

1999

An investigation into attitudes towards illegitimate birth as evidenced in the folklore of South West England

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<http://hdl.handle.net/10026.1/836>

<http://dx.doi.org/10.24382/3738>

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**AN INVESTIGATION INTO ATTITUDES TOWARDS ILLEGITIMATE BIRTH
AS EVIDENCED IN THE FOLKLORE OF SOUTH WEST ENGLAND**

by

SARAH JOANNE DAVIES

A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth
in partial fulfilment for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Exeter School of Arts & Design
Faculty of Arts & Education

October 1999.

Dedication

For my brother James, in honour of the colour green.

ABSTRACT

Sarah Joanne Davies

An Investigation into Attitudes Towards Illegitimate Birth as Evidenced in the Folklore of South West England

This thesis is a comparative, cross-generic, study of attitudes towards illegitimacy as evidenced in folksong and folk narrative genres. It is a regionally based study, focusing specifically on oral materials collected from the counties of Devon, Cornwall and Somerset, in the South West of England since 1970. Hence archival sources, in addition to my own fieldwork, provide the main sources of folklore data for this project. This is the first thesis to draw extensively upon the large body of material known as the Sam Richards Folklore Archive, which includes over 500 hours of taped recordings. The collecting towards this archive was originally inspired by the prolific work of early folksong collectors Sabine Baring-Gould and Cecil Sharp in the South West region.

My work on this project is the first broad-based critical analysis of selected materials from the resulting thirty years' collecting.

Representations of out-of-wedlock pregnancy in South West folksong are often extremely diverse. Illegitimacy is commonly fused with other types of theme, including seduction and betrayal. By contrast, a fairly narrow depiction of "illegitimate" pregnancy is given in supernatural legends and memorates, local legends and local character anecdotes, where it is consistently seen as having negative repercussions for the woman and sometimes the child, concerned.

An extensive overview of folklore scholarship informs my eclectic approach to this study. In the early chapters of this thesis I delineate my source materials in some detail, also setting out the historical context from which my chosen songs and narratives emerged. In my analysis of these materials in Chapters 6, 7, and 8, I have combined the use of detailed textual analysis with a consideration of the creation of meaning in the interaction between text and performance context.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank all my interviewees and correspondents, who so generously contributed their time towards this thesis: Pat Barker, Chris Binmore, Sheila Bricknell, Joe and Dilly Davis, Jack Gard, Dave German, Edwin Hall, Charlie and Jess Hill, Bessie French, Denis Hutchings, Vic Legg, Dave Lowry, Bill Packman, Margaret Palmer, Ken Penney, Tish Stubbs, Maureen Tatlow, Wray Tucker, Paul Wilson, and George Withers.

Particular love and thanks are due to Jacqueline Patten and Pete Gill for their constant support and encouragement, and to Angela Blaen, without whom this project would never have happened. I am also much indebted to my specialist supervisor Julia Bishop for her professional advice, patience, perseverance, and hospitality over and above the call of duty; to my Director of Studies, Philip Hull, for his unfailing confidence and kindness; to David Holt for his swift reading of final drafts; and Richard Williams for his interest and encouragement.

Gratitude is also due to my friends and colleagues at Wandale Research Base, in particular to Val Clarke, Ian Dalgleish, Simon Rippingale, Anna Trussler, and Amy Williams, both for their humour, and for a whole range of emotional and practical support, including the sharing of ideas, chasing up material, the painstaking reading of earlier drafts, and technical assistance. I am also indebted to Karen Somerfield, for her calming temperament and optimism. Thanks also to other dear friends; to Helen and Paul Seaton-Burn for faith and encouragement; to Ed and Ali Pawson, for their hospitality and constant love and kindness; to Vic Chadwick, for her strength and practical help, including her more than generous hospitality.

Gratitude is also owed to a number of other institutions for their help and collaboration; to the Wren Trust, and the Librarian, Malcolm Taylor, and Assistant Librarians, at The Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, for making my archive research possible; to NATCECT, particularly for the use of their unique resources; to the committee members and staff at the Folklore Society, particularly to Steve Roud, for selflessly slaving over a hot computer, to Doc Rowe, for generous hospitality and the use of his archive, and the librarian, Dr Caroline Oates. Thanks also to the library and media staff at University of Plymouth, particularly Sue White for help with inter-library loans, and Alex Palmer for help with computing; Moi Deighton and Sam Richards, for help with fieldwork; Madeleine Midgeley for chasing books and obscure references; and Martin Graebe and Dr Marion Gibson, for guidance and professional advice.

Finally, considerable thanks are due to my family; to my sister Alex, for the use of her house as a "research" base, to my mother, for her assistance with proof-reading and editing final drafts of the thesis, and to my father, for backing and financially assisting this project.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other university award.

This study was financed with the aid of a studentship funded by the University of Plymouth.

Signed . *J. H. D. Jones* .

Date . 17th . October . 1999

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study has used a thematically based cross-generic approach to explore attitudes towards illegitimacy as evidenced in folk narrative genres in the South West of England. A variety of folksongs and three types of prose narratives - supernatural narratives, local legends and local character anecdotes relevant to this theme form the central focus of the discussion. This study has a contemporary emphasis and therefore only considers narratives if the evidence points to their actively circulating in oral tradition in the South West region since approximately 1970, whether or not they have continued into the present day. It combines the use of textual analysis, with various kinds of contextual approach (see Chapter 2). Consequently, it attempts to interpret attitudes within the narratives in terms of their performance context, as well as the wider socio-historical context of their circulation. In the process of collectively evaluating these narratives as evidence of attitudes towards illegitimacy in the distant, and recent past, as well as the present, the comparative usefulness of the data will also be considered in relation to other types of source material, such as official records and historical researches.

Four different archival collections - the Sam Richards Folklore Archive (hereafter SRFA), the Wren Trust Archive, the Patten Archive, the Sound Archive at the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, in addition to my own fieldwork and a variety of folk narratives recorded in printed sources - collectively form the main source of data in relation to this project. Each of the archives is linked by their folklore content, their association with the local area and their strong emphasis on contemporary tape-recorded material. Recordings and notes from my own collecting reflect a similar concern with local folklore, particularly with songs and narratives relating to this theme, as do these additional printed sources.

Folksongs provide a particularly unique resource because they belong to an extremely deep-rooted tradition. Whilst undergoing spates of revival since the late nineteenth century, this has generally suffered a decline in terms of a smaller, increasingly marginalised proportion of the general population performing folksong, or participating in folk singing events. A study of this particular corpus of post-1970s folksongs therefore provides the means to test the hypothesis that with the declining popularity of a cultural artefact, such as

song, a corresponding decline occurs in the relevance of the social attitudes expressed within it. In other words, declining popularity may reflect the increasing inability of song to resonate with the values of the immediate social group (see Pickering "The Past", "The Farmworker").

That the theme of illegitimacy also surfaced in prose narrative genres, such as local legend, as well as song, provided a useful body of comparative materials. Because different types of narratives convey, and provide, an insight into social attitudes, as already observed by scholars such as Polly Stewart and Isabel Peer, these could be used to further test my hypothesis in relation to song. One might reasonably expect a decline in particular types or attitude in certain generic categories to be followed by a corresponding decline in another. My increasing awareness of the subjective nature of different types of classification as essentially academic constructs also confirmed the validity of this cross-generic approach (Dundes "Texture" 252). It was clear that certain types of folklore in performance, such as a folksong, might intrinsically be a mixture of many different forms, perhaps being incorporated as part of a custom or rite of passage, whilst also having particular elements in common with the joke. Finally, this approach stemmed from an awareness of the dearth of studies of this kind, particularly in relation to English folklore.

There were two additional reasons for using folklore materials as the main source of data for this project. Firstly, whilst folklore has always been a vital and persistent current within our society and continues to be so, for numerous reasons folklore data still stands as a neglected resource, in spite of its relevance to a wide range of academic disciplines including history, linguistics, literature and cultural studies (Widdowson). As a relatively untapped resource, the kinds of folk narrative included in this thesis were considered to be worthy of discussion. For similar reasons, maximum use of materials from other generic categories, such as language, custom and belief, which also reveal attitudes towards sex and illegitimacy, is made in Chapter 5. Hence folklore data is combined with other types of material, such as oral testimonies and more conventional historical writings, to assemble a wider picture of socio-historical context in which these focal folksongs and prose narratives pertaining to the theme of illegitimacy were and are circulated.

Secondly, there has been a growing recognition that until recent years, mainstream historians have tended to exclude certain aspects of human experience from historical discourse, focusing in particular upon politics, certain types of "historical" event, and prioritising the views and experiences of the educated

élite in their discussion (Shorter The Making 8-13; Newton "Introduction"; Neilands 3-4). This has been common not only with regard to certain groups of people, such as the lower classes and women, but also with certain subject areas. This neglect is particularly apparent in relation to areas defined as essentially personal, such as "supernatural" beliefs, or as intrinsically taboo, such as sex and childbirth.¹ Folklore data is thus a means of redressing the balance in terms of the distorted view traditionally provided by élitist mainstream history by adding an alternative point of view. It follows the wider move by other groups of scholars, such as oral and women's historians, towards the greater acceptance of more unconventional sources, since approximately the 1960s. Hence, whilst drawing upon alternative kinds of data, including autobiographical testimony or writing and family histories, scholars have begun developing new working models with which to view them. The qualitative, subjective nature of the folk narratives themselves ensured that they were a better source of information, given the nature of my research questions, than other less descriptive, statistical kinds of evidence, such as census returns, more suited to quantitative research.

My interest in this central theme, out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth, was sparked by the apparent disjuncture between the attitudes alluded to in folksong texts within the SRFA (with which I was initially concerned), and prevailing attitudes within the more liberal climate of today. Songs such as "Catch Me if You Can" seemed to have an obvious affinity with the past, and yet their existence in a relatively contemporary tape-recorded archive compiled since the 1970s suggested that they might have continued in active circulation up until the present day. Intriguingly, further research revealed that the same anomaly appeared to exist within other types of folk narrative, such as local legends, and the environments of their circulation, and thus the theme aroused my curiosity. Moreover, this subject area also provided a useful case study of the dynamic relationship between folklore and its social context, choosing an aspect of experience which has been subject to considerable rapid social change.

This thesis primarily seeks to establish how folksongs, supernatural narratives, local legends, and local character anecdotes relate to attitudes towards illegitimacy in the relatively contemporary environments of their circulation (i.e. from 1970-present day). However, the retrospective nature of many of the narratives also suggested the possibility that the narratives might evidence

¹Significantly, the discrepancies between official histories and the reality of past experience is highlighted in Chapter 5, even on the basis of South West data alone (see abortion and infanticide, Chapter 5).

attitudes and experiences in the distant past to which they seemed to refer, thereby demonstrating the kind of "time-lag" which is characteristic of folklore in oral tradition. Similarly, the obvious antiquity of particular songs seemed to confirm that this might be the case.² Because of the need to anchor attitudes within the narratives to a particular era, they were viewed from a diachronic perspective. Changing experiences and attitudes were therefore reconstructed for the period 1850-present day, for reasons further explained in Chapters 3 and 5.

This thesis was written during my time as a Research Student for the University of Plymouth. This full-time studentship, which commenced in November 1993, was funded by a three-year bursary and was established following the acquisition of a contemporary tape-recorded archive, the SRFA. The use of this resource, which was housed in an office space at the Exmouth campus of the University of Plymouth, was a condition of the studentship. It was also intended that I would undertake my own fieldwork, the resulting materials being deposited with, and augmenting, the existing archive. Hence, to a certain extent, the type of data considered within this project was pre-determined. My initial investigation of the SRFA, with which I was completely unfamiliar, revealed that most of the material related to musical traditions.

Hence, the decision to examine three additional archival collections was motivated firstly by the wish to conduct a more extensive survey of illegitimacy-related songs collected within the South West region during a comparable time period. Secondly, the additional sources were chosen with a view to further investigating other generic categories of material, such as local legend, which were underrepresented in the SRFA itself. Each of these archives was examined at the same time as conducting fieldwork, and was considered as a potential source of informants. The geographical repercussions of the SRFA being located at Exmouth, coupled with the obvious constraints on time, labour and resources, also determined how each of these additional archives was chosen. The same considerations also affected the planning of and execution of fieldwork within this project, and the use of other facilities, such as public libraries. Hence my eventual bias towards the Devon area.

Chapter 2, The Growth of Scholarship Relating to the Theme of Illegitimacy in Folk narrative Genres, charts the development of scholarly thought in relation to this theme as it occurs in folksong and selected prose

² The song "The Foggy Dew", for example, can be dated back to a broadside ballad printed in 1689 under the title The Fright'ned York-shire Damosel, or Fears Dispers'd by Pleasure.

narrative genres. The different approaches of a growing number of scholars in Britain, Ireland and North America are compared and contrasted. For instance, in relation to folksong the insights of a range of studies from the contextual approaches of Neilands and Gammon, to the semiological approaches of Renwick and Kodish, are considered. Ultimately, this chapter critically examines the hypotheses of each scholar with regard to the theme of illegitimacy itself and its significance in terms of attitudes towards illegitimacy both within the text, and within the environments at large in which these narratives were circulated. A greater proportion of this chapter is devoted to the former genre in part one, as studies of relevant folksongs have been far more prolific than those relating to prose narratives. Nevertheless, certain branches of scholarly thought in relation to songs of this theme, were easily transferable to other types of narrative (see Preston).

Chapter 3, Methodology, initially explains how and why the data considered within this thesis was collected from each of the four archives, my own fieldwork and additional published sources - which are more closely examined in Chapter 4. Making explicit the assumptions which underpin this study, a more detailed explanation of how my chosen folksongs and folk narratives are analysed is then given. The various phases of research are viewed in terms of the different strands of ideas which linked them together. Hence, I will be acknowledging other scholars who directly influenced the development of thought in relation to my own work and whose approaches were drawn upon in devising my own methodology. Having defined my use of terms (including "illegitimacy") in relation to my own material, in the final section I will then explain how the data considered in Chapters 6, 7 and 8, is presented.

Chapter 4, A Critical Examination of the Main Sources of Data, focuses upon source material falling into two distinct categories: the four selected archives; the body of data accumulated during my own collecting activities; and additional material obtained from a variety of printed sources. Each of these sources is described and analysed in some detail, evaluating to what extent the data can be seen as reliable, authentic or even representative of folk narrative relating to sexual relationships and illegitimacy. Thus the particular interests and inherent biases of each collector or writer are carefully considered, with a view to evaluating how this may have affected their findings. The motivations and rationale behind my own data collection ^{are} also considered, and a detailed background to all informants contributing material is provided.

Chapter 5, Socio-Historical Context, attempts to reconstruct a relevant historical context for the illegitimacy narratives which are considered in Chapters 6 and 7, exploring the interface between these narratives and selected aspects of experience in both the distant and recent past from 1850-present day. My data-centred approach necessitated that the subject matter of these narratives ultimately determined which particular areas of socio-historical experience were expanded within the discussion. Therefore, whilst less obviously connected subjects, such as social class and female suicide, are sometimes considered in some detail, others, like infanticide, are consigned to a more marginal position. For the same reasons, data relating to the South West of England is, as far as is possible, foregrounded within this reconstruction of attitudes and experience. Material from a variety of disciplines, including oral and women's history, folklore and anthropology, is used to this end. Hence the insights of broadly based historical works about changing sexual behaviour and social custom, are combined with those afforded by more localised studies specifically relating to illegitimacy in the South West (see Shorter, E.P. Thompson and Robin).

Chapter 6, Folksongs, presents the findings in terms of all relevant song data obtained from the sources outlined in Chapter 4, clarifying how each of these songs was selected. A comprehensive list of material is provided in Table B, with plot summaries for each song, or group of song variants. In part two, I will complete a textual analysis of each song, initially examining attitudes towards illegitimacy in terms of stated text alone. This discussion then investigates the creation of meaning in performance, using the insights of singers and audiences in relation to the singing of those same songs since 1970 with a view to establishing their significance in terms of my chosen theme. Finally, the experience of, and attitudes towards illegitimacy, as represented within these songs is related to those same experiences and attitudes within the wider cultural environments of their circulation. Hence, I aim to draw some conclusions about the extent to which a given song communicates attitudes towards illegitimacy in the "distant" past; more contemporary notions about attitudes towards illegitimacy held in the distant past; or attitudes towards illegitimacy since the 1970s.

Chapter 7, Folk Narrative, focuses on attitudes towards out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth in the three different types of prose narrative genres. By focusing specifically on examples which have been in active circulation in the South West during approximately the last thirty years, this analysis attempts to employ a similar time scale to that used in the previous

discussion of folksong. This enables a comparison to be usefully drawn between the experience of, and attitudes towards, out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth as exemplified within two different genres of oral tradition. With recourse to earlier-collected material, particularly that amassed by turn of the century collectors, these more contemporary narratives were viewed from a diachronic perspective.

Chapter 8, Comparison between Attitudes towards Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancy and Illegitimate Birth in Folksong and Prose Narrative Genres,

contrasts attitudes towards illegitimacy, synthesising the separate analyses conducted in the previous two chapters. These categories of material are collectively viewed in terms of attitudes towards illegitimacy implicit within the texts. Songs and prose narratives are also evaluated as evidence of attitudes towards illegitimacy in the distant, rather than recent past and as evidence of contemporary attitudes towards illegitimacy in the historical past, with a view to suggesting why certain narratives promote a particular view of history and what functions this might serve. Finally, this corpus of material is evaluated as evidence of attitudes towards illegitimacy in living memory and experience.

Chapter 9, Conclusion, provides an overview of all the findings earlier discussed and draws some general conclusions about attitudes towards illegitimacy as represented within, and communicated by, both folksong and prose narrative in the South West.

Geographical/Social Background

The South West of England is a triangular-shaped peninsula surrounded by sea, with the Atlantic Ocean on its northern and eastern edges, and the English Channel creating a more sheltered coastline to the South (Devon 108). The topography of the region as a whole is extremely varied, East Devon and Somerset belonging to "lowland" Britain, and Cornwall and the rest of Devon to the highland part (Central, English 2).

The largest area of granite-based moor is located within the Dartmoor region, a designated National Park since 1951, which occupies much of the southern part of Devon (83). This is "a compact 365-square-mile . . . upland lying between the Tamar and the Ex" (Devon 97; "Dartmoor" (TV)). Like Exmoor, this region has a high altitude, being over 1000 feet above sea level in parts (Devon 102-03). The climates of both areas can therefore be extremely inhospitable throughout the winter period, though Dartmoor tends to be wilder and bleaker, the weather

sometimes isolating its communities (Central, English 4; Devon 101-03). Exmoor, having a total of 265 square miles, is the smaller of the region's two national parks (Devon 101). Whilst it straddles the Devon/Somerset border, over two thirds of this region is located in Somerset (Devon 101). A much smaller, bleak area of moor land, Bodmin moor, is located in the eastern part of Cornwall, and like Dartmoor and Exmoor has traditionally been used as rough grazing ground (Central, English 19; Devon 101). The other, more fertile areas of Devon, Cornwall and Somerset, "are not well suited to growing cereals and concentrate mainly on grassland" (Central, English 19; Devon 127).

Compared to other parts of Britain, the South West continues to be a sparsely populated, predominantly rural area (Central, English 13-14, Britain 8-9; cf. W.G. Hoskins 158). One estimate for the more widely defined South West region, in 1978, suggested that only a quarter of its inhabitants were living in towns of more than 100,000 people (Central, English 14; cf. Hoskins 158-59). The region as a whole has few conurbations or large towns, instead having a fairly even distribution of small towns which "play an important social and economic role in the more sparsely populated areas" (Central, English 14). Devon is both the largest of the three counties in terms of its area and population, which tends to be concentrated in the South, particularly in the Torbay and Plymouth districts (Central, English 13-14). By the mid 1990s approximately twice as many people were living in Devon, than in either Cornwall and the Scilly Isles, or Somerset (Central Office, Britain 8-9).

Prior to the twentieth century, the South West continued to be a relatively isolated region. This was particularly true of Cornwall, "the last outpost of Celtic England", which had its own language well into the eighteenth century and continued to be separated from Devon and Somerset by the River Tamar (Reader's Digest 130; Payton 119). The isolation of the South West began to diminish with the advent of the railways. Since the Paddington to Exeter route was established in 1844, the time of travel has been reduced from a five, to a one hour fifty minute journey (Devon 84, 141).³ London to Penzance has now been a mainline passenger route for over twenty-five years. Since the motorway system was developed, Exeter, "the tourism gateway for both Devon and Cornwall", became linked to Bristol by the M5 in the late 1970s, reducing travelling times by up to two hours, the A303/A30 and M3 making the route to London a three hour journey (Devon 31, 164; Hawkins 35, 55). Links also extend to Plymouth and the ferry ports by the A38, though not until 1985 was the dual carriageway completed through to the Cornwall county boundary

³By 1859, the railway also extended across the River Tamar (Reader's Digest 130).

(Devon 31, 164; Hawkins 55-56). Road systems within the South West itself, have also been improved, creating greater accessibility. The North Devon Link, built in the late 1980s, is one such example (Devon 141, 164).

The economic importance of traditional occupations, such as domestic service⁴, tin mining and quarrying, deep-sea fishing, and farming has declined throughout the twentieth century, each employing a much smaller proportion of the population (Hoskins 159; Central, English 18-21; Sayers; Reader's Digest 130; Payton 127; Devon 127, 130). Meanwhile, tourism, which began in the late nineteenth century, has accelerated as a major growth industry (Devon 48, 53, 139; Payton 125-27). The Central Office of Information were referring to the more widely defined South West area, as "Britain's leading region for tourism" by 1978, Devon and Cornwall being exceptionally popular (Central, English 11). Devon, said to be "the most popular destination in this country for British tourists" in 1989, was alone estimated to have "over three million visitors stay[ing] in the county each year" (Devon 85). Hence, in spite of being subject to seasonal fluctuations, as "a multi-million-pound industry", tourism had become "a most important contributor to Devon's economy" (Devon 85). As with both Somerset and Cornwall, the associated redistribution of wealth has had direct repercussions in terms of local services, such as shops and recreational facilities, and employment, generating work particularly in the "ancillary manufacturing and service industries" (Devon 85). Tourism has now become a permanent feature of life on Dartmoor, one estimate in 1987 suggesting that there were up to eight million visitors each year, concentrated in a small number of places ("Dartmoor" (TV)).

Early Collectors of Folk Narrative and Song in the South West Region

The history of folklore collecting in the South West region stretches back at least as far as the early nineteenth century. As Gillian Bennett rightly observes:

The early folklorists were all *insiders* - clergymen, men of letters, publishers, journalists, gentlefolk - middle-class Victorians with time and/or money to devote to their hobby: frankly "bourgeois". Necessarily, they looked at the rural life and country customs they studied with the preconceptions of their time and class. (Traditions 191)

This upper class bent amongst the early folklorists took its toll upon the material they gathered. In relation to their encounters with folksong texts, for example, the collectors found that

⁴ In Devon, this was the largest single occupation prior to the First World War (Hoskins 159).

as *gentlemen* they could not approve the *words*. These were "corrupt" as prudish Victorians saw it, neither "wholesome" nor a "refining influence". They were, in fact, often lewd, crude and rude, full of dialect words, "incorrect" grammar, lines that would neither scan nor rhyme, and - worse still!- shockingly frank about sex. (Bennett, Traditions 192)

The tension created by the opposing values of collector and informant could only be assuaged by the collector sacrificing the words of the songs, which were censored, altered and rewritten. Bennett emphasises that the practice of censorship was applied on a wider scale as "almost identical attitudes and processes are observable in the collections of regional folklore and legends" in which collectors were also unscrupulous about their "improvement" of living traditions (192).

One of the first publications with a major focus on folk narrative from the South West region was produced by **Anna Eliza Bray (1790 -1883)**, who collected information about the area surrounding her home in Tavistock, on the western edge of Dartmoor, with her husband (Dorson 95). The writer Robert Southey (1774-1843), influenced Anna Bray to include aspects of folklore such as traditions, manners, nursery songs, for their added interest, in her three volume work published in 1836. This "did not so much initiate a new kind of domestic history as divert into a new channel literary treatments of [the] legendry" (Dorson 97). Interestingly, Bray's fieldwork suggests that local narratives were undergoing a rapid change in popularity and that certain beliefs and tales had lost their currency by the time she was collecting (Hunt, footnote Popular Romances 21).

An important collection of Cornish folk narratives was later accumulated by **William Bottrell (1816-1881)**. He is praised by **Robert Hunt (1807-1887)**, a fellow collector and colleague, as "a native of St Leven, who possesses a greater knowledge of the household stories of the Land's End district than any man living" (Hunt, Popular Romances 31). Bottrell, like Hunt, was painfully aware that they were collecting in fluid social environments where certain types of traditional narrative struggled to survive. The stories perpetuated by semi-professional droll tellers, for example, were seen to be fast becoming redundant.⁵ Hunt claimed there were just two such droll tellers left in 1829 and that he recorded only a few of their tales.⁶ Having gathered sufficient material,

⁵ Dorson defines the droll teller as "an itinerant minstrel specializing in long, rambling, episodic narratives interspersed with song, which he often adapted to local situations" (323).

⁶In his writing, Bottrell tries to mimic "the rambling narrative-style of old droll-tellers", attempting to translating some of the stylistic qualities of oral speech into a written form (Bottrell, Introduction, i)

Bottrell started to publish his own work in selected periodicals, over fifty of his narratives also being incorporated in Hunt's collection of stories (Popular Romances). Hunt was able to follow up his early interest in Cornish Folklore through his work with the Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society in connection with the mining industry. Visiting remote parts of Devon and Cornwall in this capacity, Hunt was brought "into intimate relation with the miners and the peasantry" (Hunt 22). Loss of material is repeatedly mentioned by Hunt, who notes with dismay that by the time he endeavoured to record some of his remembered childhood stories approximately sixty-seven years later, they had been entirely forgotten (Hunt, Popular Romances 30).

Both Hunt and Bottrell were documenting oral traditions at a time when the polishing, reworking and remoulding of oral narratives was seen as an acceptable procedure. Consequently, it is no surprise that Hunt needed to reassure his readers that his collection of legends were not invented, having taken away their flavour of authenticity (Popular Romances 16). He anxiously provides descriptive proof to confirm this (Popular Romances 23). Dorson reminds us however that, "the idea of accuracy did not at this stage require the literal reproduction of the spoken word" and that Hunt's reworkings represent one characteristic of the activities of the "county fieldworkers" at large, none of whom "set down literal texts" or attempted "to reproduce dialect" (321). The mixing of oral and printed sources, paraphrasing of oral texts and underhand journalistic tamperings with material also characterised their work (321).

The "socially distanced" nineteenth century collector is typified by **Margaret Ann Courtney (1834-1920)**, a banker's daughter, whose difference in social standing from her informants, had an important effect upon her material (see A.E. Green "Foreword"). By her own admission, contrasting sensibilities resulted in her expurgating certain types of material. In the preface to her pinnacle work Cornish Feasts and Folk-Lore, Courtney alludes to the sexual nature of this vetted material: "there must be many charms in use here that have not come under my notice; a few are too coarse to record, as are some of the tales" (1). Nevertheless, her writings contain a wealth of material of general relevance to this thesis, including local legends, beliefs such as the "piskies", superstitions surrounding baptism and other rites of passage. In spite of being constrained by the established pattern of regional scholarship, Green praises Courtney for the fact that her "armchair" borrowings of stories and anecdotes from published sources are integrated with a wealth of data from her own collecting. This includes examples of customs, games, and stories, all of which were experienced at first hand during a lifetime spent in Cornwall.

One of the first individuals to conduct a "rationale study" of the Dartmoor area from his own pioneer explorations was **William Crossing (1847-1928)** (see Le Messurier "introduction"). After approximately 1872 Crossing started keeping "careful records of his Dartmoor excursions and studies", having "constantly walked or ridden the moor" until approximately 1893 (Le Messurier 6). Crossing's Guide to Dartmoor, which contains the earliest reference to the legend of "Jay's Grave", was extremely successful, running to three editions in 1901, 1912 and 1914 (8). He has since been praised for being "an accurate chronicler" of customs and folk narratives which might otherwise have been lost, and for gaining "the confidence and respect of Dartmoor people" (Le Messurier 11-12). By contrast with Beatrice Chase (see Chapter 4), Crossing can "be relied upon to present the true Dartmoor, unadorned by flights of fancy", his guide books continuing to be extremely influential (11-12).

There were two major folksong collectors in the South West region, the first, **Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924)**, predating Sharp (with whom he later collaborated in a folksong publication) by about fifteen years (see Gordon Hitchcock "Introduction"; Edward Hardy "Introduction"; Bickford H. C. Dickinson; for further biographical details). His South West collecting (from approximately 1888 onwards) was conducted in the shadow of his dual identity as collector and parson. During his lifetime Baring-Gould earned a reputation as a thorough researcher in relation to his academic work. Baring-Gould was motivated by remarkably similar concerns to Sharp in believing that his song collecting mission was of utmost importance to the "cultural life of the nation" in order that "this heritage should be saved before it perished with the old singers" (Reeves, Idiom 2-3; cf. "Dundes "Devolutionary").

Baring-Gould's methods differed from Sharp's in a number of ways. He was not a trained musician like Sharp and therefore had to rely on his friends, F.W.Bussell and the Rev. H. Fleetwood Sheppard, to transcribe the music accompanying his song texts. Secondly, although he did make field excursions (Bickford H. C. Dickinson 129-32), the collector was more inclined, where possible, to invite traditional singers to the vicarage at Lew Trenchard where he could record their songs at his convenience. Hence, over sixty singers performed their songs in a socially contrived setting, in the unfamiliar surroundings of Baring-Gould's home. Disparities of class, wealth, and etiquette would have been heightened in this environment and the direct effect upon the material collected needs to be considered. Baring-Gould's attitude towards his singers is another important factor. His reaction to their repertoires can be

gauged by the remarks and suggestions made in his notes. Kenneth Goldstein observes:

In his notes to the final edition of *Songs of the West*, he indicates that he supplied new texts, mostly of his own composition, to replace the words he had collected for at least 20 per cent of the 121 songs whose melodies he enshrined in the volume. And most of these textual exchanges were made explicitly because the original words "were very gross", or "could not possibly be inserted here."
("Bowdlerization" 379-80)

Consequently, Goldstein views Baring-Gould as the archetypal figure of the bowdlerising gentleman collector, because of the total substitution of song texts outlined above.⁷ Baring-Gould's comments make it quite explicit that his refusal to transcribe particular songs (or sections of songs) had a sexual basis.

Baring-Gould's treatment of his song material has further implications for both his collecting and publication of stories and legends. Although we have more scanty information about his collecting of folk narrative, it is equally likely that he subjected this genre to a similar kind of treatment as that meted out to the songs.⁸ In addition, the levels of self-imposed censorship discussed below in relation to singers would have been an equally viable option for his other informants.

Clearly, Baring-Gould censored his material at a number of different stages between its performance and its publication. A glance at his preparatory volumes of Songs and Ballads of the West confirms that many relevant songs, such as numerous versions of "Down by the Old Riverside," were totally expurgated from his later volumes. So extreme was his censorship at the level of publication that not a single song text in any of his volumes makes even the slightest allusion to the themes of out-of-wedlock pregnancy or illegitimate birth. Songs of this nature are sometimes so radically altered that they are practically unrecognisable by all but their titles (e.g. "Down by a Riverside"). Yet comparison with manuscript versions of these same songs confirms the reader's

⁷ It is important to understand Goldstein's terminology: "*Expurgation* shall refer to censorship by omission - the intentional deletion of all or part of any erotic or obscene item of folklore. *Bowdlerization* shall refer to censorship by commission - the intentional alteration or modification of any item of sexual folklore by substituting or exchanging one or more words, phrases, verses, or an entire item, for another." ("Bowdlerisation" 375)

⁸ An example from my fieldwork suggests this may have been the case. Bill Packman provided an account of a married farmer who had contracted a sexually transmitted disease from his unfaithful wife as an example of "an old story". The absence of this kind of material from earlier collections may suggest either censorship by the collectors or else a conflict between informant/collector categorisation of material.

suspensions that such themes had been an integral part of the singers' original performances.⁹

Fortunately, Baring-Gould's songbooks are no longer the only published sources deriving from his collected material. Subsequent scholars, such as Purslow and Reeves, have, since the late 1950s, attempted to publish full versions of selected songs as taken down by the collector in the field. It is important to remember, however, that much of this work is still incomplete and that the publication of Sharp's South West material has, by comparison, been far more comprehensive. To date, the most relevant work in this area is Reeves volume The Everlasting Circle (1960), in which 53 of the available 202 Baring-Gould song texts are published in their entirety (Reeves, The Everlasting, 6).¹⁰ From these, and other comparative sources, it is possible to piece together a picture of the range of material which Baring-Gould collected and the likely state of his song texts prior to alteration.

Cecil Sharp (1859- 1924) was an extremely influential figure in the field of folksong and dance, both regionally and also on a national level. His work is of paramount importance in relation to this study because his philosophies have exerted a widespread influence upon subsequent folksong collectors in the South West, particularly by encouraging the "devolutionary" premise within their work (Dundes "Devolutionary"). Sharp's successful campaign to bring folksong back into schools has also made a noticeable difference to the kinds of songs to which people in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset have been repeatedly exposed (see, for example, III:024:I:96). Sharp's high output of printed song books for educational and other purposes has also had the effect of marketing particular versions of particular songs as "traditional" pieces. These have become widely accessible whilst other, less "suitable" songs available to Sharp have been overlooked.

Sharp generated a huge body of song data during an intensive period of collecting in the South West between 1903 and 1907. Sharp's concentrated collecting efforts involved his working most intensively in Somerset, but also venturing into Devon. The didactic function attributed by Sharp to song in schools was fused with a wider and more political vision in which folksong was seen by Sharp as a redemptive force on society at large, "a great instrument for sweetening and purifying our national life and for elevating and refining popular

⁹ Compare Reeves, Everlasting 247-48 "The Squire and the Fair Maid" with the same in Songs and Ballads, part 1, 48-49.

¹⁰ As more of Baring-Gould's material has since been discovered this total figure would now have to be revised.

taste" (Sykes).¹¹ This new inspiration motivated Sharp to edit a volume of songs previously published by Baring-Gould.

Sharp has recently been much criticised for his lack of objectivity as a collector. Criticisms include the allegation that he devised a mode of collecting that lent support to his theories. If he had gathered data from a more neutral perspective, he would have permitted findings which facilitated the re-appraisal of his previous ideas. Sharp's choice of informant, for example, was, according to Harker, tailored to accommodate this rather exclusive definition of folksong. The prevalence of the elderly singer in Sharp's sample, born between the 1830s and 1840s, minimised his chances of encountering vast amounts of material already dismissed as "not genuine folk song".¹² This kind of methodology sits uncomfortably with Sharp's assertion that his "1907 study was, by his own definition, an attempt to provide a *scientific* definition of folk song" (Sykes 50). Sharp has also been criticised for both the misinterpretation and censorship of his collected material for reasons of personal gain. Goldstein summarises this position:

The popularizer draws on materials from a culture *other than his own* and subjects them to changes based on the standards and aesthetics shaped by *his* society. The original materials may have been folk, but once the popularizer changed them according to *his* values and concepts the published materials are no longer folklore. (384)

Cecil Sharp's aesthetic preferences in relation to the songs of the "folk" reflected a "heavy emphasis on the music as opposed to the words of songs" (Sykes 448). This highly selective way of working typified a more general tendency amongst the collectors of the first revival who were "deeply interested in the melodies of the songs they were collecting" (Sykes 448). Sharp had "a very clear idea of what did and did not constitute a *folk song*" (Harker "May Cecil" 49). He did not, for example, consider anything from the music hall to be a folksong, despite the fact that this definition excluded a large part of some of his main informants' repertoires (see Harker, "Cecil Sharp" 231).

Sharp tended to work outwards from the folksong to the singer, rather than allowing singers (the "folk") the central position from which his definition of folksong was formulated. With the hindsight of more recent scholarship, in which the individual singer is seen as internalising the tastes and concerns of

¹¹ Sharp Collection, Morning Post 19.04.1906 quoted in Harker, Cecil Sharp, 240.

¹² Harker states that by these means Sharp, "sought to produce a distancing hiatus between what he knew of the decline of the broadside trade and the advent of the second generation of late Victorian music halls." ("May Cecil" 50)

his or her community, Sharp could have viewed the singer's repertoires differently (cf. Kodish). Repertoires, in particular, active repertoire, could instead be seen as reflecting the tastes of the "folk" at large.

Sykes notes that "between 1801 and 1911, the proportion of the population that was urban rose from twenty per cent to eighty per cent, a trend accelerated during the agricultural depression from the 1870s" (472). Sharp's collecting should therefore be seen against a backdrop of demographical change, which resulted in a predominantly urban population. Sykes perceives the inherent irony of the fact that Sharp saw folksong (which he defined as rural) as an expression of national character.

Harker argues that Sharp laid false claim to widespread collecting throughout Somerset. Instead, he deliberately created an artificial dichotomy between the town and the countryside in order to give false support to his theoretical stance in relation to the "purifying" effects of folksong. For the most part, he concentrated on a small number of settlements and consciously chose to avoid major towns and cities in the vicinity, such as Bath and Bristol. Harker maintains that Sharp created a false impression by claiming to have collected from 350 people, when instead "over half his Somerset songs came from 32 human beings, living in 18 small towns and villages" ("May Cecil" 51). Having collected this material, yet another level of selection began in terms of deciding which songs to forward for publication.

Clearly, a quantitative analysis of Sharp's selection of material, both for collection and also publication, exposes an obvious bias towards certain types of songs.¹³ Unfortunately, it is only possible to remedy the later situation by returning to Sharp's manuscripts. However, knowledge about the precise nature of Sharp's selectivity is extremely useful because it suggests the value system underpinning his South West collecting as a whole, forcing us to reassess to what extent Sharp's material is a representative resource.

Goldstein views the bowdlerisation of sexual materials, particularly in relation to song, as a curiously British phenomena. He claims that similar examples of Sharp's expurgation of texts by substituting particular words "could be drawn from the published collections of most English field workers at the end of the last century and during the first decades of this" ("Bowdlerization" 381).

However,

¹³ Harker mounts a scathing attack on Sharp, largely because Sharp's later writings (Sharp, 1907) suggest a far more comprehensive and representative survey than was the case.

American ballad scholars have rarely indulged in total replacement of an erotic or obscene text by a less offensive one. Their British counterparts, however, have frequently indulged in substituting mild texts for coarse ones, even going so far as to write their own words to replace those collected. (Goldstein, "Bowdlerization" 379)

In other words, both Sharp and Baring-Gould were typical of most English song collectors in bowing to the proprieties of their time. Baring-Gould, however, represented the extreme end of the scale, whilst Sharp was more moderate in his approach:

Cecil Sharp . . . preferred not to substitute entire texts for those obscene items whose tunes he admired. Where a few judicious alterations would not suffice in emending an offending text, he simply would not publish a text at all, but rarely was he forced to expurgate a song totally. (Goldstein, "Bowdlerization" 381)

Goldstein reveals Sharp's attempts to change the emphasis of some of his songs at the level of publication. Such alterations provide a measure of the extent to which Sharp's value system was at odds with that of his informants.

As I walked through the Meadows is re-cast into normative bourgeois ideology: intercourse *means* marriage. *The Trees they do grow high* systematically minimises the active sexual role of the girl, largely by using the passive moods. (Harker, "May Cecil" 52)

The tendency for sexual censorship to distort the meaning of "illegitimacy" songs, as exemplified by Baring-Gould, is also repeated by Sharp. Goldstein cites the song, "The Foggy Dew", as one example. This song concerns a sexual encounter between a young couple, which, in some variants, results in pre-nuptial pregnancy and in others results in illegitimate birth. Goldstein claims that, in order to make the song more socially acceptable, its narrative "gets shifted from a real encounter into the fantasy world of dreams," with the passing note that "Mr Marson has re-written the words, retaining as many lines of Mrs Hooper's song as were desirable" ("Bowdlerization" 54). Harker also notes the tendency for Sharp to modify the erotic implication of particular songs. He claims, for example, that the wife who runs away with "The Wrangle Taggle Gipsies" is cast as a "kind of unthinking shameless hussy", twisting the perspective of the original song ("Cecil Sharp" 52).

Fortunately, as with the Baring-Gould manuscripts, scholars have since sought to rectify this situation in terms of the rather limited texts produced in Sharp's early editions (Reeves [The Idiom](#)). They have both published previously unpublished material from the Sharp manuscripts and have re-published

material which was previously given in censored form. The most comprehensive work in this area is Maud Karpeles' two-volume anthology of Cecil Sharp's Collection of English Folksongs. A preliminary investigation of "The Foggy Dew" versions in this collection confirmed that Karpeles' transcriptions provide an accurate picture of Sharp's original manuscripts. Whilst not completely comprehensive, Karpeles attempts to incorporate the most important versions from Sharp's notebooks without alteration. It would therefore be reasonable to assume that material of a sexually explicit nature will be fairly represented within these two volumes as a whole.

Having considered the likely extent of bowdlerisation and expurgation at the level of both singer and collector, it is logical to assume that songs concerning illegitimacy will be greatly under-represented within the comparative data provided by both Sharp and Baring-Gould. This is because, as commonly emphasised by the sequential structure of their narratives, many songs about illegitimacy are also about sex and seduction. There is ample evidence that collectors experienced some anxiety on encountering any song material relating to these latter areas of existence.

The fruits of Sharp's collecting in the Somerset region inspired the work of **George Barnet Gardiner (1852/3 - 1910)** and **Henry Hammond (1866-1910)**, fellow academics at the Edinburgh academy, soon after (Purslow, "George" 130). Their resulting material, which compares favourably with Sharp's, is of particular interest because "Gardiner obviously took great care to note the exact words the singer sang - even if they didn't make sense. There is no attempt at bowdlerisation in the note-books" (137). He was clearly well liked by his singers and, unlike Sharp, was not overly discriminate about what he considered to constitute a "folksong" (139). The work of Sharp, in particular, has had a lasting effect, being one of the main sources of inspiration for the post-1970 collectors responsible for the SRFA (see Chapter 4).

CHAPTER 2

THE GROWTH OF SCHOLARSHIP RELATING TO THE THEME OF ILLEGITIMACY IN FOLK NARRATIVE GENRES

The theme of illegitimacy within folk narrative genres has come to the attention of a growing number of scholars in Britain, Ireland and North America. It has been explored both as a central subject and as a secondary concern. Studies of this theme in folk narrative genres have their roots in the subject areas of **sexual/romantic relationships** and **birth**, both of which have been of enduring interest to folklorists. Scholarly interest in folk narratives which revolve around the theme of illegitimacy should therefore be seen as an offshoot emerging from an established body of critical writing, rather than as an entirely separate development.

This first "parent" area, the theme of sexual and romantic relationships in folklore genres as studied by antiquarians, folklorists and anthropologists, has resulted in a prolific output of writings.¹⁴ However, information about the experience of and attitudes towards illegitimacy, as well as the representation of this theme in folk narrative genres, is noticeably absent within works which at a cursory glance might appear to be useful. Thistelton-Dyer's ambiguously titled work Folk-Lore of Women (1893), for example, is characterised by numerous excerpts relating almost exclusively to folklore about the temperaments and physical appearances of women, according to men. These are taken from a wide variety of international sources through the borrowings of "armchair" scholarship. In their writings on customs and belief, both Westermarck (1926) and Ryley Scott (1953) demonstrate the same tendency, thus providing the means by which the sensitive subject of sexual practices and conventions at home can be deftly avoided.

In recent years, scholars investigating the themes of sexual and romantic relationships have been motivated by a very different set of concerns to their predecessors. Their work often reflects the current academic preoccupation with issues surrounding gender and sex roles wherein the expression of sexual/romantic relationships between men and women are given a wider significance and are commonly viewed as indicators of sex roles and gender relations in society at large (e.g. Preston). These in turn are seen as cultural

¹⁴ Frazer's The Golden Bough, provides one such example. His work, which tended to speculate about the ancient origins of existing 'fertility' rituals, was extremely influential and had a wide-reaching impact on later studies of romantic and sexual relationships in folk narrative.

constructs, encoded with meaning, intrinsically related to the values of the society which they both shape and describe. Some ground-breaking studies of this kind have thus emerged, particularly in relation to folksong and selected prose narrative genres (see, for example, Kodish; Bill Ellis).

Many early collectors encountered a vast amount of folk narrative relating to sexual/romantic relationships. However, turn-of-the-century fieldworkers were extremely wary of material which was at all sexually explicit, preferring to censor or alter, so any serious study of sexual/romantic relationships in folklore has lagged far behind folklore scholarship in other areas (G. Porter, 92. See Chapter 4).

During the second half of the twentieth century there was a backlash against this Victorian censorship. Scholars, such as Reeves and Purslow, began publishing material in its entirety, which had been vetted seventy years earlier (e.g. The Idiom, The Everlasting; Marrowbones). In the 1960s, writers such as Gershon Legman and Kenneth Goldstein drew attention to the extent of this earlier neglect in relation to erotic and sexually explicit kinds of material. In doing so, they initiated discussion on the kinds of material which are central to this thesis (e.g. Goldstein, "Bowdlerization" 380-81). Legman was acutely aware of the hypocrisy surrounding the exclusion of sexual materials from published collections, given the prevalence of violent and gory deaths in folksong compilations such as Child's (Lloyd 198). Work undertaken during this period of "rebellion" confirms that many narratives relating to illegitimate birth were amongst material previously vetoed, censorship in this area being surprisingly extreme. Reeves demonstrates how censorship applied not only to eroticised "illegitimacy" songs, but also to those which might be seen as mildly socially subversive. Clearly, any scholarly progress could not commence until this restrictive blanket was lifted.

This weakening of sexual taboo has also encouraged a more liberal approach to prose narratives. Studies using, for example, the insights of psychoanalytical theory, have speculated about the psycho-sexual significance of narrative details such as symbolism preceding the birth of Snow White (in the Märchen of that title) without fear of censure (Bettelheim 202). Many birth-related narratives have been examined from the perspective of both their symbolic importance and their social function and significance, as exemplified by recent studies of changeling stories and legends relating to unusual kinds of birth (Rieti Strange Terrain; Schoon Eberly). The importance of early childhood, particularly the liminal status of the child between birth and christening, is often a central focus

and sometimes includes specific references to the "illegitimate" status of children. Candid personal experience narratives relating to the process of birth itself are also considered in Janet McNaughton's ethnographic study of the beliefs and practices of traditional midwives in Newfoundland. The sexually liberated nature of post 1960s studies examining forms of verbal art including prose narrative is also exemplified by Robbie Davis Johnson's study of the folklore of a Texas madam (Johnson).

To date, the subjects of illegitimacy, sexual/romantic relationships and childbirth have tended to be discussed in terms of relatively distinct categories of folklore, such as myth, legend, custom and belief. Although particular scholars are clearly inspired by the idea of cross-generic comparison between different narrative genres (e.g. Peer), nevertheless such work is rare and constitutes a very recent development. This lack of comparative work is particularly noticeable in relation to folksong studies, which have remained insular. Stewart, who draws upon an existing work on the didactic function of folktales in order to conduct a similar analysis in terms of song, is typical of other scholars in that links between these two genres remain undeveloped (Stewart 66).

The following literature review naturally tends to reflect the divisions which the scholars themselves have imposed on their material and, for the sake of clarity, is separated into two sections: **Folksong Scholarship** and **Scholarship in Prose Narrative Genres**. This first body of literature is accompanied by a more extensive and detailed discussion than the second for two reasons. Firstly, writings on the theme of sexual relationships in folksong have become extremely prolific and are accompanied by an increasingly sophisticated level of discussion. Therefore it was preferable to foreground the scholarly debates in this area which, in terms of the "illegitimacy" theme, are more developed than in relation to the prose narrative genres represented within my South West sample.

Secondly, this genre provides a useful case study, because scholarly writings on song tend to provide a comprehensive overview in terms of the major developments in critical approaches to all narrative genres. Different forms of structuralism have, for example, been applied by scholars to sub-genres including folksong (e.g. Renwick), the folktale (e.g. Propp Morphology of the Folktale), legend (e.g. Simpson), and personal experience narrative (e.g. Bill Ellis). So, for example, even though Renwick's analysis of song (itself indebted to the work of "a large number of European scholars" including Claude Lévi-Strauss) specifically focuses on the structural study of signs, a critical

discussion of his approach is nevertheless useful in highlighting some of the inherent limitations of structuralism itself (Renwick x-xii). Largely on the basis of subject matter, certain studies have been placed in part one, but clearly analytical frameworks, such as Preston's study of "register" in song, might just as fruitfully be applied to prose narrative genres.

FOLKSONG SCHOLARSHIP

Many writers see A. L. Lloyd's seminal text Folk Song in England (1967) as marking the turn to contextualism among folksong scholars in Britain. This work was seen as representing

on the one hand the last substantial link with the old paradigm in folksong scholarship, associated in England with the likes of Sharp, Broadwood, Baring-Gould, and Kidson, and on the other hand a forging of the first links towards a contextualist approach, specifically in his case via the discipline of history. (Pickering, "Recent Folk" 41)

This shift has been one of the most distinctive movements in the recent study of folksong in Britain. Pickering notes that

the new emphasis followed initially from A. L. Lloyd's pioneering achievement in attempting to reintegrate urban as well as rural vernacular song in the historical process from which it emanated and through which, as performance, it was lived. ("Recent Folk" 41)

Lloyd was one of the first people to consider the range of possible meaning(s) attributed to songs by their singers and audiences, using the insights of social history. Songs about sexual/romantic relations and illegitimacy were drawn upon significantly, although the work veers towards being descriptive rather than analytical. His observations concerning illegitimate birth as depicted in song would now be seen as outdated, but nevertheless this examination of songs about sex/romance is important because he prompted further academic interest in this topic.

Lloyd offers two rather contradictory assertions in relation to these songs. The first is based upon the acknowledgement of the social stigma attached to illegitimate birth in the past. Lloyd promulgates a romantic notion whereby particular songs, such as "Gathering Rushes in the Month of May," are seen as equipping particular individuals to deal with the pain of their existence (see "Maids A-Rushing", Chapter 6). This is accomplished in song by transcending the harsh realities of one's existence through "transposing the world on to an imaginative plane . . . colouring it with fantasy, turning bitter even brutal facts of

life into something beautiful, tragic, honourable" (170). He hypothesises that country women bearing illegitimate children would "have been heartened to face the sorrow of their plight and the scorn of their neighbours by the sweet nobility" of these songs (170). However, corroborative evidence for this assertion is lacking because Lloyd assumes rather than researches the performance context of these particular songs and the social identity of their singers. The retrospective emphasis of this study precludes the possibility of fieldwork.

Lloyd accounts for "the 'disconcerting ease' with which young women in the folk songs become pregnant" with recourse to a now discredited theory, proclaiming that rural societies always welcomed extra hands to help with the work (185). Yet, as Gammon points out, accepted theories relating to the socio-historical context that Lloyd was researching - i.e. the popular idea that pre-industrial England was a sexually free and open society - have since been highlighted as extremely inaccurate by developments in social history and historical demography (Gammon 210-12). Therefore Lloyd's assertions that rural women were "tried out" prior to marriage in order to prove their fecundity and "[out-of-wedlock] pregnancy was only unwelcome if the girl was deserted, and not always then," have also been debunked (185).

Lloyd's approach to his material was problematic because, like a number of other scholars, he sought to take historical writings as his starting point whilst drawing upon songs from an extremely wide pool of material in support of the "truths" which he discovered (cf. Neilands 3). This approach was flawed, however, as it allowed him to bypass the problems posed by songs which were partially or completely at odds with socio-historical reality, by a process of de-selection. Lloyd never resolved this issue and was therefore forced to make some rather improbable suggestions about this "illegitimacy" material.

Twenty years after Lloyd, folksong scholarship has expanded, taking root in higher education. Scholars have been able to refine and develop more specialised areas of interest. Consequently, contemporary scholarly folksong studies are rarely as general as Folksong in England and the theme of illegitimacy touched upon by Lloyd is more usually discussed within narrower categories of material. These include subjects such as gender relations and sexual/romantic relationships, or analyses of individual song variants.

Colin Neilands' examination of the broadside ballad trade in nineteenth-century Ireland demonstrates Lloyd's earlier contextual concern, but reverses the

technique by which this is accomplished. Neilands takes the songs as his starting point and uses historical fact as a point of reference to illuminate particular features. This approach serves ^{to give} a more faithful representation of the songs themselves because he is obliged to confront the extent of distortion or omission in relation to historical "truths", rather than ignoring discrepancies between text and social context.

Typifying the approach of most other scholars examining illegitimacy-related songs (particularly as case studies), Neilands focuses upon past environments rather than present-day contexts. Likewise, he is inclined to give far greater attention to reconstructing the socio-historical environment in which his song sample was circulated, than to recreating their performance context. Yet clearly it is possible to assemble data relating to past performances of song, through historical research, as demonstrated by Pickering ("The Farmworker"). In some cases, this can be accomplished through the field interview, where details concerning past performances of particular songs within the chosen corpus still exist within living memory (see Kodish).

Songs about sex, courtship and marriage are part of Neilands' main focus and, according to his statistical analysis, comprise a significant body (19%) of his overall sample of 2459 broadside ballads. Neilands sees the songs about out-of-wedlock pregnancy within this category as rooted in a wider concern with virginity. He notes the prevalence of descriptive passages in which songs tend to underline the importance of modesty and chastity in relation to women. These songs, found within categories such as "Seduction/Desertion", equate loss of chastity with a loss of power. This is because nineteenth-century broadside ballads tend to present a view of marriage where "the girl was the 'property' which was exchanged, and her value was calculated according to her purity" (12).

Interestingly, Neilands observes that songs relating specifically to out-of-wedlock pregnancy, where the "chastity" law has been flouted, almost always end in disaster and sometimes death. Because there is no equivalent to this self-destructive pattern in relation to the male protagonist, the greatest pain in these situations is always depicted as being experienced by the women. Neilands' most interesting finding is that there is a discrepancy between the reality of the experience of illegitimacy/"illegitimate pregnancy" in nineteenth-century Ireland and its representation in song. The ballads seem to ignore the fact that, in the words of Arensburg and Kimball, "to 'destroy a girl's character' in the countryside is to upset the pattern of family and community life by

overthrowing the possibility of an orderly change of farm succession" (quoted in Neilands 12). Hence, a man so doing "would invoke social condemnation on a par with the girl who allowed her character to be so destroyed" (Neilands 12).

Accounting for such discrepancies, Neilands implies that people who "consumed" the ballads (and who therefore influenced the ballad market) had internalised some of the strict sexual values promoted and enforced by the church and state - values including the notion that "marriage was the required licence for the expression of sexual love" (13). Procedures governing the inheritance of property and the provision of a marriage dowry, themselves designed around this value, seemed to confirm the fact that sex outside marriage jeopardised both individual and community well-being. Loss of virginity could put families in a poor bargaining position in relation to the marriage dowry, for example. Neilands concludes that only "partial realities" are represented within these songs, whereby certain elements, such as the perils of sex outside marriage, are left in, whilst others, such as the importance of the marriage dowry, are, for the sake of romanticism, taken out. He sees the songs as essentially endorsing existing moralities: "the broadsides seem to reflect the morals, but not necessarily the sexual and marital mores, of their contemporary society" (14).

However, this explanation seems to oversimplify the complexities of the relationship between song and its social context, characterised by the processes of distortion, escapism, exaggeration and inversion discerned by Gammon. Analysis of the importance of the songs to their "consumers" remains at a fairly superficial level. How songs apparently warning about the dangers of sex outside marriage appealed to the "romantic instincts" of women in particular is not discussed. However, the "register of gender" (see below) might, as Preston has argued, be a key issue, playing an important part in the reading of such texts.

Gammon's general survey of English traditional songs and broadside ballads about sex, sex relations and sex roles also raises some interesting issues. He examines material relating to the period 1600-1850, viewing contemporaneous folksongs as a unique resource which, in the words of Stone, allow us "to probe attitudes and feelings" of people in the past (208). By suggesting a viable methodological framework which does justice to their diverse and complicated nature, Gammon hopes to re-examine the songs in this respect. Significantly, he argues against previous interpretations in which these songs have been seen as historical evidence of sexually uninhibited behaviour and of rural

tolerance towards illegitimacy (see Lloyd). Gammon initially overturns this established "myth" by revising out-dated notions about pre-industrial society drawing upon the recent findings of historical demography and social history. Hence, he proposes that society:

was strongly patriarchal; women had a low status, and were thought to deserve special punishments such as . . . whipping or incarceration in a house of correction for bearing a bastard child. It was a society in which sexual activity outside marriage generally took place in a disapproving, inquisitive, and regulative atmosphere. (210)

A picture of sexual restraint enforced by social forces and mechanisms collectively emerges from these sources, which is incompatible with the evidence extracted from a too literal interpretation of song. Gammon therefore rejects as untenable an approach which simply uses songs as illustrative examples of actual behaviour, attitudes, and past events.

Gammon uses a similar contextual approach to Neilands, in which songs are seen as the first point of reference, whilst the socio-historical environment of their reception is reconstructed around them. All aspects of the songs are then re-examined using information supplied by this contextual framework. Current theories about the actual incidence of premarital sexual encounters in seventeenth-century society are, for example, compared to the frequency of those encounters as depicted in song. Hence, discrepancies, rather than being overlooked, are directly confronted during the process of textual interpretation. Six general categories of material are identified within Gammon's survey: Love, Sexual Encounter, Ribald Situations, Obscenity, Unhappy Relationships and Gender Role Rejection. Several songs relating to the theme of illegitimacy appear as examples of the above.

Like Preston, Gammon emphasises the intersection of themes of sex/gender issues and class, observing that sexual liaisons are frequently used as a metaphor for class relations. This is why a number of songs describing encounters between upper-class women and lower-class men include an element of class revenge. Gammon also sees class issues as operating in songs where parents overtly oppose their daughters' marriages to social "inferiors".

Gammon's concern with socio-historical context includes a consideration of the occasions on which these songs were delivered. He suggests that production and reception of meaning are partially dependent upon the identities of an audience at any one time, even when, as happens with the illegitimacy ballad

"Gathering Rushes," texts from different performances turn out to be remarkably similar (Gammon 234-35). Consequently, performance context is a crucial factor in the interpretation of a song. Seen from this perspective, Atkinson, Freedman and Thomson's case studies of "illegitimacy" ballads could be criticised for their lack of awareness of performance context leading to a vital loss of meaning and overemphasis on the importance of text.

Gammon argues that audience composition can be diachronically reconstructed by assembling data relating to the environments in which these songs were performed. This task is complicated, however, by the fact that detailed references to singing venues can be sparse and case studies of repertoires and performance strategies in relation to past generations are few and far between. Encountering these same difficulties, Preston instead turns to literary sources to reconstruct nineteenth- and early twentieth-century performance venues. Gammon therefore freely acknowledges that the process of reconstruction is fraught with difficulties.

Gammon is strongly opposed to seeing songs about sexual/romantic relationships as a form of realism. Seen in the light of their socio-historical contexts, he argues that actions described within the songs cannot be seen as replicating examples of everyday behaviour. Gammon instead posits the idea that "the tension in such songs is between culturally approved forms of behaviour and the actual conduct described in the songs" (235). Their primary function is therefore the "act of contravention" (236).

In tackling the issue as to why these songs transgress approved social norms at the level of representation, Gammon posits a number of ideas, some of which are inspired by structuralist philosophy. One of their main purposes is identified as the production and reproduction of existing cultural constructs. This theory is based upon the idea that, in the very act of subverting an established social norm, for example, by gender role reversal, one tends simultaneously to endorse it. This is because the act of subversion is based upon an inverse relationship between opposites. Subversion therefore operates within the same binary model as that which it subverts. Thus it represents the other side of the coin, rather than advocating a different paradigm altogether. By reflecting this process, Gammon argues that songs about sexual/romantic relationships tend to reinforce and perpetuate gender constructs and the idea that patriarchal ideology should not be challenged. This is largely because they transmit the same, rather than different, classificatory systems (237).

The above theory tends to attribute a dual action to these songs. Whilst on the one hand they appear merely to describe the "real world", they also partially construct it. This is because cultural constructs, such as gender difference, even when subverted, are represented in such a way as to pass as part of a "natural" order and therefore go unquestioned. Gammon comments:

In general I think the most significant thing about the songs under discussion was that they were workings *upon* reality. They worked in the realm of ideology. Their job was to voice tensions, to work over the contradictions of human life, to mediate, to naturalize, perhaps to sublimate, to warn, but most important to pass on, often at a subliminal level, messages about appropriate roles in society. (237)

Consequently, their primary importance is in articulating a kind of "negative truth" because, by consistently providing often comic examples of behaviour beyond the bounds of propriety, they tend to define exactly what those proprieties should be (238). For "it is only by viewing the situations described in songs as largely atypical that they can be used to 'discover unspoken norms' " (238). This inverted relationship is seen as having caused writers such as Lloyd to misinterpret these songs and their bearing on historical truths. Gammon eventually concludes that, ironically, these songs have an essentially conservative, rather than a subversive function.

Gammon is one of the few writers to acknowledge the extreme complexity of the relationship between song and its socio-historical context, suggesting possible pathways through this kind of material which directly confront, rather than side-step, the apparent contradictions. More recently, scholars have pursued some of the issues raised by Gammon in much closer detail. Cathy Lynn Preston, for example, addresses the above question relating to the importance of audience composition and identity. She investigates precisely how personal and group identity affect the reception and interpretation of particular songs, exploring "the possible range of meanings for a specific social group" (Gammon 234) in her study of the female rural labourer.

Preston not only explores the complex process by which multiple readings arise in relation to a given song text, but does so using a female figure of considerable relevance to my own song sample. Drawing upon feminist literary criticism, Preston gives particular attention to both gender issues and gendered readings in relation to song. Preston sees the co-textual frame of seventeenth-, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English bawdy song in both printed and oral tradition as taking from "and enhancing gender and class stereotypes of the sexually active country maid" (315).

Sexual relations portrayed in song are seen by Preston as a kind of social metaphor. The sex act becomes a symbolic event, encapsulating aspects of sexual politics at large. She argues that men are cast in a position of sexual dominance within these encounters, where they intrude and exercise control over a woman's person and sexuality. The way in which men and women interact with each other in sex reflects power struggles between men and women on a wider scale. Other thematic stands are woven into this central dialogue, because "the posturing of men, identified differently by class and region, as they struggle with one another for economic and political power" is also another issue of key importance to these songs (315-16). Preston suggests that the stereotypical image of the female rural labourer provided a "means through which males established a shared identity and consolidated androcentric representations of reality" (315).

Preston's main thesis is that the way in which people engage with song texts is profoundly influenced by their personal identities. Personal identity is, however, itself seen to be a product of the number of different "registers" of which one is a part. Preston defines a "register" as an identity-forming group with which one is closely affiliated. For the purpose of her study, Preston limits herself to three different variables, selecting groups defined by sex, class and regional identity. It can be seen that the female rural labourer has three immediate registers: sex - she is female, social class - as a labourer she is working class, and regional identity - she belongs to rural, not urban society. Therefore, the sum production of these three registers is combined, in collage-like fashion, with all the other registers to which the person is affiliated. This accretion of each of these sub-identities represents a considerable part of an individual's personal identity. This process is further complicated by the fact that registers are constantly in a state of flux, the solidarity one feels with a particular group varying, for example, according to the social context in which one is placed, particular registers taking precedence over others during different periods.

Preston uses an inter-textual approach to song, looking at the interplay between the personal identity of the "reader" and identities constructed within the text according to these three registers. The English bawdy song, "The Spotted Cow", which existed in oral tradition during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is explored using this framework. Further examples, such as "A Pleasant New Court Song Between a Young Courtier and a Country Lass", are also used. However, Preston's argument loses its impact in relation to these later examples because the same standards do not seem to be applied to male

and female protagonists alike. Preston argues that certain individuals would experience a degree of compromise in singing "The Spotted Cow". We might therefore expect it to appeal more to particular social groups, but intriguingly, evidence seems to suggest that this was not the case, the song being sung amongst people of all three combinations of register affiliation.

Preston consults the fictional writings of Thomas Hardy as an aid to unravelling the meaning of "The Spotted Cow", in order to suggest a range of possible interpretations taken from the song by past audiences during this period. The positioning of references to the song, which arise at strategic points in the plots of Tess of the D'Urbervilles and The Woodlanders, is seen as being highly significant because they are located between passages underlining conflicts among different registers. The juxtapositioning of scenes and setting and the exact details of performance style and context in Tess also contributes to this impression. Hardy's characters are, through their own interpretations, seen as hinting at the polysemic nature of "The Spotted Cow" and Preston herself collectively views this literary evidence as vouching, in the words of Margaret A. Mills, for the song's "multiple interpretative possibilities" (323).

Preston therefore deduces from her literary analysis that the song is used to heighten our awareness of oppositions among cultural registers and has a wider political meaning (323, 325). Her interpretation provides an interesting contrast to that of Renwick, who unreservedly sees the central couple as being of equal standing in terms of age, social status and experience. Renwick thus ensures that "The Spotted Cow" fits with the euphemistic model of song in which the keeping of precepts relating to equality in such areas guarantees a comic experience (Renwick 82).

The reading advocated by Preston is structured in such a way as to acknowledge difference and heterogeneity in relation to the reception of any given song. Preston, like Freedman, therefore demonstrates that she is extremely critical of the notion of song as a product of shared homogeneous values, particularly in relation to representations of gender and gender conflict. Both scholars contend that a multifaceted set of readings operate in relation to these areas.

Preston's study has some rather a-contextual leanings, the socio-historical context of her songs occupying a marginalised position within the discussion as a whole. Although she puts forward the idea that the songs voiced register tensions which were current within their socio-historical environments, she does

not elaborate upon this relationship in any great detail. A rather too literal correlation between song and social context is therefore implied. This would be seen as problematic by scholars such as Gammon and Pickering ("The Past") who have highlighted both the complexity of the above relationship and the importance of grounding songs within specific socio-historical contexts.

Preston's consideration of the bearing of performance on what otherwise appears to be a rather androcentric interpretation of song is unfortunately rather brief, the sex of the performer being the main variable considered. Using contemporary variants of her songs, she demonstrates how female performances of songs may have had "a subversive intent that undercuts the assertion of male dominance", recontextualising meaning through the use of female narration (337).

Preston ultimately concludes that the bawdy song tradition which she examines uses sex as a means by which power relations between different registers are worked out. As men of different social registers boast their ability to satisfy and dominate each other's women, in the spirit of class revenge outlined by Gammon, "the generalized site of that struggle is the generic female body (laborer or lady)" (331). The more specific site of struggle is, however, the body of the rural female labourer. Preston posits a rather extreme view in this respect, in likening the unifying force of singing such songs to an act of group sex.

In the absence of any other explanation Preston proposes that female singers' and audiences' participation "in the predominantly male bawdy song tradition" could be a measure of the extent to which "representation defines reality" (338). This explanation seems implausible, however, because it vastly underestimates the complexities of performance and casts female singers and audience members in an excessively passive role. This is at odds with my own research findings and also with the view of other scholars who stress the very active role of the singer in learning and perpetuating songs (cf. Pickering "The Past"). Scholars have also observed a tendency for singers to gravitate towards songs which resonate with aspects of their own identities (Green "McCaffery"). The tastes and values of their communities are often expressed as well (Kodish).

Folksongs relating to the period examined by Preston are usually seen as evidencing attitudes and values relating to the lower classes (see, for example, Neilands 3-4). Yet she fails to acknowledge the anomaly between the

privileging of values associated with upper-class male registers within song texts which were predominantly purchased among the lower classes, by men and women alike, and oversimplifies the reasons for the values of dominant culture apparently disseminating downwards into the lower orders. Those "at odds with the voice of dominant culture" (Preston 338) (e.g. women and male rural labourers) may, for example, as Porter suggests in relation to tailors, have taken an active role in perpetuating their own stereotypes for particular reasons (Porter 84). Gammon's suggestion that representations such as song "work upon" rather than entirely structure the nature of reality also stands as a more convincing argument (see above).

The feminist scholar Polly Stewart shares similar concerns to Preston by questioning the idea of the unified reception of meaning in relation to a given song performance by singers/audience alike. She, too, examines folksong in terms of specific shades of meaning received by particular social groups. However, Stewart's analysis is conducted from a much narrower perspective than Preston's, in considering the lessons imparted to women through song. She focuses on the uses to which Child ballads, depicting "agonistic" situations involving women, might have been put, as a kind of inter-female communication by women in performance. In considering the reception of meaning in relation to approximately 100 ballads from oral sources, Stewart thereby confines herself to the single register of gender (Stewart 55-56).

The working premises underpinning Stewart's study are informed by some intriguing and complex ideas about gender roles and the acquisition of knowledge. It is worth considering the illegitimacy theme within folk narratives (sung and spoken) in the light of some of these assertions. Stewart claims, for instance, that folklore has didactic qualities which she claims are capable of teaching informally "by supporting and reifying belief systems" (54). If this were true, we would expect the didactic function of folklore to be obvious in relation to areas of human existence where the effects of social conditioning and "learning" are most apparent. Sexual behaviour is one such example.

Unfortunately, Stewart's questions about the didactic function of folklore are of greater interest to this study, than her eventual findings in relation to the Child ballads on which she focuses. Because of the obvious flaws in her methodology, these findings are less significant. Many of Stewart's observations are problematic because of the particular strand of feminism by which they are informed. This tends to create a level of bias which seems to

interfere with the objectivity of this study.¹⁵ Stewart adopts the stance of some of her predecessors in viewing sexual oppression as "a conscious, monolithic plot against women" with the result that her argument becomes far too simplistic (Moi 29). Stewart, like Millet, the feminist literary critic, tends to view "sexual ideology as a set of false beliefs deployed against women by a conscious, well-organized male conspiracy" (Moi 28). But, as Moi points out, this conveniently "ignores the fact that not all misogyny is conscious, and that even women may unconsciously internalize sexist attitudes and desires" (28). Stewart's examples themselves suggest it is probably more helpful to see "patriarchal rule" as operating on a cultural, rather than gender-specific, level within these songs.

Stewart's desire to define patriarchy as a fairly straightforward series of binary oppositions has further ramifications. She concludes from the first part of her analysis that most of the ballad women she examines achieve personal (and sometimes cultural) success by the clever use of words. Women thereby "outwit the men by a rather large margin" (65). This notion is also taken up by Toelken (46). His analysis of female verbal agility in "The Outlandish Knight" tends to corroborate Stewart's findings (142). Unfortunately, in her application of Michel de Certeau's concept of strategy and tactics, this idea is then developed in a way which tends to enforce the notion of all women as oppressed and all men as oppressors.

Other methodological complications are raised by Stewart's rather a-contextual approach to her material. She initially states her belief that "an individual item, process, or body of folklore has analytic potential as a window to the whole tradition" (54). She therefore envisages that the Child ballads will be a microcosm of the genre of folksong as a whole. I would dispute this assertion. Whilst methodological approaches in relation to song can be transferable, findings in relation to a particular collection of material relating to a specific socio-historical context, such as nineteenth-century Scotland, are not. Scholars such as Kodish (see below) have already demonstrated that singing traditions are in a sense unique because they tend to adapt and incorporate aspects of their socio-historical environments.

Stewart seems reluctant to acknowledge the arbitrary nature of her system of categorisation. This is exemplified by her use of the word "success". Although she makes clear her working definition of the term, she fails to make explicit exactly, how, why, and from whose perspective it was formulated. We can only

¹⁵ Her approach might be compared with the stage two feminism referred to by Moi, in her review of "feminist" approaches to literary criticism (12).

assume that her position is informed by a mixture of feminist theory regarding patriarchal rule and the reproductive role of women, and her own readings of "success" arising from her ballad sample (56). I would not therefore see the fact that a large number of songs relating to out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth appear in all four categories as particularly significant, because Stewart's lack of clarity in relation to her own interpretative framework mars the usefulness of her findings.

Stewart goes on to examine the didactic purposes to which Child ballads are put by women in more contemporary contexts. Unfortunately, sweeping generalisations are poorly substantiated, using isolated examples, many of which are not among her original sample. Her data concerning performance contexts relates not only to a later century but also to a different continent and therefore is unreliable evidence of ways in which the ballads were used as communications by women in the past. The fact that the didactic function of folksong might be entirely specific to its particular socio-historical environment is therefore entirely overlooked.

An important means of examining songs about sexual and romantic relationships has been to use an interpretative framework informed by the principles of structural analysis. The work of Roger deV. Renwick has been extremely influential in this field and will therefore be examined in some detail. Subsequent studies, such as those of Debora Kodish and Barre Toelken, are clearly indebted to Renwick's earlier semiological approach. Their interest in similar kinds of subject matter, including gender roles, sexual relationships and sexual metaphor in song, also suggest his influence.

Renwick's seminal text is primarily concerned with looking at how coherent systems of meaning are established within the vernacular of folksong. He believes that particular ideas or principles are inscribed in the song text at various levels, in the form of codes. By deciphering these codes we can therefore gain access to a comprehensive set of principles which they create. These principles themselves send out a particular set of subtextual messages which are activated during the performance/reading of any given song.

His study of sexual relationships in song is devoted to testing his original hypothesis that "a poetic repertoire popular in folk tradition during any given era will constitute a coherent system of meaning" (55). Renwick uses a sample of 152 English folksongs specifically concerned with a sexual relationship to this purpose (55). His commentary accompanying these songs, many of which

feature out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimacy, is slanted accordingly. Songs relating to this thesis, though discussed at some length in two of Renwick's chapters, are never considered as a separate corpus of material. This is partly because, in contradistinction to Gammon and Neilands, Renwick uses structure, rather than subject matter as his main organising principle.

Renwick raises some thought-provoking ideas in his initial consideration of the differences between his own structural approach and morphological analysis, deconstructing the introductory phrase "As I Roved Out One May Morning," as an illustration (18-19). According to Renwick, settings such as churches, dwellings and outlying farms, "where one is fixed to one's repetitive daily duties and their concomitant constraints," tend to signify customary contexts within song (19). The straying of protagonists outside the bounds of this context carries very deliberate connotations. Such spaces are not only physical environments but also conceptual spaces, away from the community, where "everyday rules do not apply" (19). Renwick suggests that binary oppositions of this kind can also be viewed from a wider perspective. Hence they might come to represent established paradigmatic oppositions or tensions between nature and culture, instinct and law, individual and society, or even Id and Superego (18).

Renwick suggests that not only places, but also certain people, exhibit these polarised connotations. Protagonists who are sailors (with whom he associates the fisherman in this song), or "maidens" are two such examples. Sailors occupy a polarised position in terms of exhibiting, on the one hand, extremely untrustworthy qualities as lovers and, on the other, excessive loyalty and devotion. Interestingly, Renwick emphasises that this "Janus-like characteristic . . . is a consequence of sailors' mobility" (33). This is because "that selfsame mobility which allows sailors to return to a reborn union - or, for that matter, even to arrive on the scene as potential partners in the first place - also permits them to easily escape an unwanted permanent union" (33). A maiden's most noticeable trait, on the other hand, is

her state of high personal risk, especially in love relationships . . . in keeping with the high-risk statutes of their maidenhood in romantic involvements, girls are fated almost inevitably either to the ecstasy of a marital union or to the agony of being parted from their true lovers (32).

This polarised position in representation is likewise seen to reflect the young unmarried woman's liminal status in the socio-historical environment. Eligible young women were, according to Renwick, in the ambivalent position " between that of the well-defined female child (who, whether residing at home . . . or in

service . . . was under the authority of her parents, to whom all her wages were handed over) and that of wife-and-mother" (40). Other details, such as the extreme prudery surrounding pregnancy, suppression of sexual knowledge for adolescents and taboos against male and female intimacy are given in support of this view.

Songs concerning illegitimacy are consigned by Renwick to one of three different classificatory schemes, **symbolic**, **euphemistic** and **metaphorical** models (Renwick, 54-112). Each of these are determined by stylistic features and poetic devices which are identified within the songs.

In symbolic songs, meaning is seen as being formulated through pairs of binary oppositions, each of which is accorded a primary and secondary value. One such example is intensity versus lack of intensity in relation to colours. Thus, whilst a diverse profusion of multi-colouredness is depicted as primarily positive, being used to symbolise a sexual affair in its prime, a narrow spectrum of colours is primarily negative. Binary oppositions are also seen to underpin the meanings of this second category.

The euphemistic model maps out "five phenomenal domains of territory, experience, social status, personality, and motive" within the songs (85). Oppositions, particularly in the domain of personality, are described in terms of conventionally "masculine" and "feminine" traits, consequently, activity would be added to the former and passivity to the latter categories. This contributes to the overriding binary opposition of masculine versus feminine to which I shall later return. The consistency with which certain kinds of traits, or circumstances, result in particular kinds of outcome in relation to each of these phenomenal areas is, according to Renwick, how particular meanings are encoded in terms of thirteen identifiable "precepts." Precept seven, for example, decrees:

If you engage in a sexual liaison with an *acontextual* man, then you will have a tragic experience. Acontextual men are those with extremely mobile and itinerant professions; in the sample, these are soldiers, sailors, thieves, tinkers, Irishmen, migrant harvest workers, and tramps. Judging from the number of songs that exhibit this precept in action, we could safely call this the most critical rule in the euphemistic song catechism. (78)

These precepts are laws which normally take the form of a sex-specific constraint or prohibition, for which there is one or more optional escape clause. The ideas contained within the above precept connect with the observations of other scholars, such as Gerald Porter, who identify the prevalence of the

sexually inconstant "roving sailor" in songs about sexual relationships. Porter, however, views this figure more as a kind of occupational stereotype than as part of a general precept against roving men. Renwick names several other precepts which are extremely relevant to this study.

Renwick's third sub-genre, the metaphorical song, is eclectic. In this model metaphors are placed on a continuum, ranging from those limited to a single figurative phrase of the song (e.g. the "bush" in "Australia") to the elaborately extended metaphor, using the "thrashing machine", in the song of that title. The former types of metaphor is closely identified with the euphemistic model, being subject to similar kinds of conditions in terms of the above precepts. Renwick identifies two types of metaphorical song. The first takes a catalogue form where, in terms of meaning, the sum total of all parts added together make up the whole (e.g. " Riddles Wisely Expounded" (Child 1)). The second uses a more narrative-centred technique and is more solely concerned with sexual activity. Metaphorical songs are often much lighter in tone than the other models:

The *consequences* of sex for its participants, predetermined in the symbolic songs and contingent in euphemistic songs, are of little concern in the world view of metaphorical songs, for the relationship between the actors is not one of victimization. (90)

Renwick claims that both forms of metaphorical songs advocate "the supreme rightness of sex as a leveller of male/female differences" and are primarily concerned with the domain of anatomy (95-96). They therefore represent a primarily existential world view, in contrast to the other two models (96).

In an overview of his three models, Renwick describes each sub-genre as "ways of thinking and communicating about sexual matters thus can all be logically interrelated within the cultural system of an agricultural village community" (112). He aligns the symbolic model with "an older, more traditional, and more fundamental world view" (112). Euphemistic songs are associated with a period of change during the formative years of the Industrial Revolution, meeting the demands of a fast-evolving environment. Although metaphorical song is seen as a more time-transcendent model, it is assigned to particular, usually quite restricted performance environments and is seen to portray a behavioural "world reduced to mechanics and to energy" (112).

Renwick's classificatory system of song could be questioned for a number of reasons. His model tends to be accompanied by rather problematic labels which confuse his argument. Renwick's sub-category of euphemistic song is a

prime example. He uses the terms "masculine" and "feminine" to denote the two sides of the overriding binary opposition which he sees as characterising such songs. He tends to assume the aptness of these labels on grounds of the similarity between the inverse relationship of pairs of qualities (such as activity versus passivity) encompassed by this overriding opposition, and character traits "which map onto conventional perceptions of male and female in the traditional world view" (72).

His use of the "masculine"/"feminine" labels, therefore, seems to be motivated, in part, by a wish to exploit an established system of thought, in order to clarify his own argument. Perhaps this is why, whilst implicitly agreeing with other scholars that such tags represent a pervasive form of sexual stereotyping, Renwick still uses the model (see, for example, Moi, 33 and 36 in relation to Ellmann).

The choice of such labels might, however, be seen as unhelpful, partly because, as Renwick acknowledges, they seem to harbour sex-specific connotations, tacitly implying that particular kinds of behaviour are determined by biological sex. They therefore carry their own "baggage" which engenders a sense of confusion, particularly in the context of situations where males are seen to demonstrate so-called "feminine" traits, such as passivity - a seeming contradiction in terms. Renwick's system reinforces the idea that, in the natural order of the songs, certain traits "belong" to women and others to men, whilst the work of other folksong scholars suggests that this impression is misleading. There has been, for example, a long-standing tradition of female bravery, cunning and initiative (Dugaw). Moi, summarising Cixous's position, observes, "it doesn't much matter which 'couple' one chooses to highlight: the hidden male/female opposition with its inevitable positive/negative evaluation can always be traced as the underlying paradigm" (105).

Renwick's assumptions relating to the processes by which we formulate meaning might also be criticised. His paradigm is limited by the binary oppositions which in turn govern the production of particular kinds of encoded meaning. These pairs are mutually dependent and tend to create significations through their structural relationship with each other. Thus, the presence of a particular condition signifies the absence of another.¹⁶ This particular model is clearly identified by Toril Moi in her critique of H  l  ne Cixous's examination of patriarchal ideology. Cixous, who is a French literary theorist, would clearly view

¹⁶ For example with "male" versus "female", one term would be meaningless without the existence of the other (Moi 105).

Renwick's paradigm as an extension of a pervasive movement in Western philosophical and literary thought. It might be argued that the dualities discerned within the songs are more revealing of the theory being applied than of emic categories within the songs themselves. The discussion surrounding "Young A-Growing," is a case in point. Here, Renwick attempts to eradicate the inconsistencies in a song presenting some unusual inversions in terms of the euphemistic model (99-100).

In Moi's summary of Cixous's stance, Renwick's type of approach is criticised on the grounds that:

Corresponding as they do to the underlying opposition man/women, these binary oppositions [e.g. activity versus passivity] are heavily imbricated in the patriarchal value system: each opposition can be analysed as a hierarchy where the "feminine" side is always seen as the negative, powerless instance. (104)

Recent scholars, such as Jacques Derrida, have tended to avoid the problems inherent in structuralism by advocating an entirely different paradigm in relation to forms such as language. Drawing heavily upon Derrida's critique of binary logic, Cixous suggests that meaning can instead be examined using the idea of "multiple, heterogeneous *difference*" (Moi 105). Meaning, rather than being viewed as either one thing or the other, is consequently formulated against the backdrop of a whole series of variables. A simple example of this is the word set "much - more - most" in which subtly different, but related forms of signification are suggested through a non-binary system of language (Moi 105).¹⁷ Moi's summary of relevant post-structuralist theory essentially underlines the importance of signification as part of a process of the deferring of meaning on to other differential elements. Consequently, meaning is seen as a "kind of open-ended play between the presence of one signifier and the absence of others" (Moi 106). Moi's paradigms embrace the seeming contradiction that meaning "is never truly present, but is only constructed through the potentially endless process of referring to other, absent signifiers" (Moi 106).

As Gammon observes, Renwick's model could also be seen as problematic due to its reliance on the reception of shared, coherent, "fixed" meanings in relation to these songs. Renwick's view is clearly also at odds with that of Freedman, who claims that far from being the product of shared values and beliefs, songs are in fact representative of important areas of social conflict and dissent within

¹⁷ Cf. Moi's detailed examination of De Saussure's ideas in relation to a similar linguistic theory concerning the phoneme (Moi 106).

the same community. Preston's alternative reading, which suggests that songs have always had the potential to generate a vast range of different meanings, even within the same performance clearly also challenges Renwick's position. This is because singers and audiences take an active role in the creation and reception of meaning. The variety of received meanings in relation to any given song therefore reflects the wide spectrum of identities within the group at any one time and is seen more as part of a process than Renwick's view allows. Renwick seems to eradicate contradictions by ignoring ambiguities so clearly discerned by other scholars. His analytical precepts thereby almost achieve the status of emic categories within the discussion.

This deceptive sense of unity also extends to Renwick's view of the socio-historical contexts in which he locates these performances. Renwick's conception of the past communities he examines tends to "deny the fundamental heterogeneity of cultures that are made up from different and often conflicting elements" by overemphasising the importance of shared values (Gammon 239). Renwick's "uncritical acceptance of the idea of a progress from simple community to a complex society" is seen by Gammon as a romantic illusion (239).

Renwick does pursue some interesting lines of enquiry in relation to the songs, highlighting areas of extreme relevance to my own study. However, his historical research lacks specificity and results in generalised statements being used to contextualise the songs. As Gammon observes, it is far more important to uncover distortions, exaggerations and omissions in song by carefully examining the complex dialectical relationship between the songs and the environments in which they circulated.

The same lack of specificity is also apparent in relation to Renwick's symbolic, euphemistic and metaphorical models of song. Exactly how these relate to specific socio-historical periods is never really clarified. This leaves us with the sense that they could either be products of evolutionary history, and/or simultaneously functioning models, accumulating meanings in response to different historical environments (Renwick 106, 109).

Renwick tends to use examples of documented occurrences, such as rough music rituals, from particular regional areas and relate them to English folksong as a whole. This creates a historically inaccurate impression which tends to undermine his line of argument. Renwick's suggestion that this sanction was most often used as a response to adultery, wife-beating, and out-of-wedlock

pregnancy thereby exaggerates the importance of the ritual in relation to explicitly sexual misdemeanours (50). E. P. Thompson's broader examination of the practice suggests that other "crimes", such as particular kinds of remarriage, nagging or scolding by wives, and excessive submissiveness by husbands were also major provocations, thereby placing a greater emphasis on a range of actions offending more generally against the patriarchal notion of marital roles (E. P. Thompson, "Rough Music" 493-99).

Renwick's choice of examples in describing two different versions of the ritual - both of which relate to different kinds of sexual relationship - is also misleading (102-03). The elaborate forms of the ritual to which Renwick seems to refer tend to suggest that all such rituals mirrored the "heterogeneous paradigm of symbolic songs in . . . [their] images of *multiplicity, activity, and amplified sound*" (original emphasis 103). But rough musicings, including those applied to sexual misdemeanours, were often much more simple. Renwick's use of the ritual as ethnographic evidence of expressive social behaviour mirroring the same underlying structural code of symbolic songs is therefore weakened (102).¹⁸

The performance context of song tends to occupy a marginalised position in terms of Renwick's analysis as a whole. His interpretative model tends to heavily prioritise the written text in its search for meaning, particularly in the sections which focus upon songs about sexual and romantic relationships. Barre Toelken, in later adopting Renwick's model, attempts to veer away from this rather mechanistic approach, in which songs are categorised purely on the grounds of their written text alone. Toelken observes that usually the words of vernacular songs "themselves do not carry the metaphorical meaning, but rather the skilled application of the words in particular culturally recognizable situations" (48). This idea is further elaborated with recourse to everyday language, the different interpretations and connotative meanings of words having a latent sexual significance being recognised by a similar process (48).

Toelken gives much greater priority to the singer's interpretation than does Renwick, showing more sensitivity to aspects of performance, such as how the recognition of double entendres is made explicit through laughter. Toelken's consideration of meanings activated through the interaction of text and context also results in his considering other cultural forms, such as jokes, in order to substantiate his argument. As we would expect, fieldwork occupies a fairly

¹⁸ A similar parallel is drawn between the underlying structural codes of symbolic song in relation to colour and social codes of dress (104). Renwick's argument, however, is equally unconvincing in this respect.

central position in this study, which seeks to understand the cognitive processes involved in recognising and appreciating metaphors.

Like Renwick, Toelken concludes that "the language of many English folksongs is laced with vernacular metaphors" and that a coherent system of meaning can be clearly identified in songs about sexual/romantic relationships (45). Toelken claims that "when these images are seen in the aggregate, we become more aware of the body of consistent relevance that singers use, whether or not they are all keenly cognizant of all the implications, as . . . Baring-Gould . . . perhaps naively, doubted" (45). Toelken would clearly see this process at work in songs concerning illegitimacy as he claims that sexual "metaphors are abundant, that they are consistent, and that they have directly to do with the action of the song and are not just pretty decorations. Otherwise, pregnancy and abandonment would not so often result" (45).

Toelken nonetheless allows for more variance in the reception of these encoded meanings than Renwick. He speculates that precisely because the arena of all these metaphors is sexuality the identity of the singer, particularly in terms of gender affiliation, will affect their interpretation of the song. The reluctance of men to sing particular songs in female company is cited as a case in point. He is keen to emphasise that "the very nature of such themes as seduction will be registered differently by men than by women because the action of the songs means something different to each gender" (45). Consequently, the concept of register begins to surface, but remains at a more basic level than Preston's lengthy analysis, with Toelken underlining the absence of studies relating to the "female perception" of sexual metaphors.

Debra Kodish, also working within the American school, is primarily interested in using songs concerning sexual/romantic relationships as a means of exploring notions about adult responsibility. Kodish, like Polly Stewart, views such material as a central part of women's singing traditions. In order to conduct this research she focuses on twentieth-century singing activities in the South East of Newfoundland. According to Kodish, the sexual/romantic relationships depicted within song are construed as an important measure of one's initiation into adulthood. However, it is also suggested that the act of learning and performing these songs formed an intrinsic part of their singers' child to adulthood transition, continued performance being linked to maintaining adult status. Consequently, an examination of relations between the sexes within these kinds of songs is likely to be fruitful. Central protagonists who continue to navigate particular social responsibilities and expectations with success are

usually described in terms of a fully fledged adult. Such individuals are seen as more empowered to form and sustain personal relationships. Consequently, these songs provide illustrations of traits viewed as fundamental to adult identity.

Kodish adopts a similar semiological approach to Renwick in viewing the commonplaces within song "as the most deeply coded and culturally meaningful signifiers" (132).¹⁹ Kodish assumes that by acknowledging the underlying patterns and structures formed by such commonplaces we may gain access to vernacular meanings which are essential to a thorough understanding of song.

Kodish notes the prevalence of three particular kinds of commonplaces within her song sample, the first of which relates to age. Males described as "young men" are noticeably absent from these songs but, when they do appear, they are usually seen as having an ambiguous relationship to their communities. Males having a more permanently established social role, however, are viewed as being older. Conversely, women who are solitary or independent are seen as being older, whereas women closely tied to their communities are identified in various ways as young (137).

Kodish also identifies important commonplaces relating to the theme of family. Her chief informant's repertoire suggests that "the problems of becoming and being adult may outweigh in importance the romantic premarital entanglements of young women and men upon which we have tended to focus in our consideration of these love songs" (131-32). Paradoxically, songs "about" sexual/romantic relationships may therefore prioritise other concerns. Kodish notes that female protagonists, in particular, show more anxiety over leaving their families and starting out in an unfamiliar community than over their sexual/romantic liaisons.

Kodish also notices that commonplaces are apparent in relation to worldly goods - weapons, money and beds being particularly conspicuous items in these songs. The symbolic importance attached to such objects has some consistency with the messages conveyed by these other patterns relating to age and the family. The accretion of meanings in relation to beds provides one such example:

couples who most frequently meet over beds are mothers and daughters. Their meetings usually accompany the death of the daughter,

¹⁹ Kodish defines "ballad commonplaces" as being "the most patterned and ubiquitous elements of these songs" (132).

although these selfsame daughters are supposed to be on their wedding beds. Thus, beds that were initially meant to join lovers and to mark their passage to adult status are associated with a different change of status. (143)

Interestingly, a variant of the "illegitimacy" song "Rosemary Lane" is exceptional in this respect. As with South West variants,

a sailor pays a woman for her favors. But for this one pleasurable union, the young woman is left alone. In fact, she receives gold and a child, but neither a home nor a husband - a case of imperfect production and reproduction. (143)

This pattern again underlines the importance of women gaining independence from their families/communities in order to be granted success in their personal relationships. The fact that lovers are more often united by graves than they are by beds is therefore seen as a comment on the struggles inherent in this conditional relationship (143). The wider picture of gender relations is also obviously an important feature of these songs. Kodish sees "classically Freudian overtones" within her informant's repertoire, which scholars have also identified within Anglo-American folksong at large (140). Consequently, Kodish sees, for example, the tendency for fathers to "oppose their daughters' attempts to initiate liaisons and to leave home" as highly significant (140). Interestingly, according to Kodish, "parents together signify stasis rather than active interference to their nearly adult daughters"; therefore the added presence of Mothers seems to have the effect of tempering paternal authority (140).

Kodish relates the insights revealed by these commonplaces to ethnographic evidence from the early twentieth-century environment in which her informant learnt the bulk of her repertoire. Around 1910, for example, it was usual for men to be taken into the family fishing crew, staying close to their Newfoundland homes. Meanwhile, it appears that in some communities young women were encouraged to break away from their families and provide for themselves. Consequently, whereas women tended to marry as outsiders, the opposite was usually true for men (139-40). Kodish consequently observes that a correlation seems to exist between the rites of passage into adulthood within this socio-historical environment and the crossing of boundaries from youth to adulthood depicted within the songs. She suggests, for example, that this accounts for the songs emphasising the difficulties experienced by women in dissolving ties with their mothers in order to forge sexual/romantic relationships. She tends, however, to suggest a rather imprecise relationship between the songs and the social environments in which they had currency:

commonplaces neither exactly reflect nor skew outport reality, but they always center upon culturally significant matters. . . . like symbols, ballad commonplaces frequently project simultaneously positive and negative meanings. (144)

She sees their interconnectedness as rather more self-explanatory than is actually the case. It could, for example, be seen as extremely puzzling that women's relatives play such an active role in their romantic relationships when, in real life, they were more likely to have been entirely absent. A more detailed explanation of how and why this relationship works might, therefore, have been useful.

Kodish makes an important point about the interactive triangle existing between socio-historical context, performance context and text.

The commonplaces in song texts may elaborate gender distinctions and the responsibilities of adulthood. But gender distinctions and adult responsibilities also shape the very contexts in which singing is done, for relationships between adults, friends and kin, are spun out in sociable encounters involving songs. (132)

In other words, gender-based distinctions operating within Newfoundland society at large tend to result in the fact that men and women have different (but sometimes overlapping) singing traditions. These differences are clearly observable in relation to the mode in which songs are shared, performed and transmitted, but also in relation to the existence of spaces organised around gender in their performed environment. However, the performance context also seems to affirm and reinforce the structures by which it is shaped. The same is true of the gender relations which are both described, but perhaps also are reinforced, by the song text and which have a circular motion too.

Kodish succeeds in providing quite detailed information about singing styles and the performance venue. However, she does not examine with any precision the meanings generated through the interaction of text and context.²⁰ I would emphasise that the significance of commonplaces identified by Kodish may have been radically affected by their use in the performance context and that singers and audiences may therefore have received a different set of meanings. My own findings, in addition to those of other scholars, such as Dunn, who also conducted fieldwork, suggest performance context plays a vital role in the construction of meanings. Dunn convincingly argues that aspects of

²⁰ That these songs were most commonly shared or performed in private context, except on festive occasions, may explain this particular leaning (Kodish 132-34).

performance, such as style, tone and gesture, radically alter meaning and that song texts are therefore extremely versatile.

Kodish's findings are strongly affected by the fact that her model tends to prioritise the observation and interpretation of the scholar, rather than that of the individual singer. Perhaps realising the limitations of her approach, Kodish was therefore reluctant to investigate, for example, precisely how gender distinctions marked within song and performance context feed back into gender relations in society. Kodish's assertions about the way that particular commonplaces related and interacted with socio-historical context have, therefore, to be seen as fairly speculative. However, further research, such as synchronic comparison with other individual repertoires from the area, might have tested her hypothesis and have further substantiated her findings.

As previously mentioned, a prominent feature of songs about personal relationships is the use of sexual metaphors which relate to the occupational roles of their protagonists. Reeves was one of the first in a line of scholars, including Lloyd (196-97), Gammon (214-15), Toelken (40-44; 122-23), Preston (328) and Porter, who have continued to be intrigued by this particular trait.²¹

Porter argues that it is inaccurate and misleading to try to assimilate occupational song into other categories of material. He identifies, for example, the fact that occupation is one of the most stable elements in song in oral transmission as highlighting its obvious importance. Fortunately, his extensive examination of occupation also extends to the traditional use of occupational processes as a metaphor for the sexual act. He consequently deconstructs many like metaphors to those operating within my own sample. Interestingly, Porter sees these metaphors and comparisons, which stretch back as far as the sixteenth century, as having undergone a series of changes in both essence and complexity over the last few centuries (92). He claims that the shift from the use of tools to the use of machine in the nineteenth century was matched by a corresponding shift in sexual metaphors (95). Porter, argues, for example, that the use of steam power eventually resulted in steam becoming a sexual metaphor denoting orgasm, both in songs and also the popular novel.

Porter also examines the importance of songs about sexual/romantic relationships where the role of occupation is more subtle. He identifies, like Renwick, the tendency for central protagonists to be repeatedly cast in

²¹Porter however, argues against Reeves' position, in which traditional song is concerned not with occupation in its own right, but only in relation to sexual relationships (43).

particular occupations within his song sample, a process which also occurs in relation to my own corpus of songs. Gammon suggests that certain occupational "types" such as cobblers, tinkers and millers have been more prevalent in this respect than others because the nature of their work lends itself to the making of sexual metaphors (Gammon 215). In my sample, the most popular male protagonists of a named profession are soldiers and sailors, whilst female protagonists in both my selected songs and other "illegitimacy" folk narratives are predominantly servants. Interestingly, these kinds of occupation proved to be one of the more stable elements, there being little alteration between different variants of the same songs, and they corroborate Porter's findings in this respect.

Porter's reading of occupational songs sheds light upon the importance of occupational markers within songs with a sexual content. Porter's idea is that occupation functions as a kind of code. His approach is therefore reminiscent of Renwick's, in viewing this element of song as a meaningful signifier, conveying a range of meaning beyond that to which it seems immediately to refer.²² Certain occupations are seen, by Porter, to be more prevalent than others because songs make use of an established accretion of meaning in relation to particular trades. However, this accretion of meaning is not always confined to the vernacular of song, but also extends to other cultural forms, such as jokes and caricatures (82). Certain occupations therefore carry particular sub-texts which pervade the narrative and figurative codes of song.

Porter sees these semiotic codes as also relating to gender. He notes that the majority of (usually male) discernible occupations are sex specific. This is important because occupations can therefore also be seen as providing a metaphor for relations between the sexes and gender issues.²³ Porter highlights the importance of sexual stereotypes as denoted by occupation and sometimes also accompanied by generic names, e.g. "Jack" the sailor (83). Porter's example of the enduring stereotypes of the roving sailor is also an integral figure within South West folksong. Porter's work therefore tends to suggest that we need to look beyond a literal interpretation of occupation in relation to songs about illegitimacy. We might therefore view it more as a kind of referential system, in which certain character traits or ideas about gender or even class issues are triggered.

²² Porter takes greater account of the interaction between song and other cultural forms however, including jokes, proverbs and caricatures.

²³ Porter cites, for example, the development and remoulding of particular narrative conventions as evidence that occupational songs depict a change in gender relations between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries.

Porter's discussion, though generally useful, is limited on a number of counts. In spite of the fact that he observes a preponderance of occupational markings for men, rather than women, he carries out no thorough investigation as to why this is the case (93).²⁴ As will be seen in Chapter 6, my song sample tends to suggest that women's occupations often play an important part in the actions of these songs. Indeed, songs relating to illegitimacy delineate a variety of different kinds of work in relation to women. However, women's work is rarely overtly labelled, particularly within song titles, in the same way as is men's (Porter 111). This situation raises a series of interesting questions. It might, for example, have been important to ask whether this tendency represents a deliberate part of narrative strategy. Alternatively, it could be asked whether this reflects a more general tendency in which women are more commonly defined in relation to the occupation of their partners or fathers, than in terms of their own employment - which tends more to be accompanied by umbrella terms such as "being in service". Porter does observe that "there are songs which give the woman's point of view" (109). However, he does not fully address the question of why they demonstrated a preference for songs relating to male, rather than female occupations, and male rather than female fantasies if, as he states, women were involved in the process of printing broadside ballads and were also their major purchasers (108-10).

Songs concerning out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimacy have served as a focal point for a number of case studies (see Harker "A Warning," Coffin, "Mary Hamilton"). Many of these are the result of detailed analyses of individual ballads from the Child corpus in which illegitimate pregnancy is so prevalent (see Stewart above). Scholars have approached this material from a variety of perspectives. Whereas Jean Freedman is primarily concerned with examining three particular songs as out-of-wedlock pregnancy/illegitimacy ballads, with a greater concentration on their emotional content and aesthetic appeal than the other scholars, David Atkinson uses just one of these examples to explore an inter-related web of themes, including religious damnation and infanticide. "The Cruel Mother" is therefore examined in more general terms, by synchronic comparison with other kinds of material.

Freedman's study sets out to challenge the idea that folksongs and ballads explicate the normative values of a community (3-4). It is argued that this notion, which is linked to the theory of communal creation, has endured amongst folksong scholars. In their concern that selected material should meet

²⁴ His main suggestion is that this is indicative of the fact that "sexual oppression has a greater historical and social weight than class oppression" (140).

these criteria, scholars have falsely identified a unified voice in folksong which does not exist (3).

Freedman proposes the alternative view that folklore genres, even amongst the same ballad singing community, may function more as an expression of social dissent. In consulting the relevant literature, however, she notices that scholars have mainly focused upon inter-community, rather than intra-community conflicts (5). Insights are therefore rather limited, although several strands of the work of Luigi Lombardi-Satriani, on conflict between different economic classes, and the theories of Bakhtin are relevant.²⁵ Satriani's position as summarised by Freedman is that "folklore is *different* from elite culture and representative of different points of view" (6). Bakhtin's theories tend to complement this view because they also regard "the entire folk milieu" as a means by which alternative points of view are added to those of the dominant culture (6-7). Freedman derives her working hypothesis from these ideas, proposing that if folklore is a contestive force, it would logically follow that gender-based conflict would be articulated within folklore genres. She examines her selected Child ballads accordingly.

Freedman suggests that the Child ballad corpus abounds with examples of intra-community conflict. Her "illegitimate pregnancy" ballads are therefore selected examples from a wider range of material featuring "a world rife with conflict, a world of murder and rape and revenge, of war and abduction and broken promises, of thwarted love and malicious cruelty" (4). Freedman compares and contrasts the impressions created within three songs pooled from a larger range of Child ballads in which "illegitimate" pregnancy/birth is an important feature. Although "Tam Lin" (Child 39) does not appear in South West collections, both "The Cruel Mother" (Child 20) and "Lady Maisry" (Child 65) were collected in the South West at the turn of the century (see Chapter 6 and Appendix II).

Freedman views "Tam Lin" as depicting a world in which women have a great deal of sexual freedom and both physical and supernatural power. The central female protagonist chooses to take sole responsibility for her actions, makes her own decisions, and vetoes restrictions imposed upon her by others. She is not chastised for conceiving outside of wedlock and remains unperturbed by her pregnancy. The fact that Tam Lin (the male lover) is cast in a weaker position, dependent upon the goodwill of the two female characters, is seen as highly

²⁵Dissent according to Lombardi-Satriani, could be viewed through the model of binary oppositions whereby folklore represents the voice of the oppressed and hegemonic culture the voice of the oppressor.

significant. Essentially this ballad is interpreted as a celebration of women's sexuality and power, therefore presenting a stark contrast to the impression created in "The Cruel Mother".

The most stable elements of the song's variable plot, in the versions studied by Freedman and Atkinson, are as follows. A nameless woman, simply referred to as "the cruel mother", is described giving birth alone, to one or more children, under a tree. She immediately kills her offspring (frequently with a penknife) for reasons often left unexplained. She later meets their revenant(s) who are not immediately recognised. They return to her in the form of a group of children at play and confront her with her "crime". Whilst becoming fully conscious of their identity she is, at the same time, alerted by these ghost-children to the judgement of eternal damnation which awaits her.

Through the consistent structuring of plot as outlined above, using the revenants as a dramatic device for divine/moral comment, the female protagonist is never permitted to go unpunished for this original act of infanticide. Thus, she is chastised by artistic means for a crime that in worldly terms goes unpunished.

As might be expected, Freedman naturally tends to focus on variants in which the dead children are clearly portrayed as illegitimate. Consequently, her resulting analysis has a rather different emphasis to Atkinson's, which considers versions in which the status of the birth is either ambiguous or else evidently legitimate. Freedman sees the act of infanticide as a direct response to the circumstances of the child's illegitimacy, whereas Atkinson sees this connection as more tenuous. Significantly, his additional perspective, gained from the synchronic and diachronic comparison of variants, shows that the fact of "illegitimacy" is an unstable component within the song.

Freedman's analysis disputes the suggestion that this song essentially functioned as a deterrent "uphold[ing] conventional standards of propriety" (12) and allows for a wider range of interpretative possibilities than Atkinson suggests:

at a first glance, "The Cruel Mother" reads like a cautionary tale; it seems to champion normative values and warn young women against untoward behavior. Yet the woman is condemned as a "cruel mother," not as a wanton woman; it is the fact of infanticide that turns her into a villainess (Freedman 11).

Variants which seem to show sympathy for the woman's initial abandonment by her lover, and details, such as her speaking tenderly to the newly born child, are used to substantiate this position. Consequently, Freedman argues that it is not the fact of having had sex outside marriage, but the killing of the child, which incites this tone of condemnation. However, Freedman's reading suggests responses to the song's infanticide are still not straightforward, the inclination to pity a woman whose actions are motivated by desperation, in the absence of any better alternative, contributing to this sense of ambivalence (12).

Accordingly, a number of different interpretations and opinions might be accessed within the same text. This woman is therefore a kind of anti-heroine, one who challenged the sexual conventions of her society and failed because of the worldly boundaries which contain her: "[Cruel Mother] is not a simple denunciation of unchaste behavior; rather it is a grimly realistic portrait of what may happen in a society where those in power condemn unchaste behavior" (12).

In Child's Scottish versions of Freedman's final ballad "Lady Maisry", the discovery of a woman's "illegitimate" pregnancy results in her being burned to death. According to Freedman, this death sentence is passed by Maisry's male relatives on grounds of her "sexual wantonness" as evidenced by her pregnancy, and secondly, for "dallying with the enemy" in variants where she becomes pregnant by an English lord (13). The song therefore sometimes acquires a political aspect (13). That "in all versions, it is Maisry's male relatives - her father and her brother - who instigate the burning, and it is her brother who is particularly active," is interesting in the light of Kodish's remarks about the Freudian implications of folksong (13-14). However, the "patriarchal oppression" this signifies is not so one-sided as Stewart tends to imply. Maisry's mother and sisters, though cast in a more co-operative role, still endorse this punishment by colluding with the men by offering no resistance, or even assisting with the execution (Freedman, 13-14). Maisry's lover (also a male "patriarch") throws himself into the fire as a direct response to the killing of his lover and unborn child and therefore also partakes in her suffering.

The action of "Lady Maisry" takes place within a cultural framework where human constraints dictate that she dies before her lover arrives to save her. Freedman contends that narrative devices, such as the response of the errand boy and lover, structure our responses to the course of events and secure our sympathies for the woman (13). Other strategies, such as the casting of Maisry's executioners as her closest relatives, use the violation of kinship ties to exaggerate the injustice of the sentence passed upon her.

Freedman argues that, collectively, these ballads present a multifaceted view of out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth, with additional ballads (e.g. "Mary Hamilton", "Fair Anne") contributing still further perspectives (15). A wide variety of attitudes towards illegitimate pregnancy is suggested by the range of experiences and outcomes they describe. "Tam Lin" does not directly challenge but "side steps" the prevailing social convention of the real world by inversion. Staged in a fantasy world where patriarchy is completely absent and supernatural powers take an active role in the course of events, different rules apply and human love and bravery triumph.

Both "The Cruel Mother" and "Lady Maisry" are seen as showing "the horrors that may follow a woman's 'illegitimate' sexuality," but vary on the point of whether or not the woman is condemned (14). Maisry's struggle to challenge patriarchal authority in the "real" world is seen as a reflection of "the fight to control a woman's sexuality" in Scottish society during the period of the song's circulation (13). Ultimately, therefore, the strength of love and commitment between the central couple fails and "conventional mores, carried to their most rigid and inhuman extreme, have won out" (14). This, Freedman claims, is more of an indictment of such standards than a demonstration of their supreme rightness.

Freedman suggests that Scots ballads "offer an occasionally bewildering polyphony of voices" (16) because

like Greek tragedy, [they] exist not to provide a sum of shared values, but instead to articulate conflicts that arise from unshared values; and, in so doing, the ballads suggest solutions, air grievances, and perhaps defuse or detonate these conflicts by changing them from reality to representation. (4)

Freedman's model therefore moves closer to Atkinson's which endows "The Cruel Mother" with a cathartic function which allows us to explore "disturbing emotions associated with maternity and parenthood in general," impulses which might otherwise be repressed (375).

Atkinson places "The Cruel Mother" within the tradition of the revenant ballad. This sub-genre (defined by the role of its characters) usually involves the apparition of one who is dead and departed, returning for a specific purpose to one who is living. The revenant, commonly a male lover, is usually summoned by the remaining partner, who grieves too much at their loss and calls them back from the dead (cf. Shields). So Atkinson proposes that revenant ballads

deal primarily with the dislocation of the dead from the living (359). "The Cruel Mother" therefore embraces a subtle irony in having its revenants confront "the mother's refusal to acknowledge their identity as her own dead children, and compel her to recognize her responsibility for their deaths" (359). These ghost children are also empowered to pronounce divine judgement upon her .

Atkinson's earliest variant of "The Cruel Mother", entitled "The Duke's Daughter's Cruelty" emerges during the late seventeenth century, some years after 1624 when infanticide was made a separate offence from murder. The fact of illegitimacy is more explicit in this early narrative than in subsequent versions of the song. Having contextualised the song, examining this socio-historical environment in some detail, Atkinson concludes that this ballad served as a kind of deterrent against particular types of behaviour, in support of "a culture of tight controls over illegitimacy and infanticide" (360-62).

"The Duke's Daughter's Cruelty" is seen, like other contemporaneous forms of popular literature, to depend "upon a largely atypical occurrence" due to its central act of infanticide (362). This atypicality is also seen by Atkinson as being underlined by the unequal relationship between the mother and her socially inferior lover, who "provided a conspicuous example to persons lower down the socio-economic scale, at whom the broadside market was primarily aimed" (362). Atkinson's suggestion, however, that the atypicalities of the song served to "reinforce the definition of social norms" is not altogether convincing (362). He himself admits that it is impossible to establish exactly how prevalent infanticide was during this historical period (360). Therefore one can only really speculate about whether infanticide constituted an "unusual" act in the eyes of seventeenth-century audiences. Likewise, he does not adequately explore the significance of the discrepancy in social status between the female protagonist and the broadside public and does not account for her appeal amongst predominantly lower-class audiences amongst whom infanticide was probably more prevalent.

Atkinson's main concern, however, is not the relationship between the song and its socio-historical context. Rather, his study attempts to demonstrate the importance of reading symbolism synchronically, through comparison with other contemporaneous songs, in order to gain access to the conceptual framework employed by its singers and listeners. He claims it has "long been recognized that ballads do contain symbolic effects, and that these appear to have referred to widely understood cultural ideas embodied in a common fund of imagery" (370). However, the main difficulty lies in gaining access to, and

identifying, this latent symbolism. By comparing like symbols and motifs, we can gain a deeper understanding of accretions of meaning and fathom more accurately the way songs were interpreted by past generations.

Particular details in "Cruel Mother," such as the scarlet clothing of a certain child and the persistent mention of the children playing ball, are examined accordingly. Our understanding of their symbolic importance is enlarged and in turn affects our interpretation of the song. The religious connotations of the above details in relation to Christ tend, for example, to strengthen the idea that the revenants predict the divine reaction to the mother's crime (373). Atkinson concludes that

the identification of religious elements in secular ballad versions clearly demands a degree of cultural knowledge on the part of singer and audience. This is equally a requirement for the recognition of the drama of eternal judgement from symbolic imagery in "The Cruel Mother". As a general principle, it is recognized that a shared cultural context can create a crucial part of the meaning in traditional events. (375)

Atkinson's detailed structural analysis of "The Duke's Daughter's Cruelty", suggests that it had a continued existence in oral tradition (367). He compares the ballad's synchronic structure based on "The Duke's Daughter's Cruelty" with its diachronic structure, based upon its form in transmission. By comparing these two models, he evaluates the status of particular elements and concludes that "the meeting with the revenant children is absolutely intrinsic to the ballad" (367).

Because the act of infanticide and its relationship to this subsequent meeting is regarded as the song's "persistent core," Atkinson centres his analysis on this concern (359). However, the significance of the act of infanticide for this thesis depends upon its causal link with the earlier birth of an illegitimate child. Unfortunately, much of the symbolism explored by Atkinson can only be regarded as indirectly relevant because he does not distinguish between variants on grounds of the child's legitimacy or illegitimacy. Clearly, he is less interested in the sexual relationship which precedes the events described, than in these events themselves.

Atkinson's conclusion that within the ballad "the apparently simple occurrence of infanticide is closely integrated into a complex of behavioural and ethical issues" is, however, interesting (375). It is this that leads him to suggest that the narrative "may therefore function as a correlative for the psychological consequences of a range of events such as abortion or abandonment . . .

besides infanticide itself," whilst marking the significance of the ballad's prevalence amongst female singers (375-76).

In arguing for the ballad's cathartic, rather than prescriptive function, Atkinson's position moves closer to Freedman. Unlike Freedman however, Atkinson sees "The Cruel Mother" as essentially conforming to a unified model which "has the effect of incorporating the ballad story with the shared understanding of the group or community. This embraces psychological awareness, but it can also prescribe limits to individual behaviour" (376).

One of the main functions of such songs, as suggested by this example's more unusual variants, is therefore the establishing or reinforcing of group norms. This is achieved through the continual redefinition of limitations to human behaviour (376). Reflecting the general import of the revenant ballad, Atkinson therefore sees the narrative exemplifying "the methods by which communal wisdom is transmitted in order to maintain the psychological equilibrium of individuals and of the group" (376-77).

The ballad "The Foggy Dew" serves as a case study for Robert S. Thomson's "historical explication of a ballad text," in which he makes explicit his rejection of both historic-geographical and contextual approaches to song (35-36). His objection to this latter method seems to stem from his rather narrow definition of contextualism, which he sees in terms of the isolated interpretation of one text in a single performance and therefore lacks the sophistication of Gammon's model. Thomson is therefore dismissive of this approach which "all too often . . . is dependent upon phenomena external to the text itself" and emphasises the importance of having some sense of "intrinsic text" in this kind of historical explication (36).

Thomson begins his analysis using a late-seventeenth-century broadside of "The Foggy Dew" entitled "The Frightened Yorkshire Damsel" (hereafter "Yorkshire Damsel") which is compared with three later texts. A fifth text, the "Bell manuscript", though not presented in the study, is also drawn upon quite extensively. Thomson uses the dialect term "bogulmaroo," contained within this early broadside, as the centre-pin of his discussion. The word, which is substituted with "foggy dew" in later texts, is used as a focal point in this diachronic comparison. It not only serves as an aid to chart the transmission of this ballad but also explains some of its inconsistencies.

Thomson claims that the Bell text provides a clue to the use of this unfamiliar term in the earliest broadside. The slightly altered "bogle bo" of this later manuscript functions as a kind of ghost within the narrative and therefore makes sense of the girl's inexplicable fear prompting her to seek refuge in the young man's bedroom. Thomson's additional investigation into linguistic research, which identifies "bogulmaroo" as "a dialect form or compound construction originating in the northeast of England," reveals some further insights in this respect (44). Analysis of its two parts "bogul" and "maroo" seems to confirm what Bell manuscript's plot already implies, that the "bogulmaroo is a ghost and a companion, fellow worker, partner or mate" (46).

By this comparison, Thomson argues that we can eradicate some of the misunderstandings associated with "Yorkshire Damsel," even though the Bell text actually belongs to a later period. That particular structural discrepancies can be explained once we have established that the ghost helper is part of a joke/stratagem to seduce the young woman is given as justification for his diachronic comparison. Thomson argues that this unusual dialect term was eventually replaced with "foggy dew" because as the ballad spread geographically, the idea of the central act of trickery lost coherence, due to the narrative's textual dependence on " the recognition and comprehension of a localized dialect construction cognate with 'bogul' " (47). Consequently, "a suitable rationalization" was employed (47). Thomson discerns a change of tone in "The Bachelor Brave" :

In overall pattern we see that the deception has gone and in its place we have merely a distracted young girl. Since the stratagem has disappeared, a substitution is called for in the final stanza and is provided by the introduction of a note of moral condemnation of the girl's actions - male chauvinism indeed! (47)

Interestingly, the rather sexist emphasis in this later text is entirely absent within more contemporary South West versions of the song in oral tradition.

By the mid-nineteenth century, suitable rationalisations as employed by broadside printers like Haly and Baird resulted in "seduction leads to pregnancy which necessitates marriage" becoming a central theme of the song, whereas originally in "Yorkshire Damsel" the couple immediately marry the morning after the seduction. Thomson suggests that "The manner in which the ballad's structure has changed from its seventeenth century form to its present day state is indicative of the process of oral transmission lacking the support of print reinforcement" (49-50). Over the last hundred years, he therefore sees Anglo-American variants of "Foggy Dew" as having been in a steady state of textual

decay, singers during the post-1950 folk revival relying heavily upon access to printed versions and phonograph recordings (49). Thomson subsequently attempts to devise a taxonomy of twentieth-century versions, assembling a family tree of the song, suggesting the likely influence of each of these forms and the points of cross-over between them. His subsequent discussion is not therefore directly relevant to this thesis. However, it is interesting to note that he places two of Sharp's Somerset versions within Group B which bears a close correspondence to the early nineteenth-century Pitts/Catnach broadside, in which "a boy takes advantage of a girl who is frightened by the foggy dew and as a consequence of this action he gains a wife" (Thomson 50).

In foregrounding their own interpretations of text and marginalising performance context, the above scholars sometimes make rather improbable assertions. Freedman tentatively suggests, for example, that illegitimacy ballads may be part of a women's genre. My own research suggests that this is unlikely and this statement is poorly substantiated by Freedman's own song sample. Her other evidence in support of this view, that "ballads are often told from a woman's point of view and look with detail at what is usually considered a woman's problem" is equally unconvincing (8). Clearly the fact of a singer being male does not preclude the possibility that he might be inclined to express a "woman's sentiments" in song (Freedman 8). Neither is there much socio-historical evidence to suggest that unwed pregnancy was ever seen exclusively as a woman's problem - the financial burden of illegitimate children presenting a problem for the whole community, whilst the possibility of being blamed or implicated in such situations concerned all (see Chapter 5).

SCHOLARSHIP RELATING TO PROSE NARRATIVE GENRES

So far, the theme of illegitimacy has been discussed exclusively in studies of folksong. Few other kinds of folk narrative pertaining to this subject area have reached publication until recent years. Not surprisingly, it is only now that scholars are beginning to make inroads into this area of research.

Oral historians and folklorists have been the two main groups responsible for raising the profile of these kinds of narratives, making them more accessible to other scholars. Groundbreaking studies, such as Maureen Sutton's *We Didn't Know Aught: A Study of Sexuality, Superstition and Death in Women's Lives in Lincolnshire during the 1930s, '40s and '50s*, have emerged during the last decade. This work provides copious examples of anecdotes and personal

experience narratives relating to sex, illegitimacy and birth. Bennett's book, Scottish Customs from Cradle to Grave, provides examples of similar kinds of narrative from an earlier period, being an anthology of relevant writings and research from the last few centuries.

The emphasis in these kinds of works is on the presentation of material, rather than its interpretation. In the former study, interpretation and analysis of the narratives themselves is not the main concern, material being examined more as socio-historical evidence of the lives of past generations. This tendency is also apparent amongst scholars working in the field of plant-lore and folk medicine. For instance, Gabrielle Hatfield uses folk narratives relating to illegitimacy in her chapter "Herbs in Pregnancy, Childbirth and Breast-Feeding" as historical evidence supporting the traditional use of particular plants (Vickery, Plant-Lore 84-93).

Lack of research into the themes of sex and illegitimacy reflects the larger trend identified by Simpson towards the scholarly neglect of particular types of prose narrative genres throughout the country, including supernatural memorates and legends, local legends and local character anecdotes (The Local 25).²⁶ Such material, rather than being analysed, is instead used to compile anthologies and as isolated examples in guide books and popular books about folklore (e.g. Hunt Popular Romances, Burton, Chard). Similar kinds of folk narrative text are also printed in newspapers and local history books (Simpson, "The Local" 34). The main emphasis in the above kinds of literature is on "telling the story", consequently contextual details are often lacking and the academic interpretation of content is seen as being of secondary importance.²⁷

A small group of folklorists, particularly those associated with the Irish Folklore Commission's archive, have taken the academic study of illegitimacy-related prose narratives one step further. Fionnuala Nic Suibhne's " 'On the Straw' and Other Aspects of Pregnancy and Childbirth from the Oral Tradition of Women in Ulster" is one such example. This study looks at the theme of illegitimacy as a sub-section of its wider concern with birth. In doing so, it begins to examine aspects of language, such as the common sayings applied to the parents of an illegitimate child and customary advice given to women. These details are

²⁶ This lack of interest has resulted in a corresponding lack of archival resources in relation to folk narrative genres in this country (Simpson, The Local 34).

²⁷ The above emphasis on "readability" has also resulted in an abundance of what Simpson refers to as "smoothed out versions". In these instances, the often edited narrative is given in fixed form in which all inconsistencies are ironed out. Each item is therefore presented as though it only existed as a single, stable variant and is divorced from the style of its telling and other aspects of performance style and context.

related to the social context of the time in which the stigma associated with illegitimacy resulted in discrimination against both mother and child in various arenas such as work and marriage. Attitudes towards illegitimacy are also related to further anecdotes (for example, regarding menstrual taboos) highlighting the atmosphere of secrecy and superstition surrounding sexual knowledge.

Linda-May Ballard's " 'Just Whatever they had Handy': Aspects of Childbirth and Early Child-Care in Northern Ireland, Prior to 1948", is a similar kind of study. Illegitimacy is discussed quite extensively, once again as an offshoot of this general concern with birth. Ballard's interesting discussion briefly considers the use of traditional tales surrounding the treatment of women becoming pregnant outside of marriage, evaluating her findings against other historical evidence. These local legends are placed within the context of other evidence from oral testimony relating to areas touched upon in the previous study, including the abortion of illegitimate children, the stigma surrounding treatment of mother and child, local phrases associated with illegitimate children, and sexual secrecy. Consequently, different generic categories of material are used to provide a composite picture.

The most detailed and relevant analyses of prose narrative genres in relation to my own data are studies of local legend by the folklorist, Jacqueline Simpson. Simpson observes that the interpretation of particular kinds of narrative has been prioritised above others. She notes that the Märchen has received far more scholarly attention than local legend, even though the latter form is at least as numerous ("The Local" 25).²⁸ This observation goes some way to explaining why there are very few studies of the sub-genre of local legend relating to the South West of England, let alone in relation to those concerned with sexual attitudes and behaviour.

Simpson's main contention is that the sub-genre has the potential to offer insights into the values of particular communities. Her interests therefore coincide with my own in using folklore as a source of attitudes towards illegitimacy within a specific regional area. Simpson is keen to emphasise that the sub-genre is an especially rich source of local attitudes and values, having "far more to offer to the student of popular rural culture" than other kinds of narrative genres, such as the fairy tale (Simpson 25). This is largely due to some of its distinguishing characteristics, outlined below.

²⁸ All subsequent references are to Simpson's "The Local Legend".

According to Simpson local legend takes a "specific place, person or object" as its central focus, each of these referents either existing or having "existed within the knowledge of those telling and hearing the story" (25). This form therefore tends to emphasise the real, rather than the imagined world by both its content and certain stylistic features. It is, for example, frequently told with a sober tone and recounted in brief, occurring most commonly within the context of casual conversation. Simpson accentuates the fact that even where legends incorporate more anomalous elements of a supernatural and fantastic nature, these still achieve "maximum plausibility by being brought into close association with the physical localisation of the tale" (25). Legends teach, warn or convey information, but are also used for a wider range of purposes. Significantly, the convincing combination of content and narrative strategy by which they are delivered, often ensure that local legends become widely accepted as historical fact.

Simpson's assertion that local legends have the potential to reveal "communal attitudes" has some important implications for narratives such as "Jay's Grave", which deal with the subjects of sex and illegitimacy. Such material would be seen, like other local legends, as expressing a collective view about truths (in relation to a particular event) that people either believe, or seek, for various reasons, to promote to themselves and/or their listeners. Simpson, reminds us that the value of any given story in this respect is not dependent on whether or not the legend itself proves to have a firm historical basis.

Local legends, she argues, reflect "the beliefs, moral judgements and everyday preoccupations of the social group," and therefore those in contemporary circulation must invariably reveal something about the immediate social group among whom they are told (25). Because they aim "to hand on accounts of significant events alleged to have occurred in a particular community", they tend, by their very nature, to impart information about local opinions as to what is, and what is not, deemed to be important (25).

This is further elaborated with recourse to migratory legends. Simpson discusses in detail one such legend, dating back to the seventeenth century, versions of which are told in relation to both the village of Chumleigh in Devon and also to Great Wishford in Wiltshire. A man, for differing reasons, attempts to avoid having children by leaving his wife for seven years. On his return, his wife becomes pregnant and gives birth to septuplets. In the Chumleigh version of the tale, the outwitted father conceals his children and carries them to the river to be drowned. He is accosted by a gentlewoman and is forced into telling

her than he intends to drown some puppies. Realising his deception, she adopts the children, who eventually become priests. In both villages a local monument is claimed as authenticating evidence for this story. As this legend recounts the story of a woman having a multiple birth, some of its didactic content impinges upon issues which are central to the narratives discussed within this thesis.

Simpson analyses her material using a form of structural analysis. However, this frame of interpretation is loosely applied. As she observes, it is difficult to be too rigid in the deconstruction of a genre whose texts are constantly shifting in oral tradition. Her structural framework is therefore more flexible than Renwick's. This legend is contextualised using historical evidence and is therefore viewed diachronically, from a number of perspectives. She links ideas apparent within this story to beliefs in early modern times, where multiple births are unnatural or shameful. She sees it as significant in relation to the tale that they were usually seen as a punishment for sexual and other kinds of sins. That the babies are rescued is seen as a suggestion that "God will provide for what he creates, and that lives saved by him should be dedicated to him" (27). Consequently, Simpson discerns a "repressive" moral message in this tale, where "it is a sin to try to avoid one's duty of begetting and bearing children, and God will miraculously frustrate the attempt" (27). This didactic function is, she claims, an important feature of the genre of local legend:

The moralising function is prominent in many local legends, reflecting a preoccupation with supernatural rewards and punishments, judgements and providential deliverances, which was a powerful element in religious belief in the early modern period. . . . So far, the studies of popular religion in this country in past centuries . . . have concentrated upon beliefs and observances rather than ethics, though sometimes noting how particular beliefs (e.g. in ghost or fairies) reinforced certain rules of social conduct. (30)

Simpson explores an identical line of enquiry to Stewart in relation to the didactic function of song. Simpson places a similar emphasis on the importance of uncovering the morals of a story, commenting "in the endeavour to understand the mentality of past generations, the didactic nature of many folktales may offer clues that should not be neglected" ("The Local" 30). However, she does concede that not all local legends have the kinds of ethical or religious content suited to this purpose (32). Sometimes, the local legends serve as a focus for local pride:

To this day, there is a strong tendency in any village to claim that its own tradition about, say, a buried treasure or a haunted building must have some grain of truth in it. Every community feels curiosity and pride about

its surroundings and its past, and wishes to annex some of the glamour of history and mystery for itself (32-33).

Sometimes legends even express local hostilities, therefore representing the "culture of contestation" discussed by Freedman in relation to song. Simpson reminds us of the importance of regarding local legend as fluid, recognising that in oral tradition there may be many different variants, in contrast to the "smoothed out" versions of printed texts (33).

Unfortunately, in her otherwise insightful analyses of specific local legends as evidence of attitudes in the past, Simpson is rather imprecise about exactly which social groups she refers ^{to}. This might partly be because many of the texts under consideration were recorded by earlier collectors who provided little background information concerning either their informants, or the status of a given narrative in oral tradition at any one time. Consequently, Simpson's assertion that local legends offer "insight[s] into the mental attitudes and preoccupations of those who told and remembered them" is problematic when the identities of those participating in the storytelling event remain so ill-defined (34).

Neither does Simpson tackle the question of how to compensate for the lack of contextual detail surrounding particular performances of local legends which inevitably results, given her assertion that in their "natural" setting such narratives are a predominantly conversational genre (34). Yet clearly the absence of such information creates a methodological problem if we consider that, like song, the mode and context in which local legends are conveyed shapes a vital part of their meaning.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Collection of Material

As previously stated in Chapter 1, the use of the SRFA was a condition of my studentship, hence it was already predetermined that some of the data towards this project would derive from this resource. Shortly after commencing this post, I also agreed to take on the role of temporary archivist, employed to carry out the task of making working copies of all the existing field recordings in the SRFA. I decided to use this process as a means of gaining a thorough knowledge of this material by unselectively listening to each recording during copying. By familiarising myself with approximately thirty years of field recorded work, I allowed the data itself to suggest a subject area I would eventually pursue. My simultaneous discovery of a wealth of illegitimacy-related folksongs amassed by turn-of-the-century collectors, clinched the decision to research my chosen topic. The theme of illegitimacy in folk narrative genres therefore evolved out of this body of data, rather than vice versa. Relevant data was consequently collected from the SRFA as part of this straightforward procedure, with the assistance of the archive computer database and the brief notes and draft transcriptions I compiled during copying.

By these means, I began to assemble a list of relevant song titles and prose narratives pertaining to the themes of out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth. This was used, and added to, during my investigation of each subsequent archive and ongoing fieldwork, to assist my search for relevant material. The SRFA database was repeatedly consulted at difference stages to double check that all appropriate material had been collected. Thus, all the illegitimacy related songs emerging from my research into the published material of South West collectors Cecil Sharp, Baring-Gould, Hammond and Gardiner, were searched for using this facility. Having used the song title index in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library (hereafter VWML) to uncover alternative titles for my chosen corpus of songs, the database was repeatedly used in this capacity.

Again, my focus on the SRFA data determined my decision to foreground illegitimacy-related songs and narratives in relatively contemporary circulation (i.e. since 1970) which would then lend themselves to further investigation in the field. Hence, my approach differed from that of scholars such as Freedman

and Atkinson who, by tending rather to examine the significance of illegitimacy-related songs in previous centuries, have precluded the possibility of being able to conduct fieldwork into live performances.

I consequently began my search for other archives having a close association with the local area and a strong emphasis on contemporary tape recorded material relating to either folksong and/or folk narrative genres. Resources which came to my attention included the vast private collection of Doc Rowe. This archive contains a large quantity and variety of South West material, including hundreds of audiotaped and videotaped recordings of folksong, local custom, folk narratives and jokes. I undertook a preliminary investigation into this collection at a time when the archive was housed in the collector's flat in London. However, due to the extremely limited domestic space, accessibility to the archive was hampered by practical considerations. This situation, in addition to the fact that the archive was awaiting an imminent move to a new location in Bristol, confirmed my decision that extensive use of the material would not be viable. Another private collection, that of Peter Kennedy, was excluded because the collector assured me that almost all of his South West material existed in the form of duplicates held at the British Library National Sound Archive and the Sound Archive at the VWML, into which I had already instigated research (Peter Kennedy, letter).

I eventually decided to collect material from three additional archives, the Wren Trust Archive, the Patten Archive and the Sound Archive at the VWML. The method by which relevant data was obtained from the Patten Archive presented a contrast to that used in relation to the SRFA, being by process of direct consultation with one of the collectors only. Hence, I initially described my chosen area of research to Jacqueline Patten who then carried out a preliminary investigation of the kinds of archival material which were likely to be useful, providing me with a brief written report of her findings. Jacqueline conducted more detailed searches having been informed about and/or provided with lists of relevant material generated from the research into the other three archives, fieldwork, and additional resources.

In collecting data from the Wren Trust Archive, I took a more selective approach than with the SRFA. Having described my project to the collector Paul Wilson, I followed his and Marilyn Tucker's directions regarding where I might find material relevant to this subject area. I initially began by working through taped-recordings of traveller families, in order to establish which of the appropriate folksongs were originals or duplicates of SRFA material, and which were unique

to the Wren Trust Archive itself. The computerised database and database printouts were also used to narrow the range of tapes potentially relevant to the study and locate additional material, written tape summaries being used where database records were absent. My expanding list of relevant songs and prose narratives from other types of resources were again used to aid this search.

Fortunately, it was possible to ask the head librarian, Malcolm Taylor, about the existence of relevant material in the VWML. The creation of comprehensive card indexes relating to the Sound Archive greatly assisted my search in this respect, being used in conjunction with my revised check-list of relevant songs and prose narratives. A certain amount of guess-work was inevitable, particularly where certain song titles were totally unfamiliar. Hence I targeted particular kinds of recording, such as solo albums performed by South West folk singers, or recordings which clearly had high incidence of songs concerning sexual and romantic relationships. Again, it was necessary in some instances to establish which material duplicated a recording already existing in the SRFA or Wren Trust Archive. For the sake of clarity, I excluded all uncatalogued archival recordings from this study, and material which, whilst listed on a given index or computer database, could not be located.

Because of the inductive nature of my research, I allowed my findings to influence my approach to the collection of material throughout the study. This was exemplified by my treatment of folksong. For instance, I found that none of the existing data in the SRFA supported the notion that folksongs relating to the theme of illegitimacy are necessarily part of a woman's genre, even though, biologically speaking, pregnancy ("legitimate" or "illegitimate") has so far been specific to women (cf. Atkinson; Freedman). Hence, I saw no reason to discriminate against male singers at this stage in the planning and execution of my fieldwork (cf. Freedman). I also took an active policy of non-censorship, both in terms of the kinds of material I transcribed from each of the four archives and my own fieldwork recordings (cf. Baring-Gould). This also applied to the material which people were shown, in the form of song transcriptions, during interviews. Chapter 4 provides a detailed account of how and why material was obtained from particular individuals.

Analysis of Material

My chosen line of investigation - the analysis of folksong and selected prose narratives as evidence of attitudes towards illegitimacy - required that I undertake a qualitative, rather than quantitative analysis of this corpus of

material. The nature of the songs and prose narratives collected from each of the four archives, my own field work, and additional published sources, to a certain extent, determined which analytical approaches might most usefully be applied. Again, this was due to the inductive nature of the research.

The premise behind my analysis of folksong as evidence of attitudes towards illegitimacy, and that underpinning my analysis of supernatural legends and memorates, local legends, and local character anecdotes, was fundamentally similar. This is because I assumed that the creation of meaning in relation to both generic categories of material would be inextricably linked to the immediate environment of their reception and the wider social context of the communities in which they were perpetuated.

However, I decided to set my analysis of folksong apart from that of prose narrative genres (see Chapters 6 and 7). This was largely because my preliminary research suggested there were some essential differences between the social contexts in which the songs and prose narratives were performed; the modes of transmission by which they were perpetuated; and types of individual by whom they were circulated. It seemed likely that such variables would not only have a profound affect upon attitudes conveyed within each type of respective text, but also upon those expressed in performances of both sets of material. I imposed this division with a view to comparing the two groups of material at a later stage.

My analysis of the selected folksong and prose narrative data began with an examination of the experience of, and attitudes towards, illegitimacy as represented within stated text alone. A predominantly (though not exclusively) synchronic, rather than diachronic approach to the texts was deemed to be the most appropriate method by which this might be accomplished, because of the contemporary emphasis of this study (cf. Thomson). Experiences and attitudes exemplified within different songs and prose narratives were compared and contrasted, as well as those represented in variants of the same item. In doing so, I attempted to be receptive to their multi-interpretative possibilities, avoiding the temptation to reduce them to a single viewpoint (cf. Freedman). Hence, my analysis remained open to the possibility that the material might present a multifaceted view of out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth (cf. Freedman).

My synchronic analysis of supernatural legends and memorates, local legends, and local character anecdotes emphasised the interplay of these narratives in

oral tradition and as perpetuated within printed or written texts - an aspect not considered in relation to song. Danielson has already convincingly argued for the validity of an approach which takes account of popular printed sources upon the oral tradition, in relation to urban legend. He comments in relation to "The Vanishing Hitchhiker" that

to ignore . . . the specter's appearance in *The Star*, the *National Enquirer*, and newsstand paperbacks simply because these sources constitute a popular tradition rather than a folk tradition risks antiquarianism. It also dismisses valuable data that may aid our comprehension of the story and its vitality. (131)

Yet, whilst scholars such as Richard Dorson have recognised the importance of using such printed sources in reconstructing oral traditions of past centuries, paradoxically, "the more recent the printed sources become, the more skeptical folklorists are expected to be" (Danielson 131). Consequently, "we peruse the *Spirit of the Times* and nineteenth-century local histories more industriously than the contemporary *National Enquirer* or the *Playboy* joke page" (Danielson 131). As a direct result of this academic snobbery, there is a lack of methodological frameworks with which to contrast "the texts and textures of those materials located in both oral and printed sources, a combined body of narrative that we can term vernacular, reflexive verbal art" (Danielson 132). Danielson himself therefore implements Dorson's suggestion that "the folklorist can judge the approximation of the printed item to oral tradition by comparing it with field-collected analogues" within his own study of "The Vanishing Hitchhiker" (132). In my comparatively small-scale study of prose narratives relating to the theme of illegitimacy in oral tradition, I have therefore had to rely upon a similar technique.

In analysing these folksongs and prose narratives, I was anxious not to give too "truncated" a view of their "nature and essence" by over-emphasising the importance of texts resulting from the transcription of oral items in isolation from either the immediate environment of their reception in performance, or their wider social context (Finnegan, Oral Poetry 42). As Finnegan rightly observes:

Oral literature differs from our implicit model of written literature: the mode of communication to a silent reader, through the eye alone, from a definitive written text. Oral literature is more flexible and more dependent on its social context (Oral Poetry 29).

Hence, I assumed that a vital part of the meaning created within and drawn from my chosen songs and narratives would be shaped by the immediate environment of their reception, being affected by factors including the

performance venue, audience composition, the social identity of the performer, their delivery, and the response of the audience (cf. Gammon; Preston; Kodish; Finnegan, *Oral Poetry* 29, 42; Simpson; Dégh). Hence, even where variants of the same song or narrative had remarkably similar texts, I still considered that the precise nature of their interpretation on different occasions could be diverse.

The extent to which the audio-taped recordings with which I was working were able to supply the above kinds of information varied considerably. Much of the material had, for instance, been recorded in the contrived setting of an interview, with little comment as to the kinds of occasion and venue in which it would usually be performed. The fact that I was experiencing material second hand, through the recordings of other collectors, also created certain interpretative difficulties. This was partly because the audio-taped medium itself could not supply information relating to the more visual aspects of performance, which the collector would have been able to directly observe.

The ability to conduct fieldwork in relation to songs and narratives which had recently been in oral circulation, by talking directly to those who performed and listened to them, was a great advantage in overcoming some of these obstacles. This informant-centred approach eradicated the need for scholarly speculation and avoided some of the methodological pitfalls associated with re-creating performance context using alternative strategies. Methods used by folksong scholars have, for instance, included deploying literary descriptions of song performances in the past, or using personal observations and fieldwork from one era and importing them into another, in order to generalise about the nature, function and meaning of certain song performances for previous generations (cf. Preston; Stewart).

As will be explained in more detail in Chapter 4, in the case of song I was sometimes able to return to exactly the same singers from whom material had originally been collected. Although I did not return to any of the few informants who originally supplied some of the supernatural memorates and local legends, fortunately I still managed to interview those who continue to perform, and listen to some of these prose narratives. Hence I was able to establish performance context by direct questioning and observation, rather than conjecture (cf. Lloyd; Simpson). Where possible, my analysis of text therefore takes account of the immediate vicinity, such as a folk club, a public house, or a private dwelling, in which the performance of a given item takes place, considering the likely effect of that physical environment upon the choice of repertoire and the creation of meaning (cf. Kodish). In this connection, informants were sometimes asked

detailed questions about the performance environment, for example, about the effect of the juke box on pub singing, or of tourism on storytelling venues (e.g. III:007:95, III:027:1:96).

Through direct field observations of performances in their "natural" settings, or observations, listening and questioning in the more contrived context of an interview, I was able to consider other aspects of performance. In many cases, I could identify the type of occasion during which a given folksong or narrative might be performed by questioning its singers as to where they last performed it, and where they would usually feel most comfortable performing it. I also asked them about situations where they might not perform a given item and, particularly in the case of song, about other kinds of material performed at singing events. I also gained an insight into the composition of particular audiences using the same means. Largely because of the subject matter of my chosen corpus of material, I was particularly keen to examine the interaction between text and performance context in terms of the register of gender. Hence, particularly in the case of song, I tried to establish the register affiliations of particular audiences by asking singers about the ratio of men to women and the effects of audience composition on the type of material performed.

Again, the identity of particular performers was established through both direct observation in the field and also through questioning within the context of an interview. Hence, informants were sometimes encouraged to talk about the importance of their own social identity in relation to the material they perform(ed) or, particularly in the case of song, were asked to comment on the age, sex and social identity of other singers of illegitimacy-related songs.

The same techniques were also used to examine how a given song or narrative was performed. Hence, in considering the creation of meaning generated through the interaction of text and context, I attempted, where possible, to take account of the performer's body language, use of gesture and style, rhythm and tone of their delivery (cf. Dunn; Toelken; Dégh; Bennett). The ability to either directly observe, or ask informants about the audience's response during particular performances was also a useful means of providing an insight into the interpretation of meanings in relation to my chosen theme.

Informants were often asked, from the point of view of being both a performer, and audience member, about their interpretation of a particular song or narrative. In the case of song, the use of written transcriptions was particularly helpful. They were often asked more specifically about the meaning of that item

in terms of attitudes towards out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth. This direct form of questioning avoided the temptation to speculate about the meanings of songs and narratives of this kind, for those amongst whom they are circulated, according to pure conjecture. It also allowed for the possibility that individuals within the same audience have differing interpretations of the same material, because the way in which people engage with songs and narratives in performance is profoundly influenced by their personal identity and register affiliations (cf. Preston; Gammon 234).

In order to more precisely delineate the kinds of attitude which I had discerned within stated text alone, as well as those realised in performance according to the meanings created by the performer(s), and denotative and connotative meanings received by the listener(s), I needed to view my data in terms of its historical context. I initially assumed that a dialectical relationship always exists between the song or narrative itself and the cultural context in which it is, or was, actively circulated (Pickering "The Past", "The Farmworker").

Hence, I attempted to consider the entire corpus of folksong and narrative data, collected since 1970, using historical evidence as a point of reference to illuminate particular features of these texts and reconstruct the environment of their reception (cf. Lloyd and Neilands, Chapter 2). My analytical method differed from that of earlier scholars in rejecting an approach which draws only upon selected examples of folksongs and narratives which conveniently fit with particular aspects of past experience (cf. Lloyd). Similarly to Kodish, I attempted to construct this historical context using data specifically relating to experiences and attitudes within the regional area from which my original song sample was collected.

Because folksongs relating to the theme of illegitimacy were far more numerous than my selected prose narrative genres, I took a slightly different approach in relating ~~the~~^{two} kinds of material to their historical context. In the case of folksong, I initially compared and contrasted the experiences described within the texts with the actual experience of, and attitudes towards, illegitimacy during the time in which they were circulated, remaining open to the possibility that certain songs might simultaneously represent attitudes towards illegitimacy during the time they were most recently performed, as well as alluding to attitudes towards illegitimacy as held by people in the more distant past. I hoped to arrive at some conclusion as to their meaning and function within that specific environment (cf. Gammon).

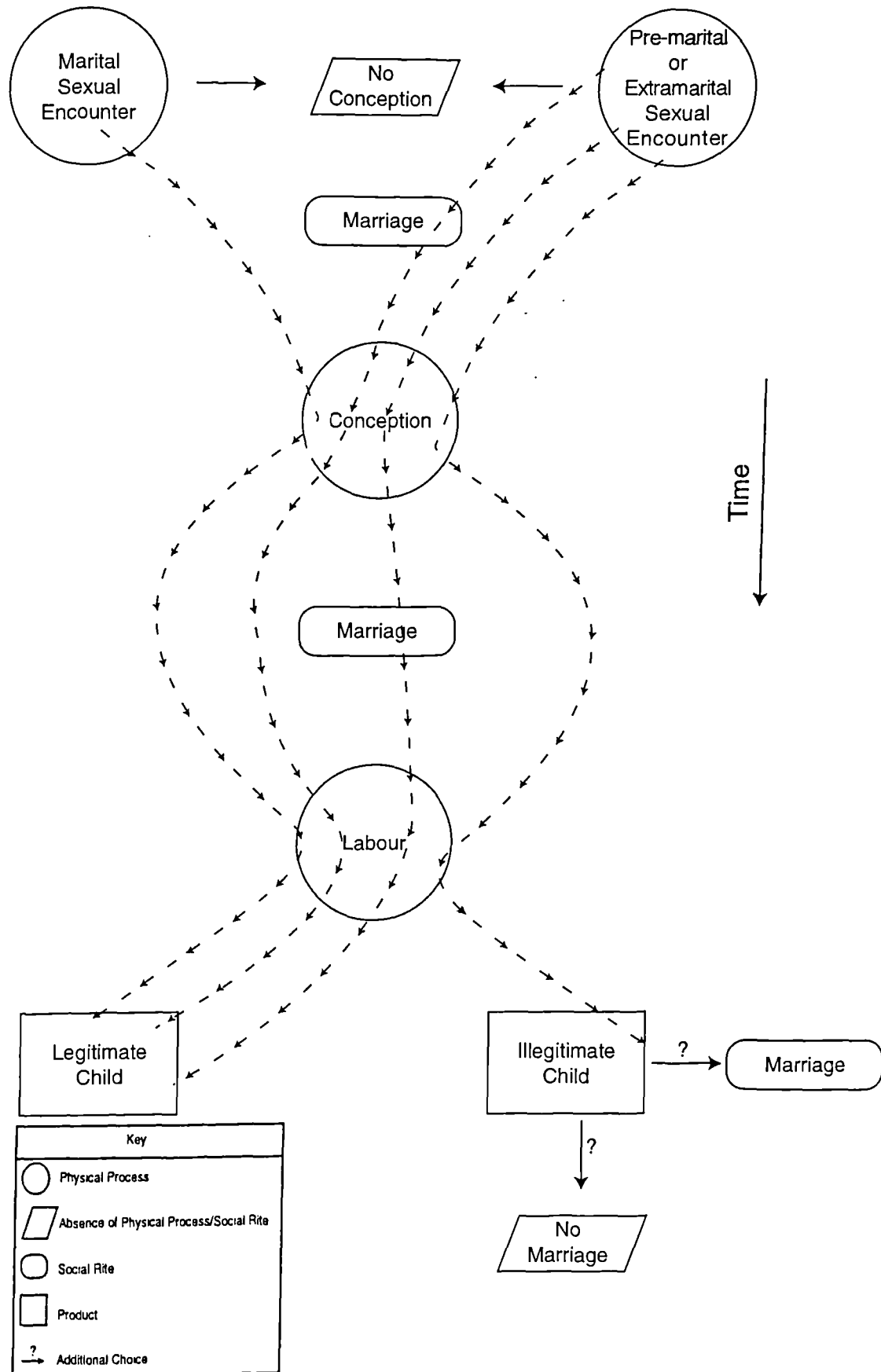
In the case of prose narratives, the experiences and attitudes described within the texts were initially compared and contrasted with those same experiences and attitudes within the historical context to which that particular narrative appeared to refer. Available historical evidence, in conjunction with the history of particular narratives in oral tradition, was then used to establish the likelihood that particular narratives evidence attitudes towards illegitimacy in the distant past. By focusing in particular upon notions of truths in each text, it was then possible to explore the dialectical relationship between the narratives and the environment of their circulation. Hence, this analysis considers the relationship between this material and contemporary notions about experiences of, and attitudes towards illegitimacy as held in the distant past, as well as contemporary attitudes towards illegitimacy during the period of circulation, since 1970. As with song, I then hoped to arrive at some conclusion as to their meaning and function for those amongst whom they are circulated.

Illegitimacy: Arriving at a Working Definition

In formulating a working definition I decided that it was essentially unhelpful to view "illegitimacy" in terms of the binary oppositions of legitimacy/illegitimacy.²⁹ It seemed more appropriate to view illegitimacy as part of a process, by which one "becomes illegitimate" (See Diagram A). Viewed in this way, illegitimacy is the outcome of a social journey, the different stages of which are marked by a different set of variables. Sometimes these variables take the form of an active choice made by either/both parent(s) along the way, such as getting married, for example. Other variables are more dependent on less foreseeable sets of circumstances, such as the sudden death of the child, or on less changeable circumstances, such as a legal prohibition against marriage. (See Diagram B) Each of these variables ultimately affects whether the resulting child will, or will not, be illegitimate.

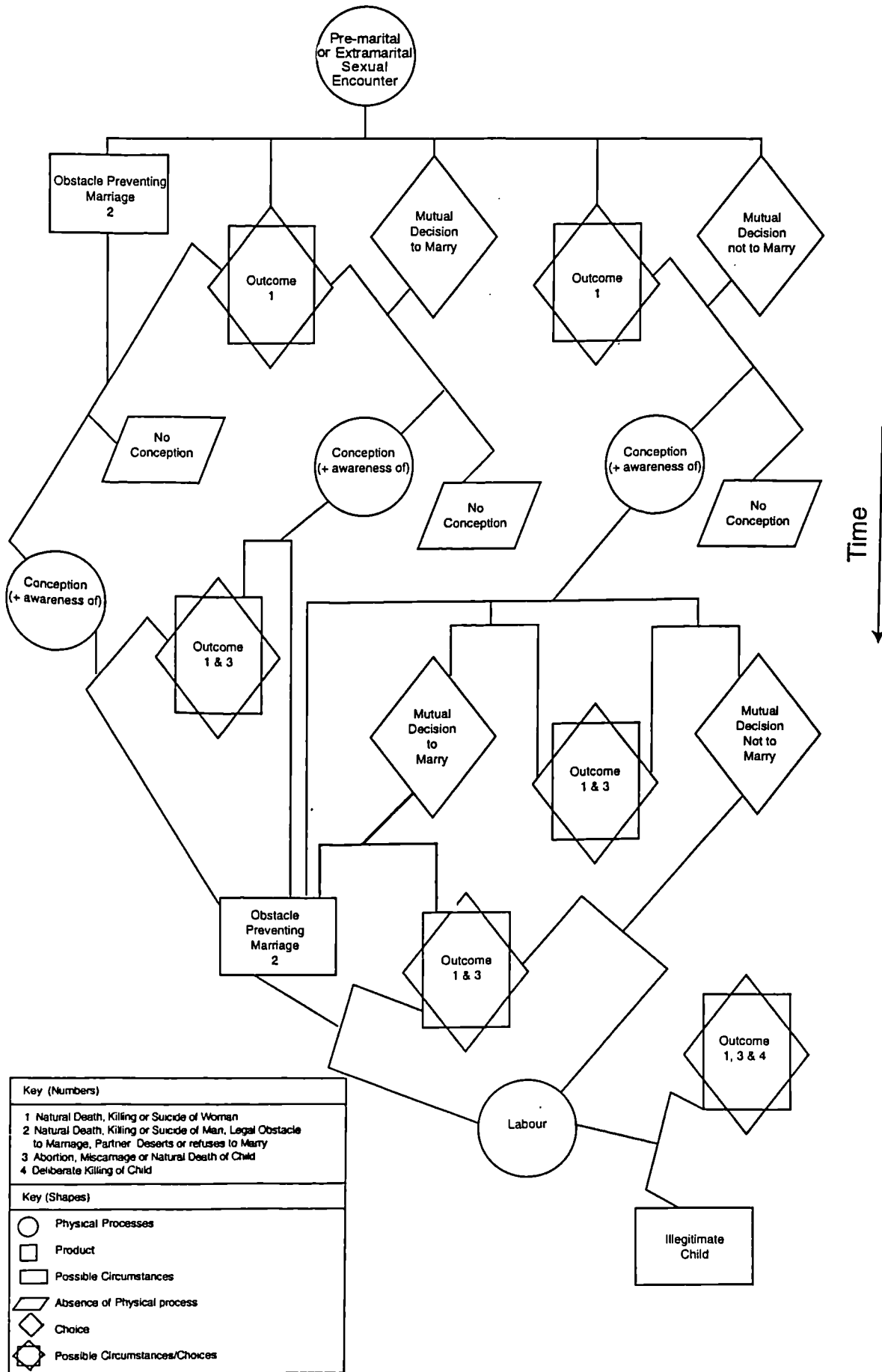
²⁹ Language is not helpful in this respect. The only other means of distinction between different circumstances of birth, is the "prenuptial pregnancy" label provided by social historians.

FIGURE 1



COMPARISON OF PATHS TOWARDS LEGITIMATE AND ILLEGITIMATE BIRTH

FIGURE 2



ROUTES TOWARDS ILLEGITIMATE BIRTH: INDICATING RANGE OF POSSIBLE CIRCUMSTANCES AND INDIVIDUAL DECISION MAKING PROCESSES

Four "standard" scenarios were incorporated into my working definition of illegitimacy which was devised according to canon law and English common law (Teichman 28). For the purposes of this thesis, a child is deemed to be illegitimate if at the time of both its conception and birth one or more of the following statements applies:

- The child's parents are single and are not married to each other.
- The child's mother is married to a man who is not its father.
- The child's father is married to a woman who is not its mother.
- Both of the child's parents have spouses, but are not married to each other.

As a result of my viewing illegitimacy as a process, I also decided that my study would consider folksongs, supernatural legends and memorates, local legends and local character anecdotes featuring a number of additional scenarios, which are listed below. A more detailed discussion and further rationale for the sorts of narrative considered is included at the beginning of Chapters 6 and 7.

- Cases where a single woman becomes pregnant, but dies before the child is born.
- Cases involving pre-nuptial pregnancy.
- Cases where the parents' marriage, prior to their child's birth, is uncertain.
- Cases where it is unclear whether or not a woman is pregnant.
- Cases where out-of-wedlock pregnancy is hypothetically discussed.

The kinds of inclusions listed above were extremely important for two reasons. It is sometimes the very fact that certain narratives involving "illicit" sexual encounters (i.e. between two people who are not married to each other) do not result in the birth of an illegitimate child, that is, in itself, highly significant. Other courses of action taken by the protagonists in these situations include , marriage, suicide or murder. Such responses are often conditioned by the importance attached to the legitimacy/illegitimacy distinction within the terms of the narrative. The contents of these narratives are therefore useful, as the responses which they portray are potentially indicative of attitudes towards illegitimate birth, regardless of whether or not illegitimacy is, in fact, their end result.³⁰

³⁰ Particular variants of both the folksong "Died for Love" and the local legend "Jay's Grave", which refer to the out-of-wedlock pregnancy of the dead woman, are prime examples. In such

The inclusion of the above listed scenarios was also justified by another observation. It appeared that, at the level of representation, the "path" which leads from an "illicit" sexual encounter to illegitimacy, and other paths, which lead from an illicit sexual encounter into other kinds of outcome (such as "prenuptial pregnancy"), share a number of similarities. Indeed, sometimes these paths are so nearly identical that it is possible for two variants of essentially the same song to have different endings: one resulting in the birth of a legitimate, the other, an illegitimate, child.³¹ Narratives leading to both types of ending have one or more of the following phases in common, though their order may vary:

- An "illicit" sexual encounter which is proposed and/or initiated.
- A hypothetical discussion about the possibility of pregnancy.
- A revelation about the nature of the relationship.
- A revelation about the reality of pregnancy.
- A direct response to the knowledge of pregnancy by one or both partners.
- An active decision concerning the future course of action in relation to that pregnancy by one both partners.

Defining Illegitimacy

It was necessary, for the purposes of this thesis, to arrive at a working definition of the term "illegitimacy". This definition should, however, be recognised as just one particular interpretation because there can be no finite formula as to how one qualifies as "legitimate" or "illegitimate". Recent philosophical, anthropological and socio-historical studies indicate that illegitimacy is an extremely complicated concept (cf. Teichman). Notions of what constitutes illegitimacy have depended upon contrasting and sometimes mutually exclusive variables, even within the same society.³² This is partly because the precise nature of the legitimate/illegitimate distinction is informed by the historical context in which those definitions are applied. This is clearly demonstrated by the tendency for the prevalent ideas about reproduction at any one time to govern the legal understanding of the legitimacy/illegitimacy distinction (see, for

cases, it is particular important to ask whether a causal link between her pregnancy and ensuing suicide is intended.

³¹ See, for example, the different versions of "The Foggy Dew".

³² Jeger provides us with one such example. The legitimate/illegitimate distinction was modified in early twentieth-century England and the previous definition revised and amended. She states that, "in 1926 a law was passed allowing children to be legitimised by the subsequent marriage of their parents", providing that neither of the parents had a spouse at the time that the child was born (ix).

example, Eccles 44). Where there were genuine uncertainties surrounding the time of conception/period of gestation in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, for example, cases arose where legitimacy was argued for children born anything from approximately five to fourteen months after the supposed time of conception. In the absence of scientific knowledge and technology it was impossible to devise a legal formula which might clarify this position and therefore many children were proclaimed as legitimate who would clearly be seen as illegitimate today (see, for example, Eccles 45).

Any definition of illegitimacy is therefore profoundly affected by the nature of the society into which children are born. In all societies, the notion of what constitutes legitimacy is strongly informed by prevalent ideas about what constitutes a marriage. Therefore the legitimate/illegitimate distinction has to vary between cultures in which the forms of marriage are so very different. Societies where polygamous rather than monogamous marriage is the norm, exemplify this position. In such cases, the question as to whether or not a child's father is already married to a woman who is not its mother has little relevance in establishing that child's legitimacy/ illegitimacy. However, in English society, where there is a long established history of monogamous marriage, the same question might be crucial in determining the status of any given child.

There are sometimes variations between the different sectors of a society which in turn affect the legitimate/illegitimate distinction. This situation, as it has arisen within English society, most commonly occurred because of the disparity between "marriage", as recognised by law, and "marriage", as recognised by particular groups of individuals.³³ Evidence suggests that irregular forms of marriage commonly existed within certain minority groups and specific regional areas. (See Rhys Jones and John R. Gillis, "For Better") These examples illustrate the fact that the illegitimacy/legitimacy distinction was often blurred. Sometimes, even the clergy have had trouble in distinguishing marriage according to "common law" from marriage formally recognised by law (see Rhys-Jones). The lack of clarity governing the legitimate/illegitimate distinction also extended to the South West. The validity of particular marriages was occasionally disputed by legal officials in this area. This is because they had been contracted as the result of a wife sale, which is seen by certain scholars as an early form of "common law" divorce (E.P. Thompson "The Sale"). Consequently, it is important to acknowledge that, in addition to the historical differences governing notions of "illegitimacy", there were also a number of

³³ See E.P. Thompson, for example, on remarriage after wife sale ("The Sale").

cultural differences affecting how it was conceptualised in England at any one time.

Presentation of material

In examining the songs, I divided my analysis into two parts. The first section initially introduces all the illegitimacy-related song data which forms the central focus of the analysis. I clarify how I selected each of these folksongs - all of which were collected since 1970 - from the four archives and my own fieldwork recordings. A comprehensive list of this material alphabetically arranged by standard title is also presented in Table B and is followed by a brief description of plot for each song, or group of song variants.

A textual analysis of each song is then completed, attitudes towards illegitimacy initially being examined in terms of their representation in stated text alone. Hence, material is grouped together according to the kinds of attitude it appears to describe. As far as possible, my selected songs are then analysed in terms of their performance contexts since 1970. As particular attention is given to text and interpretation in relation to my chosen theme, extensive use is made of my fieldwork interviews, during which singers talked in some detail about their understanding of their own and other people's songs. The experience of, and attitudes towards illegitimacy, as represented within these songs, is therefore related to those same experiences and attitudes within the wider cultural environments of their circulation. Hence, some conclusions are drawn about the extent to which a given song communicates attitudes towards illegitimacy in the "distant" past; contemporary notions about attitudes towards illegitimacy held in the distant past; or attitudes towards illegitimacy since the 1970s.

My examination of selected prose narrative genres is divided into three sub-sections: supernatural memorates and legends; local legends; and local character anecdotes, allowing the material to shape the structure of the analysis. Apart from local character anecdotes, all other categories of material are initially viewed from the perspective of earlier-collected narratives of that genre, in which the illegitimacy theme occurs. An explanation regarding the selection of narratives, and differentiation of materials, is provided at the beginning of each section. Where possible, I have presented verbatim texts of oral versions, setting out each narrative in some detail, noting the biographical details of the informant, and context in which they were recorded.

The detailed unravelling of each text includes the synchronic comparison between variants in order to establish which are the stable, and unstable components of each narrative. Some consideration is then given to the question of why certain elements tend to be more persistent than others, and the significance of particular influences (e.g. popular printed sources) in terms of the portrayal of attitudes towards illegitimacy within the text itself. Existing scholarship by folksong and folk narrative scholars, such as Preston and Simpson, are also used as tools for textual analysis.

Where possible, certain aspects of text in performance, including the ordering of items within individual repertoires, the structuring of events, diction, connotative significance of particular phrases, and importance of sub-text, are considered in terms of the creation of overall meaning. The evaluation of truth in oral versions and a consideration of factors influencing belief or disbelief ^{are} prioritised within this discussion.

Finally, a variety of methods are used to establish an appropriate historical context for the narratives, such as history of the site to which they refer, key textual features of narrative, or written documentation relating to the history of the narrative itself. The circumstances and attitudes described within the text are then compared and contrasted with the respective circumstances and attitudes within that historical context. Specific examples or case studies are then used to evaluate the factual underpinnings of the narratives themselves.

Having separately completed analyses of all three sub-genres, I present an overview of the findings in relation to each type of prose narrative. Hence, some conclusions are drawn about the main focus of these narratives, their relationship with the reality of experience of illegitimacy in the past, their factual basis, and relationship to attitudes held in both the distant past and by people since the 1970s.

Having completed two separate analyses of folksong and prose narrative genres, the findings in relation to both sets of data are then synthesised by comparing and contrasting attitudes represented in both. Hence, both these categories of material are collectively viewed in terms of attitudes towards illegitimacy implicit within the texts. Secondly, both songs and prose narratives are evaluated as evidence of attitudes towards illegitimacy in the distant, rather than recent past. This is accomplished by taking account of the histories of individual songs and narratives as circulated in oral tradition, in conjunction with the insights gained from the reconstruction of their historical context. Thirdly,

the data is examined in terms of its implications for contemporary attitudes towards illegitimacy in the historical past. Hence, a comparison between notions of truth as discerned within particular narrative performances (and related oral testimonies) with the likely reality of past experience is undertaken. The reasons why certain narratives promote a particular view of history and what function this might serve are also probed. Finally, the data is collectively viewed in terms of its relationship to contemporary attitudes towards illegitimacy in living memory and experience. Hence, a closer consideration of the types of material which has and has not endured in oral tradition since the 1970s is used to this end, as is a comparison between the meanings of songs and prose narratives as generated in their performance context and the wider cultural context of their circulation.

Abbreviations

All references beginning "III", or "Gen:Res" followed by a number, refer to audiotaped recordings generated as part of my own field research. Likewise, field recordings housed within the Sam Richards Folklore Archive, Wren Trust Archive and the Patten Archive are referred to using the prefix SRFA, WT, or PA followed by a tape reference number. All commercial recordings are cited using an abbreviated title, and are distinguished from books by the word "disc" (referring to records) or "tape" (referring to cassette tapes), in parenthesis.

CHAPTER 4

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE MAIN SOURCES OF DATA

Having established how and why each of the main sources of folksong and folk narrative data pertaining to my selected theme were chosen in Chapters 1 and 3, I will now be examining each of these sources in greater detail. The contrasting agendas and value systems of both field collectors and authors profoundly influenced the kinds of data they collected, the way in which they did so, and the extent to which they altered their material. Hence, it was important to consider the motivations of field-collectors contributing to each of the aforementioned archives, whilst also making explicit my own agenda in interviewing each of the South West informants who are delineated within this chapter. The work of additional authors and author/collectors is also examined accordingly.

Having attempted to assess the level of bias inherent in each source, the following analysis provides a clearer perspective through which the data can be evaluated. It therefore establishes to what extent the material which forms the foundation of the discussion in Chapters 6, 7 and 8, can be seen as reliable, authentic or even representative of folksong and folk narrative relating to out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth in general.

ARCHIVAL DATA

As stated above, my proposed research strategy, stemming from my work with the SRFA, was to focus in particular upon those collections containing audiotaped material. All of the archives I examined contained data relating to South West folklore, but they should not all be viewed exclusively as specialist regional "folklore" or "folksong" archives. Four archival collections, the **Sam Richards Folklore Archive**, the **Wren Trust Archive**, the **Patten Archive** and the **Vaughan Williams Memorial Library Sound Archive**, were examined in the course of the research. A description of each is given below. The following set of accounts provides information on the background of each archive and its relationship to the South West. They also describe (where possible) the motivation of the collectors during their fieldwork and the kinds of strategies they employed in collecting. It is hoped that, in presenting this kind of information, each account might shed light on the processes governing the

selection of informants by the collector. This in turn might explain the prevalence of certain types of informants above others.

Naturally, the variety of people represented within any collection also affects the kinds of material that will be found within it. It is also the case, as previously exemplified by Sharp, that the collector's objectives and ideology have a profound effect upon the types of material which are prioritised.³⁴ All of these factors are important considerations in my discussion in Chapters 6 and 7 of the findings from all four archives.

The usefulness of each archive, from the position of the academic researcher, is also commented upon in the following account. Certain traits were common to all the archives and radically affected my use of the material. As might be expected, transcriptions of audiotaped folksongs, stories and other items of interest were rare, and therefore had to be produced by myself. Although some additional musical notation to accompany the song texts would have been highly desirable, it would have been impossible to attempt such a task, due to both the lack of additional help, expertise and the constraints of time. As my enquiry deals more with the narrative aspect of song, focusing primarily on interpretation and the creation of meaning, I decided that this omission would not be detrimental to the thesis as a whole. Other traits common to all archives included poor sound quality, due to the effects of age/storage conditions upon this unstable medium, and the absence of detailed field notes and other explanatory material to go with the recordings. It was often the case that details about the informants and performance context were kept to a bare minimum by the collector(s).

My discussion is particularly detailed in relation to the SRFA. This is partly because my knowledge of this archive is more extensive than with any of the other three archives. Also, because the majority of the songs studied in this thesis were drawn from this archive, and some of the material is duplicated in the Wren Trust Archive and on Peoples Stage Tapes (see p.92) and other commercial recordings lodged at the VWML, a comprehensive background to these recordings was particularly desirable. In order to obtain this information, I talked to all three main collectors whose work forms the SRFA and who are still living in the South West.

³⁴ Because of his interest in tunes, for example, Sharp often stopped short after noting the first verses of the words in his note books. According to Harker, 148 of the 1,450 tunes noted by 1907 have no text at all. See Harker "Cecil Sharp" and "May Cecil"; both of these articles are later conflated and appear in *Fakesong* 172-197. Copies of Sharp's manuscripts are held at the VWML in London.

The Sam Richards Folklore Archive³⁵

In spite of its name, the SRFA represents a large body of material generated by three major and about six minor collectors. The three main collectors, Sam Richards, Tish Stubbs and Paul Wilson met in the early 1970s when they were music students at Dartington College of Arts in Devon. All were outsiders to the South West.

During their student years they formed a folk band called Staverton Bridge and their later alliance as collectors emerged out of this singing liaison. During their time at college the three met Peter Kennedy, a collector with a long-standing and keen interest in folk music and song. Kennedy was, for a time, a tutor at Dartington College of Arts. Staverton Bridge's collecting activities were strongly influenced by Kennedy's notion that there was still material worth collecting from particular individuals in the locality.

Having finished at music college, the Staverton Bridge threesome continued their musical alliance for some years. They became committed to performing as a professional venture which involved touring the folk circuit throughout England on a regular basis. It was during this period that the activity of collecting was inspired by Sam's idea to search for original material to use in performance, thus primarily collecting activities were designed to see whether such song material still existed. Influenced by Sharp and Baring-Gould, the team not only took note of the content of the material those collectors had produced, but also partly assimilated their attitudes towards it. Consequently, the rationale behind the initial phase of the collecting was to record that which was dying out. This is reflected in the bias towards people aged sixty and above in the SRFA. Thus, the implication was that the material might be rescued and preserved before it was lost forever (cf. Dundes, "Devolutionary").

The group's collecting was partly funded by their income as professional performers and partly by temporary grants obtained from South West Arts. The latter funds stretched to cover the cost of basic recording equipment, such as an open-reel tape recorder and external microphone, and provided for travel expenses. This enabled the collectors to go slightly further afield than might otherwise have been viable, but it is clear that most of the work was undertaken

³⁵ Most of the information included in the following discussion of the SRFA and Wren Trust Archive derives from interviews with the collectors Tish Stubbs and Paul Wilson (see Gen:Res:004:96 & Gen:Res:005:96).

from a financially precarious position and involved erratically executed spates of collecting.

The initial phase of collecting during the early 1970s involved all three individuals. After 1976, Paul Wilson broke away from the other two at the end of the band's performing career. At this point Paul moved to South Zeal but continued with his own collecting, generating material which later became absorbed into the Wren Trust Archive (see below). From 1976 onwards, Sam and Tish continued collecting together, joined for brief periods by others. Sam and Tish broke up as a collecting team in 1986, after which Sam continued collecting for a short period single-handedly until approximately 1990. Some of Sam Richards' later work produced the archive's small quantity of supernatural folk narratives.

Many of the group's fieldwork expeditions would culminate in some kind of performing activity, such as a dance or folk night or a get-together. According to Paul Wilson, the collectors developed their theories alongside their collecting activities and thus the types of questions that the informants would be asked were coloured by a continually shifting agenda. The collectors' earlier approach centred around the question "Have you got any old songs?" partly because their initial enthusiasms were derived from a Sharpian approach, characterised by a more avid interest in the songs than the singer, or even the singing tradition. Later on, the collectors came to realise that many of the songs they were uncovering were in a noticeably fragmented and transient state. Having taken stock of what had been collected, they recognised a growing need to provide adequate contextual information relating to the cultural milieu from which these songs had been obtained. A later switch of agenda resulted in the informants being interviewed in a more spontaneous manner, whereby they talked about whatever motivated their personal interests in singing.

Tish Stubbs explained how, in the early days of collecting, the method of finding informants was simply to knock on doors. An alternative method was to ask at pubs about any local people who were reputed to be singers of old songs. Paul Wilson took advantage of his being able to play the accordion, joining in with music-making sessions at pubs as a form of introduction to local people. As the collecting process accelerated, contacts generated other contacts and collecting methods became less random.

A more sophisticated strategy was made possible by consulting the manuscripts of the song collector, Cecil Sharp, in relation to the Dartmoor area,

as he had written both the surname and location of his Dartmoor informants on his song transcriptions. It was thus possible to select important family names in relation to singers in this area. Potential informants of this name were then located using knowledge about the locality obtained from one of the additional collectors, Martin Scragg, who worked with the Staverton Bridge three.³⁶

The mass media were employed as another means of finding informants. Sam Richards' weekly use of a three-minute slot on BBC Radio Devon, called "Search for a Song", is one such example. Usually a folksong from the evolving archive would be played and listeners were invited to volunteer further information, thereby generating further informants.³⁷ Tish recalled that occupational groups were a prominent focus of the collecting and that therefore a large number of recordings related to Exmoor farmers, their working lives, lore, custom and practice.

The collecting team seldom devised a strategy for who would visit whom. Collectors tended to pursue their personal interests. Consequently, Martin Scragg focused on Dartmoor and Paul Wilson conducted extensive work with travellers. Both Paul and Tish stated that the gender of the collector was an extremely important factor in determining the kinds of material obtained in any given interview. However, the effect of gender cannot be uniformly described. Paul Wilson viewed gender and personality as equally important as the collector's motivation in terms of an interview's outcome but Tish rated the effect of the number of people present and of personality as more important than gender.

In the process of collecting, the Staverton Bridge three met up with the Somerset-based folklore and song collector, Ruth Tongue, as well as the Devon folklorist, Theo Brown, both of whom offered encouragement and support. Contacts made whilst they were on tour resulted in the group's small amount of fieldwork in other areas such as Birmingham and Stockton-on-Tees.

As a direct result of the various strategies used to locate informants, the material collected represents more male than female informants and a greater number of adults than children. Paul Wilson commented that, when the work began, the collecting environment of the pubs was far more of a male preserve than it is today. Tish noted that, in all performance contexts, "When you're approaching strangers it's the men who will suggest themselves first." She

³⁶ Martin's family originally came from Dartmoor and he was brought up in the locality.

³⁷ The Gard family was one such contact.

believes that what she terms "women's folklore" and "women's culture" is more hidden. Tish also related this gender bias to the group's main purpose in collecting, this being to produce an end result or activity in the shape of a performance. Male performers were thus the most obvious resource to draw upon.

Both Paul and Tish suggested that more traveller than non-traveller women were prepared to volunteer themselves, Tish linking this to the greater tendency towards assertiveness amongst travellers and the egalitarian nature of their marriages. She noted the tendency for whole families (rather than men only) to present a united front when faced with a stranger, thus creating a situation whereby the collector meets all alike.

The three main collectors seem to have had quite differing visions about the future use and purpose behind collecting their material. This led to a slightly disjointed archive. As it exists today, the SRFA consists of a collection of field recordings made on approximately five hundred reel-to-reel audiotapes, and about thirty cassette audiotapes. In addition, the archive has a computerised database which supplements the tapes. Once the collectors became interested in the broader contextual background to the songs, they gathered a range of material, including books, diaries, field notes, pamphlets, and historical leaflets, and took numerous photographs. These, however, remained with Sam Richards and do not form part of the SRFA. The archive also contains a library of about thirty text books relating largely to folksong scholarship.

The majority of recordings within the SRFA were obtained in the counties of Devon, Cornwall and Somerset, concentrating around the areas of Dartmoor and Exmoor. However, the SRFA is not exclusively a South West archive, due to the influence of external contacts made during the collectors' numerous tours around other parts of the country. This has resulted in the inclusion of material from other areas, such as self-recorded cassettes of song sent to the collectors by the informants themselves. It is also the case that people were sometimes recorded who had moved to the South West having spent the greater part of their lives elsewhere.

The vast majority of archive informants had jobs connected with farming and agriculture and very few people in other types of occupation were interviewed. Many people were retired by the time they were recorded. Fifty percent of the archive is comprised of sung material collected from a variety of people within a number of different contexts, ranging from the formal interview to a pub sing-

along or spontaneous singing arising from an event, such as the May Day celebrations in Padstow. There is also a significant quantity of children's songs, mostly recorded in the playground. The other half of the recorded material takes the form of interviews. Interviews with singers (and/or their relatives) account for the majority of these recordings. Another significant area of this spoken material consists of information about travelling families and traveller culture. The rest of the spoken material comprises locally based interviews and concerns all aspects of people's lives, work and families. As previously mentioned, a very small number of these recordings move into areas of custom and belief, such as ghost stories, local legend and superstition.

The computer database contains a total of 646 records which are arranged alphabetically by informants' surnames. It was compiled by Sam Richards, who assembled the information using the File-Maker Pro package on an Apple Mac computer. The database greatly assisted my ability to scan an assortment of information contained in the archive as a whole. This informant-centred focus means that the system is a particularly useful aid in collating separate recordings of a given individual. In relation to my own research, however, this computer system was limited in terms of the tasks which it would effectively perform. The way in which the records had been assembled, for example, presented one such difficulty. This is because it was not always possible to view the computerised notes in a format which would relate to the chronological sequence of material on the tape. This was a consequence of the database functioning around an informant- rather than tape-centred structure. The documentation for any recording featuring more than one individual became problematic because notes were invariably scattered between records and therefore both the order of events and the identity of informants became confused.

Certain information was not available on the database and, in the absence of diaries and fieldnotes, had to be discovered through other means. One useful addition would have been an indication of the place of birth of an informant and the subsequent places in which they had lived and worked. Not only would these kinds of details reveal a person's precise connection with the South West (indicating, for example, if they had moved to the district from another part of the country) but would also suggest likely influences in terms of the acquisition and transmission of their material. Basic records of family background and changes in name, due to adoption or an alteration in marital status, for example, would also have been useful. This kind of information shows how individuals are related to each other and clarifies where two distinct names in fact relate to

only one individual. Again, such details also contribute to the larger picture of paths of transmission in relation to songs and other types of material.

In the initial phase of my work with the material there were no copies of any of the field recordings stored on reel-to-reel tape. My work with the recordings was consequently restricted because it was impossible to repeatedly play back parts of the original and often fragile audiotapes using the given equipment without the risk of irreparably damaging them. The task of generating working copies was inevitably time-consuming, with over five hundred hour-long recordings to copy and all the accompanying technical problems associated with this type of medium including the available open-reel machines breaking down because of age and deposits of particles which had gathered on the original field recordings.

Overall, it became evident that the SRFA represents a much more extensive, thorough and diverse body of material in relation to the South West than, for example, the material held in the VWML. The data has the advantage of having been collected by more than one person over two decades, covering a relatively large geographical area over a long period of time for a sound archive.

The Wren Trust Archive

In 1976, Paul Wilson broke away from the Staverton Bridge team and continued his own fieldwork, prior to establishing the Wren Trust as a registered charity, with Marilyn Tucker, in 1983. All the resulting material from both Paul Wilson's own collecting and that affiliated with the Wren Trust is now on deposit at the Wren Trust Archive in Okehampton, Devon.

The move towards establishing this kind of organisation was prompted in part by Paul's earlier collecting experiences. He had become increasingly frustrated with the focus on the older, fragmented song material which the Staverton Bridge three had originally prioritised in their collecting. A more informant-centred approach was slowly realised during Paul's interaction with travelling families, whose way of life he found particularly fascinating. Gradually the informants' lives became more important than the songs in themselves. Increasing discomfort was also experienced by Paul in relation to the kinds of collecting techniques used by the Staverton Bridge three, where complete strangers were approached in the quest for songs. He considered that such strategies risked prioritising the status of material above that of the informant.

Paul Wilson's ideas became much closer to those of Marilyn Tucker, who later became his colleague. Her academic background in sociology led to an approach whereby the human implications of work in the community were more carefully considered and the successful interaction of people with each other was highly prioritised. Consequently, Paul and Marilyn formed the Wren Trust partnership from the position of shared concerns, with the individual personalities of both strongly influencing the ideological basis of the establishment (see Wren Trust).

As it exists today the Wren Trust is a community arts organisation which encompasses a wide variety of artistic and creative disciplines and has a firm grounding in folklore materials. Interaction with the community on a creative basis, with a view to enriching their artistic provision and experience, is seen as one of their main objectives. Therefore, the organisation is mobile and active throughout the South West.

Because of the varied nature of Wren Trust activities, not all the projects are documented on audiotape. When they are, collectors get to know their informants prior to recording them. Work is organised in terms of specific, individually funded community projects, which are often pitched at a small-scale level.

All of the above activities have resulted in an expanding collection of archival material which is housed at the Wren Trust's administrative base in Okehampton and is available for use by prior arrangement during limited hours. The archive itself consists of approximately two hundred reel-to-reel recordings and approximately one hundred cassette tapes and a hundred books (relating to both folklore and song). Working copies of each tape were not available and therefore the original recordings I used had to be handled with extreme care. There is some overlap between the taped material in this archive and that in the SRFA. This is because Paul brought both originals (and copies) of his recordings of travelling families to his new base after having broken away from the former collecting team. It is hard to discern which are original recordings and which are copies within this body of work, the situation being exacerbated because tapes have been copied in part, and new compilations have been formed. I tackled this problem by comparing the detailed transcriptions of all relevant Wren Trust Archive songs to equally detailed transcriptions of the SRFA material where most, but not all of the same recordings also exist, to establish the differences and similarities between recordings.

Paul and Marilyn view their archive as an information base with many uses as an interactive resource. Paul outlined the collection's potential as a sound library, providing examples of particular items as performed in a traditional context. He suggested that this was an important function because it would encourage performers to gain an appreciation and respect for living traditions before attempting to incorporate the same material into their own repertoires (see Wren Trust). The archive is also seen by the Wren Trust as an aid to other creative work. Thus a set of copies of taped material is deposited at the original venue of most projects in order that easy access be granted to participants. A proportionally greater quantity and variety of folk narratives (such as local legend), superstitions, sayings, information about folk medicine and oral history are found within this collection than are represented in the SRFA, reflecting the later shift away from collecting song.

Access to the written material within the archive was helpful because there were a number of books on local folklore aimed at a more popular audience for reasons discussed later in this section. This was a useful addition to some of the more scholarly literature I had already encountered. However, the Wren Trust was not designed to cope with the specific demands of academic research at the time of my investigation largely due to a shortage of staff but also to the Trust's outward focus on the local community, which places the emphasis in any project upon the activity as an end in itself, rather than on the resulting forms of documentation.

Under these circumstances my use of the audio collection presented obvious difficulties. The tools (such as a computerised database) with which to explore this material were still in their infancy. Those forms of documentation already existing, such as the hand-written summaries accompanying the audiotaped recordings, were minimal. Some biographical information about each informant was provided but was usually limited to their name and the place of recording. Taped material was not accompanied by field notes, diaries or transcriptions. This being the case, my own use of the archive necessitated a heavy reliance on the guidance of both Paul and Marilyn who elaborated upon existing details and suggested further lines of enquiry.

The Patten Archive

The Patten Archive is a private archive based at the home of its two collectors - Jacqueline and Robert Patten - in the village of Morchard Bishop, Devon, where they have lived since 1985. Both have had a long-term involvement with

the locality, Robert born and bred in the Ilminster area of Somerset, and Jacqueline moving in from the South East when she was twelve and going on to work for the Devon Record Office in Exeter.

The Pattens began actively collecting as a personal interest, having been partly inspired by Kingsley Palmer (see below), whom Robert knew from school. Jacqueline has now branched out as freelance local historian operating from home. The collecting activities which generated this body of material began in the late 1960s and continue to the present day. Jacqueline Patten views their collecting interests as motivated by a concern with social history, and a high regard for recording contemporary life. Therefore, unlike the SRFA, the Patten collection contains more of a balance between material relating to folksong, dance, folk narrative, custom, belief, language and all other aspects of living. Although the Pattens have collected throughout the South West, their most prolific activity has been in Somerset and consequently their archive material reflects a similar geographical emphasis.

Everything that is gathered by the Pattens is seen as contributing to an active repository. Consequently, material from the archive is drawn upon for practical purposes, such as the use of music manuscripts as a resource in educational workshops run by Jacqueline Patten. The Pattens have also jointly produced a number of publications based on the material they have collected over the years, mainly intended to have a wide public appeal with particular attention to the biographical details of each informant (e.g. Exmoor Custom and Song, "Rab Channing" and Somerset Scrapbook).

The archive itself includes a collection of printed material comprising academic texts, fictional works, dance books, dance sheet music and seven volumes of newspaper cuttings. Hand-written material in the archive ranges from original music manuscripts (and copies) to the notes from research activities. Material assembled during field work includes approximately 500 audiotapes, 1000 photographs, approximately 1500 slides and a few video tapes.

Partly because of its location in a private residence, the Patten Archive is not, at present, directly accessible to the public. Thus, in my use of the archive, I was unable to sift through the archival material myself. Relevant material was located by liaising with Jacqueline Patten in relation to my work. Jacqueline subsequently lent me some of the books from the collection and kindly provided me with material on request, including copies of any field recordings, transcriptions, notes, and xeroxed material which appeared relevant. All the

biographical information about informants as well as details of each recording situation were also supplied through communications with Jacqueline.

The archive is not designed to be instantly accessible to users in the same way as, for example, the Wren Trust Archive. Therefore, search facilities, such as wide-ranging indexes or a computerised database, have not developed alongside the collection. However, the collectors have managed to retain a high level of familiarity with their material. This may partly be attributed to the fact that they were often well acquainted with their informants, forming close friendships with many people they recorded. This may also be due to the fact that the archive is still of a manageable size and material is continually being used. The limitations surrounding access were not, therefore, a particular hindrance to my research.

The Vaughan Williams Memorial Library Sound Archive

The Sound Archive is part of the VWML, its resources supplementing the other materials provided by this specialist British folksong library. Both the archive and the library are based at Cecil Sharp House, Camden Town, London, the headquarters of the English Folk Dance and Song Society to which they belong (EFDSS). This building is also used as a venue for other folk-related events. The archive is supervised by two library staff who are responsible for overseeing all the material.

Broadly speaking, the Sound Archive focuses on the music and song of the English-speaking world, with the field recordings of British traditional musicians and singers as its major component. The archive has its origin in the 1950s, but some of its material dates from a much earlier period, such as the turn-of-the-century phonograph cylinders recorded by major English song collectors including Cecil Sharp, Percy Grainger and Vaughan Williams. Recordings from a variety of mid-to-late twentieth-century collectors supplement this early material. These later recordings include copies of the work of Peter Kennedy (commencing in the 1950s) and Mike Yates and Ian Russell in more recent years. The collection, which currently houses something in the region of 7000 items, is continually expanding. Many of the recordings, particularly the commercial releases, have been donated, partly because there is no established repository where copies of new releases are automatically kept for future reference. The resulting archive lends itself to being utilised in a complementary capacity to the collection of printed and manuscript music and songs (including copies of the originals of Cecil Sharp's manuscript) also held in

the VWML, particularly as there is a large degree of overlap between the written and recorded material. Unlike the other collections, the archive is not unified by the common goals of a team of collectors, working together towards particular projects. Neither is there a regional emphasis which would logically bind together material.

The VWML Sound Archive contains approximately 300 items relating to the South West of England. Although most of this material relates to musical traditions, a very small number of recordings also includes other kinds of material such as folk narrative. Material divides roughly into five different categories: that collected for broadcasting purposes under the auspices of the **British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)**, material collected by Peter Kennedy and subsequently released commercially under his **Folktracks** label, material uncovered as a result of the efforts of the Staverton Bridge collecting team and later released as **Peoples Stage Tapes, independent commercial releases** and lastly **privately collected, non-commercial field recordings** which were donated to the archive at different stages.

The BBC Material comprises original field recordings commissioned by the BBC as part of a national trend during the 1950s. The movement was motivated by a new interest in aspects of regional culture, such as dialect and song, and an increasing awareness of their potential use and value in relation to broadcasting for radio. In the initial stages of their work, the BBC collectors seem to have gathered their material in as inclusive a manner as possible. Consequently, a version of the suggestive song, "The Foggy Dew," escaped censor but was subsequently confined to the locked cupboard of the archivist, Marie Slocombe, being deemed unsuitable for broadcasting (Stewart and Fees 270-73). This example illustrates how, to a certain degree, the activities of the BBC collectors must have been curtailed by the proprieties of the time. Although de-selected material was given archive space, perhaps because some future use could be anticipated, there would be little incentive to collect a mass of material which would subsequently be left redundant.

The recordings generated by the BBC included, among other things, oral testimony concerning aspects of people's lives and work, folk music, traditional dance music and song from the South West. The VWML Sound Archive contains a comprehensive set of duplicates relating to the last three categories of material. There are approximately 100 vinyl records relating specifically to South West music and song. Most of these recordings were made by Peter Kennedy, who was employed at this time by BBC Radio Bristol. After leaving

the BBC, Peter Kennedy continued collecting the same kinds of material in the locality, having been appointed as a tutor for Dartington College of Arts in Devon.³⁸

Peter Kennedy combined some of the material he had collected under the auspices of the BBC, some of which had never been broadcast, with some additional material collected privately at a later date. He commercially released this material as cassette tapes under the label "Folktracks". Albums were assembled by compiling songs unified usually by a thematic link. The album Blackbirds and Thrushes: Songs of Seduction, for example, included a number of songs from all over the country about sexual encounters and romantic relationships.

"Peoples Stage Tapes" was the commercial label of a set of audiotaped recordings which were produced and marketed by the collector Sam Richards as a private enterprise. Each cassette was produced from a compilation of material mostly borrowed from that already recorded by the Staverton Bridge threesome and associated collectors. Material was fairly loosely linked together, often by performer. Sam produced an album entirely devoted to one of his favourite singers, Bill Hingston, for example (see Richards "Bill Hingston"; Richards and Stubbs, 75, endnote 78). The production of Peoples Stage Tapes was fairly short lived and is of minor importance in relation to this thesis because all the relevant material duplicates were already held in the SRFA.

Some of the more recent independent commercial releases have been produced on compact disc in addition to cassette tape and 12-inch discs. Some of these albums produced by independent record companies, such as Devon Tradition by Topic Records, or the recording of Sophie Legg by Veteran Tapes, also duplicate some of the SRFA recordings and were therefore of limited value in relation to my research. Other independent releases, however, such as the numerous recordings of the Cornish singer Cyril Tawney, proved to be much more useful. They provided easy access to recordings of singers from parts of the South West that had been beyond easy reach of the Staverton Bridge three and were thus under-represented in the SRFA data as a whole.³⁹ Field recordings of relevant material about sexual relationships and illegitimacy in the South West of England were extremely minimal and consisted of a few field recordings donated by private collectors on 5-inch reel-to-reel tape.

³⁸ Kennedy told me that Rebecca Penfold was recorded during this later period.

³⁹ My own fieldwork revealed evidence of Cyril Tawney's influence on singing traditions in the South West, for example, but no recordings of this singer are held in the SRFA.

A more publicly oriented system is enabled by the status of the EFDSS as a registered charity which charges either a membership fee or a flat rate for the use of its facilities. The VWML had comprehensive indexes which related to various aspects of all the archive recordings. Thus I was able to sift through the material from a regional angle, consulting lists of informants by county which could then be broken down into performers' names and titles of material, such as songs and stories.

Most of the constraints placed upon my use of the collection as a researcher were related to the obvious distance created between collector(s) and overseer/librarian within this institution. Consequently, no one was at hand who had an intimate knowledge of the precise circumstances of each recording. It was also extremely difficult to uncover the collectors' motivations and sphere of work. Biographical information about the informants and information about the context in which the recordings were made was equally difficult to obtain. As the South West material housed by the archive was dominated by either commercial releases or recordings made for broadcasting purposes, the lack of contextual data was hardly surprising. The upshot of this situation was that the kinds of informal background conversations which commonly occur during recording sessions were excluded. This was unfortunate because, as illustrated by some of the SRFA recordings, these kinds of conversations provide an atmosphere in which valuable information about, for example, the acquisition and interpretation of songs, is casually imparted by the informant. This predicament was only partly redressed by using sleeve notes and also consulting the library staff.

DATA RESULTING FROM MY OWN FIELDWORK

The following description maps the key stages of the research as it developed in relation to particular individuals, even though a number of other contacts were also involved. The time scale in relation to each stage varied considerably - for example, my initial plan to interview informants discovered through my research in the archives outlined above spanned a period of about twenty months. For this reason, potentially important informants, such as Cyril Tawney, were not interviewed due to the limitations of time at the point at which the archive recording was discovered. The practical considerations meant it was better to stagger the investigation of other archives over a lengthy period of time. This part of the research therefore became integrated with other activities, such as reading and interviewing informants. The unpredictable nature of work

with a heavy reliance upon human subjects worked against an inflexible research methodology with tidy boundaries.

One particular facet of the SRFA data - the accumulation of songs about illegitimate birth - provoked my curiosity and determined my designated area of study: an investigation of attitudes towards illegitimate birth as evidenced in both South West folksongs and prose narrative genres. The initial stages of the study encompassed the task of selecting and transcribing all seemingly relevant material from the SRFA, including a variety of songs about sexual relationships and illegitimacy, local legends, supernatural memorates and other types of oral testimony. The next stage was to resolve how this largely song-centred, transcribed material would be employed within the fieldwork required for my own project, in which I was anxious to redress the balance between folksongs and the other types of folklore and oral history pertinent to the study.

The most obvious point of departure was to instigate follow-up interviews with the SRFA singers who had sung the selected songs. I began drawing up a list of potential informants targeting, in particular, those who sang more than one song relating to illegitimacy, because it ensured the most productive use of valuable interview time. Because this target group were singers, I decided to start by using the song transcriptions as an entrée into discussing the meaning of the songs; the experience of, and attitudes towards, out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth.

It was expedient to revisit as many of these informants as possible, because much of the contextual information surrounding their songs had not been covered in the original interviews. The recordings excluded any in-depth exploration of the meaning in relation to any one song and paid little attention to the exact interpretation of the song by the singer. Enquiries were rarely made about the singer's reasons for incorporating a particular song into his or her active repertoire, or for performing the song within a certain context. Details such as where, how and from whom he or she learned the song were also absent.

Whilst attending to these details during my own interviews, I was also keen to find out what the perceived bearing between songs about illegitimacy and the singers' own life experiences (and the lives of others) might be. In the SRFA data, conversations with singers seldom focused upon the song's narrative and its relationship to the historical and/or moral truth of the events described, as perceived by the singer. This line of questioning has, however, been shown to

be fruitful and therefore the approach was adopted as part of my own working strategy (cf. A. E. Green, "Mc Caffery"). Singers were asked about their own song as well as most of the other related songs from the archive. It was hoped that in doing so I might gauge the popularity of any one song and chart the response to that song by its audience as well as its performer. Regardless of whether or not the informant was familiar with the particular song, the transcription would nonetheless serve as a useful means of provoking further discussion about the experience of, and attitudes towards, illegitimacy.

The second stage of my work with this target group was designed to branch outwards from the songs into other types of material revealing of attitudes towards sex and childbirth, such as local legend, superstitions and courtship customs. I therefore asked the informants to recollect their own experiences, in addition to recalling any types of folk narratives, superstitions, customs and other types of folklore of which they might also be aware. This strategy contained the inherent disadvantage that all of these people had formerly been interviewed on the grounds of their song repertoire. Therefore it might be difficult to obtain information relating to other types of material, as they might easily assume that my interest in the latter category was of secondary importance. However, this consideration seemed to be outweighed by the fact that the song transcriptions provided an extremely useful tool by which personal and potentially embarrassing topics of conversation could be introduced. Discussion about the content of the song transcriptions would be further legitimised by the fact that they are perceived to be more distanced from the informant than, for example, personal experience narratives. The latter genre is, by definition, more immediately referential to the life of its teller whereas song, by contrast, is usually seen as a more collective means of expression. The above group of singers had already been approached by researchers and were accustomed to being interviewed. Therefore, potentially they might be easier to question than a completely new set of informants.

I carried out some of the interview work alone, but where it was judged to be beneficial, it was also undertaken with other people. Jacqueline Patten introduced me to some of her previous informants and contacts, accompanying me on many of my field trips as a working companion. I was also accompanied by Sam Richards on two occasions where my introduction as "a friend" was deemed helpful. Moi Deighton, a teacher and long-term resident of Lymptone, later became the contact through which potential informants from the village were located. Having introduced me to Chris Binmore in this capacity, Moi enthusiastically joined us for the following interview sessions.

The inclusion of spouses in the interview situation arose partly out of the need to be considerate and sensitive in the domestic home context where the interviews took place. However, these additional testimonies also proved valuable in their own right. Dilly Davis, Jess Hill, Jill Lowry and Mervin Binmore were all included in this capacity.

Wherever possible, the song transcriptions from archive material and my own recordings were checked for accuracy with either the performer or with their friends and relatives. This procedure was primarily intended to compensate for my own and Sam Richards' errors in transcribing which had arisen from the misunderstanding of regional speech. A smaller number resulted from the poor sound quality of the recording. This process of double checking also exposed situations where the singer had either modified or partly forgotten a song since its last recording.

Interviews with SRFA Singers

I contacted Sam Richards, in order to obtain the precise details of each informant's location and for confirmation that they were still alive. Where he was unable to provide this information, I obtained these details in person via telephone calls or letters, or by a direct enquiry to a neighbour or near relative. At this stage of the research it became apparent that my working strategy in relation to visiting selected SRFA singers would not be totally feasible. A far greater number of informants than I had anticipated had died or were presumed to be dead (see Table A). By the time I commenced my fieldwork during the period 1995-96, twenty out of the forty-nine singers of "illegitimacy" songs were deceased, in part a direct result of prioritising older informants by the Staverton Bridge three.

TABLE A

SONG	SRFA SINGER	AVAILABILITY
Ball of Yarn	Nelson & David Birch	Not contacted
	Nobby Clarke ⁴⁰	Deceased
	Robert Clatworthy	Deceased
	George Edworthy*	Deceased
	Bill Hingston*	Deceased
	Sophie Isaacs ⁴¹	Presumed dead
	Herbie Middleton*	Deceased
	Tommy Penfold*	Deceased
	Ken Penney*	Interviewed
	Charlotte Renals*	Deceased
	Emma <u>Roberts</u>	See footnote ⁴²
	Bob Small*	Deceased
Daisy Small*	Not contacted	
Albert Weekes*	Deceased	
.....		
Bell Bottom Trousers	Jim Gard	Deceased
	Norman Mortimore	Deceased
	Mrs Osborne & Miss Ross ⁴³	Deceased
	Mr Stook	Not contacted
	Albert Weekes*	Deceased
.....		
The Brisk Young Butcher	Denis Hutchings*	Interviewed
.....		
Catch Me If You Can	Sophie Legg*	Declined interview
	Henry Orchard	Presumed dead ⁴⁴
	Bill Packman*	Interviewed
.....		
The Cruel Ship's Carpenter	Mrs Feen	Presumed dead
.....		

CONTACT WITH SRFA SINGERS

⁴⁰ For a recording and further details of this singer, see Devon Tradition (disc) and Richards and Stubbs, 67, endnote 78.

⁴¹ See "Sweet Willie", on Devon Tradition (disc).

⁴² Paul Wilson contradicted the database entry for this informant, insisting that the singer was in fact Emma Saunders, but I was unable to clarify this situation by letter.

⁴³ For further details see Richards and Stubbs 152, endnote 156.

⁴⁴ In one of my later interviews, Nelson Penfold contradicted Sam, and told me that Henry was still living.

TABLE A cont....

SONG	SRFA SINGER	AVAILABILITY
The Dark-Eyed Lover	Polly Birch*	Not Contacted
	Sheila Bricknell*	Interviewed
	Vashti Edwards	Not contacted
	Mrs Hawkins	Not contacted
	Walter Hutchings	Not contacted
	Jim Orchard	Not contacted
	Charlotte Renals*	Deceased
.....		
Died For Love	Harriet Adams	Not contacted
	Phoebe Birch ⁴⁵	Not contacted
	Phoebe Birch's Daught.	Not contacted
	Polly Birch*	Not contacted
	Sheila Bricknell*	Interviewed
	Denis Hutchings*	Interviewed
	Bill Hingston*	Deceased
	Herbie Middleton*	Deceased
	Sister of Carol Orchard	Not contacted
	Tommy Orchard & Carol Penfold	Not contacted
Ken Penney*	Interviewed	
.....		
Dit'sum Lad	Bill Hingston*	Deceased
.....		
Don't Tell I Tell 'E	George Edworthy*	Deceased
.....		
Down by the Old Riverside	Jim Hook	Presumed dead
	Sophie Legg*	Declined interview
	Bill Packman*	Interviewed
	Phyliss Penfold	Deceased
	Bob Small*	Deceased
.....		
Down by the Shannon Side	Charlotte Renals*	Deceased
	Bob Small*	Deceased
.....		

⁴⁵ See Devon Tradition (disc).

TABLE A cont....

SONG	SRFA SINGER	AVAILABILITY
Down in the Valley	Stoke Damerel Schoolgirls Various Young Singers	Untraceable Untraceable
The Foggy Dew	Jim White*	Not contacted
Navy Boots	Bill Parnell ⁴⁶ Bob Small ⁴⁷	Deceased Presumed dead
The Thrashing Machine	Joe Davis ⁴⁸ Ralph Gardiner Donald Hooper Jim White*	Interviewed Not contacted Declined interview Not contacted
Underneath Her Apron	Betsy Renals*	Deceased
Up the Green Meadows	Amy Birch ⁴⁹ Tommy Penfold*	Not contacted Deceased

Key

* Marks an individual who sings more than one of the illegitimacy-related songs in this corpus.

⁴⁶ See "Navy Boots" on Devon Tradition (disc).

⁴⁷ See Devon Tradition (disc).

⁴⁸ Joe's version is recorded on Devon Tradition (disc).

⁴⁹ Items from Amy's repertoire, including "Up the Green Meadows", are recorded on An English Music Anthology and Devon Tradition (discs). For further details of this singer see Richards and Stubbs^{103, 116}, endnote 121.

Eventually I managed to conduct five interviews with singers of songs relating to illegitimacy. **Sheila Bricknell** was in her fifties when I first interviewed her in January 1996. A housewife who had spent most of her life in the Burnthouse Lane area of Exeter, Devon, Sheila learned many of her songs from her family during her childhood, particularly her mother, a one-time Lloyds tobacco factory worker (SRFA tapes 95 & 96; Kath Barber, 43-44). Her repertoire was heavily influenced by the family's involvement with the Exeter Christian Mission, a Protestant organisation which facilitated her learning religious songs such as Sankey and Moody hymns. Sheila learned more secular songs at school and from children's parties. Sheila has maintained an active interest in singing during her adult life, passing her songs on to her daughter and the children in the local Girl's Brigade.

Joe Davis was in his seventies when I first visited him and his wife Dilly, at their home in Bratton Flemming, North Devon, in October 1995 (see [Devon Tradition](#)). Joe, born in Widdon Courtney, spent his childhood years in Somerset learning many of his songs from his father who worked as a farm labourer. Unlike Sheila, who never became immersed in pub/folkclub culture, Joe started singing in the pubs in his late teens. He was initially employed as a blacksmith, after which he became a road worker for the council. When Joe was twenty-four years old, he moved to Devon, where he has remained ever since. Joe's wife, **Dilly Davis**, comes from a travelling family, and remembers many travellers' songs, even though she maintains she is not a singer herself.

Denis Hutchings was born in Blackmoor (a village south of Bristol) just after the beginning of the Second World War, but spent most of his school days in Wiveliscombe, Somerset. He joined the army at nineteen but made an early career change into the police force, where he remained until his retirement, moving to Devon when he was first married. Denis was living in Torquay when I first visited him in October 1995. He learned many of his songs and tunes from his farm-labourer father. He also learned the accordion and started accompanying local pub-singers, until his parents put a stop to these covert performances since he was well under age. His accompanying skills also earned a small fee at the gypsy camps on Langford Common. Although Denis considers himself primarily as an accompanist, seldom singing in public unless as part of a group, his estimated repertoire contains 300 songs and the Hutchings family have maintained a lasting tradition of singing in the home.

Denis's interest in the folk revival was inspired by Sam Richards and he has continued to play in public at various folk clubs and also at a hotel.⁵⁰

Ken Penney was born in London but had been settled in Devon for over thirty years when I interviewed him in September 1995. Ken has always been active in the folk scene since moving into the area to work as a lecturer in economics at the University of Exeter (see An English Music Anthology (disc)). He has sustained an interest in promoting local get-togethers during this time, organising song and ale weekends and using his talent for creating informal, singing environments. Ken runs the long-standing Pennymoor-Sing-Around, a folk group which includes both "traditional" and "revival" singers. Ken's involvement with the Staverton Bridge collectors became fundamentally important in enabling the research, creating local contacts and hospitality during field trips into North Devon. Ken formed a close singing alliance with George Edworthy before he died, and was therefore a useful source of information about the late singer's repertoire.

Bill Packman was in his seventies when Sam Richards and I interviewed him at his home in Ermington, South Devon. Bill has always lived in the South West and used to run a scrap metal business from his yard at Ermington, living on site in a caravan. Bill had been settled in a house for fourteen years when I interviewed him in January 1996. He learned many of his songs from his mother, a Romany traveller, who came from a branch of the Orchard family, from near Helston in Cornwall.

Interviews with Friends and Relatives of SRFA Singers

In several cases it was necessary to conduct interviews with close friends and relatives of the singers selected in relation to their SRFA material. This was either because the singer was unwilling to participate in the research or because the person had died since being recorded. The above strategy was useful because, in addition to providing contextual information on the songs, this group of people had often learned parts of the repertoire of their relative or friend.

In addition to asking Ken Penney about **George Edworthy's** repertoire, which included "The Ball of Yarn" (which Ken had learnt) and "Don't Tell I Tell 'E", I was able to ask about the songs of **Sophie Legg** (who did not wish to be

⁵⁰ Hereafter the term "folk revival" should be taken to refer to the Second Folk Revival, which had its roots in the 1950s.

interviewed) through her son **Vic**. He was also able to speak about aspects of her repertoire and was willing to check transcriptions of songs with his mother on my behalf. Through Vic's testimony I was also able to assemble information about the repertoires of Sophie's two sisters, **Charlotte** and **Betsy Renals**, who had died since being recorded by the SRFA collectors in the 1960s and '70s (SRFA tapes 146, 147, 148, 149, 229). This work in relation to other family members also provided a useful opportunity to interview Vic as a singer in his own right. I was keen to evaluate to what extent Vic had learnt songs from family members, particularly in relation to my central core of songs about illegitimacy.

Vic Legg was living in Bodmin and was approximately fifty years old when I interviewed him in 1996. Vic grew up in Cornwall, later moving to Plymouth to take up an apprenticeship in Devonport dockyard. Vic's mother belonged to a Cornish branch of the Orchard family and it is from her, his two maternal aunts and his grandfather that Vic learned many songs during his childhood. Vic did not start performing these family songs in public until the start of the folk revival in Plymouth, when he was in his early twenties. Vic learned additional songs from commercial recordings, from revival singers and from people in the dockyards. He now enjoys a firmly established reputation as a performer, touring the folk circuit as far as London and the United States.

My recourse to friends and relatives of the original SRFA singers whom I was unable to talk to became a self-perpetuating mode of enquiry as the research gained momentum. Vic Legg's mention of an unusual version of "The Ball of Yarn" in relation to his grandfather, Edwin Orchard, for example, led to my ensuing conversation with Lar Cann, another singer who provided further information about Edwin's song text.

Singers Located Through Other Archives

The names of several informants were either encountered through my work with other archival material, leading to the discovery of further singers of "illegitimacy" songs, or resulted from the mention of material as recalled by other collectors. My four selected archives have copies/originals of some of the same material and recordings of the same informants in common. The following three tables relate only to individuals not already mentioned in connection with the above corpus of SRFA songs. However, singers' names are repeated where the recorded item(s) differs from that attached to the same person in the preceding archive(s).

TABLE B

SONG	SINGER	STATUS
Barnacle Bill the Sailor	Wray Tucker*	Interviewed
Died For Love	Fred?	Untraceable
Ball of Yarn	Bill Cann Wray Tucker*	Not contacted Interviewed

AVAILABILITY OF WREN TRUST ARCHIVE SINGERS

TABLE C

SONG	SINGER	STATUS
Bell Bottom Trousers	Charlie Showers ⁵¹	Deceased
The Dark-Eyed Lover	Amy Ford ⁵²	Deceased

AVAILABILITY OF PATTEN ARCHIVE SINGERS

⁵¹ For further biographical details see "Charlie Showers" (Bob Patten) and Somerset 12 (Patten and Patten).

⁵² Amy's version is recorded on Somerset Scrapbook (tape). For further details see Patten and Patten "Mrs. Amy Ford" and Somerset 74-75.

TABLE D

SONG	SINGER	STATUS
Rosemary Lane	Cyril Tawney	Not contacted
The Lady and the Grenadier	Rebecca Penfold	Presumed dead

AVAILABILITY OF VWML SOUND ARCHIVE SINGERS

Two relevant records in the Wren Trust Archive prompted my first interview with the singer **Wray Tucker**, at his home in South Zeal, a village on the northern edge of Dartmoor, in April 1996. Wray, then in his seventies, was born and brought up in the village but moved away from the area for a lengthy period of time in early adulthood, on joining the army. Wray returned to South Zeal when he was discharged from his overseas posting on grounds of ill-health. By this juncture the large part of Wray's song repertoire was already formed from material learned in the army. However, he continued to learn additional songs in the locality, staying firmly entrenched in the pub-based culture to which his charismatic uncle, Percy Tucker, a singer of "Ball of Yarn", clearly belonged.

I interviewed **Margaret Palmer** with Jacqueline Patten because Jacqueline recollected her singing a song of George Edworthy's in which I was interested. Margaret was in her early sixties when we initially visited her farmhouse in Chawleigh, Mid Devon, in June 1995. Both Margaret's parents came from Exmoor, and Margaret was born on the Southwest edge of the moor, at North Molton. She grew up on a farm and therefore many of the singing venues she experienced, such as harvest suppers, were related to the agricultural environment. Margaret learned songs through her family as both her parents and also her cousin, Dick French, sang. When Margaret left home to become a farmer's wife, she continued to sing to herself around the house. As a result of her later contact with the folk revival, she began to attend a folk club at the Rockford Inn in Brendon, North Devon, and also joined the Pennymoor-Sing-

Around. Therefore some of her songs have also been learned from folk clubs and song books.

Singers Located through Fieldwork and by Others' Recommendation

Having contacted some of the more accessible SRFA informants, my fieldwork began to branch out in a new direction. Inevitably, interview questions about particular songs tended to trigger recollections of the same song being sung by a different singer in a more recent context. In order to investigate the extent to which selected songs were actively performed at the time of researching, it was important to follow up these leads. Some of my interview work was also the product of a personal recommendation either by a fieldworker, a friend or an informant.

After Ken Penney referred to **Pat Barker** as a contemporary singer of "Died For Love", I subsequently arranged to meet her to discuss her repertoire. Pat, who was born and bred in Gloucester, lived in a variety of places but had been settled in Devon for twenty-four years when I interviewed her at her home in West Sandford near Crediton, in September 1995. Then in her fifties, Pat's interest in singing had emerged out of her growing friendship with Ken Penney in later life. She learned all the songs in her repertoire from song books, recordings or other singers. Pat worked for a long period as a teacher in Crediton and is a regular member of the Pennymoor-Sing-Around, which is run by Ken.

On several occasions SRFA informants invited me to accompany them to their local singing venues. Consequently, I attended the Pennymoor-Sing-Around on two occasions, a folk gathering at The Bishop, a public house in Bishopsteignton, and a birthday party at Stag Hunters, a public house in Brendon. At this second venue, **Edwin Hall**, a regular member of the folk group, sang one of the selected songs I was studying and I went to interview him shortly afterwards. Edwin Hall originally came from North London, but moved to Devon in his early twenties. His interest in the folk scene was cultivated during his time as an undergraduate at the University of East Anglia in the late sixties, where touring singers would perform. Whilst still a student, Edwin made his *début* appearance as a singer at a folk club in Torquay, re-performing some of Peter Bellamy's most recent songs, acquired via an illicitly recorded cassette-tape.⁵³

⁵³ For an obituary of this well-known Norfolk folk singer see Arthur et al.

My work with **Nelson Penfold** emerged when I originally approached Sam Richards to obtain further details of the singer Bill Packman, intending to set up an interview. At this point, Sam suggested combining the trip with a preliminary visit to another singer, Nelson Penfold, because Nelson's home in Ivybridge was in close proximity to the Packman's scrap-yard and Nelson had become a good friend of Sam's during his previous collecting activities. Sam stated that Nelson would be an ideal informant because his prolific repertoire, coupled with his background as a traveller, would make him more likely to have encountered some of the older and rarer of my selected songs (see Devon Tradition (disc); Richards and Stubbs, 86, endnote 90). Nelson Penfold was in his sixties when Sam and I visited him in March 1996.

I interviewed **Charlie Hill** at the suggestion of the Devon folklorist Angela Blaen, who recommended him on the basis of both his extensive repertoire of traditional songs and her past experience of his warm and helpful personality (see Chris Smith 120-122).⁵⁴ Charlie was approximately seventy years old when I first visited him in September 1995. Born on the northern edge of Dartmoor in the village of Drewsteignton, he continued a long-standing family tradition of farming on the moor being based in Spreyton for most of his working life. Charlie has never moved away from the area, learning songs passed down to him through his family. As well as being an important accompaniment to routine occupational tasks, like ploughing, singing was also a regular activity at the Drew Arms in Drewsteignton as well as at village concerts. With the advent of the folk revival, Charlie was introduced to venues much further afield. Consequently he learned new material through widening contact with other singers. Now he is retired, Charlie works on a voluntary basis as a tour guide at Castle Drogo and no longer sings in public on grounds of ill health. His wife, **Jess Hill**, was born in Nuneaton and moved to Dartmoor from Derbyshire when she married Charlie. As she was a trained midwife, she continued to work part-time at a hospital in Okehampton after she was married.

I occasionally followed up names and addresses of people given to me by informants. Charlie Hill, my most visited informant, for example, had already spoken to **Dave Lowry** about my work when he encouraged me to visit him. Charlie told me that Dave knew many of the sorts of songs in which I was interested. Dave, who was in his early fifties when I first interviewed him in December 1995, lives in the Heavitree district of Exeter. Dave's family came from the Plymouth area but he moved to Exeter where he works as a salesman, when he was in his early twenties. Dave became heavily involved in the folk

⁵⁴ See Devon Tradition (disc).

scene from his late teens and sang in a number of folk bands such as the Oak Leaves and Isca Fayre. Dave regularly attended the influential Exeter Traditional Folk Music Club, which specialised in unaccompanied singing.⁵⁵ Here, he met his wife **Jill Lowry** who is also local to the area and regularly attended folk clubs. Dave travelled to other clubs in the locality, including those at Exmouth, Sidmouth and Topsham. Though essentially a "revival" singer, Dave also became inspired by the manuscripts of Baring-Gould. Consequently, he discovered the existence of a traditional song in his own family (SRFA tape 252). Dave has also been strongly influenced by the singing of Cyril Tawney.

My attempts to locate singers using all of the above strategies, resulted in there being a greater number of men than women. This was probably because these three methods were all tied into the more public face of singing. On average singers were also aged fifty and above. Hence, having made enquiries at the Sidmouth Folk Festival in August 1996, I was keen to follow up the suggestion that Maureen and Robbie Tatlow, a singing couple from Cornwall, might be suitable informants.

Maureen Tatlow lives in Wadebridge and was in her forties when I first interviewed her with Jacqueline Patten in February 1997. Maureen was born and bred in Padstow, Cornwall, a village renowned for its strong traditions of predominantly male pub-singing. Singing was a part of Maureen's family life - her father was a notable pub singer and her grandmother sang to her as a child.⁵⁶ However, the majority of songs which Maureen learned during her childhood were more ingeniously procured by listening out of her bedroom window, to song sessions at the neighbouring pub below. The spread of the folk revival into Cornwall, creating folk clubs in pubs, prompted Maureen's performing career in her early twenties, just after her marriage. Maureen currently works in a bank and continues to sing in public, often performing with her husband. Venues include organised singing weekends in pubs and charity concerts.

Because there was also a greater number of travellers than would be the case with a more representative sample, and more informants located in Devon than in Somerset or Cornwall, I decided to interview **George Withers** from Somerset (see Patten, Somerset 66). A commercial cassette of his songs which had been released in the previous year suggested a preference for songs within George's repertoire about romantic relationships, indicating that he was likely to know

⁵⁵ Hosted by the Jolly Porter pub in the St David's area of Exeter.

⁵⁶ Recordings of Maureen's father, Tom Morrissey, are held at the VWML Sound Archive.

some songs about illegitimacy (Withers The Fly). George was an ideal informant in terms of his willingness to be interviewed, particularly as I managed to obtain an introduction through his nephew, a lecturer at the University of Plymouth.

George Withers lives in Horton, near Ilminster, and was in his early seventies when I first interviewed him in the summer of 1996. George grew up in Donyatt, where he lived and farmed for many years. He later moved to Isle Abbots where he met Harry Adams who revived George's interest in traditional songs (Patten and Patten, Somerset 41, Jacket notes). George learnt many of his songs from his parents, who were both Somerset people, and on the wave of the nation-wide efforts to bring folksongs back into schools (Cox). Pub culture made a minor contribution to George's repertoire until more recent years. In later life George has sung at folk festivals throughout the South West, such as the Wadebridge Folk Festival in Cornwall and the Sidmouth Folk Festival in Devon.

Non-Singers Located Independently and by Others' Recommendation

Because my project set out to examine not only South West folksong as evidence of attitudes towards illegitimate birth, but also folk narrative genres, additional work was important in order to conduct a more comprehensive investigation into a wider range of folklore materials than my initial sample allowed. Because my early interviews were centred around the revisiting of a group of people on the basis of their songs recorded in SRFA, my follow-up work initially perpetuated some of the biases of my original sample. My original methodology was designed to overcome one of these biases, that relating to the types of material evinced from these informants, because I also planned to ask them questions in relation to genres of folklore other than songs. However, this plan could not overcome the fact that this group of people were known first and foremost in their capacity as singers. I decided to initiate some further interviews, in the remaining time, with informants of entirely my own choosing in the hope of remedying this bias.

A number of these further interviews was inspired by my reading of folklore publications relevant to my researching activities. These generated the need to compare the types of data I was finding in academic studies and more popular works, with the same data as it was perpetuated by living people. My visit to **Mrs Bessie French** was inspired by my reading of material relating to Jay's Grave near Manaton on Dartmoor (see Chapter 7). I set out to interview

somebody who had lived for a long time in close proximity to the site. Mrs French was suggested to me by a lecturer at Plymouth University. As his neighbour, she would be easy to approach and fitted the above criteria. Bessie's family history was ideal in that several generations of her family had settled on Dartmoor, giving her knowledge of the area and its associated traditions a long established basis. Having been born in Corndon and educated in Leusdon, she spent much of her life in an area approximately five miles from Jay's Grave. I intended to talk to Bessie about other local legends and beliefs from my reading in addition to those relating to Jay's Grave.

Bessie French was in her seventies when I interviewed her at her home in Ponsworthy, a village North West of Ashburton in June 1996. Bessie worked as a domestic servant both before and, for a short while, after her marriage. Her mother, Granny Turner, was locally renowned as a healer of a skin disease called King's Evil, and for her gift of charming warts, which Bessie is also believed to share (see Theo Brown, "84th report" 270; SRFA tape 296).

At this point in the research I became keen to interview anyone with a reputation for telling local stories. Again this desire arose out of the need to compare the kinds of folklore found in written texts with living folklore as perpetuated by local people. My work with **Dave German** began in a more spontaneous manner than that undertaken with Bessie French. I encountered Dave by chance as a result of an evening in a Princetown pub, in the heart of Dartmoor. During the evening, a sceptical reference was made to Dave's rendition of local legends, in particular the story of "Jay's Grave". The following day I approached Dave and arranged to talk to him about his storytelling.

Dave German was fifty-four years old when I interviewed him in December 1996 at his home in Princetown. Dave was adopted as a baby by a Dartmoor couple and grew up in the Princetown area. Dave originally learned many of his stories from his adoptive grandfather, some of which he has reworked using written sources. Dave maintains an active interest in local history, archaeology, storytelling and traditional song. Since his retirement from the police force he has worked for the Princetown Information Centre.

Finally, I was anxious to establish the ubiquity of certain types of folklore and folksong which had mainly been recorded in the Dartmoor/Exmoor regions. Consequently, I tried to find an informant who was atypical in relation to the SRFA informants in terms of his/her place of residence and the fact of his/her not being a singer, but who was typical in terms of being over fifty and in having

had a long-standing association with the local area. I decided that I would target the village of Lympstone, in East Devon, in order to find an informant and was put in touch with **Chris Binmore** through Moi Deighton. I first interviewed Chris and her husband **Mervin Binmore** at their cottage in January 1996 when she was in her sixties. Generations of her family lived in this ex-fishing village and Chris has lived in Lympstone most of her life. Her father was in the navy but later worked as a local fisherman and water bailiff.

A variety of materials was collected during fieldwork. There are about forty audiotapes, most of which contain recorded interviews. However, a smaller number of recordings were made in a performance context, at pub sessions at Sidmouth Folk Festival and sessions at the Pennymoor-Sing-Around, for example. A small number of photographs were taken in these different types of recording situations. Other material generated during this time included my own hand-written diaries describing each occasion or interview, tape contents summary sheets, informant biography summary sheets, numerous song transcriptions and partial transcriptions of most of the interviews.

The resulting data still reflects a song bias as songs were used as the starting point for the research and time was limited in terms of exploring other avenues. Consequently, there was a lack of informants interviewed solely on the basis of their association with prose narrative genres. However, the fact that a concerted effort was made to broaden the range of folklore about which the informant was asked compensated for this bias to a certain extent.

PUBLISHED SOURCES

Twentieth-Century Folklore Writers and Collectors

The writings of **Ruth Tongue (1898 -1981)** made an influential contribution to the County Folklore Series, providing a source of Somerset legend, custom and belief which was much quoted by a range of scholars over the following thirty years (see Somerset Folklore, Folktales of England, Chime Child, Forgotten Folktales). Tongue was an amateur folklorist, with a background in art and music. She published an interesting compilation of songs in addition to the above text, gathered from selected Somerset singers over a period of sixty years. Tongue claims to have known many of these informants, presenting their song transcriptions against a background of biographical detail (Tongue Chime Child). Many extracts from this work include examples of folklore relating to illegitimacy. Her description of "Annie's Granny", an illegitimately born singer,

whom she repeatedly refers to as a "chance-come" child provides one example.⁵⁷ Another example is given during Tongue's description of Grey Witches in Somerset Folklore where an anecdote from "an old hedger, 1960", relates the predicament of a woman, who, on finding herself unmarried and pregnant, seeks assistance from the local witch (64).

In spite of the seeming relevance of much of her material, research presented by Robert and Jacqueline Patten since Tongue's death disputes the reliability of her work and highlights some discrepancies. The authors recommend that her material be used with caution because Tongue was "a far better performer than folklorist", and ought to be combined with other sources for academic purposes (Patten ms, 2). They conclude that Tongue "wove genuine folklore into her stories - as did Thomas Hardy within the literary tradition" (Patten ms, 13).⁵⁸ It is made apparent that Tongue, who is described as "an otherworldly character, perhaps out of her time" (Patten ms, 1), was nothing like as reliable as scholars to date have assumed.

Because there is also disregard for the factual in relation to her own life, the authenticity of Tongue's material becomes increasingly questionable. Tongue made much of her special connection with Somerset but spent lengthy periods of time away from the county.⁵⁹ Contrary to popular belief, Tongue was actually born in Handsworth in Staffordshire. She could not have been a "chime child" (having special gifts and the ability to inspire confidences) because, by her own definition, she was born at the wrong time and place. However, she was to foreground this characteristic in her writing.

Secondly, many of Tongue's dates seem to hinge upon a time around 1906, when she was convalescing in the Taunton area, at the age of eight. However, as the Pattens point out, the gathering of an unrealistic amount of material is attributed to this time, during which the evidence for her being in Somerset is uncertain. Because the main bulk of her work attributes a large percentage of stories, customs, superstitions and beliefs to her own personal collecting activities, the discovery of uncertainty at source-level, makes the rest of her material appear more problematic.

Thirdly, comparing material gathered by Tongue to her contemporaries, reveals some stark differences. Tongue uses referencing in which she provides

⁵⁷ She uses the term five times during the six-page description.

⁵⁸ All subsequent quotes from the Pattens are taken from an unpublished paper on Ruth Tongue.

⁵⁹Tongue lived in Harrow from the early 1920s - 1955.

pseudonyms for singers, ostensibly out of both consideration for the lingering superstition against being mentioned by name, but also out of respect for the feelings of the singer, their friends and relatives (Tongue, Chime Child x). Mysteriously, however, Cecil Sharp, with whom her collecting overlaps, provides careful notes of names, places and dates for all his singers. As Tongue rarely chose to use a tape recorder when it became available, it is not possible to check the authenticity of her transcriptions against any given field recording. After an extensive examination of the Sharp manuscripts (mainly collected in Somerset) the Pattens note that these two collectors recorded implausibly contrasting sets of material (Patten ms, 10-12). Tongue's material was, in comparison to Sharp's thoroughness, particularly short on broadsides as well as the "As I walked out" types of song. They conclude that, "in The Chime Child Ruth published 31 songs unlike anything found in Sharp, Hammond, Baring-Gould or any other West Country Collection" (Patten ms, 12). Tongue's imbalance is surprising considering the extent of Sharp's collecting activities and comparatively prolific range of informants. Finally, although almost all of Tongue's folklore, other than that relating to folksong and folk narrative genres, correlates with that taken from other sources, the Patten's note that many details are not exact (7). Meanwhile, narratives in particular acquire a distinctive "Ruth Tongue" flavour, densely characterised by the supernatural.

Tongue's many interests (other than folklore) go a long way towards explaining the attitude she took towards her material. It is noted that she "was a lady of many talents - singer, artist, story-teller, poet . . . playwright, folklorist . . . herb doctor and generally gifted with people and animals." (Patten ms, 1) These additional aspects of her personality resulted in and perhaps even merited a more creative use of her data than academic scholars today would allow. Consequently, she "drew no distinction between collection, recollection and recreation" (Patten ms, 10).

Theo Brown (1914-1993) has produced a number of important studies of South West folklore which are germane to this thesis (see Davidson for further biographical details). Her most relevant writing concerns supernatural narratives (see "Radiant Boy") and local legends, such as "Jay's Grave" (see The Fate, Devon Ghosts). Her additional research into various forms of rough music in the locality and discussion of certain aspects of supernatural belief, such as in spectral hounds on Dartmoor, also provide an important contribution to Chapter 5.

Brown absorbed many local stories during the prolonged periods she spent in rural Devon in her early childhood. She became permanently settled in the area after her formal adoption by a local family. Graduating from art college in early adulthood, she received no formal training in the study of folklore. However, Davidson's glowing tribute to Brown describes her respectfully as a particularly thorough researcher: "her contribution to West Country folklore was immense, and her knowledge of written sources, gained from random reading, often brought rich rewards" (169). She also praises her spontaneous and unaffected style of writing, characterising Brown as a "gifted and dedicated amateur" (169).

Brown lived in the villages of Chudleigh and Dog Village for the majority of her working life. Her growing reputation as a local folklorist came about through the accumulation of direct experience in the field as well as through her developing contacts with other local folklorists and antiquarians. Davidson mentions how in the early days as a fieldworker, Theo lived in a caravan and collected local folklore. Her activity in the field continued, as testified by her accounts of later research (see "Stag-Hunt", Tales of). The resulting work reflects Brown's particular interest in local traditions and characters, folk narratives, and otherworld beliefs as well as being informed by her commitment to Anglicanism.

Brown's writing shows signs of having been sculpted by the variety of roles which she performed throughout her career as a folklorist. She made frequent appearances on local radio and took up the position of Honorary Research Fellow at Exeter University, where she taught for a number of years, based in the Department of History and later, Theology. She also worked for the Devonshire Association, whose publications bear witness to the numerous papers and notes presented by her during her thirty years as their Recorder of Folklore. She was an active member of the Folklore Society, also working as an editor for the West Country Folklore Series, published by Toucan Press. In contrast to figures such as Ruth Tongue, Brown was preoccupied with the academic credibility of her work, taking particular care over facts and the meticulous citation of her source material.

Ruth St Leger Gordon⁶⁰ settled as a long-term resident in the village of Sticklepath, Dartmoor in Devon, with her husband D. St Leger-Gordon, the local historian. Ruth, who at one time worked in broadcasting, produced a notable book on the folklore of Dartmoor in 1965. Interesting anecdotes recounted from the author's firsthand experience, tend to outweigh her rather limited use of

⁶⁰ Though now deceased, Ruth's dates could not be obtained from any published sources.

secondary sources and casual use of citations. The most relevant sections of this work concern local legends, including "Jay's Grave".

Kingsley Palmer was born in the Bristol area and came to live in Somerset in his early teens. Having graduated from the University of Leeds, he then completed an M.Phil at the Institute of Dialect and Folk Life Studies in the late 1960s. During this time he worked on the classification of oral traditions from Somerset and Dorset and is therefore a trained collector. He maintained an enduring interest in fieldwork, which is a major aspect of his later work and writing (see Folklore of Somerset, Oral Folk-Tales of Wessex). Palmer's collection of material mainly concentrates on the south of Somerset and much of his fieldwork involved interviews with local people, providing useful data for this study. The legend of "Molly Hunt", for example, with its associated haunting at a crossroads, provides an interesting comparison to the legend of "Jay's Grave", another crossroads haunting. Many of these narratives are related without alteration, as they were told to the author. Names of informants are deliberately omitted, but source material from particular individuals is clearly and precisely identified by alternative means.

Alan Holt moved to Somerset as a retired vicar in 1977. Prior to this time, he had lived in the West Midlands and so his knowledge of local history and folklore was acquired late in life. Holt is particularly fond of narratives relating to murders and ghostly experiences, perhaps because his main purpose is to recount "interesting" stories (see West Somerset, a guide book of walks, and Folklore of). Most of Holt's narratives are written creatively, as a kind of revived history, based upon "a multitude of books and many newspaper cuttings belonging to libraries and private individuals together with some very old newspapers in their entirety" which he encountered (West Somerset 169). However, Holt's lack of formal training has clearly been a hindrance, resulting in a lack of specificity in terms of published sources (see West 169). It has also resulted in a sense of vagueness surrounding narratives directly deriving from oral tradition: "I have stayed in my caravan in many out of the way places and conversed with numerous Somerset folk, which has made it extremely hard for me to recall whence various of my stories have hailed" (see West 169). Partly because he gives no clear indication of the currency of particular stories, such as "Molly Hunt", at any one time, from an academic point of view Holt's writing is rather unreliable.

Many popular writers on folklore and the supernatural in the South West are affiliated to the Cornish publishers **Bossiney Books**, established in 1975 by

Michael and Sonia Williams. Michael Williams writes fairly regularly on matters relating to folklore, particularly in Cornwall, where the couple ran a hotel outside Tintagel for ten years (see Curiosities and Strange Stories). Bossiney writers, many of whom have established links with local journalism and radio broadcasting, exchange material and ideas, sometimes undertaking collaborative work. Although their recorded narratives often derive in part from oral tradition, these highly anecdotal works cannot be relied upon for the authenticity, for being tailored to a wide audience and written primarily for their entertainment value. However, they are included within this thesis largely because the wide-reaching impact of these publications, which are commonplace in most libraries, book shops and tourist information centres, has to be considered. This printed material clearly affects both the type of narratives circulated within oral tradition and the emphasis within them (cf. Bennett, Traditions 44-45).

Sally and Chips Barber pitch their writing at a similar level to the above set of writers and are at least as accessible in terms of the ubiquity of their publications within the South West. They have had an extremely prolific output, producing something in the region of fifty pamphlet-sized books on aspects of local history and folklore. They are well known in the area for the round of informal talks which accompany their research. Their three most relevant books in relation to this project concern ghost narratives in Devon (Barber Ghosts of Exeter, Ghastly and Ghostly Devon, Haunted Pubs in Devon). These books are based upon original material gathered during the authors' field expeditions. Chips Barber notes with surprise that the research into Ghosts of Exeter "unearthed. . . a medley of stories" (3). Although writing essentially for entertainment, the Barbers try not to comment on the authenticity of the experiences recounted within their material. They are also keen to preserve the essential details of the narratives without fabrication, as attested by Chips Barber, who claims that all stories, except one in Ghosts of Exeter, are true (3).

Fiction

Eden Phillpotts (1862-1960) is better known for his fictional works, particularly in relation to his series of approximately eighteen novels inspired by the Dartmoor area (the "Dartmoor Cycle"). He amassed a range of material including novels, plays, poetry and books about Devon. Phillpott's extensive knowledge of the moor and its folklore contribute greatly to the quality of his creative writing, which includes references to rough music, courtship customs and other rites of passage.

The work of **Olive Katherine Parr [Beatrice Chase] (1874-1955)**, a Devon based author who wrote under the pen-name Beatrice Chase, provides some useful source material in relation to this study (see Laver and Oxenham for further biographical details). During the period of over fifty years that she spent on Dartmoor, Chase developed an intricate knowledge of the area's topography through her love of walking. Her accounts of these expeditions reveal a keen interest in the various local personalities whom she met, and with whom she formed attachments. As these people are the subject of many of her Dartmoor novels, it is no surprise that Chase's creative work also reflects a preoccupation with the folklore that was a part of their lives. Laver draws attention to the profusion of dialect words and phrases referred to by Chase in the space of just one novel, exceeding 150 in The Heart (89-90). In addition to her interest in regional speech, Chase was also intrigued by the legends, customs, superstitions and beliefs which she so vividly describes. These are represented as living forces, affecting the decisions, attitudes and experiences of her characters, shaping their collective realities and texturing their existence.

Beatrice Chase developed her enduring love of Dartmoor when she moved to the area from London in 1901-02. It was during this time that she took up writing from her base at Venton, a hamlet in the South East of Widecombe.⁶¹ She soon became an extremely successful author of popular fictional and semi-autobiographical works. These, in addition to her romantic novels, and poetry, were inspired by Dartmoor. Her greatest financial success was her first Dartmoor book, The Heart of the Moor, which contains numerous references to Jay's Grave and its accompanying story, and which sold 77,000 copies under Herbert Jenkins (cf. Through a (1915) and The Dartmoor (1918), Laver Appendix 107)

Chase's eccentric personality comes across clearly in her writing. Laver mentions the "unselfconscious sense of superiority and of class distinction" (90) which pervades her novels, stemming from a life which united "a low income and high ideals" (88). Using her view of herself as a gentlewoman, Chase establishes the persona she employs within her semi-autobiographical writing. She constructs her position as one who is socially superior, and therefore distanced by class from those whom she describes. This allows her to incorporate certain stylistic features into her writing, such as the preference for recounting romanticised incidents in which she is held up as an instrument of moral reprisal. Laver mentions Chase's "taste for highly-coloured effects and

⁶¹ As distinct from Venton near Plympton.

language", and discloses the "arch girliness" which characterises the authorial tone of the writing in which Chase loves to portray herself as a "helpless female" (89). These stylistic qualities present us with some difficulty in using Chase's writing as folkloric evidence. It is hard to distinguish between incidents with a factual basis and incidents where, out of a need to keep her persona intact, Chase exerts a degree of artistic licence. Even Chase's publisher seems to have grappled with this problem and wrote to her complaining of the "excessive melodrama" of one particular novel (Jenkins).

Fortunately, Chase responds to this criticism and in doing so asserts the validity of the most important material in relation to this study. She makes a specific reference to her account of Jay's Grave and its unfolding legend. She writes, "seriously, the condemned melodrama is as written. We did discover the suicide's grave one day by accident, long after we had been here. The story was lost until I found Granny Caunter; the tragic deaths are true" (Jenkins vi). Chase's assertions tend to suggest that the Jay's Grave material has a largely factual underpinning, even though the incidents recounted have been somewhat embellished with her usual stylistic features. Therefore, Chase's material is considered as a valuable addition to the data, providing that it is used cautiously and with the back up of other, more purely historical sources.

CHAPTER 5

SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Introduction

The following chapter seeks to assemble a relevant historical context for the content of the illegitimacy narratives which are the subject of this thesis. My narrative-centred approach determines that, as far as is possible, data relating to the South West of England is foregrounded within this reconstruction of attitudes and experience. Part A will assemble a picture of the discernible experience of sexual relations and illegitimacy between 1850 ^{and the} present day using the insights of social and oral historians, folklorists, feminist/women's historians and my own fieldwork. I explore the interface between these narratives and selected aspects of their historical context, such as class, contraception and female suicide. As the subject matter of these narratives ultimately determines which particular areas of socio-historical experience are expanded within the discussion, some are explored in depth, while others, such as infanticide, are consigned to a more marginal position. Part B will draw upon this material in examining attitudes towards illegitimate birth during the period, in terms of specific responses towards the mother, father and child.

This chapter attempts to cover a time period from 1850 to the present day, even though this thesis is primarily concerned with illegitimacy-related narratives as they exist(ed) within a late twentieth-century context. One reason for incorporating this time scale relates to the way in which the material is perpetuated. This sometimes produces a time-lag between the narratives and the environments in which they are performed. Consequently, even where a given narrative seems to have lost its relevance in terms of subject matter, it may still remain in circulation, persisting some two or more generations later. This process can be particularly well observed in relation to folksong. Factors including the widespread notion of "song ownership", and traditional modes of bequeathing material to another singer after one's death, often contribute to the seemingly "irrelevant" subject matter of a particular item becoming of secondary importance amongst those who perpetuate it (see Dunn 202-03; Casey and Rosenberg 400-01). This sense of time-lag may be particularly pronounced where a song has been regarded as a type of "heirloom", passing through the generations of one family in a fairly unaltered state. As attitudes evidenced in narratives may sometimes therefore have much greater relevance to an earlier

era than that into which they have continued, historical context plays an important role in anchoring attitudes to a particular time.

Because many of these narratives are inclined to refer to a "distant past", the meanings elicited by those who both listen to, and perpetuate them are constructed accordingly. It is therefore particularly important to untangle accepted "truths" about the experiences and attitudes of those in the past - such as that many masters "cruelly" sexually exploited their female servants - establishing the points of correspondence between reality and its representation. Having evaluated the accuracy of such "accepted truths" it might then be possible to suggest how they function in terms of the meanings elicited from illegitimacy-related narratives during the late twentieth century and to ask what this tells us about attitudes towards illegitimacy during that period.

One might also consider which other aspects of the narratives, such as the identities of their protagonists, seem to remain true to the experience of illegitimacy and why. Could it be, for example, that such details actually challenge the view of history put forward by social historians about the past? As both Neilands and Gammon suggest in relation to folksong, both distortions and absences at the level of representation can be seen as highly significant. These have implications not only for the function of songs in terms of past singers and audiences - perhaps as "workings upon reality" - but are also indicative of the attitudes informing their meanings (Gammon 237). One might therefore ask what these areas of correspondence suggest about attitudes towards illegitimacy in the society in which the narratives were performed and circulated? Equally, the points of departure between areas of human experience and their representation within folk narrative genres might also be considered. Having tackled some of these questions, it is hoped that the attitudes towards illegitimacy as uncovered within folksongs, local legends and personal experience narratives may be further explicated in terms of their socio-historical and performance contexts in Chapters 6 and 7.

THE OVERVIEW OF ILLEGITIMACY IN NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURY ENGLAND

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the processes of birth and death existed in closer proximity to each other than they do today (cf. Chamberlain and Richardson). This was largely due to higher rates of maternal mortality during or after childbirth owing to a lack of medical technology (Shorter

A History). It is therefore hardly surprising that traditionally these have been conceived of as closely related, and sometimes overlapping events. Prior to the late twentieth century, social, rather than technological factors, ensured that sexual intercourse remained a necessary precondition for conception (McLaren, Reproductive 13-14). Due to the causal chain whereby intercourse followed by conception could result in natural death from pregnancy/labour, sex also became inextricably bound with pregnancy, birth, and therefore death as well. Human factors have also played an important part in strengthening the already existing association caused by the biological pitfalls of reproduction. For instance, by 1930 "as a cause of maternal deaths, abortion had become 'more important than delivery at term' " (Brookes 51). Even by the 1960s, many women still died as a result of social and economic considerations, which in turn affected the outcome of their pregnancies through, for example, fatalities from post-abortion infection (Brookes 133, 137).

Historians discussing the social experience of illegitimacy, particularly during the nineteenth century, have tended to focus upon statistical evidence, using rates of pre-nuptial pregnancy and illegitimacy as indicators of social change. Hence, the reasons for a discernible mid-nineteenth century peak, after "the number of out-of-wedlock pregnancies began to skyrocket in virtually every community we know about, often reaching three or four times the previous levels", have been hotly debated (Shorter, The Making (81-83) 79-108; "Illegitimacy"; Fairchilds; Gillis "Servants").⁶²

Primarily seeing this increase as symptomatic of radical changes in patterns of courtship and sexual attitudes, Shorter views the nineteenth century in the context of a first "premarital sexual revolution" (Shorter, The Making 79-108, 119, "Illegitimacy" 238). Other historians, such as Tilly, Scott and Cohen, beg to differ, arguing against the emancipating effect of women's work in industrialised society, and therefore against the associated change in attitudes towards sex, or "sexual revolution" advocated by Shorter (Gillis "Servants" 114). Illegitimacy is explained by these scholars rather as "a product of the persistence of traditional sexual attitudes in the changing economic context of urbanization and modernization" (Fairchilds 628). The pattern whereby women obtained husbands by entering an "illicit" relationship, becoming pregnant and securing a marriage, now failed, in the atmosphere of increased geographical and occupational mobility during the nineteenth century. This is because men could more easily abandon their pregnant lovers. Hence, illegitimacy is seen more as

⁶² These rates started decreasing by about 1860, reaching a plateau and then plummeting until the mid-twentieth century.

a product of "altered circumstances of economic modernization" than a symptom of sexual liberation (Fairchilds 629).

John Gillis looks more specifically at the high rates of illegitimacy amongst the nineteenth century servant population in London, as evidenced by the records of the London Foundling Hospital. Examining more closely the question of why particularly the higher rank of servant was so vulnerable to illegitimacy, he concludes, similarly to Tilly, Scott and Cohen

The answer lies in their efforts to combine customs of courtship and marriage appropriate to women of their class backgrounds with the standards of conduct expected of them by their employers Away from home and subject to strict supervision, it was rare for them to meet men in the traditional settings of courtship, namely dances, hiring fairs, and festivals or at home and among friends. (129)

Hence, rather than seeing "sexual revolution", poverty or the casual nature of employment as the main cause of illegitimacy, he places much greater emphasis on the conditions of, and ethos surrounding, certain types of employment, which "by encouraging male mobility, posed a hazard to stable relationships" (134-35).

After the 1850s, declining illegitimacy rates carried through into the first half of the twentieth century up until the Second World War. However, because illegitimacy was subject to alarmist fears, anxieties relating to the illegitimacy rate were often unrelated to statistical evidence throughout this period. Haste notes, for example, that there was a scare during the First World War, when in 1915, a Conservative MP suggested that large numbers of illegitimate children were about to be born in areas where troops were stationed (41). The resulting newspaper scandal about the "collapse of morals" was later abandoned, however, as grossly exaggerated, when statistics revealed that illegitimate births had hardly increased (Haste 41).

Although the First World War did eventually have an impact on illegitimate births, the rate being up 30% on pre-war years by 1919, it was not until after the Second World War that "virtually every western country saw major rises in illegitimacy" (Haste 41; Shorter, The Making 112). As well as attributing the rebounding illegitimate fertility and pre-nuptial pregnancy rates to a gradual change in attitude, Shorter also links this increase to better diets and an improved capacity to be able to conceive (Shorter, The Making 84, 112). This steady increase in illegitimate children from post-war years culminated in another boom in illegitimate births during the 1960s (Shorter, The Making 84).

This trend continued into the 1980s, when Haste remarked that "one in four children were born outside wedlock in 1988 compared with 12 per-cent as recently as 1980" (Haste 287). As "many of their parents were cohabiting", clearly this increase was partly related to couples moving away from marriage (Haste 287). A more recent estimate, from 1993, suggested that "almost a third of babies are now born outside wedlock" (Joan Smith, 18). An increasing number of these children are being born to young mothers, as evidenced by one estimate from 1998, which suggests that 87% of unmarried mothers are between the ages of 15-18.⁶³

Marriage, the main variable determining the legitimacy or illegitimacy of offspring, has undergone considerable changes both in its nature and its popularity as a social institution. It cannot be overemphasised that up until the twentieth century, marriage was regarded by most as an indissoluble union. Although, as previously mentioned, social historians have convincingly argued for the existence of popular forms of divorce (such as wife sale) prior to this time, the official legal position still determined that, in the absence of formal divorce, the marriage contract could only be broken by death itself. Even though divorce had become available in the civil courts in 1857, extending this option "beyond the tiny circle of wealthy aristocrats who could afford the staggering expense of a parliamentary divorce", it remained an impossibility for most because "the terms were drawn so tightly that only a tiny minority of married couples were able to satisfy them: 141 in 1861, rising to the still negligible figure of 580 in 1911" (Joan Smith, 16). Prior to 1923, legalised divorce therefore remained "daunting and expensive, not to mention socially suicidal" for most people (Joan Smith 16).

With the second Divorce Reform Act in 1923, many spouses, particularly unhappy wives, took advantage of the fact that divorces were now much easier to obtain. Consequently divorce rates began to accelerate in the 1920s with a noticeable surge after the Divorce Reform Act of 1969 (Joan Smith 16). The dramatic increase in the divorce rate, from 6,092 in 1938, to 162,579 by 1993, underlines the extent of this explosion. In reality, this shift meant that whilst one in three marriages ended in divorce during the early 1980s (Haste 286), two fifths of all marriages were failing by 1995 (Joan Smith 15). Moreover, one estimate from the mid-1990s suggested that Britain had the highest rate of marital breakdown in Europe (Joan Smith, 15).

⁶³ From Newsnight, BBC 2, 23rd October, 1998.

The fact that so many marriages were ending in divorce by the second half of the twentieth century had two main repercussions. There was a fundamental questioning of marriage itself. Changes, such as the more commonplace remarriage of divorcees, necessitated that matrimony ceased to be conceptualised as an indissoluble life-long union between two individuals. The meaning of the marriage promise itself therefore became redefined and people's expectations of marriage changed. Stone remarked in the late 1970s, for example, that "aspirations for sexual and emotional fulfilment through marriage have mushroomed" (Stone 423). In particular, there was a growing awareness of the legal inequalities governing marriage deriving from the double standard on which it was based (see Thomas, 199-202). Even sixty years after divorce became legalised, for example, the law still enshrined double sexual standards, keeping wives at a disadvantage to their husbands in suing on grounds of adultery (Joan Smith 18). The pressure for greater sexual equality between spouses continued throughout the twentieth century, as evidenced by the abolition of the law granting English and Welsh husbands immunity from prosecution for marital rape, in 1991 (Joan Smith 18).

The growing divorce rate also led people to question whether marriage still had a place as a social institution. By the 1960s there was increasing recognition of viable alternatives to marriage, such as cohabitation. The latter kind of union had significantly increased by the 1980s and 90s when "a sizeable minority of couples . . . [began] to work out ways of living which don't include formal marriage" (Joan Smith 18). Loss of faith in marriage also inevitably resulted in fewer people getting married. By the 1980s adultery was perceived to be increasing, as the "traditional" (i.e. nuclear) family became a diminishing proportion of the population, many more children being raised within single parent families by parents who had either never been married, or were separated or divorced (Haste 271). By 1993 "the number of weddings fell below 300,000 for the first time in 40 years" (Joan Smith 16).

By questioning the very institution of marriage itself, people inevitably started to question the validity of any distinction drawn between children born inside or outside of wedlock. As well as being challenged by sheer weight of numbers, the term "illegitimate" had, to a certain extent, ceased to be a meaningful description of the circumstances of a given child's birth. For whilst a parent no longer married might bring up a legitimate child within a single parent family, a child officially deemed "illegitimate" might be brought up by parents in a committed relationship within the context of a nuclear family.

Most social historians use data on pre-nuptial pregnancy and illegitimacy rates to evaluate the sexual implications of changes in courtship customs prior to approximately 1965. However, after this date, many argue that the widespread use of reliable contraception in the form of "the pill", means that out-of-wedlock conceptions cease to be a reliable indicator of sexual activity (Shorter The Making 113). Shorter argues that pre-marital pregnancy rates for the period 1900-1950 indicate a high incidence of pre-marital intercourse (The Making 83, 108-11). Haste corroborates this position, observing that although the illegitimacy rate remained steady during the inter-war years (accounting for 4 to 5 % of all live births), a growing number of premarital conceptions were being masked by marriage (72). She refers to an estimate made by the Register general in 1938-1939, which claimed that one seventh of all children born in England had resulted from extramarital conceptions and that almost 30 % of all mothers at that time, had conceived their first born out of wedlock (Haste 72). These figures, if accurate, suggest that at least a third of women of a childbearing age were having sex outside marriage in these years.

Shorter argues, however, that it was not until the late 1950s that there was a significant change in patterns of sexual behaviour among unmarried people, after which date the majority, rather than minority of individuals, had sex before marriage (The Making 84). Clearly, this increase in "unmarried" sex can be partly attributed to the declining popularity of marriage itself. However, Shorter also argues that the 1960s witnessed "major discontinuities in the erotic life of the average unmarried woman", tentatively suggesting that what he terms the "second sexual revolution" erupted in this decade and continued into the early 1970s (The Making 111). He speculates that "in the 1960s the chances were very high that young people who felt attached to each other would extend their relationship into the sexual domain. Even those who did not feel very attached would probably do so as well" (The Making 119). His argument rests largely upon the soaring illegitimacy and pre-marital pregnancy rates, even at the point where contraception was becoming more reliable and accessible than ever before (Shorter, The Making 111-12). He observes that "until the pill began its work, the revolution in postwar sexual behavior would leave unmistakable path-marks in the official demographic statistics" (The Making 112).

An important aspect of this twentieth century change in sexual behaviour was that a younger age group began to engage in sex outside of marriage.⁶⁴ Shorter views statistics relating to pre-nuptial pregnancy and illegitimacy rates during

⁶⁴Certainly, the steady lowering of the age at first intercourse throughout the twentieth century, seems to corroborate this suggestion (Haste 271).

this period as part of the wider "trend to liberation of the young from sexual controls imposed by the family and the surrounding community" (Shorter, The Making 119). As a result, "sexual activity has changed from a dangerous and marginal aspect of relations between the unmarried, to a central part of mating and dating" (The Making 119, 79). Consequently, more young women of the 1960s and 70s were willing to have sex before marriage than ever before (Shorter, The Making 84). It was perhaps the realisation of this change in attitude which led to alarmist fears of illegitimacy rates amongst teenagers in the 1960s, even though the rate amongst 15-19 year olds accounted for 18.6 % of all live births in 1960, compared to 17.8 % in 1938 (Haste 164). However, eventually the illegitimacy rate amongst this age group did dramatically increase as "sex outside marriage became the common experience of most adolescents and young adults" by the 1980s and 90s (Haste 271; cf. Farrell 1-2).⁶⁵ Stone comments that:

pre-marital sexual experimentation has become increasingly respectable, thanks partly to a dramatic improvement in contraceptive technology which has at last more or less successfully isolated sexual pleasure from procreation, and partly to a shift of attitude to one favourable first to contraception and now also to abortion. (Stone 423)

KEY ASPECTS OF ILLEGITIMACY-RELATED FOLK NARRATIVES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE SOCIAL EXPERIENCE OF ILLEGITIMACY BETWEEN 1850 - PRESENT DAY

The Diffusion of Sexual Knowledge and Birth Control

To unravel some of the questions posed in Chapter 3, Methodology, it is important to begin by establishing whether the lack of contraception represented in narrative accurately mirrors the actual state of affairs as regards contraception from 1850 ^{to the} present day amongst those cast as the central protagonists of these narratives. Consequently, the following discussion considers the likely level of sexual and contraceptive knowledge amongst young, unmarried men and women from the lower-to-middle classes as well as assessing their access to, and use of available contraceptive means at any one time.

⁶⁵ Shorter attributes this rise in teenage illegitimacy to naïvety over contraception, refusal to marry fathers.

It is essential to recognise that during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, "abortion and contraception were fused in the popular mind in the single category of birth control" and that, in a sense, abortion therefore remained one of the most widespread means of "birth control" until well into the twentieth century (Brookes 2; cf. McLaren, *Reproductive* 107-11; Lewis, *Birth* 199). In fact, a clear distinction only began to be drawn when, in the 1920s, leading proponents of the birth control movement pushed to make contraception acceptable. This fusion of ideas was partly due to the fact that women traditionally "regulated their fertility in a number of ways primarily oriented around menstruation", rather than around intercourse, or a particular developmental stage of an unborn child (Brookes 3). Whereas "experience suggested that not every act of intercourse led to pregnancy", a delayed period was often "a sure sign of something amiss" (Brookes 3). Consequently, from a contemporary perspective, certain traditional methods of fertility control, such as taking a large dose of laxatives to pre-empt menstruation, could, depending upon circumstances, either be regarded as a contraceptive measure (i.e. as a method which might prevent the process of conception) or as a method of procuring abortion (see Knight 58).

Contrary to popular opinion, contraceptive "barrier" methods did exist prior to the twentieth century, although the animal intestine sheath was, "the only appliance to acquire commercial status before the late nineteenth century" (Peel 113-114). Interestingly, this early form of condom was not initially marketed as a contraceptive, its function as such being considered "incidental to its primary purpose of protection against venereal infection" (Peel 113). When the manufacture and retail of commercial contraception did get underway by the 1880s, it was predominantly used "amongst professional and middle-class sections of the population" (Peel 115).

This is because, even for the two-thirds of families who were not below the poverty line at the end of the nineteenth century, the average wage still dictated that the sheath was far too expensive for the majority of people (Knight 59; Brookes 3, 42). The lower classes therefore depended on unreliable non-barrier contraceptive methods, such as abstinence, withdrawal or the "safe" period, which Knight argues was "anything but safe since it was thought to occur mid-way between periods, the very time of maximum fertility" (59; Peel 115; McLaren "Not A" 269). All these methods depended heavily upon mutual self-control and male co-operation (Brookes 52). Peel concludes that "the accumulated wisdom of the nineteenth-century birth control movement amounted to very little" (116). However, at least in theory, an upper class man or

woman was therefore far better equipped to minimise the risk of themselves or their partners conceiving an illegitimate child prior to the First World War.

Nonetheless, McLaren's study suggests the possibility that people in late eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain felt that they had a greater degree of control over their own capacity to reproduce, than they appear to have exercised by modern standards (Reproductive 13-11, 55-87, 149-50). There is ample evidence to suggest that people believed they could promote, as well as prevent conception during this period. Peel notes, for example, the abundance of "cures" for impotence (as well as VD) amongst the "flood of dubious sexual literature and quack remedies" advertised by the early Victorians in outlets such as the penny Press (113-15). Folklore relating to human fertility was also passed on through oral transmission. Precautions such as drinking an infusion of a shrub known as "Old Man" in North Devon, was said to prevent pregnancy (Theo Brown, "84th Report" 269), whereas in late nineteenth century Lincolnshire the same was said of having sex when the tide was coming in, or stealing a penny from a dead man's hand (Sutton 53; 92). Conversely, remedies for curing infertility (or enhancing fertility) included, in Wessex, touching a dead man's hand (See Hole, English 59 and Radford 124-26. Cf. Udal Symonds 142). Such measures presumably allowed the individual to assume a pro-active role, regardless of whether they actually worked.

One technological development - the vulcanisation of raw rubber in 1844 - had a radical effect on the mass production of contraceptive devices including condoms, diaphragms and pessaries, during the twentieth century (Peel 117). However, during the first quarter of the twentieth century the lower classes continued to depend upon unreliable methods such as withdrawal, abstention or the "safe" period (Brookes 42). This was largely because other forms were still too expensive for low income groups to afford and were perceived as having a high rate of failure (Brookes 58).

Although the growing demand for contraceptives during this period meant the number of retail outlets increased and existing products became more varied, it seems that "few significant innovations in technique or improvements in manufacture" occurred during this period (Peel 119). In fact, the opposition to birth control was so strong at the beginning of the twentieth century that anyone found publishing information on birth control or sending contraceptive appliances through the post was liable to prosecution (Knight 58). Even so, surgical stores which had become commonplace in most sizeable towns, used local and national newspapers to advertise their products (Peel 119). In the

meantime, pharmacists, who supplied a range of drugs which might be used to procure abortion, also "extended their activities to include, in addition to chemical spermicides, a wide range of contraceptive hardware" (Knight 55; Peel 119).

Although developing female methods of contraception had been available since the 1880s, these were expensive and often required space and time to prepare. Consequently, their use was therefore limited to those with financial means and a degree of privacy (Knight 59). Brookes argues that by the 1914-1918 war, birth control had started spreading to the lower classes. Largely due to fears about venereal disease, free supplies of condoms had been issued to the armed forces in the First World War (120). Perhaps as a result, the popularity of the sheath (the cheapest mechanical method of male or female contraception) increased amongst those who were able to afford contraception. Gittins observes that by the 1930s, "sheaths were available virtually everywhere" (Gittins, "Married" 58).

Only after the Second World War did the real explosion in the sale and manufacture of the sheath occur. Now made of latex, it was far a more effective and attractive option (Peel 122). However, in terms of popularity, this was later eclipsed by chemical contraception, in the form of "the pill", an oral contraceptive for women, which flooded the market during the 1960s. Both these methods of contraception have been refined and developed, continuing in widespread use into the 1990s. Other female contraceptive devices such as the coil and the diaphragm have also been able to compete with existing measures, having been made more reliable and safer to use.

A specific set of difficulties were encountered by individuals trying to avoid becoming pregnant as a result of "unmarried" sex in the South West 1850-present day. During the nineteenth century, in particular, contraceptive knowledge was spread largely by informal networks. Though regional evidence shows some variation, it is probable that these excluded lower-class, young, unmarrieds of both sexes (Gittins, "Women's" 88-89). Certainly, evidence relating to abortion, suggests that knowledge about remedies was primarily shared amongst married women with families (Knight 58-60, 62; Gittins, "Women's" 88-89). In an atmosphere where so many sanctions existed against illegitimate pregnancy in the South West, it seems particularly unlikely that young men and women would have been given advice about contraceptive techniques until they married.

Perhaps the most important obstacle, particularly in the early twentieth century, was the strength of taboo surrounding the subject of bodily functions (such as menstruation), sex, and reproduction (Roberts 104; Humphries "Forbidden" (TV)). Evidence suggests that this was prevalent among all social classes (Gittins "Married" 54). Early in the twentieth century, sex education in schools, for those who did attend, was non-existent (Farrell 122-159, Humphries "Forbidden" (TV)). As very little information could be gleaned from text books, even by the 1930s (Haste 72-73), all sexual knowledge had to be obtained either through direct experience or through other channels, such as friends, workmates, family or the media (Gittins, "Married" 54; cf. Farrell 34-81, 100-121, 160-170). As one West Somerset woman, May Balkwill, put it, "my mother never told us anything. In fact I was really naïve when I got married, leave alone courting. I didn't know anything" (WT. NT tape 10). She repeatedly referred to this extreme level of sexual naïvety throughout the interview (cf. III:017:96). In all areas, the most appalling sexual ignorance existed even amongst those who were married (see Sutton 33, 50, 91; Gittins, "Married" 54-55; Humphries "In Disgrace"). The fact that many couples hardly knew how or why a woman became pregnant, or how even the baby would be born, increased the unlikelihood of those engaging in pre-marital sex being able to control their fertility (Gittins, "Married" 55). Evidence tends to contradict the assumption of many parents who thought that by keeping their children in a state of sexual ignorance they would prevent them from becoming pregnant (cf. Leap and Hunter 106-7).

Gittins tentatively suggests from a small scale study in Essex during the inter-war period, that a correlation existed "between the type and location of employment prior to marriage and the degree of awareness and knowledge of reproductive functions" ("Married" 55). Her data indicates that, for women, the age of fourteen until marriage was a crucial time for acquiring knowledge of sexual, reproductive and contraceptive matters. Her most pertinent findings in terms of the narratives discussed in this thesis, relate to domestic servants. Gittins argues that in contrast to those who were employed in environments outside the home, such as offices and factories, "those women whose employment was home-centred, especially resident domestic servants, went into marriage with virtually no knowledge of reproduction, much less awareness of the possibility of controlling it" ("Married" 55). This partly is explained according to the taboo on discussion of sexual matters in the mistress/servant relationship as well as the more hierarchical nature of relationships in this occupation. Whilst "work colleagues or friends, who were often older and married" were the main sources of information for women working outside the

home, those in domestic service had a lesser exposure to a variety of people with different attitudes and values, or to mass media, such as articles on birth control in women's magazines ("Married" 55-57). Perhaps significant, friends were still the most popular source of information about reproduction in the 1960s and '70s (Farrell 56).

It was also difficult for unmarried people to obtain reliable knowledge about contraceptive methods during this period. Derek Thompson refers, for example, to the folklore associated with condoms between the war, stating that "the widely believed and oft-repeated legend that there was a 'dud' in every packet was enough to discourage most people" (40; cf. Peel 118). Even during the 1940s, when formal sex education was given in approximately a third of secondary schools, teaching was unhelpful in this respect and "sex education was left to voluntary organizations, most of them offshoots of the social purity movement concerned to bind sex education to religious morality" (Haste 72-73). Partly out of necessity, sex slowly began to be discussed more openly during the Second World War because of fears about the spread of venereal disease. Many therefore first experienced sex education as part of their training in "moral hygiene" (Haste 112).

In addition to the problems posed by lack of sexual knowledge and education, evidence from oral testimonies suggests that unmarrieds experienced some considerable embarrassment in purchasing contraceptive devices from local chemists. Derek Thompson, refers to the fear of "getting found out" when young men bought condoms in Preston between the wars and their great efforts at concealment (40). This seems to have been partly because the use of contraceptive devices was less widespread than it is today. This embarrassment was, as Thompson implies, exacerbated in the kinds of tight knit community which are also prevalent in the South West, where an individual would be well known. A related problem was the difficulty of obtaining information about contraception in rural areas such as the South West. Knight consequently suggests that birth control was less frequently attempted in these districts (Knight 58). Even when birth control clinics were established in 1921 and started to issue the cap, the few that did exist tended to be positioned in large urban areas and refused to deal with unmarried women (Gittins "Married" 58; cf. Lewis, Birth 212; Humphries "Forbidden" (TV)).

The official standpoint also made it difficult for those engaging in sex outside of marriage to obtain contraception. Even when the Ministry of Health indicated official acceptance of birth control in 1931, contraceptive advice could be given

to married women, for medical reasons only (Gittins, "Married" 58; cf. Lewis, Birth 206-07). Even with the advent of reliable oral contraception in late 1950s, women were initially prescribed the pill only if they were already married (Brookes 153; Haste 205).

Sanctions Against the Begetting of Illegitimate Children

A sizeable proportion of all the narratives which are the subject of this thesis tend to imply that, by contrast with the begetting of children within marriage, the begetting of illegitimate children is something for which both men and women may be punished. In the minority of cases the punishment of a particular parent via official means is demonstrated within the action of the narrative, as in a variant of "The Brisk Young Butcher", where the father is fined by a judge (III:029:I:97). More frequently, an individual's actions and words are used to insinuate that they will be (or have already been) chastised by some social means, such as shaming (e.g. "Catch Me if You Can"). However, most narratives do not describe a punishment in any literal sense. Rather, through unfolding the action they appear to "punish" the individual in an artistic sense as, for instance, when a broken hearted protagonist dies. A particular feature of these narratives is that punishment is seen to be heavily weighted against young, unmarried women, rather than their lovers or seducers. As with the issue of contraception, it is therefore important to uncover what bearing the repercussions of begetting illegitimate children as represented in narrative have upon the actual experience of illegitimacy from 1850 to the present day.

Official Sanctions

After the mid-nineteenth century, the distinction between "social" and "official" punishment was subject to social change, as rural society entered the transitional period between being controlled by three distinct legal authorities, and "one all-powerful state system" (Bettey 106). As the jurisdiction of the Church Courts, over what would now be regarded as secular matters, began to diminish, there was a corresponding decline in particular types of ecclesiastical sanction directed against those responsible for out-of-wedlock pregnancies and illegitimate births (Bettey 110). Stone notes, for example, that "shame punishments for fornication or prenuptial conceptions" such as the bareheaded, and barefooted public confessional used in eighteenth-century Cornwall (Michael Williams, Curiosities 103), were reduced to a "thin trickle" after 1770

(Stone 400).⁶⁶ Another ecclesiastical sanction, withholding of the rite of churching from unmarried mothers, had severely declined by the mid-nineteenth century, its impact also being lessened by the changing significance of the ritual itself (see Rushton; Fildes 68-107). Church punishments have therefore been classified as social, rather than official sanctions, during the period under consideration.

Mothers, rather than fathers, of illegitimate children were kept at a legal and financial disadvantage under the New Poor Law of 1834 and the Bastardy Act of 1872. Under this first law, the system for dealing with poverty changed. Relief was now provided by the union workhouse and conditions were made intentionally unattractive (Betty 123; Teichman 66). Betty remarks how "These workhouses were loathed and feared by the poor with a hatred far more fierce and bitter than had been the case with the parish poorhouse" (123). Although the New Poor Law repealed "all statutes empowering magistrates to imprison unmarried mothers", the woman herself now became obliged to shoulder financial responsibility for the child, even though the lower female wage meant she could often least afford it (Teichman 65). Were she unable to do so, liability was shifted to the parish or borough (Teichman 65). In addition, "suits for maintenance of an illegitimate child [now] had to go to Quarter Sessions, a costly and time-consuming process" and the mother's assertion that a particular individual was the father of her child must be "corroborated by other evidence" (Teichman 65).

The latter stipulation remained a particularly strong deterrent against going to court, as women were obliged to suffer the embarrassment of revealing intimate details in public (Rose 116). Even women who bore this "shame and expense . . . rarely got a favourable judgement", because "women who had been correct and discreet in their relations with the man had no proper witnesses to call" (Gillis 138). The law of 1834 also decreed that if maintenance were recovered, no money was to be spent on, or entrusted to, the mother herself. This, in addition to the fact that the set rate for maintenance was inadequate and was not increased in line with the rate of inflation, was another disincentive to litigation, leaving unmarried mothers at a severe disadvantage (Rose 116; Gillis 138).

⁶⁶ Vestiges of these early, officialised punishments, may have endured (see Tongue, Somerset 148-49).

Interestingly, Jean Robin concludes from her case study of illegitimacy in the parish of Colyton, Devon, that "the behaviour of the Guardians of the Poor . . . reveals no evidence that indigent bastard-bearers were treated any differently from other poor people during the 1850s and 1860s" in an attempt at moral reform (336-37). In fact, they had the same rights as married women in terms of outdoor relief at childbirth, and other forms of assistance, such as the provision of coffins, any discrimination being "social rather than economic" (336-37). Robin is keen to emphasise that deserted wives, poor widows and orphans also ended up in the workhouse and that only the new legislation in the 1870s, facilitated greater "official" discrimination (336-37).

Under the Bastardy Act of 1872, the law was amended, theoretically offering more assistance to the unmarried mother in relation to affiliation proceedings and raising the maximum rate of maintenance by the father "to 5 shillings a week until the child was 16, instead of 13 as before", even if the woman married a third party (Rose 115). However, for similar reasons, the act does not seem to have encouraged more women to go to court, with less than a sixth of all new unmarried mothers in England and Wales making successful claims for maintenance from the fathers of their children (Rose 115).

Between approximately 1850 - 1950 it is clear that certain members of the clergy withheld the rite of baptism from illegitimate children. This refusal was partly used as a means of demonstrating official disapproval, in relation to certain types of sexual behaviour, the parson perhaps being "aware of the exemplary use he might make of the event when he came to preach to his flock about the sanctity of marriage" (Laslett 103). By drawing "a thick, black line around what is permissible", the withholding of this rite would tend to label the behaviour of certain individuals as "deviant", presumably also being intended to function as a deterrent (Laslett 102). In some cases, the refusal to baptise provided an incentive for the child's parents to marry, where the granting of this rite was conditional upon them doing so (cf. Philpotts, Widecombe Fair 125).

However, evidence from the South West of England suggests that many illegitimate children were still baptised during this period. Jean Robin's study of Illegitimacy in Colyton, Devon, also explicitly states that between 1851-1881 that 108 of the total 1,939 child baptised were illegitimate (309). Robin's alternative sources of data, such as burial books and census returns, do point to 42 out of the 150 illegitimate children born between 1851-1861 in Colyton, being excluded from the baptismal registers. However, it is impossible to

evaluate the significance of this finding because no comparative data is provided for lack of baptism amongst legitimate children ("Illegitimacy" 308-09).

The oral testimonies of two South West informants, Charlie Hill and Wray Tucker, confirmed that refusal to baptise was still used as a social sanction against illegitimacy during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Charlie commented, "a lot of children, you see, were never christened in those days. I mean . . . to be blunt, . . . they were known as bastards" (III:010:I:95). Wray corroborated this assertion, more tentatively stating "if you were . . . illegitimate you, . . . [I] think I'm right in saying that you couldn't get baptised" (III:020:96). Emphasising the detrimental effect upon mothers, Charlie further explained "in some cases, the rector wouldn't christen them. You see there was a big sort of a . . . there again it's wrong . . . the chap was as responsible as the girl was, but . . . the girl carried the stigma" (III:010:I:95). Hence he implied that the refusal to baptise had a more detrimental effect on mothers, rather than fathers, of illegitimate children.

Charlie then went on to cite a specific instance, "there was a private school at North Tawton [Dartmoor], and this girl, she had an illegitimate child. Well, you see, the rector there, he wouldn't christen it" (III:010:I:95). Having been repeatedly questioned about the date of this occurrence, he commented during a subsequent interview "I'm talking about the rectors now that are in their seventies and eighties years of age" (i.e. practising from approx. 1935-45 onwards) (III:010:I:95). This may explain why a third Dartmoor informant, Dave German, being approximately twenty years younger than Charlie and Wray, could not recollect any such discrimination.

The potentially grave implications believed to result from this ecclesiastic sanction can be better appreciated by considering the symbolic importance of baptism itself during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. On one level, baptism marked the social recognition of a new-born child and its acceptance into the church and community. Hence, not being baptised symbolically represented a form of social ostracism. More importantly, in being baptised (i.e. dedicated to God), the child became "christianised". This process was sometimes rather literally interpreted in terms of the rite itself, during which, according to nineteenth and early twentieth century folk belief in the South West region, the devil was believed to physically depart from the child (Crossing Folklore 17; Hewett, Nummits 56; Dunsford; Palmer, Folklore 31). Baptism therefore both "saved" and protected from the forces of evil in life, as well as after death. Hence, the unbaptised child remained in a state of spiritual peril,

potentially being at risk of eternal damnation in the event of death (cf. O'Connor).

Ill-effects resulting from the refusal to baptise a child are made more explicit in certain strands of local legend and superstitious belief relating to the unbaptised child. Courtney notes, for example, how during the early 1800s, such children were "said to turn, when they died, into piskies; they gradually went through many transformations at each change, getting smaller until at last they became "Meryons" (ants) and finally disappeared (Cornish Feasts 125; cf. stillborn children, Deane and Shaw 92). Bray, writing in 1838, also notes how

the elders amongst the more knowing peasantry of Devon will invariably tell you (if you ask them what pixies really may be) that these native spirits are the souls of infants, who were so unhappy as to die before they had received the Christian rite of baptism (Bray, Vol. 1 Traditions 172).

Crossing, writing at the turn-of-the nineteenth century, also alludes to the existence of this one-time belief amongst "the peasantry" (Folklore 73). Not only were these other-world beings destined to live in solitary, "liminal" places, but were also believed to derive certain supernatural powers from the devil (Bray 181).

Tongue claims to have been told by an elderly Exmoor woman in 1930, that unchristened children were buried in a particular section of the churchyard (called Chrysamer), to save them from becoming "spunkies" (Tongue, Somerset 146).⁶⁷ These are defined as Will O' the wisps⁶⁸, which are, "believed to be the souls of unbaptised children, doomed to wander until judgement day", a Somerset belief also recorded by Palmer (Tongue, Somerset 93-94; cf. Palmer, Oral 88). Hence, clearly these unbaptised children received a similar fate to those in Devon and Cornwall, according to the vestiges of nineteenth century folk belief. The souls of unbaptised babies were also at one time believed to be transformed into butterflies or moths in parts of the South West - having a long established reputation in folklore as soul images (Hole, English 7; Tongue, Somerset 58; Palmer, Folklore 30).⁶⁹ Courtney's assertion that moths used to be called "piskies" in some parts of Cornwall, represents an interesting fusion of ideas regarding the unbaptised (Courtney, Cornish Feasts 125).

⁶⁷ For connection between punkie and spunkie see Palmer, Oral 88.

⁶⁸ A flame-like phosphorescence caused by the combustion of gases from decaying matter, particularly in marshy ground (Palmer, Oral 88).

⁶⁹ Repeated in Radford 77.

The Dartmoor legend of the Yeth Hounds (or "wish" hounds)⁷⁰, who hunted over the moor with the Devil, also emphasised the most sinister repercussions of children not being baptised (Hole, English 7; cf. Westward 39-41, 188). However, the tale appears to have been in a "shadowy state" in oral tradition by the early twentieth century (Crossing, Folklore 53-54; Gordon 24; Brown "53rd Report"). Theo Brown explains how:

It was believed that either the hounds were chasing up the souls of children who had not been baptised before they died, or that they were actually the transformed souls of unbaptised babies presumably chasing up their negligent parents: both equally unacceptable notions these days. (Devon 120, cf. "Stag" 107)

One of the practical ramifications of not being baptised, was being debarred from burial in consecrated ground, apart from in exceptional cases. This seems to have been common practice, even during the early twentieth century, and tended to reinforce the importance of the rite of baptism itself (Binmore III:014:96; Bricknell III:015:96; Tucker III:020:96). Hole gives the belief that the unbaptised were "thought to be shut out from heaven" as the rationale for this exclusion (English 7). However, the example provided by Ruth Tongue, suggests rather than the act of burying, or not burying a person in consecrated ground, itself determined whether or not eternal peace and salvation extended to that individual (see Chapter 7). Wray Tucker also stated his belief that at one time the church would not marry illegitimate children, but unfortunately there is a lack of evidence with which to corroborate this assertion (III:020:96).

The most stringent measure against mothers of illegitimate children during the twentieth century was the Mental Deficiency Act of 1913, which

gave local authorities powers to certify pregnant women who were homeless, destitute or "immoral", many women were detained in reformatories or mental hospitals for long periods, often with little hope of rehabilitation, or even escape, as a draconian punishment for their moral lapse. (Haste 72)⁷¹

Around 10,000 women were sent to asylums under this legislation (Humphries "Forbidden" (TV)). As evidence confirms that it was often the families of the expectant mothers who instigated their institutional confinement, such measures should also be rightly regarded as social sanctions. As one ex-nurse from Lincolnshire explained "parents or relatives of the unmarried mother could say that she was insane and then no formalities were necessary to admit them

⁷⁰ See Blaen, "A Survey" 156-164.

⁷¹ Some of these institutions were clearly workhouses, converted into psychiatric hospitals (Leap and Hunter, 112).

into a mental institution" (Sutton 81; cf. Humphries "Forbidden" (TV)). Sometimes this was done in order to protect the family name (see Leap and Hunter 111-12). Evidence of under-age⁷² or pre-marital sex alone was enough grounds to have women admitted, even as late as the 1940s, such behaviour being deemed sufficient proof of mental imbalance (Humphries "Forbidden" (TV)). A variety of shock treatments was used on inmates classified as "feeble minded" or "moral imbeciles" (Humphries "Forbidden" (TV)).

Pat Barker, singer of "Died for Love", remembered the Mental Deficiency Act being enforced against unmarried mothers-to-be in Devon. She recollected that these women were sent to the Western Lodge Hospital, a mental hospital in Crediton, where many of them eventually became completely institutionalised (cf. Sutton 77-78). Institutionalisation was so great a national problem that even in 1959, when the act was repealed, medical opinion advised they many unmarried mothers should not be released (Humphries "Forbidden" (TV); Leap and Hunter 112). Leap and Hunter also mention "After 1927, the Poor Law authorities had new powers that entitled them to detain those young unmarried women who were in receipt of poor relief when their children were born and classified as 'mentally defective'. In practice, this meant that many young women were locked away for life" (111).

The state had a policy of inaction during the first half of the twentieth century, which meant that they took no responsibility for illegitimate children or their parents either financially, or in terms of their welfare. This effectively constituted a sanction against illegitimacy, as "provision for unmarried mothers was left almost entirely in the hands of voluntary organizations, mainly philanthropic bodies whose aim was moral reclamation" (Haste 129). The Second World War (1939-1945) facilitated change in this respect. Haste describes how:

The war entered the fabric of everyone's lives, disrupted the continuity of family life and offered new opportunities, experiences and choices to individuals released from the normal sanctions on sexual behaviour. Expectations of courtship as well as the certainties of marriage and family life were tested under extreme conditions. (Haste 99)

Massive social shifts in population occurred as a result of war. In 1944, for instance, approximately 33 % of the male working population was enlisted, many for long periods of up to five years (Haste 99). Alliances formed between local women and soldiers stationed in Britain also brought about demographic change (see p.154-55).The state's policy of inaction in relation to illegitimacy

⁷²The age of consent for women was raised to 16 years in 1885 (Rose 117).

gradually began to change during this period, partly because there was a growing recognition that wartime disruption, had helped to create the problems posed by increasing numbers of unmarried mothers (Haste 130). It was therefore only right that "the Government should take responsibility, and evolve a policy to deal with it" (Haste 130). The first major change in this respect came as a result of the government's inquiry into the problems arising from illegitimacy, at the hands of the Advisory Committee on the Welfare of Mothers and Young Children in 1943 (Haste 130). As a result, "welfare authorities [were made] responsible for the care of unmarried mothers and their children", trained social workers being appointed to attend to the welfare of illegitimate children (Haste 130). This shift towards state responsibility was fundamentally important as it "was the first time there had been any national policy on the issue, and it shifted illegitimacy from the realm of sin and punishment into an issue of public welfare, care and humane support" (Haste 130-31).

Social Sanctions

A working-class woman delivering an illegitimate child could expect to have her choice of lying-in wards limited to the workhouse (Rose 32). Chamberlain and Richardson acknowledge that "there were some lying in hospitals and a few lying in wards in voluntary hospitals or dispensaries" for women of this class, who were typically refused help by most practising doctors as "unprofitable cases". However, these institutions "required letters of admission, and discriminated against unmarried mothers" (33; cf. Rose 46).

In her study of "Illegitimacy in Colyton, 1851-1881", Jean Robin carefully examines whether the fact of a woman having had an illegitimate child "would militate against marriage" to a man who was not the father of the child, in cases where the child survived (Robin, "Illegitimacy" 314). This acknowledged prejudice appears to have provided the rationale for a legal revision under the Bastardy Act of 1872, whereby the father's maintenance payments for his illegitimate child, were no longer affected by the mother's subsequent marriage to a third party (Rose 115). Robin found that:

we can only be relatively sure that the mother married the father of her illegitimate child in 15 per cent of the marriages; while in more than a third (38 per cent) we can be nearly certain that she did not. In these cases, bearing an illegitimate child fathered by one man did not prevent marriage to another. (314-15)

She also discovered that "women whose bastards survived were more likely to marry than those whose offspring died" (316). This could be seen as particularly

surprising, given that the "Guardians of the Poor were by the 1870's ruling that the husband in such a marriage must support his wife's bastard child" (316). Nevertheless, Robin proceeds to argue that statistical evidence still points to the mothers of illegitimate children being hampered in marriage. This was because she "experienced a waiting period of four to five years between bearing her first offspring and finding a husband, and saw her contemporaries who had not had children marrying before her" (316). Such women also tended towards extremes by comparison with their peers, marrying men either significantly older or younger than themselves. An example provided by Ruth Tongue, relating to the 1830s, demonstrates how in such cases marriage to a much senior man could be part of a practical strategy (Robin 317; Tongue Chime 35-41). Whilst the woman hoped to gain security from such a union, her husband would have an active wife to care for him in old age.

Evidence suggests that the custom of rough music⁷³, which had been long-established in the South West of England by the nineteenth century, was also used as a social sanction against individuals begetting illegitimate children. This extended to situations in which an individual, by their actions, might be liable to beget an illegitimate child (Ingram). Used in its wider sense, this term refers to a variety of related rituals, by which the community sought to comment upon the actions of particular individuals, typically with a view to causing humiliation (Ingram 81; see E.P.Thompson, "Rough" 509). Hence, this set of shaming rituals traditionally provided an informal vehicle for the expression of social disapproval.⁷⁴

An examination of Rough music rituals in different parts of England reveals considerable regional variation in terms of their forms and the type of occasion for which they were used. Contrasting forms of the ritual, inspired by different kinds of offence, were also practised in the South West of England, at the same point in time (Brown "The Stag"; Blaen "A Survey"). In attempting to create a typology of Westcountry rough musicings, the Devon folklorist, Angela Blaen concludes that they "loosely fall into three categories; **skimmingtons**, **mock hunts** and the **use of effigies**", but acknowledges that "it is often difficult to separate the various activities and their descriptions" ("A Survey" 133).

Unfortunately, Blaen's detailed study is not primarily concerned with examining the social provocations for rough music in this regional area, but rather in

⁷³ Alternative referred to as charivaris (e.g. Ingram 99).

⁷⁴ However this was not exclusively the case, certain forms of rough music having a more festive connection, or being used in a celebratory capacity (see Thompson 94-96; 483. Rowse 9).

comparing the ritual as documented in historical sources, with its representation in the fictional works of selected Westcountry authors. E.P. Thompson's more general study of rough musicings in England, from data of his own collection, is of some assistance in this connection. Thompson divides the causes of rough music into "domestic" or "public" provocations, "domestic" being most relevant to this study ("Rough" 493). This category includes "specific offences against a patriarchal notion of marital roles", such as wives beating husbands; "a number of sexual offences"; and "wife-beating or other ill-treatment of the wife by the husband" ("Rough" 493).

However, as Thompson rightly observes in relation to sexual offences, the data itself is problematic as "contemporary definition of the offence is usually evasive and lacking in specificity" ("Rough" 493). He concludes that the most common provocation of this kind was adultery between two married people, although he also observes that "a noted seducer of young women could be victimised", particularly if he were married ("Rough" 493). Having evaluated all the relevant scholarship to date, including the writings of Violet Alford, Arnold Van Gennep and Fortier-Beaulieu, E.P. Thompson concludes that there are severe methodological problems in using their data to accurately discern the comparative importance of different types of offences occasioning rough music. Hence, with the available evidence, it is impossible to estimate the actual incidence of rough music as a social sanction against the begetting of illegitimate children.

Nevertheless, a number of instances are alluded to by individuals writing about rough musicings in the South West of England, where this may well have been the case. The writer Henry Williamson, who lived in Devon for two lengthy periods during this century, is the only person to explicitly state that rough music was used in this connection, implicitly during the late nineteenth century. In his "factional" work, Life in a Devon Village (1945), he comments:

Rough music had gone out of the parish life. It used to be given outside the cottages of people who were disliked: such as a single man who got a young woman with child and denied it, or a married man who neglected a sick and subdued wife for another woman. (159)

Hence, this account suggests that rough music served a dual purpose in announcing the illegitimate paternity of a particular individual, as well as voicing social disapproval. This example is interesting, in that this form of social censure implies greater condemnation of the man, rather than the woman concerned (cf. Keightly 219). The emphasis on her youth, may be a significant factor in this respect.

Ruth Tongue provides three additional examples in her book Somerset Folklore, where the seduction of the woman concerned may well have resulted in pregnancy. The following account clearly refers to a form of rough music practised during the nineteenth century. The similarity between the elements described, and those comprising the ritualised "stag hunt" recorded in other accounts, tends to vouch for the authenticity of the following testimony:

The only instance of this I know of was when I was a child, and occurred, i think, on the Somerset-Devon border. The married man who had led a "maid" astray was serenaded with tin cans, saucepan lids, whistles and sustained shouted scurrility, after which a bowl of blood was poured out on his threshold. *Personal, 1905.* (Tongue, Somerset 181; cf. Brown "The 'Stag-Hunt' ", Blaen "A Survey")

Again, the ritual suggests condemnation of the man, rather than woman concerned. Two additional examples, allegedly recorded by Tongue in 1960, also create a similar impression, one woman from Kingston St. Mary claiming that " 'He ought to be tarred and feathered' is said very promptly over any extra-marital culprit, particularly in the case of a married man and an unmarried girl", the ritual having at one time been used in "nearby hill communities" (Somerset 181). Another woman recounted an instance in Cannington where this actually happened, between approximately 1908-14, to a man who "had seduced a 'maid' " (Somerset 181). However, unfortunately no other South West evidence either confirms the existence of tarring and feathering in the region, or its use to this purpose.

In spite of the lack of references to actual instances where rough music was explicitly said to have been used as a social sanction against the begetting of illegitimate children, there are numerous references to it being applied to sexual relationships between individuals not married to each other (i.e. those at greater risk of having an "illegitimate" conception). Such instances were talked about by two South West informants, Harry Adams, from Isle Abbotts, interviewed by Bob and Jacqueline Patten, and Charlie Hill (see Appendix I). Harry, who died in 1982, recollected how a "skimmetty riot" had been held for a married man from Isle Brewers, who was known to be having an extramarital affair with a widow in the neighbouring village. Harry implies that a straw effigy was made of both parties and was burned outside of both their houses in a wheelbarrow, as a form of social censure. Interestingly, Charlie's second-hand account of rough musicings from his grandmother, seems to imply that it was the male, rather than the female effigy that would be burned, even where two married people were having extramarital affairs with each other. Local terminology for the

effigy also differs, Harry referring to the effigy was a mommet, rather than a "dickey", an expression regarded as having sexual connotations by Charlie Hill.

Another example, sent to the Devonshire Association ⁱⁿ the 1930s, provides a remarkably similar account of a form of rough music involving effigy burning practised in nineteenth century Chumleigh, a Dartmoor village, on November the 5th. The effigy resembled "any evil doer, bad liver, or unpopular person or persons in the village", the example provided being an unmarried couple (Pearse Chope). Hence once again the ritual articulated social condemnation of those in "illicit" sexual relationships, specifically one from which out-of-wedlock, or illegitimate pregnancy might result.

The most important sanction against illegitimacy during the twentieth century seems to be the sense of shame which mothers of illegitimate children incurred. Other measures, such as forcing the woman to give up her illegitimate child for adoption or fostering, tended to reinforce the sense of shame and social unacceptability attached to having a child outside of wedlock. They could also be seen as serving a dual purpose by providing a means whereby the social sanction of shame might be averted, being symptomatic of the extreme stigma attached to illegitimacy itself. They serve as examples of the lengths to which people would go in order to conceal it.

Several different kinds of social sanctions against illegitimacy were mentioned during the interview conducted with South West informants. Wray Tucker, singer of "Barnacle Bill" and "Ball of Yarn", emphasised that even after the Second World War, any woman who had an illegitimate child in his home village of South Zeal, on Dartmoor, was regarded as a social outcast and would be treated accordingly. Consequently, although she would be tolerated, she would not be spoken to. Margaret Palmer, the Exmoor singer of "Don't Tell I Tell 'e", also remembered a close friend's boyfriend insisting that she should not speak to another friend for becoming pregnant outside of wedlock. The ensuing disagreement resulted in the couple breaking up (Ill:001:95). May Balkwill describes a similar sanction against unmarried mothers being encouraged in the village of New Town, in West Somerset. In an interview with the Wren Trust, she gave the following account from her childhood years, during an approximate period 1920-1930:

I remember one girl, who also came from a big family of girls and two boys, [who] lived further up the road. And she "slipped did she not". She got pregnant and she wasn't married . . . they'd say "you mus'n't speak to her, you're not to speak to her". She had to get married, you see, and we couldn't mention her name. The scandal in the street was lovely. All

the ladies were open to their doors talking about "have you heard about so and so". (WT. tape NT10AB)

May's account also draws attention to the malicious gossip incited by any woman having an illegitimate pregnancy. Such gossiping was also remarked upon by Wray Tucker who referred to people "mumblin' behind your back" if a woman who was pregnant got married in white (III:020:96). Denis Hutchings, from Torquay, also noted scandalising as a form of social censure, "strangely enough it was mainly a lot of chat between women, more so than men I might tell you. You would hear the women talking about it, neighbours over the garden wall . . . that's invariably how the news got passed around" (III:012:I:95). This may be why, when Charlie Hill was asked about attitudes towards unmarried mothers, the subject immediately brought to mind his Grandmother's injunction against gossiping (III:005:II:95).

Several South West informants mentioned that a woman in this predicament would be forced to marry the father of her child, a compulsion also mentioned in other parts of the country (cf. Derek Thompson 40). This course of action is alluded to by Ruth Tongue in a local character anecdote concerning a Somerset Grey Witch, at the turn-of-the-century. Rather than helping the informant's aunt to abort, she had instead successfully advised her to "go whoame, thee gurt fule, and tell'n [the father] tew marry 'ee" - the marriage resulting in sixteen children (Somerset 64). This may explain why marriages which had to take place because of pregnancy, were referred to in Devon as a "fo'ced case. (=forced case)" (Abell). Sheila Bricknell, singer of "Died for Love" said of her neighbourhood in Wonford, Exeter, "sometimes I think there might have been a pressure to get married because they would say 'oh she *had* to get married' or you know, that would be the expression that they would say" (III:015:95). Dilly Davis uses a similar turn of phrase (Richards, "Westcountry" 140).⁷⁵ Chris Binmore, from Lypstone village, in East Devon remarked that this measure was applied particularly amongst tight knit country communities. She stated "you would have probably married the chap . . . it would be none of this that you didn't want to marry him. I mean perhaps you'd only gone astray once and got pregnant . . . You would be married, end of story, to make it respectable before a baby was born (III:018:96). Denis Hutchings, however, talks about the pressure to marry in the context of more established relationships, "the thing was that if you were going out with a girl and you got her in to trouble you ended up marrying her, that's what happened most of the time" (III:012:I:95). May Balkwill notes a similar pressure being applied in West Somerset.

⁷⁵ The expression, used in relation to both sexes, is widespread (e.g. Derek Thompson 40).

Confinement to the home could also be used as a sanction by parents against mothers of illegitimate children, although it is not always clear whether this was intended as a punishment or in order to lessen the family's sense of shame (cf. Leap and Hunter 108-09). Wray Tucker described this happening in relation to his married cousin in South Zeal (see p.183) as did May Balkwill regarding the aforementioned neighbour's daughter:

Nobody ever mentioned why she was in disgrace and she was kept home from work. She could only have been about three months [gone]. I guess she wasn't allowed to work. She was kept in the house, you see, until the Welshman came back after the baby was born and they got married. (WT. tape NT10AB)

Whether it was the woman's family, or her employer who debarred her from working, is unclear. Both the refusal to employ and dismissal of those who became pregnant outside of marriage - particularly by one of their male employers - is made more explicit in oral testimony (Sutton 75; cf. Nic Suibhne, "On the" 14). Gwen Faulkner, a West Somerset woman, who was born illegitimate in 1910, also alludes to this predicament. Gwen describes how she went to find her natural mother who, at that time, was employed as a cook by a family in Exeter: "I went up there all on my own at three [years old], all along Polsloe road and knocked on the door and she [Gwen's mother] had a fit when she saw me 'cos they didn't know that she had me you see" (WT. tape 203 NT22A).

Both Chris Binmore and Wray Tucker remembered actual instances where families had thrown their daughters out, other informants having similar recollections (e.g. Denis Hutchings, III:012:I:95). Once "banished" from their homes, Chris claims they were left to the mercy of a grandmother or elder sister, whilst Wray asserts they were instead sent to workhouses, such as the old Castle Hospital in Okehampton (III:018:96; III:020:96). More general memories regarding the harsh conditions and frightening reputation of workhouses are also prevalent amongst numerous oral testimonies (WT. tape 203 NT22A, NT10AB, NT16A; cf. Sutton 74, 78-79). Accounts also confirm that neither of these two practices were confined to the South West, such measures being commonplace in other regional areas including Norfolk and South Wales before the Second World War (cf. Sutton 75; Derek Thompson 40). One Great Yarmouth example, from the 1910s, suggest that mother and child sometimes returned from the workhouse, and were incorporated into the family (Leap and Hunter 110-11).

Homes for unmarried mothers, the first of which was opened in England in 1805, presented one alternative to the workhouse (Teichman 110). The Salvation Army, Church Army and Workhouse between them took in around 10,000 women each year during the 1920s and '30s (Humphries "In Disgrace") Haste describes the treatment of women during the inter-war years, at the hands of these establishments:

Some voluntary or church organizations had a reputation for being as punitive as the workhouse had once been with regimes like those in prison, on which many of them were based. As illegitimacy was an indication of woman's moral failure, these organizations saw their duty as moral reform. Arduous domestic work was considered the appropriate training ground (Haste 72) .

A similar ethos governed the home for unmarried mothers in Exeter, even in the early 1960s. Ken Penney, singer of "Died for Love", said of a friend who was sent there at this time:

[A] horrific story she would tell you about [the] home there in Exeter, that they were made to feel guilty and they were punished. They had to do all the scrubbing, almost like penances, like a Catholicism, to actually overcome the terrible sin. Most of them were encouraged, almost forced, into having their babies adopted and not keeping the babies. (III:002:95)

Interestingly, one such charitable home, The Home of the Good Shepherd in Exeter, has served as the inspiration for supernatural narratives, its former function and reputation being remembered in oral tradition (cf. Dégh, The Memorata 237). A composite narrative provided in a popular publication by the Barbers implies that this home was believed to be haunted by the unmarried mothers themselves (Ghosts 32). Its association in the recent past as a harshly remembered, "unhappy" place thus both stimulates and authenticates its reported hauntings. Unfortunately, the Barbers' source, the anonymous testimonies of "several former employees", is resynthesised in an extremely confusing form.⁷⁶ These Home of the Good Shepherd narratives have therefore been excluded from the more detailed discussion of this genre in Chapter 7, as attitudes implicit in this text are especially hard to fathom.

Similar accounts to Ken Penney's are given in relation to homes for unmarried mothers in other regional areas (cf. Sutton 73-74, 79; Leap and Hunter 110,114; Humphries "In Disgrace") though one report of a Salvation Army home gives a more humane account (Leap and Hunter 113-14). Women who remained with

⁷⁶ Chips Barber was unfortunately unable to provide any clearer transcriptions.

their families, seem to have been under less pressure to give up their children altogether. Sheila Bricknell, stressed that it was more usual for such children to be incorporated into the family, in the Wonford district of Exeter. Denis also remembered this being the most likely scenario during his teens in East Somerset (see below).

Women of all classes in the South West region were sent away by their families in order to conceal both their pregnancies and births. It appears that one Somerset woman was "shunted off" as far as South Africa in the mid 1880's "to avoid a scandal", the child's father being a high society gentleman - perhaps even royalty ("Was Bertie"). Whilst Chris Binmore stated that "some girls disappeared for a time", the baby remaining in the family line, perhaps with an aunt or grandma, Ken Penney mentioned that women in Pennymoor went away "until recent years", women in Exeter leaving as if going on holiday, even in the early 1960s (Binmore III:018:96; Penney III:002:95). Sutton's study of Lincolnshire during the 1930s and '40s suggests, however, that the choice of particular strategies tended to be determined according to social class:

Working class families tended to send or put their daughter away. Their babies were nearly always adopted . . . Rich families had the baby brought up by an aunt and the unmarried mother was said to have had a "love child". (Sutton 74)

Denis Hutchings was confident that a woman might jeopardise her marriage prospects by having an illegitimate child, partly because "I don't think anybody wanted second hand goods" (III:012:1:95). The child itself was seen as a still larger obstacle to marriage than loss of virginity, because if "they'd had the baby . . . [there were] an awful lot of guys that wouldn't want to take on another child, somebody else's child, unfortunately. And I think that's probably the basis for some of these sad songs, 'cause the girls knew the aftermath of becoming pregnant" (III:012:1:95). However, Denis conceded that there were probably men who were exceptions to this rule (cf. Sutton 76). The jeopardising of marriage prospects is also mentioned by Dilly Davis who said about a traveller who became pregnant by a Gorgio⁷⁷ "of course, everybody shunned her. No boys would go with her or anything. . . . it was a long time before anyone would marry her" (Richards, "Westcountry" 140). Both Vic Legg, in his explication of his family song "Catch Me if You Can" (see Chapter 6) and Chris Binmore, in her testimony regarding the fate of her second cousin Olive, who had an illegitimate son by an Irish labourer, seem to corroborate this view. Chris emphasised that "she never ever married", partly because, as a result of her predicament, "she

⁷⁷ Gypsy name for non-gypsy (Concise Oxford Dictionary).

was the one that stayed at home with the aged Mum and Dad" (III:018:96; cf. Nic Suibhne 14).

One of the harsher social sanctions against illegitimacy was the stigmatising of children who were known to be illegitimate. Hence the Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child recommended that all parents use a shortened form of birth certificate, available since 1947, which omitted references to either a child's parentage or adoption by way of eradicating stigma (Jeger 2-5). Illegitimate children were, like their mothers, shunned in South Zeal, often being tormented by other children and told "you haven't got a Dad" (III:020:96). Several other informants from Devon and Cornwall alluded to this prejudice and remembered, like Wray, the derogatory use of the term "bastard" (III:020:96, III:010:I:95, III:025:I:96, III:030:II:97; cf. Sutton 76-77).

Although it was beyond the scope of this thesis to give a comprehensive overview of all the social and official sanctions against illegitimacy from 1850-present day, the examples considered above have demonstrated how different forms of censure could be applied to both men and women begetting illegitimate children. Of the two parents, women, however, appear to have borne the brunt of this discrimination. These sanctions tended, by their nature, to also have negative repercussions for the illegitimate child.

The Social Identities of Those Having Illegitimate Children

As will be later discussed in Chapters 6, 7 and 8, South West folksongs and prose narratives tend to portray very particular kinds of people as being responsible for out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth. Both men and women are delineated in terms of their register affiliations with a narrow range of groups as defined according to social class, occupation, age and marital status. The tendency for protagonists to have standard, or set, identities is a particularly intriguing feature of these narratives and warrants further investigation.

Female protagonists in approximately half the narratives discussed in Chapters 6 and 7 are seen as being employed exclusively in service-related occupations, loosely falling into three different categories. The first comprises urban domestic servants, typically seen working in a London-based environment and as performing the duties of a chambermaid within a lodging house or inn. Implicitly, or explicitly, these women also have some involvement with casual prostitution (cf. "The Butcher" , "Rosemary Lane"). The second category comprises rural

labourers, possibly working as farm hands, milk maids or general farm helps (cf. "Thrashing Machine", "Ball of Yarn"). A much smaller category comprises women as lower grade domestic servants for a "big house" or hotel within a rural context (cf. "Jays Grave", "Three Bridges", Chapter 7).

Female protagonists may also acquire their social identity through the occupation of their fathers (see "Died for Love). In such instances, women are usually associated with the lower-to-lower-middle classes and are practically never affiliated with the upper classes or gentry. Significantly, the majority of women within these narratives are seen as being young, or at least "younger" than the men with whom they become involved and single, rather than married women, or widows.

Urban Domestic Servants

Focusing on causes, Lawrence Stone clearly sees the high rates of illegitimacy amongst the female servant population in the nineteenth century as a by-product of urbanisation. A "tragic" symptom of the associated "decline of family and community protection of single girls", the female domestic servant became "increasingly exposed to sexual exploitation" (404). Hence, Stone argues "without protection from parents, kin, neighbours, ministers or local opinion, these girls were easy victims of seduction by their masters, who then dismissed them when they became pregnant", but fails to corroborate this assertion (404). William Acton's remark about the temptations arising from the cohabitation of male and female servants, remains similarly unsupported (Stone 104).

John Gillis's detailed study of illegitimacy amongst female servants in London 1801-1900, using the records of the London Foundling Hospital, provides some interesting insights, and tends to undermine both Acton and Stone's earlier assertions regarding causes. Gillis notes that illegitimacy rates amongst all female servants in the capital were noticeably higher than those of women in other occupations during this period. Shorter also corroborates this assertion, stating that "among the 339 illegitimate mothers whose occupations were known in several parishes of London during the 1850's, only three were "gentlewoman", and the largest share by far were domestic servants" (The Making 118).

As chambermaids, the female urban domestic servants of folk narrative, seem on some levels to be most closely aligned with Gillis's lower ranks of servant. These lower-class women often worked in single servant households, in "the

lowest paid and probably hardest worked situations in London" but did not make a career out of service. Most, in fact, left in "their late teens or early twenties, either to seek other employment or to marry" (Gillis 120).

Gillis's evidence suggests that the representation of urban domestic servants within folk narrative tends to distort the reality of experience in three respects. Firstly, whereas narrative tends to focus on illegitimacy amongst the lower ranks of servant, Gillis observes that illegitimate pregnancies were actually much more frequent amongst servants of more prestigious occupation (117-18). Secondly, whereas in narrative the stereotypical roving sailor is portrayed as the sexual partner of the urban domestic maid, in reality, few London servants (particularly those of higher rank) seem to have had liaisons with soldiers or sailors, who were considered undesirable suitors. Thirdly, folk narrative tends to depict these urban domestic servants as having isolated sexual relationships with strangers sometimes implicitly or explicitly with a view to financial gain. Unfortunately, Gillis does not probe the relationship between domestic service and female prostitution during this period, being more interested in recourse to prostitution by ex-servants, as a means of supporting their illegitimate children (138, note 144; cf. Fairchilds 640). However, far from being the product of either promiscuity or casual prostitution used to supplement the servant's earnings, the greater part of servant illegitimacy in his study, "was generated by couples apparently well matched and genuinely betrothed. The percentage of relationships involving promise of marriage remained relatively constant throughout the century, averaging 55 percent" (Gillis 132).

Unfortunately, no statistical analysis of the extent to which illegitimate pregnancy was the result of casual prostitution amongst female servants in England from 1850 onwards, has been undertaken (see p.174-75). Comparative data does, however, exist for France, although the evidence is regrettably rather early. *Déclarations de grossesses* relating to both urban and rural areas in the region of Provence have been studied by Cissie Fairchilds, who includes pregnancies from casual prostitution in her third category of relationship "short-term encounters", involving promiscuity or rape. Fairchild's argues that although pregnancies from such encounters increased throughout the eighteenth century, by comparison with those from "relationships of inequality" and "relationships of equality", the numbers still remained comparatively small, with only 4.6 % of pregnancies occurring from "promiscuity" (including prostitution) between the years 1750-1789.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Historically, prostitutes may have had a greater knowledge of contraceptive techniques.

However, it seems that many servants, particularly during spells of unemployment, had no alternative but to resort to prostitution, particularly as they were paid approximately one third less than men, and "wages were miniscule" (Fairchilds 637). The 3.1 % of "promiscuity" cases between 1727-49, included "inn servants, who seem to have casually slept with customers whose names they often did not know" (648). Fairchilds adds, "it is highly probable that most of the female servants in inns and cabarets were part-time prostitutes" and therefore "women in this category tended to show up more frequently than one would expect in the younger age groups" (648).⁷⁹

One point on which folk narrative and historical data do seem to correspond is, however, in terms of the mobility of the male protagonists involved, even if the precise nature of their identity seems to differ. Gillis identifies one of the main causes of illegitimacy as "the marked immobility of women in service and the contrasting rapidity of movement of the men to which such women most frequently found themselves attached" ("Servants" 133). Gillis argues that "movement of job and place was particularly accentuated among the kind of men who made up more than one-third of the partners, namely, the aristocrats of labor, the skilled workers" ("Servants" 133).

Of all female occupations, service seems to have been one of the most economically precarious positions once the woman became pregnant. The higher rank of London servant was an "almost exclusively celibate occupation" (Gillis, "Servants" 121). Consequently women would normally leave service when they got married. However, once pregnancy became obvious, most female servants would be forced to leave their position, thereby jeopardising any source of income. As almost all servants of this rank tended to live with their employers, the woman would also be obliged to sacrifice her domestic security, including her keep. Although Gillis states that a surprising number of men did financially support their partners, in cases where they did not, the woman would be obliged to fall back on her savings. These, in many cases, formed a kind of marriage dowry, and added to her appeal as a wife. Her prospects of gaining employment would also be minimal, as she had few transferable skills outside the occupation of service and other job prospects for women were comparatively poorly paid and vulnerable to exploitation (138). Gillis suggests that many women faced with this predicament would become poverty stricken and might end up as wetnurses, doing washing or needlework or becoming casual prostitutes ("Servants" 138).

⁷⁹Fairchilds also discerns a direct correlation between increased poverty and the greater tendency for women to work in these positions (653).

Female Rural Labourers and Rural Domestic Servants

Data relating to illegitimacy rates amongst female rural labourers and rural domestic servants in the South West of England from 1750-1900, is difficult to obtain. This is partly because women's occupations were only recorded under exceptional circumstances during this period. Jean Robin's case study of Colyton in Devon is of limited use, as the majority of women in this parish were employed in lace making and only eight per cent of those responsible for illegitimate children were servants ("Illegitimacy" 310).

Even so, Robin does raise a similar point about the economic vulnerability of both types of rural servant once they became pregnant to that mentioned by Gillis, in relation to his London sample. Robin sees the preponderance of lace makers within her sample as evidence of a causal relationship between a woman's employment and her propensity to take the risk of illegitimate pregnancy. Consequently, she attributes the low incidence of illegitimacy amongst Colyton servants to the fact that "if a servant girl, whether employed on outside or inside work, became pregnant, her chances of employment once the child was born would be far less than for a girl who had a skilled trade such as lace making, which could be carried on at home" (Robin, "Illegitimacy" 324).

Robin also makes some interesting observations about the kinds of women having illegitimate children in terms of marital status and age. However, it is important to emphasise the small-scale and extremely specific nature of this study. Robin's data shows a higher incidence of married women and widows than are represented within folk narrative. 10 % of her sample had already been married and either had their offspring as widows or in the long-term absence of their husband, whilst the remaining 90 % were single ("Illegitimacy" 310). However, there was a much greater correspondence between the impression of age created in folk narrative and the age at which unmarried women were first having illegitimate conceptions in Colyton. Robin discerned a pattern whereby "the mean age at which the mothers as a whole gave birth to their first illegitimate child, or had it baptized, was 21.89 years, in contrast to the mean age at first marriage of 24.14 years among their peer group" who had not had an illegitimate child ("Illegitimacy" 311). On this basis she argues against Laslett's assumption that women having illegitimate children during this period gave birth at approximately the same age as their married peers (Robin, "Illegitimacy" 311). However, she is keen to emphasise that "no unmarried

mother was under 17 at the time her child was born or baptized, and there is no evidence of widespread early or mid-teenage promiscuity" ("Illegitimacy" 313).

Moving on to the fathers of illegitimate children, many of the men described within illegitimacy-related songs and prose narratives are also given their social identity according to the register of occupation. Particularly in song, their occupational markings tend to be slightly more varied than those of their female counterparts. Two main groups, sailors or soldiers, are consolidated by a number of additional named occupations, including "weaver", "butcher" and "airman". Far more men than women are seen as coming from the middle-to-upper classes in prose narratives, whilst the majority in song are most strongly affiliated with the working classes. Men are usually seen as slightly older than the women with whom they get involved, but a large age disparity between partners is only rarely made overt.

Perhaps significantly, neither soldiers nor sailors feature at all in Robin's study of men responsible for pre-nuptial pregnancies in the parish of Colyton, Devon. She instead finds that farmers were the occupational grouping responsible for the largest number of pre-nuptial pregnancies, but convincingly dismisses the idea that this phenomenon was a result of "fertility testing" relating to property inheritance ("Prenuptial" 117). Agricultural labourers ranked in second place, with wage earning minor craftsmen and tradesmen coming third.

Similarly to Lawrence Stone, Robin, sees the custom of pre-nuptial pregnancy as the prerogative of the lower orders during this period, arguing that in mid-nineteenth century Colyton "it appears that social pressure to conform to a morality which demanded that sexual intercourse with an intended bride should not take place before marriage was strong only on the landed proprietors and the *petit bourgeois*." ("Prenuptial" 123). Consequently, it seems most likely that the majority of men responsible for illegitimate conceptions would be affiliated with the lower orders. Shorter argues that explosions both in pre-marital pregnancy and illegitimacy rates seem to have begun with the lower classes, with a much lesser impact on the middle classes at a much later date (The Making 117).

This tendency for illegitimacy to be a lower class phenomenon during this period, is also reflected in Jean Robin's case study in the parish of Colyton, Devon between 1851-1881. Having viewed her data on mothers of illegitimate children according to five social and economic groups, she states:

It will be seen at once that while mothers of known illegitimate children were absent from the families of landowners and professional men, and were under-represented among the farming community, the self employed petit bourgeois, and the wage-earning craftsmen and tradesmen, they were considerably over-represented in the labouring group, since 57 per cent of bastard-bearers came from this class, while only 36 per cent of all male household heads in Colyton in 1861 did so. ("Illegitimacy" 311)

However, it is important to emphasise that cases of illegitimacy amongst men and women in the upper classes from 1850-present day are less likely to appear in official records, such as those kept by the Poor Law authorities (Robin, "Illegitimacy 311). There was also a greater chance that they might be concealed, as the upper classes had the financial means to do so.

National illegitimacy rates amongst female servants were still relatively high at the beginning of the twentieth century. Gillis mentions, for example, one general survey carried out in 1911, which suggested that "46 percent of the illegitimate children in Britain were born to women who had been in service" ("Servants" 116). This is extremely interesting, in the light of Gittins' findings relating to restricted access to sexual and contraceptive knowledge experienced by female servants during the inter-war years (see above). The twentieth century brought changes, however, in that there was a rapid increase in the pre-nuptial pregnancy and illegitimacy rates within the middle to upper classes. Consequently, people from a wider variety of occupational groups started having illegitimate children, although by the latter part of the twentieth century rates of premarital pregnancy and illegitimacy were still higher in the lower classes (cf. Shorter, The Making 118).

Relationships between local women and soldiers resulted in a large number of out-of-wedlock conceptions during the Second World War, with one American estimate suggesting these allied troops left behind approximately 70,000 illegitimate children (Haste 126). The arrival of one million GIs clearly had an impact on the sex industry (e.g. Ill:018:96). In Devonport, Plymouth, for example, prostitutes doubled their fees. (Humphries "Sins of" (TV)). Soldiers, in particular, had a larger disposable income during this period. Just how many illegitimate children were the result of casual prostitution is, however, unclear. Other liaisons resulted in more permanent unions, with 100,000 women marrying allied troops "80,000 of them GI. brides who emigrated to America" (Haste 126). It seems that the main change in this respect was not an influx in the number of out-of-wedlock conceptions, but rather "the number of

pregnancies not subsequently regularized by marriage", in many cases due to the absence of the father (Haste 129).

The casting of female protagonists as young, unmarried women in illegitimacy-related folk narrative, presents an interesting contrast to the actual state of affairs as documented during the Second World War. During this period, there was a growing awareness that it was not only teenagers and younger women who had illegitimate pregnancies. In fact, the largest increase in illegitimacy rates, of 41 percent on pre-war years, "was among women aged 30-35" (Haste 129). The Second World War also witnessed a large increase in the number of married women having children registered as illegitimate at birth. The number of illegitimate children born to married women in Birmingham, for example, tripled over the years 1940-1945 (Haste 109). Haste makes the following observation:

Almost one third of all illegitimate children in the last two years of war were born to married women. Over half the 520 mothers reported in 1945 had husbands serving in the Forces; the remainder were divorced, widowed or living apart from their husbands. Since married women had to get their husband's consent for adoption, the illegitimacy was difficult to conceal. Many husbands accepted the cuckoos in their nest but for others it was a contributory, if not the main reason for divorce (109).

Clearly, the war brought more "illegitimate" pregnancies among married women to light, prolonged male absence often making it obvious that the woman's husband could not be the father.

Oral testimonies from the South West also lend support to the view that many illegitimate children conceived during the twentieth century were born to married women. A male informant from Dartmoor, gave one such example from Princetown during the Second World War. A married woman gave birth to an illegitimate son by a local man, " 'cause the husband was in the home guards and XX used to go around, he was a womaniser. And she had a baby and it weren't her husband's". He immediately went on to say "there's quite a few in the village like that". Wray's anecdote concerning his cousin who became pregnant by an American soldier during the Second World War, also makes it clear that she was married at the time. A similar situation arose when American GIs were based in Phear Park in Exmouth, within close proximity of Lympstone village. One husband, who was either "actually abroad or in a prisoner of war camp" during the war, found that his wife had had an illegitimate son when he eventually returned to Lympstone (III:018:96).

Parental Responses to Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancy

The folksongs and prose narratives discussed in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 tend to depict a world in which those responsible for illegitimate conceptions are seen as exercising a narrow range of choices in response to their predicament. Men most typically distance themselves from, or abandon, the women with whom they have become involved. Only in exceptional cases are they seen to marry, thereby turning the illegitimate conception into a pre-nuptial pregnancy. Women also exhibit a narrow range of responses in terms of the courses of action left open to them by their partners. In exceptional cases they marry the father or return to their parents. However, the vast majority of female protagonists die, implicitly from heartbreak, in childbirth, or by committing suicide, or else become reconciled to an unhappy existence as a single parent.

Given that female responses seem to veer towards emotional extremes, it is important to establish the actual range of choices open to those faced with illegitimate pregnancy during the late eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to consider whether the narratives tend to depict a much narrower range of responses than were actually taken by people during this period. One might also ask whether the most popular male and female responses depicted in these narratives were representative of actual behaviour during this period, or whether other responses to illegitimate pregnancy, such as infanticide, were more common.

Suicide

Several social and oral historians have considered the response of suicide to illegitimate pregnancy during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (e.g. Roberts 75-78; Shorter, A History 178). However, most scholars have stopped short at acknowledging that such suicides in England could and did happen, rather than investigating the likely extent of suicide as a response to illegitimate pregnancy in different regional areas. The only rigorous investigation of this kind is conducted by Olive Anderson, a social historian investigating suicide in Victorian and Edwardian England (1837-1910). Anderson combines the use of statistics with the reconstruction of attitudes through various sources including the popular street ballad, in order to reconstruct the experience of suicide during this period. Consequently, she not only discusses the likelihood of suicide as a response to illegitimate pregnancy, but the assumed relationship between illegitimate pregnancy and suicide.

Anderson's findings suggest that throughout Victorian and Edwardian England there were sex specific patterns of suicide (41-73). Statistical analysis reveals that, except during later teens, suicide was three to four times more frequent amongst men than women during this period (41). This is an interesting point to consider in relation to folk narrative genres in the South West of England as a whole. If we discount death from heartbreak, as is described in the ballad, "Barbara Allen", there is not a single folksong relating to male suicide within all the South West repertoires contained in the SRFA. Yet clearly, the incidence of female suicide in folksong is much higher, as is evidenced by the sample considered within this thesis. The impression created in local legend, however, is rather different. Popular literary tradition records several instances of male suicide due to a range of causes, from the shame of having been defrauded, to grief over a broken love affair (e.g. Bennie 47, 80; Barber, *Ghosts* 20). Anderson also observes the variation in modes of suicide, women having a greater propensity to choose drowning than their male counterparts (43). Consequently, a larger proportion of female suicides could have escaped registration as such because of the ambiguous interpretation placed upon death by drowning during the nineteenth century in the absence of further evidence (43).

Men and women not only have different rates of suicide throughout this period, but also show a different age incidence at which suicide is most likely to occur (41-73). Even up until the present day, female suicide tends to peak at around puberty and also around the menopause, whilst generally speaking, male suicide tends to increase in direct proportion to the ageing process (42). Examined in this light, local legends such as "Jay's Grave", or folksongs such as "Died for Love" which focus upon the suicides of implicitly very young women, allude to the female experience of suicide with a degree of historical accuracy.

Another interesting observation on female suicide emerges from Anderson's discussion of the cities. In attempting to overturn the conventional argument that the cities were responsible for the dramatic increase in suicide during this period, Anderson points to the fact that London, which had exceptionally high suicide rates, has been misleadingly seen as representative in this respect (43, 78; 49-73). She argues that, contrary to popular opinion, suicide amongst females 15-19 was far less likely in big towns than elsewhere (49). Consequently it may follow that as Devon, Cornwall and Somerset are predominantly rural areas, the likelihood of suicide amongst women 15-19 may

have been much higher than in other parts of the country (92). Anderson also considers that women in the cities may have been much less likely to commit suicide as a direct result of becoming pregnant than women living in other areas because the city provided a number of other options not available in the restrictive town or village community:

Urban immortality and licentiousness were always exaggerated by reformers; and if a girl was pregnant and deserted, suicide might well be less likely to seem the only solution available in a big city than in the far more rigid, confined, and reputation-conscious environment of a small town. (57)

Anderson's discussion of attitudes towards female suicide is particularly fascinating. She argues that even where suicide rates were practically equal amongst men and women in their teens, suicide in women was much more frequently attributed to sexual causes:

The assumption was always that if an unmarried girl committed suicide, it was because she had been seduced. Female "precocity" and "indulgence of lustful desires" at puberty seemed as certainly the explanation of these higher suicide rates among girls. (57)

This misconception was apparently so firmly lodged that "the first thought of coroners and juries at an inquest on a girl was always to establish whether she had been pregnant", even though this rarely transpired to be the case (59). So prevalent was this idea that it led to the creation of a nineteenth century stereotype in popular street ballads of this period, which romanticised the fallen and abandoned woman, who kills herself in response to her pregnancy or seduction (57-58, 196-99). However, the unreality of this stereotype, certainly in terms of the actual experiences of women in London during this period, seems to be confirmed by the low recorded incidence of such female suicides. For instance, having consulted the existing scholarship of Gillis ("Servants" 128); Laslett et al (Bastardy 54); and Howkins (The Voice 70); Anderson emphasises that there were only a few recorded cases of attempted suicide amongst the hundreds of unmarried mothers that tried to gain their infants admission to the London Foundling Hospital (Anderson 59).

A few oral testimonies refer to female suicide as a response to illegitimate pregnancy during the late nineteenth century. However, as might be expected, recollections tend to be brief and lacking in detail, as exemplified by the few references included in Roberts' A Woman's Place (76-78). Ironically, of the two references to suicidal responses to pregnancy contained within the four selected archives, one concerned a woman expecting a legitimate child. The

predicament of this Dartmoor farmer's wife was exacerbated by her unhappy marriage to an exceptionally cruel and stingy husband. Hence, she drowned herself in a river (SRFA tape 290). Margaret Palmer, from Exmoor, recollected another incident, from her own family folklore, also taking place between approximately 1880-1900. On the subject of the shame attaching to illegitimacy in her parents' generation, she commented " I know I had an aunty [Margaret's great aunt] and she was expecting and committed suicide because she was pregnant. It was terrible in those days to have illegitimate children. You know as the time goes on it's altered" (III:001:95).

Although Steve Humphries documents the cases of two women who attempted suicide as a response to out-of-wedlock pregnancy (by drowning and ingesting toilet cleaner), this seems to have been fairly unusual in terms of twentieth century England as a whole ("In Disgrace"). There were no references to such suicides during this period in any of the four archives or additional oral testimonies collected in the field. These findings tend to indicate that although even after the turn-of-the-century, some women did respond to their illegitimate pregnancies by committing suicide, its importance as a response within these narratives tends to be exaggerated. Folk narratives perpetuated within the South West may well be indebted to a popular and enduring nineteenth century stereotype, which uses a fatal outcome to romanticise the predicament of the fallen or abandoned young female.

Alternative Responses to Illegitimate Pregnancy

The previous discussion has already established that a large percentage of those responsible for illegitimate conceptions 1850 - present day, reacted to their predicament by getting married. However, the following section seeks to explore the other alternatives available to men and women in this predicament, including abortion, infanticide, placing of the infant with child minders, foster or adoptive parents, or relying upon family.

Preventing Birth: Recourse to Abortion

None of the data examined in Chapters 6, 7 or 8, directly describes or alludes to attempted abortion, by unmarried or married women expecting either legitimate or illegitimate children. Yet this theme has been taken up within folksongs, supernatural memorates and legends, and local legends, recorded (or alluded to) by collectors in other parts of Britain, Southern Ireland and America during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. (Dégh, The Memorate 237; O'Connor;

Vickery, A Dictionary 246, Ballard "Just" 70). Whilst in one of the Scottish Child ballads, the male protagonist accuses his lover of planning to abort their child, in another, the female protagonist actively attempts abortion and fails (Toelken 92; McLaren, Reproductive 92; Freedman 9-11; Hatfield "Herbs" 85; Vickery A Dictionary 207).

The only South West narrative of this kind, a local character anecdote, was allegedly recounted to Ruth Tongue by "an old hedger" in 1960 (Tongue, Somerset 64). However, certain aspects of this anecdote and Tongue's known propensity to recreate stories from her own imagination, suggests that the authenticity of this narrative could be questionable. Tongue's abortionist is, for example, characterised as a kind of "grey witch". Certainly, the role of midwife and witch is linked in some oral testimonies relating to the South West (Sayers 46, Hole, English 120; Palmer Oral 118; cf. Harley).⁸⁰ The identities of midwife and witch have also sometimes been fused in folklore where, on the one hand, midwives have been endowed with supernatural powers (Baring-Gould A Book of Devon 187-193; cf. Hole, English 6; McNaughton 282, 293) On the other, reputed witches or individuals endowed with the power of ill-wishing have also traditionally been able to interfere in gynaecological matters, by causing a miscarriage or deformity in a foetus (Williamson, Life in 111, 284; cf. Hole, English 10; Halpert, "Legends" 2-5).⁸¹ Whilst some earlier evidence for witch-abortionists exists, the argument that community wise-women or "witches" traditionally procured abortions during the period under consideration is, so far, poorly substantiated (McLaren, Reproductive 98-99; cf. Ehrenreich and English). It is probably also suspicious that the narrative has more the hallmarks of literary convention rather than of discernible historical "fact" (cf. Philpotts, Thorn 23-29; Swift 258-67; Tennant 153, 164, 186-190).

The following section attempts to establish whether this seeming lack of recourse to abortion in South West folk narrative reflects the real absence of abortion as an option for women in this region from 1850-Present day. It considers in particular, the likely availability of abortion for young unmarried women.

It might be thought that the criminalisation of abortion would prevent it from being an option for those conceiving illegitimate children during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Abortion was first made illegal in 1803 and remained

⁸⁰ Perhaps significantly however, McNaughton argues that "in North America, the correlation between these two roles does not prove strong when empirical evidence is carefully considered" (291-92).

⁸¹ See Blaen, "A Survey" for a detailed analysis of the evil eye in South West folklore.

so except under highly exceptional circumstances, until the 1960s. Although the law at this time initially "distinguished between abortion before and after the quickening (the latter being a capital offence)", it was again tightened under the "Offences against the Person Act" of 1861 (Knight 57; cf. Brookes 22). This decreed that "abortionists could be given harsh sentences ranging from several years imprisonment to death, but prosecutions usually only took place if the woman died or became seriously ill" (Knight 57). For the first time, the woman herself could be liable for prosecution (Brookes 25).

However, in spite of its illegality, there is ample evidence that abortion was extremely widespread both before and during the period under consideration. The earlier use of abortion is reflected in the records of the Quarter Sessions, relating to seventeenth and eighteenth century Somerset, where spinsters and widows are mentioned using both external trauma to the body and drugs (Quaife 117-120; cf. Shorter A History 177; Stone 266; McLaren, Reproductive 101).⁸² Patricia Knight argues that there was actually a dramatic increase in abortions during the 1890s, due to increased pressures on the standard of living (57-58; cf. McLaren, "Not A" 268-69).

As previously mentioned, between 1850 - approximately 1940, the distinction between contraception and abortion remained blurred. Abortion was not therefore regarded with any particular horror amongst those by whom it was practised. In fact evidence suggests that a good deal of both working and middle class abortion occurred, even though contemporaries tended to see abortion as an exclusively working-class phenomenon. Abortion was also clearly attempted by women in the upper classes and aristocracy (cf. Stone 266).

Opinion differs as to what extent abortion would have been practised as a response to illegitimate pregnancy during this period, although McLaren mentions one estimate which suggests that between one-sixth to one-fifth of all pregnancies were terminated ("Not A" 269). Evidence is hard to come by, due to the underground nature of all abortion during this time. Patricia Knight is inclined to see abortion as the prerogative of those who were married, and already had children:

All evidence points to abortion being very widespread, and most women who attempted it, like those who used birth control, seem not to have been young unmarried girls, but married women who already had two

⁸² N.B. Stone argues that only a minority would have used chemical remedies or surgical intervention (266)

or more children. Abortion was often resorted to in desperation after the birth of a number of children (59).

Whilst also agreeing that "abortion was confined to women who were desperate", Shorter comes to the opposite conclusion as regards recourse to abortion amongst single women:

Amongst the most desperate were unmarried women. It is hard for us to imagine with what dismay they in particular viewed pregnancy, for once they were found out, they would be fined, jailed, or humiliated by church courts, to say nothing of the reproaches which the community would have heaped upon themselves and their families. (Shorter, A History 177)

One certainty is that a number of methods for procuring abortion did exist during the period under consideration and are well documented by historians (see Shorter, A History 177-223, McLaren, Reproductive 89-112, Brookes, Knight). Methods used by various people at any one time, tended to undergo shifts in popularity throughout this period. Working-class women were unlikely, at least initially, to attempt abortion through the use of implements, partly because this would require help from an abortionist whose fee they could not afford (Knight 60). Women from the lower to lower middle classes were most likely to resort to drugs. These could be easily and cheaply bought from the local chemist and were therefore easily accessible (Knight 60). A variety of herbs and drugs were in widespread use throughout this period, "including tansy, pennyroyal, apiol, gin, gunpowder and gin and salts" (Knight 60; cf. Shorter The Making 57).

The example of gin, serves to show how a given remedy's reputation for procuring abortion often stemmed from a prior knowledge of the properties of one of its basic ingredients. Gin was and still is made from juniper berries (Grigson 28). Juniper, which is sometimes known by the alternative names savin, saffern or saffron, had already been used as a herbal remedy for procuring abortion (cf. Stone 234-35). Documented as far back as the sixteenth century, it is referred to in relation to Mary Hamilton's (lady in waiting to Mary Queen of Scots) desperate attempts to rid herself of her illegitimate pregnancy, in variants of the eponymous Child ballad 173 (Child, 1889:387) (see Vickery, A Dictionary 207; cf. McLaren, Reproductive 92, 104-06, 141).⁸³ The regional term for juniper (*Juniperus sabina*) "bastard killer", recorded by Frederic

⁸³ One variant ending with the stanza:
"She's gane to the garden gay
To Pu' of the savin tree;
But for a' that she could say or do,
The babie it would not die".

Elworthy in his The West Somerset Word-Book (1886), is testimony to the strength of association between known abortifacients and the termination of illegitimate pregnancies (47).

Numerous remedies for abortion, only some of which were effective, could also be obtained through the Sunday and local evening papers, where carefully worded advertisements ostensibly marketed remedies for other complaints, such as "menstrual irregularities" (Knight 61; McLaren, "Not a" 267-68, 271).⁸⁴ However, as Knight observes, these were unlikely to be used by working class women, as they would be more expensive than drugs obtained from the chemist (Knight 62; McLaren, "Not a" 268).

Knight proposes that the only other source of information and remedies available to working-class women seeking abortion was therefore through informal channels such as friends, neighbours, handywomen and midwives, as "part of local folk-lore handed down from generation to generation, and passed on from one woman to another" as part of a female sub-culture (Knight 60-62). The folksongs and narratives described in Chapters 6 and 7 could be interpreted accordingly. Female protagonists are often described in predicaments which suggest they have little access to any of these informal networks. Most of the protagonists described in these narratives are single women without existing children. Consequently, they would be unlikely to have established links with either handywomen or midwives, from whom they might seek advice on how to procure abortions. Perhaps significantly, the absence of female support is particularly evident in versions of the local legend "Jay's Grave", and the folksong "Died for Love", where pregnant female protagonists eventually commit suicide by hanging.

One disincentive to abortion amongst all women must have been the known risk of infection and often prolonged and painful death. Shorter considers that "the occasional references to septic abortion suggest that post-abortal abscesses and fevers must have loomed awesomely to the women in village culture" (A History 191). However, he also suggests that such cases as a percentage of abortions as a whole, were in fact, surprisingly low (A History 191). Other disincentives, particularly for the middle-class women who purchased remedies by replying to advertisements, was the fear that they would be exploited, either in terms of the remedy proving to be ineffectual, or in terms of blackmail by the supplier (Knight 61-2). Not only was there also the justifiable anxiety that the

⁸⁴Methods of procuring abortion were also hinted at in works such as the extremely popular Culpeper's Herbal, by mentioning remedies either not to be taken during pregnancy or for "menstrual irregularities" (Le Strange xvii, 150-52, 74; cf. McLaren, Reproductive 101-11).

abortionist would be incompetent, but particularly in urban areas, the more sinister fear of falling victim to a calculated killer (cf. McLaren, "Not a" 267, 270, 272, 278-79).

For all women, there was the fear of being caught and prosecuted. This was perhaps more pressing amongst the working-classes who were less able to afford the safer and more discreetly performed abortions available to upper class women. Shorter notes, for example, how apiol (a derivative of parsley) was prescribed by doctors for what was euphemistically termed "menstrual irregularity" between 1860 and 1900. However, the drug did not come into widespread use as an abortifacient amongst the masses until the turn of the century (A History 215). Fear of prosecution, however, was still not strong enough to deter women of all classes from continuing to seek abortion throughout this period, who realised that the Act of 1861 was, in most cases, not enforceable.

New techniques for procuring abortion continued to be discovered throughout the twentieth century. During the 1890s, women wanting to self-abort began to consume lead pills or powder scraped from lead plaster, which was sold by chemists for the treatment of minor injuries, such as bruises (Shorter, A History 210-12). This method was probably discovered by observing the high incidence of miscarriages amongst women who worked in lead factories (Knight 60). So many women resorted to buying lead over the counter in order to procure illegal abortion, that restrictions were imposed upon its sale and it began to be sold in a different form (Shorter, A History 212; Lewis, "Birth" 208-09).

Lead remained widespread for only about forty years, being eclipsed in popularity by quinine, which took off after the Second World War (Shorter A History 212-13; cf. Lewis "Birth" 199, 208-09). Brookes observes that "apiol, along with quinine was one of the most reliable abortifacient drugs becoming available in the early twentieth century" (Brookes 4; cf. Shorter 188). However, other methods, such as Beechams pills, castor oil and herbal remedies, still continued to be used (see Lewis "Birth" 199). Porter, for instance, mentions the use of tansy and parsley by unmarried Fenland village girls, large quantities of parsley likewise being used by women in the South West (Porter, quoted in Vickery, A Dictionary 275, 368; Michael Williams, Superstition 57). In terms of invasive techniques, douches and dilation of the mouth of the uterus by slippery elm still remained popular (Brookes 3). Shorter argues, however, that through Europe as a whole the use of injection was the most popular form of abortion by the first quarter of the twentieth century.

During this period, illegal abortion was clearly practised on a massive scale, many women continuing to exchange remedies for "delayed menstruation" during the early twentieth century, whilst " 'artificial' birth control continued to be viewed as a 'sin against the Holy Ghost' " (4). Marie Stopes' travelling birth control clinic, established in the late 1920s, received approximately 20,000 requests for "illegal" abortion (Brookes 5- 6). The BMA calculated that between approximately 16-20% of all pregnancies were ending in abortion during this period (Lewis, "Birth" 199; cf. Brookes 105). A later estimate suggests that 100,000 illegal abortions occurred each year before the Second World War (Humphries "Forbidden" (TV)).

The testimonies of several South West informants suggested that knowledge of how to procure an "illegal" abortion was relatively easy to obtain. Margaret Palmer, Denis Hutchings, Chris Binmore and Wray Tucker were all able to name specific remedies or techniques said to have been used in the past, or remembered as being used within living memory. The consumption of large quantities of gin was clearly particularly popular. The ingestion of poisons; laxatives; preparations, such as Beechams powders and Epsom salts and "drugs . . . made up by the doctors to get rid of children", was also reputed to cause a miscarriage (III:009:95; III:012:II:95). Other methods included the (unspecified) use of slippery elm bark; taking hot baths; and the invasive use of instruments, such as spoon handles and knitting needles (III:008:95; III:009:95; III:012:II:95; III:020:96). Elsie B., a twentieth-century midwife in rural Devon interviewed by Leap and Hunter, cited an actual instance where an unmarried mother successfully aborted: "I remember one - I think the mother knew a few things. We were unlucky - it was a cord prolapse and of course we had a stillborn because mother had been pulling on the cord and she hadn't sent for anybody. I wondered about that" (116).

Not all attempted abortions were successful. In fact, Shorter reports that "British midwives reported in the 1930's that abortion had become so common that mothers would ask the midwife if the baby was "all right", since they had taken so many drugs to end the pregnancy" (Shorter, A History 197). South West informant, Chris Binmore, clearly shared her mother's suspicions that a failed abortion may have been behind the congenital disability of their relative's illegitimate son. His mother Olive, having an exceptionally strict father, would have had particular reason to resort to desperate measures in order to avoid disgrace.

Chris Binmore, Charlie Hill and an additional male informant from Devon, recalled the existence of "criminal" abortionists in this region.⁸⁵ Although Chris had not heard of anyone practising in Lympstone, the village being "too small", she maintained "I heard of people that had been to people, you know" (III:018:96). Charlie Hill stated:

Well, you see, in the country areas there were what they called the "black doctors". But the black doctors, they weren't coloured, they were Dr Blacks, they were known as. And . . . the girls and society ladies used to go to them to have an abortion. They were the back street clinics, if you know what I mean (III:010:1:95).

He further added that Dr Blacks did not have any formal medical training and also mentioned the one-time existence of a "nursing home" in Belstone, which suddenly closed down because it was discovered that "illegal" abortions were being carried out on "society girls". Brookes' finding that many nursing homes, which "were poorly equipped and run by unqualified staff", had the legal scope and "reputation for performing abortion" at the time, supports Charlie's testimony (65). Confirming that they charged a sizeable fee, she also validates Charlie's assertions regarding the clientele (65).

Though also familiar with Dartmoor, XX did not recollect the expression "Dr Blacks" or the Belstone home. However, this informant provided the most detailed account of a local abortionist he had known (hereafter given the pseudonym Ben Dorson) practising in the Dartmoor region after the Second World War:

There used to be a lot of illegal abortions used to go on, I remember that. Used to be a bloody man in North Tawton used to go around doing 'em. And he wasn't trained, he wasn't a doctor, or anything. And he used to do these illegal abortions I can't remember anybody dying of it, but there obviously must have been You know, they were ill for months and months and months by the time this bloody swine got at 'em.

My informant further explained that Ben Dorson had worked as a "taxi and a bus driver", hence he did not know how he had learned to perform abortions. His comment "it was common knowledge that he done it. So I don't know how he ever didn't get picked up on it, or why they didn't look into it", suggests that a conspiracy of silence protected Dorson. This also reflects the national situation, whereby "Abortion continued to be lightly and selectively policed and juries remained sympathetic to the abortionists" (Brookes 22, 133). Hence, in spite of

⁸⁵ This informant is hereafter referred to as XX due to the sensitive nature of his testimony.

a brief period of increased vigilance immediately after the war, between 1949-63, few professional abortionists were being convicted (Brookes 137-144).

My informant was not aware of the existence of any other abortionists in the region, but claimed "they used to come from near and far to go to Dorson in North Tawton, . . . 'cause he had a bit of a reputation, was well known". XX commented "cor he used to make a bloody bomb out of it . . . the more the merrier where Ben Dorson was concerned". On the basis of the considerable stigma attached to women having illegitimate children in this district, my informant speculated that it was single, rather than married women who turned to Dorson. His comment "it was against the law even so but it was more the scandal they were frightened of more than anything else because you were sort of an outcast. Bloody branded nearly", suggested that the illegality of abortion did not deter women determined to obtain one. The fact that one bride in five was thought to be pregnant on her wedding day, in 1965, could be seen as suggesting that "of those who did not marry, some went to criminal abortionists" (Brookes 154). It was not until 1967 that abortion became legalised under certain conditions in 1967 (Humphries "Forbidden" (TV)).

Due to the lack of evidence, it also almost impossible to evaluate to what extent abortion would have been a likely response of those expecting illegitimate children in the South West of England during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, the previous discussion has established that knowledge of how to procure an abortion did exist during this period, even though unmarried women may have experienced some difficulty in obtaining it. It is certainly clear that many unmarried women from the working-classes could gain access to non-instrumental methods of procuring abortion. If their attitudes were anything like those of married women who aborted legitimate offspring, then there would have been little ethical objection to procuring abortion during this period. Considering the evidence, it seems much more likely that an unmarried woman expecting an illegitimate child would attempt an abortion rather than commit suicide.

Child Minders, Foster Parents and Adoption

During the nineteenth century many illegitimate children were, for a set fee, entrusted to "baby farmers" or child minders who became responsible for their upkeep (Rose 79-84, 182-86). This option provided, on the one hand, an affordable and usually relatively anonymous service for many parents, and a means of maintaining contact with their children (Teichman 111). On the other

hand, many child minders were disreputable and "nurse children", particularly those who were illegitimate, had an extremely high death rate, ranging "from 40% in the best run homes to 90% in the worst" (Rose 110; cf. Teichman 111). Ironically, whilst this may have been a disincentive to many parents considering this option, to others, the high risk of infant mortality may have added to its appeal. There was also the added possibility of being easily able to abnegate responsibility for one's children, often with drastic repercussions. Rose recounts how one Annie Took, a baby-minder from Exeter, took charge of "an illegitimate baby boy, which she received for £12 to cover the first year of its keep. She killed and dismembered it when the money ran out, but newspaper accounts of the grisly discovery of its remains led the trail back to her" (111-12). Took was subsequently executed for infanticide in 1879 (111). Bertie Thomas, another illegitimate baby "of high society parents" born 1885-86 was more lucky. That he survived his childhood years in Dulverton, Somerset, was no doubt partly due to the considerable annual fee his 69 year old child minder, a Miss Steer, was paid ("Was Bertie").

Particularly in the twentieth century, fostering became an option for some parents of illegitimate children. This arrangement also seems to have provided a degree of anonymity (cf. WT NT22A). However, it usually entailed the natural mother securing a sufficiently well paid position to support herself as well as contributing to the upkeep of her child. This is exemplified by the case of Gwen Falkner's mother (see above), who went to work for a family in Exeter as a cook. Gwen Falkner, born in 1910, had happy memories of being brought up by her foster mother, from the age of 3 months, to 16 years.

Adoption was another available option. However, certainly until 1926, when adoption was granted legal status, this was only open to those who were wealthy enough to be able to afford it (Leap and Hunter 110). Prior to that date, this procedure had to be arranged through informal channels, such as newspapers and "the natural mother would advertise the child, and actually *pay* the adoptive parents either a weekly or a lump sum" (Leap and Hunter, 110, original emphasis).

Residing With Family

Evidence suggests that many women who gave birth to illegitimate children between 1850-present day tended to themselves remain at home, or leave their child at home amongst their immediate family, where it was sometimes subsequently registered in census enumerators' schedules as its grandparent's

son or daughter. (Robin, "illegitimacy" 335-36). Jean Robin says that "the great majority of mothers of illegitimate children in Colyton could look for, and receive, considerable assistance from their parents ("Illegitimacy" 322). Her study suggest that of the 20 % of women who remained in the village with their illegitimate children, "nearly three-quarters . . . were living with either a father, a mother, or both parents at the first census to be taken after the birth of their bastard" (Robin, "Illegitimacy" 320). Therefore, "if parents were available to provide help, then as a rule they did so" and continued doing so for some time ("Illegitimacy" 320-21). Parental help was also given to other groups of bastard bearers, many of whom lived with at least one parent before they married, or moved away (321). Robin also asserts that "parental help played a considerable part in ensuring that the mothers of illegitimate children remained uninstitutionalized" (323). Significantly, those that did end up in the workhouse seem not to have had a living parent in a position to help (323). Whilst once again stressing the small scale and localised nature of Robin's study, there is little reason to suppose that her findings are particularly exceptional in respect of parental support.

South West informants Chris Binmore and Sheila Bricknell mentioned what seems to have been an informal system of "adoption" during the twentieth century, whereby either the maternal grandmother of the illegitimate child, or other family members, such as aunts and uncles, would take on the child as if it was their own (cf. Leap and Hunter 106; Humphries "In Disgrace", "Acts"). Chris Binmore, from Lypstone, in East Devon, remembered work colleagues who had been "adopted" in this way:

I knew a couple of cases where the girl was sort of sent away to an aunty and then the [girl's] mother would have brought it up and it would be brought up as that girl's sister. I've actually worked with girls that thought their mother was their elder sister. . . . Perhaps at a time when they'd need[ed] their birth certificate and it had come to light. (III:018:96)

Infanticide and Child Abandonment

Though a less likely response to illegitimate pregnancy from the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth centuries than abortion, evidence suggests recourse to infanticide was a very real possibility, particular for the desperate (McLaren, "Not a" 269). However, it is difficult to obtain reliable evidence of the state of infanticide because, like abortion, it remained illegal throughout this period. Consequently, it was surrounded by secrecy and usually only came to public attention in exceptional circumstances.

Largely for financial reasons, the temptation to commit infanticide or to abandon a child would have been particularly high amongst unmarried mothers from the lower classes. Stone says:

The rise in bastardy inevitably stimulated some deliberate infanticide and a great deal of abandonment, for the plight of an unmarried mother without means of support was bad enough to encourage a few desperate women to murder their newly born infants and many more to leave them in the streets to either die or to be looked after by a charitable passer-by, the parish workhouse, or a foundling hospital (Stone 296-97).

However, he argues that because of the legal penalty - death - infanticide was only resorted to by the most desperate, abandonment, particularly during the eighteenth century, being far more common (297).

As previously mentioned, the legal responsibility for illegitimate children was placed upon the mother, yet many of these women had more limited means than the fathers to support their children, or to pay the fee required by adoptive parents. In the 1850s, when there was "an upsurge of philanthropic rescue mission activity", charitable bodies prioritised the rehabilitation of the "fallen woman" rather than preservation of her illegitimate child (Rose 46). Hence, there was a lack of charitable institutions who would take unwanted or needy children. Consequently, it is highly likely that a number of illegitimate children were killed because of the lack of viable alternatives.

For those faced with the difficulties associated with caring for illegitimate children, especially where the social stigma threatened their livelihood, the possibility of infanticide may have been made more appealing because of the obvious loopholes in the legal system during this time. The scope for infanticide to go undetected during this period was enormous, partly because birth registration was not made compulsory before 1874, and therefore the birth of a child might be concealed altogether (Rose 122). As Rose observes:

We can be sure that the non-registration rate among illegitimates was significantly higher than among legitimates, as unmarried mothers' motives for secrecy were all the greater, and it is for this reason that the 1871 Select Committee strongly recommended compulsory birth registration - but kept silent over the more contentious question of registration of stillbirths. (Rose 122)

Even where an infant was known to have died, there was still a large chance that the act of infanticide would go undetected (Rose 57-69). Coroners who investigated these cases had little expertise, being selected by county rate-

payers (Rose 57). They were often uncertain as to when to hold an inquest, as the law was imprecise in this area, and where possible, avoided holding post-mortems in order to save paying a dissection fee (Rose 58-59). Rose concludes that "A selection of typical coroners' verdicts on infants in the early 1860s shows just how shallow and uninformed the inquests were" (59). The absence of an infant might be easily accounted for and the incriminating evidence concealed, because the requirements of the 1874 Act dictated only that delivery of stillborns to the cemetery be accompanied by the written declaration of a doctor or midwife (cf. Chamberlain and Richardson, 36). The registration of still births was not made compulsory until 1927 (Botting 1).

The practice of infanticide during the late nineteenth century was mentioned during an interview with Margaret Palmer, but with reference to a legitimate child. This anecdote relates to her Grandmother, who would have been born in Exmoor, Devon, around the 1880s.

I've heard 'em say that, years ago, all these poor families used to have a lot of children and they couldn't afford 'em. Well, my mother said when her and her sister was born they were twins and me grandmother 'ad got four else. The nurse wanted to feed the babies bread and milk to kill 'em. Well my grandfer wouldn't, but she said, "what shall I give 'em some bread and milk and let 'em go on?" So that was done, wouldn't it, for the nurse to say that ? . . . Must have been common but nobody knew, you see. But that's in those days. (III:009:95)

This account is interesting because it confirms not only that particular individuals had both the knowledge and the expertise to procure infanticide in the South West of England, but also that some "nurses" (implicitly a handywoman/midwife) seem to have done so without fear of detection, as in other regional areas (cf. Rose 85-92; McNaughton 289-291, footnote 51). Clearly, at least in this instance, there seems to have been a conspiracy of silence between the midwife and the parents concerned. The anecdote also underlines the disparity between the legal view, which criminalised infanticide during the late nineteenth century and the view of the populace. Because of the poverty of the family concerned, the midwife herself seems to have offered to kill the new-born twins in the spirit of helpfulness, rather than of personal gain. Whether such "kindnesses" were offered to the mothers of illegitimate children cannot, however, be certain.

Legal restrictions implemented during the early twentieth century reduced the likelihood of mothers of illegitimate children being able to commit infanticide without detection. Childbirth itself increasingly came under the jurisdiction of the medical profession throughout this period and was subject to increasingly

stringent legislation. After the passing of the Midwives Act in 1902 dictating that "all new entrants had to be qualified, but unqualified women practising regularly before the Act could continue until 1910" (Rose 85; Leap and Hunter 7). Hence the type of long-established traditional handywoman described by Chase in The Heart, "a wise, simple village midwife" taking more or less sole responsibility for the delivery of children in an isolated rural area, was swiftly phased out (213-14). Hence, it seems extremely unlikely that the kind of incident described by Margaret Palmer would have occurred much after 1910 (Rose 85).

However, statistical evidence of mortality rates amongst illegitimate children during this period does tend to raise the suspicion that infanticide may still have been practised, particularly during the first half of the twentieth century. Whereas the figures for neonatal deaths amongst legitimate children in 1918 were 34.5 per thousand, the same calculation was 66.4 for those born illegitimate (Jeger x). Whereas for every 1,000 legitimate births in 1918, 91 infants died before their first birthday, over twice this number of illegitimates, a total of 186 children, died within the same year (Jeger x; cf. Teichman 105-07). By the mid-twentieth century, the gap between the mortality rates of legitimate and illegitimate children had been significantly reduced (Jeger x). However, the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child (hereafter NCUMC) was still concerned about the slightly higher rates amongst illegitimate children, particularly in view of the fact that social and medical services at this time were available to all (Jeger vii).

Oral testimonies from other parts of England occasionally allude to the practice of infanticide in relation to illegitimate children in the twentieth century. Two examples were remembered by Sutton's Lincolnshire informants, both involving unmarried women employed in service-related occupations, who were subsequently imprisoned (86-87). Whilst conceding that they obtained few references to infanticide, Leap and Hunter consider it probable that "some of the accounts of premature babies born in the toilet and babies accidentally smothered in bed were not as innocent as they seemed" (104). Interestingly, Denis Hutchings who worked as a CID officer during this period, claimed that he never encountered a single case of infanticide during his working life and no other references to twentieth century infanticide in the South West of England were uncovered (III:012:95).

PART B: ATTITUDES TOWARDS ILLEGITIMACY

Many of the folksongs and prose narratives examined in Chapters 6 and 7 depict a world in which the birth of an illegitimate child is seen as something which is socially undesirable. This impression is sometimes conveyed through the protagonists' responses to their predicament. Male protagonists who suspect that their lovers may have become pregnant may, for instance, respond with shame or guilt, by running away. Alternatively, the undesirability of illegitimate birth is either voiced by the narrator, or by one of the protagonists. Perhaps most significant is the pessimistic outcome of plots, the female protagonist either dying or committing suicide and the illegitimate child prevented from being born, or being killed off in the early stages of infancy. Once again, it is important to ask whether the implied undesirability of illegitimacy in folksong and prose narrative genres reflects the reality of social attitudes in the environments in which they were circulated. Areas of distortion or subversion at the level of representation might suggest that this corpus of material has a particular dramatic purpose.

The previous analysis of 'The Experience of Illegitimacy 1850 - Present Day' has already given some insights into how illegitimacy was regarded in the South West of England. However, whilst it is possible to deduce something about attitudes from experiences, it is important to remember that attitudes themselves play a crucial role in determining the nature of experience at any one time. It should also be remembered that the relationship between experiences and attitudes is never straightforward. It does not automatically follow, for instance, in societies where statistically speaking illegitimacy becomes part of the common experience, that attitudes towards illegitimate birth are necessarily more permissive.

Obtaining information on attitudes in the past, particularly those relating to illegitimate birth, is difficult. As Jean Robin observes in relation to her Colyton sample, "evidence on attitudes held in the past tends to be fragmentary, idiosyncratic and difficult to retrieve" ("Illegitimacy" 335). Evidence of lower-class attitudes is particularly hard to come by as this information was not habitually written down by members of this social group and the insights of oral history do not usually stretch back much further than the 1880s. The opinions of the lower orders tend, therefore, to be mediated either through official documents, such as court records, which were angled to a particular purpose, or through the writings of socially distanced middle-to-upper-class observers.

Interestingly, a sizeable proportion of the corpus of folksongs and prose narratives under study in this thesis draw attention to this double sexual standard, through a number of different devices. Sometimes allusions to the double sexual standard are made by the protagonists themselves, such as when men take a derogatory stance towards their partners, as soon as they have been seduced - a particularly noticeable feature of relevant folksongs collected at the turn-of-the-century. The double standard is also seen as a prime motivating factor in terms of human behaviour. Male and female protagonists are, for instance, seen experiencing the fact of illegitimate pregnancy rather differently, because of the contrasting responses they know they will receive. Perhaps most importantly, a heightened sense of the double standard is created as the events of these narratives themselves unfold, as for instance, when in the vast majority of cases the woman is left "holding the baby". This seems to be particularly pronounced in instances where the man is obviously of a higher social class than the woman he makes pregnant (e.g. "Jay's Grave", "Henry Trinman").

Keith Thomas argues that the concept of the double standard has been so ingrained in English society that "its effect upon law and institutions as well as upon opinion has done much to govern the relations of men and women with each other" ("Double" 195). Nevertheless, it should be stressed that the double standard was particularly pronounced amongst the upper classes and "much less marked in the lower classes" during the period under consideration (Thomas, "Double" 207).

The double standard has had several logical implications. On the one hand, it has generated the belief that it is best for a man to be sexually experienced before he marries - hence the many English kings who had mistresses prior to, and sometimes during, marriage (195). On the other, it has led to the "exaltation of female virginity for its own sake" and to the exaggerated sense of shame and enduring stigma attached to loss of "honour" amongst women (195). As tangible evidence of pre-marital or extra-marital sex, illegitimate pregnancy was judged extremely harshly, particularly amongst upper-class women who were expected to practise such a high degree of sexual restraint.

In order to sustain this position of inequality, a practical solution to the problem of how to give men "comparative sexual freedom" whilst also keeping "single women virgin and married women chaste", had to be found. Prostitution, which had been widespread since medieval times, provided the answer (Thomas,

"Double" 197). Hence, by the Victorian era, "prostitution in London and the industrial cities was carried out on an enormous scale", one estimate issued by the Chief Commissioner of Police in 1841, suggesting "there were 3,325 brothels in the Metropolitan district of London alone" this calculation taking "no account of part-time prostitution produced by inadequate female wages" (Thomas 198). Middle-to-upper class women were, in the meantime, exposed to the "great mass of didactic literature for young ladies" which taught them that they should accept the double standard as a natural part of life (Thomas "Double" 196).

Even though from the late seventeenth century onwards, there was "a large body of middle-class opinion which has regarded illicit sexual activity outside marriage as equally unrespectable in men and women alike", it seems that the double standard still persisted amongst this social group (Thomas, "Double" 205). This is largely because of the classist nature of their sympathies, whereby attention was "directed towards safeguarding the chastity of married women and of the daughters of respectable families", rather than the honour of working-class and "fallen" women (Thomas, "Double" 205).

The desire to draw attention to the double standard may in part be why the lower-class servant-maid is such an important feature of narratives relating to the theme of illegitimacy. As previously mentioned, the sexual double standard was most pronounced amongst the middle and upper classes. It might reasonably be assumed that the servant girl's employer would most likely be affiliated with this social bracket. Consequently, illegitimate pregnancies amongst servant women, as distinct from other kinds of female employees, would acquire a particular significance. As women employed in service were expected to subscribe to their employer's values (at least in appearance), implicitly, such pregnancies would be judged particularly harshly, being a violation of notions of female chastity (Gillis 115, 122-23). Secondly, illegitimate pregnancy amongst servant women might serve a useful dramatic purpose. Where it is implied that the woman's lover was either her employer, a relative of her employer, or one of her employer's social class, her situation might be used to draw attention to the extreme injustice of the double standard (see "Jay's Grave", Chapter 7). This is because the very man who took the liberty of seducing her might also, by the standards of his class, condemn her. It might therefore be interesting to consider whether particular illegitimacy-related narratives use the double standard as a vehicle to express not only gender conflict, but also inter-class conflicts.

Considerable regional variation in attitudes towards illegitimacy endured throughout the twentieth century, as evidenced by the wide variety of responses to out-of-wedlock pregnancies and illegitimate births recorded by oral historians. Drawing upon material collected from Ulster during the period 1935-1970 and fieldwork in Co. Donegal between 1989 and 1990 Nic Suibhne observes how "women who gave birth outside marriage . . . drew upon themselves the censure of the community, as they were seen to have broken an unwritten social law" (13-14). The father of the child was treated leniently by comparison with the mother and it was said that he usually escaped unscathed. The expression she always gets "the heaviest end of the stick" as applied to the unmarried mother, seems to be an acknowledgement of this double standard.

Roberts, in An Oral History of Working-Class Women 1890-1940, also emphasises the "strict sexual self-control exercised by the great majority of young couples" within what were often lengthy periods of courtships in the North West of England, and unanimous condemnation of sex outside marriage (73-75). Attitudes to out-of-wedlock pregnancy were consequently extremely harsh, as exemplified by an incident recounted in the oral testimony of Mrs Dobson, relating to a period prior to the First World War. One of her mother's colleagues was stoned at her church wedding, by the other women at work, because she was pregnant when she got married. When the incident was relayed the following Monday, the other weavers agreed with stoning her, because "they thought it was a crime" (78).

A similar attitude towards out-of-wedlock pregnancy was found in Preston, Lancashire, between the wars. Derek Thompson describes how "*especially* in the area of sexual morality, women came out the losers and were expected to observe a more rigid code than men" (40 original emphasis). Consequently, it was always a scandal for a woman to become pregnant, and conferred shame on herself and her parents. The male concerned however, was never made to suffer to the same degree, or likewise turned out by his parents. Nevertheless, Thompson still cites cases of pre-nuptial pregnancy where the groom's parents would not attend his wedding and forbade other family members to do so (41-42). Chamberlain and Richardson also record harsh attitudes towards those having illegitimate children in London (34).

However, in some areas, such as wartime East Anglia, attitudes appear to have been far more tolerant (Leap and Hunter 117). Certain examples suggest a correlation between the wage earning capacity or economic independence of the unmarried mother, and liberal attitudes in this respect. For instance, "Mary

W" who had been a midwife in the pit villages around Barnsley, West Yorkshire, recalled how:

The babies were just sort of absorbed into the family. Not much stigma attached, no. The grandmother became the mother in most cases, and they were absorbed into the family. It didn't make much difference. The grandmother would look after the baby and the girl would go back to work - in the mills or domestic work. Very often there was a quick wedding so that the baby was legitimate (Leap and Hunter 115).

Up until the First World War, illegitimacy was still very much condemned by the majority of people. During the war years there seems to have been strong public pressure against condoning any circumstances resulting in illegitimacy or making heroines of unmarried mothers. Haste suggests that the slight change in attitudes brought about during the First World War amounted to very little and that "the punitive moral stigma persisted long afterwards" (Haste 42). Only one official organisation, the NCUMC was concerned with the welfare of illegitimate children and their parents during the inter-war years.

It was not until the major changes in established sex roles, sexual relationships, courtship and marriage were brought about by the Second World War, that attitudes underwent a corresponding shift. Ceasing to be officially viewed as a moral issue, illegitimacy came instead to be more sympathetically viewed as a social "problem", "to be tackled not by blame and punishment for sin, but through assistance founded in rational social policies" (Haste 128). The Birkett Committee also had a vested interest in lobbying for more liberal attitudes towards illegitimacy by the late 1930s, because of concerns about the high level of criminal abortion, which was reckoned to be terminating 16-20% of all pregnancies (Haste 129).

Pioneer political moves towards liberal mindedness were, however, met with some resistance (e.g. Haste 129). Interestingly, the NCUMC was still clearly defining illegitimacy as an undesirable social problem in the early 1950s and advocated the view that "a high illegitimacy rate is symptomatic of a troubled society, a society where education, in its fullest meaning, needs to do still more positive, preventative work" (Jeger xii). However, at the same time, less condemning attitudes towards illegitimacy emerged at a more grass roots level. Haste notes, for example, that "women in the forces whose companions fell pregnant tended to sympathize rather than disapprove" (132). A more independent attitude was also encountered by social workers who observed that unmarried mothers chose not to enter homes for unmarried mothers and kept their children, disregarding any "sense of public shame" (Haste 131).

Attitudes Towards Illegitimacy in the South West

Ruth Tongue broaches the subject of nineteenth-century attitudes towards illegitimacy in her book on Somerset singers. She describes one of her informants, a farm maid and charwoman called Annie's Granny, as an illegitimate child born in Taunton Vale 1834 (Chime 35-44). Attitudes towards illegitimacy are described in relation to this woman's mother, supposedly a thirteen year old girl who became pregnant when she was raped by a passing itinerant. Once again, it is difficult to know how to handle Tongue's material in this instance. The unlikely circumstances of this child's conception raise questions about the authenticity of the story, particularly if factors including the later onset of puberty in young women during the early nineteenth century are considered (Laslett, Family 215).

However, certain features of Tongue's account are worth considering in conjunction with other kinds of South West evidence. The expression "chance-come" child is interesting. A similar dialect term "come-by-chance", is also mentioned in Elworthy's late nineteenth century dialect dictionary, as well as by D. St Leger-Gordon in relation to twentieth century Dartmoor, both being applied to illegitimate children (153; 199). This term seems to define illegitimate pregnancies more as unexpected accidents resulting from a particular turn of fortune, rather than as the produce of their parents' "sin". Having more positive connotations in West Somerset than alternatives "bastard", or "base child", "Come-By-Chance", also suggested the fortuitous appropriation of property (Elworthy 47, 153).

Nevertheless, Tongue still depicts a harsh picture of mother and child's treatment by the community. Whilst the parents took both daughter and grandchild into their home, "countryside rulings" decreed that both worked excessively hard in a state of "serfdom" in exchange for "a kind small corner in the community, free of hard names and words" (Chime 35). Perhaps in an attempt to romanticise the plight of the illegitimate child, she underlines that, "the 'chance-come' paid its way for leave to live" and shows the mother's elderly labourer husband refusing to speak to her illegitimate child (Chime 35-37).

Tongue emphasises that attitudes towards the illegitimate children begotten by soldiers and camp-follower women in Taunton were far more cruel, such children being referred to as "hose-birds" a dialect version of "whore's broods" (35). She adds that "those poor children never met with any reaction but public

comments on their mother's past and their own prison futures" (35). Although, as Bob and Jacqueline Patten observe the term "hosebird" was obsolete at the time Tongue was writing, Elworthy's dialect dictionary confirms that it was "an epithet of reproach (very common); no doubt the corruption of whore's brood", in widespread usage at the time to which this story refers (Patten 9; Elworthy 353-54).

Jean Robin's study of the Parish of Colyton, in East Devon, presents an interesting comparison with this account. Robin's evidence also points to the fact that a certain degree of stigma attached to illegitimacy during the period 1851-1881. This assertion is partly based on her statistical analysis, which suggests that the group comprising women who already had illegitimate children had much lower rates of pre-nuptial pregnancy than their peers. Robin interprets these figures as an indication that the former group became cautious of having unmarried sex, because they had "previously suffered from the breakdown of a socially acceptable system where premarital intercourse, followed by a conception, normally resulted in marriage before the child's birth" ("Illegitimacy" 318). Robin corroborates this assertion with evidence from census enumerator's schedules. These reveal that whilst there was "a diversity of responses to the presence of an illegitimate child in the household", in some Colyton families there were attempts to conceal the circumstances of a child's birth (335-36). Whilst some respondents used the surname of the mother's current husband, others used the terms "stepson" or "stepdaughter" ("Illegitimacy" 335-36). Significantly, only in one instance was the child explicitly named "illegitimate" in relation to the household head ("Illegitimacy" 336).

These census enumerator's schedules also tend to suggest that the same degree of concealment (or openness) was found in similar proportions amongst the families of these women, regardless of whether they had had only one, or more than one, illegitimate child. Robin views this as an indication that "sensitivity on the subject was to be found within and without the bastardy prone sub-society" and that therefore "a cross-section of bastard-connected families did feel disadvantaged by illegitimacy, whether socially or economically" ("Illegitimacy" 336). She goes on further to say, that it was the stigma associated with illegitimacy, "rather than economic discrimination, which helped to isolate the bastardy prone sub-society" of Colyton ("Illegitimacy" 339). This was because the fact of having had an illegitimate child, or being closely related to a woman who had, would detract from a family's respectability. This would make it more difficult for any member to marry into a family who had little association with illegitimacy and would therefore tend to reinforce the cohesions

of the bastardy-prone sub-society through ties of proximity, kinship, or marriage ("Illegitimacy" 339-40).

Traces of negative attitudes towards illegitimacy can also be found in relation to nineteenth century Cornwall. Courtney, writing in the late 1880s, recorded a relevant superstition relating to a logan (or loggan) stone (see Weatherhill 144, for a definition of logan stones). Huge rocks of this kind were commonly believed to have curative powers (see Hamilton Jenkin 300). Courtney records how "At Nancledra, a village near St Ives, [there] was formerly a logan rock, which could only be moved at midnight; and children were cured of rickets by being placed on it at that hour", Hunt also mentioning the same belief (Cornish Feasts 68; Popular 179). However, folk belief discriminated against children born out of wedlock, Courtney recording that the Nancledra logan "refused to rock for those who were illegitimate", Hunt that "if . . . the child was 'misbegotten,' or, if it was the offspring of dissolute parents, the stone would not move, and consequently no cure was effected" (Cornish Feasts 68; Popular 179; cf. Weatherhill 145).

The subject of attitudes towards illegitimacy in nineteenth century Cornwall is also mentioned by A.L.Rowse. The following anecdote, concerning changing courtship customs, refers to the author's great grandfather and probably relates to a period between 1860-1890:

Great-grand-father Rowe . . . came, I believe , from St Stephen's parish Of his family, three of the children had been born before wedlock and three after: very Cornish, after an older mode. My father's mother was one of those born before, uncle George after. My father was very sensitive on this point and never mentioned it - as if it mattered. The important point, as we can appreciate in these days of declining population, is that they did get born. (Rowse, A Cornish 21)

Rowse's reference to "an older mode" alludes to a more ancient, established custom, whereby courting couples not only engaged in premarital sex, but also produced one or more child/children before they got married. A Mr Havelock Ellis, writing in 1897, provides corroborative evidence in this respect, stating "the Cornish woman will sometimes have a baby before she is legally married; it is only an old custom of the county, though less deeply rooted than the corresponding custom in Wales" (Havelock Ellis). These examples highlight the comparative lack of urgency surrounding the need to marry in order to legitimise offspring, in relation to the Colyton sample. The fact that Rowse's great-grandparents waited until after the birth of their third child, tends to suggest that their decision as regards when to marry was not the result of social pressure, but rather of personal choice. Significantly, this anecdote also highlights how

within the space of two generations sensitivities surrounding particular sexual mores had radically changed, the fact of Rowse's grandmother's illegitimacy being a source of embarrassment for his father by the early twentieth century.

Udal Symmonds is the only person to allude to the possibility that the begetting of illegitimate children during the nineteenth century may have carried a sense of social stigma for fathers. He says of the practice of using pregnancy to preempt a marriage:

I have heard that this custom is, or was, not altogether unknown in the western parts of Dorsetshire and in the adjoining county of Devon . . . it is considered a gross breach of a man's honour to refuse to marry a women with who he has been "keeping company" and has caused to become *enceinte* (Symmonds)

Unfortunately, however, he does not give the source of this information, or the exact date or district to which it relates.

As with other parts of the country, attitudes towards both pre-nuptial pregnancy and illegitimacy seem to have been much harsher during the first quarter of the twentieth century, than they were after the Second World War - the war years being marked as a turning-point by a number of South West informants (III:010:I:95). The local historian and one-time member of the Devonshire Association, D. St. Leger-Gordon, suggests that the Dartmoor custom, whereby "marriage usually follows birth and when convenient, precedes it, if only by a few weeks" was the source of both class-conflict and conflict between the parishioners and the teachings of the church in the earlier part of the twentieth century (199).

Writing in 1954, he refers back to a time when what he loosely terms "immorality" was prevalent in country parishes (D. St Leger-Gordon 151). He relates a particular incident from his own recollection where "one outspoken vicar once refused to marry a couple in whose case the ceremony was too obviously desirable until the man at least had called at the vicarage to hear the pastor's opinion of him" (D. St Leger-Gordon 151). Clearly, at least in the eyes of the church, marriage was not seen to redeem this couple from the "sin" of having engaged in pre-marital sex as evidenced by the woman's conspicuous pregnancy.

Leger-Gordon also cites another more extreme case from the Dartmoor area, where "in the old autocratic days, when the squire reigned supreme, the code was sometimes strict to harshness. I knew one village in which the arrival of a

'come-by-chance' involved the expulsion of the mother and all her family" (199). However, he is keen to emphasise that this never happened in the village of Sticklepath, his own neighbourhood of thirty years, and implies that this was the exception rather than the rule.

William Turner's report relating to the findings of the mass observation team, in Luccombe, Somerset, suggests a more lenient attitude within the village in pre-war years:

Before marriage there seems to be a large measure of freedom between the sexes, as in most other communities, today. Little importance attaches itself to the rumour that few marriages have taken place before it was necessary, and no factual data is obtainable on this subject, the evidence being hearsay and gossip. Many rumours circulate in the village about the morals of others. (43)

Turner's description of sexual behaviour in the predominantly agricultural community of Luccombe is strongly reminiscent of Jean Robin's findings in relation to late nineteenth century Colyton, in East Devon. In both communities there seems to have been relatively permissive attitudes towards pre-marital sex, providing that the couple had an understanding that they would marry at the onset of pregnancy. Consequently, little stigma seemed to be attached to such pregnancies because the outcome rarely resulted in illegitimate birth.

However, Tongue claims to have recorded certain superstitious beliefs, after the turn-of-the-century, which suggest pervasively negative attitudes towards illegitimacy amongst Somerset people. An undated belief "never step over a broom if you are unmarried. You will bear a bastard child", recorded in the Quantocks, appears to relate to the practice of the folk wedding by "jumping the broom", though the rationale for a similar superstition in Taunton Deane (1905-60), relating to sitting on tables, is rather more ambiguous (Somerset 143; cf. Dundes "Jumping"). A condemnatory attitude towards illegitimacy is also implicit in an East Somerset belief "the illegitimate child of an illegitimate child becomes a blood-sucking ghost", allegedly recorded by Tongue in 1940 (Somerset 148).

Leger-Gordon again comments on attitudes towards illegitimacy on Dartmoor some years later, during the Second World War. He claims that in Sticklepath:

Illegitimacy carries no stigma. Even the influx of dusky infants which followed the "invasion" of negro troops during the war caused little consternation. Upon the contrary, they were taken round and exhibited by their grandparents as something of a novelty. One naïve girl did indeed plead excessive smoking as the reason for her baby's colour, but that was considered "false pride", no excuse being thought necessary. (199)

Although this anecdote is interesting, being yet another example of the prevailing ignorance about sex and reproduction during this period, it seems likely that Leger-Gordon's representation of liberal attitudes on Dartmoor may be misleading. As previously mentioned, Wray Tucker, who lives in the adjacent village of South Zeal, emphasised the harsh, condemning attitudes towards illegitimacy during this time, saying, "It was terrible, it was awful" (III:020:96). In fact, Wray described the community having quite the opposite reaction to the "dusky" illegitimate daughter of his cousin, begotten by an American soldier during the prolonged absence of her husband. The child was not brought out for months:

Cor it was terrible, . . . her mother was weeping and wailing "oh what shall we do?" Wouldn't take it out in a pram, wouldn't take it out. Wouldn't dare show anybody, you know, it was terrible the attitude towards this kid, still people now. (III:020:96)

Wray however, seemed to make concessions for his cousin in view of the fact that it was war time and her husband was away with the troops. He was appalled by the prejudiced reaction of the community against both mother and child, not least because of the undercurrent of hypocrisy, "everybody went astray during war I don't care a damn what they say. Nobody gonna come preaching they were angels to me during the war 'cause they weren't, you know" (III:020:96). Wray said of illegitimate children in general that "if the child was illegitimate, you were branded a bastard and that was it. And you were shunned and he wouldn't get the same dues anywhere as if you were a legitimate child. And it was the same with colour" (III:020:96).

Wray attributed the attitudes towards illegitimacy in South Zeal to the narrow mindedness of the villagers who had never moved outside. By contrast Wray himself had lived away from Devon at several points in his adult life. Wray viewed attitudes towards illegitimacy and the extreme racial prejudice, traces of which still exist in the village, as having the same root cause. Wray did, however, detect a subtle change in attitude since the Second World War in both respects "people started realising gradually . . . that was one of the bad parts of having a narrow minded village because . . . everybody in the village down

there was related you had to be careful who you were talking to because you were talking to somebody's cousin" (III:020:96).

That illegitimacy had been, and sometimes still was, seen as undesirable was mentioned by every other South West informant. Several informants mentioned the anxiety that this caused the parents or grandparents of teenagers and young adults. Denis Hutchings remarked, for instance, "Parents used to I think worry about their children more even when they were seventeen, eighteen year-olds they used to worry about them more what they were up to at night" (III:012:I:95). In other cases this concern gave rise to cautionary advice, particularly in the case of girls and young women. During a discussion about illegitimacy during the Second World War, Jess Hill commented "Mothers used to tell their daughters to keep their legs together" (III:005:II:95). Charlie also gave a humorous account of the advice given to a young woman starting her first job by Granny Cann, the grandmother of a well-known Dartmoor family, who concluded her farewells with " 'and mind you keep your bloody legs tight ! ' " (III:005:II:95). Maureen Tatlow from Cornwall, also remembered being given similar advice by her grandmother:

The gran that's alive would say "don't you bring no trouble home", never saying what trouble was. But you knowed darn well that that would be trouble if you come home carrying a baby and you wouldn't married. And also, I mean, if you went on to be confirmed within the church, I mean, very strong feelings that you shouldn't actually get pregnant out of wedlock. Very stigmatised. (III:030:II:97)

Like Ken, Maureen also emphasised that illegitimacy "was well covered" up during her youth. Wherever it did come to light, however, "it was definitely a talking point that was extremely frowned upon" (III:030:II:97). Maureen's insights as to why "the morals of the time said that's the way it should be" were very much linked to economic considerations (III:030:II:97). She commented, "you can understand that with war really, because I mean you've got enough troubles anyway without a whole load of stray children appearing that nobody got any money and nobody's taking responsibility for . . . particularly when times are hard and money's short, that another mouth to feed you 'aven't allowed for, just on the whim of five minutes nookey somewhere" (III:030:II:97). However, she considered that there were other reasons for this stigma, including the effects of the Victorian and Edwardian emphasis on sexual abstinence (III:030:II:97).

Sheila Bricknell, from Wonford in Exeter, was one of the few informants who mentioned sympathetic attitudes towards those who had illegitimate children. However, the more kindly responses she describes still seem to have been

based on the assumption that to have children outside of marriage was wrong. Sheila remarked:

people were very understanding and very tolerant I always found . . . the saying was "they aren't the first and they won't be the last". So it was an accepted thing although, to begin with, to tell people that your daughter was pregnant was quite a stigma really, you know, and a hard thing . . . but I think people were quite tolerant really, people that I knew, you know, understood. (III:015:96)

The difference in attitude amongst Sheila's circle of acquaintances may in part be due to her strong affiliations with the Church army. It is probable that many of those she encountered adhered to the Christian faith. Consequently, whilst on the one hand they may have held the deep-seated belief that children should only be born within the God ordained union of matrimony, on the other, they were probably well aware of biblical teaching against hypocrisy and judging others (Luke 6:37-42; Matthew 7:1-5), particularly on grounds of sexual sin (Luke 7:36-50; John 8:1-11). Sheila further commented "people with children of their own would realise that it could happen to anybody you know" (III:015:96). Consequently, she mentions people helping out, in practical ways, by passing on items such as baby clothes and prams.

Even so, it seems that there was still some sense of the double standard, although this seems to have been less pronounced than in other areas. Sheila asserted that a man who had fathered one or more illegitimate children would not be looked down upon by the community. Perhaps for biological reasons, this was not, however, true of the mothers. As Sheila explained "people used to say 'it takes two to make a bargain' . . . but usually I suppose because the girl had to have the baby didn't she and she carried the shame really and she had the evidence" (III:015:96).

Amongst some of the South West informants, there was still a strong conviction that children should not be born outside of marriage. Consequently, when "illegitimate" pregnancy did occur, it was invariably seen as an accident or mistake, particularly on the part of the women concerned. Hence, Denis Hutchings remarked, " If I get told now somebody's pregnant I just think 'stupid girl', that's all I think because there's no reason for any girl to become pregnant now, to be honest, is there? Not in the same way as there was years ago" (III:012:I:95). For both Denis Hutchings and Charlie Hill, the act of becoming pregnant outside of wedlock, was viewed as even more "foolish" or unnecessary in an era where reliable contraception is widely available. Charlie commented "but I do think today, if anyone's enjoying sexual activity, I mean it's

up to them, but really with all the preventatives they've got today there's no reason why a girl should get pregnant is there really?" (III:005:II:95). Interestingly, neither account seemed to condemn illegitimate pregnancy on the grounds that the women or couple should not have been having pre-marital sex. Rather, illegitimate pregnancy tended to incite disapproval because it was seen as evidence of irresponsibility. Consequently, when asked about changing attitudes towards illegitimacy, Denis remarked "I don't think there is the same sense of responsibility in today's younger people as there was perhaps even when I was young" (III:012:I:95).

All the South West informants who talked about the subject of illegitimate pregnancy agreed that a dual standard did exist, whereby the mothers were always judged much more harshly than the fathers. In some instances, informants related the discrepancy in the treatment of parents to the double sexual standard. Denis Hutchings remarked of his youth, during the 1950s, that in choosing a marriage partner men "went out to find a virgin" (III:012:I:95). Women who had had a previous partner were, in many ways, therefore seen to have lost their value. Denis explained, "if you went out with a gang of lads and they were talking about somebody that had been with somebody else, they weren't interested because they . . . somebody else had been with them" (III:012:I:95). However, he emphasised the injustice of this situation, given that women were expected to overlook their marriage partner's sexual history "it was the poor woman that got the lash back after that. You see because the guys weren't any different were they?" (III:012:I:95) For these reasons, Denis asserted "the men got away pretty lightly. It was always the woman, I think, that got the back lash of any unwanted pregnancy" (III:012:I:95). Ken Penny also talked about the double sexual standard, seeing the fact that women were sent away to conceal the extreme shame of having had an illegitimate child, as a prime example, and explicating the song "Ball of Yarn" accordingly.

Chris Binmore also observed that apart from being made to marry the woman in certain cases, men who were responsible for illegitimate conceptions got off lightly. Once again this was related to wider views about what constituted appropriate sexual behaviour in men as opposed to women, " [of] course it was the same then really 'oh he was just growing up' it's very much the same now, isn't it really, when you look at it? It's always the woman that has the trauma of it, 'must have led him on' and all this" (III:018:96).

Other informants, whilst not directly relating the disparity in treatments of those begetting illegitimate children to the double sexual standard, were nevertheless

painfully aware of this inequality. Wray said of the community of South Zeal, on Dartmoor:

they never used to blame the father did they? You know that was evil, wicked really 'cause they never used to blame the father at all. He used to get away with murder you know. It was always the women . . . They used to say "takes two to tango" but then the father used to get away every time, it was wrong really you know (III:020:96).

Similarly to Sheila, Wray also drew attention to the irony that whilst the common wisdoms of the time emphasised that it takes two adults to consent to sex and conceive a child, attitudes dictated that only one party was apportioned with the blame.

CHAPTER 6

FOLKSONG RELATING TO THE THEME OF ILLEGITIMACY IN THE SOUTH WEST OF ENGLAND

The following chapter is arranged in two parts. The first section, **Part A**, introduces all the illegitimacy-related song data which forms the central focus of the analysis in **Part B**. I will initially clarify how I selected each of these folksongs - all of which were collected since 1970 - from the four archives and my own fieldwork recordings. A comprehensive list of this material is alphabetically arranged by standard title in Table B, and is followed by a brief description of plot for each song, or group of song variants.

A textual analysis of each song is completed in **Part B**, where I examine attitudes towards illegitimacy as represented in stated text alone. Hence, material is grouped together according to the kinds of attitude it appears to describe. As far as possible, my selected songs are then analysed in terms of their performance contexts since 1970. As particular attention is given to the creation of denotative and connotative meanings in relation to my chosen theme, extensive use will be made of my fieldwork interviews, during which singers talked in some detail about their interpretation of their own and other people's songs. Finally, the experience of, and attitudes towards illegitimacy, as represented within these songs is related to those same experiences and attitudes within the wider cultural environments of their circulation. Hence, I aim to draw some conclusions about the extent to which a given song communicates attitudes towards illegitimacy in the "distant" past; contemporary notions about attitudes towards illegitimacy held in the distant past; or attitudes towards illegitimacy since the 1970s.

PART A : Presentation of Data

Folksong data collected by Sabine Baring-Gould, Cecil Sharp, and Hammond and Gardiner, suggests that the theme of illegitimacy has had an enduring popularity in folksongs circulated in the South West of England since at least the late nineteenth century. Sharp in particular, collected an impressive number of songs relating to this theme. In fact, the total number of recorded variants, probably provides a rather conservative estimate of the number of relevant songs circulating in oral tradition at this time, given the censorious inclinations of both Sharp and Baring-Gould. A brief outline of all the relevant songs

transcribed by each of these four collectors, other than those again collected since 1970, is provided in Appendix II.

The complexities surrounding this word "illegitimacy" have already been highlighted in Chapter 3, where I suggested that illegitimacy could be viewed as a process by which one "becomes illegitimate" by passing through a set of stages. This seemed to be a more useful interpretation of the term in relation to my own analysis than one which sought to apply a definitive label (as with statistical analysis). It was therefore clear that the study should not confine itself to the investigation of song plots only conforming to a narrow dictionary definition of "illegitimate birth" (i.e. where either a single or married woman gives birth to a child with a man to whom she is not married). A study so limited would have been far too exclusive and would have risked constructing rigid divisions between essentially inseparable material. In selecting my twenty-three songs from each of the archives and other fieldwork materials, my aim had therefore been to include as much relevant data as possible.

With the help of **Figure 2** on p. 73, it is possible to examine a range of potentially relevant songs from the wider pool of songs about sex/sexual relationships. As can be seen from this diagram, a necessary precondition applying to the plots of all such songs is that they start with either a pre-marital or extramarital sexual encounter. However, from this point onwards, there are a wide range of paths (or plot scenarios) which can be taken through the diagram, most of which stop short of the full journey arriving at illegitimate birth.

Practically every different path, or set of scenarios, incorporated within this diagram can be matched by a particular song variant within the data. Proportionally the spread of song variants relating to each particular stage is also fairly equal. Consequently, song narratives which include the birth of an illegitimate child have to be seen in relation to the greater number of associated songs which do not.

The shortest routes through the diagram tend to end in the top section, shortly after the sexual encounter. The song "Down by the Old Riverside" (hereafter "Old Riverside") is one such example. In both Sophie Legg's versions, a pre-marital sexual encounter is followed by the retraction of a previous marriage promise by the male protagonist (Obstacle Preventing Marriage 2). As a consequence of his refusal to marry her, the female protagonist allows herself to be pushed in the river and drowned (Outcome 1) (WT TF 26, SRFA tape 147). Interestingly, the time scale of this narrative is such that we are never

permitted to know whether or not conception would actually have taken place, as is assumed by Jim Hook in both his fragmented versions (SRFA tapes 178 & 461).

Other songs from my sample, such as "The Shannon Side" progress to a far later stage in the diagram before stopping short at labour and birth. In this plot structure, the pre-marital sexual encounter seems to be followed by a mutual agreement not to marry. It is only after the knowledge of conception that the female protagonist makes a marriage proposal and is rejected by the child's father (obstacle preventing marriage 2). The ensuing action is, however, left entirely to the imagination, although there are various textual prompts to the fact the child will be born illegitimate. Only a minority of songs (e.g. "Maids A-Rushing", "The Female Cabin Boy", "High Germany") take one of several possible paths and complete the full course of the diagram.

A characteristic of this body of relevant songs is that, as with "Old Riverside", different variants of the same song family reach different stages on the diagram, with plot sequences leading to entirely different sets of outcomes. Frequently, the existence of either a live, or unborn child, is established as a common variable, whilst other textual elements remain relatively stable, as with "Thrashing Machine". In some versions of this song, the discernible plot elements are a pre-marital sexual encounter, conception, labour and birth. In others, only the premarital sexual encounter itself, or the premarital sexual encounter and conception is included. Other song families (e.g. "The Dark-Eyed Lover" and "Ball of Yarn") also exhibit this general trait.

In some instances the plot element in question is not the existence of a child, but instead the fact of its legitimate/illegitimate status. So, whereas in some versions of "The Foggy Dew" the legitimate child is implicitly born out of a prenuptial pregnancy, in others the absence of particular verses suggests that the parents never marry and the child is left with its father (see III:003:95; cf. III:012:I:95). This example shows the inherent difficulty in trying to categorise songs according to the different types of "birth scenario" they depict. Clearly, songs like "The Foggy Dew" cannot be confined to a single position in terms of the "stage" of illegitimacy the song depicts, and they have therefore to be seen as occupying a combination of categories.

The fact that only a minority of relevant songs within the data explicitly include the birth of an illegitimate child seemed unimportant in terms of the data selection process. Whether a song is able to be revealing of attitudes towards

illegitimate birth is not necessarily dependent upon the birth of an illegitimate child actually taking place within the narrative sequence of the song. Although in songs like "The Shannon Side" illegitimacy itself is absent, the theme of illegitimacy within such songs is ever-present and serves as an important motivating force.

The obvious exchange between "illegitimacy" songs and other categories of song, such as songs of seduction, could not, by this stage, be ignored. Not only did separate categories commonly explore identical themes using similar semiological devices, but singers also tended to conflate illegitimacy songs and non/illegitimacy songs. This was done both conceptually, in discussion, but also creatively, by sometimes combining elements of "illegitimacy" with a non "illegitimacy" song in their performance. The ordering of songs in individual repertoires also implied an association between material (e.g. SRFA tape 146). I therefore decided that I had little choice but to adopt a fairly inclusive approach.

Eventually I decided to include within my sample all songs incorporating scenarios whose routes can be plotted on Figure 2 and which in some way deal with the theme of out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth. Providing at least one variant from any song family established this connection, I considered all variants of that song within my sample (e.g. "The Grenadier"). This seemed particularly important as I decided that such variations might, as an integral part of these songs, be significant and therefore merited further investigation. My later experience in the field also confirmed this decision as I became alerted to the fact that singers would often interpret songs with a heavy sexual innuendo which could not be discerned from the text in itself. I decided not to include songs where the illegitimacy connection could only be established by comparison with other sources, being obscure in the existing variants (e.g. "The Oxford Girl", SRFA tape 74).

All of the following songs presented for discussion fulfil one (or both) of two criteria in relation to their association with the locality. They were either performed by singers who were currently part of the indigenous population of the South West, or by individuals who had originally come from other counties but had been settled in the South West for a period of more than twenty years.⁸⁶ All songs considered relevant have been included regardless of where they were learnt, the mode by which they were learnt or even who they were

⁸⁶The singer Jack Gard was eventually excluded from the study for this reason (Richards and Stubbs, 98, endnote, 119).

learnt from, providing that they fulfilled these two criteria. On rare occasions, where it was not possible to tell whether an individual fulfilled the above stated criteria (e.g. a pub singer), the recording of their song was still included.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the terms available to me - legitimacy, illegitimacy, out-of-wedlock pregnancy, pre-nuptial pregnancy - were of limited use in adequately describing the wide range of predicaments apparent within the songs themselves. The problem of terminology was also encountered by Freedman, who used the terms "out-of-wedlock pregnancy", or "illegitimate pregnancy" in her study of Scottish ballads, even though strictly speaking, there can be no such thing as an "illegitimate pregnancy", only illegitimate birth. In the absence of alternatives, I adopted both expressions in relation to my own data, but avoided the phrase "out-of-wedlock pregnancy" to describe predicaments where the female protagonist is married to someone other than her child's father, in order to avoid confusion (e.g. "Collumara Cradle Song").

For the purposes of this thesis, the term version and variant are used interchangeably to refer to a single song or narrative text. However, the term variant is only ever used in cases where more than one text of the same item exists within the data (e.g. "Died for Love").

Relevant data from the four archives of tape recordings and my own fieldwork was found in a variety of states. Many of the songs occurred in a fragmented form, either because the singer could not remember all the words or because the song was interrupted by, for example, a cut in the tape. A common occurrence in terms of singers who struggled to remember a song was that they would recount the story as a prose narrative, singing only a few lines. Partly because of my interest in the narrative aspect of these songs, I decided to include such fragments. Indeed, sometimes these incomplete texts provided a better opportunity for the singer to explain their own conceptualisation and interpretation of the song than more complete texts. I also included all fragments where the words of the song were spoken rather than sung, and counted them as part of the song text.

The following table provides an overview of relevant song-data collected as part of my own fieldwork, either during my observations of live singing events or in the context of an interview. Whilst the first column lists each singer from whom I collected material, the second column indicates what relevant material, if any, had previously been recorded from that particular individual. My own contribution to the collecting of relevant song-data is represented in the far

right-hand column. Underlined song titles mark known cases where the song was, or used to be, in the singer's active repertoire, whilst (F) marks a fragmented version.

TABLE A

Informant	Existing Archival Recordings	Additional recordings collected in the field.
Pat Barker	None	<u>Died For Love</u> (subtype A)
Sheila Bricknell	<u>The Dark-Eyed Lover</u> <u>Died For Love</u> (F)	The Foggy Dew (F)
Joe Davis	<u>The Thrashing Machine</u>	Died For Love (subtype A) (F)
Edwin Hall	None	<u>Ball of Yarn</u>
Charlie Hill	None	Ball of Yarn Thrashing Machine <u>Rosemary Lane</u> The Foggy Dew Catch Me if You Can
Denis Hutchings	<u>The Brisk Young Butcher</u> <u>Died For Love</u> (subtypeA)	<u>Thrashing Machine</u> <u>The Foggy Dew</u>
Vic Legg	None	<u>Catch Me if You Can</u> Ball of Yarn (F)
Dave and Jill Lowry	None	Ball of Yarn (F)
Bill Packman	<u>Catch Me if You Can</u> <u>Down by the Shannon Side</u>	None
Margaret Palmer	None	<u>Don't Tell I Tell 'E</u>
Nelson Penfold	None	Died For Love (subtype A) (F) Rosemary Lane (F) Down by the Old Riverside (F)
Ken Penney	<u>Ball of Yarn</u> <u>Died For Love</u>	<u>The Maid of Australia</u> Rosemary Lane (F)
Maureen Tatlow	None	<u>The Handsome Cabin Boy</u> <u>High Germany</u> The Lady and the Grenadier Thrashing Machine (F) <u>The Brisk Young Butcher</u> <u>Collumara Cradle Song</u>
Wray Tucker	<u>Ball of Yarn</u> (F) <u>Barnacle Bill the Sailor</u>	Died For Love (subtype A) (F)
George Withers	None	<u>The Lady and the Grenadier</u> Ball of Yarn (F) Rosemary Lane <u>The Foggy Dew</u>

SONG DATA COLLECTED DURING FIELDWORK

Table B represents a comprehensive list of all songs relating to the themes of prenuptial pregnancy and illegitimacy discovered within the above four archives and collected as part of my own fieldwork. Each song is listed by its standard title in alphabetical order. The first set of numbers recorded within the table indicates the total number of singers who are recorded performing each song within the data as a whole (two or more singers performing a song in unison are counted as one singer). The second column shows the frequency with which each song occurs, this row of numbers detailing the total number of versions or separate performances which were recorded. Bracketed numbers within the same column show how many of these versions exist in a fragmentary form (F). Songs are classified as fragments where either the singers themselves acknowledge that part of the song is missing or where it becomes apparent through an additional performance by the same singer that the song is incomplete.

The final column examines the distribution of song variants in relation to the total number of performers, highlighting where particular singers are recorded singing a song on more than one occasion. The bracketed figures on the far right-hand side indicate the distribution of these repeat performances among singers. The first digit in each sum shows exactly how many of the total number of singers (or groups of singers) were responsible for a given number of performances.⁸⁷ Consequently, in relation to "Old Riverside" the bracketed numbers (1x3) and (2x2) indicate that of the four repeat performances of this song, one singer sang three versions, with two singers performing two versions each. This information is useful because it may suggest the level of familiarity which singers have with particular songs, and the status of a given song within active repertoires.

⁸⁷ Re-takes of the same song on the same occasion have not been counted.

TABLE B

Song (standard title)	No. of versions	No. of singers/ singing units	Repeat performances
Ball of Yarn	34 (F)	23	11 (4x3) & (3x2)
Barnacle Bill the Sailor (hereafter, Barnacle Bill)	1	1	0
Brisk Young Butcher, The (hereafter, The Butcher)	4	2	2 (1x3)
Catch Me if You Can (hereafter, Catch Me)	7	5	2
Collumara Cradle Song, The (hereafter, Collumara)	1	1	0
Cruel Ship's Carpenter, The (hereafter, Ship's Carpenter)	1 (F1)	1	0
Dark-Eyed Lover, The (hereafter, Dark-Eyed Lover)	9 (F1)	8	1 (1x2)
Died for Love, subtype A	17 (F6)	17	0
Died for Love, subtype B (Up the Green Meadows)	2 (F1)	2	0
Dit'sum Lad	1	1	0
Don't Tell I Tell 'E (hereafter, Don't Tell I)	3	2	1 (1x2)

**TAPE-RECORDED VERSIONS OF ILLEGITIMACY-RELATED SONGS
COLLECTED SINCE 1970**

TABLE B CONTINUED

Song (standard title)	No. of versions	No. of singers/ singing units	Repeat performances
Down by the Old Riverside (hereafter, Old Riverside)	10 (F4)	6	4 (1x3) (2x2)
Down by the Shannon Side (hereafter, Shannon Side)	4 (F2)	2	2 (2x2)
Down in the Valley	2	2	0
Foggy Dew, The (hereafter, Foggy Dew)	5	5	0
Handsome Cabin Boy, The 1 (hereafter, Cabin Boy)		1	0
High Germany	1	1	0
Lady and the Grenadier, The (hereafter, The Grenadier)	3	3	0
Maid of Australia, The (hereafter, Australia)	1	1	0
Maids A-Rushing (hereafter, A-Rushing)	1	1	0
Navy Boots	2 (F1)	2	0
Rosemary Lane	12 (F5)	12	0
Thrashing Machine, The (hereafter, Thrashing Machine)	8 (F1)	7	1 (1x2)

Plot summaries of all the songs, or song variants, listed in Table B are as follows. The bracketed information immediately following each song title refers to the places in which variants of that song have been noted or recorded, during the twentieth century according to the Roud Index, a computerised index of song, and my own research into published and archival sources. All references to Maud Karpeles' song versions are taken from her work Cecil Sharp's Collection.

"Ball of Yarn" (England, Northern Ireland, Canada, Australia, America)

Thirty-four variants of this popular song of seduction were collected from local singers in the South West of England. Ten singers directly incorporated the theme of illegitimacy in their narratives. Most of these versions were affiliated with the wider strand of "Ball of Yarn" variants which include a refrain beginning "Sweet Belinda" or "Sweet Melinda" (see Penney, Appendix III). The male protagonist, the narrative "I" of the song, is described as the farmer's grandson by five of the ten singers, whilst Maureen Tatlow instead remembered him as a sailor in her father's version (III:029:I:97). Six of these ten singers depict the female protagonist as a maid, typically within the context of a farm setting.

The male protagonist typically propositions the woman in all versions, by euphemistically asking her if he can "wind up" ^{either} her little ball of yarn, or twine. In the a-typical versions by Edwin Hall and Charlie Hill, she initially turns him down because he is a stranger, suggesting he try his charms on other women and come back another time (Gen:Res:001:95, III:011:95; III:005:I:95). However, a seduction always follows. In the versions of seven singers, the narrator describes this encounter with an air of pseudo naiveté, claiming not to have intended any harm. By substituting "pretending", for "intending", Ken Penney and Nelson and David Birch instead suggest a more conniving male protagonist (SRFA tape 68; tape 38). The ending of the song tends to vary quite considerably, but all ten singers include a verse in which the male protagonist subsequently encounters the woman holding his baby. In the versions of five singers, the woman's black look makes it clear that the child is unwelcome, Edwin Hall's alternative phrase, "she wouldn't look at me", having similar connotations (III:011:95). In an a-typical version by Nobby Clark, the male protagonist, who clearly acknowledged his paternity and married the woman during pregnancy, now reminisces on their pre-marital exploits (SRFA tape 53). In Robert Clatworthy's unusual Somerset version, the male protagonist instead

ends up in court nine months later, being imprisoned for fathering the child (SRFA tape 2). Daisy Small's narrative is closely affiliated with a strand of travellers' variants, in which immediately after the encounter the woman dresses and runs home to tell her mother, whilst her seducer runs away:

So I hopped across the green,
Not intending to be seen,
After winding up her little ball of yarn. (Appendix III)

This version describes how a year later, she verbally confronts him:

Oh she said "look what you've done,
I am bringing you your son". (Appendix III)

and like other travellers' versions, the narrative ends with a warning directed to "country maidens", to beware of people and "keep your hand on your little ball of yarn" (Appendix III).

"Barnacle Bill" (England, Canada, America)

There have been few audiotaped recordings of this song in England, where versions exist mainly in compilations of bawdy songs, such as rugby songs. Wray Tucker's South West version uses the dialogue technique to progress through the seduction of a young woman by a sailor, in a series of stages (see Appendix III). The tone and rhythm of the song with these opposing voices seem to parody the narrative convention of seduction in traditional song (cf. "Old Riverside"; "Shannon Side"; "Foggy Dew"; cf. "Dabbling in"; "Floating Down" Appendix II). Thus the sailor starts by knocking at the bedroom door, the implied narrative suggesting he works his way into the woman's bed. The song culminates in the woman articulating her fear of pregnancy, to which the sailor responds, "We'll drown the bugger and shag for another."

"The Butcher" (England, Scotland, Canada)

Denis Hutchings' version concerns an entrepreneurial butcher who sets out for London (or Newcastle in Maureen Tatlow's version) to buy some cattle (SRFA tapes 368 & 453, III:008:I:95). On reaching his destination he arrives at an inn. He is received by the chambermaid in the inn keeper's absence and successfully bribes her to spend the night with him, with a sovereign. On leaving the inn the following morning, the butcher is asked to pay his bill, but falsely tells the innkeeper that this money has already been entrusted to the chambermaid, for he gave her a sovereign but did not receive his change. The butcher returns to the inn exactly one year later and, to his amazement, the

chambermaid places a young baby on his knee. With mock sincerity, she urges the enraged butcher not to be angry, for she is merely returning his "change". Though otherwise similar, Maureen Tatlow's version includes two additional stanzas in which the maid, fearing recrimination, is forced to surrender the sovereign to her employer, the butcher eventually being taken to a judge and fined one hundred pounds, the song ending with a warning against "sporting" with chambermaids (III:029:I:97).

"Catch Me" (England)

Variants of "Catch Me" are concentrated in the West Country, being collected in Dorset, Devon, Somerset and Cornwall (Roud). The theme of illegitimacy is a stable component of this song, emerging in all seven South West variants. This seducer chances to meet an attractive young woman as he walks through the meadows (see Appendix III). Announcing his intention to "show her what she had never seen" in all but Henry Orchard's versions (SRFA tapes 69 & 190), he entices her to accompany him. Eventually he manages to seduce her, and the woman therefore asserts her right to know his name. He introduces himself as "Catch Me if You Can", promising to marry her on his return "across the wide ocean", but subsequently deserts her. She waits for him through her developing pregnancy until her child is born, the conclusion of Charlie Hill's narrative (III:003:95). In all other versions, she vows bitterly to search the world or "woods and valleys" until she finds "that false young man". The consistently slow tempo to which the repetitive tune is sung tends to underline its serious nature.

"Collumara" (England, Wales, Northern and Republic of Ireland,
America, Canada, Australia)

Noticeably few versions have been recorded in other parts of England and Wales (Roud). In Maureen Tatlow's South West version, this lament is related by a young, cuckolded husband, from the fictional town of Kianga (cf. "Baby Lie Easy" on Songs From (disc)). Having married to cheer himself up, he instead finds that his young wife deceives him. Philandering with other young men whilst he is at work, she leaves him at home to mind another man's child. The narrator bemoans his fate, regretting his marriage and wishing he was single again. The song ends with a warning stanza against taking up with alluring women who, when married will "leave you a-rocking the cradle alone" (III:030:I:97).

"Ship's Carpenter" (Scotland, Northern Ireland, America, Canada)

This song has been collected in counties such as Norfolk, Sussex and Staffordshire during the last century. Mrs Feen's fragmented version excludes the introductory stanzas of earlier-collected South West variants, in which a ship's carpenter takes his fiancée on a journey, ostensibly to visit friends but instead seduces her (Karpeles 237-38, 240). Rather, she begins with the scene of confrontation, in which the implicitly pregnant female protagonist accuses her fiancé of betrayal and he ruthlessly announces his intention to kill her (SRFA tape 203). Hence the carpenter's motives remain unexplained, whereas in William Tucker's earlier-collected variant the killing is more obviously incited by his desire to break his marriage promise and shun responsibility for his child. Mrs Feen moves straight to the gory stabbing resulting in the female protagonist's death, also excluding the stanza in which the woman pleads for the life of herself and their child and relinquishes hold over her fiancé (cf. Karpeles 237-38). The murdering-lover then boards a ship which cannot sail because of the recent murder.⁸⁸ Though he denies his guilt, the carpenter is caught and according to Mrs Feen's recollections is tried and put to death (cf. Karpeles 237-38)

"Dark-Eyed Lover" (England, Scotland, Republic of Ireland, America, Canada)

Collected in other English counties such as Dorset and Suffolk, all but one South West version of this song, by Jim Orchard (SRFA tape 178), is narrated by the female protagonist, as a form of dramatic monologue. She relates how her love affair ended when her lover abandoned her, having been distracted or "persuaded" by another woman - a more wealthy rival in the versions of Walter Hutchings, Charlotte Renals and Amy Ford (SRFA tapes 368; 46 & 229; Somerset Scrapbook (tape)). The serious tone with which this song is consistently sung is underlined by its slow tempo.

Of the seven singers using a female narrator, two mention the woman's pregnancy within the song. Whilst Mrs Hawkins makes suggestive allusions to the narrator being brought or left "to my shame" (SRFA tape 196), both she and Sheila Bricknell include a more explicit reference to pregnancy in their narratives, which incorporate the stanza:

⁸⁸ In William Tucker's turn-of-the century version (Karpeles A), there is a stronger suggestion that the inability of the ship to leave relates to superstition regarding the murderer's presence on board.

When I'm on my bed of sickness,
When I'm on my bed of pain,
When you see my baby smiling,
You will want me back again. (SRFA tape 196)

In Mrs Hawkin's version, the embittered narrator unhappily reminisces about the many times they spent together, mourning her lover's inconstancy. In both versions, she tells her former lover to take back his gifts of a ring and necklace and bestow them on her rival. As the female protagonist then bids her parents, friends, and lover farewell, naming him as the cause of her downfall, in both versions she clearly dies. However, in Mrs Hawkin's extended narrative, the female protagonist continues to rebuke the unfaithful lover, rhetorically demanding that if he considers her so lowly, he leave, forget her and do what he wishes.

"Died for Love" (England, Scotland, Northern and Republic of Ireland,
American, Canada, Australia).

The family of songs linked by the standard title "Died for Love" is widespread throughout England. Sound recordings have been generated in approximately fifteen English counties during the last century. Subtypes A and B have both been collected in other parts of the country.

"Died for Love" subtype A

Seventeen versions of this song were collected in the South West. All but one complete text describes how a father returns home one night and discovers his daughter has hung herself from a beam. Taking his knife and cutting her down, he then finds a suicide note in thirteen versions (cf. "A Sailor by Right"). Most versions briefly impart, albeit unspecifically, the first person account of her unhappy affair with her inconstant lover. In the eleven versions which contain references to an unborn, or newly-born child, very occasionally specific reasons for the suicide are given. In Herbie Middleton's variant, the woman laments how the lover, now overseas, never replies to her many letters (SRFA tape 145); in Bill Hingston's version, that he no longer thinks of her (SRFA tape 150); in a traveller's version by Harriet Adams, that the lover was too shy to speak (Appendix III). In Denis Hutchings' version the female protagonist commits suicide because she cannot bear the stigma attached to illegitimacy (see Appendix III). Eight of these eleven versions also include a similar burial request to the following:

Dig my grave both wide and deep,
And lay white lilies at my feet. (SRFA tape 368)

In three of these versions the furnishing of her grave, with white lilies and a dove, is intended either "to show", or "show the world", that she had "died for love" - a phrase which despite being incorporated in the song's most familiar title, is never explicitly elucidated in the text (SRFA tapes 457; tape 368; tape 191). It is therefore open to a number of different interpretations, including that she died because her feelings were unrequited. The link between the daughter's suicide and her abandonment is often strengthened by later stanzas. The cautionary stanza attached to eight of the eleven illegitimacy-related versions, akin to Herbie Middleton's:

Now all ye maidens bear in mind,
A soldier's love is hard to find,
But if you find one good and true,
Don't change the old one for the new

also strengthens the causal link between the woman's suicide and the absent lover's betrayal (SRFA tape 145).

"Died for Love" subtype B ("Up the Green Meadows")

Variants of this song are narrated by the distraught female protagonist who laments the demise of the affair with the father of her unborn child. In Amy Birch's more complete version, she tells how she is abandoned for another, more wealthy woman (SRFA tape 83; cf. "Dark-Eyed Lover"). She introduces her pregnancy by articulating her wish that her baby was already born and smiling for its father, a component also included in Tommy Penfold's version (SRFA tape 47; cf. "Dark-Eyed Lover"). Claiming that "all my sorrows would fade away" if she were dead, this distracted female protagonist proposes to search for the flower which "grows by night and fades by day", hoping it will ease her grief. Both singers include a distinctive passage in which she gathers an apronful of flowers, Amy Birch describing how, having completed this task, the young grieving woman subsequently lies down to die.⁸⁹

"Dit'sum Lad" (England)

Illegitimacy is a minor theme in this light-hearted jovial song about a tearaway young lad and his carefree exploits. The song's title comes from the village of

⁸⁹ Toelken remarks on the full apron as "an image for pregnancy" in this and other songs (43-44).

Dittisham in Devon, where it was composed by the singer's friend, Paul Fisher (SRFA tape 58). Themes of premarital sexual encounter and "illegitimate" pregnancy are implied both within the catalogue form of the song's chorus, incorporating the "one for sorrow" magpie rhyme relating to marriage and birth. A suggestive verse also describes the attempted forcing of the protagonist into a shot-gun wedding.

"Don't Tell I" (England)

The versions of George Edworthy and Margaret Palmer use a similar persona to "Ditsum Boy" to describe a young man's exploits (SRFA tapes 24 & 27; III:001:95). In one verse, a woman variously named Lucy Brown or Sarah Jones gets "in the family way". Being chased up a tree by her enraged father, this narrator is also nearly forced into a shot-gun wedding. In Margaret's narrative, he blames the pregnancy on a third party, Dick French.

"Old Riverside" (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, America, Canada)

This song has been collected from oral tradition in ^{other English} counties including Shropshire and Sussex during the last century (Roud). In the most lengthy South West versions by Sophie Legg, a male seducer relates how he took a fancy to a young woman whom he chanced to meet by the riverside (WT. TF26, SRFA tape 147). He persuades her spend the night at his home, having promised to "marry her in time". However, the following morning he makes as if to leave her and she realises his betrayal. When she reminds him of his covenant with her, he reproaches her for being so gullibly deceived into sex, claiming it would now be beneath him to marry her (cf. "Down by the Riverside"; "As I Walked", Appendix II). Fearing the resulting "shame and disgrace" if she returns home as he suggests, the young woman does not comply with his wishes. Her ominous remark:

I would rather go and drown myself,
Or die in some lonesome place

foreshadows the actions of her seducer, who walks her back to the river, kisses her and "gently pushed her in". Thus, the woman's death seems, depending upon interpretation, to waver somewhere between murder and suicide. Totally lacking in remorse, in the final stanza the male protagonist proposes to leave for another country. The essential differences in this narrative and the versions of Bill Packman and Phyllis Penfold is that whilst Bill concludes with the female protagonist's preference for drowning herself, Phyllis ends on the ninth stanza, with the seducer watching the woman drown (SRFA tape 54; tape 47). Bob

Small instead begins with the scene of confrontation the next morning but, like Phyllis, excludes the penultimate stanza (SRFA tapes 55 & 64). Jim Hook's fragmented versions are particularly interesting (SRFA tapes 178 & 461). Remembering only the beginning of the song, he "tells" the rest of the narrative. Although he uses the tune of "Old Riverside" for the first stanza, in one version introducing a couple by a river, he then incorporates a distinctive phrase from "Catch Me":

I would show her some flowers and pretty things,
I would show her what she had never seen.

His delineation of plot further suggests that he fuses these two songs. Following this sexual encounter, Jim describes how the female protagonist becomes pregnant, is abandoned by her lover, and has a child.

"Down in the Valley" (England)

This bawdy folksong seldom appears in printed and recorded collections.⁹⁰ The narrative depicts a young couple who meet as strangers in the valley and describes their sexual exploits. Using a simple format which depends upon colour symbolism from which it draws its rhyme scheme, it is extremely easy to memorise. The narrative is told very simply, in the first person, by the male protagonist and functions as a very light-hearted, slightly risqué, black humoured piece. The couple's encounter is developed in more graphic detail throughout each subsequent meeting. The most relevant variant describes how the woman has a baby which later dies, before the couple's final encounter when the misogynistic male protagonist breaks her neck (SRFA tape 79).

"Cabin Boy" (England, Scotland, America, Canada)

Oral variants of this song have been collected in other English counties including Dorset, Warwickshire and Suffolk, during the twentieth century (Roud). As its title suggests, this song tells of a young woman who disguises herself as a man and sets off to sea, inspired by foreign travel. In Maureen Tatlow's version, the "cabin boy" enlists with a captain for a year and the captain's wife is pleased by the appointment of such a handsome looking sailor (Ill:030:I:97). However, after the metaphorical "eating of the captain's biscuits" the cabin boy starts to display all the signs of pregnancy and eventually goes into labour, waking all the other sailors. When the doctor delivers a child and the sailors disclaim responsibility, the Captain's wife realises the child's

⁹⁰ The antiquity and geographical distribution of the song, first published in approximately 1917, is therefore unclear.

paternity and teasingly congratulates her husband. Her witty remark, "twas either you or I's betrayed that handsome cabin boy," again creates a pun on gender-role reversal and adds an ironic twist to the tale.

"The Foggy Dew" (England, Scotland, Republic of Ireland, America, Canada, Australia)

Oral variants have been collected in counties including Norfolk and Warwickshire. This narrative is notable for its extreme versatility - the juxtaposition and alteration of particular stanzas in different versions creating a diverse range of meanings. The adaptability of this song may partly explain why it has been more frequently recorded than any other song included in Table B.

The basic plot elements of "Foggy Dew" are as follows. A weaver's girlfriend comes into his bedroom one night because she is afraid of something ambiguously referred to as "the foggy dew." He takes her into his bed to comfort her and the couple "sport and play". The woman immediately articulates her fear that she may have become pregnant in the versions of Charlie Hill and George Withers, the weaver responding by chiding her "foolishness" and reassuring her that "the foggy foggy dew" has either "come", or "gone" (III:003:95; III:024:I:96). Whilst these two versions also include a later stanza in which the weaver states that the couple later married prior to the child's birth, the three remaining versions completely exclude this (SRFA tape 413; III:017:96; III:012:I:95). The final stanza depicts the weaver, described as a bachelor, widower or old man some years later, along with his grown son (implicitly the result of this union) in all but Sheila's version (III:017:96). The father commonly reminisces about his former lover, whose absence overshadows the scene. Depending upon versions, his situation as a single parent could be variously attributed either to the death of the woman (for example, through old age or in childbirth) or to her having deserted him.

"High Germany" (Scotland, Ireland, Canada)

Many versions of this song have been collected in other counties, such as Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Suffolk over the last century (Roud). This ballad deals with the realities of war and the absence of relatives and loved ones (cf. "What Did Your Sailor Leave You" Appendix II). Maureen Tatlow's version initially focuses on a conversation between two lovers as the man is sent to war in Germany (III:030:I:97). The male protagonist urges his girlfriend to accompany him but she declines, partly because her advancing state of

pregnancy means she is not fit to go to war. He promises to marry her presently, but in spite of his efforts to coax her and their obvious mutual attachment, she chooses to stay at home (cf. "Lisbon"). The song ends with the female protagonist cursing "those cruel wars" taking her three brothers and lover from her, leaving her to bring up their child alone.

"The Grenadier" (England, America, Canada)

This song has been collected in many different counties (Roud). This narrative is conveyed through a dialogue between a grenadier and his young lover as they walk out together.⁹¹ Similar versions are sung by South West singers George Withers and Maureen Tatlow, though Maureen includes a refrain (III:024:I:96; cf. III:029:I:97). In George's version, the grenadier (here described as a "volunteer") produces a fiddle from his knapsack and plays her a tune (III:024:I:96). When he wants to stop playing, his lover urges him to continue. She eventually asks him to marry her, but is turned down because the volunteer has a wife and six children in London. The volunteer assures her that although he is leaving for a year, he will be back in the spring. Rebecca Penfold's comparatively fragmented version is the only text which includes an additional verse, a floating stanza from a particular strand of "Died for Love" variants, in which the woman laments her advancing pregnancy, implicitly because of the soldier's revelation that he is married. Even though she forgets parts of the song in places and talks Peter Kennedy through the narrative, the singer delineates a similar plot.

"A-Rushing" (England, Scotland)

Numerous variants having since been collected in counties such as Suffolk, Northumberland, Yorkshire and Durham during the twentieth century (Roud). Betsy Renals' South West version begins with two "pretty maidens" setting out on a rush-gathering expedition when one of them spontaneously gives birth to a son (SRFA tape 146). In the intermediate stages of the narrative, the woman conceals the child as she takes it home underneath her apron, passing it off to her father as her "missus's [mistress's] gown". The child crying in the night obliges the daughter to explain her situation. Only then are we told anything about the central affair, the daughter promising to identify her lover in the morning. She emphasises he is not a vagabond or a clown, but a comparatively wealthy town gentleman, by alluding to his having given her a stomacher (cf.

⁹¹ In the British Army, a grenadier is a soldier from the first regiment of the royal household infantry.

Karpeles A).⁹² This gift is also suggestive of his commitment to the relationship, an impression reinforced by the confident manner in which the daughter delivers this final exposé.

"Australia" (England, America, Canada)

Ken Penney's version of this song describes an encounter between a native Australian woman and a stranger, the male "I" telling how he chanced across this alluring woman as she provocatively paraded herself by the river (III:002:95). Having titillated him by swimming naked in the water, she flirtatiously invites him to pull her out and a sexual encounter ensues. The stranger departs at sundown. He is nowhere to be found, nine months later, when the Australian maid gives birth to a son, so she curses their day of abandonment.

"Navy Boots" (England, Northern Ireland)

In Bill Parnell's more lengthy version of this humorous bawdy song, a navvy (the male "I" of the narrative) boasts his sexual prowess by recounting, with mock repentance, how he prepared to go courting and met a "poor skivvy" (SRFA tape 47). Awoken by his knocking at her window, she let him in and he seduced her "with me navy boots on". Promptly deserting the skivvy against her wishes, he was tried in court nine months later and punished, implicitly because he abnegated responsibility for their resulting child. The song ends with a mock warning directed at men.

"Rosemary Lane" (England, Scotland, America, Canada)

This song has been collected in many other parts of England, such as Surrey, Yorkshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire, during the twentieth century (Roud). More recently collected South West versions of the song tend to conform to one of two distinct variants. The first has anything up to ten stanzas and is usually referred to by the standard title "The Oak and the Ash", after one of the lines in its refrain (see Tatlow, Appendix III). This version has an obvious progression of narrative, from arrival and seduction through to eventual departure, with a warning stanza against sailors sometimes tagged on as an ending. The song therefore lends itself to being sung as comic or tragic-comic, depending on the singer's interpretation. "Home Dearie (Dearest) Home" a song in which a sailor wishes he was at home with his sweetheart/wife, is a tamer form of this version.

⁹² A decorative panel worn at the front of a dress during the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries.

The second variant of "Rosemary Lane", usually entitled "Bell Bottom Trousers" after its first line, is much shorter, having approximately three stanzas and no refrain. This version is sung to a slightly slower, repetitive tune. It has a much more condensed story line, but almost always includes the quip contained in the final two lines quoted below. In both strands of variant, this male protagonist clearly epitomises the stereotype of the wandering sailor (See Renwick 75, 78-79; Porter 83). In most versions he is seen to take advantage of his occupational mobility, happily resigned to the casual, sexually motivated relationships afforded him at the expense of those he leaves behind.

A man consistently described as a sailor, finds himself a night's lodgings and has a sexual encounter with a woman described as a servant or chambermaid in four versions and the landlord's daughter in a further text (SRFA tape 128, III:029:II:97, PA tape C-20/M85, Round the (tape); III:003:95). Having asked the female protagonist to show him to his room, in five versions he then propositions her and, thinking no harm will come of it, she consents (III:029:II:97, Round the (tape), PA tape C-20/M85, SRFA tape 128, tape 108). The next morning the sailor departs, in all versions leaving the woman some money as compensation in case the night's exploits should result in a child. The song typically ends with a cheeky quip, included as part of the sailor's advice on how to bring up their child, in Maureen's version:

If it be a daughter you send her out to nurse,
With gold in her pockets and silver in her purse,
But if it be a boy let him wear the jacket blue,
Go climbing up the riggin' like his daddy climbed up you.
(see Appendix III)

Only two versions, sung by Maureen Tatlow and Cyril Tawney, include a warning verse against sexual liaisons with sailors (Appendix III; Round the (tape)).

"Shannon Side" (England, Ireland, Scotland)

The theme of illegitimacy emerges in all recently collected South West variants. In the most lengthy version by Charlotte Renals, a male protagonist tells how he encounters a young woman on her way to tend her father's sheep by the Shannon side (SRFA tape 146). Overcoming her initial reluctance to risk angering her parents, he accompanies her, seizing the opportunity to seduce her on the riverbank. The couple part amicably, though the female protagonist is implicitly distressed by her loss of virginity. Six months later they have

another chance meeting and the male protagonist tries to ignore the now heavily pregnant woman. However, she reminds him of their liaison, and proposes marriage, offering a generous dowry. She then learns he is already engaged to a "wealthy grazier's [glazier's] daughter". He grants her request to know his identity, so she can name her child accordingly and the song ends with the tearful female protagonist issuing a solemn warning to women against trusting such young men.

"Thrashing Machine" (England, Northern Ireland, Canada, Australia)

"Thrashing Machine" is extremely widespread in England, variants being collected in many counties during the twentieth century (Roud). In the four South West variants which incorporate the theme of illegitimacy, the male protagonist, the narrative "I" of the song, tells how he initiated a sexual encounter in a barn, with a young woman called Nell (see Hutchings, Appendix III, SRFA tape 21, tape 413, III:003:95, III:008:II:95). He euphemistically describes how he showed her the works of his "thrashing [i.e. threshing] machine", using an extended metaphor to comically describe the sex act in mechanical terms (see Porter, Chapter 2). Some non-illegitimacy versions take the form of self-parody, where the machine, the outward symbol of male sexual prowess, goes berserk and breaks down (SRFA tape 169, tape 188, III:007:95). A reference to the consequence of this encounter - Nell's swelling stomach - concludes Ralph Gardiner's of the song (SRFA tape 21). However, the versions of Jim White, Charlie Hill and Denis Hutchings all extend the narrative, with an additional stanza which humorously describes how a son is born, and end on a similar rhyming couplet:

And under its nappy twas plain to be seen,
A brand new two cylinder threshing machine. (III:008:II:95)

The tune of this extremely well-known Westcountry folksong is easy to memorise as is its refrain. It is usually seen as bawdy and light-hearted and is associated particularly with communal pub-singing.

Part B: Texts as Evidence of Attitudes Towards Illegitimacy

The above corpus of narratives describes a wide range of attitudes towards out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth. The following discussion attempts to compare and contrast the attitudes referred to in the narrative world of each song according to stated text alone, working from texts in which attitudes towards the male or female protagonist are particularly harsh, to texts in which they are comparatively lenient. As with the supernatural legends, supernatural

memorates, local legends and local character anecdotes discussed in Chapter 7, most of the following folksongs do not allude to attitudes by making a direct statement about the social mores within the narrative. Rather, they convey a sense of attitudes through the experiences and actions of their central protagonists.

As Mrs Feen's version of "**Ship's Carpenter**" is extremely fragmented, attitudes towards illegitimacy are particularly hard to discern. The central killing might be variously interpreted, perhaps as demonstrating the male protagonist's excessively cruel nature and desire to be rid of his lover. Alternatively, it might be seen as a bid to escape the social "law" decreeing that men should marry the women with whom they have had sexual relations, particularly when pregnancy results, and an attempt to separate sex from procreation. Accordingly, the male protagonist's act of killing could be regarded as evidence of the extent to which he had internalised this law and to which this pressure had become firmly entrenched in the narrative's community.

If the main motive for the murder were to shun responsibility for the woman and her unborn child, effectively avoiding social censure, clearly the male protagonist displays a negative attitude towards his illegitimate child, which he regards as an unwelcome encumbrance. Interestingly, a sense of divine justice is accomplished, when circumstances expose the male protagonist's guilt and he is eventually punished by death. However, it is unclear to what extent this punishment is intended to be regarded as his just deserts for abandoning his lover and child, or for their brutal murder.

Two rather unusual, fragmented versions of "**Old Riverside**" by Jim Hook allude to a narrative world in which the begetting of illegitimate children is also stigmatised. In one fragmented version, when he resorts to telling the story, he says of the male protagonist that "he got her in trouble" and then left her (SRFA tape 178). Once again, illegitimate pregnancy is therefore negatively defined and is seen as having a detrimental effect upon the female protagonist. In another version, he says "she got herself into trouble, you see", creating a similar impression, but reallocating the sense of blame (SRFA tape 461).

In all other versions, the extent to which the narrative is considered to be revealing of attitudes towards illegitimacy is totally dependent upon the creation of sub-textual meaning. Accordingly, the fact that the male protagonist manages to seduce this young woman only after he has given her a promise of marriage, might be seen as significant. It could be interpreted as an indication that she

fears having a child outside of wedlock and would therefore be reluctant to give her consent under any other circumstances. This reading would also be consistent with this young woman's reaction when, realising her lover's betrayal, she is immediately appalled by his suggestion that she should return home to, in her view "bring shame and disgrace", and claiming, perhaps rhetorically,

I would rather go and drown myself,
Or die in some lonesome place

in Sophie Legg's variants (SRFA tape 147, WT TF26), using a similar expression in two additional texts (SRFA tape 54, tape 55). Again, this statement could be seen as tacitly acknowledging the risk of pregnancy, and the likelihood of her bringing disgrace upon her parents because of the stigma attached to a young, unmarried woman bearing an illegitimate child.

The extent to which each of the eleven most relevant texts of "**Died for Love**", **subtype A** could be considered to be revealing of attitudes towards illegitimate birth is totally dependent upon the creation of a sub-text established between the stigma attached to illegitimate pregnancy and female protagonist's suicide in all but one version (cf. Herbert memorate, Chapter 7). Only in Denis Hutchings' text is this connection made explicit, the female protagonist directly stating in her suicide note that she cannot face the shame of giving birth to an illegitimate child (see Appendix III).

Hence in this particular text, the woman's actions tend to allude to harsh attitudes incited by an upper-class woman having a child outside wedlock by a sailor. Her choice of words, in claiming she cannot bear to have "a child without a name", is also important. As well as alluding to the practice of illegitimate children taking their mother's maiden name, rather than father's surname in most parts of England, this phrase also suggests the female protagonist's internalisation of negative attitudes, whereby the illegitimate child is defined solely according to the absence of its father. It might be argued that this sense of stigma and condemnation surrounding illegitimacy in this variant, is slightly moderated in the latter stanzas. Clearly, the fact that the community carry out her burial request, in terms of the adorning of her grave with lilies and a dove, might well be seen as a forgiving gesture. Lilies, a customary mourning flower, have an added significance as long established "emblems of innocence, purity and virginity", also carrying the connotation of absolution from sin (Radford 221-22; Vickery, A Dictionary 13-14, 228, 386-87). Similarly, the dove is a traditional symbol of innocence, purity and holiness (Matthew 10:16; Radford 139-40).

In all other versions, the connection between the pregnancy and suicide by hanging, is far more ambiguous. In Herbie Middleton's version, for instance, the statement that the soldier has ceased to reply to her many letters, precedes the comment:

I wish my baby had not been born,
then all my troubles will be gone (SRFA tape 145).

Consequently, there is a strong suggestion that the existence of an illegitimate child, perhaps exacerbated by the breakdown in communication with the absent lover, is the main source of her distress and subsequent suicide. This couplet also carries the implication that the woman has suffered as a direct result of giving birth to her child in a hostile or inhospitable environment.

In Bill Hingston's version, the woman instead claims that her absent lover has forgotten her, and stating:

I wish my baby was born
And all my troubles had been free

thus creating the converse impression that her "troubles" would be ended with the birth of her illegitimate child (SRFA tape 150). Consequently, the fact of having an out-of-wedlock pregnancy, exacerbated by the neglect of her absent lover, appears to be the main cause of distress and subsequent suicide in this version. The connection between the birth of the child and the woman's release from her "troubles", "worries" or "sorrows" is also made in seven other versions (III:004:95, SRFA tape 48, tape 178, tape 191, tape 265, tape 457, WT. SZ27). Whilst in Nelson Penfold's version, she instead claims that the birth of her child would be a source of happiness (III:019:96).

The extent to which texts of **Died for Love**, subtype B could be considered as revealing of attitudes towards illegitimate birth is, once again, totally dependant on the extent to which the woman's grief is seen as deriving from her out-of-wedlock pregnancy. In terms of stated text alone, it is unclear whether, the heartbreak resulting from the demise of the affair with the father of her unborn child is actually caused by the knowledge of her pregnancy, and likely social stigma she and her child will have to face. Alternatively, this conception might function more symbolically, the female protagonist's grief over the demise of the affair merely being exacerbated by the ironic realisation that, whilst her lover is out courting another woman, she is expecting his child. Hence, interpretation is totally dependant upon the type of sub-text which the singer, or listener creates.

"**Australia**" initially seems to describe a similar scene of sexual abandonment to "Thrashing Machine", in which neither protagonist articulates fears that pregnancy might result. The maid only becomes concerned by the male protagonist's absence when she gives birth to a son, and he is nowhere to be found. The female protagonist's ultimate response, whereby she curses the central encounter, could well be seen as signifying her frustration at being unable to disentangle sexual gratification from pregnancy, unlike her partner. Alternatively it might be seen as suggesting the stigmatised position of an unmarried woman giving birth to an illegitimate child by a stranger within the world of the song. Meanwhile, the male protagonist's narration suggests that, having likewise regarded the maid purely as an object of sexual desire, he views her resulting pregnancy as neither his concern nor responsibility.

In "**Down in the Valley**", neither the male nor female protagonist articulates their fear that pregnancy might result, in the more coarsely described seduction within this song. Illegitimacy itself is seen as totally inconsequential, there being no mention of social stigma. It is only the female protagonist's comment, "the bastard's dead", that confirms her own derogatory attitude towards this child. In this instance, her negativity seems to stem more from the fact that the child is the unwelcome by-product of sex, than from any sense of unmarried mothers being condemned within the world of the song. As with "Australia", the male protagonist's narration suggests that, regarding the woman solely as a means of gratifying his sexual desire, he is totally indifferent to their child, which he regards as neither his concern nor responsibility.

Fears about pregnancy resulting from an isolated sexual encounter with a stranger are again alluded to in "**Catch Me**". Immediately after the scene of seduction, the woman establishes a seeming contradiction, when she accuses her partner of "stealing away", or "throwing away", in one of Henry Orchard's versions (SRFA tape 69), her "liberty". It is unclear why loss of virginity, to which this phrase implicitly refers, should necessarily entail loss of freedom. However, her comment might be seen as alluding to the fear of pregnancy, and therefore loss of peace of mind, or the reality of pregnancy, which she anticipates will follow. Symbolically, by claiming her right to know the stranger's name (his social identity), this woman attempts to empower herself and establish some hold over her lover (cf. "Shannon Side"; Preston 336). The reply "my name is Catch Me If You Can" therefore creates an instant irony, having completely the opposite effect in signalling the male protagonist's sly, evasive nature, and the woman's likely inability to constrain him (cf. Preston 336).

The female protagonist's need for assurances is also suggested by the male's swift offering of a false promise of marriage. This has the effect of pacifying the woman and giving himself time to abandon her. The male protagonist's actions in this respect denote both his wish to have sex without commitment, and to separate sex from procreation; hence he attempts to disassociate himself from both the woman and any child which might result. His running away also suggests the degree of social pressure for him to marry the woman and act as father to the child, should he stay. Hence, the undesirability of illegitimacy within the world of the narrative is already established through this reluctant father's response, before knowledge of the pregnancy.

The expression "the child had got no father", included in all versions apart from Charlie Hill's (which ends at pregnancy), is strongly suggestive of attitudes towards illegitimacy within the world of the narrative. This description results in the illegitimate child being negatively defined by the absence of the male protagonist, as opposed, for example, to being positively defined by the absence of the male protagonist, as in "High Germany", or even positively defined by the presence of its mother. Hence the use of this phrase enforces the impression that children should have social, as well as biological fathers, and that it is undesirable for any child to be born illegitimate.

The woman's embittered response when she is left to raise a child alone, not only corroborates this view, but also alludes to her own, now stigmatised, position, within society. Her own sense of suffering seems to be the driving force for wanting to get revenge upon the man who has betrayed her.

The narrative world of "**Shannon Side**" also alludes to the considerable stigma associated with illegitimacy. By contrast with "Catch Me", immediately after their liaison neither protagonist seems particularly fearful that pregnancy might have resulted, the couple amicably parting and going their separate ways in both Charlotte Renals' versions (SRFA tape 146, WT. TF 25). However, this initial lack of concern might be partly attributed to the female protagonist's exaggerated youth, naiveté and sexual innocence.

The juxtaposition of stanzas emphasises the marked change in attitude when a second chance meeting occurs some months later. On beholding his former lover, clearly in the advanced stages of pregnancy, the male protagonist immediately tries to avoid her and ride on. His response suggests not only that he wants to disassociate himself from the woman and her pregnancy, but also

that he fears recrimination and anticipates being pressurised into taking responsibility for the unborn child.

The structure of the narrative also draws attention to the marked difference in the female protagonist's response, once she realises their encounter has left her pregnant. She alludes to her now disadvantaged position, by anxiously reminding the male protagonist of their liaison (the "fall") and asking him to take pity on her, thereby inadvertently referring to negative social attitudes towards her predicament. This impression is confirmed by her proposal of marriage, and her father's willingness to offer fifty pounds and sixty acres of land to a complete stranger, in order to secure his daughter's marriage to the father of her child. Given the father's obvious wealth, the sense of negativity accompanying this illegitimate birth clearly does not in any way derive from the fact of the child being an impossible financial burden. Rather, it is more closely related to the shame associated with a young, wealthy farmer's daughter giving birth to a child outside wedlock. Hence, the woman's understandable grief, when she discovers that Walters is already engaged to another woman, though in one variant there is some suggestion that her stigma may be lessened if the child's father is named (SRFA tape 146).

By contrast, Walter's response suggests that comparatively little social stigma is attached to a middle-to-upper class male begetting an illegitimate child by a wealthy farmer's daughter in the world of the narrative. The variant in which Walters is prepared to reveal his name to the woman and to "own" his child, suggests that he does not anticipate that his illegitimate paternity might jeopardise his existing engagement or cause any serious repercussions (SRFA tape 146; cf. Holcombe Rogus, Chapter 7). The final warning stanza in both Charlotte Renals' versions, leaves us in no doubt as to the undesirability of the woman's predicament in the world of the narrative and her pessimistic view of the life ahead of her (SRFA tape 146, WT. TF25).

The timing of the official punishment meted out to the male protagonist of "**Navy Boots**" nine months after having seduced a "poor skivvy" in Bill Parnell's version, creates the strongest suggestion of illegitimacy within this song (SRFA tape 47). The fact of the navy, implicitly the child's father, being chastised also establishes the begetting of illegitimate children as essentially undesirable within the world of the narrative. Other details, such as the female protagonist's fearful response immediately after the seduction, when she pleads "pray do not leave me, you know you done wrong" in addition to the navy's retrospective acknowledgement of his immorality, also contribute to this

impression (SRFA tape 47). However, both the tone of mock repentance with which the narrative is told, and the comic nature of the male protagonist's punishment - being hung upside down by his boots - tend to detract from the impression of serious stigmatisation or shame attaching to the navy. Rather, the song suggests that he proudly regards the skivvy's implied pregnancy as a sign of his sexual prowess, the warning stanza addressed to other males being a sham statement of remorse, serving more as a boast.

Negative attitudes towards males begetting illegitimate children, are also comically described in "**Don't tell I**" and "**Dit'sum Lad**". In both songs, fathers threaten with a gun the men they assume to have seduced their daughters and implicitly impregnated. Hence, through their actions, such individuals allude to the desirability of a hasty marriage for females in this predicament, although in "Dit'sum Lad", the mother's attitude is clearly more light-hearted (SRFA tape 58). In George Edworthy's version of "Don't tell I", the enraged father's ambiguous remark "you'll let her pay", could either be seen as a rhetorical question, to the rogue, leaving his daughter to shoulder the burden, or a statement of fact in terms of her having to suffer him as a husband (SRFA tape 27). Interestingly, Margaret Palmer's version instead underlines the accused's need to provide recompense, the father stating "you'll 'ave to pay" (III:001:95). The truth of the male protagonist's denial appears more doubtful, given his tendency to abnegate responsibility and shift the blame in all spheres of life.

Once again, illegitimate pregnancy is the source of distress for the female protagonist in Rebecca Penfold's version of "**The Grenadier**". However, she apparently only despairs of her predicament, saying "what shall I do?", when she realises that the male protagonist is married, and that therefore what might have been a pre-nuptial pregnancy will now almost inevitably be an illegitimate birth. The song thus alludes to the sense of stigma accompanying an unmarried woman's having an illegitimate child. The male protagonist is, by contrast, unaffected by the prospect of his paternity. This suggests the lack of negative repercussions he will experience, not only by virtue of being male, but also because of his status as a mobile outsider, unconstrained by the social mores of the woman's community. Being at a distance from home his illegitimate paternity would also be unlikely to threaten his existing marriage (cf. "Cabin Boy").

The female protagonist's lament "now he's left me to my shame" in Mrs Hawkin's version of "**Dark-Eyed Lover**" might be construed as referring to her humiliation at being abandoned for another woman (SRFA tape 196). However,

it seems more likely that this song also refers to the stigma of being an unmarried woman left to give birth to an illegitimate child, in view of the additional stanza in the versions of Mrs Hawkins and Sheila Bricknell, regarding an unborn child (SRFA tape 196). Here, the suggestion that the inconstant lover will be enticed back by the smiling child, seems to be wishful thinking on the part of the deserted female protagonist. Her excessive grief might be variously interpreted. In view of the greater number of variants not including the theme of illegitimacy, the broken relationship might be regarded as the primary source of her distress. However, in the above two versions, the lover's willingness to expose her to social disgrace and/or to leave her to raise their child alone, might be considered as equally, if not more, important. Although the female protagonist clearly views her own predicament as tragic, unlike "Died for Love", there is no suggestion that her death is the direct result of suicide. Clearly, any sense of stigma in this narrative, does not extend to the male protagonist, who considers himself free to engage in another romantic liaison, and does so without social censure.

The maiden's fear of pregnancy in "**Barnacle Bill**" is used to comic effect, as an excuse for the crude retorts of the stereotypically randy sailor (WT SZ8). Hence, in farcically taking the desire to separate sex from procreation to extremes, Barnacle Bill suggests the mercenary strategy of drowning the child and conceiving another. Hence, the child itself is defined as a completely unwelcome product of sex. Thus, whilst the narrative creates a general sense that illegitimacy is stigmatised, particularly for unmarried women, that stigma is not seen as having any serious repercussions in the world of the narrative itself.

Negative attitudes towards the illegitimate child in "**Collumara**", tend to derive partly from the fact that it is not the husband's child and partly from the fact that he is left to care for it alone whilst his wife goes off philandering. However, the primary source of distress for the narrator in this song, seems to be the wife's infidelities - of which the child is an obvious symbol - and his disillusionment with marriage. Little sense of stigma seems to attach to the woman's having had an illegitimate child within the larger world of this song, perhaps because the child is assumed to be her husband's.

The fear of pregnancy is once again used to allude to the stigmatised position of unmarried women having illegitimate children in particular variants of "**Foggy Dew**". In the versions of Charlie Hill and George Withers, this young female protagonist exclaims "Oh I'm, undone", immediately after her seduction by the weaver, her established boyfriend (III:003:95; III:024:1:96). Whilst her concern

might be seen as deriving from her loss of virginity, in the context of the fourth verses of both versions, in which she considers conception as a hypothetical possibility:

Supposing I should have a child,
Through lying along with you

it seems more likely that her anxiety stems from the risk of having become pregnant by this encounter (III:003:95). Her immediate reaction therefore alludes to the stigma attached to illegitimacy and her declaration "This evening I would rue", were a child to be the result, consolidates this impression (III:003:95). The weaver's self-assured response in both versions might be variously interpreted. His comparative lack of fear, might be seen as an indication that the stigma of any resulting pregnancy is more likely to rebound upon the female protagonist than himself. Hence it might be seen as reflecting his more advantaged position in terms of social attitudes. His inclination to chide his girlfriend could also be seen as symptomatic of his frustration, because of her lack of faith in his emotional commitment to her and desire not to see her shamed. The weaver's subsequent declaration of his feelings and actions in the fifth stanza are consistent with this latter interpretation. He clearly marries his implicitly pregnant girlfriend later in the year, thus legitimising their child. In George Withers' version, the weaver articulates one regret at the end of this stanza:

But the only thing I ever did wrong,
Was to keep her from the foggy foggy dew. (III:024:I:96)

This euphemism conveys a mild suggestion of guilt at having seduced the woman prior to their marriage; perhaps leaving her pre-nuptially pregnant.

Both Charlie Hill and George Withers conclude the narrative with the weaver looking upon his son with nostalgic tenderness, as he is reminded of his young lover. Hence, the weaver, like the male protagonist in "High Germany," is described as having a positive attitude towards his illegitimately begotten child, largely because of the strength of his affections for the woman concerned.

The versions of Denis Hutchings and Jim White have different implications, because of the exclusion of particular verses and the altered identity of the weaver. Whilst he is clearly named as a bachelor in the final stanza of Denis's version, as an "old man" in Jim White's text, his marital status remains ambiguous (III:012:I:95; SRFA tape 413). Although one might assume that the male protagonist articulates his regret at his wrong-doing in "saving" or "keeping" the woman from "the foggy foggy dew" because pregnancy resulted,

the reasons for his remorse are ambiguous. It is unclear whether his regret is caused by the negative repercussions of an illegitimate birth upon himself, or upon his partner. Hence, whilst both versions create a sense that illegitimacy may be stigmatised within the narrative, the exact nature of the stigma remains unspecific. In Sheila's version, the weaver instead names his acts of wrongdoing as both marrying "a fair young maid" and saving her from "the foggy foggy dew" (III:017:96). It could therefore feasibly be imagined that the weaver's remorse stemmed from his having been obliged to marry the woman he had seduced, and perhaps even made pregnant, with unhappy results. However, the meanings in this shortened, fragmented text again remain ambiguous and the narrative must likewise be regarded as open to interpretation.

Variants of "**Rosemary Lane**" describing a sexual encounter between a woman and sailor, consistently depict pregnancy, or the risk of pregnancy, as a negative repercussion for the woman concerned. In doing so, they allude to the stigmatisation of unmarried women, particularly domestic servants, begetting an illegitimate child as a result of isolated sexual encounters with strangers. Two variants preface the narrative with a stanza referring to the distressing outcome of this encounter for this Drury (or Dreary) Lane servant, implicitly because she became pregnant. In Albert's version, the sailor's arrival marks the beginning of her downfall:

But one day a sailor, he came a-down that way,
That was the beginning of my misery. (SRFA tape 128)

Likewise, in Cyril Tawney's she comments:

When along came a sailor,
Ashore on liberty,
And oh to my woe he took liberties with me. (Round the (tape))

In five other versions attitudes towards illegitimacy are also conveyed during the scene of seduction, which includes a reference to the woman thinking no "harm" will result from getting into bed with the sailor (PA tape C-20/M85, SRFA tape 128, tape 108, Round the (tape), III:029:II:97). In this context it appears that "harm" becomes a euphemism for pregnancy, considering that all these versions are inclined to describe the ensuing sexual encounter as pleasurable, rather than detrimental in any way.

The tendency to define illegitimate pregnancy in negative terms is again reinforced in the stanza describing the sailor's departure the following morning. In six versions he immediately offers the woman money as recompense for the "damage" he has caused (SRFA tape 15, tape 128, tape 129, III:019:96, PA

tape C-20/M85, Round the (tape)). In doing so, he seems to acknowledge that, in financial terms, any resulting pregnancy would be to her, rather than his, detriment. However, his use of this term also alludes to the stigmatised position of an unmarried woman giving birth to an illegitimate child alone and to the potential "damage" to her reputation. A more moderate expression is included in the versions of Charlie Hill and Maureen Tatlow, the sailor

Saying take this me love for the mischief I have done,
For this night I fear I('ve) left you with a daughter or a son.
(III:003:95 & III:029:II:97)

Clearly, "Rosemary Lane" is unusual in that it is one of the few songs in this corpus where males are seen as considering the repercussions of their actions, taking financial responsibility for their resulting offspring. Indeed, they tend to regard their illegitimate children in positive terms, as a sign of their own sexual prowess and virility, hence their assumption that pregnancy will be the inevitable consequence of these isolated sexual encounters. The final warning stanza in the versions of Maureen Tatlow and Cyril Tawney, addressed to "all you young maidens" tends, once again, to emphasise the negative repercussions of the encounter for the woman (III:029:II:97 & Round the (tape)). It warns against trusting beguiling sailors, with the prospect of being left alone with a baby as a deterrent.

There are striking similarities between South West variants of "Rosemary Lane" and "**Ball of Yarn**", in terms of the negative definition of illegitimate pregnancy within both songs. On instigating this encounter with the stranger, in the versions of seven singers the male protagonist claims not to have intended any harm, whilst in the versions of Ken Penney and Nelson and David Birch, he instead "pretends" not to do the woman any harm (SRFA tape 68, tape 38). Although it is possible the term is used to refer to the full blown seduction of the woman, the overall sense of the song suggests that, in the context of each of these nine versions, "harm" is equally, if not more likely to serve as a euphemism for illegitimate pregnancy.

The negative repercussions of the pregnancy for the woman concerned, are communicated by her black look in the versions of Herbie Middleton, Ken Penney, George Edworthy, Charlie Hill, Nelson and David Birch and by the fact that she "wouldn't look at me" in Edwin Hall's version. All these versions carry the suggestion of social stigmatisation, whilst her equally angry response in Edwin Hall's version, also alludes to her sense of shame.

"A-Rushing", alludes to a world which is critical of an unmarried woman's having an illegitimate child, through the female protagonist's unconventional labour, amidst a bed of rushes, in addition to her obvious attempts to conceal the resulting child. Indeed, rather than proudly presenting her new-born son to her father, she guiltily responds by hiding it under her apron, dismissing the child as her "missus's gown" (SRFA tape 146).

The impression that this woman anticipates a negative, rather than positive response, is also enforced by the defensive manner in which she breaks the news of the birth to her father, with constant reassurances as regards her lover's identity. Although both her actions and speech therefore allude to the stigmatised nature of her predicament, this female protagonist is relatively uninhibited by her pregnancy, by comparison with other women who cannot face their parents (cf. "Died for Love"). Interestingly, she uses the fact that her lover is a wealthy gentleman and a provider of gifts to pacify her father, although it remains unclear whether these are mitigating factors because they indicate that he is able and willing to financially provide for the child, or because the social status of her lover lessens the stigma attached to her illegitimate maternity.

Moderate attitudes towards illegitimacy also pervade the narrative world of **"High Germany"**, in which the female protagonist initially demonstrates a positive, but pragmatic response to her advancing pregnancy, when she refuses to go to war. Her predicament is not seen as a great source of anxiety, as with other female protagonists (cf. "Shannon Side"). This is indicated by her lack of compulsion to immediately marry her lover before his departure, or to pressurise him into doing so (cf. "Lisbon" Appendix II). Thus, she clearly puts the welfare of herself and her unborn child before the need to be "legitimate".

Similarly, the male protagonist of "High Germany", unlike other males in song, feels no prompting to abandon his girlfriend as a result of her pregnancy, but rather wishes her and their child to accompany him, for he values her companionship (cf. "Catch Me"). It is therefore unclear whether his suggestion of marriage is primarily motivated by the wish to solemnise their union in the face of danger, or the desire to legitimise their child. In the final stanza, the now illegitimate child is positively, rather than negatively defined by the female protagonist in terms of its father's absence, because it serves as a joyful reminder of her beloved.

By comparison with other songs, attitudes towards women begetting illegitimate children in the narrative world of "**The Butcher**" are surprisingly lenient. When the chambermaid initially consents to the butcher's proposition, in neither Denis Hutchings nor Maureen Tatlow's versions is she unduly concerned that she might become pregnant by the encounter (cf. "Barnacle Bill", "Foggy Dew"). Although she subsequently tries to conceal her transactions with the butcher by surrendering the sovereign in Maureen's version, this is more because she fears being blamed for the butcher defrauding the landlord, than being reprimanded for her sexual conduct (III:029:I:97). The fact that the maid is still employed one year later, when the butcher returns, suggests that she has not been penalised by her employer. Her own attitude towards her predicament does not suggest that she has suffered unduly from social stigma or that she regards herself as a victim but tends more to imply that her pregnancy has been relatively inconsequential.

By contrast, the butcher's stamping and swearing suggests his own extremely negative attitude towards his illegitimate child. He is partly enraged because his efforts to "purchase" sex from a stranger without there being any unwanted repercussions, have clearly been frustrated. His fury also derives from the fact that the child represents the chambermaid's financial revenge. Having been so craftily cheated out of the agreed amount of payment for her sexual favours, the maid now successfully reverses the situation. Whereas the complacent butcher assumed he had saved himself expense, both versions imply that he is suddenly faced with a considerable debt, in the form of child maintenance, Maureen's version directly stating that he is legally compelled to pay one-hundred pounds.

The undesirability of the butcher's predicament is underlined by the final verse directed to "frolicking lads" in Maureen's version, warning against the sporting with chambermaids (III:029:I:97). Thus, the overall structure of the song allows for the enactment of a kind of dramatic justice, underpinned by the assumption that fathers should take responsibility for their illegitimate offspring and that a woman should not be abandoned to raise a child alone.

Again, "**Cabin Boy**" depicts comparatively lenient attitudes towards illegitimacy. The female protagonist's attitude to her predicament is never stated, the narrative describing the "ailing" cabin boy's developing pregnancy as a list of physical symptoms. However, when the doctor arrives he is clearly amused by the irony of a sailor giving birth and regards this in the light of a practical joke (cf. "Sea Captain" Appendix II). As with "The Butcher", the child's

father, the captain, swears when he hears the news. However, his response has rather different connotations, as he is married and his wife is on board. It suggests his frustration at the child jeopardising a situation whereby he could exploit the cabin boy's gendered disguise to his own ends- his own sexual gratification. It also implies fear of his wife's reaction, the child being tangible evidence of his adultery. Finally, his response stems from his thwarted attempts to have sexual relations without any repercussions.

There is a mild suggestion of social stigma in the response of the sailors who, perhaps anticipating trouble, solemnly swear that the child is none of theirs. The captain's wife, like the doctor, seems to regard the birth as an elaborate joke. Rather than upbraiding her husband in public, she instead seizes the opportunity to tease him.

At the far end of the spectrum, no sense of negativity whatsoever accompanies the illegitimate pregnancy described in versions of "**Thrashing Machine**". Neither protagonist fears the risk of conception resulting from their sexual encounter although, as with "Cabin Boy", the female protagonist becomes reduced to a set of physical symptoms with the onset of pregnancy and hence her reaction to the pregnancy is not observed.

By contrast, the male protagonist's response is noted in all four relevant versions. In Ralph Gardiner's narrative, the pregnancy is referred to as "the wonderful works of a threshing machine", the glorious demonstration of the male protagonist's virility (SRFA tape 21). In the more graphically sexual versions of Denis Hutchings and Jim White, where the narrator also boasts having "showed her the way", or "showed her the Westcountry way", the pregnancy is again seen in positive terms (Appendix III, SRFA 413). Hence, the narrative "I" in Denis's text, describes all going "well", when the female protagonist is three months pregnant. Viewing this illegitimate conception as an extension of his sexual prowess, he observes "the steam had gone out of the threshing machine" (Appendix III). This choice of metaphor, in which conception is the end result of this mechanical process, also implies that pregnancy is a natural and inevitable part of sex (cf. Porter Chapter 2).

Although the versions of Jim White and Charlie Hill conversely describe the early stages of pregnancy in negative terms, the narrator triumphantly asserts that "the dirty old works" of his "thrashing machine" were responsible (SRFA 413, III:003:95). Hence, once again the pregnancy becomes a positive symbol of male potency. In all three extended versions, a sense of well-being surrounds

the birth nine months later, when a son is born within a "brand new two Cylinder" thrashing, threshing or drashing machine, giving a sense of completion to the reproductive cycle and natural course of life (III:003:95, III:008:II:95, SRFA tape 413). Unlike a number of other songs, there is no sense of condemnation in the world of the narrative, no suggestion of either protagonist being penalised by their employer or suffering any negative repercussions.

Conclusion

The texts of my chosen corpus of songs present a wide range of attitudes towards out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimacy, although the extent to which they are seen as evidencing certain types of attitude is, in many cases, heavily dependent upon sub-textual interpretation. However, the majority of folksongs in the corpus under consideration describe a narrative world in which no sense of stigma is attached to a man responsible for an out-of-wedlock pregnancy, or the birth of an illegitimate child, by stark contrast with their female counterparts.

At one end of the spectrum, a small number of variants allude to the extreme condemnation of women begetting children out-of-wedlock where there is no prospect of marriage. Hence, in one version of "Died for Love", the female protagonist commits suicide, rather than facing the shame of her predicament, having been abandoned, pregnant, by a sailor. That different standards are applied to men and women is suggested by the fact that no male protagonist experiences a similar degree of despair as a result of "illegitimate" paternity.

The majority of variants typically describe a more moderate response in relation to the female protagonist concerned, the resulting pregnancy instead causing anxiety, anger, and resentment, rather than despair. In one unusual instance, it is the cuckolded husband, rather than the woman, who bemoans his lot (see "Collumara"). At the opposite end of the spectrum, in a small minority of songs the reaction of both parties indicates that no social stigma attaches to illegitimate pregnancy, such conceptions being regarded as relatively positive within the narrative world itself.

Performance

The one South West variant of "**Ship's Carpenter**" contained within the data, was performed by Mrs Feen, at her home in Falmouth, Cornwall, in September 1980.⁹³ Both the context in which Mrs Feen's recording was made, in addition to the seriously fragmented nature of this version, suggested that this singer - then in her seventies - was no longer actively performing the song at this time. None of the South West singers recorded within the SRFA mentioned ever having performed the song or recollecting anyone who did. Only Ken Penney and Joe Davis remembered the song; Ken stating he heard it sung, mainly in the 1970s; Joe, that his daughter-in-law performs it, having learnt it from a book (III:002:95, III:007:95). I never directly observed a performance of this song.

The four selected archives were found to contain twelve tape-recorded variants of "**Died for Love**", **subtype A**, by twelve different singers, or singing units. Whilst approximately half of these were women, six singers, or pairs of singers, belonged to travelling families. All were between their early twenties and late seventies at the time of recording. Evidence relating to the context in which three of these recordings were made, at public houses and Holsworthy fair, tends to confirm that "Died for Love" was in the singers' active repertoires at the time of recording (SRFA tapes 265 & 267, WT. SZ tape 27)

Further information as to the status of "Died for Love" within individual repertoires was also obtained during my subsequent interviews. Denis Hutchings's remarks implied that he had frequently performed his illegitimacy-related variant in the context of family gatherings, of the type in which he was recorded in March 1987, and confirmed that he continued to do so.

Ken Penney also stated that he used to sing this song, although he had ceased to do so at the time of our meeting in September 1995, partly out of consideration for the other singers who were currently performing it (e.g. Pat Barker) (III:002:95). My interview with Sheila Bricknell confirmed that the fragmented version, recorded in May, 1981, had remained in her passive repertoire since she first witnessed its performance as a child. A further five of my informants; Charlie Hill, Joe Davis, Wray Tucker, George Withers, and Vic Legg remembered having witnessed performances of this song, though George clarified that the performer he remembered was not a South West singer. Whilst Nelson Penfold confirmed that he used to perform the song himself, Pat Barker

⁹³Sam Richards's recording of Willy Small, from Bovey Tracy, apparently broke (III:019:96).

confirmed that she still performed her illegitimacy-related variant at the time of recording in September 1995.

During our initial meeting, Ken Penney talked about his own rendition of "Died for Love", having performed a version in which references to pregnancy, or a child, were totally excluded:

The way I sang this, again, it had no powerful message. It was the mock pathos type way you'd deliver a song . . . "poor old man", you know, "he's lost his daughter". Not really meant as a serious song at all I used to bring out a handkerchief, and cry with it, you know, as I was singing it. Because that's what it's meant to be . . . it has no real deep message. But again, it's sort of that double value again, isn't it? (III:002:95)

Ken was clearly familiar with versions where the existence of an unborn child was associated with this suicide and further questioning clarified why, as with "Ball of Yarn", he appeared to identify a sexual double standard within the song. Ken revealed that the theme of illegitimacy was an important part of the song's sub-text, in that "well, there was a kind of assumption that she was, um, pregnant. That's why she 'died of love' " (III:002:95). However, the singer and audience's knowledge of the extreme prejudice against unmarried mothers during the twentieth century in itself, did not provide a convincing explanation for illegitimate pregnancy, rather than other types of motivation (such as grief over the broken relationship) being seen as the root cause of this suicide. Rather Ken's assertions that "well, I think a lot of people would of recognised what had happened and read it They'd know why she'd hung herself" strongly suggested the influence of established narrative conventions relating specifically to the figure of the female suicide, further outlined in Chapters 5 and 7 (III:002:95). This long-established tradition within song would have given rise to the assumption that this female protagonist killed herself rather than face the shame of having been abandoned pregnant. Significantly, Ken's additional remark, "still happens, of course, doesn't it? Um not hanging, but take pills and so on" betokened that he believed such suicides to have a firm basis in the reality of experience (III:002:95). Hence, the sense of double standard was perhaps created by mocking, and making light of the circumstances surrounding this woman's suicide as a male singer, implicitly narrating the song from a comparative position of advantage.

Further questioning suggested that Ken regarded the occupational identity of the male protagonist - a sailor in his version- as creating an important part of the song's connotative meaning. Ken claimed that "sailors in particular and, to a lesser extent, soldiers, were . . . completely a-moral either by design or

intention" (III:002:95). Ken saw prolonged periods of absence as being in the nature of both occupations, though he regarded soldiers as being the more stable of the two. Although he recognised that both would be obliged to leave their girlfriends behind and were limited in their abilities to help them, he claimed that "many sailors did use this very much as an excuse for not taking their responsibilities" (III:002:95). Hence this perceived relationship between representation and reality, suggests that Ken cast this woman as a likely victim of circumstance, and perhaps also of male exploitation.

However, the occupational identity of the male protagonist was also seen as having literary significance, Ken acknowledging the "rover sailor" as a "great charmer" and "seducer of women" (III:002:95). Hence, a particular set of connotations would be created in the final stanza, incorporating the line "a sailor's love is hard to find", given the existence of this popular stereotype, because "you might think you've got a sailor's love, [but] by golly you haven't . . . They're all too wily, they've seen everything in so many ports" (III:002:95).

In September 1995, I interviewed Pat Barker about her version of "Died for Love", this time a text containing an explicit reference to an unborn child. Pat initially explained:

I feel that I haven't got a good singing voice at all, and that therefore the only songs I can get away with are ones that are slightly funny . And then people will laugh, and I can make a joke of it and I don't need to try to sing really seriously. (III:004:95)

She then described her tragic-comic renditions of this song:

I will often . . . find I can't sing it straight. And, you know, do it with actions and . . . get to go, "how [sob] happy [sob] I would be", and borrow somebody's handkerchief. And when it gets to . . . "on her breast this note he found" . . . I'll sort of do the writing. The first verse round one breast, and the second verse round the other breast, and act about as my way of getting through the song. And when it gets to the, "be extra careful of middle aged men", I find some man in the pub who is either clearly not middle aged, or whatever, and go and sit on his knee! (III:004:95)

Pat's inclination to parody of "Died for Love" in performance therefore suggested that, similarly to Ken, she did not classify this item as a "serious" song. It was this type of rendition which I witnessed when, perhaps for my benefit, Pat performed "Died for Love" at a pub house in Black Dog village, when I accompanied her to the Pennymoor Sing-around that evening (notebook 1, 22-24). Though she limited her use of gesture on this occasion, Pat performed the song with a comic twist, an added quip, "well, at least I didn't say

'middle-aged Ken' [Penney] . . . , or 'Len' ", following the final warning stanza (notebook 1, 23).

Whilst Pat delivered "Died for Love" as a "comic" song, the social etiquette governing individual performances at the Pennymoor Sing-Around, which functions almost as a "social club", suggested that, on one level, each singer and their song was taken very seriously. The insistence on silence being observed during each performance, tended to emphasise the importance of the narrative itself. The performer/audience distinction was deliberately blurred by factors including the seating of everyone together, clustered around tables. This tended to ensure that each performance functioned as a "shared" experience, reinforcing the sense of group cohesion.

When questioned about the song's main appeal, Pat initially gave "chance" and "the tune" as her reasons for choosing "Died for Love" (III:004:95). After further consideration, she added it "has to be one I can identify with. And I couldn't sing a song which . . . was totally from the male perspective", qualifying this remark according to this variant's mode of narration, which excludes the first person male "I" (III:004:95). Finally, although Pat was keen to impress she did not have any "deep [implicitly personal] reasons" for choosing the song, she emphasised its relevance to contemporary experience:

I think it is a situation to which everybody can relate. I think everybody will know somebody, either fairly directly, or sort of within their village, or . . . their circle somewhere, who's had an unplanned pregnancy. [That is] to put it at its most vague and general. (III:004:95)

Similarly to Ken, Pat discerned a causal link between this illegitimate pregnancy and the female protagonist's subsequent suicide, likewise regarding the stigma associated with illegitimate pregnancy as its root cause. However, the more prominent position of my chosen theme within this text, made it hard to establish whether Pat's knowledge of the stigmatised position of unmarried mothers during the twentieth century, or the influence of narrative conventions relating to the figure of the female suicide, was more instrumental in this conclusion.

Pat did not place a literal interpretation upon the experiences described within the song, in terms of the reality of such suicides in the distant and/or recent past, though in a later comment she suggested that the fact of women being abandoned pregnant was "very commonplace within the culture [and] that this happened all too frequently" (III:004:95). Rather, she emphasised the song's "emotional truth" in terms of the accurate representation of feelings:

I think it's a very real emotion. I think certainly most women would identify with that very closely, even though attitudes are so much more liberal now. I think most people could understand exactly how a girl could feel so bad that she would feel the need to do this (III:004:95).

Hence, negative attitudes towards unmarried mothers, as discerned within the past environment of the song, were judged as still being applicable to the female experience of prevailing attitudes within a contemporary context.

Pat, like Ken, was inclined to view this female protagonist as the victim of circumstance, considering the possibility that she may have been exploited by her lover:

Lilies to me indicate purity. . . . A lot of people, they would think, well this was the fallen girl, you know, who had sinned. But I take it that she was an innocent, really, who had been landed in this situation without really understanding that she was going to get pregnant, or whatever. Or she had done it for money because she was so hard up. So I see this as she certainly saw herself as innocent and it's meant to give the impression to the listeners also that she was an innocent girl. (III:004:95)

Playing down the impression created in the fourth stanza, sourcing part of the woman's unhappiness to the absence of the beloved, Pat also allows for the possibility that this pregnancy might have resulted from casual prostitution. She thereby introduces a sense of class-based register conflict into the song (III:004:95; see Preston, Chapter 2). This narrative of inequality may explain Pat's assertion, "I think you are meant to end up sympathising with the girl, without a doubt" (III:004:95).

As with Ken's interpretation, there seemed to be some discrepancy between the singer's interpretation of the song in performance, and her personal conviction as to the serious nature of the "truths" enshrined within the narrative. This suggested the possibility that at least two levels of meaning operated simultaneously, within the same performance.

According to Denis Huichings, "Died for Love" often used to be performed when he and his brother used to "play in the pubs". He emphasised "there's a lot of people know that song" being "probably better known than any of the others that I've mentioned" (III:008:1:95). Denis's assertion that rather than going out of fashion, "the number of people that . . . would sing that sort of song have probably died off", suggested that it was particularly popular amongst the older generation (III:008:1:95). Denis estimated that few people "under the age of forty", would know the song (III:008:1:95).

By contrast with both Ken and Pat, Denis insisted that "Died for Love" was "always sung as a straight song" having "a little bit of a seriousness attached to it" (III:008:I:95). He claimed that "when people sang sentimental songs; which is what it is, they never ever treated it like a joke" (III:008:I:95). Hence the song was always performed with feeling, and never treated flippantly, "because there is a message in there really, isn't there?" (III:008:I:95). Denis, who had never encountered any song words other than his own, therefore assumed that the audience, like himself, would interpret the narrative as a tragedy:

I suppose when you think of some one, a young lady, taking her own life because she was pregnant, what a terrible thing that she should find it necessary to do that because of the stigma that the public, or whatever, had made about a young girl having a baby wasn't it? Terrible thing really. (III:008:I:95)

Similarly to Pat and Ken, Denis obviously discerned a causal link between this illegitimate pregnancy and the female protagonist's subsequent suicide in his atypical variant, involving a sailor and "a girl of high society" (see Appendix III). Likewise he regarded the stigma associated with illegitimate pregnancy, in this instance, as its root cause.

Given the fact that this text is the most overtly stated of all "Died for Love" variants, in terms of explicitly creating a direct causal link between the shame of illegitimacy and the woman's subsequent suicide, it is virtually impossible to evaluate the influence of either; the singer's knowledge of stigmatised position of unmarried mothers within living memory and experience or narrative conventions relating to the figure of the female suicide; in this interpretation.

Denis's initial emphasis on the notion of "truth", suggested this was an important part of the song's appeal, "that's another story which I can imagine that the song was written as a result of a real occurrence. It's something that happens even in this modern world, let alone umpteen years ago when this song was written" (III:008:I:95). In fact he subsequently suggested that the woman's father might well have written the song. Denis repeatedly emphasised his belief that the narrative had derived from a genuine historical experience, though more in terms of the pre-Victorian, or Victorian era in which he imagined it being sung, "than today, when it's not so important that you're having a baby and you're out of wedlock" (III:008:I:95). However, clearly there was some suggestion that the events described were still relevant to contemporary experience.

Family requests had also clearly influenced Denis's inclusion of the song in his active repertoire "believe it or not, that song is a favourite of one of my elder brothers [Richard]. And whenever we're in a sing song situation he will always ask me to play and sing that song" (III:008:I:95). Yet Denis was puzzled by his brother's preference, saying of the song "It's sad isn't it?", by nature of it being about the unhappy event of a suicide (III:008:I:95). As Denis performed their late father's version of "Died for Love", the act of singing would also have added significance.

Denis saw the illegitimacy stigma as more specifically deriving from the woman's family in this variant:

The girl . . . obviously had an affair with the sailor and . . . finds herself pregnant. But the sailor's probably gone off on to one of his ships again. And she's got to be faced with telling her father that she's having his baby, and she couldn't bring herself to doing that. So she took her own life. (III:008:I:96)

Denis claimed that "a girl in high society would probably find it harder to live with the idea of being pregnant than a girl in maybe even lower society" and that her family would have taken greater pains to conceal it by various means (III:008:I:95). He suggested that although in the lower-class woman would probably have ended up in the workhouse, "a girl in high society, . . . she would be more shamed" (III:008:I:95). Hence, Denis created a direct causal link between the exaggerated sense of social stigma attached to an upper-class woman having an illegitimate child in the historical past, and this female protagonist's suicide. An additional remark suggested that Denis also saw the stigma attached to illegitimate pregnancy in this song, as emphasising the self-defeating nature of the double standard amongst the upper classes in the historical past. Hence, he appeared to regard the discovery of the daughter's suicide as a piece of dramatic irony, in that the very father who mourns her loss, would probably have condemned her as any other woman (see p.178-87). The circumstances envisaged by Denis were perhaps also more potentially shaming because the issue of class was compounded by his interpretation of this liaison as a casual "fling", the singer regarding the comment

" . . . I can't bear the shame,
To have a child without a name",

as the reaction of an upper-class woman who did not know the identity of her child's father (III:012:I:95).

A similar stereotype to that identified by Ken, was also brought to bear upon the male protagonist's occupation: "When you think about it, in all the services, the

sailor was the one that was most likely to be in one port and gone the next, wasn't 'e? . . . hence the saying 'they've got a girl in every port' " (III:008:I:95). He considered that out of airmen, soldiers and sailors, the sailor could most easily "justify going off " (III:008:I:95). Once again this therefore increases the sense of this female protagonist as a victim of circumstances, as well as one exploited by the man concerned. Denis also inferred from the narrative that this was a one-parent household, this interpretation again heightening the sense of female vulnerability.

Denis seemed to regard the imagery in the burial stanza, as marking the sadness, or tragedy of this occasion, assuming the father "had made it clear what had happened", to the village community (III:008:I:95). He imagined that everyone would be "devastated by the fact that she's taken her own life just for something like this", and therefore saw the honouring of her burial request regarding lilies, with the addition of a dove, as indicating great sorrow, implicitly also serving as a gesture of forgiveness (III:008:I:95). Whist conceding that " It sounds like she's 'ad a sailor before doesn't it? [laughter]", Denis struggled to explain the reasoning behind the final stanza (III:008:I:95).

In response to further questioning, Denis was disinclined to see "Died for Love" as a cautionary, "warning" song (cf. Atkinson, Chapter 2). Rather for Denis, the song seemed to function more as an indictment, rather than a vindication of the morality pervading the world of the song. Hence his comment "it's such a tragic song that even the hardest people would have to stop and think when they heard that song, wouldn't they?" suggested more that he saw the song functioning as a vehicle for criticising the reality of excessively harsh attitudes towards illegitimacy (III:008:I:95). Hence, he viewed "Died for Love" as slightly subversive, in that:

The Victorian attitude . . . may have changed, mightn't it, as a result of that song? It might have made people . . . say, "what a terrible thing we've made this girl take her own life because she can't face having this baby. (III:008:I:95)

However, Denis wry remark "today they wouldn't bat an eyelid would they?. . . It's a different world", raised another question (III:008:I:95). Could it be that the act of performing and listening to this song served as a welcome reminder of an era when the legitimacy/illegitimacy distinction was deemed to be important, particularly given the fact that, as previously stated in Chapter 5, there were several clear indications that the singer regarded illegitimacy as an undesirable phenomenon.

The four selected archives were found to contain four variants of "**Shannon Side**", by two different singers, Bob Small, and Charlotte Renals, both of whom were travellers. Whilst the spontaneous nature of Bob's pub performances suggested that he was actively performing the song during the period under consideration, evidence relating to the context in which Charlotte performed the song offers few clues as to its status in her repertoire (SRFA tapes 55, 146; WT. TF tape 25).

No other singers recorded within the SRFA, mentioned ever having performed the song, or recollecting anyone who did (SRFA database). Whilst, within my own fieldwork interviews Charlie Hill had no recollection of the song, the four individuals who did, all had connections with travelling families. Joe and Dilly Davis stated that they had heard "Shannon Side", but were not aware of anyone currently performing it; Nelson Penfold mentioned that an Ivybridge man, Moses Stanley, "used to sing it"; whilst Vic Legg remembered the song in relation to his maternal aunt, Charlotte Renals (III:007:95; III:019:96; III:025:II:96). My own observations of singing events in public venues, did not yield any other versions. Hence, it would appear that "Shannon Side" was infrequently performed, by few singers, during the period under consideration.

Neither of the above two singers, both of whom were dead by the time I was researching between 1994-98, talked about their own interpretation of the song, or provided much contextual detail relating to its meaning in performance. Fortunately, it was possible to ask Vic Legg, about his aunt's performance of the song. Vic clearly stated that both the Renals sisters had continued singing into old age, thus indicating that "Shannon Side" was probably still a part of Charlotte's active repertoire during the 1970s (III:025:I:96).

Vic identified the types of occasion where Charlotte would perform "inherited" family songs of this kind at family gatherings, particularly family get-togethers at Christmas time (III:025:I:96). As a family member, Vic had clearly been present on many of these occasions. Hence, I became particularly interested in the process of how Vic had engaged with, and derived meaning from, his aunt's performances of "Shannon Side". Using my transcription of Charlotte Renals' version, I asked Vic about aspects of his own interpretation.

When questioned regarding the identity of the protagonists, Vic explained how he envisaged this woman as a humble shepherdess (III:025:II:96). In placing greater emphasis on the woman's more lowly status, rather than her exalted identity as a wealthy farmer's daughter later established in stanza seven, Vic

created a sense of class disparity between the lovers. The notion that the relationship was therefore exploitative followed as a natural progression of this interpretation. With a tone of indignation, Vic commented, "I think the song dates further back than . . . the others. It goes back to a time of when people like this could take advantage, had a right to the young women of the neighbourhood" (III:025:II:96). Yet, as previously stated in Chapter 5, the available evidence suggests that such illegitimate pregnancies, as the result of exploitative relationships of inequality were highly exceptional. I would therefore suggest that rather than deriving from living memory and experience, Vic's assertions in this respect have another source.

Vic's interpretation of "Shannon Side" bears a striking resemblance to a particular strand of literary convention, which focuses upon situations where illegitimate conceptions are the result of sexual relations between a woman and a male who is in a position of authority over her, or is her social superior. This type of narrative tends either to be used as a central theme within the work as a whole (e.g. Maskell) or as a motif (e.g. Blair 11-13, 16). Several different types of literature have been responsible for dissemination of this kind of narrative. During the twentieth century, classic works, such as those of Thomas Hardy and George Eliot have gained a much wider audience by becoming popularised as television dramas and glamorised as film epics (Tess, Far From; Adam Bede). Writers of contemporary fiction set in the historical past also have a wide readership and have been an important source of inspiration for further television dramatisation and film making (e.g. Howatch Penmaric; Taylor Bradford A Woman of Substance; Binchy Circle of Friends). This type of narrative has also been perpetuated by writers of popular fiction (e.g. Mills and Boon) and popular writers on folklore (e.g. Holt).

Almost without exception, the relationships depicted within narratives of this kind entail a degree of exploitation on the part of the male protagonist, who instigates the union primarily with a view to his own physical gratification (e.g. George Eliot 128-138; Kate Alexander 35-44; Howatch 68-70; Taylor Bradford 355-60; Maskell 72-74; Binchy 364-65). Though these unions are sometimes of a romantic, consensual nature, the man typically seducing the woman, in other instances he coerces her into sex, or commits rape (cf. Hardy, Tess 118-19, 130; Howatch 111-112; Upshall 4-6; Cookson, Katie 54-59). Hence these narratives often tend to emphasise the selfishness of these males and their betrayal of the female protagonist's trust (see George Eliot 150-53, 297-311; Howatch, Rose pages; Kate Alexander 43-44; Maskell 78; Binchy 445-51). Not surprisingly, a high proportion of master-servant or squire-labouring tenant

relationships feature in this particular type of narrative (George Eliot; Taylor Bradford; Susan Howatch).

The comparatively precarious position of the woman in these situations is emphasised by detailing the extreme social stigma she will incur if she has an illegitimate child, hence the strong preference for eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth century settings. This type of plot is used to several different ends. For instance, it is frequently used to emphasise the cowardice, snobbery, hypocrisy or moral weakness of the upper classes (e.g. Taylor Bradford, 375-80, Cookson, title, pages; Binchy 445, 448-51). It also serves to illustrate the mistreatment or abuse of the lower orders by the upper classes, particularly where the resulting pregnancy and associated stigma is seen as having a detrimental effect upon the woman, her associates and child (Eliot 407-416, 429-38, 452-55, 462-63, 471; Hardy, Tess 435-37; Cookson, Katie 57-59; 66-70; Maskell 78-80, 138). It can be employed as a kind of lover's test, or "moral litmus test", which the male protagonist will either pass or fail (Gillis 114). Hence, the sense of romance tends to be heightened where, from a position of comparative privilege, the male protagonist risks losing face by marrying his social inferior, thereby rescuing her from disgrace (cf. Madris Dupree). Alternatively it tends to emphasise the constancy, fidelity and moral worth of a third party, where he humbles himself by heroically marrying a woman pregnant by another man, to similar ends (Blair 16; cf. Philpotts, Thorn 45-54).

Such narratives usually feature young, unmarried women who are exceptionally attractive or desirable (George Eliot 84-86, 102; Cookson, Katie 24, 27; Binchy 48-50, 282). Such individuals are frequently described as being sexually ignorant and innocent (e.g. Maskell 73; Binchy 378-80). Their male counterparts whilst also typically described as unmarried tend, by contrast, to be more senior, worldly wise and sexually experienced (e.g. Maskell 49, 75, 152; Binchy 170, 372-73, 378-80).

Having assimilated the types of assumptions underpinning such narratives, Vic viewed all subsequent action of "Shannon Side" from the perspective of this fundamental inequality. Hence Vic regarded Captain Walter's disinclination to marry his pregnant lover as a symptom of the rigid divisions between different social classes:

Nothing good would have come out of it, I don't expect, if he had married below his station and she had married above hers . . . they might be happy in their own way, but people wouldn't be happy with them doing it. (III:025:II:96)

Vic also inferred that Captain Walters, whose exact social status within the text remains unclear, was closely aligned with the titled gentry. Hence, this protagonist's willingness to provide his child with a name was seen as being characteristic of the habits of men of this class, in "owning" their illegitimate children, Vic citing the prevalence of surnames such as "Duke" and "Earl" as a case in point.

Vic's analysis suggested that he did not identify with the male protagonist within the song. Rather, certain aspects of his interpretation, such as the sense of injustice at what he regarded as a form of sexual exploitation, suggested he had stronger allegiances with the woman, the "working-class exploited", rather than the "upper-class male exploiter" (see Preston, Chapter 2). The fact that, class, rather than sex, became the dominant register in terms of Vic's interpretation, suggested that the theme of out-of-wedlock pregnancy primarily served to highlight register conflict between different social classes within the narrative itself. Sympathy for the woman thus became the necessary pre-condition for the narrative to function as a means of articulating working-class hostilities towards the ruling classes. Any associated sense of compromise for Vic as a male singer was clearly minimised by his defining the male protagonist as the "other" in terms of his superior social status (cf. Preston).

The theme of out-of-wedlock pregnancy occupied a central position in terms of Vic's interpretation of the song, creating an essential part of the song's overall meaning in performance. However, Vic clearly did not consider that "Shannon Side" challenged the existing sexual morality within the song, through the revelation of plot. Rather, the outcome of the song was seen as reinforcing the moral that social hierarchy cannot be ignored and that sexual relationships and marriage alliances should therefore not take place between members of different social classes.

As previously stated, the four selected archives were found to contain four tape-recorded variants of "**Catch Me**", by three different singers - Bill Packman, Henry Orchard and Sophie Legg - all of whom belonged to travelling families. Evidence relating to the context in which the recordings were made confirms that both Bill and Henry (his first cousin), who were then in their fifties, were actively performing the song during singing events held at a public house in Ermington, Devon, in 1974.⁹⁴

⁹⁴At the Crooked Spire.

Sophie Legg, who was then in her early sixties, was recorded at her home during the late 1970s. Unfortunately, neither recording suggests whether she was still actively performing the song, but the testimony of her son, Vic Legg, indicated that Sophie, like her sisters, was probably still performing at family gatherings, particularly Christmas get-togethers, during this period. No other singers recorded with the SRFA mentioned ever having performed the song, or recollecting anyone who did, though a reference to "Vic's" (presumably Vic Legg's) recent performance is made by an audience member, during one of Bill Packman's performances (SRFA database; SRFA tape 54).

Two additional performances of "Catch Me" were recorded by myself from another two singers, Charlie Hill and Vic Legg, as part of my fieldwork. On his own initiative, Charlie Hill performed the song during our first interview at his home in September 1995 (III:003:95). In spite of his faultless performance, it soon became clear that Charlie had always regarded "Catch Me" as "Vic's song", rather than as a part of his own active repertoire (III:005:I:95). Because Charlie had learnt the song by memorising Vic's performances, he still regarded it as Vic's "property" to such an extent that only with Jess's persuasion would he check my transcription of the song during our second interview (see p.119).

Vic, who was unaware of my presence at that time, spontaneously performed "Catch Me" as part of a lunch time singing session at the Volunteer Inn, during the Sidmouth Folk Festival in August 1996 (Gen:Res:I:96). Hence, the context in which the recording was made suggested that Vic was actively performing the song during the period under consideration. This was confirmed by my subsequent observations of an additional performance during an evening concert in the Manor Pavilion, and interview with Vic himself. None of my informants referred to any other contemporary singers of "Catch Me" and Vic was clearly established as the most widely recognised singer of this song - perhaps because of his attendance at the major folk festivals in the South West region (III:003:95, III:024:I:96, III:030:I:97, Gen:Res:I:96). Hence, it would appear that the not infrequent performances of this song since 1970, have been confined to a handful of singers, all of whom are affiliated with travelling families.

Although I managed to visit Bill Packman at his home in January 1996, it was extremely difficult to encourage this singer to talk about the song due to ill-health, which had affected his eye-sight since he was last interviewed by Sam Richards. This complicated the use of transcriptions and possibly explained why Bill initially had difficulty recollecting the song (III:016:96) .

Fortunately, my interview with Vic Legg, a few days after his performance of "Catch Me" at the Volunteer Inn, was far more successful. Our discussion suggested that the notion of this female protagonist as a sexual innocent was clearly important in Vic's rendition. This explained why Vic thought it highly amusing that his mother's uncle had been known to sing, "I'd show her what she'd seen before", rather than ". . . what she had never seen" in all sincerity, being totally oblivious to the connotations of sexual experience which he created (III:025:I:96).

When questioned about his own interpretation of the song, Vic immediately related the fact of the child having "no father" more to the penalties attached to being illegitimate, rather than practical considerations: "' Child's got no father' implies the child's gonna . . . always be disadvantaged for having no father and no name, no father's name no father's surname" (III:025:I:96). This expression was also seen as referring to the woman's now stigmatised position in society. Vic explained "She wouldn't get anybody to marry her . . . very important part. 'Child got no father' means she'll never be married because she's got a child" (III:025:I:96). Vic immediately cited a situation from living memory, in support of his argument, recounting the story of a local woman, described as "simple" from his home town of Bodmin, Cornwall. Apparently, this woman's reputation became tarnished when she gave birth to an illegitimate son, having been sexually exploited by a soldier, and no one would marry her (III:025:I:96).

By implication, Vic therefore regarded the predicament described within this song as being highly relevant to experiences and negative attitudes within living memory and experience, which played a crucial role in the process of personal interpretation. This choice of analogy is interesting, because it suggests, by association, that the female protagonist is also regarded as a victim of sexual exploitation as well as harsh attitudes towards unmarried mothers within the world of the song. Hence, Vic appears to have a sympathetic, rather than critical attitude towards this woman's predicament.

It is perhaps significant that Vic, as a member of an established travelling family, would be only too aware of the grave repercussions for any traveller woman becoming pregnant outside of marriage - particularly by an outsider to the social group (Richards, "Westcountry" 140). Accordingly, the same value system also decreed that male travellers should "respect" female virginity within their own social group (Richards, "Westcountry" 140). Hence, the singer's

inclination to pity the woman appears not only to derive from his conviction that her predicament is undesirable, but also that it is unjust.

Vic interpreted the final verse of the song as a statement of bitterness and self-justification, rather than an actual statement of the woman's intention to seek out, and get revenge upon her deceiver (III:025:I:96). In terms of the enactment of plot, the narrative Vic assembles does not therefore appear to challenge the existing sexual morality of the song world, but rather performs a more cautionary function. In stressing the undesirability of illegitimacy, it reinforces the notion that women should be especially wary of being easily duped into sexual relationships with strangers. It also teaches that out-of-wedlock pregnancy should be avoided at all costs.

Although I had already observed live performances of "Catch Me" by Vic, I had been unable to establish how individual audience members may have engaged with, and derived meaning from this song. The most striking aspect of both these occasions was that audiences automatically started participating in the verses of the song, and were therefore already clearly familiar with the words (Gen:Res:I:96; notebook 2, 59-61). Fortunately, my interview with Maureen established that she had witnessed repeated performances of "Catch Me" by Vic and we were therefore able to discuss her interpretation of the song.

Maureen's explication highlighted the discrepancy between meaning, as brought to the text by the singer, and meaning as realised during the song's reception by the listener (cf. Gammon 234). Maureen deliberately overlooked the notion of this female protagonist as a sexual innocent, implicit in "I would show her what she had never seen", perhaps because this would abnegate the woman from the responsibility of having consented to sex without considering the repercussions - a view which did not accord with Maureen's own value system. Her later choice of analogy with a recent situation from living memory, involving the illegitimate pregnancy of a teenage girl, suggested that she took an earthy, rather than romanticised view of this encounter (III:030:I:97). By association, in spite of her youth, the female protagonist was seen as being worldly wise, having a more active role in instigating this sexual liaison. Consequently, Maureen rejected any notion that this female protagonist had been unfairly taken advantage of by an exploitative male:

I think these benighted lady's who say, "oh yes, you can play about under my apron strings" and then moan and complain, 'aven't got a leg to stand on, 'cause it takes two to tango and she could have said no in the first place, so she can't claim victimisation, 'cause she joined in.
(III:030:I:97)

By comparison, Maureen appeared to attach little importance to the male protagonist's cavalier attitude towards the woman he seduces then abandons, or to the making of a false promise that he would marry her on his return.

To a much greater extent than Vic, Maureen interpreted the action of the song according to contemporary values and experiences, tending to ignore the severely stigmatised position of unmarried mothers prior to the 1960s. Whilst illegitimacy was still defined in negative terms, the reasons for the woman's distress, now defined as "complaint", were therefore seen as being more pragmatic, in being left to raise an illegitimate child alone. Thus, she was judged more harshly than if her grief had instead been engendered by an awareness of the social penalties likely to be inflicted upon herself and her child, her predicament being seen as a direct result of her own lack of foresight. Because of this contemporary emphasis, Maureen also clearly perceived the woman as more culpable for her resulting pregnancy: "I would say these days a woman's got even less cause to complain about victimisation, than she did back in let's say the 1800's when there was no contraception either" (III:030:I:97).

There was an implied contradiction in Maureen's reasoning in relation to this song. Whilst on the one hand, her use of the above quoted conventional wisdom "it takes two to tango" suggested that she saw both protagonists as being equally responsible for having sex, on the other she appeared to insinuate that it was the woman's responsibility to deal with the consequences of her own, as well as her partner's actions. Hence, it was impossible to tell whether her unquestioning acceptance of the rightness of only one party being "lumbered" with the child derived from her tendency to have higher expectations of her own sex.

Like Vic, Maureen interpreted the female protagonist's final threat as a form of wishful thinking, stating "I think you can take from the last verse she intends to get her own back. I don't think you can literally say she will go and look" (III:030:I:97). Hence, the woman is disempowered, remaining at a practical disadvantage, in both interpretations (III:030:I:97). Maureen regarded this stanza as a form of compensatory fantasy, of a "what I would do, if I could do it", variety (III:030:I:97). Her comment "it's the feeling, the essence of what the words say, not the black and white literary content of the words that you've got to look at really" suggested that the emotional content of this stanza, in terms of the female protagonist's anger, disappointment and bitterness were of greatest significance in her own interpretation (III:030:I:97).

Maureen repeatedly stated that she considered the sentiments expressed within "Catch Me" to be "universal", suggesting that the aforementioned unmarried mother, "could go down the road, sing that song and have complete empathy with it". She further remarked:

people can identify with that. Your audience'll identify with that. They would all say "yeah well that 'adn't happened to me but I know somebody it did happen to", or "I can see that would happen" . . . like I say , the words in it will go on through eternity. I can't see people getting any wiser and not doing it [laughter] and getting thereselves in trouble, 'cause you know, they couldn't have any more reasons not to these days, really. (III:030:I:97)

therefore implying that the song continues to be sung, because its meaning still resonates with audiences today. Hence, Maureen's interpretation of the song left no doubt as to her own negative attitudes towards illegitimacy, the song performing as an essentially conservative reminder of female regret in the face of unwanted pregnancy and thereby endorsing existing values.

The four selected archives contained eight tape-recorded versions of "**Old Riverside**", by five different singers, all of whom belonged to travelling families. The context in which the recordings of Bob Small and Bill Packman were made confirms that both singers, who were then in their fifties, were actively performing the song during singing events held at public houses in Chudleigh, Ermington and Newton Abbot, in Devon, between 1974-75. Unfortunately, none of the details relating to Jim Hook's illegitimacy-related variants, recorded in 1976 and 1983, when he was in his seventies and eighties, or Phyllis Penfold's version recorded in 1976 when she was in her fifties, confirms the status of "Old Riverside" within their repertoires. No other singers recorded within the SRFA mentioned ever having performed the song, or recollecting anyone who did (SRFA database).

Whilst one additional fragment of "Old Riverside" was recorded by myself and Sam Richards from Nelson Penfold in March 1996, my interview with Vic Legg confirmed that he was actively performing this song during the period under consideration (III:025:I:96). However, I never witnessed a performance of this song during any of my observations of live singing events.

Because Jim Hook's fragmented song texts had suggested that the fear or reality of illegitimate pregnancy might be an important part of the narrative's sub-textual meaning as realised in performance, my field investigations concerning "Old Riverside" were therefore primarily concerned with establishing

whether this was actually the case. As explained above, my attempts to encourage Bill Packman to talk about his songs were largely unsuccessful (III:016:96). Again, his recollections of this song were initially vague, and analytical discussion was limited. Hence, I was unable to clarify this issue.

Fortunately, Vic Legg was much more amenable to talking about the creation of meaning in performance. Vic saw the female protagonist's response to her seduction as suggesting her extreme sense of sexual guilt. He commented "the very fact that they'd been some sort of intimate relationship . . . was bad enough, the result was even worse, if there was [one]" (III:025:I:96). Hence, Vic's interpretation allowed for the possibility that negative attitudes towards illegitimate pregnancy might affect her decision to entrust her welfare to her deceitful seducer. Vic further stated that because of the absence of reference to a struggle, he regarded the woman as wilfully consenting to her death (III:025:I:96).

Vic cited two performances of "Old Riverside", at an unspecified location in America and in a folk club venue, the Empress of Russia, in London, where the song had not been well received, because the audience felt it was "derisive to women" (III:025:I:96). This American audience had refused to take the song seriously, laughing when the woman is pushed into the river. The strength of feeling amongst some of the women in the audience (including the singer, Peggy Seeger) led to the suggestion Vic should drop the song from his repertoire. Vic was therefore made painfully aware of the discrepancy between the reception of this song amongst the family group, amongst whom "Old Riverside" was taken as a serious song, about a serious subject, concerning events which used to actually happen, and the hostile response of outside audiences.

Partly because of his belief that the song originally had some factual basis, and could not have been "dreamed up", Vic was extremely perplexed by this reaction (III:025:I:96). He rejected the notion that the singing of such songs would exacerbate violence towards women, "if I stopped singing this, those sort of things would still carry on in its present day context . . . stopping singing doesn't stop the thing happening" (III:025:I:96). His present day analogy with domestic violence, suggested that he viewed the act of singing, as an important part of bringing to light unsavoury, "neglected" aspects of human experience. He also felt this criticism to be unjustified, because of his "sympathetic" attitude, implicitly towards the woman, as singer and was therefore adamant "I'm not going to throw out family songs" (III:025:I:96).

Both versions of **Navy Boots** discovered within the data as a whole had been actively performed by their singers Bob Small and Bill Parnell, in public venues during the 1970s. Only one additional singer, Wray Tucker, mentioned ever having performed "Navy Boots". Whilst Maureen Tatlow recollected the song's one time popularity, when it "cropped up in the big sings and the pub scenes", Vic Legg named an individual who still occasionally performs the song (III:029:I:97; III:026:I:96).

Though my ability to examine the creation of meaning in performance was rather limited, the tone of both existing recordings, in which both singers mention having expurgated implicitly obscene stanzas from their versions, suggests that "Navy Boots" was delivered as a bawdy, slightly risqué, comic song. Using similar words to Bill Parnell, Wray described how he likewise delivered the song in parody Irish fashion, at folkclubs in Exeter and South Tawton. His assertion "always gets a laugh, that one", consolidated the above impression (III:028:I:97, Richards et al, Jacket notes).

The only variant of "**Collumara**" was recorded by myself and Jacqueline Patten in an interview with Maureen Tatlow, who still occasionally "trawled it out", at the time of collecting. Maureen associated this song with "Baby Lie Easy", remarking that both songs used to be frequently performed in local pubs, often by female singers, in spite of both expressing the sentiments of a male narrator, "lamenting that he's left with the baby" (III:029:I:97). Maureen explained how she specifically learnt "Collumara" for a functional purpose, to rock her children to sleep. However, her analysis of "Baby Lie Easy"

You ain't really fussed, at that moment in time. If that child is screeching an' bawling, you really don't want it to be your own anyway. So it don't matter whose it was or whose it wasn't, the words of the song are quite appropriate to the moment

suggested that narrative content was still important, Maureen creating her own sense of meaning by engaging with the sentiments deriving from the illegitimacy component.

The four selected archives were found to contain two variants of "**Died for Love**" (**subtype B**), both collected from Devon travellers. Tommy Penfold, who was then in his seventies, and Amy Birch, then estimated to be in her forties, performed the song during interviews at their homes in November 1976, Amy providing a more complete version. As Amy states earlier on in tape that her songs are still performed during a family get together, "old songs" being

requested when people tire of the others, it is likely that this song was still performed at the time of recording (cf. Richards et al, Jacket notes). However, just two of my informants were familiar with this song, and then only in association with Amy or her daughter Jean Orchard (III:019:96, III:024:I:96 & III:024:II:96). Although I observed an entire evening's singing, by the Orchard family, at a public house in South Zeal, during Dartmoor Festival in August 1996, Amy did not once perform this song.

The four selected archives were found to contain one tape-recorded (non-instrumental) version of "**Foggy Dew**" by a South West singer. No other SRFA singer mentioned having performed this song, or recollected any who did (SRFA database). The context in which Jim White's performance took place, as part of a singing event in a public house in Parracombe, Devon, in December, 1982 suggests that the song was in his active repertoire at this time.

Four additional versions of "Foggy Dew" were collected during my fieldwork investigations. Charlie Hill instigated a performance of this song, during an early interview with myself and the Pattens, at his home in September 1995 (III:003:95). However, Charlie, who had an exceptionally good memory in relation to other people's songs, never directly stated whether "Foggy Dew" had ever been part of his own active repertoire of privately, or publicly performed songs, and only ever referred to performances in relation to other named individuals.⁹⁵

Denis Hutchings also performed a version of the song at my request, when I interviewed him at his home in Babbacombe, Torquay, in December 1995. Denis calculated that he had learnt the song as a soldier, when he was stationed near Aldershot. Denis's father, was "most intrigued with the words" and used to request it, calling the song "The Foggy Foggy Dew" (III:012:I:95). Both the fact that Denis's father was still alive in 1987, and the ease with which Denis performed the song, tended to suggest that "Foggy Dew" had occasionally surfaced within his active repertoire during the period under consideration. Denis was unusual, in that he did not consider this song to be well known throughout Devon as a whole (III:012:I:95).

Sheila Bricknell also recollected "Foggy Dew", during an interview at her home in February 1996. However, she had not observed, or participated, in performances of this song since her Youth Club days, when she was about

⁹⁵ Bill Ellis was mentioned in this connection, Charlie later referring to Cyril Partridge's performances, at the Drew Arms, during a subsequent interview (III:003:95; III:021:96).

twenty years old, hence the extremely fragmented nature of her version (Ill:017:96). A fourth variant was recorded when I interviewed George Withers at his home in July 1996. George clearly stated that the song was still a part of his active repertoire at that time. Other informants also remembered, albeit unspecifically, the one-time popularity of this song (Ill:018:96; Ill:024:1:96). Maureen Tatlow cited the fact that so many singers performed "Foggy Dew" in the sixties, in addition to the song's existing association with The Clancies, as two of the main reasons for the song not appealing to her as a singer (Ill:029:1:97). Vic Legg had clear recollections of the Cornish singer Mervin Vincent, from St Issy, performing this song on a fairly regular basis, prior to his death in the late 1970s (Ill:026:11:96).

Although my attempts to instigate an analytic discussion of this song with Charlie Hill were largely unsuccessful, Denis Hutchings was much more articulate about his own "Foggy Dew" version, which he used to perform quite often, as he liked the song (Ill:012:1:95). Denis elaborated, "I just like the lyrics of it. I thought it was humorous. And it's a story, and I could imagine it, as I've said before, that [with] so many songs the lyrics are based on what I think are true happenings" (Ill:012:1:95). Hence the narrative and its associated meanings appeared to ^{be a} major part of the song's appeal (Ill:012:1:95). Underplaying the sense of long-term courtship implied in the ^{fourth} line of his version "I wooed her in the summer time and in the winter too", Denis interpreted the story as follows:

I should imagine that he's a guy that's out and about. And he meets up with this young girl, who's probably got nowhere particular to go. No ties possibly, you know, [a] roving female. And I think that he befriended her and invited him [her] back to his house It looks very much to me . . . as if she was a sort of foot loose and fancy free young lady, doesn't it really? Because she went back to his house, she stayed the night. There's no mention in the story of her having to answer to anybody, her parents, or whatever. (Ill:012:1:95)

Interestingly, the woman's a-contextuality was therefore identified as semiologically important, the absence of references to authority figures, such as parents (by contrast with songs such as "Shannon Side" and "Old Riverside") seeming to signal her likely promiscuity (cf. Renwick; Kodish, Chapter 2).

Denis clearly saw this sexual liaison as being solely instigated by the woman, who was cast more in the role of sexual predator, needing little "persuasion" to get into bed with the sleeping male protagonist (Ill:012:1:95). Her absence in the final stanza, where "he's a bachelor [rather than widower] living with his son, both working at the weaving trade", was explained according to the fact that the

couple had never married, and "that she disappeared . . . left him holding the baby [laughter]. Typical woman [laughter]" (III:012:I:95).

Whilst Denis implicitly regarded the weaver's twice repeated remark "the only thing I ever did wrong was to save her from the foggy foggy dew", as euphemistically referring to their sexual encounter, the phrase was not interpreted as an admission of sexual guilt. Rather, it was seen as a statement of regret, the weaver now realising that by allowing himself to be seduced, he inadvertently brought about "his downfall" (III:012:I:95). Hence, according to Denis's interpretation, the weaver is regarded as the "victim" of his abandoning lover, the illegitimate child invariably being an unwelcome encumbrance in the absence of its mother (III:012:I:95).

When further questioned about his own attraction to the song, Denis's explanation suggested that he revelled in the irony, that whilst the well intentioned weaver had charitably "set out to do this young lady a favour", she had "obviously led him on. And he bought it and got left holding the baby [laughter] and she's gone!" (III:012:I:95). Hence, the primary appeal of "Foggy Dew" appears to have derived from the singer's recognition of subversive humour within the text itself, an aspect also presumably not lost ^{on} the audience, ~~when~~ Denis notes responding with laughter, particularly at the final stanza beginning "and now I am a bachelor" (III:012:I:95).

Whereas both the narrative convention of folksong itself, and living memory and experience, decreed that in most situations the woman would bear the brunt of an illegitimate pregnancy, a complete gender-role reversal is enacted within the world of the song. Instead, according to Denis's interpretation, it is the female protagonist who is both the sexual and financial exploiter, and her male counterpart, the exploited (cf. "The Butcher"). Hence, negative attitudes towards illegitimacy ensure that, in the final stanza, the weaver is mocked as a kind of gullible, yet likeable fool, conceptualised in a similar fashion to the cuckold in other types of song (cf. "Collumara"). Interpreted in this light, the humour of this song is therefore dependent upon two factors; the shared cultural assumption of female disadvantage in such situations; and the acknowledged influence of negative, essentially conservative, attitudes towards illegitimacy within society at large. However, the song's ^{humour} is not necessarily dependent upon whether the singer or listener personally upholds those values.

It is possible that Denis's truncated text may originally have emerged as a self-conscious parody of more lengthy, romanticised versions, although Denis could

not have intended this to be an intrinsic part of his performance, because he was completely unfamiliar with the additional stanzas exemplified within Charlie Hill's text (III:012:I:95; notebook 1, 89). However, this does not preclude the possibility that his audience might have received it as such, the above description of audience response at the final stanza being consistent with this interpretation.

In his first rendition of "Foggy Dew", George initially left out the stanza beginning "supposing I should have a child", in which the female protagonist articulates her fears of pregnancy, only subsequently realising his omission. Both this, and his subsequent analysis of his version, suggested that the theme of out-of-wedlock pregnancy was seen as subservient to the over-riding sense of romantic nostalgia which George clearly perceived as being the emotional core of this song. Hence, the subsequent marriage of the couple was seen as testimony to the male protagonist's affections. That the woman's absence in the final stanza, was accounted for by her death, also served to reinforce the sentimental aspect of this song.

This different emphasis led to a totally different explanation as regards the male protagonist's reference to wrong-doing in saving his lover from "the foggy foggy dew", which George did not conceptually link with the resulting illegitimate pregnancy, even though he clearly regarded the weaver's son as the result (III:024:I:96). Rather, George stated "all that I can think is that that was his excuse for getting the girl in his bed as far as I could see" (III:024:I:96). Hence, he unconsciously arrived at an explanation consistent with the ballad's original meaning, some centuries earlier, where this statement serves as the guilty admission of having played a practical joke for reasons of personal gain.

By mental comparison with my transcription of Charlie Hill's text (III:003:95), Vic Legg managed to recollect the more specific details of Mervin Vincent's version. Vic revised the first line of the final stanza, to "now I am a bachelor and I live with my son"(III:026:II:96). Hence Vic, like Denis, asserted "they weren't married" (III:026:II:96). Vic tentatively agreed, from what he could remember, that the woman had probably died in childbirth, after the couple had lived together "All this winter through" (III:026:II:96). His additional remark " 'cause he took her in, didn't 'e, from the cold" suggested that similarly to Denis, he perhaps regarded this woman as a type of "down and out", or vagrant (III:026:II:96; cf. III:012:I:95).

However, maybe because of the assumption that the woman had died, rather than faithlessly deserting her lover, the tone of Mervin's version appears to have been radically different. Vic explained "it was sung because it was a sad event. There's no regrets. In fact, there's pride in the fact that there's a child, but regrets that there's no mother" (III:026:II:96). Hence both illegitimacy, and illegitimate paternity itself, was clearly defined in much more positive terms according to Mervin's more sentimental rendition of the song, which he performed "quite a bit" being "very fond of the song" (III:026:II:96).

Of the six variants of **Rosemary Lane** obtained from the four selected archives, none of the singers, six of whom were men, were known to be travellers or having any association with travelling families. Singers from all three counties were represented within this sample. Unfortunately, none of these performances gave any indication as to the status of this song in the singer's repertoire at the time of recording. I only managed to obtain further information in relation to one of these singers, a letter from Eileen Gard suggesting that the song was part of her father-in-law's rather than husband's active repertoire.

Five additional variants were recorded as part of my own fieldwork collecting: Charlie Hill and Maureen Tatlow performing complete versions, whilst Ken Penney, Nelson Penfold and George Withers recollected fragments of this song. Joe Davis also stated that he used to perform the song, but had not heard it for a long time; Denis Hutchings, that "we sing that one up at the Crown and Sceptre on Friday nights . . . we sang it last Friday night. But I play it mostly"; and Vic Legg that "it's sung in Padstow", Cornwall (III:026:II:96).

During one of my interviews with Charlie Hill, I attempted to establish how the singer interpreted the meaning of this song. Charlie clearly considered that the type of encounter described could have some basis in the reality of historical experience, as he regarded the "terrible reputation" of seaside ports such as Plymouth as being analogous to the circumstances depicted within the song:

Years ago there were three towns in Plymouth. Devonport, which was the naval base and Plymouth and Stoke. After the war they all got amalgamated and they all became Plymouth . . . All these ports they had a terrible reputation, you know, with these girls and one thing and another. And you see they would go abroad, they would come ashore I suppose looking for girls of that sort I dunno. I suppose they had plenty of money and that was a big attraction. (III:005:II:95)

This comparison tends to suggest that Charlie conceptualised the type of encounter described within this song as a form of casual prostitution. In choosing this emphasis, he assigns this woman to a more marginal

"criminalised" social category, than the stated text actually implies. Unfortunately Charlie did not further elaborate his interpretation of the illegitimacy component within this song. However, he did talk about one of his own performances:

Used to be a little girl lived opposite and she used to come over and watch me milking and I['d] start off singing this one you see. Well I'd sing the chorus and I'd sing "The oak and the ash and the bonny *rowan* tree", because she was called Rowan you see. She used to look at me!
(III:005:I:95)

This comment suggested that rather than engaging with the illegitimacy theme in these particular performances, Charlie primarily performed this song because of a fortuitous pun on his listener's name.

By contrast, the theme of illegitimacy clearly formed an important part of Maureen Tatlow's interpretation of "Rosemary Lane", which she was still performing in both private and public venues at the time of interview. She explained how, in relation to the final verse:

You see you adapt it to suit yourself, because I got two daughters and where I'm singing it people know that I've got two daughters. So if I say "left me with a pair of maids" and Rob's standing next to me, were'm also mucking about in doing that, but that's something you do to get the audience with you. (III:029:II:97)

In respect of its illegitimacy component, Maureen's performance of this song seems to ^{have} had an essentially conservative function of the kind identified by Gammon whereby by the use of subversive humour, the song essentially emphasises, or defines the norm. The comedy in Maureen Tatlow as a known local personality performing this particular version of "Rosemary Lane" derived from the fact that she was clearly not a single mother who had been abandoned with two illegitimate children having had a casual fling with a sailor, but a married woman with two daughters by a conspicuous husband. Hence these songs could be seen as evidencing essentially conservative values, reinforcing the existing status quo through representing the "other side of the coin" (see Gammon, Chapter 2). Whilst Maureen's description of her own performances implied that she essentially regarded "Rosemary Lane" as a light-hearted, comic piece, her additional comment "still sing that, actually sang that at Dad's wake 'cause he liked that", suggested that in particular kinds of context, the act of singing this song, could be construed as more emotive (III:029:II:97).

The four selected archives contained twenty tape-recorded variants of "**Ball of Yarn**", by fifteen different singers or singing units, twelve of whom were men.

Of these original fifteen singers, six individuals were known to be travellers. The context in which seven of these performances took place, suggests that those singers were actively performing the song during the period under consideration; Bob Small being recorded in a public house in Newton Abbot and Chudleigh in Devon during the autumn of 1974⁹⁶; Nelson and David Birch's illegitimacy-related version being recorded in a pub, on Bampton Fair day, in October 1979; and George Edworthy's variant, also including this theme, being recorded ⁱⁿ a public house in Torquay and Pennymoor, in July and September of 1981.⁹⁷ Finally, Robert Clatworthy's illegitimacy-related variant was recorded at his local pub in Winsford, in February 1982⁹⁸; whilst Wray Tucker's fragmented version was performed in a public house in South Zeal.

During my own fieldwork investigations, I was able to establish that Ken Penney, who was recorded in Pennymoor, Devon, in September 1981, had been actively performing this song, having learnt it from George Edworthy. It was also likely that Charlotte Renals was actively performing the song during the period under consideration, for reasons stated above. Additional informants recollected past performances of this song. I recorded one live performance, by the singer Edwin Hall, who had been unaware of my research interests, when I observed his rendition of "Ball of Yarn" during a singing events in a public house, near Torquay, in Devon (Gen:Res:001:l:95).

During our interview discussion, Ken attributed the popularity of "Ball of Yarn" to its being "a chorus song" which "people could learn . . . very very quickly" (Ill:002:95). As he explained, one of the main attractions of this song was its ability to be inclusive, allowing other individuals to "learn their ways of coming in" thereby shaping, and becoming an intrinsic part of the performance (Ill:002:95). In fact, Ken originally learnt "Ball of Yarn" by participating in George Edworthy's version, prompting this more elderly singer when he forgot the words. He again emphasised "people would come in with comments all the way through it" (Ill:002:95). Ken therefore implies that the cohesive social function of the song, was at least as important as its narrative. When asked if there were any situations where he would ever refrain from perform^{ing} this song Ken responded "No, that's pretty mild" (Ill:002:95).

Ken stated, "there's a lot of debate, you know, about how what the actual words mean", citing the interchangeable use of the words "And I place her on a

⁹⁶ The Fox and The White Hart.

⁹⁷ The Devon Dumpling and The Crwys Arms.

⁹⁸ The Royal Oak

tree/knee" as one such example, and provided the following comment on the narrative's primary appeal:

It's a kind of euphemism for putting your hand where you shouldn't put your hand. They love these euphemisms. Her little ball of twine is, you know, euphemistic, and if you produce a euphemism which people actually really know what's happening, and yet it's said in polite English, they love that. That's [the] kind of humour. But again, it's the same old story. They get together, and unwanted pregnancy, and that's why she looks so black at him. (III:002:95)

Ken's analysis therefore suggested that the primary importance of the narrative was the titillation of its understated seduction, the song's illegitimacy component, and the woman's black look, later serving as proof of the full blown sexual encounter between the couple. Clearly regarding the child as "unwanted" Ken saw illegitimate birth as being negatively defined within the world of the song. Ken's remark "it's the same old story" and his later comment on the song's "standard form", suggests that he recognises this basic plot structure as part of a wider narrative convention of illegitimacy narratives in song (III:002:95).

Ken appeared to regard the female protagonist's predicament as being relevant to the experience of, and attitudes towards, illegitimacy within living memory and experience. He later compared the actual practice of concealing the illegitimate pregnancies of young, Pennymoor, women, until "recent years"⁹⁹, due to the associated shame, with the pervading morality of this song:

Again it's a it's a double standard there you see but this light-hearted, "Looked so black at me but", but this dual value is so well portrayed in folk song. You know it's, the men, . . . it's sort of like the women are play things it doesn't really matter you know very completely cavalier attitude to it. (III:002:95)

By analogy, Ken seemed to be suggesting that the woman's "black look" derived from her resentment of the social stigma that she, rather than the male protagonist, subsequently incurred. The song was therefore seen as inadvertently highlighting gender-based register conflict between men and women. Yet, in Ken's opinion the fact of the male protagonist deserting the woman, and the type of sexist male attitude encapsulated within the song, would have been the exception, rather than the norm "I don't really believe that was true. I mean, there . . . have been, as now, a lot of caring men who didn't just have their way with women and forget them" (III:002:95).

⁹⁹ By sending them away.

Though it might be tempting to suggest that the song served some didactic purpose, perhaps warning of the negative repercussion befalling women becoming illegitimately pregnant, or of the dangers of casual sexual encounters, Ken did not believe this to be the case (cf. Stewart). He emphasised "I don't think anybody . . . when they hear it, or even singing it, would really have any serious message to bring on" (Ill:002:95).

Unfortunately, it was much more difficult to draw Ed Hall, into an analytical discussion about the content of this song. My direct observation of his spontaneous performance merely confirmed both that the song was extremely well received, as all the other singers and musicians, in this predominantly male pub environment, joined in. Both the musical accompaniment, tone and tempo, with which the song was performed, confirmed its status as a light-hearted piece.

Finally, Dave Lowry, who had frequently witnessed performances of "Ball of Yarn" at the Jolly Porter since 1970, also talked about this song. Although one of the reasons why he had not attempted to learn it, was because so many other people were singing it at this time, as a singer, he was also clearly uncomfortable with what he regarded as the "male chauvinism" he discerned within performances of this song (Ill:013:95).

Maureen Tatlow's performance of **High Germany**, recorded by myself and Jacqueline Patten in March 1997, was the only version of this song occurring within the data as a whole. None of the singers recorded within the SRFA mentioned ever having performed the song, or recollecting anyone who did (SRFA database). This, in addition to the song's absence from live performances, tended to suggest that "High Germany" has seldom been performed in the South West region since 1970.

Maureen, who originally learnt the song from a record in approximately 1966, used to sing it "when I was pregnant, 'cause it was the only one that had pregnancies in it and I thought it was appropriate" (Ill:030:I:97). Hence, part of the song's appeal was clearly its portrayal of a particular aspect of physiological experience, with which Maureen identified at that time. Maureen confirmed that "I sing it from time to time now, but not very often" (Ill:030:I:97). Implicitly, this was because much of the song's humour when she used to perform it "out", in the context of a pub, derived from her own state of pregnancy, "because if I'm standing up there with a big fat front singing that everybody's laughing, they're thinking 'oh yeah'" (Ill:030:I:97). Maureen's analysis therefore confirmed that the

theme of illegitimate pregnancy directly influenced the creation of meaning in performance, being the main source of the song's risqué humour.

Once again, the comic element was clearly dependent on the process of direct subversion. It arose from the juxtaposition between the singer's known social identity as a married woman, expecting a legitimate child by her husband, and that of the female protagonist, who according to Maureen, clearly knew the father of her child, but rejected his marriage offer because "she didn't think she ought to go to war" (III:030:I:97). The jest would sometimes be compounded by the presence of Maureen's singer-husband in the audience. Again, the precise nature of the song's humour alludes to the essentially negative definition of illegitimacy amongst the immediate social group.

The only version of "**Australia**" was performed on request, by Ken Penney, during an interview with myself in September 1995. Ken confirmed that he only occasionally still performed the song at the time of recording. No other singers recorded within the SRFA mentioned ever having performed the song, or recollected anyone who did (SRFA database). Amongst my own informants, Ken also remembered Cyril Tawney having performed "Australia" "years ago", whilst Maureen Tatlow asserted that a Lympstone singer, who probably originated from London, used to sing it during the Second Folk Revival at "the big sings" (III:002:95, III:029:I:97). However, I never directly observed a live public performance in person.

Having performed this song, Ken promptly remarked "it's one I won't sing nowadays" (III:002:95). He confirmed that the reasons for seldom performing it directly related to its content, which in the contemporary environment he now considered to be both "sexist" and "racist". Hence Ken clearly assumed from his perspective as a male singer, that the connotations of both English male superiority and of misogyny - neither of which accorded with his own value system - were inextricably inscribed within the narrative. Hence, he would only now sing it in private, or for a particular dramatic purpose "if I wanted to shock a university audience or something like that", but never "to really glorify what's in it" (III:002:95).

By contrast, Maureen Tatlow either did not perceive, or deliberately chose to overlook, the sexist and racist overtones which Ken so clearly discerned within the song. She claimed:

I don't think of songs in genders, I think of songs in "that's got a good bit of comedy in it", or "it's got a nice tune", or "it's got a good chorus", or "there's something in the words of that song that actually pulls at me heart strings". (Ill:029:I:97)

Hence Maureen did not appear to feel compromised or "emasculated" as a female audience member participating "in the universal experience posited by the song" (Preston 319). She claimed it was generally well received, as people "joined in the chorus bit with quite enthusiasm" (Ill:024:I:97).

Even though her recollections of "Australia" clarified that the male singer^{er} took on the persona of the narrator in the song, Maureen considered that this added to the song's enjoyment as an essentially life-affirming piece of male sexual bravado. Perhaps this is due to the woman's definition of "other" in terms of her national identity, performances of the song therefore acting as a cohesive force in terms of the immediate social group. By entering into the sexual fantasy of the male narrator, the audience might therefore collectively share in his sense of supremacy and sexual gratification, applauding his cunning when^{he} he leaves the maid stranded with their illegitimate child. Maureen did not consider that anyone at that time would have regarded the song to be sexist and voiced her opposition to the "politically correct paranoia" surrounding certain types of songs in more recent years (Ill:029:I:97).

The only South West version of "**Cabin Boy**" within the data, was performed by Maureen Tatlow, during an interview with myself and Jacqueline Patten in March 1997. Maureen told us that she had learnt the song in her early singing days, but had not performed it regularly as it was not a great success (Ill:030:I:97). Maureen attributed the song's lack of popularity to her own lack of skill, being an inexperienced performer at that time, rather than to any aspect of content and meaning.

The four selected archives contained two versions of "**Don't Tell I**" by the singer George Edworthy. Both performances were recorded in public houses in Pennymoor and Torquay in Devon, this latter venue being used by Torquay Folk Club. Hence the context in which these recordings were made, in July and September of 1981, confirmed that this song was being actively performed during the period under consideration. Unfortunately, the singer had died by the time I began researching.

An additional version of "Don't Tell I", was recorded by myself and Jacqueline Patten, from Margaret Palmer, at her home in June 1995. Margaret was still

performing the song at that time, during singing events organised by the Pennymoor Sing-around at Black Dog village, and at another folk club venue in Brendon, North Devon. Both Denis Hutchings and Maureen Tatlow were also familiar with the song; Denis's description suggesting that he had witnessed a performance by Margaret Palmer; Maureen regarding the song as a "favourite" around Dartmoor, but being seldom performed in Cornwall (III:030:I:97).

Perhaps because she regarded her performance of the song as speaking for itself, Margaret was clearly rather bewildered by my attempts to analytically discuss the interpretation of meaning in relation to this song. My particular focus, on the stanza incorporating out-of-wedlock pregnancy, also appeared to cause discomfort and embarrassment. Yet a closer examination of Margaret's text and comparison with George Edworthy's version, suggested that this theme likely played an essential role in the creation of meaning in performance. Margaret personalised her version of the song by incorporating the name of her seventy-year-old cousin in the following lines. The male protagonist, having been chased up a tree by the angry father, exclaims:

And I hollered leave I be,
For with that wench was old Dick French,
So don't tell I tell 'e

thereby suggesting that the named party, rather than narrator, is responsible for this out-of-wedlock pregnancy (III:001:95). As Margaret's testimony and my own observations suggested that Dick would often have been present as an audience member, this alteration clearly served as a form of good-humoured teasing between them. The jest would certainly have also been shared by the audience, Dick being one of the most well known local singers in the region, renowned specifically for his sexual humour (notebook 1, 4). Again, the song appears to have functioned by process of subversion, resting upon the shared assumption of conservative values as regards sexual mores, amongst the immediate social group.

That Margaret emphasised the "jovial" tone of "Don't Tell I" by comparison with "very old folk songs" of this theme, shows consistency with this interpretation (III:001:95). Though she considered that there were some who "would look down their nose at it", Margaret was confident of the narrative's reception as "a bit of fun", particularly in the more liberal contemporary environment, and was keen to emphasise, "It's just a song and just a joke like" (III:001:95).

The comparatively recent composition of "**Dit'sum Lad**", by a friend of Bill Hingston, suggests the likelihood that the only collected variant, recorded from

Bill in May 1985, was in his active repertoire at that time.¹⁰⁰ I also directly observed an additional singer, Nathan Orchard, the teenage son of a traveller couple, performing the song on two occasions, at the Volunteer Inn during the Sidmouth Festival in August 1995, and another public house during the Dartmoor Festival in August 1996. Nathan personalised the song by substituting the phrase Dit'sum lad/boy with Gypsy lad/boy. There were several indications that Ken Penney, George Withers and Maureen Tatlow's familiarity with the song, could also be attributed to Nathan.

The four selected archives contained nine versions of the "**Dark-Eyed Lover**" by eight singers. Only one performance, that of Vashti Edwards, a traveller in her sixties, recorded in a public house at Barnstaple Fair during September 1982, confirmed the song's status in the singer's active repertoire at that time, all other recordings being made at the singers' homes. Unfortunately, neither Mrs Hawkins, from Woodbury Salterton who performed an illegitimacy-related variant when she was in her sixties in June 1980; or Sheila Bricknell, who also performed a relevant version, when she was in her forties, in May 1981, commented on the status of the song within their repertoires. Just two of these singers, Amy Ford, of Low Ham, Somerset, and Charlotte Renals, of Bodmin, Cornwall, were recorded outside of Devon. Six, out of the eight singers of this song were female, whilst exactly half were known to be travellers. All singers were known to be between approximately forty and eighty years of age, at the time of recording.

Only one variant of "**Barnacle Bill**", performed by Wray Tucker, at a singing event in a public house in South Zeal, arose within the data, the context of this undated recording suggesting that the song was part of Wray's active repertoire at that time. No additional informants claimed to have performed the song, and only Maureen Tatlow thought she remembered a singer from North Devon, who had (III:030:I:97).¹⁰¹ Although I observed a live performance of "Barnacle Bill" at the end of a birthday celebration in an Exmoor pub, the couple who performed it were visiting from Yorkshire (Notebook 1. 65-69).

Wray's inclination to distance himself from this "army song" in the context of an interview, remarking "it's a bit smutty wasn't it?", tended to inhibit discussion of my chosen theme in relation to "Barnacle Bill". Wray immediately stressed that it was not the sort of song you could sing in a folk club, because of the discrepancy between pub culture, where "anything goes . . . [and] you expect a

¹⁰⁰ The song has since appeared on a commercial cassette of the folk band Rumpus (see Rumpus (tape)).

¹⁰¹ Maureen's daughter contradicted her mother, claiming they used to sing it on car journeys.

few smutty songs, a few rugby songs", and folk clubs, where "you can't sort of put them across" (III:020:96). He therefore strongly implied that performance venue has a profound effect upon the creation of meaning - songs like "Barnacle Bill" being easily misconstrued within the folk club environment.

Having witnessed performances of this song, Maureen Tatlow clearly regarded "Barnacle Bill" as crude, and lacking the subtlety of the "Cornish sense of humour", where sexual innuendo is implied, and "worked at" rather than being overtly stated. From a singer's point of view, she considered the words of the stanza beginning "bugger the mat . . . ", particularly objectionable, though she conceded, "I mean blokes yeah, blokes would want to sing that" (III:030:I:97).

Two versions of "**Down in the Valley**" emerged within the data as a whole. One variant was collected during a recording session with Stoke Damerel schoolgirls, in their early teens, in Plymouth, Devon; the other was recorded from "various young singers" in their twenties, in the Crwys Arms, Pennymoor, Devon, in 1983. No other versions were collected by myself as part of my fieldwork. Only with much embarrassment and giggling was a relatively unexpurgated version performed, almost as a dare, on this former occasion. Hence, the song's delivery confirmed its semi-taboo status in this context, as a bawdy, obscene item amongst the immediate social group.

The four selected archives were found to contain one variant of "**The Grenadier**", by Rebecca Penfold, an elderly traveller who was recorded at her home by Peter Kennedy during the 1970s, the fragmented nature of her text suggesting that the song was not in her active repertoire at this time. I collected an additional variant of "The Grenadier" during an interview with George Withers who still performed the song at the time of recording in July 1996. A third variant was collected by myself and Jacqueline Patten during an interview with Maureen Tatlow, in February 1997. Maureen associated the song with another Cornish singer, eighty-one year old Charlie Pitman. However, her faultless performance of his version tended to corroborate her assertion that the immediate social group (including herself) would usually join in (III:029:I:97).

Rebecca Penfold's rendition suggested that she conceptually linked "The Grenadier" with a variant of "Died For Love" in which the theme of unmarried pregnancy is made explicit in relation to the song's female protagonist.¹⁰² Hence, Rebecca seemed to be in little doubt as to the sexual nature of this

¹⁰²It is probably correct to assume that the suggestion of pregnancy has always operated at a sub-textual level, there being no evidence of censorship in any of Sharp's manuscripts.

affair, giving credence to Toelken's semiological suggestions regarding the thinly veiled innuendo surrounding the "fiddle" in this song, and its widespread erotic significance within the vernacular of folksong as a euphemism for male genitalia (Toelken 5-11; cf. "The Devil's in the Girl", Appendix II).

Rebecca's fragmented song version therefore suggested that both the sexual element of the song, and the result, in terms of an illegitimate pregnancy, might be an important part of this narrative's sub-textual meaning within other South West performances. When asked about this particular aspect of the song, George Withers knowingly commented:

Well, they don't tell you much except that he takes a fiddle out of his knap sack and plays it. But what that means, you're left [laughter] I just don't know whether you're supposed to put you own construction on to it, or what. But she's asking him to marry her. Whether there's a good reason for to, I just don't know. (III:024:I:96)

George clearly acknowledged the possibility that this had been a sexual affair, as part of the narrative's sub-textual meaning. However, the question as to whether pregnancy had resulted, and whether there was a direct causal link between the social undesirability attached to becoming a single parent, and the female protagonist's anxiety to propose marriage, was clearly left open to interpretation.

Maureen's description of "The Grenadier" in performance, tended to suggest that the song served an important function, almost as a kind of rite of passage, between different stages in the singing event itself:

Within the singing circle that we've always been in, Charlie always used to use it as a starting song. . . . Until they'd sung that one, then no matter what you'd sung before . . . , you could talk in between. But once you'd sung that one you didn't [laughter]. (III:029:I:97)

Maureen's assertion that "it wouldn't be sung as a serious song", suggested that the song's latent sexual innuendo would have been realised in performance. However, she did not explicitly state whether the fact of pregnancy might form part of this interpretation.

The four selected archives were found to contain two recordings of "**The Butcher**". Both variants were sung by Denis Hutchings, at his home in Torquay Devon in February and March of 1987, when he was in his fifties. No additional references to this song were contained with the SRFA database. During my fieldwork investigations I managed to establish that this song had been, and was still, in Denis's active repertoire at that time. Myself and Jacqueline Patten

also recorded an additional variant of this song from Maureen Tatlow in February 1997. Relatively few singers were familiar with this song; Ken Penny stating "I hear it quite often"; Dave Lowry recollecting a good friend who sings it; and Vic Legg asserting that the late Mervin Vincent used to sing it (III:002:95; III:023:96; III:026:II:96).

Though normally performed within the context of family gatherings, Denis Hutchings confirmed that his last public performance of "The Butcher" took place in the Crown and Sceptre, near Torquay, between 1990-91. Denis Hutchings claimed that "The Butcher" was always "very well received", and that "the last verse, of course, created quite a laugh at the end", thus confirming its status as a comic song (III:012:I:95).

Denis talked in some detail about his own interpretation, explaining how the butcher "went to London, with a fair amount of money to buy some cattle and he would have probably taken it in sovereigns" (III:012:I:95). Hence this male protagonist was clearly envisaged as an affluent, self-employed tradesman, with floating capital. Denis described how:

He would have gone up there a bit loaded. And the idea being footloose and fancy free, miles away from home appealed to him. And I would imagine that any chambermaid in those days, the idea of making a quick pound was a lot of money, wasn't it? (III:012:I:95)

The financial transactions between the butcher and the servant maid were therefore immediately seen as emphasising her respective financial disadvantage, the chambermaid being seen as an impoverished member of the working classes.

The above remark also confirms how Denis saw the experiences described within the song, as being firmly rooted in the unspecified historical past.¹⁰³ Denis repeatedly emphasised his belief in the factual basis of this song, stating "I can imagine it happening actually, I think that could have happened. It's not so unreal is it? I mean . . . pubs used to have wenches and if the right money was available they used to entertain the gentlemen". The lack of recourse to reliable contraception in the past was also used to authenticate Denis's belief that "there [wa]s loads of situations like this" and that "many a woman were left pregnant" (III:012:I:95).

¹⁰³ When questioned as to the song's historical context, Denis himself surmised that the history of the sovereign would determine the time at which the song was originally written.

Rather than viewing the central sexual encounter as indicating the female protagonist's involvement in casual prostitution, Denis instead saw the incident as a more opportunistic, one-off occurrence, considering that "the chambermaid was probably innocent and succumbs to the temptation of getting a quick pound, which was an awful lot of money wasn't it?" The butcher was also seen as grabbing both the sudden opportunity afforded by his disposable income and of being removed from the customary context of his home: "I can see his mind working the same way as most young men's minds would work if they were leaving an area and going into bustling city where there was loads of girls" (III:012:I:95; cf. Renwick).

Denis admitted that he was confused by certain elements of the song. For instance, he did not know how to interpret the lines:

He called for his acquaintance,
But all he left unpaid

in the second stanza, not automatically assuming, like myself, that this was a reference to the absent landlord (III:012:I:95). He was also bewildered by the butcher's comment in the fourth stanza,

Oh no the butcher did reply,
Pray do not think it strange,
One sovereign I gave your maid,
But I did not get the change. (III:012:I:95)

Clearly, he did not perceive this as being a deliberately strategy used by the butcher in order to defraud the absent chambermaid of her sovereign. Yet I assumed that this original payment for sexual favours must now be surrendered to the landlord in lieu of his outstanding rent, the butcher exploiting the covert nature of his original bargain with the chambermaid to regain some of his capital. Denis's differing interpretation of what I had regarded as the central act of trickery, must inevitably have rebounded upon his overall understanding of the song. This is because the ability to fully appreciate the metaphor in the final stanza, whereby the child is handed to the butcher as "the change", depends on the associations engendered by the intricate layers of plot.

Denis initially proposed that the butcher "did not expect to see that young girl again. He thought twelve months later she probably wouldn't be there", and that he therefore "probably thought he wasn't going to get caught out" (III:012:I:95). Equally, he considered that this fifth stanza might be seen as hinting that the presumptuous butcher again anticipated a sexual dalliance with the same chambermaid. However, "instead of that, he got the shock" (III:012:I:95). By

contrast, the chambermaid was seen as being empowered by the butcher's unexpected reappearance, "she probably thought she'd seen the last of the butcher, not dreaming that he would be coming back in twelve months time, and seizing the opportunity to present to him what he [had] left her with" (Ill:012:I:95). Hence the ironic humour of these final stanzas was clearly at the butcher's expense.

Denis clearly inferred from the final stanza that the child was an unwelcome encumbrance to its father who "gets lumbered with a child", claiming "he was enraged by it, wasn't he? 'How did he stamp and swear' " (Ill:012:I:95). Envisaging the butcher to be a single man, Denis asserted "He's now confronted with the situation that he either marries the girl who's father [mothered] his child or he pays" (Ill:012:I:95). Denis's interpretation therefore implies that illegitimacy is somewhat stigmatised within the world of the song, the existence of a child now resulting in pressure on the butcher to marry the chambermaid, or to offer "compensation" in the form of money. Either way, he would presumably stand at a financial loss, his opportunism being punished in kind.

Maureen Tatlow also confirmed that [“]The Butcher[”] was a part of her active repertoire, stating that she learnt it in the 1960s, probably from Cyril Tawney. The response of her audience seems to have been remarkably similar, the "punch line" of the song, being the sixth stanza:

You'll find when you're singing it, that everybody laughs at the bit where she plonks the baby on his knee and says in here "I've brought your change". And I can see how the last verse will get lost because you then get sort of drowned out with the hilarity of course with that part of the song. (Ill:029:I:97)

Maureen added "It was a bit risqué. I mean, you [!] have to say as a lady singer if you can get away with something that's a bit risqué then you do it. You don't mess with it, you have a crack at it and see how it goes" (Ill:029:I:97). When further questioned about the song's risqué humour, Maureen's explanation suggested that part of the difficulty with "putting a bit of feeling into it" drawing upon certain facets of "self", was the risk of becoming too closely identified with the figure of the implicitly sexually available chambermaid (Ill:029:I:97). She considered that through portraying a "free and easy relationship . . . in the spirit the song", the singer could personally give the impression of being "free and easy", particularly as she later added that with this kind of song where "nothing is said outright", that "nothing is explicit but what the singer puts into it" (Ill:029:I:97).

Similarly to Denis, Maureen also regarded the woman as eventually being in an empowered position, with "success to the woman in the end. I mean she got her own back on him. But I wouldn't say that I learnt it with any of that in mind, I mean I learnt it because there was a laugh in there and because the tune jumps along nicely" (III:029:I:97).

Betsy Renals, the only South West singer of "**A-Rushing**", was recorded at her home, in Bodmin, during the late 1970s, when she was estimated to be in her sixties or seventies (SRFA database). In the absence of contextual information, I asked Vic Legg, about the status of this song within his aunt's repertoire. Vic confirmed "It's not one she sang, at all often. I know that 'cause I was quite astounded to hear it myself", the time of recording being the only occasion witnessed by Vic (III:020:I:96). When asked whether there was any particular reason why Betsy appeared to exclude the song from her active repertoire, Vic suggested "probably she wasn't asked it. They wanted to sing other songs, you see. They usually sing what people ask them for . . . that's how travelling people would go" (III:025:I:96). No other singers recorded within the SRFA mentioned ever having heard the song, or recollecting anyone who did; my own observations and those of Charlie Hill relating to performances by Peta Webb, a visiting singer from London (III:005:I:95, notebook 2, 59). Maureen Tatlow was the only other singer who recognised "A-Rushing", being familiar as a "revival song", though not prevalent in her locality.

My selected archives were found to contain four tape-recorded variants of "**Thrashing Machine**", by four different male singers from Devon and Somerset, none of whom were known to be travellers. Only in one of these instances did the performance context confirm that this song was in active circulation during the period under consideration, Jim White's version, which directly incorporates the theme of illegitimacy, being recorded as part of a singing session at a public house in Parracombe, Devon, in December 1982. During my fieldwork interviews I was able to establish that Joe Davis, who was recorded at his home, in Bratton Fleming in December 1975, was also actively performing his non-illegitimacy related version, in public houses, during the period under consideration.

During my fieldwork investigations, I collected variants of "Thrashing Machine" from three additional singers, Charlie Hill, Denis Hutchings and Maureen Tatlow. Denis, who was recorded at his home in October 1995, clearly stated that the song was in his active repertoire at the time of recording (III:008:II:95).

Though the singer Margaret Palmer has never actually included "Thrashing Machine" within her active repertoire, she was one of the few singers to elaborate the use of the illegitimacy theme in performance. Talking about Brendon Pony Sale, during our second interview, she mentioned a party in October 1994, when she directly participated in a farcical performance of the song:

Jim Saunders goes up, walks round the ring afterwards and us went as pregnant women with balloons up their jumpers and he sang " I 'ad 'er I 'ad 'er I 'ad 'er I ay" [laughter]. All these pregnant women round the ring [laughter]. (Ill:009:95)

On this particular occasion, it is clear that an essential part of the song's comic, bawdy, element derived from the theme of out-of-wedlock pregnancy within the narrative. In fact, the particular performance described, might be seen as having much in common with practical jokes. Comparing the respective philosophies of Bergson and Freud in relation to the joke, Mary Douglas comments:

For both the essence of the joke is that something formal is attacked by something informal, something organised and controlled, by something vital, energetic, an upsurge of life for Bergson, of libido for Freud. The common denominator underlying both approaches is the joke seen as an attack on control. ("Jokes" 95)

Douglas further explains "what is crucial is that one accepted pattern is confronted by something else" (95). One of the "accepted patterns" subverted in this particular instance, appears to have been the identities of the participants. It is probable that many of those with balloons up their jumpers were, like Margaret, known to be married women, now past their child-bearing years, with no illegitimate children. The "accepted pattern" of morality was also challenged, because women such as Margaret, who were known to have had legitimate children by their husbands, were now seen as becoming illegitimately pregnant by the same man. Hence, the fact that, by the very nature of its absurdity, this performance was recognised as having a "subversive effect on the dominant structure of ideas" directly alludes to the essentially conservative values, and negative definition of illegitimacy amongst the immediate social group itself (Douglas 95).

The question as to whether the type of performance Margaret describes should therefore be seen as having a conservative, or radical purpose, in terms of attitudes towards illegitimacy at large, becomes a more complicated issue. Maureen Douglas's suggestion that:

The joke merely affords opportunity for realising that an accepted pattern has no necessity. Its excitement lies in the suggestion that any particular ordering of experience may be arbitrary and subjective. It is frivolous in that it produces no real alternative, only an exhilarating sense of freedom from form in general (96)

tends to suggest that whilst exposing the arbitrary nature of the legitimacy/illegitimacy distinction as a product of particular types of sexual relationship, such performances could be seen as essentially conservative because they propose no alternative paradigm to that which they subvert.

"Thrashing Machine" did not appeal to either Ken Penney or Dave Lowry as singers. Whilst Ken remarked "well again it's pretty sexist", Dave similarly identified this narrative as "a male chauvinist song", which always "got a laugh" but required very little skill from the singer (III:002:95; III:013:95).

When asked about the performance context of this seemingly "male" song, Denis commented, "This hotel where I play they, they have got it, 'cause I introduced it. . . . They hand out the copies and everybody sings it, the women and all" (III:008:11:95). He added "They all sing it together and they love it". Hence, Denis's description suggests that the song was seen as a bawdy piece of enjoyment by his audience, who were implicitly tourists to the area. His comment "the minute that they start singing 'I ups and I showed her the way' they start the wom[en]...you can just imagine these old ladies can't you I mean, "I ups and I show her ho ho ho", suggests that the song's graphical sexual humour, the main source of amusement, seems to have been appreciated by all (III:008:11:95).

Maureen Tatlow also gave a fairly similar account of performances of this song, which she remembered as having a similar ending to Jim White's version. She remarked:

They would sing 'I 'ad 'er I 'ad 'er I 'ay' with great enthusiasm because that was sort of rude. But I mean for the rest of the verses it told the story. Basically as long as it had sort of the words that told the story in I don't think there was much fuss They was more interested in the chorus. (III:030:1:97)

Hence, she implied that the song's main attraction was its bawdy chorus, the theme of illegitimacy being a secondary concern.

Conclusion

The above examination of my chosen corpus of songs in performance confirms that whilst certain items have been dwindling in popularity since 1970, others, most noticeably those with an overtly sexual nature, persisted as a living tradition. In fact, several singers had deliberately made the effort to learn illegitimacy-related songs during the period under consideration, for a variety of different reasons.

In many instances the theme of illegitimacy has played a vital role in the creation of the songs' connotative and denotative meanings by singers and audiences since 1970. These findings therefore confirm that in many cases a dialectical relationship exists between reality and representation, in terms of the experience of, and attitudes towards illegitimacy described within the song texts, and those same experiences and attitudes existing within the living memories or experiences of the singers and audiences performing or listening to those songs since 1970.

The subversive humour derived from many performances points to the essentially conservative nature of attitudes towards illegitimacy amongst those by whom the songs are perpetuated. Interviews with singers also suggested that the notion of "truth" has been a particularly important part of interpretation, there being a high incidence of songs which are regarded as an accurate representation of the experience of illegitimacy in the recent or distant past, either in terms of depicting events which are actually believed to have happened, or in terms of the belief in their accurate portrayal of the feelings and emotions in relation to the protagonists they describe.

CHAPTER 7

FOLK NARRATIVE RELATING TO THE THEME OF ILLEGITIMACY IN THE SOUTH WEST OF ENGLAND

The purpose of the following chapter is to examine attitudes towards out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth within prose narrative genres in the South West of England. The following analysis posed a specific set of problems which were distinct from those encountered when examining song. These related either to the way in which the material had been recorded, or to the nature of the material itself. Because the research towards this thesis began with the song-orientated SRFA, practically all relevant folksongs relating to the period 1970-present day derived from audio-taped field recordings of song performances, whereas only some of the following prose narratives were recorded in this way. Hence, given the main sources of data, it was not possible to conduct the same broad-based comparison of oral variants as with song. It was also necessary to set out each narrative in greater detail, as texts of prose narratives relating to the theme of illegitimacy, particularly those within sub-genres such as local legends, are not made so accessible in published sources.

Many of the following narratives were documented in different forms, such as tape recordings, guide books, and scholarly research. The diversity of source material in this respect created the greater need for interpretation and therefore comparisons between narratives were more complicated than those between folksongs all directly deriving from field recorded material. The nature of these narratives themselves also necessitated a rather different kind of treatment, as narratives were sometimes of a protracted nature and often required unravelling. As there was a more considerable difference between narrative variants than there was between song variants, the narratives necessitated a different kind of discussion.

The following section focuses upon three different sub-genres: **supernatural narratives**, **local legends**, and **local character anecdotes**. Other types of tale relating to this theme, for example personal narratives, such as those used in Chapter 5, or even life stories, could have been included in this Chapter but were excluded because of the size limitations of this thesis. The use of other types of material was therefore confined to comparative purposes in the following discussion. Apart from the criterion already stated in Chapter 1, Introduction, the main criteria for choosing the narratives examined in this

chapter were as follows: if the theme of out-of-wedlock pregnancy or illegitimate birth arose in one or more variant, as with song (cf. Chapter 6). In cases where the theme emerged in only one variant, texts of all variants still were considered.

SUPERNATURAL LEGENDS AND MEMORATES

Narratives documented in written sources suggest that the theme of illegitimacy has had an enduring popularity in the form of supernatural legends and memorates circulated in the South West of England (see Appendix IV). These continued to be recorded during the twentieth century. The following example, relating to the seventeenth century squire, John Bluett, of Holcombe Rogus in Devon, is worth quoting in full as it makes an interesting comparison with more recently collected narratives considered below.

John [Bluett] apparently fell in love with a local girl (Waterslade has been mentioned as her home) and the story followed the usual lines. The rich heiress appeared, and when John (if John it was) went to his wedding, he left the unwanted one shut up, with her little girl in one of the tower rooms, hoping they would starve. But the poor creatures' cries were heard; she let down some vessel on a string, and the pitying servants fed them. But the villain returned unexpectedly and put a stop to all this. Mother and child died. The sequel, 200 years later, is said to be thus:- when the Bluetts finally sold Holcombe to the Rayers, the new family used to be disturbed by the faint crying of a child which much distressed them. The house was then being thoroughly restored, including the porch. Under the pavement was found the skeleton of a young woman and a little girl. They were buried in the churchyard, and the crying child was never heard again. (Mansfield 53-54)

For the purpose of this thesis, supernatural tales were distinguished from other types of narrative, such as local legends, local character anecdotes and personal narratives, in which the theme of illegitimacy also occurs.

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the inevitable degree of overlap between categories of material, particularly that between the supernatural narratives which follow and the local legends which are discussed in a later section of this chapter. Some, but not all of the supernatural narratives outlined below, could, for example, be seen as local legends, according to the definition applied by Simpson in her study of this particular sub-genre ("The Local" 25). Certain types of local legend could conversely, be viewed as "supernatural" narratives, because particular variants include supernatural components, such as apparitions of the dead (e.g. "Jay's Grave").

The narratives examined in this section were distinguished from other types of material firstly on the basis that the supernatural component of the narrative occupied a central position, rather than a supporting role, in the majority of available variants. Secondly, in all cases, the supernatural element had to be a consistent feature of all, rather than only some, variants of the narrative.

In most instances, the process of identifying variants of the same supernatural narrative was straightforward. However, in terms of the material relating to the Dartington Estate, the status of a given narrative could be much more ambiguous, reports of several different types of supernatural experience or apparition being attached to this site. The narrative directly relating to the theme of illegitimacy was taken as a starting point. Additional variants were then distinguished on the basis of shared characteristics with this narrative. Hence other narratives were only considered as related variants if they also described a supernatural experience relating to the church tower or an isolated female apparition who is associated with the church yard or tower within the narrative itself.

The following section considers all supernatural narratives relating to the theme of illegitimacy, from both archival and published sources. Although it discriminates between narratives depending on whether they are, for example, documented within a popular guide book aimed at a wide audience, or derive from archival recordings, generated for the purposes of academic research, an eclectic approach was necessary for a number of reasons.

As Gillian Bennett rightly observes, there has been a lack of serious research in relation to supernatural narratives. This is partly because, ever since the nineteenth century, scholars have tended to rely upon "armchair scholarship", continually re-publishing material from existing collections. This has served as a disincentive for individuals either to publish new material or more recently collected "unofficial" versions of narratives already "fixed" in print (Bennett, Traditions 201-03).¹⁰⁴ The resulting lack of recently recorded supernatural narratives which might be consulted has placed constraints upon the available data, as the scholar Larry Danielson observes:

The ethnography of speaking and the detailed description of the folkloric event constitute but a small portion of the data available to us for analysis. In many cases, because of the halting development in folklore scholarship of data collection and presentation, we must rely on

¹⁰⁴Bennett adds, "thanks to this continual borrowing, there grew up a received body of tales, which by 1920 was accepted as "the' folklore of ghosts" (Traditions 201).

compacted story texts extracted from oral performance and resynthesized in print. (Danielson 131)

This lack of archival recording and accurate transcriptions of supernatural narrative in part created the need to be as inclusive as possible of the available source material in this section. Popular guide books and books on supernatural folklore, most of which were published since the 1970s, presented an attractive additional resource, because they tended to record, albeit imprecisely, oral versions of supernatural narratives circulated between approximately 1970 - present day.

There was also another good reason for examining versions of supernatural narratives provided by these popular sources. As Danielson discovered in relation to his own study of the Vanishing Hitchhiker legend (E332.3.3.1), these popular printed sources, whilst deriving from and being shaped by the oral tradition, also tend, through their widespread influence, to feed back into the oral tradition itself.

The Narratives

This first supernatural narrative was recounted by Sarah Herbert, from Totnes in South Devon. Sarah was formerly an art student at Dartington College of Arts to which the story relates and was in her twenties in 1988 when she was recorded at her home by Sam Richards. The events described in the following account, which was given as part of an interview concerning "unexplained happenings", relate approximately to a period between 1970-1974:

There is one ghost story that I heard about Dartington, about the old church tower in the grounds. Well, it's sort of a ghost story. It doesn't necessarily actually involve any ghosts, although that tower is said to have been haunted. A friend of mine, who was at college at that time, had an older sister who had also been at college in Dartington eight years previously. The old church tower had not been kept locked as it is now and people used to go up there sometimes. And because of all the rumours about it being haunted, of course, sooner or later somebody dared somebody else to stay up there for the night. They made a bet with this girl that she couldn't stay up there all night, that she wouldn't stick it out on her own, and she said she would. So she went up to the tower, went up to the top of the tower, with her sleeping bag and her flask of tea. And apparently next morning she was brought down stark raving mad and has been locked away in a psychiatric hospital ever since. So yes, whether it's her own mind, or something actually in the building, I don't know. (SRFA cassette 11)

When asked by Sam Richards to clarify her relationship with the protagonist, Sarah reiterated, "I know the sister of the person who went mad, I don't know

the person who went mad". Remarking, once again, "but it might just have been stuff going around inside her own mind", Sarah then moved straight into her second supernatural narrative:

I know somebody who, who lived at Dartington who was actually a housekeeper's son, they lived in The Barton and he saw a white figure float off the top of the tower one night and you know the story is that a maid in the big house got pregnant and killed herself by throwing herself off the tower.

[Sam] And is this the white lady or the grey lady or ?

[Sarah] Well there's several white ladies or grey ladies.

(SRFA cassette 11)

Several other sources allude to the existence of a ghostly figure associated with the church tower. In the folklore section of the Devonshire Association Report and Transactions of 1975 a Miss Shirley Heslop says of this grey lady "in 1970 a member of an extra-mural class at South Molton spoke of this alleged being. She said that the lady had thrown herself off the old church tower, and a tree grows on the spot. This tree, however, is said to be quite young" (Brown, "72nd report" 192).

Shirley Heslop, stating "here is another reference to this belief", recounts the following memorate:

Some few years ago two friends and I were driving home after having been to the theatre at Dartington Hall. It was dark, but the dark of a summer evening, and as we drove slowly up the road we could see a group of young people in bright colours on the left of the road in front of us. The driver slowed to walking pace and I was just about to remark on a solitary figure on the right side when the driver almost stopped. The young people carried on but the woman in grey started to cross the road in front of the car, becoming clearly visible in the headlights. And then - quite suddenly - she wasn't there! There was a moment's silence, and then the driver said in a rather strained voice, "She just disappeared - we must have seen as ghost". In an equally strained voice I agreed with her. We were silent all the way home, especially as the third occupant of the car had seen nothing unusual. When after some weeks I talked about the episode and mentioned that the ghost was crossing the road in the direction of the old churchyard I was told that we had seen "The Grey Lady" or "The Grey Nun" of Dartington. The grey figure might well have been wearing a nun's habit, or she may have been in mediaeval dress.¹⁰⁵ (192)

An unpublished paper in the Dartington Archive, which provides a set of brief anonymous accounts of different hauntings on the Dartington estate, includes the following remark: "The ghost of a grey lady or nun was seen in the road by the church tower before it suddenly disappeared" (Gould 1991). A similarly

¹⁰⁵ Theo Brown re-tells this story in brief in Devon Ghosts 35.

ghostly figure associated with the church tower, is referred to by Mann, in his publication The Ghosts of Totnes (1993):

For over three centuries the estate was the home of one family and naturally, with the generations living and dying at the rambling hall and its environs, a number of traditional ghost stories came to be told. All the ghosts were very conventional. . . a Grey Lady seen in the vicinity of the old church tower who possibly haunted the spot because she had thrown herself from it. (29)

He further adds, "the Grey lady is well known, or at least talked about, in the area of the great Hall, and drivers on their way home from plays and concerts have swerved to avoid a shadowy figure who may or may not be she" (29). However, clearly both narratives might derive largely from the earlier account of Shirley Heslop.

The second supernatural narrative is supplied by Sally and Chips Barber, in their book The Ghosts of Exeter (1990). It relates to a building called Halden House, which has since been renamed the Lord Halden Hotel. Chips Barber informed me that the narrative was sent to him by the former owner, a Mrs Martin, who had written to him some years previously.

A middle aged woman, in the late 1980s, saw a servant girl, dressed in eighteenth century clothing, appear before her all dripping wet and extremely upset. It is believed that she was murdered in a lake that once existed in the grounds of the house. It is assumed, and generally believed, that she became pregnant by some one way above her in social standing and was murdered to avoid any scandal (Barber 19)

Analysis

Because most of the above supernatural narratives relating to the theme of illegitimate pregnancy tend to be recorded in writing, often being printed in popular publications tailored to a wide audience, it is essential to acknowledge their limited ability to provide a holistic representation of what Georges would term the "storytelling event" itself (317). If it had been possible to examine the narratives as they were told in their performance contexts, this might have led to a rather different explication of their meanings, and have afforded a different insight into the narratives themselves as evidence of attitudes towards out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth. For this reason, parts of the following discussion have to remain fairly speculative, though where possible account is also taken of the meanings generated by the narratives, as they were told in their performance context. A textual analysis of each of the supernatural narratives presented above is conducted in the first part of this section.

Of the supernatural narratives associated with the Grey Lady of Dartington Hall, the memorate provided by Sarah Herbert is the only narrative which explicitly creates a link between this particular haunting and the theme of illegitimate pregnancy.¹⁰⁶ The similarity between the suicide story provided in this narrative, and Shirley Heslop's account, does suggest, however, that this narrative may belong to a particular strand of Grey Lady variants where the haunting by an ambiguously described female figure who threw herself off the church tower is the most consistent feature (cf. Bryanston House, Dorset, in Palmer, Qral 139). The theme of illegitimacy has therefore to be seen as one of the less stable components of the narrative.

The marginalisation of this theme may in part be explained by developments in the genre of supernatural narrative itself. For reasons intricately discussed in Bennett's study of "traditions of belief", the ghost narrative underwent some important changes during the nineteenth century (Traditions). She observes,

Most significantly, in the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century writings, ghosts became more silent and passive than they had been earlier. If they had a purpose, it was seldom stated outright. They observed a Trappist code of conduct. It was the percipient's task to interpret their appearance, and the ghosts themselves did little or nothing to aid that interpretation. Ghosts might "appear" but they seldom either "did" or "said" anything at all. (Traditions 183)

Because of the need for interpretation, a particular haunting might be accompanied by several different kinds of explanation, thereby generating a number of different narrative variants. Clearly, there would be less scope for this to happen where the ghost, speaking for itself, stated its purpose and the reason for its return within the narrative.

When, to borrow Bennett's expression, ghost narratives became "literary-fied", mainly in printed collections of regional folklore and legends from 1840 onwards, this eventually led to two main developments. Firstly, "one curious result of the 'literafying' of oral legends of the supernatural was the reinstatement of the purposeful ghost, and the institutionalization of the connection between apparitions and unnatural deaths or wicked lives" (Traditions 197). As Bennett observes, this "is so set now in our mental habit that it seems strange to reflect that this apparently necessary connection did not exist in medieval thought nor in the writings of the sixteenth century" (Traditions 197). Secondly, the assumption that ghosts were the apparitions of the dead

¹⁰⁶It is possible, however, that the theme of illegitimacy may be an implicit part of some of the other narratives.

became firmly ingrained. Yet, as Bennett points out, prior to the seventeenth century

though apparitions might be of people who had lived or died violently, they *might* just as easily be of people who had led blameless lives and died quietly in their own beds. Indeed, apparitions were not even necessarily of *dead* men at all: they might just as easily be wraiths of the living. (Traditions 198)

The Grey Lady of Dartington is therefore a classic example of this kind of silent, "purposeless" ghost who, when rationalised according to twentieth-century belief systems, themselves deriving from nineteenth-century literary tradition, is endowed with a particular kind of identity. Thus, she is assumed both to be the apparition of one who is dead and also to have met with an unnatural death, being depicted as a suicide. Viewed within this framework, the Herbert memorate has to be seen as one of a body of narratives which provide a rationale for this apparition, by equipping her with a suitably "unnatural" death, the theme of illegitimacy being used to further elaborate the motive behind this basic suicide (cf. Bryanston House, Palmer, Oral Folk-tales 139).

That the Herbert memorate is the only Dartington Hall story which refers to the theme of illegitimate pregnancy, may also reflect the lack of serious research undertaken in relation to this particular strand of supernatural narratives. As one contributor to Dartington College of Arts annual newsletter rightly observed, "references have been made periodically to the Grey Lady at regular intervals over the past 40 years, but there seems never to have been any attempt to record or analyse her appearances" (Spotlight 1966).

Both the subject matter and stylistic features of Sarah Herbert's narrative confirm its status as a supernatural legend. The narrative fulfils all of the criteria outlined by Simpson in her attempt to define local legend, particularly as it reflects the "beliefs, moral judgements and everyday preoccupations of the social group" ("The Local" 25). Characteristic of this sub-genre, the Herbert memorate is told in brief and recounted in the manner of conversational speech.

Unlike some of the oral variants of the legend of "Jay's Grave", this narrative does not allude to attitudes by making a direct statement about the social mores which prevail within the world of the narrative. Instead, Sarah Herbert's memorate conveys a sense of the attitudes through the experiences and actions of its central protagonist. This technique leads to an even greater dependence upon the shared understandings and assumptions of the storyteller and the listener in terms of the interpretation of the tale. This is because, as

Georges observes, the process of recounting any narrative requires that the storyteller "formulate, encode, and transmit a message" and that the listener(s), (in this case the interviewer) "receive, decode, and respond to that message", both "in accordance with socially prescribed rules with which he and the other participants in the storytelling event are familiar" (318).

Sarah Herbert's memorate is constructed in a very particular order. The narrative begins by describing the sighting, by the housekeeper's son, of the apparition floating from the top of the tower. A loosely constructed narrative is therefore laid down through the actions of the ghost itself. By going straight into the story of the servant-maid the juxtaposition of narratives creates a link between the identity of the apparition and the woman it then describes. The female protagonist is immediately introduced as "a maid in the big house". This short description succinctly conveys quite a detailed impression in terms of this woman's likely social identity as a comparatively young, unmarried, working-class woman employed by a wealthy rural household. "Maid", though sometimes used as a dialect term for young unmarried women, is clearly used here as an occupational label, thereby identifying this woman (and thus the apparition) as an indoor domestic servant. Meanwhile, in the context of this recording, her association with "the big house" suggests that she worked in Dartington Hall itself, as part of a large, hierarchical, rather than single-servant establishment (cf. "The Butcher").

The events which the narrative describes - that the woman becomes pregnant and then kills herself by jumping off the tower - are ordered in such a way as to establish a causal link between the two occurrences, whilst reinforcing the narrative's connection with the original haunting. Unlike other illegitimacy narratives, there is no intervening reference to the relationship between the servant-maid and her lover. Consequently, it would be difficult to attribute the woman's suicide, even in part, to a broken relationship on the basis of stated text alone. As the narrative does not provide any other reason for the suicide, such as extreme poverty or excessively cruel treatment, the pregnant maid's suicide cannot be seen as incidental. Consequently, an explanation has to be sought with recourse to the shared cultural assumptions of the storyteller and listener regarding suicide and pregnancy.

The listener has several choices in terms of providing a sub-text to the narrative. They might, on the one hand, draw upon their own **life experience and their knowledge of social history**, perhaps from oral testimonies such as those included in Chapter 5. Consequently, with an awareness of the enduring

stigma attached to illegitimacy, until even quite recent years, they might interpret the servant-maid's suicide as an objective correlative for her sense of psychological pain, or more literally as a desperate attempt to avoid the effects of shame and social punishment. Consequently, the memorate would be seen as highlighting the harsh attitudes towards women who became pregnant outside of wedlock in previous generations, by using the extreme example of a servant who would rather take her own life than face the shame of having an illegitimate child.

On the other hand, in trying to rationalise the servant-maid's suicide the listener might create their own sub-text drawing upon **existing narrative conventions relating to illegitimacy** (see Chapter 6). Whilst such conventions tend to be based in part on historical fact, they tend to exaggerate particular aspects of social history for a dramatic purpose (see Cookson, Our Kate 16-19, cf. Katie Mulholland). Illegitimacy narratives, particularly those surrounding the female domestic servants of the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, are well established in the popular novel for example (see Howatch; Taylor Bradford; Cookson Katie, Feathers) and are also favoured in the writings of popular folklorists (e.g. Holt, "Emborough Pond", Folklore of 25-30). In such instances, the theme of illegitimacy is commonly fused with a number of other themes, such as seduction by a social superior, class exploitation and the double standard (cf. Thomas Hardy Tess). Such narratives, tend in particular to emphasise the gravest repercussions of pregnancy for female domestics, like the Dartington servant, who constantly lived under the scrutiny of their employer (cf. Chapter 5). Such narrative conventions have also served as inspiration for a number of popular television dramas (e.g. A Woman of Substance). These in turn have propagated accepted "truths" about the social history of illegitimacy, for example, that servant girls were commonly seduced by their employers.

A sub-text might also be brought to this supernatural narrative using **established narrative conventions relating specifically to the figure of the female suicide** (previously outlined in Chapter 5). Accordingly, it might be assumed that the Dartington servant killed herself rather than face the shame of having been abandoned pregnant, perhaps having been seduced by a social superior.

Finally, in rationalising the servant-maid's suicide, the listener might also create a sub-text drawing upon **conventions established within the "literarified" supernatural narrative**. Thus an unexplained haunting by a young female ghost, might be attributed to her suffering because of an illegitimate pregnancy

in life (cf. Susan Hill). This process can be clearly discerned in James Turner's Ghosts of the South West (1973), in relation to the seventeenth-century ghost story of Dorothy Dingley (see also Hole, Haunted 35-37; Underwood Ghosts of Cornwall 15-17). Turner "borrows" and retells this Cornish narrative from existing accounts, but strays outside the given text and makes a sweeping suggestion in interpreting the tale from a late twentieth-century perspective. Turner speculates that Dorothy Dingley may have died in childbirth, the elder Bligh son being the father of her illegitimate child. Consequently, the Bligh parents' anxiety that Ruddle should meet with Dingley's ghost in the field is interpreted accordingly:

if indeed, Dorothy's "crime" had been to have an illegitimate child by the old man's elder son and to have it put away or murdered it (which was not unknown at the time), they might well have been afraid, not only for their younger son, now so obviously under the influence of a "bad woman", but for themselves. (64-65)

However, Turner's source makes clear that the ghost remained speechless until John Ruddle, the Vicar of Launceston, attempted to exorcise it by hearing it confess its "sin". As it swore him to secrecy, Dorothy Dingley's "crime" was never known (60). Having little basis in earlier texts, Turner's assertions seem, rather, to derive from an existing narrative convention relating to this particular kind of ghost.

Narratives such as that of the Dartington servant-maid above, might therefore be subject to a process of inter-textuality in terms of the creation of their meanings. The question of how the narrative evidences attitudes towards illegitimacy therefore becomes more complex. Firstly, the extent to which the narrative is seen as evidence for the extreme stigma attached to illegitimate birth in the past surely depends on the extent to which the out-of-wedlock pregnancy is seen as a motivation for suicide. The presence or absence of this causal link in turn depends upon the type of sub-text formulated by the listener in their decoding of the legend's message (Georges 318). If, for example, it were assumed that the pregnancy has resulted from sexual exploitation, the suicide might be perceived more as a response to personal misery and mistreatment than as an attempt to avoid the shame of illegitimate birth. Rather than revealing attitudes towards illegitimacy, the memorate might instead be regarded as articulating class hostilities. Secondly, if both the legend teller and listener self-consciously realise that they are either delivering, or receiving a legend according to a narrative convention, they may be more sceptical about the narrative's relationship with the past.

The Herbert narrative creates a circular relationship between the belief and its accompanying legend, which perform a mutually reinforcing function. As previously mentioned, the story of the pregnant servant-maid's suicide tends, on the one hand, to provide a suitable rationale for the apparition according to twentieth-century ghost traditions. By implication, the story also provides an explanation for the "unexplained happening" in the church tower as described in the previous memorate. On the other hand, both the unexplained happening and the sighting of the apparition also seem to vouch for the authenticity of the legend of the servant-maid. Documenting the rise of the Romantic ghost, between 1840-1920, Gillian Bennett says that such apparitions, who look like humans but seem to have no role to play in the human world

are assumed to have had a malice so intense that it cannot die, or they are assumed to have had a death so cruel that death itself cannot die and goes on being re-enacted somehow. The after-death hauntings are mirror-images of the pre-death emotions. So wicked men "come again very badly" in deliberately horrific forms . . . and the victim-ghosts endlessly try to enlist the support of the living to avenge their misery (200).

Accordingly, the apparition of the servant-maid falling to her death could be seen as reinforcing the legend by bearing the emotional imprint of the servant's desolation and suffering. The earlier memorate, regarding the student who went mad after spending a night in the tower, could also be seen in the same light, with the same "emotional imprint of despair" manifesting itself in a different form (Brown, Devon 92).

In these ways, the legend itself illustrates received ideas about attitudes towards illegitimacy by showing the kinds of predicament which might be regarded as a reasonable incentive for suicide. Thus it supports the idea that unmarried mothers were severely persecuted in the past. However, both the haunting and the "unexplained happening" also serve as evidence of received ideas about harsh attitudes towards illegitimacy. This is because they illustrate the kind of predicament which might be believed to have been so severe and emotionally disturbing as to leave either a haunting, or some other "emotional imprint" in its path.

In this respect, the function of the haunting within the narrative might well be compared to that of the ghostly daughter at Berry Pomeroy Castle (see Appendix iv). Evidence suggests that this narrative is perpetuated largely through the popular literary tradition. However, the implied or stated rationale for the appearance of this apparition is similar to the above (cf. S.M.Ellis 2; Underwood, Gazetteer 24-26; Green 58-59; Seymour 11, 100). Once again, the

haunting is interpreted as a kind of "emotional imprint", with the sense of severe emotional disturbance surrounding this illegitimate pregnancy being amplified by the fact that the child is incestuously begotten by the woman's father. Hence, implicit in the resulting act of infanticide is the woman's psychological need to obliterate her own sense of horror, "contamination" and guilt. In exploring the cross-over between two kinds of social taboo, the narrative evidences received ideas about the stigma associated with illegitimacy and incest specifically amongst upper class families in the past. However, by portraying this predicament as so disturbing as to have left a haunting in its wake, the narrative both vouches for the stigma associated with illegitimacy and incest in living memory during the period in which the narratives are circulated and perpetrates it in contemporary retellings.

The opportunity to examine each of the above texts in performance and to interview their tellers would have provided a greater insight into the meaning of the narratives for different narrators. However, the Herbert memorate was the only text which could truly be analysed as a performance. In doing so, it is hoped that the narrative itself would provide clues as to whether the circumstances and attitudes described were believed, at least in part, to be true. Consequently, an insight might be gained into attitudes believed to be true of the past, and perhaps therefore, attitudes still pervading in the present.

It is immediately apparent that the story of the Dartington servant-maid is prefaced by the supernatural memorate relating to the student and the church tower. The ordering of the narratives in this fashion is an important part of how we receive the second story. Significantly, there are several indications that this first memorate is "told as true", according to the criteria outlined by Bennett in relation to contemporary legend. Similarly to one of Bennett's "believe me" informants, Sarah Herbert uses what Bennett describes as "personalizing ploys which attach the episode closely to her own life" ("Legend" 16). For example, Sarah says that she heard this supernatural narrative from the girl's younger sister, a fellow student at Dartington College. Thus, by personalising this relationship, Sarah not only challenges audience scepticism but also strongly links the narrative with her own experience as a student at the same establishment eight years later (Bennett, "Legend" 16). As Bennett suggests, such "ploys . . . strongly signal 'believe me', for by making these claims and observations and attaching them so closely to their own experience, speakers are laying their reputation on the line" (Bennett, "Legend" 16).

The Herbert memorate also harbours other "believe me" traits. It is extremely specific, for instance, in terms of both time - "eight years previously" - and place - the "old church tower" (Bennett, "Legend" 16). The narrator also takes pains to structure her account "with the precision of courtroom testimony" (Bennett, "Legend" 16). She irons out inconsistencies, such as the fact that the church tower is now kept locked, with recourse to her own experience. As with other "believe me" narrators, Sarah Herbert also uses all six stages of narrative as identified by Labov and Waletzky ("Narrative Analysis"). In her first sentence "the abstract gives a résumé of the events to come" (Bennett, "Legend" 18). In her second and third sentences, "the orientation sets the scene that prevails throughout the time-span covered by the story" ("Legend" 18-19). In her fourth sentence, the complication sets up the action which follows. In the fifth sentence, the evaluation gives it "point" (that the central protagonist sleeps in the church tower in order to win a dare). Finally, "the resolution tells of the outcome", that the girl went mad, and "the coda brings events back to the present", by stating that she has been kept in a psychiatric hospital ever since. Because the amount of orientation (i.e. the setting of the scene throughout the time span being covered by the story) floods all stages of the narrative, the proportioning of the narrative elements also reflects the "believe me" pattern, as do certain stylistic features, including what Bennett terms the "riffle and pool effect" (Bennett, "Legend" 25).

By comparison with this first supernatural memorate, the story of the pregnant servant-maid tends to have what Bennett would term much greater "narrative velocity" (Bennett, "Legend" 20). By contrast, the bare essentials of the legend are succinctly conveyed in the space of only a sentence "a maid in the big house got pregnant and killed herself by throwing herself off the tower". It is tempting to see this as an indication that the narrator does not care enough about the narrative to "tell the story properly" and therefore does not want her audience to believe it. However, certain features of this performance suggest that this is not the case. Once again, Sarah takes pains to use personalising ploys, and thus to create a link between herself and her informants. Instead of saying "somebody told me", she says "someone I know", and names her informant explicitly, as the son of a housekeeper who lived in the Barton. Thus he is seen as someone who has an established, intimate connection with the Dartington estate. It therefore seems more likely that the narrative is told in brief for a number of other reasons.

By the time Sarah Herbert moves on to this ghost story, she has already provided the listener with ample orientating information and has established the

scene of the supernatural occurrence to come. There is therefore little need for her to labour the point a second time round. She has also tried her best to convince her audience that there is something uncanny about the church tower in the previous memorate. Thus, she has already established the "jinxed" nature of the church tower and its tendency to exert a disturbing, negative influence over those within its bounds, using the narrative which connects most closely with her own personal experience. Consequently, she already knows that this brief ghost story has a heightened dramatic impact, and gives the appearance of being far more plausible in following on from this first supernatural memorate.

The style in which this ghost story is told provides the most obvious clue as to why it is recounted so briefly. The expressions Sarah Herbert uses, such as "you know, the story is that", point up the "traditional" or rather "conventional" nature of the narrative which follows. Unlike the narrative which *precedes* it, she uses a kind of oral short-hand, in relaying this memorate. She seems to assume that no elaboration is necessary, because her audience already knows something about this kind of narrative, and is familiar with its sub-text.

Whilst the stated narrative is brief, the implied narrative is nevertheless far more complicated, requiring, for example, quite extensive prior knowledge about the occupation of domestic service and the identity and status of female servants to be fully understood. It might be suggested that this particular style indicates disbelief, by acknowledging that the story "is going the rounds" (Bennett, "Legend" 15). However, in the context of this particular performance, it seems more likely that the opposite is true. Sarah Herbert's telling of the narrative does not indicate that she is sceptical. Rather, she does not trouble to tell the memorate in full, because the narrative to which it refers passes for an "accepted truth" so culturally prevalent that it does not need to be explained.

Neither the Herbert memorate, nor any other variant referring to the alleged suicide of a woman from the church tower, establishes a time period in which her death occurred. The history of Dartington Hall itself, which was originally a medieval manor house built in the fourteenth century, suggests that the historical context to which the legend might refer, is potentially extremely broad (Mann 28). The Hall was the residence of the Champernownes, one of Devon's leading families, from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries and, in a state of ruin and disrepair, was then bought by the Elmhursts in 1925. The Elmhursts founded Dartington Hall as a broad-based, educational establishment (see Mann 28). Although Dartington Hall therefore spans seven hundred years,

certain features of the Herbert memorate suggest that this particular narrative refers to a more specific time period than the site's history might suggest.

Firstly, the fact that none of the grey lady narratives forms authenticating links with the present by, for example, claiming to have known the woman concerned, tends to place the story of the suicide in the distant, rather than recent past. Secondly, the occupational label used in the Herbert narrative also ties her with a particular period. Significantly, during the nineteenth century the greatest shift in female employment was to domestic service, "which reached a peak of 46 percent of the female work force in 1871 and was still the largest single employer of women in 1911" (Gillis, *A History* 242). This woman's position with a wealthy family, in a large private residence tends therefore to connect her with a period between about the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth centuries.

The implied connection between the woman's pregnancy and her subsequent suicide in the Herbert narrative also has repercussions for the dating of this narrative. If her actions are interpreted as a response to the illegitimacy stigma, then the morality described tends to fit more closely with the Victorian era than with the twentieth century, in which changing values dictated that a suicidal response to illegitimate pregnancy was far less common (see Chapter 5).

Narratives relating to both Dartington Hall and the Lord Halden Hotel respectively depict nineteenth- and eighteenth-century servants as becoming illegitimately pregnant. As previously noted in relation to the songs, statistics relating to the rate of illegitimate pregnancy amongst female domestic servants specifically in Devon are not available, but by comparison with women from other occupational groups, the national incidence of illegitimate pregnancy amongst those women was relatively high throughout the period under consideration. Thus both narratives have a degree of historical accuracy in casting their female protagonists in this role.

As previously explained, by comparison with women in other occupational groups, the choices open to domestic servants becoming illegitimately pregnant were ironically more limited, for reasons relating to the servant's close proximity to her employer and limited access to outside networks (see Chapter 5). More drastic repercussions would also have ensued because of the live-in nature of their employment, and expectation of the middle-to-upper-class employer that servants would internalise their values. Consequently, by offending their employer's notion of sexual propriety through becoming pregnant, they stood

not only to lose their jobs and therefore wages, but also their keep, accommodation and hope of future employment.

Viewed in this context, the Dartington servant-maid's sense of desperation is therefore fairly credible, but how she acts upon that desperation diverges from the reality of experience. Although the historian Olive Anderson observes that a suicidal response to illegitimate pregnancy might have been more likely in rural areas like Dartington, in contrast with the city, she still concludes that the actual incidence of such deaths in the nineteenth century was very low. Yet the perceived incidence of suicide was much higher, due to the existence of a popular stereotype relating to the figure of the young, female suicide. More likely responses to illegitimate pregnancy included marrying the father or another party; leaving service and falling back on family support; gaining admittance to the workhouse; or placing the child in another's care, and seeking alternative employment (see Chapter 5). Consequently, it is clear that the narrative foregrounds a far more extreme and self-destructive response to this predicament than was usually the case.

Social attitudes alluded to within the Herbert memorate have a degree of historical accuracy in terms of the employer's likely condemnation of the unmarried female employee expecting an illegitimate child. This judgement might be even more severe if the father of the child was a member of the employer's family because the woman's predicament would uncomfortably impinge upon the double standard. However, the servant's heightened sense of shame makes less sense in terms of her own social group where the stigma of illegitimacy would not be so extreme.

Moving on to the supernatural narrative associated with the Lord Halden Hotel in Exeter, this narrative depicts a world where the illegitimacy stigma attaches to both men and women begetting children outside of marriage. In this respect, it is similar to the Holcombe Rogus narrative collected during an earlier period, where the squire fears that the discovery of his illegitimate child may jeopardise his marriage prospects to a third party (cf. John Bluett, above). Likewise, this stigma is explicitly associated with an upper-class value system which decrees that it is shameful for a male of that class to father an illegitimate child with a social inferior. The male protagonist's internalisation of this social "law" is demonstrated by his actions in murdering his mistress.

In this instance the apparition has the appearance of an eighteenth-century "servant girl", and is therefore associated with the working classes. The

narrative therefore describes a world in which an upper class male would rather murder his socially inferior lover than allow his secret to be discovered.

Unfortunately, the narrative does not make clear whether illegitimate pregnancy is stigmatised because it signifies the covert sexual affair between social unequals, or because of the fact of pregnancy occurring.

By contrast with another male protagonist in local legend, the poor father who sets out to drown his seven children in the Chumleigh tale, this upper-class male is therefore seen as killing out of choice, rather than necessity (cf. Simpson "The Local" 27).¹⁰⁷ Whilst he might conceivably have resorted to a more humane strategy, such as financing his mistress's removal to another parish in order to conceal her pregnancy, the extreme psychological pressure to conform (perhaps combined with the lover's self-interested nature) results in both mistress and child being literally sacrificed to his reputation. The woman's punishment by death is therefore seen as stemming from a fallible human decision rather than from divine judgement. As her social "invisibility" works against her, her death also emphasises her comparative social and economic disadvantage.

Through its action, this narrative inadvertently draws attention to the social and economic vulnerability of the working classes with whom this eighteenth-century servant-maid is closely aligned. It therefore uses the theme of illegitimacy to highlight what Preston would term "register conflict" between different social classes. In doing so it creates a parallel between the male protagonist's ability to use his mistress as a disposable sexual commodity and the ability of the upper classes, as "consumers", to exploit the working classes as and when they please.

Unlike the Dartington apparition, this ghost does not partially enact its tragic ends but instead, details of the apparition's physical appearance and demeanour give rise to assumptions about the circumstances of its death. Whether the servant girl's distress is seen as deriving from her out-of-wedlock pregnancy or from the fact of being murdered by her lover remains unclear. As with the Dartington ghost, however, there is an assumed connection between those who haunt, and those who meet with violent deaths, that the ghost is dripping wet being taken as a sign that she was drowned. It is interesting that her violent death is not, however, identified as suicide, but rather as a murder. In so doing, the theme of illegitimacy is once again used to highlight register

¹⁰⁷ Recordings of oral versions of this migratory legend can be found in the SRFA and the Sound Archive at the VWML.

conflict, because a lower-class woman is literally sacrificed to upper-class values.

The haunting seems also to be closely tied to the well-documented belief that those without Christian burial cannot rest until they are "properly" buried by the living (see Baring-Gould A Book of Folk-lore 151). In the Bluett narrative, this is supported by the fact that the haunting ceases after the skeletons are unearthed and reburied in consecrated ground (see Simpson, "Some Irregular" 11). However, because no bones are subsequently discovered to authenticate this haunting, this narrative remains more open-ended (cf. Mrs Leakey, Appendix iv).

As with the Dartington ghost, it is tempting to attribute this haunting to the tendency for those who were cruelly murdered to come back to haunt the scenes of their deaths (cf. Brown Devon 59-60). In the context of this narrative, this particular belief might therefore be seen as having a moral function, conveying the idea that the crimes and sexual misdemeanours committed by the living do not, ultimately, go undiscovered (cf. Holt, West Somerset 33-37; Tongue, Somerset 95). Consequently, the supernatural component of the narrative seems to hint at the divine judgement awaiting the murdering lover for his deeds committed on earth. At the same time it also creates the sense that the pre-death emotions of women who become pregnant and are betrayed, in this case by an upper-class male lover, would be strong enough to be carried beyond the grave.

In terms of its historical context, this supernatural narrative tends to focus on the exception rather than the norm, in terms of the sexual relationship it describes between a lower-class woman and a middle-to-upper class male. Most cases of illegitimacy appear to have arisen out of relationships between people of the same social class during this period (see Chapter 5). Although written documentation regarding sexual relationships is less comprehensive in relation to middle-to-upper-, rather than lower-class males, evidence suggests that most men from this former group did not respond to illegitimate pregnancy or birth by murdering their lover or lover and child. A middle-to-upper-class male would have been more likely to resort to a number of other strategies including persuading her to have an abortion; paying her to leave for another parish; paying her to name someone else as the father or to marry someone else; exploiting the woman's social and legal disadvantage and denying his paternity altogether, or simply paying for the child himself.

A greater degree of time specificity is given in the supernatural narrative relating to the Lord Halden Hotel, than within the Herbert memorate, because the female protagonist is described as "a servant girl, dressed in eighteenth century clothing" and can therefore be examined in terms of this historical context (Barber, The Ghosts 19). This narrative plays down the effect of the double standard on attitudes towards male sexual behaviour, as discerned by social historians. Historical evidence tends to suggest that the existence of a sexual double standard was firmly ingrained by the eighteenth century, being particularly pronounced amongst the middle-to-upper classes. As this decreed that it was desirable for a husband to be sexually experienced prior to marriage, it is unlikely that the reputation of an upper-class male would be damaged, or marriage prospects jeopardised, by his having fathered an illegitimate child - particularly where the mother of that child was an "inferior", lower-class woman.

The world which this narrative describes, in which the illegitimacy stigma is seen as applying to middle-to upper-class males and lower-class women alike, seems to have more in common with a twentieth-century, rather than eighteenth-century environment. This may provide a clue as to why the narrative has still continued in circulation since the 1970s. However, that the illegitimacy stigma applies to both men and women in this narrative could also be seen as a dramatic device enabling one class to express hostilities towards another. Viewed in this light, this narrative might be seen as evidencing the attitudes of the working-classes in eighteenth-century Devon towards their social superiors. According to the sexual morality of the former group, the fact of an upper-class male having pre-marital sex with his social inferior would probably not be condemned in itself, but because he would likely have little intention of marrying her, particularly when pregnancy occurred. Consequently, the assumption that illegitimacy is undesirable is used to emphasise the male protagonist's dishonourable, untrustworthy nature.

The relationship between the above narratives and their historical context raises an important question about the narratives themselves. Do they focus upon seemingly exceptional responses to illegitimate pregnancy for a particular dramatic purpose, or alternatively, could it be that the more extreme responses to illegitimate pregnancy in the past which have tended to be overlooked within historical accounts based on "official" written sources, are documented within these narratives instead? One means of resolving this question was to select one of the narratives as a case study, consulting the available sources in order to ascertain whether or not it is based upon a genuine historical occurrence. The Herbert narrative was particularly suited to this purpose, because

appropriate material could be easily accessed through the Dartington Archive.¹⁰⁸

Supernatural Narratives as Evidence of Experiences and Attitudes in the Past

The first relevant publication was a copy of a previously unpublished poem, from a bundle of privately owned, personal papers which were sent to the Dartington Archive in 1960 ("NoD Spotlight"). Though it remains anonymous, the approximate dating of this Romantic poem, to around 1800, is confirmed by its "pseudo-medieval" style which was so fashionable during the early nineteenth century ("The Ghost"). The poem's form indicates that, by contrast with the Herbert memorate, it is a product of a middle-to-upper-class milieu and was composed by an educated person.

Early verses describe how the birth of a new heir to Dartington is accompanied by joyful celebration. Whilst the nurses watch over its mother, the lord, its elated father, publicly presents the child whilst "cake and candle" are distributed.¹⁰⁹ The festivities are suddenly interrupted by a grave-looking male, who states:

Sure t'was our lady's ghost I saw
Beneath the tower walls; and blood,
But yet methought t'was flesh
And loudly it did call.

The terrified party run to the Lady's bedroom and find that the nurses, in their drunkenness, have fallen asleep. The lady lies dead on the ground below, a brief earlier reference to the "mother's prattling joy" implying that post-natal delirium has caused her accidental death.¹¹⁰ Her loss is accompanied by the nurses' remorse and widespread mourning. One of the final stanzas describes how:

And now at midnight's solemn hour,
Her ghost is heard to call;
And still she haunts the lonely tower
Beside the castle wall. ("NoD Spotlight")

As the contributor to a past Dartington news letter, "News-of-the-Day", proposes, this early poem "may suggest the possible origins of the Dartington

¹⁰⁸ The archival assistant was unable to comment on the factual basis of this occurrence.

¹⁰⁹ Probably a "Groaning" cake, part of the birth festivities in many regional areas traditionally shared by a woman's husband and gathering of neighbours during or after her labour (Hole, *English* 5-6; Radford 174-75).

¹¹⁰ The mother is named in the final stanza of the poem as Maria. However, Miss C. Elizabeth Champemowne states "I do not think 'Maria' has any connection at all with the Champemownes" ("The Ghost").

Grey Lady legend" ("NoD Spotlight"). As the poem describes how the pregnancy of a woman closely associated with Dartington Hall is followed by her falling to her death from a high tower, which she then proceeds to haunt, this text has all the basic components which later appear in the Herbert narrative. However, the Herbert narrative shows three main differences; the woman is an unmarried servant rather than the married lady of the house; her death happens before, not after the birth of her child; and her fatal fall is a suicide, rather than accidental death. The direction of these changes is particularly interesting. By altering the identity of the central female protagonist, the theme of illegitimacy is placed at the centre of this supernatural narrative. By making her a servant, the narrative also introduces the idea of conflicting notions of sexual morality between employer and employee, and hence, register conflict between different social classes. Thus, the narrative carries a strong suggestion that she is an exploited victim of the ruling class. In making her death a suicide, the narrative also produces a particular effect, by demonstrating the depth of this female protagonist's unhappiness and desperation, hence inciting a greater degree of sympathy for her predicament.

Ninety-one-year-old Miss C. Elizabeth Champernowne, comments on the poem in a later publication. Her testimony implies that the poem may, in part, have some factual underpinnings:

As to the story of one of the family having wandered out after the birth of her baby, there is certainly evidence of this. In October 1712 Elizabeth (née Courtney) the wife of Arthur Champernowne is said, though ill and delirious, to have been in the care of the nurse who became intoxicated, when she wandered out and was found by the bailiff lying dead in the snow. ("The Ghost")

This particular incident, may also have fused with another piece of Champernowne family folklore, where a domestic argument resulted in the miscarriage of a child ("The Ghost").

However, there is no evidence that the poem was inspired by the supernatural legend of the Grey Lady. In fact, Miss Champernowne, whose family owned Dartington Hall for over 300 years until 1925, comments, "I never heard any mention of a 'Grey Lady'" ("The Ghost"). Her assertion in this respect, is given credence by the lack of documentation in relation to this legend prior to the 1970s. As she suggests, it is therefore far more likely that the poem inspired the legend of the Grey Lady, rather than the legend inspiring the poem.¹¹¹ It is also

¹¹¹ Chard's assertions as regards the Grey Lady of Dartington, seem to be based entirely upon Miss Champernowne's testimony (Chard 49).

feasible that creative retellings of certain aspects of Champernowne family folklore inspired both.

All of the available information about this supernatural narrative therefore seems to indicate that whilst the story of the servant maid who committed suicide from the church tower derives, in part, from historical occurrences, the incident itself has no factual basis. Consequently, rather than picking up on an "unofficial" undocumented history, the narrative presents this emotionally extreme response to illegitimate pregnancy as though it were a historical occurrence for a particular dramatic purpose.

The fact that the story of the Dartington suicide has no clear factual basis, has implications for the narrative as evidence of attitudes towards illegitimacy in the past. If it had been true, it might be possible to argue that, through the representation of experience, the narrative evidenced extremely harsh attitudes towards women who had illegitimate children, during the period to which the narrative refers. However, particularly as the creation of the narrative seems to be a much later development, this memorate does not properly convey attitudes towards illegitimacy held in the distant past. Because the style of performance suggests that Sarah Herbert believes the narrative to be true (or at least tells it "as true"), the circumstances she describes as a "believe me" narrator therefore tend to reveal what she believes could have happened or might feasibly be believed to have happened, in the past.

Although her narrative therefore purports to tell us about the experience of out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth in the past, it actually tells us more about present-day conceptions of the experiences and attitudes of previous generations. In other words, the narrative illustrates the fairly contemporary belief that, perhaps as a result of class exploitation, servant women were particularly susceptible to illegitimate pregnancy, a predicament which was treated with extreme hostility by their employers, ^{and that} hence, some women actually resorted to suicide as a preferable alternative to facing the resulting shame, or experienced a comparable sense of desperation, whilst the father of the child remained unscathed.

Given the strength of the illegitimacy stigma until quite recent years, it seems most likely that Sarah Herbert's notion of what might have happened to this servant, is informed by her personal experiences as well as the oral testimonies of those around her relating to the past. Her age and social identity, as a single woman in her twenties, might also contribute to her heightened awareness of

the significance of the legitimacy/illegitimacy distinction. Thus, it could be argued that the memorate communicates attitudes towards illegitimacy still persisting in the 1980s, acknowledging the surviving stigma and sense of "social suicide" attached to an unmarried woman having a child out of wedlock.

Whilst personal experience combined with communal memory and experience would likely appear to confirm the "moral" truth of Sarah Herbert's memorate, accepted narrative conventions concerning illegitimacy (see previous discussion) might be seen as providing its form. Both these influences would therefore tend to validate the tale and endorse Sarah's position of belief, perhaps with other additional factors affecting Sarah Herbert's willingness to believe the narrative, for example, her own education through history lessons and school.

If Sarah Herbert had instead been a "don't believe me" narrator, the memorate's relationship with attitudes towards illegitimacy still prevalent in the 1980s, would be somewhat more complicated. Rather than telling us about what the narrator believed to have been true of experiences and attitudes towards illegitimacy in the past, the tendency towards scepticism could in some cases be seen as constituting a rejection of those very experiences and attitudes the narrative describes. However, it would still be the case that there was a relationship between the cultural environment in which the supernatural narrative was being circulated, and the narrative itself. It might also indicate that at some point in the chain of transmission, or "legend conduit", the narrative had been believed (Dégh and Vázsonyi 96, 99-100, 116-119).

LOCAL LEGENDS

Narratives documented in written sources suggest that the theme of illegitimacy has had an enduring popularity in local legends circulated in the South West of England (see Appendix v). Because many of these legends include supernatural components, it is often difficult to draw a distinction between this particular sub-genre, and the supernatural narrative.

The following criteria outlined by Simpson in relation to local legends were used to distinguish these narratives from supernatural legends and memorates and local character anecdotes circulated in oral tradition during approximately the last thirty years. The local legend

centres upon some specific place, person, or object which really exists or has existed within the knowledge of those telling and hearing the story. It reflects the beliefs, moral judgements and everyday preoccupations of the social group, and is in many cases, though not invariably, told "as true". Its aim is to hand on accounts of significant events alleged to have occurred in a particular community or area and it has no truck with "once upon a time" and the "never-never land" ("The Local" 25).

As certain supernatural narratives also conform to Simpson's definition, local legends were further distinguished on the basis that, where supernatural elements were included, these occupied a supporting role, rather than central position within the narrative as a whole. In addition, on the basis of the available evidence the supernatural component had to be an unstable element of the narrative, appearing in some, but not all of the variants.

The following section focuses in particular on one Dartmoor legend, the legend of "Jay's Grave". I decided to use a case study partly because the sheer quantity of potentially relevant material in South West folk narrative meant that it was not possible to conduct a comprehensive analysis of each individual legend. Because so many of the observations made in relation to "Jay's Grave" are also applicable to other illegitimacy-related legends in the South West, this particular narrative provided a particularly appropriate means of centring the discussion. The small-scale nature of the study also allowed for a detailed examination of narrative tradition in oral and popular printed sources and an evaluation of the interaction between these two modes of narration - an important consideration in relation to all legends and supernatural narratives pertaining to this theme. It also provided a framework permitting some further research and fieldwork to be undertaken without exceeding the scope of this thesis.

The following section initially presents the texts of all relevant variants. A textual analysis of each of these narratives then follows. As far as possible, this examination of attitudes towards out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth also takes account of the meanings generated by legend variants, as they were told in their performance contexts. Finally, each of the narratives is further examined in terms of an appropriate historical context, giving particular attention as to where both circumstances and attitudes diverge from the reality of experience, as reconstructed in Chapter 5.

The Legend of "Jay's Grave"

The following group of legend variants are associated with a site situated on the edge of Dartmoor, South West of Manaton between Cripdon and Hamel Downs, at the point where the minor road running off the B3344, in the direction of Hound Tor, is crossed by the footpath towards Manaton. It is currently marked on Ordnance Survey maps as "Jay's Grave" (grid reference 791739). As with the other folk narratives in this chapter, variants of this legend were chosen providing that the evidence suggested that they were actively circulating in oral tradition at some point between approximately 1970 and the present day in the South West of England. Similarly, a combination of variants from both oral and printed sources was initially considered. However, variants of the "Jay's Grave" legend, particularly in popular printed sources, were so prolific that I decided to be more selective in the texts considered.

I therefore considered the corpus of oral texts which were available, and prioritised the analysis of this material within the discussion. A selected, rather than comprehensive list of "Jay's Grave" variants appearing in popular printed sources and broadcast on the radio since 1970 can be found in Appendix vi. These were analysed in a supportive role, to discern where one version of printed text may have influenced a narrative circulating in oral tradition, and conversely, where certain texts in popular printed sources seem to have derived from the oral tradition itself. This material was useful in establishing the likely interface between oral and printed modes of narration, through helping to trace paths of transmission between both kinds of text.

Following Simpson's recommendation that the topography of a legend's setting, including features such as boundaries, gates and cross roads, should be considered in terms of its connotative importance, I would like to consider the established associations known to have existed in relation to cross road sites in the South West of England, before introducing the oral variants themselves (Simpson, "The Local" 28).

A strong association between crossways and suicides has developed, largely because of the practice of burying suicides, except when proven to be of unsound mind, and other individuals at crossroads continued until 1823, when the law^{requiring it} was repealed (Puhvel 83, Brown, Devon 101).¹¹² Some historians

¹¹² "An act was passed during the reign of George IV laid down that the burial of suicides should be in a churchyard, or a cemetery, and forbade the custom of the stake. As a result the

believe that crossroads burials were intended to baffle the suicide's ghost. In Tudor and Stuart times, the Church tolerated, without sanctioning, this kind of de-consecration rite, when corpses were flung naked into pits at crossroads - sometimes with a stake for good measure. Because, as Palmer observes, the ghosts of individuals such as suicides and murderers were thought likely to be particularly troublesome, the additional precaution of burial "with a stake through the heart to prevent the corpse 'walking' " was taken (Palmer, Oral 25; cf. MacDonald 44-45, 47-48).¹¹³ Unknown individuals such as tramps and strangers were also sometimes buried at crossroads (Brown, Fate 36)

The fact that during the seventeenth century "common people attributed suicidal urges to witches as well as to Satan" in areas including the South West may partly be responsible for the additional connection between crossroads locations and witchcraft (MacDonald, 43, 52-59; cf. Tongue Somerset 81). The ancient association of the underworld deity, Hecate, with crossroads locations may have contributed to the connection between crossroads burials and witches (Puhvel 2-4; cf. Theo Brown, Devon 101). During the Middle Ages, this goddess of sorcery, necromancy, ghosts and the dead, developed into "a demonic mistress of witchcraft", as evidenced by offerings to Hecate at crossroads being referred to later in Shakespeare's Macbeth (Puhvel 4). Traditionally, witches and crossroads have also been linked in the folklore of Britain and Ireland (Puhvel 34).

The widespread belief that "witches' gatherings and festivities take place at crossroads" also emerges in South West folklore (Puhvel 29; see "The Witches' Stone" in Coxhead 103-04). In addition, reported witches are sometimes said to have been buried at crossroads locations (see "The Witch of Membury" in Brown, Devon 60-63; cf. Coxhead 155-162). However, it should be emphasised that there is no substantial evidence indicating that witches were buried at crossroads in practice, the closest approximation being burials in unhallowed ground beyond the churchyard wall (see "Witch Burials" in Brown, "80th Report").

The longstanding belief that crossroads are haunted also dates back at least as far as the Middle Ages, where in popular tradition such locations were a common place for conjuring up demons (Puhvel 15). Brown cites one late seventeenth-century example of a Dartmoor conjurer in connection with the

north side of the churchyard was sometimes used. This area was thought unlucky and cold for the corpse. Traditionally it was reserved for the unbaptised" (Palmer, The Folklore 87-88).
¹¹³ Cf. the treatment of reputed eighteenth-century vampires (Baring-Gould, A Book of Folklore 129).

spirit of a "troublesome" suicide (Fate 47). The crossroads' reputation for being haunted was no doubt reinforced by the existing connection between witches and crossroads - witches having the power to appear as apparitions (see Bennett "Ghost and Witch"). As Palmer suggests, the practice of burying "restless" dead in these locations also explains why ghosts have continued to be associated with crossroads both in South West folklore, and the folklore of Britain and Ireland up until the present day (e.g. Courtney, Cornish Feasts 169; Palmer, The Folklore 87-88; cf. Puhvel 93-94, 98-100).¹¹⁴

Crossroads sites including Jay's Grave, have also sometimes been associated with criminals, criminalised classes of individual, such as prostitutes, and those of marginalised social status, such as travellers. This can be partly attributed to the practice of both executing and burying criminals at cross roads locations, or even just leaving their bodies to rot (Puhvel 85-87; Brown, Devon 101-02; Palmer The Folklore 89). Tales of criminals who were hanged at crossroads and wayside locations are particularly well remembered in South West folklore (Brown, Devon 93-94; S.M.Ellis 5). For instance, both Palmer and Holt recount the tale associated with Walford's Gibbet (Holt West Somerset 68-70; Folklore of 69-72; Palmer, Folklore 89).¹¹⁵ In Holt's romanticised version incorporates the theme of illegitimate pregnancy in the story of this ill-fated love affair (see Appendix v). The narrative concludes with the emotionally charged execution of John Walford, who is left hanging for a whole year, and his remains buried on the spot. Hippisley Cox mentions reports of people since having smelt rotting flesh in the location (Haunted Britain 31).

However, there may also be other reasons for the association between crossroads and criminalised types of individual. The connection with prostitutes may, for example, have originated in local history, evidence in relation to sixteenth and seventeenth century Somerset suggesting that vagrant prostitutes most commonly solicited at inns, markets, fairs or crossroads (Quaife 146).

The following variant of the "Jay's Grave" legend was told by Lillian Sanderson to interviewers from the Wren Trust.¹¹⁶ During the preceding discussion, the informant talked about local hauntings associated with the Oxenham family and a phantom coach said to appear in the locality. This variant was volunteered as a natural progression of this conversation:

¹¹⁴ Twentieth-century examples of the belief in the persistence of the suicide's ghost are commonplace (e.g. Underwood, Ghosts 16, 76, 99).

¹¹⁵ This account in part derives from the Bath and Bristol Magazine of 1797.

¹¹⁶ I was unable to obtain biographical details for this informant from the Wren Trust, or further information about this recording.

You know there's a grave up Dartmoor, don't you? And somebody puts a bunch of flowers on that grave, don't they? And they reckon that girl was a servant, years ago, from a big 'ouse and 'er had a baby and 'er died [pause] and they reckon that's where 'e buried 'er to. And they wonder who ever puts 'er flowers on. I mean, 'e couldn't do it because 'e'd be dead. So, I mean, she died. I don't know if the baby died. So very often I wonder well did the baby marry and it all went back over to that. I'd always like to find the history out of that.

[Marilyn Tucker] Hmmm.

[LS] 'Cos it is a grave.

[Paul Wilson] "Jay's Grave", i'n' it?

[LS] Yeah, yeah, and sometimes you'll see a beautiful bunch of flowers there, but nobody know who puts them there. No, I'd like to go back really and find out. I mean she 'ad this baby by, I mean 'twas a servant. And years ago they was taken advantage of, and if they'd a baby they was thrown out, weren't they? And she killed 'erself, didn't she? And they buried her there. But whatever 'appened to that baby, that's what I've always tried to find out. (WT. SZ tape 17)

In the above account, it is Paul Wilson, the interviewer, rather than the informant who refers to "Jay's Grave" by name. However, Lillian clearly identifies this site as the grave of a young female who used to be a maid in service to a large residence. Implicitly, the maid was seduced by a member of her employer's family and subsequently had a child. As a result she was dismissed and committed suicide. Lillian's account emphasises that flowers are still put upon the grave, but that no one knows by whom.

The following version of "Jay's Grave" was provided by Mr Brown and an unnamed male friend during an interview about local culture around the village of Widecombe, East Dartmoor, in their youth.¹¹⁷ This recording was made by Sam Richards and Tish Stubbs in the village of Widecombe where Mr Brown, a local farmer, was still living in the early 1980s. This particular "storytelling event" arose out of a conversation about local ghost stories and legends.

[Friend] [The] thing with Jay's ghost and that. A few years ago, everyone thought there was a ghost up there. Even Jimmy Irons who really thought 'twas a ghost but, when I went up, inside the hedge up there was a white sheet so I knew it wasn't a ghost. Somebody had been up and -.

[Mr Brown] [laughter] Well, he'd left his clothes behind 'adn't 'e ?

[SR] Why [word unclear] that story of "Jay's Grave" ?

¹¹⁷ The SRFA database does not provide a forename, this informant being consistently referred to as "Farmer Brown".

[Mr Brown] Well 'tis something about some maid that, 'er boss or something got 'er in the family way or something?

[Friend] No, she was a girl taken from a workhouse, to work for a farmer and the son, she , she got [pause] err, umm, uh.

[Mr Brown interjects] 'Er got pregnant with the son?

[Friend] And then she hung herself.

[Mr Brown interjects] That's right.

[Friend] In a barn and she was buried at the cross-roads which is where the grave is. There's a cross road of Manaton and Widecombe parishes.

[SR] And that's a true story you think?

[Friend] It 'appened, they think, in the end 1780 sometime.

[SR] Oh.

[Friend] They reckon about that time. Well, Miss Gould, who'd been looking up all this thing because of this programme we're supposed to do some time, found out there's no record of her death.

[Mr Brown] No, no.

[Friend] And she 'asn't yet found the record of her birth which is more likely to have been a record of her birth rather than of 'er death. But she, only -.

[Mr Brown] At that time a lot of the old books were destroyed in Exeter apparently about that time. So they think that even if there was one it was destroyed.

[SR] Ummmm.

[Mr Brown] I was up Shaw Priory.

[Friend] It's quite feasible that story is, quite feasible.

[Mr Brown] It's possible.

[Friend] Oh yeah, it's quite feasible.

(SRFA tape 284).

Again, the narrators identify this site as the grave of a young female. Likewise, this woman is said to have been a local servant who had a sexual relationship with a member of her employer's family, became pregnant, and committed suicide. However, this version differs from the Sanderson version on several counts. No reference is made either to the mystery of who puts the flowers on the grave, or to the exploitative nature of the relationship between the couple.

Background information, stating that this woman was taken from the workhouse to work for a local farmer, rather than as a domestic servant in a large residence, also differentiates her occupational status. Although this female protagonist likewise becomes pregnant, there is no reference to her having an illegitimate child, or subsequently being dismissed.

Mr Brown's narrative is less repetitive and supplies a greater level of detail than the Sanderson account. The woman is explicitly named as "Jay" during the initial conversation about hauntings. Consequently, a link is immediately established between the name of the site and the person said to be buried there, a connection which is also forged in the accounts of Charlie Hill, Jess Hill, and Dave German. Early on, the friend also establishes that the grave was said to be haunted within living memory (i.e. during the "recent" past). Jay's lover is more explicitly identified as the farmer's son and her suicide, by hanging, in a barn is delineated in greater detail. In addition, a precise description of the grave's location between two parishes is given and a summary of research into the legend is used to justify why there are no relevant historical documents and to place this occurrence in the 1780s.

Jess Hill participated in an interview session at the Hills' Dartmoor home in September 1995, at which Charlie Hill and I talked about South West folksongs in which the theme of illegitimacy occurs. The following remark by Jess Hill, regarding the "Jay's Grave" legend, spontaneously arose out of a conversation about "Died for Love" and the depiction of suicide as a response to out-of-wedlock pregnancy in this song:

It was a disgrace, wasn't it, for a girl to get pregnant, years ago? . . .
There's that Jane's Grave on the moor. Jay's grave. You'll see it and that's only because she got er - [pause]. Somebody made her pregnant and she was cast out. (Ill:005:II:95)

This brief remark confirms that Jess Hill also regards the site as a grave, the person said to be buried there being initially called "Jane" but then referred to as "Jay". Similarly to Lillian Sanderson's version, a direct causal link is established between this woman becoming pregnant and subsequently being "cast out". However, in Jess's version there is no mention of an actual child. Neither is there any description of the woman's occupational identity, or the nature of the relationship that leads to her pregnancy.

The following version of the legend, was recounted by Jess's husband, Charlie Hill, during a later interview session in 1995. In this instance, I requested Charlie to tell me the version of the legend that he knew:

That's one of the legends of the moor. And apparently Jay, Jane was an orphan and whether she was taken into an orphanage. She probably was. And she went [to be] a servant girl to this farmer on Dartmoor and of course she had a baby and she got thrown out. And she's buried beside . . . Have you seen her grave, have you? Who was responsible and no matter what day you go there's always fresh flowers put there. Who puts the flowers we've no idea. But, you know, what the story is, the old story I mean, I've no idea. No, really, I would be telling a non-truth if I said I did but, I mean, I don't. Only thing I know is she was a servant. She was a servant in [a] farmer's house and she died. What is it, I suppose she died of exposure? . . . You see they call it "Jay's Grave" but I can't imagine a girl with a name being called Jay. We've always known it as "Jane's Grave".

[SD] Can you remember who told you that story then? How long have you known the legend for?

[CH] I've no idea. No, as I say, I'd be kidding you if I told you a cock and bull story but I mean, you're after the truth.

(ILL:010:I:95)

Like the previous informants, Charlie identifies this site as the grave of a young female, and similarly to his wife, Jess Hill, he variously calls this woman Jay, or Jane. Charlie's narrative follows the pattern established in the first two variants above, whereby this woman is said to have been a local servant who became pregnant by a member of her employer's family and dies. The woman's occupational description most closely corresponds with the second variant, in that she goes to work for a Dartmoor farmer. However, the narrative has other traits in common with Lillian Sanderson's version, which states that as a result of having an illegitimate child, the woman is subsequently dismissed and then dies. The mystery of the flowers, foregrounded in Lillian's account, is also emphasised by Charlie Hill.

Charlie's account introduces the idea that Jay or Jane was from an orphanage, rather than from the workhouse, as described in Mr Brown's account. However, the fundamental difference between this and other accounts is Charlie's uncertainty as to the cause of the woman's death, and tentative suggestion that she died of exposure rather than committing suicide.

The following version of "Jay's Grave" was provided by Wray Tucker during an interview about local culture around the village of South Zeal, East Dartmoor, since his youth. This recording was made by myself and Jacqueline Patten, at Wray's home in South Zeal, in February 1997. When asked how he came to know the legend, Wray remarked, "I don't know really, it's just growing up with

it, you know. My mother used to talk about it even." He then recounted the version he learned during his youth:

Well, she was a servant girl that got, uh, put in the family way by this [pause] son of some big family, big noise and that, and they kicked her out with, I dunno, ten bob in her pocket or something like that, and, um, she committed suicide, they say, you know. That's the story I've heard. That's the story I'll stick by sort of [chuckles]. No, we um, I like to keep it going. (III:028:II:97)

Wray's narrative conforms to the pattern established in the versions of Lillian Sanderson and Mr Brown. Significantly, the woman's occupational identity is described in strikingly similar terms to those used in the Sanderson narrative, as a domestic servant in a large private residence, whilst her lover, as the son of the house, is given a similar identity to that used in Mr Brown's narrative.

The narrative differs from most other oral accounts in terms of its lack of detail. Although Wray mentioned the mystery of the flowers earlier in the interview, unlike both Lillian Sanderson and Charlie Hill his account does not include this *element as an integral part of the legend, or "storytelling event"*. Unlike the other accounts, this narrative does not overtly state that the site is the burial ground of this young woman, nor does it explicitly refer to this particular location by name (thus forging a link with the woman said to be buried there). The narrative also lacks any reference to the servant's background as an orphan or workhouse child.

Dave German told a version of "Jay's Grave" during an interview I conducted at his home in December 1996 about life in Princetown, central Dartmoor, and the development of his storytelling. Dave voluntarily started performing all the local legends in his active repertoire on this occasion, which included the following narrative.

Another story that people come in and ask me about in the Information Centre, years and years ago, out over at Manaton, right beside the road, there's a grave. It's known as Kitty Jay's Grave. And dear old Kitty Jay, she was an orphan and [word unclear] she had been taken into the farm to work. And she fell in love with the farmer's son and she became pregnant. As soon as he found out he was gone and left her, he didn't want to know and through a broken heart she committed suicide. And in those days, a suicide had to be buried at midnight, on the edge of a parish. And so she was duly buried at midnight on the edge of the parish. Some say in those days they used to drive a stake through the heart of this suicide person to keep their evil spirits in.

But, you know a very strange thing is this. That ever since then there have been flowers on her grave. You can go there winter or summer and you'll always find a few flowers on her grave. People have kept watch,

and nobody had ever seen anybody put flowers there and they come in the Centre and ask me and I tell them and they said, "Ah we've heard about these flowers". I said "It's true". I said "if there's no flowers there when you come back tonight in the pub I'll buy you a drink", and they said, "Hang on, 'fore you go, if there's flowers there, you've got to buy me a drink". And I've had pints of beer [spoken emphatically] and I don't put the flowers there. (Ill:027:1:96)

The significant differences here from the versions of Mr Brown and the Hills are that her name is lengthened to "Kitty Jay" and that this is the only account to explicitly state that the relationship between the central couple is a love affair, and that the discovery of Kitty Jay's illegitimate pregnancy is linked to the desertion of her lover, the farmer's son, rather than to her own dismissal. It is also unique in specifying that "through a broken heart she committed suicide". The exact description of "Kitty Jay's" burial, on the edge of the parish, at midnight, with a stake through her heart, is also not included in any of the other oral accounts. This particular narrative element could be seen as suggesting the narrative's antiquity, being a piece of historical fact orally preserved. Yet both the emphasis within this and other narratives performed by Dave, and the composition of his repertoire suggest that this is not the case (cf. Brown; Barber, Appendix vi). Rather, this detail bears the hallmark of texts in popular printed sources, particularly those in more recent publications, and a radio broadcast (cf. Deacon (1973) 145; Brown (1982) 101; Barber (1988) 30; Bennie (1995) 11; Beard, Appendix vi).

In the above corpus of oral texts, the theme of out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth is one of the most stable components of the narratives themselves. Although it is important not to exaggerate the pre-eminence of any one finding in relation to so small a sample of oral variants, a comparison between these "Jay's Grave" narratives and those associated with another crossroads location in the Ilminster area of West Somerset, suggests that the centrality of this theme may be significant.¹¹⁸

When Palmer conducted fieldwork in West Somerset during the late 1960s, he discovered that an illegitimacy narrative had also become associated with another crossway. He comments about this site: "In the Ilminster area by far the most important crossroads burial with an associated ghost is that of Mary or Molly Hunt" (*Folklore* 88). A comparison between these two crossways might therefore be seen as particularly apt because of the importance of both in terms of the immediate locality.

¹¹⁸ The "grave" of Mary Hunt is located where the road from Dowlish Ford to Cricket Malherbie crosses the road from West Dowlish to Knowle St Giles (ST 359 124).

Interestingly, the type of illegitimacy narrative Palmer describes is strikingly similar to certain "Jay's Grave" variants, with the female protagonist also committing suicide as the result of an out-of-wedlock pregnancy. Once again, the basic plot elements described seem to allude to a past era in which those having children out of wedlock faced a hostile environment:

In Somerset a large number of traditions were collected concerning Mary Hunt's grave, near Ilminster. Altogether seventeen versions were collected. Some said that Mary Hunt was a gipsy, others that she committed suicide, or that she was a witch, one that she was a prostitute, another that she killed herself because she was going to have a baby. Naturally in some versions the cross-roads became haunted. One informant added that people used to say that between 12 o'clock and 1 o'clock Mary Hunt would rattle her chains - rattle her chains and turn in her grave - but the informant had never heard anything himself. (Oral Folk-tales 25)

The same cross-roads location, and name of Mary Hunt, also seem to have become attached to the story of a woman, sometimes called Kitty Churchill, who is said to have murdered her husband (Palmer, Oral Folk-tales 56-57).

By contrast with "Jay's Grave" narratives, in oral versions of the "Molly Hunt" legend Palmer observes extreme variation in the identity of the woman herself, though significantly she is consistently aligned with marginal social categories, associatively contributing to the idea of the unmarried mother as a stigmatised, or criminalised individual. The cause of her death and subsequent burial at the cross-roads also varies. Notably, the theme of out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth is a peripheral concern within this corpus of narratives as a whole, with only one of seventeen total variants incorporating this theme.¹¹⁹ Viewed from this perspective, the fact that the theme of illegitimacy occurs in all six of the above "Jay's Grave" variants has more serious implications for the likely importance of this theme in post-1970s oral variants as a whole.

The impact of printed versions on the oral tradition itself may partly explain the different emphasis in each corpus of narratives. One essential difference between these legends is that whilst "Jay's Grave" narratives were being continually reprinted in popular sources by the mid-1960s, variants of "Mary/Molly Hunt" were not. Even after Palmer conducted his original fieldwork, only Holt, the writer of popular books on folklore, took up this legend, using the theme of illegitimacy in a "literafied" version of "Mary Hunt", included in his Folklore of Somerset (1992). Rather than being influenced by printed sources,

¹¹⁹ Palmer is slightly more ambiguous in his later publication, The Folklore of Somerset (1976), implying that the theme of illegitimate pregnancy occurs in more than one variant.

the Hunt variants collected by Palmer more directly derive from a conglomeration of traditions and beliefs associated with crossroads, and crossroads burials in general (see previous discussion). This has played an important role in ensuring that variants of the Molly Hunt legend have become extremely diverse, establishing the theme of illegitimacy as an unstable component.

By contrast, the influence of popular printed sources on "Jay's Grave" variants has been much more dominant. Of the versions included in Appendix vi, the themes of out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth are explicitly mentioned in approximately half of this sample, having clearly become increasingly persistent elements in published accounts during the last twenty years. It therefore seems likely that by infiltrating the oral tradition, these sources have been responsible for creating and maintaining the central "illegitimacy" focus of versions circulated since the 1970s. However, the preoccupations of narratives in popular printed sources would clearly not have been taken up so swiftly unless those amongst whom oral narratives are circulated identified with their central concerns.

Attitudes Towards Illegitimacy Within the Narratives

The "Jay's Grave" narrative supplied by Lillian Sanderson does not make a direct statement about attitudes towards out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth, unlike certain versions in popular printed sources (cf. Deacon; Jones; Brown, Appendix vi). Rather, it conveys a sense of the attitudes which prevail within the world of the narrative through the experiences and actions of its central protagonists, thus using a technique apparent in most other oral variants. Consequently, certain phrases, such as "a servant, years ago, from a big house", act as "pegs", marking out a particular kind of narrative which the listeners receive and decode according to the socially prescribed rules with which they are familiar (cf. Georges 318). Significantly, the terminology she uses here is strikingly similar to that of Sarah Herbert in relation to the Dartington narrative.

By explicitly linking the fact of the servant having an illegitimate child to her dismissal, Lillian Sanderson implies that illegitimacy is strongly condemned within the world of the narrative. Both Charlie Hill and Wray Tucker also use this causal link to create a similar impression. The shame attached to illegitimacy in all three instances is seen as specifically deriving from the employer's value

system, which decrees that for a servant-girl to have a child outside of wedlock is a transgression.

By describing the servant as working for "a big 'ouse", or "some big family", Lillian Sanderson and Wray Tucker delineate the employer in similar terms as a wealthy, middle-to-upper-class family. The employer is seen as slightly less socially superior by Charlie Hill, being more specifically identified as a Dartmoor farmer. The female protagonist, being their servant in all three versions, is conversely associated with a lower social bracket. This is particularly the case in Charlie's version in which, being an orphan sent into service, she is affiliated with the poorest sector of the working classes. In all three variants she is therefore judged according to the values of a more privileged social class than that to which she belongs.

Lillian's narrative uses attitudes towards illegitimacy to draw attention to the inherent hypocrisy of the ruling class. Whilst the employer considers it entirely permissible to "take advantage" of their female servants, the existence of a sexual double standard allows them to punish those whom they have sexually exploited, once they become pregnant. The servant thereby becomes a disposable sexual commodity (cf. Lord Halden Hotel). Whilst the father of her child, as a member of the employer's household, remains unscathed, she is instead dismissed, thereby being made jobless, homeless and without the means to support her child.

The reasons why the servant-maid subsequently commits suicide are not overtly stated by Lillian Sanderson. Because the relationship between the child's parents is implicitly one of sexual exploitation, her death is unlikely to have been caused by heartache over a broken relationship (as in Dave German's variant). The woman's suicide has three other possible causes. Firstly, it might have been incited by her mistreatment at the hands of both her seducer and her employers. Secondly, it might be connected with the prospect of having to face adverse circumstances in the outside world, now pregnant and without any means of financial support to alleviate the poverty of single parenthood. Thirdly, the reason for her suicide might be related to the stigma attached to unmarried mothers, engendering a hostile, rather than comforting, reception from the community to which she returns.

In terms of the status of, and relationship between, its central protagonists, Lillian Sanderson's version of the "Jay's Grave" legend is strikingly similar to that published by Sally Jones in Legends of Devon (1981). Jones describes

how "a servant-maid who worked in a great house near Widecombe" becomes pregnant after being seduced by "her master's student son" (53). By describing this young woman as "seduced", a number of other popular writers also emphasise the exploitative nature of this relationship (cf. Burton; Whitlock; Carter and Skilton; Bennie, Appendix vi). Jones' account again highlights the injustice of the double standard, as the maid is dismissed and drowns herself in a pond.

Most components in this account, can also be discerned within versions of the legend printed in popular sources around this time. As early as 1914, Chase used the intriguing appearance of the flowers, and mystery as to their giver, as a dramatic device in The Heart of the Moor (88-89, 99-104, 158-177). It has since been suggested that Chase herself was responsible for perpetuating this mystery, by secretly placing flowers at the site (St Leger-Gordon; Hemery; Barber, Appendix vi; III:027:I:96). By the mid 1960s, the mysterious appearance of flowers seems to have become an integral part of the "Jay's Grave" legend itself (St Leger-Gordon 115-117). It has been acknowledged and perpetuated by a number of popular publications since (cf. Underwood Gazetteer, Ghosts of; Burton; Whitlock; Hemery; Bennie, Appendix vi). Lillian Sanderson's narrative is, however, totally dissimilar to any of these popular printed versions in assuming that an illegitimate child was born and might possibly be traced.

In Mr Brown's version of "Jay's Grave", attitudes towards illegitimacy as evidenced by the stated text alone are much more difficult to fathom. This is because the narrative provides no account of the employer's response to the maid's predicament, moving straight from the reference to her becoming pregnant by the farmer's son to "and then she hung herself". In this respect, the pregnancy/suicide elements of this narrative are structured in a similar fashion to the Herbert memorate relating to the Dartington suicide. Likewise, it is the juxtaposition of events which implies a causal link between the maid's out-of-wedlock pregnancy and her suicide, and the absence of any intermediate description, for instance, relating to the relationship between the female protagonist and her lover.

It is therefore only by creating a sub-text that the listener can deduce why the servant-maid committed suicide. This might be drawn from a similar range of sources to those outlined in the previous section, including the listener's life experience and their knowledge of social history (perhaps from oral testimonies); existing narrative conventions relating to illegitimacy or the figure of the female suicide; and supernatural conventions relating to the isolated

female ghost. Likewise, the meanings elicited from the narrative are wholly dependent upon the nature of the sub-text the listener creates.

Thus, the legend could be viewed as highlighting the harsh attitudes towards women who became pregnant outside wedlock in previous generations, by using the extreme example of a servant who would rather take her own life than face the shame of having an illegitimate child. However, this is clearly just one of many possible interpretations. Because of the relationship of inequality between the two central protagonists, where the farmer's son is of a higher social class than the servant, it is possible that the notion of sexual and class exploitation could be seen as occupying a more central position than the theme of illegitimacy. Hence, the suicide might instead be viewed largely as a response to misery and mistreatment in a legend primarily articulating class hostilities and gender conflict. In fact, the direction in which Mr Brown later takes the conversation, by talking about a squire who left all his money to his parishioners, suggests that the breaking of social boundaries and the inversion of class order, may for him have been the most important feature of this narrative.

The fragmented, conversational style in which the Brown narrative is told distinguishes it from synthesised accounts of the "Jay's Grave" legend in popular printed sources. In terms of content, however, there are similarities with a number of these texts, suggesting that the versions of the legend which both informants encountered have in turn been shaped by these printed sources. Perhaps significantly, the fact that this young woman was taken from the workhouse and apprenticed to a Dartmoor farmer is mentioned in several accounts, up until the present day (cf. Deacon, 1973; Whitlock, 1977; Brown, 1982; Carter and Skilton, 1987; Bennie, 1995, Appendix vi). The type of relationship described, between the servant and her employer, is also emphasised by several other writers, who explicitly identify this individual as the employer's son in two cases (cf. Whitlock, 1977; Jones, 1981; Carter and Skilton, 1987, Appendix vi). In Lois Deacon's novel, the lover is also closely associated with the employer's family, being a live-in apprentice on the farm.

By mentioning that the woman hung herself, this narrative foregrounds a particularly melodramatic, poignant mode of self-destruction, with the effect of emphasising the female protagonist's extreme state of emotional disturbance and psychological pain. Mr Brown's narrative is the only oral variant to include this particular detail. However, many of the popular sources printing the "Jay's Grave" legend have tended to borrow the details of the suicide from one

another, the melodramatic hanging first being referred to at the beginning of this century by Crossing and then Chase (ref). Since Ruth St Leger Gordon published a version of the legend in The Witchcraft, in 1965 (115), the woman's suicide by hanging has become a relatively stable feature of the narrative within popular printed sources (cf. Underwood, Gazetteer 1971; Burton 1973; Deacon 1973; Whitlock 1977; Underwood, Ghosts 1982; Brown 1982; Hemery 1983; Carter and Skilton 1987; Barbers 1988; Bennie 1995, Appendix vi).

The possible influence of printed sources is again suggested by the dating given in this account, which loosely corresponds to that given by earlier writers such as Chase, whose novel, The Heart, places the suicide somewhere between 1789 and 1810, S.H. Burton (1973), who states that the woman was "a poor house drudge of the mid-eighteenth century", Lois Deacon (1973) and Brown (1982), who state she was born in 1790 (Appendix vi).¹²⁰ This notion of historical context seems to have continued into the following decade with Hemery (1983) stating that the hanging occurred "early last century", and Carter and Skilton (1987) that she "hanged herself in a local barn nearly two hundred years ago" (Appendix vi).

Jess Hill's use of the "Jay's Grave" legend is particularly interesting, as it is cited as direct evidence of harsh attitudes towards illegitimacy in the past. Consequently, the existence of this stigma "it was a disgrace, wasn't it, for a girl to get pregnant, years ago", is directly linked to the woman being "cast out", her predicament inciting only social condemnation. Both Charlie and Jess Hill's versions of the legend typify the usual pattern in establishing an indirect causal link between the servant's dismissal and her eventual death. However, unusually, Charlie does not attribute her death to suicide. Consequently, it cannot be seen as a reflection of her own emotional turmoil caused by past mistreatments; the prospect of poverty; or the stigma of single parenthood which she would now be obliged to face. Her fate in dying, probably from exposure, is therefore seen more as a repercussion of her dismissal, itself leading to poverty, rather than as direct repercussion of the stigma associated with illegitimacy.

By creating sets of binary oppositions within the narrative, Charlie's version yields its symbolic significance (cf. Simpson "Beyond" 224-29). The female protagonist is immediately established as an orphan and, as in Dave German's version, is consequently seen as a lone, "rootless" individual with no obvious means of support. Being apprenticed to a farmer by implication she is placed

¹²⁰See later discussion re. Chase's dating.

within an extended family related by ties of kinship, a group who rely upon and support each other as a productive social unit. The existence of this essential opposition clearly had a radical effect on the emotional impact of the narrative for Dave:

She was an orphan and in those days they were, well, they had the workhouse and orphanages and "Oh, I want somebody, I want a girl or a boy on the farm. I'm the farmer, rough and ready". And this girl got a job [on] the farm helping the mother or whatever and either the son or the next door neighbours' son got her pregnant and he didn't want to know, you know. "Go away". And, poor girl, she didn't have any friends or relations. Nobody to care for nobody to give her counselling, no one to look after her or give her a cuddle and say, oh, "We'll help you". She was on her own. (Ill:027:l:96)

In having an illegitimate child by a member of her employer's family, the servant immediately threatens the existing social order. In doing so, she blurs the distinction between "insider" social group and "outsider" individual, as well as the boundary between employer and employee. In Charlie's version, by expelling her, the family attempt to preserve the existing status quo. Within the narrative, attitudes towards illegitimacy are therefore seen as being determined by the particular identities of the parties concerned and the group allegiances involved (see. Beattie on kinship 100-01).

In Wray Tucker's version, it might be argued that attitudes towards illegitimacy are used to draw attention to the employer's hypocrisy and to the injustice of the double standard. Wray's description of her dismissal - "they kicked her out with, I dunno, ten bob in her pocket or something" - tends to give consistency to this impression. This statement seems to imply that rather than giving the servant her final wages, the family pay her off in order to protect their own reputations, thereby drawing attention to the inherent corruption in their own moral standards.

Although Wray's variant implies an indirect causal link between the servant's dismissal and her subsequent suicide, once again the exact reason for her suicide is ambiguous. Consequently, depending on interpretation, it might be attributed either to broken-heartedness, mistreatment, or the prospect of poverty and disgrace.

A subtle shift in attitudes towards out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth occurs in Dave German's variant. As the servant is not dismissed, the shame attached to illegitimacy is seen as less explicitly tied to the employer's middle-class value system. Rather, the more general sense that the servant-maid would be condemned for having a child outside wedlock pervades the

world of the narrative. The father's reaction in deserting his lover "as soon as he found out" inadvertently acknowledges the illegitimacy stigma and the likelihood that he may be pressurised into making a commitment which he does not want. However, it is unclear whether the farmer's son seeks to avoid the recriminations of his lover, his lover's family, his own family, or recriminations from the local community as a whole. As her death is seen more as an indication of her distress over the break-up of the relationship, than a measure of the illegitimacy stigma itself, the servant's suicide unfortunately does not clarify the issue of blame.

Kitty Jay's burial at the crossroads with a stake through her heart has symbolic importance, marking her as a "criminalised" class of individual because of the established associations in relation to such graves (see Molly Hunt above). Her being denied a "proper" burial in the world of the narrative, suggests that, as a suicide, she is seen as being eternally damned. The stated rationale for the desecration of her corpse with a stake, to keep her evil spirits in, also confirms this impression. By modern standards, this view of women who committed suicide having become pregnant from a broken affair is therefore extremely harsh, as is their treatment within the narrative world described. By including this detail, Dave German's account therefore incites greater sympathy for the woman as a victim of social circumstance.

By comparison with Lillian Sanderson, Charlie Hill and Wray Tucker's accounts, Dave German's narrative is more concerned with using attitudes towards illegitimacy to emphasise the mistreatment and exploitation by the middle classes of the least privileged, than with drawing attention to middle-to-upper-class hypocrisy deriving from the double standard. However, through once again depicting the treatment of this woman as a disposable sexual commodity, this narrative still uses attitudes towards illegitimacy as a means of expressing class hostilities.

An insight into the attitudes of those who perpetuate the "Jay's Grave" narrative can be gained from a closer examination of the interaction between the ongoing custom of placing both floral tributes and coins on this wayside grave and the telling of the legend itself. In English culture, where flowers have been traditionally used to mark the graves of the dead, the act of placing flowers on a grave is, in itself, a highly symbolic act. Depending on its social context, this gesture signifies remembrance of the deceased, as well as allowing the expression of emotions such as respect, remorse, grief and forgiveness

(Keightly 118-121). Yet both the forms of this ritual act are constantly shifting and its associated meanings subject to revisions.

During the 1970s, for example, folklorists witnessed the emergence of a new tradition whereby floral and other tributes were placed at the site of a sudden, tragic or violent death, such as a car crash, often on the anniversary of the event (see Vickery, A Dictionary 149; cf. Monger). Thus, this ritual procedure began to be disassociated with the burial site of the deceased, although some of the symbolic language in placing such tributes, in terms of expressing sorrow, remorse, and sympathy for the deceased and their family, was retained. In relation to some such sites, additional layers of meaning have also crept in, such as where offerings are now placed "for luck", as with coins in a wishing well (Vickery, A Dictionary 149).

The placing of floral and other tributes on wayside graves is not uncommon. Somerset informants during the late 1960s, for example, remembered flowers being put on the grave of Molly Hunt "in years gone by" (Palmer, The Folklore 88-89). Vickery cites a further example of a well-known crossroads grave in Suffolk, the Boy's Grave, on which bunches of flowers are also placed (Vickery, A Dictionary 149).¹²¹ As with Jay's Grave, in many such instances this procedure has ceased to be "commemorative" in the true sense of the word.¹²² Interestingly, rather than preserving the person or event in memory, by ritual act, it actually attempts, in many instances, to construct or create it. Hence the many different variants of narratives springing up around such sites (see Vickery, A Dictionary 149).

A circular relationship exists between the "Jay's Grave" narrative and ritual procedures attending this site. Where individuals are aware of the illegitimacy-related narratives associated with this woman, and place floral tributes on her grave, their actions might be interpreted as articulating sympathies for her predicament. Symbolically they cast the circumstances of her death as worthy of empathy, remorse and regret, perhaps even as "tragic", considering the symbolism of flowers placed particularly at roadsides, to mark the scene of fatal accidents. It could therefore be argued that this woman is seen as the victim of harsh attitudes towards illegitimacy by at least some of those who sympathetically place flowers and other tributes at this site.

¹²¹ At the Chippenham - Moulton cross-roads.

¹²² i.e. to "preserve in memory by some celebration" (Concise Oxford Dictionary).

It is also possible to view the narrative, and ritual procedures associated with Jay's Grave, in reverse. One could recognise that individuals have a number of different motives for placing flowers and coins upon the grave, but see the significance as being that an illegitimacy-related narrative has become tied to such a spot. In other words, the fact that a servant committed suicide because she was pregnant, or was turned out because of pregnancy and died from natural causes, is seen as the kind of story for which people would have sympathy, and express their regret.

Performance

Through her choice of words, and the style in which she recounts the narrative, Lillian Sanderson acknowledges her desire to believe in the "Jay's Grave" legend. However, rather than being "told as true", the narrative is instead performed "as if it could be true". Thus she tells the narrative in a consistently serious tone, and immediately draws attention to "the stimulating and authenticating object", stating "you know there's a grave up Dartmoor, don't you? And someone puts a bunch of flowers on that grave, don't they", using a similar strategy to Dave German, before she proceeds to tell the tale (Simpson, "The Local" 28).

Because Lillian wants to believe in the legend, the question of who might be responsible for the flowers on the grave is rationalised according to the details of the legend itself: "They wonder who ever puts 'er flowers on. I mean, 'e couldn't do it because 'e'd be dead". Rather than questioning the existence of the servant-maid, and her lover, Lillian instead speculates about what happened to this servant-maid's child. In fact, the main sense of mystery seems to derive from this question, which is raised twice within the space of the narrative.

Lillian does not recount the legend as though it were irrefutably historical fact, possibly because she is only too aware of the gaps in her own knowledge - "I'd always like to find the 'istory out of that" - and makes no attempt to conceal them. Her inclination to believe that the tale is true, however, is also evidenced in her attempts to authenticate the circumstances described with recourse to experiences in the past - "Twas a servant years ago and they were taken advantage of, and if they'd had a baby they was thrown out, weren't they?" Consequently, accepted truths regarding the sexual exploitation of servant-maids, with which she assumes her listeners are also familiar, are served up as supporting historical "facts". However, the source of this belief is unclear. As

was previously outlined in relation to the supernatural narrative, this notion of historical "fact" might derive from personal experience and the oral testimonies of others. Alternatively, it might be formulated according to existing narrative conventions relating to the experience of illegitimacy in the past, particularly literary conventions which themselves have influenced television, film and other forms of popular culture.

Mr Brown's "storytelling event" demonstrates some of the characteristics described by Dégh in her observation of a similar legend-telling session, being the least "contrived" of all the oral variants in terms of its performance context:

This . . . demonstrates some important characteristics of legend composition and the variable attitudes expressed parallel to the process. The form seems to be unstable and subject to the actual feelings and interaction of the people who happened to be present. This is to say that the personality composition of the group was responsible for this particular event. Each legend-producing session has to be viewed as unique. ("Legend and" 107)

The development of the narrative is particularly interesting. In its early stages, the friend begins by discrediting the belief of "a few years ago" that a ghost haunted the grave, by means of a humorous personal experience narrative. Thus, he recounts how the reported ghost turned out to be a sheet in the hedge and consequently resorts to a much-used strategy employed within "traditions of disbelief" (Hufford, "Traditions of" 49).

Accordingly, the disbelief in this particular supernatural agent conforms to the well-worn argument "that traditions about such agents generally develop with very few actual experiential referents" (Hufford, "Traditions" 49). This particular haunting is thus accounted for using the third explanation outlined by Hufford: "the creative urges that lead to hoaxes, and the fabrication and modification of legends by prevaricating raconteurs" ("Traditions" 49). One cannot help but wonder whether this scepticism derives from the fact that ghost narratives relating to the "Jay's Grave" legend started to appear in popular, often commercially orientated, guides to folklore and the supernatural, during the approximate time period to which the narrators attribute the hauntings (cf. Underwood Gazetteer, 1971; Whitlock, 1977; Chard, 1979; Underwood Ghosts, 1982; Brown, 1982, Appendix vi).

The personal experience narrative of the first narrator has the effect of undermining the original belief in the ghost, because the anti-ghost story he tells falls into Hufford's second category of "actual experiences", described as follows:

When the combined "disbeliefs" of baseless tradition and culturally shaped hallucination are excluded in a given case, the next explanation traditionally resorted to is "illusion". Whilst hallucinations have *no* external source, illusions are misperceptions of external stimuli. A traditional example from Newfoundland tells of timid believers in a headless ghost repeatedly fleeing from what a brave and level-headed skeptic ultimately discovered to be the rear end of a horse seen at dusk through the ever-present Newfoundland fog. ("Traditions of" 50 original emphasis)

With the humorous remark "he'd left his clothes behind, 'adn't 'e?", Mr Brown then aligns himself with the sceptical position of the first narrator. Consequently, both speakers are faced with a dilemma when the interviewer asks them about the "Jay's Grave" legend itself, for by switching to a relative position of belief, they risk losing face. Consequently, Mr Brown initially approaches the narrative with caution, reserving an air of detachment in his provision of the abstract.

The woman's out-of-wedlock pregnancy is initially described in euphemistic terms by Mr Brown - " 'er boss . . . got 'er in the family way". Interestingly, when his friend assumes responsibility for recounting the narrative in slightly more detail, he experiences some difficulty in openly stating that "she got pregnant", his embarrassment hinting at the taboo nature of illegitimacy itself, according to his own social experience. At this juncture, Mr Brown enthusiastically rescues him, and decisively interjects "'er got pregnant with the son?", thereby giving him licence to continue with the narrative. Consequently, the friend immediately goes into detail as to how the woman died, and where she is buried at "a cross-road of Manaton and Widecombe parishes". The tale thereby immediately starts to acquire some of the classic traits of "believe me" narratives. It also provides some sense of historical context, as this kind of "wayside" burial described would not normally be associated with either late-nineteenth- or twentieth-century society. In the meantime, the interviewer and Mr Brown subtly shape the performance as "their feelings evoked in the different stages of the telling" contribute to the legend variant itself (Dégh "Legend and Belief" 107). Mr Brown seems to vouch for the truth of the narrative by interjecting with affirmative remarks such as "that's right". Significantly, when the interviewer directly poses the question "and that's a true story you think?", the friend instantly attempts to provide confirmation of this truth by responding with a precise reference to dates "it 'appened they think in the end 1780 sometime".

Both narrators aim at the effect of accuracy, paying "painstaking attention to the fine detail in a strenuous effort after verisimilitude, accuracy and internal coherence - that is: to the 'truth' as we customarily judge it" (Bennett, "Legend"

16). Consequently, between them they go to some lengths to provide a feasible explanation as to why there is no document evidencing this woman's birth, bringing their knowledge of historical records into close association with the legend to persuasively ground this account in reality, "a lot of the old books were destroyed in Exeter apparently about that time. So they think that even if there was one it was destroyed". Eventually, both provide evaluative remarks - "it's possible" and "it's quite feasible" - revealing their mutual belief that it could be true.

The context in which Jess Hill introduces the "Jay's Grave" legend evidences her utter conviction that it is based upon a "true" historical occurrence, as does the style in which she recounts the tale. Similarly to her husband and Dave German, she names the grave after the woman early on in the narrative, thus strengthening the sense of the legend's authenticity through its connection with the stimulating object. All three narratives therefore exemplify the tendency, identified by Simpson, for material objects and place names to be used as authenticating evidence for local legends ("The Local" 28).

Certain aspects of Charlie Hill's performance also suggest that he believes the legend to be grounded in truth and wants to communicate this to the listener. Consequently, he pays attention to detail, in terms of the "facts" as he knows them. He therefore chooses to acknowledge the ambiguity surrounding the woman's name, stating "Jay, Jane was an orphan", and later adding by way of explanation "you see they call it 'Jay's Grave' but . . . we've always known it as 'Jane's Grave' ". Charlie also tries to be specific in terms of place and occupation, stating "she went [to be] a servant to this farmer on Dartmoor". When asked who told him the legend and when, Charlie reflects a similar preoccupation to "believe me" narrators, who "are worried or apologetic when they fail to produce sufficient information" in terms of his response - "I'd be kidding you if I told you a cock and bull story . . . you're after the truth" (cf. Bennett, "Legend" 17). Most of all, Charlie is anxious not to fabricate the truth, in order to satisfy the curiosity of the interviewer, believing that there is an objective truth to be had, and facts which might be obtained.

One particularly intriguing aspect of this narrative in performance is that, similarly to Mr Brown, Charlie was himself a Dartmoor farmer. Consequently, in both narratives the male responsible for the woman's pregnancy is a member of the narrator's own occupational group. In addition, in Charlie Hill's narrative, it is implicitly the farmer's family who turn the woman out. Those responsible for her death are not therefore "the other", in terms of class and occupation, as in

Lillian Sanderson's account, but rather a member of the narrator's own "insider" group.

Wray is the most sceptical narrator of all those who provide oral variants of the "Jay's Grave" legend. Significantly, his style of narration is very similar to that of Bennett's selected, "don't believe me" narrator, Michael. Having been asked to recount his version of the legend, Wray immediately tells the tale with no abstract, no orientating information and no evaluation. Similarly to Michael's account of "The Hairy-Handed Hitchhiker", Wray's "rendition rushes on with considerable 'narrative velocity', flowing directly and without interruption to its end", and likewise his "presentation of the plot is extremely bare" ("Legend" 21).

By comparison with the other accounts, Wray provides very few specific references either to places, dates or names. The throw-away remark "they kicked her out with I dunno ten bob in her pocket or something" tends to suggest that he is not particularly concerned about the absence of detail. His narrative is very different from Dave German's, having "a 'non-Labovian' structure which omits orientation and coda, concentrates on complicating action and ends with only a brief resolution akin to a punch line" (Bennett, "Legend" 25), when he states "that's the story I've heard. That's the story I'll stick by sort of [chuckles]. No, we um, I like to keep it going". Wray's concern with pointing up the traditional nature of the legend as a folk narrative clearly "doing the rounds" is also telling.

One might argue that this is simply characteristic of Wray's narrational style. Yet a comparison with the personal narrative concerning his cousin, who had an illegitimate child during the Second World War, tends to suggest that this is not the case (see Chapter 5). Although this narrative also showed signs of having been repeatedly performed (having similar stylistic features on both occasions it was recorded) Wray took far more trouble to tell it as true, carefully delineating a sense of time, place, and the identities of those described.

As with the narrative of Bennett's teller, Michael, in Wray's "Jay's Grave" variant, there is "internal evidence that the narrator has chosen to assume that the story is already familiar to the hearers (this may take the form of 'hitting the high spots' only, or of revealing plot elements which for true dramatic effect need to be kept concealed)" ("Legend" 26). However, the reasons for this assumption are unclear. It is hard to tell, whether Wray's sceptical position was a product of the interview session itself, in which he had already discussed the issue of belief with reference to the "authenticating" mystery flowers on "Jay's

Grave". Wray's awareness that his listeners were South West researchers in social history and folklore could also have affected the "storytelling event" itself.

Several aspects of Dave German's narrative suggests that it is told as true. Apart from having no abstract, it perfectly conforms to the Labovian structure which characterises "believe me" narratives. It is also extremely specific in terms of details relating to times and place. The ensuing tale is structured with considerable care and the kind of "oral paragraphing" found in the "believe me" narratives discussed by Bennett. Similarly to Lillian Sanderson, Dave German also tends to authenticate the narrative with recourse to experiences in the past. Consequently, he asserts that "in those days, a suicide had to be buried at midnight, on the edge of the parish", and emphasises that Kitty Jay was buried accordingly. As with some of the other narratives, the grave's location itself therefore seems to support the assertion that this woman was a suicide, as anyone familiar with the site can see that the grave lies between Manaton and Widecombe parishes.

In the second part of the account, Dave creates a sense of mystery surrounding the grave's flowers. Because he asserts "ever since then there have been flowers on her grave", he creates the impression of continuity and thus reinforces the link between legend and authenticating object. He also uses a similar strategy to "believe me" narrators, in bringing the legend into close proximity with his own experience, as an employee at the Tourist Information Centre at Princetown. He uses reported speech to humorously recount the anecdote regarding his bet with the tourists, therefore heightening the sense that his testimony is "true". He also makes use of a common ploy identified by Simpson, whereby "the concluding sentences of a narrative direct the hearers' attention back to one of these local features, triumphantly asserting that 'you can see it to this day', as though that in itself authenticates the entire story" (Simpson, "The Local" 28).

Despite being "told as true", the way in which Dave recounted the legend, indicated that he did not whole-heartedly believe in the truth of the narrative himself. The phrase "and dear old Kitty Jay", for example, whilst ostensibly expressing sympathy for the woman is delivered with mock pathos. In telling the legend, Dave seemed to tacitly acknowledge that his main purpose was to entertain, by distinguishing his style of performance from conversational speech and by veering away from a consistently serious tone, unlike Mr Brown.

Historical Context

The purpose of the following section is to discuss both the circumstances described in each of the above oral variants of the "Jay's Grave" legend, and the attitudes they depict towards out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimacy, in terms of an appropriate historical context. As with the previous analysis of supernatural narratives, this section is particularly concerned with establishing to what extent the narratives both correspond with, and diverge from, the reality of the experience of illegitimacy as reconstructed in Chapter 5.

As earlier demonstrated in relation to the Herbert memorate, there are several different ways of establishing an appropriate historical context in relation to any given folk narrative. Simpson's observation that

anything noteworthy, from an illegible tombstone to an uncommon pub name . . . can rouse curiosity and become a focus for story-telling. The object that served as stimulus then takes on two further roles: its existence is a perpetual reminder that keeps the tale alive, and is often claimed to be proof positive of its veracity, (Simpson, "The Local" 28)

might well be applied to the legend of "Jay's Grave". Consequently, one could heed her suggestion that "the age of the stimulating and authenticating object is of help to scholars in determining the date at which the legend began to be told in one particular spot" and attempt to use the physical structure of the existing, unmarked, grave as a means of establishing this historical context (Simpson, "The Local" 28).

The earliest reference to the history of the grave site itself can be found in William Crossing's "Guide to Dartmoor", initially published in the Western Morning News in May 1909, which states:

About 3/4 m. from the gate a path runs off L. between the estate named and Heytree, and here we shall notice a small mound, with a head and footstone. It is the burial place of a suicide, and is known as Jay's Grave. Kitty Jay, as she used to be spoken of, is said to have been a young unmarried woman, who many years ago hung herself in an outbuilding belonging to Canna, a farm not far from the foot of East Down (S. Ex. 61), and in accordance with the barbarous custom of the time was interred at this cross-way. More than forty years ago Mr. James Bryant, of Hedge Barton, caused the grave to be opened, when human bones, including a skull, were discovered, and declared on examination to be those of a female. The date of the unfortunate woman's death is unknown, as no one then remembered the occurrence. Mr Bryant had the bones placed in a box and re-interred on the spot where they had

been found, and raised the mound and set up the stones that now mark it. (Guide 295)

As the physical description of the grave in this account corresponds with the appearance of the grave site today, Crossing's account suggests that the present set of grave stones were set in place by Bryant at some point during the 1860s (cf. Chase, The Heart 88). Interestingly, Crossing's most concentrated period of exploration and fieldwork on the moor, between approximately 1867 and 1893, corresponds with the years immediately after the grave's construction (Le Messurier 5-7). Although he remarks: "no one then remembered the occurrence" at the time of excavation, his earlier comment, "Kitty Jay, as she used to be spoken of", suggests that the legend was actively circulated in oral tradition within his own living memory. Crossing's remarks therefore seem to point to the fact that after the discovery of this woman's remains and her more conspicuous reburial, interest in this story was rekindled.

A similar impression is created in his later account of 1914, where he alludes to the one-time existence of supernatural narratives associated with this grave, commenting "the little grave still exists, but the shade of the unfortunate girl has long ceased to visit it" (89). Interestingly, his use of the present tense in this later account: "what drove Kitty Jay to the act of self-destruction is unknown, but the local story has it that she hanged herself in a barn" (89) also implies that a version of the narrative is still told.

Five years after Crossing's early account, the history of the grave site is once again alluded to, this time by the novelist Beatrice Chase in her fictional work The Heart (1914). Chase uses one of her fictional characters, Thirza Endacott, to explain the grave's history. Thirza recounts the story as told to her by her mother. A Squire Brown dismantled the bank housing the grave, during her mother's lifetime. He discovered bones, later confirmed to be that of a female human, by a doctor staying with him at the time. The Squire then replaced the bones, constructing a more obvious grave in order to prevent any further disturbance (101-02). Chase therefore seems to corroborate Crossing's earlier testimony regarding the construction of the grave. As Thirza is depicted as a young woman of marriageable age, she might be envisaged to be in her mid-twenties. As her mother would logically be between approximately twenty-four, to forty years older, this places the excavation between 1849-1865, thus corroborating the dates in Crossing's account.¹²³

¹²³ This calculation is partly formulated using average marriage ages for women in Britain in 1889 (Gillis, For Better 111).

Although it is possible that Chase may have used Crossing's earlier guide as a source of artistic inspiration, several features of her account make it unlikely that she borrowed his material. A remark in her introduction, "we did discover the suicide's grave one day by accident, long after we had been here", suggests that she may have started to unearth the grave's history prior to the publication of Crossing's work (vi). As Chase arrived on Dartmoor in 1901-02, and Crossing's account was not published until 1909, it is clear that she could have found the grave in this intermediate period (Laver 88). Similarly, her additional remark, "I came in to search maps and guide books, but in vain", suggests she was actually unaware of Crossing's references to "Jay's Grave" in the Western Morning News, or the well-indexed version of his "Guide to Dartmoor", published in 1912.

Two more contemporary writers, Ruth St Leger-Gordon and Theo Brown, provide additional information about this excavation. Both agree that the excavation took place "about 1860", tying it to a similar time period referred to in the previous accounts. Only St Leger-Gordon explicitly mentions that pathologists conducted the examination of the bones. Brown states that the "local squire" ordered the bones to be reinterred. St Leger-Gordon states that "Bryant had the remains placed in a wooden box, re-interred on the same spot and the little mound raised above, as it is today" (115-16). Unfortunately, neither author gives the source of her information, although perhaps significantly, Crossing is cited in both St Leger-Gordon's bibliography and Brown's list of "further reading" (St Leger-Gordon 9; Brown 143). Consequently, it is difficult to tell whether either author is reliable in respect of facts.

Although the above evidence establishes that the "stimulating and authenticating object" for the "Jay's Grave" legend is tied to a period around 1860, the question still remains as to whether the stone structure itself is of any help in determining the date at which the legend began to be told on Dartmoor. Unfortunately, because the grave was erected some time after the original burial, the history of the site itself leaves room for the fact that the legend may have been circulated between the time of the woman's death and Bryant's excavation in 1860. In the absence of an earlier stone marker, or reference to an earlier marker, which might reveal the date of the woman's death, this method of establishing a historical context is limited, because the attitudes evidenced by the legend itself may well be tied to an earlier period.

An appropriate historical context for the legend can be more accurately established using information contained in some of the existing written sources.

In Chase's introduction to The Heart, where she discusses the factual underpinnings of the novel, she asserts that, following her discovery of the grave, "the story was lost until I found Granny Caunter" (vi). The novelist therefore implies that this fictional character was inspired by a real person. Consequently, the following passage, in which Granny Caunter recounts the legend to Chase, may well be significant in terms of the dating of the legend itself.

J's grave 'tis called. No, I can't tell 'ee how 'tis spelt for I never couldn't spell. Mary Jay was the poor maid's name. I heard my mother tell of it, when I was a li'l maid. It happened when her was a li'l maid herself. . . . 'Tis a suicide's grave, miss. . . . A poor maid, miss. Her was an orphan 'prentice from the workhouse, 'prenticed to Barracott farm between Manaton and Heatree. One day, when her was quite young, her tooked a rope and went to the barn there on the Manaton road, and hanged herself from a beam. Her was quite dead when the farmer found her. (Chase 89-90)

Assuming this character, who is described as an extremely elderly woman, was between seventy and ninety years old when this conversation allegedly occurred, this account indicates that the "Jay's Grave" legend was in active circulation prior to the date of Bryant's excavation in 1860, between about 1830-1850. Assuming that Granny Caunter was born when her mother was between twenty-four and forty-five years old, then the suicide itself would have happened between approximately 1779-1820.¹²⁴ A further remark by Granny Caunter narrows this dating down to 1779-1810, as "it happened more'n a hundred years ago, and not a soul ever mentioned it after my poor mother died" ("The Heart" 93).

St Leger-Gordon also suggests that the story was known prior to Bryant's excavation, by which time "after the lapse of a century, facts had become blurred" (115). Consequently, she dates the death of this "poor-house infant of the eighteenth century" at around 1760 (115). St Leger-Gordon's account is unique in implying that "rumour", caused by the distortion of the original tale over time, was the main reason for Bryant instigating the excavation in the first place, in order to "ascertain the truth" as to whether it housed a human or sheep's burial. Unless the story of this woman had previously been in oral tradition, it is hard to imagine why rumours of this nature would emerge.

Theo Brown adds yet another strand to the story of how and why this grave was originally discovered, claiming that "about 1860, a road-mender working

¹²⁴ Calculation formulated as above, with average of 23.75 years for period 1824-1844 (Gillis, For Better 111).

opposite, dug into a rough burial and reported finding bones" (99). When these were established not to be those of a pony, but a young woman, this labourer "told his wife about this and she could remember being told by her mother that it was the burial of a young girl who had hanged herself at a farm in Manaton parish" (Devon 99-100). Like Crossing, Brown therefore implies that the discovery of the remains rekindled interest in the tale, and also confirms that the legend of this suicide existed in oral tradition some years prior to the excavation in 1860 (see Brown Appendix vi).

Collectively, the above evidence from written sources points to the "Jay's Grave" legend beginning to be told on Dartmoor at around the turn of the eighteenth century. Internal characteristics of the legend itself, such as the reference to a crossroads burial in the accounts of both Crossing and Chase, also tend to tie the legend to a period prior to 1823, when suicides were buried in this manner. The oral accounts which follow are therefore examined with a view to the fact that the circumstances, and attitudes they describe, may relate to a period between approximately 1780 - present day.

It is important to establish how closely the circumstances described in each of the oral narratives corresponds with the reality of the experience of illegitimacy, in the South West of England during this period. In terms of occupation, both Lillian Sanderson and Wray Tucker's versions imply that the woman was a domestic servant in a large residence, her role reflecting the national experience of illegitimacy as regards rates amongst domestic servants. However, throughout the period 1780-present day, there have been few wealthy rural houses in the immediate vicinity of Jay's Grave in which the woman might have been employed. Therefore, in terms of the locality itself, the woman's experience in this respect has to be seen as atypical. This particular detail tends to suggest that rather than being an episode in local history, orally preserved, both Lillian and Wray's accounts are, in part, a product of literary convention. However, the depiction of this kind of servant as being desperate in the face of out-of-wedlock pregnancy has a degree of historical accuracy. This is due to reasons already explained in relation to the Herbert memorate, relating to the limited choices of this occupational group; proximity with the employer; limited access to outside networks; as well as the likelihood of illegitimate pregnancy having more drastic repercussions for the domestic servant than for women in any other sort of employment.

In three other accounts, the woman is either implicitly or explicitly described as an apprentice to a farmer on Dartmoor. The geography of the local area

suggests that her occupational role as such would have been far more likely. An agricultural labourer could easily have been employed by a farm in Manaton or one of the neighbouring villages, and consequently her identity corresponds much more closely with the reality of experience in the local area.

The fact that Jay is named as a farm apprentice, either from an orphanage or workhouse, is particularly interesting. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the alarming increase in demands on the parish poor rates resulted in the overseers being particularly vigilant (Bettey 120-21). They ensured that children, including those who were illegitimate or categorised as "orphans", should not become charges upon parish relief by apprenticing them, often at an extremely young age, into "husbandry" or "housewifery", effectively existing as "virtually unpaid servants" (Bettey 121; cf. Chase The Heart 179-81). Unfortunately, it seems most likely that Brown's assertion that "Jay" appeared in "a brief record in the Apprentices' Register which Beatrice Chase saw but is now lost" is unfounded, being based on a misreading of the relevant passage (Brown, Devon 101; cf. Chase, The Heart 179-81). However, her description as a young farm apprentice still strongly ties her to the experience of young apprentices of this kind on Dartmoor during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It also emphasises her extreme vulnerability to exploitation and strong impetus to become enfranchised through marriage (Brown, Devon 101).

Once again, it should be emphasised that it is not possible to obtain accurate statistics on illegitimacy rates amongst female farm apprentices and labourers for this regional area during this period. However, as previously mentioned in Chapter 5, by comparison with women from other occupational groups, the national incidence of illegitimate pregnancy amongst servants was relatively high throughout the period under consideration.

In four versions it is suggested that the servant becomes involved with, or is taken advantage of by, a member of her employer's family and subsequently becomes pregnant. Certainly, in terms of the experience of illegitimacy, as reconstructed during the nineteenth century, clearly this was not the situation in the majority of cases. As mentioned in the previous section, in most cases, illegitimate children were the product of relationships between parents of the same social status and rarely between employer and employee. Folk narratives, such as that relating to Henry Trinman in the following section, do suggest it is possible that the impression created by official written documents could therefore be misleading. Nevertheless, it still remains that illegitimate children as a product of either sexual exploitation or rape by an employer, have to be

seen as the exception rather than the norm in terms of the experience of illegitimacy as a whole. These four variants therefore emphasise an atypical occurrence. In the two remaining versions, the identity of the child's father is not mentioned; consequently it is difficult to come to any conclusions about the typicality or atypicality of the relationship.

In three versions the servant is then dismissed, whereas Jess Hill merely states that this woman of unspecified occupation was "cast out". These versions tend to mirror the reality of historical experience up until approximately the mid-twentieth century in terms of the most likely response of the employer. The suggestion that the servant was "paid off" would be a particularly fitting response, in terms of the class of family Wray describes. Charlie's version also has a degree of historical accuracy in that farmers who took on apprentices primarily for economic reasons would not welcome the encumbrance of a servant with a child. However, the circumstances in both Lillian and Charlie's versions are atypical in that the servant is described as giving birth before she is "thrown out" by her employers, whereas servants would normally have been dismissed as soon as the employer realised their pregnancy. Nevertheless, by describing events in this order, the narrative accomplishes a dramatic purpose in creating a greater sense of the employer's cruelty and the pathos surrounding the situation of the servant-maid and her new-born child.

In four variants, it is stated that the woman then commits suicide, in one version, by hanging. The likelihood of this response to her predicament is largely dependent on the set of circumstances described in each individual variant. In the versions of both Lillian Sanderson and Wray Tucker, the narrative is relatively accurate in creating a sense of the woman's limited range of choices following her dismissal. However, there is a greater probability that this particular female protagonist would have resorted to a number of other options, such as drawing upon the support of her parents or relatives, abandoning or killing the child, marrying another man, or turning to the workhouse, given the stated facts within these particular variants. In the variants of Mr Brown, Charlie Hill and Dave German, the situation is somewhat more desperate, as the woman is described either as an orphan or workhouse child. Consequently, it is clear that she has neither parents, nor any established family to fall back on. However, it is still probable that she would have received some assistance from the Guardians of the Poor, who might have a vested interest in securing a maintenance order from the father, knowing that failure to do so would oblige this woman to be totally dependent on parish relief.

Even in extreme sets of circumstances, a suicidal response to illegitimate pregnancy would have been particularly unlikely, for reasons explained in the previous section on song relating to other alternatives including abortion, abandonment, or infanticide. Rather, in Dave German's variant where the relationship is a love affair, this extreme reaction suggests more heartbreak over the lover's willingness to expose her to both financial hardship and social condemnation considering the historical context of the narrative.

That she died of exposure, as suggested in the Hill texts, is also fairly unlikely, given the existence of alternative options, such as the workhouse. However, this suggestion is made more credible in view of the fact that the woman is an orphan, and therefore could not have obtained support from parents or family, her age and status also making it unlikely she could draw on other networks for support.

The servant's eventual suicide is, however, extreme in terms of the possible responses that a servant-maid might have in this situation. As Wray makes no mention of the woman either coming from the workhouse, or being an orphan, there is no reason why she could not have tried to obtain help from her family. She could also have resorted to any of the other alternatives outlined above, including illegal abortion, infanticide and falling back on the workhouse, before taking her own life.

It is important to question why all of the above "Jay's Grave" variants depict a far more extreme or self-destructive outcome to out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth than would have "really" been experienced in the past. As with supernatural narratives, available source material is valuable in establishing whether this tendency might be attributed to the narratives being based upon a genuine historical occurrence, overlooked by historical accounts based on "official" written sources.

In the earliest written account of the grave and its legend by Crossing, the suicide is merely referred to as a young, unmarried woman (Guide 295). Crossing explicitly states in his account of 1914 that "what drove Kitty Jay to the act of self-destruction is unknown", there being no clear reference to her identity, or motive for suicide, whatsoever (Folklore 89). It is Chase's account of the legend in The Heart which introduces the idea that a sexual relationship may have been the root cause of this woman's suicide, an "accepted wisdom" being imparted by the character Granny Caunter - "no one won't ever know

more'n what us thinks, you understand us reckoned 'twas the same old story, miss - a young man, who wadn't no gude to her, poor maid" (90-91).

However, written evidence tends to suggest that only by the time St Leger-Gordon was writing in 1965, some fifty years later, do "Jay's Grave" narratives start to imply that the woman was pregnant and establish a causal link between the woman's out-of-wedlock pregnancy and her subsequent suicide. Thus Leger-Gordon euphemistically states "when she was about sixteen years old, she was seduced by a young farm-labourer. Relentlessly persecuted by her employers *when her plight became obvious*, the miserable girl finally went out and hung herself in one of the barns" (115; my italics). Since the 1960s, the notion of an unhappy sexual liaison between a variously identified male and this suicide has become one of the most persistent features of this narrative in written accounts, up until the present day (e.g., Burton (1973) 123; Carter and Skilton (1987) 11, Appendix vi). The related theme of illegitimacy and the causal link between the woman's pregnancy and subsequent suicide, have also become central, though slightly less stable, components (cf. Vian Smith 115; Deacon; Whitlock 37, 58; Sally Jones 53-54; Underwood 107-08; Brown 99-100; Bennie 11, Appendix vi).

An examination of the chronological development of written accounts in relation to "Jay's Grave" therefore suggests that versions which state that this woman was illegitimately pregnant, and further imply that pregnancy was one of the reasons for her suicide, are highly unlikely to be based on a genuine historical occurrence. Rather, it seems more likely that the romantic theme of a broken love affair began to be incorporated into the narrative at a later stage, as it continued to be perpetuated in both popular printed sources and the oral tradition. Similarly to the Herbert memorate, "Jay's Grave" variants cannot be said to evidence experiences or attitudes in the past. Rather, in the case of "believe me" narrators, the circumstances described tend to reveal what people believe could have happened, or, might feasibly be made to believe could have happened, in the past. In the case of "don't believe me" narrators, such as Wray, the "Jay's Grave" narrative still has a relationship with the cultural environment within which it is circulated, and also suggests the type of legend which might have been believed by some individuals in the recent chain of transmission (Dégh and Vázsonyi, 99-100, 116-119).

It is highly likely that the prolific sales of Chase's novel, The Heart (1914), may be partly responsible for the "Jay's Grave" narrative acquiring its romantic theme. However, the nineteenth-century stereotype relating to the female

suicide in popular literary tradition may have been equally influential in this respect, and have helped the theme of illegitimacy to fuse with the existing narrative since the 1960s. Other printed versions published since this date have clearly had an influence on the oral tradition (see Deacon An Angel, cf. Hemery 725-26), and have almost certainly helped ensure that this theme remains an intrinsic part of the legend.

The tendency for the theme of illegitimacy to become attached to existing folk narratives in the South West can also be observed in relation to a migratory legend, usually referred to as "The Fairy Midwife". South West variants of the story, as documented in written sources, have tended to conform to the pattern outlined by Hole (English 134-35; cf. Westwood 193-95, 345-46). This narrative was early recorded by Mrs Bray in 1832¹²⁵ in relation to a Tavistock midwife; by Courtney, as "The Pisky's Midwife" in parts of Cornwall; and by Baring-Gould, in relation to a Devon midwife, called Morada, near Holne village (Traditions of Devonshire vol. 1; "Cornish Folk-Lore" 181; A Book of Devon 187-93).¹²⁶

The narrative has since been collected, or repeated, by a number of other individuals in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset, up until the present day (cf. Coxhead 37-39; Sharman V. Day 12; Deane and Shaw 93; Holt West Somerset 82-85). However, a distinctive variant of the narrative has developed in relation to Bradley Manor, in Newton Abbot. In the narrative told to Theo Brown by the occupier, Mrs Woolner, has the midwife delivering an illegitimate child. Having smashed its head against the wall, causing an indelible bloodstain, its father then burns it on the fire. Years later, the midwife accidentally returns to the room to which she had been led blindfolded, and the crime is made public (Brown, Devon 20-21). Significantly, because of her awareness that this is a migratory legend, "Mrs Woolner does not believe that this is genuine historical fact" (21). Brown reveals that "in view of its similarity to the Littlecote legend, [she] considers - and so do I - that it is a localised version of a widespread folktale promulgated by ballads and broadsheets" (21-22).

THE LOCAL CHARACTER ANECDOTE

Reminiscences or anecdotes concern human characters who are known to the narrator or his audience, but apparently they may be retold frequently enough to acquire the type of verbal art and some may be retold after the characters are no longer known at first hand. They are accepted as truth, and can be considered as a sub-type of the legend, or a proto-legend. (Bascom, "The Forms" 5)

¹²⁵ Dating from Coxhead 39.

¹²⁶ Baring-Gould published the story under the title "A Pixy Birth".

The following section examines the theme of out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth as it arises in the local character anecdote. The above description by William Bascom, explains how such narratives develop out of both reminiscences or anecdotes, and might rightly be considered as a sub-genre of local legend. Hence they are sometimes referred to as "community legends" (Langlois 147). Mullen identifies local character anecdotes as "a neglected form of folk narrative", in spite of his conviction that they are widespread (*I heard* xiii). The South West narrative under consideration concerns the historical personage, the nineteenth-century hotel owner, Henry Trinman (Hemery 459; Quick 125-27). Variants are known to have been circulated in oral tradition around the Princetown area of central Dartmoor since the 1970s, and are probably still told in the locality today.

Unfortunately, due to the lack of time, I was unable to collect or obtain individual variants of this corpus of narratives. However, it was possible to obtain a written account composed by Dave German, the storyteller from Princetown, who has been actively interested in local history for many years. This narrative was formulated using oral accounts told directly to Dave German by local people in and around the area. It concerns the Two Bridges Hotel, in Two Bridges, a neighbouring village to Princetown.

In 1893 the inn passed to Henry Trinman. By all accounts his wife was extremely long suffering. Henry had a fearsome reputation throughout the moor for being a "ladies man". He became rather too friendly with several housemaids who left the hotel far fatter around the waist than when they first arrived.

The Trinman's added to the original building and renamed the inn the Two Bridges Hotel. They went upmarket, installing piped water into the hotel and even went so far as to have a bathroom installed for the convenience of their residents. Business boomed for them with day trippers and residents making use of the railway which had reached Princetown. (German)

The circumstances depicted in the above account are particularly interesting. Unlike most other fathers of illegitimate children described in local legends and supernatural narratives, Trinman is depicted as a married man. He is also described as begetting children with not just one, but "several" of his female domestic servants! Interestingly, there are some striking similarities between the identities and relationships between the protagonists described in this local character anecdote, and those depicted in certain variants of "Jay's Grave". Once again, the women are live-in female domestic servants. Consequently, they are affiliated with the working, lower classes. By contrast, Trinman and his

wife are the comparatively wealthy owners of a large hotel. Thus they have a greater affiliation with the higher middle social classes.

Whilst this particular account implies that Trinman was locally renowned as a womaniser, the question as to whether his sexual relationships with his servants were abusive or consensual remains unanswered. What is strongly implied, however, is that as soon as the predicament of each woman became obvious, she was immediately dismissed by the Trinmans, and was thus turned away without a job, an income, or a place to live. The narrative therefore explicitly links the stigma of illegitimacy to the employer's value system, the servant-girl having transgressed through becoming pregnant by her married employer. This dismissal might not only be attached to the "shame" of illegitimate pregnancy, but to the wife's realisation of her husband's infidelities with her servants. Consequently, the narrative has certain similarities with Charlie Hill's version of "Jay's Grave", in which, in having an illegitimate child by her employer, the servant immediately threatens the existing social order because she blurs the distinction between "insider" social group and "outsider" individual, as well employer/employee boundaries. Similarly, the implication is that the Trinmans expel their maids in order to preserve the existing status quo. The servant is therefore judged and "punished" according to the moral standards of a more privileged social group than that to which she belongs.

Similarly to Lillian Sanderson's variant of "Jay's Grave", the local character anecdote relating to Trinman tends to draw attention to the inherent hypocrisy of the more socially privileged employer. Whilst Trinman considers it entirely permissible to take advantage of his female servants, he allows those he has sexually exploited to be dismissed once they have become pregnant. Consequently, the narrative uses the theme of illegitimacy to expose the existence of the sexual double standard, particular amongst the higher classes. In doing so, it highlights register conflict by drawing attention to the exploitation of lower-class women by the property-owning classes.

In the absence of oral variants, it is not possible to discuss the meaning of this local character anecdote in its performance context. However, Dave's comments about this narrative, during an interview recorded by myself, at his home in Princetown in December 1997 alluded to the social context in which these narratives were told. Having stated that they were obtained from "local people", he added, "I can talk to them because I s'pose my family 'ave been here for years". In other words, he implies that, at that time, they were usually circulated only amongst established members of the local community.

Mullen makes some important suggestions about the function of such personal anecdotes, using the insights of "the sociological construct of deviance" (xiii | Heard).

Richard Dorson states one of the traits of the local character which is a key to analyzing his function: "First and foremost the character is eccentric and his legend is built upon his deviations from normal and accepted conduct." Since the local character is considered a deviant, the study of deviant behavior is a valuable approach for understanding local character stories. . . . Local character anecdotes are part of the oral tradition of a community and reveal more about society's reaction to deviance than about the deviant. (Mullen 116)

Clearly, Trinman himself might fruitfully be viewed according to the above perspective. This raises the question, by what criteria he might be considered a deviant. As Mullen observes,

the local character has to have rules to break in order to become the subject of narratives. It is in the breaking of norms that the character is considered an appropriate subject for anecdotes. In order to understand how the anecdotes function in the community, we must know what rules the character has broken and what norms and rules lie behind these rules. (116-17)

The most obvious act of "rule breaking" seems to be the fact of his fathering an illegitimate child as a married man. Socio-historical evidence relating to the Dartmoor region at the turn of this century supports the view that extra-marital affairs were strongly disapproved of and were considered sufficiently "deviant" to occasion milder forms of rough music, such as effigy burning (cf. Chase, "The Heart" 214). Trinman's deviancy might be seen as particularly pronounced, considering his identity as a middle-class male, having extra-marital affairs with his live-in servants, who are presumably local women of a lower social class. This would be compounded with his "fearsome reputation" as a womaniser, responsible for not just one, but several, out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

Trinman is therefore labelled as deviant, not just because of his transgressions in being a married man fathering an illegitimate child, but because of his tendency towards extremes, as a seducer with a reputation for having fathered several illegitimate children by his social inferiors. This particular definition of deviance has ramifications for sexual values and attitudes towards illegitimacy around the Princetown area of Dartmoor since the 1970s, when these narratives were still circulated, because

the character anecdote is based on actual incidents of deviant behavior which are observed and then put into narrative form by the observer or someone who hears the incident from the observer. Thus the stories arise and are circulated during the lifetime of their subject, but they continue to be told long after the eccentric character dies or leaves the community. The verbalization of the incident is a part of the process of labelling a person as deviant. After the person is no longer around, the stories continue to be told, and they continue to function to label the behavior described in them as deviant. Their continued uses within the community are related to the basic attitudes of the group towards the deviant. The first step in analyzing the anecdotes, then, is to describe the community, the deviant, and the deviant's place within the community. (Mullen 117)

As Mullen observes, such narratives provide the storytellers with opportunities to stress the fact that they are not deviant, in this instance, in relation to their own sexual values and behaviour (Mullen, I Heard 122). In the meantime, attitudes towards the deviant himself are mixed because he is "both a symbol of the group's values and a threat to those values" (125).

Similarly to most other narratives in this chapter, the women concerned are given the role of female domestic servants, again reflecting a degree of statistical accuracy. Although evidence suggests that most men begetting children out-of-wedlock during this period were single, a sizeable minority of married men played an important role in this respect.

The narrative starts to veer away from the "norm" (as far as it can be discerned from the reconstruction of historical experience) in respect of the male being the woman's employer. Interestingly, the perceived relationship between this personal anecdote and the experience of sexual relations in the past was, however, somewhat different. On the subject of the Trinman story, Dave German stressed how illegitimacy, particularly amongst servant-maids, was less tolerantly treated in the past and seemed to suggest that sexual exploitation was commonplace:

Gracious me, in those days, you see, it was a big stigma. You know, the girl was got rid of, you know, "on your bike, I don't want to know you", because of the power, the influence if [the] man had money or power [or] was a lord of the manor or an owner of an hotel. Girls working down there were just glad of a few pence to earn . . . a living. Some would have stayed with a roof over their head and a bit of food and they were treated like that. You come in my room tonight Miss, come here. Luckily, say luckily, gladly through education, you know, people are becoming more aware. (III:027:1:96)

The reality of the illegitimacy experience also suggests that it would be unusual for one man to be responsible for more than one "illegitimate" pregnancy,

unless he or his partner were members of the "bastardy prone sub-society" as defined by Jean Robin ("Illegitimacy" 339). Nevertheless, the outcome of this situation has a much greater degree of historical accuracy in that the servant is dismissed and sent away, rather than being murdered by her lover, committing suicide, or dying of exposure. In this respect, the above narrative depicts a far more realistic set of circumstances surrounding the experience of illegitimacy in the past than most other folk narratives discussed in this Chapter.

In terms of the circumstances it describes, the narrative reflects the existence of the sexual double-standard and its exaggerated importance particularly amongst the upper middle classes during this period. As we might expect, the wife therefore appears to tolerate, or turn a blind eye to, her husband's infidelities, at the expense of herself, and also of the servant-women concerned. The narrative also depicts the employer's most common response in this situation, in that the servant is dismissed as soon as her pregnancy is discovered, before, rather than after the birth of her child, as in some "Jay's Grave" variants. On the basis of historical evidence, we might expect that Trinman would have bribed the women with a lump sum, or have eventually been obliged to pay maintenance for his children. However, the narrative is left open to interpretation in this respect, thereby creating the impression that the Trinman's servants are left to fend for themselves, thus solely reaping the negative consequences of their predicament.

Conclusion

The above findings indicate that supernatural narratives, local legends, and personal character anecdotes have a tendency to focus on women, rather than men who beget children out of wedlock. Extreme outcomes accompany out-of-wedlock pregnancies and illegitimate births, which have unhappy and sometimes even fatal consequences for the women and children concerned. In most cases this can be attributed wholly, or in part, to the pervading illegitimacy stigma which ensures that women (and occasionally also men) who beget illegitimate children are condemned by their families, employers or society in general.

Because they depict far more extreme responses from the two adults involved, these narratives distort the reality of the experience of illegitimacy in the past. They also exaggerate the importance of illegitimacy as a result of exploitative intra-class liaisons between working-class women and middle-to-upper class males. This tends to suggest that the shame attached to illegitimacy is used to

express hostilities between different social classes. There is also a particular concentration on illegitimate pregnancy as the product of broken romantic relationships. In such cases, the stigma attached to illegitimacy is used to highlight the injustice of the sexual double standard, thereby articulating gender conflict between men and women.

A small-scale investigation of the historical underpinnings of these narratives suggests that, with the possible exception of local character anecdotes, they do not document genuine historical occurrences. In the case of supernatural narratives and local legends, the theme of illegitimacy often becomes attached to the narratives some time after they began to be circulated in oral tradition. Although these narratives therefore purport to convey attitudes and experiences in the past, they instead evidence contemporary attitudes towards illegitimacy in the historical past and attitudes towards illegitimacy in living memory and experience.

CHAPTER 8

COMPARISON OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS ILLEGITIMACY AS EVIDENCED IN FOLKSONG AND PROSE NARRATIVE GENRES IN THE SOUTH WEST OF ENGLAND

The purpose of the following chapter is to compare and contrast attitudes towards illegitimacy, synthesising the separate analyses conducted in the previous two chapters. Firstly, these categories of material will be collectively viewed in terms of **attitudes towards illegitimacy implicit within the texts**. Secondly, an evaluation of songs and prose narratives as evidence of **attitudes towards illegitimacy between 1750-1930, in the distant past**, will be made. An overview of the histories of individual narratives as circulated in oral tradition, in conjunction with the insights gained within Chapter 5 (Historical Context) will be used to this end. Thirdly, **contemporary attitudes towards illegitimacy in the distant past** will also be examined. This will involve a comparison between notions of truth as discerned within particular narrative performances (and related oral testimonies) with the *likely reality* of past experience. More specifically, this chapter will attempt to probe the reasons why certain narratives promote a particular view of history and what function this might serve. Finally, it is hoped that some conclusions might be reached about the relationship between this corpus of material and **contemporary attitudes towards illegitimacy in living memory and experience (i.e. from 1930 to the present day)**. A closer consideration of the types of material which ~~have~~ and ~~have~~ not endured in oral tradition since the 1970s is helpful in this respect, as is a comparison between the meanings of songs and prose narratives as generated in their performance context and the wider cultural context of their circulation.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS ILLEGITIMACY IMPLICIT WITHIN THE TEXTS

Songs

On the basis of stated text alone, the folksongs which are the subject of this thesis evidence a wide range of attitudes towards out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimacy rather than a single perspective, hence supporting Freedman's suggestion that they create a polyphony of different voices. At one end of the spectrum, attitudes alluded to within the song world are extremely harsh in relation to women begetting children out of wedlock with no prospect of marriage. Hence, in one variant of "Died for Love" the text explicitly states that the woman commits suicide rather than face the shame of an illegitimate birth.

However, in all other variants this causal link between pregnancy and suicide is totally dependent on sub-textual interpretation. By contrast, not a single male death is seen as resulting from the illegitimacy stigma.

In the majority of songs, negative attitudes towards illegitimacy are more moderate, causing anger, bitterness and misery rather than despair. In "Catch Me", for example, the birth of such a child instead causes the embittered woman^{to} [^]vow to find and get revenge on her deceitful lover, rather than taking her own life. Song variants in which illegitimate pregnancy is seen as moderately positive, as in certain variants of "Foggy Dew" where it facilitates the couple's happy marriage, are extremely rare.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, a small corpus of variants describe a narrative world in which no social stigma is attached to illegitimate pregnancy for either the men or women concerned. In the light, bawdy "Thrashing Machine", for example, the song provides no moral comment, the begetting of illegitimate children being a jovial, inconsequential affair. Thus illegitimate pregnancy is portrayed as essentially life affirming, being seen here as both a positive expression of specifically male sexuality and human fecundity in general.

The majority of folksongs in the corpus under consideration describe a narrative world in which no sense of stigma is attached to a man responsible for an out-of-wedlock pregnancy, or the birth of an illegitimate child (e.g. "Foggy Dew", "Rosemary Lane", "Australia"). In the few instances where the male protagonist is chastised, this appears to be largely as a result of the stigma befalling the woman concerned and the economic implications of her pregnancy (e.g. "Don't Tell I", "Dittisham Boy", "The Butcher"). Even then, there is little sense that any stigma rebounds upon the male protagonist himself as the putative father.

In a handful of cases this lack of stigma is seen to be a feature of the narrative world itself, in which the male does not expect to suffer any kind of reproach or admonishment in these situations, often making little effort to conceal or deny his paternity (e.g. "Shannon Side"). However, this lack of negative social repercussions can often also be attributed to the fact that he is^a [^]mobile man, such as a sailor, and absents himself after the encounter. Consequently, the woman is often left to face pregnancy and/or birth alone (e.g. "Died for Love", "Rosemary Lane", "Australia").

By contrast, many songs describe a narrative world in which a strong sense of stigma is attached to women having out-of-wedlock pregnancies, or giving birth to an illegitimate child (e.g. "Catch Men", "Ball of Yarn"), although there are exceptions to this general rule (cf. "Collumara", "Baby Lie", "Thrashing Machine," "The Butcher"). Unlike their male counterparts, women are unable to escape the negative social repercussions associated with pregnancy because biology dictates that they are unable to distance themselves from their illegitimate conceptions. Women only escape the stigma of illegitimacy within these songs through death itself, or very occasionally by marriage (cf. "Old Riverside", "Foggy Dew").

Although certain song texts seem to be sympathetic to the woman, in many cases a great deal of ambiguity surrounds attitudes towards male and female protagonists as expressed in the texts alone. In "Catch Me", for instance, like so many of the women in song, this female protagonist has an isolated encounter with a stranger and is left to bear the brunt of the situation alone. The text could therefore, on the one hand, be seen as condemning the woman for being so gullible for having an isolated encounter with a stranger (cf. "Ball of Yarn", "Shannon Side"). On the other hand, she could be regarded as a victim, having been taken advantage of, deceived, and abandoned by a rogue. Likewise, the male protagonist might either be condemned for deceiving this woman and abandoning both her and his unborn child, or admired for his audacity and cunning in instigating an encounter with an attractive stranger and successfully avoiding the consequences.

Occupational labels and other kinds of social "markings" in more recently collected song texts usually signify that the protagonists are both from the lower classes and are of an equal social status. This tends to enforce the impression that sexual relationships described are consensual. Hence, unlike their counterparts in prose narrative, these female protagonists are implicitly free to act out of choice. The extent to which the folksong texts appear to convey sympathy for the woman is, to a large degree, dependent upon the type of sexual relationship described. Greater sympathy is, for example, expressed for the woman left pregnant having been abandoned by an inconstant lover, than in rare instances where illegitimacy is the product of casual prostitution (cf. "Dark-Eyed", "The Butcher"). Yet it is perhaps significant that such a high incidence of these female protagonists are described being young (probably in their late teens and early twenties), unmarried woman. Song worlds therefore tend to emphasise their vulnerability and identity as "innocents". As well as eroticising the situation by contributing to the sense of male conquest, this feature also

elicits a more compassionate response towards the female protagonist than if she had been an older, more experienced, married woman or widow.

A heightened sense of sympathy for the women becoming pregnant outside of wedlock often seems to be conditional on their tragic ends within the text (e.g. "Dark-Eyed", "Died for Love" subtypes A and B, "Cruel Ships"). Hence the suggestion is that their predicament would not have inspired such sympathy if they had lived. This same pattern can also be discerned within both supernatural narratives and local legends (cf. Herbert Memoriate, "Jay's Grave").

Prose Narratives

A narrower spectrum of attitudes towards out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth are evidenced in recently collected supernatural narratives, local legends and local character anecdotes relating to this theme. Similarly to song, at one extreme attitudes within the world of the narrative are extremely harsh in relation to women becoming illegitimately pregnant, resulting in their being "cast out", dismissed, or committing suicide. However, in prose narratives this sense of condemnation is often more explicitly linked to the woman's employer, or employer's family, than in song, where a greater preponderance of female servants are described in the narrative context of their employment. Hence, there is a stronger suggestion that the woman is judged according to the values of a higher social class than that to which she herself belongs.

Another essential difference between recently collected songs and prose narratives is that in prose narratives harsh attitudes towards illegitimacy are also occasionally seen as extending to the father of the child, particularly if he is a member of the middle-to-upper classes. Hence, in the supernatural narrative associated with the Lord Halden Hotel narrative, the female servant is implicitly murdered because her upper-class lover wants to save his reputation rather than because, like the female protagonist of "Old Riverside", she herself wants to avoid "shame and disgrace".

Female suicide is a more prevalent component in these prose narratives. Supernatural narratives such as the Herbert memoriate, as well as variants of "Jay's Grave" and "Molly Hunt", might thus be seen as alluding to the considerable shame and disgrace attached to an unmarried woman having an illegitimate child within the world of the narrative (cf. "Died for Love"). Occasionally, the woman's response to her predicament tends to suggest that

attitudes towards illegitimacy are slightly more lenient, such as with the local character anecdote relating to Trinman, where there is a reference to the servant's dismissal, but no mention of her subsequent suicide. Interestingly, not a single prose narrative describes a world in which the social stigma attached to illegitimate pregnancy is negligible for both adults concerned. Unlike certain of the songs, prose narratives never depict the begetting of illegitimate children as a jovial or inconsequential affair. Neither do they ever focus in upon situations where illegitimate pregnancy and birth are regarded as a positive occurrence as, for example, where the fact of pregnancy overcomes parental opposition and facilitates a subsequently happy marriage.

This may in part be explained by the fact of folksong and prose narratives functioning as rather different modes of communication. Folksongs lend themselves to a more jovial, humorous treatment, than either supernatural memorates and legends, local legends, or local character anecdotes of this theme. This is perhaps because song provides a more effective vehicle by which the performer can distance themselves from the action or sentiment of the narrative. Hence they are given much greater licence in terms of narratives which are, for example, fantastic, subversive, sexually explicit, or voyeuristic in terms of their mode of narration. Story telling is a rather different genre which often implies the personal involvement of the teller. Perhaps for this reason, my chosen supernatural memorates and legends, local legends, and local character anecdotes tend to marginalise, or exclude, the sexual element of their narratives. These particular forms also purport to give, or subvert, a more serious message, and are therefore more obliged to be more firmly grounded in social reality and "truth" (ref Dégh).

As with folksongs, the majority of prose narratives describe a narrative world in which no sense of stigma extends to the male responsible for an out-of-wedlock pregnancy, or illegitimate birth, with only a few exceptions. Prose narratives often focus only on the female protagonist whilst her lover is noticeably absent, being marginalised within the narrative world itself. Some "Jay's Grave" variants, for instance, exclude any but a passing reference to the father. Where the lover is referred to in prose narratives, in most cases his actions imply that he does not expect to be reproached or admonished for his paternity by either his family, or society in general (e.g. Trinman).

Where male protagonists in supernatural narratives, legends, and local character anecdotes are identified, they are depicted as members of upper-class families or titled gentry, land-owning farmers, sons of land-owning

farmers, or property owners like Trinman, landlord of the Two Bridges Hotel. Unlike many folksongs, the male protagonist's tendency to have a complacent attitude towards his situation is not seen as a product of his mobility, as with soldiers, sailors and navvies.¹²⁷ Rather, the lover's attitude typically relates to his being of more privileged social position than his comparatively powerless, socially inferior lover. Hence, in terms of stated text alone, the theme of illegitimacy is used to articulate register conflict between different social classes to a much greater extent within prose narratives than songs.

All prose narratives either imply or overtly state that, by contrast, within the narrative world a moderate to strong sense of social stigma is attached to women becoming illegitimately pregnant or giving birth to such a child. On the whole, these predominantly young, unmarried female protagonists are portrayed more sympathetically than their counterparts in song. This is because the vast majority of prose narratives tend to imply that pregnancy is the result of the woman having been a victim of sexual exploitation or rape by her employer or a member of her employer's family, rather than of a consensual relationship, typically between a couple of equal social status. However, because many of these prose narratives are used to express register conflict between different social class^{es}, it is vital that the listener feels some compassion for the woman in order to equate her mistreatment at the hands of her lover and the exploitation of the lower orders by the middle-to-upper classes. However, the heightened sense of sympathy for the woman becoming pregnant outside of marriage is once again made conditional on her tragic ends within the text.

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Songs

The more recently collected folksongs considered in Chapter 6 conform to the pattern established in folksongs collected at the turn-of-the century, by describing a narrative world where men responsible for out-of-wedlock conceptions and illegitimate births rarely suffer the effects of social stigma by contrast with their female counterparts (cf. "Willie O Winsbury, "Floating Down", "Alderman's Lady"). Once again, lack of negative repercussions can be partly attributed to male mobility, due to the preponderance of sailors, soldiers, and "ramblers" in these earlier-collected songs (e.g. "I Wish", "A Sailor by Right", "Floating Down").

¹²⁷ If anything, they are seen as being more geographically stable than their female counterparts.

However, male absence is a more significant factor in causing women to face the stigma of pregnancy and/or birth alone in songs circulated since the 1970s. By contrast, the tendency for women to bear the brunt of illegitimate pregnancy - particularly where, as in the majority of cases, the child is the product of an isolated sexual encounter outside of an established courtship - is instead more directly related to the double sexual standard in songs collected at the turn of the century. Hence the greater tendency for male protagonists not to anticipate their own blame or social condemnation and to chastise or mock their lover for causing her own misfortune in these turn-of-the-century narratives (cf. "Glastonbury Town", "No, My Love, Not I", "Dirty Beggarman"). The greater number of middle-to-upper-class male protagonists also contributes to the impression that males assume immunity from prosecution and social stigma in these turn-of-the-century songs (cf. "Alderman's Lady", "Glastonbury Town", "Earl Richard").

Social stigma only ever attaches to men begetting illegitimate children in these earlier collected folksongs where there is an additional cause, such as that he has brutally murdered his lover (cf. "Cruel Ship's", "Oxford Murder", "James Macdonald"). Indeed, deaths of this kind are far more commonplace than amongst folksongs collected since the 1970s, in which female deaths by natural causes are less frequent (see Appendix II).

The stigma resulting from a woman conceiving or giving birth to an illegitimate child is much stronger in this earlier-collected material than folksongs collected since the 1970s (e.g. "Down by the Riverside", "Floating Down"). There is also a far greater incidence of songs collected since the 1970s in which out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth do not imply any social judgement for the woman concerned than at the turn-of-the-century (e.g. "Basket of"). This may be part of a more widespread tendency towards the theme of illegitimacy becoming "sexualised", being more inextricably bound with themes of both sexual encounter and seduction in more recent song performances.

Again, the narrative convention whereby a woman's ability to escape the illegitimacy stigma is limited to marriage or death can also be traced to this turn-of-the-century material. The tendency for a heightened sense of sympathy for these women to be conditional on their tragic ends is more firmly established in turn-of-the-century songs, partly because of the higher incidence of deaths by murder (cf. "Bonnie Annie", "Lady Maisry", "Cruel Ships", "James Macdonald", "Oxford Girl", "Oxford Murder", "Brisk Young Lover", "Betsy Watson"). However,

marriage is also more frequently depicted as a solution to illegitimate pregnancy than in songs collected since the 1970s (cf. "Raking of Hay" (Karp A), "Lisbon").

Prose Narratives

Evidence suggests that none of the early supernatural narratives have continued in oral tradition, except for those deriving from Farquhar's account in which parts of the original tale are preserved in fragmented form. Unfortunately, because of the strong tendency towards popular reprintings in relation to this legend, it is impossible to tell how central the story of the murdered, incestuously begotten child is to these supernatural narratives as told since the 1970s. It is hard to evaluate whether the connection between the supernatural experience and this illegitimacy narrative is made in personal experience narratives and memorates as told in oral tradition, or only when that narrative is committed to print, in popular publications (e.g. Seymour 11, 118).

As regards the narratives recorded by Bottrell, Courtney and Hunt, the local historian Hamilton Jenkin observed how by 1933 "superstitious stories" had ceased to be told except to make fun of tourists, the average Cornishman being

quite unable to rake up a single legend, ghost story, spectre, or romantic belief, unless it might be some tale which a summer visitor had imparted to him from his own study of Hunt's *Popular Romances*, or the railway company's *Guide to Legendland* (303-05).

Although memories of the white hare apparition seem to have continued, the associated illegitimacy-related narratives have not endured (Hunt 377; cf. Dean and Shaw 109 and Underwood, *Ghosts of Cornwall* 39).

Unfortunately, Mansfield did not comment on the currency of the Holcombe Rogus narrative in oral tradition in 1952. Although other individuals have subsequently published the same legend, it is clear that the borrowings of armchair scholarship are at work. Hence Brown provides a faithful representation of Mansfield's earlier narrative, apart from a few select omissions in a later article on child ghosts where she emphasises "one is in no position to check the authenticity of [this legend]" ("Radiant Boy" 249). Brown more explicitly acknowledges Mansfield as her source in the less detailed version published in *Devon* in 1982 (59). Sally and Chips Barber also later publish the tale in *Ghostly and Ghastly Devon*, but Chips Barber informed me that the narrative derived from Theo Brown in person (15). Almost all of the above narratives seem only to have been continued in printed sources. However, as demonstrated in Chapter 7, the theme of illegitimacy itself constantly resurges

in oral tradition, emerging in relation to different narratives during different periods.

The supernatural narratives, legends and local character anecdotes considered in Chapter 7 tend to follow the pattern established in prose narratives collected during the late nineteenth century whereby illegitimacy is seen as socially undesirable. However, the notion that this stigma attached to illegitimacy is also sometimes experienced by the middle-to-upper class male protagonist seems to be a more recent development. In the narratives supplied by Courtney, Hunt and Bottrell, illegitimacy is consistently seen as a symptom of a corrupt, morally degenerate situation, and sometimes also as its cause, such as where it leads to infanticide (cf. "Mermaid's Vengeance", "White Hare"). Similarly, the idea that illegitimate pregnancy and birth is the product of male moral depravity or exploitation can also be traced to these earlier-collected narratives. However, this idea appears with much greater force in narratives circulated in oral tradition since the 1970s because, whilst similar attitudes have persisted, the kinds of circumstances and relationship described have changed.

In turn-of-the-century narratives the role of parental or family opposition in sabotaging a particular relationship for self-interested motives is particularly prevalent. Hence, the root cause of illegitimacy is either seen to be the negative influence they exert upon the male protagonist, or their detrimental effect upon the relationship itself. Because the male protagonist is therefore portrayed as a social pawn, he is seen as being less directly responsible for the downfall of his lover than in prose narratives collected since the 1970s. Hence, as the female protagonist, or female protagonist and child, are less obviously made victims of the lover's self-seeking indifference, the allocation of blame is rather less specific.

Turn-of-the-century narratives sometimes make explicit that the male protagonist and his relatives are of slightly higher social class and perhaps more wealthy than the female protagonist and her family. This sense of class disparity is often causally linked with illegitimate pregnancy. Hence it provides the main incentive for engineering the break up of a relationship, preventing a particular marriage or for acting upon malicious rivalry in inciting the "shaming" of another family's daughter. Hence, the use of the theme of illegitimacy to highlight conflict between different social classes can also be traced to these early narratives. However, it appears with much greater force in narratives collected since the 1970s where, for example, the injustice of the

double standard is used to emphasise the mistreatment of the lower orders by the middle to upper classes.

Whereas illegitimacy is usually seen as a product of established, consensual sexual relationships in prose narratives collected at the turn of the century, often it is instead portrayed, either implicitly or explicitly, as the result of sexual exploitation in narratives circulated since the 1970s. Hence, in these later-collected narratives, the notion of female victimisation and exploitation, have become even more pronounced. Other changes also tend to consolidate this impression. For instance, female deaths by suicide appear to have become a much more persistent feature in later-collected texts. By comparison with turn-of-the-century narratives, in supernatural narratives circulated in the 1970s the woman's apparition has been reduced to a much more passive role and no longer functions as an instrument wreaking vengeance upon the inconstant lover (cf. "White Hare", Herbert Memorate).

Texts as Evidence of Attitudes Towards Illegitimacy in the Distant Past (1750-1930)

In the absence of information about particular performances it is impossible to evaluate the exact significance of the theme of illegitimacy in folksongs and prose narratives as performed in the distant past. However, the insights gained from fieldwork relating to performances of folksong narratives of this kind in recent settings tend to corroborate Gammon's assertion that:

potential meanings can be inscribed in a text at different levels, for example the factual and the symbolic. Whether or not potential meanings are realized depends on the reception of the reader or hearer. Just as there are levels of potential meanings so also meaning may be received at different levels of consciousness. (234)

Hence, it cannot be assumed, by nature of the inclusion of this theme, that the meanings of such folksongs and narratives in performance are always revealing of **past attitudes towards illegitimacy between 1750-1930**, when some of this material was in oral circulation; **contemporary attitudes towards illegitimacy in the distant past** (i.e. 1750-1930); or **contemporary attitudes towards illegitimacy in living memory and experience** (i.e. 1930-present day). This is because *singers, storytellers and audiences* sometimes perform, and engage with particular performances for reasons entirely unrelated to this theme, and therefore decode their texts accordingly.

Examples might include a situation where the song "Thrashing Machine" is performed solely because it has a bawdy chorus which everybody joins in or where both singer and listener focus upon another aspect of the song's content altogether, as with Charlie Hill's performance of "Rosemary Lane" to a child called Rowan, because of a fortuitous pun on her name. The content of a given prose narrative is incidental to its performance in fewer instances than with song. Still, prose narratives such as local legends might, as Simpson suggests, be performed because "every community feels curiosity and pride about its surroundings and its past, and wishes to annex some of the glamour of history and mystery for itself", a sentiment which was clearly shared by Wray Tucker in his tellings of "Jay's Grave" (Simpson "The Local" 32-33). Hence, on some occasions, the meaning of a given narrative in performance and its significance in terms of attitudes towards illegitimacy, might be subservient to other kinds of function, such as its dramatic purpose.

As previously explained, the ability of any given song or prose narrative to evidence communal attitudes towards illegitimacy in the past is not dependent upon whether that particular narrative is based upon a genuine historical occurrence - this being particularly unlikely in the case of song (see Simpson, "The Local" 26-27). Rather, their "usefulness as clues to cultural history and communal mentality" in the South West is determined more by the length of time during which they have been actively circulated in oral tradition within that region ("The Local" 27). Even if a particular narrative alludes to an earlier period to that in which it was initially circulated, the validity of its text as evidence of prevalent notions regarding attitudes towards illegitimacy amongst previous generations at that time, remains unaltered. Because of this dialectical relationship between the narrative and the environment in which it^{is} perpetuated, narratives such as "Jay's Grave", which seem to allude to an earlier time period to that in which they were initially circulated, might also be regarded as revealing of attitudes towards illegitimacy during the time of circulation.

The fact that so many of my chosen corpus of songs were collected in the South West region at the turn of the century, suggests that many of those in active circulation since 1970 are likely to provide evidence of prevalent attitudes towards illegitimacy held between 1750-1930. My fieldwork suggested, for instance, that three songs, "Catch Me", "Shannon Side", and "The Butcher", had passed through several generations of one family. Unfortunately, available evidence was limited in its ability to uncover paths of transmission in relation to other variants. However, my analysis suggested that the perceived relationship between the experience of, and attitudes towards, illegitimacy in the distant

past, according to post-1970 singers and audience, was much stronger than the "actual" relationship between the songs and the past itself.

Although prose narratives relating to the theme of illegitimacy often purport to tell us about attitudes in the distant past in most instances this is not the case. Rather, with the possible exception of local character anecdotes, the attitudes they describe relate to a more contemporary environment. Contrary to appearances, the theme of illegitimacy is often a comparatively recent addition to the narratives themselves, being added some time after they originally began to be circulated in oral tradition (cf. "Jay's Grave", "Fairy Midwife"). Hence, whilst seeming to describe harsh attitudes towards illegitimacy during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, narratives such as "Jay's Grave" have a much closer relationship with both attitudes towards illegitimacy and accepted narrative conventions on this theme since approximately the 1960s.

Wray Tucker and Dave German's inability to wholeheartedly believe in their own "Jay's Grave" narratives could well be seen as indicating their awareness that the illegitimacy component was not a part of earlier versions. Perhaps significantly, both individuals became familiar with the narrative in their youth; Wray mentioning initially being told the narrative by his mother; whilst Dave German commented, "my uncle when I was like ten years old at Peat Cot would tell me and they'd be just the fire and his pipe ' Have you heard about this one Dave?' and that's the way I learnt a lot of these" (^{II.11:027:1:96}). Both narrators were therefore familiar with the legend prior to its widespread publication in popular printed sources as a commercialised "illegitimacy" narrative.

Interestingly, it was not possible to see the narrator's scepticism in either case as deriving from the ~~improbability~~ of the kinds of circumstances and attitudes alluded to within the legend itself. By providing examples from their own Dartmoor family histories, both narrators demonstrated that they were conscious of the mistreatment and extreme stigmatisation of women begetting illegitimate children in the historical past. Dave in particular seemed to be keenly aware of ^{the} vulnerability of servant women in this respect.

The case study of local character anecdotes associated with the historical personage Henry Trinman tends to suggest that this sub-genre may have a much closer relationship with local attitudes towards illegitimacy in the past, than do either supernatural narratives or local legends. Similarly to folksong, the Trinman narratives point to the stigma attached to illegitimate pregnancy and birth in the past, particularly amongst unmarried women. They also emphasise

the radical importance of the double sexual standard in both shaping these attitudes, and in governing the treatment of those women who flouted social mores in this respect.

Although it is impossible to give an exact date at which these narratives began to be told, Trinman's ownership of the Two Bridges Hotel since the 1870s suggests that these narratives entered oral tradition between approximately 1870-1900. Hence, the attitudes alluded to within the narrative are likely to relate to a similar historical period. Their mode of transmission tends to suggest that stories about Trinman record attitudes towards illegitimacy amongst local people in the past to far greater extent than, for example, the legend of "Jay's Grave". Both Dave German's testimony and the absence of references to Trinman and his servant-maids in popular printed sources tends to suggest that these narratives were only circulated amongst local people in the Princetown region up until comparatively recent years.

FOLKSONGS AND PROSE NARRATIVES AS EVIDENCE OF CONTEMPORARY ATTITUDES TOWARDS ILLEGITIMACY IN THE HISTORICAL PAST

Folksongs

The extent to which folksongs and prose narratives evidence contemporary attitudes towards illegitimacy in the historical past revolves around the key issue of belief. Several interviews with singers suggested certain illegitimacy-related songs, particularly those which "tell a story" were believed to be "true" and hence clearly evidenced contemporary attitudes towards the experience of illegitimacy in the distant and recent past. The concept of "truth" might be in the sense of the song deriving from a genuine occurrence in the distant past. Denis Hutchings envisaged the daughter's suicide in his version of "Died for Love" accordingly, asserting that her father might well have written the original song. Alternatively, a song might be "true" in terms of depicting a scenario which could feasibly be imagined to have happened in the past. Vic Legg discerned this level of truth in "Shannon Side", which he saw as typifying the sexual exploitation of working-class women by the gentry. Finally, a song might be regarded as "true" in the sense of accurately conveying the sentiments of those involved in the experience of illegitimacy in the past.

Several prevalent ideas about attitudes towards illegitimacy in the historical past (1750-1930) emerged from my discussion of specific songs during interviews

with singers. Both Ken Penney and Denis Hutchings appeared to believe that the stigma associated ^{with} an unmarried women begetting a child outside of wedlock in the historical past was so pronounced that some women actually committed suicide, rather than face the shame. However, Denis saw this more as an upper-class response, the sexual double standard ensuring that a woman of this class incited greater condemnation, and experienced a greater sense of shame than her working-class, female counterpart in the pre-Victorian/Victorian era, because of the greater emphasis on female chastity amongst this social group. Pat Barker placed greater emphasis on the emotional truth of the song, regarding the suicide as a kind of objective correlative, for a desperate emotion experienced by women facing illegitimate pregnancy in this historical past.

Vic Legg emphasised the sense of shame, ~~and~~ extreme guilt experienced by an unmarried woman becoming pregnant out of wedlock, in relation to the unspecified distant past of "Old Riverside". This might also be inferred from his interpretation of "Catch Me", where he further suggested that no one would marry a single woman having a child out of wedlock in the distant past, and that the child itself would be socially disadvantaged. There was a general assumption amongst singers that past attitudes towards women having out-of-wedlock pregnancies were always critical, and that the birth of an illegitimate child was never seen as a positive event. Hence Denis assumed that within the historical past of "Foggy Dew" and "The Butcher" male protagonists regarded their illegitimate children as an encumbrance, Maureen Tatlow likewise interpreted the female protagonist's distress in "Catch Me", as bitter regret over her "unwanted" pregnancy.

Ken, Denis and Charlie appeared to believe that sailors and soldiers were inclined to have a particularly casual, or self-seeking attitude to their sexual liaisons, partly as a result of their occupational mobility. Hence, whilst they were implicitly seen as more liable to cause an illegitimate conception than other types of male, they were also considered as being less likely to regard any resulting pregnancy as either their concern or responsibility. Vic Legg also associated a cavalier attitude to illegitimate pregnancy with the landed gentry, implicitly as a result of the double standard. He believed that such individuals had exerted their right to take advantage of young women in the neighbourhood in the distant past, indifferent to the repercussions for the woman concerned. Generally speaking, there seemed to be a widespread assumption that men were often indifferent to the out-of-wedlock conceptions

they caused within the past, tending not to experience either ^{the} guilt or stigma endured by their female counterparts.

Prose Narratives

Greater difficulty is encountered in obtaining relevant data concerning how supernatural narratives, local legends and local character anecdotes are told and understood in their performance context. However, certain stylistic features of each ^{of the} three sub-genres suggests that they are more likely to evidence contemporary attitudes towards illegitimacy in the historical past than song. Dégh's observation that "legends are deeply rooted in social reality" might equally be applied to all three forms, which are inclined to portray a "real", rather than overtly fictitious narrative worlds, whilst also closely imitating, and occasionally directly deriving from, "actual" social experiences in the historical past (Dégh "Legend" 109). All three types of illegitimacy-related prose narratives are more frequently viewed as a literal representation of history than is song. This is most obviously the case where a narrative is believed to be entirely "true" by its narrator, and is therefore cited as if it were oral history.

The evidence discussed in Chapter 7 suggests that certain prose narratives relating to the theme of illegitimacy are sometimes more revealing of established narrative conventions relating to illegitimacy, than of contemporary attitudes towards illegitimacy in the historical past. This is particularly the case where both narrator and audience remain sceptical about the narrative's factual underpinnings. However, the issue of whether narratives which are not wholeheartedly believed by their narrators are able to shed light upon contemporary attitudes towards illegitimacy in the historical past, is clearly extremely complicated. As previously mentioned, the fact that the narrators themselves take a sceptical attitude towards their own narrative, does not preclude the possibility that someone in the legend conduit may believe the circumstances described to be accurate in terms of attitudes towards illegitimacy in this historical past. Hence even though Wray acknowledges that he perpetuates the "Jay's Grave" narrative primarily for enjoyment:

I like these old stories, you know, I like to keep 'em going really and even if you believe 'em you know, don't believe them or believe 'em don't matter but it's nice, you know it keeps a little bit of mystery attached to it all, it's nice I think.

There is a strong possibility that those for whom he performs might believe the narrative to be true. Perhaps significantly, the experience of and attitudes towards illegitimacy in the historical past as portrayed in narratives which were

both believed and not believed to be true by their narrators, were remarkably similar. Narrators who appeared to believe in the "truth" of their narratives promoted the idea that attitudes towards women begetting illegitimate children in the past were extremely harsh, particularly if the woman was of a lower social class to the man by whom she became pregnant. Hence a woman might be dismissed for having an illegitimate child even if she had been seduced by her employer. As with song, it was also believed that as a result of this associated sense of stigma, some women committed suicide rather than face the shame and desperation of their predicament.

Contemporary notions implicit in certain prose narratives also tended to consolidate the impression created in song, whereby attitudes towards fathers of illegitimate children were far more lenient. Similarly, men were rarely believed to be stigmatised for their illegitimate paternity, even if they were married. However, prose narratives tended to diverge from this accepted pattern in exceptional cases where it was believed that the stigma of illegitimacy might extend to an upper class male, who would consequently resort to extreme measures, such as murder, in order to avoid it.

The possible reasons for perpetuating a view of history which emphasises extremely harsh attitudes to women begetting illegitimate children in the past are potentially numerous. The exaggerated class disparity between the two central protagonists in most prose narratives suggest that supernatural narratives, local legends, and local character anecdotes relating to the theme of illegitimacy, are a useful vehicle for expressing lower class hostilities towards members of the wealthy middle to upper classes. In the majority of cases, the main incentive for doing so could well relate to the mistreatment of the lower class by their social superiors according to the living memories and experiences of those who perpetuate them. Alternatively, it could relate more generally to a feeling of hostility towards social division hierarchy, particular considering that society is still separated by both social class and wealth today.

In the case of one particular narrative, the anecdotes relating to Trinman, the incentive for doing so may derive from actual memories of instances where lower-class women were sexually exploited and became pregnant by their social superiors. However, the noticeable absence of references to specific instances where such situations occurred in oral testimonies from the South West, suggests that ~~in most cases~~ prose narratives do not function as an exposé of exploitative relationships in the past. Interestingly, such relationships were only referred to in generalised terms, as when Chris Binmore remarked:

Particularly in my mother's day, I think, you got the gentry, you know, the moneyed people. Well the sons could do as they liked. They could have their way with [anybody], that was "oh they was sowing their wild oats". But if any poor girl . . . that they'd got pregnant sort of dared to say anything. And 'course it was twice the shame then on the family, because they would deny all knowledge or chuck 'em a few guineas and say "get on with it", you know. Wouldn't want to know. (III:018:96)

On the subject of sexual exploitation by the upper classes, Margaret Palmer also commented:

That was terrible, weren't it? They used to go out to work, and then it was always the maid's fault and 'er couldn't say no to the master could 'er? I think that was terrible don't you? And then you were brought down and it was your fault weren't it? And I mean they just done what they liked . . . Be enough to make anyone commit suicide really, wouldn't it?
(III:009:95)

However, one might tentatively suggest that Margaret's statement is informed more ^{by} accepted historical truths and prevalent narrative conventions relating to the theme of illegitimacy, perpetuated by the popular novel, television, and other forms of popular culture, than by the reality of past experience.

Margaret does however allude to another important reason for promoting a view of history which emphasises the extremely harsh circumstances surrounding, and attitudes towards, women begetting illegitimate children in the past. Whilst often exaggerating the fatal repercussions of such predicaments, such narratives enable the narrator and listener to appreciate how people might have felt in the past, and more specifically to empathise with the plight of particular women. In this respect such narratives perform a number of important functions. They provide the narrator and audience with a means of discussing subjects such as sexual relationships, rape, and birth, which have traditionally been considered taboo until comparatively recent years. Through a stark contrast in circumstances, they also allow the narrator and listeners to regard contemporary attitudes, particularly towards mothers of illegitimate children, as a radical improvement. Thus, through this comparison, they create the impression of a more civilised, liberal minded society. Such narratives might also allow those who participate in their telling with a means of expressing sympathy for those who were severely mistreated as a result of having illegitimate children in either the recent, or distant past.

Clearly, there might be different reasons for telling a particular narrative at a given point in time, and a changing emphasis in terms of the function it

performs in its immediate context. The tale of Henry Trinman's liaisons with his servant-maids is a case in point. Since having been told different versions of this local character anecdote by "local people", Dave German composed the above quoted narrative which was then incorporated into a "historical" table-mat commissioned by the Two Bridges Hotel. Hence, in recent years the tale has been introduced into the popular printed tradition. As the Two Bridges Hotel is a major tourist attraction, located in close proximity to the main Visitor's Centre in Princetown, the narrative was clearly tailored to a particular audience.

Its popular appeal lies not only in its relevance to the history of the hotel, but also in its ability to fit with a recognisable narrative convention to which the tourists can relate, in which the working-class servant is sexually exploited by the middle-class employer.¹²⁸ Consequently, the narrative accords with the reader's received ideas about attitudes towards illegitimacy in the historical past. In this respect, the narrative is strikingly similar to certain "Jay's Grave" variants in popular printed sources. The style of Dave's printed text suggests that the primary purpose of the narrative is now to entertain. The scandal of Trinman's extramarital affairs and resulting children functions as a salacious piece of gossip, used to titillate the reader according to patriarchally engendered sexual fantasy.

As the local character anecdote of Trinman can now be read by any tourist or other visitor who eats at the hotel, the impact of this printed text on these narratives in oral tradition is potentially enormous. As it is gradually appropriated by the tourist population, of whom, according to one estimate, two thirds are Devonians, the narrative will likely become disassociated from attitudes towards illegitimacy within living memory and experience among the immediate local community. Instead, it will likely reflect both attitudes towards illegitimacy within living memory and experience and prevalent narrative conventions relating to illegitimacy in the past, on a more national scale.

Songs and Prose Narratives as Evidence of Attitudes Towards Illegitimacy in Living Memory and Experience

Even though almost all illegitimacy-related songs included in this thesis are themselves widespread, their meanings generated in performance as regards

¹²⁸ Significantly, Dave obviously deselected another anecdote told in interview as unsuitable, perhaps because the tourist population would not regard it as politically correct. It related to the gay love affairs of another previous owner of the same hotel, who was again portrayed as "deviant".

attitudes towards illegitimacy, often relate in a very specific, personal way to the immediate social context. The use of humour within performances of illegitimacy-related songs exemplifies the tendency for such narratives to be greatly revealing of attitudes towards illegitimacy within both living memory and experience.

For instance, in performances of "Died for Love", "Don't Tell I" and "High Germany", particular singers used the theme of illegitimacy either to parody known individuals within the audience by incorporating their names in the song, or as a means of parodying themselves. In this respect certain songs in performance had an essentially conservative function of the kind identified by Gammon whereby, through subversion, these songs essentially emphasise, or define the norm. Hence the humour of "Died for Love" and "Don't Tell I" in these performances derived from the fact that Ken Penney and Dick French were clearly not heartless or self-interested seducers of young women responsible for illegitimate pregnancies. Likewise, the comedy in Maureen Tatlow performing her particular version of "High Germany" whilst pregnant, derived from the fact that she was clearly not illegitimately pregnant by a lover gone to war, but a married woman with a husband in the audience. Hence these songs could be seen as evidencing essentially conservative values, reinforcing the existing status quo through representing the "other side of the coin".

The use of subversive humour also extended to songs where the circumstances and attitudes described were clearly atypical in terms of the reality of twentieth-century experience. Consequently, both Denis and his audience were implicitly delighted by "Foggy Dew" and "The Butcher", not only because these songs subverted the usual state of affairs in living memory and experience whereby the woman bore the brunt of an illegitimate pregnancy, but also because they subverted long established attitudes whereby society, the employer and the woman herself internalised a condemnatory attitude towards her situation.

The humour derived from many performances of illegitimacy-related songs pointed to the essentially conservative attitudes towards illegitimacy amongst those by whom the songs are perpetuated. Other kinds of data, such as interviews with singers, also consolidated this impression. Of those who expressed an opinion, not a single individual seemed to regard illegitimacy as a positive thing and many appeared to be critical of those who had illegitimate children.

Particular narrative elements of the supernatural narratives, local legends and local character anecdotes considered in Chapter Eight are relatively widespread. Many components of the Herbert memorate can, for example, also be found in narratives from other parts of the country. These include the causal connection between a sexual or romantic relationship and the suicide of a lone female (Underwood Gazetteer 15, 127, 146), the mode of female suicide, by jumping from a tower or high place (Underwood Gazetteer 15, 127, 146, 194, 216) in addition to the subsequent haunting by the deceased (Underwood Gazetteer 15, 127, 146, 194, 216). Hence, Palmer records an almost identical legend to the Herbert memorate in relation to Bryanston House, in Dorset, where some say that the White Ghost, seen in the grounds "is the ghost of a woman who committed suicide on her wedding day by throwing herself off the church tower" (Oral Folk-tales 139). However, unlike the majority of illegitimacy-related folksongs, evidence suggests that all the South West prose narratives which specifically incorporate the theme of illegitimacy are performed in the geographical area to which they refer with only one exception - Bradley Manor's "The Fairy Midwife" variant, a migratory legend which is also performed in Wiltshire (cf. Westwood 67-70; Underwood Gazetteer 122-25).

Yet ironically, for two main reasons the evidence suggests that attitudes towards illegitimacy, particularly as depicted in supernatural narratives and local legends, are less specifically tied to the immediate cultural environment than are those depicted in song. Firstly, whilst there is some degree of overlap between those who perpetuate folksongs and those who perpetuate prose narratives relating to the theme of illegitimacy, to a far greater extent than with folksong, both the forms of illegitimacy-related supernatural narratives and local legends and their meanings as generated in performance, are influenced by the tourist population of whom, according to one estimate, almost a third are outsiders to Devon.

For instance, both the history of the Grey Lady at Dartington, and Sarah Herbert's testimony tend to suggest that the tale of the pregnant servant-maid who committed suicide has traditionally been circulated amongst students at Dartington College of Arts, many of whom, like the Staverton Bridge three, would have originated from areas other than the South West. The supernatural narrative associated with the Lord Halden Hotel in Exeter is also likely to have been shaped and influenced by an "outsider" population, comprising tourists from both the South West and other regional areas, in view of the building's function and location.

The full impact of the tourist industry on prose narratives relating to the theme of illegitimacy, can be best appreciated in relation to the Dartmoor legend of "Jay's Grave". By the mid-1960's, Ruth St Leger-Gordon observed how tour guides were catering for the tastes of their coach parties, perpetuating their own versions of "Jay's Grave" and thereby influencing those in oral tradition. She comments:

Apart from Widecombe and Princetown Prison, this wayside grave . . . evokes more popular interest than any other spot on Dartmoor. Tourist coaches are halted here while their occupants listen open-eyed and-mouthed to the driver-cum-guide relating his own version of this present-day "mystery". For here is a piece of folklore in process of development. (115)

Approximately thirty years later, Dave German describes performing his version of "Jay's Grave" in a strikingly similar context, to visiting coach parties. Once again the narrative is told primarily for entertainment. He commented:

People, after I've told stories, they go back on a coach and the tour director has said to me next time she said "they thoroughly enjoyed that, they were frightened out of their lives". That's what it's all about, bring it alive, keep it going, 'cause if we don't they will die out and all people will have is books just to read. (III:027:I:96)

Certain stylistic features of Dave's performance, such as the intense, melodramatic manner in which Dave delivers his tale, suggests that Dave has tailored his rendition of the narrative to this particular purpose. This may be partly why local people adopt a mocking, sceptical attitude when he performs the legend in their presence, because unlike Mr Brown's conversational narrative, Dave's style of narration demands the endorsement and full attention of the audience. Dave commented:

If you talk to local people, like, being cynical I suppose, really if you're talking about local history or local legends . . . they will just scoff and just laugh. If you were at a pub at Widecombe, or anyway round the moors, and you talk about a legend or "Jay's Grave" they say "here he goes again, telling them a story". I suppose they look at it, "well yeah, it's there and we don't want to know". But [if] somebody's from outside, this is why I have such audiences when I tell legends. They are interested. (III:027:I:96)

It was this kind of response that I witnessed when I first encountered Dave as a storyteller, in a public house in Princetown.

Perhaps in response to the commercialisation of the "Jay's Grave" legend in recent years, many local people are inclined to distance themselves from the story by emphasising their total lack of interest. Having lived in close proximity

to the grave for over seventy years, my Dartmoor informant Bessie French resorted to this strategy when asked about Jay's Grave during an interview. She was entirely disdainful of the story and when asked whether other locals talk about the grave, scathingly remarked, "No, [they] don't they just accept it, it happened years ago, it's just one of those things, isn't it? Local people don't bother with these things, it's only people from away", and subsequently likened the legend to Dartmoor prison in terms of its tourist appeal (III:002:96).

Mrs French was clearly aware of the different strands of the narrative, stating "there are different stories about that and it's not for me to say which is right" (III:022:96). However, she was reluctant to become embroiled in any form of discussion and whether "true" or "untrue", was not persuaded to impart any of these versions. Neither would she be drawn on the question of who puts the flowers on the grave, stating, "Oh I've no idea, your guess is as good as mine who does that. But do you see you're more interested in that than I am. I wouldn't be interested in who puts the flowers there". Bessie French instead referred me to Tony Beard as an authority on the subject, having listened to his radio programme on "Jay's Grave" some years earlier.

When asked about local interest in the grave, Dave German also commented, "oh no. Local people, they don't talk about it", adding, "I think it's just they can't be bothered" (III:027:I:96). Presumably by contrast with the tourists, Tony Beard also remarked about the grave that "locals don't do pilgrimages to it" Wray also gave a similar impression, although he emphasised that the mystery of the flowers still holds some appeal for local people:

No they don't talk about it very much, you know. They still wonder why the flowers get there and all this that. I don't think they want to solve it do they? You know, they don't want to know do they really, 'cause the old thing would be finished if you suddenly found somebody putting a bucket of flowers that would be the end of that, wouldn't it? (III:028:II:97)

The above example of "Jay's Grave" therefore demonstrates how, for reasons relating to the context of their performance since the 1970s, many illegitimacy narratives are not, as might be initially assumed, closely tied to contemporary attitudes towards illegitimacy according to the living memories and experiences of local residents.

The above example of "Jay's Grave" also tends to illustrate how supernatural narratives and local legends have a much stronger relationship with popular literature. Dave German, who worked in the Princetown Visitor's Centre at the time of interview, commented on the impact of such texts in disseminating

legends such as "Jay's Grave". The resulting publicity has tended to promote interest in the grave beyond the immediate locality of Dartmoor. Hence Dave remarked "that's why they come in the [tourist information] centre, 'cause people are more aware so it's not always had that publicity and everybody knows about it, that's grown more recently because of people's awareness because of books and communication" (III:027:I:96). The example of "Jay's Grave" also demonstrates how texts in popular printed sources tend to shape the form of narratives in oral tradition, and influence the attitudes expressed within them (see previous discussion).

The study of one particular local character anecdote, suggests that these kinds of narrative may be more closely tied to attitudes towards illegitimacy within living memory and experience among the local community than either supernatural narratives or local legends. However, it is important not to exaggerate the importance of this finding in relation to so small a sample.

Trinman narratives as told to Dave German could therefore be seen as expressing essentially conservative attitudes towards illegitimacy amongst long-standing members of the Princetown community, according to whose standards Trinman is defined as "deviant". This is because, on the one hand, evidence about the performance context of the narrative indicates that it was told within confined social circles amongst local people. On the other, its mode of transmission also suggests its affinity with local values, being carried exclusively through oral testimonies rather than both through an oral and printed medium until recent years.

Collectively, the above findings suggest that prose narratives relating to the theme of illegitimacy do not entirely support Simpson's proposition that local legends provide an important insight into the values and attitudes of the local community. This is partly because since the 1970s, "outsiders" to the community, such as students and tourists, have played such an important role in shaping and perpetuating these narratives. Hence because both storyteller(s) and audience play a vital part in negotiating the meaning of a given storytelling event, it might be argued that as much as evidencing attitudes towards illegitimacy in living memory and experience in the South West itself, local legends and supernatural narratives also evidence attitudes in other parts of Britain. The influence of popular literary traditions also means that these narratives as told in performance often reveal more about prevalent narrative conventions relating to illegitimacy in the past, than about local attitudes themselves.

Within Chapter 6 I have consolidated Freedman's existing work in relation to illegitimacy ballads, choosing a more contemporary emphasis in examining a larger sample of relevant folksongs collected from a different regional area - the South West of England since 1970. Whereas both Freedman and Atkinson were inclined to suggest that certain illegitimacy ballads were part of a women's genre, my own sample did not tend to support this assertion. In fact a greater number of male, than female singers, were recorded singing songs of this theme during the period under consideration, though this imbalance may partly be explained in terms of the original collecting strategies of the SRFA collectors, which tended to be biased towards the more male dominated, public face of performance. Neither did I find any evidence within my own sample to support Polly Stewart's proposition that songs depicting women in agonistic situations often have an essentially didactic purpose in educating and warning women, and are therefore used as a kind of inter-female communication.

As previously stated, Freedman suggests that the fatal outcome of certain songs functions more as indictment of certain sexual standards than a demonstrations of their supreme rightness (Freedman 16). However, my ability to evaluate my chosen sample from this perspective was extremely problematic. This is because in most cases the link between the illegitimacy stigma and the death of the woman concerned (the "fatal" outcome) was not overtly stated and was consequently a matter of personal interpretation. Although my research into "Died for Love" revealed that all three of the singers interviewed made this sub-textual link, only Denis Hutchings interpreted the song as a challenge to pre-Victorian/Victorian morality, the other two singers performing "Died for Love" as a parody, rather than a serious song. This impression was further complicated by the fact that Denis clearly regarded illegitimacy as highly undesirable.

The essentially conservative humour generated by many of these songs in performance, also tended to suggest that within my own sample, songs of this theme did not function as an expression of social dissent, or gender conflict, within the same community, as Freedman suggests. Rather, the tendency to personalise particular songs, for instance, by including references to known individuals, seems rather to have contributed to the sense of cohesion and unity amongst the immediate social group.

Within this thesis I have identified an important strand of folk narratives, largely overlooked by scholars of supernatural legends and memorates, local legends,

and local character anecdotes, in which the themes of out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth are of central importance. Written documentation suggests that these "illegitimacy" narratives have been long-established in the South West of England. As similar types of evidence allude to the one-time existence of such narratives in other region areas, this particular strand of folk narratives could well be in widespread circulation throughout the country.

I have demonstrated that Bennett's proposed method of evaluating truth in oral texts of urban legends, can be usefully applied to other types of supernatural legend and memorates, and local legends. However, my own findings suggested that, as a method of determining the extent to which the narrator believes a given narrative, or at least tells it "as true", this type of analysis should not be too rigidly applied. This is because my examination of one supernatural memorate in particular, tended to suggest that there are sometimes performance-related discrepancies. Factors including the positioning of items within a given repertoire, for example, can create a false impression of scepticism, when such texts are subjected to this kind of examination in isolation. Discrepancies can also be caused by the content of the narrative itself. For instance, a teller may use a form of "oral short-hand" to recount their tale in brief, because they assume that its sub-text is already familiar to the reader, being so culturally prevalent that it does not need to be explained (cf. Herbert Memorates). Hence, in evaluating "truth" in the any oral text, it is important, where possible, to adopt a holistic^{approach}, being sensitive to the impact of other variables.

This study has also further explored and revised Simpson's notion that the sub-genre of local legend is an especially rich source of communal values and attitudes within particular regional areas, and therefore has "far more to offer the student of rural culture", than other, less "insightful" types of narrative genre. There was nothing within my case study of "Jay's Grave", to contradict Simpson's assertion that local legends invariably reveal something about the immediate social group amongst whom they are told ("The Local" 25). However, an in depth investigation of the social group amongst whom the "Jay's Grave" legends is circulated, produced some interesting insights and raised some important questions about exactly whose values and attitudes were being represented. There were several indications that a high proportion of those perpetuating this particular legend, were outsiders to Devon. Hence, whilst still "hand[ing] on accounts of significant events alleged to have occurred in a particular community", in essence, this legend could not be seen as imparting

information about local opinions as to what is, and what is not, deemed to be important ("The Local" 25).

In using supernatural memorates and legends, and local legend as a source of social attitudes, the case studies of both the Herbert memorate and "Jay's Grave" also underlined the importance of using various techniques in order to accurately tie the experiences and attitudes described within the narrative to a specific period in time. Simpson's suggestion that legend's "stimulating and authenticating" object can be used to this end, was of limited use in relation to my own study. In the case of the Herbert Memorate, the history of the building, as part of the Dartington estate, was itself far too broad, whilst evidence relating to Jay's Grave suggested that the narrative itself preceded the existing grave site, whilst its text had undergone a series of constant revisions. Simpson's more contextual approach, whereby particular aspects of narrative content are viewed in terms of the historical context, was also found to be equally misleading in relation to my own study. With the hindsight of a more diachronic analysis of the development of particular strands of text, this method merely demonstrated the adeptness^{of} both sub-genres to successfully "mimic" aspects of past experiences in the South West region, rather than accurately dating the kinds of social attitude to which those experiences appear to refer.

This thesis has also demonstrated the influence of narrative conventions within the popular novel,^{and} popular writings on folklore, as well as within certain types of mass media, such as television, video and film, on prose narrative genres and, to a more minor degree, on song. As well as shaping the form of certain types of material, such as supernatural narratives and local legends, such influences have also had an impact on whether those perpetuating such narratives believe the experiences or attitudes described within them to be true. Hence my own material consolidates the findings resulting from Gillian Bennett's analysis of contemporary supernatural belief, in which she detects the influence of film, television and other types of mass media upon person experience narratives in oral circulation (Traditions 44-45).

Finally, this study of the theme of illegitimacy in folksong and prose narrative genres has demonstrated the complexities associated with examining any form of representation where the attitudes in question are subject to rapid social change. It is therefore possible that some of the insights gained from this particular analysis could also be applied to the study of other areas of human experience (such as sex, or death) in folksong and prose narrative genres, where the attitudes in question are also in a state of flux. Similarly, this study

might also provide some useful insights in relation to the study of other forms of cultural artefact, where different types of social attitude tend to converge. For instance, the process of unravelling the reality of experiences and attitudes in the past, from contemporary notions of experiences and attitudes in the past, and therefore by implication, from experiences and attitudes in the present, might also be usefully applied in relation to the genre of film.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

This examination of attitudes towards illegitimacy in folksongs and selected prose narrative genres in the South West of England, suggests that folksongs in active circulation since 1970 tend to acknowledge the experience of, and attitudes towards illegitimacy, within the living memories and experience of the singer and his or her audience. This is most frequently accomplished by referring to an undefined, but remote, distant past, though sometimes the language, diction and metaphors incorporated within particular songs are seen as referring to a more contemporary context. Traditional songs therefore represent the past in order to convey or construct values and/or attitudes with which the singer and his or her audience usually, though not exclusively, find accord. Consequently, my original hypothesis that with the declining popularity of a cultural artefact, such as song, a corresponding decline occurs in the relevance of social attitudes expressed within it, was proved to be inaccurate in relation to my chosen sample of songs relating to the theme of illegitimacy. The ages, and life experiences of my chosen group of singers, may have been of major importance in contributing to the "conservative" function of song in this respect.

Prose narratives instead convey contemporary beliefs, or accepted truths about the circumstances of illegitimacy in the past (i.e. between 1750-1930) to a greater extent than songs. Accordingly they often depict illegitimacy as the result of class exploitation, and the negative repercussions of the double standard for lower class women. However, their emotional content in terms of the experience of illegitimacy itself, means that, similarly to song, these narratives also convey or construct values and attitudes with which both the teller and his or her listeners can identify as having existed within their living memories and experience, and to which they can therefore relate. The thriving traditions within this comparative prose-narrative sample also tended to disprove the theory that the declining popularity of illegitimacy-related songs may reflect the increasing inability of a song's content to resonate with prevailing social values.

Critique

An inherent problem with taking a thematic approach to this study was the possible discrepancies between my emphasis on certain types of material, and aspects within it, and that of the informant. Hence, I chose a perspective which the informants themselves may not always have regarded as particularly important. At times the study risked being collector-, rather than informant-centred in terms of creating a hierarchy within individual repertoires, whereby certain items were prioritised above others. By focusing in particular on folksong and selective prose narrative genres, and structuring the thesis accordingly, I also created an unnatural division between "selected illegitimacy-related data", and other items including personal experiences narratives, jokes and sayings, considered as "context" in Chapter 5.

One of the methodological pitfalls associated with my analysis of song, resulted from how I examined the complex process by which meanings were constructed by performers and audiences between 1970-present day. A considerable time-lag between the live performance of an illegitimacy-related folksong, and my discussion of that performance with an informant, inevitably resulted from my using the earlier-collected taped recordings of other collectors (e.g. "Shannon Side"). Hence, the informant's memories of a particular song as performed since 1970 had sometimes deteriorated with the passing of time, possibly being less accurate and specific in detail, than might otherwise have been the case. This tendency might have been avoided had it been possible to carry out a more holistic investigation of meaning as created in performance by interviewing both singers and audiences members immediately after that event.

A related methodological problem concerned the use of written transcriptions in order to jog a particular informant's memory. Particularly where a song had not been recently sung, it might be argued that these did not succeed as an *aide-mémoire* to how meanings were created during particular song performances in the past. Rather, in certain cases it might be argued that this technique instead encouraged singers to carry out a textual analysis of the transcription at hand, rather than relying upon genuine recollection.

Although my study sought to exclude folksongs and selected prose narratives which had not been in oral circulation since 1970, a number of complications arose from the drawing of this boundary. Particularly in the case of prose narratives, it was often very difficult to distinguish between cases where a

narrative had been circulated in popular literary tradition only, and those in which the process of oral transmission was also at work. Likewise, the fact that a given song or narrative was performed in interview could also be misleading. It might not necessarily follow that material collected within this contrived context since 1970, would necessarily have been performed at other times, though it does tend to suggest that such material was at the forefront of the person's consciousness. Yet in certain cases, in the absence of a direct statement as to when the narrative was last told by the informant, I was obliged to assume, without knowing for certain, the item's existence in oral tradition. My analysis of "Jay's Grave" narratives was one such example.

My investigation of song in particular, highlighted that fact that the term "active circulation" is itself very difficult to define, because many of the various ways in which songs are shared, recollected and performed might be seen as constituting an active performance (cf. Kodish). A situation in which a singer learns a song from another's performance, and then continues to silently "replay" the song inside their heads, as appeared to be the case with Charlie Hill and "Catch Me if You Can", could be seen as one such example. Indeed, it might be argued that it is particularly important not to overlook such "performances", because the existence of such items in a person's passive repertoire indicates that an aspect of content or "meaning" has continued to resonate with the person concerned.

Several additional methodological pitfalls became apparent during the process of interviewing informants. The strategy of direct questioning, which I had devised in order to probe the relationship between the material and its historical context, was relatively straightforward in the case of local legends, and local character anecdotes. This was because the form of these particular sub-genres, which tends to be firmly rooted in the "real" world of a time now passed, suggested an immediate connection with the reality of past experience. Hence, this mode of questioning seemed logical to the informant, regardless of whether they actually believed the narrative concerned to be true.

In terms of my chosen corpus of songs, however, the same strategy proved to be far more problematic. This was because many of the informants regarded a song, by its very nature, as something which was not reality. Rather, in many cases it was seen as a purely fictional creation, used primarily for entertainment. Hence, many of my informants regarded my attempts to forge a connection between the representation of experiences and attitudes in song, and those areas of existence according to living memory and experience as

totally illogical. Bewildered by my literal approach, singers such as Margaret Palmer, were keen to emphasise "but it's just song" (III:001:95).

Rather than negating the relationship between song and its socio-historical context, these findings tend to suggest that for many singers, the relationship between reality and representation operates on a far more symbolic, subconscious, psychological level - a point already convincingly argued by Sam Richards in relation to the "key" songs of Westcountry travellers ("Westcountry" 126-27, 145-46). Hence singers could hardly be expected to articulate how experiences and attitudes within these songs relate to those same social attitudes and experiences within the cultural environment in which they are circulated, where such a connection might not even have been realised by the informant themselves (Richards "Westcountry" 145).

My experiences in the field, also corroborated A.E. Green's observations that "for most singers, not surprisingly, the song itself is sufficient articulation of what they want to say, and it is fruitless for the fieldworker to ask more". ("McCaffery" 8). Hence, singers who were articulate about their singing, and were inclined to engage in some degree of analytic discussion regarding the content of their songs and its relationship to the reality of experience, were clearly the exception, rather than the norm.

In terms of my own study, the informant's disinclination to perceive a relationship between selected songs and their social context, was in many cases, a sign of how thoroughly entrenched they were in the values of their culture. Certain value-based assumptions were part of the informant's internal "reality". The significance of songs was therefore completely taken for granted. Hence, the reasons for responses, such as laughter, had never before been questioned, and to directly ask the informant to elaborate particular aspects of the song, such as sexual morality, in relation to real life experiences, often caused embarrassment. The ability of any given informant to perceive a relationship between selected songs and their social context, therefore depended on the level of objective analysis they could bring to bear on a given song at any one time. Their inclination to do so, was in turn affected by factors such as personality, life experience, and education.

A comparison with Green's study of Mc Caffery variants, also suggests that the tendency to distance representation from reality may well have been a product of the particular corpus of songs which I had chosen. Rather than being centred

around a specific "historical" event, my material was instead thematically linked by aspects of human experience.

Though, as I had hoped, my chosen songs did provide an entrée into the discussion of the experiences of, and attitudes towards, illegitimacy in the past, this was not necessarily because the informant linked representation and reality in terms of their own interpretation, or as a natural progression of their discussion of the material. An alternative technique, such as providing several opportunities for the informant themselves to suggest, or not to suggest, a connection between representation and reality within the discussion, in many cases would have provided a more accurate indication of how the singer conceptualised their own material.

It was often more difficult to overcome some of the obstacles created by using other people's data in my analysis of supernatural narratives and local legends, than with my discussion of song. The fact of not having interviewed certain narrative tellers, such as Sarah Herbert and Mr Brown, in person, was clearly a handicap. I was consequently prevented from questioning them about particular aspects of their narrative, such as the issue of belief, or about themselves. This situation resulted in the work being more speculative than would ideally have been the case.

Another difficulty was that the scale of the thesis would not allow for a thorough investigation of the historical underpinnings of every single narrative, even within the selective sample of prose narratives considered. Hence, my suggestion that supernatural memorates and legends evidence contemporary notions about the experiences of, and attitudes towards, illegitimacy in the historical past is based upon having generalised the findings from only one case study in relation to each sub-genre. Only further, more specialised research, using a far larger sample of supernatural narratives and local legend pertaining to this theme, would firmly establish whether this was actually the case.

An associated problem concerned the availability of source material with which to check the authenticity of these particular supernatural legends and memorates, local legends and local character anecdotes. The illegitimacy stigma has inevitably resulted in the circumstances surrounding such conceptions and births being poorly documented. This is particularly the case in relation to the most popular scenarios in these oral narratives, involving middle-to-upper class males, and working class women, where the male concerned

would have both the authority, and financial means to conceal his paternity (e.g. "Jay's Grave"). Hence, even in the minority of cases where it is impossible to investigate the factual basis of a given narrative, evidence is extremely limited. For instance, although it would have been possible to consult two sets of census returns in relation to the Henry Trinman^{anecdote}, it is highly unlikely that, even then, the fact of his fathering a particular child would be made explicit.

Suggestions for further work

Several other lines of investigation suggested themselves throughout various stages of the research and would be a useful addition to the research already undertaken within this thesis. It became immediately apparent that the sizeable body of illegitimacy-related folksongs noted by Baring-Gould, Sharp, Hammond and Gardiner, would be an ideal resource for anyone wishing to conduct an extensive study of attitudes towards illegitimacy as evidenced within folksongs collected at the turn of the century. Additional work of this kind would then provide the means by which attitudes communicated within earlier- and later-collected songs, from the same regional area, might then be compared.

The material amassed by these turn-of-the-century collectors, might be used in order to view the data considered within my existing study, from a diachronic perspective. Hence, the texts of particular illegitimacy-related variants which have continued in oral circulation might be examined from the perspective of continuity and change (cf. Atkinson). This in turn, would provide insights into folksong as evidence of changing attitudes towards illegitimacy in the South West of England, between approximately 1890-present day. Alternatively, one could compare the entire corpus of illegitimacy-related folksongs collected at the turn-of-the century, with those collected since 1970, using the study of social attitudes in the region to suggest why, when particular songs have endured, others have tended to drop out of oral circulation altogether.

Further research, tracing paths of transmission, and charting the "history" of particular illegitimacy-related songs in this region would also be a useful addition to my existing study. This would enable a wider range of folksongs, than the three considered by myself, to be more carefully evaluated as evidence of attitudes towards illegitimacy in the historical past, where a text was proven to have been in oral circulation prior to 1930.

As previously mentioned, many of the methodological problems associated with examining all three selected prose narrative genres pertaining to my chosen

theme, arose from the fact that there has been a serious lack of fieldwork in relation to this kind of material, and a tendency towards armchair scholarship. However, direct work in the field, collecting oral variants using a tape-recorded medium, would begin to compensate for the fact that many illegitimacy-related narratives tend to be recorded in writing, predominantly appearing in popular publications tailored to ^awide audience. The collection of contextual information relating to the tellers would also contribute to the sense of having a more holistic representation of the "storytelling event" itself.

Perhaps the most useful addition to this existing study, would be an investigation of attitudes towards illegitimacy within either folksong, or supernatural legends and memorates, local legends, and local character anecdotes, within another regional area, over a similar period of time. This would provide the means whereby attitudes alluded to within my own sample, might ^{be} contrasted with those represented within a comparative body of data from another part of the country. A study of this kind would also provide a vehicle by which to test my hypothesis regarding the cultural prevalence of particular types of narrative convention, and its importance in shaping beliefs about the experience of, and attitudes towards illegitimacy in the historical past. The notion that servant maids were sexually exploited and became pregnant by members of their employers' families, is one such example.

APPENDIX I

EXAMPLES OF ROUGH MUSIC IN THE ORAL TESTIMONIES OF SOUTH WEST INFORMANTS

Harry Adams

The following account of a "skimmetty riot" was provided by Harry [Herbert] Adams, during an interview with Bob and Jacqueline Patten at his home in Isle Abbots, Somerset, in October, 1976. At the time of recording, Harry was 73 years old and had lived in the locality for most of his life, where he worked in various occupations, including agricultural work and engineering. The events described implicitly took place during the first half of the twentieth century.

[HA]¹ Well, this skimmetty riot [laugh, laugh] yes, there was an old lady lived there, she weren't all that old, she was a widow woman and, er, used to be a married man come from Isle Brewers to "see to her", pretty regular. So one night they had what they called a skimmetty riot.

[RWP]² uhhh huhh

[HA] Course, made a mommet, a mommet, a effigy then and put it in a wheelbarrow, you see, took it out in this field here, other side the road and caught fire to it, burned it. And then they went down Isle Brewers, outside of his place and done the same, another mommet down there.

You know what a mommet was, don't 'e? A lot of people really don't know what mommets are, know what I m[ean]. A lot of people say "What the Devil's a mommet?" [laugh] Ah well, 'twas effigy, I s'pose, really, they called it, that's what happened. An' you know, because he'd come over here. I don't know what they'd be burning wheelbarrow fulls and wheelbarrow fulls of straw these days if they was do the same now . . . I can't remember seeing it but I can always remember it happened once, you know. An' old Ted Hooper, he was one . . . keeping her up, holding her on, and he was crying, like, see, called wiping her eyes, 'twas only an old sack with a hat on. Oh it was quite a to-do, I think. Course, they used to drink a lot of cider while they was doing it, s'pose they wouldn't do it else (Patten Transcription).

¹ Harry Adams.

² Bob Patten.

Charlie Hill

Fragmented additional accounts of rough music were provided by Charlie Hill when I interviewed him alone, and also with Jacqueline Patten at his home in Drewsteignton. As previously stated, Charlie grew up on Dartmoor where he worked all his life as a farmer until his retirement and was in his seventies at the time of recording. Charlie volunteered the following information during a general discussion about sexual morality and changing attitudes towards illegitimacy in September 1995:

I don't know if I told you, but if a married couple was having a relationship years ago they used burn his effigy [laughter]. And they used to call it burning his dickey. Have you ever heard of when they used to burn his effigy? (ILL:005:11:95)

Charlie repeated this anecdote on another occasion in December 1995, with the same emphasis on punishing the offending male. The fact that the ritual was associated with Charlie's grandmother's generation, suggests that it was probably still current during the mid-to late nineteenth century.

If anybody went off with somebody else's wife or, you know, started mucking about . . . they used to say they were gonna burn his dickey. They used to burn an effigy of [pause] and it was done around the Sticklepath, South Zeal area, because I've heard my grandmother in law talk about it. (Ill:010:1:95)

He continued:

[CH] Adultery in those days weren't talked about, you know, like it is today. Probably wan't no News of the World If a fella was mucking about with somebody else they used to burn his effigy. Supposed [to evoke?] something like the gods, or something or other, and it was supposed to bring the fella bad luck. W'er it did or it didn't I don't know. But that's what they used to call it, burning his dickey.

[SD] What did they make the effigy out of? . . .

[CH] Something like you'd make a Guy Fawkes today. And they[d] put him on a pile of wood, and sort of burn him. If they would say or chant anything whilst this thing was being burnt, I don't know, she never went into that. (ILL:010:1:95)

In a subsequent conversation in April 1996, Charlie re-explained the custom to Jackie Patten. In doing so he also included Belstone and South Tawton as areas in which it was known to have happened.

[CH] You ask him [Wray Tucker] if he's heard of when they used to burn anybody's dickey. Now what it was, if a fella was unfaithful with somebody else's wife, they used to burn his dickey [Aside to Jackie]. Whether that was done just around the Belstone, South Tawton, South Zeal area, I don't know. (ILL:021:l:96)

Jacqueline and I had already asked Wray about this particular ritual. Although he recollected it being talked about in the Dartmoor area, he was unable to supply any detail (III:020:96).

APPENDIX II

Folksongs Relating to the Theme of Illegitimacy collected in the South West of England during the Turn of the Century

All references in the following appendix to versions published by Karpeles are taken from Maud Karpeles, [ed]. Cecil Sharp's Collection of English Folk Songs. 2 Vols. London: Oxford UP, 1974.

"A Sailor by Right"

This ballad tells the story of two women deceived by one man who promises to marry them both. When the two women become pregnant, the sailor marries one and abandons the other. The deserted woman denounces the treacherous lover who has publicly shamed her and hangs herself in a wood. Her body and suicide note, requesting that her rotting corpse be left as a warning to others, are found by two hunters and her spirit begins to haunt the unfaithful lover. He is eventually forced to flee, but her vengeful ghost catches up with his ship and consumes him in fire.

"An Alderman's Lady"

John Barnett's version dramatises a conversation between an *alderman* (or "elderman" in Jack Barnard's version) and a woman called Nancy, the object of his affections. Nancy questions the alderman's sexual intentions, expressing concern as to what would happen if she were to have a child. She suggests he might deny responsibility, the child would suffer and she would go to prison. He proposes sending her to her Mother's and killing the baby in her absence, thereby concealing the birth. She refuses to trust him and expose herself to "shame and disgrace". The comparatively peripheral narrative eventually recounts how on her thereby winning the alderman's respect, he subsequently marries her.

"As I Walked Out One May Morning"

This narrator, a predatory male, describes his chance meeting with a young girl on the plains who claims she is a day too young to marry or "lie" with him

(cf. "Too Young"; "Catch Me"). Still persisting in seducing her, he wryly comments "I found she was not a day too young" and she subsequently asks him to name their wedding day. He refuses to marry her, mockingly requesting her to carry her "big belly" home to her mother instead.

"The Barley Rakings"

A harvest-time frolic between a "loving couple" has only negative repercussions for this female protagonist when she becomes pregnant (cf. "Raking of Hay"). Writing to tell her lover the news, she implores him to prove loyal. Instead he urges her not to waste her efforts, or feel pained, and to forget the "barley rakings" (i.e. their sexual encounter). Being intent on roving, he regards a commitment to her only as a last resort.

"The Basket of Eggs"

In the complete version by Mrs Lawrence, a young woman takes advantage of a wealthy sailor's offer to carry her basket. He unknowingly relieves her of her illegitimate child which, with his comrades, he carries ahead to the inn. In mistaking the basket's contents for food, the deception is uncovered. One of the sailors makes an offer of fifty pounds to anyone who will take charge of the baby. The child's mother thereby reclaims the infant with a handsome profit, subsequently marrying the sailor she danced with at Easter, who the narrative implies is her child's natural father.

"Bonnie Annie"

A young woman runs away with her sea captain lover by whom she is pregnant. In some versions, she almost immediately gives birth on boarding the ship. She subsequently requests to be returned home but her lover refuses. In three texts she explicitly asks her lover to throw her and her baby overboard or voluntarily jumps overboard with her child. In another two, they are drowned at the lover's initiative. The distinctions being blurred between suicide and murder; the reasons for their death are enigmatic in all versions.

"The Cruel Mother"

Mrs Woodberry's version of "The Cruel Mother", the only South West text, introduces the female protagonist as a lady from York who "fell in love with

her father's clerk". However, the text excludes any reference to the woman's pregnancy or to the scene of labour and the killing of the children, instead jumping straight to the mother's encounter with the ghosts of her dead children. In damning her to hell, the children's pronouncement of divine judgement is therefore rather inexplicable. By comparison with variants collected in other regional areas, such as those considered in Atkinson's study, this particular song therefore excludes many narrative details and exists in much simpler form.

"Dabbling in the Dew"

This song uses a dialogue between a milkmaid and a man of higher social class to convey its narrative. Two of the variants in published sources directly pertain to the theme of illegitimacy. In both, the male protagonist asks and receives answers to various hypothetical questions, such as "suppose I was to kiss you, my pretty dear", in John Swain's version (Karpeles A). The action of the song therefore progresses with the minimum of description, throughout each stage of the seduction. Eventually, when the gentleman asks the milkmaid to suppose she were pregnant, she replies "you'll have to stand the father of it", for if he were to abandon her, "the devil would fetch me [her] back again" (Karpeles A). In James Olver's version, she instead reassures him her brother could make the cradle, and she its clothes.

"The Devil's in the Girl"

This narrative tells how a young "lusty gentleman" stays overnight with his girlfriend. Following their encounter, she teases him provocatively and euphemistically requests him to play her favourite "tune" (the song's title) again. The girl's cunning is outwitted, however, as the couple subsequently wake up her mother who beats the lover and throws him out. Later becoming aware of her daughter's pregnancy, she dryly comments upon the risk of playing "the devil's in the girl". Twelve months later, when the young gentleman returns and finds he has a son, he refuses the female protagonist's marriage proposal with a euphemistic witticism regarding the "piper's" fee and suggests she finds another lover.

"The Dirty Beggarman"

Of the two versions pertaining to the theme of illegitimacy, Miller Spearman's (Karpeles D) concerns a much sought-after, wealthy farmer's daughter. A lonely neighbouring farmer comes to court her, disguised as a tinker or beggar. When he arrives, requesting her to bring out hardware to mend or provide a night's accommodation, she makes him a bed in her father's barn. Seizing the opportunity, he traps her by barring the barn-door and seduces her. He subsequently provides her with some money in anticipation of a child's nursing fees (cf. "Rosemary Lane"). The otherwise similar version by John Edbrook (Karpeles F) extends the narrative, the farmer's daughter being confronted with her pregnancy by her mother and later writing to the farmer in response to him having promised her further reward if she gives birth to a son.

"Down by the Riverside"

James Chedgy's version of this song (Karpeles B) is narrated by a seducer who chances upon a young woman by the riverside. Having overheard her singing, he asks her to marry him but she insists she is too young. However, he persuades her that her youth is an asset, with a false promise of marriage:

The younger you are, my dear,
The better you are for me,
That I may say some other day,
I married my wife a maid.

However, he successfully seduces, then deserts her. "Down by the Riverside" thus uses a similar plot to "Old Riverside" and "As I Walked" (see above). However, this song ends differently, because there is no resulting murder or suicide. The female protagonist merely bemoans her fate, by contrast with her unburdened peers

Farmer's daughter's used to ride,
Market they would go,
When this poor girl would stay at home,
And rock the cradle O

and is grieved by her lover's deceit. Her unsympathetic seducer tells her that her own sexual licence ("good will") is to blame. Unfortunately, the most

recently collected South West version of this song, performed by Jack Gard, in Calverleigh, Devon, in 1977, had to be excluded from the discussion in Chapter 6, as the singer had emigrated to Canada in the 1920s. Perhaps significantly, Jack's version - in which the theme of illegitimacy is made even more prominent - has some striking similarities with "Old Riverside", the subsequent stanzas, in which the man puts on his clothes to leave and reproaches the woman for her gullibility, being also almost identical.

"Earl Richard"

Alfred Emery's version of this ballad is the only published South West text directly referring to "illegitimate" pregnancy, in what appears to be a floating stanza also connected with "The Shannon Side" (See Karpeles A). A knight called William drunkenly seduces a farmer's daughter on a plain. He reveals his name in response to her request to have a name for her resulting child. When he rides away, she follows him, running an arduous journey across country to the royal household. There, she petitions the king, telling him of her "stolen" maidenhead. He grants her compensation by arranging her marriage to the reluctant knight, ^{or} in other versions offering money. The female protagonist reveals herself to be a duke's daughter and all is well.

"Floating Down the Tide"

In terms of its language and style, "Floating Down the Tide" has striking similarities with more recently collected variants of "Old Riverside", though particular plot elements differ. This time the song concerns a courting (or at least familiar) couple, rather than strangers, the woman again being described as "young and foolish" by her seducer in Mrs Tremlett's version (Karpeles A). Although, by contrast with "Old Riverside", the woman's pregnancy is made explicit from the outset, a similarly worded betrayal scene ensues. Whilst the seducer rejects his lover, requesting her to return to her family, she refuses on the grounds of disgrace, ominously stating:

I'd sooner go and drown myself,
Down in a lonesome place. (Karpeles version A)

However, rather than pushing her into the river, the inconstant lover later recognises his girlfriend floating in the water and climbs in too. Having established that she is dead, implicitly as a result of heartbreak or suicide, he is thoroughly remorseful of his treachery (Karpeles version A). In Susan

William's version he actually drowns himself alongside her, in others asking divine forgiveness:

The Lord have mercy on my soul,
I've been a false young man. (Karpeles version A)

"Glastonbury Town"

A squire offers his girlfriend a bribe to have sex with him and she consents. Over six months later when he again rides by, his girlfriend confronts him with her advanced pregnancy, daring him to deny his paternity. When he asks her to provide details of where, when, and at what time, the supposed encounter took place, she crossly produces the gold engagement ring he gave her. Dismissing the ring as a token of friendship, he slyly evades his marriage promise.

"I Sowed Some Seeds"

This song again alludes to the male protagonist's mobility. Purslow's composite text suggests that he may be seen as temporarily residing in lodgings in London, perhaps as an apprentice, in Mrs Gulliver's version. This story has more of a sense of foreboding than related narratives, such as "Rosemary Lane". In all three texts the narrator describes how in being a stranger he fell prey to temptation and "sowed some seeds all in some grove" (Lucy White, Karpeles A). Purslow's composite text and Mrs Glover's versions imply that he guiltily runs away, whilst in all versions he leaves his young lover to "reep the seed that I have sown" (Lucy White).

"I Wish I had Never Known"

This lyrical song takes the form of a monologue in which the circumstances of the broken affair are imparted from the female protagonist's perspective, as with "The Dark-Eyed Lover". Although this narrative similarly conveys a tone of embittered sentimental regret, it also incorporates several viewpoints because the narrator's voice is contrasted against those of knowledgeable "others". It is thus from reported speech that we learn of the lover's departure and, in the fifth stanza, the results of this affair:

Some say I'm with child but that I'll deny,
Some say I'm with child, but I'll prove it a lie.
I'll tarry awhile and soon let them know

That he likes me too well to serve me so (Purslow, Wanton 35)

Consequently, the song gives us a growing sense of the narrator's inner struggle created by her refusal to accept the harsh realities of her predicament. She maintains her position of denial to the end of the song when she says she no longer cares.

"James Macdonald"

A beautiful sixteen year old servant becomes pregnant by her long-term lover, a servant of this name. When he reveals his intention to kill her, she begs him not to commit a double murder, promising to relinquish all ties if he spares her life. Nevertheless, Macdonald kills her with a whip. The woman is found, and retribution is facilitated at the hands of the police, who find and imprison Macdonald in Wicklow gaol sentencing him to hang.

Lady Maisry

The most lengthy South West version of this ballad is sung by Jack Barnard. It begins with an unidentified woman (presumably Lady Maisry) hurriedly sending a page boy to fetch "her lord" from his castle, it being unclear whether the union between the two central protagonists is a marriage. When asked by the lord whether his "gay lady" has gone into labour, the page boy articulates the fear that she may die before his return. However, there is no mention of murder and the cause of her death remains unclear. The lord is met by Maisry's funeral on his arrival, the ballad stating that he died the following Sunday. By comparison with variants collected in other regional areas, such as those considered in Freedman's study of Scottish ballads, this variant therefore excludes key narrative details.

"Lisbon"

Though a similar narrative situation to "High Germany", this song instead stages the emotional parting of a sailor or squire and his girlfriend. In Robert Parish's version (Karpeles A) the woman urges him to marry her before he travels overseas, reminding him of her advancing pregnancy and trying to persuade him to stay. He refuses, claiming he would be disgraced by not going, so she declares her intention to accompany him by disguising herself as his serving man. Though otherwise extremely similar, Eliza Hutching's

version (Karpeles B) includes three additional stanzas, with the male protagonist testing his girlfriend with the idea of battle danger and his own infidelities. Pleased with her response he marries her.

"Maria and William"

This narrative tells how a man pursues and seduces an upper-class woman. Having made her his sexual conquest, he then scorns her, spurning her throughout the resulting pregnancy. After the child is born, he sees her dancing with another man and is overcome with envy. He decides to poison her wine but, when it starts to take effect, is remorseful of his jealousy and drinks it too. The united couple die a slow death together.

"No My Love Not I"

In the more lengthy version sung by Mrs Overd (Karpeles A), the narrator describes how he chanced upon a woman gathering may. When he asks her if she will marry him, she rejects his offer with the phrase "not I, my love, not I". A few months later, realising their encounter has left her pregnant, the female protagonist regrets this decision and writes to summon the stranger. He mockingly retracts his offer of marriage, instead advising her to go out begging and "curse the very hour that you said: No, my love, not I", using a play upon words relating his refusal to hers. The eventual tone of dismissal on the part of the male protagonist is reminiscent of "The Barley Rakings".

"The Oxford Murder"

A farmer's daughter becomes pregnant by her long-term partner, a gamekeeper. Distressed by her condition when he courts another woman, she confronts him with her predicament in the park. Refusing pressure to marry her, he stabs his lover to death, cutting her open and placing her twin babies in her arms. She is found, identified and the news conveyed to her heartbroken parents. The gamekeeper is imprisoned and sentenced to hang, the condemned man warning against the breaking of marriage promises in three final stanzas.

"Poor Nell and the Chimney Sweep"

In the most complete version by Captain Lewis, a wealthy lawyer's housekeeper-mistress becomes distressed by her developing pregnancy and urges him to marry her. Having vowed to do so on pain of being carried away by the devil, the lawyer dismisses her and takes up with another woman - a more wealthy suitor in the two additional variants. Taking recourse to a practical joke in order to win him back, Nell disguises herself in a chimney sweep's clothes and pretends to be the devil. Accosting her inconstant lover with his broken marriage promise, she successfully tricks him into marriage (cf. "Basket of Eggs"). When, at the child's birth, the lawyer learns of this deception he congratulates Nell on her cunning.

"Raking of Hay"

In Mrs Palmer's version of "Raking of Hay" a soldier encounters a woman working in a field and presses her to come away with him. Fearing she will lose her job and wages, she resists, but is eventually swayed by his persistence. Having plied her with gifts, he initiates a sexual encounter which leaves her pregnant. Elizabeth Lawless's version of the song ends with the woman becoming remorseful in the later stages of pregnancy, exclaiming "Cursed be the hour that I left my master's hay," thus implying an ultimately negative conclusion (Reeves, The Idiom 133). However, in Mrs Palmer's version two additional stanzas describe how the female protagonist is eventually pleased when a son is born and, on hearing the news, the equally elated soldier marries her.

"The Sea Captain"

A captain is sent straight to sea, without having time to consummate his marriage. His newly-wed wife commits adultery with a neighbouring squire in her husband's absence. He leaves her fifty pounds, boasting already to have fathered twenty children that same year, and the encounter leaves her pregnant. When the sea-captain returns nine months later, his wife is particularly anxious to conceal her obviously illegitimate pregnancy. Hence she attempts to allay her husband's suspicions, dismissing her weight gain as fat, and her labour pains as "the colic". The doctor, then midwife are sent for and deliver a son; a dramatic device involving the wife's serving-women also confirms her guilt. However, her husband forgives her "for the joke's

sake", his teasing remarks making an ironic allusion to the squire's earlier boast.

"The Sprig of May"

When a couple meet by chance on a "dreary moor", the woman mournfully says she would be pleased to marry the stranger and euphemistically poses a sexual challenge, which implicitly he accepts. Approximately four months later, the absent male protagonist comments:

It's by experience I know full well,
One sprig of May made her belly swell. (Reeves, Everlasting 246)

This allusion to his sexual experience suggests that he is habitually promiscuous.

"Through the Woods"

Clearly affiliated with Renwick's category of "symbolic song" the most complete version of "Through the Woods", sung by Richard Adams (Karpeles A), describes how the inconstant lover promises eternal fidelity to the female protagonist if she has sex with him. The woman unhappily reaps the consequences of her partner's deception, when he deserts her immediately after their encounter (cf. "A Sailor by Right"). Forced to give birth alone, she subsequently suffers a lingering death "lamenting for her true love".

"Valentines Day"

A woman initiates a sexual encounter with her lover on St Valentine's day. In Mrs Overd's version, she becomes pregnant and subsequently visits him, daring him to deny his paternity. He challenges her, requesting how, where, when and at what time the encounter took place and she retorts by threatening him with prison if he does not consent to marry her (cf. "Glastonbury Town"). Having given his agreement, the lover flees aboard a ship. He returns with his riches seven years later, so rather than rebuking him the woman praises his courage. A variation in plot occurs in James Bishop's version where the male protagonist disappears immediately after the encounter, but is likewise confronted by his pregnant lover when he eventually returns, challenges her and is threatened with prison.

"What Did Your Sailor Leave You"

In contrast with "High Germany", which employs a similar theme, this song deals with a more symbolic, abstracted world. A dialogue between a naive, childlike, woman and a stranger constructs the narrative of this song. This sentimental account tells how a sailor has gone away to war, leaving his lover a single parent to their child. That this is a committed relationship is suggested by the juxtaposition of the woman's assertion that they will marry on his return and a final remark regarding the loss of partners due to war.

"Willie O Winsbury"

This ballad has a similar narrative structure to "Maids-A-Rushing", likewise dramatising the moment of revelation when a father suddenly discovers his daughter's out-of-wedlock pregnancy. However, rather than the new-born child facilitating this discovery, it is the daughter's pale, wan/worn or ill appearance, and obvious weight gain in Mrs Sage's version, which prompts the father's suspicions when he returns to his castle after a prolonged absence. When questioned about the man who fathered her child, in the lengthy dialogue which follows, the female protagonist discloses his identity as her father's servant man or one of his sailors ("Jack Tar" or "jolly, jolly tar"). Asking this man to marry his daughter, her father promises an inheritance. Although his proposal is accepted, the lover spurns the offer of land in all cases.

"Young Rambleaway"

In James Parson's comparatively uncensored version published by Reeves, a flashy young male seducer describes how he flirts with a woman at Tavistock Fair. He courts, then subsequently deserts her, leaving her to confront her parents with her pregnancy. The song ends with a warning directed at women thinking of making themselves "free" (i.e. becoming sexually intimate) with young men who court them.

APPENDIX III

Examples of Illegitimacy-related Songs Collected Since 1970

Standard title: "Ball of Yarn"

Name of singer: Ken Penney

Place of collection: Singer's home, Pennymoor, Devon

Date of collection: 30.09.81

Name of collector: Sam Richards & Tish Stubbs

Source: SRFA tape 68

It was in the month of June,
When the roses were in bloom,
I was working at me grandfather's farm,
When I met a pretty maid,
And unto her I said,
May I wind up your little ball of twine?

Sweet Melinda, sweet Melinda,
Tell me truly, tell me truly you'll be mine,
Like the blackbird and the thrush,
Keep your hand upon your brush,
And your finger on your little ball of twine.

Well I took that pretty maid,
And I placed her on my knee,
Oh! Pretending I would do her no harm,
But the devil entered me,
And I went above her knee,
And I winded up her little ball of twine.

Sweet Melinda, sweet Melinda,
Tell me truly, tell me truly you'll be mine,
Like the blackbird and the thrush,
Keep your hand upon your brush,
And your finger on your little ball of twine.

Well, several months had passed,
Before I saw that pretty maid,
She was carrying a baby in her arms,
And she looked so black at me,
And the reason you could see,
I had winded up her little ball of twine.

Sweet Melinda, sweet Melinda,
Tell me truly, tell me truly you'll be mine,
Like the blackbird and the thrush,
Keep your hand upon your brush,
And your finger on your little ball of twine.

Standard title: "Ball of Yarn"

Name of singer: Daisy Small

Place of collection: Singer's home, Bishopsteignton, Devon.

Date of collection: 05.07.83

Name of collector: Sam Richards and Tish Stubbs

Source: SRFA tape 242

In the merry month of May,
When I caught her making hay,
Way down upon a little farm,
Well we had a little walk,
And we had a quiet talk,
And I asked her could I wind her ball of yarn.

Now I put my arms around her,
I gently laid her down,
Not intending to do her any harm,
But the devil tempted me,
To put my hand upon my knee,
And my fingers on the little ball of yarn.

Now after she arose,
She buttoned up her clothes,
To run home and tell her dear mama,
So I hopped across the green,
Not intending to be seen,
After winding up her little ball of yarn.

Now were twelve months to the day,
I was passing by that way,
And a maiden came running up to me,
Oh she said "look what you've done,
I am bringing you your son,"
After winding up my little ball of yarn.

Now all you country maidens,
Who work down on the farm,
Never rise too early in the morn',
So beware all of the mush³,
The blackbird and the thrush,
And keep your hand on your little ball of yarn.

³ Romany for friend or man (Sandford 251).

Standard title: "Barnacle Bill the Sailor"
Name of singer: Wray Tucker and unnamed woman
Place of collection: Public house, South Zeal ?
Date of collection: ?
Name of collector: ?
Source: WT SZ tape 8

"Who's that knocking at my door?" [speech]

"Come on Johnny, you know this one" [speech]

Who's that knocking at my door?
Who's that knocking at my door?
Cried the fair young maiden.

It's only me from over the sea,
Said Barnacle Bill the sailor,
It's only me from over the sea,
Said Barnacle Bill the sailor.

I'll come down and let you in,
I'll come down and let you in,
I'll come down and let you in,
Cried the fair young maiden.

You can sleep upon the mat,
You can sleep upon the mat,
You can sleep upon the mat,
Cried the fair young maiden.

[woman] "Bugger the mat you can't . . . [laughter]"

Bugger the mat you can't shag that,
Said Barnacle Bill the sailor,
Bugger that mat you can't shag that,
Said Barnacle Bill the sailor.

What if I should have a child,
What if I should have a child,
What if I should have a child,
Cried that fair young maiden.

We'll drown the bugger and shag for another,
Said Barnacle Bill that sailor,
We'll drown the bugger and shag for another,
Said Barnacle Bill the sailor.
[laughter]

Standard title: "Catch Me if You Can"

Name of singer: Vic Legg

Place of collection: The Volunteer Inn, Sidmouth, Devon

Date of collection: 05.08.96

Name of collector: Sarah Davies

Source: DAVIES Gen:Res: ?:96

1. As I was walking out one day,
Down in those meadows,
Growing green,
A fair young girl I chanced to see,
And I ask her if,
She would walk with me.
2. I asked her if she would walk with
me,
Down in those meadows,
Growing green,
I'd show her flowers,
And pretty things,
I'd show her what,
She had never seen.
3. As this young couple,
Were walking along,
He sang to her,
Some sweet pretty songs,
He sang to her,
Some sweet pretty songs,
And soon he gained her favour.
4. Now since you've had your will of
me,
And stolen away my sweet liberty,
You have stolen away my sweet
liberty,
Won't you please tell me,
Your name sir.
5. My name is catch me,
That's if you can,
I'll marry you when I return,
I'll marry you when I return,
For I'm going to cross the wide
ocean.
6. Now three long months,
They were over and passed,
And six long months he never
returned,
And nine long months had come at
last,
And the child had got no father.
7. I'll roam this wide world all round
and round,
I'll find that young man if I can,
I'll find that young man if I can,
If I catch him at his own pleasure.

Standard title: "Died for Love"

Name of singer: Harriet Adams

Place of collection: Singer's home, Ashwater, Devon

Date of collection: 09.11.75

Name of collector: Sam Richards, Paul Wilson, Tish Stubbs

Source: SRFA tape 191

A man came home from work one night,
And he found his home without a light,
He walked upstairs to go to bed, go to bed,
When a sudden thought came to his head.

He walked into his daughter's room,
There he found her hanging from a beam,
He took a knife to cut her down, cut her down,
And on her breast this note he found.

Oh Lord, I wish my child was born,
And all my troubles they were gone,
If you find one good and true, good and true,
Never change the old love for the new.

On yonder corner grew a tree,
The leaves blew gently after me,
I picked one up but it would not break, would not
break,
My love passed by but he would not speak.

Oh speak young man and don't be shy,
For I'm the girl who passed you by,
Here's my hand but not my heart, not my heart,
True lovers and true loves part.

Oh dig my grave and dig it deep,
And place white lilies at my feet,
On my breast please place a dove, place a dove,
To show the world that I died for love.

Standard title: "Died for Love"

Name of singer: Denis Hutchings

Place of collection: Singer's home, Torquay, Devon

Date of collection: 22.03.87

Name of collector: Sam Richards

Source: SRFA tape 368

A maiden young and fair was she,
A girl of high society,
A sailor born and bred was he,
Who caused her all her misery.

Her father came home late one night,
And found his house without a light,
He went upstairs to go to bed,
And a sudden thought came through his head.

He went in to his daughter's room,
And he found her hanging from a beam,
He took his knife and cut her down,
And on her breast these words were found.

Oh father, I can't bear the shame,
To have a child without a name,
So dig my grave both wide and deep,
And place white lilies at my feet.

They dug her grave and dug it deep,
And placed white lilies at her feet,
And on her head they placed a dove,
To show the world she died for love.

Now all you maidens bear in mind,
A sailor's love is hard to find,
So if you find one good and true,
Don't change the old one for the new.

Standard title: "Rosemary Lane"
Name of singer: Maureen Tatlow
Place of collection: Her home, Wadebridge, Cornwall
Date of collection: 18.02.97
Name of collector: Sarah Davies and Jacqueline Patten
Source: DAVIES III:029:II:97

[Refrain]

Home boys home,
Home I'd like to be,
Home for a while in me own country,
Where the oak and the ash and the bonny rowan tree,
Are all a-growing greener in the West Country.

Well who wouldn't be a sailor lad a sailing on the main,
To earn the good will of his captain's good name,
Oh I came ashore one evening for to see,
That was the beginning of one true love and me.

[And it's ...followed by refrain]

Well he asked her for a candle, to light him up to bed,
A-likewise a flannel to wrap around his head,
She tended unto him like a fair maid ought to do,
Then he says to her "why don't you jump in with me
too?"

[And it's...followed by refrain]

Well she jumped into bed, thinking no alarm,
Thinking a young sailor lad could do to her no harm,
He kissed her and he cuddled her the whole night long,
Till she wished the short night had been but seven years
long.

[And it's.... followed by chorus]

Well now early next morning that sailor lad arose,
Into Molly's apron threw a handful of gold,
Saying "take this me dear, for the mischief I have done,
For tonight I fear I left you with a daughter or a son."

[And it's.... followed by refrain]

Well now if it be a daughter you send her out to nurse,
With gold in her pockets and silver in her purse,
But if it be a boy let him wear the jacket blue,
Go climbing up the riggin' like his daddy climbed up
you.

[And it's...followed by refrain]

So come all you young maidens, a warning take by me,
And never trust a sailor lad an inch above your knee,
Oh I trusted one and he beguiled me,
And left me with a pair of maids to dangle on me knee.

[And it's... followed by refrain]

[Laughter]

Standard title: "The Thrashing Machine"

Name of singer: Denis Hutchings

Place of collection: His home, Babbacombe, Torquay, Devon.

Date of collection: 30.10.95.

Name of collector: Sarah Davies.

Source: DAVIES III:008:II:95.

Twas down in Dorset the story do tell,
I courted a maiden and her name was Nell,
'er was fine young and handsome and sweet seventeen,
And 'er longed for a ride on me threshing machine.

I 'ad 'er, I 'ad 'er, I 'ad 'er, I ay,
I 'ad 'er, I 'ad 'er, I 'ad 'er, I ay,
I 'ad 'er, I 'ad 'er, I 'ad 'er, I ay,
I up'd and I showed her the way.

Twas one fine morning in the merry month of May,
When most of the farmers were out making hay,
I said "come to the barn dear,
Where we can't be seen,
And I'll show you the works of me threshing machine".

Twas one fine morning in the merry month of June,
When most of the farmers were looking at the moon,
I cocks up me ear-hole and heard a good scream,
There went our Nell of me threshing machine.

Well three months later all went well,
The tip of Nell's stomach began to swell,
Twas under her apron and plain to be seen,
The steam had gone out of the threshing machine.

Twas nine months later Nell's baby was born,
Twas a darling but very forlorn,
And under its nappy twas plain to be seen,
A brand new two cylinder threshing machine.

[laughter]

APPENDIX IV

SUPERNATURAL NARRATIVES

In the 1790s, the physician, Dr Walter Farquhar, provided a supernatural memorate relating to the theme of illegitimacy based upon an account of his visit to Berry Pomeroy Castle, near Totnes, in Devon. This narrative has been extremely influential, being subject to extensive rewritings by armchair scholars (see Seymour 110; Brown Devon Ghosts 33). Fragments of the narrative have been reused and distorted by various authors recycling each others' material in published guide books and popular books on supernatural folklore throughout the twentieth century (S.M.Ellis 2-5; Underwood, Gazetteer 24-26; Turner 114-18; Green 58-59; Folklore 150; Chard 46-47; Seymour 100; Underwood Ghosts 19-22; Brown, Devon 33-34).

Additional examples of relevant supernatural narratives are also recorded by Bottrell, Hunt and Courtney in relation to nineteenth-century Cornwall. In both "A Legend of Pengersec" and "The White Hare" illegitimacy is seen as the product of the deceit and/or self-interested corruption of the male protagonist or male protagonist and his family. According to Hunt, the motif of the white hare derives from the widespread Cornish belief that

when a maiden, who has loved not wisely but too well, dies forsaken and broken-hearted, that she comes back to haunt her deceiver in the shape of a white hare. This phantom follows the false one everywhere, mostly invisible to all but him. It sometimes saves him from danger, but invariably the white hare causes the death of the betrayer in the end. (377)

Thus the supernatural component clearly functions within the narrative as the moral agent of divine justice and retribution (cf. "The Mermaid's Vengeance"). Apart from taking an animal, rather than human form, the hare therefore has a similar purpose to the most widespread post-reformation apparition, who returns "for some specific purpose" to the living, inspired by a range of secular motives, such as to "rectify wrongs committed in life" and "revenging crimes" (Bennett Traditions 167; cf. Brown Fate 81). Through the enactment of their plots, such narratives therefore express sympathy for the abandoned mothers of illegitimate children. In a further narrative, "The

Spectre Bridegroom", illegitimacy is seen as the result of the destructive force of parental opposition, rather than as a result of male deceit, inconstancy or moral corruption (Hunt 233-39).

The Legend of Berry Pomeroy Castle (John H. Ingram 336-41)

A brief resumé of this narrative from Ingram, who tells the story "as nearly as possible in Sir Walter's own words" (Ingram 341), is as follows. Farquhar was summoned on a professional visit to Berry Pomeroy Castle to attend the steward's wife. The couple were the only people living in a section of the castle at that time. Whilst Farquhar waited in the outer apartment:

the door opened, and a female somewhat richly dressed entered the apartment. He, supposing her to be one of the family, advanced to meet her. Unheeding him, she crossed the room with a hurried step, wringing her hands, and exhibiting by her motions that deepest distress. . . . As she reached the highest stair the light fell strongly on her features, and displayed a countenance, youthful, indeed, and beautiful, but . . . "if ever human face", to use the doctor's own words, "exhibited agony and remorse; if ever eye, that index of the soul, portrayed anguish uncheered by hope, and suffering without interval; if ever features betrayed that within the wearer's bosom there dwelt a hell, those features and that being were then present to me. (Ingram 337-38)

The next day Farquhar mentioned his experience to the Steward, the Steward's wife now appearing to be much better. But the Steward interpreted Farquhar's account as a premonition that his wife would die, and enlightened him to the identity of the apparition:

the daughter of a former baron of Berry Pomeroy, who bore a child to her own father. In the chamber above us the fruit of their incestuous intercourse was strangled by its guilty mother; and whenever death is about to visit the inmates of the castle she is seen wending her way to the scene of her crimes with the frenzied gestures you described (Ingram 339).

Having asserted that she was seen the day his son was drowned, the steward stated that during his thirty years at the castle, he had never known the omen to fail (Ingram 339). The premonition comes true, as the Steward's wife shortly dies (Ingram 339). Many years later, Walter Farquhar is called upon by a woman who had subsequently visited the castle with her brother and sister. Her sister had seen an apparition identical to that encountered by Farquhar, immediately prior to the death of the Steward, and had been in a state of shock ever since (Ingram 339-40).

"A Legend of Pengersec" (Bottrell 134-50; Courtney "Cornish Folk-Lore" 15-16).

This nineteenth-century Cornish narrative concerns the one-time Duke of Pengersick Castle. When fighting overseas, this self-interested lord fell in love with a princess, by whom he had two illegitimate children. The first was presumably killed, the narrative stating it was "put going", or "made away with" according to Bottrell's aside (135). The second was conceived after, unbeknown to the princess, Pengersec had become married to a Cornish woman. When eventually abandoned, Pengersec's mistress pursues him to his castle and upbraids him for his cruelty. Enraged by this confrontation, Pengersec pushes both his mistress and new-born child off the cliff top. The mistress drowns, but the child is rescued by a ship. The spectre of the murdered woman wreaks divine vengeance in the form of a white hare, terrorising the deceitful Duke with incessant hauntings. Disaster befall him in the intermediate years before his eventual drowning at the hands of the white hare which startles his horse, causing it to plunge him into the sea. The illegitimate son is reinstated as Pengersec's castle, being happily reunited with his half brother, Pengersec's legitimate child.

Mrs Leakey (James Turner 122-28).

This seventeenth century narrative from Somerset concerns the spectre of a Mrs Leakey. Like ghosts from the Middle Ages, this purposeful apparition had religiously motivated behaviour "harnessed to the teaching of the church" and validated "central rites such as baptism, confession and burial" (Bennett, Traditions 165). Mrs Leakey appeared to her daughter-in-law in a mirror and requested her to urge her uncle, Lord Bishop of Waterford, to repent of his "sin". With her as his accessory, the Bishop's illegitimate child by her sister's niece was delivered, baptised and strangled, the corpse subsequently being buried in a bedroom. The daughter-in-law's attempts to persuade the bishop to repent were in vain. The skeleton was discovered, and the bishop was subsequently hanged as the ghost predicted.⁴

⁴ Bishop of Atherton of Waterford was reportedly "executed in Dublin in 1640 'upon charges of an abominable kind' " (Turner 123).

"The White Hare" (Hunt 377-78)

This narrative involves a romantic relationship between an uneducated peasant's daughter and the young farm manager, for whom she runs a dairy. This inconstant male allows his family to sabotage the union, by discharging the maid and putting forward a more seemingly appropriate marriage suitor (377). Having faced pregnancy alone, this fallen state of affairs prompts the dairymaid to commit infanticide and when the strangled infant is discovered, she is executed for murder. Once again, fate ensures that financial disaster subsequently strikes the inconstant lover, who declines into alcoholism. Nightly being plagued by the apparition of the white hare "known to hunt the perjured and false-hearted to death" the male protagonist is eventually thrown into a disused mine shaft and drowned, the white hare having startled his horse (Hunt 377-78).

APPENDIX V

LOCAL LEGENDS

The theme of illegitimacy early appears in two local legends first collected in the seventeenth century, in narratives relating to the Gubbings family and Walford's Gibbet. Hunt and Bottrell also recorded three local legends from Cornwall relating to the themes of out-of-wedlock pregnancy and illegitimate birth. The first of the legends published by Hunt, "Betty Stogs and Jan the Mounster" set in Towednack, is a type of changeling narrative which uses the theme of illegitimate pregnancy to establish the central female protagonist as a comic anti-heroine, her out-of-wedlock pregnancy being used as one of many examples epitomising the woman's incompetent, careless, or slovenly nature (103-07).

A second legend, "The Mermaid's Vengeance", set in Perranzabuloe, uses the same theme to highlight both family, and class-based register conflict (Hunt 155). Illegitimacy is seen as the product of male moral depravity and a "fallen" relationship. The third "Nelly Wearne", recorded by Bottrell 7-27, rather than focusing on the given circumstances surrounding a particular illegitimate birth, instead explores the adventures of this tear-away illegitimate daughter.

In a further legend, "The Witch of Hamdon Hill", included in Ghosts and Legends of South Somerset (1923), the theme of illegitimacy performs an important function by concealing certain plot elements, such as details of parentage (Munford). Like the other disguise strategies within the narrative, the theme of illegitimacy contributes to the sense of suspense and dramatises the ultimate revelation in a similar fashion to the folktale. Illegitimacy is once again seen as the product of male deception, resulting in the female protagonists suffering a social (rather than physical) death, in preference to disgracing the good name of her family.

The Gubbings Family (Sayer 34-35)

The Gubbings family, who were renowned for flouting social mores regarding illegitimacy, became enshrined in seventeenth-century legend, one writer stating in 1644, "they live in cotts (rather holes than houses), like

swine, having all in common, multiplied without marriage into many hundreds" (quoted in Sayer 34-35; cf. Hewett Nummits 159-63; "The North Devon Savages", Brown "Fifty-Fifth Report").

"Betty Stogs and Jan the Mounster" (Hunt 103-07)

This comic story of Betty Stogs, concerns a woman marked as slovenly and lazy, due to her untidy appearance and domestic incompetence. Her parents assemble a dowry, hoping to attract a suitable husband for their daughter. Thus drawn by the money, a disreputable character, Jan, contrives to form an intimacy with Betty. When Betty's resulting pregnancy (euphemistically described as "meeting with a misfortune") is discovered, her anxious parents increase Jan's financial incentive to marry her (104). Yet, being motivated by greed, Jan pressurises them into offering still more. Betty's determined mother, incited by the pressing concern to save her daughter's reputation, goes to Penzance to buy new furnishings for her daughter's cottage, thereby pleasing Jan sufficiently to marry her.

The resulting child is neglected and Betty becomes an alcoholic. After a heated argument over Jan's broken watch, her husband also turns to drink. After the strained union results in the baby being left alone, lying untended on dirty rags, it mysteriously disappears, the fairies implicitly having stolen it as an act of benevolence. The parents frantically search for their missing child, which is eventually returned, washed and adorned with flowers, amongst the furze. Thereafter, "the cottage was kept tidy, the child clean; and its father and mother drank less, and lived happier, for ever afterwards" (107). Hence, the fairies function as a moral agent, delivering punishment to the drunken parents and conferring judgement, particularly upon its mother (cf. Hunt 103). In doing so they ultimately facilitate reform and reconciliation.

"The Mermaid's Vengeance" (Hunt 155-170)

In Hunt's composite version, the squire's nephew, Walter Trewoofe, a young soldier of ill repute falls in love with Selina, daughter of a rival family. When Selina becomes flattered by the attentions of her social superior, the Squire decides to exploit the situation motivated by his grudge against her father. He casts aspersions on her sexual reputation to his nephew, whom he persuades to seduce her. The squire facilitates the opportunity by engineering her father's prolonged absence and pregnancy results. Thus,

he succeeds in shaming his rival's daughter, causing further humiliation by scorning the assumption that his nephew would ever have married her.

Once again, divine justice is seen to operate within the narrative (cf. "The White Hare"). When Selina dies following the birth of her child, disaster immediately befalls the Squire's family, who reap financial disaster and fall further into moral decline. Selina's otherworld associations in life are enacted after her death, as her ghost becomes the agent of vengeance. When the faithless lover staggers down to the beach in a drunken stupor, the spectre of a mermaid, entices him towards the sea. Infatuated by this apparition of Selina, Trewoofe begs forgiveness and is eventually drowned.

Nelly Wearne (Bottrell 7-27)

This lengthy narrative introduces Nelly Wearne as the illegitimate daughter of a Squire Cardew from Boskenna. It describes how, according to Westcountry custom, she was bound as an apprentice to her privileged father, in an attempt to provide Cardew with a degree of guardianship over his offspring. However, this tale describes how this spendthrift individual instead neglected his daughter, stressing that such children were normally regarded as the poor cousins of legitimate family members. The spirited Nelly, having insisted on going to a dance on the eve of Burian Fair-day, runs away with Billy Brea (alias Captain Black) her secret suitor and thus her subsequent adventures begin. However, her dramatic disappearance during thunderstorm leads people to conclude she was carried off by the devil.

"The Witch of Hamdon Hill" (Munford 74-88)

Maurice Greenwood, the hero of this legend, set in the 1730s, is a foundling adopted in infancy by a local farmer. When he falls in love with a farmer's daughter from Hinton St George, her father opposes the match, his attempts to sabotage the union bringing to light Maurice's adoption (85). Rebecca, the witch of Hamdon Hill, reveals that only she knows his parentage and mysteriously helps secure the young couple's union. Exploiting the sense of drama and opportunity for disguise during the Christmas mummers play, she

uses her fearful reputation to their advantage and gains the farmer's consent.

Now married, Maurice again encounters the witch who unexpectedly reveals herself to be his mother, a woman "born of noble house" and deceived in girlhood by a high-born youth with royal connections (86). Producing a gold ring to authenticate her story, she explains how, preferring to die rather than disgrace her family, she fled from home. Maurice mourns her loss when she is discovered dead at the bottom of a quarry soon after, and remains eternally grateful for her assistance.

"Walford's Gibbet" (Holt West Somerset 68-70; Folklore of 69-72; Palmer, Folklore of 89)

Holt's romanticised version of the narrative, relating to the late eighteenth century, derives in part from the Bath and Bristol Magazine of 1797. John Walford's crime is portrayed as the indirect result of his being debarred from marrying his first love, an educated miller's daughter, by her stepmother. During their enforced separation, he is seduced by another woman and forced into an unhappy, unsuitable marriage when she becomes pregnant. Shortly afterwards, in the heat of an argument, he kills her, is subsequently tried at Bridgwater Assize and sentenced to be hanged. Having just been reconciled with his first love at the scene of his execution, Walford is left hanging for a whole year, and his remains buried on the spot.

APPENDIX VI

THE LEGEND OF "JAY'S GRAVE" IN POPULAR PRINTED SOURCES AND RADIO BROADCASTING SINCE 1970

Popular Printed Sources

A) The following text was printed by Peter Underwood, in his Gazetteer of British Ghosts, which was published in 1971. Underwood is one of the most prolific writers for Bossiney Books. From the 1960s he was President of The Ghost Club and is particularly interested in the supernatural.

Underwood has lectured, written and broadcast extensively and has used his experience to create files on most alleged hauntings throughout the British Isles from his Hampshire Base.

Two miles north of Widecombe-in-the-Moor there is a lonely stretch of countryside with a roadside grave where fresh flowers have appeared mysteriously for years. Jay's Grave is said to be the final resting place of a young girl, Mary Jay, who hanged herself in a barn which used to stand on the site of the grave. According to the custom of over a hundred years ago, she was buried in unconsecrated ground on the spot where she committed suicide. Ever since, it is said, fresh flowers have appeared on Mary's grave and no one has ever discovered where they come from. From time to time there are stories of unexplained figures being seen in the vicinity of the grave. In August 1967 a seventeen-year-old girl and her fiancé saw someone, or something, crouching over the grave as they passed the spot in a car. Rosemary Long described how the crouched figure straightened itself and stood up as they passed, looking like a huddled man at the head of a grave. He appeared to have a dark blanket over his head and body and around the bottom of the blanket there was a white line. The blanket stopped about a foot above the ground; yet there were no legs to the figure and no face was visible. Other local people and visitors have had similar experiences there. (55-56)

B) The following text was published in 1973

Manaton is chiefly delightful to the explorer because it is adjacent to so many striking Dartmoor features . . . most of all, Kitty Jay's grave. This is situated below Hound Tor, at a spot where the three parishes meet. As she was a poor suicide she was disclaimed by all three. Kitty was a orphan, a poor house drudge of the mid-eighteenth century. Seduced, she was hounded to her death by her righteous employers and hanged herself. She was buried at a crossroads to prevent her "evil" spirit from rising. Curiously, there are flowers on her grave, winter and summer. Nobody knows who puts them there. This pretty custom had gone on for a long time when a hard-headed rationalist

decided to open the grave. "Twer nought but a daid shep," he said. It was, in fact, the grave of a girl. Some have said that, as human beings rejected her, the pixies took Kitty Jay to their hearts and it is the little folk who bring her flowers. (S.H.Burton, Devon Villages (1973) 123)

C) Lois Deacon wrote a novel, An Angel from Your Door, based on the legend of "Jay's Grave", which was published in 1973. The following is a summary of the story as depicted within this fictional work.

"Jay", a foundling and implicitly an illegitimate child, was born in 1790. Due to the practice of naming the Newton Abbot poorhouse infants according to alphabetical order, she was allocated the letter "J", with the forename Mary, and therefore became known as "Mary Jay". The poorhouse officials taught her to read and write and, in her teenage years, she remained a religiously-minded and sexually naive young woman. On signing the indentures binding her to her apprenticeship at the age of fifteen (until she was twenty-one or married) she was given the new forename "Kitty". She was then taken to work for a farmer, Elias Endacott, at Ford Farm in the parish of Manaton, where she was treated with equality and had a relatively happy existence.

As a result of her sexual naïveté she becomes pregnant from an isolated encounter with a fellow farm apprentice. But, by the time she realises her predicament, he has been manipulated into marrying the farmer's daughter, who is anxious to conceal her own illegitimate pregnancy by a sailor. As a direct result of her pregnancy, Kitty Jay decides to commit suicide, because of the lack of viable alternatives. Consequently, she hangs herself in the kitchen of Canna farm, a disused thirteenth century farmhouse serving as an outhouse for Ford Farm. Because the coroner cannot pronounce a verdict of insanity, Kitty Jay cannot be buried in consecrated ground and is instead interred with a stake through her heart at the crossroads. Fellow workers at the farm mourn her loss and put flowers on her grave. Flowers are also left, in secret at night, by her repentant lover, who suffers a failed marriage and turns to drink in his guilt.

D) Ralph Whitlock, one of the more recent West Country folklorists, included the following version of the Jay's Grave legend in The Folklore of Devon, published in 1977. Whitlock is a local farmer and is therefore informed about country matters which have been the subject of his writing since the 1930s. However, in spite of the fact that much of his writing on custom and belief is taken from either his own personal experience or from the many people he knows within the vicinity, it appears from his end notes that Burton is his main source of information in this instance:

There is the story of Kitty Jay. She was an eighteenth-century servant maid, an orphan, placed by the parish on a farm where she became a drudge. Seduced by her employer, she was disgraced and driven out

of the parish. In despair, she hanged herself. Her body was buried at a point , below Hound Tor, where three parishes meet, - an outcast disowned by all of them. Yet it was said that for long afterwards fresh flowers were always to be found, recently placed on her grave. The pixies showed more compassion than her own folk had ever done.

(37)

Not far away, on the moors, is a place marked on the map as Jay's Grave, said to be that of a pregnant girl, Mary Jay, who committed suicide. Her ghost is sometimes seen, apparently laying flowers on the grave. The Old Inn, too, has a ghost of a child, who can sometimes be heard crying, but is never seen. (58)

E) Judy Chard, is another Bossiney Books author, with a background in creative writing, broadcasting and journalism (e.g. for Devon Life). Rather than providing a full account of the story in her popular book on the supernatural, Devon Mysteries (1979), Chard instead refers to the legend within her discussion of a nearby haunting: "At the Old Inn at Widecombe a child is heard sobbing pitifully and during 1968 Geoff Ellis and his wife who often encountered this sound, wondered if it had any thing to do with the suicide of the girl buried at nearby Jay's Grave (44)".

F) A serving-maid who worked at a great house near Widecombe was seduced by her master's student son and when she confessed that she was expecting a baby , she was driven from the house in disgrace . . . the unfortunate girl drowned herself in a pond little more than three feet deep. . . no-one is quite sure whether Jay was her Christian name, surname or initial since some people believe her name was Mary Jay, others that the initial J stood for Jane . . . The last time I stopped to look, a tiny vase contained sprigs of bright berries and a posy of marigolds and nasturtiums while on the headstone lay a small heap of coins. (Sally Jones, Legends of Devon (1981) 53-54)

G) Underwood repeats the legend of "Jay's Grave", in his later publication, Ghosts of Devon, a popular work published by Bossiney Books in 1982. All the details supplied in his former account remain consistent, but he adds one further detail that, "Mary Jay was a poor country girl who committed suicide after her lover deserted her, leaving her to bear his child". (107-08)

H) Theo Brown, the Westcountry folklorist, published the following account of the "Jay's Grave" legend in her popularised book on folklore, Devon Ghosts (1982). This book was then republished in 1992.

I) In the south-west angle of the crossways is a mound of rather more than common interest: it is the grave of a suicide, a young woman

named Kitty Jay, who, early last century hanged herself, poor creature, to end her misery, "and in accordance with the barbarous custom of the time", as Crossing has it, "was interred at this cross-way". The authenticity of the legend is beyond doubt: over a century ago the owner of nearby Hedge Barton, Mr James Bryant, caused the grave to be opened and the remains examined, which were confirmed as those of a young woman. They were re-interred, and a mound was raised above them with head- and foot-stones. Some writers says that Kitty had worked at Canna Park, but Mr and Mrs Jack Bowden, formerly of Ford Farm (near Ford Gate) assure me that, as Crossing says, the scene of her labour and unhappiness was Canna Farm, where she hanged herself from the great kitchen fireplace lintel. It is said that, since the re-interment, the grave has never been without fresh flowers; during my years as Dartmoor Guide I passed the spot at all times of the day - and night - and can vouch for the present-day truth of this. Who is the mysterious rememberer? Some have invoked the pixies. Beatrice Chase, out of heartfelt sadness over such as story, used at times unobtrusively to add to the flowers on the grave, as others have done. And there I shall leave the matter. (Eric Hemery, High Dartmoor (1983) 725-26)

J) This is the grave of Kitty Jay, who hanged herself in the barn of a local farm nearly two hundred years ago. Kitty was a young, unmarried workhouse girl brought to the farm as a drudge. Seduced by the son of the house, she took her own life and her body was interred at the crossroads. It was thought the devil could not claim a suicide's soul if the corpse was buried at a crossroads. Fresh flowers in a jam jar are said to appear regularly on Kitty's Grave overnight . . . the grave occupies a serene corner of the tourist circuit. Coaches pull in but there is little of the usual hasty clatter of people getting out. Cars stop, cameras click and people gather round and stare at the mound with its jar of willow herb. (Carter and Skilton, Dartmoor: The Threatened Wilderness (1987) 62)

K) Kitty Jay's wayside grave is sited on the road between Hound Tor and Heatree Cross. Solid facts are hard to established about this young girl who is believed to have committed suicide after becoming pregnant out of wedlock. In keeping with tradition she had to be buried at the nearest crossroads rather than in consecrated ground of a parish church cemetery. Until 1823 the law required that suicides and criminals should be buried at a crossroads with a stake through their bodies. The idea was that their troubled spirits would not be able to find their way back to the village. Who Kitty Jay really was is not known for the story passed down through time has warped and distorted, although the "bare bones" of the story are probably close to the truth. In 1860, James Bryant, a road mender, discovered bones in a rough grave and it was at first supposed they were that of an animal. When it was discovered they were from a young woman, his wife vaguely remembered a story told her by her own mother about an orphan girl who hanged herself. The bones were re-buried in their present position and for many years fresh flowers appeared daily of her grave, creating their own mystery as nobody knew who did this caring deed. It has been suggested by some that it is the pixies who

leave them, other say that Beatrice Chase, the eccentric novelist who discovered the sad story of Mary Jay who hanged herself, was responsible. It is now most likely that her story has been told so often that people consider it a sign of good luck to leave a small posy of moorland flowers on her grave. Her ghost has reputedly been seen hovering over the grave by people travelling past, although this is unsubstantiated but even so some folk will go on quite lengthy detours to avoid the spot. (Sally and Chips Barber, Dark and Dastardly Dartmoor (1988) 30-31)

L) Kitty Jay is said to have been a workhouse girl who worked on a farm in the Manaton area. Like many a lass before and since, she was seduced by a young man who disowned her when she became pregnant. In despair, she hanged herself.

According to the landlord of the Ring of Bells in North Bovey, she did so at that pub. Most versions of the story say simply that she hanged herself in a barn, but it could just as easily have been a barn attached to the pub as anywhere else! One thing *is* known: a previous landlady refused to sleep on the premises, claiming that the inn was haunted.

Being a suicide, Kitty could not be buried in consecrated ground. She was therefore interred at a crossroads with a stake through her heart. This was believed to stop the Devil getting her soul, and at the same time confuse her spirit so that it could not find its way back to haunt the living. If the story told at the Ring of Bells is to be believed, however, this precaution obviously did not work!

You will usually find a bunch of fresh flowers of Jay's Grave. It is said that there has never been a day when flowers have not appeared there, even in midwinter, apparently brought by the pixies. (Michael Bennie Walking the Stories and Legends of Dartmoor (1995) 11)

Radio Broadcasting

M) The legend of "Jay's Grave" was the subject of a short programme broadcast on local radio during the early 1990s, and is likely to have influenced versions of the legend circulated in oral tradition since. This programme was presented by Tony Beard, a local personality, known as the "Wag of Widecombe", and produced by John Govier. Unfortunately it was not possible to obtain a recording of this broadcast, either from BBC Radio Devon, or from Tony Beard himself. However, the presenter was able to recollect the main substance of this programme, during a telephone conversation with myself in 1997. References cited during the course of this telephone conversation, suggests that the programme was strongly influenced by popular printed sources (cf. Barber, as above).

Mary Jay was a nineteenth century poorhouse orphan from Newton Abbot who was apprenticed to a Dartmoor farmer. She became pregnant after being seduced by the farmers son and was no longer able to work properly. Because illegitimate pregnancy was regarded as a "terrible crime" in those days, she committed suicide in one of the farm's barns. The fact of her having committed suicide incurred great shame, considerable stigma being attached to suicides even during Tony's lifetime, when such individuals were never taken beyond the church porch before burial.⁵ Jay was buried at the boundary between two parishes with the additional precaution of the stake. Bryant excavated the site in 1860, and discovered the bones of a young woman. He had the remains reinterred and constructed the grave site which exists today. There are always flowers on the grave and people question who puts them there. Some have suggested that tourists are responsible, whilst others have named local people, particularly people from Chagford. A hooded figure has sometimes been seen at night by people driving past.

⁵ McEwan mentions an instance of one twentieth century Devon suicide being left in the hearse during his funeral (35).

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ARCHIVAL RECORDINGS

Field Recordings

Copies of both my own field recordings, beginning "III" (interviews specifically relating to the theme of illegitimacy) or "Gen:Res" (general research) followed by a reference number, are housed at the University of Plymouth, Exmouth, Devon. All SRFA tapes and cassettes can be found at the same location. Side letters A and B are used to identify the side of the original field recording on which material is located.

Author's Recordings

- III:001:95. Interview with Margaret Palmer. Audiotape. Rec. 12 Jun. 1995. Side A. 90 min TDK cassette tape.
- III:002:95. Interview with Ken Penney. Audiotape. Rec. 4 Sept. 1995. Side A. 90 min TDK cassette tape.
- III: 003:95. Interview with Charlie Hill. Audiotape. Rec. 7 Sept. 1995. Sides A & B. 90 min. TDK cassette tape.
- III:004:95. Interview with Pat Barker. Audiotape. Rec. 20. Sept.1995. Side A. 90 min. TDK cassette tape.
- III:005:I:95. Interview with Charlie Hill. Audiotape. Rec. 27 Sept. 1995. Sides A & B. 90 min. TDK cassette tape.
- III:005:II:95. Interview with Charlie Hill. Audiotape. Rec. 27 Sept. 1995. Side A. 90 min. TDK cassette tape.
- III:007:95 Interview with Dilly and Joe Davis. Audiotape. Rec. 23 Oct. 1995. Sides A & B. 90 min TDK cassette tape.
- III: 008:I:95. Interview with Denis Hutchings. Audiotape. Rec. 30. Oct. 1995. Sides A and B. cassette tape.
- III:008:II:95. Interview with Denis Hutchings. Audiotape. Rec. 30.Oct. 1995. Side A. cassette tape.
- III:009:95. Interview with Margaret Palmer. Audiotape. Rec. 9 Nov 1995. Sides A & B. 90 min TDK cassette tape.
- III:010:I:95. Interview with Charlie Hill. Audiotape. Rec. 4 Dec. 1995. Sides A & B. 90 min. TDK cassette tape.

- III:010:II:95 Interview with Charlie Hill. Audiotape. Rec. 4 Dec. 1995. Side A. 90 min. TDK cassette tape.
- III:011:95. Interview with Edwin Hall. Audiotape. Rec. 5 Dec. 1995. Sides A & B. cassette tape.
- III: 012:I:95. Interview with Denis Hutchings. Audiotape. Rec. 5.Dec. 1995. Sides A & B. 90 min TDK cassette tape.
- III: 012: II:95. Interview with Denis Hutchings. Audiotape. Rec. 5.Dec. 1995. Side A. 90 min TDK cassette tape.
- III:013:95. Interview with Dave and Jill Lowry. Audiotape. Rec. 6 Dec. 1995. Sides A & B. 90 min TDK cassette tape.
- III:014:96. Interview with Chris Binmore. Audiotape. Rec. 10. Jan. 1996. Sides A & B. 90 min. TDK cassette tape.
- III:015:96 Interview with Sheila Bricknell. Audiotape. Rec. 24 Jan 1996. 90 min TDK cassette tape.
- III:016:96. Interview with Bill Packman. Audiotape. Rec. 29 Jan 1996. - Sides A and B. 90 min TDK cassette tape.
- III:017:96. Interview with Sheila Bricknell. Audiotape. Rec. 2 Feb. 1996. Side A. 90 min TDK cassette tape.
- III:018:96. Interview with Chris Binmore. Audiotape. Rec. 28. Feb. 1996. 90 min. TDK cassette tape Sides A & B.
- III:019:96. Interview with Nelson Penfold. Audiotape. Rec. 13 Mar. 1996. 90 min TDK cassette tape.
- III:020:96. Interview with Wrey Tucker. Rec. 11 Apr. 1996. Sides A & B. 90 min TDK cassette tape.
- III:021:96. Interview with Charlie and Jess Hill. Audiotape. Rec. 11 Apr. 1996. Sides A and B. 90 min. TDK cassette tape.
- III:022:96. Interview with Bessie French. Audiotape. Rec. 12 Jun. 1996. Side A. min cassette tape.
- III:023:96. Interview with Dave and Jill Lowry. Audiotape. Rec. 17 Jun. 1996. Sides A & B. 90 min TDK cassette tape.
- III:024:I:96. Interview with George Withers. Audiotape. Rec. 29 Jul. 1996. Sides A & B. 60 min. TDK cassette tape.
- III:024:II:96. Interview with George Withers. Audiotape. rec. 29 Jul. 1996. Side A. 60 min. TDK cassette tape.
- III:025:I:96. Interview with Vic Legg. Audiotape. Rec. 7 Aug. 1996. Sides A & B. 90 min. TDK cassette tape.

- III:025:II:96. Interview with Vic Legg. Audiotape. Rec. 7 Aug. 1996. Side A. 90 min. TDK cassette tape.
- III:026:I:96. Interview with Vic Legg. Audiotape. Rec. 10 Sept. 1996. Sides A & B. 60 min. TDK cassette tape.
- III:026:II:96. Interview with Vic Legg. Audiotape. Rec. 10 Sept. 1996. Sides A & B. 60 min. TDK cassette tape.
- III:027:I:96. Interview with Dave German. Audiotape. Rec.13 Dec. 1996. Sides A & B. cassette tape.
- III:027:II:96. Interview with Dave German. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 13 Dec. 1996. Side A. cassette tape.
- III:028:I:97 Interview with Wrey Tucker. Audiotape. Rec. 18 Feb. 1997. Sides A & B. 60 min. TDK cassette tape.
- III:028:II:97. Interview with Wrey Tucker. Audiotape. Rec. 18 Feb. 1997. Side A. 60 min. TDK cassette tape.
- III:029: I:97. Interview with Maureen Tatlow. Audiotape. Rec. 18 Feb. 1997. Sides A & B. 60 min TDK cassette tape.
- III:029:II:97. Interview with Maureen Tatlow. Audiotape. Rec. 18 Feb. 1997. Side A. 60 min. TDK cassette tape.
- III:030:I:97. Interview with Maureen Tatlow. Audiotape. Rec. 25 Mar. 1997. Sides A & B. 60 min TDK cassette tape.
- III:030:II:97. Interview with Maureen Tatlow. Audiotape. Rec. 25 Mar. 1997. Side A. 60 min TDK cassette tape.
- GEN:RES:001:I:95. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 3 Nov. 1995. Side B.
- GEN:RES:004:96. Interview with Tish Stubbs. Audiotape. Rec. 1 Feb. 1996. Sides A & B. 90 min.TDK cassette tape.
- GEN:RES:005:96. Interview with Paul Wilson. Audiotape. Rec. 6 Mar. 1996. Side A. 90 min. TDK cassette tape.
- GEN:RES:I: 96. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 5 Aug. 1996. cassette tape.

SRFA Recordings

It should be acknowledged that there is sometimes a discrepancy between the dating of a particular recording in the SRFA, and that same recording as it exists within the Wren Trust archive. Occasionally, there was also some variation in the identification of particular informants on the same audiotape. Given the time limitations of this project, I was unable to resolve these issues.

Tapes

- SRFA tape 2. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 10 Feb. 1982. Side A. 5" reel.
- SRFA tape 15. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 10 May 1977. Side A. 5" reel.
- SRFA tape 21. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 15 Jan. 1982. Side A. 5" reel.
- SRFA tape 24. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 31 Jul. 1981. Side A. 5" reel.
- SRFA tape 25. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 31 Jul. 1981. Side A. 5" reel.
- SRFA tape 26 Side A [look up details].
- SRFA tape 27. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 30 Sept. 1981. Side A. 5" reel.
- SRFA tape 30. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 29 Jun. 1981 and 6. Oct. 1981. Side A. 5" reel.
- SRFA tape 38. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. ? Oct. 1979. Side A. 5" reel.
- SRFA tape 41. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. ?/?/1974. Sides A & B. 5" reel.
- SRFA tape 46. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. ? Oct. 1976. Sides A & B. 5" reel.
- SRFA tape 47. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. ? Summer 1975 and ? Nov. 1976. 5" reel. Sides A & B
- SRFA tape 48. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. ? Oct. 1976. Side A. 5" reel.
- SRFA tape 53. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. ? Nov. 1975. Side A. 5" reel.
- SRFA tape 54. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. ?/Summer 1974 and Autumn 1974. Sides A and B. 5" reel.
- SRFA tape 55. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. Autumn 1974. Sides A&B. 5" reel.
- SRFA tape 58. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 28 May 1985. Side A. 5" reel.
- SRFA tape 63. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. Autumn 1974. Side A. 5" reel.
- SRFA tape 64. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. sometime 1975. Side B. 5" reel.
- SRFA tape 68. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 30 Sept. 1981. Sides A & B. 5" reel.
- SRFA tape 69. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. ?/?/1974. Side B. 5" reel.
- SRFA tape 74. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. ? Nov. 1976. - Side A. 5" reel.
- SRFA tape 83. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. ? Nov. 1976. - Side A. 5" reel.
- SRFA tape 95. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 28.05.1981 - Side B. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 96. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 28.05.1981 - Side B. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 108. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 20 Jun. 1980. Side B. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 126. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. "1974" . Sides A & B. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 128. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. Nov. 1975. Side A. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 129. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 9 November 1975 and Nov. 1975.
Sides A & B. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 144. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 14. Apr. 1980. -Side B. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 145. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec 14. Apr. 1980. Side A. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 146. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 60s/70s ?, and late 1970s. Sides A &
B. 5 " reel.

SRFA tape 147. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 60s/70s ? and late 1970s. Sides A &
B. 5" reel.

SRFA Tape 148. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 60s/70s? Sides A and B. 5" reel.

SRFA Tape 149. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. Sides A and B. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 150. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. ? Side B. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 152. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. ? Aug. 1976. Side A. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 168. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. ? Nov. 1978. Sides A & B. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 170. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. spring 1979. Side B.

SRFA tape 177. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. ?/ November 1976. Side A. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 178. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. ? Summer 1976. Side A. 5" reel.

SRFA Tape 188. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. ? Dec. 1975. Side A. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 190. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. ?/?/1974, 9 Nov. 1975?. Side A. 5"
reel.

SRFA tape 191. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 9 Nov. 1975, Nov. 1975. Sides A &
B. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 196. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 28 Jun. 1980, 28 May 1981. Sides A
& B. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 203. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 16. Sept. 1980. Side A. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 210. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. Autumn 1978. Side B. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 227. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 10 May 1977. Side A. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 229. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. Late 1970s. Side B. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 232. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 16 Sept. 1982. Side B. 5" reel.

SRFA Tape 252. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. early 1980s. Sides A & B. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 255. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 16 Sept. 1982. Side A. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 258. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 17 Oct. 1982. Side A. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 262. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 24 Oct. 1982.

SRFA tape 265. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. ? Nov. 1975. Side A. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 267. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. mid 1980s. Side A. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 271. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 17 Oct. 1982. Side B. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 279. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 22 Oct. 1983. Side B. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 284. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. early 1980s. Side A. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 290. Untitled. Audiotape. Undated. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 296. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. n.d. SRFA tape 296 Side A. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 310. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 13 June 1983. Sides A & B. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 311. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 13 June 1983. Sides A & B. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 315. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 24 Oct. 1982. .

SRFA Tape 316. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec.? Sides A and B

SRFA tape 317. Untitled. Audiotape. Undated copies of other recordings. Sides A & B.

SRFA tape 336. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 9 May 1976. Sides A & B. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 368. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 22 Mar. 1987. Side A & B. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 413. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 31 Dec. 1982. Side B. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 422. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 5 Jul. 1983. Sides / 5" reel.

SRFA tape 423. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 5 Jul. 1983. Sides / 5" reel.

SRFA tape 424. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 5 Jul. 1983. - Side B. 5" reel.

SRFA tape 425. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 5 Jul. 1983. Sides / 5" reel.

SRFA tape 426. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 2 Jul. 1983. Sides A & B. 5" reel.
SRFA tape 427. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 15 Oct. 1982. Sides / 5" reel.
SRFA tape 431. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 15 Mar. 1983. Sides /. 5" reel.
SRFA tape 432. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 14 Feb. 1983. Sides A & B. 5" reel.
SRFA tape 433. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 14 Feb. 1983. Sides /. 5" reel.
SRFA tape 434. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 20 Feb. 1983. Sides A & B. 5" reel.
SRFA tape 435. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. ? Nov. 1975. Side A. 5" reel.
SRFA tape 453. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 1 Feb. 1987. Side A. 5" reel.
SRFA tape 457. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 18 Feb. 1983. Side B. 5" reel.
SRFA tape 460. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 15 Oct. 1982. Side A. 5" reel.
SRFA tape 461. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 5 Sep. 1983. Side A. 5" reel.
SRFA tape 462. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 2 Jul. 1983. Side A. 5" reel.

Cassettes

SRFA cassette 11. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. Summer 1988. Side A.
Cassette.

Wren Trust Recordings (housed at The Wren Trust, 1 St James Road, Okehampton, Devon).

WT. SZ tape 7. Tucker.W. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 25 Dec. 1979. Side B.
WT. SZ tape 8. Tucker.W. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. ? Side B.
WT. SZ tape 17. Sanderson. L. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 15 Jul. 1981. Side A.
WT. SZ tape 21. Underhay. Mrs. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 20 May. 1981.
WT. SZ tape 24. Cann. Bill. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 2 Oct. 1980. Side A.
WT. SZ tape 27. Fred ? . Untitled. Audiotape. Rec.? Side A.
WT. Tape NT10AB. Balkwill. M. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 1 Mar. 1990.
WT. Tape NT16A. Forrest. M and mother. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 12. Apr.
1990.
WT. Tape NT22A. Faulkner. G. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec ? .

WT. Tape NT24A. Holmes. W. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec ?.

WT. TF 25 Side B. Charlotte Renals. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. ? .

WT. TF 26 "Catch Me if You Can" Legg. S. [Side ?]. Untitled. Audiotape. 5" reel.

Patten Archive (housed at the Patten's private residence in Morchard Bishop, Devon).

PA tape C-20/M85. Showers. C. Audiotape. Rec 17 Jan 1973. Side A. 5" reel.

PA tape C-61/M46. Adams. Harry. Untitled. Audiotape. Rec. 24 Oct. 1976. Side A. 5" reel.

Commercial Recordings

Blackbirds and Thrushes: Songs of Seduction (tape). Peter Kennedy, 1975, Harberton, (Folktracks FSB 017).

Devon Tradition: An Anthology from Traditional Singers. Richards, Sam, Tish Stubbs and Paul Wilson. London: Topic, 12TS349, 1979.

Down Among The Barley Straw: Seduction Songs from the Baring Gould Manuscripts (disc). Tawney. C. , 1971, London, (Trailer LER 2095).

An English Folk Music Anthology: Nursery Songs, Children Singing, Songs Associated with Rituals, Country Singers, Travellers, Urban Singers, Recent Songs of Unknown Authorship. Richards, Sam, and Tish Stubbs. New York: Folkways, FE38553.

The Fly be on the Turmut: The Songs of a Somerset Man. John Howson. Stowmarket, Suffolk: Veteran Tapes, VT133, 1995.

An Hour with Cecil Sharp and Ashley Hutchings (disc). Ashley Hutchings, 1986, Great Dunmow, (Dambuster Records DAM 014).

In Course of Time (tape). Fred Jordon, Derek Schofield, 1991, London, EFDSS VWML 006.

Round the Buoy (tape) Cyril Tawney, 1989, Leeds, (Neptune NEP 001).

Rumpus: Songs of the South Devon Coast. No production details. 1986 (Rump1), side B.

Somerset Scrapbook (tape). Patten and Patten, 1987, INA cassettes.

The Sweet Primroses. Peter Kennedy, Rec. 1975, (Folktracks. FSA 30-042).