Introduction

A survey of origins and development of English ballads in Scotland and Dogri ballads of the Jammu region reveals that these ballads mostly belong to fourteenth century and onwards. This study is comparative, it will discuss the common characteristics of this form of poetry especially the common thematic patterns and similar historical backgrounds. The problem of ballad origins has occupied the attention of folklorists and balladists from the beginning of the ballad studies. Much confusion about the matter of origin comes from the failure of the first scholars, Herder, Grimm and Gummere, in not making a clear distinction between the ballad and folk song in general. They saw the ballad as continuing tradition from the primitive times and consequently applied to the ballad, conclusions arrived at from the study of primitive folk songs in general. Ballads were composed by the folk under the direction of a patron who brought the necessary discipline into the composition and who functioned as an organizer. James Reeves writes:

All poetry of a civilized community can be divided into two major categories - anonymous poems and poems written by individuals.

For hundreds of years before the beginnings of poetry written by individuals whose names are known, there was in existence a vast oral culture and a body of poems handed
down from one generation to another by word of mouth only. We may call this ballad literature. The authors of ballads were not remembered, and we can only conjecture who they were. This ballad tradition continued side by side with the more literary tradition, right on into the nineteenth century, and it has existed wherever there have been considerable bodies of people to whom reading came with difficulty or not at all. (47)

In the past, people sang lively little tunes and danced to them. They called these songs ballads. During the Middle Ages in Europe, men known as “troubadours” used to make up verses about all manners of things—battles, weddings, shipwrecks and tales of people’s lives and sing to them to entertain the people. These songs were so interesting that people found that they would rather listen than dance and after a while, the word ballad, no longer meant a dance, but a song that told a story. In the early middle ages, when very few people could read and write, ballads were important as a means of remembering stories and even history. It is much easier to remember the words and music in a song than to remember a story.

Matthew Hodgart broadly defines ballad as “a song that comments on life by telling a story in a popular style” (II). It is a form of verse, often a narrative set to music. Ballads derive from the medieval French
chanson balladee or ballade, which were originally “dancing songs”. Ballads were particularly characteristic of the popular poetry and song of the British Isles from the later medieval period until the 19th century and used extensively across Europe and later the Americas, Australia and North Africa. Many ballads were written and sold as single sheet broadsides. The form was often used by poets and composers from the 18th century onwards to produce lyrical ballads. In the later 19th century it took on the meaning of a slow form of popular love song and the term is now often used as synonymous with any love song, particularly the pop or rock power ballad.

The ballad derives its name from the medieval French dance songs or “ballares”. As a narrative song, its theme and function has originated from Scandinavian and Germanic traditions of storytelling. Ballads were originally composed to accompany dances. But they were not just songs, they contained a definite story. Ballads usually tell stories of battles, heroes, outlaws, or unhappy love affairs.

The tradition of singing ballads orally continued from very early period, almost in all ballad knowing countries. The Bards or minstrels sang ballads orally and made the ballads interesting by their musical instruments. They would listen to stories from the experienced old persons and would change them into a ballad by their efforts and would also add new stanzas and lines to them from time to time borrowing from
other narrations. Sometimes, they were eyewitness to happenings as they used to accompany armies to battlefields and saw for themselves valour and heroism of their princes and chiefs and formed ballads orally and passed them to their descendants. Their transmission took place orally as there was no written record at that time.

Ballads never carried the names of authors because no one knew exactly who composed them. In the Middle Ages, few people could read or afford books and hence, minstrels who sang or recited stories in ballads, were very popular everywhere. Ballads were repeated by one man to another; minstrel would learn them by listening, often adding lines of his own. Thus, in course of time a ballad grew as a result of contribution of several generations of a particular Bard family.

Scholars of ballads are often divided into two camps, the ‘communalists’ and the ‘individualists’. The advocates of communal authorship argue that ballads arose by a combined communal effort and did not have a single author. They were created collectively, or by a group of people, with each performer having a hand in the composition by means of a variation. On the other hand, advocates of individual authorship assert that there was a single original author and that one person’s work has been passed on from generation to generation, with variations occurring as a result of faulty memory on the part of singers. For the single author theory to be true, the single author would have had
to be an extremely talented individual, and that we would not know something about him or her, such as his or her name, is unlikely.

Most of the scholars pointed out that the ballad is certainly the product of the late Middle Ages, that it is certainly not a product of the primitive society. It is a highly artistic and rather difficult form. The music was intimately and fundamentally a part of it. Ballads were oral; the folk took them over. Through the years of singing them, the folk modified them, changed them and over the years, put their mark upon them. The mark is a distinguishing and unmistakable one.

The word ballad, when talking about Scottish song traditions is used as a general word for a song or a poem that tells a story using short verses and secondly as a specialized word for one of a group of songs that are hundreds of years old and tell dramatic stories of war, love and betrayal, trickery or strange events. Many factors have contributed to the ballad’s longevity and shaped its legacy in Scotland. The first has to do with the form itself, most observable in ballads that have been transmitted primarily through oral tradition over generations, many of which bear evidence of their medieval origins. This type of ballad is most commonly defined as a narrative song, that is, a song that tells a story. Scottish ballad stories are dramatic in nature, centering on moments of intense conflicts and marked by violence, ranging over themes such as murder, fatal consequences, encounters and treachery. For example, The sailor,
Sir Patrick Spens in the ballad “Sir Patrick Spens” mourns his fate, and that of his men, at the king’s capricious order to sail during an unfavourable time of the year when sailing the North Sea means a probable death.

Dictionary of Literary Terms & Literary Theory by J.A Cuddon has classified the ballads into two basic kinds, “the folk or traditional ballad and the literary ballad. The former is anonymous and is transmitted from singer to singer by word of mouth. It thus belongs to oral tradition” (71). On the other hand, a literary ballad is not anonymous. It is written down by a poet who composes it. A third kind of ballad called the popular ballad is also distinguished but it is similar to the traditional or folk ballad. It is associated with semiliterate or literate urban rather than rural communities.

With regard to the English ballads, this thesis will focus on the ballads collected by Sir Walter Scott in his book Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border (1802-03) Scott divided the contents of the book into three categories- Historical Ballads, Romantic Ballads and Imitations of the Ancient Ballad. This thesis will make an attempt to study the historical ballads collected by Sir Walter Scott in Vol. I and Vol. II of Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border. The historical ballads narrate events, which we know to have actually taken place. Such ballads were early current upon the Anglo-Scottish border, which had a long tradition of
balladry, such that a whole group of songs existed that are often called ‘Border Ballads’. A.L Lloyd said of the ballads:

The bare rolling stretch of country from the north Tyne and Cheviots to the Scottish southern uplands was for a long time the territory of the men who spoke English but had the outlook of Afghan tribesmen; they prized a poem almost as much as plunder, and produced such an impressive assembly of local narrative songs that some people used to label all our greater folk poems as ‘Border ballads’. (150)

These ballads of the Scottish border were famous for their emotive power. The Border ballads are dramatic in content. For subject matter, they are ripe with the soaring themes of kinship, old battles, cross border raids, and the supernatural. Ballads like “Sir Patrick Spens”, “Auld Maitland”, “Jamie Tefler of the Fair Dodhead”, “The Sang of Outlaw Murray” are few examples of historical ballads.

William Montgomerie writes:

The three balladists of greatest historical significance among English speaking people are Bishop Percy, Sir Walter Scott, and Professor F.J Child. All three were editors basing their printed work primarily on ballad manuscripts. Percy and
Child did no field work in oral tradition, and the case of Scott needs to be reconsidered. (158)

Compared with his predecessors, Sir Walter Scott was a conscientious collector. But he probably patched up many ballads with lines of his own. Sir Walter Scott has been criticized in much of his writing for depicting an overly romantic and even mythological picture of Scotland’s history when he published Border Ballads, he certainly did not hesitate to edit and ‘improve’ them, but he did not invent the romantic reiver heroes; these figures already existed in the ballads. However, Scott certainly did nothing to diminish the myth of the reiver as a hero who fought to a code of honour, avoided unnecessary bloodshed and was decent at heart. The reality was often different.

In the Border Ballads, Sir Walter Scott adopts a distinctly patriotic tone and emphasizes the enmity between the Scottish and English borderers. However, in reality, nationality was of little importance to the inhabitants of the Marches. Loyalty to other borderers superseded any loyalty to either England or Scotland. The disregard for nationality in preference to kinship was seen as a problem by both England and Scotland. In perpetuating the myth of the reiver hero, Sir Walter Scott was not altering the spirit of the existing Ballads. However, in emphasizing the national rivalry along the Border, he was imposing his
own ‘cultural patriotism’ on history. It was at this time that ‘The Borders’ came to mean the Scottish Borders rather than the Marches and it is to Scott that much of the popular perception of the romantic past of the Borders is owed.

Scott was first introduced to the Border ballads during his visits to his grandfather’s farm near Kelso. In 1773, the young Walter became ill with what was probably polio, and was sent to his grandfather’s farm to recuperate. The illness severely affected Walter’s left leg, and he was forced to spend much of his time indoors, where he listened to tales of the Borders told to him by his grandfather and aunt. As an adult he retained his interest, and from the late 18th century he collected ballads upon his trips to the Borders, publishing *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* in 1802.

As with many other collectors, Scott was not averse to working on the original pieces. Stanzas were added, rhymes and rhythms reinstated or altered versions melded and so on. He gives information on his editorial constructions throughout the text of the *Minstrelsy*, noting if he was dealing with mangled versions; if, from historic documentation, names seemed to have been altered, if he set out verses in a more logical narrative sequence and so on
Oral literature belonging to different countries may appear different at the surface level but its implications are the same. Although it belongs to different geographical regions, yet the inherent spirit is universal.

In India, the ballad form *Raso* was the form of poetry during the medieval period. During this time, men called *bhat* or *bhutt* travelled around the countryside playing their harps and singing ballads in Castles and villages. They sang the traditional folk ballads and also composed new songs for their listeners. Important events such as a great victory or the coronation of a king were described in the ballad form. This type of composition appears to have arisen spontaneously in almost all literatures, representing one of the early stages in the evolution of poetic art. Its origin is much in dispute, but it seems to have begun, as its name implies as a song intended to accompany a dance. Hence, the term was applied to a spirited poem, and then to a poem in which a popular story was vividly and simply told. It originally received its present name and shape in Jammu probably during fourteenth or fifteenth centuries.

Like other literatures, in Dogri too, poetry came to be written earlier than prose. Hence, poems were composed and sung much earlier than prose, even before any written form of literature came into existence. A long, continuous and rich tradition of oral literature existed as an integral part of Dogra community’s day-to-day life. For centuries, ‘Jogis’, ‘Gardis’ and ‘Dreses’ have been singing ballads called *Lok Gatha* which
exists in two forms: ‘Bars’ and ‘Karaks’ They narrate the bravery and sacrifice of great sons of the Duggar region and express its history, experiences, values, beliefs, ideas, traditions, legends and mythology. Most of the great heroes of these ballads have occupied the minds of the local population. ‘Karaks’ are the ballads with religious themes. They are primarily the narratives connected with ‘Brahmanical’ gods and goddesses, village deities and those of family deities. They may be called eulogistic commemorations of noble-minded persons who command reverence of the people for their edifying influence on them. The intensify the human qualities like sense of justice, piety, religious and moral fervor.

The second form of ballads prevalent in the region is Bar. Bar is the corruption of Hindi term Bir, which means brave or chivalrous. Since these ballads deal with the theme of prowess and adventure, they are called ‘Bars’ or the ballads of heroism. They are usually more stirring than ‘Karaks’ because they appeal to the feelings of mystery and romance which predominate over all other feelings in a common man. These ballads are woven around the valour of the characters which grips the heart and arouses a feeling of hero-worship.

Ballads became so popular among Dogra Community that they gave rise to a new class of ballad singers called Jogi Gardi or Dres. They used to recite the ballads at social gatherings, festivals and at the royal
courts. They handed down the ritual of minstrelsy from generation to generation. Thus, ballad poetry makes a direct appeal to all the classes of readers and listeners from the Middle Ages to our own day.

With regard to Dogri ballads, this thesis will focus on historical ballads or ‘Bars’ and the ballads of folk or family Deities (‘Karaks’). These ballads were not compiled by a single person but it was a joint labour on personal as well as institutional level. The organizations like the Dogri Sanstha and Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages played an important part in the compilation of Dogri ballads.

Oral tradition is important in all societies, despite the reliance of some cultures on written records and accounts. These traditions account for the way things are and often the way they should be, and assist people in educating the young and teaching important lessons about the past and about life. Because many oral traditions are highly structured and are told faithfully without alterations, they can be as reliable as other non-oral ways of recording and passing on experiences. While oral literature can vary from teller to teller, variations are also open to contradiction in the same way that written accounts are. In the same way the force of oral tradition can continue through generations although small details in the telling may change. Jan Vansina defines oral traditions as, “Verbal messages which are reported statements from the past beyond the present generation. The definition specifies that the message must be oral
statements spoken, sung, or called out on musical instruments only” (27). He further states that, “There must be transmission by word of mouth over at least a generation” (28).

The historical messages contained within the ballads are passed on from generation to generation. This means that all the successive historical messages are lost except the last one which is recorded by the historian or the folklorist.

This thesis will attempt to bring out the invisible context of the heroic English and Dogri ballads. All available scholarship in English is deficient in this regard. Though Dogri ballads invite a comparison with the ballads written in English of the British Isles both in technique as well as their impact on society, yet it is also a fact that if ballads are narrative poems telling the story of development and growth of societies from the feudal ages to the point of time in history when they were collected from the oral form of literature and printed, these ballads only make visible the intensity of feeling, economy and directness of expression in a dramatic style which has won the admiration of scholars and ordinary readers for centuries.

The spirit of literature is one but it finds different expressions in different places. It is cast in the mould with which the people present it-the mould of their customs and emotions. It speaks their language,
represents their customs, suffers in their grief and rejoices in their festivities. Thus, a work of literature, apart from possessing form and structure, also exists in time, space, history and society. To appeal to audience, a literary work must speak of concerns that readers recognize as relevant to their own lives. It must have a social dimension. In addition, a literary work always bears the imprint of the historical moment in which it was written. The ballads in English and Dogri selected for this research project are about feudal ideals, court intrigues and written at a time when these things meant a lot to the audience. The feudal system was held together by bonds of fealty and duty; serfs were bound to lords and could not seek work elsewhere. But once trade developed, work became available in towns and serfs could flee the land and become wage labourers for guilds. According to the Marxist theory of history, feudalism contained within it a contradiction that allowed it to evolve into capitalism. The feudal economy which was organized around agricultural labour by serfs for lords generated surplus grain / stock that allowed trade to develop. The new class of traders required new rules of social relationship (contract as opposed to fealty). Their trading activity made it necessary for them to live in towns where the feudal lords could not control them or interfere with them. The development of towns and the growing power of the merchant class allowed the development of new political forms (law, constitutions and republic) according to the interests
of the merchant class. In conjunction with the economic might of the
merchant class such new political forms meant the demise of feudalism.

This thesis will situate the English and Dogri ballads at the juncture
between the old feudal forms and the emerging mercantile economy or
capitalist form of society in Jammu and British Isles. Though the region
of Jammu does not totally compare with British Isles, yet the
contradictions of the political system are apparent in the ballads. Both
Jammu and England underwent social and economic upheaval. In
England, monarchy was overthrown in 1649. It is a historical fact that in
Jammu, the Rajput warrior Gulab Singh, by entering into a contract with
Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Lahore established the Dogra rule in 1822. The
rule of Gulab Singh came not out of feudal fealty of Maharaja Ranjit
Singh but as a part of the social /political contract in which the gift of
goods and human resources to Ranjit Singh was annually submitted. The
heroic ballads of “Bawa Jitto”, “Mian Deedo”, “Data Ranpat” and others
give a panoramic view of the feudal society of Jammu region just as the
Scottish ballads present the British feudal structure with its inherent
contradictions.

The role that the minstrelsy played in the creation of these ballads
is of great significance both in Dogri as well as English literature.
Minstrels were the professional poets, employed by a patron, such as a
monarch or nobleman, to commemorate the patron’s ancestors and to
praise the patron’s own activities. They sang the songs recalling the tribal warriors’ deeds of bravery as well as the genealogies and family history of the ruling strata. They were blessed with artistic qualities like composing, singing and playing music.

The singers could not read and although they had wonderful memories, they did not aim at reproducing a text exactly, but at simply telling the old stories in the old way. No two versions of the ballad were ever exactly alike, and every singer was both a transmitter of tradition and an original composer. In the feudal social structure the minstrel and the religious priests had an allotted place in the social ladder. The minstrel was patronized by the feudal lord / chieftain or king and the ballads happened to be songs sung in praise and glory of the patron deity, lord or king. A preliminary research into this subject reveals that the ballads do not narrate the reality about the patron. There are silences and absences in the texts of these poems which can be filled up through a proper study of the historical background of the feudal times as well as through a survey of the sociological development of the cultures represented by this form of poetry.

‘History’ is an attempt to represent the past in a truthful way and make it useful for the society. History is true. In contrast, Folklore is a pack of damned lies. History is important; momentous events are ‘historic’ while folklore is marginal, fetching but trivial. Folk history is
an oxymoron: a false truth, may be false, may be only irrelevant. Folk history is absurd because there is no meaningful relation between folk history and a historian’s chronicle of facts. But in contrast, Jan Vansina states:

Oral traditions have a part to play in the reconstruction of the past. The importance of this part varies according to place and time. It is a part similar to that played by written sources because both are messages from the past to the present, and messages are key elements in historical reconstruction… Wherever oral traditions are extant they remain an indispensable source for reconstruction. They correct other perspectives just as much as other perspectives correct them.

(199)

A historian must remain truthful to the past and useful to the society. But all historical traditions contain charlatans who pretended to act responsibly to advance the cause of the self. Minstrels are the true examples of such charlatans. Minstrels were employed and patronized by the royal chiefs, lords etc. Hence they could not compose anything that went against the dignity of these patrons. They constructed ‘events’ in the ballads only to appreciate the deeds of the lords and by doing so they tried to justify even their false acts. Thus, they composed the ballads only to legitimize their patron’s power and dominance over their subjects.
In medieval Gaelic and Welsh society, bards (Scottish and Irish Gaelic) would compose a satire if the lord who employed him failed to pay the promised amount. This proves that the bards or minstrels behaved in a selfish way. They did not act as responsible composers by narrating the truth about the patron. They distorted history only to gain rewards. They felt no responsibility towards society. In such circumstances the power of the patron became an agent of manipulating events. It dictated him what to include in the composition and what to exclude. Only those incidents which favoured the powerful lords were included and the incidents which went against them were excluded from the text.

The line of argument will be developed by drawing in theoretical concepts of Michel Foucault and George Lukacs with reference to history as discourse and historical realism respectively.

The concept of Discourse as delineated by Michel Foucault when applied to the reading of history as represented in the ballads, reveals the role of power in constructing the narrative of these ballads. He defines discourse not only as:

…groups of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations) but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Of course, discourses are composed of signs, but what they do is more than use these
signs to designate things. It is this *more* that renders them irreducible to the language (*langue*) and to speech. It is this ‘more’ that we must reveal and describe. (49) (emphasis original).

Foucault traces the role of discourse in wider social processes of legitimating power, emphasizing the construction of current truths, how they are maintained and what power relations they carry with them. He later theorized that discourse is a medium through which power relations produce speaking subjects. Discourse joins power and knowledge, and its power follows from our causal acceptance of the reality with which we are presented. He argued that power and knowledge are inter-related. Discourse is created and perpetuated by those who have the power and means of communication. The ballads of “Mian Deedo” in Dogri and “Johnie Armstrang” in English truly represent the role of power. Both the folk heroes have been eulogized by the minstrel but the pressure of power of the king can be easily discovered. Hence, power is always present and can both produce and constrain the truth. According to Foucault, truth, morality and meaning are created through discourse. Every age has a dominant group of discursive elements that people live in unconsciously. Thus, in a work of literature ‘truth’ is built to justify the power.

Foucault very persuasively explains how power works and why some people perform very irrational acts. Within Foucault’s world view
there is no absolute morality. Morality is created through exercise of power. Mian Deedo is called a bandit, an outlaw and Johnie Armstrong is presented as a ‘traitor’. Power controls the process of composition by dictating what can be spoken of, where and when one may speak and who may speak. In his view, knowledge is inextricably connected with power.

George Lukacs developed his theory of historical realism in his book *The Historical Novel* (1962). His perception is grounded in his conception of totality in art. He lays emphasis on realism. In his view, a literary work ought to reveal underlying patterns in the social order and provide a sense of wholeness of existence with all its inherent contradictions, conflicts and tensions. Realism was not a question of a text’s ability to provide a surface authenticity or verisimilitude in terms of detailed physical description but rather to what extent the sense of underlying historical relations were depicted. Thus, he commented on composers / writers who were preoccupied with form, technique and literary innovation. He emphasizes the process of legitimating feudal societies which contributes “to eradicate from history the greatest historical events of the epoch,” (26). He further states:

…history is a silent, imperceptible, natural, “organic” growth, that is, a development of society which is basically stagnation, which alters nothing in the time-honoured, legitimate institutions of the society and above all, alters
nothing consciously. Man’s activity in history is ruled out completely. (26)

With the help of these two critical thoughts, this thesis will discover the social development of the feudal ages which comprise of ceaseless class struggles, revolutions, successful or abortive uprisings. The ballads of both the origins will be analysed in totality and the underlying role of discourse and realism will be made visible.

The review of literature is in two parts: available critical material on ballads in English and available critical work on Dogri ballads.

The traditional, classical or popular ballad has been seen as originating with the wandering minstrels of late medieval Europe. From the end of the fifteenth century, there are printed ballads that suggest a rich tradition of popular music. In England the songs of the people were very early printed in the shape of broadsheets, such as were sold in Shakespeare’s time “stall copies”, as Scott styles them. In the time of Charles II, these broadsheets were eagerly collected by the famous Mr. Pepys, of the Diary, and by lord Dorset. Samuel Pepys Ballads at the English Ballad Archive (1500-1800) features facsimile images of 1,857 ballads at the Pepys’ Library, Magdalene College, Cambridge, with transcriptions, background essays and notes. As the printing of broadsides and ballads became easy, their selling among common people became
popular. But during the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the surviving sheets were sought after by collectors. The most early collections were made by Ambrose Philips in *A Collection of Old Ballads*, (1723-25) and Allan Ramsay in his two publications, *The Evergreen*, (1724) and *The Tea-Table Miscellany*, (1724). By the middle of the eighteenth century, Thomas Percy, Bishop of Dromore was able to publish a considerable volume of anonymous ballad literature in his book *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, 5 Vols. (1765). He was the wellspring of ballad collecting and ballad scholarship in England. In 1769, David Herd published his *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs, Heroic Ballads, & C.*, a work which was enlarged in two volumes in 1776. He was a most successful and faithful collector who avoided tampering with his collections. In 1777, appeared the first edition of Evan’s *Old Ballads, Historical and Narrative*, in two volumes. Pinkerton published his *Scottish Tragic Ballads*, (1781), followed by *Select Scottish Ballads*, (1783). In 1783 Ritson commenced the publication of that long series of volumes which is of such inestimable value to the literary antiquary, with *A Selected Collection of English Songs. The Bishopric Garland, or Durham Minstrel*, followed, in 1784; *The Yorkshire Garland*, in 1788; the *Pieces of Ancient Popular Poetry*, in 1791; *Ancient Songs and Ballads from the reign of Henry II to the Revolution*, in 1787; *The Northumberland Garland*, in 1793; *Scottish Songs*, in 1794; and Robin
Hood, in 1795. James Johnson’s *The Scots Musical Museum*, (1787), was a collection of many new songs.

In 1801, *Scottish Poems of the XVIth century* edited by J.G Dalzell was published in Edinburgh. In 1802, Sir Walter Scott published the first two volumes of *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. Scott’s miscellanea of indices, essays, notes and glossaries provide an authoritative framework to the *Minstrelsy* ballads. In 1806, Robert Jamieson who published his *Popular Ballads and Songs, from Tradition, Manuscripts and scarce editions* worked simultaneously with Scott. John Finlay of Glasgow published in 1808 his *Scottish Historical and Romantic Ballads*, a collection of twenty-six ballads. John Gilchrist’s *Collection of Ancient and Modern Scottish Ballads, Tales and Songs*, (1815), was compiled from former books. In 1822 David Laing published *Select Remains of the Ancient Popular Poetry of Scotland*. The year 1824 was marked by the publication of volumes, C.K Sharpe’s *A Ballad Book* and James Maidment’s *A North Countrie Garland*. J.H Discon, in 1845 entitled his work *Scottish Traditional Versions of Ancient Ballads* based on collection of some more unpublished compositions. In 1826, Allan Cunningham published *The Songs of Scotland*. William Motherwell’s *Minstrelsy, Ancient and Modern*, (1827), is a work which contains the best account of ballad literature. In 1829, Robert Chambers published his collection of *Scottish Ballads*, which contains eighty pieces including modern ballads.
or imitations. Peter Cunningham published *The Songs of England and Scotland*, in 1835, and Thomas Wright printed *The Political Songs of England from the reign of John to that of Edward II.* in 1839. In 1840, the Percy society was founded in honour of Bishop Percy. It continued to print some old songs and collections of old ballads until 1852. William Chappell published *Collection of National English Airs, consisting of Ancient Song, Ballad, and Dance Tunes*, (1840), which was re-arranged and enlarged and issued in 1855 as *Popular Music of the Olden Time.* In 1844 Alexander Whitelaw published *The Book of Scottish Ballads* and *The Book of Scottish Song.* Frederic Sheldon’s *Minstrelsy of the English Border*, (1847), is a work of little value. Dr. Rimbault printed in 1850, the valuable *Musical Illustrations of Bishop Percy’s Reliques.* In 1858 William Edmondstoune Aytoun published his *Ballads of Scotland,* a collection of thirty-nine ballads, with short introductions. Another Book entitled *The Bagford Ballads*, (1878), was a collection of ballads made by John Bagford for Robert Hartley, I Earl of Oxford. This collection was donated to the British Museum upon his death and is now known as the Harleian Collection. By the end of the nineteenth century, a considerable body of published ballads was in existence and on these, the American scholar, Francis James Child of Harvard based his monumental edition of ballads titled *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, in five volumes, (1882-98).

Dogri has had a long, continuous and rich tradition of oral literature, which cannot be fixed in any time. It has always been there as an integral part of the Dogra Community life, providing it with a creative medium of self-expression and enshrining its history and experiences. Dogri folk literature, especially the Dogri ballads have fulfilled the functions of a living, vibrant literature for a vast majority of Dogras for many generations. Some of it may have been lost in the flux of time but some of it has been collected and documented.

It contrast to the English ballads, the Dogri ballads that are available in printed form constitute only a small fraction of the rich ballad tradition. The work of collecting and preserving Dogri folk literature has been done at institutional as well as individual level. Among the organizations, the roles of Dogri Sanstha, Jammu followed by Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages and the Sahitya Academy are very crucial. The other organizations which have also done
some work in this field are the Dogra Mandal, Jammu; Dogra Research Institute, Jammu; Dogra Mandal, New Delhi; Bandralta Sahitya Mandal, Ramnagar; Bhadlai Sanstha, Bhaderwah and Hillman’s Cultural Centre, Bhaderwah. The government or autonomous agencies in addition to Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages include Sahitya Academy, New Delhi; Jammu University, Information Department of Jammu and Kashmir, Radio Kashmir Jammu and Doordarshan. In addition collections have been brought out and some analytical studies have been made by individual authors.

In 1954, Dogra Mandal, Jammu published a small booklet *Amar Katha* which describes the life of the peasant-saint of Duggar, Bawa Jitto. Dogri Sanstha took up the pioneering work of collecting and publishing Dogri folktales and folksongs as well as Dogri proverbs and idioms. Dogra Mandal, Delhi started the first journal of Dogri *Nami Chetna* in collaboration with the Dogri Sanstha, Jammu. Publication of the journal was later taken over by the Dogri Sanstha, Jammu and it became its quarterly publication. Since then, Dogri Sanstha has been publishing off and on, articles, books and special issues of its quarterly *Nami Chetna* concerning Dogri folk songs, folk ballads and folk-tales and other material pertaining to folk-arts.

The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (established in 1950’s) with the active support of the members of the
Dogri Sanstha, complemented and expanded the activities undertaken by the Dogri Sanstha with its much larger resources. In 1959, five selections of Dogri poetry, a quarterly journal *Sheeraza* (Dogri), an annual literary digest *Sarha Sahitya* and a large number of publications, including collections of Dogri writing, Dogri folksongs, folktales and translations into Dogri from other languages like Hindi, Bengali etc. were brought out. Among individuals who have done some specialized work, the major are Prof. Lakshmi Narain and Sansar Chand who have written *An Introduction to Dogra Folk Literature and Pahari Art* in 1965. This book contributes towards the study of folk literature, culture and history of *Duggar* region. In 1965-66 the Academy published a collection of Dogri folk ballads under the title *Dogri Lok Geet (Karakan-Baran) Vol.II.* edited by Neelamber Dev Sharma and Kehari Singh ‘Madhukar’. The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages which stepped in with a planned publication of Dogri orature had published seven collections of Dogri folksongs and four of Dogri folktales by 1970.

The role of Prof. Ramnath Shastri in the field of Dogri literature in the formative years is immemorial. He gave a new direction to Dogri literary renaissance movement. His research papers dealt with subjects like Bawa Jitto, a folk hero; Gugga, a legendary figure; history of *Duggar* and his essays covered subjects like different aspects of Dogri life, art, culture, language and literature. He edited Dogri Sanstha’s quarterly

Om Goswami’s work as an editor was of very high order. He edited some issues of Nami Chetna, the quarterly journal of Dogri Sanstha. Later on, he was appointed as the editor (Dogri) in the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and languages. He edited from 1975 onwards several issues of Sheeraza (Dogri) and Sarha Sahitya, collections of Dogri folksongs and folktales. The 1976 edition of Sarha Sahitya: A Detailed Study of Dogri Folk Song edited by Om Goswami contains some essays on Dogri folk ballads. Shivnath has written History of Dogri Literature, 1976, published by Sahitya Academy, New Delhi. He has written a chapter on Dogri folk literature in this book besides writing stray articles on the same subject.

In 1977, Dogri Sanstha published a collection of local ballads popular in Marh block titled Marh Block De Shaheed, compiled and edited by Shri Surender Pal Gandalgal. The 1979 edition of Sarha Sahtiya edited by Om Goswami was titled Dogri Lok Gatha: Ik Adhyayan (A Study of Dogri Folk Ballads). It was totally devoted to the study of Dogri folk ballads. The 1980 edition of Sarha Sahitya Special titled Dogri Lok Sahitya Vigyan, again edited by Om Goswami devotes two chapters to the study of Dogri ballads.
Prof. Ashok Jerath made a memorable contribution to the compilation of some important and extinct Dogri ballads which he collected from a beggar turned Dres (minstrel) named Peeran Ditta and collected them in his book *Namian Dogri Baran- Dres Gathan* published by the Dogri Sanstha in 1980. A more ambitious effort towards the survey of Dogri folklore was seen in the publication of *Nami Parakh Nami Khoj*, a collection of essays edited by Ramnath Shastri and Shiv Ram ‘Deep’ by the Dogri Sanstha in 1980. The articles deal with subjects like folklore of Duggar, ‘Karaks’, ‘Bars’ and Dogri folk songs. The Dogri Sanstha published the folk legend of Gugga Chauhan entitled *Gugga Gatha*, edited by Prof. Ramnath Shastri and Shivram ‘Deep’ in 1981. The ballad is the Himachali version describing the incidents in the life of this legendary figure deified in Rajasthan, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and the Jammu and Kashmir. In 1982, Shiv ‘Nirmohi’ wrote a book in Hindi titled *Duggar Ki Lok Gathayen*. In this book he defined Dogri ballad and also discussed the different types of ballads. *Duggar De Lok Nayak* written by Prof. Ramnath Shastri and published by the Dogri Sanstha in 1990 is a masterpiece in the history of folk literature. In this book, there is complete study of the ballads of four Dogra heroes – “Bawa Jitto”, “Data Ranpat”, “Mian Deedo” and “Gugga Chauhan”. The J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages published a compilation of folk ballads titled *Dogri Lok Gathan* edited by Om Goswami in 1990.
This book contains 56 folk ballads, covering its each form, popular in Jammu region.

Nasib Singh Manhas from Dogri Department, Jammu University worked on Dogri ballads and produced a thesis entitled “Dogri Ballads- An Analytical Study” in 1993. Ms. Surashta from History Department, Jammu University also worked on Dogri ballads and produced a thesis entitled “Socio- Cultural aspects of Dogri Ballads (Jammu – Kangra Region)”.

After a survey of the available literature on ballads written in English as well as Dogri, it is found that the folklorists were interested in collecting texts. They aimed at recording minimal informant data for instance, name and age, place and the data, of recording but no attempt has been made to discover how this form of poetry which was very popular among the common folk intended to represent historical facts and characters. The available criticism in English and Dogri has made no serious efforts to study the sociological origin of the poems. The role of society and power in the ballads has not yet been discovered by scholars of English and Dogri.

The subject area of this thesis is ‘Comparative Literature’. It will attempt to make a comparative analysis of the heroic ballads written in English and Dogri. Ballads written in English and ballads written in
Dogri have been analysed separately. But so far, no attempt has been made to study the ballads in a comparative manner. This thesis will discuss the cultural coherence and contradictions arising in the ballads belonging to the two different regions. The focus will be on the study of heroic ballads in English and Dogri, and attempt will be made to locate the origin of these tales in the history of the nations as no culture can be understood without taking into account the history of that culture. This research will also discover the contrasts and similarities with regard to their themes, style, form, technique, historical background and above all bring out the silences and absences in the ballads.

‘Comparative Literature’ is a kind of world religion. The underlying suggestion is that all cultural differences disappear when the literatures of two different nations are compared. ‘Comparative Literature’ in India is directly linked to the rise of modern Indian Nationalism and native literatures have been used to assert national cultural identity. This thesis will try to contribute to and establish the identity of Dogri cultural practices.

It implies a study of literature which uses comparison as its main instrument. It enhances awareness of our own tradition and openness to works written in other countries and other languages. Comparatists are comfortable with theme and forms which may involve literary
representation of natural phenomenon and men’s reaction to them; or be interested in recurring motifs in literature and folklore or recurrent situations: the eternal triangle, the oedipal situation, or literary representation of the types – professional groupings, social classes, races etc. Thematic studies enable us to examine and contrast the spirit of different societies and epochs as well as those of individual talent. It is fascinating to see how the problems facing the groups, classes and societies become embodied in literary figures with the life and will of their own. This research hopes to meet the contemporary needs by providing the context and background from the sociological perspective. Such research will take into account History, Geography, Sociology and Culture of Jammu region along with a similar study of the British regions from where the ballads in English originate. This research is thus interdisciplinary in nature and hopes to satisfy the requirement of research in Indian Universities on regional literatures.

Both English and Dogri ballads subvert historical truth. The content of the ballad is changed to suit the governing power structure and institution of monarchy is used to legitimize the suppression of revolts by feudal chieftains. Thus, this thesis will reveal the historical truth and make the invisible visible. It will also, as D.N Jha states:

…enhance the efficacy of feudal model by undertaking a comparative and cross-cultural study of English and Indian
societies, to comprehend their shared historical experience and to examine the process of change on a wider spatial and temporal canvas. Such a perspective will certainly provide a universalist perception of human past and equally certainly, will provide an effective antidote to the fashionable studies in which social criticism floats free of any universalist theoretical ground.(30)

This topic is very much relevant today as cultural materialists are revisiting history of societies to locate the origins of the present day political uncertainty and turmoil the world is experiencing. Literature as cultural history encapsulates the visible tale as well as the invisible / visible by subverting the oral form. The ballads narrate the minstrel’s story. The minstrel may subvert the truth to legitimize the power structure of the society.
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 (vīstī),
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 from 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 monastry 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. Significnalty, 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 slewn 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 land holders, 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”, “KINMONT 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 upto 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 Armotrong. Johnie Armstrong of Gilnockie was one of the most popular, powerful, and feared clan chiefs on the Scottish border.

The Armotrong 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 Armstrang” 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 Armstrang” 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 Johnie 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 Johnie’s heirs but they were occupied by Lord Maxwell three days after Johnie’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 Johnie’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 Johnie 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 Johnie? Johnie 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 17\textsuperscript{th} March 1596 when Kinmont Willie was captured, to his liberation from Carlisle on 13\textsuperscript{th} 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:

\begin{quote}
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)
\end{quote}

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 the 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 renown 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. Nobody 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
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 Buckscleuth 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 ben 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 Maharaja 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
डेरा सत्तलुढ़ार 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
ingenuity of the Dogra minstrels or bards to create ballads out of their own imagination.

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,
इक्क 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 ‘म्हाचले दा,
‘तारागङढे छ होया कमाल राजा।

79
Raja Jagat was the brave warrior of Himachal,
did wonders in Taragarh.

Compromise took place in Taragarh,
all the polices of Mughals failed.  

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,  
दिल्लिया च हाए-हाए मची जौ। (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:

‘हौं इंद्र—आ’ जगता बोल्लेई,
खाँड़ी काण सकांह 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:

हुकम करदा इंद्र राजा—
इसरा गर्व जरुर 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. ज्हारा सिंह मियें दे घर ढीढ़ो जम्मेआ
   जम्मेआ ओ बड़ा ई पुआझा
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? Whether 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 आख्दी पिट्ठ देइयै निं आमेअः
ओ तू बिच लड़ेआं गै धारा नाई। (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:

“ढाकेअ हा पिटःढ़े आया नाई
ए खूनी हत्ये मत्था टेर्कना नाई” (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 ड़ेरा नेईं लायां
जम्मू छोड़ियाँ त्होर नाईं 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 भेज्दा।

लिखी परवाने राजे गी भेज्दा।

मेरी करी देनी मदाद लोको।

नूरपुर, बौड़ लैने छुड़ाइ लोको।

राजे बी दित्ता जवाब लोको।

करी कल्ला पठानिया जोर लड़ें।। (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. Mean while, 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

जे असें सुलह गै करनी ऐ

चिद्द्दा झंडा गै दिता

ए असें लझाई निं करनी (174–179)

Ae dikho Bhute Pathanen da rang

Likheya janda ae jernaile gee khat

Likheya 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 blinded 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:

जवानो दूर रेही नै घर-बाहर
साढ़ा सफर गिलगिता दा
असें औना निं 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 larhaya
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 Armstrong” 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 jealously 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.
Chapter-2
Narratives of Social Disruption in English and Dogri Heroic Ballads

This chapter undertakes the study of Heroic English ballads narrating the plight of lower sections of the society in comparison to those depicted in the Dogri ballads of almost the same time span in the histories of both the respective regions. The English ballads deal with the people who lived on the Anglo-Scottish border. This period of Scottish history is marked by constant wars between England and Scotland as well as by frequent raids by the border reivers. The condition of common people or peasants in Duggar region was not much better than the Scottish people. They were governed by the feudal social structure. Peasant life was incredibly hard as portrayed through the Dogri ballads.

Songs and poetry including the ballads which have been discussed in the earlier chapter depict borders as sites of romantic period from the 13th century to the beginning of the 17th century. However, it was a cruel time. This was not just about England versus Scotland. Scot robbed Scot and English robbed English. There were feuds between families on the same side of the border and across the border. Robbery and murder were everyday occurrences. Raiding became an important part of the social system—a way of life. No householder could go to sleep secure, no cattle could be left unguarded. The land was dominated by the sword. The
ballads that narrate the stories related to border raids and counter raids to recover robbed goods are ‘The Fray of Suport’, “Jamie Telfer of the fair Dodhead” and ‘Dick o’ the Cow’.

“The Fray of Suport” tells about an English woman living in Suport, near the foot of Kershope. She had been plundered by a band of Scottish moss-troopers in the night. In the morning, she convoked her servants and friends for the ‘Hot Trod’ or pursuit of the reivers to get back her things. At the same time, she complained about their negligence and incompetence in securing her safety. Hot Trod was the hot pursuit of reivers and was allowed under the border laws. It allowed for the ones who had been robbed to mount a pursuit within six days of the raid and to cross the border, if necessary, to follow the raiders and hound and horn for the recovery of their goods. It was the duty of all neighbours between the age of sixteen and sixty to join the Trod. A piece of burning turf was held aloft on a spear point to let others know what was happening. The person in pursuit had the right to recruit help from the first town it came to and the first person encountered was to bear witness that a lawful Hot Trod was being carried out. When told to join the Trod, if a person refused, he would be considered to be a traitor and to be in alliance with the enemy. That person who refused would also be forced to become a fugitive. Even if the Trod was successful, the pursuers could not relax. They knew that there would be reprisals and then reprisals upon reprisals.
According to the ballad, the English woman called out the men of the countryside and the coopers working in the woods to rise in arms against the band of marauding Scots who had stolen her horse and cattle the previous night, in addition to many others valuable articles. They had also lamed her guests who tried to help to defend her home. The lady said that all the fords on the Liddel and a gap which was a possible escape route were guarded. The Scots would be prevented from returning home to Scotland. The narrator finally announced the arrival of authorities such as the Captain of Bewcastle, Jephtha’s John and Captain Musgrave. The town bell of Carlisle also started ringing. With this the lady was assured that the property would not be taken over the border without a fight.

“The Fray of Suport” operates very effectively as a part of the reiving ballad group within the Minstrelsy. It is very precise in its geography, it names specific individuals in history and while the lines and the structures are very different from the other ballads, the drive and emotional impact of the verses are the same. It may be useful to consider “The Fray of Suport” alongside “Jamie Tefler of the Fair Dodhead”, as one presents a Scottish raid on English territory, while the other presents an English raid on a Scot and while one of the heroes of ‘Suport’ is the Captain of Bewcastle, he is the villain in “Jamie Tefler of the Fair Dodhead”.
“Jamie Tefler of the Fair Dodhead” is one of the raid and retrieval ballads contained in the Minstrelsy. According to the ballad, the Captain of Bewcastle and his men ride into Teviotdale on a plundering expedition and seized the cattle and ransacked the home of Jamie Tefler in Dodhead. Tefler begged the Captain not to take his possessions, saying that he would be revenged if he did so, but the Captain merely laughed, noting that there was only a sheathless old sword in the house. Telfer ran ten miles in the dark to Stobs’s Ha’ to ask for help from Gibby Elliot there but Elliot refused and told him to seek help at Branksome Ha’, where he had paid protection money to him although Telfer implied that he had made payments to the Elliots. Telfer then hurried towards Coultart Cleugh to ask for help from his brother-in-law, Jock Grieve, and Grieve furnished him with a horse. Tefler then rode to Catslockhill to ask for help from William’s Wat, and Wat and his two sons rode with him to the home of old Buccleuch at Branksome Ha’. Buccleuch summoned his son, Willie Scott. He raised other Scotts and soon caught up with the Captain. Willie demanded that the Captain should give up Tefler’s cattle but the Captain refused and a skirmish broke out in which Willie Scott was struck on the head and killed. Wat of Harden then urged the Scots to avenge him and they won the day, leaving two of the Captain’s men dead and thirty wounded. The Captain himself had a broken leg and was
emasculated. When word of his capture went to the lady, she said that she would rather have seen him dead than disgraced.

A wild young man called Watty wi’ the Wudspurs, lead a band over the border to the Captain’s house at Stanegirthside and stole his cattle. Hence, Jamie Tefler was presented with thirty-three cows when he had only ten stolen from him. Tefler paid the rescue fee, and Willie Scott was greatly mourned.

There is no historical record which relates to the events narrated in the ballad. However, many of the characters mentioned in the ballad have historic parallels, with the notable exception of Jamie Tefler himself. There is no specific individual of this name who appears in historical documents. Jamie Tefler, therefore, should be taken as a representative of one of the inhabitants of the border, who found themselves victim to the border reivers. Moreover, the portrayal of the deputy of the Warden, an officer of the peace, making a raid, not in the way of retaliation, but simply to plunder, is too much out of rule even for Bewcastle and does not speak favourably for the antiquity of the ballad.

Another ballad which narrates the story of a border raid into England and then clever retrieval by a foolish Englishman is “Dick o the Cow”. In this ballad, the man regains his stolen cows. According to the ballad, Fair Johnie Armstrong and Willie Armstrong of Liddesdale
decided the ride into England in search of booty after a peaceful time where there has been no raiding.

They came to Hutton Ha’, but the lord had secured everything except six sheep, and the Armstrongs decided that they would be deeply ashamed to go home with no more booty than that. The thought of the three good cows of Lord Scrope’s fool, who was called Dick of the Cow and they raided his place at night taking the cows and three bed covers. In the morning, Dick’s wife cried about their loss but Dick assured her that he would bring her back, three time the value of the cows. He went to Lord Scrope and obtained his permission to steal in Liddesdale, but only from those who had stolen from him. He then bought a bridle and spurs to take with him but went on foot to Pudding-burn house where the thieves were living. He complained about the theft to the Lord’s Jock who presided over the gatherings of Armstrongs there, but the Lord’s Jock merely invited Dick to dine on the meat from one of his own cows. That night, Dick went into the stable and hamstrung all but three of the horses. He galloped away on one horse, leading another. In the morning, Armstrongs discovered that Dick had gone off with the horses of Fair Johnie and Willie. The third horse that he left undamaged was a bay belonging to the Lord’s Jock. Fair Johnie sought permission to pursue Dick. He overtook Dick on Cannobie Lee and threatened to kill him but the spear he threw went through Dick’s jerkin without hitting him. Dick
knocked Fair Johnie unconscious and took his sword and his steel-jacket and cap away with him. He also took his horse. When he came home, Lord Scrope threatened to hang him when he saw with him the horse that he knew belonged to the Lord’s Jock, but Dick explained that he won the horse when he fought with Fair Johnie and he showed Johnie’s sword and steel jacket and cap as tokens. Lord Scrope then gave him a fine cow and offered Dick fifteen pounds for the bay, and Dick forced the price up to twenty pounds. Dick then met Lord Scrope’s brother Ralph, who offered him ten pounds and a good cow for Fair Johnie’s horse and Dick again forced the price up to twenty pounds. He was accordingly able to go back to his wife with forty English pounds, two fine cows, and the third horse that he had obtained, which was as good as the others. However, he told her that the Armstrongs would hang him if he remained in Cumberland and hence, he took farewell of Lord Scrope and moved south to Burgh under Stanmuir.

In “The Fray of Suport”, the raid was followed by the ‘Hot Trod’. But Dick stopped his wife from crying loudly and announcing their loss. He says:

“O had thy tongue, my wife,” he says,

“And o’ thy crying let me be;

And ay where thou hast lost ae cow,

In gude suith I shall bring the three.”(33-36)
He intended to recover his cows by stealing and he sought permission from his lord who allowed him to go across the border into Scotland for the theft. As a law-keeper, he would have sent him in a Hot Trod, then why did he do so? Was he averse towards excess blood-shed that would have resulted from the conflict? Armstrongs were the most powerful of Border reivers. Hence, their fear might have led to such an action. He also forbade Dick to steal more than his own cows. Dick is depicted as a foolish man throughout the ballad. The poet says:

Dickie’s ta’en leave o’ lord and master;

I wat a merry fule was he!

He’s bought a bridle and a pair of new spurs,

And pack’d them up in his breek thie. (57-60)

He was shown buying a bridle and a pair of spurs, although he had no horse to ride on. He went on foot. Has the poet used the term “fule” ironically? Was Dickie a clever person as he had already planned to steal a horse from the Armstrongs?

Feudalism in its simplest form was a pyramid of power. At the very top was the king. Below him were noblemen and knights, and below them were the peasants. The peasantry was the largest chunk of the pyramid, right at the bottom, and it could make up to three quarters to nine-tenths
of the entire population. Among the peasantry, the classes were further sub-divided into Freemen, Villeins, Cottagers and Slaves.

Vassals who possessed extensive fiefs divided out portions of them in a process known as subinfeudation. The result of subinfeudation was that every landholder in the feudal system became both a vassal and an overlord, except the king and the lowliest vassal holding single, indivisible fief. This system grew unsystematically and it carried so complicated tenure relationships that it carried with it the seeds of its own disintegration. In reality, lords had little control over their lesser vassals. The descriptive phrase of the time, ‘The vassal of my vassal is not my vassal,’ describes the dissolution of the ability of the overlord to maintain effective authority over fiefs granted to vassals. Even king ‘holding only from God’-who owed homage to no one and was purportedly above such fractionalizing involvements, became mere landlords bound by feudal contracts to vassals who were their equals and sometimes their superiors in military strength and political power. The power of feudal monarchs was so limited by contracts to a position that they were little more than first among equals. The limitation of royal power, a striking feature of feudal society, was a result of such practices as subinfeudation.

Peasant life was incredibly hard. To many peasants, regardless of class, life generally meant backbreaking field-labour. Under Medieval
law, the king owned everything by what they believed was “divine right”, the right to rule granted by God and then passed on through heredity. What the king gave to his lords were the things which the lords had to pay rent on. For that rent, anything within the lord’s land belonged to him. This everything included the crops, the people, the animals, the wood, tools, clothing- hence everything. Away from the Kings notice, landlords were free to wield their not-inconsiderable power. Landlords were allowed to set their laws and taxes, and did so freely. Peasants were, therefore, exploited. D.N Jha states, “the Indian peasantry was subjected to an ever increasing burden of rent in kind and to some extent, in cash” (15). The region of Jammu was no exception. The condition of the peasants during feudal age was pathetic. Dogri ballads present an excellent impression of the suppression of peasants by the feudal lords. Mrinalini Atrey writes:

Prevalence of feudalistic practices in the region is also evident through the ballads. We come to know about the kind of relationship existing between the feudal lord and the peasant and the picture is not very encouraging. The feudal lords were usually harsh in their treatment of the peasants. They afflicted atrocities on the peasants not only in the process of tax collection, but also, indulged in excessive taxation for one reason or the other. (42)
Thus, the peasant class of Jammu region was suppressed, both physically and financially. Dogri ballads which present a realistic picture of the plight of peasantry in Duggar region are “Bawa Jitto”, “Data Ranpat”, “Bawa Tholu” etc.

The Karak of “Bawa Jitto” depicts the events of the sad self-sacrifice of a Brahmin for the sake of justice. The incident had a mass appeal and hence, it became a great theme for a ballad, which seems to have been composed by an expert poet. As the person involved happened to be a Brahmin, the caste which enjoyed an exclusive position of reverence in Hindu society of sixteenth century, the Karak became something religious in nature. Because of this fact, the shrine and the Karak became popular although there were so many other similar incidents which also became subject of a number of ballads, in which the persons sacrificed themselves for some good cause. The basic events of the Karak, the self-sacrifice of Jitto as a form of passive resistance to feudal injustice, was an historical fact on which the edifice of the Karak was constructed by the composer and more details were added to it by the later reciters. Illiterate ‘Jogis’, ‘Gardis’, and ‘Draeses’ were prone to provide their own words and sentences which were liable to go off the memory.
Hence, it was very common that new descriptions were added and some incidents were constructed in order to add to the sensational effect of the story as desired by the composer and the reciter.

Bawa Jitto was the only son of Rupo Brahmin and Jojala. He got married to Maya. Soon after that his parents died. His wife also died after giving birth to a daughter. Jitto had to depend on her aunt Jojan to bring up her infant daughter. Jojan had seven sons but their ancestral land was divided into two parts, one part belonged to Jitto and the other part belonged to her seven sons. The lady was believed to practice witchcraft and it was believed that the deaths in Jitto’s family were afflicted by her. She also tried to kill Jitto’s daughter, Kauri and Jitto in order to grab his land. Afflicted by the various tortures, Jitto decided to leave his village Ghar along with his eight years old daughter Kauri. He reached Panjore where his friend Rulho Luhaar lived. He stayed at his place for some days. Then he asked Rulho if he could get any land for cultivation. Ghaghi suggested them to meet Mehta Bir Singh, the Zagirdaar and the maternal uncle of the king of Jammu, Raja Ajaib Dev. All three of them went before the Zagirdaar, where he offered Jitto to accept the job of a priest in any temple. Jitto told him that although he was a brahmin, yet he wanted to earn his living by doing hard work. This argument enraged the proud zagirdaar.
In order to teach him a lesson, Mehta Bir Singh gave him an infertile piece of land near Shama Chack with a written agreement that Jitto would have to give one-fourth of the crop’s share to him. Though the share of the zagirdaar was supposed to be fifty percent of the crop, Bir Singh pretended this generosity because he knew that Jitto would fail to yield a crop on the barren land. He ordered Iso Megh, the keeper of that land to accompany Jitto and help him to select the land. Jitto and Iso worked hard on the land and prepared it for cultivation. He made Iso his partner. They grew wheat on the land, watered it, manured it and took proper care throughout day and night. Bua Kauri once visited the field and she wanted to taste the sweat soft fruit but Bawa Jitto forbade her to do so, as the crop had many partners. Such were the ideals of Bawa Jitto. After the harvest, Jitto made a heap of the wheat. Mehta Bir Singh was reported about the excellent crop yield. When he himself saw the quality of wheat, he became greedy and asked his men to collect fifty percent of the crop. At this, Jitto got annoyed and he reminded the Zagirdar about his agreement, to which the cruel lord totally denied. Bawa Jitto was convinced that the lord was determined to do injustice. He went home, got a dagger and stabbed himself to death on the heap of wheat. His eight years old daughter Bua Kauri immolated herself along with her father.

Historical facts narrated in the ballad have been distorted. Mehta Bir Singh has been shown as a royal official and has been called as wazir
of the *Raja* of Jammu, in an effort to prove that Jitto’s struggle was a struggle against the ruling power. Bir Singh was only a petty officer, or probably a farmer of the government deputed to the territory of Ambgarota. Jitto invited him to come, measure the crop yield and take his share. Mehta Bir Singh is shown to proceed from Gumat, the centre of Jammu Kingdom. Bir Singh is shown to be present at the field when Jitto came with his dagger but historical records say that he had gone away, instructing his men to take away half of the wheat as his share. The introduction of Bir Singh is added to heighten the pathos of the event and the firm determination of the offended brahmin. He stabbed himself saying:

रुक्खी कनक निं खायां महतेआ, दिन्नां मास रलाई।
रामो—राम ध्यान्दा बावा, ते पेट कटारा लाई। *(Gandalgal 82)*

Rukhee kanak nin khayan Mehteya dinnan maas ralaye
Ramo- Ram dhyanda Bawa, te pet kataara laalyee.

Don’t eat dry wheat, let me add my flesh to it.

Chanting Ram-Ram, Bawa stabbed his stomach with the dagger.

(Transliteration mine)

There is a confusion about the historical period of this ballad. Most of the folklorists consider Bawa Jitto as contemporary of Raja Ajaib Dev Singh who ruled Jammu for 31 years from 1423 onwards. Raja Hamir
Dev, also called Bhim Dev was killed in a battle with Jasrath Khokhar in April 1423. When Hamir Dev was killed his son Ajaib Dev was only six years old. His maternal uncles Mehta Mardhana and Jaipal seated him on the throne and carried on administration. Mehta Bir Singh was appointed Zagirdar of Ambgarota. Since Ajaib Dev’s death is recorded to have happened in 1454, he was not the ruler of Jammu at the time when Bawa Jitto committed suicide. It was his son Bhirm Dev, who ruled from 1454 to about 1490. Bawa Jitto’s martyrdom is said to have happened in 1458.

Another important aspect of Duggar society which gets highlighted in the ballads is land and boundary disputes. The most remarkable ballad exhibiting this theme is the one related to Data Ranpat. He was a pious brahmin who lived in Birpur near Jammu. The Zagirdar of Birpur, Bangi Charak was a deceitful lord. He had forcefully acquired the land of his relatives. This led to a dispute. Data Ranpat, was appointed as judge to settle the dispute. Data Ranpat who was a man of principles and truthfulness, passed his judgement against Bangi Charak. The feudal lord was enraged over his decision. He tried to bribe him but was unable to convince him. Thus, he got Data Ranpat murdered by his own maternal cousins. Ranpat’s head fell at a place called Dral and his body fell at Birpur. Ranpat’s mother Alma immolated herself along with her son and ordered her daughter-in-law Shukra to perform Sati after 12 years.
Some of the historical facts have been wrongly narrated in the ballad. Aengal, Maingal, Mehnga and Chhajju who killed Data Ranpat are said to be his maternal cousins but in reality they were his step-brothers. They had their own reasons to kill Ranpat. Ranpat was appointed the Purohit of the Charak family, the lords of the village, by superseding all his brothers. As a result, they were jealous of his position. When they were instigated by Bangi Charak, they captured this occasion to fulfill their plan. The ballad wrongly narrates about the relation of these people to Ranpat as:

एंगल, मैंगल, मेंघा ते छज्जू, हैन मसेरे भाई।
अर्गे–अर्गे दाता चलै पिच्छें मौती ने छड़ी लाई (82, 83)

Aengal, Maingal, Mengha te Chhajju, hain masere bhaae Aggen-aggen Data chalai pichhen mautee ne chhatarhi laayee.

Aengal, Maingal Mengha and Chhajju were his maternal cousins

As Data moved forward, death followed him.

(Transliteration mine)

Data Ranpat also owned a large piece of land. Killing him was beneficial to them as they could also capture his land. Moreover, the panchayat was held on the eleventh day of Bawa Ladha’s death, the
father of Data Ranpat. But Data Ranpat was killed after four years, on the
day of fourth death anniversary of his father. The incident took place
around 1660 A.D when Bahuwal Kings ruled Bahu.

Data Beeram was also killed over a land dispute. He was a Jat Peasant. He came into conflict with Brahmin peasant in which he was killed.

Cattle raids were very common during feudal ages. The poor peasants were mostly affected by this practice. The ballad of "Data Sukho" is about the sacrifice of a Rajput lord who lost his life while releasing the cows of a poor untouchable peasant. He came pleading to Data Sukho about his loss and cried for his help. Data Sukho had a tough fight with the other party (raides) and ultimately he was killed in fighting against injustice.

Another ballad related to the capture of cattle is about Data Hallo. Meru Gujjar who was the worker of Data Hallo complained that Bajju Jatt had forcibly captured his cows. There was a tough fight after this incident which resulted in the martyrdom of many people.

Bawa Alla Sidh committed suicide when Sungliye people refused to return his stolen cows. He pleaded before them but they made fun of him and depressed Bawa hung himself from the tree near their house.

Data Sarnu of Marh got killed during a cattle raid. While he was grazing his cows, some Mughals came and surrounded the cows to
capture them. Data Sarnu gave a tough fight to them but was ultimately killed.

Conflicts were also aroused among common people when their cattle strayed into the neighbouring fields and destroyed the crop. The ballad of “Data Rangu” narrates such an incident. He was a shepherd belonging to the Jat class of peasants. One day his cows entered into the field belonging to peasants of Majbe caste and destroyed the crop. This infuriated the Majbe people who killed Rangu over this petty issue.

Data Leekho, a brahmin from Muthi village in Jammu was killed by the Manhas Rajputs, the owners of the field which was a little destroyed when the cows of Leekho entered there. He immediately took them out of the field but one of the them became so annoyed that he stabbed Leekho with his sharp instrument.

Another evil practice prevailing in the Duggar region was of human sacrifice. The ballads of “Bawa Tholu” and “Raj Bahu” Rull” are examples of humans sacrificed by feudal lords.

Bawa Tholu was a brahmin child, born to Paras Brahmin in Kharote village of Kathua which was under the rule of Mehtab Singh of Lakhanpur. Mehtab Singh was constructing a palace but the walls couldn’t stand at all. A priest was called upon to find out the reason behind this. He told the lord that a devil resided below the foundation of the walls. He needed a sacrifice of a fair innocent brahmin. Mehtab Singh
sent his soldiers all over his territory to get such a *brahmin* for the 
sacrifice. They captured Tholu who was a minor child of 5 years without 
being noticed by his father Paras. When the poor father became aware of 
his son’s missing, he went to seek help from the lord, Mehtab Singh who 
pretended to help him in all the possible manner. Poor little Tholu heard 
his father and wanted to cry aloud but the soldiers stopped him. On the 
day of sacrifice, Tholu was laid alive on the foundation and then the wall 
was built.

Raj Bahu Rull was the daughter-in-law of the king of Kangra and 
she was sacrificed in the same way as Tholu, for the purpose of building a 
canal by her in-laws. The cruel practice was although prevalent in the 
*Duggar* society, yet it was not wide spread.

The sacrifice of all the martyrs of Dogri ballads discussed in this 
chapter, was elevated to a supreme level by the practice of Deification 
prevalent in the *Duggar* society. They are all commemorated through 
shrines called ‘Dehris’ or ‘Dehras’, built in their honour. Annual and bi-
annual congregations, fairs and festivals are organized in their memory. 
‘Jogis’ and ‘Chelas’ sing ballads of their deeds. It may be pointed out 
here, that the process of deification of these martyrs was followed by the 
sufferings, diseases, mis-happenings caused to the people responsible for 
their unnatural deaths. The families were cursed after they committed the 
sin. When the cause of the pains afflicted to the murderers was
discovered, if was found to be the *Hatya* which means ‘murder’. Most of
the martyrs belonged to the *brahmin* caste, the most highly revered class
in the Hindu religion. Hindu religion considered the murder of person
belonging to this sect as the greatest sin. According to the epic
*Ramayana*, Lord Rama was also cursed by *Brahma Hatya* as Ravana was
a *brahmin*. His father was a *brahmin* saint while his mother was a
*Raakshasi*. Hence, Ravana was a *brahmin* by birth. Lord Rama had to go
to Sangam in Allahabad to repent for his sin. If Lord Rama, who was
believed to be the incarnation of God himself, could not survive the
pressure of superstitious beliefs of Hindu religion, then, how could a
common man or a feudal lord/king be denied committing such a sin. But,
if considered the other way, Lord Rama who is regarded as the *Maryada
Purshotam* or the Ideal Man in Hindu religion, exhibited this belief to
show that violence and murder are the greatest sins on earth. If an ideal
king like Rama, who killed Ravana for the good cause can be cursed, the
sin of killing an innocent person or forcing a person to take extreme steps
as suicide, is the crime for which there is no apology. The people took the
legend of Lord Rama otherwise. Firstly, they killed a person or forced
one to commit suicide, then they commemorated him/her as their Deity
with the fear of being cursed by the dead person’s wrath. In feudal times,
this practice of Deification was very common. The Deity acted as power
in Dogri ‘Karaks’ and the discourse of the ballads is shaped by him/her.
They conform to Lukacs’ viewpoint because they narrate history with its inherent contradictions.

The English and Dogri ballads discussed in this chapter are related to the sufferings of the lower section of the society. They narrate the tales of their victimization by the feudal lords. Whether it is Anglo-Scottish border, or the Duggar region, lying so much apart geographically, the status of the weaker and poor sections of the society had a close resemblance. The Anglo-Scottish people were tortured by border reivers as well as feudal lords whereas the peasants of Duggar region were victimized by feudal lords and religious agencies. The methods of subjugation and discrimination varied but the motive was same, i.e., to suppress the lower classes through physical and economic harassment.

Both the English as well as Dogri ballads exhibit the themes of victimization by feudal lords, economic discrimination, cattle raids, violence and lawlessness in the Anglo-Scottish border region and Duggar region respectively. The first major theme which is depicted in all three English ballads and many of the Dogri ballads are based on cattle raids. “The Fray of Suport”, “Jamie Tefler of the fair Dodhead” and “Dick O’ the Cow” are about cattle raids as regards Dogri ballads, “Data Sukho”, “Data Hallo”, “Bawa Alla Sidh”, Data Sarnu” narrate the events of cattle raids in Duggar society.
The English ballads narrate the events that followed the cattle raids whereas the Dogri ballads are about the cattle raids. In “Fray of Suport” and “Dick o’ the Cow”, the raids were carried by the Scottish reivers on the English side of the border. Since, the borders had their own distinct laws, the retrieval of the cattle or other goods plundered by the reivers was sought through the practice of ‘Hot Trod’ as already discussed in “The Fray of Suport”. “Dick o’ the Cow” depicts a different procedure. The man who was robbed was allowed by the lord himself to go and retrieve his things by stealing. A law-keeper, Lord Scrope, allowed Dick to go to Liddesdale to take revenge rather than undertaking the expedition lawfully or waiting for the ‘Truce Day’ to settle his complain. Hence, from the study of these two ballads, it concludes that there was no particular law prevailing in the borders to protect the poor people from the frequent raids. In contrast, “Jamie Tefler of the Fair Dodhead” narrates a separate theme. This is a story of a border raid by the English Captain of Bewcastle and his men into the Scottish territory. The man who led the ‘Hot Trod’ in “The Fray of Suport” to get back the plundered cattle and goods was himself involved in a raid on opposite side of the border. Jamie is helped by the lords although many of them rejected his request. The ballad narrates a lot of bloodshed during the conflict to get back his things. Willie Scott lost his life in this battle.
As regards the cattle raids depicted in the Dogri ballads, the theme of retrieval is narrated in the ballads of “Data Sukho” and “Data Hallo”. Both of these folk heroes helped the men who came to ask for their help in getting back their cattle. They sacrificed their life for the men who came in their shelter. In contrast “Bawa Alla Sidh” and “Data Sarnu” exhibit the plight of poor peasants whose cattle was forcibly captured by the feudal lord and powerful Mughals respectively. Bawa Alla Sidd had nobody to go for help because the man who was supposed to be responsible for his protection and well-being was himself plundering him. Data Sarnu was all alone when the Mughals captured his cows. He could not call anybody for help and hence sacrificed his life while fighting for justice.

It follows from the comparative study of both English and Dogri ballads, that although law existed but it was at the disposal of the feudal lord when and how to use it.

To maintain tenure of the strips assigned to them, serfs owed more than labour service to the landlord. Along with the customary dues and rents, the peasants were obliged to give a percentage of all they harvested to the lord, a part of its to the priest, and perhaps a share to the steward. There were also extra obligations, such as gifts made to the landlord on certain holidays and other special occasions, and there was additional labour owed, such as collecting the lord’s firewood or doing other errands.
for him. If they wished, lords could arbitrarily impose additional charges on their serfs.

The theme of economic burden is well visualised through the Dogri ballad “Bawa Jitto” and English ballad “Jamie Tefler of the fair Dodhead”. The self-sacrifice of Bawa Jitto was a tragic outcome against feudal injustice. According to the agreement made by the feudal lord, Mehta Bir Singh, Bawa Jitto was supposed to give one-fourth of his crop yield to the lord. But the greedy feudal lord was lured when he saw the extraordinary quality of wheat produced in Jitto’s field. He, on the spot, raised his share to fifty percent. To this, Jitto revolted and killed himself.

In “Jamie Tefler of the Fair Dodhead”, Jamie Tefler went to Gibby Elliot for help, but he refused him saying that he had not paid the protection money to him. Jamie tried to convince him that he had paid the money but Elliot did not believe him. Jamie had to seek help elsewhere. These two ballads throw light on two common practices in both the regions. Firstly, to increase the share payable to the feudal lord without any advance notice or under any law and rule. Secondly, to deny the payment made or agreement signed. In “Bawa Jitto”, Mehta Bir Singh denied having signed any agreement which dictated his share to be one-fourth of the grains.

The theme of land disputes is not depicted in any particular English ballad but these ballads talk about border reivers who plundered the
people living on the Anglo-Scottish border. Central to the reivers’ activities was an area delightfully termed as the “Debatable Land.” Straddling the border between Scotland and England, for over 300 years, its inhabitants effectively answered to neither government. Beyond the “Debatable Land”, a wide stretch of territory on both sides of the national border was divided into Marches and officials called Wardens were appointed by both the governments. These wardens were sometimes represented as law-keepers and sometimes as law-breakers.

Landlords did have certain obligations to the serfs. They were obliged to make land or some other means of livelihood available to them, and once all obligations to the lord were satisfied, peasants were granted what remained of their produce for their own needs. Sometimes landlords also offered peasants aid and support in times of dearth and, on special days, provided them with feasts and celebrations. Landlords were the sources of livelihood. They had the authority of a king, who was a distant and vague ruler beyond the approach of most peasants. Landlords fulfilled the basic functions of local government for their peasants. They offered protection from external harm and maintained internal peace when peasants revolted against abuses and unwarranted corruption.

Subordination was emphasized by the lord’s control over local justice and by his manipulation of laws and justice in his own favour,
often at the expense of tenants. Beyond providing protection, landlords generally tried to get as much from their serfs as possible.

A prominent example of land dispute is exemplified by the ballad of “Data Ranpat”. Data Ranpat was got murdered by a feudal lord who was dissatisfied by the just judgement of the Ranpat in the case of a land dispute between the lord and his relatives. The feudal lord was infuriated by the loss of land, illegally occupied by him. People were also killed over minor incidents of land disputes and cattle straying. The ballads of “Data Beeram”, “Data Rangu” and “Data Leekho” represent brutal murder of these poor people by the powerful and tyrannous rich lords over petty issues.

Human sacrifice is another issue dealt in the Dogri ballads. Sacrificing poor children and women for a religious cause or for building some monument was a practice prevalent in the royal families of Duggar region. Although, many examples of animal sacrifice are found in Hindu and Muslim religions, but sacrificing a human for a sacred cause was not widespread except for practitioners of black magic in India. The ballads of “Bawa Tholu” and “Raj Bahu Rull” highlight this darker side of the Duggar society.

The minor themes of mutual jealousy, witchcraft and Sati are also visualized through the Dogri ballads. Aunt Jojan of Bawa Jitto practiced witchcraft and killed his parents and wife as told in the ballad. She also
forced him to leave Ghar, his native village. At one instance in the ballad, where Mehta Bir Singh was attracted by the good quality wheat, Jojan who was far away in her village is shown to come to Jitto’s field. The lord gave some grains to her. Jitto discovered her and complained that she had followed him there also as his misfortune. She caused pain to Jitto due to her jealousy for larger share of land held by him and by driving him away from the village, she secured the land for her seven sons. But, if her aim was fulfilled, why then, is she shown to follow Jitto to Shama Chak. This is poet’s own imagination, introduced in the ballad to elevate the emotional appeal of the narration. Mutual jealousy is also exhibited by the step-brothers of Data Ranpat, Aengal, Maingal, Mehnga and Chhajju who murdered him. The theme of Sati is also depicted in the ballads of “Bawa Jitto” and “Data Ranpat”. This theme will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Both English and Dogri ballads are pictures of the Medieval societies exhibiting the social, economic and political life of the people in both the regions. The feudal society was constructed for one reason—security. The nobles wanted the security of maintaining control over their far-reaching kingdom; they were forced to delegate power to local control. The peasants wanted security from marauders and barbarians from neighbouring lands. They also wanted security from invading armies. And thus, the development of the feudal system and the fief
structure was almost inevitable. However, all this came at the great expense of the common man. He gave up his freedom for security. The ballads present the discourse of feudalism according to the principle of 'Realism'.
Chapter 3

The Heroic and Women in the English and Dogri Ballads

This chapter deals with the visibility of women in the English and Dogri ballads. One major aspect of the Dogri ballads which differentiate from the subject of Scottish ballads is the heroic deeds of women. Both Dogri and Scottish ballads revolve around the theme of wars/battles but the consequences of war that filtered down among the masses have not been appropriately reflected in the Scottish ballads. Dogri ballads have also been devoted to the heroic deeds of the women. This chapter will focus on the strategies adopted by a patriarchal social system in eulogizing women as have who conformed to the ideals of virtue and submission.

Absolute silence has been maintained by the poet/narrator about the role of women in the feudal societies. Did women have any voice in the decision that their husbands took when they went out to war with the king? They are represented as ideal women whose loyalty was firm while waiting for the husbands’ return. There were no proper roads or adequate means of transport. Many of the soldiers had to walk on foot. The danger of being attacked by bandits also weakened the chances of their safe return. The condition of women in the light of such uncertainties was painful. In the Dogri ballads, the heroism of women has been deified but English ballads selected by Sir Walter Scott does not mention about the
sacrifice, pain, insecurity and fear of loss. Feudal society in Europe and especially England and Scotland was crude and often violent, given the instability and constant competition inherent in feudal relationships. The Church sought to soften the harshness and brutality of feudal life by proclaiming the Truce of God, which prohibited fighting during certain times, and the Peace of God, which prohibited brutality to women, children, and the Clergy. But male warriors were idolized, and social relationships revolved around them. Indeed, the most representative example of feudal literature, the Scottish ballads celebrated the male virtues that were basic to feudal relationships. Women are rarely mentioned in the English ballads of Scotland, despite the fact that female labour and services made possible the feudal era.

The historical ballads collected by Sir Walter Scott hardly portray any women characters in the ballads. These ballads are about the expeditions, raids and rescues undertaken by men. Women had no active participation in these exploits. The only role assigned to women was of a waiting wife or mother. Although suppressed in the narratives, the sufferings and status of women in the Medieval England and Scotland can be ascertained from the minute details of the women in the ballads.

“Sir Patrick Spens” highlights the experience of women, who were affected by the adventurism of the king who sent young men out to die. Three stanzas are devoted to the portrayal of ladies, wives and mothers
who bear the brunt of the loss when the state demands sacrifice. In the ballad, they represent an alternative body politic which, sitting or standing, may not be made whole because their men have been severed from them.

The ladies stood waiting for Spens and their men to return. They stood, while the king sat, and by the end of the ballad, the men lay. Their fans were signs of vanity, but fans were also used to control the weather by making one more comfortable when it was too hot. At sea, however, the weather could not be controlled, and the storm killed their men. The king signed the letter with his hand, which lead to the deaths of Spens and the nobles; that the ladies waited with fans in their hands for men who never returned. The ballad states:

O Lang, lang, may the ladys sit,

Wi’ their fans into their hand,

Before they see Sir Patrick Spens

Come sailing to the strand! (93-96)

The repetition of ‘hand’ links cause and effect, the king, who caused the men to go to sea by signing the letter with his own hand, and the effect, the men’s demise and their women’s sorrowful waiting.

The women are shown to be holding gold combs. Gold is again a traditional symbol of worldliness, and while the gold combs would remain shiny, the women’s hair would turn grey with time. Their
attention to gold is misplaced, for like their men, they too would pass away.

The women waited for their ‘ain dear lovest”, but men belonged no longer to them but to death. The women would never see their men again, though ironically, the reader sees them lying on the ocean floor. The women hoped to see their men alive, but the reader sees the men’s dead bodies.

The ballad portrays women as involved in worldly possessions. They waited for their men while they held fans and gold combs in their hands. Even in a state of sorrow and despair, they did not part from their worldliness. They are depicted as symbols of vanity whose only role was to enjoy life with the wealth brought by their men and they would wait for them to return from expeditions. The pain and suffering of these women at the endless waiting for their men is overshadowed by the symbols of vanity.

“The Sang of the Outlaw Murray” hints towards the plight of a widow in the Medieval period. When Outlaw Murray was threatened by the king of Scotland to pay homage to him for holding the Ettrick forest and the Castle, he warned him of a fierce battle which would cause the death his men as well as his own and would make his wife a widow. At first, the Outlaw refused and accepted the challenge. But later on when the king arrived with the huge army and gave him a second chance to
accept his supremacy, he decided to seek pardon. His decision of accepting the king’s subjugation was the result of his concern for his men, children and wife. The king had threatened to kill him and make his wife a widow. The fear of the sufferings which his wife would undergo after his death prevented him from fighting against the king. The Outlaw says:

“My merryemen’s lives, my widowe’s teirs –
There lies the pang that pinches me! (263, 264)

These lines depict the condition of a widow. After the death of her husband, a widow was sure to face a lot of problems. In the feudal age, the rights given to the women were almost negligible. Due to the disturbed state in the border region, a single woman without the protection of her husband would have suffered much. That was why, a brave outlaw like Murray decided to accept the King’s suzerainty and avoided any harm or pain to his wife.

In “Johnie Armstrang”, the women wished for the safe return of their men. The ballad states:

The ladies lukit frae their loft windows –
“God bring our men wed back agen!” (19, 20)

Johnie Armstrong and his men went to meet the king of Scotland, James V, on his invitation.
The king sent him a ‘loving letter’, ensuring his safety. The Armstrongs dressed up in the best attire and went unarmed. However, they were treated as traitors and without any trial, they were hanged on the same day. When their ladies saw them unarmed, they became worried about their safety and wished to the Almighty for their safe return. They could not even suggest to them to take their arms with them. They looked from their windows while they went and just prayed to the God. Here, they are portrayed as good and obedient wives. They did not interfere in their men’s matters and decisions but only accepted what they said or ordered them to do.

A similar example of a faithful and obedient wife is depicted in the ballad of “Dick o the Cow”. Johnie Armstrong and Willie Armstrong went on a raiding expedition to Liddesdale, but they did not find anything to raid as everything had already been secured. To return with less booty was a shame for them. Hence, they captured three cows from Dickie’s house along with three bed covers. When Dickie’s wife discovered the loss, she cried aloud and tried to raise an alarm against the raiders through Hot Trod. But Dickie stopped her from doing so and assured her that he would recover the loss. The good wife obeyed her husband. Dickie went alone to the Armstrongs and stole two horses from their stable. When Johnie Armstrong pursued him, he was able to knock him down unconscious from his horse. He stole his horse also and came back.
The ballad again portrays the role of a woman as an obedient and good wife. Dickie’s wife did not suggest to him to avoid pursuit of the Armstrongs alone as enmity with them was dangerous. But in the ballad she is just depicted as being worried about her personal loss of things and not really about her husband’s safety.

In “Jock O’ the Side”, the town of Liddesdale was raided and Michale of Winfield was killed. Jock O’ the Side was captured but lady Downie was left unharmed. She went to her brother, Lord of Mangerton and told him about Jock’s imprisonment. He assured of her Jock’s safe recue from the enemies. The ballad then narrates about the rescue of Jock. The ballad represents the sympathetic attitude of the raiders towards the women. Men were killed or imprisoned but the ladies and children were left unharmed. This was in accordance with the Peace of God which prohibited brutality to women, children and the Clergy. But the reality was not the one depicted through this ballad. The ballad of “Johnie Armstrang” narrates that all of the Armstrongs who went to meet the king were hanged except one. Sandie Scott was burned alive because he had torched a house with women and children in it.

The ballad “The Fray of Suport” is about a raid on the English side of the border in a place called Suport. The main character of the ballad is a woman who had been plundered by the reivers. She raised an alarm in the morning for a Hot Trod to pursue the reivers. But the narrator shifts
focus from her character to the process of Hot Trod and provides a comic role to the woman who suffered from the loss of her things. Her loss is depicted as minute against the exaggerated and comic display of the expedition undertaking the pursuit. Her personality is altogether hidden in the ballad. She is shown to raise a voice for Hot Trod about her petty loss. Here also, a woman’s love and attachment to worldly things have been highlighted.

Hence, the historical ballad in English are composed from a patriarchal point of view. The characters are male heroes and they are highly eulogized by the poets with minimum attention paid to the portrayal of women characters. Women are represented as spoiled vain creatures in pursuit of worldliness. They were not subject to the hardships that their men had to face in securing their luxurious and peaceful lives. They only waited for their men to come back with more and more wealth for their pleasure. The pain and suffering which they went through are made invisible by the strong visibility of the male hero. They are shown to live under the shadow of men but their suppression and discrimination is not represented.
The roots of the present day scenario of increasing crime against women in India can be traced back to the Medieval period. From an unknown period in Medieval India to the modern times the condition of women is still the same with a little change. In India the families were always ‘Patriarchal’. Women were never given any rights of liberty and equality. They not only abstained from being educated but also were not permitted to step out of the house. Some practices of suppressing women like child marriage, *Purdah* and *Sati* have been abolished but other forms such as dowry and domestic violence still persist. The Dogri folk ballads selected for this chapter represent the status of women in Medieval India. The themes of child marriage, dowry, domestic violence, *Purdah* and *Sati* are well visualized in the ballads. This chapter undertakes a survey of Dogri folk ballads concerning the women deities from a perspective of patriarchal construction.

The patriarchal social order in Jammu region under the Dogra rule began suppression of women by feigning to help the weaker sex. Its political agenda was to make the women feel that they were insecure in a man’s world and required protection and warding off of the male gaze. Through force or strength or power invested in the men, the women internalized the notion of their inferiority and accepted the conditioning which men foisted on them. In terms of social history, the tendency to confine women to home may be explained by a greater intermixture of
cultures coming in with the invasion by Mughals. The fear of exposing their women folk to alien men must have resulted in mandatory codes of conduct enjoined on them, with the threat of ostracism.

The feudal phase of Jammu’s history was marked by constant military activity which became the exclusive sphere of man. Hence, there was a tendency to degrade the position of women more and more and to consider them items of property. Strong male domination appeared to be a strong characteristic of the feudal phase. The women did not have the fortune of being treated at par with men. She was primarily intended for her role as a good wife and mother. The patriarchal structure of the society made for the superiority of man and strict notions of duty, etiquette and moral obligations were infused into a woman’s mind from her very infancy. Much of her happiness in the society depended, if she was unmarried, on her parents and on her husband, if she was married. As Chandra Nisha Singh writes:

Traditional values in the form of Hindu Shastras dominate the minds of men and women even today. The Shastras emphasize fulfilling obligations of “grahasthashram” and make man-woman partnership in marriage an indissoluble bond which continues even in subsequent lives. But the rationalization within Hindu moral philosophy at the level of “dharma” and “Karma” works, interestingly, more to subdue
and reconcile women rather than man to her unavoidable
duty and inevitable fate.(50)

More subtle expression of patriarchy was enforced through
symbolism giving message of inferiority of women in the form of
legends, myths and other forms of folk art and literature. The Dogri
ballads about women deities highlight the self-sacrificing, self-effacing
pure image of women through ritual practices which emphasize the role
of women as faithful wives and devout mothers.

Women deities of Duggar region celebrated through folk ballads
can be categorized under three forms: firstly, the women who became
victims of domestic violence, secondly the women who committed Sati
under the pressure of society or from their own sense of duty and thirdly
the women who sacrificed themselves in protest against the feudal
discrimination.

The women who became victims of domestic violence are “Bua
Satyawati”, “Bua Makhaan”, “Bua Bhukhi”, “Bua Sheela’, “Bua
Bangalu”, “Bua Amro” and “Dati Sukhdei”.

In Puranas and legends, different types of marriages of free choice
are spoken of. But for most of the people falling between the low class
and the royal families, arranged early marriage was the only option.
Infact for the average women the end of mortal life was to be trained to
be able to perform onerous duties of family life. The abuse of child marriage led to the loss of all sense of play and fun too early in life.

The social pressure on a daughter’s mother to train her daughter in household work is well visualized through the ballad of Bua Satyawati. According to the ballad, Bua Satyawati was the devotee of Mata Vaishno Devi and she spent most the time in her devotion. Her mother who wanted to teach her other things which would help her to become a good housewife, was annoyed over her mediation and renunciation of worldly things. Hence, she spoke harshly to Bua telling her to show some interest in other tasks. The harsh words of the mother caused her emotional distress and she died of this immense suffering. According to the ballad:

देवी सत्यवती नै पूजा देवी दी लाई।
उठी सवेरे माता ताना मारेवा अग्नि कोलेजे आई।
कौती प्रार्थना सबचे भगवान दे लेबल उंगली लाई।
चुकिकिये सलों उबड़ी छंड कराई अग्नि अम्बरेवा आई।
अग्नि दी लपटा जुटिवां देवी बेठी जान गंवाई। (12-16)
badalaie uthi tun pooja karni hor kamm kardi nayee.
Mau apni da taahnaa Bua da gaya kaalja khaayee,
keetee prarthnaa Bua Satwanti, Maa migi laeyi chal aungli laayee.
Channan chikha banaayee Bua ne agg ambraen daa aayee,
Psychological abuse can erode a woman’s sense of self-worth and can be incredibly harmful to overall mental and physical well-being. But Satyawati underwent a similar experience when her own mother stopped her from meditation and discouraged her by putting the blame on her that she did not want to learn other chores of the household.

In all patriarchal societies the birth of a girl was generally an unwelcome event. They did not receive as much care and commitment from their parents and society as a boy would. They were kept under strict surveillance of the parents only to train them to become good housewives in future. Since, the girls were married quite young, the mothers felt the stress of training their daughters as soon as possible. This strain is visible in this ballad.
A similar case of depression and resulting suicide caused by psychological abuse can be explained through the ballad of “Bua Makhaan”. There are three main aspects of the patriarchal structure in India that affect women’s agency: marriage, active discrimination by means of abuse and diminished women’s agency through limited economic opportunity through stifled opportunity for independence. The distortion which women suffered from being confined to domestic life resulted in developing them into tyrannical, despotic, cunning and petty housewives. This perhaps explains the proverbial cruelty of the Indian mother-in-law towards her daughter-in-law.

“Bua Makhaan” was a victim of the abuse of child marriage which prevailed among the middle classes in Jammu region. The girls were married off at a very tender age. The Dogri ballads present a proof of the fact that only girls were adversely affected by this practice because the bridegrooms were much older. The ballad of Bua Makhaan is an example of child marriage resulting into a tragic outcome. Bua Makhaan who was married at a very young age was quite immature to understand the duties of a housewife. But she tried her level best to fulfill her responsibilities. One day when the festival of Rade was being celebrated in the village, she asked her mother-in-law to permit her to go and play with other girls and participate in the festival. But her mother-in-law strictly dismissed her request and abused her. Bua Makhaan was already upset by the
murder of her brother. Her mother-in-law’s harsh words added fuel to the fire. She was overtaken by depression as a result of which she committed suicide in a nearby pond. The ballad narrates:

हत्थ बन्नी अरजां करदी, सस्स गी गल्ल सनाई,  
“देया सुए बस्तर, में सामां खेडन जाई।”
हंस पलट्टनी चंदरी सस्सु ने बुआ गी बोली लाई,  
धियां होन ता खेडन सामां, नूए दा ए कम्म नाई  
प्योकिये तेरे शाह न जलोत्रे दे सनेहा पुजाई।
सुए सुहामें भेजन टल्ले, लेआं तू अंग लगाई।।
बोली लगी बुआ मक्खां गी गल्ल सहने दी नाई।  
इक दुक्ख मिगी अपने बीरे दा, दुआ सस्सु बोली लाई।

(3–10)

hath banniyae arjaan kardi, sassu gi gal sunaayee,  
daeyo mere suhe bastar, main saamaan kheddan jaayee.  
Hans pallattani chandari sassu ne, Bua gi bolee laayee,  
dhiyaan hon taan khedan saamaan, nuyein daa ae kamm naayein.

Pyokiyeay tere Shaah ne Jalotre, de sanehaa bhajaayee,  
suae suhaame bhejan talle, laeyaan tu ang lagaayee.  
Boli laggi Bua Makhaan gee, gall sehne di naayein,
ik dukh migee apne birae daa, duaa sassu bollee laayee.
With folded hands, she requested her mother-in-law, 
give me red clothes, I want to play in the shade.
Her cruel mother-in-law turned and laughed, and taunted
her, 
daughters go to play in the shade, daughters-in-law don’t.
Your parents are Shah Jalotre, send them message,
when they send red clothes for you, wear them.
The harsh words hurt Bua Makhaan, it was unbearable,
on one hand I am sad on my brother’s death and secondly
my mother-in-law abused me. (Transliteration mine)

This is also a form of domestic violence, not physical but
psychological. Through these lines, we can estimate the emotional state
of Bua Makhaan. Her mother-in-law abused her by referring to her
parents, knowing very well that the girl was already sad by the loss of her
murdered brother. This portrays the indifference of a mother-in-law
towards the daughter-in-law. In her suffering, she did not console her and
did not help her to overcome the pain. Instead she added to her distress by
abusing her and reminding her of her parents.

The evil practice of dowry which prevailed in the Duggar region is
also highlighted in these lines. Although dowry is given to a daughter
during her marriage but the customs and rituals prevalent in Duggar
society urge the parents of a daughter to send gifts to her on various occasions. So, the practice of giving dowry is lifelong and even after the death of the daughter. In the Dogra customs the last rites of a dead woman include dressing the dead body in the clothes provided by her parents or relatives. Even after her death, her funeral expense so to say is to be borne by her parents.

Another issue raised in the ballad is the difference with which the daughters and daughters-in-law were treated in the Duggar society. The mothers knew that their daughters would lead a tough life after their marriage, so they tried to be nice to them although they felt the necessity of training them for their future hardships. And if there was a daughter-in-law of the same age, the chance of getting both of them spoiled in each other’s company was much greater. As a result the mother-in-law was strict towards the daughter-in-law, forcing her to do household chores and would not allow her to play with her daughter or other girls of the locality.

Bua Bhukhi was another victim of child marriage and passive domestic violence. Married at early age of seven, she took care of all the household chores in addition to the cattle and fields. The overburden of work adversely affected her health. She also suffered from malnutrition. She was not given adequate food to eat. As a result, she fell ill and consequently died a painful death without being attended to by her in-
laws or husband or even by her own parents whom she sent several messages. The ballad states:

घर सोहरिये दे पुज्जी भुक्की नारें मंगल गई।
सस्सू सोहरे दी सेवा करदी, भरते दे मन भाई।
घर सोतदी देवते पूजदी खेतें ते करदी रखवाली।
डंगर चारदी जंगल झाड़े, कम्म करदी भारी।

(44–47,50–52)

Ghar souhriyein dae puji Bua naarein mangal gaayee.
Sassu sauhre di seva kardi bhartae de mann bhaaeyee.
Ghar sotdi, devte pujdi, khaetein di kardi rakhwaali.
Dangar chaardi jungal jaarhein, kamm kardee bhaaree.

kamm muktaa ruttee thorhee, Bua da mooh gaeya kumlaayee.
Sukkiyae bua teelaa hoi gayee bedan kussae gee naayein.
Chalde Bua gi chakkar aundae, Bua thakdi naayein.
She served her parents-in-law and won her husband’s heart.

Sweeps the house, worships the family deities and looks after the fields.

Grazes the cattle in the forest and performs heavy work.

Work was more but the food was less, Bua got very weak.

Was reduced to a skeleton, but nobody bothered.

Fainted while walking but Bua never stopped.

(Transliteration mine)

The treatment of a daughter-in-law as a ‘beast of burden’ is depicted through these lines. They were overburdened by domestic work and in some communities they were also made to work in the fields and given cattle to graze in the forests, irrespective of their age. Moreover, they were given less to eat or only the leftover food of their husbands, which resulted in making them weak and their bodies would wither at a very young age.

Due to the large age gap between the husband and the wife, their relationship could not develop in a congenial way. In addition the Dogras followed the joint family system predominantly comprising of complex
relationship between different family members of the family. These ranged from mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationship to a husband and wife relationship. Therefore, the emotional bonding between the husband and the wife was almost negligible. The wife was considered as a mere object to attain sexual pleasure by an adult husband. The moral/emotional support desired by a wife from her husband was never fulfilled. In case of Bua Bhukhi, her husband was also indifferent to her prolonged illness. This proves that he shared no emotional attachment towards his dying wife. The sole purpose of the marriage was to provide him an object to fulfill the physical needs and to get a free of cost maid for domestic work. If one woman died, another could be managed by re-marriage of the male and the two needs could be fulfilled. The society which prohibited widow remarriage easily consented for the remarriage of the husband if his wife died.

Bua Bhukhi was weakened by overburden of work both inside and outside the house. She often used to faint while walking. This led to her sickness and ultimate death. But the anonymous poet attributes the immediate cause of her death to the apparition of some evil spirit in the forest while she was grazing the cattle. He writes that she was frightened and fainted and never recovered from the dreadful experience. This is poet’s imagination because nobody told him about such event. Bua herself was the witness and she rarely spoke after her illness. The passive
torture resulted in her ultimate death, but the poet attributes the cause of her death to being her occupied by an evil spirit. The poet says:

भर दपेहरी तलाईं दे कंठे बुआ बैठी आई।
अक्खीं अग्ने किश शे खड़ोती, बुआ गोई त्राही। (59,60)

Bhar dapehri talaacee de kandae Bua baithi aayee.
Akkheen aggaein kish shae kharhoti, Bua gayee trahee.

At noon Bua sat beside a pond.

Some devil stood in front of her, Bua got frightened.

(Transliteration mine)

Similar themes of child marriage, overburdened daughter-in-law, malnutrition and lack of proper medication are depicted through the ballad of “Bua Sheelawanti”. The ballad narrates that she was married at the age of eight years. She served her family very devotedly. But her young and delicate body could not bear the burden of domestic work, hence she fell ill. The family called the local Vaid who directed them not to give any food or water to the sick girl. The condition of Bua Sheelawanti deteriorated without food and water but the family did not give her anything to eat or drink. She died while craving for water. She starved to death and nobody even from her paternal side came to her help.

The role of her husband is not seen at all. According to the ballad:
घर सौहरिये दे पुज्जी बुआ नारे मंगल गाई।
सस्सू-सौहरिये दी सेवा करदी, भरख्चे दे मन भाई,
दिन गुजरे महीने गुजरे बुआ बमार होई।
दूरैं-दूरैं दे बैद सदाए दिती ओषधी आई,
औगढ़ बैदा ने हुक्म कीता रुट्टी पानी देना नाई।
विज्ञ पानी दे तड़फ़े बुआ पानी नि दिना कोई,
पानी-पानी करलांदी बूआ, बूआ गेई समाई। (16—22)

ghar souhriyein dae pujee Bua naarein mangal gaayee.
Sassu sauhre di seva kardae de mann bhaaeyee,
din gujre mheenae gujre Bua bamaar hoe.
Durein-durein de vaid sadaeey ditti aushdhi aayee,
Augarh baidaa ne hukm keetaa ruttee paanee dena naayein.
Bijan paanee de tarhfae Bua paanee nee dindaa koe,
paanee-paanee karlaandi Bua, Bua gayi samaayee.

Bua was welcomed in the in-law’s house with ceremonial
songs sung by women.
She served her parents-in-law and won her husband’s heart,
with lapse of time Bua fell ill.
Voids from far flung areas medicated her,
Augarh Vaid ordered not to give her food and water.
Without water Bua was miserable but nobody gave her water,
while craving for water, Bua died. (Transliteration mine)

In the past, there was a practice of making a patient suffering from continuous fever abstain from taking food in order to cure the fever by the ‘Vaids’, but water was given to them. In this case the whole blame is put on the Vaid and no reference is given to the indifference shown to Bua by her family. Their role in torturing Bua with over work and leaving her unattended in her illness is suppressed by blaming it on the Vaid’s prescription.

The in-laws used this prescription as an excuse to leave the girl child without food and water and let her die so that the boy could remarry.

The ballad of “Bua Bangalu” depicts a little girl abandoned by her in-laws as well as her parents and maternal uncles. Bua Bangalu had renounced the worldly pleasures for the love of God but her parents got her married at the age of nine. Because of her devotion to God, she was overthrown by her mother-in-law, after which she came back to her parent’s house and pleaded with her mother to take her to river Ganges for a holy bath on the occasion of Kumbh. Her mother refused her saying that they had no money for her journey but assured her to send her to her maternal uncles who were well off and could bear the expenses of her
journey to Haridwar. She took some money and came to her maternal uncle Teku whom she requested for the same. Handing over the money to him she had brought; she requested him to fulfill her desire and assured him that he would not have to spend much on her. He assured the girl to take her to the pilgrimage after some time as the *Kumbh* was scheduled four months later. She went back and waited for her uncles’ message but none came. After one month, she again came to her uncles. Medu abused her and Teku slapped her. Her condition was pathetic. She wanted to attend the *Kumbh* desperately; hence she set out all alone. After three months of suffering and starvation, Bua reached the Ganges and had a holy dip in the river. Then she started her journey towards Badrinath where she died in an accident by falling into a deep gorge.

Social evils like child marriage, dowry, domestic violence and isolation are highlighted through this ballad.

The ballad narrates:

जिस बेले बुआ दी डोली गई।
ते तुलसी दाजे च पाई (10–11)

Jis bele Bua di doli gayei,
Te Tulsi daaje ch paayee, (10,11)

When the palanquin of Bua went, dowry in the form of Tulsi was also sent.

(Transliteration mine)
The parents of Bua were poor. They might not have been able to give much dowry according to the expectations of her stepmother-in-law. In order to get more dowry, she threatened Bua of arranging a second marriage of her stepson. According to the ballad, she said:

नेई तां पुतरे दी मैं होर मंगनी करनी,
तेदुए ब्याह लैनी आं ब्याही (25, 26)

Nayein taan puttarae dee main hor mangani karni,
teeduae byah laeni aan byaahee, (25, 26)
Otherwise I will engage my son somewhere else,
and arrange his second marriage.

(Transliteration mine)

Afflicting Bua Bangalu with emotional and physical assault, the mother-in-law threw her out of the house. She returned to her parents and narrated her plight to her mother. She complained:

मैं ब्याह करना चाहन्दी नेई माता
तुसें की दिती ही ब्याही, (61,62)
Main byaah karna chaahandi nayein maataa,
tusein ki ditti hee byaahee,(61,62)
I was unwilling to marry mother,
Why did you forcibly get me married,

(Transliteration mine)
The theme of isolation as a form of domestic violence is described at length in the ballad. At such a tender age of nine, she was abandoned by her parents, in-laws and by her maternal uncles. She had to go to Haridwar all alone. The hardships she endured during her long journey are not mentioned in the ballad.

The ballad of “Bua Amro” narrates the extreme cruelty of a mother-in-law towards her daughter-in-law. Bua Amro’s father gave adequate dowry in the wedding. He had also got a well dug in their house. But the mother-in-law remained unsatisfied and tortured her both physically and mentally. One day she gave some grains to grind to the little bride who could not perform the task properly with the little hands. Seeing this, the tyrant mother-in-law broke all barriers of cruelty and killed her by putting her head in the grinder and beating it with the rod.

The incident is represented in the following lines:

क्रोधे बलिये चंदरी सस्सरी, पाँदी हरे जाई।

देहये सिर बिच्च उखली दै ते मोहले दी उपर टकाई।

रोदन करदी बुआ अमरो कूंजे बांग करलाई। (68–70)

Krodhae baliyae chandari Sassari, paundee hathaein jaayee.

Daeiyae sir bichh ukhalee dae te mohle dee uppar takaayee.

Rodan kardi Bua Amro kunjae baang karlaayee. (68-70)
Instigated by extreme anger, the cruel mother-in-law beats her.

Placing her head in the grinder she beat it with the rod,

Bua Amro cried loudly in agony. (Transliteration mine)

These lines depict the agony, pain and brutal murder of innocent Bua Amro by her cruel mother-in-law in a pathetic way.

A single recorded example of honour killing in Duggar region is depicted in the ballad of “Dati Sukhdei”. She was killed by her husband after he was complained about her behaviour outside the house. A person named Heeru Lappak blamed Dati Sukhdei of not wearing her veil properly while taking her cattle for grazing. The lady tried to plead her innocence but her husband gave her no chance to prove herself and killed her with his sickle. The ballad of “Dati Sukhdei” is narrated within the ballad of her husband, “Bawa Bangi” who renounced the world after murdering his innocent wife. The incident is depicted as:

क्रोध भड़कया बावा बंगी सुखदेई सारन लाई।
खुंडा दाट प्लैया बाये क्रोध थमोदा नाई।
नाई मिगी मारेखो आंछ बेकसूर संगध लेखो चुकाई। (39–41)
Krodh bharhkyaa Bawa Bangi gee Sukhdei maaran laayee.
Khunda daraat plaeyaa Bawe krodh thamohnda naayein.
Nayeein migee maareyo aoun bekasoor sagandh leyo chakaayee.

Burning in anger Bawa Bangi wanted to kill Sukhdei.

He sharpened his blunt sickle and his anger was out of control.

Bua said, “I swear by God that I am innocent, don’t kill me.”

(Transliteration mine)

During the marriage ceremony, the bridegroom takes a vow to protect the honour of his wife and support her in every difficult situation. But in reality, in the patriarchal society only the females are insisted to obey the laws made for her. Here, instead of protecting and justify the honour of his wife, Bawa Bangi kills her. In a patriarchal society, all the powers of decision-making lie with the men. Women are not allowed to express their feelings or even justify themselves even when it is necessary for their survival.

The second category of women deities in Duggar region belong to the Sati women. Some of them performed Sati due to their own sense of duty towards their deceased husbands while some were forced by the society. Though, the first form of Sati was also indirectly enforced by the society. The ballads of “Dati Tripta”, “Dati Naagru”, “Dati Laddo”, “Bua Kauri”, ‘Mata Alma” and “Dati Shukra” are about Sati deities.
Dati Tripta was married to a young Brahmin minister of Ambaran under Raja Neel Singh. While the minister was away for his marriage, other courtiers intrigued against him and aroused the King’s doubts. The King immediately sent for him as soon as the minister arrived at his native village along with his new bride. He set off for the palace but before leaving he directed his wife to perform Sati if the king killed him as he had smelt the hostility of the King towards him. Although the minister managed to convince the King of his loyalty, but there was chaos in the town due to some horses who managed to escape from the stable. Disturbed by the chaos and confusion, the young bride of five years age mistook the whole incident as her husband’s murder by the King. In this confusion, she burnt herself along with the house. The incident is narrated as:

 हुकम कीता नीलसिंह राजै, परोहता गी लेआ सदाईँ 
 ढोली लेइयें अजें में घर आया, तूं सेहरा खोलन दिता नाईँ।
 घोड़ा खुल्ले दा बिच्च तबले, दिवा सरपटे लाईँ।
 बहर बूआ हाकां लांदी परोहत लंबदा नाईँ। (79–83)

Hukam keetaa Neel Singh rajaee, parohatae gee laeyaa sadaayee.
Doli laeyeaa ajaein main ghar aaya, tuoone sehra kholan ditaan naaayein.
Ghora khullae daa bichh tabaelae, dindaa sarpatae laayee.

Bahar Bua haakaan laandee parhot labadaa naayein.(79-83)

Raja Neel Singh ordered the purohit to immediately report.

Purohit said, “I have just arrived with the bride, you didn’t even let me
open my sehra.”

He took a horse from the stable and off he went.

Bua called him but he was nowhere to be found.

(Transliteration mine)

She was a newly wedded bride who had just arrived in the village. She knew nobody whom she could ask about the actual state of affairs. So, in her inexperience and inability in finding out the truth, she ended her life in a very tragic manner.

Dati Naagru sacrificed herself with her son Daulat Pal who was murdered by Raja Prithvipal Bhadwal of Bhaddu in a feudal dispute. Dati Naagru brought her son’s corpse from Bhaddu and prepared a pyre for herself and her son. The king ordered a severe punishment for the person who lit the pyre. The corpse lay un-cremated for three days. At last a Brahmin named Thutha cremated the body along with the alive Dati who as deity protected the man from King’s wrath. The ballad narrates:

तुष्पी लेथ पुत्तर दौलत पाल दी बिच्च भड्डू लियाई
This ballad depicts the terror of a feudal lord in Duggar region. Firstly, he murdered an innocent young boy and then he ordered to punish the one who lit the pyre.

There is no separate ballad of “Dati Laddo”. Her devotion and so called sacred act of Sati is celebrated in the ballad of “Data Balla” who was her fiancé. Data Balla was murdered by her relatives while he was coming to marry her. Datti Laddo also committed Sati on the funeral pyre of her fiancé. This is represented as:

आखें अग्नि ठंडी, मियी बोलन तले रोहने दा कम्म नाई।
भरता मेरा बैरियें मारेआ, जीना हून धर्म ऐ नाई। (79, 80)
aakhae, agg thandee, migee bol n tatte, rauhnae daa kamm naayein.

Bharta mera bairiyein maareyaa, jeena hun dharma enayeein,

She says that fire is cold but the hot words force me not to live.

My husband is killed by enemies; my duty doesn’t allow me to live any more, (Transliteration mine)

The first line is important where Dati tells about the hot and unbearable remarks made by the people. They were even hotter than the fire. These comments of the relatives forced her to immolate herself. This is the trend of a patriarchal society. Her life after the death of her husband was detestable. She was held responsible for the mis-happening. Nobody else in the society wanted to marry such a cursed girl. This is justified by giving it the name of dharma.

The ballad of “Bua Kauri” is also merged within the ballad of “Bawa Jitto”. Bua Kauri was his eight years old daughter who immolated herself with her father. Bawa Jitto sacrificed his life in revolting against the feudal lord who was lured by his good crop yield and wanted to extract more from the peasant than what had been earlier decided. The poor peasant stabbed himself with a sharp weapon due to this injustice
done to him. His daughter also immolated herself. The painful end of this little girl is stated as:

अपनी चिखा बनाई बुआ ने, बापू दी चिखा बनाई।

भारी शाल चिखा च पोंदी, हरि—हरि राम ध्याई। (Shastri 49)

Apni chikhaa banaayee bua ne, baapu di chikhaa banaayee.

Maari shaal chikha ch paundi, hari-hari Ram dhyayee.

She made a pyre for herself before making her father’s.

She jumped into the pyre chanting the name of God.

(Transliteration mine)

The above extract depicts the effect of feudalism on the poor, innocent peasant class of Duggar region. The feudal lords could raise the tax or their share in the crop yield according to their wishes. They were not governed by any rules and regulations. The sacrifice of Bawa Jitto and Bua Kauri is an example of supreme sacrifice. The little girl knew the hardships of surviving alone in the unjust world without the protection of her father. Hence, she took the extreme step of ending up her life along with her father.

Mata Alma is another example of a mother who immolated herself along with her son Data Ranpat. Data Ranpat was murdered over the settlement of a land dispute. He was appointed as a judge to settle the dispute of division of land between the two brothers. The party which
remained unsatisfied by his just decision killed him. Mata Alma immolated herself and ordered her daughter-in-law Shukra who was pregnant at that time to perform Sati after twelve years after bringing up the child. She said:

जिने मामें दे पुत्तर मरदे, मामा जीनिया नाई।

.................................................. (Shastri 115)

Jinhe mamein de puttar marde, mama jindiyaan naayein.

..................................................

Channan rukh badaya Mata, Chadi chikha par jaai। (Shastri 118)

Channan rukh badaya Mata, Chadi chikha par jaayi. Those mothers whose sons die cannot survive.

Mata paid a pyre of sandalwood and sat on it.

(Transliteration mine)

Sukhra had a nightmare after twelve years. She was frightened by Mata Alma who dragged from her hair and asked her to perform Sati in keeping with her promise twelve years ago.

पकड़ी चूँख़े शुक्रा नूहा गी, कंधा कन्ने पटकाई।

बारे बरे दा बोल तू कीता, सती किया नेई होई?

(Shastri 118)
Pakdi chundaeyaan Shukra nuhaan gee, kandhaa kannae patkayee.
Baarein bare da bolt tu keetaa, sati kiyaan nayein hoi?
Holding Shukra’s hair, she pushed her towards the wall.
Twelve years ago you promised, why didn’t you perform sati?  
(Transliteration mine)

Thus, Shukra was forced to perform Sati after twelve years of her husband’s death. The nightmare of Shukra seems to be the poet’s imagination in order to justify the unjust behaviour of society towards her.

Two women deities of Duggar region came in direct conflict with the feudal lords and sacrificed their lives in revolting against the injustice done to them. These were Dhabuj Wali Dati and Bua Bhaaghaan. Dhabuj Wali Dati stabbed herself when the feudal lord named Lal Pal refused to return her cow. He tried to convince her by giving her a cow of gold but Dati did not agree and laid down her life in revolt. She said:

सोने दी गाऊँ में के करां राजा कुन्न फिरै सिर
चुकिकियै |  
(Nirmohi, 107)

I do not want to have a cow of gold who would not wander by raising the head.  
(Transliteration mine)
Bua Bhaaghaan was an active revolutionist. She convinced people of her village, not to pay the increased tax. The soldiers of the King of Bhaddu who had passed the order, came to capture Bua Bhaaghaan. Bua opted to end up her life to protect her honour. She stabbed herself and burnt herself and her infant daughter along with the house. The ballad narrates:

सपाही घेरदे बुआ भागां गी, भागां ढिड़ैं कटारा लाई,
ढिड़ैं कटारा लया भागां ने सपाही नसदे जाई। (9,10)
Sapaahi gherde Bua Bhaaghaan gee, Bhaaghaan dhidhae kataara laayee,
dhidhae kataara laya Bhaaghaan ne sapaahee nasde jaayee .(9-10)

Soldiers surrounded Bua Bhaaghaan, Bhaaghaan stabbed herself with a
sharp weapon,
Bhaaghaan stabbed herself and the soldiers ran away.

(Transliteration mine)

The oral tradition tends to portray the dead women as virtuous champions. A violent premature death as a prerequisite for deification in folk tales is clear from stories recorded in Dogri folk ballads. A sudden,
terrible death transformed these women into heroines. Historical or mythological accounts of heroic or sacrificial behaviour frame paradigms which assist individuals and groups in defining their identities. The purpose of glorifying such acts is to inculcate values to the generations to come or internalize the edifying metaphors. Women are powerfully influenced by the exemplars of their culture. The women deities celebrated in the Dogri ballads found place in history through the memorial structure called *Dehris* erected to mark their deaths.

The purpose of this chapter was to bring out the darker side of Dogra cultural practices through the Dogri folk ballads about which most of the people are unaware. The poets (*Gardi/Jogi*) who were themselves male were reinforcing patriarchal tradition through their compositions. Instead of making women strong to fight and resist against their discrimination, they told them to immolate themselves in the interest of family’s honour. The process of deification of these women was also a patriarchal construct to lead women to follow the similar path of *dharma* to achieve the status of supreme heavenly beings.

A comparative study of the women, represented in English and Dogri ballads reveal that although they were living far apart from each other, they were equal and close to each other as far as their social status was concerned. They were the victims of patriarchal discourse which shaped their portrayal in the ballads.
Chapter-4

Form and Technique in the Heroic English and Dogri Ballads

In this Chapter, an attempt will be made to discuss the various characteristics of ballad poetry both in English and Dogri and to locate the presence or absence of these features in the ballads which have been discussed in earlier chapters of this thesis. *Dictionary of literary Terms and literary Theory* by J.A Cudden enumerates certain basic characteristics of ballad as, “a) the beginning is often abrupt; b) the language is simple, c) the story is told through dialogue and action; d) the theme is often tragic (though there are a number of comic ballads); e) there is often a refrain” (71).

Analysing the English and Dogri ballads, it has been found out that these ballads have the characteristics of ballad poetry but with exceptions and little variations.

Abrupt beginning is the first characteristic. The historical ballads in English and Dogri ‘Bars’ have an abrupt beginning. A particular framework was not followed while starting the ballad. The first stanza of the ballad begins suddenly and unexpectedly. Since the heroes of these ballads were popular and were known to the common masses, the minstrel presumed that the audience knew about him in advance. No introduction was required at all. Subject of these ballads was fabricated to eulogize the feudal lords. In all probability, the minstrels avoided going
into biographical details, for such details would incorporate truths that the feudal lord would not approve of, if revealed. This might diminish their honour among the common masses. To be faithful to their lords, the minstrels just narrated fabricated details of events, partly or wholly constructed by their own imagination.

However, among the Dogri ‘Bars’, there are two ballads which are an exception to the above mentioned characteristic of the ballads. The ballads of “Baaj Singh” and “Raja Kirpal Dev and Mian Nath Dalpatia” follow a definite pattern. They share a common beginning. The first line of these ballads is:

आपू राजे हुक्म कराया (Jerath 5)

Aapoo Raje Hukam karaaya

The king himself ordered (Transliteration mine)

These two ballads are based on actual historical events with minimum fabrication of the narrative.

The folk ballad in Dogri called ‘Karaks’ also follow a definite pattern. The beginning of all the ‘Karaks’, composed to commemorate the martyr saints, now revered as folk deities in Duggar society is marked by the same type of narration. They begin with the description of the deities’ birth and birth related ceremonies, prevalent in the Duggar society. The beginning lines and language may slightly differ from each other but the
story is same. Beginning from the birth, the ballad slowly narrates the
different stages of deities’ life in almost a similar pattern.

The second characteristic of ballads pertains to the language in the
ballads. It says that the ballads are composed in a simple language which
can be easily comprehended by the common masses. The English ballads
discussed in this thesis were popular among the people living on the
Anglo-Scottish border. The language which was spoken by these people
has been reproduced by the poet. F.Sidgwick in his book *The Ballad* says,
“The ballad language is common popular stock; the folk will have
nothing to do with the phraseology of artists” (61). The minstrel as well
as the common people were illiterate. Hence, the ballads emerging from
and preserved by them was characterised by simplicity of expression and
absence of artistry.

The same quality is also found in Dogri ballads. They have been
composed in local dialect which comprises of Dogri and ‘Pahari’,
languages. The aim of the minstrel was to make a direct appeal to the
common masses. Hence, he used the language of the people.

‘The ballads contain dialogues and action’. This is true of English
as well as Dogri ballads. Since the ballads are about the heroic exploits of
the heroes involved, they comprise of battles, bloodshed, verbal conflicts,
sufferings, sacrifice and chivalry. To express these things, a verse
including dialogue and a lot of action was indispensable. This was done
to heighten the emotional appeal of the ballad. More number of verbal
conflicts and more action in the ballads led to the much desired popularity
of the ballads. For example, in the ballad “Sir Patrick Spens”, the hero,
Sir Patrick Spens speaks to his sailors. The conversation is presented in a
dialogue form:

“Make ready, make ready, my merrymen a”!

“Our gude ship sails the morn.”

“Now, ever alake, my master dear,”

“I fear a deadly storm”! (45-48)

The dialogue is placed at a point in the ballad from where the
disaster of the ship and its sailors is destined. According to the ballad, Sir
Patrick Spens had led a royal voyage to Norway to bring back the king’s
daughter, Margaret who was married to the king of Norway, king Eric.
The king of Scotland, Alexander III sent a ship at an unfavourable time of
the year to sail the North sea. After they reached Norway, some lords
there blamed Sir Patrick Spens and his men of being a financial burden
on the king of Norway. The captain got annoyed over these unworthy
remarks and instantly ordered his men to sail back to Scotland. One of his
sailors warned him about the bad weather and forecast a ‘deadly storm’.
But the Captain did not agree and as a result they all perished in the sea
along with their ship.
Similar examples of dialogue can be traced in Dogri ballads. They are used at the places where the poet was required to heighten the emotional effect of the ballad. For example in the ballad of “Baaj Singh”, the hero General Baaj Singh ordered his army to vacate the fort of Chitral and march out. He said:

फौज बाहर गई कड़िड़यां
बोल्लेआ जगातसिंह जर्नेल
आखेजर्नेल सिहे गी
नेई जायां ओ किले दे बाहर (188–191)

Faujan bahar gai kaddian
Bolleya Jagat Singh jernail
Aakhai jernail Singh gee
Nayin jayan o kile de bahar

Soldiers were marched out

General Jagat Singh said
to General Baaj Singh

Don’t go out of the fort (Transliteration mine)

General Baaj Singh and his army including many officers had gone to Chitral and Gilgit to suppress the revolt of ‘Bhuta Pathans’. After a fierce battle, the Dogra army won and captured the fort of the Chitral driving the ‘Pathans’ away. The deceitful ‘Pathans’ sent a letter to the
General, submitting to the Dogra supremacy and demanded pardon and peace. They raised a white flag which also convinced the latter. General Baaj Singh ordered his soldiers to march out of the fort to restore peace. One of his companions, General Jagat Singh suggested to him that the ‘Pathans’ were very cunning and shrewd. Earlier too, they had promised submission, but when the ripe time came, they retracted from their word. But, General Baaj Singh could not be persuaded to consider his order. He trusted the enemy. He led the army out of the fort. The ‘Pathans’, as feared by General Jagat Singh had cheated them. They started firing on the Dogra army. General Baaj Singh was hit on the thigh but he continued to fight. At last, he was hit by another bullet on his chest and he died. Thus, the dialogue stated above acts as a turning point in the ballad. The victory of the General was turned into a defeat.

Both English and Dogri ballads use dialogue to emphasize a point. The ‘heroic’ in such cases was a decision that brought about their fall. The heroes were too trusting and gullible. In both the examples, discussed here, the men in command ordered some action, they were suggested to either cancel, postpone or reconsider their decision, but they both remained firm and too rigid which led to the fatal consequences. Thus, the poet intentionally placed such dialogues in the ballads to arouse the curiosity of the people and appeal to their emotions.
Action was the soul of heroic ballads. Without action, the ballads would seem lifeless and would attract less number of people. The historical ballads in English and Dogri were about the battles and wars, raids and rescue operations. These adventures include a lot of action. The brave and daring deeds of the heroes involved a lot of action. The English ballad “Auld Maitland” is about the brutal murder of an old Scottish Lord by the English forces in the war between England and Scotland. His sons took the revenge by killing many Englishmen. This is represented in the ballad as:

And they shot out, and they shot in,
Till it was fairly day;
When mony of the Englishmen
About the draw brigg lay (137-140)

A similar example is found in the Dogri ballads. The Bar of “Chandan Dev and Rattan Dev” talks about a number of combats that took place between the warriors of Raja Bhup Chand and the two Dogra heroes. One such conflict of Chandan Dev and Luddar Singh is narrated as:

दूई बारी चन्दन दे स दी आई, तुलकी बर्छी चन्दन दे स जाई
लगी लुढ़रसिंहः दे जाई, बैठी कलेजे बिच गे आई
सुट्टेआ घोड़े खल्ल लुहाई, मियां लुढ़रसिंह गी छोड़े नाई
तेग कहादर चन्दनदेव मिया हड्डरिये गी मार गराया जी S —

(Jerath 51)
In the second attempt, Chandan Dev threw his spear
It hit Luddar Singh on his chest
He fell from the horse, Mian was after Luddar Singh’s life
The brave Chandan Dev Mian killed Luddar Singh Handuria

(Transliteration mine)

The action packed tales are narrated in such a way that the listener can feel the intensity of the actual incident as if it was taking place before his eyes. Even the Dogri heroic ballads about the folk deities are filled with action. Though many of them do not involve the theme of war, but they contain the elements of sacrifice, murder, suicide and Sati which involve a lot of action. The suffering of the deities, while they were alive, caused by the feudal lords are well visualized through the Dogri ‘Karaks’.

The next characteristic of the ballad deals with the theme. It states that the ballads were composed on a tragic theme. This applies to most of
the ballads that have been discussed earlier in this thesis. Each ballad involves a tragic incident at its core but it was the will of the minstrel to give it a tragic expression or to present it in a comic way. He was affected by his own sense of morality and loyalty towards his patron or towards his country. Almost all the English Historical Ballads taken up for this research have been composed from a Scott’s point of view. The minstrel seems to be occupied by his loyalty towards the Scottish lords, border reivers and Scottish people. The minstrel is rarely sympathetic towards the sufferings of the English people who were continuously living under the threats of the border reivers of Scotland e.g., In “The Fray of Suport” the poet portrays the agony of the woman affected by the robbery in her house in a comic way. She is shown to enlist the details of the things plundered from her, very dramatically. Her address to different people calling them to pursue the reivers is also a comic expression. The ballads begins as:

Sleep’ry Sim of the Lamb-hill,
And snoring Jock of Suport-mill, (1,2)

In contrast, the poet depicts the tragedy of the border reivers in the ballad “Johnie Armstrang”. Johnie Armstrong and his men were collectively hung by James V, the king of Scotland in 1530. The tragic end of Johnie Armstrong and his men is depicted as:

John murdered was at Carlinrigg,
And all his gallant companie;

But Scotland’s heart was ne’er sae wae,

To see sae mony brave men die - (125-128)

The Dogri ‘Bars’ and ‘Karaks’ are packed with element of tragedy. Whether they are ‘Bars’ narrating the heroic deeds of warriors of Duggar region or they are ‘Karaks’ commemorating the supreme sacrifices of the martyr deities of this region, the theme of tragedy is prevalent in all of them. The ‘Bars’ narrate the chivalry of the warriors comprising of battles, widespread blooshed and their tragic ends by the enemies. The minstrel infact added to the tragedy by presenting it in a fabricated way. The ‘Karaks’ deal with the sufferings and tragic fate of the family and folk deities of Jammu region. The theme is presented in a pathetic way as in the Karak of “Bawa Jitto”. The tragedy in the life of the peasant saint is heightened by the following lines:

पंगडी कटारा गला नै लान्दा, हर हर राम ध्याई।।

(अशोक सूरी)

Toon dharma da bhai katarana, jurha naye tarsaai।।

(Gandalgal 81)

Pagarheeta kataara gala nai landa, har har Ram dhyae.

Toon dharma da bhai katarana, jurha naye tarsaee.

Holding the daggar, he embraces it while chanting ‘Har Har Ram’
You are my brother, dear dagger, don’t cause pain.

(Transliteration mine)

The suffering caused to Bawa Jitto due the injustice done by the feudal lord is depicted in these lines.

Hence, it was at the disposal of the minstrel either to lend a pathetic mode to a tragic theme or to give it a comic expression.

Another common feature is the use of refrain in the ballads. Refrain is, “A phrase, line or lines repeated at intervals during a poem and especially at the end of a stanza” (Cudden 736). The presence of refrain proves that the ballads were composed to be sung or recited. About the presence of refrain in English and Scottish ballads, Louise Pound says:

When the English and Scottish ballads do use the refrain, they use it in the art way, not in the folk way. It is something extraneous, introduced from the outside, varying for the same ballad, subject to modification or replacement at the will of the singers, not part of the fabric of the song.

(77)

Thus, the presence of refrain in English ballads was not the part of the ballads’ narrative. The minstrel could change the lines to be repeated according to his will. Further, the presence of refrain only, does not qualify a poem to be treated as ballad if it lacked the narrative element.
All English ballads taken up for this research have a refrain. In the ballad “Johnie Armstrang”, a stanza is repeated several times. It is as follows:

“Away, away, thou traitor strang!

“Out o’ my sight soon may’st thou be!

“I grantit nevir a traitor’s life,

“And now I’ll not begin wi’ thee.” (29-32)

This stanza is repeated five times in the ballad. These are the only words which are spoken by James V after every request made by Johnie Armstrong to grant him life. This shows James’ determination to put an end to the activities of border reivers along the Anglo-Scottish border at the instigation of the king of England. He did not bother to listen to Johnie who had come there with an intention to discuss the problems faced by his people due to the English army’s exploits on the border. The repetition of the stanza adds to the intensity of pathos in the ballads.

The Dogri ballads too make use of refrain for instance in the ballad of “Mian Deedo”, there is repetition of a line throughout the poem. It is:

बैरिया कंढी छोड़ दे माझे दा मुलख सम्हाल। (43)

Bairiyia kandi chhorhi de Majhe da mulkh samhaal.

Enemies leave my land and rule your own land

(Transliteration mine)
The line creates the same effect as the words of James V in “Johnie Armstrang”. It exhibits the determination of Mian Deedo to drive his enemies out of his Duggar land.

The presence of refrain in both the English and Dogri ballads strengthen the idea that a ballad is a poem meant to be sung.

Hence, the prosody of the ballads in English and Dogri differs, since the language is different, but as has been pointed, the structural features are similar.

There are some other features which can be attributed to the ballad poetry. Firstly, a ballad narrates a single-episode. Secondly, the events leading to the tragic end are related swiftly with minimal description of the surroundings. Thirdly, the narrator is impersonal and lastly, well established and popular terms are used in the poem with sparse and simple imagery.

The narration of a single-episode is applicable to English and Dogri ballads. The ballads are about one or more heroes narrating a particular event of their lives as tributes to their chivalry and sacrifice. The ballad “Sir Patrick Spens” is about a disastrous voyage and the end of Scottish lords in the North Sea. “Kinmont Willie”, “Jock O ‘the Side” and “Archie of Ca’ field” are about the rescue of these heroes from the imprisonment of the enemies. Similarly, all other English ballads narrate single incidents with an exception of “Auld Maitland” which first describes
Maitland’s conflict with the English troops and his brutal murder by them; then it narrates the revenge undertaken by his three sons who killed many Englishmen.

Dogri ballads are also centered around single episodes. Historical ballads, ‘Bars’ are about the chivalry of the great warriors of *Duggar* region. The ballad of “Baaj Singh” is about his expedition to Gilgit and Chitral, “Mian Deedo” is about his last combat with the Sikh forces. “Raja Hira Singh” is about the final and last conflict of this hero with the Sikh army of Lahore, “Chandan Dev and Rattan Dev” narrates the episode of the release of Maharaja Ranjit Dev. Hence, almost all the historical ballads tell about single episodes with an exception of “Raja Jagat Singh” where the hero is first shown to plunder Delhi and then his invasion of Kabul and other regions is depicted. The ‘Karaks’ are about folk deities of *Duggar* region. All of them narrate the life histories of the heroes. They begin with the depiction of their birth and the related ceremonies, then they tell about their marriage and slowly lead to the events which tell of their tragic fate. Hence, the Dogri ‘Karaks’ narrate the whole life of the hero or deity right from the birth till the time of their sacrifice, suicide or murder. The ballads of “Bawa Jitto”, “Data Ranpat” “Bua Sheela”, “Bua Satyawati” and all other are the examples of such narratives.
The surroundings or the description of nature and its beauty is not a feature of ballads as in the case of rest of the poetry. The focus of the poet is his hero and his exploits. The exaggerated details of the hero are present in the ballad but the surroundings are mostly neglected. The events related to the crises are swiftly narrated. The whole ballad is focused on the honourable description of the hero, the feudal lord or the border reiver, in most of the cases, the patron of the poet. Hence to please his lord, the minstrel sang a eulogy of bravery and martial skills. Sometimes they even constructed events, as has already been seen, only to please their lords. They avoided padding and did not waste their poetic talent in describing extraneous matter like the surroundings.

English ballads follow the same pattern but there is an exception in the ballad “The Sang of the Oultaw Murray”. In this ballad the poet began his narrative with a little description of the surroundings. The ballad states:

Ettricke Foreste is a feir foreste,

In it grows manie a semelie trie,

There’s hart and hynd, and dae and rae,

And of a’ wilde beasts grete plentie. (1-4).

The poet used this description with a motive. It is the beauty of the forest that lured the king of Scotland, James IV to establish his supremacy over the land, forcibley captured by Outlaw Murray who did
not pay homage to him. The ballad narrates the events describing the
sending of messengers to the Outlaw to submit, who firstly refused to the
king’s terms but later on, he succumbed and accepted the king’s
subjugation. The king appointed him the Sheriff of the Ettrick Forest.

Dogri ‘Karaks’ too give some minimal details of the surroundings.
e.g., the ballad of “Bawa Jitto” gives a description of the beautiful
surroundings of his native village Ghar. When he decided to leave his
home with his daughter Bua kauri, she tried to persuade her father to
consider his decision of leaving a beautiful place like Ghar. She describes
the idyllic scene in pastoral imagery.

रुम्बल— तम्बल त्रोड़ी खागे, नारे दा पीगे पानी।

घनियां—घनियां ठंडियां छामा, ठड़ड़े मिट्टड़े पानी।।

(Gandalgal77)
Rumbal trumbal trorhi khage, naarhen da peege pani.

Ghaniyan-ghaniyan thandian chhaman, thandrhe mithrhe

pani.

We will eat whatever is available, and drink water from the

spring.

There is thick shade and cold sweet water.

(Transliteration mine)
Hence, in Dogri ‘Karaks’ some description of the surroundings may be found woven into the fabric of the ballad, otherwise the focus was more on narrating the tragic sequence of events in a racy manner.

The next feature that needs to be brought out is the presence of an impersonal narrator. Louise Pound writes, “The English and Scottish ballads are not so wholly impersonal as one is often assured. The ballad “I” may not often refer to the individuality of the author, but “I” of the singer or reciter is frequently present” (101). This is true of many ballads. The poet narrates the events in such a manner that it appears as if he was an eye-witness to the exploits of the heroes of the ballads. In the ballad “Archie of Ca’ field”, the poet begins by saying:

As I was a walking mine alane,

It was by the dawning of the day,

I heard twa brithers make their mane,

And I listened weel to what they did say. (1-4)

The poet asserted his presence in the narration by the frequent use of “I”. He had done this deliberately to strengthen the idea that the event which he narrated in the ballad was actually true as he himself was an eye-witness to it.

The poet is impersonal as regards the Dogri ballads. The ballads are narrated in an exaggerated form and minute details have been
included in them to reinforce the point that the events mentioned were real and the poet himself was an eye-witness to them.

The minstrels were clever in their compositions. In order to earn the patronage, they used epithets to glorify their deeds. But they did not venture to coin new words. They used well established epithets over and again in their ballads. The words like ‘strang’, ‘sovereign’, ‘lawful’, ‘feir’, ‘nobil’ etc. are all examples of well established epithets used again and again by the poets in English ballads. The same is true with Dogri ballads. Here, the poet not only uses the words again and again, but he picks up full lines and passages from one ballad and inserts them into other ballads. The word ‘तेग बहादुर’ or ‘Teg Bahadar’ which means ‘very brave’ is used in almost all the historical ‘Bars’. All the Dogri ‘Karaks’ make use of similar lines and even similar stanzas. Since, they were about the folk deities, the religious sentiments of the people were attached to them. Much experimenting with their exploits could annoy the people or the deity itself who may throw his/her wrath on the poet, as was feared. The poet cleverly inserted the lines of other well established and accepted ballads into the new compositions.

As already discussed, the poet’s focus was on eulogizing the patron lord, king or deity, he rarely attempted to experiment over the usage of widespread imagery in the ballads. The most abundant and established form is the visual imagery which is present throughout the ballads. The
poet makes such an appeal by his narration that the listener is forced to visualize the events himself.

Traditionally, ballads are composed in a four-line stanza or quatrain with alternating four stress and three-stress lines. The rhyme scheme is usually abcb, sometimes abab. All the English ballads conform to this stanza style. For instance, the ballad of “Hobbie Noble” Starts as:

Foul fa’ the breast first treason bred in!

That Liddesdale may safely say:

For in it there was baith meat and drink,

And corn into our geldings gay. (1-4)

From these lines, it follows that the there are four-line stanza with rhyme scheme abcb. The same stanzaic pattern is adopted throughout the ballad. It also applies to all the other ballads discussed in this thesis with exception to “The Fray of Suport”. The ballad style is totally different from other ballads. The variation occurs even within the poem. The number of lines in each stanza also varies. The style that is consistent in the ballad is the presence of the last lines repeatedly. These lines mark the end of each stanza. They are:

Fy lads! Shout a’ a’a’a’ a’,

My gear’s a’ taen. (10,11)

The four line stanza style is not very common in the Dogri ballads. In fact, they do not follow any fixed stanzaic pattern. The poets have used
verse paragraph. Some ballads are without any stanza. They are written in
continuing lines. There are some other which follow a two-line stanza
(couplet). This is the verse form used in epic poetry, with lines that rhyme
in pairs. The ballad of “Bawa Tholu” exhibits this stanzaic pattern:

उच्छै नछ्तर जरमेआ बावा, औस नराणै लाई।
घर ब्रैह्माने दे जरम बावे दा, नारी मंगल गाई। (1–2)

Uchhai nachhattar jarameya Bawa, auns Naranai laayee.

Ghar Braihmanae de jaram Bawe da, naari mangal gayee.

Bawa was born on an auspicious time with the blessing of

God.

He was born in a Brahmin family, and ladies

Sang ceremonial songs. (Transliteration mine)

This form of stanza with rhyming verse is called a heroic couplet.

This form was commonly used in epic poetry. Hence, this shows that the
Dogri poets followed the stanzaic pattern of the epic poetry in some
ballads.

There are few ballads where there is a combination of different
stanzaic patterns, having different number of lines in a stanza. Four-line
stanza (quatrain) is also found in certain Dogri ballads. The ballad of
“Bua Bangalu” has three line stanzaic pattern (tercet) without any rhyme.
The style is also quite different. The ballad starts as:
Bua was born in Sukho Chak
And engaged in Kootah
O, devotee of the Deity  (Transliteration mine)

Hence, it has been observed that there was no definite stanzaic
pattern followed in the Dogri ballads. The style depicted in this stanza of
the ballad too is not even consistent. Five-line stanzas are also present
there. The style of writing in the stanza is also not same throughout the
ballad. Accordingly, with each variation, the rhyme scheme also changes
and there is no regular rhyme scheme in most of the ballads. Wherever
there is rhyme scheme, it is continuous with all the last words rhyming
throughout the ballad.

Ballads were composed to be sung or recited. The ballads of “Sir
Patrick Spens” exhibits this feature very well. The first stanza of the
ballad is:
The king sits in Dumfermline town,

Drinking the blue-red wine;

“O whare will I get a skeely skippe,

“To sail this new ship of mine?” (1-4)

The interjection ‘O’ is added in the stanza while singing. Alternate rhyme scheme has been used.

Dogri ballads were also sung in the courts, fairs and festivals. The ballad of “Raja Kirpal Dev” ends with a similar pattern as discussed above. The lines are:

बाहुवे नारी मंगल गाई।

जम्मू माता दे दरबारें पेहला सम्मत गाया जी ....

SSSI (Jeerath 15)

Bachwe naaree mangal gaayee

Jammu Mata de darbarai pehla sammat gaya jee…… SSS.

Women sung ceremonial songs at Bahwe

They sang first verse at the shrine of the Jammu Goddess.

(Transliteration mine)

Hence, both the English as well as Dogri ballads possess the qualities of songs intended to be sung by the minstrel to earn patronage and appreciation. They were sung to the accompaniment of a musical instrument. Ballads were originally composed to accompany dances and
hence were composed in couplets with refrains in alternate lines. These refrains would have been sung with the dance. Most of the ballads are written in ballad stanzas or quatrains of alternating lines of iambic (an unstressed followed by a stressed syllable) tetrameter (eight syllables) and iambic trimeter (six syllables), known as ballad meter. Usually, only the second and the fourth line of a quatrain are rhymed, as already discussed, in the scheme abcb, which has been taken to suggest that, originally, ballads consisted of couplets (two lines) of rhymed verse, each of 14 syllables. English ballads possess these characteristics but Dogri ballads show a lot of variation.

Hence, there is considerable variation on this pattern in almost every respect, including length, number of lines and rhyming scheme, making the strict definition of a ballad extremely difficult.

In addition to all the characteristics discussed in this chapter, the ballads possess some more qualities. The first in the Diction. The ballads make use of archaic diction (old fashioned language). Many of the words and phrases are no longer part of normal English or Dogri. Words used in English ballads such as ‘gurly’, ‘braid’, ‘twá,’ ‘sae’, ‘wae’ etc. are not used in today’s English.
In Dogri ballads the words like ‘khadere’ (drive out), ‘Naayeen’ (not), ‘Teg Bahadur’ (very brave) etc. are no longer used in present day Dogri language.

Secondly, ballads make frequent use of metaphors. In the ballad of “Sir Patrick Spens”, the wine that the king drinks is ‘blood red’, suggesting his power over life and death, as well as the ease with which he sends men to their deaths as casually as one might drink a glass of wine.

In Dogri ballads, the great warriors are often compared with the ‘lion’. They are called ‘lions’ in the historical ballads. This adds to the chivalry and valour of the heroes. Frequent is the use of other poetic devices such as simile, hyperbole etc.

Alliteration and assonance have also been used in the ballads. Since ballads were sung, the presence of these two devices add to the rhythm of these narratives.
There are several levels of information contained within language used in historical ballads. Much is that of a narrative, but there may be other important points of information which can refer to cultural or historic practices, or may refer to the emotional condition of the characters. Literal statements may actually indicate a different action, which cannot be fully presented due to the constraints of ballad language and the invasive nature, a full description would have on the actual narrative of the story within the ballad. Developed euphemisms may be used to indicate but not state a more visceral event than that which seems to be referred to.

Sometimes, such information may be presented through the use of supernarrative functions, which operate as an effective shorthand code, implying actions, emotions or the likelihood of a certain outcome, which would not be easily described concisely or within the bounds of a ballad’s verse.

Several forms of language structures, formulas and formulaic language have been developed within the tradition, in order to contain a full emotive response from a listener, who would often share the knowledge with the singer.
Hence, it follows from the above discussion that wherever the ballads are found, the style and manner of narration are almost the same. The English and Dogri ballads although geographically apart, are quite similar. Both were composed with the same purpose, featuring same characteristics. Thus, though written in different continents and parts of the world, the social structure of the society gave impetus to the poets to create forms almost similar despite their different languages. The similar social structure, similar laws and similar sufferings afflicted on the people make the poetry of the two nations so much alike.
Conclusion

The concepts related to the Ballads, the ‘Heroic’, invisible / visible, feudal lords and their victims and women as depicted in the ballads have been dealt with in the Introduction and Chapter I to IV of the thesis. The logical conclusion that can be arrived at in terms of the discussion presented in the preceding chapters, can be summarized as follows.

The ballads form has always been associated with music, and while all ballads don’t have to be sung, most were presented in the form of a song. They were sung and they told stories. In fact, for centuries, ballads were a form of popular art, a form which was not restricted to any special audience, whether of birth, or wealth, or education. If a poem was to be heard by a large and various audience, it needed some special characteristics. It should tell its story in a pretty straightforward way, and it helps if the patterns of the verse are familiar to the audience, and if there is some regular repetition.

The poetry taken up for discussion in this thesis, constituted, the official poetry of the Medieval period, both in the case of English as well Dogri. The ballads were anonymous popular verses, both ruder and more truly alive which cannot be localized or dated with any precision. Their origin cannot be traced to the 14th century and later because they in all probability have an earlier beginning and continued to be produced till a
later time. The impulse to compose them, however, seems to have been particularly active in the late 14th & 15th century, to which most of the oldest specimens belong.

The ballads of both the regions depict feudal age. The minstrels narrated the exploits of feudal lords and border reivers in an exaggerated manner, eulogizing them. Since the ballads were about the heroic deeds of the character involved, are they termed ‘heroic’ poetry. Ballads were composed to entertain the people, narrating their exploits, with emphasis on acts of social responsibility. Dan Ben-Amos relates the social context and folklore in three different forms:

… possession, representation, and creation or re-creation.

Basically, a literal interpretation of the term “folklore” sets up the first type of relationship. Accordingly folklore is “the learning of the people” “the wisdom of the people, the people’s knowledge,” or more fully, “the lore, erudition, knowledge or teaching of a folk.” This view of folklore as the lore shared by the whole group communally applies, in practice and theory, to different degrees of public possession. (5)

The minstrels who were poor illiterate people relied on the knowledge which they gained through different stories and eye-witness accounts of the soldiers who returned safely from the battles. Moreover, it
was discovered that sometimes, the bards also accompanied the warriors to the battlefields. They sung ballads incorporated with chivalry. By doing so, they inspired the soldiers to fight bravely and glorify their ancestors’ name and their motherland. They also recorded the current exploits of the warriors in the battle and instantly composed new ballads, eulogizing their heroic deeds. Gradually, they became court minstrels and entertained the lords with their wit and humour along with the exaggerated tales of their ancestor’s heroism. But Jan Vansina writes:

Eye witness accounts are only partly reliable. Certainly it is true that complex (battle) or unexpected (accidents) events are perhaps rarer than simple, expected events. Yet even here the account remains imperfect. The expectation of the event itself distorts its observation. People tend to report what they expect to see or hear more than what they actually see or hear. To sum up: mediation of perception by memory and emotional state shapes an account. Memory typically selects certain features from the successive perceptions and interprets them according to expectation, previous knowledge, or the logic of “what must have happened,” and fills the gaps in perception. (5)

The idea that these minstrels narrated what they heard or saw, is contradicted. Even if he was himself an eye-witness to the incident, the
narrative which was passed on from one generation to the other by word of mouth, underwent many changes and at each level, new additions and deletions were liable to take place.

Minstrels were men of creative genius and honourable nature, enjoying privileged social and intellectual patronage. Thomas Percy wrote on the position of minstrels in the feudal times. He writes:

… there were grads in this profession as in other, and law-givers doubtless found it necessary to control such Bohemians as wandered about the country without licence. The minstrels of a noble house was distinguished by bearing the badge of his lord attached to a silver chain. (XV)

Since the minstrels were patronized by the feudal lords, they had to be loyal to them. The type of relationship that existed between a patron and his client (the minstrels) was governed by the power. The patron exercised power over the minstrel, not in an active form but rather in a passive way. The fear of being punished or deprived of the patronage prevented the honour of the lord, no matter what the truth might be. He legitimized his acts by subverting the truth. The reward system did not relate to the faithfulness of the reproduction, but only to its pleasing character. Border reivers were cruel people who raided the Anglo-scottish borders and afflicted pains on the poor people as well as the rich. But the ballads glorify these reivers as romantic figures.
The first chapter reveals that the texts of ballads, like other kinds of verse, have often undergone a complex process of change and revision before actually being read. But unlike poems for which an author may write several versions before arriving at a final one, ballads cannot be identified with a single author. Revision still occurs, however, but it is a kind of collective revision, as a ballad is taken up by various performers and often changed—perhaps to meet the expectations of differing audiences, perhaps simply to make better sense to the individual performer. Hence, a ballad was invented, elaborated, refined, and passed along by many singers, whose names and faces cannot be known.

Sir Walter Scott was often blamed by the critics for adopting a sympathetic attitude towards the reivers. The reason behind this is that Scott’s ancestor, Walter Scott of Harden, was a notorious reiver of the 16th century. Sir Walter Scott, the poet and writer who compiled the Reiver ballads in his *Minstrelsy* was his direct descendant. Hence, it may be said about Scott that as he himself belonged to one of a border clan, in editing the ballads, Sir Walter Scott took care to include only such matter which glorified the reivers.

Characters in ballads should not be assumed to be accurate reflection of any historic parallel they may have. The ballads may have a personal or political bias, it may have been created or influenced by friends or enemies of the person who actually lived, or it may contain
fictional events. It can be interesting to discover how accurate, or otherwise, the ballad representation is when compared to historic accounts. Certain ballads can be linked to known historic events. They may contain some detailed accounts of incidents which may actually be minor incidents or they made provide a creative interpretation of a well known or notorious event.

The heroes depicted in the ballads are a part of realism, subtlety and modernity of the narrative character drawing. By ‘modernity’ it is not suggested that these characters belong to the 21st century, but to the narrator they were contemporary. They were not summoned from an imaginary part, but created out of the narrators’ own experience of life. The warriors, the women are heroic in the manner in which they grapple with the challenges of time. Minstrels used history to get patronage and attention. They lied about the past to prop the regimes of corrupt feudal lords. But they were not historians.

The definition of a historian being used in this argument would imply that Historians are those who succeed in maintaining their double responsibility to the past and the future.

In Dogri historical ballads (‘Bars’), the heroes were not deified, neither any spiritual power was attributed to them. They were represented as historical personages performing some feats of valour. The objective of these ‘Bars’ was to amuse large gatherings of people at fairs and
festivals and to earn something in return. These ballads were framed historical events and person, recorded in other sources also or known to the people at large. The narration underwent a constant change from time to time according to the requirements of the changing audience and the family of the patron over centuries. This fact makes the ballads inaccurate for use as historical data in comparison to scientific historical sources. Consequently the ballads have failed to add new knowledge about the events they narrate.

In the second chapter, an attempt was made to explain that Sir Walter Scott hardly portrays the plight of the victims of the border raids, living on the Anglo Scottish border. He included only three ballads pertaining to the cattle raids and their victims. The narratives of these ballads are however, presented in a comic manner. The pain, the agony and suffering undergone by the poor people is not all described. The stories proceed comically towards their ends and the victims are presented as actors of some comic play. This is in contrast to the attention devoted to the border reivers. Hence, both the minstrel and Sir Walter Scott, the editor of the *Minstrelsy* have played their respective roles in making the invisible visible and visible invisible.

As far as Dogri ballads are concerned, the ‘Karaks’ were composed as devotional songs praising the deities. The victims of the feudal social system were all deified after they died an unnatural and violent death.
Deification was a mode of apology adopted by the people for fear of receiving the wrath of the dead person. Men as well as women were equally deified as deities after their untimely death. The ballads portray the sufferings of these people while they were alive. Here, the minstrel eulogizes the common man who has been deified.

The third chapter reveals that the ballads collected by Sir Walter Scott are mostly about the deeds of male heroes. The role of women in history of Scotland and England was altogether ignored. They were portrayed as good and faithful wives, as virtuous ladies waiting for their husbands. Reversly, they were also depicted to be involved in vanity and worldliness. In contrast, women in Dogri ballads, the ‘Karaks’, have been eulogized in the same manner as male deities were. The sufferings of a female beginning from her very childhood till her violent and premature death are well visualized in the Dogri ballads. But, the ballads are constructed from a patriarchal point of view. The women who performed Sati either on their own or under the social pressure were deified and revered as heavenly beings. Their sacrifice or murder was accepted casually but given due importance through the ballads in order to reinforce the ideals of sacrifice and chastity among women.

The study of form and technique of the ballads of both English and Dogri origin in Chapter IV reveals that the ballads possessed similar patterns and techniques. Similar characteristics of the ballad poetry are
present in the ballads of both countries, although with little variations and exceptions. These ballads, though separated geographically, share common inherent features and social background.

Ballads are also associated with dance. But in the ballads in English and Dogri, undertaken for this research project, dance as mode of representation has not been referred to since both Dogri and English ballads were more known as narratives. Emphasis was given to the story of the narrative than its tune. The ballads have their ends rhyming like in a song which made it more striking and appealing in their narrative quality. The interesting and attractive tale of the ballads couldn’t be mixed with dancing. It would have deprived the ballads of their actual charm.

Oral history has been increasingly recognized in academia as a valuable contribution to the historical record. Ballads were recorded, transcribed, reread and analyzed. Yet the transcript is not the real narrative and should not be seen as such. Transcription by its very nature must adhere to the rules and regulations of its written language—punctuation marks, for example, that give a sense of the way something was said but do not account for the rhythm or the melody of one’s voice or the variations in diction that emphasize different points or feelings. Narratives convey meaning that can only be perceived by listening, not by reading and simply reading a transcript flattens the emotional context.
Notwithstanding the importance placed on accuracy, ballad narratives often present variations—subtle or otherwise—each time they are told. Narration may adjust a story to place it in context, to emphasize particular aspects of the story or to present a lesson in a new light, among other reasons. Through multiple telling, a story is fleshed out, creating a broader, more comprehensive narrative.

Written histories can also be criticised for they were also written by people employed by the kings and lords. History means ‘his story’ and the contents of the history were the historians’ own stories about the patron. Gulabnama which is a very important chronicle of history of the Jammu and Kashmir State was written by Diwan Kirpa Ram, the Dastur-i-Azam of the state. The title page of the historical record mentions that Gulabnama is, “…compiled on the orders of the benevolent and exalted. …Sri Maharaja Ranbir Singh Sahib, G.C.S.I., the Ruler of Jammu and Kashmir State.”

The character of Mian Deedo is discussed in a chapter entitled “Chastisement of the Wicked Rebels” which states, “While his lordship was staying at Riasi it was reported to him that the rebels Bhupdev and Dido had stretched their hand of tyranny on Dansal” (83).

These facts prove that history was written on the order of the rulers and ‘historians’ were paid for that. These historical chronicles were shaped and fabricated according to the wills of the ruling class. Writing
against them meant severe punishment. A learned and well educated historian came under pressures of the power structure, and also a poor and an illiterate minstrel. The invisible is present even in the historical documents and the visible is constructed to suit the power structure.

Written history does not present a dialogue so much as a static record of an authority’s singular recounting of a series of events. Readers may interpret these writings, but the writing itself remains the same. Oral narratives, on the other hand, do not have to be told exactly the same way. What is fundamental is whether or not they carry the same message.

Oral tradition, is therefore, a collective enterprise. A narrator does not generally hold singular authority over a story. The nuances evident in distinct versions of a specific history represent a broader understanding of the events and the various ways through which people have internalized them. Often, oral histories must be validated by the group. This stems from the principle that no one person can lay claim to an entire oral history.

Lakshmi Narain and Sansar Chand state that Dogri ballad tradition and

Ballad public dwindled from the scene of ballad recitation into offices and factories and the soft music of the minstrels was drowned into the crude whir of the steam engines. Industrialization dealt a heavy blow to rural crafts
consequent upon which the rural population was dislocated and lost many of its ballad tradition. (29)

Nothing could be more absurd than the above statement. Where and when was the whir of steam engines heard? Jammu had never been an industrial town, or a factory workers’ abode. The available criticism on Dogri ballads has made no serious efforts to study the sociological origins of the poem. The above statement may apply to the ballad tradition in England partially but it is totally misleading as far as Dogri ballads are concerned.

However, the demise of ballad tradition can be attributed to the decline of the feudal social structure and development of new modes of representation in Literature.

The English and Dogri ballads are similar in many respects. If they are removed of their local and historical backdrop, they will hardly have anything to discriminate them from each other. Not only they narrate gripping tales of men and women but afford an insight into the minds of the medieval man.
Works Cited


Billterlee, U. *Cultures in conflict: Encounters Between Europe and non-European Cultures 1492-1800.*


224


**Internet Sites**


https://www.scheong.wordpress.com

https://www.freepages.geneology.rootsweb.ancestry.com

https://www.scotsites.com

https://www.scottishhistory.com

https://www.borderrivers.com