

# POOR DEAR, POOR GIRL!



**The Murdered-Girl Stereotype  
in Ballad and Newspaper**

**By ANNE B. COHEN**

# Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper

**Polly Paulusma**



## **Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper:**

Poor Pearl, Poor Girl! Anne B. Cohen,1973-01-01 The year was 1896 and nineteenth century journalists called the murder of Pearl Bryan the Crime of the Century From the day Pearl s headless body was found to the execution of her murderers on the gallows the details of the murder fascinated newspaper reporters and ballad composers alike Often glossing over the facts of the case newspaper accounts presented the events according to stereotypes that were remarkably similar to those found in well known murdered girl ballads such as Pretty Polly Omie Wise and The Jealous Lover Events characters motivations and plot were presented through this framework the simple country girl led astray by a clever degenerate Nearly all variants of the Pearl Bryan ballad point the same moral Young ladies now take warning Young men are so unjust It may be your best lover But you know not whom to trust Representations of this formula appear in such diverse genres as the ballad Poor Ellen Smith and the novel An American Tragedy As Anne Cohen demonstrates both newspaper accounts and ballads tell the Pearl Bryan story from the same moral stance express the same interpretation of character and are interested in the same details Both distort facts to accommodate a shared pattern of storytelling This pattern consists of a plot formula the murdered girl formula that is accompanied by stereotyped scenes actors and phrases The headless body surely the most striking element in the Pearl Bryan case is absent from those ballads that have survived Anne Cohen contends that a decapitated heroine does not belong to the formula a murdered heroine yes but not a decapitated one Similarly newspapers made much of Pearl s innocence and tended to downplay the second murderer Only one murderer the lover belongs to the stereotype Poor Pearl Poor Girl is a ballad study conducted on historic geographic lines that is it seeks to trace the history and interrelations of a series of ballad texts and to relate the ballads directly to their ideological and historical context in the American scene It also compares the narrative techniques of ballad composition with the techniques of other forms of popular narrative especially newspaper journalism *Poor Pearl, Poor Girl!* Anne B. Cohen,1963 **Poor Pearl, Poor**

**Girl!** Anne B. Cohen,1973 *Poor Pearl, Poor Girl!* Anne B. Cohen,2014-07-03 The year was 1896 and nineteenth century journalists called the murder of Pearl Bryan the Crime of the Century From the day Pearl s headless body was found to the execution of her murderers on the gallows the details of the murder fascinated newspaper reporters and ballad composers alike Often glossing over the facts of the case newspaper accounts presented the events according to stereotypes that were remarkably similar to those found in well known murdered girl ballads such as Pretty Polly Omie Wise and The Jealous Lover Events characters motivations and plot were presented through this framework the simple country girl led astray by a clever degenerate Nearly all variants of the Pearl Bryan ballad point the same moral Young ladies now take warning Young men are so unjust It may be your best lover But you know not whom to trust Representations of this formula appear in such diverse genres as the ballad Poor Ellen Smith and the novel An American Tragedy As Anne Cohen demonstrates both newspaper accounts and ballads tell the Pearl Bryan story from the same moral stance express the same interpretation of character and

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*Murder Ballads* Katy Horan, 2025-04-29 In this unique illustrated collection Literary Witches co creator Katy Horan unearths the true and fictional stories behind twenty traditional murder ballads exploring the beauty and horror of the art form through stories lyrics and original illustrations *Murder Ballads* is a guide to the origins and cultural impact of murder ballads as a music genre covering its roots in patriarchal violence and white supremacy as well as its contemporary relationship to true crime From Delia s Gone to The Death of Queen Jane each of twenty carefully chosen ballads is accompanied by one of Horan s beautifully macabre illustrations and a thoroughly researched reflection on the song s history and evolution At the back of the book readers can browse a list of essential recordings for each ballad Mysterious and alluring as the songs themselves *Murder Ballads* will delight history enthusiasts armchair musicologists true crime fans and critics as well as anyone who appreciates the darker side of folk music

**Hear My Sad Story** Richard Polenberg, 2015-12-07 In 2015 Bob Dylan said I learned lyrics and how to write them from listening to folk songs And I played them and I met other people that played them back when nobody was doing it Sang nothing but these folk songs and they gave me the code for everything that s fair game that everything belongs to everyone In *Hear My Sad Story* Richard Polenberg describes the historical events that led to the writing of many famous American folk songs that served as touchstones for generations of American musicians lyricists and folklorists Those events which took place from the early nineteenth to the mid twentieth centuries often involved tragic occurrences murders sometimes resulting from love affairs gone wrong desperate acts borne out of poverty and unbearable working conditions and calamities such as railroad crashes shipwrecks and natural disasters All of Polenberg s account of the songs in the book are grounded in historical fact and illuminate the social history of the times Reading these tales of sorrow misfortune and regret puts us in touch with the dark but terribly familiar side of American history On Christmas 1895 in St Louis an African American man named Lee Shelton whose nickname was Stack Lee shot and killed William Lyons in a dispute over seventy five cents and a hat Shelton was sent to prison until 1911 committed another murder upon his release and died in a prison hospital in 1912 Even during his lifetime songs were being written about Shelton and eventually 450 versions of his story

would be recorded As the song you may know Shelton as Stagolee or Stagger Lee was shared and adapted the emotions of the time were preserved but the fact that the songs described real people real lives often fell by the wayside Polenberg returns us to the men and women who in song became legends The lyrics serve as valuable historical sources providing important information about what had happened why and what it all meant More important they reflect the character of American life and the pathos elicited by the musical memory of these common and troubled lives The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Lovell Beddoes Ute Berns, 2016-03-23 Bringing together eminent scholars and emerging critics who offer a range of perspectives and critical methods this collection sets a new standard in Beddoes criticism In line with the goals of Ashgate's Research Companion series the editors and contributors provide an overview of Beddoes's criticism and identify significant new directions in Beddoes studies These include exploring Beddoes's German context only recently a site of critical attention reading Beddoes's plays in light of gender theory and reassessing Beddoes's use of dramatic genre in the context of recent work by theatre historians Rounding out the volume are essays devoted to key areas in Beddoes's scholarship such as nineteenth century medical theories psychoanalytic myth and Romantic ventriloquism This collection makes the case for Beddoes's centrality to contemporary debates about nineteenth century literary culture and its contexts and his influence on Modernist conceptions of literature

**Warrior Women and Popular Balladry, 1650-1850** Dianne Dugaw, 1996-01-15 Masquerading as a man seeking adventure going to war or to sea for love and glory the transvestite heroine flourished in all kinds of literature especially ballads from the Renaissance to the Victorian age Warrior Women and Popular Balladry 1650 1850 identifies this heroine and her significance as a figure in folklore and as a representative of popular culture prompting important reevaluations of gender and sexuality Dugaw has uncovered a fascination with women cross dressers in the popular literature of early modern Europe and America Surveying a wide range of Anglo American texts from popular ballads and chapbook life histories to the comedies and tragedies of aristocratic literature she demonstrates the extent to which gender and sexuality are enacted as constructs of history

*Murder in Parisian Streets* Thomas Cragin, 2006 In *Murder in Parisian Streets* Thomas Cragin provides an in depth study of the production sale and content of the canards He demonstrates their significance to nineteenth century culture even their role in determining the emerging tabloid's success Cragin explores the incremental creation of textual meaning in the canards authorship production distribution and consumption He exposes the power of oral traditions as well as modern marketing at work upon this popular news literature The canards challenge our assumptions about the nineteenth century's revolution in print and reorient our understanding of cultural creation through textual construction Jacket

**Street Literature of the Long Nineteenth Century** David Atkinson, Steve Roud, 2017-08-21 For centuries street literature was the main cheap reading material of the working classes broadsides chapbooks songsters prints engravings and other forms of print produced specifically to suit their taste and cheap enough for even the poor to buy Starting in the sixteenth century but at its chaotic and flamboyant peak in the nineteenth

street literature was on sale everywhere in urban streets and alleyways at country fairs and markets at major sporting events and holiday gatherings and under the gallows at public executions For this very reason it was often despised and denigrated by the educated classes but remained enduringly popular with the ordinary people Anything and everything was grist to the printers mill if it would sell A penny could buy you a celebrity scandal a report of a gruesome murder the last dying speech of a condemned criminal wonder tales riddles and conundrums a moral tale of religious danger and redemption a comic tale of drunken husbands and shrewish wives a temperance tract or an ode to beer a satire on dandies an alphabet or reed a ma daisy reading made easy to teach your children an illustrated chapbook of nursery rhymes or the adventures of Robin Hood and Jack the Giant Killer Street literature long held its own by catering directly for the ordinary people at a price they could afford but by the end of the Victorian era it was in terminal decline and was rapidly being replaced by a host of new printed materials in the shape of cheap newspapers and magazines penny dreadful novels music hall songbooks and so on all aimed squarely at the burgeoning mass market Fascinating today for the unique light it shines on the lives of the ordinary people of the age street literature has long been neglected as a historical resource and this collection of essays is the first general book on the trade for over forty years

*Violence in American Popular Culture* David Schmid, 2015-11-02 This timely collection provides a historical overview of violence in American popular culture from the Puritan era to the present and across a range of media Few topics are discussed more broadly today than violence in American popular culture Unfortunately such discussion is often unsupported by fact and lacking in historical context This two volume work aims to remedy that through a series of concise detailed essays that explore why violence has always been a fundamental part of American popular culture the ways in which it has appeared and how the nature and expression of interest in it have changed over time Each volume of the collection is organized chronologically The first focuses on violent events and phenomena in American history that have been treated across a range of popular cultural media Topics include Native American genocide slavery the Civil Rights Movement and gender violence The second volume explores the treatment of violence in popular culture as it relates to specific genres for example Puritan execution sermons dime novels television film and video games An afterword looks at the forces that influence how violence is presented discusses what violence in pop culture tells us about American culture as a whole and speculates about the future

*The English Traditional Ballad* David Atkinson, 2017-07-05 Ballads are a fascinating subject of study not least because of their endless variety It is quite remarkable that ballads taken down or recorded from singers separated by centuries in time and by hundreds of kilometres in distance should be both different and yet recognizably the same In *The English Traditional Ballad* David Atkinson examines the ways in which the body of ballads known in England make reference both to ballads from elsewhere and to other English folk songs The book outlines current theoretical directions in ballad scholarship structuralism traditional referentiality genre and context print and oral transmission and the theory of tradition and revival These are combined to offer readers a method of approaching the central

issue in ballad studies the creation of meanings out of ballad texts Atkinson focuses on some of the most interesting problems in ballad studies the wit combat in versions of *The Unquiet Grave* variable perspectives in comic ballads about marriage incest as a ballad theme problems of feminine motivation in ballads like *The Outlandish Knight* and *The Broomfield Hill* murder ballads and murder in other instances of early popular literature Through discussion of these issues and themes in ballad texts the book outlines a way of tracing traditions in English balladry while recognizing that ballad tradition is far from being simply chronological and linear

**The Routledge Companion to English Folk Performance** Peter Harrop, Steve Roud, 2021-07-12 This broad based collection of essays is an introduction both to the concerns of contemporary folklore scholarship and to the variety of forms that folk performance has taken throughout English history Combining case studies of specific folk practices with discussion of the various different lenses through which they have been viewed since becoming the subject of concerted study in Victorian times this book builds on the latest work in an ever growing body of contemporary folklore scholarship Many of the contributing scholars are also practicing performers and bring experience and understanding of performance to their analyses and critiques Chapters range across the spectrum of folk song music drama and dance but maintain a focus on the key defining characteristics of folk performance custom and tradition in a full range of performances from carol singing and sword dancing to playground rhymes and mummers plays As well as being an essential reference for folklorists and scholars of traditional performance and local history this is a valuable resource for readers in all disciplines of dance drama song and music whose work coincides with English folk traditions

**The Perils of Pearl Bryan** James McDonald, Joan Christen, 2012-01-27 Amidst the turbulence and gaiety existing in American society during the last decade of the 20th century the paths of two young men and a young woman merge Each is inexorably drawn to a midnight rendezvous on a lonely road in northern Kentucky and ghastly and fatal consequences result

**Of Death and Birth** Barbara Schuler, 2009 Scholars of popular Hindu religion in India have always been fascinated by oral texts and rituals but surprisingly only few attempts have as yet been made to analyse the relationship between rituals and texts systematically This book contributes to the filling of this gap Focusing on the dynamics of a local non Brahmanical ritual its modular organisation and inner logic the interaction between narrative text and ritual and the significance of the local versus translocal nature of the text in the ritual context the study provides a broad range of issues for comparison It demonstrates that examining texts in their context helps to understand better the complexity of religious traditions and the way in which ritual and text are programmatically employed The author offers a vivid description of a hitherto unnoticed ritual system along with the first translation of a text called the *Icakkiamman Katai IK* Composed in the Tamil language the *IK* represents a substantially longer and embellished form of a core version which probably goes as far back as the seventh century C E Unlike the classical source this text has been incorporated into a living tradition and is being constantly refashioned A range of text versions have been encapsulated in the form of a conspectus which will shed light on the text's variability or fixity and

will add to our knowledge of bardic creativity Includes a film by the author on DVD      **Ballads and Broad­sides in Britain, 1500-1800** Patricia Fumerton, Anita Guerrini, 2017-05-15 Bringing together diverse scholars to represent the full historical breadth of the early modern period and a wide range of disciplines literature women s studies folklore ethnomusicology art history media studies the history of science and history Ballads and Broad­sides in Britain 1500 1800 offers an unprecedented perspective on the development and cultural practice of popular print in early modern Britain Fifteen essays explore major issues raised by the broadside genre in the early modern period the different methods by which contemporaries of the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries collected and appreciated such early modern popular forms the preoccupation in the early modern period with news and especially monsters the concomitant fascination with and representation of crime and the criminal subject the technology and formal features of early modern broadside print together with its bearing on gender class and authority authorship and finally the nationalizing and internationalizing of popular culture through crossings against and sometimes with cultural Others in ballads and broad­sides of the time      **Angela Carter and Folk Music** Polly Paulusma, 2022-12-01 From her unique standpoint as singer songwriter scholar Polly Paulusma examines the influences of Carter s 1960s folk singing unknown until now on her prose writing Recent critical attention has focused on Carter s relationship with folk fairy tales but this book uses a newly available archive containing Carter s folk song notes books LPs and recordings to change the debate proving Carter performed folk songs Placing this archive alongside the album sleeve notes Carter wrote and her diaries and essays it reimagines Carter s prose as a vehicle for the singing voice and reveals a writing style imbued with songfulness informed by her singing praxis Reading Carter s texts through songs she knew and sang this book shows from influences of rhythm melodic shape thematic focus imagery voice and breath how Carter steeped her writing with folk song s features to produce canorography song infused prose Concluding with a discussion of Carter s profound influence on songwriters focusing on the author s interview with Emily Portman this book invites us to reimagine Carter s prose as audial event dissolving boundaries between prose and song between text and reader between word and sound in an ever renewing act of sympathetic resonance      **Psycho USA** Harold Schechter, 2012-08-07 AMERICA S MOST COLD BLOODED In the horrifying annals of American crime the infamous names of brutal killers such as Bundy Dahmer Gacy and Berkowitz are writ large in the imaginations of a public both horrified and hypnotized by their monstrous murderous acts But for every celebrity psychopath who s gotten ink for spilling blood there s a bevy of all but forgotten homicidal fiends studding the bloody margins of U S history The law gave them their just desserts but now the hugely acclaimed author of The Serial Killer Files and The Whole Death Catalog gives them their dark due in this absolutely riveting true crime treasury Among America s most cold blooded you ll meet Robert Irwin The Mad Sculptor He longed to use his carving skills on the woman he loved but had to settle for making short work of her mother and sister instead Peter Robinson The Tell Tale Heart Killer It took two days and four tries for him to finish off his victim but no time at all for keen eyed cops



to spot the fatal flaw in his floor plan Anton Probst The Monster in the Shape of a Man The ax murdering immigrant's systematic slaughter of all eight members of a Pennsylvania farm family matched the savagery of the Manson murders a century later Edward H Ruloff The Man of Two Lives A genuine Jekyll and Hyde his brilliant scholarship disguised his bloodthirsty brutality and his oversized brain gave new meaning to mastermind Spurred by profit passion paranoia or perverse pleasure these killers the Witch of Staten Island the Smutty Nose Butcher the Bluebeard of Quiet Dell and many others span three centuries and a host of harrowing murder methods Dramatized in the pages of penny dreadfuls sensationalized in tabloid headlines and immortalized in murder ballads and classic fiction by Edgar Allan Poe and Theodore Dreiser the demonic denizens of Psycho USA may be long gone to the gallows but this insidiously irresistible slice of gothic Americana will ensure that they'll no longer be forgotten

**American Folk Songs** Norman Cohen, 2008-09-30 This state by state collection of folksongs describes the history society culture and events characteristic of all fifty states Unlike all other state folksong collections this one does not focus on songs collected in the particular states but rather on songs concerning the life and times of the people of that state The topics range from the major historical events such as the Boston Tea Party the attack on Fort Sumter and the California Gold Rush to regionally important events such as disasters and murders labor problems occupational songs ethnic conflicts Some of the songs will be widely recognized such as Casey Jones Marching Through Georgia or Sweet Betsy from Pike Others less familiar have not been reprinted since their original publication but deserve to be studied because of what they tell about the people of these United States their loves labors and losses and their responses to events The collection is organized by regions starting with New England and ending with the states bordering the Pacific Ocean and by states within each region For each state there are from four to fifteen songs presented with an average of 10 songs per state For each song a full text is reprinted followed by discussion of the song in its historical context References to available recordings and other versions are given Folksongs such as those discussed here are an important tool for historians and cultural historians because they sample experiences of the past at a different level from that of contemporary newspaper accounts and academic histories These songs in a sense are history writ small Includes Away Down East The Old Granite State Connecticut The Virginian Maid's Lament Carry Me Back to Old Virginny I'm Going Back to North Carolina Shut up in Cold Creek Mine Ain't God Good to Iowa Dakota Land Dear Prairie Home Cheyenne Boys I'm off for California and others

**The Anglo-American Ballad** Dianne Dugaw, 2015-12-22 Originally published in 1995 This book's collection of key essays presents a coherent overview of touchstone statements and issues in the study of Anglo American popular ballad traditions and suggests ways this panoramic view affords us a look at Euro American scholarship's questions concerns and methods The study of ballads in English began early in the eighteenth century with Joseph Addison's discussions which marked the onset of an aesthetic and scholarly interest in popular traditions Therefore the collection begins with him and then chronologically includes scholars whose views mark pivotal moments which taken together tell a

story that does not emerge through an examination of the ballads themselves The book addresses debates in tradition orality performance and community as well as national genealogies and connections to contexts Each selected piece is pre emptied by an introductory section on its importance and relevance

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## **Table of Contents Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper**

1. Understanding the eBook Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper
  - The Rise of Digital Reading Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper
  - Advantages of eBooks Over Traditional Books
2. Identifying Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper
  - Exploring Different Genres
  - Considering Fiction vs. Non-Fiction
  - Determining Your Reading Goals
3. Choosing the Right eBook Platform
  - Popular eBook Platforms
  - Features to Look for in an Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper
  - User-Friendly Interface
4. Exploring eBook Recommendations from Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper
  - Personalized Recommendations
  - Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper User Reviews and Ratings
  - Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper and Bestseller Lists
5. Accessing Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper Free and Paid eBooks

- Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper Public Domain eBooks
  - Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper eBook Subscription Services
  - Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper Budget-Friendly Options
6. Navigating Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper eBook Formats
- ePub, PDF, MOBI, and More
  - Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper Compatibility with Devices
  - Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper Enhanced eBook Features
7. Enhancing Your Reading Experience
- Adjustable Fonts and Text Sizes of Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper
  - Highlighting and Note-Taking Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper
  - Interactive Elements Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper
8. Staying Engaged with Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper
- Joining Online Reading Communities
  - Participating in Virtual Book Clubs
  - Following Authors and Publishers Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper
9. Balancing eBooks and Physical Books Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper
- Benefits of a Digital Library
  - Creating a Diverse Reading Collection Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper
10. Overcoming Reading Challenges
- Dealing with Digital Eye Strain
  - Minimizing Distractions
  - Managing Screen Time
11. Cultivating a Reading Routine Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper
- Setting Reading Goals Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper
  - Carving Out Dedicated Reading Time
12. Sourcing Reliable Information of Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper
- Fact-Checking eBook Content of Poor Pearl Poor Girl The Murdered Girl Stereotype In Ballad And Newspaper
  - Distinguishing Credible Sources
13. Promoting Lifelong Learning

- Utilizing eBooks for Skill Development
- Exploring Educational eBooks

14. Embracing eBook Trends

- Integration of Multimedia Elements
- Interactive and Gamified eBooks

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