THE TRANSFORMATION OF “TAM LIN”: AN ANALYSIS OF FOLKTALE PICTURE BOOKS

by

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Abstract

The folktale picture book is rooted in a common folklore as well as literary and illustrative traditions. Scholarship indicates the necessity for evaluative criteria to be proposed for this unique genre which, subsequently, would assist writers, illustrators, critics and, due to their dependence on written retellings, storytellers.

I group critical questions stemming from the adaptation a folktale to a folktale picture book into four categories. The first, source acknowledgement, asks whether an author has credited folktale sources used when researching the retelling. The second, narrative features, examines changes made to a folktale’s plot, characters and setting. The third, stylistic features, looks at the techniques by which a folktale works as an oral story and asks if the folktale picture book also lends itself to oral performance, preserves recurring symbols and images, and effectively uses diction. The final category, illustrative features, explores the ways in which an artist incorporates folklore into the pictures by means of mirroring the text, accurately presenting the culture, bringing additional layers of meaning to the story, and respecting the folkloric text’s presence on the page.

I apply these questions to four picture books which maintain dominant motifs found in nine versions of the ballad of “Tarn Lin” collected by Sir Frances Child: Tamlane by Judy Paterson and Sally J. Collins, The Enchanted Forest by Rosalind Kervan and Alan Marks, Tam Lin by Susan Cooper and Warwick Hutton, and Tam Lin by Jane Yolen and Charles Mikolaycak. This analysis leads me to conclude that, around a base of source materials, the narrative, stylistic and illustrative categories that form my evaluative framework converge to form a metaphorical triangle; a good folktale picture book must be constructed from these equally important foundations; serious deficiency in one area affects the structural integrity of the entire book.

On a more personal level, this investigation has prompted me to re-examine my own work as an oral storyteller. My version of “Tam Lin,” ever a work in progress, has been changed by this evaluative framework as well as my experience with the picture books themselves.
# Table of Contents

Abstract ................................................................................................................................. ii

Table of Contents ................................................................................................................ iii

List of Tables ........................................................................................................................ iv

Dedication ............................................................................................................................... v

Acknowledgements ............................................................................................................... vi

Chapter One: Introduction ................................................................................................. 1

Chapter Two: Literature Review ......................................................................................... 8

Chapter Three: Critical Issues ............................................................................................ 16

Chapter Four: Traditional Tam Lin Ballads ....................................................................... 39

Chapter Five: Analyses of Tamlane and The Enchanted Forest ...................................... 54

Chapter Six: Analyses of Tam Lin and Tam Lin ................................................................ 74

Chapter Seven: Conclusion ................................................................................................. 104

Works Cited ......................................................................................................................... 110

Appendix A: Child Ballad 39A .......................................................................................... 116

Appendix B: Child Ballad 39 G ......................................................................................... 119

Appendix C: Aesop Award Criteria ...................................................................................... 122

Appendix D: Margaret Read MacDonald’s Criteria for the Folktale Picture Book... 122

Appendix E: Criteria for Picture Book Selection ................................................................. 123
## List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Evaluative Framework for Folktale Picture Books</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Child 39 A to I: Sources, Characters and Place Names</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Child 39A to I: Motifs</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dedicated to the memory of
Joel Warnica –
a true human knight lost forever to
the Otherworld.
A thousand thank-yous to:

The balladeers, storytellers, authors and illustrators who have given life to Janet, Tam Lin and the Fairy Queen.

Dr. Kieran Kealy – you’ve worked patiently with me in transforming a storyteller’s love of “Tam Lin” not simply into a thesis, but my thesis.

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Dr. Anna Altmann – what sharp eyes you have!

My family, friends and colleagues who deserve accolades for their hours of listening, listening, and more listening to all things related to “Tam Lin.”

The dreamer awakes. The shadow goes by. When I tell you a tale, the tale is a lie. But listen to me, fair maiden, proud youth. The tale is a lie, what it tells is the truth.
Chapter One: Introduction

O I forbid you, maidens a’,
That wear gowd on your hair,
To come or gae by Carterhaugh
For Young Tam Lin is there.

There’s nane that goes by Carterhaugh
But they leave him a wad,
Either their rings, or green mantles,
Or else their maidenhead. (Child 39A, 1-2)

So warns the beginning of a text of “Tam Lin,” one of nine variants of the ballad recorded by Sir Francis Child in 1895. In the next verse, Janet braids her hair, lifts her kilt above her knees, and runs straight to Carterhaugh. When she arrives in the forbidden woods, she inadvertently summons Tam Lin by plucking a fairy rose. Later, she does, indeed, leave with him her maidenhead. After her family discovers her pregnancy, she returns to Carterhaugh to look for herbs to serve as an abortifacient, an act which summons Tam Lin once more. In their ensuing conversation, he asks her not to kill the “bonie babe” and she, in turn, asks him if he is Christian. Tam Lin not only implies that he has been baptized, but he also suggests that Janet can save him from the Queen o’ Fairies, who plans to sacrifice him as a tithe to Hell. Janet agrees and, following Tam Lin’s instructions, she makes her way to Miles Cross on Halloween night. When the fairy troops pass, she pulls her lover from his white steed and holds him fast while the Queen transforms him from one beast to another. Finally, when she changes Tam Lin into a burning gleed, Janet throws him into the well, breaking the enchantment. Tam Lin emerges, naked and reborn into the human world. The Queen o’ Fairies, however, has the last word:
'But had I kend, Tam Lin,' she says
'What now this night I see
I wad ha taen out thy twa grey een
And put in twa een o tree.' (Child 39A, 41)

This ballad, Child 39A, is the version "known to most readers today" (Niles, "Traditional" 147); yet it comprises only one of more than thirty known variants which follow similar patterns of plot and characterization.²

This large number of documented ballad versions attests to "Tam Lin's" long history in song and print. Child tells us that the first-known, partially-recorded version of "Tam Lin" appeared in 1549 as a shepherd's song in Vedderburn's Complaint of Scotland. More than 200 years passed before David Herd preserved a complete version in 1769; within decades, several additional versions appeared, including an 1802 literary adaptation penned by Sir Walter Scott (335). (They are respectively known as Child 39B and 39L.) Since then, versions have appeared in pamphlets and in collections of ballads, music and poetry.³ Furthermore, musicians continue to sing its stanzas and storytellers perform it as a folktale. And, importantly, "Tam Lin" has taken root in the written tradition; authors have reshaped this story for adults and, perhaps surprisingly, for children.

Sex, pregnancy, abortion and human sacrifice, all found in "Tam Lin," hardly seem the matter of children's stories, yet this ballad has appeared for more than a century, albeit altered, in folktale collections written for children. Joseph Jacobs, in 1890, included a version in More English Fairy Tales, and Sophie May used many of Tam Lin's motifs three years later in Little Prudy's Fairy Book. Beginning in the 1970s, authors also began to recount Tam Lin's and Janet's adventures in novels and short stories.
specifically meant for young adults. And, since the late 1980s, at least nine picture book retellings have found their way to library and bookstore shelves. \(^4\)

It was through one of these picture books that I first met Janet and Tam Lin. Attracted to a colourful cover depicting Scottish tartans, two young lovers and a red, red rose, I picked up Jane Yolen’s *Tam Lin* and have been smitten ever since. (Yolen’s version is fairly similar to Child 39A in tone, but it excludes mention of sex, pregnancy and the abortifacient.) I intuitively recognized the elements which make “Tam Lin” such a strong, evocative tale: the focus on courage, love, and the struggle between good and evil; the hero’s archetypal process of maturation; and the magic of fairy enchantment. I wanted, as an oral storyteller, to tell and adapt it for audiences of all ages. I began my research at once.

When I read the “Tam Lin” variants in *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, I was thrilled to discover the darker side of this story, the aspects Yolen omitted. I became even more drawn to the characters, especially to Janet. I loved her willful disobedience, indomitable spirit, and her heroic act of courage. I also felt drawn to the romantic elements of the tale – love at first sight, love in the wilderness, and love worth dying for. Yet, as I became more immersed in learning the story, and the elements not included in so many prose versions, I grappled with issues of audience, interpretation and narrative flow. Should I make this story accessible to a younger audience by retelling it, like Yolen, without the sexual aspects? Should I keep all of the scenes as they appear in the ballad? If not, should I edit the scenes according to my own tastes, or to those of a particular audience?
After much thought, I decided not to tell this tale for a younger audience. I tell it for teens and adults only. This choice sparked questions about how to present the characters. Now that I had determined to keep the sexuality in the story, should I portray my Janet as a willing participant or a manipulated victim in this sexual encounter? How did I want to convey her relationship with her family? What would my Fairy Queen be like? Over time, I have developed my own oral retelling, which does not exactly follow Yolen’s picture book text or the versions collected by Child. For example, in my version, I do not suggest that Janet returns to Carterhaugh for abortive herbs. (In all honesty, the thought of dealing with that topic in front of an audience makes me uncomfortable). Rather, over the eight years I have been telling this story, this unborn child has become the pivotal factor which motivates Janet to risk her life; she needs a father for her child. Also, for brevity, I have eliminated a few scenes; for instance, in most of the Child ballads, Janet returns home, confronts her family when her pregnancy is discovered, then returns once again to Carterhaugh. Instead, I have condensed these incidents into a single scene in which I say: *Tam Lin held Janet's face in his hands and kissed her. She didn't refuse, and she didn't get home until very late that evening, if you know what I mean.* [pause] *When Janet returned to Carterhaugh, she was very upset ... and very pregnant.* Overall, my choices have shaped “Tam Lin” into a uniquely told tale about independence, sexual maturation and a young heroine’s determination.

But my version of the story is not yet finished. The desire to evaluate and improve my own work prompts me to scrutinize every retelling of “Tam Lin” that I come across because, as Betsy Hearne so accurately says, “stories pass back and forth between oral and literary traditions, are told, written down, read, remembered, retold” (*Beauty*) 5.
Likewise, background research about the stories I tell often comes from published versions of folktales, many of which appear as picture books written for a young audience. Reading these texts has led me to consider the inherent challenges that both authors and illustrators face when drawing their source material from traditional stories that they have either read, or heard directly from a storyteller or a sound recording. Most importantly, I have questioned whether authors and illustrators are able to translate oral aesthetics to a printed page. And, given that oral narratives are meant to change over time, how much license does an author have to alter a story that will remain fixed in a written version? Similarly, do the illustrations interfere with a reader’s imagination and his or her individual interpretation?

When I began to investigate these questions, I realized that, though “Tam Lin” and other traditional stories have flourished for centuries, literary criticism of such tales, especially when they are adapted for children, is a relatively new form of discourse. In particular, there has been very little criticism evaluating the use of folklore in children’s picture books. I feel very strongly that this issue needs attention because folklore (used interchangeably in this study with oral narrative and oral tradition) is “a body of knowledge which has been transmitted orally over several generations and is the collective property of a given society” (Tosh). Therefore, it not only comprises part of our social fabric, but it has also influenced, and continues to inform, our literary roots. In fact, the importance of the folktale to future literary experiences cannot be overstated. The folktale contributes to the literary schema and develops literacy skills which may not be gained from other sources. The folktale also provides the continuity between the past, the present, and the future through language of allusion,
metaphor and symbol. Folktales have become the tradition-bearers for this generation. (Bunnell 31)

Because of its obvious importance, I believe that folklore should be appropriately evaluated when used in picture books; not only do readers deserve to be exposed to their folkloric heritage, but critics, authors, illustrators and storytellers, who often work with folklore, also gain important knowledge from a well-researched, well-executed folktale picture book. Moreover, while many scholars have researched various aspects of the Tam Lin ballad, few have commented upon its adaptation into children’s literature.

In this thesis, I will examine general issues arising from the adaptation of folktales into children’s literature as well as Tam Lin picture books. Chapter three examines the artistic differences between oral and written traditions and will endeavor to address the question, by which criteria should one evaluate a folktale picture book? Then, in chapters four through six, these issues inform my analysis of the Tam Lin ballad and four picture books that incorporate dominant motifs found in Child’s nine variants: Tamlane by Judy Paterson and Sally J. Collins, The Enchanted Forest by Rosalind Kervan and Alan Marks, Tam Lin by Susan Cooper and Warwick Hutton, and Tam Lin by Jane Yolen and Charles Mikolaycak. However, I will first provide a review of relevant scholarship.

1 Sir Francis Child collected several variants (written renditions of oral performances recorded in the 18th and 19th centuries) of 305 ballads, which were then published between 1882 and 1898 in five volumes titled English and Scottish Popular Ballads. “Tam Lin” is listed as #39, with each of its nine variants designated with a letter. This version, 39A, was originally recorded by Robbie Burns and published in 1792 as part of James Johnson’s The Scottish Musical Museum (also known as Johnson’s Museum).

2 More than 30 versions appear on the Tam Lin Pages found at www.tam-lin.org
3 See Tyra Twomey’s *Annotated Bibliography of the Ballad of “Tam Lin”* for more details.

4 See the bibliography for additional picture book retellings. For additional retellings in folktale collections and as short stories and novels, refer to chapter three of Anna Altmann and Gail de Vos’ *Tales, Then and Now: More Folktales as Literary Fictions for Young Adults*, pages 87-138.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

For the purposes of this study, I have accepted Stith Thompson’s assertion that the folktale can legitimately “include all forms of prose narrative, written or oral, which have come to be handed down through the years” (4). This broad definition works well within the context of my study because I am not concerned with the how one categorizes oral narratives, as have been many previous scholars, but with how one evaluates these stories. In view of that, the terms folktale, fairy tale, legend, myth, etc. will be used interchangeably. However, for clarity, I will use the term \textit{ballad} to mean a folkloric narrative in stanza or verse form, and \textit{folktale picture book} to mean a picture book, written for children, based on a folktale.

In addition to categorization, two other areas of scholarship are often discussed in relation to the subject of folklore and children’s literature: theories on the origins of folktales and their dissemination, and controversies questioning the appropriateness of folktales for an audience of children. As these issues do not impact my study, they will not be addressed. What does affect this study, however, is the fact that, despite the large number of folktale picture books published each year, criticism exploring the ways in which one should evaluate them has been scarce.

Although illustrations and children’s books have shared a long history, the 1950s, with new four-colour printing technology and an appetite for artistic experimentation, fostered an explosion of picture books in the following decade (Saltman 218-19). Many were based on folktales and, by the late 1970s, critics were beginning to address evaluative concerns about the folktale picture book. For example, in 1978, Mae Durham
Roger raised the following points at an IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People) Conference:

There is a plethora of collections for children and a plethora of single tales published in picture book format. What background, what knowledge do we take to their evaluation and selection? We can at least ask what changes have been made and why. We can go a step further and make comparative evaluations using as lodestars those versions that are faithful to the tales when first recorded. (65)

In her discussion, Roger does not claim that oral versions are superior to their written counterparts. Nor does she feel that oral stories prove more authentic. Rather, she challenges us to question such texts, increasing and applying our knowledge about folktales to better criticize and evaluate folktale picture books.

Eleven years later, Betsy Hearne published her landmark study, Beauty and the Beast: Visions and Revisions of an Old Tale, in which she evaluates and compares twenty-two versions of one story, including picture books, plays, poems, novels and short stories. Hearne does not judge one version as better than another. In fact, she finds that the same motifs survive in all forms of the story, concluding that literature and orality constantly support and inspire each other. Significantly, she also points out that there is still a need for more work in this area:

[T]here is a lack of consistent scholarship in children’s literature that leads to less than consistent standards for publication of both new works and new editions of traditional works. Much current juvenile publishing consists of illustrated adaptations of folktales, but there is not enough careful comparison of text and art among the editions. Moreover, many new works have folklore motifs and mythological dimensions of which reviewers, who are the chief critics in the field of children’s literature, are unaware or without time to examine. (141)

Because Hearne’s study includes picture books, it provides a strong foundation on which to further build my research.
Yet, by 1999, critics still stated the need for an evaluative framework for folktale picture books; Janice Del Negro published a study in *Library Trends* in which she contrasts the folktale chapters of all editions of *Children and Books*, a highly regarded textbook for students of children's literature. She had hoped to find an increase in the evaluative criteria offered in the 1997 edition and was disappointed in her findings; the publication still primarily focused on theories regarding the origins and dissemination of folktales and on the form and style of western European stories. It did not offer ideas about analysis. Del Negro concludes:

> Considering the healthy number of folktale retellings published yearly and the controversy surrounding them, the need for guiding criteria for evaluating traditional folktales for youth seems evident. A discussion of what comprises those criteria and how current awareness of the aesthetics of style and presentation, folklore scholarship, ethics, and pragmatic usefulness can be synthesized with issues of artistic freedom is in order. (15)

This is not to say that critics had ignored this topic, however. Over the past twenty years, several scholars have offered insightful perspectives about assessing folktale picture books. For example, Claire England and Adele Fasick's *Child View: Evaluating and Reviewing Materials for Children* includes a short chapter titled, “Traditional Materials.” Perry Nodelman’s *Words About Pictures* focuses quite directly on the illustrations of folktales, paying particular attention to versions of “Snow White.” Besty Hearne considers the importance of proper citation in “Reducing Cultural Chaos.” Notably, Margaret Read MacDonald, who has written many folktale picture books and folktale collections herself, has given many presentations about this subject. And importantly, the Children's Folklore Section of the American Folklore Society has developed criteria for its Aesop Prize, an award which recognizes excellence in the genre of the folktale picture book. These scholars' ideas, although important, have limitations.
Because of the formats in which their criticism is published or presented, they are not able discuss issues at great length or detail.

Gloria Delores Currie Bunnell, however, is able to thoroughly investigate writing style in her 1999 thesis, *Stylistic Analysis of the Contemporary Retold Folktale*. Recognizing the need for evaluative guidelines, she chose seven award winning folktale picture books for her study of diction and sentence/syntax structures. She concludes that a good folktale picture book preserves its oral ties by: balancing informal and formal stylistic features (diction, imagery, sentence types); retaining the original tale’s linguistic flavour; and writing with controlled language that incorporates minimal exposition, a quickly developed plot, a succinctly presented setting, contained character description and minimal imagery (83-84). And, like other scholars previously mentioned, she proposes that, in “the interest of maintaining authenticity and integrity in folk literature and preserving our literary heritage for generations to come, additional research is recommended on the quality of writing and style within the folktale” (81).

In another dissertation, *Awakenings and Transformations: Re-Visioning the Tales* of “Sleeping Beauty,” “Snow White,” “The Frog Prince” and “Tam Lin,” published in 1997, Martha Pitt Hixon makes similar comments. She observes that relatively little attention has been devoted to how modern retellers adapt the classic tales to suit their own cultural contexts and contemporary fictional or media forms; [...] Concerning fairy tales told or retold for a young reading audience, critics have examined primarily only the superficial retellings or the classic tales [...] rather than the deeper reinterpretations that substantially alter the classic motifs. (16)

Hixon’s work is of special importance to my study because she deals not only with general issues of folklore in children’s literature, but also with the tale of “Tam Lin.”
Hixon notes that the majority of “Tam Lin” scholarship focuses on the ballads themselves rather than their equally important, literary offspring. She also feels that in-depth studies of folktales have been preoccupied with stories written or performed for adults, not for youth. This omission motivated her to look at five literary recreations of “Tam Lin” for a young audience. Her subsequent analysis includes two picture books, both titled Tam Lin, by authors Jane Yolen and Susan Cooper. Significantly, Hixon brings a very personal, yet feminist, interpretation to her reading of these books: “‘Tam Lin’ is as much a story about a woman’s social conflicts as it is about supernatural events,” she writes, “the narrative concerns a violation of established social conventions which is ultimately seemingly condoned to an extent, or at least not punished” (193).

Other critics have also begun to take a similar interest in providing more expansive interpretations of “Tam Lin.” Sandra Marie Guy, for example, textually examines the ballads’ literary elements; her 1997 thesis looks at the skillful use of colour as metaphor, character motivation, and the uses of various plot devices to render the fairy and human realms. Kimberly White brings to the text a very different point of view. Her thesis, written in the same year, takes a socio-historical approach to the heroine’s actions, arguing against the generally accepted idea that “Tam Lin” is a romance. On the contrary, White feels strongly that Tam Lin rapes Janet. Janet, living in a patriarchal culture that shuns premarital pregnancy, has no choice but to act heroically because she needs a father for her child. Although these two studies focus on the ballad texts, they nonetheless reflect ideas and research that can be applied to all of the literary works and retellings that deal with “Tam Lin,” including picture books.
More specific to children’s literature, two short articles look at issues regarding the use of folklore in Tam Lin adaptations for young audiences. In “Traditional Ballads and Modern Children’s Fantasy: Some Comments on Structure and Intent,” C.W. Sullivan comments yet again on the deficiency of scholarship: “Considering the small amount of evaluation of the traditional nature and heritage of children’s literature in general, it is not surprising that so little attention has been given to the work of authors of fantasy for children and adolescents who have drawn directly on traditional ballads [. . .]” (145). Although this 1986 article evaluates novels based on “Tam Lin,” the questions Sullivan raises about an author’s, or critic’s, awareness of and respect for the source ballads also apply to picture books.

Evelyn Perry takes this issue of respect for traditional tales even further in “The Ever-Vigilant Hero: Revaluing the Tale of ‘Tam Lin,’” published in 1997. She argues against the distillation of folktalest to suit a children’s audience. She believes that “[r]emoving elements originally intended for instruction leaves only a description of the hero’s journey. [. . .] Good loses its force when there is no real threat, no Evil, to compare it to” (32). In the case of “Tam Lin,” these elements include Janet’s purposeful disobedience, her subsequent pregnancy and, in Perry’s interpretation, an ending in which Evil is postponed, not vanquished. She illustrates these ideas in her evaluation of two young adult novels as well as Yolen’s Tam Lin.

Finally, recent bibliographic research has been very helpful to this study. In Tales Then and Now: More Folktales as Literary Fictions for Young Adults, published in 2001, Anna Altmann and Gail de Vos deal with literary retellings of folktales for young audiences. They include a chapter about the ballad of “Tam Lin.”
providing general background information, they offer annotations of both critical resources and literary retellings. Likewise, Tyra Twomey’s 2003 manuscript, “An Annotated Bibliography of the Ballad of ‘Tam Lin,’ ” provides relevant information about the ballads’ history in print.

In conclusion, the early thrust of critical writing about the use of folklore in children’s literature was concerned with defining categories of oral narratives, the dissemination of folktales, and the suitability of traditional materials for a young audience. Research concerning the evaluation of folktale picture books has increased, particularly since the late 1990s, but critics have discussed evaluative issues only briefly, or have concentrated their focus on a single picture book element; for example, Bunnell examines only writing style, Nodelman only illustrations, and Hixon discusses how modern authors interpret the story of “Tam Lin.” Clearly, a more comprehensive approach to evaluating this genre is needed. Thus, in chapter three, I will examine the main differences between the oral and written traditions, as well as draw from established criticism about folktale picture books in order to propose an evaluative framework.

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1 Scholars distinguish between illustrated books and picture books. The former term refers to a book in which the role of the pictures is to mirror the words on the page. In the latter, words and images create visual and verbal story lines that interact with each other and “can be separately phased so as to reinforce, counterpoint, anticipate or expand, one another” (Hunt 176). However, David Lewis has suggested that, “to some extant, all pictures have decorative, narrative and interpretive potential” (25). So, for simplicity, I will refer to both types of books as picture books.

2 For detailed descriptions of each of these forms, see Stith Thompson’s The Folktale, pages 7-9, or Gail de Vos and Anna Altmann’s Tales Then and Now, pages 7-9.

3 Theories of folktale origins include monogenesis and polygenesis. The former term refers to the idea that all tale variants disseminated from a single ancestral group. For example, occidental stories have Indo-European roots. The latter term holds that, based
on the emotions and unconscious desires common to humans, tale variants developed independently across the globe. Scholars also debate whether folktales stemmed from dreams, or if they are degenerate versions of myths, which may themselves remnants of nature rituals (Thompson 367-390; Sutherland 182-187; Saltman 247-48).

4 “Folklore has been under attack as unsuitable reading material for children at least since the sixteenth century” (Saltman 249). Historically, opponents argued against the folktale’s predilection for fantasy and violence. For example, seventeenth century Puritans, concerned with children’s moral development, considered “folktale about giants, witches, and enchantment to be immoral” (Norton 279). However, in the twenty-first century, these concerns still exist; take, for example, some of the religious backlash against J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series. Furthermore, critics have recently called folktales “frightening, immoral, violent, racist or sexist” (Saltman 249).

On the other hand, proponents believe that the folktale has entertaining, educational, imaginative and cathartic functions. Perhaps the best-known book in defense of folktales is *The Uses of Enchantment*, in which Bruno Bettelheim “maintains that fairy tales help children cope with their dreams and inner turmoil” (Huck 232).

For a broad overview of the critical issues, refer to the essays in Martin Hallet’s *Folk & Fairy Tales*, pages 263-370.

5 The books in Bunnell’s study are: *Rapunzel*, retold by Paul O. Zelinsky; *Puss in Boots*, translated by Malcolm Arthur; *Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters*, retold by John Steptoe; *Little Red Riding Hood*, retold by Trina Schart Hyman; *The Silver Cow: A Welsh Tale*, retold by Susan Cooper; *Lon Po Po: A Story from China*, retold by Ed Young; and *The Talking Eggs: A Folktale from the American South*, retold by Robert D. Sans Souci.
Chapter Three: Critical Issues

Folktales survive over generations because their universal themes, memorable structures, and effective use of language have been successfully imprinted on the minds of listeners and storytellers. One reason for this success stems from the storytelling process – the story becomes a joint creation between the storyteller and his listeners during a given performance because he interacts directly with an audience to gauge their receptiveness for different types of stories. He shifts his words to suit their age and mood. The story never unfolds the same way twice.

In contrast, the author deals with product – the form of her finished work. An author may involve other people in the process of imagining or editing a story, but her main goal is to create a polished piece of writing for an audience to read, or have read to them. Unlike the oral narrative, the written story does not evolve over time or adapt to a specific audience because, once published, the text becomes unalterable. However, because the written product remains static, the reader has the option to return again and again and re-examine the fixed words and images.

This fundamental dichotomy between process and product creates challenges for the critic who wants to assess a folktale picture book’s use of folklore. The natural fluidity of oral narrative not only poses difficulties in identifying the mutable elements of a traditional story, but it also complicates questions about the narrative elements an author has just license to alter. The oral and written forms also use different stylistic devices to communicate with the audience. Furthermore, the picture book’s illustrations have no oral counterpart for comparison.
However, despite the challenges, individual scholars have formulated important questions about issues pertaining to how authors and illustrators integrate a traditional story's folklore into a picture book retelling. My study draws from, and expands upon, the ideas of several critics, authors, illustrators, academics, librarians, educators and reviewers who bring to this discussion a diversity of experience. (Note that this study does not address parodies, a genre commonly known as fractured fairy tales.) Importantly, I have also been influenced by the criteria for the Aesop Prize, a juried award given by the Children's Folklore Section of the American Folklore Society for an outstanding illustrated children's publication utilizing folkloric themes, as well as some unpublished notes given to me by folklorist and author, Margaret Read MacDonald. I am indebted to all of the scholars who have previously considered folkloric issues in children's literature, for it is on their foundation that I have established my own evaluative framework. I have organized critical issues into four categories: source acknowledgement and narrative, stylistic and illustrative features. I would like to stress that these criteria, summarized in table 1 on page thirty-five, provide a foundation for analysis, a lens through which to examine a story, and are not meant to be a prescriptive set of questions for every folktale picture book evaluation.

**Source Acknowledgement**

Although, for the most part, oral narratives belong in the public domain, it is nevertheless important for an author to include information regarding her source materials. Firstly, by doing so, she pays respect to a tradition and the predecessors who created and refined a story such that it is fit for retelling. Next, where relevant,
references can connect the story to its particular ethnic background, thereby giving the reader a glimpse into the originating culture. Sources also provide pertinent information which future storytellers and authors will find useful when researching story variants for their subsequent retellings. Finally, background notes suggest that the author has read several versions in order to get a sense of how the material has been handled (Sullivan 147; MacDonald letter; Aesop).

There are different ways in which the author can provide source acknowledgement, ranging from background notes to information on the Cataloguing in Publication (CIP) page. For this study, I am primarily interested in whether a source has been cited at all, but Hearne suggests that the “truly exemplary note cites the specific source(s), adds a description for cultural context, and describes what the author has done to change the tale, with some explanation of why” (“Cite” 4).  

Narrative Features

A story’s narrative features, its core elements, provide the initial foundation on which an author must build her retelling of a folktale. Before she can decide how to tell the story, she must decide what to tell. The details which she does, or does not, include raise questions about the adaptation of the plot, characterization and setting for an audience of children.

An author who adapts traditional materials to an illustrated text often must alter the actual tale by adding or omitting certain plot elements. This practise elicits much discussion amongst critics. According to Claire England and Adele Fasick, such changes do not, necessarily, irreparably alter the story: “Eliminating subplots may achieve the
desired effect of shortening the text without damage to the major theme and incidents”
(87). Such changes can also clarify the story, making it more accessible to a younger audience. England and Fasick observe, for example, that while in the traditional tale of “The Three Little Pigs” the wolf attempts to catch the third pig in three outdoor locations before finally descending the chimney, popular modern versions successfully eliminate these scenes to streamline the story.

Likewise, I do not think such changes are negative because, similarly, the storyteller practising the oral tradition changes his stories according to factors such as venue, audience age, or the general mood of the listeners. For example, in order to adapt to a very young audience, he may streamline plot elements to simplify the story, or add repetitive phrases for the purpose of eliciting audience participation.

Whatever the changes, it is crucial that the reteller (storyteller or author) respect the cultural background of the story. For example, the number four holds an important place in First Nations mythology; this represents the four directions, the four elements and the four peoples of the earth. As such, it would be inappropriate to change a story such that it focused, instead, on the Western symbolism attached to the number three. Furthermore, non-Western stories often have a different narrative shape, being episodic, rather than linear, in nature (Hearne, “Respect” 3). Again, the reteller should make sure that any plot changes respect the traditional story.

England and Fasick also discuss the problems of handling “unsuitable” themes in written retellings of oral narratives for children. They believe that children do not always need detailed explanations or descriptions to enjoy a story and, therefore, support the alteration of sexual themes and unnecessary violence. For example, they feel that, when
retelling Arthurian lore, it is not necessary to include details that Mordred, King Arthur’s enemy, is the bastard son of Arthur and his sister, Morganna (82). Nor do they disagree with versions of Cinderella that omit the birds’ role as avengers who pluck out the stepsisters’ eyes (86). This issue of unsuitability is one where the oral and written traditions have, at least in the past, greatly diverged.

Historically, storytellers did not alter their tales for children, which explains the mature content of many traditional stories. When Western culture was still predominantly oral, children were not seen as a distinct social group, separate from the adults. Rather, from a very young age, children participated in a general community life that included people of all ages. As Judith Saltman discusses, “Before the seventeenth century, children were considered smaller versions of adults. In those difficult times of high infant mortality and short life spans, children were drawn into the world as quickly as possible.” Because childhood, as we know it today, did not exist, neither did the current idea of selecting and adjusting certain fairy tales for young audiences. In fact, Saltman continues, “[n]o special entertainment was provided for them; children and adults alike enjoyed myths and folktales, ballads and stories, courtly romances, and embroidered histories of their families, neighbors or regions” (2). Thus, children listened to the same oral narratives as adults, and were exposed to baser themes in these stories such as sex, incest, violence, infanticide and misogyny, though, due to children’s limited life experiences, much of the subject matter would have probably escaped their understanding.

Over the past four hundred years, however, the idea that children are miniature adults had greatly changed. The seventeenth century Puritans, the first group to overtly
recognize the differences between children and adults, are credited with discovering "the child" (Saltman 4). In the eighteenth century, Western society in general followed suit. Such a realization sparked the beginning of an enduring debate regarding the subject matter society deems appropriate for children. The Puritans did not approve of the folktale's imaginary creatures. In 1762 Jean-Jacques Rousseau "argued that children should be given nothing but the unvarnished truth" (Saltman 249). And currently, due to a popular viewpoint that children should not be exposed to "unsuitable sexual or violent incidents" such traditional details have been omitted from many folktale picture books (England 82).

Not all critics agree with this line of thought. Rather, some believe that plot simplification and, in particular, changes concerning sexual and violent/evil elements, affect the meaning of the story and have the potential to devalue the intended audience of children. Because folktales spring from a social history comprised of details and points of view that often contrast with the norms of today's society, modern authors frequently expurgate elements with which they are not comfortable. Roger disagrees with this practise: "Folk tales are vestiges of the past and represent our heritage. Are we to alter that history?" she asks, "[w]ould we change the words of a poet to adjust to current expressions of thought?" (65). The history of which she speaks is a time when themes of sexuality were treated very differently. Regarding the story of "Rapunzel," for example, she wonders, "how many versions accessible to children include her twins at the end of the tale? I wonder, are they omitted because there is no marriage? [. . .] It is all too easy to forego the original flavor of the story, to destroy its national or cultural quality that offers an individuality" (64).
According to Perry, such omissions also reveal how modern society devalues the audience of children. When our stories shelter children from such themes, it can be argued that society does not adequately recognize their needs, nor does it prepare them for the world in which they live. She writes:

I believe that sex and Evil and unnatural behavior have been left out of children's/young adult literature in order to appeal to the current buying audience – an audience trained in Judeo-Christian morality. Our culture continues to insist that such things destroy the purity and innocence that we believe in and romanticize. Our estimations of pre-adolescents and adolescents reading young adult literature allow for sexual feelings to exist – but continue to enforce their suppression.[…]

It seems quite odd to me that we should try and keep our children ignorant of a world in which we participate by refashioning folk tales, the literary roots of our world. As we distill their literature, we misrepresent the world that children, like adults, are all participants in. (42-43)

Thus Perry contends that we need to discuss sexuality and violence with our children in order that they learn about and understand the world around them. (Philosophically, I agree with her, but putting these ideas into practise poses challenges when telling stories in public settings such as schools and libraries.)

Furthermore, many critics feel that children, who have limited life experience, need conventional violence in folktales in order to make sense of the world. One well-known supporter, Bruno Bettelheim, argues that the inclusion of violence in a tale helps children to identify the villains and the heroes. He believes that “polarization dominates the child’s mind, therefore fairy tales allow the child to easily comprehend the difference between good and evil” (8). So, in stories that conclude with the antagonist’s death, the violence provides a sense of justice and resolution.

Another element of a children’s folktale picture book that needs to be explored involves the way the adaptation deals with characterization. Unlike oral narratives,
mother’s death (MacDonald, “Lion’s”). But, significantly, in both stories, unreciprocated love motivates the woman’s brave and determined actions.

In addition, the author may opt to insert or omit characters. If this happens, it is important to ask whether or not she is justified in doing so. Does the omission of a secondary character aid the narrative flow? For example, a repetitive story such as “Jack and the Robbers,” a variant of “Bremen Town Musicians” which features a human protagonist with several animal companions, will not be noticeably different if told with fewer animal friends (MacDonald, “Jack”). Conversely, does an added character have an important reason for appearing in the story? For instance, early versions of “Little Red Riding Hood” did not include the hunter who saves the girl and her grandmother from the wolf’s belly. Yet, he was successfully introduced later to provide the story with a justifiable, happy ending (Hallet 23).

The final narrative element that needs examination is an adaptation’s use of setting. Oral narratives usually provide few details; for this reason, there are many conventional folktale beginnings, such as once upon a time or long ago and far away, that simply suggest that the time and place are removed from our own. The storied landscape may then include general markers such as a forest, a castle, a village and, occasionally, a place name. In the case of myths and legends, which belong to particular locales (eg. Sherwood Forest’s “Robin Hood”), the setting may also include geographical and/or temporal specificity.

Authors have the option of creating far more elaborate settings than do storytellers. Most obviously, the fact that the text is illustrated ensures that setting will be developed to some extent. But, whatever the chosen locale, including a contemporary
setting, adaptations must still respect the symbolism that the setting implies in the traditional tale. As Hearne discusses, when “the word ‘forest’ appears, everyone understands it as a symbolic setting for losing one’s way, for danger and confusion, for separation from security and those we love” (Choosing 148). Not surprisingly, it is in the woods where Hansel and Gretel meet the gingerbread witch. It is in the woods where Vasilisa meets Baba Yaga. Even if subsequent retellings do not include a literal forest, the setting should still create a mood of danger and isolation as does, for example, Fiona French’s Snow White in New York in which the heroine finds herself lost and alone in the city’s dark streets.

Stylistic Features

Evaluating an author’s stylistic techniques proves to be much more difficult than exploring her use of a folktale’s narrative structures. While the storyline, characters and setting may stay relatively similar in written and oral stories, an author’s use of style, or how she tells a story, does not.

Folktales have survived over time because their language facilitates oral performance. The storyteller’s words evoke memorable action, imagery and emotion, which in turn foster communal memory. Many techniques of oral narratives work as mnemonic aids to guide the storyteller’s memory, as well as help the listeners simultaneously discern meaning and visualize words. The storyteller’s limited description, coupled with his use of formulaic phrases, standard settings, character types, and conventional motifs or symbols quickly orientate listeners towards a story’s meaning, yet also allow them to imagine finer details. Listeners define their own once upon a time.
kingdom across the sea, or princess with the golden hair. And sound devices such as rhythm, repetition and rhyme, which aesthetically create a lyrical atmosphere, also serve as mnemonic aids (Ong 31-57; de Vos 3-4).

Although some of these same techniques, rhythm and repetition for example, also work as stylistic features in picture books, the written medium presents a different set of opportunities. This format allows the reader to absorb the story at an individual pace – she or he can take the time to reflect on the words, their meanings, and their spatial relationship on the page. This affords the author a chance to flesh out the plot, develop characters, and create a detailed setting. Also, because the author does not have to rely on mnemonic devices to communicate her story, she has the liberty to use rich description and figurative language. Moreover, there is an expectation that an author will use language in a fresh and unique way. As de Vos and Altmann point out, in “a literary narrative, commonly known phrases and stock situations are dismissed as clichés, hackneyed and trite” because “we literature folk primarily value originality of expression” (4).

Yet, even while creating a literary work infused with her own brand of artistry, the author who retells the folktale should, at the same time, write in a manner that resonates with the story’s oral roots. Bunnell suggests that, if “careful attention is not paid to the re-creation of stylistic elements, the folktale will lose its power and purpose” (31). In particular, the text should employ “language that lends itself to oral performance” (MacDonald letter), maintain key images and symbols, and use appropriate diction.
Because many oral stylistic devices also work within a written context, the author can, in fact, easily create a text that can be read aloud. Importantly, when words are spoken, they must flow with natural ease and, therefore, should not be interrupted with unnecessarily detailed description (England 87). Oral qualities are further accentuated with rhythmical movement and repetition of words, phrases and images (Bunnell 31). The point of view also facilitates oral performance; when an audience hears a story narrated in the first person, a discrepancy arises from personal pronouns that compromises narrative flow. Although I represents the narrator, it also contextually refers to the person reading aloud, thereby causing the audience’s attention to shift, if only slightly, from the story to the performer. A third person perspective, on the other hand, keeps the audience focused on the story.

Over generations, traditional stories have developed tried and true images and symbols that, due to their success and poignancy, have persisted from telling to telling. Hearne suggests that these elements need also to permeate written works because the “aesthetic survival of a strong story follows similar patterns in the oral and literary traditions” (140). We can see examples of this in a childhood favourite like “Little Red Riding Hood.” Regardless of medium, the image of the little girl saying, ‘Grandmother, what big teeth you have!’ is one of the most anticipated and familiar moments in all of Western literature (Hallet 21). Because certain folkloric motifs have remained over time, I feel that folktale picture books book should strive to maintain them in an effort to preserve the enduring power of the tale.

Every good author and storyteller retells a story with a narrative voice based on a personal style that helps to create a unique, fresh interpretation of the story. Because
style is flexible, and extremely individual, versions of the same story will differ in composition, focus, tone and diction. The folktale author can, in fact, take great liberties with almost all of these elements. Yet, whatever liberties are taken, the author should choose words that show respect for both the material and the audience.

Importantly, she should use, for the most part, standard language that is free from slang, idioms and colloquialisms that may challenge some readers. By doing so, the author renders the text accessible to a wider audience (England 87). That is not to say that an author should exclude all colloquialisms, however. Roger, in fact, expresses concern about too much standardization in children’s books. “Simplification of language or vocabulary [and] the loss of a culture’s individuality,” she says, “are but a few of the changes that have brought about an homogenized quality that makes me stop and ask: where is the distinctive stamp that belongs to the tale?” (65). Therefore, if the traditional folktale contains words or idioms unique to its cultural and temporal setting, the author should strive to include some of them in order to enhance the story. For example, because the ballads of “Tam Lin” use language strongly suggestive of a Scottish setting, words such as bairn, mantle, bonnie and bonnet would serve to enhance a picture book retelling.

Roger also advocates that the author show respect for an audience of children by choosing words that do not speak down to them. As an example, she draws on retellings of the Grimm’s version of “Rapunzel” which have replaced the word *rampion* with lettuce or spinach. She asks,

Is it not sufficient for a child to know that it is an edible craved by the woman with child in the story? Can we not let the child grow to the meaning of a word so long as there is no interference with the enjoyment of the story? This kind of
change, for me, is a form of condescension. And condescension has no place in our work with children. (64)

Thus, the inclusion of a variety of words, some of which may be unfamiliar to younger audiences, not only respects children’s intelligence and ability to infer contextual meaning, but it also presents them with the opportunity to increase their vocabularies.

Sometimes, however, archaic, obsolete or unsuitable words do interfere with a child’s enjoyment of the story. If the text contains too many unfamiliar words, a child may not enjoy the overall experience with the book as she or he will be too busy guessing a word’s meaning to exercise his or her imagination. England and Fasick suggest a compromise: “suitable adaptation takes place only if the story is made more clear to the child. [. . .] A new version should sound and read as well as an older one” (90).

Illustrative Features

Critics whose work evaluates illustration notably debate about whether or not folktales should be illustrated at all; opponents not only maintain that illustration “destroys the very vagueness that is a forte of fairy tales,” but also that it “preempts a child’s visualization” (England 88). On the other hand, proponents, such as the author of Words About Pictures, believe that the oral tale, with its focus on action and sparse detail, makes an excellent text for a picture book (Nodelman 279). Whatever the arguments, artists do illustrate folktales; it is the folkloric influence on a picture book’s images, layout and interpretation that concerns this study.

Any evaluation of how an illustrator visually represents a story must begin with the images themselves. He may execute them in any number of styles and media, but the need for quality is uncompromising. All too often, critics write, children’s picture books
include "hackneyed illustrations" (Schwarcz 118), "sweet-and-innocence nostalgia" (Hearne, Choosing 45), or "bad draftsmanship" that results in visual stagnancy (Alderson 38). If a folktale picture book is to appeal to an audience, the images must, first and foremost, reveal good craftsmanship.

Because illustrative craftsmanship entails the use of many techniques, critics have devoted entire books to this subject. However, just as it is unnecessary to preface textual analysis with explanations about grammatical elements, it is not my intention to discuss compositional techniques (except with reference to specific books in chapters five and six). It is not essential for a reader to have extensive knowledge about art in order to sense if pictures lack quality: poorly-crafted images that do not give the characters an expressive quality or fail to direct the reader’s eyes around the page will neither engage the reader’s interest nor facilitate his or her movement through the book (Hearne, Choosing 45; Alderson 38; MacDonald letter). The images will lie flat and lifeless on the page. In contrast, "[g]ood illustrators get right into the heart of the story and make it come alive with individualized lines, colors, shapes, textures, and patterns" (Hearne, Choosing 45).

The primary function of the illustrator “is to use the graphic art form to help tell the significant aspects of the story [. . .]” (Cianciolo 3). The folktale artist can do this in a number of ways. First of all, he should include major symbols of the retold story, the rose that appears in “Tam Lin,” for example. In addition, his choice of a style and medium should reflect the text’s tone as it does, for instance, in Paul O. Zelinsky’s retelling of Rumpelstiltskin; he sets this well known German tale in a very distinct setting in which, Hearne suggests, “[o]il paintings rich in Italian Renaissance style, setting and
costume unfold this version of the Grimms’ strange tale of greed compounded and, finally, confounded” (Hearne, Choosing 46). And dominant illustrative techniques work well if they support the folkloric themes found in the text. For example, Jane Doonan suggests that an illustrator may emphasize particular colours to focus on the story’s mood; a “high-key colour scheme using light colours is able to suggest feelings of well-being, whereas a low-key scheme in dark colours may well have a more sombre effect” (31). An illustrator may also support the text by emphasizing particular objects, and their importance, by isolating them from their surroundings with heavy contour lines (Doonan 24), or by placing them in the center of the picture (Nodelman 132-33). These techniques, only a few from an artist’s possible selection, can effectively support the written text.

Also, an illustrator, like an author, should take care to research the background of a story in order to convey accurate images (Aesop; MacDonald letter; England 91; Hearne, “Respect” 3). If the setting has a specific time period, the illustrator should ensure the absence of anachronisms. Likewise, if the story claims to take place in a specific locale, the artist should accurately reflect the culture in the costumes, objects, buildings and landscape. An example in which this does not occur is The Little Spotted Fish which tells the tale of a fisherlad who meets and rescues a magical talking fish. The author, Jane Yolen, offers the following comments about the illustrations: “I love the story, but the pictures puzzle me. It is clearly a Celtic story—all the clues are there: a green island, a coracle (a skin boat) and references to Irish poets and Scottish folk wisdom in the notes. But the Dutch artist Henstra set it in some kind of mythical Bora Bora” (Yolen, Book).
However, although an artist should research the objects he depicts, he does not have to faithfully represent the artistic style of the culture from which the story originates. In fact, Hearne suggests, it is better for an illustrator to accompany an adaptation in a new graphic mode “than to borrow art motifs and superimpose them uncertainly or awkwardly. When artists try to imitate a ‘ naïve’ or ‘primitive’ style, [ . . . ] the result is often art that’s neither authentically crafted nor freely imaginative” (“Respect” 3).

A final issue regarding a picture book’s images concerns their suitability for an audience of children. Illustrations of folktales may present images that some critics would not deem appropriate for a children’s audience. Folktales, as discussed earlier, use violence as a tool to polarize good and evil and to provide a just resolution to the story’s conflict. However, even scholars who believe that children process folktale violence differently than adults temper their arguments when a story is visually rendered. “The illustration is always more horrible than the folktale situation itself,” Lutz Röhrich writes, “not only because it freezes the ghastly moment, giving it permanence, but also because it moves the unconscious to the conscious by making it visible. Pictorial representation, by definition, makes the image conscious” (139). Thus the illustrator must be very careful in his choice and style of pictures when faced with such scenes.

From the evaluation of images we can move to the relationship between folklore and the book’s layout. Text breaks play an important role in facilitating a picture book’s ability to lend itself to oral performance. Ideally, the text and images are choreographed “so that the inevitable pauses will have a more positive effect on the rhythm and shape of the words” (Nodelman 248). Take, for example, a passage from The Enchanted Forest:
She crept closer to the well. The ancient bricks were 
half hidden by a mass of fragrant wild roses. She reached 
out to pick one—
   And in that instant... (7)

The last line perfectly mimics the natural pause a storyteller might use in order to create tension and suspense.

Another important element of layout is the integration of the text and the images. Illustrations should respect the autonomy of the folktale by allowing the text to maintain a strong presence on the page. For example, Kathryn Shoemaker, a well-known Canadian children’s illustrator, has analysed five picture book versions of *The Nightingale*. Of one illustrator she says: “[Nancy] Burkert is known for her respect for the text both in its content and its presence on the page. In her design of the book, about two-thirds of the forty-eight pages are devoted to text” (3). Furthermore, Shoemaker has argued the idea that, when pictures and text are wholly integrated, and often when they are partially integrated, the images tend to crowd or eclipse the text, signifying that the words themselves are insignificant. 7

Critics also stress that it is superfluous for an artist simply to mirror the story’s words. Rather, a picture book needs illustrations that enhance and expand the text (MacDonald letter; Cianciolo 3; Nodelman 274). To create added meaning, the illustrator may insert images – objects, symbols, visual motifs or characters – that do not appear in the text. For instance, an introduction may simply state that the story takes place *long ago and far away*, but the illustrations may define a specific culture, time or place. Also, the illustrator’s choice of scenes to depict is integral to the story. For example, versions of “Snow White” that favour pictorial concentration on the dwarfs communicate a very different story than those that focus on the Queen’s demise or on
"Love's First Kiss" (Nodelman 272-73). And lastly, the illustrator can bring emotive depth to a story through a character’s gesture, expression and mood. Trina Schart Hyman illustrates this idea in her version of "Snow White," in which she depicts Snow White's mother from inside [her] room; we look out with her, rather than at her from without. We are asked to empathize, and because we see details of the room – her maid, her religious triptych hanging on the wall, and so on – we know something about the particular interests and lifestyle of the person we are empathizing with. (Nodelman 208)

By fostering empathy in this way, Hyman brings a very original interpretation to a popular tale.

Summary

Any final evaluation of folktale picture books, as outlined in this chapter, may seem difficult to achieve, but I believe that certain criteria can nonetheless be proposed. Although traditional folktales, for the most part, belong in the public domain, the author should acknowledge her source material. And while oral narratives naturally change over time, an author should remain faithful to the narrative core of the tale. The written medium necessitates the original use of literary devices, but the written folktale should still lend itself to oral performance. The author must breathe fresh life and meaning into her interpretation, yet she must maintain key images and symbols. Finally, the author must show respect for the audience of children by blending standard language with cultural and temporal colloquialisms, as well as balancing familiar and unfamiliar vocabulary in such a way as to avoid condescension. Thus, an author retelling a folktale faces many challenges; yet, so does the illustrator, who must demonstrate craftsmanship and interpretive depth, support the textual symbols and themes, provide cultural and
Table 1: Evaluative Framework for Folktale Picture Books

**Illustrative Features:**
- Are the images well-crafted?
- Do the images support the text’s folkloric elements?
- Has the illustrator researched his or her folkloric subject?
- Are the images suitable for a children’s audience?
- Do the illustrations enhance the meaning of the folktale?
- Does the layout work well with the text?

**Stylistic Features:**
- Do the words lend themselves to oral performance and listening pleasure?
- Have the key images and symbols been kept?
- Is the diction suitable for an audience of children? Does it balance standard and distinctive vocabulary?

**Sources:**
Has the author cited his or her sources and/or provided background notes?

**Narrative Features:**
- Has the plot been altered from folklore versions? If so, what kind of changes have been made and do they justifiably improve the story?
- Do the main characters retain the names and/or core traits found in folklore?
- Have characters been added or omitted? If so, do these changes work in the story?
- Does the setting maintain the symbolism of the traditional folktale setting?
- Have important place names been kept?
temporal accuracy, be sensitive to the needs of an audience of children, as well as display an understanding of how layout will assist in communicating the story.

In short, a good folktale picture book results from the synthesis of research about the traditional tale, a subsequent respect for its core narrative elements and stylistic features, and the individual interpretations brought to the story by both the author and the illustrator. As Perry adeptly suggests:

When the metaphors of tales, the narrations of our social and literary history, are not reshaped according to contemporary needs, the tales are lost, their ability to instruct, provoke and pacify is leached out, darkness prevails. [...] The tales must be respected and honored, but not through exacting repetition, clanging like a death knell through literary history. Tales must be reshaped in order to be kept alive; they must be respected and honored by conscientious, active and self-aware retellings. ("Poetry" 12)

Still, the challenges of evaluating any work of written or visual art are compounded by the subjectivity of personal taste. No matter the author’s style of writing, or the artist’s approach to illustration, critics will differ in their opinions about the same book. Take, for example, reviews about Susan Cooper and Warwick Hutton’s Tam Lin. One writer feels that “Hutton is a masterful watercolorist [whose] close-ups lend immediacy to the dramatic action” (E.L.H., 341), while Diane Roback feels that “Hutton’s watercolors are not on par with Cooper’s superb prose. His images here are less distinct than usual, the lines are awkward and their faces are non-descript.” Yet, despite the differences of opinion, each critic has given thoughtful, considered analysis to the illustrative features of this picture book.

Thus, drawing on the evaluative issues and criteria discussed at length in this chapter, I will study four “Tam Lin” picture books to further explore the ways in which authors and illustrators retell oral narratives. However, in order to get a sense of how these artists use folkloric elements such as plot, characters, setting, conventions and
symbols, it will be beneficial to this study to explore the narrative and stylistic features of the ballads on which these picture books are based.

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1 The Aesop Prize criteria and the notes by MacDonald can be found respectively in appendices C and D. Please note that I do not address all of their evaluative concerns in this paper.

2 *Public domain*, or the idea that any person can tell any folkloric tale, is not a universal concept. In several cultures, especially First Nations peoples, particular individuals, families, or groups have rights to stories. Also, some critics argue that members outside of a particular story's culture do not have the right to tell the tale. In both of these contexts, cultural appropriation becomes an issue. However, "Tam Lin," as a widely sung and published ballad, does not face these issues. Therefore, I will not address appropriation in this paper. *Sitting at the Feet of the Past: Retelling the North American Folktale for Children* provides an interesting range of essays on this topic.

3 In her article, "Cite the Source," Hearne divides source notes into five categories: the non-existent source note that simply makes a claim that the book belongs to a specific culture; the background-as-source note that gives general information, but no specific sources; the fine-print source note which appears in small print on the CIP pages, almost invisible to the layperson; the well-made source note, which offers specific sources in visible print; and the model source note, that cites specific sources, information about the story's cultural context and describes how an author has changed the story (3-4).

4 According to Philip Aries, children were mixed with adult company around the age of seven, "as soon as they were considered capable of doing without their mothers or nannies, not long after a tardy weaning" (Sale 26).

5 This concept came from a discussion with Canadian author, storyteller and librarian, Sarah Ellis.

6 Of particular note are Perry Nodelman's *Words About Pictures* and Jane Doonan's *Looking at Pictures in Picture Books*. Both of these books give detailed accounts of illustrative techniques in children's books, covering topics such as movement, which the artist can communicate in a number of ways. For example, disconnected contour lines or lines with a slight tremor usually seem more energetic than solid lines (Doonan 24; Nodelman 161). Linear emphases lead the eye in different directions, with diagonal lines, for instance, conveying upwards / or downwards \ mobility (Doonan 27; Nodelman 127-28). Relational positions between characters on the page, or with each other, also shift our attention; for instance, if a character's back is turned toward us, our eyes move towards that at which s/he is looking (Nodelman 133). And also, by showing an action just before it reaches climax, such as a hammer in mid-air, one's mind automatically makes the leap to complete the action (Nodelman 160). These are but a few of the
techniques used by artists to facilitate movement, but they nonetheless give an introductory glimpse into fundamentals of composition.

7 I learned this information during a conversation with Kathryn Shoemaker in the spring of 2003.
Chapter Four: Traditional Tam Lin Ballads

Two generally accepted definitions for the ballad, given respectively by Gordon Hall Gerould and M.J.C. Hodgart are: “a narrative poem in short stanzas” (3), and “a folk song that tells a story” (9). Although neither definition proves independently sufficient, together they emphasize the folk ballad’s relationship to oral tradition and its stanza structure. ¹ As a sub-genre of oral narrative, the ballad has plot driven orientation, limited characterization, sparse description, third person point of view and conventional symbols. However, because of its stanza limitations, it also possesses a unique narrative structure. In contrast to the linear plots found in most folktales, for example, Gerould writes that this form “stresses situation rather than the continuity of narrative” (5). As well, the “situation unfolds as a series of flashes, each revealing a further step in the action” (89). It is these recurring flashes in nine ballads, Child 39A to 39I, ² which have informed my choices of illustrated Tam Lin books for this study.

Narrative Features

Five Tam Lin ballads, 39 A, B, D, G and I, tell complete versions of the story. I cite 39A at the beginning of chapter one and also in appendix A. 39G is given in appendix B. The remaining four fragments, 39 C, E, F and H, give a partial rendition of the story. However, in all nine versions, the following five motifs emerge. For simplicity, I will use the character and place names from 39A. (See table 2, page forty-two, for each variant’s character and place names. Table 3, page forty-three, shows the ballads’ motifs.)

• Janet pulls a rose at the forbidden woods, thereby summoning Tam Lin.
• A dialogue ensues in which Tam Lin questions Janet’s actions; she claims her right to
the land.

• Tam Lin instructs Janet how to save him from being sacrificed by the Queen o’
Fairies on Halloween.

• Janet waits for three horses, letting the black and brown pass, but pulling Tam Lin off
the white horse.

• To rescue Tam Lin, Janet holds him through several transformations until he finally
changes into a burning gleed.

The following motifs appear in at least two of the Child versions of the ballad:

• An introductory warning tells maidens to stay away from Carterhaugh. (six variants)

• Janet braids her hair, lifts her skirts and runs to Carterhaugh. (three variants)

• Margaret sews in her bower. (two variants)

• A sexual encounter, sometimes non-consensual, takes place. (six variants)

• Janet has a confrontation with her family or the court about her pregnancy. (four
variants)

• Janet picks herbs, or a rose, with the intention of precipitating a miscarriage. (seven
variants)

• Tam Lin recounts his abduction by the fairies. (six variants)
  He fell asleep. (two variants)
  He fell from his horse. (two variants)
  He fell asleep, then fell from horse. (one variant)
  He was hunting. (four variants)

• Tam Lin, by implication or explication, reveals he’s been christened. (six variants)

• The Fairy Folk ride through Scotland and England on Halloween. (two variants)

• Janet waits at the crossroads on Halloween. (five variants)

• Before the coloured horses arrive, Janet must let three companies pass by. (four
variants)
• Tam Lin rides a white horse because he is human. (five variants)

• A token helps Janet to recognize Tam Lin. (five variants)
  His left hand is bare. (three variants)
  He wears a star in crown. (two variants)
  His horse breathes fire. (one variant)

• Tam Lin, in metal form, undergoes a purification ritual before returning to human form. (five variants)
  Janet throws him into a well. (one variant)
  She dips him in milk and water. (two variants)
  She casts holy water around them. (two variants)

• After his last transformation, Tam Lin appears naked. (four variants)

• Janet covers Tam Lin with her mantle. (four variants)
  The mantle is green. (three variants)

• The Queen o’ Fairies curses Janet and Tam Lin. (seven variants)

Finally, the following details only appear in one of the ballad texts.

• A Fairy King is included.

• The Fairy Court includes grooms, squires, etc.

• Janet and Tam Lin loved each other when they were nine.

• Tam Lin is taken when he’s three years old.

• Tam Lin muses about having a child.

• Margaret holds Tam Lin until the sun rises.

For this study, I have consciously chosen picture books which include the five motifs found in all versions: ³ Tamlane by Judy Paterson and Sally J. Collins, The Enchanted Forest: A Scottish Fairy Tale by Rosalind Kervan and Alan Marks, Tam Lin by Susan Cooper and Warwick Hutton, and Tam Lin by Jane Yolen and Charles Mikolaycak. Not
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<th>Childs’ Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Robert Burns: Johnson’s Museum (1792)</td>
<td>Tam Lin (Roxbrugh’s grandson)</td>
<td>Carterhaugh Miles Cross</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>Glennriddel’s MS* (1791)</td>
<td>Tom Line (Roxbrugh’s grandson)</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>David Herd: The Ancient and Modern Scots (1769)</td>
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<td>Jennet</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>Motherwell’s MS Pitcairn’s MS James Maidment: A New Book of Old Ballads (1885)</td>
<td>Tomlin (Laird of Foulis’ son)</td>
<td>Chaster’s wood Rides Cross</td>
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<td>Fair Margaret</td>
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<td>Motherwell’s Notebook</td>
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<td>Lady Margaret</td>
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<td>Queen of Faery</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Motherwell’s MS (1825)</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Chester Wood Chester Bridge</td>
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<td>Queen of Fairies</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Sir Walter Scott: Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border (1802)</td>
<td>Tamlane (Earl of Murray’s son)</td>
<td>Carterhaugh Miles Cross</td>
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* MS = manuscript
The Fairy Court includes brown, squirre-like creatures and tiny, two-legged creatures. It is a place where the faeries live. The hero, a white horse, lives in the Fairy Court and is searching for his lost friends. He is guided by a fairy who tells him to look for the white horse. The hero must find the white horse and the fairy will help him. The fairy tells the hero to follow a path through a forest and to listen for the sound of singing. The hero finds the white horse and they follow the path together. They eventually reach a clearing where the fairy reveals her true form. The hero is surprised but also grateful for her help. The fairy tells the hero that he must now find the white horse's friends and that he will be guided by a special bird. The hero sets off on his journey, followed by the fairy, who sings a special song to guide him. The hero finds his friends and they all return home together, cheered by the fairy's song.
Because these details only appear in one ballad variant, they are not, technically, motifs. However, they do appear in picture books.
surprisingly, these authors have also incorporated into their stories a variety of additional
details, but these narrative flashes provide the foundation for the Tam Lin retellings. It is
also worth examining the ballads’ setting, characterization and stylistic devices in order
to make a thorough analysis of each picture book’s use of folklore.

As ballads generally focus on action, they do not develop a setting. The story may
unfold in specific locales (Janet’s home, Carterhaugh and Miles Cross), but the texts do
not elaborate on their description. Instead, the Tam Lin ballads make effective use of
colour. The flower that Janet pulls evokes imagery, even if the colour itself is not
mentioned. And the fairy troop’s brown, black and white horses help to present vivid
images of the fairy rade. Guy writes, “against the indistinct setting of Carterhaugh, the
colors of the fairy troop, however drab, create the presence of a fairy court which
provides a large part of the setting’s detail” (14).

Similarly, ballads do not focus on character development. Instead, character types
are revealed through action, dialogue and symbols. In “Tam Lin,” the two main
protagonists are the Janet and the Tam Lin figures; because the perspective remains with
the heroine, the audience comes to know her best. From descriptions such as “fair” or
“milk-white hand,” we know that Janet is beautiful. And from her words and actions, we
understand her core traits. Importantly, Janet ignores an explicit warning and goes to the
forbidden Carterhaugh. In some variants this disobedience is further expressed when she
goes “as fast as she can hie”(39A, 3). Once there, she counters Tam Lin’s questions by
asserting, “I’ll ask nae leave o thee”(39G, 6). Later, back at home, she uses very strong
language to defy both a senior knight and her father. She tells them respectively: “Had
your tongue, ye auld fac’d knight/Some ill death may ye die” (39B, 12) and “There’s not
a laird about your ha/ Shall give the bairnie’s name”(39B, 14). These incidents, coupled
with her final act of holding Tam Lin during his transformations, reveal a willful,
confident and courageous heroine. Furthermore, audiences familiar with the ballad
tradition would have known that Janet’s character accords with the “heroines of ballad
literature [who], as well as being effective rescuers of their lovers, are also very adept at
dealing with parents who attempt to restrict their relationships” (Kealy 129). Thus, in
spite of her family, Janet meets, loves and rescues the father of her child.

Notably, some texts imply that Janet also seeks a sexual liaison. This desire,
suggested by Janet’s intentional journey to Carterhaugh although she knows she may not
return a maiden, is confirmed by highly symbolic language. In preparation for that
meeting, Janet “[brodes] her yellow hair,” “[kilts] her green kirtle a little aboon her knee”
and “pulls a rose” (39A 3&5). In the ballad context, these images respectively connote a
virgin indicating her readiness for sexual activity, a garment which will bring about bad
luck as well as hide tell-tale grass stains, and sexuality. 

In contrast, the man with whom the liaison occurs is not portrayed with the same
amount of metaphorical or dialogical richness. The ballad neither describes Tam Lin’s
physical traits nor, for the most part, his actions. We can infer, however, that the white
steed he rides externalizes his beauty and his innocence. Beyond that, we gain a limited
understanding of this character primarily through his speech. For example, Tam Lin feels
entitled to question Janet, first about her presence at Carterhaugh and then about her
intended abortion. He is also the kind of man who hasn’t any hesitation in taking a
maiden, either with her permission or against her will. He also discloses to Janet
important details about his abduction, his lineage, his Christian soul, and his impending death. Ironically, he doesn’t appear very disturbed about his life in the fairy world, telling Janet that “Full pleasant is the fairy land / How happy there to dwell” (39C, 5). He only wishes to leave because he fears his own life is endangered by the Queen o’ Fairies.

The ballads create a curious portrayal of the Queen o’ Fairies. On one hand, she rules over a very “pleasant land” which Tam Lin seems to find enticing. On the other, she maintains her realm by paying a teind to hell every seven years. Thus, she seems both agreeable and villainous at the same time. This corresponds with the traditional belief that fairies “are neither especially good nor especially bad. They simply have unusual powers for good or ill [so] it is best to keep them happy” (Niles, “Tam Lin” 341). But, by the ballads’ conclusion, there is little doubt about her ferocity. The black and brown horses externalize her dark thoughts; her curses manifest them. She declares that, had she known that Janet would rescue Tam Lin, she would have taken out his two grey eyes and his heart and replaced them with wood and stone.

The remaining characters do not play as distinguished a role in the story as Tam Lin, Janet or the Queen. With the exception of the “four and twenty ladies fair” and the “auld grey knight,” the ballad texts don’t attribute any physical traits to secondary characters. Nonetheless, the dialogue hints at their personalities. The “auld grey knight” scolds Janet out of fear that he and his knights will be “be blamed a” for her pregnancy (39I, 16). Her father, knowing her situation, still calls her “sweet Janet” (39A, 13) Her brother, mother and sister direct her to gather herbs that will “scathe the babe away” (39F, 5). And the King o’ Fairies and the other fairy folk serve merely as a silent backdrop to the Queen. However, although we don’t know much about the fairy characters, ballad
audiences would have understood that they are “not the minute creatures of modern whimsy, but are like human beings in size and some of their ways of life” (Hodgart 116).

Stylistic Features

The ballad form imposes several rhetorical devices onto the narrative in order to effectively communicate the story to the listener. Its structure supports rhyme, rhythm and repetition, while its oral conventions influence point of view, word choice and symbols.

In addition to providing an ideal context for rhyme and rhythm, the ballad stanza can serve as a refrain – one of four important types of repetition. Although this does not advance the story, it gives the storyteller a mental pause to help him remember or improvise the next line. Another form of repetition is incremental or cumulative in nature; a stanza repeats itself in succession, each time adding details that eventually lead to the climax. Although “Tam Lin” does not employ a refrain, incremental repetition takes place when Tam Lin shape shifts:

‘They’ll turn me in your arms, lady,  
Into an esk and adder;  
But hold me fast, and fear me not,  
I am your bairn’s father.

‘They’ll turn me into a bear sae grim  
And then a lion bold;  
But hold me fast, and fear me not,  
As ye shall love your child. (39A31-32)

The next two stanzas provide a similar element of tension; we know that the change is forthcoming, but we don’t know what shape until Tam Lin finally says: “And then I’ll be your ain true-love / I’ll turn a naked knight” (39A, 35).
Two additional types of repetition occur in “Tam Lin.” Parallelism happens when actions repeat that which has already been established in speech; for example, Tam Lin gives Janet detailed instructions to rescue him, then she later accomplishes the tasks. And finally, a single line or verse may be sprinkled throughout the text; while this may resemble a refrain, it does not occur in patterned intervals. For example, in order to emphasize Janet’s character, some Tam Lin variants repeat the stanza in which she traverses to and from Carterhaugh:

Janet has kilted her green kirtle  
A little aboon her knee,  
And she has snooded her yellow hair  
a little aboon her bree  
And she’s awa to Carterhaugh.  
As fast as she can hie. (39A, 3,8 &17)

In general, although these types of repetition often seem ineffective from a rhetorical perspective, they have the potential to “intensify some moment of the action, or repeatedly give emotional colour to the story” (Gerould 107). This is an important method of communicating mood, given that the ballad narrator’s role is to remain objective.

The narrative voice in most ballads, including “Tam Lin,” creates a distance and objectivity between the narrator and the subject matter. Generally, this results from the use of limited third person point of view and the narrator’s lack of judgmental commentary or explanation. For example, the narrator makes no comment regarding Tam Lin’s pending sacrifice. This “impersonal attitude,” however, does not restrict audience sympathy for the “victims of mischance or cruelty or injustice”; rather, the narrator allows the characters and events to speak for themselves (Gerould 9). As a result, the very fact that Tam Lin is to be killed may provoke audience sympathy.
Simplicity of diction is also integral to a ballad's narrative voice. Because voiced lyrics have to quickly convey an image to the listener, "[u]nconventional metaphors are rare, perhaps because they might hold up the narrative" (Hodgart 31). Thus we find that Tam Lin's steed is "lighter than the wind" (39A, 16), or that Janet was "once the flower among" the ladies (39A, 9). Furthermore, "The ballads are sternly economical in their vocabulary. They use Homeric epithet [...] to avoid distraction from the story-telling" (Hodgart 31). In "Tam Lin" we find such examples in "auld grey knight" (39B, 12) and "milk-white steed" (39A, 28).

Ballad rhetoric also relies heavily on generally accepted motifs and symbols. Katherine Briggs calls Child 39 "a compendium of Scottish Fairy beliefs" which includes mortal abduction, a teind to hell, transformations and disenchantment (de Vos 90). But, rather than give possible interpretations of all of the symbolic objects and actions present in the ballad, I will limit my discussion to a select few that have relevance to the picture books in this study.

Importantly, "Tam Lin" exposes a number of folklore taboos. It reveals how an individual, inadvertently or otherwise, summons the fairies. For example, the rose, previously discussed as a sexual symbol, also connects the fairies with nature. When Janet pulls the rose, she disturbs nature and, by extension, the fairy world. Thus the disturbance serves as one method of invocation. Others include: a human's presence on the pagan transition holidays when fairies travel through the mortal world; sleep under a sacred apple tree (Guy 40-41); and hunting, during which a character undertakes a metaphorical search for self (Caldecott 52).
The Tam Lin ballads also contain several religious motifs which, quite remarkably, apply to both human Christians and fairy pagans. For example, the teind to hell may seem like a Christian contrivance to create an allegiance between the fairies and the devil. However, the sacrifice does much more than cast the fairies in a negative light. It echoes the pagan ritual murder of the divine kings; because the king embodied the fertility of the land, he was sacrificed when his potency failed (Hodgart 124). Furthermore, the purification rite that Tam Lin must undergo, either by milk, water or holy water, has dual purposes. This act not only resembles a christening, cleansing Tam Lin of his fairy sins, but it is necessary for “passing from a non-human shape, produced by enchantment, back in the human” (Child 338). The well, as the unique place of disenchantment in 39A, works beautifully in this context because it serves as a method of purification as well as an entrance to the otherworld.

Additional motifs exclusively express pre-Christian themes. The fairies’ attention to horses harks back to the early Celts, who held these animals in such high regard that they associated them with sacred myths and deities. In addition, the night on which Janet saves Tam Lin, Halloween or Samhain, has historically signified a changeover to the new year, a time of remembrance for the dead, and the eve when the fairy folk will ride. Also important is the location at which Janet saves him; the crossroads or a bridge was known as a passage between the human and fairy worlds (Niles, “Tam Lin” 341). Furthermore, it can be argued that the Queen’s curses arise not only from her anger at a lost offering, but also from the fact that Tam Lin, with eyesight intact, will now be able to see fairy folk who walk amongst humans (Child 339).
Because the Tam Lin ballads contain a wealth of plot devices, characters, conventional motifs and symbols, many interpretive possibilities exist. What appears in one ballad may not be found in the next. For example, variant 39G suggests that Tam Lin rapes Janet while another offers humorous innuendo: “And what they did I cannot tell,/ The green leaves were between” (391, 10). Moreover, others gloss over this scene completely, leaping from Janet’s claim to the land straight to her journey back home. As a result, the dissimilarities between variants often make it difficult to extract a common meaning. Also, the meaning “in large part depends on the teller, the audience, the culture and time period the narrative is presented in” (Hixon 187).

That said, I nevertheless maintain that it is possible to suggest a few common threads. The protagonist possesses a sense of self-determination that leads her to break social rules. Also, the ballads address the triumph of human love over fairy darkness, good versus evil. Regardless of whether Janet is motivated by maternal or romantic love, she risks her life and holds fast during severe testing to break a powerful enchantment, ensure a father for her child, and marry the man she loves – all in spite of earlier social condemnation. Finally, the ballads are heavily steeped in fairy symbolism.

Clearly, “Tam Lin’s” narrative and rhetorical devices work in a way that leaves much to the imagination. As readers and listeners of the ballads, we are responsible for determining how the characters look and the tone in which they speak. We are given symbols that resonate with so many layers of meaning that each of us will, no doubt, understand the story in a different way. Its skeletal framework thus offers immense flexibility to storytellers and authors alike. Chapters five and six will explore and
critique how four author and illustrator collaborations have envisioned their own Tam Lin stories.

1There are two main types of ballads. In addition to the traditional folk ballad, passed down orally, a literary ballad, written by a known author, is “a studied imitation of the general rhythmic pattern and stanza form of the folk ballad...[that is] more polished and consciously artful”(Morner 10). There has been much scholarship about the folk authenticity of Child ballads 39A and 39I. Critics disagree about the origins of the former ballad, recorded by Robbie Burns; while E.B. Lyle believes Burns was faithful to several folk variants, John D. Niles believes that he made many literary changes. The author of the latter, Sir Walter Scott, claims that his version was “compounded of the Museum copy, Riddell’s, Herd’s, and ‘several recitals from tradition’ ”(Child 335). However, because Burns and Scott have obviously drawn from earlier variants and are not creating original literary pieces, I have not differentiated them from folk ballads.

2 Several additional versions exist, but “all are either reprinted in Child or closely resemble those in his collection” (White 6); therefore, these nine variants provide an excellent point of reference for this study.

3 I have decided to include two books in this study that veer slightly from these motifs. Kervan has altered the story to include two black horses, instead of a black and a brown. However, this choice echoes the ballads’ purpose of conveying the darkness of the forest and the Fairy Queen’s intentions. Similarly, Cooper substitutes the brown horse with a grey. This change attests to her rich understanding of folklore, as fairy horses in general are often black, grey and white (Briggs, Fairies 90). She has also altered the time period from Halloween to Midsummer Eve which, for reasons further discussed on page 80, do not adversely affect the story.

4 Barre Tolken discusses the meaning of combing hair and the rose, while Katherine Briggs discusses that wearing green brings about bad luck (Hixon 204). Abigail Acland, on her Tam Lin website, asserts that green hides tell-tale grass stains.

5 One version strongly suggests that Tam Lin rapes Janet: “When he had got his wills of her,/ His will as he had taen” (39G, 8). Kimberly White focuses on this interpretation in her MA thesis, He Never Once Asked Her Leave.

6 Examples of this can be found in many Celtic myths. In Irish mythology, Macha is a horse goddess whose mortal husband forced her, while pregnant, to race against the king’s horses; as punishment, for nine generations, the men of Ulster, in the hour of their greatest need, became defenseless as a woman in labour. Likewise, in Welsh mythology, the goddess Rhiannon is an otherworldly horsewoman who marries a mortal, Pwyll; when she is wrongly accused of murdering her son, Pwyll forces her to carry visitors from gate to the castle on her back. Her son, Pryderi, is also associated with horses. Two excellent books on Irish and Welsh mythology are, respectively, Over Nine Waves, by Marie Heaney, and The Mabinogion, translated by Jeffrey Gantz.
Chapter Five: Analyses of Tamlane and The Enchanted Forest

I have examined critical issues arising from the adaptation of an oral folktale to a folktale picture book as well as the narrative and stylistic features of the Tam Lin ballads. Building on this research, my study now shifts to the analysis of individual picture book retellings of “Tam Lin.” Of the nine such books I found, I have chosen the four that most closely match Child’s Tam Lin versions, by incorporating the dominant motifs discussed in the previous chapter. The books which did not fall into this category are The Red Cloak by Betsy Byers, Never Let Go by Geraldine McCaughrean, The Nightwood by Robin Muller, Wild Robin by Susan Jeffers, and The Magic Well by Maida Silverman. Those included in this study are Tamlane by Judy Paterson and Sally J. Collins, The Enchanted Forest by Rosalind Kervan and Alan Marks, Tam Lin by Susan Cooper and Warwick Hutton, and Tam Lin by Jane Yolen and Charles Mikolaycak. (Appendix E offers annotations and further demonstrates the criteria for picture book selection.)

This chapter focuses on the first two titles, Tamlane and The Enchanted Forest. Having evaluated their source acknowledgments and how their narrative, stylistic and illustrative features deal with the folklore of the traditional ballads, I now propose to demonstrate that both picture books, in my opinion, exhibit fundamental flaws which compromise the integrity of the Tam Lin tale. As a result, they are examples of unsuccessful retellings.

Tamlane by Judy Paterson and Sally J. Collins:

Judy Paterson’s retelling takes place in Ettrickdale, where Tamlane, son of the Earl of Murray, plays with Janet, daughter of the Earl of March. When Tamlane is nine,
he and his white horse disappear. Janet asks her nurse about him, but the old woman warns her, “‘You Just stay away from wells and woods altogether or you’ll be taken by the fairy folk too!’ ”(4).¹ Many years later, on a spring day, Janet decides to discover for herself if the stories about Tamlane’s fairy abduction are true.

In the woods on the Carterhaugh Estate, Janet finds a white horse standing by a well. Believing this to be a sign that Tamlane is near, she sits and waits. However, only after she picks a white rose does he appear. He asks why she has come and she, in return, asserts her rights as the Laird’s daughter. They recognize each other and, subsequently, explore the fairy forest together. At the end of the day, when Janet returns home, she is surprised that little time has passed and that the servants are still performing their morning chores.

As summer passes, she remembers days spent playing hide and seek with Tamlane in the rose garden. And by the time autumn arrives, she knows she loves him and determines to see him again. Returning to the well, she summons him once more with the last rose on the bush. She encourages him to come home to be with his family, but he informs her that, because of a spell, he cannot. Moreover, the Queen of Fairies plans to use him to pay her due to the devil. But he告诉Janet, “‘If you love me, [...] you can break the spell which holds me’ ” (19). She promises to do so. Later that night, on Halloween, she wraps herself in a green mantle and goes to Miles Cross. At midnight, the Queen passes by on a black stallion, the King of Elves on a brown horse, and Tamlane on a milk-white steed. Janet pulls him from the saddle and holds him amidst the confusion of screeching fairies and magic flashes that turn him into a snake, a bear, a lion and, finally, a burning lead weight. Simultaneously, she declares her love for Tamlane 

55
and drops the weight into an ancient trough. When Tamlane steps out of the hissing water, Janet wraps her mantle around him. The Queen curses them, but Tamlane is safe. They return home, much to the joy of the old nurse, whose concluding words, “‘You found Tamlane!’” (32), echo their childhood game.

Source Acknowledgement

Paterson has clearly researched her retelling. In her notes, she offers information about the Etterick Valley – land once belonging to the Earls of Dunbar and March, both of whom appear in Sir Walter Scott’s version, Child 39I. As well, she provides background about the theft of small children by fairies and the magical nature of woods and wells. She also quotes, but does not cite, the final stanza from Herd’s version, Child 39B. Throughout the text, she further borrows heavily from, but does not credit, Gordon Jarvie’s “Tam Lin,” found in Scottish Folk and Fairy Tales, which she quotes almost verbatim. Compare the following:

Jarvie:
“Come with me Janet, and I will show ye all the flowers of the forest.”
And so they explored the forest of Carterhaugh, which Janet had never before visited, in the half-light of the gloaming. (56)

“I must go,” Janet said at last. “They will be looking for me. I have been gone a long time.”
“Not so very long,” laughed handsome Tam. “Not so very long.”
And indeed, when Janet returned to the Hall from the enchanted wood, no one had even noticed she had been away. (56)

Paterson:
“Come with me Janet, and I will show you the fairy forest.”
They spent a long time exploring the forest of Carterhaugh. It was a new and secret world for Janet who had never been there before. In the half light they looked for flowers [. . .].” (10)

“It is time I went home. I have been gone for such a long time. My father will be looking for me.”
Tamlane smiled at her, “You have not been away for long. Do not fear.” (10)
All was just as she left it. No-one seemed to notice that she had even been away. (13)
Jarvie:

Then the fairies were screeching and screaming around her. (58)

Paterson:

All around, the fairies ran screeching and screaming. (20)

Yet, overall, Paterson has blended together details from Jarvie as well as many other versions in order to create her personal vision of the story.

Narrative Features

Like Scott, Paterson includes Janet and Tamlane’s childhood friendship in her plot. They play together until he is nine years old, at which time he and his white horse disappear one day after “riding through the forest of Carterhaugh to visit his uncle” (4). This bond provides motivation for Janet to disregard the warning about the dangers of Carterhaugh. Also, because the element of sexuality and family conflict have been omitted from the story, this relationship provides a believable reason for Janet to return to Carterhaugh a second time, then to Miles Cross to risk her life on Tamlane’s behalf.

Although Janet’s family doesn’t provide conflict, it nevertheless plays an important role in the story. Janet’s and Tamlane’s fathers, the Earls of March and Dunbar, are both mentioned in the introductory paragraph and on several additional occasions. When Tamlane disappears, his father expresses worry, showing that he cares about his son. Later, by offering Tamlane her father’s assistance, Janet demonstrates belief in her father’s abilities and a lack of concern that he will be angry at her going to Carterhaugh. But, most revealing, is the question she asks Tamlane: “‘Would you like to be with your family again?’ ”(17). Thus, although Janet loves Tamlane, the impetus to save him seems strongly related to familial bonds. This is reinforced at the conclusion,
when the old nurse, who cared for them both as children, shows much delight that he has come home.

Janet’s attention to family shows Paterson’s creative interpretation, but Janet’s bravery and willfulness also closely mirror her ballad counterpart. Furthermore, although not surrounded by the “four and twenty ladies” and the “auld grey knight” of the traditional verses, Janet clearly belongs to the upper class; in her home she is surrounded by an aristocratic father, an old nurse and several servants. As an earl’s son, Tamlane occupies a similar social position.

In addition to using social class as a tool to convey characterization, Paterson also depends on description. For example, she writes that Janet has “golden hair” (6) and a “brave heart” (5). She also allows Janet to experience a variety of emotions. For instance, when Janet realizes that Tamlane remembers her, she reacts crossly at first, but then frowns and worries. Similarly, although she is “not afraid” in the woods (6), at Miles Cross she is so “frightened she nearly [lets] go” of the bear which Tamlane has become (24). Tamlane’s physical and emotional attributes are likewise included in the text. He is tall and handsome, with grey eyes and long, dark hair worn loose over his shoulders. He laughs softly when he meets Janet, but later looks “sad and troubled” when he reveals his impending death (17).

Paterson, however, offers no physical description of the Queen of Fairies. As with the ballads, we must infer her character traits from Tamlane’s comments and the Queen’s limited dialogue. He tells Janet that, because she is not a good fairy, she will use her magical powers to change Tam Lin into “all kinds of beasts” (19). And, from the
Queen's final curses, we know that she is very angry at Janet’s success in saving Tamlane at Miles Cross.

While Paterson has maintained important place names such as Carterhaugh and Miles Cross, as well the date of Halloween, her development of the setting presents problems. She makes reference to Ettrickdale and the Border Country, but nowhere, including in the notes, does she indicate that these locales are in Scotland. This is a minor concern for the reader who is unfamiliar with the Scottish landscape. What proves more problematic is Paterson’s description of the woods on Carterhaugh Estate. At first, it works. Janet “wandered deeper and deeper into the forest. It grew more and more still and silent, but she was not afraid. Then she came to a small clearing. Here the sunlight struggled through the dark trees” (6). This description creates a dark atmosphere reflecting the inherent dangers of the wood. But later, Tamlane and Janet’s exploration of the fairy wood undermines this symbolism: “It was a new and secret world for Janet who had never been there before. In the half light they looked for flowers and watched the squirrels at play” (10). Because Paterson minimizes the threat posed by the woods, Janet’s metaphorical struggle against evil and darkness is also diminished.

**Syntactic Features**

Overall, Paterson’s Tamlane reads aloud well enough. It is told from a third person perspective and, for the most part, she has smoothed out the narrative flow by omitting scenes based on the ballads’ redundant verses – Janet running to and from Carterhaugh, for instance. Also, although the text does not notably use techniques such as repetition, rhyme and so forth to make it especially suitable to oral performance,
neither does it get weighted down with too much detail. Paterson does, however, include lovely details that heightened my appreciation of the text. I particularly like two sentences: “The north wind carried strange sounds” (20); and “her fingers were tangled deep into the shaggy mane of a yellow-eyed lion” (27). Also, the diction is fairly standard, but includes geographically specific, archaic words such as “wee,” “mantle,” “bonny” and “laird.”

Paterson has also incorporated many symbols into her retelling. Importantly, she maintains many that are found in the ballads: the well, the white steed, the roses, the crossroads and the green mantle. She does not attempt to explain their meaning, but simply includes them in the text several times and trusts that the reader will come to an understanding. Her private symbols are less successful. For example, the text brings attention to Janet’s garments; for her first excursion, she dons a rose-coloured gown and a green mantle. For her next visit, she wears a peach gown with a red hooded cloak. And, when she goes to Miles Cross that same evening, she again wears the green mantle. This leads me to believe that these colours should play a significant role. However, aside from the last item, the colours are not consistent, nor do they seem related to other aspects of the text. They are merely visual details that do not further the story.

Illustrative Features

The story’s illustrations have many weaknesses. Most obviously, Collins does not effectively facilitate the reader’s movement through the book because her images, rendered in 7 ½” x 9 ¾” format with mixed media including ink, crayons and watercolours, do not consistently demonstrate skilled craftsmanship. Some spreads
successfully convey movement; for example, the scene in which Janet pulls Tamlane from his horse is intensely dramatic; amidst swirls of blue, green and yellow crayon, Tamlane awkwardly leans to the left of his horse, about to fall into Janet’s grasp. But the majority of spreads feel stagnant, partly because of characters’ lack of movement, but also in part due to their relational positions. For example, because a reader’s eyes are naturally drawn in the direction towards which a character is looking, it works well for a character to look to the right; this takes the reader’s eyes towards the edge of the page, then he or she will naturally turn it. Conversely, Tamlane has six spreads that show Janet facing left.

Furthermore, the images convey neither a true sense of the danger that Tamlane faces, nor the severity of the risk that Janet takes to save him from the Queen of Fairies. As already discussed, the text minimizes these elements, but the illustrations compound the effect. In the woods, not only is there an illustration of “squirrels at play” (10), but there are also a deer and two rabbits innocuously watching the young couple from behind. Moreover, the fairies seem much more comical than frightful. The Queen of Fairies appears hag-like, with long, white spiked hair and melodramatic facial expressions. The front cover shows her abducting Tamlane by grabbing his shirt collar, the back of which is stretched high over his head. This does not seem like a genuine abduction by a powerful magician. Conversely, the other fairies, who run “screeching and screaming” (20), are tiny and scrawny, with pointed hats and stick-like hair. They poke
their little heads out of the well. Their angular bodies awkwardly dance and taunt. These images do not evoke any feelings but those of lightheartedness.

However, despite the illustrative drawbacks, the images nonetheless bring a strong sense of place to the story and also respect the presence of the text. In particular, the characters’ clothing reveals a medieval setting that is not made explicit in the text. One scene shows Janet and her peers wearing tippets, fabric streamers, attached to their short sleeves, as well as a separate undergarment covering the arm to the wrist. Also, Janet’s head is encircled with a chaplet, or band, of gold while Tamlane is dressed in a tunic with tights. They both wear the pointed shoes indicative of this time period.

Before offering a conclusion for Tamlane, I will first examine another picture book based on the story of “Tam Lin.”

The Enchanted Forest: A Scottish Fairy Tale by Rosalind Kervan and Alan Marks:

“Once upon a time there was a thick forest that was said to be enchanted. [...] But nobody with any sense ever went into it” (7). That is, until Janna, whose father owns the land, squeezes under the fence one day and goes in. She discovers a horse tethered by an ancient well, half-hidden by a mass of wild roses; she picks one. Tam Lin appears, demanding to know how she dare come into the forest. Janet coolly answers him, but her self-assurance fades once he tells her that, as payment to the Fairy Queen who saved his life after a fall from a horse, he must capture anyone who enters the forest. However, Tam Lin offers to risk the Queen’s punishment if Janna returns to the well on Hallowe’en, pulling him free from the fairy procession. “‘But do not let me go!’” he says, “‘For nothing can hurt you [...]. If you love me’” (12). The next night, Janet
does as ordered and finds her way back to the well. The Fairy King and Queen ride past on black horses, but Tam Lin arrives on the snow-white horse. After a moment’s hesitation, she drags him from the saddle and holds onto him while grim-faced fairies poke and stab at her, as he turns into a snake, a lion, and a red-hot bar of metal. She staggers towards the well, hoping to relieve the burning pain, but before she can dip her hands the metal splashes into the water of its own accord. Tam Lin changes back into his human shape and offers his hand to Janna, who takes it of “her own free will” (27). In the time it takes them to walk to her house, they decide to get married and they “[love] each other deeply for the rest of their days” (29).

Source Acknowledgement

The CIP page indicates that “[t]his retelling is based on a traditional folk tale, which can be found in Scottish Folk and Fairy Tales” edited by Gordon Jarvie” (4). Although it does not refer to the ballad sources (which the author may not have used), it informs the reader of the story’s cultural background and folkloric roots. And, importantly, it assists a potential researcher by providing the name of an additional version.

Narrative Features

Although Kervan depends heavily on Jarvie’s version, Kervan streamlines her retelling in several ways. She keeps only four characters (Tam Lin, Janna, the Fairy Queen and King), omitting the father figure and the people who welcome Janna and Tam Lin back to the Hall. By doing so, Kervan reduces the number of necessary scenes.
also collapses the heroine’s two trips into a single event so that Janna meets Tam Lin only once before being asked to save him on Hallowe’en. This allows Kervan to avoid any focus on sexuality, which was not, in any case, part of her source material. She also omits the mortal sacrifice that the Fairy Queen must make every seven years. Instead, Tam Lin merely wants to be free from enchantment.

Most significantly, however, she leaves out the initial warning, thereby eroding the heroine’s traditional, courageous spirit, robbing Janna of the foreknowledge she needs to make informed choices. Because Janna has not been explicitly warned about the real dangers lurking in the woods, she does not purposely disobey an authority figure when she enters it. Rather, her decision seems based on the fact that she is a “wild sort of girl” who “doesn’t have any sense” (7). Furthermore, she makes sure nobody is looking before she enters the forest. This protagonist differs greatly from the ballads’ heroine who unabashedly challenges authority and asserts her independence.

Kervan’s Janna does not choose to take risks, but is forced into doing so by Tam Lin’s ultimatum. Nor is she told that, once she grabs Tam Lin, he will change into the shapes of ferocious beasts. She only knows that “the Fairy Queen will try to frighten [her] with her spells” (12). Moreover, despite the fact that Janna holds him throughout his transformations, she is not even responsible for the final act of throwing him into the well. Rather, when she nears it, “the metal bar suddenly [leaps] from her hand of its own accord into the water” (24). Janna thus is simply a tool that Tam Lin uses to help him save himself.

In contrast, Tam Lin’s character has a very strong presence. For the most part, he devises his own plan to be free of his enchantment by coercing Janna into helping him.
He acts very aggressively towards her. When she first plucks the rose, he cries "'How dare you come here!'" (11). When she answers him with conviction, he throws back his head and laughs. He later seizes her hand, tightens his grip and tells her she must return on Hallowe’en. Fittingly, his forceful nature melts away once the enchantment has ended. "'Thank you, my lady,'" he says with a smile (27). He has become a gentleman.

Unfortunately, the manner in which Kervan has developed her characters interferes with core themes common to traditional Tam Lin retellings. "The emotional core of the Tam Lin tale," Hixon writes, "is redemption and return to the human world brought about through the power of love to hold fast during severe testing" (194). Kervan’s Tam Lin, at least initially, has an overbearing nature that makes it difficult for the theme of love to ring true in the story. Because he acts so roughly towards Janna, I do not believe that her love for him, the very love she needs to ensure that the Fairy Queen cannot hurt her, has developed that quickly, or that truly.

Similarly, Janna’s character contradicts the concept of free will so inherent in traditional versions; John Stephens, in a discussion about “Tam Lin,” says, “folktale form and content are used to examine the importance of free will and choice in human life, while insisting that individuals must take responsibility for the consequences of their actions” (223). In contrast, Kervan’s Janna does not consciously defy authority and act of her own volition, but only exerts free will at the story’s conclusion.

To a lesser degree, Kervan has also taken some liberties with “Tam Lin’s” traditional setting. The presence of fairies and the importance of Halloween offer some clues, but if it weren’t for the subtitle, the reader would not know the story’s Scottish
location. Also, the forest remains unnamed and the crossroads do not play a role in the story.

Nonetheless, Kervan is faithful to the setting’s spirit. The shadowy forest is “utterly still, eerily silent” (8). It also takes on a carnivorous nature when “the trees swallow [Tam Lin] up” (12). This fosters a mood of danger and trepidation. The date on which the rescue must occur also compounds the element of darkness, as Halloween is the day on which “most people [stay] safe inside their houses with their doors tightly locked” (14).

**Stylistic Features**

From a perspective of oral performance, Kervan’s adaptation of this folktale for a picture book format is excellent. Of the four works I use in this study, *The Enchanted Forest* is the shortest (1040 words), leaving out many details in favour of illustrative communication. In addition to using third person point of view, Kervan also pays a lot of attention to the rhythm of the story; her lines vary in length, include fragments, and make excellent use of caesuras:

Under the trees, everything was utterly still, eerily silent. Slowly, Janna walked on.

At last, she came to an old well. Behind it, a lovely snow-white horse was standing, as if it were waiting for its rider.

Janna looked around. She couldn’t see anyone. She called out, but nobody answered.

She crept closer to the well. The ancient bricks were half-hidden by a mass of fragrant wild roses. She reached out to pick one –

And in that instant … (8)
As a result of the text’s perspective, strong cadence and attention to words sounds, particularly the alliteration used in the first sentence, Kervan clearly intends for the text to be heard, not simply read. And, in fact, this retelling truly provides a pleasurable listening experience.

The well, the roses and the snow-white horse found in this passage further attest to Kervan’s fidelity to the story’s major symbols, the importance of which I discussed in chapter four. Notably, she also focuses attention on Tam Lin’s eyes. When Janna first meets him, they are grey, “smouldering with strange, secret mists” (11). Later, at the moment Janna hesitates to pull him from his horse, her heart melts when his “grey eyes [look] into hers” (18). After the disenchantment, the strange mists disappear altogether. The use of sight to reveal the change in Tam Lin’s character is most appropriate to the story; however, I think this symbol would have had even more impact had Kervan brought in the Queen’s traditional curse: “I wad hae taen out thy twa grey een,/ Put in twa een o tree” (Child 39B, 41).

The story would also be stronger if its language reflected, even to a small extent, its Scottish roots. Although Kervan’s standard language is an important tool, making the text accessible to a young, diverse audience, it lacks unique, geographically specific words that would make the story truly resonate as a “Scottish” folktale. (Compare, for example, Paterson’s retelling that includes words like wee, mantle, bonny, lassie and laird.)

Illustrative Features

Alan Marks’ illustrations are very beautiful, meaningful and dynamic. In an 8 ½”
by 10 ¾” portrait format, he uses watercolour and ink lines to create a dark, magical setting and ethereal fairy characters which render the pages stunningly alive with movement. The contours, which accentuate select images, are disconnected and energetic, creating a sense that all in the forest is wild. This includes Janna, with her bare feet and untamed hair. Also, great sweeps of white dominate many spreads, leading the reader’s attention around the entire page. For example, from the edge of page twenty-one (the right side of a double spread), wispy, wraithlike fairies fly clockwise over both pages to create a semi-circle of light. In another scene, the moon shines a winding path that leads Janna to the edge of the forest, the edge of the page. It is compositional details such as these that demonstrate superb craftsmanship.

Marks also utilizes the element of scale to reflect the textual themes. Generally, Janna seems much smaller than the other characters or objects on the page, suggesting that she is dominated by others. For example, in the scene in which she meets Tam Lin, his figure appears in the foreground and extends upwards across the entire page. In contrast, as a character in the background, she takes up only one-third of the page. Only in the final picture does Janna stand shoulder to shoulder with Tam Lin, indicating that she is now equal to him, acting of her own free will.

Scale also works to promote tension and fear. On Hallow’een, Janna’s thumbnail image almost blends into the background while the Fairy Queen, King, and their black horses dominate the facing page. Similarly, Marks angles the lion in such a way that its head, shoulders and front paws serve as the foreground, nearly encompassing the entire page. Janna, whom we look down on, appears small and powerless as she clings to the beast’s hindquarters.
Because Kervan has written with limited description, Marks inevitably brings to the story many additional details. The wall that Janna climbs is made of stone. The rose she plucks is white. All we know of Janna is that she is “a wild sort of girl” (7), yet his illustrations reveal her brown hair and long-sleeved, red dress. In addition to being a “young man” with “grey eyes” (11), Tam Lin also carries a jeweled dagger and wears a tunic, leggings and leather boots which change shades, depending on the light source.

And, most impressively, Marks’ vision of the Fairy Queen is truly otherworldly. To show that she is “dazzling, with a cold, unearthly beauty” (16), he renders her (as well as the king) as human-sized, wearing spiked crowns that stream charges of light. Their ghostly garments flow and swirl as if made from wind and moonlight.

Marks’ use of light enriches and expands upon textual references. When the bar of red-hot metal leaps into the well, “silvery drops [spatter] everywhere” (24). This description pales in comparison to the intense rays of light, filled with hues of pink and orange that explode from the mouth of the well, sending Janna reeling backwards.

Furthermore, because, in the beginning, Janna turns from the shadowy paths of the forest “towards the sunlight” (12), it is most fitting that, after Tam Lin returns to his human shape, the forest also fills with light.

Ironically, Marks’ careful consideration of the text affects the illustrations’ relationship with folklore. Like Kervan’s story, the pictures convey a fearful Janna in a position of subordination. This does not mirror the willful character of the traditional stories. Also, the images sometimes crowd the text, making the story seem secondary to the pictures. Page breaks, on the other hand, have been precisely executed in order to best facilitate suspense and narrative flow. For example, on page seven, the break occurs
after the sentence, “Then she took a deep breath and went in” – this natural pause builds suspense about what will happen next, motivating the reader to turn the page.

Summary

Overall, I think that Judy Paterson and Sally J. Collins have made an honest attempt at retelling this story on a small production budget. To her credit, Paterson has read several versions of the story and gives some background information about fairy lore and the story’s ballad roots (although she doesn’t mention Gordon Jarvie’s version, from which she so freely borrows). She has also maintained most of the plot elements, Janet’s willful and decisive nature, important names, symbols and distinctive vocabulary. Likewise, Collins has clearly researched medieval clothing in order to set the story in a specific time period. But, however good their intentions, Tamlane is a weak retelling.

The text is of mediocre quality. Paterson does not employ many devices to create a text that especially lends itself to oral performance, but nor does she use too many descriptions to convolute the narrative flow. The exception to this is her attention to clothing colours, which do not seem to hold any real symbolic meaning that furthers the story. Also, Paterson turns the dark forest setting into a harmless wood filled with whimsy and wonder. Moreover, she omits the sexual elements but, because Janet’s motivation for finding and saving Tamlane is rooted in their childhood friendship, her love for Tamlane is believable.

Furthermore, Tamlane’s illustrations are poorly rendered. The images themselves seem amateurish without much attention to compositional elements; as a result, the
pictures are stagnant and do not engage the reader. Also, in mirroring the text’s forest animals, the illustrations minimize the setting and the dangers lurking in the forest.

Conversely, The Enchanted Forest’s illustrations are excellent and its language is well adapted for a picture book. Nonetheless, it is a poorly retold version of “Tam Lin.” Kervan does pay respect to her source, “Tam Lin” by Gordon Jarvie, but she has altered its details in a way that undermines the core traits of the story. Most notably, the character of Janna does not exhibit the courage, free will and determination of her folkloric predecessors. Instead, Janna’s bravery results from fear and ignorance of what will happen when she holds Tam Lin; the theme of love cannot ring true in this context. Furthermore, Kervan eliminates the threat that Tam Lin is to be sacrificed, thus reducing the story’s tension and danger.

To the book’s credit, however, its stylistic features are excellent. The text lends itself to oral performance by varying its sentences, creating a rhythm that allows the words to easily flow. The dialogue is lively, the details are sparse and the pace works well. Also, the major symbols appear in this retelling.

Furthermore, the illustrations demonstrate excellent craftsmanship. Marks’ images foster movement through the book and they also support the textual themes. He uses the element of scale to portray Janna’s sense of fear. He also adeptly creates a setting that emphasizes the darkness that lurks in the enchanted wood. The dark pages at times eclipse the text but, for the most part, the presence of the words on the page is respected and text breaks are carefully considered.

In general, Tamlane and The Enchanted Forest contain enough motifs to designate them Tam Lin tales and they both demonstrate some commendable qualities. For
example, Paterson remains fairly faithful to the ballads’ plot and characterization and Marks provides apt illustrations. However, the shortcomings overshadow these attributes, compromising the integrity of the folktale. Tamlane’s illustrations minimize the setting’s importance and The Enchanted Forest’s characterization of Janna undermines the ballads’ steadfast themes. In contrast to these picture books, the following chapter examines two books that, I believe, are stellar retellings of “Tam Lin.”

1 The picture book is unpaginated. For clarity, I have numbered the pages from one to thirty-two, beginning with the title page and ending with the last page of text and illustration. The story itself begins on page three.

2 I briefly entertained the notion that this picture book is intended as a parody. However, only the animals and fairy illustrations support this idea because the text does not suggest a humorous tone.

3 In her notes on the CIP page, Paterson says that “Tam Lin” is a traditional ballad from the 13th century.

4 Dress in the Middle Ages by Francoise Piponnier is an excellent resource for researching the clothing of this period.

5 This picture book is unpaginated. For clarity, I have numbered its thirty-two pages. In the hardcover edition, pages one/two and thirty-one/thirty-two are glued to the cover. In the paperback edition, these pages include author/illustration biographies and a list of additional titles available from the publisher. In both books, the CIP data is on page four, the title page faces it, and the story runs from page six to twenty-nine.

6 This information is incorrectly spelled on the CIP page as Jarvis. In this story, Janet ignores warnings about the haunted pinewood with a fairy well, and makes her way to Carterhaugh one spring day where she finds a white horse tethered by a well. When she plucks a white rose, Tam Lin appears. When he asks her why she has come to the wood, she answers defiantly, but her boldness disappears once he tells her he protects the wood for the fairy folk. He offers to show her the fairy forest, and when she returns home, nobody even notices she’s been gone. When autumn comes, she returns to the wood and plucks the last white rose in an effort to see her lover. Tam Lin appears, tells her how he came to be with the Queen o’ Fairies, and asks Janet to save him from being sacrificed as human tithe to hell. He tells Janet what she must do, and she, that Hallowe’en evening, returns to the wood, waiting for him to pass by, his left hand bare and his bonnet well back. She pulls him from his white horse and holds him while he transforms into a
snake, a lion and a red-hot iron. She then throws him into the well, and he comes out of it in his human form. The Queen o' Fairies curses them, but, as they are well beyond her powers, they are able to return home and live together in great happiness.

7 See Nodelman, page 128, for discussion about scale.
While Tamlane and The Enchanted Forest have, in my opinion, serious flaws that compromise the story of “Tam Lin,” two picture books by Susan Cooper and Warwick Hutton, and Jane Yolen and Charles Mikolaycak, Tam Lin, prove to be exemplary retellings.

**Tam Lin by Susan Cooper and Warwick Hutton:**

As well as introducing us to the protagonist, Cooper’s first sentence of Tam Lin foreshadows the troubles to come: “The clouds marched over the blue summer sky, and the cloud-shadows slid purple and grey across the hills of Scotland [. . .]” (3). The text continues with a description of Margaret’s activities with the girls in the castle; they sit and sew, recite rules of female conduct, wait to be married, and listen to their old nurse, who prohibits them from visiting Carterhays because, she warns, if they ever saw Tam Lin, no man would want to marry them.

Margaret, not interested in marriage, quickly runs from the castle and begins her adventures. She reaches the wood and picks a rose, thereby summoning Tam Lin. After their initial confrontation, she accepts his offering of an apple and they spend the day together. At twilight, she returns to the castle only to discover she has been away for an entire week. Berated by the chamberlain and ostracized by the other girls, Margaret returns to Carterhays, summons Tam Lin, and discovers his soul will soon be sent to Hell to fulfil an Elfin pact with the Devil. Although she doesn’t immediately commit herself to helping him, that night, on Midsummer’s Eve, she steals the stable key, takes her horse, and rides to Miles Cross. As foretold, the Elfin host passes by; when she sees Tam Lin, she pulls him from his horse and holds him throughout his transformations into a
wolf, a snake and a deer. Once he changes into a red-hot bar of iron, she throws him into the well. The Elfin folk immediately disappear into the air, and Tam Lin climbs from the well as the “light [grows] in the eastern sky” (30). Tam Lin and Margaret speak of children, but not marriage, as the sky returns to its initial state.

Source Acknowledgement

The summary on the CIP page states that this story is “A retelling of the old Scottish ballad in which a young girl rescues the human knight Tam Lin from his bondage to the Elfin Queen” (2). Although these notes are not extensive, they nonetheless reveal the culture in which the story originates and give the reader some guidance if he or she wanted to research the story further. What is lacking in notes, however, Cooper makes up for with fidelity to the core elements of the story. Research reveals that her retelling draws heavily from Child 39G, but also combines motifs from several variants.

Narrative Features

Cooper’s story not only retains almost all of the ballads’ scenes, but it also inserts three additional plot elements: Tam Lin’s offering of an apple, Margaret’s theft of the stable key, and the instructions to blindfold her horse so that it will not become enchanted. (While these additions all serve to convey character or folk beliefs, I feel that the stable scene, rather than help build suspense, slows down the narrative.)
Importantly, Cooper subtly maintains the element of sexuality that was so integral to the traditional ballads. Although the text does not explicitly state that Tam Lin and Margaret share sexual intimacy, the image of picking roses connotes this idea. So does that of Tam Lin offering an apple to Margaret, an echo of Adam and Eve’s sin. As well, several examples of dialogue hint at this possibility. When Margaret returns from her rendezvous, the chamberlain reprimands her for having “disgraced” the court and her nurse weeps, “‘No man will wed you now’” (11). Also, after Margaret has rescued Tam Lin, he says, “‘One day we shall have a child, you and I, as naked and glad as the knight born today out of this well’” (31). One reader may understand this sentence to mean that she is already pregnant, while another may think this is a future plan. In the spirit of the oral tradition which addressed diverse audiences, Cooper has created a story that can truly be appreciated on different levels.

Cooper also maintains the ambivalent ending found in the ballads. In most versions, the story ends with the Queen’s curses, which Perry suggests have a very significant purpose: “The Fairy Queen will have us understand that the vigilance with which we must battle Evil is constant. Janet’s success is seen as temporary, and an appeal is made to the hero in all of us to help maintain her success” (“Ever” 38). Likewise, Cooper’s concluding sentence, which mirrors the introduction’s reference to the foreboding sky, implies that all does not necessarily end happily ever after.

Cooper also maintains the characters’ core traits and, for the most part, the traditional techniques by which they are conveyed. Her characters retain the porous qualities of their oral counterparts; in fact, she adds little more description to Margaret, Tam Lin, and the secondary characters than the few details offered in the ballads.
However, although Cooper does not describe her characters in great detail, she effectively uses action and dialogue as tools to help develop them.

Margaret is the character whom the narrative perspective follows, yet we learn little about her appearance or her history. She is the king’s daughter who is “supposed to set a good, gentle example to all the other girls” (3). She wears “green skirts” and has “long dark flying hair” (12). Nonetheless, her words and actions possess a strength and confidence that clearly convey her indomitable spirit. We first meet Margaret sitting in her tower with her nurse and a company of girls, longing for adventure. The demands expected of her rank, coupled with her lack of interest in marriage, propel her first rebellious words: “‘Pooh,’ ” she says, “I am not a flower waiting to be picked. I would rather do my own picking!” (4). This irreverent disagreement with her nurse marks the first of many to come: “‘Marry, marry, marry!’” she says to her nurse and peers, “Can’t you think about anything else?” (4). She similarly challenges Tam Lin at Carterhays by asking, “‘Why should I ask leave of you?’” (8). And, at her father’s court, she boldly declares that she doesn’t care that she’s “disgraced” them (10). Clearly, she has the confidence to say what she thinks.

Margaret’s words go hand in hand with her actions. Frustrated at courtly life, she “[flings] down her embroidery” and publicly declares she’s going “‘To pick roses!’” (4). Once at Carterhays, she quickly accepts the fairy apple from a “remarkably handsome” stranger in a reputedly haunted forest (8). And she steals a key from the stable groom so that she can take her horse to Miles Cross. Margaret is a girl who refuses to follow accepted social rules.
However, Margaret, although impetuous and recalcitrant, also has a thoughtful side. When she returns from her first rendezvous at Carterhays, she tells her father “‘I’m sorry I wasn’t home before dark’” (10). She seems to care what he thinks. And, during her second visit with Tam Lin, she responds carefully to his request for her to save him, telling him she will try to do so if she loves him. Moreover, because she has met Tam Lin more than once, her love for him has, in fact, had time to develop and is, therefore, not the result of some rash impulse.

Cooper also limits the details describing Tam Lin to a few physical attributes. He has a “deep voice” and is “remarkably handsome, with blue eyes, sun-gold skin, and curling fair hair.” His beauty, paired with his “country shirt and tunic” and bare feet, evokes a sense of innocence (8). He hardly has the demeanor of the “Elfin knight, [waiting] there, to trap young girls” (3). However, his actions suggest otherwise.

Tam Lin plays an instrumental role in his release from the Elfin world. When summoned by the rose, he first looks at Margaret “challengingly, unsmiling” (8). But, after her haughty retort, he laughs and offers Margaret one of the King’s apples. One has to wonder, did Tam Lin make his offer because he realized that Margaret displays the necessary willfulness to face the Elfin Queen? After all, one bite leads to an adventuresome chain of events that involves Margaret’s forgetfulness, her seven-day sojourn at Carterhays, her subsequent disgrace, her flight from rigid castle life and finally, her courageous actions to save his life. Furthermore, Tam Lin is quick to offer Margaret vital information. She merely asks if the Elfin Queen is beautiful, to which he responds with news about his impending death. He clearly does not show any hesitation in asking her to take a risk to save him; in fact, he may have used the apple to manipulate
the situation from the beginning, although we aren’t told this for certain. Again, Cooper has left room in the text for a variety of interpretations.

However, we cannot question Tam Lin’s feelings for the Elfin Queen. They are irrefutably negative. He explicitly tells Margaret, “‘When I was three years old I fell asleep one day in my father’s garden and the Elfin Queen stole me away. I have lived captive in her kingdom ever since’” (13). He also informs Margaret that the Queen is “‘Beautiful but coldhearted’” and has a “‘pact with the Devil’” (14). He feels no allegiance to she who holds him captive.

This conversation offers the only insight into the Elfin Queen’s character; interestingly, as the villain, she has very little presence in the story. She does not interact with Margaret or Tam Lin during the story, nor does she leave her carriage while the magic transformations take place. In fact, she does not even address her only words, “‘Tam Lin leaves me,’” to anyone in particular (25, 29). However, the lack of focus on the Queen mirrors the ballads, in which she is neither described nor given much opportunity to speak.

Cooper successfully uses secondary characters to emphasize a courtly setting. She includes figures from the ballads such as Margaret’s father, the four and twenty ladies (the girls with whom she sits and sews), and, in the guise of the chamberlain, the grey-bearded, ill-tempered knight. To this cast Cooper has added the old nurse, who cares for the girls, and the men at arms who guard the castle. She also builds the community of the Elfin host to include an Elfin King, knights, squires and ladies.
Importantly, some of these characters facilitate the conflict resulting from the social restrictions that the court imposes on Margaret. On three separate occasions, in response to her complacent nurse and peers, Margaret flees the castle. Her first flight to Carterhays is sparked by a discussion of marriage between the old nurse and the girls. She makes a second trip because “none of the other girls would speak to her” (12). And finally, she confirms the decision to risk her life at Miles Cross when she sees “the old nurse reciting rules for the conduct of maidens, and the maidens sitting meekly sewing their embroidery [...]”(19). She clearly does not wish to accept the prescribed rules.

While Cooper has remained very true to the ballads’ characters and plot, she significantly emphasizes and expands the role of setting. She maintains the key locales in which the story unfolds: Margaret’s courtly home, the woods named Carterhays, and the crossroads where the transformation occurs. And her alteration of the date to June works very well. Midsummer’s Eve is one of three spirit nights (the others are Halloween and Beltane), a special time for fairy travel because the veil between their world and the human world is thin. Also, because the world is on the verge of shifting back into darkness, this solstice proves a very good time for the practise of dark magic (Freeman 183). For these reasons, Cooper’s change does not significantly alter the story’s essence, but it does help to emphasize themes and motifs. Because Midsummer is a time for romance, a festival for lovers (Funk 723), the story focuses more Margaret and Tam Lin’s romantic relationship than on the conflict with the Elfin Queen. Furthermore, the setting facilitates Cooper’s use of tree imagery.

Notably, Cooper also uses setting as tool to create mood and theme. The opening line, for example, creates a tone for the entire story, juxtaposing the blue sky and the dark
shadows. Throughout the story, this motif characterizes the differences between humans, associated with colour and light, and the Elfin folk, akin to shadows and the night. For example, when Margaret reaches Miles Cross, she not only glimpses “shadowy” Elfin folk and “moon-shadowed trees” (22), but she also notices that “the world [is] washed by silvery moonlight, without color anywhere” (20). In contrast, Margaret lives, predominantly, in daylight. The story begins in the castle where, “every morning” (3), Margaret sits with the other girls. Later, she rushes home from Carterhays at twilight, apologizing to her father that she “‘wasn’t home before dark’” (10). Her second visit to Carterhays also happens “under the blue sky” (19). On her third excursion, however, Margaret must delve into darkness, midnight on Midsummer’s Eve in order to rescue Tam Lin, but they significantly reunite as “the sun [rises] behind the wood and [brings] color back into the world” (30). Goodness has triumphed, at least temporarily, over Evil.

Stylistic Features

Ironically, Cooper’s fidelity to the ballad makes the text seem somewhat stilted. For example, Cooper’s description of Margaret traversing back and forth from the castle, which corresponds to a repetitive ballad verse, does not translate well to the printed page. The six scenes showing Margaret en route do not serve to enhance the story, but instead make the text seem unnaturally long. Similarly, the ballads’ pattern of dialogue does not work well in this picture book. In the complete Child texts of the ballad, most of the speech occurs in the first half of the work; the remaining verses are merely descriptive in nature, except for the Queen’s final curses. Cooper imitates this by relying heavily on dialogue for the first seventeen pages of the story, then switching predominantly to narration for the remaining pages (the Queen speaks two sentences, Tam Lin speaks
once). Overall, the text seems unbalanced. However, these limitations are overcome when the text is read aloud. The performer’s voice, gestures and expressions move the narrative forward, thus counteracting any monotony threatened by the repetition.

Cooper’s style of diction is commendable, making the text very accessible to the modern reader without rendering it anachronistic; for the most part, the vocabulary remains simple, easily comprehensible to modern ears. However, there is also a liberal sprinkling of archaic words and phrases such as “coronet,” “milady,” “tunic,” “chamberlain,” “squires,” and “hitching up her green skirts.” Overall, this creates a tone that invites us to identify with the story while, at the same time, setting it undeniably in the past.

Cooper’s skillful diction extends to the dialogue. The sentence fragments and contractions found in Margaret’s words mimic actual speech. In contrast, Tam Lin speaks very formally with unnaturally long sentences, inverted phrases and conditional verbs. For example, compare the following excerpts, spoken respectively by Margaret and Tam Lin:

Carterhays belongs to my father the king, and I can come and go as I please. And pick roses. (8)

In your hand I shall change my shape, and change my shape, and many a strange shape she will put on me. But you must hold fast, and you must not let me go. Remember always that I shall never hurt you, whatever I may seem to be. At the very last, you must drop what you hold into the well and – you shall see what you shall see. (8)

Tam Lin’s distinct, archaic voice works well to set him apart from Margaret. As a result, we understand even more emphatically that he comes from a different world.

Cooper also incorporates other rhetorical techniques in presenting her story. The third person narrator, whose perspective remains with Margaret, allows us to objectively
experience the tale’s happenings; the absence of direct commentary leaves much room for the reader to exercise his or her own interpretation. Cooper also relies on conventional devices such as epithets ("old nurse," "fat Jana," or "soft-voiced Allison"), metaphors ("sun-gold skin"), and, importantly, symbols.

In fact, Cooper demonstrates immense skill with details that have symbolic possibilities. She draws many from the traditional ballads, such as hair, green skirts, green cloak, well, and milk-white steed. For the most part, she offers no explanation to the reader about what these symbols mean; she merely brings them into the text and leaves all interpretation up to the reader. For example, on two occasions Cooper uses the phrase: "Through the fields she went, hitching up her green skirts, looping up her long flying hair [...]
" (6,12). Later, she refers to Margaret’s green cloak/mantle three times. However, Cooper never explains the importance of the colour green or the meaning of the looped hair.

The rose, however, is different. Margaret’s first words reveal the important role it will play in the tale. To her nurse and peers she states, "I am not a flower waiting to be picked. I would rather do my own picking!" (4). Margaret verbalizes her refusal to be treated as an object of fragility and beauty, foreshadows her actions and, for the more mature reader, alludes to sexual activity. When she later goes to Carterhays, she does not pick a cultured rose from a manicured garden, but a wild red rose that mirrors her own spirit. Then, after Tam Lin appears and questions her actions, she affirms, "I can come and go as I please. And pick roses" (8). Importantly, Margaret’s concluding words to Tam Lin further reflect the importance she places on action and independence:
“ ’We’ll teach [our child] to pick roses’ ”(30). Because Cooper has placed the rose in a number of contexts, it acquires several levels of meaning.

Cooper also includes images that do not appear in the traditional ballads, but are nonetheless deeply rooted in folklore. She pays particular attention to the types of trees mentioned in the text. Although the apple tree appears in Child 39G (as the tree under which Tam Lin was sleeping and, subsequently, stolen), the fruit itself seems peripheral to the ballad. But in Cooper’s text, Margaret’s eating of an apple plays a significant role because, after a single bite, her spirited defiance towards Tam Lin fades. Thus Cooper has not only retained the Celtic idea that that sleeping under an apple tree is taboo, but she has also shown how the apple tree is a tree of enchantment (Briggs, Fairies 100).

Also, Carterhays is filled with oak, ash and thorn, a grouping of trees known as the “magic trilogy.” The oak was sacred because it was worshipped by druids, the ash served as a protection against fairies and the thorn was sacred to or haunted by them (Briggs, Encyclopedia 159).

**Illustrative Features**

Warwick Hutton is an established watercolour artist and “master of lighted landscapes and light filtered interiors”(Hearne, Beauty 99). Given that Cooper’s text makes symbolic use of light and shadow, the match between these two artists seems ideal. As well, Hutton’s illustrations of Tam Lin, achieved with watercolour and ink, demonstrate craftsmanship, an understanding of the text, interpretive creativity, and a respect for folklore.

Hutton draws on many compositional skills to create images in a 8 ¼” by 9 ¾” portrait format that facilitate the reader’s movement through the book. Of particular note,
his use of cross-hatching and of finely drawn, often disconnected contours lend energy to
the illustrations. Also, he frequently shows his characters mid-action. Three excellent
examples of this occur during Tam Lin’s transformation. Hutton first shows Margaret on
the verge of falling backward as a wolf lunges at her; then he portrays her off-balance,
one foot raised, as a snake winds around her body; in the next illustration, Margaret
straddles a wild deer, using her whole body to pull back on its antlers. The reader
unconsciously finishes the actions in his or her mind. This technique allows Hutton to
avoid visual stagnancy and instead create the illusion of movement and energy.

Like Cooper, Hutton focuses the story not on individual characters, but on more
general themes of social taboos and the struggle of good and evil. He achieves this by
emphasizing the story’s setting. Of the twenty-one spreads, only a few show a close-up
view of any of the characters, and even then the details are rather non-descript. For the
most part, the illustrations show the characters from afar, often from a birds-eye point of
view. As a result, the reader does not feel connected to the characters as unique
individuals, but instead sees them in relation to the surroundings.² In this case, the
surroundings include the castle, the outdoors, and the scenes depicting both light
and darkness.

Hutton’s use of line and scale greatly contrasts the human and the natural worlds.
Two illustrations reveal castle rooms filled with rectangular carpets and flags, framed
portraits, wooden-panel floors and walls, and a great square fireplace. The rigidity of
these lines differs from the bending trees, curving paths, and rounded flowers of
Carterhays. In another spread, Margaret runs past the guards, out of the castle. In this
scene Margaret is only a blip on the page compared to the walls that tower above her.
Literally, she takes up 1 cm of space while, at the highest point of the turret, the castle stands 30 cm in height. The castle’s shadow, in fact, nearly hides Margaret completely, suggesting, as the text does, the oppressiveness and rigidity of castle life in contrast to the perceived freedoms of the outdoors.³

The way Hutton uses light and darkness further supports the text. He takes the colours associated with the book’s first sentence – blue sky, purple and grey cloud-shadows, and green hills – and weaves them throughout the illustrations, creating a mood which has been claimed as “idyllic, eerie, fearful and ultimately triumphant” (E.L.H. 341). Also, Margaret’s scenes take place, predominantly, in tones of light, while the Elfin Queen resides in shades of darkness. Perhaps one of the most illustrious scenes occurs when Margaret throws the red-hot bar of iron; as she looks down into the well, a white arc of light extends from the its mouth, cutting through the dark shadows. The scene rings of pure victory.

At first, it may seem that Hutton does not bring added layers of meaning to the story. Because Cooper’s dense, although beautiful, descriptions leave little room for expansion, his scenes tend to mirror the text, perhaps even a little too literally at times. For example, he shows Margaret en route back and forth from Carterhays in six spreads. However, upon closer examination we can see the subtle nuances he has added by creating character foils for Margaret. Although the Elfin world seems wild and free, it nonetheless has a hierarchical social structure. Tam Lin informs Margaret it has an Elfin Queen and King, as well as squires, ladies and knights. To these words, Hutton adds the shadowy images of the Elfin court, who look very similar to the courtiers who surround Margaret’s father. Moreover, the banners which the Elfin folk carry echo those seen in
the castle hall. Visually, the reader comes to learn that Tam Lin, like Margaret, is subjected to social rules; while she is expected to marry, he is expected to die in order to seal the Elfin Queen’s pact with the Devil. Happily, Tam Lin and Margaret both prove successful in averting these expectations.

Hutton also creates an interesting relationship between Margaret and the Elfin Queen. The reader sees only one image of the Queen in which she steals the infant Tam Lin. Her back is turned, but her head is furtively turned toward the reader. On the facing page lies an image of Margaret running from the castle. This juxtaposition helps the reader to observe that Margaret and the Queen resemble each other. They both wear their dark hair long and loose. They have similar, non-descript, facial features. In fact, their actions will also be the same. The Queen once stole Tam Lin and Margaret, in turn, will steal him back.  

In addition to providing rich illustrations, Hutton also respects the folkloric roots of the story. He has maintained important symbols such as the green skirt and cloak, the holy well and the rose. His Elfin folk are, as per ballad tradition, the same size as humans and his setting, although not filled with a lot of specific details, rings true to a Scottish castle and countryside of long ago. His illustrations do not crowd the text, so the story itself is not diminished; often the text has a page of its own, which faces a full-page spread. Other times, when they appear together, the text is either above or below the illustration. And even when the text is imposed on a darker background, for the night scenes, the text is clear and easy to read.

Cooper and Hutton clearly show immense respect for the folkloric roots of their retelling, as do Jane Yolen and Charles Mikolaycak, albeit in a very different manner.
Tam Lin by Jane Yolen and Charles Mikolaycak

Yolen's Tam Lin opens with a description of the setting: “There was once a strange, forbidding castle with ruined towers on a weedy piece of land called Carterhaugh. [. . .] It had been the most beautiful home in the land” (6). Through the villagers’ warnings to the children, we learn about the smells and sounds that emanate from this land. After introducing this setting, Yolen presents her protagonist, Jennet MacKenzie, providing pertinent background knowledge. Because Jennet’s “father’s father’s father” owned Carterhaugh, she feels the land belongs to her clan and that she will win it back (7). Later, on Jennet’s sixteenth birthday, her father states, “‘That land no longer belongs to the MacKenzies, girl. It belongs to the Fair Folk now, the Faeries, the Fey. Nothing lives there but ghosts and boggles and wicked things’ ” (8).

Following this lengthy introduction, the narrative turns to the linear action of the story. Jennet goes to Carterhaugh, plucks a rose, and meets Tam Lin. She discovers very quickly that Tam Lin is to be killed and offers to try to save him from the Faery Queen. So, on Hallow’s Eve, Jennet makes her way to Miles Cross, pulls him from his horse, and holds him throughout his transformations into a snake, a lion and a burning brand. She finally breaks the faery enchantment by throwing the latter incarnation into the well, sprinkling holy water and creating a protective circle made from garden earth. The conclusion, which returns to the image of the castle, reveals that Jennet and Tam Lin marry and live a “long and happy life together in the great stone castle Jennet restored and named Carter Hall” (28).
Source Acknowledgement

Yolen provides two pages of detailed endnotes that not only acknowledge the Scottish roots of the ballad of “Tam Lin,” but also briefly explain various folklore motifs such as the rose, the sacrifice to Hell, the faery troop’s horses and the transformation. She also discusses variant names used for the heroine and describes the area of Selkirk, where the story is claimed to have occurred. Interestingly, she does not reference her quotations, but research reveals that, in addition to citing stanzas one, six, twenty-four and thirty-five directly from the Burns text, Child 39A, she quotes from the introductory material in the English and Scottish Popular Ballads. Although she draws mainly from Child 39A, she includes motifs found in other variants.

Narrative Features

Yolen displays great skill in balancing these elements of folklore with creating a distinct, literary retelling. She significantly edits and revises the plot in order to smooth out the narrative flow. For example, rather than make the reader privy to Tam Lin’s original instructions to Jennet, as do the original ballads, the narrator merely tells her that “Tam Lin took her in his arms and told her what she must do” (17). This helps to build tension and suspense for the climax.

Yolen also limits the descriptions of Jennet’s travels, giving attention only to her first trek to Carterhaugh and her Hallow’s Eve journey to Miles Cross. Other moments during which she travels are merely implied. For instance, the scene in which she and Tam Lin meet ends with the sentence: “His words were like his kisses – cold, distant and fierce.” The following page begins, “On Hallow’s Eve Jennet stole away from her
house" (18). The reader implicitly understands that Jennet has left Cartherhaugh and returned home.

Yolen's decision to merge three distinct scenes in the ballads provokes much more discussion, however. In the traditional ballads, the heroine meets Tam Lin, subsequently faces social conflict at home, then visits Carterhaugh once more. This time frame allows for her pregnancy to be discovered, and it also provides the heroine with time enough to reflect on her relationship with Tam Lin. However, in Yolen's version, Jennet only makes one trip to Carterhaugh, meeting Tam Lin and learning about his impending death at the same time. This limits the possibility of Jennet discovering her pregnancy, but as Yolen also omits suggestions of a sexual encounter in order to adapt to a young audience, this is a moot point. Yet, Perry feels these changes adversely affect the story:

[T]he creative way in which Yolen implies the touching that romantic love involves does not achieve the actual threat and anxiety motivating Jennet and Tam in the original ballad. As the two scenes are collapsed and their sexual union is avoided, the love between Jennet and Tam is rather quickly produced. The reality of their circumstances is minimized. (“Ever” 39)

In the traditional Tam Lin ballads, the sexuality and pregnancy serve as plot devices to create motivation and to develop a plausible relationship between the two main characters. The alteration of these devices has the potential to affect the structural integrity of the entire story. However, Yolen circumvents this problem by also making changes to her characters and setting.

Whereas the ballad form does not accommodate detailed characterization, the picture book's format allows Yolen to develop her main characters: Jennet, Tam Lin and the Faery Queen. As the main protagonist and she whom the narrator follows most closely, Jennet MacKenzie is the best-developed character. Yolen deftly integrates
several details that render Jennet a very realistic heroine. Jennet has a last name, a family history, a clan tartan, and a birthday celebration. Dialogue also enhances our understanding. For example, Jennet’s first words directly contrast her with the older boys who have previously visited Carterhaugh. “‘Are you boys afraid of shadows and smells?’ she asked. ‘I am not afraid. Besides, my father’s father’s father owned Carterhaugh. […] When I am old enough, claim it I will!’” (7). In her first appearance, then, we meet a confident, brave, defiant young woman whose desire to reclaim Carterhaugh will motivate her throughout the story.

Not only does Jennet speak what she thinks, but her actions also echo her brazen words and triumphant spirit. For example, despite general warnings given to all the children, plus several explicit orders from her parents, Jennet goes to Carterhaugh. Furthermore, she does not shy away from confrontation, but actually smiles and laughs at the Faery Queen. And, most importantly, she boldly holds onto Tam Lin during his transformations.

Although Jennet is brave, she is not one dimensional. Throughout the story, Jennet experiences a variety of emotions. Upon first entering Carterhaugh, Jennet is afraid, but later, when Tam Lin tells her about his fate, “Tears [start] in her eyes” (17). Clearly, the reader is meant to empathize with her.

Because the point of view remains with Jennet throughout the text, Tam Lin’s character is less rounded. For the most part, we see him reacting to situations rather than creating them. As in the ballads, he appears at Carterhaugh because Jennet summons him with a rose and, on Hallow’s Eve, he undergoes transformations as a result of Jennet’s and the Faery Queen’s actions. However, unique to this retelling is that Tam Lin does
not even directly ask Jennet to save him. Rather, he tells Jennet that he can be saved by his “own true human love” (17); then it is she who actively pursues the necessary information to save him.

Very skillfully, Yolen uses Tam Lin’s apparent inaction as a measure of character growth and maturation. Because he is reactionary throughout the text, we notice when his demeanor changes. In particular, after the enchantment has ended, Tam Lin becomes more active and independent. He first reminds Jennet to make an earthen circle of protection around them. Then, he directly challenges the Faery Queen: “‘Your curses return from us to thee, O Queen of the Ever Fair. [. . .] Your power is over. Be gone’” (26). These words, the last lines of dialogue in the story, affirm his growth and foreshadow a dynamic future.

As with Jennet, Yolen also refines Tam Lin’s character with unique and realistic details. For example, although Yolen draws Tam Lin’s introductory dialogue from the ballad texts, she suggests a melancholy, rather than harsh character. “‘Who is it that pulls the rose and calls me back to the world of men?’ His voice was hollow-sounding, as if it came from far away” (13). Later, Tam Lin sighs and his face grows “long and sad” (17), thereby making this man facing impending death very believable. Then, once he knows that Jennet will try to save him, his words become like “his kisses—cold, distant, and fierce” (17); he has discovered new emotion.

The character who will try to inflict this death, the Faery Queen, is the most enigmatic of the text’s characters. Whereas the ballad texts render minimal characterization of Jennet and Tam Lin, they convey almost nothing of the Fairy Queen. In general, they objectively introduce the Faery Queen through Tam Lin’s words and
conclude with her raging rants. Likewise, in Yolen’s text, we don’t meet the Faery Queen until the Faery Rade, so our initial information about her also comes from Tam Lin. Interestingly, he seems ambivalent about her. At first, he tells Jennet that, after laying “faint on the hillside,” the Queen “took him inside the green hill” (13). In this context, it seems as if the Queen saved him. But later, Tam Lin contradicts himself by saying, “I shall ride with [the Fey] as I have done every seven years since they stole me away” (15). He also mentions that he fell from his horse because it “shied,” which leaves us to wonder whether or not the Queen was responsible for startling the horse in the first place.

Any uncertainty that surrounds the Queen disappears once she rides by Jennet on her bejeweled horse. She is no longer the vague figure presented by the ballad texts, but a tall, stern, beautiful Queen with a hundred white braids hanging down her back. Then, departing from the ballads’ descriptive verses, Yolen creates vivid interaction and dialogue between the Queen and Jennet, resulting in a fierce conflict that naturally arises from their claim to the same man. The Queen’s demands for the return of Tam Lin coupled with her strong curses render her very aggressive and powerful. And the rhetorical questions she asks during Tam Lin’s transformations expose her cold-heartedness; she enjoys watching Jennet struggle and taunts her by asking “ ‘What do you hold now, human girl?’ ” (25). The Faery Queen is indeed a formidable opponent.

Yolen has taken liberties, but great care, in creating her secondary characters. Of those who appear in ballad 39A (old grey knight, four and twenty ladies, and Janet’s father), she keeps only the father figure. By omitting the others, she takes the story out of a royal context. Then, by adding Jennet’s mother and a community full of “mothers,”
“fathers,” “younger children,” “older boys,” “nurses,” “tutors,” and people who “all said [Jennet] would never marry,” Yolen roots the story in the village where Jennet and her family currently live (7). By including both of Jennet’s parents, Yolen also makes the situation more accessible to younger readers whose lives still revolve around the family.

The village setting also differs greatly from the ballads’ royal court not only in terms of its inhabitants, but also with regard to the role it serves in the story. Whereas the ballads include several scenes that take place in Jennet’s home, Yolen’s Tam Lin contains only one – Jennet stands before her pleading parents during her sixteenth birthday celebration. This diminished attention to her social surrounding allows the story to focus on foregrounding Jennet’s internal conflicts rather than on more general social mores. Her primary concern does not revolve around marriage expectations or sexual taboos, but the reclamation of her ancestral home.

In fact, it is Jennet’s determination about Carterhaugh that facilitates the shift from the traditional ballads’ focus on sexuality. According to Hixon:

Yolen focuses on the ballad’s motif of Carterhaugh as Jennet’s rightful inheritance, making it her prime motivation in daring to venture there in the first place [...].

Yolen’s Jennet is strong-minded indeed, but her thoughts are on things besides an awakening to sexuality, and she is characterized more in terms of a hero-figure who actively fights the encroachment of the fairy world than a girl who is faced with resolving a humiliating social situation. In keeping with the characterization and shift in theme, Yolen reinterprets the meaning of this traditional ballad motif, shifting it from signifying the loss of virginity to representing the act of claiming her birthright, an act more commonly associated with the male hero of a fairy tale. The act still symbolically represents entry into adulthood: loss of virginity is a woman’s right [sic] of passage, and claiming the birthright is a man’s. (195)

Thus, although Yolen has minimized the elements of sexuality prevalent in the ballad texts, she has also guided the heroic quest towards the ballads’ secondary issues of Jennet’s land and birthright.
Notably, Yolen's Carterhaugh includes not only land and gardens, but also a castle – a setting that she uses in a variety of ways. The opening sentence informs the reader that the castle sits on "a weedy piece of land" and has "ruined towers" (6). Because it serves to externalize Jennet's quest for reclamation, it is not surprising that, after Jennet she has succeeded, the "great stone castle [is] restored" (28). As well, it serves as a temporal reference point. Rather than express her ancestry in terms of years, Jennet says, "my father's father's father owned Carterhaugh" (7). Similarly, Tam Lin gestures to the ruins and says, "'When I rode off that summer's day, this house stood upright and unbroken'" (13). It has obviously been a long time since Carterhaugh had human owners.

**Stylistic Features**

In fairy tale fashion, Tam Lin begins with "There once was," a formulaic opening that reflects a distant time and place. The diction further reinforces this setting throughout the text as Yolen includes archaic words such as such as "prickers," "garlands" and "mantle." Also, contractions are noticeably absent, particularly in the dialogue. "'Do not go down to Carterhaugh' said [the] mothers and nurses. 'There is an awful smell to the place. There are prickers and briars, thistles and thorns'" (6). This formality in both speech and vocabulary adds to the overall sombre tone.

The tone, however, does not interfere with the story's ability to lend itself to oral performance. Yolen exhibits a keen awareness of the differences in oral and written stories and blends the strengths of both traditions in order to create a tale that is most pleasing to the ear. She uses a third person point of view and balances the narration and
dialogue. The result is a clearly-told, well-paced story that maintains the reader's engagement. She also integrates into the text effective stylistic devices. Take, for example, the following passage describing the horses:

[S]he let the first horse pass her by. It was black as coal, black as the pit's bottom, black as death. [...] 
She let the second horse go by as well. It was brown as oakwood, brown as old blood, brown as earth in grave. [...] 
[T]he third horse came by. It was white as snow, white as the froth on the waves, white as the milk on the mouth of a babe. (19)

The repetitive adjectives and sentence structures build a natural rhythm that easily lends itself to the spoken word. This excerpt also illustrates her use of conventional similes in phrases such as “black as death” and “white as snow.”

She also includes fresh metaphors without weighing down the flow of the narrative with excessive details. For example, when the Queen offers Jennet riches in exchange for Tam Lin, the latter replies: “I have enough gold in my mother’s hair and silver in my father’s [...] The only jewels I need shine in my true love’s eyes” (22). Her metaphors blend seamlessly into the story, as do her symbols.

Of all of Tam Lin’s symbols, roses play the most prominent role because they appear in association with many characters. At Jennet’s birthday celebration, her mother crushes a pale rosebud, implying that Jennet, like the rosebud, has not fully matured and will be severely tested. Soon, Jennet finds herself at Carterhaugh, where she plucks a second rose. This act not only summons Tam Lin, but it also signifies her determination when she says, “I take this rose, the only thing of beauty left here, as my pledge. I shall take back Carterhaugh from the Fey and restore it to humankind” (10). When she later puts the rose in Tam Lin’s hand, she seems to suggest her interest in romantic love as
well as her intentions to include him in her future plans; the story indeed concludes with the marriage of Jennet and Tam Lin. Hence, roses serve both as a private and a universal symbol to connote maturity, familial and romantic love, and the promise of regaining possession of Carterhaugh.

Colours also prove significant to the story and, in particular, to Jennet’s character. Her skin is the “color of new cream”(7). Her birthday dress is “green as a young willow” on which she wears a “golden brooch”(8). On Halloween, in keeping with the traditional ballads, she wears “a mantle as green as grass”(18). And importantly, the rose Jennet plucks is “the color of spilled blood,” which connotes the red associated with passionate love and also foreshadows Tam Lin’s pending death (10). Jennet also wears a “a skirt and bodice as red as human blood” (18). This recurring connection between Jennet and blood serves to emphasize her mortal nature. Furthermore, Yolen does not merely use colour to convey a visual image of Jennet, however. She also uses it as a subtle tool to show her maturation. At first, her hair is “the red-gold of a sunrise”(7), but when she ventures upon her life-threatening task, it is the “color of dusk, after the sun has set”(19).

Illustrative Features

Charles Mikolaycak’s artistic vision of Tam Lin has been described as "romantic and brooding" with "illustrations abound with motion, drama, and rich color" (Cutts 3). Illustrated with watercolour and coloured pencil, Mikolaycak’s 8 ½” by 11” images take us into another time filled with distinctive Scottish tartans and faery magic. He executes this style with strong, bright colours and solid contour lines to create vivid pictures that demand the reader’s attention; while the images themselves do not denote a lot of
movement, the sheer beauty of their intricate details and vivid colours – green, red, black and white – invites the reader to linger on the page.

The illustrations also strongly support the text. Not only do the predominant colours and objects echo the story’s narrative themes and symbolism, but many of the techniques also reinforce the focus on individual conflicts. Because the scenes are depicted from a close or mid-range perspective, the reader clearly sees facial expressions and gestures that encourage him or her to develop an interest in the lives of individual characters. Also, the reader’s eye-to-eye view of the characters facilitates a sense of empathy. Furthermore, except for one occasion, the spreads are set outdoors with very little background to draw attention away from the characters. As a result of these techniques, the characters are very prominent, maintaining a distinct and clear presence on the page.

For the most part, Mikolaycak conforms to the colours, characters and symbols found in the text. For example, like Yolen, he renders an opening and concluding image of Carterhaugh Castle. Nevertheless, his pictures bring some very powerful and engaging ideas to the story. Importantly, Tam Lin’s clothing, like the man himself, undergoes a transformation. Where the text tells us only that he wears “velvet and kilt” (10), the pictures show that he wears black and white, with red trim. Then, Tam Lin’s transformation is brilliantly conveyed in one image. As he turns into a snake, we see that the tip of his tail sports the red trim, his middle shows the black and white plaid, and the upper snake, coiled around Jennet’s waist, has green scales. Two lion paws wrap around her chest as the lion’s head roars from behind. Later, after the enchantment is broken, Tam Lin’s “faery clothing [is] burned away” (26); he is starting his life anew. The last spread shows him in his original black and white, but interwoven into his new garments
are the reds and greens of Jennet’s MacKenzie plaid. In this way, Tam Lin’s clothing
affirms his change, his personal growth and his union with Jennet.

Mikolaycak also creatively works with his borders. Every spread is double framed
with an air border as well as a thin green border. However, Jennet, Tam Lin and the
Faery Queen do not always respect these boundaries. On several occasions, their images
either cross over the green border, or completely bleed to the edge of the page. These
actions support the willfulness of the characters who refuse to be bound by borders and,
by extension, rules. Also, the border for the final scene, which shows Jennet and Tam
Lin holding their baby, is partially comprised of roses – an apt image to reveal their true
love.

Interesting details also help anchor the story’s various settings. For example, when
Jennet stands before her parents, she does so in a very public space that includes a
musician, a peasant couple and two dogs. This adds to the village atmosphere. Likewise,
the image of a church and graveyard, which Jennet passes, adds to the eeriness of
Hallow’s Eve. And, most magnificently, by seating the Faery Queen on a green horse,
Mikolaycak roots us in the magic of the Faery Rade.

Finally, the illustrations reflect a respect for “Tam Lin’s” folklore. Mikolaycak
aptly reveals the story’s Scottish origins in both the clothing and the Celtic flavour of
several objects (such as the design carved on Jennet’s parents’ chair). He also leaves
room for the text; mostly, the images occupy the page facing the text. And, very
noticeably, the pictorial images follow the page breaks. For example, the text introduces
and describes Jennet on page seven, but we must turn the page to see Mikolaycak’s
illustrative rendering. This page break format allows the reader, however briefly, to
imagine the words’ implications in his or her own mind before turning to the concrete images on the next page.

**Summary**

Overall, both of these picture books serve as excellent examples of folktale retellings. Susan Cooper and Warwick Hutton have created a Tam Lin story that remains true to nearly every aspect of the traditional ballad. Cooper’s book provides a small amount of background information to credit the story’s connection to its folkloric sources. She has also maintained the core elements found in the ballads’ narrative features. Her characters, although not overly developed, are interesting and well crafted. Her plot, although sometimes slow, subtly keeps the ballads’ ambiguous ending and the sexual nuances while still keeping a young audience in mind. And she brilliantly uses setting as a tool to develop general themes of social subversion and the conflict of good and evil.

Cooper’s loyalty to the ballads extends to the stylistic devices she uses in her retelling. She keeps the ballads’ patterns of repetition and dialogue and effectively uses diction, dialogue, point of view, epithets and symbols. In fact, her use of symbols is one of the greatest strengths of this retelling. She incorporates the well, green clothing, hair and roses. She also weaves in traditional Celtic symbols, such as apples and oak trees, that resonate within the fairy context.

Hutton works well with Cooper’s words and his craftsmanship skillfully moves the story forward. His attention to setting reinforces the thematic content. And, while partially restricted by Cooper’s dense descriptions, he is able to subtly add richness to the
story by visually contrasting elements of the text. The juxtaposition of the Elfin and human courts, Margaret and Tam Lin, and Margaret and the Elfin Queen brings character foils and added interpretive possibilities into the text.

Overall, Yolen and Mikolaycak’s *Tam Lin* is a well-constructed, smooth retelling of the traditional ballads that provides extensive background information for the reader, remains fairly true to the oral motifs and, at the same time, demonstrates literary skill. Rather than include elements of sexuality, Yolen builds her story on the idea that Carterhaugh by right belongs to Jennet. While this weakens Jennet’s motivation for saving Tam Lin, Yolen’s focus nevertheless respects the traditional tale. This shift also works because the text privileges developed characterization, thereby encouraging the reader to take an interest in Jennet’s and Tam Lin’s internal conflicts. And finally, the story’s attention to Carterhaugh, depicted as an old castle, provides a strong, concrete setting that works as textual and visual symbols.

The stylistic elements of this picture book reveal Yolen’s immense skill in balancing the oral and written traditions. Her text truly lends itself to performance, balancing oral conventions, rhythm and repetition in particular, with descriptive passages and unique metaphors. She not only maintains the ballads’ key symbols, such as the rose and the various colours, but she also places them in a variety of contexts in order to enrich their meanings. And her diction, formal with some archaic words, works well to establish a distant setting as well as the sombre mood.

Finally, Mikolaycak beautifully crafts his illustrations, using bright colours and strong lines to bring attention to the characters and their emotions. In this way, his work supports the textual themes. He also includes textual symbols, paying insightful attention
to colours in particular, and infuses the images with a Celtic flavour. Also, the characters’ disregard for borders mirrors their disdain for social boundaries. Importantly, the illustrations respect the text, allowing much space for the printed word on the page and facilitating effective page breaks.

After this in-depth analysis of these two books, I wholeheartedly agree with Helen Gregory’s claim that “both would be excellent additions to any folklore collection.” Each demonstrates the author’s and illustrator’s careful consideration of folklore in every aspect of the story. Not surprisingly, all four artists are internationally renowned for their adaptations of folktales into children’s literature. Their broad exposure to and immersion in folklore permeates their work, bringing artistry, interpretive depth and folkloric resonance to their words and images.

This leads me back to my initial rationale for this study. Because folklore narratives form an important part of our cultural and literary heritage, they deserve adequate recognition and evaluation when adapted into children’s picture books. These books not only serve an audience of children, who deserve to be exposed to high quality art and culture, but they also comprise part of the research from which authors, illustrators, and storytellers create their own retellings. The concluding chapter then summarizes my proposed evaluative framework and also reviews my own Tam Lin retelling.

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1 The text is unpaginated, so I have numbered the pages for clarity. The first is the title page, the second the CIP page, and the story takes place from pages three to thirty-two.
2 See Nodelman, pages 149-51, for discussion about the relationship between perspective and setting.

3 Ibid. page 153, for discussion about shadows.

4 Ibid. page 140, for discussion about bilateral symmetry.

5 The text is unpaginated, so I have numbered the pages for clarity. Page one is the half-title page, page three the full-title page and page four the CIP page. The story runs from pages six to twenty-nine, and the endnotes from pages thirty-one and thirty-two.

6 See Nodelman, page 132, for discussion about isolation of objects from background.
Chapter Seven: Conclusion

This study has looked at a variety of issues relating to folklore and children's literature. An initial review of relevant scholarship indicated the necessity for evaluative criteria to be proposed for the unique genre of folktale picture books. Such a framework would be useful to writers, illustrators, critics and, due to their dependence on written retellings, storytellers. I then researched the writings of scholars and professionals in the field of children's literature to understand the kinds of critical questions that arise from the adaptation of an oral folktale to a folktale picture book. I compiled, discussed and explored these issues, which I later utilized in my analysis of four Tam Lin picture book retellings. On a more personal level, this investigation has prompted me to re-examine my own work as an oral storyteller: my version of "Tam Lin," ever a work in progress, has been changed by both the evaluative framework I have established and the picture books themselves. Finally, this study has sparked questions worthy of further examination.

I have grouped critical questions stemming from the adaptation of a folktale to a folktale picture book into four categories. The first, source acknowledgement, asks whether an author has credited folktale sources used when researching the retelling. The second category, narrative features, examines changes made to a folktale's plot, characters and setting. The third category, stylistic features, looks at the techniques by which a folktale works as an oral story and asks if the folktale picture book also lends itself to oral performance, preserves recurring images and symbols, and effectively uses diction. The final category, illustrative features, explores the ways in which an artist
incorporates folklore into the pictures by means of mirroring the text, accurately presenting the culture, bringing additional layers of meaning to the story, and respecting the folkloric text’s presence on the page.

Of the four picture book retellings of “Tam Lin,” I considered two to be unsuccessful. Based on the criteria I have proposed, both Tamlane by Judy Paterson and Sally J. Collins, and The Enchanted Forest by Rosalind Kervan and Alan Marks have major deficiencies. Although Paterson acknowledges the oral tradition and, in fact, maintains most of the ballads’ narrative structures such as character traits and plot elements, Collins’ illustrations are problematic. Regardless of the text, the images do not compell the reader to move through the story. Moreover, the cute forest animals and the melodramatic expressions of the Fairy Queen diverge from the story’s serious nature.

On the contrary, Marks beautifully illustrates The Enchanted Forest: A Scottish Fairy Tale, paying close attention to textual themes and contributing many details not found in Kervan’s text. Also, the layout of the text and images, coupled with the style of writing, allow the story to be read aloud quite well. However, because the narrative elements have undergone such immense changes, the entire picture book is compromised. For example, unlike “Tam Lin’s” traditional heroine who has survived in oral lore, Kervan’s Janna is neither strong-willed nor consciously brave.

The two successful retellings, both titled Tam Lin, differ in many ways. Susan Cooper and Warwick Hutton’s work remains true to nearly every folkloric aspect of the ballads. It mirrors the ballads’ narrative structure, manner of characterization, use of repetition, symbols and, to some extent, diction. Conversely, Jane Yolen and Charles Mikolaycak take many liberties with the folkloric elements in order to smooth out the
narrative flow and create a more sophisticated, literary retelling that includes original metaphors and rich description. Furthermore, Cooper and Warwick create a story rooted in social conflict that results in the protagonists’ subversive actions against societal expectations. Yolen and Mikolaycak, on the other hand, focus on the character’s individual traits and their internal struggles.

Despite these differences, both picture books serve as excellent retellings of the Tam Lin tale and demonstrate the immense flexibility offered by traditional lore. They both credit their traditional sources as well as preserve the ballads’ core traits that have survived over time. These include steadfast symbols such as the rose, the horses and the green mantle. Most importantly, however, Janet and Margaret, both strong and defiant young women, do not accept their prescribed role in life. These books also keep the plot device by which Tam Lin, in thrall to the Fairy Queen, will be sacrificed unless the heroine chooses to risk her life by facing the Fairy Queen and hold Tam Lin throughout his bestial transformations. Thus the protagonists exercise free will and, subsequently, face real danger in a setting of metaphorical darkness.

This analysis leads me to conclude that, around a base of source materials, the narrative, stylistic and illustrative categories that form my evaluative framework converge to form a metaphorical triangle; a good folktale picture book must be constructed from these three equally important foundations; serious deficiency in one area affects the structural integrity of the entire book. This is apparent in The Enchanted Forest which, although offering beautifully artistic illustrations, misrepresents “Tam Lin’s” plot and characters. Similarly, although Tamlane’s text is generally respectful of its folkloric sources, the comic, poorly-drawn illustrations do not adequately reflect the
text. Folkloric influence on narrative, stylistic and illustrative elements must then all be considered when evaluating the success of an individual picture book.

Although a folktale picture book may fall short of excellence, it is not void of merit. The authors and illustrators of these four books have each contributed a unique idea or image to the story that has, in some way, enriched my own understanding. The *Enchanted Forest* visually renders how dark and frightful the forest truly is. The old nurse in *Tamlane* brings attention to the day-to-day realities of courtly life. Warwick’s juxtaposition of the human and fairy courts has sparked a new appreciation for Tam Lin’s social situation. And I find Yolen and Mikolaycak’s *Fairy Queen* absolutely memorable and electrifying.

Now, after many years of telling this story, this study has motivated me to examine my own retelling of the Tam Lin ballad. Initially, I was surprised to discover how much Yolen’s version has influenced me. I have transformed Carterhaught into a symbol of inheritance, attributed the initial warning to the heroine’s parents, and kept the romantic ending in which the couple marry and live happily ever after. I intend to make some changes.

Although I love Yolen’s version, I have come to realize that I am most attracted to “Tam Lin’s” social struggles, as opposed to its romantic elements. I have kept Janet’s pregnancy for this very reason and will continue to do so; although this limits the age of my audience to teens and adults (pragmatically speaking, I would have a difficult time with teachers and librarians if I told this, as is, to a young audience), it also allows me to explore the theme of abortion that was so prevalent in the ballad texts. Thus far, I have shied away from this aspect but, inspired by Cooper’s skill with subtle nuances, I aim to
incorporate the herbs that will “destroy the bonie babe.” To build on the social themes, I will maintain the presence of Janet’s disapproving parents, but will most likely reduce the importance that Carterhaugh, as an ancestral home, plays in my story. I also like the ballads’ ambiguous ending and plan to conclude my story with the Queen’s curses, leaving Janet and Tam Lin’s future unspoken. However, I will continue to foster the spirit of Yolen’s Fairy Queen in my retelling.

This leads me to further questions about retellings, either by an author or a storyteller, not dealt with in this study. “Tam Lin,” as a traditional ballad, belongs to the public domain. However, if my Fairy Queen has been influenced by Yolen’s character, at what point have I committed plagiarism? Or is this a moot point when dealing with folktales? This issue could also apply, for example, to Tamlane, which quotes almost directly from Gordon Jarvie’s version.

Akin to this issue, one can ask where, exactly, is the demarcation between a folktale version of a story, written or told, and a unique, literary retelling? For example, in The Magic Well, by Maida Silverman, a mother must save her daughter from the Fairy Queen by holding her throughout several transformations. Another example, The Nightwood, by Robin Muller, blends motifs from “Tam Lin” and Christina Rosetti’s poem, “Goblin Market.”

Finally, one could look at a number of Tam Lin retellings in collections, or in picture books, over a period of time and speculate about the recurring motifs. Most obviously, the heroine’s pregnancy is removed from picture books (although Cooper’s infers this may be the case), but there are many other interesting examples. I have found that, although the ballads emphasize that Tam Lin is Christian, the picture books I have
read either downplay this aspect or expunge it altogether. Also, I find it interesting that, although only Child 39G tells that morning comes, each of the picture books include this detail. Similarly, only in Child 39A does the heroine throw the burning metal into the well, yet this detail persists in the majority of retellings. And, not surprisingly, the magical transformation also occurs in all of these books.

Over time, “Tam Lin’s” motifs will shift as social norms fall in and out of favour. Its details will mold both into the format in which it is presented and to the listening or reading audience. But, ultimately, it is the triumph of good over evil, and the true power of love, that will persist. I have no doubt that this story, which has already flourished in ballad form for centuries, will survive by way of the storyteller’s lips, the author’s pages, the illustrator’s pictures and, most importantly, our children’s imaginations.
Works Cited

Primary Sources
(* indicates picture book retelling of “Tam Lin”)


**Secondary Sources**


114


Appendix A: “Tam Lin” (Child 39A)

1. O I forbid you, maidens a',
That wear gowd on your hair,
To come or gae by Carterhaugh,
For young Tam Lin is there.

2. There's nane that gae by Carterhaugh
But they leave him a wad,
Either their rings, or green mantles,
Or else their maidenhead.

3. Janet has kilted her green kirtle
A little aboon her knee,
And she has brooded her yellow hair
A little aboon her bree,
And she's awa to Carterhaugh,
As fast as she can hie.

4. When she came to Carterhaugh,
Tam Lin was at the well,
And there she fand his steed standing,
But away was himel.

5. She had na pu'd a double rose,
A rose but only twa,
Till up then started young Tam Lin,
Says, Lady, thou's pu nae mae.

6. Why pu's thou the rose, Janet,
And why breaks thou the wand?
Or why comes thou to Carterhaugh
Withouten my command?

7. 'Carterhaugh, it is my ain,
My daddie gave it me;
I'll come and gang by Carterhaugh,
And ask nae leave at thee.'

8. Janet has kilted her green kirtle,
A little aboon her knee,
And she has snooded her yellow hair,
A little aboon her bree,
And she is to her fathers' ha,
As fast as she can hie.

9. Four and twenty ladies fair
Were playing at the ba,
And out them cam the fair Janet,
Ance the flower amang them a'.

10. Four and twenty ladies fair
Were playing at the chess,
And out then cam the fair Janet,
As green as onie glass.

11. Out then spak an auld grey knight,
Lay oer the castle wa,
And says, Alas, fair Janet, for thee
But we'll be blamed a'.

12. 'Haud your tongue, ye auld fac'd knight,
Some ill death may ye die!
Father my bairn on whom I will,
I'll father nane on thee.'

13. Out then spak her father dear,
And he spak meek and mild,
'And ever alas, sweet Janet,' he says,
'I think thou gaes wi child.'

14. 'If that I gae with child, father,
Mysel maun bear the blame;
There's neer a laird about your ha
Shall get the bairn's name.

15. 'If my love were an earthly knight,
As he's an elfin grey,
I wad na gie my ain true-love
For nae lord that ye hae.

16. 'The steed that my true-love rides on
Is lighter than the wind;
Wi siller he is shod before,
Wi burning gowd behind.'
17. Janet has kilted her green kirtle
A little aboon her knee,
And she has snooded her yellow hair
A little aboon her bree,
And she's awa to Carterhaugh,
As fast as she can hie.

18. When she cam to Carterhaugh,
Tam Lin was at the well,
And there she fand his steed standing,
But away was himsel.

19. She had na pu'd a double rose,
A rose but only twa,
Till up then started young Tam Lin,
Says Lady, thou pu's nae mae.

20. Why pu's thou the rose, Janet,
Amang the groves so green,
And a' to kill the bonie babe,
That we gat us between?

21. 'O tell me, tell me, Tam Lin,' she says,
'For's sake that died on tree,
If eer ye was in holy chapel,
Or christendom did see?'

22. 'Roxbrugh he was my grandfather,
Took me with him to bide,
And ance it fell upon a day
That wae did me betide.

23. 'And ance it fell upon a day,
A cauld day and a snell,
When we were frae the hunting come,
That frae my horse I fell;
The Queen o Fairies she caught me,
In yon green hill to dwell.

24. 'And pleasant is the fairy land,
But, an eerie tale to tell,
Ay at the end of seven years
We pay a tiend to hell;
I am sae fair and fu o flesh,
I'm feard it be myself.

25. 'But the night is Halloween, lady,
The morn is Hallowday;
Then win me, win me, an ye will,
For weel I wat ye may.

26. 'Just at the mirk and midnight hour
The fairy folk will ride,
And they that wad their true-love win,
At Miles Cross they maun bide.'

27. 'But how shall I thee ken, Tam Lin,
Or how my true-love know,
Amang sae mony unco knights
The like I never saw?'

28. 'O first let pass the black, lady,
And syne let pass the brown,
But quickly run to the milk-white steed,
Pu ye his rider down.

29. 'For I'll ride on the milk-white steed
And ay nearest the town;
Because I was an earthly knight,
They gie me that renown.

30. 'My right hand will be glovd, lady,
My left hand will be bare,
Cockt up shall my bonnet be,
And kaimd down shall my hair,
Nae doubt I will be there.

31. 'They'll turn my in your arms, lady,
Into an esk and adder;
But hold me fast, and fear me not,
I am your bairn's father.

32. 'They'll turn me into a bear sae grim,
And then a lion bold;
But hold me fast, and fear me not,
As ye shall love your child.
33. ‘Again they’ll turn me in your arms
To a red het gaud of airm;
But hold me fast, and fear me not,
I’ll do to you nae harm.

34. ‘And last they’ll turn me in your arms
Into the burning gleed;
Then throw me into well water,
O throw me in wi speed.

35. ‘And then I’ll be your ain true-love,
I’ll turn a naked knight;
Then cover me wi your green mantle,
And cover me out o sight.’

36. Gloomy, gloomy was the night,
And eerie was the way,
As fair Jenny in her green mantle
To Miles Cross did she gae.

37. About the middle o the night
She heard the bridles ring:
This lady was as glad as that
As any earthly thing.

38. First she let the black pass by,
And syne she let the brown;
But quickly she ran to the milk-white steed,
And pu’d the rider down.

39. Sae well she minded whae he did say,
And young Tam Lin did win;
Syne covered him wi her green mantle,
As blythe’s a bird in spring.

40. Out then spak the Queen o Fairies,
Out of a bush o broom:
‘Them that has gotten young Tam Lin
Has gotten a stately groom.’

41. Out then spak the Queen o Fairies,
And an angry woman was she:
‘Shame betide her ill-far’d face,
And an ill death may she die,
For she’s taen awa th boniest knight
In a’ my companie.

42. ‘But had a kend, Tam Lin,’ she says,
‘What now this night I see,
I wad hae taen out thy twa grey een,
And put in twa een o tree.

Appendix B: “Tam Lin” (Child 39G)

1. Take warning, a’ ye ladies fair,
   That wear gowd on your hair,
   Come never unto Charter’s woods,
   For Tam-a-line is there.

2. Even about that knight’s middle
   O siller bells are nine;
   Nae ane comes to Charter wood
   And a maid returns again.

3. Lady Margaret sits in her bower door,
   Sewing at her silken seam;
   And she langd to gang to Charter woods,
   To pou the roses green.

4. She hadna poud a rose, a rose,
   Nor broken a branch but ane,
   Till by it came him true Tam-a-line,
   Says, Ladye, lat alane.

5. O why pou ye the rose, the rose?
   Or why brake ye the tree?
   Or why come ye to Charter woods,
   Without leave askd of me?

6. ‘I will pou the rose, the rose
   And I will brake the tree;
   Charter woods are a’ my ain,
   I’ll ask nae leave o thee.’

7. He’s taen her by the milk-white hand,
   And by the grass-green sleeve,
   And laid her low on gude green wood,
   At her he spierd nae leave.

8. When he had got his wills of her,
   His wills as he had taen,
   He’s taen her by the middle sma,
   Set her to feet again.

9. She turnd her right and round about,
   To spier her true-love’s name,
   But naething heard she, nor naething saw,
   As a’ the woods grew dim.

10. Seven days she tarried there,
    Saw neither sun nor moon;
    At lengh, by a sma glimmering light,
    Came thro the wood her lane.

11. When she came to her father’s court,
    As fine as ony queen;
    But when eight months were past and gane,
    Got on the gown o’ green.

12. Then out it speaks an eldren knight,
    As he stood at the yett:
    ‘Our king’s daughter, she gaes wi barn,
    And we’ll get a’ the wyte.’

13. ‘O had your tongue, ye eldren man,
    And bring me not to shame;
    Although that I do gang wi bairn,
    Yese naeways get the blame.’

14. ‘Were my love but an earthly man,
    As he’s an elfin knight,
    I woudna gie my ain true love
    For a’ that’s in my sight.’

15. That out it speaks her brither dear,
    He meant to do her harm:
    ‘There is an herb in Charter wood
    Will twine you an the bairn.’

16. She’s taen her mantle her about,
    Her coffer by the band,
    And she is on to Charter wood,
    As fast as she coud gang.

17. She hadna poud a rose, a rose,
    Nor braken a branch but ane,
    Till by it came him Tam-a-Line,
    Says, Lady, lat alane.

18. O why pou ye the pile, Margaret,
    The pile o gravil green,
    For to destroy the bonny bairn
    That we got us between?

19. O why pou ye the pile, Margaret,
    The pile o gravil gray,
    For to destroy the bonny bairn
    That we got in our play?

20. For if it be a knave-bairn,
    He’s heir o a’ my land;
    But if it be a lass-bairn,
    In red gowd she shall gang.
21. ‘If my luve were an earthly man,
As he’s an elfin rae,
I coud gang bound, love, for your sake,
A twalmonth and a day.’

22. ‘Indeed your love’s an earthly man,
The same as well as thee,
And lang I’ve haunted Charter woods,
A’ for your fair bodie.’

23. ‘O tell me, tell me, Tam-a-Line,
O tell, an tell me true,
Tell me this night, an mak nae lie,
What pedigree are you?’

24. ‘OI hae been at gude church-door,
An I’ve got christendom;
I’m the Earl o’ Forbes’ eldest son,
An heir ower a’ his land.

25. ‘When I was young, o three years old,
Muckle was made o me;
My step-mother put on my claithes,
An ill, ill sained she me.

26. ‘Ae fatal morning I went out,
Dreading nae injury,
And thinking lang, fell soun asleep,
Beneath an apple tree.

27. Then by it came the Elfin Queen,
And laid her hand on me;
And from that time since ever I mind,
I’ve been in her companie.

28. ‘O Elfin it’s a bonny place,
In it fain I woud dwell;
But ay at ilka seven years’ end
They pay a tiend to hell,
And I’m saw fou o flesh an blude,
I’m sair feard for myself.’

29. ‘O tell me, tell me, Tam-a-Line,
O tell me, tell me true;
Tell me this night, an make nae lie,
What way I’ll borrow you?’

30. ‘The morn is Halloweven night,
The elfin court will ride,
Through England, and thro a’ Scotland,
And through the world wide.

31. ‘O they begin at sky setting,
Rides a’ the evening tide;
And she that will her true-love borrow,
[At] Miles-corse will him bide.

32. ‘Ye’11 do you down to Miles-corse,
Between twall hours and ane,
And full your hands o holy water,
And cast your compass roun.

33. ‘Then the first an court that comes you till
Is published king and queen;
The next an court that comes you till,
His maidens mony ane.

34. ‘The next an court that comes you till,
Is footmen, grooms and squires;
The next an court that comes you till
Is knights, and I’ll be there.

35. ‘I Tam-a-Line, on milk-white steed,
A goud star on my crown;
Because I was an earthly knight,
Got that for a renown.

36. ‘And out at my steed’s right nostril,
He’ll breathe a fiery flame;
Ye’ll loot you low, and sain yourself,
And ye’ll be busy then.

37. ‘Ye’ll take my horse then by the head,
And lat the bridal fa;
The Queen o’ Elfin she’ll cry out,
True Tam-a-Lines’s awa.

38. ‘Then I’ll appear in your arms
Like the wolf that neer woud tame,
Ye’ll had me fast, lat me not go,
Case we neer meet again.

39. ‘Then I’ll appear in your arms
Like the fire that burns sae bauld;
Ye’ll had me fast, last me not go,
I’ll be as iron cauld.

40. ‘Then I’ll appear in your arms
Like the adder an the snake;
Ye’ll had me fast, lat me not go,
I am your warld’s make.
41. 'Then I'll appear in your arms
Like to the deer sae wild;
Ye'll had me fast, last me not go,
And I'll father your child.

42. 'And I'll appear in your arms
Like to a silken string;
Ye'll had me fast, let me not go,
Till ye see the fair morning.

43. 'And I'll appear in your arms,
Like to a naked man;
Ye'll had me fast, let me not go,
And wi you I'll gae home.

44. Then she has done her to Miles-corse,
Between twall hours an ane,
And filled her hands o holy water,
And kiest her compass roun.

45. The first an court that came her till
Was published king and queen;
The niest an court that came her till
Was maidens mony ane.

46. The niest an court that came her till
Was footmen, grooms and squires;
The niest an court that came her till
Was knights, and he was there.

47. True Tam-a-Line, on milk-white steed,
A gowd star on his crown;
Because he was an earthly man,
Got that for a renown.

48. And out at the steed's right nostril,
He breathd a fiery flame;
She loots her low, an sains hersell,
And she was busy then.

49. She's taen the horse then by the head,
And loot the bridle fa;
The Queen o Elfin she cried out,
'True Tam-a-Line's awa.'

50. 'Stay still, true Tam-a-Line,' she says,
'Till I pay you your fee,'
'His father wants not lands or rents,
He'll ask nae fee frae thee.'

51. 'Gin I had kent yestreen, yestreen,
What I ken weel the day,
I shoud taen your fu false heart,
Gien you a heart o clay.'

52. Then he appeared in her arms
Like the wolf that neer woud tame;
She held him fast, let him no go not,
Case they neer meet again.

53. Then he appeared in her arms
Like the fire burning bauld;
She held him fast, let him not go,
He was as iron cauld.

54. And he appeared in her arms
Like the adder an the snake;
She held him fast, let him not go,
He was her world's make.

55. And he appeared in her arms
Like to the deer sae wild;
She held him fast, let him not go,
He's father o her child.

56. And her appeared in her arms
Like to a silken string;
She held him fast, let him not go,
Till she saw fair morning.

57. And he appeared in her arms
Like to a naked man;
She held him fast, let him not go,
And wi her he's gane home.

58. These news hae reachd thro a' Scotland,
And far ayont the Tay,
That Lady Margaret, our king's daughter,
That night had gaind her prey.

59. She borrowed her love at mirk midnight,
Bare her young son ere a day,
And though ye'd search the world wide,
Ye'll nae find sic a may.

Appendix C: Aesop Prize Criteria for Nomination
(juried award given by the Children’s Folklore Section
of the American Folklore Society)

1. Folklore should be central to the book’s content and, if appropriate, to the illustrations.

2. The folklore presented in the book should accurately reflect the culture and the world view of the people whose folklore is the focus of the book.

3. The reader’s understanding of folklore should be enhanced by the book, as should the book be enhanced by the presence of folklore.

4. The book should reflect the high artistic standards of the best of children’s literature and should have strong appeal to the child reader.

5. Folklore sources must be fully acknowledged and annotations referenced within the bound contents of the publication.

Source: http://afsnet.org/sections/children/aesop.htm

Appendix D: Margaret Read MacDonald’s Criteria for the Folktale Picture Book

1. Language that lends itsef to oral performance AND/OR a skillfully retold tale.

2. Illustrations which enhance and expand the text and facilitate movement through the story.


4. Sensitivity to the tale’s ethnic origins OR a clearly playful break with tradition.

5. Notes revealing the tale’s sources and connecting the tale with its ethnic origins.

Source: Lecture notes given to the author in a letter, September 2002.
Appendix E: Criteria for Picture Book Selection

The following motifs appear in Child ballads 39A to 39I. Picture books chosen for this study include all of them:

a: Heroine pulls rose, thereby summoning hero.
b: Hero questions heroine’s actions; she claims her right to the land.
c: Hero instructs heroine how to save him.
d: Heroine pulls hero from white horse.
e: To rescue hero, heroine holds him throughout several transformations.

The Enchanted Forest: A Scottish Fairy Tale by Rosalind Kervan and Alan Marks
Janna enters an enchanted forest and meets its guardian, Tam Lin. He lets her go free on the promise she will return to rescue him from the Queen of Fairies, to whom is a slave. (a, b, c, d, e)

The Magic Well by Geraldine McCaughrean and Jason Cockcroft
Lured to the fairy world by the promise of a playmate, Janet soon tires of her new life. She reveals her whereabouts to her mother, who risks her life to save Janet from the Fairy Queen. (c, d, e)

Never Let Go by Geraldine McCaughrean and Jason Cockcroft
On the eve of his wedding, Tamlin of Carterhaugh is stolen away by the Fairy Queen. His beloved, Janet, searches for him in the garden, where a magic double rose tells her what she must do to bring him back from Fairyland. (a, d, e)

The Nightwood by Robin Muller
Elaine, angry with her father, leaves the safety of her castle to explore the mysterious Nightwood. She joins the Elfin Queen’s ball, where she meets the Elfin knight, Tamlynne. She returns often, becoming more listless with each visit. After hearing some advice from an old woman, Elaine faces the Queen, consequently regaining her vitality as well as Tamlynne’s mortal soul. (a, b, d, e)
The Red Cloak by Betsy James
Tam goes fishing by the stones in the lake, and doesn’t come back. While most people think he is dead, his friend, Jan, believes otherwise. One year after his disappearance, on midsummer eve, she seeks the advice of the wisest woman and finds him. But, before she can take him home, she must rescue him from the elves. (d, e)

Tam Lin by Susan Cooper and Warwick Hutton
Margaret flees from her rigid castle life to explore the haunted Carterhays woods, spends a week with the elfin knight Tam Lin and is subsequently berated by the court. When she returns to the wood, she learns that the Elfin Queen plans to send Tam Lin’s soul to Hell to fulfill a pact with the devil and makes a decision to rescue him. (a, b, c, d, e)

Tam Lin by Jane Yolen and Charles Mikolaycak
Although Carterhaugh has been taken over by the Fey, Jennet MacKenzie determines to reclaim it for her family. She goes to the forbidden castle, where she meets Tam Lin and learns that the Faery Queen plans to kill him to settle a tithe to Hell. In risking her life to save him, Jennet also attains her ancestral home. (a, b, c, d, e)

Tamlane by Judy Paterson and Sally J. Collins
hen he is nine, Tamlane mysteriously disappears. Years later, his childhood friend, Janet, discovers him in Carterhaugh forest and risks her life to save him from the Queen of Fairies, who plans to use Tam Lin to pay her due to the devil. (a, b, c, d, e)

Wild Robin by Susan Jeffers
Wild Robin is a lazy and unruly boy who longs for home after he is captured by the fairies. Janet, informed of his whereabouts by an elf, rescues her brother. (e)