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I N May 1859, artist and writer James Ballantine published his *Chronicle of the Hundredth Birthday of Robert Burns*, collecting into one massive volume accounts of 872 celebrations "honouring the memory of the Ploughman Bard" that had been held on 25 January that year (v). As Ballantine's book makes clear, within the British North American colonies, from Pictou, Nova Scotia, to Peterborough, Canada West, a variety of lavish events marked the centenary of the birth of Burns. In Galt, Canada West (named after another Scottish writer, John Galt), for example, over one thousand inhabitants gathered at the Town Hall to enjoy "recitations from the Poet's works; some of his sweetest, most patriotic, and manly songs; addresses from gentlemen of well-known ability; music from the Galt band; singing by the Galt Philharmonic Society; and exquisite music from the piano" (514). In Montreal, Canada East, the City Concert Hall was "beautifully and appropriately decorated for the occasion with illustrations of and quotations from the works of Burns, under the direction and auspices of the Montreal Burns Club" (530). In Toronto, Canada West, there were two banquets, one at the Rossin Hotel and one at the nearby St. Lawrence Hall, each with elaborate toasts and musical performances. Even small towns joined in the centenary celebrations. In Downie, Canada West, one Mr. James Simpson "invited a number of his friends and neighbours to his house, on the 25th, to do honour to the memory of the poet" (513).

As Ballantine's volume also demonstrates, there were distinct national interpretations of Burns at these celebrations (Davis). While centenary events held in the United States, for example, tended to depict the Scottish poet as a representative of the spirit of revolutionary democracy,[1] the celebrations in the British North American provinces focused on Burns as a more complex figure of competing identities, both local

and imperial. As a Scottish poet who wrote and sang about his local Ayrshire environs, Burns represented a connection with the "homeland" for the many Scottish settlers in the British North American colonies. At the dinner held in his honour in Sydney, Nova Scotia, for example, the speaker emphasized Burns as the quintessential Scottish writer, observing that "no poet that ever sang, no prophet or historian, however gifted, has so indelibly left the impress of his writings on the national character of a country as Burns" (535). At the same time, however, Burns was seen as part of the connective tissue of empire, uniting the different locations around the globe through literary culture. Although the speaker at the Sydney dinner promoted the distinct Scottishness of Burns, he also indicated that Burns was a transnational figure who would be commemorated not only "where the broad banner of Britain waves, but in every part of the world where the foot of the white man hath trodden. In the great republic of America, — in the crowded cities of China, — in the torrid plains of India, — ay, even in the desert of Africa" (535).

As many of the centenary speeches given at British North American locations suggest, Burns was valued because he offered an example of how a writer outside the metropolitan centre could rise to fame by voicing the concerns of his specific location. In this essay, I explore how pre-Confederation writers in the British North American colonies capitalized on the cultural phenomenon that Burns represented to negotiate their own writing on the periphery of the British Empire in the nineteenth century. I focus on two writers who put the work of Burns in dialogue with their own: Nova Scotian poet Thomas Daniel Cowdell (1769-1833) and Alexander McLachlan (1817-96) of Erin Township in Ontario. By examining these case studies, I aim to fine-tune what Robert Zacharias refers to in a recent discussion of the "spatial politics of CanLit" as the "British tradition" (107). Although critics of Canadian literature for some time have adroitly challenged interpretations of nineteenth-century Canadian writers as derivative of this "tradition," more attention needs to be paid to the distinct national components of what is often homogenized as "British."[2]

Juliet Shields observes in the context of American literature that

> By allowing England to stand in for the British archipelago . . . recent literary scholarship has not only overlooked the significant contributions of Scotland, Ireland and Wales to the development

of American literature and culture and oversimplified the processes
through which the new United States differentiated itself culturally
from Britain; it has also underestimated the impact of migration on
British literature and culture during the late eighteenth and early
nineteenth centuries. (3)

Taking up a similar challenge in the Canadian context, I focus here on a
distinctly Scottish aspect of pre-Confederation Canadian writing. At the
same time, however, I draw on current theories of transatlantic reading
to shift the critical focus beyond this model of one-way influence to take
into account what Julia Straub refers to as the "multi-directionality and
processes of circulation" that characterize transatlantic connections (2).
In particular, I suggest that reading Burns, Cowdell, and McLachlan in
light of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's theory of the rhizome offers
a useful corrective to a unidirectional understanding of influence, con-
testing the "implicitly hierarchical" nature of "influence studies" that
places "the non-canonical poet in the position of inferior copier" (Pace
116-17) and providing a new way of conceptualizing writers' texts and
bodies as they went back and forth across the Atlantic.

The connection between Burns and North America dates back to the
early years of his career when his work appeared in periodical form, as
Rhona Brown has discussed. Fiona Black has noted that, "within two
years" of the publication of *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (1786),
"printers J. and A. M'Lean in New York and publishers Peter Stewart
and George Hyde in Philadelphia were competing with British editions,
by distributing their own across North America" (58). Nevertheless,
she observes, "by far the majority of editions of poetry broadsides and
collections of Burns [purchased in British North America] were pub-
lished in Glasgow or London and exported either directly from printers/
publishers to colonial booksellers or, perhaps more commonly, through
the intermediary of general merchants and wholesaling warehouses"
(58). Many Scottish immigrants to British North America in the early
nineteenth century also brought their own editions of Burns with them
across the Atlantic. The popularity of Burns was such that, as Elizabeth
Waterston asserts, "In Canada, in the nineteenth century, there was
hardly a household that did not treasure a copy of Burns's poems" (*Rapt
in Plaid* 19). Manuscript and oral cultures also helped to translate Burns
across the Atlantic, for his work travelled in letters, songs, and conver-
sations as much as in printed editions. In *Authors of Their Lives: The*

Personal Correspondence of British Immigrants to North America in the Nineteenth Century, for example, David Gerber cites Nathan Haley, an immigrant who quotes from Burns in a letter back to his village in England (176). At the centenary celebration held at the Rossin House in Toronto, Daniel Wilson, chairman of the occasion, acknowledged the pervasive influence of Burns in oral culture: "The songs of Burns are already a part of the living language of our common race" (Ballantine 542).

A number of Scots settlers did more than just read, sing, and recite the works of Burns; they also composed their own poems and songs. In 1900, Daniel Clark, chairman of the Toronto Caledonian Society, drew attention to the pervasiveness of Scots in Canada's literary world by publishing a volume devoted to *Selections from Scottish Canadian Poets: Being a Collection of the Best Poetry Written by Scotsmen and Their Descendants in the Dominion of Canada*. In his preface to this work, Clark suggests that "The Scots who have made Canada their home, and that of their children after them to several generations, were and are so permeated with the literature of Scotland, especially the poetry of Burns and Scott, that they are almost intuitively led to adopt to some extent the form and prominent constructive features of these song-writers" (xiv). According to Clark, Scottish writers in British North America used Burns (as well as Scott) both consciously and subconsciously as their model.

Clark's view of Canadian writing as essentially imitative of and drawing its authority from Scottish originals continued to resonate well beyond his own era. Writing over a century after Clark, Waterston, for example, also draws on a narrative of influence in describing the connection between early Canadian writers and Burns: "[W]hen Canadians felt the urge to write verse, many of them found themes and meters in Burns, and a tone and a language — poetry not intellectual, not complex, but simple, homely lyric" (*Rapt* 18-19). In "The Lowland Tradition in Canadian Literature," Waterston speculates further that "Burns suited Canadian needs too well. Loving his work, finding it applicable, Canadian poets settled for his range, and sent out few feelers into the realms of experience more complicated than his" (210). Carole Gerson and Susan Wilson confirm that "Burns offered models for many nineteenth-century Canadian writers, particularly those of Scottish descent" (124), while Michael Vance suggests that Scottish

dialect poetry like that of John Imrie (1846-1902) was "largely imitative of the work of Robert Burns" (104). More recently, in examining the "affective legacy" of Burns in British North America and America, Gerard Carruthers has commented on its tendency to become "emptily platitudinous" as a result of writers' failure to grapple with the intricacies of the work of Burns (98). Such perspectives, though useful in pointing out the pervasiveness of Burns as a figure in early Canadian writing, reinforce a one-way sense of influence.

An alternative theoretical perspective can be found in recent developments in transatlantic studies. Although the precise nature of these studies is still open to debate,[3] Lance Newman indicates how the field has shifted from an early focus on the "anxiety of influence" among writers from the Americas (4) to a more balanced sense of "the diversity of literary expression in English along the Atlantic Rim" and the "multiple episodes and vectors of ideological exchange" (8). As Hutchings and Wright suggest, "The focus on the Atlantic has . . . encouraged the conceptualization of this larger region as a space of shipping, migration (coerced and uncoerced), and bilateral cultural exchanges, supplementing and complicating cultural histories that stress the unidirectional movement of ideas from East to West and between dominant nations" (3). In *Transatlantic Literary Studies: A Reader*, Susan Manning and Andrew Taylor suggest that the idea of the rhizome (as employed by critics Deleuze and Guattari) can offer a more nuanced and multidirectional map of connections across the Atlantic, a way of "thinking across" that is "singularly suggestive for transatlantic critical comparison" (5). The rhizome, as a "subterranean stem . . . absolutely different from roots and radicles," they note, counters the "logic" of the tree or root (7) that lies at the heart of narratives of influence. Rather than reinforcing a one-way "arborescent" model of influence, the rhizome is "detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification" (Deleuze and Guattari 13). In the words of Martiniquan writer and philosopher Édouard Glissant, the rhizome is "an enmeshed root system, a network spreading either on the ground or in the air, with no predatory rootstock taking over permanently. The notion of the rhizome maintains, therefore, the idea of rootedness but challenges that of a totalitarian root" (11). Important here, however, is the fact that Deleuze and Guattari do not conceive of the rhizome as existing in binary opposition to the tree/root; rather, the root/tree exists as a "line of segmentarity" within

the rhizome (10). The notion of the rhizome, therefore, can account for the power of Old World influences, including that of Burns, but allow for an understanding of New World productions as something other than what D.M.R. Bentley refers to as "transference and adaptation" ("Romantic Aesthetics" 66) of Old World aesthetics. A rhizomatic reading moves us from seeing Cowdell and McLachlan just as branches on a tree whose powerful "root" is Burns, to seeing all three writers as parts of a multiplicity of heterogeneous "routes" that travel back and forth between Scotland and Canada and create new "lines of flight" and intersections (Deleuze and Guattari 10).

Accordingly, in the rest of this essay, I employ a rhizomatic approach in order to "think across" the work of Cowdell and McLachlan, moving away from the "binary logic" of imitation and influence to examine the multiple ways in which Burns is referenced, recontextualized, and hybridized in their work. A rhizomatic approach also allows for more concentration on each writer's movement back and forth across the Atlantic in a process of what Robert Weisbuch has termed, in the context of American writers' ambiguous reaction to British writers, a "double-cross" (xvii-xviii). I take that term both figuratively and literally here. Cowdell travelled from Nova Scotia to England, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland on a trip that lasted several years. His poetry was produced during the course of this transatlantic sojourn; in fact, the publication of his work served to finance his travels. Later in the century, McLachlan left his home in Canada West and returned several times to Scotland, occupying the dual role of being the "Burns of Canada" when in Canada and the "Scoto Canadian Poet" when in Scotland. In their travels, both writers capitalized on their transnational situations not just to represent their British North American colony to the "parent nation" but also to blur the boundary between the two. Reading Cowdell and McLachlan rhizomatically allows us to see them not just as early Canadian writers but also as writers who occupied "liminal and fluid inter-national" spaces (Hutchings and Wright 2).

Thomas Daniel Cowdell, a merchant and music teacher, was one of the earliest British North American poets to reference Burns in a collection of original poetry. The son of an Irish mother and an English father, Cowdell grew up in London before emigrating to Nova Scotia in 1789 and marrying a Scottish wife with whom he had eight children. In December 1808, in the wake of business failure and a dispute within

the Halifax Methodist congregration in which he was involved, Cowdell set sail for Ireland in order to claim an inheritance left to him by his mother's brother (Vincent). He took to publishing the writing that he had begun on his transatlantic journey in order to raise funds to support himself while he pursued his inheritance. Accordingly, in 1809, he published *A Poetical Journal of a Tour from British North America to England, Wales, and Ireland* in Dublin. The selling point of the book was its claim to provide an authentic perspective on North America, a "continent, rul'd by extremes/Of frigid cold, and flaming beams" (9). Cautioning readers not to "credit all accounts you hear" regarding the New World, Cowdell indicates that, while the land appears to be "forbidding" enough to dissuade potential emigrants, in fact it can boast "the best of blessings" for those who take the risk (10). In the same vein as earlier writers such as Thomas Cary, author of *Abram's Plains: A Poem* (1789), Cowdell describes the British North American colonies in terms of their utility for Britain, noting the Naval Yard of Halifax, the cattle that "might grace an English market well," and the seas "teeming" with fish (13-14), not to mention the "sons" of the "Colonies" who enlist in the navy "to rule the foaming tide" and further Britain's cause in the Napoleonic wars (20).

Cowdell's poem, however, moves from describing the Muse's "wood note lay" in "British North America" (10) to tracing a route back from Nova Scotia to Britain to "see my native land again" (20). The narrator of *A Poetical Journal* occupies a liminal place; a native son who has been away "full twenty years," he both celebrates Britain as a "most favor'd isle" (24) and criticizes the moral degradation that he now perceives, ranging from the "Lewdness, and drunkenness and strife" (27) of the streets of Portsmouth to the corruption of the "fashionably great" (32) (including those clamouring for the resignation of Prince Frederick, Duke of York, as commander-in-chief after the scandal involving the sale of military commissions by his mistress, Mary Anne Clarke). The circumnavigation of Britain takes Cowdell to Portsmouth, London, Windsor, Bath, Bristol, Carnarvon, Cork, and Dublin. *A Poetical Journal* ends with a positive perspective on Ireland and two patriotic songs celebrating George III's jubilee. With its dedication to "the Loyal Citizens of Dublin," *A Poetical Journal* attempts to confirm Irish participation in the British Constitution in the wake of the 1798 Rebellion and the subsequent 1801 Act of Union.

Cowdell republished *A Poetical Journal* two years later in order to finance his trip back to Halifax, expanding the collection and renaming it in the process. *The Nova Scotia Minstrel: Written on a Tour from North America to Great Britain and Ireland: Interspersed with Suitable Reflections, and Moral Songs, Adapted to the Most Popular Airs* was published in London in 1811, with a further edition published in 1817 in Dublin during a return visit to that city. Cowdell made significant changes to the subsequent editions of his work in order to increase its marketability. Although *A Poetical Journal* included only two songs, which appeared at the end, the 1811 edition of *The Nova Scotia Minstrel* folds twenty-four songs into the main narrative of the poem, and the 1817 version boasts forty (Vincent). Cowdell's interest in including songs and "popular airs" can be attributed to his attempt to capitalize on the phenomenal success of Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies*, the first two volumes of which had appeared in 1808 when Cowdell was commencing his travels. But he also combines resonances of Moore with references to Burns, for the later versions of *The Nova Scotia Minstrel* extend the narrator's journey to "Auld Scotia," both indirectly and directly calling attention to Scotland's most famous son. Cowdell adapts Burns for his own purposes, but his work can also be read as offering challenges to "arborescent" perspectives.

In his preface to *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (1786), Burns drew attention to himself as a rustic bard "unbroken by rules of Art" (iv). Similarly, in the new introduction included in the 1817 version of *The Nova Scotia Minstrel*, Cowdell aligns himself with Burns by referring to his own "untaught genius" and asking the reader to pardon his "rudely varying verse" (6): "I write from sentimental rule; / Weak heads may from pure laws depart, / While firm and upright stands the heart" (8). Cowdell suggests that his "bosom" shall glow "with gratitude" if he makes a positive impact on "the good" (11). In addition, he includes what appears to be a reference to the last line of Burns's controversially democratic poem "The Dumfries Volunteers." Where Burns declared "But while we sing, God save the king, / We'll ne'er forget the people" (*Best Laid Schemes* 161), Cowdell offers a more politically conservative turn of phrase: "The best returns I can prepare / My violoncello shall declare, / In untaught strains whilst I shall sing, / Heav'n bless the people and the king" (8). As well as implicitly referencing Burns's works, Cowdell makes Burns's influence on him explicit, giving one of his

poems, "To Walter Bromley, Esq., Paymaster 23d Regt," the subtitle *"An Imitation of Burns."* Cowdell addresses Bromley in the Scots register, employing the Scottish poetic form, "Standard Habbie," that Burns had popularized:

> Gude mon, the poor maun [must] loe [love] ye weel [well]:
> Care no what ithers [others] say or feel;
> But foster ev'ry mither's chiel [mother's child].
> > Ye'll soon get on.
> Guide 'em to loe [love], wi [with] all your skill
> > Baith [both] God and mon [man]. (116)

Whereas the work of Burns in Standard Habbie is often full of satirical bite, however, Cowdell's description of Bromley, the man who "open'd" the Royal Acadian School, the first school in Halifax to be based upon the principles of the Quaker Joseph Lancaster (Fingard), is unremittingly positive, since he advises Bromley to ignore the controversy surrounding his charitable enterprise and continue with his mission. A Methodist lay preacher himself, Cowdell praises the humanitarian efforts of Bromley in educating the poor:

> Heav'n smile on sic [such] a mon [man] as this
> Whaes maist [whose most] delightful joy it is
> To share anither's [another's] joy or bliss
> > Wi' a' his soul:
> His paith [path] to Guid [God] he canna miss —
> > There's na controul. (117)

This use of the Scots vernacular suggests that Cowdell, like Burns himself, possessed what Jeremy Smith refers to as the ability to "'code-switch,' i.e. to shift from one register or variety of language to another in accordance with the social situation of his language" (84). But Bromley himself was an Englishman, born in Lincolnshire; he did not speak Scots. Cowdell's employment of the stanzaic form and linguistic register associated with Burns, therefore, was designed to recall for the reader the affinities of Burns with the labouring class, whose children Bromley taught, rather than the Scottish associations of Burns. "To Walter Bromley" suggests how Cowdell as a writer in the New World could choose how to recontextualize elements of Burns's work, preserving and reframing what he wished to emphasize.

In "To the Memory of Robert Burns," Cowdell directly addresses Burns as "Sweet Bardie of Auld Scotia's plain," again using the Standard Habbie stanza associated with Burns; as he notes, the poem is "*attempted in his own metre*," but this time Cowdell uses standard English with the Scottish stanza (*Nova Scotia* 112). "To the Memory of Robert Burns" suggests that the poetry of Burns has given Scotland "an immortal name," for "All England," for example, "smiling owns thy fame" (112). But Cowdell also indicates that Burns is well known beyond the shores of the British Isles:

> Nor England only knows thy worth,
> Or Caledonians in the North;
> Thy muse, unfetter'd, wanders forth
>   Beyond the sea:
> Even Nova Scotia's barren earth,
>   Yields this for thee. (112)

Cowdell's poem imagines Burns's "muse" being "unfetter'd" from its local context and generating new kinds of poetic enterprise. Although Burns himself never embarked on the journey to the New World that he had originally planned before the publication of his *Poems* in 1786, in Cowdell's poem Burns's muse inspires the narrator himself to create poetry in what otherwise seems to be an inhospitable poetic climate. *The Nova Scotia Minstrel* is a product both of Cowdell's actual travels to Scotland and of his imagining of Burns's muse's travelling away from Scotland and "Beyond the sea."

Burns, his muse, and his work are presented as "detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification" (Deleuze and Guattari 13) in *The Nova Scotia Minstrel*, a work composed in transatlantic transit as, in Cowdell's words, "the first fruit of a distant colony offered to the parent isles" (3). But also apparent in *The Nova Scotia Minstrel* when we read rhizomatically is the challenge to ideas of binary logic of "colony" and "parent isles." In seeking to explain further their image of the rhizome, Deleuze and Guattari offer the example of an orchid and a wasp "connected, caught up in one another" (10). The orchid forms "an image, a tracing of a wasp," as if the "wasp is a piece in the orchid's reproductive apparatus." From an "arborescent" perspective, "It could be said that the orchid imitates the wasp, reproducing its image in a signifying fashion." However, it is possible to see "something else entirely . . . going on," sug-

gest Deleuze and Guattari — "not an imitation at all but a capture of code, surplus value of code, an increase in valence, a veritable becoming, a becoming-wasp of the orchid and a becoming-orchid of the wasp." From this perspective, "wasp and orchid, as heterogeneous elements, form a rhizome" (10). A rhizomatic reading of Cowdell and Burns offers us an opportunity to gain a similarly different perspective, seeing the two poets as "connected, caught up in one another." In this reading, Cowdell engages with Burns's "unfetter'd muse" not as "imitation" but as "a capture of code." In this light, *The Nova Scotia Minstrel* can be read as a vehicle through which Cowdell "owns [Burns's] fame," in both senses of the word, both "acknowledging" the fame of the Scottish poet and, in another sense, "possessing" that fame insofar as Cowdell's new poetic activity increases Burns's "valence" beyond Scotland, constructing a new line of flight for Burns to connect with global culture (Pittock).

The early to mid-nineteenth century saw a marked increase in Scottish emigration to British North America, especially as the British North American Land Company and the New Brunswick and Nova Scotia Land Companies all "addressed their recruiting appeals to Scots" (Waterston, *Rapt in Plaid* 20-21). Among these Scottish immigrants, a number both drew on their Scottish heritage for subject matter and wrote poetry using the Scots vernacular, as evident in Clark's collection, *Selections from Scottish Canadian Poets*. Arguably, the most famous of these immigrants was Alexander McLachlan. He was the son of Charles McLachlan, a cotton mill mechanic from Paisley who emigrated to Canada in 1820, leaving his pregnant wife and three children, including Alexander, with his father-in-law in Johnstone, Renfrewshire. Charles was granted one hundred acres of uncleared land in Caledon Township, Canada West, but he died before he could settle it. Back in Scotland, Alexander became a tailor's apprentice in Glasgow and a supporter of the Chartist movement, serving as a delegate for Johnstone at the Great Meeting of Scottish Delegates held in Glasgow in August 1839. In 1840, Alexander emigrated to Canada himself in order to claim his father's land, working in the backwoods of Ontario as a farmer and tailor and lecturing at Mechanics Institutes (Edwards). His first book of poems, *The Spirit of Love*; *and Other Poems*, was published in 1846 in Toronto. It was followed by *Poems* (1856), *Lyrics* (1858), and *The Emigrant, and Other Poems* (1861). *Poems and Songs* appeared in 1874 and *Songs of Arran* in 1889.

McLachlan references Burns in a number of his poems. "My Love Is Like the Lily Flower" (*Emigrant* 181-82), for example, obtains some of its affective power from its allusion to Burns's "My Love Is Like a Red, Red Rose." "Epistle to William Smith, Teacher" borrows a phrase from Burns's "To a Mouse, on Turning Up Her Nest with the Plough, November, 1785" to convey sentiments similar to those found in "To a Louse. On Seeing One on a Lady's Bonnet at Church":

> For O! the very warst o' folk,
> Hae something that is good,
> And when they gang a bit aglee,
> Let's mind that neither you nor me,
>   Are better than we should. (*Emigrant* 194-95)

McLachlan also composed two poems on Burns. He read "To the Memory of Burns" at the centenary celebration that he attended at St. Lawrence Hall in Toronto. The poem emphasizes the levelling nature of Burns but eschews Scots vernacular in favour of standard English:

> All hail! prince and peasant, the hour that gave birth
> To the heart whose wild beatings resound through
>   the earth;
> Whose sympathies nations nor creeds could not bind,
> But gushed out in torrents of love to mankind. (*Emigrant* 173-74)

Returning to the subject of Burns in his first-prize poem for the Burns anniversary celebration in 1885, McLachlan again suggests the egalitarian outlook of Burns, this time, however, employing Scots vernacular to make his points:

> Hail tae the bard! wha did belang [belong]
>   Tae nae [to no] mere class or clan;
> But did maintain and not in vain
>   The Britherhood o' Man:
> The King o' Herts! wha did far mair [more]
>   Tae knit us tae ilk ither [to each other],
> Than oor [our] lang line (some ca't divine)
>   O' Kings a' put thegither [together]. (*Burns* 1)

McLachlan's representation of Burns as the author of "A Man's a Man" is clear in these poems dedicated to the memory of the democratic Scottish bard.

Nineteenth-century critics made much of McLachlan's references to Burns. Writing in *Sketches of Celebrated Canadians* (1862), Henry J. Morgan, for example, suggested that "Mr. McLachlan's chief aim in becoming an author and lecturer" was "to be an exponent of the minds of the working men of Canada; in fact, to be to Canada, if possible, what Burns was to Scotland. . . . His ambition is to stand shoulder to shoulder with Burns and [Hugh] Miller, as a pioneer in establishing the literature of the working classes" (756-57). Similarly, in his "Biographical Sketch" introducing the posthumous *Poetical Works of Alexander McLachlan*, Edward Hartley Dewart referred to McLachlan as "The Burns of Canada" (11). Indeed, a plaque in the public library in Orangeville (close to his home at Erin) commemorates him as "The Robbie Burns of Canada" (Edwards).

More recent literary critics have largely accepted this equation. According to Waterston, McLachlan's work constitutes "the climax of the Burns tradition in Canada" ("Lowland Tradition" 208). In his biographical sketch included in the *Canadian Poetry Database*, George L. Parker also comments on "McLachlan's debt to Burns," while James Doyle, in *Progressive Heritage: The Evolution of a Politically Radical Literary Tradition in Canada*, follows suit with his observation that, "Like Burns, McLachlan makes use of the ballad form, dialect, the experience of lower-class people, and egalitarian and revolutionary sentiments" (27). Only D.M.R. Bentley suggests that McLachlan's relationship with Burns is more complex than suggested by this model. According to Bentley, Dewart's (and subsequent critics') labelling of McLachlan as "The Burns of Canada" "obscures McLachlan's selective approach to Burns and his considerable debts to other poets" (*Mimic Fires* 251). This is absolutely true. I would argue, however, that even Bentley's careful discussion reinforces an arborescent form of thinking, for concepts such as "debt" still imply a hierarchical relationship between an original source and a "borrower" who "owes" credit to it.

Viewing McLachlan's use of Burns from a rhizomatic perspective, however, enables us to go beyond the idea of "debt" and allows us to see the new "lines of flight" created as part of the rhizome. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that "Every rhizome contains lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organized, signified, attributed, etc, as well as lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees. There is a rupture in the rhizome whenever seg-

mentary lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is part of the rhizome" (10). Part of the "rupture" that McLachlan's poetry creates involves new political lines of flight and new multiplicities as McLachlan uses his work to comment on the new political possibilities for working people available in the British North American provinces, political possibilities that entail rejecting Old World politics while fostering relationships among immigrant groups. "The Workman's Song," for example, addresses itself to "ye weary sons of toil," asserting that "We've eat oppression's bitter bread, / And eat it far too long" (*Emigrant* 198). "John Tamson's Address to the Clergy in Scotland" excoriates Scottish workers for not protesting the actions of the powerful Highland landlords:

> Awake, if ye would longer be
> > The pilots that would steer us,
> Attack the vices o' the age,
> > Be up, be moral heroes!
> Tell Sutherland's high mighty Duke,
> > Tell Atholl without fearing,
> The Devil keeps a black account,
> > Against them for their *clearing*. (*Emigrant* 143)

McLachlan's condemnation of the upper classes generally expresses itself less as a call for political action and more as a reminder of Christian principles, however. More common than poems that adopt a politically radical perspective in his works are those that promote sympathy among all members of the human race. "We're a' John Tamson's Bairns," for example, adopts the Scottish vernacular to urge everyone, "nae matter wha ye be," to "listen to my sang":

> For there's a human sympathy,
> > That sings to you and me;
> For as some kindly soul has said,
> > All underneath the starns,
> Despite of country, clime and creed,
> > Are a' John Tamson's Bairns. (*Emigrant* 126)

McLachlan's poem "We Lean on One Another" similarly suggests that, though there are some external differences among people, "nature meant that we should lean, / In love on one another" (*Emigrant* 216). Morgan

suggested that McLachlan was interested in demonstrating the "mental workings of the working man" to the rich in order to prove that "the real distinction between the two classes consists less in intrinsic worth, than in fortuitous antecedents" (157). This poem, however, reverses that design by showing the "mental workings" of the rich to demonstrate the interdependence of all men: "A king may need our sympathy, / For all his great attendance; / For among men there's no such thing / As perfect independence" (*Emigrant* 217). McLachlan's doctrine of equality applies not just to men of different classes but also to those of different nationalities, for it reaches out to Irish compatriots, suggesting that, "Tho' great is mighty England's heir, / Poor Paddy is his brother!" (*Emigrant* 217).

For McLachlan, Canada represents an escape from the tyrannies of the Old World as well as of other parts of the New World. In "The Genius of Canada," he depicts the new national spirit coming "from over the western wave" but rejecting the "southern skies" because it hears "the cries of every weeping slave" there. Instead, Canada chooses the "freedom" of the northern woods in which to rear her new "race," one made up of Irish, English, and Scots influences:

> "And these," she says, "are the hearts we mould
> In the land of lake and pine,
>   Where the Shamrock blows,
>   And the English Rose
> And the Scottish Thistle twine." (*Lyrics* 17)

Significantly, however, McLachlan does not depict these Old World affiliations disappearing. Indeed, they serve as identities that ensure loyalty to the "Great mother" of Britain (*Poems and Songs* 18). "Song Written for the Scottish Gathering, in the Crystal Palace Grounds, Toronto, 14th September, 1859," for example, conjures up memories of wandering through "bonnie glens, / Wi' gowans a' in bloom," in order to mount an emotional appeal for loyalty to the British Empire:

> And should the sleeky Loon o' France,
>   His faith wi' Britain break,
> We'll help to put the Lion's foot,
>   Ance mair upon his neck;
> A Highland host in Canada
>   Will don the kilt again,

And rush their native land to free;
    Like thunder o'er the main. (*Emigrant* 160-61)

Despite his appeal for loyalty to Britain, for McLachlan Canada's position of being governed by distant Britain represents the possibility of a different relationship. In "On the Prince's Visit," the speaker hopes that "our land of maple green" might be "The brightest gem in Britain's crown" but also suggests the mutual obligation of the ruler and the ruled, calling attention to the poorest in the nation: "Long may she have a loyal race, / Of peasants in her valleys, / And be their humble hearths secure, / As is their monarch's palace" (*Emigrant* 152). The poem concludes in the optative mood, mixing good wishes for the prince with a subtle qualification: "May wisdom guide the Prince's heart, / And from all ill preserve it, / And we'll be true to him, if like / His mother he'll deserve it" (*Emigrant* 152-53).

The "if" of the penultimate sentence suggests the delicate balance that McLachlan seeks for British North America. Although he does not advocate independence from Britain for Canada, he does point out the importance of renegotiating in a New World context the political rights and obligations found in the Old World. "On the Prince's Visit" echoes Cowdell's earlier comment regarding the relationship between "the people and the king," a comment adapted from the more radical statement of Burns. Whereas Cowdell, writing soon after the Irish Rebellion, supported a conservative politics in the New World as in the Old World, albeit one that ensured provision for the needy, McLachlan advocated for a more pluralistic society in British North America, creating new "lines of flight."[4]

Moreover, as much as McLachlan engages with Burns, he also places him alongside other writers from the Old World in what Deleuze and Guattari call a "multiplicity" or "assemblage" characteristic not of a root but of a rhizome (9-10). The title page of McLachlan's *Lyrics*, for example, contains an epigraph from the Glaswegian poet Thomas MacQueen's *The Moorland Minstrel* (1840). Poems and songs from *Lyrics* and from McLachlan's later volumes also reference the weaver poet and songwriter Robert Tannahill, from Paisley, where McLachlan's weaver father, too, was born. Indeed, McLachlan included "Ode on the Death of Robert Tannahill" in his *Lyrics* (34-35), while "The Young Rake; Or, Skinflint's Last Advice" (223-27) has resonances with Allan Ramsay's "Lucky Spence's Last Advice." McLachlan also references non-

Scottish poets in his work. Section IX of "The Emigrant," which begins with "O sad was the heart of the old Highland piper, / When forced from the hills of Lochaber away" (*Emigrant* 83), for example, recalls Thomas Moore's lyric quality and focus on exile. "Song, Written for the Scottish Gathering in the Crystal Palace Grounds, Toronto, 14th September, 1859," with its opening line, "My heart leaps up wi' joy to see" (*Emigrant* 159), references Wordsworth's well-known poem. The echoes of Tennyson also resound in many of McLachlan's poems, such as "The Seer," with its chorus "Round, round on their earthly mound / The laden ages reel, / No creak, no sound, to the ceaseless round / Of Time's eternal wheel" (*Emigrant* 121). As Bentley notes, "Burns is merely a very prominent member of the chorus of writers who can frequently be heard singing cheek-to-cheek in McLachlan's poetry" ("Introduction"). In fact, Old World poets from across the British archipelago appear within McLachlan's work in lines of connection so thick as to challenge the idea of a single root and branch. Rather than seeing these instances as McLachlan's "debts" to these writers, a rhizomatic reading of his work allows us to see how Burns and other writers are re-presented in different lines of flight and multiplicities. Such a reading can engage us in seeing McLachlan as establishing his own "becoming," in Deleuze and Guattari's terms, and as contributing to the global "becoming" of Burns and other poets (Seargent and Stafford).

A rhizomatic reading of McLachlan, as of Cowdell, also enables greater attention to the idea of double-crossing back and forth across the Atlantic as it brings into greater focus McLachlan's liminal position between his Canadian home and his Scottish birthplace, not just metaphorically but also materially. Waterston notes that in 1862 McLachlan was "appointed emigration agent, to encourage Scottish workers to come to Canada" (*Rapt in Plaid* 27). As one of several agents sent to England, Ireland, and Scotland to encourage immigration to Canada and prevent the loss of immigrants to the United States, Paul Gates notes, McLachlan was given the task of touring Scotland, "especially the rural sections, lecturing on Canada as a field for immigration" (33). McLachlan was also commissioned to "prepare a report on the condition of the emigrating classes and the best means of making known to them the advantages of Canada" (33). In addition to supporting the transatlantic migration of people from Scotland to Canada, McLachlan figured as a transatlantic cultural broker. On a visit to Scotland in 1874 to sell

copies of his *Poems and Songs*, he delivered a lecture on Shakespeare in his hometown of Johnstone. He was billed on this occasion as "The Celebrated Scoto [sic] Canadian Poet" (Edwards), a reversal of his label in the New World as the "Burns of Canada." His transatlantic cultural activity also led to his ability to engage with publishers on both sides of the Atlantic, as in 1889, when he published *Songs of Arran* with the Edinburgh publishers Mackenzie and Storrie. Such double-crossings are indicative of "the eddies and cross-currents" that, as Newman suggests, complicate the transatlantic literary landscape and transform the simplicities of "roots and radicles" into rhizomatic connections (10).

The "Notices of the Press" published with *The Emigrant, and Other Poems* (n.p.), drawn as they were from sources on both sides of the Atlantic, further confirm the double-crossing of McLachlan's work. In one such notice, Thomas D'Arcy McGee, the ex-Young Irelander turned Canadian parliamentarian, suggests that it is "by extending to such men as McLachlan [along with Charles Sangster and Charles Heavysege] a timely welcome at their own doors, that Canada is to make her way in letters as in commerce and self-government." A notice from *The Scottish American Journal* commends McLachlan for "rousing up the Scottish heart with song and eloquence." The well-known lawyer and author of the ten-volume *Modern History of Europe from the French Revolution to the Fall of Napoleon* (1833-42), Sir Archibald Alison, comments that "We have always taken a deep interest in Canada, and will henceforth take a deeper interest, from knowing that it contains a citizen so truly inspired with the genius of poetry as the author of these beautiful lyrics." And a review republished from the *Glasgow Citizen* effuses that "Mr. McLachlan, the author of this volume, has breathed his hopes and fears, and fine imaginations into tangible verse. Many of the lyrics are ably written and almost sing themselves while you read them." McLachlan's work drew critics from both sides of the Atlantic into dialogue in a rhizomatic connection.

In *Transatlantic Insurrections: British Culture and the Formation of American Literature*, Paul Giles comments on how the national literary histories of English literature and American literature have developed in relation to one another: "[R]ecent understandings of these subjects have often been framed, covertly, if not overtly, by particular sectional interests which have tended to occlude the more disruptive forces of interference and alterity. The retrospective fabrication of national tradi-

tion becomes a reverse projection whereby utopian hopes for the future are displaced back into an idealized version of the past" (7). Literary histories of Canada have also been "fabricated" by "a reverse projection." In Canada's case, such histories have emphasized Canadian literature's close connections with British literary history, but they have also frequently written out the nuances of what made up the "British tradition." As I have been suggesting here, it is important to break down the homogeneous assumptions underlying what we think of as that tradition in Canadian literature and to take into account instead the particular cultural, economic, and social conditions associated with each of the individual nations within the British archipelago as well as each nation's unique connection with British North America. In the process of investigating these connections, as the cases of Cowdell and McLachlan demonstrate, it is also important to question the model of influence, since such a perspective can reinforce a hegemonic system that places a higher value on Old World writing. British North American poets used Burns consciously for their own purposes, recontextualizing him for transatlantic consumption and creating new connections and lines of flight as they crossed metaphorically and literally between Canada and Britain. A rhizomatic reading of Burns in relation to Cowdell and McLachlan can help us to see the early Canadian poets' use of Burns not as "an imitation at all but a capture of code, surplus value of code, and increase in valence, a veritable becoming" (Deleuze and Guattari 10). Such a reading can help us to appreciate better the complexity of the works of these two early Canadian poets and to start to "unfetter" them from the anxiety of Burnsian influence under which critics have placed them.

Notes

[1] At the Parker House Hotel in Boston, for example, Ralph Waldo Emerson proclaimed Burns "the poet of the middle class" who "represents in the mind of men to-day that great uprising of the middle class against the armed and privileged minorities — that uprising which worked politically in the American and French Revolutions, and which, not in governments, so much as in education and in social order, has changed the face of the world" (qtd. in Ballantine 551).

[2] The editors of *Recalling Early Canada: Reading the Political in Literary and Cultural Production* suggest that the trajectory of criticism of early Canadian literary works has shifted from a single "colony to nation" paradigm to "multi-cultural, postcolonial and pluralistic

analysis" (Blair et al. ix). For examples of perspectives that acknowledge the hetereogeneity within the homogenizing concept of the "British tradition," see Gittings and Rieley.

[3] Kevin Hutchings and Julia Wright read transatlanticism as "a concept through which to unpack the conceptualization and representation of liminal and fluid inter-national spaces and, above all, transnational subjects who resist the interpellative pull of the modern nation-state" (2). Amanda Claybaugh, conversely, argues that, rather than constituting a new field in itself, transatlanticism is "a call to reorganize our existing objects of study in new ways. Properly understood, it is not a field at all, but a provocation within fields, a challenge to reconsider whether these fields should continue to structure our thinking and teaching" (445).

[4] In their neglect of Indigenous Peoples, however, both demonstrate what Diana Brydon, quoting Michael Rogin, identifies as a "cultivated structure of disavowal" at the root of early Canadian writing (58).

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