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Centro de Educação e Humanidades
Instituto de Letras

Carolina de Pinho Santoro Lopes

“We’re all on leading strings out of the past”: memory in Lewis Grassic Gibbon’s *A Scots Quair*

Rio de Janeiro
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Tese apresentada, como requisito parcial para a obtenção do título de Doutor, ao Programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras, da Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro. Área de concentração: Estudos de Literatura.

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DEDICATION

To my family, again. Your stories live within me and have taken me from wars in far-off lands and the chaos of emergency rooms to old schoolyards and the coziness of unknown kitchens.

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The Tradition

For years I wandered hill and moor
Half looking for the road
Winding into fairyland
Where that blacksmith kept a forge

Who'd heat red hot the dragging links
That bound me to the past,
Then, with one almighty hammer-blow
Unfetter me at last.

Older now, I know nor fee
Nor anvil breaks those chains
And the wild ways we think we walk
Just bring us here again.

Kathleen Jamie

RESUMO

LOPES, Carolina de Pinho Santoro. *"We're all on leading strings out of the past":* memory in Lewis Grassic Gibbon's A Scots quair. 2021. 187 f. Tese (Doutorado em Letras) – Instituto de Letras, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 2021.

O objetivo desta tese é analisar questões relacionadas à memória na trilogia *A Scots Quair* (1932-4), de Lewis Grassic Gibbon. Composta pelos romances *Sunset Song*, *Cloud Howe* e *Grey Granite*, a obra acompanha o amadurecimento da protagonista Chris entre 1911 e a década de 1930, representando também o impacto de eventos históricos como a Primeira Guerra Mundial e a Grande Depressão na sociedade escocesa. A trilogia também retrata a transição do ambiente rural para o urbano, uma vez que a ação se desloca do vilarejo de Kinraddie para a pequena cidade de Segget e, em seguida, para a metrópole de Duncairn. Todos esses locais são ficcionais, porém localizados por Gibbon no nordeste da Escócia. O papel de canções e narrativas tradicionais em *A Scots Quair* é explorado, assim como as mudanças na relação dos personagens com esses elementos ao longo do tempo. Além disso, a análise enfoca a paisagem em relação à dualidade entre permanência e mudança que permeia a obra, uma vez que a terra é tanto testemunha da história quanto superfície em que comunidades de diferentes épocas imprimem suas marcas. Esses vestígios do passado ajudam os personagens a se lembrarem tanto da sua história pessoal quanto de acontecimentos importantes para os grupos que eles integram. Por fim, o impacto da memória da Primeira Guerra Mundial nas décadas seguintes é investigado. O trauma causado por esse conflito perdura por anos na vida dos que lutaram e de seus familiares. A criação de memoriais é uma estratégia para lidar com a dor da perda e tentar garantir que a memória dos falecidos não se apague. A experiência dos soldados também é compreendida dentro de um contexto mais amplo de violência e trauma, que se relaciona com seus ancestrais, mas também com as gerações que os sucederam.

Palavras-chave: Memória. Paisagem. Ficção escocesa. Lewis Grassic Gibbon.

ABSTRACT

LOPES, Carolina de Pinho Santoro. *"We're all on leading strings out of the past":* memory in Lewis Grassic Gibbon's A Scots quair. 2021. 187 f. Tese (Doutorado em Letras) – Instituto de Letras, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 2021.

The aim of this thesis is to analyze issues of memory in Lewis Grassic Gibbon's trilogy *A Scots Quair* (1932-4). Composed by the novels *Sunset Song*, *Cloud Howe* and *Grey Granite*, this work recounts the coming of age of the protagonist Chris between 1911 and the 1930s, also representing the impact of historical events such as the First World War and the Great Depression on Scottish society. In addition, the trilogy depicts the transition from a rural to an urban setting as the action shifts from the village of Kinraddie to the town of Segget and later to the city of Duncairn. All these places are fictional, but clearly located in the northeast of Scotland. The role of traditional songs and narratives in *A Scots Quair* is explored, as well as the changes in the characters' relation with these elements through time. Besides, the analysis focuses on the landscape in relation to the duality between permanence and change that permeates this work since the land is both a witness to history and the surface upon which communities from different ages inscribe their marks. These vestiges from the past remind the characters both of their personal stories and of events that are relevant to the group to which they belong. Finally, the impact of the memory of the First World War in the following decades is investigated. The trauma caused by this conflict endures for years in the lives of the former combatants and of their family members. The creation of memorials is a strategy to deal with the pain inflicted by loss and to try to make sure that the memory of the fallen does not vanish. Soldiers' experience is also understood within a broader context of violence and trauma, which is related to their ancestors, but also to the generations that come after them.

Keywords: Memory. Landscape. Scottish fiction. Lewis Grassic Gibbon.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Memory has a central role in the studies of Scottish literature. As will be discussed here, memory holds strong ties with the identity of communities as it contributes to the construction of a sense of belonging. According to historian Roger Chartier (2009, p. 24, our translation), memory is shaped by the needs of social groups since it is "an essential element to the construction of their collective being"[1]. Anthropologist Joël Candau (2016, p. 50) highlights the role of collective memory in creating a perceived stability through time and in distinguishing a community from others, thus helping to mold its identity. The foundation of the collective self is what is deemed worth commemorating as what is remembered is the product of processes of selection and hierarchization (CANDAU, 2016, p. 94).

Far from being an exact representation of the past, memory is changeable and influenced by different factors. Sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (2015, p. 93) sees memory as a reconstruction, an incomplete image of what happened, which may be based on false impressions or forgotten information. This author also considers that collective memory is founded on that which is able to survive in the group's memory, referring to a "continuity that is not at all artificial"[2] (HALBWACHS, 2015, p. 102, our translation). Whereas Halbwachs seems to imply that this process of selection is somewhat spontaneous, other scholars point to strategic motivations behind it. Candau (2016, p. 106, 122) discusses how memory responds to and is shaped by the present concerns of a group as the representation of the past is guided by issues of identity. For this reason, distorted memories may reveal disputes at play in a given society since these alterations are motivated by an attempt to adapt the past to the needs of the present (CANDAU, 2016, p. 172). Similarly, historian Jacques Le Goff (1990, p. 422) argues that the manipulation of collective memory is exposed by the blanks in history.

As a fundamental element in the construction of identities, memory may be a source of contention. Le Goff (1992, p. 98) describes collective memory as "an instrument and an objective of power", highlighting its role in struggles for authority. Therefore, controlling memory is an important concern among those in dominant positions (LE GOFF, 1990, p. 422). Exploring the mechanisms of memory transmission may unveil the attempts to determine how the past is represented. The power to produce records that are considered

[1] "um elemento essencial da construção de seu ser coletivo"

[2] "uma continuidade que nada tem de artificial"

legitimate is traditionally concentrated in the hands of a small group. Historian Pierre Nora (1993, p. 15-16), for instance, names the state, the church and noble families as great producers of archives. Candau (2016, p. 158-159, our translation) also asserts that the establishment of heritage to be preserved may be ideologically driven and favor a certain version of the past, especially one that fosters "the illusion of continuity"[3]. In this context, although commemorative acts celebrate a supposedly shared remembrance, the perspectives of women, working classes and ethnic minorities are frequently excluded (CANDAU, 2016, p. 149).

The formation of national identities is a core example of how memories can be distorted to fit a certain narrative. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Ernest Renan (1997, p. 19) states that forgetting is fundamental for the building of a nation since its origins are usually marked by violent conflict. The scholar even goes so far as to affirm that historical research may put the feeling of nationality at risk by uncovering these ancient struggles (RENAN, 1997, p. 19). Historian Benedict Anderson (1997, p. 86) foregrounds the fact that these hostilities tend to be represented as clashes between brothers although the opposed sides might not have felt as part of the same community. Contrary to Renan's expectations, Anderson (1997, p. 86) sees a systematic official effort to remind individuals of these early conflicts: the point is to promote the portrayal of these quarrels as a family feud. To counter the dominance of hegemonic groups over memory and thus make it more inclusive, it is possible to resort to local recollections, which are not institutionalized (LE GOFF, 1990, p. 471). This focus on local history will be an important feature of the literary works under analysis.

In Scotland, the construction of a national identity is deeply connected to memory, a trace that is accentuated by the complex relationship between this nation and England. The gradual loss of Scottish political autonomy, marked by the Union of the Crowns (1603) and the Union of Parliaments (1707), led to both a growing anglicization of Scottish society and a reaction against this process of assimilation, with efforts to preserve the Scottish language and the national tradition of songs and narratives, as will be explored in the first chapter of this thesis. Sociologist Andrew Blaikie (2013, p. 8) calls attention to the importance of representations to the construction of identity by claiming that "Scotland is a physical place, but it is also a landscape of the mind", including "the images that are evoked and the emotions

[3] "a ilusão da continuidade"

that belonging conjures up", both of which "signal historically specific categories of thought". Therefore, cultural elements are fundamental to the constitution of a feeling of Scottishness.

The aim of this research is to explore issues of memory in Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *A Scots Quair* (1932-4). The focus will be on the relationship of memory to three topics: the presence of traditional songs and narratives in the trilogy, the representation of the landscape, and the echoes of the First World War in this literary work. The analysis will be based on the theoretical framework of memory studies, especially on the works of scholars such as those aforementioned: Halbwachs, Nora, Le Goff, Chartier, and Candau. In addition, research on traditional literatures, like the writings of folklorist Margaret Bennet, historian Lizanne Henderson, and literary critic Suzanne Gilbert, will also be taken into consideration. This thesis will also dialogue with studies on the meanings of landscape and heritage, like those developed by geographers Denis Cosgrove, Brian Graham, Gregory J. Ashworth and John E. Tunbridge. The chapter on World War One is based on investigations concerning its impact and commemorations, such as works by historians Angus Calder and Jay Winter.

Lewis Grassic Gibbon is the pen name of James Leslie Mitchell (1901-1935). Born in Aberdeenshire, in the northeast of Scotland, Gibbon grew up in a rural area as the son of crofters. He left the countryside in 1917 to work as a reporter in Aberdeen and later Glasgow. After that, he served in the army in the Middle East and worked for the Royal Air Force, finally settling in Welwyn Garden City, near London. From 1928 to 1935, he published a variety of literary and nonfictional works, showing a special interest in history. For instance, he published *The Conquest of the Maya* (1934), a historiographical work, and the historical novel *Spartacus* (1933) under his birth name. His pseudonym was mostly used in books more intimately connected with Scotland, such as *A Scots Quair* and *Scottish Scene, or the Intelligent Man's Guide to Albyn* (1934), a collection of essays, poems, and short stories published along with Hugh MacDiarmid (1892-1978). Peter Whitfield (1994, p. 81) considers the adoption of this pen name as representative of "a new and specifically Scots identity". The books credited to Lewis Grassic Gibbon are characterized not only by a Scottish setting, but by differences in style and use of language (MALCOLM, 2016, p. 15-16). The use of this pseudonym is thus associated with topics such as identity and the role of the Scots language in literature, which will be addressed in this work, especially in the first chapter.

Gibbon's political views have a significant impact on his writing. Although clearly a supporter of left-wing ideologies, he did not align himself completely with any single group. Ian Campbell (1985, p. 10) describes Gibbon as "an open Marxist" even though his views could not fit completely into any political party. William Malcolm (2016, p. 16) argues that

his position combines anarchist idealism with more practical communist principles. Gibbon is deeply moved by the plight of the common folk, expressing a special concern about the peasants and the urban working class, which is conveyed in his writing. While the first endure a life of "narrowness and bitterness and heart-breaking toil in one of the most unkindly agricultural lands in the world", the latter dwell in slums depicted as "waste jungles of stench and disease and hopelessness" (GIBBON, 2007b, p. 172, 134).

Living in a markedly unequal society, Gibbon reflects upon the role of the artist in this context, in which art may seem superfluous. In his essay "Glasgow", for instance, he claims that "[t]here is nothing in culture and art that is worth the life and elementary happiness of one of those thousands who rot in the Glasgow slums" (GIBBON, 2007b, p. 137). Whereas Gibbon criticizes artistic works that do not engage with this social reality, he maintains the belief that art may work as a tool to contribute to society's transformation (MALCOLM, 2016, p. 17). This political commitment may take the form of speculations about an ideal future and how to achieve it (SHIREY, 2015, p. 90). Another possible expression for this political concern is "an aesthetic that was itself a kind of political statement" (SHIREY, 2015, p. 91), which is often conveyed by a strong emphasis on human suffering throughout history (MALCOLM, 2016, p. 25). Regarding this discussion, Gibbon (2001, p. 738-739) positions himself as "a revolutionary writer", stating that "all my books are explicit or implicit propaganda". This conscious decision to denounce the evils afflicting society may be recurrently perceived through *A Scots Quair*, as will be further explored.

Another important influence on Gibbon's works is his view of history, which dialogues with his political opinions. The author subscribed to the Diffusionist theory that civilization was responsible for the downfall of humanity, giving rise to oppressive structures such as religion and social hierarchy. Malcolm (2016, p. 23) calls attention to the fact that this theoretical framework led Gibbon to a perception of humanity as essentially good, contrasting with the widespread pessimism following World War One. Gibbon's understanding of the past is also opposed to the idea of constant evolution and progress in human history (MALCOLM, 2016, p. 23). However, the belief in a golden age also opens the way to the hope of a utopic future mirroring this idealized past (SASSI, 2015, p. 36-37). From Gibbon's point of view, the idea that "[b]enevolence is as natural to Natural Man as hunger" feeds the dream of a coming utopic society taken as "an ultimate necessity for human survival, for there is no sure half-way house between Utopia and extinction" (GIBBON, 2007b, p. 195). On the way to this better future, lessons from the past are essential and may serve both as example to be followed and as a spark of hope that reality can be different. The representation of the past

and its relationship with the present will be a recurring theme in this analysis of Gibbon's trilogy.

Gibbon's approach to history highlights the clashes between the two opposing groups of the powerful and the powerless. This perspective is related to the influence of Marxist historical materialism by Uwe Zagratzki (2015, p. 68) and Christopher Silver (2015, p. 114). The latter interprets Gibbon's emphasis on human suffering as "part iteration of Marxist theory, part propaganda and part literary device" (SILVER, 2015, p. 114). The political aspect of this aesthetic choice is also discussed by Malcolm, as aforementioned. The conflicts between these two polarized groups provide a foundation for the foregrounding of continuity through history, a central theme in *A Scots Quair* and in Gibbon's body of works. As noted by Campbell (1985, p. 42), the contemporary working classes are likened to the primitives of the golden age or the rebels led by Spartacus, just as the elite of different historical periods is portrayed as belonging to the same group. In this narrative of history as a series of class struggles, Gibbon underscores the importance of recounting the tribulations of the common folk, traditionally left out of historical accounts, and rejects romanticized depictions of the past. These distortions in historiography are considered especially problematic in Scotland, with Gibbon (2007b, 103) claiming that "[f]ew things cry so urgently for rewriting as does Scots history, in few aspects of her bastardized culture has Scotland been so ill-served as by her historians".

Gibbon's relationship with his native country is ambiguous, as is his opinion on the nationalist ideas circulating in his lifetime. Whereas some of his works, such as *A Scots Quair*, demonstrate an attachment to Scotland, his writing is far from painting a rosy picture of it. This ambivalence is also expressed in his very choice to leave the country and settle in England. In his visit to Scotland after publishing *Sunset Song*, the first volume of the trilogy, Gibbon is not welcomed by his family, who rejects the book due to the unflattering representation of their neighbors (CAMPBELL, 1985, p. 8). He thus feels like an outsider in his hometown as his ambitions are not validated or even understood within that community. In a letter to fellow writer Helen Cruickshank (1886-1975), Gibbon mentions that his wife is thinking of moving back to Scotland, to which his reaction is "Heaven knows why!" before stating that he is considering it because "it's a matter of indifference to me where I live" (MITCHELL, Nov. 1932). Although this actual return never takes place, the author keeps going back to his native country in his works. His writing criticizes and satirizes the perceived backwardness of Scotland while possessing a nostalgic tone at times. The fact that Gibbon

(2007b, p. 177) writes from a distance seems to be central to his appreciation of his feelings toward that nation, as expressed in the essay "The Land":

> Beyond the contours of Drumtochty, through the piping of that stillness, snipe were sounding. I got off my bicycle to listen to that and look round. So doing I was aware of a sober fact: that indeed all this was a little disappointing. I would never apprehend its full darkly colourful beauty until I had gone back to England, far from it, down in the smooth pastures of Hertfordshire some night I would remember it and itch to write of it […].

This multifaceted relation with Scotland and, more particularly, with life in its rural regions is mirrored in the feelings of *A Scots Quair*'s protagonist Chris, as will be further explored in chapter 2.

As for Scottish nationalism, Gibbon's response to its rise in the early twentieth century is complex and nuanced. On the one hand, he rejects this ideology for its connections with Fascism and criticizes it for not addressing social injustice. In "Glasgow", nationalism is strongly attacked as one of a number of "cultural aberrations", and its inefficacy to improve the lives of the dispossessed is treated with irony:

> It will profit Glasgow's hundred and fifty thousand slumdwellers so much to know that they are being starved and brutalized by Labour Exchanges and Public Assistance Committees staffed exclusively by Gaelic-speaking, haggis-eating Scots in saffron kilts and tongued brogues, full of such typical Scottish ideals as those which kept men chained as slaves in the Fifeshire mines a century or so ago. . . . (GIBBON, 2007b, p. 142).

This quotation also illustrates Gibbon's reluctance to accept a view of history that glorifies the past since it is filled with cruelties against the common folk, like the individuals exploited in the Fifeshire mines. On the other hand, the writer's interest in exploring and preserving Scottish culture is undeniable. Gibbon's home country has a remarkable presence in his works since he explores Scottish history and inserts the rhythms of the Scots language into his prose. This attention to Scotland is attested by some of the projects planned by Gibbon before his premature death: a biography of the national icon William Wallace (c.1270-1305), a historical novel set in seventeenth-century Scotland, and the organization of the book series "The Voice of Scotland", to which he was supposed to write a volume.

These contrasting attitudes give rise to discussions about Gibbon's position regarding Scottish nationalism. Campbell (1985, p. 49) sees the author as divided between his rejection of nationalism and "the desire to maintain a distinctive Scottishness in life and literature". In an article published in the magazine *The Free Man*, Gibbon describes himself as "non-Nationalist, and yet interested in this new revival of cultural and political Nationalism" (GIBBON, 1934, p. 9 apud MALCOLM, 2016, p. 86). To him, cultivating the national culture does not conflict with his ideal of "ultimate cosmopolitanism" as local elements may

contribute to the development of this utopic transnational culture (GIBBON, 2007b, p. 142-143). Hence, Gibbon (2007b, p. 143) affirms that he "temporarily, opportunistically" turns his eyes to Scottish culture while he waits for the coming of this perfect future when the idea of nation will have ceased to exist. Carla Sassi (2015, p. 38, 46) argues that Gibbon regards any generally accepted idea with suspicion, a trace that is expressed in "his fragmented but simultaneous inscription between Scotland and the whole world, rooted in the local and yet embracing the global". Like Gibbon's political views, his position in the nationalist debate seems to be idiosyncratic. Envisaging an ideal future, he allows himself to play with apparently contradictory ideas and to try to synthetize them in such a way as to have the best of all possible worlds.

Gibbon wrote during a period of effervescence in Scottish letters, known as the Modern Scottish Literary Renaissance. He kept in touch with prominent authors such as Hugh MacDiarmid – pseudonym of Christopher M. Grieve – and Neil Gunn (1891-1973), as well as reviewed works by fellow Scottish writers and published articles in literary magazines like *The Free Man* and *Scots Magazine*. As mentioned before, Gibbon also co-wrote *Scottish Scene* with MacDiarmid. Despite these professional links, Malcolm (2016, p. 85) considers that Gibbon kept his distance, both geographically and ideologically, from this literary revival. However, the Renaissance was marked by its heterogeneity, with room for dissenting positions among the writers (GIFFORD, 2013, p. 9). What brought them together was a project of reassessing Scottish literary tradition and strengthening the place of Scottish literature within the European and the broader international context. Douglas Gifford (2013, p. 8-9) affirms that Renaissance writers shared a desire to break with the representations of Scotland that came before them since they considered them to be distorted. Their exploration of national identity was, therefore, motivated by a project to write a more realistic portrayal of Scotland, dealing with social and political issues of their time (RIACH, 2009, p. 14). These common objectives of the Renaissance are central to some of Gibbon's works, as made apparent by his aforementioned statement of the need for a rewriting of Scottish history. The role of national traditions and the representation of historical events in *A Scots Quair* will be a focal point in the different chapters of this thesis.

A Scots Quair is composed of *Sunset Song* (1932), *Cloud Howe* (1933), and *Grey Granite* (1934). It retells the story of Chris Guthrie from her adolescence to her adult years in the early twentieth century, also representing the transformations in Scottish society in this period, marked by the First World War and the Great Depression. In this way, the changes in Chris's life and in Scottish history are intertwined. The three novels are set in fictional places

located in the region of the Mearns, in the northeast of Scotland, where Gibbon was raised. The setting changes in each novel, shifting from a rural village to a big and industrialized city, which mirrors the processes of urbanization and industrialization.

Sunset Song is set in the village of Kinraddie between the years 1911 and 1920. As Chris comes of age, gets married for the first time and has a child, Kinraddie undergoes profound changes due to World War One, which shows that the impact of historical events reaches even places that are relatively distant from the battlegrounds and the center of economic and political power. Not only does the war cause the death of some of the characters, like Ewan, Chris's husband, it also leads to the felling of the woods around the village and, consequently, to climate changes in the region and to the end of the traditional peasant way of life.

In *Cloud Howe*, Chris gets married to the minister Robert Colquohoun and they move to the town of Segget. Set in the decade of 1920, the novel represents the rise of Fascist and socialist movements in Scotland. Robert, a supporter of socialist ideals and the Labour Party, tries to use his position as a minister to bring social change to the town. Besides, *Cloud Howe* shows Ewan, Chris's son from her first marriage, growing up and turning into a teenager. After the failure of the general strike supported by Robert and the death of his newborn son with Chris, the minister becomes increasingly disillusioned and dies at the pulpit after one of his sermons.

Grey Granite takes Chris and Ewan, now a young adult, to the city of Duncairn, where he works at a factory and she runs a boarding house in the 1930s. Surrounded by the appalling conditions of life of the poor and unemployed, Ewan becomes more involved in politics as the narrative progresses and ends up joining the Communist Party and leaving Duncairn to lead a hunger march in London. Chris, in contrast, is ever more skeptical of all kinds of creeds and ideologies and, thus, more isolated.

The first chapter of this thesis, divided into two sections, analyzes the role of traditional songs and narratives in the trilogy and the relationship between the characters and these cultural elements. The first section focuses on songs and poems, dealing with the song tradition in Scotland and its connection with the Scottish language. Although the presence of songs in the characters' daily lives weakens as time goes by and the action shifts to urban locations, they remain alive in people's memory, being a part of their shared repertoire. Moreover, the trilogy problematizes the representation of Robert Burns (1759-1796), historically considered Scotland's national poet, and depicts the beginning of a new tradition of political songs. The second section explores the legends and supernatural phenomena in *A*

Scots Quair, investigating the role of traditional narratives in the creation of a sense of place in the novels. Besides, these stories and visions reinforce the idea of continuity and engage with views on Christ and religion.

The second chapter investigates the representation of the landscape in the trilogy, calling attention to how characters relate to the past of the places surrounding them. The landscape embodies a fundamental theme of the novel – that of the interplay between permanence and change. As a witness to centuries of events, the setting symbolizes continuity through history and acts as a reminder of those who inhabited it before. Chris, for example, frequently associates the places she sees with past events, suggesting the strong presence of these stories in her memory. In this way, locations such as battle sites, ruins and historical buildings reinforce the connection between the characters in the novels and their ancestors. The chapter also analyzes, as aforementioned, the relationship of the protagonist Chris and her son Ewan with the landscape. While the first has a special bond with the land and vestiges from ancient times, young Ewan interacts with the landscape of the Mearns through his archaeological explorations.

The third chapter examines the ways in which World War One is remembered in *A Scots Quair*. The first section explores the war memorials erected in Kinraddie and Segget, the settings of the two first novels. It also addresses the former combatants' and their loved ones' memories of the conflict, dealing with some characteristics of trauma. The second section analyzes the representation of the interwar period, particularly the influence of the First World War in these years and the growing tensions that would lead to the Second World War. The third section focuses on the continuity of state violence, comparing the experiences of the generation who fought the war and the one that comes after them. Their encounters with the police and the army are traumatic events that connect them with oppressed groups from different locations and historical periods.

In sum, this thesis foregrounds different aspects related to memory in Gibbon's *A Scots Quair*. The analysis of traditional texts, the landscape, and the memories of World War One in the trilogy is connected by a view of permanence and change as inextricably linked. The exploration of these topics calls attention to the disputes over memory and the processes of selection and erasure that may contribute to the building of certain narratives about a community. These operations highlight the close relation between a group's identity and how its members recollect its past. In dealing with these subjects, this thesis will hopefully contribute to the discussion of Gibbon's works and of the complex workings of memory in Scotland.

1 MEMORY IN TRADITIONAL CULTURE IN *A SCOTS QUAIR*

> People who care nothing for their country's stories and songs […] are like people without a past — without a memory — they are half people.
>
> *Alasdair Gray*

1.1 Singing the past

Songs and ballads are an important part of a community's heritage as they are transmitted across generations and express the group's way of life and perspective on the world. As songs are passed on through time, they may be adapted to new social and historical contexts, reflecting the changes which the community has undergone. These cultural elements are also closely linked to a group's identity since they constitute its cultural memory, defined by cultural theorist Jan Assmann (1995, p. 132) as consisting of "that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose 'cultivation' serves to stabilize and convey that society's self-image". Assmann's concept of cultural memory underlies literary scholar Ann Rigney's (2011, p. 80) view that poetry worked as "a medium of community building" until the late nineteenth century, having a stronger effect when it was set to music and, thus, could be performed. This close association between songs and community may be observed in *A Scots Quair* as several of them are performed in communal gatherings and celebrations, such as the protagonist Chris's wedding, reinforcing the feeling of the endurance of shared values and experiences. In this, the musical tradition constitutes an important element in the construction of the group's identity.

Songs have been a noteworthy element in the construction of a Scottish national identity, especially concerning the complex relationship between England and Scotland. The history of these two nations is intertwined and strongly influenced by the political and economic English hegemony. Until 1603 this relation was marked by fierce disputes over the territories close to the border between the countries. After the death of Elizabeth I of England

(1558-1603)[4] without a direct heir in 1603, James VI of Scotland became king of both nations and was crowned as James I of England (1567-1625/1603-1625). The fact that the king was Scottish, however, did not lead him to favor his native land. On the contrary, the court was transferred to London, and he only visited Scotland once after that. His attitude and that of other Stuart monarchs that followed him was to try to exert absolute control over political and religious issues in Scotland, which was cause for deep and widespread dissatisfaction.

The final blow to Scotland's political autonomy was the union of the English and the Scottish parliaments in 1707, during Queen Anne's reign (1702-1714). Despite the unpopularity of the policy and the anti-union riots in different cities of Scotland, the Scottish parliament voted for its own end, described by the Lord Privy Seal at the time as "ane end of ane auld sang [an old song]" (MACLEAN, 1996, p. 156). The opposition sang "We are bought and sold for English gold", implying that Members of Parliament took bribes in order to pass the Act of Union (MACLEAN, 1996, p. 156). Some pasquils (satirical poems) also express people's discontentment with the Union, as the final stanzas from the anonymous "A Curse against the Unionists and Revolutionists" may illustrate:

> Curst be those treacherous traitors who,
> By their perfidious knaverie,
> Have brought the nation now unto
> Ane everlasting slaverie!
>
> Curst be the Parliament that day
> They gave the Confirmation;
> And curst for ever be all they
> Shall swear the abjuration. (MAIDMENT, 1868, p. 369)

This pasquil makes evident the perception of the nation's downfall and the feeling that the Parliament betrayed the will of the people. According to literary critic David Daiches (1966, p. 17), there were two main reactions to this political situation: the first was an "attempt to rediscover its (Scotland's)[5] own national traditions" as a compensation for its lack of political power, and the second was to acknowledge the English dominance and try to "achieve distinction by any standard the dominant culture may evolve". The latter attitude is the one attributed to intellectuals such as philosophers Adam Smith (1723-1790) and David Hume (1711-1776), associated to what is known as the Scottish Enlightenment. The revival of national traditions may be illustrated by the publication of collections of Scottish songs by several eighteenth-century writers and poets.

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[4] Whereas the dates of birth and death are given in reference to historical figures in general, monarchs will always be followed by the period of their reigns.

[5] The references to elements previously mentioned in the quotations will be added in parentheses. Brackets will be used to signal the definition of Scottish words.

An early example of this revival was the publication of *A Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Poems Both Ancient and Modern* (1706-1711) by Scottish printer James Watson (? -1722), the first volume of which dates from 1706, shortly before the Act of Union was passed. This influential and heterogeneous collection, which included poems, ballads, and folk songs from different periods, contained types of poems and verse forms that served as inspiration for later Scottish poets like Allan Ramsay (1686-1758), Robert Fergusson (1750-1774) and Robert Burns (1759-1796). An example of this is "The Life and Death of the Piper of Kilbarchan or The Epitaph of Habbie Simson", whose stanza was widely used by these later poets:

> Kilbarchan now may say, alas!
> For she hath lost her Game and Grace,
> Both Trixie, and the Maiden Trace:
> but what remead [remedy]?
> For no man can supply his place,
> Hab Simson's dead.
>
> Now who shall play, the day it daws [dawns]?
> Or hunt up, when the Cock he craws?
> Or who can for our Kirk-town-cause,
> stand us in stead?
> On Bagpipes (now) no Body blaws [blows],
> sen [since] Habbie's dead. (WATSON, 1869, p. 32)

The poem was so influential that its stanza was labeled as "Standard Habby" by Allan Ramsay (WOOD, [1952], p. 36). The subject of "Habbie Simson" also adds a touch of local color as it refers to the piping tradition and to tunes which were commonly played ("The day it daws" and "Hunt up"). Watson's intention to convey the value of the Scottish tradition as comparable to other European nations' may be perceived in his introduction to the collection as he affirms that "the frequency of Publishing Collections of Miscellaneous Poems in our Neighboring Kingdoms and States, may, in great measure, justify an Undertaking of this kind with us" (WATSON, 1869, s/p.). Watson (1869, s/p.) also describes his own work as "the first of its Nature" in Scotland, highlighting its importance. Daiches (1966, p. 19) states that the collected poems represented "a definite turning back to the roots of Scottish culture" and to a moment in time when Scotland and its literature flourished. Thus, the anthology was reminiscent of a period which could be considered a "golden" past.

Allan Ramsay also collected traditional songs in the four volumes of *The Tea-Table Miscellany* (1724-1737) and the two of *The Evergreen* (1724). In addition to the collection work, Ramsay wrote his own pieces and contributed in different ways to the Scottish cultural life, having created a circulating library, opened a theater, and founded the Easy Club, in which young people could gather to discuss political and literary issues. The discussions were

mainly focused on matters associated with Scottish history and language so as to nurture a nationalist feeling (HENRIQUES, 1998). His effort to "enrich the nationalist literary movement" is clear in his anthologies and contributed to "restore Scots literature to its natural place in the daily life of the people" (DAICHES, 1966, p. 24). Ramsay's concern with the national tradition is clear in the following quotation from the preface to *The Evergreen*: "(These good old Bards') Poetry is the Product of their own Country, not pilfered and spoiled in the Transportation from abroad: Their Images are native, and their Landskips domestick; copied from those Fields and Meadows we every Day behold" (RAMSAY, 1724, p. vii-viii). This fragment also puts it in evidence that the landscape is for Ramsay an element of continuity which bonds his contemporaries to the "good old Bards", contributing to the construction of a sense of identity and nationality. The understanding of the landscape as a witness to the community's past is also present in Gibbon's *A Scots Quair*, in which the fields and ancient buildings play an important role, as will later be discussed. One of the songs contained in *The Evergreen* was "Chryst's Kirk of the Grene", also included in Watson's collection:

WAS nevir* in Scotland hard* nor sene* sic* dancing nor deray*, Nowthir* at Falkland on the Grene*, nor Pebills* at the Play, As was of Wowers*, as I wene*, at Chrysts-Kirk on a day; Thair* came our Kitties washen* clene* in new kirtills* of Gray Full gay, At Chrysts-Kirk of the Grene that Day. [...]	*never / heard / seen *such / revelry *neither / green *Peebles *wooers / ween *there / washed / clean *kirtles
Thay* girnit* and lute gird* with Grains*, ilk Gossip uder greivt*: Sum strak* with stings*, sum gaddert stains*, sum* fled and ill* mischevt*. The Menstral* wan* within twa* Wains*, that day full weil* he preivt*: For he came hame* with unbirs'd bains*, qhair* fechtairs* war* mischeivt, for evir*, At Chrysts-Kirk of the Grene that Day. (RAMSAY, 1724, p. 1-2, 9-10)	*they / snarled, gnashed / let fly / branches *each friend the other injured *some stroke / poles / some gathered stones *some / badly / injured *minstrel / went / two / dwellings, rooms *well / proved *home / unbroken bones *where / fighters / were *forever

The ballad humorously describes a country celebration which turns into a brawl, focusing on a rural setting in an occasion that includes the performance of songs since there is reference to a minstrel. The stanza was also used by later writers in poems describing revelries and festivities, such as "Hallow Fair", by Fergusson, and "The Holy Fair" and "Hallowe'en", by

Burns (WOOD, [1952], p. 16).

As for the Gaelic tradition in the Highlands, James Macpherson (1736-1796) published *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* (1760), allegedly a collection of translations of ancient Gaelic poems from a time before the establishment of the clans in the region (MACPHERSON, 2008). Years later Macpherson published *Fingal* (1762) and *Temora* (1763), claiming that these epic poems had been composed by Ossian, an ancient bard and the son of the legendary hero Fingal. Thus, these works were supposed to be the foundational epics for a primitive and pure society, ascribing value to the Highland people and culture. The poems were hugely successful and influential, and their authorship became the subject of heated debate. According to Dafydd Moore (2007, p. 92), although Macpherson's works seem to be closer to imitations, rather than translations, of old poems, it is undeniable that he relied on his knowledge of the Highland culture and oral tradition to create them. This scholar also considers that Macpherson combined the Gaelic traditional songs with the eighteenth-century ideas about ancient societies and literature (MOORE, 2007, p. 92).

The practice of adjusting traditional songs and poems to the taste of the time when they were collected was not unusual. In fact, Ramsay, for example, altered the texts in order to make them more appropriate to his day. In the preface to the fourteenth edition of *The Tea-Table Miscellany*, Ramsay (apud DAICHES, 1966, p. 25) affirms: "In my compositions and collections, I have kept out of all smut and ribaldry, that the modest voice and ear of the fair singer might meet with no affront". Thus, it is evident that the propriety of the songs was considered more important than being true to the original compositions. Walter Scott (1771-1832), whose collections will be explored in further detail later on, also finds it acceptable to make changes in the ancient texts so as to "win the favour of the public, at a period when the great difficulty was not how to secure the very words of old ballads, but how to arrest attention upon the subject at all" (LOCKHART, 1833, p. 64). In this defense of Thomas Percy (1729-1811), who edited *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), Scott, in the introduction to the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802-1803), deems it valid to change the songs to reach and delight a wider audience, something done by Scott himself in his collection.

Robert Burns is another poet who drew upon the Scottish song tradition, both collecting and reworking old songs after his own fashion. Burns, widely regarded as the national poet of Scotland, produced a variety of poetry, ranging from lyric poems to satires and works containing political commentary. "John Barleycorn" is an instance of traditional song upon which Burns worked and made additions:

There was three kings into the east,

Three kings both great and high,
And they hae sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn should die.

They took a plough and plough'd him down,
Put clods upon his head,
And they hae sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn was dead.

But the cheerful Spring came kindly on,
And show'rs began to fall;
John Barleycorn got up again,
And sore surpris'd them all.
[...]

John Barleycorn was a hero bold,
Of noble enterprise;
For if you do but taste his blood,
'Twill make your courage rise.
[...]

Then let us toast John Barleycorn,
Each man a glass in hand;
And may his great posterity
Ne'er fail in old Scotland! (BURNS, 2009, p.60-62)

This ballad is about the legendary figure of John Barleycorn, a personification of barley, describing its planting and harvest and celebrating the production of liquor from it. This cereal is the basis of the typically Scottish whisky and several other alcoholic beverages. Due to his rural background, Burns was named the "Heaven-taught ploughman" by Scottish writer Henry Mackenzie, a debatable title since the poet was a well-read man, who was educated at home by a tutor and his own father and even attended school for a short period of time. Burns was strongly influenced by Watson's and Ramsay's collections of songs, affirming that he read and was absorbed in these books as he was driving his cart or walking to the fields (WOOD, [1952], p. 44-45). All these anthologizing efforts contributed to reinforcing the idea of a singular Scottish identity, distinct from the English, in a context marked by England's political, economic and cultural hegemony. According to Paul Henderson Scott (2002, p. 14), these collections represented "a patriotic undertaking to establish continuity with the independent Scotland of the past".

The endeavor to preserve traditional Scottish songs was continued by Walter Scott in his edition of the three volumes of *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. This was part of his interest in the history, identity and traditions of Scotland, which also led him to collect antiques associated with the nation. As told in his memoir, from his childhood, Scott was acquainted with traditional songs and tales through his grandmother and other family members, and these works made such an impression on him that they helped form his opinion

about historical figures and events as a child. *The Tea-Table Miscellany* was also one of his favorite books when he was young (LOCKHART, 1901). The writer gathered much of the material for the *Minstrelsy* during excursions through the Border region, in which he collected songs and tunes known by the folk living there.

Scott attributed an important role to place and the character and manners of its inhabitants in the composition of songs. This association between songs and the nation may be illustrated by the fact that the author refers to early ballads and songs as a way to be acquainted with "the National Muse in her cradle" (LOCKHART, 1833, p. 15). The close connection between songs and the place where they were created, as well as its history, is also demonstrated by the long introduction to the *Minstrelsy*, which consists of an account of the history of the Border region and a description of the customs there. Each song is also introduced by a text which discusses its historical accuracy and comments upon other versions or other ballads related to it. "Battle of Otterbourne", for instance, is preceded by an account of the 1388 battle between the English and the Scottish which it is supposed to describe. The explanation of the Scottish victory draws upon both historiography and legends though the editor clearly states his sources and gives more credibility to the official history, pointing instances of imprecision in the song. The introduction also emphasizes the connection of the song to the region and to the present as Scott gives the name of the then proprietor of the area where the battle happened and states that there is a cross there to mark the place of the Earl of Douglas's death (SCOTT, 1803, p. 29). The ballad included in the *Minstrelsy*, according to Scott, evidently conveys the Scottish perspective on the battle:

> It fell upon the Lammas tide,
> When the muir-men [people from the Border region] win their hay,
> The doughty earl of Douglas rode
> Into England, to catch a prey.
>
> He chose the Gordons and the Græmes,
> With them the Lindesays, light and gay;
> But the Jardines wald [would] not with him ride,
> And they rue it to this day.
>
> And he has burn'd the dales of the Tyne,
> And part of Bambrough shire;
> And three good towers on Roxburgh fells,
> He left them all on fire. [...] (SCOTT, 1803, p. 34)

Scott's hypothesis seems to be confirmed by the fact that the song praises the Scottish nobles and the damage they inflicted on English land. Despite the inaccuracies which may occur, ballads are deemed a possible historical source since, despite poets' "fabling" character, the contents of some songs are corroborated by other texts, and the comparison between rhymes

from different origins demonstrates “the ancient history of states; their slower or swifter progress towards civilisation; their gradual or more rapid manners, sentiments, and religion” (LOCKHART, 1833, p. 14-15). Thus, songs may be a relevant way to understand a community’s culture and history. Shifts in the relationship between a group and its musical heritage may also reveal fundamental transformations in its structure, as the analysis of *A Scots Quair* will demonstrate.

The work of all these writers and collectors, except for Macpherson’s, represented an attempt not only to rescue and promote the Scottish song tradition, but also to safeguard and foster the use of the Scots language. According to linguist Stephen Barbour (2000, p. 29), Scottish identity is “clearly linked to language [...] in very complex ways”. This complexity has to do both with the unequal relation with England and with linguistic divisions within Scotland itself. Barbour (2000, p. 30) identifies three linguistically distinct regions in Scotland: “the Highlands and Western Isles; the Lowlands; and the Northern Isles (Orkney and Shetland)”. The fundamental division of Scotland in the Highland and the Lowland regions has been marked by the use of Scottish Gaelic and Scots, respectively, before the supremacy of the English language. The first is a Celtic language which was used until the Middle Ages throughout the current Scottish territory. Meanwhile, Scots – also known as Lallans (Lowland language) – developed during the Middle Ages from a common origin with English. As Scots grew apart from English, with a different “process of codification” (BARBOUR, 2000, p. 30), it spread in the Lowlands and replaced Gaelic in the region, becoming the state language. As a result, from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, Scots was the predominant language in the Lowlands. During this period, Scotland was much more intimately connected, both politically and culturally, to France. As a consequence of these ties, many words of Latin origin entered Scots vocabulary either directly from Latin or via French. The significance of these loans is demonstrated by the fact that “Latin and French between them account for more than 50 per cent of the vocabulary of Older Scots” (ROBINSON; Ó MAOLALAIGH, 2007, p. 161).

After the Reformation, however, English influence was more strongly felt in Scotland. John Knox (c.1514-1572), the leading figure of the Scottish Reformation, wrote *History of the Reformation* in a language which was closer to English than to Scots. Besides, Scottish Protestants adopted English versions of the Bible; hence, English became the language of religion. David Daiches (1966, p. 13) also points out to a general weakening of Scottish national culture following the Reformation, with the disruption of the cultural life and the prohibition of its expressions such as folk dance and drama. Another historical event which

contributed to a change in the linguistic landscape in Scotland was the Union of the Crowns in 1603. These transformations led to a decline in the use of Scots in writing, which caused the language to break into different dialects. Even though both languages coexisted, with people "talk[ing] in Scots and [doing their] formal writing in English" (DAICHES, 1966, p. 14), Scots was stigmatized as a corrupt or debased dialect of English. From as early as the eighteenth century, Scots was considered a disappearing language (MCCLURE, 1980, p. 12). In this context, English was adopted as the language of education and prestige to such an extent that members of the educated elite in Scotland aspired to use its standard form. David Hume, for instance, aimed at excluding all forms of Scotticisms from his text (DAICHES, 1966, p. 31).

Given the dwindling prestige of Scots and the increasing use of English, the utilization of the first in the eighteenth-century collections of songs may be understood as a form of resistance against cultural assimilation. The editors themselves deal with the subject and highlight the use of Scots in their anthologies. Watson (1869, s/p.) affirms that his was the first collection to be published "in our own Native Scots Dialect", emphasizing the importance of the choice to record the songs in this language. Ramsay (1724, p. x-xi) also defends the employment of Scots and criticizes the disdain felt by some people toward it as the following quotation from the preface to *The Evergreen* may demonstrate:

> There is nothing can be heard more silly than one's expressing his Ignorance of his native Language; yet such there are, who can vaunt of acquiring a tolerable Perfection in the French or Italian tongues, if they have been a fortnight in Paris or a month in Rome: But shew them the most elegant thoughts in a Scots dress, they as disdainfully as stupidly condemn it as barbarous. But the true Reason is obvious: Every one that is born never so little superior to the Vulgar, would fain distinguish themselves from them by some Manner or other, and such, it would appear, cannot arrive at a better Method.

From Ramsay's perspective, as Scots should not be regarded as inferior to any prestigious language, the contempt for it is based on nothing but affectation. Moreover, Burns (1786, p. iii), in the preface of his *Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect*, claims to "[sing] the sentiments and manners, [sic] he felt and saw in himself and his rustic compeers around him, in his and their native language". Thus, the poet stresses not only the use of the Scots language, but also his dedication to the feelings and customs of the common folk of Scotland. In the nineteenth century, Walter Scott was the first one to revive the use of Scots in prose in his *Waverley Novels*, which may show the intention to preserve this language. Since Scottish words and expressions were chiefly part of the speech of lower-class characters, their use was a way to mark distinct social status. To avoid distancing himself from a wider audience, Scott combined Scots and English and adapted Scottish words as to make them more easily

comprehensible by a foreign audience (JOBIM; HENRIQUES, 1996, p. 125).

In the twentieth century, Scots was still regarded with prejudice and excluded from schools. The Scottish Literary Renaissance, however, contributed to a revival of the literary use of Scots. This 1920s movement involved the search for a distinctively Scottish culture and literature, hence dealing with linguistic issues. Hugh MacDiarmid, a prominent figure of the Renaissance, wrote some of his poetic works in Scots, such as "The Bonnie Broukit Bairn":

Mars is braw* in crammasy*, Venus in a green silk goun*, The auld* mune* shak's her gowden* feathers, Their starry talk's a wheen o' blethers*, Nane* for thee a thochtie* sparin' Earth, thou bonnie* broukit* bairn*! *– But greet*, an' in your tears ye'll drown* *The haill clanjamfrie*!*[6]	*fine / crimson *gown *old / moon / golden *a pack of nonsense *none; thought *beautiful / neglected / child *cry *whole crowd of them

It is possible to observe in the poem the mixture of words considered poetic or archaic, such as "crammasy", and others which are still common in current use, like "bairn" or "greet". This has to do with MacDiarmid's project of developing a Synthetic Scots by drawing words from different periods and regions of Scotland.

The use of Scots or Scottish Gaelic is considered fundamental for the creation of Scottish, rather than English, literature according to Lewis Grassic Gibbon. In his essay "Literary Lights", Gibbon states that Scottish authors who write in English use a language which is not their first. As a Scottish author "has to *learn* to write in English", they have more difficulty experimenting with language and making formal innovations (GIBBON, 2007b, p. 147, original emphasis). Their texts sound foreign to an English audience, "as though the writer did not *write* himself, but *translated* himself" (GIBBON, 2007b, p. 146, original emphasis). Gibbon (2007b, p. 146) attributes this alien feeling to the echoes of Scots in the writers' minds and reaffirms the strong presence of this language in the country, as the following quotation may illustrate: Scots "is still in most Scots communities, (in one or other Anglicised modification,) the speech of bed and board and street and plough, the speech of emotional ecstasy and emotional stress". Hence, Scots is, from Gibbon's perspective, an essential part of most Scottish people's background, intimately associated with emotion and spontaneous reactions.

Gibbon, however, acknowledges Scots' lack of prestige among the elite and the association of this language with uneducated people. As for the status of Scots, the author

[6] Available at: http://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poem/bonnie-broukit-bairn/.

affirms that “it is to the bourgeois of Scotland coarse and low and common and loutish, a matter for laughter, well enough for hinds and the like, but for the genteel to be quoted in vocal inverted commas” (GIBBON, 2007b, p. 146). Not only does Gibbon condemn this view of Scots, but he also disapproves of the restricted use of the language in literary texts. When analyzing the works of John Buchan (1875-1940), a Scottish novelist, Gibbon considers that they have no connection with Scotland. This opinion is related to the fact that Buchan “writes it all in a competent, skilful and depressing English: when his characters talk Scots they do it in suitable inverted commas: and such characters as do talk Scots are always the simple, the proletarian, the slightly ludicrous characters” (GIBBON, 2007b, p. 151). Thus, Gibbon attacks the restriction of the use of Scots to the speech of the least educated characters, a limitation which reproduces the stigma attached to this language and reinforces its inferior status in relation to English. This idea is illustrated by Gibbon’s statement that Buchan “could envisage Braid Scots as being only a ‘vernacular’, the tongue of *a home-reared slave*” (GIBBON, 2007b, p. 151, original emphasis).

In the same essay, Gibbon highlights the connection between language and identity, emphasizing the importance of linguistic choices in order to create a distinctive Scottish literature. In his appraisal of Scottish writer Neil Gunn (1891-1975), Gibbon (2007b, 149) considers that he “is a brilliant novelist from Scotshire who chooses his home country as the scene of his tales”. This passage makes it clear that, according to Gibbon, using Scotland as the setting of one’s narratives is not enough to write Scottish literature since the term “Scotshire” – with the suffix commonly present in the names of English counties – reinforces the perceived assimilation of Scottish culture to the English. Gibbon (2007b, p. 150) stresses the role of language in the creation of a national literature in the following quotation, also concerning Gunn’s works: “[w]riting in orthodox English, he is merely a brilliantly unorthodox Englishman”. Following these standards, MacDiarmid’s poetic works are highly praised for displaying “the flexibility and the loveliness of that alien variation of the Anglo-Saxon speech which is Braid Scots” in a context that was “pale and jaded with the breathing and rebreathing in the same room of the same stagnant air of orthodox English” (GIBBON, 2007b, p. 153). Thus, from Gibbon’s point of view, the use of Scots also has a great potential to bring about an injection of originality and freshness in the national literature.

Lewis Grassic Gibbon, in *A Scots Quair* and other works, seeks to fill in a gap which he claims to exist in Scottish literature: the lack of a novelist who uses Scots more broadly. He addresses the significance and the role of the use of Scots in the following note to the reader, which precedes *Sunset Song*:

> If the great Dutch language disappeared from literary usage and a Dutchman wrote in German a story of the Lekside peasants, one may hazard he would ask and receive a certain latitude and forbearance in his usage of German. He might import into his pages some score or so untranslatable words and idioms – untranslatable except in their context and setting; he might mould in some fashion his German to the rhythms and cadence of the kindred speech that his peasants speak. Beyond that, in fairness to his hosts, he hardly could go: to seek effect by a spray of apostrophes would be both impertinence and mis-translation.
> The courtesy that the hypothetical Dutchman might receive from German a Scot may invoke from the great English tongue. (GIBBON, 2006, p. xxxix)[7]

In his analogy, Gibbon acknowledges the decline of the usage of Scots in literary texts while affirming the importance of this language to convey a more truthful representation of his peasant characters' speech. This claim relates to Gibbon's view that Scots is still "the speech of bed and board and street and plough" in many Scottish communities (GIBBON, 2007b, p. 146), which has been mentioned before. Besides, the author emphasizes the untranslatability of some words and expressions, adding one more argument to the preservation of Scots in literature. Gibbon stresses this point in the note which introduces the glossary included in the American edition of the novel, stating that "most of the Scots words are untranslatable except in their context setting. Otherwise there would have been little point in using them: English would have served, as elsewhere. So the following 'translations' are very faulty – the English a mere approximation to the Scots" (GIBBON, 2007a, p. 290). Hence, Gibbon argues for the irreplaceability of Scots, a view which goes against the derogatory notion that it would be a mere corrupt version of English. The strategy of highlighting the value of Scots while admitting its decline in prestige and usage is also present in Gibbon's preface to the American edition of *Sunset Song* as this quotation may illustrate:

> [f]or the author (whose humility may be taken for granted) can be best regarded as a sagaman arrived in the house of the English with the salvage of his own ruined house of words; and the tongue of his hosts, so it seems to him, may be yet enriched with this salvage of words that are only half-alien (GIBBON, 2007a, p. 303).

Although the use of Scots is associated with the "salvage" of a place in ruins, the author claims – in maybe not such a humble position – that it has the potential to enhance the English language. It is also interesting to notice that Gibbon employs the image of a house as a metaphor for Scots, evoking the feeling of belonging and identity related to the use of one's native language.

In the aforementioned essay, Gibbon (2007b, p. 155) describes his project in the *Quair* as "to mould the English language into the rhythms and cadences of Scots spoken speech, and to inject into the English vocabulary such minimum number of words from Braid Scots as that

[7] All quotations are from the same edition of the trilogy, which will be, from now on, referred to by page numbers only.

remodeling requires". Writer and language activist Billy Kay (2006, p. 76) states that, for people familiar with Scots, the language in *Sunset Song* "can be rendered broad Scots by simply changing the pronunciation and intonation of the English text". The use of language in the novel may be illustrated by the following quotation, in which Chris's opinion about a book character is expressed: "she loved Katy and envied her and wished like Katy she lived at a school, not tramping back in the spleiter [driving rain or snow] of a winter night to help muck [remove manure from] the byre, with the smell of the sharn [shairn = dung] rising feuch! [interjection of disgust] in her face" (p. 41). It is possible to observe in this passage the presence of some Scots words intertwined with standard English text. In this sense, Gibbon's technique may be compared to Walter Scott's as both combine English and Scots in their works as a way to reach a wider audience.

There is, however, a fundamental distinction between Scott's and Gibbon's use of language: whereas Scots is used mainly in the speech of lower-class characters in the works of the first, it is the language of both characters and narrative voice in the *Quair*. In fact, the trilogy is narrated in several passages from the point of view and through the voice of the community, either as a collective voice or from the perspective of one of its individual members. Not only the *Quair*, but also Gibbon's short stories are told by an anonymous community narrative voice (LOW, 2003, p. 104). As the story is recounted through the communal memory and gossip, the text reproduces some characteristics of oral narratives, which means that there is not a clearly marked distinction between the characters' diction and that of the narrative voice. An example is the use of italics to signal direct speech in the trilogy, as the following passage may illustrate: "And the doctor, old Meldrum he was, he'd wink at Alec and cry *Man, Man, have you been at it again?* and Alec would say *Damn it, you've hardly to look at a woman these days but she's in the family way*" (p. 31). By this technique, the characters' words and those of the narrative voice are more smoothly interwoven.

Literary scholar Cairns Craig (2002, p. 65) considers this "a radical narrative strategy" since "the third person, omniscient – and anglocentric" voice of the author gives way to a narrative conducted by the very community which is depicted. There is the transformation of the community's voice, which becomes more individualized, throughout the trilogy as the narrative shifts from a rural to an urban, industrialized environment (CRAIG, 2002, p. 65). In *Sunset Song*, the narrative voice makes it clear in several passages that the story told is based on communal knowledge; hence, it is not possible to determine exactly whose voice is represented. An example of this may be found in the narrative of a rumor about Kinraddie's

minister, which is introduced by telling the reader "[a]bout what happened after that some told one thing and some another and some told both together" and continued as a composite of perspectives (p. 89). In *Grey Granite*, by contrast, it is mostly possible to distinguish whose perspective is in focus. Instead of being told by an anonymous community narrative voice, the story is recounted from a variety of shifting points of view. Even when the narrative seems to convey the perspective of a group, it is a more distinctive set of people, such as the more unskilled employees of the Gowans and Gloag factory in this passage: "Oh ay, the toff bastard heard it (the insult) fine, but he didn't let on, just went on with his work, all the lads laughed, you'd known he'd no guts" (p. 504). In this context, Craig (2002, p. 96) attributes to the "dialect voice" the role of "maintain[ing] the possibility of community and communality in defiance of the hierarchies of the class system that are embodied in and through the voice of standard English".

The Scots language is, thus, an element of continuity in Scottish literature and culture as it endures throughout the centuries despite its decline in prestige and its elimination from schools following Scotland's loss of political autonomy. Gibbon carries on, in a different way, the attempt to preserve Scots which was also endeavored, as analyzed before, by those antiquaries who collected popular songs in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The songs themselves were also a connection to the past and to a distinctive Scottish culture. Allan Ramsay (1724, p. ix) puts this idea in evidence in his preface to *The Evergreen* by stating that the reader "is stepping back into times that are past and exist no more". Living at a time which, in spite of all the historical, social and economic transformations, was still concerned with the exploration of Scottish culture and sense of identity, Gibbon also taps into the rich national song tradition in his works, as will henceforth be analyzed.

As aforementioned, there are numerous references to songs and poems in the trilogy *A Scots Quair*. Their presence is especially striking in the first novel, *Sunset Song*, possibly due to its rural setting and the period when the story takes place. As the action moves to more urbanized places, the role played by traditional songs in characters' lives is less prominent, which reflects the relationship established by Joël Candau between the structure of a group and the strength of its collective memory. Candau (2016, p. 45) claims that societies whose members have closer relations with each other are more likely than an anonymous megalopolis to develop a strong and structuring collective memory. Besides, World War One is represented in the novel as a watershed in the Scottish countryside, marking the end of the traditional rural way of life. One of the transformations brought about by the war is the death of some of the village's inhabitants, which means the near extinction of a generation of men.

Another change is the cutting down of the woods surrounding Kinraddie, symbolic of the dying of a way of life as it causes the land to become barren, making it impossible for the community to continue to live off farming. Toward the end of the novel, during the inauguration of the village's war memorial, Kinraddie's new minister describes that time as the "*sunset of an age and an epoch*" and states that:

> *With them* [those who died] *we may say there died a thing older than themselves, these were the Last of the Peasants, the last of the Old Scots folk. A new generation comes up that will know them not, except as a memory in a song, they pass with the things that seemed good to them, with loves and desires that grow dim and alien in the days to be. It was the old Scotland that perished then, and we may believe that never again will the old speech and the old songs, the old curses and the old benedictions, rise but with an alien effort to our lips.* (p. 254)

This passage not only reinforces the idea of the end of a traditional way of living, but also highlights the role of songs in keeping alive the memory of those who have passed away since they will only be remembered as "*a memory in a song*". Besides, the words of the minister emphasize the cultural change experienced by the community as he affirms that the old sayings, songs, and ways of speaking will not be used anymore. When discussing the modification of how society deals with the past, Pierre Nora (1989, p. 7) considers peasant culture as a "quintessential repository of collective memory", attributing the collapse of memory to industrialization. In addition to the effects of the war, the repercussions of industrial growth in a society may also be observed in the trilogy as Chris moves from the village of Kinraddie to a small town and later to an industrial city. Hence, the decay of the peasant manner of living may be related to the transformation in the treatment of songs throughout the trilogy.

"The Flowers of the Forest", by Jane Elliot (1727-1805), is one of the most noteworthy songs in *Sunset Song*, emphasizing the connection between different historical moments. The composition, first recorded in the eighteenth century, is a lament that commemorates the dead in the battle of Flodden (1513). The Auld Alliance between Scotland and France was at the origin of this conflict between the Scottish and the English since England was at war with France at the time. The battle resulted in a major defeat for Scotland, with several casualties, including King James IV (1488-1513), whose heir was still a child. Thus, the country was weakened and plunged in a period of political instability. Flodden represented, according to literary scholar Douglas Gifford (2013, p. 71), the end of a "Golden Age" of peace and flourishing culture in Scotland. Despite the political repercussions of the battle, the song focuses on the loss experienced by the common, anonymous people, making reference to the women and children in grief, as the lyrics may demonstrate:

I’ve heard the lilting at our yowe*-milking, Lasses a-lilting before the dawn o’ day; But now they are moaning on ilka* green loaning: ‘The Flowers of the Forest are a’ wede* away.’	*ewe *each *weeded
At buchts*, in the morning, nae blythe* lads are scorning*; The lasses are lonely, and dowie*, and wae*; Nae daffin’*, nae gabbin’*, but sighing and sabbing*: Ilk ane* lifts her leglen*, and hies* her away.	*sheep pens / cheerful / teasing *sad / woe *jesting / chattering / sobbing *one / milk-pail / hastes
In hairst*, at the shearing, nae youths now are jeering, The bandsters* are lyart*, and runkled* and grey; At fair or at preaching, nae wooing, nae fleeching*: The Flowers of the Forest are a’ wede away.	*harvest *harvesters / white-haired / wrinkled *flattery
At e’en*, in the gloaming, nae swankies* are roaming ‘Bout stacks wi’ the lasses at bogle* to play; But ilk ane sits drearie, lamenting her dearie: The Flowers of the Forest are a’ wede away.	*evening / slender men *hide-and-seek game
Dule* and wae for the order sent our lads to the Border; The English, for ance*, by guile wan* the day; The Flowers of the Forest, that foucht* aye* the foremost, The prime o’ our land, are cauld* in the clay.	*grief *once / won *fought / always *cold
We’ll hear nae mair* lilting at our yowe-milking, Women and bairns* are heartless and wae; Sighing and moaning on ilka green loaning: ‘The Flowers of the Forest are a’ wede away.’ (DIXON, 1910, p. 414-415)	*more *children

The song focuses on the mourning of the deceased’s widows and children, which reinforces the essential role played by anonymous people in history. The setting is clearly rural as evidenced by the mention of the work of harvesting, and shearing and milking sheep. The communal grief is shared by the speaker in the song as the line “the order sent *our* lads to the Border” (emphasis added) may demonstrate.

As “The Flowers of the Forest” deals with the consequences of a real battle, it is a way for people to get in contact with and learn about a historical event that marked the nation’s history. Chris’s view on the conflict is partly shaped by the song, as the following quotation illustrates: “even after that (the battle of Bannockburn) the English were beaten in all the wars, except Flodden and they won at Flodden by treachery again, just as it told in *The Flowers of the Forest*” (p. 42). This representation of the English as dishonest rivals is present in the following line from “The Flowers of the Forest”: “The English, for ance [once], by guile wan [won] the day” (DIXON, 1910, p. 415), suggesting that it honors the Scottish while reinforcing their contention with England. This musical composition was first published in 1755, a few decades after the closure of the Scottish parliament. It was a part of a trend to write poems and songs which emulated the Scottish folk tradition, revived by the anthologies

published in that century (DAICHES, 1966, p. 23). The use of the song as a source of historical information contributes to Chris's negative opinion of the English, described just before the passage quoted as "awful mean" people that "couldn't speak right and were cowards who captured Wallace[8] and killed him by treachery" (p. 42). Hence, since it retells the past and helps to mold people's understanding of a historical event, "The Flowers of the Forest" is an example of a song that functions in the novel as a "medium of remembrance", one of the roles literature can play in the production of cultural memory according to Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney (2006, p. 112).

Besides, the song may be described as "an object of remembrance" (ERLL; RIGNEY, 2006, p. 112-113) as it is part of an established, preserved canon and is included in the constant dialogue between works belonging to different periods of time. Its presence in the repertoire of *Sunset Song* characters may be demonstrated by the fact that Chris is always touched when hearing it "played and a lot of people singing it at a parish concert in Echt", and the girl even writes a school essay based on the lyrics (p. 42-43). Therefore, it is suggested that the song is played in gatherings and well-known in the community. "The Flowers of the Forest" is remembered and performed by characters in the novel on different occasions, being invested with new layers of meaning each time, for instance when it is used to pay tribute to the dead in World War One. *Sunset Song* is closed by the passage which narrates the inauguration of the war memorial in the community of Kinraddie. On this occasion, "The Flowers of the Forest" is played by a piper from the Highlands, an image which is traditionally associated with Scottish identity. The use of a lament about a sixteenth-century battle to pay homage to those who died in World War One brings the two conflicts closer, highlighting repetition and the cyclical nature of war throughout history. In this way, the performance of the song at this moment reinforces the similarity, though centuries apart, of the loss and the grief experienced in the past and in the present. The depiction of young women who "are lonely, and dowie [sad], and wae [woe]", "lamenting [their] dearie" (DIXON, 1910, p. 414-415), in the song is mirrored in the novel, which describes people's – especially women's – expression of mourning as the song is played in the following quotation:

> It (the song) rose and rose and wept and cried, that crying for the men that fell in battle, and there was Kirsty Strachan weeping quietly and others with her [...]

[8] William Wallace (c.1270-1305) was one of the leaders of the resistance against the English rule over Scotland imposed by Edward I (1272-1307) in the late thirteenth century. After leading some successful campaigns, such as the Battle of Stirling Bridge (1297), Wallace was captured, tried and hanged as a traitor in London in 1305. He became a national hero and symbol of the fight for Scottish independence.

> He could fair play, the piper, he tore at your heart marching there with the tune leaping up the moor and echoing across the loch, folk said that Chris Tavendale alone shed never a tear, she stood quiet, holding her boy by the hand, looking down on Blawearie's fields till the playing was over. (p. 255-256)

The image of Kirsty Strachan crying over the loss of her husband and Chris standing quietly with her son in the village of Kinraddie echoes the portrayal of desolate women "sighing and sabbing" in a rural setting in "The Flowers of the Forest". The landscape described in the novel is also typically Scottish, composed by the moor and a loch, as well as the circle of standing stones upon which the memorial was erected.

The emotional impact of "The Flowers of the Forest" is acknowledged in *Sunset Song*, being especially felt by Chris. The soldiers' fate saddens a young, unmarried Chris, who cries for "the lads that came back never again to their lasses among the stooks, and the lasses that never married but sat and stared down south to the English border where their lads lay happed [covered] in blood and earth, with their bloodied kilts and broken helmets" (p. 42-43). This quotation also shows how the reconstruction of past events may be influenced by invented traditions since the kilt seems to have its origin only in the eighteenth century, a long time after the battle of Flodden (TREVOR-ROPER, 1995, p. 21-22). In spite of the possible anachronism, the image of the conflict makes such an impression upon Chris that, when the guests ask her to sing something during her wedding, "all she could think of was that south country woman crying in the night by the side of her good man" (p. 165). As she sings "The Flowers of the Forest", the first and the fifth stanzas of the song are quoted in full – highlighting the description of the women grieving and the lament for the soldiers' death, as well as the praise for them, as in the following lines: "The Flooers o' the forest, that fought aye [always] the foremost, / The pride o' oor [our] land lie cauld in the clay" (p. 166). The bride's song choice foreshadows the war and the loss to be experienced by the community and, particularly, Chris herself.

The memory of Chris's singing is also present at the passage preceding her husband Ewan's execution as a traitor during the war. Ewan yields to the community's pressure and enlists in the army, which completely changes his behavior. When he comes back home on leave after training, he is aggressive and jeering and mistreats Chris. One day, in the war front, he wakes up regretting his attitudes and decides to go back to Kinraddie but is arrested by the military. Before his execution, he thinks of the land and Chris, recalling their wedding in a conversation with former neighbor Chae Strachan, who was visiting him in prison:

> [...] *there was nothing between her and me till the night we married. Mind* [remember] *that – and the singing there was, Chae? What was it that Chris sang then?*

> And neither could remember that, it vexed Ewan a while, and then he forgot it, sitting quiet in that hut on the edge of morning. (p. 235-236)

Ewan's inability to remember the song calls attention to "The Flowers of the Forest" due to its very absence since the dialogue includes the reader in the act of recollection. Forgetting, in this passage, may be understood as a defense against those memories which are unbearable. Amid the horrors of World War One, it may be overwhelming for Ewan to think of dead soldiers and their grieving loved ones, especially as his own death fast approaches. Besides, thinking of Chris and their wedding may be too painful seeing that Ewan affirms that Chris was "*lost to* [him] *through* [his] *own coarse daftness*" (p. 234). These ideas match Candau's interpretation of forgetting as an unconscious strategy for self-preservation which involves blocking unendurable memories (CANDAU, 2016, p. 72). Moreover, Ewan's forgetting may also symbolize the end of the age of songs and the traditional rural way of living, which die along with him and Chae. The First World War transforms Kinraddie in various forms, from people's livelihood and cultural references to their bonds and sense of community. Gifford (2013, p. 71) considers "The Flowers of the Forest" a "symbol of the death of song throughout the trilogy". While there is indeed a decline in the presence of songs throughout the *Quair*, they endure in different and new forms instead of completely vanishing, as will be further explored later in the chapter.

Chris and Ewan's wedding represents a moment of celebration not only of their marriage, but also of the Scottish musical tradition as the occasion includes the performance of several songs and dances. One of them is "The Bonnie House o' Airlie", a seventeenth-century Scottish ballad by an anonymous author which, like "The Flowers of the Forest", makes reference to a historical event. Charles I (1625-1649) imposed changes both in structure and in liturgy to the Church of Scotland in order to make it more similar to the Church of England. In 1638, those who opposed the policies enforced by the king signed the National Covenant, a document safeguarding the Church of Scotland against changes in its doctrine and structure. Consequently, this group became known as the Covenanters. "The Bonnie House o' Airlie" recounts a romanticized version of the attack perpetrated in 1640 by the Earl of Argyll, a Covenanter, to the castle of the Earl of Airlie, who supported the king:

It fell on a day, and a bonnie* simmer* day, When green grew aits* and barley, That there fell out a great dispute Between Argyll and Airlie. Argyll has raised an hundred men, An hundred harness'd rarely, And he's awa' by the back o' Dunkell,	*beautiful / summer *oats

To plunder the bonnie house o' Airlie.	
Lady Ogilvie looks o'er her bower-window; And oh, but she looks weary! And there she spied Argyll, Come to plunder the bonnie house o' Airlie.	
'Come down, come down, my Lady Ogilvie, Come down and kiss me fairly': 'O I winna* kiss the fause* Argyll, If he shouldna* leave a standing stane* in Airlie.'	*will not / false *should not / stone
He hath taken her by the left shoulder, Says, 'Dame, where lies thy dowry?' 'It's up and it's down by the bonnie bank-side, Amongst the planting o' Airlie.'	
They hae* sought it up, they hae sought it down, They hath sought it baith* late and early; And they hae found it in the bonnie plum-tree, That shines on the bowling-green o' Airlie.	*have *both
He hath taken her by the middle sae* small, And oh, but she grat* sairly*! He hath laid her down by the bonnie burn-side, Till he hath plundered the bonnie house o' Airlie.	*so *cried / sorely
'Gif* my gude* lord were here this night, As he is with Prince Charlie, Neither you, nor no Scottish lord Durst have set a foot on the bowling-green o' Airlie.	*if / good
'Ten bonnie sons I have borne unto him, The eleventh ne'er saw his daddie; But though I had an hundred mair*, I'd gie* them a' to Prince Charlie.' (DIXON, 1910, p. 334-336)	*more *give

As the lyrics may demonstrate, the song focuses on the resistance of Lady Ogilvie, the royalist's wife, who remains loyal to her husband and the king even in face of the Earl of Argyll's plundering of the castle. Airlie Castle was located close to the region where *Sunset Song* is set, which may help to explain why the song is performed during Chris's wedding.

Another Scottish ballad sung at the wedding is "Auld Robin Gray", by Lady Anne Lindsay (1750-1825), which also deals with a woman's tribulations. Written in first person, the ballad retells the story of a woman who is forced by financial hardship to marry Robin Gray while her lover Jamie is away at sea and presumably dead. However, Jamie eventually returns, causing the speaker to lament her fate:

When the sheep are in the fauld*, and the kye* a' at hame*, When a' the weary warld* to sleep are gane*, The waes* o' my heart fa' in showers from my e'e*, While my gudeman* lies sound by me.	*fold / cows / home *world / gone *woes / eye *husband

Young Jamie lo'ed me weel*, and sought me for his bride; But saving a croun* he had naething* else beside. To mak* the croun a pound, my Jamie gaed* to sea, And the croun and the pound, they were baith* for me.	*well *crown / nothing *make / went *both
He hadna* been awa' a week but only twa*, When my mither* fell sick, and the cow was stown* awa'; My father brak* his arm – my Jamie at the sea; And auld* Robin Gray cam a-courtin' me.	*had not / two *mother / stowed *broke *old
My father couldna* wark*, my mither couldna spin; I toil'd day and nicht*, but their bread I couldna win: Auld Rob maintain'd them baith, and wi' tears in his e'e, Said, 'Jeanie, for their sakes, will ye marry me?'	*could not / work *night
My heart it said na* – I look'd for Jamie back; But the wind it blew hie*, and the ship it was a wrack; His ship it was a wrack – why didna* Jeanie dee*? And why do I live to cry, Wae's me?	*no *high *did not / die
My father urged me sair*; my mither didna speak, But she looked in my face till my heart was like to break. They gied* him my hand – my heart was at the sea; Sae* auld Robin Gray, he was gudeman to me.	*sorely *gave *so
I hadna been a wife a week but only four, When, mournfu' as I sat on the stane* at the door, I saw my Jamie's wraith – I couldna think it he, Till he said, 'I'm come hame, my love, to marry thee.'	 *stone
O sair did we greet*, and meikle* did we say: We took but ae kiss, and I bade him gang* away. I wish that I were dead, but I'm no like to dee; And why was I born to say, Wae's me?	*cry / much *go
I gang like a ghaist*, and I carena* to spin; I daurna* think o' Jamie, for that wad* be a sin. But I'll do my best a gude* wife to be, For auld Robin Gray, he is kind to me. (DIXON, 1910, p. 440-442)	*ghost / care not *dare not / would *good

The song describes a rural setting where the characters raise sheep and cows, a feature which is highlighted in the novel since the first stanza is quoted in full. "Auld Robin Gray" focuses on the problems of common folk and describes how destitute some of the people in the countryside were. This story of heartbreak "aye brought Chris near to weeping, and did now, and not her alone" (p. 146), a reaction similar to that provoked by "The Flowers of the Forest". The emotional appeal of "Auld Robin Gray" may be related to the fact that the song echoes some of the issues faced by the characters in *Sunset Song*, such as the difficulty to earn a livelihood. This sequence of sad songs performed at the wedding leads Chris to reflect

> how strange was the sadness of Scotland's singing, made for the sadness of the land and sky in the dark autumn evenings, the crying of men and women of the land who had seen their lives and loves sink away in the years, things wept for beside the sheep-buchts [sheep pen], remembered at night and in twilight. The gladness and

> kindness had passed, lived and forgotten, it was Scotland of the mist and rain and the crying sea that made the songs (p. 166).

In this passage, the mood of the songs is associated with the Scottish land, nature and bleak weather, as well as the frustrations remembered by the country folk. Besides, the close link between the song tradition and rural areas is reinforced by the references to the land and to sheep pens. The melancholy of many of the songs played during the wedding may also anticipate the deaths and the end of the traditional countryside way of life to come in consequence of the war.

Some works by Robert Burns are also performed during Chris and Ewan's wedding. The poem "To a Mouse" is one of the compositions mentioned as old Pooty, "the oldest inhabitant of Kinraddie" (p. 31), tries to recite it during the party. He attempts to do so at any community event, a habit which is humorously attacked by the narrative voice since "Pooty was maybe the worst stutterer ever heard in the Mearns" (p. 31). The intimacy of the community with the poem may be illustrated by the fact that the narrative voice never refers to it by the title, but by its first line ("Wee, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie"). In the passage about Chris's wedding, the poem is even termed Pooty's "TIMROUS BEASTIE" (p. 165), which demonstrates the community's familiarity with it. Another example of the presence of the national poet in the wedding is "Up in the Morning Early", consisting of two stanzas by Burns added to an older chorus (BURNS, 2009, p. 310). Chae introduces the song as a "seasonable" one since it started to snow during the celebration (p. 164). Reinforcing this relation, the chorus is, then, quoted in full:

> Up in the morning's no for me,
> Up in the morning early
> When a' the hills are covered wi' snaw [snow]
> I'm sure it's winter fairly! (p. 165)

The narrative voice states that "all joined in" (p. 164), highlighting the communal aspect of the performance. The widespread familiarity with the song in the community is also illustrated by the fact that Chris and her brother Will used it as a signal when they went to school together (p. 106). Moreover, Will whistles it when leaving the family home for Aberdeen, which brings the memory of their childhood back to Chris and moves her even though she is not aware that he will not come back home (p. 106). Hence, this is another instance of the power of songs to stir up memories and emotions in the listeners.

This effect may also be perceived when "Auld Lang Syne" is sung during the wedding. This song was collected and edited by Burns although it is not clear to what extent it was modified by the poet (BURNS, 2009, p. 341). It is sung during Chris's wedding as it

takes place on New Year's Eve, an occasion in which the song is traditionally played. Its communal performance includes conventional gestures, executed by the characters present, who "all joined hands and stood in circle to sing it" (p. 166-167). "Auld Lang Syne" invites the reminiscence and the celebration of long-lasting bonds and relationships, as the lyrics may demonstrate:

Chorus:	
For auld lang syne*, my dear,	*old long ago
For auld lang syne.	
We'll tak* a cup o kindness yet,	*take
For auld lang syne!	
Should auld* acquaintance be forgot,	*old
And never brought to mind?	
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,	
And auld lang syne?	
And surely ye'll be* your pint-stowp*,	*pay for / tankard
And surely I'll be mine,	
And we'll tak a cup o kindness yet,	
For auld lang syne!	
We twa* hae* run about the braes*,	*two / have / hillsides
And pou'd* the gowans* fine;	*pulled / daisies
But we've wander'd monie* a weary fit*,	*many / feet
Sin* auld lang syne.	*since
We twa hae paidl'd* in the burn*	*waded / stream
Frae* morning sun* till dine*,	*from / noon / dinner-time
But seas between us braid* hae roar'd	*broad
Sin auld lang syne.	
And there's a hand, my trusty fiere*,	*friend
And gie's* a hand o thine,	*give us
And we'll tak a right gude-willie waught*,	*goodwill drink
For auld lang syne. (BURNS, 2009, p. 341)	

This song about old friendships induces Chris to think of her brother Will, who emigrated to Argentina after getting married (p. 166-167). The emotional effect of "Auld Lang Syne" is emphasized by its characterization as a "sugary surge" by the narrative voice (p. 166).

The association of the songs performed during the wedding to the Scottish tradition is stressed by the contrast provided by the ones sung by Ellison, the Irish man who manages the biggest estate in Kinraddie for the trustees. He is portrayed as an alien to the village not only due to his origin, but also to the fact that he was not born into farming and had to learn it (p. 15). The narrative voice, demonstrating its characteristic suspicion toward people from outside the region, describes Ellison with scorn as "a poor creature of an Irishman who couldn't speak right and didn't belong to the Kirk" (p. 15). The difference between Ellison and the community, marked by language and religion, also reveals itself in his choice of songs

during the wedding. First, he sings an air from *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), by John Gay (1685-1732), a play which parodies Italian opera by portraying underworld characters who sing popular tunes. The narrative voice affirms that this is "a song they didn't know" (p. 164), suggesting their preference for and their broader knowledge of the Scottish tradition. The second song chosen by Ellison is "Villikins and his Dinah", a ballad of tragic love made popular in a comic version by the English actor and comedian Frederick Robson (1821-1864), who performed it in the farce *The Wandering Minstrel* (1853). The community's distance from the song is once again implied in its description by the narrative voice: "an English one (song) and awful sad, about a young childe [man] called Villikins and a quean [girl] called Dinah" (p. 164). It is interesting to remark that this is the only reference to the origin of a song in the whole passage about the wedding, which underscores the fact that Scottish songs seem to be regarded as standard among the community of Kinraddie.

Whereas Ellison is marked as foreign to the village, Long Rob of the Mill fulfills the role of bearer of the song tradition. In addition to singing and playing the fiddle during the wedding, Rob constantly sings or whistles while working in the fields. Examples of tunes sang by Rob are "Ladies of Spain" (also known as "Spanish Ladies") and "The lass that made the bed to me". The first song, first recorded in the eighteenth century, was reportedly popular among sailors as late as in the beginning of the twentieth century (PALMER, 1986, p. 125-126). The latter was composed by Burns based on the ballad "The Cumberland Lass", which seems to date from the late seventeenth century (BURNS, 2009, p. 583). Throughout *Sunset Song*, the connection between Rob and music is repeatedly asserted as references to his singing are pervasive. An instance of this is the following passage, describing the sounds during the harvest season: "you'd hear the skirl of the blades ring down the Howe for mile on mile, the singing of Long Rob of the Mill" (p. 74).

After the onset of World War One, as the relation between the community and their song tradition changes, Rob remains a representative of the old ways. When putting Chris's son, Ewan, to bed, Rob sings "Ladies of Spain", "There was a Young Farmer" – a folk song–, and "A' the Blue Bonnets are Over the Border", a composition about military conflicts with England written by Walter Scott and included in his novel *The Monastery* (1820). These songs are no longer commonly heard according to the narrative voice, which makes it "queer and eerie" to listen to Rob, "like listening to an echo from far in the years at the mouth of a long lost glen" (p. 228). Hence, the character seems so out of tune with his times that his voice is regarded like an echo from a distant past. The period of the war is marked by the popularity of "*Tipperary* and squawling English things, like the squeak of a rat that is bedded

in syrup, the *Long, Long Trail* and the like" (p. 227-228). The clearly negative description of these songs by the narrative voice may imply a certain nostalgia for the old ones. "It's a Long Way to Tipperary" (1912), music-hall song by Jack Judge (1872-1938) and Harry Williams (1873-1924), and "There's a Long, Long Trail" (1914), by Zo Elliot (1891-1964) and Stoddard King (1889-1933), were well received during the war and widely sung by soldiers. The success of "Tipperary" is also mentioned in this quotation from *Cloud Howe*, which sarcastically criticizes the hypocrisy in the attitude of MacDougall Brown – Segget's postmaster – toward the military conflict:

> During the War he had fair been a patriot, he hadn't fought, but losh! how he'd sung! In the first bit concert held in the War he sang Tipperary to the Segget folk with his face all shining like a ham on the fry, and he sang it right well till he got to the bit where the song has to say that his heart's right there (p. 313).

After the war, the decline of the old songs is even steeper, a process which may also be symbolized by Rob's death in battle. The way in which the community remembers him and his beloved songs is expressed in this passage:

> you minded [remembered] him singing out there in the morning, he'd sung – And you couldn't mind what the song had been till maybe a bairn [child] would up and tell you, they'd heard it often on the way to school, and Ay, it was *Ladies of Spain*. You heard feint the meikle [nothing] of those old songs now, they were daft and old-fashioned (p. 245).

The song routinely heard before becomes so distant that the narrative voice is not even able to remember its title. Besides, there is a transformation in the appraisal of the new songs; whereas "Tipperary" and "Long, Long Trail" are negatively regarded during the war, later it is the older and more traditional songs which are deemed out of fashion, being replaced by "fine new ones [...], right from America" (p. 245). Thus, the changes triggered by World War One include the weakening of the role of songs in the characters' everyday lives.

In the trilogy, it is also possible to observe the modification of the community's opinion of Robert Burns. As mentioned before, some of his poems and songs are present in *Sunset Song*, especially in the celebration of the protagonist's wedding. His works are presented as part of characters' everyday lives as well since Rob whistles "The Lass that Made the Bed to Me" while working, and Chris and her brother Will sing "Up in the Morning Early" as a signal on their way to school. This suggests that Burns's songs are part of a shared repertoire in the community of Kinraddie, an idea which is reinforced by the fact that the poet's name is not mentioned in the novel. His songs and poems are referred to simply by the title or by the quotation of some of their lines as they are well-known and deeply ingrained in characters' lives. Comments about Burns's works are rare in *Sunset Song*, seeing that the narrative voice and the characters sing or recite them without usually presenting an

interpretation or critical assessment. An exception is the aforementioned passage in which "Auld Lang Syne" is characterized as a "sugary surge" (p. 166), highlighting its sentimental aspect.

Whereas *Sunset Song* focuses on Burns's works, rather than on the poet himself, *Cloud Howe* foregrounds the problematization of his legacy. As the memory of the poet is disputed by different characters, the novel represents the construction of collective memory in a way that recalls Candau's definition of the concept. According to this author, collective memory is "a *representation*"[9], consisting of the discourse produced by members of a group about the memory which is supposedly shared by them (CANDAU, 2016, p. 24, original emphasis). Therefore, the memory of the community is not understood as the untouchable product of spontaneous transmission, but as a cultural heritage that may be questioned and reinterpreted throughout time. As distinct opinions are expressed about Burns, a different image of the poet and his works emerges depending on what is highlighted about him. The views conveyed by each character are influenced by factors such as their political inclinations, as will be further analyzed.

The Burns family is associated with the northeast of Scotland, and especially with the fictional town of Segget, in *Cloud Howe*. According to the narrative voice, the family lived there during the Killing Times, the persecution of the Covenanters by Charles II (1660-1685). In the novel, James and his father Peter Burnes, ancestors of the poet, were taken to Edinburgh and tortured in an attempt to make them renounce the Covenant. As Peter was almost forswearing, James started singing a psalm loud enough to drown his father's voice. Peter died as a consequence of the mistreatment, and James was gravely injured and kept in prison, where "rats ate him [...] while he still was alive" (p. 270-271). The narrative voice sees their loyalty to their beliefs in a positive light, stating that "maybe there were better folk far in Segget, but few enough with smeddum [mettle] like this" (p. 271). The family settled in Segget and then in Glenbervie until Robert Burns's father "grew sick of the place" and moved to Ayr, where the poet was born (p. 271). Simon Burnes, a relative who remained in the fictional town, led a revolt against the Mowats, the owners of the Segget estate, in the early nineteenth century, convincing weavers not to pay their rent. When the Mowats' castle burned down, even though folk claimed not to be involved, the narrative voice suggests that loot could be found in some of their houses, as in the following quotation: "the bell that rung the weavers awake had once been a great handbell from the hall of the Mowats up on the Kaimes

[9] "uma *representação*" (our translation)

high hill" (p. 271). This anecdote may evoke the image of Robert Burns as a man who defended ideals of equality and even seemed to sympathize with the French revolutionaries, one of the many personas of the poet. Besides, Gibbon also recounts a peasant uprising against aristocrats in *Sunset Song*, in which peasants demand equality from the hypocritical lord who supported the Jacobins (p. 14). Therefore, the author values popular movements in his narrative, which seems to echo his own political views.

The connection between Burns's family and the region is reinforced by Hairy Hogg's claim to be their descendant. Hogg, Segget's provost, brags so much about this that the narrative voice sarcastically remarks that "you'd have thought by the way he spoke that Rabbie had rocked him to sleep in his youth" (p. 324). Although the community is not impressed by his alleged ancestry, Hogg frequently alludes to it and is a fierce defender of Burns's memory. He describes the poet as "a patriot childe [young man], aye [always] ready to shed his blood for the land" (p. 356) before the celebration of the Armistice Day in front of Segget's war memorial, suggesting thus that Burns possessed characteristics valued by the nationalistic propaganda during the conflict. His effort to defend and embellish Burns's image may be related to Candau's (2016, p. 139) statement that, by protecting their ancestors' memory, individuals safeguard their own memory and identity. This positive view of the writer, however, is not shared by the rest of the town. For example, Mowat, the young man who inherited the estate, despises the poet's work, saying "*Oh, Robbie Burns? A hell of a pity he couldn't write poetry*" when Hogg tells him about his ancestry (p. 368). Though this remark annoys Hogg, he refrains from answering since "'twas the laird, just joking-like; and he was the *laird*" (p. 368, original emphasis). Mowat's social status is also marked by his use of language as he employs "Robbie" instead of "Rabbie", the Scottish form preferred by the narrative voice in the passage quoted before. His way of speaking, which reflects the elite's predilection for English over Scots, is mocked and called his "English bray" by the narrative voice (p. 368).

Another character who fiercely criticizes Burns is Ake Ogilvie, Segget's joiner, who writes poetry himself. Ake disapproves, for example, of the poet's behavior toward women after Hogg describes him as a patriot, affirming that "*He slew a fell lot of the French – with his mouth. He was better at raping a servant quean [girl] than facing the enemy with a musket*" (p. 356). In addition to condemning Burns's treatment of women, Ake denies Hogg's representation of him as a brave patriot. Ogilvie's comment may be a reference to "The Lass that Made the Bed to Me", mentioned as one of Rob's favorites in the first novel, though the contents of the song are not entirely related in the trilogy. It describes the speaker's sexual

encounter with a maid who begs him:

'Haud aff* your hands, young man!', she said, 'And dinna* sae* uncivil be; Gif* ye hae onie luve* for me, O, wrang* na my virginitie!' (BURNS, 2009, p.584)	*hold off *don't / so *if / have any love *wrong

Although the speaker claims that she enjoyed it, the maid sighs and cries, considering herself "ruined" after that night (BURNS, 2009, p. 584). Ake also touches upon Burns' relationships with women in a more humorous way, which may be illustrated by the following anecdote recounting the poet's arrival in heaven:

> Well, the creature died and went to heaven and knocked like hell on the pearly gates. And St Peter poked his head from a wicket, and asked *Who're you that's making a din?* And Burns said *I'm Robert Burns, my man, the National Poet of Scotland, that's who.* St Peter took a look at the orders, pinned on the guard-room wall for the day; and he said, *I've got a note about you. You must wait outbye* [outside] *for a minute or so*. [...] syne [then] the gates at last opened and he was let in. And Burns was fair [quite] in a rage by then, *Do you treat distinguished arrivals like this?* And St Peter said *No, I wouldn't say that. I've been hiding the Virgin Mary away.* (p. 386-387)

In the story, Burns is portrayed as a proud man who considers himself the "National Poet of Scotland" and a "distinguished arrival" in heaven. Besides, Ake scoffs him by ironically calling him "their (folk's) own Great Poet" before telling this tale. While Ake's irreverent attitude toward religion makes his listeners consider the anecdote "a real foul story" (p. 387), it brings him closer to Burns's own treatment of religious issues in works such as "Address to the Deil" and "Holy Willie's Prayer". The narrative voice also refers to the poet's philandering behavior, introducing Burns as "him that lay with nearly as many women as Solomon did, though not all at one time" (p. 271). The tone in this quotation is more comic than reproachful; however, Burns is still represented in a less serious and reverential manner. Thus, the poet is not simply remembered as an admirable icon, but as a figure that may also be questioned and treated in a humorous way.

While Burns's works are part of the characters' daily lives in *Sunset Song*, they are associated with school learning in *Cloud Howe*. Ake asks jokingly "*Well, then, have you learned your Burns?*" when Chris's son, Ewan, lingers by his door on his way to school (p. 376). Burns's songs seem to be, therefore, associated with formal education, rather than communal celebrations in the novel. Ewan's opinion of these works is negative as he defines them as "silly Scotch muck about cottars and women, and love and dove and rot of that sort" (p. 376). Instead of identifying with the world of the songs, Ewan despises their focus on nature and rural motifs, as well as their sentimentality. This attitude is in stark contrast with that of several characters in *Sunset Song*, who enjoy traditional songs and feel emotional when

hearing them, as formerly mentioned. Even though Ewan prefers Ake's own poems to the ones by Burns, he has a general dislike for poetry and its use of language and imagery as expressed in the following quotation: "[p]oetry was rot, why not say it plain, when a men kissed a woman or a woman had a baby?" (p. 377). Thus, the preferences of the younger generation are pictured as distinct from those who came before, suggesting a transformation in individuals' relation to the song tradition.

Characters' political orientation also influences their impression of Burns and their interpretation of his works. Examples of this may be found in Hairy Hogg's comments about the poet and his songs. The character's political views are expressed on several occasions in *Cloud Howe*, such as the following quotation about the failure of the General Strike: "now the Strike was ended so fine, you'd mighty soon see a gey [big] change for the good, no more unions to cripple folks' trade, and peace and prosperity returning again; and maybe a tariff on those foreign-made boots" (p. 421). Hogg's antipathy to left-leaning ideologies and groups, like the unions, is also expressed in his disdainful reference to "coarse Labour tinks" (p. 421). When asked about the situation of the country, he replies that "Scotland was fair in a way, and if Burns came back he would think the same; and the worst thing yet they had done in Segget was to vote the Reverend Colquhoun to the pulpit – him and his Labour and sneering at folk, damn't!" (p. 395). This passage suggests that the character projects his own opinions on to Robert Burns, making the poet into his ideal and role model. This may also be observed in Hogg's reading of one of Burns's songs:

> What was it that the poet Robert Burns had written? – an ancestor, like, of the Hoggs, Rabbie Burns. *A man's a man for a' that*, he wrote, and by that he meant that poor folk of their kind should steer well clear of the gentry and such, not try to imitate them at all, and leave them to manage the country's affairs (p. 439).

According to Hogg, the song advocates the separation of individuals who belong to distinct social classes, with the prescription of different roles for each of them. This interpretation can hardly be supported by the lyrics, with lines such as "The rank is but the guinea's stamp, / The man's the gowd [gold] for a' that" and "It's coming yet for a' that, / That man to man, the world, o'er / Shall brithers [brothers] be for a' that" (BURNS, 2009, p. 535-536).

This interplay between one's worldview and the interpretation of given texts may be related to Candau's (2016, p. 172) statement that memories may be altered and even distorted so that they can adapt to identity contests in the present. Ann Rigney, in her text "Embodied Community: Commemorating Robert Burns, 1859", explores different representations of Burns during the celebrations of his centenary. This scholar shows that the political aspect of the poet's works was regarded differently depending on elements such as the social class and

the political opinion of those honoring him. Whereas, for instance, Burns's progressive ideals were presented in a patronizing way in the ceremony at Glasgow's city hall, the poet was praised as part of a radical tradition in the gathering at the Merchants Hall (RIGNEY, 2011, p. 88). Hence, the representations of Burns in *Cloud Howe* echo, to an extent, real ideological disputes about the poet and his legacy. Hogg's interpretation of "A Man's A Man for A' That" as the polar opposite of its more traditional readings may be related to Gibbon's criticism of right-wing sympathizers, who are negatively and sarcastically depicted throughout the trilogy.

In *Grey Granite*, even though the presence of traditional songs is not as pervasive as in *Sunset Song*, they are still part of characters' cultural repertoire. The tradition of singing "Auld Lang Syne" on the New Year's Eve, for instance, may be observed in the last novel of the trilogy. The Young League, a left-wing organization founded by young Ewan to fight for better lives for the working class, promotes a New Year's dance as a way to fundraise and attract more people to the group. At midnight, one of the musicians announces, "*Join hands – here's New Year*" (p. 583), inviting those attending the dance to perform the typical choreography of holding hands in a circle, which is also described in *Sunset Song*. The song lines quoted in this passage – "So here's a hand, my trusty fiere [friend], / And here's a hand o' mine–" (p. 583) – both refer to this gesture and stress companionship as the theme of the song. The fact that the characters are cued to sing "Auld Lang Syne" simply by the announcement of the New Year indicates their familiarity with the song and with the tradition to sing it at this occasion.

Another of Burns's works mentioned in the first novel, "Up in the Morning Early", reappears in a modified version in *Grey Granite*. The last novel is set in the 1930's in the fictional industrialized city of Duncairn, portraying the repercussions of the Great Depression in Scotland. At the time, the British government established that workers should pass a means test, an inquiry into their financial situation, in order to qualify for unemployment benefit. In a protest against this policy, characters in the novel sing the following version of "Up in the Morning Early":

> Up wi' the gentry, that's for me,
> Up wi' the gentry fairly,
> Let's slobber on King and our dear Countree [country] –
> And I'm sure they'll like me sairly [sorely]. (p. 533)

The song attacks Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald (1866-1937), the first Labour party member to occupy this position, implying that his agenda is to please the elite, and not to improve workers' lives. Characters' attitude toward the song contrasts with that observed in

Sunset Song as it is treated in a more irreverent and humorous way. By creating a parody, protesters make the song their own and charge it with political meanings related to their lives and the context surrounding them. The choice to perform a version of "Up in the Morning Early" during the demonstration implicates that people in general are supposed to know Burns's song as they are expected to sing along. Besides, this intertextual relationship is not directly indicated in the novel as the name of the poet or the title of the song are not mentioned, which suggests that readers' familiarity with the song is also assumed.

The context in which these works are performed in *Grey Granite* also points out to a change in setting and, consequently, in the ways characters relate to each other and build a feeling of community. Whereas songs are part of communal celebrations and daily activities in *Sunset Song*, they are sung in events associated with politics in the third novel. Characters in the first book are brought together as members of the same community due not to their beliefs or political affiliation, but to the fact that they all live in the same village and share the same lifestyle, facing similar difficulties. In a big city like Duncairn, the contact with other people is marked by anonymity, and relationships become more distant and are usually formed based on one's political engagement or place of work. In *Grey Granite*, traditional songs are present at gatherings organized by people who share a common interest or objective, such as the protesters and the members of the Young League.

The connection between songs and political issues may also be observed in the references to left-wing anthems in *Grey Granite*, which are sung in marches and meetings promoted by political groups. When Ewan is organizing his workers' league, the group sings "England, arise! The long, long night is over", by Edward Carpenter (1844-1929), an English writer who defended social reform. The song, composed for the Sheffield Socialist Society in 1886, calls for workers to rise against the oppressive forces that bring about poverty and inequality:

> [...]
> By your young children's eyes so red with weeping,
> By their white faces aged with want and fear,
> By the dark cities where your babes are creeping
> Naked of joy and all that makes life dear;
> From each wretched slum
> Let the loud cry come;
> Arise, O England, for the day is here!
>
> People of England! all your valleys call you,
> High in the rising sun the lark sings clear,
> Will you dream on, let shameful slumber thrall you?
> Will you disown your native land so dear?
> Shall it die unheard–
> That sweet pleading word?

> Arise, O England, for the day is here! [...] (CARPENTER, 1922, p. 19)

The song establishes a contrast between the city, where people live in poor conditions, and nature, which calls for change, suggesting the necessity of a return to simpler times and a deeper connection with the natural world. The passage in which the song is mentioned in the novel is narrated from the point of view of one of Ewan's colleagues, who feels hesitant about going to the meeting and is a little suspicious about getting involved with a leftist political movement. This may explain his humorous remark that the audience was singing so loud that "if England didn't awake she must be stone deaf" (p. 558). However, he also acknowledges the power of music to evoke a sense of belonging to a certain group as he states that "there was a piano up in the corner with a lad sitting at it, and he started to play and you all got up and sang about England arising, the long, long night was over, [...] Christ, what a perfect fool you felt not knowing the words" (p. 557-558). Gibbon's fluid use of "you" is also a way to reinforce the feeling of being part of a community and, at the same time, to include the reader in the narrative.

Another instance of the presence of music in marches is the singing of "The Red Flag" (1889), by Irish journalist and activist Jim Connell (1852-1929), during the celebration of Ewan's release from prison. Chris's son is arrested during a picket at the factory where he works after being unjustly accused of assaulting a police officer. The song, used as anthem for the Labour Party for most of the twentieth century, is directly quoted in the novel: ". . . Come dungeon dark or gallows grim / This song shall be our parting hymn!" (p. 617). The choice of songs in the demonstrations in which Ewan takes part seems to mirror his political trajectory since their lyrics become more radical as his political involvement deepens. "The Red Flag", for instance, refers to the blood shed in these struggles and to promises to fight until death:

> The worker's flag is deepest red,
> It shrouded oft our martyred dead,
> And ere their limbs grew stiff and cold
> Their hearts' blood dyed its ev'ry fold. [...]
>
> With heads uncovered swear we all
> To bear it onward till we fall.[10]

The emphasis on the violence faced by those who fight for social change differs from "England, arise!", in which workers' struggle is described in almost idyllic terms, stripped of its possible brutal repercussions. As for Ewan's point of view, the experience of being arrested and tortured in prison profoundly transforms his beliefs, as the following quotation

[10] Available at: http://www.folkarchive.de/redflag.html.

may demonstrate: “One thing he had learned: the Communists were right. Only by force could we beat brute force, plans for peaceful reform were about as sane as hunting a Bengal tiger with a Bible” (p. 617). Hence, as Ewan starts to consider the use of force, the song chosen at the occasion echoes a more violent perspective of the struggle for social transformation.

It is also possible to observe the shift from the mostly national tradition of the first novels to a more cosmopolitan one, informed by political affiliation, in *Grey Granite*. Both songs already mentioned are not Scottish, but respectively English and Irish, with “England, arise!” referring specifically to England, instead of Scotland or Britain. “The Red Flag” also mentions other countries as sharing the same struggle, reinforcing the international reach of the political ideals expressed in the lyrics:

> Look ‘round, the Frenchman loves its blaze,
> The sturdy German chants its praise,
> In Moscow’s vaults its hymns are sung
> Chicago swells the surging throng.[11]

Besides, William Morris (1834-1896), English designer, writer, and early socialist, is alluded to in the novel. During the first meeting of Ewan’s Young League, one of the participants suggests “*readings from the great revolutionary poets, beginning with the greatest of all, William Morris*” (p. 559) to attract new members to the organization. Ewan, however, considers that this would not be appealing and deems the Dundee *Sunday Post* more inviting, which implies his intention to convince those who are not already involved with politics to join the group as he suggests “something light and attractive” (p. 559).

Finally, “The Internationale”, by Eugène Pottier (1816-1887) and Pierre Degeyter (1848-1932), is sung during the march against Ramsay MacDonald’s policies in which the parody of “Up in the Morning Early” is performed. This passage is narrated from the perspective of an anonymous unemployed man who is a little reluctant to join the protest at first. Once again, music’s power to evoke a feeling of union and community is present, as the following quotation may illustrate:

> A new song ebbing down the damp column, you’d aye [always] thought it daft [silly] to sing afore this, a lot of faeces, who was an outcast? But damn’t, man, now–
> Arise, ye outcasts and ye hounded,
> Arise, ye slaves of want and fear–
> And what the hell else were you, all of you? Singing, you’d never sung so before, all your mates about you, marching as one, you forgot all the chave [struggle] and trauchle [burden] of things, the sting of your feet, nothing could stop you. (p. 534)

As the character identifies with the lyrics, he changes his mind about singing, which leads to the feeling that all the protesters are “marching as one”. The song also makes him aware that

[11] Available at: http://www.folkarchive.de/redflag.html.

all of the individuals marching belong to the same class as he deems them all “outcasts”. The adaptation of the lyrics in the novel may be related to the fact that it is a translation from the French and that there are several different versions in English. “The Internationale” was the anthem of the First, Second and Third Internationals, associations which assembled, respectively, workers’ groups, trade unions and socialist parties, and communist parties from different countries. The novel, thus, reveals a budding collective memory, based on common political convictions rather than nationality. This cosmopolitan tendency may indicate that the politically involved characters, such as Ewan and the Communist Party leader Jim Trease, influenced by the Marxist idea of class struggle, consider that Scottish workers have more in common with their counterparts from abroad than with the Scottish elite. Gibbon, in the essay “Glasgow”, claims that cosmopolitanism is “the world’s salvation” and longs for the day

> when nationalism, with other cultural aberrations, will have passed from the human spirit, when Man, again free and unchained, has all the earth for his footstool, sings his epics in a language moulded from the best on earth, draws his heroes, his sunrises, his valleys and his mountains from all the crinkles of our lovely planet. . . . (GIBBON, 2007b, p. 142-143).

Hence, the author embraces and idealizes the notion of a culture which is not limited in terms of nationality. He defends his seemingly paradoxical defense of the Scots language by branding it as something “opportunistic” and temporary: “I think the Braid Scots may yet give lovely lights and shadows not only to English but to the perfected speech of Cosmopolitan Man: so I cultivate it, for lack of that perfect speech that is yet to be” (GIBBON, 2007b, p. 143).

The analysis of the presence of songs in the trilogy shows that, even though the place of tradition in individuals’ lives changes with World War One and industrialization, memory of these works endures. In fact, overstated fears of the disappearance of traditional culture are recurrent as the collection of songs and ballads in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was spurred by the idea that Scottish tradition was “verging on oblivion” after the transformations brought by new farming methods and industrial growth (GILBERT, 2013, p. 107-108). Although the depiction of the war repercussions in *Sunset Song* points to the decline of the song tradition, it is possible to observe the continuity of customs such as the singing of “Auld Lang Syne” on the New Year’s Eve in *Grey Granite*. Besides, the adaptability of traditional songs to new historical contexts is present in several instances in the trilogy, like the new meaning attributed to “The Flowers of the Forest” in the commemoration of the First World War and the creation of a parody of “Up in the Morning Early” during a protest. According to Candau (2016, p. 191), living memory is characterized exactly by its openness to new

interpretations and to creative engagements with new generations. Finally, the construction of a new musical tradition, formed by politically charged songs, among left-wing movements is also represented in *Grey Granite*.

1.2 **Legends and supernatural phenomena**

History, memory and fiction, as historian Roger Chartier (2009, p. 21) puts it, are all ways in which a society relates to its past, bringing it closer to the present. The construction of a community's memory is driven by the fact that remembering the past is a fundamental element of the group's identity (CHARTIER, 2009, p. 24). Folk narratives are an important part of this process as they are considered as "defining a nation or, at a micro-level, a region" (LYLE; BOLD; RUSSELL, 2013, p. 21). Therefore, the study of folk stories may contribute to a better understanding of the construction of a community's identity. In the trilogy *A Scots Quair*, there are references to some legends and supernatural phenomena, all of them somehow connected to historical or religious aspects, as will be analyzed.

Legends are characterized by being presented as a true account, focusing on human characters, which may include supernatural elements and deal with religious or secular matters (BENNET, 2013, p. 10). There are several categories of legends, including historical ones, which tell stories about the past (LYLE; BOLD; RUSSELL, 2013, p. 20), with references to specific time and places. Folklorist and writer Margaret Bennett (2013, p. 12) states that legends about the Scottish clans bring together "not only past and present but also the natural and supernatural", a claim which may be extended to other historical legends. Folk narratives hold strong ties with song and literary tradition, in addition to being found in early historiographical texts. These characteristics may also be observed in the legends present in *A Scots Quair*.

The attitude toward folk beliefs and narratives in Scotland has varied through time. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, after the Reformation, there was an effort among scholars to distinguish between religion and supernatural phenomena that were part of folk's belief. Besides, the Church of Scotland sought to put an end to these popular beliefs as they were not generally deemed to be in accordance with the Christian faith. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were marked by two opposing forces: while the focus on reason advocated by Enlightenment thinkers relegated folk beliefs to the position of old-fashioned

superstitions, there was a rising movement to collect traditional sayings, stories and customs, which was based on the assumption that they were endangered by progress (HENDERSON, 2013, p. 25-29). The publication of song anthologies, thus, occurred parallel to the collection of other expressions of popular culture.

These questions related to the supernatural and religion may be observed in Robert Kirk's (1644-1692) and Martin Martin's (c.1665-1718) works. Episcopalian minister Robert Kirk is the author of *The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns and Fairies* (1691), in which beliefs and narratives about these entities are recounted. Kirk (1893, p. 6) associates these folkloric figures to religious ones, characterizing fairies as a being of "a middle Nature betwixt Man and Angel, as were Demons thought to be of old". The author states that his aim in writing the book is to combat atheism as the lack of belief in fairies or elves could lead to the questioning of the existence of God and angels (HENDERSON, 2013, p. 28). The story of Kirk's death has become a legend in itself for he is supposed not to have died, but to have been abducted by fairies as a revenge for making their mysteries public (SCOTT, 1830, p. 165). In contrast, Martin Martin's *A Description of the Western Isles of Scotland* (1703) presents a description of the geography, the customs, and the history of the region, as well as the cures for diseases and techniques for fishing, cooking, and raising cattle used there, among other subjects. Stories of second sight and other popular beliefs, although included, are not the focus of the book and are, in fact, negatively regarded by the author, as the following quotation from his preface may demonstrate:

> There are several instances of Heathenism and Pagan Superstition among the inhabitants of the islands related here, but I would not have the reader to think those practices are chargeable upon the generality of the present inhabitants; since only a few of the oldest and most ignorant of the vulgar are guilty of 'em. These practices are only to be found, where the Reform'd Religion has not prevail'd; for 'tis to the Progress of that alone that the Banishment of Evil Spirits, as well as of Evil Customs is owing [...] (MARTIN, 1703, s/p.)

Martin opposes religion to the belief in supernatural phenomena, stating that the Church of Scotland was responsible for extinguishing them. His claim that these beliefs are not prevalent among most inhabitants may be related to his effort to represent the people of the islands in a positive light throughout his preface since he sees these "instances of heathenism" as a flaw.

As with the collection of songs, authenticity was an issue with the anthologies of folk stories produced in the early nineteenth century. An example of that is Allan Cunningham's (1784-1842) collection *Traditional Tales of the English and Scottish Peasantry* (1822), much of which was probably invented, rather than collected, by him (HENDERSON, 2013, p. 30). Even in the late nineteenth century, this suspicion was already well established, as Henry

Morley (1887, p. 8) demonstrates in his introduction to the 1887 edition of Cunningham's book: "Though his Traditional Tales may be mainly of his own invention, they are the outcome of a mind that had been in much real contact with North Country peasantry". In other instances, it is not clear how much the editor altered the collected stories, as in *Scenes and Legends of the North of Scotland* (1835), by Hugh Miller (1802-1856), who was motivated to gather tales by the idea that this tradition was disappearing (HENDERSON, 2013, p. 33). Miller (1835, p. ix) describes the contents of his work as

> stories connected with Cromarty, which, in the past ages, were deemed of interest enough to be transmitted to the present. Some of these are evidently founded on circumstances which have occurred in real life; some of them seem to have sprung out of minds darkened by ignorance and superstition [...]; some of them may be considered as the fragments of codes of belief that have long since fallen into desuetude.

In addition to the focus in his hometown, Miller makes explicit the mixture of fact and fiction which characterizes his anthology. According to him, his tales "form a kind of vista into the past", reflecting the transformations in Cromarty, which are considered similar to those occurred in other parts of the country (MILLER, 1835, p. vi-viii). Hence, Miller highlights the role of traditional stories in representing the past of a group since they afford readers a glimpse of old beliefs and customs and may even refer to factual information.

After James Macpherson's publication of the poems attributed to Ossian in the eighteenth century, there was a surge of interest in the collection of Highland traditions, especially songs and poems. However, one of the pioneers in the anthologizing of the region's folk narratives was John Francis Campbell (1821-1885), who edited the four volumes of *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* (1860-62). Born and raised in Islay, one of islands of the Inner Hebrides, off the west coast of Scotland, Campbell was in contact with the Gaelic tradition from his childhood, as he details in his manuscripts:

> As soon as I was out of the hands of nursemaids I was handed over to the care of a piper [...] and from him I learned many useful arts. [...] I made early acquaintances with a blind fiddler who could recite stories. [...] I got to know a good deal about the ways of the Highlanders by growing up as a Highlander myself (THOMPSON, 1990, p. 89).

This early connection to traditional culture may be compared to Walter Scott's childhood interest in the Border region's songs and stories, which was mentioned before. Inspired and influenced by the Grimms' collections of Scandinavian tales, Campbell started gathering folk stories from the Highlands, both by travelling around the region and by relying on the help of collaborators living there. He also included in his works theoretical questions, such as the classification of tales and the investigation of story migration applying the same methodology

used by comparative philologists. The book is intended by the author as “a contribution to this new science of ‘Storiology’”; therefore, he seeks to follow some method in the collection, such as the faithfulness to the original recitation as he considers that it would be as “barbarous to ‘polish’ a genuine popular tale, as it would be to adorn the bones of a Megatherium with tinsel, or gild a rare old copper coin” (CAMPBELL, 1890, p. ii-iii). In this, it is possible to discern a scientific concern which would be fundamental in the later development of the ethnographic field of research. Besides, Campbell turned his attention to other aspects of Highland culture, campaigning for the teaching of Scottish Gaelic at universities and publishing a study of bagpipe music (SHAW, 2007, p. 349-350).

As stated before, there are deep connections between folk narratives and literary tradition in Scotland, which may be illustrated by the works of James Hogg (1770-1835). Born in the Borders area, Hogg lived there for most of his life, working as a shepherd. He and his mother were some of the singers from whom Walter Scott collected material for his *Minstrelsy*. Due to his little formal education, Hogg was known as the “Ettrick Shepherd”, a title which gave him some publicity – leading to comparisons with Robert Burns, for example – and, at the same time, led to a lack of critical appreciation of his works in the literary circles in his lifetime. His familiarity with the local oral storytelling allowed him to make use of both the form and the contents of traditional narratives in his literary creations, which present a mixture of “elements from traditional and literary culture” (BOLD, 1990, p. 88). Hogg, for instance, draws upon a historical legend about king James V (1513-1542) traveling around Scotland in disguise in *The Profligate Princes*, a play in verse included in his book *Dramatic Tales* (1817) (BOLD, 1990, p. 74). According to literary scholar Valentina Bold (1990, p. 75), Hogg’s proximity to folk tradition makes his depictions of aristocratic figures less complimentary than those of other authors, like Scott. References to supernatural elements are also abundant in Hogg’s works even if he at times adopts an ambivalent attitude toward folk beliefs, presenting rational explanations for the perceived phenomena (BOLD, 1990, p. 79). Thus, folk narratives are far from isolated from Scottish literature; much to the contrary, traditional culture has represented a rich source of material for a range of writers.

In *Sunset Song*, legend is intertwined with history in the account of the beginnings of Kinraddie. The first part of the novel is a prelude, entitled “The Unfurrowed Field”, which briefly recounts the history of the village and presents each of its inhabitants in 1911, when the narrative begins. The opening of the prelude sets the foundations of the village in “the days of William the Lyon, when gryphons and such-like beasts still roamed the Scots countryside” (p. 11). This passage, with the reference to William I (1165-1214) and to

gryphons, foregrounds the blend of historical and legendary elements, characteristic of historical legends, as previously stated. The fantastic nature of the beast is reinforced by its description: it has “great wings”, a “great belly” and “the head of a meikle [big] cock, but with the ears of a lion” (p. 11). Gibbon tells the story of how Cospatric de Gondeshil, a Norman young man, was granted the lands of Kinraddie after killing this creature, a tale that is exclusive to the realm of the trilogy as the village is a fictional place. This legend provides Kinraddie with a story of its origin, which is interwoven with that of the family who owns the estate. As Candau (2016, p. 96) points out, it is common for groups to have foundational narratives, ranging from explanations about the origins of the universe or a religion to decisive historical events, such as the French Revolution. These narratives, the product of processes of selection, consist of a significant element in the construction of the identity of a given community (CANDAU, 2016, p. 96-97).

The legend of the gryphon conveys a representation of feudalism that is convenient to Cospatric’s descendants for it not only legitimizes their ownership of the land, but also justifies it. The adoption of the feudal system in Scotland in the twelfth century, influenced by the Norman example in England, consisted in the distribution of lands through agreements and charters to Anglo-Norman aristocrats close to the king, which helped to establish the royal power. Cospatric, “young and landless” (p. 11), earns the estate through a deed of bravery and valor instead of mere political alliances. His act may, indeed, be regarded as a favor to those who lived in the region as he frees them from a beast which “ate up sheep and men and women and was a fair terror” (p. 11). Besides, the contrast between the depiction of the king and that of Cospatric contributes to a better impression of the latter. Whereas the king is an idle man, who is “sitting drinking the wine and fondling his bonny lemans [beautiful mistresses] in Edinburgh Town” (p. 12) while his subjects are contending with a murderous gryphon, Cospatric is described as “fell [very] brave and well-armoured” (p. 11). Although his ambition, as a “landless” young man, is clear, his decision to face a creature that was “squatting in bones” (p. 11) helps to support his merit for earning the land of Kinraddie. The risk of his venture is also suggested by the fact that he “commended his soul to God” (p. 11) before killing the gryphon, a fragment which also presents him as a true Christian believer, a desirable quality in a religious community. The king’s determination that Kinraddie should belong to Cospatric and “the issue of his body for ever after” (p. 12) is fulfilled since their domain over the lands comes to an end only in the early twentieth century, when the last heir is considered mad and kept in an asylum, with the property mortgaged and managed by trustees, in a foreshadowing of the crumbling of the empires which was to follow. As

Cospatric's heirs' possession of the estate is perpetuated for centuries, the legend suits their interests as it implies that they deserved to own the place due to their ancestor's feat.

The tale of the gryphon also downplays the presence of other people in the region before Cospatric's arrival. By focusing on the knight's victory over the beast, the story positions the inhabitants of Kinraddie as passive, helpless victims in need of a savior. Moreover, the king's reward includes the permission to "keep down all beasts and coarse and wayward folk" (p. 12), which not only puts in evidence the expected oppression of the peasants, but also shows a derogatory view of them as negative qualities are attributed to them, and they are equated with animals in this passage. After the legend is recounted, however, Gibbon offers some clues as to their identity when he affirms that "Cospatric got him the Pict folk to build a strong castle" and "married a Pict lady" (p. 12). The Picts were early inhabitants of the northern part of the current Scottish territory, about whom very little is known. For that reason, Maclean (1996, p. 22) describes them as "a shadowy, ill-documented race of people of uncertain antecedents". They were first called Picts by Roman authors in the late third century AD, possibly due to their habit of tattooing their body (FRY; FRY, 1995, p. 21, 236). They were probably part of the Celtic waves of settlers that arrived in Britain during the first millennium BC (MACLEAN, 1996, p. 14). Even though the Picts are not mentioned in historical texts after the ninth century, Gibbon identifies them as the ancestors of the people living in Kinraddie long after that. In the essay "The Antique Scene", the author also refers to the continuity of the Picts through time: "Thereafter (after 844 AD) the name Pict disappears from Scottish history, though, paradoxically immortal, the Pict remained" (GIBBON, 2007b, p. 109).

There are some signs in the novel that Cospatric and his family seek to control the narrative about the origin of their connection with the village. They receive the royal permission to "wear the sign of a gryphon's head for a crest" (p. 12), which is a way of keeping Cospatric's legend alive in popular memory. Other tangible reminders of the tale may be observed in a tower that is an annex to the local church. On the tower, there is an effigy of Cospatric "lying on his back with his arms crossed and a daft-like simper on his face" (p. 17), a commemoration of the patriarch despite folk's unflattering description of his image. A relic is also treasured inside the building: "the spear he (Cospatric) killed the gryphon with was kept in a kist [chest] there, or so some said, but others said it was no more than an old bit heuch [sickle] from the times of Bonnie Prince Charlie" (p. 17). Authentic or not, the object corroborates the attempt to keep the story in people's minds, which may even have led to the fabrication of this artifact. In addition to that, Cospatric's son replaces his foreign surname

with Kinraddie, the name of that area before the family's arrival, concealing their Norman background and making them seem closer to region. In this way, the heir intertwines the family history with that of the village and, thus, strengthens their claim to the estate. The change of the name contributes to the naturalization of the family's ownership of the land. This construction of a process of identification is also intensified by the tale of the gryphon as it locates Cospatric's settling in the region in a mythical past, so distant and exotic that strange creatures still inhabited the place.

Although the legend discussed so far was invented by Gibbon, he was influenced by stories related to Arbuthnott, the village where he grew up. The name of the character is inspired by Cospatrick de Swinton, Earl of Northumberland, who was said to be a relation of Hugh de Swinton, considered the founder of Arbuthnott in the late twelfth century (MALCOLM, 2007, p. 271). The fourth Laird of Arbuthnott, Hugh le Blond (c.1260-c.1300), appears in two local legends. The first, which seems to have been Gibbon's inspiration, is that he killed a dragon at the Den of Pitcarles (MALCOLM, 2007, p. 271). The other one is the theme of a ballad titled "Sir Hugh le Blond", included in Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Borders* as recited by an old woman who worked for the Arbuthnott family for a long while (SCOTT, 1849, p. 58). It is a ballad from northern Scotland and the tale it tells is "universally current in the Mearns" according to Scott (1849, p. 51). Categorized as a "romantic ballad" in the collection, the song recounts Hugh le Blond's heroic attitude of dueling to defend the honor of the queen, who was falsely accused of adultery by a nobleman. Scott (1849, p. 52-53) explores some possible events that may have given origin to the story and, though it seems not to be the record of a historical fact, it is valued as a song "in the genuine style of chivalry". As in Gibbon's legend of the gryphon, the young noble is praised for his courage, for instance, in the passage in which the queen looks for someone to fight on her behalf:

> "Alas! alas!" then cried our queen,
> "Alas, and woe to me!
> "There's not a man in all Scotland
> "Will fight with him for me."
>
> She breathed unto her messengers,
> Sent them south, east, and west;
> They could find none to fight with him,
> Nor enter the contest.
>
> She breathed on her messengers,
> She sent them to the north;
> And there they found Sir Hugh le Blond,
> To fight him he came forth. (SCOTT, 1849, p. 62-63).

Hugh le Blond, described by the king as “bold” (SCOTT, 1849, p. 64), is the only one in the whole nation who is willing to face the man who slandered the queen and prove her innocence. After winning the duel, he is granted the territory of Fordoun, to be added to the estate of Arbuthnott, already in his possession. Hence, Cospatric of Gondeshil’s reward also echoes the end of the ballad from the place where Gibbon grew up. Moreover, it is interesting to observe that the Arbuthnotts claimed to have preserved the sword used by Hugh le Blond in the famous duel almost until Scott’s time (SCOTT, 1849, p. 51), which brings to mind the alleged conservation of Cospatric’s spear in the novel.

The credibility of this kind of tale among folk may be illustrated by the passage of Chris and Ewan’s visit to Edzell Castle, the ruins of the Lindsay family residence, located in the northeast of Scotland. As they observe the pictures on the walls of the castle, with “wild heraldic beasts without number”, Ewan comments that “he was glad they’d all been killed” (p. 174). Ewan’s belief in the past existence of mythic creatures suggests that, even as late as the early twentieth century, characters still give credit to legends about these animals. Cospatric’s tale, thus, may not be regarded as fantastic, but as an accurate representation of the beginnings of the village. Even though gryphons and other beasts of the kind are perceived as part of a distant past, it is still deemed a historical, rather than legendary, past by some of the folk living in Kinraddie.

While Ewan believes in these creatures, Chris considers them “beasts of an ill-stomached fancy” (p. 174), a contrast which may be related to their different levels of education. The distinction between their perspectives is also clear when Ewan, upon seeing the small chambers in which bowmen stood, remarks that “they must fair have been fusionless folk, the bowmen, to live in places like that” (p. 174). This makes Chris laugh, feeling “queer and sorry”, and realize “the remoteness that her books had made” (p. 174), which illustrates how education sets her apart from the community. Characters’ view on education seems to be ambivalent in Kinraddie. On the one hand, it is acknowledged as a path for social mobility as Chris’s father implies with his instruction to her: “*Stick to your lessons and let’s see you make a name for yourself*” (p. 55). Therefore, education is a way to “become one of the Rich” (p. 53), as well as to escape from the exhausting labor in the fields. Practical learning which enables people to work elsewhere is considered desirable, as discussed during Chris’s wedding:

> they agreed that the land was a coarse, coarse life, you’d do better at almost anything else, folks that could send their lads to learn a trade were right wise, no doubt of that, there was nothing on the land but work, work, work, and chave [hard work], chave, chave, from the blink of day till the fall of night, no thanks from the soss [dirty wet mess] and sotter [mess], and hardly a living to be made (p. 157)

On the other hand, schooling is generally regarded as a useless affectation as the discussion during a break from threshing the corn in Kinraddie may demonstrate: "Most said it was a coarse thing, learning, just teaching your children a lot of damned nonsense that put them above themselves, they'd turn round and give you their lip as soon as look at you" (p. 91). Chris's mother also sees education as negative and potentially unwholesome since, when her father tells Chris to focus on her studies, she replies "*Take care her head doesn't soften with lessons and dirt, learning in books it was sent* [sic] *the wee* [little] *red daftie* [mad man] *at Cuddiestoun clean skite* [insane]*, they say*" (p. 55).

As for Chris, learning is related to an inner conflict since she feels divided between her love of books and her attachment to the land. This tension may be illustrated by the following passage:

> So that was Chris and her reading and schooling, two Chrisses there were that fought for her heart and tormented her. You hated the land and the coarse speak of the folk and learning was brave and fine one day; and the next you'd waken with the peewits crying across the hills, deep and deep, crying in the heart of you and the smell of the earth in your face, almost you'd cry for that, the beauty of it and the sweetness of the Scottish land and skies. (p. 41)

The character's connection with the land and nature is reinforced by the reference to the sensuous appeal of the earth, the sky, and the singing of the birds. Her ambivalence is also suggested by the description of learning as "brave and fine" since "brave", an adaptation of the Scottish "braw", which means "fine", is juxtaposed with its English equivalent. This word choice stresses the contrast between the different Chrisses in terms of nationality, which is explicit in the use of the phrase "the English Chris" to refer to the personality that is fond of learning and reading. Although the English Chris dreams of becoming a teacher and having her own house away from Kinraddie (p. 69), the girl realizes, after her father's death, that these plans

> [had] been just the dreamings of a child over toys it lacked, toys that would never content it when it heard the smore of a storm or the cry of sheep on the moors or smelt the pringling smell of a new-ploughed park under the drive of a coulter. She could no more teach a school than fly, night and day she'd want to be back, for all the fine clothes and gear she might get and hold, the books and the light and learning. (p. 123)

Once again, the sensations associated with the countryside life are presented as elements to which Chris is deeply attached. Literary scholar Ian Campbell (1974, p. 48) associates the English Chris with a more intellectual desire whereas her bond to the land is related to a more emotional longing. Her choice to remain in Kinraddie, hence, shows that her affective ties to the land "are too strong to be broken by an essentially intellectual desire to be free of them"

(CAMPBELL, 1974, p. 49). Nonetheless, Chris's interest in learning and her education have a lasting influence on her even after she abandons her plans to leave the countryside. After her mother's death, which obliged her to leave school and help the family with household chores, Chris still considers the folk from the village "yokels and clowns everlasting, dull-brained and crude" when they insinuate that she belongs in a kitchen and not in college (p. 91). Her moral values also remain significantly different from those of most of the community even after her final decision to stay in Kinraddie, as exemplified by the following quotation: "it was maybe because she was over young, had read over many of the books, had been the English Chris as well as this one [...] the old ways of sinning and winning, having your own pleasure and standing affronted at other folk having theirs, seemed often daft to her" (p. 132). As aforementioned, this distance between Chris and the rest of the community is visible in the distinction between her and Ewan's impressions of the heraldic beasts during their visit to Edzell Castle.

The introductory Proem in *Cloud Howe* also retells a legend connected to a historical building in the fictional town of Segget. The tale is about the death of king Kenneth II (971-995) although he is mistakenly identified in the novel as Kenneth III (p. 267). The circumstances of Kenneth II's death are not clear; Encyclopedia Britannica (2019), for instance, only states that he "was slain, apparently by his own subjects, at Fettercairn in the Mearns". According to the legend, though, his assassination was planned by Finella, the wife of a noble, as a revenge for her son's death. As will be later explored, there are distinct versions of the tale, which was also associated with the literary tradition in different ways. In *Cloud Howe*, Finella is introduced as "the wife of the Sheriff of Mearns", and her men ambush and kill the king when "he hunted slow through the forested Howe, it was winter, they tell" (p. 267). In this passage, the circulation of the story in the region is attested by the use of the phrase "they tell", which also reinforces the oral transmission of the legend and the uncertainties and the lack of documentation about it. Even though Finella is responsible for the king's murder in the story, she is not patently condemned by the narrative voice. As Kenneth II is blamed for her son's death, her actions are represented as "even[ing] that score up" (p. 267), which justifies them to a certain extent. When the king's allies attempt to avenge him, the narrative voice explains that "the darkness comes down on their (Finella's men's) waiting and fighting and all the ill things that they suffered and did" (p. 268). Not only does this quotation describes their fate as obscure, but it also depicts Finella and her supporters as both perpetrators and victims of violent deeds. Hence, the narrative voice does not side with the king and his followers, which may indicate that the folk sympathize to a degree with

Finella due to the loss of her son. It may also suggest that the succession of Kenneth II was indifferent to the common people, not directly affecting their lives. A similar idea is expressed by Gibbon (2007b, p. 107) in the essay "The Antique Scene":

> The peasant at his immemorial toil would lift his eyes to see a new master installed at the broch, at the keep, at, later, the castle: and would shrug the matter aside as one of indifference, turning, with the rain in his face, to the essentials of existence, his fields, his cattle, his woman in the dark little eirde [earth], earth-house.

For the common folk, thus, the disputes among the elite are not a central concern as these conflicts do not substantially alter their oppressed condition.

Finella's story is, both within and outside the novel, a testament to the intertwining of legend and historiography. The narrative voice humorously acknowledges "that dreich [dull] clerk Wyntoun" (p. 267) as a source, directly quoting from his work. This is a reference to Andrew of Wyntoun's (c.1350-c.1423) *Original Chronicle*, whose aim is to retell the history of humankind until the fifteenth century, focusing especially on Scotland. Wyntoun's account comprises a blend of religious and legendary tales, such as the stories of Noah's ark and King Arthur's court, with historical information about diverse kings and popes. The *Original Chronicle* also inspired the Shakespearean scene of Macbeth's encounter with the weird sisters who predict that he will be king. In Wyntoun's narrative, Sybil or Fembel, as Finella is called in this version, is the daughter of the Earl of Angus and has a "yong [young] and bald [bold]" son, who is put to death by Kenneth II (WYNTOUN, 1906, p. 196). After that, she decides to avenge herself and, since she is not able to do so through her might, she resorts to her "slycht [cunning]" (WYNTOUN, 1906, p. 196). The monarch is then ambushed and slayed by a company of men in Fettercairn as narrated in the fragment quoted in *Cloud Howe*:

As throw* the Mernnys* on a day The kynge wes ridande* his awyn waye*, Off his awyn cuntre al suddandly* Agayn hym rase a companny* In to the town of Fethirkern*. To feycht withe hym thai war sa yarn*, And he agane thaim facht sa* fast Till he wes slane thare* at the last. (WYNTOUN, 1906, p. 197-198)	*through / Mearns *king was riding / own way *his own country all suddenly *against him rose a company *Fettercairn *fight with him they were so eager *against them fought so *was slain there

This passage, included in the novel, praises the king for his ability in combat; however, Finella's representation in Gibbon's text is not as negative as in the *Original Chronicle* given that Wyntoun (1906, p. 196) describes her as cunning and "tratouris [treacherous]".

Another medieval chronicler mentioned in *Cloud Howe* is John of Fordun (?-after 1384), who also recounts the legend of Finella. As with Wyntoun, the narrative voice refers to him in a playful and malicious way, showing a jesting rivalry with the neighboring village

where he was born: “a Fordoun childe [man] him and had he had sense he’d have hidden the fact, not spread it abroad” (p. 268). John of Fordun’s *Chronicle of the Scottish Nation* bears some similarities with Wyntoun’s work – it entwines religious and mythic material with historical information to trace the history of Scotland from the beginnings of time. John of Fordun relates the division of the world among Noah’s sons and the lives of saints and locates the origin of the Scottish people in ancient Egypt. His account of Kenneth II’s death is more fanciful than the one found in Wyntoun’s chronicle and in *Cloud Howe*. According to Fordun, Finella set a trap in a statue attached to crossbows so that the king would die when he touched it. His narrative is also more reproachful of the woman’s act of revenge, which is reflected in his choice of words since he refers to her as a “traitress” who prepares for “perpetrating a crime” and “beguiled” the king (FORDUN, 1872, p. 166). Besides, she is part of a bigger conspiracy, acting in concert with nobles who were plotting the king’s assassination, and the reason for her son’s execution is unknown, the text suggesting that it may be related to “what he had done”, that is, that he may have been justly condemned to death (FORDUN, 1872, p. 166). Kenneth’s murder is more emphatically lamented in this version of the tale, with exclamations of sorrow such as “Why say more? Why dwell on so sad a tale?” (FORDUN, 1872, p. 167). Therefore, Fordun’s and Gibbon’s approach to the legend differ in their representation of Finella and her actions.

Finella’s tale is also associated with the literary tradition, which testifies to its lasting influence. English poet Thomas Sedgwick Whalley (1746-1828) published *Kenneth and Fenella*, a narrative in verse, in 1809. Whalley (1809, p. iv) mentions historiographical works as his sources and considers the story to be “founded on undoubted History”. In his preface, the legend is connected to Macbeth – both the historical figure and the Shakespearean tragedy. Whalley (1809, p. iv, original emphasis) compares Finella to the character of Lady Macbeth in the play, affirming that “[w]hat he (Shakespeare) imagines Lady Macbeth to *have been* – Fenella really *was*”. Emphasis, thus, is placed upon her murderous act and not on her motivation as Finella is not, like Lady Macbeth, moved by ambition. In addition to that, the author refers to the hypothesis, attributed to Scottish historian William Guthrie (1708-1770), that Finella was an ancestor of the historical Macbeth and that Duncan’s murder was the result of a quarrel between their families initiated by Finella’s deed since Duncan was Kenneth II’s great-grandson (WHALLEY, 1809, p. iv-v). By establishing a relation between the story he recounts and historical and literary texts, Whalley tries to capture the readers’ interest and defends the relevance of his work as he places it in line with a longer tradition. The poet introduces the tale of the statue, also presented in Fordun’s chronicle, as the tradition and

claims to have altered it in his narrative in such a way that gives it “an air of greater probability” (WHALLEY, 1809, p. vi). In his version, Finella invites the king to her castle for a feast, where he is slain by Finella with a spear after killing several of her men. She is then pursued by warriors sent by Malcolm, Kenneth’s son, who arrives at the scene right after his father’s murder. Finella is taken back to her castle and burned to death after killing one of Malcolm’s soldiers. According to the poem, the ruins of the building still exist: “The Ruins of Fenella’s Tow’rs, / Though shorn of all the Terrors, stand” (WHALLEY, 1809, p. 40). The remains of a burnt castle are also mentioned in *The Traveller’s Guide; or a Topographical Description of Scotland* (1798) as a feature of Fettercairn. The guide states that it is “commonly called *Fenella’s Castle*” and that it was the place where “Kenneth III was murdered” by Finella (FAIRBAIRN, 1798, p. 216, original emphasis), which demonstrates the circulation of the legend in the region. The fact that the author, like Gibbon, identifies the assassinated king as Kenneth III suggests that it is a common confusion.

This legend is connected with the Kaimes, the ruins of an ancient building in Segget, in *Cloud Howe*. The narrative voice affirms that “Finella’s carles [men] builded [built] the Kaimes, a long line of battlements under the hills”, around an old Pictish tower, as a shelter from those who came to punish them for the king’s death (p. 268). The association between the place and the legend is stressed by the possibility that other vestiges from Finella’s time may have been found around the Kaimes. The narrative voice claims that people have looked for treasures near the Kaimes and have found only “some rusted swords, tint [lost] most like” in Finella’s days (p. 267). Young Ewan, Chris’s son, is fond of exploring the area and finds some spear blades there, which inspire one of his stepfather’s sermons:

> And Robert told of the uses the thing had once had, in the hands of the carles [men] of the ruined Kaimes; and the siege and the fighting and the man who had held it, desperate at last in the burning lowe [glow] as King Kenneth’s men came into the castle: and the blood that ran on this ruined blade for things that the men of that time believed would endure and be true till the world died [...] (p. 322).

By associating the blade with Kenneth’s time, Robert links the past to the present since he attributes feelings and convictions to those who fought on that occasion, which makes the tale more vivid and relatable.

Finella’s tale is also closely related to the local landscape in other references to the legend in the novel. When Chris is moving with her family from Kinraddie to Segget, she sees “the Howe spread out like a map” and lists some of the towns observed (p. 295). One of them is Fettercairn, remembered as the place “where the soldiers of the widow Finella had lain in wait to mischieve King Kenneth” (p. 295). The legend, hence, comes to mark the history of

the place and even to be an event that identifies the town. The defining importance attributed to the past of a certain location to its present may also be observed in Gibbon's choice to include a prologue retelling the history of his settings in both *Sunset Song* and *Cloud Howe*. Besides, Finella is connected with the landscape of the region in another passage that describes an excursion. When young Ewan and his girlfriend Ellen leave Duncairn to spend a day in the countryside, she looks "up through the woods at the heights of Drumtochty towering far in the April air, dark at this time of the year, the sky behind waiting and watching with a fleece of clouds like an old woman's cap" (p. 626). After she remarks that, Ewan answers that it is "Finella's mutch, had she never heard of Finella?" (p. 626). The tale, thus, has such strong bonds with the region that even the shape of the clouds is interpreted as an object associated with Finella, which reveals the lingering impact of the story on the community's memory. The regional appeal of the legend is also stressed by the fact that Ellen, an English woman, does not know it, confusing it with something from "the Covenanting Times" (p. 626).

Even though the structure built by Finella's allies in Segget is "left bare and with ruined walls" in the days of John of Fordun (p. 268), it remains a prominent feature in the landscape as Hew Monte Alto, the man who is granted the estate by Robert the Bruce (1306-1329), builds his castle within its walls. In the novel, this castle is related to another piece of local tradition – the story of Lord Melville's murder. Mowat, the fictional laird of Segget, helps his relative Mathers, one of the men responsible for the death of the Sheriff of Mearns. The narrative voice introduces the story humorously, as a matter of misinterpretation: Mathers and other nobles complain to the king about the sheriff and "the King was right vexed, and he pulled at his beard – *Sorrow gin* [that] *the Sheriff were sodden* [boiled] – *sodden and supped in his brew!* He said the words in a moment of rage, unthinking, and then they passed from his mind; but the lairds remembered, and took horse for the Howe" (p. 270). However, the narrative becomes gruesome as the lairds throw Melville in a boiling cauldron, watching

> while he slowly ceased to scraich [scream], he howled like a wolf in the warming water, then like a bairn [child] smored [smothered] in plague, and his body bloated red as the clay, till the flesh loosed off from his seething bones; and the four lairds took their horn spoons from their belts and supped the broth that the Sheriff made, and fulfilled the words that the King had said (p. 270).

Both passages show the conversational style of narrative that pervades the trilogy. Following the ghastly meal, Mathers hides in the Kaimes under Mowat's protection until he receives the royal pardon. The recurrent comic tone returns in the conclusion of the tale as, after escaping punishment and leaving his confinement in the castle, Mathers "swore if ever again in his life

he supped of broth or lodged between walls, so might any man do to himself as he had done to the Sheriff Melville" (p. 270).

The story surrounding the sheriff's murder is a widespread local tradition, with an archaeological site in the region, containing what may have been a kiln, named the Sheriff's Kettle. Hubert Frederick Barclay (1865-1948), the descendant of one of the noblemen involved in the crime, refers to historical evidence of Melville's murder in his *History of the Barclay Family* (1933), quoting from the copy of a 1421 letter of remission which officially pardoned the culprits. Barclay (1933, p. 160-161) identifies Hugh Arbuthnot, the laird of the village where Gibbon grew up, as the leader of the group and retells different versions of the story. According to Principal Arbuthnot, who wrote about the family history in 1567, Melville's arrogance caused offence to the other lairds and made them follow him and kill him as he was going home from a meeting with them (BARCLAY, 1933, p. 160). Another version related by Barclay (1933, p. 160-161) states that the Duke of Albany, the regent at the time, replied to the noblemen's grievances about the sheriff "in a manner which encouraged the barons to take the matter into their own hands". Finally, Barclay (1933, p. 161) affirms that "[t]radition [...] has persistently maintained a very horrid description of the affair" and recounts a very similar story to the one included in *Cloud Howe*, containing almost the same quotation attributed to the sovereign: "'Sorra [sorrow] gif [that] he were sodden and supped in broo [brew]'". Walter Scott (1902, p. 242) considers the tradition concerning the sheriff's murder as a true historical event, describing it as part of "the real history of Scotland". The story is included in the notes to "Lord Soulis", whose plot resembles that of Melville's death, in the *Minstrelsy*, demonstrating once more the relationship between songs and oral history and narratives. The song tells the tale of a cruel man who can only be killed by being thrown in boiling lead as he was made magically immune to various kinds of wound. As Gibbon interweaves the history of his Segget with different traditional stories from the Mearns region, such as the tales of Finella and Lord Melville, he imparts a distinctly local color to the fictional town's past. Characters' sense of identity is thus deeply rooted in the traditions from the northeast of Scotland.

The story of Melville's murder, which inspired Gibbon, also involves the episode of hiding in a castle to escape punishment. The Kaim of Mathers is said to have been built by Barclay as a shelter from royal persecution. According to Hubert F. Barclay (1933, p. 163), David Berclay of Mathers, the father of one of the killers, erected the Kaim in 1424 as a stronghold for fear of revenge from the sheriff's friends. The castle was constructed on a rocky cliff which was only accessible from the mainland through a narrow passage. Much of

the building has been eroded by the sea, and the ruins currently cannot be reached. This strategic and impregnable location is reflected on the name given to the castle since “kaim” means “a long, narrow, steep-sided mound or ridge” or “a small peninsula, in the form of a narrow, low isthmus, leading from a cliff to a shore” (DSL, s/d., s/p.). Therefore, the Kaimes in *Cloud Howe* combines characteristics from different historical buildings. It is, at once, related to the place known as Finella’s Castle, as it is described as a hiding place for her men, and to the Kaim of Mathers, even bearing a similar name to the latter. Thus, the fictional construction is both clearly local and not exclusive to any specific town since, though it is connected to distinct legends and places, they are all within the Mearns. Moreover, the Kaimes is a thread connecting diverse historical moments in the novel for, in addition to being related to these two tales, it is burned in the culmination of a popular revolt sparked by Simon Burnes, ancestor of the famous poet, in the early nineteenth century. As aforementioned, this anecdote may reinforce the image of Robert Burns as a revolutionary figure.

Another legend mentioned in the trilogy concerns the English king Alfred (871-899). Following a surprise Viking attack in 878, Alfred and his family were forced to flee from their residence at Chippenham. After this, it is said that Alfred spent some time in a cowherd’s cottage in disguise, where he was asked by the peasant’s wife to watch some cakes that were baking. Alfred let them burn, which made the woman, unaware that he was the king, harshly reprimand him. Alfred, however, was amused by the incident and rewarded the couple after his victory over the Vikings (ALEXANDER, 2013). In *Sunset Song*, the legend is mentioned after a meeting between Chris and Ewan before their relationship starts. While Chris is alone baking oatcakes and scones, wearing only a vest and a petticoat, Ewan stops by her house looking for her brother. Both of them blush, embarrassed, during their short exchange, and Chris is so distracted after he leaves that she ends up burning a cake, which leads the narrative voice to compare her to Alfred: “she stood looking after him a long while, not thinking, smiling, till the smell of a burning cake roused her to run, just like the English creature Alfred” (p. 105). This passage demonstrates not only the familiarity of the community with the story and how it relates to their daily life, but also the characteristic irreverence of the narrative voice. Alfred is not even identified as a king; instead, he is just called an “English creature”, which shows little deference for the aristocracy. Besides, the narrative voice only focuses on Alfred’s ineptitude, rather than acknowledging his subsequent victorious encounter with the Vikings.

All the legends analyzed here are set in the medieval age, representing it as a perilous and extraordinary period. Most of the tales involve violence and bloodshed, whether in the

form of a deadly creature or clashes between the nobles. Moreover, the Middle Ages are depicted as a distant, exotic past, when strange and fantastic events were possible. All stories selected by Gibbon contain something remarkable and out of the ordinary, such as the gryphon, for instance. In Finella's legend, it is noteworthy that a woman sheds the delicateness and fragility traditionally associated with femininity and is powerful and persuasive enough to have the monarch killed. Whereas fatal conflicts between noblemen were not uncommon in medieval times, the appalling method used for murdering the Sheriff of Mearns is quite remarkable. Finally, the tale about Alfred is unusual in part due to the very prosaic quality of the task which he is incapable of carrying out. Furthermore, the fact that the king is scolded by a commoner is also unexpected and gives an amusing turn to the narrative.

Another characteristic shared by the traditional tales mentioned in the trilogy is that all of them concern aristocratic figures and make reference to historical characters. The depiction of these characters belonging to the elite differs in each legend and is frequently marked by the irreverent tone of the narrative voice. As analyzed before, whereas Cospatric of Gondeshil is mostly represented in a positive way, as the courageous man who slayed the gryphon, he is not immune to folk's mockery about his effigy with the "daft-like simper on his face" (p. 17). Contrary to some earlier authors' perspective, Gibbon's narrative voice does not unequivocally condemn Finella's actions or refer to her as a traitress. In addition to the aforementioned possibility that the transition between kings may not be significantly relevant for the peasants, this attitude may reflect the change in people's attitude toward monarchs. As a twentieth-century author, Gibbon is in a more comfortable position to depict Finella in a more sympathetic way as the king was not such a centralized and absolute authority as in Andrew of Wyntoun's and John of Fordun's times. Even though the lairds who killed the Sheriff of Mearns are portrayed as men capable of a horrid act, the story also has a comic aspect due to its farcical character. The humorous tone is present in Alfred's tale as well, with the king represented as a clumsy man. Thus, the depiction of noblemen is especially negative in these last two stories as the narratives emphasize their shocking violence and, at the same time, their inability to perform a simple task.

Although entities such as fairies and brownies are abundant in Scottish folklore, the supernatural elements present in *A Scots Quair* are not related to them, but to historical and religious aspects. The supernatural appears in the trilogy in the form of visions of dead people – either unidentified or specific characters – or religious figures. However, these apparitions are not pervasive in the narrative, and rational explanations for them are offered in most instances. Examples of these mundane justifications are sleepiness, consumption of alcohol,

and an unbalanced mental state. The supernatural phenomena in the novels establish a link between the present and the past, as well as reveal some characters' attitudes to religion and historical events.

Some of the visions are related to the population of the Scottish territory in the age of the ancient Greeks and Romans. As Chris's family moves from Echt to Kinraddie, in the beginning of *Sunset Song*, they go through accidented land on a winter night, facing unfavorable weather conditions. During this journey, Chris starts feeling sleepy and has a "strange dream" as they trudge through the "ancient hills" (p. 48). The description of the setting contributes to an unearthly atmosphere, and the characterization of the hills as "ancient" stresses the role of the landscape as an element of permanence, binding the present and the past. Chris sees a man who "wrung his hands, he was mad and singing, a foreign creature, black-bearded, half-naked he was; and he cried in the Greek *The ships of Pytheas! The ships of Pytheas!* and went by into the smore of the sleet-storm on the Grampian hills [...]" (p. 48). This man, though unseen by her father, frightens one of the horses, a frequent characteristic of supernatural phenomena. To Chris, this is a "strange dreaming" even if "her eyes were wide open, she rubbed them with never a need of that, if she hadn't been dreaming she must have been daft" (p. 48). This explanation for the vision is ambivalent as it provides a rational reason for it while undermining in a way the idea that Chris is dreaming.

Pytheas, the man announced by the apparition, was a Greek explorer who lived in the fourth century BC. He is considered the first Greek to visit the British Isles and may even have reached Norway or Iceland in his journey. He published his discoveries in *On the Ocean*, and, although this book was lost, part of its contents is indirectly known through other sources. Pytheas reported some of the local customs that he observed in Britain while exploring it on foot and made close estimates of the circumference of Britain and of its distance from his hometown Massalia according to Encyclopedia Britannica (1998). The man seen by Chris is, thus, the embodiment of continuity as a presence from distant times which still lingers in the landscape. The vision symbolizes the endurance of elements from a past that still haunts, in a way, the place.

Ian Campbell (2006, p. 677), in his notes to *A Scots Quair*, considers the passage of Chris's vision as the representation of "the first brush with civilisation that the country had had". Gibbon had a strong interest in history and identified with the Diffusionist view that ancient Egypt was the origin of all civilizations around the world. Both in his fictional and non-fictional works, Gibbon locates the root of all modern problems in the spread of civilization while creating the narrative of a Golden Age of hunters and gatherers. Therefore,

Diffusionist ideas provide not only an explanation for present issues, but also a model for new and better forms of social organization (SHIACH, 2015, p. 11). Gibbon (2007b, p. 104) expresses this view in the essay "The Antique Scene", in which civilization is described as a "yoke" and an "architecture that enslaved the minds of men" whereas humans before its establishment were "a free and happy and undiseased animal wandering the world in the Golden Age of the poets (and reality) [...]". It is clear, thus, that Gibbon opposes the oppressive force of civilization to an ideal past which he claims to be real rather than simply the product of writers' fancy.

These ideas are also present in *A Scots Quair*, mainly expressed by Robert, Chris's second husband. In *Cloud Howe*, Chris imagines herself in this golden age: "you'd not have a care or a coin in the world, only *life*, swift, sharp, and sleepy and still; and an arm about you, life like a song, and a death at the end that was swift as well [...] undreaming the dark tomorrows of the Howe that came with the sailing ships from the south . . ." (p. 448-449, original emphasis). This belief in a time when people would be rid of concerns and hierarchies seems to be inspired by Robert's opinion, which he states in an earlier conversation with Chris about the individuals who built an ancient circle of stones:

> Robert said that they came from the East, those fears, long ago, ere Pytheas came, sailing the sounding coasts to Thule[12]. Before that the hunters had roamed these hills, naked and bright, in a Golden Age, without fear or hope or hate or love, living high in the race of the wind and the race of life, mating as simple as beasts or birds, dying with a like keen simpleness (p. 404).

Even though Robert claims that civilization arrived in Scotland before Pytheas, the Greek explorer remains a point of reference, suggesting that he may also be connected to this process. Hence, the vision of Chris's youth of a man announcing Pytheas may symbolize the endurance of the negative consequences of civilization.

The other apparition from ancient times dates back from the Roman battle over Scottish territory under Agricola's command. The supernatural episode happens during World War One, when Chae, who enlisted early, comes home on leave and visits his neighbors. After leaving Rob's house, "a strange thing" occurs, and a mundane explanation for the phenomenon is presented: "maybe he'd drunk over much of Long Rob's whisky, though his head was steady enough as a rule for thrice the amount he'd drunk" (p. 205). As with Chris's vision, although a rational account for the event is offered, it is also questioned, leaving the matter open for speculation. The setting once more adds to an eerie feel since the apparition happens near the Standing Stones of Kinraddie, which are associated with the supernatural

[12] After leaving Britain, Pytheas sailed northwards and reached a place that he named Thule. Even though its precise location remains unknown, it is suspected that it is either Iceland or Norway.

and with ancient pagan rituals as “Druids [...] [would] sing their foul heathen songs” around them (p. 22). Chae sees a man next to a cart close to the “vanished Standing Stones” and greets him but receives no answer (p. 205). When Chae looks again, the man is no longer there, and he realizes that

> it was no cart of the countryside he had seen, it was a thing of light wood or basketwork, battered and bent, low behind, with a pole and two ponies yoked to it; and the childe [man] that knelt by the axle had been in strange gear, hardly clad at all, and something had flashed on his head, like a helmet maybe (p. 205).

Chae’s description, along with the possible disappearance of the circle of stone, suggests that the man belongs to another time and even that Chae may have been transported to a moment in the past. His impression is that “maybe it was one of the men of old time that he saw there, a Calgacus’ man from the Graupius battle when they fought the Romans up from the south; or maybe it had only been the power of Long Rob’s Glenlivet” (p. 205-206), showing again the ambivalence between a supernatural and a more prosaic explanation for the event.

The battle of Mons Graupius, mentioned by Chae, is the first recorded event in Scottish history, narrated by Roman historian Tacitus (c.56-c.120) in his *Agricola*, which recounts the feats of his father-in-law and Governor of the Roman Province of Britain (MACLEAN, 1996, p. 9-10). Calgacus, whose name seems to be a Latin version of the Celtic “calgaich”, meaning swordsman (FRY; FRY, 1995, p. 23), led the Caledonian resistance against Roman invasion in 83 AD. Even though Tacitus describes the battle as a significant Roman victory, it did not contribute to a consolidated occupation of the region by the Roman Empire as Agricola and his army retreated after it (FRY; FRY, 1995, p. 24-25). This historian retells the speech supposedly given by Calgacus to his warriors before the fight, which depicts their enemies as “savage” and the actions of the Roman Empire as “[p]lunder, murder and robbery” (WARNER, 1996, p. 16). In this way, the conflict is presented as heroic by Calgacus since it is framed as a struggle against “tyrannical governors” and “taxes [...] and all the penalties of slavery” (WARNER, 1996, p. 16).

Chae’s vision reinforces the connection between the present and the past as it brings together a First World War soldier and an ancient warrior. Thus, the novel evokes the link between different historical moments in the repetition of wars and the loss inherent to them. This suggests a cyclical view of history as, amidst all transformations occurred from Roman times to the twentieth century, there is a perceivable pattern of recurrence of certain types of events. This connection between strikingly different contexts is also indicated by the use of the song “The Flowers of the Forest” as a tribute to the casualties of World War One, as previously analyzed. The relation between different military conflicts may also be observed in

Chae's reasoning for enlisting in the army since it is associated with the preservation of people's families, the community, and their way of life, echoing the speech allegedly given by the Caledonian chieftain. In addition to the criticism of the Roman Empire mentioned before, Calgacus claims that his men's "wives and sisters" will be "insulted", that their properties and crops will be reduced by taxes and subsidies and that they will be forced to work "clearing roads through fens and forests" in case the Romans are victorious (WARNER, 1996, p. 17). Similarly, Chae affirms that "every man might yet have to fight for bairn [child] and wife ere this war was over" and that "if the Germans did (won) there'd be an end of both peace and progress forever, there wouldn't be safety in the world again till the Prussians [...] were beaten back to the hell where they came from" (p. 191). As the discourse employed to justify the fight in the novel resembles the one present in Tacitus' account, there is a continuity in the rhetoric of persuading and motivating soldiers throughout the centuries.

The context of the warrior's apparition in *Sunset Song* also enlightens the interplay between permanence and change that permeates the trilogy. When Chae returns to Kinraddie on leave, he is upset about the transformations in the village, especially about the aforementioned cutting down of the woods. He is so distressed by this that his reaction is "a great roar" that frightens his wife (p. 200). Chae attributes the decision to sell the timber for high prices to short-sighed greed since it would make it impossible to grow crops in the village, as expressed in the following passage:

> it seemed the same wherever he went in Kinraddie [...]: every soul made money and didn't care a damn though the War outlasted their lives; they didn't care though the land was shaved of its timber till the whole bit place would soon be a waste with the wind a-blow over heath and heather where once the corn came green (p. 202).

Chae's anger gives way to a sad nostalgia as he realizes the extent of the destruction of the woods: "when he came back, he didn't shout at all, he said he'd often minded [remembered] them out there in France, the woods, so bonny [beautiful] they were, and thick and brave [fine], fine shelter and lithe for the cattle" (p. 201). His encounter with the mysterious man happens during this stay in Kinraddie, in which he becomes so disappointed with the ongoing changes. At first, his vision, emphasizing continuity, seems a counterpoint to this moment of profound transformations in the community. However, the relation between the felling of the woods and ancient times is alluded to at another excerpt from the novel. Robert, after becoming Kinraddie's minister, preaches a sermon referring to the cutting down of the trees and paraphrases a sentence attributed to Calgacus: "*They have made a desert and they call it peace*" (p. 249). Thus, the statement about the practices of the Roman Empire is applied to the

post-war situation in the village, underscoring the endurance not only of armed conflicts, but also of the destruction following them.

Other characters' visions are also related to the First World War and those who died in it. Pooty, an old shoemaker living in Kinraddie, starts having hallucinations and a paranoid behavior during the war, which leads him to stay locked up in his house and eventually be confined in an asylum. He constantly sees "a white German face, distorted still in the last red pain, haunting the Scottish fields" and hears men's steps on the road at night belonging to "the Germans, the German dead from out of the earth that had come to work ill on Scotland" (p. 205). Pooty's delusions may be intensified by the fierce anti-German propaganda circulating during the war. The village's minister, for example, preaches that "the Kaiser was the Antichrist" (p. 193) and that "the German beasts now boiled the corpses of their own dead men and fed the leavings to pigs" (p. 215). This kind of discourse dehumanizes the enemy and may contribute to Pooty's fear of maleficent ghosts, as well as his visions.

Still during the war, Chris comes across the apparition of her husband Ewan, who was executed as a traitor during the conflict. After finding out that Ewan was killed for trying to go back home, Chris holds his clothes and whispers "*You did it for me, and I'm proud and proud, for me and Blawearie, my dear, my dear – sleep quiet and brave* [fine]*, for I've understood!*" (p. 236). Hence, rather than a source of shame, Ewan's desertion is, for Chris, a kind of redemption for his aforementioned appalling behavior during his leave from training. As Chris is holding his clothes, she is possessed by "a strange impulse and urge" that makes her climb to the Standing Stones (p. 236). Her connection to the natural world is stressed in this passage as "[t]he beech listened [to Chris's whispers] and whispered, whispered and listened, on and on" (p. 236) before the urge comes to her and she is called by "[s]un and sky and the loneliness of the hills" (p. 237). In addition to the supernatural aura surrounding the Standing Stones, they also represent a place of rest and reflection for Chris throughout the novel. Each section of *Sunset Song* begins and ends with Chris near the stones, thinking about what has happened to her up to that moment, which is recounted as a flashback. In the beginning of "Seed-time", the third section, Chris leans against one of the stones, and "it was strange and comforting – stranger still when you thought that this old stone circle, more and more as the years went on in Kinraddie, was the only place where ever she could come and stand back a little from the clamour of the days" (p. 112). The Standing Stones, therefore, symbolize the remembrance of both the nation's history and the protagonist's own past, intertwining collective and individual memory.

It is at this highly emblematic place that Chris has a vision of her dead husband after "the mist of memories" recedes and the previous urge returns (p. 237). She sees Ewan coming toward her, and the apparition is described:

> [l]aired [covered] with glaur [mud] was his uniform, his face was white and the great hole sagged and opened, sagged and opened, red-glazed and black, at every upwards step he took. Up through the broom: she saw the grass wave with no press below his feet, her lad [boy], the light in his eyes that aye [always] she could bring (p. 237).

This description emphasizes the violence perpetrated by the state against him since it focuses on the bullet hole in his body. Besides, the fact that his feet do not press the grass underscores the supernatural nature of this encounter. This aspect is also indicated by the account of what happens after Ewan appears: "The snipe stilled their calling, a cloud came over the sun" (p. 237). Nature seems to react to this unearthly phenomenon, echoing the horse's fright when Chris sees the man announcing Pytheas, as analyzed before.

The meeting between Ewan's apparition and Chris is charged with emotion and gives them a final chance to reunite. As Chris stands, with her eyes filled with tears, Ewan "went into the heart that was his forever", exclaiming "*Oh, lassie, I've come home!*" (p. 237). Ewan, in his aforementioned conversation with Chae before his execution, makes it clear that it pains him that Chris "*didn't even come to give me a kiss at good-bye,* [...] *we never said good-bye*" due to his aggressive behavior (p. 234). His supernatural return, hence, gives him an opportunity to make amends and part in better terms. It is significant that their reunion is only possible after Chris is able to understand his motivations and looks at him in a different light, forgiving him for his conduct during his leave. Chae's account of the reason for Ewan's death contributes to this transformation in the way in which Chris remembers her husband. This change may be related to social psychologist Ecléa Bosi's (1994, p. 426) idea that the memories of our deceased family members evolve within us through time, undergoing the influence of the present.

In *Cloud Howe*, the supernatural is associated with religion as Robert has a vision of Jesus Christ amid a crisis of faith felt both by him and by the community as a whole. Distressed by social issues, Robert tries to use his position as a minister to launch what is called "his campaign on Segget" (p. 323), that is, an attempt to change the town and thereby eliminate poverty. Even though he is optimistic about his project at first, he becomes disillusioned after the failure of a strike which he was helping to organize[13]. Chris, pregnant during the strike, gives birth to a boy who dies shortly afterwards and is herself at risk after

[13] Gibbon's fictional representation of the 1926 General Strike in *A Scots Quair* will be further explored in chapter 3.

labor. Symbolically, the death of their child happens only a few days before the end of the strike. Moreover, Chris's problematic labor follows her effort to run after Robert, who went to the town station to prevent the strikers from blowing up a rail bridge. Sunken in grief, Robert loses faith not only in his left-wing ideals, but also in religion itself, as illustrated by their maid Else's account of their son's funeral to Chris: "*And after he said that* (I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.) – *he didn't know what he was saying, Mem, with his bairn* [child] *new dead and his Strike as well – he said AND WHO SHALL BELIEVE? quiet and queer . . .*" (p. 418).

Robert's doubts arise at a moment of decline in religion in Scotland, represented throughout the trilogy. World War One is depicted as the event which triggers this process of change, as indicated by the dialogue between Chae and his neighbor Mistress Mutch during his leave from the army: "And she asked Chae when the War was to end, and Chae said *God only knows* and she asked *And you still believe in Him?* And Chae was real shocked [...] But now that he thought of God for himself he just couldn't say, there was more of his Enemy over in France [...]" (p. 204). The same idea is also expressed in *Cloud Howe* as the narrative voice comments:

> Faith! so it was, nothing unco [strange] in that, there was hardly a Kirk [church] in the Mearns that wasn't, the War had finished your fondness for kirks, you knew as much as any minister. Why the hell should you waste your time in a Kirk when you were young, you were young only once, there was a cinema down in Dundon, or a dance or so [...] and your quean [girl] to meet and hear her complain that she's not been ta'en to the Fordoun ball (p. 280).

The passage reveals that the dwindling of faith is particularly felt among the younger generations. In fact, on the very day of Christ's apparition, Robert is on his way to Stonehaven for "a meeting of ministers, called together to discuss the reason why every kirk [church] in the Howe grew toom [empty], a minister would sometimes rise of a Sunday and preach to a congregation of ten, in a bigging [building] builded [built] to hold two hundred" (p. 426).

As the minister is coming back from this meeting, passing near Dunnottar's woods, he has the vision. The setting adds to the mystic nature of the event as it happens in a "corridor of trees [where] the light fell dim, a hidden place, no sun came there" (p. 428). Jesus is never referred to by name, but only called "the Figure" throughout Robert's retelling of the apparition. He can only be identified by the description given by the minister:

> He came so quiet by the side of the road that Robert hadn't heard His coming or passing, till he raised his head and saw Him quite close, tired, with a strange look on His face, no ghost, for the hair blew out from His head and he put up His hand to brush back the hair. And Robert saw the hand and the piercèd palm, he stood frozen there as the Figure went on [...] (p. 428).

Christ is recognized for the marks of the Crucifixion on his hands, as well as the capitalization used in the words referring to him. The use of the expression "the Figure" may indicate that Robert is so overwhelmed by the experience that he is incapable of naming the apparition. His emotional state is also signaled by his reaction of "trembling, suddenly weeping in his hands" (p. 428) after the vision. The practice of not naming Jesus is also used in "Forsaken", a short story by Gibbon which recounts the return of Christ to urban Scotland in the early twentieth century. In the story, he is called "Yid", which may suggest people's suspicion and intolerance toward those from a different nationality or religious background.

Robert is profoundly affected by his vision, which has an impact on his view of Christ and of religion. Before the apparition, Jesus is for Robert a human figure who shares his ideals, as the minister claims in one of his sermons: "Christ was no godlet, but a leader and a hero–" (p. 405). Robert also states that when Christ "preached the Kingdom of Heaven – He meant it on earth" (p. 405), a paradise which would be achieved through humankind's effort since Robert considers that there is an aspect of the divine in people. His belief that Christ would share his convictions and his ideas about changing the world is suggested when he preaches that the strike "was the beginning of the era of Man made free at last, Man who was God, Man splendid again. Christ meant and intended no more when He said that He was the Son of Man" (p. 405). In addition to predicting that the strike would represent the emergence of a new world, Robert makes it clear that religion is, for him, deeply connected to the reality around us and stripped of its transcendental aspect. The godlike nature attributed to humans is also suggested by the capitalization of the word "man" in the quotation. This view of Christ as a human leader is also expressed in "Forsaken", for instance in the passage in which Will, a member of the Communist Party and the son of the man who welcomes Christ in his house, explains to their visitor who Jesus was:

> [...] *this Prophet childe* [man] *started with the notion that men's hearts would first need changing, to make them love one another, care for the State – he called it the Kingdom of God in his lingo. And what happened was that he himself was crucified after leading an army against Jerusalem; syne, hardly was he dead than his followers started making a god of him, quite the old kind of God, started toning down all he'd taught to make it fit in with the structure of the Roman state.* (GIBBON, 2001, p. 54)

The character not only relates Christ's teachings to mundane political issues, but also portrays his preaching as a war since he leads "an army". Moreover, Christ's divinity is characterized as a distortion of his nature promoted by his followers, who propagate a more tamed version of his teachings with the aim of making them seem less challenging of the status quo. Gibbon reinforces this point by making Christ himself convey this idea in the same short story:

> And after that last black night, that hour when you cried to God forsaking you, mad darkness had descended again on the earth [...] And those banners you had led up the passes against El Kuds[14] were put away for the flaunting flag of a God – a God worshipped afar in the strange touns [towns] (GIBBON, 2001, p. 55).

Christ's godly quality is thus contested by Jesus in the narrative as he points to the misconstruction of his actions.

Robert's view of Jesus seems to be influenced by his own experience as a soldier in World War One. This is indicated by another of his sermons, preached by the war memorial on Remembrance Day, in which God is equated with the men fighting in the war: "God had made neither night nor day in human history, He'd left it in the hands of Man to make both, God was but Helper, was but Man Himself, like men he also struggled against evil, God's wounds had bled, God also had died in the holocaust in the fields of France" (p. 357). According to Robert, the divine is not incompatible with humanity; rather, it is something present within each individual. Besides, the minister considers that the fate of humanity is in our hands since history is made by humankind. This leads him to an optimistic, hopeful view of the future at first, as expressed in the same sermon: "But He rose anew, Man rose anew, he was as undying as God was undying – if he had the will and the way to live, on this planet given to him by God" (p. 357). This anthropocentric theology inspires his attempts to transform reality and to improve the lives of the poor in Segget. Gibbon (2007b, p. 188) regards these "younger ministers of Scotland" with sympathy in his essay "Religion", describing them as "free-hearted and liberal, mild socialists", a characterization which fits Robert.

After seeing Jesus, however, Robert casts a new look upon religion and the figure of Christ, which even affects his behavior and his relationship with Chris. Shocked by his experience, Robert tells Chris that "*God, Chris, it was HIM, whom I've never believed! I've thought Him only a Leader, a man, but Chris – I've looked on the face of God . . .*" (p. 433). Therefore, he abandons the view of Jesus as a reformer, aligned with his political ideals, and starts seeing him as a divine figure. Campbell comments on Gibbon's references to the Biblical theme of the impossibility of looking directly on God's face in his notes to *Cloud Howe*. According to this scholar, the idea also appears in *Spartacus*, a historical novel published under the name of James Leslie Mitchell, and in another passage of *Cloud Howe*, the sermon near the war memorial, in which Robert alludes to the manifestations of God in the form of a pillar of fire and a pillar of cloud (CAMPBELL, 2006, p. 681). The emphasis on the overwhelming power of this experience helps to explain Robert's strong reaction to it. In

[14] Al-Quds is the name of Jerusalem in Arabic.

his next sermon, he preaches that "Christ still walked the earth" and urges the congregation to find, on their own, within themselves "what the world denied, the love of God and the fellowship of men" (p. 434). His focus on spiritual matters shows a stark contrast with his calls for social change in earlier homilies. His way of addressing the audience also changes, becoming softer and less energetic, a transformation which disappoints part of the community:

> Folk listened and thought the man a fair scunner [bore], damn't! you wanted a minister with spunk, whatever had come over this childe [man] Colquohoun, bleating there soft as a new-libbed [castrated] sheep? Once he'd glowered as though he would like to gut you, and thundered his politics, and you'd felt kittled up [stimulated], though you didn't believe a word that he'd said (p. 434).

For others, however, this is a welcome change as Robert shows himself "decent and douce [sober], as a minister should be – not trying to alter things as he'd done – who the hell wanted alterations in Segget?" (p. 468-469). The idea that reform is unnecessary is presented by Gibbon in an ironic tone as the narrative voice goes on to list the several problems affecting the town, such as unemployment, poverty, and the scarcity of food.

Robert's last sermon demonstrates that, though he is still concerned about social issues, he feels skeptical about the possibility of change in the near future. He states that Christianity is built upon the hope of Christ's return and the consequent redemption of the world from all evil. While Robert considers the moment after the war as the time of "*the promise of christ fulfilled in men*" (p. 470), with people gathering to fight oppression, he sees the failure of the general strike as a new betrayal of Christ's promise. His generation, hence, seems to witness "*the end of mankind himself in the west, or the end of the strangest dream men have dreamt – of both the god and the man who was christ, who gave to the world a hope that passes, and goeth about like the wind, and like it returns and follows, fulfilling nothing*" (p. 471). In this passage, Robert unites the divine and the human in Christ, affirming, however, the emptiness of the hope symbolized by him. From this pessimistic perspective, the only path left is to "*forget the dream of the christ, forget the creeds that they* (his followers) *forged in his shadow when their primal faith in the god was loosed*" and look for "*a stark, sure creed that will cut like a knife, a surgeon's knife through the doubt and disease*" (p. 471). Disillusioned by his failure to create a more equal and just society in Segget, Robert leaves behind his dream to bring about change through religious teachings or his socialist ideals, announcing the collapse of the gospel of compassion and hope. Although he envisions a chance for transformation "*far off yet in the times to be*" (p. 471), he cannot identify this redemptive creed in the world around him.

The apparition and Robert's reaction to it also deepen the separation between him and Chris. Campbell (2017, p. 118) summarizes the trajectory of Chris's relationship with religion as beginning with her father's extremism, passing through her life with Robert to end in "a thoroughly secular life" in *Grey Granite*. Her father, John Guthrie, is radical in his Christian beliefs to the point of imposing them on his family in a violent and authoritarian way. When his wife affirms that she does not want to have any more children, he "thundered at her, that way he had *Fine? We'll have what God in His mercy may send to us, woman. See you to that*" (p. 38). This attitude leads to other pregnancies and ultimately drives her to commit suicide as she cannot endure another difficult labor. Another instance of his violent extremism is the passage in which he beats his son Will for having named a horse Jehovah, unaware of the meaning of that word. Chris states her view on religion later in the novel, in a conversation with Will during the war, when he is visiting her after emigrating to Argentina with his wife: "*I don't believe they were ever religious, the Scots folk, Will – not really religious like the Irish or French or all the rest in the history books. They've never BELIEVED. It's just been a place to collect and argue, the kirk, and criticise God*" (p. 214-215). For Chris, then, church is a social obligation for the community, empty of faith or transcendence. She even stops going to church altogether as a grown woman. At the point when the dialogue with Will takes place, she has been away from the church for a year. This idea that the Scottish are not truly religious is also expressed by Gibbon in the essay "Religion", in which he affirms that a family of farmers attend church as "a mild social function" since "there is nothing much else to be done on a Sunday" (GIBBON, 2007b, p. 189).

Although Chris goes to church after her marriage to the minister, her lack of faith remains unchanged. Early in their relationship, she thinks of Robert praying to "that God of his that you couldn't believe in, though you hid that away, what need to hurt Robert with something that never he or you could alter though you lived forever?" (p. 316). When Chris recalls the conversation with Will quoted above, she reaffirms her impression about the religiosity of the Scottish people, considering that "[t]here was something lacking or something added, something that was bred in your bones in this land – oh, Something: maybe that Something was GOD – that made folk take with a smile and a gley [squinting] the tales of the gods and the heavens and the hells [...]" (p. 317). Significantly, Chris only acknowledges the possibility of a spirituality rooted in skepticism and suspicion of religious creeds in this passage. She also contrasts religious beliefs, compared to "a fairy-tale in a play", with "the REAL", encountered by individuals only after death, which is "neither heaven nor hell but the earth that was red, the cling of the clay where you'd alter and turn, back to the earth and the

times to be [...]" (p. 317). Hence, reality consists of the land and the biological destiny that returns the dead to the earth and, consequently, to nature and the cycle of life. This opposition between reality and religion or ideologies is symbolized by the recurrent references to the land in contrast with clouds or mists in the trilogy. An instance of this is Chris's idea that Robert "knew that he followed a dream, [...] and his hopes [were] but mists" (p. 317).

Chris doubts not only Robert's Christian beliefs, but also his political ideals and the notion that the world could be changed. Referring to Robert's view of the close relation between the human and the divine, she rejects his faith in "this God he believed was the father of men, pitiful, He was Pity and a Friend, helpless even in a way as men, but Kind and Hero, and He'd conquer yet with all the legions of hell to battle" (p. 317). Whereas Robert considers the general strike to be a test which would lead to "the triumph of greed or the triumph of God", Chris lacks conviction as she "had hardly a thought in the matter because of that nameless doubt that was hers – doubt of the men and method that came to change the world that was waiting change [...]" (p. 401). Thus, her skepticism about people's potential to fight inequality echoes her rejection of religious beliefs, which suggests that political ideologies are equated with a form of religion from Chris's perspective. This idea is also illustrated by the following fragment, in which Chris thinks that the world might be experiencing "the end forever of creeds and of faiths, hopes and beliefs men followed and loved: religion and God, socialism, nationalism – Clouds that sailed darkling into the night" (p. 448). Not only are political ideals and religion considered part of the same group, but they are also compared once again to clouds, which emphasizes their ephemeral nature. Chris criticizes Robert and those like him for being "hunters of clouds" and wonders whether there may be an alternative for cynicism and idealism, "a third way to Life, unguessed, unhailed, never dreamed of yet" (p. 405).

This way of seeing the world sets Chris apart from the community and also from Robert. The protagonist's rejection of religion is related to her sense of identity and individuality, as a dialogue with her son may insinuate. When Chris asks him if he thinks about religion, Ewan answers that "*I hated the notion God was there, prying into every minute of my life. I wanted to belong to myself, and I do; it* (religion) *doesn't matter a bit to me now*" (p. 398). After hearing this, she "understood well enough what he meant, how like her he was sometimes, how unlike!" (p. 398), which suggests that she shares his feelings about religion. As Chris considers that many people are abandoning old ideals and beliefs, she sees herself as distinct from both those who still follow these ideas and those who left them behind:

> folk were doing so (turning from these ideas) all over the world, she thought, back to the sheltered places and ease, to sloth or toil or the lees of lust, from the shining splendor of the cloudy hills and those hopes they had followed and believed everlasting. She herself did neither, watching, unsure: was there nothing between the Clouds and the Howe? (p. 448)

Therefore, she seems to feel isolated in her doubt and in her search for something different from disbelief and from these convictions that Chris finds imprisoning. In *The Modern Scottish Novel*, Cairns Craig discusses the centrality of a Calvinist fear of God in Scottish literature and characterizes Chris as one of the fearless characters who do not submit to it. Although Craig considers her fearlessness to be the accomplishment of the community's potential, only made possible by her freedom from its suffocating moral values, this state of mind "is not achieved without separation from the community, without defiance of its timidity and its fear-inducing gossip" (CRAIG, 2002, p. 68). The increase of Chris's isolation is noticeable as the trilogy progresses, for example, in *Grey Granite*, she experiences "a feeling of terrible loneliness", "knowledge of how lonely every soul was, alone and apart as she had been surely even at the most crowded of her life" (p. 578).

Even if, at first, Chris seems to understand and sympathize with Robert's views without sharing them, his obstinate devotion to his ideals eventually causes them to grow apart. When young Ewan criticizes Jock Cronin, one of the workers who associate with Robert, for preaching socialism when he knew it to be "a fairy-tale" in the boy's opinion, Chris affirms that "*When you too grow up you'll find facts over much – you'll need something to follow that's far from the facts*" (p. 381). She seems, then, to sympathize with Robert's need to find a higher principle to guide him and give him hope. However, Chris comes to resent his dedication to the church and to his cause and the way it makes him distance himself from her. After the loss of their child, Robert isolates himself and becomes harsher and more impatient with Chris. As a reaction, "she buried herself in the work of the house, and sought in her pride a salve for the sting of the knowledge she counted for little with Robert, compared with his cloudy hopings and God" (p. 420). For Chris, thus, Robert's beliefs become a rival for his attention and affection.

His vision of Christ deepens the gulf between them as Chris sees this story as "a madman's dream" (p. 432) and feels "pity" and "repulsion" (p. 433) for Robert. Even though she considers that her husband is retreating into "fear and the fancies of old" after the failure of the general strike, she sees fear as a driving force in his life for a long time:

> she'd seen then, clear and clear as he spoke, the Fear that had haunted his life since the War, Fear he'd be left with no cloud to follow, Fear he'd be left in the day alone and stand and look at his naked self. And with every hoping and plan that failed, he

> turned to another, to hide from that fear, draping his dreams in the face of life as now this dream of the sorrowing Face (p. 433).

Therefore, Chris associates Robert's beliefs, as well as his vision of "the sorrowing Face", with his inability to face himself without being shielded by them. His hopes and ideals give him a sense of purpose which allows him to carry on even after the traumatic experience of the war. After a walk through the countryside in which she reflects about the apparition, Chris reasserts her independence by refusing to change for Robert and concludes that "[s]he had found in the moors and the sun and the sea her surety unshaken, lost maybe herself, but she followed no cloud, be it named or unnamed" (p. 434). As Chris's strong connection with nature and the land – represented as permanent in the novel – seems to ground her, she is able to remain true to herself without the need to follow fleeting ideals.

The changes in Robert's behavior after the vision also disgust Chris since she does not consider them genuine, as expressed in the following quotation: "he was quiet and kind, with a kindness Chris hated – for it was not his. It was something borrowed from his unclean dream, not Robert at all, a mask and a pose, a kindness he followed with Fear for an urge" (p. 440). For Chris, the real Robert is the one "who once would have flamed into curses and anger on the cruelty of men" (p. 441); therefore, his transformation makes her quiver "as though at a filthy thing" (p. 441). The word choice reflects Chris's aversion as the apparition and Robert's change of behavior are described as something "unclean" or "filthy" in these fragments. The alterations in her husband breed "a shivering hate for" religion and Christ in Chris and she sees the ideas preached by Jesus with indifference:

> Christ? So maybe indeed He had lived, and died, a follower of clouds Himself. That figure she minded [remembered] from school-time days, and even then it had not moved her, it seemed a sad story, in mad, sad years, it was over and done: and it left her untouched. And it left her so still, it was only a dream that could alter nothing the ways of the world . . . (p. 440)

Christ is compared to Robert as a follower of empty, futile ideas, and his legacy is incapable of changing the world from Chris's perspective. Besides, she believes that Robert's attempt to appeal to the Segget community in his struggle for reform is in vain: "What hope in appealing to them (the congregation) for help? – were there but a flicker he had sold his soul to that fancy and Figure for something at least. But they heeded as little the whine of his Christ as the angry threat of his Struggling God" (p. 441). Hence, the change in Robert's attitude does not seem to be a fruitful way of helping those in need. His stubborn determination to preach his last sermon even when his health is clearly fragile demonstrates the insurmountable distance between him and Chris at that point. Faced with her pleading to spare himself for her sake, he

answers: "*It's you or the kirk, Chris, and I'm the kirk's man*" (p. 466), choosing not only the church, but the path that would lead to his premature death at the pulpit.

Robert's vision in *Cloud Howe* foregrounds and problematizes the Christian tradition. Although there is a fairly long and strong influence of Christianity in Scotland, Chris highlights the transience of religion in relation to humankind's existence. Besides, the attitude toward religion in the novel is far from dogmatic. Instead of presenting an absolute truth, Gibbon shows that the figure of Christ and his legacy may be regarded and interpreted in different ways: as a leader who protected and fought for the poor; as a deluded man who pursued impossible goals; or as a divine entity. Robert's shift from the first perspective to the last one demonstrates the diversity of ways in which Jesus is seen. The approach to Christ's lessons also varies – at first, Robert considers them transformative and change-inspiring; however, he loses faith in their power to alter reality after the unsuccessful general strike. From Chris's perspective, Christ's ideas are distant from the world around her and, therefore, innocuous.

The legends and supernatural phenomena present in *A Scots Quair* are deeply related to the history and the landscape of the region of the Mearns. The legends provide Gibbon's fictional settings with a sense of history as they are intertwined with the origins and the past of Kinraddie and Segget in the prologues about these places. The fact that there is no section recounting the history of Duncairn in *Grey Granite* contributes to the idea of this city as a space "without a history, [...] without background" as argued by Ian Munro (1966, p. 176 apud HART, 1978, p. 239). It is also telling that Duncairn is not associated with any legends, which suggests the lack of connection between its inhabitants and the past of the place, as well as the absence of a sense of community or identity associated with the city. In addition, the tales in the trilogy are strongly related to the landscape of the region as tangible vestiges and reminders can be found there, from the supposed relics from Cospatric of Gondeshil's time to the Kaimes of Segget, where Finella's allies and one of the cannibal lairds allegedly sheltered.

The apparitions which occur in the *Quair* also emphasize continuity by showing the lingering presence of the dead in the landscape. While the man warning about the approach of Pytheas' ships may recall the spread of civilization and its lasting consequences, Chae's vision of an ancient soldier brings to mind the repetition of wars and the loss and destruction in their wake. The dead in the First World War, the historical event that marks *Sunset Song*, also come back to Kinraddie as the German soldiers in Pooty's hallucinations and Ewan in his return to see Chris one last time and make up for his previous aggressive behavior. Hence,

these visions underscore the presence of the past and of its enduring influence in the present. The apparition of Christ in the second novel of the trilogy illustrates the diversity of ways in which his nature and his ideas are interpreted. Moreover, the novel raises questions about the faithfulness of what can be known about Jesus so long after his time. As his views can only be known through the words of his followers, there may have been distortions and alterations in them through the centuries, as alluded to by Robert in his last sermon. Therefore, with religious issues, as with legends, rather than seeking the truth, it is more fruitful to acknowledge the enduring influence of every version and the central role of these narratives in shaping one's identities. In employing legends to tell the history of his settings, Gibbon recognizes the importance of these accounts in constructing a sense of belonging and community even if the events narrated are not necessarily verifiable. Thus, for the author, the identity of northeastern Scotland is founded not simply on written or official records – which are partial narratives as well –, but also on the stories that circulate and remain alive in people’s memories there.

2 **PLACE AS MEMORIES: LANDSCAPE AS A WITNESS AND A MEMENTO IN *A SCOTS QUAIR***

Here lies our land: every airt
Beneath swift clouds, glad glints of sun,
Belonging to none but itself.

We are mere transients, who sing
Its westlin' winds and fernie braes,
Northern lights and siller tides,

Small folk playing our part.
'Come all ye', the country says,
You win me, who take me most to heart.
Kathleen Jamie

Landscape may be taken for granted as something natural or spontaneously developed; however, it is socially and culturally constructed in different ways. First, space is molded by human interaction with the land, being "a mutable and ever-changing product of economic, social, cultural and political processes" (GRAHAM; ASHCROFT; TUNBRIDGE, 2000, p. 55). Moreover, landscapes may also be regarded as texts which may evoke a variety of interpretations. Geographer James Duncan (1990, p. 17) argues that the landscape functions as "a signifying system through which a social system is communicated, reproduced, experienced, and explored". This symbolic character is not limited to human interventions in the natural world as meaning can be attached to natural objects and environments, turning them into cultural objects, as described by geographer Denis Cosgrove (1989, p. 123, 126).

Regarding landscape as a text has implications in the analysis of how a place is perceived. As a discourse, landscape is open to various readings through time, and hegemonic groups may try to control these representations to their own ends (GRAHAM; ASHCROFT; TUNBRIDGE, 2000, p. 31). Therefore, the analysis of the landscape in *A Scots Quair* may contribute to the understanding of how political, social, and cultural issues are approached in this literary work. Besides, landscape is intimately connected to memory and to a community's relationship with its own past. According to architect Juhani Pallasmaa (2009, p. 17), landscapes and buildings are "the most important externalization of human memory", along with works of art and literature. In exploring the representation of the landscape in Gibbon's trilogy, the aim of this chapter is to investigate the characters' relationship with the

past of the places inhabited by them. This connection between individuals and the landscape is a mutual one as the land at once influences human life and is modified by human activity.

In *A Scots Quair*, the landscape is closely related to the duality between permanence and change which permeates this work. The land is recurrently represented as an enduring element in contrast to the ephemerality of human life. In an emblematic passage from *Sunset Song*, Chris reflects on these matters as she walks through the fields and her eyes follow the mist through the landscape of the Mearns:

> The wet fields squelched below her feet, oozing up their smell of red clay from under the sodden grasses, and up in the hills she saw the trail of the mist, great sailing shapes of it, going south on the wind into Forfar, past Laurencekirk they would sail, down the wide Howe with its sheltered glens and its late, drenched harvests, past Brechin smoking against its hill, with its ancient tower that the Pictish folk had reared, out of the Mearns, sailing and passing, sailing and passing, she minded Greek words of forgotten lessons, Παντα ρει, *Nothing endures*. And then a queer thought came to her there in the drooked [soaked] fields, that nothing endures at all, nothing but the land she passed across, tossed and turned and perpetually changed below the hands of the crofter folk since the oldest of them had set the Standing Stones by the loch of Blawearie and climbed there on their holy days and saw their terraced crops ride brave [fine] in the wind and sun. Sea and sky and the folk who wrote and fought and were learnéd, teaching and saying and praying, they lasted but a breath, a mist of fog in the hills, but the land was forever, you were close to it and it to you, not at a bleak remove it held and hurted you. (p. 122-123)

This fragment illustrates several of the issues that will be analyzed: first, it expresses the idea of constant transformation present throughout the trilogy, with reference to the Greek philosopher Heraclitus's (c.540 BC-c.480 BC) notion that "everything flows". Secondly, Chris states the opposition between the transience of human life and the permanence of the land and of other natural elements, such as the sea and the sky. The endurance of the land also points to the continuity of the intimate connection between the crofters and the fields for ages since the time of the Standing Stones. Finally, there are references to vestiges of people from other times, like the tower in Brechin and the stone circle in Blawearie. The landscape of the Mearns, then, is marked not only by the enduring land, but also by traces of human occupation which far outlast the folk who left them. As asserted by historian David Lowenthal (1975, p. 10), although artifacts may fall into decay, "cumulations of time mostly surpass its dissolutions", and even ruins are signs of inhabitants from a distant past. Thus, the interplay between transformation and permanence is deeply inscribed in the landscape, which is also the place where past and present, as well as human and nature, meet.

Like the interaction between permanence and change, the relationship between humankind and nature is represented in a complex and nuanced way in the trilogy. In some passages, the ephemeral human life contrasts with the endurance of natural elements, as in the following reflection by Chris:

> In ten years time [sic] what things might have been? She might stand on this hill, she might rot in a grave, it would matter nothing, the world would go on [...] oh, once she had seen in these parks, she remembered, the truth, and the only truth that there was, that only the sky and the seasons endured, slow in their change, the cry of the rain, the whistle of the whins on a winter night under the sailing edge of the moon– (p. 278).

Whereas Chris may be dead in the following decade, the rain, the wind, and the moon will still exist, which makes them the only endurable truth. Interestingly, continuance is related to the seasons, changeable elements by their own nature, suggesting that permanence is not defined in terms of stasis, but of nature's perpetual repetition. This recalls the notion of deep history, a concept established by historian Fernand Braudel to refer to what endures, seemingly unchanged, through long periods of history. According to Braudel (1992, p. 370), deep history is not marked by immobility, which he equates to death, but by repetition. The contrast between humanity and nature also expresses the meaninglessness of our lives as young Chris, faced with and distressed by the idea of human mortality, considers that the whins and the sea "only were real and true, beyond them was nought you might ever attain but a weary dream and that last dark silence – Oh, only a fool loved being alive!" (p. 54). The cycle of human life and death, however, is deeply connected with nature, as after death one is "under grass, down in the earth that smelt so fine and you'd never smell" (p. 54). Moreover, death is characterized as the absence of sensual perception of nature, as "seeing never again the lowe [flame] of burning whins or hearing the North Sea thunder beyond the hills, the thunder of it breaking through a morning of mist" (p. 54). Therefore, the relation between human beings and nature is not simply defined as a clear-cut opposition since both are closely connected.

Besides, the transience of humanity and its ideas is not opposed to nature in general since their change is likened to the movement of the clouds. For instance, Chris reflects that "a vexing puzzle to the howes [valleys] were men, passing and passing as the clouds themselves passed: but the REAL was below, unstirred and untouched, surely, if that were not also a dream" (p. 432). To her, if the real exists, then it must be attached to the land. In contrast, all human feelings and ideologies are ephemeral:

> they (humans) followed and fought and toiled in the wake of each whirling pillar that rose from the heights, clouds by day to darken men's minds – loyalty and fealty, patriotism, love, the mumbling chants of the dead old gods that once were worshipped in the circles of stones, christianity, socialism, nationalism – all – Clouds that swept through the Howe of the world, with men that took them for gods: just clouds, they passed and finished, dissolved and were done, nothing endured but the Seeker himself, him and the everlasting Hills (p. 404).

Once again, religion and political ideals are equated to clouds and regarded as passing elements, destabilizing any idea of definitive truth, as aforementioned. Nevertheless, this search for answers seems to be an essential human characteristic as it persists generation after generation. Although the ideals pursued are ephemeral, the quest for understanding, like the "everlasting Hills", endures through centuries.

Even though the land is mostly represented as permanent, the landscape is subjected to the transformations inflicted by humankind, in a relation that is not always harmonious. When Chris's brother Will, who migrated to Argentina, visits his sister during the war, he says that Scotland is "*dead or it's dying*" (p. 214). She becomes angry and thinks that he is mistaken as "Scotland lived, she could never die, the land would outlast them all [...] long and long after all their little vexings in the evening light were dead and done" (p. 214). Chris predicts the endurance of the land and of its profound connection with the peasants through the agricultural cycle, with "the winds come sailing over the Grampians still with their storms and rain and the dew that ripened the crops" (p. 214). Hence, the land remains meaningful to the folk as both a means of sustenance and a keeper of memories through the different generations. Nonetheless, it is Chris herself who later considers Kinraddie as "a countryside that was dying or dead" (p. 286), in a near repetition of her brother's words. It is significant that Chris acknowledges this decay of the countryside after she herself abandoned farming for the life of the manse as Robert's wife. As mentioned in chapter 1, the felling of the woods surrounding the village caused changes in the weather which led to the end of agricultural activity there. The narrative voice laments that "sheep baaed and scrunched where once the parks flowed thick with corn, no corn would come at all, they said, since the woods went down" (p. 249). The cutting down of the woods to provide the timber needed for the war effort has such a devastating effect on the landscape that it is compared to the impact of an actual battle, as Chris thinks even before her brother's visit: "The woodmen had all finished by then, they'd left a country that looked as though it had been shelled by a German army" (p. 212). This transformation tears Kinraddie's social fabric as it deeply affects the peasants' way of life, not only putting an end to the small tenant farms, but also breaking the strong bond, shaped by the seasons, between crofters and the land. This change in the landscape is also negatively represented later in *Cloud Howe* since Chris walks through "the shaven lands of the Reisk, shaven and shorn in the greed of the War" (p. 433). The endurance of the land, hence, does not mean that the landscape remains untouched through time.

In establishing a strong bond between the peasants and the land, Gibbon goes against a representation of the beauty of the Scottish landscape which ignores the reality of agricultural

labor. Although the landscape is an important factor in the construction of Scottishness, this identity is connected to an iconography which is far from what could be observed and, according to Blaikie (2013, p. 137), "overwhelmingly consists of images of empty places that are distant from where most Scots live". Gibbon (2007b, p. 170), however, rejects the idea that "the land is the lilting of tourist names" in his essay "The Land". To him, "The Land" consists of the agricultural fields of the Mearns, where the peewits fly, combined with the folk who farm them. According to Gibbon (2007b, p. 170), the peasants "are The Land in as great a measure [as the natural landscape]. Those two, a dual power, are the protagonists" of his article on the countryside. This idea is underscored in *A Scots Quair* by the description of the land in Peesie's Knapp, one of Kinraddie's farms, as having "the sweat of two thousand years in it" (p. 19), reinforcing the link between the land and the crofters established by their hard work. John Guthrie, Chris's father, laments the decline of the traditional rural way of life and stresses the close bond between the peasants and the land as he considers that he and his neighbors are "the last of the farming folk that wrung their living from the land with their own bare hands" (p. 82). In the quoted essay, Gibbon (2007b, p. 181) also expresses the dedication and devotion involved in farming by extensively listing the stages of this work: "each of those minute stubble stalks grew from seed that men had handled and winnowed and selected and ploughed and harrowed the earth to receive, and sown and tended and watched come up in the rains of Springs and the hot Summer suns". Besides, agriculture and, by extension, the peasants are represented as elements of permanence, as illustrated by the reference to the two thousand years of labor underlying Peesie's Knapp. In "The Land", Gibbon (2007b, p. 177) underscores this continuity by stating that even in ancient times, "before Pytheas sailed these coasts", "there were peasants on those hills, on such a day as this, who paused to wipe the sweat from their faces and look with shrewd eyes the green upspringing of the barley crops". The repetition of the gesture of wiping one's face since time immemorial highlights the kinship between the ancient and modern peasants.

The intense relationship between crofters and the land is exemplified in the trilogy by how farming and the seasons bear a deep influence on the characters both physically and emotionally. The harvest, for instance, has a fortifying and vicious impact on John Guthrie:

> every harvest there came something queer and terrible on father, you couldn't handle the thing with a name, it was as if he grew stronger and crueller then, ripe and strong with the strength of the corn, he'd be fleeter than ever and his face filled out, and they'd hear him come up from the parks, [...] singing hymns, these were the only things that he ever sang, singing with a queer and keen shrillness that brought the sweat in the palms of your hands (p. 74).

This intensification of some traits of John Guthrie's character, which frightens his children, is attributed to "the strength of the corn", showing the primal bond between crofters and this crop. Corn also shapes Chris's routine and even fills her dreams as illustrated by the following passage: "Corn and the shining hollow stalks of the straw, they wove a pattern about her life, her nights and days, she would creep to bed and dream of the endless rigs and her hands in the night would waken her, all pins and needles they would be" (p. 226). This quotation conveys not only corn's vital importance, but the physical cost involved in its harvest. Nonetheless, the work in the land provides comfort for Chris while Ewan is away at war since she throws herself into work and considers it "the way to forget" (p. 226). Besides, the land is physically soothing: "the fields were a comfort, the crumble of the fine earth under your feet, swinging a graip [fork] as you walked, breaking dung, the larks above, the horses plodding by with the snorting breath" (p. 211). Hence, the connection with nature, inherent in farming, is a source of solace for her in this difficult moment.

Farming, especially of corn, is particularly connected with Chris and Ewan in their married life, gaining a special meaning with her pregnancy. The titles of the chapters are symbolic as the one in which young Ewan is conceived is called "Seed-time" and the one that recounts his birth is named "Harvest". In the early months, when Ewan finds out about Chris's pregnancy, the corn is sprouting, "carpet[ing] Ewan's trim fields" (p. 182), implying the analogy between her gestation and the growth of the crops. Moreover, Chris thinks that "there was nothing there but the corn growing and the peewits calling" (p. 182) when she is anxious about Ewan's becoming aware that she is pregnant. This parallel is even clearer in the passage that describes his closeness to the corn: "A bairn [child] with a toy, Chris thought, laughing as she watched him then; and then came that movement in her body as she watched Ewan still – a mother with his child he was, the corn his as this seed of his hers, burgeoning and ripening, growing to harvest" (p. 186). This imagery is further extended as young Ewan is born right after the harvest (p. 187). Thus, the connection between the peasants and the product of their toil is so intimate as though the produce were their own flesh and blood. Ewan's connection to the land is reinforced by the fact that many of his last memories are related to Blawearie. His conversation with Chae before his execution is filled with memories of Chris and of farm work:

> *Mind* [Remember] *the smell of dung in the parks on an April morning, Chae? And the peewits over the rigs? Bonny* [Beautiful] *they're flying this night in Kinraddie, and Chris sleeping there, and all the Howe happéd in mist.* [...]
> he (Ewan) started to speak of Blawearie then and the parks that he would have drained, though he thought the land would go fair to hell without the woods to shelter it. [...] he'd been speaking of the horses he'd had, Clyde and old Bess, fine

> beasts, fine beasts – did Chae mind that night of lightning when they found Chris wandering the fields with those two horses? That was the night he had known she liked him well [...] (p. 235).

The blend of recollections of Chris and of the farm expresses the latter's importance for Ewan and stresses his affective bond with the land. Once again, it seems that the farm and his work hold a central position in his life, like a member of his own family.

Continuity is emphasized in the trilogy by the representation of the landscape as an enduring witness to history. The stability of the landscape establishes a connection between different generations who inhabit the same space. For instance, during a night stroll through the streets of Segget, Robert asks Chris: "*Can you think that folk'll do that sometime, far off some night in the times to be, maybe a lad and his lass, as we are, and wonder about Segget and the things they did and said and believed in those little houses? And the moon the same and the hills to watch*" (p. 308). The character brings into focus the possibility of individuals imagining the lives of those who came before as the old streets and buildings would spark memories and reflections about the past. This illustrates how the marks of the past in the space around us play the role of conveying a sense of permanence, as analyzed by Maurice Halbwachs (2015, p. 170). Continuity is also highlighted in this passage by the permanence of natural elements, like the moon and the hills. In another fragment, Chris climbs the Barmekin Hill and sees the place where astronomers observed an eclipse a century earlier. Although these events are "all long gone and dead and forgotten", these scholars "[had] left a great mass of crumbling cement that made a fine seat for a wearied body" (p. 632-633). Thus, the narrative voice underscores the contrast between human transience and the permanence of what is built by them. Once again, the landscape brings together past and present as different generations see and touch the same stones and buildings, which triggers memories and reflections about the past. This role of the landscape recalls Halbwachs's (2015, p. 170) idea that turning one's thought to the space around them causes new categories of memories to resurface.

The landscape is also associated with local narratives and historical figures such as William Wallace. An example of this is the description of the manse's garden in *Sunset Song*,

> where the yews bent thick above the lush grass their boughs that had sheltered the lost childe [young man] Wallace in the days before the coarse English ran him to earth and took him to London and there hanged him and libbed [castrated] him and hewed his body in four to hang in the gates of Scotland (p. 80).

Once more, like in the passage showing Chris's view of Wallace mentioned in chapter 1, the English are represented in a negative way, with their brutality underscored in this fragment. While the landscape evokes the lofty memory of a national icon, it is ironic that the trees that

sheltered Wallace are now used as a hiding place by the adulterous minister. The humor is reinforced by the narrative voice, which emphasizes that the minister's sexual encounter with his maid happened at exactly the same spot where Wallace hid, "there, in that grass in the half-dark" (p. 80). Gibbon, at once, upholds Wallace as an icon and subverts the reverential way in which he is traditionally represented, suggesting perhaps that Wallace's revolutionary spirit lies dormant and forgotten.

Given Gibbon's view of Wallace, this perceived lack of continuity with the values attributed to him may be an indictment of modern society in the quoted fragment. In "The Antique Scene", Gibbon (2007b, p. 110) characterizes Wallace as "one of the few authentic national heroes" and avers that his leadership "still rings splendid and amazing". The author thus expresses his admiration for this historical figure as an enduring example of a popular leader, as someone "who promised something new" and managed to break peasants' "customary indifference over the quarrels of their rulers" (GIBBON, 2007b, p. 111). According to Gibbon (2007b, p.110), Wallace is a symbol of a positive kind of nationalism, the "true political nationalism", which is "not the nationalism forced upon an unwilling or indifferent people by the intrigues of kings or courtesans, but the spontaneous uprising of an awareness of blood-brotherhood and freedom-right". From Gibbon's perspective, Wallace was an authentic and praiseworthy leader provided that he was in touch with the needs and demands of the common folk, instead of heading an elitist movement. This class-inflected view of this icon is also clear in "Glasgow" as Gibbon (2007b, p. 143) refers to the battle of Bell o' the Brae, led by Wallace,[15] as "a venture unsupported by priest or patrician, the intellectual and the bourgeois of those days". Wallace's uprising is regarded as a model of popular insurgence against an oppressive rule and a source of hope for these movements as "it lighted a flame of liberty throughout Scotland" (GIBBON, 2007b, p. 143). For Gibbon (2007b, p. 143), the belief in changes for the better remains since those leading "the hundred and fifty thousand [Glasgow slum-dwellers] may take that tale of Bell o' the Brae for their text", which conveys the potential power of Wallace's example to the author even in modern times. Considering this representation of Wallace as a revolutionary hero of the common people, the profanation of his hiding place by the unfaithful minister is even more significant.

[15] The battle of the Bell o' the Brae is said to have occurred in the region of the High Street, in Glasgow, during the Scottish struggle against the English in the late thirteenth century. This fight is recounted in the epic poem *The Actes and Deidis of the Illustre and Vallyeant Campioun Schir William Wallace* (c. 1477), by Blind Harry (1450-1493), which portrays Wallace as a hero and a martyr in the cause for independence. The battle is described as a strong defeat for the English, led by Lord Percy. The source used by Blind Harry is unclear, and the narrative of the battle may be based on legends about Wallace. Despite claims that Blind Harry's account is not historically accurate, it was reproduced in different books about the history of Glasgow (MARWICK, 1911, p. 18-19).

In addition to the stark contrast between the knight's laudable deeds and the minister's reprehensible act, there is a marked class distinction between them, with the cleric representing a group despised by Gibbon.

Another fragment that makes reference to the historical associations of the Mearns landscape is the one in which Chris moves from Kinraddie to Segget. The moving truck passes by "the bending of yews where long, long ago the knight Wallace had hidden as the English were looking for him in the wars" (p. 295). The yews themselves are a mark of the past as these trees are known to live for centuries and have been associated with death since ancient times, being a common feature in British churchyards (LAQUEUR, 2015, p. 133-135). As Chris leaves Kinraddie, the antiquity of Blawearie, her former home, is also stressed by the mention of "its ancient brae" (p. 295), showing the protagonist's close ties with the past. As the truck winds through the roads, several towns are named, including Fettercairn, with the aforementioned reference to Finella and king Kenneth's killing. The narrative voice gives a glimpse of different places in the region, with geographical and historical information about them, before getting to the new setting of Segget. Gibbon, thus, reinforces the local aspect of his trilogy and its strong connection to the northeast of Scotland.

The landscape is also represented as a witness to battles in *A Scots Quair*. An instance of this is the reference to the Battle of Mondynes in *Sunset Song*. This clash took place in 1094 and consisted in a dispute for the Scottish throne after the death of king Malcolm III (1057-1093). Malcolm had grown up in England, and his reign was marked by an increase of the English influence in Scotland, including the decline of the Gaelic language at court (FRY; FRY, 1995, p. 55-56). Following his demise, there was a struggle for power between his brother, Donald Ban (1093-1097), who seized the throne, and his eldest son, Duncan II (1094). Donald, raised under Celtic and Norse influence, revoked some of Malcolm's policies inspired in the Anglo-Norman ways. Duncan, formerly a hostage in England, managed to depose his uncle, but was soon killed, which led Donald Ban to regain the throne (MACLEAN, 1996, p. 25-26). According to George H. Kinnear (1921, p. 63), in *Kincardineshire*, Duncan died during the battle of Mondynes, in which the regional ruler of the Mearns supported Donald Ban. Despite its impact on the royal succession, the battle is not named in several books on Scottish history (FRY; FRY, 1995; MACLEAN, 1996; ROSS, 2008), which focus more on the consequences of the conflict. Peter and Fiona Fry (1995, p. 59), for instance, even cast some doubt on who killed Duncan, stating that it was "probably [...] Donald Bane's supporters". Further details about the clash are found in Kinnear's work, which has a more local appeal. The latter author even mentions a stone called Duncan's

Stone, which is supposed to mark the site of the battle (KINNEAR, 1921, p. 63). In *Sunset Song*, the conflict is briefly referred to when Chris, on her way to buy fruit in Drumlithie, passes by Mondynes, "there where the battle was fought in the days long syne [ago]" (p. 82). Neither the parties involved in the struggle, nor its date or its consequences are specified in the novel. The emphasis lies in the place where the battle was fought, seemingly mirroring how the community remembers it. To those living in Kinraddie, the conflict is relevant because it happened close to their village and is, thus, a piece of local history. The fact that the dispute between the two noblemen and the consequent death of the king are forgotten may be related to the aforementioned idea that, according to Gibbon (2007b, p. 107), the change of ruler is not particularly significant for the peasants as it represents the replacement of one oppressor with another, bringing no relief to their poverty.

The origin of Segget is connected with the Battle of Barra, also known as Battle of Inverurie, even though this clash happened to the north of the region where Gibbon locates his settings. Interestingly, the site of the battle is closer to Aberdeen, mid-way between Auchterless, where Gibbon was born, and Echt, where his protagonist Chris was born. This conflict took place in 1308, when Robert I, or Robert the Bruce, was still facing opposition within Scotland. Robert I's victory against John Comyn at Barra was decisive as it quenched the resistance against him and strengthened his position as king. This result allowed him to focus on the fight for independence against the English according to Historic Environment Scotland (2012). In the Proem to *Cloud Howe*, the narrative voice explains that Bruce's allies stopped at Segget's Kaimes, by then deserted, on their way to the battle. This information is attributed to John of Fordun, who indeed recounts the conflict in his *Chronicle of the Scottish Nation*. Gibbon, then, blends the fictional building with Fordun's historical chronicle. In the novel, among Bruce's supporters is Hew Monte Alto, a fictional Lombard who is moved by Segget's landscape and decides to settle there after seeing "the mists that went sailing by and below his feet the sun came quick down either slope of a brae to a place where a streamlet ran by a ruined camp" (p. 268)[16]. Hew is touched and considers this impressive sight a good augury since it reminds him of his own land, which shows the power of the landscape to him. This example expresses the role of landscape as an "amplifier of emotion", as stated by Pallasmaa (2009, p. 30), since the view strengthens Hew's feelings of optimism and

[16] The character of Hew Monte Alto may be inspired by historical figures. Lands in Angus, close to Aberdeenshire, were granted by William the Lion (1165-1214) to a family of surname de Montealto, whose name changed into Mowat with the passage of time. This family is believed to be of Norman origin and to have first settled in Wales. William de Montealto (?-1327) was one of the men who signed the Declaration of Arbroath in 1320, a letter to the Pope asserting the independence of Scotland and Robert the Bruce's position as the sovereign (JERVISE, 1853, p. 184-185).

belonging. After the success at the battle, Bruce agrees to grant him the land as its former owners, the Mathers, sided with the English king, Edward I (1272-1307), and even received him as a guest during his invasion of Scotland (p. 268).

Kinraddie and Segget, thus, share some similarities as to their foundation narratives. Both Cospatric of Gondeshil and Hew Monte Alto are foreigners with "no gentle blood" (p. 269), who win the estates of Kinraddie and Segget by fighting. The narrative that they *earned* their lands helps to legitimize their ownership, benefitting their descendants, as analyzed before in reference to the legend of the gryphon. While Cospatric proves himself by killing this beast, Hew chooses the victorious side of the battle, which is also represented as the more honorable one since he goes on to defend Scotland's independence at the Battle of Bannockburn (1314), a decisive victory against the English. Another parallel in Cospatric's and Hew's trajectories is the fact that both of them mingle with the locals through marriage as the first marries a Pict lady, and the latter, one of Mathers's daughters. Hew also brings weavers from Lombardy to settle in Segget and they end up blending with the local population though they were at first "ill-received by the dour, dark Pictish folk of the Mearns" (p. 269). Finally, Cospatric's and Hew's descendants change their family names so as to make them sound less foreign. Cospatric's heirs change their surname to Kinraddie, as aforementioned, and the surname Monte Alto becomes Mowat as time goes by. Continuity is strongly expressed in the enduring power held by these two families. Whereas the Kinraddies have their estate mortgaged after the last heir is sent to an asylum in the beginning of the twentieth century, the Mowats remain powerful and still own the jute mills in Segget in the 1920s. Mowat embodies the whole class that ambitiously exploits workers, as demonstrated in the passage in which Chris looks at him, "elegant, neat, in his London clothes, with his tended hair and his charming look", and feels that "she was looking at more than Mowat, the class that had made of the folk of Segget the dirty-hungry folk that they had been and were – made them so in sheer greed and sheer grab" (p. 410). His selfishness and dishonesty – and that of the elite represented by him – are clear in the end of *Cloud Howe* since he defrauds a bank and vanishes with the loan, leaving the mills to be mortgaged and all the spinners unemployed.

Another reference to Hew Monte Alto emphasizes permanence, both in the landscape and in human feelings. The end of the third section of *Cloud Howe*, "Stratus", finds Chris near the ruins of the Kaimes, reflecting on the loss of her child, and the narrative voice compares her sight to the medieval knight's: "Chris moved and looked at the waiting Segget, quiet in the lazy spray of June sun, the same land and sun that Hew Monte Alto had looked on

that morning before Bara battle" (p. 418). This fragment stresses the permanence of the land through the centuries that divide Monte Alto from Chris. Moreover, other similarities between these characters are pointed out in the passage following the previous quotation: "You were waiting yourself in a halt before battle: all haltings were that, you thought, or would think if you weren't too wearied to think now at all" (p. 418). In addition to the landscape seen by Hew and Chris, their circumstances are also considered analogous, with both bracing themselves to face a trying situation. While a literal battle awaits Hew Monte Alto, Chris will have to deal with her own grief as well as that of her husband, who is also disillusioned with the failure of the general strike, as mentioned before. Monte Alto's halt is given thus a wider meaning as a moment of preparation and reflection before a challenge, which is part of everyone's lives. The universality of this experience is reinforced by Gibbon's use of "you", connecting the reader with Chris's feelings.

A conflict between Covenanters and royalists is associated with Duncairn in *Grey Granite*. In Chris's journey to the countryside with young Ewan and Ellen, the bus climbs Duncairn Rise "up to the heights where the men of Montrose had marshalled three hundred years before, suddenly, on a Sunday, over-awing Duncairn and pouring down to a Sabbath of blood" (p. 518). The ravaging of Duncairn is probably a reference to the capture of Aberdeen by royalist forces led by Montrose in 1644. This attack was a heavy defeat for the Covenanters and was characterized by the brutality of the royalists' looting of the city. It lasted three days – during the weekend, like the fictional event in Duncairn –, and the troops' "treatment of civilians [...] took the Scottish wars to a new level of ferocity" (DESBRISAY, 2002, p. 259). The number of casualties was particularly high among men of lower classes, who fought on foot and had more difficulty retreating, according to Gordon DesBrisay (2002, p. 259). The reference to the clash in Duncairn underscores the level of violence used by Montrose and his allies, which is consistent with Gibbon's generally positive depiction of the Covenanters. In "Antique Scene", he highlights the level of engagement of the common folk in this movement, stating that "[t]he People's Church gathered around it the peasants – especially the western peasants – in its defence" (GIBBON, 2007b, p. 116). This popular involvement is something celebrated by Gibbon, who affirms that for many Lowlanders "the Covenant was not so much a sworn bond between themselves and God as between their own souls and freedom" (GIBBON, 2007b, p. 116). The violent oppression suffered by the Covenanters is markedly present not only in Gibbon's essays, but also in *A Scots Quair*, as will be later explored.

The references to these battle sites in the trilogy emphasize the fact that meaning is attributed to these landscapes by the local community based on its memories. As Cosgrove (1989, p. 123-124) remarks, “the site of the battle that founded or saved a nation are locations of intense cultural significance which the uninitiated pass by”. Architect Marc Treib (2009, p. 209-210) also agrees that meaning is not inherent to buildings or landscapes and that some level of mediation and explanation is always required to express the importance of a certain place. As such, the significance of a field or hill is a cultural element which may be transmitted in an informal way within the group who inhabits the area, depending on their memory for its survival. This idea is demonstrated in the trilogy as, for instance, the fictional anecdote about Hew Monte Alto’s contemplation of what would become Segget is clearly restrained to a local scope. Therefore, this knowledge may be a mark of belonging to that region and to the community established there. Besides, Gibbon reinforces the existence and the importance of the history of small, peripheral places through his allusions to this kind of events which do not feature in historiographical accounts of the nation.

These tales associated with locations in the trilogy also help to shape characters’ perception of the landscape. Barry Curtis (2002, p. 55) considers memory as one of the factors that turns undifferentiated space into a place, which is defined by the interaction of our subjectivity with the external world. Stories about the region mediate the relationship between Gibbon’s characters and the Mearns, as well as invest the area with meaning even for readers who have never been there so that they may feel as part of the groups depicted. Pallasmaa (2009, p. 26) also distinguishes the physical world from the existential space, which is endowed with meaning and “interpreted through the memory and experience of the individual”. However, this subjective nature of interpretation does not prevent the members of a group from experiencing existential space similarly and deriving a sense of community from this shared perception (PALLASMAA, 2009, p. 26). Hence, belonging is intimately related not simply to the physical landscape surrounding a group, but to a common way of regarding it. The capital importance of memory to this attachment to place is well explored by Gibbon since *A Scots Quair* is permeated with allusions to stories of the Northeast.

References to landmarks in *A Scots Quair* also underscore the legacy of the Picts in the Mearns. In the previously quoted passage in which Chris remembers Heraclitus’s aphorism about constant transformation, the narrative voice brings up the “ancient tower that the Pictish folk had reared” in Brechin (p. 122). The round tower of Brechin dates from the medieval period, with estimates varying between the tenth and the twelfth centuries. Although its style is common in Ireland, they are rare elsewhere, with only two round towers still

standing in Scotland according to Historic Environment Scotland (2007). The mention of such a relic from the past amid a passage dealing with the pervasiveness and inevitability of change – centered on the idea that "nothing endures at all, nothing but the land" (p. 122) – may express a more nuanced view of the interplay between permanence and transformation. Discussing this theme, Ferdinand Braudel (1992, p. 356) affirms that global history may be analyzed through "a permanent dialectic [...] between permanence and change"[17]. However, what endures is not absolutely fixed; its apparent immobility is due to the fact that it changes much slower than other elements (BRAUDEL, 1992, p. 356). Braudel's ideas may inform a reading of the trilogy in that change, albeit inexorable, is not uniform, allowing for these glimpses of the past that permeate *A Scots Quair*.

Even though the narrative voice characterizes the tower in Brechin as Pictish, the connection between it and this people is debatable. The article on Brechin in the seventh edition of Encyclopedia Britannica (1842, p. 224) states that the town is believed to have been the capital of the Pictish kingdom. Richard Gough (1773, p. 83), in contrast, stresses the relation of the structure to its Irish counterparts and attributes its characterization as Pictish to the fact that Abernethy, where there is another round tower, used to be the capital of this folk. Cameron (1994, p. 375), a more recent source, considers some of the motifs in the carvings on the tower to be closer to Pictish art, but dates the building to a later period (late tenth or eleventh century). Hence, Gibbon's description of the tower may hint at the view of the Picts as the authentic ancestors of the Scottish people, which appears in some of his works. Hanne Tange (1999, p. 164) argues that Gibbon, in "The Antique Scene", portrays the Picts as "pure Scottish stock" despite mentioning other groups which constituted the Scottish population. Indeed, Gibbon (2007b, p. 107) contemptuously avers in this essay that "[t]he Kelt, the Scot, the Norseman, the Norman were no more than small bands of raiders and robbers". The author also states that Scotland "was in essentials a Pictish civilization, as the vast majority of the inhabitants remained Picts" even after the decline of Scottish Gaelic in the Lowlands (GIBBON, 2007b, p. 109). Tange (1999, p. 167) considers Gibbon's "choice of the Mearns as preferred symbol of the nation" as "a response to the Celtic mythology predominant within Scottish Renaissance circles at the time, a Celtophilia threatening to silence all alternative stories of the nation". His exaggerated tone – describing, for example, the Celt as "a mere Chicagoan gangster, murderous, avaricious, culturally sterile" (GIBBON, 2007b, p. 108) – seems to confirm this idea. The fact that he strongly downplays the contributions and the

[17] "uma dialética permanente [...] entre permanência e mudança" (our translation)

influence of other peoples that settled in Scotland may be read as a satire of the myth of purity usually promoted by nationalist discourse.

In *A Scots Quair*, the continuity of the Picts is reinforced, as previously mentioned; however, the interaction between them and other groups is acknowledged, and the distinction between these folks may be interpreted as more related to class than to ethnicity. Whereas the landowner families in Kinraddie and Segget have Norman and Lombard ancestors, pointing to the heterogeneous origin of the Scottish people, the crofters are recurrently described as of Pictish descent. In *Sunset Song*, for instance, the tenant farmers are "dour folk of the old Pict stock" (p. 14) even in the early nineteenth century, well after references to the Picts disappear from historiographical accounts. The lasting influence of the Picts is embodied in the landscape in elements like the "broch from the days of the Pictish men" (p. 268) in Segget. Significantly, this tower is used as basis for the structure built by Finella's men, within whose walls the Lombard Monte Alto later built his castle, symbolizing different layers of history and the blend of influences that gave origin to the modern town. As for Segget's population, the weavers brought by Hew from Lombardy overcome the locals' suspicion, and "the breeds grew mixed" through time (p. 269). As analyzed before, the foreign knights also seek to mingle with the local aristocratic families. Therefore, the trilogy suggests a more heterogeneous formation of the Scottish people, pointing to a "Pictish-cum-Brythonic-cum-Gaelic-cum-Anglo-Saxon-cum-Viking-cum-Norman" (HAGEMANN, 1994, p. 48) origin, rather than a purely Pictish one.

For several characters in the trilogy, the Picts seem to stand for a generically distant and sometimes mysterious past. For instance, Miss Murgatroyd, one of the residents in Chris's boarding house in Duncairn, is fascinated by ancient Scottish magic and considers the Picts "Awful Powerful in magic" (p. 613), emphasizing the mystical character attributed to them. To her, the Picts are conflated with other groups classified as Celtic since her knowledge of the magic of "the ancient Scots" (p. 511) is based on works by Lewis Spence (1874-1955), a Scottish nationalist who wrote books such as *The Magic Arts in Celtic Britain* (1945) and *The History and Origins of Druidism* (1949). In addition, the term Druids is used by the community to refer in a broad way to early inhabitants of Scotland, as in the passage in which young Ewan shows some flints found by him to Mrs. Hogg and praises her because "she wouldn't just laugh or blither about Druids, as everyone else in Segget would do, but would ask what the hunters had done with the things" (p. 377). The Standing Stones in Kinraddie are also associated with Druids, as will be further explored later. Ian Leins (2015, p. 5) explains that it was only in the eighteenth century that scholars adopted the term Celt to

refer to the early population of Britain and Ireland. At that moment, different prehistoric vestiges were connected with the Celts, including stone circles dating from much earlier (LEINS, 2015, p. 6). This misconstruction seems to endure and to be part of some characters' understanding of Scottish history in *A Scots Quair*. According to Christopher Silver (2015, p. 111-112), historians at Gibbon's time considered the Picts as a pre-Celtic population, which may explain the indistinct association of this people with various prehistoric groups by the trilogy's characters.

References to the Pictish legacy in the landscape illustrate different views and approaches toward heritage and its preservation. During their trip to the countryside, Chris, Ewan, and Ellen climb the Barmekin and find an "old Pict fort built by the men of antique time, a holy place before Christ was born" (p. 522). They see that some of the walls were destroyed and that a fire was recently lit there, which makes Ewan furious. Chris, on the contrary, is unconcerned and thinks that "they were only rickles of stone from long syne [ago] raised up by daft childes [men] who worshipped the sun" (p. 522). The disagreement between them recalls the fact that the conscious preservation of heritage is a relatively modern idea, from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This means that "the general trend [is] that what we now possess has survived through chance, neglect and lack of motive to redevelop" (GRAHAM; ASHCROFT; TUNBRIDGE, 2000, p. 13). Besides, this passage from *Grey Granite* conveys the connection between past and present, as well as the way in which historical knowledge helps us to envision the future. Ewan stresses the idea of continuity by stating

> how close in the generation these [ancient] men were, how alike ourselves in the things they believed, unessentials different – blood, bone, thought the same. For if history had any lesson at all it was just that men hadn't changed a bit since the days of the folk in the Spanish caves who painted the charging aurochsen – except to take up civilization (p. 523).

Hence, Ewan sees an underlying unchanging human nature which strongly links us to the people of the past, regardless of all the changes which can be observed since prehistoric times. He also refers to civilization as "that ancient calamity that fell on the world with gods and kings and culture and classes" (p. 523), echoing Gibbon's Diffusionist view. After hearing this, Ellen calls him a socialist since "*[i]f there was once a time without gods and classes couldn't there be that time again?*" (p. 523). Thus, Ellen expresses the impact that one's view of the past has on one's capacity to imagine the future. This evokes the aforementioned notion that Gibbon's Diffusionist ideas create an "alternative space in and through which to imagine a different logic of freedom" (SHIACH, 2015, p. 11). This conversation with Ellen sparks

Ewan's interest in socialism and the description of his thoughts brings together past and present as he "[treads] down from the breach in the Pictman's fort to seek the like in the crumbling castle that prisoned the men of his time" (p. 524), in an analogy between the ruins and the structure oppressing humankind.

Another vestige attributed to the Picts is an old tunnel in Duncairn, one of the rare remains from the past in this city. It is telling that this structure is hidden and forgotten, used as a storm sewer. The narrative voice highlights how deeply it is buried by following the path of the rainwater:

> the gutters gurgled, eddied and swam, piercing down to a thousand drains, down through the latest Council diggings, down to dark spaces and forgotten pools, in one place out through an antique tunnel that the first Pict settlers had made and lined with uncalsayed stones [unpaved], set deep in earth, more than two thousand years before (p. 572).

The fact that it is completely hidden from view, buried so deeply, may symbolize that the city is profoundly disconnected from its past. Whereas the fort in the countryside, though neglected, is still part of the landscape and even used on some social occasion, the tunnel in Duncairn is utterly severed from the people living there. Therefore, the city is marked by the forgetting of its past, as previously suggested by the lack of legends associated with Duncairn and the absence of a prologue retelling its history. This alienation of the city dwellers from its past may be explained by the process of industrialization and the ensuing radical changes in the landscape.

A foremost feature of the landscape in the trilogy are the Standing Stones on Blawearie Brae. This monument, attributed to "Druids" in the narrative, is a remarkable vestige of the ancient inhabitants of the land. Archaeologist Caroline Wickham-Jones (2001, p. 169) discusses the ritual importance of these prehistoric structures and affirms that they "were designed to emphasize the links between the community and their landscape", referring both to the land and to "the celestial landscape". It is possible that the position of the stones was determined by astronomical phenomena that mark relevant moments in the natural cycles, such as the seasons, which would be particularly important to communities dependent on farming. However, the meaning and the exact role of the stone circles remain shrouded in mystery (WICKHAM-JONES, 2001, p. 181-182). In *Sunset Song*, the landmark is described as "a circle of stones from olden times, some were upright and some were flat and some leaned this way and that, and right in the middle three big ones clambered up out of the earth and stood askew with flat, sonsy [suggesting good omen] faces, they seemed to listen and wait" (p. 22). The personification of the stones in this fragment suggests the mysterious,

supernatural aura associated with the place and positions them almost like characters, rather than background setting.

Some of the references to stone circles reveal an interest in the common folk who lived in ancient times. For Chris, the Standing Stones of Kinraddie evoke images of the rituals of thousands of years before: “the wild men climbed the brae and sang their songs in the lithe of those shadows while the gloaming [twilight] waited there above the same quiet hills” (p. 65). This passage also stresses the endurance of the stones and of the hills as they witnessed these ceremonies from long ago. Besides, these thoughts of the ancient people underscore the permanence of some aspects of human experience through time. When Chris thinks of the enduring Standing Stones, “up there night after night and day after day by the loch of Blawearie”, she imagines that “around them there gathered things that wept and laughed and lived again in the hours before the dawn, till far below the cocks began to crow in Kinraddie and day had come again” (p. 78). In another fragment, during a walk near Segget, Chris and Robert see a stone circle, which stands as a “memorial [...] of a dream long lost, the hopes and fears of fantastic eld” (p. 404). Both quotations emphasize the similarities between ancient and modern people since they focus on emotions and expectations which live on through different generations. In spite of the transience of life, there is an enduring human core of emotions and dreams.

The community’s perception of the people who erected the stones is associated with the mystery and the ritualistic character of the circle. The narrative voice considers “the Druids” as “coarse devils of men in the time long syne [ago], they’d climb up there and sing their foul heathen songs around the stones” (p. 22). This negative image arises from the fact that this folk was not Christian, an idea which is reinforced by the choice of words – “devils”, “foul heathen” – in this passage. The prejudice against them based on religious grounds is also stressed by the assertion that “if they met a bit Christian missionary they’d gut him as soon as look at him” (p. 22). Chris’s father, an extremist member of the Kirk, is of the same opinion, regarding the stones as “coarse, foul things” and affirming that “the folk that raised them were burning in hell, skin-clad savages with never a skin to guard them now” (p. 50). Hence, although the Standing Stones may be an enduring mark of the local history and of the community’s ancestors, they are not generally seen by Kinraddie’s Christian folk as the token of a past worth remembering.

The relationship between the Standing Stones and pagan rituals may explain the fear of this place expressed by the community. When introducing the reader to the loch of Blawearie, the narrative voice states that “few enough [people] did that (stood there of an

evening) for nearby the bit loch" was the stone circle (p. 22). In addition, Chris has the impression that her father, "him that was feared at nothing dead or alive, gentry or common", "kind of shivered, as though he were feared" when he was near the Standing Stones (p. 50). The emphasis on John Guthrie's usual fearlessness heightens the eerie atmosphere surrounding the area. Chris herself once experiences "a queer, uncanny feeling" and is "half-feared" when walking near the stones (p. 65). Moreover, the occurrence of Chae's and Chris's supernatural visions close to the circle contribute to the mysterious, other-worldly aura of the Standing Stones, as analyzed in chapter 1.

Another important vestige from the past in the trilogy is Dunnottar Castle, which is associated in the narrative with what Gibbon regards as popular uprisings. Although the construction of the castle whose ruins are still standing nowadays began in the fourteenth century, the occupation of the area dates from much earlier: it was a religious site in the fifth century and a Pictish fort in the late ninth century. During the struggle against English occupation, William Wallace attacked the castle in 1297, an episode recounted in Blind Harry's epic poem (CUNNINGHAM, 1998, 20-21, 37). This is the first historical event associated with Dunnottar Castle to be mentioned in the trilogy. The prelude to *Sunset Song* narrates that Cospatric of Gondeshil's great-grandson fought alongside the English against Wallace. The tone of this section is highly ironic, mimicking an aristocratic voice in a satire of the "annals-style historiography" (MALCOLM, 2016, p. 92) centered on the elite. Wallace is depicted as "the Cateran who dared rebel against the fine English king" leading an "army of coarse and landless men" (p. 12). However, the narrative voice also reveals the self-serving attitudes of the nobility as the laird of Kinraddie and other noblemen take food and equipment to Dunnottar Castle and lay waste to all the region to prevent their opponents from finding supplies there. Even though the castle is "well-builded and strong" in an advantageous position for defense, Wallace, "who had but small patience with strong places", manages to climb the steep rocks and kill those who were taking shelter there (p. 12). The struggle is again represented in terms of class, rather than nationality, since Wallace's army of common folk faces resistance not only from the English, but also from part of the Scottish aristocracy, which reinforces Gibbon's portrayal of Wallace as a revolutionary leader.

In *A Scots Quair*, Dunnottar Castle is mainly associated with the Covenanters, a group regarded by Gibbon as embodying the will of the common people. When Chris and her future husband Ewan visit the castle after her father's death, they see different reminders of violence, namely the slits on the walls from which arrows could be shot and "the mouldering clefts where a prisoner's hands were nailed while they put him to torment" (p. 128). This

emphasis on human suffering is recurrent in the references to Dunnottar in the trilogy. Remembering the Covenanters who were imprisoned there elicits a strong emotional reaction in Chris: “There the Covenanting folk had screamed and died while the gentry dined and danced in their lithe [cozy], warm halls, Chris stared at the places, sick and angry and sad for those folk she could never help now, that hatred of rulers and gentry a flame in her heart, John Guthrie’s hate” (p. 128). This passage emphasizes both the Covenanters’ distress and the injustice of their treatment while those belonging to the upper class are enjoying themselves. The Covenanters’ struggle is framed as an issue of social class, instead of a religious conflict, which may help to kindle Chris’s sympathy and identification to the point that she considers them “[h]er folk” (p. 128) even if she does not attach much importance to religious matters. Gibbon (2007b, p. 115) likewise relates this dispute to a class struggle in the essay “The Antique Scene”, stating that the Covenanters defended the Church of Scotland as “the Church of the Commons, of the People, bitterly assailed by noble and King”. The violence inflicted against this group is also stressed in this article, described as “an orgy of suppression” and illustrated by an occasion when “Covenanters were tortured with rigour and a sadistic ingenuity before being executed in front of their own women-folk” (GIBBON, 2007b, p. 116). These horrific acts are attributed to Scottish nobles such as Graham of Claverhouse, known as “Bonny Dundee”, regarded by Gibbon (2007b, p. 116), in spite of the romanticizing of his figure by earlier authors, as “a sadist and a criminal degenerate” and, far from an isolated case, he is “one in a long train of the Scots nobility”. The dispute between Covenanters and Royalists is thus characterized as a conflict between the common folk and a despicable aristocracy.

Chris and Ewan’s visit to Dunnottar Castle also reveals the fragility of memory, and human efforts against forgetting. They see a memorial to the Covenanters who died as prisoners in the castle in 1685, an attempt to preserve their names and their struggle for later generations. However, very little information is recorded other than the fact that they died “FOR : THEIR : ADHERENCE : TO : THE : WORD : OF : GOD : AND : SCOTLANDS : COVENTANTED : WORK : OF : REFORMATION” (p. 129). Although the inscription elevates these common men and women to the status of martyrs of the Church of Scotland, even the names of some of them were lost and forgotten at the time when the memorial was erected. Another trace of this period is present in Kinraddie’s churchyard, with some tombstones that “went back to the old, unkindly times of the Covenanters, one had a skull and crossed bones and an hourglass on it and was mossed half over so that but hardly you could read the daft-like script with its esses like effs, and it made you shudder” (p. 65). Chris’s

chilling encounter with these vestiges is one more time distinguished by marks of mortality and the loss of information through the cracks of time. Forgetting may be regarded as a second death as suggested by Chris's distress when she thinks of people from long ago during her visit to Edzell Castle: "they had no name or remembered place, even in the lands of death they were maybe forgotten, for maybe the dead died once again, and again went on" (p. 174). However, the more distant we are from the dead, the easier it is to convert them into symbols or objects of memory, as analyzed by Candau (2016, p. 143). The memory of the dead is subject to interpretation and manipulation and may play an important role in the construction of a community's identity or in identity contentions in the present (CANDAU, 2016, p. 144-145). Hence, the scarcity of information about the Covenanters who were imprisoned and died may actually contribute to their becoming icons of resistance.

The Covenanting movement has become a noteworthy element in Scottish identity, with various memorials dedicated to them throughout the nation, as recorded by the Scottish Covenanter Memorials Association, created in 1966 to preserve them. Historian Edward J. Cowan traces how the Covenanters have been represented in different historical moments and how this portrayal is shaped by the interests of distinct groups. Cowan (2002, p. 123) foregrounds the fact that the movement is both religious and political and states that "it was the stress upon civic responsibility in opposition to the forces of Stewart tyranny which would remain the most inspirational aspect of the covenant in the shorter and longer terms". This influence leads to the establishment of a strong "covenanting mythos" that comes to "embody a corpus of Lowland tradition embracing heroism, atrocity and sacrifice" (COWAN, 2002, p. 121-122). The image of the Covenanters is thus invoked by different groups fighting for social reform and left-wing activists (COWAN, 2002, p. 126). Besides, the supporters of the Covenant can be considered an example and even the origin of the egalitarian, democratic spirit regarded as a feature of the Scottish identity (BLAIKIE, 2013, p. 99). Therefore, although these authors do not present the movement as exclusively composed by the common folk like Gibbon, the novelist is not alone in his depiction of the Covenanters as a group that comes to stand for progressive ideas or popular interests.

To Chris, Dunnottar Castle symbolizes the long-standing oppression of the folk by the elite. In *Cloud Howe*, Mowat, the estate owner, returns to Segget and visits Robert, who hopes that the young man will help him in his project of social reform. However, the laird's ideal, influenced by his recent stay in Italy, is to reestablish "[d]iscipline, order, hierarchy" in Scotland, along with "its old-time civilization and culture" (p. 369). This transformation inspired by Fascist and nationalist precepts would solve the nation's problems by restoring the

social and political conditions of a prosperous past. Chris criticizes Mowat's idealized view of Scottish history, questioning him:

> *Was there ever the kind of Scotland you preach? – Happy, at ease, the folk on the land well-fed, the folk in the pulpits well-feared, the gentry doing great deeds? It's just a gab and a tale, no more* [...] *I've been to Dunnottar Castle and seen there the ways that the gentry once liked to keep order* (p. 370).

Dunnottar Castle embodies the suffering of the folk at the hands of a repressive landed gentry. This struggle of the exploited classes is presented as constant through centuries as Chris sees "the pageant of history" before her:

> the ancient rites of blood and atonement where the Standing Stones stood up as dead kings; the clownings and cruelties of leaders and chiefs; and the folk – her folk – who kept such alive – dying frozen alive in their eirdes, earth-houses, chaving [working hard] from the blink of day for a meal, serfs and land-workers whom the Mowats rode down, whom the armies harried and the kings spat on, the folk who rose in the Covenant times and were tortured and broken by the gentry's men, the rule and the way of life that had left them the pitiful gossiping clowns that they were, an obscene humour engraffed on their fears, the kindly souls of them twisted awry and veiled from men with the dirty jest [...] (p. 370)

Chris identifies again with the peasants, who have been despised and enslaved by an elite that depends on them for its accumulation of wealth. Continuity manifests itself not only on the exploitation of the common folk, but also on the perpetuation of the power of the landowner class since the Mowats remain the proprietors of the estate through several generations. Whereas the Covenanters' uprising is represented as an instance of common people's resistance against this oppression, Chris considers that this subaltern condition has a lasting detrimental influence on the peasants' psyche. Even though she still considers them to be "her folk" and is indignant at social injustice, she regards them now from the perspective of an outsider, which may indicate her growing isolation from those around her.

Later, in *Grey Granite*, Chris feels even more detached from the oppressed folk and particularly the Covenanters, in a passage that brings to the forefront their religious motivations, in addition to their political ones. She remembers the Covenanting movement after passing by a church, which brings to her mind both thoughts of religion and of Robert and his socialist ideals. Chris reflects that the Covenanters perhaps expected that God would come to their aid "when they faced the gentry in the old-time wars" (p. 508). This time, however, her view of the supporters of the Covenant and their struggle is much more skeptical and pessimistic:

> Only God never came and they died for Him and the old soss [mess] went on as it always would do, aye [always] idiot folks to take dirty lives and squat in the dirt, not caring a lot were they letten [left] a-be to rot as they liked. No concern of hers – she belonged to herself as Ewan had told her he belonged to himself, she'd have hated the Covenant giving her orders as much as she'd have hated its enemies the gentry (p. 508).

Chris no longer identifies with the Covenanters as she feels that allegiance to them – or probably to any group – would be a constraint, preventing her from being truly herself, which emphasizes her feeling of distance from other people. As she increasingly isolates herself, she sees the difference from other individuals more clearly than any possible similarity. In fact, she even suggests that the Covenanters are "idiot folks" who are to blame for their afflictions. Chris also sounds more doubtful about the possibility of change that any revolt against the gentry can bring. It is significant that social class is the sole focus of her reflections when she empathizes with the Covenanters whereas it is a musing about religion which makes her recall them in this quotation. Indeed, right before her mind is turned to these historical figures, Chris considers religion "only a fairy-tale, not a good one, dark and evil rather, hurting life, hurting death, no concern of her if others didn't force it on her, she herself had nothing to force in its stead" (p. 508), reaffirming her disbelief in any passing ideals.

Ewan shares with his mother the interest in the Covenanting movement, which he also associates with violence and class struggle. To Ewan, the Covenanters are "funny chaps" who revolted against the elite: "the advance guard of the common folk of those days, their God and their Covenant just formulae they hid the social rebellion in" (p. 626). Like Gibbon and Chris in her youth, Ewan considers the Covenanting revolt as a fight of the oppressed people mainly against social injustice, downplaying the religious aspect involved in it. Therefore, he sees the Covenanters as aligned to his own ideals and perhaps even as his predecessors in the striving for equality. In addition, their captivity in Dunnottar Castle is mentioned by Ewan, who states that "the gentry imprisoned and killed them in scores . . ." (p. 636), emphasizing the violence of their repression by the upper classes. The brutality suffered by those who rebel against the status quo is represented as an element which endures through the centuries as Ewan comments that "*There's nothing new under the sun – not even torture*" (p. 626). His remark alludes to the vicious treatment that he was subjected to by the police when he was in jail, stressing the similarity of his situation and that of the Covenanters. Ewan also refers to a passage in the Ecclesiastes which deals with the idea of repetition: "What has been will be again, / what has been done will be done again; / there is nothing new under the sun" (BIBLE, Ecclesiastes, 1, 9). Thus, Ewan's perspective on the Covenanters underscores the continuity of social inequality and of the violent opposition encountered by those who combat it.

In his analysis of landscape, Cosgrove introduces the concepts of dominant and residual cultures, with their respective traces. Residual elements in the landscape are those that have lost much of their original meaning, being open to interpretations which are more

closely related to the present than to the time when these structures were created (COSGROVE, 1989, p. 131-132). Most of the landscape features explored so far, like the stone circle, the broch and Pictish vestiges, fit into this category as their old significance and function are gone and even remain mysterious in the case of the Standing Stones. These elements acquire new roles, with the tower in Brechin being annexed to the church, for instance. The Standing Stones are another example of this resignification since the community creates its own hypotheses about its ancient use. Besides, the stone circle is endowed with new meaning as the plaque in homage to the dead of World War One is affixed on it, as will be later discussed in more detail. There are, however, signs of dominant culture in *A Scots Quair* as well. According to Cosgrove (1989, p.128), these elements express a view of the world in accordance with the interests and the perspective of hegemonic classes, thus contributing to the maintenance of their power as they help to shape other individuals' perception of reality.

A manifestation of dominant culture is the statue of king Edward VII (1901-1910) in Duncairn. The monument is inspired by its counterpart at Union Terrace, in Aberdeen, close to where Gibbon lived while working in the city (CAMPBELL, 1988, p. 20). This imposing representation of royalty is severely undermined in the novel, which suits Gibbon's usual derogatory stance toward the aristocracy. Chris's description of the statue is humorous and quite unflattering since the king is "bald as a turkey and with much the same face, ready to gobble from a ton of grey granite" (p. 498). Moreover, this reminder of kingly power contrasts sharply with the social afflictions of the time as around the monument are "the unemployed, aye [always] plenty of them, yawning and wearied, with their flat-soled boots and their half-shaved faces" (p. 498). The tired and unkempt appearance of the unemployed clashes with the king's stateliness, emphasizing the pervasive social inequity. The fact that the king is a statue, "unmoving" (p. 498), may also hint at the elite's indifference toward the life of the disadvantaged. Gibbon's representation of the setting in this instance recalls the possibility of subverting hegemonic attempts to control how the landscape is read.

Another example of the selection process involved in recording and remembering the past is presented by young Ewan's visit to the museum in Duncairn. The description of the place suggests that it is utterly detached from people's interest and everyday reality. Everything in the gallery is old and evokes boredom and sleepiness: it is "dusty and dim" and "as usual dingy and desolate", with an "old chap in uniform yawning at a table" and "deserted stairs" (p. 549-550). The only other visitors are a couple looking for a quiet spot for their romance, who pay no heed to the art pieces. This general indifference to the items in

exhibition may be related to the fact that they reveal an elitist representation of the world. As Ewan goes through the sculpture and painting galleries, the blanks in the scenes portrayed disturb him, and he thinks of what is missing:

> picture on picture limned in dried blood, never painted or hung in any gallery – pictures of the poor folk since history began, bedevilled and murdered, trodden underfoot, trodden down in the bree [commotion], a human slime, hungered, unfed, with their darkened brains, their silly revenges, their infantile hopes – the men who built Münster's City of God and were hanged and burned in scores by the Church, the Spartacists, the blacks of Toussaint L'Ouverture, Parker's sailors who were hanged at the Nore, the Broo men man-handled in Royal Mile. Pictures unceasing of the men of your kin, peasants and slaves and common folk and their ghastly lives through six hundred years [...] (p. 550).

Ewan emphasizes the violent oppression suffered by the poor who dared to rebel for centuries, implying the continuity of their suffering until the present. He also brings together revolts from physically distant places, connecting Münster's Anabaptists, the Roman slaves led by Spartacus or the German communist Spartacus League, Haitian revolutionaries, British mutineers, and Duncairn's unemployed. This vast geographical span points to a universal class struggle and foregrounds the similarities among the underprivileged regardless of nationality. Ewan's reaction to the items in display calls attention to the selection of what is worth remembering that is inherent to the curation of a museum and, more broadly, to the writing of history. The choices behind a museum collection are anything but neutral as some aspects of the past can be erased while others are stressed, which makes this kind of institution "an arena of contestation" (GRAHAM; ASHCROFT; TUNBRIDGE, 2000, p. 32). Historian Edward H. Carr (2002, p. 49) argues that the filtering of historical information does not happen by chance, but by the conscious or unconscious choices of what should be preserved for the future. As Ewan questions the fact that statues of Trajan and Caesar prevail over representations of Spartacus (p. 550), it is clear that this selection is guided by those who have power and authority, leaving the common folk voiceless and apparently without a past.

Ewan's experience at the museum also raises questions regarding the role of art, and the character's stance seems to be similar to Gibbon's. When Ewan sees some landscape paintings, he thinks them "the deadest stuff" and wonders "why did people make a fuss of pictures? Or music? You'd never seen anything in either" (p. 550). A possible explanation for this lack of interest in art may be his pragmatic, hard personality, so often compared to the grey granite found in Duncairn's buildings. Another reason, however, may be his perception that these works of art represent reality in a limited and inadequate way. Gibbon (2007b, p. 137), in the essay "Glasgow", asserts the prevalence of the struggle for acceptable conditions of life for the poor over any artistic or cultural matters. He also criticizes both forms of artistic

expression that romanticize poverty, portraying it with “a proper aesthetic detachment”, and those which ignore social issues and serve as comfort for the elite (GIBBON, 2007b, p. 135, 138). For Gibbon, art may be a means to denounce social and political evils, contributing to the transformation of reality (MALCOLM, 2016, p. 17). This leads to a close association between political and aesthetical aspects in his writing, revealing the “belief that the artist has a moral obligation for the positing of human suffering – in past, present or future – at the very core of his aesthetic”, as stated by Malcolm (2016, p. 25). In a letter to Scottish poet Helen Cruickshank, Gibbon comments on “the pathological horrors” included in his novel *Spartacus* and discloses the feelings that inform his writing: “I am so horrified by all our dirty little cruelties and bestialities that I would feel the lowest type of skunk if I didn’t shout the horror of them from the house-tops. Of course I shout too loudly” (MITCHELL, 1933, p. 2). Thus, the strong emphasis on the graphic representation of cruelty in his works comes from his dismay at the hardship imposed on part of the population. In the same letter, Gibbon reveals a view of history with focus on marginalized groups:

> Ancient Greece is never the Parthenon to me: it’s a slave being tortured in a dungeon of the Athenian law-courts; Ancient Egypt is never the Pyramids: it’s the blood and tears of Goshen; Ancient Scotland is never Queen Mary: it’s those serfs they kept chained in the Fifeshire mines a hundred years ago (MITCHELL, 1933, p. 2).

The notion of constant suffering is conveyed by references to oppressed folk from different places and time periods, which bear a striking resemblance to Ewan’s impressions about the museum quoted above. Ewan’s reflections echo Gibbon’s perspective on history, as well as his conscious choice to intensely depict instances of human distress in his works:

> Why did they (the Greeks) never immortalize in stone a scene from the Athenian justice-courts – a slave being ritually, unnecessarily tortured before he could legally act as a witness? Or a baby exposed to die in a jar? – hundreds every year in the streets of Athens, it went on all day, the little kids wailing and crying and crying as the hot sun rose and they scorched in the jars; and then their mouths dried up, they just weeked [squeaked] and whimpered, they generally died by dark . . . (p. 549-550).

This passage even uses the same image of the tortured Athenian slave present in Gibbon’s letter to Cruickshank. Hence, Ewan’s point of view on history and art seems to reflect the author’s ideas in terms of both content and form.

This visit to the museum is a decisive moment in Ewan’s political trajectory. It happens after he witnesses police brutality against a demonstration of the unemployed, a scene which shocks him and lingers in his memory as a “scream, tingling, terrified” that makes him “start awake, sweating, remembering that from a dream” (p. 547). Even though this experience disturbs Ewan, he still looks down on the working class and considers himself

distant from them. His description of his colleagues at the factory is filled with disdain as he calls them "the unscrubbed lot, with their idiot ape-maunderings and idiot hopes, their idiot boasts, poor dirty devils" (p. 547). He also sets himself apart from them with a feeling of superiority: "They took you for one of themselves, so you'd almost become as half-witted as they. [...] What have the keelies [brutes living in a city] to do with you – except to make you feel sick?" (p. 547). Despite seeing their precarious conditions of living, Ewan does not sympathize with them and actually feels disgust and indifference, telling himself that these workers "DON'T concern you. BREAK with it all" (p. 548). However, after his reflection on the untold and ever-repeated history of pain and oppression, there is a radical shift in his attitude, as illustrated by his feelings at the museum:

> And you bit your lips to keep something back, something that rose and slew coolness and judgment – steady, white-edged, a rising flame, anger bright as a clear bright flame, as though 'twas yourself that history had tortured, trodden on, spat on, clubbed down in you, as though you were every scream and every wound, flesh of your flesh, blood of your blood . . . And you gave a queer sob that startled yourself: Something was happening to you: God – what? (p. 551)

Thinking about injustice and suffering kindles a new passion and fury in him, and, more than that, makes him identify strongly with the folk who is a victim of the violent and destructive forces of history. This new-found empathy leads Ewan to become progressively more involved in politics.

Ewan's engagement with politics is also influenced by his changing view of the past, which is informed by his interest in archaeology. This fascination for historical vestiges mediates his relationship with the landscape. His search for prehistoric flints as a boy takes him to various places in the Mearns: "he'd raked half the Howe, he'd been down by Brechin and Forfar for flints. He was known in places Chris had never seen" (p. 424-425). Ewan's archaeological hunts also lead him to the Kaimes, where he finds a connection with the past, like his mother, as will be explored. The ruins in Segget are rich in vestiges from prehistoric people as "when they dug the Kaimes they must have dug deep, in a squatting-place of the ancient men, and mixed the flints with the building-earth" (p. 382). Thus, the Kaimes castle, made up of medieval structures from different periods, is deeply linked to much earlier communities. The potential of amateur archaeological explorations for deepening one's sense of belonging to a place is described by anthropologist Jo Vergunst (2012, p. 36) in his account of the bond between the community and Bennachie hill in the northeast of Scotland. This activity is also an act of memory as those "who did live there are remembered, imaginatively, and in a way made present again" (VERGUNST, 2012, p. 36). Then, in addition to helping to

shape Ewan's view of history, his search for flints may be his way of inhabiting the Mearns and making it his own.

Speculating about the uses of these vestiges brings up the tension between the belief in a past golden age and the view of war as an enduring element in human history. As a child, Ewan finds a piece of metal on the Kaimes and asks his stepfather about it: "*Did they use it for ploughing?* Ewan wanted to know, and Robert said *No, they used it for killing; it's a spear, Ewan man, from the daft* [silly] *old days*" (p. 319). This object inspires one of Robert's sermons, which emphasizes the inevitability of change and forgetting as he reflects on the men who "thought they were fighting for things that would last, they'd be classed as heroes and victors forever. And now they were gone, they were not even names, their lives and their deaths we knew to be foolish, a clamour and babble on little things" (p. 322-323). Robert then advocates that the congregation should actively contribute to social transformation and the improvement of life in Segget so that people in the future could look back without disapproval. To him, although "[a]ll history had been no more than the gabble of a horde of apes that was trapped in a pit" (p. 323), the present is a key moment, and utopia awaits if folk take action.

As aforementioned, this belief in a better future is spurred by an idealized view of the past, especially prehistory, as the time before the deleterious influence of civilization. Robert's idea of a past golden age is brought up by Ewan when he admires his collection of artifacts:

> And sometimes you'd raise your head and look up, when the sun grew still on the peaks of the Mounth, by the glens and the haughs [meadows] you had searched for flints, and think of the men of ancient times who had made those things and hunted those haughs, running naked and swift by the sunlit slopes, fun to live then and talk to those people. Robert said they hadn't been savage at all, but golden hunters of the Golden Age (p. 383).

This passage illustrates how Ewan's interest in archaeology molds his relationship with the landscape. He also seems to echo in part Robert's view of prehistory as he considers it "fun to live then". Even though Ewan accepts the notion of a past golden age at first, he comes to question it in *Grey Granite*. It is after observing the violent repression of a march of the unemployed by the police that the memory of his flint collection comes back to him. Ewan's thoughts of the ancient people are once more strongly associated with the landscape:

> Some careful craftsman had squatted to knapp, with careful knee and finger and eye, looking up now and then from his work on the flakes to see the grey glister of the Howe below, the long lake that covered the Low Mearns then, with sailing shapes of islands upon it, smoke of fires rising slow in the air from the squatting-places of the Simple Men, deer belling far on the hills as the sun swung over to the hazes of the afternoon, things plain and clear to anyone then – you supposed: was that no more than supposing? (p. 549).

Older and discouraged by Duncairn's harsh reality, Ewan starts challenging the idea of an idyllic past when everything was simpler and clearer. In spite of the supposed freedom enjoyed by the prehistoric folk, the artifacts produced by them are deemed no different from the pieces of armament manufactured in Gowans and Gloag, where Ewan works. This line of thought leads him to consider the products from the factory as "power-dreams fulfilled of the flint-knapping men" (p. 549), implying that the ambitious and destructive motivations behind human actions have endured since ancient times. Far from being a harmonious paradise, the prehistoric world of hunter-gatherers is as marked by conflicts as modern times. These reflections cause Ewan's interest in the flints to die down since they lose significance to him, becoming only "a dusty stone, chipped by someone no shape at all, a dim shadow on dust, meaning nothing, saying nothing" (p. 549). As the ancient objects no longer stand for an idealized and just society, they are reduced to their materiality, regarded simply as pieces of stone. This rejection of the golden age ideal is another step toward Ewan's greater involvement in politics. After his flint collection fails to comfort him, Ewan ends up at the museum, questioning the lack of representation of the oppressed groups in art, as analyzed above.

Even as the flints cease to symbolize a utopic world, they continue to be a form of contact with the past. In a trip to the countryside with Ellen after his time in prison, Ewan passes by Segget and sees the Kaimes, one of the sites that he explored when he was growing up, a period which seems as distant as "a million and a half years or so ago" (p. 625). Ewan's reminiscences underscore the bond between place and the memory of those who inhabited it:

> And he minded [remembered] the rolling drummle [jumble] of names of those hill-hidden touns [towns] through the parks of which he'd searched out the flints – Muir of Germany, Jacksbank, Tannachie, Arnamuck, Bogjorgan, Droop Hill, Dillavaird, Goosecraves, Pittengardener, Cushnie, Monboddo – he could run the list for a hundred more, queer he'd never before seen these names for the real things they were, the lives and desirings of many men, memories of their hopes and possessions and prides though their own names and dates had vanished forever (p. 625).

Although Ewan, as a child, was not fully aware of his shared humanity with the people from the past, his hunt for archaeological pieces allows him to visit countless places, where the traces of ancient folk endure long after their names were forgotten. This interest in the anonymous people from the past is felt by Ewan from an early age. As a young boy, he considers that "[i]t was worth reading history to get at these people, the makers of flints and their lives long ago. Though most of the histories were dull as ditchwater, with their kings and their battles and their dates and such muck, you wondered how the people had lived in those

times" (p. 381). Ewan's view of history privileges the common people and rejects an aristocratic historiography, foreshadowing his engagement in the fight for equality.

Whereas young Ewan's interest in archaeology shapes his relationship with the landscape, Chris's attachment to the land is central to her interactions with the setting. As mentioned before, Chris, like her father and her husband Ewan, among other characters, has a strong bond with the land, which leads her to choose to remain in Kinraddie in *Sunset Song*. This connection is expressed in different ways throughout the trilogy. For instance, Chris's body is compared to natural elements: "her eyes clear and deep and brown, brown, deep and clear as the Denburn flow, and her hair was red and was brown by turns, spun fine as a spider's web, wild, wonderful hair" (p. 77). Nature also has a calming influence on her, like during the anxious spells that mark her pregnancy:

> Only night was the time to be feared, if she woke and there was that stillness; but even the quietest night if she listened hard she'd hear the wisp-wisp of the beech leaves near the window, quietening her, comforting her, she never knew why, as though the sap that swelled in the branch and twig were one with the blood that swelled the new life below her navel, that coming day in the months to be a thing she'd share with that whisperer out in the dark (p. 185)

Both passages suggest that Chris is fully and harmoniously integrated with nature. The analogy between the sap of the beech and Chris's blood, as well as that between the new branches and her unborn child, draw attention to the similarities between Chris and the tree as living organisms. Therefore, Chris is represented not as a separate entity, but as part of the natural world. This profound fusion with nature, especially the earth, is further illustrated by the following excerpt:

> From that (the earth) we all came, you had heard Robert say, but wilder and stranger you knew it by far, from the earth's beginning *you yourself* had been here, a blowing of motes in the world's prime, earth, roots and the wings of an insect long syne [ago] in the days when the dragons still ranged the world – every atom here in your body now, that was here, that was you, that beat in your heart, that shaped your body to whiteness and strength, the speed of your legs and the love of your breasts when you turned to the kiss of your Robert at night – these had been there, there was nothing but a change, in a form, the stroke and the beat of a song (p. 316-317, original emphasis).

This unbreakable bond with the natural world is expressed in a material, atomic form in this fragment. What makes up Chris's body is much older than she, connecting her in a fundamental way to the beginnings of time and to a mythical world. The duality of endurance and change is also emphasized in this passage as there is a continuity within all living things from time immemorial; however, these lasting elements are shaped by a constant change in form and appearance.

Chris's special relationship with the land continues even after she marries Robert and leaves the life in the croft behind. At first, she imagines that she would "weary to death" with a routine that did not include tending to the fields and the animals (p. 279). However, there has been such radical changes in Kinraddie's way of life that her transition to the life of the manse is not as hard as she first imagined, as illustrated by this quotation: "But now as she looked on the land so strange, with its tractors and sheep, she half-longed to be gone. It had finished with her, that life that had been, and this was hers now: books, and her Robert, young Ewan to teach, and set a smooth cloth on the Manse's table [...]" (p. 279). Chris's focus on the "tractors and sheep" implies that what she misses is the close contact with the land and the careful work involved in growing crops. Although Chris realizes that it is impossible to go back to the life she had before the war, her feelings of nostalgia and longing for connection with the land remain throughout her life. Living in Duncairn, Chris feels completely disconnected from the radio shows and prefers to "drowse instead and think of the countryside, corn coming green in clay parks this night as often you'd seen it when you were a quean [girl], wedded to Ewan in Kinraddie long syne [ago] – you that waited the feet of another Ewan now" (p. 499). The urban environment is unappealing to her, leading her to wonder "why did folk waste their time in touns [towns], in filth and stour [dust] and looking at shadows when they might have slipped away up the Howe and smelt the smell of the harvest – oh! bonny [beautiful] lying somewhere on a night like this!" (p. 564). These memories of the countryside are marked by the sensations associated with this setting, as will be further explored. It is also interesting to observe that Scots words are more frequent in these passages, underscoring Chris's affective relation with the language and its association with the rural areas.

In both Segget and Duncairn, Chris finds a way to abate her yearning for the land: looking after a garden. This activity allows Chris to keep cultivating the land, even if in a much smaller scale than before. This reconnection with the land brings back memories and sensations, for example with Chris feeling again "sweet and forgotten the smell of the earth" (p. 318) as she tends to the garden with Robert. While Chris is living in Duncairn, her garden provides a rare opportunity to be in contact with nature in this industrialized city. As she works in the garden, she can listen to "the hedge by the house next door [...] a-rustle, soft green, with its budding beech, far off through the hedges some eident body was at work with a lawn-mower, *clinkle-clankle*" (p. 553). Although these sounds may recall the vegetation and the farming equipment heard in the countryside, the garden is a poor substitute for the work in a croft, and Chris considers her flowers in Duncairn "pale things [...] compared with

Segget's" (p. 553). Her feeling that her work in the garden fails to live up to her experience in the farms is expressed even more strongly in the following quotation:

> And Chris thought in that hour of the bright April day as she hoed round the blackberry bushes and roses – suddenly, with a long-forgotten thrill – what a fine smell was the smell of the earth, earth in long sweeping parks that rolled dark-red in ploughing up the hills of the Howe, earth churned in great acres by the splattering feet of the Clydesdale horses, their breath ablow in a morning like this, their smell the unforgotten stable smell, the curling rigs running to meet the sun. Earth . . . and she sossed [fussed] about here in a little yard of stuff that the men she'd once known wouldn't have paused to wipe their nebs with! (p. 618).

Chris's reminiscences of the work in the fields once more revolve around her perceptions, the colors and the smells associated with the earth and the animals. This passage also highlights Chris's deep bond with the land since these memories cause "a long-forgotten thrill" in her.

Even though the gardens in Segget and in Duncairn cannot be compared to a farm, they have a similar quietening effect on her. After the loss of her newborn son, Chris turns to gardening as a way to keep herself busy and find some kind of solace: "So busied Chris was as the days grew warm, she'd found in a garden what once in the fields, years before, on the windy rigs of Blawearie, ease and rest and the kindness of toil, that she saw but little or nothing of Robert [...]" (p. 424). She finds peace by working on the land, like she did when Ewan was away at war, when "hurt and dazed, she turned to the land, close to it and the smell of it, kind and kind it was, it didn't rise up and torment your heart, you could keep at peace with the land if you gave it your heart and hands, tended it and slaved for it, it was wild and a tyrant, but it was not cruel" (p. 226). Despite the harshness of agricultural labor, the contact with the land is a source of comfort for Chris at difficult moments. After Robert's vision of Jesus, which causes them to become more distant, she turns again to the land, as illustrated by the following passage: "she worked through that autumn tending the garden, till almost the earth rebelled from her touch, she thought with a smile, and welcomed the winter" (p. 440). More than merely part of the setting, the land is a true companion to Chris in her moments of need. The connection with the land and the rhythms of nature seems to be the source of Chris's resilience.

The sensations associated with the countryside often stir up Chris's memory and bring back recollections related to that environment. On their first day in Segget, Chris finds out that one of the men helping them to move in is from her hometown Echt, and he says that her father and his farming were long remembered there, which makes her think of her father proudly and fondly since he "could farm other folk off the earth!" (p. 298). These thoughts bring her attention to the cries of birds, which in turn send her into a daydream:

> the rooks were cawing up in the yews, and you thought how they'd fringed your pattern of life – birds, and the waving leafage of trees: peewits over the lands of Echt when you were a bairn [child] with your brother Will, and the spruce stood dark in the little woods that climbed up the slopes to the Barmekin bend; snipe sounding low on Blawearie loch as you turned in unease by the side of Ewan, and listened and heard the whisp of the beech out by the hedge in the quiet of the night; and here now rooks and the yews that stood to peer in the twisty rooms of the Manse. How often would you know them, hear them and see them, with what things in your heart, in what hours of the dark and what hours of the day, in all the hours lying beyond this hour when the sun stood high and the yew-trees drowsed? (p. 298).

Chris and nature are so intricately connected that the sounds of birds and trees frame the memories of different stages of her life. When she is pregnant with her second child, the view of the landscape in spring makes her feel closer to "that Chris of long syne [ago], far from the one that had taken her place, that Chris of kirks [churches] and Robert and books" (p. 406). This proximity to the younger, crofter Chris provoked by the coming of springtime is also expressed in her choice to give birth in the room with furniture from her old home Blawearie. Besides, the smells of the countryside continue to follow Chris even in Duncairn: "suddenly, washing the breakfast things, there came a waft of stray wind through the window, a lost wean of the wind that had tint itself in play in the heights of the summer Mounth" (p. 516). This reminder of the countryside startles Chris to the point that she almost drops a cup and, when Ma Cleghorn, the owner of the boarding house where Chris lives and works, asks her if she has seen a ghost, she replies "*Only smelt one*" (p. 516). After that, she decides to take a trip to the country and ends up visiting Echt, her birthplace. The influence of the sights, sounds and smells associated with nature on Chris's memory reveal the strong impression that these sensations made on her and the lasting power of the reminiscences of the countryside in her life.

In addition to sensuous perceptions, physical space also sparks memories in Chris. On her journey to the countryside with Ewan and Ellen, for example, as the bus goes through the Slug, Chris remembers the day when her family took the same road to move to Kinraddie:

> there came a sudden memory to Chris – a winter night twenty-three years before when father and mother and Will and herself and the loons [boys] long lost and the twins that died had flitted across these hills in a storm, with battered lanterns in the on-ding of sleet . . . twenty-three years before. Back and back through the years as the bus climbed the Slug, years like the rustle of falling leaves, dreams by night and dim turnings in sleep, and you were again that quean [girl] in the sleet, all the world and living before you unkenned [unknown], kisses and hate and toil and woe, kisses at night when the byre-stalls drowsed, agony in long deserted noons, hush of terror of those moon-bright nights when you carried within your womb seed of men – for a minute they seemed no more than dreams as you drowsed, a quean, in the smore of the sleet . . . (p. 519).

If the parallel between the two trips through the Slug makes Chris recollect following that route in a cart as a girl, this memory, in turn, takes her on an emotional journey through her life, making her feel young again. For this fleeting moment when older Chris sees herself as the girl who moved to Kinraddie, all her experiences seem as distant as dreams. Another instance of this feeling of travelling back in time induced by visiting the places of her youth happens when Chris sees "Arbuthnott [which] slept on the Bervie banks, clusters of trees, with the sudden gleam in the wind and the sun of the polished gear, bridles and haimes [horse collar], on the straining shoulders of the labouring teams" (p. 431). The impression of "going back into your youth" makes Chris sigh and think that she is getting old, which suggests that she feels somewhat nostalgic. The fact that these reflections arise from the view of Arbuthnott, the place where Gibbon, rather than Chris, grew up, points to the autobiographical elements included in the trilogy. Like his protagonist, Gibbon grew up in the northeast of Scotland and was strongly interested in the world of books and learning. Both also share an emotional connection to the land and the local culture although they take radically different directions in their choices since Chris chose to stay in the countryside whereas Gibbon left and eventually settled near London.

Chris's feeling of being transported into the past when returning to the places of her childhood and youth may derive from the impression that the landscape remains untouched through time. According to Halbwachs (2015, p. 188-189), memory is inextricably linked with place, and the relative stability of space gives us an illusion of permanence and of recovering the past in the present. This semblance of continuity is also clear in Chris's trip to Barmekin hill with Ellen and Ewan, where she can hear "lonely, unforgotten, never-stopping that plaint, the peesies [peewits] flying over Barmekin" (p. 520). On this occasion, the recurrent presence of the singing of the birds in Chris's life even gives her the impression that their cries have never ceased since her childhood: "Twenty-three years and they never had stopped . . . And Chris thought half-shamed, in a desperate flyting: *Losh, but their throats must surely be dry!*" (p. 520). Hence, returning to the places where she used to live stimulates her memory and provides her with a sense of constancy in her life.

The effect of the landscape on Chris's reminiscences, however, may also arise from the alterations that it has undergone through time. As she is leaving Kinraddie for Segget, Chris gives a last glance at the village, with

> the moors that smoothed to the upland parks Chae Strachan had ploughed in the days gone by, the Knapp with no woods to shelter it now, Upperhill set high in a shimmer of heat, Cuddiestoun, Netherhill – last of them all, high and still in the hill-clear weather, Blawearie up on its ancient brae, silent and left and ended for you; and, suddenly, daft [silly], you couldn't see a thing (p. 295).

Chris seems to focus her attention on the absent elements in the landscape: her former neighbor Chae, killed at the war, and the woods cut down during the conflict. Besides, the reference to some of the crofts points to the recent changes in Kinraddie. Whereas each of the nine farms housed a family before the war, all the estates are owned by four families in the early 1920s since some of the inhabitants died at the fighting and others were driven away by the high prices demanded by the trustees for the purchase of the properties. As analyzed before, another important transformation is the fact that people in Kinraddie stop farming the land and start raising livestock for a living. Chris's final look is directed to Blawearie, her former house, which was bought by one of her neighbors to raise sheep. Her tears seem to spring from her several losses – the deaths of her parents, her husband and her friends, the end of her life as a tenant farmer, and more broadly the passing of the whole community's way of life. The view of the village calls to Chris's mind all that she has left behind, evoking a nostalgic feeling.

In all three novels, Chris builds a special relationship with a specific landmark. For example, she develops a close bond to the stone circle, which becomes a place of reflection and memory for her. As previously mentioned, all the chapters in *Sunset Song* open and close with Chris near the Standing Stones, reminiscing the latest events in her life. As the novel progresses, she seems to become gradually closer to the monument. While the stones are barely mentioned in the opening of the first two chapters, Chris has a more intimate contact with them in the last two sections. In "Seed-time", the third chapter, after an intense argument with Ewan, Chris runs to the stones and rests the slapped cheek on the greatest of them, describing the sensation as "strange and comforting" (p. 112). In "Harvest", Chris climbs Blawearie Brae and touches the biggest of the Standing Stones after finding out about Ewan's execution, showing her strong relationship to these relics in difficult moments of her life. Besides, the connection between the stone circle and her memories is underscored in the last section since "[t]he mist of memories fell away" when she stops touching the stone, marking the end of this chapter's flashback. It is also telling that the stones are repeatedly personified in these passages. After the altercation with Ewan, for example, Chris leans against "the meikle [big] one (stone), the monster that stood and seemed to peer over the water and blue distances that went up to the Grampians" (p. 112). When this scene is recounted again, toward the end of the chapter, as Chris climbs the hill, she sees "the Standing Stones wheeling up from the whins to peer with quiet faces then in her face" (p. 179). In "Harvest", Chris removes her hand "from the face of the Standing Stone" (p. 237), a quotation which shows

another feature that personifies the stone circle – the capitalization of the words referring to these relics throughout *A Scots Quair*. Thus, the stones are represented as enduring observers of the life in Kinraddie and as reliable companions to Chris.

Chris's intense relationship with the stone circle springs from the fact that they become a sort of haven for her as she comes of age. As previously mentioned, the Standing Stones constitute a place of refuge for Chris, "the only place where ever she could come and stand back a little from the clamour of the days" (p. 112). This location is more than a place where she could rest and recall her life's events, but where she looks for "safety, compassion, so often and oft when she was a quean [girl] . . ." (p. 278). More than a feature of the landscape, the stone circle becomes Chris's confidant and a source of comfort as she grows up. Her connection with the stones is so intimate that it is "queer" to be near them with Robert, in this place "that once was hers" (p. 278), as though he is invading her secret, private spot.

Even though Chris moves away from Kinraddie, memories of the Standing Stones still come back to her in later years. In *Grey Granite,* Chris remembers the stone circle, deeply associated with her youth, in moments of crisis. When Ma Cleghorn falls gravely ill, Chris faces the troubling prospect of having to find a new home and another source of income since she would not be able to keep the house on her own. At that moment, she recalls her wedding night, which provides a stark contrast to her present circumstances: "just a night like this she minded [remembered] now, lights, and Long Rob and Chae at the fiddle, dancing, warmth, the daftness of being young: they'd seemed eternal, to outlast the hills, those moments when Ewan had first ta'en her in his arms" (p. 579). Remembering the past reinforces the passage of time and the feeling of distance from her early adult years, both due to all she had lived and faced and to the radical change in her situation. When she recalls Blawearie, she thinks of

> the croft in the north wind's blow, of the snow driving about it this night lashing the joists and window-panes, the fly and the scurry of the driving flakes about the Stones high up by the loch, the lost rigs sleeping under their covering, the peesies [peewits] wheeping [piping] lost in the dark. Oh idiot, weeping to remember that, all things gone and lost and herself afraid and afraid and a morning coming she was feared to face, lost and alone. (p. 579)

These memories denote Chris's strong emotional attachment to the land and nature, as well as to the stone circle. The farm and the Standing Stones also come to stand for a longed-for past in which she perceives her life to have been better. This desirable past is marked not only by the contact with the land and the newlywed expectation of a blissful union, but also by the feeling of promise associated with having her whole life ahead of her.

This sense of freedom also contrasts with Chris's feelings in another passage in which she thinks of the Standing Stones. After Ma Cleghorn's death, Chris feels that she is dragged into a marriage with Ake Ogilvie, who offers her financial stability and helps to free young Ewan from his unjust arrest. In this situation, she compares herself to the prisoners supposedly sacrificed in rituals near the Standing Stones: "the fugitive Chris was imprisoned at last, led in a way like the captives long syne [ago] whom men dragged up the heights to Blawearie Loch to streek [strike] out and kill by the great grey stones. Caught as they were: she, who had often lain down in the shadow of the Stones –" (p. 587). Once more, Chris contrasts her present circumstances, in which she feels trapped, with a more untroubled past. It seems, however, that her view of her youth is somewhat idealized seeing that she went through a number of traumatic experiences at the time, such as her mother's suicide and her father's abuse and death. In this passage, the stone circle, rather than simply symbolizing the carefree past she remembers before marrying Ake, points to an ancient violent ritual involving the oppression of a group of imprisoned people. This somber aspect of the Standing Stones may be related to Alan Bold's (1983, p. 133) interpretation that they represent the beginnings of civilization and organized religion, repressive forces from Gibbon's perspective.

The structure of *Cloud Howe* and *Grey Granite* is analogous to that of *Sunset Song*, with each chapter bookended by scenes of Chris recalling past events in a special location. In the later novels, Chris's reflections dwell on the passage of time and on more distant memories before the flashback of more recent events. In Segget, Chris is attracted to the ruins of the Kaimes castle on her first day living there:

> And now as she climbed swift up the slope, queer and sudden a memory took her – of the hills above the farm in Kinraddie, how sometimes she'd climb to the old Druid stones and stand and remember the world below, and the things that were done and the days put by. Was that why the Kaimes had so filled her sky the twenty-four hours she had been in Segget? (p. 273).

Like in *Sunset Song*, Chris tends to retire to the Kaimes at moments of change or distress, such as her newborn son's and Robert's deaths. The ruins also come to be a place of comfort and reflection for Chris both physically and psychologically. Not only does she find shelter from the rain there in the opening of the second chapter, but she also seeks some respite in the Kaimes after the loss of her child: "the Kaimes had called her after those weeks of the smell of medicines, close fires, and the pain that ran up and down her and played hide and seek with every sinew and bone that she had" (p. 372). Thus, her relationship with the ruins in Segget seems to echo to an extent the one she had with the Standing Stones.

There are several parallels between the stone circle in Kinraddie and the Kaimes. Both are relics located in high places and that are not valued by the communities despite their local historical significance. While the Standing Stones are a vestige of the early inhabitants of Scotland, the ruins in Segget are associated with different local tales, like the legends of Finella and of the assassination of the Sheriff of Mearns, as previously analyzed. The destruction of the castle is also the product of social unrest in the early nineteenth century as it is destroyed in a fire after the rent strike sparked by a member of the Burns family, as mentioned in chapter 1. Hence, the Kaimes, which was built in stages and is thus composed of layers dating from different periods, is a witness and an evidence of the town's history. As in the first novel, the place where Chris recalls her past is also strongly linked to history, connecting her memory to that of the whole community. Another similarity between the stone circle and the Kaimes is the fact that the local population does not attach importance to them. Folk in Kinraddie regard the Standing Stones with suspicion and fear due to their pagan origins. For the people of Segget, the Kaimes is an unseemly place to visit, "the place where spinners and tinks [itinerant laborers] of that kind would go, of a Sabbath evening, and lie on the grass and giggle and smoke and do worse than that – Ay, things that would leave them smoking in hell, as the old minister said that they would" (p. 302). The abandoned ruins are considered a spot where people go to break social norms, which makes it even more shocking to Segget's folk that the minister's wife would go there, as Chris remembers with amusement: "by the tale they told all Segget had seen her and stared astounded, a scandalled amaze–" (p. 300). Her visits to the Kaimes are the first pretext for Segget to gossip about her, an example of the vicious rumors abundant in the town.

Chris's time in the Kaimes is filled with memories of her family and earlier life, as well as reflections on the passage of time. When she first climbs to the Kaimes castle, Chris sees the sunrise painting the landscape in red, and the color reminds her of "the folk who had died, and the sun came washed from the sea of their blood, the million Christs who had died in France, as she once had heard Robert preach in a sermon" (p. 299). As the strong imagery in this passage suggests, the horrors of the First World War deeply affect her life as her first husband Ewan is killed in the war and Robert, a veteran of the conflict, has his health debilitated due to his time at the front. Moreover, the thought of Robert's dream of equality reminds Chris of the suffering of her own family: "Was there a new time coming to the earth, when nowhere a bairn [child] would cry in the night, or a woman go bowed as her mother had done, or a man turn into a tormented beast, as her father, or into a bullet-torn corpse, as had

Ewan?" (p. 299). As Chris grows older and more mature, her musings are suffused with memories of her own experience and of that of the people surrounding her.

These moments of introspection also lead Chris to think of the changes resulting from the passage of time and to assess her life. The inevitability of change, a central theme throughout the trilogy, is increasingly present in the protagonist's reflections as she matures. When Chris returns to the Kaimes six months after moving to Segget, her life in Kinraddie seems to be surprisingly distant from her: "It felt like years – long and long years – since she'd worked as a farmer's wife in Kinraddie. Years since she'd felt the beat of the rain in her face as she moiled at work in the parks" (p. 300). This feeling of distance may have more to do with the change in her situation, namely with her new life in the manse and in a new town, than with the actual amount of time elapsed. As Halbwachs (2015, p. 36) remarks, losing touch with a certain group makes it more difficult to recall the events related to this community. Chris's attachment to the land is expressed in the quotation by her sensuous memories of the touch of the rain as she worked, stressing once more her connection with nature. These thoughts about the transformations in her life lead her to question herself about her choices: "How much had she gained, how much had she lost?" (p. 300). While change may be both positive and negative in this quotation, it assumes a more frightening and overwhelming aspect in Chris's last visit to the ruins, after the shock of Robert's death: "Queer and terrible to think of that now – that all things passed as your life went on, but the little things you had given no heed" (p. 419). This reflection on change also touches upon the notion of identity:

> And here she climbed from those ten full years, still the same Chris in her heart of hearts, nothing altered but space and time and the things she had once believed everlasting and sure – believed that they made her life, they made her! But they hadn't, there was something beyond that endured, some thing she had never yet garbed in a name. (p. 419)

The interplay between permanence and change is reiterated, now with the focus on Chris's perception of herself. Whereas the circumstances around her are clearly altered, she believes that there is an unchanged essence within her, something that defines her though she cannot identify it. However, this stable identity seems to some degree paradoxical, at once fixed and elusive, since it is enduring but resists definition.

In *Cloud Howe*, Chris's moments of reminiscence also contain some allusions to biblical passages, which may arise from her life as a minister's wife. After the death of the baby she was expecting, she compares her visit to the Kaimes "to sit and look from the high places here" to Jesus' fasting on the Mount of Temptation "with the devil for guide" (p. 372).

Instead of being tempted with power or material goods, Chris's temptation is to rest: "Idly she minded [remembered] that and smiled – it came of being a minister's wife. What had the devil said to Christ then? Maybe *Just rest. Rest and have peace. Don't let them tear you to bits with their hates, their cares and their loves, your angers for them. Leave them and rest!*" (p. 372). Chris feels that she should leave aside her concerns about Robert and young Ewan "for the first time in years", implying that she has been putting their needs before hers for a long period. Thus, this advice to rest may be a recommendation to become more attuned to her own feelings. Significantly, there is a reversal of roles as the capitalization of "He" in the following quotation suggests that this counsel comes not from the devil, but from Christ: "Yes, He'd said that, there wasn't a doubt, just as He stood by her saying it now, telling her to rest [...]" (p. 372). Uwe Zagratzki (2015, p. 70) calls attention to Gibbon's "subversive reading" of Christian elements in *The Calends of Cairo* (1931) and *Persian Dawns, Egyptian Nights* (1932), two collections of short stories published under his birth name. This approach seems to be at play in this fragment from *A Scots Quair*, with the recommendation that Chris detach herself from others' pains to take care of herself represented as Christ's counsel, rather than a reproachable attitude.

Moreover, Chris's final reflection near the Kaimes refers to the book of Ecclesiastes after her aforementioned thoughts on change and identity. A passage of the biblical text is directly quoted in the novel: "*The wind goeth towards the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits*" (p. 420). As Chris ponders about what has changed and what remains the same, this fragment which conveys the idea of perpetually cyclical alteration comes to her mind, stressing the theme of constant repetition in the trilogy. This biblical reference is significant since the Ecclesiastes seems to be aligned to Chris's ideas about change and the transience of human experience. For instance, a few lines before the biblical fragment quoted in *Cloud Howe*, the following passage is found in the book of Ecclesiastes: "Generations come and generations go, / but the earth remains forever" (BIBLE, Ecclesiastes, 1, 4). This excerpt encapsulates the duality between change and continuity that permeates the trilogy. Besides, the Ecclesiastes expresses the meaninglessness of human endeavors in face of inevitable death and forgetting, which is strikingly similar to Chris's view of human pursuits as passing clouds. Therefore, even though Chris and Robert frequently differ in their view of the world, it is possible that part of his religious discourse helps to inform her perspective. Robert's influence may also be observed in the closing of *Cloud Howe* as Chris imitates his blessing gesture when leaving the Kaimes for the last time: "so standing she minded [remembered] the way that Robert would

bless the folk of Segget on Sabbath. And, queerly, her hands shaped into that gesture, with Segget rising in its driftings of smoke, and the hills behind, and all time before" (p. 472). Her blessing closes this chapter of her life and may symbolize her final detachment from ephemeral ideologies since, after that, she sees the hills "bare of their clouds for once, the pillars of mist that aye [always] crowned their heights, all but a faint wisp vanishing south, and the bare, still rocks upturned to the sky" (p. 473). As she leaves Segget, the enduring rocks prevail over the transient mist.

In *Grey Granite*, while Chris is in Duncairn, the location where her reminiscences take place is the staircase on Windmill Brae. As the spots chosen by her in the previous novels, it is a high vantage point with a view, a characteristic emphasized in the following fragment showing Chris's thoughts:

> funny this habit she aye [always] had had of finding some place wherever she bade to which she could climb by her lone for a while and think of the days new-finished and done, like a packman halting hill on hill and staring back at the valleys behind. She minded [remembered] how above the ploughed lands of Blawearie this habit had grown, long syne [ago], long syne, when she'd lain and dreamed as a quean [girl] by the loch at the shadow of the marled Druid Stones, and how above Segget in the ruined Kaimes she had done the same as the wife of Robert (p. 539).

The passage underscores the symbolic aspect of Chris's choice of high places as the act of remembering is compared to the observation of the valleys below. The hills allow her not only to be detached from her routine, but also to see farther both physically and metaphorically. Besides, like the stone circle and the ruins, the staircase is a quiet place, complimented by Chris as "the blessed desertion of the Windmill Steps so few folk used in Duncairn toun [town]" (p. 485). Hence, this spot allows the solitude necessary to muse about her life.

There are, however, important differences between Windmill Brae and the other places chosen by Chris. The contrast of Duncairn's urban environment is marked, for instance, by the fact that the hillside has been tamed into a staircase. Besides, Chris's perceptions on Windmill Brae differ from those on Blawearie Brae and in the Kaimes. The description of Chris's moments near the Standing Stones are highly evocative, with an abundance of references to nature: the young girl feels "the coarse grass crackle up beneath her into a fine quiet couch" (p. 70) and sees the moors colored "yellow with broom and powdered faintly with purple, that was the heather but not the full passion of its colour yet" (p. 35). She also hears "the hum of the heather-bees" (p. 110), the cries of the peewits and the snipes (p. 237), and the "*whirroo!*" of "a pheasant [that] flew up beneath her feet" (p. 111), as well as the sounds of carts and farming equipment coming from Kinraddie: "somewhere there was a driller on the go [...], the clank was a deafening thing" (p. 111). The moments in the Kaimes

also have some of this idyllic quality, with the sight of heather, broom and the stars, and the sounds of curlew, peewits, a blackbird, and a cock. The harmony and the beauty of the natural world contrast with the sound of the hooters of the mills, described as "a screech like an hungered beast in pain" (p. 299), and the sight of "a red, quiet lowe [flame], from the furnaces stacked for the night in the mills" (p. 371). In Duncairn, the description of the place is even more unpleasant due to the consequences of urbanization and industrialization. The city is enveloped in a "yellow fog that [...] had in her (Chris's) throat the acrid taste of an ancient smoke" (p. 483) and a "foul smell" (p. 485), stressing the pollution caused by the factories. The iron handrail of Windmill Brae steps is "warm, slimy" and compared to "a famished snake" (p. 483), a description which emphasizes its repellent aspect. From this spot, it is also possible to hear an abundance of urban sounds:

> she was suddenly aware of the silence below – as though all the shrouded town also stood still, deep-breathing a minute in the curl of the fog – stilling the shamble and grind of the trams, the purr of the buses in the Royal Mile, the clang and swing of the trains in Grand Central, the swish and roll and oily call of the trawlers taking the Forthie's flood [...] (p. 483).

This fragment, rich in onomatopoeia, illustrates the replacement of the calling of the birds with a cacophony of metallic sounds and the noise of engines. This halt of the bustling sounds in the night is broken by "the scrunch of a tram wheeling down from the lights of Royal Mile to the Saturday quietude of Gallowgate" (p. 484). Chris sees "the shiver of sparks through the fog, syne [then] the sailing brute swing topaz in sight, swaying and swearing, with aching feet as it ran for its depot in Alban Street" (p. 484). With no animals in sight, the tram is given attributes of a living organism, "swearing" and running with "aching feet". Its portrayal as a "brute" also contributes to a negative depiction of the tram and, by extension, of the urban environment.

Moreover, contrary to the Standing Stones and the ruins of the castle of the Kaimes, the staircase in Duncairn lacks historical significance. Whereas these remains connect Chris to the local and national history, the steps on Windmill Brae are not associated with a shared past. As Hannah Sackett (2005, p. 26) argues, the monuments in the first two novels help Chris "to think beyond the confines of Kinraddie or Segget, and to locate her own position in the world and in history". These relics provide her with immediate evidence of distant predecessors and of the passage of time, with the entailed transformations. The fact that Chris reminisces in a place with no obvious ties to the past in Duncairn suggests that the city-dwellers may be incapable of connecting with their roots due to the radical alterations caused by industrialization in the landscape. In Gibbon's novel, industrial development –

traditionally represented as progress – causes a rupture as it engulfs the city at the expense of its inhabitants' bond with their origins. Nonetheless, there are some emblems of time in Windmill Brae, such as the clock on Thomson Tower, which can be seen from the steps. Another important symbol is the mirror hung by a curve of the stairs, which allows Chris to think about herself and to assess the signs of time in her own body:

> She saw a woman who was thirty-eight, looked less, she thought, thirty-five maybe in spite of those little ropes of grey that marred the loops of the coiled bronze hair, the crinkles about the sulky mouth and the eyes that were older than the face. Face thinner and straighter and stranger than once, as though it were shedding mask on mask down to the last reality – the skull, she supposed, that final reality (p. 484).

In the absence of historical vestiges, the ageing of her body is the remaining sign of temporality and the way that she finds to connect to the past, restricted now to her own lifetime, instead of spanning centuries.

Thoughts of death and reflections about the future are recurrent in Chris's introspective moments in Duncairn. In the first chapter, Chris ponders on life and death as she remembers her dead husbands: "Oh, mixed and queer soss [mess] that living was, dying, dying slowly a bit of yourself every year, dying long ago with that dim lad, Ewan, dying in the kirk [church] of Segget the time your hand came red from Robert's dead lips" (p. 484). Although she expresses this gloomy view of life as a slow journey toward death and feels that the death of her loved ones takes something from her, she is still capable of laughing at "a foul tale told of Duncairn crematorium" (p. 484). In addition to seeing humor in these difficult situations, Chris feels that her approach toward death has become more unemotional: "Once it had been dreadful and awful to think of – the horror of forgotten flesh taken from enduring bone, the masks and veils of life away, down to those grim essentials. Now it left her neither sick nor sorry, she found [...]" (p. 484). As Chris grows older, she believes she is no longer disturbed by the thought of ageing or dying, which are regarded just as part of life. Later, however, when confronted with the death of Ma Cleghorn, her partner in the boarding house, Chris is more affected by it, though not in the way usually associated with mourning: "Long ago Robert would have been able to put in fine words the things that you felt – or could even Robert? Could he have put in words both your pity and desire to laugh – laughter because death was so funny and foolish?" (p. 586). From her perspective, death is mundane, even absurd, a view which may be explained by how often she experiences bereavement – throughout the trilogy, Chris loses her parents, her brother, two husbands, and several close friends. Regarding death in a more detached and pragmatic way is perhaps a strategy to cope with these repeated blows.

Chris's meditations about the future tend to be pessimistic as she finds herself in unexpected predicaments in *Grey Granite*. In several passages, the unpredictability that shapes all our lives is emphasized, with Chris going into "those mists of the future" (p. 540). After Ma's death, Chris looks back into the past as an attempt "to make out where she'd mislaid that security hers and her own only a short six months before" (p. 542). This sense of false security leads to an anxiety about the future conveyed by the repetition of the question "Whatever next?" both before and after her flashback. Moreover, Chris feels bewildered and helpless in this circumstance: "How could she have known that day in July when she rested here and wondered on things that *this* would come, that she'd stand here appalled, that she wouldn't know which way to think or to move?" (p. 541-542, original emphasis). These moments of despair are followed by the calm brought about by the thought that she can face whatever comes: "No worry could last beyond the last point, there was nothing awaiting for her but her life, New Year and Life that would gang [go] as it would, greeting [crying] or laughing, unheeding her fears. And she went up the steps to death and life" (p. 586). A similar reaction follows her decision to marry Ake Ogilvie, when she feels imprisoned and tense. Once more, the future is considered opaque and unforeseeable, with exclamations such as "what an antrin world that waited to-morrow!" (p. 630) and "[o]h, that unguessable to-morrow would tell" (p. 631). Chris also reflects on the futility of making plans since "[n]o to-morrow ever was [what you expected] though you planned it with care, locked chance in the stable and buried the key" (p. 630). Both situations that trigger these ponderings about the future involve an impression of being at the mercy of chance, rather than in control of her own life, a condition which may be particularly difficult to such an independent character as Chris.

The theme of change is developed in the openings and closings of each chapter throughout the trilogy. In *Sunset Song*, Chris's musings are focused on the present and the more immediate past events in her life. As she grows older, other considerations come to the forefront. These reflexive passages in *Cloud Howe* are pervaded with thoughts about her life in Kinraddie and all the transformations experienced since that time, as previously explored. In *Grey Granite*, while in Duncairn, Chris not only wonders about death and the process of ageing, but she also worries about the uncertain future and the changes which it brings to her life and to that of her son Ewan. She is concerned, for example, about the future of his relationship with Ellen: "Grey granite and thistledown – how would they mix?" (p. 631). The passage of time and the consequent changes provoke reflections and apprehension about the

course taken by her life. Only after a return to her hometown in the countryside will Chris be able to reconcile herself to the at once beneficial and destructive potential of change.

The last chapter of the trilogy takes Chris back to the village of Echt, in Aberdeenshire, where she was born and spent her childhood. Whereas the bulk of the chapter is set in Duncairn, the opening and closing sections take place in Echt, with Chris climbing Barmekin hill. The idea of cycle, of repetition in the midst of transformation, is central to this passage of *Grey Granite*. An instance of this is the description of the place surrounding Chris: she returns to the countryside, where she is in touch with nature like she was in Kinraddie, following a path "choked with whins and the creep of the heather" and seeing "the heather bells hung shrunken and small, bees were grumbling going to their homes, great bumbling brutes Chris brushed from her skirts" (p. 632). The notion of cyclical repetition is stressed by the fact that the trilogy begins and ends in two periods of drought in June, divided by twenty-three years. *Sunset Song* opens with "all parks [...] fair parched, sucked dry, the red clay soil of Blawearie gaping open for the rain that seemed never-coming" (p. 35), and Chris's last reflection in *Grey Granite* happens in "a June of drought and sweltering heat" (p. 632). As nature is shaped by seasonal cycles, so are human life and history marked by continuity and repetition. Besides, the return to the country means that Chris is once more surrounded by tangible traces of the past. It is on the Barmekin that she finds the structure left by astronomers after the observation of an eclipse and the Pictish fort noticed by Ewan during their journey to the countryside with his future girlfriend Ellen, as aforementioned. Therefore, Chris's retreat to recall recent events in the last chapter allows her to connect once again with a more distant past as well as her own.

Chris's return to her birthplace marks a strong reconnection with her roots as she settles in Cairndhu, the same farm where her family lived, with "the room where she herself had been born, the kitchen where she'd sat and heard her mother, long syne [ago], that night the twins were born . . ." (p. 671). The pervasiveness of change is also explored in this passage since, even though it constitutes a return to Chris's origins to an extent, the circumstances surrounding her are quite different. This idea of transformation is expressed earlier in the novel, when Chris sees Cairndhu again during her trip to the country with Ewan and Ellen. The place is abandoned, dominated by overgrown grass and thistle, since "another and bigger farm long syne [ago] had eaten up the land and the implements" (p. 520). Hence, the transformations in farming that deeply affected Kinraddie are also responsible for the dilapidation of Chris's childhood croft. During this visit, she is distressed by these alterations:

> Chris wandered from place to place like one seeking that which she wouldn't know – maybe something of that sureness mislaid in the past, long ago, when she was a quean [girl]. But here was nothing, nothing but change that had followed every pace of her feet, quiet-paddling as a panther at night (p. 520-521).

In this passage, Chris is "haunted" by her memories (p. 521) and regards change as unsettling, surreptitiously impacting her life and leading to a feeling of being uprooted and lost. Once she is cleaning the house and settling there, the place evokes strong recollections of her family:

> sometimes in the middle of that work in the house or tinkling a hoe out in the parks she'd close her eyes a daft minute and think nothing indeed of it all had happened – Kinraddie, Segget, the years in Duncairn – that beside her Will her brother was bending to weed, her father coming striding peak-faced from the house, she might turn and see her mother's face . . . (p. 671).

This illusion of changelessness, however, is quickly shattered, with the transience of human life contrasted with the permanence of the landscape: "And she'd open her eyes and see only the land, enduring, encompassing, the summer hills gurling in summer heat, unceasing the wail of the peesies far off" (p. 671). Chris's return to Cairndhu, thus, plays with the notions of endurance and change as, although she returns to farm work and to the very house where she was born, her situation is significantly altered.

The interaction between repetition and change is related to life and death in Chris's final reflection. She thinks that she is expected to remain "at home with her work, eident and trig [brisk], and seeing to things for the morn – that the morn she might get up and see to more things" (p. 633), a routine of unending work guided by the cycle of day and night. Although marked by this pattern of repetition, life is permeated by change as this perpetual toil is

> the reality for all folk's days, however they clad its grim shape in words, in symbols of cloud and rock, mountain that endured, or shifting sands or changing tint – like those colours that were fading swift far in the east [...] Change that went on as a hirpling clock, with only benediction to ring at the end – knowledge that the clock would stop some time, that even change might not endure (p. 633).

Change is inescapable even for those who seek to live by sure creeds, symbolized by the rocks and mountains, instead of being "hunters of clouds" (p. 405) like Robert. In fact, the quotation suggests that such certainties are no more than illusions since death is the only certainty and the only escape from constant transformation. Whereas change is represented more negatively in this passage, with death as a "benediction", Chris seems to come to terms with the ambivalence of change as her meditation progresses:

> Chris moved and sat with her knees hand-clasped, looking far on that world across the plain and the day that did not die there but went east, on and on, over all the world till the morning came, the unending morning somewhere on the world. No twilight land anywhere for shade, sun or night the portion of all, her little shelter in Cairndhu a dream of no-life that could not endure. And that was the best deliverance of all, as she saw it now, sitting here quiet – that that Change who ruled the earth

> and the sky and the waters underneath the earth, Change whose face she once feared to see, whose right hand was Death and whose left hand Life, might be stayed by none of the dreams of men, love, hate, compassion, anger or pity, gods, devils or wild crying to the sky. He passed and repassed in the ways of the wind, Deliverer, Destroyer and Friend in one (p. 671-672).

At first, Chris expresses, as before, uneasiness with the unceasing cycle of day and night, which offers no respite. Her thoughts suggest that her retreat to Cairndhu is a fruitless attempt to break free from the constant struggle of living and to find some rest, "a dream of no-life". However, Chris comes to acknowledge that the unstoppable change encompasses both destruction and regeneration as it is "Deliverer, Destroyer and Friend" at once. From her perspective, change is the ruling principle of the world, prevailing over any human dream or emotion, and has a sacred quality, as suggested by the capitalization of the word. In order to achieve this peace of mind, Chris has to live utterly detached from other people and "without hope or temptation, without hate or love" (p. 633), transcending the feelings and the social connection which characterize human life. In this state, she becomes one with nature as she sits on the hill, in the rain, until "feeling no longer the touch of the rain or hearing the sound of the lapwings going by" (p. 672), finally finding her home.

3 **THE ECHOES OF WORLD WAR ONE**

Daytime an' nicht,
Sun, wind an' rain;
The lang, cauld licht
O' the spring months again.
The yaird's a' weed,
An' the fairm's a' still –
Wha'll sow the seed
I' the field by the lirk o' the hill?

Prood maun ye lie,
Prood did ye gang;
Auld, auld am I,
But O! life's lang!
Ghaists i' the air,
Whaups cryin' shrill,
An you nae mair
I' the field by the lirk o' the hill –

Violet Jacob

The First World War had a great impact on Scottish life. These consequences were even more intensely felt in smaller communities. Their social structure was deeply affected due both to the war casualties and to economic transformations that created new opportunities and drove a large number of people from the countryside to urban areas, as stated by historian and writer Angus Calder (2004, p. 6-7). Some of the considerable repercussions of the Great War are represented in *A Scots Quair*. Whereas the years of fighting are comprised only in *Sunset Song*, the conflict casts a long shadow throughout the trilogy. The war is remembered and commemorated in different ways, both communal and individual, as it leaves a lasting mark on those who fought and those who were left behind. As time passes, even though the signs of a new armed conflict haunt the last novel of the trilogy, younger generations seem more distanced from the memories of the war. However, their experience mirrors that of their parents in some ways, emphasizing the ideas of continuity and repetition in *A Scots Quair*.

As such a consequential and traumatic event, World War One gave rise to various collective acts of remembrance. Candau (2016, p. 151) describes how tragic events give origin to strong memories that may contribute to a group's sense of unity since painful memories are more prone to bring people together. Turning specifically to the First World War, historian Jay Winter (2006, p. 18) considers that this armed struggle was inserted in the context of a "memory boom" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which

focused mainly on the construction of national identities. The commemoration of the war casualties was an important part of this phenomenon, both modifying the way in which the past was remembered and deeply influencing the representation of later conflicts in the social imaginary (WINTER, 2006, p. 1, 20). Remembering the dead is also a way of strengthening a community's identity. Candau (2016, p. 145), for instance, considers that monuments for the dead embody the continuity to which each group aspires. The strong and widespread impulse to keep alive the memory of those who died in the war is depicted in Gibbon's trilogy, as exemplified by the creation of war memorials in the communities of Kinraddie and Segget.

These efforts to honor the fallen springs from the feeling of a duty to remember them. Calder (2004, p. 19) argues that the rise of the average life expectancy before the war reinforced the idea of death in battle as an honorable sacrifice in the service of the nation, especially when it came to the young combatants. The tribute to the dead is an important part of the commemorative acts performed after the conflict. Besides providing a way for families to deal with the loss of their loved ones, these practices of remembrance sought to express the notion that "the conflict had a meaning, that these sacrifices were redemptive, that they prepared the ground for a better world" (WINTER, 2006, p. 32). Hence, the idea that the First World War was "the war to end all wars" could be used to reassure the population that the bloodshed had not been in vain. These optimistic and patriotic views are challenged in *A Scots Quair*, both by the skepticism of some characters and by the representation of an increasingly belligerent atmosphere in the decades following the fighting, as will be analyzed.

3.1 **Memorials and narratives**

The grief experienced by those on the home front during World War One was intensified by the impossibility of a proper funeral and burial for the fallen. As explained by Calder (2004, p. 13-14), most corpses were not repatriated to Britain, remaining, sometimes unidentified, in cemeteries or unmarked graves abroad. In this context, collective memorials are valued as a place of mourning where anyone, but mainly those who lost someone in the fighting, could pay homage to the dead. An example of such a practice was the interment of an unknown soldier to represent all combatants in Westminster Abbey in 1920 (CALDER, 2004, p. 13). The distress caused by the lack of a burial ceremony is represented in *Sunset Song* in the passage in which Chris receives the news of Ewan's death. Her feeling of

confusion is clear: “She was vexed and startled by that – what was it she did? Did she go out to France and up to the front line, maybe, into a room where they’d show her Ewan lying dead, quiet and dead, white and bloodless, sweat on his hair, killed in action?” (p. 230). Her agony continues until John Brigson, a worker hired to help her out in the farm, tells her that “she did nothing, they could never take all widows to France and Ewan must already be buried” (p. 231).

The absence of a corpse to bury is reinforced by Gibbon’s description of the remaining material vestiges of the dead. Kirsty Strachan, for example, only receives the “pocket-book and hankies and things” (p. 248) belonging to her late husband Chae. Instead of bringing fond memories, however, these objects distress her and even make her faint as “blood lay still in a pouch of the pocket-book, cold and black” (p. 248) even though it was washed before being sent to her. Thus, Chae’s possessions evoke the horror of his death and the violence inflicted on him. The focus on the brutality of war in this passage is representative of the general stance toward this conflict in the trilogy. For instance, the futility of the fighting is underscored by the fact that Chae is killed only an hour before the time agreed for the ceasefire.

The account of Long Rob’s death also implies a criticism of mainstream ideals of heroism connected with prowess in battle. His performance as a soldier during the war wins him honors such as a medal and “a bit in the paper about him” (p. 244). The narrative voice, however, sees through these official distinctions and suggests their emptiness, commenting that “[n]ot that he got it (the medal), faith! he was dead, they came on his corpse long after, the British, but just as a mark of respect” (p. 244). These tributes to Rob are especially ironic when his early refusal to fight is taken into consideration. When he is called to appear before the war exemption board, the following interaction takes place: “the chairman, a wee [small] grocer man that worked night and day to send other folk out to fight the Germans, he asked Long Rob how he liked the idea that folk called him a coward? And Long Rob said *Fine, man, fine. I’d rather any day be a coward than a corpse*” (p. 207). This passage puts in evidence the hypocrisy in the discourse about bravery and cowardice in relation to the war as the man who promotes this idea is himself not going to fight. In contrast, Rob, who rejects this ideal of courage and seems indifferent to other people’s opinion of him, is later capable of sacrificing himself to save his comrades in battle.

The patriotic language used to justify the war and the consequent losses is also repudiated by Chris. After Ewan’s death, some of her neighbors try to console her by saying that “he’d died fine, for his country and his King he’d died, young Ewan would grow up to be

proud of his father" (p. 232). Their words echo the official condolences sent to the families of the deceased. Calder (2004, p. 12) explains that "the anti-grief kit" prepared by the British government included a tribute from the local authorities attesting that the combatant "'died for King and Country in the Great War. Greater Love Hath No Man Than This, That a Man Lay Down His Life For His Friends'". Nevertheless, Chris becomes even more agitated by such discourse and answers "*Country and King? You're havering, havering! What have they to do with my Ewan, what was the King to him, what their damned country? Blawearie's his land, it's not his wight* [fault] *that others fight wars!*" (p. 232). She does not deem the war a worthy cause, but something completely distant from their lives and their work on the land. The thought that her husband died in vain is expressed even more explicitly in the following fragment: "Ewan was dead, they knew it and she knew it herself; and he'd died for nothing, for nothing, hurt and murdered and crying for her, maybe, killed for nothing: and those bitches sat and spoke of their King and country . . ." (p. 232). For Chris, justifying the war with the defense of the nation and the monarch is a fallacy as she does not feel represented by these institutions.

If the war proves to be a controversial topic in Gibbon's trilogy, the creation of memorials also reveals conflicting points of view and the inherently political aspect of commemorations. In Kinraddie, there is a clash between the community's expectation and the memorial designed by Robert, as illustrated by the following passage: "Folk thought that he'd have a fine stone angel, with a night-gown on, raised up at Kinraddie's crossroads. But he sent for a mason instead and had the old stone circle by Blawearie loch raised up and cleaned and set in place, real heathen-like, and a paling put round it." (p. 252). As mentioned before, the village's folk sees the Standing Stones with suspicion due to their supposed pagan origin. Robert's position as a minister makes his attitude even more strange and reproachable in the community's eyes. However, Robert values the historical significance of the stone circle over the more conventional monument expected by the village. These differing views of Kinraddie's monument may be related to art historian Jonathan Black's (2004, p. 134) claim that memorials' "design and style of figurative sculpture can just as easily divide as unite" those involved in the act of remembrance. Thus, the aesthetical features are also a matter that has political significance and can generate disagreement.

The tribute to the fallen soldiers in Kinraddie connects World War One to other historical moments. The stone circle, associated with bygone rituals and sacrifices in the novel, gains a new layer of meaning with the homage to the deceased, connecting contemporary and ancient inhabitants of the region. The names of the dead are literally

inscribed on the Standing Stones and, consequently, on the Scottish landscape. During the inauguration of the memorial, there is another reference to the past: the performance of the song "The Flowers of the Forest", composed as a lament about the sixteenth-century battle of Flodden, as analyzed in chapter 1. These elements position the characters within a broader historical context as they bring the people of Kinraddie closer to those who lived centuries before. The inscription in honor to the men who died in the war also mirrors the plaque, mentioned earlier in the novel, remembering the Covenanters in Dunnottar Castle. The texts follow the same pattern, recording the names of the deceased and the cause of their deaths. This emphasis on what they died for may be a way of reaffirming that they gave their lives for a worthy cause. Besides, both inscriptions are typographically similar and reinforce the importance of their message by making reference to the same biblical chapter, the second of the book of Revelation. Cairns Craig (1996, p. 49) relates these two memorials by arguing that Chris and Ewan's visit to Dunnottar Castle may work as a foreshadowing of the latter's hesitant contact with history during the war and his eventual fate as he only joins the army after feeling pressured and ends up being executed for desertion. Craig (1996, p. 48) also credits the centrality of the First World War in Scottish literature to its being "the moment when the historical is reintroduced into the historyless Scottish environment, but the historical in a terrifying and alienating form". As Gibbon establishes a relationship between these various historical periods, the action of the destructive forces of history seems to be marked by a cyclical repetition.

Robert's design for the memorial may be related to his speech during the inauguration ceremony. The connection of the war casualties with the ancient people who lived in the area underscores the continuity between the peasants of the early twentieth century and their ancestors, reflecting Robert's idea that the dead soldiers "*were the Last of the Peasants, the last of the Old Scots folk*" (p. 254). The biblical reference in the memorial not only brings together the pagan and the Christian traditions, but also reinforces Robert's message. The title of his sermon is even based on the verse from the Revelation in the inscription – "I will also give that one the morning star" (BIBLE, Revelation, 2, 28). This passage of the Bible expresses a divine promise of reward to those of the Church of Thyatira who continue to follow Christ's true teachings, instead of Jezebel's. Similarly, Robert warns his congregation against the temptations of pride and ambition that rise with the end of small farms after the war. Besides, he calls for a return to older values of simplicity and promises a better future if the community stays true to the spirit of those who died at war:

> *So, lest we shame them, let us believe that the new oppressions and foolish greeds are no more than mists that pass. They died for a world that is past, these men, but they did not die for this that we seem to inherit. Beyond it and us there shines a greater hope and a newer world, undreamt when these four died. But need we doubt which side the battle they would range themselves did they live to-day, need we doubt the answer they cry to us even now, the four of them, from the places of the sunset?* (p. 254-255).

This is a further example of the relationship established by Robert between religion and his political hope for a better world. His words are not well received by the community, who is "dumbfounded" by the perception that "this was just sheer politics, plain what he meant" (p. 255). Regardless of the context, the minister is deemed "fair objectionable" and a "Bolshevik" due to his proximity to farm workers and his support for their union (p. 250). However, it is also possible that their disapproval springs from the feeling that Robert's political message is a profanation of the tribute to the dead.

Another political choice in the trilogy is the fact that Ewan's name is included in the memorial. The names of the executed combatants are not included in tributes, and it was only in 2000 that relatives of those condemned to death could participate in the march past the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday (BLACK, 2004, p. 144). In 2001, the pioneering *Shot at Dawn* memorial was unveiled in England after the fundraising efforts of the daughter of one of the executed soldiers (BLACK, 2004, p. 144). This homage may be understood as the product of a change of mentality regarding war and mental health and is associated by Black (2004, p. 135, 146) with a campaign for the official pardon of these men. This pardon was eventually granted to all soldiers executed for desertion and cowardice in 2006, with Des Browne, then Defense Secretary, reportedly considering "all of them as victims of the first world war" (NORTON-TAYLOR, 2006). Hence, Gibbon's attitude toward the executions seems to be ahead of his time. Ewan, a deserter, and Rob, a decorated hero, are remembered and commemorated together, suggesting that there is no moral hierarchy between them. On the contrary, their status as victims of a terrible military conflict brings them together. As with Chris's opposition to the justifications for the war, mentioned before, the record of Ewan's name in the memorial challenges the official discourse of bravery and heroism.

The contrast between Chris and Robert's taste and that of the larger public is also put in evidence by their reaction to the war memorial in Segget. This monument is closer to the community's wishes in Kinraddie: a stone angel at the town square. Robert calls it "*this trumpery flummery*" and expects people to see it as "*a joke*" after the improvements he expects in society (p. 309). From his point of view, unlike Kinraddie's Standing Stones, this

conventional design, devoid of a deeper historical root, is shallow and meaningless. Similarly, Chris considers the memorial an unworthy tribute to the fallen:

> And Chris saw the thing that had now ta'en his (Robert's) eyes, the War Memorial of Segget toun [town], an angel set on a block of stone, decent and sonsy [good-looking] in its stone night-gown, goggling genteel away from the Arms, as though it wouldn't, for any sum you named, ever condescend to believe there were folk that took a nip to keep out the chill . . . Chris thought it was fine, a pretty young lass [girl]. But then as she looked at it there came doubts, it stood there in memory of men who had died, folk of this Segget but much the same still, she supposed, as the folk she had known in Kinraddie, folk who had slept and waked and had sworn, and had lain with women and had lain with pain, and walked in the whistle of the storms from the Mounth, and been glad, been mad, and done dark, mad things, been bitter for failure, and tender and kind, with the kindness deep in the dour Scots blood. Folk of her own, those folk who had died, out in the dark, strange places of earth, and they set up THIS to commemorate THEM – this, this quean [girl] like a constipated calf! (p. 309)

When Chris thinks of the lost lives and even identifies with the dead, she deems the angel, with her expression of affectation, disrespectful to the memory of those men. Chris's reflections focus on the real, lived experience of humans, which cannot be adequately conveyed by a statue that is so uninspired and distant from the common folk.

The memorial in Segget gives rise to different feelings and opinions within the community. Although Robert criticizes it for its appearance, he respects the monument as a tribute to the memory of combatants, holding a Remembrance Day ceremony around it. However, he does not express an insincere or exaggerated solemnity regarding the memorial. When young Ewan tells him that there is a dog that urinates on the memorial every day, "he'd laughed and laughed and said that the dog was a pacifist, maybe" (p. 379). For Robert, honoring the memory of those who died in the war goes beyond outward manifestations, but involves fighting for a fair society, as his speech in Kinraddie suggests. A strikingly different attitude toward the memorial is expressed by Mowat, the owner of Segget's mills and estate. When the young heir travels from England to Segget, he sees "birns [loads] of the statues [...], lasses [girls] in bronze and marble and granite, dancing about on pedestal tops" (p. 367). While his driver considers them "bonny [beautiful]", Mowat cries "*Oh Christ, even here – another bitch in a flannel shift!*" and complains that "Britain had gone harlot-mad, and stuck up those effigies all over the place, in memory no doubt of the Red Lamps of France" (p. 367). Mowat not only takes issue with the aesthetic aspects of the monuments, but also attacks the memory of the dead soldiers by putting their behavior into question. In fact, he even erases the combatants as he claims that the statues are a tribute to prostitutes. Mowat's insulting language contrasts starkly with Robert's more respectful criticism as the minister's

objections spring from the idea that more meaningful memorial designs would be a better way to honor the deceased.

Segget's memorial is the setting of an Armistice Day celebration, a passage that highlights the different ways in which the war is remembered by the community. The ceremony underscores the social rift between middle-class workers and the spinners employed at the mills. It is Robert who insists on commemorating the dead even though the community is dissatisfied by that and praises the previous minister, who "hadn't bothered to hold any service at all, he'd over-much sense to catch cold in the Square" (p. 356). The fact that Robert "[had] badgered folk to close up their shops and gotten the mills to close down as well" (p. 356) recalls his exhortation that "he expected a fine attendance, whatever the weather – *they'd to attend in ill weather, the folk that fell*" (p. 252) after announcing the inauguration of Kinraddie's memorial. Although the shopkeepers are not enthusiastic about the tribute, they disapprove of the spinners for not attending the event: "And you took a canny [guarded] keek [glance] round about, at the throng of the Segget folk that were there – hardly a spinner, where were the dirt?" (p. 357). This comment reveals not only their derision toward the working class, but also the double standards by which they judge the spinners' behavior and their own.

The focus of Segget's middle class on respectability becomes even more explicit when the mill workers interrupt the ceremony. As the spinners walk toward the Square, the narrative voice criticizes their appearance, describing them as "a twenty or thirty of the ill-gettèd creatures, with their mufflers on, not in decent collars, their washy faces crinkled with grins" (p. 358). In addition to the spinners' clothes, their manners are reproached as they are "laughing and joking" when they approach the monument (p. 358). The people attending the ceremony are shocked, as expressed by the narrative voice: "Well, your mouth fell open, as it damn well might, you had never yet seen such a sight in Segget" (p. 358). These passages reveal the importance of appearances and respectability for the town's shop owners and civil servants. Their reaction also calls attention to the community's expectations regarding these tributes. On this topic, Black (2004, p. 134) affirms the fundamental importance for the people present at these events "to be seen to behave in a way that has been stipulated and sanctioned by the wider community". The disapproval of spinners' clothes and attitude may be related to the other characters' bias against them as it reinforces the image of the working class as disreputable and lacking manners. This, in turn, can be used as a justification for the middle class's feeling of superiority in relation to them. However, even though the people attending the ceremony behave in a manner that is considered proper, they are not deeply

invested in the homage to the fallen. As mentioned before, they are not eager to participate in the commemoration. Besides, during the service, they feel self-conscious about singing a hymn and keep focusing on what is happening around them, like the sound of a car and the approach of the spinners. The audience also expresses discontent with Robert's speech, deemed "fair heathen" (p. 357). Instead of a moment of meditation about the losses inflicted by war, it seems that the celebration is an opportunity for them to pass judgment on other people.

The hypocrisy of the middle class is emphasized by the passage showing their interaction with the mill workers. Arriving late at the celebration, the spinners start singing "The Red Flag", the anthem of the British Labour Party, making the hymn performed by the others inaudible. This attitude shocks those attending the celebration, especially Sim Leslie, the town's policeman, who tries to repress the spinners' singing. Nicknamed Feet due to his foot size, the officer

> was fair roused, a patriot-like childe [man], he hadn't been out to the War himself, they wouldn't let him go with feet like that in case he might block up the trenches, folk said. But he'd fair been a one for the War all the same, and he wasn't to see its memory insulted by a pack of tink brutes that didn't wear collars (p. 359).

This excerpt exemplifies the biting and malicious gossip circulating in the community, but also calls attention to the hypocritical support for the war among those who would not actually fight, an issue raised in Long Rob's session at the exemption board in *Sunset Song*, as mentioned before. Another character with a strong patriotic discourse but no military service is MacDougall Brown, who, during the Armistice Day service, "was well to the fore, not that he'd fought in the War, but he'd sung" (p. 358). In contrast, the spinners are all decorated combatants with their medals on display. When Feet accuses the mill workers of disrespecting the tribute to the fallen, Jock Cronin challenges him by pointing out the disparity in their experiences of war. The narrative voice sides with the police officer in the matter:

> Well, that fair staggered Feet and you felt sorry for him, especially as you had no medal yourself, you hadn't been able to get to the War, you'd been over-busy with the shop those years, or keeping the trade going brisk in the Arms, or serving at Segget as the new stationmaster. And well you might warrant if the King had known the kind of dirt that those spinners were he wouldn't have lashed out as he'd done with his medals (p. 359-360).

This passage clearly expresses the perspective of Segget's middle class, revealing that many of them share Feet's hypocritical position. Besides, the claim that the spinners' medals were undeserved shows both an attempt at self-justification and the exclusivity of the middle class' respect for former combatants. Gibbon's use of "you" in this fragment positions the reader as

part of this group of hollow, hypocritical patriots, which may be a way of provoking readers into reassessing their own views.

The interaction between Segget's folk during the Armistice Day tribute puts in evidence the class struggle in the town both during and after the war. In addition to the conflict between lower-class servicemen and the middle-class individuals who did not fight, there is a tension between former combatants who served in different capacities during the war. Ake Ogilvie, a joiner, is annoyed by the spinners' intervention in the ceremony and asks Jock Cronin where he served in the conflict. The dialogue that follows demonstrates the tension between more and less skilled soldiers: "*Up in the front, my lad, not scrounging behind with the Royal Engineers. – No, you hadn't enough brain for them, poor fool*, Ake Ogilvie said" (p. 360). This division mirrors the combatants' status before the war, which endures after they return home. Segget's community remain separated into the mill workers and the trading middle class, even in geographical terms, with the former living in the West Wynd and the latter, in the East Wynd. To the more affluent group, however, the war is perceived as a force that blurred social hierarchy: "the War had fair been a ruination, letting tinks [gypsies, itinerant laborers] like the Cronins find out that their betters ate and smelt just the same as themselves" (p. 360). This impression does not reflect the crisis experienced by the soldiers when coming back home, as will be further analyzed. It is also interesting to note that the war is considered "a ruination" not due to the casualties, but to the supposed social leveling. The endurance of this tension related to social class in Segget contradicts the report of a *Manchester Guardian* journalist about the camaraderie among war veterans from different social echelons at the dinner following the unveiling of the memorial to the 24th Infantry Division (BLACK, 2004, p. 140). The burial of the Unknown Soldier in London, as well as other commemorations, also emphasized "the equality of all citizens in grief" (CALDER, 2004, p. 16). However, the understatement of social class on these occasions did not lead to more equality in general. Gibbon's choice to represent this tension may be an attempt to underscore the persisting social hierarchy, instead of downplaying it as it was done in some war tributes.

The mill workers' interruption of the service leads Chris and Robert to reflect on the political questions raised by their act. The leader of the spinners carries a red flag and invites the community to join the Labour Party to fight poverty and unemployment. Their performance of "The Red Flag" moves Chris and evokes memories of Chae Strachan, her socialist neighbor in Kinraddie:

> she'd never before seen men with that flag, or heard them singing the song about it – hirpling and sad, but it caught you somehow, there was something in it that you knew was half-true, true with truth that drew your mind back to Chae Strachan far in your younger days, who had said the mission of the common folk was to die and give life with their deaths forever . . . Like Robert's God, in a way, you supposed (p. 361).

This emotional effect of the song may come from Chris's greater identification and involvement with the "common folk". As she becomes increasingly detached, the song loses its power upon her. In *Grey Granite*, when "The Red Flag" is sung in a march in support of young Ewan after he leaves prison, Chris is dissatisfied with the demonstration as she would prefer to be alone with her son. At this moment, Chris's self-reliance is emphasized: "[she] had always felt so and felt more than ever that she belonged to herself alone" (p. 617). The change in her reaction to the song echoes her growing feeling of distance from the class of workers or peasants and from any political involvement. For Robert, Jock Cronin's speech at the Remembrance Day commemoration gives his aspiration for change a more definite, concrete direction. Robert's sermon on the occasion is about the divine in humanity and humankind's capacity to rise again after the war – "he (Man) was as undying as God was undying" (p. 357). After Cronin's call for action, Robert sees the possibility of transformation coming from the spinners' struggle and begins to share their idea of "*a war of the classes to bring fruit to the War*" (p. 361). The belief that the war could bring change is also expressed by Chae in one of his visits while on leave from the army, when he voices his thought that "the War would bring a good thing to the world, it would end the armies and fighting forever, the day of socialism at last would dawn, the common folk had seen what their guns could do and right soon they'd use them once they came back" (p. 205). Hence, the memory of Chae and his ideals remain alive even after his death in battle.

World War One is also remembered in an individual level by those who fought and those who are close to former combatants. There is remarkably little about the life in the trenches in the trilogy. During the war, the narrative perspective never shifts from Kinraddie. The only passage set in France is Chae's conversation with Ewan before the latter's execution, which is only recounted to Chris when he visits the village. All descriptions of war scenes are either soldiers' memories or images pictured by those who remained in Scotland. For instance, during an earlier leave, Chae talks about his experience of war when Ewan asks him whether the Germans are truly as barbaric as they are told by the media and the church. Chae answers that

> he was damned if he knew, he'd hardly seen one alive, though a body or so you saw now and then [...] Well, out there you hardly did fighting at all, you just lay about those damn bit trenches and had a keek [peep] at the soil they were made of. And

> man, it was funny land, clay and a kind of black marl, but the French were no good as farmers at all, they just pleitered [worked in an aimless way] and pottered in little bit parks that you'd hardly use as a hanky to wipe your neb. Chae didn't like the French at all, he said they were damned poor folk you'd fight for, them, meaner than dirt and not half so sweet (p. 200).

Immersed in such an unfamiliar situation, surrounded by death, Chae turns his attention to what reminds him of home: the land. Besides, his view of the French is determined by his assessment of their ability as farmers.

An exception to the general silence about the war among those who served is Dite Peat, Segget's grocer. He is described as having a questionable character, and his mistreatment of his father causes the spinners to stop shopping from his store even though most of the others, who see themselves as guardians of morality, "weren't foolish as that" (p. 307). One of his stories retells how he took advantage of the woman who owned the lodgings where he stayed in London while on leave. He used her fragility to sleep with her after discovering that her husband had died at war. Dite Peat justifies his act by saying that she "was only English and they're tinks by nature, it wasn't as though she was decent and Scotch" (p. 305). His tale, which disgusts the other customers in the bar, is not considered out of character for him. His other reference to the war reinforces his cruelty, focusing on the gory aspects of the fighting. When Dite is called to kill a pig, he affirms that the Armistice Day is a good day for that since "*I've seen humans carved up like pigs, like bits of beef in a butcher's shop, and it fair looked fine, as I often thought, you couldn't wonder at those cannibal childes* [men]" (p. 350). His brutal, sadistic personality is even more eloquently expressed in another passage, in which the flesh of the pig "minded [reminded] him well of the bits of folk that a shell would fling Feuch! in your face with a smell of sharn [dung], out in the War – He had liked it fine; there was something in blood and a howling of fear that kittled up a man as nothing else could" (p. 351). Dite's fond memories of the war may explain why he speaks more frequently about his experience than other characters. To him, the recollections of the war bring pleasure and maybe even nostalgia, instead of horror.

There is a marked contrast between Dite Peat's and Robert's attitude toward the war. The minister speaks little about his experience, a silence that is mirrored in Gibbon's narrative choices. Robert's perspective is not focalized in the trilogy; rather, the reader sees him through Chris's, young Ewan's, and the community's eyes. His difficulty to deal with these memories can be related to their traumatic impact. Cathy Caruth (1995, p. 153) defines trauma as "the confrontation with an event that, in its unexpectedness or horror, cannot be placed within the schemes of prior knowledge". Thus, traumatic experiences cannot be easily

represented or expressed. Robert attempts to make sense of his time in the war through religious or symbolic terms. He claims, for instance, that suffering a gas attack strengthened his faith, as represented in the following passage: "'twas in the months of his agony he'd known, conviction, terrible and keen as his pain, that there was a God Who lived and endured, the Tortured God in the soul of men, Who yet might upbuild the City of God through the hearts and hands of men of good faith" (p. 286). Therefore, his participation in the fighting is decisive for his belief in the divine within humans and in our duty to make the world more just, which was analyzed in chapter 1. His symbolic understanding of the war is also revealed in his sermon at the Armistice Day service, when he declares that "God was but Helper, was but Man Himself, like men he also struggled against evil, God's wounds had bled, God also had died in the holocaust in the fields of France" (p. 357). It is significant that Robert uses the word "holocaust", with the original meaning of a religious sacrifice, to refer to the carnage of the First World War. The symbolic representation of the war may be a way for Robert to detach himself from the traumatic memories of the conflict by associating it with a grander narrative of sacrifice and resurrection. Besides, his aforementioned idea that the war may lead to the fight for more equality suggests an effort to find a reason to believe that the horrors of the war were not in vain.

Despite Robert's silence about his own experience, the lingering impact of World War One on him is clear. He even carries the marks of the fighting in his body, with a scar caused by shrapnel on his shoulder and permanent damage to his lungs due to the gas attack. Toward the end of his life, when Robert starts coughing blood, the doctor attributes this to the effect of the chemical weapon. His respiratory issues, aggravated by his insistence to preach his last sermon instead of resting, eventually cause his death. By dealing with the use of chlorine gas by the German troops, Gibbon engages with a common motif in artistical representations of the First World War. An example of this is Wilfred Owen's (1893-1918) poem "Dulce et Decorum Est", which depicts the suffering of a soldier who was gassed. Owen (2004, p. 761) emphasizes the gruesome outcomes of the use of this weapon, describing the man "drowning", "the white eyes writhing in his face" and "the blood / Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs". In *Cloud Howe*, the persistent effects of the "awful gas" are underscored as Robert suffers from them years after the war and, even right after the attack, "months had gone by ere he breathed well again, and the fumes of that drifting Fear were gone" (p. 285-286). This invisible but enduring consequence of Robert's experience in the war is symbolic of the negative repercussions of the conflict even on the survivors. Another insidious consequence of the war is the recurrent coming of "a black, queer mood" upon

Robert (p. 285). These moments, filled with hatred and hopelessness, are ascribed by him to "a physical remembrance" (p. 285). He shows regret for these events and is represented as powerless in the face of "the queer, black beast that rode his mind in those haunted hours" (p. 285). His lack of control over his mood and his memories is reminiscent of the notion that "[t]o be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event" (CARUTH, 1995, p. 4-5). Robert's time in the war has a profound impact in different levels, affecting both his physical and mental health, as well as his convictions about religion and politics.

The memory of the First World War also haunts Chris even if she did not experience the fighting first-hand. The shadow of the conflict in her life is revealed, for example, in the passage in which she plans to have a child with Robert in *Cloud Howe*. She is full of anticipation until she feels her husband's scar and becomes "as rigid as death" (p. 348). This vestige of the war brings to her mind thoughts of the futility of the fighting and makes her worry about the desired child's fate. The idea that she may have to send her child to another war makes her give up the plan of another pregnancy:

> And she'd set herself to conceive a child – for the next War that came, to be torn like that, made blood and pulp as they'd made of Ewan – *Oh, Ewan, Ewan, that was once my lad, that lay where this stranger's lying tonight, I haven't forgotten, I haven't forgotten, you've a Chris that lies with you there in France, and she shan't bring to birth from her womb any bairn* [child] *to die as you, for a madman's gab . . .* (p. 348-349).

This fragment demonstrates how thoughts of the war are intertwined with memories of Ewan for Chris. Although she gets married for a second time and finds happiness in her early years with Robert, the death of her first husband leaves an enduring mark on her, and she recurrently remembers Ewan. Chris also strongly associates the conflict with the pain and suffering inflicted on the soldiers as bloody images fill her musings on this historical event. Besides, after seeing Robert's scar, she expresses her indignation at the hypocritical behavior of those who participate in war commemorations by vouching to "never have a bairn [child] of his (Robert's) for torment, to be mocked by memorials, the gabblings of clowns, when they that remained at home go out to praise the dead on Armistice Day" (p. 349). This reflection is presented right before the account of the Remembrance Day tribute in which it becomes clear that many of the characters with highly patriotic discourses did not serve in the war. Hence, Chris's criticism is supported by the narrative of the events in Segget, reinforcing the idea that these celebrations may be hollow, more a matter of appearances than an actual moment of remembrance of the suffering and the losses brought by the conflict.

As Chris has no direct experience of the war, her thoughts about this event are mediated by others' narratives, but especially by her own imagination. The pictured scenes

are particularly charged with emotion as they usually involve her loved ones in deadly situations. When Chris finds out that Ewan joined the army, she is distressed, and John Brigson, the farm worker hired by her, tries to comfort her by saying that the war will soon be over and that "*I see the Germans retreating on all the fronts, they're fair scared white, they say, when our men take to the bayonet*" (p. 211). However, it makes Chris more upset, and she vomits "for if you've ever gutted a rabbit or a hen you can guess what is inside a man, and she'd seen a bayonet going into Ewan there" (p. 211). The mental image of the terrible fate that Ewan may suffer leads her anguish to grow even more intense. Ewan's death is also imagined by Chris when she receives the telegram with the dreaded news. She lies on her bed and covers her ears, "trying not to hear a cry of agony in a lost French field, not to think that the body that had lain by hers, frank and free and kind and young, was torn and dead and unmoving flesh, blood twisted upon it, not Ewan at all, riven and terrible, still and dead [...]" (p. 231). Her focus lies on the contrast between the happy memories of her husband and the mental picture of his corpse, which heightens her grief. In addition, Chris's imagination highlights Ewan's suffering and the marks of violence on his body, emphasizing the harrowing consequences of the First World War. Another scene conjured up by Chris is what could have happened to Robert during the conflict. The scar on his shoulder makes her think that, if the shrapnel wound had been "a little lower", "it would have torn his body, grunting, into a mesh of blood, with broken bones and with spouting blood, an animal mouthing in mindless torment" (p. 348). Once again, the trilogy highlights the pain inflicted on the combatants and the brutality of war. Another similarity with the passage about the bayonets is the analogy between suffering soldiers and animals. For Chris, only familiar with the domestic sphere, the slaughtering of livestock may be the only way to frame the violence of a battle. Besides, the comparison reinforces the dehumanizing situation in which the soldiers find themselves, treated as disposable resources. The parallel also brings to the forefront the material, biological aspects of life and death as a military conflict keenly demonstrates the fragility of the human body.

Combatants' memories of the war emerge during protests against unemployment and the poor conditions of life in the post-war period. After years of fighting, soldiers came back home to a grave crisis, deepened in the late 1920s by the Great Depression. In his speech during the Remembrance Day ceremony, Jock Cronin underscores the fact that those who served in the war found no real reward for them at home:

> *WE went to the War, we knew what it was, we went to lice and dirt and damnation: and what have we got at the end of it all? Starvation wages, no homes for heroes, the capitalists fast on our necks as before. They're sacking men at the mills just now*

> *and leaving them on the bureau to starve – that's our reward, and maybe it's yours, that's the thing we mind to-day. Not to come here and remember the dead, they've a place that's theirs and we'll share it some time, they're maybe the better compared with some that live here in Segget worse-fed than beasts. It's the living that's our concern, you chaps* (p. 360).

Life at the front is related to distress and wretched conditions, attributes that may also characterize the experience of disadvantaged families in Segget. This leads Cronin to claim that the suffering of the living deserves more attention than the sacrifice of the dead soldiers. From his perspective, only the situation of the living may be improved and is thus worth fighting for. Cronin uses the arguments presented in this quotation in an attempt to persuade the listeners to join the Labour Party and take action. In *Grey Granite*, in another demonstration, former combatants also remember their war experience. Spurred by a life of poverty and hunger, a group of unemployed men join a march organized by the Communist Party. The description of the protest is reminiscent of a military drill: "Flutter, flutter the banner over your head, your feet beginning to stound [ache] a wee, long since the boots held out the water, shining the drift of the rain going by. And now you were all thudding into step, and beyond the drum saw Royal Mile, flashing with trams, thick with bobbies" (p. 533). This passage, suggestive of the preparation for a battle, also foreshadows the clash between protesters and police officers. The way that the demonstrators come to a halt, almost as if in formation, brings back memories from their time in the war,

> the rain and stink and that first queer time your feet slipped in a soss [slop] of blood and guts, going up to the front at Ypres – Christ, long syne [ago] that, you'd not thought then to come to this, to come to the wife with the face she had now, and the weans – by God, you would see about things! (p. 533)

Once again, the former servicemen express their frustration about the situation that they found when they came back home. In this quotation, though, personal disappointments are mentioned, in addition to the unemployment and deprivation that are the reason for the protest. Compared to Jock Cronin's speech, this fragment gives more prominence to the horrific aspects of war. This difference may be caused by the fact that Cronin is trying to convince other people to become more politically engaged. Hence, his choice to downplay the barbarity of war and focus on the powerful analogy between the conflict and a life of deprivation may be a rhetorical strategy.

3.2 **Toward another war: the rise of Fascism and the memory of the Great War**

Gibbon substantially draws on the contemporary historical context to create the setting of *A Scots Quair*. The locations of the trilogy work as a microcosm of Scotland, with pervasive evidence of some historical trends of the early twentieth century. Gibbon, thus, engages with and provides commentary about his own times, calling attention to certain issues. In this sense, Gibbon's writing is within the tendency of Scottish literature in the 1930s to become more overtly political against the backdrop of the consequences of economic depression, as described by Margery Palmer McCulloch (2009, p. 94). The interwar period was marked by social and economic crisis, as well as the rise of different political currents. In the 1930s, a new war in Europe also loomed large in the horizon, bringing back to memory the carnage of the First World War. This section will explore how the trilogy represents this historical period, with particular focus on how the shadow of the previous military conflict influences these early decades of the twentieth century.

In the years after World War One, social issues were acutely felt, with high rates of unemployment, insufficient housing, and elevated prices, as described by historian David Thomson (1977, p. 69). These problems are represented in the novels, for example, in Cronin's comparison between life in Segget and at the front, as already mentioned. Although this passage is set in the early 1920s, this situation persists throughout the trilogy. This reflects historians' account of the period in Scotland. John Foster (1994, p. 223) argues that the effects of the economic depression following the war lasted from 1921 to 1939, hitting Scotland harder than England and Wales. The appalling consequences of this enduring situation are painfully represented in the story of the Kindness family, recounted toward the close of *Cloud Howe*, set in the end of the 1920s. They are evicted from their house by the landlord, an operation overseen by the indifferent police officer Sim Leslie, who "thought nothing of it, he was used to that now" (p. 461). The family spends the first night in an empty house, but is again thrown out by Leslie, who threatens to take the case to court. Finding nowhere to stay, they shelter from the sleet in an abandoned pigsty. In the following morning, the Kindnesses find out that rats chewed off the thumb of their three-week baby during the night. Shocked by this story, Chris and Robert offer them a room and fetch a doctor. However, help comes too late, and the baby ends up dying. Once again, Gibbon emphasizes the horrors afflicting those living in the margins. This disturbing passage is a powerful indictment of an unjust and uncaring society.

In *Cloud Howe*, Robert's involvement in politics represents the attempts made by left-wing groups to change this dreadful situation. A central instance of this is the fictional rendition of the General Strike of 1926. After the First World War, trade unions became more

organized, strengthening their position. When pay cuts for the miners were announced in 1926, a mining strike was called in the beginning of May, and other sectors also stopped working in solidarity (THOMSON, 1977, p. 110-111). In the novel, Jock Cronin leads the stoppage of the spinners in Segget, with Robert's support. For the minister, the coming strike is a decisive moment, and he holds high hopes that it will bring about a new and better world. Talking to Chris about unemployment and workers' apathy, he claims that "*we'll alter these things forever in May*" (p. 401). The General Strike lasted for nine days; its end was determined by the Trades Union Congress after the intervention of Sir Herbert Samuel, the chairman of the British Royal Coal Commission, without gains for the workers (THOMSON, 1977, p. 114-115). This disappointing outcome caused the public to become disillusioned with the syndicalist movement, according to Thomson (1977, p. 116). Gibbon depicts the incredulity of the strikers when they receive the news that the action is over, as well as the backlash faced by those who helped to organize it in Segget. For instance, some of the mill workers smash the windows of Cronin's house and try to do the same in the manse (p. 417). Cronin and his family also lose their jobs, which leads him to move to Glasgow. As for Robert, he goes through the loss of his newborn son and loses faith in the possibility of political change, turning his focus to religious matters, as analyzed in chapter 1. The decision to bring the strike to an end is presented as a cowardly betrayal in the novel as "the leaders had been feared of the jail" (p. 417). Robert uses even harsher language to refer to this situation in his final sermon, comparing the strike leaders to Judas:

> *and the leaders of the great nine days, days filled with the anger and the pity of the christ who drove the money-changers from the temple courts, looked in their hearts and found there fear, heard the crunch of the nails that were driven in through the shrinking hands of the christ, and they sold him again, his promise in man, each for their thirty pieces of silver* (p. 470).

While the end of the strike is described as a grave disloyalty, the workers' movement is considered "*great*" since Robert sees it as an occasion when "*the common people banded at last – in a christ-like rage of pity to defend their brothers who sweated their blood in the mines* [...]" (p. 470). This demonstration of union and solidarity is compared to Christ's attitudes, again expressing the strong relation between religious teachings and politics for Robert, as explored in the first chapter.

With the coming of the Great Depression, social issues continued to afflict the nation. Chris Bambery (2014, p. 192) defines the 1930s as "a decade of unemployment, sub-standard housing and poor levels of health in Scotland". Young Ewan's visit to a colleague's house in *Grey Granite* paints a bleak picture of life in the poorer areas of Duncairn:

> . . . That ghastly house that Bob took you to – father unemployed for over five years, mother all running to a pale grey fat like a thing you found when you turned up a stone, one of the brothers a cretin, rickets – sat giggling and slavering in a half-dark corner, they couldn't afford to have the gas on, a dead smell of dirt left unstirred and unscrubbed, disharmonic heads and moron brains [...] (p. 547-548).

Bob's family experiences long-term unemployment and a level of deprivation that forces them to live in a cold, unsanitary house. The damaging effects of such living conditions are evident in the description of the mother's unhealthy appearance and the brother's condition since rickets is commonly associated with malnutrition. In 1931, in an effort to cut public spending, the British government reduced the unemployment relief and created a means test to verify those who qualified for the benefit, a policy that caused discontent (THOMSON, 1977, p. 147). For example, in a debate at the House of Commons, George Lansbury (1859-1940), a Member of Parliament for the Labour Party, accused the government of failing to treat fairly the men who fought in the war and argued that, by establishing the means test, it was "going to crush their children and their grandchildren further down" (UNITED KINGDOM, 1931, col. 634). In *A Scots Quair*, the memory of the First World War is also present in the march against the new policies regarding unemployment benefits. Protesters carry a banner with the words "DOWN WITH THE MEANS TEST AND HUNGER AND WAR" (p. 532), bringing together their state of hardship and the reality of a military conflict as equally undesirable. Besides, it is during this demonstration that some unemployed men remember their time in the war, as mentioned in the last section. The emphasis on the status of those affected by the means test as former servicemen or members of their families highlights the unfairness of the relief provided by the British government since those who had to fight for the nation are abandoned into poverty once the war is over.

The interwar period also saw a shift in British politics, with the decline of the Liberal Party and the rise of Labour. In this period, Ramsay MacDonald became the first Prime Minister from the latter party. The Russian Revolution contributed to the increasing importance of leftist groups in Britain. Although Labour sought to distance itself from the Communists since the 1920s, the notion of leftism helped to conflate these different groups in the public opinion (THOMSON, 1977, p. 65-66, 118). In a highly anti-Communist atmosphere, the blurring of the differences between these groups worked to the advantage of those in the opposition to the Labour Party, such as the Conservatives and Fascist groups (THOMSON, 1977, p. 96, 118). The suspicion of distinct sections from the population regarding the "red threat" represented by left-leaning organizations is recurrently depicted in *A Scots Quair*. Meg, the maid who works at Chris and Ma's boarding-house, for example,

thinks that “no decent lassies would listen to them (the Communists), for they knew the Communionists were awful tinks [itinerant laborers] who wanted to break up the home” (p. 501). She also sees them as a menace, considering that, if a Communist lived in the boarding-house, he would “maybe rape you and gut you in the middle of the night, as the coarse tinks did with hardly a break, night on night, in that awful Russia” (p. 502). This discourse is similar to that of the elite as illustrated by the Lord Provost’s response to the demonstration against the means test: “he said that this Bolshevism should be suppressed, he put the whole riot down to Communist agents, paid agitators who were trained in Moscow, the working class was sound as a bell” (p. 537). The likeness of these portrayals of the Communists suggests the influence of the voice of the authorities and the press on workers’ political opinion.

Another important trend in the period is the rise of Fascism, which features in *Cloud Howe* and even more strongly in *Grey Granite*. Thomson (1977, p. 118, 148) affirms that the considerable social inequality of the 1930s created a breeding ground for political polarization, fostering the activity of Fascist organizations in Britain. In *A Scots Quair*, support for Fascism is associated with members of the elite and educated classes. Mowat, the heir of the estate of Segget, allies his nationalistic aspirations for Scotland to an admiration for the political developments in Italy, which are, in his view, “Rahly amazing, the country awakening, regaining its soul, its old leaders back – with a new one or so. Discipline, order, hierarchy – all that” (p. 369). Another Fascist sympathizer is Alec Hogg, the son of Segget’s Provost, who considers the group “fine, Conservatives, like, but a lot more than that” (p. 324). He works as a clerk in Edinburgh and is a snobbish character, full of “*Edinburgh touches*” (p. 325), which reinforces the relation of Fascism with those who feel superior in the trilogy. This idea is even more evident later in the novel, when Alec rejects this ideology. This change happens after he loses his job and endures hardship without any help from other members of the Fascist group. When he comes back to Segget and starts mending roads for a living, he states that “there was nothing like a damn good taste of starvation to make you take ill with ideas you’d held [...] as for Fascism’s fancies on Scotland and Youth – well, starvation’s grip in your belly taught better” (p. 446). In *Grey Granite*, other supercilious characters express their alignment with authoritarian ideas. John Cushnie, one of the lodgers at Chris’s boarding-house, has a clerical job, but feels uneasy about his social status as he comes from a working-class family: “what did it matter, you were middle-class yourself now and didn’t want ever to remember that you might have been a keelie [a brute living in a city] labourer” (p. 643). When talking about the Communists, John accuses them of manipulating workers and claims that

"that was the worst of the working class that they could be led astray by agitators, they'd no sense and needed to be strongly ruled" (p. 643). In addition to his condescending view of the working class, this passage implies his belief in the need for a strong authority, recalling Mowat's values.

The rise of Mussolini and Hitler to power and their increasing prominence in European politics is also suggested by references to these leaders in *Grey Granite*. These mentions occur in everyday conversations, implying that the rise of these totalitarian regimes is a matter of public attention in the novel. Moreover, both historical figures are associated with brute force and tyranny in these passages. An example of that is when Ma Cleghorn tries to make her way through a crowd at Woolworth's and steps on a man's foot. When he calls her attention, she responds with "*Ay? Anything to say?* and he said *Ay, I have. Who do you think you are – Mussolini?*" (p. 563). While the man disapprovingly relates the Italian dictator to forcefulness, Ma is not troubled by being compared to him, as she seems to positively relate Mussolini to a model of masculinity: "*Faith, I could wear his breeks and not feel ashamed. You never had a thing under yours, you runt*" (p. 563). As for Hitler, he is associated with abuse of authority during a strike at the factory where Ewan works. When the police officer Sim Leslie threatens to arrest Ewan, the other workers react with revolt: "A fair growl went up from the folk at that, no body could stop strikers picketing their works. Who did the fat sod think he was – Hitler?" (p. 589). To the strikers, Hitler personifies authoritarianism and the disrespect for basic rights, which may reveal some of the discourses about him circulating in Duncairn.

The growth of Fascism makes Ewan and Jim Trease, the leader of the Communist Party, more pessimistic about the future. Ewan tells his comrade that there are no more left-wing students, only Fascists and nationalists, and consequently "the fight for the future was the workers against all the world" (p. 649). Ewan believes that the ascension of the Fascist ideology will hinder the workers' revolution. He also expresses a similar idea in a conversation with Ellen, in which he affirms that change will take long to come since "capitalism had a hundred dodges yet to dodge its own end, Fascism, New Deals, Douglasism[18], War: Fascism would probably outlast the lot" (p. 639-640). The notion that capitalism possesses different facets that will help it endure makes Ewan doubt the possibility of transformation during his lifetime. As a result, his political struggles would not seem to

[18] British economist Clifford Douglas (1879-1952) created the Social Credit theory, which advocated granting credit to individuals and financing the production of goods so as to increase purchasing power. His ideas gained force in the 1920s and 1930s, particularly in the early part of this period, according to Encyclopedia Britannica (2021). Available at: https://www.britannica.com/biography/Clifford-Douglas.

bear fruit for a long time. However, he considers that it is important to carry on even though "*History* [is] *our master not the servant we supposed . . .*" (p. 640). Despite the feeling that he is just another cog in the machine, he sees no other way to act but to keep fighting for his ideals. These impressions are shared by Jim Trease, who even predicts the coming of another war:

> He said he misdoubted they'd ever see workers' revolution in their time, capitalism had taken crises before and would take them again, it was well enough organized in Great Britain to carry ten million unemployed let alone the two and a half of to-day, Fascism would stabilize and wars help, they were coming, the wars, but coming slow (p. 651).

Jim is convinced that capitalism is strong enough to resist even amid such a profound social crisis as they are experiencing. In this, Ewan and Jim reveal a more skeptical view of political engagement than Robert, only expecting change in the long term.

The memory of the First World War plays a particularly important role as tensions increase and a new conflict seems to approach. Gowans and Gloag, the factory where Ewan works, hires more workers when the demand for metal products increases. At first, the workers do not understand what the new castings will be used for. However, Ewan soon informs them that they are "new ammunition parts, bits of shells and gas-cylinders for Sidderley, the English armament people" (p. 576). The production of materials used for gas attacks brings the memories of World War One to the forefront. When Ewan calls a workers' meeting to propose a strike to paralyze the production of weapons, he reads aloud the account of a nurse who tended to gassed soldiers:

> I HURRIED THERE AND ALMOST AT ONCE THE STREAM OF AMBULANCES WITH THE UNFORTUNATE PRISONERS BEGAN TO ARRIVE. AT FIRST SCORES, THEN LATER HUNDREDS, OF BROKEN MEN, GASPING, SCREAMING, CHOKING. THE HOSPITAL WAS PACKED WITH FRENCH SOLDIERS, BEATING AND FIGHTING THE AIR FOR BREATH. DOZENS OF MEN WERE DYING LIKE FLIES, THEIR CLOTHES RENT TO RIBBONS IN THEIR AGONY, THEIR FACES A HORRIBLY SICKLY GREEN AND CONTORTED OUT OF ALL HUMAN SHAPE— (p. 576).

This excerpt belongs to the memoir *I Was a Spy!* (1932), written by Marthe McKenna (1892-1966), who worked as a nurse in a German military hospital in Belgium and spied for the British. The book was a great success when it was published and was even made into a movie in 1933 (RAYFIELD, 2018). The fragment selected by Gibbon gives emphasis to the brutality of the gas attacks, like other passages in the trilogy concerning the war. The focus on the soldiers' suffering is Ewan's strategy to touch the other workers and convince them of the need to stop producing these weapons. Thomson (1977, p. 156-157) reports a strong anti-war mood in Britain in 1933 and 1934, with active peace societies and the widespread belief that

manufacturing armaments led to the occurrence of wars. This suggests that Gibbon represents and responds to ideas prevalent at the time.

This episode in *Grey Granite* also puts in evidence that the memories of the First World War are fading as the younger generations are mostly unmoved by the idea of military conflicts. Ewan's colleagues reject his appeal and regard wars as something utterly distant from them, a feeling that may be ascribed to a generation gap. It is necessary for Ewan to refer to an eyewitness account since "he hadn't been at the War, none of them had" (p. 576). In spite of this lack of direct experience, he believes that "they'd all read and heard about gas-attacks" (p. 576). It is not clear whether the other workers are familiar with these reports; however, their shock may indicate that they are not. The narrative read by Ewan, though upsetting, fails to move them to action against the production of weapons. In fact, the very ghastliness of the description may be the reason why the others resort to humor to deal with the discomfort that it causes them, as illustrated by the following passage: "Christ, you'd felt sick at that stuff, he'd read, but then wee Geordie Bruce at the back of the hall sounded a raspberry and everybody laughed, high out and relieved, you laughed yourself, only Norman and Ewan didn't" (p. 577). Although they are disturbed by the horrors of the gas attacks, they still clearly consider that wars are restricted to other countries and will not affect them, as will be further analyzed. This feeling of distance may be related to a lack of connection with those who fought in the war. This rift between generations is also expressed in the inauguration of Kinraddie's war memorial in *Sunset Song*, which is much closer in time to the end of the war. During the ceremony, the younger people look detached from the tribute: "the young ploughmen they stood with glum, white faces, they'd no understanding or caring, it was something that vexed and tore at them, it belonged to times they had no knowing of" (p. 255-256). These passages challenge the effectiveness of acts of remembrance such as the erection of memorials since most younger characters seem to forget the war victims or, at least, do not see their fate as a lesson for the future. On this subject, Winter (2006, p. 140) considers the effort to collectively commemorate the fallen as "a quixotic act" since the meaning of these acts of remembrance are eroded through time. Gibbon's emphasis on the human cost of the First World War in the trilogy may be a call to look at the past as a way to avoid repeating it, especially as he shows himself to be acutely aware of the increasingly hostile atmosphere in Europe and in other parts of the world.

The reaction of Gowans and Gloag's workers is in part motivated by the lack of empathy toward citizens from other countries. Initially, they show no interest in learning what the pieces produced in the factory will be used for. In a context of mass unemployment, this

kind of concern is considered a luxury: “you didn’t much care as long as it gave a bit of work to folk, better any kind of a decent job than being pitched off on the bloody Broo” (p. 575). When the other workers are unmoved by the fact that they are producing weapons, Ewan advocates for solidarity, arguing that “if a man were such a poor swine that it didn’t matter to him he was making things to be used to blow Chinese workers to bits, people like himself, then it didn’t matter. But if he had any guts at all he’d join the whole of Gowans and Gloag in a strike that would paralyse the Works” (p. 576). His argument, though, does not appeal to his colleagues, who express a disregard for people from other places. The workers see Ewan’s unease with the issue as snobbish and answer that “*It doesn’t matter a faeces to us what they’re going to do with the wee round tins. If you’re a Chink or a Black yourself, that’s your worry*” (p. 577). This indifference seems to be driven by a perception of racial difference and a feeling of safety as they believe to be unaffected by these conflicts. The influence of racial stereotypes on their opinion is illustrated in a quotation from after the tumultuous strike is over:

> Gowans and Gloag’s had quietened down after the strike, the chaps went back and said to themselves no more listening to those Communist Bulgars that got you in trouble because of their daftness, damn’t, if the Chinks and the Japs wanted to poison one the other, why shouldn’t they? – they were coarse little brutes, anyhow, like that Dr Fu Manchu on the films (p. 647).

Fu Manchu is a character in novels and short story collections by British writer Sax Rohmer (1883-1959) and in their movie adaptations. The films *The Mysterious Dr. Fu Manchu* and *The Return of Dr. Fu Manchu*, directed by Rowland V. Lee, were released, respectively, in 1929 and 1930. These narratives portray the Asians as a menace to the Western world since Fu Manchu is an evil genius. The first movie also features a Chinese secret society targeting Westerners. The passage from *Grey Granite* depicts the negative impact that stereotypical mediatic representations may have on the public opinion. Besides, it is another instance of the unfavorable view of the Communists, with workers considering them as a group that puts them in trouble.

Ewan’s attitude contrasts with his colleagues’ disregard for conflicts in other countries. As he makes clear in his dialogue with the other workers, he considers “a poor swine” (p. 576) the person who does not care about the fate of other humans, regardless of where they come from. Ewan expresses a solidarity that goes beyond any national or racial barrier since his focus is on the oppression shared by different peoples. His perspective is illustrated by his visit to Duncairn museum, in which he brings together popular movements from distinct places and time periods, as analyzed in chapter 2. When Ewan expresses his

desire to see art that presents a more realistic portrayal of people's lives, he longs for pictures "of the men of your kin, peasants and slaves and common folk and their ghastly lives through six thousand years" (p. 550). Hence, he identifies with exploited groups, revealing bonds related to class rather than nationality. This international perspective is also present in left-wing political songs that appear in the trilogy, such as "The Red Flag" and "The Internationale", as explored in chapter 1. McCulloch (2009, p. 105) states that this tendency to take the global context into account is characteristic of the Scottish Literary Renaissance of the early twentieth century. Gibbon (2007b, p. 142) positions himself in relation to this question in the essay "Glasgow", claiming that "the world's salvation lies in neither nationalism nor internationalism, those twin halves of an idiot whole", but in "ultimate cosmopolitanism". His ambition for humanity is the end of all differentiation among nationalities in favor of a view of unity, of all humankind as one.

Although there is little support for the strike against fabricating armament, Ewan's League manages to convince workers to stop the manufacture due to the productivity speed-up in the factory (p. 588). The reactions to the strike and to the consequent conflicts expose the stance of different segments of the population regarding the political context of the time. Strikers clash violently both with workers trying to enter the factory and with the police. A foreman who attempts to get through the pickets' blockade is thrown into the sea and ends up drowning. After that, when the police surround the strikers, two of them use pepper spray to break their lines. These events are widely reported in the news and elicit distinct responses from each group. The newspaper *Daily Runner* positions itself as anti-strike and represents the protesters in a negative way, giving an account of "those coarse brutes the Gowans strikers, and the awful things they'd done to the working folk that were coming decent-like from their jobs" (p. 595). This report is avidly read in the wealthy neighborhood of Craigneuks, whose residents affect to be horrified. Gibbon's description of the elite in this passage is bitingly sarcastic:

> whenever Craigneuks came on a bit of snot it breathed out *Uhhhhhhhhhhh!* like a donkey smelling a dung-heap, delighted, fair genteel and so shocked and stirred up it could hardly push down its grapefruit and porridge and eggs and bacon and big salt baps, fine butter new from the creamery, fresh milk and tea that tasted like tea, not like the seep from an ill-kept sump. And it said weren't those Footforthie keelies awful? Something would have to be done about them (p. 595).

This fragment calls attention to the underlying pleasure felt by the rich with the news of the violence related to the strike and their desire to tighten the control over the working class. By emphasizing their plentiful breakfast, Gibbon also highlights the great inequality in Duncairn

and challenges the notion that the privileged are in a position to judge those who face hardship.

Gibbon's depiction of the clergy is even more damning, with Reverend MacShilluck expressing support for the Fascists. After reading the news about the strike, he also approves of the production of weapons as a way to prevent military conflicts, saying to his housekeeper Pootsy that:

> Ahhhhhhhhhhhh, what they needed in Duncairn were folk like Fascists, they knew how to keep tink brutes in trim. And this nonsense about the keelies being on strike because Gowans were making shells and gas-cases – well, wasn't a strong man sure in defence? Wasn't it the best way to avoid a war for a country to keep a strong army in the field? (p. 595-596).

His sympathy for Fascism reinforces the idea that this political orientation is more common among the elite. The fallacy of his reasoning about self-defense is exposed by his housekeeper, who "said she was sure, that must have been why the last War had happened, those coarse brutes the Germans and Frenchies, like, had had hardly an army to their name, would it be, and that was why the war had broke [sic] out?" (p. 596). Exchanges like this are recurrent in the novel, with Pootsy seemingly agreeing with the minister and then asking uncomfortable questions that force him to change the subject. Reverend MacShilluck has to admit that lack of armament was not the cause of the war but claims that she could not understand the issue. He goes on to praise the First World War, stating that it was "*a fine thing* [...] *in many a way*" (p. 596). For him, the fighting is not related to bloodshed, but to an erotic tale of a nurse and a wounded soldier, which he recounts to his housekeeper when sexually harassing her. The minister's advances add to his portrayal as a repugnant, hypocritical character. Besides, it associates the supporters of Fascism with lies and reproachable moral behavior.

As happened with Robert in *Cloud Howe*, the strike is a transforming experience for Ewan, especially after he is arrested and tortured in connection to it. His time in jail leads him to change his political view and start believing in the use of force to bring about change. After that, Ewan abandons the Young League he created and joins the Communist Party. As for the strike, though it brings positive outcomes for the workers, the production of weapons continues, and there is even a plan for the factory to start filling the cases with gas. Jim Trease tells Ewan that "Bolivia and Japan were in a hell of stamash [uproar] to get arms: and Gowans were dancing in tune" (p. 620), in a reference to the Japanese expansionist policy that would lead to its part in World War Two. To Ewan, this is a defeat, and he feels that his effort and his suffering were in vain, asking Jim "—*And I went through what I did – just for that?*" (p.

620). Jim agrees that their actions may have little effect in the short term; however, he seems to draw motivation from the idea that it is "[a] *hell of a thing to be History* [...]*!*" (p. 620). This thought, at the same time ambitious and skeptical of the potential for change in the near future, also attracts Ewan, who believes that it is "[a] hell of a thing to be History! – not a student, a historian, a tinkling reformer, but LIVING HISTORY ONESELF, being it, making it, eyes for the eyeless, hands for the maimed!—" (p. 620). Despite his understanding of History as a "*master*" (p. 640), he is willing to surrender to this force and play his part in the advancement of society, even if it is small and social justice is imperceptibly slow to come. Ewan, toughened by his experience in prison and spurred by the idea of becoming History, decides to dedicate himself fully to the cause, through any means necessary. His devotion to his ideals eventually causes him to justify lying when it advances his agenda and to break up with Ellen as she begins to doubt his form of political engagement. His trajectory of progressive hardening gives grounds for the recurrent comparison of Ewan to the granite that abounds in Duncairn.

3.3 **"*Nothing new under the sun*": continuity of state violence and trauma**

Young Ewan's encounter with police brutality exemplifies the kind of state violence that repeatedly appears in the trilogy. To Gibbon, who considers civilization as a rotten and corrupting force, the police and the army are particularly oppressive institutions. *A Scots Quair* presents the idea that both organizations are at the service of those in power and their interests. For instance, Long Rob sees World War One as a conflict that expresses the will of an elite, affirming that the war

> was a lot of damned nonsense, those that wanted to fight, the M.P.s and bankers and editors and muckers, should all be locked up in the pleiter [mire] of a park and made to gut each other with graips [garden fork]: there'd be no great loss to the world and a fine bit sight it would make for decent folk to look on at (p. 193-194).

The police are also portrayed as contributing to the maintenance of the status quo since they repress strikes and demonstrations. Besides, they are responsible for carrying out evictions, as happened to the Kindness family, which implies that, for the police, the defense of private property prevails over concerns about the welfare of individuals. These two institutions are associated with violent acts in the trilogy, a persistent behavior that affects both the generation that fights in the First World War and the one that comes after them.

The violence inflicted by the British state on its own citizens during the war is illustrated by the stories of Rob and Ewan. The first is arrested for refusing to join the army and displays a remarkable resilience in face of the brutal treatment by the police. Rob remains true to his ideas, as illustrated by the quotation: "they had put him in prison and ill-used him awful; but he wouldn't give in whatever they did, he laughed in their faces, *Fine, man, fine*" (p. 216). He eventually resorts to a hunger strike and is released after the prison doctor states that "it was useless to keep him, he'd never be of use to his King and country" (p. 216). These events point to a view of the army and the police as institutions used by the state to impose the government's decisions, even if they mean sending people to a war. As the First World War is repeatedly represented as a fruitless and costly effort in the trilogy, the use of force by the state in this case is rendered even more reproachable. The assessment of the prison doctor also calls attention to the dehumanization of the citizens since, from his point of view, Rob's value depends on his capacity to fight. Rob's suffering is highlighted by the description of his fragility when he comes back home: "folk told he was fairly a wreck, he could hardly stand up and walk or make his own meat, God knows how he ever got into his clothes" (p. 216). The decline in his health helps to give rise to readers' empathy for him, contributing to the consequent disapproval of the actions of the police.

For Ewan, the violence of the army begins much earlier than his execution as a deserter. When he comes home on leave after training, he is so changed that Chris thinks that "it wasn't Ewan, her Ewan, someone coarse and strange and strong had come back in his body to torment her" (p. 221). He despises Chris and is so aggressive toward her that he frightens young Ewan. Even his physical description suggests the transformation he has undergone since he has "the neck with its red and angry circle about the collar of the khaki jacket, a great half-healed scar across the back of his hand glinted putrescent blue" (p. 220). The word choice in this quotation evokes Ewan's anger and highlights the repugnance of the marks of violence in his body, a physical trace reminiscent of his now repulsive personality. Gibbon discusses the depiction of Ewan's brutalization in a letter to Helen Cruickshank. While he admits that the final part of the novel is rushed, he defends Ewan's portrait after the training as "factually the truth if not artistically" (MITCHELL, 1932, p. 1). This comment indicates that Gibbon privileges his criticism of the army's influence on young men over aesthetic concerns, suggesting the importance attributed to this issue.

This view of the negative impact of the army on those who join it is also expressed in the novel *The Thirteenth Disciple*, published under Gibbon's birth name. This work portrays life in the army during training and fighting as the protagonist Malcom enlists during the First

World War. Malcom fiercely criticizes “the festering moral-reek of the barrack-room” (MITCHELL, 1981, p. 128). The training is deemed useless and outdated, bound by foolish traditions regarding salutes and proper forms of address within the hierarchical system. To Malcom, this kind of training is pointless and comparable to

> finding himself member of an insane and impossible ant-hill on which the ants, threatened by the descent of a gigantic and exterminating boot, paraded to and fro on their hind-legs, their antennae held in complicated positions, or solemnly and portentously waving those useful members at one another . . . . (MITCHELL, 1981, p. 125).

Despite the inadequacy of the training to the modern techniques of warfare, Malcom sees little reaction from his colleagues against the system. From his point of view, “[w]ith the fewest of exceptions, [...] the civilian enlistments assimilated tradition and method without question and almost without demur” (MITCHELL, 1981, p. 126). The numbing exercises and the damaging atmosphere have an adverse impact on the servicemen, as exemplified by the following description of “the dull, plodding, anxious ploughmen, the nervous worried boys, [...] those whom the orgy of beastliness had overtaken and mentally murdered” (MITCHELL, 1981, p. 131). This passage about the hardened peasants could also be a description of the transformed Ewan. In this way, the portrayal of the army training in *The Thirteenth Disciple* may give an insight into a process of dehumanization similar to Ewan’s, which is not narrated in *A Scots Quair*.

The ultimate official act of violence against Ewan is his execution after his desertion. His decision to go back home stems from the perception of his mistreatment of Chris and the consequent commitment to make amends. In his conversation with Chae before his sentence is carried out, Ewan admits that “mad and mad he had been, he had treated her (Chris) as a devil might, he had tried to hurt her and maul her, trying in the nightmare to waken, to make her waken him up” (p. 234). His resolution, then, is to try to win Chris’s trust back and to be close to his son again. Even though he believes that he will not be able to return home, he is spurred on by “that promise that he’d never fail her (Chris)” (p. 234). Ewan’s motivation for deserting not only elicits empathy, but also stresses the idea that he is trapped in a situation out of his control, in a war that is not his. He is socially pressured into enlisting, hardened by his training, and rigorously punished when he tries to become his old self again. The army shapes him and discards him when he can no longer be relied on to fight. His trajectory challenges the notion of heroism traditionally associated with war and emphasizes the violence inflicted by their own state, rather than by the enemy, on those who have to fight.

The brutality suffered by Rob and Ewan finds an echo in the experiences of young Ewan and his colleague Alick Watson in *Grey Granite*. Ewan's harsh treatment at the hands of the police is depicted as a standard practice toward left-wing activists. In the words of the police station inspector, Jim Trease is only spared of "a taste of what he needed" because "he could raise hell in the courts over-easily, he knew the law inside out and bottom up" (p. 601). Young Ewan is framed for assaulting the police during the strike at Gowans and Gloag. He is also accused of using pepper spray during the clash between the police and the strikers. While in prison, Ewan is tortured to confess his involvement in the drowning of one of the factory workers, an accusation of which he is innocent. The police violence is emphasized in the passage: "Two of them (the police officers) held him while Sim Leslie bashed him, then they knocked him from fist to fist across the cell, body-blows in the usual Duncairn way with Reds, one of them slipped in the blood and swore, *That's enough for the bastard, he'll bleed like a pig*" (p. 609). Besides, this quotation reinforces the idea that this is a common treatment for those involved in left-wing groups. Ewan's suffering is strongly stressed in the narrative, with the description that "[e]very movement he made sent a stream of pain down his legs and body, he thought, but wasn't sure, that his right arm was broken where they'd twisted it; and thought again *Not likely, that would show too much*; and fainted off in the fire of the pain" (p. 608). Once again, Gibbon highlights the agony of oppressed groups and the unbalance of their struggle against hegemonic forces.

Ewan's situation, far from being represented as an isolated event, is connected to the distress of individuals from different places and historical moments. When the police first threaten him at the station, Ewan does not take them seriously, considering that this kind of practice belongs in other places: "he'd minded [remembered] in a flash of a story he'd read of the ghastly happenings in American jails. Rot: this was Scotland, not America, the police were clowns and idiot enough, but they couldn't—" (p. 609). If this quotation associates his experience with that of people in the United States, a passage after his torture relates Ewan to a range of groups targeted by those in power:

> he lay still with a strange mist boiling, blinding his eyes, not Ewan Tavendale at all any more but lost and be-bloodied in a hundred broken and tortured bodies all over the world, in Scotland, in England, in the torture-dens of the Nazis in Germany, in the torment-pits of the Polish Ukraine, a livid, twisted thing in the prisons where they tortured the Nanking Communists, a Negro boy in an Alabama cell while they thrust the razors into his flesh, castrating with a lingering cruelty and care. He was one with them all, a long wail of sobbing mouths and wrung flesh, tortured and tormented by the World's Masters while those Masters lied about Progress through Peace, Democracy, Justice, the Heritage of Culture – even as they'd lied in the days of Spartacus, lying now through their hacks and the pulpit and press, in the slobberings of middle-class pacifists, the tawdry promisings of Labourites, Douglasites . . . And a kind of stinging bliss came upon him, knowledge that he was

> that army itself – that army of pain and blood and torment that was yet but the raggedest van of the hordes of the Last of the Classes, the Ancient Lowly, trampling the ways behind it unstayable: up and up, a dark sea of faces, banners red in the blood from the prisons, torn entrails of tortured workers their banners, the enslavement and oppression of six thousand years a cry and singing that echoed to the stars. No retreat, no safety, no escape for them, no reward, thrust up by the black, blind tide to take the first brunt of impact, first glory, first death, first life as it never yet had been lived— (p. 609-610).

In this quotation, young Ewan becomes one with all oppressed and persecuted people through his suffering, in another instance of Gibbon's cosmopolitan focus on history. In addition to political and racial motives, the hostility against these groups is strongly associated with class issues. It is a struggle between "the Last of the Classes" and "the World's Masters" – the elite, the politicians, the clergy and the press. This fragment from the novel emphasizes the continuity of both the exploitation of the downtrodden groups and the deceiving attitudes of the hegemonic ones as those holding power in the early twentieth century are compared to the Roman elite in the days of Spartacus. Hence, Ewan's experience is contextualized within a history of inequality and violence. Like in other passages from the trilogy, the suffering of the common folk is stressed, with graphic imagery such as "banners red in the blood from the prisons, torn entrails of tortured workers their banners" (p. 610).

The abuse that Ewan suffered in jail profoundly affects him as memories of it linger in his mind. The "insistent return" of traumatic memories (CARUTH, 1995, p. 5) is portrayed in the novel. After Ewan goes back home, he still feels the effect of what he has been through:

> sleep came seldom, hour on hour, while he fought to lock back in his memory those pictures: pictures of himself in that prison cell, in the hands of the bobbies while they mauled him about, pictures . . . and he'd cover his face with his hands, bury his face in the pillow to forget the sick shame of it (p. 619).

This recurrence of disturbing images is a characteristic of trauma. As argued by Caruth (1995, p. 9), it is this feature that makes a traumatic experience so powerful and overwhelming since "the impact of the traumatic events lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located, in its insistent appearance outside the boundaries of any single place or time". Remembering his appalling treatment in prison, Ewan becomes disgusted by his own body, regarding it as "a loathsome thing that he lay within, a foul thing he didn't dare to look upon" (p. 619). This expresses the significant repercussions of this trauma on Ewan's perception of himself.

Although time allows Ewan to distance himself from these memories, retelling his experience to Ellen seems to be an important factor in helping him to leave these mental images behind. During their trip to the countryside, the light touch of Ellen's hair against his cheek makes him remember "the Horror: but it was in some way dimmer, queer, as though

something were hiding it away" (p. 625). Their conversation about the subject happens still during this journey, when the young woman mentions the Covenanters. This leads Ewan to talk about their confinement by "the gentry" at Dunnottar Castle, remarking, with a somber expression, that "*There's nothing new under the sun – not even torture*" (p. 626). This dialogue reinforces the association between his experience and that of countless other people through history, as well as the role of social class as what divides the oppressors and the oppressed. The horror of Ewan's imprisonment is conveyed by Ellen's strong reaction to his narrative as his words are left out of the novel. The police's actions are so disturbing that Ellen "felt sick, knew she'd faint, gripped herself not to, and felt sick again" (p. 626-627), emphasizing the brutality of it all. After recounting what happened, Ewan reassures Ellen and promises to leave it behind. Significantly, he speaks Scots then, which is unusual for him: "smiling into the misery of her eyes, speaking Scotch who so seldom spoke it, that blunted and foolish and out-dated tool: *You needn't fash for me. I've been the gypedest* [most foolish] *of gomerils* [idiots] *to let on and vex you so, but I'm better now, I'll forget, we forget everything*" (p. 627). The use of the vernacular at such a sentimentally charged moment echoes Gibbon's (2007b, p. 146) view of Scots as "the speech of emotional ecstasy and emotional stress". The fact that talking to Ellen about his ordeal helps Ewan to feel better may be related to studies of trauma. Caruth (1995, p. 153-154) discusses how verbalizing one's traumatic experience allows the individual to make sense of it and is an important step in the attempt to overcome the trauma.

Although young Ewan seems to feel less the impact of the torture after his dialogue with Ellen, Chris sees a transformation in him even in the long term. Shortly after his release from jail, she compares the change in her son to that of his father after the army training:

> There was something about him (young Ewan) since that awful time when he'd fainted on the Steps of Windmill Brae that minded [reminded] her of his father back from the War – not the Ewan of the foul mind and foul speech, but that darker being she'd not kenned [known] in those days, only later when the tale of his death was brought her: that being who had been the real Ewan imprisoned, desperate, a wild beast seeking a shelter she hadn't provided, a torn and tormented thing seeking a refuge— (p. 618).

This passage reinforces the similarity between the situations experienced by Ewan and by his son. To Chris, both are so profoundly affected that their true selves become trapped and they need to find a place of safety and protection. Bringing together the physical torture suffered by young Ewan and the consequences of his father's time in the army emphasizes the violence perpetrated by the state through the police and the armed forces. The defense and stability of the nation takes precedence over the well-being of its citizens in both situations. Just as Ewan

is forced into enlisting for defending his "King and Country", young Ewan is arrested and beaten in the name of a political stability that also protects the interests of the economic elite. Even after young Ewan's traumatic experience is not as present in his mind, Chris still considers that he is different and becoming increasingly similar to his father. She thinks that his cool, detached way "was transmuting again before her eyes – into something darker and coarser, in essence the same, in tint antrin [peculiar] queer. More like his father he seemed every day, if one could imagine that other Ewan with his angers and hasty resentments mislaid . . ." (p. 635). The young man's attitude becomes more somber and, at the same time, more humorous, which makes Chris wonder "had he found that (sense of humor) in torment in a prison cell?" (p. 635). Chris's impressions make it clear that the brutality undergone by young Ewan has lasting consequences for him.

There are also traces of continuity in the treatment given by the army to the servicemen, as illustrated by the story of Alick Watson, young Ewan's colleague at Gowans and Gloag. During the strike, Alick falsely accuses Ewan of being involved in the drowning of one of the workers and in the use of pepper spray against police officers. He is motivated to do that by the wrong belief that it was Ewan who made his sister pregnant. After finding out his mistake, Alick goes to the Slainges Barracks and, "half-feared and yet desperate" (p. 616), decides to enlist. The soldier on guard presents a damning picture of life in the army: "the sentry said not to be a soft sod, why join in this lousy mob? The grub was stinking potatoes, worse beef, seven shilling a week pay and about half of that docked in sports and fines. It was just plain hell when it wasn't hell decorated" (p. 616). In addition to the low wages and the awful food, there are physical punishments, as witnessed by Alick right before enlisting: "a wheen of poor muckers were wheeling round the square, shoggle [wobble] and thud, they looked half-dead, punishment drill of some kind Alick knew" (p. 616). This kind of violent penalty almost makes him give up enlisting; however, his guilt prevails as he thinks that "they couldn't do worse to him, could they, than the bobbies had done to Ewan?" (p. 616). The kind of punishment suffered by the soldiers is thus compared to the malpractice of the police, regardless of the fact that the first is legal. This reinforces the criticism toward any official violence in the trilogy, which goes beyond questions of legality or the reason for the punishment.

Alick's time in the army illustrates the institution's lack of regard for the servicemen. After joining it, Alick attempts to organize his peers to fight for better working conditions. Their dissatisfaction becomes even sharper after the explosion in the Gowans and Gloag factory, where armament was being manufactured, as aforementioned. The incident brings

back the discourse of sacrifice for the nation that was widespread during the First World War. The newspaper *Tory Pictman* states that "the affair was very regrettable, like science and religion experiment had its martyrs for the noble cause of defending the State" (p. 656). The newspaper also gives voice on the matter to "a leader […] full of dog Latin and constipated English, but of course not Scotch, it was over-genteel" (p. 656). Once again, Gibbon's tone is highly satirical, leaving no doubt where the readers' sympathies should lie. Alick takes the explosion as a sample of the combatants' experience in the next war, which is an ever more pressing threat in *Grey Granite,* as mentioned before. He warns his comrades that that fate is "*what's waiting us in the next war* […] *Skinned to death or else toasted alive like a winkle in front of a fire, see?*" (p. 657). When asked what they could do, Alick draws upon his experience of workers' organization at the factory, as led by Ewan. He suggests that the soldiers

> organize and stick up for their rights, would they back him to-day down in the mess if he made a complaint about the mucking meat? They could force they sods to feed them proper, no fear of that if they'd stick together, no need to knuckle-down to the bloody NCOs [non-commissioned officers]. And if a war came and the chaps in the companies were well-organized: what the hell could the officers do to them then? (p. 657).

Alick hopes that presenting their demands collectively may be a way of getting a fair treatment from their superiors. Seeing their strength in numbers, he tries to break with the strict hierarchical organization of the armed forces and stop the abuse against those in lower ranks.

However, Alick's trajectory in the army indicates that this institution seeks to suppress any kind of dissent. He is jailed and "court-martialled for circulating seditious literature in the barrack-rooms" (p. 664). Like Rob and Ewan (the father) in *Sunset Song,* Alick is treated with what is considered "the severity appropriate to his case" (p. 664), which shows that these punishments for disobedience endure even in peace time. Violence continues to be used as a way to break those who do not submit to the orders of their superiors while making them serve as an example to discourage rebellion. Just as Rob's and Ewan's attitudes may be considered a threat to the troops' morale during the war, Alick's attempt to organize the servicemen is believed to undermine discipline in the armed forces. The newspaper *Daily Runner* wonders that, "behind the muddled notions of Private Watson", there may be "forces […] aiming at the forcible overthrow of Society and suborning the loyalty of our troops" (p. 664). The strategy to appeal to people's fears is also similar to the discourse used during the war. The idea of protecting the foundations of society from the menace of left-wing ideologies mirrors the call to protect women and children from the demonized German enemy.

Once more, the press is at the service of those in power, presenting a partial account of Alick's story. The *Daily Runner* claims that the other soldiers were against him and arrested him "with admirable promptitude" (p. 664). However, the same news piece ends up suggesting what is left untold: "The tales of the barrack-room riots in his defence might be discounted as malicious gossip . . ." (p. 665). Gibbon shifts the focus then from the article to be published to the thoughts in the sub-editor's mind as "he scratched his head in some doubt" (p. 665). The questions he asks himself both give a better picture of what really happened and reveal the partiality of the press:

> He wondered a moment what had really happened when the furniture was smashed in two barrack-rooms and five rounds issued to the NCOs? Better cut out that bit and keep bloody vague. Something about the absolute and unswerving loyalty of our Army and Navy throughout the hundreds of years of their history? What about Parker and the Mutiny at the Nore? Or, closer at home, the Navy at Invergordon? Or the Highlanders in France? . . . Better miss it all out. Some blah about the bloody hunger-march now— (p. 665).

The accounts of smashed furniture indicate that the uprisings in Alick's defense are more than "malicious gossip". However, the journalist clearly feels that he should not openly mention this subject, laying bare the newsroom policy of favoring powerful groups. The references to other mutinies emphasize that Alick's actions are not isolated, but the repetition of events that have been happening throughout history. This is another instance of the focus on continuity that is recurrent in *A Scots Quair*. It is also possible to draw significant parallels between Alick's story and the historical events mentioned by the journalist. As Alick is associated with forces with the objective to dismantle British society, the sailors involved in the 1931 Invergordon Mutiny were suspected of being induced by Communist militants (MACDONALD; YEOMAN, 2016). The same strategy of fearmongering was also used in the 1797 Nore Mutiny. At the time, the press represented Richard Parker (1767-1797), one of the leaders of the revolt, as a tyrant and even suggested his association with Robespierre's terror in France (HILL, 2019). Another similarity between Parker and Alick is the fact that both were chosen as examples of the severe punishment faced by those who rebel while other individuals involved in the mutinies were pardoned (HILL, 2019). Thus, Gibbon highlights the permanence not only of uprisings against the difficult working conditions in the military, but also of the pattern of selective punishments and distorted representation of the mutineers in the press.

The depiction of instances of state violence at different points of the trilogy underscores the permanence of this kind of practice. Young Ewan's and Alick's trajectories in the 1930s echo the stories of Long Rob's torture and Ewan's execution during World War

One. This puts in evidence the fact that these violent actions are the norm, and not exceptionally adopted in times of war. In fact, there are even references to similar and much earlier historical events in the *Quair*, highlighting the idea that these aggressive strategies are recurrent throughout history. Gibbon presents a negative picture of these practices, emphasizing the suffering of those who are tortured and killed. Besides, he criticizes the brutalizing influence of the armed forces culture as illustrated by Ewan's transformation after his army training. Finally, the clash between these four characters and the institutions is portrayed as part of a larger context of political issues. While the First World War is characterized as a conflict that interests those in power rather than the common folk, young Ewan's and Alick's treatment is influenced by hegemonic groups' fear of revolts that might topple them. Hence, this pattern of using state apparatus to suppress certain groups is represented as an enduring feature of civilization, as "nothing new under the sun".

CONCLUSION

Memory, by definition, brings together the past and the present, which makes it a productive framework for analyzing Gibbon's works. In *A Scots Quair*, the present is never isolated from what happened before but inhabited by the past in various ways. From the songs performed on different occasions to relics on the landscape, traces from other times are a constant reminder of the characters' antecedents and of the historical processes that led to the contemporary reality. Continuity is recurrently emphasized in the narrative, underscoring a more cyclical view of history. This focus on repetition, however, does not imply immobility; rather, it shows a nuanced representation of the interplay between permanence and change. Although the passage of time necessarily brings transformation, a pattern of oppression and exploitation may be observed through different historical moments as Gibbon foregrounds the suffering of the common folk.

This complex approach to transformation and continuity is an example of the complication of binaries that is characteristic of Gibbon. As previously explored, this attitude may also be perceived in his simultaneous attachment and hostility toward the land, which leads him to sing praises to the peasants and the countryside while refusing to live like them and feeling isolated from this community in his literary pursuits. Another instance of this attempt to conciliate apparent opposites is the author's simultaneous focus on the local and the global. In his representation of the history of the common people, Gibbon foregrounds the events and traditions of the northeast of Scotland. However, in doing so, he stresses the shared fate of the disadvantaged worldwide and the need for international solidarity. Therefore, from Gibbon's point of view, the bonds between individuals go beyond national borders as Scottish peasants and urban workers have a deeper connection with their foreign counterparts than with the "gentry" that exploits them.

Gibbon's emphasis on the suffering of common folk through history and the duality between permanence and change are central to all chapters in this study. The traditional songs and tales mentioned in the trilogy remind the community of a shared past and culture, as well as add local color to the novels. In addition, the changing relationship between the characters and the song tradition illustrates the adaptability of these cultural elements and provides an example of continuity amid transformation. The landscape also embodies this duality, with the land standing for endurance in opposition to the transience of human lives. As a lasting witness to history, the landscape accumulates vestiges that convey at once their material

permanence and signs of the passage of time. When getting in touch with these views and ruins, characters are reminded not only of their own past, but also of that of their region. Finally, the commemorations of the First World War highlight its connection with other conflicts, putting it into the context of a cycle of military struggles and consequent losses. This sense of continuity is reinforced by the representation of the permanence of state violence and of the growing tensions that anticipate the Second World War. Memories of World War One also resurface in passages dealing with the social and economic crisis that characterized the interwar years, calling attention to the similarities between the despair in the trenches and back home.

The performance of songs is a part of daily life and contributes to the building of a collective identity in *Sunset Song*. The musical tradition is remarkably celebrated during Chris's wedding, with an abundance of Scottish songs played on this occasion. As a tradition that is passed on through generations, these compositions strengthen the bond between those living in Kinraddie and their ancestors. Many of the songs refer to situations to which the characters can relate, such as "Auld Robin Gray", with its depiction of the harsh, impoverished life in the countryside. Another song set in a rural area is "The Flowers of the Forest", which gains a particularly poignant meaning as the community mourns the men killed in the war, echoing the scenes described in this lament about a sixteenth-century battle. Significantly, both songs portray the lives and sorrows of the common people, who are traditionally excluded from historical accounts of the nation. In this way, this musical heritage fits Gibbon's preferred perspective on history.

Although traditional songs are such an important feature in most of *Sunset Song*, the characters become increasingly detached from them after the war. The conflict represents a decisive moment for Kinraddie since it gives rise to radical changes in the village. With some of the men dead and the woods cut down, the traditional way of living and working the land comes to an end. The decline of the song tradition, however, does not imply that it vanishes completely; it is still remembered, in a transformed way, in the other two novels. When discussing popular culture, Chartier (2009, p. 46) states that it interacts in an intricate way with imposed cultural elements and is able to survive in an adjusted form. These adaptations to the present moment may be observed, for example, in *Grey Granite* as a parody of Robert Burns's "Up in the Morning Early" is sung during a march of the unemployed.

The way in which Burns is remembered throughout the trilogy also portrays how the representation of the past is influenced by relevant issues in the present. Whereas his works are so integrated into daily life in *Sunset Song* that the name of the poet is not even

mentioned, the figure of the national bard seems to be more consciously negotiated in *Cloud Howe*. As Burns's poems become part of the school curriculum, rather than simply sung or recited in community gatherings, some characters begin to challenge the idealization of his image and to refer to him in an irreverent manner. Political orientation is an important factor in individuals' impression of Burns. For instance, Hairy Hogg, a conservative character, considers that claiming to descend from the Burns family provides him with an illustrious provenance. In addition, he reads the bard's "A Man's A Man For A' That" through the lens of his political preferences and assumes that they share the same views about society.

Grey Granite portrays the development of a new tradition of political songs as left-wing anthems are sung in different marches and political assemblies. Composed in the late nineteenth century, songs such as "The Red Flag" (1889) and "The Internationale" (1871/1888) gradually establish themselves as part of a transmitted repertoire, as illustrated by their presence in the novel. This new tradition is also indicative of a novel form of community building. While the village of Kinraddie is inhabited by a close-knit, though heterogeneous, group of people, bonds in a big city such as Duncairn are more often formed between individuals with shared characteristics. Political preference is, thus, a possible reason for congregating people, and music may contribute to the strengthening of these connections. In addition, the political songs present in *Grey Granite* are examples of a more cosmopolitan view of the world that reinforces the similarity of workers' situation around the world. This transnational focus is in line with Gibbon's ideal of a world not bound by national borders.

Like the songs, the legends present in *A Scots Quair* contribute to the construction of a local identity in the trilogy since they are all based on stories from the region of the Mearns. These tales provide Gibbon's setting with a past and even with an explanation for their origin, as is the case with Kinraddie and the legend of the gryphon. Being orally transmitted, these remembered narratives resemble the rumors that pervade the novels. Besides, these traditional stories put in evidence the relationship between memory and power dynamics. As the legendary killing of the gryphon by Cospatric de Gondeshil furnishes his descendants with a legitimate and honorable reason for owning the estate of Kinraddie, there is a perceivable effort to keep it alive on people's minds, with the inclusion of the beast in the family coat of arms and the preservation of the weapon allegedly used by the knight. The fact that the village remains in the hands of the same family until the beginning of the twentieth century reinforces the continuity of social hierarchy.

The idea of permanence is also underscored by some of the supernatural apparitions narrated in the trilogy. Figures from Antiquity still haunt the landscape, recalling the

beginnings of civilization in the announcement of the ships of Pytheas, for example. Chae's vision of a warrior from the times of the Roman Empire brings together the First World War and the fight between Romans and Caledonians, foregrounding the repetition of military conflicts through history. Hence, these apparitions symbolize aspects of the past that endure in the long term, lasting into the present. The focus in the continuity of destructive elements, like wars, mirrors Gibbon's negative view of civilization as the force that annihilated a golden past.

The supernatural phenomena in *A Scots Quair* also explore different representations of Jesus and how they may be influenced by political matters. Even though Robert is a minister, he sees Christ first and foremost as a social reformer, someone who defended equality and spoke for the common folk. This view puts Christ in line with Robert's own political ideals of social reform, a transformation that would spring from the divine within humanity. After his disillusionment with the failure of the general strike, however, the minister's vision of Jesus causes him to radically change his point of view and focus on Christ's godly aspect. In his final sermon, Robert states that Christian teachings have not resulted in a more compassionate world. On the contrary, he claims that the hope embodied in Christ is empty, "*fulfilling nothing*", and that a new creed is necessary (p. 471). In such a pessimistic mood, Robert denies the notion of a divine, essential compassion or goodness within humans that could lead to an improved world. From his perspective, human existence is stuck in a cycle of misery and suffering that will not be broken unless we abandon this benevolent faith in ourselves in favor of "*a stark, sure creed that will cut like a knife* […] *through the doubt and disease*" (p. 471).

The landscape is a site where the interplay between permanence and change is especially visible in *A Scots Quair*. Although the land may be transformed by humanity, as exemplified by the cutting down of the woods during the war, it is a tangible symbol of continuity in the narrative. In contrast, humanity and all our endeavors are as ephemeral as clouds. Due to its relative stability, the space around the characters conveys a sense of permanence and connects individuals from different periods. Gibbon repeatedly expresses the idea that his characters inhabit places that have long been occupied and tread the same ground as their ancestors. These bonds between distant generations reinforce the endurance of human feelings and emotions since, despite the transience of individual lives, people's grief, hopes, and dreams remain essentially the same. In this sense, a moment of reflection and preparation to face challenges unites Chris and Hew Monte Alto regardless of the centuries that separate them, for example. This attention to the human heart stresses the focus on the common,

anonymous people, who are subjected to a second death in the form of forgetting. The fragility of memory is such that individuals' names fall into oblivion even when there is a commemorative effort, as happened to the Covenanters celebrated in Dunnottar Castle.

Amidst this constant struggle against forgetting, the landscape evokes reminiscences prompted by the accumulation of vestiges and references in it. These recollections may be both individual and collective, stimulated by traces of a shared past or by places associated with relevant events in one's life. The relationship between place and memory calls attention to the human construction of landscape not only in physical terms, but also in terms of representation. As we attribute meaning to certain locations, they come to stand for important marks of identity. Hence, belonging to a place involves a common way of seeing it and associating it with a shared pool of narratives. This link between memory and attachment to a place is well illustrated by Chris's ties to certain locations in the novels. In the two later novels, especially in *Grey Granite*, she goes through a geographical and emotional journey through the Mearns by revisiting the places of her childhood and youth, which culminates with her return to the house where she was born in the end of the trilogy. Chris also displays a deep and lasting attachment to the land throughout *A Scots Quair* even after moving to more urbanized areas. This connects her to a larger class of peasants, also represented by her father, her first husband Ewan, and neighbors such as Chae and Rob. After the radical changes brought by the war, Chris is the last member of this group and has to distance herself from the land until her final return to her hometown.

In addition to this affectional bond to the land, Chris's strong connection with a collective past may be observed in her preference for places like the Standing Stones and the Kaimes. By choosing these locations to reflect back on what happened to her, Chris intertwines her own memory with that of the community. These places with deep historical associations become a refuge where Chris could rest and seek comfort, strengthening her emotional links with them. These ties position her as a character that does not lose sight of the collective past. Significantly, the staircase on Windmill Brae, her place of reminiscence in the city of Duncairn, contrasts starkly with the stone circle and the castle ruins in that it is not a vestige from other times. This contributes to the representation of the city as a space that is more detached from its own past, an idea reinforced by the lack of legends associated with Duncairn. To Chris, this place, remote from the land and history, is such a source of dissatisfaction that she decides to leave it and return to a rural village.

Gibbon frequently historicizes the landscape of the novels in the trilogy, highlighting the impact of the past on the present. The numerous references to events occurred in his

settings highlight the history of smaller places, which do not frequently feature in historical accounts of the nation. In his allusions to history, Gibbon privileges certain figures and groups that he considers to be representative of the common people, such as William Wallace and the Covenanters. The conflicts in which they are involved are framed primarily in terms of class in the *Quair*. Wallace, for instance, fights not only against the English, but also against aristocratic Scottish families like the Kinraddies in *Sunset Song*. In order to weaken Wallace, these nobles do not hesitate to destroy the region before retreating to Dunnottar Castle, which underscore their selfishness and indifference toward the population's suffering. These references to historical events are also frequently focused on violent deeds, with an emphasis on battles and torture. The Covenanters are usually portrayed as victims of violent oppression perpetrated by a cruel elite. Thus, the remarks about historical events in the trilogy tend to reinforce the idea of a constant conflict between classes, with the common folk continuously exploited and brutalized.

The persistence of war and violence is also demonstrated by young Ewan's archaeological explorations in the Mearns as he finds an ancient spear on one of these occasions. For a long time, Ewan seems to share his stepfather's belief in a golden age of hunters and gatherers, ruined by the coming of civilization. The idea of this utopic past fosters hopes in the coming of an ideal world, holding together past, present, and future. Later, however, Ewan finds it hard to reconcile this optimistic view with his flint collection as he associates some of these ancient artifacts with the weapons produced by the factory where he works. This perception of a cycle of violence is a factor in his growing political involvement, as illustrated by his visit to the museum and his indignation at the lack of representation of the violence suffered by the common people through history.

The depiction of the First World War in the trilogy emphasizes the negative repercussions of the conflict on people's lives. *Sunset Song* conveys the idea that the war interested the government, the media and "the English generals and their like down there in London" (p. 231), but not most of the population. In this way, conscription may be regarded as yet another example of abuse of the common folk. The novel challenges the discourse of heroism associated with military struggles, highlighting the suffering endured by combatants and pointing out the hypocrisy of some that pressured others to fight without volunteering themselves. The futility of war is stressed by Chae's death just hours before the ceasefire, for example. The brutal aspect of the conflict is repeatedly expressed in the passages of the trilogy dealing with former soldiers' memories and the pictures imagined by Chris. Although there are few descriptions of war scenes, they foreground blood and gore, as in the acute

representation of the horror of gas attacks. An anti-war stance may also be observed in the sympathetic account of Ewan's desertion and execution, with his name included in Kinraddie's memorial despite the rules against it at the time.

World War One is portrayed as part of a cycle of violence in *A Scots Quair* since the trilogy underscores the relationship between this conflict and previous ones. These connections are especially evident in the commemorations of the fallen combatants. The performance of the song "The Flowers of the Forest" at the inauguration of Kinraddie's memorial highlights the parallels between the scenes of grief described in this lament about a sixteenth-century battle and those experienced in the village after the war. Besides, the inscription of the names of the deceased on the Standing Stones connects these distant historical moments, establishing a deep relationship between these men and Scottish landscape and history. The stone circle is at times associated with sacrificial rites in the novel and has been interpreted as a symbol of the early days of civilization (BOLD, 1983, p. 133). Hence, its conversion into a war memorial may be a strong statement of the destructive cycles that characterize civilization from Gibbon's perspective.

The creation of war memorials is inherently political and may be a source of contention. From design choices to the selection of who is commemorated, these monuments reveal certain attitudes and positions, as the aforementioned inclusion of Ewan's name may demonstrate. The great relevance of these commemorative acts is attested by the persistence of discussions about them even more than a century after the end of the First World War. An instance of this is the recent apology issued by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission for the lack of proper commemoration of Asian and black combatants of World War One, following a documentary on this theme (TOPPING, 2021; OLUSOGA, 2021). Tributes to the dead are part of the wider duality between permanence and alteration since they are monuments that are supposed to last and keep memory alive in the long term while calling to mind the transience of human lives. However, the story told by them is partial and may be influenced by different matters as the recent controversy about racial issues indicates. A bias that may be identified in *A Scots Quair* is the disregard for non-fatal victims of the war during the Remembrance Day celebration in Segget. Not only is the experience of spinners that served in the army ignored, but they are also despised by the middle-class characters, who consider them disreputable. The fact that almost all of Segget's shop owners and civil servants did not fight in the war only adds to their hypocrisy.

Issues of social inequality are also central to several occasions in which former combatants remember their time in the trenches. The economic crisis of the 1920s and 1930s

is represented in *A Scots Quair*, with special focus on its repercussions for the more disadvantaged classes, such as unemployment, poverty, and evictions. This hard situation is compared to men's memories of the war, highlighting the similarity of both experiences in terms of lack of sanitary and wholesome living conditions. The hardship endured by these groups is in stark contrast with the promises of "homes fit for heroes" upon soldiers' return from the battlefields. Once again, Gibbon emphasizes the horrors of poverty and injustice, illustrated, for example, by the story of the baby who ended up dying after having his thumb eaten by a rat. The indifference of those who are better off is also exposed and criticized in the narrative.

Memories of the First World War resurface with the rising tensions of the 1930s, particularly in the debate about the manufacture of armament in the factory where young Ewan works. When trying to convince his colleagues to strike in protest against weapon production, he quotes from an eyewitness account of the gruesomeness of gas attacks. The workers' apathy toward the matter suggests the fragility of memory since the young men seem to feel disconnected from the experiences of the previous generation. From their point of view, wars are something utterly distant from them and restricted to far-off countries. Young Ewan's peers also express indifference toward the Asian people that will supposedly suffer the consequences of the production of armament in that factory. This disregard may be fueled by stereotypes about Asians promoted by the cinema, as indicated by the reference to movies starring the character Fu Manchu in *Grey Granite*. In contrast, Ewan is motivated by concerns that are not bound by race or nationality. To him, the suffering of the population of any country is also a cause that deserves attention, echoing Gibbon's own ideal of international solidarity.

Whereas the First World War may, to some characters, appear to be distant, the repetition of traumatic experiences and state violence is underscored in the trilogy. Robert, a former combatant, suffers lasting repercussions of his time in the army, being so deeply scarred that he is unable to talk about what he witnessed during the war. In *Sunset Song*, Rob and Ewan (the father) are forced to enlist and undergo different violent acts. Rob is imprisoned and mistreated in jail, which leads him to start a hunger strike, while Ewan is profoundly changed by his training and is eventually executed for his desertion. These acts of violence perpetrated by the state against its own citizens are mirrored in the trajectory of characters of the following generation. Young Ewan, for instance, is unjustly arrested and tortured due to his political involvement. His plight is compared to that of people from various places and historical periods, stressing the bonds between them as part of an

oppressed group. Hence, Gibbon highlights the endurance and the prevalence of violent subjugation of groups challenging the status quo.

Faced with this relentless, vicious cycle of repression and exploitation, Chris and young Ewan react in different ways. Both are characters strongly connected to the past; however, there is a difference: whereas Ewan focuses on the study of history, his mother's relationship is with lived history itself. In response to the inequality around him, the young man devotes himself to political action, following the tenets of the Communist Party without question. Although he feels that change will not come in the near future, he marches on, in the hope that his actions may have some impact in the long term. Chris, conversely, becomes increasingly skeptic of all ideologies since, in her own words, "*[t]he world's sought faiths for thousands of years and found only death or unease in them*" (p. 670). Her final journey is a return to her origins and a reconnection with nature. Progressively detached from society, Chris seems to assume superhuman characteristics, being able to observe history almost from an outside perspective. Like Walter Benjamin's (2005, p. 998) angel of history, she sees the "piling wreckage" resulting from progress and retreats from civilization. Heeding the lessons from the past, Chris manages to come to terms with the inexorability of change and transcend our reality to become one with nature.

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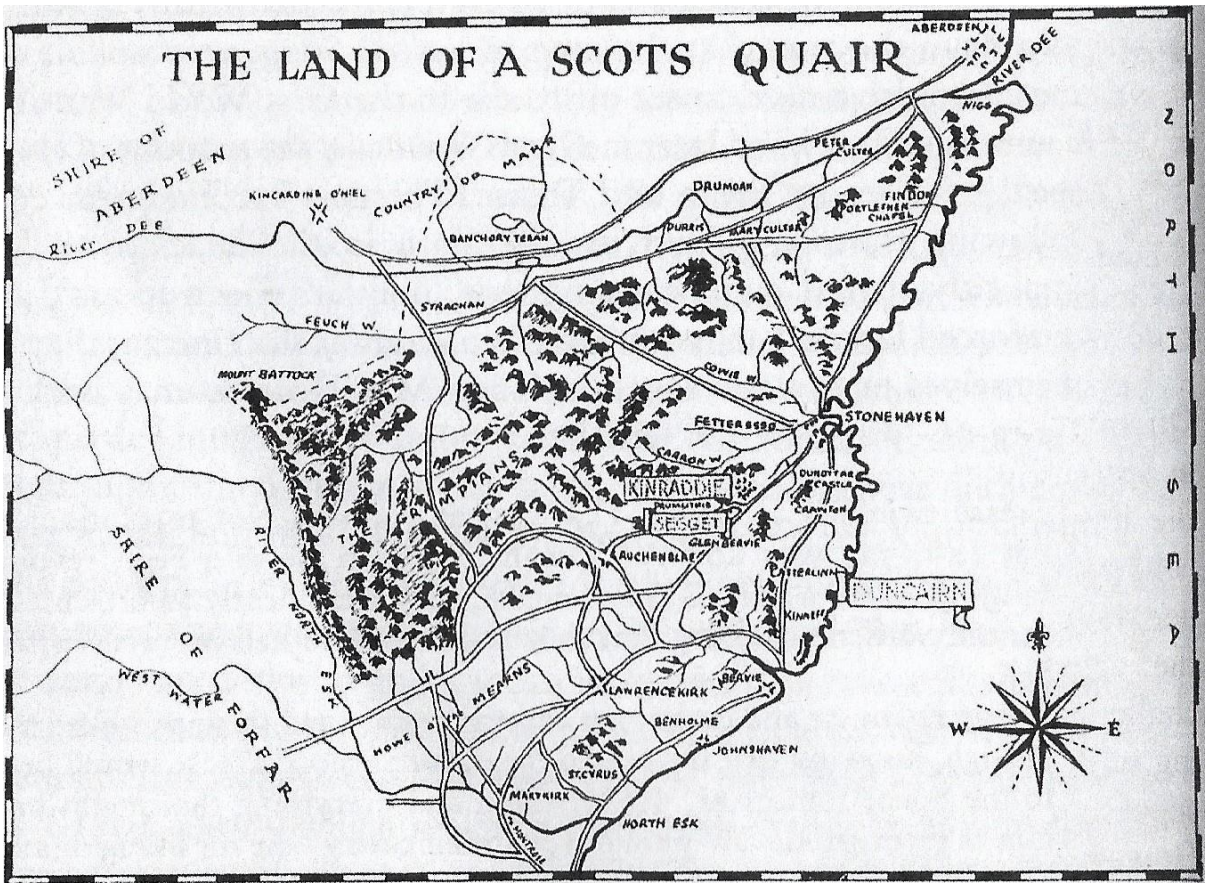
ANNEX – The Land of *A Scots Quair*: Map

Map 1 – The Land of *A Scots Quair*



Source: GIBBON, L. G. *A Scots Quair*. Edinburgh: Polygon, 2006. p. 480-481.