

BA (Hons) Literature Dissertation

Dissertation Title: *'Then Things Went South: A Post-Colonial Analysis of Robert Fergusson, Robert Burns and James Hogg'*

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In this dissertation I shall be focussing on the application of Postcolonial literary theory in relation to Scotland during the period of time which has been coined by academics as the ‘long eighteenth-century’.¹ Specifically, I shall be focussing on the works of Robert Fergusson, Robert Burns and James Hogg; respectively, *Ghaists: A Kirkyard Eclogue*, *The Twa Dogs*, and *Dusty, or, Watie an’ Geordie’s Review of Politics; an Eclogue*. I will be focussing on examples of established hallmarks of postcolonial literature; including the paradisaical depiction of the colonized nation in the time preceding colonization, and the use of the native language as a form of protest against the precedence of the culture of the colonizer. This depiction of the pre-colonial nation is portrayed through the poets’ use of the natural world, of Scottish history, of the decline in the power of the Church, and in their relation of their own work to that of a fabled Scottish literary origin and history. The poets also use the Scots language to great effect in their poetry - apart from the obvious use of their native, oppressed, tongue as an act of political protest, they also reinvigorated the oral and bardic Scottish literary traditions, with an effective use of the vernacular and portrayed their own dismissal - or ignorance - towards the Anglicized Scottish educational system. Specifically, I will be applying Postcolonial theory to these poets within the time soon after the Union of Parliaments in 1707, where the Governments of Scotland and England established the first ‘British’ parliament, with Scotland relieving themselves of sovereign power. While the application of Postcolonial literary theory is usually in the context of a former overseas colony, the place held by ‘regions’ of the United Kingdom - being that of Scotland, Ireland and Wales – create a curious relationship; as both oppressors, and of the oppressed.

INTRODUCING THE POSTCOLONIAL:

The concept of ‘Postcolonial’ literature is one which focusses its energies on the plight and performance of formerly-colonized nations to exhibit a national character and culture out with the restraining binds of the imperial power which previously confined their expression. As is detailed by Homi K. Bhabha in ‘The Location of Culture’; ‘Postcolonial perspectives emerge from the colonial testimony of Third World countries and the discourses of ‘minorities’ within the geopolitical divisions of East and West, North and South.’² However that’s not to say that a nation’s ‘Postcolonial’ literature simply ‘begins’ on their independence day; ‘Postcolonial’ literature is an all-encompassing term that gives categorization to the work of a people from the instance of subjugation, to the celebration of independence, and then past that point into their struggles as an individual nation. This allocation of the ‘Postcolonial’ ‘genre’ is expanded upon by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths & Helen Tiffin - as they write that ‘we use the term ‘post-colonial’, however, to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of

¹ O’Groman, Frank, *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Political and Social History 1688 – 1832* (London : Bloomsbury : 2016), p.03

² Bhabha, Homi K., *The Location of Culture* (New York, NY : Routledge : 2004) p.245

colonization to the present day'.³ The sentiment of 'Postcolonial' literature is not something that can be succinctly boiled down to a singular sentence – it's far too multi-faceted, and its individual cases have independent aspects to them. However, Robert J.C. Young made an attempt at concisely detailing the feeling of postcolonial literature as thus; that the people of the 'Postcolonial' 'live in a world of others, a world that exists *for* others'.⁴

While the bedrock of the postcolonial conversation is, rightly, focussed on the colonies which were once termed 'Third World'; ever-expanding social and political awareness – especially in the 'home nations' of Great Britain – have culminated in the rise of a conversation regarding the place of other nations and cultures in the postcolonial framework. While the 'shackles of imperialism' have been – at least, superficially – removed from these nations, (the 'home nations'); the three countries that provided England its first imperial endeavours still find themselves trapped in the framework of the United Kingdom.⁵ Furthermore, as John McLeod has stated, 'In addition, it has occasionally been pointed out that the literatures from the British Isles, such as Wales and Scotland, can be thought of as Postcolonial. These countries have suffered the institutional and cultural authority of England which the writing from each has attempted to challenge'.⁶ This has resulted in a peculiar parallel evolution of their relationship as both the assimilated and the subjugated.

This subjugation of Scottish institutional and cultural identity is integral to – in this particular case – Scotland's relationship with the colonial system, and ergo, Postcolonial theory. While the nation may not have found its people's ankles enchained, it found its culture and identity bound and suppressed; diluted and amalgamized into the Anglicized 'British' state. This reading is reinforced in 'The Scots and the Union'; 'While the sources of English and Scottish identities differ, over three centuries much water from the respective streams comprising the two national histories has merged into a single but unevenly flowing channel: Britishness'.⁷

However, with Scotland's relationship with the imperial system being 'simultaneously as an early casualty and economic node of Britain's nascent empire', we come to a limitation of the 'Postcolonial' literary theory – where it needs to be made malleable to encompass 'home nation' postcolonialism.⁸ In

³ Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin, 'Introduction' in *The Empire Writes Back* (Abingdon : Routledge : 2002) p.02

⁴ Young, Robert J.C., *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press : 2020) p.02

⁵ Lyon, Rob, 'The Shackles of Imperialism – Third World Debt', *In Defence of Marxism* (14/02/2005) [accessed:12/04/2021] <<http://www.marxist.com/third-world-debt-imperialism140205.htm>>

⁶ McLeod, John, *Beginning Postcolonialism (Second Edition)*, (Manchester : Manchester University Press : 2010) p.282

⁷ Whatley, Christopher A., Derek J. Patrick, *The Scots and the Union* (Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press : 2006) p.24

⁸ Trumpener, Katie, 'Formations of Empire, Place and History in Galt and Munro', *Scottish Literature and Postcolonial Literature: Comparative texts and Critical Perspectives*, Ed. Gardiner, Michael, Graeme McDonald, Niall O'Gallagher (Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press : 2011), p.47

its present, more rigid form - which it takes in the minds of many literary theorists - its view of what is and isn't 'colonial' is steeped in the past.

That is not to say, however, that the expansion of Postcolonial theory to encompass the 'home nations' is not contentious – as aforementioned, the theory has stood as it exists for decades, and the idea of Scottish independence outside of the confines of the postcolonial idea is contentious enough as it is. As John McLeod questions in his introductory postcolonial text; 'although the experiences of the Irish, Welsh and Scots, and those who suffered from British and French rule, may be cited as examples of colonialism, are these experiences and versions of colonialism necessarily the same?'⁹ This relationship Scotland – and the other 'home nations' - have with their colonial past, as part of the British Empire, cannot and should not be ignored; however, it results in a uniquely perverse relationship with the Postcolonial theory, something not seen in many cases throughout the world. This 'double identity as both coloniser and colonised' does indeed muddy the water in terms of Scotland's relationship with postcolonialism, however I do not feel it weakens its qualification for a place within its bounds.¹⁰ In fact, I feel it bolsters its case, as Scottish writing remains uniquely situated within the postcolonial literary landscape; as Peter Barry posits 'at another level, the double or hybrid identity is precisely what the postcolonial situation brings into being'.¹¹ This concept, of the 'postcolonial' system being not nearly as strict and unmalleable as originally positioned, is one reinforced by the writers of 'The Empire Writes Back', as they bolster the idea that; 'the term post-colonial might provide a different way of understanding colonial relations: no longer a simple binary opposition, black colonized vs. white colonizers; Third World vs. the West, but an engagement with all the varied manifestations of colonial power'.¹² The fact that integration of Scottish writing into the domain of Postcolonial theory has proven to be an awkwardly technical task is compounded by Scotland's engagement in British Imperialism, which has created an air of ambiguity surrounding the matter. As is referenced by John M. MacKenzie and T.M. Devine; 'after 1707, the Scots gained legitimate entry into to the newly constituted 'British' Empire and rapidly played a significant role in all its geographical sectors, in the West in the thirteen colonies, Canada, and the Caribbean, and in the East through the East India Company'.¹³

Frantz Fanon's 'Wretched of the Earth' is, as Riley Quinn states 'one of the original works of anticolonial theory as well as the postcolonial theory that followed' and, as such, it would seem incongruent to delve into postcolonial readings of Fergusson, Burns and Hogg without his guidance.¹⁴ In his 'bible of decolonization', Fanon states how he believes that postcolonial writers find their creative

⁹ McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism*, p.284

¹⁰ Barry, Peter, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory (Fourth Edition)*, (Manchester : Manchester University Press : 2017) p.197

¹¹ Barry, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, p.198

¹² Ashcroft, *The Empire Writes Back*, p.200

¹³ MacKenzie, John M., T.M. Devine, 'Introduction', *Scotland and the British Empire*, Ed. MacKenzie, John M., T.M. Devine (Oxford : Oxford University Press : 2016), p.01

¹⁴ Quinn, Riley, *An Analysis of Frantz Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth* (London : Macat : 2017), p.44

and political stride when casting their minds far from the imperial corruptions of their present-day nation, back in time.¹⁵ He delves into the notion that ‘native’ postcolonial writers can transport themselves to a pre-colonial past, and are then able to note the corruption and rotting of their nation from that point on; ‘perhaps unconsciously, the native intellectuals, since they could not stand wonderstruck before the history of today’s barbarity, decided to go back further and to delve deeper down; and, let us make no mistake, it was with the greatest delight that they discovered that there was nothing to be ashamed of in the past, but rather dignity, glory and solemnity’.¹⁶ This is founded on the reiteration of foundational narratives of the nation, the imaginary origins of a people - a time of philosophised ‘purity’ or virtue. Peter Barry, in his 1995 book ‘Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory’ reiterates on this point, detailing how ‘characteristically, postcolonial writers evoke or create a precolonial version of their own nation, rejecting the modern and the contemporary, which is tainted with the colonial status of their countries’.¹⁷

This ‘precolonial version’ of the native land can be depicted in many ways: however, one way in which Scottish authors tap into that pre-Union state is through the natural world, through the rural landscape. As such, it seems only fitting that all three aforementioned writers decided to write – among many other ways – in the form of the Eclogue. Postcolonial writing - and its aforementioned drive to travel to before the ‘tainted’ colonial occupation in the present – then seems to be the perfect fit for the Eclogue format; as the format allows them to focus on ‘the subject of rural life and the society of shepherds, depicting rural life as free from the complexity and corruption of more civilized life’.¹⁸ This is expounded by Ernst A. Schmidt, writing in ‘Oxford Readings in Classical Studies: Vergil’s Eclogues’ that; ‘the retrospective idyll has become the expression of an internalized Utopia of the past’.¹⁹

As Scottish writers, Fergusson, Burns and Hogg were all too aware of their nation’s place within Britain’s imperial framework and sought to resist the cultural shackles from which they had found themselves bound in as passionate men of a once proud, historic nation. This sentiment is echoed by Marshall Walker, who states that; ‘since 1707 Scottish sensibility has either touched its forelock to England’s supremacy in a nominal Britain, or has resented forces which seemed to have sabotaged an ancient nation, or has functioned, at some level, in terms of awareness that it is peripheral to the cultural and economic centre of the Union’.²⁰ This belief – of Scotland as an ‘ancient nation’ with a fabled past, being suppressed within a relatively modern political union – is one echoed in Jeremy Black’s chapter

¹⁵ Quinn, *An Analysis of Frantz Fanon’s The Wretched of the Earth*, p.14

¹⁶ Fanon, Frantz, *The Wretched of the Earth* (London : Penguin : 2001), p.169

¹⁷ Barry, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, p.196

¹⁸ Encyclopaedia Britannica, ‘Poetic Form: Eclogue’ [accessed: 08/03/2021]

<<https://www.britannica.com/art/eclogue>>

¹⁹ Schmidt, Ernst A., ‘Arcadia: Modern Occident and Classical Antiquity’, *Oxford Readings in Classical Studies: Vergil’s Eclogues*, Ed. Volk, Katharina (Oxford : Oxford University Press : 2008), p.47

²⁰ Walker, Marshall, ‘Preface’ in *Scottish Literature Since 1707* (Essex : Addison Wesley Longman Ltd : 1996) p.ix

for the 2017 collection 'Histories of Nations: How Their Identities Were Formed'. He writes that 'it was Great Britain, though, that came into being in 1707 and not the much older kingdoms of England or Scotland or the principality of Wales [...] in this sense Britain lacks a deep history comparable to those of England, Scotland and Wales because much that we associate with one is of no relevance to another'.²¹

ROBERT FERGUSSON ('The Ghaists: a Kirk-yard Eclogue'):

With Fergusson's earliest surviving work being written in 1765, his writing is the closest to the Act of Union from that of our three writers.²² As such, his perspective is particularly cogent and his interaction with the question of nationhood which all three poets wrestled with was noted by James Robertson – in his introduction for Fergusson's selected works, stating that 'Fergusson lived at a time when the question of Scottish identity – political, cultural, linguistic – was, even when not explicitly debated, very much in people's minds'.²³

If there is one statement by either of Fergusson's 'ghaists' – George Watson and George Herriot – which epitomizes the passionate nostalgia of pre-colonial Scotland in Fergusson's poem it would be that stated by Herriot. Reminiscing over 'thae blest days' of 'when royal Jamie sway'd the sovereign rod', Herriot – who was in fact a goldsmith and financier to James VI – casts the reader back to a nation which had almost seemed to have ceased to exist; that of a monarchic, pre-Union, pre-colonial Scotland.²⁴ Herriot continues with this sentiment; of a wise, aged country which came to a treacherous end after a long, passionate life. Herriot calls Scotland by its ancient, Latin name, and bemoans its perceived death as he laments; 'Ah, CALEDON! The land I yence held dear, / Sair mane mak I for thy destruction near'.²⁵ Hamish Mathison, in his essay 'Gothic Poetry in Scotland: the Ghaistly Eighteenth Century', reinforces this idea of Herriot reminiscing over the past of a once proud nation – one now far out of reach. He writes that 'Fergusson's George Herriot is a ghaist with a nostalgic turn of mind, bringing forward once more the days of Scottish independence'.²⁶

²¹ Black, Jeremy, 'Great Britain: The confected nation state' in *Histories of Nations: How their Identities were Forged* (London: Thames & Hudson : 2017), p.167-168

²² Robertson, James, 'Footnote' in *Robert Fergusson: Selected Poems* (Edinburgh : Polygon : 2007), p.49

²³ Robertson, James, 'Introduction' in *Robert Fergusson: Selected Poems* (Edinburgh : Polygon : 2007), p.26

²⁴ Fergusson, Robert, "The Ghaists: a Kirk-yard Eclogue' in *Robert Fergusson: Selected Poems* (Edinburgh : Polygon : 2017), p.136

Fergusson, *Robert Fergusson: Selected Poems*, p.136

Robertson, *Robert Fergusson: Selected Poems*, p.135

²⁵ Fergusson, *Robert Fergusson: Selected Poems*, p.136

²⁶ Mathison, Hamish, 'Gothic Poetry in Scotland: The Ghaistly Eighteenth Century' in *Gothic Studies* 14:01 (May 2012) p.41

Fergusson continues his lamentation of the suppression of Scotland's past, as Herriot tells the reader how nature itself – from the skies to the birds who call them home – have deteriorated from the time of Scotland's subjugation within the Union; 'for tho' the eastern lift betakens day, / Changing her rokelay black for mantle gray, / Nae weirlike bird our knell of parting ring, / Nor sheds the caller moisture frae his wings. / NATURE has chang'd her course; the birds o' day'.²⁷ This is in keeping with the postlapsarian motif running through the poem – that is, that the world of the Union is that of a world 'existing after the Fall of Man'; after the hellish defacing of a once-proud nation.²⁸ This concept, of nature deteriorating from the time of the Union, is built upon by Herriot later in the poem as he deplores how Scotland's previously most treasured, ancient land could soon be farmed, mined and drained completely; 'he may tir our stateliest riggings bare, / Nor acres, houses, woods, nor fishins spare' – his particular defining of the lands as 'riggins', or 'the back or back-bone of a person or animal' emphasises the land's importance to the nation.²⁹ This concept, of Scotland's – seemingly murdered – past, interacting with its colonial present is something noted and detailed by Murray Pittock in his 2008 exploration of 'Scottish and Irish Romanticism. As he states; 'Fergusson injects into Scottish literature what was to become a major trope: the presence of 'old Scotland' as the accusing ghost at the feast of modernity'.³⁰

As Fanon's 'Wretched of the Earth' was – as aforementioned – such a pivotal text in the stimulation and solidifying of the Postcolonial movement, being the origin of many of its core facets, it should come as no surprise that it concerns itself with the second area in which I shall analyse the poetry of Fergusson and the others; that is, the relationship each poet has to their native Scots language. Fanon proclaims that; 'At the very moment when the native intellectual is anxiously trying to create a cultural work he fails to realise that he is utilizing techniques and language which are borrowed from the stranger in his country'.³¹ Peter Barry, in parallel to the previous section, reiterates Fanon's proclamation, detailing how the colonized people's 'uneasy attitude to the colonial language is evident'. These arguments are reinforced in a Scottish context in Stan Smith's article for 'Darkening English', where it is stated that 'the language of English is darkened by a corrupting political complicit, and the poet of a subject people cannot use it without being compromised and co-opted'.³² This relationship between colonizer and colonized, through the language they choose to speak and write in, is developed as the choice is not

²⁷ Fergusson, *Robert Fergusson: Selected Poems*, p.136

²⁸ 'Postlapsarian', *Lexico Online Dictionary* [accessed: 13/04/2021]

<<https://www.lexico.com/definition/postlapsarian>>

²⁹ Fergusson, *Robert Fergusson: Selected Poems*, p.138

'Rig', *Scottish Language Dictionaries: Concise Scots Dictionary* (Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press : 2017), p. 564

³⁰ Pittock, Murray, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism* (Oxford : Oxford University Press : 2008) p.41

³¹ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p.180

³² Barry, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, p.196

Smith, Stan, 'Darkening English: Post-Imperial Contestations in the Language of Seamus Heaney and Derek Walcott', *English: Journal of the English Association*, 43(175) (Spring 1994), p.40

simply between one or the other, but between ‘right’ and ‘wrong’, submission to the new normal or active rebellion in defence of tradition.

As a student of St. Andrews University in Fife, Robert Fergusson had first-hand experience of this dynamic shift in linguistic preference – a ‘luxury’ not afforded to most at the time, and, as such, there are examples of educational learning spread throughout his poetry. However, the luxury of education was not one afforded to most, as is explored by James Robertson, who states that; ‘[Fergusson had] something which neither Ramsay nor Burns had – a college education, which gave him access to the classics, as well as an early familiarity with Scottish and English literature’.³³ This formal education is witnessed in many aspects of his writing, the fluidity and succinctness of his verse being one - he also exhibits an extensive knowledge of the history of his home city of Edinburgh. This is seen in the depiction of the two ‘Ghaists’ of his *Kirkyard Eclogue*; George’s Watson and Heriot – both wealthy philanthropic figures of Edinburgh from the century past. This can also be seen in his referencing of many other historical members of the Edinburgh philanthropic elite long-since dead; detailing that the cemetery is where Geordie Girdwood - former sexton of Greyfriars’s Kirkyard – ‘spends mony a lang-spun day, / Houkit for gentlest banes the humblest day’ and that we’d find Inigo ‘Danish’ Jones – then believed to have been architect of Heriot’s Hospital - ‘in vain [...] wi gimcrack pains, / In Gothic sculpture fret the pliant stanes’.³⁴

This evidence shows that Fergusson was clearly not simply an man of bardic intelligence – in the same ‘heaven-taught’ way of the ‘people’s poets’ we shall continue onto further – but that he was formerly taught and learned in the ways of the educational system of the time; Anglicized language preferences included. However, as I shall detail with haste, Fergusson never replaced the Scots language of his cultural heritage, but chose to enhance his poetry by an education offered to him within the confines of a post-Union Scotland. As Jerry O’Brien details in ‘Studies in Scottish Literature’; ‘Fergusson’s heart spoke in Scots; he had to learn to write in Scots, or more properly, he had to acquire the courage to do so.’³⁵

Fergusson’s education, however, is mostly-likely the reason that he was so elegantly able to converse in both tongues – his bilingualism didn’t cause his poetry to falter as he attempts to balance the weight of two languages, in fact he was able to confidently write in both English and Scots; ‘although he wrote from within two poetic traditions, Fergusson achieved, as no Scot poet had done before, an intellectual and linguistic synthesis’.³⁶ This ‘double-voicedness’ of Fergusson was an active choice by a writer who

³³ Robertson, *Robert Fergusson: Selected Poems*, pp. 28-29

³⁴ Fergusson, *Robert Fergusson: Selected Poems*, p.135

Fergusson, *Robert Fergusson: Selected Poems*, p.137

³⁵ O’Brien, Jerry, ‘The Sonsie Muse: The Satiric Use of Neoclassical Diction in the Poems of Robert Fergusson’, *Studies in Scottish Literature* 19(1) (1984), p.174

³⁶ Wilson, Gavin Scott, ‘The Verse-Epistles of Robert Burns: A Critical Study’, in *Theses from Faculty of Arts and Humanities Legacy Departments: University of Stirling* (September 1976), p. 68

protested the idea of betraying a language which had nurtured him since birth.³⁷ Instead, when pressured into leaving Scots behind for an ‘Enlightened’ future with the English language, he chose to protest – James Robertson, detailing this aspect in his 2007 ‘Introduction’ for Fergusson’s selected works, writes that ‘it is a mistake to think of Fergusson as being faced with a straight choice between writing in English and writing in Scots, as if these were mutually incompatible’.³⁸

To reiterate, using the words of Jerry O’Brien - that Fergusson’s heart ‘spoke in Scots’, the orality of Fergusson’s poetic work cannot and should not be understated.³⁹ Fergusson’s passion for, and ability to write from, the Scots oral tradition was – as is the case for the use of a ‘minority’ native language in a colonial system – a test in adaptation, and a truly remarkable act. As declared in the preface for a 1785 collection of his poetry, Fergusson’s ‘talent for versification in the Scots dialect has been exceeded by none, - equalled by few’.⁴⁰ The hallmarks of oral literature are a ‘tight metrical structure’, and as such we find that ‘the rhythmic verbal structure is always influenced’ – as a result, the use by Fergusson of the simple, orally-inspired alternate scheme of rhyme in *The Ghaists* should come as no surprise.⁴¹ This is seen throughout the poem, and is most fluidly implemented as George Herriot details; ‘I’m weel content; but binna cassen down, / Nor thou the cock will ca ye hame ovr soon, / For tho’ the eastern lift betakes the day, / Changing her rokelay black for mantle grey’.⁴² It’s now anecdotal that Fergusson had such passion for the Scottish oral tradition that he; ‘indeed sold ballads in the street where he amused ‘multitudes’ with a variety of favourite Scots songs’ – as K.M. Costain expresses, Fergusson’s ‘delight in a language, the vigour of which derives from Scottish speech, and which forcefully, expresses a Scottish cultural identity threatened by a “foreign tradition known only by reading and report.”’⁴³ This unbreakable connection between Fergusson and the Scots oral tradition is one which seems natural to us now, as contemporary literary scholars are able to trace what they call the ‘persistent phantom of lyrical melody in the written tradition of poetry’.⁴⁴ Fergusson wasn’t willing to depart from the orality of Scots, and – as written language is, by nature an evolution of its solely-spoken predecessor – we can find the ‘ghaists’ of it still haunting the pages. Hazel Hynd, writing for ‘Studies in Scottish Literature’ in 2004, maintains this orality of Fergusson’s Scots poetry - and its inclusion acting as a matter of

³⁷ Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism*, p.124

³⁸ Robertson, *Robert Fergusson: Selected Poems*, p.12

³⁹ O’Brien, *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 174

⁴⁰ Fergusson, Robert, ‘Preface’, *Poems on Various Subjects by Robert Fergusson: In Two Parts* (Edinburgh : T. Ruddiman and Co.: 1785), p.iii

⁴¹ Goody, Jack, ‘Folk Literature and Fable: Oral Literature’, *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (27/08/2016) [accessed: 04/04/2021] <<https://www.britannica.com/art/oral-literature>>

⁴² Robertson, *Robert Fergusson: Selected Poems*, p.136

⁴³ Costain, K.M., ‘Review Essay: Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson, *Poems*’, in *International Review of Scottish Studies* (1987), p.45

Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism*, p.120

⁴⁴ Menninghaus, Winifried, Valentin Wagner, Christine A. Knoop, Mathias Scharinger, ‘Poetic speech melody: A crucial link between music and language’ *PLOS ONE* 7(13) (November 2018), p.02

protest towards the rise of written literature, post-Union - stating that ‘they are full of oral energy and folk irreverence in the face of Anglocentric associations’.⁴⁵

Fergusson also found himself drawn towards the incomprehensible diversity of the language through its own, internal dialects. It’s this passion that Alexander Law speaks of when he relates ‘Fergusson’s love for the variety of the Scots dialect, and the mixture of Lothian, Fife and Aberdeenshire words that is to be found in his poems’.⁴⁶ This focus on the vernacular, on the language spoken and used by the common Scot, is another aspect of Fergusson’s poetry which implicitly protests the imperial advances of English into Scottish culture post-1707. He unknowingly ‘initiated something called “The Vernacular Revival”’; that is, in the eighteenth century these poets revived poetic use of Scots (“THE vernacular”) after a seventeenth century of treacherous anglicization that stems, in part, from James VI and the Union of Crowns’.⁴⁷

This prominent and punctual use of Scots vernacular in his poetry can be seen throughout – however, there are some cases within *The Ghaists* which I feel most poignantly proclaim their protest in their use. James Gray, writing in 1821, commented on the seemingly ‘common’ use of Scots vernacular when he wrote that ‘in the exordium of the Ghaist, the midnight horrors of the churchyard are brought before the mind in imaginations worthy of Shakespeare, yet the succeeding dialogue between the spirits of Heriot and Watson does not rise above the tone of common conversation’.⁴⁸

As mentioned before, Fergusson – through Herriot – bemoans that the Union ‘may tirr our stateliest riggings bare’; ‘riggings’ being ‘the back or the backbone of a person or animal’, and as such emphasising the land’s importance as that of structural and self-confidence.⁴⁹

This sentiment is carried on in his portrayal of the ‘Mortmain Bill’ – and the Union with England by extension – by proclaiming that the ‘tiring’ may continue until ‘he can lend the stoitering state a lift / Wi’ gowd in gowpins as a grassum gift’.⁵⁰ Fergusson’s use of ‘stoitering’ to describe the Westminster government, that is, moving with ‘a lurch, a stagger, a tottering step’ infers instability; his use of ‘gowpins’ as the method of Scots delivering their gold, that is, with ‘two hands held together to form a bowl’ portrays Scotland as beggar-like, and in a position of slave-like servitude; and his use of ‘grassum’ as the descriptor of the ‘gift’ we would be sending to London reinforces the coloniser-

⁴⁵ Hynd, Hazel, ‘John Davidson and the Hidden Legacy of Burns’, in *Studies in Scottish Literature* 33(1) (2004), p.90

⁴⁶ Law, Alexander, ‘Review: Robert Fergusson’, *The Scottish Historical Review*, 37(123) (April 1958), pp. 66-67

⁴⁷ Jack, R.D.S., ‘Which Vernacular Revival? Burns and the Makars’, *Studies in Scottish Literature* 30(1) (1998), p.09

⁴⁸ Gray, James, *The Poems of Robert Fergusson with A Life of the Author, and Remarks in His Genius and Writings* (Edinburgh : Oliver & Boyd : 1821), p.xxiv

⁴⁹ Robertson, *Robert Fergusson: Selected Poems*, p.138

‘Rig’, *Scottish Language Dictionaries: Concise Scots Dictionary*, p.564

⁵⁰ Robertson, *Robert Fergusson: Selected Poems*, p.138

colonised relationship mentioned before, as a 'grassum' is 'a sum over and above the rent paid by a tenant at the granting of a renewal of a lease' - inferring that Scots now do not even own the land they once called home.⁵¹

The power dynamic between England and Scotland as that of overbearing tyrant and subjugated nation are reinforced when Herriot reiterates the betrayal of those 'Enlightened' individuals who wish to Anglicise themselves to better assimilate into the new Union. He tells of how Scotland's 'executors, and wise trustees', 'Upo' their dwining country girn in sport, / Laugh in their sleeve, and get a place at court'.⁵² Fergusson's use of 'dwining' to describe Scotland's condition portrays the nation as sickly and dying as a result of their betrayal, as to 'dwine' is 'to pine, waste away, fail in health'; and his use of 'girn' once again depicts the perceived one-sidedness of power in Anglo-Scots relations as a 'girn' is 'a noose, a snare', making Scotland some small mammal, being hunted, yet this also infers that the Union was a trap, or a trick – not an honourable end for such an ancient nation as Scotland.⁵³ Fergusson's use of 'girn' in describing those Anglicized 'executors, and wise trustees' is making a further mockery of their Anglicized over-refined manners, as a 'girn' is also a 'a grin, a grimace', portraying their feigned smiles as nothing more than pouting sneers infers that they are nothing more than sleazy opportunists, and don't actually hold the high-class of those who usually filled such high-ranking positions.⁵⁴

If there's one thing that should be understood about the literary and cultural landscape of Scotland at the time, it should be that there was a great divide between the 'Enlightened', Anglicized, pro-Union 'literati' of Edinburgh and other urban areas; and the 'benighted', traditional, anti-Union, vernacular-speaking poets. The conflict and synthesis of English and Scots in the evolving language of the 19th century is emblematic of this. This friction between the 'old way' and the 'Enlightened' way was found on many fronts, but one focal one was that of language – that being the consignment by the 'Enlightenment' thinkers of the day of Scots vernacular as an inferior language, or – even more patronizingly - a subset of English. However, as K.M. Costain recounts; 'writers of imaginative literature, however, found it more difficult than the literati to accept the relegation of Lowland Scots to the status of regional dialect (or dialects).'⁵⁵ This is a viewpoint very much held by Fergusson, as has been made abundantly apparent in the sections of the dissertation before, as he strove to use Scots not only as lyrical or literary preference, but as an act of political protest. Pittock proclaims that; 'not for him was Scots the *'uncouth and degraded dialect'* identified by some of the writers of the Scottish

⁵¹ 'Stoit', *Scottish Language Dictionaries: Concise Scots Dictionary*, p.691

'Gowpen', *Scottish Language Dictionaries: Concise Scots Dictionary*, p.256

'Grassum', *Scottish Language Dictionaries: Concise Scots Dictionary*, p.259

⁵² Robertson, *Robert Fergusson: Selected Poems*, p.139

⁵³ 'Dwine', *Scottish Language Dictionaries: Concise Scots Dictionary*, p.179

'Girn', *Scottish Language Dictionaries: Concise Scots Dictionary*, p.247

⁵⁴ 'Girn', *Scottish Language Dictionaries: Concise Scots Dictionary*, p.247

⁵⁵ Costain, *International Review of Scottish Studies*, p.45

Enlightenment'.⁵⁶ Fergusson – as has been established – was incredibly competent at writing in English as well as Scots, to write in a 'lower' language. As such, he grouped himself among the many Scots poets who wrote in their 'mither tongue' 'overtly as a badge of national identity' – as John Corbett details; 'any piece of writing in Scots is an ideological statement, a proclamation that the writer is refusing to be identified with the politically and culturally dominant English-speaking community'.⁵⁷ The 'racy vigour of [Fergusson's] Scots vocabulary, and his attractive use of the traditional Scots verse forms' were used to consolidate the 'firmly-held belief that the national spirit can best, or only, be expressed' through Scots, by Scots speakers.⁵⁸

ROBERT BURNS ('The Twa Dogs, a Tale'):

As the national bard for the nation, Burns is seemingly as Scottish as one could get in our present day, however his nationality played a massive role in his writing, even then. Burns 'drew heavily upon the work of Ramsay and Fergusson', as such it should be no surprise that he was also an avid depicter of Scotland, in its time before its unification with England. Robert L. Kindrick, for 'Studies in Scottish Literature' reinforces Burns' continuation of this aspect when detailing Burns' knowledge of his nation's past; 'the poet himself tells us that the roots of his devotion to Scotland are found in [...] history'.⁵⁹ This 'devotion' to Scotland's pre-Union history can be seen as early as the first lines of *The Twa Dogs*, as Burns speaks of his home-county of Ayrshire, not in bland verse but by referring to the region of King's Kyle by its historical namesake; 'Twas in that place o' Scotland's isle, / That bears the name o' auld King Coil'.⁶⁰ The 'auld King Coil' of Burns' poem is one way in which Burns transports the reader back not only to a Scotland before the time of the Union, but to another time of 'north-south divide' – in the formative years of the nation. James Paterson, details the historicity of the region's namesake; 'Kyle was so designated from Coilus, king of the Britons, who was slain and interred in the district [...] a civil war [had] ensued between the Britons, who occupied the south and west of Scotland, and the Scots Picts, who were settled in the north and north-west'.⁶¹

Burns' eclogue – similarly to Fergusson's *Ghaists* – poises its discourse between two characters; in this case, the 'Twa Dogs' of Luath and Caesar. While the naming of the dog whose 'hair, his size, his mouth,

⁵⁶ Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism*, p.120

⁵⁷ Corbett, John, *Written in the Language of the Scottish Nation: A History of Literary Translation into Scots* (Clevedon : Multilingual Matters Ltd. : 1999), p.01

⁵⁸ Law, *The Scottish Historical Review*, p.65

McClure, J. Derrick, *Scots and its Literature* (Amsterdam : John Benjamins : 1995), p.24

⁵⁹ Kindrick, Robert L., 'Robert Burns and the Tradition of the Makars' in *Studies in Scottish Literature* 30(01) (1998)

⁶⁰ Burns, Robert, 'The Twa Dogs: A Tale', *The Complete Poems and Songs of Robert Burns* (Glasgow : Waverly Books : 2020), p.108

⁶¹ Paterson, James, *History of the Counties of Ayr and Wigton: Volume I – Kyle, Part I* (Edinburgh : James Stillie : 1863), p.ix

his lugs, / Show'd he was nane o' Scotland's dogs' as 'Caesar', most likely after the imperial Roman emperor, is not unimportant, Burns' naming of his poem's other speaker fits well with Burns' own political sympathies.⁶² Luath, as is even noted by Robert Burns in his own footnotes, is named after 'Cuchullin's dog in Ossian's 'Fingal'' – as is referenced in the poem itself, as Burns writes; 'Wha for his friend an' comrade had him, / And in his freaks had Luath ca'd him, / After some dog in Highland Sang'.⁶³ In naming his 'Scottish' dog Luath – in contrast to his 'English' Caesar – Burns is indicating towards the pre-colonial past, where Scotland had a 'Northern epic poet to match the classical Homer' as a symbol of national pride.⁶⁴

This feeling of an ancient nation's worth being tarnished, and its pre-colonial history being diminished while being under the thumb of the imperialists is also something which can be affected in the present – or, at the present time of writing. This can be seen as Burns comments on the dispossession of Scottish peasants of their ancient, native lands – with their own culture and history – by anglicized landowners; an act which came to be known as 'The Highland Clearances'. Burns references this as he details how; 'there's monie a creditable stock / O' decent, honest, fawsont folk, / Are riven out baith root an' branch, / Some rascal's pridefu' greed to quench, / Wha' thinks to knit himself the faster / In favour wi' some gentle master'.⁶⁵ The experiences of Burns' fictionalized peasants, of them being evicted from lands their ancient forebears no doubt cultivated, is identical to historical fact, as Terry Stewart details the acts of the Clearances as that of 'families who were dispossessed of their land and even, to an extent, of their culture, over a period of around 100 years between the mid-18th to 19th centuries'.⁶⁶ Burns' depiction of the Clearances is highly involved with the postcolonial idea of the pre-colonial nation being depicted as the oppressed land is tainted, as the Clearances acted effectively as a way for the ancient history, customs and homeland of highland Scots to be wiped clean. Eric Richards bolsters this conclusion, as he states that 'the owners of the land were an old social elite, which had been thoroughly anglicized [...] they turned their ancestral territories over to great capitalist sheep-farmers, colonists from the south'.⁶⁷ This mass-movement of people, and eradication of ancient Scottish history, was something Burns was acutely aware of – and his comments on the Clearances reflect that. Christopher Harrie reinforces this statement, writing that; 'the complex longer poems of the Kilmarnock edition of

⁶² Burns, *The Complete Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, p.108

⁶³ Burns, Robert, 'Footnote' in *The Complete Poems and Songs of Robert Burns* (Glasgow : Waverly Books : 2020), p.108

Burns, *The Complete Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, p.108

⁶⁴ Gaskill, Howard, 'Preface' in *The Reception of Ossian in Europe* (London : Thoemmes Continuum : 2004) p.viii

⁶⁵ Burns, *The Complete Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, p.110-111

⁶⁶ Stewart, Terry, 'The Highland Clearances' in *Historic UK: The History and Heritage Accommodation Guide* [accessed: 08/03/2021] <<https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofScotland/The-Highland-Clearances/>>

⁶⁷ Richards, Eric, *A History of the Highland Clearances: Agrarian Transformation and the Evictions 1746-1886* (Abingdon : Routledge : 2020)

1986 – ‘the Twa Dogs’, ‘The Brigs o’ Ayr’ and the epistles – were grounded in his sharp awareness of a changing community’.⁶⁸

Robert Burns penned in 1787 that Robert Fergusson was his ‘elder brother in misfortune, / By far my elder brother in the muses’ – not only was this a lyrical ode to the departed poet who inspired his work in innumerable ways, but a verse detailing how the poets’ lives seemed to walk down eerily parallel paths.⁶⁹ Similarly to Fergusson, Burns was a man who found himself educated in many ways beyond his immediate wants – for a man who would claim the moniker of the ‘ploughman’s poet’, he was far from a ‘heavenly-taught’ artist. As is elaborated in ‘Studies in Scottish Literature’; ‘both Burns and Fergusson faced the dilemma in their creative lives of having to choose between English and Scottish poetic models. Both were keenly aware of the neoclassical tradition – Fergusson through his education in St. Andrews, Burns through his intense self-education. Similarly to Fergusson, Burns was aware of the Anglicized Education system in Scotland – albeit less so than Fergusson, who had studied at university first-hand – and as such, it’s difficult not to see Burns’ acknowledgement and, purposeful rejection of the ‘Enlightened’ teachings. As is reiterated in ‘Scotland’s Books: A History of Scottish Literature’; ‘Yet no sooner had these Scottish professors, who were anxious for their ambitious students to write ‘proper English’, pronounced distinctively Scots language virtually extinct than Robert Burns (an educated man with little patience for college classes) established himself as the greatest poet ever to use the Scots tongue in literature’.⁷⁰

Also similarly to Fergusson, Burns found himself living on the linguistic fault line of 18th century Scotland, where he was surrounded by language – at varying levels of usage – as is detailed in ‘Scottish Literature and Postcolonial Literature: Comparative Texts and Critical Perspectives’; ‘Robert Burns was born into a Scotland whose active languages had once included Gaelic, Latin, Scots and English’.⁷¹ This melting pot of language boiled down to a relatively binary choice – to travel the road of least resistance and embrace ‘Enlightenment’ use of English, or protest the diminishment of Scots and embrace it and all its forms. However, just like his ‘brother in the muses’, Burns chose a third option - to accept English but to also bolster his Scots use, and not to limit himself within the boundaries of one or the other. This is made all the easier as, as we found with Fergusson, ‘by the eighteenth century, writers appear to have found a workable, at times brilliant, fusion of the two’ and as Billy Kay in ‘Scots: The Mither Tongue’ recounts; ‘the best poetry of Ramsay, Fergusson and Burns is the result’.⁷²

⁶⁸ Harvie, Christopher, ‘Review: Burns the Radical’ in *Scottish Affairs* Vol.45 (Autumn 2003) p.158

⁶⁹ Burns, Robert, ‘Lines Under The Portrait of Fergusson’, *The Complete Poems and Songs of Robert Burns* (Glasgow ; Waverly : 2020), p.197

⁷⁰ Crawford, *Scotland’s Books: A History of Scottish Literature*

⁷¹ Davis, Leith, Kristen Mahlis, ‘A Conceptual Alliance’: ‘Interculturation’ in Robert Burns and Kamau Braithwaite’, *Scottish Literature and Postcolonial Literature: Comparative Texts and Critical Perspectives* (Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press : 2011), p.16

⁷² Kay, Billy, *Scots: The Mither Tongue* (Edinburgh : Mainstream : 2006), p.89

In another stroke of analogous literary vision, Burns too found himself captivated by the orality of the Scots language, as he ‘insistently recalled the spoken word’ within his work.⁷³ Burns did this by incorporating hallmarks of oral literature – most prominently the inclusion of a simple, memorable rhyme scheme; that being, the couplet. Proclaimed by Donald Wesling in ‘The Chances of Rhyme: Device and Modernity’ to be; ‘the most memorable rhyme form, because of its maximal closure and its more regular arrangement of words as units of unequal length’, this reinforces the orality of Scots as oral literature is originally meant to be learned and repeated, and as such would most likely use simple rhyme to make that task immensely more manageable.⁷⁴ Similarly to Fergusson, this scheme can be seen throughout the poem, however I believe it is most elegantly implemented in Caesar’s chastising of the upper-class’s frivolous comings and goings, as he chides that they spend their time ‘at operas and plays parading, / Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading: / Or maybe in a frolic daft, / To Hague or Calais takes a waft’.⁷⁵ Burns’ adoration for the Scots oral tradition comes in two parts; first, the little formal education that he received which bolstered both it and English, and second, the Scots society which he grew up around – a community of his family, his local parish, and the work of Scots writers is reinforced by Davis as he states that; ‘Growing up, his creative energies were fed by Scots oral and song culture and formal schooling in Standard English. While his mother taught him songs and psalms in Scots, he was also deeply versed in English poetry and culture’.⁷⁶ However, Burns also found within himself a unique role within the diminishing oral tradition of the Scots language – that of a ‘collector of songs, acting as a cultural broker between the oral folk-culture and the cultivated reading public of Edinburgh’.⁷⁷

As we’ve clarified, Burns was a man well-versed in both English and Scottish literary traditions, and also far more well-educated than he is known to be; or, in fact, wished to be perceived as. As Scotland’s proclaimed national bard, he incorporated the persona of the ‘ploughman’s poet’ to better suit the types of tales he wished to tell – and to better fit the politics of a Scots-writing poet of the time. This bardic identity is reinforced by his writing of eclogues, such as *The Twa Dogs*, which begins – as many eclogues do – with the two characters who are to be the dialoguing pair being detailed. As such, we find Burns beginning his poem’s first stanza with a description of the landscape and the entrance of the titular ‘Twa Dogs’; ‘Twa dogs, that were na thrang at hame, / Foregather’d ance upon a time’ which then leads into them proclaiming what they have decreed to converse about; ‘An’ there began a lang digression / About the ‘lords o’ the creation’.⁷⁸ Burns finds himself as the quintessential bardic

⁷³ Stafford, Fiona, ‘Lice, Mice, Bumclocks, Grubs: The Challenge of Regional Language and the Legacy of Robert Burns’, *International Journal of Scottish Literature*, Issue 06 (Spring/Summer 2010), p.03

⁷⁴ Wesling, Donald, *The Chances of Rhyme: Device and Modernity* (London : University of California Press : 1980), p.77

⁷⁵ Burns, *The Complete Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, p.111

⁷⁶ Davis, *Scottish Literature and Postcolonial Literature: Comparative Texts and Critical Perspectives*, p.16

⁷⁷ Crawford, Robert, *Devolving English Literature* (Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press : 2000), p.107

⁷⁸ Burns, *The Complete Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, p.108

composer of Scots literature of the time as he situated himself – due to cultural and political antagonisms with the 1707 Union – as squarely as he could conversely from the Anglicized literati; ‘there was a place within eighteenth-century poetics for the wild, bardic, and ‘natural’ – all that was opposite to the sort of composition taught by the teachers of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres. As ‘the Scotch Bard’, Burns managed to position himself in that space’.⁷⁹

Burns positions his dialoguing pair as representatives for opposite sides of the landowner-crofter hierarchy, and entice them to converse with one another over the contentions of the system. We find Caesar, a dog ‘o’ high degree’ querying; ‘I’ve aften wonder’d, honest Luath, / What sort o’ life poor dogs like you have’⁸⁰ He is not simply content in his luxury however, for he contends the cruelty and negligence of his gentry masters, proclaiming that; ‘Lord man, our gentry care as little / For delvers, ditchers, an’ sic cattle; / Thay gang as saucy by poor folk, / As I wad by a stinkin’ brock’.⁸¹ Luath has his own role; to, amongst other things, act as the Bard himself – to not only protest the conditions of the peasantry, but to portray the rural communities of Lowland Scotland in a pastoral light – in keeping with the eclogue form; ‘But how it come, I never kent yet, / They’re mostly wonderfu’ contented; / An’ buirdly chieles, an’ clever hizzies, / Are bred in sic a way as this’.⁸²

That is not to say, however, that he solely incorporated an amalgamized ‘Scottish’ conflation of Scots – his own dialectical biases were still prevalent. As an Ayrshire poet, his local vernacular did bleed through, however it was met with the other strands of Scots and English to form his bardic voice. Michael Morris, in his article for the ‘Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies’ reiterated this, stating that Burns had an ‘enlarged linguistic register open to him as a poet of Ayrshire rural idiom and Scots literary heritage, as well as being a master of English poetic diction’.⁸³ Burns’ Ayrshire roots are apparent from the very first lines of the poem – as mentioned in the previous section, regarding the depiction of pre-colonial Scotland – as he calls by name, the district of ‘King’s Kyle’ in Ayrshire; ‘Twas in that place o’ Scotland’s isle, / That bears the name o’ Auld King Coil’.⁸⁴

Burns’ use of Scots vernacular in *The Twa Dogs* is used to great effect to emphasise the difference between land-owner and tenant, rich and poor. Caesar displays the gentry’s disgusting habits by detailing how they act as they eat; ‘An’ tho the gentry first are stechin, / Yet ev’n the ha’ folk fill their pechan’.⁸⁵ Burns’ use of ‘stechin’ to describe the gentry eating, that is, ‘to stuff or cram (oneself or

Burns, *The Complete Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, p.108

⁷⁹ Crawford, *Devolving English Literature*, p.99

⁸⁰ Burns, *The Complete Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, p.108

Burns, *The Complete Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, p.109

⁸¹ Burns, *The Complete Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, p.109

⁸² Burns, *The Complete Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, p.109

⁸³ Morris, Michael, ‘Robert Burns: Recovering Scotland’s memory of the Black Atlantic’, *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 37(3) (2014), p.357

⁸⁴ Burns, *The Complete Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, p.108

⁸⁵ Burns, *The Complete Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, p.109

one's stomach) with food', however it also means; 'to create a strong unpleasant stifling atmosphere (in a place), fill with bad air or fumes, stink'.⁸⁶ His use of 'stechin' infers that the Anglicized gentry are wasteful, gluttonous, and nauseatingly repulsive.

Caesar continues discussing the actions of the land-owners as he describes the procedure in which a peasant is unable to pay his dues and the land-owner is not only depicted as furious, but the peasant is depicted as having to bear a great ordeal of verbal abuse. Caesar speaks of; 'Poor tenant bodies, scant o' cash, / How they maun thole a factor's snash'.⁸⁷ Burns' use of 'thole' to describe the rural peasant's ordeal, that is, 'to have to bear pain or grief; to be afflicted with (some evil)' infers that; not only the peasants are bearing a great deal of suffering from the ordeal, but that the land-owners themselves are actually inflicting a genuine evil upon them.⁸⁸ This is compounded by his use of 'snash' to describe the land-owner's tirade, that is, 'to insult, speak impertinently to, sneer at', inferring that his words are not simply upsetting, but disrespectful and mocking towards the peasant – enforcing that abusive, Anglicized hierarchy.⁸⁹

Burns' use of Scots vernacular to heighten already scathing works against the Anglicized gentry of eighteenth-century Scotland with deeper meaning is emblematic of the 'vernacular revival' as it slights the Anglicized powers-at-be with the sharpness that only a native vernacular can provide. As Michaela Koletnik and Natalia Kaloh Vid write for 'Slavia Centralis'; 'there are not many poets in the world who succeeded in the careful blending of two linguistic traditions, as did Burns, using vernacular Scottish and poetic Standard English as the vehicle for poetic expression, thereby broadening the significance of the Scottish dialect.'⁹⁰

As we've just discussed, Burns didn't help establish the 'vernacular revival' as a result of haphazard introductions of Scots back into popular poetry – he did so with purpose, and that purpose being the active and indirect protestation of the pervasive spread of English into Scottish literature following the 1707 Union. Koletnik and Kaloh Vid reinforce this point by stating that 'the use of vernacular Scottish, or Scots, in Burns' poetry carries important, though implicit, information'.⁹¹ As aforementioned, Burns found great popularity and success around Europe, 'despite' his use of the 'inferior', 'dialect' of Scots – this led to many speculating why he chose to write in the language; as he was obviously talented, it seemed perplexing to the Anglicized 'Enlightenment literati' that the choice of language was made in favour of the vernacular. As is iterated in the 'International Journal of Scottish Literature'; 'Burns's origins 'in the lower ranks of life' were irrelevant, since his genius needed no special pleading. Why,

⁸⁶ 'Stechin', *Scottish Language Dictionaries: Concise Scots Dictionary*, p.683

⁸⁷ Burns, *The Complete Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, p.110

⁸⁸ 'Thole', *Scottish Language Dictionaries: Concise Scots Dictionary*, p.737

⁸⁹ 'Snash', *Scottish Language Dictionaries: Concise Scots Dictionary*, p.650

⁹⁰ Koletnik, Michaela, Natalia Kaloh Vid, 'Dialect in poetic translations: The case of Robert Burns' poetry in Russia and in Slovenia', *Slavia Centralis* 13(1) (2020), p.08

⁹¹ Koletnik, *Slavia Centralis*, p.08

then, did he persist in using the language of the farmyard? ‘Barbarism’ was only one stage above ‘savagery’, according to eighteenth-century assumptions about the advance of civilization, so Burns, whose refined sensibility was abundantly apparent in his work, should be striving for correct English compositions?’⁹² Burns’ choice to write in Scots – as we are now well aware – was a multi-faceted choice. Regardless, his lexicon wasn’t wholly Scots, Burns didn’t require it to write – his knowledge of English was almost equal to that of Scots. This is important as it proves that Burns also wrote in Scots for political purposes - that, because ‘Burns is a sophisticated writer, writing in Scots is always a poetic option for him, not an educational necessity’.⁹³ In a humorous excerpt from ‘Scottish and Irish Romanticism’, Murray Pittock notes that the fact ‘that a poet of Burns’s ability might actually *choose* to write in Scots for particular literary purposes seems to have occurred to no one’.⁹⁴ Despite pressure from many of his contemporaries, and many more of his critics, he decided to stay true to his Scots heritage as a matter of principle, but also of politics. As a result, according to Billy Kay, Burns retained the punctuality and rural charisma which would have been greatly diminished otherwise; ‘Fortunately Burns was enough of his own man to ignore the advice of the literary elite to write solely in English; otherwise he would have been just another obscure, stilted versifier [...] instead of one of the world’s genuinely popular yet great poets’.⁹⁵

JAMES HOGG (‘Dusty, or, Watie an’ Geordie’s Review of Politics; an Eclogue’):

While all three men – Fergusson, Burns and Hogg – were no doubt god-fearing men, given the cultural norm of the time, James Hogg can be set aside for the proportionally greater focus the divine receives in his writing. As is bolstered by Doctor Elaine Elizabeth Petrie, she writes of ‘the religion and superstition that dominate his narrative works’.⁹⁶ Nicole Goulet writes; ‘regardless of the actual methods used to apply postcolonial theory, the nature of religion – who defines it, controls it, and constructs it – is viewed as highly politicized, and speaks to unequal power relations not only between the colonizer and the colonized but between the colonized elites and the masses’, as such it should be no argument that religion’s inclusion in the Parthenon of postcolonial literary topics is a justified one.⁹⁷ However, where the confrontation may arise is with regards to its importance to pre-colonial Scottish history. When Hogg’s character of Geordie proclaims; ‘but how can be blythe, while viewin’ / My dear dear country gaun to ruin?’ the passion for his nation can be in no doubt, however these feelings ferment

⁹² Stafford, *International Journal of Scottish Literature*, p.02

⁹³ Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism*, p.145

⁹⁴ Stafford, *International Journal of Scottish Literature*, p.02

⁹⁵ Kay, *Scots: The Mither Tongue*, p.105

⁹⁶ Petrie, Dr. Elaine Elizabeth, *James Hogg: A Study in the Transition from Folk Tradition to Literature* (Stirling : Stirling Online Research Repository : 1981), p.68

⁹⁷ Goulet, Nicole, ‘Postcolonialism and the Study of Religion: Dissecting Orientalism, Nationalism, and Gender Using Postcolonial Theory’ in *Religion Compass*, 05:10 (2011), p.632

– allowing the crux of Hogg’s postcolonial depiction of pre-Union Scotland to appear, as ‘a political discussion ensues, beginning with Geordie’s complaint that the old religion is being neglected’.⁹⁸

Hogg, through Geordie, laments religion’s place in comparison to Scotland of old, when the Church was respected and dedicated to. This is detailed when Geordie decries that ‘religion’s grown a laughing stock, / A butt for fools whereat to mock, / An ugly thing, that anes detectit, / The owner o’t is ay suspectit’.⁹⁹ This feeling, of the ancient, unstoppable might of religion in pre-colonial Scotland being toppled, and not respected in the present-day, colonial nation is most likely due to the Church being resented for the part it played in support of the Union of Parliaments in 1707. In a paraphrasing of Hugh Clark’s 1710 ‘Modest Reply to a Pamphlet, titled: ‘A Letter from a Friend to Mr John M’millan’, Alasdair Raffe comments on how ‘the act ‘involved’ the Church in ‘all the Guilt of that Union’’.¹⁰⁰ Hogg’s lamentation of the spiritual disintegration of the historically powerful Scottish Church, due to the Union, is further bolstered by the testimony of Thomas Boston – a minister in Hogg’s own home parish of Ettrick who ‘began his ministry in Ettrick on the day the union came into force [and] commented that ‘the spirits of the people of the place’ were ‘embittered’ by the union ‘against the ministers of the church’’.¹⁰¹

Hogg mostly used the character of Geordie as a mouthpiece, and if there had to be a ‘protagonist’ of the poem, it would be him – no doubt that is why Hogg’s ‘powers of empathy make Geordie the more sympathetic character of the two’.¹⁰² As such, when Geordie is berated for his criticizing of the current, state of affairs, Watie – his counterpart on the unionist side – lambasts him for; ‘a’ your Cameronian rants, / ‘Bout solemn leagues an’ covenants, / ‘Bout kings an’ laws, and constitutions, / Supremacy an’ persecutions’.¹⁰³ His ‘Cameronian rants’ mark him as representative of ‘the Cameronians, the radical Covenanting minority’, the pre-Union Scottish religious sect whose ‘cultural affinities with the Presbyterians were offset by their opposition to the Union’.¹⁰⁴ In doing this, Hogg is representing pre-colonial Scotland by focussing on his protagonist’s religious similarities to a group which openly opposed the Union. This anti-Union stance is reinforced by the words of prominent Cameronian James Renwick in 1715 – who clarifies the position of the Cameronians to the Union, by writing that; ‘the

⁹⁸ Hogg, James, ‘Dusty, or, Watie an’ Geordie’s Review of Politics; an Eclogue’ in *Scottish Pastorals, Poems, Songs, Etc. Mostly Written in the Dialect of the South* (Edinburgh : John Taylor : 1801), p.10

⁹⁸ Radcliffe, David Hill, ‘Dusty, or, Watie an’ Geordie’s Review of Politics; an Eclogue’ in *Spenser and the Tradition: English Poetry 1579-1830* (February 2006) [accessed: 08/03/2021]

⁹⁹ Hogg, *Scottish Pastorals, Poems, Songs, Etc. Mostly Written in the Dialect of the South*, p.11

¹⁰⁰ Raffe, Alasdair, *The Culture of Controversy: Religious Arguments in Scotland, 1660-1714* (Suffolk : Boydell Press : 2012), p.205

¹⁰¹ Raffe, *The Culture of Controversy: Religious Arguments in Scotland, 1660-1714*, p.205

¹⁰² Radcliffe, *Spenser and the Tradition: English Poetry 1579-1830*

¹⁰³ Hogg, *Scottish Pastorals, Poems, Songs, Etc. Mostly Written in the Dialect of the South*, p.12

¹⁰⁴ Kidd, Colin, ‘Conditional Britons: The Scots Covenanting Tradition and the Eighteenth-century British State’ in *The English Historical Review*, 117:474 (November 2002), p.1148

Kidd, *The English Historical Review*, p.1150

late, sinful, Treaty of Union which all good men ought forever to abhor. An Union, which is most directly contrary to our Covenanted union, and destroys all our fundamental laws and liberties; establisheth prelacy in England, and Erastianism in Scotland forever'.¹⁰⁵

With both our previous poets, Fergusson and Burns, we found that they both held at least some form of formal education – starting off with Fergusson, who fully attended St. Andrews University, and moving on to Burns who, while not attending university, did attend forms of secondary education. In our final Scots poet, we come to perhaps the truest form of the ‘peasant poet’ of the three. James Hogg attended no real formal education, and – in the words of William Wallace’s 1903 ‘Introduction’ to his collection of poems – ‘he prided himself on his knowledge of the Scottish language but was not in reality an expert’.¹⁰⁶

As we have found, Fergusson and Burns – in a motion to keep the orality of Scottish literature alive in a burgeoning literary world of Anglicized written poetry – incorporated Scots’ orality into their written work. This movement is noted by Suzanne Gilbert who writes that; ‘the eighteenth century had seen burgeoning interest in the oral tradition’.¹⁰⁷ Hogg – in his ‘self-fashioning as a champion of oral tradition’ – shoulders this motion and brings it into the nineteenth century, while incorporating aspects of his own Borders oral history.¹⁰⁸ This ‘passing of the torch’ is commented on in ‘Orality and Public Poetry’, as it’s noted that ‘more rebellious and revolutionary spirits like Burns aimed to keep alive the subversive force of Scottish identity, conducted through representations of orality; and James Hogg [...] allied himself with popular resistance channelled through popular song’.¹⁰⁹

Hogg’s oral literary education began from childhood, as his Scots Borders community fostered such oral tradition. From his parents, to his religious community and his local surroundings, Hogg found oral literature to be the standard - which, in conjunction with his lack of formal education – perhaps explains the statement that he was ‘not in reality an expert’ of written Scots. Valentina Bold, writing in ‘James Hogg: A Bard of Nature’s Making’ reinforces this, stating that ‘coming from a family of multi-talented tradition bearers Hogg learnt oral forms of creativity from an early age’.¹¹⁰ As a result, it should come

¹⁰⁵ Renwick, James, *An Informatory Vindication of a Poor, Wasted, Misrepresented, Remnant: Of the Suffering, Anti-popish, Anti-prelatick, Anti-erastian, Anti-sectarian, True Presbyterian Church of Christ in Scotland United Together in a General Correspondence. By Way of Reply to Various Accusations, in Letters, Informations, and Conferences, Given Forth Against Them* (1715), p.12

¹⁰⁶ Wallace, William, ‘Introduction’, *The Poems of James Hogg, The Ettrick Shepherd* (London : Isbister and Company : 1903), p.08

¹⁰⁷ Gilbert, Suzanne, ‘James Hogg and the Authority of Tradition’, *James Hogg and the Literary Marketplace: Scottish Romanticism and the Working-Class Author*, Ed. Sharon Alker, Holly Faith Nelson (Farnham : Ashgate : 2009), p.94

¹⁰⁸ Gilbert, *James Hogg and the Literary Marketplace: Scottish Romanticism and the Working-Class Author*, p.105

¹⁰⁹ Davis, Leith, Maureen N. McLane, ‘Orality and Public Poetry’, *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature, Volume Two: Enlightenment, Britain and Empire (1707-1918)*, Ed. Brown, Ian, Susan Manning (Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press : 2007), p.126

¹¹⁰ Bold, Valentina, *James Hogg: A Bard of Nature’s Making* (Bern : Peter Lang : 2007), p.63

as no surprise that, of all literary forms, ‘Hogg’s earliest compositions were songs’ – not poems or prose.¹¹¹ However, we can see Hogg’s focus on orality as he incorporates the same coupled rhyme scheme as Burns in his poem *Dusty, or, Watie an’ Geordie’s Review of Politics; An Eclogue* – used throughout, and implemented by Geordie, who bewails; ‘Thou wert my friend, poor ‘onest DUSTY, / A faithful servant, true and trusty; / My fate an’ me thou follow’d after, / Thro’ frost an’ snaw, thro’ fire and water’.¹¹²

Hogg’s oral influence finds itself not only integrating into the rhyme he uses, but – alongside the precedent set by Fergusson and Burns – the Scots bardic tradition. Without the formal education of Fergusson and Burns, Hogg lets this oral tradition influence him greatly in all his writing – Gilbert maintains this point, stating that ‘Hogg became aware that he could model his own writing on what he knew best: the rich store of ballads, songs, and stories of Ettrick and Yarrow’.¹¹³ His incorporation of the bardic voice was also an act of protest against the continuing tide of Anglicized ‘Enlightenment’ thinking which had only gained momentum as the century had passed. Just as Burns presented himself as a ‘peasant poet’ of the West Coast, in Ayrshire, Hogg sought to become his living parallel in the Scottish Borders. The ‘Edinburgh Companion to James Hogg’ bolsters this point further, detailing ‘Hogg’s self-presentation as a ‘mountain bard’, assuming that prophetic voice in the title of his book, marks a crucial distinction from Scott’s ‘minstrelsy’ [...] Hogg’s role is as a modern bard of his native region, whose intimate personal knowledge of oral tradition qualifies him to continue the ballad tradition of which Scott is merely a collector’.¹¹⁴ As aforementioned, this was in great part in response to Burns’ own ‘Ploughman’s Poet’ persona, and Hogg’s ‘comparison with the recent manifestations of bardic poetry in the work of Robert Burns’ is clear.¹¹⁵ As with the previous pair of eclogues we have seen thus far, which both follow the form of eclogues-of-old, Hogg’s ‘Eclogue’ begins with our discourse between ‘Watie an’ Geordie’ where; ‘Upon a brae baith dry and clean, / Twae ‘onest lads sat down to lean, / And haud the following conversation / About the’ affairs o’ their ain nation’.¹¹⁶ Their conversation – once again – begins with a lamentation of the state of a particular political issue; ‘But how can I be blythe, while viewin’ / My dear dear country gaun to ruin?’¹¹⁷ In this case, it regards, among other things, the works of ‘William Pitt the Younger [who] was a reforming prime minister [and]

¹¹¹ Bold, Valentina, Suzanne Gilbert, ‘Hogg, Ettrick, and Oral Tradition’ *The Edinburgh Companion to James Hogg*, Ed. Duncan, Ian, Douglas S. Mack (Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press : 2012), p.12

¹¹² Hogg, *Scottish Pastorals, Poems, Songs, Etc. Mostly Written in the Dialect of the South*, p.18

¹¹³ Gilbert, *James Hogg and the Literary Marketplace: Scottish Romanticism and the Working-Class Author*, p.94

¹¹⁴ Bold, *The Edinburgh Companion to James Hogg*, p.14

¹¹⁵ Bold, *The Edinburgh Companion to James Hogg*, p.14

¹¹⁶ Hogg, *Scottish Pastorals, Poems, Songs, Etc. Mostly Written in the Dialect of the South*, p.09

¹¹⁷ Hogg, *Scottish Pastorals, Poems, Songs, Etc. Mostly Written in the Dialect of the South*, p.10

who was determined to do what he could to rationalise the British system of taxation.’¹¹⁸ This is seen in its ramifications for Geordie, who cannot afford to keep his faithful dog Dusty due to the rise in taxes; ‘Our dogs – but now, for want o’ patience, / How I cou’d curse the vile taxations - / Thou wert my friend, poor ‘onest DUSTY, / A faithful servant, true and trusty’ [...] ‘That plaguy PITT! Cude I yoke wi’ him, / The loss o’ thee I might forgie him’.¹¹⁹

Compounds James Hogg exists in many ways as the next evolution of Scots poetry along the line from Allan Ramsay, Robert Fergusson, and Robert Burns. However, his contribution is less as a benefactor to the ‘vernacular revival’, than as one of the first notable recipients of its fruits of labour. This is elaborated on by Nigel Leask in the ‘Cambridge Companion to Scottish Literature’, stating that; ‘developing the eighteenth-century tradition of Scots verse associated with Allan Ramsay and especially Robert Fergusson, Burns crafted the first modern vernacular style in British poetry, providing a resource for subsequent verse written in non-standard English, especially by ‘peasant poets’ like James Hogg’.¹²⁰ That is not to say, however, that Hogg had nothing to contribute towards the Scots vernacular landscape of the nineteenth-century. Suzanne Gilbert writes of his contribution by speaking of ‘Hogg’s [own] recognition of what he could bring to the literary table, thanks to his roots in the traditional oral culture of his native Ettrick’.¹²¹

Hogg, through Geordie, exclaims to Watie that; ‘if they raise the taxes higher, / They’ll set alunt that smoostin’ fire, / Whilk ilka session helps to beet, / An’, when it burns, they’ll get a heat’.¹²² Hogg’s use of ‘alunt’, to describe the figurative igniting of passions towards Westminster, that is; ‘alight, on fire’, is significant as it’s an instance of vernacular particular to the Borders alongside its inference of passions being sparked if more action by Westminster is taken.¹²³ His use of ‘smoostin’’, to describe the nature of the Westminster-headed passion, that is; ‘(a smell of) thick, choking, sulphurous smoke’, is significant as it is also an instance of Borders vernacular, but also due to its inference that the fire – once ablaze, will be of such ferocity due to its accrument of anger.¹²⁴

Geordie once again attacks the Union, but this time more in principle than in previous instances. He proclaims that; ‘Faith, lose they, win they, I’m indiff’rent; / For come they, bide they, we’ve a liferent / O’ slavery o’ the hardest kind’.¹²⁵ Hogg’s use of ‘liferent’, to describe Scotland’s relationship with

¹¹⁸ ‘War and the Coming of Income Tax’, *United Kingdom Parliament Website* [accessed: 04/04/2021] <<https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/private-lives/taxation/overview/incometax/>>

¹¹⁹ Hogg, *Scottish Pastorals, Poems, Songs, Etc. Mostly Written in the Dialect of the South*, pp.17-18

¹²⁰ Leask, *Cambridge Companion to Scottish Literature*, p.71

¹²¹ Gilbert, *James Hogg and the Literary Marketplace: Scottish Romanticism and the Working-Class Author*, p.94

¹²² Hogg, *Scottish Pastorals, Poems, Songs, Etc. Mostly Written in the Dialect of the South*, p.16

¹²³ ‘Alunt’, *Scottish Language Dictionaries: Concise Scots Dictionary*, p.14

¹²⁴ ‘Smuist’, *Scottish Language Dictionaries: Concise Scots Dictionary*, p.648

¹²⁵ Hogg, *Scottish Pastorals, Poems, Songs, Etc. Mostly Written in the Dialect of the South*, p.15

England due to the 1707 Union, that is; the right under Scots law to ‘receive the revenue of a property till death without the right to dispose of the capital’ is significant not only because Scots law was – and remains – a key difference between England and Wales, who both have their own legal systems, but also as it infers that Scotland as a nation can occupy its own land, yet will never have any say over it – as that lies with England.¹²⁶

This use of vernacular reinforces Hogg’s protest at the Anglicization of Scots literature, but also the overarching Union of 1707 while seeking to ‘give voice to the concerns and insights of people normally marginalized by mainstream society [...] [a] tradition grounded in the old oral ballads, and [...] in the writings of Alan Ramsay, Robert Fergusson, Robert Burns and James Hogg’.¹²⁷

As a self-proclaimed ‘natural successor’ to Burns, alongside the fact that – as aforementioned – the pressure of the ‘Enlightenment’ literati to conform Scottish literature to the Anglicized amalgam had only increased its fervour, it should come as no surprise that Hogg continued to protest as both Fergusson and Burns did.¹²⁸ Meiko O’Halloran, in her work ‘James Hogg and British Romanticism: A Kaleidoscopic Art’, compounds this pressure alongside pre-existent protest over the Union to begin with, stating that ‘Hogg’s crafting of his poetic identity responded to the continuing uncertainty over Scotland’s identity as part of a newly united Britain following the Act of Union of 1707’.¹²⁹ This overtly political use of Scots – the fact that writing in Scots vernacular behaves as an act of protest – is another way in which Hogg is the next step along the literary timeline from Fergusson and Burns. The specific poems can be compared in parallel, as Valentina Bold states; ‘he indirectly attacked the status quo in ‘Scottish Pastorals’ (1801). ‘Dusty, or Watie an’ Geordie’s Review of Politics’ is a debate recalling Burns’ ‘Twa Dogs’’.¹³⁰

In response to a letter from Walter Scott – a prominent Scottish author of the ‘Enlightenment’ – James Hogg dons his ‘Ettrick Shepherd’ bardic persona once again and responds in defence of Scots poetry’s rurality and vernacular; ‘Ye can never suppose that I belong to your school of chivalry. Ye are the king o’ that school, but I’m king o’ the mountain and fairy school, which is far higher ane nor yours’.¹³¹ Such a response is expected from Hogg, who passionately defended the orality of his native Borders

¹²⁶ ‘Liferent’, *Scottish Language Dictionaries: Concise Scots Dictionary*, p.377

¹²⁷ Alker, Sharon, Holly Faith Nelson, ‘Hogg and Working-class Writing’, *The Edinburgh Companion to James Hogg*, Ed. Duncan, Ian, Douglas S. Mack (Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press : 2012), p.55

¹²⁸ Bold, *James Hogg: A Bard of Nature’s Making*, p.80

¹²⁹ O’Halloran, Meiko, *James Hogg and British Romanticism: A Kaleidoscopic Art* (Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan : 2016), p.65

¹³⁰ Bold, Valentina, ‘‘Nature’s Making’: James Hogg and the Autodidactic Tradition in Scottish Poetry’, *Enlighten: Theses: University of Glasgow*, (1997) [accessed: 25/03/2021] <<http://theses.gla.ac.uk/2759/>>

¹³¹ Wallace, *The Poems of James Hogg, The Ettrick Shepherd*, p.08

and all of his writing ‘was representative of the culture in which he was raised, and which he sought to protect’.¹³²

¹³² Bold, *The Edinburgh Companion to James Hogg*, p.14

CONCLUSION:

As Marshall Walker, notes in ‘Scottish Literature Since 1707’, the language of Scots is still in existence – and semi-regular use – well within the twenty-first-century; ‘Standard English could not suppress spoken Scots, as the Scottish Language Resource Centre is proud to point out’; ‘In spite o twa hunner year o Standart English bein learnt in the schules the length an breadth o Scotland – aw ye need tae dae is tae keep yer lugs cockit an ye’ll hear that Scots is still aboot, whither yer argyin in Ayr or Aiberdeenshire, bidin in Buckie or Biggar, crackin in Castlemilk or Crieff or daunderin roon Dumbarton or Dundee’.¹³³ So, although I’m in no doubt that we have these three poets – along with so many others along the way – to thank for this fact, I’m sure that if they exist as ‘ghaists’ themselves, that they can haunt happily with the knowledge that their ‘mither tongue’, which they struggled to resuscitate from the brink of death, has remained and flourished in the centuries since.

And as we, in the realm of the living, can look upon their work through lenses such as the ‘Postcolonial’, we find that we can glean not only their own personal insights, but insights into nationhood itself - of Scotland’s constantly evolving place within the United Kingdom and within Europe. Now, at the end of this dissertation, I hope I have been able to at least throw new light onto some poets whose nationalism has been at the forefront of their identity from the very beginning.

As we find, all three poets wrote their poems in the Scots vernacular; and, as such, inherently rebelled against the established, Anglicized literary establishment, they all found themselves in a constant struggle between the two languages; which Fergusson and Burns conceded by writing in a delicate fusion of the two and Hogg writes in his *Borders Scots*, while we are aware that – through his other writings – he was very capable in the arena of English literature.

While Scots is an inherently oral language, all three poets were able to cohesively represent this aspect in their written poems. The form of rhyme in all three poems, alongside their use of the vernacular, create the phantom of song throughout their work – and, as English literature focussed on the written word, and Scots was still preoccupied with the oral, the continuation of this tradition is another act of protest.

As invigorators – and inheritors – of the Scottish ‘vernacular revival’, all three poets used their native language to rebel against the Anglicization and standardization of the Scottish literary landscape. However, even though all three poets were cohesive in their use of Scots vernacular they also reinforced the locality of their own Scots dialects – Fergusson from Edinburgh – alongside his proficiency in his use of North-East Scots - Burns from Ayrshire, and Hogg from the Borders.

¹³³ Walker, *Scottish Literature Since 1707*, p.79

Fergusson's depiction of pre-Union Scotland, through his use of the natural world, is achieved through his reminiscence of an ancient Scottish independence; as the proud nation of Caledonia. This also results from his depiction of Scotland's natural landscape reflecting negatively from the Union. Burns also achieves his depiction of a pre-Union Scotland through his own use of Scottish history - he references ancient Scotland, exploring the time of King Coilus of the Britons, and referring to the work of Ossian; Scotland's epic poet. Hogg also details pre-Union Scotland in his poetry as he delves into the dissolution of the ancient, unstoppable might of religion, and of the Church being resented in post-Union Scotland due to its influence in the Union.

Fergusson represents his own dismissal of the Anglicized Scottish educational system, not through his rejection of it, but through his use of his formal education to bolster his native Scots work – reclaiming some form of self-sufficiency. While Burns didn't benefit from the same university level of formal education as Fergusson, he took what formal education he did benefit from and established himself as an anti-intellectual Scots bard – and proceeded to become all the more popular for it. Hogg, in contrast found himself being brought up with no real formal education past that of the Church – he, in this regard, found himself epitomizing the 'ploughman's poet' of Burn's persona; and, ergo, running directly against the Anglicized education of his contemporaries.

REFLECTIONS FOR FURTHER EXPANSION:

Overall, we see that all three poets' work are cogent examples of the application of Postcolonial literary theory within the framework of their poems, however that is not to say that all fit in the bounds of the postcolonial framework as each other. While the poems of Fergusson and Burns do work well in reflecting changes in sentiment from the time of the Union onwards, there are elements of Burns' work – for example, his blending of English and Scots – that, while not being as overtly postcolonial does raise some very interesting questions regarding the national language. However, if there are some elements which I felt didn't fit as snugly as would be hoped, they would be those surrounding the work of James Hogg. While the idea of his inclusion was a sound one at first – being that his work is reflective of the 'long eighteenth century', and that he represents native Scots literature attempting to find a foothold in its – seemingly – dying breaths. While we know that Scottish literature would have a revival in the late twentieth and the twenty-first centuries, this was the apparent death-knell of Scots literature; however, James Hogg's work – as he was a tentative nationalist in many stages of his life – doesn't work as cohesively towards that 'Postcolonial' outcome as that of Fergusson and Burns.

However, as with all areas of academia, this dissertation is limited and, if a situation were to arise where the dissertation topic could be broached again there are many areas where it could be expanded. In my research of the dissertation topic, I found that the presence of Allan Ramsay was inescapable and in broadening the dissertation parameters I should think that either the work of Hogg could be replaced by

Ramsay to make for a more concise historical narrative, or for Ramsay's work to be introduced before Fergusson to add to the literary timeline.

To develop this point further, I also believe that the topic – if taken beyond this dissertation and broadened out – could balloon either side; that being in the past and closer to the present-day, to show the history and development of the ideas of Scottish literature. In the original drafting of this dissertation, in fact, a section devoted to the work of the Makars – of which Allan Ramsay was one – was planned, yet unfortunately scrapped due to unforeseen circumstances; in a revision of this dissertation, I would have liked to have pursued this further. I should also have been intrigued to broaden the dissertation to move past the works of James Hogg, and to reach further into the 19th century and beyond. Given that Scottish literature has adapted with the political landscape of the nation, I would be greatly interested to see how literature – and the Postcolonial literary theory – has reacted to political events such as the downfall of the British Empire, Scottish Devolution in 1999, and the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum.

Even if a second revision of the dissertation was only to focus on the pre-existing poets of Fergusson, Burns and Hogg, I also feel that there are elements which could be expanded upon in this regard. While the poems chosen by myself from these three Scots were chosen for their apparent cohesion, both with the Postcolonial literary theory and with each other, I feel that these poems could also be supplemented by the introduction of others – to reinforce particular areas of weakness or lack of representation. In particular, I feel that research into this subject could be broadened with the inclusion of poems such as 'Auld Reekie' by Fergusson, 'A Parcel of Rogues in a Nation' by Burns, and 'Caledonia' by Hogg.

(10,984 WORDS)

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