



## THE THEME OF MOTHERLAND IN ROBERT BURN'S POETRY

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*Maratova Farangiz Xasan qizi*

*Chirchiq Davlat Pedagogika Universiteti*

*Turizm fakulteti Xorijiy til va adabiyoti (ingliz tili)*

*yo'nalishi 2-bosqich talabasi*

*Ilmiy rahbar: Khamitov Eldorbek Erkin o'g'li*

*E-mail: xamitov.e@cspi.uz*

*Chirchiq Davlat Pedagogika Universiteti o'qituvchisi*

### ABSTRACT

Robert Burns, the celebrated Scottish poet, often delved into the concept of motherland in his works, showcasing a deep sense of attachment, nostalgia, and reverence towards his native Scotland. This article examines Burns's portrayal of the motherland through a close analysis of select poems, including "Auld Lang Syne," "A Man's a Man for A' That," and "To a Mouse." By exploring the themes of patriotism, identity, and belonging, this study sheds light on Burns's profound connection to Scotland and the enduring impact of his poetry on the national consciousness. Through intricate language and vivid imagery, Burns captures the essence of the Scottish landscape, culture, and people, offering readers a poignant reflection on the significance of one's homeland.

**Key words:** Robert Burns, Scotland's historical feature, Pre-Romanticism, Natural features.

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate Robert Burns' use of nature as a subject in his poetry. It focuses on the part that nature plays and the natural aspects in the poetry, the message that these elements convey, and the location of nature in the poems from the perspective of literary elements. I chose the area of poetry and poetical work analysis mostly because I find it to be both extremely tough and also enriching. I've always found the world of poetry to be confusing, if not unapproachable. However, after reading some of Robert Burns' poems, I realized that this is not always the case. In the process of forming Scotland's external image and contributing to the formation of its national identity, Robert Burns deserves some recognition for his use of natural poetry. In addition, I want to respond to the query of what ideas and messages Burns' organic poetry conveys. This article's three short



parts comprise its introductory theoretical section. The first part focuses on the historical and ecological features of Scotland that have shaped the identity of the country as a whole. The part aims to give the reader a neutral picture of Scotland, which serves as the setting for the poetry and creates an atmosphere reminiscent of the eighteenth century that is likely to be reflected in the poems that are examined. The second part provides an overview of Robert Burns' life and character as well as an explanation of his place in both eighteenth-century and contemporary culture. The literary movement that Robert Burns invented, pre-romanticism, is introduced in the third chapter in order to portray the general tone of Burns' writing and his approach to poetry. To further highlight the variability of natural poetry and define the subject under analysis, a description and fundamental typology of natural poetry are also given.

### **The Scottish Identity: Scotland's Historical and Natural Features.**

“Culture brings people to live, work, and do business, and shapes [Scotland's] reputation as a warm, welcoming, open, progressive nation,” said Nicola Sturgeon, the former First Minister of Scotland (2014–23). (Gov. of Scotland, 2022: 4) The intricate and ongoing relationships between the country's politics, culture, and identity are reflected in the Scottish Government's self-aware articulation of its support for culture, creativity, and its many heritages.

Robert Burns' poem, *The Jolly Beggars: John Highlandman*, demonstrates his empathy towards the Highlanders. "Robert Burns and 18th Century" finds that Burns' interpretation of John Highlandman's offense was to wear a highland garb and be loyal to his clan. The poem alludes to a correctional camp for convicted offenders. The poem's fourth stanza encapsulates it:

They banished him beyond the sea  
But ere the bud was on the tree  
Adown my cheeks the pearls run,  
Embracing my John Highlandman.

### **The Life and Times of Robert Burns.**

The most beloved poet in Scotland, Robert Burns is recognized not only for his poetry and wonderful love poems but also for his persona, which includes his hard drinking, womanizing, good spirits, and "kirk-defying" behavior. At the age of 27, he became well-known throughout Scotland as a poet, thanks to his wine, ladies, and song lifestyle.

He was an Ayrshire farmer's son, born in Alloway in a cottage erected by his father. Burns has his own museum now housed in this cottage.



When Burns was a little boy, an elderly widow who occasionally assisted him on his father's farm would tell him stories about the paranormal. As he grew older, Burns adapted many of these tales into poems.

In 1786, Burns faced dire financial troubles due to the farm's lack of profitability and his two mistresses. His father had passed away in 1784. In 1786, Burns released his "Poems in the Scottish Dialect," which became an instant hit, in an attempt to raise the funds needed to fund his decision to relocate to Jamaica. Dr. Thomas Blacklock urged him to reconsider leaving Scotland, and the poems were published in Edinburgh in 1787.

Ellisland, a farm near Dumfries on the banks of the River Nith, was purchased by Burns; but, the farm did not succeed, and in 1791 he gave up farming to work as an exciseman full-time.

A problem soon developed because he had plenty of opportunity to pursue his long-standing weakness of heavy drinking thanks to the reliable income from this job.

#### **Pre-romanticism and natural poetry.**

The definition of pre-romanticism given by Encyclopaedia Britannica, which I think accurately captures both the characteristics of pre-romantic literature and the setting in which the movement began, is as follows:

... a shift in public taste away from the grandeur, austerity, nobility, idealization, and elevated sentiments of Neoclassicism or Classicism toward simpler, more sincere, and more natural forms of expression. This new emphasis partly reflected the tastes of the growing middle class, who found the refined and elegant art forms patronized by aristocratic society to be artificial and overly sophisticated; the bourgeoisie favoured more realistic artistic vehicles that were more emotionally accessible. ("PreRomanticism")

According to The Norton Anthology of English Literature ("The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century"), nature—which is viewed as "the universal and permanent elements in human experience"—was what poets most sought to see and depict throughout the greater period.

This thesis focuses on natural poetry, which is a key component of romanticism and pre-romanticism. The question that needs to be addressed at this point is, "What is a nature poem?" It may be argued that all poetry about life fits the bill.

The definition must be restricted in order to serve this theory. The definition of a nature poetry, according to Michael Bugeja's book *The Art and Craft of Poetry*, is "A poem in which nature has a crucial function, highlighting the land and life (including humans) in a natural environment, as well as any 13-season metaphor,



symbol, circumstance, or subject (42). Nature's integrating role in poetry does not distinguish between its role as the poem's main theme and its supporting cast.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Robert Burns's exploration of the theme of motherland in his poetry reveals a profound sense of love, loyalty, and pride towards Scotland. Through his verses, Burns immortalizes the essence of the Scottish landscape, culture, and people, cementing his legacy as Scotland's national poet. His works continue to resonate with readers worldwide, evoking a sense of nostalgia and connection to one's roots. As we reflect on Burns's enduring influence, it becomes evident that his portrayal of the motherland transcends time, inspiring generations to cherish and celebrate their own cultural heritage. Ultimately, Burns's poetry serves as a timeless tribute to the enduring power of the bond between individuals and their homeland.

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