

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910817188103321
Autore	Newman Steve <1970->
Titolo	Ballad collection, lyric, and the canon [[electronic resource] ] : the call of the popular from the Restoration to the New Criticism / / Steve Newman
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Philadelphia, : University of Pennsylvania Press, c2007
ISBN	0-8122-0293-7
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (305 p.)
Disciplina	821/.04409
Soggetti	Ballads, English - Great Britain - History and criticism Ballads, Scots - Scotland - History and criticism Ballads in literature Popular culture in literature English literature - History and criticism Criticism - Great Britain - History Criticism - United States - History
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. [263]-282) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- Introduction -- Chapter 1. Why There's No Poetic Justice in The Beggar's Opera: Ballads, Lyric, and the Semiautonomy of Culture -- Chapter 2. Scots Songs in the Scottish Enlightenment: Pastoral, Progress, and the Lyric Split in Allan Ramsay, John Home, and Robert Burns -- Chapter 3. Addressing the Problem of a Lyric History: Collecting Shakespeare's Songs/ Shakespeare as Song Collector -- Chapter 4. Ballads and the Problem of Lyric Violence in Blake and Wordsworth -- Chapter 5. Reading as Remembering and the Subject of Lyric: Child Ballads, Children's Ballads, and the New Criticism -- Notes -- Bibliography -- Index -- Acknowledgments
Sommario/riassunto	The humble ballad, defined in 1728 as "a song commonly sung up and down the streets," was widely used in elite literature in the eighteenth century and beyond. Authors ranging from John Gay to William Blake to Felicia Hemans incorporated the seemingly incongruous genre of the ballad into their work. Ballads were central to the Scottish Enlightenment's theorization of culture and nationality, to

Shakespeare's canonization in the eighteenth century, and to the New Criticism's most influential work, *Understanding Poetry*. Just how and why did the ballad appeal to so many authors from the Restoration period to the end of the Romantic era and into the twentieth century? Exploring the widespread breach of the wall that separated "high" and "low," Steve Newman challenges our current understanding of lyric poetry. He shows how the lesser lyric of the ballad changed lyric poetry as a whole and, in so doing, helped to transform literature from polite writing in general into the body of imaginative writing that became known as the English literary canon. For Newman, the ballad's early lack of prestige actually increased its value for elite authors after 1660. Easily circulated and understood, ballads moved literature away from the exclusive domain of the courtly, while keeping it rooted in English history and culture. Indeed, elite authors felt freer to rewrite and reshape the common speech of the ballad. Newman also shows how the ballad allowed authors to access the "common" speech of the public sphere, while avoiding what they perceived as the unpalatable qualities of that same public's increasingly avaricious commercial society.

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