainer tale, or even a French tale. Type indexes for songs tend to be limited to single language areas, but from the time of Herder on it was clear that plots reoccur in the ballad repertoire of many nations: the story of the Dutch ‘Heer Halewijn’ is essentially the same as the Anglo-Scots ‘Outlandish Knight’, and there are parallels in French, German, Polish, Hungarian, Danish, Italian, Portuguese and other song traditions.²³ That folklore, which is highly local in its form of transmission, but eminently transnational in its content, should have alighted on the region as its proper perspective for study and presentation, requires some explanation.

REALIZING THE REGION THROUGH FOLKLORE

Some academic folklorists have attempted to establish the reality of cultural regions and mark their boundaries. The Swedish folklorist Carl von Sydow borrowed the term ‘ecotype’ from the natural sciences to illustrate that, while a folktale like *Cinderella* might be all but universal in its distribution, there were distinct national and regional variations in how it was told, whether its hero was male or female for example. A particular variant was preferred in a particular cultural zone because the story (or any other element of tradition) had been adapted to that milieu.²⁴

²² See Giuseppe Cocchiara, *The History of Folklore in Europe* (Philadelphia: ISHI, 1981), chap. 17.

²³ William Entwistle, *European Balladry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939).

²⁴ Carl W. von Sydow, ‘Geography and Folk-Tale Oicotypes’, *Béaloidas* 4 (1934): 344-55. See also David Hopkin, ‘The Ecotype, or a Modest Proposal to Reconnect Cultural and Social History’, in Melissa Calaressu, Filippo de Vivo and Joan-Pau Rubiés (eds), *Exploring Cultural History: Essays in Honour of Peter Burke* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010): pp. 31-54.

Cultural differentiation, undermined by diffusionist models, was rediscovered at the level of the 'variant'.

Such ecotypes can be revealed through mapping. Already in the 1880s and 1890s the Spanish folklorist Antonio Machado y Álvarez and his French correspondent Paul Sébillot had urged the use of cartography in order to establish the spatial distribution of traditions. At the time folklore collecting was simply too haphazard for reliable maps, but in the wake of the inter-war dialect atlases, cartography did become a recognized folklore methodology. There exist underused atlases of German, Austrian, Swiss, Polish, Swedish, Finnish, Dutch and Yugoslavian folk cultures.²⁵ Since the 1980s, folklore cartography has fallen into disrepute, partly because it was associated with racist attempts to establish ethnic boundaries in the 1930s, but also because the maps themselves did not cohere. Cultural regions defined through the use of a particular technology (such as a type of plough) did not necessarily overlap with cultural regions defined by observation of particular festivities. Perhaps the death-knell was J.J. Voskuil's bestselling satirical novel series *Het Bureau* (1996-2000) about the Dutch centre for folklore studies, the Meertens Instituut, and its attempts, among other things, to map whether farmers buried the placentas of horses or hung them in trees.²⁶ Traditions, Voskuil had concluded in his day job as an ethnologist, were simply too fluid to be represented in a static form like a map with its implied claims to long-term continuity.

In the late twentieth century, in common with other social scientists, academic folklorists have turned their attention away from collectivities towards the individual. They have become less interested in establishing the genealogies of traditions and instead concentrate on how they were adapted and used in the moments when they were performed.²⁷ Delimiting traditions is no longer fashionable. But academics make up a rather small subset among folklore writers and practitioners, and among the wider public the region remains much the preferred space. It is part of the habitus of populist folklorists, their publishers and their consumers. Folklorists do not need to explain their choice because their public already expects it. If one browses the shelves dedicated to the local region in a bookshop in Cork, Barcelona or Aarhus one anticipates books on the folklore of Munster, Catalonia or Jutland.

Default regionalism does not mean that folklore is necessarily hostile to nationalism. As Chris Manias has shown, the scholars responsible for establishing the sciences of human culture such as archaeology, anthropology and folklore, had relatively little truck with ideas of racial purity and national segregation but rather understood modern nations as the product of historical interactions between many peoples and cultures whose particular contribution was still visible in regional particularities.²⁸ The nation was a garden of many blooms, each region contributing, through its costumes and its dances, a particular burst of colour. In 1860 Jules Champfleury published his *Chansons populaires des provinces de France* in which each province was represented by a selection of songs brought together for the enjoyment of the nation as a whole. This proved to be a very popular model. Ernest Closson's 1905 *Chansons populaires des*

²⁵ Robert Wildhaber, 'Folk Atlas Mapping', in R. M. Dorson (ed.), *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982), pp. 479-96.

²⁶ Gerard Rooijakkers and Peter Meurkens, 'Struggling with the European Atlas. Voskuil's Portrait of European Ethnology' *Ethnologia Europaea* 30 (2000): 75-95.

²⁷ Américo Paredes and Richard Bauman (eds), *Toward New Perspectives in Folklore* (Austin TX: Texas University Press, 1972).

²⁸ Chris Manias, *Race, Science, and the Nation: Reconstructing the Ancient Past in Britain, France and Germany* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013).

provinces belges was a direct imitation. The same logic underwrote the Community Singing Movement in interwar Britain,²⁹ and the ‘Singing Together’ programmes made by the BBC for use in schools from 1939 to 2001.³⁰ Entire generations of Britons grew up with a song repertoire that included representatives from the Scottish Highlands (‘The Skye Boat Song’) Wales (‘Men of Harlech’) and Cornwall (‘Trelawney’). The fact that all three songs relate moments of regional resistance to the hegemonic English centre in no way detracted from their appeal; rather it demonstrated that historical resistance could be co-opted into a single narrative of national coming together.

A more idiosyncratic method for harmonizing the regional and the national in folklore was the adoption of a particular region as a metonym or an archetype for the national whole. Linguistic purity can explain this substitution, which is one of the reasons that the Gaeltacht, the Irish-speaking west of the Ireland, was (and is) frequently described as the ‘most Irish’ of regions, whose cultural distinctiveness could serve as a reservoir to revitalize the entire nation.³¹ Anglophone Ascendancy Irish writers, such as Lady Augusta Gregory and John Millington Synge, journeyed west, and in particular to the Aran Islands, to learn Gaelic, record folklore, and find inspiration for a modern, but distinctively national literature. The first play put on at the Abbey Theatre in 1904 is exemplary in this regard. *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*, ascribed to William Butler Yeats but mostly written by Lady Gregory, draws on the pair’s folklore collecting in the west of Ireland. The eponymous Cathleen is a folkloric/literary personification of Ireland as a poor old woman, who nonetheless inspires the play’s hero, a Mayo peasant, to embrace martyrdom for the national cause.³² In 1893 another Ascendancy Protestant Douglas Hyde founded the Gaelic League which aimed to ‘de-anglicise Ireland’ by drawing on the material he and others had collected in the Gaeltacht. The League ran classes in Gaelic and encouraged singing, folk dancing and folklore collecting. It was also, although not by design, a nursery for physical force nationalists.³³ The Irish Free State took up many of the League’s objectives after independence, for instance making Irish a compulsory subject in public schools. The oral autobiography of a Gaelic-speaking islander, the storyteller Peig Sayers from Great Blasket, recorded by another Anglophone and folklore minded visitor, Molly O’Kennedy, became the set text on the curriculum. The intention was to reconnect the urban, anglicized centres of Ireland – the ‘people’ as a political entity – with their Gaelic heritage – the ‘people’ as bearers of a distinct cultural tradition..

In a similar manner the Zuiderzee region in the Netherlands, Dalarna in Sweden and Hardangerfjord in Norway have been treated by folklorists as ‘relic areas’ (the term comes from dialectology, but indirectly from the natural sciences), which still practiced distinctive national customs and manners whereas urbanized areas had become more cosmopolitan. Henrik Ibsen himself had been sponsored by the Norwegian government to collect folklore in Hardanger in

²⁹ Dave Russell, ‘Abiding Memories: The Community Singing Movement and English Social Life in the 1920s’, *Popular Music* 27:1 (2008): 117-133..

³⁰ Gordon Cox, *Living Music in Schools 1923-1999 Studies in the History of Music Education in England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002). .

³¹ Martin Ryle, *Journeys in Ireland: Literary Travels, Rural Landscapes, Cultural Relations* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999).

³² Deborah Fleming, ‘A Man Who Does Not Exist’: *The Irish Peasant in the Work of W.B. Yeats and J.M. Synge* (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1995).

³³ John Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987); Diarmuid Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore: Tradition, Modernity, Identity* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2000).

1862, and some of what he heard made its way into his later plays.³⁴ The promotion of such relic areas was most visible in the presentation of folk cultures at World Fairs and International Expositions, such as the Hindeloopen room (from a town on the coast of the Zuiderzee) which formed part of the Dutch contribution at the 1878 Paris Exposition Universelle.³⁵ Open-air museums such as Skansen in Sweden, developed directly from these, enormously popular ethnographic recreations.³⁶ Such assemblies of regional vernacular building styles in turn inspired the formation of a 'national romantic' architectural style.³⁷ This is perhaps most visible in the Nordic countries, but simultaneously in Hungary the Fiatalok group of architects looked to the vernacular building of Transylvania, another 'relic area', to develop their new national style.³⁸

The most striking example of the region as archetype of the nation must be Karelianism, a cultural movement in nineteenth and early twentieth-century Finland, which saw Finnish writers, artists and composers travel to Archangel Karelia to witness for themselves performances of the rune songs that, a generation before, had been noted down by the song collector Elias Lönnrot and reassembled into the Finnish national epic, the *Kalevala* (1835).³⁹ The peculiarity of the Karelian case is that, though its language is related to Finnish, the region lies outside the boundaries of both the historic Duchy and the modern sovereign state of Finland: it remains a province of Russia. As Pertti Anttonen has argued, the value of an external relic area to the successful Finnish nationalist movement was that, while Karelia showed Finns what they had been, the nation-state could emphasise its own modernity in contradistinction. Karelia was the national past, worthy of recording but as a base on which to develop a modern national culture and a trajectory towards the future, which Karelia itself could not enjoy.⁴⁰

However, folkloric regionalism cannot always be subsumed into narratives of nation-building. To quote another attempt to define the field of folklore, folklorists are not just orientated towards the informal but also 'the marginal (in relation to the centres of power and privilege)'.⁴¹ This is a predilection rather than an obligatory position, but it is quite pronounced, and it often puts folklorists at the forefront of attempts to promote the region and to defend it against the overpowering state. Hence folklorists have often been active in regionalist politics.

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³⁴ Per Schelde Jacobsen and Barbara Fass Leavy, *Ibsen's Forsaken Merman: Folklore in the Later Plays* (New York: New York University Press, 1988).

³⁵ Adriaan de Jong and Mette Skougaard, 'The Hindeloopen and the Amager Rooms. Two Examples of an Historical Museum Phenomenon', *Journal of the History of Collections* 5:2 (1993), pp. 165-178.

³⁶ Daniel Degroff, 'Artur Hazelius and the Ethnographic Display of the Scandinavian Peasantry: A Study in Context and Appropriation', *European Review of History* 19:2 (2012): 229-48.

³⁷ Peter Blundell Jones, 'Ideas of Folk and Nation in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century European Architecture', in Baycroft and Hopkin (eds), *Folklore and Nationalism*, pp. 69-98.

³⁸ David Crowley, 'The Uses of Peasant Design in Austria-Hungary in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries', *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 2:2 (1995): 2-28.

³⁹ William A. Wilson, *Folklore and Nationalism in Modern Finland* (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1976).

⁴⁰ Pertti Anttonen, *Tradition Through Modernity: Postmodernism and the Nation-State in Folklore Scholarship* (Helsinki: Studia Fennica, 2005).

⁴¹ Elliott Oring (ed.), *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres: An Introduction* (Logan UT: Utah State University Press, 1986), pp. 17-18.

This political engagement can take many forms, ranging from limited attempts to protect distinct cultural heritages to more radical campaigns for regional autonomy or even separatism. In the first half of the period such regionalist activism was more often, though not exclusively, the tool of the conservative right, intent on preserving rural social hierarchies and religious identities from the threat posed by national and class based politics. Since the Second World War, however, regionalism has developed a left-wing, anti-imperialist discourse. But in both cases, defence of folk culture has provided a justification for alternative political arrangements, as well as the material through which to voice and disseminate a regionalist message.

As folklore is concerned with tradition its attention is necessarily turned towards the past, and this was especially marked in the generations of folklorists before the Second World War who tended to exaggerate the age and immutability of traditions. One could argue that, in many European countries, the region was also becoming a thing of the past, overtaken by the centripetal forces of nation-state building. This seemed particularly evident in countries where historic regions had been deprived of all administrative functions, such as France, Italy and Sweden. Nation-building was the opposite of folklore in that it relied on 'formal instruction or institutional direction' through national bureaucracies and national curricula in education and national disciplining institutions such as the army and the police. The informality and anonymity of folklore can give the impression that it is a more natural culture expression, the organic issue of a particular environment. Hence, the appeal of 'ecotype', 'relic area', and other metaphors from the natural sciences to folklorists.⁴² Modern, and in particular urban culture was, in contradistinction, fabricated, and often the work of a single named author. Increasingly the sources of urban popular culture were heterogeneous and often foreign: think of jazz. It was commercial and ephemeral, brought to 'the people' rather than made by 'the people'. But elite national culture was just as alien and relied on schools as a method of inculcation. Both threatened the specific culture of the regions, whose protection therefore became a spur to political activism.

Folkloric regionalism often denies its own political nature. Nostalgia for a regional past was perceived as an escape from the strident howls of interest-group politics that bedevilled the modern – that is to say the national – public sphere of parliamentary parties, newspapers, leagues and trade unions. The region, usually depicted as a rural hinterland, appeared untarnished by the blight of ideological division which characterized national politics. The region could be presented as a place free from class conflict (itself seen by many conservatives as a product of industrial modernity and unhealthy cosmopolitanism). Through folklore two definitions of 'the people' – as a social class opposed to the elites, and as a social whole bound by shared traditions that included elites – could be reunited. Many of the folklorists already mentioned, including Sébillot, Cosquin, Machado, Yeats, Lady Gregory and Hyde, initially recorded folklore from their servants: through folklore elites could connect with other social classes.⁴³ Thus, although folkloric texts contained many bitter statements of social antagonism, edited for public consumption they appeared more as a dialogue that bonded the different members of a single community. This downplaying of class conflict was easier to imagine in the countryside, and

⁴² Valdimar Hafstein, 'Biological Metaphors in Folklore Scholarship: An Essay in the History of Ideas', *Arv: Nordic Yearbook of Folklore* 57 (2001): 7-32.

⁴³ Lawrence P. Morris 'Aristocracies of Thought': Social Class in the Early Folklore of Yeats and Hyde', *Irish Studies Review*, 18:3 (2010): 299-313; David Hopkin, 'Intimacies and Intimations: Storytelling between Servants and Masters in Nineteenth-Century France', *Journal of Social History* 51:3 (2018).

therefore the region, where direct relations pertained between employer and employee, than in the *anomie* of the factory and the city.

The region was a retreat from the pressures of modernity, literally so in the case of Dalarna which was, and is, one of the prime locations for summer holidaying by urban Swedes. Because folklore dealt with collective custom and ritual – quite literally ‘Singing Together’ – it could be used to emphasize the ties that bind, the communal and traditional *Gemeinschaft*. Through folkloric practices, such as regional costuming, social differences could be elided. Participating as part of a choir or a dance generated a sense of *communitas*, a sense of collective wellbeing. Those who had been divided by the processes of modernization and nation-building, could be reunited through folklore and the region.

Of course the rejection of ideology (and class conflict) is itself an ideological position. Marxist historians have been withering in their critique of the conservative mythologies of ‘merrie England’ which underlay the first English folksong revival of the early twentieth century.⁴⁴ One could make a case that, within the United Kingdom, this search for ‘Englishness’ was itself a kind of regionalism.

Evidently the region was not a politics-free zone. One cannot fail to notice that it was precisely those regions whose cultural identity was in dispute or whose relationship to the state was most strained, were precisely those where folklorists were most visibly active. Examples include Andalusia, Galicia, Catalonia and the Basque Country in Spain; Alsace, Lorraine and Brittany in France; Sicily and the Val d’Aosta in Italy; Flanders in Belgium. Regions whose relationship to the political centre was uncontested, such as the Loire valley in France, were less frequently visited. Regionalist activism and folklore collecting expand in parallel. .

This is not to say that folklorists have taken a unified position on political regionalism. Costantino Nigra, the collector of Piedmontese songs, was also a diplomat and Cavour’s lieutenant during the years of Italian Unification. Sent by Cavour on behalf of the new Italian state to take control of the South in 1861 from its conqueror Garibaldi, Nigra wrote to his mentor ‘for heaven’s sake stand out against the regional system or we are lost’.⁴⁵ Being a regional folklorist did not necessarily entail being a political regionalist. But Nigra was relatively unusual: on the whole folklorists’ sympathies are with the small against the large, and thus with the region rather than the state. But even folklorists who were committed regionalists held a great variety of views about the politics of regionalism.

There are many folklorists for whom affection for a specific region is the wellspring of all they do. Félix Arnaudin, for example, dedicated his entire life to recording the dialect and songs, the tools and even the fauna and flora of his native Landes de Gascogne. Yet he refused to participate in regionalist associations such as the Escòla Gaston Fèbus (the Gascon Félibrige, founded in 1896). A reluctance to collaborate was certainly part of Arnaudin’s personality, but this rejection was also an intellectual position: he lamented the cultural and environmental

⁴⁴ Dave Harker, *Fakesong: The Manufacture of British Folk Song, 1700 to the Present Day* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1985); Georgina Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester University Press, 1993). But see also David Gregory, *Fakesong in an Imagined Village? A Critique of the Harker-Boyes Thesis*, *Canadian Folk Music* 43:3 (2011): 18-26.

⁴⁵ Quoted by Stefano Cavazza, ‘Regionalism in Italy: A Critique’, in Joost Augusteijn and Eric Storm (eds) *Region and State in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Nation-Building, Regional Identities and Separatism*, ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012), p. 74.

destruction of the Landes of his youth, but he considered its passing inevitable and irreversible.⁴⁶ On the other hand Arnaudin's rough contemporary Louis Pinck, who collected thousands of songs in Germanophone Lorraine, was so committed to defending the culture of his native region that he would involve himself in autonomist politics. Pinck, a Catholic priest, was a vocal critic of the secular and Republican French state. He considered it an existential threat to the identity of Germanophone Lorrainers which for him were defined by their language and their faith, both expressed in their songs. Language and faith were bound together because the truth of religious sentiments could only be imprinted on the heart in one's mother-tongue. Pinck's many critics believed his overt regionalism was a cover for German nationalism, but while it is the case that he had been more comfortable within the pre-1918 borders of the Reich, he could be equally vituperative in his attacks on the German state, if it threatened his region's cultural specificity.⁴⁷

In both these cases the folklorist was concerned only with their home region. Antonio Machado y Álvarez and his Portuguese counterpart Teófilo Braga (in 1915 briefly the second President of the Portuguese Republic) also did much to record the folklore of their native provinces – Andalusia and the Azores respectively – but their commitment to regionalism extended beyond local patriotism. They were federalists and republicans, who saw the strengthening of the region as a mechanism to realize democracy within a regionally diverse state. Decentralization they saw as necessary not just to protect traditional culture but to revitalize the economy and society.⁴⁸ An equivalent in France might be Charles Beauquier, a folklorist who also served as the Radical Socialist deputy of the Doubs between 1880 and 1914. Fiercely anticlerical, Beauquier was certainly not wedded to all forms of traditionalism. As a folklorist he restricted himself to the province of Franche-Comté, but as the President of the Fédération Régionaliste Française he argued against fetishizing historical regions in favour of a more modern form of decentralization based around economically determined regions.⁴⁹

Brittany provides a rather more direct example of the marriage of folklore and political regionalism. A historic province, Brittany nonetheless lacked an extensive written literature in Breton: oral tradition, therefore, had to provide the evidence of cultural distinctiveness and regional-cum-national consciousness. Hersart de la Villemarqué was already using folklore in this manner in his *Barzas Breiz*, the first substantial publication of Breton ballads made in 1838,⁵⁰ but Breton patriotism did not really translate into overt regionalist political action until the formation of the Union Régionaliste Bretonne in 1898. One of its first co-presidents was Anatole Le Braz, who taught French and Celtic letters at the Université of Rennes but who was also the busiest folklorist in Brittany in the last decade of the nineteenth and first decade of the twentieth century. His vice-president was Charles Le Goffic, a less reliable but nonetheless prolific folklorist. The Union's secretary was François Taldir Jaffrenou, a Breton poet who also

⁴⁶ Guy Latry, "Introduction: Arnaudin à la lettre," in Félix Arnaudin, *Correspondance*, ed. Guy Latry, *Oeuvres complètes de Félix Arnaudin* 5 (Bordeaux/Mont-de-Marsan: Confluences, 1999).

⁴⁷ Laurent Mayer, *Culture populaire en Lorraine francique: coutumes, croyances et traditions*, (Strasbourg: SALDE, 2000).

⁴⁸ Enrique Baltanás, 'Folk-lore, política y literatura popular en el siglo XIX (cartas inéditas de A. Machado y Álvarez a Teófilo Braga)', *Estudios de Literatura Oral* 7-8 (2001-2).

⁴⁹ Julian Wright, *The Regionalist Movement in France, 1890-1914: Jean Charles-Brun and French Political Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁵⁰ Nelly Blanchard, *Barzas-Breiz: Une fiction pour s'inventer* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2006).

edited folk songs for use in schools. He would be one of the people who broke away from the Union to form the more radical Fédération régionaliste de Bretagne in 1911, taking with him François Vallée, linguist and folksong collector, Jean Choleau, economist and folksong collector, Maurice Duhamel, composer and folksong collector, Léon Le Berre, journalist and folktale collector, and Yves Le Diberder, bookseller and folktale collector. Duhamel would go on to secede from the Fédération to form a militant Breton autonomist party in the interwar period.⁵¹

REGIONALISTS AND THE USES OF FOLKLORE

Just as folklore is ‘coded’ regional, so regionalism is ‘coded’ folklore. For some of these Breton regionalist activists, such as Le Braz, Duhamel and Le Diberder, folklore collecting was a core element of their professional lives. But the same was not true for Choleau, Vallée and Le Berre: for them folklore collecting was very much a sideline, their major contribution to regionalist activism was in other fields. Nonetheless, as regionalists they felt it was an appropriate thing for them to engage in. Their regionalist agenda was not set by folklore, but it was not divorced from it either.

This becomes quickly apparent if one consults the regionalist publications. From the 1890s onwards new journals appeared that articulated a clear regionalist cultural or political agenda, succeeding early nineteenth century provincial antiquarian and learned society journals which eschewed overt political campaigning.. Examples from France include *Lémouzi* founded and edited by the journalist and folklorist Johannès Plantadis from 1893 to 1922, the *Revue du Nivernais*, founded in 1895 by Achille Millien, a poet but also the most successful collector, in numerical terms, of folktales and songs in nineteenth-century France, and the *Le pays lorrain* which was founded and edited by the folksong and tale collector Charles Sadoul from 1904 to his death in 1930.⁵²

Not surprisingly, given the interests of their editors, all these journals gave a lot of space to folklore. However that was also true of regionalist journals that were not edited by folklorists, such as the *Annales de Bretagne*, which was founded in 1886 as house journal of the Faculté des Arts of Rennes University. It had (and continues to have) articles on regional history and literature but, in its early years, it gave over many pages to folkloric material, particularly songs and tales. These articles normally consisted of texts alone without interpretation, and their presence alongside more academic content was never really explained. It was simply assumed that this is what readers wanted in a scholarly journal dedicated to their region.

This practice, of inserting bald folkloric texts, is common in regionalist journals. The Auvergne region was particularly fecund in regionalist publications in the twentieth century, and they covered a variety of different publics: *L’Auvergne littéraire, artistique et historique* founded in 1924 was an overtly regionalist journal that supported campaigns for decentralisation, and was aimed primarily at local literati such as university lecturers and teachers; *La Montagne d’Auvergne; revue illustrée, littéraire, artistique, touristique, sportive* (1912-13) was not intended for a local market at all but was an attempt to direct the growing

⁵¹ Sharif Gemie, *Brittany 1750-1950: The Invisible Nation* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), chaps 7-8.

⁵² David Hopkin, ‘Identity in a Divided Province: The Folklorists of Lorraine, 1860–1960’, *French Historical Studies* 23:4 (2000): 639-82.

number of motorized tourists to sites of interest, including regional cuisine, handicrafts and sites associated with legends; whereas *L'Écho d'Auvergne* was a Parisian journal aimed at Auvergnats resident in the capital. In all three folktales and folksongs simply appear without comment: although the readership was different, it was axiomatic that a journal dedicated to a region should contain folklore. .

Folklore did not just appear in this 'undigested' form. It was part of the agenda espoused by journals like *Le pays lorrain* to encourage a regional high culture which could compete with metropolitan literature, music and art. However, it was not enough for that literature and art to be from Lorraine, Auvergne, Flanders, it had to be for Lorrainers, Auvergnats, Flemings... and it should be authentically about them. Therefore it should draw its inspiration from their cultural expression, that is their folklore. Hence *Le pays lorrain* was enthusiastic about the *dayâge*, a local game which involved verbal exchanges between groups of boys and young men outside a house, and groups of women inside a house: the boys started by proposing a sale; the women proposed a counter-sale and so the game continued until it either descended into insults or the boys were invited in to start courting more formally. As both speakers remained anonymous, the exchange created plenty of opportunities to deliver scandalous messages or to make political points. Thus it provided an excellent plot device which was utilized by regionalist writers in their contributions to *Le pays lorrain*.⁵³

REGIONALISM AND REVIVALISM Reviving literature was only one of the uses that regionalists envisaged for folklore. Regionalist journals also covered the revival of folkloric practices: the song festivals, the dance festivals, the *eisteddfodau*, the *jeux floraux*, the parades in traditional costume. For instance, most French regionalist journals covered the 'Fêtes régionalistes de Bourges' of 1911, organized by the sculptor and regionalist fanatic Jean Baffier, who led events with his musical troupe 'les gâs du berri' playing traditional dance tunes of the region. 'Les gâs du berri', founded in 1888, are still going strong.⁵⁴ They continue to demonstrate that folklore in the long twentieth century was not something just to be recorded, but something to be revived, practiced, and lived.

Regionalist publications were crucial in this process of revival. In 1903 Johannés Plantadis, editor of *Lemouzi* and a contributor to lots of other Limousin papers, started a campaign to revive the folk craft of lacemaking in the Tulle region. Despite the fact that there had been no local lace industry for the previous hundred years, he reported that at various social events of that year the great ladies of the region had, out of Limousin patriotism, started wearing local lace 'barbes'. Aristocratic women's patronage of handicrafts was widespread across Europe in the decades before the First World War, and was envisaged as a mechanism to overcome growing class divisions in the countryside.⁵⁵ Plantadis urged the authorities to get behind this project and invest money in lace teaching in Tulle. The campaign was successful: the prefect of the Creuse invested money, a local lace industry was briefly revived, activist women

⁵³ David Hopkin, 'Love Riddles, Couple Formation, and Local Identity in Eastern France', *Journal of Family History* 28:3 (2003): 339-63. See also Anne-Marie Thiesse, *Écrire la France: le mouvement littéraire régionaliste de langue française entre la Belle Époque et la Libération* (Paris: Presses universitaires de la France, 1991).

⁵⁴ Neil McWilliam, *Monumental Intolerance: Jean Baffier: A Nationalist Sculptor in Fin-de-Siècle France* (University Park PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000).

⁵⁵ See Stana Nenadic And Sally Tuckett, 'Artisans and Aristocrats in Nineteenth-Century Scotland', *Scottish Historical Review* 95:2 (2016): 203-29.

really started wearing local lace to regionalist events, and of course all of this success was reported in the regionalist press which log-rolled the whole enterprise, with the bizarre consequence that invalid soldiers in Tulle were taught lacemaking during the First World War.⁵⁶

The effort put into such revivalism demonstrates that folklore really mattered to regionalists. After all, it could be hard work. Most of the leadership of the militant Fédération Régionaliste Bretonne were not native Breton speakers, any more than Hyde, Yeats, Synge and Lady Gregory were native Irish speakers. They had to learn the language whose defence and propagation was one of the primary motivations for their political action.⁵⁷ Maurice Duhamel and Yves Le Diberder also learnt to play traditional, and almost moribund, musical instruments such as the small pipes, the *biniou coz*. They thus paved the way for the resurrection of the Breton bagpipe in the twentieth century. This revival really took off not in Brittany itself but among the Bretons of Paris. The *bagad*, the drum and pipe band which is now the ubiquitous accompaniment of any public festivity in Brittany, only arrived there after the Second World War, having already been a feature of interwar Saint-Denis, a suburb of Paris with a large Breton population.⁵⁸

Regionalist events are almost always accompanied by costume, dances, song and other displays of what is perceived as regional folk culture. One's commitment to a region cannot just be a matter of words: it has to be performed. Although this dressing up, *tout ce folklor* in the French colloquial usage of the term, can make regionalists an object of public mockery, one advantage is that it brings regionalist political activists into contact with a wider public which, while it might possess a sense of local patriotism or an interest in local custom, was not yet committed to regionalist politics. Singing and dancing together might be a weak bond, but a bond nonetheless which could be mobilized for propaganda purposes.

The most spectacular occasions for singing and dancing are folk festivals. Popular choral societies and song festivals have a long history, and in the nineteenth century they were important vehicles for the development of a mass participatory national culture.⁵⁹ Yet even in this period, the region as a constitutive element in the make-up of the nation was on display. At the first *Laulupidu*, the Estonian National Song Festival held in 1869, and an important moment in the Estonian national awakening, many of the fifty-one participating teams dressed in their regional costume. The nation was exhibited to the nation in all its local variety, visual as well as aural.⁶⁰

The regional character is more pronounced in those festivals that label themselves 'folk'. The origins of such events can be traced to before the First World War, such as Basque 'fêtes folkloriques' held at Saint-Jean-de-Luz in 1897 and the Stratford-upon-Avon Festival of Folk

⁵⁶ This story can be pieced together from the material in the Archives départementales de la Corrèze, 11 F 'Fonds Plantadis'.

⁵⁷ Jean-Yves Guiomar, 'Régionalisme, fédéralisme et minorités nationales en France entre 1919 et 1939', *Le Mouvement social* 70 (1970): 89-108; Michel Oiry, 'Yves Le Diberder : Un lettré au service de la tradition orale', *Ar Men* 141 (2004): 38-44.

⁵⁸ Armel Morgant and Jean-Michel Roignant, *Bagad: vers une nouvelle tradition*, (Spézet: Coop Breizh, 2005).

⁵⁹ Krisztina Lajosi and Andreas Stynen (eds), *Choral Societies and Nationalism in Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

⁶⁰ Karsten Brüggemann and Andres Kasekamp, '"Singing Oneself into a Nation"? Estonian Song Festivals as Rituals of Political Mobilisation', *Nations and Nationalism* 20 (2014): 259-276.

Song and Dance in 1909. There was a quickening of the pace in the interwar period with, for instance, the foundation of the 'Morris Ring' in 1934, and the first International Folk Dance Festival, organized by the English Folk Dance and Song Society in London in 1935.⁶¹ But the real heyday of this kind of musical and costumed revivalism came after the Second World War and the establishment of annual folk festivals, such as that held in Sidmouth every year from 1955, Newport Folk Festival (since 1959), the Finnish Kaustinen Folk Festival (since 1968), and the Festival Interceltique de Lorient (every year since 1971).

An interesting political shift can be observed in the post-war folk revival and its festival culture.. there are numerous examples of radical and socialist folklorists, there is a tendency, before 1945, to think of folklore as an ideological tool of the traditionalist right, and one can see how the valorization of a rural inclusive culture could serve those opposed to radical working-class politics.⁶² However, the post-war revival appeared more left-leaning. Ewan MacColl and Bert Lloyd, who were prominent in England, and Hamish Henderson, a Scot who initiated the Edinburgh People's Festival Ceilidh were all members of the Communist Party.⁶³ One explanation is that postwar regionalism learnt its rhetoric from anti-colonial and broadly Marxist movements. The Scottish folk singer, Dick Gaughan famously claimed that 'the first colony of the British Empire was in fact England'.⁶⁴ His opposition to imperialism and capitalism could fuel not just separatist movements within the four nations of the United Kingdom, but also English regionalism. No doubt, just as with the generalizations about the pre-1939 period, such a characterization of post-war revivalism as leftist does not do justice to the variety of political positions adopted by folklorists. The absence of a substantive literature on the period, outside Anglophone countries, makes this point difficult to pursue. However, it does confirm folklorists' reputation as *frondeurs* at heart. Folk-song could vocalize collective resistance to imperial and other forms of oppressive power.⁶⁵ Folk clubs and folk festivals were important venues in the 1960s and 70s in the articulation of autonomist and separatist political ambitions.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Georgina Boyes, "'Potencies of the Earth": Rolf Gardiner and the English Folk Dance Revival', in Matthew Jefferies and Mike Tyldesley (eds) *Rolf Gardiner: Folk, Nature and Culture in Interwar Britain* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011). Frank Howe, 'The International (European) Folk Dance Festival', *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society* 2 (1935): 1-16.

⁶² See Christian Faure, *Le projet culturel de Vichy. Folklore et révolution nationale* (Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 1989).

⁶³ Michael Brocken, *The British Folk Revival, 1944-2002* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003); Pino Mereu and Owen Dudley Edwards (eds), *At Home Wi' Freedom: Essays on Hamish Henderson and the Scottish Folk Revival* (Ochertyre: Grace Note, 2012).

⁶⁴ Dick Gaughan, *Handful of Earth* (1981), writing in the sleeve notes about the song 'World Turned Upside Down' by Leon Rosselson. The statement has been much quoted.

⁶⁵ This trend can also be seen in France: Jonathan Briggs, *Sounds French: Globalization, Cultural Communities, and Pop Music in France, 1958-1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), chap. 4.

⁶⁶ May McCann, 'Music and Politics in Ireland: The Specificity of the Folk Revival in Belfast', *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 4:1 (1995): 51-75. Although the role of folk music in Ireland may be particular, the use of folksong as a badge of identity and a mobilizer of collective emotions is common among separatist movements: The Occitan song 'Se Canta', a product of the folk revival, is uniformly sung at Languedocian activist gatherings, and is the formal anthem of the semi-autonomous Occitan valleys in Spain; the folk 'Song of the Reapers' has, in an adapted form, become the anthem of the Catalan nation as imagined by Catalan activists: Josep Massot i Muntaner, Salvador Pueyo and Oriol Martorell, *Els Segadors: Himne nacional de Catalunya* (Barcelona: Abadia de Montserrat, 1993).

PERFORMING THE REGION

Festive folklore illustrates some of the paradoxes of twentieth century regionalism. The culture on display was largely rural, but the organization and audience were largely urban. Folklore, by definition, should be acquired without ‘formal instruction or institutional direction’, but revivalism relies on formal organizations and their ability to train and mobilize. It is no accident that the *Bagad* developed among the Breton diaspora of Paris, for this is where the capacity to run classes, organize marches and print flyers existed. Urban institutionalization in the form of the society *Kenvreuriezh ar Viniaouerien* from 1932 preserved the skills of bagpipe playing which the informality of Breton village traditions had condemned to extinction.

The point of such revivalism was not just to imbue provincials, albeit displaced, with a sense of their own cultural traditions, but to valorize those traditions by performing them to others. The rapid urbanization of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw a massive transfer of rural inhabitants into new urban settings, such as Bretons and Auvergnats in Paris. One of the prime aims of folklorists, such as the François Cadic, vicar of the ‘Breton parish of Paris’, was to ensure that his fellow countrymen were not acculturated by their immersion in the noise and vice of the big city, but remained steadfast Catholic Bretons. Religious practices alone were not enough: song, and in particular dance, were methods of reaffirming links to ‘the old country’.⁶⁷

However, even in the absence of committed activists with regionalist agendas, migrants created a market for regional traditions. In the first half of the twentieth century folklorists travelled to the mountains of the Auvergne to record shepherds performing ‘bourrées’, but this traditional dance could also be observed in the dance halls of Saint-Etienne, Lyon and Paris.⁶⁸ Auvergnat dance nights were occasions for people from the region to meet up and most importantly to court. Couple formation is an overlooked component to regionalism in the twentieth century. At home in the countryside, rural dwellers tend to marry people from their own village, or a limited number of adjacent villages. In the cities, the geographic pool became larger, but was restricted to people from one region: Bretons in Paris largely married other Bretons.⁶⁹ This effect is well known to demographers, but the degree to which such couples and their offspring provided the market for regionalist folklore, and politics, has not been explored.

However, you did not have to be Auvergnat to dance a ‘bourrée’. A dance could be taken up by commercial, and indeed high culture, where it was used as an aural marker of rurality in general.⁷⁰ When the Musée des arts et traditions populaires organized a field trip to the remote corners of the Haute-Loire in 1946, the musicologists would always ask, ‘and where did you learn this bourrée?’ To which the answer was often ‘from the radio’ or ‘from a record’.⁷¹ The shepherds were learning their own regional culture from the cities. Since the Second World War,

⁶⁷ Fañch Postic (ed.) *François Cadic: Un collecteur vannetais, ‘recteur’ des Bretons de Paris* (Brest: CRBC, 2012).

⁶⁸ Marianne Bröcker, ‘A French Minority in Paris’, in Ursula Hemetek et al (eds), *Manifold Identities: Studies in Music and Minorities* (Amersham: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2004), pp. 129-61.

⁶⁹ Leslie Page Moch, *The Pariahs of Yesterday: Breton Migrants in Paris* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

⁷⁰ Hence an Auvergnat bourrée features in the Cornish regionalist opera ‘The Logan Rock’ by Inglis Gundry (premiered 1956).

⁷¹ Didier Perre and Marie-Barbara Le Gonidec (eds), *Chansons et contes de Haute-Loire. L’enquête phonographique de 1946* (Paris, CTHS-AMT: 2013).

and the spread of folk clubs, the bourrée has become a standard across France. Indeed, in international folk dance festivals, the bourrée often represents ‘France’ generally as much as the Auvergne specifically.⁷² And yet Auvergnats, both in the region and among the diaspora, both rural and urban, continue to learn and perform the bourrée as an expression of a regional identity.

Displays of regional specificity can be performed by both insiders and outsiders to the local community, but in either case they are intended to parade cultural distinctions. The most obvious beneficiary of these displays has been the tourist market. Regional identity is performed for visitors so that they can authentically experience what it means to be somewhere different. Perhaps the visitor will be able to join in, as at a Breton ‘fest noz’, and temporarily be absorbed into a different, seemingly more intense community than the one left at home.⁷³ This link between regional tourism and regional folkloric display goes back to the beginning of mechanised travel, but it really developed with excursion tourism – that is with the bicycle and then the car the defining technologies of the ‘long twentieth century’..⁷⁴

Folklorists were important to this tourist economy. They supplied the stories which explained why you visit this castle (haunted by a white lady), this gorge (from which lovers leapt), this inn (used by a smuggling gang). They could be more directly involved too: Paul Sébillot, the leading figure in French folklore circles in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, did most of his fieldwork in the village of Saint-Cast on the north Breton coast. He was also an artist, and encouraged other artists to visit the region. One of these was Alfred Marinier, a watercolourist, who not only set up his study there, but bought land to turn into holiday villas. His son in law wrote tourist pamphlets for the local railway company which promoted Saint-Cast as a tourist destination. Saint-Cast, a fishing village when Sébillot visited in the 1880s, is now almost entirely given over to the tourism industry, and is one of the prime destinations on Brittany’s ‘côte d’emeraude’. This title, applied to the coast west of Saint-Malo, and which is now ubiquitous on tourist literature, was invented by the folklorist Eugène Herpin in 1894. Because tourist literature is often ephemeral its role in establishing a corpus of narratives and beliefs about places and regions is easy to overlook, but it is important.⁷⁵

ARE THE FOLK REGIONALISTS?

The production of identity — cultural and political — is a key element of revivalism. But in the period before revivalism folklore collectors seldom asked their informants whether they told a story in a particular way or participated in a particular custom because they perceived it to be part of their regional culture. Did Lorrainers playing the *dâyage* think of the game as something specific to them *qua* Lorrainers? Did mountaineers dancing the bourrée feel themselves more Auvergnat? Did they recognize others as members of a regional community because of their knowledge of distinctive traditions (or as outsiders because of their ignorance)? As we have

⁷² For example at the ‘Festival of National Dances’ held at the Albert Hall in London in March 1955. See Violet Alford, ‘A Jubilee Symposium’, *Folk Music Journal* 2:2 (1971): 79-101.

⁷³ Desi Wilkinson, ‘Celtitude, Professionalism and the Fest Noz in Traditional Music in Brittany’, in Martin Stokes and Philip V. Bohlman (eds), *Celtic Modern: Music at the Global Fringe* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2003): 219-56.

⁷⁴ See also the chapter by Storm.

⁷⁵ See also Patrick Young, *Enacting Brittany: Tourism and Culture in Provincial France, 1871-1939* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

seen, it was folklorists who ascribed a regional label to folk songs and tales; there is little indication that singers and storytellers understood their repertoires as expressive of a regional identity. In most studies of nation-building from the ground up, it is assumed that pre-existing loyalties seldom extended beyond the village, the parish or the immediate locality. The parish or commune existed as an institution that legally bound inhabitants into a single entity; practices associated with the ritual year (Lenten dances, rogations, Maypoles, Saint-John's bonfires) involved the inhabitants of one village. Thus the culture which we now label as 'folkloric' largely gave expression to a village community, rather than a regional one. Neighbouring villagers were rivals who needed to be excluded.

Yet there were occasions, even before regionalist campaigning reached the countryside in the long twentieth century, when some sort of regional identity that extended well beyond the village appears to have been mobilized. Peasant revolts in the early modern period often took a whole province as their field of action. In nineteenth-century rural autobiographies one can occasionally observe an awareness of demarcations between a regional 'us' and 'them', indicated by changes in dialect, costume and song. And even in the absence of clear-cut cultural distinctions, one can still find articulations of a regional identity. An anthropologist working in the village of Elmdon on the Essex/Cambridgeshire border 'heard an Elmdon mother, distressed at the thought of her daughter marrying a man living as far away as Chelmsford [the county town], console herself with the thought that "anyhow, he is an Essex man".'⁷⁶ What value she attached to this fact is difficult to know, but it meant something. It may be that folklore collections provide an archive through which to investigate these popular expressions of regional identity.

CONCLUSION

In western Europe the region has become folklore's preferred operational space, even though the collecting zone of a single folklorist was usually more localized, and the lore itself much more widely dispersed than a single region. Nor is there much evidence that folklorists' informants – tradition bearers in the disciplinary jargon – understood their own performances as expressions of a distinct regional identity. Yet folklorists' use of regional demarcators in their titles clearly appears natural not only to them but also to their public; hence few deem it necessary to offer an intellectual rationale for their choice.

The relationship of folklore to regionalism emerged at the beginning of the long twentieth century, as parallel responses to state modernizing projects and the development of class politics. Both could become forms of escapism, a retreat into ruralist visions of immutable traditions and unthreatening social relations. This is not to deny the cultural and intellectual achievements of both tendencies, only to point out that they shared an appreciation of the small, the local, and the domestic.

Although folklore was sometimes mobilized in support of more militant forms of regionalist politics, it could also become the raw material of 'banal regionalism'. For most of us, locals and visitors alike, the region is enacted through folk manifestations, such as music festivals, costumed dolls and local delicacies. The folklorized region becomes a safe space as regional differences are reduced to a map of speciality cakes exhibited on a tea-towel sold in a

⁷⁶ Jean Robin, *Elmdon: Continuity and Change in a North-West Essex Village, 1861-1964* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. xii.

National Trust cafe. But banality has its own power: in these forms the region has become an ubiquitous and uncontroversial geography.

But contained in the wealth of material collected by folklorists are opportunities for historians to look again at what defines a region, and what constitutes a regional identity. Distinct cultural regions are hard to detect, but that does not mean that there are no regional differences in 'traditional art, literature, knowledge, and practice', which interact with other geographical, political and administrative definitions of the region. By-and-large we do not know what it meant to nineteenth-century villagers to wear what we call 'regional costume', to learn regional dances and to maintain regional styles of architecture. However, given that they involved cost and effort, it is plausible that they considered them of some importance. Before discarding the region as yet another form of 'invented tradition', it would be worth investigating what folkloric traditions meant to those who practiced them.

FURTHER READING

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