CHAPTER II

At "sang about": Scottish song and the challenge to British culture

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In *Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing Since 1790*, Seamus Deane comments on the process of translating Irish oral sources into print:

> The sounds that issue from the mouths of the Irish – as speech, song, or wail – pose a challenge for those who wish to represent them in print . . . What is taken in by and emitted from the mouth cannot easily be represented in print. The movement from an oral to a print culture is not simply a matter of translating folk tales or customs from the mouths of the people to the page. It involves an attempt to control a strange bodily economy in which food, drink, speech and song are intimately related.[1]

For Deane, translation operates as a violent form of control, a cutting off of the organic body in an attempt to assert ideological power. In this chapter I extend and modify Deane's analysis in examining the case of Scotland in the eighteenth century and the Romantic era, as I argue that the representation of Scottish songs in printed collections served not just to promote the cultural hegemony of a London-based Britain, but in many cases to challenge the basis of its power.

Collections of notated Scottish songs – for dancing, musical instruction, and amateur playing – began circulating throughout Britain before the eighteenth century, published variously in Edinburgh, London, and even Dublin and Paris.[2] As David Johnson notes: "There was, in London in the 1680s, a flourishing genre called 'Scotch songs'; these were somewhat debased popular songs of allegedly Scottish origin, some with fake tunes, all with fake words, and Londoners liked them because they were refreshingly different from the classical productions of Purcell and Lully" (*Music and Society*, 131). While many "Scotch songs" were drawn from an "invented" traditional corpus, as Johnson suggests, others derived from (or were loosely based on) songs from actual oral sources. The translation of these songs into written music, initially in manuscript form, then in printed collections, altered them in a number of significant ways. First, notation enforced more uniformity on the songs.[3] As Michael Chanan observes, "the development of notation has the effect of shaping musical materials to satisfy its own demands, thereby marginalizing and excluding from its syntax whatever it is unable to capture."[4] In addition, the songs were presented with musical accompaniment by non-traditional instruments (German flute, hautboy, harpsichord, and, by the end of the century, pianoforte) or, in many cases, lyrics were omitted completely and only the title was retained. The process of printing also changed the relationship between music, musician, and audience implicit in the original performance of Scottish songs. The local "bodily economy" of which the original songs were part was left behind, as "Scotch songs" became commodities available in shops and performed in drawing-rooms all over Britain.

In addition to altering the nature of Scottish songs, early printed collections served to homogenize the geographical and cultural peripheries of Britain. Many of the early collections were designed to appeal to a metropolitan interest in the novelty of the provinces. Songs from both the Lowland and Highland regions of Scotland are mixed together with songs from other Celtic areas. Daniel Wright's *Aria di Camera* (London, 1725), for example, bills itself as "*a Choice Collection of Scotch, Irish, & Welsh Air's* [*sic*]," compiled by representatives of the three nations. The tunes from each nation are commingled, and there are no editorial indications of their separate national affiliations. Neither does Wright seem at all concerned with establishing an accurate transliteration of his titles. Rather, as his Italian title, *Aria di Camera*, suggests, his object is to render the tunes in a manner appropriate for chamber music. Burke Thumoth also published several other collections of songs from the Celtic periphery, including *Twelve Scotch and Twelve Irish Airs with Variations* (London, *c.* 1745), arranged for the German flute, violin, or harpsichord.[5] As Thumoth's case suggests, quite often publishers who had been successful with a collection of music of one nation would try their hand at another flavor of national music. John and William Neal of Dublin, for example, published *A Colection* [sic] *of the Most Celebrated Irish Tunes* (Dublin, *c.* 1726) as well as a similarly titled *Colection* [sic] *of the most Celebrated Scotch Tunes* (Dublin, *c.* 1726). Such Scottish identity as is acknowledged in these collections is designed to appeal to an audience interested in a distinctive but harmless Scottish or "Highland humour," as Playford's *A Collection of Original Scotch-tunes (full of the Highland humours) for the violin* (London, 1700) calls it. For the most part, this "humour" is characterized as natural, simple and rural, in opposition to the artificiality of metropolitan culture.

Orpheus Caledonius (London, 1725), for example, a compilation by William Thomson, a Scot living in London, begins with a poem which contrasts the "True Passion" of the lads and lasses found in songs like "Peatie's Mill" with the "Beaus and Belles so fine and fair" (1) of the capital. Early publications of Scottish music work to create a homogeneous sense of British culture with London as the cosmopolitan center to the rustic (and disembodied) Celtic peripheries.

Allan Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany*, first published in 1724, represents Scottish songs in a very different context. Ramsay's collection does not cater to a London audience, as, unlike contemporary collections, the *Miscellany* does not include music to the songs.[6] Instead, it presents only lyrics and an indication of which song is to be used with each set of lyrics. At times the tune is obvious from the title of the song; at other times, Ramsay includes the instructions "To the tune of . . ." In order for his readers to fully appreciate and understand his work, they must already be familiar with the tunes of the songs. In other words, they must have some intimate knowledge of Scottish folk culture. In addition, whereas collections like the Neals' and Thompson's present music without reflection on the performance of the work, Ramsay addresses the issue of performance in his "Dedication," as he builds the participation of his readers into the meaning of his collection. Without singers "reviv[ing]" the songs with their "tunefu' notes . . . Arising saftly thro' [their] throats," he suggests, his work will fail.[7] While the songs may have been disembodied from the people who originally sang them, Ramsay imagines them being re-embodied in new contexts by the consumers of his work, "Ilka lovely British lass" who sings while she pours tea or "dances on the green" (1: v).[8]

Ramsay uses Scottish music in order to provide a positive identity for the Scots in the years shortly following the Act of Union, but he does not want the music to link Scotland simply to a nostalgic past or a rustic identity. He notes that Scots tunes are universally appreciated: "Scots tunes . . . have an agreeable gaiety and natural sweetness, that make them acceptable wherever they are known, not only among ourselves, but in other countries" (1: vii). But he presents the music as popular because it is good, not because it reflects a natural "Scotch humour." David Johnson argues that the *Tea-Table Miscellany* "was nothing less than an attempt to set up, single-handed, a complete new Scottish song repertory" (*Music and Society*, 134). It is important to keep in mind that Ramsay was establishing this new repertory in conjunction with maintaining aspects of the oral tradition. The majority of the tunes mentioned in the *Miscellany*, for example, are traditional tunes. The performance of these tunes links the singer, albeit indirectly, to the

Scottish past. Ramsay provides a number of possible lyrics for each tune, both traditional lyrics and those which he and others wrote specifically for the *Miscellany*. By including new songs, Ramsay represents Scottish song not as a fixed corpus, but as part of a dynamic and ever-changing tradition. Those songs which were written for the *Miscellany* draw more heavily on art song than folksong in a further attempt to illustrate Scotland's cultural sophistication.

Instead of reinforcing the subordination of Scotland to a hegemonic center, Ramsay works to change the model of a powerful, cosmopolitan London versus a weak, traditional Scottish periphery. He eventually expanded his project to include not just Scottish but English songs. In the new work, *The Tea-Table Miscellany: Or, A Collection of Choice Songs, Scots and English* (1737), the Scottish dominate the English songs, making the latter nation's musical contribution appear minimal. In addition, Ramsay emphasizes the international connections that Scottish music promotes. In particular, he notes the popularity of the *Miscellany* in America, as he includes the following verses by Dr. Bannerman in the Preface:

> Nor only do your lays o'er *Britain* flow.
> Round all the globe your happy sonnets go;
> Here thy soft verse made to a *Scottish* air,
> Are often sung by our *Virginian* fair.
> [Bononcini's] *Camilla's* warbling notes are heard no more,
> But yield to *Last time I came o'er the moor*;
> [Mancini's] *Hydaspes* and [Handel's] *Rinaldo* both give way
> To *Mary Scot, Tweed-side*, and *Mary Gray*. (1: viii)

Songs from the *Miscellany* serve as an indication of the power of Scottish culture to dispel the fervor for Italian opera.

Ramsay also challenges the disciplinary divisions between the arts that were being established at the time in Britain, as he implies that Scottish songs combine aspects of both poetry and music. In his Preface to the *Miscellany* he writes: "[the Scottish songs] must relish best with people who have not bestowed much of their time in acquiring a taste for that downright perfect music, which requires none, or very little of the poet's assistance" (1: viii). Ramsay intimates that music combined with poetry, which he calls "an harmonious speaking" (1: viii), is preferable to pure music. I want to explore this point a little further, situating Ramsay's commentary on Scottish song's fusion of "words and melody" within the context of what Lawrence Lipking describes as the impulse to establish the "modern rules" of the arts in the eighteenth century. According to Lipking, "Painting, music and poetry attracted larger audiences than ever before, but their accomplishments had not been set in order . . . For the first time many Englishmen thought it important that their arts should have a history and their tastes should have a guide."[9] James Harris's "A Discourse on Music, Painting and Poetry" (1744) registers this rage for order: "The Design of this Discourse is to treat of MUSIC, PAINTING AND POETRY; to consider in what they *agree*, and in what they *differ*."[10] Although Lipking attributes the "transformation in studies of the arts" to a newfound interest in "both history and the arts," the urge was also fed by nationalist interests. The founding of the Royal Academy, the Shakespeare Jubilee of 1769, and the Handel Commemoration of 1784, to which Lipking refers, are not just "tokens of a great surge of popular appreciation and respect for the arts" (*The Ordering of the Arts*, 7), but also a reflection of the desire to promote an English-dominated British national identity by endowing it with a firm cultural foundation.[11]

The project to establish the foundations of the British arts also involved assigning relative value to the different disciplines in order to determine which of the arts "IS MORE EXCELLENT THAN THE OTHER TWO" ("A Discourse," 55), in Harris's words. And the measuring stick most often used in this determination was the medium's imitative capacity. Harris asserts that music has the weakest power of imitation of the three fine arts. Working from the assumption that "the *Definite* and *Certain* is ever preferable to the *Indefinite* and *Uncertain*" ("A Discourse," 80), he concludes that music is inferior to poetry (which is itself inferior to painting in terms of imitative ability), because "MUSICAL IMITATIONS, tho' *Natural*, aspire not to raise the *same* Ideas, but only Ideas *similar* and analogous" ("A Discourse," 80). John Brown echoes Harris's view, observing in his *A Dissertation on the Rise, Union, and Power, The Progressions, Separations, and Corruptions, Of Poetry and Music* (1763) that the "Expressions" of music are "general and vague" in comparison with those found in poetry.[12] Music clearly ranks at the bottom of the artistic hierarchy.[13]

By presenting Scottish song as a unique combination of words and music, the *Miscellany* defies the conventional separation and hierarchization of the arts in Britain and disrupts the standard assessments used to define British culture.[14] Furthermore, by indicating that "[the Scottish songs] must relish best with people who have not bestowed much of their time in acquiring a taste for . . . perfect music" (1: viii), Ramsay suggests that Scottish songs provide an alternative medium which is more accessible to people who are not musical experts. Scottish songs are designed for a population who take pleasure in singing, not for those who have time and money to devote to perfecting the arts. Rather than acting as yet another "attempt to control" Scottish oral culture, Ramsay's printed Scottish songs assert Scottish identity at the same time as they challenge the foundations of British culture.

The popularity of Ramsay's work is indicated by the fact that *The Tea-Table Miscellany* enjoyed steady republication throughout the eighteenth century.[15] A fourteenth edition was published in 1769, the same year as fellow Scot David Herd published his collection, *The Ancient and Modern Scots Songs, Heroic Ballads, &c. Now first Collected in one Body, From the various* MISCELLANIES *wherein they formerly lay dispersed.* Herd's work was in part response to Bishop Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, published in 1765. But it also represents an extension of Ramsay's concerns. Where Percy's *Reliques* worked to excise the "ancient poetry's" connection to music and to promote the narrative aspects of the ballad, Herd's *Songs*, like Ramsay's *Miscellany*, retains an interest in the continued existence of the song tradition in Scotland and in the connection between oral and printed (or "Ancient and Modern") sources.

Percy begins his "Essay on the Ancient Minstrels" (included as an appendix in the first volume of the *Reliques*) by acknowledging that the "ancient Bards" practiced both "the arts of poetry and music," accompanying themselves with harps.[16] He notes a division which occurred when the bards left their "German forests" for Britain, and which separated "Poets," who were "men of letters" working in monasteries, from "Minstrels," who "got their livelihood by singing verses to the harp at the houses of the great," but who also practiced the composition of verse (*Reliques*, I: 347).[17] Percy suggests that "most of the old heroic ballads in this collection" (I: 347) were composed by minstrels who were poets and musicians, although their art began to deteriorate soon after this era. Apart from noting that the minstrels played on harps and that the name for the harp, "cithera," derives from an Anglo-Saxon not a Celtic word (I: 390), Percy is not interested in the kind of music that was played with the ballads. He is concerned with the narrative matter of the ballads, not the manner in which they were performed. In concentrating on the literary rather than the musical heritage of England, Percy concurs with the assessments of his contemporaries Harris and Brown (the latter of whom he quotes regarding the unification of "melody, poem and dance" [I: 384] in ancient minstrelsy) regarding poetry's superiority over music. In *Crimes of Writing*, Susan Stewart argues that in eighteenth-century ballad collections a single text represents "a fragment of a larger whole that is a matter not only of other versions, but of the entire aura of the oral world – such a world's imagined presence, immediacy, organicism, and authenticity."[18] Percy's project presents ballads disembodied from their particular musical sources – specific tunes – and attached instead to a general concept of orality.

The influence of the *Reliques* can be seen in the Preface of *Scots Songs* in Herd's discussion of ancient Scottish poetry's role in illustrating "the most natural pictures of ancient manners."[19] Capitalizing on the popularity of Percy's work, Herd also includes a number of "Heroic Ballads" in the second part of his book. Herd's *Scots Songs*, however, refuses a dissociation from music, as the editor "confess[es]" himself "warmly attached" to both the poetry and the music of "the original Scottish songs" (*Scots Songs*, iii). In fact, he suggests that "the merit of the one is, in many instances, equal to the other" (iii). Like Ramsay, Herd provides lyrics without any music, instead including an editorial indication of what tune is to be used in each case. The readers of the *Scots Songs*, like those of the *Tea-Table Miscellany*, must participate in recreating the songs based on their previous knowledge of Scottish song. Also like Ramsay, Herd provides traditional and newly composed lyrics to traditional tunes, fulfilling his promise of representing both the "Ancient" and the "Modern" Scots songs. He expresses his regret that "the original words to many favourite tunes, once everywhere known, are now irrecoverably lost, excepting what are to be found in the memories of country people" (*Scots Songs*, iv). But he maintains hope in the embodied knowledge of the people of the country, as he expresses his desire to gather additional material. The *Scots Songs* includes an Advertisement noting that the editor intends to publish "*other old songs as can by any means be obtained – together with several modern songs, by celebrated authors, to the old Scottish tunes, together with an ample* Glossary *for the whole, which could not be contained at the end of this volume*" (ix). In this Advertisement, Herd requests submissions from anyone "*into whose hands the following collection may come*" who is "*possessed of any Scots songs of merit, not here found*" (x).

According to Stewart, ballad collecting does not so much produce a "fixed form" but rather releases "the oral from such fixity" (*Crimes of Writing*, 104). Stewart reads the eighteenth-century "writing of folklore" as "a method for making oral genres extinct just as the zeal for trophies might ironically . . . both celebrate and eradicate a species" (104). While Herd, like Percy, does engage in a certain nostalgia for the world of oral culture, he also represents "the old Scottish tunes" as a renewable resource involving community activity and an interaction between oral and print sources. *Scots Songs* is not a finished product that preserves a dying or vanished oral culture, but an ongoing process that relies on the resources, including the singing and composing bodies, of the current Scottish community. Herd presents an alternative cultural genealogy to that suggested in the *Reliques*, one in which oral culture does not give way to a literary print culture, but in which the two coexist and replenish each other.[20]

Writing a few years after Herd, Robert Burns also draws on the radical potential of the song tradition of Scotland to trouble the homogeneity of both the British nation and its literary market. In the "Epistle to John Lapraik," for example, Burns sets up an opposition between Scottish and British literary culture, between "rhymin'" and "poetry" (lines 49–50), with the speaker of the poem coming down on the side of the "hamely" Muse that inspired his Scottish predecessors:[21]

On Fasteneen we had a rockin,
To ca' the crack and weave our stockin;
And there was muckle fun and jokin,
  Ye need na doubt;
At length we had a hearty yokin,
  At *sang about.*

There was ae *sang*, amang the rest,
Aboon them a' it pleas'd me best,
That some kind husband had addrest,
  To some sweet wife:
It thirl'd the heart-strings thro' the breast,
  A' to the life.

I've scarce heard ought describ'd sae weel,
What gen'rous, manly bosoms feel;
Thought I, "Can this be *Pope*, or *Steele*,
  Or *Beattie*'s wark;"
They tald me 'twas an odd kind chiel
  About *Muirkirk*. (lines 7–24)[22]

The poem suggests that it is the activity of song (or "sang," as it is referred to in Scots) in particular which destabilizes British literary values. The action takes place at a "rockin" or "sang about" of a local Scottish community.[23] The narrator associates his own literary practice with oral culture, deliberately setting out his powers in opposition to the British literary tradition. He notes that "critic-folk" are outraged that he dares "To mak a sang" (line 58), and he concludes the epistle by pledging himself Lapraik's friend and servant "while I can either sing, or whissle" (line 131). Moreover, he also re-presents writers from the tradition of British *belles-lettres* within Scottish oral culture. The speaker's first reaction to the "sang" that touches him most is to conclude that it must be by Pope, or Steele, or Beattie. The ironic implication is that it would not be unusual to find works by those writers in the medium of song. In *The Making of the English Literary Canon*, Trevor Ross suggests that poets in the eighteenth century derived their authority from "the canonic masters" before them whose work they received and reproduced "for a modern audience, rendering it accessible through commentary, certifying its canonicity, consecrating it within its own hallowed temple."[24] In the "Epistle to Lapraik," Burns contests the authority of the canonic masters – and the literary economy they represent – by consecrating them within a Scottish "sang about."

Burns further destabilizes British literary culture by including songs within his published book of poetry. *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, published at Kilmarnock in 1786, contains five songs. David Daiches expresses his surprise that Burns should have included "so few songs in the Kilmarnock volume," given the fact that he had "produced several charming songs by 1786."[25] Daiches suggests that:

> The reason for the negligible number of songs in this volume is probably to be found in Burns's concern for the taste of the genteel audience to whom the volume was addressed . . . Burns probably felt that he would reveal a naiveté in taste if he showed a preference for songs over other kinds of poetry . . . For all his interest in song, he does not appear seriously to have associated his songs with his ambition to be a Scottish poet recognized by the genteel world. (*Robert Burns*, 209).

I contend that Burns's use of his songs – however few – is an important aspect of his poetic self-representation. Specifically, Burns used Scottish song to create an alternative cultural economy to that of the "genteel [English] world." He does not provide titles to his songs. Instead, he gives them the title "Song" or "Fragment," then, in the tradition of Ramsay and Herd, indicates the name of the tune to which the lyrics were set. This configuration sets up a different relation between reader and writer than that found in a conventional book of poetry. Instead of positioning the author as producer and the reader as consumer, Burns requires a form of production on the part of his reader who, like the readers of the *Tea-Table Miscellany* and *Scots Songs*, must draw on a knowledge of Scottish song culture. Carol McGuirk suggests that Burns's refusal to give titles to his songs demonstrates his "modesty in seeing his lyrics as mere subordinate 'vehicles to the music,'"[26] but it also illustrates his foregrounding of songs as a different genre. The "Songs" are linked within the volume as sites of alternative cultural practice. Like Herd, Burns does not represent a separation of oral and print cultures or of the musical and the poetic; rather he represents them in dynamic interaction as a challenge to conventional printed poetry.

Burns posits a similar kind of interaction between oral and print cultures and between music and poetry in "Love and Liberty" (also referred to as "The Jolly Beggars"), a work which remained unpublished during his lifetime. "Love and Liberty," like Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, mocks operatic form with its structure of arias interspersed with "recitativos." In Burns's "ballad opera," the arias are all set to traditional folksongs, which, as in the *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, are identified merely by their title. Burns selects the title of each song to reflect upon the action of the piece he has written: the "raucle carlin"'s lament for her dead husband is set to "O, An Ye Were Dead, Guidman," while the "tinkler" (tinker) sings to "Clout the Cauldron." For their part, the "recitativos" draw on both literary and oral forms. The poem begins with the "Cherry and the Slae" stanza, made famous by the Scottish Chaucerian, Alexander Montgomerie. The narrative introducing the "pigmy Scraper" is written in the "Standard Habbie" form invented by Robert Semphill in the seventeenth century, and the concluding verses concerning the "bard of no regard" use the sixteenth-century "Christ's Kirk on the Green" stanza form. Burns deliberately includes an example of every Scots poetic form that he knew. At the same time, other "recitativos" are written to fit song forms. The fight between the fiddler and the tinkler over the Highlander's widow is written in standard ballad form, while other "recitativos" are in either literary or folksong forms. The "recitativo" introducing the "martial chuck," for example, is written with alternating eight and six syllable lines using an *ababababab* rhyme. Critics of "Love and Liberty" focus on what Maurice Lindsay calls its "pure anarchism," its rejection of social, moral, and religious ideals.[27] Daiches, for example, argues that the beggars "renounc[e] organized society" (*Robert Burns*, 199), while Thomas Crawford suggests that "the world of 'The Jolly Beggars' is in opposition not simply to the aristocracy or the citizen class or the 'unco guid,' but to every kind of social stability and institutional cohesion."[28] The hybrid form of "Love and Liberty," its challenging of disciplinary and generic conventions, corresponds with and emphasizes the work's thematic focus on social disruption.

Burns's shift to the publication of songs in the latter part of his life represents his realization of the full radical potential of Scottish music within British culture. From 1787 until his death, Burns contributed songs to two publications: James Johnson's *The Scots Musical Museum*, published in six volumes from 1787 to 1803, and George Thomson's *A Choice Collection of Original Scotish* [*sic*] *Airs for the Voice*, published in eight parts from 1793 to 1818. Burns's excitement about both projects is evident in his extraordinary output and his comments in his letters. He writes, for example, regarding

Johnson's work to Reverend John Skinner, a song writer: "There is a work going on in Edinburgh, just now, which claims your best assistance. An Engraver in this town has set about collecting and publishing all the Scotch Songs, with the Music, that can be found . . . I have been absolutely crazed about it, collecting old stanzas, and every information remaining, respecting their origin, authors, &c."[29] And his last letter to Johnson expresses his hope for the future of the collection: "Your Work is a great one; & though, now that it is near finished, I see if we were to begin again, two or three things might be mended, yet I will venture to prophesy, that to future ages your Publication will be the text book & standard of Scotish [*sic*] Song & Music" (*Letters*, II: 381–2). Burns was eager to take part in this project for posterity for its own sake, but he also used it as a foil to his activities in the literary marketplace.

In *Poetry as an Occupation and an Art in Britain, 1760–1830*, Peter Murphy argues that Burns's turn to song "relieved [him] from the oppression of authorship" and the task of having to pander to the taste of the high literary culture of Edinburgh.[30] More than this, however, I suggest that Burns wanted to establish the collecting of Scottish music as an alternative practice to the marketing of poetry. Burns's work for the *Scots Musical Museum*, volumes II to V of which he edited himself, establishes a different relationship between author and reader than that involved in poetic composition. Burns as author in fact disappears, since he does not discriminate between songs which he writes and those which he revises or merely transmits from available sources. In addition, the reader of the *Museum* is required to become a performer, one who will re-embody the songs by singing them. In a spirit similar to Herd's *Scots Songs*, Burns's *Museum* invites readers to contribute to the collective process of creating a complete repository of Scottish song. Acknowledging that, "It has long been a just and general Complaint, that among all the Music-Books of Scots Songs that have been hitherto offered to the Public, not one, nor even all of them put together can be said to have merited the name of what may be called A Complete Collection," the first volume of the *Museum* offered the following request: "if any Lady or Gentleman have any Song of Merit with the Music (never hitherto Published) of the true Ancient Caledonian Strain, that they would be pleased to transmit the same to the Publishers, that it may be submitted to the proper Judges, and so be preserved in this Repository of our National Music and Song."[31] Burns also defied the conventions of the literary marketplace by refusing to accept money for his song contributions. In his letter of September 16, 1792, he wrote to George Thomson: "As to any remuneration, you may think my Songs either *above* or *below* price; for they shall absolutely be one or the other. – In the honest enthusiasm with which I embark on your undertaking, to talk of money, wages, fee, hire, &c. would be downright Sodomy of Soul!" (*Letters*, II: 149). He published his six hundred songs for the most part anonymously. Such interventions suggest Burns's contestation of the idea of the author as an individual negotiating property rights and a place for his work in the marketplace.

Burns's attempt to use Scottish music to create an alternative space to that of the literary marketplace was short-lived, however, as was his attempt to challenge the conventions of authorship. The sixth and final volume of the *Museum* (1803), published seven years after Burns's death, undoes the anonymity which Burns had desired, capitalizing on the marketability of what Michel Foucault refers to as the "author function." Johnson makes a point of indicating for the reader of volume VI which of the songs previously published were Burns's: "The Songs in the 5 preceding Volumes marked R. and B. the Editor is now at liberty to say are the production of Mr. BURNS" (Museum, VI: iv). Even though Johnson acknowledges that "Mr. BURNS requested these marks only, and not his name should be added to them" (VI: iv), he nevertheless exposes the poet's authorship. Adding insult to injury, the originals of the personal letters Burns sent to Johnson are offered for view to "subscribers."

Ironically, it is just such an emphasis on the "author function" that resulted in Burns's relegation to the margins of the canon of English literature. Wordsworth, Carlyle, and other nineteenth-century spokesmen of "high culture" used Burns as a negative example of true genius, an individual who failed to achieve greatness because of his inability to control his natural high spirits.[32] This focus on Burns the individual author has resulted in a relative neglect of the musical projects to which he contributed, because, as we have seen, Burns himself used the collection of songs to obfuscate the distinction between literary author and oral tradition. Burns has only recently become an acceptable figure in Romantic anthologies as more and more collections include his work in their contents. But in welcoming him into the center of an institution from which he has long been excluded, it is important that we avoid merely absorbing Burns into a conventional understanding of Romanticism. Rather, we need to use his example to rethink our definitions of Romanticism, indeed of literary studies in general. Reading Burns can help us challenge both the traditional period divisions between eighteenth-century and Romantic writing and the English-based model of British culture under which we tend to operate. As I have suggested in this chapter, Burns draws heavily on eighteenth-century aesthetics and popular culture – particularly Scottish song culture – in formulating his challenges to the British literary tradition. The case of Burns can also help us realize the importance of looking beyond literary works in our assessment of the cultural marketplace in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Without an understanding of the uses made of Scottish song in the eighteenth century and the part that song played in Burns's work, we forego a real appreciation of his radical project. It is in the "sang," "catch," "crooning," and "whistle"[33] – similar to the "speech, song, or wail" of Deane's Irish population – that we hear the voice of Burns – and of Scotland – troubling the text of British culture in the Romantic era.

NOTES

1. Seamus Deane, *Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing Since 1790* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 55.
2. Roger Fiske notes that "Scotch Songs [*sic*] of a popular type were reaching London at least by Cromwell's time, and eventually in astonishing numbers" *Scotland in Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1. See also David Johnson's *Music and Society in Lowland Scotland in the Eighteenth-Century* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972) and John Purser's *Scotland's Music* (Edinburgh and London: Mainstream Publishing, 1992) for more particulars on eighteenth-century Scottish music.
3. The printed texts of Scottish music would still have been open to local variation, of course. Then, as now, printing would have served to give an outline to the tune, not to constitute specific instructions. But notation of any kind, published or longhand, imposes a different system of order on music. See Michael Chanan's *Musica Practica: The Social Practice of Western Music from Gregorian Chant to Postmodernism* (London and New York: Verso, 1994), John Shepherd's *Music as Social Text* (Cambridge: Polity Press; Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell 1991) and Max Weber's *Rational and Social Foundations of Music*, trans. Don Martindale, Johannes Riedel, and Gertrude Neuwirth (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1958).
4. Chanan, *Musica Practica*, 77.
5. The title-page of Thumoth's *Scotch and Irish Airs* also advertises "Two Collections of all the most favourite old and new Scotch Tunes several of them with Variations entirely in the Scotch Taste" by James Oswald.
6. Alexander Stuart published *Musick for Allan Ramsay's Collection of Scots Songs Vol: First* in Edinburgh in 1726, but it was not very popular. Johnson speculates that "fiddlers in Edinburgh had most of the Tea-table Miscellany tunes in their manuscript books, or in their heads, already" (*Music and Society*, 114).
7. Allan Ramsay, *The Tea-Table Miscellany. A Collection of Choice Songs Scots and English*, 4 vols. (London: A. Millar, 1763), 1: v. Subsequent quotations are from this edition.

8. The gendered terms and the metaphor of reproduction which Ramsay uses add to this sense of embodiment. Although the contributors of the songs are male (Ramsay himself and "some ingenious young gentlemen, who were so well pleased with my undertaking, that they generously lent me their assistance" [1: ix]), the singers he imagines are exclusively female. If the songs from the *Miscellany* succeed in stealing "into the ladies' bosoms," he suggests, the *Miscellany* will be "again reprinted" and "live . . . as long as the song of *Homer*" (1: x).
9. Lawrence Lipking, *The Ordering of the Arts in Eighteenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 3.
10. James Harris, "A Discourse on Music, Painting and Poetry," *Three Treatises* (New York: Garland, 1970), 55.
11. On the construction of English national identity in the eighteenth century, see John Lucas's *England and Englishness: Ideas of Nationhood in English Poetry 1688–1900* (London: Hogarth, 1990) and Gerald Newman's *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History 1740–1830* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987).
12. John Brown, *A Dissertation on the Rise, Union, and Power, The Progressions, Separations, and Corruptions, Of Poetry and Music* (New York: Garland, 1971), 223.
13. Harris does offer a deviation from the aesthetic measuring stick of imitation, however, by suggesting that the real "Efficacy" of music is derived not from imitation but from its ability to raise the "Affections" ("A Discourse," 95). This, in fact, makes it the perfect accompaniment for poetry, which also aims to raise the affections; "the most sensible Impression" can be made, suggests Harris, when the "Affections . . . are already excited by the Music. *For here a double Force is made to co-operate to one End*" (97–8). Music has the power to "temper" the Mind. "From what has been said it is evident, that these two Arts can never be so powerful *singly*, as when they are *properly united*" (102). But Harris quickly compensates for his temporary diverting from the standard of value by ending with an assertion regarding the primacy of poetry: "Yet must it be remembered, in this Union, that *Poetry* ever have the *Precedence*; its *Utility*, as well as *Dignity*, being by far the more considerable" (102).
14. The *Miscellany's* conflation of music and poetry finds an echo in James Beattie's *Essays: On Poetry and Music* (1776), as Beattie argues that a combination of music and poetry is even more powerful than just poetry: "I am satisfied, that though musical genius may subsist without poetical taste, and poetical genius without musical taste; yet these two talents united might accomplish nobler effects, than either could do singly" (*Essays: On Poetry and Music* [London: Routledge/Thoemmes, 1996], 120).
15. The *Miscellany* went through nineteen editions by 1793. It was republished both as "a collection of Scots songs" and "a collection of choice songs, Scots and English" and packaged variously in four volumes, two volumes, and a single volume.

16. Bishop Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, ed. Henry B. Wheatley, 3 vols. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1927), I: 345–6. Subsequent references are to this edition.
17. Percy notes that "minstrel" in English properly designated "one who sung to the harp, or some other instrument of music, verses composed by himself, or others," but he suggests that "the term was also applied by our old writers to such as professed either music or singing separately . . . Music, however, being the leading idea, was at length peculiarly called minstrelsy, and the name of the minstrel at last confined to the musician only" (I: 385).
18. Susan Stewart, *Crimes of Writing: Problems in the Containment of Representation* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1994), 104.
19. David Herd, *Ancient and Modern Scots Songs* (Edinburgh: Martin and Wotherspoon, 1769), ii. Subsequent references are to this edition.
20. Many other Scots followed Percy's lead in concerning themselves primarily with the narrative ballad in an attempt to provide Scotland with a distinctly literary heritage. Most notable among these were Walter Scott in his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border Consisting of Historical and Romantic Ballads*, ed. T. F. Henderson, 4 vols. (Edinburgh and London: Blackwood and Sons; New York: Charles Scribner, 1902) and William Motherwell, *Minstrelsy Ancient and Modern* (Glasgow: John Wylie, 1827). While the title of Robert Jamieson's two-volume *Popular Ballads and Songs* (Edinburgh: Cadell and Davies; London: John Murray, 1806) suggests the editor's interest in both genres, the work itself neglects any reference to music. Instead, the editorial comments shape both ballads and songs so as to make them representative of the "RELIQUES OF ANCIENT SCOTISH [*sic*] POETRY" (Dedication, n.p.).
21. In *Devolving English Literature*, Robert Crawford argues that such juxtapositions work to "upset established categories, raising questions about the way in which we casually assign cultural value" (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 89.
22. *The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, ed. James Kinsley, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), II: 85. Subsequent references to Burns's poetry are to this edition.
23. Burns picks up on the tradition of verse epistles begun by Allan Ramsay and William Hamilton of Gilbertfield (*Robert Burns: Selected Poems*, ed. Carol McGuirk [London: Penguin, 1993], 204).
24. Trevor Ross, *The Making of the English Literary Canon: From the Middle Ages to the Late Eighteenth Century* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), 4.
25. David Daiches, *Robert Burns* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), 209.
26. *Robert Burns: Selected Poems*, ed. McGuirk, xvi.
27. Maurice Lindsay, *Robert Burns: The Man, His Work, The Legend* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1979), 91.
28. Thomas Crawford, *Burns: A Study of the Poems and Songs* (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1960; Edinburgh: Canongate, 1994), 132.
29. *Letters of Robert Burns*, ed. G. Ross Roy and J. De Lancey Ferguson, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), I: 168.

30. Peter Murphy, *Poetry as an Occupation and as an Art in Britain, 1760–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 80.
31. *The Scots Musical Museum*, 6 vols. (Edinburgh, 1787–1803), 1: iii.
32. For expansion of these ideas, see my *Acts of Union: Scotland and the Literary Negotiation of the British Nation, 1707–1830* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), chapters 4 and 6.
33. All mentioned in "Epistle to Lapraik."