EUDY, VIRGINIA BLAIRE, M.A. "Disturb not her Dream:" The Influence of Jacobite Coding on Robert Burns's Poetry. (2014) Directed by Dr. Anne Wallace. 33 pp.

Robert Burns has collected many personas throughout literary history. Known separately as a political satirist, bawdy poet, and romantic bard, Burns is often attributed with only one of these identities at a time. Many critics seem to ignore the importance of viewing Burns holistically. By unifying Burns's reputations we can elicit a deeper meaning from his lesser known works. Furthermore, by applying the lens of Jacobite coding, a form of communication often used during the Jacobite Movement (1688-1745), to his less overtly political love songs "Afton Water" and "Ae Fond Kiss," we as an audience can better understand Burns's unified identity. Through an extensive exploration of Jacobite lore and imagery in the love songs, I will demonstrate Burns's capacity for fostering various readings in the same source. More importantly, by establishing these sign posts we can continue to explore Burns's other works in order to better unify his multiple reputations and gain a deeper knowledge of his 18<sup>th</sup> century audience's reactions. EUDY, VIRGINIA BLAIRE, M.A. Neither Black nor White: Gray's Liminal Pastoral. (2014) Directed by Dr. Jennifer Keith. 31 pp.

Throughout Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" the speaker applauds the poor for their "heroic" suffering. As a poem sentimentalizing the poor, Marxist critics have often attacked the speaker's motives and his ability to identify with the poor he idealizes. In addition, the Marxist critics have often highlighted the pastoral elements in the work, and suggest that the nature of this mode lends itself to capitalistic propaganda. Although these Marxist readings allow the reader to understand the ways in which the speaker distances himself from the poor through his seemingly condescending diction, I would argue that this lens ultimately narrows the poem's potential for other goals. In Marxism's stead I suggest we reassess the poem through the lens of liminality. As a 20<sup>th</sup> century anthropological theory, liminality discusses the space of "in-between." Theorists argue that in this in-between space (i.e. a threshold or a transition), people are always considered equals, and that there is no overarching hierarchy. Furthermore, when applied to the pastoral, a mode of poetry set on the outskirts of society, liminality becomes a physical space, open for anyone to enter freely. By applying the 20<sup>th</sup> century anthropological lens of liminality, as discussed by Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner, to the definition of the pastoral, as posited by Roger Sales, I will explore the speaker's attempt to unify the social classes through the destruction of societal structures.

## "DISTURB NOT HER DREAM:" THE INFLUENCE OF JACOBITE CODING ON ROBERT BURNS'S POETRY

#### AND

### NEITHER BLACK NOR WHITE: GRAY'S LIMINAL PASTORAL

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts

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#### APPROVAL PAGE

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#### INTRODUCTION

While both Roberts Burns and Thomas Gray remain two of the most influential British poets of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, their works have often been read one-dimensionally. Often viewed as the "political satirist," "bawdy poet," and "romantic lyricist," Burns's works are critiqued from several perspectives, yet these lenses have caused Burns's reputation to become fragmented; for most of these critics only focus on one aspect of his multiple personas. In contrast, Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" often only falls prey to Marxist criticism for its sentimentalized treatment of the poor. These narrow lenses hamper the potential for each of these poets to achieve a sense of unity. Although they attain unity by different means and for different purposes, both of these poets eventually create a space in which societal constructions evaporate. By examining two of his seemingly innocuous love songs ("Afton Water" and "Ae Fond Kiss") through the lens of Jacobite coding, we as an audience can discover Burns's capacity for fostering multiple readings in the same work. This exploration proves vital in order to unify Burns's fragmented reputation. Later, by applying the anthropological theory of liminality, a theory that focuses on the elimination of social constraints, to Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" we can assess the speaker's ability to dissolve social barriers and establish a sense of unity between himself and the impoverished dead of the pastoral graveyard. In the end then, this two-part thesis aims to analyze the ways in which both of these poets defy their social constructions in order to achieve unification.

# "DISTURB NOT HER DREAM:" THE INFLUENCE OF JACOBITE CODING ON ROBERT BURNS'S POETRY

While some critics see Robert Burns as a political satirist, others consider him a purveyor of bawdy songs or simple romantic poetry. These critics tend to ignore the fact that Burns's linguistic choices cross genre and that most of his poems draw from more than one tradition. Two of his love poems, widely considered apolitical and innocent, contain strong political elements in addition to the more obvious romantic ones. In "Afton Water" and "Ae Fond Kiss," Burns makes use of Jacobite imagery, which creates two distinct ways of reading each poem. On the surface, both poems praise beloveds; however, using the lens of Jacobite coding, a form of communication often used during the Jacobite Movement (1688-1745), demonstrates that Burns has also infused the poems with strong political themes. By establishing these codes we can explore Burns's other works in order to better unify his multiple reputations and gain a deeper knowledge of his 18th century audience's reactions.

Most critics recognize Burns's poetry's political nature; however, some explore this side of his poetry to a deeper extent than others. Highlighting the political side of Burns, Marilyn Butler in her article "Burns and Politics" argues, "Burns's social position and his self-preservation, the deliberately simple and traditional language, verse-forms and metres, are all in the end political" (86). Although Butler narrows her focus to a few of Burns's poems, her initial, overgeneralizing statement reflects the sentiments of several other Burns scholars. In his book, *Robert Burns*, Raymond Bentman describes

Burns's first body of work, "The Kilmarnock Edition": "[His poems] have an ethical position to argue from and advocate—the praise of freedom and spontaneity or the denunciation of repression, hypocrisy, and social and economic inequality" (21). Focusing mainly on Burns's religious poems, Bentman analyzes the poems for their satirical elements and notes the progression of his political emphasis. From a slightly different perspective, Patrick Scott Hogg in his essay, "The Lost Radical Works of Robert Burns: 1793-96" reveals an extensive censorship of Burns's work "motivated by a desire to protect the poet's reputation or by fear of stepping over the line of the laws (sedition or libel)" (240). Hogg's view suggests that while Burns has a reputation for political works, his reputation may have been more inflammatory had the censored or destroyed poems remained intact. While each of these critics offer a thorough and enlightening study of Burns's works, they emphasize above all else his political messages.

In contrast to the political readings of Burns, John C. Weston and Mary Ellen Brown focus their criticism on the bawdy nature of Burns's poems. Reflecting on Burns's perceived personality Weston posits, "[H]e saw himself as indolent, careless, foolish, impulsive; driven by imagination, whim, caprice, and passion; full of humor, wit, good nature, and generosity; fated to a life of poverty and giddy instability" (539). Discussing Burns's famous poem, "Tam O'Shanter", Weston suggests that all of these traits inevitably appear in Burns's work because Burns cannot separate himself from his speakers. Although this argument seems fraught with presuppositions, Weston's argument hints at Burns's ability to create multifaceted works. Like Weston, Brown, in her book

*Burns and Tradition*, suggests, "[Burns's] use of content was both obvious and pervasive...he adapted bawdy songs—sometimes bowdlerizing them, sometimes making them bawdier" (50). Brown argues that Burns's affinity towards the bawdy surfaces often throughout his work, and she reveals that several of the poems he composed for the *Merry Muses*, a collection of Scottish folk songs, were not used because of their indecent content. Both of these critics suggest that Burns's tendency towards the scandalous attracts a large audience. Yet, there is more to Burns's work than poems about premarital sex.

Of particular interest to Burns scholars is the treatment of women and their communities in the poet's love songs. A. L. Kennedy devotes her chapter, "Love Composition: The Solitary Vice," to the study of Burns's passionate writing. She insists, "Burns's fixed and rewarding focus on the objects of his verses would naturally have lent a certain passion and clarity to his work" (Kennedy 25). Kennedy's focus on Burns's passion is only enhanced by Christina Keith's praising of Burns's specialty. In *The Russet Coat*, Keith asserts, "It is on the love-songs Burns has made his name" (134). Focusing specifically on Burns's stylistic choices, Keith maintains that his strongest contribution to the love-song genre is his mastery of "[t]he short poem…with the explosive first line and—most vital of all—that air of guileless simplicity which only the most experienced lover can achieve" (Keith 136). Broadening Keith's observations, in her book, *Robert Burns and the Sentimental Era*, Carol McGuirk explores the elements of sentimentality and sensibility in Burns's works. She states, "Burns's songs demonstrate a profound respect for people as ideal capacities of human nature and the infinite dimensions of such

commonly experienced feelings" (McGuirk 147). In other words, McGuirk suggests that Burns not only captures the experiences and attentions of the women he portrays but seeks to also accurately represent and attract their communities. Furthermore, as each of these critics argue Burns's distinct style hinges on his linguistic choices.

This interest in his language becomes an integral part of my thesis, for it is through Burns's specific word choice that the Jacobite symbols surface. Shifting away from specific thematic criticism to a brief exploration into linguistic analysis, Jeremy W. Smith in his article "Copia Verborum: The Linguistic Choices Of Robert Burns," suggests, "Burns, despite his poses, would have been fully conscious of what he was doing; he was, as we now know, by modern standards a well-read man, whose references range from Sappho to Adam Smith" (77). According to Smith, Burns's immersion in Jacobite culture would have inevitably seeped into his works. Expanding Smith's work, Alex Broadhead in his book, *The Language of Robert Burns: Style Idelolgy, and Identity*, applauds Burns for "the peculiarly imaginative, original and masterful way in which he goes about reconstituting reality through language" (170). In other words, both Smith and Broadhead marvel at Burns's understanding of language and how he utilizes it, for without his word choices, Burns could be just another poet ignored by the canon.

Burns's cunning use of diction allows him to conflate his multiple personas throughout his works. More specifically, his disparate reputations as "political satirist," "bawdy poet," and "romantic lyricist" become unified by exploring Jacobite coding in his famous love songs "Afton Water" and "Ae Fond Kiss." Although most of its symbolic components are now mostly forgotten, the Jacobite movement communicated mostly

through song. By communicating their political messages through coded songs, Jacobite composers could remain anonymous and safe from prosecuting authorities. Though this essay does not intend to suggest that Burns purposefully coded his all of his poetry with Jacobite symbols it does intend to draw attention to Burns's use of language and what his specific word choices evoke from the audience. By highlighting such imagery, we as the audience can not only gain a better understanding of how Burns's 18<sup>th</sup> century audience may have interpreted his songs, but how fluidly his personas blend throughout his works.

By recalling the complexities of seventeenth century Great Britain's royal succession we can recognize the significance of discovering Jacobite codes in Burns's less overtly political poetry. The line of British royal succession from Queen Elizabeth I to King George I was filled with broken lineage and complications. In 1603, the second cousin of Queen Elizabeth I, King James VI of Scotland inherited both the English and Scottish crowns and was crowned James I of England (Mackie 188). A "man born for tragedy," the second son and heir to James I, Charles I, was immediately embroiled in a government schism upon his coronation in 1625 (Miller 67). Parliament sought to gain more power in the government, and Charles I believed in absolute monarchy. A series of civil wars ensued, and after many casualties on each side, Charles I lost the war in England (Wormald 102). Charles was then put on trial, sentenced and executed in 1649 (Miller 79). Thus began the period known as the Interregnum or the Commonwealth and Protectorate of Britain (Morgan 372). From 1649-1660, England experimented with various constitutions, abolished the monarchy, the House of Lords, and the Anglican

Church (Morgan 373). From 1653-1658, Oliver Cromwell ruled as the Lord Protectorate, leading England into a semblance of a republic.

In 1660, Parliament held a vote and unconditionally reinstated Charles II, the son and heir of Charles I. Ruling until 1685, Charles II left the throne to his brother, James II, the king who ignited the Jacobite Movement. James II's reign only lasted three years. As a devout Catholic, James was unpopular with the Parliament and his Protestant subjects (Miller 196). Upon the birth of the king's son, James III (later known as the "Old Pretender"), Parliament schemed with William and Mary of Orange, the son-in-law and daughter of James II, to usurp his throne in 1688 (Miller 197). As William and Mary had no surviving heirs, the Act of Succession in1701 designated Mary's sister, Anne, and her heirs as the next in line (Miller 210). In 1702, upon William's death, Anne began her reign and successfully ruled for the next 12 years. One of the most significant accomplishments of Anne's reign was the legal unification of England with Scotland in 1707 (Mackie 258). This created Great Britain and unified the Parliaments of each country. However, when Anne died without living issue in 1714, the reign of the Stuarts was finally at an end. George I, son of James I's granddaughter Sophia of Hanover, took his place on the British throne and began the Hanoverian regime that would reign for the next 187 years.

Though multifaceted in its ultimate goals, the combined sects of Jacobitism shared a common objective, which was to restore the Catholic monarch King James II's son James III, or his eventual heir, Prince Charles Edward Stuart, to the throne of England and Scotland. Though not overwhelming in numbers, the Jacobites caused

significant conflict throughout their active years. As Murray G. H. Pittock explains, "Jacobitism...was regarded by its contemporaries as a major military, political and religious threat to the existence of the [British] state itself" (2). While the Revolution of 1688 was relatively free of bloodshed, there were three critical battles that have remained significant in the history of Jacobitism: 1715 ("The Fifteen"), 1719 ("The Nineteen"), and 1745 ("The Forty-Five"). These battles decided the fate of the deposed King, for the English troops decimated the Jacobite forces' numbers (Petrie 213). With the event of the final defeat, Prince Charles Edward Stuart ("Bonnie Prince Charlie") was forced into exile. He spent the remainder of his days in France. Yet, despite their "King's" exile, the culture of Jacobitism was so deeply entrenched in pockets of Scottish society that it took over forty years for their activism to subside. Colin Kidd attests, "A variety of Jacobite ideas, sentiments and symbols managed to outlive the dynastic cause which they had originally served" (58). These ideas and symbols continued to thrive because they had become so ingrained into the culture. As Pittock argues, "Scottish Jacobitism aspired to [be] a totalizing view of a free, familiar and traditional Scotland" (134). This suggests that for the Scottish Jacobites, there was no distinction between nation and Jacobitism. Thus, for the Scottish Jacobites, James symbolized the nation, instead of simply a man, and the poetry of the period does not distinguish between the two (Poetry 135). Jacobites often celebrated their deposed monarchs through the clever use of song.

The tradition of cyphered songs in Scotland, however, did not originate with the Jacobites. As a long-standing Gaelic tradition, coded ballads, elegies, and other works allowed participants to communicate openly, even in a place of enmity. In his study on

Gaelic panegyric code, John MacInnes explains these songs as "a very complex system of transformations in which the linked rhetorical figures occupy a whole range of constantly shifting positions" (460). This construction, MacInnes suggests, allows a song or poem to relate two different narratives simultaneously. More importantly, the panegyric code's construction also allows the performer to address two different crowds in a subtle way. While a song may superficially espouse the tale of a drowned woman, for those familiar with various cultural symbols and events, the story becomes a sung memorial composed for a long dead chief (MacInnes 455). The Jacobites continued this use of polysemic songs.

Like the panegyric code described by MacInnes, the Jacobites crafted their communications in the most subtle of ways in order to ensure not only their survival, but also the political messages of their songs.<sup>1</sup> Pittock in his recent book, *Material Culture and Sedition, 1688-1760: Treacherous Objects, Secret Places*, suggests that "[t]he major threats to Jacobite discourse, language, symbol, association, communication and display were the laws on treason and sedition" (15). In other words, the Jacobites were forced to code their communications in order to remain safe from authorities. As Pittock in his other work *Jacobitism* suggests, song could "reveal Jacobite sympathy publicly while rendering prosecution virtually impossible" (*Jacobitism 69*). Utilizing multiple cultural techniques, the Jacobites disguised their propaganda. These songs were often composed in a blend of English and the local dialect of Scottish in order to blur the lines of political dissension in the works (*Jacobitism* 70). The combination of languages practically guaranteed that the song would change each time it was sung, which made it difficult for

the governmental authorities to attain evidence to prosecute the perpetrators. Furthermore, Butler proposes that "[songs] had their own process of transmission through performance in public or private, including the rhyme and the air, which helped the memory to retain them" (98). In other words, the most effective method of communication and protection from prosecution was through song, for neither the composer nor the performer was usually at risk of detection.

During an initial reading of "Afton Water" one will find the story of a lover begging a river not to disturb his slumbering lover. However, when a Jacobite lens is applied Burns's potentially subversive message appears. In the song, the speaker seemingly warns the Jacobites against further disturbing their enemy, England. Using the form of a traditional English song, the speaker lures the audience into believing the poem is about Mary, when its true focus is the river. In this specific reading of the song, Burns subverts the traditional love song through his focus on the river's attributes as well as its "possessions." He essentially removes the assumed lover from the picture by repeatedly reiterating that she is asleep. Before exploring the specific symbols of Jacobite code throughout the song, we must first identify the structural choices throughout Burns's work. By establishing the traditional elements often found in Scottish and English song, we can better understand the ways in which Burns's work fosters a double meaning.

Throughout Burns's work, he uses songs to different ends. In one of his letters, Burns extols the significance of the Scottish, "national" music: "There is a certain something in the old Scotch songs, a wild happiness of thought and expression, which peculiarly marks them, not only from English songs, but also from the modern efforts of

song-wrights, in our native manner and language" (*Letters* 147). In most of his songs, Burns adheres to these characteristics of "wild happiness of thought and expression." His songs "A Red, Red Rose" and "The Fornicator" embody the carefree poet singing to his beloved or causing mischief against the cultural institutions. For Burns to shift the tone of his song, "Afton Water," from carefree to deeply troubled raises questions about alternative meanings to the song. This modification forces his audience to focus on what other ideas he may be trying to convey in this work.

Throughout the various printed editions of Robert Burns's works, the title of the song changes. This fluidity suggests that, like many of the other Jacobite songs, Burns's song has been performed repeatedly and in various locales. Editor Carol McGuirk of *Robert Burns: Selected Poetry* chose to title the song, "Afton Water" based upon the original copy of the poem, as penned by Burns. In addition, by titling the lyric in this way, McGuirk immediately alerts the reader that the following work will focus on water. The nature of this title reflects not only the formal style of the song for it contains no flowery language or romanticized notions, but also the directness so often associated with Burns. In contrast to McGuirk's editorial choice, an edition printed in 1900 calls the song "Sweet Afton," but in the footnote refers to it as "Flow gently sweet Afton" (*Complete* 247). Unlike the title "Afton Water," these titles allow the lyric to possess a more poetic nature. These alterations in title suggest that this lyric was, in fact, recited often enough to garner substitution, for the editors of these collections would not have transposed the name if there was not contention surrounding it. While the title changes, the lyrics of the

song show little to no alteration. However, all of these titles share one commonality: each use traditional English dialect.

To emphasize their nationalism, Jacobites used their songs to promote the native language. In Jacobite culture, the use of the English language was viewed as negative while the use of the Scottish language was positive (*Poetry* 140). Thus, Burns's use of formalized English appears problematic. If this song has a subversive Jacobite message, and the objective is to have the song reach those with similar sympathies, then using a form of language detested by that specific audience seems counterproductive. However, by using the English language, Burns attracts an English audience. Although the Jacobite movement lingered longer in Scotland than in England, during Burns's lifetime there were still Jacobites in England who would understand the code. Instead of using the Scottish dialect as he does in several other songs, Burns specifically selects the English stylizations. His word choices, such as "braes," "lays," "wanton," and "lave," are all more formalized than the usual "simplistic" Ayrshire dialect that he uses in his other songs.

Burns's conscious choice to make this work a song suggests that he wanted the work to be accessible to multiple types of people. He further widens the scope of his accessibility with the use of the traditional English format: iambic pentameter. Many contemporaries and precursors to Burns composed poems in this meter, including Alexander Pope and John Milton. However, Burns distinguishes himself by disrupting the classic structure. Throughout the song, the meter of "Afton Water" is iambic pentameter, with an extra syllable. By consciously subverting this format by adding an

extra syllable, Burns creates distance between his song and his predecessors'. The song no longer flows in the exact same manner, but the addition of the syllable does not create too great a distance from the "original" meter form. Furthermore, the altered iambic pentameter demonstrates Burns's desire to separate himself from the Anglicized influences of England.

Burns's use of the traditional couplet seems like a clear homage to English influences, but his "innocent" word choices hide the more rebellious content in the lyric. Specifically, the repeated pairing of "stream" and "dream" adds nothing to Burns's potential political subversion ("Afton Water" 3, 4). However, removing both words from the end of their lines reveals more problematic concepts. By removing the last word from lines three and twenty-three, "My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream", the line becomes "My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring" ("Afton Water"). The omission shifts the entire meaning of the sentence, for now the word "murmuring" becomes a verb, an action performed by the river, thus giving it a sense of power in the song. This alteration suggests that the river's murmuring, though usually loud enough to wake someone, has, instead, cast some sort of spell upon the slumbering maid. Similarly, the removal of the end word from lines four and twenty-four, "Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream" shifts the focus onto Mary, rather than her dream. This creates a more distinct warning not to interfere with the distant Mary. This subtle warning is intensified further through the use of sound.

In lines four and twenty-four, the speaker contrasts soothing phonemes to describe the river with harsh sounds to describe Mary. The speaker asks the river to "Flow gently,

sweet Afton, disturb not her dream" ("Afton Water" 4, 24). This formulaic phrasing creates in the line a disconnect between the first four words, which flow as if they are the river and the repeated "d" and "t" sounds of the last four words which stilt the language. By drawing a comparison between the flowing language of the river and the harsher words assigned to Mary, the speaker appears to be warning the river of a negative outcome, should his "beloved" be awoken. The stark sounding language forces Mary to become an outsider for it isolates her from the smoother sounding phonemes. Mary is further isolated by the speaker's use of possessive language.

Throughout the song, the speaker continually gives the river dominion over its surroundings. By giving the river a possessive position, the speaker not only personifies the river, but allows it to have control over its actions. With the use of "thy," the speaker makes the river a more active participant in the narrative of the lyric. Over half of the twenty-four lines draw attention to the river's possession of either the local fauna or scenery. In the first line, the speaker defines the river's space, "among thy green braes," ("Afton Water"). The OED defines a brae as a "steep bank bounding a river valley".<sup>2</sup> The speaker gives the river possession over the "neighboring hills" and "green vallies [sic]" ("Afton Water" 9, 13). These "lofty" hills, which are usually associated with Scotland, are the picturesque domain of the river ("Afton Water" 9). The speaker's personification of the river's possession over its domain seems natural because of its life-sustaining power. However, this personification also feels unnatural, much in the same way that the English would view Scotland's autonomy. Thus, by personifying the river, the speaker links the river to Scotland. Furthermore, this personification through possession allows

the speaker to build a community in which the river resides, and also creates connections between the river and its residents.

By giving the river Afton possession of the blackbirds, the speaker situates it as metaphor for Scotland. Throughout Jacobite culture, the "blackbird" is a secret symbol for Prince Charles Edward Stuart (*Jacobitism* 70). As the Afton of the song harbors the blackbirds in the protective "thorny den," Scotland protected Charles Edward Stuart, or "The Blackbird," from England ("Afton Water" 6). Additionally, the association of the word blackbird to Prince Charles allows the speaker to assign humanlike tendencies to these creatures. These blackbirds are wild. As the speaker only designates two of the twelve possessions as specifically "wild," this word choice proves even more deliberate and significant. By calling the blackbirds "wild" the speaker separates them from the other birds, the "stock dove" and "green crested lapwing" (5, 7). One of the connotations of wild is "[u]ncivilized, savage; uncultured, rude; also, not accepting, or resisting, the constituted government; rebellious" (OED). Thus the blackbirds embody not only the dispossessed Prince, but his followers; for, like the blackbirds, the Scottish Jacobites refused to quietly assimilate to the new monarchy and were thus viewed as wild rebels.

The speaker further draws a connection between the River and Jacobites through his reference to the "primroses" ("Afton Water" 14). Flowers in Jacobite culture hold great significance. According to Pittock, the rose in Jacobite culture represents the "fertility of the land and its returning king" (*Poetry* 135). The primrose becomes a veiled reference to Jacobite tradition. Line fourteen furthers this connection: "Where wild in the woodlands the primroses blow" ("Afton Water"). The imagery aligns with the earlier

explanation from Pittock. The speaker again uses the word "wild". As Smith argues, Burns deliberately decides which words to use and his vocabulary is vast. Thus, the second use of the word "wild" signifies a connection to the other possession described in this manner. Only the "primroses" and "blackbirds" are deemed "wild." The connotation attached to the flowers, though slightly different from the blackbirds, still maintains the sense that they are "not cultivated" (OED). While the meanings vary slightly, the message remains the same; both of the symbols of Prince Charles represent the unrestrained resistance to the new monarchy. Furthermore, the word "blow," during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century had the connotation of "bloom" (OED). This definition most contextualizes the line, for as the Jacobites wildly rose up and "blossomed" against the Hanoverian regime, the primroses bloom without regard to the confined space of the woodlands.

Although described multiple ways, the Afton becomes the most rebellious of the personified natural elements. From the first line, the speaker begs the river to "flow gently." This request, in addition to the other five repetitions, suggests that the normal state of the river is not one of peace or submission. On the contrary, the river appears to be active and industrious. The hills surrounding the Afton are "mark'd with the courses of clear, winding rills" ("Afton Water" 10). A rill is a "small stream; a brook; a rivulet" (OED). In this line, there is a sense of resistance and community. The rills, of the song, pervade the hillsides and flow into the larger river, just as the Jacobite individuals of the Scottish hills decided to unite and rise up against the government. Water imagery, in Jacobite tradition, surfaces constantly. John Fleming emphasizes that one of the most

referenced Jacobite traditions is a toast that pays homage to the "King across the water;" to emphasize the distance separating them, the toast is made with a specially etched glass over a bowl of water (175). The reference in line seventeen then becomes a subtle allusion to the tradition, "Thy chrystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides" ("Afton Water"). While "chrystal" most obviously refers to the clarity of the water in the river, the word can also refer to the crystal glass used in the toast to the Jacobite King. Furthermore, as both King James and Prince Charles Edward Stuart were often referred to as the "King across the water," this makes the speaker's choice to focus this song on a river more poignant; for it was through the transportation of the Prince over the water into Scotland that sparked the final Jacobite rising, and revealed the unruly nature of the Scottish Jacobites.

The speaker confirms the River's power and disruptive nature through his use and subversion of sophisticated English diction. The most significant line in the song is line nineteen, "How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave" ("Afton Water"). Again, the speaker focuses on the language of wild and unruly with the word "wanton;" however, this time the speaker distinguishes it from the other two instances by elevating the language to a less common word. The deliberate word choice signifies that the river is somehow above the blackbirds and the primroses in hierarchy. The definition of wanton, in fact, also shows a greater intensity than the more simplistic word "wild." The OED defines "wanton" as "[u]nprovoked and reckless of justice or compassion." Although this definition most closely mirrors the first definition of wild, which was earlier applied to the blackbirds, it reinforces Burns's deliberate word choices in order to highlight the

overall Jacobite message. Just as the Scottish Jacobites, as well as their "Prince" were seen as wild and reckless, this word choice reaffirms the idea that the river's natural state is not one of flowing gently, contrary to what the speaker insists.

Most importantly, in line nineteen, the speaker acknowledges that the river attempts to rebel against Mary. As she has invaded its space with her feet, the river washes her feet with its "unruly waters" in order to remind her which of them holds the power in this dynamic. With one of the connotations of "lave" being "washed in blood," this line reflects the numerous battles the Jacobites waged against the English government (OED). With this line, the speaker pushes the audience to believe that this river has no choice but to act against Mary, for she has invaded its space and its natural state is wantonness. Furthermore, while this line clearly demonstrates that Mary is not impervious to the river's power, this does not mean that the river should rally against her.

Drawing a distinction between the river's community and Mary's, the speaker notes how the Afton "winds by the cot where my Mary resides" ("Afton Water" 18). The significance of this line lies in the word "by." According to the speaker, Mary may have access to the river, for it flows near her cultivated space or cottage, but there is always a clear line of separation between the two spaces. Similarly, Scotland and England are geographic neighbors, for the countries stand within the same space; however, neither country would call the other's citizens their fellow man. They each hold distinctive histories and beliefs. Thus, as the speaker forces the audience to recognize the definite space between the two entities, so too did Scotland and England ensure the border remained between their two countries.

Like England during most of the Jacobite era, Mary remains in the background. In each stanza, the speaker mentions her, reminding the audience that Mary is always there, even if not active. However, before the time of the song, Mary settled in the land of the River Afton. In lines eleven and twelve, just after describing the "neighboring hills" and the "clear, winding rills" of the river, the speaker mentions when entering the river's domain he sees "my Mary's sweet cot in my eye" ("Afton Water" 10). These lines fall in stanza three, yet they are the first description of Mary that does not involve her sleeping, and yet it is not her. Although it is not her physical form, the "cot" or cottage represents the effect she has on the environment around her. Here, in the river's space, Mary has purposefully carved out a section in order to call it her own. This invasion and occupation mirrors that of the English influence in Scotland. While the English forces may not be physically in Scotland, during Burns's authorship of this song the structures they created during the time of the Union remain. Furthermore, the use of the word "cot" is particularly noteworthy. Used almost exclusively by Burns's contemporary English poets, the word cot, of course, implies a small dwelling, often found in the countryside. However, English poets used this word when romanticizing the countryside and rural life of the country folk. Burns uses the English word instead of his Scottish dialect to potentially instill in his readers that this is an English structure. Thus, Mary's only lingering presence becomes one of settlement and invasion.

Drawing the connection of England to Mary, Burns essentially omits her from the song. While the speaker bestows the word "sweet" upon the river six out of the nine times it is used in the song, he never associates the word with Mary. In most "love

songs," the main character is usually acknowledged as the "beloved." This is the woman the speaker either sexually desires or wishes to keep wholly pure, against the impending forces of a defiling world. For example, in Burn's song "A Red, Red Rose," the speaker extols his love for his "dear," "As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,/So deep in luve am I" (5-6). Thus, in this instance, among others Burns composed, the audience recognizes an affinity for the attractive heroine of the song. Mary's representation, however, contradicts the traditional love song, for in the narrative, she is not only passively present, but the speaker does not once refer to her as his love, nor describe her with any lingering affection. Instead, Mary becomes the outsider and second to the River which the speaker showers with praise.

This reversal of roles, in which the river is bestowed with glorifying description and Mary's presence is minimalized, reflects the speaker's subtle intentions in the song. Mary was never supposed to be the important character in the narrative, for the speaker repeatedly reiterates that the river is "the theme of my lays" ("Afton Water" 22). Why then would the speaker add Mary in the first place, if the song is truly about the River Afton? Burns's carefully crafted work had to have a "beloved" character in the song in order to camouflage, if only barely, the fact that he is praising Jacobite Scotland. By adding the sleeping maid, or Mary, into his song, Burns blurs the reader's eye to his ultimate goal, for he knows his general audience would not question that the song is, in fact, about Mary, even if he repeatedly confirms the opposite. Thus, with Mary's presence, the audience subconsciously allows the speaker to praise the River, or Jacobite Scotland without any ramifications.

Furthering his adaptation of the stereotypical English love song, the speaker consistently takes possession of Mary with the use of the word "my." This detail convinces the audience that the speaker shows pride in his "beloved." The use of the possessive also seems to further the speaker's cause, for it allows him to create a line of clear demarcation between Mary and the river. However, without the flowery language, so typical of a love song, being directly attached to Mary, the Jacobite audience would recognize an anomaly. Mary's place in the narrative of the love song becomes one of a place holder, and the tone of "my" adopts a hint of sarcasm. The speaker never refers to the river with any words of possession; however, the affectionate attachment to the river is implicit. Thus, the possessive diction over Mary becomes artifice and a means of highlighting the difference between the inherent love of Scotland and the artificial attachment to the absent England, for the narrator's feigned attachment mirrors the Jacobites' perception of Scotland's forced loyalty to the English crown.

Though Mary's enduring presence lies in a colonizing cottage, her actual physical body remains in an almost constant state of slumber. Throughout the song, Mary has no voice of her own, and is only present through the speaker's repeated mention of her sleeping. Although this bizarre absence could partially explain the speaker's failure to shower her with compliments and professions of love like the typical love song, the speaker's overall nonchalance towards Mary further underlines her place as the metaphorical representation of England. As the speaker never describes Mary's dream, it becomes the most elusive facet of the song. Twice the speaker implores the Afton to "disturb not her dream" ("Afton Water" 4, 24), and yet never depicts what she is

dreaming. By acknowledging Mary's ability to dream, but then removing all description from the plot of the dream, the speaker diminishes the significance of her dream in almost a condescending tone. This belittling again begs a comparison between Mary and England. During the time of the Jacobite rebellions, England did not strike until provoked. The Jacobites were allowed to plot and attempt their coups while the English "slumbered," "dreaming" of a better future with their new Hanoverian government. The space between sleep and the world the speaker describes makes the place Mary occupies precarious. If the River or any of its "possessions" wake up Mary, the results could be disastrous. In fact, it appears the whole point of the speaker's song is not to protect Mary from the intrusive river, but instead to protect the river, or Jacobite Scotland, from the dominating force of Mary, or monarchical England.

The speaker establishes Mary as the absent, slumbering maid, yet she does make one striking, conscious appearance in the song. In the fifth stanza, just after the wanton waters wash against her snowy feet, Mary reacts against the unruly waters, "As gath'ring sweet flow'rets she stems thy clear wave" ("Afton Water" 20). While the narrator previously praises the river for its wild and unruly nature, with the appearance of this line, the audience recognizes that Mary is the one with the power. She can disrupt and, in fact, stop the river's unruly flow. The abrupt shift in power reiterates the question of Mary's role in the song. In four words, Mary transforms from the seemingly innocent "slumbering Fair" to a violent force, capable of damming a river ("Afton Water" 8). More importantly, however, are the symbols that appear throughout this line, for by

combining both war and Jacobite imagery, in this line, Burns cements Mary as the metaphor for England.

While the word "sweet" bears seemingly no direct contact to Jacobite culture, Burn uses the word to reinforce the river's possession over the flow'rets. The speaker repeatedly refers to the Afton as "sweet." In fact, only once, when addressing the river directly, does the speaker *not* use the word. In contrast, only one use of the word, when the speaker refers to Mary's cottage as "sweet," is not related to the river. The other two instances are the "sweet scented birk" and "sweet flow'rets" ("Afton Water" 16, 20). Although both of these natural elements are associated with the river just by proximity, the word "sweet" connects them even further. There are multiple definitions to the word "sweet;" the one that connects all three elements the most accurately is "not corrupt; free from taint or noxious matter" (OED). Each of these elements' contexts in the song suggests that they are pure and untarnished in nature. While Mary's presence may later call that state into question, at the time of the word's use for each element, this state of purity remains. Thus, through the connection of the word sweet, Burns makes the flow'rets part of the river.

The speaker's subtle claim to the river's possession over the flow'rets, and Mary's action of gathering proves to be one of the most horrifying scenes in the song. Through the flow'rets, Burns creates a striking link to Jacobite culture; for as the water symbolizes the "King over the water," the flow'rets signify the Jacobite members. While roses represent the King, other flowers embody various aspects of the Jacobite tradition. Daffodils indicate hope, honeysuckles denote fidelity, Lilies of the Valley signify a return

to happiness, sunflowers mean unswerving loyalty, and forget-me-nots and carnations symbolize coronation (*Jacobitism* 76). As each of these flowers represents a founding idea of Jacobitism, the removal of any of them from the movement would prove catastrophic. However, the flow'rets could also embody the Jacobite rebels; for men who followed the movement often wore these flowers to display their political sympathies (*Jacobitism* 75). Regardless of which symbolic meaning Burns intends in this line, Mary's act of gathering creates a graphic scene. The OED defines gathering as, "To collect from the place of growth; to cull". Mary's initially innocent act then becomes one of elimination and removal. Since Burns refuses to define exactly which type of flow'rets Mary gathers, he instills an even greater sense of danger, for regardless of the flowers she removes, she will either be undermining the tenets of the Jacobites' cause, or culling the Scottish rebels themselves.

While Mary's actions against the flow'rets demonstrate the individual injuries of England against Jacobite Scotland, the end of line twenty depicts the inevitable fate of those who rise up against England. After all of his description and personification of the river's power and ability to possess the surrounding elements, Burns in five words removes all of that power: "she stems thy clear wave" ("Afton Water" 20). With these words, Mary effectively stops or dams whatever power the river previously had (OED). Not only does Mary usurp the river's power, she sullies its once clear "vision." The "snowy foot" Mary plants in the river does not purify it, but, instead, besmirches its already "clear" waters; for when a foreign object disrupts a fast moving stream, the current usually disturbs the detritus on the bottom ("Afton Water" 19, 20). In the same

way, after Mary strips the river of its flow'rets and steps in the way of its path, the river's view becomes blurred. Without its flow'rets or tenets the river cannot see where to flow and regain its power. Thus, Mary conquers the muddled River Afton with relative ease.

Drawing greater parallels between the river and Mary and Scotland and England, Burns's word choice explicitly creates a battle scene. The use of the word "wave" proves particularly problematic; for unless the river is large and exceptionally fast moving, the likelihood of a river creating a "clear wave" is minimal. This word then becomes the metaphor for a wave of warriors in battle. In the last two lines of the fifth stanza, the river attempts to out maneuver Mary. While it rebels against her by washing her feet in the metaphorical "blood" of Jacobites, the battle "wave" is almost instantly stopped by Mary, just as England stopped the Jacobite troops. Furthermore, "stems" is also often associated with the stopping of blood. In this case, the blood, or the "life-force" of the Jacobite movement flows in the water of the river. Thus, if the river's wave is the army and blood of the Jacobites, Mary's foot not only "stems" the wave of attack, but also crushes the blood of the enemy, or the Jacobite rebellion. As the speaker never reassures his audience that the river can escapes Mary's hold, she ends the power debate by cutting off the river from its intended path, thus reasserting Mary and England have control over the river and Scotland.

Subtle Jacobite coding throughout the narrative of the song allows for a dual reading of Burns's famous love song. Although most of his audience would simply hear the song of a man attempting to convince a river not to awaken his sleeping lover, the veteran Jacobite would recognize the cultural images rife in the lyric. Unlike Henry

Mckenzie's repeated acclamations of Burns as the "heaven-taught ploughman," Burns's meticulous knowledge of the Jacobite culture could not have been bestowed by God alone (Mckenzie 389). Burns's knowledge of Jacobite tradition surfaces throughout his work because the lore was so deeply ingrained into his culture. Moreover, Burns's word choice creates multiple meanings and numerous images for his audience. In the end, Burns's knowledge of form and language allows him to convey any message he pleases. He can even twist an "ordinary" love song into a dark and twisted admonition.

Like "Afton Water," Burns's song "Ae Fond Kiss" seemingly depicts the story of a man relishing his final kiss with his lover before they depart each other's company. In the poem, the speaker appears to shower his love upon his beloved "Nancy." Although this affection seems far more concrete than the speaker's distant professions of love for Mary in "Afton Water," this poem, nevertheless, operates in a similar vein. Similar to "Afton Water," "Ae Fond Kiss" contains elements of Jacobite culture. Through this lens the reader can see that what initially appears to be the bittersweet farewell of a lover, transforms into the lament over a battle long ago lost between Jacobite Scotland and England. However, while the Jacobite symbolism in "Afton Water" surfaces through the poet's use of imagery, the elements of Jacobite influence in "Ae Fond Kiss" appear in a much more subtle way, through the use of diction.

Throughout the poem, the speaker consistently contrasts himself and his lover, Nancy, utilizing specific diction to connote light and dark, or more abstractly, triumph and defeat. The speaker makes his circumstances quite clear; with this separation between he and Nancy all he will receive are the dark, negative emotions and statuses,

while she, the beloved, will attain the bright, positive statuses. This stark contrast mirrors the Jacobite loss to the English forces in 1745. In this instance, Nancy appears to possess Mary's role and holds the place of England, and the speaker is left to embody the defeated Jacobites, for nowhere in the poem does Nancy have a reaction to the speaker's claims of pain and despair.

The speaker demonstrates this Jacobite-inspired diction in stanza two. In line eight, the speaker claims, "Dark despair around benights me" ("Ae Fond Kiss"). For the speaker, all hope of triumph, or of keeping his love has been lost. "Despair," stemming from the Old French "*dēspērāre*" it is the combination of "de" or "not" and "*spērāre*" or "hope" and thus literally means "a state of mind in which there is entire want of hope; hopelessness" (OED). As the etymology and definition suggest, despair connotes the space in which there is an utter lack of hope. More importantly, because it means "not hope" it inherently suggests hope should exist. This space of "not hope" was experienced by the Jacobites just as the speaker relates: the Jacobites hoped for triumph against the English troops in order to reinstate their king, but this made their defeat that much more painful, and sent them into the place of despair. Just as the Jacobites dwelt in a space of defeat after their final uprising in 1745, so the speaker remains in a mental defeat, separated from the triumphant Nancy. This despair haunts the speaker and envelops him in a seemingly inescapable way.

In order to clarify this all-encompassing space of despair, the speaker uses a specifically, almost archaic, English word, "benights." Meaning, "To be overtaken by the darkness of night," this word proves particularly poignant. When again expanded to

incorporate the Jacobite/England dynamic, the word takes on its own life. As this is a historically English etymology, the use of the word symbolizes England itself swallowing the speaker in a cloud of darkness and defeat (OED). Thus, the speaker inhabits a Jacobite-like space in which he must depart from this woman as the defeated party, never to rise to happiness, or in the Jacobite's case, power again.

In the lines of stanza four, the contrast between the speaker and Nancy becomes evident. Highlighting the opposite fate for his "beloved", the speaker proclaims, "Thine be ilka joy and treasure/Peace, Enjoyment, Love, and Pleasure" (19-20). While the speaker assigns himself "despair," he recognizes that Nancy receives "joy." The first definition of joy in the OED is "the feeling or state of being highly pleased or delighted; exultation of spirit; gladness, delight" (OED). Evoking the polar opposite of his "hopelessness," as the definition of joy suggests, the speaker inadvertently admits that Nancy has triumphed, for she can depart unscathed with an "exultation of spirit." More importantly, the speaker continues to bestow these positive emotions onto his now exlover.

Further deepening the disparity between his depression and her elation, the speaker also assigns the word "peace" to Nancy. This word choice is particularly fascinating for it functions on two levels. This first definition, which is the connotation most easily accepted on the initial reading, is "[f]reedom from anxiety, disturbance (emotional, mental, or spiritual), or inner conflict; calm, tranquility" (OED). Again, even with this definition, Nancy has the power. She has the freedom to do as she wishes, without conflict or guilt. While the narrator is lost in the darkness of his thoughts, Nancy

has the ability to move on as though nothing has changed. Narrowing the focus, with the second definition of peace, "an agreement, ratification, or treaty of peace between two nations who were previously at war," the poem again shifts from just emphasizing two individuals, to instead suggest a larger entity or two warring factions who have finally agreed to a "truce." Thus, just as England triumphed over the Jacobite uprising and unified the British Isles with a peace treaty, so too does Nancy for she has the word "peace" specifically attached to her name, while the narrator is left to her disposal.

Although "love" and "pleasure" have their own striking connotations, the most important word in these two lines is "enjoyment." for its definition solidifies Nancy as a symbol for England. The OED defines enjoyment as "[t]he action or state of deriving gratification from an object. Also, in weaker sense, the possession and use of something which affords pleasure or advantage." In other words, by attaching this word to Nancy, the speaker admits to being possessed by Nancy. After the unification of Scotland with England in March of 1707, England practically possessed Scotland. The Jacobites, like the speaker, were defeated and forced to become a part of the British Empire (Green 155). As Nancy implicitly expects to find satisfaction with her possession, so too did England seek entertainment and contentment from Scotlish songs and tales.

With the definitions of these contrasting emotions in mind, the relationship between the speaker and Nancy becomes more complex. Though it first appears that the speaker wishes Nancy a happy life after their separation, with the use of his diction, it becomes abundantly clear that there is a disparity in their relationship. For if they were truly equal partners, there would be reciprocation between the speaker and Nancy. The

disproportionate allotment of emotional states reiterates the power struggle of the Jacobite movement against the Hanoverian monarchy. For just as the Jacobites were exiled and "cast into darkness" when defeated at the last uprising, so too is the speaker left to be dejected and desperate. Furthermore, England had no need to feel any emotions of defeat for they had finally dismantled the competition for the crown. The separation intensified by the speaker's emphasis on dark and light diction, however, is initiated far before stanzas two and four.

By detaching himself from Nancy in the first line, the speaker creates an immediate tone of melancholy. More importantly, with the first line, "Ae fond kiss, and then we sever," the narrator finalizes his defeated fate with the word "sever." Although the OED would traditionally define this word as, "[t]o go away, part, be sundered from," the more productive definition through the lens of Jacobite diction is "[t]o disjoin, dissociate, disunite" (OED). This second definition shifts the focus of the poem from the singular entity, Nancy, to the larger Jacobite movement. At this point in the history of the Jacobite movement, the English troops have conquered the Jacobite armies and exiled their would-be King to France. Thus, England forever "severs" the Jacobite hold upon the kingdom and disunites the resistance. Also significant in this line is the word "fond." While a modern audience would associate that word with connotations of affection and love, another connotation associated with that word, especially during Burns's era was that which "has lost its savour; insipid; sickly-flavoured" (OED). In other words, "ae fond kiss" becomes a moment in which the speaker takes no delight, for he already

knows the union is at an end. Burns then, from the very beginning, alerts his readers that this song is not what it seems.

As the song continues, the imagery of war and defeat become more profuse. Most obvious is the repeated use of the word "warring." Seen in the last lines of the first and last stanzas, "Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee", this word evokes the battle scenes of the Jacobite uprisings ("Ae Fond Kiss" 4, 24). The OED defines "warring" as "[e]ngaged in strife." Although this definition seems overly clear, the peculiarity derives not from the definition, but from the usage. In a poem about eternal love, "Love but her, and love for ever" the mention of war and conflict seems incongruent ("Ae Fond Kiss" 11). However, when casting Nancy as England, and the speaker as Jacobite, the need for war imagery could not be clearer, for it cements the images of conflict and disparity between the two participating entities.

Like "Afton Water," "Ae Fond Kiss" contains specific language that carries connotations of dominance and power. Focusing on the words, "wage," and "pledge" the audience will recognize a distinct discussion of power appearing throughout the song. The word "wage" as defined by the OED means "[a] pledge or security." In the poem, this word appears in conjunction with "thee," referring to Nancy, and suggests that the speaker makes an oath of allegiance to her ("Ae Fond Kiss" 4, 24). This unspoken debt, if viewed through a Jacobite lens could imply the "Oath of Allegiance and Supremacy." As outlined by Pittock, this oath passed in 1689 as a means of legitimizing William's place as king (*Material Culture* 15). This oath was also used to locate the Jacobite rebels. More importantly, when these rebels were discovered, they were often put on trial, and if

convicted of treason, quartered, and beheaded (*Material Culture* 13). As the speaker wages Nancy, "[d]eep heart-wrung tears" and pledges her "[w]arring sighs and groans," he draws a connection between the punishment enacted on the discovered Jacobites and a lover's disappointment at leaving his "beloved." In other words, the song highlights the historical significance of appeasing a perceived superior through submission.

The speaker's submission and pledges to Nancy further suggests this song's Jacobite elements after exploring the etymology of the name, "Nancy." In her book, The Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names, Elizabeth Withycombe explores the etymologies of proper names and their diminutives. She asserts that "[t]he early diminutives [of Anne] were Nan and Nanny, but they came in time to be used as a term for a loose woman, and were replaced in the 18th [century] by Nancy" (Withycombe 24). The association then with the name Anne creates a striking Jacobite connection. By using the name "Nancy" the speaker suggests that the object of his song could also be Queen Anne. Although she was the daughter of James II, Anne was not sympathetic towards the Jacobite cause. In 1707, Queen Anne legally united England and Scotland. This union required an oath from all parties that the sovereignty of Anne would not be questioned (Green 155). This oath, like her brother-in-law William's, was used to reveal any Jacobite sympathizers (Material Culture 15). Thus, like the Jacobites, in order to survive, the speaker must pledge his love and devotion to Nancy, or Queen Anne. This pledge seals his fate as forever attached to the "beloved," even in her absence.

Although the narrative of "Ae Fond Kiss" contains less imagery than "Afton Water," the elements of the Jacobite symbols still dominate it. Drawing connections between darkness and light through warlike diction, the speaker suggests the lingering presence of long ago battles. The song fosters a double meaning, one for the general audience seeking the absolution of a relationship, and the other recognizing the political environment of the Jacobite movement. This political rhetoric, readily assumed in Burns's more blatant works, nevertheless appears in these love songs. Yet, even when we see the potential for Burns's hidden cyphers, he always allows for another interpretation. While his tone in "Afton Water" is one of apprehension and warning, there is also one of lingering melancholy. Although it does not conform to any specific structure of ballad or ode, the song resonates in an elegiac mode. Additionally, there are several images that suggest there is a darker theme. The weeping of evening, and the screaming of the family-centered lapwing and Mary's slumber all suggest that Mary may, in fact, be dead and this song memorializes her ("Afton Water" 15, 7). Yet Burns, ever the clever crafter of words, completes his Jacobite imagery; for if Mary, the metaphorical England is dead, so too is its monarchy. Moreover, in "Ae Fond Kiss", by distinctly linking Nancy to Queen Anne, Burns's dualistic code creates a warning to the unified Great Britain. By interpreting the kiss as the seal of the oath to Queen Anne, the speaker's immediate insistence that their bond has now severed becomes more complicated. The severance warns England that the Jacobites will not embrace the new power structure, even though they have been forced to condone it.

While this essay only illustrated the Jacobite symbols of two of Burns's love songs, the presence of these symbols speaks volumes for uniting his reputation. The convolution of Burns's multiple meanings throughout these two love songs, "Afton Water" and "Ae Fond Kiss," suggests that even in the most unlikely of forms, Burns maintained a united persona. His precise word choices allow for divergent interpretations, yet their presence reinforces his inability to separate himself into specific categories; for the presence of disparate connotations creates a stronger motivation for the audience to explore the works. Thus, by separating Burns's reputations into "political satirist," "bawdy poet," and "romantic lyricist" we as an audience lose the beauty and complexity of his masterpieces.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The use of intricate code was not limited to song. In a collection of letters beginning in November, 1718, James Butler, second Duke of Ormonde, utilized a battery of various pseudonyms when corresponding with King James II. He also took care to alter the names of the other Jacobites who sought to reinstate the deposed monarch. Butler used the name "Peter" and several other false identities specifically when referring to the King himself, in order to create a more complex, indecipherable code (Ormonde 1). <sup>2</sup>In this essay all etymologies and definitions will derive from *The Oxford English Dictionary (Second Edition)* and will simply be cited as (OED).

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# NEITHER BLACK NOR WHITE: GRAY'S LIMINAL PASTORAL

In Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard,"<sup>1</sup> the unnamed, melancholic speaker draws his audience into the world of the poor through his use of sympathetic language. The speaker applauds the unrecognized poor for their noble struggle against their hard laborious life, and he suggests they are akin to unsung heroes. The speaker, however, as seen in his diction, clearly comes from a more privileged place in society. As a result, the speaker's perspective on the poor is often attacked by Marxist critics. These critics, including Suvir Kaul, Terry Gifford, William Empson, and John Guillory, accuse the speaker of widening the divide between the social classes by inaccurately portraying the poor's suffering. They suggest that the poem is capitalistic propaganda. Furthermore, these same critics recognize pastoral elements in Gray's "Elegy," and they argue that the pastoral mode lends itself to a Marxist interpretation, because as a long established mode it inherently celebrates the status quo. Empson, in particular, suggests that "[b]y comparing the social arrangement to Nature [Gray] makes [the social hierarchy] seem inevitable, which it was not" (4). Thus, Marxist arguments question the place of literature in society, for if language is the method by which capitalists control the masses then no literature is revolutionary or can escape from capitalist inflections. Although Marxism provides one structure to interpret the poem, this power structured lens narrows the message of the poem. By assigning capitalistic motives to the speaker through the pastoral mode, Marxist critics fail to recognize the key

similarities between the speaker and the poor. In order to expand our understanding of Gray's "Elegy," I propose a different approach. By viewing the anthropological theory of liminality through the literary pastoral form, I will demonstrate that the speaker becomes equal to the poor, thus eliminating class barriers and creating a sense of unity.

The pastoral mode is inherently a space between worlds, because it focuses on the space between the city and wilderness. Thus, the pastoral provides a place in which the poet can situate a liminalized individual to criticize social structures free from political repercussions. In his book, English Literature in History, 1780-1830: Pastoral and *Politics*, Roger Sales argues that "[p]astoralism is composed of the famous five Rs: refuge, reflection, rescue, requiem, and reconstruction" (15). These five Rs, he suggests, allow pastoral poetry to remain a viable mode not only throughout literary history but throughout various cultures. Although the pastoral has often been associated with a Marxist lens, Sales's definition of pastoral refuge contains strong connections to liminality. The pastoral refuge creates a boundary between the corrupting forces of the city and simple ways of the country. Connecting the pastoral and the liminal, Bjorn Thomassen defines liminal landscapes as, "in-between spaces...Liminality implicates the existence of a boundary, a *limes*...This limit is not simply there: it is there to be confronted" (21). As Thomassen suggests, the liminal confronts the line between spaces and allows us to gain a deeper understanding of that space. Furthermore, although the theory of liminality and liminal space originated in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the concept transcends cultures and histories. By applying liminal theory to the pastoral mode, we can gain a different perspective on Gray's use of the pastoral, and unlock a deeper connection

between the speaker and the poor. The pastoral provides a space in which the speaker can contemplate the values of bygone days. More importantly, the pastoral becomes the space between the world of reality and fantasy, and allows the speaker a space in which he can be equal with his subject, for there are no rules of hierarchical status in a space of liminality.

While the pastoral creates a physical space in which liminality can occur, liminality itself originates as a state of being. Arnold van Gennep, the father of liminality, posits that there are three separate rites in the "transition between worlds" (1). The first stage he labels "the rites of separation from a previous world" (van Gennep 21). During these "preliminal rites," the initiate divorces himself from a past set of social mores. Van Gennep's second phase, known as "liminal rites," defines the period in which the individual resides in the threshold of two worlds. He no longer identifies with the past world, but has not yet entered into the final stage of the transition, or the "postliminal rites." Van Gennep states that these rites states are "the ceremonies of incorporation into the new world" (21). Van Gennep's "preliminal rites" appear throughout Gray's "Elegy," which establishes the society from which the speaker and the dead separate themselves so as to enter the "liminal rites" of the graveyard.

Expanding van Gennep's theory that all parts of life must undergo these tripartite rites, Victor Turner provides clear guidelines as to the state of the initiate or "neophyte." In *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, Turner examines the tribal nature of certain rites of passage. He explains that the neophyte's "condition is one of ambiguity and paradox, a confusion of all the customary categories" (97). Upon entering the liminal

rites, the neophyte maintains none of his previous social customs. In the liminal space social categories paradoxically all apply to the initiate, and yet because he currently resides outside of the society, they do not apply. Turner continues on to explore the various "interstructures" in the liminal space, including the lack of hierarchies between the initiates. "The liminal group is a community or comity of comrades and not a structure of hierarchically arrayed positions. This comradeship transcends the distinctions of rank, age, [and] kinship positions" (Forest 100). As Turner's assertion suggests, while residing in the liminal space, neophytes create bonds deeper than structured society usually allows. In his later book, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, Turner reiterates the neophyte's place in liminal space. He explains, "Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial" (95). In other words, once an individual departs from his old world into the liminal, he can better envision a world free of social orders and stigmas. Furthermore, the initiate or neophyte can explore the essence of his fellow man without fearing criticism through the "old world" norms. Applying Turner's descriptions of the neophyte to the speaker of Gray's "Elegy," we can discover a different dynamic between the speaker and the poor from the Marxist view so traditionally accepted. Furthermore, by situating the speaker in the liminal space of the pastoral graveyard, the speaker can understand and unite the impoverished dead specifically through the use of symbols.

Drawing a deeper connection between the liminal and the pastoral, both structures use symbolic language. Eleanor Terry Lincoln argues that a shepherd, the archetype

generally used in pastorals, are often symbolically represented as "a musician, a poet, a prince, and a priest...a hunter, a fisherman, a king, a child, or a shipwrecked mariner" (2). These metaphorical depictions suggest the reader can impress his own emotions and world views onto this nameless peasant. Like Lincoln's apt observation, Turner emphasizes the neophyte's lack of identity and connection with symbols. He posits, "[Neophytes] are not yet classified, [and are] often expressed in symbols modeled on the processes of gestation and parturition. The neophytes are likened to or treated as embryos, newborn infants, or sucklings by symbolic means" (Forest 96). Combining the symbolic elements of the liminal and the pastoral, throughout Gray's "Elegy," the speaker assigns the dead with multiple symbolic states. In the first line of stanza fourteen, the dead are compared to "Full many a gem of purest ray serene" (53). This comparison blends the characteristics of the liminal and pastoral. For like Lincoln's description of shepherd's metaphorical counterparts, the dead have no viable connection to a gem, yet like Turner's neophytes, by comparing the dead to gems they become associated with clarity and growth. More importantly, by comparing the dead to "pure" gems, the speaker creates a community of "newborns," or a community free of social hierarchy. This is simply one example of the marriage between the liminal and the pastoral in Gray's "Elegy."

By blending the definitions of pastoral from Sales and other scholars and liminal from Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner, this essay will explore in Gray's "Elegy" what I define as the "liminal pastoral." While I develop my definition throughout this paper, the basic premise of the liminal pastoral is that it is a space where all inhabitants

are equal because they are separate from the corrupting forces of the preliminal (i.e., urban) world. More importantly, by eliminating the corrupting structures, the liminal pastoral provides a space for inhabitants to interact freely with one another for there is no hierarchy or overarching political organization. By combining this mode of poetry and this 20<sup>th</sup> century theory, the poem becomes not a piece of capitalist propaganda, but an attempt to reconstruct the world in order to create a sense of unity between the classes.

The pastoral mode allows the speaker of "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" to construct tranquil moments away from the chaos that rules his reality. Defining "Refuge," Sales states, "Pastoral is an escape to another country where things are done differently as innocence and simplicity order the sunny days" (15). In Gray's "Elegy," the speaker creates a world distinctly separate from the urban. In the second line, the speaker draws the reader's attention to his surroundings, specifically the "lea". The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines "lea" as "an arable field that is not currently in use for farming".<sup>2</sup> The fertile yet unblemished farmland creates a physical barrier between civilization and the speaker, which allows the lea to blend both the liminal and pastoral elements of the poem. As a liminal space, the lea represents the transition between seasons, and its pastoral elements derive from its specific location and its uncorrupted state apart from the city. However, in "Elegy," the speaker refocuses Sales's definition.

Although he creates a space that focuses on innocence and simplicity, by shifting away from the pleasant farmland the speaker darkens the pastoral space by setting the poem in a graveyard. Through his focus on the tranquil yet foreign space, the speaker

better illuminates the liminal nature of the pastoral graveyard. The world of the graveyard is simple unlike the city. The "solemn" silence in stanza two implies the expected behavior while in a cemetery. Traditionally, societies demonstrate their reverence for the dead by emphasizing their silence, by reflecting on their time spent with the deceased before death. This silence creates for the speaker calmness, for it is expected, and a part of his former society. However, reiterating Sales's definition of the pastoral, the liminal cemetery has different norms. There are various noises, specifically the "beetle [that] wheels [in] his droning flight" that disrupt the norms of the graveyard, yet reinforce that this place is a pastoral refuge away from urban life (7).

Pastoral communities and the community specifically created by the speaker exist because they are both physically and metaphorically separated from the corrupting forces of the current urban structure. As Terry Gifford suggests, the pastoral contains an "implicit or explicit contrast to the urban" (2). His explanation expands Sales's definition of refuge; for authors of pastorals often propose that the simple way of life, as embodied by the country laborer, is the true space society should inhabit, instead of in the corrupting confines of the city. Gifford's definition explains why the speaker would set his poem in a graveyard; for as the physical space between life and death, the graveyard becomes the liminal zone in which the speaker can compare all of the various facets of society. More importantly, the speaker's setting allows him to immediately contrast the rural to the urban through specific word choice in the first line of the poem.

The speaker uses the word "curfew" to not only distinguish the pastoral countryside from the city, but to situate the graveyard as a liminal space. He proclaims,

"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day" (1). The OED defines the word "curfew" as the medieval European practice of extinguishing daily fires when the town bell tolls, thus signifying the end of day. Using this definition, the speaker's use of the word indicates the unseen community surrounding the space of the country churchyard. The tolling bell exists to tell the community to retire for the evening. Moreover, the mention of a curfew implies the institutions of other social norms in this unseen society. The speaker's inclusion of the curfew also suggests the distant urban setting, for only financially sound communities can support a church bell to enact the curfew. Thus, although the speaker does not physically see an urban community, he does recognize its existence. More importantly, now that he has established the preliminal society, the words, "tolls, knell and parting" begin to develop the tone for rest of the poem. Lyle Glazier suggests, "tolls, knell and parting—in a short line three words convey death's mastery over atmosphere of the poem" (34). As Glazier suggests, while the speaker creates the world of society through the tolling of the communal bell, through this same bell he separates himself from that community, highlighting the liminal world of the pastoral graveyard. Furthermore, the tolling of the bell in this line warns the speaker that he is about to pass into the liminal pastoral world, a world in which the same rules and social norms do not apply.

The speaker reinforces the pastoral distrust of the city through the depiction of his surroundings and the people who help form his refuge. In lines 73 and 75, the speaker finally situates the setting of his poem in relation to the overbearing city, "Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife...Along the cool sequestered vale of life". Line 73

specifically defines the speaker's setting as pastoral; for he and the other inhabitants of the graveyard are far away from the city's pointless suffering. Jeffery Hart attests that "[i]t is this pastoral view of the village that leads directly to the poem's rejection of the life of the city, ambition, and the 'madding crowd'" (165). The "madding crowd" represents not only the city, but the preliminal world that the speaker attempts to escape. In addition, the "ignoble strife" the crowd experiences becomes the societal norms that dissolve upon entering the "sequestered vale" in line 75. The speaker shifts his focus between the setting and those who are "far from" the madding crowd. In lines 74 and 76, "Their sober wishes never learned to stray... They kept the noiseless tenor of their way." Discussing the peasant's "noble" suffering, the speaker concentrates on the poor's place outside of the corrupting city, but more importantly, their liminalized status. Explaining this characteristic of the pastoral, Raymond Williams, in his book The Country and the *City* suggests, "[T]he contrast within Virgilian pastoral is between the pleasures of rural settlement and the threat of loss and eviction" (17). As the speaker sets the poem in a graveyard, he immediately highlights the eviction of the poor from society. He also creates a space in which they are ostracized. The speaker reiterates the liminality of the graveyard by using the word "vale," which connotes both a serene, pastoral place of refuge, and the end of life (OED). This pastoral, sequestered vale produces for the speaker the refuge he needs to create unity between him and the dead. For in the confines of the pastoral graveyard, the speaker is completely separated from the corrupting influences of the city and can reflect upon his current state of being.

After he establishes the pastoral refuge, the speaker shifts his focus to another occupant of the pastoral space, the owl, in order to further his own transition into the liminal world of the graveyard. In stanza three, the speaker observes, "The moping owl does to the moon complain/Of such, as wandering near her secret bower,/Molest her ancient solitary reign" (10-12). In Egyptian mythology the owl represents night and death (Cirlot 247). These associations are significant for if the owl is a creature of death and darkness and is at home with these spaces, then it understands the world of liminality. By choosing this creature to usher the speaker into the space of night and death, the speaker creates what Turner calls an "instructor" (Forest 100). According to Turner, the instructor is given full power over not only the liminal world, but the neophytes in it. He deems who is worthy to enter into the liminal space and how long the initiate must remain in that realm. Turner asserts, "The authority of the elders is absolute, because it represents the absolute, the axiomatic values of society in which are expressed the 'common good' and the 'common interest'" (Forest 100). Epitomizing this definition, the owl experiences this shift from the old world to the new every night and thrives within the transitional space. Her "ancient solitary reign" refers to the conquered domain of the night as well as the graveyard. As an instructor it is her mission to lead her allotted neophytes, in this case the corpses of the graveyard, through the liminal rites of night, for though her pupils are now inanimate, she surveys their graves every night to ensure their progress in their liminal pastoral space.

Drawing a deeper connection between the liminal and the pastoral and further proving the owl's status as an instructor, her "secret bower" aligns with multiple theories

posited by Turner. The initial connotation of "bower" is a close knit grouping of branches and shrubbery, which reinforces the space of the pastoral. As a bower is often associated with rural forests, it reminds readers that the speaker has again entered a foreign land, one that emphasizes trees over buildings. However, the OED has several definitions for the word "bower," two of which situate the owl in the liminal world of the graveyard. The first definition is "a dwelling, habitation, abode" (OED). Turner suggests that in the world of the liminal cottages or huts take on a dualistic role, "[the] antithetical processes of death and growth may be represented by the same tokens, for example, by huts and tunnels that are at once tombs and wombs" (Forest 99). This dualism of the abode is exemplified through the fact that the "bower" is placed in the realm of the dead, the cemetery, and yet provides shelter for the live owl. Furthermore, the use of the word "secret" in this instance contrasts against the light of day, for in the preliminal world the owl's home is invisible. The other definition of the word "bower" focuses on the owl's neophytes or pupils. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, bower was often used to mean "a peasant, husbandman" (OED). With this definition, the word "secret" slightly shifts meaning. According to Turner, the neophytes or initiates are secreted away to some "seclusion site" during their liminal rites and though physically present they do not take up social space. Thus, if we apply both of these definitions, the "secret bower" represents the unseen neophytes the owl leads into the liminal space of the night ritualistically.

By establishing the owl as the instructor of the graveyard, she becomes an authority figure who can grant access into the liminal pastoral space over which she reigns. Therefore, her most significant role in the poem is not necessarily her "solitary

reign" over her neophytes, but her acknowledgment of the speaker's presence. The owl complains to the moon, the presider over the larger liminal space of the night, that her domain has been disturbed. With these complaints, the owl admits the speaker into the liminal space of the graveyard, for she knows that if the moon has already accepted him, she is powerless to argue. Thus, the speaker becomes part of the liminal realm.

Ultimately, the speaker achieves Sales's definition of "innocence and simplicity" by drawing the reader's attention to the tranquil, liminal space of the pastoral graveyard. In lines five and six, the speaker states, "Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,/And all the air a solemn stillness holds". These two lines highlight both the speaker's separation from established society and the setting that allows him to achieve that distance. The fading light physically blurs the speaker's conditioned views of the world, which creates for him Sales's refuge. He has reached a "different country" in which nothing seems familiar and the chaos of his previous world has been significantly diminished. Furthermore, with the onset of the dusk, the speaker's separation from his preliminal world forces him into the role of neophyte, for he has slipped from the urban life into the liminal space of the pastoral graveyard. Like Turner's neophytes, the speaker must cast off his old world views in order to adjust to this liminal space in which he now dwells.

Sales's shifts his focus from the physical construction of the pastoral and preliminal landscape with his second and third "Rs," reflection and rescue, which emphasize the cultural and sentimental aspects of the pastoral. In his discussions of reflection and rescue, Sales suggests, "Pastoral's reflective rather than purely descriptive

impulse can be seen in the attempts to rescue specific values from the past" (16). That is, in the pastoral, there is a greater need to reconnect with those values that seem lost in modern society. This reflection on and desire to reinstate values mirrors the liminal as well; for as Turner explains, "During the liminal period, neophytes [or initiates] are forced...to think about their society...and the powers that generate and sustain them" (*Forest* 105). In the case of "Elegy," the speaker blends this emphasis on rescuing forgotten values and recognizing his and the dead's new shared space by reflecting on the preliminal culture of the poor.

The speaker uses stanza five to summarize his reflections on the three facets of the preliminal world of the neophytes: art, nature, and religion. Beginning with art and its importance to humanity, the speaker highlights in line seventeen the "incense-breathing morn". In this line, the speaker combines the liminal and pastoral; for he establishes the morning or the realm of the preliminal, and he does so in order to reflect upon the structures of the old world. According to Roger Lonsdale, this specific line refers to Milton's *Paradise Lost* (xiv). As one of the most influential works in English literature, Milton's *Paradise Lost* examines the social hierarchies designated from the era of Adam and Eve. Often casting light and morning as a metaphor for attaining acceptance from God, Milton creates a social expectation to desire light over dark. Thus, the speaker's allusion to Milton provides a moment in which the speaker reminds his readers that values once stemmed from art; for Milton discussed many morals and social behaviors in *Paradise Lost*. Moreover, Milton's influence prompts the readers to recognize that the neophytes or corpses of the graveyard are no longer affected by the physical society that

still surrounds them; they are now impervious to the elements that constitute the society, such as art and its associated lost values.

For the second element of the poor's previous life, nature, the speaker chooses the swallow and the cock as symbols of the unattainable simplicity of the past. In line eighteen, the "Swallow twittering" plays a significant role as swallows represent in most literature the harbinger of spring and a virtuous bird (Beare 5). However, this representation further clarifies the societal structures that are now superfluous to the dead. The swallow is simply a bird, and it does not represent the spring or the virtue of beneficence. Yet the poet, as the product of his society, chooses the swallow in order to allude to its social connotations. Furthermore, the speaker's reflection on the swallow signals an attempt to recover the lost value of harmony, for the swallow consumes harmful insects, creating a safer environment for the harvest. However, in the space of the liminal graveyard, the poor no longer need the help of the swallow; they no longer need a symbol of nature to create harmony, for they have entered the liminal world free from such social virtues.

Still focusing on the elements of nature while reiterating the preliminal structures of the dead poor's society, the speaker draws the reader's attention to a cock. He uses the "cock's shrill clarion" to reiterate the now superfluous patterns of the preliminal world (19). Karen Edwards explains that "the cock provides a pattern for humanity to follow as it greets the new day" (255). As Edwards suggests, the cock symbolizes both natural progression and social structure. By selecting the cock as his herald of the morning, the speaker connects his work not only to the non-human pastoral elements that surround the

lives of the poor, but also attaches his poem to other works that similarly reference the cock, such as Milton. He blends the social concepts of art and nature in order to reinforce the differences between the preliminal world of the dead and their now liminal space in the graveyard. He reminds the readers of a time when the cock's simple crow could wake the living, and a time when the preliminal world's norms applied to the dead that now lay before him. The dead have since departed from that society, the culture of farmers and specifically timed patterns, and now inhabit a new and strange world that is unfathomable to the society of the living. However, the speaker next alludes to another form of morning alarm that evokes different connotations in the dead's preliminal society.

In line nineteen, the speaker uses the "horn" as a symbol to reflect on the old world's emphasis on religious obligation. In the poem, the speaker suggests the horn should wake the living poor. According to Juan E. Cirlot, the horn represents both a symbol of fame and strength, but also a call to the Holy War (144). By drawing attention to this element, the speaker attempts to rescue the virtue of devotedness. As a symbol of the Crusades a horn epitomizes valor and sacrifice, for a horn would have sounded at the beginning of battle. Thus the horn represents not only a call for religious obligation, but the preliminal social structure of war. However, the speaker's attempt to rescue these virtues of valor, devotedness, and sacrifice are unsuccessful because he and his fellow neophytes have moved into the world of the dead. The dead may have believed in their religious duty during their participation in the "old world," but their current status releases them from the construct of religion, for according to their old society, they are now separated from their souls, the entire focus of their obligation. Yet, the speaker's

nostalgic emphasis on the values of bygone days suggests that there are elements of not only the pastoral but the georgic mode as well.

Although the definition of "georgic" has altered over the centuries, the overarching focus of the mode surrounds the daily life of the farmer. Andrew Low attests the georgic "is preeminently about the value of hard and incessant labor" (Low 8). The georgic does not diminish or sentimentalize the reality of labor. Anne Wallace, in her nuanced discussion of the georgic in the poetry of Wordsworth and Clare, points out that the georgic stresses work instead of leisure (511). This work can vary, but overall the georgic "insistently links moral and political labor with common physical labor" (Wallace 513). The georgic often focuses on the farmer or ploughman in order to best depict these values. Like a georgic, the speaker of Gray's "Elegy" centers his poem on a ploughman. Yet he subverts the traditional emphases of the georgic by minimizing the clear presence of hard labor. In contrast to the georgic, Gifford stresses the pastoral's tendency to gloss over the more insidious parts of life. He suggests the pastoral "celebrate[s] a landscape as though no-one actually sweated to maintain it on a low income" (Gifford 2). The speaker thus reinforces the mode of the pastoral through his use of the ploughman. This purposeful misrepresentation of the rural environment allows the speaker to reflect on an untarnished society, free from polemical political criticisms of economical inequalities.

Contradicting the traditional pastoral, the speaker's nameless main character is a ploughman; nevertheless, the speaker sentimentalizes the ploughman just as pastorals usually idealize shepherds. The speaker begins by introducing the ploughman early in the

poem: "The ploughman homeward plods his weary way" (3). In this line, the ploughman conjures the muse of the provincial farmer and epitomizes the impoverished poor of the graveyard. As member of the preliminal world, a world based in hierarchy and social structure, the weary ploughman cannot rise above his station as simple food provider. He is "weary" after a long day of work, and his beleaguered state confirms his submissive position; for his labor leaves him no time for an education that may allow him to leave behind his status as ploughman. Yet, the speaker omits any specific labor the ploughman has accomplished throughout his day. This lapse supports Gifford's observation of the "celebrated landscape," for there is no initial mention of the imprint left on the natural environment by man. More importantly, by neglecting the presence of hard labor, the speaker tempers the influence of the georgic, which allows him to focus more on the traditional pastoral focus of leisure.

The pastoral emphasis on leisure allows for the minimization of the poor's lives outside the home, which allows the speaker to reinforce the preliminal structure of family. The speaker discusses the "leisure time" of the poor: "For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,/Or busy housewife ply her evening care:/No children run to lisp their sire's return" (21-23). At first, these lines remind the audience that the speaker's subjects are deceased, for each of these actions is in the past; however, the true focus of these lines is the home life of the poor. The first of these lines revolves around the hearth, which is the center of familial life. The hearth provides the focal point of a gathering space, a place in which food is cooked and children play.

In lines 22-23, the speaker focuses on not only the hierarchical nature of 18<sup>th</sup> century society, but also the ploughman's nightly activities. The "housewife" evokes the image of a kindly maternal submissive, for her role is to "bend" to the will of her husband. Yet, reminding us of the pastoral influence, the speaker's emphasis on "care" as the last word of the line suggests that when the ploughman returns home he need not worry about hard labor. He can submit to his wife's doting nature and spend his time playing with his children. While in line 23 the speaker reinforces the expectations of the old world by highlighting the presence of children, he again ignores any presence of work. The children run to meet their father; they seemingly have no chores or duties to attend to and thus may play. Ultimately, though these lines suggest work has been accomplished, there is no outright example of what toils occur before their return. Thus, the figure of the ploughman allows the speaker to reinforce both the pastoral elements of leisure and the poor's preliminal society. Moreover, by highlighting the leisure time of the poor, the speaker builds a connection between the classes for the privileged understand leisure more than they comprehend hard labor.

When the speaker finally incorporates discussions of the poor's toils in the field, he fails to portray the difficulty involved with cultivating land. His descriptions define the pastoral omission of hard labor yet "rescue" the value of perseverance and productivity. In lines 25-26, the speaker reflects on the poor's daily labors, "Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield/Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke". These two lines mask the intense work needed to complete the described tasks. However, his idealized view of the poor allows the speaker to temporarily rescue the nobility of hard work yet maintain his

place in the liminal world, for the portrayal does not accurately depict the preliminal society. Further sentimentalizing the poor, the speaker relates, "How jocund did they drive their team afield!/How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!" (Gray 27-28). This sentimentalized portrayal reveals nothing about the pain and toil the poor experience; on the contrary, it celebrates the poor's strength and ingenuity in their everyday tasks. The speaker, strengthened by his own admittance into the liminal graveyard, seeks to unite the classes through his use of idealized portrayal.

While the pastoral can mourn or elegize the past's values and ultimate truths, it cannot return to that past; the past is therefore mourned by the living and becomes a space between life and death. Sales suggests, "The pastoral idiom affects a reflective melancholia at the transitory nature of life, but tries to locate and isolate still points of permanence" (Sales 17). Requiem, as Sales defines it, highlights the pastoral's ability to maintain a state between life and death. It is only appropriate, then, that such requiems are performed in a graveyard, another physical space between life and death. Sales's definition of requiem lends itself to the darker elements of "Elegy" and speaker's focus on the liminal darkness. More importantly, the speaker "complicates the transition from the personal to the social" by depicting the poor as various metaphors and nameless entities (Sales 16).

Throughout the poem, the speaker consistently unites the poor through his descriptions. He rarely focuses on a single person, and his use of plural pronouns as well as his concentration on community complicates the personal/social transition. In the space of the liminal pastoral graveyard, the speaker only uses the words "they," "them,"

and "their" when referring to the dead in the churchyard. Just as the neophytes of Turner's work become nameless when initiated into the liminal rites, so too do the speaker's fellow initiates. Though this diction initially appears ostracizing, by using it he is, in fact, solidifying the community of the graves. The speaker uses these plural pronouns over twenty-five times throughout the poem in order to emphasize their innate unity and obscurity as neophytes. By creating anonymity, the speaker constructs a realm where no one gains status above another. Turner explains, "The interstructural character of the liminal…is a structure of a very simple kind…among neophytes there is often equality" (*Forest* 99). The corpses then are not only in the liminal space but create a liminal community in which all are the same and none can rise above another. Furthermore, because the speaker has been inducted into this liminal space by the owl, and is also nameless, he becomes a part of this unified, liminal pastoral community.

In the second line of the poem, the speaker does not directly compare the "herd" to the poor, yet his specific word choice eventually unifies the dead Moreover, by connecting the herd to the poor, the speaker accomplishes his first union of the poor into a single body. The first definition most often associated with "herd" is "a company of domestic animals of one kind" (*OED*). While this connotation is clearly what the speaker intended in the line "The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea," there is another definition that more appropriately connects this herd to the deceased poor (2). The *OED*'s third definition of herd shifts the word's association from animal to human: "A large company of people; a multitude." With this use of the word "herd," the speaker draws our attention to the unity of the poor. The graveyard is filled with the bodies of the

dead, yet the speaker unites them into a single mass. Furthermore, as the second definition suggests, a herd is one cohesive entity, and there are no distinctions in it. Expanding this definition, Turner explains that "complete equality usually characterizes the relationship of neophyte to neophyte" (*Forest* 100). Like the herd, the poor in their liminal state of death have entered an entirely equal space. There is neither hierarchy nor a desire to create one. The dead are simply a herd of the poor. Moreover, by indirectly comparing the poor to a herd, the speaker enacts Sales's definition of requiem, for the speaker blurs the line between personal and social transition by suggesting that a mass of bodies can unite into a single entity. Though the word "herd" itself is a word in its singular form, "herd" defines a multitude; thus this transition from many into one does not seem implausible; however, the speaker further unites the poor in a later comparison to a single flower.

Ultimately combining Sales's definition of requiem with liminal anonymity, the speaker unifies the poor into a single metaphor. Stanza fourteen concludes with the speaker describing the dead as "Full many a flower is born to blush unseen/And waste its sweetness on the desert air" (55-56). In these lines, the speaker laments the poor's stagnant position in society. The speaker suggests that as flowers should always be seen for their full beauty and sweetness, so too should the poor. Yet his comparison of the dead to a single flower reaffirms the complication of the personal/social transition; for although flowers connote life, as they provide the method by which all plants reproduce, these flowers are ultimately dead for they are the lifeless poor lying at the speaker's feet. More importantly, in this metaphor the multiple dead of the graveyard meld into a

solitary image. The speaker creates then in this metaphor the perfect blend of the liminal and pastoral; for he reinforces Sales's observation of requiem and its complicating nature between the personal and the social and incorporates Turner's anonymity of the neophyte. Thus, the speaker's comparison of the poor to an inanimate flower solidifies their unity in the liminal pastoral graveyard.

Shifting his focus from the unified poor to their liminal space, the speaker evokes Sales's definition of requiem as he becomes suspended in the most basic of liminal spaces: darkness. In the line after the ploughman heads home, the speaker suggests he "leaves the world to darkness and to me" (4). In liminal theory, darkness is not only disorienting, but is the transition from one day to the next. In darkness, the narrator can openly reflect on the socially stigmatized subject of the poor, for he has abandoned the society of man and day, and entered the liminal space of night. In this case, the night represents the in-between space of two days. Night and darkness have a clear boundary created by the sun, for the sun sets, which eliminates the daylight, and then later rises at dawn, which ends liminal darkness. Connecting this cycle to the pastoral, Sales asserts, "Our beginning is also our end. This circular movement, and the requiem which accompanies it, rules out any chance of effective social rescue" (55). By recognizing the circular movement of time, Sales suggests that although rescuing values long lost proves implausible, there is certain permanence to these cycles. In other words the pastoral darkness represents the space in which the speaker can reflect and properly mourn the dead, for it isolates a point of permanence.

Further drawing a connection to Sales's definitions of requiem, the speaker's use of darkness creates another "point of permanence" while also alluding to Turner's "communitas." The ancient connotations of night were chaos and the antithetical embodiment of both creation and destruction (Walker 347). As Barbara Walker explains, "The classical concept of chaos defined what the world was before creation: all the elements mixed in a homogenized mass... nothing differentiated from anything else, a universe of no form" (336). Similarly, in the night and darkness, there is no differentiation between objects. William Hutchings in his article "Syntax Of Death: Instability In Gray's 'Elegy Written In A Country Churchyard'" attests, "As night falls, as the world fades on the sight, reality can no longer be firmly and clearly perceived. It is a time when distinctions become blurred, when objects cannot be surely grasped, but only held as nebulously as stillness the air, or air the stillness" (501). The blurring and equalizing power of night correlates to Turner's definition of the liminal world. While there are "many degrees of superordination and subordination" in the realm of the living, "[i]n the liminal period such distinctions and gradations tend to be eliminated" (Forest 99). This theoretical definition from Turner supports the symbolic definition from Walker. In addition, for both Turner and Sales, the liminal as well as the pastoral requiem are the spaces in which chaos reigns.

Turner's further explanation of the liminal space also applies to the other connotations of night and darkness: creation and death, which both stem from ancient mythology. He states, "Opposite processes and notions in a single representation characterizes the peculiar unity of the liminal: that which is neither this nor that, and yet is both" (*Forest* 99). This definition associates creation and death to darkness and night. As the fourth line of "Elegy" suggests, the world has been left to darkness and thus also to death. Michael Ferber suggests that night "stands for death" (136). In his book, Ferber recalls Jesus saying, "'I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (Ferber 136). This explanation separates the night or darkness from the day or light, for it defines day as the world of the work and order, while night becomes unnavigable space. Although the speaker defines the point in which he enters the world of darkness, once there, he cannot fully navigate his way out; he becomes trapped in the world of darkness. Finally, in contrast to the Biblical interpretation of night, ancient Greek mythology viewed night as a space of creation and new life. Walker explains, "Mother Night...stood for the darkness of the womb in which all things are generated, for the blackness of the abyss, and for infinite space" (347). This concept fulfills Sales's definition of requiem, which allows the speaker to commune with the dead and reconstruct their lives.

Ultimately blending temporal spaces, the pastoral becomes a literary construction outside of time and space. As the final R in Sales's definitions, reconstruction combines the previous four Rs (refuge, reflection, rescue, and requiem) to explain that the pastoral "offers a political interpretation of both past and present" (Sales 17). It does not recount history as it truthfully was, but instead reimagines it as the author desires. This final R then epitomizes why the speaker can achieve a sense of unity in the pastoral space of the graveyard; for he, as a fellow inhabitant, can reconstruct their liminal world to represent

anything he desires. The speaker achieves this unity through his reconstruction of the lives of poor. He recasts their downtrodden existences into models of success and fame.

By the middle of the poem, the speaker has established himself as an inhabitant of the liminal pastoral and calls on his preliminal society to embrace his fellow neophytes. Two stanzas specifically highlight his pleas for unity as he uses each of Sales's five Rs to reconstruct an envisioned world. Lines 29-32 initiate the speaker's reconstruction of the liminal pastoral, and allow him to redefine familiar values in new ways. He begins, "Let not Ambition mock their useful toil/Their homely joys, and destiny obscure" (29-30). With these lines, the speaker subverts the often hallowed virtue of Ambition. In the preliminal, Ambition represents drive and passion. Reiterating that the liminal world does not hold the same standards, the speaker repositions the personified value of Ambition from a desirable virtue to a condescending other. The speaker then highlights the poor's "useful toil." This focus subverts the predisposed view of Ambition, for in these lines, the poor are surrounded by positive diction, while the virtue is chided for "mocking." The stanza concludes with the lines, "Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile/The short and simple annals of the poor" (31-32). These two lines accomplish the same reconstruction as the first two. However, in line 31, Grandeur reacts to the poor in an even harsher way than Ambition. The speaker bestows upon Grandeur a "disdainful smile" which allows him to diminish the importance of this value. Outside of the liminal space of the pastoral graveyard, Grandeur or wealth are coveted and desired. Yet, by revealing Grandeur's true nature as arrogant and cruel, the speaker can applaud the poor for their humility. More importantly, through its unifying nature the liminal pastoral

allows the speaker to discuss the poor in these elevated terms without repercussion. Thus, through vilifying the personified virtues, "Ambition" and "Grandeur," the speaker resituates their desirable attributes in order to unify himself with the poor.

Further using the pastoral convention of reconstruction, the speaker compares the poor to various influential individuals. Comprising one of the most controversial stanzas of the poem, these lines idealize the potential of the forgotten poor.

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast The little tyrant of his fields withstood; Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest, Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood. (57-60)

In these lines the poor are compared to John Hampden, John Milton, and Oliver Cromwell, all men who sparked revolution and discord. The speaker claims that these poor are the fallen and repressed surrogates of revolutionaries, which seemingly creates a problem with the idea of unity. Roger Lonsdale argues that the speaker offers "examples of greatness which had proved dangerous to society" as a means of promoting the illiteracy of the poor (128). Further still, Suvir Kaul suggests that these lines insist that "purity is contingent upon being left out of history" (138). Finally, Richard Sha posits, "If the poor cannot read, then they cannot 'learn to stray'; that is, they cannot yearn for equality and position. The poem thus actively buries or silences their desires" (345). Although each of these lines can be interpreted in these ways, each of these three critics glosses over what the speaker could also suggest in these lines. The speaker suggests in this stanza that the poor could have triumphed where the real revolutionaries failed. With each comparison of the poor to a revolutionary, the speaker uses positive diction to contradict the original outcome. In particular, while the last line could be interpreted that the impoverished "Cromwell" did not commit murder because he was poor, it could also be seen that had the poor revolutionary been given the opportunity he would have successfully achieved his goal "guiltless of his country's blood" (60). In the end, instead of silencing the poor to the margins of history, the speaker reconstructs a society in which the poor become the successful, influential members of society.

Demonstrating elements of Sales's definitions the speaker reconstructs the society in which the poor are downtrodden in order to suggest an alternative, a place in which not all are made liminal characters. The elements of the pastoral provide a familiar mode through which the speaker can suggest his subversive politics. More importantly, the liminal space which the speaker inhabits allows him to explore the possibilities of a new society, free from the social hierarchies of the living or "preliminal" world. He emphasizes the poor's past lives in order to humanize them and allow his audience to see the poor as more than just a simple "lowing herd." Ultimately, the speaker reminds his audience that death is the last unifier: "The paths of glory lead but to the grave" (Gray 36). By centering his poem on the already liminalized dead instead of the living poor, the speaker achieves his unity with society, but at what cost to himself?

By the end of the poem, the speaker becomes not only a neophyte alongside his dead brethren, but achieves an ultimate unity with the poor in his own metaphorical death through an epitaph. This epitaph causes the speaker to become suspended in what Arpad Szakolczai considers "permanent liminality." Szakolczai suggests that "[1]iminality becomes a permanent condition when any of the phases in this sequence becomes frozen

...Individuals keep repeating the same roles, movements and gestures all over again" (212). In other words, though the speaker does not physically repeat the same actions, he figuratively inscribes what he deems his life work into a stone, thus cementing his place in the liminal space. This permanent liminality ultimately occurs because the speaker composes his epitaph in the space of the graveyard and thus uses the language of liminality. As he did earlier when discussing the other neophytes, the speaker rechristens himself using symbolic language. His epitaph states, "And Melancholy marked him for her own" (120). Cleanth Brooks suggests that this shift means "[he] has lost his identity as an ego... [and is] one with the others in the country churchyard" (117). The speaker's alignment with Melancholy performs two roles in his epitaph. Firstly, as the "child" of the non-physical entity Melancholy, the speaker symbolically does not remain human. Melancholy becomes his liminal symbol, the neophyte name with which he associates. The word "melancholy" connotes liminality; during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, those in the state of melancholy were thought to inhabit both emotional states of happiness and sadness. More importantly, Samuel Johnson defines melancholy as a "kind of madness in which the mind is always fixed on one object" (458). Thus, in conjunction with the definition from Szakolczai, the state of melancholy leaves the speaker in a state of permanent liminality, for his sole fixation on the unification of his fellow neophytes with the rest of society prohibits him from reentering the living world and completing his postliminal rites.

In the end, although the speaker's attempt to unify the poor with society appears to succeed, he is forced to remain alone. He begins the poem with every living thing deserting him for the home they prefer. As Thomas Carper reiterates, "All of the

creatures have purpose and home, most have community; even the dead have community" (458). Yet the speaker enters the country churchyard alone and separated from society. In his reflections on the dead, he focuses on their former communities and social structures in the hopes unifying them with the society that shunned them in their daily live. Furthermore, he seemingly hopes to become part of their community in order to attain a sense of belonging. The liminal dead accept him with ease for their symbolic instructor, the owl, allows him to enter into her domain. However, the irony of the speaker's acceptance lies in his eventual permanently liminalized state, for by becoming part of the neophytes of the grave, the speaker can never again rejoin the living. Thus, the speaker remains alone, for though he can better understand the neophytes he once studied, they reside in a world that he cannot truly enter until he has passed into the true realm of the dead.

# NOTES

<sup>1</sup>All citations for "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" will come from Roger Lonsdale's edition, and will be noted by line number.

<sup>2</sup> In this essay all etymologies and definitions will derive from *The Oxford English Dictionary Online* and will simply be cited as (OED).

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