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High Bank to 'High Noon': A Prince Edward Island Gaelic out-migration song-poem from the Far West

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Following on from work written in Gaelic for Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 6,[1] which examined the Western Canadian out-migration song-poem 'Òran Anyox', this paper proposes a close-reading of another compelling New World Gaelic song-poem of out-migration by Donald A. Stewart. This Isle of Skye-born, Prince Edward Island-raised Gael relocated in his early forties to a homesteader's life in North Dakota, USA, where he died in 1914 and whence this untitled song-poem of his comes (Allan 1972, 27–30). In Stewart's life can be seen a common trajectory of Highland emigration to British North America (the Dominion of Canada following the 1867 Act of Confederation) and its results in terms of out-migration (or further migration events) to the United States. In the words of one report on British emigration to the Dominion of Canada in the 1920s, Canada was seen as acting as an emigrant 'sieve' (Cavel 2006, 354), attracting important numbers of first-generation immigrants from the imperial mother-country but then losing equally important numbers of second-generation Canadians in their ensuing acts of out-migration to the neighbouring United States.

Born in Torra Mhicheig[2] (a place-name at times anglicised as Tarmichaig in various sources), by Sconser, Isle of Skye, in 1838, Stewart was two years old when his mother, father, nine-month-old brother and himself emigrated to Prince Edward Island (PEI) in 1841.[3] Spending the

[1] See 'Eadar a' chlach is an sgrath: "Òran Anyox" mar òran in-imrich is às-imrich taobh siar Chanada', in Nancy R. McGuire and Colm Ó Baoill (eds), *Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 6* (Aberdeen, 2013), 207–22 for a discussion of the multi-layered nature of the evocation and invocation of migration events in and across text, time and space.

[2] Near the present-day location of the Sconser Golf Course: an area with a history in the mid-19th century of some outbreaks of cholera, the source of water of which was suspected of being the carrier of this disease (as communicated to the author by Mark Wringe, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, University of the Highlands & Islands).

[3] His father Angus Norman Stewart, mother Catherine (née MacKinnon) and brother Alexander. A first child of the Stewart family, also called Alexander, had been born in 1836 and died in 1837

first winter with his father's aunt's family at Glashvin, PEI,[4] they subsequently bought a farm in the spring of 1842 at High Bank, King's County. This was clearly an area of some substantial numbers of Gaelic-speaking Skye and Raasay settlers, though not the epicentre of this 'saoghal ùr Gàidhealach' ('*new Highland world*'), in eastern PEI which was located around Bellevue, Orwell and Caledonia. Acting out their own event of further migration within the colony of Prince Edward Island, the family sold this High Bank farm in 1866 (when our poet-composer was twenty-eight years old) and moved to Caledonia West (now in the aforementioned epicentre of Gaelic-speaking PEI).[5] In this two-part migration narrative of his own family, experienced by Stewart first as an infant and then as a young man, can be seen some of the nature of 'what it is like to be a migrant' (Connell, King & White 1995, ix–x) with the attendant sense of 'rootlessness, restlessness […] displacement [and] […] communities lost and created anew' (ibid.). And it is a narrative which would more than prepare him for his own act of out-migration (or emigration from one country to another) which he would undertake in 1880/81, at the age of forty-two: eventually bringing out with him his wife[6] and four children ranging in age from three to eleven, settling on a prairie homestead fifteen miles southeast of Bismark, Dakota Territory,[7] and in the process founding a town called

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at Torra Mhicheig, a burial Stewart invokes later in his song-poem and a family loss even before, and perhaps one of the causal factors of, the emigration from Skye (cf. footnote 5 below).

[4] This aunt (Ann Stewart Docherty) had emigrated on board the totemic *Polly* in 1803 with the Earl of Selkirk's original group of Gaelic-speaking Hebridean and West Highland settlers to the Crown Colony of Prince Edward Island:
http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~peistewart/Angus_Norman_Stewart
(accessed 25 June 2019).
The following emigration of family members speaks to the often-noted nature of 'chain migration' (see Price 1959) in migration studies where an original group of settlers acts as a beach-head for further groups related either by family or place of origin or both (here at a temporal remove of almost forty years).

[5] Caledonia West was known as *Sgonnsair* (Sconser) to local Gaelic-speaking Prince Edward Islanders (Stewart's parents thus coming full circle, at least in terms of toponymy, from their Skye home to their PEI one, though losing finally in the hills of Caledonia West the commanding view of the sea, the Northumberland Strait, Pictou Island and on a good day of mainland Nova Scotia which they had enjoyed at High Bank). Personal communication to the author by the late Percy MacPherson (*Pearsaidh Lachlainn a' Ghobha*), Glen William, PEI.

[6] Janet Stewart, born at Belle Creek, PEI circa 1839, the daughter of another passenger on board the *Polly* in 1803, her father Ronald Stewart being then a two-year-old child. Janet Stewart and our poet-composer had two girls and two boys, all four apparently living at the time of the relocation to Dakota Territory in 1881/82 (cf. footnote 5 above) though Stewart refers later in his song-poem, stanza 16, to his own children being where his buried parents are (in their Little Sands, PEI cemetery) which gave him 'reubadh is cràdh' (literally '*rendering/laceration*' and '*anguish*'): we will return to this stanza further on.

[7] This part of the United States was referred to as Dakota Territory from 1861 until 1889 when two states, North and South Dakota, were created out of it.

Stewartsdale.[8] It is this tripartite nature of his own migration narrative that Stewart so clearly and carefully enacts throughout his song-poem: the Isle of Skye as the *locus primus*; Prince Edward Island as the place where he was raised and importantly for him the place where his loved ones are now buried; and finally the unnamed North Dakota present where he finds himself in a multicultural, multilingual world not fundamentally to his own Gaelo-centric liking. And it is this same tripartite enactment of these migration events throughout Stewart's song-poem which will be elucidated here in some detail bearing in mind the notions of *enracinement* ('rootedness') and *errance* ('wandering') coming out of the Francophone world of Caribbean créole cultures with the ensuing discourse of *écriture migrante* as seen in the work of Édouard Glissant (1997) among others.[9]

Given that Stewart's song-poem at twenty-eight stanzas is considerably longer than Roddy Campbell's seven-stanza 'Òran Anyox', it is appended here in its entirety to the end of this paper. I will deal with its *mise en scène* and its invocation and evocation of its, and its speaker-poet's, various migration events as they evolve throughout it with direct reference made only to various pertinent sections when needed.

Starting then with the opening stanza, the overriding narrative at play here is one of movement and distance:

> Chì mi uam, uam, uam
> Le mo smuaintean-s' tha snàmh,
> Air gach taobh dhen chuan,
> An iar-thuath s' is dol an-àird.

Although the opening line is, granted, largely formulaic (evidenced in everything from the Nova Scotia Gaelic song 'Chì mi bhuam, fada bhuam'[10] to the proverb which begins 'Chì mi bhuam fada bhuam / Trì mìle far a' chuain') it nevertheless nicely allows for the following line's evoking of the speaker-poet's agency of seeing. It is from the outset clear that he is not seeing with his eyes (which would take in only the North Dakota prairie world around him at the time of composition) but with his 'thoughts' which

[8] The genealogical notes on Stewart add that, in addition to 'found(ing) a town called Stewartsdale' he was also known locally as the 'Bard of the Plains'. The naming of land which had been until very recently the sole preserve of the Sioux Nation of the area in typically Eurocentric fashion is seen here adopted by Stewart, at a time less than a decade before the last pitched battle against the Lakota Sioux in South Dakota at the infamous Wounded Knee creek. The proximity in time and place between our poet-composer and the latter event leaves, for all that, no trace at all in his out-migration song-poem.

[9] See Aldrich 1995, 101 for a discussion of Glissant's terms of reference for his native Caribbean as being a land of '*enracinement*' and '*errance*'.

[10] See A. D. MacDonald, *Mabou Pioneers*, vol. 1 (Halifax, 1998), 525–26 for this Alan 'The Ridge' MacDonald song-poem about removing from Cape Breton Island down to mainland Lower South River, Antigonish County, Nova Scotia in the first half of the 19th century.

are 'swimming'. It is as though the speaker-poet is able to capture the *errance*, the fundamental wandering, implicit in every act of migration by the simple, effective coupling of his seeing thoughts with the act of swimming to encompass 'each side of the sea'. Here he presents us with both sides of his journey which he has undertaken from there to here: ending in the final line with and in 'the north-west' and 'rising'. The last part of this line allows for some ambiguity. Is the 'dol an-àird' referring to the speaker-poet's thoughts rising with the opening evocation underway? Or is it the present north-west place which is rising? Or is it possibly the sea itself which has bounded his journey over space and time and is now rising in his mind's eye, in his seeing thoughts adrift? Whatever the case, it is an ambiguity which is altogether fitting for a song-poem about conflicted allegiances, self-inflicted wanderings and problematic relationships with the speaker-poet's present world.

The second stanza fixes the Isle of Skye as the first place inhabited by the speaker-poet: 'Eilean Sgitheanach a' Cheò / San robh mi 'n toiseach mo là'. This too is largely formulaic, with Stewart claiming the island as the world he was in at the beginning of his 'day'. However, the next two lines begin the pattern of evocation and invocation of the dead and buried to be repeated throughout the song poem: 'Tha mo chàirdean ann 's fon fhòid / Mo bhràthair òg an siud le càch'. The 'young brother' under the sod with 'the others' is Alexander Stewart, who died in infancy a year before the birth of our poet (see note 4). And what this invoking of the buried family back in Skye does is to anchor our speaker-poet emotionally on the other side of the sea over which he has wandered (and over which his swimming thoughts now also wander): so the twin concepts of *enracinement* and *errance* are clearly brought in to play here in the most succint manner possible in a matter of only two stanzas.

The third stanza opens with a line and an ensuing image which, like the buried loved ones and intimately connected to it, will be repeated at various intervals throughout the work: 'Anns an uaigh, 'n uaigh, 'n uaigh' followed by 'Tha mo shluagh-s' ann nan tàmh'. It is not simply 'the grave' which is evoked here, but the locational 'in the grave, the grave the grave' putting the speaker-poet's thoughts right there inside the tomb back on Skye where his people are 'at rest'. In terms of simple versification, this third stanza echoes nicely the opening line's repetition of 'uam, uam, uam' with 'uaigh, uaigh, uaigh' while also giving us 'tàmh' playing off the earlier end-of-second-line 'snàmh' from the first stanza. Indeed, it is a coupling which also gives us an important reinforcing of the enactment of *enracinement* brought into play by 'tàmh' with that of *errance* provided for by 'snàmh'.

The rest of the third stanza and all of the fourth are largely formulaic panegyrics of place and people in a distinctly Highland key concerned with past martial glory: 'na sàir', 'na seòid', etc., as are the first two lines of the fifth stanza where we have further evocations of an almost prelapsarian world of kindness and humanity: 'Siud an tìr san robh an sluagh / San robh suairceas is bàigh'. There is nothing here that one would not expect to find in this praising of a past *Gàidhealach* place. But then suddenly the last two lines give a clear sense of the speaker-poet's actually well-informed apprehending of the idealised (and formerly heroic) Isle of Skye past and its late-19th-century present: 'Cuid dhith nis tha falamh fuar / 'S a cuid sluaigh anns gach àite'. The 'cold' and 'empty' nature of part of the island with its people in 'every place' under the sun, including some in Stewart's own far-flung north-west.

And then from this succinct invocation of the present and partly depopulated Skye with its scattered native sons and daughters, our speaker-poet turns his attention to 'another island' in opening lines which reproduce the opening of the first stanza above:

> Chì mi uam, uam, uam
> Le mo smuaintean-s' tha snàmh,
> Eilean eile e sgiamhach uaine,
> Is e cuairtichte le sàl.

This other island, both 'comely green' and 'surrounded by salt-water', is of course Prince Edward Island: the second *locus* in Stewart's tripartite migration event from there to here, from then to now. And as in other song-poems of emigration and immigration, what is not stated in the list of virtues of the PEI place can be just as instructive as what is enumerated. So, for the 'uaine' and 'cuairtichte le sàl', one can read into this the unstated adjectival opposites of 'withered' and 'surrounded by land' for an appraisal of Stewart's North Dakota present: the fertile sea-bound land of High Bank, PEI, contrasted with the burnt umber prairie of Stewartsdale, ND, at almost the very geographical centre of the North American continent.

The seventh stanza has our speaker-poet seeing the place in which he was young, at the beginning of his personal 'benefit' or 'good purpose' ('stàth'), mirroring the second stanza's placing of him back in Skye at the beginning of his day: 'Chì mi far an robh mi òg / 'S ann an toiseach mo stàth'. He also sees friends, relatives and groups or companies of his loved ones: 'Chì mi càirdean 's luchd m' eòil / Chì mi còmhlain mo ghràidh'. All of which he can 'see' at a spatial remove of more than two thousand miles and a temporal one of more than twenty years from his North Dakota present place. And yet, as soon as he evokes the image and memory of beloved friends and family (and the collective nature of his life back on the

'other island' as opposed to the nuclear-familial world he has created for himself, his wife and children in the north-west) he goes on, in the following stanza, to bury himself back in the grave of the third stanza above.

This eighth stanza is a pivotal one in terms of the speaker-poet's rarefied view of the bi-locational past (Skye/PEI) and his disparaging of the North Dakota present. He opens, as he opened his song-poem itself, by marking and remarking on the distance between himself and the rest, some of whom are in the grave: 'Uam, uam fada uam / Cuid san uaigh dhiubh a tà'. And in a sombre parallel with these PEI-buried loved ones, he is 'here' in the 'north-west': 'Mis' an seo 's mi san iar-thuath / Measg gach sluaigh 's mi fo phràmh'. The lines are redolent of the often-heard melancholy, nostalgic stance of various speaker-poets in the corpus of Gaelic song-poems of emigration and immigration. He is here, as an individual, among 'every (kind) of people'; and, because of that perceived isolation and separation from his own 'sluagh', he finds himself to be 'fo phràmh': sorrowful, dejected, lethargic.

This disparaging of the present place continues unabated in the ninth stanza with the speaker-poet's cultural and linguistic *dépaysement* finding expression in lines of pure Gaelo-centrism:

> Tha mi nis am measg gach seòrs'[11]
> A bha san Eòrpa a thàmh;
> Dhe gach cànan is còmhradh,
> Le gach dòigh agus gnàth.

Where once, back in Prince Edward Island, he was surrounded not merely by salt-water but also by groups, companies of loved ones ('còmhlain mo ghràidh'), here and 'now' he is 'among every sort' to have come out of Europe: 'Of every language and conversation / With each manner and custom'. Although not described in any more ethnographic detail, Stewart is speaking here, in his late-19th-century, early-20th-century Dakota world, of other European immigrant population groups: Scandinavians in large measure with some initial waves of Ukrainian settlers from the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires (Friesen 1987). By focussing on those that 'were in Europe' (much like his own 'sluagh' before their emigration to British North America), he elides utterly the Native American populations who would still have been present in North Dakota, though restricted to lives on federal reservations as opposed to what had been their own

[11] See 'Duanag à California' (MacDonell 1982, 172) for similar lines in an out-migration song-poem by a Cape Breton Gael having removed to California, printed first in the Antigonish, Nova Scotia, newspaper *The Casket* , 9 December 1926: 'Tha daoine 'n seo à Carolina / Mecsico, Iapan is Tìna / Roinn à Eileanan Hawaii / Is còrr à Calamasu'.

unfettered wanderings over the shrinking margins of the Far West: margins of manoeuvre contracting almost daily with the incoming of settler populations much like the Stewart family of Prince Edward Island. But of this Sioux 'sluagh' there is no mention at all: their absence from the farming lands of the Dakota prairies replicated by their absence from the stanzas of our speaker-poet's song-poem.

At any rate, this multicultural, multilinguistic North Dakota world is, for Stewart, the unproblematic cause of his dejection, sorrow and lethargy: ''s [e] fo phràmh'. Given his own position as that of a linguistic minority in a majority Anglophone colonial world on the margins of the British Empire whose shores he had left some twenty years before, the irony of his present disparaging of the others from Europe, their languages and customs, is apparently lost on Stewart. However, for all his ethnocentrism, he does admit to in the tenth stanza, and further enumerates, the material gains he has incurred[12] since coming to the far-flung non-Gaelic north-west: 'Ged a fhuair mi san iar-thuath s' / Fearann, buar agus bàrr'. However, even though he admits that he has 'found' in this north-west 'land, cattle and crops', and so has seen to the material well-being of his family, he continues in the second part of the stanza the thought hanging on the conjunction 'although' with which he opens it: 'A ta m' inntinn-'s neo-shuaimhneach / Measg sluaigh ta gun ghràs'. Despite his material security, his 'mind' is now existentially 'restless' in the prarie present 'among people without grace' in a criticism redolent of a Calvinist insistance on 'grace alone'[13] in terms of Stewart's reformed theological upbringing among his fellow Gaelic-speaking Prince Edward Islanders of either the Free Church of Scotland or the Presbyterian Church of Canada.

Indeed, this Gaelo-centric world he has left back and behind in PEI (at one remove from the original, first-part *locus* in the Isle of Skye, yet recreating to varying degrees in its midst both a Gaelic-speaking Presbyterian world and world view) is further compared favourably to the present world where, in the eleventh stanza, Stewart finds himself socially isolated when he speaks about that which is, for him, theologically 'right':

> Nuair a labhras mi mun chòir
> Bidh mi m' ònar de ghnàth,
> A ta gach aon airson a lòin,
> 'S cha dèan iad còmhradh mu ghràs.

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[12] See MacPherson (2010) for a discussion of this aspect in the corpus of pro emigration and immigration song-poems where the gains in land ownership and the attendant harvest of it are clearly at the forefront of these poetic acts in the wide-ranging debate regarding the merits of emigration from the Scottish Gàidhealtachd to the New World.

[13] *Sola Gratia* in terms of reformed theology.

And he concludes the stanza by passing his own form of Biblical judgment on his neighbours, commenting that 'each one is for his livelihood' (in other words, for Stewart, each one is in it for himself alone) and that they 'will not converse about grace'.

The twelfth and thirteenth stanzas take us back to that 'eilean sgiamhach uaine' (the 'comely green island') surrounded by salt-water which he once again apprehends through the agency of his swimming thoughts. It is an abrupt move from *errance* (through his wandering mind's eyes) to *enracinement* (with his longing for past rootedness) which he accomplishes by focussing on the 'seann daoine còir' (the 'dear old people') whom he sees 'fon fhòid ann nan tàmh'. Dear old people from his own specific language and religious group with whom in 'làithibh [a] òige' he was 'tric a' còmhradh mu ghràs'. Indeed, these last two lines of the thirteenth stanza put a pointed exclamation mark on to the comparison he is making between the present 'grace'-avoiding European immigrant groups and his own PEI Gaelic-speaking world where his 'dear old people' would talk about the very subject he finds so absent from his Dakota neighbours' material and worldly discourse.

From this recollection of Gaelic conversations regarding grace, Stewart dedicates his fourteenth stanza to the desire in his mind to be back in this same PEI world as he once was:

'S tric a mhiannaich mi nam inntinn
Bhith rithist ann mar a bhà,
Ged tha fios agam is cinnt
Chaoidh nach pill[14] mi ann a thàmh.

But he carefully restricts this expressed desire to return to his mind and, just as quickly as he evokes how often he desired to be 'again there as it was', pointedly subverts it by finishing with the clear-eyed observation that he 'know[s] and is certain / never will [he] return there to reside'. And it is not simply the knowledge that he will not return to 'live' in his PEI world, but, by using the verbal noun 'tàmh' (which he does throughout the song-poem) he is able to allude to both the impossibility of his returning to live but also to 'rest' there: to find himself in a final resting place, buried with his New World loved ones, which he knows will not be for him.

[14] This preference for what could be plausibly read as a higher register Biblical form of the word for 'return', also found on headstones in PEI with 19th-century Biblical inscriptions, though normally 'tillidh' is used in conversational PEI Scottish Gaelic as recorded by the author in conversation with Percy MacPherson (Pearsaidh Lachlainn a' Ghobha), is seen elsewhere in Stewart's song-poem where he equally seems to favour older, more scripturally inflected forms: 'ta' instead of 'tha', 'làithibh' instead of 'làithean' and 'tar èis' instead of 'an dèidh'.

Having here invoked the non-return event of Stewart, his intention being either to reside or to be buried in the PEI-based second movement of his tripartite migration event (both actual and poetic), stanzas fifteen to twenty revolve nearly exclusively around burial. It is a question then of the act of burial, the loved ones buried and the future projected burial by his PEI family and friends of their (and one assumes his too) own loved ones in turn. Indeed, stanza 15 opens with the actual, recalled movement of our speaker-poet (as opposed to the imagined movement of the opening stanza) as he evokes his return 'aon uair' ('once') to the Canadian island to bury his mother:

> Chaidh air chuairt, chuairt, chuairt
> Ann aon uair le mo mhàthair,
> 'S ga cur na sìneadh gu [h-]ìosal
> Sa chill, 's na chuir càch.

First he manages an immensely poignant evocation of the journey home 'with [his] mother' as though she were a still living travelling companion as opposed to the reason for Stewart's more than two-thousand mile return trip from North Dakota to Prince Edward Island to bury her 'na sìneadh gu h-ìosal / sa chill': 'stretched out low in the burial-ground'. But then second, there is also the fact that this stanza gives us a compelling clue as to the date of composition of this song-poem as being most likely after 1898. According to provincial records, Catherine MacKinnon Stewart died in February 1898 and was buried in Little Sands Cemetery, a few miles distance from the High Bank homestead where she and her husband and young family first settled after initially arriving from Skye[15]. The speaker-poet then is composing his work some time after his sixtieth year: some time on the approach to his own 'aois a' gheallaidh' of seventy years.[16] And finally the stanza ends with the referencing of the others also put there

[15] As verified by the author on his visit to Little Sands Cemetery, PEI, September 2012.

[16] A letter dated 4 May 1908 and sent by Colin MacKinnon, Torrin, Isle of Skye, to 'Mr. Stewart' begins: 'The postmaster Broadford, Skye has received a letter from you making inquiry if any of your MacKinnon's (sic) are alive in Skye. I understand you are Donald Angus Stewart […] and that you were born in Tarmichaig in 1838'. So, ten years after the death of his mother in PEI, and at the age of 70 (merely six years before his own death in 1914) Stewart is reaching out across the Atlantic to reconnect with the MacKinnons on his mother's side of the family. The letter also contains an interesting description of the departure of the Stewart family from Skye in 1841: 'When your parents left for Prince Edward Island you were then a boy about 3 years as she [the letter writer's mother] remembers […] my mother's father Charles MacKinnon, also Peter MacKinnon, also Donald MacKinnon and John MacKinnon stayed for 2 nights in the ship [the *Ocean*] at Portree seeing your parents away to Prince Edward Island'. And it ends with this touching detail: 'My mother Marion (your first cousin) is 81 years of age and is blind for 7 years and remembers nursing you before your parents left for abroad'. http://freepages.rootsweb.com/~peistewart/genealogy/letters/skye1.htm (accessed 25 June 2019).

(passively) or of the others who also (actively) did the putting (planting, burying) of loved ones 'sa chill': ''s na chuir càch'. Indeed, are the 'càch', the 'others', here in reference to those buried overseas, including Stewart's infant brother, away from his mother? Or do they refer to his own family, back in North Dakota, far away from the final resting place of his mother whose committal he seemingly attended to in person?

Leaving the questions raised here in abeyance, Stewart moves on in the sixteenth stanza to demarcate the resting place of both his parents: 'Far a bheil mo phàrantan le chèil' / Dan tug mi spèis agus gràdh'.[17] But then he invokes his own children: 'Is mo chuid cloinne tar èis fhèin / A thug dhomh reubadh is cràdh'. Since records show that all four of Stewart's children emigrated with him and his wife Janet to the family homestead in Dakota Territory, what is one to make of these two lines? Are the 'lacerating' and 'anguish' caused him (given to him) the result of a type of projected loss in the event of the future deaths of his own children?[18] Definitely among the most emotionally raw lines in the song-poem, the poet's 'reubadh is cràdh' remain ambiguous in terms of their final and initial cause.

In the next stanza, Stewart continues his focussing on the specificity of the PEI past, and its past place, by training his mind's eye on the spot of the Little Sands Cemetery (here unnamed): 'far na charaich mi nan òig' / le cridhe leòint' agus cràidht' / mo phiuthar ghaoil, mo bhràthair òg / 's tha iad fon fhòid ud nan tàmh'. As witnessed by the author on the tombstone at Little Sands Cemetery, his sister Annie is shown to have died in 1875 at the age of 32, and his brother Alexander in 1856 at the age of 8. And they, like all the rest, (the 'càch', alluded to in the opening stanzas regarding the Skye burials and now here regarding the PEI ones) are there 'under that sod and at rest'.

In stanza 18 Stewart sees a grave, redeploying the pattern of 'chì mi uam, uam, uam' he has used elsewhere to this point in the song-poem: 'Chì mi uaigh, uaigh, uaigh'. But, more than his simply seeing from his North Dakota vantage point a grave in PEI (or Skye), in his mind's eye, he also sees the people buried therein: 'chì mi 'n sluagh annta a tà / is iad nan sìneadh 's iad fuar / ach bha uair bha iad blàth'. Although only the singular 'uaigh' is used in his invoking and evoking of the 'grave', the second line speaks to the plurality of the graves hosting all his scattered loved ones:

[17] Having visited (see footnote 16 above) the Little Sands Cemetery, I viewed the Stewart tombstone which has the father's name, Angus Stewart, on the front with his death noted in 1878 at the age of 75 and on the reverse side the words 'His Wife/Catherine MacKinnon/Married 1825'.

[18] As verified above, there is no sign of his children having predeceased their father and indeed all are recorded in the Stewart family genealogy of having arrived in Dakota Territory with their parents.

'sluagh annta'. Moreover, the last two lines, where Stewart sees his 'sluagh' stretched out in the grave and cold, somewhat bring to mind a Hieronymus Bosch painting or a François Villon poem in their immediate, physical enactment of the present position and positioning ('nan sìneadh') of the dead that, though now cold, 'once […] were warm'.[19]

In stanzas 19 and 20 Stewart moves to address a collective turning, his rhetorical injunction on the 'agus' revolving round the graphic image evoked in the preceeding stanza of the buried dead, stretched out and cold: 'sibhse tha fhathast beò / an siud de chòmhlain mo ghràidh'. So the 'you' plural he addresses are people 'there' ('an siud'): the PEI-based members of the groups of his loved ones whose vigour is now failing: 'tha nis a' fàilneachadh nar treòir'. And here the 'nar' instead of the possibly expected 'nur' is evidence either of a typo perhaps, or the rendering of Skye Gaelic's pronunciation of 'ur' (with its attendant prepostional-pronominal form 'nur') where there is not always a clear distinction between 'ur' ('your' plural or formal) and 'ar' ('our') tending more to the sound of the latter than the former. In which case Stewart is simply writing the word the way he hears it. Or instead, he is intentionally shifting from the 'nur' to the 'nar' in order to include himself in the group of those that, still alive, are nevertheless failing in their strength and vigour.

In stanza 20, Stewart extends the injunction to his collective listenership back in PEI with the evocation of their future acts of the burying of their own loved ones:

> Nuair a bhios bhur cridhe-s' leòint',
> Sibh cur fon fhòid luchd ar[20] gràidh,
> Cuimhnichidh sibh air a' bhròn
> A chuir Dòmhnall na dhàn.

So, in the act of the burying (literally the 'putting under the turf') of their departed, Stewart tells his notional collective listener-readership that they *will* remember the grief / mourning / melancholy that, given the ambiguity which can arise out of Gaelic syntax, either Donald put in his poem (the

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[19] See François Villon, *La ballade des pendus* with its images of the dead and hanged speakers of the poem describing themselves graphically as 'plus becquetés d'oiseaux que dés à coudre' ('more picked at by birds than darning thimbles') (Lagarde & Michard 1962, 219).

[20] Again, as with stanza 19, are we to read 'luchd ar gràidh' as a typo or Skye-inflected pronunciation of 'luchd ur gràidh' to maintain consistency with the first line? Or is Stewart intentionally shifting from the second person plural ('your loved ones') to the first person plural ('our loved ones') to emphasise the collective nature of the community, these 'còmhlain [a] ghràidh'? Or is it a case of the text of this song-poem having been transcribed as such or rather having been edited by the unknown scribe in question. These questions are interesting and very much in need of further research, the author being kindly indebted to the challenging points raised by one anonymous reader of this paper.

grief being the subject of his poem put there by the poet) or that put Donald in his poem (the grief being the active agent which put Donald as subject, a character almost, into his own work).

In stanza 21 there is a clear shift away from the present and departed loved ones back in PEI to the north-west poetic and personal present. Though he is far from them all ('uaibh fada uaibh') here in the north-west, and though his 'appearance' has 'changed' ('ged a chaochail mo shnuadh') his love for them has not grown cold: 'cha do dh'fhuaraich mo ghràdh'.

The twenty-second and twenty-third stanzas see Stewart recounting how he has given 'love, love, love' (both 'gaol agus gràdh', or 'love and affection') to his people 'gu bràth'. But more than to his own people, (his 'sluagh' both living and dead, both here in PEI and there in Skye as opposed to the 'sluagh' of Europe amongst whom he now finds himself in the Far West), he adds that he also gave love to his two islands: 'Don Eilean Sgitheanach is Prionns' Ìomhair', the first two parts of his tripartite migration event and ensuing poetic event most demanding of his recounting and representing. He continues with the almost domestically endearing line that both islands were 'tìorail de ghnàth' (or 'habitually cosy / snug / comfortable') and that both contained within them ('annta') the following four virtues: 'diadhachd is ciatachd / 's fialaidheachd is bàigh', or 'godliness and elegance' followed by 'generosity and humanity'. This list repeated as a couplet after stanza 23 can again, as elsewhere in this song-poem, be construed as an unstated rebuke of the North Dakota present, where against each of his virtues invoked as being possessed by both Skye and PEI one can read their opposites as obtaining in the north-west: ungodliness, awfulness, miserliness and inhumanity, in other words which though not spoken here are present nonetheless[21] in the mind of the speaker-poet and of his listerners in both of these now distant islands.

The twenty-fourth stanza simply repeats the opening stanza word for word, while the twenty-fifth reprises the PEI-based seventh stanza, at least in terms of the opening line, only injecting a variation into the second line. From ''S ann an toiseach mo stàth' we move now to 'Is ann an treòir mheadhain-latha' as being the speaker-poet's youthful condition back in PEI: it now being described as his being in 'midday vigour'. Against which he compares his present condition in North Dakota as being one 'far a bheil [e] nis call [a] threòir' ('where [he] now is losing [his] vigour / force'). Although he then abruptly ends this stanza by drawing pointedly away from

[21] See MacPherson (2010, 174–75) for a discussion of similar 'semantic twins' lying unstated but present in a list of attributes for the Scottish Gàidhealtachd home in a Manitoba song-poem in the *contra* key regarding the merits of emigration to the New World.

movement over space and time and in to his reformed faith's hope in grace: 'ach tha mo dhòchas tre[22] ghràs'.

This movement away from the temporal preoccupation of his tripartite migration narrative (through space, time and song-poem alike) is further sustained in stanzas 26, 27 and 28 where he forsakes worldly concerns for the realm of faith. No longer are his 'thoughts' swimming 'air gach taobh dhen chuan' ('on both sides of the sea' being his opening enactment of *errance*). But instead now it is he, the speaker-poet, who is swimming 'air sgèith a' chreidimh bheò' ('on the wing / shield of the living faith / religion') outwith the imagining agency of his mind's eye and his up-until-now expressed desire for an invoked *enracinement* amongst his own people, both living and dead, which would serve the role of his way out of the vicissitudes of the tripartite acts of *errance* which have left him stranded, in his own mind, on the margins of the north-west. Indeed, when he now speaks of the end of his journey in stanza 27, 'nuair a chrìochnaicheas mo chuairt' ('when my journey ends'), he pins his hopes for eternal *enracinement* not on the PEI / Skye graves where he has laid to rest and left his own departed, or on those groups of loved ones still living back in these recollected islands, but on the 'dachaigh tha bith-bhuan' ('the eternal home') where he will find 'suaimhneas 's fheàrr' ('the best ease / repose') by 'dèanamh luaidh[23] air a ghràdh' (or 'praising his love').

And so at the end of his song-poem, Stewart eschews all three acts of his migration narrative, bounded by space and time, not to mention the material (and indeed psychological) price to be paid for migration, by putting his final stanza to the service of his own reformed faith with a mimetic use of the 'ua' assonance given above (and throughout the song-poem) by 'uam, uam, uam' (*errance*) and 'uaigh, uaigh, uaigh' (*enracinement*) to bring into play 'gràdh an uain, an uain, uain' ('the love of the lamb, the lamb, the lamb'). It is the lamb (*Agnus Dei*) who triumphed over his enemy, ('a thug buaidh air mo nàmh'), freed him from the grave ('mo shaoradh on uaigh') and delivered him, disentangled him from death ('m' fhuasgladh on bhàs'). It is a spiritual resolution which, by apostrophising in a final couplet his collective listeners/readers, he offers to all the others as well: 'chum bhur saoradh on uaigh / is bhur fuasgladh on bhàs', ('in order to save you all from the grave / and deliver you from death'). In other words, it is a flight into eternity here, on the wing (the shield) of Stewart's living faith,

[22] As seen elsewhere, either Stewart or the editor of this song-poem, has preferred a more Biblically, equally Irish Gaelic-inflected form of 'through': eschewing 'tro' for 'tre'. Or as one reader has suggested 'tre' could be extracted from dialectal 'troimhe'.

[23] This verbal phrase can mean both 'making reference to' and 'praising': so the speaker-poet will sing the praises of, whilst referring to, the love of his lord over and above land(s) and loved ones here and there.

and out of the earthly time and space which had, up until the twenty-fourth stanza, played the central roles in his compelling, if not fully realised, song-poem of movement and loss with past time and forsaken place recreated, recaptured, if only fleetingly through the agency of his 'smuaintean-s' tha snàmh': his thoughts swimming here and there on both sides of the sundering though momentarily vanquished sea.

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APPENDIX 1
Donald Angus Stewart's song-poem[24]

1
Chì mi uam, uam, uam
Le mo smuaintean-s' tha snàmh,
Air gach taobh dhen chuan,
An iar-thuath 's is dol an-àird.

2
Eilean Sgitheanach a' cheò,
San robh mi 'n toiseach mo là,
Tha mo chàirdean ann 's fon fhòid,
Mo bhràthair òg an siud le càch.

3
Anns an uaigh, 'n uaigh, 'n uaigh
Tha mo shluagh-s' ann nan tàmh,
San Eilean Sgitheanach o thuath,
San tric n' fhuaradh na sàir.

4
Siud an tìr san robh na seòid,
A dhèanadh còmhrag sna blàir,
'S a làimhsicheadh an claidh'-mòr
A thoirt tòrachd da nàmh.

[24] See footnote 2 above for the printed provenance of this untitled song-poem. The text given here is that found in Allan (1972), 27–30 (edited by the author for modern usage in line with the Scottish Qualifications Authority's *Gaelic Orthographic Conventions* (2005). The questions of its transcription or composition and its previous (if any) published appearances (for example, in *Mac-Talla*, perhaps) are, unfortunately, outwith the scope of this paper though the author would like to express thanks to one anonymous reader who raised them in the first instance. Any further investigation tracking the present song-poem's pre-1972 printed provenance is more than warranting of additional investigation. However, just before going to print, the author was fortunate enough to receive by way of the poet's great-niece a photcopy of one handwritten version of the song-poem sent in March 1902 from North Dakota to the poet's sister, Mrs Maru Gillies (née Stewart), of Murray Harbour, Prince Edward Island. The author is deeply indebted to Mrs Betty Campbell (née MacDonald), also of Murray Harbour, PEI (and the granddaughter of Donald Angus Stewart's sister) by whose generous kindness he has then been able to clarify some ambiguous readings which have now been put into the Gaelic text both here, in the Appendix, and throughout the paper. See Appendix 2 for the first page from this manuscript.

5
Siud an tìr san robh an sluagh
San robh suairceas is bàigh,
Cuid dhith nis tha falamh fuar
'S a cuid sluaigh anns gach àite.

6
Chì mi uam, uam, uam
Le mo smuaintean-s' tha snàmh,
Eilean eile e sgiamhach uaine,
Is e cuairtichte le sàl.

7
Chì mi far an robh mi òg,
'S ann an toiseach mo stàth;
Chì mi càirdean 's luchd m' eòil,
Chì mi còmhlain mo ghràidh.

8
Uam, uam fada uam,
Cuid san uaigh dhiubh a tà,
Mis' an seo 's mi san iar-thuath
Measg gach sluaigh 's mi fo phràmh.

9
Tha mi nis am measg gach seòrs'
A bha san Eòrpa a thàmh;
Dhe gach cànain is còmhradh,
Le gach dòigh agus gnàth.

10
Ged a fhuair san iar-thuath-s'
Fearann, buar agus bàrr,
A ta m' inntinn-'s neo-shuaimhneach
Measg sluaigh ta gun ghràs.

11
Nuair a labhras mi mun chòir
Bidh mi m' ònar de ghnàth,
A ta gach aon airson a lòin,
'S cha dèan iad còmhradh mu ghràs.

12
Chì mi uam, uam, bhuam,
Le mo smuaintean tha snàmh,
Chì mi 'n t-eilean sgiamhach uaine
Ud tha cuairtichte le sàl.

13
Chì mi na seann daoine còir'
Tha fon fhòid ann nan tàmh,
Le robh mis' an làithibh m' òige
Tric a' còmhradh mu ghràs.

14
'S tric a mhiannaich mi nam inntinn
Bhith rithist ann mar bhà,
Ged tha fios agam is cinnt
Chaoidh nach pill ann a thàmh.

15
Chaidh air chuairt, chuairt, chuairt,
Ann aon uair le mo mhàthair,
'S ga cur na sìneadh gu [h-]ìosal
Sa chill, 's na chuir càch.[25]

16
Far bheil mo phàrantan le chèil'
Dan tug mis' spèis agus gràdh,
Is mo chuid cloinne tar èis fhèin
A thug dhomh reubadh is cràdh.

17
Is far na charaich mi nan òig'
Le cridhe leòint' agus càidht',
Mo phiuthar ghaoil, mo bhràthair òg
'S tha iad fon fhòid ud nan tàmh.

18
Is chì mi uaigh, uaigh, uaigh,
'S chì mi 'n sluagh annta a tà,
Is iad nan sìneadh 's iad fuar,
Ach bha uair bha iad blàth.

[25] In the handwritten copy of the song-poem referred to in footnote 24 above, the poet has added to 'Sa chill, 's nach eil m' àill'-s' ('In the churchyard where my preference is not') a line here reinstated: 'Sa chill 's na chuir càch' with 'càch' underlined in his own hand in ink.

19
Agus sibhs' tha fhathast beò
An siud de chòmhlain mo ghràidh-s',
'S tha nis a' fàilneachadh nar treòir
Ach air bhur n-eòlas a tà.

20
Nuair a bhios bhur cridhe leòint',
Sibh cur fon fhòid luchd ar gràidh,
Cuimhnichidh sibh air a' bhròn
A chuir Dòmhnall na dhàn.

21
Ged tha uaibh fada uaibh
San iar-thuath sa ged-thà,
Ged a chaochail mo shnuadh
Cha do dh'fhuaraich mo ghràidh.

22
Thug mi gaol, gaol, gaol,
Thug mi gaol agus gràdh,
Tha mo thairiseachd gun ghaoid
Dha mo dhaoine gu bràth.

23
Don Eilean Sgitheanach is Prionns' Ìomhair
Bha tìorail de ghnàth
Annt' bha diadhachd is ciatachd
'S bha fialaidheachd is bàigh

Annt' bha diadhachd is ciatachd
'S fialachd is bàigh.[26]

24
Chì mi uam, uam, uam
Le mo smuaintean-s' tha snàmh,
Air gach taobh dhen chuan
'N iar-thuath s' is dol an-àird.

[26] Again based on the handwritten text of the song-poem, it is not clear if this is an appended couplet coming in to reinforce the virtues of PEI, or a variant final two lines of the stanza with very little difference between the two versions for all that.

25
Chì mi far an robh [mi] òg
Is ann an treòir mheadhain-là
'S far a bheil mi nis call mo threòir
Ach tha mo dhòchas tre ghràs.

26
Bhith snàmh air sgèith a' chreidimh bheò
Is beò-dhòchas na slàint',
Bhith triall tre fhàsach nan deòir s'
An taic ri còmhnadh a ghràis.

27
Nuair a chrìochnaicheas mo chuairt
Gu' faigh mi suaimhneas 's fheàrr
Anns an dachaigh tha bith-bhuan
A' dèanamh luaidh air a ghràdh.

28
'S e gràdh an uain, an uain, an uain
A thug buaidh air mo nàmh
Chum mo shaoradh on uaigh
Agus m' fhuasgladh on bhàs.

Chum bhur saoradh on uaigh,
Is bhur fuasgladh on bhàs.

(Following translated by the author of this article)

1
I see from me, from me, from me
With my thoughts that are swimming,
On both sides of the sea,
This North-West and rising.

2
The misty Isle of Skye
Where I was at the start of my days,
My relations are there and under the sod,
My young brother there with the rest.

3
In the grave, the grave, the grave
My people are there at rest,
In the northerly Isle of Skye,
Where often were found the heroes.

4
That's the land where the heroes were,
Who would fight in the battles,
And would handle the claymore
To give chase to an enemy.

5
That's the land where the people were
Where there was civility and humanity,
Some of it now empty cold
And its people in every place.

6
I see from me, from me, from me
With my thoughts that are swimming,
Another island, it beautiful green,
And surrounded by salt-water.

7
I see where I was young
At the beginning of my force;
I see family and friends,
I see companies of my loved ones.

8
From me, from me, far from me
Some of them are in the grave,
And I here in the North-West
Among every people and I depressed.

9
I am now among each kind
That resided in Europe;
Of every language and conversation,
With every manner and custom.

10
Although I found in this North-West
Land, cattle and crops,
My mind is restless
Among people with no grace.

11
When I speak of the just
I am usually alone,
Each one is for his livelihood,
And they won't converse about grace.

12
I see from me, from me, from me
With my thoughts that are swimming,
I see that beautiful, green island
Surrounded by salt-water.

13
I see the worthy old people
That are under the sod there at rest,
With whom I, in the days of my youth,
Often conversed about grace.

14
Often I wished in my mind
To be there again as I was,
Though I know with certainty
I shall never return there to reside.

15
[I] went on a trip, a trip, a trip,
There one time with my mother,
Putting her stretched out low
In the churchyard, where were put the others.

16
Where my parents are together
To whom I gave affection and love,
And my children afterwards
Which gave me laceration and anguish.

17
And where I placed in their youth
With a heart wounded and anguished,
My beloved sister, my young brother
And they are under that sod at rest.

18
I see a grave, a grave, a grave,
And I see the people in them there,
And they stretched out and cold
But once they were warm.

19
And all of you who are still alive
There of the companies of my loved ones,
And who are now failing in our strength
But that you know.

20
When your hearts are wounded,
As you put our loved ones under the sod,
You shall remember the sorrow
That Donald put in his poem;

21
Although away from you, far from you
In this North-West, however,
Although my appearance has changed
My love has not grown cold.

22
I gave love, love, love,
I gave love and affection,
My fidelity is without flaw
For my people forever.

23
For the Isle of Skye and Prince Edward
That were snug as was their want,
In them was godliness and excellence
And generosity and humanity.

In them was godliness and excellence
And generosity and humanity.

24
I see from me, from me, from me
With my thoughts that are swimming,
On each side of the sea
In this North-West, rising.

25
I see where [I] was young
And in the vigour of midday
And where I now am losing my force
But my hope is through grace.

26

To be swimming on the wing of the living faith
And the living-hope of health,
To be journeying through the wilderness of these tears
Succoured by the saving of his grace.

27

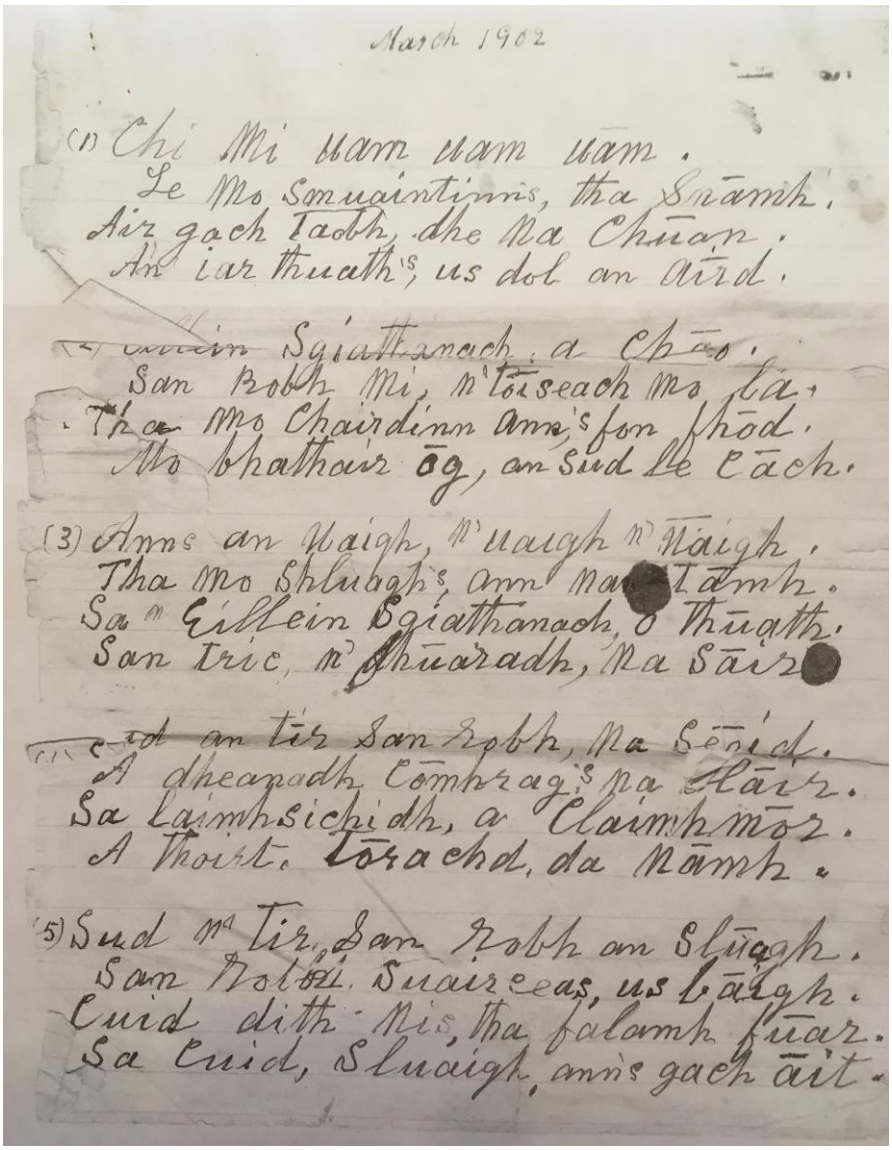
When my journey ends
And I find the best repose
In the everlasting home
Praising is love.

28

It's the love of the lamb, the lamb, the lamb
Which vanquished my enemy,
In order to free me from the grave
And release me from death.

In order to free all of you from the grave
And release you all from death.

APPENDIX 2



March 1902

(1) Chi Mi uam uam uam.
Le Mo Smuaintinnis, tha Snāmh.
Air gach Taobh dhe Na Chuan.
An iar thuath's us dol an Aird.

(2) Suain Sgiathanach a Chāo.
San Robh Mi, n'Toiseach Mo La.
Tha Mo Chairdinn ann's for fhod.
Mo bhathair ōg, an Sud le Cach.

(3) Anns an Uaigh, n'Uaigh n'Naigh.
Tha Mo Shluagh's, ann Na Tamh.
Sa n'Gillein Sgiathanach, o Thuath.
San Iric, n'Dhuaradh, Na Sair.

(4) Ged an tir San Robh, Na Seoid.
A dheanadh Comhrag's na Clair.
Sa Laimhsichidh, a Claimh mōr.
A thoirt Torachd da Namh.

(5) Sud n'a Tir, San Robh an Sluagh.
San Robh Suaimeas, us Caigh.
Cuid dith Nis, tha falamh fuar.
Sa Cuid, Sluaigh, ann's gach āit.

The first page of the handwritten version of the song-poem. Reproduced by kind permission of Mrs Betty Campbell, also of Murray Harbour, PEI, granddaughter of Donald Angus Stewart's sister.