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„Lewis Grassic Gibbon’s *A Scots Quair*:
Elements of the Regional, the National,
and the Universal“

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DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

I confirm to have conceived and written this M.A. thesis in English all by myself. Quotations from other authors are all clearly marked and acknowledged in the bibliographical references, either in the footnotes or within the text. Any ideas borrowed and/or passages paraphrased from the works of other authors have been truthfully acknowledged and identified in the footnotes.

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HINWEIS

Diese Diplomarbeit hat nachgewiesen, dass die betreffende Kandidatin oder der betreffende Kandidat befähigt ist, wissenschaftliche Themen selbstständig sowie inhaltlich und methodisch vertretbar zu bearbeiten. Da die Korrekturen der/des Beurteilenden nicht eingetragen sind und das Gutachten nicht beiliegt, ist daher nicht erkenntlich mit welcher Note diese Arbeit abgeschlossen wurde. Das Spektrum reicht von sehr gut bis genügend. Die Habilitierten des Instituts für Anglistik und Amerikanistik bitten diesen Hinweis bei der Lektüre zu beachten.

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1. Introduction

“*Oh Chris Caledonia, I’ve married a nation!*”
(Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 139, italics his)

The present thesis is concerned with the trilogy of novels, *A Scots Quair*, comprising of *Sunset Song*, *Cloud Howe*, and *Grey Granite*, published between 1932 and 1934 by James Leslie Mitchell (1901-1935) under his pseudonym Lewis Grassie Gibbon.¹ The trilogy, and particularly its first novel *Sunset Song*, has achieved a prominent place in the canon of Scottish literature and has come to be acknowledged as a Scottish classic.² Over the decades since its publication, several scholars have given their attention to analyses of the *Quair*. Issues of political stance like nationalism and socialism have been examined, as well as symbolism (and especially the protagonist’s possible status as a metaphor for Scotland, as expressed in the statement above), language, feminism, regionalism, and many more.

When looking at these analyses it seems that the interplay of certain factors connected to regional, national, and universal elements in the *Quair* merits closer attention. In his introduction to *Sunset Song* Tom Crawford points out that “[t]he book celebrates a nation through a region; its farm folk are of the Mearns, but they are also typical Scots” (Introduction *Sunset Song* viii). He puts forward the argument that regional and national elements in the novel co-exist, an effect which, he claims, is achieved by incorporating both regional verisimilitude and national representation in the novel. In Crawford’s view, Gibbon’s themes transgress regional boundaries to become relevant in national terms, achieved by making the characterisation and setting increasingly reflect Scottish phenomena rather than merely ones related to the Mearns. The reception of the trilogy in Scotland points towards the fact that it is perceived as representing the people of Scotland – and not only the Mearns – faithfully. Crawford furthermore argues that *Sunset Song* surpasses regional and national levels of representation and meaning to achieve a universal scale, and other scholars give vital

¹ The choice to refer to the writer as “Lewis Grassie Gibbon” in this thesis arises from the fact that the text in consideration, the *Quair*, was written under this pseudonym.

² Cf. Boztas who reports that the novel is a classroom staple in Scotland. It received over a tenth of votes, superceding classics like *Trainspotting* in the poll backed by the Scottish Book Trust and *The List* magazine.

information about Gibbon's reasons and aims in doing this.³ A further examination of the relationship between the elements of the regional and the national promises insights into the possible authorial intention to make comments on culture and politics, not only seen regionally, but also concerning the state of the nation, Scotland. Discussing the universal level of representation in the *Quair*, the influence of Gibbon's political views of anarchism and socialism in combination with the hope for an ultimate cosmopolis, inspired by diffusionist thought, should become clear.

A number of publications hint at a possible development in the interplay between these elements as the trilogy progresses to *Cloud Howe* and *Grey Granite*. Arguably, the regional element declines from *Sunset Song* onwards, whereas the national and the universal aspects successively gain momentum. While *Sunset Song* presents a rural picture of regional verisimilitude, the last novel, *Grey Granite*, is perceived as illustrating Gibbon's cosmopolitan views on such issues as industrialisation, the problems of the new working classes, and his socialistically motivated hopes for the future. Significantly, as scholars like Douglas Young have pointed out, already *Sunset Song* adds the dimensions of national commentary and universality to its regionalism by its diffusionist agendas of making the Mearns farming folk a "pars pro toto" for Scottish people and, ultimately, humankind at large. Therefore, the present thesis aims to provide a more detailed analysis of some of these issues by illuminating the ways in which Gibbon combines or contrasts elements of the regional, the national, and the universal. However, the framework of a thesis like this does not provide sufficient space to address all questions related to these issues, which include diverse considerations of settings, events, or themes.⁴ Therefore, the present analysis focuses on a group of elements which seem particularly essential, that is, the *Quair's* language, characterisation, and the narrative structure, which combines the previous two spheres. While doing this, Gibbon's motivation in creating such a symbiosis, as well as the ensuing effects on the *Quair's* interpretation will be addressed.

Before making such observations, however, section two aims to present terminological, ideological, and political concepts to provide a framework for this analysis. The concept of regionalism and the features of regionalist literature, the tool of imagology, which will be used to analyse characterisation in the *Quair*, and some of the

³ Cf. for instance Malcolm, *Blasphemer* and Young, *Beyond*.

⁴ Some of these issues have been addressed by the author's essay "'Silly Scotch Muck about Cottars and Women'?: The Regional, the National, and the Universal in *A Scots Quair*" to be published in 2010 (Ed. J. Derrick McClure).

general ideological and political frameworks which are vital for understanding Gibbon's work will be treated. Section three examines Gibbon's unique linguistic style, a combination of Scots and English, which is perceived as decidedly Scottish by readers, regardless of their linguistic competence in Scots. In addition to lexical features, syntactical elements which seem specifically Scottish are deployed to suggest authenticity. Section four deals with Gibbon's characterisation of Chris and the communities of the *Quair*, which arguably reveal several layers of detail and individuality, with a number of highly individualised characters, others representing distinctive traits of the Mearns farmers, but also Scottish ones, and again others portrayed as universally recognisable types. Section five treats Gibbon's unique use of voice, which has been argued to be indicative of different levels of representation, implying that certain characters or voices represent groups like the Mearns peasants, Scots, or the working classes in general. Moreover, the highly innovative technique of the "you" will be described, which offers unique possibilities for characterisation and narrative development, opening possibilities of great narrative immediacy and intimacy with the protagonist. Finally, in section six, the conclusion, an integration of the issues discussed in the previous chapters will be presented. The emphasis will be on the interplay between the elements of the regional, the national, and the universal, the possible tensions between them, the ways in which they are combined, and the development from the regional towards the national and the universal in the course of the trilogy. Moreover, Gibbon's intention in combining them should become clear, as well as the overall consequences for the interpretation of *A Scots Quair*.

2. Terminology, Theoretical Concepts, Ideological and Political Background

Before plunging into a detailed analysis of the *Quair*, it is necessary to clarify the terminology used and to establish the theoretical concepts which are vital for understanding Gibbon's oeuvre, as well as the ideological background against which his writing has to be read. First, the concept of regionalism as used in this analysis will be explicated. Second, the basis for an analysis in terms of national representation will be established, outlining the main elements and historical origins of the study of imagology, which will be used throughout the present thesis, but with particular emphasis in section six, as well as Gibbon's affiliation with nationalist thought and the

nationalist literary school of the Scottish Renaissance. Third, the influence of a number of ideological and political concepts on Gibbon's philosophical and political views will be analysed. This background created in Gibbon the desire to speak of and for the socially downtrodden classes, which conditioned his depiction of characters as universally recognisable types in order to put forward his humanist commentary on contemporary society and politics. In particular, the formative concept of diffusionism, as well as Gibbon's views on issues of religion, nature/agriculture, and philosophical or political affiliations with Marxism/communism and anarchism will be addressed.

2.1. Regionalism

In order to arrive at valid conclusions about elements of the regional in the *Quair*, some of the terminology and concepts central to such an analysis need to be clarified. Elements of the regional, as treated in this study, are connected to the notion of the region, which is defined by Vance as a "homogenous area with physical and cultural characteristics distinct from those of neighboring areas" with a consciousness of its distinct customs and ideals as a basis of its identity, which sets it apart from the rest of the country (Vance 308). He defines "regionalism" as "the regional idea in action as an ideology, as a social movement, or as the theoretical basis for regional planning" (ibid. 308).⁵

Moreover, regional elements are characterised by their adherence to the conventions of regionalist literature. *The Dictionary of Literary Terms* refers to two main elements in the definition of regionalism. First, it represents a particular section or area. Second, it aims for fidelity and accuracy in depicting the geographical region, its history, and the speech, manners, customs, folklore, beliefs, and dress of its people.⁶ *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* defines a regionalist writer as "one who concentrates much attention on a particular area and uses it and the people who inhabit it as the basis for his or her stories" (Cuddon 737).⁷ *The Dictionary of Literary Terms* points out that some form of regionalism can be found in almost all literary works, since they generally involve a specific setting; "the term, however, is usually applied to writings in which locale is thought of as a subject interesting in itself"

⁵ He adds that in its extreme, regionalism might lead to separatism (309).

⁶ Shaw 319. The dictionary also refers to some exemplary authors such as The Brontës, Willa Cather, William Faulkner, Robert Frost, Ellen Glasgow, Thomas Hardy, Bret Harte, Joel Chandler Harris, Robinson Jeffers, Sarah Orne Jewett, Dylan Thomas, Mark Twain, and Thomas Wolfe.

⁷ *The Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* mentions Maria Edgeworth as the earliest of regional novelists. As outstanding regional novelists Thomas Hardy, D.H. Lawrence, and William Faulkner are mentioned, and for Scotland John Galt and Sir Walter Scott are referred to.

(Shaw 319). Generally, it is also pointed out that the impetus, ideas, and imagery of the writing of many authors are inspired by the land and the people closest to them.⁸ The *Dictionary of World Literary Terms* refers to regionalism as the tendency of authors to set their works in a certain locality, which is presented in some detail and which affects the lives of its inhabitants. Moreover, the movement of “back to the soil” is mentioned, which is an agrarian reaction to industrialisation.⁹ The *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* adds that the area used by regional novels is most commonly rural and/or provincial, but can also be urban and industrial, such as in Dickens.¹⁰ For Patrick Scott, the most pressing defining aspect of regional literature is that it “does not look to the center for precedent or recognition” (72).¹¹ Central to the definition of the literature of region, thus, seems to be the concept that it is concerned with questions of regional identity, which is set against that of another entity which is perceived as more powerful in political and economical terms – the “centre.” David Hewitt has pointed out that the factors involved in the construction of regional identity are manifold:

[T]he natural environment of a region, its communal, popular and cultural history, its modes of winning and living, its material, religious and political culture, together with a sense of being in opposition to another culture [...] – each of these, all of these, or any combination of these may be involved in an awareness of regional identity. (“North-East” 190)

Yet, the “other,” the centre, is not only linked to the concerns of regional literature in terms of demarcation and distinction from other regions. In the period after World War I the metropolis drew more and more young writers to the centre,¹² threatening to homogenise culture and cultural production.¹³

Interestingly, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* lacks an entry on “regionalism” but refers to “local colour” writing in the USA in the 19th century as depicting the unique customs, manners, speech, folklore, and other qualities of a particular regional community. Yet, local colour is claimed to be found mostly in comic

⁸ Shaw 319.

⁹ Shipley 268. He mentions the manifesto *I'll Take My Stand*, published in 1930 by a group of agrarian writers from the American South, including John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren or Stark Young.

¹⁰ Cuddon 783-4.

¹¹ However, there are also critics who attribute the labeling capacity to the centre rather than the region itself. As Hönnighausen points out, Eric J. Sunquist's view is more ironical than Scott's when he comments on the interplay between regionalism and realism, stating that those in power are frequently labeled “realists” whereas those who are marginal such as blacks and women are regularly categorized as “regionalist” (cf. Eric J. Sunquist “Realism and Regionalism” qtd. Hönnighausen 161).

¹² Wade 94-5.

¹³ Wade 152.

short stories.¹⁴ Also the *Dictionary of Literary Terms* defines local colour writing as developing and promoting the mannerisms, dress, speech, and customs of a particular region, stating that local colour writers aim to be informative about the peculiarities of a given region, emphasising verisimilitude of details in their depiction of features such as dialect or local geographical features.¹⁵ Even though some reference works differentiate between “regionalism” and “local colour,” the frequent cross-referencing between the entries suggests that many reference works treat the two terms synonymously or at least see them as related.

2.2. National Representation

The notion of fictional characters as representative for, or symbolic of, groups of people or even the nation is reminiscent of the processes at work in (national) stereotyping as will be discussed in connection to the field of imagology. As Craig points out, “through the novel [the] public [can] grasp itself not as an anonymous accumulation of isolated individuals but as the temporary manifestation of the eternal being of the nation” (*Modern* 9). Therefore, in this process of the narration of the nation, there is a tendency in the readership of a novel to perceive certain characters as representative of a larger group of people, reading their characteristics, views, and experiences as metaphoric of the nation’s.

2.2.1. Imagology

The study of imagology is based on the analysis of national/ethnic/racial/cultural images or stereotypes¹⁶ of groups of people. Stanzel distinguishes between the positive and the negative aspects of the concept of stereotypes.¹⁷ The positive aspect denotes preliminary generalisations about groups of people, with high “intertextually established recognisability” as described by Leerssen (“Rhetoric” 285), which can be revised if further evidence falsifies the conception, while the negative aspect is characterised by the rigid persistence of the generalisation, even if proven invalid. Another distinction, as pointed out by Beller and Leerssen and Stanzel, has to be made between hetero-images and auto- or self-images, that is, images or stereotypes which characterise the other and

¹⁴ Baldick 143.

¹⁵ Shaw 319.

¹⁶ Firchow 135.

¹⁷ Stanzel, “National Stereotypes” 1.

those which characterise the self, as represented in discourses such as literary texts.¹⁸ While auto-images are subject to continual reflective reconsiderations and adaptations of the self-perception by experience, hetero-images tend to be more firmly and persistently stereotypical. Thus, as Beller mentions, the aim of imagological analysis is to “describe the origin, process and function of national prejudices and stereotypes, to bring them to the surface, analyse them and make people rationally aware of them” (“Perception” 11-12).

2.2.1.1. The Genesis of Stereotypes

The dynamics of human perception, the formation of images, and the ensuing consequences of such images have been studied by scholars of social psychology. For instance, Walter Lippmann in his *Public Opinion* (1922) describes the process of perception thus: “For the most part we do not first see, and then define, we define and then see” (Lippmann qtd. Beller, “Perception” 4), implying that preconceived notions such as prejudices and stereotypes influence the way we perceive things, definition occurring prior to seeing. Yet, the intertextuality of clichés is highly unspecific; an “everyone knows” consensus does not have to be triggered by references to a certain author or text but frequently refers to

an unspecified “discourse,” to a scheme, to general knowledge in the abstract, or to received opinion, whose vague, textually unspecific nature is indicated by the terminology one encounters: “collective memory,” “cultural memory,” “cultural literacy,” or a “reader’s competence,” which rests on the collective-anonymous hearsay of *on-dit*, *discourse preamble*, *discourse social*, *opinion du public*, or even *ideology*. (Leerssen, “Rhetoric” 285-6)

Thus, the authorship of stereotypical perceptions remains unclear and empirically unverifiable. Leerssen, however, mentions unmemorable instances of early childhood socialisation as a possible place of contact (“Rhetoric” 286). Moreover, in his explanation of the origins of stereotypes, Stanzel emphasises the human tendency to dramatise and exaggerate accounts of experiences, but also to generalise¹⁹ and Beller, underlining that people cannot experience empirical reality in its entirety, points out that in time partial representations come to stand for the whole. Thus, “[p]rejudices involve [...] an *a priori* information deficit” (Beller, “Perception” 5), extrapolating from details into generalisations.²⁰

¹⁸ Beller and Leerssen, Foreword xiii-xiv; Stanzel, *Europäer* 33.

¹⁹ Stanzel, *Europäer* 19.

²⁰ Beller, “Perception” 8-9.

Therefore, as Stanzel argues in *Europäer*, such images are necessarily constructed, imagined, removed from reality and thus fictive.²¹ Leerssen also stresses the constructivist paradigm of imagology in line with the realisation that nationality is culturally constructed,²² even though, as Barclay and Glaser-Schmidt point out, stereotypical images might indeed be rooted in reality.²³ Yet, the subjectivity of such images and therefore also the basis of imagological studies needs to be acknowledged:

Our sources are subjective; their subjectivity must not be ignored, explained away or filtered out, but be taken into account in the analysis. The nationality represented (the *spected*) is silhouetted in the perspectival context of the representing text or discourse (the *spectant*). [...] Both *spected* and *spectant* are usually categorized in national terms, but in both cases the scholar will be wary of seeing in this appellation a straightforward reflection of empirical real-world collectives. (Leerssen, "Imagology" 27)

Moreover, scholars have established the fact that tensions between the self-image and the image of the other (or the hetero-image) cause perception to become selective.²⁴ As both Stanzel and Zacharasiewicz point out, a contributing factor in this process is people's involuntarily ethnocentric point of view when encountering unfamiliar individuals and cultures, applying their own values and beliefs in addressing the unknown, especially if the encounter is superficial.²⁵ Leerssen adds that ethnocentrism dates far back in time and seems to have been present in all human societies.²⁶ Thus, ethnocentric observation heightens the perception of differences, causing potential exaggerations in the representation of certain features which have been judged according to one's own values, usually felt to be superior to the other.²⁷ Moreover, Stanzel draws attention to the human tendency to view the foreign in a xenophobic way, trying to grasp the unknown by generalising and categorising its characteristics, which provides opportunity for easy judgment and therefore adds to the creation of stereotypical images.²⁸ Yet, Beller emphasises that valorisations of the other need not be

²¹ Stanzel, *Europäer* 9.

²² Leerssen, "Rhetoric" 269-70.

²³ Barclay and Glaser-Schmidt, Introduction 9.

²⁴ Gottfried Niedhart, "Perzeption und Image als Gegenstand der Geschichte von den internationalen Beziehungen: Eine Problemskizze," *Das britische Deutschlandbild im Wandel des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Bernd-Jürgen Wendt (Brockmeyer: Bochum, 1984): 39-52; as well as Michael Kunszik, *Images of Nations and International Public Relations* (Erlbaum: Mahwah, NJ., 1997), who terms the phenomenon "selective evaluation," both qtd. in Beller, "Perception" 4.

²⁵ Zacharasiewicz, *Images* xxi; Stanzel, "National Stereotypes" 75.

²⁶ Leerssen, "Rhetoric" 272.

²⁷ Zacharasiewicz, "Review" 75; Stanzel, *Europäer* 33.

²⁸ As Beller points out, the terminology used to define the study of imagology and its aims diverges considerably from study to study, which, in combination with methodological uncertainties, causes new

negative but can also be “starry-eyed idealizations,” which, however, “stand in need of correction” as much as negative ones (“Perception” 5).

This interplay of self- and hetero-images constitutes the “discursive and literary articulation of cultural difference and of national identity” (Leerssen, “Rhetoric” 268-9). However, Leerssen also mentions that the study of imagology does not aim at putting forward a theory of cultural or national identity, but rather at describing national stereotypes and the typology of characterisation.²⁹ Such national images ring familiar and recognisable because of their frequent reiteration, which gives them considerable rhetorical effect. Yet, their truth value remains small, since the process of national stereotyping does not involve reporting facts but rather defining national characteristics by using literary and discursive conventions.³⁰ Leerssen terms one of these conventions the “effet de typique,” a “conflation between the salient and the representative” (“Rhetoric” 283-4), that is, a melange of description and features portrayed as typical.³¹ Beller and Leerssen sum up the process of the “imagined discourse,” as they term it, thus:

Generally, imagined discourse (a) singles out a nation from the rest of humanity as being somehow different or ‘typical’, and (b) articulates or suggests a moral, characterological, collective-psychological motivation for given social or national features. Imagined discourse offers characterological explanations of cultural difference. (Beller and Leerssen, Foreword xiv)³²

The interest of imagology, therefore, lies in identifying and describing the characterological explanations of nations’ differences and the conventions used to reiterate them when narrating the nation.

2.2.1.2. Stereotypes and Literature

Referring to Benedict Anderson’s seminal work,³³ Cairns Craig comments on the fact that today nations are perceived as narrative constructs. Therefore, narrative arts are central in establishing, maintaining, and elaborating national identities.³⁴ He points out

imagological studies have to retrace historical developments of current views, “often adding to the burden by the addition of freshly-coined new ones” (Beller, “Perception” 13).

²⁹ Leerssen, “Imagology” 27; Beller and Leerssen, Foreword xiv.

³⁰ Leerssen, “Rhetoric” 280, 282; Beller and Leerssen, Foreword xiv.

³¹ Leerssen refers to his “L’effet de typique,” *Moeurs et images: Etudes d’imagologie européenne*. Ed. Alain Montandon, (Clermont-Ferrand: U Montesquieu, 1997): 129-34.

³² In this context, they also refer to Joep Leerssen “L’effet de typique” and Leerssen, “Rhetoric.”

³³ Anderson, Benedict R. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1991.

³⁴ Craig, *Modern* 10.

that the novel helps to make the nation “imaginatively present to the mass public,” therefore giving the members of the nation the possibility to grasp the nation as a coherent group of people: “It is upon such national imagining that the political and economic agency of the nation state depended” (Craig, *Modern* 9-10). According to Stanzel the conspicuous persistence of both auto- and hetero-images can be attributed to their employment in literary texts, through which historical experiences become long-lasting stereotypes, perpetuated by literature in its wider sense.³⁵ Leerssen also comments on the recognisability of stereotypes, which relies (quite literally) on intertextuality. Therefore, they can be described as schemata which are activated by certain triggers.³⁶ Moreover, “an entire dynamics of the way that certain texts serve to affirm or deny current stereotypes, echo them or ironically subvert them, contradict them or endorse them, becomes describable” (Leerssen, “Rhetoric” 285). The basis of such considerations is the presupposition that literature enters into a discourse with social reality. Indeed, as Firchow, points out, “imagology depends on the assumption that literature profoundly influences how we think and what we are” (138). He argues that the reason why stereotypes remain persistent in literary representation is the tendency of literary texts to reflect their culture of origin.³⁷ Thus, stereotypes are reinforced by means of “exemplary heroes engaged in exemplary actions,” and often cast in opposition to other group identities (Firchow 140). Also Leerssen points out that, in literature, manifestations of a nation’s cultural identity, as well as its moral and aesthetic world-view can be found.³⁸ Indeed, he argues that “it is in the field of imaginary and poetical literature that national stereotypes are *first and most effectively* formulated, perpetuated and disseminated” (Leerssen, “Imagology” 26, emphasis added).

However, literature not only reflects social reality in presenting various images and group identities, but, as Firchow argues, it also has an active function in reinforcing such images, since readers regularly identify with literary figures and thus see stereotypical characteristics projected onto themselves.³⁹ In this respect, he mentions the American comparatist René Wellek, who criticised imagological studies for frequently being motivated by political considerations, and, indeed, Firchow concedes that, if broadly enough defined, the rationale behind imagology can be called “political” since

³⁵ Stanzel, “National Stereotypes” 1, 7.

³⁶ Leerssen, “Rhetoric” 285.

³⁷ Firchow 135.

³⁸ Leerssen, “Imagology” 19.

³⁹ Firchow 141.

literary aspects are, after all, part of the “polis,” and that scholars should be wary of claiming objectivity for their studies.⁴⁰ Moreover, the analysis of canonical texts seems particularly worthy of attention and valuable, since those texts “may be said to incorporate the officially accepted values of a culture” because they are mediated through elite institutions like universities (Firchow 139). Furthermore, Leerssen points out that such texts have, in comparison to others, a longer shelf life and thus a more extended currency, especially if they are authored by a well-known writer such as Shakespeare, which gives them more prestige, longevity, and therefore even more potential impact on perceptions of the self and the other.⁴¹ Gibbon’s trilogy’s status as a canonical Scottish text, therefore, adds weight to an imagological analysis of its characters, events, and places.

2.2.1.3. Historical Development of Stereotypes in Literature

Bassnett stresses that the genealogy of national stereotypes, even though a neglected field of study, merits closer attention⁴² and indeed, further main concerns of imagology are the origins and implications of such clichés. The earliest clichéd characterisations⁴³ were based on concepts like the four temperaments, the deadly sins, or professional types like the soldier, elements of which were superimposed onto certain groups of people, for instance the Teutons. Starting from the time of the Greco-Romans, also the theory of climate, today a “time-worn model of thought” (Zacharasiewicz, “Review” 80), was used to allocate different stereotypical features like vices and virtues to the people of the northern, middle, and southern zones.⁴⁴ Beller points out that early stereotypes originated in the distinction in Greek literature of the Greeks from the barbarians and certain *topoi* can be traced back to the earliest classical poetry.⁴⁵

The creation of nations in the late 16th and the 17th centuries eventually brought a systematisation in description of nationality and the attachment of some of these attributes to nations, thereby initiating the formation of the concept of “national

⁴⁰ Firchow 136-7.

⁴¹ Leerssen, “Rhetoric” 282.

⁴² Bassnett, Introduction xx.

⁴³ For further information about early philosophical thinking about the concept of the image by Plato, Aristotle, moving through Neo-Platonism, Empiricism and Idealism to Husserl and Wittgenstein see Beller “Perception.” Firchow refers to Hugo Dyserick’s essay “Zum Problem des ‘images’ und ‘mirages’ und ihrer Untersuchung im Rahmen der Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft,” which provides a useful survey of the history of imagology (cf. Firchow 135).

⁴⁴ Stanzel, “National Stereotypes” 3.

⁴⁵ Beller, “Perception” 6-7.

character.”⁴⁶ Stanzel points out that such a concept is born out of the superimposition of stereotypical characteristics and behavioural patterns onto ethnicities or nations.⁴⁷ As Beller points out, a search began for specific characteristics to describe one’s own nation, in part by distinguishing it from other nations by positive self-valorisation and negative other-valorisation. In particular, he mentions plays (most importantly by Shakespeare), comedies of manners, and novels, essays and travel books of the 18th and 19th centuries as perpetuating stereotypical and ethnocentric views of national character.⁴⁸ Thus, national characteristics fulfilled the politically important function of distinguishing nations from each other, which led to the tendency to maximise differences, even if they were minimal, in order to provide a clear distinction from other nations.⁴⁹

The vogue of describing national character started in the 16th and 17th centuries,⁵⁰ and compilations of national characteristics appeared in various lexicons and thesauri, which were used in grammar schools to provide simple aids for writing essays, but also overwhelmingly in phrase books used to teach Latin. Zacharasiewicz addresses the fact that intellectuals were prepared to use these “classical sources, ancient ethnographies and histories, when depicting ethnic differences in contemporary Europe” (“Review” 83), for instance Tacitus’s *Germania*, which was rediscovered in the 15th century. Also Leerssen points towards the fact that there seems to have been a tradition of “echoing, citing, [and] referring” to previous texts (“Rhetoric” 280), therefore perpetuating such images. Clichéd “types” also surfaced in 16th and 17th century drama, with playwrights willingly drawing on well-known national traits for characterisation, usually selecting one decisive feature to signify nationality. Demands of quick production of texts prompted many to use physical appearance or accent, for instance, to trigger stereotypes and thus make the character a recognisable figure to enable instant audience recognition of a character as German or French. Furthermore, such immediate identification provided the audience with important clues concerning the plot, since foreign characters were often either villainous or comical.⁵¹ Zacharasiewicz mentions that the persistence of this practice caused audiences, who “seem to have been eager to have their own preconceptions and prejudices confirmed,”

⁴⁶ Leerssen, “Rhetoric” 272. For a more in-depth analysis of the historical development of concepts like “character,” and “nation” see Leerssen, “Rhetoric.”

⁴⁷ Stanzel, *Europäer* 21.

⁴⁸ Beller, “Perception” 6.

⁴⁹ Stanzel, *Europäer* 12.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 26.

⁵¹ Stanzel, “National Stereotypes” 2.

to assess the authenticity of the representation of foreign characters by their conformity to established stereotypes (“Review” 81).

Early evidence of the systematic collection and representation of national stereotypes may be found in two typologies, the “Völkertafel” (the Styrian Tabelau of Nationalities) and the *Laconicum Europae Speculum* (*LES*), whose categories and descriptions arise from notions found in the climatic theory in combination with common stereotypes derived from publications from the 16th and 17th centuries mentioned above to compile systematic inventories of stereotypical features allocated to the European nations. Such lists permitted the imagined communities of nations to distinguish themselves from each other on a psycho-political level⁵² but also made it possible for audiences to recognise representatives of nations in texts. The “Völkertafel,” which dates from the early 18th century, is a “national-characterological systematization of ethnic stereotypes and anecdotal knowledge concerning ‘manners and customs’” (Leerssen, “Imagology” 17). It is based on a kind of opinion poll in Europe, providing “vulgar political gossip”⁵³ about several national groups of Europe. Significantly, its content has been established as not derived from real experience but rather from stereotypical information found in earlier publications and literary texts, at times demonising and at times idealising the unknown.⁵⁴ Yet, as Stanzel points out, the “Völkertafel” and its stereotypes were immensely popular at the time and thus its influence can be felt even in recent history.⁵⁵ The *Laconicum Europae Speculum*, another schematised compilation of national characteristics, is probably derived from the “Völkertafel” but contains more categories than its predecessor. Many elements of the “Völkertafel” recur in the *LES*, which points towards the fact that the stereotypical characteristics presented in the two lists were firmly established and widely known. The vogue of representations of national character reached its peak in the 18th century, during which more and more details were added to the stereotypes of the “Völkertafel” and the *LES*.⁵⁶ Today, traces of such systematic descriptions can still be found in literary production and attitudes towards the foreign and the other.

⁵² Anderson 3.

⁵³ “Vulgärpolitische[r] Tratsch.” Cf. Stanzel, *Europäer* 13.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 18.

⁵⁵ Stanzel, *Europäer* 13.

⁵⁶ Zacharasiewicz, “Review” 87.

2.2.1.4. Imagology as an Analytical Tool

The tool of imagology will help to elucidate the question whether Gibbon's representation of characters, settings, and events confirms or undermines stereotypes of Scots and Scotland, possibly doing both at the same time, and which ends are achieved in the process. Moreover, as auto-stereotypes presented in literature often become hetero-stereotypes, in turn reinforcing auto-stereotypes, an analysis of Gibbon's treatment of such clichés facilitates insights into the author's intentions concerning national representation. Since the relevance of imagological considerations extends from the poetical realm towards the political,⁵⁷ the effects of Gibbon's representation of characters must be seen in the context of their possible reception as typically Scottish and therefore nationally representative. The aim in analysing Gibbon's characterisation and depiction, in line with Leerssen's concept of the imagological approach,⁵⁸ is to establish which traditions of national representation the *Quair's* characterisation follows or rejects, as well as to determine Gibbon's way of treating such tropes and the ensuing clues for interpretative approaches. Moreover, examining the readers' perception of stereotypes in the *Quair*, information about its reception as a national narrative might be gathered. Additionally, as Leerssen points out, a contextualisation of the text in question is necessary, not only on the basis of contemporary historical developments and the ideological and political views of the author, but also concerning the treatment of conventions of narrative and descriptive paradigm.⁵⁹

2.2.2. Gibbon, Nationalism, and the Scottish Renaissance

Gibbon's association with nationalist ideas and, by extension, the Scottish Renaissance, is highly ambivalent. Malcolm points out that the fact that the *Quair* has been interpreted in Marxist, as well as nationalist terms, illustrates the general uncertainty concerning Gibbon's political beliefs.⁶⁰ What can be claimed, however, is that he was very outspoken against what he termed the "cultural aberration" of nationalism.⁶¹ What is more, Campbell underlines the fact that Gibbon refused any patriotic sentiments⁶² but points to the fact that, paradoxically, Gibbon was a strong force motivating nationalist

⁵⁷ Beller, "Perception" 3.

⁵⁸ Leerssen, "Imagology" 28.

⁵⁹ Ibid. 28.

⁶⁰ Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 1.

⁶¹ Sassi 113.

⁶² Campbell, *Gibbon* 5.

movements in his time, but also gives focus to nationalist aspirations today.⁶³ His own views, however, were far from nationalist. In his essay “Glasgow,” originally published in *The Scottish Scene* together with MacDiarmid, Gibbon attacks the nationalism of small nations, “babbling militant on the subjects (unendingly) of their exclusive cultures, their exclusive languages, their national souls, their national genius, their unique achievements in throat-cutting” (*Speak* 125). Moreover, he makes his point against the political nationalism that was on the rise at the time:

It will profit Glasgow’s hundred and fifty thousand slum-dwellers 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. (Gibbon, *Speak* 126)

Therefore, Gibbon rejects the kind of nationalism en vogue in Scotland at the time, which was insistent on stereotypical markers of Scottishness such as language, food, and dress. The fact that he did this in an essay published in a joint volume with MacDiarmid – an outspoken advocate of both cultural and political nationalism – points towards the tensions between the two writers’ views.

Douglas Young mentions the diffusionist school as another influence on Gibbon’s views of nationalism, since diffusionist doctrine sees nationalism as a purely civilised concept unnatural to man bringing about war and misery.⁶⁴ Campbell goes so far as to call Gibbon decidedly an anti-nationalist.⁶⁵ This claim, however, is invalidated by Gibbon’s own words. In a letter to Neil Gunn, the writer says that he is not, in fact, anti-nationalist but that he loathes fascism.⁶⁶ As Malcolm points out, Gibbon had a blind fear of fascism, which, to him, was connected to the nationalism practised in Germany and France, but also in Scotland: in his essay “Religion” he writes that the Scottish national parties have large elements of fascism in them.⁶⁷ This apparent interrelation of the concepts of nationalism and fascism in Gibbon’s mind can be seen as a central factor conditioning his views of nationalism. However, Malcolm also mentions the fact that, although Gibbon was opposed to political nationalism, he retained “a spontaneous and genuine affection for his native land” (*Blasphemer* 8). The writer was intensely proud of his native country, which is reflected in its positive appearance in many of

⁶³ Campbell, *Gibbon* vii.

⁶⁴ Young, *Beyond* 21. The main views of the diffusionist school, as well as its influence on Gibbon’s ideology, will be treated later in this chapter.

⁶⁵ Campbell, *Gibbon* vii.

⁶⁶ Qtd. Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 7.

⁶⁷ Gibbon, *Speak* 173.

Gibbon's stories and, most importantly, in *A Scots Quair*. Indeed, he always felt emotionally and romantically attached to the Mearns.⁶⁸

Gibbon's outspoken rejection of political nationalism, as well as nationalism in literature and arts, therefore, initially positioned him in opposition to the cultural nationalism that characterised the literary movement of the Scottish Renaissance.⁶⁹ Gibbon's complex view on the various aspects of nationalism is best described by the author himself, depicting himself as non-nationalist but still interested in the revival of cultural and political nationalism which was the core of the Scottish Renaissance.⁷⁰ The Renaissance, a remarkably unified movement that spanned a variety of genres in both Scots and English, arose around Hugh MacDiarmid's (the alias of Christopher Murray Grieve) "Scots language" platform.⁷¹ It advocated a rebirth or regeneration of the Scottish language, history, literature, and culture in combination with a new confidence in national identity. Moreover, the movement, which was left-wing and nationalist at the same time,⁷² gave attention to social and cultural issues, lamenting the decline of Scottish national identity.⁷³ Douglas Gifford points out some of the main endeavours of the Scottish Renaissance, including the preservation of tradition in Scotland and a focus on heritage and folklore, as well as a "return to roots" in terms of national consciousness, which becomes apparent in Gibbon's writing. According to Gifford, the Scottish Renaissance rejected "sentimental, stereotypical representations of Scotland" popular in the late 19th century and found a main endeavour in "bring[ing] modern Scottish culture into alignment with the most advanced European thought and avant-garde artistic techniques" ("Re-Mapping" 128). Additionally, the writers of the Renaissance agreed that Scottish literature was suffering from a lack of a tradition of its own, criticising images of Scotland as found in the last three hundred years as untrue and debased.⁷⁴ Instead, they explored tradition, legend and Scottish history in a new way, critical of 19th century conventions of including historical episodes like the Reformation or the Industrial Revolution in expressions of national identity, looking at pre-history and the myth of a golden age as a basis for their work.⁷⁵ The golden age concept went hand in hand with a wish for direct appreciation of the relationship

⁶⁸ Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 8.

⁶⁹ Young, *Beyond* 21.

⁷⁰ Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 9.

⁷¹ Gifford, *Gibbon* 9. The main protagonists, according to Gifford, include Edwin Muir, Gunn, Eric Linklater, Gibbon, Naomi Mitchison, James Bridie, and William Soutar (cf. 9).

⁷² Gifford, *Gibbon* 10.

⁷³ Gifford, "Re-Mapping" 17.

⁷⁴ Gifford, *Gibbon* 8.

⁷⁵ Gifford, Dunnigan, and MacGillivray, *Scottish Literature* 581.

between man and nature lost in today's society.⁷⁶ Significantly, the writers of the Renaissance combined these elements with their own versions of modernism, as, for instance, Gibbon in his adaptation of the Joycean "stream of consciousness" technique.⁷⁷

Quite in opposition to MacDiarmid's cultural nationalism, Gibbon's views were extremist socialist, prepared to welcome the occupation of a Chinese army and the end of Scottish culture if only the misery in the slums of Glasgow was helped.⁷⁸ Thus, Gibbon's participation in the (mostly culturally, but also politically nationalist) Scottish Renaissance depended on considerable persuasion on the part of fellow Scottish writers like Gunn and MacDiarmid that their nationalism need not be equated with fascism.⁷⁹ MacDiarmid had to tone down his own nationalist attitude in order to motivate Gibbon to collaborate in the Renaissance.⁸⁰ Finally, it seems, his friend MacDiarmid and other writers in the Scottish Renaissance managed to win Gibbon over for the movement, since he shared some of the Renaissance's views and aims such as an emphasis on folklore, a closer and more natural relationship between man and nature, and a call for a new Scottish tradition in literature, rejecting outdated representations of Scotland and leading Scottish literature into a new era.⁸¹ MacDiarmid himself claimed that towards the end of his life Gibbon was becoming more and more committed to Scottish nationalism and the Renaissance.⁸² Thus, as Tange notes, Gibbon picked out the elements of the Renaissance's views that concurred with his own endeavours, political and cultural.⁸³ This uneasy relationship between Gibbon and the Renaissance, especially in terms of political views, created some ambivalence in the reception of *A Scots Quair*, as will become apparent in the following chapters.

2.3. Universal Representation

The analysis of the universal representation of characters, places, and events of the *Quair* is based on the assumption that authors, even though choosing certain settings

⁷⁶ Gifford, *Gibbon* 10-11.

⁷⁷ Gifford, "Re-Mapping" 19. Goldie mentions in this context that the important difference between Scottish modernism and a more common, international modernism is that the writers of Scottish modernism felt compelled to comment on or even create national identity or Scottishness, while international modernism aimed at a separation from national issues (cf. 54).

⁷⁸ Gifford, *Gibbon* 9.

⁷⁹ Young, *Beyond* 21.

⁸⁰ Dixon, "Gospels" 139.

⁸¹ Young, *Beyond* 21.

⁸² Gifford, Dunnigan, and MacGillivray, *Scottish Literature* 585.

⁸³ Tange par. 12.

and milieus for their works, might endeavour to give them universal significance and appeal by addressing issues common to everyone. Again, there may be numerous reasons for suggesting characters to be representative of mankind at large or certain groups of people, or local events as representative of global developments. Moreover, the techniques used to suggest such a representative function, as for instance presenting character as types rather than individuals, will have to be scrutinised.

Gibbon's possible aim of creating a universally appealing and representative narrative is connected to his strongly socialist-anarchist worldview. In line with Leerssen's above-mentioned call for a contextualisation of texts in their contemporary social and political climate as well as their historical environment, this section will illuminate the ideological and political elements which provide the background for an analysis of Gibbon's *Quair* as universal, taking into account the social, political, and literary developments at the time, but also philosophical concepts which influenced Gibbon's worldview and art.

2.3.1. Diffusionism

A much-discussed concept which provides some of the fundamental coordinates conditioning Gibbon's views is the school of diffusionism.⁸⁴ The academic protagonist of the diffusionist school of thought was Professor Grafton Elliot Smith, an Australian doctor of medicine. Diffusionist doctrine stands in opposition to those of the Evolutionary school,⁸⁵ its name deriving from the historical-anthropological assumption that civilisation started with the chance discovery of agriculture when the Nile flooded and thus periodically provided fertile land for farming. According to the diffusionist view, agriculture and thus the beginnings of civilisation eventually diffused throughout the world. However, civilisation is not perceived positively by diffusionists, who hold the view that initially, in the phase that preceded the discovery of agriculture, humankind lived in a "golden age" in which man roamed the world freely and innocently, hunting and living without restrictions, rules, or taboos. As Young elaborates, according the diffusionists, this nomadic man was a hunter-gatherer, who "had no laws to curb and confine him and there was no need for them; in his pristine state man was kind and generous and sociable" (*Beyond* 10). Neither was there government authority or religion which could have imposed a moral code, a sense of

⁸⁴ Cf. also Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 28.

⁸⁵ The relevance of diffusionism for Gibbon's thought has been discussed in Young, *Beyond* 10-12; Dixon, "Gospels"; Malcolm, *Blasphemer* xii.

sin, or taboos. Most importantly, however, there was thought to be worldwide peace because war did not exist yet.⁸⁶ It follows that human nature, as perceived by diffusionists, is fundamentally good and evil is a result of social institutions such as land ownership and property.⁸⁷ After the coming of civilization, however, mankind was corrupted.

As Dixon points out, Gibbon was fascinated by this idea of a primitive communistic society of the golden age, free of any constraints,⁸⁸ perceiving in it a reflection of his own experiences of a “golden age of childhood” from which he was “expelled” when he entered the world of agriculture (Young, *Beyond* 2). Gibbon’s perception of the impact of an agricultural lifestyle, as described in his essay “The Land,” is in line with the diffusionist view that agriculture was the agent that enslaved man to the land. He recalls the people of his native village as a child, who were bent in servitude to agricultural work, having in time lost the joy of living.⁸⁹ Applying diffusionist historical ideas to Scotland, Gibbon creates a “highly personal version of Scottish history” (Young, *Beyond* 14), celebrating the Picts as the pristine men of the golden age, with the implication that the Mearns peasants descend directly from them. While Young was the first to stress the centrality of diffusionism for any interpretation of Gibbon’s work and especially *A Scots Quair*, Malcolm cautions against such a single-minded approach, as he calls it, suggesting that even though it encouraged Gibbon in denouncing social inequality, the prominence of this element in the writer’s thinking and writing should not be overestimated, stating that,

[...] while diffusionist doctrine provided an ‘objective correlative’ for his personal political and philosophical opinions, it does not lie at the heart of either his personal philosophy or his art. Indeed, much of the success of *A Scots Quair* in particular is due to the fact that in this volume Mitchell penetrates beyond the superficial and relatively arid theories of diffusionism to those principles which moved him most deeply as a man. (Malcolm, *Blasphemer* xii-xiii)

Gifford also points out that diffusionism should not be the main focus of any interpretation of Gibbon’s work.⁹⁰ Therefore, while the diffusionist influences on Gibbon’s writing will be considered in the analysis of *A Scots Quair*, as they provide background knowledge vital for interpreting the trilogy and Gibbon’s motivation in

⁸⁶ Young, *Beyond* 10.

⁸⁷ Young, *Beyond* 12. Also Gifford, Dunnigan, and MacGillivray provide a useful short summary of the genesis of diffusionist thought (*Scottish Literature* 584).

⁸⁸ Dixon, “Gospels” 145.

⁸⁹ Gibbon, *Speak* 153.

⁹⁰ Gifford, *Gibbon* 47.

depicting characters, places, and events in certain ways. However, as Malcolm rightly states, this element should not become the overpowering factor in approaching the text.

2.3.2. Religion

In his comprehensive study on Gibbon and his oeuvre, Malcolm identifies “two main thrusts of Mitchell’s personal philosophy, the one basically religious and the other essentially political” (Malcolm, *Blasphemer* xiii). The “basically religious” element, however, must not be interpreted as connected to orthodox religion. On the contrary, the writer believed that the Presbyterian Church had dominated the life of Scots by its “forbidding code” which produced “strange abnormalities of appearance and behaviour” in people (Gibbon, *Speak* 166) and which thus moulded the nation.⁹¹ Especially Scottish Calvinism is perceived by Gibbon as distorting the sexual life of the Scot,⁹² which is first and foremost exemplified by the heroine’s father’s fate in the *Quair*.⁹³ In his essay “Religion,” Gibbon speaks of religion as “what the Diffusionist historian recognizes as the reign of a cultural aberration, what the political student might apprehend as a reign of terror” (*Speak* 165). Thus, when Gibbon encountered the diffusionist theory, he felt his anti-religious stance supported by the diffusionist view of religion as an institution of civilisation and therefore part of a negative development and a contributing factor in mankind’s unhappiness by imposing restrictions, a sense of sin, and taboos on people.⁹⁴ Speaking of Scotland in the first part of the 20th century, however, Gibbon notes that the place of the church in people’s everyday lives has declined and that going to church had acquired a “mild social function,” attended because there is nothing else to do and because churchgoers use the gathering as a social event to invite neighbours for dinner or compare their own status (measured in terms of clothes) to that of others (ibid. 168). Yet, while strongly criticising religion and the Scottish Kirk, Gibbon admits that there are positive sides to those institutions, giving hope to the miserable and helping the poor.⁹⁵ Moreover, as Gifford stresses, Christianity not only provides imagery but also a basis for belief in love and respect which underlies Gibbon’s philosophical thinking.⁹⁶

The alternative mythology to religion that surfaces in Gibbon’s work – what Malcolm terms his “blasphemy” (*Blasphemer* xiii) – is, in line with diffusionist

⁹¹ Young, *Beyond* 19.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Cf. also Wilson, P. 64.

⁹⁴ Young, *Beyond* 10, 17, 30.

⁹⁵ Gibbon, *Speak* 170.

⁹⁶ Gifford, *Gibbon* 58.

doctrine, based on the realisation of the insignificance of man in a godless universe, and therefore basically atheistic.⁹⁷ Malcolm derives this phenomenon of thought from the contemporary cultural-historical conditions, the cataclysm of the First World War causing changes in the intellectual climate. Thus, the revision of people's thoughts and beliefs "cut modern man off from the comparatively stable values of Victorian society releasing him into a godless universe ruled by the principle of chance rather than design" (Malcolm, *Blasphemer* xiv). One reaction to this development includes the Absurd, as found in Camus's work and anticipated by Gibbon.⁹⁸ However, Gibbon displays another reaction, which springs from the diffusionist mindset in combination with his preference of science over religion. These elements lead him towards a different kind of myth, in which a pantheistic relationship between humans and nature ultimately brings about the realisation that death means a mere redistribution of molecules and that, seen on a basic level, life is eternal.⁹⁹ A number of scholars see this view confirmed in Chris's philosophy of life, which is based on the realisation that change is the only thing which endures, and especially in the last scene of the *Quair*, which has been interpreted by some as Chris's return to nature and by some as her death.¹⁰⁰ As Malcolm points out, Gibbon thus regards human life as one expression of the universal transformation of matter, natural absorption affecting a return to the source, and consequently part of the process of decay and change.

Therefore, Gibbon rejects Presbyterian religion, against whose strict code he argues in an outspoken manner, demanding greater freedom and a more enlightened attitude towards religion in general. Instead, he advocates an idiosyncratic mythology of pantheism and scientific rationalism¹⁰¹ that is strongly connected to the diffusionist mindset and an awareness of the relationship between humankind and its natural environment.

2.3.3. The Land – Nature – Agriculture

The relationship with nature is central to understanding Gibbon's ideology. Malcolm identifies a philosophical dimension to Gibbon's thinking, stimulated by his rural upbringing and his "immersion in the organic patterns which governed life in the

⁹⁷ Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 27, 31, 32.

⁹⁸ Malcolm, *Blasphemer* xiv.

⁹⁹ Ibid. 34, 43.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. 39. Douglas Young, for instance, interprets Chris's "oblivion" as a return to nature (*Beyond*), while Wilson P. sees this as her death.

¹⁰¹ Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 40-42.

country,” and which prompted the writer to prioritise knowledge of the physical realm over a search for metaphysical meaning (*Blasphemer* 37). Yet, as Malcolm furthermore argues, Gibbon associates nature directly with God when, in his essay “The Land,”¹⁰² the harvest receives mystical power as a manifestation of the divine, as consuming the produce of the land is likened to eating the flesh of God and “nature is directly represented as the single ordering force presiding over life in the universe” (ibid. 38). By extension, human existence is perceived to have a purpose beyond that of being a physical organism, as it is part of divine nature and thus to be revered.¹⁰³ Death, therefore, is part of the natural process of change and the perpetual life circle of nature.¹⁰⁴ Consequently, the *Quair*’s heroine’s special relationship with nature, as well as her realisation that nothing endures but change, can be claimed to converge with Gibbon’s views.¹⁰⁵

Gibbon grew up as a crofter’s son in the Mearns in the North-East of Scotland. Life on the croft was characterised by agricultural work and Gibbon very early observed the effects of its hardships on people. The boy preferred books to farm work and regularly wandered off into the countryside to roam the moors and hills, looking for ancient artefacts such as standing stones, cairns, and flints. This way of escaping farm work caused considerable conflict between him and his father.¹⁰⁶ As a consequence, Gibbon’s views on rural life are necessarily tinged by his negative feelings towards agriculture. However, even though Gibbon was criticised for “[t]he unredeemed close-packed filth, meanness, spite, brutality, lying squalor and stupidity” in his depiction of the negative sides of agricultural work in *Sunset Song*, that “wearied” the reviewer of *The Paisley Express* (qtd. Crawford, Introduction *Sunset Song* vii), he was later praised by critics for his authenticity. Indeed, his negative feelings towards agricultural life did not entirely suffocate his portrayal of peasant life in the North-East region. On the contrary, a superficial reading of the *Quair* might lead to the interpretation of Gibbon’s treatment of his native soil as a – possibly even nostalgic – “passion for the land.” However, David Hewitt invalidates this view, stating that “‘a passion for the land’ is a misleading diagnosis of the imaginative commitment, for the land is far from favourably presented” (“North-East” 197). He concedes that the land was indeed a central theme in the literature of the North-East during pre-industrial times for the simple reason that

¹⁰² In Gibbon, *Speak* 128-139.

¹⁰³ Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 39.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. 41.

¹⁰⁵ Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 38.

¹⁰⁶ Young, *Beyond* 3.

most of the region's inhabitants had occupations in agriculture. When industrialisation set in, the land gradually became a myth in literary production, creating by its recurrence an image of the North-East as a predominantly rural area, even while reality was different.¹⁰⁷

In order to arrive at a valid interpretation of Gibbon's attitude and feelings towards the land, another element has to be taken into account. As Young points out, a complete understanding of these issues needs to be informed by the consideration of his diffusionist worldview. Young was the first critic to analyse Gibbon's oeuvre in terms of these ideas, arguing that a crucial distinction has to be made between his attitudes to the land, on the one hand, and agriculture, on the other. Agriculture, according to the diffusionist theory of the development of societies, is the institution which initiated civilisation, thus bringing about power struggles, poverty, and war by enslavement to property and an agrarian way of life. Young underlines the fact that even though Gibbon sees farming and farming folk as loathsome, the land and nature itself are beautiful to him.¹⁰⁸ Thus, Gibbon's relationship with the land was not a love-hate relationship, as several critics have claimed.¹⁰⁹ Young clarifies this point by pointing out that it was rather a love relationship with the land, the unspoiled countryside, and the people and a hate relationship with agriculture and its effects on the land and the people.¹¹⁰ The land acquires an almost mythical force as the only thing that remains amidst the constant change that Scotland and the *Quair's* characters experience. Moreover, it is a constant source of reassurance for Chris, drawing her to the Mearns again at the end of the trilogy. Dixon comments that the land in its untouched and pristine state is perceived by Gibbon to be at the heart of the Mearns folk's Scottishness: "through Chris and the crofting community of Kinraddie, and also in his non-fiction Grassie Gibbon identifies Scottishness with the land" ("Gibbon" 205). Indeed, the land becomes a symbol of primitive values for Gibbon,¹¹¹ which should be rediscovered in industrial times. Scottish writer Helen Cruickshank wrote in a letter that "in 'Sunset Song' it seemed to [her] that the inarticulate land of [her] forefathers had at last found an authentic voice" (qtd. McCulloch and Dunnigan, Introduction 18).

¹⁰⁷ Hewitt, "North-East" 201 ff.

¹⁰⁸ Young, *Beyond* 3.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. for instance Campbell *Gibbon*, who does not make a distinction between the land and agriculture or Gifford, Dunnigan, and MacGillivray who claim that Gibbon's was a "'love-hate' ambivalence to the Mearns and to farming" (*Scottish Literature* 581).

¹¹⁰ Young, *Beyond* 3.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* 29.

As mentioned before, Gibbon saw the people farming the Mearns as descending directly from the pristine Picts. To him, even though the primitive virtues of those hunters had been suppressed by the rule of civilisation, they survived in the peasants.¹¹² This wins them Gibbon's admiration, calling them "those selfless aristos of Scotland" (qtd. Young, *Beyond* 29). As Munro points out in his introduction to *A Scots Hairst*, Gibbon was strongly conscious of his own peasant origins and proud of this background, which he used to great effect in *A Scots Quair*.¹¹³ Yet, from his childhood on, Gibbon had also perceived the Mearns farming folk as loathsome and narrow. In *The Scottish Scene*, Gibbon recalled the farming folk of his childhood as "wrinkled people who have mislaid so much fun and hope and high endeavour in grey servitude to those rigs" (Gibbon, *Speak* 153). Thus, as Gifford points out, there seems to be a paradox between this reverence and pride, on the one hand, and Gibbon's portrayal of the peasants of the Mearns as deplorably narrow, on the other.¹¹⁴ This "peculiar mixture of love and hate for the Mearns and its people" (Gifford, *Gibbon* 74), as Gifford terms it, is seen rather differently by Young, who emphasises that there is no paradox in Gibbon's view of the farming folk, since he idealises the peasants and their preserved pre-civilisation virtues but depicts their current living conditions as grotesque.¹¹⁵

However, Gibbon's celebrations of the Mearns peasants does not entail that he advocates a return to a peasant nation, an ideal reminiscent of the pastoralism of Kailyard literature.¹¹⁶ In his essay "The Land" he provides a very clear picture of what he thinks of politicians' plans to emphasise agricultural production in Scotland:

[...] when I read or hear our new leaders and their plans for making Scotland a great peasant nation, a land of little farms and little farming communities, I am moved to bored disgust [...] They are promising it narrowness and bitterness and heart-breaking toil in one of the most unkindly lands in the world. [...] they are promising years of murderous monotony, poverty and struggle and loss of happy

¹¹² Young, *Beyond* 28, 29.

¹¹³ Munro, Introduction vii.

¹¹⁴ Gifford, *Gibbon* 43.

¹¹⁵ Young, *Beyond* 28.

¹¹⁶ The school of Kailyard literature, with J.M. Barrie (1860-1937) and Ian McLaren (1850-1907) as the most prominent members, is characterized by a nostalgic depiction of Scottish life, emphasizing pastoral simplicity and country living, which many critics reveal as escapist. The school, which was commercially highly successful, had its heyday between 1888 and 1896. McLuckie refers to the typical structure of Kailyard literature (loosely connected vignettes), its voice (omniscient), tone (nostalgic rural poverty), and character (types, in the folk tradition). McLaren's novel *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush* (1894) is considered the outstanding example of the school; sentimental, rustic and plotless (cf. McLuckie par. 2). Craig refers to the Kailyard's "inherent sentimentality and its flight from the realities of industrial Scotland" (*Modern* 14). Campbell also mentions a "fixation with education and "getting on" (*Gibbon* 3), while Gifford puts forward his view that the Kailyard is "a deliberate tradition of falsification of social reality, condescension and exploitation" (*Gibbon* 5).

human relationships. They promise that of which they know nothing, except through sipping of the scum of Kailyard romance. (*Speak* 153-4)

Thus, Gibbon takes a clear stand against such attempts to solve the world's problems. Drawing the appropriate conclusions, Young points out that the above passage disproves the view of those critics who see in Gibbon an idealiser of the peasant and an advocate of naïve pastoralism. The author's vision is not to be seen as a call "back to nature" but rather as an idea for a new golden age that is characterized by a recovery of an ancient spontaneity of being which has been lost in civilised man, "an almost religious rediscovery of the fundamental essence of living" (Young, *Beyond* 29). Indeed, Gibbon's intention seems to be to suggest a return to the land as a mythical entity which is capable of providing a sense of belonging. This idea, however, does not necessarily have to be tied to rural settings or country living but should be applied to Scotland in general.¹¹⁷

According to Young, the opposition between agriculture and the primitive, that is, between enslavement and misery on the one hand, and freedom and happiness on the other, completes the myth of the land as found in Gibbon's work.¹¹⁸ The mythical hold of the land on Chris combines with the realisation that nothing endures but the land. Human life is seen as an expression of a universal transformation of matter within a cyclical process of change, which makes death a mere "return to the material base" (Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 42).¹¹⁹ As mentioned before, this ideological concept takes the place of religious faith in Gibbon's oeuvre, connecting the farming folk with the land in a quasi-religious way.

2.3.4. Marxism – Communism – Anarchism

While a number of critics and writers have commented on Gibbon's political views,¹²⁰ there is still considerable disagreement concerning his affiliation with national parties or political creeds. It seems that, even though he considered himself a radical writer in solidarity with the down-trodden,¹²¹ he did not put great emphasis on labels, his political attitudes first and foremost informed by his burning desire to draw attention to social

¹¹⁷ Young, *Beyond* 3, 23, 29.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. 3.

¹¹⁹ As Malcolm points out, Mitchell's views were influenced by the teachings of such personalities as Marx, Engels and Lenin (*Blasphemer* 40).

¹²⁰ To name just a few: Campbell, *Gibbon*; Dixon, "Gospels" and "Gibbon"; Gifford, *Gibbon*; Malcolm, *Blasphemer* and "Shouting"; McCulloch, "Modernism"; Wilson, P.; Young, *Beyond*; Zagratzki, "Homage" and *Tendenzen*.

¹²¹ Zagratzki, "Homage" 158.

evils.¹²² Indeed, as Malcolm points out, Gibbon's concern was less with issues of social organisation or economic theory but primarily with basic moral issues and human ideals.¹²³ Already from his childhood on these humanist views were pronounced. His experiences of poverty and unacceptable living conditions in Glasgow and Aberdeen helped to shape libertarian and left-wing thoughts which became increasingly radical in order to search for greater freedom in the political and religious spheres.¹²⁴ Gibbon was not the only artist who was influenced by social developments at the time. Especially the traumatic events of the First World War and the deteriorating social conditions in the inter-war years had caused art to acquire "a stern political aspect" (Malcolm, *Blasphemer* xiv). Moreover, the intellectual climate was shaken by the horrific events of the First World War, destabilising the value system and casting man into a godless universe ruled by chance. Writers responded to "the futility and anarchy of contemporary history" in different ways, most importantly by creating the Absurd and Modernism (Gifford, Dunnigan, and MacGillivray 589).¹²⁵

However, as Malcolm points out, Gibbon's political agendas were always informed by his own concrete experiences and related, even subordinated, to his social endeavours.¹²⁶ Gibbon himself pointed out that he was prepared to use his art to achieve his humanist goals, commenting in *The Left Review* that all his writing was, in essence, political propaganda. Therefore, Gibbon's view of his own art was strongly functional, seeing it as an expression and extension of his radical opinions.¹²⁷ He was well aware that this kind of propaganda through art might be detrimental to the artistic value of his work, admitting that there was a danger of letting his art be overpowered by his moral obligation to shout out the evils of society. In a letter to fellow writer Helen Cruickshank, however, he pointed out that he was still compelled to keep up the propaganda, explaining his reasons thus:

Yes, horrors do haunt me. That's because I'm in love with humanity. [...] 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. (qtd. Malcolm, "Shouting" 76)¹²⁸

¹²² Cf. Malcolm who refers to Gibbon's friends who remember the writer's intolerance of anything that did not address social evils (*Blasphemer* 24).

¹²³ Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 2.

¹²⁴ Ibid. xiii, 3. For an analysis of Gibbon's libertarian views see Zagaratzki *Tendenzen*.

¹²⁵ Cf. also Malcolm, *Blasphemer* xiv.

¹²⁶ Ibid. xiv, 4.

¹²⁷ Ibid. 12.

¹²⁸ Leslie Mitchell, letter to Helen B. Cruickshank, 18 November 1933, National Library of Scotland MS 26109.

Gibbon's objective, therefore, was indeed to "shout too loudly" in order to make his humanist views heard. In fact, there is a consensus that Gibbon's work can be termed "literature engagée," that is, literature promoting a cause and fulfilling a social function.¹²⁹ The writer's political standpoint, however, has been given various labels by different critics, such as "Marxist" or "Scottish Communist-Nationalist," while Gibbon used different terminology, labelling himself mainly as an anarchist or a communist.¹³⁰

Again, an analysis of Gibbon's political affiliations must be cast against the background of his diffusionist views. As Malcolm points out, the central ideas of diffusionism largely concur with the directives of both anarchism and communism.¹³¹ Young mentions that Gibbon's communist friends insisted that he was a communist.¹³² Establishing the nature of Gibbon's affiliation with the communist party, however, is problematic. According to Young, MacDiarmid claimed that Gibbon was a member for only a short time, being expelled as a Trotskyist.¹³³ Malcolm points out that Gibbon's enthusiasm for the communist ideology stems from his time as a young reporter in Aberdeen, retaining an active interest until his death.¹³⁴ Yet, in a letter to fellow writer Neil Gunn, Gibbon wrote that he was not a member of the communist party since they refused to allow him. In another letter Gibbon complains about the frequent attacks on him by communist papers, calling him a "disruptive Anarchist."¹³⁵ These comments, however, are probably meant ironically, since Gibbon was known to be sceptical of any commitment to a certain creed, therefore not having a strong desire to be a member of any political party.¹³⁶ Still, Gibbon's views were strongly socialist and based on the humanistic principles of communism, even though Malcolm points out that he had romantically idealised ideas of communism since he did not live to experience Stalin's Russia.¹³⁷ Some described the writer as a passionate Marxist,¹³⁸ which, however, is disputed by Young who sees Gibbon's views more as a personal interpretation of

¹²⁹ Malcolm, "Shouting" 80.

¹³⁰ Malcolm refers to George Blake and John Paton who saw Gibbon as a Marxist and Hugh MacDiarmid who called him a "Scottish Communist-Nationalist" (cf. Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 1).

¹³¹ Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 20.

¹³² Young, *Beyond* 23.

¹³³ Ibid. 23.

¹³⁴ Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 21.

¹³⁵ Qtd. Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 7, 25.

¹³⁶ Gifford, *Gibbon* 56.

¹³⁷ Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 1-2.

¹³⁸ Campbell, *Gibbon* vii, and Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 25. Malcolm mentions that, despite considerable efforts, he could not find any evidence about the details of Gibbon's involvement with the communist party (cf. *Blasphemer* 23.)

diffusionist theory than Marxism.¹³⁹ Yet, while Gibbon always considered himself a communist,¹⁴⁰ it seems that he was not entirely convinced of the power of communism to achieve his humanist goals.¹⁴¹

Significantly, in Gibbon's view, communism was merely a step towards ultimate anarchism.¹⁴² As Malcolm puts it, Gibbon's "ideal of universal equality was sought in full recognition of the rights of the individual" (*Blasphemer* 19). Inspiration came from Peter Kropotkin's *News From Nowhere*, which was highly regarded by Gibbon, as well as from the radical anarchist Michael Bakunin, whom Gibbon calls "St. Bakunin" in his essay "Glasgow."¹⁴³ As Zagratzki points out, there was an anarchist cult of the natural, the spontaneous, and the individual which placed the peasants in the centre of its philosophy because of their closeness to nature, an element which can be found in Gibbon's vision of the Mearns peasants as heirs to the unspoilt Picts.¹⁴⁴ Indeed, the depiction of heroic peasants can be seen as common in modern anarchist teachings, which greatly revered the natural, the spontaneous and the individual as well as proximity to nature and the simplicity of a traditional lifestyle as a basis for a philosophy of change.¹⁴⁵ Young stresses the similarities between the diffusionist utopia and anarchism, which are both based on the reliance on the natural virtues of man and agree in their criticism of capitalist society.¹⁴⁶ Gibbon's ultimate ideas of a new cosmopolis meant an anarchist abolition of property and constitutional and legislative ruling instead of a redistribution of wealth, as envisaged by communism.¹⁴⁷ Ultimately, therefore, Gibbon saw communism as a complementary tool to achieve an anarchist utopia based on his libertarian and diffusionist views.

2.4. Concluding Comments

The diverse terminological, ideological, and political concepts explicated in this chapter make up the theoretical framework of this analysis of *A Scots Quair*. The concept of

¹³⁹ Young, *Beyond* 25. Young also points out that Gibbon had little patience with what he called the "bolshevik blah" of the Marxists (*Beyond* 25-26).

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Young who quotes a letter from Gibbon to MacDiarmid in which Gibbon calls himself and MacDiarmid communists (cf. *Beyond* 26).

¹⁴¹ Wilson, P. 56.

¹⁴² Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 20. Young mentions that also Hugh MacDiarmid saw communism as a step towards anarchism (*Beyond* 26).

¹⁴³ Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 19. The essay "Glasgow" can be found in Gibbon *Speak*.

¹⁴⁴ Zagratzki, "Homage" 155-56. Zagratzki also refers to George Woodcock, *Anarchism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963).

¹⁴⁵ Zagratzki, "Homage."

¹⁴⁶ Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 19, 20; Young, *Beyond* 26.

¹⁴⁷ Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 21.

regionalism puts the depiction of the *Quair's* characters, places, and events into the light of regionalist verisimilitude and a typical distinction of the region from the centre, which is perceived as more powerful.

The tool of imagology will be used to analyse the image of Scotland and Scottish people as conveyed in Gibbon's *magnum opus* and establish the degree in which it can be interpreted as representative of the nation, allowing conclusions concerning Gibbon's intentions when using or rejecting common stereotypes. Gibbon's relationships with nationalism and the Scottish Renaissance provide important background information when discussing his trilogy in terms of such national representation. Moreover, an imagological point of view provides a new focus for analysis of the reception of the trilogy, commenting on the way the *Quair* and its characters, places, and events are perceived by readers.

Any study of Gibbon's trilogy has to take into account Gibbon's political and ideological views, which not only influence his art but also form the basis for politically motivated commentary in order to address social ills. While the strength of his affiliation with the political creeds of Marxism and communism wavered, his commitment to diffusionism and anarchism was pronounced and formative. The element of universal representation of characters and their experiences in his work is conditioned by this desire to appeal to an international reading public – and thereby finding a large platform for his humanist concerns – by presenting universally recognisable character types. As Malcolm argues, Gibbon's trilogy rises above the various literary and philosophical influences in order to “make great art from the ideological forces by which he himself was motivated,” proving that ultimately the eclectic elements are second nature to the *Quair's* strong universal messages (*Blasphemer* xv).

3. Language

Many critics see Gibbon's prose style as one of the main elements of the *Quair's* success.¹⁴⁸ Gibbon's innovative use of language in the trilogy has been described by several scholars who commented on its makeup, its purpose and its achievements in

¹⁴⁸ As, for instance, Corbett, “Ecstasy” 89 or MacDiarmid who comments that Gibbon's use of Scots gave his work “passage and power” (*Uncanny Scot* 160).

relation to Gibbon's intentions.¹⁴⁹ The present analysis will contextualise past findings with considerations of regional, national, and universal representation as outlined in section two of the present thesis, as well as insights from the trilogy's reception, and thus shed light on elements of the regional, the national, and the universal in the *Quair's* language. As a main source for lexical and phonetic information, the *Dictionary of the Scots Language* (DSL, available online) will be used.

Before discussing Gibbon's views, however, the terminological issues surrounding English, Scots, and various other concepts need to be addressed. In the present analysis, "English" will be used to denote Standard English and "dialect of English" when talking about dialectal varieties within England.¹⁵⁰ "Scots" is used for the language akin to English, but differing in pronunciation, lexis, and syntax. Corbett provides a distinct description of the features of Scots (or braid Scots), explaining that it is a hybrid language originating from Old English, Old Norse, and French, with a few borrowings from Gaelic. Significantly, its core vocabulary and grammar is shared with English, particularly as spoken in the North of England (Corbett, *Language* 5). Doric is a variety of Scots spoken in the surroundings of Aberdeen, where Gibbon grew up. Scottish Standard English is characterised by a low number of Scots lexical and syntactical features but a distinctive pronunciation and spoken by most educated Scots (ibid. 11-16). A number of scholars have provided useful short overviews of the historical development of Scots or Lowland Scots. See, for instance Corbett, *Language* 3 ff.; Johnston 105 ff.; McClure, *Scots* 5 ff.; Roskies 143 ff. For a detailed overview of phonological, morphological, and syntactical properties of Scots, as well as the similarities and differences between Scots and Scottish Standard English, see Johnston 112 ff. The concept of Lallans arose during the Scottish Renaissance. Corbett describes it as a kind of "plastic Scots" based on different existing varieties of Scots and advocated by "language activists" (*Language* 14). However, it never reached the status of a widely used prestige form and thus remained a literary phenomenon.¹⁵¹

As several sources suggest, Gibbon was torn between two conflicting impulses of writing in English or Scots.¹⁵² These contradictory strands were personified by the

¹⁴⁹ Gibbon's linguistic achievements have been treated in various publications. For in-depth analyses, see for instance Young, *Beyond*; Wade; Campbell, *Gibbon* and "Style"; Corbett, "Ecstasy"; Hewitt, "Outside View"; Johnson; Malcolm, *Blasphemer*; Roskies; and Trengove.

¹⁵⁰ The divergent views on the exact definition and place of Standard English cannot be addressed in this study. See, for instance, Peter Trudgill's, Richard Hogg's, and Richard Hudson's "Three Views on Standard English" at <<http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/dick/standard.htm>> [04.10.2009].

¹⁵¹ Corbett, *Language* 16.

¹⁵² Cf. for instance Corbett, "Ecstasy"; Gifford, *Gibbon*; Johnson; Young, *Beyond*.

two personae James Leslie Mitchell and Lewis Grassie Gibbon, who each used different signatures and even typewriters.¹⁵³ The pseudonym is a version of his mother's name (Lilias Grassie Gibbon) and a traditional name from the North-East of Scotland. As a child, Gibbon had been taught to avoid using his language at school. He thus adopted the condescending attitude of the teachers, coming to view the vernacular as coarse and vulgar; an antipathy which was strengthened by its association with agriculture, which Gibbon hated.¹⁵⁴ The socially and politically engaged revolutionary writer he came to be, Gibbon pragmatically called for solutions to the pressing problems of the modern world and advocated radical measures to alleviate the plight of the working classes during and after the Industrial Revolution, emphasising his cosmopolitan visions for the future. Writing as Mitchell, he criticised nationalism, especially in small nations. He treated the insistence of small nations on the preservation of their national languages scathingly since his view of the New Utopia requested the creation of a universal, cosmopolitan language.¹⁵⁵ Consequently, he advocated the use of orthodox English for literary production when writing as Mitchell.¹⁵⁶

Yet, contrary to this, he also felt that English was an "inadequate" medium for Scottish writers since, according to his views, its use involves "translating" from their native Scots into the English language and thus produces second-rate art.¹⁵⁷ Young also notes this conflict between Gibbon's personae as the social reformer and the artist; "the one despising Scots, the other finding it an essential part of himself" (*Beyond* 80). Gibbon's conflicting feelings about Scots reflect a general trend in the perception of Scottish literature in the 20th century. In the early 20th century, Ford coined the idea that the English language was insufficient for voicing specifically Scottish experience¹⁵⁸ and during the following decade scholars and writers alike perpetuated this opinion.¹⁵⁹ McClure develops this approach further, arguing that the English language is incapable of expressing as much meaning and emotion as Scots. In his view, Scots has a strong onomatopoeic as well as a phonoaesthetic faculty, therefore appealing directly to readers' feelings and communicating meaning through direct relation between sound

¹⁵³ Munro, *Mitchell* 103.

¹⁵⁴ Young, *Beyond* 79.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 80, 79.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. his essay "Literary Lights" in Gibbon, *Speak* 130.

¹⁵⁷ Gibbon, *Speak* 139.

¹⁵⁸ Ford 4.

¹⁵⁹ For instance, Willa Muir, Hugh MacDiarmid in *Albyn: or Scotland and the Future* (1927) (see Zenzinger 145), Gregory Smith in his influential *Scottish Literature: Character and Influence* (1919), McClure in *Why Scots Matters and Language, Poetry, and Nationhood* (see also Miller 197 ff.).

and sense.¹⁶⁰ Also MacDiarmid was of the opinion that English could not voice “the chief elements of Scottish psychology” (qtd. Zenzinger 145). Scots was famously described as “the language of the heart” as opposed to English, “the language of the head,” by Gibbon’s fellow writer Muir (ibid.). Also Gibbon sees Scots as “the speech of emotional ecstasy and emotional stress” (*Speak* 130). As Miller points out, this view of Scots as the language of the heart gave it an image of being sensual, emotional, and vigorous. Yet, it also came to be perceived as primitive and thus lost potential as a literary medium. As a consequence, an inferiorist mythology connected to the language was created.¹⁶¹

In the *Quair*, Gibbon’s divided views on the use of Scots are dramatised in a scene at Chris’s wedding during which the characters discuss the question whether Scots should be abandoned in favour of the more universal English. Mr. Gordon is of the opinion that one would have to be able to speak English in order “*to get on in the world [...] orra though it be*” (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 156, italics his).¹⁶² In reaction to this, a discussion ensues among the characters present. Long Rob, however, points out that Scots words are more precise and appropriate in such a context (i.e. traditional rural community gatherings) and laments the slow disappearance of Scots words in everyday life.¹⁶³ He asks, “*what’s the English for sotter, or greip, or smore, or pleiter, gloaming or glanching or well-henspeckled? And if you said gloaming was sunset you’d fair be a liar*” (ibid. italics his).¹⁶⁴ Thus, Long Rob voices the opinion, which the author himself evidently shared, that many Scots elements were untranslatable into English.¹⁶⁵ As this discussion during Chris’s wedding shows, *Sunset Song*’s characters voice Gibbon’s fundamental dilemma of language.

Moreover, this tension between Scots and English manifests itself as a split in the *Quair*’s heroine’s character, who

[...] wanted [...] Scots words to tell your heart how they [her family] wrung it and held it, the toil of their days and unendingly their fight. And the next minute that passed from you, you were English, back to the English words so sharp and clean and true – for a while, for a while, till they slid so smooth from your throat

¹⁶⁰ McClure, *Why Scots Matters* 56 and *Language* 93.

¹⁶¹ Miller 207-8. He also refers to Fanon, who coined the concept of “inferiorism” in the context of colonisation (Frantz Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove, 1963). Poets and writers like MacDiarmid have since tried to work against this inferiority complex by employing Scots in their writing.

¹⁶² In the *Quair*, Gibbon uses italics instead of quotation marks to distinguish the narrative from direct speech.

¹⁶³ Cf. also Johnson 143, 106.

¹⁶⁴ Gibbon’s self-reflective irony is reflected in this comment and the author’s use of the English word “sunset” instead of “gloaming” for the book’s title.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Gibbon’s introductory note to *Sunset Song* quoted on page 33 of this thesis.

you knew they could never say anything that was worth saying at all. (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 32)

Chris thus inhabits both languages at the same time, even though they seem to be connected to different situations in her life.¹⁶⁶ As manifested in Chris, Gibbon's aim in the *Quair* is to achieve a combination of English and Scots, unlike the treatment his native vernacular had experienced from many of his contemporary Scottish authors. In his essay "Literary Lights," he criticised the stylistic treatment of Scots by other authors, commenting that some were trying to "out-English the English" (*Speak* 131). In his view, they could merely be called "commendable writers from the interesting English county of Scotshire" (ibid. 132). According to Gibbon, the main narratives of these writers were in "depressing English" and featured Scots in spoken dialogue only in "suitable inverted commas" and mostly in the speech of "the simple, the proletarian, the slightly ludicrous characters" (Gibbon, *Speak* 134). For Gibbon, these narratives were consequently not part of a truly Scottish literary tradition since they rejected their native Scots as a literary medium. Gibbon's innovative style, therefore, arose as a reaction against those narratives which either suppressed Scots entirely or used it as an indicator of social stigma.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, as Zagratzki mentions, Gibbon was not of the opinion that braid Scots had lost any of its potential for cultural identification in modern Scotland. To Gibbon, a rediscovery of Scottish culture entailed a rediscovery of braid Scots.¹⁶⁸

Therefore, in order to give expression to both his desire to express himself in his native tongue and his hopes for a cosmopolitan future without nation or national languages, Gibbon used the name Mitchell when writing his "English" fiction and non-fiction, and the pseudonym of Lewis Grassie Gibbon when producing his "Scottish" fiction. More importantly, he also created his unique style of blending his native language, Scots, with English. In his note preceding *Sunset Song*, Gibbon draws parallels between the relationships between Scots and English and Dutch and German:

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

¹⁶⁶ For a more in-depth analysis of this "split" in Chris's identity see chapter four of the present thesis (p. 50 ff.).

¹⁶⁷ Corbett, "Ecstasy" 90.

¹⁶⁸ Zagratzki, *Tendenzen* 223.

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 mistranslations.

The Courtesy that the hypothetical Dutchman might receive from German a Scot may invoke from the great English tongue. (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* xiii)

Thus, he explains that he would use only such words and idioms from Scots in his narrative, which are “untranslatable” in order not to risk a “mis-translation” of the experience he is trying to convey. Yet, the impression of strong Scots influences remains. This will become clear in the following analysis of lexis and syntax in the *Quair*.

3.1. Linguistic Innovation

In his essay “Literary Lights,” using the name James Leslie Mitchell, the writer comments on the oeuvres of contemporary Scottish writers. Interestingly, he also outlines the literary style of his alter ego, Lewis Grassie Gibbon:

The technique of Lewis Grassie Gibbon in his trilogy *A Scots Quair* [...] is 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 remodelling requires. (Gibbon, *Speak* 137)

The linguistic style used by Gibbon in his trilogy is thus characterised by himself as a melange of English and Scots. Outwardly, the *Quair*’s prose appears to be English but, if looked at more closely, displays an intricate combination of English and Scots vocabulary, as well as specific uses of syntax to approach patterns typical of Scots.

3.1.1. Lexis

According to Gibbon’s own explanation quoted above, he inserted lexical items from braid Scots into the prose of the *Quair*, which he describes as largely English.¹⁶⁹ The items Gibbon injects are not consistently taken from one existing variety of Scots, but, as Corbett points out, in Gibbon’s style “some archaic Scots and English items are mingled with general Scots terms, as well as a few regionalisms from different localities, though mainly north-eastern” (“Ecstasy” 91), similar to MacDiarmid’s technique. Corbett describes the various Scots terms used, commenting that they include nouns (such as “dafties,” “futret,” “creature”), verbs (“swithering,” “louping,”

¹⁶⁹ Since English and Scots share a large part of their lexical items, however, a speaker of Scots may be able to recognise most of the prose as Scots. Yet, its outward appearance speaks for an interpretation as largely English.

“sleeking”), quantifying adjectives (“a bit walk”), and intensifying adverbs (“fell early”). Thus, the nouns describe people, often negatively, such as Mistress Munro’s derogatory nickname “futret.” According to Corbett, the adjectives and adverbs mostly belittle or intensify.¹⁷⁰ In general, the use of Scots words adheres to Gibbon’s view stated in his prefatory note. Therefore, his characters can “cal[l] a graip by its given name” (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 185) without the author having – or wanting – to find an English equivalent.

Yet, Scots items are not merely exchanged for English words but “disguised” or “cloaked” as English vocabulary by printing Scots words such as “braw” (“beautiful, nice”) as similar English words such as “brave.”¹⁷¹ One of the early passages of *Sunset Song* provides an example of this phonetic trick, through which readers, even if unfamiliar with the Scots lexis, might receive an almost intuitive understanding of the passage by inference from the context:

But for days now the wind had been in the south, it shook and played in the moors and went *dandering* up the sleeping Grampians, the rushes pecked and quivered about the *loch* when its hand was upon them, but it brought more heat than cold, and all the *parks* were *fair* parched, sucked dry, the red clay soil of Blawearie gaping open for the rain that seemed never-coming. Up here the hills were *brave* with the beauty and the heat of it, but the hayfield was all a crackling dryness and in the *potato park* beyond the *biggings* the *shaws* drooped red and rusty already. [...] Some said the North, up Aberdeen way, had had rain enough, with Dee in spate and *bairns* hooking stranded salmon down in the shallows, and that must be fine enough, but not a *flick* of the *greeve* weather had come over the hills, the roads you walked down to Kinraddie smithy or up to the Denburn were *fair* blistering in the heat, thick with dust so that the motor-cars went *shooming* through them like kettles under steam. (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 25, italics mine)

In this passage Gibbon uses a few exclusively Scots words such as “dandering” for the wind’s personified movement or “biggin,” a General Scots term for building, or a cluster of buildings.¹⁷² Even if the general reader might not know this word, its meaning becomes clear from the context. Moreover, there are the Scots words “bairns” and “greeve weather.” The word “shooming” is especially interesting with its almost onomatopoeic sound-pattern. It is noted in the DSL as a verb used exclusively by Gibbon in *Sunset Song* and *Cloud Howe*, defined as “a low buzzing or humming sound.” The use of “fair” as a qualifying adjective or adverb (i.e. in “fair parched”) meaning “complete(ly), absolute(ly), utter, quite” seems consistent with the Scottish

¹⁷⁰ Corbett, “Ecstasy” 90.

¹⁷¹ Crawford, Introduction *Sunset Song* x.

¹⁷² Cf. Dictionary of the Scots Language Online.

context, noted by the *Dictionary of the Scots Language* (DSL) as General Scots, but is also used in Northern English dialects. The sentence about the potato field has some English words like “hayfield” and “dryness” but some decidedly Scots words are used by Gibbon, such as “park” (used in Scots for “field”), “biggins” and the “shaws” (the top parts of the potato plants) which are drooping. Significantly, words like “enough” or “weather,” which are familiar to any speaker of English, would be pronounced /ənjʊx/ or /wiðə/ by a Scots speaker and could therefore appear to them as Scots. With such pronunciation, it becomes clear that many of the words used are shared by English and Scots and would therefore be perceived differently by speakers of English or Scots. Thus, the background of the reader determines their perception of the *Quair*’s text as predominantly English or Scots. The effect of this is that international readers feel that *Sunset Song* is very accessible and at the same time they are persuaded that *Sunset Song*’s language is authentically Scottish. The perception, therefore, is that of a literary dialect.

It has been argued that the spelling used by Gibbon is not always that of modern braid Scots but rather archaic.¹⁷³ Indeed, Campbell points out that a considerable number of these words is not easily recognisable, even to Scottish people, because of their spelling. For instance, he lists the Scots “chiel” printed as “childe,” “meickle” for “muckle,” “owre” (too much) as “over,” or “coorse” as “coarse.” Campbell mentions that “quean” is spelt by Gibbon as “queen” but the present author has not been able to find any instances of this in the text.¹⁷⁴ Instead, Gibbon uses the most common spelling, “quean,” throughout. Another instance is the word “gomerel,” spelt by Gibbon as “gomeril,” which the DSL lists as a possible alternative spelling. The verb “to chave” is usually spelt “chauve,” but it seems that both are used frequently. The adjective “drooked” is a variant of “drouked,” of which “drookit” is evidently a modern version (see SCOTS corpus). Yet, many of the specifically Scots words like “gowk,” “limmer,” “kye,” “spleiter,” “to thole,” “to glower,” or “neuk” are spelt in common ways by Gibbon (see DSL) and the claim that Gibbon’s spelling is archaic only seems to apply to a limited number of instances. In general, however, Campbell comments that readers have no difficulty understanding the Scots words. Yet, the resulting style cannot, in his view, be termed Scots but a style that pragmatically aims to do away with either

¹⁷³ Corbett, “Ecstasy” 91. Even though it has to be made clear that there is, indeed, no standard to compare Gibbon’s spelling with. However, Gibbon’s spelling has been described by critics such as Campbell and Corbett as deviating from the norm.

¹⁷⁴ Campbell, “Style” 275.

glossary or explanation: “the reader apprehends a subconscious level while reading, and incorporates either meaning or guess as part of the larger meaning of the paragraph” (Campbell, “Style” 275). It has been argued that these nuances of meaning subconsciously convey a feeling of community warmth as well as of sharing Gibbon’s emotional involvement with the story.¹⁷⁵

Consequently, Gibbon’s style is not to be understood as the representation of actual spoken Scots but rather as a literary construction of Scottish speech in line with his aim of making the narrative accessible to international readers,¹⁷⁶ as well as creating a feeling of “Scottishness.” As Blamires points out, the *Quair’s* “lilting idiom” authenticises the presentation of peasant life without patronising tendencies, which strongly roots the narrative in the Scottish earth (133). Roskies comments on the highly stylised nature of Gibbon’s prose, which enhances the intended sensuous vernacularity rather than detracting from it.¹⁷⁷ Zagratzki also stresses that Gibbon knowingly deployed Scots idiom in order to create the perception of authenticity, especially by using everyday Scots words in his rendition of orality.¹⁷⁸

The makeup of the *Quair’s* style is fluid in terms of the voice which is heard at any given point.¹⁷⁹ Thus, even though most voices use Scots idiom, the extent of the use of Scots as opposed to English is conditioned by the speaker. For instance, Chris’s voice oscillates between Scots and English. Which language is used generally depends on the current situation she is in, school being associated with English and the home with Scots. When moving to an urban and more diverse environment, English takes precedence over Scots. Her son Ewan, in contrast, thinks of Scots as “rubbish” (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 110) and almost exclusively speaks (and thinks) in English. Yet, he reverts to Scots in emotional situations.¹⁸⁰

Moreover, the use of Scots is contingent on social class. As Zagratzki points out, Gibbon’s peasants tend to speak Scots, while the gentry prefers to speak English.¹⁸¹ The linguistic distinction of class is mentioned by Chris, when she muses that if she spoke Scots, people would think “*Isn’t that a common-like bitch at the Manse?*” and if she spoke English “the speak would spread round the minister’s wife was putting on airs”

¹⁷⁵ Campbell, “Style” 276.

¹⁷⁶ Corbett, “Ecstasy” 91.

¹⁷⁷ Roskies 146.

¹⁷⁸ Zagratzki, *Tendenzen* 223, 224.

¹⁷⁹ For a more in-depth analysis of the different voices see section 5 of the present thesis (p. 88 ff.).

¹⁸⁰ Ortega 150.

¹⁸¹ Zagratzki, *Tendenzen* 223. Moreover, Ortega (150) and Kerrigan (184) mention the fact that the use of English is tied to class distinctions.

(Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 15, italics his). In an episode in which Chris is reminded of the scholars in her former school at Stonehaven, she observes that it is “funny how they tried to speak English one to the other, looking sideways as they cried the words to see if folk thought them gentry. Had Marget and she been daft as that?” (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 121). Accordingly, characters who speak English are seen as snobbish by the other characters and the use of English to appear socially superior is seen as “daft.” However, there is also an element of admiration of those characters who use English, as they are perceived as “putting on airs” (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 15), which implies a certain respect.¹⁸² The density of Scots idiom is therefore contingent on the situation, the social class of the speaker, as well as on the impression they would like to make on others.¹⁸³

Furthermore, the differentiation of voices and their relative density of Scots items fulfils the important function of providing differentiation between Scotland and England, and by implication between “home” and “the world,” as well as between a rural and an industrial, urban lifestyle. Chris thinks that “English words can’t say anything worth saying” (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 32) but other characters are of the opinion that in order to succeed in the world, one needs to speak English.¹⁸⁴ On several occasions the characters of the *Quair* caricature the English language by mispronouncing English words, Gibbon giving a semi-phonological transcription of the pronunciation. For instance, the word “fiancé” is used instead of the native “lass” but pronounced “feeungsay” (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 60) to comic effect. If this element is seen in regionalist terms, the treatment of the tensions between English and Scots becomes a central factor in the regionalist differentiation of England, the “centre,” and Scotland, the “periphery.” It could be argued that Gibbon’s use of Scots forms, in combination with the distinction from England, is intended to be a powerful statement against the linguistic and cultural hegemony of England and thus becomes part of national discourse.¹⁸⁵ This becomes even more pronounced when English features increasingly appear in *Cloud Howe* and *Grey Granite*, taking over much of the space of the voices which had used Scots. As Ewan’s consciousness grows more central to the novels’ themes and the urban, capitalist population uses ever fewer Scots elements, it

¹⁸² Ortega 151.

¹⁸³ Wittig also notes this transitoriness and sees in it a reason for much negative criticism directed at Gibbon. Yet, he points out that the varying degrees of English influence on the *Quair*’s style are native to Scots speakers since they are taught in schools to speak a Scots modified by English (cf. 333).

¹⁸⁴ Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 156.

¹⁸⁵ This element, however, can also be seen in a different way. By focusing on Scotland and Scots, Gibbon inverts this pattern by positioning his native country and his native language in the centre of the *Quair*.

could be expected that the place Scots occupied in *Sunset Song* would be entirely claimed by English. However, this development is not completed and the new community voice of the workers rediscovers Scots words. Thus, as Craig points out, the *Quair* undermines the position of Standard English in favour of Scots.¹⁸⁶ Moreover, by doing this, Gibbon implicitly resists the capitalist forces which bring about the “degradation” of humanity as seen in Duncairn’s industrial way of life.¹⁸⁷

Gibbon consciously decided to create the *Quair*’s lexical makeup in a way that ensures accessibility not only to readers who are familiar with Scots, but also to those who might not be. His aim in making the book universally accessible, in accordance with his cosmopolitan views and hopes for a future without nation, national languages, or class, is to speak to international audiences about basic human issues like community, equality, or the socio-political implications of industrialisation. Significantly, the Scots words Gibbon uses evoke a certain feeling of “Scottishness,” that is, national representation, from the reader. In the case of the Scots reader, this feeling is retrieved from memory and, in the case of the international reader, it is created “from an imagined experience skilfully constructed by the author from apparently random elements” (Campbell, *Gibbon* 54). Thus, the lexical manipulation of the *Quair*’s style gives readers from Scotland, but also those from other nations, images of the local, at the same time as representing the national, while retaining universal intelligibility of style and thematic appeal.

Several critics claim to find a falling-off in the general quality of the *Quair*’s prose style. Young, for instance, finds the prose of the later works to be less authentic, hasty, and journalistic and attributes this to a lack of involvement on Gibbon’s part with the environment (*Beyond* 105).¹⁸⁸ Yet, an analysis of the *Quair*’s style should not merely consider changes as a flaw but look at potential reasons for such alterations. Campbell sees a possible function of the “systematic dismantling of [*Sunset Song*’s] stylistic success in the later parts of *A Scots Quair*” (Campbell, “Style” 286) as a trick to use the reader’s involvement when depicting the end of the peasant lifestyle and the beginning of industrial life. Therefore, the sacrifice of intimacy, which is reflected in the “thinning” prose approaching “a neutral form” in *Grey Granite*, is based on Gibbon’s intention (ibid. 278). In *Cloud Howe*, the spoken Scots becomes more and

¹⁸⁶ Craig, *Modern* 96.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ortega adds Jack Lindsay, Ivor Brown, Hugh MacDiarmid, Ian Milner, Kurt Wittig, and Jack Mitchell to the list of critics who have commented on a decline in prose quality (cf. 149).

more interspersed with English, which also affects Chris's voice, while Ewan, whose thoughts and words are almost exclusively English, becomes a major character in the novel.¹⁸⁹ In *Grey Granite*, Ortega argues, Gibbon adapted his linguistic style to fit the new environment of the industrial city, which implies adopting the rhythm of the machine as a driving force, as well as the style arguably becoming more monotonous, mechanical, and repetitive.¹⁹⁰ Moreover, *Grey Granite's* style becomes more influenced by Gibbon's own views, which surface more and more in the novel's description of working class life. As Gifford, Dunnigan, and MacGillivray add, this very visible foregrounding of the author's voice is a modernist critique of narrative conventions like neutrality and the detachment of authorial tone.¹⁹¹

Thus, detecting linguistic or compositional flaws in the later parts of the trilogy would fail to recognise Gibbon's intention in adapting his prose style. Indeed, the changed thematic focus demands an adaptation of the *Quair's* language to the new vernacular used in the city as well as to the working class's forms of expression like the political speech, the pamphlet, or the trade-union debate.¹⁹² Significantly, *Grey Granite's* character's speech is more and more influenced by English, especially through the prominence of Ewan's voice. Campbell points out that the various degrees of uneasiness with English, which is partly conditioned by a character's generation, play an important role in the novel's characterisation.¹⁹³ The use of English by other characters is frequently portrayed as comic, as in John Cushnie's "feeungsay," and "over-genteel" characters who try to abandon their native language in favour of English are frequently treated with sarcasm in the narrative. Indeed, Gibbon's view of the declining use of Scots is ambivalent, since he portrays its deterioration with regret but also seems to accept it as necessary for progress.¹⁹⁴

3.1.2. Syntax

The *Quair* uses several syntactic features which help to "mould" the English language into the cadences of Scots.¹⁹⁵ The effect of this technique is the perception of the *Quair's* style as a kind of hybrid form between English and Scots. Consequently, the

¹⁸⁹ Campbell, "Style" 276-77.

¹⁹⁰ Ortega 154.

¹⁹¹ Gifford, Dunnigan, and MacGillivray 589-90.

¹⁹² Ortega 156.

¹⁹³ Campbell, "Style" 279.

¹⁹⁴ Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 151.

¹⁹⁵ Today, critics subscribe to the view that there is a continuum between English and Scots, along which any text can move freely (see for instance McClure, *Scots* 174, Aitken's model (1984) reprinted in Johnston 110 ff.)

reader who is familiar with Scots can almost *hear* authentic Scots and the reader unfamiliar with the language *imagines* hearing it.¹⁹⁶ Interestingly, Campbell also points out that when watching the television adaptation of *Sunset Song*¹⁹⁷ and hearing the prose spoken, there is a point at which both the reader from the Mearns and the reader from other parts of Scotland realise that this is not, in fact, the way that Mearns people or Scots – whether in a rural or an urban environment – talk. Indeed, he argues, only a minority of Scots would use the “artificial” word-order that Gibbon uses in their everyday speech, even while they are familiar with such forms.¹⁹⁸

A main component in the melange of English and Scots and its syntactical manifestations is the impact of colloquiality, which surfaces by way of features found in spoken language. Both Ortega and Roskies provide extensive lists of these elements, naming ellipses, assonance, alliteration, colloquial repetition, hesitations, verbal omissions, and grammatical “inconsistencies.”¹⁹⁹ Most importantly, the style used echoes the rhythms of spoken speech and thus creates a strong impression of authenticity.²⁰⁰ For instance, the following excerpt displays several of these features:

Then Chris took a keek from one window and saw him again: he was raking about in the basket she’d thrown at his head, he made the parcels dirl on the road till he found a great bar of soap, and then he began to eat that, *feuch!* laughing and yammering all to himself, and running back to throw himself against the door of Pooty’s again, the foam burst yellow through the beard of him as he still *ate and ate* at the soap. But he soon grew thirsty and went down to the burn, Pooty and Chris stood watching him, and *then it was that Cuddiestoun himself came ben the road*. He sighted Andy *and* cried out to him, *and* Andy leapt the burn *and* was off, *and* behind him went Munro clatter-clang, *and* out of sight they vanished down the road to Bridge End. Chris unbarred the door in spite of Pooty’s stutterings and went and repacked the bit basket, and everything was there except the soap; and that was down poor Andy’s throat. (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 51-2, italics mine)

This passage has strong oral elements such as the repeated conjunction “and” and using structures like “then it was that Cuddiestoun himself came ben the road” which contains an it-cleft. There is some repetition (for instance “ate and ate”) and an anapaestic pattern might be detected in sequences like “Chris took a keek from one window and saw him again,” but also alliteration (“bit basket”) and even a near rhyme (“soap”-“throat”). The insertion of the exclamation “feuch!” is another strong feature of orality. Such asides

¹⁹⁶ Campbell, “Style” 273.

¹⁹⁷ The television adaptation was first broadcast by the BBC in 1971 and was very successful.

¹⁹⁸ Campbell, “Style” 274.

¹⁹⁹ Ortega 150, Roskies 147.

²⁰⁰ Johnson 127.

and exclamations strengthen the impression of spoken language dramatising key scenes.²⁰¹ Ortega comments that most critics agree that the *Quair* and especially *Sunset Song* are among the most oral novels ever produced.²⁰² Also Roskies points out that the *Quair's* prose lends itself to oral recitation. In accordance with the strong oral element, the syntactical unit found most often is not governed by grammatical sense, as found in conventions of written language, but by the breath of the speaker. The elements of storytelling and asides recur frequently, interspersed with laughter as if being told by the fireside.²⁰³

As several critics point out, Gibbon repeatedly uses inverted sentences and run-on sentences. Campbell gives phrases like “a Norman childe, Gospatrick de Gondeshil” or “such-like beasts” (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 1) as examples of the specifically Scots-sounding rhythms and cadences of spoken Scots as found in the *Quair*.²⁰⁴ The following passage illustrates some of these elements:

Mistress Gordon was a Stonehaven woman [...] She was a meikle sow of a woman, but aye well-dressed, and with eyes like the eyes of a fish, *fair cod-like they were*, and she tried to speak English and to make her two bit daughters, Nellie and Maggie Jean, *them that went to Stonehaven Academy*, speak English as well. And *God!* they made a right muck of it [...] (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 20, italics mine)

This example shows four of the elements of cadence which are noteworthy. First, the construction “fair cod-like they were” is a fronting of the adjective. Second, “them that went to Stonehaven Academy” inserts extra information which clearly draws on previous shared knowledge of speaker and addressee. Third, the insertion of “God!” is a colloquial element which represents a speech act. Fourth, the frequent use of “and” to connect phrases again echoes the structures of spoken language.

Ortega comments on the frequent use of alliteration and rhythmic anapaestic prose which, to him, reflects traces of the past that survives, but also echoes the rhythms of living and working.²⁰⁵ Corbett introduces the claim that anapaestic rhythm is used to mark the *Quair's* prose as decidedly “un-English,” causing the reader to interpret it as “Scots.” In line with the desired distinction between English and Scots and the ensuing interpretational implications, the *Quair's* English is arguably differentiated from Scots by using iambic metre. However, Corbett notes that this distinction is not always clear-

²⁰¹ Corbett, “Ecstasy” 92.

²⁰² Ortega 150.

²⁰³ Roskies 148, 150.

²⁰⁴ Campbell, “Style” 274.

²⁰⁵ Ortega 152.

cut, but he can detect certain passages which are marked with anapaestic rhythm and do sound “Scottish” (see above).²⁰⁶ However, David Hewitt disagrees, stating that he detects no Scots cadences in the *Quair*’s style but accedes that it is still successful in suggesting authenticity (“View” par. 12). The perception of readers, therefore, suggests that the *Quair*’s syntactical features are received as authentically Scottish thus, pointing towards national representation.

3.2. Reception

As the above considerations illustrate, the reception of the *Quair*’s language is central to an analysis of elements of the regional, the national, and the universal, since the readers’ interpretation might deviate from the writer’s intentions. Whittington argues that any reading of the *Quair* as regionalist must be based on the use of dialect.²⁰⁷ The implication is that, since regionalist texts frequently aim to portray authentic dialects, the *Quair*’s language is an example of authentic Mearns speech. Indeed, in the linguistic style of the trilogy critics mainly applauded its authenticity of speech. The reviewer of the *Modern Scot* noted that Gibbon’s dialogue “recaptures admirably the clipped, racy speech of the Mearns” (qtd. Johnson 155). Gibbon’s patterning of the *Quair*’s prose style was also mentioned positively by reviewer Peter Monro Jack in the *New York Times Book Review* who felt that in *Sunset Song* the village itself is speaking to him directly. Indeed, he commented that he could almost hear the tone of the Scottish farmer’s voice – proof of the positive reception of the *Quair*’s naturalism and regionalist verisimilitude. Significantly, Johnson adds, such positive reactions to the authenticity of the *Quair*’s language were not limited to professional reviewers, but also extended towards the larger reading public and fellow writers who sent appreciative notes.²⁰⁸

Indeed, the *Quair*, and especially *Sunset Song*, were regularly described as fine examples of verisimilitude and Johnson points out that Gibbon’s skill in representing the language of the Mearns was applauded by most critics.²⁰⁹ Wade, for instance, refers to Gibbon in his list of writers who use language to “ultimately represen[t] a specific place and people” (152) and comments on the incorporation of non-standard English

²⁰⁶ Corbett, “Ecstasy” 93.

²⁰⁷ Whittington 79.

²⁰⁸ Qtd. Johnson 15.

²⁰⁹ Johnson 155.

elements into the narrative voice as a vital ingredient for a successful regional novel.²¹⁰ Yet, as scholars have argued, this perception of authenticity is based on Gibbon's linguistic tricks, since the *Quair's* language is clearly not Doric, the authentic language of the Mearns people, but a kind of General Scots with lexical items taken from different diachronic and synchronic varieties. Moreover, Hewitt mentions that readers interpreted "the land" as a major theme and "the Doric" as the medium of the *Quair*. He deconstructs this notion and invalidates both these claims,²¹¹ but the general perception of these elements remains and together, Hewitt explains, they mirror the "identifying image of North-east Scotland," a stereotypical image of the region which is "more powerful than the facts" ("North-East" 204). Yet, the readers' perception remains and places the *Quair* into a regionalist context.

One of the astounding achievements of Gibbon's prose style is the fact that the *Quair* is perceived differently by different readers. To the reader unfamiliar with Scots, the *Quair's* style appears to consist of English prose with a few interspersed lexical items of Scots. Even though they might initially encounter difficulties, they will probably soon lose the feeling of reading something alien.²¹² Consequently, while the text remains accessible for non-native speakers of Scots, it attempts to create the perception that it is, in fact, specifically Scottish. As Campbell points out in relation to *Sunset Song*, Gibbon tries to evoke a "Scottish response" even from the non-Scottish reader by the perceived authenticity and Scottishness of its speech.²¹³ To the non-Scots-speaker, therefore, the *Quair's* language appears to reflect national culture linguistically.

Readers of the *Quair* who are familiar with Scots would largely perceive its style as Scots. The reason for this is the fact that the lexical makeup of the trilogy displays some specifically Scots elements and a large number of elements which are shared between English and Scots. Accordingly, a reader familiar with Scots might interpret them as Scots rather than English. As Kay points out, the novels' style can be interpreted as braided Scots simply by reading the English prose with Scots pronunciation.²¹⁴ Zagratzki argues that the vivid language of *Sunset Song* and *Cloud Howe* is directly linked to the peasant population, the local colour element created by

²¹⁰ Wade 18.

²¹¹ The arguments that point against the land as a theme and the Doric as a medium have already been discussed.

²¹² Campbell, *Gibbon* 89.

²¹³ *Ibid.* 85-6.

²¹⁴ Kay 76.

the style's perceived authenticity adding to the historical dimension of the trilogy.²¹⁵ Most critics agree that Gibbon has achieved a style perceived by speakers of Scots as typically Scots, even though the style is not a variety found in reality. Accordingly, while readers from the North-East of Scotland largely interpret the trilogy to represent their region, at the same time they perceive it to reflect Scottish life in general, a view confirmed by McClure's reading of the trilogy.²¹⁶

Yet, the anonymous reviewer of *The Fife Herald and Journal* criticised the fact that Gibbon did not use Scots words everywhere possible, claiming that Gibbon did not know Scots, at all.²¹⁷ Had the reviewer considered Gibbon's note preceding *Sunset Song* (quoted p. 33), however, this misunderstanding might not have occurred, since it made clear that the author was not trying to use as many lexical items from Scots as possible.²¹⁸ Indeed, referring to Gibbon's note preceding *Sunset Song*, Crawford points out that Gibbon implicitly positions the book as both a national and a regional novel by using Scots words which are meant to be regional and national signifiers at the same time.²¹⁹ Consequently, wide-spread accessibility is retained and a particularly "national" feeling is channelled through the *Quair's* style.²²⁰ Crawford also underlines the fact that the lexical features used in the trilogy strengthen the conviction of native speakers of Scots "that they are participating in a life both familiar and national" (Introduction *Sunset Song* xi). Therefore, a feeling of national, in addition to regional, representation is created. This element is aided by Gibbon's choice of a relatively large number of lexical items of general Scots which could be understood by any Scottish reader, while vocabulary from minority registers is ruled out. Since language is regularly incorporated in a sense of national identity,²²¹ Gibbon's use of Scots has often been interpreted as perpetuating a nationalist opposition towards England,²²² an interpretation many regional novels are subjected to.²²³ Both Zenzinger and Corbett testify to the central function of the Scottish vernacular in the discourse of Scottishness and national literature²²⁴ and Kerrigan points out that language is an important way of expressing national identity which meets the "basic psychic needs" of familiarity and security,

²¹⁵ Zagratzki, *Tendenzen* 256.

²¹⁶ McClure, Interview.

²¹⁷ Cf. anonymous Review of *Sunset Song* in *The Fife Herald and Journal*, qtd. Johnson 54.

²¹⁸ Gibbon also points out this fact in his reply to this review (cf. Gibbon Author's Reply qtd. Johnson 55).

²¹⁹ Crawford, "View" 121.

²²⁰ Campbell, *Gibbon* 54.

²²¹ Leerssen, "Character "Moral"" in Beller and Leerssen 286.

²²² Cf. the centre-periphery opposition mentioned before.

²²³ Snell, "Regional" 45.

²²⁴ Corbett, *Language* 9; Zenzinger 145.

continuity, and a sense of belonging (185). Thus, language fulfils a psychological role in national identity building.²²⁵ Consequently, for people from Scotland Gibbon's use of language might trigger a feeling of belonging to the nation.²²⁶

3.3. Concluding Comments

The analysis of the linguistic style of Gibbon's trilogy offers insights into questions of regional, national, and universal representation. Gibbon's choice of style is innovative and "experimental" in its incorporation of Scots into English prose, extending its use not only to direct speech but also to the main narrative.²²⁷ As Young points out, Gibbon did not want to use MacDiarmid's synthetic Scots as a basis of prose, and using the Doric of the North-East would have made the trilogy just another regional novel, which was clearly far from Gibbon's intentions.²²⁸ Also employing Lallans, which was used by the Kailyard school and thus associated with "saccharine chlichès (sic)" (Roskies 144) and a nostalgic yearning for an old order of respectable parishes, was not an option for Gibbon. Indeed, as Roskies points out, Gibbon's aim was to revive the "literary ambience hitherto fixated upon stereotypes of national speech and national character" (145) by renewing contact with spoken idiom, thus actively working against national stereotypes. Yet, Gibbon was aware of the importance of English in a modernised world²²⁹ and of the necessity to do away, ultimately, with national languages. Consequently, he attempted a combination of English and Scots, making a virtue of the necessity of Scottish writers to "foreignise" English.²³⁰ An important influence on Gibbon's style in his Scottish prose was F.S. Delmer's translation of the German novel *Jorn Uhl* by Gustav Frenssen, in which Delmer used Scots expressions to reflect the Low German elements of the novel in order to "suggest the provincial and rustic atmosphere of the story" (qtd. Young, *Beyond* 84) and Young argues that *Sunset Song*'s style is doing something very similar. Moreover, as Gibbon's essays suggest, he was well aware that this linguistic experiment would call attention to his style.²³¹

A regionalist reading of the trilogy is supported by the distinction between centre and periphery frequently found in regional novels. Even though in the *Quair* there are few instances in which the Mearns are distinguished linguistically from other

²²⁵ Kerrigan 185.

²²⁶ Campbell, *Gibbon* 86.

²²⁷ Johnson 131.

²²⁸ Young, *Beyond* 82.

²²⁹ Johnson 143.

²³⁰ Corbett, "Ecstasy" 90.

²³¹ Gibbon in *Scottish Scene* (Gibbon and MacDiarmid) qtd. Trengove 47.

regions, such passages can be detected in the trilogy, for instance in the opposition between the Mearns and the centre Stonehaven or the region of the Highlands of Scotland. Inhabitants of both of these regions are portrayed as speaking differently from the Mearns people.²³² The opposition between Scots and English, however, is significantly more pronounced, which points primarily towards a distinction between Scotland and England. Understood in regionalist terms, however, this opposition is between Scotland, the “periphery,” and England, “the centre,” positioning Scotland as a region of Great Britain. An interpretation of the *Quair* as regionalist, therefore, is largely based on the reception of the text as portraying authentic speech due to Gibbon’s attempted realism and verisimilitude in dialogue as well as its reception as such. Moreover, an emphasis on the distinction between periphery and centre (both between the Mearns and other regions as well as between Scotland and England) utilises regionalist discourses of power.

Even though the *Quair*’s language has been interpreted to perpetuate nationalistic views, Gibbon’s intention in using Scots was clearly far from suggesting a nationalistic image and his agenda must not be misunderstood as (culturally) nationalistic.²³³ Gibbon’s work has been misinterpreted in nationalist terms. Yet, contrary to the writers of the Scottish Renaissance, he embraced the idea of a cosmopolitan language. Gibbon created a linguistic code that would enable both Scottish and non-Scottish readers to experience the familiarity and continuity of the language. Most importantly, however, Gibbon’s aim of presenting political and social issues which, in his diffusionist view, applied to humankind in general, was aided by his universally understandable style. Malcolm provides further explanation for Gibbon’s aim of finding a universally intelligible prose style that retained its Scottish flavour, commenting that he saw the style of the *Quair* as an experiment to find a cosmopolitan language, a universal hybrid which incorporates features of individual tongues from all over the world.²³⁴ The combination of the local form, Scots, with the universal form, English, therefore creates a hybrid language representing both local and universal issues. Craig points out that this pattern of local and universal representation had previously been used by Robert Burns in his poetry, modulating between Scots and English. In Burns, the vernacular narrator was regularly open to evaluation by a “more enlightened” reader through the language

²³² Cf. also Whittington 79.

²³³ Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 14.

²³⁴ *Ibid.* 14.

of English (“Scotland” 228, 226).²³⁵ Gibbon’s style, however, is not so much a modulation between Scots and English but an integrated combination. Furthermore, the vernacular speaker of the *Quair* is regularly the main character, with whom the reader identifies. The situation, therefore, is reversed and in the *Quair* the Scots-speaking characters are evaluated more positively than the English-speaking ones.

Several critics have commented on the changes in the *Quair*’s style, some interpreting them as mimetically induced and some as manifestations of hasty composition and a lack of involvement with the subject. The developments in the trilogy, with the Scots lexis moving away from rural towards urban elements, with which Chris is unfamiliar, is mimetic of the change in setting and ideological theme of the novels. However, the style of *Grey Granite*, and especially the urban vocabulary, achieve universality by incorporating items that connect Duncairn’s working class with workers all over Europe. Ultimately, as Sassi points out, Gibbon’s aim in creating his prose style was to find a new literary language as a kind of “vernacular cosmopolitanism” which should reflect his sense of belonging. Most importantly, the goal was to consolidate the desire to retain one’s own “provincial” standpoint and the hope to become a citizen of the global Cosmopolis.²³⁶ Additionally, as Riach mentions, Gibbon’s style refrains from engaging in too much verisimilitude in favour of a compromise that would represent his native speech and remain comprehensible for an international readership. Accordingly, the trilogy’s style aims at making international readers comprehend the local and the universal in Gibbon’s characters.²³⁷ Thus, the *Quair*’s regional, national, and universal elements have to be seen in the context of Gibbon’s socio-political agendas, but also of the trilogy’s reception, which might have emphasised elements according to certain viewpoints that the writer might not have intended.

²³⁵ This pattern is, however, dependent on the topic treated in Burns’s poems.

²³⁶ Sassi 114.

²³⁷ Riach 200.

4. Characterisation

The present section investigates Gibbon's characterisation of the *Quair's* protagonist and its communities.²³⁸ As a preliminary, a summary of some of the most significant stereotypes of Scottishness and their possible origins will be given.²³⁹ Subsequently, the presentation of characters in the novel will be analysed, placing them in the context of imagological description as outlined in section two of the present study. An analysis of the characters' portrayal will shed light on the question whether they are individualised characters or rather representatives of certain social groups like the working-class inhabitants of Duncairn, who are arguably defined mainly by stereotypes and clichés.

Characters who are presented in a differentiated way can largely be found in the *Quair's* rural communities, a fact that has prompted critics and readers alike to interpret the trilogy, and especially *Sunset Song* when it appeared, as a regionalist text. Indeed, the verisimilitude apparent in the depiction of character, setting, and custom points towards a possible reading as regionalist. Moreover, the nostalgia shining through Gibbon's portrayal of rural Kinraddie is in line with the themes of waning communities or declining community quality, the gradual loss of tradition and custom, as well as the almost threatening opposition between the region, the "periphery," and the "centre," which is perceived as more powerful in economic and cultural terms.

However, characters who are otherwise highly faceted and individualised might, at the same time, be portrayed or perceived as representatives of certain groups. The trilogy's protagonist has, time and again, been interpreted as embodying Scotland herself, which led critics and readers at large to treat her story as an allegory of the nation's state and development. Ewan senior and junior might, apart from their individual traits, be perceived as a stereotypical Highlander (in Ewan senior's case) or the prototypical communist leader (in Ewan junior's case). Yet, as the trilogy progresses, the characterisation of minor figures increasingly seems to rely on typicalities and stereotypes. While certain minor characters from the Kinraddie community receive individual traits, the people of Segget are divided into groups like the spinners, and therefore mostly appear as representatives of those groups. The

²³⁸ An analysis of the characterisation of other characters such as Ewan junior would shed light on different facets of Gibbon's treatment of character. Unfortunately, the limited scope of the present study does not permit such an endeavour and a focus on Chris and a small selection of other characters seems to be called for.

²³⁹ An exhaustive analysis of such stereotypes and their origins would exceed the scope of the present study and has to be left for further investigation in the future.

workers of Duncairn are “faceless,”²⁴⁰ homogenised members of a group, and are often seen as replaceable entities with interchangeable names.²⁴¹

The significance of the representation of characters lies in the reader’s ensuing perception and its implications. As Leerssen points out, characters who conform to stereotypes might still be interpreted as realistic by readers.²⁴² Therefore, the representation of minor characters, to which comparatively little space is given in most texts, might rely on commonly known clichés to suggest character traits using little narrative time. Douglas Young subscribes to this view in relation to Gibbon’s work, pointing out that the *Quair* was produced hastily and thus uses character types frequently.²⁴³ An analysis of the depiction of characters, casting Gibbon’s trilogy into the light of individualised or typical characterisation, will reveal elements of the regional, national, and universal in the *Quair*’s characterisation.

4.1. Scottish Stereotypes

The Scots are associated with golf, whisky, haggis, thriftiness, caber-tossing, the kilt and the bagpipes, as well as heroic struggles in the past captured Hollywood-style in Mel Gibson’s portrayal of William Wallace. (Pope 2)

The above statement summarises the most common stereotypes of Scottishness found today.²⁴⁴ As the study of imagology has shown, the earliest manifestations of national stereotypes or clichés, also in a written form, frequently date back to antiquity.²⁴⁵ Indeed, also in the case of Scotland, stereotyped notions can be traced far back. Some of the earliest texts referring to such notions are from the first century BC. For instance, Caesar’s *De Bello Gallico*, which was circulated c. 50-40 BC, describes the tribes of the Gauls, who are seen by historians as ancestors of Scots.²⁴⁶ Tacitus’s *Agricola*, dating from the first century AD (c. 98), relates the meeting of the peoples native to Britain and the Roman invaders. The text is a biography of the author’s father-in-law, Gnaeus Julius Agricola, who was sent to Caledonia during a Roman invasion starting in 77 AD.

²⁴⁰ Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 154.

²⁴¹ Gibbon, *Grey Granite* 186.

²⁴² Leerssen, “Mimesis” 169.

²⁴³ Young Interview.

²⁴⁴ See also Riach who comments that images like “tartan, haggis, whisky, heather, wild mountain scenery and bad weather” are reliably associated with Scotland (239).

²⁴⁵ Zacharasiewicz, “National Stereotypes” 85.

²⁴⁶ See, for instance, the English translation on Project Gutenberg at <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/10657>.

It includes information about the peoples the invaders met in Britain,²⁴⁷ remarking about the appearance of the Caledonians that they have red hair and large limbs, which Tacitus attributes to their Germanic origins and to climatic factors.²⁴⁸ The main focus in Tacitus's description, however, is on the war-related aspects of the Caledonians. He claims that they exhibit a pronounced boldness in challenging danger but timidity in facing it.²⁴⁹ Moreover, he quotes a speech which was said to have been given by Galgacus, a Caledonian chieftain,²⁵⁰ who spurred on his troops at the eve of the battle at Mons Graupius (c. 83 or 84 AD) by praising them as heroic, "fresh and unconquered people" (Tacitus par. 31). The speech stresses the concept of freedom he saw as inherent in the Scottish mindset, describing slavery as "a thing unknown" (ibid. par. 30). Thus, as Riach points out, the speech affirms individual freedom, social liberty and national self-determination.²⁵¹ Watson notes that Tacitus was only rediscovered in the late 15th century, but the "Scottish obsession with freedom" seems to have been born during these struggles and documented in Tacitus's text (Watson, F. 44). These values later became attributed to Scottish people as a whole and subsequently found a manifestation in Robert Burns's song "Scots wha hae" (233),²⁵² which is allegedly based on a speech given by William Wallace at the wake of the battle of Bannockburn in 1314, in which Scotland fought back the English army under King Edward II.²⁵³ This characterisation of Scots as freedom-loving but unwavering warriors, which appears already in *Agricola*, was later echoed in descriptions of the Jacobite risings (1715-1745) and culminated in the creation of the stereotype of the physically strong and proud Highland warrior.²⁵⁴ For instance, in the very popular 18th century *Encyclopédie* by Diderot and D'Alembert, the proverbial adjectives for various nations are presented, including "proud as a Scotsman."²⁵⁵

²⁴⁷ It could be argued that much of the ethnographic information that appears in *Agricola* might be derived from the previously published descriptions of the Gauls in Julius Caesar's *De Bello Gallico* (c. 50-40 BC).

²⁴⁸ Tacitus par. 11.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ As Riach mentions, this speech is what Tacitus imagined it to have been, since it betrays a distinctly Roman worldview (Riach 232).

²⁵¹ Riach 86.

²⁵² The first line in English is "Scots who have with Wallace bled."

²⁵³ Harvie, *Scotland* 25.

²⁵⁴ Pittock 15.

²⁵⁵ "Nation." The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d'Alembert Collaborative Translation Project. Translated by Sujaya Dhanvantari. Ann Arbor: Scholarly Publishing Office of the University of Michigan Library, 2005. 01 Jan. 2010. <<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0000.095>>. Trans. of "Nation," *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, vol. 11. Paris, 1765.

A further significant manifestation of Scottish national sentiment was the Declaration of Arbroath (1320).²⁵⁶ Faced with an invasion by King Edward I and England's forces, a group of Scottish chiefs and noblemen composed and signed a letter to the pope of the time, John XXII, in which they affirmed the independent status of Scotland as a kingdom, asking for the pope's approval of the nation's sovereignty. The declaration stresses the peaceful nature of Scottish national character but also the readiness to fight against invaders. Its most ringing statement expresses the nation's values, as perceived by contemporary leaders, very directly: "We fight not for glory nor for wealth nor honours: but only and alone we fight for FREEDOM, which no good man surrenders but with his life" (qtd. Riach 233, emphasis theirs). The Declaration of Arbroath, therefore, is one of the earliest documents in which freedom and the value of life are given a central position in the Scottish mindset.²⁵⁷ Moreover, Riach points out, the declaration and its values became the basis of Enlightenment views in the 18th century, which were disseminated throughout the world by Scotsmen who were part of British imperialist endeavours.²⁵⁸

In the 15th century another topos of Scottishness, that of the antagonism of Scotland and England, appeared in a written form. The future pope Pius II visited Scotland in 1435 and noted that "the Scots liked nothing better than to hear abuse of the English" (qtd. Pittock 37). As Pittock points out, such an opposition to the powerful neighbour strengthens the national cohesiveness by evoking solidarity against England.²⁵⁹ Indeed, this fact has found various manifestations over time. For instance, practices such as dressing up in tartan for football matches against England are mentioned,²⁶⁰ and McCrone, Morris, and Keily note that even stereotypical icons of Scottishness such as Bonnie Prince Charlie or Mary Queen of Scots, embodiments of Scottish nobility, might be used as national markers in opposition to England.²⁶¹ Even today, very few positive attributes of Englishness are contrasted with an image of the English as arrogant, snobbish, insular, and reserved.²⁶² Many historians and critics find the reason for this antagonism in the history of Scotland's relationship with England,

²⁵⁶ Arbroath lies in the Lowlands of Scotland near the east coast. The full text of the English translation of the Declaration of Arbroath is available at <http://www.constitution.org/scot/arbroath.htm>.

²⁵⁷ Riach 84.

²⁵⁸ Pittock 28.

²⁵⁹ Ibid. 37.

²⁶⁰ Corbett *Language*, 189.

²⁶¹ McCrone, Morris, and Keily 7.

²⁶² Lindsay 51. The survey Lindsay refers to was taken in 1996.

which is seen as an overpowering and colonising force²⁶³ due to events like the repeated invasion of Scotland by English troops, the union of the nations and the traumatic Highland Clearances. Michael Hechter argues that the “Celtic” areas of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland were in fact colonised by England, being dominated and exploited by London.²⁶⁴ Significantly, it was the Englishman William Shakespeare who provided another literary – and largely negative – manifestation of Scottish stereotypes in his *Henry V* (1600). The two Scottish characters Douglas and Jamy use highly dialectical and idiosyncratic language, their speech bordering on caricature. Indeed, as Riach points out, Shakespeare’s characterisation has been used as a model for iconographies and exaggerated descriptions of Scots ever since.²⁶⁵ The image of bravery and valour, however, is also reflected in Jamy, who is “brave, ready with argument and packed with knowledge of old wars and classic strategies” (Riach 33).

Religion, and especially the Scottish Church (the Kirk) have played an important part in the auto-image of Scots. As Pope notes, the denominational aspect of Scottish identity is divided between the Highlands, in which Catholicism is dominant, and the Lowlands, which are linked to Presbyterianism and the Covenanters.²⁶⁶ In the 16th century the Reformation (which was part of the Protestant Reformation in Europe) caused a split of the Church of Scotland from the Catholic Church and a break with the Papacy. As Lynch argues, many Scots see the Reformation as a central historical event which contributed to the creation of a Protestant nation.²⁶⁷ After the Reformation, the Church of Scotland was dominated by Calvinist doctrine. Carruthers calls the 17th century the “fanatical seventeenth century” (130) and, indeed, as MacDougall points out, in the 17th century Calvinism came to include the notion of election, according to which salvation did not depend on the actions of a person but on predestination.²⁶⁸ Thus, every person would either be one of the “elect” to be saved or a “reprobate” to be doomed.²⁶⁹ One of the positive effects of the Calvinist doctrine was that it required everyone to read the Bible, thus increasing literacy significantly. However, at the same time the Church repressed all other literature since it felt threatened by it.²⁷⁰ The

²⁶³ See, for instance, Michael Hechter’s study *Internal Colonialism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975) which argued that the Scottish, Welsh, and Irish periphery was dominated and exploited by London.

²⁶⁴ Hechter, *Internal Colonialism* qtd. Pittock 12-13.

²⁶⁵ Riach 46.

²⁶⁶ Pope 7.

²⁶⁷ Lynch 82.

²⁶⁸ MacDougall 136.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ MacDougall 138.

influence of religious faith and the Kirk has been treated frequently in Scottish literature. Indeed MacDougall argues that Scottish writing has been “shaped” and often “twisted” by religious views, since the ensuing worldview influenced everyday life.²⁷¹ Schwend describes a preoccupation with the Kirk as a typical feature of modern Scottish literature, for instance in James Hogg or John Galt.²⁷² The influence of religion on Scottish life and identity has thus permeated Scottish writing from early on.

In the 1760s the poet James Macpherson presented a cycle of poems to the public, which, as a collected edition, came to be called *The Works of Ossian* (1765). He claimed to have discovered these poems, allegedly of ancient origin written by a Gaelic warrior poet of the 3rd century, and translated them from Scots Gaelic to English. The debate concerning the true origins of the poems has been heated and is still ongoing.²⁷³ Their influence on the image of Highland culture, and by extension Scottishness, however, is indisputable. The impact of Macpherson’s work is described by Syndram thus:

There is something like a literary topography, with its own aura of moods and associations and with an emotional allure that is stronger in literature than in historical reality. The Orient of the *Arabian Nights*, the America of noble Indians and wandering frontiersmen, the Scotland of Macpherson and Walter Scott, [...] those regions are better to be found in the pages of books than by other modes of transport. (Syndram 187)

Indeed, Macpherson’s work enjoyed great popularity, being translated almost instantaneously after its appearance into Italian, French, Dutch, and German, influencing and inspiring the German Romantic movement. Even Napoleon Bonaparte was a fervent reader, attracted to the heroic militarism depicted in the poems.²⁷⁴ Indeed, he stated that “[i]t was I, - I made them the fashion. I have even been accused of having my head filled with Ossian’s clouds” (qtd. Ferguson 241). Most importantly, however, Macpherson’s work provided a central contribution to the development of Romanticism across Europe, both in literature and in art in general.²⁷⁵ Also the reception in Scotland, Ferguson mentions, was rapturous. David Hume, for instance, thought of Macpherson as the Scottish Homer.²⁷⁶ In fact, the prospect of possessing classical poetry comparable to that of ancient Greece or Rome seemed to validate Scotland’s nationhood and

²⁷¹ MacDougall 130.

²⁷² Schwend, Introduction 11.

²⁷³ See, for instance, Ferguson 227 ff.

²⁷⁴ Ferguson 40.

²⁷⁵ Ibid. 241.

²⁷⁶ Ibid. 243.

positioned the Highlander as a noble savage.²⁷⁷ Moreover, the element of wild nature features prominently in Macpherson's work. Indeed, Francis Grierson's thesis that the Celtic mind was at one with nature²⁷⁸ is reflected in the poems, presenting another cliché that entered into the image of the noble savage. Thus, *Ossian* provided a romantic view of Highland culture, the clan system, the heroic warriors, and the Gaelic poems and songs, creating a "Celtomania" (Ferguson 245) which, even though disputed and diminished by doubts of authenticity, had significant influence on Scottish self-perception.

The schemata of the "Völkertafel" and the *Laconicum Europae Speculum*, compiled in the 19th century, provide no information on stereotypes of Scottishness. Only those of the English are mentioned, the "Völkertafel" describing them as pleasant, effeminate, dressed in the French fashion, and treacherous, being strong warriors at sea and most likely to die of consumption. The *Laconicum* echoes this list, describing the dress of the English as "proud." The stereotypes of Scottishness, therefore, do not feature in the tableaux of nationalities that were so well-known in the 19th century.

Much of what is nowadays perceived as Highland culture, including tartan and Highland games (such as caber-tossing) and Highland dancing, is arguably based on what Anderson calls "imagining" and Hobsbawm and Ranger call "inventing," that is, a process of creating national icons, symbols, traditions and cultural signifiers which are not necessarily based on historical fact but which are perpetuated by writers, the media, or governments, thereby reflecting a particular national image. As Pittock points out, during the romantic period interest in Highland culture experienced a vogue, greatly helped by the concept of the noble savage attributed to Highland warriors and the treatment of Highland figures by writers, and, most prominently, Sir Walter Scott. Indeed, in 1822, when King George IV visited Scotland, Scott acted as a pageant master for the festivities, controlling every detail of the celebrations and using "all the pomp and ceremony [he] could discover" (MacDougall 115). According to MacDougall, Scott "invented" Highland customs and dress which are until today seen as authentically Scottish and based on ancient tradition (ibid.). Yet, Scott did not invent all of those

²⁷⁷ MacDougall 103. Cf. Cuddon on the concept of the noble savage, which signifies primitive goodness in humans, as well as dignity and nobility which have not yet been "corrupted" by civilisation. Arguably, the source of this concept is in the pre-lapsarian innocence of Adam and Eve in Eden. Noble savage heroes were particularly en vogue during the romantic period (Cuddon 550-51). Significantly in the context of Gibbon's work, this concept is in line with the diffusionist view that humankind was without vices before it was corrupted by civilisation (see, for instance, section 2.3.1. of the present thesis).

²⁷⁸ Francis Grierson "The Celtic Temperament" (1913) qtd. in Scott and Gifford 369.

traditions and dances but also adapted existing ones to figure in the ceremonies.²⁷⁹ Scott's writing, and especially *Waverley* (1814), is one of the most influential factors in the perception of Highland culture. The novel is set during the Jacobite rebellion in 1745 during which Charles Edward Stuart (also known as "Bonnie Prince Charlie") sought to regain political power in Scotland for the House of Stuart. *Waverley* describes these events, which in themselves have become part of the myth of Scottishness, as well as Highland culture, the clan system, and features honourable, brave, and compassionate representatives of the Highland population. In particular, the beautiful Flora McIvor is presented as "the epitome of Romantic Scotland" which was, in essence, seen as equivalent to the Highlands (MacDougall 114). The fact that in the novel the English soldier Waverley is accepted into the McIvor clan points towards Scott's aim of creating a new narrative of Scottish history which would be reconcilable with the post-Union status of Scotland.²⁸⁰ Sir Walter Scott's treatment of Highland culture is a main reason for its vogue in the romantic period throughout Europe. The great popularity of *Waverley* ensured that Scott's vision was disseminated widely, contributing to the romanticised image of Scotland throughout the world.

This romanticised image found its culmination in a set of cultural practices and visual signs subsumed under the name of tartanry. After George IV's visit to Scotland and the festivities led by Sir Walter Scott, the kilt with respective tartan patterns in combination with bagpipes as well as pronounced patriotism and sentimentality became a symbol of "genuine" Scottishness.²⁸¹ While Scott's implication was that kilts and tartans were ancient traditions, they are said to have evolved only after the Union with England (1707) as a kind of protest against the Union.²⁸² Yet, this theory has been disputed. For instance, Pittock disagrees and points out that kilts and tartans have been used to signify authentic Scottishness as early as 1596.²⁸³ Corbett, in contrast, argues that they were a manifestation of middle-class Lowland Scots' yearning for a romantic Highland past and noble ancestry.²⁸⁴ What is clear, however, is that in 1747 the kilt was banned (with the exception of the Highland regiments of the British army) since it had become a sign of growing discontent about the Union. When Sir Walter Scott "reinvented" it in the 19th century, it had seemingly lost much of its subversive potential

²⁷⁹ MacDougall 115.

²⁸⁰ Ibid. 114-5.

²⁸¹ Bayart 204; Corbett, *Language* 186.

²⁸² Trevor-Roper 15.

²⁸³ Pittock 3.

²⁸⁴ Corbett, *Language* 168.

and King George IV and Queen Victoria even adopted the tartan for their dress.²⁸⁵ Also Highland games and Highland dancing are said to have developed relatively late, that is, in the 1780s.²⁸⁶ Tartanry, therefore, seems to be a relatively young phenomenon which, however, has had a lasting influence on the image of Scottishness, as reflected in the contemporary popularity of kilts, tartans, and bagpipes throughout the world in communities with Scottish ancestry, as well as Hollywood films such as *Braveheart* or *Rob Roy* (both 1995).

In the 18th century, a contrary movement to the romanticism of Highland culture gained momentum. The Scottish Enlightenment was based on the humanist and rationalist advances and teachings of figures such as David Hume (1711-1776) and Adam Smith (1723-1790), emphasising the rule of reason and empiricism in philosophy, science, and economic matters. The population of Scotland had enjoyed a comparably high number of schools²⁸⁷ and intellectual debates and letter correspondence advancing Enlightenment thought extended throughout the western world, spreading Enlightenment ideas and “common sense philosophy” as an “invisible export” (Broadie, Introduction 6). Thus, many presidents of the United States of America are said to have been greatly influenced by Scottish mentors who taught Enlightenment values that had, in turn, been inspired by the Declaration of Arbroath, foreshadowing the American Declaration of Independence.²⁸⁸

At the same time, the image of the Highlands as a romantic and picturesque place, peopled with heroic but sentimental inhabitants, was continued.²⁸⁹ Queen Victoria, in her *Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands* (published in 1869),²⁹⁰ writes about her sojourns in Scotland. As Riach points out, the descriptions frequently use words such as “picturesque,” “pretty,” “charming,” or “beautiful” (151). Meeting a Highlander, she notes that he was typical of “the Highland race” and describes him as “full of independence and elevated feelings . . . singularly straightforward, simple minded, kind-hearted and disinterested: always ready to oblige”

²⁸⁵ Corbett, *Language* 186.

²⁸⁶ Pittock 86.

²⁸⁷ Emerson 11.

²⁸⁸ Riach 86.

²⁸⁹ During the Romantic period, and supported by the wide appeal of Scott’s novels, Highland culture came to stand for Scottish culture metonymically. However, the history and cultural backgrounds of Highland and Lowland regions of Scotland have historically been very distinct. Indeed, Ferguson points out that an “old enmity between Highlands and Lowlands” (245) exists. Lynch attributes this, amongst other things, to an incident in 1580 when the poet Alexander Montgomerie ridiculed Celtic origins legends, creating social stigmatisation of the Highlands (Lynch 93).

²⁹⁰ Queen Victoria, *Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1869) 87 qtd. Riach 151-52.

(qtd. Riach 151-52). The topos of the freedom-loving Scot is repeated here, but also passion and straightforwardness are foregrounded. Significantly, however, the positive comments are tinged by notions of the noble savage ("simple minded," "kind-hearted"). Indeed, as Pittock argues, the Victorian period saw representations of Highland Scots (who were often seen as representative of Scots in general) as primitive and picturesque.²⁹¹ For instance, many postcards of the time feature "vast and hairy Scots soldiers" (Pittock 86). By extension, the hetero-stereotype of Scots as a whole was characterised by notions of being "strong," "hardy," "sturdy," and "robust" due to their "preindustrial vigour and strength" (Haldane qtd. Pittock 86).²⁹² Indeed, as Power puts it, the general impression of Highlanders was "of exuberant physical fitness, romantic courage, and a very moderate amount of brains" (165).

The celebration of William Wallace was equally continued. The powerful myths surrounding historical figures like Wallace, who has achieved the status of a national hero with international renown (as for instance in the 1995 Hollywood film *Braveheart* mentioned in the quote on p. 50),²⁹³ provide a basis for the kind of "cultural memory" or received opinion which constitutes the discourse of Scottish nationality.²⁹⁴ Significantly, however, via their perpetuation in various texts such figures are altered to become icons of national imagination and thus achieve a status more akin to myth than historical reality. Therefore, the treatment of Scottish cultural icons in literature strengthens their position within the myth of nationhood. Interestingly, Carruthers points out, some historical figures become part of the national imagination only retrospectively. For instance, Mary Queen of Scots and Charles Edward Stuart were only adopted into the mainstream notion of Scottish identity in the Enlightenment era.²⁹⁵

In the second part of the 19th century, the kailyard school of writing developed, continuing the celebration of rustics in a Lowland context.²⁹⁶ The main representatives were J.M. Barrie, Ian McLaren alias the Reverend John Watson, and S.R. Crockett. Its focus was on rural communities, portraying the lives of ordinary Scots and their communities as a kind of microcosm of society. Watson argues that the kailyard tended

²⁹¹ Pittock 86.

²⁹² Katherine Jean Haldane, "Imagining Scotland: Tourist Images of Scotland 1770-1914" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Virginia, 1990; 273, 283).

²⁹³ Cf. for instance Roy Campbell "Sir William Wallace" on Wallace's status as a national hero and the uncertainty of historical fact, most of the information probably stemming from the 15th century romance "The Wallace" (par. 3). Cowan calls Wallace "Scotland's unimpeachable hero" and comments that almost all the information on him is from "enemy" sources (Cowan 58-9).

²⁹⁴ Leerssen, "Rhetoric" 285-6, 269.

²⁹⁵ Carruthers 125.

²⁹⁶ Corbett, *Language* 185.

to particularise the universal,²⁹⁷ presenting issues of human life such as poverty or greed in a small and comfortable context. The Scottish national character portrayed by the kailyard was characterised by primitive innocence and wiliness as well as simple decency.²⁹⁸ Corbett adds that the kailyard's main concerns were domesticity, rusticity, humour, humility, piety, poverty, and canniness.²⁹⁹ The kailyard, therefore, perpetuated the image of the Scot as simple and rustic but noble at heart. Significantly, the kailyard vision of national identity was static and pastoral,³⁰⁰ emphasising the role of peasants and rural communities, largely disregarding the important advances in technology and the onset of Industrialisation. The religious element, however, became highly pronounced and piety was depicted as a central trait of kailyard characters. The popularity of kailyard literature at the turn of the 20th century helped to disseminate the generalisations of Scottish national character inherent to the genre throughout Britain and the USA.³⁰¹

The technological and ensuing social developments of the 20th century, however, could not be brushed aside for long. Industrialisation and urbanisation changed the face of Scotland radically. Indeed, Scotland achieved the status of the "first industrial nation" (Pittock 83) due to the enormous rate of its technological development. However, the majority of the population lived in poverty. The romantic and essentially Celtic image of the Scottish people remained strong. Combined, those views "made up the model of a country with an emotionally and impractically Celtic heart and a practical, businesslike Germanic head" (Pittock 79). In 1919, Gregory Smith published his *Scottish Literature: Character and Influence*.³⁰² He coined the term "Caledonian antyzygy" which implies that the Scottish psyche is essentially divided, incorporating both of these self-images. Moreover, the term denotes a kind of tradition of disagreement between Scots which, according to Carruthers, arose from the Scottish Enlightenment's modes of debating issues of moral and scientific nature.³⁰³ Literature reflected this view of Scottish character and provided images of the "divided self" in personal and political terms³⁰⁴ since the "Germanic head" dismissed longings for

²⁹⁷ Watson, R. 140.

²⁹⁸ Ibid. 134.

²⁹⁹ Corbett, *Language* 185.

³⁰⁰ Watson, R. 131.

³⁰¹ Watson, R. 136-7; McLuckie par. 3.

³⁰² G. Gregory Smith (*Scottish Literature: Character and Influence*. London: Macmillan, 1919).

³⁰³ Carruthers 131.

³⁰⁴ Pittock 6.

political independence in favour of unionism.³⁰⁵ Arguably, the view of internal conflicts as a particularly Scottish trait, as perpetuated in literature, created an auto-stereotype and “deformed” the view of Scottish culture, creating an “inferiorist” mentality (Corbett, *Language* 184). Beveridge and Turnbull argue that this inferiority is also caused by a lack of a unified Scottish identity in the face of a stronger British identity, which made the image of Scottishness shift into nostalgia and sentimentality.³⁰⁶ According to MacDougall, this national inferiority complex is reflected in the work of Hugh MacDiarmid, the main representative of the Scottish Renaissance.³⁰⁷ Indeed, MacDiarmid echoes the stereotypical views of Scots when he says that they “have no use for emotions, let alone sentiments, but are solely concerned with passions” (98). Others see this cultural fragmentation as a positive sign of pluralism³⁰⁸ or as a phenomenon of postmodernity replacing the concept of a unitary national culture and identity.³⁰⁹ The achievements of MacDiarmid and the Renaissance, however, become apparent in the rejection of stereotypes of the kailyard, the emphasis on contemporary representations of Scottishness including urban spaces, as well as the attempts to rejuvenate Scots-language writing.³¹⁰ Moreover, as Broun, Finlay, and Lynch point out, the Renaissance and World War I saw the destruction of the cliché of the Scottish warrior.³¹¹

Today, most of the stereotypes described above have found their place in the contemporary image of Scottishness. As Lindsay points out, in a small survey from 1996, Scots largely showed a positive self-image based on characteristic friendliness, patriotism, warmth, and humour but also low self-esteem, a “touch of roughness” and paranoia feature while the hard-working, ambitious, Calvinist image is infrequent (51). Consequently, it can be established that the clichés connected to Scottishness arise from sources dating back into antiquity, being reinforced by historical figures representing

³⁰⁵ Pittock 79.

³⁰⁶ Beveridge and Turnbull 92-3. Also the emergence of films like *Braveheart* and *Rob Roy* (both 1995) testifies to the persistence of romanticised images in media representations.

³⁰⁷ MacDougall 55.

³⁰⁸ Cf. Angus Calder. “A Song of Our Own” (*The Scotsman*, June 25, 1994) qtd. Beveridge and Turnbull 93.

³⁰⁹ Cf. David McCrone. *Understanding Scotland: the Sociology of a Stateless Nation* (London: Routledge, 1992) qtd. Beveridge and Turnbull 94.

³¹⁰ Corbett points out another myth of Scottish identity, which was not successful; Clydesideism was developed by a group of Scottish critics in the 1980s, rejecting the kailyard and tartanry but promoting a working-class basis, which was essentially “heroic, male, sensitive, skilled, socialist, poor, alcoholic, violent, trapped, oppressed” (Corbett, *Language* 187). Irvine Welsh’s 1993 novel *Trainspotting* and its 1995 Hollywood adaptation to film are powerful representatives of urban narratives about working-class Scots.

³¹¹ Broun, Finlay, and Lynch, Introduction 3.

the distinction from England as well as the people's self-definition as a nation, but also by hetero-stereotypes such as the inferiorist myth, which have entered the national self-perception and become auto-stereotypes.

The array of stereotypical notions presented in the present subchapter combines to paint a picture of Scottishness against whose clichés the *Quair's* characters might be cast. Significantly, Lewis Grassie Gibbon's view of Scottish history and the myths constituting Scottish national character is far from positive. He describes the view of Scotland held by the rest of Europe thus:

The chatter and gossip of half the salons and drawing-rooms of European intellectualism hang over the antique Scottish scene like a malarial fog through which peer the fictitious faces of heroic Highlanders, hardy Norsemen, lovely Stewart queens, and dashing Jacobite rebels. Those stage-ghosts shamble amid the dimness, and mope and mow in their ancient parts with an idiotic vacuity but a maddening persistence. [...] Yet behind those grimaces of the romanticized or alien imagination a real people once lived and had its being [...] (Gibbon, *Scots Hairst* 123)

Stereotypical figures like heroic Highlanders, Mary Queen of Scots and Bonnie Prince Charlie are thus rejected by Gibbon as a basis for national identification. To him, the "real people" are the peasants who constitute the unspoilt basis of humankind and who suffer the most from poverty and wars. Indeed, in Gibbon's view, basic economic necessities take precedence over mythologies and the search for a national identity or a unified national character.³¹² Therefore, the characterisation of the *Quair's* figures must be seen against the background of Gibbon's pragmatic and "icon-smashing" view of Scottish history and identity (Carruthers 128).

4.2. Chris

Symbolism is a major feature of Modernism, more than in any previous age; with Modernism, the literary boundaries between realism, symbolism and allegory began to shift and blur. This is true throughout *A Scots Quair*. (Gifford, Dunnigan, and McGillivray 596)

As noted in the quote above, characterisation in the *Quair* must be viewed from realistic, symbolic, and allegorical standpoints in order to grasp the significance of characters and their depiction for the trilogy's success and intended message. Indeed, as the following considerations will make clear, the figure of Chris can be read in various contexts, including realism and symbolism, offering room for interpretation in regionalist, nationalist, and universal terms.

³¹² Carruthers 127.

Chris Guthrie (later Chris Tavendale, Chris Colquhoun, and Chris Ogilvie) is the protagonist of the *Quair*. The trilogy covers her life from childhood to middle age and her eventual death.³¹³ While she is the main character of *Sunset Song* and *Cloud Howe*, large parts of *Grey Granite* focus on her son Ewan. In *Cloud Howe*'s Segget, Chris becomes an outsider due to her marriage with the minister Robert Colquhoun, living in the Manse and participating only infrequently in community life.³¹⁴ The opinion leaders of Segget seem to marginalise her, gossiping about her alleged aloofness and cool detachment:

[...] the speak went out and about the parish that Chris [...] had grown that proud that she made her maid cry *Mem!* every time they met on the stairs [...] And who was she to put on airs [...] the Manse and the minister's silver the things that the new Mrs. Colquhoun had had in her mind. (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 10, italics his)

[...] Miss M'Askill was asking Chris, sharp, *Are you fond of social work, Mrs. Colquhoun?* and Chris said *Not much* [...] Chris knew she had made an enemy in Segget [...] (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 102, italics his)

Thus, the members of Segget view her in a critical light, suggesting that, although she is "just" a peasant woman, she is "putting on airs" and trying to climb up the social ladder by marrying Robert Colquhoun while distancing herself from community life.³¹⁵ In addition to the community, Chris stands apart from her husband since she does not share his religious fervour or his political agendas of improving conditions for the spinners.³¹⁶ In *Grey Granite*'s Duncairn, Chris is even more at the margins of society, the language and social pastimes of the new working class alien to her. For instance, going to see a film at "the Talkies" with her landlady Ma Cleghorn, Chris finds no pleasure in what must be an episode of Mickey Mouse (a mouse wearing trousers like a man):

[...] Chris felt sleepy almost as soon as she sat, and yawned, pictures wearied her nearly to death, the flickering shadows and the awful voices, the daft tales they told and the dafter news. She fell asleep through the cantrips a creature was playing, a mouse dressed up in breeks like a man, and only woke up as Ma shook her: *Hey, the meikle film's starting now, lassie* [...] (Gibbon, *Grey Granite* 85, italics his)

³¹³ The question whether the last scene of *Grey Granite* describes Chris's death is disputed. While some believe that she is still alive, the majority of scholars subscribe to the view that she dies (for instance Douglas Young (Interview), Patricia Wilson (78), David Hewitt ("North-East" 201) and William Malcolm (*Blasphemer* 180).

³¹⁴ Murray 113.

³¹⁵ Interestingly, the Australian version of the *Quair* (accessible on Project Gutenberg) features a note preceding *Cloud Howe*, explaining that Colquhoun is pronounced "Ca-hoon" (<http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks07/0700471h.html>), whereas the printed version used for the present analysis does not include this note.

³¹⁶ Campbell, *Gibbon* 95.

A subsequent description of the film seen through Chris's eyes provides more material suggesting that she has difficulties understanding such a narrative about a world so alien to her. Moreover, Zagratzki mentions that Chris has little to do with the new working class, describing her as an onlooker on the class struggles of the industrial city.³¹⁷

For large parts of the *Quair's* narrative Chris is the focaliser in Genette's terms,³¹⁸ that is, events are narrated as perceived by her and filtered through her consciousness, being thus presented to the reader from her point of view.³¹⁹ Consequently, the rendition of events includes Chris's cognitive and emotional reaction and interpretation. As Malcolm points out, this mode of presenting events through a participating character gives the narrative great spontaneity because of their first hand experience.³²⁰ Two key scenes in Chris's relationship with her first husband exemplify this narrative intimacy with the protagonist's thoughts and feelings. First, the young couple's early marriage and Chris's bliss is described thus:

So that was her marriage, not like wakening from a dream was marrying, but like going into one, rather, she wasn't sure, not for days, what things they had dreamt and what actually done [...] they two alone, with all the gladness that was theirs alone and her kisses the most that Ewan'd ever seek and his kisses ending days and nights, and almost life itself for her. (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 168-70)

Chris's experience is depicted as highly subjective and dreamlike, Gibbon's rendition allowing intimate insights into her emotional world. Second, the scene in which Ewan comes home on leave before going to France conveys Chris's agony at the change in Ewan's behaviour with an immediacy that reflects the painful and sickening experience:

He caught her and pulled her on to his knees and said *Be stand-offish now if you can, what the devil do you think I've come home for?* It had been like struggling with someone deep in a nightmare, when the blankets are over your head and you can barely breathe [...] He laughed as he fought her there in the chair and held her tight [...] oh he was drunk and didn't know what he said, terrible and sickening things, he'd had women when he pleased in Lanark, he said. And he whispered of them to her, his breath was hot on her face, she saw the gleam of his teeth, he told her how he'd lain with them and the things he'd done. (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 224, italics his)

Chris, who had been eagerly awaiting her husband's return, is shocked at his apparent change of character, treating her disrespectfully and cruelly and confronting her with his

³¹⁷ Zagratzki, *Tendenzen* 228.

³¹⁸ Genette 132 ff.

³¹⁹ Exceptions are *Sunset Song's* and *Cloud Howe's* preludes, which are given by an anonymous narrator, who, however, betrays strong bias against certain community members and relates tales and historical inaccuracies as if fact, thus positioning him/herself as an unreliable narrator.

³²⁰ Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 137.

adultery. Chris's experience of Ewan's unwelcome and crude advances is encompassed in a simile that reflects the claustrophobic aspects of nightmares, as opposed to the dreamlike quality, in a positive sense, the first days of their marriage possessed. Moreover, Ewan's actions and words intersperse the descriptions of her feelings of disgust and shame, thereby creating great narrative immediacy. Subsequently, Chris and Ewan spend the night together but she only feels repulsed at this "foulness" and "[t]he horror of his eyes" (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 225). Unable to cope with the emotional pain and humiliation, Chris escapes into detachment: "she was calm and secure, putting Ewan from her heart, locking it up that he never could vex her again, she was finished with him, either loving or hating" (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 226). Soon after he leaves, however, Chris's composure wavers and she regrets the way they parted, breaking down in tears. As Murray points out, such passages have an unrepeatable emotional impact on the reader,³²¹ thus creating strong involvement with Chris's character.

In fact, several critics comment on the fact that Chris seems to be one of the most believable and likeable characters in Scottish literature. Malcolm, for instance, comments on the high sense of psychological realism apparent in Chris's characterisation.³²² Indeed, it has been argued that Gibbon was so successful that most women readers identify with Chris, male readers generally falling passionately in love with her.³²³ The realistic description of the figure of Chris is arguably indebted to the experience of his wife, Ray. As Whitfield points out, one of the reasons for the *Quair's* success was that Chris was closely modelled on her. Significantly, Ray lost a baby in 1926 and was close to death from eclampsy,³²⁴ which is reflected in the death of Chris's and Robert's baby and the illness Chris has to endure, which seems to be similar to the symptoms of eclampsy.³²⁵

A further significant factor for the success of Chris's characterisation is Gibbon's use of narrative technique to give the reader insights into her mind.³²⁶ The structure of each novel comprises of four chapters which are shown retrospectively

³²¹ Murray 110-11.

³²² Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 139.

³²³ Johnson 156.

³²⁴ Eclampsy, also eclampsia, is a life-threatening complication during pregnancy related to high blood pressure which can include convulsions and coughing blood (cf. the entries for Eclampsia <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000899.htm> and Preeclampsia <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000898.htm> in the online Medical Encyclopedia on the homepage of the United States National Library of Medicine).

³²⁵ Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 152 ff. Chris coughs up blood (152, 153), which can be one of the symptoms of eclampsia or preeclampsia. She also experiences a free and light feeling at one point during her illness, knowing that the "Thing" (death) was close (153), which seems to echo the near-death of Gibbon's wife.

³²⁶ See section 5 of the present study for a detailed analysis of narrative structure.

through Chris who is reflecting on the events in her life while finding repose in high places like the Kinraddie Standing Stones, the Segget Kaimes and the Duncairn Windmill Brae. After each of these internal analepses, the narrative returns to Chris.³²⁷ As Trengove points out, this structure creates the impression that the central chapters are “somehow told by rather than of Chris,” which has caused critics to describe *Sunset Song* (and by extension the *Quair*) as a “monologue” (Trengove 57).³²⁸ This effect is created by the technique of the self-referring “you,” which is a central device used to establish an intimate relationship between Chris and the reader.³²⁹ By letting Chris refer to herself as “you,” her thoughts and feelings are voiced as if in a dramatic monologue. Significantly, this device also seems to extend towards Chris’s emotive response to her feelings of belonging, thus sharing with the reader the pull of the land.³³⁰ In *Cloud Howe* and *Grey Granite*, the parts which are focalised by Chris decline and extended passages focalised by her son Ewan appear, as well as others which seem to be told by anonymous members of the working class. As Zagratzki points out, this heterogeneous narrative situation of the later novels fragments Chris’s narrative.³³¹ However, the trilogy ends with a significant event in Chris’s life, proof for Zagratzki that the trilogy is mainly concerned with existential issues connected to her search for truth.³³² Indeed, as Young argues, the story of Chris in the *Quair* is also a paradigm of human experience,³³³ reaching out towards international audiences through the universal significance of her experience. At the same time, as Hewitt points out, the rendition of Chris’s psychological and spiritual experience helps to persuade the reader that the *Quair* is a portrait of the North-East.³³⁴ Seen in this light, Chris becomes the signifier of regional specificity which, at the same time, communicates a feeling of belonging to readers all over the world, thus combining the regional with the universal.

A further significant feature of Chris is her rejection of any kind of religion or political creed. Talking to her brother, she says “I don’t believe they were ever religious, the Scots folk. [...] They’ve never BELIEVED. It’s just been a place to

³²⁷ Zagratzki, *Tendenzen* 222; Trengove 56. The analepses begin in the past perfect tense and then switch to the simple past (Trengove 56). See chapter 5 of the present thesis for a more detailed treatment of narrative structure.

³²⁸ Trengove refers to J. Kidd, “The voice of the land. Lewis Grassie Gibbon” (*S.L.A. News*, Dec. 1964. 13) and G. Wagner, “Lewis Grassie Gibbon and the use of Lallans for prose” (*Aberdeen University Review* Autumn, 1952: 335).

³²⁹ Campbell, *Gibbon* 92.

³³⁰ *Ibid.* 60.

³³¹ Zagratzki, *Tendenzen* 228.

³³² *Ibid.* 241.

³³³ Young, *Beyond* 139.

³³⁴ Hewitt, “Outside View” par. 32.

collect and argue, the kirk, and criticise God” (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 217, emphasis his). Indeed, in contrast to the inhabitants of Kinraddie, who in her view go to church for different reasons than true worship, Chris herself attends service very infrequently in *Sunset Song*. Married to a minister in *Cloud Howe*, she has to attend his sermons regularly but she would only “stand in the choir and sing, and sometimes look at the page in her hand and think of the days when she at Blawearie had never thought of the kirk at all” (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 15). Indeed, Chris’s take on faith is different to orthodox Christian and especially Calvinist views, approaching a kind of nature mysticism or pantheism in which the land functions as an unchanging basis of life from which the human race comes and to which it ultimately returns:

There was something [...] that was bred in your bones in this land [...] maybe that Something was GOD--that made folk take with a smile and a gley the tales of the gods and the heavens and the hells, [...] heaven on earth and the chances of change, the hope and belief in salvation for men [...] but they knew the whole time they were only players, no Scots bodies died but they knew that fine, deep and real in their hearts they knew that here they faced up to the REAL at last, 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 [...] to a spray of dust as some childe went by with his plough [...] to the peck and tweet of the birds in the trees, to trees themselves in a burgeoning Spring. (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 52-3)

Life is thus seen as a play in which humans are insignificant agents, not going to heaven or hell after death but returning to the soil and, in time, the body’s molecules becoming part of nature, exemplified by the image of trees in a burgeoning spring. Moreover, this realisation of the circle of life, according to Chris, is shared by Scottish people in general. When Ma Cleghorn dies in *Grey Granite*, Chris imagines her going to “heaven” and meeting St. Peter “in a lum hat and leggings, looking awful stern” asking her whether she was one of the blessed according to Calvinist belief (Gibbon, *Grey Granite* 110-11). However, Ma is not “impressed” with heaven and tells St. Peter that this is not a place for her, “striding into the mists and across the fire-tipped clouds to her home” (ibid. 111). This highly sarcastic rendition of Ma Cleghorn’s rise to (Calvinist) heaven and rejection of it exemplifies Chris’s uneasiness with and detachment from religious belief, and in particular the Scottish Kirk.

However, already at a young age, the Kirk plays a significant part in Chris’s life. The relationship between her strongly religious father John and her mother Jean is destroyed by John’s strict adherence to church doctrine, refusing the use of contraception. When their family has grown to four, Jean says that they should not have

any more children. However, John is infuriated and “thunders” at her: “*We’ll have what God in His mercy may send to us, woman*” (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 29, italics his). Since he is still sexually attracted to his wife, however, their family grows and grows to the point where the couple can no longer sustain it. Chris’s mother becomes ever more troubled, unhappy, and physically exhausted in this situation and Jean’s and John’s marriage and love relationship suffers from the fact that they should not have any more children but are unable to suppress their physical attraction. John is torn between desire for his wife on the one hand, and guilt and remorse when he witnesses the painful deliveries, on the other. When Jean learns that she is yet again pregnant (with her seventh child), her desperation becomes unbearable and she commits suicide, poisoning herself and her unborn child as well as her baby twins.³³⁵ This horrific event leaves a lasting mark on Chris, who realises that

[...] it was not mother only that died with the twins, something died in your heart and went down with her to lie in Kinraddie kirkyard-the child in your heart died then [...] and the Chris of the books and the dreams died with it, or you folded them up in their paper and tissue and laid them away by the dark, quiet corpse that was your childhood. (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 63-4)

The loss of her mother and siblings not only bereaves her of loved ones but also leaves her in charge of the household and other farm duties. Therefore, the Kirk’s prohibition of contraception, in combination with John’s sexual appetite, creates a precarious economical situation for the family. As an adult, Chris advocates the use of contraception, no doubt driven by her memories of her mother’s suffering. When her maid Else is about to get married, Chris talks to her about the possibility of not having to bear “bairns that you can’t bring up” (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 188). However, Else seems to share John Guthrie’s attitude, saying “[t]hey’ll just come, and we’ll manage” (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 188). Robert is also shocked when he overhears this and tells Chris that children are God’s concern only. Significantly, however, Chris and Robert had used contraception themselves,³³⁶ which throws a dubious light on Robert’s involvement and advocacy of church doctrine. Therefore, the strong influence of the Kirk on Chris’s life reflects the general trend in Scottish writing of trying to come to terms with restrictive Calvinist norms as well as the central status the Kirk enjoyed in Scotland. Gifford even interprets the fact that Chris’s and Robert’s child (in his

³³⁵ Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 63 ff.

³³⁶ Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 189.

interpretation the child of Scotland and the Kirk) is so short-lived as an expression of Gibbon's rejection of religious doctrine.³³⁷

Moreover, Chris does not seem to care about political issues. In *Sunset Song*, she is not concerned with the war; "Britain was to war with Germany. But Chris didn't care [...] though she minded it sometimes, Chris paid no heed to the war, there were aye daft devils fighting about something or other" (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 186), until it starts claiming members of the Kinraddie community and also her own husband. In *Cloud Howe* she is uninterested in Robert's socialism and also rejects the fascist ideas of Stephen Mowat, saying that "*If it came to the push between you and the spinners I think I would give the spinners my vote*" (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 107, italics his). In fact, Chris thinks of creeds like religion and politics as "clouds":

[...] 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 [...] (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 142)³³⁸

In *Grey Granite*, Chris thinks of Ewan's increasingly radical socialism as a kind of faith and "just another dark cloud" (Gibbon, *Grey Granite* 202). Indeed, speaking to his friend Ellen, Ewan says that Chris believes in nothing at all,³³⁹ which is accurate if one thinks of religious or political creeds. However, Chris does believe in something connected to her special relationship with the land, which will be treated below.

Chris's apparent refusal of political commitment and independence from creeds is arguably a reflection of what Campbell calls "Scottish peasant independence" (Gibbon 113). Zagratzki elaborates on this concept, arguing that this anti-authoritarian tradition stems from the old matriarchal society of the Picts as well as from a kind of peasant pride.³⁴⁰ Indeed, Chris is portrayed as having a particular connection to those Golden Age people through her golden eyes,³⁴¹ as well as her feelings of calm or epiphany when she spends time at the standing stones or the Kaimes, which incorporate

³³⁷ Gifford, *Gibbon* 72.

³³⁸ Whether "men" in this passage implies humankind or the male sex can be debated. However, this statement has been interpreted as creating an opposition between male creeds (clouds) and the female "howe" (valley) of the world (Dixon, "Edges" 297).

³³⁹ Gibbon, *Grey Granite* 156.

³⁴⁰ Zagratzki, *Tendenzen* 238.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

a Pictish broch.³⁴² Gifford, Dunnigan, and MacGillivray add that her physical appearance corresponds to Gibbon's vision of the ancient people, but she also has an unashamed attitude towards her own body,³⁴³ which, to Gibbon as a diffusionist, is a sign of natural innocence. Moreover, according to Malcolm, Chris's "hatred" of rulers and gentry shows her "smeddum," that is, a sense of pride and independence (*Blasphemer* 140). According to Zagratzki, this element is also indicative of an anarchistic worldview that highly valued the peasant as a manifestation of naturalness, as well as great "passion" for total self-determination.³⁴⁴ Chris's independence and love of freedom thus echo the stereotype of the freedom-loving Scot, which can be traced back to Tacitus, the Declaration of Arbroath, and up to Hollywood movies like *Braveheart*.

In Gibbon's view, the peasants of the Scottish North-East were direct descendants of the Picts and thus of the Golden Age people whose innocence and primitive society structures (no land ownership and thus no wars, freedom from taboos and restraints) the writer saw as an ideal worth returning to.³⁴⁵ Chris therefore becomes a representative of those (in a highly positive sense) primitive people in the *Quair*, her life reminiscent of the diffusionist story of the unwholesome forces of civilisation, encroaching on her initial innocence and communion with the land in the later novels.³⁴⁶ Yet, the essential Chris is never conquered and she retains her primitive values connected to the land, in particular when walking in the moors or visiting historical sites.³⁴⁷ Thus, as Young points out,

Like all great novelists Mitchell discovers the universal in the particular, so when he casts his eye over the Howe of the Mearns he sees mankind's past, present and future. It is not just the story of Chris Guthrie and of Kinraddie but a total critique of human civilization. (Young, *Beyond* 86)

Chris as an embodiment of primitive values becomes a vehicle for Gibbon to put forward his views on the fundamental values of life,³⁴⁸ giving the *Quair* universal significance by authorial intention. The concept of "Scottish peasant pride" is based on these primitive values, connecting Scottish peasants with the universal ideas of

³⁴² A broch is a stone fortress. Cf. "A prehistoric structure, found in Ork[ney] and Sh[etland] and the adjacent Sc[ottish] mainland, consisting of a round tower with inner and outer walls of stone, and popularly supposed to have been built by the Picts [...] Now accepted as a gen[eral] archæological term" (*Dictionary of the Scots Language* Online).

³⁴³ Gifford, Dunnigan, and MacGillivray 596.

³⁴⁴ Zagratzki, *Tendenzen* 239.

³⁴⁵ See p. 5 of the present study.

³⁴⁶ Young, *Beyond* 94-5.

³⁴⁷ Ibid. 94-6.

³⁴⁸ Ibid. 139.

diffusionism, which see peasants worldwide as united by their relationship with the land and primitive values. According to Gibbon, those values, which are also contained in Chris's character, still exist within humankind and should be rediscovered and returned to.³⁴⁹

Connected to this sense of peasant independence and close relationship with the land is Chris's apparent stoicism and detachment from emotional bonds. This surfaces early in *Sunset Song* after her painful experience of Ewan's visit referred to above (p. 64), but also when she seems unable to cry at her father's funeral: "it was fair the speak in Kinraddie, her coolness" (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 110). In *Cloud Howe* her detachment from charity work earns her the contempt of Miss M'Askill (see p. 62 of the present study). Various labels have been given to this character trait, ranging from "cool self-possessed nature" or "dourness" (Campbell, *Gibbon* 90) to a "laissez-faire attitude" (Gifford, Dunnigan, and MacGillivray 109). Campbell attributes this feature of Chris's personality to repeated injuries like the suicide and homicide of her mother and twin brothers, her father's attempted incest, Ewan's horrible change of character and death in the war, and so forth.³⁵⁰ Yet, a lack of visible emotion in Chris could also be explained with her natural reserve,³⁵¹ which she regains in contact with nature, for instance after she has heard of Ewan's death in *Sunset Song*.³⁵² This feature of Chris also seems to be inspired by Gibbon's diffusionist view of history, as well as his pantheism which interprets death as a return of the body's molecules into the circle of nature.³⁵³ Chris even initially regards her pregnancy as a prison, preventing her from roaming nature at will and limiting her independence.³⁵⁴ However, she soon accepts the situation and returns back to a stoic outlook by imagining herself as an unmoving plant.³⁵⁵

Significantly, Chris seems to be of the opinion that this kind of reserve and stoic outlook is typical for Scottish people. When she realises that she tends to hide away painful experiences, she also muses that this must be a trait in Scottish people in general.³⁵⁶ This feature is reminiscent of the "dour Scot," a trope which seems to originate from the image of Scots as hardy and self-sufficient. In addition to that, Gibbon's suggestion that Chris has retained the innocence and vigour of the Golden

³⁴⁹ Young, *Beyond* 94, 136.

³⁵⁰ Campbell, *Gibbon* 90.

³⁵¹ Ibid. 115.

³⁵² Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 241. Cf. Wilson, P. 68.

³⁵³ Cf. p. 21 of the present study.

³⁵⁴ Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 177.

³⁵⁵ Ibid. See also Wilson, P. 72.

³⁵⁶ Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 139.

Age people of diffusionism (whose pantheism, in the diffusionist view, was close to stoicism) would seem to underline this portrayal of Chris as “dour.” Moreover, with few examples, Chris refrains from siding with others against oppressive forces.³⁵⁷ In individual cases in the community, however, Chris is outspoken for others and takes action.³⁵⁸ At the end of the trilogy, Chris’s stoicism, detachment, and independence have resulted in alienation from her son, her third husband Ake, and most of her friends. Thus, her life becomes fragmented, making her a typical modernist outsider.³⁵⁹ After Ma Cleghorn’s death in *Grey Granite* Chris realises that her income depended on Ma’s business and that she might lose her lodging. She tries to calm herself but only reaches the conclusion that she is alone:

[...] she had friends, she had Ewan. . . . SHE HAD NOTHING AT ALL, she had never had anything, nothing in the world she’d believed in but change, unceasing and unstaying as time [...] Nothing endured, and this hour she stood as alone as she’d been when a quean [...] And she covered her face with her hands and sat down and so stayed there awhile and then rose and put on her clothes, coldly, mechanically, looking at the clock [...] (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 104, emphasis his)

Chris seems to return to this detached position, which Bell calls “emotional nihilism” (268), due to her realisation that nothing endures and only change is constant. Therefore, in her view, human relationships seem temporary and insignificant in the context of everlasting change and the circle of life to which everyone belongs:

And that was the best deliverance of all, [...] that Change who ruled the earth and the sky and the waters underneath the earth, Change whose face she’d 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 or devils or wild crying to the sky. He passed and repassed in the ways of the wind, Deliverer, Destroyer and Friend in one. (Gibbon, *Grey Granite* 203)

4.2.1. Chris and the Land

The relationship between Chris and the land is a major factor in her characterisation, the interpretation of Gibbon’s intended diffusionist messages, but also her reception as representative of the land or even Scotland. Growing up on a croft in Kinraddie, Chris becomes acquainted with hard manual labour, the necessity to look after the farm

³⁵⁷ Cf. for instance the memorial service in *Cloud Howe*, which is interrupted by the spinners. A tense situation develops but Robert and Chris remain “cool and calm,” which enrages the spinners: “It made a man boil to see them so meek, damn’t!” (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 97).

³⁵⁸ Cf. for instance the episode when she and Robert hear about the fate of the Kindness family. While Robert goes to find them, Chris hurries to prepare a room for them, taking care of their injured baby (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 201).

³⁵⁹ Gifford, Dunnigan, and MacGillivray 593.

animals, and the economic problems of small family crofts competing against large farms. Similar to Gibbon's experience, she dislikes agricultural work and its effects on the lives of people. Successful at school, she yearns to break out of her peasant background and leave behind "[t]he weary pleiter of the land and its life [...] Glad she'd be when she'd finished her exams and was into Aberdeen University, getting her B.A. and then a school of her own" (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 61). However, just as Gibbon did, she shows an emotional bond with untouched nature: "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" (ibid. 32). This emotional relationship with wild nature is reminiscent of the Ossianic myth on the one hand, and the Lowland rural version of the kailyard on the other. Yet, Gibbon complicates this feature, giving Chris conflicting feelings about her native region and depicting the negative sides of rural communities as well as the positive ones. Indeed, critics have pointed out the fact that Gibbon's own conflicting feelings about his home region have found expression in Chris's character when she muses "Oh, she hated and loved in a breath!" (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 120).³⁶⁰

Yet, the land (that is, untouched nature) regularly becomes a sanctuary for her,³⁶¹ acting as a stabilising and cathartic force.³⁶² In *Sunset Song* Chris retreats to the standing stones near the loch above her father's croft in order to reflect on events and to achieve a measure of detachment from village life and gossip; "this old stone circle, more and more as the years went on at Kinraddie, was the only place where ever she could come and stand back a little from the clamour of the days" (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 108). In *Cloud Howe* the Kaimes, an old castle, take the place of the standing stones, but in the city of Duncairn, Chris is entirely removed from nature and is thus unable to find solace standing on the Windmill Braes of the city.³⁶³ A feeling of unease and uncertainty takes hold of Chris in Duncairn and she feels the urge to escape to the country to regain what has been called her "surety" in *Cloud Howe* (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 173) and what Young calls her "sureness" (*Beyond* 133).³⁶⁴ She goes on a trip to Echt with Ewan and his friend Ellen, climbing up the Barmekin Hill. There, she feels young again, "shinning the slopes light and free and sure of her hold" (Gibbon, *Grey Granite* 42), even more effortlessly than her son. Climbing the hill, she is reminded of

³⁶⁰ Gifford, *Gibbon* 74; Young, *Beyond* 87.

³⁶¹ Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 183.

³⁶² Campbell, *Gibbon* 64. Zagratzki, *Tendenzen* 232.

³⁶³ Zagratzki, *Tendenzen* 232; Wilson, P. 66.

³⁶⁴ Wilson, P. 66; Young, *Beyond* 132.

her father and their troubled relationship. Yet, standing on the hilltop, she realises that “THAT didn’t much matter” (Gibbon, *Grey Granite* 42, emphasis his), thus regaining her detached attitude to life. At the end of the trilogy Chris moves back to the countryside, the last scene of the *Quair* signifying her ultimate union with the land and dramatising her realisation of the “unending morning somewhere on the world” and that change and ultimately death cannot be avoided (Gibbon, *Grey Granite* 203). As Malcolm points out, Chris’s final reunion with the land can be seen as a kind of spiritual fulfilment.³⁶⁵ Moreover, this scene in which she finds renewed contact with nature also brings her back to the primitive (that is, unspoilt) reality she had enjoyed in the first novel of the trilogy,³⁶⁶ thus representing Gibbon’s ideal of modern man returning to primitive values.

The structure of *Sunset Song* reinforces the relationship between Chris and the land. The novel is divided into chapters entitled “The Unfurrowed Field,” “Ploughing,” “Drilling,” “Seed-time,” “Harvest,” and finally once more “The Unfurrowed Field,” which signify the development of the protagonist from child, adolescent, woman, wife, mother, and widow. Campbell points out that such metaphorical constructions presenting character development in relation to the seasons or the cycles of the land are frequently used by regionalist writers such as Lawrence or Hardy.³⁶⁷ Moreover, the strong pull of the land and nature on Chris, in contrast with her feeling of standing apart from the communities of the *Quair*, suggest a pattern of “belonging and not-belonging” which, according to Draper, is a “hallmark of literary regionalism” (Introduction 7). Chris’s strong attachment to the Mearns and the natural world in her home region is conveyed by an “accumulation” of detail in describing nature³⁶⁸ – for instance, the different species of birds and in particular the peewits, the aural experience of their song, “crying across the hills, deep and deep, crying in the heart of you” (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 32), or the smell of the earth. This verisimilitude of description of the natural world is strongly reminiscent of regionalist writing³⁶⁹ and, in combination with the intimate focalisation of the novels by Chris, allows the reader to share her feelings of belonging. Moreover, as Crawford points out, the *Quair*’s structure does not only correspond to the development of the Mearns from a rural to an industrial region, but mirrors the traumatising events of the Industrial Revolution and World War I on a

³⁶⁵ Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 177.

³⁶⁶ Young, *Beyond* 135.

³⁶⁷ Campbell, *Gibbon* 63-4.

³⁶⁸ Johnson 133.

³⁶⁹ See p. 6 of the present study on verisimilitude in regional literature.

national as well as an international scale, thereby “reach[ing] out to universalism by talking about the region and nation” (“View” 111, 117). Consequently, Chris’s perception of her region and the various changes it is subjected to mirrors international phenomena and therefore combines regionalist description with universal relevance.

Intertwining the characterisation of Chris with the land as well as the cycles of agricultural life, however, has not always drawn positive criticism. As has been argued, the portrayal of the female protagonist as “closer to nature” and removed from political and religious creeds might suggest a Romantic view of women being closer to nature, implying that a woman’s place is not in the political realm of society but fulfilling a reproductive function.³⁷⁰ Zagratzki addresses this concept, describing the strong identification of Chris with “female knowledge of cyclical nature” in opposition to the male order of life (*Tendenzen* 230-31, transl. Mewald) as well as the clouds mentioned above. By correlating agricultural landscape with the protagonist, Gibbon exploits the sexual metaphors connected to female fertility (cf. the chapter headings of *Sunset Song* which parallel Chris’s transition from girl to woman and mother). Moreover, women’s sexual roles are fixed as passive and receptive by the identification of Chris with the land.³⁷¹ Thus, Chris’s characterisation as being close to the land might be understood as a stereotypical reduction of women’s roles to the natural and reproductive realm of life.

The dynamics of the *Quair*’s character-land relationship are therefore in line with the regionalist feature of the land as an agent affecting the lives and fortunes of the characters.³⁷² The fact that Chris ultimately returns to a rural lifestyle could be understood as exemplifying a “back to the soil” idea perpetuated by Gibbon. Indeed, his criticism of industrial centres and the living conditions in slums³⁷³ might underline this claim. Such an interpretation would correspond with the writings of many other regionalist writers advocating a return to agrarianism.³⁷⁴ However, Gibbon’s intentions have been shown to be far from that, the writer being aware that such an endeavour would invariably fail.³⁷⁵ Consequently, Gibbon’s convictions contradict an interpretation of the *Quair* as including a regionalist “back to the soil” message comparable to agrarians like Ransom or Tate. Indeed, his intention in having Chris return to the land seems to be connected to her mythical relationship with nature rather

³⁷⁰ Carol Anderson referred to in Dixon, “Edges” 298.

³⁷¹ Stirling 50.

³⁷² Shipley 268. See also p. 5 of the present study on the features of regional literature.

³⁷³ See p. 15 of the present study.

³⁷⁴ See p. 5 of the present study.

³⁷⁵ See p. 24 of the present study.

than to ideas of agrarianism. The portrayal of Chris's personal development in terms of the agricultural cycle, however, points towards the fact that Chris is seen, at least by Gibbon, as an heiress to the Golden Age people, thus giving her character the potential of universal representation.

4.2.2. Chris Caledonia

Chris is addressed as "Chris Caledonia" in *Cloud Howe* by her second husband Robert Colquhoun:

What does it feel like being as you are--a nuisance, just, or tremendous and terrible? And Chris had said that it made you feel sick, now and then, and Robert had laughed at that, [...] Oh Chris Caledonia, I've married a nation! (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 139, italics his)

Some time after this conversation, Chris muses that "it was true enough, somehow you did hide away the things, Scots folk had always done that, you supposed--in case they'd go blind in their naked shrine" (ibid.). Thus, she acknowledges her own tendency of hiding pain and emotions and keeping a matter-of-fact approach to life. She also implies that this is a trait shared by Scottish people in general. It could be argued that this is the "businesslike Germanic head" that makes Chris – and by implication all Scots – treat everyday things this way (cf. p. 59 of the present study) and that causes both Chris and Robert to interpret her reaction as typically Scottish.

Indeed, the above quoted passage is frequently used as an argument by critics interpreting Chris as a national metaphor. Another decisive instant is when Stephen Mowat says that he felt as if "Scotland herself" in the person of Chris was staring at him (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 105). Yet, as Stirling argues, the idea of Chris as a national metaphor is based mainly on the interpretation of critics and testifies to the need for such a figure at the time.³⁷⁶ Indeed, Crawford compares Chris's "national typicality" to figures like Jeanie Deans from the *Waverley* novels by Sir Walter Scott ("View" 124, italics his), thus becoming another of such national representatives. In his introduction to *Cloud Howe*, Crawford also notes that Chris embodies "the most positive, the most enduring aspects of the national character in a complex form" (xi), acting, in his eyes, sometimes as a representative, not of Scotland or Scottish history, but of the Scottish people. If understood as a national metaphor, as for instance by Gifford,³⁷⁷ Chris's characteristic unwillingness to subscribe to religious or political creeds, as well as her

³⁷⁶ Stirling 49.

³⁷⁷ Gifford, *Gibbon* 72.

alienation in industrialised and urbanised spaces, would suggest that Gibbon is drawing a picture of Scotland that is strongly reminiscent of the freedom-loving Scots who have a romanticised connection to the land they live on.

Moreover, Chris's connection to the land has been interpreted in terms of national character, implying that a special bond between humans and nature is a particularly Scottish trait. As early as in Macpherson's *Ossian*, nature mysticism and communion with the landscape, and through it ancestral memory, emerged as a stereotype of Scottish people.³⁷⁸ Young attributes this feature to the fact that Chris has many generations of peasant blood in her veins, making it impossible for her to lead a life removed from nature.³⁷⁹ Indeed, Chris's relationship with the land has led to her interpretation as "the Earth Mother whose time is past" (Gifford, *Gibbon* 110). In fact, it has been argued that while most stereotypes of Scottishness are male, the most dominant cliché for women is that of "mother of the earth."³⁸⁰ The parallel structure of *Sunset Song* with Chris's development into a woman, wife, and mother, further underlines this theme by associating female and arable fertility.³⁸¹

Dixon maintains that throughout the *Quair* the land is identified with Scotland.³⁸² Since Chris is seen by some as symbolically representing the land,³⁸³ she might thus be perceived as representative of Scotland by extension. Indeed, critics have repeatedly interpreted her as "Scotland herself" (Wittig 331) or "the Scottish national metaphor" (Richardson 127), arguing that her connections to her three husbands are symbolic, as well. Wittig famously put forward the idea that the union with a Highland crofter, a minister, and a common man signify Scotland's facets of Highland culture, the Kirk, and the emerging working classes.³⁸⁴ Campbell echoes this view, arguing that Chris's first marriage symbolises Scotland's link with the land, the second marriage the link with the Church, and the last marriage with the Depression.³⁸⁵ Indeed, also the stages of Chris's story described in the *Quair*, moving from a rural Scotland through domination of church and war to the industrial revolution, have been read as signifying the changes the nation went through in the process of becoming a modern nation.³⁸⁶

³⁷⁸ Carruthers 130.

³⁷⁹ Young, *Beyond* 87.

³⁸⁰ Skirrow qtd. Corbett, *Language* 188. G. Skirrow, "Women, Women and Scotland: "Scotch Reels" and Political Perspectives" (*Cencrastus* 11 (1983):3-6).

³⁸¹ Stirling 51.

³⁸² Dixon, "Gibbon" 205.

³⁸³ Gifford, Dunnigan, and MacGillivray 595.

³⁸⁴ Wittig 331.

³⁸⁵ Campbell, *Gibbon* 58.

³⁸⁶ Gifford, Dunnigan, and MacGillivray 588.

This general pattern corresponds to Gibbon's view of the coming of civilisation and its influence on people. Significantly, this extends towards all humankind, making the *Quair's* characters and events universally representative of the diffusionist primitive peoples corrupted by religion, power, and politics.³⁸⁷

However, Stirling argues, Chris should not be understood as a simple romantic personification of Scotland, her realistic characterisation clashing with such a function from the start. Instead, Stirling sees her as a representative of the national character and an undemonstrative humour as in her conversation with Robert about her pregnancy.³⁸⁸ In fact, as several scholars have argued, Chris should not be seen as a symbol of Scotland but rather as embodying certain elements connected to Scottish national character. Campbell maintains that the possibilities of Scottishness are reflected in her struggle for identity and survival against "hostile and ugly invasions of alien effort" (*Gibbon* 112) – presumably English influence – and not in visible markers of Scottishness such as dress, language, or custom.

4.2.3. Divided Selves

The notion of Chris's divided selves appears early in *Sunset Song*, when she muses "two Chrisses there were that fought for her heart and tormented her" (*Gibbon, Sunset Song* 32), one longing to leave behind the rural community that feels so restrictive, the other unable to detach herself from the land. This struggle is also between the "English Chris" and the "other Chris" (with the implication that this is the "Scottish Chris") who is content with her rural lifestyle and her closeness to nature (*Gibbon, Sunset Song* 46). The "English Chris" reads English books, likes schoolwork, and wants to become a schoolteacher, "she'd have a brave house of her own and wear what she liked" (*Gibbon, Sunset Song* 61). This part of Chris wants to break out of the confines of rural Kinraddie and leave behind the hard peasant life that is embodied by her father. The "other Chris" seems to be inspired by her mother, since Chris calls this self "the Chris that was Murdoch, Chris of the land" (*ibid.* 43) after her mother's maiden name. In Zagratzki's view, the part of Chris that wants to escape from the rural village and to rise on the social scale is connected to the English language and thus articulates a feeling of inferiority towards English cultural and educational dominance, reflecting a national inferiority complex.³⁸⁹ Dixon interprets this feature of Chris's character similarly,

³⁸⁷ Gifford, *Gibbon* 101.

³⁸⁸ Stirling 51.

³⁸⁹ Zagratzki, *Tendenzen* 216.

seeing it as an expression of the tension between Englishness and Scottishness, with the implication that Englishness is connected to learning and social promotion and Scottishness to an organic relationship with the land.³⁹⁰ Therefore, the implied conflict within Chris is between traditional values and ways of life and embracing the modern, “sophisticated” world.³⁹¹

When Chris grows older, more “Chrisses” appear, while others, like the child in her, disappear. When she realises that she is pregnant in *Sunset Song*, “Chris Guthrie crept out from the place below the beech trees where Chris Tavendale lay and went wandering off into the waiting quiet of the afternoon” (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 176). This self, however, becomes distant past already in *Cloud Howe*, when Chris muses about “that other Chris [...] Remote and far to think she was YOU!” (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 137, emphasis his). Malcolm argues that Chris goes through several “incarnations” in the trilogy, the first the nature-loving Chris inspired by her mother, then the ambitious Chris, the romantic personage during her marriages, and finally the fourth, independent and detached Chris.³⁹² Reading the last pages of the trilogy in view of this, it could be argued that Gibbon favours the “Scottish” Chris by making her return to the land in the end.³⁹³ This split in Chris’s character is reminiscent of Gibbon’s own conflicting feelings towards his native region and Scotland, feeling the pull of the land, on the one hand, and the urge to break out of his rural background, on the other.³⁹⁴ Significantly, Gibbon himself chose the other possibility, namely leaving his native region to live in England.

As Carruthers points out, Chris’s condition of having divided selves is in line with the modernist trope of divided identities or “otherness” within characters.³⁹⁵ This feature of Chris’s character could also be interpreted as a sign of “fluid subjectivity” in Julia Kristeva’s terms, positioning her in a modernist and feminist context and underlining the concept of women’s diverse subject positions.³⁹⁶ Other scholars have read it in terms of “split personality,”³⁹⁷ which might suggest – in combination with the epithet “Chris Caledonia” – a symptom of national disorientation, similar to Smith’s

³⁹⁰ Dixon, “Gibbon” 204.

³⁹¹ Young, *Beyond* 87.

³⁹² Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 176.

³⁹³ Campbell, *Gibbon* 59-60.

³⁹⁴ Campbell, *Gibbon* 40; Gifford, *Gibbon* 84.

³⁹⁵ Carruthers 131-2.

³⁹⁶ McCulloch and Dunnigan, Introduction 22; Lumsden’s “‘Women’s Time’: Reading the *Quair* as a Feminist Text” 44. See also Deirdre Burton’s essay “A Feminist Reading of Lewis Grassie Gibbon’s *A Scots Quair*.”

³⁹⁷ Carruthers 129.

concept of the Caledonian antyzygy,³⁹⁸ thus suggesting a split national identity through Chris's divided selves.

4.3. Communities

As Douglas Young has argued that, since the communities of the *Quair* receive less intensive treatment than the major characters in terms of characterisation, their members tend to appear as types or representatives of certain groups.³⁹⁹ The novels' social settings move from a close-knit rural community to a small-town community and, finally, to a large industrial town. While several community members of Kinraddie receive individual and rounded treatment, the Segget community comprises of groups like the spinners whose members are basically interchangeable, and in Duncairn most people are anonymous and the few characters interacting with Chris are, in Forster's terms, flat.

The community of Kinraddie features several minor characters that are depicted in a rounded fashion. For instance, the members of Chris's family are shown in their various facets. Particularly the treatment of her mother and father shows the characters' inner conflicts, hopes, and dreams. A flashback in *Sunset Song* tells the reader about the time before their marriage, during which John is having trouble resisting the temptation of pre-marital sex: "his face would go black with rage at her because of that sweetness that tempted his soul to hell" (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 27). In John Guthrie's case, the preoccupation with and strict adherence to church doctrine is foregrounded, echoing the prominent trope in Scottish fiction of the Kirk's strong influence on everyday life, writers seeking to come to terms with restrictive rules and often false piety. As mentioned before (see p. 66 of the present thesis), John is torn between the physical attraction to his wife and the fact that he cannot let his family grow any larger, in combination with the church's ban on contraception. Much of his frustration surfaces in cruel treatment of his children as well as in hate for himself.

The characters and communities of *Sunset Song* have also been read in national terms. Tom Crawford argues that the novel "celebrates a nation through a region; its farm folk are of the Mearns, but they are also typical Scots" (Introduction *Sunset Song*, viii). This view is shared by Richardson, who points out that the novel succeeds in presenting national sentiments because Gibbon skilfully creates an image of

³⁹⁸ See p. 59 of the present study.

³⁹⁹ Young, Interview.

Scottishness,⁴⁰⁰ as well as by Campbell, who provides a summary of some typically Scottish elements in *Sunset Song*, its characters and communities:

There are many features of the book which strike the Scottish reader as Scottish [...]: the election of a new minister and the community's dour, fierce interest in the personalities rather than the significance of the Church affairs (S 52); Long Rob's fierce working-class anticlericalism and radicalism (S 27); the community spirit which binds Kinraddie at the time of the burning of Peesie's Knapp (S 76-7) and even more typically the slanderous gossip which follows, once Chae and his family are safe, enquiring whether they started the fire deliberately to make insurance money (S 81). Chris's neighbourliness to Rob (S 167) and Ewan's confidences to Chae (S 177) in France indicate the neighbourliness of Scot to Scot in times of difficulty. (Campbell, Gibbon 89-90)

Thus, neighbourliness, a sense of community, and a certain disregard of the authority of the church, but also gossip and radicalism are seen as typically Scottish. In particular, the characters of Chae Strachan and Long Rob contribute to the picture of neighbourly help and friendship in *Sunset Song*. Campbell even goes as far as calling Kinraddie "warm" and "welcoming" (Gibbon 118) which, in fact, suggests that the village resembles a typical Kailyard setting. Indeed, with "its pastoral simplicity" of being slightly remote, patriarchal and devout, and with its sympathetic characters like Chae and Rob, the depiction of Kinraddie could create this impression (Campbell, Gibbon 67). Yet, by depicting negative features like the "slanderous gossip," Gibbon subverts the Kailyard form and balances out the romanticised image of Scots as close to nature with the depiction of social reality. Moreover, the tendency to oppose and criticise each other, reminiscent of the "Caledonian antyzyzygy" is mentioned as typically Scottish in the quote above. Consequently, the features outlined by Campbell suggest a reading of *Sunset Song* in terms of national representation. These elements of national character are nevertheless strongly connected to the region by their perceived authenticity and thus exemplify the co-existence of regional and national elements from the beginning of the trilogy on.

The central place of the Kirk, also hinted at in the quote above, becomes very pronounced in several places in Gibbon's trilogy. Gibbon's depiction of the Scottish Kirk adds to the negative picture of his tight-knit communities of Kinraddie and Segget. Gibbon was of the opinion that the church, and especially Scottish Calvinism, produce "strange abnormalities of appearance and behaviour" (*Speak* 166), for instance in the sexual life of Scots. Gibbon's portrayal of the community's devoutness, however, has an ironic side next to its fatalistic one. The churchgoers sleep or bring sweets to while

⁴⁰⁰ Richardson 125.

away the time.⁴⁰¹ Some attend the service merely to be able to join the gossip about the new minister later. Going to church thus becomes a farce of pretentiousness and false piety and a stage for gossip. Yet, not only the pretentious churchgoers, also the ministers receive their share of Gibbon's sarcasm. They are presented as hypocritical parasites to the community, having affairs with young girls and drinking excessively.⁴⁰² Thus, the place of the Kirk in the *Quair* and its considerable influence in people's lives reflects a common trope found in Scottish literature.⁴⁰³

When, in the first volume of the trilogy, the First World War breaks out, several men of *Sunset Song* are forced to become soldiers and thus give Gibbon the opportunity to pit his characters against the stereotype of the Scottish warrior. Initially, the characters of *Sunset Song* are not concerned with the fighting. Long Rob is the most steadfast pacifist of the village and is frequently exposed to negative reactions by members of the community.⁴⁰⁴ However, with time, more and more men of Kinraddie sign up for the front line and even Long Rob, who had defied the recruitment agency for a long time, decides to join the war.⁴⁰⁵ Significantly, heroicism does not feature in Gibbon's rendition of the war. Ewan, whose character had been so terribly altered while training to go to war, tries to flee from the front, having realised that his place was on his farm and with his family, and is shot as a deserter. In line with Broun, Finlay, and Lynch's claim that the trope of the Scottish warrior had disappeared by the beginning of World War I, the depiction of *Sunset Song's* men as soldiers is devoid of what is commonly perceived as heroicism or military success. Indeed, Gibbon depicts Ewan's decision to return home as heroic, on contrast to what would have been expected of the stereotypical Scottish warrior. In *Cloud Howe* the aftermath of the war surfaces in Robert's mysterious illness which is revealed to be caused by exposure to gas weapons.⁴⁰⁶ Thus, Gibbon's depiction of the war-related qualities of his Scottish characters rejects the stereotype of the Scots as fierce and dour warriors, a cliché that romanticises and downplays the horrors of war. In contrast, Gibbon's pragmatic and pacifist view of international conflicts, conditioned by the diffusionist belief in the primitive goodness of man, becomes clear in his treatment of the First World War. The *Quair's* characters who participate in it, and especially Ewan, are implied to be

⁴⁰¹ Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 206.

⁴⁰² Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 74, 84.

⁴⁰³ See p. 53 of the present study.

⁴⁰⁴ Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 194.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid. 232.

⁴⁰⁶ Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 20.

descendants of the innocent Golden Age people, led astray by civilisation but returning to “sanity” in the end. Consequently, Gibbon’s depiction of his characters in the war subverts the stereotype of the Scottish warrior and, instead, helps to emphasise the writer’s humanist agenda.

The demarcation of the *Quair*’s communities from other regions and “centres” has been argued to position them in a regionalist context. In *Sunset Song*, a distinction between the Lowlands and the Highlands seems to feature prominently. Ewan senior, who is a Highlander, is referred to as “coarse” and a “dour devil” with a “Highland temper” (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 100, 145, 143) and also Chris’s English teacher Mr Murgetson “spoke with a funny whine, the Highland whine, and the boys swore he had hair growing up between his toes like a Highland cow” (ibid. 44). A negative view of other regions and their inhabitants thus establishes a demarcation from other regions and by inference a feeling of belonging to the Mearns. Moreover, Stonehaven is seen as a kind of “centre” where people have started to replace their local culture with socially more prestigious elements. This can be observed when people are trying to speak English: “funny how they tried to speak English one to the other, looking sideways as they cried the words to see if folk thought them gentry” (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 121). Indeed, the demarcation and distinction from the “other,” the centre, reflects concerns of the centre and the periphery as found in regional literature. In addition, the distinction from the English is marked in the *Quair*. Anti-English sentiments become apparent early in the trilogy, the Kinraddie community voice expressing the common opinion that “everybody knew that the English were awful mean and couldn’t speak right and were cowards who captured Wallace and killed him by treachery” (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 33). In *Cloud Howe*, Dite Peat talks about his landlady in London, saying that she was

[...] only English and they’re tinks by nature, it wasn’t as though she was decent and Scotch. [...] a face like a bairn, a fool, white, with no guts, like the English queans [...] every now and then she would laugh like an idiot, he supposed that the English did that in their pleasure. (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 41)

This statement expresses the tensions between Scotland and England inherent in Gibbon’s treatment of Scottish national identity. Thus, the dynamic of centre vs. periphery can be applied to England vs. Scotland. Considering the relationship of the two nations, a pattern of centre vs. periphery, rather similar to the relationship between region and nation can be discerned. In this respect, the *Quair*’s regionalist distinction between the Mearns and other regions blends into a kind of nationalist distinction from England. Thus, the regionalist tensions between the periphery and the centre extend to

the opposition between Scotland and England, the power relations in the *Quair* hinting at potential readings in terms of the regional and the national, at the same time.

The reception of the *Quair* is a further factor that points towards the co-existence or even co-dependence of regional and national issues in the novel. At least in the eyes of many readers, Gibbon's social realism depicted the nation of Scotland and its problems and challenges faithfully. For instance, *Sunset Song* was voted "the book which most epitomised Scotland" in 2003 (McCulloch and Dunnigan, Introduction 20). Its popularity, not only in Scotland but worldwide, suggests that Scottish readers recognise the settings and communities as their own and non-Scottish readers appreciate a representation of Scotland that appears authentic and accessible. However, even though Gibbon was criticised for "[t]he unredeemed close-packed filth, meanness, spite, brutality, lying squalor and stupidity" in his depiction of the negative sides of agricultural work in *Sunset Song* that "wearied" the reviewer of *The Paisley Express* (qtd. Crawford, Introduction *Sunset Song* vii), his social realism was later praised by critics. Moreover, Gibbon's arguable authenticity even resulted in displeasure in the population of the Mearns when people from his native village and its surroundings "recognised" themselves or their relatives in *Sunset Song*.⁴⁰⁷ Indeed, many of Kinraddie's characters are modelled on people from Gibbon's childhood and youth. For instance, John Guthrie has to be considered a reflection of Gibbon's unrelenting father and the character of Long Rob seems to have been inspired by Gibbon's father-in-law.⁴⁰⁸ The reception of *Sunset Song* therefore points towards a possible reading of its characters as typically Scottish.

The quality of characterisation has been argued to fall off in the later volumes of the *Quair*. Campbell maintains that some of *Cloud Howe's* characters are "cruelly blown up compared with the sustaining foreground of credible characterisation based on Chris" (Gibbon 97). Indeed, figures like Ag Moultrie, the "Roarer and Greeter," are presented in just this function, shouting out rumours, having "fit[s] of delight" when spreading news and gossip (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 145), or crying out loudly whenever something tragic happens in Segget. Sim Leslie is a prototypical policeman who tries to uphold order but is usually not heeded by Segget's people. When a group of spinners enter the local fair without paying, he turns a blind eye to avoid unrest: "Sim Leslie, him that the folk called Feet, went over and looked at the bunch fell stern, he hadn't seen them pay at the gate. But he wasn't keen on starting a row, just looked at them

⁴⁰⁷ Williamson 149.

⁴⁰⁸ Campbell, *Gibbon* 6.

stern: and the spinners all laughed” (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 61). When he tries to break up a fight later that day, the opponents let go of each other and beat him up instead.⁴⁰⁹ Old Leslie the blacksmith is another one-dimensional character who is frequently used to voice criticism as a representative of the older generation, adding tales about his childhood, which always start with “when I was a loon up in Garvock” and which no one seems to want to hear: “*Now, when I was a loon up in Garvock . . . and folk began to hem and talk loud, and look up at the roof and hoast in their throats, and you couldn’t hear more, and that was a blessing, the old fool could deave a dog into dysentery*” (ibid.132, italics his). Such treatment of character suggests caricature, a view which is shared by Douglas Young, according to whom such passages should make a “cheap laugh” (Young, *Beyond* 106). Indeed, also Dixon comments that Mr. Mowat, for instance, is the “caricatured fascist aristocrat of *Cloud Howe*” (“Gibbon” 204). His speech is described as an “English bray” (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 106) that makes the maid giggle, Gibbon ridiculing his speech by orthographic means:

The thing that was needed everywhere was Discipline, hwaw? and order, and what not. The hand of the master--all the Jahly old things. He had been down in Italy the last few months and had seen things there, Rahly amazing, the country awakening, regaining its soul, its old leaders back--with a new one or so. Discipline, order, hierarchy--all that. And why only Italy; why not Scotland? (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 106-7)

As Dixon’s statement suggests, Mowat is received as a typical fascist aristocrat just as Feet seems to be the stereotypical policeman and Old Leslie the cliché of the oldest and quirkiest man in town. This array of typical figures has prompted Crawford to describe Segget as “fictional in order to be *typical* – more typical than a photographic documentary of any real community could be” (Introduction *Cloud Howe* viii, italics his). Most poignantly, however, *Cloud Howe*’s spinners are described as one entity, its members seemingly a crowd of indistinguishable figures. Young Ewan muses that “you liked the Mills, you’d been down there twice, with Charlie, he said the folk in New Toun were daft to speak of the folk in the Mills as only spinners, there were foremen and weavers, and a lot more besides; but they all *looked* like spinners” (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 117, italics his). Thus, with few exceptions such as the story about the Kindnesses,⁴¹⁰ the spinners are seen as one entity lacking individualised characterisation. Consequently, it can be established that the minor characters of *Cloud Howe* are largely depicted as “types,” which are often comical, sometimes bordering on

⁴⁰⁹ Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 75.

⁴¹⁰ See p. 93 of the present study.

“crude comedy,” for instance in the case of Old Leslie (Young, *Beyond* 106). Yet, even though these types appear to be closely linked to their region they seem to transgress its borders, arguably to become Scottish ones, as Crawford’s statement above suggests. The community of Segget has come to encompass the group of the spinners which is frequently represented by characters who hardly seem individualised but rather exchangeable members of the group.

As the trilogy moves to an industrial city in *Grey Granite*, the community has become fragmented and the minor characters largely disappear. Those who feature in the novel have become even less individualised than *Cloud Howe*’s characters and are frequently mere representatives of groups. Chris interacts with a few people in Ma Cleghorn’s boarding house, but only Chris and Ewan receive differentiated treatment. Ma Cleghorn, who owns the boarding house Chris lives and works at, becomes Chris’s main contact and even daily companion and friend. Her characterisation, however, focuses mainly on her position as a mother figure for Chris as well as a matriarch of the house. Ma is worried about Chris feeling cold and comforts her when she mourns Robert’s death.⁴¹¹ In the boarding house, Ma usually sits at the top of the table looking “sonsy and sturdy” (Gibbon, *Grey Granite* 13).⁴¹² Through Ewan and his work at the factory the reader hears about the lives of a few working-class people⁴¹³ and the narrative voice frequently shifts into inner monologues of unnamed inhabitants of Duncairn. Indeed, many of the minor characters of *Grey Granite* are depicted as “types,” which is confirmed by Douglas Young, who points out that the detail and differentiation in the characterisation of minor characters and communities decreases as the trilogy progresses.⁴¹⁴

Parallel to a loss of individualised characterisation, the groups of people featured in *Grey Granite* seem to lose their regional or even national distinctiveness. Indeed, Whittington argues that they “have nothing regional about them. They are urbanites who could belong to any region and who are only Scottish because Gibbon locates them in a Scottish city” (79). Duncairn’s workers – unlike *Sunset Song*’s peasants who were able to retain some of their pristine characteristics – seem to have lost their individuality and by implication their essential humanity.⁴¹⁵ As Young points out, they are no longer distinctive but “merely representative of civilised mankind” (*Beyond* 108). To Young,

⁴¹¹ Gibbon, *Grey Granite* 9, 16.

⁴¹² “Sonsy” is general Scots for “sensible” (DSL).

⁴¹³ Gibbon, *Grey Granite* 46.

⁴¹⁴ Young, Interview.

⁴¹⁵ Young, *Beyond* 122-23.

the reason for the lack of individuality in the Duncairn workers is that Gibbon could not relate to the experience of the proletariat; he might not have been immersed enough in these communities to portray them faithfully and believably and thus saw them all as one type, the “keelies.”⁴¹⁶ In addition, the mimetic element of such characterisation must not be underestimated, the writer aiming to emphasise the alienation and dehumanisation that, to him, are the consequences of modernity and industrialisation. The ideas of diffusionism offer a similar reading of this decline in individuality of characters and heterogeneity of communities. In fact, diffusionists, who perceive industrial cities as negative consequences of civilisation, would depict the urban population as alienated from the natural world and their own nature, alienated even from each other. Thus, while the inhabitants of Duncairn lack regional specificity and even individuality, their lives, their problems and dreams are depicted as universally relevant and, therefore, parallel to the experiences of working class people all over the world.

4.4. Concluding Comments

The present chapter has put the characterisation of Chris and the communities of the *Quair* into the context of regionalist literature, national representation, and universal representation or significance. The narrative technique of internal focalisation in combination with the technique of the self-referring “you” (treated below) creates an intimate relationship between Chris and the reader, which in turn provides a basis for conveying the pull of the land on the character. A regionalist reading of the verisimilitude of detail in describing landscape and nature, as well as Chris’s feelings of belonging, is evident. However, Chris’s relationship with the land reaches out further to universal representation, when seen in the context of the diffusionist theory in which peasants worldwide reflect and retain the innocence and primitive values of the Golden Age people. Chris’s special relationship with the land is part of Gibbon’s diffusionist view that spiritual communion with the land is central to human experience, thus positioning Chris as a universal representative. Moreover, her rejection of religion is presented as a national typicality, even though the Kirk has a vital influence on her life as a restricting force, which is a frequent trope in Scottish writing. By presenting Chris as unconcerned with other “creeds” such as politics Gibbon conveys the universal suggestion that mankind needs to return to primitive values instead of “hunting clouds.” Chris’s stoicism or natural reserve seems to be connected to this freedom of creeds. This

⁴¹⁶ Young, *Beyond* 105, 122 ff; Whittington 83.

feature is implied to be common to Scottish people and can be linked to the long-standing stereotype of the freedom-loving and dour Scots, who asserted their independence already in the Declaration of Arbroath. Scholars have read certain passages of the *Quair* as establishing Chris as a national metaphor. Indeed, her character has been shown to reflect certain traits which are suggested to be typically Scottish, but her differentiated characterisation contradicts readings that position her as a mere symbol or “woman-as-nation.” In fact, Chris should rather be seen as representative of the innocent Golden Age people who have retained the primitive values Gibbon advocated.

The characterisation of the *Quair*’s communities shows a pattern of declining cohesion and individuality of character of community members as well as increasing depiction of characters as types. *Sunset Song*’s village community features several characters who receive differentiated treatment. Elements like the inclusion of regional customs and the opposition of the Mearns to centres like Stonehaven or other regions like the Highlands suggest a regionalist reading of the novel. Yet, the community of Kinraddie has also been read in terms of national representation. The central place of the Kirk in people’s lives but also the basic independence of religion, and not the least the reception of the community as authentically Scottish, point towards such an interpretation. At the same time, Gibbon’s diffusionist view implies that the Mearns peasants are representative of humankind, having been able to retain their primitive values. Thus, already the community in the first volume of the trilogy combines elements of the regional, the national, and the universal.

In the second and third novels, the differentiated characterisation of communities and their members seems to decrease significantly. Minor characters disappear or become mere “types” and groups of people such as the spinners in *Cloud Howe* or the workers in *Grey Granite* are represented by interchangeable figures. This development seems to reflect Gibbon’s view that the experience of industrialisation and urbanisation was universal and not particular to Scotland. Yet, even as the characters of *Cloud Howe* and *Grey Granite* become more universal and consequently suitable for Gibbon to comment upon issues of international magnitude like industrialisation, urbanisation, and poverty, some retain elements of their regional identity. Consequently, the depiction of communities in the *Quair* reflects the coexistence of the regional, the national, and the universal with a progressive movement towards the universal.

5. Narrative Structure

This section deals with two major elements of narrative structure which combine issues of language and characterisation. First, Gibbon's use of different voices representing the point of view and thoughts of the main focalisers creates a narrative pattern which is intended to convey intimacy with the characters, but, when adapted by Gibbon to hint at universality, also the perception of their representative nature. Second, the linguistic feature of the "you" reinforces the identification of the reader with the characters and, depending on its usage, helps to suggest that certain experiences or reactions of characters can be seen as either individual or typical.

5.1. Voices – Individual and Collective

The analysis of the different voices that make up the narrative pattern of the *Quair* is conditioned by the strong oral element in the trilogy. Throughout the three novels, individual characters, but also the community, function as focalisers through whose consciousness the events are rendered. Indeed, as Campbell points out, the technique of using these voices creates reader involvement in issues that concern both, individual characters and the community.⁴¹⁷ Gibbon's technique of using various voices thus creates the impression of hearing the thoughts of the *Quair's* people.⁴¹⁸ The transgression between the different voices is achieved by linguistic markers which shift the point-of-view seamlessly. For instance, the appearance of "father" or "mother" provides vital clues as to the character whose voice is currently heard and who is accordingly acting as the focaliser.⁴¹⁹ A side effect of Gibbon's strong focus on orality is that events tend to be presented dramatically, that is, through dialogue and monologue, rather than narratively by an authorial voice.⁴²⁰ As Trengove points out, the impression that the central chapters are told by Chris as a monologue is an important element of the trilogy's – and especially *Sunset Song's* – success.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁷ Campbell, *Gibbon* 92.

⁴¹⁸ Power 192.

⁴¹⁹ Trengove 50.

⁴²⁰ Ibid.

⁴²¹ Ibid. 57.

5.1.1. Chris

Chris is a main voice heard from the beginning of the trilogy. Already the opening paragraph of the main narrative⁴²² introduces Chris's consciousness through which events are filtered and narrated retrospectively as flashbacks:

Below and around where Chris Guthrie lay the June moors whispered and rustled and shook their cloaks, yellow with broom and powdered faintly with purple, that was the heather but not the full passion of its colour yet. And in the east against the cobalt blue of the sky lay the shimmer of the North Sea, that was by Bervie, and maybe the wind would veer there in an hour or so and you'd feel the change in the life and strum of the thing, bringing a streaming coolness out of the sea. (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 25)

This description is clearly given through the filter of Chris's thoughts, as insertions like "maybe" indicate. Moreover, Chris's consciousness provides additional information, for instance that the broom is not "the full passion of its colour yet" or "that was by Bervie" as additional explanatory elements. Her personal reaction to the coolness of the sea, "you'd feel the change in the life and strum of the thing," is also rendered in this passage. Thus, Chris's consciousness provides a filter to the narrative voice from the beginning of the trilogy on, reflecting on and interpreting the things she perceives.

Commenting on the properties of a successfully Scottish novel, Corbett notes that it will usually use the narrator as "a mediating element" going between the Scottish characters of the novel and non-Scottish readers.⁴²³ Chris is thus also a mediator between the Scots and the English elements of the *Quair's* style, as illustrated in the quote about the "Scots" Chris and the "English" Chris (see p. 32 of the present thesis). Moreover, the internal view of Chris adds significantly to her characterisation, in combination with the external view provided by other characters or voices.⁴²⁴ Indeed, the way that Chris's consciousness is presented assumes not only an expository but also a mediating function in Corbett's terms. He notes that verbless clauses are often indicative of the stream-of-consciousness technique,⁴²⁵ appearing for instance when Chris realises that she cannot leave her father's farm in order to become a teacher: "And her fine bit plannings!" (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 120) or when she has to tend to her horses in a thunderstorm: "So out to the night again" (ibid. 135).

⁴²² The Prelude and its narrator receive further treatment on p. 91 ff. of the present thesis.

⁴²³ Corbett, *Language* 145.

⁴²⁴ Cf. section 4 of the present thesis on characterisation.

⁴²⁵ Corbett, *Language* 162.

The effect of the predominant focalisation of events by Chris, aided by the self-referring “you” as outlined in the following subsections,⁴²⁶ is that the reader feels like a confidant who participates in her most intimate thoughts and feelings. By creating such a close relationship between the central character and the reader, Gibbon achieves strong identification with Chris.⁴²⁷ As most events of *Sunset Song* are presented by Chris herself, the narrative acquires great immediacy and spontaneity. For instance, a scene which has drawn considerable attention – indeed the claim has been voiced that it must have been written or at least informed by a woman⁴²⁸ – is the birth of Chris’s son Ewan. Her pain is described as a terrible beast clawing at her from inside, but then “the beast moved away from her breasts, scrabbled and tore and returned again, it wasn’t a beast, red-hot pincers were riving her apart. Riven and riven she bit at her lips, the blood on her tongue, she couldn’t bite more, she heard herself scream then, twice” (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 190). This scene could hardly have been rendered with more immediacy, intensity, and intimacy.

In the course of the trilogy, Chris’s voice occupies more and more marginal positions within the narrative. While in *Sunset Song* she is one of the protagonists of Kinraddie village life and we thus experience most events through her consciousness, in *Cloud Howe’s* Segget she is at the fringe of town life as the wife of the minister. In *Grey Granite’s* Duncairn, finally, she is one of the many voices that make up the narrative of the novel, alongside other individual voices like her son’s. When her voice is heard, there seems to be a development away from Scots to English, which could be read as a consequence of her “estrangement” from the land and thus her true nature. For instance, her daily routine in the boarding house is described thus:

[...] you were hungry all day, ate a large supper at nine o’clock found work nearly done and yawned a bit, and sat listening to Ma’s radio in the sitting-room, a deserted place most nights but for you. And you’d listen to talks on ethics and cocktails and how to go hiking on the Côte d’Azur [...] (Gibbon, *Grey Granite* 18)

This passage uses the familiar self-referring “you” but does not display any decidedly Scots features. Moreover, it introduces urban and cosmopolitan elements (i.e. the radio and the programme about the Côte d’Azur) which are far removed from Chris’s situation and therefore alien to her.

⁴²⁶ Cf. the subsection on “you” of the present thesis (p. 99 ff.).

⁴²⁷ Campbell, “Style” 277.

⁴²⁸ For instance, Gibbon’s fellow writer Helen Cruickshank was of the opinion that these scenes must have been written by a woman (cf. Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 138).

The decline of Chris's voice is felt strongly by the reader who is increasingly faced with unfamiliar and often anonymous voices expressing the fate of the working classes.⁴²⁹ While her voice had provided a kind of connecting tissue for the narrative of *Sunset Song*, commenting and interpreting events for the reader, the new voices in the later novels are fragmented, unreliable, and often unsympathetic. This development reflects the move from an intimate rural village to the alienation and change in community quality in an urban industrialised environment. Gibbon's implication in combining this development with the gradual loss of intimacy with the main character is in line with his diffusionist views that an industrial urban lifestyle, the ultimate consequence of "civilisation," is alien to and unbeneficial for humans.⁴³⁰

5.1.2. The Community Voice

Another major voice heard in the trilogy is the community voice or collective voice. A central element of this voice is its multi-faceted, changeable, and representative nature. The voice that is heard at the beginning of the trilogy in the Prelude to *Sunset Song* is referred to by some as the folk narrator or the folk voice. It recounts the history of the area and comments on the settlement of Kinraddie and the establishment of different families: "that was the Mains, below the Meikle House, and Ellison farmed it in his Irish way and right opposite, hidden away among their yews, were kirk and manse" (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 7). Johnson sees it as the voice of a member of the Kinraddie community recounting the history of the region, without the pretence of objectivity, and giving pieces of gossip about the resident families. The marked unreliability in this passage gives the reader clues not to accept such prejudices at face value.⁴³¹ An interpretation of the Prelude's narrator as one member of the community suggests a single anonymous voice from the community rather than a unified community voice. Indeed, Crawford's statement that the "anonymous folk narrator" is a main voice of *Sunset Song* implies his reading of this voice as *representative* of the community. This view is consistent with Ortega's analysis, who points out that, to him, the community voice is an assembly of interests and points of view that can be differentiated and might conflict with each other, rather than the community in unison.⁴³² Other scholars go

⁴²⁹ Campbell, "Style" 286.

⁴³⁰ Cf. the subsection 2.3.1. on diffusionism (p. 18 ff.).

⁴³¹ Johnson 128.

⁴³² Ortega 154.

further in their differentiation of the folk narrator and the community voice, perceiving the folk narrator as standing apart from the community voice.

The community voice, in contrast, is generally described as a unified voice expressing common opinion. According to Roskies's interpretation, the community voice is not identifiable with any single character (at any given time) but rather constitutes a "third presence" which *seems* omniscient and whose prejudices mark it as representative of the respective community.⁴³³ Yet, while the voice certainly claims great knowledge of the community, it does not qualify as omniscient since it is based on the common knowledge of its members.⁴³⁴ The considerable lack of agreement between scholars concerning this matter suggests that there is a fluid boundary between the interpretation of this voice (and/or the "folk narrator" - depending on the viewpoint) as consisting of many individual voices or as being the unison of the voices of the community. Indeed, Young points out that there is a frequent ambiguity of point of view which complicates the identification of the speaker as a specific character, an anonymous folk narrator, the community itself, or an amalgam of these. However, Wittig comments that this stylistic feature presents reality as both subjective and communal⁴³⁵ and to Young it is exactly this ambiguity that enables *Sunset Song* to express peasant life in its complexity.⁴³⁶

Furthermore, the community voice regularly gives the impression that its narrative is addressed to an imagined "fireside" audience.⁴³⁷ Consequently, a strong element of orality and performativity is engrained in this voice from the beginning on. This is reflected in the fact that it is regularly called the "speak" due to its function of relating the gossip of the place, but also the events at community gatherings such as weddings and traditional festivals. Norquay adds that the community voice of *Sunset Song* occasionally allows itself to adopt the viewpoint of a certain character, which might shift the sympathy toward the character being described by relating their own perception of a situation. Yet, Norquay continues, the voice will not entirely side with characters but relate both positive and negative "speak."⁴³⁸ Also Gifford notes that the "speak" constantly changes its tune, praising one character or event and condemning the other. Moreover, he points out that the "speak" does not always have to refer to an

⁴³³ Roskies 148.

⁴³⁴ Also Norquay points out that the voice does not claim omniscience (59).

⁴³⁵ Wittig 332.

⁴³⁶ Young, *Beyond* 90.

⁴³⁷ Roskies 148.

⁴³⁸ Norquay 59.

anonymous speaker but may also be “allocated” to a certain speaker.⁴³⁹ For example, an instance of this allocated “speak” can be found in John Muir’s story of the horrible fate of the Kindness family, who is evicted from their home during a rainy night. They try to find shelter and decide to spend the night in an empty pig stall. During the night, however, their baby’s thumb is gnawed off by rats and it dies soon after. John Muir’s story, starting with a question addressed to Chris, also incorporates the community voice: “She had heard of the Kindnesses? Well, they were folk that bided down in Segget Old Toun. [...] Kindness himself was an ill-doing childe, and weeks behind with his rent, folk said” (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 201). This passage intermingles Muir’s voice and the community voice, using certain markers to distinguish between them. The question to Chris initiating the story clearly puts Muir in the position of the speaker and Chris into the position of the listener. When the addition “folk said” is made, it becomes clear that the unsympathetic gossip is not Muir’s but that it is considered general knowledge or opinion.

A further significant function of the “speak,” as demonstrated in the example above, is its connection to the gossip of the place, which is related with an undertone that is regularly humorous, but also often ironic, sarcastic or even cruel. The following example exemplifies this idea: “Folk said that the kirk at Segget nowadays was a fine bit place to go for a sleep [...] you could pop a sweetie or so in your mouth and take a bit snore as the sermon went on” (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 206). This quote seems to illustrate the majority opinion in the community, stating the hypocritical attitude to religious service. The way this is communicated, using the common adjectival addition “bit,” which regularly indicates smallness and/or contempt,⁴⁴⁰ as well as the diminutive “sweeties,” expresses the lack of seriousness and the hypocrisy in Segget’s adherence to religious practice. The ironic element is created by the tensions between statements like this and the general climate of strict orthodox opinions. Robert, for instance, is treated with contempt because of his unorthodox way of leading his parish: “*He’s gentry and dirt with his flat-patted hair; and speaking to God as though he were speaking to a man next door*” (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 59, italics his).

Campbell argues that the slanderous gossip of the “speak” is an element that marks the *Quair* as typically Scottish.⁴⁴¹ The implication is that the close-knit nature of the communities described in the *Quair*, the way that community members gossip about

⁴³⁹ Gifford, *Gibbon* 76-77.

⁴⁴⁰ Cf. SND in the Dictionary of the Scots Language.

⁴⁴¹ Campbell, *Gibbon* 89-90.

each other, as well as the humorous or ironic element in this process, are specifically Scottish. Since these features are engrained in the “speak,” they seem to signify a national stereotype about the tendency for scathing gossip.⁴⁴² Gibbon’s treatment of these elements, however, often addresses such statements and their speakers ironically. Dramatic irony is frequently employed against such voices, as, for instance, in Hairy Hogg’s reaction to a sermon of Robert’s about evolution, misinterpreting the line of argument: “afore night had come the story had spread, the minister had said – you’d as good as heard him – that Hairy Hogg was a monkey, just” (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 59). Hogg is offended by Robert’s sermon because he thinks the minister claimed that he was directly descended from apes. By incorporating details like these, Gibbon attacks and deconstructs the stereotype of the gossiping, small-minded Scottish townspeople which had formerly been disseminated by the Kailyard and the anti-Kailyard.⁴⁴³ Additionally, individual voices like Chris’s work to undermine such rumours or gossip and to expose their stereotypical nature.

The collective voices of *Cloud Howe* and *Grey Granite* are adapted to express the changed conditions and thematic agendas of the author. As for the community voice of *Cloud Howe*, Murray argues that it tends to relate most of the events and social activities, largely replacing Chris’s consciousness as a mediating filter.⁴⁴⁴ There seems to be considerable disagreement among scholars whether it is unified and representative of the community or rather a chorus of individual voices, identified or unidentified.⁴⁴⁵ Zagratzki mentions that a number of heterogeneous voices make up the new collective voice of *Cloud Howe*.⁴⁴⁶ Indeed, it seems that the Segget community voice is not as homogenous as Kinraddie’s, since the town’s social makeup is more diverse than Kinraddie’s with the new class of the workers appearing on the scene. Instead, the Segget voice seems to be largely composed of individual voices or voices representative of certain groups which can mostly be identified by their opinions and views. For instance, statements like “the news reached Cronin, the old tink in West Wynd, him that was aye preaching his socialist stite” (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 134) or “you took a canny

⁴⁴² Stereotypes receive more detailed treatment in section 4 of the present thesis.

⁴⁴³ See p. 24 of the present study.

⁴⁴⁴ Murray 113. Roger Fowler terms the phenomenon of the use of different voices and the change in style and point of view the “mind-style” (Fowler 67). See also section 5 of the present thesis for a more in-depth analysis of the characters’ “mind-styles.”

⁴⁴⁵ Crawford interprets it as one voice representative of the community (Crawford, “View” 118-19) and Harvie describes the pattern as protagonist-chorus (Harvie, *Centre* 184). Young, in contrast, states that Segget does not have a voice of its own like Kinraddie had since, in his view, there is no continuous speaking voice behind the narrative (Young, *Beyond* 107). Also Norquay shares this view and adds that Segget’s voice is more fragmented and permits individual voices to be heard (Norquay 60).

⁴⁴⁶ Zagratzki, *Tendenzen* 225.

bit keek round about, at the throng of the Segget folk that were there – hardly a spinner, where were the dirt?” (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 94) are clearly spoken from the perspective of one of the Segget townspeople, who are very outspoken against socialist ideas.

Furthermore, in *Cloud Howe*, the tolerance of the Kinraddie voice wanes and characters are often exposed to cruel gossip. Also sympathy with characters or animals is largely lost. When the tale of Dalziel’s cart and horse is told, in which the horse is horribly impaled by a part of the cart, the voice seems to enjoy sharing the scandalous story:

Afore you could speak a fell concourse was round, old Moultrie came hirpling out with his stick, and cried *What do you mean, malagarousing my house?* and Jess Moultrie peeped, and looked white and sick; and Ag came out and then nipped back quick, no doubt in order to Roar and Greet. (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 128, italics his)

The reactions to this gruesome event are portrayed unsympathetically, even making the sarcastic comment about Ag, “the Roarer and Greeter,” allegedly coming to the scene to engage in her frequent screaming (“roaring”) and/or crying (“greeting”), which has given her this nickname. This general trend towards a hostile community voice that “delights in gossip and scandal” (Murray 109) alienates the reader and reinforces the feeling of loss of an old way of life the reader shares with the characters. As Zagratzki notes, the “speak” of Kinraddie was a kind of connecting tissue of the community, but the gossip of Segget strengthens the dividing forces as well as the egoism and envy of individuals. Moreover, he states, *Cloud Howe*’s community voice becomes a vehicle for class distinction since the new class of the spinners appears on the scene.⁴⁴⁷

Grey Granite faces the problem of representing the population of a large urban space. In order to depict the situation of the typical inhabitant of Duncairn, the novel’s collective voice acquires a fragmented quality to mirror the different experiences of city life by reflecting an amalgam of various individual and collective voices. However, the speakers are regularly unnamed or unidentified and thus take on a representative function, for instance for the workers.⁴⁴⁸ Indeed, as Campbell points out, *Grey Granite* does not feature a unified community voice, but “a pastiche of various *paroles intérieures*,” a polyphony of voices, organised in “layers of speech reporting” (“Style”

⁴⁴⁷ Zagratzki, *Tendenzen* 225.

⁴⁴⁸ See also section 4 of the present study for more information on the representative elements of characters.

279-80).⁴⁴⁹ Zagratzki states that *Grey Granite*'s tone has lost its poetic nature and now reflects the mechanic, monotonous rhythms of an industrial town.⁴⁵⁰ He mentions that this polyphony of voices reflects hastily sketched characters, but Norquay notes that it could also be interpreted as deliberately creating a sense of disparity mimetic of city life.⁴⁵¹

Zagratzki also establishes a connection between linguistic style in *Grey Granite* and Gibbon's aim of representing the social polarisation of Duncairn. He claims that the novel's style underlines this social phenomenon by the indirect speech of the middle-class characters, which is not framed by any narrative voice but rendered directly, mirroring the loss of communicative skills in an urban capitalist environment.⁴⁵² Malcolm points out that this "degeneration" of the narrator into a vague presence which presents the typical "keelie" experience contributes to the picture of social hardship Gibbon is painting, reaching its climax towards the end of the novel.⁴⁵³ This unspecified urban narrator is nameless and is used, for instance, to relate Ewan's release from prison: "And what would young Tavendale get, would you say?" (Gibbon, *Grey Granite* 144).

Yet, the community voice is not entirely lost in *Grey Granite*. As Craig points out, during their strike, the workers develop a collective consciousness and a collective voice:⁴⁵⁴ "all your mates about you, marching as one, you forgot all the chavie and trauchle of things" (Gibbon, *Grey Granite* 55). The generic "you," which had been used to great effect in the previous novels, reappears here to underline the creation of the new community voice. Indeed, this kind of collective voice is central to Gibbon's aim of presenting the workers not as individuals but as a body⁴⁵⁵ in order to speak about the political measures needed to relieve the plight of the masses in the industrial towns. Significantly, this new voice incorporates items of Scots, which demonstrates that the workers have found a way of expressing their opinions in Scots, their implied "natural" tongue.

⁴⁴⁹ See also Bakhtin's analysis of heteroglossia in his "Discourse in the Novel" (written in the 1930s, reprinted in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. By M. M. Bakhtin. Ed. Michael Holquist. Austin: U of Texas P, 1981.).

⁴⁵⁰ Zagratzki, *Tendenzen* 228.

⁴⁵¹ Norquay 62.

⁴⁵² Zagratzki, *Tendenzen* 228. Such an interpretation is, however, based on a negative evaluation of changed modes of communication in an urban context. Certainly, the emerging industrial towns at the time Gibbon was describing, might have given the impression of rapidly changing societal structures and modes of communication.

⁴⁵³ Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 154.

⁴⁵⁴ Craig, "Scotland" 237-8.

⁴⁵⁵ Norquay 62.

In addition, by the end of the novel, another set of (partial) community voices has appeared in the shape of bodies like the Town Council, the Church, the Labour Party, the Press, or the Police. These voices are presented in clippings without connecting narrative passages. Norquay points out that especially the media can be seen as a collective voice, which parodies contemporary insecurity.⁴⁵⁶ These institutionalised voices are part of the urban environment and, like the Segget voice, iterate opinions that are generally accepted as true. The multiple narration of events through these “institutional” voices provides an almost postmodern multiple-layered picture of social reality.

5.1.3. Development of Voices in the Trilogy

The pattern of voices undergoes several changes in the course of the trilogy. In *Sunset Song* Chris’s consciousness is the main focal element and her voice is accordingly one of the main narrative tools. The community of voice of Kinraddie, with its unified and organic quality, presents a homogenous body of opinion, complementing Chris’s consciousness as a narrative focus while mirroring the close-knit nature of the community.

In *Cloud Howe*, however, Chris’s voice recedes into the background, as her position is no longer in the centre of the community but rather on its fringe. The minister’s wife in Segget, she moves from a protagonist of village life to an observer of the events in town. Consequently, she loses her function as a focaliser of community life, her consciousness acting as a narrative filter only occasionally, and in scenes which mostly concern her private life. When her voice is heard, it seems to be more English than Scots, following her “estrangement” from the land. In addition to her voice, Ewan Jr.’s voice is introduced into the narrative, reflecting on Chris, Robert, and life at the Manse. Consequently, in *Cloud Howe*, large parts of the novel are rendered by different voices. Moreover, as Gifford, Dunnigan, and MacGillivray note, the “speak” of *Sunset Song* almost disappears in the later volumes and various other voices gain momentum.⁴⁵⁷ Campbell terms these developments a “breakdown of the unified style of *Sunset Song*” (“Style” 279). Moving to Segget, the community voice becomes less homogenous than the Kinraddie voice, incorporating several individual but regularly unnamed voices from the community. Most importantly, it serves to differentiate

⁴⁵⁶ Norquay 64.

⁴⁵⁷ Gifford, Dunnigan, and MacGillivray 590.

between social groups, e.g. the gentry and the newly emerging working class, by contrasting the opinions and views of individuals, which are often radical.⁴⁵⁸ Thus, the collective voices which are heard in *Cloud Howe* are arguably not representative of the whole town but of specific groups of people such as the spinners.

Whitfield comments that *Grey Granite's* technique is "fragmented" and "kaleidoscopic" (88). For instance, passages reflecting the reactions to the violence during a protest are separated by breaks in the text but not connected by any narrative voice (Gibbon, *Grey Granite* 57 ff.). The voice of Chris is pushed further to the background as the themes of the novel move from rural concerns to those of industrialised urban spaces and the rising working classes. Ewan in turn becomes the central consciousness to reflect these issues,⁴⁵⁹ but also other voices such as Ellen's or Ake's are heard; "Ellen closed her eyes and leaned back her head and stretched out her nice legs, she knew they were nice, and lovely and tingly [...] That run was fun" (Gibbon, *Grey Granite* 96) or "Now, that had been just a kind of blackmail, as Ake knew right well but didn't much care" (ibid. 68). Norquay notes the appearance of further new voices in *Grey Granite*, coming from the factory workers, which use the familiar "you" construction as an inclusive device.⁴⁶⁰ The workers' voice rises most noticeably during their demonstration: "And a growl and a murmur went through the column, what was wrong up there, why had they stopped? [...] And then you heard something" (Gibbon, *Grey Granite* 56). The speaker of these voices, however, is either left anonymous or the generic worker "Bob"⁴⁶¹ or a worker with exchangeable names: "the crowd was on the run to the Docks [...] And John-Peter-Thomas-Neil-Oh God, he was there" (Gibbon, *Grey Granite* 186). In addition, the voice of the urban middle class develops, represented by Miss Ena Lyon.⁴⁶² The community voice, as the reader knew it in *Sunset Song*, is no longer visible in *Grey Granite*. Gifford points out that, while being representative of the suffering worker, it becomes "hysterical rather than evocative" and therefore less convincing (Gifford, *Gibbon* 110). Yet, he sees this as a deliberate way of showing the decline of community cohesion. The sense of loss the characters feel concerning their culture and lifestyle is thus transferred directly onto the reader. As Crawford notes, *Grey Granite's* community voice becomes "faceless" and typical of the

⁴⁵⁸ Roskies 152.

⁴⁵⁹ Norquay 61.

⁴⁶⁰ The use of "you" is the focus of section 5.2.

⁴⁶¹ Norquay 62.

⁴⁶² Ibid. 64.

“keelie” experience.⁴⁶³ This “faceless” voice of the workers is entirely alienated from Chris, who knows little of the workers’ lives. The reasons for this significant change in Gibbon’s style can be found in the changed circumstance, setting, topics, and themes of *Grey Granite*, which is, in contrast to *Sunset Song* and *Cloud Howe*, a highly modern urban novel. Therefore, the novel’s style addresses the problem of depicting linguistically an industrial town, its diverse population, and its fragmented and hectic nature as well as the socio-political background of the Depression.⁴⁶⁴

5.2. “You”

One of the most striking techniques used by Gibbon is that of the “you” in its different variations. In his article, Trengove has given an overview of the three kinds of “you” in the *Quair* which are also outlined by Johnson: the direct-address “you,” the self-referring “you,” and the generic “you.” The differentiation between those three, however, is not always clear-cut and leaves room for interpretation, as will become clear in the following analysis.

5.2.1. The direct-address “you”

The direct-address “you,” according to Trengove, is used in situations in which a character both addresses and refers to another character at the same time, usually in dialogue,⁴⁶⁵ for instance in addresses like “*Mistress Munro, will you get up and come to the wife?*” (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 14, italics his). This usage is fairly common and can be expected in a novel. However, apart from this usage, it may also be used by Gibbon as an opportunity for intruding into the narrative and addressing the reader directly, pointing out important details to the reader.⁴⁶⁶ Significantly, the frequent use of this version of “you” helps to reinforce the identity of the implied reader or addressee. This implied reader is created already by the Prelude whose style of English combined with Scots implies that they are familiar with the Scots idiom. Moreover, according to Johnson, the direct-address “you” includes the implied reader into the process of storytelling by directly addressing them.⁴⁶⁷ For instance, the sensationalist story about Mr. Mowat’s adultery in *Cloud Howe*, obviously a piece of gossip spread through the

⁴⁶³ Crawford, “View” 119.

⁴⁶⁴ Campbell, “Style” 279.

⁴⁶⁵ As noted above, Gibbon uses italic font to offset dialogue from the rest of the narrative, a device that Trengove calls “idiosyncratic” (47).

⁴⁶⁶ Johnson 129.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid. 128.

community, includes a direct address “you”: “once the servant went in of a morning and what do you think he saw in the bed? Young Mr. Mowat with a quean on each side, he’d slept with the two and he fairly looked hashed” (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 122). Other instances include “Well, where do you think that Jim ended up? Down in the House of MacDougall Brown” (ibid. 91). Thus, this insertion creates the impression that the teller of the story, in this case the community voice, is addressing the reader directly. This sense of orality and conversational address, which is used most often when relating gossip, draws the reader into the narrative, creating stronger identification with characters and thus more potential for Gibbon’s messages.

5.2.2. The self-referring “you”

As Trengove notes, the technique of the self-referring “you” is rarely used in fiction.⁴⁶⁸ It draws attention to Chris’s consciousness because it is mostly used to express her emotions as if in a dramatic monologue. It is usually not used extensively in longer passages but frequently in isolated sentences.⁴⁶⁹ As Corbett puts it, it is as if Chris was talking to herself and the reader was eavesdropping.⁴⁷⁰ The following instance illustrates the way that Gibbon indicates that this is Chris’s consciousness addressing herself: “And you thought how long, long ago with Will, your brother, [...] you’d said that the Scots were never religious, had never BELIEVED as other folks did” (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 52-3, emphasis his). As mentioned earlier, the use of “mother” and “brother” indicates that it is Chris’s voice which is heard. Indeed, Gibbon’s intention in using the self-referring “you” is also that of reminding the reader that Chris’s consciousness is reporting and filtering events.⁴⁷¹ Accordingly, this kind of “you” does not appear in the Prelude of *Sunset Song* but is confined to the central chapters dealing with Chris’s life and declines in the later volumes in accordance with the receding prominence of Chris’s voice.

An early example of the use of the self-referring “you,” when Chris recalls memories of her mother, illustrates the intimate nature of the thoughts rendered by this technique: “mother had worked and ran the parks those days, she was blithe and sweet, you knew, you saw her against the sun as though you peered far down a tunnel of the years” (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 31). These observations are clearly intimate thoughts of

⁴⁶⁸ Cf. Fludernik 223 ff. for an extensive analysis of the frequency and uses of the second-person narrative and generic “you” in literature.

⁴⁶⁹ Trengove 51.

⁴⁷⁰ Corbett, “Ecstasy” 91.

⁴⁷¹ Cf. also Trengove 55.

Chris's that she would not readily share with others, which makes the reader a confidant of Chris, gaining insight into her most private emotions.⁴⁷² Consequently, this kind of "you" conveys highly personal and intimate information and, while referring to the speaker themselves, also addresses them, as if they were talking to themselves. Chris's interior monologue, therefore, is presented by Gibbon in a dramatic manner that overtly draws attention to itself.⁴⁷³ In combination with internal focalisation, the self-referring "you" renders Chris's thoughts, feelings, and inner conflicts in a way that creates a strong identification between the reader and the character.⁴⁷⁴ Additionally, this element is central for Chris's characterisation, commented on by most critics as one of the greatest successes of the *Quair*.

Moreover, in the course of the trilogy the self-referring "you" is increasingly used by other characters whose voices are heard in the later novels. For instance, in *Cloud Howe*, Ewan Jr.'s voice becomes a main focaliser. His daily routine of joking with Ake about learning Burns poetry, which both of them dislike, is described using the self-referring "you": "Most mornings you loitered about at Ake's, he'd lean from the door with his compass in hand and cry *Well, then, have you learned your Burns?* 'twas a joke between you" (Gibbon, *Cloud Howe* 113-4). Similarly, John Cushnie's experience is expressed via the self-addressing "you" when he takes his girlfriend to the music-hall: "Christ, how you laughed when he [the entertainer] spoke the daft Scotch and your quean beside you giggled superior" (Gibbon, *Grey Granite* 171). The appearance of these different voices using the self-referring "you" creates a polyphony of voices in which a number of standpoints are expressed. Most importantly, however, its function is to present the consciousness of the main characters (Chris in *Sunset Song*, Ewan in *Grey Granite*, and both in the middle volume) and to create reader involvement with any character whose fate Gibbon depicts. This involvement, in turn, is used by Gibbon to convey his political messages.

5.2.3. The generic "you"

The third version of "you," the generic "you," is used with particular frequency in the trilogy and can be described as universally-referring.⁴⁷⁵ The "you" consequently refers

⁴⁷² Cf. also Johnson 133 and Trengove 51.

⁴⁷³ Trengove 52. Trengove also points out that more conventional methods are used by Gibbon, such as clauses marked by "think." While he comments that its distribution might suggest a usage in times of emotional crises of characters, there is no direct correlation (52-3).

⁴⁷⁴ Corbett, *Language* 142.

⁴⁷⁵ Trengove 53-55.

to a generic person and Johnson points out that in these instances, it could be substituted with “one.”⁴⁷⁶ The “you” refers to a speaker who is sometimes named and sometimes left anonymous. Used by an unspecified member of the community, it often states the general opinion held by the inhabitants of the community. This kind of “you” occurs most often in modified direct speech, such as in “Cuddiestoun swore ‘twas a lie from beginning to end, the thing you’d expect from a damned pro-German, like” (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 198). Thus, it gives the impression of a “homogenous body of opinion” (Trenrove 49) in the community which assumes that its views are taken at truth value. For instance, the following passage about Long Rob seems to be told by a member of the Kinraddie community and displays the familiar generic “you.” The “you” refers to the anonymous teller who assumes a representative function for the community: “He thought himself a gey man with horses, did Rob, and God! he’d tell you stories about horses till you’d fair be grey in the head, but he never wearied of them himself, the long, rangy childe” (Gibbon, *Sunset Song* 19). In this case, the “you” is used by the anonymous voice to refer to anyone Long Rob would have a conversation with and the implication is that Rob generally bored his interlocutors with his stories. While the generic “you” as used by Gibbon is infrequent in literary narrative language, its use is fairly common in spoken language. Thus, Gibbon’s use of this kind of “you” in the *Quair*’s narrative prose points towards its strong oral quality.

The factor distinguishing the generic from the self-referring “you” is that the generic “you” refers to a generic person, that is, people in general and not a specified person or experience.⁴⁷⁷ Interestingly, as Trenrove points out, the self-referring “you” of Chris’s voice is regularly used in combination with the generic “you.” Such a deployment of this element suggests that Chris’s thoughts and views should be seen as universally applicable or relevant, just as those of the community.⁴⁷⁸ Johnson sees one of the main effects of this generic “you” as creating a symmetry between the narrator and the reader, in which the reader shares the views of the narrator.⁴⁷⁹ In relation to Chris using the generic “you,” this would put the reader into the position of a sympathetic friend, since Chris would not voice her opinions in an unsympathetic context.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁶ Johnson 129.

⁴⁷⁷ Trenrove 47, 59.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid. 53.

⁴⁷⁹ Johnson 129.

⁴⁸⁰ Trenrove 54.

Furthermore, as David Hewitt states, Gibbon's use of the generic "you" helps to convince the North-Eastern reader that the country of the *Quair* is their own.⁴⁸¹ Also Malcolm stresses that Gibbon is successful in creating a sense of authenticity in his approximation to peasant speech,⁴⁸² which is partly achieved by using the generic "you." This element of the perceived authenticity of speech, as mentioned by Wade, is a key aspect of the regional text of the modern period. Yet, he points out that a text that makes concessions to the readership in order to be more intelligible – which the *Quair's* style of mixing Scots and English does – deviates from this regionalist norm of authenticity.⁴⁸³ Therefore, when talking about language, the *Quair's* regionalist verisimilitude can only be stated with reservations. As Trengove notes, the generic "you" is used widely in the English speaking world in spoken language. Thus, this usage of the "you" also enforces the general colloquiality of Gibbon's style, also found in its vocabulary, by reflecting both everyday spoken Scots and English in its implication of wider validity.⁴⁸⁴ Consequently, the generic "you," while expressing the voice of the community and therefore reflecting regionalist tendencies, is at the same time a universal element due to its world-wide usage.

5.2.4. Concluding Comments

The syntactic element of the "you" with its three different versions has diverse functions. The direct-address "you" involves the reader in the storytelling, sometimes by addressing them directly, creating an immediate response to events and characters. By involving the reader, Gibbon ensures the readers' sympathy for the regional, national, and universal issues he addresses, such as the disappearance of small farms, the social problems following rapid industrialisation, the role of the church, and political upheaval. The self-referring "you" is a central element in characterisation of the main characters, presenting their most intimate thoughts and thus achieving even more reader involvement. The self-referring "you" as used by minor characters creates a polyphony of voices and an identification of the reader with those different characters. Gibbon thus achieves a sweeping view of Scottish society but also an expression of the universal significance of individual fates in line with his cosmopolitan and diffusionist views of mankind's condition. The generic "you" refers to a generic person and is often

⁴⁸¹ Hewitt, "Outside View" par. 14.

⁴⁸² Malcolm, *Blasphemer* 136.

⁴⁸³ Wade 42-43.

⁴⁸⁴ Trengove 48.

used by the community voices which express popular opinion. Moreover, the use of the generic “you,” in combination with other linguistic elements, induces most readers from the North-East of Scotland, as well as from Scotland at large, to feel that they and their speech are being represented authentically.⁴⁸⁵ The trilogy’s reception displays a feeling of recognition of places and language and reader identification with the *Quair*’s characters, even though they do not speak authentic varieties like Doric. Yet, the *perceived* authenticity of the *Quair*’s prose testifies to Gibbon’s success in creating the perception of regional verisimilitude at the same time as reflecting national elements such as distinction from England and suggesting the universal significance of the characters’ experience.

6. Conclusion

Analysing the interplay between elements of the regional, the national, and the universal in Gibbon’s *A Scots Quair* offers insights into the authorial intention of making the trilogy’s style, characterisation, and narrative structure reflect regional belonging, national representation, and universal significance, at the same time. Moreover, the issue of a possible decrease in regional elements and an increase in national and universal elements with respect to the different treatment of style, character, and narrative technique in the three novels has been addressed. The national and international reception of the novels, which is not always in line with Gibbon’s views, adds to this picture, positioning the trilogy in a very different light than the author might have intended.

As has been shown in the chapter on language, the unique linguistic style used by Gibbon – a melange between English and Scots – has been interpreted in different ways. On the one hand, it helps to distinguish the Mearns from other regions and centres, thus creating a dynamic of centre vs. periphery that suggests a regionalist reading. The reception of Gibbon’s style as authentic supports this claim. On the other hand, the fact that the *Quair*’s style seems to be accessible to Scottish and international readers, but nevertheless recognisably Scottish to both groups, indicates that readers view the *Quair*’s language as typically Scottish. Indeed, a reading in national terms is also suggested by the tensions between centre and periphery that extend from a

⁴⁸⁵ Not all North-East Scots feel that they are being represented authentically. Cf. Hewitt, “View” par. 12.

distinction between the regions to the linguistic distinction between England and Scotland.

However, while the *Quair's* linguistic style has been perceived as recognisably Scottish and Scots-speaking characters are generally portrayed in a more sympathetic light than English-speaking ones, Gibbon's intention seems to lie in making his work universally accessible. He achieves this by using mainly English lexical items, which often echo Scots ones, thus maintaining international accessibility. By doing this, the author's diffusionist and humanist views on modernity, industrialisation, and urbanisation acquire the potential to reach the working classes all over the world. The changes in the *Quair's* style, which manifest themselves in an increased use of English and urban elements as well as a fragmented quality of the prose as the trilogy progresses, has been interpreted as a negative effect of hasty composition. However, Gibbon's choice of style could be seen as mimetically reflecting the movement towards the world of the "common people," connecting them to working classes all over the world as well as conveying the author's socio-political views.

The chapter on characterisation in the *Quair* sheds light on the modes and different levels of characterisation, which show marked differences between the main character and the treatment of communities. Gibbon's characterisation of Chris utilises the narrative techniques of internal focalisation and the self-referring "you" to achieve an intimate relationship between the character and the reader. Chris thus becomes a vehicle to convey feelings of belonging to the Mearns region, similar to other protagonists of regionalist fiction. Gibbon's implication that Chris is heir to the Golden Age people of diffusionist doctrine positions her as a universal model of the author's hope for renewed contact with nature in the face of the negative effects of civilisation. Moreover, Chris has been perceived as embodying national characteristics such as a resistance of religion and politics, a stoic outlook on life and a strong sense of personal freedom. Indeed, these features correspond to common stereotypes of Scottishness. However, a reading of Chris as a mere embodiment of the nation is invalidated by her differentiated characterisation and Gibbon's clear intention of presenting her as a universally significant figure. Consequently, Chris unites regional, national, and universal elements in her characteristics. Yet, her basic features of her character and the depiction of her life remain constant throughout the trilogy.

The communities of the *Quair*, in contrast, are treated by Gibbon with a declining amount of detail and differentiation between the members. *Sunset Song*

features a number of individualised minor characters and includes regionalist verisimilitude of customs. However, certain elements of the Kinraddie community such as the central place of the Kirk in spite of people's basic independence from religion have been interpreted to reflect national typicalities. Yet, Gibbon seems to imply that the community's characters have retained their natural primitive values, thus making them representative of mankind at large. In *Cloud Howe* and *Grey Granite* the minor characters seem to become less and less individualised. They are increasingly depicted as "types" or as exchangeable representatives of groups. Indeed, members of the Segget community are frequently seen as recognisably Scottish types. Gibbon uses these stereotypically Scottish figures to comment on clichés of Scottishness such as found in the Kailyard. The depiction of *Grey Granite's* minor characters relies on presenting them as faceless and even nameless members of groups. However, these characters become a basis for Gibbon to develop ideas of the future of the working classes, the effects of industrialisation and urbanisation, and poverty. Consequently, the depiction of the *Quair's* communities reflects elements of regional verisimilitude as well as national and universal representation. A movement away from the regional towards the national and universal seems to be conditioned by Gibbon's aim of commenting on political issues.

The chapter on narrative technique shows that the *Quair* is dominated by the use of different voices and the narrative technique of the "you." Chris's voice is communicated by showing her inner feelings and thoughts in an immediate and involving way, using internal focalisation in a past-tense third-person situation which, nevertheless, is highly intimate. Therefore, Chris acting as a focaliser, the events of the trilogy are presented from her point of view, including her cognitive and emotional reactions. Gibbon uses the ensuing close relationship between Chris and the reader to convey her feelings of belonging to the region and the land. However, Chris's voice becomes less prominent in the later novels, losing its prominence in the narrative as well as its connection to Scots, by implication caused by Chris's estrangement from the land. As Chris's voice recedes into the background, other voices surface presenting the views of other characters. Most importantly, the communities of the *Quair* receive narrative voices. However, the quality of these voices changes in the course of the trilogy. In *Sunset Song*, the community voice presents the common opinion of its members, commenting on people and events. While the Kinraddie voice, also called the "speak," provides a frame of reference for Chris and the reader, the community voices

of *Cloud Howe* and *Grey Granite* are increasingly fragmented, incorporating representative voices from groups such as the spinners or the workers. In the last novel, the community voice ultimately becomes depersonalised, expressing the feelings and views of anonymous workers during the strike. Ewan's voice almost pushes aside Chris's voice as a main narrative focus, since the novel is primarily concerned with issues of industrialisation and urbanisation, which are fundamentally alien to Chris. The narrative technique of *Grey Granite* can be seen as reflecting the urban setting, its diverse and fragmented population, and the socio-political effects of the depression linguistically. In addition, the narrative technique of the "you" helps to achieve successful characterisation and reader involvement. This extends to the voices of several characters of the *Quair*, thus creating a sweeping view of Scottish society. Moreover, by using the "you," Gibbon achieves great immediacy of narrative. He uses this feature to emphasise his views on regional concerns like the disappearance of small farms as well as to suggest authenticity of speech and character. Moreover, the use of the "you" conveys the importance of national elements such as the role of the Kirk. In addition to that, it becomes the basis to address universally applicable phenomena like rapid industrialisation and its consequences for people's lives or the diffusionist hope for renewed contact with nature and a global cosmopolis. Therefore, issues of regional, national, and universal significance are addressed via Gibbon's use of narrative technique.

Consequently, a pattern of elements of the regional, the national, and the universal in the *Quair* can be established. Its interpretation as a regionalist text is based on its fundamental rootedness in the region, its perception of nature as an important and almost mythical part in people's lives, and its verisimilitude in describing character, community life, local culture, and speech, arguably lending the novels authenticity and relevance as sociological representations of a region. Yet, popular and scholarly reception points towards the fact that the *Quair* can be read in terms of national representation. Indeed, Gibbon not only describes the region of the Mearns but he also successfully suggests that its people, language, and customs are typically Scottish in many ways, not the least since they experience events of national and international magnitude such as the Industrial Revolution or World War I. However, a reading of the *Quair* as a nationalist text and its protagonist as a national symbol is invalidated by the author's rejection of both, political and cultural nationalism. In fact, Gibbon clearly aimed to represent his native region as a locale in which to address universal issues

connected to his political and philosophical views. Therefore, the trilogy's language, characterisation, and narrative technique seem to contain all of these elements from the beginning on.

As the trilogy progresses, however, this pattern seems to shift. While in *Sunset Song* regional verisimilitude seems to dominate over national and universal representation, the later novels show a decline in the regional element. It seems that *Cloud Howe* and *Grey Granite* move away from the regional towards national representation. Yet, Gibbon uses this as another stepping-stone towards his ultimate goal of universal representation, being thus able to comment on international phenomena like the plight of the new working classes. Indeed, even though all three novels of the *Quair* incorporate universal elements of diffusionist origin, *Grey Granite* seems to depict an archetypal industrial city with archetypal social and political problems. Consequently, the pattern of regional, national, and universal elements in the *Quair* reveals the co-existence of these elements but also a shift away from the regional towards the national and the universal.

Due to restrictions of space, the present analysis of the regional, the national, and the universal in the *Quair* could not be extended to the trilogy's themes, settings, or cultural events, which could have revealed significant information on Gibbon's treatment of his native region and its customs, but also on changes from community events to mass phenomena like the cinema. Such detailed analyses remain to be undertaken; an overview of these issues is included in my essay: "Silly Scotch Muck about Cottars and Women'?: The Regional, the National, and the Universal in *A Scots Quair*."⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸⁶ Mewald, Katharina. "Silly Scotch Muck about Cottars and Women'?: The Regional, the National, and the Universal in *A Scots Quair*." Selected Proceedings of the Twelfth International Conference on the Literature of Region and Nation (July 2008 Aberdeen, Scotland). Ed. J.D. McClure. [forthcoming]

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Appendix I

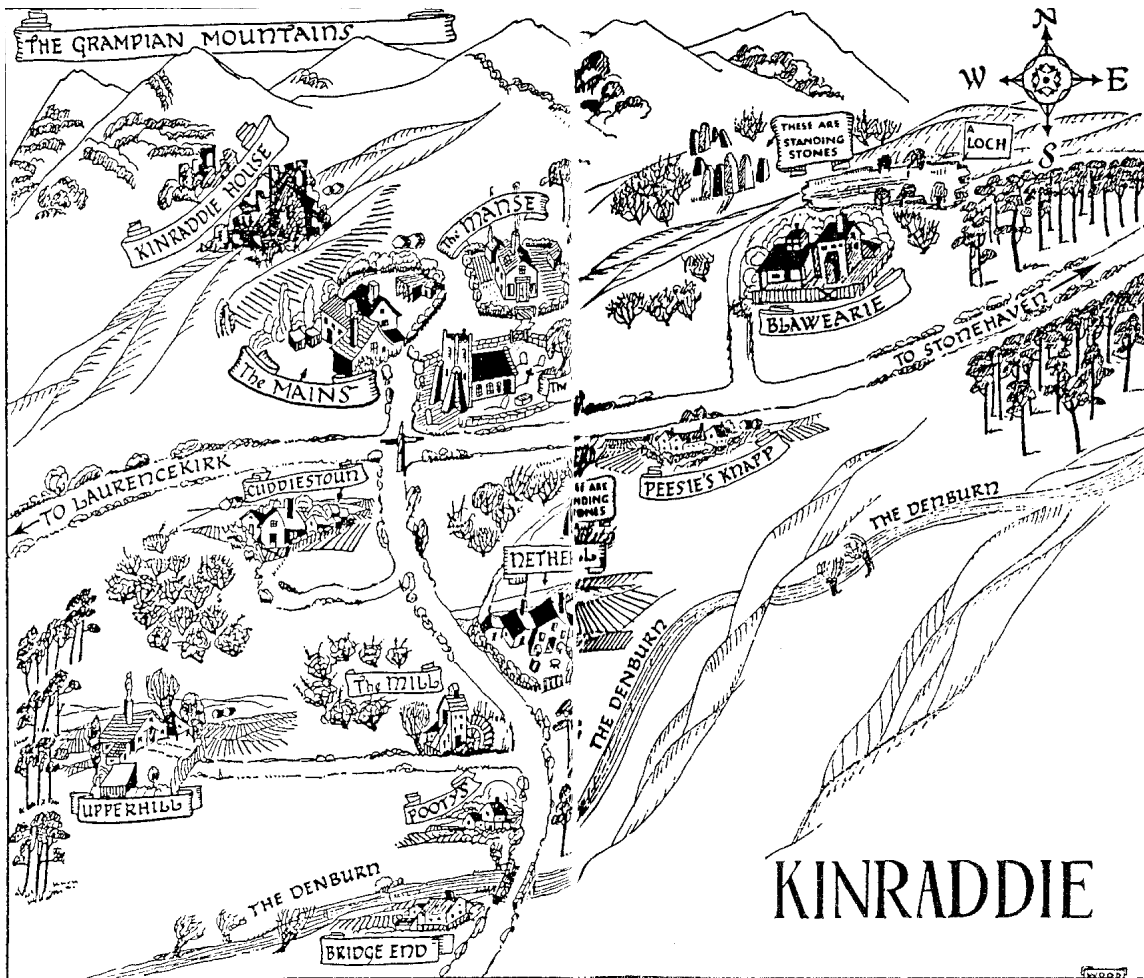
Main settings

Sunset Song – Kinraddie (map below)

Cloud Howe – Segget (map below)

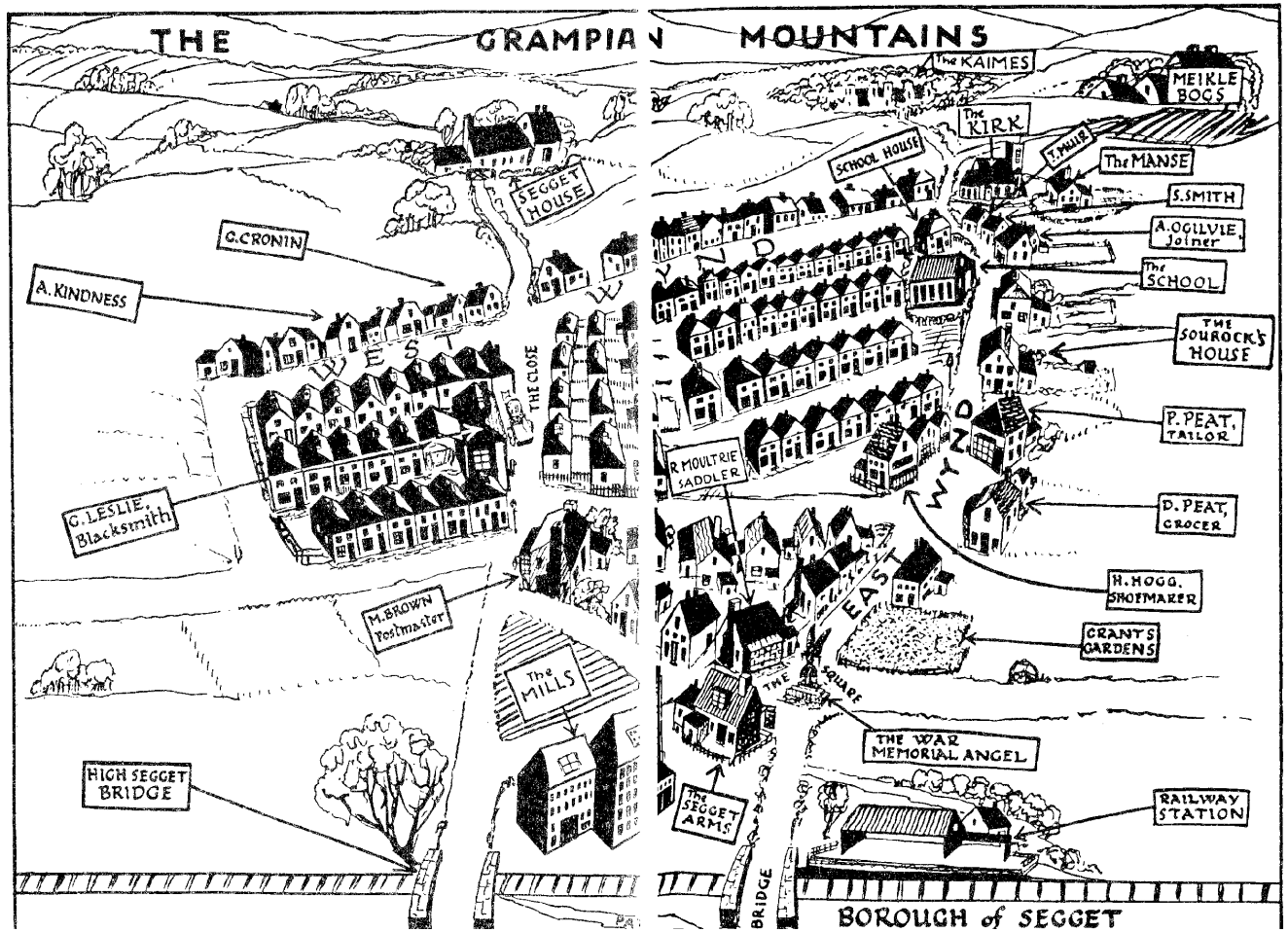
Grey Granite – Duncairn

Map of Kinraddie



Gibbon, Lewis Grassie. *A Scots Quair: Sunset Song, Cloud Howe, Grey Granite*. Ed. and introd. by Tom Crawford. Edinburgh: Canongate, 1995. xiv-xv.

Map of Segget



Gibbon, Lewis Grassie. *A Scots Quair: Sunset Song, Cloud Howe, Grey Granite*. Ed. and introd. by Tom Crawford. Edinburgh: Canongate, 1995. xviii-xix.

Appendix II

“Völkertafel” (Styrian Tableau of Nationalities)

(printable version – part I)

Agentliche Vorstell- und Beschreibung der Fürnehmsten in EUROPA befindlichen Land-Völcker

	Nahmen	SP	F	W	T	E	S	B	U	M	TG
1	Sitten	Hochmüthig	Leichtsinnig	Wälscher	Teutscher	Engelländer	Schwed	Polack	Ungar	Moßowit-ter	Türk oder Griech
2	Natur u. Eigenschaft	Wunderbahrl	Holdseig u. ansprächig	Hinterhältig	Offenhertzig	Wohlgestalt	Siarck u. Groß	Bairisch	Untreü	Bolhofftig	Wie das April Wetter
3	An Verstand	Klug u. weis	Fürsichtig	Scharfsinnig	Gantz gut	Liebreich	Grausam	Noch wilder	Aller grausamste	Gut Ungarisch	Ein Lügen Teufel
4	Der Eigenschaft Anzeigung	Männlich	Kindisch	Scher wie man will	Witzig	Anmuthig	Hartnäckig	Gering-achtent	Noch weniger	Gar nichts	Oben nauß
5	Wissenschaft	Schrift-gelehrt	in Kriegs Sachen	in Geistlichen Rechten	Überal mit	Weiblich	Unerkentlich	Mittelmässig	Blut- begierig	Ungehobelt	Zärtlich
6	Tracht der Kleidung	Ehrbar	Unbeständig	Ehrsamb	Nachaher	Auff frantzösisch	Vom Leder	Lang-Röckig	in Lateinischer Sprach	in Griechischer Sprach	Ein falscher Politicus
7	Unugenden	Hoffärtig	Betrügerisch	Geistsichtig	Verschwen-derisch	Unruhig	Aber- glaubisch	Prallter	Verräther	Noch ärger	Noch be- trügerlicher
8	Lieben	Ehr-Lob und Ruhm	Den Krieg	Das Gold	Den Trunk	Die Wollust	Köstliche Speisen	Den Adel	Die Aufrühr	Den Prugel	Selbst eigene Liebe
9	Kranckheiten	Verstopfung	An Aigner	An böser Setich	Am Podagra	An der Schwindsucht	An der Wassersucht	An Schräli- zopfen	An der Fraß	An Keichen	An Schwachheit
10	Ihr Land	Ist fruchtbar	Wol gearbeitet	Ergötzlich u. wollüstig	Gut	Fetücht	Bergig	Waldicht	Frucht- und goldreich	Voller Euß	Ein lieblichers
11	Kriegs Tugenden	Großmüthig	Arglistig	Fürsichtig	Unüberwind- lich	Ein See- held	Unverzagt	Ungestümm	Aufrührisch	Bemühsam	Gar faul
12	Gottes Dienst	Der allerbeste	Gut	Etwas besser	Noch andächtiger	Veränderlich wie der Mond	Eyferig in den Glauben	Glaubt allerley	Unmässig	Ein Abtriniger	Eben ein solcher
13	Erkennen für ihrem Herren	Einen Monarchen	Einen König	Einen Patriarchen	Einen Kayser	Bald den bald jenem	Freye Herrschafft	Einem Erwehiten	Einem unbelibigen	Einem freywilligen	Einem Tyrannen
14	Haben Überfluß	An Früchten	An Wähen	An Wein	An Getrayd	An Vieh weiden	An Ertz-Gruben	An Peltzwerck	In Allem	An Ynen	An zart u. weichen Sachen
15	Verzehren die Zeit	Mit spielen	Mit betrogen	Mit schwätzen	Mit trincken	Mit arbeiten	Mit essen	Mit zanken	Mit miesiggang	Mit schlaffen	Mit kräncklen
16	Vergleich unter den Thiem	Einen Elephanten	Einen Fuchsen	Einen Luchsen	Einen Löwen	Einen Pferd	Einen Ochsen	Einen Beern	Einen Wolff	Einen Esel	Einen Hund
17	im Leben und grab	Im Bett	Im Krieg	im Laster	im Wein	im Wasser	Auf der Erd	im Stall	Beim Sichel	im Schnee	im Betrug

Leopold-Stich (LS), Augsburg, zwischen 1719 und 1726.

Umschrift: Reiter/Stanzel

“Völkertafel” (Styrian Tableau of Nationalities)

(printable version – part II)

Kurze Beschreibung der In Europa Befindlichen Völkern Und Ihren Aigenschafften

	SP	F	W	T	E	S	B	U	M	TG
Namen	Spanier	Frantzöf	Wälſch	Teuſcher	Engeländer	Schwöth	Boläck	Unger	Muskawith	Türk oder Griech
Sitten	Hochmütig	Leichtsinnig	Hinderthätig	Offenherzig	Wohl Geſtalt	Stark und Groß	Bäuriſch	Untreü	bodhaft	Wie das Abrißweier
Natur Und Eigenschaft	Wunderbarlich	Hofseelig Und geſprächig	Eifersüchtig	Ganz Gut	Lieb-reich	Graus-sam	Nochwilder	AllerGraussambst	Gut Ungariſch	Ein Lung Teüel
Verstand	Klug un Weiß	Firsichtig	scharffſinnig	Wizig	Anmuthig	Hartknäkig	Gering Achtent	Nochweniger	Gar Nichts	Oben Auß
Anzeüung deren Eigenschafften	Männlich	Kindisch	Wie jederwill	Über Allmit	Weiblich	Unerkendlich	Mittelmässig	Bluthbegirig	Unentlichkrob	Zärtlich
Wiſſen-schafft	schriftgelahrt	In Kriegssachen	In Geſelligen Rechte	In Weltlichen Rechte	Welt Weis	In Freuen Künsten	In Unerschädlichen Sprachen	Ladeinſichersprach	In Kriechſichersprache	Ein falſcher Boliticus
Tracht Der Kladung	Ehrbar	Unbeſtändig	Ehrſam	Macht alles Nach	auf Franzöſchiſcheart	Von Löder	Lang Röckig	Viel Färbig	Mit böllzen	Auf Weiber Art
Untugent	Hoffärtig	Betrügeriſch	Geiſtlich	Verschwenderiſch	Unruhig	Aber Glauberiſch	Braller	Veräther	GarVerätheriſch	noch Verärrischer
Lieben	Ehrlöb und Röm	Den Krieg	Das Gold	Den Trunk	Die Wohlust	Köſtlichespeiſen	Den Adl	Die Aufruhe	Den Brügl	Selbsteigene Lieb
Krankheiten	Verstopfung	An Eigner	An böſſer ſeüch	An bogogrä	An Der ſchwindtsucht	An Der Waſſerſucht	An Dendurchbruch	An der freis	An Keichen	An Schwachheit
Ihr Land	Iſt fruchtbaar	Wohlgearbeith	Ergüzlich Und Wohlſitig	Gut	Fruchtbaar	Bergig	Waldich	Und golt Reich	Voller Eio	Ein Liebreichig
Kriſgs Tugente	Groß Mühig	Arg liſtig	Firsichtig	Unüberwindlich	Ein See Held	Unverzackt	Un Geſtimt	Aufrieriſch	Miesamb	Gar faul
Gottesdienſt für ihren Herrn	Der aller beſte	Gut	Etwas beſſer	Noch Andächtiger	Verendlich Wie der Mond	Eifrig in Glauben	Glaubt Allerley	Unmüſſig	Ein Abtrünger	Eweneinsolchen
Haben Überfluß	Einen Monarchen	Eine König	Einen Bäteräch	Einen Kaiſer	bald den balt jene	Freie Herrſchaft	Einen Erwelden	EinenUnbeliebigen	Einen Freimiligen	Ein Thiran
die Zeit Vertreiben	An Früchten	An Waren	An Wein	An Getraid	An Fich Weid	An Ärtz Kruben	An Böllzwerch	In Allen	An Innnen	an zu Und weckersachen
Vergleichung Mit denen Thiren	Mit Spillen	Mit betrügen	Mit ſchwalzen	Mit Trinken	Mit Arbeiten	Mit Eſſen	Mit zancken	Mit Miſſigethen	Mit ſchlaffen	Mit Kränkeln
Ihr Leben Ende	Ein Elöfantän	Ein Fuchſen	Einen Luchſen	Einen Löben	Einen Pferd	Einen Ochſen	Einen Bern	Einen Wölffen	Ein Eſel	Einer Kalz
	In Böth	In Krieg	In Wein	In Water	In Waſſer	Auf der Erd	Im ſtall	beüm säwel	In ſchnee	In betrug

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„Völkertafel“ (VT), Steiermark, zirka 1730-40

Laconicum Europae Speculum
(printable version – part I)

LES: Tabellarische Übersicht des lateinischen Textes der Einzelblätter und seiner zeitgenössischen Verdeutschung (ohne „Batavus“) Tab. I

	Hispanus Spanier	Gallus Franzose	Italus Welscher	Germanus Teutscher	Anglus Engländer	Suecus Schwed	Polonus Pohl	Hungarus Hunger	Moscovita Moscowit
Mores Sitten	Gravis Gravitätisch	Levis Leichtsinning	Tectus Geheln	Apertus Offenherzig	Pulcher Annehmlich	Asper Ernsthaft	Durus Etwas rauh	Crudus Streng	Agrestis Vornahls unfreundlich
Genius Et Natura Art und Natur	Mirabilis Wundersam	Affabilis Gesprächig	Zelotypus Eifersüchtig	Optimus Gut Mann	Amabilis Liebenswürdig	Terribilis Hitzig	Terribilior Jähzornig	Terribilissimus Tölpel	Similimus Förmlich
Ingenium Verstand und Gemüths Gaben	Sapiens Weise	Prudens Klug	Perspicax Scharfsinnig	Sagax Verständig	Solidum Festgegründet	Firmum Gründlich und fest	Arduum Durchdringend	Strenuum Fertig und fähig	tardum Etwas langsam
Physiognomia Physiognomie oder Gesichtsbildung	Virilis Männlich	Puerilis Jung oder zärtlich	Gener: Communis Verschiedener Gattung	Gener: omnis Aller Gattung	Gener: femin: Weiblich	Tetricus Mannhaft	Rotundus Rund und vollkommen	Truculentus Drohend	Incultus Saursüchtig
Scientia Wissenschaften	Theologus Ein Theologus	Polemicus Gut im Disputieren	Canonista Ein Canonist	Iurista Ein Jurist	Philosophus Ein Weltweiser	Philologus Philologus, oder Liebhaber der Sprachen und galanten Studien	Linguista Linguist	Latinus Lateiner	Graecus Griechisch
Vestitus Kleidung	Modestus Bescheiden	Protheus Veränderlich	Honestus Erbar	Simius Nachäffend	Gallus Stolz	Coriaceus Natt und dauerhaft	Togatus Lange Röcke	Coloratus Geschmeidig und mannfärbig	Pelliceus Peltzern
Vitia Fehler	Superbus Hochmüthig	Fraudulentus Betrieglich	Luxuriosus Wollüstig	Prodigus Verschwenderisch	Turbulentus Unruhig	Superstitiosus Rachgierig	Ostentator Großthuend	Inconstans Unbeständig	Deterior Ungestümt
Amant Liebet	Gloriam Ruhm	Militiam Krieg	Aurum Gold	Potum Trunk	Delicias Niedlichkeit	Escas Gute Speisen	Nobilitatem Den Adel	Rebellionem Die Unruhi	flustum Hart Tractament
Morbus Quo Decumbunt Kränkheiten, woran sie leiden	Hypochondriaco Miltz-Sucht	Suo Ihre eigne	Peste Pest	Pede Podagra	Tabes Schwindsucht	Hydrope Wassersucht	Plica Haarschrötel	Phrenetico Tobsucht	Asthmate Engbrüstigkeit

Laconicum Europae Speculum
(printable version – part II)

1400-11

	Hispanus <i>Spanier</i>	Gallus <i>Frantzeose</i>	Italus <i>Wechsler</i>	Germanus <i>Teutscher</i>	Anglus <i>Engelländer</i>	Saecus <i>Schwed</i>	Polonus <i>Pohl</i>	Hungarus <i>Hungar</i>	Moscovita <i>Moscovit</i>
Terra, Quam Inhabitant Das Land, so sie bewohnen	Faecundam <i>Fruchtbar</i>	Excultam <i>Wohlgebaud</i>	Delicatam <i>Delicat</i>	Bonam <i>Gut</i>	humidam <i>Feucht</i>	Montosam <i>Bergicht</i>	Sylvestrem <i>Wäldicht</i>	Praedivitem <i>An allem Reich</i>	Glaciale <i>Schneereich</i>
In Virtute Bellica Tapferkeit im Krieg	Magnanimus <i>Großmüthig</i>	Astutus <i>Lisig</i>	Providus <i>Fürsichtig</i>	Invictus <i>Unüberwindlich</i>	Archithalassus <i>Helden zur See</i>	Infractus <i>Unerschrocken</i>	Impetuosus <i>Frisch im Angriff</i>	Turbulentus <i>Muthig</i>	Laboriosus <i>Arbeitsam</i>
In Cultu Religionis In Religions- Übung	Optimus <i>Der Beste</i>	Bonus <i>Gut</i>	Melior <i>Besser</i>	Devotior <i>Andächtiger</i>	Minus constans <i>Veränderlich</i>	Simplicissimus <i>Standhaft und andächtiger</i>	Multiplex <i>Eifrig</i>	Indiscretus <i>Mannigfaltig</i>	Superstitiosus <i>Älterhand Secten</i>
Domini Quos Agnoscent Welche sie vor ihre Herren erkennen	Monarcham <i>Einen Monarchen</i>	Regem <i>König</i>	Patriarcham <i>Papst</i>	Augustum <i>Kayser</i>	Mixtum <i>Vermischt</i>	Dominum <i>Einen König</i>	Electum <i>Einen Erwehlten</i>	Invitum <i>Einen Gelinden</i>	Despoticum <i>Einen Strengen</i>
Abundant Haben Überfluß	Fructibus <i>An Früchten</i>	Mercibus <i>Wahren</i>	Vino <i>Wein</i>	Frumento <i>Getreid</i>	Pascuis <i>Gute Weide</i>	Metalis <i>An Metallen</i>	Pellibus <i>An Gerreid</i>	Omnibus <i>An allem</i>	Apibus <i>An Bienen</i>
Tempus Consumunt Verreiben die Zeit	Ludendo <i>Mit Spielen</i>	Fallendo <i>Beiriegen</i>	Loquendo <i>Schwatzen</i>	Bibendo <i>Trincken</i>	laborando <i>Arbeiten</i>	Comedendo <i>Mit Essen</i>	Rivando <i>Zanck und Streit</i>	Otiando <i>mit Müßiggehen</i>	Dormiendo <i>mit Schlaffen</i>
Animalia Quibus Comparantur Mit was für Thieren sie verglichen werden	Elephas <i>Elephant</i>	Vulpes <i>Fuchs</i>	Lynx <i>Luchs</i>	Leo <i>Löw</i>	Equus <i>Pferd</i>	Taurus <i>Stier</i>	Ursus <i>Bär</i>	Lupus <i>Wolff</i>	Alce <i>Elend-Thier</i>

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Zusammenfassung in deutscher Sprache

Die Diplomarbeit beleuchtet regionale, nationale und universelle Elemente in Lewis Grassie Gibbons Romantrilogie *A Scots Quair* (1932-34). Den methodischen Ausgangspunkt bilden Überlegungen aus der Literaturtheorie, Imagologie und der Forschung zu Lewis Grassie Gibbons ideologischem und politischem Hintergrund. Definitionen regionaler Literatur werden ebenso dargelegt wie die Möglichkeiten des Studiums von Stereotypen und Nationalcharakter mittels imagologischer Betrachtung. Weiters wird Gibbons Weltanschauung aus politischer und ideeller Sicht betrachtet, um als Basis für die Interpretation marxistischer und diffusionistischer Tendenzen und Implikationen in seinem Werk zu dienen.

In der Folge behandeln drei Kapitel die regionalen, nationalen und universellen Elemente in der Sprache, Charakterisierung und Erzählstruktur der Texte. Zunächst beschreibt ein Kapitel Gibbons innovative Wahl einer Mischform aus Englisch und Scots für seinen Prosatext, die lexikale und syntaktische Elemente aus dem Englischen und Scots miteinander verbindet bzw. widerspiegelt. Der erzielte Effekt zeichnet sich durch internationale Verständlichkeit, aber auch die Rezeption als authentisch schottische Sprache aus. Die Interpretation von Gibbons linguistischem Stil erlaubt Rückschlüsse auf die dialektale Abgrenzung der Region von anderen Regionen und Zentren sowie die Publikumsrezeption der Sprache als typisch schottisch. Gleichzeitig kann Gibbons Entscheidung für eine zugängliche Sprache als Versuch verstanden werden, die Erfahrungen der Charaktere als universell relevant darzustellen und ein breites, internationales Publikum zu erreichen.

Das folgende Kapitel greift Gibbons Charakterisierung der Hauptfigur und der Gemeinschaften auf. Eine Zusammenfassung von historisch gewachsenen Stereotypen bildet die Ausgangsbasis. Die Repräsentation von Chris folgt dem Muster der internen Fokalisierung, welches im Leser eine starke Identifikation mit der Figur zur Folge hat. Gibbon verwendet dieses nahe und empathische Verhältnis um seinen Lesern Chris Verbundenheit mit dem Land und der Region zu vermitteln, die als zentraler Bestandteil von regionaler Literatur gesehen wird. Die Verwendung von Ausdrücken wie „Chris Caledonia“ impliziert eine Interpretation der Figur als nationales Symbol, was sich auch in der Rezeption der Trilogie wiederfindet. Nicht zuletzt ist Chris auch als Charakter zu sehen, dessen Geschichte und Erfahrungen vom Autor als universell bzw. repräsentativ für die Menschheit dargestellt werden. Die Darstellung der Gemeinschaften zeigt den

zunehmenden Rückgriff auf Charaktertypen und Stereotype bei der Charakterisierung von Nebenfiguren. Obwohl die Tendenz zur detailreichen Darstellung auf regionale Wirklichkeitsnähe hindeutet, wird verstärkt das Augenmerk auf Züge gelegt, die als typisch national empfunden werden. Im Zuge der Trilogie verschiebt sich diese Typologie zu einer klassentypischen Darstellung, die durch globalisierte Sprache und austauschbare Charaktere die Verbindung zwischen der Arbeiterklasse in Schottland und weltweit unterstreicht.

Das Kapitel zur Erzählperspektive von *A Scots Quair* beschreibt die Verwendung der Stimmen einiger Charaktere und den Einsatz von „you“, das als Erzählform selten zu finden ist, als die Basis für die narrative Situation. Die Stimme von Chris vermittelt den Großteil der Geschehnisse der Trilogie mittels interner Fokalisierung während die Erzählperspektive in der dritten Person bleibt. Chris Stimme vermittelt ein starkes Gefühl von Unmittelbarkeit des Erzählten und gleichzeitig Intimität mit ihrer Figur. Durch diese Charakterisierung kann der Leser das Gefühl von regionaler Zugehörigkeit und Nähe zur Natur, das Chris prägt, nachempfinden. Die Stimme von Chris rückt im Zuge der Trilogie in den Hintergrund und die Stimmen der Gemeinschaften gewinnen an Wichtigkeit. Während die Gemeinschaftsstimme anfänglich zur detaillierten Beschreibung der Menschen und Gebräuche dient und als zusätzlicher narrativer Fokus die Geschehnisse kommentiert, werden die Gemeinschaftsstimmen von *Cloud Howe* und *Grey Granite* zunehmend fragmentiert. Sie repräsentieren in immer größerem Maße Bevölkerungsgruppen wie Seggets Spinner oder Duncairns Arbeiterklasse. Im letzten Teil der Trilogie ist die Gemeinschaftsstimme endgültig entpersonalisiert und besteht aus namenlosen Arbeiterstimmen, die jedoch repräsentativ für die neu entstandene Klasse stehen. Die Verwendung von „you“ als erzählerische Komponente erlaubt es Gibbon, die emotionale Welt der Charaktere in den Vordergrund zu rücken und somit regionale Elemente, aber auch nationale Elemente wie den Einfluss der Kirche und universelle Aspekte von Chris Erfahrungen zu vermitteln.

Die Diplomarbeit schließt mit der Interpretation der regionalen, nationalen und universelle Elemente in der Sprache, Charakterisierung und Erzählsituation von *A Scots Quair* und deren Zusammenspiel. Die Rezeption als Regionalliteratur basiert auf der detailgenauen Beschreibung von Charakter und Gemeinschaft. Nationale Elemente entstehen durch die Implikation, dass die Region der Mearns und die soziokulturellen Entwicklungen der Trilogie vom Autor als typisch schottisch dargestellt werden. Die

Interpretation als national repräsentatives Werk spiegelt sich in der nationalen und internationalen Rezeption wider. Die universelle Komponente von *A Scots Quair* wird in der Intention des Autors deutlich. Gibbons Heimatregion wird als Bühne für universelle und allgemeingültige Erfahrungen und Aussagen verwendet, um ein internationales Publikum zu erreichen.

Somit ergibt sich ein Bild, das die Koexistenz regionaler, nationaler und universeller Elemente von Beginn der Trilogie zeigt, wobei eine veränderte Zusammensetzung im Zuge der Romanreihe erkennbar wird. Während die regional detaillierte Beschreibung in *Sunset Song* die stärkste Ausprägung zu haben scheint, rückt dieses Element in *Cloud Howe* und *Grey Granite* zunehmend in den Hintergrund und national repräsentative Faktoren scheinen zu dominieren. Gibbon verwendet diese Veränderung jedoch als Basis für die Weiterentwicklung zur Darstellung universeller Probleme einer archetypischen Industriestadt und der neu entstandenen Arbeiterklasse. Folglich verschiebt sich das Zusammenspiel der regionalen, nationalen und universellen Elemente der Trilogie weg von der Dominanz der regionalen Beschreibung zur Darstellung von Problemen auf nationaler und internationaler Ebene, motiviert durch Gibbons humanistische Beweggründe und den Wunsch nach einer internationalen kommunistischen Gemeinschaft.

Curriculum Vitae

Katharina Mewald

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Education

- 1996-2000 BORG – Bundesoberstufenrealgymnasium Wiener Neustadt, A-levels with Distinction
- 2000-2001 Economics, FH Wiener Neustadt (University of Applied Sciences for Business and Engineering Wiener Neustadt)
- 2001-2010 English and American Studies, University of Vienna

January – May 2006: English and Film Studies, Erasmus, University of Aberdeen, UK

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Work Experience in the Academic Field

- Nov. 2007 - Department of English and American Studies, University of Vienna
- Jan. 2010
- Research assistant and project administrator (FWF projects)
 - Editorial work for two collections of essays:
 - *Transatlantic Exchanges: The American South in Europe, Europe in the American South*. Ed. Richard Gray and Waldemar Zacharasiewicz. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2007.
 - *Social and Cultural Interaction and Literary Landscapes in the Canadian West*. Ed. Waldemar Zacharasiewicz and Fritz-Peter Kirsch. Vienna: WUV, 2010.
 - Assistance in organising and coordinating the international conferences:
 - “Native Americans and First Nations: A Transnational Challenge” (16.-19.10.2009, University of Vienna)
 - “Riding/Writing Across Borders in North-American Travelogues and Fiction” (16.-18.10.2009, University of Vienna)

Publications

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