**THE UNQUIET GRAVE – TEXTUAL ANALYSIS**

The object of the present work is to discuss and analyse the ballad The Unquiet Grave.

As far as the title is concerned the reader cannot figure out the topic of the ballad, it could be a tragic love story, the supernatural or conflicts on the border.

Anyway the noun “grave”, connoted by the adjective “unquiet”, conveys a dim and anguished atmosphere.

The following analysis is meant to satisfy the reader’s curiosity.

In order to reach the goal a denotative analysis will be first provided, on a second moment connotative choices will be considered to find out how they add to meaning.

Considering the lay out, the text is arranged into seven quatrains, the rhyme scheme, ABAB, immediately highlights the key words of the text because of their repetition and their key position: “love”, which is repeated five times, “grave” and “lips”, which are repeated three times.

As a consequence the reader understands the topic: a tragic love story.

The first stanza introduces a direct speech and the speaking voice makes the tragic nature clear from the very beginning. Indeed the speaking voice explains that his, only true-love has died.

The direct speech goes on in the second quatrain, the speaking voice provides a good representation of his grieve and sorrow with the alliteration of sound “m”, “much” “my” “man may” “twelvemonth”, which conveys the idea of mourning and whining.

The third stanza introduces the theme of the supernatural, indeed the dead people cannot actually speak.

The speaking voice tells the reader the reason the dead lady is talking with the technique of the direct speech: she’s complaining about the loud sobs that wouldn’t let her sleep.

In the fourth stanza the lover speaks again, telling her that he craves one last kiss. The kenning “clay-cold” used to connote “lips”, which is repeated three times along the fourth and fifth stanzas, makes clear and impossible for the reader to forget that the lady is dead. Thus, the reader understand that is a crucial point in the narration.

In the sixth stanza the lover recalls some sweet memories with colourful images, “yonder garden green”, which soon become nostalgic and melancholic. Indeed the last two lines, “The finest flower that e’re was seen is withered to a stalk” set the atmosphere for the last stanza.

In the last quatrain the speaking voice juxtaposes their lives to dry flowers, “The stalk is withered dry, my love, so will our hearts decay”, that will inevitably come to an end.

Hence, inviting both the reader and the lady to reflect about time’s flow and human finitude, he conveys the message not to waste time.