ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis:	"SO HARD A STEPMOTHER" TO POESY: LEVERAGING THE TRADITIONAL BALLAD AS EPIDEICTIC RHETORIC AND SOCIAL ACTION
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Poetics are foundational to both social ideology and rational forms of argumentation. Highlighting a foundational role for rhetorical poetics, I suggest the traditional, third-person narrative ballad idiom as epideictic rhetoric and look at the agential intent of the ballad form from within the foundational elements of its construction/re-construction: its story selection, protagonist selection, narrative sequencing, authorial gaze, and narrative outcomes. The traditional ballad is most widely viewed as a folklore representative of cultural values and beliefs, yet the traditional ballad is also a site of social contest, a challenge to normative cultural ideology and harmful social structures. Despite its distanced wrappings, often we find the "traditional" ballad is a rhetoric narratively structured to apportion blame, an epideictic seeding conviction for the necessity of social change.

“SO HARD A STEPMOTHER” TO POESY: LEVERAGING THE TRADITIONAL BALLAD AS EPIDEICTIC RHETORIC AND SOCIAL ACTION

by

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Dedication

For Halie, Emma, Matthew, and Caroline

Table of Contents

Dedication……ii
Table of Contents……....iii
Chapter 1: Ballad Persuasion……...1
Chapter 2: Building the Ballad World……...47
Chapter 3: Ballad as Social Action……58
Bibliography……..83

CHAPTER 1: BALLAD PERSUASION

> ***So that since the excellencies of it, may bee so easily and so justly confirmed, and the lowe creeping objections so soone trodden downe, it not beeing an Art of lyes, but of true doctrine; not of effoeminatenesse, but of notable stirring of courage; not of abusing mans wit; but of strengthening mans wit; not banished, but honored by Plato; Let us rather . . . enquire why England the Mother of excellent mindes should be growne so hard a stepmother to Poets, who certainely in wit ought to passe all others, since all onely proceeds from their wit, beeing indeed makers of themselves, not takers of others.***
>
> ***Is it the lyric that most displeases, who with his tuned lyre and well accorded voice, gives praise, the reward of virtue, to virtuous acts; who gives moral precepts and natural problems; who sometimes raises up his voice to the height of the heavens, in singing the lauds of the immortal God? Certainly I must confess mine own barbarousness; I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet; and yet it is sung but by some blind crowder, with no rougher voice than rude style; which being so evil appareled in the dust and cobwebs of that uncivil age, what would it work, trimmed in the gorgeous eloquence of Pindar?***
>
> ***—Philip Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy"***

We could take almost any instance of narrative poetic makings and their transmissions to champion the foundational importance of poetics to persuasive discourse--there are unlimited examples to choose from (once you begin to see them as such) in the stories propelling influential scientific literature, political oratory, advertisements, academic papers of all kinds--but I have here chosen balladry as our primary example. The traditional (often called popular) ballad is a ubiquitous, equally oral and literary form. Working through the affective and memorable medium of melody, the English/Scottish ballad tradition is conspicuously narrative in poetic structure. In short, it is an easy target for a study agitating for fuller understandings of the social potentials of poetic rhetorics. The traditional ballad is also a literature which may deserve a contemporary revival of a different sort of scholarly interest because of the social reach of its

delivery and the way its melodic hauntings find their way into other important rhetorics to good effect.

Fundamentally, the ballad is a poetic story set to music, and story is foundational to all persuasive discourse. Scholars are beginning to find, for example, storytelling as requisite to such seemingly rational enterprises as science communications (see Jones and Crow). Although since Descartes (and possibly Plato) we have mostly segregated poetics from rational argumentation both in field and instruction (see Weiss), the truth is that we have great need to consider their synergy. Cicero in *Pro Archia poeta* cautioned the academy in particular to continue to pay attention to the influence of poetics:

> [L]et this name of Poet, by holy unto you, which even the barbarian [*barbaria*] dareth not to spit upon and violate. The very stones of the Wilderness aunswer to his voice; the beastes [*bestiae*] oftentimes are softened, & made still & tame, by hearing of his songe, and shal we that have been educated in the best lerning be deaf, and not moved by the voise of Poets? (as quoted in Kinney 33)

Nevertheless, as Sir Philip Sidney's likening of the academy to harsh stepmothers indicates, the general scholarly imagination has often been, and I argue remains, too harsh to the poetics we need to think, argue, and live. What is important about Sidney's *Defence* is that it reminds us that poetics are not verse and extraneous entertainment, as so often conceptualized. Though they can and do versify and entertain, their work is not this. Instead, poetics are the foundational affective power and foundational vantage behind both our thought and the effective communication of that thought, even the most rational of those thoughts.

Recognizing this, the late medieval world developed an entertaining, memorable, and manipulatable poetic in which to seed their social rhetorics, what we now call the traditional

ballad. It should be said at the outset that this is *not* the widely held view of the traditional ballad, which continues to be noted for its seemingly objective, distanced, nonrhetorical, and often anonymous poetics. The traditional ballad has been mostly studied as a communal poetic (folklore) rather than an act of individual rhetoric; and, indeed it is a communal poetic, but I forward also that it is an important genre of agential persuasion and a social and ideological tool. I seek to demonstrate the third-person narrative formulation of the traditional ballad as a social action which utilizes traditional culture to help direct the vantage of future culture. Here, I offer the "traditional" end of the ballad spectrum (noting the "paradox" of ballad terminology and definition, see Brown and Atkinson) as an important rhetorical form that has not been studied extensively as such, precisely because its early scholars defined, bounded, and envisaged the poetic against direct or overt rhetorical content. This designation was troubled early but has had long and lasting sway, which has served to direct our attention away from examining the social rhetoric and action possible in this type of ballad construction and propagation. Unfortunately, this view has been so persuasive that the traditional narrative ballad is currently overlooked both as a serious literature of rhetoric and also as a contemporary popular poetic capable of important social action.

While the traditional ballad has historically been categorized as such by its objective or neutral tone and seemingly distanced, anonymous, and communal poetics, I argue that these appearances of objectivity, anonymity, and collectivity are just that—appearances. What we continue to call the "traditional" ballad as an aesthetic object was concomitantly defined and collected by the Romantics, who severed a genre of ballads from the more apparently individual, rhetorical, and commercial "broadside" ballads which circulated also in Renaissance print

culture. It was seen by early ballad scholars as the definitive pre-literate, oral form, universally representative of the English and Scottish folk popular culture and not as an agential rhetoric.

I must be clear about the focus of this project at the outset. Here I am concerned with the ballad idiom as a still available means of influence and persuasion, not in debating where the ballad resides between creation, distribution, types of recording, performance, and the minds of individuals; if it can be said to exist as a type; or if it can be bounded as version or ever really captured in its material multiplicity. The contemporary ballad scholar's conception of the ballad as a cultural abstraction, unable to be pinned down (see Atkinson's 2014 ontological inquiry into the state of the ballad's being), while an important discussion of "diachronicity" and "exemplification," is not the chosen focus of this study (84). Though we debate its boundaries, most will yet agree the ballad idiom *is*. I am interested in what it has been and what it is capable of doing, that it is a useful form of influence, that it can be viewed as a kind of rhetorical potential available to alter and shape ontologies. While, in a new historical way we can't locate an original or determine for sure what any particular variation accomplishes, it is worth looking at what we might think a text could accomplish through time, in order to deploy similar potentials in the future. We will require rhetorical eyes to examine the effects of ballad poetics. Yet, this also is abrasive to the contemporary mind, which distains to limit poetic in any way to pragmatic purpose, as Jeffrey Walker says: "Few will disagree, I think, if I say that twentieth-century discussion of the lyric has often granted little recognition, and sometimes none, to the role of argumentation" (5). Instead, Walker asks us to consider that the "poet is a singer not of tales, or of transient mind-states, but of arguments" ("Aristotle's Lyric" 18). This is certainly not to say that every ballad functions in the same way ("Judas," "St. Stephen and Herod," "Thomas

Rymer A,"[1] and many others do not appear to speak to social conditions in the way that I will suggest the "old song of Percy and Douglas" does) or that one can speak so generally of ballad functions given the historically arbitrary and slippery field. It is admitted the still living texts that I look at have been captured in fleeting moments of material and historicity, nevertheless their narratives interact with and act upon audiences even as we say that audiences help shape and continue to shape them. Walker summarizes, "there will be . . . places in an argument where narratives emerge; and in turn there will be places in a narrative where an argument of some kind will emerge" (11). I am concerned here with what kinds of arguments can emerge in ballad narratives, those which have not often been considered rhetorical, in the sometime-called and sometimes still called "traditional" end of the ballad's spectrum. This is in no way to fix meanings or texts, but rather to offer potential readings of the kinds of influence available through the texts moving through time. I am here looking for what acts of influence are possible when ballad language and ballad aesthetic come into contact (and recontact) with audiences.

I look at the ballad from within the foundational elements of its construction/re-constructions: its story selection, protagonist selection, narrative sequencing, authorial gaze, and narrative outcomes. These, I argue, showcase agential rhetorical content despite a superficial appearance of objectivity. I see the communal creation of the ballad as a series of individual instances of rhetoricity and seek an additional conceptualizing of the traditional ballad as a highly successful form of disarming rhetoric, a rhetoric offering easy entrance to audiences through poetic delight and which often pretends to neutrality while promoting positioned social arguments, alternative ideologies which materialize through the practice of poetic world-making within the ballad idiom.

[1] "B" however does appear to speak to social conditions, in the way that gender roles reverse: it is Thomas who "runs" instead of "rides" and the ballad alludes to a man rather than a woman as the fall of mankind.

As well as a collectible poetic artifact, the traditional ballad can be profitably envisioned as a site of social contest, challenging normative ideologies and harmful social structures. For example, the tragic qualities of the traditional ballad idiom have often been noted. To this I add that ballads often create poetic worlds which work to showcase the negative outcomes of currently held social ideologies, and many times, that outcome is death. These kinds of ballads are stories where repeating social situations are shown to produce harmful or deadly outcomes. They are thus a potent ground of challenging old--and highlighting the need to develop new, less harmful--social ideologies. Their epideictic accomplishes the same work that Eric MacPhail outlines in his study on Montaigne where he says epideictic "works to undermine consensus and even to challenge the very impulse to conform to social and ethical norms" (22). Here I advance the traditional ballad as epideictic rhetoric, functioning primarily through individually authored third-person narratives structured often to apportion blame to social structures and to generate a moving pathos in an audience through music and poetics, seeding convictions for the necessity of social change. In other words, much of what has been recognized previously as the traditional ballad does not so much represent a collective social voice, so much as it strategically utilizes collective voice and rhetorically selects narrative and poetic resources in order to challenge normative social structures and behaviors.

Scope and Partition

I have chosen to ground our discussion primarily in two ancient and enduring ballads: "The Ballad of Chevy Chase," (alternately "The Hunting of the Cheviot") and "Tam Lin," ("Young Tam Lane," et al.). These are good places to look for poetic rhetoric, the way the ballads suggest, convince, and ultimately agitate for a change in social ideology, because they have long been considered highly representative of the traditional ballad idiom. Both ballads are

featured in Francis Child's definitive (albeit aesthetically defined) nineteenth century collection, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads.* Both have been held in high esteem by prestigious voices for their artistry and lasting appeal. In addition, these choices span different categories of traditional balladry. Ballad scholar David Buchan outlines for us the three major categories and a smaller fourth category of balladry: (1) the magical and marvelous, (2) the romantic and tragic, (3) the historical and semi-historical, and (4) the smaller group of comic ballads (Hixon 68). "The Ballad of Chevy Chase" is a historical/semi-historical ballad reacting to the events of an actual fourteenth century medieval skirmish which took place in the contested border regions of Scotland and England. Two brave, and alternately courteous, knights, Percy and Douglas, meet in a highly romanticized combat. While "Tam Lin" is a poetic imaginary presenting the historical and social dangers surrounding Early Modern sexual behavior. It is a romantic ballad and equally a supernatural or magical ballad, since heroine Janet (alternately Lady Margaret) rescues her love interest, the knight Tam Lin, from fairyland's Elf queen. While one might wonder what an ancient border skirmish or an elf tale have to do with the current state of rhetoric studies, I suggest here that the ballads have much to tell us about the way we view and create ourselves poetically and about how we can leverage, react to, speak and argue from our poetic ways of being, what Susan Stewart refers to as "lyric possession" (34). Part of the underlying motivation for this thesis is to do a small part to forward that there is poetically generated ideology beneath much of the moral sight that we use to decide the ethics which both invent and determine our deliberative and judicial arguments. I would like us to consider, as Walker also

argues, [2] that it is epideictic rhetoric, and I would like us to consider the traditional ballad as one example.

Before we examine our primary ballads, I will first give a little background concerning the ballad's form and also speak a bit on the prevailing focus of previous ballad scholarship, as this will help both to orient the reader to the characteristics of the form and also to distinguish the focus of this thesis as addressing a gap in the field of ballad studies. I would also like to draw attention at the outset to the limited cultural scope of our examples of epideictic rhetoric. While my focus here is limited to derivations from the Northeast Scottish oral ballad tradition lauded by Child, Scott, Percy, Addison, Sidney and others, the ballad, and folksong more broadly, has an almost universal human presence. It is *not* limitedly Anglo or even Euro-centric—it is an omnipresent, transcultural oral and literary *mythos* interacting with and reflecting and speaking back to the community knowledge and customs of any culture to which it belongs. Song has accomplished this throughout human history and throughout the globe. From the resañas of Goldberg's collected volumes of the Romancero, to Idema's recovery of a women's script within the narrative ballads of the heroines of Jiangyong, to Cachia's "Pulp Stories" of "honor crimes" among the Egyptian folk singers, scholars can locate the folksong almost whenever and wherever they look. In fact, Nietzsche has argued that the human ability to experience music is a "transcendental precondition for the possibility of language" (Higgins 663). For Nietzsche, self-understanding requires language and language in turn requires music-- it appears, humans may require the framework of music to accomplish any linguistic communication at all, and folksong has been, for some time, simply a substantive part of being human. This is an important point to

[2] "Epideictic rhetoric thereby cultivates the communal attitudes—the ideological and emotional commitments—that will constitute the available grounds for deliberation and decision in specific practical situations" (Rhetoric 87). The reader may also find Ernesto Grassi's philosophical/rhetorical works of interest.

stress, because while I focus on one small collection and type of folksong (and examining just a handful of examples at that) some of these same rhetorical potentials lie within and are available to and/or have been at work across the globe and throughout history. I underscore this now because I desire to promote the ballad's rhetorical potentials as a fertile and potent opportunity for marginalized people groups especially, through the way its potentials make visible the otherwise unseen or help remake the otherwise socially intolerable. In fact, I shall argue that it performed the same function for portions of the English and Scottish.

This said, I can now outline an argument troubling the commonly held assumption that the folk ballad's primary work lies in reflecting the idea of a whole "people" and not in a series of the ideas and rhetoric of particularly discerning and creative individuals. First, I begin with a quick overview of the history of ballad tradition and delineate the key elements constructing the traditional third-person narrative ballad. Though I mostly avoid the "Ballad Wars" which have debated the method/extent of oral composition of the ballad, in order to examine its ideological and rhetorical potentials, it will be necessary to examine and once again trouble the initially held notion of communal creation which has unnecessarily directed, even crippled, the scholarly interest in the rhetoric of the literary form. This established, I will offer a comparative analysis utilizing several versions of each of our chosen ballads, identifying key rhetorical strategies of the traditional ballad idiom and discussing how these ballads and their variations work to either create, continue, or alter a particular gaze of social ideology. I will then establish the ideological shifts capable with these kinds of poetics. Finally, I conclude by describing the ballad as epideictic rhetoric capable of inspiring judgments of praise and blame for various social understandings, suggest a possible method for its ability to shift cultural values, and offer that

these poetically established ideologies can also be effectively coupled to other important and more obvious acts of argument.

What is a Ballad? The Form, History, and Device of Ballad Poetics

The "traditional ballad" is an ancient and highly influential public poetic, an oral and literate folk form made first and foremost for musical accompaniment, performance, and singing. The name itself stems from an ancient Greek "*ballein*," and the Latin "*ballare,*" which was carried into English around 1227 through the French (perhaps from a form of chivalric poetry and music), and like the etymologically related "ballet," it means "to dance" (Mladenovic). Paralleling the etymological dating of this name, traditional English and Scottish ballads are a European musical phenomenon dating from the late medieval but perhaps having more ancient origins. Certainly popular throughout the Renaissance, they had much of their heyday in the sixteen and seventeenth centuries, when the songs caught the commercial attention of the printing press and also the antiquarian/collector's attention of the literary elite, such as Sir Walter Scott, Bishop Thomas Percy, and others. This elite literate attention continued through the devoted interest of nineteenth century Harvard Professor Francis Child and beyond. But, it was that extended moment of both collector attention and printing which ensured the ballad's place as a truly literate object and also led to giving definition to the form as well as a definition to literature itself.

The ballad's formal structure presents two obvious constituents: (1) bare/bold, almost wholly third-person narratives which are set in simple strophic repetition (quite helpful for memorization) and (2) communal linguistic formulations called "commonplaces" which succinctly activate communally held understandings in a culture. Generally, there are also two basic ballad patterns with quite a number of variants: (1) a couplet-based form of four-syllable

stress with an intermittent refrain and (2) a four-line form of alternating three and four syllable stress with end rhyme on the second and fourth lines. "The Ballad of Chevy Chase" is of the second variety with an occasional six-line stanza inserted. To example the pattern, tone, and style of the traditional ballad, note this beginning six-line stanza:

The Persë owt off Northombarlonde,
and avowe to God mayd he
That he wold hunte in the mowntayns
off Chyviat within days thre,
In the magger of doughtë Dogles
and all that euer with him be.

Similar in form to "Chevy Chase," "Tam Lin" is also of the second strophic pattern. The following are the beginning stanzas of Child's "A" variant. Notice this version contains an example of a form of introductory second-person, conspicuously rhetorical warning that periodically attaches to this ballad and others, but notice also how it quickly transitions and then generally persists as a third-person telling:

O I forbid you, maiden a',
That wear gowd on your hair,
To come or gae by Carterhaugh,
For young Tam Lin is there.

There's nane that gaes by Carterhaugh
But they leave him a wad,
Either their rings, or green mantles,

Or else their maidenhead.

Janet has kilted her green kirtle
A little aboon her knee,
And she has broded her yellow hair
A little aboon her bree,
And she's awa to Carterhaugh,
As fast as she can hie.

To keep us oriented to my argument, I will pause to mention here that there is certainly rhetorical intention (feigned or earnest) behind such a command as "I forbid you" in the introductory warning, but ballad narratives which follow such direct introductions often serve both as proof and example of that same warning or comment--with or without its inclusion in the variants. Here, Janet, our heroine, indeed does not leave Carterhaugh with her maidenhead, and the narrative choices alone portray this as a dangerous and socially compromising situation for the young woman—the beginning warning is optional. In this ballad's narrative and in others, the plot is rhetorically positioned rather than neutral to the events concerning the main characters of the drama.

Returning to the ballad's distinguishing features, typically, it portrays only the essential actions necessary for a particular telling of a story, and those actions jump quickly from scene to scene. Besides the occasional warning or comment intrusions to the narrative, there is little obvious narrator presence and no lengthy scenic descriptions. The scenes just seem to appear before the eyes of the listener without the distancing effect of what we might call the literary eye of a novel. As Miller agrees, the ballad's "events and characters stand wholly on their own

merits, wholly for themselves": they contain little to no lengthy narrative commentary, little extended narrative description ("there is no time to describe Achilles' shield," for example), and the characters are "not described in any true sense," only by commonplaces and quite straightforwardly by what they do and say (Miller 34-37). Charles Lowry Wimberly also concurs with this description of the prominent role of action in the ballad: the arrangement, he says, is "narrative rather than descriptive. It always tells a story but rarely paints a scene. Its interest lies not in the background but the in the action of the story" (5). Wimberly gives us a memorable conception of the quick pace of the plot (and also several oft-used commonplace descriptives) worth including here:

> the "action is so swift that in a few stanzas the heroine with 'gouden hair' changes her bridal veil for a shroud, and the hero with hair no less golden descends from his capering "milk-white" steed of the morning to swing that evening form the gallows tree. The plot is simple and forward moving, and is obstructed neither by moralizing nor by lyric effusion." (5)

The ballad allows action to speak its intention to the audience directly. The second conspicuous constituent of the ballad, the "commonplaces" or formulaic expressions, reveal in this excerpt through the descriptives "gouden hair" and "milk-white" and the way Janet has "kilted her green kirtle," a phrase found in many of the romantic ballads signaling social drama surrounding female agency. Also, "wearing gowd on your hair," is a pre-emptory signal to the ballad audience that young female sexual sanctity is going to encounter a significant engagement. To summarize thus far, we might say that the ballad spends the currency of its narrative on plot rather than on the lengthy description or other lengthy moralizing or scenic passages sometimes

associated with other literary forms, and that it uses commonplaces to quickly and succinctly transport communally held knowledge to its audience.

It is crucial to stress ballad construction and propagation as musical and performative. While the ballads are at essence "narrative poems distinguished by their concision, episodic structure, objective or neutral tone, and dense patterns of repetition and refrain," they are even more fundamentally oral performance songs (McGill 158). The lyrics of traditional ballads are sung to modal repeating folk tunes which are often re-used interchangeably; one tune might set various lyrics to create many different songs, an accepted custom of the Renaissance which made it easy to create new ballads quickly. And, perhaps in the same way that sampling a portion of a previously popular song into a new commercial production today produces emotional familiarity which popularizes (and monetizes) the new song more quickly, when an old tune was used, the new ballad already had familiarity with an audience. Alternatively, one song might be sung to different tunes depending on the needs, personal preferences, or intents of the performer.

The ballads also have the typical features of oral composition: "repetitive textual, metrical, and melodic structures; patterned arrangements of narrative; recurrent formulaic phrase and epithets" as well as "conceptual parallelism and incremental repetition" and often they include "formalized refrain lines" (Perry 293). We can see repetition and conceptual parallelism in the doubled preparations Janet makes to her dress and hair (she "kilts her kirtle" more than once in the narrative) and in the rhetorical strategy of creating both a hero and affective familiarity through epithet. Also, a not-so-subtle, repetitive overuse of the definitive article in "*the* Persë" persists throughout the "The Hunting of the Cheviot," aptly demonstrating Susan Stewart's idea of the power of lyric possession because this catchy repetitive construct even occurs in some of the ballad's scholarly literature. This repetition appears to help to construct

and disseminate the heroic framing of the masculine worthy foe, as evidenced in the preemptive adjectival lauding of *the* "*doughtë* Dogles." This may be, as we shall see, because the ballad's social imaginary has promoted Douglas and Percy as figurative stand-ins for the sovereigns of Scotland and England, but these repetitions certainly work to create affective familiarity which roots in the minds of the ballad's audience. We might take Sidney's own testimony of his affection for the "old song" of Percy and Douglas as a fairly authoritative witness to this effect.

Another characteristic of the ballad narrative is a dramatic quality that it is told through actions which often begin in the middle of the story with no background given. The ballad sometimes begins directly with dialogue, as if a piece of cinematic drama. For example, "In the Hunting of Cheviot" we don't know why Percy feels he must hunt in the Cheviot right now, only that he has made a binding vow to do so, and in "Tan Lin" we aren't told why Janet is today so set on going to Carterhaugh to pick roses—she just does, and that is part of the rhetorical puzzle delivered to the audience to decipher. This can be seen as a device which encourages audience interest and immediate cognitive involvement in deciphering the purposes behind the narrative. Without background information or narrative intrusion, this sort of beginning foregrounds the act of decision itself and then proceeds to relay the fateful reverberations of that decision as it affects the characters of the ballad.

Yet another characteristic is that the energetic scenes are both stark and vivid, held together by quick transition in what has been described in cinematic language as "jump scenes" or "leaping and lingering" (Perry 293). Actions are rendered without narrator commentary on emotional states. This has the effect of lessening the aesthetic distance between the audience and the direct actions of the scene. The auditor is positioned as a direct "eyewitness" to the action through what might be labeled with the ancient rhetorical strategy of *enargeia*--a "strikingly

pictorial way," an appeal "made to the senses of the listener" where "attendant circumstances are described in such a way that the listener will be . . . in the presence of the characters" (Zanker 297). This last characteristic is an important rhetorical construct to bear in mind. The ability to succinctly import pregnant, meaningful cinematic and communal associations through such limited word choice is one of the key ballad features.

While managing word choice, the ballad nevertheless preferences quick place and object descriptive detail, a rhetorical power first set out by Aristotle's *Rhetoric* that causes the imagined senses to be present among the objects and places in a way that invites a specific personal identification with the scene and story (Kennedy 207, 222). In the traditional ballad idiom (in opposition, for example, to the "Once Upon a Time" anywhere of a fairytale), we are generally given acute details, like the locale of "Cheviot" or "Carterhaugh" and specific names, like those that died with "the good lord Persë" and "the doughtë Doglas": "Sir John of Egerton, Sir Robert Harcliffe, Sir Williams, Sir Iames, that bold barron," etc. Quick, but potent, detail is pregnant with rhetorical significance. Enlightenment philosopher and rhetorician Giovanni Battista Vico tells us that "when one treats a cause in its universal dimensions, he moves the affections only a little . . . excitations of the soul come through the senses which are stimulated by means of images of particular things (10). He then decries the missed opportunities of the Christian speakers of his day because they speak only generally about tragic items of virtue and neglect details which delight: "when they speak in general . . . no one or only a few are moved" (10). In other words, they would have been more persuasive if they used the close aesthetic proximity of the ballad, which punctuates with identifying details of particular objects and places and does not usually "go in for tear-jerking sentiment," but rather allows the characters "to speak for

themselves" and the action to occur "with no editorial commentary or didactic intrusion" (Barber).

Thus, the rhetorical details of the ballad form provide familiarity through detail to evoke identification, encourage empathy, and mold our communally held associations with objects and places. The ballads highlight what geographer Yi-Fu Tuan argues is "language that makes place"—words that have the powerful and unique capacity to "call places into being" (686). He outlines what he calls the "ritual creation of place" where, through culturally empowered speech, a landscape is "transformed, by imaginative narration, into a vivid presence"—this he says changes our perceptions in the same way or more than if the place itself had been physically altered. It draws forward or recedes aspects of place in the same way that a few "kind words among friends" changes a kitchen "into a bright and happy place" (686). In this way, Tuan claims that aesthetic speech "may mediate between environment and behavior" (Tateo 694). I will return to the ballad's in-between/mediator role later but Tateo highlights something the ballad makes good use of: language which alters or guides perception. Also, Aristotle comments in the *Poetics* that good tragedy details only what is possible, "according to the law of probability or necessity," keeping to "real names, the reason being that what is possible is credible," ethos being the third leg of his rhetorical triad of *pisteis* (Poetics). So, although the aesthetic of the traditional ballad "operates at 'the level of tragic acceptance'" often concerning tragic outcomes, it is set "in the barest of words," the words are chosen for optimal familiarity, rhetorical framing, sharp cinematic effect, for affective purpose, and for memory (Muir as quoted in Barber).

Ballad Scholarship: Collection and Definition Against A Rhetorical Content

As mentioned in the introduction, the traditional ballad has been often overlooked as an important rhetoric aimed at questioning social ideologies and harmful normatives. Poetics in general are often overlooked as rhetorical objects, but early ballad scholarship has heavily influenced scholars to look against, rather than for, rhetorical intent; this has been true since the conception of the traditional ballad genre itself. This is not to say that one can pin down rhetorical intent or determine the effect on every (or any) listener in a particular moment of history, but rather to insist that poetics like these which initially appear to be distanced, often have important aims toward influence. It is Harvard professor Francis James Child who is generally credited with the creation of the field of ballad research (and, incidentally, the college English department itself). Child defined the ballad and collected what he defined--he defined and collected a ballad without an author. Anonymous stories with tragic plots and impersonal tones, mostly devoid of moralizing and obvious argument, were common denominators among the ballads Child sought. Child, like the earlier Sir Walter Scott, distinguished between ballads of high and low literary quality, attempting to highlight their courtly medieval themes and also their resemblance to ancient classic literary forms. Because of the content and style of particular ballads, he named what I am calling the traditional ballad the "romantic and tragic ballads" (the oldest example in his collection, "Judas," dates to the thirteenth century). Child was not a field collector, he never traveled to England or Scotland, and so he relied on other collectors to attain the bulk of his manuscripts which he then researched, selected, arranged, and extensively annotated. His admitted purpose was to look for the oral culture behind the English/Scottish ballad tradition, and therefore any ballads which he believed to be generated for print culture he discounted and even disparaged for either their overt political content, low literary quality, or vulgarity. By looking for ballads which he believed had originated in an ancient oral culture and

discounting the more recent political ballads with overt arguments generated for recent news events, Child biased himself and the field against considering the "traditional" ballad's rhetorical content. Relying heavily on his prolific communication with, often deferring his own opinion to, Danish folklorist Svend Gruntvig, he desired his collection be representative of a particular ballad tradition, a tradition he believed was polished by years of oral communal participation, until each ballad had no author but only the representations of a culture. A ballad with no author has a difficult time ever being considered rhetorical, since it is missing one of the key components of any piece of rhetoric, an agent with a purpose. According to his definition in Johnson's 1900 Encyclopedia, Child thought of the ballad as a national poetry rather than an individualized poetic: "it will always be an expression of the mind and heart of the people as an individual, and never of the personality of individual men. The fundamental characteristic of popular ballads is therefore the absence of subjectivity and of self-consciousness" (Child 214). And, rather than being conceptualized as historical reactions to historical moments and attitudes, Child conceptualized the ballads as an "early poetry" constructed primarily of universal representations, "[b]eing founded on what is permanent and universal in the heart of man" (214). Therefore, he often disparaged some other popular forms as "veritable dung-hills," either because of their birth in or exposure to early modern commercial print culture, overt political rhetoric, or even because of their popular vulgarity, which did not suit the elite scholarly tastes of the time (Barber).

Grundtvig's substantial experience with vulgarity in authentic versions of Scandinavian ballads worked to help moderate Child's opinion of the ballads containing this particular stylistic element, but never completely altered his predilection for the type of ballad exhibited by more wholesome singers like Mrs. Brown of Falkland (Buchan 213). Child's entry in Johnson's 1895

Encyclopedia, though he admitted was not definitive or even finished, presents what we may call his "Darwinian" model of ballad creation: "Though they don't write themselves as William Grimm said, though a man and not a people composed them, still the author counts for nothing, and it is not by mere accident but for the best of reasons that they have come down to us anonymous" (Barber). Later ballad collectors, like Cecil Sharp who was surprised to find circulating versions of medieval English and Scottish ballads among the people of the American Appalachians, challenged the general communal authorship idea and held the songs were likely the work of a single talented songsmith, although existing in disparate versions held by particular performing "songsters" whose memories retained and slightly reworked the material in subsequent retellings. This later focus served to re-orient subsequent ballad scholarship to a focus on performance and collection—an emphasis on the "conscious acts of creation on the singer's part" which continues today in the partitioned areas of Folklore studies (Atkinson 16). The ballad was pictured as a still living communal property, alive in the ongoing oral performances which yet represented the form's ability to represent the ideas of a community.

Child's preference for what he believed were communal creations of a "whole people" divided ballad scholarship forever between Child's three hundred and five ballads and all other ballads, which were subsequently labeled, and until quite recently mostly derided as, "Broadside Ballads." Most of the Broadside Ballads came from the print culture flooding English streets in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the "Grub Street hacks" who peddled commercial and/or bawdy and/or political songs which served a timely purpose both as social tabloid and a form of important news media (Barber). Child conceptualizes his genuine ballad however as the creation of one national mind: "During the fifteenth and the early part of the sixteenth century a second growth of the genuine popular song appears, some of it springing, doubtless, out of

shoots from the old stock which had lived through this long interval, some of it a fresh product of the age. These ballads were popular in the large and strict sense; that is, *they were the creation and the manifestation of the whole people, great and humble, who were still one in all essentials, having the same belief, the same ignorance, and the same tastes, and living in much closer relations than now*" (215, emphasis mine). His genuine ballad was already restricted to a past that never existed.

Even Child's seemingly arbitrary division between the print culture of individuals and an imagined early, oral, national poetry, however, is much complicated by the way David Buchan and others have demonstrated that Child's much denigrated print culture sometimes found its way back into the formulaic communal churning of oral culture. One of the reasons for this denigration might plausibly be found in Child's conception of the traditional popular ballad originating with the highest classes of people and then only subsequently circulating in the memory of the lower classes of people. With such a conception, no lower-class author could produce a "real" ballad, which by definition must originate in ancient aristocratic classes and through time degenerate to the memories of the common folk. These definitive conceptions, which exclude both print culture and origination outside of ancient aristocratic classes served to preclude both conceptualizing their rhetorical content *and* also ever again producing a novel and genuine traditional ballad.

Certainly, other scholars have troubled Child's conceptions of an exclusively oral, aristocratic, and ancient origin. Walter Morris Hart, for example, noted early that a traditional ballad may actually originate in print culture and then subsequently churn in the mode of oral transmission: "A whole ballad may be completely derived from print, and yet, in the course of time, revert to the popular form" (760). The ballad, as we know it, is co-mingled with print

culture. We note that the ballad "Tam Lin" was among the very first items registered with the Company of Stationers who received a royal charter in 1557 to control what amounts to an early copyright on all of England's print needs. A John Wallye and Mistress Toye registered for printing "A Ballett of Thomalyn" between July of 1557 and 1558. Illustrating the importance of ballad trade to print culture, the pair's register of "Tam Lin," along with twenty-nine other ballads, is only the eighth entry on the brand-new registry. "A Ballet of Thomalyn" had its London printing nearly *two centuries* before the birth of Mrs. Brown of Falkland, whom Child considered a personage who best represented the "authentic" oral tradition, even though Mrs. Brown was quite literate. Mistress Toye, incidentally, is the only woman printer listed for some time (the only female name among the first seventy printers) and appears to have been a member of the company in her own right, as she later registers to herself an apprentice--her husband, "Master Toye," having been buried in 1556 (Register). We note this woman's particular interest in ballad printing, because of the recognition that the *oral* ballad culture, so fetishized by Child, was also described as mostly maintained by women.

It appears that Child, although himself a distinguished professor of rhetoric, was influenced by his training with classical Greek and Latin poetics to look for similar "origins of thoughtful expression in English," with the distinct purpose of promoting an ancient English national literature to the status of the ancient Greek and Latin—he was not looking to define the ballad as a rhetorical object or an available rhetorical option. Bruce Smith calls this Child's "fetishism of ballads from oral tradition, imagined as narrative poetic creations of oral 'bards' on the order of Homer" (328). He also links this to an already established pattern, dating from Samuel Pepys, Phillip Sidney, and Walter Scott, of literate highbrow interest in low socio-economic Anglo narratives. This dual identity intimates the ballad's ongoing socio-economic

personality disorder as an oral artifact, kept and cultured by rural country folk, but also appropriated by the urban politically minded and fetishized by the literate elite. Child's seemingly arbitrary inclusions and exclusions have been much discussed in ballad scholarship, however David Buchan's 1972 *The Ballad and the Folk*, a study of Scottish ballads from the NorthEast, does provide some vindication for Child's selections and his creation of the genre.

Buchan takes up the work of Milman Parry and Albert Lord, whose research documented patterns and techniques of oral transmission and creation among the Yugoslavian epic bardic tradition. Applying Parry and Lord's ideas of oral-formulaic construction to the Northeastern ballad tradition (the particular ballads oft praised by Child) Buchan demonstrates that there was indeed an oral (mostly untouched by literacy concerns) rather than a verbal (post-literate) culture of transmission among the singers in the Northeast, like Mrs. Brown. Child often called the ballads from this particular area the best: "that the best Scottish ballads are from the North there can be no doubt" (Buchan 5). Buchan's close study of the formulas and framing techniques of the Northeast ballads, especially those contributed by Mrs. Brown of Falkland, demonstrates that Child indeed often had a natural feel for identifying the patterns of oral construction. These ballads, Buchan shows, "in addition to their sometimes-intricate aural patterns of assonance and alliteration . . . frequently possess quite complex architectonic patterns. These later patterns manifest themselves, structurally and conceptually, in all kinds of balances and parallelisms, contrasts and antitheses, chiastic and framing devices, and in various kinds of triadic groupings" (53). The framing devices, he believes, were integral to their oral construction and kept the singer/poet aware of where he/she was at in the story. Buchan distinguishes the literate mind as visual but the oral mind as aural. Using sound-groups, the oral singer of tales did not attempt to render the visual words of a story exactly as heard or by rote memory, but rather aimed to deliver

the *story* itself. It is a sort of living text held together by generic form and formulaic phrasings which work to generate content. It can be improvisational so long as the *story* is transmitted. Thus, Buchan tells us that within oral tradition there are the paradoxical competing forces of dynamic re-creation but also a narrative conservatism: "Stability comes about, first, because the maker normally tries to tell the right and true story, the one he heard, and second, because each story in a regional tradition carries with it its own inherited patterns—the structural, aural, and other formulaic patterns" (167). His seminal idea is that the singer of oral tradition imbibes these inherited structural, aural, and formulaic patterns from youth, in a similar way that one learns the patterns of everyday prose grammar and can then access those patterns, with some creative talent of course, to re-craft tales much as one would an ordinary sentence.

For Child, Mrs. Brown of Falkland is the exemplar of this mostly oral tradition, but even she is not enough to establish the ballad we know as an oral form. Andersen and Pettitt claim she was "early enough—and oral enough—to be in contact with an authentic ballad tradition, but late enough—and literate enough—for her ballads to have been preserved . . . Mrs. Brown is the closest equivalent British balladry can provide to the *guslars* studied by Parry and Lord" (4). Mrs. Brown, for example, contributed two versions of the same ballad, Child Waters (Child 63) in 1783 and 1800 whose variants provide a demonstration of both the stabilizing features of ballad creation and the way a text is yet alive and re-created by the singer through those imbibed patterns and commonplaces. However, Andersen and Pettitt's study of Mrs. Brown's ballad versions against other versions, especially a highly similar composition by a later Mrs. Gillepsie, concludes that even Mrs. Brown is not "oral" enough to count as representative of the truly oral phase of English and Scottish balladry; for them it puts the "'oral' phase pretty well out of reach" (23). They continue: "England was swamped with broadside ballads by the second half of the

sixteenth century. As there are very few English ballad texts (other than broadsides) from before 1600, the bulk of the English Ballads surviving to us belong, accordingly, to the 'verbal' stage" (23). They conclude that "oral-formulaic theory has, therefore, almost by definition, little relevance for English balladry" (23). Mrs. Brown's versions, as the best available exemplar of oral balladry in this tradition, prove only that "she was capable of changing, or even improvising, individual phrases, lines, or stanzas . . . but the instances are few and scattered, and the process involved in her transmission of ballads is overwhelmingly the memorization of a fixed text" (Andersen and Pettit 23). Mrs. Brown, and by default then all of preserved English ballad tradition, would truly belong to the post-oral phrase of balladry, the one existing side-by-side and co-mingling with literacy. This is simply to say that the English ballad tradition as we have it, unlike the Yoguslav *guslars*, may not have produced texts of *stories* that were truly "created" spontaneously at each performance. As Holger Olof Nygard maintained:

> Ballads have sharply defined structural characteristics that keep them remarkably uniform and unchanged in spite of their oral transmission . . . A ballad cannot readily be sung if the details are forgotten; the singer may change minor details and later change them back again, but the singer cannot usually be ready to make up new stanzas, complete with rhyme and verse length, on the spur of the moment . . . If a ballad narrative is changed in oral delivery, that change is likely to be of two sorts: the ballad may be intermixed with stanzas remembered from other ballads, or else with stanzas borrowed from other parts of the same ballad." (2)

This suggestion seems to concord with the amount of textual transfer and similarity that appears between ballads, where there is such overlap that one ballad's content is highly correlated with another to the extent that sometimes Child was in a difficult place to determine

whether a particular version was indeed an entirely separate ballad or a variant of one previously noted. Eleanor R. Long, for example, begins her essay with that very question: "Where does one ballad stop and another begin?" (225).

I have been reviewing for us how much prior ballad scholarship has been highly concerned with collection/definition or in the so-called "Ballad Wars" of debating the oral construction and transmission which undergirds the tradition, or with the activity of recording textual variants or later performance. These have been important considerations, but this focus has been so extensive that the rhetoric and social philosophies held and questioned by the ballad tradition have often been completely disbarred from conversation or at best highly overshadowed. This and the idea of a communal recreation of the values of an entire community or a national lore remained so pervasive in the early scholarship that study of the rhetoric inhabiting the subsequent variations has been a mostly hidden research, one that has further hindered research into the goals and accomplishments of this kind of rhetorical poetic. In fact, the ballads which contained generous amounts of direct moralization or overt political rhetoric were dismissed from Child's ballad tradition and thus, the focus has been *away* from interrogating the social influence of the ballads (almost as definitional of the traditional ballad itself) let alone on the rhetorical potentials still available in the traditional form for current social action.

In order to consider the use of these rhetorical potentials, we must first begin to see and define the ballad less as an anonymous construction from a whole people (with unavailable ancient aristocratic beginnings) and more as the discourse action of an available individual rhetorical agent. Before Child's "whole people" approach was held to scrutiny, scholars such as Gummere and Moulton went so far as to imply that the "folk" stood in dance circles and

communally created the ballad verse spontaneously, a fantastical position now discounted but one I argue has silently continued to influence the field (Pound 209). Louise Pound was one of the vocal opponents who scolded:

> Surely theorist and dictionary makers should know by this time that there is no mysterious national 'folk', 'the masses', the 'common people' of the old folklorists. . . all oral traditional is necessarily regional or group lore, a generalization too often overlooked. There is never any one folk from the point of view of folklore, but instead many folk groups, as many as there are regional cultures or occupations or racial groups within a region" (Buchan 3).

In "The Beginnings of Poetry," Pound goes on to question the then vogue notion of the origins of poetry; she challenges the "mass ownership" of primitive song, saying that while song is very much a "social thing," that these peoples sing, dance, and improvise together does not banish or negate the priority of individual "feeling, authorship, and ownership" (209). She notes as example the Chippewa Native American "dream song" composed by a single author after some visionary experience and cites numerous additional examples of individual song creation among the Native American tribes as indicative of oral poetic creation among folk groups. Additionally, she says of the ballad: "it seems clear that it is time to instill caution into our association of the primitive festal throng improvising and collaborating, and hypothetical throngs of peasant or villagers collaborating in the creation of the English and Scottish popular ballads. Primitive song and the medieval ballads are separate phenomena, with a tremendous gulf in time and civilization between" (227). She summarizes powerfully against what is yet an oft-repeated conjecture against the literary object of a single composer. We will gladly allow her some space here as we could hardly say this with fewer words or better examples:

> But when it is affirmed that improvising folk-throngs created the literary type appearing in the English and Scottish ballads of the Child collection, pieces like "The Hunting of the Cheviot," the Robin Hood pieces, "Sir Patrick Spens," "Lord Randal," etc., the affirmation is pure and not too plausible conjecture. We have to do with long, finished narratives, obeying regular stanzaic structure, provided with rhyme, and telling a whole story pretty completely in older versions, more reducedly in the later. To assume that ignorant uneducated people composed these, having the power to do so *just because they were ignorant and uneducated that is quite a different thing*, and it finds no support in the probabilities (229 emphasis mine).

There is an assumption here, which Pound attempts to dispel, that illiterate people composed communally without the later "art" of individual rhetorical intent simply because they were illiterate. Pound further notes the pervasive aristocratic themes of the Child ballads in particular, but she does so with an elitist assumption (also promoted by Child) that the authors could not have been of lower classes:

> They are not invariably on the work, or on episodes in the life of the ignorant and lowly. Would they have had so great vitality or have won such currency if they had dealt with labourers, ploughmen, spinners, peasants, common soldiers, rather than with aristocrats? The typical figures in the ballads are kings and princesses, knights and ladies, --King Estmere, Young Beichan, Young Hunting, Lord Randal, Earl Brand, Edward, Sir Patrick Spens, Edom o'Gordon, Lord Thomas and Fair Annet, Lady Maisry, Proud Lady Margaret, or leaders like the Percy and the Douglas. We learn next to nothing concerning the humbler classes from them; less than from Froissart's Chronicles, far less than from Chaucer. The life is not that of the hut or the village, but that of the bower. (231)

While it is true that many of the ballad's themes are distinctly aristocratic (and as Pound has it, the ballads themselves are of "such length, structure, coherence, finish, artistic value" and of such "adequacy of expression") it is not then proven that their authors were necessarily aristocratic, but rather only that they must certainly have had a vantage to the inner working of aristocracy, a talent for inventive composing, and a motivation for doing so (232). Others have argued that the gaze of the ballad is often directed toward the span of social distance between the aristocracy and the common people. Since this does appear the case, I suggest that one might better look for authorship among those whose social positions align with the distance of that spanning rather than in the aristocracy itself.

In Child's conception, the traditional ballad is also unavailable because it requires hundreds of years of churning to create the beauty of it. Like Pound, Douglas Hammer, in his study seeking textual restoration of the "Hunting of the Cheviot," vehemently contests the textual variation that occur from historical transmission as communal *improvement* on an original text. He takes Child to task here: "it is critically unwise to acknowledge the existence of forces which achieve textual degradation and then to speak of the results of that degradation as if they were the sacrosanct acts of literary creation" (1). Using the text offered, not written, by minstrel Richard Sheale, given in Tamworth in 1559, Hamer reconstructs the ballad line to align to a "fairly regular ballad metre singable to a simple repeating tune" (5). He distinctly outlines and gives examples of eight potential reasons for the textual corruption of the original, its offspring, or by Sheale himself and concludes with a fair amount of disdain for those considering the variations between ballad version to be simply accepted as the charming poetic work of a complete communal people:

> There is nothing wrong in attempting, as logically or as scientifically as possible, to work back to an original through the maze of textual corruptions. We do it for the text of Shakespeare, because it deserves all of our attention. What is wrong is to see in the grossly degraded texts of ballads the genuine poetry of the uncultured people, and to build a whole body of criticism upon that error. (21)

One can begin to hear here the beginning of a plea to consider the text of the traditional ballads and their variations as the intention and worthy literature of an agential poetic mind instead of conceptualizing ballads as an oral anti-literature or an anonymous crowdsourced-free-for-all. Contemporary scholars have abandoned reductive ideas of static texts and pristine originals for more fluid conceptions of textual birth and changing meanings through time. There is always that sense, of course, in which all communicative creation is social, the product and work of a past and present community, and yet one must still allow the speaker some agency. Acknowledging the social creation of the speaker does not allow the speaker to speak as if the entire communal—the speaker has his or her own vantage and intent, even if that vantage and intent is directed by social processes and community. A single author, and subsequent single authors acting on a text, can still embody with their art the collective voice of certain communities—not an entire nation of course which has often been the error in conceptualizing folk literature of all kinds—but certainly it approaches the viewpoints of certain segments of community voices. And it is these selective community-based viewpoints that we now turn.

With this in mind then, it might be fruitful to begin to examine the ballad's rhetorical origination as from an individual or at least within a much smaller group's point of view, the social purposes behind the creation or recreation of a ballad text as a bit of important rhetoric responding at the time of creation or substantial re-creation to particular exigence and situation

of a community or people group. Long reports that scholars such as Bronson and Fowler, Amzulescu and Wolf, Cecil Sharp, and Linda Dégh have taken steps toward new understandings of ballad texts, "not as representing haphazard corruptions of a once-virginal model, *but as reflecting the impact of personality* upon tradition"—this in both the creation and decisions surrounding the transmission of selected ballads (229 emphasis mine). For example, Mrs. Brown, instead of representing an ideal of the entire genre of traditional balladry or the lore of a nation, might equally be looked at as an individual utilizing the ballad idiom, knowingly or unknowingly, to forward her own social views and personal predilections. Long relays Bronson's recognition that Mrs. Brown's collection and perpetuation of balladry, for an apt example, operated on the following very personal tendencies: (1) "She was fond of the supernatural and marvelous themes," (2) "[as the wife of a minister] She avoided the sensational (incest, murder, adultery)" (3) "She was constantly improving on the diction of her texts, especially altering their endings to make them more dramatic [which Long then reminds us were not wholesale original creations but 'simply variations or improvements on a text given']" (231). Even in the textual selection and subtle reworkings of the traditional ballad singer then we can see a particular social vantage and individual personality shining through. What might we find then in the selection of foundational narrative elements in the stories, actions, and consequences which actually construct even the most ancient versions and their subsequent re-envisionings?

Instead of looking for what Diane Dugaw laments has been academically hegemonized as a "national literature" containing the "untainted, untutored genius of the English people," I aim to find in our selected ballads the vantage and message of agential poets (literate, pre-literate, or as Buchan demonstrated in the tradition of the Northeast, transitioning between the two), residing amongst a particular people group (71). I look for individual rhetorical intention in the

member poetics of a social community that are both reflecting and reacting to current social ideologies.

Removing the Veil of Ballad Definition to Expose a Mixed Poetic and Rhetoric

If we can allow for a more rhetorical conception of the ballad, it might also be fruitful to briefly examine the ballad's limiting definition as "folk narrative" (folk and narrative), which seems to also somewhat veil the dramatic and lyric elements within the ballad idiom. George Miller cites Child's entry into Johnson's Enclycopedia: "The word ballad in the English signifies a narrative song, a short tale in lyric verse" (4). He lists several other expert definitions which generally give the same idea: a popular story, a tale set to known music, a lyric narrative (4). For Miller, Professor Gummere offers the most recent definition (to the time), but in all of these, Miller rightly laments these definitions' lack of acknowledgement of the dramatic and lyric elements of the ballad. Gummere, for example and as noted above, surmises that when the ballad tends toward emotional outburst (lyric) or highlights dramatic elements (drama) that it is somehow a departure from "pure ballad" (5). Miller's crucial thesis is that while stressing the narrative form of the ballad, we have overlooked the importance of the dramatic elements in our definition of the form. He recognizes that we maintain the poetic distinctions of lyric, dramatic, and epic handed down from the time of Aristotle.[3] Miller follows this observation with Dr. Grosse's enlightened quip that "a pure lyric, epic, or dramatic poetry has never been realized anywhere" (6). For our purposes, the essential characteristic of the dramatic is, of course, dialogue. The essential of the epic is narrative action/description alongside of dialogue, while the essential of lyric is purported to be a subjective, personal emotive utterance. Miller

[3] In contrast to Miller's characterization, I would like to offer the observation of Jackson and Prins, gathered from Genette and others, that Aristotle does not actually mention "lyric" poetry in the sense that we have inherited it from later Romanticism. Genette renders Aristotle's actual genres as dithyrambic, epic, and a dramatic dialogue, yet do acknowledge with Miller the triparte system's later determinate steering of poetic theory

concludes that the key characteristic of the dramatic is the absence, "impersonality," of the author, where the characters are left to speak the action themselves (8). He says, "it is true, too, that the epic and the lyric make use of quoted speeches, but the long-winded addresses of the former and the subjective intention of the latter can hardly be called dialogue in a true sense" (8). One might take exceptions here: the former does not always contain "long-winded" addresses, and the latter might very well be called dialogue, as dialogue does not absolutely require the immediate presence of another in order to be construed as such.

As scholars, we tend to seek to distinguish folk art and elite art and also song from literature. Miller goes on to imply that no one doubts the division of poetry generally into two classes: poetry of the "schools" and those of the "folk"—artistic poetry and popular poetry. Indeed, Child also kept to these distinctions, at all times disparaging the "art" or "artistry" of literate content's intrusion into the "pure" supposedly objective ballad of the folk. Certainly, this distinction lives on in current academic minds which tend to view song at almost all times as a sort of popular folk event rather than a serious literature. The modern literary scholar has been effectively trained even to forget literature's connection with song. Scott Trudell, however, has recently offered us a timely reminder that much of what we study as textual Renaissance poetry was actually created as or in and among song. He writes:

> Much about the history of vocal music has, accordingly, been effaced . . . poetry to drama from Sidney to Milton were "unwritten"—in the sense that they ranged far beyond written language and in the sense that their music has been lost, ignored, and written out of literary history. (13)

Miller, like Child, considers the traditional ballad non-artistic, meaning unaffected by the more conspicuously literary art forms like the highly embellished and chock-full-of-rhetorical-

devices Renaissance court poetry: "It is safe to assume, then, that written literature has developed from oral literature, that folk-literature developed into artistic literature. If we would understand the ballad . . . we must go back to pure folk-poetry uninfluenced by artistry" (10). Again, we see this characterization of a spontaneous creation arising pure and innocent from the communal folk rather than a poetic creation of an individual with rhetorical "art."

Perhaps we have also been directed to look against what might be highly personal qualities of the ballad which may have been too often labeled as impersonal. Concerning what we might alternately call a lyric, or subjective, personal quality of the ballad (as opposed to the communal), Miller says "that it hardly needs pointing out that the popular ballad is strikingly impersonal"—one of its "distinguishing forms" (33). It is striking, however, that Buchan actually notes this impersonal aesthetic as a palpable quality of the personalities of the people of the cooperative Northeast: "Not a demonstrative race, they found their aesthetic form in the ballad, where emotions were objectified in near-ritualized terms and subordinated to the dramatic recounting of factual event. In this society the ballads served a cathartic function, for they provided a dramatic yet disciplined outlet to the emotions denied regular expression by the dour, canny, undemonstrative, northeastern folk" (16). If we take Buchan, who was born in Aberdeen, on his word about the character of the Northeast people—the objective and impersonal *appearing* qualities of the ballad were actually their kind of a *subjective* experience and therefore functioned as a kind of personal cathartic (lyric) release concordant with the individual personalities of their community. Perhaps, after all this time, the seemingly objective formulation of the "national" folk ballad is actually the subjective rhetorical creation of an emotive individual from the Northeast, one that emotes restrainedly and quite differently than say a Renaissance lyric poet of the court. Thus, I am offering here that the third person

narrative/dramatic stance of the traditional ballad was certainly not the result of communal dance turned spontaneous rhyme and therefore devoid of the subjective, but that the seemingly objective stance of the ballad is potentially a *subjective* artistic choice for a subjective, emotive rhetorical purpose.

I would also like us to see that this objective appearance is a rhetorical stance still available (though often overlooked) today. I ask us to consider then whether Child's conception of Mrs. Brown's kind of ballad as most representative of an entire nation's ancient poetry isn't too much a stretch. Mrs. Brown versions and performances may simply represent her particular individual or community predilections and her particular social circumstances. Other national examples, even the ancient ones, might be more or less overtly rhetorical, more or less magical, more or less artfully embellished, even more or less vulgar than those exhibited by Mrs. Brown.

With this in mind, I suggest then that the traditional ballad idiom might be more profitably viewed as a clever piece of local rhetoric and social action designed, as John Rodden might say, as "fictional stories that become part of our cultural fabric and social mythology" which can "both reflect and shape our lives" (149). Thus, the ballad is active not as reflecting roundly the culture of "a whole people" or nation but in the rhetorical poetics of creative and generative minds reacting to particular and local "folk" experiences, a rhetoric which also shapes the philosophy of the "folk" and their future selection of poetic rhetoric through an unavoidably discriminating outlook. In this way, I parallel Roland Greene's quest in lyric, desiring instead to understand how the ballad, as a dramatic, surreptitiously affective, narrative action "interacts with the world of affairs, creates structures of belief, becomes knowledge" (22).

Narrative as a Peculiar and Invitational Rhetoric

Keeping in mind the previously expressed understanding of the ballad form as more layered and encompassing than simple narration, we can now consider what persuasion narration itself is capable of accomplishing. John Rodden, quoted above, studies the differences between narration and argument; he asks "How do stories persuade us?" (165). He claims that almost all stories persuade us of something, that we enter a "world animated by values" and that the persuasion of story occurs "beyond the range of so-called didactic literature" (166). A simple, seemingly objective telling without direct moralizing or argumentation can be persuasive through its appeal to our imagination and by way of the "analogical extensions" auditor/listener creates between the woven motifs of the narrative world and his/her own. It appears as a natural human ability, approaching an involuntary ability, to seek to extend an experienced narrative's motifs and chains of ideas to our own interests, creating connections even between disparate times, language, or customs. The images and words of a given narrative may or may not be directly "analogous" to the listener's experience, "Nonetheless, the reader will draw some conclusions about the narrative as persuasive act by comparing its world with his own" (169). I'll suggest the key might lie in the way the human brain is hardwired in a constant search to locate meaning in language and gesture of all kinds--because survival often relies on this ability. For example, when we witness someone make a frantic motion across a street, we immediately begin to attempt to interpret the motion as containing meaning, and then we nearly simultaneously connect that interpretation to ourselves, "What does this person intend? What does this have to do with me? Should I do something now? What should I do?" This nearly automatic chain response, source-to-self, is dependent first on our interested attention. One might command attention without stimulating interest, as in repeated frantic signaling that appears to lead to no immediate concern. We might begin to ignore signals from such a person.

Thus, the symbolic chain requires 1) attention, 2) an expectation of received meaning, 3) an expectation that the meaning connects to the self in some way, 4) an attempt to discover the way in which the communication relates to the self. The pleasures of lyric poetry operate on somewhat the same model. Lyric purports to directly express the thoughts and emotion of the author/speaker, but the delight we find in lyric, as Roland Greene relates, is that "lovers, worshippers, and others may quote lyric discourse as though it were their own speech" (91). For Greene's generic distinction of lyric to be valid, we must 1) direct our attention to the lyric, 2) anticipate receiving meaning, 3) also anticipate that that meaning is not limited to the experience of the poet but also can pertain to ourselves, and 4) after locating relevant connection to our own experience, then desire to speak as if the poet's words were our own. The traditional ballad narrative appears to elicit the same type of cognitive response—we are primed to enter the ballad world, as fantastic or as far-off as its language or motifs may first appear, looking for ways our own lives participate in the actions and consequences of the narrative. We are led by those actions and consequences to experience the emotion and glean meaning from the conceptual connections between those actions and consequences. Rodden asks "Are stories arguments? Are narratives persuasive discourses?" and then replies: "Sometimes. If they progress primarily by conceptual chains or by motifs carrying ideas, we may posit, enthymematically, a tentative "yes." He also suggests that we pay attention to "how" that narrative moves us if we want to understand or actuate what about it is persuasive and what it may be subtly calling us to.

We might immediately see that the structure of the ballad narrative is indeed a linking of "conceptual chains" and "motifs carrying ideas." The very selection of specific characters, like Janet and "The Persë"; scenes and actions of any real or fictional moment in time, like Janet's rape and her decision to seek an abortive herb; the relationships established by those characters,

scenes, and actions, like the ongoing feud between Percy and Douglas; the levels of agential control the characters have over those environments, like the common soldiers fighting on behalf of Percy or Douglas; and the choices and actions within the scenes which create conceptual chains the auditor seeks to follow, like Janet's decision to rescue Tam Lin from the Fairy Elf Queen in order to have a father for her child--all of these, the listener mines for meanings that have some import to the self. The traditional ballad idiom of knights and ladies, heroic battles, and multiple paramours are particular motifs which carry ideas of anxieties of social status, romantic and familial relationships, mortality, and the reach of the feudal and monarchial (what we might currently conceptualize as social and governmental) control over lives. Though the narrative might contain fantastical elements, speak of ancient times, or present strange items, customs, or language, the content remains potentially persuasive through the way these nearly universal anxieties connect with our current selves.

It is no wonder then that Sidney could say that he was yet moved, and never failed to be, by the "old song of Percy and Douglas," even though it was set in "rude style" and "the dust and cobwebs of that uncivil age," and even though it was "sung by a blind crowder" (Sidney). He had no physical investment in these obscure figures' lives or outcomes; his personal investment was in the motifs which he could relate to his own experience, likely that of a noble Englishman who also "coincidently" believed in the social and moral benefits of fidelity to one's friend, the seemingly necessary bond of country and countryman, and yet a man that also lamented the tragic loss of otherwise lively and accomplished men to the indistinguishing hand of death in military conflict (Sidney). And as if to further demonstrate that link through time, the talented Sidney was one of those taken early by that same indistinguishing hand.

I want to offer here that the historical and cultural distance of the motifs might actually heighten opportunity for personal investment in a narrative by the very nature of that removal. A removed story disarms our didactic guards, as we may we initially think the story could contain little rhetoric or didactic that pertains directly to ourselves. We enter, sometimes merely out of the curiosity of the foreign or as a listener/reader who must take the role of what Peter J. Rabinowitz has theorized as "narrative audience" (130). Narrative audience, he maintains, is the fiction of themselves that the *audience* must become to inhabit, and receive the effect of, such a story. Focusing his attention on the work that the audience must do, he claims that we simultaneously inhabit both our own worlds and the entered world of the narrative. This we must do in order to create understanding of a text. For example, he offers that the ability to enjoy *Sherlock Holmes* requires that we are able to suspend our belief in Sherlock's fictional status enough to emotionally invest in his outcomes (fearing for him in situations of danger for instance and triumphing with him in his brilliance) and at the same time to keep one foot outside that fictional world in order to not believe the absurdity that we might literally have to lament the tragedy of a real murder or actually seek out Holmes for our real-life detective needs. We hold these things in suspension throughout our participation, our fictional selves required to take pleasure in the narrative and our real selves which we also require in order not be fooled into thinking the fiction a reality. The most profitable reading experience however occurs when the events are "treated as both "true" and "untrue" at the same time" (125). What I am proposing is that this requisite overlap of types of audience self may allow for the auspicious seepage of epistemological "truth" somewhere between these simultaneous holdings and tensions. In fantastical stories, Rabinowitz claims we must temporarily abandon some of our real beliefs and temporarily accept others in order to enjoy and glean meaning from the story. In order to derive

meaning and aesthetic pleasure from Janet rescuing her lover Tam Lin from the Elf Queen, we must temporarily believe in or accept the temporary fictional existence of Fairyland. Science fiction demands similar participation of an audience. It proceeds by connecting with what Aristotle identified as the probable even in the midst of the fantastical. Our attention secured, beliefs suspended, our didactic guards are down, and yet the habitual human response of searching for meaning that pertains to ourselves is ever at work decoding and applying the symbolic conceptual chains. This is the disarming work of the ballad's epideictic rhetoric.

Demonstrating more rhetorical intention with the audience, the ballads also parallel the rhetorical strategies outlined by Aristotle of effective ancient Greek tragedies. Ballads portray the mystic and mythological workings of the free potentials of fate: they let the stuff of life and the predictable and unpredictable consequence of choice unfold. As in Aristotle, the plot of the ballad speaks for itself in an eloquence that operates almost below the level of consciousness—to the communal association of a common sense and creation of place through artistic imitation:

> Now it is evident that the dramatic incidents must be treated from the same points of view as the dramatic speeches, when the object is to evoke the sense of pity, fear, importance, or probability. The only difference is that the incidents should speak for themselves without verbal exposition. (Poetics)

A tragic telling is said to be grounded within the potentials of the *listener's* misfortune. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle tells us that "those who are utterly ruined do not feel pity" because "they think there is nothing left for them to suffer," and those who are enormously happy, with "insolent pride," likewise think it "not possible to experience evil" (139). In this way, the listener limits the narrative's influence by being unable to envision themselves as experiencers of tragic incidents no matter the craftwork of the author. For most however, tragic foreshadowing

in the beginning of the narrative allows the narrative to immediately connect with the possible destruction of the listener's good/goods, as represented through the probable experience in and with details that feel directly lived. For example, in "Tam Lin," a commonplace announces the tragic foreshadowing surrounding the threat to Janet's virginity and, indeed, also her social status in a culture which values female chastity and trades these sanctified female bodies in patriarchal marital/financial arrangements. This foreshadowing and the deciphering of the commonplace allows also for audience participation within the unfolding and meaning making of the plot. With such ancient and distinguishable rhetorical features constructing the text, and the additional cultural allowance of reusing melodies, much of the art and rhetoric of the ballad poet involved choosing which story to tell and for what purpose.

Contriving a Rhetorical Poetic Gaze

Study of the traditional ballad directs us toward important rhetorical strategies useful for all sorts of narration, even the sorts required to make traditional academic arguments both palatable, enticing, and exigent to audiences. This section will serve briefly to outline a few of these rhetorical strategies. Firstly, I will argue that the generally third-person narrative telling of the ballad is not only an aesthetic/poetic choice but also an available means of persuasion. Secondly, I point out additional narrative strategies utilized in the ballad idiom which closely parallel those given as effective for persuasion in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. Thirdly, I suggest that the communal re-creation seen in the ballad tradition can be viewed as alterations necessary to avoid communicative limitations and to continue to connect a story with an audience bound in time and culture. Lastly, I urge us to view the ballad idiom as a careful selection of narrative resources for a particularly selected *telos*.

While large portions of current popular song lyric is crafted in the first or second person, the traditional ballad's generally dispassionate third-person narrative style works to bring an objective, journalistic credibility to the selected storyline. The third-person narrative, instead of the first or second person, is a clever choice for a text with any kind of rhetorical intention. The third-person masquerades as story that could have little to do with the author/speaker of the narrative or even with the audience and only involves both with act of the telling. It appears to dislocate the rhetorical purposes of the speaker. Simultaneously, it creates a small, triangulated, involved community of narrator, listener, and the characters of the story. A third-person narrative at first appears to be a story about others. However, since the speaker has chosen to tell someone else's story, the listener may very well immediately begin to wonder "why are you telling me this story?" and might also begin to wonder what this story might have to do with the speaker or with himself/herself, or even with the relationship between them. In this way, the listener may be *more* primed to participate in an involved action of discovery than in a first or second-person telling where the connection between speaker and listener is more obvious or where the didactic content is overt. On the whole then, the ballad appears to tell, not the narrator's story, but someone else's, and we might also say that this works to initially mask the appearance of any personal messages, ideologies, or arguments of the speaker.

The usual mode of third-person narration in the ballad generally removes the meddling of a consequence-absorbing or lecturing narrator presence, whose interference might weaken what *appears* to be the direct causal potentials between personal choice, action, and the elements of fate and social structures. This is important for my argument that much of the rhetorical intention of the ballad is held primarily in the selection and arrangement of these narrative actions—within the plot itself. Indications of judgments are generally not given by the narrator

but are left to the mouths of the characters, which also work to establish the choice-creates-character continuum of discovery. Emotions are also indicated through actions and are not stated explicitly, also limiting the narrative distance between audience and story. For example, we are not directly told by the narrator that Janet is worried or stressed by her pregnancy or even that she is pregnant. Instead, in Child's variant "A," we are made to visualize her as "green as onie glass" and decipher that she is pregnant, and then we witness her telling an old knight, worried that he or the other knights of her father's court might get the blame, "Hand your tongue, ye auld fac'd knight . . . Faither my bairn on whom I will, I'll father nane on thee." Without narrator comment, Janet simply "kirts her kirtle" again and goes back to pluck at Carterhaugh, which plucking summons Tam Lin. He innocently asks: "Why pu's thou the rose, Janet, / Amang the groves sae green, / And a' to kill the bonie babe / That we gat us between?" This narrative style parallels Aristotle's directions in the *Rhetoric* for creating useful affect in narration for distinctly rhetorical purposes; for he says that a master story-teller will not tell their audience what emotion the character is experiencing, but instead will narrate actions which demonstrate emotion through symbols, as extreme sorrow is indicated in Homer: "Thus she spoke, and the old nurse covered her face with her hands" (241). He says that "Aeschines says of Cratylus, that he was hissing and violently shaking his hands; for these things are persuasive since they are indications [*symbola*] that the audience knows of those things they do not know" (241). Rather than expose or draw attention to the act of narration or the narrator or the narrator's purposes in narration, in the traditional ballad idiom the actions themselves are emotional symbols which the audience interprets, continuing the affective and cognitive experience of direct audience-to-character interactive.

The tradition of the ballad, through multiple variations of the same song, also demonstrates to us the limitations to persuasion that foreign customs and language impose on a conceptual chain—that there is a limitation to how removed the language is or how removed the custom is from our own abilities to comprehend and share in the experience, which of course are crucial abilities necessary to any persuasive act. If the auditor is distanced and cannot find a personally relatable entrance into the world or understand the motifs or language which carry the conceptual chains, the persuasive ability and interest is lessened or lost altogether. If, as Rabinowitiz also notes, "historically or culturally distant texts are hard to understand, it is often precisely because we do not possess the knowledge required to join the authorial audience" (127). The ballad tradition has solved some of these problems by way of communal recreation, the changes made by subsequent performers of each ballad. The performers vary word choice, dialect, details of names and place, or even whole plot episodes over many re-tellings, often spanning centuries, in order to continue to create relevant connections between an older storyline and a current audience. These changes can be subtle or nearly create an entirely different story depending on the rhetorical needs or simply the memory of the performer.

I have also previously mentioned that the selection of these elements craft and reveal a viewpoint (a social vantage) around which the story revolves—this may reveal more of the rhetorical purpose of the author than we have previously credited. Because the author chose the traditional ballad ethos as a medium for utterance or because the ballad form is characteristic of certain aesthetic qualities does not entail that an individual author did not craft through individual rhetorical intent or for a specific impact. Because the author is not typically a first-person narrative presence *inside* the ballad does not, of course, grant us the license to imply that the individual author is not a narrative presence (as in Child's long-lived characterization "the

narrator counts for nothing"), but only reveals that the author has made quite conscious resource decisions in the construction or alteration of the literature. The author has selected the "resources," as James Phelan might say, of the traditional ballad idiom in order to reach the audience.

The "Ballad of Chevy Chase" might tentatively be labeled a mini-epic form, a narrative with dramatic dialogue. This ballad and its sister ballad, "The Battle of Otterburn," depict the actions and speech surrounding a deadly skirmish between the English and the Scottish. This event generated ballad re-envisionings which variously cast the actions and speech in interpretations which alternately favor the English on the one hand and the Scottish in another. With this context in mind, obviously, this ballad's narrative is not so removed from the subjective author (original or later), or as impersonal as we have so long pretended. It only has the *appearance* of distance from the author, especially to a more removed or modern audience with little ideological investment in the actual historical interests which created and/or re-worked the narrative. This ballad, while relaying the story of a physical and otherwise historically recorded battle, was itself, in its origination and subsequent modification, an acute sight of ideological battle, the various versions recording the investments, gazes, and purposes of the various historical singers. Through this sort of "lyric possession," any particular vantage point of an author and any ideological messages that the vantage carries can have lasting influence. While the details of the actual historical battle of Otterburn are now rarely encountered even by students of history, the ballad's narrative has been widely retained in English and Scottish popular culture through the powers of poetic memory, overshadowing, even overwriting, the actual events and historical narratives of the battle.

CHAPTER 2: BUILDING THE BALLAD WORLD

Creating Poetic Worlds: "The Hunting of the Cheviot" or "The Battle of Otterburn"

The ballad offers more to scholars when viewed as a rhetorical poetic utilizing collective understandings and activities to engage with and question social norms and as an agential epideictic helping to shape cultural ideologies. In this section, I demonstrate the competing authorial vantages of the ballads which took advantage of the historical event of the battle of Otterburn, creating narratives which seed particular social messages. I argue these ballads, "The Hunting of the Cheviot" in particular, create poetic worlds in which listeners are led to experience a need for social change concerning the effects of aristocracy and feudal mentalities, which are imaged in the stories as especially harmful to the lower classes. Below, I walk us through a comparative analysis of these ballad variants, necessary to demonstrate that they are foundationally constructed with a particular social argument in mind and through a particular ethical gaze which cannot be extracted or wished away from the ballad. They display social contestation not only between the variants (in controlling the social understanding of the battle), but they also contest the broader culture, not only through direct narrator commentary, but more importantly through the selection of narrative elements alone. In short, the story itself is selected and pieced to example this social argument.

Child confirms that "The Hunting of the Cheviot" (Child 162) and "The Battle of Otterburn" (Child 161) were both "founded upon the same occurrence," on August 19th, 1388, with "The Hunting of the Cheviot" believed to be the later of the two envisionings. "The Hunting of the Cheviot" in particular appears confused about the date, characters, and results of the battle--the historical Henry Percy, the Earl of Northumberland was not present at the skirmish of 1388. In the historical account, Percy's two sons, Henry "Hotspur" and Ralph, were

both captured by the Scotts; Ralph was wounded but neither man lost his life. The "Hunting of the Cheviot" also includes anachronistic end comments about the bravery of Douglas and Percy placed in the mouths of Henry IV and James of Scotland. Neither king reigned in 1388, instead ruling a decade and almost three decades after respectively. James Tait gives us a very good reason for the various tellings of the ballads—because both sides claimed they won. And Froissart's history of the battle says it was "the best fought and severest of all the battles I have related"; the events were so "romantic" that they entered the popular imagination with versions by both the Scotts and the English (Tait).

For example, "The Battle of Otterburn" begins with an incident purposefully omitted in "The Hunting of the Cheviot," that of the "Dowghtye Dowglasse"'s decision to descend into England to raid:

Yt fell abowght the Lamasse tyde,
Whan husbondes wynnes ther haye,
The dowghtye Dowglasse bowynd hym to ryde,
In Ynglond to take a praye. (1)

After burning Northumberland, and full of loot from harrying "Bamborowe schyre," the Scots made plans to raid "Newe Castell" where "Syr Henry Persay laye." The forces meet at "Oterborne" but the focus of all versions of the ballad story is on the personal meeting of the two great aristocrats. The author claims forty thousand Scots fought. Percy is said to have brought seven standards (nine thousand men) with him and he is early made to prophesy their deaths:

The Perssy cam byfore hys oste,
Wych was ever a gentyll knight:
Vpon the Dowglas lowed can he crye,

I wyll holde that I haue hyght.

For thou haste brente Northomberlonde,

And done me grete envye;

For thys trespasse thou hast me done,

The toue of vs schall dye (29-30)

It is important to note the subtle use of epitaph and description which signals the intent of the author to laud *both* men, not simply treat one as an unworthy scoundrel. The clear intent is to glorify the efforts of both, something which might not have been done by someone directly affected by the raids and so signals a later, already distanced purpose for the story. Percy is then told by another that his father and another baron and all his host wishes to attend to the fight tomorrow. Percy graciously declines this offer saying that his "trowth" is to the "Skottysh knight" to fight him as is and that Douglas would call him a coward. He is worried that "ever my manhood schulde be reprovyd" by a Scot, so he instead orders the archers to fire and the minstrels to sing their war songs (42). The arrows fly on both sides, and at this point in Child's "A" the narrator does intrude the *enargeia* by boasting "As I haue tolde yow right" and begins calling one side "Owr Yunglyssh men." This invites the listener to a distinct vantage point of the battle. At stanza fifty, "The Perse and the Dowglas mette" somehow in the din of battle; recognizing each other, they spar with swords until Percy kills Douglas. We are given a list of the "dowghty" Scots that died. In this version, the English are clearly victorious, only eighteen of forty thousand Scots survived the English onslaught. We also get a list of the English knights; of the nine thousand, five hundred survive, and a clearly affective detail that in the morning, the widows came to take away their dead. Oddly, Percy is said to be taken prisoner, by the eighteen

we presume, and was later traded back for "Syr Hewe Mougomery." The ballad ends by requesting that we all pray to Jesus that Percy makes heaven, "For he was a gentyll knight"—evidently we are meant to appreciate Percy's bravery and honorable "trowth" in the face of so many and fierce Scots, and yet for some reason he needs our prayers to make sure his action of killing Douglas was the right one, for "so gentle a knight." I would like us to recognize the focus on heroic concepts like loyalty, manhood, and oaths, the clearly English authorial vantage yet the staging which allows us to view both sides as somehow belonging to the audience, and the end request for prayers which appear to also make some judgment on the actions of the characters to which the audience is invited to consider.

In the "B" variant of "The Battle of Otterburn," it is still Douglas that raids England but it is a small servant boy who served one of Douglas's family members that takes out a pen knife and murders him after the boy is threatened with hanging if his report that the English are coming turns false. This sort of imaging of treacherous conduct might have some source in the historical account told by Froissart and recounted to us by Tait which relates that Percy's host came upon the Scots during their dinner hour and they therefore fought "not completely armed" (Tait). After Douglas is killed, Percy meets Sir Hugh Montgomery in battle and yields to him after Montgomery discloses himself. In this variant, it is Montgomery instead who is the "courteous knight," who rather than killing Percy, more graciously leads him away captive to await the ransom due a brave knight.

The "C" variant is the one which appears in the *Scotch Ballads, Materials for Border Minstrelsy* collated by Walter Scott. In this variant, Douglas comes directly to Percy's castle and requests a spar. Percy is felled from his horse by the Scottish spear and then claims that if the gentle kinghts were fighting on the ground that he would have won. He tells Douglas to meet

him in Otterburn in three days for a rematch and allows that Douglas can call him "A fause lord" or a "coward" if he doesn't show. Clearly all of these variants are meant to showcase the chivalrous conduct of feudal knights and their devoted followers. The two meet again after Douglas has a dream that a "dead man won the fight." Percy then wounds Douglas who retreats and tells his nephew, Hugh Montgomery, to bury him beneath the "blooming brier, / And never let a mortal ken / A kindly Scot lyes here" and orders him to keep the battle going by shouting the good name of Douglas. By daylight the "mony gallant Englishman" rout the Scots. Montgomery and Percy meet and "swakked their swords till sair they swat, / And the blood ran down like rain," a memorable image or formulaic commonplace repeated in all three variants and interestingly enough in the versions of the "The Hunting of the Cheviot" as well. Percy yields when Montgomery reveals himself. It is Montgomery who this time treats him with "mickle courtesy," but of course does go on to kill the rest of the English host: "He left not an Englishman on the field . . .That he hadna either killd or taen / Ere his heart's blood was cauld" (40).

The cause of the battle changes drastically in "The Hunting of the Cheviot," with Percy vowing he will go "hunte" in Cheviot in spite of the mighty Douglas's warning not to sport there. The days of the vows are the same three mentioned in the "C" variant of "The Battle of Otterburn," however, one wonders whether the motive of hunting "hartes" was added as a conflation of the type of raiding or hunting that was to be accomplished, since these versions certainly center around the rhetoric of noble pride and the waste of both good knights and their loyal lower class devotees. Douglas then promises to "let [hinder] that hontyng yf that I may" (2). With a hundred deer dead, "twenty hondrith spear-men good" then appear to face fifteen hundred English archers. Douglas, angry about the deer, again vows prophetically "therfor the

ton of vs shall de this day," but then, curiously, expresses concern that all these other men should die (17). I am suggesting that this signals the rhetorical intention of the narrative—to highlight, and allow the listener to experience, the waste of life which accompanies prideful, aristocratic feuds. In this version, Douglas is now the courteous knight who suggests a personal battle of substitution, a contest of just himself and Percy, instead of the entire hosts. Then, as if to draw attention to feudal culture which would not allow a footsoldier's honor to carry home the moral baggage of such a substitution, the narrator has a poor squire of the land, Richard Witherington, speak up: "neuer" will he "se my captayne fight on a fylde, / and stande my selffe and loocke on" (23). The ethical gaze of this version continues directed to the loss of innocent men in a skirmish of two headstrong, albeit, epicly portrayed noblemen. At this point the narrator abruptly steps in to call it a "dredfull day" and to assure us that more of the tale is coming. Once again, we have the hand-to-hand combat of the great men and the commonplace formula of blood raining from swords. Douglas tells Percy that if he yields, James the King of Scotland will give him an earl's wages because he is the "manfullyste man" he has ever sparred with. Percy gloats that he told him before that he would never yield. Then out of nowhere, an arrow pierces Douglas in the breast, plunging "thorowe lyvar and longës bathe" (37). At the death, Percy returns a gentle nobleman's complement to Douglas and claims that to have saved his life he would have "partyde with my lands for yers thre / For a better man, of hart nare of hande, was nat in all the north contrë" (39). In this version, it is Montgomery who then rides through fierce arrows to sink his spear straight through Percy. The narrator once again intrudes the scene to tell us that "Towe bettar captayns wear nat in Cristiantë" (43). To finish off the threads of honor, loyalty, and waste, an English archer, seeing Percy die, sends an arrow through Montgomery, but the battle rages on. Sticking close to our suggested reading, we are told no one would flee but stood

by their dead leaders "Heawyng on yche other" all night long (47). Of the hosts, seventy-three English archers lived and fifty-five Scottish. The narrator then rues the unborn children of the dead, we are given a list of the nobles who died, and we are also told about a brave man who fought upon his knees when his legs were gone (a commonplace found in other ballads which signals loyal devotion in battle). Word gets back to both kings. "Kyng Harry" says he has a hundred men as good as Percy, but vows, according to theme, to avenge his death. We are told that the "battell of Hombylldown" was later fought for Percy's sake and the narrator goes on to say that "Old men" still know of the place of Otterburn and that since this skirmish began the blood still runs "as the reane doys in the stret" in the "Marche-partës" (67). While engaging in heroic affective, the narrative gaze is toward pity for the slain in these battles, specifically the huge loss of common life continuing to fight and die in order to avenge aristocratic pride.

Child's "B" variant, "Chevy Chase," from Percy's manuscript, tells a nearly similar story with some expansion on the hunting motif—greyhounds are added to the chase with their romantic echoes ringing through the woods. Most die as before, but what is interesting in this version is the ending the narrator amends which quite directly reveals the purpose of his telling: "God saue our king, and blesse this land / with plenty, ioy, and peace, / And grant henceforth that foule debate / twixt noble men may ceaze!" (64). Child oft repeats that he believes almost all of these sort of first person narrative intrusions into the dramatic narrative to be later corruptions of an older more simple telling, but I argue that the sustained vantage point of the narrative and purposeful selection of events and characters throughout these ballad variants (not just the direct first person, obviously rhetorical narrator intrusions) also have individual rhetorical intent, which could never be successfully excised to reveal an objective, communal, non-artistic, non-rhetorical original. The story itself is wholly constructed out of that rhetorical intent.

In short, running through all these ballad variants, we see the ideological and rhetorical battleground of a culture seeking to impute blame to a foundational element of its social system and perhaps with the likely goal of encouraging a view towards social change. These ballads are not stories of a historical battle so much as they are stories about the cost of aristocratic feuds. The plot is structured to promote and inculcate a social ideology which can acknowledge the wasteful outcomes of feudal battle culture while still allowing the audience to participate in the accustomed romanticism of heroic culture.

A Rhetoric of Poetic Ideology

This section establishes that ballad poetics can work to shape the ground of our experiences, understandings, and ideologies. In order to understand the ballad as a site of contestation rather than simply a communal narrative affirming cultural standards, we must understand that poetics can work to create new and alter existing realities, how we view and interpret ourselves, our surroundings, and the actions which occur in those surroundings. We must accept that the ballad accomplishes an ideological work, a social action. Here we will return to Sidney:

> Only the poet . . . lifted up with the vigor of his [her] own invention . . . in making things either better than nature brings forth, or, quite anew, forms such as never were in nature . . . not enclosed within the narrow warrants of her gifts, but freely ranging within the zodiac of his [her] own wit . . . [nature's] world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden."

Since Aristotle, poetics have often been looked upon as *mimesis*, a "representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth"; Sidney, likewise, calls poesy "an art of imitation," (Sidney) because it feigns representation of a certain something else by means of linguistic symbolization. But Sidney, at

some points, steps a good bit further than the concept of *mimesis* in his *Defence*. He repeatedly returns to an older Greek idea, one still pregnant in the lexis because the etymological root of "poet" is *poiein*, "to make." In the quotation which began this thesis, Sidney goes so far as to say that the poet even makes themselves: "beeing indeed makers of themselves." The poet, in this interpretation, is much more than an imitator; the poet is a Maker, a creator of something new, even a new self. Through this lens, the poet does more than delight and teach, the poet creates new ideas, new mental connections, new ways of seeing, in essence helps creates a new social reality. It is a main point of Sidney's treatise to work to eradicate a widespread understanding of poetry as mere versification for entertainment's sake and offer the real work of poetics. Verse, he insists, is "but an ornament and no cause to poetry" (Sidney). Generally, he defines the poetic process as "that feigning notable images of virtues, vices, or what else, with that delightful teaching," and in this way keeps close to the *mimesis* of Aristotle—the poet can "yield to the powers of the mind an image of that whereof the philosopher bestows but a wordish description, which doth neither strike, pierce, nor possess the sight of the soul so much as that other doth" (Sidney). But we are concerned here with the way the poet might be seen as *both* the philosopher who seeks to establish a ground of reality and the representor of that reality, in the potential that the poetic act works to create what can later appear as a seemingly objective kind of knowledge about ourselves and our world. Poetry understood as a linguistic representation, *mimesis,* presents as an end product in a linear process: the final creation of a memorable, moving image which represents a prior idea or knowledge. But surely the process is far more generative and recursive than this—that poetic creation is also knowledge creation, not simply as Sidney also cogently argues, the most potent form of knowledge dissemination. Sidney argues that the reasoner *requires* poetry because the minds of men must somehow 1) be enticed to

actively entertain propositions, 2) to understand obscure or difficult propositions, and 3) to remember or want to remember those propositions, if the desired end of the reasoner is to be realized—the actual praxis or lived activity of such reasoning. As he puts it, "Where the philosophers, as they scorn to delight, so must they be content little to move" (Sidney). His seminal point is essentially that reasoning is impotent without being nested within the practice of poetics. Memory is "the only treasurer of knowledge" and "words which are fittest for memory are likewise most convenient for knowledge" (Sidney). He doesn't mean that one must use rhyme or verse to convince poetically, but rather that one must poetically *create mental ideas* in words and images that delight enough to be entertained and, quite importantly, remembered. Rhyme, verse, and device can be used as aids but they are not the meat of poetics, which is why Sidney laments that his contemporary versifiers have no "poetical sinews in them" (Sidney). He recommends imagining placing their verse into prose in order to check it for any new understanding it conveys. He decries the stringing of "tinkling" words together which have little reason. It is in discussions like this that Sidney steps to grasp the philosophic activity of the poet, not simply the poetic *mimesis* (representation or imitation) of some prior philosophic activity which has already established the ground for knowledge, interpretation, or understanding of an action or a thing. What Sidney is looking for is not only words that create mental images, delight or are memorable, but words that appear to provide the mind a dwelling place from which new understandings are birthed, either completely new ways of seeing which lead to new understandings and new mental relationships or else novel ways of continuing an exploration of held understandings.

Sidney states that Plato's conception of poetic steps philosophically further than his, but the germs of poetically generated philosophy are all here in Sidney anyway. Sidney relates the

activity of the poet to the activity of the historian: “And do they not know that a tragedy is tied to the laws of poesy, and not of history; not bound to follow the story, but having liberty either to feign a quite new matter, or to frame the history to the most tragical convenience?” (Sidney). But here we have a quite different kind of feigning—this feigning is not an imitation (a mere mimesis) of something actual, but rather an act which creates or manipulates the perception of something which may or may not even have prior existence. And we could also say that any imitation is an act of new creation as well, as it never imitates a completely objective original but rather creates a new, curated representation which vies against and among others (like the ballad variants stemming from the historical Battle of Otterburn) as a mental space from which to conduct further understanding. Poetics create a new dwelling space within the mind from which cognition conducts business with both prior and future experiences. Poetry, and all good rhetoric as well, is about the business of creating and then propagating mental spaces that people choose to promote above others, remember, and dwell within as if a part of themselves. In opposition to Plato, Sidney, following Augustine, simply relies on the poetically established ideologies of Christianity to accomplish what he considers the beginning of these truth making activities. In our example above, the author/s of “Chevy Chase” uses poetic world-making to ideologically establish or promote an understanding in the audience that the custom of feudal loyalty is not *only* heroic but it is also wasteful of human life.

CHAPTER 3: THE BALLAD AS SOCIAL ACTION

Ballad Protesting

In his study on lyric, Jonathan Culler claims that "[l]yric can be a form of social action which contributes to the construction of a world and works to resists other forms of world-making carried out by instrumental rationality and reified common sense" (Culler 8). I am suggesting here that the ballad, as a slightly alternative poetic form, has been at work in the same way (I say slightly in remembrance of our discussion concerning the overlap of poetic theoretical distinctions, epic, drama, lyric within in the ballad form). There have been a few studies which have examined the social action of the traditional ballad. In her 1976 thesis entitled, "The Romantic and Tragic Ballads: Popular Dream for an Egalitarian Society?," Shirlee Alcinda McGuire argues that the ballads were a protest literature "against the conservative and elitist attitudes of courtly literature and of the aristocratic audience which fostered it" (2). She argues that most of the ballad stories are actions speaking against "social prejudice, the customs of inheritance, the stigma of unwed motherhood, and infidelity," that they "allude to a popular desire that distinctions be leveled within the broad social spectrum" (5). In particular, she takes up the subject of the pastourelle, suggesting that many of the romantic ballads criticize the elite fetishized objectification, seduction, and rape of women, especially those of the lower classes. Indeed, many of the ballads do present the dire consequences of sexual activity, and especially pregnancy, to those acting outside of socially sanctioned roles. Some of them address tales which extend the sanction of marriages initiated by individual choice to both the nobility and the lower classes. They also appear to encourage romantic love across these social boundaries. There is much in the romantics ballads that deal with tales surrounding the interaction of love, lust, property, social status, and marriage: parents (especially mothers) denying their offspring

their choice of lover ("Clyde Waters"), male suitors impregnating socially vulnerable women ("Child Waters," "The Cruel Mother," et al.), the anxieties surrounding matches of highland men and lowland women (of which David Buchan designates a whole group of its own), and the anxieties of arranged noble marriages and inheritance, "the romantic attachment between man and woman as a transaction between families" (Buchan 449). As Buchan says, "the folk did not sing about the folk," they sang about the interactions of, and sometimes of their own social and economic interactions with, the nobility, but the poetic gaze (or authorial vantage) of these ballads is constructed against the social structures that be (81). If we want to fully understand the ballad as a genre, we should pay attention to that constructed gaze.

Jean-Paul Sarte, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida have all conceptualized gaze as a particular stance, which could be otherwise, from which an individual or a group determines meaning through sense perceptions. Gaze is therefore a subjective, psychologically dependent sense-based phenomenon which masks itself, even to the viewer, as an objective reality. They theorize that we experience, determine, and believe from inside a particular social vantage, and this is often the one that has been socially privileged above other potentials. In their work with visual images, for example, Sturken and Cartwright have more recently stressed that gaze is of foundational importance in systems of power and in our very ways of knowing. They review that gaze (*"le regard"* to the French theorists) is not the actual looking but about the ideological connections inhabited and made through that looking, the "viewing relationship characteristic of a particular set of social circumstances" (76). Laura Mulvey's work with film, for example, theorized a male gaze at work in the camera techniques and production of Hollywood film which privileged male sensual pleasure and voyeurism, simultaneously defining powerless roles for real women to mirror and also precluding them from seeing the potential power of a privileged and

ideologically altering female cinematic gaze. One can see this gaze as a type of Foucault's "discourse" which determines power relations by first determining what counts as knowledge and then strengthens those knowledges as they are repeated and further validated through that repetition. Jean R. Freedman postulates that the ballad's gaze is often from a position of conflict with existing social structure. Far from thinking the ballad demonstrates the idea of a whole people, she thinks conflict is the ballad's central feature: "[to] the contrary," she says, "the world that the ballads present is anything but a place of harmony and shared ideas. It is 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). She maintains that like the Greek tragedies, the ballads show "unshared values" (4). Sometimes they show alternative choices or outcomes, but often they simply contest by merely airing the consequence of a particular social structure. "Tam Lin," she says, works inside a fantastical universe to portray an area outside of the patriarchy where "the action is controlled by women" (11). "Tam Lin" is an "inversion ballad"—it "presents a world in which women hold both material and spiritual power, a world where men are fairly helpless creatures who look on while powerful females—Janet and the Queen of Elfinland—perform the action" (10). Following this interpretation of the ballad, the story of "Tam Lin" has been co-opted by modern feminists as demonstrating one of the few examples of true female agency in fairytales. Martha Hixon (because of the ballad's happy ending) thinks the same and demonstrates that the tale was picked up by female authors of juvenile literature in the 1970s and 1980s with the goal of promoting strong female characters to young girls (78). What is striking about these later pieces of literature however is the way Janet's sexual activity, her pregnancy, attempted abortion and rape – the essential items of the plot of the traditional ballad, are completely removed or reworked to the point of being trite, as if

today's young ladies don't need to worry about these things anymore. My own reading of "Tam Lin" is not so optimistic, but I do agree with Freedman that the ballad exists to contest rather than simply delight, and that the fantastical universe is one part of the author's ability to rhetorically and poetically manipulate toward social ideologies outside of the oppressive social paradigms affecting women and their sexuality.

As McGuire aptly points out, in the tragic ballad, often the only solution to the ballad's social and sexual anxieties is death: over and over the ballads portray deaths as the "realistic answers to what happens in problems of love that are complicated by illicit sex or social prejudice" (32). In "Clyde Waters" for example both lovers are drowned by decisions and actions directly related to their mothers' refusal to sanction their romantic relationship. The ballads also privilege romantic love across social boundary; in some examples, "they imply that lovers who work from high and worthy motives will resolve their problems successfully" (McGuire 32). Yet, there is also a prevailing theme among the romantic ballads of women who are forced by their existing social circumstances to demonstrate unearthly, impossible, or foolish loyalty (much like the feudal loyalty exampled in "Chevy Chase"), often in dire or exceedingly unfair circumstances, in order to win their husbands, rise in social rank, or simply survive. "Tam Lin," I offer, is better seen as one of these.

"Tam Lin"—Constructing a Poetic Gaze at Vulnerable Sexuality

"Tam Lin" and many other romantic ballads create poetic worlds which direct audience attention to consider the limited recourse available to females within a social hegemony that privileges elite male sexual dominance and overlooks its violence. As previously mentioned, it is important to remember that "Tam Lin" begins with a direct, second-person, narrator warning not to go to Carterhaugh: "O I forbid, you maidens a'. . . for young Tam Lin is there." This is a

commonplace signaling that the ballad will be about a young woman losing her virginity or becoming pregnant in untenable social circumstances and attuning the audience to interpret the narrative according to those themes. Janet begins the tale with the action of "kilting" her "green kirtle." Martinez Garcia and Ana Belén have demonstrated this as a kind of transition formula used to introduce a sudden plot change and also to "construct an image of powerful women" within the ballad (175). Their idea is that ballad formulas, through repetition, "become ingrained in people's minds"—in this case, that an idea of female agency is represented as a mental image associated figuratively with women's clothing. The adjustment to hair or attire signals that a woman is about to "go somewhere" both physically and psychologically; these are signals that women are "making their own decisions" (184). They also tell us that women who are able to "avoid being deserted by their lover and who manage to enforce a beneficial marriage are, for example, the heroines of the ballads "The False Lover Won Back," "Child Waters," and "Rose the Red and the White Lily" (184-185). The disturbing part of these stories, however, is that often the "lover" is also a rapist and the heroine is faced with little social alternative when socially exposed as having engaged in sex out of wedlock. I suggest the common character denominator in these stories is a self-centered or violent man who must be transformed by a woman's supernatural loyalty into something that she can depend upon to safeguard her survival and that of her child. In spite of feminist scholars' desire to see "Tam Lin" as a feminist tale, all of these ballads end with the heroine securing a husband out of what began as an act of violence. Child's "A" has the warning sent out to all maidens (so we are made to understand the enchanted knight, "Tam Lin," as a repeat sexual offender) but this version is missing an explicit rape scene. Child's "B" and "C" variants are likewise. However, Child's "D", a North Country version

procured from a recitation by an old woman includes these lines which match the introductory warning:

> He took her by the milk-white hand,
>
> And by the grass green sleeve,
>
> And laid her low down on the flowers,
>
> *At her he asked no leave.*
>
> The lady blushed, and *sourly frowned*,
>
> And *she did think great shame*:
>
> Says, "If you are a gentleman,
>
> You will tell me your name" (7-8 emphasis mine)

Here, as well as in the introductory warnings of the others, a rape is indicted, this time strictly limiting the action to a nonconsensual act: "At her he asked no leave." This action then brings the woman "great shame." The woman's remaining remedy is to get the rapist to reveal his name in order to provide a future opportunity to socially legitimize the event. This might be viewed as our heroine's attempt at what were referred to in Renaissance England and Scotland as spousals or irregular marriages. Arthur McGee has this to say about marriages in Early Modern England:

> In Shakespeare's time spousals could be either *de futuro* or *de praesenti*. The spousal *de futuro* was a promise to marry at a future date not necessarily specified, which was binding in so far as one party could apply to the ecclesiastical court to have the errant spouse brought to the altar unless good reason for the voiding the contract could be produced, and if marriage was anticipated the betrothal was automatically converted into an irregular which became "perfect" if marriage with a priest officiating then followed.

> On the other hand the betrothal *de praesenti* was an irregular marriage from the time it was entered into, although according to the strict letter of the couple were not allowed intercourse. (47)

In order to form a temporary sort of binding marriage, all that was needed in the interim was a verbal agreement between the two parties, which later could be somehow proven (a shaky business indeed) and then for the agreement to be "perfected" at some date by a church marriage. Josephine Roberts has forwarded that young Lady Mary Wroth may have believed that she had a *de praesenti* marriage with William Herbert, this being the reason she tried to refuse Robert Wroth (Hughes). Mary Wroth's struggles with attempting to convince Pembroke to marry her helped produce her pivotal work, *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania,* though they failed to make Pembroke make good, even after she birthed him two illegitimate children--proving that these sort of after-the-fact betrothal accomplishments eluded even the most exceptional of women. Janet, however, does eventually get her man, and for this she is lauded a heroine. Child's "D" does continue with what appears to be a hint of one of these spoken betrothals. When Margaret asks his name, he tells her all of them, first he was called Jack, then John, and since at the fairy court, "Tomlin." In this version, Margaret is told immediately after the sexual act, "So do not pluck that flower, lady, / That has these pimples grey; / They would destroy the bonny babe / that we've got in our play." He then tells her that he was the "Laird of Foulis's son," heir of the land, and gives her directions on how to rescue him. In "G", from Buchan's manuscripts, we get the introductory warning and also this rape passage which is yet rendered as "love":

> He's taen her by the milk-white hand,
>
> And by the grass-green sleeve,

And laid her low on gude green wood,

At her he spierd nae leave.

When he had got his wills of her,

His wills as he had taen,

He's taen her by the middle sma,

Set her to feet again.

She turnd her right and round about,

To spier her true-love's name,

But naething heard she, nor naething saw,

As a' the woods grew dim.

Margaret then spends seven days waiting there before she returns to her father's court apparently "As fine as ony queen." Eight months later, the old knight notices the pregnancy and her brother tells her to go get the abortive herb at Charter wood. She follows "Tam-a-Line"'s directions and performs a spectacular rescue. The narrator then tells us that news reached all Scotland that "Lady Margaret, our king's daughter, / That night had gaind her prey," ironically reversing the sexual stalker. The sequencing and vantage of the plot is directly pointed at remediating the initially compromising activity of male sexual dominance over a physically and socially vulnerable female: the abortifacient is offered at this, the probable attempt at a spousal is offered at this, and the final rescue of "Tam Lin" which turns him into a proper knight who is taken home as Janet's own is the final remediation. This last action, however, was not one available to Renaissance females—it is a fantastical remedy to an otherwise intolerable social situation. It

resolves the tension of the story but at the same time also makes visible to the audience the near impossibility of a non-fantastic remedy to this female cultural burden. In other words, the necessity of a fantastical remedy to a common social predicament suggests a need for a social change.

In Child "A", when Janet returns for the abortifacient, Tam Lin tells her how to rescue him from the Elf Queen. She is to wait until Halloween and at Miles Cross she is to pull the rider off the "milk-white steed." When she does, she is to hold onto him while he magically transforms within her arms. No matter how terrifying the ordeal or what creature he turns into, she is to hold him fast and fear him not. Janet performs this act of supernatural fearlessness, as in all the variants, exactly as directed and takes the now perfectly docile and naked man home, this time wrapped in her green mantle. The Elf Queen curses her loss to Janet and the story ends.

A similar theme of extraordinary female faithfulness is repeated in other ballads. In "Child Waters" where a woman already very pregnant with her lord's child is about to be discarded by him, she nevertheless vehemently declares her fidelity and declares she will stay with him no matter what. This being her decision, he then tells her she must run beside his horse disguised as his footboy. She must also muck his stables, procure a whore from the town for him (and beautify the woman's feet from the foot of the bed!). In a setting reminiscent of the Madonna, she then gives birth to the Lord's child alone in a stable. After this, she fords a treacherous river while carrying her young child while her lord, of course, rides safely. But, performing these female feats of Hercules, she is then proclaimed lady of his castle and we are to infer that these super-heroic acts of loyalty have granted her victory over her perilous social circumstances.

Likewise, in “Rose the Red and the White Lily” female sisters disguise themselves as men to escape their cruel stepmother and follow their former loves (their stepmother’s sons) as servants in the woods. They fight and throw as well and as bravely as any men. When one of the sisters is suspected as a maid, her lover tells her that he will come to her bower and see whether she is actually a woman or not. Again, we see showcased the problem of violent male sexual dominance—this time even over females who fight as well as any man. She tells him:

O gin ye come to my bowr within,
Thro fraud, deceit, or guile,
Wi this same bran that's in my han,
I swear I will the kill.'

'But I will come thy bowr within,
An spear nae leave,' quoth he;
'An this same bran that's i my han
I sall ware back on the.' (Child’s “A,” 21-23).

He breaks her bower door at midnight and despite having the “bran,” we are told she conceives a child by morning. When the child is to be born, she blows a horn for her equally disguised sister to come help her with the birth. The sister answers the call, fights her sister’s jealous “lover” until she is wounded, at which time it is revealed to him that she also is a woman. The tale and the girls’ feats are so extraordinarily remarkable that the narrator tells us that King Arthur himself leaves his court to come out to the wood to witness it all. The two girls then reveal their identities and win their wedding days.

Surely, in these ballads we are meant to see that it requires nearly superhuman acts of fearlessness and loyalty from the socially compromised woman to either avoid or undo her compromised position and secure a continued social standing within the culture as it exists. While others have seen strong female agency in these tales, I see they might also be read as not-so-veiled rhetorical poetics against a social and legal system that long normalized elite male sexual privilege at the expense of sexually and socially vulnerable females who are not realistically capable of performing such fantastical feats. The ballads construct a story which reads like a superhero tale, as if to invite the audience to wish they too had superhero abilities to fight against the dark forces that be. I suggest here that the ballads' narrative elements (story, protagonist, plot sequence, commonplaces, narrative outcomes) were chosen to highlight those dark forces in order to generate an affective response capable of encouraging social change.

The Ballad as a Potent Epideictic Rhetoric

The ballad's introductory warnings and conceptual chains selects a particular social vantage and the musicality and repetitive nature of the form ensures directed attention, communal interest, and memorability—making the ballad a potent epideictic rhetoric, a discourse which allows an audience to create a judgment concerning praise or blame. As we have seen, both "The Hunting of Cheviot" and "Tam Lin" are narratives which through their plot structures imply blame to social structures creating vulnerability at the hands of dominant social ideology. Publicly motivated poetics like the traditional ballad have long been acute sites of ideological battle—a battle to control the narratives which control the way people experience and remember. Jeffrey Walker tells us that *poiêsis* is a "mimetic art of constructing and representing a *mythos*, a story" (19). He also states that for the ancient Greeks *poiêsis* was a "making," and that before *poiêsis* was *poiêsis*, it was *adoiê*—it was song. Walker begins his book with a hymn

from Hesiod's *Theogony* which he claims contains the earliest reference to what would later be separately termed poetry and rhetoric. It is a passage that speaks of the bard and the wise prince. Long before our more rigid, classical distinctions between civic oratory and poetry, the eighth century Hesiod presents the wise prince (*basileus*) and the bard (*aoidos*) as performing the same enterprise—they both use the power of eloquence to speak forth peace and justice, "to 'turn aside' the listener's mind from its current state or path" (Walker 4). They are socially juxtaposed through the same tool—the singer-men soothe the "stricken at heart" with their sweet flow, and the wise prince soothes the people with "honeyed," "gentle" words that bring justice (Walker 3). Interestingly, Hesiod uses the term *epea* for this speech. Walker tells us "*[e]pos* in this broader sense comprises the entire range of cultural lore an oral society cultivates, disseminates, and preserves in rhythmic discourse" (6). The *basileus* brings "honeyed" justice by speaking through and from the cultural lore of the people, the civic guides and customary laws as well as the mythological and heroic narratives. These types of speech acts can be considered epideictic and pragmatic. As also in Aristotle, epideictic speech is primarily differentiated from pragmatic speech acts because it is presented on occasions where there is no direct vote or verdict—epideictic discourse simply "asks its audience to form opinions, or even to revise their existing beliefs and attitudes on a given topic" (8). Since epideictic forms the cultural beliefs and attitudes underlying pragmatic actions, Walker believes epideictic can be viewed "as the central and indeed fundamental mode of rhetoric in human culture" (10).

> In Hesiod's world, the *aoidos'* poetic/epideictic discourse is the mode of suasion that both establishes and mnemonically sustains the culturally authoritative codes of value and the paradigms of eloquence from which the pragmatic discourse of the *basileus* derives its "precedent," its language, and its power. (10)

And this is, we now can see, why Plato saw fit to expel the poets from his *Republic* and why Sidney sought to makes its *Defence*; Plato believed that the poets formed and controlled the primary knowledge base of the people and by poetically propagating that knowledge, ultimately controlled the decisions of the polis which were necessarily grounded to that foundational poetic and the social ideologies it establishes.

Epideictic rhetoric, unfortunately, has sometimes been viewed by scholars as a limited category of discourse. Aristotle, for example, appears, at least initially, to limit epideictic to a sort of formal public speech, given on proper public occasions, which encourages praise or blame of someone or something. Because of this, epideictic is conventionally thought of as a formal sort of speech that mainly reinforces existing cultural identities. Cynthia Miecznikowski Sheard's important complaint is that rhetoric scholars have long overlooked how epideictic is also a discourse action, something that can create civic change. Therefore, Sheard argues for a more expansive view of epideictic rhetoric, discourse that is not only a place for the recirculation of current cultural values and identities but also an important place for the activation of ideological and pragmatic change. Long ago, Aristotle classified epidictic as an oratory that praises or blames someone or something but does not call for an immediate action from the audience, an important distinction from the more immediate summons to judgmental action of judicial or deliberative rhetoric. As the third kind of discourse genre, epideictic certainly had a very public role in the life of the Greek polis, but it was not viewed (or defined rather) as the kind of rhetoric which directly resulted in physical action within the polis. This has led to it being viewed as the impotent kind of persuasion, something that merely asks people to reaffirm what they already know, instead of something that asks an audience to consider something new. As mentioned, in *Rhetoric* Aristotle initially relegates epideictic to only a certain kind of public

speech act. However, Brian Vickers believes that Aristotle later expanded his own definition of epideictic to include any discourse that impacts opinions and attitudes. George Kennedy, likewise, may have followed Aristotle's progression of thinking by first maintaining a more limited definition of epideictic and then later expanding his own definition, as Sheard tells us, to include "*any discourse* that does not aim at a specific action but is intended to influence the values and beliefs of the audience" (Sheard 768, emphasis mine). The repercussions of these initially limited definitions abound in rhetorical studies, however. The modern student reading *Rhetoric* is bound to come away giving short shrift to the scope and goals of epideictic, and because of the influence that this foothold has had in the history of rhetorical scholarship, that opinion is likely to go unchallenged by instructors. It is well understood, of course, that Classical Greek rhetorical instruction was hyper-focused on promoting the effective praxis of judicial rhetoric. And although Roman oratory later shifted to focusing on the high elocution that praise and blame speeches could showcase, the opportunities for such a narrowly defined discourse and the fashion for such high-styled elocution has historically ebbed and waned. For the modern student, chances to engage in epideictic of this sort of formal public ceremonial speaking appears severely limited. Interestingly for our study, the category of epideictic rhetoric was expanded during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, however, to include not just speeches of praise and blame but also literature. Unfortunately, the timing of this expansion served to stress the affective qualities of epideictic during a historical moment when science and logic began to dominate conceptions of the "right" kind of rhetoric. Once again, an opportunity for a more comprehensive conception of epideictic was eventually dismissed. Sheard complains that because of this timing and the subsequent side-lining of affective rhetorical functions to

logic, that modern scholars have mostly lost sight of the important pragmatic and civic functions which can be accomplished by the genre.

Reinforcing Brian Vickers's scholarship, Christine Oravec's study of "'Observation' in Aristotle's Theory of Epideictic" also argues that we have misrepresented Aristotle's complete understanding of the purposes of epideictic, specifically that we have relegated it to an inert aesthetic spectacle. She begins "[t]ranslators and commentators have traditionally identified Aristotle's epideictic genre of discourse with spectacle or theatrical display" (162). She laments our current understandings of epideictic as mere entertainment, theatrics, or show, and its audience as mere spectators delighting in that show—that little to none of the event of epideictic is considered by most to be important to the pragmatic concerns of real choice and action in the world. Though she does limit the scope of her observation to speeches, she theorizes the way epideictic oratory functions in the audience: that the observer is indeed a judge (only that the action of that judgment is "preparatory" to a more deliberative form of judgment) and that epideictic invokes a critical insight and observation in the audience which works from and connects to an audience's common values. Her idea is that the rhetor applies older common values to new experiences with particular objects in an aesthetic which serves to heighten these values in the audience, to return "these experiences heightened and renewed" (171). In her encapsulation, it is the audience's perception and judgment of the competence of and their delight in the speaker which provides the path to this renewal of the audience's already held common perceptions and values: "epideictic establishes its truth by accurately reflecting, through display and magnification, the audience's present 'observation' of the praiseworthy object" (173).

Though Oravec limits her discussion to praise and blame speeches, I can see several important considerations to extend to our study on balladry: 1) that epideictic activates critical judgment in the audience by way of an established set of common values and experiences which are accessed and then judged as applicable to a current object, 2) that this access occurs through a pleasurable, aesthetic experience which results in a transference of this pleasure to the critical association made between held and renewed beliefs and the current object, and 3) that a new connection (new knowledge) is made in the mental space between the old values and the current object. I am suggesting that we can see this in the way a commonly held cultural appreciation for the social value of loyalty has been utilized in our ballads to create new social understandings of loyalty (as a tool of feudal wastefulness in "Chevy Chase" and as a tool of female sexual exploitation in "Tam Lin") between the old value and the new object (the narrative).

So, although epideictic rhetoric has indeed been seen to establish new judgment events concerning praise or blame, I want to expand this view as it parallels what I am forwarding with the ballad, and offer that epideictic does not merely reaffirm cultural knowledge, instead it both partially affirms and partially alters cultural knowledge. What I am suggesting is that new judgments are necessarily formed by means of the new connection between an old value and a currently evoked target. The audience, however, must be persuaded to agree to the applicability of this connection. If the old value is "bravery," for example, the audience must agree to accept the rhetor's newly evoked connection of that value to a currently evoked object—this is a new judgment. Something about the currently evoked action must align with the audience's current understanding of bravery, but it would be a mistake to believe this to be a full one-to-one full correspondence that simply reinforces existing beliefs. A one-to-one correspondence would indeed lead to a stagnant cultural conception of bravery but also to a necessarily limited scope of

applicability—to only the very same things to which bravery has always been and only been applied. Limitations such as these would indeed lead to reaffirmations of a current cultural standard, but this is not what occurs. In epideictic rhetoric, we continually find that new objects are proffered to connect to old value conditions. I would like to suggest that there is slippage in the cultural definition of "bravery" every time a current action is agreed by the audience to be partially connected in some way to the old cultural value. While the cultural standard of something like "bravery" is partially reaffirmed, it is also partially altered by each application target. I am suggesting that it is precisely this reflexive slippage that creates the movement potentials and social action potentials of epideictic rhetoric. It is through epideictic rhetoric that cultural standards are both acknowledged to exist and where they are redefined and extended. It is also through epideictic rhetoric that those standards are slightly changed by each acknowledged connection, making the contact of a particular example with an established value a potential site of a very active social action working to explore the boundaries of or redefine older values.

Conclusion

This thesis has worked to provide a conceptualization of the traditional ballad as an idiom which represents an agential form of epideictic rhetoric, providing accessible and needed challenge to normative social standards. As we have seen, "The Hunting of the Cheviot" and "Tam Lin" have had lasting impacts and they continue to circulate. I mentioned Sidney and Addison's fascination with the old story of Percy and Douglas and I want to add that "Tam Lin" continues to haunt as well, perhaps because it speaks to a social condition which does approach a nearly universal experience for women. Martha Hixon says that "Tam Lin and brave Janet seem to hold a special fascination for modern women," and I believe that this is because the story

plays a cathartic role to women's continued tragic social experience of vulnerable sexuality. It provides an imaginary world in which to deal with even current anxieties and fears, one in which the female triumphs over her subordinated social circumstances. Freedman thinks this is because the story presents "a world that is the reverse of the patriarchal," where "men are fairly helpless creatures who look on while powerful females—Janet and the Queen of Elfinland—perform the action" (10). However, I think this interpretation somewhat oversteps the storyline. Janet does rescue Tam Lin, but she does so after being raped, or at the very least, in every version, after being compromisingly seduced because of her vulnerable status. She is socially compelled to abort her pregnancy or follow Tam Lin's directions fastidiously. Janet is still well within the bounds of the patriarchal system. I'm going to suggest that the story merely provides a fantasy of victory *within* a socially threatening patriarchal structure, which is the fantasy that even modern women are attracted to. There is a beautiful contemporary version of this ballad by Anaïs Mitchell. Mitchell makes the decision to leave out the world of fairies. In Mitchell's modern version, Janet still leaves her "silken seam" and "lonely bower" to pick roses at Carterhaugh. We remain in the courtly world of ladies and knights, but there is no introductory warning and Tam Lin simply impregnates Janet:

> And he has took her by the hand,
> Took her by the sleeve
> And he has laid this lady down
> Among the roses green
>
> And he has took her by the arm
> Took her by the hem

And he has laid this lady down

Among the roses red (Mitchell)

There is no direct mention of rape, but the ambivalent description of the sexual activity, the more ominous notes from the guitar, and lingering break in the vocals foreshadow this as a troubling event.[4] In Mitchell's version, Janet returns to her father's court "green as any glass," claims that she will take "the blame" of her father, rebuffs the suggestion that she would treat any of the knights at court "so well," and then returns to Carterhaugh for the abortive herb. "Tam Lin" again protests both her plucking and her plans to abort the pregnancy. Janet responds with determinate agency over her pregnant condition:

Oh I will pull the rose, Tam Lin

And I will break the tree

But I'll not bear the little babe

That you have got with me (Mitchell)

Built to engage the concerns of the modern audience, notice that it is not so much the sexual activity but the babe itself which threatens Janet's social standing—it is the "wild shade" this time. She continues:

If he were to a gentleman

And not a wild shade,

I'd rock him all the winter's night

And all the summer's day

Tam Lin responds by telling Janet what she must do to "win" his love, a gentleman, husband, and, this time, a love for the pregnancy, "and you will love your child":

[4] An important reminder that the ballad's rhetorics can never be completely separated from both its performance and its musical aspect

Then take me back into your arm

If you my love would win

And hold me tight and fear me not

I'll be your gentleman

But first I'll turn change, all in your arms

Into a wild wolf

But hold me tight and fear me not

I am your own true love

And then I'll change, all in your arms

Into a wild bear

But hold me tight and fear me not

I am your husband dear

And then I'll change, all in your arms

Into a lion bold

But hold me tight and fear me not

And you will love your child (Mitchell)

Again, Janet follows these directions with an almost supernatural bravery, wraps her "naked man" in her coat and simply takes him home. We are to understand that the wild Tam Lin is now a docile and loving husband. This version of the ballad speaks to modern women by applying fantastical and "happy ending" control over what they still perceive as physically,

socially, financially, and mentally threatening sexual activity—agential or not. It is, of course, a fantasy that one can use their superhuman abilities to transform threatening men into docile, supportive fathers, but it is a fantasy that continues to appeal because it is still socially needed. Janet's story provides a cathartic experience over this portent and an apparitional way out, a new sort of consciousness and an attempt at control over a yet vulnerable position. Gerder Lerner's study of "The Creation of Feminist Consciousness" defines this consciousness "as the awareness of women that they belong to a subordinate group; that they have suffered wrongs as a group; that their condition of subordination is not natural, but is societally determined; that they must join with other women to remedy these wrongs; and finally that they must and can provide an alternate vision of societal organization in which women as well as men will enjoy autonomy and self-determination" (14). The traditional ballads, with their focus on women's perilous romantic and sexual activity, have in some way contributed and continue to contribute to this "alternate vision," a social action of a transitional poetic world through a transitional gaze.

In "Tam Lin," Janet has not restructured the patriarchy, but her story does spotlight women's subordination and peril within it while the musical affect and enticing entrance of narrative invites both male and female identification with her subordinated positioning. It provides poetic gaze into positions and people who might otherwise be socially invisible to dominate structures, what Geoffrey of Vinsauf, in his *Poetria nova*, claims is a conjuring: "Art plays, as it were, the conjurer; causes the last to be first, the future to be present, the oblique to be straight, the remote to be near; what is rustic becomes urbane, what is old becomes new, public things are made private, black things white, and worthless things are made precious" (22). In the romantic and fantastical ballads, the consequences of rape and out-of-wedlock sex to a woman's womb have the imagined affective potential to become personal to everyone--the ballad singer

performing the role of conduit to an otherwise socially invisible personal and, in this case, very female experience.

It is also important to keep in mind another potent ability inherent in this kind of epideictic rhetoric—individual and communal memory. While James Phelan has insisted on the important rhetorical action of narrative: "*the telling of a story by someone to someone on some occasion for some purpose*" (as quoted in Dawson 71, original emphasis), Susan Stewart has forwarded the "haunting" psychagogic results of these tellings—they stay with us, they "forward in time regardless of whether at any given moment the poet or reader can explain or refer to such a meaning" (38). Additionally, she examples the differences in remembrance between propositional speech and melodies and lyrics through the medical condition of global aphasia: "recent work on aphasia suggest a separation between propositional speech—the deliberate production of contextbound and comprehensible utterances—and nondeliberate or "automatic" utterances (38). Patients who loose propositional speech can often still hum melodies and sing lyrics. She then suggests that in a similar way we are "haunted by the structure of a preexisting [lyrical] work" (51). It is not just the poet who has the muse; we are all "spoken through" by lyric possession. A good recent example of the communal inhabitation of lyric for the promotion of future argument is Jesse Williams' BET acceptance speech for the Humanitarian Award in 2016. He ends with these words concerning African American's contributions to American culture:

> We've been floating this country on credit for centuries, yo, and we're done watching and waiting while this invention called whiteness uses and abuses us, burying black people out of sight and out of mind while extracting our culture, our dollars, our entertainment like oil – black gold, ghettoizing and demeaning our creations then stealing them,

> gentrifying our genius and then trying us on like costumes before discarding our bodies like rinds of strange fruit. The thing is though… the thing is that just because we're magic doesn't mean we're not real. (Lasher)

Within this propositional argument are many poetic illusions: extracting black talents for profit like "oil," trying black creations on like "costumes." These are also powerfully memorable poetic imaginings which I am uncertain concerning the origins. They may be original to Williams or additional examples of poetic haunting, but there is an obvious reference here to a well-known song in the simile "like rinds of strange fruit." With this single image, Williams is able to affectively attach that financial and talent extraction to the historical violence of black lynching, through a song which has inhabited the American consciousness since 1937. "Strange Fruit," of course, is the poetic anti-lynching protest song written by Jewish songwriter, Abel Meeropol, and made famous by jazz singer Billie Holliday.

> Southern trees bearing a strange fruit
> Blood on the leaves and blood at the root
> Black bodies swinging in the Southern breeze
> Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees
>
> Pastoral scene of the gallant South
> The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth
> Scent of magnolia sweet and fresh
> Then the sudden smell of burning flesh.
>
> Here is a fruit for the crow to pluck

For the rain to wither, for the wind to suck

For the sun to rot, for the trees to drop

Here is a strange and bitter crop. (“Strange Fruit”)

The entire ballad is a third-person narrative, extended metaphor of “black bodies” as “strange fruit” hanging from southern trees. *Time* magazine has called it “the most important song of the century” (McCartney). Williams’s choice of this poetic works to highlight the violence of lynching and the continued structural violence without mentioning the word. This allowed him, as it allowed Billie Holiday, poetic license to bring awareness to and elicit sympathy of those atrocities from “gentle” audiences that would otherwise have deemed the topic too unpleasant for entertainment venues. Williams follows this example at the awards event and is able to reference the violence to current blackbodies through the poetic lyric. Culler reminds us of the power invoked here, “the lyric performance succeeds as it acts iterably through repeated readings, makes itself memorable. The consummate success is, ironically, to become a commonplace, to enter the language and the social imaginary, to help give us a world to inhabit” (131). Shira Wolosky claims that what poetics do powerfully is to “represent, expose, and manipulate the rhetorics of its surrounding culture, bring them to view and to self-consciousness” (17). Poetic world-making, drawing and receding to highlight and hide qualities of subjects and events, creating conceptual chains through vividly felt imaginaries, making potent metaphorical associations memorable, making knowledge memorable and available for future argumentation--these are the powerful rhetorical potentials of the ballad’s poetic.

In light of these potentials and their abilities to highlight needs to shift current normative ideologies and structures, the third-person narrative ballad deserves revival in the popular and scholarly rhetorical imagination. The resources of the traditional ballad are still available.

Though the extended third person narrative is a form rarely heard in today's popular song, the good news is that lyric forms are never really gone. Culler tells us that poets can revive old forms, exploiting possibilities that have lain dormant for a while: "Poets can at any time resurrect them in their original form, a modernized version, or in a deeply intra-generic or intertextual manner," and again, "lyric forms are not confined to one historical period but remain available as possibilities in different eras" (4). Mary Ellen Brown quotes the great ballad collector William Motherwell: "[The traditional ballads] were like a commodious garment that could be wrapped expeditiously round every subject of whatever nature or dimensions" (175). They can still do that and we, especially the marginalized and the yet invisible, can still call on them to do so.

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