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*Ballads Within, Around, Among,  
Of, Upon, Against, Within*

Where do ballads belong?

Most obviously, perhaps, on a sheet of paper, printed on just one side. Calculating from entries in the Stationers' registers and from the number of surviving titles that were never entered, Hyder Rollins projects that upwards of 4,000 broadside ballads were printed before 1600; in the registers they outnumber books and plays from 1557 to 1642 (Rollins 1924: 1; Rollins 1919: 281-282, 296; Livingston 1991: 32). Perhaps also on a post, on a door, on a wall. As the most conspicuous place for putting up notices of all kinds, St. Paul's Cathedral offered two sites for self-publishing balladeers: the church doors and the churchyard, where cleft sticks were set up bearing both handwritten pasquinades and advertisements for printed wares on sale nearby (Rollins 1919: 324-326). Within doors, broadside ballads, replete with woodcuts, might do the work of a painted cloth, a painted panel, or a bit of painted wall, as Jonson's *Old Cokes* attests when he sees ballads for sale at Bartholomew Fair: "O Sister, doe you remember the ballads ouer the Nursery-chimney at home o' my owne pasting up, there be braue pictures" (Rollins 1919: 336-338; Jonson 1925-1963, 6: 74).

If not on a post, a door, or a wall, then in the street. Natascha Würzbach has used speech-act theory to ground the singing sellers of printed ballads in the streets of London. "Good people all to me draw neer, / and to my Song a while attend," "I Pray good People all draw near, / and mark these lines that here are pen'd," "Give eare, my loving cuntry-men, / that still desire newes": in the act of hawking a ballad the seller would perform the text in such a way that the absent, figurative "I" of the story takes shape as the aggressively self-presenting seller, the absent, figurative "you" as the listeners (1990: 39-104).

From the street to the stage was only a matter of steps—about fifty, in fact, if the Globe was 99 feet in diameter. On the stage, ballads might be not only commented upon and quoted, but performed and *metaperformed*. Shakespeare's Cleopatra is only the most famous of the characters who voice contempt for "scald Rimers" who will "Ballad vs out a Tune"—in the same breath that she scorns the "quicke Comedians" who "extemporally will stage vs" (F1623: 5.2.211-213).

Such ritual snubs to a commercially rival medium do not, however, prevent characters from seizing on popular ballads in moments that require lyric intensity, as Desdemona does with "Willow, willow" just before her death or Benedick with "The God of loue that sits aboue" in the throes of his love for Beatrice (*Othello* F1623: 4.3.38-55; *Much Ado* Q1600: 5.2.25-28). Performance of ballads onstage did not stop with quotation, however. The *jigs* that concluded performances in the South Bank theaters, even of tragedies, are no more than narrative ballads that happen to have been danced as well as sung. *Metaperformances* of ballads onstage—that is to say, performances of performances of ballads—occur most famously in *The Winter's Tale* and *Bartholomew Fair*, where Autolychus and Nightingale ply their wares to rural and to urban customers who are alike in their eager gullibility.

In manuscripts and books ballads might also find a place. El-derton's "The gods of love" survives, in fact, only in miscellany of the early seventeenth century, where it lodges with lute music, twenty-eight other poems, cookery recipes, and home remedies (Osborn 1958: 11). In print it is worth noting that two ballads from oral tradition—"A Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode" and "Adambel, Clym of the cloughe, and Wylliam of cloudesle" (Child 1957: 117, 116)—as well as John Skelton's "A balade of the scottysse Kyng" are among the earliest chapbooks published in England (Livingston 1991: 36).

To some contemporaries the only place for ballads was on a dung hill. Sir William Cornwallis in his book of essays modeled after Montaigne tells about standing as a bemused onlooker before just the kind of street scene Würzbach describes. Delighting in the poet's "strained stuffe" and the crowd's exuberance, he notes that both parties are well paid, "they with a filthy noise, hee with a base reward." The occasion for Cornwallis's essay "Of the observation, and use of things" is an hour's conversation with an unlettered husbandman, a man of estimable wit, "if it were refined, and separated from the durt that hangs about it." The filthiness of the ballad-seller's singing and the dirt on the body of the husbandman are very much in Cornwallis's mind when he talks about his appetite for cheap print—and the use to which he puts the paper when he is done:

All kinde of bookes are profitable, except printed Bawdery; they abuse youth: but Pamphlets, and lying Stories, and News, and two penny Poets I would knowe them, but beware of beeing familiar with them: my custome is to read these, and presently to make use of them, for they lie in my privy, and when I come thither, and have occasion to employ it, I read them, halfe a side at once is my ordinary, which when I have read, I use in that kind, that waste paper is most subject too, but to a cleanlier profit. (1600: I6-17)





Earl of Northumberland's daughter, who chances to pass by the prison where her father has immured a captured knight from across the forbidden border that haunts so many ballads from oral tradition. The Scottish knight spies her, pleads his love, promises to marry her. "The faire flower of *Northumberland*" succumbs, steals her father's ring, uses it to secure the knight's release, and rides off with him over the border. At the gates of Edinburgh, he confesses that he already has a wife and five children. "Now chuse (quoth he) thou wanton flower, / . . . / Whether thou wilt be my paramour." Taking her horse away, he orders her to walk.

O false and faithlesse Knight quoth she  
follow my loue, come ouer the strand;  
And canst thou deale so bad with me,  
and I the faire flowre of *Northumberland*?

She is abandoned. At length, two gallant knights of fair England come riding by, hear her confess her offense against her father, and take her home. Be warned, fair maids: "Scots were neuer true, nor neuer will be" (Deloney 1619: F3-G1<sup>v</sup>).

Fantasy though it be, Deloney's story casts into high relief several important details. First of all, the singers, like most of the informants from whom ballads were recorded in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, are women. The ballad they sing has been appropriated by Deloney from oral tradition, but despite its appearance in print it continued to be passed along in oral tradition down to the nineteenth century and beyond. Our only access to that oral tradition, in the form of Deloney's novel, comes via print. Furthermore, Deloney implies five distinct contexts for situating the individual singer: (1) in her own fair and comely person, (2) in the workroom as an acoustic field, (3) in the social circumstances that bring her together with other people as a woman and as a hand laborer, (4) in her political subjection under the surveillance of king, factory owner, and author, and (5) in the psychological space she occupies as a result of all the other factors.

In Deloney's scenario, a ballad is more than a genre, a certain verse form and certain set of subjects; it is more than a medium, an oral art that operates both inside writing and without. It is, rather, a complete system of communication, involving certain people in certain kinds of situations communicating certain kinds of experiences in certain kinds of ways. Partly as a result of the commerce of print, partly as a result of the rift between "the great tradition" and "the little tradition," ballads became ever more conspicuously autonomous in the course of the sixteenth century. In Niklas Luhmann's terms, early modern ballads form an "autopoietic" system of commu-

nication, self-referential and self-reproducing (1990: 1-20). As such, it touches other systems—the human body, the built environment, the economic system, the political system—in what Luhmann calls "zones of consensuality." Each of these other systems constitutes a "horizon" for ballads. (In Chapter 1 appears a diagram of how systems are related to one another in Luhmann's model.) The capacities of women's bodies for singing, the physical organization of Jack of Newbury's factory, the shared social experience of "spinsters and carders," the apparatus of state control over what people may say and do—all of these factors impinge on ballad-singing. But ballad-singing maintains a logic of its own. Within these horizons, ballads constitute, in Luhmann's terms, a highly "resonant" medium: that is to say, they interact in highly volatile ways with the physical body, with soundscapes, with speech communities, with political authority, with the singer's sense of self. Although in print we may never be able to specify just where ballads belong, we can approach that site via these intersecting horizons.

#### THE PHYSIOLOGICAL HORIZON

Sir William Cornwallis, seated in his privy, was hardly alone in associating ballads with the material body, even if other sites on the body occupied most other people's imaginations. With William Elderton, author of "The gods above" and at least sixteen other extant ballads, it was the nose (Rollins 1920: 213-214, 218-220). His was red. Elderton's lost ballad "Eldertons Jestes with his mery Toyes" (registered 1561-62) seems to have provoked an attack from a London hosier named Leach. William Fulwood joined the fray with "A Supplication to Eldertonne, for Leaches vnlewdenes: Desiring him to pardone, his manifest vnrudeness" (1562: BB 78), ostensibly comforting Elderton against so unworthy an attacker but in fact insulting Elderton—especially his nose:

And him me thinkes you should not blame,  
that can wel shape a hose:  
For he may likewise cut and frame,  
a case for your riche nose.

(Fulwood 1562)\*

The Martin Marprelate tracts *Pappe with an hatchet* (1589), usually attributed to John Lyly, invokes Elderton as the archetypal ballad-writer, one whose "ballets come out of the lungs of the licour" (Rol-

\* Broadside ballads are cited in the text by the catalogue number (BB#) assigned to them in Carole Rose Livingston, *British Broadside Ballads of the Sixteenth Century* (1991).

lins 1920: 231, 234). It is in an alehouse that Richard Brathwait's characteristic ballad-monger concocts his wares, "extracted from the muddie spirit of Bottle-Ale and froth" (1631: B4).

Censure from the likes of Gabriel Harvey was more intellectual than moral, but specifically religious attacks on balladry throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries persistently brand it as lecherous. Elderton's "The god of love that sits above," for example, provoked not only an attack but a pious parody. The attack comes from Thomas Brice in a ballad "Against filthy writing / and such like delighting" (BB 74, 1561–62). Brice's persona is no less assertive ("What meane the rimes that run thus large in euery shop to sell? / With wanton sound, and filthie sense, me thinke it grees not well") than savvy about ballad-lovers' tolerance for religious instruction ("come bak, where wil ye go?") (Brice 1561–62). Brice wonders whether "the god of love that sits above" is Christ or Cupid; William Birch provides his own answer in "The complaint of a sinner, vexed with paine, / Desyring the ioye, that euer shall remayne. After W. E. moralized" (BB 81, 1563), which begins, "The God of loue, that sits aboue, / Doth know vs, Doth know vs" (Birch 1563). "Wanton sound" and "filthie sense" are more than clergymen's fantasies in ballads like "The Carman's Whistle" and "Watkin's Ale," which turn the male member into something seen, heard—and danced. In "A Ditty delightfull of mother watkins ale / A Warning wel wayed, though counted a tale" (BB 237, c. 1590) a lad happens to overhear a maiden's lament that she doesn't want to die a virgin. He promises to give her some "Watkin's ale." Once she has tasted it, she can't get enough. From, of all places, *The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book* comes the tune that sets human feet to the dance of metrical feet in the ballad's penultimate stanza (musical quotation 7.2). When the balladeer sings about a "cuntry dance," he has more than geography on his mind.

The physicality of Cornwallis on his jakes, Elderton in his cups, and the carman at his whistle also characterizes Deloney's maidens at their spinning wheels. The rhythm of their singing, in steady four-beat lines, is synchronized with the rhythms of their hands as they comb out the tangles in the wool and set the strands to the turning wheels. Turns in their work—from the top of a tuft to the bottom, from one tuft to another, from tuft to wheel, from wheel to thread—are heard as turns in their song, as two singers, line by line by line, hand over "the ditty" and all the others hand back "the burden." In this exchange it is the ditty in lines 1 and 3 that advances the story; "the burden" in lines 2 and 4 meditates upon it, almost like the chorus in a Greek tragedy. More typically in orally transmitted ballads, the burden would sound three beats to the ditty's four, but Deloney has preserved the narrative rhythm of advance/pause/advance/

## Musical quotation 7.2

Thrice scarce - ly chang - ed hath the moon Since first this pret - ty tricke was done,  
Which be - ing harde of one by chance. He made there - of a count - ry dance.

And as I heard the tale, he cald it Wat - kins ale, which ne - ver will be stale. I do be - leue:  
This dance is now in prime. And chief - ly vsde this time. And late - ly put in rime: Let no man greue.

To hear this mer - ry iest - ing tale, The which is called Wat - kins ale;  
It is not long since it was made,—The fin - est flower will soon - est fade.

(Tune adapted from Simpson 1966: no. 494, words from *A Ditty Delightful* 1590)

pause that distinguishes oral performances from written documents. Moving the story forward by choosing from a stock of tried-and-true motifs and phrases, a singer needs time to choose what will come next (Jones 1961: 97–112). (The fact that *two* singers are able to do this simultaneously may be a mark of Deloney's literacy in imagining the scene.)

In "The Flower of Northumberland," as in most oral ballads, the burden in lines 2 and 4 is more than filler. The exactly repeated burden in line 2 ("follow my loue, leap ouer the strand," "follow my loue, come ouer the strand") returns obsessively to the episode in which the knight makes the maid follow him across a stream that is "rough and wonderfull deep." The varied repetitions of the final line—"Northumberland" and "Scotland," "good Earle" and "faire flower"—evoke a mental and ethical geography for the events of the ballad, maintained through all the variations. Altogether, the assonances of the burden—"love"/"come"/"Humber," "follow"/"flower," "follow"/"o'er," "follow"/"north," "Scot"/"o'er," "strand"/"land"—create a satisfyingly regular sequence of muscle movements in the mouth—[f], [a], [u], [r], [e], [f], [a], [r], [u], [a]—that is heard as an open sound field bounded by [r]. The fact that these incantations are self-produced helps each singer to internalize the events of the story. Victor Zuckerkandl's explanation of meaning in vocal music, quoted by Mark W. Booth in *The Experience of Song*, seems particularly apt for ballads: "The singer who uses words wants more than just to be with the group: he also wants to be with things, those things to which the words of the poem refer. . . . [Tones] remove the barrier between person and thing, and clear the way for what might be called the singer's



inner participation in that of which he sings" (1981: 19). Chanted again and again, the phrase "*And I the faire flower of Northumberland*" turns the subject position into each singer's own. The fictional "I" of the story becomes the singing "I" of the performance. That happens, not through a cerebral act of imagination, but through the pressure of air in the lungs, certain constrictions of the throat, certain movements of the tongue, the opening and closing of the lips.

Wherever Deloney got the ballad, from oral singers or out of his own head, "*The Fair Flower of Northumberland*" bears many of the structural marks of body-based remembering that David Buchan has traced in border ballads collected from oral tradition (1972: 87-144). As written out by Deloney, the ballad follows the traces of a spatially central design, in which the narrative moves by stages toward a central event—the knight's escape from prison in stanza 17—and then out again. Along the way, episodes in the first half of the journey have their counterparts in the second half: the knight's first plea for pity six stanzas from the beginning is answered by his abandonment of the maid six stanzas from the end. The maid's protestations about her honor seven stanzas from the beginning are echoed in her plea that he "Dishonour not a Ladies name" seven stanzas from the end. The knight's assurance "I haue no wife nor children I" ten stanzas from the start is reversed ten stanzas from the end when he confesses, "For I haue wife and children fiue."

In Child's compilation of texts, the next written notice of "*The Fair Flower of Northumberland*" after Deloney's version is a manuscript of about 1826, taken down from recitation of a Scottish informant, Miss E. Beattie (Child 1957, 1: 115, 5: 398). The way from *Jack of Newbury* to Miss E. Beattie is literally uncharted territory. Nineteenth-century versions of the ballad, none of them nearly as long as Deloney's text, variously transform the maid into a provost's daughter or a bailiff's and domesticate the story by telling of her homecoming and by giving her one censorious and one forgiving parent. How did these nineteenth-century singers know the ballad? Probably not from Deloney's text. Was there an oral tradition from which Deloney transcribed his version—an oral tradition that continued independent of print down to the nineteenth century? Or was Deloney's printed ballad the inspiration for a subsequently oral tradition? Both possibilities are known from other ballads. The Stationers' register contains six entries before 1600 for now-lost broadsides of ballads that seem to have come from oral tradition: "*The Jolly Pinder of Wakefield*" (Child no. 124, registered 1557-58), "*Dives and Lazarus*" (Child no. 56, 1557-58, 1570-71), "*Tam Lin*" (Child no. 39, 1558), "*The Lochmaben Harper*" (Child no. 192, 1564-65, 1565-66), "*King Edward IV and a Tanner of Tamworth*" (Child no. 273, 1564, 1586, 1600, 1615, 1624),

and "*The Lord of Lorne and the False Steward*" (Child no. 271, 1580, 1624). A version of "*The Tanner of Tamworth*" survives as a chapbook (1596, 1613), and both "*The Tanner of Tamworth*" and "*The Lord of Lorne*" survive in late seventeenth-century broadsides. On the other hand, at least one orally transmitted ballad, "*The Daemon Lover*" (Child 1957: 243) is first recorded as a late seventeenth-century broadside, "*A Warning for Married Women, being an example of Mrs. Jane Reynolds (a West-country woman) born near Plymouth, who, having plighted her troth to a Seaman, was afterwards married to a Carpenter, and at last carried away by a Spirit, the manner how shall presently be recited*" (Pepys 1987, 4: 101; Crawford 1890: 1114; Holloway 1971: 377 and 378).

The printed broadsides hawked around the countryside by a ballad-monger might grow so common "as every poore Milk maid can chant and chirpe it under her Cow; which she useth as an harmelesse charme to make her let downe her milke" (Brathwait 1631: B4<sup>v</sup>). Wye Saltonstall says the same of a peddler at a country fair: "If his Ballet bee of love, the countrey wenches buy it, to get by heart at home, and after sing it over the milkepayles" (1951: no. 21). What happens between page and pail is impossible to predict. Carole Livingston has convincingly demonstrated that one of the ballads collected in Thomas Percy's folio manuscript, "*Bishoppe and Browne*" (1756, 2: 265), is an oral reconstruction of William Elderton's broadside "*A new Ballad, declaring the Treason conspired against the young King of Scots, and how one Andrew Browne an Englishman, which was the Kings Chamberlaine, preuented the same*" (BB 200, 1581) (Livingston 1991: 880-885). The movement of ballads into and out of print in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries stands as a signal illustration of Michel de Certeau's point that orality and literacy, far from being polar opposites, exist only in terms of each other—and in terms that are constantly changing. One of the two, furthermore, must function as the dominant factor, as the standard by which the other is judged to be different (de Certeau 1984: 133). For sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century broadside ballads, the dominant factor is clearly orality.

Traces that the singing, remembering human body has left on printed ballads are not hard to find. The earliest surviving printed broadside (BB 1) is an untitled sheet of verses "spoken" in first person by the seven virtues, possibly intended to be cut apart as scrolls to be put above or beneath figures representing the seven Virtues on the wall of a room, as many of Lydgate's verses are known to have been (Bradshaw 1889: 100; Schreiber 1928: 51-54). "*Titulus verse*" is Alan Nelson's name for what amounts to a distinct genre (1982: 189-210). Furthermore, printed ballads and other broadside texts convention-

how  
know?

visual

ally identify the author via “quod” or “quoth” at the end of the text, followed by the author’s name or initials. In effect, the foregoing text becomes something the author “spoke,” “said,” “declared.” Finally, the printed text contains all sorts of cues to the ballad as a somatic experience: tune designations (especially the likes of “To a pleasant new tune”) require the purchaser to get the tune from hearing it, woodcuts provide bodily habitations for first-person voices, scrolls above speakers’ heads furnish shorthand mnemonics of lengthy speeches.

Even as they stand in for the human body, printed ballads declare themselves to be artifacts in the literal sense of the word: something made by the writer’s hand but not involving other members of the writer’s body. Such touches are present even in the earliest broadside ballads. Sir Thomas Smyth’s contribution to a flurry of ballads on the fall of Thomas Cromwell in 1540 sings the language of carols and rounds but features the pen as a weapon. To William Gray, one of Cromwell’s ballading attackers, Smyth offers this offense:

¶If with the poynte of my penne, I do you so spurre and prycke  
That therby you be greved and greatly styred to yre  
Yet doubtte I not syt sure / all though you wynche and kycke  
Fast closed in my dewty / to save me from the myre.

(Smyth 1540b)

In printed broadsides it is not uncommon to find the author “saying” and “writing,” both in the same line. Set down in writing but pointed toward performance, the ballad often becomes a “bill” or a “letter.” The execution of John Felton, who affixed to the Bishop of London’s palace a copy of the papal bull excommunicating Queen Elizabeth, prompted Steven Peele to write a pair of ballads, both of them cast as letters. In the first, “A letter to Rome, to declare to y<sup>e</sup> Pope, Iohn Felton his freend is hangd in a rope” (BB 146, 1570), the persona presents himself as a messenger, beating on the gates of the Vatican. The tune is “Row well ye Mariners” (musical quotation 7.3). The reply—“The pope in his fury doth answer returne, To a letter y<sup>e</sup> which to Rome is late come . . .” (BB 147, 1570)—likewise speaks two languages at once: the language of a letter and the language of dramatic presence. “When I had pervsd your byl,” the pope says, “It greued mee those lines to vew / Were written in your name” (Peele 1570b), even though the first ballad allows a singer to imagine himself following the words of the “byl” in the pope’s own ears.

The ambiguous status of a broadside ballad—written and yet sung, seen and yet heard—is registered most acutely, perhaps, in “A new balade entituled as foloweth, / To such as write in Metres, I write / Of small matters an exhortation, / By reading of which, men

## Musical quotation 7.3

(Tune adapted from Simpson 1966: no. 401, words from Peele 1570a)

may delite / In such as be worthy commendation” by one “R. B.” (BB 142), published the same year as Steven Peele’s musical missives to the pope. (No tune is specified.) R. B. is to broadside ballads what Sir Philip Sidney is to poesie. He provides criteria for judging excellence, an enumeration of kinds, models for emulation, a politics of writing, and (overtopping Sidney in this respect) concern with the material medium. R. B.’s touchstone of judgment is nothing less than Horace’s *Ars Poetica*—evidence enough that the “low culture” status of broadside verse had not quite been established by 1570. Horace, like persons of discernment today, was pestered by bad poets:

¶Read in his bookes, and then vnderstand,  
They vexed his eares, they troubled his eyes  
With Metres in number, compared to y<sup>e</sup> sand:  
And lacked not such, as wolde to the skyes  
So prayse their workes (such was their guyse). . . .

After implicitly comparing ballads to spices—both hawked by peddlers, both sold to “Master” and “Clowne” alike, both “good to cast downe / When ye haue doen”—R. B. goes on to catalog three distinct genres: “balades of loue,” “newes,” and “open sclander” from Catholic exiles in Louvain. As models, ballad-writers should emulate Chaucer, Lydgate, Wager, Barclay, and Bale. Last of all, he admonishes printers to be careful in manufacturing broadsides as commodities for readers’ consumption: “The Printer must vse good paper and inke. / Or els the reader may sometime shrinke / When faulte by inke or paper is seene.” And finally an Althusserian gesture: “And



thus euery day before we drinke / Let vs pray God to saue our Queene. Amen." Or is it a Dionysian gesture?

### THE PHYSICAL HORIZON

"The Fair Flower of Northumberland" may begin within each singer's body, but Deloney's singing maidens project the ballad into the space round about them. They fill the workroom with their sound. As an enclosed space, likely built of sound-deflecting stone or reverberant plaster-over-lath, the workroom would be only lightly damped, making for a high degree of resonance between the sounding voices and the acoustic surround (Handel 1989: 47). The whirring of the spinning wheels and the scrape of combs through wool fibers—both low-amplitude, multifrequency sounds—would be apprehended as unlocalized "white noise." To the ear, the room would be the women's song. As consciously crafted sound, singing pushes at the boundary between the human body as an autopoietic system and the built environment as an autopoietic system. Through singing, the body projects itself into space and claims that space as its own.

Even self-consciously literate appropriations of ballads preserve this quality of self-assertion. After the Virtues' speeches and five more or less fragmentary sheets, the next surviving printed ballads are eight volleys in a verse combat carried out among William Gray, Thomas Smyth, R. Smyth, and "G, C" in 1540 (BB 6–13, Livingston 1991: 821–828). The arrest and impending execution of Thomas Cromwell, chief minister to Henry VIII, provided the occasion for the ballads, but hurling insults at each other occupies most of the poets' attention—an example of "agonistically toned" oral discourse if there ever was one (Ong 1982: 31–77). Figuratively at least, the participants throw their bodies about as they do so. The first salvo survives only in a reprint by Thomas Percy in *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*: "A newe ballade made of Thomas Crumwell called TROLLE ON AWAY" (Percy 1756, 2: 58). With the exception of the final gesture toward reconciliation (BB 13), described as a "Paumflet" by its author "G, C," all the succeeding assaults are likewise cast as "ballads," and most of them ask the reader to "troll." With respect to the human body, to troll is to roll, ramble, or walk about; with respect to the ancient Yuletide carol (or similar), to troll is to sing the parts of a round. "Synge trolle on away, synge trolle on away / Heve and how rombelowe trolle on away" goes the refrain to Sir Thomas Smyth's "A balade agaynst malycyous Sclanderers" (BB 6), a reply to "TROLLE ON AWAY." In the absence of specified tunes, it is unclear whether these ballads were sung as a whole, chanted as a whole, or sung in the

refrains and chanted in the verses (Livingston 1991: 824). What is certain is Smyth's swagger:

¶Trolle into the way / trolle in and retrolle  
Small charyte and lesse wytte is in thy nolle  
Thus for to rayle upon a christen soule  
Wherfore me thynke the worthy blame  
Trolle into the way agayne for shame.

In the exchanges among Gray, the Smyths, and "G, C" we can observe a fusion of at least three distinct cultural practices. With its heaving and hoing, its singing and trolling, Smyth's "A balade agaynst malycyous Sclanderers" is a piece of performance art, a public mockery like the *ad hominem* attacks in Greek Old Comedy. In its written state it is also a proclamation, a satiric inscription in a public place, a pasquinade. It is, finally, a commodity that must have earned quite a few pennies for John Gough, Richard Grafton, Richard Banks, and other printers and booksellers involved in the whole business. The political implications of such goings-on were serious enough to land Gray, Thomas Smyth, Gough, and Grafton in the Fleet and, if Livingston is correct, to give the Tudor monarchy its first cue that broadside ballads were a medium to be carefully censored (Livingston 1991: 826–827).

Propelling the singer's body into space is only a figurative gesture in the "TROLLE ON AWAY" ballads, but a handful of ballads in manuscript and print invite the listener to leap into the circle and join the dance. As it happens, the occasion for most of these ballads is a wedding. "A newe Ballade intytuled, Good Fellowes must go learne to daunce" (BB 110, 1569) makes the invitation in jubilant monosyllables that never miss the beat of four and three. The tune, unspecified on the printed sheet, appears along with one stanza of the text in Bodleian MS Mus. e.1–5 (from which it is transcribed in musical quotation 7.4). The French "brawl," to hear Moth describe it in *Love's Labour's Lost*, was an especially flirtatious dance. Having sung a song for Don Armado *inamorato*, Moth is commanded to call a servant to take a letter to Jacquennetta. "Maister," he asks, "will you win your loue with a french braule?"

[ARMADO]

How meanest thou? brawling in French.

BOY

No my complet Maister, but to ligge off a tune at the tongues ende, canarie to it with your feete, humour it with turning vp your eyelids, sigh a note and sing a note. . . . (Q1598: 3.1.5–10)

Less jocular witnesses suggest a couples' dance, alternately in partners and in lines, that sometimes involved the trading of kisses all

## Musical quotation 7.4

Good fel - lowes must go learne to daunce, the bryd - eall is full nere:

There is a brall come out of Fraunce, the tryxt ye harde this yeare,

For I must leape, and thou must hoppe, and we must turne all

three: The fourth must bounce it lyke a toppe, and so we shall a - gree. I

praye thee Myn - strell make no stoppe, for we wyll me - ry e be.

(Tune adapted from Bodleian MS Mus. e.1-5, words from [Anon.] "Good fellows" 1569)

around (Baskervill 1929: 347-349). What the singer of "Good fellows" is imagining is not only a brawl but a *morris*. Let us deck ourselves with a band of bells, he proclaims, and "A shurte after the Moryce guyse, / To flounce it in the wynde a." A staff-bearing whiffler will clear the way for bringing in May. The singer's final gesture is to summon one and all to join in: "Drawe to dauncinge, neyghbours all, / Good fellowshyppe is best a . . ." A whole series of ballads on "Jocky and Jennie" also orchestrate fantasies of bodies trolling about with the ballad's sound. One of the cacophonous best, by John Wallis, appears in a manuscript likely assembled by the minstrel Richard Sheale in the early 1560s. After a narrative ballad about Jock and Jenny's courtship, banns, and wedding comes an invitation to the dance: "Now play us a horn pype, Jocky can say; / Then todle lowdle the pyper dyd playe." The dance itself, partly pentameter couplets and partly in ballad stanza, spins along as a swirl of shouts:

"Torn rownde, Robyne! kepe trace, Wylkyne!

Mak churchye pege behynde;"

"Set fut to fut a pas," quod Pylkyne;

"Abowt with howghe let us wynde."

"To, Tybe, war, Tom well," sayd Cate;

"Kepe in, Sandar, holde owte, Syme.

Nowe, Gaff, hear gome abowt me mat;  
Nycoll, well dansyde and tryme."  
(Sheale 1860: 123-124)

The very apotheosis of balladeering is the jig: a ballad that thrusts bodies, along with sound, into ambient space. It does so in leaps and whirls (Baskervill 1929: 357-358). When Beatrice describes a typical lover's wooing as "hot and hasty like a Scotch ijgge [*sic*] (and ful as fantastical)" (Q1600: 1.3.67-68), she could be looking ahead to the jig that will end the performance of *Much Ado*, since the plot of most surviving jigs is clever seduction, usually of someone else's wife. A jig preserved among Edward Alleyn's papers at Dulwich College sets one of the most famous jig characters, Rowland, on his usual quest, a dance of sexual conquest. Nan's favors will go to whoever dances best. This time, however, Rowland and three other wooers are foiled by who else but the Fool of traditional *gests*. In "The Wooing of Nan" singing, dancing, and sexual performance amount to the same thing. Sing Nan to the disappointed Gentleman among her suitors, "& if you be Ielous god give you god night / I feare you are a gelding you caper so light." "Exnt" Nan, Fool, *et al.*, leaving the jilted Gentleman to sing the moral:

I thought she had but Iested & ment but to fable  
but now I doe see she hath playd w<sup>th</sup> his bable  
I wishe all my frends by me to take heed  
that a foole com not neere you when you mene to speed.  
(Baskervill 1929: 432-436)

Ballads lay claim to space through lungs and larynx, through arms, hands, legs, feet—and genitals.

## THE SOCIAL HORIZON

"Newes newes newes / ye never herd so many newes,"  
goes the burden.

A[s I sat] vpon a strawe  
Cudlying of my cowe  
Ther came to me Iake daw  
newes newes

our dame mylked the mares talle  
The cate was lykyng the potte  
our mayd cme out wyt aflayle



and layd her vnder fotte  
newes newes

In ther came our next neyghbur  
frome whens I can not tell  
but there begane a hard stouer  
aw youe any musterd to sell  
newes newes

a cowe had stolyn a clafe away  
and put her in a sake  
forsoth I sel no puddynges to day  
maysters what do youe lake  
newes newes

Robyne ys gone to hu[n]tyngton  
To bye our gose afayle  
lyke spip my yongest son  
was huntyng of a snalle  
newes newes

our mayd Iohn was her to morowe  
I wote not where she ferwend  
our cate lyet syke and takyte grete sorow[ . . . ]  
(Seng 1978: 6–7)

Dairyman, mistress, “next neighbor,” peddler, Robin, son Spip, Joan the maid, even the cat, first licking the pot, then lying sick and sorrowful: the circle convened in this ballad from Henry Savile’s manuscript (British Library MS Cotton Vespasian A-25, 1570s) typifies the social horizon that encircles all ballads as they are said, sung, and danced, as they are gotten by heart, as they are passed along to others. Ballads may begin *within*, they may reverberate *around*, but they have their social being *among*. Ballads help to confirm a speech community’s identity. In the case of Deloney’s spinsters and carders, that act of confirmation is carried out collectively, with two singers calling out the story and all the rest physically adding their consent. “The Maidens Song,” as Deloney entitles the text, affirms their *maidenness*, just as “The Weauers Song” affirms the men’s membership in a venerable and honorable trade. “Then loue and friendship did agree, / To keep the band amitie,” they sing to round out each verse. “Good Fellowes must go learne to daunce” ends by drawing “neyghboures all” into the circle of fellowship. A *good fellow* is one who will not refuse. Even if the appeal is not so direct, ballads give voice to an implicit “us.”

For there to be an “us,” there has to be a “them.” In a way, then, all ballads are *border ballads*. Often the semiotically necessary Other

is palpably present: a demon, the Sheriff of Nottingham, a Scottish knight, a seditious Catholic. “Open sclander” from Catholic exiles is one of the major genres of printed broadsides that R. B. specifies in “To such as write in Metres” (1570)—a distinction justified by Rollins’s calculation that during the years 1569–1571 ballads on Catholic plots and on the Catholic-inspired Rising in the North constitute the majority of ballads entered in the Stationers’ register (Rollins 1920: 208–211). Steven Peele’s pugnacious “A letter to Rome, to declare to y<sup>e</sup> Pope, Iohn Felton his freend is hangd in a rope” (1570) provides a signal example. In taunting the pope with news of Felton’s gruesome execution Peele speaks, or sings, for all true Englishmen. A subtler, more ambiguous sense of “them” is conveyed by the implicit geography of sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century ballads in English. “The Fair Flower of Northumberland” is far from being the only orally transmitted ballad that delights in recounting “the matter of the North.” To the North belong not only the martial deeds of Otterburn (Child no. 161) and Chevy Chase (Child no. 162) but the free-wheeling physicality of “Jocky and Jenny”:

In all the nouthe land, my Jocky,  
As it pleantly doth apear,  
Was not syk another weddyne  
This fyve and forty year.  
(Sheale 1860: 124)

In “Good fellowes must go learne to Daunce” that place of libidinal license is closer at hand:

O where shall all this dauncing bee,  
In Kent or at Cotsolde a?  
Oure Lorde doth knowe, then axe not mee,—  
And so my tale is tolde a.

Such dislocations are easy to understand for Deloney’s merchant-class readers in London. Kentish villagers don’t *need* a ballad bidding them to dance a morris. To what degree is the poet of “Good fellowes” putting words into Kentish dancers’ mouths? To what degree is he staging a country spectacle for urban consumption, like the bride-ale staged before Elizabeth at Kenilworth in 1575? To what degree is he staging, for urban consumption, a country spectacle into which Kentish dancers might want to project themselves once they have heard—or even read—the new ballad? Such questions indicate the complications of trying to fix the social horizon when the medium of communication is print. One thing seems certain: even in orally transmitted ballads the way to adventure most often lies north by northeast, more rarely south by southwest. With respect to singers

and listeners as a community wherever they may be—in London, in Kent, in the Cotswolds—the events of a ballad are *there* in fiction but *here* in sound and body.

Dislocations of the sort to be witnessed in “Good fellowes must go learne to Daunce” are made possible by print. Ballads with no place but lungs and larynx are less *portable* than ballads with a place on the printed page. From early in the sixteenth century, broadside ballads demonstrate their power to colonize oral culture. “TROLLE ON AWAY” and its progeny may bear marks of orality, but none of them is an oral ballad. Rather, Thomas Smyth and his cronies have appropriated a folk form in just the way Henry VIII and his courtiers did with the “greenwood” songs, poems, and plays that captured the court’s fancy in the teens and early twenties (Stevens 1961: 177–187; Hutton 1994: 66–67). Two later typographical flytings are similar appropriations of country mores. Sixteen broadside ballads exchanged among Thomas Churchyard, Thomas Camel, and assorted others in 1552 started out as ridicule of Churchyard’s ballad “Dauy Dycars Dreame,” an innocuous enough confrontation of Piers Ploughman with mid-sixteenth-century mores, and ended up as a souvenir quarto of the whole affair in *The Contention bettwyxt Churchyard and Camell, upon David Dycers Dreame . . .* (1560). It was for delectable insults like this that purchasers put down good money for broadside or book:

Is this the order, that Camels do use?  
Because you are a beast, I must you excuse.  
A Camell, a Capon a Curre sure by kynde,  
I may you well call, synce so I you fynde.  
(Churchyard 1560: A3–A3<sup>v</sup>)

Even more obviously than in the “TROLLE ON AWAY” ballads, Churchyard and his shake-pens are appropriating—and mocking—oral practices. Davy Dicer can have such revelatory dreams in the first place because he is an unlettered husbandman. When Geoffrey Chappel joins Churchyard and Camel in the fray (if “Chappel” is not in fact a pseudonym for Churchyard himself), a fiction is built up that country bumpkins are delivering to Camell and to Chappel “bills” on which the insults are written. First, Chappel sends to Camel “A supplicacion” in the person of “Harry Whobal.” Then “Steven Steple” (another fixture of the Churchyard?) joins the fray as a messenger from Chappel to Camell in “Steuen Steple to mast Camell.” As the flyting goes on, the dialect gets thicker and thicker. “Steuen Steple” speaks a nonce language made up of Cotswold *ich*’s, West Country *z*’s for *s*’s and *v*’s for *f*’s, and Dutch *d*’s for *th*’s that has little to do with

his supposedly native Kent. At Geoffrey Chappel’s bidding, Steven Steple returns the “bill” containing Camel’s latest ballad:

And her cha brought yor byl ayen, corrupt it iz ich go,  
Vor vende godes vorbodman I zedge, to let it go worth zo:  
But well ich zee yor braine is dicke, your wits be curstly vext,  
Prey God ye be not zyde yor zyelf, er be to morow next:  
Deruore go couch and sleap a now, and dan com to yor parte,  
And dyte a wyser dyng dan dat, or all is not wort a vart.  
(Churchyard 1560: E2<sup>v</sup>)

In the galumphing fourteeners of Churchyard and his cronies, the medium seems indeed to be the message. The later skirmish touched off by Churchyard’s “A Farewell cauld, Churcheyards, rounde / From the Courte to the Cuntry grownd” (BB 99, 1566) likewise takes place within the imaginative precincts inhabited by simple country folk, though not in their dialect.

In the process of transforming everyday practices into commodities for consumption, broadsides must forever proclaim their newness. “A new ballad entitled . . .,” “To a pleasant new tune”: titles like these insinuate the ballad’s claims on a purchaser’s attention. Along with newness comes, to Mospa’s ears at least, a guarantee of truth. Enter Autolychus, with a false beard and a pack of true ballads:

CLOWNE What hast heere? Ballads?  
MOPSA Pray now buy some: I loue a ballet in print, a life, for then we  
are sure they are true.  
AUTOLICUS Here’s one, to a very dolefull tune, how a Vsurers wife was  
brought to bed of twenty money baggs at a burthen, and how she  
long’d to eate Adders heads, and Toads carbonado’d.  
MOPSA Is it true, thinke you?  
AUTOLICUS Very true, and but a moneth old. (WT 4.4.257–265 in  
F1623: 311)

A moneylender’s wife who gives birth to twenty sacks of cash: here’s news to put “The Fair Flower of Northumberland” to shame. In one way or another, printed broadsides manage to be insistently topical. In R. B.’s catalog of kinds—“balades of loue,” “newes,” and “open sclander”—only the first would seem to escape topicality, but even love-lyrics proclaim their newness. The most famous of all Elizabethan broadside ballads first appears in print as “A new Courtly Sonet, of the Lady Green sleeues. To the new tune of Greensleeves,” in the collection entitled *A Handefull of pleasant delites, Containing sundrie new Sonets and delectable Histories, in diuers kinds of Meeter* (Robinson 1584: B2–B3<sup>v</sup>, emphasis added). Four years earlier Richard Jones, the publisher of *A Handefull*, had been licensed to print “A newe northern



Dittye of y<sup>e</sup> Ladye Greene Sleeves." But "new" thrice over was not new enough. In short order, the Stationers' register received entries for "ye Ladie Greene Sleeves answe're to Donkyn hir frende," "Greene Sleeves moralised," "Greene Sleeves and Countenaunce in Countenaunce is Greene Sleeves," "A merry newe Northern songe of Greensleeves be-gynninge the boniest lasse in all the land," "A Reprehension againste Greene Sleeves by William Elderton," and "Greene Sleeves is worne awaie, Yellowe Sleeves Comme to decaie, Blacke Sleeves I holde in despite, But White Sleeves is my delighe" (Simpson 1966: 269). Traditional ballads are never "new" in quite the same way. Each singer's performance, drawn from a repertoire of phrases and motifs, may be different, but "The Fair Flower of Northumberland" from Deloney's spinsters in 1596 and from Miss E. Beattie in 1826 is recognizably the same story. "Newes" is a phenomenon of print. "Newes newes newes newes / ye never herd so many newes": it is, perhaps, the phenom-enon of broadsides that gives the dairyman's ballad its locally topical wit.

### THE POLITICAL HORIZON

As Deloney sets the scene, the weavers in their praise of weaving and the spinsters and carders in their song of womanly daring are literally *overseen* and *overheard* by economic authority in the person of Jack and state authority in the person of Henry VIII. Figuratively that is the case with all ballads, both oral and printed. The difficulty is first in knowing just where to place the political horizon, and then in judging its constrictive power. As voice projects the singer into the acoustic space around him, as the singer takes her place in a speech community, so the ballad ranges outward to grasp authority figures and draw them by force into the singer's song. *To ballad* is to make a political gesture. Intransitively, one ballads by making up a song; transitively, one ballads by making someone or something the ballad's object. In sixteenth-century terms, Steven Peele "ballads" John Felton, he "ballads" the pope, he "ballads" Catholics. Implicit in both senses of the verb *to ballad* is the idea of taking an event or a person and performing it: giving it a voice, giving it a body, appropriating it by *becoming* it. A ballad is said to be "of" thus-and-so, "upon" thus-and-so, "against" thus-and-so. The politics of ballads consists in the relationship between the balladeer and the thing being "balleted."

In the ballad of "Agincourte Battell," included in Thomas Percy's folio, distinctions between "against" and "of" are especially sharp. The ballad is against the French, in particular the person of Charles VI; it is "of" Henry V. Even the tune makes a political statement. A printed copy of the ballad in the second edition of *A Crowne-Garland*

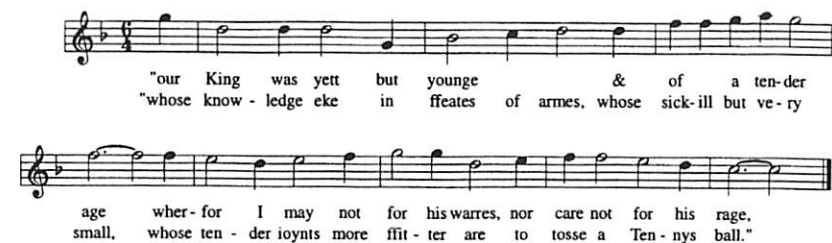
of *Golden Roses* (1659) specifies the tune as "Flying Fame"—the very tune to which the Ballad of Chevy Chase was sung. Charles is briefly impersonated, but in altogether odious terms. Hearing the message of defiance sent by "our King" via "our ambassador," the not-our French king frames a nasty reply (musical quotation 7.5). Tennis balls are duly sent, duly received, duly revenged. Closely following the plot line of Shakespeare's *Henry V* (and certainly postdating the play's first performances), "Agincourte Battell" avoids all of the political ambiguities that post-World War II critics have attempted to find in Shakespeare's play. The ballad is clearly "of" a brave and outspoken Henry. When he speaks in his own person, as he does on the eve of the battle, the singer is proud to become him.

"regard not of their multitude,  
tho they are more then wee,  
for eche of vs well able is  
to beate downe ffrenchmen 3. . ."

News that the French have taken "all our Iewells & treasure" and "many of our boyes haue slaine" quite pointedly comes *before* Henry orders the English soldiers to kill their French prisoners (Hales and Furnivall 1867-1868: 166-173).

Anti-Catholic ballads provide another occasion for declaring and patrolling borders. It needed no encouragement from above for professional ballad-writers to give true-hearted Protestants a voice for railing against John Felton, against the northern lords, against the pope, against whoever it was who cast a "Papisticall Bill" in the streets of Northampton in 1570. The wittiest among them, hands down, is "A Lamentation from Rome, how the Pope doth bewayle, That the Rebelles in England can not preuayle" (BB 132, 1570) by Thomas Preston. The author of *Cambises* pursues a raging vein—in the person of a fly who happens to be lodged in the pope's nose when

Musical quotation 7.5



"our King was yett but younge & of a ten-der  
"whose know-ledge eke in ffeates of armes, whose sick-ill but ve-ry  
age wher-for I may not for his warres, nor care not for his rage,  
small, whose ten-der ioynts more fit-ter are to tosse a Ten-nys ball."

(Tune adapted from Simpson 1966: no. 63, words from Hales and Furnivall 1867-1868: 166-173)

news comes about the Catholic uprising in the north of England. "All you that newes would here, / Geue eare to me poore Fabyn Flye," the ditty begins. First report has it that the rebels have won. The pope rejoices so stoutly "From that his nose he blew me out." But Fabyn creeps back in while the Pope is asleep. When news comes in the middle of the night that the rebellion has been put down, the pope, the cardinals, and assorted friars are distraught. They say mass, the pope swoons, the cardinals try to help him, the pope rages and throws stools against the wall. Fabyn is terrified. The tune is "Row well, ye mariners," the same tune Steven Peele uses in his pair of ballads against the pope (musical quotation 7.6). With his wings Fabyn beats a hasty retreat, just before the pope knocks down the center post, pulling down the house, leaving no harbor for even a mouse. For "balleting" the pope three different strategies are mapped out by Steven Peele's "A letter to Rome," the same author's "The pope in his fury doth answer returne," and Preston's "A Lamentation from Rome." Peele's "letter" invites the singer to joke, jibe, and jab in the proud person of an English subject. The pope's "answer" allows the singer to *become* the pope and thus to enjoy the effects of his or her own jibing. Preston's way with the pope combines the two strategies: Fabyn gives the singer access to the pope's very body, allowing the singer to be inside the pope and outside the pope all at the same time.

In the capacity of ballads to let just anyone become a figure of authority lies their political danger. To "ballet" King Henry V at Agincourt was, for the 1590s, safe enough. To "ballet" the Earl of Essex was something else again. Margaret Allde, the publisher of "A lamentable Dittie composed upon the death of Robert Devereux late Earle

Musical quotation 7.6

He courst me so a - bout, In the house I coulde finde no roome, Then  
Loth I was to go out, And shrind my selfe vn - der a Brome. With

by and by downe he was set, He rubbd his el - bowe on the Wall,  
an - ger he was one a swet, So fell a - rayl - ing on Saint Paule

Fye fye bloud hatte, He scratchde him selfe till he dyd smart,  
poll nose rube eye, Grash the teth drawe mouth a - wrye.

(Tune adapted from Simpson 1966: no. 401, words from Preston 1570)

of Essex, who was beheaded in the Tower of London, upon Ash-wednesday in the morning. 1601," seems to have waited fifteen months—until the accession of James I—before she printed the ballad up and put it on sale. "God saue the King" is the text's last line. Her caution was justified, since the ballad offers a sympathetic line on the earl's career, in more ways than one. The very tune, "Welladay," invited singers and listeners to remember the earl's father, Walter, and his death by poisoning, as recounted in the ballad "Essex's last good night" (Chappell 1855–1859, 1: 174–177; Collmann 1912: 106–110). Walter, first Earl of Essex, died in Ireland, the very arena of heroic endeavor that brought his son into royal disfavor. Through a series of risings and fallings, the tune modulates from lamentation (in the section marked A) to defiance (in B) to a qualified lamentation (in C) (musical quotation 7.7).

Meditative pauses in the narrative, first on the phrase "Welladay, welladay," then on the phrase "evermore still," are realized by the singing voice as mellismas, as vocal movements free from the march of syllables. These phrases, especially the first, become the emotional heart of the ballad. As the story moves along, "welladay, welladay" becomes "gallantly gallantly" (for Essex's performances in tilts before the queen and in exploits in Ireland, France, and Spain), "gratiously

Musical quotation 7.7

(A)  
Sweel Eng - lands pride is gone well - a - day well - a - day

Which makes her sigh and grone e - ver more still:

(B)  
He did her fame ad - uance in Ire - land Spaine and France,

(C)  
And now by dis - mall chaunce is from her tane.

(Tune adapted from Simpson 1966: no. 496, words from [Anon.], "A lamentable Ditty" 1603)



graciously" (for the queen's clemency to all the conspirators but Essex), "mournefully mournfully" (for the words of the lieutenant of the Tower to the condemned lord, for Essex's private prayers, and for Essex's pronouncement of forgiveness to his enemies), and finally "cruelly cruelly" (for the fall of the executioner's axe). Although it sometimes advances the narrative, "evermore still" likewise becomes a series of emotionally charged phrases: "well is it known," "like him before," "more was the pittie," "as it is sayd," "to die tomorrow," "of this my death," "priuate to pray," "for this your death," "that had him wrong'd," "For all the blowes." What all these variations solicit is empathy. In these moments particularly the singer *becomes* the event. Indeed, the ballad invites him or her to become the Earl of Essex. Third-person narrative begins the ballad, but the twenty-five stanzas are structured like a ballad remembered from oral tradition in their move toward the center, to the moment when Essex sings in his own person, in the singer's person:

I haue a sinner been  
 welladay welladay  
 Yet neuer wrong'd my Queene  
 in all my life,  
 My God I did offend,  
 Which grieues me at my end,  
 May all the rest amend,  
 I doe forgiue them.

It is precisely here, toward the middle of the ballad, in a phrase at the very top of the melodic crest, that Essex expresses his love for the common people of England:

To the state I ne're ment ill  
 welladay welladay  
 Neither wisht the commons ill  
 in all my life,  
 But loued all with my heart,  
 And alwaies tooke their part,  
 Whereas there was desert,  
 In any place.

Although the narrative returns briefly to third person, it finishes in first person plural, in a gesture of solidarity with the executed hero:

His soule it is at rest,  
 in heauen among the blest,  
 Where God send us to rest,  
 When it shall please him.  
 ("A lamentable Ditty," 1603)

"A lamentable Dittie composed vpon the death of Robert Lord Deuereux" helps to explain why Essex was a popular hero. In the act of "balleting" Essex, the ballad "subjectifies" Essex, making it possible for hero and singer to speak as one person. Frederic Gerschow, visiting from Germany just a year after the earl's execution, testifies to the popularity of a song on the event—perhaps, indeed, this very ballad. Having been shown the site of the earl's death in the Tower, Gerschow remarks,

How beloved and admired this Earl was throughout the kingdom, may be judged from the circumstance that his song, in which he takes leave of the Queen and the whole country, and in which also he shows the reason of his unlucky fate, is sung and played on musical instruments all over the country, even in our presence at the royal court, though his memory is condemned as that of a man having committed high treason. (1892: 15)

The contrast with balletings upon Queen Elizabeth could hardly be greater. Two ballads contemporary with Elizabeth's review of the troops at Tilbury are remarkable for denying the queen—and the singer—a subject position. In T. I.'s "A Ioyful Song of the Royall receiuing of the Queenes most excellent Maiestie into her highnesse Campe at Tilburie in Essex: on Thursday and Fryday the eight and ninth of August, 1588" (BB 222, 1588) there is only the slightest flirtation with such a position in the line "Then might she see the hats to flye." The queen's famous speech is reported in only the most general terms—and in third person. Thomas Deloney's "The Queenes visiting of the Campe at Tilsburie with her entertainment there" (BB 221, 1588) does allow the singer to become the queen, but compresses her famous speech into just one stanza. The tune is "Wilson's Wild" (musical quotation 7.8). Immediately the singer resumes the subject position that dominates the rest of the ballad, that of Elizabeth's loyal subjects:

This done the souldiers all at once,  
 a mightie shout or crye did give:  
 Which forced from the Assure skyes,  
 an Eccoo loud from thence to driue.  
 (Deloney 1912: 478)

The ballad finishes with a bystander's view of the queen proceeding to the Lord Chief General's tent for a feast, then boarding her barge and being rowed away. Instructed by Deloney, the singer respectfully keeps his or her distance. Elizabeth herself remains a third-person Other. The same arrangements hold true for Richard Harrington's Accession Day ballad "A famous dittie of the Ioyful receauing of the

## Musical quotation 7.8

And then be - spake our nob - le Queene my  
I hope this day the worst is seen that  
lou - ing friends and cour - tie - men  
in our wars ye shall sus - taine.

For in the midst of all your troupe to  
be your ioy, your guide and com - fort For  
we our - selues will be in place e -  
uen be - fore our en - e - mies face.

(Tune adapted from Simpson 1966: no. 526, words from Deloney 1912: 478)

Queens moste excellent maiestie, by the worthy Citizens of London the xij day of Noumber, 1584. at her graces comming to Saint Iames" (BB 210, 1584). "Come ouer the born bessy / come ouer the born bessy / Swete bessy come ouer to me": "A Songe betwene the Quenes maiestie and Englande" (BB 92, 1564), from early in Elizabeth's reign, seems to be a charming exception to the rule. A ballad-singer can become Henry V, become the pope, become the Earl of Essex, but he or she may not become the queen.

At quite the opposite extreme is the chance to become a common criminal: a cutpurse, a highwayman, a murderer. Confessions sung in the person of condemned prisoners—indeed, of already executed prisoners—were prominent in the ballad-seller's stock in trade. Such songs found their inspiration partly in the spoken confessions required by sentencing and partly in the songs felons sang on the way to the gallows. Orazio Busino, chaplain to the Venetian ambassador in 1617–18 and in general a trustworthy witness, seems to be speaking from personal observation when he describes the rituals of public execution:

They take them five and twenty at a time, every month, besides sudden and extraordinary executions in the course of the week on a large cart like a high scaffold. They go along quite jollily, holding their sprigs of rosemary and singing songs, accompanied by their friends and a multitude of people. On reaching the gallows one of the party acts as spokesman, saying fifty words or so. Then the music, which they had learned at their leisure in the prisons, being repeated, the executioner hastens the business, and beginning at one end, fastens each man's halter to the gibbet. (1995: 148–149)

Ballads like "Luke Huttons lamentation: which he wrote the day before his death, being condemned to be hanged at Yorke this last assises for his robberies and trespasses committed" (BB 246, 1598) may, then, be making some claims to authenticity. (The specified tune, "Wandering wauering," has apparently been lost.)

Adue my louing frends each one,  
ah woe is me woe is me for my great folly  
Thinke on my words when I am gone,  
be warned young wantons, &c.  
When on the ladder you shal me view,  
thinke I am neerer heauen then you.

([Anon.] 1598)

What is offered in ballads like these seems to be, in fact, a *double subject position*: the singer gets to be the criminal, but she also gets to be the criminal's judge. Opportunity to be both the victim and the executioner, particularly in scenes of erotic violence, is one of the things ballads share with stage plays (Smith 1996: 421–443).

The politics of *upon* and *against* can be explained in part by shifts in the social status of ballads and balleting in the course of the sixteenth century. In the general divergence of "the great tradition" from "the little tradition" ballads occupy a crucial place. At the beginning of the century, literate ballads bore the pedigree of Chaucer and Lydgate and were cultivated by the likes of the writers in R. B.'s list: Alexander Barclay, John Bale, William Wager. By the end of the century literate ballads had become, as Natascha Würzbach demonstrates, a self-consciously proletarian medium (1990: 13–27). Sir William Cornwallis, hanging back at the edge of the crowd, typifies the ambivalent relationship of cultivated men and women to ballads on the street and ballads in print. Their ambivalence may have had as much to do with the commodification of ballads as with the smelliness of the crowd. Well before 1600, the titles emblazoned on broadside ballads register no embarrassment whatsoever about their commercial status—a far cry indeed from books that often apologize for their very existence, particularly when written by someone like Sir William



Cornwallis. His collected *Essayes* carry a dedicatory epistle from Henry Olney, who asks pardon for putting his friend's works into print "although I know that worthy Knight, the Author of these Essayes, hateth nothing more then comming in publick" (Cornwallis 1600: A2). From the standpoint of the authorities, ballads were dangerous not only for *what* they might say but for *how* they might say it. To ballet a subject was to commandeer the subject. Within the political horizon at least, Carole Livingston's thesis seems just: the main thing distinguishing printed ballads from oral ballads is the constant threat of censorship (1991: 902–910). The Commonwealth would have none of them. After 1642, players on the stage fell silent. After 1649, so did balleters in the street (Rollins 1919: 321).

### THE PSYCHOLOGICAL HORIZON

Positioned at the center of four intersecting horizons—the physiological, the acoustic, the social, the political—the ballating subject finds her self-identity in the fifth. Her sounding voice reverberates inside her body, it projects itself into the space around her, it rings out with the voices and the bodies of her peers, it strikes the baffles of political authority—and sometimes penetrates them. At the fifth horizon the ballad returns to the interiority from which, as sound, it first issued, but it returns with resonances from all the other horizons it has touched. Early modern singers and listeners were themselves aware that it was the first-personhood of ballads that made them so interesting. When Cokes asks Nightingale to point out any cutpurses he sees lurking in Bartholomew Fair, Nightingale whips a ballad out of his packet: "Sir, this is a spell against 'hem, spicke and span new; and 'tis made as 'twere in mine owne person, and I sing it in mine owne defence. But 'twill cost a penny alone, if you buy it" (3.5.42–45, emphasis added, in Jonson 1925–1963, 6: 74). Buy several, he implies, and I'll lower the price of each. Potent or not against cutpurses—Philip Stubbes in *The Anatomy of Abuses* cites performances of "Caveats against Cut-Purses" as just the time when the peddler's confederates would be hard at work fleecing the crowd (Rollins 1919: 320)—ballads "made as 'twere in mine own person" were especially seductive when the subject was love. The decades-long popularity of William Elderton's "The gods of love" derives from its capacity to give sound and rhythm to the desires of thousands of men and women (musical quotation 7.9).

Just as "A lamentable Dittie composed vpon the death of Robert Lord Deureux" finds its most intimate, most personal moments in meditative pauses on "welladay welladay," so "The gods of love" insinuates itself as the singer's very own in the phrase "And knows me,

### Musical quotation 7.9



The God of love that sits a-bove And knows me, and knows me  
Grant my re-quest that at the least She show me, she show me

How sor-row-ful I do serve; That ev-ery brawl may turn to bliss, To  
some pi-ty when I de-serve.

joy with all that joy-ful is Do this my dear and bind me For-  
And as you here do find me, So

e-ver and e-ver your own, For till I hear this u-ni-ty I lan-  
let your love be shown:

guish in ex-trem-i-ty.

(Tune adapted from Simpson 1966: no. 163, words from Osborn 1958)

and knows me," echoed shortly in "She show me, she show me." In those two phrases are invested the song's erotic longing: the singer's narcissistic pleasure cries out for sexual admiration. The tune in each case accentuates the effect of strong personal feeling by a change in the rhythmic pattern and a coming to closure. In later stanzas, the phrase "And knows me, and knows me" becomes a series of equally charged meditations: "Uprightly, uprightly," "To find ye, to find ye," "Full truly, full truly," "To speed me, to speed me." The second phrase, "She show me, she show me," undergoes similar metamorphoses: "So lightly, so lightly," "To mind ye, to mind ye," "As duly, as duly," "You need me, you need me." In the last stanza in particular, full of figurative words given physical force, the combination of self-indulgence and physical desire is, for the singer at least, irresistible:

With courtesy now, so bend, so bow,  
To speed me, to speed me,  
As answereth my desire;

Unworthy though to come so nigh  
That passing show that feeds mine eye,

Yet shall I die without it,  
If pity be not in you. . . .

(Osborn 1958: 11)

Small wonder that Benedick should think of the song in the very height of his frustrated love for Beatrice.

It is in ballads upon love, perhaps, that the singer most conspicuously becomes the thing sung about. But narrative ballads offer the same possibilities for self-projection in the telling and self-absorption in the singing. First-person dialogue, not third-person narration, brings the events of orally transmitted ballads into aural and visual presence. In certain of these ballads—"Edward" (Child no. 13) and "Lord Randall" (Child no. 14) are probably the best-known examples today—there is no third-person narration at all. The singer who traverses the city streets and travels the countryside with Brathwait's characteristic ballad-monger changes his voice to suit changing subjects—and perhaps even changing customers. A veritable "*Chantel-eere*" (someone who sings and ogles at the same time?), he can even impersonate Puritans, as he

sings with varietie of ayres (having as you may suppose, an instru-me[n]tall *Polyphon* in the cranie of his nose). Now he counterfeits a naturall *Base*, then a perpetuall *Treble*, and ends with a *Counter-tenure*. You shall heare him feigne an artfull straine through the Nose, purposely to insinuate into the attention of the purer *brother-hood*: But all in vaine; They blush at the *abomination* of this knave, and demurely passing by him, call him the *lost childe*. (1631: B5)

As performance pieces, jigs in particular take shape as a series of dramatic exchanges. Even when the story-singer sets the scene, connects episodes separated in narrative time, and rounds out the story with a moral, as Deloney's maidens do in "The Fair Flower of Northumberland," dramatic speeches remain the heart of the ballad. The reason is not hard to discover: it is precisely in those moments of dramatic presence that the singer becomes the subject—or rather the *subjects*. Narrative ballads offer a range of opportunities for becoming people other than oneself by assuming their voices. In "The Death of Queen Jane" (Child no. 170), for example, the singer becomes both Jane Seymour and Henry VIII. Queen Jane's death after birthing Prince Edward in 1537 inspired a ballad that did not receive literate attention until the late eighteenth century (Child 1957, 3: 372–376) but that presumably goes back to the event itself. Certainly the ballad enjoyed wide circulation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, both in Britain and in North America. Mrs. Kate Thomas's version, taken down by Cecil Sharp and Maud Karpeles in Lee County, Kentucky, sometime between 1916 and 1918, gives voice to a queen

Musical quotation 7.10

O Hen - ry, King Hen - ry Pray lis - ten to me. And  
O no, said King Hen - ry That could ne - ver be. I would  
pierce my right side o - pen And save my ba - by.  
lose my sweet flo - wer To save my ba - by.

(Sharp and Karpeles 1968: 45)

and a king who had been dead for four hundred years (musical quotation 7.10). Mrs. Thomas sang these long-dead voices, but she did so on her own terms. When Sharp told Mrs. Thomas who the people were about whom she sang, she replied, "There now, I always said that song must be true because it is so beautiful" (Sharp and Karpeles 1968: 45, 104). Even an informant in England, even an informant closer in time to the historical events of the ballad, might have made the same reply. If Mark W. Booth is correct, identification of the singer with the song is the very thing that assures a song's popularity and survival (1981: 14–17). What Mrs. Thomas offers in her version of "The Death of Queen Jane" is a personalizing of two historical figures. For Queen Elizabeth, at least during her reign, that was not a possibility for ballad-singers.

One transformative mark of print on ballads is greater dependency on third-person narrative (Livingston 1991: 895). Thus the text of "The wofull death of Queene Iane, Wife to King Henry the eight: and how King Edward was cut out of his mothers belly," printed in *A Crowne-Garland of Goulde[n] Roses* (1612), probably from a lost broadside, tells the story almost entirely in third person. Neither Henry nor Jane is given a single dramatic speech. The one person who is given voice, "a lady" who reports Jane's dire condition to the king, points toward the ballad's implicit subject position: the people of England. "Oh mourne, mourne mourn faire Ladies, / *Iane* your Queene the flower of England dies," goes the refrain at the end of each stanza. In the final stanza this refrain is given topical immediacy. It is Prince Edward's successor Elizabeth whose death is being mourned: "Oh mourne, mourne, mourne faire Ladies / *Elizabeth* the flower of Englands dead" (R. Johnson 1612: C2<sup>v</sup>–C4). There is a voice that recommends "The wofull death of Queene Iane" to singers, listeners, and readers in the first decade of the seventeenth century, but it happens



not to be the voice of a mother dying in childbirth or the voice of an unyielding husband.

Third-person narrative could be regarded as a corruption of oral immediacy, but printed broadsides offer a singer or a listener a wider choice of subject positions, both *among* ballads and *within* ballads.

Ballads! my masters, ballads! Will ye ha'any ballads o' the newest and truest matter in all London? I have of them for all people, and of all arguments too. Here be your story-ballads, your love-ballads, and your ballads of good-life; fit for your gallant, your nice maiden, your grave senior, and all sorts of men beside. Ballads! my masters, rare ballads! Take a fine ballad, *Sir*, with a picture to't. (Tite 1845: 44-45)

The ballad-hawker's cry in this Restoration pastiche of *Bartholomew Fair* gives some sense of the possibilities, not only for the "Sir" who will pay but for the "nice maiden" who will enjoy her consort's purchase. Print, and the topicality fostered by print, made it possible for a ballad-singer to become not only the faithless lover, the constant lover, the knight, and the trickster of oral tradition, but Luke Hutton the highwayman (BB 246, 1598), King Solomon (Heber 18339, c. 1600), Richard Tarlton caught in a flood (BB 154, 1570), a fly in the pope's nose (BB 132, 1570), a soldier at Tilbury (BB 222, 1588), the Earl of Essex (1603), a morris dancer in the Cotswolds or Kent (BB 110, 1569), a military deserter (Shirburn 47, 1600), the town of Beckles, Suffolk, speaking for itself after being burnt to the ground (BB 217, 1586), a naked love-crazed madman on a rampage among his neighbors (Euing 201, 1637), even God Himself (BB 240, 1592). Something of the same freedom is offered *within* a single ballad. The singer becomes first the narrator, then this character, then that character, then perhaps a third. Rather than foreclosing the possibilities for dramatic impersonation, printed ballads open them up. The result, as Frederick O. Waage has argued, is the capacity of ballads to speak to the contradictions in early modern culture, allowing the singer to sympathize both with the condemned criminal who speaks in first person and with the system that condemns him (1977: 731-742).

To a much greater extent than texts in "the great tradition," popular ballads invited singers and listeners to occupy a female subject position. In addition to "The Fair Flower of Northumberland" and "The Death of Queen Jane," Deloney's singing spinsters and carders might have included in their repertoire any number of ballads from oral tradition that give voice and presence to women: "Tam Lin" (Child no. 39, licensed for printing 1558), "The Lord of Lorne and the False Steward" (Child no. 271, licensed 1580), "Fair Margaret and Sweet William" (Child no. 74, quoted in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* 1611), "The Knight and the Shepherd's Daughter" (Child no.

110, first printed c. 1660, possibly quoted in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*), "Little Musgrave and Lady Barnard" (Child no. 81, printed 1630), "Georgie" (Child no. 209, possibly identifiable with "George Stoole," printed c. 1630, and "George of Oxford," printed 1683), "The Daemon Lover" (Child no. 243, printed c. 1650), "The Twa Sisters" (Child no. 10, printed 1656), "Lord Thomas and Fair Annet" (Child no. 73, printed c. 1670), "The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington" (Child no. 105, printed 1670-1696), and "Bonny Barbara Allan" (Child no. 84, printed 1685-1692). From ballads circulating, in part at least, in writing they might have sung "The nutt browne mayd" (Percy MS, ed. Hales and Furnivall 1867-1868, 3: 174-186, datable to 1502), Ellen Thorn's song (BL MS Cot. Ves. A-25, ed. Seng, no. 34, datable to the 1570s), "The complaint of a woman Louer" and "The lamentation of a woman being wrongfully defamed" (printed in *A Handful of Pleasant Delights*, 1584), "Marye Aumbree" (Percy MS 1756, 1: 515-519, cited in *Epicoene* 1609), "Ladies: ffall" (Percy 1756, 2: 246-252, datable to 1595), and "Queene Dido" (1756, 3: 499-506, printed 1620). Lovers—constant, faithless, murderous, dying—loom large in these narratives, but in length, breadth, and intensity they sing on equal terms with men. In "Little Musgrave and Lady Barnard" the women rivals dominate the dialogue, and in Ellen Thorn's song men have no singing part at all. In "Georgie" and "Queene Dido" male singers exist primarily to give the female protagonists their cues. In strength of presence, the most remarkable of these female protagonists is Mary Ambree, whose prowess as a soldier was proverbial enough to earn contemptuous references from Jonson in *Epicoene* (4.2.123), *A Tale of a Tub* (1.4.22), and *The Fortunate Isles* (393).

To insist on gender exclusivity is, in a way, to miss the point: what ballads offer the singer and the listener is the possibility of becoming many subjects, by internalizing the sounds and rhythms of those subjects' voices. A male singer of "The Lord of Lorne and the False Steward" must sing in the person of the duchess who discovers the young lord's identity and marries him, as well as in the persons of the young lord, his father, and the steward who tries to convince the duchess and her father that the young lord is a common drudge. Likewise, a female singer of "Tam Lin" must impersonate the fairy knight who changes into the shapes of beasts as well as the princess who wins him by holding on tightly through all his metamorphoses.

In their allurement to fantasies of identity, ballads in performance are like plays in performance. Commonwealth authorities recognized as much when they closed the playhouses in 1642 and began to persecute ballad-singers at about the same time. After 1649 it was illegal to sing ballads in the streets. In general, links between plays and ballads are not hard to identify. Both media had become, by the 1590s,

capitalist commodifications of cultural performances that had once been community-produced without a profit motive (Weimann 1996: 113–119; Bristol 1996: 31–41). Several people made successful careers out of both. William Elderton, for example, not only produced some of the most quoted broadside ballads of the century but directed boy actors in plays before the queen. Churchyard in his flytings with Camel *et al.* cast himself as a vice, a plain-speaker who calls a spade a spade:

Nay, any, some one must speake,  
 although the vice it bee:  
 Or els the play were done ye wot,  
 then Lordinges pardon mee.  
 (Churchyard 1566)

Richard Tarlton's fame as a performer of jigs was enough to induce four different printers to attribute ballads and chapbooks to his talents, the two surviving examples (BB 154, 1570, and BB 239, 1591–1592) being remarkably unjig-like. But why not? Jigs were simply ballads put on the stage, a way of rounding out a good comedy or turning a tragedy on its head. The custom made a strong impression on, for one, Thomas Platter, taking in a performance of *Julius Caesar* at the Globe. "Their wont" in England was to break down a play into a danced ballad: "Portia" becomes the likes of "Nan," "Caesar" the likes of "Rowland," "Brutus" the likes of "The Fool."

Plays could become ballads without such radical changes in the plot. In addition to "Agincourte Battel," strollers in the street and browsers in bookstalls could buy any number of ballads "upon" the subjects of famous plays: "A ballad of the life and deathe of Doctor Ffaustus the great Cunngerer" (registered 1589, MS copy c. 1616 as Shirburn 15, surviving imprints 1624, 1658–64, 1686–88, c. 1693, c. 1695), "A newe ballad of Romeo and Juliett" (reg. 1596), "A new song, shewing the crueltie of Gernutus a jew, who would have a pound of flesh" (c. 1620), "The Spanish tragedy, containing the lamentable murders of Horatio and Bellimperia" (c. 1620), and "A lamentable song of the Death of King Leir and his Three Daughters" (collected in Richard Johnson's *The Golden Garland of Princely Pleasures* [1620]). In some cases the ballad and the play may derive from the same printed source (for example, "Faustus" and possibly "Gernutus"), but dates of surviving imprints suggest that in most cases ballads were designed to cash in on the stage successes of plays. "Residuals" is the term in modern show business. The fact that John Danter in 1594 registered "a booke intituled a Noble Roman Historie of TYTUS ANDRONICUS"—a play that turns out, in print, to be Shakespeare's—and, in the very next entry, his copyright for "the ballad

thereof," suggests that playscripts and ballads may, for some purchasers at least, have served the same mnemonic function of keeping the play alive by keeping it in their mouths and ears (Arber 1875, 2: 644).

"The Lamentable and Tragical History of *Titus Andronicus*" (surviving imprints c. 1625, 1658–59, 1675, 1690, and 1700) provides, in fact, a good example. The tune, "Fortune my foe," is one of the most widely circulated among broadside ballads of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. As the setting for laments such as those of numerous broadside ballads upon murders, natural disasters, and deathbed confessions (Simpson 1966: 225–231), it was likewise a tune especially well suited to first-person "complaints" such as Titus's (musical quotation 7.11). Like most broadside ballads, "The Lamentable and Tragical History of *Titus Andronicus*" is designed to retail "news," and to do it in the most arresting, expeditious way possible, which typically entails more direct narrative than dramatic dialogue. In this case, however, the narrator is the protagonist: all the events of the story—even his own death—are sung by him. The only other character who "speaks" is the tongueless Lavinia, whose inscribed words are distinguished in this imprint by Roman typeface:

For with a staff, without the help of hand,  
 She writ these words upon a plat of Sand:  
 The lustful Sons of the proud Empress,  
 Are doers of this hateful wickedness.  
 ("Titus Andronicus," 1658–59)

In singing the ballad alone, in performing it for others, even in performing it *with* others, the singer perforce becomes the titular hero: all

#### Musical quotation 7.11

You no - ble minds and fa - mous Mart - ial Wights,  
 That in de - fence of Na - tiue Coun - treies fights,  
 Give ear to me that ten years fought for Rome,  
 Yet reap'd dis - grace at my re - turn - ing home.

(Tune adapted from Simpson 1966: no. 144, words from "The Lamentable and Tragical History of *Titus Andronicus*" 1658–1659)



