Scripta Uniandrade, v. 18, n. 1 (2020)
Revista da Pós-Graduação em Letras – UNIANDRADE
Curitiba, Paraná, Brasil

SINGING SCOTTISH CULTURE IN LEWIS GRASSIC GIBBON'S *SUNSET SONG*

CAROLINA DE PINHO SANTORO LOPES (DOUTORANDA)
Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ)
Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
(carol.pslopes@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT: Lewis Grassic Gibbon's novel *Sunset Song* (1932) represents the early decades of the twentieth century in the fictional Scottish village of Kinraddie, portraying the strong impact of the First World War in this rural community. Traditional Scottish songs are central to characters' daily lives and play an important role in shaping the group's sense of identity. This situation changes with the coming of the war, with traditional Scottish songs giving way to foreign ones. Despite the decline in the relevance of these cultural elements for Kinraddie's inhabitants, part of this tradition endures and gains new meaning in this transformed historical and social context.

Keywords: Scottish literature. Songs. Memory studies. Cultural Identity.

Artigo recebido em: 28 jul. 2020.
Aceito em: 17 ago. 2020.

LOPES, Carolina de Pinho Santoro. Singing Scottish Culture in Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *Sunset Song*. *Scripta Uniandrade*, v. 18, n. 2 (2020), p. 49-66.
Curitiba, Paraná, Brasil
Data de edição: 09 set. 2020.

CANTANDO A CULTURA ESCOCESA EM *SUNSET SONG*, DE LEWIS GRASSIC GIBBON

RESUMO: O romance *Sunset Song* (1932), de Lewis Grassic Gibbon, representa as primeiras décadas do século XX no vilarejo ficcional de Kinraddie, na Escócia, retratando o forte impacto da Primeira Guerra Mundial nessa comunidade rural. Canções tradicionais escocesas estão no centro da vida cotidiana dos personagens e têm um papel importante na formação da identidade desse grupo. Essa situação muda com a ocorrência da guerra, com as canções tradicionais dando lugar a músicas estrangeiras. Apesar do declínio na relevância desses elementos culturais para os habitantes de Kinraddie, parte dessa tradição permanece e ganha novo significado nesse contexto histórico e social transformado.

Palavras-chave: Literatura escocesa. Canções. Estudos da memória. Identidade cultural.

Songs and ballads are an important part of a community's heritage as they are transmitted across generations and express the group's way of life and perspective on the world. As songs are passed on through time, they may be adapted to new social and historical contexts, reflecting the changes which the community has undergone. These cultural elements are also closely linked to a group's identity since they constitute its cultural memory, defined by cultural theorist Jan Assmann as consisting of "that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose 'cultivation' serves to stabilize and convey that society's self-image" (ASSMANN, 1995, p. 132). Assmann's concept of cultural memory underlies literary scholar Ann Rigney's view that poetry worked as "a medium of community building" until the late nineteenth century, having a stronger effect when it was set to music and, thus, could be performed (RIGNEY, 2011, p. 80). This close association between songs and community may be observed in Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *Sunset Song* (1932) as several of them are performed in communal gatherings and celebrations, such as the protagonist's wedding, reinforcing the feeling of the endurance of shared values and experiences. In this way, the musical tradition constitutes an important element in the construction of the group's identity.

Lewis Grassic Gibbon was the pseudonym used by James Leslie Mitchell (1901-1935) in his writings more strongly related to his native Scotland. He was born in a rural area of Aberdeenshire, in the northeast of Scotland, into a family

of crofters. Gibbon's most famous work is the series *A Scots Quair*, composed of the novels *Sunset Song*, *Cloud Howe* (1933) and *Grey Granite* (1934). The trilogy recounts the coming of age and adulthood of the protagonist Chris, fictionally portraying the early decades of the twentieth century in the region of the Mearns, in the Scottish northeast. *Sunset Song*, the first instalment, is set in the fictional village of Kinraddie between the years 1911 and 1920 and depicts the profound impact of the First World War in this community. *Cloud Howe* and *Grey Granite* take place, respectively, in the town of Segget and the city of Duncairn, representing the transition from a rural to an urban, industrialized setting.

There are numerous references to songs and poems in *A Scots Quair*. Their presence is especially striking in *Sunset Song*, possibly due to its rural setting and the period when the story takes place. There is a decline in the relevance of traditional songs in characters' lives when Chris moves to more urbanized areas, which may be associated to anthropologist Joël Candau's claim that societies whose members have closer relations with each other are more likely than an anonymous megalopolis to develop a strong and structuring collective memory (CANDAU, 2016, p. 45). Besides, World War One is represented in the novel as a watershed in the Scottish countryside, marking the end of the traditional rural way of life. One of the transformations brought about by the war is the death of some of the village's inhabitants, which means the near extinction of a generation of men. Another change is the cutting down of the woods surrounding Kinraddie, symbolic of the dying of a way of life as it causes the land to become barren, making it impossible for the community to continue to live off farming. Toward the end of the novel, during the inauguration of the village's war memorial, Kinraddie's new minister describes that time as the "*sunset of an age and an epoch*" and states that:

> *With them* [those who died] *we may say there died a thing older than themselves, these were the Last of the Peasants, the last of the Old Scots folk. A new generation comes up that will know them not, except as a memory in a song, they pass with the things that seemed good to them, with loves and desires that grow dim and alien in the days to be. It was the old Scotland that perished then, and we may believe that never again will the old speech and the old songs, the old curses and the old benedictions, rise but with an alien effort to our lips* (GIBBON, 2006, p. 254).[1]

[1] All quotations are from the same edition of the trilogy, which will be referred to only by page numbers from now on. Gibbon uses italics to signal direct speech throughout the novels of *A Scots Quair*.

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

"The Flowers of the Forest", by Jane Elliot (1727-1805), is one of the most noteworthy songs in *Sunset Song*, emphasizing the connection between different historical moments. The composition, first recorded in the eighteenth century, is a lament that commemorates the dead in the battle of Flodden (1513). The Auld Alliance between Scotland and France was at the origin of this conflict between the Scottish and the English since England was at war with France at the time. The battle resulted in a major defeat for Scotland, with several casualties, including King James IV (1488-1513)[2], whose heir was still a child. Thus, the country was weakened and plunged in a period of political instability. Flodden represented, according to literary scholar Douglas Gifford, the end of a "Golden Age" of peace and flourishing culture in Scotland (GIFFORD, 2013, p. 71). Despite the political repercussions of the battle, the song focuses on the loss experienced by the common, anonymous people, making reference to the women and children in grief, as the lyrics may demonstrate:

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

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

The song focuses on the mourning of the deceased's widows and children, which reinforces the essential role played by anonymous people in history. The setting is clearly rural as evidenced by the mention of the work of harvesting, and

shearing and milking sheep. The communal grief is shared by the speaker in the song as the line "the order sent *our* lads to the Border" (emphasis added) may demonstrate.

As "The Flowers of the Forest" deals with the consequences of a real battle, it is a way for people to get in contact with and learn about a historical event that marked the nation's history. Chris's view on the conflict is partly shaped by the song, as the following quotation illustrates: "even after that [the battle of Bannockburn] the English were beaten in all the wars, except Flodden and they won at Flodden by treachery again, just as it told in *The Flowers of the Forest*" (p. 42). This representation of the English as dishonest rivals is present in the following line from "The Flowers of the Forest": "The English, for ance [once], by guile wan [won] the day" (DIXON, 1910, p. 415), suggesting that it honors the Scottish while reinforcing their contention with England. This musical composition was first published in 1755, a few decades after the closure of the Scottish parliament in 1707. It was a part of a trend to write poems and songs which emulated the Scottish folk tradition, revived by the anthologies published in that century (DAICHES, 1966, p. 23). The use of the song as a source of historical information contributes to Chris's negative opinion of the English, described just before the passage quoted as "awful mean" people that "couldn't speak right and were cowards who captured Wallace[3] and killed him by treachery" (p. 42). Hence, since it retells the past and helps to mold people's understanding of a historical event, "The Flowers of the Forest" is an example of a song that functions in the novel as a "medium of remembrance", one of the roles literature can play in the production of cultural memory according to Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney (ERLL; RIGNEY, 2006, p. 112).

Besides, the song may be described as "an object of remembrance" (ERLL; RIGNEY, 2006, p. 112-113) as it is preserved through different generations and dialogues with other discourses and works of art. Its presence in the repertoire of *Sunset Song* characters may be demonstrated by the fact that Chris is always touched when hearing it "played and a lot of people singing it at a parish concert in Echt", and the girl even writes a school essay based on the lyrics (p. 42-43). Therefore, it is suggested that the song is played in gatherings and well-known in the community. "The Flowers of the Forest" is remembered and performed by characters in the novel on different occasions, being invested with new layers of meaning each time, for instance when it is used to pay tribute to the dead in World War One. *Sunset Song* ends with the passage which narrates the

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

inauguration of the war memorial in the community of Kinraddie. On this occasion, "The Flowers of the Forest" is played by a piper from the Highlands, an image which is traditionally associated with Scottish identity. The use of a lament about a sixteenth-century battle, to pay homage to those who died in World War One, brings the two conflicts closer, highlighting repetition and the cyclical nature of war throughout history. In this way, the performance of the song at this moment reinforces the similarity, though centuries apart, of the loss and the grief experienced in the past and in the present. The depiction of young women who "are lonely, and dowie [sad], and wae [woe]", "lamenting [their] dearie" (DIXON, 1910, p. 414-415), in the song is mirrored in the novel, which describes people's – especially women's – expression of mourning as the song is played in the following quotation:

> It [the song] rose and rose and wept and cried, that crying for the men that fell in battle, and there was Kirsty Strachan weeping quietly and others with her [...] He could fair play, the piper, he tore at your heart marching there with the tune leaping up the moor and echoing across the loch, folk said that Chris Tavendale alone shed never a tear, she stood quiet, holding her boy by the hand, looking down on Blawearie's fields till the playing was over. (p. 255-256)

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

The emotional impact of "The Flowers of the Forest" is acknowledged in *Sunset Song*, being especially felt by Chris. The soldiers' fate saddens a young, unmarried Chris, who cries for "the lads that came back never again to their lasses among the stooks, and the lasses that never married but sat and stared down south to the English border where their lads lay happed [covered] in blood and earth, with their bloodied kilts and broken helmets" (p. 42-43). This quotation also shows how the reconstruction of past events may be influenced by invented traditions since the kilt seems to have its origin only in the eighteenth century, a long time after the battle of Flodden (TREVOR-ROPER, 1995, p. 21-22). In spite of the possible anachronism, the image of the conflict makes such an impression upon Chris that, when the guests ask her to sing something during her wedding, "all she could think of was that south country woman crying in the night by the side of her good man" (p. 165). As she sings "The Flowers of the Forest", the first and the fifth stanzas of the song are quoted

in full – highlighting the description of the women grieving and the lament for the soldiers' death, as well as the praise for them, as in the following lines: "The Flooers o' the forest, that fought aye [always] the foremost, / The pride o' oor [our] land lie cauld in the clay" (p. 166). The bride's song choice foreshadows the war and the loss to be experienced by the community and, particularly, Chris herself.

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

> [...] *there was nothing between her and me till the night we married. Mind* [remember] *that – and the singing there was, Chae? What was it that Chris sang then?*
> And neither could remember that, it vexed Ewan a while, and then he forgot it, sitting quiet in that hut on the edge of morning. (p. 235-236)

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

Chris and Ewan's wedding represents a moment of celebration not only of their marriage, but also of the Scottish musical tradition as the occasion

includes the performance of several songs and dances. One of them is "The Bonnie House o' Airlie", a seventeenth-century Scottish ballad by an anonymous author which, like "The Flowers of the Forest", makes reference to a historical event. Charles I (1625-1649) imposed changes both in structure and in liturgy to the Church of Scotland in order to make it more similar to the Church of England. In 1638, those who opposed the policies enforced by the king signed the National Covenant, a document safeguarding the Church of Scotland against changes in its doctrine and structure. Consequently, this group became known as the Covenanters. "The Bonnie House o' Airlie" recounts a romanticized version of the attack perpetrated in 1640 by the Earl of Argyll, a Covenanter, to the castle of the Earl of Airlie, who supported the king:

It fell on a day, and a bonnie* simmer* day, When green grew aits* and barley, That there fell out a great dispute Between Argyll and Airlie.	*beautiful / summer *oats
Argyll has raised an hundred men, An hundred harness'd rarely, And he's awa' by the back o' Dunkell, To plunder the bonnie house o' Airlie.	
Lady Ogilvie looks o'er her bower-window; And oh, but she looks weary! And there she spied Argyll, Come to plunder the bonnie house o' Airlie.	
'Come down, come down, my Lady Ogilvie, Come down and kiss me fairly': 'O I winna* kiss the fause* Argyll, If he shouldna* leave a standing stane* in [Airlie.'	*will not / false *should not / stone
He hath taken her by the left shoulder, Says, 'Dame, where lies thy dowry?' 'It's up and it's down by the bonnie bank-[side, Amongst the planting o' Airlie.'	

They hae* sought it up, they hae sought it [down, They hath sought it baith* late and early; And they hae found it in the bonnie plum-[tree, That shines on the bowling-green o' Airlie.	*have *both
He hath taken her by the middle sae* small, And oh, but she grat* sairly*! He hath laid her down by the bonnie burn-[side, Till he hath plundered the bonnie house o' [Airlie.	*so *cried / sorely
'Gif* my gude* lord were here this night, As he is with Prince Charlie, Neither you, nor no Scottish lord Durst have set a foot on the bowling-green o' [Airlie.	*if / good
'Ten bonnie sons I have borne unto him, The eleventh ne'er saw his daddie; But though I had an hundred mair*, I'd gie* them a' to Prince Charlie.' (DIXON, 1910, p. 334-336)	 *more *give

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

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

When the sheep are in the fauld*, and the kye* a' at [hame*,	*fold / cows / home
When a' the weary warld* to sleep are gane*,	*world / gone
The waes* o' my heart fa' in showers from my e'e*,	*woes / eye
While my gudeman* lies sound by me.	*husband
Young Jamie lo'ed me weel*, and sought me for his [bride;	*well
But saving a croun* he had naething* else beside.	*crown / nothing
To mak* the croun a pound, my Jamie gaed* to sea,	*make / went
And the croun and the pound, they were baith* for [me.	*both
He hadna* been awa' a week but only twa*,	*had not / two
When my mither* fell sick, and the cow was stown* [awa';	*mother / stowed
My father brak* his arm – my Jamie at the sea;	*broke
And auld* Robin Gray cam a-courtin' me.	*old
My father couldna* wark*, my mither couldna spin;	*could not / work
I toil'd day and nicht*, but their bread I couldna win:	*night
Auld Rob maintain'd them baith, and wi' tears in his [e'e,	
Said, 'Jeanie, for their sakes, will ye marry me?'	
My heart it said na* – I look'd for Jamie back;	*no
But the wind it blew hie*, and the ship it was a wrack;	*high
His ship it was a wrack – why didna* Jeanie dee*?	*did not / die
And why do I live to cry, Wae's me?	
My father urged me sair*; my mither didna speak,	*sorely
But she looked in my face till my heart was like to [break.	
They gied* him my hand – my heart was at the sea;	*gave
Sae* auld Robin Gray, he was gudeman to me.	*so
I hadna been a wife a week but only four,	
When, mournfu' as I sat on the stane* at the door,	*stone
I saw my Jamie's wraith – I couldna think it he,	
Till he said, 'I'm come hame, my love, to marry thee.'	

O sair did we greet*, and meikle* did we say: We took but ae kiss, and I bade him gang* away. I wish that I were dead, but I'm no like to dee; And why was I born to say, Wae's me?	*cry / much *go
I gang like a ghaist*, and I carena* to spin; I daurna* think o' Jamie, for that wad* be a sin. But I'll do my best a gude* wife to be, For auld Robin Gray, he is kind to me. (DIXON, 1910, p. 440-442)	*ghost / care not *dare not / would *good

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

> how strange was the sadness of Scotland's singing, made for the sadness of the land and sky in the dark autumn evenings, the crying of men and women of the land who had seen their lives and loves sink away in the years, things wept for beside the sheep-buchts [sheep pen], remembered at night and in twilight. The gladness and kindness had passed, lived and forgotten, it was Scotland of the mist and rain and the crying sea that made the songs (p. 166).

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

Some works by Robert Burns, widely regarded as Scotland's national poet, are also performed during Chris and Ewan's wedding. The poem "To a

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

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

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

This effect may also be perceived when "Auld Lang Syne" is sung during the wedding. This song was collected and edited by Burns, although it is not clear to what extent it was modified by the poet (BURNS, 2009, p. 341). It is sung during Chris's wedding as it takes place on New Year's Eve, an occasion in which the song is traditionally played. Its communal performance includes conventional gestures, performed by the characters present, who "all joined hands and stood in circle to sing it" (p. 166-167). "Auld Lang Syne" invites the reminiscence and the celebration of long-lasting bonds and relationships, as the lyrics may demonstrate:

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

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

The association of the songs performed during the wedding to the Scottish tradition is stressed by the contrast provided by the ones sung by Ellison, the Irish man who manages the biggest estate in Kinraddie for the trustees. He is portrayed as an alien to the village not only due to his origin, but also to the fact that he was not born into farming and had to learn it (p. 15). The

narrative voice, demonstrating its characteristic suspicion toward people from outside the region, describes Ellison with scorn as "a poor creature of an Irishman who couldn't speak right and didn't belong to the Kirk" (p. 15). The difference between Ellison and the community, marked by language and religion, also reveals itself in his choice of songs during the wedding. First, he sings an air from *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), by John Gay (1685-1732), a play which parodies Italian opera by portraying underworld characters who sing popular tunes. The narrative voice affirms that this is "a song they didn't know" (p. 164), suggesting their preference for and their broader knowledge of the Scottish tradition. The second song chosen by Ellison is "Villikins and his Dinah", a ballad of tragic love made popular in a comic version by the English actor and comedian Frederick Robson (1821-1864), who performed it in the farce *The Wandering Minstrel* (1853). The community's distance from the song is once again implied in its description by the narrative voice: "an English one [song] and awful sad, about a young childe [man] called Villikins and a quean [girl] called Dinah" (p. 164). It is interesting to remark that this is the only reference to the origin of a song in the whole passage about the wedding, which underscores the fact that Scottish songs seem to be regarded as standard among the community of Kinraddie.

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

After the onset of World War One, as the relation between the community and their song tradition changes, Rob remains a representative of the old ways. When putting Chris's son, Ewan, to bed, Rob sings "Ladies of Spain", "There was a Young Farmer" – a folk song–, and "A' the Blue Bonnets are Over the Border", a composition about military conflicts with England written by Walter Scott and included in his novel *The Monastery* (1820). These songs are no longer commonly heard according to the narrative voice, which makes it "queer and eerie" to listen to Rob, "like listening to an echo from far in the years at the

mouth of a long lost glen" (p. 228). Hence, the character seems so out of tune with his times that his voice is regarded like an echo from a distant past. The period of the war is marked by the popularity of "*Tipperary* and squawling English things, like the squeak of a rat that is bedded in syrup, the *Long, Long Trail* and the like" (p. 227-228). The clearly negative description of these songs by the narrative voice may imply a certain nostalgia for the old ones. "It's a Long Way to Tipperary" (1912), music-hall song by Jack Judge (1872-1938) and Harry Williams (1873-1924), and "There's a Long, Long Trail" (1914), by Zo Elliot (1891-1964) and Stoddard King (1889-1933), were well received during the war and widely sung by soldiers. The success of "Tipperary" is also mentioned in this quotation from *Cloud Howe*, which sarcastically criticizes the hypocrisy in the attitude of MacDougall Brown – Segget's postmaster – toward the military conflict: "During the War he had fair been a patriot, he hadn't fought, but losh! how he'd sung! In the first bit concert held in the War he sang Tipperary to the Segget folk with his face all shining like a ham on the fry, and he sang it right well till he got to the bit where the song has to say that his heart's right there" (p. 313).

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

> you minded [remembered] him singing out there in the morning, he'd sung – And you couldn't mind what the song had been till maybe a bairn [child] would up and tell you, they'd heard it often on the way to school, and Ay, it was *Ladies of Spain*. You heard feint the meikle [much] of those old songs now, they were daft and old-fashioned. (p. 245)

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

The analysis of the presence of songs in Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *Sunset Song* demonstrates their importance in the community of Kinraddie. Songs are thoroughly integrated with the characters' daily life, being performed not only in special celebrations, but also during everyday activities, such as the work in the fields and the walk to school. Part of the considerable repercussions of the First World War in Kinraddie is the transformation in the characters' relation with their musical heritage as the traditional songs are replaced in popular taste

by new, foreign ones. However, the adaptability of the song tradition to new historical contexts is also represented in the novel since "The Flowers of the Forest" is endowed with new meaning when it is performed in the inauguration of the village's war memorial. Therefore, Gibbon depicts at once the decline of this tradition after the war and its potential for reinvigoration, revealing the complexity of processes of change, as well as the inevitable interplay between permanence and transformation.

REFERENCES

ASSMANN, J. Collective Memory and Cultural Identity. *New German Critique*, Durham, USA, n. 65, p. 125-133, Spring-Summer 1995

BURNS, R. *The Complete Poetical Works of Robert Burns*. Catrine: Alloway Publishing, 2009.

CANDAU, J. *Memória e identidade.* São Paulo: Editora Contexto, 2016.

DAICHES, D. The Scottish Literary Tradition. In: _____. *Robert Burns*. London: Andre Deutsch, 1966.

DIXON, W. M. (ed.) *The Edinburgh Book of Scottish Verse*: 1300-1900. London: Meiklejohn and Holden, 1910.

ERLL, A; RIGNEY, A. Literature and the Production of Cultural Memory: Introduction. *European Journal of English Studies*, Abingdon, v. 10, n. 2, p. 111-115, August 2006

GIBBON, L. G. *A Scots Quair*. Edinburgh: Polygon, 2006.

GIFFORD, D. *Neil M. Gunn & Lewis Grassic Gibbon*. Kilkerran: Kennedy & Boyd, 2013.

NORA, P. Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire. *Representations*, Oakland, n. 26, p. 7-24, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory, Spring 1989.

PALMER, R. (Ed.). *The Oxford Book of Sea Songs*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

RIGNEY, A. Embodied Community: Commemorating Robert Burns, 1859. *Representations*, Oakland, v. 115, n. 1, p. 71-101, Summer 2011.

TREVOR-ROPER, H. The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland. In: HOBSBAWM, E.; RANGER, T. (ed.) *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995. p. 15-42.

CAROLINA DE PINHO SANTORO LOPES é bacharel em Letras – Inglês/Literaturas pela Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (2012) e mestre em Letras (Literaturas de Língua Inglesa) pela mesma instituição (2016). Atualmente é professora do Colégio Pedro II e aluna de doutorado do Programa de Pós-graduação em Letras da Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ). Sua pesquisa explora questões relacionadas à memória na trilogia *A Scots Quair*, de Lewis Grassic Gibbon.