



THEMATICALLY, PATRIOTICALLY AND DESCRIPTIVE LITERARY ANALYSIS FOR ROBERT BURNS' AND WILLIAM WORDSWORTH'S POEMS

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Abstract

In Robert Burns' "My Heart's in the Highlands," the speaker yearns for the Scottish Highlands, expressing a deep emotional connection to the land. The poem reflects Burns' nostalgia and reverence for his homeland. Through vivid imagery and emotive language, Burns captures the rugged beauty of the Highlands [1, p.5], portraying it as a place of solace and inspiration. The repetition of the phrase "My Heart's in the Highlands" emphasizes the speaker's longing and the emotional pull of the region. The poem can be seen as a reflection of Burns' own life, marked by periods of exile and longing for the familiar comforts of home.

In contrast, William Wordsworth's "The Solitary Reaper" focuses on an individual figure amidst a rural landscape. The speaker encounters a solitary reaper singing in the fields, and the beauty of her song captivates him. Wordsworth emphasizes the power of nature and the human connection to it through the reaper's song, which transcends language and cultural barriers. The speaker's response to the reaper's song highlights the impact of simple, unadorned beauty on the human soul. Wordsworth's use of lyrical language and the musicality of the poem enhance its emotional resonance [2, p.258].

Both poems explore the connection between individuals and their environments, but while Burns' work is rooted in a specific, deeply personal nostalgia, Wordsworth's poem emphasizes the universal and transformative power of nature and art. Burns' "My Heart's in the Highlands" is a tribute to a cherished homeland, while Wordsworth's "The Solitary Reaper" captures a fleeting moment of beauty that leaves a lasting impression on the speaker.

Key words: Nostalgia, emotional connection, imagery, Scottish Highlands, rural landscape, solitary figure, lyrical language, nature.

"My Heart's in the Highlands" by Robert Burns is a nostalgic and heartfelt poem in which the poet expresses a deep longing for his homeland, the Scottish Highlands. Let us dive into a line-by-line analysis:

1. My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;

- The poet feels a strong emotional connection to the Highlands, indicating a sense of belonging and yearning. Despite being physically present elsewhere, his heart remains in the Highlands.

2. My heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the deer;

- This line evokes imagery of the poet's idealized vision of the Highlands, where he imagines himself engaging in traditional activities like deer hunting.

3. Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,

- Continuing the imagery from the previous line, the poet emphasizes his longing for the untamed, natural beauty of the Highlands and the freedom it represents.

4. My Heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go.

- Regardless of his physical location, the poet's heart and thoughts are always with the Highlands, reinforcing the deep emotional connection he feels.

5. Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,

- The poet bids a sorrowful farewell to his cherished homeland, highlighting the pain of separation.

6. The birthplace of Valour, the country of Worth;

- Burns praises the Highlands as a land of bravery and moral excellence, reflecting his admiration for the region and its people.

7. Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,

- No matter where the poet travels, his thoughts remain with the Highlands, suggesting an enduring and unbreakable bond.

8. The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

- The poet expresses his everlasting love for the Highlands, emphasizing that his affection for the region is eternal.

9. Farewell to the mountains, high-cover'd with snow,

- The poet describes the majestic, snow-covered mountains of the Highlands, evoking a sense of awe and reverence.

10. Farewell to the straths and green valleys below;

- The poet bids farewell to the wide river valleys and lush, green landscapes of the Highlands, highlighting the beauty and diversity of the region.

11. Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods;

- Burns expresses his sorrow at leaving the dense forests and untamed woodlands, emphasizing the natural splendor of the Highlands.

12. Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.

- The poet bids adieu to the powerful, roaring waterfalls and rivers, capturing the dynamic and dramatic nature of the Highlands.

In this poem, Robert Burns masterfully conveys his deep emotional attachment to the Scottish Highlands through vivid imagery and heartfelt expressions of longing and admiration. The poem reflects the poet's nostalgia for his homeland and his enduring love for its natural beauty and cultural heritage.

"The Solitary Reaper" by William Wordsworth is a lovely pastoral poem celebrating the beauty and melancholy of a reaper's song heard in the Scottish Highlands. Here's a brief analysis of each stanza to capture its essence:

1. Behold her, single in the field, / Yon solitary Highland Lass!

- Wordsworth starts by drawing our attention to a solitary reaper, highlighting her isolation and the serene setting.

2. Reaping and singing by herself; / Stop here, or gently pass!

- The poet invites us to stop and listen to her song, or to pass by quietly so as not to disturb her.

3. Alone she cuts and binds the grain, / And sings a melancholy strain;

- The reaper's task and her song are both solitary and melancholic, suggesting a deep personal or cultural sorrow.

4. O listen! for the Vale profound / Is overflowing with the sound.

- The valley resonates with the powerful, emotive song that echoes all around, creating a moving atmosphere.

5. No Nightingale did ever chaunt / More welcome notes to weary bands

- Wordsworth compares her song to that of a nightingale, emphasizing its beauty and the comfort it provides.

6. Of travelers in some shady haunt, / Among Arabian sands:

- The song is described as a welcome relief for weary travelers, as refreshing as an oasis in a desert.

7. A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard / In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,

- Her song is compared to a cuckoo's call-in spring, yet it's even more thrilling and impactful.

8. Breaking the silence of the seas / Among the farthest Hebrides.

- The reaper's song is portrayed as something that could break the profound silence even in remote, isolated places.

9. Will no one tell me what she sings? / Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow

- The poet is curious about the meaning of the song, suggesting it may be a sorrowful tale.

10. For old, unhappy, far-off things, / And battles long ago:

- It's speculated that the song might tell of ancient woes or historic battles, adding to its melancholy.

11. Or is it some more humble lay, / Familiar matter of to-day?

- Alternatively, the song could be about more immediate, everyday concerns.

12. Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain, / That has been, and may be again?

- The song could reflect universal human emotions and experiences that are timeless.

13. Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang / As if her song could have no ending;

- Regardless of the content, the reaper sings as if her song is endless, emphasizing its perpetual nature.

14. I saw her singing at her work, / And o'er the sickle bending;

- The poet watches her as she works, deeply immersed in her task and song.

15. I listened, motionless and still; / And, as I mounted up the hill,

- Wordsworth is captivated, standing motionless, and continues to listen as he moves away.

16. The music in my heart I bore, / Long after it was heard no more.

- The song leaves a lasting impact on the poet, resonating within him long after he can no longer hear it.

This poem beautifully captures the interplay between nature, work, and the human soul. Wordsworth's attention to the reaper's song emphasizes the profound impact of simple, everyday experiences on the human spirit.

The similar poetic style between the two authors

While Robert Burns and William Wordsworth have distinct poetic styles, they share some similarities that align with their romantic sensibilities. Let's explore these common stylistic elements:

1. Nature Imagery:

Both poets extensively use vivid nature imagery to convey their themes and emotions.

Burns: Often describes the Scottish landscape, as seen in "My Heart's in the Highlands," where he paints a picturesque view of the mountains, valleys, and wildlife.

Wordsworth: Uses nature as a central theme, as seen in "The Solitary Reaper," where the serene setting of the Scottish Highlands enhances the emotional impact of the reaper's song.

2. Emotional Depth:

Both poets infuse their work with deep emotional resonance, capturing the intensity of human feelings.

Burns: Expresses heartfelt longing, love, and patriotism with a passionate tone that connects readers to his personal experiences.

Wordsworth: Explores introspection and the sublime, encouraging readers to reflect on their emotions and the natural world's influence on their inner lives.

3. Lyricism:

Both Burns and Wordsworth employ lyrical qualities in their poetry, making their verses musical and rhythmic.

Burns: Often wrote in the form of songs and ballads, using regular rhyme schemes and meters that lend themselves to musical settings.

Wordsworth: While he often wrote in blank verse, his poems, such as "The Solitary Reaper," maintain a lyrical flow that captures the reader's attention with its musical quality.

4. Simplicity and Accessibility:

Both poets valued simplicity and sought to make their poetry accessible to a broad audience.

Burns: Used the Scots dialect and everyday language, making his work relatable and understandable to the common folk of his time.

Wordsworth: Advocated for using plain language in poetry to express natural and sincere emotions, avoiding overly elaborate diction.

5. *Romantic Ideals:*

Both poets are associated with the Romantic movement, sharing common themes such as the celebration of nature, individual emotion, and the beauty of the ordinary.

Burns: Focused on rural life, love, and social justice, reflecting the Romantic ideal of valuing personal experience and the common man's perspective.

Wordsworth: Emphasized the spiritual and moral benefits of communion with nature, exploring the profound connection between human emotions and the natural world.

6. *Focus on the Individual:*

Both poets highlight individual experiences and emotions, capturing the essence of personal moments.

Burns: Often wrote from a personal perspective, sharing his own feelings and experiences in a way that resonates with readers.

Wordsworth: Focused on the individual's relationship with nature and their inner world, encouraging personal reflection and introspection.

In summary, while Burns and Wordsworth have their unique styles, they share common elements such as nature imagery, emotional depth, lyricism, simplicity, Romantic ideals, and a focus on individual experiences. These shared stylistic features contribute to their enduring appeal and the powerful impact of their poetry.

Both William Wordsworth's "The Solitary Reaper" and Robert Burns' "My Heart's in the Highlands" exemplify the Romantic movement's core themes: a deep appreciation for nature, individual emotion, and the beauty of the ordinary. Despite their similarities, these poems also present distinct contrasts in their thematic focus, poetic style, and emotional resonance.

In conclusion, "The Solitary Reaper" and "My Heart's in the Highlands" showcase the poets' mastery of capturing the essence of individual experience and the natural world [3, p.260]. Wordsworth's serene reflection and Burns' heartfelt longing highlight the diverse ways in which Romantic poets explored the depths of human emotion and the beauty of nature. Their enduring appeal lies in their ability to resonate with readers across time and place, celebrating the universal and timeless aspects of the human spirit.

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