

EDWARD, EDWARD - A HYBRID OF FOLKLORE IMAGINATION AND LITERARY EXECUTION

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Among some hundreds of anonymous English ballads of medieval origin the text, known to us from Thomas Percy's collection under the title *Edward, Edward*, is from many points of view an exceptional work. Its exceptional status is attested to by its appearance within that group of ballads which are most frequently anthologized¹. This would suggest that the text —just like other ballads rooted in an oral folklore tradition— must possess markedly literary qualities². Therefore in the course of analysis this ballad should demonstrate particularly clearly the nature of two types of utterance —the folkloristic and the literary. This is the justification for the title of this paper.

The exceptional status of this ballad also strikes the observer in that it is one of the small number of ballad texts the structure of which is exclusively that of a dialogue between figures of the fictional world³. Thus in *Edward, Edward* the dramatic mode appears at first sight dominant throughout —in this way contradicting prevailing scholarly opinion which sees the epic mode as the outstanding feature of the ballad.

A further extremely interesting feature of the text is its unusual number of oppositions and tensions: contrastive tendencies seem to govern its plot and language, the speakers' attitudes appear to belie their situation, contrasting systemic tendencies, resulting from the subordination of folklore conventions to a literary idiolect, combine with the different demands of the epical, dramatical and lyrical. It is worthwhile taking a closer look at these tensions, and worthwhile also to examine the details of the ballad's rhetoric, as these determine its shape as a multi-layered and polyfunctional utterance.

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*Edward, Edward*⁴

“Why does your brand sae drap wi' bluid,

Edward, Edward?

Why does your brand sae drap wi'bluid,

And why sae sad gang ye, O?”

“O I ha’e killed muy hawk sae guid,
 Mither, mither,
 O I ha’e killed my hawk sae guid,
 And I had nae mair but he, O”.

“Your hawkes bluid was never sae reid,
 Edward, Edward.
 Your hawkes bluid was never sae reid,
 My dear son I tell thee, O”.

“O I ha’e killed my reid-roan steed,
 Mither, mither,
 O I ha’e killed my reid-roan steed,
 That erst was sae fair and free, O”.

“Your steed was auld and ye ha’e gat mair,
 Edward, Edward,
 Your steed was auld and ye ha’e gat mair:
 Som other dule ye dree, O”.

“O I ha’e killed my fader dear,
 Mither, mither,
 O I ha’e killed my fader deer,
 Alas and wae is me, O!”

“And whatten penance wul ye dree for that,
 Edward, Edward?
 And whatten penance wul ye dree for that,
 My dear son, now tell me, O?”

“I’ll set my feet in yonder boat,
 Mither, mither,
 I’ll set my feet in yonder boat,
 And I’ll fare over the sea, O”.

“And what wul ye do wi’ your towers and your ha’,
 Edward, Edward?
 And what wul ye do wi’ your towers and your ha’,
 That were sae fair to see, O?”

“I’ll let thame stand til they dwon fa’,
 Mither, mither,
 I’ll let thame stand til they dwon fa’,
 For here never mair maun I be, O”.

“And what wul ye leave to your bairns and your wife,
 Edward, Edward,

“And what wul ye leave to your bairns and your wife,
 Whan ye gang over the sea, O?”

“The warldes room late them beg thrae life,
Mither, mither,
The warldes room late them beg thrae life,
For thame never mair wul I sae, O”.

“And what wul ye leave to your ain mither dear,
Edward, Edwrad?
And what wul ye leave to your ain mither dear,
My dear son, now tell me, O?”
“The curse of hell frae me sal ye bear,
Mither, mither,
The curse of hell frae me sal ye bear,
Sic counseils ye gave to me, O”.

One can see right away that one of the tensions is determined here by the opposition of the uncommonly tragic situation /demanding top emotional engagement of the speakers/ and the protagonists' highly conventional and literary language whose artfulness seems to nullify the emotion presupposed by the situation itself.

Let us consider this point more closely. Edward appears on the implied “stage” of the dialogue just after killing his father, the sword in his hand still dripping with blood /“Why does your brand sae drap wi' bluid...”/. He meets -here, on this “stage”— the woman who persuaded him to commit this crime, his own mother. An almost ideal dramatic situation, which allows one to infer a tragic struggle within the protagonist's soul between love for his mother and for his father, between despair after the event and fear for the future, between concern for his immediate family and a sense of his own criminality. Similar tensions must govern the mother's experiences. The model of the plot situation —probably culturally systemic, because it occurs many times in several versions within our culture⁵— which involves the dramatic opposition of three persons who are joined together by the closest family bonds, contains outstanding tragic potential. We would expect that the dialogic structure used here, the exchange of utterances, would realize this potential.

But the dialogue which takes place on this implied “stage” does not manifest the interpersonal tensions which we expect. Indeed, each utterance involves the return of the most conventional exclamations, individual elements in each of the responses are monotonously repeated, the majority of the mother's questions is marked by obviously rhetorical features, and their sequence is clearly subordinated to conventional structures of enumeration /“what wul ye do wi'...”, “what wul ye leave to...”/. The rhyming and regular quatrains which make up each of the responses, in conjunction with the previously mentioned reiterative linguistic and literary patterns, also scarcely favour the demonstration of emotion and of tension within the speakers' psyches. The conventionality of the dialogue is pushed so far, that certain illogicalities emerge in the “actions” of the characters —their activity

on the implied “stage” being exclusively the constructing of the subsequent utterances. It becomes clear that what the partners say does not truly follow either the logic of the implied story or the logic of the presupposed dialogic situation. Why, for instance, does the mother so persistently ask what the blood on her son’s sword means, since the *Vorgeschichte* of the action/which is implied in the final lines of the ballad/ suggests that she knows perfectly well whose blood it is? Why does Edward try to deceive his mother with stories of killing his hawk or his horse, since it was she who persuaded him to kill his father in the first place?

These divergences between the shape of the protagonists’ utterances and the plot situation point unambiguously to the general principle which motivates the strategy of individual responses: the dialogue, as it is constructed, is not and is not intended to function as a dramatic one; the responses do not assume the shape of the figures’ real utterances. To put it another way, the situation in terms of dialogue is not identical with the situation in terms of plot. Thus, despite the exclusively dialogic structure of the text, the quasi-drama which emerges does not establish the possibility of “playing out” the plot situation, reveals the “dramatic” structure as pretense, and in this way nullifies its codex function⁶, defining the speakers in non-dramatic terms.

In a genuine dramatic structure the tragic element must be linked to an experiencing figure from the fictional world, and must emerge as a direct feature of the actor’s “role” which he must assume. The appropriate “playing” of this role by the actor, the presentation and realization of the protagonist’s experiences allow the audience to identify themselves with the presented figure, with his situation both in terms of plot and psychology, and it is via this identification that the very experience of the tragic element itself becomes possible⁷.

In the text of *Edward*, *Edward* this possibility is closed off by the severance of the dialogic situation from that of the plot. It would be impossible to stage this text in the theatre. It is not Edward and his mother who produce the sequence of responses- they can be said to be theirs only by virtue of the use of appropriate forms of ascription: “Edward, Edward”, “mither, mither”. The dialogue, by losing the features of dramatic exchange, reveals the nature of the responses as utterances rather “imagined” than really spoken in the fictional world.

Identifying oneself with someone recounting the tragic story is also closed off, because in fact —contrary to ballad tradition— no one recounts this story, there is no narrator here. There is also no first-person lyrical “I” who would be able most effectively to stimulate the experience of this situation in the reader. Is it possible to say how and by what means the obvious tragic aspect present in the outline of the plot situation is to be brought home to the receiver? Is it possible to say who is guiding the receiver’s reactions, from whose point of view the text is presented? It seems that the receiver is deprived of any personal contact which could stimulate the experience of tragedy. The plot situation we sketched out earlier, which bears within it the seeds of tragedy, is, as it were, suspended in mid-air, a scarcely concretized abstraction. It appears severed from the fictional reality both in individual, psychological and personal terms, and with regard to its spatio-

temporal aspects. No individual features of Edward's or his mother's personality emerge from the ballad dialogue, which would supply some measure of existential verisimilitude to the plot situation for the receiver. Nor are there any concrete details of the time and space in which our protagonists are rooted. What castle is the background to this tragedy? Who and from what family is the murdered man? When and where exactly was the crime committed? We do not know.

We do not know because here neither the reality of the fictional world nor the characters themselves are of central importance. The building up of the dialogue on top of the plot situation, as the product of a quite distinct and separate situation from that implied by the plot, brings to the foreground—in keeping, one should note, with the tendencies of folklore genres—the personal category of the *performer*, and establishes this very dialogue as above all a proposal for the *apportioning of voices in a performance of the ballad*.

For the purposes of our analysis it does not really matter how in fact this proposal was realized in concrete “ballad sessions”. It may be that in keeping with the repetitive arrangement of each couplet the voice of the individual singer or reciter interwove with the choral repetition of the text by the remaining participants. Perhaps the participants were divided into bass and soprano voices, taking respectively the parts of Edward and his mother. It may also be that the performance combined both possibilities. For our observations however the important point is that the compositional, syntactic, and linguistic structure of the work more fully determines and defines the parameters of the performance situation than that of the plot.

Of course, these parameters are set forth in the same general way as is the systemic outline of the plot. Here we are concerned with a folklore genre, and the fact that the text must have been performed by a variety of actual participants differing in age, understanding, and performing skills conditions the schematic and general nature of the suggested parameters. But it would be difficult to overestimate the importance of this displacement of the dominant functions of the text from the fictional universe, from the implied time and space of the plot situation to the very process of performance and to its tangible spatio-temporal determinants. In effect, here it is not the logic of the mother's questions which is important, but, for example, the possible divisions within and between stanzas, because these organize through dialogue and refrain the arrangement of performers' voices as contrasting or complementary utterances. It is not the protagonists' emoticonal tensions that are important here, but, perhaps, the vowel and consonantal qualities of the text of the type of their musical consonance which—by their loudness, sonority, resonance—seem to delimit the spatial area of a “ballad session”. Similarly, the meter, rhythm, the linear and sequential nature of the utterances appear to define the temporal aspect of the performance event. In result the voice of the speaker does not belong to the plot situation: it shapes and determines the situation of the performance. The semantics of what is uttered, sung, or recited will—consequently—be also connected with the event of performance more decisively than with the plot situation.

The text thus tends towards the effective removal of any distance between the past tense of experience and the present tense of its transmission and reception. So it is hardly surprising that we are not concerned here with a situation of re-creation, of “re-enactment”, nor with a dramatic representation or a recounting of events. There is only the “here-and-now” of the performance, a typical “happening”. This reveals the pretext-like nature of the plot situation which, while it remains the text’s starting point, does not constitute the real theme of the ballad. For the theme is what happens in the ballad, and what really happens there is in fact the performance of that text. The cultural phenomenon of folklore, with which we are concerned here, is not a matter of listening to a telling of past events, the reception of an account, or even of watching the re-presentation of past occurrences. It is rather the experience of the production of an utterance, the experience of this process in all its dynamism, in the constant passage of “here-and-now”. The plot function is taken over by the process of the text’s performance.

The real theme of the work gradually emerges as we uncover the complicated relations among textual phenomena. The dialogue’s structure as an “imagined” exchange permits the foregrounding of the figure who performs the imaginative act —the person of the performer. At the same time it permits the activation of the underlying meaning of the basic situation —of that dominant feeling of tragedy. We noted above that tragedy must appear in a personal, individual vision of reality. Such a perspective is offered in this ballad by the foregrounded category of the performer⁸. In effect, there is no attempt to present the pretextual plot situation for the receiver. It is sufficient that it is well known to the performer, and the aim is rather to find suitable expression for the performer’s experience of the tragic born of this situation. The ballad seeks to activate this experience, to make it present, to attest it through the deployment of the text itself.

This cultural operation emphasizes the emotive rather than the referential function. It is not directed towards past events, but towards a present situation. Hence the choice of a seemingly dialogic structure, which perhaps most strongly stresses the *present*, but hence also the refusal to provide detailed information about the pretextual situation, and hence the illogicalities in the “imagined” dialogue, in the attitude and reactions of the protagonists.

It is thus too that the performer becomes the real protagonist, the real speaking and experiencing subject, and that everything in the emerging text is designed to serve the expression of the tragic vision which is suggested by him in the course of performing the text. It has to operate above all *lyrically* —contrary to scholarly expectations which are based upon traditional definitions of the ballad and contrary to the receiver’s initial impressions which are prompted by the seemingly dialogic structure. It would appear that ballad traditions are used in a rather deceptive way in this particular folklore text. The work emerges principally as the lyric utterance of performers who are seeking a suitable expression for their experience of the tragic. And the usual indications of the lyrics mode, strategies of suggestion and implication also emerge as decisive in the formation of the literary

character of this text, constituting the dominant compositional rules of its superorganization.

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We should recall that when the text of *Edward, Edward* appeared in print in Percy's collection, it immediately began to function in an altered communicative situation. A situation of literary communication began to dominate the hitherto established situation of folklore performance. This diametrically changed and determined the internal relations of implied author, character and reader, and finally shaped the text as a multifunctional utterance.

Within the phenomenon of folklore singing and also of ballad recitation the performer concentrated in himself several functions simultaneously. The participants in a "ballad session", fulfilling the functions of quasi-actors in this quasi-drama /through the apparently dialogic structure and through the division into "imagined" voices/, could recall for themselves the figure of the plot situation, and conjure up for themselves the protagonists' experiences. And at the same time every one of them was alternately the sender of the text /by the act of performing it/and its addressee /by the act of listening to it/. The conventionality of individual responses strengthened the sense of distance towards the protagonists' plot situation, leading in effect to a concentration on the act of performance. The rhythmic regularity and the regular repetition of virtually identical expressions permitted the interchangeability of the acts of sending and receiving, situating each of the performers not only as sender and addressee, figure and actor, but at the same time as a participant in an unfolding event, in the production of an utterance.

The fixing of this utterance as a text divided the hitherto combined functions of sender and addressee. The addressee assumed the status of the implied reader, the receiver of a finished product, and not a co-creator of a process. In a similar way the category of the sender was isolated —as the figure who purposefully and consciously had directed this "imagined" dialogue, who had been responsible for the choice and combination of certain elements repeated in the text, who had deliberately given a specific compositional shape to the work. At the same time, however, the hitherto dominant category of the performer was virtually obliterated, losing its pragmatic sense, as it were.

But the dynamism of the utterance as event was not destroyed; the fixing of the emerging utterance was able to seize and hold all the elements which in the course of the text's performance gave it its process-like quality. What was in the balladic performance a search for a suitable expression of a tragic experience assumed the shape of a potential not fully realized, waiting in fact for its implied receiver, a potential fixed in a sequence of textual signals and through their compositional arrangement able to generate the experience encoded in them.

In order to re-create the experience a literary equivalent of the folklore *performance* is necessary: such a *reading* of the text which accords with the driving

force of the textual process and which does not stop merely at an understanding of the pretextual plot situation, but which glimpses in the constructional dynamics of this utterance a testimony of the experience governing it. We saw that the experience of the tragic was the source of both performance and text in the course of the folkloric “ballad session”, but literary communication works, as it were, in reverse: it is the text itself and its very unfolding/not the plot situation, not the emotions of the protagonists, and not the now forgotten performance situation/ which constitute the immediate source of the resulting experience. Let us consider in more detail what are the literary strategies employed here and how they are combined, continually to imply the work’s fundamental experience through the “imagined” sequence of the mother’s questions and her son’s replies.

The mother’s first /rhetorically highly conventional/ question leads us to the very essence of the plot situation: “Why does your brand sae drap wi’ bluid, Edward, Edward?”. The repetition of this question —which at the same time establishes for the whole ballad the pattern of syntactic repetitions within stanzas— forcibly directs our attention at the very start to the formulation of the phrase as a whole. It signals the importance of the presentation of thoughts in words, and forces one to consider the power of the suggestion which may be concealed in a combination of individual signals. There is also something peculiar in this first question besides its evidently rhetorical nature. First, the comparative adverb “sae” is used here in its emphatic function: “Why does your brand sae drap wi’ bluid”. There seems to be a suggestion that the sword is very blood-stained, and that this is more than might normally be expected in the circumstances. To look at the matter from a purely physical point of view, if the sword has been used it should not matter whether it is more or less bloodstained. It should be enough to know that it has wounded someone. So therefore the degree of bloodstain on the sword clearly has a metaphorical meaning: something more important, something less expected than the normal use of a weapon has occurred —some more bloodstained matter. Of course, the mother’s question is supplemented by the repetition of the same structure in the fourth line, once more with an emphasizing function: “And why sae sad gang ye, O?” Nor is this the last of the repetitions of this construction in various versions. In the second stanza the mother declares that the hawk’s blood was “never sae reid”, and Edward describes his dead horses as “sae fair and free”. In the fifth stanza he adds to this sequence by declaring that his towers and hall “were sae fair to see”. Each repetition of this construction carries with it new implications besides the basic meaning of the exceptionality and the importance of the event implied by the mother’s first question.

This first question has another unusual feature. It does not employ the perhaps more common and logical passive construction, but rather an active one. Instead of asking why the sword is so bloodstained, or blood is dripping from it, the mother asks: “Why does your brand sae drap wi’ blood?”. In this way the weapon is not only seen as an instrument which inflicts wounds, but also as an object which can be wounded. It is seen in the same way as a scored tree which drips sap, in the same way as King Duncan, in whom no one would have expected so much blood. The

use here of the active voice clearly indicates that the blood on the sword is not just a sign of the shedding of the victim's blood, but also is a sign that this deed is the equivalent of the metaphorical wounding of the attacker himself. Perhaps this is why the sword drips so, and perhaps also why the red of the blood is brighter, redder than the hawk's /stanza 2/. After a while, indeed, this brighter red, brighter than an animal's blood, is finally explained -it is a parent's blood. But already we meet with signals that the person who says these words —the performer of the ballad; its implied author -is consciously and purposefully piling up suitable implications and suggestions, and by a sequence of hints broadens the meaning of his own formulations.

The broadening of the associative field also occurs through the element of equivalence within the construction of subsequent sections of the text. Thus, for example, Edward's first three replies —in keeping with the fondness of folklore texts for tri-partite constructions— supply three versions of the exceptional event noted above. First Edward declares that he has killed his hawk, and later that he has killed his horse, only to confess finally that it is his own father he has killed. As a result of the placing of all these three signals in a hierarchical sequence, hawk, horse, and father are made equivalent. And thus when Edward declares at the start that his hawk was "sae" good and that he had only one, this whole utterance may be seen in the light of his final confession as an expression of grief not so much for the hawk but also for his father. The use of the emphatic "sae" structure, which hitherto /as we have tried to demonstrate/ fulfilled above all the function of highlighting the importance and exceptionality of the event, is further justified here by establishing a "semantic equation" which implies the father's qualities /proposition: the hawk was good; equivalence: the hawk is like the father; implication: the father was so good/. In the same way and by logical extension the statement in the second stanza that the horse was "sae fair and free", can refer to the father and constitute a sign of grief that his murder has put a stop to such beauty and freedom. The mother's insistence that the horse /father/ was old and that anyway her son has plenty of others, harshly interrupts this sequence of equivalents, and signals her lack of feeling for her husband, her lack of grief and self-reproach, and also, as it were ironically, suggests the reasons she may have had for persuading her son to commit the murder.

It is not surprising that it is *after* this signal —in a contrasting arrangement— that Edward confesses to murdering his father. We must remember however that these confessions do not come from the protagonists but are ascribed to them by the performer; by the implied author of this ballad. It is he who has so constructed the text that the sequence of elements in the utterance attests to the tragic which —for him— characterizes the protagonists' situation. Equally, an unsaid verdict on the events lies hidden in the implications of the choice of words /the constructions with "sae", "does... drap"/, in the motifs/ the blood redder than a hawk's/, and also in the very construction of the sequence of implied comparisons analyzed above. It is not the protagonist who gives this verdict but the speaker of the text, suggesting

through its composition that the murder of such a good, beloved father /“my fader dear”/ is a uniquely outrageous crime.

It is the performer too who, taking advantage of the genre’s disposition towards the convention of repeating individual elements, shapes these repetitions so that, linked with each other in different contexts, these elements are endowed with supplementary meanings. We have just seen this with regard to the emphatic “sae” construction, which functions first as a signal of the importance of the crime, and then in the implied sequence of comparisons of hawk, horse, and father. This construction also operates in the implied comparison of past and present. This is first seen in the second stanza where the statement concerning the dead horse that it was once /“erst”/ so fair and free expresses grief that it is no longer so. It can also be observed in the fifth stanza, which suggests different visions of the world before and after the murder, through the description of the towers which “were sae fair to see”, and thus no longer seem so. Also the word “dear” enjoys a range of different meanings. It is spoken by the mother when she addresses her son as “my dear son”, appears in Edward’s confession /“my fader dear”/, and sounds ironically and bitterly in the mother’s last question about herself /“your ain mither dear”/.

Persistent repetitions, recurrent phrasing compelling one to pay attention to the build-up itself of sentences and lines, much repeated emphatic constructions which pile up superimposed information, refrains in the form of exclamations /“I tell thee, O”; “now thell me, O”/, and ones in the form of questions /“And what wul ye leave to...?”/ —it seems that the text as it were begets itself, a number of its elements are born from the preceding ones and in turn determine the appearance of their successors. One construction rooted in the parallel syntax of two lines earlier; another phrase reflecting that of a stanza later. The text grows up nurtured by itself, sprouts additional meanings, develops new semantic “branches”, illustrates through its construction its own process of growth, and draws attention to its search for the most appropriate expression. Often it is as if it cannot free itself from its own powers of suggestion. Since the red colour of blood /“bluid... sae reid”/ has been mentioned once, it must occur again in the description of the horse /“my reid-roan steed”/. The statement concerning the protagonist’s sea voyage /“I’ll fare over the sea”/ so strongly fixed in the performer’s memory the phonetic shape of the words used, that it recurs echo-like shortly afterwards in the description of the towers /“sae fair to see”/. One of the first sentences ascribed to Edward, which carry at the same time a heavy load of tragic emotion, “I had nae mair but he”, is reflected in a twisted manner in the mother’s words “ye ha’e gat mair”, and will produce a few stanzas further on /stanzas 5 and 6/ the refrains, “never mair maun I be”, “never mair wul I see”. Such echoes obviously add new shades of meaning. Both the final statements, for example, refer directly to the castle and to wife and children, but, in a persistent sequence of formulations such as “nae mair” and “never mair”, they constitute a constant reminder of the state of mind of the performer, which both defines the situation of performance, its emotive function, and refers to the plot situation of the protagonist. It is in such repetitions and

echoes as these that the multi-functional and polysemantic aspect of the utterance is apparent.

Of course, none of these superimposed meanings appear *expressis verbis*. They emerge as a result of a complicated network of references and repetitions which links individual semantic elements within the ballad as a whole. The dominant technique here is that of suggestion and implication; the basic strategy is insinuation. But it is precisely this additional level of organization which determines the text's literariness. As they are revealed in the course of the utterance, the individual connecting strands expose its process-like aspect -this utterance is moving towards something, is preparing something, leads to something. Of course, it leads to the surprise at the end. Despite many signals indicating the mother's relation to her husband and to her son, and her real role in the plot situation /lack of reaction to news of her husband's death, the conventionality of her questions, the ironic undertone of her remark about the horse's age/, the receiver is, right up to Edward's last reply, not fully conscious of all the relations between the three protagonists. The final revelation that Edward has committed the crime as a result of his mother's influence, which ties up all these relations in a neat triangle, means at the same time the end of the last interpersonal contact and the ultimate disintegration of values in the fictional world of the text.

Because, if we look closely at the construction of the network of implied meanings and suggestions from the beginning of the text, it becomes clear that each carefully connected thread joining different textual phenomena reveals a rupture in personal links or a collapse of values in the fictional universe. Emphatic constructions with "sae", and the equivalences of the first three stanzas suggest not only grief that the murder has destroyed one human relationship/with the father/, but also point to a whole group of values destroyed by the crime /so good, so fair, so free/. The following stanzas, "sae" constructions, repetitions and echoes focus on other effects of the crime: loss of wife and children, whom a beggar's lot now awaits, exile from home and society, exposure to time's wasting powers. However the very existence of what seems to be a dialogue —a quasi-exchange between mother and son— maintains, as it were, one value, maintains the illusion of one undisturbed point of contact. It is only at the ballad's conclusion /the text's composition reverses that of plot situation by moving from the effects of the crime to its causes/ that the very kernel of the tragedy is finally suggested along with the full paradoxical nature of the son's motives. Once more it is only implied in the last line /"sic counseils" —what counseils exactly?/ that the crime against the father was committed out of love for the mother, that here we have a conflict of values, a contrast and conflict of two loves. This conflict leads to the final destruction of the moral order of the whole fictional world⁹. Its last remaining moral value, its last remaining point of contact go the way of the others: the son curses his mother. The seeming dialogue must now stop; the ballad text must come to a conclusion.

But we should note that the final link between textual signals has been maintained, in however different a key —the cry "mither, mither", which was

repeated in every previous stanza, only here acquires its full semantic and expressive force.

At the same time the dominant superorganizing principle of the literary text is at last fully revealed: the reader's experience of the tragic is made possible because the compositional development of the text from the first question of the mother to the concluding reply of her son is linked carefully with the progressive loss and destruction of values in the fictional reality. For the literary nature of this experience it is important that the closing of the last link in the subtly interwoven network of semantic interconnections, which spreads from stanza to stanza and from line to line, is achieved suddenly, in the unexpected final suggestion of the original causes of the plot situation. During a "ballad session" it is in this *finale* that the performer finds the most appropriate expression for his experience of the tragic. And it is only at this concluding point that the reader of the text reaches full understanding of the tragedy in the sudden shocking illumination of the truth about the fictive world. In both folklore and literary perspectives the main aim of the performing as well as reading activities is reached through the experience of the textual patterns of "appositional" construction and the sequential composition.

4

It seems that our observations allow us to see *Edward, Edward* both as a folklore utterance /a primary cultural phenomenon/ -and as a literary text /a secondary cultural artefact/. In its function as folklore utterance, the ballad testifies to *collective* experience of the *process* of performance. As a literary text the ballad is directed primarily towards the *individual* experience of an *act* of understanding, of exposing certain meanings, and of grasping the meanings of the text in a *Gestalt*, of seizing its semantic fullness in one moment of revelation. Moreover, what constitutes the *source* of the folklore utterance —the tragic experience— becomes the ultimate *aim* of the literary text. Finally, while the folklore performance remains only an utterance, the literary communication assumes the shape of a text: an utterance fixed through notation.

From these differences comes a whole series of consequences in terms of the organization of both these types of phenomenon. Thus, for example, the temporal qualities of folklore utterance /which determine its transitory nature/ undergo a certain "translation" in the literary text into relations of space. What emerged as process is encoded as notational space. We may say that the transitory quality of folklore, its process-like features, demands a further stage of cultural activity: the transformation of what is transitory and temporal into a timeless potential. It demands its writing down, it demands the emergence of a text. But the text in turn demands its own realization, too; demands a reversal of that transformation, a subjecting of the written *text* to the *process* of reading.

Thus both these types of phenomenon can be seen to be individual links in a chain of supplementary activities. Our analysis of the work should illustrate this

well enough. Despite its having to fulfil the different functions of both types of utterance, the ballad *Edward, Edward* emerges nevertheless as a unified phenomenon. Although it embodies two types of utterance, it remains the whole time within the sphere of cultural creation, within the sphere of communication. Despite its many functions, its unity as a cultural phenomenon stems above all from the fact that for each of these two functions the course of the utterance itself or the space of notation are decisive. Or, to put it another way, the construction of the utterance itself, the arrangement of signals their sequence, interweaving, and repetition define both in the folklore performance and in the literary text their semantic potential, their ability to testify to and to generate the experience of the tragic.

Notes

1. The ten anthologies and collections of English poetry which I have checked /among others the two Norton anthologies, the *Albatross Book of Living Verse and British Literature*, I, ed. H. Spenser et al./ contain on average ten to twenty ballads. *Edward, Edward* and *Lord Randall* share second place/ they are in six anthologies/ after *Sir Patrick Spens* and *The Wife of Usher's Well* /in eight anthologies/. *The Three Ravens*, *Thomas the Rhymer*, and *The Cherry-Tree Carol* appear in five anthologies.
2. As M. J. C. Hodgart points out, Percy's version of this ballad lends support to the theory that it is the work of a talented poet / perhaps Sir Patrick Dalrymple/. This is the reason, according to Hodgart, why this is not only the best version of the ballad / does that mean from a literary point of view?/, but also in general one of the best ballads. /Cf. M. J. C. Hodgart, *The Ballads*, London 1950, Hutchinson, p. 103/.
3. The English medieval ballad, although it often contains sections of dialogue, nevertheless very rarely casts the entirety of a text in dialogue form. I know of only two such texts: *Edward, Edward* and *Lord Randall*. The ballad *The Nut-Brown Maid* is also cast in dialogue form, but this is realized in a different way. It is clearly divided into generalized voices, "he" and "she", and concludes with a stanza which comes directly from the author.
4. The text is quoted after *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* /shorter edition/, New York, A. M. Eastman et al. /eds./, p.34-35, but cf. also: Thomas Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry...*, vol. I, London 1844, printed for Henry Washbourne, p. 61-63.
5. If we refer only to the occurrence of this pattern in the history of the folklore ballad, we would find at least the three oldest versions of it in Britain, three in Denmark, and one in Scandinavia. We may trace further the appearance of this pattern in many Swedish and Finnish versions from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and in sixteen American versions, noted in the twentieth century. /Cf.: A. Taylor, "Edward" and "Sven i Rosengård": A Study in Dissemination of Ballads, Chicago 1931/. But this pattern can

be also seen frequently in mythology and drama, for example in the stories of Orestes and Oedipus.

6. See my theoretical discussion of the phenomenon of the dramatic text. /A. Zgorzelski, *Drama as an opposition of functions /On the example of W. B. Yeats's "A Full Moon in March"*, in: *Studies on Drama, Zeszyty Naukowe Wydziału Humanistycznego, Filologia angielska 6*, Gdańsk 1985, Uniwersytet Gdański, pp. 77-90/. There I argue that drama, besides its literary function, as the transcription of a unique utterance, building up its own unique supercode, also fulfills the function of a codex: that is, a basic written text which can generate a series of later cultural utterances /performances/. The literary text thus becomes a master code for later theatrical realizations. This code fixes the relationship of the model of the fictional world with the model of the performance situation, establishes the mutual relationship of actor and spectator, distinguishes stage space from that of the auditorium, points to the appropriate theatrical and stage conventions, and makes clear the degree of authority which the textual codex demands in relation to performance. It also establishes the basic communicative situation: it defines the type of cultural experience which these performances are meant to constitute.

The displacement, which I discuss in the main text, can be perhaps expressed in the above terminology as a change in the function of the dialogue, which, whenever it completely dominates the text, contains within itself a specific vision of theatre. Thus in the ballad *Edward, Edward* we can see a complete rejection of such a vision. Further, this rejection takes place in a unique way that sets *Edward, Edward* apart from other ballads. Instead of suggesting how to perform the dialogue on stage, the ballad merely takes the form of a transcription of a performance. It is not possible here to go into the many and detailed theoretical differences between ballad and dramatic text, or between *Edward, Edward* and other ballads. This would demand a study of its own.

7. Naturally we are not considering here the historical possibility of the emergence in the Middle Ages of some text, instead of *Edward, Edward*, possessing the features of psychological drama. We are here only concerned, first of all, with the minimum condition for the existence of the tragic in any text; and, second, with the possibilities, hidden and *in potentia* in the structure of the dialogue/ independent of literary-historical conventions/, for the emergence of the above category: the tragic.
8. I. Sławińska notes /in *Współczesna refleksja o teatrze*, Kraków 1979, p. 60/ that according to Adamczewski "the events in themselves are not tragic: they acquire "tragic status" through the involvement of an experiencing subject, by virtue of his tragic vision" /transl. mine, A. Z.). The subject in the ballad appears to be the performer.
9. Such a connection of the essence of tragedy with a conflict of two moral values and with the inevitable destruction of one of them relates, of course, to the views of Max Scheler, while the final effect of a defence of one of such values /which we can see in the poem/, namely the destruction of all values within the tragic vision of the world, would resemble the views of Z. Adamczewski who suggests that such a defence finally turns back on itself, and the very value which originally motivated it. /Cf. I. Sławińska, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-63 - on Z. Adamczewski and J. M. Domenach/.