Cherchez le texte:

The Interrelationship of Manuscript and Print
in Seventeenth-Century English Popular Ballads

By

Patricia A. Dowdall

A thesis
submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis I propose to study the complex relations between manuscript and print as exemplified by three seventeenth-century popular ballads found in both the Pepys collection of broadside ballads and the Percy Folio Manuscript. Following Roger Chartier's practice of "object studies," I examine these ballads with three goals in mind: first, by considering the ballad as a material artifact, I attempt to show how materiality affects the way in which ballads in different modes present and communicate information; secondly, by studying both the bibliographic and linguistic codes, I suggest that ballads are performative texts, not merely when orally transmitted, but also in manuscript and print; and thirdly, by looking at the ballad as a palimpsest revealing layers of text, I suggest that ballads are also sites of production and re-production. Taking issue with "great divide" theories that describe changes in communications technology in revolutionary terms, I argue instead that a close study of ballads in different media reveals that there is still a significant degree of interplay and interpenetration between manuscript and print some one hundred and fifty years after the emergence of print technology.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Chapter 1

Introduction: The Materiality of Texts

Media have always mattered in literary studies. Print may appear to be more transparent than other historical artifacts – indeed, it may seem to speak to us directly – but the words we read are physically inscribed or printed, made up of ink on paper. Manuscripts and books are part of the vast array of historical artifacts that comprise the material culture of the past. Material culture in this sense refers, in the words of G. Thomas Tanselle, to the "interrelations of thought and objects," and forms part of the "material evidences of mental activity"; he argues that "there cannot be a history of ideas without a history of objects" ("Printing History" 271). Material culture includes both technology and the products of technology, both the press and the poem printed on it. Until recently, scholars interested in the book as a material object have concentrated their efforts on analytical bibliography and textual criticism. Their focus has been on the physical artifact, on the use of type, paper, printing and binding, and on the construction of a historical account of various editions and printings. The purpose of this work has been to establish "texts as intended by their authors" (Tanselle, "Textual Criticism" 83). This appeal to the authority of the author has been based on the premise

that there is a single informing consciousness in the creation of the text. By the 1960s, however, the centrality of the author was coming under scrutiny in essays such as Roland Barthes' "The Death of the Author" and Michel Foucault's "What is an Author?"[1] Although Barthes and Foucault approach the subject very differently, both reject the idea that the author is the source of meaning in a text. D.F. McKenzie, in the inaugural Panizzi Lectures at the British Library in 1985, contrasted the traditional view of a text as "authorially sanctioned, contained, and historically definable" with the developing concept of text as "always incomplete, and therefore open, unstable, subject to a perpetual re-making by its readers, performers, or audience" (*Bibliography* 55). Since reception is an integral part of this concept of text, McKenzie emphasizes the social and collaborative nature of print. While he would expand the scope of bibliography to include films, videos and computer-stored material, he reiterates the importance of the material text, arguing that "forms effect meaning" (*Bibliography* 13). In other words, the format – the typography, layout, paper and binding – does not merely influence meaning; it effects it, helps to bring it about. Books and manuscripts are not merely containers of text; they are essential to our understanding of the verbal artifact.[2] Jerome McGann, like McKenzie, has been influenced

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[1] Earlier, and from a very different perspective, the New Critics also displaced the author as the source of meaning, giving primacy instead to the text in an essay by Wimsatt entitled "The Intentional Fallacy."
[2] For an overview of the importance of interrogating materiality in the study of texts, see Donatelli and Winthrop-Young, "Why Media Matters."

by literary theory to think in new ways about what constitutes a text. In *The Textual Condition*, he argues that both "the practice and the study of human culture comprise a network of symbolic exchanges" and that, because we are not angels, "these exchanges always involve material negotiations," a state he describes as the "textual condition" (3). He argues against the "readerly" view, in which "text is not something we *make* but something we *interpret*" (4, italics in original). To him, textuality is instead a "phenomenal event" (5); texts cannot be known apart from their specific material modes of existence. There is no "ideal" text, imperfectly embodied in physical form; to McGann, the text exists as "a laced network of linguistic and bibliographical codes" (13), and the bibliographic codes, such as ink, paper, typeface, etc., are as important as the linguistic codes for understanding textuality. He contends that the instability of the text, as reflected in its various manifestations, can best be understood by studying the material text as well as its linguistic content. McGann has provoked controversy for his rejection of the central importance of authorial intention in textual editing, but he has been very successful in broadening the boundaries of textual criticism.

While the Anglo-American view of the material text was changing, in France scholars were studying the impact of print on French society.[3] *Histoire du livre* grew out of the Annales school of history, which focuses

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[3] For a brief discussion of the Anglo-American and the French approaches to the study of books, see Feather, "Cross-Channel Currents: historical bibliography and *l'histoire du livre*."

attention more on the analysis of long-term trends than on political events and major figures. Drawing on the vast store of records available from the *ancien régime,* scholars examined patterns of book production and distribution over centuries, seeking an understanding of the social, economic and cultural effects of the introduction of print. Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, in their groundbreaking volume, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing, 1450-1800,* studied the economic and social context of the creation of books – including technology, production and distribution methods, organization of the book trades, and the effect of printing on the ordinary reader. Several scholars have carried on the work begun by Febvre and Martin, drawing on both the approach of the *Histoire du Livre* and the new trends in Anglo-American bibliography. Robert Darnton proposed a model for the "communications circuit" that includes author, publisher, printer, shipper, bookseller and reader (111), setting the book in a nexus of social relationships. Darnton, however, limited his study to the printed book, drawing a clear boundary between manuscript and print and between books and ephemeral print. Roger Chartier broadens the focus to include cheap print that reaches a wide audience. His approach, like Darnton's, elucidates the networks of practices involved in printing and the reception of texts. For Chartier, there is no text apart from the material form in which it comes to the reader. He argues that:

we can see the inadequacy of the approaches that consider
reading as a transparent relationship between the "text"
(given as an abstraction and reduced to its semantic
content, as if it existed outside the written objects that
present it for decoding) and the "reader" (also an
abstraction, as if the practices through which the reader
appropriates the text were historically and socially
invariable). (*Cultural History* 12)

Along with McKenzie and McGann, he contends that there is no ideal
text, imperfectly embodied in material form; there is only the material
text. Chartier joins the call for a new understanding of the text as a
material object.

Among Canadian scholars, there has been an appreciation of the
role of communications media in a larger social context. Harold Innis
suggests that the development of society in a particular historic period is
influenced by the means of communication predominant in that period.[4]
He examines technologies of the word to determine their effects on
society, arguing that, because each medium has its own "bias," the
medium affects the character of knowledge and thus influences the
development of social institutions and in time the redistribution of

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[4] Innis, a well-known economic historian in Canada who developed the staples
theory of economic development, turned his attention to the history and
economics of communications late in his career. For an analysis of the
contribution of Innis and McLuhan to communications theory, see Czitrom,
Media and the American Mind, chap. 6.

power. Innis emphasizes the effect that changes in the technology of communication have on society: "Application of power to communication industries hastened the consolidation of vernaculars, the rise of nationalism, revolution, and new outbreaks of savagery in the twentieth century" (29). He sees communications technology as a key element in historical change; nevertheless, he does not claim that technology *determines* social change. In this he differs from his colleague, Marshall McLuhan, who argues that media exert a powerful force in shaping modern sensibility. He contends that the power of the dominant medium of communication of an era is so strong that we are unable to perceive its consequences; for example, only now that we have entered the electronic age are we able to see the effects of the earlier technology of print. McLuhan contends that "'the medium is the message' because it is the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action" (*Understanding Media* 9). The medium of print is not a container for text; to McLuhan it *is* the text and content is merely "the juicy piece of meat carried by the burglar to distract the watchdog of the mind" (*Understanding Media* 18). McLuhan's emphasis on the importance of the technology of communications finds echoes today in the frequency of references to a communications revolution, but although his insights into the electronic age now seem prescient, his bipolar approach to the transition between script and print has come under scrutiny.

Formerly it was argued that media are organized in a binary fashion, but now we understand more about the interplay and interpenetration of media. Research focusing on oral and literate cultures originally emphasized the differences between the two, leading scholars to see them as mutually exclusive polar opposites.[5] Theories derived from Eric Havelock's analysis of the consequences of alphabetization on the society of ancient Greece were subsequently applied to the effects of increasing literacy in the middle ages and to the introduction of print in early modern Europe. Among the scholars who adhere to the theory of a radical break between the world of orality and the world of print is Walter Ong, a former student of McLuhan. In several books, the best-known of which is *Orality and Literacy*, Ong argues that the advent of writing had a profound effect on how we think, and that chirographic culture brought about a restructuring of the human mind: "more than any other single invention, writing has transformed consciousness" (78). Further, he argues that "print both reinforces and transforms the effects of writing on thought and expression" (117). In recent years, scholars have taken issue with the binary approach, stating that textuality is not exclusive to print and emphasizing both the gradual acceptance of new media and the continuing existence of old. Ruth Finnegan admits that the binary model may give us some insight into forms of organization but this, she suggests, does not outweigh its shortcomings, which include:

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[5] For an analysis of both the 'great divide' and the 'continuity' approaches, see Ruth Finnegan, *Literacy and Orality* and "Communication and Technology."

tempting us to generalize before we have the detailed

evidence, over-simplifying situations in which complexity is

not just an accidental distraction but an essential aspect of

actual human activity and expression, and misleadingly

implying that certain situations – 'pure oral' in particular –

are somehow more 'natural' and unproblematic than

others. (*Literacy* 145-46)

She argues for a "continuity model" that would see literacy as one factor

enabling change, rather than as the cause of change. Such a model

would enable us to move away from both the cause and effect

relationship and the progressive narrative inherent in the dichotomous

approach.

A great deal of scholarly work has focused on the historical shift

from script to print in early modern Europe, a transition that has been

cast in dramatic terms. Since Francis Bacon declared that printing was

among the three inventions that changed the whole world (the other two

being gunpowder and the compass), the printing press has been credited

with a revolutionary role in transforming society. Scholars such as

McLuhan and Ong argue that print produces a fundamental change in

mentality that has far-reaching effects in society. In her monumental

study, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and

Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe*, Elizabeth Eisenstein

describes print as a catalyst giving rise to the three major movements of

the early modern period: the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation and the birth of empirical science. Although she acknowledges that other factors were at work, print plays the major role in the teleological narrative she describes. She argues that print's capacity to preserve knowledge and to produce, in quantity, reliable and authoritative texts enabled scholars to spend less time collating and correcting manuscripts and more time building on the work of their predecessors, transforming the world of the learned. Eisenstein's study was a pioneering effort in book history, painting in broad strokes a vivid picture of the emerging world of print, but as a work of synthesis it has been criticized for its dependence on secondary sources, its focus on elite print, and its lack of attention to the social, economic and political context in which print developed (Hindman 2-3). More recently, Adrian Johns, in his revisionist history, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making*, challenges Eisenstein's focus on the determining effects of technology. In his scrutiny of printing practices in early modern London, Johns portrays a chaotic scene of piracy, plagiarism and misprints, rather than a world of fixed, authoritative texts (30-31). He argues that "the emergence of fixity was matter of convention and trust, of culture and practice" that took several centuries to develop (633).[6] Close examination of primary sources supports the view that print had an evolutionary rather than revolutionary effect. In "From Script to Print . . . and Back,"

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[6] Eisenstein and Johns discuss each other's approaches to the topic in a forum in the *American Historical Review*.

Joseph Donatelli examines examples of chirographic and printed texts, demonstrating the influences of each on the other and exploring the many ways in which script and print combine and interact, to reveal "the complex and deeply ambivalent relation between writing and printing during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries" (92). Through a close reading of the manuscript of Douce 261, Donatelli shows how the anthology "represents the personal appropriation of originally separate printed texts in a single field of textuality, the unity of which is achieved here by the italic hand" (101). This approach, focusing on the cultural object itself, reveals that the discursive field of textuality is much more complex and diverse than the overarching binary theories have indicated.

The focus of most literary studies has been on elite writers, printers and culture, but recent shifts in research have incorporated popular culture. Margaret Spufford's study of chapbooks from Samuel Pepys' collection, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England,* comparing them with similar small books published in France known as the *bibliothèque bleue,* argues that literacy was much more widespread than previously thought and raises a number of questions about the distribution of cheap print. Tessa Watt's more recent examination of the effect of both chapbooks and broadside ballads in spreading protestant ideals in seventeenth-century England, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640,* reveals the wealth of information that can be obtained from these formerly

marginalized works, and Alexandra Halasz, in her study, *The Marketplace of Print: Pamphlets and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, demonstrates the effect of the marketplace on public discourse in the early days of print. All three authors deal with works that had broad circulation in early modern England, works that can be described as part of popular culture.

As scholars turn their attention to the so-called "culture of the people," the discussion has often been framed in terms of a dichotomy between elite and popular culture; however, the concept of popular culture appears to lose stability under scrutiny. First, it is difficult to draw a clear connection between a cultural object and a social class. Although works requiring a high level of literacy would be read only by the educated, popular literature has an appeal to those of all backgrounds.[7] As Peter Burke demonstrates, in early modern England "educated people did not yet associate ballads and chap-books and festivals with the common people, precisely because they participated in these forms of culture" (27). Secondly, when looked at through the lens of culture, social classes are not sufficiently homogenous and distinct from one another to justify an elite/popular dichotomy. Chartier notes that such a division ignores the many other cleavages in society, such as those between town and country dweller, Protestant and Catholic, male and female, young and old (*Cultural Uses* 4). Those who were higher on

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[7] For a discussion of the extent of literacy in early modern England, see Cressy, "Levels of Illiteracy in England, 1500-1700" and *Literacy and the Social Order.*

the social and economic scale were not necessarily part of a cultural elite. Women, for example, were not usually educated sufficiently to participate in elite literature. Rather, Burke suggests that they acted as mediators between "the group to which they belonged socially, the elite, and the group to which they belonged culturally, the non-elite," passing on their knowledge of folk tales, songs and aphorisms (28). Attempting to differentiate popular culture from the culture of the elite may indicate more correspondence between culture and social class than actually exists, setting up a false dichotomy between the two.

Although the binary model of culture provides a framework for incorporating the literary study of works that had been seen as marginal, closer examination of these works reveals them to be much more complex and diverse than previously thought. Instead of clearly demarcated boundaries between cultures and social classes, we find "fluid circulation, practices shared by various groups, and blurred distinctions" (Chartier, *Cultural Uses* 3). To avoid the problems of over-generalization inherent in a global approach, Chartier argues for the use of case or object studies that focus on "specific practices, particular objects, and clearly defined uses" (*Cultural Uses* 12). Rather than beginning with a category, such as popular literature, he begins with a specific print object or objects, and closely studies the text, its typography, layout, illustration and format, as well as the manner in which it is read and the various social contexts in which it is produced

and distributed. This approach does not deny difference, even class difference, but rather than labeling the work as part of a category, such as popular culture, it "characterizes the practices that differentially appropriate the materials circulating in a given society" (Chartier, "Texts" 171). Chartier's approach encourages close observation of all types of printed materials – books, chapbooks, banners, pamphlets, marriage contracts and proclamations.

Ephemeral literature, in which authorship is not privileged, has traditionally been identified with popular culture, but it is not exclusive to one social group. Burke argues that "educated noblemen maintained contact with popular culture through their mothers, sisters, wives and daughters, and they would in many cases have been brought up by peasant nurses who sang them ballads and told them folktales" (28). He contends that any discussion of elite and popular culture must take into account a degree of elite participation in popular culture and vice versa. Many of the ballad and chapbook romances popular among the people, such as *Guy of Warwick* and *Bevis of Hampton,* were based on tales created for the nobility and present an aristocratic point of view and values (Burke 63). Although in literary studies the organizing principle has traditionally been the author, ephemeral literature is usually categorized by its physical format – broadside, chapbook, pamphlet, etc. – or, less often, by its subject matter. Among the cheapest and most widespread forms of ephemeral print in seventeenth-century England

were broadside ballads. Watt estimates that as many as 3 to 4 million copies of 3,000 different ballads were circulating during the latter half of the century (11), and at a penny a piece, they were not out of reach for a laborer in the building trades who was earning 8 to 10 pence a day (12).[8]

Penny ballads, chapbooks and pamphlets existed in a world in which print competed with oral and scribal communication, and these forms of cheap print penetrated all three worlds. Ballads, which exist in performance, in manuscript and in print, fit Halasz's description of pamphlets: their "ephemerality associates them with the orality of gossip, their printedness with the authoritative texts that they materially resemble. Yet it is their printedness that allows them to circulate like gossip" (3). Although broadside ballads only came into existence with the printing press, they were an intrinsic part of contemporary oral and scribal culture as well. Ballads were not only "hawked in the alehouses and markets, but in the same period they were sung by minstrels in the households of the nobility and gentry, who copied them carefully into manuscripts" (Watt 1). Hyder E. Rollins describes the pervasiveness of broadsides:

> The walls of inns, taverns, and dwelling-houses, those
> patronized or owned by the well-to-do no less than by the
> poor, were commonly lined with broadsheets, which not
> only helped to supply the absence of wall-paper and

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[8] A popular history of English broadside ballads can be found in Shepard's two studies, *The Broadside Ballad* and *the History of Street Literature.*

tapestry, but gave to the rooms a picturesque, if bizarre,

appearance. ("Black-Letter" 336)

To show that the rural areas were not to be outdone by the city, Rollins

quotes Sir Robert Cotton: "We in the country do not scorn / Our walls

with ballads to adorn, / Of Patient Grissel and the Lord of Lorn" ("Black-

Letter" 336). Ballads were ubiquitous in seventeenth-century England,

reaching a vast audience across all social class and most parts of the

country.

The ballad, which dynamically sets itself between the oral and

written, is central to ephemeral literature and provides a basis for

theorizing the dichotomies of orality and writing, script and print in early

modern England. Ballad texts display substantial variability. One ballad

may exist in two or more media and in several versions that differ in

wording, character and plot, a variability that in the past has been

explored by careful analysis of the linguistic text. Following McGann and

Chartier, however, a more fruitful approach would include an analysis of

the material text – the physical form of the ballad, including the spatial

layout, ink, typeface or hand, illustrations and paper. McGann has

demonstrated the importance of exploring what texts *do* in the process of

saying what they say, calling for a "material hermeneutics" that is based

on an analysis of the bibliographic as well as linguistic codes of a text

(Textual Condition 15). Much recent research on ballads has taken this

revisionist approach. In the last decade, scholars such as Susan Stewart,

Joseph Donatelli and Nick Groom, have begun to reexamine ballads in the light of changing theoretical conceptions, incorporating the social and material dimensions of the text and its publication in their studies.

In this thesis, I will analyse three seventeenth-century ballads in both manuscript and print, focusing on their material and performative dimensions, and exploring the multiple practices and intermingling of media common in this period. I draw on both McGann's materialist hermeneutics and Chartier's "object studies" – examining a set of print and manuscript ballads in an attempt to reveal the effect the physical form has on our reading of the text. This method allows us to trace some of the "complex trajectories that run from the spoken word to the written text, from writing that is read to gestures that are performed (Chartier, "Texts" 170-71). A comparison of the same or similar ballads in various media reveals the astonishing fluidity of texts in this period. Exploring the palimpsestic qualities of ballad texts leads to a perusal of the myths engendered by ballad collections – myths of origin in an "imagined community" of ancient provenance where issues of class and gender are barely visible through the layers of text.

Chapter 2

The Ballad Text(s)

Ballads challenge our assumptions about texts and provide a productive

site to interrogate issues of stability and authority. Fluidity rather than

fixity is the norm for ballads, which exist in many versions and different

formats, none of which can be considered authoritative. The ballad

stretches the boundaries of the term "text." As an art form with roots in

an oral culture, the ballad was recreated with every performance.

Bertrand Bronson suggests that Anna Gordon Brown, the source of a

large corpus of oral ballads, held in her memory "Not a *text*, but a *ballad*:

a fluid entity soluble in the mind, to be concretely realized at will in

words and music" (qtd. in Buchan 65). The fluidity inherent in oral

transmission is also evident in the many versions of ballads extant in

manuscript and print. This endless play of texts resists classification and

identification. Few ballads privilege the author by preserving his or her

name, evading the most common form of organizing and classifying texts.

Even simple identification is complicated by the lack of fixed titles and

incomplete or missing imprints, illustrating Donatelli's contention that

"the fundamental category 'text' was destabilized at an early date in

ballad studies" ("To Hear" 347). In the past, scholars such as Francis

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Child have attempted to create a hierarchy of ballads, separating the traditional ballad, closest in content to an oral original now lost, from the more debased broadside, produced by hack writers and published for profit. A close examination of ballads in both manuscript and print reveals the difficulties of enforcing such a hierarchy on these multiplicitous texts.

From the vast corpus of extant manuscripts and broadsides, I have selected for this study ballads that exist in both manuscript and print formats, providing a basis for comparison between different media versions. The ballads were drawn from two of the richest and best-known collections of English ballads in existence, the Percy Folio Manuscript and the Pepys collection of broadside ballads. The Percy Folio Manuscript has been called "the Rosetta Stone of British ballad study" (Shepard vii). A seventeenth-century commonplace book, it is a handwritten transcription of 195 ballads, metrical romances and popular songs, some dating from the middle ages.[1] The wealth of handwritten material in the Percy Folio MS is rivaled in print only by the collection of broadside ballads begun by the antiquarian John Selden and enlarged by Samuel

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[1] The Folio MS was discovered by Bishop Thomas Percy, who drew from it for his groundbreaking collection, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry,* first published in 1765. It was also a treasure trove for Francis J. Child's monumental work, *English and Scottish Ballads,* and in some ways can be said to have inspired his collection. John W. Hales and Frederick J. Furnivall edited the Folio MS, publishing it as *Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript* 1867-68. All references to ballads in the Folio MS are either to this edition, cited hereafter as HF, or to a microfilm copy of the Folio MS itself, cited PFMS.

Pepys, diarist and man of letters. This huge collection comprises

approximately 1,775 sheets of English broadside ballads of the

seventeenth century. The ballads, which were originally printed on

individual broadsheets, were "collected, organized and pasted into one of

five large volumes under Pepys direction" (Weinstein xvi).[2]. A comparison

of the two media versions of each ballad reveals that they appear to tell

the same story – although this, as we shall see, can be open to question –

but they do so in very different ways, many of which appear to be specific

to the media form in which they are presented. A reading of these

ballads, focusing primarily on the Pepys broadsides, and noting any

differences found in the Percy folio versions, will shed light on the

interrelationships of manuscript and print and lay a foundation for the

examination of the ballads' material and performative characteristics in

later chapters.

The texts were chosen to reflect themes typical of balladry –

history, romance, and classical legend – to determine whether the radical

instability of the text was characteristic of one thematic category or

common to several. The three ballad stories studied, Banister and

Buckingham, Hero and Leander, and Lady's Fall, are on the popular

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[2] Although some of the Pepys ballads found their way into print through the
efforts of Child and the English Ballad Society, it was not until 1929 that the
remainder were published in an eight-volume edition edited by Hyder E. Rollins.
In 1987, a facsimile edition of Pepys's five volume collection, edited by W. G.
Day, was published, allowing for the first time easy access to the entire
collection. All references in this study to the Pepys Ballads are to the Day
facsimile edition.

topics of history, legend and personal tragedy, respectively, and death is common to all of them. Pepys divides his collection of ballads into the following subject headings, giving an idea of the range of topics found in broadsides: "Devotion & Morality," "History – True & Fabulous," "Tragedy – vizt. Mrd^{rs}. Execut^{ns}. Judgm^{ts}. of God &c.," "State & Times," "Love – Pleasant," "Love – Unfortunate," "Marriage, Cuckoldry, &c.," "Sea – Love, Gallantry, & Actions," "Drinking & Good Fellowshipp," and "Humour, Frollicks &c. mixt" (Day 1: xii), and he includes a "Small Promiscuous Supplement upon most of the forgoing Subjects" (Day 1: 469-550). Our three ballad stories, which touch on issues of morality, history, tragedy, love and marriage, reflect themes found in the larger part of the Pepys collection.

The earliest of these ballad stories, the tale of Buckingham and Banister, written on a historical theme, illustrates a degree of textual variation in manuscript and print that raises the fundamental question of whether we are dealing with the same ballad. Like most historical ballads, these two versions are based on incidents from the past, loosely interpreted. Buckingham had taken part in an uprising against Richard III and was executed in 1483; that same year, Jane Shore, a mistress of Edward IV, was expelled from the court by Richard. The broadside story centres on the betrayal of the Duke of Buckingham by Banister, one of his own men, comparing Banister's suffering to that of Jane Shore. Although the printed version of the ballad tells both these stories, setting

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Banister's suffering against that of Shore to invoke compassion for him, the manuscript version omits Jane Shore entirely. Variation is not untypical of ballads, which in oral form were recreated in each performance, but such a dramatic rupture, changing the plot and omitting a central character, illustrates the difficulties of identifying and classifying such fluid, even slippery, texts as these.

The change in character and plot is prefigured in the changing titles of three exemplars of this ballad story. As is often the case with ballads, the very title is already destabilized: two different titles can be found in print and a third in manuscript. The broadside version in the Pepys collection is entitled, "A most sorrowfull Song, setting forth the miserable end of *Banister,* who betraied the Duke of *Buckingham,* his Lord and Master" (STC 1361.5; Day 1: 64-65),[3] a title that, for all its length, omits any mention of the third major character in the text of this ballad, Jane Shore. This version was printed by A. Mathewes for Francis Coules in 1630 (Weinstein 11-12). Thirty years earlier, however, the ballad had been registered by John Wolf under the title, "A mournefull songe comparatiuely of the miserable ende of Bannister that betraied the duke of Buckingham his lord and master to the punishement of mystres Shore &c." (Rollins, *Analytical Index* 160), a title much more reflective of the contents. In the intervening thirty years, however, the fame of Jane

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[3] The broadside is hereinafter referred to as "A most sorrowfull Song . . . of Banister," and the corresponding ballad in the PFMS is "Buckingam betrayd: by Banister."

Shore had faded, and by removing her name from the title, Coules was able to market an old ballad anew. Between the print versions and the ballad in the Folio MS there is a more radical change yet. In the manuscript version, entitled "Buckingam Betrayd: by Banister" (PFMS 270-72; HF 2: 253-59), Jane Shore slips not only out of the title but out of the text as well. The brevity of the title of the version in the Folio MS also distinguishes the two: the exhaustive title of the printed version is characteristic of broadside ballads, whereas the concise title of the manuscript version is more typical of the traditional ballad. In other examples, the Pepys broadside, "A memorable song upon the unhappy hunting in Cheuy Chase, betweene the *Earle Pearcy of England*, and *Earle Dowglas of Scotland*" (Day 92) is given the more concise title, "Cheuy Chase," in manuscript (HF 2: 1-16). And the manuscript's simple "Patient Grissell" (HF 3: 421-30) becomes "A most excellent and vertuous Ballad of the patient Grissell" in print (Day 1: 34). The variety of titles for one ballad story signals not only a lack of stability in the text but a difference in the performative functions of manuscript and print, a difference that will be explored in chapter 4.

The ballad, a folk song that focuses on a single episode, is loosely defined in comparison with other literary forms. Unlike the sonnet or rhyme royal, which follow a strict stanzaic format, the ballad exhibits a variety of meter and rhyme patterns, some of which have roots deep in the oral tradition. Two of the most common patterns are found in

quatrains with lines of alternating tetrameter and trimeter, or with lines of tetrameter throughout, rhyming *abcb*, but these patterns coexist with an earlier form, the couplet, which rhymes *aabb*. David Buchan argues that traces of the earlier couplet pattern can be found in the early quatrain (167). The transition between the two forms can be seen in those ballads that retain signs of the couplet form: four-stress lines; rhyme schemes close to the *aa* typical of couplets; syntactic units complete in two lines; and frequent repetition of lines and stanzas (167-68).

Of the texts I am considering, the Pepys broadside version of the Banister ballad is the only one to retain traces of this early couplet form, indicating earlier composition than the others. Although this ballad is divided into quatrains, the use of long measure, 4-4-4-4, rather than the more frequently used common measure, 4-3-4-3, gives the stanza the metrical form of two couplets. This reading is supported by the rhyme scheme, with 31 of 38 stanzas rhyming *aabb*, as is shown in stanza 22:

> Thou gauest an eare to widowes crie,
>   & wip'd the teares from Orphants eye,
> Thou saudst their liues by law condemnd
>   And iudge vnto a wofull end. (Day 1: 65)

The syntactic unit, which generally extends over four lines in this ballad, reveals a movement toward the quatrain form, but traces of the couplet can still be found in the syntax of stanza 25:

> What though K. Richard with disgrace
>   did cast thee from thy loftie place?
> Thy good deeds done doth spread thy fame

23

<blockquote>my cursed fact claimes endlesse shame. (Day 1: 65)</blockquote>

With rhymes on "disgrace," "place," "fame," and "shame," the broadside is

an example of heavily patterned verse. In contrast, the Folio MS version

is looser in meter and rhyme, as can be seen in the following stanza:

<blockquote>
an old felt hat vppon his head,
with 20 holes therein;
& soe in labor he spent the time,
as tho some drudge he had beene.[4] (PFMS 271; HF 2: 257)
</blockquote>

The trochee, "labor," in line 3 and the anapest, "he had beene," in line 4

disrupt the iambic pattern. The manuscript ballad's metric irregularity,

its rhyme scheme of *abcb* and its alternating lines of tetrameter and

trimeter contrast with the tight rhythmic and metric pattern of the

printed ballad. Paradoxically, the manuscript version appears to be

written more recently than the broadside. It has no vestiges of the earlier

couplet form, but rather its rhyme scheme and metric pattern reinforce

the four-line stanzaic structure.

Iteration is an essential characteristic of the ballad's roots in

orality, for like all oral poetry the ballad is created and recreated in the

process of transmission. Buchan describes how the ballad is composed

in each performance:

<blockquote>
The maker learns from older traditional singers not only the

individual stories but also the tradition's structural and

formulaic patternings, and re-creates the ballad-stories
</blockquote>

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[4] In quotations from the PFMS, I have followed the system used by Hales and
Furnivall of printing expanded contractions in italic type.

every time he performs. He learns specific structures and
formulas but, more important, learns how to expand and
create anew on the basis of the old. (166)

The ballad singer draws on recurring patterns, such as incremental
reiteration, formulaic phrases and alliteration, but he uses these
elements creatively, making each performance unique. The ballad thus
displays a degree of stability over time, as the singer attempts to retell
the story accurately; nonetheless each retelling creates new variations.

Within the ballad, the plot often progresses in "fits and starts,"
using incremental reiteration as a device for both memory and thematic
repetition. The first five stanzas of the broadside ballad "A most
sorrowfull Song, . . . of Banister" are typical of this additive style of
narration as they reveal the nature of Banister's betrayal through the
gradual accretion of detail, couched in verbal formulas:

> If euer wight had cause to rue
>   a wretched deede, vidle and vntrue,
> Then *Banister* with shame may sing,
>   who sold his life that loued him.
>
> The noble Duke of *Buckingham,*
>   his death doth make me sing this song,
> I vnto him did them betray,[5]
>   that wrought his downfall and decay.
>
> I him betraid, and none but I,
>   for which I sorrow heauily:
> But sorrow now too late doth come,
>   for I alone haue him undone.

---

[5] Rollins suggests this line should read: "I vnto them did him betray" (*Pepys
Ballads* 134 n.).

> Whose life I ought to haue preseru'd,
>> for well of me he it deseru'd,
> That from the dust had lifted me,
>> to honour and to dignitie.
>
> But I these fauours did forget,
>> when thou with danger wast beset,
> Good Buckingham thy life I sold,
>> in hope to haue reward of gold. (Day 1: 64)

Beginning with a dramatic reference to a "wretched deede," the narrator proceeds to describe the treacherous act additively by stanza. We learn first that Banister betrayed the Duke of Buckingham, that Banister alone betrayed him, that Buckingham had been his benefactor, and that Banister betrayed his master for money, as the story unfolds in incremental detail. Gordon Hall Gerould argues that such parallelism in both phrase and idea "is of peculiar importance in balladry, not because in a comparatively few cases it is used to give form to the whole narrative, but because it is the commonest rhetorical figure employed to intensify some moment of the action, or repeatedly to give emotional colour to the story" (107). In this ballad, repetition heightens the sense of treachery and sharpens Banister's expression of remorse. The development of the plot is sustained by a pattern Buchan describes as one of alternating strong and weak lines (147). In stanzas 2 to 5, the first and third lines carry most of the narration, reinforcing the plot line with reiterations of the theme of betrayal:

> The noble Duke of Buckingham,
>> . . .
> I vnto him did them betray,
>> . . .

> I him betraid, and none but I,
>
>   . . .
>
> But sorrow now too late doth come,
>
>   . . .
>
> Whose life I ought to haue preseru'd,
>
>   . . .
>
> That from the dust had lifted me,
>
>   . . .
>
> But I these fauours did forget,
>
>   . . .
>
> Good Buckingham thy life I sold,
>
>   . . .

Most of the plot is revealed in these lines, and the alternating weak lines are therefore much less important to our understanding of the narrative. Their role is "primarily aural rather than conceptual," in Buchan's terms (150); in this case, they reinforce the theme and tone by repetition and provide the rhyme scheme of the stanza.

Turning to the corresponding Folio MS version, "Buckingam betrayd: by Banister," we find a set of formulaic strategies which hearken back to English alliterative poetry. The use of formulaic phrases and alliteration are characteristic of oral composition. Ruth Finnegan describes the role of recurring formulas in facilitating "fluent and uninterrupted delivery" of an oral narrative:

> The poet had a store of ready-made diction already tailored to suit the metrical constraints of the . . . line. By manipulating formulaic elements from this story – the "building blocks" – he could construct a poem based on traditional material which was still his own unique and personal composition. (*Oral Poetry* 60)

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The use of formulas as 'building blocks' in the composition of a ballad

can be seen in the first four stanzas of the Folio MS version of the

Banister ballad:

> YOU: Barons bold, ma[r]ke[6] and behold
> the thinge *that* I will rite;
> a story strange & yett most true
> I purpose to Endite.
>
> ffor the Noble Peere while he liued heere,
> The duke of Buckingam,
> he fflourisht in King Edwards time,
> the 4th King of *that* name.
>
> in his service there he kept a man
> of meane & low degree,
> whom he brought vp then of a chyld
> from basenesse to dignitye:
>
> he gaue him lands & liuings good
> wherto he was noe heyre,
> & then mached him to a gallant dame
> as rich as shee was fayre. (PFMS 270; HF 2: 255)

Verbal formulas fitting the metrical pattern of the lines are evident

particularly in stanzas 3 and 4, where we find the following examples: "of

meane & low degree," "lands & liuings good," and "as rich as shee was

fayre." The phrases are commonplace, but these "building blocks" fit the

rhythm and rhyme scheme and allow the singer to move fluently to the

next idea. Alliterative phrases are often formulaic as well, and here are

used to draw attention to the words, to enhance the sound, and to

reinforce meaning. Repetition of the explosive consonants in the phrase

"Barons bold" demands attention of the reader or listener, making this

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[6] The letter "r" inserted in the PFMS appears to be in Percy's hand (HF 2: 255n.).

an effective opening statement. Another pair of alliterative phrases, in stanza 31, "his daugter right of bewtye bright, / to such lewde liffe did ffall" (PFMS 272; HF 2: 259) reinforces meaning by emphasizing the family's dramatic reversal of fortunes. In stanza 8, the soft and hard vowel sounds of the lines "then Richard the 3d. swaying the sword, / cryed himselfe a kinge" (PFMS 270; HF 2: 256) strengthens the image by contrasting the two phrases.

The audience is engaged directly in the broadside version of the Banister ballad through the use of a role-playing narrator who begins the story *in media res*. The narrator identifies himself ("Banister with shame may sing") and sets himself in the midst of the dramatic conflict ("I him betraid, and none but I") (Day 1: 64). As Natascha Würzbach notes, the role-playing narrator personalizes the message, making his communication very effective:

> The mere presence of the speaker suggests authority; and the credibility, prestige, and attractiveness attached, together with the obvious membership of a certain class, are value categories which are more or less consciously projected by the receiver of the message on to the message itself. (46)

The brief formulaic opening, "If euer wight had cause to rue / a wretched deede, vilde and vntrue" (Day 1: 64), creates a textual space in which the narrator announces his emotional state before plunging into his story.

His exaggerated expressions of remorse put the focus on his suffering instead of on the death of Buckingham as a way drawing forth a sympathetic response from an audience. This focus on Banister turns a historical event, which took place some 120 years before the ballad, into a personal tragedy, with Banister singing in front of the audience. Focusing on the personal as a means of understanding a historic event is a feature found commonly in historical ballads and is still used today in popular history. The narrator repeats references to his performance several times ("his death doth make me sing this song"), taking issue with Jane Shore for her "mournefull song" and pleading with his audience, "All you that here my wofull song," to learn from his mistakes (Day 1: 65; 64). The narrative follows a typical ballad pattern of "telling a story in terms of its crucial or concluding incident," in Gerould's terms (5), beginning with the critical act of betrayal. The background is briefly sketched in but the focus is kept on the tragic consequences Banister endures as a result of his treacherous act. By playing the role of Banister, the narrator gives the song a sense of immediacy and draws the audience into the drama as the recipient of his communication. The references to his performance in the broadside have the effect of inscribing the audience onto the print object.

A different strategy is used in the manuscript version of the ballad, which is told in the third person, giving the narrator greater distance and impartiality, rather than the sense of immediacy found in

the broadside. Lacking the implied credibility of the broadside's role-playing narrator, the speaker in the manuscript version must claim authority for his tale. He deflects skepticism and makes a truth claim in one concise line, announcing his song as "a story strange & yett most true." Along with his truth claim, however, he creates a sense of confusion about the media he is using. He refers both to "the thinge that I will rite" and the story "I purpose to Endite," using a now obsolete form of the word to indict or indite (PFMS 270; HF 2: 255). In this context, the word may mean either "to inspire a form of words which is to be repeated or written down" or it may mean "to express or describe in a literary composition" (OED). The word "rite" places this version within the realm of literature and demonstrates a self-consciousness foreign to ballads, but the use of "endite" two lines later raises questions of media slippage.

While it is clear that the manuscript and printed versions of the Banister and Buckingham ballad are different, it is much more difficult to infer relations between these versions and their sources. If the relation between the extant texts of the Banister ballad is problematic, any attempt to reconstruct the originary history of these texts is a very doubtful project. These are typical of ballads where a wide divergence of versions has not resolved into a linear ranking of texts, in which an original text is succeeded by later versions corrupted in transmission. Rather these versions appear to be a series of redactions which seem to have their own raison d'être and integrity. In the Pepys version, we have

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a ballad told according to many set ballad conventions. The Percy Folio

MS version seems to have more "poetic devices," but rather than seeing

that as a loss of ballad authenticity, we must realize that, while telling a

different story, this version has its own coherence. As the print and

manuscript versions of the ballad of Banister and Buckingham reveal,

there is no evidence that the manuscript is closer to oral transmission

than the broadside. Research has demonstrated that broadsides slipped

into oral transmission in rural areas, occasionally making their way back

to town and into print again (Andersen 44-45), and, furthermore, that

many broadsides were printed from ballads in oral circulation (Gerould

239-42; Donatelli, "Percy Folio" 122-24). The broadside version of the

Banister ballad, with its use of ballad conventions, and the more poetic

manuscript version of the story demonstrate the interrelationship and

interpenetration of ballads in this era.

The second pair of ballad texts under study, entitled "A Lamentable

Ballad of the Ladies Fall" in broadside (Day 1: 510-11) and, more simply,

"Ladyes: ffall" in manuscript (PFMS 268-70; HF 2: 246-52), illustrates

the way in which the ballad opens a textual space for women. In both

manuscript and print versions, dialogue is the primary means of moving

the action forward, and the principal voice is that of the woman herself.

In the broadside version, of 152 lines in the ballad, the female

protagonist speaks in 56, or more than a third, the male in only 12. She

takes charge of the situation and calls for action, while he makes excuses and delays. On learning that she is pregnant, she tells her lover of her situation and offers him two stark choices, marry me or kill me to save my honour:

> Think on thy former promise made,
>   thy vows and oaths each one,
> Remember with what bitter tears
>   to me thou mad'st thy moan:
> Convey me to some secret place,
>   and marry me with speed,
> Or with thy Rapier end my life,
>   e're further shame proceed. (Day 1: 510)

Her lover responds with flattery and evasion, pointing to her parents' objections and his fear that they will kill him. She counters his objection by courageously offering to step between him and the sword, ready to die for love: "My self will step between the Sworde, / and take the harm on me" (Day 1: 510). Then, switching from the hypothetical to the possible, she offers a plan for their escape. She says that she will disguise herself as a male, leave her father's house and wait for her lover alone in the dark:

> Disguised like some pretty Page,
>   I'le meet thee in the dark,
> And all alone I'le come to thee,
>   hard by my Fathers Park. (Day 1: 511)

In this ballad, the woman is strong, resourceful, and decisive. She quickly takes control of the situation, determining the best course of action. When her lover fails to appear, she returns home to face her fate alone; eschewing self-pity she tells her maid, "Let none bewail my

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wretched case / but keep all persons out" (Day 1: 511). Because she

dominates the dialogue, we see the situation from her point of view, and

the lover is seen through the female gaze, appearing in a particularly

unflattering light.

Ballads on the theme of the fallen woman were common in early

modern England, but in this ballad story the lady's masquerade echoes

another theme as well – the transvestite heroine who opens up new

imaginative possibilities for women's lives. The fallen-woman ballad

generally reinforces women's place in the social order, portraying the

consequences for women of breaking society's rules. The Pepys collection

includes a number of such ballads: "A Loue-sick maids song, lately

beguild, by a run-away Louer that left her with Childe" (Day 1: 371); "The

CONSTANT LADY, and fals hearted squire, being a Relation of a Knights

Daughter near Woodstock in Oxford-shier, that dy'd for Love of a Squire"

(Day 5: 285); along with advice to avoid such a fate, "The Virgins A.B.C.

or, An Alphabet of Vertuous Admonitions, for a Chast, Modest, and well-

governed Maid" (Day 1:500). Although the story of Lady's Fall is set

within the same thematic framework as these ballads, the heroine, by

playing the role of a man ("some pretty Page"), charts a different course.

Her spirit and determination place her in the ranks of what Dianne

Dugaw calls the transvestite heroines, or women warriors, found in

ballads such as "Mary Ambree," "The Famous Woman Drummer," and

"The Gallant She-Souldier." These heroines, motivated by love,

masquerade as men, often going to sea or into battle. Typically in these ballads, Dugaw argues:

> the story is placed within, and indeed ultimately justifies itself by the rules of the heterosexual, male-dominated social order. Thus, a woman ventures from her father's house where we find her at the beginning of the ballad to her husband's where we find her at the end. Nonetheless, the story's middle, by turning that world upside down, calls into question its immutability (4).

Like the women warrior ballads, Lady's Fall begins and ends conventionally, with a woman motivated by true love. In this case, however, her love is not reciprocated, she is abandoned and returns home to face the consequences of violating society's rules. Nevertheless, by playing the role of a man, even for a short time, she creates a new imaginative model for women's lives. Such a heroine "prompts – even forces – us to look in new and provocative ways at the intersecting of gender identity and heroism" (Dugaw 3-4). A conventional theme, the fallen woman, is handled in such a way in this ballad that it both opens new possibilities and reinforces the existing social order.

Although the two versions of the ballad are very similar, the broadside gives a stronger, more dramatic voice to the female protagonist. It includes this emotional plea urging her lover to action, a plea that is omitted from the manuscript version:

> Come, come, my love, perform thy vow
>   and wed me out of hand,
> O Leave me not in this extream,
>   in grief always to stand. (Day 1: 510)

The broadside allows the woman this expression of passion and at the same time it presents her as logical and responsible, taking charge of her life. In this version, the woman is very clear that it is her honour that is at stake, and she tells her lover that she will protect him from death:

> Dread not thy self to save my fame,
>   and if thou taken be,
> My self will step between the Sworde,
>   and take the harm on me;
> So shall I scape Dishonour quite
>   if so I should be slain;
> What could they say? but that true love
>   Did wo[rk] a Ladies Bane. (Day 1: 510)

In the manuscript version, the woman's approach is very different. She chides her lover for fearing for his own honour ("dread not your liffe to saue your fame!"). As in the broadside, she offers to step between him and the sword but, perhaps sarcastically, she says she is doing it to protect his honour:

> my selfe will step betweene the sword
> to take the harme of thee;
> soe may you scape dishonor quite. (PFMS 269; HF 2: 249)

The woman is a person of action in both versions, but the broadside presents her as a more forceful, strong-minded and powerful character. Also unique to the print version is the admonitory ending. Not content to let the story speak for itself, this version includes the type of moralizing

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coda that became more common with the spread of literacy and cheap print:

> Too true alas this story is,
>   as many one can tell.
> By others harms learn to be wise
>   and thou shalt do full well. (Day 1: 510)

The admonitory ending became common with broadside circulation, whereas traditional ballads reinforced social norms implicitly. The old ballads, according to Buchan, were "descriptive rather than prescriptive," influencing the audience though example instead of "moral precept" (82). The moral lesson tacked onto the end of the broadside not only attempted to drive the point home, but it allowed the ballad singer to direct his comments to his immediate audience, holding their attention longer.

We turn finally to the legendary tale of Hero and Leander, a ballad set in the distant past and far away, a tragedy of the idealized love of heroic figures. The ballad is found in the broadside "Leanders loue to loyall Hero (STC 17763; Day 1: 344-45), and in the manuscript "Hero: &: Leander" (PFMS 455-57; HF 3: 295-300). The story of Hero and Leander creates a "ballad world," far removed from the experience of ordinary people in setting and characters (Buchan 76). Based on a classical legend, the ballad is set in ancient Greece on the Hellespont, the border between Europe and Asia. Hero is a priestess of Aphrodite, much in love with Leander. Frustrated by parental opposition to their affair, Leander swims

nightly across the river to see Hero, who lights a lamp to guide him. One night, as a storm rages, Leander plunges into the river, but Hero's light has gone out, he cannot find the shore and drowns. When Hero sees his body on the beach, she jumps from a tower to join him in death. The noble characters, the setting distant in time and place and the tragic end are representative of the ballad of legend.

The imagery is simple and conventional, reinforcing the theme symbolically in a way that is easily understood by everyone. In both print and manuscript versions of this ballad the imagery is highly codified, used primarily to support the story line, but a close reading of the ballad in both media reveals its differing effects. Most of the symbols are simple and primarily visual – the lamp, often a symbol of spirit, and the river, with its connotations of life, death and renewal. The use of such imagery gives immediacy and interest to the ballad, but it also provides a deeper subtext, moving the story from a tragic romance to a parable of love, loss and redemption. More forceful imagery is used to portray Hero's awakening, previewing her death. In the broadside version:

> When Hero faire awakt from sleepe,
>   and saw her Lampe was gone,
> Her senses all be nummed weare
>   And she like to a stone.
> Oh from her Eyes then Pearles more cleare,
>   proceeded many a dolefull teare, fa la,
> Presaging that the angry flood
>   had drunke Leanders Louely blood, fa la. (Day 1: 345)

When Hero realizes what has happened, the imagery turns from cold and white stone to hot and red blood. The broadside exhibits a chilling trace

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of the vampire in the lines, "the angry flood / had drunke Leander's Louely blood, fa la" (Day 1: 345). The alliteration of "Leander," "Louely" and "la" emphasizes the adjective, an unusual choice to modify "blood." In the Folio MS version, which is very similar in language to the broadside, the same images appear, although a change in one word has a dramatic effect on the connotation:

> O! ffrom her eyes, then perles more Cleere, fa: la:
> Proceeded many a dolefull teare,
> Perswading *that* the angry flood
> had drunke Leanders guiltlesse bloode, fa: la: (PFMS 456;
>   HF 3: 299)

The manuscript version's reference to Leander's "guiltlesse bloode" is less discomfiting than the broadside's "Louely blood," but by giving an unnecessary reassurance of innocence, it succeeds in raising the question of guilt, reminding us that both Hero and Leander have transgressed the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. The idealized world created in the ballad, with characters who are larger than life in a remote setting outside the normal parameters of time and space where the normal rules do not apply, cracks a little with the appearance of the word "guiltlesse." No longer standing apart from the moral realm, the characters are closer to home, with lessons for ordinary lovers.

More significant, however, is the different effect an image may have in script and print. Like the narrator of "Buckingam betrayd: by Banister" in the Folio MS, the narrator of the Hero and Leander ballads refers to writing. In the first stanza of both versions (with one minor

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difference in spelling), the narrator uses the phrase "without all enuious blott" to describe the unsullied reputations of the two protagonists:

Two famous Louers once there was,
    whom fame hath quite forgot,
Who loued long most constantly,
    without all enuious blott;
Shee was most faire, and hee as true;
    which caused that which did ensue; fa la,
Whoose storie I doe meane to write,
    and tytle it, True Loues Delight, fa la. (Day 1: 344)

He reinforces the ink metaphor with the line, "Whose storie I doe meane to write," going so far as to mention the title he has chosen: "True Loues Delight." The reference to ink blots and writing resonates more in the manuscript version, where the reader is navigating through ink blots and written text than it does in the printed text. The different effects produced by the same image reflect the importance of including the material text in any analysis of the ballads, a topic to which we turn in the next chapter. As significant as the differences in wording, however, are the similarities between the print and manuscript versions of the ballad. Beginning with the first line, "Two famous Louers once there was" in print, and "Tow: ffamous louers once there was" in manuscript, the ballads are remarkably alike, demonstrating a close relationship between the ballads transcribed in the Percy Folio MS and ballads in print.

Scholars have tried for centuries to distinguish the "traditional" ballad from the broadside ballad; in fact, however, these categories have always

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overlapped. Child, Gerould, and Buchan have gone to great lengths to classify ballads according to their language, imagery or structure, but the evidence for claiming that one version is earlier or more authentic than another is very thin, as we have seen from this examination of three ballad stories in two different media. Albert Friedman contends that

> there are ballad texts but never a single, definitive text of a
> given ballad. Confusions and sophistications aside, any
> traditional variant is theoretically as good as another. One
> does not, as with literary texts, normalize or collate or
> genealogize in the hope of working back through different
> exemplars toward the nearest approximation of the author's
> original. (1)

As Friedman indicates, scholars have dissociated the ballad, with its quasi-legitimate status, from elite forms of literature, but even such a canonical text as Shakespeare's *King Lear* has now splintered into separate redactions. In *The Division of the Kingdoms: Shakespeare's Two Versions of King Lear*, Stanley Wells argues that "The Quarto and Folio texts of King Lear are distinct. There is no valid evidence that they derive from a single, lost archetype" (20). So too with ballads. We cannot establish a hierarchy of texts; instead each text is produced and consumed in a particular set of social conditions, such as in the privacy of the scribe's room or the commotion of the public marketplace. The crisis in ballad study, which took place as early as the eighteenth

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century, can be seen as a forerunner of the textual instability which was to catch up with literary studies in the postmodern era of the late twentieth century.

Chapter 3

Ballads as Material Artifacts

Reviewing the history of the ballads in both manuscript and print

highlights the variability of the text as a verbal artifact, but broadening

the focus to include the bibliographic as well as the linguistic codes will

allow us to explore the variability inherent in both the material and

performative dimensions of the text. A text is more than a sequence of

words on a page. McGann argues that:

> all texts, like all other things human, are embodied
>
> phenomena, and the body of the text is not exclusively
>
> linguistic. By studying texts through a distinction drawn
>
> between linguistic and bibliographical codes, we gain at
>
> once a more global and a more uniform view of texts and
>
> the processes of textual production. (*Textual Condition*
>
> 13-14)

Although the bibliographic level is usually considered subordinate to the

linguistic in a critical study of texts, both function interactively. Chartier

argues that "texts are not deposited in objects – manuscripts or printed

books – that contain them like receptacles, and they are not inscribed in

readers as in soft wax" (*Cultural History* 12). The dichotomy of

content/form breaks down upon close examination. Form *has* content; rather than a container, form can be seen as a set of interlacing relationships which not only support the verbal text but also influence its reception. In this chapter we will examine the material texts of printed and manuscript ballads, looking first at the spatial field as a whole for each medium and then turning to a closer examination of the material dimension of print and manuscript ballads as they proceed from beginning to end.

The Percy Folio MS has been preserved in the British Library under the shelfmark, Additional MS 27879. Even a quick perusal of the microfilm version of the text attests to its physical size. [1] The manuscript is vast, containing an eclectic collection of 195 lyrics, ballads and romances, all in verse; no prose has been included. Of its 268 folios, the first twenty-eight exist now only in fragments. The sheets have been folded vertically, and measure approximately 390 mm by 140 mm, after Percy's cropping (Rogers 41). Furnivall notes a reference in one of the latest ballads, "The King enioyes his rights againe," that indicates the ballad was written in 1643, and he estimates the date of the Folio MS transcription to be "about 1650, though rather before than after" (1: xiii). Gillian Rogers argues that such a large compilation could only have

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[1] In my research, I used a microfilm of the Percy Folio manuscript, as well as the Hales and Furnivall edition and the Day facsimile edition of the Pepys ballads. Three studies of the original Percy Folio MS have been very helpful to me in discussing the physical manuscript as a whole: Donatelli, "The Percy Folio Manuscript"; Groom, *The Making of Percy's Reliques*; and Rogers, "The Percy Folio Manuscript Revisited."

been collected and transcribed over a long period of time and, after examining the watermarks and changes in letter forms, she also suggests it was written from about 1642 to 1650 (44).

The manuscript contains a variety of materials composed over time, including songs, broadside ballads, romances, and metrical histories. The arrangement of items appears to be random, suggesting that "the compiler wrote in what he could get when he could get it" (Rogers 44). Despite the random order, there do seem to be principles of selection at work. What is included is a wide selection of works that might easily have been lost to posterity, particularly those that focus on history and romance. Much of the material was popular literature of an ephemeral nature. The Folio MS includes such works as "Scotish Feilde," "Death and Liffe," and "The Marriage of Sir Gawain," which may date back to the fifteenth century, side by side with ballads of the seventeenth century, such as the three included in this study. In Rogers' words, the scribe "wittingly or not, performed a valuable service to posterity in preserving, in however imperfect a form, a microcosm of seventeenth-century popular taste" (63), as well as a sample of the metrical romances of medieval England.

What draws together this varied collection is the hand of the scribe. The MS was written in "a single, rather inelegant, seventeenth-century mixed hand" (Donatelli, "Percy Folio" 116), indicating that one person was responsible for the transcription. The identity of the scribe

intrigues scholars to this day, although very little is known about the circumstances in which the work was compiled. Rogers draws her evidence from content, arguing that the scribe was probably a man because a woman would be less likely to include some of the "loose and humorous" songs (61). The possibility of a female scribe cannot be excluded for reasons of propriety alone, however, as the history of the theatre in the seventeenth century indicates. Katharine M. Rogers reports that after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 women began to take their place in the rough and ready world of the theatre as actors and playwrights (vii). Given such public participation in a scandal-prone art form, it seems entirely possible that a woman would feel free to transcribe even the "loose" lyrics in a manuscript compiled for private use. Percy said that Sir Humphrey Pitt believed the scribe was Thomas Blount, from whose library the MS was purchased (HF 1: lxxiv), but scholars have argued that a man of Blount's erudition would not have made the slips and outright errors apparent in the manuscript (Donatelli, *Death* 2).

The Pepys Ballad Collection attests to a different media format than the Folio MS. Pepys, and his predecessor Selden, followed very different collection strategies from the Percy Folio scribe. Rather than transcribing copies of ballads, they preserved ballads printed on broadsheets in their original format. Limiting their collection to broadside ballads, Selden and Pepys eventually gathered 1,775 sheets of English

printed ballads of the seventeenth century, including a few final

additions on the death of William III in 1702 (Weinstein xvi). The first

volume, from which the three ballads in this study are drawn, contains

ballads collected by Selden covering roughly the first half of the century.

Around 1702, Pepys had the ballads mounted on sheets and bound into

five massive volumes, measuring approximately 358 by 340 mm; volume

1, which includes the earlier ballads printed on heavier paper, with one

on vellum, is 100 mm thick, and the other volumes are about 70 mm

(Weinstein xvii). The ballads preserved in print in the Pepys collection

and in manuscript in the Percy Folio provide us with an unparalleled

opportunity to study the variability of the text in its material form.

Textuality creates a visual field, a space in which meaning is

constructed. For ballads, whether in manuscript or print, the visual field

is the page and all the elements that comprise it – ink, type or script,

illustrations, rules and margins. These elements are very differently

deployed in manuscript and print. A broadside ballad is a single sheet of

paper, usually printed on one side. The sheet is large – for example, "A

Lamentable Ballad of the Ladies Fall" measures 270 mm high and 293

mm wide (Weinstein 77)[2] – closer in modern eyes to poster size than book

size. As a stand-alone text, the broadside ballad can be taken in with a

single glance, unlike a book, whose contents remain hidden until it is

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[2] Weinstein notes that the ballads were often partly torn or were cropped to fit
on a page when Pepys had them bound, and the measurements she gives are of
the ballad in its current state (xviii, xxxi-xxxii).

opened. The printed page begins with an enclosure, a frame of white space marked by the absence of ink. In the handpresses of the time, margins were necessary; the type page, comprised of both type and illustrations, was held in place on all four sides in the chase by non-printing strips and wedges of wood (Gaskell 78-80). The margins created a type page whose corners were, of necessity, squared off. Within this marginal enclosure, black-letter broadside ballads adhere to a common style of layout that changed only slightly throughout the seventeenth century, a conventional format that belies the often unruly subject matter, which ran from adultery through incest and treachery to violence. The ballad sheet is partitioned into three sections – beginning, middle and end – each of which serves a different function. In broadside ballads, the format that emerged is comprised of the following: the beginning includes a title, tune direction and woodcuts, the middle contains the ballad set in columns of black-letter type with a dash of roman, and the end concludes the text and identifies the bookseller, and, less frequently, the author and printer (Weinstein xviii-xvix, xxiv-xxv, xli).

In contrast to the broadside ballad, which is a discrete text, the ballad in the Folio MS is part of a larger corpus of work. The visual field emphasizes this larger whole: rather than one ballad per page, a new ballad begins at the end of the previous text, usually part way down a page, and, after continuing for two or three pages, ends when a new work begins. The manuscript is a generous size, with the pages measuring

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approximately 390 mm long and 140 mm wide, after Percy had it trimmed and bound (Rogers 41). Unlike the broadsheet, a rectangle that must fit snugly in a printer's forme, the page of the Folio MS was entirely available to the scribe, who was free to decide how to deploy the text. Such freedom often demands an organizing principle, and this scribe chose a strong, ruled, vertical line on which to hang the text. The line defines a page with a wide left margin, taking nearly one-quarter of the page, and narrow margins on the top, bottom and right side. This spatial layout creates two distinct columns, one dominated by white space, the other by dense black script. Rather than creating an enclosure as the margins of the broadside do, these margins cannot contain the text. The scribe crosses the line most dramatically by outdenting the first word of the ballads. In "Buckingam betrayd," the first word, "you," is written in the margin as large as the title. Although their page layouts are very different, the manuscript ballad, like its broadside cousin, is partitioned in three, with a beginning, middle and end, but the functions of the three parts are much more limited in the manuscript.

Barthes reminds us that the beginning of a text is "an extremely sensitive point – *where to begin?* The *said* must be torn from the *not-said,* whence a whole rhetoric of beginning *markers*" ("Struggle" 129, italics in original). Broadside ballads begin with three elements: the title, a tune direction and woodcut illustrations. The function of this first section is to draw

attention to the ballad; as a commodity for sale, the broadside ballad had

to attract the eye of the passerby, literate or not. The mix of media in this

first section, title, tune and woodcut, encourages the onlooker to read the

ballad, scan the woodcut, listen to the singer, sing along, and finally pick

the ballad up and pay for it. The title is first among the beginning

markers. Titles were sometimes brief in the early ballads, such as "The

New Broome" (Day 1: 40), but they soon expanded into metatexts,

describing the properties of the ballad (Würzbach 80-90). "The broken

Contract; or, The Perjured Maiden. Being A Relation of a young Maid in

Kent, who had promised to Marry a young Merchant, went afterwards to

Marry a Knight, and was struck Dumb as the Minister was Marrying of

her" (Day 5: 329) is an example of a title that introduces the characters,

sets the tone and highlights the dramatic events of the narrative. The

prominent position of the title, centred over the first two columns, as well

as the wealth of information it provides, makes it an effective portal into

the ballad. The play of typefaces clearly distinguishes the title from the

rest of the ballad. In the Pepys ballads, the title is set in roman type in a

much larger size than the gothic type of the body text. In our examples,

the long title of "A most sorrowfull Song . . . of Banister" is set

approximately 50 percent larger than the body text and "Leanders loue to

loyall Hero" is set twice as large (see Figures 1 and 2). Although the

broadsides are known as black-letter ballads for the gothic type that

predominates, roman and italic type are deployed to distinguish certain

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+ A most forrowfull Song, setting forth the miserable end of *Banister*, who
betraied the Duke of *Buckingham*, his Lord and Master.
To the tune of, Liue with me and be my loue,

Figure 1a: "A most sorrowfull Song . . . of Banister, " cols. 1 and 2 (Day 1: 64).

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The second part. To the ſme Tune.

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Figure 1b: "A most sorrowfull Song . . . of Banister," cols. 3 and 4 (Day 1: 65).

types of information, such as titles, proper names, editorial comments and publishers' imprints (Weinstein xix). Many ballads display a dual structure, with a second title, centred over the third and fourth columns, such as "The second part of Leanders loue to Loyall Hero:/ To the same tune" or, more tersely, "The second part. To the same Tune." found on "Song of Banister." In the latter ballad, the divided structure is carried through to the content, with the second part introducing the story of Jane Shore, and integrating it into the main story.

The tune direction is the second element at the beginning section of broadside ballads, placed immediately beneath the title and usually given without musical notation. The page did not contain elaborate instructions for singing the ballad, merely the title of the tune. Albert B. Friedman argues that it was only in the 1690s that there was "readable musical notation furnished with songs sold in this fashion" (*Revival* 48). Claude M. Simpson, in his monumental work, *The British Broadside Ballad and Its Music*, traces the relation between the ballads and the tunes for which he believes they were designed, observing that "one explanation for the popularity of the broadside is that it was written to music already familiar" (xi). He contends that the tune "Come live with me and be my love" used in "A most sorrowfull Song . . . of Banister" was common to several other ballads, including the very popular "The woful Lamentation of Mistris Jane Shore." The latter ballad was so popular that the tune came to be called "Shore's Wife" (Simpson 121).

Leanders loue to loyall Hero.

To the tune of Shackley hay.
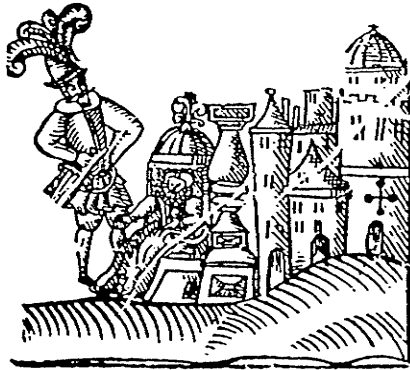
Two famous Louers once there was,
  whom Fame hath quite forgot,
The lord hath no consent,
  without all malons blott;
Shee was most faire, and hee as true:
  which caused that which did ensue, fa la,
Whose storie I doe meane to write,
  and tytle it, True Loues delight, fa la.

Leander was this young-mans name,
  right Noble by descent:
And Hero, she whose beautie rare,
  might giue great loue content.
He at Abidos kept his Court,
  and she at Sestos liued in sport, fa la,
A Riuer great did part these twaine,
  which caus'd them oft poore soules complaine, fa la.

Euen Hellespont, whose Current streames,
  like lightninges swift did glide,
Accursed Riuer that two hearts,
  so faythfull must deuide.
And more, which did augment their woe,
  their parents weare each others foe, fa la,
So that no Ship durst him conuey,
  vnto the place whereas his Hero lay, fa la.

Long time these Louers did complaine,
  the misse of their desire.
Not knowing how they might obtaine,
  the thing they did require.
Though they were parted with rough seas,
  no waters could Loues flames appease, fa la,
Leander ventured to Swim
  to Hero, who well welcomed him, fa la.

Euen in the midst of darkesome night,
  when all thinges silent were,
Would young Leander take his flight,
  through Hellospont so cleare;
Where at the shore, Hero would bee,
  to welcome him most louingly, fa la,
And so Leander would conuey,
  vnto the chamber where she lay, fa la.

Thus many dayes they did enioy,
  the fruits of their delight,
For he oft to his Hero came,
  and backe againe same night.
And she for to encourage him,
  through Hellospont more bold to swim, fa la,
In her Tower top a Lampe did place,
  whereby he might behold her face, fa la.

And by this Lampe would Hero sit,
  till prying for her loue,
That the rough waters to Leander,
  would not offend sue proue.
Be mild quoth she, till he doth swim,
  and that I haue well welcomed him, fa la;
And then euer rage and rore amaine,
  that he may neuer goe hence againe, fa la.

Now boistrous Winter hasted on,
  when windes and Waters rage:
Yet could it not the lustfull heate,
  of this young Youth asswage:
Though windes and waters raged so,
  no Ship durst venture for to goe, fa la,
Leander would goe see his Loue,
  his manly Armes in floods to proue, fa la.

Figure 2a: "Leanders loue to loyall Hero," cols. 1 and 2 (Day 1: 344).

The lecond part of Leanders loue to Loyall Hero :
To the fame tune.

Then lept he into Hellofpont
  defirous for to goe,
Into the place of his delight,
  which he affected fo.
But windes and waues did him withstand,
  fo that he could attaine no land, fa la ;
For his loues Lampe looking about,
  faire Hero flept, and it gone out, fa la.

Then all in vaine Leander stroue
  till Armes could doe no more,
For naked he depriu'd of life,
  was cast vpon the fhore :
Oh had the Lampe still stayed in,
  Leander liuelesse had not been, fa la.
Which being gone, he knew no ground,
  becaufe thicke darkneffe did abound, fa la ;

When Hero faire awake from sleepe,
  and faw her Lampe was gone,
Her fenfes all be nummed weare
  and she like to a stone.
Oh from her Eyes then Pearles more cleare,
  proceeded many a dolefull teare, fa la,
Prefaging that the angry Flood,
  had drunke Leanders Louely blood, fa la.

Then to the top of highest Tower,
  faire Hero, did afcend :
To fee how windes did with the waues,
  for maisterfhip contend :
And on the Sandes fhe did efpie
  a naked body Liuelesse lye, fa la ;
And looking more vpont, fhe knew,
  it was Leanders bloodlesse hue, fa la.

Then did fhe teare her golden haire,
  and in her griefe thus fayd,
Accurfed Riuer that art still
  a foe to euery Mayde,
Since Hellen faire, in thee was drownd,
  name'd Hellofpont tha'rt euer found, fa la ;
And now to fee what thou canst doe,
  thou hast made me a mourner too.

But though thou didst attach my Loue,
  and tooke him for thine owne :
That he was only Heroes deare,
  hencefoorth it fhalbe knowne.
Then from the Tower faire Hero fell,
  whofe woefull death I figh to tell, fa la
And on his body there did die,
  that loued her most tenderly fa la ;

Thus ended they both life and loue,
  in prime of their young yeares :
Since whofe vntimelie funeralls
  no fuch true loue appeares :
Untill more Conftant loue arife,
  their names I will immortalize, fa la.
And heauens fend fuch as haue true friends,
  as faithfull hearts, but better ends, fa la.

FINIS. quoth William Meash.

Imprinted at London for I. W.
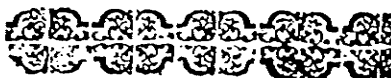
Figure 2b: "Leanders loue to loyall Hero," cols. 3 and 4 (Day 1: 345).

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"Leanders loue to loyall Hero" was sung to "Shakley Hay," which may

have originated as a dance tune; this tune was sung to half a dozen

ballads (Simpson 647, 648). No broadside other than "A Lamentable

Ballad of the Ladies Fall" states the tune direction "In Pescod Time," but

several ballads were sung to a tune entitled "the Lady's Fall" (Simpson

369). The tune direction was usually introduced with a descriptive

adjective, such as "pleasant," to entice the listener even when this

description added a gruesome note, as in "Deaths Dance. To be sung to a

pleasant new tune, called; Oh no, no, no, not yet, or the meddow brow"

(Day 1: 56-57).

The third element found at the beginning of a broadside ballad is

also the most visually dominant on a busy page – the illustrations, or

woodcuts. By the early seventeenth century, most ballads were

illustrated, and the importance of the cuts is indicated by the proportion

of space they take in relation to the text block. "A Lamentable Ballad of

the Ladies Fall" gives the largest proportion of space to woodcuts, well

over one-third of the type page (see Figure 3). "Leanders loue to loyall

Hero" gives just under one-third of the page to illustrations and "A most

sorrowfull Song . . . of Banister" one-fifth.[3] Giving such prominence to

illustrations belies the idea that the dominance of the alphabet quickly

followed the advent of print. Though it has been said that images have

become more prominent in our day, here at the very dawn of print

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[3] All calculations are the author's.

culture the image is given a significant proportion of space. The woodcuts were seldom made for the ballad they illustrate but were taken from a supply of stock figures, used and reused wherever possible. Positioned at the top of the text columns, illustrations provide a transition between the horizontal title and the strong verticality of the ballad stanzas. Although the illustrations run across the top of the columns, and can be read from left to right, they do not demand a linear reading, but rather allow the eye to roam at will, scanning rather than reading. With their strong visual appeal, woodcuts call particular attention to the bibliographic codes.

Unlike the broadside, which begins with fanfare, in the Folio MS the beginning marker of a new ballad is a horizontal line drawn directly under the last line of the previous text, marking the end of that work and the beginning of a new one. The horizontal line runs perpendicular to the scribe's vertical rule which descends like a plumb line down the page, defining a single long, narrow, ruled column of text. The title is framed by a pair of horizontal rules, running at right angles to the central vertical rule, effectively breaking up the page. Unlike the long and evocative title of a broadside, the MS title is shortened to provide the minimum information required in the fewest possible words, with colons separating the main words: "Buckingam betrayd: by Banister"; "Hero: &: Leander:"; and "Ladyes: ffall." Colons were commonly used from the fourteenth century on to indicate either a full stop or a shorter pause (Petti 26).

57

1049.

A Lamentable Ballad of the Ladies Fall.

Tune is, In Pescod time,

Mark well my heavy doleful Tale,
 you Loyal Lovers all,
And heedfully bear in your breast
 a gallant Ladies fall:
Long was the woo'd e're she was won,
 to lead a wedded life,
For sully wrought her overthrow,
 before she was a wife.

Too soon alas she gave consent
 to yield unto his will,
Though he professed to be true,
 and faithful to her still:
She felt her body altered quite,
 her bright hue waxed pale,
Her fair red cheeks turn'd colour white,
 her strength began to fail.

So that with many a sorrowful sigh,
 this beauteous Maiden mild,
With grievous heart perceiv'd her self
 to be conceiv'd with Child:
She kept it from her fathers sight,
 as close as close might be,
And so put on her silken gown,
 none might her swelling see.

Unto her Lover secretly
 she did her self betray,
And walking with him hand in hand,
 these words to him did say:
Behold said she, a Maids distress,
 my love, brought to this woe,
Behold I go with Child by thee,
 but none thereof doth know.

The little Babe springs in my womb
 to hear the Fathers voice,
Let it not be a Bastard call'd,
 sith I made thee my choice:
Come, come, my love, perform thy vow,
 and wed me out of hand,
O leave me not in this extream,
 in grief alwayes to stand.

Think on thy former promise made,
 thy vows and oaths each one,
Remember with what bitter tears
 to me thou mad'st thy moan:
Convey me to some secret place,
 and marry me with speed,
Or with thy Rapier end my life,
 e're further shame proceed.

Alas my dearest Love, quoth he,
 my greatest joy on earth,
Which way can I convey thee hence
 without a sudden Death?
Thy friends they be of high degree,
 and I of mean estate,
Full hard it is to get thee forth
 out of thy Fathers gate.

Dread not thy self to save my fame,
 and if thou taken be,
My self will step between the Swords,
 and take the harm on me:
So shall I scape Dishonour quite,
 if so I should be slain,
What could they say but that true love
 did work a Ladies bane.

Figure 3a: "A Lamentable Ballad of the Ladies Fall," cols. 1 and 2 (Day 1: 510).

58

A nd not fear any further harm,
 my self will so devise,
That I will go away with thee,
 unseen of mortal eyes:
Disguised like some pretty Page,
 I'le meet thee in the dark,
And all alone I'le come to thee,
 hard by my Fathers Park.

And there, quoth he, I'le meet my love,
 if God do lead me life,
And this day month without all fail,
 I will make thee my wife.
Then with a sweet and loving kiss,
 they parted presently,
And at their parting brinish tears,
 stood in each others eye.

At length the wished day was come,
 whereby this lovely Maid,
With lovely eyes, and strange attire,
 for her true lover staid.
When any person she espy'd,
 come riding o're the plain,
She thought it was her own true love,
 but all her hopes were vain.

Then did she weep and sore bewail,
 her most unhappy state,
Then did she speak these woful words,
 when succourless she sat:
O false forsworn and faithless wretch,
 disloyal to thy love,
Hast thou forgot thy promise made,
 and wilt thou perjur'd prove?

And cast thou now forsaken me,
 in this my great distress,
To end my days in open shame,
 which thou might'st well redress:
Wo worth the time I did believe,
 that flattering tongue of thine,
Would God that I had never seen,
 the tears of thy false eyne.

And thus with many a sorrowful sigh,
 homewards she went again,
No rest came in her watery eyes,
 she felt such bitter pain.

In travel strong she fell that night,
 with many a bitter throw,
What woful pangs she felt that night,
 doth each good woman know.
She called up her waiting-Maid,
 that lay at her Beds-feet,
Who musing at her Mistris woe,
 did straight begin to weep:
Weep not, said she, but shut the door,
 and windows round about,
Let none bewail my wretched case,
 but keep all persons out.

O Mistris call your Mother dear,
 of women you have need,
And of some skilful Mid-wives help,
 the better you may speed:
Call not my Mother for thy life,
 nor call no women here,
The Mid-wives help comes now too late,
 my death I do not fear.

With that the Babe sprang in her Womb,
 no Creature being nigh,
And with a sigh that broke her heart,
 this gallant Dame did dye:
This living little Infant young,
 the mother being dead,
Resign'd his new received breath,
 to him that had him made.

Next morning came her Lover true,
 affrighted at this news,
And he for sorrow slew himself,
 whom each one did accuse:
The mother with the new-born Babe,
 were both laid in one grave,
Their Parents overcome with woe,
 no joy of them could have.

Take heed you dainty Damosels all,
 of flattering words beware,
And of the honour of your name,
 have you a special care:
Too true alas this story is,
 as many one can tell.
By others harms learn to be wise
 and thou shalt do full well

Figure 3b: "A Lamentable Ballad of the Ladies Fall," cols. 3 and 4 (Day 1: 511).

In these ballads they seem to be used more for decorative effect, balancing the two characters mentioned or, in the case of the last-mentioned ballad, separating the two words. The title is written in a large, cursive script, inscribed more carefully than the main text, with small flourishes such as exaggerated descenders and a dash, but its function is less to draw attention to a particular ballad than to provide a point of reference for the reader leafing through the text. In the manuscript ballad, Barthes' concept of the "unsaid" includes much that is "said" in the broadside: the music, the descriptive title and the illustrations. Most significant is the lack of any indication of tune; the manuscript ballad is not a work to be heard or sung; rather it is to be preserved for private reading and consultation – an object in an archive, removed from the noise and life of the marketplace. Unlike the broadside ballad, which maintains a link with its origins in oral song and narrative, the manuscript ballad preserves a sequence of words, bereft of the music that brought the words to life.

Once the text has been launched, both print and script ballads deploy a transitional marker: in the broadside, the initial capital letter of the first, and often the third, column is dropped and set in roman type in a size larger than that of the text; whereas in the manuscript ballad the first word is set in the same large cursive script as the title and outdented in the left margin past the vertical border. All the ballads under study

exhibit the use of the dropped initial capital (broadsides) or the outdented first word (manuscript). In "A Lamentable Ballad of the Ladies Fall," for example, a dropped initial capital letter begins the first word of the first and third columns, "Mark well my heavy doleful Tale" and "And not fear any further harm." The capitals are roughly twice the size of the body type, larger even than the title, and their visual weight draws the eye from the woodcuts to the text. In the Folio MS version, "Ladyes: ffall," the first word, "Mark" is similar in size and style to the title of the ballad (see Figure 4). The word is outdented, with the final letter, *k*, crossing the vertical rule and leading the eye directly to the first line of the ballad. In both cases, these design elements provide not only a link between title and text but also a point of transition, encouraging entry into the ballad itself. The use of a decorated initial letter dates back to the work of medieval scribes, who used a large, coloured initial, sometimes containing a miniature painting, to create a focal point and move the eye of the reader into the text. Early printers continued this practice, occasionally hand-painting the initials, and even today the use of dropped or raised capitals is common in newspapers and magazines. The use of a dropped capital in cheap print added a slight flourish to the text, while creating a little more work for the typesetter, who would have to adjust space around this outsize letter while setting the first two lines on his composing stick. Perhaps it is a measure of the intermingling of

Figure 4: "Ladyes: ffall" (PFMS 268), showing the first few lines of the ballad following the end of the preceding ballad (partial page only).

script and print that the printed ballads copy the style of initial used by scribes, while the transcribed ballads use an outdented word.

Most of the ballads in the Pepys collection are set predominantly in black-letter or gothic type. Originally developed to mimic the handwriting of scribal manuscripts (Gaskell 17), gothic type was being phased out for most printed works in the seventeenth century, but it continued to be the standard type for ballads until the beginning of the eighteenth century. Because black letter was common in certain types of texts, such as bibles, prayer books, psalm books, statutes, royal proclamations, primers and other sanctioned texts, it was familiar to seventeenth-century readers. As a type that was both accessible and authoritative, its deployment lent weight and seriousness to the ballad genre. Although black letter predominates in the early ballads, a combination of black and white letter is found in every printed ballad, with the single exception of the Luther ballad (Weinstein xix). The body of the text is normally set in black letter, as it is in all three ballads studied here, giving the type a dense, compact look. The letters are narrow and tall for their width, set tightly with no letter spacing, and even the round letters, such as *a* and *o*, are cut at an acute angle that emphasizes the verticality of the type columns. Rather than the serifs of roman type, gothic letters have diagonal couplings and footings, giving the text a sharp, narrow, angular appearance. Roman type is used to distinguish different types of information in the body of the text, as well as the title.

In "Leanders loue to loyall Hero," proper names, such as Leander, Hero and Hellespont are printed in roman type. The change in font makes the names stand out clearly, and appears to give equal weight to the two lovers and the river that caused their deaths. Like gothic or black-letter type, roman (and its cursive version italic) was derived from a formal book hand (Gaskell 20). Identified more with humanist writing than with religious or official works, roman type is wider, less angular, more open, and easier to read. Although on first sight these ballads appear to be in black letter, closer examination reveals a pattern of distinguishing types of information and structural elements with the use of roman and italic.

The Percy Folio ballads also, at first glance, demonstrate strong verticality, with a single column of text beginning off-centre, flush to a left-hand line so straight that it appears to be ruled. This marginal rule provides a structural spine for the text, a starting point for each line. The script's appearance of stability is betrayed by the scribe's careless sprawl. Furnivall notes changes in the formation of the letters *c* and *x* in the last part of the manuscript (HF I: xiii). Rogers notes that "the shape of certain secretary forms – *a, b, o, p* and *y* – is relatively stable and that of certain others – *d, e, f, g, k, r, s,* and *t,* – remarkably unstable," with the secretary *h* alternating indiscriminately "with italic *h* in combination with italic *t,* frequently in the same line" (43). Contractions are common, *yt* for that, *thé* for they, *wh* for which, *pted* for parted, all of which appear in stanzas 3 and 4 of "Hero: &: Leander" alone. Punctuation is lighter

than in the broadside; an eight-line stanza will have one or two punctuation marks whereas nearly every line of the broadside ends in a comma, colon or period. The size of the script often varies, beginning small, "as if the scribe were concentrating better at the beginning of a piece and afterwards let his had resume its normal sprawl" (Rogers 44). "Ladyes: ffall" is a good example, with the first two lines smaller and written more carefully than the following lines. The somewhat erratic hand and uneven inking reveal changes in pressure, but there is nowhere near as much variability as in the broadsides, where uneven inking and show-through often impede legibility.

The closing strategies used by broadside and manuscript ballads reflect the fact that broadsides are public commodities, whereas manuscripts, though they may circulate among a small coterie of friends, are essentially private documents. The closing segment of the broadside has as many as three elements. First, there is usually a formal closing with the word, "Finis," printed in capitals and centred beneath the last stanza, as in "A most sorrowfull Song . . . of Banister" and "Leanders loue to loyall Hero," where it is also italicized. The use of "finis" may be a carryover from the medieval manuscript, where it marked the end of a text. Given the informal and ephemeral nature of broadsides, a formal ending in Latin is surprising; it also seems redundant, since the ballad ends at the bottom of the sheet, and the broadside is a discrete object.

Only in "A Lamentable Ballad of the Ladies Fall," where the third and fourth stanzas run to the bottom of the text page, is there no space for a formal closure. When "Finis" is used, it marks the end of the ballad text and provides a transition to the next two segments, the very rare authorial acknowledgement and the ever-present bookseller's name. "Leanders loue to loyall Hero" is the only ballad among the three studied to mention a creator or author, coding him as a speaker or ballad singer with the attribution, "Quoth William Meash." Unlike a phrase such as "written by" or "told by," the use of the archaic "quoth, or "says," gives the ballad the weight of authenticity, as if it had been caught in performance. Although an author is named for one ballad, publishing information is given for all three, indicating its central importance. The publisher was not a printer, but usually a bookseller who had the right to distribute the ballad (Watt 76). "A most sorrowfull Song . . . of Banister" was "Printed for F. Coules," a bookseller located just outside the Old Bailey near Newgate. Watt lists him among the ballad partners; he was active in publishing from 1624 to 1663 and by 1640 published some four dozen ballads that are extant (275). "A Lamentable Ballad of the Ladies Fall" was "Printed for W. Thackeray, and T. Passinger," printers who were active from 1664 on, making this the latest of our three ballads. "Leanders loue to loyall Hero" was "Imprinted at London for I. *W.*" Weinstein reveals that it was printed by W. White for J. White in 1614 (53). William was one of the official ballad publishers and John,

his son, took over from him in 1618 (Watt 77). Before the introduction of copyright legislation in 1709, authors had few rights and usually sold their ballads for a small one-time payment. The printer had the exclusive right to print any text he had lawfully acquired, a right he asserted and jealously guarded.

The Percy Folio ballads end even more abruptly than the broadsides, with one word, "ffinis" and a horizontal line marking the beginning of a new text. Even this word can be shortened to "ffins," as in "Buckingam betrayd: by Banister" and "Ladyes: ffall," although in "Hero: &: Leander" the scribe spells the word in full. A glance through the manuscript indicates that this ending is common. It is interesting that both broadside and manuscript ballads end so formally, with a clear sense of closure. Unlike the broadside, however, the manuscript ballad acknowledges no mediation: no author is named, no source is given, and the scribe remains anonymous. As the ballad began, so it ends, with a straight-edge horizontal rule across the page announcing the beginning of the next work.

What is gained and lost when a ballad manifests itself in one medium rather than another? The broadside is an artifact rich in significance, showing traces of oral performance and market appeal, but much of this significance is lost when it is transcribed. The illustrations and the tune direction are the most obvious omissions; indeed the ballad loses its

graphic and aural appeal. Even the broadside's limitations, such as cheap paper, broken type and hurried production draw forth an innovative response from the typesetter and printer, a creativity that is lost when the broadside is translated to script. The social and economic context are integral to the original publication, but this context changes drastically with transcription. Just like the old Coles bookstores, with their bright fluorescent lighting and clear shelf markers, which were designed to demystify the activity of buying a book for people who would never set foot in a store that looked like the library of a gentlemen's club, so too the broadside was designed to appeal to people in the midst of their daily activities who would not usually go out of their way to look for something to read. Both were designed to build new markets for print. On the other hand, the ballad in transcription gains an aura of presence and authenticity that a printed artifact lacks. The scribe places the work in a context of his own choice, uniting very different items in one textual field and creating a work that did not exist before. The manuscript also allows emendations and comments by the original copyest and later readers, providing a site for dialogue, a facility that is lost when an oral or manuscript ballad is set in type. The chirographic text may appear to be closer to orality, as it did to Bishop Percy, but the misleading nature of the aura of authenticity and presence is very evident in the case of a ballad transcribed from a broadside, since such qualities would never to ascribed to the original text.

Chapter 4

Performativity in Broadside and Manuscript Ballads

Ballads grew out of a rich tradition of narrative song in a culture in
which oral and scribal values were deeply rooted. In a revisionist study of
early modern texts, *Unediting the Renaissance*, Leah Marcus describes
the culture of the time as "a milieu in which oral and written forms
jostled up against each other and competed for the allegiance of
audiences," and she argues that the "literate and humane late-
Elizabethan theatre . . . was grafted onto, and still partly immersed in, an
earlier, predominately oral and popular theatrical culture" (155). The
ballad was an integral part of this oral culture, performed and sold
wherever a crowd gathered. At public events, such as markets and fairs,
the competition for attention was fierce. Burke notes the terms used to
describe the variety of performers, some of whom could be found in any
large assemblage of people:

> they included ballad-singers, bear-wards, buffoons,
>
> charlatans, clowns, comedians, fencers, fools, hocus-pocus
>
> men, jugglers, merry-andrews, minstrels, mountebanks,
>
> players, puppet-masters, quacks, rope-dancers, showmen,
>
> tooth-drawers and tumblers. . . . Many of the names

overlapped because the functions overlapped; . . . A

"comedian" was not confined to comic parts. A "player" . . .

might play instruments, play a part, play the fool, or all of

these. . . . A buffoon or clown might sing or improvise

verses, fence or dance on a rope, tumble or juggle with balls

in the air. So might a minstrel. (94)

The ballad was a worthy contender in this clamorous crowd. Würzbach's

suggestion that, "in a sense, the text is the score for the balladmonger's

activity as a showman" (41) reveals the interdependence of the printed

broadside and the oral performance. The seventeenth-century English

ballad cannot be traced along a linear progression through oral

composition and performance, manuscript copy and print transmission.

Rather, in this liminal period, oral communication, writing and print

existed in a symbiotic relationship as part of the cultural mix. Ballad

texts multiplied rhizomically, in various media at different times,

providing ample evidence of the interpenetration of different media forms.

In the previous chapter, we examined broadside and manuscript

ballads as material artifacts, delineating their bibliographic codes. In this

chapter we will look at the performative aspect of the ballad text, viewing

it, in McGann's terms, as a material "event or set of events, a point in

time (or a moment in space) where certain communicative interchanges

are being practiced" (*Textual Condition* 21). He maintains that we "need

to do more than explain what our texts are saying (or what we think they

are saying); we need to understand *what they are doing in saying what they say*" (*Social Values* viii). Our understanding of what a text means must be accompanied by an understanding of how it means, of how meaning is performed through the text. Rather than envisioning the concepts of representation and performance as polar opposites, we can explore the performativity of representation itself. When a text is read in different media, this change affects its performative parameters, and any such change throws the different media forms of the same text into sharp relief. Broadside ballads are conceived very differently from manuscript versions of those ballads, especially since the ballad itself is a genre that is so determined to be performative, in such details as its use of dialogue, direct address and refrain. The ballad performs through oral, visual and linguistic signifying codes; by analyzing how these codes operate in print and script we can explore the performativity of texts in different media formats.

The broadside ballad is first and foremost a commercial commodity and thus it might be compared with present-day advertisements, which combine language and visual effects to reach a target audience. Given these circumstances of its circulation, for the broadside to succeed it must "enter the space of the receiver," because the receiver is needed to complete the circuit of communication (Williamson 41). This entry, if successful, results in the "receiver" buying the ballad. The broadside

begins with the juxtaposition of text and tune, locating the text in a multi-media nexus of performance. Donatelli points out that, "As a mixed media object, the broadside involved the eyes, ears, voice, and hands, a pattern of consumption which is recorded both in its visual format and its explicit references to the handling, reading, and viewing of this print object" ("To Hear" 350). The broadside ballad is steeped in oral performance, which the ballad-seller uses for the purpose of drawing attention to his wares in a public venue. To a public unfamiliar with literary texts, the ballad singer provides a congenial way to approach the printed word through song. The broadside is a street medium, at home in the clamour of the marketplace. The long and evocative title typical of the broadside, for example, "A most sorrowfull Song, setting forth the miserable end of *Banister*, who betraied the Duke of *Buckingham*, his Lord and Master," announces the subject, sets a tone of remorse and very efficiently catches peoples' attention. Würzbach describes the use of such "metatextual advance information" in the title to draw in a crowd (80-90). The ballad's close links with narrative song are often mentioned in the title or in stanzas of the text; for example, the title of the Banister ballad begins with the description, "A most sorrowfull Song," and ends with an appeal to listeners, "All you that here my wofull song" (*S*. 37). Although it is unusual for a ballad to be identified as such in the title, "A Lamentable Ballad of the Ladies Fall" is an example of the explicit use of the term. As the references to song indicate, the ballad is a participatory

event on the street. The audience is encouraged not only to listen to the song, but is often invited to join in the singing. The refrain in "Leanders loue to loyall Hero" repeats the phrase "fa la" at the end of the sixth and eighth lines of each stanza, a very simple device that encourages people to join in and share a communal song. The meter is repetitive and the lyrics are easy to sing. The words are conventional, familiar from other contexts, making it easy for the audience to join in.

While there is much to suggest the oral performance of the broadside, the vestiges of any set musical performance are left unrecorded on the page. Broadsides do not normally include musical notation, but they do indicate the tune direction immediately under the title, and it may not have been necessary to provide the music for a popular songs like "Oh Susannah" or "Greensleeves." Friedman notes that although "bars, rests, signatures, and notes" are sometimes found on earlier broadsides, "the notation is almost always crude and frequently a downright cheat" (48-49). Naming the tune without giving the musical notation may presuppose that the tune is widely known as Simpson contends (xi), however the printed text offers the reader few clues. Although the broadside ballad was historically performed as drama and spectacle, the material text provides only a few markers of oral performance, and omits the most important, the musical notation.

Although it underperforms orally, the broadside ballad is remarkably performative visually. In spite of following a conventional

format, as described in the previous chapter, the broadside is a complex visual field in which illustrations, borders and text contest with one another for attention. Indeed, the conventional layout of the broadside functions much like brand identification, just as the uniform design of Harlequin romances as print objects tells the reader exactly what to expect in terms of character and plot. Romance novels are generally published in a standard format, with similar covers designed to assure the reader that the same triumphal story of heterosexual love is being told again through new characters and settings. Like the Harlequin romance, the broadside is designed on a grid which organizes space vertically and horizontally, as is western writing itself. Against this rough grid, the ballad predictably etches out on a broadsheet three visual "arenas" on one page, with places for a title, illustrations and text. The content of any ballad receives this standardized treatment, and it has been one of the banes of ballad scholars that apparently both so-called "traditional" and "broadside" ballads were published in exactly the same format, without any distinction between a ballad of "wheat," such as "Sir Andrew Barton" (Child 167), and a ballad of "chaff" (in the critics' eyes, at least) such as "An inconstant female' (Day 1: 370). With regard to both ballads and Harlequin romances, the readily recognizable visual format creates what is called in marketing visual "brand identification" which is meant to convey both the commodity and the narrative it contains. The sale of Harlequin romances depends not on the reputation of the author

but on the publisher's ability to forge an "association in the consumer's mind between a generic product . . .and the company name through the mediation of a deliberately created image" (Radway 40).] The package and the contents are one or, in McLuhan's terms, "the medium is the message."

The visual field of the broadside ballad is dominated by woodcut illustrations, which can take up as much as one-third of the type page. Designed to be seen in the public arena, rather than contemplated in private, they are large, bold and eye-catching, given pride of place above the columns of text. Often dismissed as crude, with little illustrative value to the text (Würzbach 9), woodcuts are nevertheless an integral element of seventeenth-century broadsides, performing several different functions. At the most elementary level, woodcuts increase the audience by attracting people who are not yet comfortable with print. Thus the images themselves perform by presenting a story that can be understood in visual terms, even if the script cannot be read. An image is both a record, reflecting the story in the text, and a creation, constructing a story that has a life of its own, and the tension between the two destabilizes the text. Although the literate world would have less need for images in the transmission of knowledge, "the early ages of print put iconographic illustrations into circulation as they had never been before" (Ong 130). Watt notes that although broadside ballads were among the first printed texts to reach rural cottagers, devotional images, "more

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pictorial than textual," printed on single sheets, had been available for parishioners to take home a century before the broadside appeared (131). The broadside's large illustrations provide a link to these familiar images of the past.

The broadside's illustrative elements make us look; they encourage us to position ourselves in front of the ballad, receptive to its message, ready to reach out to touch (and buy) it. Placed above the columns of text, they take precedence to it. They also perform an educational function by guiding the eye linearly. The woodcuts are usually placed across the sheet just below the title and tune direction, a position that encourages the eye to read them in sequence from left to right, like a line of text, giving them a visual syntax. For example, in the broadside, "A most sorrowfull Song . . . of Banister," the woodcuts relate to one another before they relate the to text (see Figure 1). In the first illustration, the king looks toward the second, drawing the eye to the right; the second illustration shows a man whose body is leaning to the right; and the third shows a man staring out at the viewer, with a border to his left. In these images, a vector, a line that draws the eye, reinforces this relationship. In the first picture, the vector runs along the king's arm to the man looking at him; in the second, it curves along the line of the man's body to the right; and in the third the left hand draws the eye toward a man facing us front and centre. The first two figures are seen in profile, a position that leaves the viewer detached from them; the third

confronts the viewer directly, eliciting maximum involvement (Jewitt and Oyama 135). As with illustrations used in an advertisement, the woodcuts are placed in juxtaposition to the text, but the relationship is not always clear, requiring the reader to infer the connection between the two. As Berger notes: "The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled" (Ways 7). The illustrations do not have a meaning, but rather they have "meaning potential, a field of possible meanings" (Jewitt and Oyama 135). Because of the lack of clarity, the ballad "enters the space of the reader" in Williamson's terms, putting him or her to work creating meaning, making it more difficult to turn away. To someone who does not know the ballad, the images portray a world of men, particularly men of high status. It is a world of clear hierarchy, of work and of travel, a public world with no reference to women, home or private pleasures. Although the ballad's world is far removed from the life of ordinary people, the images are presented at eye level, rather than from above or below, equalizing the power relationship between viewer and image.

Illustrations were not designed for individual ballads but, in a manner parallel to that of modern advertising, were drawn from the formulaic and conventional woodcuts that a print shop had at hand. While literary scholars have often seen illustrations as subordinate to or illustrative of verbal meaning, the stock illustrations, because they are not necessarily suited to the particular narrative, often create complexity

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of perception rather than clarity, much like the famous "postal horn" of Thomas Pynchon's, *The Crying of Lot 49.* If you start seeing the same woodcut in many contexts, the woodcut itself will become a self-contained sign. Ong notes that iconographic images "are akin to the 'heavy' or type characters of oral discourse" (130); they present a story that can be understood solely in visual terms. Although illustrations are often seen as complementary to the text, corroborating the story and offering redundancy, stock illustrations are more likely to add ambiguity. As we have seen in Figure 1, the images that are found on many ballads carry ready-made cultural codes, leaving the viewer free to choose some meanings and ignore others. Although a caption would limit the available meanings of an illustration, captions are seldom found on broadsides, leaving no check on the proliferation of meaning. The images on broadsides, therefore, are independent of the text and they construct their own story.

The woodcuts in "A Lamentable Ballad of the Ladies Fall" reveal how stock figures allow interpretations to expand (see Figure 3). Centred over the first two columns of text are two woodcuts of a man and woman dressed in the costume of the nobility and positioned so that they appear to be looking at and reaching out to each other. The figures are the same size, and the cuts are placed together on top of the first two columns, giving a unitary appearance. The woodcut of the man, however, has the remnants of a frame around it, the only clearly visible part of which is a

border between the two figures, separating him somewhat from the woman. The next two illustrations have thick borders and clearly stand alone. In the first, a visibly pregnant woman is lying in bed while her maid stands at her side; in the second, a man stands beside his horse, and the cut is positioned so that he appears to be looking toward the woman in bed. She is ready for birth and he is ready for travel. Rather than containing the story, the four woodcuts in this ballad, as in the others, open up further possibilities. In the text, the man kills himself after the death of his lover and their infant, but the final woodcut raises at least two other possibilities: first, that he arrived too late to take her away, and second, that rather than kill himself he fled. The text and illustration are in communication with one another, but each presents slightly different possibilities, leaving the reader to interpret. While the text assumes the man was remorseful, the familiar image of a man and his horse tells a different story – of heading for the open road and a new life elsewhere.

The re-use of a stock image brings with it traces of earlier stories in other ballads. That most of these woodcuts are used many times over is easily confirmed with a quick perusal of the first volume of the Pepys Ballads. The cuts of Hero and Leander are reused most often, over half a dozen times each, including one appearance for Leander as the reformed Banister (Figure 2b; cf. Figure 1b). Using the same illustration for a legendary romantic hero and a bitter English traitor indicates the range

of possible interpretations these woodcuts permit. Even the scene of the town with its raging river in "Leanders loue to loyall Hero" (Figure 2) makes another appearance in "O yes. If any Man or Woman, any thing desire, Let them repaire forthwith unto the Cryer" (Day 1: 272-73). Stock illustrations not only allow meanings to proliferate through their lack of precision, but in becoming signs themselves, they help to destabilize the text.

When presenting culture visually, the eye needs a series of guideposts, such as the white margin that surrounds a page, the spacing of the line of type, or column headings. These semiotic codes provide a "gestalt for organizing the way the eye will scan the page and its heteronomous characters" (McGann, *Textual Condition* 108). The broadside uses a conventional set of parameters of early print culture, such as borders and cast fleurons that contest with woodcuts and text on the page for the eye of the viewer, guiding the eye as it traverses the page. "A most sorrowfull Song . . . of Banister," for example, uses a sidepiece placed vertically as a central spine to divide the first two columns of text (Figure 1). The border runs from the base of the illustrations down the first seven stanzas, and is anchored to a set of three cast fleurons, which extend another stanza and a half, close to the bottom of the page. This centering device acts a core, demarcating two separate columns of text. Just as the woodcuts encourage the eye to read from left to right, the centred sidepiece, by visually separating the

columns of text, guides the eye vertically down the type column. The border motif is repeated with the same effect between the third and fourth columns of this ballad, which was originally a conjoined oblong sheet. In "Leanders loue to loyall Hero," cast fleurons frame the top and bottom of the original left side of the sheet (Figure 2). This frame separates the printed page from the white space surrounding it, emphasizing the unity of the type page with its illustrations and text. On the right side, double rows of cast fleurons set vertically act as sidepieces to the two woodcuts atop columns three and four, with another double set cast horizontally at the bottom of column four, squaring off the type page. In the early ballads, cast fleurons are used for the same purpose as headpieces and rules in the later works (Weinstein lii); in this case they not only frame the text, they also provide a decorative function in balancing the page. "A Lamentable Ballad of the Ladies Fall" presents a contrasting approach (Figure 3). Unusual in an early ballad, this broadside has no ornamentation aside from the four woodcuts atop each column. A larger proportion of white space gives a very open, inviting appearance, and, as in modern page layout, allows the type to take on greater prominence. The sheet is less dynamic than the other two ballads, in which the text must compete for attention in a busy visual field. Its relatively static appearance foreshadows a page layout that is very familiar in literary works today. Nevertheless, the eye does not demand a static page. Berger contends that:

> We never look at just one thing; we are always looking at
>
> the relation between things and ourselves. Our vision is
>
> continually active, continually moving, continually holding
>
> things in a circle around itself, constituting what is present
>
> to us as we are. (9)

The broadside's use of type ornaments helps to guide that "continually active, continually moving" eye across the textual field.

Type itself also has a performative function in broadside ballads. The myth that type is transparent, like Beatrice Warde's crystal goblet, allowing meaning to shine through like fine wine reflects the New Critic's fallacy of depth. Instead, we need to look at the inkings on the surface of the paper. Since the late middle ages, Gothic itself has 'performed' the past, as it does even now in deliberate signs of nostalgia, such as "Ye Olde Tea Shoppe." The black-letter typeface common to broadsides also performs the past; like many early typefaces, gothic type is modeled on a book hand and retains traces of its origins in script. Gothic gained authority from its use in bibles, prayer books, school books and other sanctioned works, in script and later in type. The authority of the type was reinforced by the letter forms because Gothic was designed as a lower-case alphabet, unlike roman type where "the capitals have the authority and the lower case is a series of improvisations (Chappell 33-34). This design, foregrounding lower-case letters, makes gothic a readable typeface, appropriate for the body of the ballad. Roman type,

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with its dramatic ascenders and descenders, is more likely to catch the eye and is easier to take in with a glance, making it particularly useful for display type such as the title.

Type depends on discriminations, and we know that ascenders and descenders can take very different forms just as capitals perform visually in relation to minuscule letters. With black letter established as the predictable media conveyance, roman is used sparingly to distinguish information, such as the title, the tune direction, the distributor and the author's name, if given. In "Leanders loue to loyall Hero," roman type is also used to set off proper names: Leander and Hero, the main characters, the river, Hellespont, and the cities in which the two lovers lived, Abidos and Sestos (Figure 2). The contrast between roman and gothic in the body of the ballad is dramatic: roman is lighter in weight, and the rounded letters slow the eye, leaving it to linger a split second longer, breaking up the visual rhythm of the text. Roman type has a disturbing effect on the solidity of the type page, adding a sense of lightness, of play, into the spiky, narrow and dense gothic text.

Spacing itself creates a visual field for the performance of type. The entire broadsheet may be considered a potential field for visual performance, wherein the marks of the printing press ink certain places and not others. The blank spaces left behind "perform" meaning. An excellent example is the convention of line length, which continues to be used even in contemporary poetry as an instrument of meaning. Further

undermining the verticality and solidity of the text is the variation in line length caused by the indentation of every second line from the left margin and by the ragged right typesetting, both of which have a practical function. Beginning every other line with a lower case letter and indenting the line encourages the eye to carry on reading to the end of the phrase. The ragged right typesetting keeps letter-spacing tight and even, making the words clearly legible. These two design elements work together to discipline the eye to read from left to right and then to proceed vertically line by line down the page. This vertical movement, however, is interrupted by the addition of space to define stanzas within the ballad. The effect of spacing is clear when "A Lamentable Ballad of the Ladies Fall," which has approximately a half-line space between its eight-line stanzas, is compared to "Leanders loue to loyall Hero," with an eight-line stanza separated by a full line space, and "A most sorrowfull . . . Song of Banister," with four-line stanzas followed by one line space (see Figures 3, 2, 1). The latter ballad is written in rhyming couplets, but the stanza division occurs after every fourth line, turning the stanza into a quatrain. With a line space after every four lines, this ballad has a much stronger stanza structure than "A Lamentable Ballad of the Ladies Fall" which has a barely perceptible space between its eight-line stanzas. The full effect of these stazaic divisions is lost to us without the musical notation which would support such a break. Although the type and its

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layout retains most of the elements of its performativity, some aspects remain unclear when only the broadside remains.

The titles and first few verses are crucial in capturing the visual attention of the audience and drawing them into the text. The broadside ballad's oral and visual performativity is strengthened by its performance at the textual level. The title does more than identify the ballad and describe its contents; along with the introductory stanzas it sets an emotional tone, introduces the characters and summarizes the action. Würzbach argues that this "metatextual advance information" functions like a trailer for a movie or television program, whetting public interest and advertising the goods for sale (80-81). She outlines similarities between the trailer and the opening words of the ballad: "their function, their public nature due to their wide distribution, the need to attract a fluctuating audience, and finally the way they are structured" (81). Most of the information given in a trailer can be packed into a ballad title. For example, "A most sorrowfull Song, setting forth the miserable end of *Banister*, who betraied the Duke of *Buckingham*, his Lord and Master" introduces the characters, Banister and Buckingham, describes their relationship as "Master" and "servant," excites curiosity by mentioning betrayal, and sets an emotional tone within a moral framework – the servant is "wretched" and the song "sorrowfull." The first three stanzas intensify the emotional tone as the singer presents himself as Banister: "I him betraid, and none but I" (Day 1: 64).

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In another example, the title and first stanza work together to create a flow of information (see Figure 2). "Leanders loue to loyall Hero" introduces the two protagonists and announces that it is a story of love and loyalty. The title is typeset twice as large as the text, but is tied to it through the large initial dropped capital "T" in line 1, set in a size at the midpoint between the title and text. In the first stanza, Hero and Leander appear as archetypal lovers, "famous," constant, without envy, "faire" and "true." No hint is given of the action, but the outcome is telegraphed in advance by the manner in which the lovers' qualities are set in counterpoint to the ominous forecast of "that which did ensue." The audience has been prepared for the tragic love story that follows.

In the case of "A Lamentable Ballad of the Ladies Fall," the title is short but clear. It effectively foreshadows the plot, as a "lady's fall" could mean only one thing – illicit love ending in pregnancy – as is confirmed in the first two stanzas. The ballad describes itself as a lament, but rather than a lament for the death of two people, the lady of the title and her child, it is a lament for her loss of virtue. The title promises a sad song in a sanctimonious tone, and the ballad delivers. Ballad "trailers" not only let the reader know what to expect in content and tone, they attract interest by the use of descriptive adjectives and superlatives, such as "A most sorrowfull Song" and "A Lamentable Ballad." As Würzbach notes, the broadside is unlike many other printed works of this era which would begin with a dedication to a patron (89), and the fact that the ballad was

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able to fashion its introductory words into an advertising tool indicates

the importance of sales over patronage in this genre.

The performative codes of broadside ballads described above –

oral, visual and textual – function like paratexts, or "liminal devices . . .

that mediate the relations between text and reader" (Macksey xi). In

Gérard Genette's schemata, paratexts, whether they are seen as part of

the text or not, "surround it and extend it, precisely in order to *present* it,

in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense: to *make*

present, to ensure the text's presence in the world, its 'reception' and

consumption. . ." (1, italics in original). Texts never circulate

independently of their paratexts; they always take a material form of

some kind. The broadside, with its need for a large audience and

readership, is very well served by a dramatic paratextual apparatus.

Although much of the ballad's oral performativity remains a matter of

speculation, the visual and textual elements of the ballad's performance

are clearly embedded in the material text.

While the broadside has the volume turned all the way up, as a print

object that creates and caters to a mass audience, the manuscript

belongs to an order of writerly performance that envisions silence and

private space. Ong suggests that "the shift from oral to written speech is

essentially a shift from sound to visual space" (117). While true of the

manuscript, however, this shift not does apply to the printed broadside,

which continued to reside in the noisy, street-wise world of orality. And the Percy Folio MS, while it belongs to the quiet order of "literary" writing, frequently overlaps the world of broadsides. If the broadside plays to the crowd, the manuscript ballad has a tradition of being a private performance, which harkens back to the scriptoria of the middle ages, though there is good evidence that medieval writers intoned words while they wrote. Yet when we look at the Percy Folio MS, there is no question that the public performance of the broadside is rendered in a different key by this very different media form. The Folio MS has long been known as a crucial text for preserving ballads, and yet scholars handling this text have constantly had to explain how so much late renaissance noise, jumble, and visuality could have ended up in such decorous circumstances, in the study of its scribe. The Folio MS is maddeningly silent when it records songs that elsewhere we have evidence were given voice. Buchan remarks with frustration on the lack of interest shown by ballad editors through the nineteenth century in recording melodies, noting that even Child devoted only a few pages to it in his *English and Scottish Ballads.*

Although the manuscript ballad may be a transcription of an oral presentation, the music is silent, unremarked by the scribe who focuses on the verbal text. The Percy Folio lacks all musical notation, omitting even the tune direction conventionally and prominently displayed on the broadside. The only indication that any of the three ballads under

discussion were ever sung is the refrain repeated after every sixth and eighth lines in "Hero: &: Leander." The scribe writes the refrain variously as, "fa la" (14 times), "fa la la" (13 times), "fa" (twice) and in the last line writes "finis" in its place. This carelessness indicates the lack of significance the scribe placed on the refrain, a lyrical reminder of the ballad's life in song. This refrain itself offers conflicting evidence of the ballad's musical history: while it reveals traces of the oral performance, it also disrupts the metric measure, turning lines of tetrameter into pentameter and hexameter at random. Refrains are found in many ballads, and they can provide some indication of how the ballad was performed – by one singer, or by a singer and chorus. In this instance, however, the scribe of the Percy Folio only tantalizes the reader with his inscription.

While the broadside accommodates a large participatory audience – people can look at the woodcuts, listen to the ballad singer, or sing along, and they can buy a copy to take home to share with friends and family – the Folio MS suggests a consistent writerly project. The scribe had the same paper at hand throughout the project, though the watermarks vary, and an eclectic collection of sources, some of them quite lengthy, as well as a consistent pen nib and manner of writing. These details suggest standardization throughout a massive project, consisting of over 500 sides of paper. The Folio MS, comprised of long, narrow sheets, would be difficult to read in a public place, and

impossible to write. Because of the size of the writing and the cramped script, the manuscript can be read easily by only one person at a time, and its dimensions make it best written and read at a desk or table in the quiet of a library. One would have to stand very close to the manuscript to read it, suggesting a private space. If the broadside underperforms orally, the manuscript ballad is mute.

The visual field of the Folio MS is rich, but the coordination of signs follows a considerably different system of annotation than early print, a fact which is notable since many of the scribe's models may have been printed texts (Donatelli, *Percy Folio* 120-25; Rogers 45-61 *passim*). The material text is a record of performance – both the original performance that was the scribe's source, now lost to us, and the performance of the copyist. The scribe's performance is very much in evidence in the single hand in which the manuscript is written. His hand belongs to the larger "public hand" of the mid-seventeenth century, but he uses that system to inscribe privately, for himself, revealing an overlap of public and private functions. He uses a consistent writing system throughout the manuscript, no matter what his materials, standardizing them into one text. Although not aesthetically pleasing, the writing has the effect of unifying and homogenizing the varied contents of the manuscript. In effect, it performs type, and levels it into his hand. The early type fonts had been designed to imitate handwriting, but Jonathan Goldberg argues that script in turn came to resemble type:

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Although the first scripts in printed books had been

reproductions of individuals' hands, in the course of the

sixteenth century, the process was reversed. Individuals'

hands were reproductions of reproductions. The technology

was no betrayal of the hand; it was its realization . . . (136)

Although the Folio scribe's hand was not so regular that it would be

mistaken for type, the ideal was demonstrated by John Davies, a writing

master, whose "fair hand is so fair that it is not immediately apparent

whether it is written by a man or produced by a machine – a realization

of the ideal anonymity of the practiced hand" (Goldberg 130). If the hand

performs type, it also performs script; therefore the scribe has a system

and keeps performing the same way. Donatelli notes that several features

of the orthography are typically scribal (*Percy Folio* 120). Contractions are

common ("*t*" for that, "*w^{ch}*" for which, "*K*" for King, "*y^r*" for your, *q^{th}* for

quoth), but the scribe does not seem to use them to save time and space

because he also doubles final consonants ("yett," "forgott," "blott") and

adds an "e" at the end of words ("shee," "constantlye," "dignitye") and an

unnecessary ampersand at the beginnings of lines ("& then mached him

to a gallant dame") throwing off the rhythm. Finally, the manuscript

ballads, like two of the broadsides, end in similar fashion with the

colophon "finis" (shortened to "fins" in two of the Folio MS ballads), a

Latin finishing touch that strikes a formal tone in a popular ballad.

The page itself is a site of performance. The paper reveals watermarks at the tops and bottoms of the inner margins, consisting of "varieties of Norman pot, mostly banded and initialled and surmounted by a crescent" (Rogers 41). The existence of the watermarks indicates that the paper is of at least medium quality, and the initials in the pot, noted by Rogers as *E R, R P, C D,* and *R O,* generally indicate the maker (Gaskell 61). Crossing the page horizontally are chain-lines, leaving further traces of the paper's production. Superimposed on the page is the copyist's performance. The spatial layout can be seen as a "gestalt for organizing the way the eye will scan the page" (McGann, *Textual Condition* 108). Like the broadside, the manuscript text is surrounded by margins, although instead of print's "marges de silence" (Genette 34) these margins are very vocal, providing a space for the scribe's second thoughts and corrections. In the ballads, unlike some of the other parts of the manuscript, the scribe does not take the opportunity to make corrections very often. In his transcription of the middle English alliterative poem, "Death and Liffe" (PFMS 384-90), the scribe corrects even some small errors: canceling "that" after "euer" in a line reading, "Th[ou] may wary the weeke th*at* euer thou wast fformed" (l. 255) and adding the words "with my" in the margin to correct line 285 to read "As to haue a [f]lapp w*ith my* ffawchyon att thy fayre state" (Donatelli, *Death and Life,* 45, 47). However, in the ballads he ignores larger errors such as an extra line in stanza 30 of "Buckingam betrayd: by Banister":

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> ffor one of his sones for greeffe
> Starke madd did fall;
> the other ffor sorrow drowned was
> within a shallow running streame
> where euery man might passe. (PFMS 271-71; HF 2: 259)

In "Hero: &: Leander," he ignores some egregious errors, such as the spelling "Tow" for "Two" in the first word of the ballad, "siarin" for "swin" in stanza 6, and "himpettalaze" for "immoratlize" in the last stanza, but he does correct himself when he skips a line in the second half of stanza 11. The manuscript reads:

> O! ffrom her eyes, then perles more Cleere, fa: la:
> Proceeded many a dolefull teare, perswading *that* the angry
>   flood
> Had drunke Leanders guiltless bloode, fa: la: (PFMS 456)

The copyist has inserted the skipped line at the end of the second line, and has moved the refrain from the second to the first line. The line following this stanza is crossed out; it is illegible on microfilm and not noted in Hales and Furnivall, who transcribe stanza 11 as follows:

> O! ffrom her eyes, then perles more Cleere, fa: la:
> proceeded many a dolefull teare,
> perswading *that* the angry flood
> Had drunke Leanders guiltless bloode, fa: la: (HF 3: 299)

The correction reveals that the scribe was attuned to the shape of the stanza, if not to errors in single words. In the broadside ballad an error cannot be corrected and remains in print for the life of the text, for example, the line "I unto him did them betray" which should read "I unto them did him betray" ("A most sorrowfull Song . . . of Banister"). The

manuscript, however, allows second thoughts, commentary, and a dialogue with later readers.

The page is divided by a long vertical rule that guides the eye down the column of text, performing much the same function as the borders and cast fleurons of the broadside. Titles are framed by horizontal lines top and bottom, separating the ballad from the previous text (see Figure 4). The titles in the Percy Folio version have been shortened to fit the space available: "Buckingam betrayd: by Banister," "Hero: &: Leander," and "Ladyes: ffall." These short forms act much more as text identifiers, like chapter titles or catalogue entries, than as trailers to make us want to buy the ballad, giving no more than the briefest information to distinguish one ballad from another. Written in a cursive script much larger than the body of the ballad, the titles provide only enough information for the reader to find a particular text.

The preservation of the manuscript itself raises issues of performance. Although Percy had the manuscript bound, there is no question that the scribe was able to begin writing at the left margin of a recto page, indicating that the manuscript was not bound when he wrote. Binding the manuscript yields a second performance: collecting old things and keeping them together to create a new work, raising issues of what to include and exclude. What Pepys did for the broadside, the Folio manuscript scribe did for his texts, although he included a much wider range of materials than did Pepys.

The manuscript ballad, though very different from the broadside, can perform very well for the reader who is familiar with both manuscript conventions and print and does not need to be persuaded to choose a ballad. One major drawback notable in the Percy Folio MS, however, is the lack of an extant index. To find an individual work, the reader must turn every page until it appears, and the apparently random organization of materials provides no clues to guide the search. Rather than an elaborate paratextual apparatus designed to make the ballad "present" to the public, as is useful for the broadside, the paratext of the manuscript ballad is designed for quiet communication among serial readers with time to spare.

Our understanding of any text is dependent on its material media form, which sets up parameters for its very conception as "a text," for its manner and style and the circumstances of its inscription, and for its subsequent circulation, either individual or public or both. Methods of signification are media-specific, most readily apparent in ballad studies where orality and textuality are still up in the air despite the body of evidence that remains, much to the frustration of ballad scholars over the years. Our comparison of the Pepys broadsides and the Percy Folio MS, the two most important sources for all ballads, shows how these conceptual issues are physically inseparable from the texts, and that, as in Pynchon, the ubiquitous postal horn may be seen everywhere, only to

remain a performative sign which fails to convey the certainty of meaning. As we shall see in the concluding chapter, from the eighteenth century on, the ballad, in all its morphing, was uniquely positioned to challenge assumptions about textual stability, and therefore becomes a crucial historical site for the Mcluhanesque contestations of meaning and media which have exerted so much influence in the course of "literary" studies at the end of the millennium.

Chapter 5

Palimpsest: The Promiscuity of the Text

Having demonstrated the very complicated and rich textuality of but

three ballads in two sources, in closing I would like to show how

antiquarian collectors and scholarly editors tried to discipline this unruly

material, especially since it did not conform to the normative practices of

"authored" literature.   Even today, the ballad is represented in surveys

of literature as a sub-literary genre, a "queer" text that lived

promiscuously on the streets and in peasant cottages, picking up new

tunes and words along the way. It is contrasted to an elite literature

where upper-class men have ruled, both as authors and critics, and

where texts had the good sense to stay put according to the discipline of

what appeared to be an iron-clad concept of "authorial intention,"

although writers like Michel Foucault have shown us that this myth of

origins is but a fantasy.[1]

John Selden in the seventeenth century collected the core of

material for the first volume of what was to become the Pepys ballad

collection, but despite his ability to isolate, locate, gather, and preserve

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[1] See Foucault, "What is an Author?" and Barthes, "The Death of the Author."

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ballads as if they were museum pieces, he suggests in a note on the back

of the title page that these ephemera are light as the wind:

> you may see by them, how the Wind sits. As take a Straw,
>
> and throw it up into the Air; you shall see by that, which
>
> way the Wind is; which you shall not do, by casting up a
>
> Stone. More solid things do not shew the Complexion of the
>
> Times, so well as Ballads and Libells. (Day 1: x)

Working with his metaphor closely, we see that he views ballads as

insubstantial: where there is paper, he sees straw (possibly with

reference to the coarse paper that was used). This is a "textual straw"

that is light enough to float on the wind, as if ballads were dispersed by

air, spreading far and wide, almost promiscuous as they are carried even

into the taverns and the homes of cottagers. Ballads were cheap and

ubiquitous, part of the fabric of everyday life; they belonged to a

handicraft of life that produced, not *Paradise Lost*, but thatched roofs

and hats. Yet, while Selden characterizes ballad broadsides as "texts-

lite," he accords them substantial political power, for these trifles show

which way the "wind" blows, something that more solid textuality, which

in his metaphor he refers to as "stone," could not do.

Where Selden saw text as "straw," Thomas Percy saw

ballads as possessing the heft of monumental stone, a fact which is

reflected in his lengthy and weighty title, *Reliques of Ancient English*

Poetry: consisting of Old Heroic Ballads, Songs, and other Pieces of our

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earlier Poets, Together with some Few of Later Date, first published in

1765. In keeping with the eighteenth-century interest in Gothic ruins,

Percy portrayed this "parcel of old ballads" as the crumbling ruins that

had survived, like the churches and cathedrals of England, as remnants

of a romantic past in which minstrels sang songs that hearkened back to

the foundational moments of British society. Percy claimed an

aristocratic pedigree for the same songs that had been but straw to

scholars a century earlier, demonstrating how strongly hermeneutic

predilections can create completely different contexts for the same text.

To Percy the manuscript evoked the early Goths, who, in his version of

history, "laid the foundations of national character, culture, and politics"

(Groom, *Making* 86). By the sixteenth century, however, minstrels who

were once "admired and revered," had fallen into such disrepute that

they were lumped in with "rouges, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars" in the

vagrancy statutes (1:377). To Percy the oral performance had thus fallen

from grace just as literacy was spreading throughout England. He

believed that the Folio MS, created in the midst of this textual shift,

captured chorographically the last vestiges of a lost oral culture.

Percy thus conceived of his editorial function in the manuscript as

a form of rescue and restoration. Given the number of editions that the

Reliques went through (four during Percy's lifetime, and at least fifty

more in the remainder of the nineteenth century), there can be no

question that he succeeded spectacularly in redeeming Selden's straw by

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turning it textually into stone in the pages of his edition and by providing

it with a good British pedigree. In order to accomplish this, Percy

"performed" the past for an eighteenth-century audience for whom, as

Donatelli has observed, "the pseudo-medieval was often more attractive

than the genuine article" ("Medieval Fictions" 436). According to what is

now a foundational narrative itself, Percy rescued the Folio MS from the

hands of a domestic realm clearly identified with ignorant women: he

found the manuscript in the home of his friend Humphrey Pitt, "lying

dirty on the floor under a Bureau in ye Parlour: being used by the Maids

to light the fire" (HF 1: lxxiv). Percy speaks to the sorry state of these

papers, which were a pile of loose sheets, with several leaves missing or

ripped in half, in a "mutilated state . . . unbound and sadly torn" (HF

1:lxxiv). Clearly, his encounter with ballads was altogether different

from that of Selden, a century earlier, who was busy catching straw in

the wind.

Percy's three-volume edition, which for well over a century was *the*

edition of ballads, called for a restoration project, although, as we know,

restoration of ruins in the eighteenth century could be, like Walpole's

Strawberry Hill, medieval fantasies rather than fact. At first, Percy

literally bound the pieces together, thereby making a book out of what

had been a pile of loose papers. Interestingly, he cleaned up his

antiquarian discovery when he conceived of the idea of showing it to

Samuel Johnson. But binding produced yet further injuries to the

manuscript since the top and bottom of lines were cut off at various

places (HF 1: xii). This first physical step in dealing with the manuscript

led to his larger editorial project of producing an anthology that would

please "both the judicious antiquarian, and the reader of taste" (Percy

1:11). As many critics have observed, in service of this project, Percy

rewrote much of the literature he had found. He felt free to write on the

manuscript itself and changed lines, prettified rhymes, corrected meters

in a wholesale way to cater to a higher class of audience, a fact that was

announced when Percy dedicated his second edition to "Elizabeth,

Countess of Northumberland, and in her own right, Baroness Percy, . . ."

hoping to use the manuscript as his own vehicle for social climbing.

There is no question that Percy's *Reliques* won literary honor for both its

author and its texts, yet it is ironic that the same free hand consigned

Percy to what Albert Friedman calls "the special hell reserved for bad

editors" (205). But perhaps it is important to take Percy on his own

terms, in his own historical moment. Against a backdrop of

medievalism, Percy saw himself, Donatelli argues, as "a latter-day

minstrel, trying to reshape the romance ballads of the Folio MS so that

they might better please his eighteenth-century audience" ("Old Barons"

232).

 With the weight of his voluminous compilation of *Reliques*, replete

with notes, glosses, and essays on English history and literature, Percy

sought to close the book on the unwieldy Folio MS once and for all. But,

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as I have attempted to demonstrate throughout this thesis, texts refuse

to sit still. A century later, Percy was excoriated by the next editors of

the manuscript, John W. Hales and Frederick J. Furnivall. Their edition,

Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript, was published in 1867-68 in three

volumes. Their encounter with the physical text has also been recorded,

but this time, the rescue was not from the hands of maids, but rather

from the hands of Percy himself. During his lifetime, Percy had so

identified himself with the manuscript – the fact that it still bears his

name shows that he continues to haunt this text – that he made it

impossible for others to gain access to it, especially critics like Joseph

Ritson, who was aware of Percy's bowdlerization but lacked the evidence

to prove it, though he tried vigorously (Johnston 125-37). Percy's family

continued to deny scholars access to the manuscript after his death, and

Furnivall made it clear that he considered their lack of cooperation a

national disgrace: "no one was allowed to know how the owner who

made his fame by it had dealt with it, whether his treatment was foul or

fair" (HF 1: ix). The efforts Hales and Furnivall made, encouraged by F. J.

Child, to obtain access to the manuscript reads like a rhetoric of literary

liberation. Furnivall and Child finally paid 150 British pounds, and in

return Hales and Furnivall were granted access to the manuscript for

only thirteen months to prepare their edition. Finally, Percy's daughter

offered the manuscript for cash to the British Museum, which has owned

it since then.

The publication of the Hales and Furnivall edition in 1867-68 broke Percy's spellbinding hold on these ballad texts. Furnivall, in his introduction, excoriates Percy's editing, often describing the man and his work in terms laden with sarcasm, revealing to us that texts can be very personal.[2] For example, in a metaphor that speaks volumes about how editing was viewed as a masculine activity on a feminine text, Furnivall says that Percy treated the manuscript as "a young woman from the country with unkempt locks, whom he had to fit for fashionable society"; she had "no 'false locks to supply deficiency of native hair' no 'pomatum in profusion,' no 'greasy wool to bolster up the adopted locks' and no 'grey powder to conceal dust.' But all these fashionable requirements Percy supplied" (HF 1: xvi-xvii).

The Hales and Furnivall edition was conceived in the positivist tradition of text editing that continued well into the twentieth century.[3] They announce their editorial standard in the introduction in terms that echo the legal obligations of a witness in a courtroom: "To tell the truth, the whole truth, of a text of MS. is an editor's first duty" (HF 1: xx). Yet Hales and Furnivall, in their turn, add an overlay of Victorian prudery by altering the sequence of texts in the manuscript. They exile the bawdy

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[2] On Percy's handling of the text, Furnivall notes: "Before he learnt to reverence it, as he says, he scribbled notes over its margins and put brackets for suggested omissions in its texts. After he reverenced it, he tore out of it the two leaves containing its best ballad, 'King Estmere,' which he had evidently touched up largely himself" (HF 1: xvi).

[3] In *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*, McGann provides a critique of this approach to editing as exemplified by the work of Fredson Bowers.

ballads to a fourth volume, *Loose and Humorous Songs*, a work that was

published privately by Furnivall after the "public" texts of the manuscript

had appeared in their three-volume edition. Given the fact that the Percy

Folio MS has been considered one of the most important primary

documents in ballad studies, it is remarkable that the Hales and

Furnivall text has had such a long shelf life and remains the standard

edition of the complete manuscript even today. It provided a textual

backbone for F. J. Child in preparing his canonical *English and Scottish*

Ballads, thus extending its influence further. In 1969, the Hales and

Furnivall edition of the Percy Folio MS was reprinted in facsimile by a

small American press, Singing Tree Press, with a brief introduction

added by Leslie Shepard.[4]

And what is the market for these ballad texts today? We still

make do with old texts, a fact which indicates the extent to which ballad

scholarship has yet to move beyond the prejudice, which exacted

apologies from any scholar who studied these texts. We still rely on

Hyder Rollins' edition of the Pepys Ballads, originally published in 1929,

although the facsimile edition of Pepys' collection, published by

Magdalene College in 1987, makes it possible "to see" the broadsides

once again. The bulk of the Percy Folio MS has never been re-edited: in

the twentieth century, specialized scholars have selected individual texts,

thus atomizing the manuscript as a complete artifact. The influence of

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[4] This reissue includes *Loose and Humorous Songs* at the end of its third volume.

postmodernism in editing has resulted in an appreciation of the

rhizomatic relations between the manuscript and its various editions,

and the notion of a hierarchy of texts has given way to complex models of

textual relation.[5] The materiality of the manuscript and the editing

agendae that it occasioned have been considered in the articles of

Rogers, Donatelli, and Stewart. Nick Groom's recent work, a monograph

on the preparation of a genetic text of Percy's *Reliques* and a facsimile of

Percy's first edition, confirms the ultimately undecipherable nature of

textual relations in late-twentieth century editing. A far cry from Percy's

ability to hear the voices of ancient bards, to Groom "a synoptic genetic

edition of Percy's *Reliques* would probably look more like a monument to

academic futility than a readable book" (*Making* 15). Over the centuries

of literary transmission, the ephemera of early print culture has become

so overlaid with commentary that it has become too weighty for scholarly

publication. The more we attempt to "fix" ballads, the more they fall

apart. Child may have adopted the most plausible approach when he

printed versions of ballads side-by-side rather than anointing one

canonical text.

   The story of ballad texts reminds us that at some level, as

Jacques Derrida has claimed, every text is a palimpsest. Texts are "less

a bearer of a final fixed inscription than a site of the process of

inscription, in which acts of composition and transmission occur before

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[5] See McGann, *Textual Condition.*

our eyes" (Bornstein 3-4). The "fluidity" of ballad texts and their inconsequential status in elite writing culture were ready-made for writing on top of writing, for erasing what was there with other fantasies and visions, with other words. My thesis has argued that the ballad is historically significant in textual studies because, by recycling plots, characters, and words with abandon, it made a mockery of concepts of textual stability and boundaries, thereby "outing" the underlying assumptions of those who have tried to purify these seemingly promiscuous texts.

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