Chapter – 1

Construction of the Visible / Invisible in the English and Dogri Ballads of the Medieval Period

This chapter discusses, how the visible has been constructed in the English and Dogri ballads under social pressure. It will explore the construction of the identity of the character of feudal lords, the military elites as well as the border reivers in the English ballads and of the feudal lords and warriors in the Dogri ballads. This chapter purports to show how the identity construction that was made visible through the ballads was not what they actually represented. The real identity of the feudal lords and other chiefs was that of tyrant and cruel men who suppressed their subjects. But in the ballads, both in English and Dogri, they have been eulogized and presented as figures who cared for the serfs working on their fief. The real character of the lords is made invisible by constructing a false image and identity of the feudal lords. The invisible is camouflaged by the visible.

The ballads composed in English and Dogri are about the feudal age, narrating the heroic deeds of the feudal lords. Hence, a survey of development of feudalism in Europe as well as its evolution in India and special reference to Jammu will not be out of place here. A comprehension of the development of feudalism in Europe will enable the
exploration of the possibility of how an identical process could have
emerged even in India. It will contribute in evolving a parameter to
situate India in a parallel network of transitional trends.

The concept of the advancement and stratification of European
feudalism has been interpreted and defined by many historians. As a basic
and simple definition, one may assume that feudalism exists in a society
with: 1) extremely strong ties of personal dependence; 2) a strong
military class at the top of the social structure; 3) hierarchical systems of
land rights based on personal dependence; 4) a breakup of central
authority, with State powers distributed to powerful men (usually) in
control of large areas of land and 5) a body of institutions used to create
and enforce the ties of dependence.

The basic characteristics of feudalism in Western Europe were the
fragmentation of political authority, public power in private lands, and a
military system in which an essential part of the armed forces was
secured through private contracts. Feudalism was a method of
government and a way of securing the forces necessary to preserve that
method of government.

Feudalism in Europe as such began with the decline of the Roman
Empire and the subsequent attacks by various tribes. These incursions
diminished the hold of the powerful king who in addition to being
militarily weak, was also unable to generate income on his own to meet
necessitating economic demands. He was, therefore, obliged to grant
tracts of lands as ‘fiefs’ to his nobles. The latter in turn distributed both
the lands and the accompanying rights to their own subordinates, the
vassals. In a period of extreme political fluctuations and the trepidation of
incoming invasions, the people were forced to accept the overlordship of
the feudal lords who atleast guaranteed their existence. These lords
slowly gained power and a social structure consequently came up; side by
side, with the power of the king, which was constantly declining.

A generalized three-tired pyramidal social structure with the
peasants at the base level followed by the knights, barons, dukes earls and
the king at the apex came into existence. The dukes and earls were direct
vassals of the king. The feudal lords of different categories possessed
lands as vassals of their respective overlords.

At first, the lords not only controlled the lands but carried out
military obligations as well. Over a period of time, the land became
hereditary property. Even their military duties were inherited by their
descendants. The peasantry which formed the lowest and largest
proportion of the population was also divided into a three-layered strata.
These included the ‘freeholders’ who received land from the lords. They
could utilize and manage the same as their own, through payment of taxes
to their lords. The other category was of ‘villeins’ who not only gave a
portion of the produce of their own land but also worked on the lord’s
fields for a minimum stipulated wage. ‘Serfs’ on the other hand, had to cultivate the lords’ lands.

The origin and growth of feudalism in India is to be sought in the land grants made to ‘Brahmins’ from the first century onwards. ‘Brahmins’ and temples were clearly granted land revenues not in lieu of services but of spiritual services. They were allowed fiscal rights, and maintenance of law and order, but such grants were defective because of the perishable nature of the material on which they were recorded. The land was commonly granted, assigned by the rulers with rights of varying degrees to ‘Brahmins’ and religious institutions, to vassals for military services, to the members of the clan or family and even to the officers.

The practice of land grants gave birth to a land-lord class between the peasants and the kings. The socio-economic aspects of feudalism in India were closely connected with the transformation of ‘Sudras’ who were treated as the common servants and slaves of the three higher ‘Varnas’ – the ‘Brahmins’, the ‘Kshatriyas’ and the ‘Vaishyas’. D. N. Jha writes:

The economic essence of Indian feudalism, like that of European, it has argued, lay in the rise of landed intermediaries leading to the enserfment of the peasantry through restriction on peasant mobility and freedom, increasing obligation to perform forced labour (vīṣṭī),
mounting tax burdens and the evils of subinfeudation. (4) (emphasis original).

The granting of rights over land in return for military or other services was the essence of the feudal system, but before this relationship could be firmly established, land had to be free or immune to possible intervention by the centralized authority. Immunity created a territory, free from interference by the state, so that public functions, such as the administration of justice or protection became the prerogative of private individuals.

Fiefs were primarily pieces of land held on terms of personal obligation. There were three main varieties of such tenure (landholding): ecclesiastical (Church), military, and general. Ecclesiastical fiefs were those given to the Church or Temple, which provided spiritual benefits to the donor – and often nothing else-in return. There were two principal types of military tenure-field service in the overlord’s army and guard service at the overlord’s residence. Other forms of tenure also existed, and these involved general, rather than spiritual or military, services. Fiefs were granted to vassals for supplying overlords with goods (horses, equipment, provisions) or personal services (hospitality or comfort in sickness). Towards the end of the feudal age, with the flourishing of a money economy, these services were commuted into payments into the overlord’s treasury.
The basis of all feudal relationship was a contract, a powerful legal and cultural force for cohesion in a world that was effectively localized and decentralized. A contract took the form of an oath of fealty (loyalty), by which homage was sworn by the vassal to the overlord for the grant of a fief. The contract between overlord and vassal confirmed their obligations to each other and lasted so long as its terms were honoured and enforced. In general, the overlord owed the vassal, support in the form of administration of justice, defense against attack and honourable treatment as an equal. Vassal owed their overlords, services such as the military and general services, payments (inheritence, ransom, dowry, knighthood fees), and the acceptance of various other obligations. Since the feudal contract rarely involved an actual written document, dramatization and ceremony were used to emphasize and publicly record the agreement. Often the dramatization took the form of humiliating rituals that underscored the subordination of the vassal. For example, the vassal might be forced to kneel down or kiss the lord. The hair of a would-be knight might be shorn to symbolize the new state into which he was entering. The serf belonging to a monastery might pull the bell rope around his neck as a symbol of the perpetual servitude into which he had entered.

Just as lords had many vassals, vassals could have several lords. ‘Leige lordship’ was the mechanism developed for determining the table
of priorities of loyalty. The liege lord was a vassal’s primary lord to whom he owed loyalty and service above all others. In the second half of the twelfth century, Henry II. of England and then King Philip Augustics of France in imitation of Henry developed an ideal of royal liege lordship in which the king was defined as the primary lord of every free man who held land in the realm, regardless of who that man’s immediate personal lord might be.

The English ballads provide a true picture of feudal society of England. Ballads like “Sir Patrick Spens” and “Auld Maitland” exhibit the examples feudal loyalty and pride respectively.

The ballad of “Sir Patrick Spens” is a tale of extreme loyalty and self—sacrifice. The King of Scotland had called for the greatest sailor in the land to command a ship for a royal errand to Norway. The name, Sir Patrick Spens was mentioned by a courtier and the King dispatched a letter. Sir Patrick Spens, though honoured to receive an order of a royal mission, was dismayed at being, put to sea in the dead of winter, clearly realizing his fate. The royal ship reached Norway where tension aroused between the Norwegian lords and the Scots, who were accused of being a financial burden on the king of Norway, King Eric. Sir Patrick took offence and left the following day. They faced a deadly storm on their return voyage and perished to the bottom of the sea.
The ballad is a true example of poet’s ignorance about historical facts. The ballad is an exaggerated mixture of two events: the bringing home of the Scottish queen Margaret, Maid of Norway, across the North Sea in 1290 and voyage undertaken by the Princess’s mother in 1281. The seven year old princess died on the way, though not in the manner of Sir Patrick in this ballad. However, many of the ships sent to fetch her are said to have perished. To consider the events one by one, one must believe that if it was the Maid of Norway’s voyage and death in 1290, then the whole narrative becomes absurd because the King of Scotland, Alexander III had died in 1285 without leaving any male heir to the throne. The kingdom had been secured to the Maid of Norway by the Parliament of Scotland. But the ballad starts as:

The King sits in Dumfermline town, (1)

The presence of the Scottish King has ruled out the possibility of the ballad’s basis of the voyage of 1290. Secondly, if it was the voyage undertaken by King’s daughter Margaret who was married to the King of Norway in 1281, then also there are no historical records of her death in the voyage. History reveals that in 1281, Margaret, daughter of Alexander III was married to the King of Norway. She sailed to Norway on the last day of July in the company of many knights and nobles. On returning home after the celebration of her marriage, the ship carrying the nobles and knights drowned killing all of them. If Margaret had accompanied
them and died, then how could Maid of Norway born in 1283. The letter which is sent to Sir Patrick Spens mentions:

“The King’s daughter of Noroway,

“Tis thou maun bring her hame.” (15, 16)

It narrates them to bring home the King’s daughter. Later in the ballad, the return voyage is planned abruptly after Sir Patrick Spens and his men were blamed of being a financial burden on the king of Norway without any reference to the Maid of Norway or her mother accompanying them to Scotland.

The King of Scotland seems desperate to send his new ship on the voyage to Norway at an unfavourable time of the year when sailing the North Sea was sure to be disastrous. Sir Patrick Spens seemed worried on receiving the royal order but he had no other option than to obey his king. Sir Patrick was not only the one destroyed; an unspecified number of nobles and the crew also perished. It is impossible to determine from the ballad as to why the king was sacrificing them all and for what purpose. The ending of the poem is very dramatic as invented by the poet. It narrates:

O forty miles off Aberdeen,

‘Tis fifty fathom deep,

And there lies gude Sir Patrick Spens,

Wi’ the Scots lords at his feet. (101-104)
This ballad is poet’s own imagination as it bears no historical reality. Even the name ‘Patrick Spens’ has no historical record and like many other heroes of such ballads, is probably an invention although some historians believe that it was actually Sir Patrick Vans. The end of the ballad is so constructed that it inspires the listeners and readers about the ideals of fealty and loyalty. The poem’s ending is ironic in the way the position of bodies have indicated social status (e.g. the knight who sat at the king’s right knee). At the end, while the lords may outrank Spens socially, their cowardice and concern for worldly things, their failure to comprehend their situation and act accordingly – sets Spens above the lords in the end. Significantly, they lie at his feet, not he at theirs. This justifies his loyalty by positioning him at a higher altar in heaven thus inspiring the coming generations that whosoever is loyal to his lord is glorified in heaven and history.

“Auld Maitland” is the ballad about the Anglo-Scottish war in which the hero of the ballad, an old Maitland, named Sir Richard Maitland was killed by the English forces and the subsequent revenge by his three sons.

According to the ballad, King Edward hight was the king of England since fifty years. His sister’s son, Young Edward hight sought his permission to join the ongoing war between England and Scotland along with fifteen hundred men. They went to Scotland where they were
warmly welcomed by Dunbar, who had allied with the English on many occasions. They reached Lammermore and came upon a darksome house. Edward cried to the owner, dictating him to hand over the house to him. The house was owned by an old knight who stood ready to fight alone with the huge English army. He killed many enemies but finally he was killed. The English conquered Scotland and headed towards France, destroying each and every Castle and town on their way. The three sons of the old Maitland were studying in France. They came to know about the brutal murder of their father and resolved to avenge it. They entered Edwards’ party pretending to be Englishmen. King Edward’s host told them that they looked like Auld Maitland who killed many of his fellow soldiers and thanked God that he was killed. On hearing this, the young Maitland stabbed the knight to death. He caught the royal flag and rode away along with his brothers. The youngest of them killed more than fifteen men pursuing them and himself got wounded. They were caught by the Captain. In the night, they slew many Englishmen and threw their bodies in gutters. King Edward was heard saying that three lads of France had stolen away their flag, that they were disguised and told a false tale. The youngest Maitland went before the king and told him that they had stolen the flag and that they were old Maitland’s son whom his army had murdered in Scotland. He challenged anyone from his side to come and fight with them. The young Edward sent Piercy to fight with the eldest,
Ethert Lunn to fight with the second one and William Lunn of Lancaster to fight with the third one. The three Maitlands killed all the three Englishmen. Young Edward wanted to punish them but king Edward warned him saying that he had already lost many of his worthy lords and that he could not afford to loose him too. But young Edward did not agree. He fought with the Maitland brothers and was killed. About the period described in this ballad Walter Scott writes:

The date of the ballad cannot be ascertained with any degree of accuracy. Sir Richard Maitland, the hero of the poem, seems to have been in possession of his estate about 1250, so that he survived the commencement of the wars betwixt England and Scotland, in 1296, his prowess against the English, in defence of his castle of Lauder, or Thirlestane, must have been exerted during his extreme old age. (8)

From this evidence, it follows that the Auld Maitland of the ballad was an historical character, eminent in the legends and ballads of the people. Although, Auld Maitland and his three sons are real historical characters but young Edward hight is a fictitious one. The creation of this lord only to be slain by the Maitland brothers is a poetic licence. The event of Maitland’s murder, invasion of Scotland and prowess to France are all historical facts but the poet is much concerned to glorify the Maitlands and their heroic deeds. He takes all liberty to construct
characters and events to achieve his goal. Hence, the second stanza and all the following ones referring to Young Edward hight are invented. The Poet says:

He had a sister’s son o’s ain,
Was large of blood and bane;
And afterward, when he came up,
Young Edward hight his name. (5-8)

The country to the north and south of the border between England and Scotland was for countries the battlefield between the two nations. The border country and its people suffered terribly as a consequence. Borderers were robbed and killed by both the English and Scottish armies; crops were burnt and property was destroyed. Historians agree that these conditions bred the reiver. Borderers learnt to live by their own rules in order to survive; to take what they needed with disregard for laws and rules and to value kinship over nationalism. In peacetimes, these attitudes prevailed. During the war they were reduced to extreme poverty by the almost daily inroads of the enemy, hence on the restoration of peace, they entirely neglected to cultivate their fields. Instead they supported themselves through robberies.

The Borders were divided into six Marches for administrative purposes, each with an appointed Warden to administer justice and uphold the law. There were three Marches on each side of the border: the
East, Middle and West Marches. The Scottish Middle and part of the West Marches made up what would now be regarded as the Borders. The Marches, had their own laws separate from either London or Edinburgh.

The word ‘reive’ means to rob or plunder. Livestock was the main focus of the raids, although other valuable objects were also plundered. Border reivers were not outlaws in the fugitive sense; some may have lived separate from the community, but most did not. They were often either farmers or landholders, but reiving was not limited to any particular social class. Many nobles, including some of the March Wardens, were themselves some of the notorious raiders. Reiving was simply an integral part of border life. They believed that all property was common by law of nature and was therefore liable to be appropriated by them in their necessity. The reivers were undoubtedly skilled, and showed courage and bravery. They also had a disregard for authority, and delighted in outwitting the Wardens on both sides of the border. Because of his heroic qualities, a reiver was celebrated as a hero in the historical ballads. The historical ballads of “Johnie Amrstrang”, “Kinvmont Willie”, “Hobbie Noble”, “Archie of Ca’ field” and “Jock O’ the Side” and “The Sang of the Outlaw Murray” collected by Sir Water Scott in Volume I. of the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border narrate the heroic deeds of these border reivers.
Border reivers usually rode in family parties, in numbers that averaged between 12 and 50 men, although men could go out alone or in large scale raids of up to 2 or 3 thousand, depending on the site of the target. Raids began at muster points known as ‘trysts’. The raids were hazardous. Reivers had to dodge border guards and watches placed on hill passes and river fords, avoiding mobile patrols and tracker dogs. If they were caught, they faced execution.

One of the most significant and powerful border clan was the Armotrons. Johnie Armstrong of Gilnockie was one of the most popular, powerful, and feared clan chiefs on the Scottish border.

The Armstrongs had a rather uneasy relationship with the Scottish monarchy for a long time, and one of the most notable incidents between the two was the execution of Johnie Armstrong along with a number of his men in 1530. The ballad of “Johnie Armstrong” is about this incident.

Armstrong’s power and influence was considered as an embarrassment to the Scottish monarchy, and this enraged the 17 year old King James V. The Scottish King had already been under some pressure to put an end to the raids that were encroaching south-of-the-border by his English counterpart Henry VIII because they were threatening the peace between the two countries. James V decided that he would hold talks with Johnie Armstrong. He sent a letter to Armstrong inviting him to meet with the royal hunting party at Carlinrig Chapel. Johnie rode
north from Gilnockie tower with his men to Carlinrig, dressed in their
fine clothes which was to show their wealth and status, and hoping that
they would be well received by the king, they were all unarmed. But they
were greeted by an ambushed party of the king’s accompanying army,
which was said to have been 10,000 men strong, and the demonstration
of wealth did nothing but infuriate the short tempered and education
deprived young James V, since he was said not to have been dressed as
well. It became clear to Johnie Armstrong that the king had no intention
of holding talks. Knowing that his life was in danger, he attempted to
bribe the king, and even make reassurances that he never killed a fellow
Scotsman. But these promises of wealth did nothing for the king and he
ordered the execution of Armstrong and all of his men. They were all
taken out and hanged from the trees, and then buried in a mass, unmarked
grave.

The ballad of “Johnie Armstrong” is a tale dominated by emotion
but little reason. The poet refers to a ‘luving letter’ written by James V
himself ‘sae tenderly’ inviting Johnie to hold a talk with him on his
hunting expedition at Carlenrig. This is a poet’s own construct to
emphasize upon Johnie’s readiness to sally forth and join the monarch.
Although, the underlying truth is that in addition to James V, Robert,
Lord Maxwell to whom Johnie Armstrong owed allegiance, wanted rid of
Armstrong. In reality he controlled the Armstrongs, not the Lord of
Mangerton and, they, as both James and Maxwell knew, were the real power in the Border country. It is now believed, by some writers that the circumstances were engineered by Maxwell as he received Armstrong’s lands not long after. Sir Walter Scott writes that the bond by which Johine held the land stated that those lands, “…my said lord has given and grantit to me, and mine airis perpetuallie…” (80).

According to this bond, the lands were supposed to be inherited by Johie’s heirs but they were occupied by Lord Maxwell three days after Johie’s hanging, who, like the king, was jealous of Armstrong’s power and wealth and wanted to see his end. Was he warding a deception by which any blame for Johie’s death could be kept well away from his doors and as a prelude invested in the lands so recently vacated by James?

James needed to respond to Henry VIII’s concerns that Johie Armstrong was a threat to the peace between the two countries and English King’s demand that his illicit empire be eradicated; his control of the most powerful clan in southern Scotland broken.

What exactly would ‘luving letter’ say and how would it be viewed by Johie? Johie was only too aware of James’ stance with the Border clans, especially the Armstrongs. There are many recorded instances of James’ dialogue with his council in which he demanded the demise of Border clans as a means of promoting peace with his uncle Henry VIII of
England. Thus, a ‘luving letter’ inviting him to hunt with the king would have been viewed with derision, apprehension and alarm. Johnie would have known about the fates of Cokeburn of Henderland and Adam Scott of Tushielaw; how they had been caught and beheaded some six weeks before. Why should we be treated differently? To add to his anxiety, he also knew of the decision of the Scottish Commissioners who, two years previously, had promised to destroy them, a decision taken with the backing of James V.

This reaction was a result of the words recorded from a meeting between the English East March Warden and Sym, the Laird of Whithaugh. Sym openly stated that he had no faith in the king of Scotland and that he did not expect justice until it were at the hands of an English King. He and the rest of the Armstrongs, had no fear of the king of Scotland. It was a fact and an approach which severally rankled with the boy King James V.

A ‘luving letter’ – definitely not! A letter perhaps requested the premier figure of the Border Lands to attend his king and discuss how his power might aid in the control of the wayward border people. Johnie Armstrong decided that a meeting with the king might be seen as an opportunity to state the case of the Scottish border folk. It was alright for Henry VIII to demand an end to the incursions south of the border into England but what of the forays and depredations by the English to the
north, into Scotland? Surely to sort out the border problems was a two way affair?

On receiving this letter, the Armstrongs and the Elliots are shown to be getting ready enthusiastically. They say:

“We’ll ride and meet our lawful king,
And bring him safe to Gilnockie.” (11, 12)

Was this letter so loving that they at once forgot the actions taken by their king against them and other border clans. They call him a ‘lawful king’ which seems quite unbelievable because they did not trust him much as shown earlier. Then they talk about bringing him safe to Gilnockie. Were they not aware of the large army accompanying the king? How could the king be unsafe under the protection of ten thousand soldiers? This is all poet’s imagination. To show the innocence of these people, the poet is using this device.

Johnie, determined to have his voice heard, set forth for Carlenrig with resolve but misgiving. He would endeavour to make the king embrace a more balanced view. Johnie and his men left Hollows Tower and moved north through Ewesdale. On their way, they were ambushed by a party of the Scottish soldiers acting for the king. They were surrounded and escorted to Carlenrig. The ambush was planned so that Armstrong would not arrive at Carlenrig with just his few followers. Should he have done so, he would have immediately been suspicious.
James V had a vast host of armed men, almost a small army. On sighting such an array of professional soldiers, Johnie would have immediately turned tail and hot-footed it back to Eskdale. The king’s ambush party was sufficiently strong enough in numbers to ensure that this would not happen. The poet does not mention about any such ambush in the ballad.

James V had already made up his mind. The Armstrongs were to be used as a scapegoat for the Borderlands, their fate to be warning to the reivers that the king’s agents were, from now onwards, to rule the borders. As soon as he reaches, the king says:

“Away, away, thou traitor strang!
Out o’ my sight may’st thou be!
I grantit never a traitor’s life,
And now I’ll not begin wi’ thee.” (29-32)

But the poet attributes the anger of the King to Johnie’s attire which overshadowed the King’s dress. He goes on to describe Johnie’s dress at length in the ballad.

Johnie Armstrong is shown to lure the king with bribes of all sorts ranging from cattle to the lands he occupied but he was not successful in his attempt. This also is done to show the negative character of Johnie to save his life.

Johnie was a shrewd and wily chief and a great survivor. While there are no contemporary accounts of the arrangements that may have
been made, it is impossible to believe that he would have deliberately submitted himself, and his men, to the king’s authority unless he had received irrefutable assurances from the king, of safe conduct. Johnie was a threat to England. He had always protected Scotland from their forays and had also killed the nephew of Henry VIII. His murder was a relief to the English throne.

The fact that this act resulted in widespread revulsion and condemnation by so many, even those close to the king, adds force to the theory that the Gilnockie party were lured to their deaths by an immoral, treacherous king.

It has already been stated that the March Wardens had the duty of maintaining justice and equity on the borders. The respective Kingdoms’ March Wardens would meet at appointed times along the border itself to settle claims against people on their side of the border by people from the other kingdom. These occasions known as ‘Days of Truce’, were much like fairs, with entertainment and much socializing. For reivers , it was an opportunity to meet lawfully with relatives or friends normally separated by the border. It was not unknown for violence to break out even at such truce days. At the Truce Day, all who attended to witness the criminal trials were granted ‘safe conduct’ for the day and until the following sunrise. Kinmont, a witness to the trials, was taken against the ‘safe conduct’ and imprisoned in Carlisle Castle.
William Armstrong of Kinmont or Kinmont Willie was a border reiver and an outlaw, active in the Anglo–Scottish border country in the last decades of the 16th Century. He attended a warden meeting, as a witness, on the English side of the Border on the 17th March 1596. As usual, the day had been assigned as a Day of Truce, which meant that nobody attending the truce could be arrested on charges unrelated to those brought to the meeting. This ensured that witnesses, officers and other attendees should have been able to attend a Warden meeting in relative safety. But his was not the case for William Armstrong. Riding back home, with a small contingent of riders, he was pursued into Scotland by the English deputy Warden, Thomas Salkelde and his men. After a ride—about and some level of struggle, William Armstrong was captured and taken to Carlisle Castle where he was imprisoned. Walter Scott of Buccleuch, keeper of Liddesdale on whose land the arrest had been made, protested to the English Warden, Thomas Scrope, who only found out about the capture after the event. He believed that Armstrong was a notorious reiver, but was loathe to admit that he had been taken against the border laws. Buccleuch wrote to Scrope, he appealed to the Scottish court and when it became clear that Scrope was not ready to release William after so much pressure, Buccleuch took matters into his own hands. He led a party of men on a daring raid into England and broke Armstrong out of the Castle with inside help from the English Grahams.
and Carletons. Elizabeth I of England was furious that one of her border fortresses had been broken into at a time when peace existed between England and Scotland. Her relationship with James VI of Scotland was tested to the point where James thought that he might lose succession to the English throne. Elizabeth demanded that Buccleuch should be handed over to the English for punishment. James was caught between allegiance to the Scots who were adamant that Buccleuch had done no wrong in rescuing a man who was captured illegally and his desire to be faithful to his English benefactor, Elizabeth. Buccleuch was eventually handed over to England although no action was taken against him.

The story of the raid on Carlisle Castle is told in the ballad “Kinmont Willie”. It deals with the capture and the rescue. The ballad begins with blaming Thomas Salkelde of falsehood in arresting Kinmont Willie.

The event of capturing William is discussed at length. Then, the false capture was reported to the bold Buccleuch who threatened to avenge his capture. Due to the peace existing between the two countries, Buccleuch decided to release Kinmont Willie without much bloodshed. He is depicted to get ready for the raid in a detailed way. He called forty men to escort him, all of them marchmen except one Elliot, Sir Gilbert Elliot. They got ready with ladders, hunting horns, bugles and arms. They encountered Thomas Salkelde on the border. After a long dialogue
between the two parties, he was killed by the Scots. They reached the Carlisle Castle. The raid into the Castle has been described with minute details. After Willie was released, he bid a farewell to Lord Scrope and shouted that he would pay him for his lodging in the prison. The English troops followed them but they could not cross the water of river Eden. Hence, Kinmont Willie was successfully released.

Whilst adhering to the sequence of events from 17th March 1596 when Kinmont Willie was captured, to his liberation from Carlisle on 13th April, the ballad is purely the product of poet’s mind. The poet goes into the details of the raid so minutely that it seems as if he was himself a witness to the whole event. For example he writes:

They band his legs beneath the steed,
They tied his hands behind his back;
They guarded him, fivesome on each side,
And they brought him ower the Liddel – rack. (9-12)

The poet gives the details of Kinmont’s capture by the English deputy Warden in an exaggerated style. Given the events on the day of his capture, the taking of Kinmont was deemed illegal by the Scots. They maintained that Kinmont was taken against the assurance and thus, contrary to those laws which since 1249 had served every generation of the border people. The English endeavoured to see the events differently.
There is a lighter side to the events surrounding Kinmont’s rescue where the underlying historical fact is burdened with confrontation and animosity. The poet has left a refreshing tale of passion, humour, unrivalled commitment and enthusiasm, and a vivid insight into that fearless crew of men who were dedicated to righting a wrong for the cause of justice, for the honour of their people and their way of life. The ballad abounds with fervour, hope and the unity of those who achieved the rescue.

From the perspective of any Scotsman, the planning and sheer audacity of the rescue, the ease with which the English were duped, gives sense to a feeling of wonderful satisfaction and elation that the English were, for once, outdone. To Scots, Kinmont is the personification of their final dominance over the English. His rescue is a just end to the great struggle that had existed for centuries between the two nations. The English justify the events by convincing themselves that it was an ‘inside job’ only possible because of the duplicity of Englishmen. The accounts are invariably written from a Scottish viewpoint, biased in concept.

The poet gives no reference to the role played by the Englishmen in the rescue. But historical facts reveal the active role played by Grahams of Esk and Leven in this raid. Hutcheon, Andrew and Willy of the Rose Trees were involved (all Grahams) because Kinmont Willie’s wife was the sister of Andrew. Thomas Carleton who was discharged by Scrope
from his office also aided the rescue. They wanted to see Scrope
humiliated, see the power of the English monarchy and government
undermined. The successful rescue of Kinmont was the opportunity they
yearned for, to create friction between the two countries that could affect
the future plans of the ageing Elizabeth I and her Scottish counterpart,
James VI.

At Sixty – Six Willie had, by the time of his capture, been reiving
successfully for some fifty years and led a notorious gang called
‘Kinmont’s Bairns’. While his imprisonment in Carlisle Castle was
undoubtedly deserved, given a lifetime of crime, his seizure was illegal.
One month later a carefully planned and perfectly executed plan to rescue
him was carried by Scott of Buccleuch, himself a law officer on the
Scottish side. The role of Buccleuch can be seen as an indication of the
flexible attitude to reiving among border folk, even those appointed to
uphold the law. As far as Buccleuch’s concern for Kinmont is concerned
it is noteworthy that after twenty years of reiving and killing, Buccleuch
had become a peacemaker and law-enforcer, putting as much energy as
he could into his new role. In 1590, he was knighted by James VI and
appointed keeper of Liddesdale. After the union of England and Scotland,
he was made Lord Scott of Buccleuch by James I in 1606. At one
moment in the ballad, the poet says:

He has call’d him forty marchmen bauld, (61)
The line is distorted truth because Armstrongs and Elliots, the border reiver clans joined Buccleuch in his raid but the poet mentions only about Sir Gilbert Elliot. This shows the close relationship between the Marches and the reivers and especially when the keeper himself was a reiver at certain time of his life. But to show that Buccleuch was a lawful man, the poet hides his alliance with the reivers in the rescue.

The ballad ends dramatically. The rescue team and Kinmont Willie crossed river Eden but Lord Scrope and his men were unable to do so. This is poet’s imagination. On the surface, Kinmont’s tale is a story of bold, indeed, almost reckless effrontery, with an outcome that left a lasting impression on subsequent generations of borderers, both Scottish and English. On a deeper level, it is also a wondrous tale of intrigue, lies, threats, and scrabble for ascendancy. It is a story of bitterness and discord and a breakdown of the personal relationships of those individuals who, however reluctantly, were to become prominent in the Kinmont affair.

In addition to “Kinmont Willie” there survive two other ballads on rescues of prisoners in similar circumstances. One is “Jock O’ the Side”, and the other is “Archie of Ca’ field”.

“Jock O’ the Side” is about the rescue of Johnie, nephew of the Lord of Magerton. A failed raid resulted in the capture of Jock of the Side. Hobbie Noble, his illegitimate half – brother and an outlawed Englishman, set out with few men to rescue him. The ballad narrates the
whole event of the rescue. According to be ballad, the town of Liddesdale was raided. Michal of Winfield was killed and Jock of the side was captured. Lady Downie went to her brother, Lord of Mangerton and told him about her husbands’ murder and son’s capture. Mangerton assured her to rescue Jock. He sent three men in the expedition including Hobbie Noble. They carried a tree with them to climb up the walls of Newcastle town but they found it too short. Lord’s Jock suggested that they should break open the gate but they were encountered by a proud porter and his men. They killed him, hid his body and took the keys. They reached the prison and woke Johnie up who was tied with heavy iron chains. Lord’s Jock held Johnie on his back in his chains and carried him outside the Castle. He was made to sit on the horse. On their way back they needed to cross the overflowing river Tyne. They waded through the water very cautiously. Just then they saw two men pursuing them but they did not dare to step into the water. Hence, Jock of the Side was rescued.

“Archie of Ca’ field” bears resemblance with “Kinmont Willie” and “Jock O’ the Side”. The ballad is narrated in a way that it seems that the poet was a witness to the whole exploit. The poet heard the conversation between two brothers John Hall and Coarse Ca’ field who were on their way to set their brother free. There were others in their company. John Hall is depicted as a brave hero while Coarse Ca’ field is shown as a coward. They rode very fast and spent the night at
Murraywhate. In the morning they again rode and reached Dumfries port. They decided that five men would hold the horses, five would be watchmen. Dickie and John Hall went into the prison, carried the prisoner on the back along with his shackles. They all rode very fast again till they came to Annan water which flowed like a sea. They managed to cross the water although Coarse Ca’ field again suggested them to leave the prisoner behind and save their lives. They were followed by Lt. Gordon and his company of about hundred men but they could not cross the water and thus, the prisoner was rescued.

The three ballads “Kinmont Willie”, “Jock O’ the Side” and “Archie of Ca’ field” share several characteristics. However, apart from the rescue, none share all characteristics. In all three ballads, the rescuers ride easily through the water while riding to their goal, but are faced with water in spate on the return. The pursuers of all the three rescuing teams were unable to cross the water thus enabling their easy escape. The rescuers of Jock of the side were instructed to conceal the armour and not to appear like armed riders. Similarly some of the forty riders in “Kinmont Willie” disguised themselves, presumably to conceal the numbers involved in the rescue party. Both of these rescuers brought a means to scale the walls, but while those in “Kinmont Willie” had ladders which allowed access to the castle, the tree used in “Jock O’ the Side” was too short and had to be abandoned and access to Newcastle was
gained by forcing their way in. In “Archie of Ca’ field”, the town was accessed directly and only tolbooth gate required forcing. In “Jock O’ the Side”, the porter of Newcastle was killed. Buccleuch in “Kinmont Willie” was adamant that no man should be killed but the Deputy Warden, Salkelde was killed. There is no mention at all of any enemy opposition in “Archie of Ca’ field” apart from the pursuers. The prisoners in the two ballads “Jock O’ the Side” and “Archie of Ca’ field” were carried on the back in their chains and shackles but nothing of this kind happened in “Kinmont Willie”. The pursuers requested the rescuers to leave behind the shackles but their request was denied in both the cases.

It follows from the close resemblance of three ballads that although they were based on true historical events, their narrative consisted of many fabricated details.

On the English-Scottish borders in the reiving times, nominally from the 13th to the 17th centuries, when the border reivers disputed all authorities, national identity was often dismissed. Joint raids by the forces of Scots and English, putting aside all animosity to each other, resulted in lucrative pay-off for the clans and families involved in the grand theft of cattle and sheep. The border country was beset with the intrigues of the reivers; local law enforcement on both sides of the border was at a loss. The ballad of “Hobbie Noble” of the Crew, one of the English border reivers of somewhat dubious reknown is one such example of Scots and
English coming together. He sided the Armstrongs of Liddesdale, a Scottish border clan, in their hour of need, yet eventually was betrayed by one of their own. The ballad of “Hobbie Noble” narrates the story of his betrayal by Sim of the Mains.

Hobbie was from Bewcastle in what was known in his time as the Waste of north Cumberland; his home was Crew Castle. He spent many years raiding in Tyndale (Northumberland) and even parts of his homeland, to the south of his Cumberland fortress. It seemed that allegiance to his countrymen was of little concern to a man bent on raiding wherever the opportunity presented itself. The product of theft, the ‘reive’, meant more to Hobbie than his own countrymen, his own people. As a result, he was disowned by his own people. He was much prized by the English West March Warden. Hobbie Noble fled to Liddesdale in the Scottish borders where he was well received by the Lord of Mangerton, head of the Armstrongs. Anyone on run from the law, irrespective of nationality, was welcomed by Armstrongs of Liddesdale. Hobbie was true to his Scottish hosts.

Jock Armstrong of the ‘Side’, a stalwart and leading member of the Scottish border clan was captured and thrown into a prison in Newcastle, Hobbie was a major force in planning and achieving his rescue. He was lauded by the Armstrongs of Mangerton for the sterling part he played in
the rescue of Jock but there were other Armstrongs, within Scottish Liddesdale, who resented the popularity of the Englishman.

The ballad narrates Hobbie’s last raid into England on the request of the Armstrongs of the Mains during which he was betrayed by Sim of the Mains. Hobbie led the Armstrongs of the Mains into England but at the same time Sim Armstrong sent word to the English keeper of Askerton that Hobbie was back on English ground. Hobbie and the Armstrongs had rested overnight before their final assault on their target. At the first light of the following day Hobbie woke up very early as he had a nightmare in which he saw his horse and himself terribly wounded. He woke up his companions and started off again to escape the English confrontation. But he was surrounded by the English marchmen. He tried to escape but the Armstrongs prevented him at his back and suddenly voiced their allegiance to the English and Hobbie was betrayed for gold.

The ballad is a tale of intrigues and betrayal but the poet has woven many exaggerated details into the historical narrative. The poets says:

Then Hobbie Noble has dreimt a dreim,

In the Foulbogshiel, where that he lay;

He dreimt his horse was aneath him shot,

And he himself got hard away. (69-72)

Hobbie was captured right after this dream as the ballad suggests. No body except Hobbie knew of the dream. Hence, it is poet’s own
imagination to portray a heroic character of Hobbie Noble. Many other incidents as giving him food and wine, setting him by the chimney fire in the prison and then bidding farewell to Lord of Mangerton and Liddesdale town are all poet’s own constructions with least reality in these events.

Hobbie was told that he would be hung next day unless he would confess to stealing of Peter of Winfield’s horse, a crime that had hung over his head for sometime. There was some doubt that Hobbie was involved, that the charge was forced by the English to see an end to the great English border reiver. He denied all allegation and prepared himself for death. Next morning he was hanged. The poet narrates this single crime which he denied but earlier we saw that he was guilty of numerous raids into his own country, destroying his own people as a result of which he was exiled from England. His entry into England was itself illegal to which the poet shows ignorance.

In all the ballads discussed earlier, the rebellious character of border reivers was highlighted. They either embraced death or were rescued through extraordinary raids, but they were averse to submit their allegiance to the royalty or the government. One single example of an outlaw seeking pardon from the Scottish monarch is commemorated through the ballad, “The Sang of the Outlaw Murray”. The ballad narrates a transaction which was supposed to have occurred between the Scottish
king and an ancestor of the ancient family of Murray of Philiphaugh in Selkirkshire. It can be dated back to the reign of James V. in Scotland.

According to the ballad, the king of Scotland was informed that there was an outlaw in Ettrick Forest who made no account of him. The king took a vow to subjugate him. Earl Hamilton advised the king to send an envoy to the outlaw to ascertain whether he was willing to pay homage to the king and hold the forest of him and if he refused, then they would proceed to extremities with him. James Boyd, the Earl of Arran and king’s brother was sent to the Ettrick Forest to narrate the terms of the king to the outlaw. He was warmly welcomed by Murray. Boyd conveyed king’s message to him that he should pay homage to the king, otherwise his lands would be subjugated, his castle invaded, his wife would be made a widow and his men would be hung. The outlaw refused to obey the terms and said that he had won the land himself from the Southron and that he recognized no king in Christendom. James Boyd went back and reported to his master that the outlaw claimed to hold the forest by his own right which he would maintain against all kings in Christendom. The king prepared to enforce his sovereignty with five thousand men. When this news reached the outlaw, he decided to take the aid of three of his kinsmen, all of whom promised help. As the king approached the forest, Hamilton ventured to give further advice: that the outlaw should be summoned to come with four of his best men to meet
the king; fire, sword and battle to follow upon his refusal. The Lord of 
Bucksclutch opposed him and stated this alliance with an outlaw as 
against the status of a king. The king sent his messenger, James Pringle of 
Torsonse to the outlaw asking him to meet the king at Permanscore along 
with his four companions. The outlaw thought about his children, his wife 
and his followers and complied. He and his company knelt before the 
king and implored his mercy. He although protested that he had won the 
lands himself, hence, he and his heirs should be made the Sheriffs of 
Ettrick Forest in exchange of his Castle. The king on his part was equally 
ready for the compromise. On surrounding the keys of the castle, the 
outlaw was appointed as the Sheriff of Ettrick forest.

The ballad is a fabricated tale composed to, probably, depict the 
good character of the reivers as well as the king. The preparations made 
for the proposed battle go in vain at the end which is indeed a happy 
ending. The tale has no historical basis. It may be alleged that history has 
fairly good record of the relations of Selkirkshire to the Scottish crown 
during the 14th Century. There is no indication of any Murray having 
been concerned in winning it from the Southron, as is pretended in the 
ballad, either then or at any time, so that this part of the story may be set 
down as pure invention. The poet says:

“Frae Soudron I this Foreste Wan,
When the king nor his knights were not to see.” (91, 92)
Hardly true seems to be the dispute between Scottish king and a Murray, in relation to the tenure. The Murray first became connected with Selkirkshire in 1461. John de Moravia then acquired the lands of Philiphaugh, and was afterwards appointed in Newark Castle, and came into possession of Hangingshaw and Lewinshope. All of these are attributed to the Outlaw in the ballad.

This John Murray was a contemporary of Boyd, Earl of Arran, and of the forfeited Murray of Traquair, but his portrayal as an outlaw is totally misleading because he was on perfectly good terms, and even in great favour with the court under James III. His grandson John Murray, was made hereditary Sheriff of Selkirk in 1509, and for this last reason nothing could be more improbable than that law – enforcing officer of the crown should ever take up an attitude of rebellious defiance opposed to his character and conduct.

The Dogri Historical Ballads called ‘Bars’ must be revisited to understand the objective for which they were written. Though the ‘Bars’ are said to narrate historical facts, yet they reveal more fiction than facts. With plenty of exaggeration so as to capture the listener’s attention, the details of the event are described vividly. Thus, the element of fiction in the narrative is constructed rather than presented realistically. Comparing history and the historical ballads, Lakshmi Narain and Sansar Chand assert:
These ballads are more authentic than history as they have arrested life in its actual gestures. They have given us a verisimilitude of reality and are the ever fresh and complete pictures of by-gone times, while history is only a dead record of the surface happenings which hardly touch the heart. (47)

This statement made about the Dogri ballads is baseless for two reasons. Firstly, the ballads are creation of the fancy and imagination of the folk poet, even if their basis is an historical event and the poetic tendency of exaggeration and vivification of the situation for the purpose of converting it into an appealing narration is irresistible. Secondly, the creators of the ballads were rarely eye-witnesses to the events mentioned and even most of them were not contemporary or contemporaneous. Hence, the details they added to the narration are nothing but pure fabrication. These poetic details and narration may reflect some cultural and emotional wealth, but seldom any history. The theme of fabrication in Dogri ballads has been taken up by Ms. Surashta in her thesis entitled “Socio-Cultural Aspects of Dogri Ballads (Jammu-Kangra Region)”. Some of the historical facts in this thesis have been drawn from her research.

Dogri ‘Bars’ contain subject matter which was constructed by the composers and do not reveal historical facts. In the composition, the aim
of the poet, Gardi or Dres was, either to earn the patronage of his feudal
lord or to grab the attention and devotion of the audience. He cared little
for history or narration of real facts. His penultimate aim was to present a
fascinating story in the ballad which would appeal to the fancy and the
superstitious nature of the people. To achieve his objective, he utilized his
poetic skills, i.e., the art of fabricating events as well as the musical notes
at his command. He adopted metre and the music which was popular
among the masses. The metre and music was inherited from his ancestors
and the masses were familiar with it. On his part, he chose for his
compositions, those stories and legends which had already become a part
of folklore or folksongs. To this, he added his own talent by coining
anecdotes and events which suited his narration and added his own
descriptions with the force of an expert folk poet. Sometime, he copied
many phrases and verses from other ballads and sometimes, he modified
these to suit his composition.

The most important factor in the composition of the ‘Bars’ with
which this thesis deals is the element of fabrication by constructing
visible and making the visible invisible.

The folk poet seems to have created some ‘Bars’ which have no
basis in history except the names of the characters of the ‘Bars’. In this
type of composition, real happenings have no place. But the events
created by the folk poet are grouped around some historical personage in
such a way as to make the whole composition sound like real history. The discussion of Dogri ‘Bars’ such as “Chandan Dev and Rattan Dev”, “Jagat Singh Pathania”, “Mian Deedo”, “Hira Singh”, “Wazir Ram Singh Pathania”, “Baaj Singh” and “Mian Nath and Kirpal Dev”, will elaborate the points mentioned above.

The *Bar* of “Chandan Dev and Rattan Dev” is a typical example of fabrication of events and anecdotes which are created in such a way so as to look historical. The *Bar* in nutshell narrates that Chandan Dev and Rattan Dev, the commanders of Maharaha Ranjit Dev of Jammu, went to Dinanagar in the court of Aslam Beg, the *Subedar* of Punjab in order to secure the release of Maharaja Ranjit Dev, who had been interned by the *Subedar* and thrown into prison. Aslam Beg agreed to release Ranjit Dev on one condition, that the Dogra commanders should help him subdue Raja Bhup Chand of Mandi-Suchetgarh who had declared his independence. Chandan Dev and Rattan Dev agreed to his condition and accompanied Aslam Beg’s army with his 500 horsemen. They made their first camps at Kheer Khadda, second at Daina Dhara and lastly on the bank of Satluddar, from where Mandi –Suchetgarh was still 18 ‘krohs’ far. On the other hand Bhup Chand received the intelligence of their invasion and came forward immediately to attack them. He was accompanied by his three brothers Luddar Singh, Bahadur Singh and Devi Singh, and his ministers Dan Shah and Ram Shah. Their sudden
attack created panic among the Mughal soldiers and Aslam Beg fled away, followed by his soldiers. On the other hand Chandan Dev and Rattan Dev came forward and a number of combats are narrated to have taken place between them and the warriors of Mandi-Suchetgarh. The first duel took place between Chandan Dev and Luddar Singh Handuria in which the latter was killed. Then Bahadur Singh and Devi Singh, brothers of Raja Bhup Chand were killed, one after the other. Afterwards two more warriors, Roop Singh Handuria and Amrik Singh, also fell dead in the battlefield. Finally, Dan Shah was killed and Ram Shah was captured along with his elephant. At last, Raja Bhup Chand himself came to fight with Chandan Dev and Rattan Dev. The Bar concludes with the Jammu commanders inviting Bhup Chand to acknowledge suzerainty of Ranjit Dev. But the Raja said that Ranjit Dev was in prison and that Jammu commanders had come to help the Mughals. Hence, it was for them to decide. Chandan Dev asked him to prefer his allegiance to the Mughals till Ranjit Dev was released. At this success, Aslam Beg was pleased and dismissed Bhup Chand with great honours. Mian Rattan Dev had stipulated that Raja Bhup Chand should get Ranjit Dev’s release after paying Aslam Beg a tribute of 22 hill states and in exchange for this he would get back his state. Bhup Chand therefore, offered a tribute of 22 hill states to Aslam Beg and in this way purchased the release of Maharaja Ranjit Dev.
The story narrated in the *Bar* is altogether fabricated making cunning use of the historical facts. Maharaja Ranjit Dev was imprisoned at Lahore for 12 years soon after his accession to the throne in 1725. Mian Chandan Dev secured the release of Ranjit Dev through the good officer of Adina Beg, Governor of Jullunder, after paying a sum of rupees two lacs. Mian Rattan Dev was not involved in this expedition, although he was also a great warrior in the army of Ranjit Dev. Adina Beg had been involved in numerous unsuccessful attempts to reduce Mandi State.

The above mentioned historical facts were known to some people but the rustic composer of the *Bar* had little knowledge of the actual names and the historical sequences of the facts. A few unhistorical elements in the *Bar* stand out clearly. Firstly, the states named Mandi-Suchetgarh were in fact Mandi and Suket which were collateral. The latter state has been wrongly named as Suchetgarh. Secondly, the king mentioned in the *Bar*, Bhup Chand, does not exist in the history of either of the state. The Ballad states:

लेग बहादर भूपचंद राजा

ढेरा सतलुढ़र च लाया जी (Jerath 50)

Teg bahadar Bhup Chand Raja

Dera Satluddar ch laaya jee

The brave king Bhup Chand
Camped on the banks of Satluddar (Transliteration mine)

‘Rajas’ of both the states adopted the terminal of ‘Sen’ and not ‘Chand’. The ‘Rajas’ contemporary with Ranjit Dev were Shamsher Sen and Surma Sen of Mandi who ruled from 1719 to 1781 and Bikhim Sen and Ranjit Sen of Suket. These ‘Rajas’ had been subject to Kangra and then to the Sikh Misldars from about 1750 onwards. Adina Beg who was Foujdar of Jallundhar for about two years had unsuccessfully tried to subdue Mandi and Suket. It seems that all the names of the characters like Aslam Beg, Luddar Singh, Bahadur Singh, Devi Singh, Roop Singh, Amrik Singh, Dan Shah and Ram Shah are fictitious except those of Chandan Dev and Rattan Dev.

The circumstances of release of Ranjit Dev are also historically different. He was imprisoned in Lahore in 1733 and was released in 1745, after 12 years. Mian Chandan Dev, the commander-in-chief of the Jammu army gave the ransom money of two lacs to Adina Beg and Ranjit Dev was set at liberty. All the historical facts given in the Bar are therefore untrue. The various events of the battle seem to be quite imaginary and do not find any support from the chronicles of Jammu, Mandi and Suket. The way the events are narrated to have happened is also imaginary and unhistorical. The way Raja Bhup Chand is supposed to have offered resistance to the invaders is quite objectionable. He sends his warriors one by one to be easily killed by Chandan Dev and Rattan Dev. This
could happen once or twice but not for more than half a dozen times. Bhup Chand could have sent his entire army against the invaders. The way, the two Jammu commanders are shown fighting with the warriors of Bhup Chand, sounds much like a tournament rather than a battle. In fact, we can say that the *Bar* is a total fabrication and the sole object of the composer seems to have been to laud and highlight the heroic spirit of the heroes of the *Bar*. Mandi and Suket were never subject to Jammu kingdom and Ranjit Dev’s influence did not extend beyond the Kangra fort.

Chandan Dev and Rattan Dev were two great Generals of Ranjit Dev who are mentioned in history in connection with many heroic events of Ranjit Dev’s reign. In a number of local battles and conquests these two Generals took active part and earned renown for bravery and valour. It was therefore natural that a *Bar* of their achievements should be sung. But there was no single actual happening which could become the theme of the *Bar*. The family minstrel therefore devised this new method of singing about the chivalrous deeds of these heroes. Their chief quality was intrepidity and dauntlessness, and these very qualities form the subject matter of the theme brought out in this cunningly devised *Bar*. Since the facts narrated were fictitious, so the names mentioned in the *Bar* are also fictitious. The only historical fact is the existence of Chandan Dev and Rattan Dev and their heroic valor. This *Bar* reveals the
In a number of ballads, minor fabrication and misrepresentation of facts is common. The bards had no knowledge about the history and geography. The *Bar* of “Raja Jagat Singh Pathania” of Nurpur, though based on true historical events, is embedded with wrong geographical conceptions and fabricated facts.

Raja Jagat Singh of Nurpur was a brave Rajput. His heroic exploits captivated the fancy of bards all over the *Duggar* region who framed few ‘Bars’ based on his heroic deeds. Two versions of the ballad are available. The first version of the ballad is current in Jammu and is particularly characterized by the historical merit and features of an historical epic. This *Bar* of Nurpur-Kangra region, couched in Dogri-Pahari language, commemorates Raja Jagat Singh’s battle against the Mughal forces of Shah Jahan. The *Bar* describes the battle which was fought during March 1642. Jagat Singh was probably the greatest ruler of Nurpur after Raja Basu Dev. He ruled from 1619 to 1649. He had three strong forts in his state namely Mankot, Nurpur and Taragarh. He was a freedom loving ruler and at least revolted four times against the Mughal authority. This last rebellion was the one described in the *Bar*. It was in the twelfth year of Shah Jahan’s reign that Raja Jagat Singh showed
dissatisfaction and later in 1641-1642 broke out into a rebellion. However he was defeated and had to accept subjugation. Mughal expedition against him was led by Prince Muradbaksh who had a tough fight with Jagat Singh. Finally, both the sides entered into an agreement at the fort of Taragarh and the Mughals had to restore his territory back to him. After this agreement, Jagat Singh rendered meritorious services to Shah Jahan during the conquest of the territories of Balakh and Badkshan across the Hindukush. The ballad ends on a note of appreciation of Raja Jagat Singh’s bravery and the bard equates him to God and calls him an incarnation of some heavenly spirit.

एह माणू नई एह देवता था,
इक्की होया एह वीर अवतार राजा। (69,70)

Eh manu nayee eh davta tha,
Ikk hoa eh veer avtar Raja

He was not human but a God,
Such a brave heavenly incarnation was the king.

(Transliteration mine)

The ballad seems to subvert the truth of Jagat Singh’s defeat by the Mughals. The ballad states:

‘राजा जगता’ सूरमा ‘म्हावले दा,
’तारागढे च होया कमाल राजा।
Raja Jagat was the brave warrior of Himachal, did wonders in Taragarh.

Compromise took place in Taragarh, all the polices of Mughals failed. (Transliteration mine)

The outcome of the battle remains ambiguous as the bard does not speak about the winner of the battle. In reality, Raja Jagat Singh was defeated in this battle and Prince Muradbaksh carried Jagat Singh and his two sons before the Emperor. On his tender of personal submission, Jagat Singh was pardoned and his territory was restored to him.

It is Raja Jagat Singh who pleaded for pardon but the bard hides this truth and consequently does no harm to his dignified lord. The Bar narrates about the bravery and valor of the hero in an exaggerated manner and makes only those events visible which keeps the honour of Raja Jagat Singh high in contrast to the Mughals who are depicted as losers despite their victory over Jagat Singh as their plans to subdue him failed.
The second version of the ballad narrates the events of conquest of Kabul by Raja Jagat Singh. According to this Bar, Raja Jagat Singh declared his independence from the Mughal Empire which was reported to the Emperor by one of his own subjects named Mehnga Nai. The Emperor immediately sent for Raja Jagat Singh who was infuriated to learn about the conspiracy of his own subject against him. He collected a large army and headed towards Delhi where he was teased by Mughal ladies who addressed him as their servant. He paid visit to the Emperor who decided to sent him out of Delhi. Before leaving Delhi, Raja Jagat Singh plundered Delhi and then along with a huge army of Rajput warriors set out towards Kabul. He invaded Kabul and became proud of his martial skills. He and his whole army was destroyed on their way back in a snow storm.

A comparison of the story narrated in the ballad with the historical facts will reveal the extent of wrong and incoherent knowledge of history and geography. It seems that the bard picked up the stray details of events by hearsay and had no capacity to make up the real sequence of events. Jyoteeshwar Pathak writes, “In 1644, Shah Jahan sent his second expedition to central Asia. Raja Jagat Singh of Pathankot was sent with Prince Muradbaksh to subdue Uzbegs and Badkhan and the Raja had recruited over 14000 men from his Dogra principality” (61).
Raja Jagat Singh occupied the forts of Balakh and Badkshan and conquered regions up to the Kahmand fort. After these successes he marched back and on his way, he died in January 1646 due to exertion and old age. The story narrated in the ballad shows how badly the historical facts have been jumbled up and how much the bard was ignorant of the geography of the countries involved. This event happened in the reign of Shah Jahan, but his name is nowhere mentioned in the Bar.

The Bar states that on hearing the declaration of independence by Raja Jagat Singh, the emperor calls him to Delhi. There is no account of battle that took place between Raja Jagat Singh and Mughal forces at Nurpur.

The bard seems quite confused and unaware of the exact chronology of events. When Raja Jagat Singh became rebellious, he was attacked and defeated by the Mughals. He was captured and carried to Delhi where he accepted Mughal supremacy and assured all sort of assistance in future. Following this, the emperor called for him to go on the military expedition to Kabul. Moreover, the Bar tells that Raja Jagat Singh plundered Delhi and then set out for Kabul which is historically incorrect. The ballad states:

लुटदेआं—लुटदेआं दिन पैहर चढ़ेआ,
दिलिया च हाए—हाए मची जी। (89, 90)

Lutdeyaan-lutdeyaan din paihar charheyaa,
Dilliya ch hai-hai machee jee.

Plundering took place from evening till morning,

There was hue and cry all over Delhi. (Transliteration mine)

The Bar also does not mention the name of any Mughal chief or Prince accompanying Raja Jagat Singh. After conquering Kabul, when Raja Jagat Singh was heading homewards, he died. The incident of his death is exaggerated to a great length. He is shown to display pride over his victory as:

‘हूँ इंद्र—आ’ जगता बोल्लेआ,
ख़ढ़ी काण सकाँह साहमणे मेरे। (111, 112)
‘Haoon Inder-Aa’ Jagata bolleya,
kharhi kaan sankah sahmane mere.

“I am God Indra”, said Jagata,
nobody can stand against me. (Transliteration mine)

His death is attributed to his pride. God ‘Indra’ gets angry with him and destroys him along with his huge army:

हुक्कम करदा इंदर राजा—
इसरा गर्व जरूर मटाना। (119, 120)
Hukam karda Inder Raja-
Isra garv jaroor mataana.

Indra ordered-
Pride hath a fall. (Transliteration mine)

This is sheer imagination of the bard because nobody survived to tell the end of the noble king according to the Bar. He died a natural death. But the sad and petty end of a brave Rajput warrior who exhibited extraordinary martial skills can’t be justified if given a straight detail. Hence, the bard takes his liberty to build the events according to his wishes and bestows proper honour on him. The bard constructed the Bar regardless of the sequence of events and historical personalities. The facts related here are meant to tell history in which the ballad fails miserably, showing how the illustrious lords were eulogized despite their failures only in order to keep up their honourable status among the masses.

Mian Deedo was born in March 1780 in Jagti village situated about 15 Kms from Jammu to the west of Nagrota. His father, Mian Hazari was from fifth generation of Raja Hari Dev who ruled Jammu during second half of the seventeenth century. Raja Hari Dev gave a few villages as Jagir to the ancestors of Mian Hazari. Mian Deedo though very active from childhood was not lucky enough to receive formal education, yet he attained mastery in sword warfare. Being revolutionary in approach, he raised a gang of like-minded young men and started settling the disputes of poor people on the spot to save them from litigation. With the passage of time more and more young men joined him and his influence extended beyond Jammu up to Reasi and Udhampur.
In 1808, Sikh forces under the command of Hukam Singh Fauzdar of Sialkot attacked Jammu. Raja Jeet Singh, being a weak ruler became nervous but his minister Mian Mota gathered courage and gave a call to the people of *Duggar Desh* to unite and give fight to the Sikh forces. Hundreds of young men enthusiastically joined the army. Mian Deedo also joined the Jammu forces. Dogras fought valiantly and the Sikh troops were defeated. Despite the victory, Raja Jeet Singh negotiated a peace treaty with the Sikhs, accepted suzerainty of Lahore *Darbar* and also agreed to pay Seventy-three thousand rupees yearly tribute. The powers of Jammu *Raja* were also curtailed.

In 1816, Maharaja Ranjit Singh removed Raja Jeet Singh from power and placed Jammu *Pargana* under Prince Kharak Singh. Mian Deedo revolted against this decision of the Lahore *Darbar*. To suppress this uprising the Sikh troops were deployed at various places. Deedo roamed the country with a large gang of followers bidding open defiance to the Sikh troops and gained much popularity by robbing the wealthy and giving to the poor.

The Lahore *Darbar* had issued an order by virtue of which nobody except Maharaja could keep a white hawk. Mian Deedo in defiance of the official notification had kept a pair of white hawks. When this came to the notice of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, he became very angry and sent Nain Singh with a group of soldiers to arrest and bring Deedo to Lahore.
along with the birds. But Mian Deedo managed to escape after killing many soldiers. Nian Singh came back to Lahore empty handed and this annoyed Ranjit Singh.

In 1817, Maharaja Ranjit Singh removed Mian Dewan Singh of Reasi and placed Reasi Jagir under Gulab Singh. Mian Deedo extended his support to Mian Bhup Dev, son of Mian Dewan Singh in raising revolt which offended Gulab Singh. On another occasion, in 1819, Pt. Birbal sent baskets full of fruit from Kashmir for Maharaja Ranjit Singh via Banihal. Deedo and his men looted the fruit and in its place grass was packed. This was an open challenge to the Lahore Darbar.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was now convinced that some suitable local person could only suppress this uprising by arresting or eliminating Mian Deedo. Gulab Singh volunteered and sought permission of the Sikh ruler. Sukhdev Singh Charak in *A short History of Jammu Raj* writes:

> This state of affairs in Jammu hills continued for over a decade and the importance Ranjit Singh attached to this insurgency is clear from the conditions of the deed of June 1820, conferring the Jammu Jagir on the Dogra family who undertook to either capture the recalcitrant Dido or kill him or drive him across the river Sutlej. (166)

Gulab Singh managed to disintegrate his gang and other supporters by severely punishing them. Bereft of support, the rebel leader was
compelled to return to his estate of Jagti. When this news reached Gulab Singh, he and his troops hastened to Jagti and surrounded his house.

The *Bar* of Mian Deedo narrates the last conflict of the rebel with the army of Gulab Singh. By the time Gulab Singh reached Jagti, Mian Deedo had escaped to Trikuta hills. His ninety year old father, Mian Hazari who was at home, valiantly emerged with a sword in his hand. The old man was attacked and brutally murdered by Attar Singh Kalal, a lieutenant of the Dogra force. Then the sikh forces proceeded towards Trikuta hills and surrounded him atop of a hill near Saanji Chhatt. He received a musket shot while fighting, and thus laid down his life like a true Dogra wedded to his personal notions of liberty.

This ballad is a typical example of the confusion of two sided pressure that the minstrel must have experienced. On one hand Mian Deedo was very popular among the common folk of Jammu region while on the other hand the poet couldn’t compose against the ruling class. He wanted to portray Mian Deedo as a hero but at the same time the suppression of this rebel by Gulab Singh had to be justified through the ballad. The beginning of the ballad is quite ambiguous. The opening lines of the ballad are:

1. जहारा सिंह भियें दे घर ठीठो जम्मेआ
   जम्मेआ ओ बड़ा ई पुआड़ा
ओ पहली सत्ता जीढो दमाना लुट्टेआ
ओ पहली सत्ता मियें दमाना लुट्टेआ
ए दुई बारी लुट्टेआ मियें जाई फलोर
ए दुई बारी लुट्टेआ मियें जाई फलोर
तेरियां खबरां गेइयां तख्त ल्होर (1–7)

Zhaara Singh Miaen de ghar Deedo jammeya
Jammeya o barha ee puaarha
O pehali satta Deedo Damana lutteya
O pehali satta Miaen Damana lutteya
Ae dui bari lutlaeya Miaen jayee Falore
Ae dui bari lutlaeya Miaen jayee Falore
Teriyaan khabraan gaeyaan takht lahore
Deedo born to Mian Hazara Singh
Was a born trouble
In the first attempt he plundered Domana
In the first attempt he plundered Domana
In the second attempt he plundered Falore
In the second attempt he plundered Falore
His news reached Lahore Darbar (Transliteration mine)

These lines exhibit sheer discourse of power. Mian Deedo is called ‘troublesome’. In what sense? Whether it is positive expression or
negative; the answer is not clear. Secondly, he is shown to plunder Domana and Flora, the two villages of Jammu region towards the west. Prof. Ashok Jerath speculates over this point and says that the robbery might refer to his exploits of robbing the wealthy and giving to the poor. But the minstrel does not make this point clear. The people affected by his robbery are not referred to here; whether they were rich or poor? Weather he distributed the wealth among the poor? All these questions that arise in the mind of the common man remain unanswered in the Bar. This might give a negative impression of Main Deedo’s personality to an outsider.

The second instance where the imagination of the minstrel is at work is Deedo’s pleading in front of Goddess Vaishno Devi to protect his honour against the enemies. Mian Deedo is depicted as a helpless lonely man who is hiding in the cave shrine of Goddess Vaishno Devi but the Goddess rebukes him saying:

माता आखदी पिट्ठ देइये निं आमेआं
ओ तूं बिंच लड़ेआं गै धारा नाईँ। (57, 58)

Mata aakhdee pith daeiyai ni aameyan
O too bich larhaeyan gai dhara naayein.

Goddess told him not to come there after showing his back to the enemies
And not to fight in the holy hills. (Transliteration mine)

The minstrel has given words into Goddess’ mouth who is speaking to Mian Deedo in a very harsh tone. Even she is shown to be annoyed at Mian Deedo’s exploits. She refuses to protect him. When Deedo again comes back to the shrine to take refuge against the enemies who had surrounded him from all sides, the Deity scolds him by saying:

“ढाकेआा हा पिट्ठ देह्येआ आया नाईँ
ए खूनी हल्थे मत्था टेकना नाईँ” (79, 80)

“Thakaeya ha pith daeiyai aaya naayeen
Ae khunee hathai matha tekna naayeen”

“I forbade you to come here by fear of enemy
Don’t pay obeisance with your murderous hands”

(Transliteration mine)

The Goddess is again angry with him and doesn’t allow him to pay obeisance with his murderous hands. This means that even the Goddess who is believed to be omnipotent and knows everything-visible and invisible is also made to act according to the wishes of the minstrel. Her words are the words of the minstrel spoken under the effect of power.

This ballad exhibits feudal discourse in the true sense where power plays its role in shaping the words of the minstrel. The truth has been subverted. On the surface level, the ballad seems to eulogize Main
Deedo but the strain present in the expression can be easily comprehended. This ballad is realistic in accordance with Lukacs’ view. The ballad is full of silences and the important historical facts have been (deliberately) missed out by the minstrel which could create a true picture of Mian Deedo.

The *Bar* of Hira Singh is one of the modern ‘Bars’ composed after his death in December 1844. The *Bar* seeks to describe the last brave action fought by the *Raja* in which he was killed along with his mentor and advisor, Pt. Jalla, Mian Sohan Singh, Wazir Kesari Singh and several other followers.

Hira Singh’s father, Dhyan Singh was the Prime Minister of Lahore. Right from his childhood, Hira Singh was the favourite of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Pandit Jalla was his tutor and guardian. After the murder of Dhyan Singh in 1873, Hira Singh was accepted as the Prime Minister of Lahore. The minor son of the Maharaja, Dileep Singh was crowned on the same day. Hira Singh appointed Pt. Jalla as his advisor and accountant general. Both of them ruled Lohore in such a way that the Sikh soldiers and Sikh chiefs as well as Rani Jindan, mother of Dileep Singh turned against them. The result was that their life was in danger. On 21 December, 1844, they secretly left Lahore with their property and ran towards Jammu but they were soon overpowered by the Sikh army. Thus, they were killed in a fierce battle few miles away from Lahore.
The ballad is a highly fabricated piece of imagination where the minstrel has enjoyed the liberty of inventing unhistorical and false events as well as characters. The ballad states that after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh Kharak Singh and then Khushhaal Singh, Kharak Singh’s wife Rani Chand Kour sat on the throne and Hira Singh was made the Prime-Minister. Hira Singh appointed his mentor Pandit Jalla, who was also a great mathematician, as his advisor and accountant general. He worked very efficiently and filled the royal treasure. He became proud of his abilities and became arrogant in his behavior. One day, when he was passing by the palace, some water droplets fell on him. When he looked up, he saw Rani Chand Kour drying her hair in the window. He took this as his insult and warned the queen that her hair will not survive for long. The queen told this to her courtiers who set out to capture Jalla Pandit. They also went to Hira Singh in his search but Hira Singh convinced them that Pt. Jalla wasn’t there. Later, Hira Singh was reported through his sources that his palace might be attacked in the night. Jalla Pandit persuaded Raja Hira Singh to leave Lahore and escape to Jammu. He left Lahore along with Raja Sohan Singh, Raja Udham Singh, Pt Jalla and twelve Riflemen of Jindrah. After killing the gate keepers of the fort, they managed to escape. But the Sikh army followed them. They reached a village called Mee Kaali where they met a lady, Ratna Labani who gave them water to drink from a well located in Katch Labaan. The lords in
turn gave their jewels. By this time, the Sikh army had approached them and there was a fierce battle. Hira Singh killed Jalla Pandit himself. The three warriors also got killed. This incident took place on the intervening night of 20-21 December, 1844.

The events narrated in the ballad are quite unhistorical. Firstly, the ballad talks about Rani Chand Kour but history reveals that it was Rani Jinda who was the mother of Maharaja Dileep Singh (the minor king). The incident which becomes the basis of the Bar i.e., Rani Chand Kour drying her hair while Pt. Jalla insults her is altogether an imagination of minstrel’s mind. The name of the queen as well as the incident, are false. The minstrel seems quite unaware of the exact history of the time. The Bar states:

राजा रातीं डेरा नेईं लायां
जम्मू छोड़ियै त्हार नईं जायां। (3, 4)

Raja raateen dera naeyeen layan
Jammu chhorhiyai Lahore naeyeen jayan.

Raja do not halt at night

Don’t leave Jammu for Lahore (Transliteration mine)

It follows from the minstrel’s words that Hira Singh was moving away from Jammu to Lahore but the reality is opposite. At another instance, the Bar talks about Udham Singh. It states:
But in contrast to this, G.C Smyth writes:

Just before he entered the arch-way the prince took the hand of Meean Oottum Sing, the eldest son of Goolaub Sing and nephew of Dehan Singh, and the two proceeded through the gateway together. As they emerged from the passage, the young Maharaja made a momentary halt while he addressed some jocular remark to his companion, and the next instant a crash was heard,— the bericks, stones, and tiles from above and the two young men were struck to the ground.

The largest of the stones fell on the Meean and killed him on the spot. (37)

From the above lines, it follows that Mian Udham Singh had died in 1840, on the eve of Kharak Singh’s funeral. It was Mian Labh Singh who accompanied Raja Hira Singh.

The incident of Ratna Labani offering water to the three warriors is a poetic construction which has not been found in any historical record. The heroes of the Bar gave her their jewels for her selfless service. The
additional construction is woven into the fabric of the ballad in order to glorify the generous quality of the heroes. Even the name of the village is not mentioned in the history. The Bar also narrates the killing of Pandit Jalla by Hira Singh. This construction places the hero on a high altar. He laid down his life like a true warrior protecting his mentor from the enemies and fulfilling his duty by killing the Pandit himself and not handing him over to the Sikh troops. But this is the imagination of the poet to justify the foolish acts of the Raja.

He was in fact prone to mistaken loyalty. Further, Pandit Jallah was killed by the Sikh army. Only to eulogize Hira Singh’s dutiful behavior, the minstrel invents this event. Hence, this Bar also follows realism and is yet another example of feudal discourse.

Wazir Ram Singh Pathania has been considered as the first freedom fighter in Punjab. The young hero and martyr belonged to a branch of the ruling family of Nurpur. His father Wazir Shama Singh was the minister of the last deposed ruler, Raja Bir Singh of Nurpur (1789-1846). He handed over his adolescent son Jaswant Singh to Ram Singh. When Sikhs were defeated in the first Sikh war in 1845, the Lahore Government ceded to the British Government of India, the hill territories of Punjab and the territory to the south east of Bias river. The hill ‘Rajas’ expected that they would be liberally treated by the British Government and would be restored to their states. But the British Governments
pensioned off ‘Rajas’ which led to restlessness in the hills. It was a result of this disappointment that some elements of Kangra-Nurpur region, joined the second Sikh war against the Britishers which broke out in 1848. Inspired by this outbreak, the last wazir of the deposed Raja of Nurpur, rebelled with the help of few hundred likeminded Rajputs. Mangal Singh Manhas along with a few hundred young men also joined him and together they occupied the fort of Shahpur on the Ravi, 8 miles to the north of Pathankot, in August 1848. He declared Maharaja Dileep Singh of Lahore as the paramount power, Jaswant Singh as the Raja of Nurpur and himself as his Wazir or Minister. The news reached the British Government and soon after the troops were sent to capture the fort and Ram Singh Pathania but he managed to escape and took shelter in the Sikh camp at Rasul in Gujarat. In January, 1849 Ram Singh returned to Nurpur hills along with 500 strong men. There was a fierce battle in which there was heavy loss to both the sides. Soon afterwards, Ram Singh was captured in Kangra, having been betrayed by a Brahmin, whom he trusted as a friend. He was transported to Singapore where he died.

The Bar of “Ram Singh Pathania” possesses qualities of a short epic and purports to give whole account of his rebellions. There are two versions of this ballad. One version is popular in Nurpur while the second version is famous in Jammu region. These two versions published in
Dogri Lok Gathan. Vol.II. have same historical events. Only the local
dialect is different. But this Bar, although quite real, could not survive the
imaginative touch of the minstrel. He says:

लिखी परवाने भाईचारे गी भेजदा।
लिखी परवाने राजे गी भेजदा।
मेरी करी देनी मदाद लोको।
नूरपुर, बौड़ लैने छुड़ाई लोको।
राजे बी दित्ता जवाब लोको।

करी कल्ला पठानियां जोर लड़ेंगा।। (19–25)

Likhee parwane bhaichare gee bhejda.
Likhee parwane Raje gee bhejda.
Meri karee denee madaad loko
Nurpur, Baur laine chhurhayi loko
Raje bee ditta jawaab loko.

Karee kalla Pathanian jor larheya.

He wrote letters to his friends and relatives.

He wrote letters to various Kings.

Please give me your helping hand.

We have to release Nurpur and Baur.

All the kings gave flat refusal.

Hence, Pathania fought alone bravely. (Transliteration mine)
This is unhistorical because we have earlier seen through history that in his first battle against the Britishers in 1848, Mangal Singh Manhas from Bara-manga helped him in capturing Shahpur fort. During his second invasion in January 1849, he was assisted by two Sikh regiments from Raja Sher Singh Attariwala, each containing 500 strong men. So, this is a mere speculation of the minstrel to stress upon the valour of the hero. But as a whole, the fabric of the Bar is sound and real events have been narrated without exaggeration except in outbursts of heroism here and there. The comparative study of the three versions of this Bar, reproduced by S.D.S Charak in *History and Culture of Himalyan States*. Vol.I. shows that these differ from each other, and prove that no two narrators or reciters reproduced the same version, or even narration by the same bard may vary from time to time. This defect in the ‘Bars’ detracts something from their reliability as sources of history.

*Duggar* is a land of great warriors and brave heroes. 20th century hero, General Baaj Singh was famous for his chivalric deeds. The major contribution of Baaj Singh was the suppression of the revolt of Gilgit and Chitral.

Baaj Singh was born in 1847 at village Badhori near Jammu. He belonged to *Dalpatia* clan of Rajputs. His father’s name was Santokh Singh. He was the officer incharge of Revenue and Buildings. Jyoteeshwar Pathik writes:
In 1891 he was entrusted by Partap Singh to lead a campaign to Chitral. He was given a warm send off at Hazuribagh Srinagar. Chitral is situated at a distance of 200 miles from Gilgit in a difficult terrain. The Dogra army succeeded to conquer so many places on the way. After they captured the fort of Chitral, they were put in a difficult situation. When they were besieged by the enemy the Dogras ran short of rations and ammunition. After waiting for a long period of 13 days, the Military Advisor, Captain Betard taunted the General saying that you had become a coward. How could he tolerate this satire, so he opened the door and began a hand to hand fight with the enemy. Meanwhile, a bullet hit him in the thigh still he went on striking the enemy. Then a subsequent bullet hit him on the chest which proved fatal for him. In the meantime Colonel Hazara Singh reached the place with reinforcement but the general had died by then.

(68)

The Bar of “General Baaj Singh” commemorates his supreme martyrdom. This is probably the latest historical Bar which was composed after the death of the General in about 1895. The technique of the Bar and the narration of events has no particular specialty and it represents the last flickers of the art of composition of ‘Bars’. However,
the *Bar* gives a comprehensive account of the achievements of the General during his campaign against Gilgit and Chitral in which he was finally killed. His march from Kashmir to Gilgit has been described in details, according to the accounts which were probably orally transmitted by those military men who accompanied General Baaj Singh on the campaign. Around the skeletal historical events much imaginary detail seem to have been woven. The *Bar* states:

ए दिखो भुट्टे पठानें दा रंग

लिखेआ जंदा ए जरनेले गी खत

लिखेआ उनें जरनेले गी खत

जै असें सुलह गै करनी ऐ

चिट्टा झंडा गै दिट्टा

ए असें लड़ाई सिं करनी (174–179)

*Ae dikho Bhute Pathanen da rang*

*Likhaya janda ae jernaile gee khat*

*Likhaya unen jernaile gee khat*

*Je asen sulah gai karni ae*

*Chitta jhanda gai ditta*

*Ae asen larhayee nin karni*

*Realize the cleverness of Bhuta Pathans*

*They wrote a letter to the General*
They wrote a letter to the General
That they want a compromise
They raised a white flag
And said that they do not want a war (Transliteration mine)

According to the above account, General Baaj Singh was taken in by the deceitful letter of the Pathans of Chitral. As a result he ordered his force to march out of the fort despite the advice of his officers. As a consequence of this order, he was killed by the enemy forces.

This is an imaginary construction of the minstrel’s poetic mind. The hero of the ballad is killed but his end has to be justified before the common folk. At any cost the weaknesses of the feudal lords were hidden and new events were constructed to give a realistic touch to the events. Hence truth can be constructed by power as Foucault suggests.

The *Bar* of “Raja Kirpal Dev and Mian Nath Dalpatia” is yet another example of exaggerated details of their chivalry. Kirpal Dev had been an influential ruler to which many kings of the neighbouring states were subordinate. Because of his over-ambitious character, he came in conflict with many neighbouring Rajas. One such dispute was fomented by Mian Nath, the disaffected minister of Raja Kirpal Dev who had left him and took refuge at Jasrota. Raja Dhrub Dev of Jasrota, instigated by Mian Nath refused to pay the annual revenue to the King of Jammu. The latter therefore invaded Jasrota. The *Bar* of “Mian Nath” narrates the
battle of this brave hero with the soldiers of Raja Kirpal Dev. The Bar however, looks more like a tournament rather than a battle because Raja Kirpal Dev sent his warriors one by one to fight against Mian Nath. At one point in the ballad fourteen soldiers together attacked him. He killed many of them and forced others to run away. Each and every line of the ballad is an expression of Mian Nath’s chivalry. A second attempt was made to kill him when eleven soldiers came in conflict with him and wounded him seriously. At last, Raja Kirpal Dev sent Mian Nath’s cousin brother Main Sabu to kill him. The lines which narrate the conversation between Mian Nath and Mian Sabu add to the pathos of the ballad. The Bar of “Raja Kirpal Dev” is also linked to that of “Mian Nath”. It celebrates the victory of Raja Kirpal Dev over Jasrota and his warm welcome on coming back to Jammu. Along with these two ballads, the Bar of “Amar Singh Jindrahiah” is also inter-woven. It depicts the bravery of Amar Singh in the battle against Raja Kirpal Dev. He had also left Jammu due to his difference with the king over the distribution of Jindrah region. He had also sought shelter in Jasrota and had then welcomed Mian Nath there. During the battle, Raja Kirpal Dev agreed to Amar Singh’s terms and made an agreement.

The historical facts reveal that Mian Nath was a great warrior. He was a prominent minister of the king of Bahu named Kirpal Dev (1660-1675 A.D). He loved his sword more than anything else. All other
ministers were jealous of him. They conspired with Kirpal Dev against Mian Nath. In the court, Kirpal Dev asked Mina Nath to give away his sword but the latter refused and said that swords were not given in courts but in the battle fields. He left the Kingdom, challenging that anyone who wished to get his sword should face him on the battleground. Though the ballad is based on real historical events, yet the poet could not resist his imagination to play its role. Lines exaggerate the martial skills of the hero, who killed many warriors before falling dead.

A Comparative study of the historical ballads discussed in this chapter reveals that these ballads share many common themes. Themes like feudal loyalty, court intrigues, feudal lord’s pride, bravery, martial skills, betrayal, revenge etc. are highlighted in the English and Dogri historical ballads of the Medieval period.

During the Medieval period, the basic social structure that prevailed in both England / Scotland as well as India and Jammu and Kashmir was feudalistic. While each society was distinct in many ways, both shared similarities in their reliance on ideas about social organization and concepts of community. The English and Dogri ballads are representative of the feudal age with its inherent characteristics and then depict a shift from feudalism to capitalism represented by various revolts by the people against the feudal lords, their rules and their discrimination.
The theme of feudal loyalty is a common feature of the English and Dogri ballads depicted in almost all of them. In the feudal social structure, the king held the highest position. He held everything by the ‘divine-right theory of kingship’, which asserted that a monarch was not subject to any earthly authority, deriving the right to rule from the will of God. The king was thus not subject to the will of his people, the aristocracy, or any other estate of the realm. It was a political and religious doctrine of royal and political legitimacy. The doctrine implied that any attempt to depose the king or to restrict his powers runs contrary to the will of God and might constitute a sacrilegious act. In India too, the kings were understood to be the ‘agents of God’, as they protected the world like God did. The subjects of the king, including the aristocracy followed these norms while performing their duties. They would obey the king’s order without any conditions and would immediately carry them out.

The best example of feudal loyalty in English ballads is represented in the ballad of “Sir Patrick Spens”. He obeyed his king’s order without any objection despite the fact, that he knew, that the voyage might be fateful for him and his crew. Receiving a royal order was a matter of pride. The ballad states:

The first word that Sir Patrick read,

Sae loud loud laughted he;
The neist word that Sir Patrick read,

The tear blined his e’e. (17-20)

These lines depict Sir Patrick’s feelings when he received the king’s letter ordering him to lead a royal ship to Norway to bring home his daughter to Scotland. At first, he felt proud to receive a royal message but at the next moment, he felt the consequences that he and his men would have to face in carrying out the king’s order. But he had no other choice than to obey him.

A similar example is found in the Dogri ballad of “Baaj Singh”. Maharaja Partap Singh ordered General Baaj Singh to lead the Dogra army to Chitral and Gilgit to suppress the rebellion of the Pathans, who had raised their voice against the Dogra supremacy and had declared their independence. General Baaj Singh, however, does not show any reluctance as is portrayed in case of Sir Patrick Spens who is shown to realize the consequences of the expedition. The path which led them to Gilgit and chitral was a mountainous track, difficult for the Dogra soldiers to climb. General Baaj Singh very enthusiastically inspired his soldiers. He said:

जवानों दूर रेही मैं घर-बाहर
साढा सफर गिलगिता दा
असें ओना नि हुन इस पार
These lines depict the undaunted spirit of the General who gave an inspiring speech to his soldiers after they felt tired by the tough climbing over mountains, leading to Gilgit. He was aware of the hardships that he was going to encounter during the long and tiring journey. But his sense of loyalty forbade him to dismiss the king’s order and disrespect his authority.

As seen, in both the cases, the Captain, Sir Patrick Spens and General Baaj Singh exhibit ultimate devotion to their lords. Despite the realization of their fate on carrying out the orders, they accepted the challenges happily and laid down their lives in the fulfillment of their duties. Moreover, these two ballads contrast two different social classes, those who gave orders and those, whose duty was to carry them out. At
first, these two classes are comprised by the king giving orders of expeditions and the knights obeying him. Secondly, the knights take up the position of the first class when they ordered their subordinates to carry out their duties. Sir Patrick Spens ordered his crew to sail in unfavourable weather conditions and General Baaj Singh ordered his soldiers to march out of the fort. The second class, here, is represented by the crew members and the soldiers respectively. They carried out the orders of their officers. Both, Sir, Patrick Spens and General Baaj Singh were suggested by their immediate subordinates to re-consider their decision but both of them denied their request. This was the feudal pride which prevented them to act according to the suggestions of their subordinates.

The historical ballads are the tales narrating the heroic deeds of the heroes involved. They portray them as brave, chivalrous warriors, well versed in martial skills. The English and the Dogri ballads display this character of the heroes throughout their narrative. The ballads are about battles and raids which involve a lot of action and bloodshed.

The ballads of “Kinmont Willie”, “Jock o’ the side” and “Archie of Ca’ field” exhibit the bravery of the lords and border reivers. These three ballads are about the rescue of Kinmont Willie, Jock of the Side and Archie of Ca’ field respectively. All of them exhibit the meticulous planning, undaunted spirit, fearlessness and bravery of rescue teams
which comprised of the marchmen and the border reivers. With minimum bloodshed, the prisoners were safely rescued from the well protected Castles.

In the ballad of “Kinmont Willie”, Walter Scott of Buccleuch, keeper of Liddlesdale set out on the expedition to rescue Kinmont Willie along with forty men. The ballads states:

He has called him forty marchmen bauld,

Were kinsmen to the bauld Buccleuh;

With spur on heel, and splent on spauld,

And gleuves of green, and feathers blue. (45-48)

The Dogri ballads portray the similar characteristics of their heroes. All the historical ballads, the ‘Bars’ are about the chivalrous deeds of the Dogra warriors. They were very skilled in fighting. They were fearless people and never retracted back from the fear of death. They preferred martyrdom instead of a shameful defeat. They happily laid down their lives to secure the honour of their motherland. The ballad of “Ram Singh Pathania” depicts how the hero fought bravely against the powerful British forces when all the relatives and friends refused to help him. The ballads states:

करी कल्ला पठानियां जोर लड़ेंगा | | (24)

Karee kala Pathanian jor lahraya
Pathania fought alone bravely (Transliteration mine)

Apart from displaying chivalry and military skills, these ballads also narrate incidents where rules and regulations were denied to achieve victory over the enemy. Though, many ballads narrate such stories but the ballad of “Auld Maitland” in English and “Mian Deedo” in Dogri are true representatives of this theme.

Auld Maitland was an old knight who possessed a darksome house in Lammermore. During the war between England and Scotland in around 1296, the English soldiers under the command of Young Edward hight brutally murderd the old knight. The knight fought with them bravely before being put to death. The ballad states:

Full fifteen days that braid host lay,

Seiging Auld Mailand keen,

Syne they hae left him, hail and fair,

Within his strength of stane (53-56)

A similar example can be traced from the Dogri ballad of “Mian Deedo”. When the Sikh army under Gulab Singh attacked Mian Deedo’s house to capture him, his old father Mian Hazara Singh came to fight with them. He was alone and killed many Sikh soldiers but finally he was himself killed by them. This incident is depicted in the following lines:
Hazara Singh was alone while the enemies were many
He killed twelve or fourteen of them
Then he got hit by a bullet (Transliteration mine)

These two examples show that regardless of the age of the two warriors, Auld Maitland and Hazara Singh, the enemy soldiers did not show any mercy and without any hesitation they went on to assault them with cruelty.

Inter-related with these two ballads is the theme of revenge which was a common feature of the feudal age. The conflicts between border clans would continue from one generation to another for the purpose of taking revenge. In the ballad “Auld Maitland”, the three sons of the knight avenge his brutal murder. They killed many soldiers of the English army. Ultimately they also killed Young Edward hight on whose orders the assault was carried out. Similarly, Mian Deedo also avenged
his father’s murder by Attar Singh. Mian Deedo killed Attar Singh and took revenge of his old fathers assault.

Another theme which is highlighted in the English and Dogri ballads is the lust or craving for political power or state. In order to gain rewards from the kings and lords, the subordinate kings or lords would not even hesitate to assault the great leaders and warriors of their own state. The rewards might be in the forms of increased political powers and control over larger regions.

The Ballad of “Johnie Armstrang” is a typical example in the *Minstrelsy* which portrays the irrational behaviour of James V towards Johnie Armstrong and his companions on the instigation of his English counterpart Henry VIII. The power of Johnie Armstrong and his clan was a threat to the English. He had always defeated the English in various minor conflicts. The plans to subdue and control the borders between England and Scotland had failed due to the strong hold of the Armstrongs in that region. Henry VIII demanded the end of their power as a prerequisite to restore peace between the two nations. James V, in order to please Henry VIII, who was also his uncle, invited Johnie Armstrong and his men, to hold talks but without giving him any chance to plead his cause, the treacherous Scottish King ordered their execution, on the spot.

In the same manner, Gulab Singh was assigned the duty to either kill Mian Deedo or force him out of the state. Mian Deedo was a threat to
the Lahore Darbar. He revolted against their supremacy in Jammu and fought for the independence of his Duggar land from the Sikh rule. Maharaja Ranjit Singh signed an agreement with Gulab Singh, another Dogra warrior, rewarding the Dogra lord with Jammu State on killing Mian Deedo or driving him out of Jammu. Mian Deedo was killed and Gulab Singh became the ruler of Jammu.

Hence, kinship and nationality hardly mattered against the lust for political power. James V killed his own countrymen to show regard for the English king and Gulab Singh killed his own kinsman and became the king. Mian Deedo and Maharaja Gulab Singh were kinsmen. They belonged to the same family, to the sixth generation of Maharaja Hari Dev of Jammu. One of them fought against the Sikh rule and laid down his life while the other fought for the Sikh rule and killed the former.

The desire to gain more political power also led to court intrigues by the knights and ministers against their fellow courtiers and lords. The ballad of “Sir Patrick Spens” portrays the intrigue of a knight who suggested the name of Sir Patrick Spens as the best sailor to sail king’s new ship, at an unfavourable time of the year, towards the North, when sailing the North Sea was a sure death. The ballad states:

O up and spake an eldern knight,

Sat at the King’s right knee,-

“Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor,
“That ever sail’d the sea.” (5-8)

The knight intrigued against Sir Patrick Spens and on his instigation, the king of Scotland sent him the letter ordering the captain to sail the ship, which became a cause of his death along with many other lords of Scotland.

The Bar of “Kirpal Dev and Mian Nath” is based on the theme of the intrigue planned by the fellow courtiers against Mian Nath. Mian Nath was a brave warrior in the court of Raja Kirpal Dev. He was king’s favourite. The position enjoyed by Mian Nath became a sound reason for the jealousy of many others who wanted to show him down and degrade him in front of the king. Mian Nath possessed a fine sword which was dear to him than anything else in the world. The other courtiers planned and instigated the king to demand for his sword as it was the best of its kind. The king did the same. He asked Mian Nath to gift his sword to him. Mian Nath was infuriated by this demand. He rejected his demand and left the kingdom, challenging the king to achieve the sword in the battlefield. Thus, the courtiers achieved their motive. They were able to drive Mian Nath away from the royal position and kingdom. This incident led to a fierce battle which has already been discussed earlier in this chapter.

Another theme depicted in the ballads of both the regions is the theme of betrayal. The lords or minor employees of the king betrayed
their chiefs or counterparts in greed of rewards. The ballads “Hobbie Noble”, and “Ram Singh Pathania” are the two examples which portray the above mentioned theme.

Hobbie Noble played a vital role in the rescue of Jock of the Side. He was actually an English reiver who had been exiled from England due to his plundering and disregard for his own countrymen. Lord of Mangerton welcomed him. The Armstrongs always welcomed the Englishmen like Hobbie Noble into their gangs. When Hobbie Noble successfully rescued Jock of the Side from the English imprisonment, his honour among the Armstrongs increased. This became a matter of jealously for many other Armstrongs who could not bear the progress of an Englishman into their clan. One of the Armstrongs, Sim of the Mains planned to get rid of him. He requested Hobbie to lead their raid into the English territory to which he agreed. When they arrived on the English land, Sim sent a message to the English keeper, telling about the arrival of the traitor, Hobbie into their territory. They captured Hobbie with the help of Armstrongs who covered Hobbie’s escape. Thus, the people for whom Hobbie had endangered his life, betrayed him and got him imprisoned where he was hanged after a few days.

The ballad of “Ram Singh Pathania” narrates the betrayal of the great warrior by his own priest. Ram Singh Pathania fought against the British empire twice. In the second attempt, he was forced to hide
somewhere in Kangra. His priest, whom he trusted like a friend betrayed him in exchange of some money. The British army captured Wazir Ram Singh Pathania while he was busy in his meditation and hence, unarmed. In the same way Raja Jagat Singh was betrayed by a barber named Mehnga Nai who reported about his rebellion to the Mughal emperor. There are many other examples of betrayal in the battle and minor conflicts throughout the ballads of both English and Dogri origin.

The important fact that prominently emerges out of the study of the historical ballads in English as well as Dogri, is that these invariably narrate only the events in which the important and popular characters were involved. The heroes of the ballads are exalted to greatness irrespective of their success or defeat. Those who fell dead in the wars and conflicts were lauded for their ideals of bravery for which they laid down their lives. Here, the imagination of the minstrels and their talent at composition found the greatest scope for expression. At such places and such situations, history did not account and it was the minstrel who exhibited his talent through vivid description of the military feats of the hero.

Hence, through the comparison of history narrated in the ballads and the written history of the period when these ballads were popularized, it has been found out that there are contradictions in the facts written in the historical records and those narrated in the ballads. The common
masses were told about the constructed images of the heroes. The minstrels attempted to distort history by making the desired accounts visible and the undesired events invisible through their poetic talent. Thus, the history which they presented to the people follows the concept of ‘Realism’ as suggested by Lukacs. The English and Dogri ballads, telling the tales about the feudal lords and border revivers present a discourse of power. The false acts are made invisible and power acts as the director who makes the invisible visible by subverting the truth.