

**PEASANT THEME IN THE CREATIVE WORK OF ROBERT BURNS AND ITS  
COVERAGE IN SOVIET LITERARY STUDIES**

***TEMA CAMPONÊS NO TRABALHO CRIATIVO DE ROBERT BURNS E SUA  
COBERTURA EM ESTUDOS LITERÁRIOS SOVIÉTICOS***

***EL TEMA CAMPESINO EN LA OBRA CREATIVA DE ROBERT BURNS Y SU  
COBERTURA EN LOS ESTUDIOS LITERARIOS SOVIÉTICOS***

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**ABSTRACT:** The article comprehends the peculiarities of the perception of the peasant theme in the work of Robert Burns in Soviet literary criticism. It is noted that the specificity of the research assessment of this scientific problem in the Soviet Union was a consequence of the desire to present Burns as a realist poet, in many respects opposed to his predecessors, sentimentalists. Soviet researchers noted the concretization of the image of the Burns peasant, its close relationship with the era, everyday life. The peasant becomes the ideal of a positive character who is living in friendship looking forward to help others and has rich inner world. Soviet critics have invariably emphasized the democratic character of Burns's poetry, his ability to appreciate the beauty and wisdom of genuine folk poetry, which, in fact, give Burns' legacy immortal glory.

**Keywords:** Russian–English literary and historical and cultural ties. Poetry. Tradition. Reception. Allusion. Comparative science. Artistic translation. Intercultural communication.

**RESUMO:** *El artículo comprende las peculiaridades de la percepción del tema campesino en la obra de Robert Burns en la crítica literaria soviética. Se observa que la especificidad de la evaluación de la investigación de este problema científico en la Unión Soviética fue consecuencia del deseo de presentar a Burns como un poeta realista, en muchos aspectos opuesto a sus predecesores, los sentimentalistas. Los investigadores soviéticos notaron la concretización de la imagen del campesino Burns, su estrecha relación con la época, la vida cotidiana. El campesino se convierte en el ideal de un carácter positivo que vive en amistad con ganas de ayudar a los demás y tiene un mundo interior rico. Los críticos soviéticos han enfatizado invariablemente el carácter democrático de la poesía de Burns, su capacidad para apreciar la belleza y la sabiduría de la poesía popular genuina, que, de hecho, dan al legado de Burns una gloria inmortal.*

**Palavras-chave:** *Laços literários e históricos e culturais russo-inglês. Poesia. Tradição. Recepção. Alusão. Ciência comparada. Tradução artística. Comunicação intercultural.*

**RESUMEN:** *O artigo compreende as peculiaridades da percepção do tema camponês na obra de Robert Burns na crítica literária soviética. Observa-se que a especificidade da avaliação da pesquisa desse problema científico na União Soviética foi consequência do desejo de apresentar Burns como um poeta realista, em muitos aspectos oposto a seus predecesores, sentimentalistas. Pesquisadores soviéticos notaram a concretização da imagem do camponês Burns, sua estreita relação com a época, o cotidiano. O camponês torna-se o ideal de um caráter positivo que vive em amizade e busca ajudar os outros e tem*

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## **Introduction**

The perception of the peasant question in a social vein, conditioned by Soviet ideological approaches, leads to the fact that the characterization of the peasant takes on a concrete, carnal aspect. This is not some abstract figure opposed to wealthy landowners, but a clearly traced social character, vividly represented by strengthening social motives, using dialogical elements in works. The acute sensation of the gap between the landlord and the tenant, the poor and the rich, intensifies in the era of the industrial revolution, when all the bitterness of life spills out, filling both everyday work and the traditional way of life. This approach of Soviet literary historians could not but influence the evaluation of the peasant theme in the work of the Scottish poet Robert Burns.

## **Literature Review**

Many Russian literary critics have turned to understanding the work of Robert Burns, and the most significant works are associated with the names of M.M. Morozov, A.A. Anikst, R.Ya. Rait-Kovaleva, A.A. Elistratova, B.I.Kolesnikov. The Russian reception of poetry by Robert Burns was interpreted in the studies of S.A. Orlov, E.S.Belashova, Yu.D. Levin, D.N. Zhatkin, A.A. Ryabova. This article is the first to study materials related to literary-critical and literary comprehension of the peasant theme in the creative works of Burns in the works of S.A. Orlov and L.V. Sevryugina, written in the 1940-1950s. –during the period of the greatest fame of the Scottish poet in Russia, which was noticeably strengthened thanks to multiple reprints of his works in translations of S.Ya. Marshak.

## **Materials and Methods**

The material for the study was the articles written by S.A. Orlov «The Peasant Question in Burns's Poetry» and L.V. Sevryugina «The Peasant Theme in the Poetry of Robert Burns», published in the 1940-1950s. and became an important milestone in

understanding the image of the Burns peasant from the Soviet ideological position. Methodologically, the research is based on fundamental works in the field of historical poetics, comparative studies, history of Russian translated fiction, theory and history of poetic translation, created by Alexander N. Veselovsky, Alexei N. Veselovsky, V.M. Zhirmunsky, M.P. Alekseev, A.V. Fedorov, A.N. Girivenko, L.L. Nelyubin and others.

## Results

In 1943, S.A. Orlov turned to the peculiarities of the perception of the peasant question in the creative work of Burns, noting the close link of the Scottish poet with the interests, joys, needs and sorrows of the peasantry and calling the texts written by Burns «a hymn to the man of labor» (ORLOV, 1943). According to S.A. Orlov's observing, Burns's grief is not sentimental, it is directly related to man, his suffering and pain, and therefore realistic and social: «To one – to the owners of Edinburgh drawing rooms, mansions, landowners' lands and plots, servants of God, blessing the existing world, tax inspectors and officials, representatives of the world of the well-fed and wealthy, influential and powerful – he pays with the full measure of his class hate. To others – people of his social circle, close in spirit, in feeling, in the world of sensations – he remains consistently faithful to the end» (ORLOV, 1943). However, Burns's famous line «suffering is our destiny» does not sound hopeless, since there is a clear understanding of the existing contradictions, therefore, there are ways to solve them. Burns, according to S.A. Orlov, has not yet completely got rid of the naive faith in the «universal brotherhood» of people, but at the same time he has a limit, a limit of patience, which will necessarily be followed by a «gust of a gloomy storm». The poet does not accept an industrial revolution that destroys the patriarchal order and complicates the life of the peasantry. At the same time, he is inclined to idealize the past life, in which, as it seems to him, the rich man was closer to the poor man, they understood each other better.

For Burns, the true wealth of a person is the wealth of his inner, spiritual world. It is inner harmony that allows you to feel rich, develops moral stamina and honesty. «In the Letter to James Smith», the poet proposes to knock with his pen on the door of Power and ask her to pour whiskey for travelling coppersmiths, increase the interest earned by the rich, and give Willie Pitt a bandage. Burns, according to S.A. Orlov's observation, not only mourns the fate of the ruined farmer, not only grieves, but also attacks himself: «He uses satire as a weapon in his struggle, he brings into his poetry a sharply denouncing, crushing stream. This is what decisively distinguishes him from the poetry of his predecessors – Ramsey and

Fergusson, from the idyllic sadness of Cowper, the lyrics of Thomson and Gray, the conciliatory position of Goldsmith» (ORLOV, 1943). Burns goes on a decisive offensive, using the form of a satirical message, a poetic dialogue, a song.

«In *Beelzebub's Appeal*», there is a characteristic image of the devil-hating man, having a friendly conversation with the chairman of the Society for Highland Scotland. The devil, wishing his close friend health, cautions him against flirting with his servants, reminds him of the events of the American Revolution: «Beelzebub amicably advises Lord Glangry to «crush and destroy the peasants, rot the rebels in prisons, abandon young puppies to work (let labor and hunger sober them up !), the girls, if they only do something wrong, send them to Drury Lane, and if women in dirty rags gather at the gate, gray with beans, frightening the lord's geese, get them with a whip and beat this crowd of gypsies with all the bastards». The devil's message ends with a kind invitation to the Lord welcome to hell, where the best place at the fireplace, between the tyrant Polycrates and Herod, has already been prepared for the honored guest» (ORLOV, 1943). «*Beelzebub's Address*», according to S.A. Orlov's observation, echoes other political works of Burns, in particular, with «*Ode to the Birth of General Washington*».

In «*Two Dogs*», which has become a kind of encyclopedia of peasant life in Scotland, the images of aristocratic Caesar and the poor Luafare created; these dogs, unlike people, are devoid of class prejudices and peacefully talk with each other about the structure of the world. The dialogue of two dogs, by the way, is very traditional for world literature: it is enough to remember «*A Conversation of Two Dogs*» by Cervantes, the fables of La Fontaine, I.I. Dmitriev, I.A. Krylov, etc. In contrast to the fabulists, Burns chooses a different form – a poetic tale, which allows you to put confidently into the mouth of Caesar destructive criticism of the arrogant aristocracy. If Luaf still allows himself to naively hope for the decency of those who hold the power, then Caesar, who is in direct contact with them, has lost any illusion a long time ago. Caesar understands that for the aristocrats the good of the homeland and the happy life of the people are not interesting at all. Thus, we can say that gradually the poet's humor was transformed into satire, which acquired sharpness and insight.

S.A. Orlov draws attention to Burns's categorical rejection of representatives of all social groups that came into conflict with the peasantry. At the same time, Burns is extremely reasonable, knows how to give a balanced assessment of everything that happens, does not absolutely accept parasitism, a desire to parasitize on the results of peasant labor. We must take into account that Burns wrote almost nothing about what he considered the positive aspects of everyday life, the values of peasant life. Perhaps, only in the poem «*Saturday Night*

of a Villager», written in the traditions of Fergusson's «Hearth of a Villager», there is a kind of idyllic perception of the patriarchal life of Scottish peasants, broken away from reality and based on such significant values for Burns as patriotism, respect for working people, priority of honest poverty over arrogant nobility. According to S.A. Orlov, «Saturday Night of a Villager», written at a turning point for Burns, due to the death of his father, the collapse of business on the farm, is «not so much a picture of the life of the family of a Scottish peasant at the end of the century, as a «look into the past», idyllic glorification of a the old days» (ORLOV, 1943). Sentimental thoughts led Burns to create a work close in spirit to a shepherd's idyll, imbued with a religious outlook, containing calls for piety. S.A. Orlov considered the religious pathos of Burns's poem deliberate, since Burns deliberately sarcastically spoke out in many works about clergy. At the same time, the mockery of the priests and their vices did not undermine neither Burns's faith nor the doctrine itself: «From this we must admit that if a poem draws the world that is desirable in some way for a poet, then it is still there –an idyll, lyrical excursion into the past, the idealization of antiquity, the naive belief that the established order of life is unchanged. We believe that the meaning of «Saturday Night» in Burns' lyrics is exaggerated, and the life itself is idealized, as is the case in some other works of the poet» (ORLOV, 1943). Undoubtedly, «Saturday evening of a villager» is close to an idyll, designed to pass off an illusory picture for a real or existing way of life. As a result, an idea «about peace and tranquility, about the justice of the existing life order, about the wise almighty and the immutability of being» is formed (ORLOV, 1943). However, this picture in essence differs from Burns's reasoning about the injustice of the existing order, repeated many times in other works. The reasons why the poet suddenly ceases to talk about the contradictions of the surrounding reality, the absurdity of the norms of life, the neglect of the church and the authorities towards the people, S.A. Orlov sees in his address in this case not to folklore, but to the book, to the literary tradition: «The poem is written a Spencer stanza (which is generally quite rare in Burns) and of purely English origin, not used by Scottish folk poets.<...>Much in the lyrical sound, digressions and phraseology of this work written by Burns reminds those English poets he knew: Milton, Gray, Pop, Thomson and Goldsmith» (ORLOV, 1943). Burns's image of the peasant is close to the land and nature, and is often created taking into account observations of the diverse agricultural work done with great knowledge of the matter: «Among the heroes of Burns we find a plowman walking behind a plow on a sunny May day; a milkmaid dreaming of marriage; a miller, showered with flour to such an extent that his very kiss is in flour, about which the villager laughs; cheerful mowers running away from the rain» (ORLOV, 1943). As S.A.

Orlov notes, the Scottish poet creates the images of his heroes-peasants with special sincerity, sympathy, warm feeling, since he sees in the peasants his like-minded people who are capable of transforming society and the whole world. Indeed, many of Burns's works are written from the perspective of a peasant who knows the smallest details of everyday life, observing its smallest changes. However, peasant life is not only work, but also is much more: «... the love of a girl, happy and rejected, a secret dating with a sweet lover which is hidden from the rest, people, quarreling, but in essence loving couple, a quarrelsome wife who does not leave her husband alone even after death, the sadness of parting and the joy of meeting, the great joy of labor, songs during field work, sharp words and jokes, songs and dances, customs and superstitions –a huge set of feelings, a drawing by a skillful brush of a truly national artist» (ORLOV, 1943).

Singing the life of the Scottish people with all its joys and sorrows, Burns touches on many topics, including love, separation, matchmaking, friendship, peasant labor, rest and holidays, material difficulties, social morality, love of the homeland, cheerful recklessness, patriotism and much other. He speaks about all this in his songs simply and unpretentiously, in understandable and accessible language, with a sincere and sincere intonation, while simplicity and accessibility are not proof of the poet's poor lexical means, his naivety: «Keeping the charm of antiquity, Burns enriches each song with his bright individuality. <...> He carefully trims each line of his poem, monitors the flexibility and expressiveness of speech, clarity of thought, achieves the ultimate artistic simplicity» (ORLOV, 1943).

Writing about the life of a peasant, Burns combines the simplicity and attractiveness of description, sadness and life-affirming masculinity; the strength of genuine courage and faith in a happy future which helps him to overcome adversity and difficulties. A sense of proportion and taste help Burns to describe real everyday life with the use of laconic, restrained pictorial means, which, in S.A. Orlov's opinion, brought him closer to the work of realists of subsequent centuries: «In his poetry we will find elements of that psychological individualization of heroes, which will become so typical of the subsequent romantic movement of literature. The realism of the image is promoted by Burns' democratization of the language, its flexibility, comprehensibility to the widest readership, and the locality of the situation» (ORLOV, 1943). The desire of truthfulness leads Burns to the fact that his peasant acquires the features of a particular era; and in this regard, even such details of the description as a hat, plow, hoe, etc. turn out not to be a kind of props, sham nuances to the image, but significant elements connecting the main character and the surrounding reality. Finding himself in a reality understandable to him, Burns categorically refuses pretentiousness,

affectation, exaggeration, superficiality in observations and descriptions, which, in the opinion of S.A. Orlov, testified to the transformation of a sentimentalist into a realist: «The development of poetical creativity of Burns was coincided with the establishment of the Realism in English poetry of the 18th century. Captivated by the general process of literary development, Burns entered the literary field as a sentimentalist, and echoes of this are not so difficult to find in his lyrics. But it is much more significant that the works of Burns, being closely related to folklore, are conditioned by the entire historical process of time, asserted realism in poetry, called to show everyday life of the masses, their feelings and emotions» (ORLOV, 1943).

The peasant world in the perception of Burns turns out to be significant, thematically diverse and historically specific, and the poet himself in every possible way emphasizes his independence from the oppressors. According to S.A. Orlov's observation, the poet's ideal is «a proud, independent personality, despising a coward, a hypocrite, a bigot, mocking money and greed of the rich, ready to go to death with his head held high» (ORLOV, 1943). Burns represents the pride of a person who has realized his own dignity, who does not want to put up with the world around him, who seeks to overcome humiliation and oppression. The peasant in the mind of Burns is unpretentious, ready to be content with little, does not strive for luxury and wealth, preferring naturalness and simplicity to them; he loves his family, his peasant labor, his field and his farm. The peasant becomes the ideal of a positive hero who lives in friendship, strives for the caring support of others, and has a rich emotional world (as opposed to aristocrats and clergy). In a positive image of a peasant, Burns, according to S.A. Orlov, expressed his own idea of masculinity, firmness, courage of man, his ability to hear the sounds of nature, live in harmony with it, dreamed of the happiness of people surrounded by honesty and friendship: «The world of the living creatures inhabiting the earth – his world, understandable, familiar and close. Burns's peasant is humane in the broadest sense of the word. He sees a wounded hare and brings down a curse on the head of the one who hides death in his criminal soul. He invites the wounded animal to run away from the person, and there is more in the poet's voice: does not a farmer who is ruined by his lord, or a beggar who is ruthlessly thrown into the street, share a similar fate? Doesn't he have the right to be happy, to know the fullness of life and the joy of being? And Burns dozens of times emphasizes the right of any living creature in the world to exist, to have a life» (ORLOV, 1943). In many works, Burns strives for generalizations, which, according to the researcher, lead him to an understanding of the incorrectness of social order, the injustice of life around him.

Burns's peasant is busy with everyday work, and therefore respects everyone who works every day, and not only people, but also animals helping them, such as horses. As a patriot of his small homeland, he dreams of a happy future for Scotland, its independence, the ability to withstand the infection of decay, the poison of luxury, the vile pus of vices. In this regard, the position of another researcher, L.V. Sevryugina, who singled out Burns's angry voice «in the general chorus of protest against disgusting social reality, against poverty and oppression»: «If sentimental poets only wrote about the people, then the voice of Burns was the voice of the people themselves. Being a true representative of the exploited and oppressed masses, Burns vividly and boldly expressed in his work all its needs and aspirations» was even more sociologized (SEVRYUGINA, 1959). L.V. Sevryugina classifies Burns as a small farmer-tenant who leased land for a period of one year with subsequent renewal; the poet's father was also a small tenant, and therefore the family constantly moved from one farm to another, wanting to improve their financial situation. Living by the joys and interests, needs and grief of the peasantry, Burns portrayed peasant life «not as an outside observer, like sentimentalist poets»: «He showed the peasant as a socially close person to him, and everything that he wrote is sincere, was natural and truthful» (SEVRYUGINA, 1959). Burns, in the preface to the first book, published in Kilmarnock, noted that his works are based not on echoes of rumor, but on the experience, felt, experienced by his own experience.

In the works of Burns, without embellishment, scenes familiar to him from a young age of rural life, the cares and joys of peasants are presented. Burns's hero cannot imagine himself outside a peasant hut, fields of rye and barley, meadows, groves, picturesque river banks; it is a space in which he not only dwells, but also works, loves, makes friends, suffers and rejoices. Following to the opinion of S.A. Orlov, L.V. Sevryugina notes the closeness of the hero to nature, leading to the fact that he turns out to be a real, and not a conventional person from the natural environment: «Burns's peasant is taken from the real life: he is a specific social character in certain socio-historical conditions of Scottish reality in the second half of the 18th century» (SEVRYUGINA, 1959). Thus, the peasant from Burns's works turns out to be correlated with a specific historical period in the life of Scotland, and specifically with the era of the industrial revolution and the agrarian revolution: «The poet speaks about the exorbitant rent, and about the fear of ruin that persecuted the farmer, and about poverty and constant need that capitalism carried with it already in the period of its formation. Burns caught both the stratification of the peasant mass, and such a characteristic feature of the agrarian revolutionary period as the difficulty for a bankrupt farmer to find work in the countryside» (SEVRYUGINA, 1959). Experiencing endless difficulties in life, Burns,



according to the observation of L.V. Sevryugina, in every possible way reflected the disaster of the people, crushed by poverty and grief in his poetry works. In his poems, one can see the despondency of a ruined farmer, and his fear of tomorrow, and speculations about the destruction of the field mouse mink, and the thought of a wildflower that died under a plow, and the parallels between the natural world and human life: «Having destroyed the field mink with a plow mouse, the poet, referring to the animal, says that he is not alone in his misfortune, that a person is constantly followed by grief and need. He looks ahead in secret fear, anxiously awaiting tomorrow, which may bring with it complete ruin. And the stalk of a daisy crushed by a plow in the field reminds the poet of the fragility of his position <...>. Just like a flower cut by a plow, a person dies, crushed by need. Such a fate awaits many, – the poet sums up. This was the fate of an ordinary person, constantly struggling with the need and the new social system which devastated common people» (SEVRYUGINA, 1959).

In his early works, talking about peasant labor, Burns uses the motives of grief, sorrow, expresses uncertainty about the future, due to tendencies towards rapid bankrupting, immersion in a beggarly life. However, these motives are expressed differently by the great Scottish poet than by his sentimentalist predecessors, who, watching the ruin of peasants, evil and injustice in the world, regretted the disappearance of the patriarchal past, and sought rural solitude. For Burns, grief is extremely realistic, due to the understanding of social injustice, the contradictions of life, underestimation of peasant labor, and therefore it is quite naturally combined with the condemnation of modern social processes. L.V. Sevryugina proves this idea, referring to the text of one of Burns's works – the poem «The Broken Farmer» dedicated to his father, after which she notes that in the process of evolution of Burns's creativity «notes of sadness and sorrow <...> gradually disappear, giving way to a vigorous life-affirming outlook»: «Unruliness to fate, inflexibility before need and misfortune more and more penetrate into the work of Burns» (SEVRYUGINA, 1959). In addition, Burns's poetry is increasingly correlated with folk art, proclaiming the power and immortality of the living forces of the people, which strikingly distinguishes it from the texts of sentimentalist predecessors, who most often saw the moral devastation of the broken peasantry, and not its inner spiritual strength. L.V. Sevryugina writes about this using the example of the poem «There was an honest farmer, my father», in which «the poet jokingly and enthusiastically challenges the «evil miser», the fate that has come across his path»: «Let him have no bread for tomorrow, let need steal his meager earnings, he does not allow his heart to fall into melancholy and sadness from adversity» (SEVRYUGINA, 1959). He is

ready to work courageously up to the end, not bending over difficulties, and to find peace only after death (in particular, he writes about this in the «Letter to James Smith»).

The cheerfulness of the Burns peasants, their optimism are close to the cheerful villagers of J. Thomson who find happiness in the simplicity of rural life. However, this closeness is very conditional, since the heroes of J. Thomson do not want any changes, they are quite satisfied with a quiet, measured existence in heart of nature, in the peaceful space of village life, opposing the vice and cruelty of the city, while Burns's heroes are aimed at fighting for a better future, at overcoming difficulties and adversities. In this regard, the allegorical images of the ballad «John Barleycorn» and the satirical poem «Two Dogs» are characteristic. The last of the named works, according to L.V. Sevryugina, is especially characteristic, since it contrasts the satiated empty world of the aristocracy and the life of the poor Scottish peasantry: «On a cloudless June day, two dogs met; one, named Caesar, lived carelessly with a noble lord, the other – Luaf – belonged to a simple peasant. Dogs talk about their owners' lives. Caesar says that his master has no worries and spends his days idly. Behind the words of the animal, the angry and protesting voice of the poet himself is heard. <...> The landowner leads an idle, empty life, to which the poet opposes the life of a poor tenant full of hardships. He has to work hard to feed himself, his wife and the «crowd of small children». It is difficult for him when he gets sick, because in this case he will face cold, hunger and poverty» (SEVRYUGINA, 1959). Thus, Burns emphasized that in the era of the industrial revolution, it was very difficult to find work in the village, where ruined tenant farmers constantly moved in unsuccessful search for a better life from one farm to another. As a result, many of yesterday's farmers left for the city, where they joined the ranks of workers.

Burns found it difficult to understand the general trend of the economy turning from the dominant agricultural sector to the dominant industrial sector. The Scottish poet associated the departure of tenant farmers to the city with the arbitrariness of large landowners, landlords, prosperous and wealthy farmers. And in this regard, the social stratification of the countryside, which had previously remained outside the field of vision of the poet, who presented the peasant mass as one and indivisible, unexpectedly turned out to be especially significant for him.

The image of a peasant girl from a poor class was also significant for the poet. In many of his works, her share is especially bitter. She turns out to be the wife of an unloved, but rich man who is suitable for her as a father. At the same time, the poet does not carry out social differentiation between the rich, does not distinguish between landowners and rich farmers, etc. L.V. Sevryugina carries out this idea when analyzing the poem «Country Girl»:

«Young milkmaid Bassey, who has many admirers, is going to get married ... She is advised to choose a groom slowly, wisely, most importantly, the groom should not be poor. <...> Bassey is being taught by an old woman. But the girl is not interested in rich John. <...> Robbie is much nicer for her than the other groom. It is true that he is as poor as she is, but he loves her sincerely, and Bassey will not exchange him for John and all his wealth» (SEVRYUGINA, 1959). As you can see, Bassey gives preference not to a rich man who has a lot of cattle and a full barn with bread, but to a simple village guy, which becomes a challenge to public sentiment.

Seeing at the end of his life the stratification in the peasant environment, Burns, however, is in no hurry to create a vivid image of the bourgeois rich farmer, but only outlines its shape. It is obvious that it is much easier for him to oppose the poor peasant to the lord, the landowner, than to the representative of a new social group that was emerging in the peasant environment. This was largely due to the patriarchal nature of the Scottish countryside, which turned out to be resistant to any kind of change. Also, according to L.V. Sevryugina's observation, Burns did not see contradictions within the peasant masses: «Burns sees contradictions between landlords and rich squires, on the one hand, and the peasant, farmer masses, on the other. But the peasant mass itself, the village itself is devoid of sharp contradictions» (SEVRYUGINA, 1959).

The perception of labor by Burns and his sentimentalist predecessors is also different: for J. Thomson it is a happy idyllic work in the bosom of nature, for J. Crabb it is exhausting painful work, for Burns it is hard work, but at the same time it brings joy, replenishes spiritual strength, becomes a guarantee of moral health: «Walking behind a plow on a fragrant May morning, when birds sing in the fields, is a great joy for a plowman. He loves his work and the gardener, from the dawn to work, and the diligent spinner Bassey, for whom work is a great joy. Her work gives her much more pleasure than tinsel and ostentatious brilliance –to the rich» (SEVRYUGINA, 1959). In portraying the joyous labor of the peasant, Burns does not go down the path of idyllic embellishment of his daily worries and life itself. Burns's hero knows how to enjoy work, the natural world around him, deep love feelings, and all these aspects of simple living were on the same plane. But at the same time, he is aware of the evil surrounding him, when thousands of people work during the year for one rich man, landlord, squire, and reconciliation with the injustice of life does not occur even in the «Villager's Saturday evening», where the villagers are called «the sons of village hard labor». Burns's hero despises the rich dressed in silk and satin, the scarcity of their interests, the pursuit of

ranks, awards, money, and gives preference to poor farmers-plowmen, peasants-toilers, tightly tied to the land and, often, having a rebellious character.

Burns peasants not only constantly feel the need, but also constantly strive to overcome it, spend their lives fighting for a piece of bread, while suffering and rejoicing, worrying and thinking. Thus, the poet comes to the affirmation of a new positive hero –a peasant-worker, about which L.V. Sevryugina writes: «The poet invariably draws his hero as a man of great strength of feeling, depicts him as truthful in relation to workers like himself, sincere in relation to the beloved. For Burns's hero, the joy of work and the joy of love are incomparable. His desires are modest, natural and human» (SEVRYUGINA, 1959). Burns's peasant is not completely killed, he has not lost his human appearance –he is aware of his dignity thanks to the moral qualities he has formed from an early age. He does not slavish before high society (I recall Burns's poem «I have a wife», whose hero declares that he will never be a slave), moreover, he realizes that he feeds himself thanks to everyday work and does not owe anything to anyone.

Describing the features of peasant life, Burns appears as a talented and insightful narrator, demonstrating his humanity, great sympathy for the joys and sufferings of the common people, incorruptible sincerity, which, according to L.V. Sevryugina's observation, can be confirmed by specific nuances of descriptions: «All processes of peasant labor, all the elements of the life of the farmer receive a truthful and vivid reflection in his poetry. Working in the field, in the garden, rest, fun, village customs, matchmaking, parting, waiting, the joy of meeting, meeting among the spikes of barley –these are the themes of Burns songs» (SEVRYUGINA, 1959). Among the heroes of Burns there are ploughmen, spinners, milkmaids, shepherds and shepherdesses, and all the events described are easily correlated with reality, and many heroes even have their own prototypes.

Burns, unlike sentimentalists, follows the path of individualizing his heroes, these are not just the villagers of J. Thomson and O. Goldsmith, but specific Nelly, Peggy, Robbie, Nancy, Willie, etc., and each of them has not only your name, but also specific features that allow you to correlate them with a real person; for example, Nellie is a girl who used to presses rye with Burns, Jean is his faithful wife, Davy is his friend, etc. In many cases the hero is not named, but it is implied: this is how the poet displays his father in «The Busted Farmer», in «The Barefoot Girl» –a stranger from the streets of Dumfries, who struck him with external beauty and at the same time poverty of clothing. Individualization helps to convey the specifics of the inner world of each of the heroes. In this regard, L.V. Sevryugina considers that the most remarkable is the Burns gallery of female images, in which none of

the heroines repeats the other: «Among them are grumpy and simple-minded, reasonable and impetuous, arrogant and tenderly loving, loyal and devoted in their feelings. <...> Here is the sly and decisive heroine of the little song «Let's Whistle ...». She is not afraid of scolding either her father or her mother and teaches her darling to come to her from the black porch so that no one will see. The direct opposite of her is another girl, unusually judicious, the heroine of the song «Night Talk». To the beloved's request to let him into the house, since he was wet and frozen in the rain and wind, the girl replies that nothing prevents him from going back. And here is another heroine, a grumpy and ruthless woman Shella O'Neill, from whom her husband is forced to go into the army» (SEVRYUGINA, 1959).

Revealing the world of his peasant heroes, Burns shows a range of a wide variety of moods –from stormy fun to sadness, and the manifestations of feelings invariably vary. For example, Duncan Gray is not ready to die because of an arrogant girl who refused him, and the hero of the song «Blue-eyed Girl» admits that he will not survive if the girl refuses his favor. Each of the heroes, thus, shows their own character traits, their own peculiarities of the inner world. It is in this versatility, this variety of demonstration of images that the specificity of Burns's descriptions of the peasantry is manifested. At the same time, being a master of portraiture, the poet uses bright colors that detail descriptions (especially of young girls); in some cases, his hero can be imagined thanks to only a few stingy touches (for example, Jenny, who soaked her dress in dew, returning from a morning date, or a miller, all stained with flour dust). Burns's characters relate not only to historical time, but also to a specific material environment, flora and fauna, to which L.V. Sevryugin draws attention: «In the poem «Death of Meili, the poet's beloved sheep», a slightly humorous tone hides sincere pity for the animal deceased in the loop. Another poem of the poet, titled «About a wounded hare that hobbled past me», is imbued with great, genuine humanity (SEVRYUGINA, 1959).

The peasants from the works of Burns are surrounded by a rich and varied material world, in the image of which, in the opinion of L.V. Sevryugina, the poet's spontaneous materialism is manifested: «If in the poetry of the sentimentalists nature was presented as the bearer of eternal beauty, a reflection of a deity on earth, then Burns depicts nature as an objective reality outside of a person and independently of the existing reality» (SEVRYUGINA, 1959). Burns' specific landscapes are accurate and detailed, and the poet himself each time finds some special colors to depict the shores of Scottish rivers, the waters of Efton, golden fields, fields of barley and rye, summer flowers, the changing seasons. Feeling the nature subtly, Burns looks closely and listens to it, paying attention to small and bright nuances –the sound of rustling breads, a running wave of rye, a daisy crumpled by a

plow, clover whitening on the hills, dewdrops on the leaves, the singing of a lark, the glitter of water in the river, the rustle of a fluttering bird, etc. Thus, the appearance of forms and the sensation of smells are born, the aroma of wildflowers, mint and honey penetrates into Burns's poetry.

Knowing well the peasant life, Burns presents it so convincingly that he wants to believe, sympathize with his heroes, grieve and having fun with them. There is a feeling of a kind of convexity of Burns's description, the perceptibility of its shapes and sizes. And this, too, in the opinion of L.V. Sevryugina, decisively distinguishes his poems from descriptive and didactic sentimental texts containing a consistent description of events, occupations of some kind of craft, seasons, etc. from the standpoint of an outside observer. On the contrary, Burns became a direct participant in the events: «The poet not only saw, but himself experienced the oppressive need in which the Scottish peasantry lived, and the fear of ruin, and fears for tomorrow. He himself knew the hard work, and the joy of companionship, and the happiness of love, and the bitterness of separation» (SEVRYUGINA, 1959). Thus, Burns's poetry, glorifying ordinary workers, also represented the Scottish author's own life, presented not coldly descriptively, but in a lively narrative manner, which assumed the maximum rejection of static, a dynamic story about actions, actions, emotions.

## **Discussion**

The form of Burns's works on peasant labor, according to L.V. Sevryugina's observation, is determined by their content. Turning to the genres of poems, ballads, more often songs close to the folk, the Scottish poet glorified work, love, nature. The particular preference for the genre of the song is due to Burns's interest in national folklore: «Burns's songs are unusually poetic and expressive. They convey all sorts of shades of human experiences. Some of Burns's poems are written in literary English; in a number of works there is the greatest admixture of words taken from the Scottish dialect, the latter dominates in the lyric songs of the poet. Following the tradition of patriotic literature that arose in Scotland in the 18th century Burns resurrects the common dialect for life in art. Widely using the Scottish dialect in his works, the poet makes them more accessible to the broad masses of Scotland» (SEVRYUGINA, 1959). Speaking in general, about the Burns language, it can be noted that it is bright, colorful, emotional, but at the same time simple and understandable to the simplest people. In particular, the poet widely used epithets, many of which go back to

folklore tradition (beautiful girls, wild mountains, crystal streams, sad night, swan neck, fragrant lips, etc.), as well as allegories.

A special feature of Burns's works, describing peasants, is their melodiousness, and the melody is unique –sometimes lingering, sometimes sonorous, sometimes chopped, chased. They already have their own music, often special, unique, but sometimes correlated with some heard motive. Some music sounds in them, which is sometimes special and unique, but can be related with the hearing once of a melody. It was the musicality that contributed to the rapid spread of Burns' texts among the peasantry. In fact, Burns's songs returned to the people, became part of the folk culture. According to LV Sevryugina, «the high musicality of Burns's verse, the construction designed for songs, along with deep lyricism and sincerity, put Burns as an artist in one of the first places in English literature» (SEVRYUGINA, 1959).

## **Conclusion**

As we can see, in the opinion of Soviet researchers, Burns's undoubted merits in presenting the peasant theme were overcoming the pessimism of his predecessors – representatives of the sentimental trend in literature, life-affirming and optimistic tonality of descriptions, a deep connection with folk tradition, genuine knowledge of the life of the people, their psychology, sympathy for their work. Soviet critics have consistently emphasized the democratic nature of Burns's poetry, his ability to appreciate the beauty and wisdom of genuine folk poetry, which, in fact, give Burns's legacy immortal glory (ANIKST, 1939; GERASIMOV, 1959; SELKIRK, 1959; KOPTILOV, 1959).

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