

Pathological Skin: Dr Albert Leblond and Arthur Lucas' *Du tatouage chez les prostituées* (1899)

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Writing in the preface to their 1899 text, *Du tatouage chez les prostituées* (On Tattooing and Prostitution), Dr Albert Leblond and Arthur Lucas define the framework for their study of the incidence of tattooing amongst women working as prostitutes in Paris.² Investigating the cultural practice of body modification, which had by 1899 become a popular site of study in criminological and medico-legal research across Europe, the authors note that tattooing amongst women working as prostitutes had not yet become the object of individual study. In addition to the general study of the topic, possible methods of tattoo removal were of particular fascination for the pair.

Without ignoring the glaring biological inaccuracies of many of the texts of the period, it is important to situate Leblond and Lucas' research within the larger criminological discourse, amongst texts that had the power to create social truths.³ Here, I examine Leblond and Lucas' short text as a means of probing the various continuities and discontinuities in nineteenth century medico-legal research and documentation of tattooing and tattoos. As this is, to my knowledge, the only text specifically pertaining to the study of tattooing amongst women working as prostitutes, it is all the more significant in our understanding of the cultural history of both prostitution and body modification. Bound up in the same discourse, both practices (and by implication, large groups of people) were defined in relation to physical and

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² The text in question will herein be referred to simply as *Du tatouage*.

³ For example see the work of the French criminologist Alexandre Lacassagne and the Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso.

social degeneration and atavism.⁴ Of note is Leblond and Lucas' reference to the women as *victims* of the barbaric practices of tattooing. Extending the environmental conception of crime put forth by the prominent French criminologist Alexandre Lacassagne, and openly opposing the atavistic theory of crime proposed by the infamous Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso, the authors acknowledge tattoos as yet another medical risk presented by the dangerous and unsanitary environments inhabited by lower class women. They also note cases of infectious diseases such as sepsis and gangrene connected to tattooing, acknowledging the practice as a *public health risk*.⁵ Undermining one aspect of the traditional as well as metaphorical association of prostitutes with death and disease (as it relates to the rampant spread of venereal disease), Leblond and Lucas frame these women as victims of disease as opposed to perpetrators of cultural decay.

In what follows, I argue that the text and accompanying illustrations (see figs. 1-2) constituting *Du tatouage* can be read as a medical investigation of the processes and results of tattooing practices amongst women working as prostitutes as opposed to a criminological or anthropological analysis. Furthermore, the visual representation of the tattoos within the text realises their definition as sites of pathology rather than as cultural markers. In line with the medical investigation of the processes of tattooing, the images as presented with their textual accompaniment invite professional interpretation as opposed to serving a merely illustrative or pedagogical function alongside the textual argument. While the authors fail to present their approach as unique (rather just their pool of subjects), numerous points of difference arise in their treatment of the subject when compared to other period texts on similar topics. This medicalised representation and description of the tattooed marks on the women's bodies provided the opportunity to define the tattoo space as a skin site of pathology. While only marginally different from the contemporaneous interpretation by their peers of the tattoo as a mark of degeneracy and atavism, Leblond and Lucas twin the discourse of tattooing

⁴ This is not to say that this is the only work on the social implications of prostitution in French society in the nineteenth century. As I have mentioned above, M. Parent-Duchâtelet published several volumes on the subject.

⁵ Leblond and Lucas, p. 93.

as a criminal practice with that of tattooing as a public health risk. To borrow Donna Haraway's words from her article 'The Persistence of Vision', the 'conquering gaze' of the un-tattooed doctor,

mythically inscribes all the marked bodies, that makes the unmarked category claim the power to see and not to be seen, to represent while escaping representation. This gaze signifies the unmarked positions of Man and White, one of the many nasty tones of the word objectivity to feminist ears in scientific and technological, late-industrial, militarized, racist, and male-dominated societies [...]⁶

As Haraway suggests, even the definition of tattooing as a public health risk and cause of disease and infection was bound up in similar discourse to that of the biological theories of crime put forth by Lombroso and the Italian school of criminology. The tattoo, located both in and on the skin, a cultural boundary with a historically shifting significance, provides an intriguing locus by which to explore shifting schools of thought in nineteenth-century criminology and medical research. The history (and historiography) of tattooing as a cultural practice will not be my main concern here, as other cultural historians, most notably Jane Caplan, have admirably mapped this trajectory.⁷

Prior to the publication of *Du tatouage* in 1899, Leblond had independently published numerous medical texts including *Du pseudo-hermaphrodisme comme empêchement médico-légal à la déclaration du sexe dans l'acte de naissance* (On Pseudo-hermaphroditism as a Medical and Legal Impediment to the Determination of Sex at Birth) (1885), *Traité élémentaire de chirurgie gynécologique* (Elementary Treatise on Gynaecological Surgery) (1878), *Note sur la fécondation artificielle, à propos d'un jugement du tribunal de Bordeaux* (Notes on Artificial Fertilization, On the Judgement of a Trial in Bordeaux) (1883), and *Sur l'avortement spontané dans les premiers mois de la grossesse, valeur médico-légale de l'intégrité des membranes* (On Spontaneous Abortion in the First Three Months of

⁶ Donna Haraway, 'The Persistence of Vision', in *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*, ed. by Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina and Sarah Stanbury (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), (p. 288). Jennifer Putzi also discusses Haraway in relation to the tattooed body in her *Identifying Marks: Race, Gender and the Marked Body in Nineteenth-Century America* (Atlanta, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2006).

⁷ See for example, her excellent edited volume: *Written on the Body: The Tattoo in European and American History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

Pregnancy and the Medical and Legal Value of the Fetus Tissue) (1875). As evidenced by the variety of these titles, Leblond demonstrated a prolonged professional interest in women's health and gynaecology. His co-author, Arthur Lucas, appears to have worked as Leblond's assistant on *Du tatouage*. The diversity of Leblond's published work indicates a sustained medical and research practice and highlights the professional context for his involvement and engagement with female prostitutes – as a doctor more generally concerned with obstetrics and female sexual health. As was often the case during this period, this interest (framed as concern) for women's health was also couched in a discourse of deviance and pathology.

Leblond's medical background provides the context for his and Lucas' criticism of French physician and criminologist Alexandre Lacassagne's well-known earlier texts on the subject of tattooing, for failing to include any significant number of female examples in his study. The Italian physician and criminologist Cesare Lombroso had also discussed tattooed prostitutes but suggested that the small number of cases were not enough to warrant further study. The prominent public hygienist, Alexandre Jean Baptiste Parent-Duchâtelet is also well known to historians for his two-volume study *De la prostitution dans la ville de Paris* (Prostitution in Paris) (1836) but does not extensively discuss the prevalence of tattooing amongst the population.⁸

As little statistical information from the period is available regarding the rate of occurrence of tattooing amongst women working as prostitutes in contrast to the broader population, it is difficult to determine whether Leblond and Lucas were in fact documenting a previously undocumented subsection of the population. The authors thus addressed what they *perceived* to be a gap in the research of their contemporaries by gathering a number of case studies and crafting illustrations documenting the incidences of tattooing amongst their chosen population. The text includes an introduction to the social and symbolic significance of the tattoo throughout history as well as a brief survey of the contemporary criminological discourse on the topic. The

⁸ Charles Bernheimer, *Figures of Ill Repute: Representing Prostitution in Nineteenth Century France* (New York: Duke University Press, 1989), p. 6.

authors employ lengthy citations from Lacassagne and Ernest Berchon's earlier texts, indicating that a more general survey of the cultural practice of tattooing was not the main purpose of the study as the topic had been well covered by the numerous authors they cite.

As numerous authors have identified, the marked body represents a tension between the biological and the cultural. Building upon this assertion, I suggest that the medical investigation, and more importantly *representation*, of the tattoos of prostitutes by Leblond and Lucas emphatically highlights this tension. As Michel Foucault has outlined in a number of texts, the body can be understood as a site of social control, and the institutional powers of both law and medicine function to discipline and configure the appearance and comportment of the individual body.⁹ In *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* Foucault argued that, 'the clinic demands as much of the gaze as natural history. As much, and to a certain extent, the same thing: to see, to isolate features'.¹⁰ Whether inside or outside the clinic, the documentation and illustration of the tattoo images inscribed on the bodies of the women referenced in Leblond and Lucas' study function in precisely this way, gathered like botanical specimens and inset in a text documenting the public health risks and pathological cases. The tattoos, like texts, were read as a mark of disease and pathology. Indeed, in other instances, the tattooed skin itself was removed from the body after death, preserved and collected by medical practitioners. A significant collection of these medical oddities can be found to this day in the collections of the Science Museum and the Wellcome Collection in London.

While Lombroso and the Italian school of criminology argued for a biological theory of crime, that is, crime as a pathology of the body and a symptom of the degeneration and atavism of sections of the population, Lacassagne and the French criminological school defined the 'milieu social'

⁹ See in particular Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* [1975], trans. by A. M. Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1995) and Michel Foucault, *Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* [1963], trans. by A. M. Sheridan (London and New York: Routledge, 2003).

¹⁰ Foucault, *Birth of the Clinic*, p. 109.

as the source of criminality.¹¹ In the second half of the nineteenth century, researchers had also become increasingly concerned with tattooing as a public health risk. As Ernest Berchon states in his 1861 paper on the possible medical complications resulting from tattooing:

Our first record of such a case, from November 20, 1859 addressed to Mr Reynaus, general inspector of the health department of the navy, was understood as a novelty. It contained, besides the details relating to navy matters that I will not elaborate upon, ten special reports: four, in which death was the consequence of the tattooing, either immediately (twice), or following the amputation of the arm, incidences in which the relationship of cause and effect were less evident between tattooing and death include the removal of the shoulder (four), characterized by serious inflammation and gangrene, and finally, one example until now unique, a case of a arterial-venous aneurysm on the elbow no doubt caused by the needle of a tattoo artist.¹²

Berchon, like other researchers, was becoming increasingly aware and interested in the pathological risks of what were often undoubtedly unsafe tattooing practices. Similarly, Leblond and Lucas were interested in the distinction between different cases of tattooing for primarily medical or public health reasons. They employ this differentiation in their description of the different processes and the materials used in various examples of tattooing and suggest that further study of infection or impermanence relating to the circumstances of the application of the tattoo would be useful. In the following chapters the authors also comment on the tattooing and scarification practices of Algerian women working as prostitutes, again noting the medical risks of such practices. Other authors focus instead on the primitive quality of the Algerian tattoos or the social implications of such practices amongst the Algerian population. One of the earliest French texts on the public health risks associated with tattooing is M. F. Hutin's article 'Recherches sur les

¹¹ Gemma Angel, 'Atavistic Marks and Risky Practices: The Tattoo in Medico-Legal Debate, 1850-1950,' in *A Medical History of Skin: Scratching the Surface*, ed. by Jonathan Reinartz and Kevin Siena (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013), p. 167.

¹² An arterial-venous aneurysm is when an abnormal communication develops between adjacent blood vessels and the arterial-venous malformation swells or dilates to become aneurysmal. This could happen with unusually deep tattooing where a needle has passed through the skin as well as through both a big vein and artery. Ernest Berchon, *Histoire Médicale du Tatouage* (Paris, 1869), p. 116.

Tatouages' (1853).¹³ In this article, Hutin documents an (admittedly rare) incident of syphilis transmission in the case of a soldier who had received a tattoo applied with infected saliva.¹⁴ Leblond and Lucas do not cite this text, perhaps due to the relative scarcity of similar cases amongst female prostitutes.

Demonstrating the medical focus of the project, the authors cite detailed observations from Lacassagne's text regarding the inflammation, infection and scabbing of tattoo sites.¹⁵ Leblond and Lucas also mention Pierre Rayer's *Traité des maladies de la peau* (Treatise on Skin Disease) (1827), a reference notable for its engagement with dermatological texts of the period. Clearly well versed in the relevant literature of their time, Leblond and Lucas also cite the aforementioned M. Parent-Duchâtelet's work on tattoo removal. Positing prostitution as a site of both moral and biological decay and degeneration, Duchâtelet noted the tattooing habits of women working in prostitution and engages with the possibility of tattoo removal.¹⁶ In his study of prostitution in Paris the author, like Leblond and Lucas, highlights the medical risks of the act of tattooing or marking the body. In reference to an infection, which led to death, he elaborates:

This operation, so simple in appearance, costs the life of an unfortunate young woman who attempted to disguise a name which she had awkwardly tried to tattoo on her left arm. This attempt caused a serious infection which ultimately resulted in her death.¹⁷

Like Duchâtelet, Leblond and Lucas also included a chapter on tattoo removal, proposing that some tattoos can disappear naturally. The authors also comment on certain (unsuccessful) methods by which women have attempted to remove their own tattoos. The authors were not the first to extensively investigate the possibility of tattoo removal in the period, as Ernest Berchon also referenced several early writings on methods for tattoo removal

¹³ Angel, p. 169.

¹⁴ Angel, p. 169.

¹⁵ Leblond and Lucas, p. 22.

¹⁶ Jane Caplan, "Speaking Scars": The Tattoo in Popular Practice and Medico-Legal Debate in Nineteenth Century Europe,' *History Workshop Journal*, 44 (1997), p. 109.

¹⁷ Alexandre Parent Du Châtelet cited in Steve Gilbert, ed. and trans. *Tattoo History: A Source Book, An Anthology of Historical Records of Tattooing from Around the World* (New York and London: Juno and Turnaround, 2000), p. 113.

in his 1869 text. For these authors, the possibility of tattoo removal (marks previously thought of as permanent and indelible) offered a very tangible social proposition: that is, the social betterment of the degenerate, criminal woman. The potential opportunity to become de-marked ostensibly offered a woman a chance to begin anew, with blank skin and body, again framing the woman as a victim of degeneration and pathology. Mechthild Fend has discussed Leblond and Lucas' text in relation to this proposition, suggesting that their preoccupation with tattoo removal corresponds with their position within the French school of criminology, focused on defining the social origin of crime.¹⁸ Tattoos, defined as socially acquired marks, fit this hypothesis of criminality. However, while the French school of criminology had moved towards a definition of the social origin of crime, the language surrounding the description of and research into prostitution remained heavily veiled by linguistic references to disease and decay. In their description of the individual tattoos Leblond and Lucas appear to regard the inscribed skin site not only as a tattoo but also as a dermatological site full of pathological potentiality--regardless of its current state, a site ripe for infection and contagion.

As Jennifer Putzi has argued, there are two ways in which a tattoo is interpreted: first, through the interpretation of the individual in response to their own tattooed body; and second the reading of the mark by those other than the tattooed individual.¹⁹ Leblond and Lucas' text and accompanying illustrations provide us with just such a binary, as included with the tattoo images are occasional notes of the iconological significance of the image for the individual. These fleeting notes of ethnographic, psychological and sociological import are buried within their presentation as medicalised data sets, that is, a group of statistical information on the patient, presented for interpretation by the doctor. With each image of a tattoo, the authors also record what they considered relevant information about the female patient including sex, ethnicity, occupation, age, age of first menstruation, arrest history as well as the marital status and parental health. In this process of

¹⁸ Mechthild Fend, 'Emblems of Durability: Tattoos, Preserves and Photographs', *Performance Research*, 14 (2009), p. 46.

¹⁹ Putzi, p. 15.

data collecting Leblond and Lucas mimic the doctor-patient relationship, recording pertinent medical information and relating it somewhat obscurely to the tattoo image itself. Reacting to this diverse set of images, the authors offer little to no symbolic or social interpretation of the images in relation to the body, demonstrating that their concern was not with the iconography of the skin image. Occasionally, presumably when the information was offered, Leblond and Lucas refer to the woman's own account of the circumstances of tattoo acquisition and any symbolic value attached to the image.

The authors argue that in the case of women, tattooing is practiced primarily in two circumstances, in their words:

From our observations, we can conclude that, amongst women, tattooing occurs as a result of two different sets of circumstances, both of which represent the state of moral decay of the victim of this mutilation. In the first case, a person tattoos herself or lets herself be tattooed, with the promise of enduring love and loyalty, and inscribes the initials of her lover. The epilogue to this first situation is often the addition of another vengeful inscription, countering the original sentiment! So great is the regret for the tattooed woman, her shameful past is still visible, the result is sometimes another inscription cursing all men, if only she would have suspected the real intimate feelings of her male "client." In the second case, it is by the hands of a professional by which the woman is tattooed. But how? The most frequent situation is when, in a nighttime café, the tattoo artist comes and display his album (a real catalogue of figures and prices). He promises it will be a success...not much pain...a reasonable price and as the women X, Y or Z already flaunts one of these *works of art*, the object of much envy, the temptation is irresistible.²⁰

Leblond and Lucas thus *collect* images of the women's tattoos, and suggest that the images themselves are selected and collected like pins or buttons. By describing the act of selecting the images from a book of designs proffered by the tattoo artist, they suggest that the acquisition of the tattoos is perhaps the result of boredom—a peculiar and painful pastime. As Nicholas Thomas has argued, in European tattoos there is an alliance between the act of tattooing or scarification and that of collecting, resulting in the potential for the

²⁰ Leblond and Lucas, pp. 19-20.

future self-commodification of the individual.²¹ While this is perhaps most obvious in the examples of the ‘painted ladies’ of the side show and fairground attractions, this conception of the tattoo as a mark of experience and an understanding of its future interest to others is also relevant when considering the prevalence of tattooing amongst other marginalised social groups. Prisoners, prostitutes and sailors are some of the most well documented groups displaying numerous prominent tattoos in the nineteenth century and body modification simultaneously became a system of signification and identification for individuals and the state – symbols of the trade in more ways than one. As Anna Cole has argued, ‘cultural meaning is derived from or attached to the tattoo’s visible and indelible status on the body and this is paralleled by its cultural use as a marker of difference, an index of inclusion and exclusion’.²² As we can see in Leblond and Lucas’ research, the tattoo had become a marker of difference not only for its indelibility but also by its potential to pathologise.

Outlining the methodological framework of their study, Leblond and Lucas affirm that they engage with the cases from an anatomical and physiological understanding.²³ They describe the environmental and societal factors that may have led to prostitution and while they link the occupation to moral degeneration, they notably avoid making biological conclusions on this point. In contrast, Lombroso and others in the Italian school of criminology describe crime or the ‘atavistic tendency’ not only as an innate characteristic, but also as a form of mental insanity and mental retardation.²⁴ As David Horn has argued, it was Lombroso’s attention to and consideration of the criminal body that defined the perceived objectivity of the then burgeoning field of positivist criminology.²⁵ In Lombroso’s words, ‘among Europeans, the most

²¹ Nicholas Thomas, ‘Introduction,’ in *Tattoo: Bodies, Art and Exchange in the Pacific and the West* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005), p. 19.

²² Anna Cole, ‘Governing Tattoo: Reflections on a Criminal Trial,’ in *Tattoo: Bodies, Art and Exchange in the Pacific and the West*, ed. by Nicholas Thomas, Anna Cole and Bronwen Douglas (London: Reaktion, 2005), p. 119.

²³ Leblond and Lucas, p. 25.

²⁴ Nicole Rafter, *The Criminal Brain: Understanding Biological Theories of Crime* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2008), p. 21.

²⁵ David Horn, *The Criminal Body: Lombroso and the Anatomy of Deviance* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), p. 11.

important reason for tattooing is atavism and that other form of atavism called traditionalism, both of which characterize primitive men and men living in a state of nature'.²⁶ Lombroso suggested that the popularity of tattoos amongst criminals signified a lessened sensation of pain amongst these individuals. Significantly, Lombroso employed photography extensively in order to diagnose the criminal or atavistic body, similar to the use of photographic images in the development of psychiatry. In this regard, much of the recording of tattoos in this period was related to new understanding of individual identification in relation to legal practice: tattoos were used within the framework of an objective system of classification.²⁷ Because many tattoos were relatively difficult to photograph, and it was more expensive and labour-intensive to incorporate photography into publications, Alexandre Lacassagne had invented a method of using a piece of transparent cloth to trace the image of the tattoo from the skin. These were then reproduced on paper by engraving into print. This method appears to have been replicated by Leblond and Lucas in their text, foregrounding the physical interaction between doctor-researcher and patient-prostitute, specifically, the touching of the skin that would have been necessary to outline the tattoo image. The act of tracing also somewhat paradoxically relies upon a smoothness and dryness of the skin surface; if the tattoo site had been at all infected the process of tracing would be obscured if not prevented entirely.

Leblond and Lucas participate in this trend of bodily or biological classification but largely in service of a different cause, namely medical research as opposed to medico-legal classification for the purposes of incarceration or social stratification. In this regard, it is worth mentioning Leblond and Lucas' choice of media for representing the images of tattoos included in the text. The authors describe the process for transcribing the tattoos as the act of tracing the images from the body and later the re-inscription of the images by a process of engraving and printing, thus

²⁶ Cesare Lombroso, *The Criminal Man*, trans. by Mary Gibson and Nicole Rafter, (New York: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 109.

²⁷ Jane Caplan, 'This or That Person: Protocols of Identification in Nineteenth Century Europe,' in *Documenting Individual Identity: Developing State Practices in the Modern World*, ed. by Jane Caplan and John Torpe, (New York: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 51.

mimicking the processes of tattooing.²⁸ Leblond and Lucas most likely borrowed this method of transcription from Lacassagne's works, as the resulting images of the tattoos appear strikingly similar. As in Lacassagne's text, no visual reference is made to the corporeal in the final reproduction of these images in the book. This is a considerably different representational practice than that employed with the images included in Lombroso's texts as well as other well-known criminological tracts such as Henry Havelock Ellis's *The Criminal* (1890), which both feature idealized and stylized outlines denoting the human form or the shape of a relevant limb. In *Du tatouage*, notably no photography or, for that matter, any references to the body or corporeal forms are included in the reproduction of the tattoos. At most, a written note refers to the placement of the image on the body, with no corresponding visual cue. This mode of representation, I argue, shows that the images of tattoos presented in *Du tatouage* were recorded to document medical pathology, inscribing the female body as victim.

The authors also include a small chapter entitled 'Strategies Employed Against the Practice of Tattooing'. In this chapter, Leblond and Lucas briefly outline the health risks associated with the practices of tattooing – what they often term 'mutilation'. What is more, Leblond and Lucas include a reproduction of the text of a letter sent by Berchon to the French minister of the interior demanding that further regulation or legislation be put into place to counter the devastating effects of tattooing on the population. Leblond and Lucas' text once again outlines a nuanced understanding of tattooing as a medical problem rather than a signifier of cultural degeneration. Linking tattooing to injury and disease, *Du tatouage* still operates within medical and pathological discourses. Belief in the power of legislation and medical intervention to stop or slow the growth of tattooing practices demonstrates this stance. In fact, the authors personally advocate criminalising the practice of voluntary mutilation. Leblond and Lucas suggest that tattooed bodies are not already criminal, but could be or should be, not for the marks they display but for the act of mark making itself. Framing tattooing as a medical problem, the

²⁸ During this period, many tattoo artists used cartoons or mockups to trace the initial image on the skin in ink before the actual tattoo was applied to the skin with a needle.

authors bring tattooing back into legal discourse, this time within the medical context. The aforementioned proposal for legislation against tattooing demonstrates the distance from the continental discourse of criminology, whilst drawing attention to the *medical* nature of the authors' interest in the practice of tattooing.

It is important here to think about how Leblond, Lucas and their contemporaries understood the tattoo. Is the tattoo *in* or *on* the body? As Claudia Benthien has argued, medical perceptions of the nature of skin had changed dramatically between the eighteenth and the nineteenth century.²⁹ While medical practitioners had increasing access to and knowledge of the penetrable nature of skin and the interior of the body, popular semantic understandings of skin as the impenetrable boundary of the body became increasingly commonplace. Leblond and Lucas' emphasis on observation, mapping and in turn classification of the images *on* the skin's surface is reminiscent of numerous contemporary nineteenth-century treatises on skin disease, which tended to employ a variety of visual images to describe and diagnose the skin. As noted in Jacyna's article 'Pious Pathology: J. L. Alibert's Iconography of Disease', art historians have generally considered medical imagery as separate and distinct from the texts that they illustrate, failing to consider the images as *illustrative* and as part of the larger textual project they help constitute. Jacyna suggests that it is only in the analysis of the 'pictorial and the literary' that these texts can be understood.³⁰ Drawing from Jacyna's proposal, we can ask: why would Leblond and Lucas reproduce the iconography of the tattoos and fail to offer an anthropological or symbolic interpretation of the imagery? One can speculate that the reproduction of the images, disarticulated from the corporeal, suggests their instability and impermanence. Framed within surrounding text that discusses the possibility of tattoo removal, we can conclude that Leblond did not employ this pictorial strategy to emphasize the permanence or significance of the tattoos as

²⁹ Claudia Benthien, *Skin: On the Cultural Border Between Self and the World*, trans. by Thomas Dunlap (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 1-3.

³⁰ L. S. Jacyna, 'Pious Pathology: J. L. Alibert's Iconography of Disease', in *Constructing Paris Medicine*, ed. by Caroline Hannaway and Anne La Berge (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1998), (p. 187).

markers of inert social depravation. Using Michael Serres' invocation of the skin 'as an entire environment' as a prompt, Leblond's decision to erase or dissolve the corporeal (and therefore sensual) boundary of the skin warrants further consideration.³¹ The author's consideration of previous texts, presentation of un-interpreted medical data and invitation for further discourse suggests a desire for further *medical* judgment, interpretation and study. As I have argued, Leblond and Lucas' representation of the tattoos as sites of pathology rather than as cultural markers represents only a slight departure from the contemporaneous interpretation of tattoos as markers of degeneracy and atavism. Here, the representation of the iconography of tattooing amongst women working as prostitutes and the characterisation and diagnosis of the process as pathological, contributed to the larger marginalisation and discourse of otherness used in relation to nineteenth-century French prostitution.

³¹ Michael Serres cited in Steven Connor, *The Book of Skin* (London: Reaktion, 2004), (p. 28).

NOTA. — La confusion du dessin indique une surcharge.



Bras droit.

En effet Julot avait fait l'inscription première. Il mourut.
Une croix indique les regrets éternels !

OBSERVATION XX

Nommée Du..., Louise, bijoutière (fille).

Agée de 23 ans.

Formée à 20 ans.

Détournée de ses devoirs à 16 ans.

Père et mère vivent ensemble, mais ne reçoivent plus leur fille.

Figure 1: Albert Leblond and Arthur Lucas, *Du tatouage chez les prostituées* (Paris: Société D'Éditions Scientifiques, 1899), p. 52.

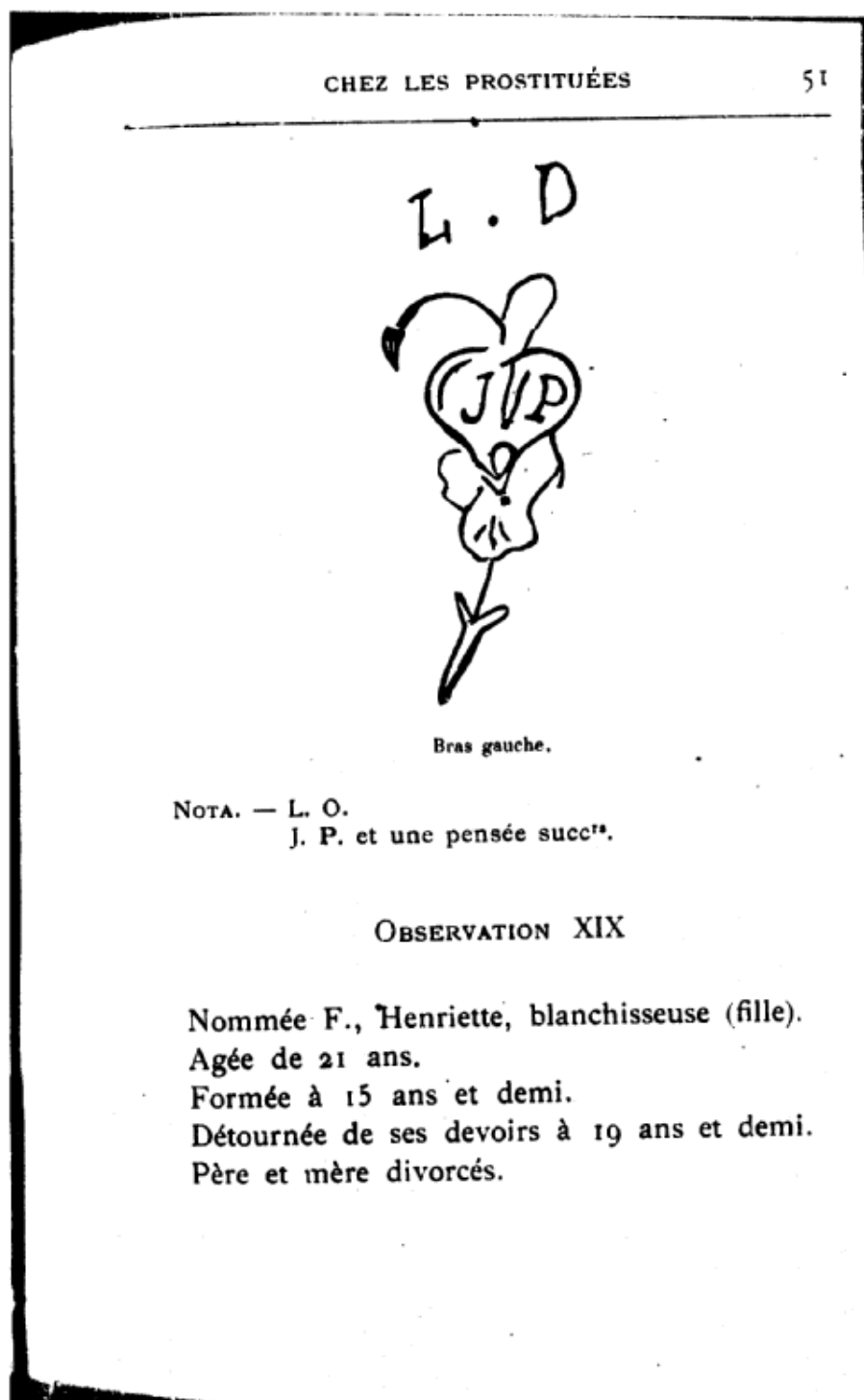


Figure 2: Albert Leblond and Arthur Lucas, *Du tatouage chez les prostituées* (Paris: Société D'Éditions Scientifiques, 1899), p. 51.

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