

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18454/RULB.2021.26.2.11>**РОБЕРТ БЕРНС В СТИХОТВОРЕНИЯХ ШОТЛАНДСКИХ ПОЭТОВ-ЭМИГРАНТОВ США XIX ВЕКА**

Научная статья

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Аннотация

Статья посвящена анализу образа Роберта Бернса в стихотворениях шотландских поэтов-эмигрантов США XIX века в контексте восприятия литературных персоналий, являющихся знаковыми для литературы Шотландии и творчества шотландских поэтов-эмигрантов. Компаративный и жанрологический анализ проведен на разных уровнях: биографическом, социокультурном и поэтологическом. Неоднозначность восприятия творческого наследия Р. Бернса прослеживается на социокультурном уровне. Схожесть биографических данных фиксируется на биографическом уровне, схожесть творческого аспекта – на поэтологическом уровне. Исследование фиксирует базовые характеристики образ Р. Бернса.

Ключевые слова: Шотландия, США, XIX век, эмиграция, поэзия, Роберт Бернс.

ROBERT BURNS IN THE POETRY OF SCOTTISH POETS-EMIGRANTS OF THE USA OF THE XIX CENTURY

Research article

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Abstract

The paper deals with the analysis of the image of Robert Burns in Scottish emigrational poetry of the USA of the XIX century in the context of perception of symbolic literary figures in the creative works of Scotland's writers and Scottish poets-emigrants. An attempt has been made to determine the criteria for choosing symbolic figures and artistic components of these images, which will be relevant for other national literatures. To identify the specifics of the image of R. Burns in Scotland and the USA, a genreological and comparative analysis was carried out at different levels: sociocultural, biographical and poetological.

Keywords: Scotland, USA, XIX century, emigration, poetry, R. Burns.

Introduction

Among the images of Scottish writers, philosophers, public and church figures, the image of Robert Burns occupies a central place in the literary works of Scottish emigrational poets. This situation is well known, but so far no attention has been paid to its paradoxicality. In the mother-country (that is, in Scotland itself), the presence of the figure of a poet-national genius, poet-national hero, poet-«father of the nation» is the norm. In emigration, where the entire environment of the poet-emigrant belongs to another culture, another literature, such a situation is not customary.

Any emigration changes the literary perspective of the worldview. It sets other accents, because the conditions of living in emigration are non-standard and even extreme for writers-emigrants. So this question becomes relevant: is the poet-symbol, the poet-embodiment of the character of the entire nation, capable of existing in the emigrational context, or is this type of character generally not applicable to emigrational literature and can exist only in metropolitan literature?

In addition to the above paradoxicality, the content and style specificity of the image of Robert Burns in the work of Scottish poets in general and poets-emigrants in particular has not been fully commented yet. Since the material of our study is primarily the poetry of the Scottish emigrants of the XIXth century, the first question to answer is: was the perception of Robert Burns as a social and literary phenomenon in the motherland (Scotland) and in emigration (USA) the same? Accordingly, this article will consider Burns' verses in both discourses. As for the XIXth century, it was chosen as the period when Scottish emigration in both the United States and Canada reached its maximum quantitative indicators.

The proposed study touches upon the problem of the perception of authoritative literary figures in the literary works of emigration and the motherland from two sides: 1) determining the criteria for choosing such symbolic figures and 2) the artistic components of these images. Presumably, our approach is relevant for any national emigration.

The aim of the work is to identify the content and aesthetic system, as well as the tasks set by the authors in the texts of the Burns' cycle in the contexts of a) Scottish and b) American, partly Canadian poetry.

The corpus of texts by 28 authors has been analyzed, consisting of 110 works. During the research, the methods of comparative analysis, genre analysis, comparative-typological and historical-biographical methods were applied.

The literary heritage of R. Burns has already been analyzed in Russian literary criticism many times (N. Aleeva [1], E.N. Elistratova [3], D.N. Zhatkin [4], [5], B.I. Kolesnikov [6], Yu.D. Levin [7], P.M. Toper [8] and others). In foreign literary criticism, it has also repeatedly become the object of special scientific research (D. Ferguson [12], Th. Crawford [11], J. Kinsley [14], K. Witting [22], J. Carruthers [10], J. Skoblow [20] and others). At the same time, this group of literary-critical and literary studies did not even mention the interpretations of the image of Burns in the Scottish emigrational poetry of the XIXth century and did not compare those interpretations with the same image in Scotland. Meanwhile, such a perspective could illuminate in a new way not only the image of Burns itself, but also the key problems of literary emigrational studies.

To understand the specifics of the depiction of R. Burns among the Scots in Scotland and the Scots-Americans in the USA, it is important to clarify the similarities and differences at different levels.

Sociocultural level

R. Burns in Scotland, as Scottish emigrational poets, did not immediately fit into the literary context of both his era and Scottish literature in general. Scotland of late XVIIIth— early XIXth centuries is already beginning to look for other values: material, because the country's standard of living remained low and the economic situation was not stable. This reality didn't correlate with the dominant motives of Burns' poetry: motives of freedom and patriotism.

The Scottish emigrational poets also were not able to become significant literature for both Scotland and the United States, despite their distinctive style and outstanding content of their poetry.

The assessment of the work of Robert Burns in the United States should be commented here. The figure of Burns for American society (literary, including) was not new in the XIXth century. Abraham Lincoln, who attended a meeting of the Burns Club in Washington in January 1865, made a toast praising R. Burns both as a person and as a poet [11, P. 136]. American poets (R.W. Emerson, J.R. Lowell, O.V. Holmes, J.G. Whittier, W. Whitman) also interpreted R. Burns as one of the most iconic figures in Great Britain. W. Whitman called him the most outstanding among the poets of Great Britain, emphasizing that his poems are very close and understandable to Americans [21, P. 427-435].

In the everyday life of Scottish emigrants, R. Burns' creative works were closely associated with the activities of various communities: Burns Clubs, Caledonian Clubs, St. Andrew's Society, Order of Scottish Clans, The Order of Sons of Scotland [18, P. 114] and others. These organizations were widespread in the United States. Their main occupation was to popularize Scottish history, culture and literature.

Biographical level

R. Burns, like most of the Scottish emigrational poets, came from the countryside. However, their origin did not prevent them from getting a good education (largely due to self-education). This fact determined the thematic and motivational aspects of their poems, on the one hand, the specifics of «their» national audience, on the other.

Due to their rural origin both R. Burns and poets-emigrants knew well the Scottish traditions, folk culture and folklore, freely expressed themselves in their native Scots. After the unification of England with Scotland (1707), the English language, English culture and English traditions began to be actively implanted in the urban environment. For the rural population, the connection with everything Scottish remained essential. The Scottish villagers still lived their centuries-old lifestyle and resolutely resisted Anglicization.

Poetological level

Anthroponymic aspect. The image of Robert Burns is the most popular in the poetry of Scottish emigrants. The name of Robert Burns is mentioned in 14 texts out of 110 analyzed poems. The mention of Robert Burns fixes the titles and / strong text positions (beginning, refrains, end) of 8 texts. Examples include the poems of J. Kennedy «To the Shade of Burns» [13, P. 66-67], J. Massey «Praise to the Bard, whose mighty hand ...» [17, P. 214-215], McPherson «Scotia's Bard» [16, P. 39-41], W. Anderson «There's nae land like old Scotland» [16, P. 354-355], H. McCulloch «Dinna forget» [16, P. 176-178] and others.

In P. McPherson's poem «Scotia's Bard» the author applies to the range of poets, whom he calls «bards»: Shakespeare, Dryden, Pope, Milton, Scott, Byron, Southey, Coleridge, Keats, Wordsworth, Tom Moore, Mackay, Swinburne, Tennyson. This reference to bard brings the idea of their unity but the author blames their poetry in the «lack of vitality» [16, P. 40], describes it as «sombre, hazy, weird» [16, P. 40], «<...> The lyre they struck in rosouince was poor; / 'Twas measured music, neatly pitched and scaled <...>» [16, P. 40]. Every poet he compares with Robert Burns and depicts the last as the King who «<...> reigns unrivaled in the realm of song <...>» and there is no one to be compared in strength or altitude with Burns. He is the figure that «<...> at home, or drifting on a foreign shore, / Of Scotia's bard we are ever proud <...>» [16, P. 41].

This ultimate idea of Burns' dominance is developed in H. McCulloch «Dinna forget» [16, P. 176-178]. The poem mentions all famous Burns' characters from his songs: Mary, Tam, Mouse, Cotter, Jolly Beggars. They all like a family to every Scot because those «<...> songs were words and music at their birth, / And voice our glory, sorrow, love and mirth <...>» [16, P. 176]. This relevance to Scots' life is generalised to global scale in J. Massey «Praise to the Bard, whose mighty hand ...», where Burns is the person «who knits all human hearts as one» [17, P. 214], « who taught us independence true / And rung the changes through and through» [17, P. 214]. He is proclaimed a uniting figure not only for Scots but or the people all over the world.

Genre and style aspect. Poets-emigrants attribute large part of Robert Burns's poems to the song genre (sangs, lays) because the poet himself often applied to Scottish folk songs and ballads, borrowing plots and motives from them. However, this borrowing was not only at the narrow-textual level, but also at the historical-typological level. Due to R. Burns the Scots (and not only they) knew their folklore well. And through the prism of folklore, the Scottish worldview was formed, «Scottishness» was assimilated as a socio-cultural quality.

However, R. Burns' genre repertoire was broader than just song tradition. The poet turned to the genres of ode, epistle and poetic dedication. For the poets-his followers, it was especially important not to limit themselves to one or two of the most popular genres, but to portray the «Scottish bard» in all the diversity of the national tradition.

Gradually the motive of the poet's immortality grows to his – almost religious – beatification and canonization: «<...> Of Scotia's bard we are ever proud; / Our homage true to the inmost core. / Till life is ended and in our shroud / With joy exultant when the day returns, / We'll meet to honor immortal Burns» [17, P. 39-41]. Burns, like a saint, has his own holiday (Burns' Night), which has become international. They are confident that the Scots will definitely meet with Burns in Paradise. Burns becomes synonymous with national memory: «<...> Who taught the lords of lofty domes / That worth may

dwelt in lowly homes / And noble patriot pride, / And points the great Creator's plan / Till man's humanity to man / Shall stem oppression's tide. <...>» [17, P. 214-215].

The genre of the epistle actualizes other theme: the theme of friendship. Friendship covers different sides and levels of being: from general school mischief to participation in traditional – national or regional – work and leisure. Finally, friendship becomes the first step towards a sense of patriotism and national unity – feelings that were of current importance in emigration. «<...> And we whose childhood's home was thine, / What joy thy memory brings! / To us thou seem'st as more divine / Than earth-created things. / For all youth's fairy scenes and glee, / Loves, hopes and fancies fain, / In Poesy's art illumed by thee, / Come back to us again <...>» [13, P. 66-67]. At the same time, Burns becomes the central figure in the circle of expanding «zones of values»: courtyard – home – school – home village – church – homeland – heavenly paradise. Burns' songs become «singing sermons» and sermons turn into «songs of God». The poet himself combines the functions of a folk singer and a folk preacher. («singing preacher, Burns» [17, P. 178]).

Along with the universal characteristics, there appear those that are especially typical for the emigrational context. Scottish emigrants personally felt that they live in a multinational state, which is, moreover, young. Such a specific society needs not only experiments, innovations, but also cultural traditions that unite all citizens. It was this consolidating function that the image of Robert Burns performed for the Scots and other emigrants: «And though from many lands they came, / To brotherhood they've grown, / By thee their pulses throb the same, / Their hearts are all thy own» [13, P. 66].

Burns did not function in the poetry of XIX century Scottish emigrants simply as a purely literary model. He acted in a foreign (American) and Canadian context as a «mighty» mythological and ethnogenic personality. For the Scots, he is fully a mythopoetic cultural hero. For the Scots of the diaspora, he became quite comparable with similar figures of the Scottish Middle Ages and the Renaissance, later – Romanticism: from the poet-fortuneteller Thomas Lermont (between 1220-1297), through the clairvoyant William Dunbar (?1460-?1520) and a native of Anglo-Scottish borderlands William Shakespeare (1564-1616), up to the pan-European romantic idol, the Scotsman by his mother George Gordon Byron. Such an interpretation of the image of a national poet in the XIXth century for both the Old and New World contained an indisputable element of novelty. Thus, Scottish emigrants contributed their share of innovation to the history of not only Scottish, but also American literature of the XIXth century [2].

Conclusions

1. R. Burns and the Scottish poets-emigrants had similar biographies and preferences in genre-stylistic and thematic-motive aspects.
2. The image of Robert Burns in the work of Scottish poets-emigrants has a number of stable features, characterized by unconditional positive evaluativeness and laudativeness.
3. An innovation of the Scottish poets-emigrants for literary emigration studies is the creation of the image of the national poet as a mythological personality. It is this mythological image of Robert Burns, appealing to Scottish tradition and folklore, that has proved to be relevant for the young United States.

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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