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MYTH AS PROPAGANDA:
THE IDEOLOGICAL USES OF MYTHOLOGY IN SCOTTISH
SOCIALIST NOVELS

DISSERTATION

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I, Jan Horacek declare that this dissertation and the work presented in it are my own and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that where I have consulted and quoted from the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed. I have acknowledged all sources of help in the bibliography.

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Most political propaganda is a matter of telling lies, not only about the facts but about your own feelings. But every artist is a propagandist in the sense that he is trying, directly or indirectly, to impose a vision of life that seems to him desirable.

—George Orwell, “The Proletarian Writer”

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PREFACE

I have always been fascinated by the peculiar ability of propaganda to communicate beliefs and values. This is particularly true in the case of Scottish socialist novels which I find to be a surprisingly thought-provoking area of study. Although they mainly reflect the political landscape of the 1930s, they are primarily a cultural means of promoting a political ideology. Regardless of their aesthetic quality, they have a lot to say about the ways in which we think about politics. As soon as I realized their potential to enlighten us about the dynamic of modern political propaganda, I looked for a pattern that could reveal how it works. I ignored the obvious answers and searched elsewhere for a clue. Eventually I decided to focus on the role of myth and its ideological uses because it has been historically used to communicate and consolidate power relations in society. I find the inescapable omnipresence of mythical thinking in the modern world tremendously impressive. It has continually motivated me to explore its function in political propaganda, and the relationship between rational and irrational thought in general.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores political propaganda in Scottish socialist novels to demonstrate how literature can convey a political ideology. It argues that they show how propaganda recycles myth as a vehicle for ideological persuasion. The reason behind doing so is to suggest that the narrative structure of Scottish socialist novels reveals a previously undetected pattern that underlies the strategies employed by political propaganda. In particular, it examines the epistemological link between myth and ideology in James C. Welsh's *The Underworld* (1920) and *The Morlocks* (1924), Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *Grey Granite* (1934), James Barke's *Major Operation* (1936) and *The Land of the Leal* (1939), respectively. The theoretical method is informed by applied structuralism and traditional myth criticism. This approach allows for a hermeneutic redefinition of the genre on the one hand, but more importantly it is instrumental in identifying significant processes inherently involved in the cultural dimension of socialist propaganda. As a result, this dissertation disregards questions of aesthetic quality because it contends that such concerns offer only a limited insight into the social phenomenon of political propaganda. Instead, it considers some universal implications of Scottish socialist novels for modern politics, especially the role of ritualization in communicating political ideologies.

INTRODUCTION

Literary radicalism in Scotland has a well-established tradition. Dating back to the iconic eighteenth-century poet Robert Burns, whose revolutionary sympathies shaped much of his poetry, Scottish writers have traditionally shown egalitarian concern for the common man. What originated as a sense of dignity in a largely agricultural society gradually over a century developed into a fierce protest against the dehumanizing effects of industrial capitalism. However, it was not until the 1920s that radical fiction appeared in Scotland. Its relatively late arrival can be accounted for by two inter-related processes. First, despite the sweeping progress of industrialization in the nineteenth century, writers typically misrepresented Scotland as an idealized pastoral community with a particular dislike for cities.¹ Second, in the wake of the First World War the increased sense of class consciousness and political radicalization² which swept across the country was far too significant to be ignored by writers. As a result, the need to tackle the dramatic changes in Scottish society brought about by its economic transformation considerably contributed to the emergence of socialist fiction in Scotland.

In particular, the socialist novel represents an unprecedented attempt to communicate the Scottish experience of rapid proletarianization and urbanization. It documents the rise and struggles of organized labor in Scotland. Ranging from dramatizations of the early period of the Scottish labor movement to the threat of fascism in the 1930s, the Scottish socialist novel not only redefines the established representational framework but also acknowledges the international political context. More importantly, it offers a vivid picture of modern Scottish history from a working-class perspective with a heavy emphasis on promoting socialist ideology.

The ideological aspect is significant for two reasons. For one thing, it was the first time writers opted for the novel form to promote socialism in Scotland. For another, their efforts to grasp and represent a political ideology clearly show the unique nature of Scottish socialism, which was largely informed by the ethical legacy of Robert Burns rather than orthodox Marxism.³ In spite of their marginalization, the works of

1. See Carl MacDougall, *Writing Scotland: How Scotland's Writers Shaped the Nation*, (Edinburgh: Polygon, 2004), 27.

2. See William Kenefick, *Red Scotland! The Rise and Fall of the Radical Left, c. 1872 to 1932* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 24.

3. See Kenefick, *Red Scotland*, 24.

Scottish socialist novelists deserve more attention because they depict a frequently overlooked aspect of British cultural and political history.

Even though the Scottish socialist novel originated in the 1920s, its definition and interpretation appears to be somewhat problematic. It is complicated by the concurrence of its formation and the advance of modernism in Scotland known as the Scottish Cultural Renaissance. In fact, this period of literary revival seems to have conveniently overshadowed the existence of explicitly socialist novels in Scotland. Although the movement's mastermind Hugh MacDiarmid was briefly associated with the Left, his cultural preferences and volatile political allegiances were not entirely compatible with the goals of Scottish socialist writers. Therefore, the Scottish Renaissance should not represent the determining factor in interpreting Scottish socialist writing.

Instead of seeing the socialist novel in Scotland as a by-product of the Scottish Renaissance, it makes more sense to define it by contrasting it with working-class fiction. Regardless of some superficial similarities, there is a fundamental difference between a socialist and working-class novel. Raymond Williams, an influential cultural critic in the New Left movement, suggests that in working-class fiction "the majority of characters and events belong to working-class life," whereas in socialist writing "the author, or a decisive character offers a socialist interpretation of what is happening, what happened, what might have happened, what could yet happen."⁴ Williams introduces a vitally important distinction that rests on the ideological baggage inherently present in socialist writing. In order to establish a degree of clarity, this straightforward definition requires further modification. In his seminal study of the radical novel in the United States, Walter Rideout points out that a socialist novel "as one of its primary purposes explicitly or implicitly advocates some form of Socialism."⁵ He stresses the importance of consistent political agenda which is at the core of socialist writing. While working-class fiction may or may not selectively dramatize some aspects of socialism, socialist novels systematically and consciously pursue intrinsically ideological objectives with the intention of advancing socialism. Consequently, the context of working-class fiction can provide a useful framework of

4. Raymond Williams, "Working-Class, Proletarian, Socialist: Problems in Some Welsh Novels," in *The Socialist Novel In Britain: Towards the Recovery of A Tradition*, ed. H. Gustav Klaus (Brighton: Harvester: 1982), 120.

5. Walter Rideout, *The Radical Novel in the United States, 1900–1954: Some Interrelations of Literature and Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 51–52.

reference, but it is the politically didactic function that truly underlies the socialist novel.

Scottish novelists who persistently displayed socialist commitment in their writing were few but determined. H. Gustav Klaus identifies James C. Welsh, Lewis Grassie Gibbon, and James Barke as the three writers who developed the genre of the Scottish socialist novel.⁶ Coming from different backgrounds, their dramatizations of socio-economic realities in Scotland differ as much as the literary strategies they use to communicate their understanding of socialism. While Welsh represents a combination of realism and political reformism, Gibbon and Barke offer a taste of modernism seasoned with militant radicalism. Whether calculated or naive, their tendency to politicize art has had a lasting impact on Scottish literature. In fact, the republished editions of Barke's and Gibbon's novels illustrate the indisputable value of their work. Although they were few in numbers and their motives varied, these writers built the tradition of socialist fiction in Scotland.

However, some would believe that this list of Scottish socialist novelists is incomplete. Andrew Croft complains that the Scottish writers Dot Allan and George Blake, who contributed to the diversity of socialist fiction in the 1930s, often go unrecognized.⁷ Allan's *Hunger March* (1934) and Blake's *The Shipbuilders* (1935) depict the period of social and industrial unrest in Scotland. Both include working-class perspectives. It is therefore tempting to consider them examples of socialist fiction. Nonetheless, they do not systematically advocate socialism.

Despite a considerable degree of compassion and sympathy for the dispossessed, *Hunger March* involves a multiplicity of narrators who cut across social classes. *The Shipbuilders* is structured around the symbiotic relationship between a philanthropic industrialist and his working-class friend who does not display any socialist beliefs. In fact, the novel has particularly nationalist overtones. Similarly, the industrial setting of Joe Corrie's novel *Black Earth* (1939) can lead to a conclusion that it offers a socialist viewpoint. Even though the writer was a well-known socialist dramatist who criticized capitalism in his plays, the novel primarily dramatizes the psychological impact of a miner's workplace accident on his family. Consequently,

6. See H. Gustav Klaus, "James Barke: A Great-Hearted Writer, a Hater of Oppression, a True Scot," in *A Weapon in the Struggle: The Cultural History of the Communist Party in Britain*, ed. Andy Croft (London: Pluto Press, 1998), 24.

7. See Andrew Croft, "Socialist Novels from the 1930s," *The Radical Teacher*, no. 48 (Spring 1996): 21–22, accessed August 10, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20709874>.

despite their being working-class in nature, the novels' ambiguous depiction of politics does not promote socialism.

Historically, Scotland lagged behind England in the development of the socialist novel, but it produced the prototype⁸ of mining novelists who sprang up in Britain after the First World War. James C. Welsh grew up in a Scottish mining community where he had first-hand experience of the coal industry. Having worked in mines from an early age, his passion for the organized labor movement led him to become a trade unionist. Rising above his proletarian origins, Welsh went on to become a Labor MP who showed concern for the Scottish working class. For example, during parliamentary debates in Westminster he raised important questions about Scotland's poor housing conditions.⁹ His social and political background informs Welsh's most important fiction. *The Underworld* represents his major achievement as a socialist novelist. Through a largely semi-autobiographical account of a miner's life, it introduced many idiosyncratic features widely associated with the trend of mining fiction in Britain. The novel was followed by *The Morlocks* which deals with the cataclysmic implications of proletarian revolution. Despite its explicitly revolutionary setting, the book shows Welsh's increasingly patronizing attitude toward labor militancy and political radicalism. Nevertheless, his fundamental role in establishing the socialist novel in Scotland remains uncontested. Besides setting a precedent in British mining fiction, Welsh openly advocates a form of socialism in his work.

Although Welsh was among the first novelists to explore the life experience of mining communities Scotland, his position in the landscape of Scottish literature has been recognized only recently. Concerning the writer's contribution to socialist writing, Klaus argues that Welsh's focus on the sense of humanity and individualized class consciousness far outweighs some ideological inconsistencies in his novels.¹⁰ Within the traditional scope of literary history, Welsh certainly fits the familiar paradigm of themes typically connected with working-class life. In fact, Klaus stresses the political significance of the symbiotic relationship between family, community, and patrician

8. See Ian Haywood, *Working-Class Fiction: From Chartism to "Trainspotting"* (Plymouth: Northcote House Publishers, 1997), 41.

9. See United Kingdom, *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th ser., vol. 166 (1923), <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1923/jul/13/rent-and-mortgage-interest-restrictions> (accessed October 15, 2016).

10. See H. Gustav Klaus, "James C. Welsh, Major Miner Novelist," *Scottish Literary Journal* 13, no. 2 (November 1986): 83.

power structures in *The Underworld*.¹¹ To a degree, the communal aspect of social relations in a mining village helps understand Welsh's all-inclusive interpretation of socialism. Admittedly, there is a noticeable shift from the radical overtones of *The Underworld* to the reformist ending in *The Morlocks*. After all, his novels recycle his experience in trade unionism on both local and national levels.

Apart from the political implications of Welsh's work, David Smith claims that he operates as a transition between the early phase of the socialist novel in England and the proletarian writers of the 1930s.¹² His function as an intermediary between two generations of socialist novelists therefore begs the important question of how he differs from his more famous followers. In a comparison between Welsh and Gibbon, Klaus concludes that both writers structure their plots around isolated protagonists but the former heavily relies on the use of melodrama.¹³ In contrast to Gibbon's effective harnessing of modernist techniques, Welsh's obsession with romantic triangles that transcend and reconcile social classes appears rather sentimental. However, this difference should be interpreted as a positive sign of heterogeneity and progress in Scottish socialist fiction.

As the economic and spiritual crisis progressed in the 1930s, a wave of politically motivated literature spread through Britain. Many writers enthusiastically embraced Marxism and attempted to redefine English literature from class perspective. One of the most controversial English proletarian writers, Alec Brown, suggested that "literary English from Caxton to us is an artificial jargon of the ruling class; written English begins with us. [all capitalized in the original]"¹⁴ Despite their aggressive sloganeering and zealous efforts to invent a literature of the working class, these writers gradually disappeared as the political idealism of the 1930s faded away. George Orwell concluded that "no decade in the past hundred and fifty years has been so barren of imaginative prose" because "the atmosphere of orthodoxy is always . . . completely

11. See H. Gustav Klaus, "Individual, Community and Conflict in Scottish Working-Class Fiction, 1920–1940," in *Community in Modern Scottish Literature*, ed. Scott Lyall (Leiden: Brill Rodopi, 2016), 46.

12. See David Smith, *Socialist Propaganda in the Twentieth-Century British Novel* (London: Macmillan Press, 1978), 42.

13. See H. Gustav Klaus, "Silhouettes of Revolution: Some Neglected Novels of the 1920s," in *The Socialist Novel In Britain: Towards the Recovery of A Tradition*, ed. H. Gustav Klaus (Brighton: Harvester, 1982), 93.

14. Alec Brown, A Contribution to "Controversy: Writers' International," *Left Review* 1, no. 3 (December 1934): 77.

ruinous to the novel, the most anarchical of all forms of literature.”¹⁵ Brown’s narcissistic iconoclasm is symptomatic of the interwar leftism, whereas Orwell’s viewpoint carries conservative undertones. What they have in common is their essentially dismissive attitude because they both categorically reject oppositional value systems. It is then rather surprising that the Scottish socialist novel proves both assertions wrong. In the unstable period of the 1930s, it reached its zenith in the form of a novelist who produced aesthetically potent writing with a sharp ideological edge.

James Leslie Mitchell, better known under his pseudonym Lewis Grassie Gibbon, not only ranks among the central pillars of Scottish literature, but more importantly he pointed Scottish socialist writing in a completely new direction. He is credited with modernizing the Scottish novel in his *A Scots Quair* (1932–1934) which documents the dramatic shift from rural to urban lifestyle in Scotland. This epic trilogy represents a major turning point in Scottish literature because it radically challenged the romanticized view of idyllic Scotland from the perspective of a writer who grew up in the environment he described.¹⁶ Although he was born and raised in the country, Gibbon pursued a journalism career in the city where he became actively involved in cultural and political activities. His upbringing gave him access to the authentic local dialect while the city life introduced him to the harsh realities of industrial Scotland. At the same time he discovered modernist narrative methods that allowed him to represent the myriad of urban voices. These aspects became the defining features of his work. Straddling the ethos of rural homogeneity and the conflicting multiplicity of a class divided city, Gibbon explores the totality of modern life. Even though *Sunset Song* (1932) is widely believed to be the most accomplished and popular book of the trilogy, it is the last and most controversial *Grey Granite* that fully shows his socialist commitment previously foreshadowed in the first two books. Marginalized and gravely underestimated, it bears testimony to Gibbon’s relentless efforts to translate a radical ideology into an aesthetically pleasing work of art. As a result, the fusion of Gibbon’s strong attachment to the countryside and his urban experience in Aberdeen and Glasgow helped him produce what remains not only a classic work in the canon of

15. George Orwell, “Inside the Whale” in *An Age Like This, 1920–1940*, vol. 1 of *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, ed. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (Harmondworth: Penguin Books, 1970), 568.

16. William Power, *Literature and Oatmeal: What Literature Has Meant to Scotland* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1935), 191–2.

modern Scottish literature but also a novel that marked a turning point in the development of socialist writing in Scotland.

Paradoxically, the more critical acclaim Gibbon received, the less attention was initially paid to the ideological aspect of his work. The discussion of his achievements has typically focused on his artistic and aesthetic merits. He has been repeatedly praised for adapting the stream-of-consciousness narrative mode to the rhythms of Scots. Additionally, his role in the Scottish Renaissance has often been exaggerated at the expense of his urban and socialist concerns. It is self-evident that Gibbon's fiction was informed by his political commitment. For example, the revolutionary setting of *Grey Granite* reflects his involvement¹⁷ in the establishment of the Aberdeen Soviet which attempted to empower workers in the north-east of Scotland. In other words, Gibbon's political radicalism in his fiction has been considered only superficially. The restrained approach to the politics of Gibbon's most famous work is epitomized by Ian Campbell whose introduction to a recent edition of *A Scots Quair* mainly foregrounds the theme of change and the narrative method in *Grey Granite*,¹⁸ whereas the socialist element is hardly touched on. There can be no doubt that all three novels depict the process of Scotland's transformation and the human predicament which it inevitably entailed. Nor is there any room for questioning the importance of Gibbon's modernist narrative technique which contributed to the trilogy's success. But to downplay the ideological purpose of *A Scots Quair* is to leave a gap in understanding Gibbon for the sake of tradition.

On the other hand, some recent research shows that the ideological dynamic of *A Scots Quair* merits recognition. Interrogating the position of modernism and Marxism in the trilogy, McCulloch charges that the novels embody Gibbon's belief in humanity rather than ideology.¹⁹ Although she does consider Gibbon's radicalism, McCulloch follows the established pattern of depoliticizing Gibbon because she portrays the ideological baggage of *A Scots Quair* as a modernist exercise in humanism. However, in a more recent study of the trilogy McCulloch partly revises her former critical remarks. Comparing Gibbon to other Scottish radical novelists, she contends that his

17. See Lewis Grassie Gibbon, "Aberdeen," in *Smeddum: A Lewis Grassie Gibbon Anthology*, ed. Valentina Bold (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2001), 115.

18. See Ian Campbell, introduction to *A Scots Quair: Sunset Song, Cloud Howe, Grey Granite*, by Lewis Grassie Gibbon, ed. Ian Campbell (1934; Edinburgh: Polygon, 2006), xxix–xxx.

19. See Margery Palmer McCulloch, "Modernism and Marxism in *A Scots Quair*," in *A Flame in the Mearns: Lewis Grassie Gibbon A Centenary Celebration*, ed. Margery Palmer and Sarah M. Dunnigan (Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2003), 39.

masterpiece represents “the most outstanding ideological and modernist proletarian fictional work of the interwar period.”²⁰ Perhaps for the sake of polemics, McCulloch broadens the scope of interpretation to include ideology as an important factor. This indicates that the underestimated political function of the novels, *Grey Granite* in particular, plays a crucial role in defining Scottish socialist fiction. More importantly, it may prove instrumental in understanding the cultural dimension of political propaganda.

The correlation of Gibbon’s ideological development with the increasingly political direction of his fiction became the focus of a critical trend that accentuates the relationship between history and politics. Roy Johnson goes as far as to claim that *A Scots Quair* exemplifies Britain’s most influential work of fiction about working-class militancy.²¹ Such a dramatic about-turn over the essential meaning of the trilogy encouraged further revisionism. Criticizing the process of silencing his politics, Dixon demonstrates the enormous influence of revolutionary ideologies on Gibbon’s writing.²² The novels are particularly marked by the author’s belief in diffusionism which Douglas F. Young took to be a key theme in the trilogy.²³ This anthropological theory centers around the utopian idea that people lived happily in primitive communist societies before their ethical purity was irretrievably eroded by the arrival of agriculture.²⁴ Additionally, the unobtrusive allusions to class conflict and social injustice that emerge throughout the trilogy gradually mature into a damning indictment of capitalism in *Grey Granite*. Borthwick charges that it not only set a standard of depicting urban life in Scotland, but it also introduced a timeless pattern of communicating class anxieties in Scottish literature.²⁵ Even though Gibbon’s involvement with the revolutionary Left may be obscured by nationalist readings of his

20. Margery Palmer McCulloch, *Scottish Modernism and Its Contexts, 1918–1959: Literature, National Identity and Cultural Exchange* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 151.

21. See Roy Johnson, “Lewis Grassie Gibbon and ‘A Scots Quair’: Politics in the Novel,” *Renaissance and Modern Studies* 20, no. 1 (1976): 39, accessed August 8, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14735787609366401>.

22. See Keith Dixon, “The Gospels According to Saint Bakunin: Lewis Grassie Gibbon and Libertarian Communism,” in *A Flame in the Mearns: Lewis Grassie Gibbon A Centenary Celebration*, ed. Margery Palmer and Sarah M. Dunnigan (Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2003), 139.

23. See Douglas F. Young, *Beyond the Sunset: A Study of James Leslie Mitchell (Lewis Grassie Gibbon)* (Aberdeen: Impulse Publications, 1973), 14.

24. See Paul Crook, *Grafton Elliot Smith, Egyptology and the Diffusion of Culture: A Biographical perspective* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2012), 59.

25. See David Borthwick, “From *Grey Granite* to Urban Grit: A Revolution in Perspectives,” in *A Flame in the Mearns: Lewis Grassie Gibbon A Centenary Celebration*, ed. Margery Palmer and Sarah M. Dunnigan (Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2003), 74.

work, *A Scots Quair* illustrates the ultimate epistemological shift toward historical materialism. Gibbon himself openly proclaimed “I hate capitalism; all my books are explicit or implicit propaganda.”²⁶ This clearly shows that the recent revisionist interpretations that emphasize the political dimension of Gibbon’s novels merely rediscover what was widely known about him during his lifetime.

It is not a coincidence that one of Gibbon’s most devoted contemporaneous admirers, James Barke, became the next leading figure in socialist fiction in Scotland. The two writers had a lot in common. First, Barke was born in a rural area where he developed a passion for the Scottish country. After he moved from the south-east of Scotland to Glasgow, he was employed as a white-collar worker at a shipyard engineering company. This gave him an opportunity to witness the collapse of Scotland’s most traditional heavy industry and the detrimental effects of unemployment on the urbanized workforce. Second, he was a staunch advocate of socialism in politics and literature. In fact, Barke was the only of the three socialist novelists who joined the Communist Party of Great Britain and remained its member until his death. In his review of *A Scots Quair* Barke concludes that though Gibbon “had not shed all his acquired bourgeois characteristics,” the trilogy “is a worthy forerunner of the novel that will dominate the coming literary scene: the novel that will be written by workers for workers, expressing the hopes, ideals and aspirations of workers.”²⁷ This demonstrates his devotion to both Gibbon and revolutionary politics. Despite the fact that neither writer was a worker by profession and the coming of proletarian literature was a self-fulfilling prophecy, Gibbon’s ideologically shaped perception of class concerns inspired Barke to write the most explicitly propagandist novels in Scotland.

Although there seems to be general agreement about the ideological function of Barke’s political writing, opinion is divided on the issue of his alleged dogmatism. While some see his orthodoxy as a perfect example of proletarian literature, others point out its infinitely damaging impact on the writer’s ability to communicate his political beliefs. Concerning the ambiguity of Barke’s position in Scottish literature, Manfred Malzahn believes that the ubiquitous portrayal of class struggle in his most subversive novel *Major Operation* positively places the author in the tradition of working-class

26. Lewis Grassie Gibbon, A Contribution to “Controversy: Writers’ International,” *Left Review* 1, no. 5 (February 1935): 180.

27. James Barke, “Lewis Grassie Gibbon,” *Left Review* 2, no. 14 (November 1936): 225.

fiction.²⁸ On the one hand, Barke's vitriolic attack on the class structure of industrial capitalism represents a definite contribution to the process of coming to terms with urban Scotland. But on the other, his wild exaggeration of the morally positive outlook of the class-conscious Scottish proletariat poses a potential risk to Barke's artistic integrity. Malzahn shows that at times the novel betrays the writer's staggering lack of control over his overtly propagandist agenda.²⁹ There is some truth in this, especially when one considers the main character's astoundingly voluntarist conversion to socialism. However, the implication that the book's propaganda is a proof of Barke's dogmatism does not only ignore the potential advantages of explicit didacticism but also the historical context of the novel's publication.

The reason behind Barke's use of politically stereotyped characters and aesthetically ambiguous dramatic devices is more complex. While they are certainly symptomatic of the kind of wish-fulfilment that is inherent in socialist writing, Barke's seemingly doctrinal representations of class anxieties aimed to upset the established assumptions about the working class. Klaus remarks that Barke's romanticized picture of the revolutionary proletariat in *Major Operation* remedies the purposefully sensationalist descriptions of the working class in another contemporary Glasgow novel *No Mean City* (1935).³⁰ In addition to his efforts to counter the stereotypical view of the Scottish working class, Barke's exaggerated delineation of class conflict was intended as an antidote to the classless view of Scottish nationalism. Barke believed capitalism inhibited the genuine development of national cultures which he thought were primarily the heritage of the working-classes.³¹ Judging by Barke's correlation between nationalism and capitalism, his propagandist intentions should not be principally attributed to his alleged dogmatism. Although he was a committed communist, he was well aware of the pitfalls of mindless propaganda. In a note to his epic novel *The Land of the Leal*, Barke urges writers to communicate political and economic struggles "not as politicians or economists (far less as propagandists of a

28. See Manfred Malzahn, "Coming to Terms with Industrial Scotland: Two 'Proletarian' Novels of the 1930s (George Blake: *The Shipbuilders*, James Barke: *Major Operation*)," in *Studies in Scottish Fiction: Twentieth Century*, ed. Joachim Schwend and Horst W. Drescher (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1990), 202.

29. See Manfred Malzahn, "The Industrial Novel," in *Twentieth Century*, vol. 4 of *The History of Scottish Literature*, ed. Cairns Craig (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987), 235.

30. See Klaus, "The Shipbuilders' Story," in *British Industrial Fictions*, ed. H. Gustav Klaus and Stephen Knight (Cardiff: University of Wales, 2000), 63.

31. See James Barke, "The Scottish National Question," *Left Review* 2, no. 14 (November 1936): 743-44.

political party), but as artists, conscious of our traditions, grateful for our heritage and imbued with a deep sense of the responsibility we share for that grand total of all art and human endeavor—civilization.”³² Therefore, the writer’s doctrinal politics did not override his ethical principles. On the contrary, his acute sense of history coupled with ideological fervor assisted him in redefining the position of the Scottish working class in literature.

Furthermore, Barke’s confident portrayal of militant labor does more than narrate modern Scottish history from a working-class perspective—the change of focus offers a fresh look at the dichotomy between the collective and the individual in a rapidly changing world. Andy Croft notes that Barke’s *The Land of the Leal* is similar to Gibbon’s *The Sunset Song* in the way it addresses the erosion of community values.³³ This argument marks a significant redirection of the discussion of Barke’s work because it does not attempt to criticize the novels for what they are—socialist propaganda. Instead, it focuses on the psychological effects of the workers’ dislocation and alienation as they move from the country to the city. Nevertheless, exploring a lost sense of community as a consequence of proletarianization raises an important ontological question. Even though the displaced workforce became temporarily uprooted, new collective identity replaced the old patrician character of rural communities. In Ramón Lopéz Ortega’s opinion, the 1930s working-class novel, which naturally includes Barke, reveals a spiritually insightful point because it documents the formation of a new collective consciousness.³⁴ What Barke is concerned with then is not only the collapse of the displaced individual in the face of overwhelmingly anonymous urban existence but also his empowerment within an emergent industrial collective. His success in representing these aspects of urban modernity has been analyzed in a revisionist doctoral thesis by Keir Elder who argues that Barke’s writing is indicative of a major transformation of Scottish society and literature in the 1930s.³⁵ His consistent interest in the relation of the individual to society shows that besides its mimetic goals, socialist writing in Scotland had an important cognitive function. It

32. James Barke, note to *The Land of the Leal* (Edinburgh: Canongate Publishing, 1987), ix–x.

33. See Andy Croft, *Red Letter Days: British Fiction in the 1930s* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 173.

34. See Ramón Lopéz Ortega, “The Language of the Working-Class Novel of the 1930s,” in *The Socialist Novel In Britain: Towards the Recovery of A Tradition*, ed. H. Gustav Klaus (Brighton: Harvester, 1982), 142.

35. See Keir Elder, “James Barke: Politics, Cinema and Writing Scottish Urban Modernity,” abstract (PhD diss., University of Dundee, 2013), iv, <https://discovery.dundee.ac.uk/en/studentTheses/james-barke>.

presented a social analysis of a major economic and cultural modernization in the twentieth century.

However, few accounts of Scottish socialist novels have systematically tried to explain their role in the context of political propaganda. What is not fully understood is how they structurally use mythology to communicate inherently ideological value systems. This question is not sufficiently clarified even by Smith who concludes that with the exception of Gibbon, British proletarian writers did not successfully convey their socialist beliefs as a result of their fanaticism, immature aesthetics and rudimentary understanding of the ideology.³⁶ To a certain limited extent, this argument is valid, and the recurring themes and references that represent the writers' commitment to socialism in the novels seem to provide enough evidence to support the hypothesis. Nonetheless, identifying the individual examples of propaganda in socialist writing against the backdrop of political and historical events has little to say about the way propaganda works. A detailed analysis of the content and form supplies some useful empirical data, but their interpretation needs to be directed toward understanding the universal mechanisms of political propaganda.

If we could identify the underlying narrative structure of the Scottish socialist novel, we would better understand not only the process of politicizing art but, more importantly, the ideological uses of myth-making for propaganda. Although the trend of increasing politicization of art has often been seen as a cultural reaction of the Left to the rise of fascism in the 1930s,³⁷ the propagandist aspect of literature is inextricably involved in the production of art regardless of time. Orwell distinguishes between a somewhat artistic sense of propaganda on the one hand, and a political one on the other. While the former communicates artists' honest perception of reality, the latter attempts to manipulate and deceive.³⁸

Despite the differences in content and intention, both share the universal timeless goal of communicating a value system which is often synonymous with ideology. Exploring the hybrid relationship between art and propaganda from the

36. See David Smith, *Socialist Propaganda in the Twentieth-Century British Novel* (London: Macmillan Press, 1978), 112.

37. See Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Technological Reproducibility," in *The Work of Art in the Age of Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, eds. Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, and Thomas Y. Levin, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Rodney Livingstone, and Howard Eiland (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 42.

38. George Orwell, "The Proletarian Writer," in *My Country Right or Left, 1940–1943*, vol. 2 of *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, ed. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970), 57.

perspective of myth-making can potentially help us identify the patterns in which ideology is communicated in the modern world. Myths are “the fundamental models of society that give practical meaning to values and beliefs,” and they resemble political ideologies in the way they “guide the processes in which policies are made and public opinion is formed.”³⁹ Therefore, the inherently propagandist nature of art shows that the interpretation of literature in the context of political propaganda remains particularly relevant today. It represents a fundamental strategy for understanding the diffusion of ideology in society.

In the context of political propaganda, Scottish socialist novels demonstrate the modern use of myth as a vehicle for ideological persuasion. Myth is widely believed to be a way of cognition⁴⁰ because it is a narrative that often explains origins and destinies. It presents a simplified view of the universe that helps people make sense of the world and their place in it. That is why myths have played a key role in the process of establishing power and dominance throughout the centuries. In fact, the cultural link between myth and propaganda can be traced back to Ancient Greece. Jan N. Bremmer demonstrates that myth along with poetry was systematically used as a vehicle for political propaganda in Athens and Sparta as early as the fourth century BC.⁴¹ Furthermore, Ross F. Collins’ inquiry into the ideological uses of myth-making in World War I shows that propaganda recycled the heroic myth to build a more agreeable view of the war.⁴² All this indicates is that Scottish socialist novels build on the long tradition of exploiting the narrative potential of myth to convey ideological belief systems.

It seems plausible, then, that if myth offers tangible explanations of formally abstract concepts, it represents a powerful propagandist tool for communicating political ideologies. Scottish socialist novels clearly recycle the cognitive model of binary opposition that is symptomatic of mythical narratives. With varying degrees of intention and success, they all primarily attempt to narrate the epic conflict between

39. Lance W. Bennett, “Myth, Ritual, and Political Control,” *Journal of Communication* 30, no. 4 (December 1980): 167, accessed October 8, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1980.tb02028.x>.

40. See Richard Chase, “Notes on the Study of Myth,” in *Myth and Literature: Contemporary Theory and Practice*, ed. John B. Vickery (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), 68.

41. Jan N. Bremmer, “Myth as Propaganda: Athens and Sparta,” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 17 (1977): 16, accessed August 3, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20189993>.

42. Ross F. Collins, “Myth as Propaganda in World War I: American Volunteers, Victor Chapman, and French Journalism,” *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 92, no. 3 (2015): 655, accessed August 3, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699015573006>.

Labor and Capital which represents a perfect example of binary opposition. Claude Lévi-Strauss has shown that myth helps people understand and solve problems which are inherently binary in nature.⁴³ On the other hand, G. S. Kirk points out that binary analysis is a mode of thought which encourages the tendency to think in terms of polar extremes.⁴⁴ But this kind of reductionism is precisely what makes the Scottish socialist novel what it is—political propaganda. Its main goal is to promote a biased interpretation of the binary opposition between polarized social forces. Consequently, the novels manifest the modern ideological uses of myth in political propaganda.

Traditionally, previous studies of Scottish socialist novels have been primarily informed by historical-biographical approaches. They based their criteria on the historical background, factual references and aesthetic quality. Admittedly, focusing on how the novels reflect the writers' lives and times has indisputably increased our awareness of the social dimension of the industrialization of Scotland. Another major contribution of these approaches is that they have been instrumental in understanding the cultural history of 1930s Britain. However, this method of analysis has a number of limitations. The main weakness of the previous research is the failure to systematically address how the novels function as a vehicle for socialist propaganda. Although it takes into account some didactic and explicitly ideological aspects of the narratives, it does so only superficially. Another drawback of the traditional approaches is that they assume at least a partial knowledge of the historical context on the part of the reader. Certainly, the novels become more meaningful when their social environment and authors' backgrounds are understood. Nonetheless, in order to show the direct relevance of myth to political propaganda represented by Scottish socialist novels, the theoretical method engages chiefly with structuralism and myth criticism.

Structuralism is particularly useful in rereading and rethinking the novels in the context of other cultural phenomena, politics in particular. Besides being one of the most reliably scientific and objective approaches to interpreting literature, structuralism has the potential to identify our ways of thinking through analyzing the patterns that assign meaning.⁴⁵ In other words, by exploring the systems of relationships that define the underlying structure of the novels, it is possible to show not only how they

43. See Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning* (New York: Schocken Books, 1979), 22–23.

44. See G. S. Kirk, *Myth: Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and other Cultures* (1970; repr., London: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 78–83.

45. See Wilred L. Guerin et al., *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, 5th ed. (New York: OUP, 2005), 369.

communicate socialist ideology, but, more importantly how political propaganda affects our cognitive processes. Consequently, reanalyzing the traditional aspects of the novels, such as setting, plot, and theme, would be largely derivative. Conversely, taking the novels for what they essentially are—political propaganda—and asking the question of how they convey meaning is likely to merit a good deal of thought.

While Strauss' structural study of myth informs the initial stage of my research, I also adapt Joseph Campbell's theory of the monomyth. The benefit of this method is that it allows me to use the structural patterns of the texts to reconstruct a possible version of the universal propagandist narrative that communicates a political ideology. The second advantage of using this approach is that Campbell's inquiry into the paradigm of the mythical hero's journey seems to address the ideological use of linearity borrowed from myth. This methodological synthesis is a reliable and valid method of data analysis because both structuralism and myth criticism strive to identify the limits in which a culture's language operates.⁴⁶ In this case, the selected approach helps clarify the ideological language of political propaganda.

Lastly, I eclectically draw on some areas of critical theory because it provides useful insights into the relationship between culture and power. Scottish socialist novels represent a particularly ideological dimension of culture which promotes and justifies political beliefs and values. Therefore, this theoretical framework was adopted to allow a deeper understanding of the epistemological link between myth and ideology which are essentially cultural products processed by political propaganda to influence public opinion.

46. See John Carlos Rowe, "Structure," in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 34. Despite the different times and places of their origin, European structuralism and American myth criticism represent natural allies in literary theory because they study the ways in which a culture finds the stylistic means to express itself.

PART I.
IDEOLOGY AND MYTH

But what gives the myth an operational value is that the specific pattern described is timeless; it explains the present and the past as well as the future. This can be made clear through a comparison between myth and what appears to have largely replaced it in modern societies, namely, politics.

—Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*

Ideology and myth conveniently coexist in the political landscape of the modern world but their roles in propaganda seem rather ambiguous. Although there is little doubt they significantly shape modern politics, it is less clear how exactly they function to communicate political beliefs. It is well established that propaganda traditionally employs powerful rhetoric and a variety of media to affect and sway public opinion. However, this conventional view offers only a partial understanding of political propaganda and its universal implications for the human mind. While concentrating on the most apparent aspects, such as scapegoating and manipulation of facts, there are two likely explanations why it fails to give a thorough insight into the actual nature of propaganda and its mechanisms. First and foremost, it underestimates the importance of myth as a vehicle for communicating political ideology. Additionally, it may overstress the content of propaganda.

This is not to say that mythology has never been considered a potentially useful means of political persuasion. On the contrary, ancient and indigenous myths have often been used to provide legitimacy for particular value systems. In the chapters that follow, I focus on explaining the ambivalent and often anachronistic relationship between ideology and myth in the context of Scottish socialist novels with the ultimate intention to show how propaganda works on a structural level. In contrast to the traditional analysis of sloganeering or explicitly ideological themes in propagandist literature, my approach fundamentally differs because it explores the structural relations which make up the matrix of propaganda.

In order to describe the boundaries within which socialist propaganda uses mythology to communicate ideology, this section looks at the structural similarities between ideology and myth on the one hand, and their dramatizations in the novels on the other. It opens with an overview of general considerations about ideology and myth to clarify the link between the two concepts and their relevance to political propaganda.

Since the use and interpretation of both have evolved over time in many areas of research, a brief discussion of definitions offers a useful point of departure. Besides clarifying the ambivalence of the terms, the following chapters also determine the areas where ideology and myth meet. Contrary to popular misconceptions, no matter how rational and logical modern ideologies attempt to appear, they heavily rely on the factor of faith in inspiring and guiding political action. Moreover, dialectic constitutes another epistemological feature shared by myth and ideology. On the other hand, myth lends ideology the story form which is a perfect instrument to communicate its values and principles. Lastly, the picture of the propagandist potential of myth would be incomplete without discussing its functions which overlap with those of ideology. By exploring the structural similarities between ideology and myth, it is possible to discover aspects of the importance and efficacy of political propaganda that have been rarely considered in the classic interpretation of Scottish socialist novels.

Chapter 1

Origins and Definitions

Despite the popular belief that myths and modern political ideologies represent two separate categories, a closer look at their backgrounds and definitions reveals a number of striking similarities. In particular, they play a significant role in affecting our ways of knowing and understanding the world. Their ability to shape our perception of reality partly accounts for their propagandist potential. However, it also demonstrates the inherently ideological nature of myth. The purpose of this section is to establish a framework of reference, and, more importantly lay the groundwork for clarifying the symbiotic relationship between myth and modern political propaganda. In order to show how Scottish socialist novels adapt myth to communicate the ideology, it is vitally important to define the key concepts as they are used throughout this paper.

Ideology frequently carries pejorative overtones as a result of its association with certain oppressive and violent political movements in the modern world. Nonetheless, it is primarily a theoretical concept that helps us systematically identify and organize questions of conduct and direction in society. Raymond Williams, the cultural critic who revised Marxism in order to understand the link between literature and society, stresses three common interpretations of the concept of ideology: “(i) a system of beliefs characteristic of a particular class or group; (ii) a system of illusory beliefs—false ideas or false consciousness—which can be contrasted with true or scientific knowledge; (iii) the general process of the production of meanings and ideas.”⁴⁷ The first two definitions in Williams’ overview of the common interpretations of ideology offers some insight into the political background of Scottish socialist novels which are firmly rooted in Marxist theory. However, in order to draw some universal conclusions about political propaganda, the third sense of the concept seems more applicable because it not only includes uses (i) and (ii), but potentially any ideology other than socialism. More importantly, its broad and universal implications are more in line with the assertion that “literature . . . is an ideology. It has the most intimate relations to questions of social power.”⁴⁸ Although I choose to work within this

47. Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (1977; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 55.

48. Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (1996; repr., Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 19–20.

epistemological framework, my use of the term frequently refers to the more specific definition of Andrew Heywood, an expert on political theory, who states that

An ideology is a more or less coherent set of ideas that provides the basis for organized political action, whether this is intended to preserve, modify or overthrow the existing system of power. All ideologies therefore (a) offer an account of the existing order, usually in the form of a ‘world view’, (b) provide the model of a desired future, a vision of the ‘good society’, and (c) outline how political change can and should be brought about.⁴⁹

While Williams’s broad sense of ideology represents an important stepping stone to a productive discussion about literature and ideology within a single epistemological category, Heywood’s narrower definition helps identify the ideological exterior of Scottish socialist novels. If we take a close look at their dramatizations of socialism, the novels clearly display all the fundamental aspects of Heywood’s interpretation of ideology. They are stereotypically set in an industrial society divided by class conflict. The heroes typically embody ideological belief systems that question the legitimacy of capitalism. Their ethical and political standards are commonly opposed to the established order because they promote an idealistic view of human society. Lastly, they exemplify the two alternative approaches to achieving socialism—evolution and revolution. Therefore, Heywood’s definition does not only offer a methodological clue to identifying the ideological pattern of the novels, but it also shows that the protagonists effectively function as the writers’ mouthpieces.

The philosophical history of ideology as a distinctive type of human thought dates back to the French Revolution. It was first introduced by the French liberal philosopher Antoine Destutt de Tracy who theorized that its purpose was to uncover the origins of ideas. George Lichtheim points out that for Destutt “the true foundation of the sciences is rather to be found in a ‘Science des idées’ which will describe the natural history of the mind, that is, the manner in which our thoughts are formed.”⁵⁰ His belief was largely shaped by the intellectual heritage of the Enlightenment and its emphasis on the ultimate power of reason, which was in sharp contrast to religion. Consequently, ideology as a science had originally an intrinsically practical character because it aimed to challenge the irrational bias of the Church whose supremacy was

49. Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1988), 12.

50. George Lichtheim, “The Concept of Ideology,” *History and Theory* 4, no. 2 (1965): 167, accessed May 6, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2504150>.

meant to be replaced with a non-religious morality.⁵¹ Although some modern ideologies display certain religious qualities, the original concept of ideology was a product of the rationalist tradition. It was intended to scientifically analyze human nature in order to arrange society in a rational and harmonious way.

The definition of myth, on the other hand, is somewhat less easy to identify because it can refer to several concepts and it is often used interchangeably. The broad use of the term naturally results in confusion. From the etymological perspective, Kirk reminds us that “for the Greeks, *mythos* just meant a tale, or something one uttered, in a wide range of senses: a statement, a story, the plot of a play.”⁵² Consequently, the widely accepted notion that myths are “specific accounts of gods or superhuman beings involved in extraordinary events or circumstances in a time that is unspecified but which is understood as existing apart from ordinary human experience”⁵³ reflects our modern generalized interpretation. However, this is grossly inaccurate because not all myths are inextricably linked to gods and religious belief.

What most definitions of myth usually share, though, is the element of narrative.⁵⁴ Describing events and retelling stories is at the root of communicating human experience which implies that “myth at all events, is raw material, which can be the stuff of literature. Insofar as this implies a collective fantasy, it must be shared.”⁵⁵ As a result, myth is not a random isolated product of human culture in the sense that it essentially functions as a means of communication. It seeks interaction which makes it an ideal vehicle for expressing values and judgments. In other words, it has great potential for propaganda.

Although myth is a type of narrative, it is not simply any ordinary cluster of more or less chronologically ordered events that we typically think of when we use the term *story*. David Bidney, a prominent theoretical anthropologist, points out that “myth, like great art and dramatic literature, may have profound symbolic or allegorical value for us of the present, not because myth necessarily and intrinsically has such latent, esoteric wisdom, but because the plot or theme suggests to us universal patterns of

51. See Lichtheim, “Concept of Ideology,” 169.

52. Kirk, *Myth*, 8.

53. *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, s.v. “Myth,” accessed July 8, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/myth>.

54. See William Righter, *Myth and Literature* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1975), 5.

55. Harry Levin, “Some Meanings of Myth,” in *Myth and Mythmaking*, ed. Henry A. Murray (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), 111.

motivation and conduct.”⁵⁶ Bidney’s view of myth is of great relevance to understanding the mechanisms of political propaganda for two main reasons. First, he stresses the universal character of myth which is structurally and socially more significant than its association with mysticism. One possible implication of this is that myth often displays a common pattern in many cultures around the world. Identifying its key tenets can contribute to the discussion of ideology and its dissemination in society. Second, it implies that myth and creative literature are strongly correlated. Taken together, these observations suggest that there is a link between myth and the political propaganda represented by Scottish socialist novels. Ultimately, they are works of fiction which use symbolism and allegory as its principle dramatic vehicles. In this context, I choose to refer to myth as a symbolic narrative that is notably timeless and universal.

In comparison to ideology, the history of myth offers less clarity because its origins are hard to pinpoint accurately. Most people are likely to think of Greek myths when asked about mythology. This is very logical because ancient Greece is widely held to be the cradle of Western civilization. Its cultural heritage has been studied for centuries and therefore it tends to dominate our conception of myth.

Nevertheless, nearly every human society has had their myths. Long before the arrival of the ancient Greek city states in the Peloponnese around the eight century BC or the Gilgamesh epic produced by the ancient Mesopotamian civilization in the first half of the second millennium BC, our primitive ancestors shared mythical narratives to account for the world and their place in it. In fact, the (pre)history of myth goes back to the Neanderthal communities that populated Eurasia between three hundred to one hundred thousand years ago. The arrangement of their graves indicates that these most recent archaic predecessors of modern humans were “conscious of their mortality,” and therefore they “created some sort of counter-narrative that enabled them to come to terms with it.”⁵⁷ Consequently, myth was by no means an outcome of some kind of unintentional empirical enquiry into the nature of the physical world and its laws. On the contrary—from our modern perspective, myth explained the universe irrationally in terms of forces beyond human control, and to a certain degree it continues to do so in many cultures around the world. It was a product of unsophisticated thinking that

56. David Bidney, “Myth, Symbolism, and Truth,” in *Myth and Literature: Contemporary Theory and Practice*, ed. John B. Vickery (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), 13.

57. Karen Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books Ltd, 2005), 1.

struggled to answer the most profound ontological questions at the dawn of the human mind.

Chapter 2

Two Types of Thought

There seems to exist an unbridgeable epistemological divide between myth and ideology. The previous chapter has shown that myth is historically older and more primitive type of thought than ideology. As opposed to our modern notion of reason, myth appears to lack the kind of rationality we normally associate with nineteenth-century science and philosophy. However, Scottish socialist novels show that modern political propaganda can merge both types of thought to communicate a political ideology. This paradox has two important implications. First, there is a synergistic relationship between myth and ideology. Second, they are not contradictory which leads to a conclusion that they might consist of similar logical processes. These observations support the assumption that mythic thought is flexible enough to be adapted and recycled for ideological purposes. This chapter describes the synthesis and evaluation of the crossover from myth to ideology and its role in political propaganda.

Although myth “differs from ideology because it is an irrational rather than a rational cultural form,”⁵⁸ ideology seems to play the role of its modern successor. Where myth is likely to resemble religion in the irrational aspect of understanding and defining the universe, ideology rationalizes the process of man’s objective awareness of his being. Halpern maintains that myth is “the origin and raw material of man’s broadest beliefs about Life,” whereas ideology represents “the rational ordering of this material for communication and social control.”⁵⁹ This partly clarifies the link between myth and socialism which emerged as a dominant political ideology in the nineteenth century. It offered a well-reasoned ontology through a systematic analysis of the material conditions of human existence. Its evolution shows how it utilized and gradually reprogrammed our intellectual and spiritual settings which could be traced back to mythical thought. The dramatizations of socialism in the novels certainly reflect a rational view of the world that stresses the importance of community and co-operation for the progress of humanity. Consequently, the fine line between myth and ideology

58. Ben Halpern, “Myth and Ideology in Modern Usage,” *History and Theory* 1, no. 2 (1961): 142, accessed October 8, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2504377>.

59. Ben Halpern, “The Dynamic Elements of Culture,” *Ethics* 65, no. 4 (July 1955): 245, accessed October 8, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2378980>.

becomes increasingly blurred because the latter appears to be a rationalized form of the former.

Despite their allegedly irrational nature, many primary myths that explain the origins of humanity display some rational traits. If we accept the fact that socialism recycled the few rational features myth has to offer, there is no reason why propaganda should not do the same to communicate a political ideology. For one thing, the category of rationality seems rather ambiguous which implies that myth and ideology might share more than we allow ourselves to believe. According to Marcuse,

Mythology is primitive and immature thought, the process of civilization invalidates myth but it may also return rational thought to mythological status. In the nineteenth century, the theories of socialism translated the primary myth into sociological terms-or rather discovered in the given historical possibilities the rational core of the myth. Today, the rational and realistic notions of yesterday again appear to be mythological when confronted with the actual conditions.⁶⁰

While Marcuse's distinction between myth and socialism reflects the traditional divide between rational and irrational modes of thinking, he believes that modern industrial society has reversed the process. What originated as a rational political response to the formation of modern class society has eventually become obsolete. The political ideology of socialism has affected many cultures around the world, but it seems to have failed to respond to the changing nature of advanced capitalism. As a result, its ultimate goal of establishing an egalitarian society with a just distribution of wealth and gratification of needs has been frequently labelled irrational because it is contradictory to the ruthless logic of the modern capitalist economy. Therefore, it is very easy to see why its principles and aims are often described as a myth because they appear to be unrealistic.

Furthermore, Marcuse's observation suggests myth and ideology share some key logical principles that underlie the process of civilization and its progress. This defies the rigid distinction between the two which seems to result from grossly overestimating the intellectual factor. Instead of looking at the cognitive aspect, which certainly separates primitive from scientific thought, Lévi-Strauss maintains that

the kind of logic in mythical thought is as rigorous as that of modern science, and that the difference lies, not in the quality of the intellectual process, but in the nature of the things to which it is applied. . . . In the same way we may be

60. Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (1964; repr., London: Routledge, 2007), 193.

able to show that the same logical processes operate in myth as in science, and that man has always been thinking equally well; the improvement lies, not in an alleged progress of man's mind, but in the discovery of new areas to which it may apply its unchanged and unchanging powers.⁶¹

Ideology represents one of the modern areas of human thought which recycle the logic that governs myth. If we look at the difference between a myth that explains the origins and social structure of some indigenous community and socialism, we will notice that both present accounts of the world and man's place in it. It would be wrong to assume that one is better constructed than the other because they both operate within their own intellectual setting that determines their particulars. This does not imply superiority because they both communicate value systems. The difference lies in the social, cultural and economic contexts that define their content. For example, the conditions in twentieth-century industrial Europe differed greatly from the Stone Age. Nevertheless, great narratives describing origins and destinies of human societies have been always told for similar social and political purposes. As a result, if myth lends ideology the logic to build and develop a belief system, there does not seem to be any reason why propaganda should not use it to effectively communicate political ideas.

One possible implication of this is that myth can be easily adapted and reprogrammed to suit ideological needs. Esther Eidinow, a professor of ancient history who focuses on Greek society and culture, explains that "one of the reasons why myth is so sticky down through time is the way in which it responds to other cultures' myths and also to current events among the people where the myth is being told."⁶² Flexibility is what myth has in common with political ideas which are generally "moulded by the social and historical circumstances in which they develop and by the political ambitions they serve. . . . Any balanced and persuasive account of political life must therefore acknowledge the constant interplay between ideas and ideologies on the one hand, and historical and material forces on the other."⁶³ This means that ideologies are inherently adaptable because they can be conveniently modified to reflect the rapidly shifting political landscape of the modern world. In particular, the dramatizations of socialism in the novels clearly show that the ideological umbrella contains many varieties. While

61. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf (New York: Basic Books, 1963), 230.

62. The University of Nottingham, "Ideology and Mythology: Esther Eidinow and the View from Classics," FutureLearn, accessed December 10, 2016, <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/propaganda/0/steps/9552>.

63. Heywood, *Political Ideologies*, 2–3.

some promote radical and violent roads to socialism, others prefer reforming the established order peacefully for the greater good of humanity. Therefore, the protean character that myth and ideology appear to share helps explain why political propaganda might use myth to communicate socialism.

The mythic narrative in Scottish socialist novels exemplifies the direct correlation between myth and ideology. They recycle mythic thought because it helps reduce the complex system of socialism to the bare minimum. Socialist ideology encompasses a wide range of abstract concepts that display a very intricate philosophical pattern. Mythic thought is instrumental in breaking down the ideology to the most essential properties that retain meaning, which can be successfully understood and reproduced by the audience. Lévi-Strauss explains that

By taking its raw material from nature, mythic thought proceeds in the same way as language, which chooses phonemes from among the natural sounds of which a practically unlimited range is to be found in childish babbling. For, as in the case of language, the empirical material is too abundant to be all accepted indiscriminately or to be all used on the same level. Here again, it must be accepted as a fact that the material is the instrument of meaning, not its object. For it to play this part, it must be whittled down. Only a few of its elements are retained—those suitable for the expression of contrasts or forming pairs of opposites.⁶⁴

The analogy between mythic thought and language demonstrates the important role of myth in modern political propaganda in two ways. First, a political ideology such as socialism surely represents a type of discourse. It uses language to produce very specific meaning. In fact, language largely shapes both the form and content of a political ideology. Without a system of phonemes that are arranged in a way that allows us to form and organize our thoughts, we would have difficulty formulating and communicating our values and political beliefs. Consequently, the structural similarities between myth and language make mythic thought an ideal vehicle for propaganda because it “whittles down” the myriad aspects of socialism to a few core elements.

Second, political propaganda is clearly a form of discourse because it structures communication in a very specific way. It utilizes language to systematically affect and manipulate public opinion in order to promote political ideas. To this end, it often makes use of contrasts and pairs of opposites. The socialist novels share a common

64. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked: Introduction to A Science of Mythology*, trans. John and Doreen Weightman (1964. Harmondworth: Penguin Books, 1986), 341.

feature in that they present the conflict between labour and capital which symbolize antithetical value systems. They achieve this symbolic juxtaposition by contrasting antagonistic class relationships, morality and ultimately ideologies. As a result, political propaganda utilizes the binary pattern of mythic thought. In Lévi-Strauss' words, it cooks the raw ideological material in order to make it accessible for the public in the form of pairs of opposites that convey simplified and biased information.

If socialism is simply a primary myth retold from a modern perspective, then myth can also function as a potentially powerful vehicle for validating and consolidating modern political beliefs. In fact, Bruce Lincoln, a professor of the history of religions, reminds us that "when a taxonomy is encoded in mythic form, the narrative packages a specific, contingent system of discrimination in a particularly attractive and memorable form. What is more, it naturalizes and legitimates it. Myth then, is not just taxonomy, but ideology in narrative form."⁶⁵ Consequently, the ability of myth to convey hierarchical systems of values and relations in a way that makes them easier to embrace by a particular community makes it a perfect vehicle for political propaganda whose sole purpose is to advertise and sell a taxonomy.

Concerning the ways of promoting interests and affecting collective attitudes by means of attractive narratives, Harold D. Lasswell shows that political propaganda is very much like myth:

If we state the strategy of propaganda in cultural terms, we may say that it involves the presentation of an object in a culture in such a manner that certain cultural attitudes will be organized toward it. The problem of the propagandist is to intensify the attitudes favorable to his purpose, to reverse the attitudes hostile to it, and to attract the indifferent, or, at the worst, to prevent them from assuming a hostile bent.⁶⁶

The striking similarity between the strategies employed by myth and propaganda demonstrates why they are not entirely incompatible. More importantly, it indicates that Scottish socialist novelists exemplify the political propagandist who uses mythic forms to stimulate culturally and socially determined responses from their audiences. The novels intentionally dramatize the heroic struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie by means of emotional pathos which produces sympathy to

65. Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 147.

66. Harold D. Lasswell, "The Theory of Political Propaganda," *The American Political Science Review* 21, no. 3 (Aug 1927): 629, accessed March 7, 2012, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1945515>.

make the protagonists and their actions believable. The pity aspect allows the propagandist to wield enormous influence over the emotions of those he intends to win over. As a result, the novels present downtrodden but morally superior heroes whose suffering intensifies the humane appeal of socialism. Naturally, in a culture that not only approves of but actively seeks collective hero worship, this strategy is very likely to achieve the acceptance of the ideology it attempts to diffuse.

Chapter 3

Dialectic and Totality

A closer look at the philosophical core of socialist ideology and myth raises interesting questions about the subversive character they seem to have in common. They both address the relationship between the part and the whole of a macrocosm. They are often concerned with the roles of individuals or ideas within larger systems. They tend to explore the nature of things from various perspectives and find solutions to problems by overcoming contradictions. In doing so, they stress the dynamic forward movement caused by constant negation of established notions, which ultimately results in progress. In the following pages, I present the dialectic compatibility of socialism and myth as one of the chief reasons why mythical paradigms are actively utilized in political propaganda. I look at the ways myth and a political ideology such as socialism interact in the context of Hegelianism and Marxism.

Emphasizing the decisive factor of contradiction and its resolution in human history, the dialectical method developed by German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel challenged some fundamental premises of Aristotelian logic which had dominated Western philosophy for over two thousand years. In particular, it outdated Aristotle's law of non-contradiction which states that "It is impossible for the same thing at the same time both be-in and not be-in the same thing in the same respect."⁶⁷ According to this principle, two contradictory things cannot be identical because they are mutually exclusive. For example, a caterpillar is a caterpillar, and a caterpillar is not a butterfly. One cannot exist and not exist (be destroyed) at the same time. Although this form of deduction may be accurately applied to numerous situations, this example shows it is not adequate for two reasons. First, a caterpillar represents a stage in the life cycle of a butterfly. It considers two items separately while ignoring the potential relation between them. Second, this syllogism also disregards their relation to the whole—they are different forms of the same organism.

By contrast, Hegel's dialectic is more organic because it shows how contradictory relations define our reality. Instead of mechanically analyzing two discrete identities such as a caterpillar and a butterfly, it stresses how one is related to the other. A caterpillar turns into a chrysalis only to become a butterfly which means it

67. Aristotle, *The Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Lawson-Tancred (London: Penguin, 1998), 88.

is not destroyed and forgotten. It is absorbed and preserved in the process of metamorphosis. Each stage in the life cycle of a butterfly exemplifies the triadic structure of Hegel's dialectical method which consists of the thesis, antithesis and synthesis. A butterfly egg represents the so-called thesis that objectively exists but is incomplete. It is negated by the process of hatching—the antithesis—which, nonetheless, is still insufficient. The caterpillar that comes out of the egg represents the synthesis of the egg and hatching. What this unity of opposites has to say about the merging of the thesis and antithesis is that “they are not the same, that they are absolutely distinct, and yet that they are unseparated and inseparable and that each immediately *vanishes in its opposite*. Their truth is, therefore, this movement of the immediate vanishing of the one in the other: *becoming*, a movement in which both are distinguished, but by a difference which has equally immediately resolved itself.”⁶⁸ The triadic process repeats itself until a butterfly comes out of the chrysalis. Consequently, each stage is contradicted but not lost in order to become more complex and add to the whole.

Socialist ideology is inherently dialectical because it suggests establishing an egalitarian society by overcoming contradictions. Michael Harrington, a prominent American socialist thinker, gives a brief outline of the socialist project:

Its most basic premise is that man's battle with nature has been completely won and there is therefore more than enough of material goods for everyone. As a result of this unprecedented change in the environment, a psychic mutation takes place: invidious competition is no longer programmed into life by the necessity of a struggle for scarce resources; cooperation, fraternity and equality become natural. In such a world man's social productivity will reach such heights that compulsory work will no longer be necessary.⁶⁹

Harrington's definition highlights the contrast between syllogism and Hegel's dialectic. The classic syllogistic view of society is rather static because a potential change implies destruction whereas Hegel's philosophy suggests dynamic movement toward a higher level. Socialism simply represents the final synthesis of contradictions in the current world that generates inequalities of wealth and power.

However, Harrington's classic interpretation of socialism owes its logic to dialectical materialism—the Marxist philosophical upgrade to Hegel's dialectical

68. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (1969; repr., London: Routledge, 2002), 114, accessed July 6, 2018, ProQuest Ebook Central.

69. Michael Harrington, *Socialism* (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1972), 344.

method which largely defined the theoretical foundation of modern socialist ideology. The epistemological background of socialism clearly shows that it is firmly grounded in the materialist tradition of philosophy which prioritizes matter over mind in the process of forming thought and consciousness. From the classical Marxist perspective, “dialectics, so-called *objective* dialectics, prevails throughout nature, and so-called subjective dialectics, dialectical thought, is only the reflection of the motion through opposites which asserts itself everywhere in nature, and which by the continual conflict of the opposites and their final passage into one another, or into higher forms, determines the life of nature.”⁷⁰ Dialectical (objective) materialism is the driving force of socialism because it places Hegel’s organic unity of opposites in the context of the physical world.

Although myth does not need to reflect the principles of dialectical materialism, it nonetheless seems to display a dialectical pattern. In particular, Lévi-Strauss is convinced that “mythical thought always progresses from the awareness of oppositions toward their resolution.”⁷¹ The notion of resolving conflict through the coalescence of seemingly inconsistent elements links myth to Hegel’s dialectical method. In fact, Lévi-Strauss ventures to suggest that “the purpose of myth is to provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction.”⁷² However, Percy S. Cohen believes such a generalized assumption might be forced because “this aspect of myth can be seen as a recurrent narrative device, rather than as a reflection of ‘dialectical’ thought.”⁷³ It is true that Lévi-Strauss’ tendency to think of myth as an abstract mode of thought might result in disregarding the narrative dimension. But the practical demonstration of his dialectical method in his analysis of the Oedipus myth shows it does not ignore the content of the narrative.⁷⁴

Furthermore, Campbell’s universal theory of myth implicitly suggests the intrinsically dialectical nature of myth. Despite the methodological differences between Campbell and Lévi-Strauss, Campbell’s psychologizing approach resembles Hegel’s triadic structure. In his hypothesis about the universal mythical pattern, Campbell theorizes that “the standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a

70. Frederick Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, trans. Clemens Dutt (1934; repr., Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972), 211.

71. Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, 224.

72. Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, 229.

73. Percy S. Cohen, “Theories of Myth,” *Man* 4, no. 3 (Sep 1969): 349, accessed July 7, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2798111>.

74. See Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, 213–216.

magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: *separation—initiation—return*.”⁷⁵ These stages are essentially contradictions which the mythical hero must overcome in order to accomplish his journey. In this process, negation propels the hero into action. Concerning the omnipresence of negativity in the dialectical method, Marcuse explains that “dialectic in its entirety is linked to the conception that all forms of being are permeated by an essential negativity, and that this negativity determines their content and movement.”⁷⁶ According to Marcuse’s observation, it is a logical conclusion that myth is dialectical in nature because it is a product of human culture that overcomes contradictions by means of negation.

Another important reminder of the dialectical unity of the beginning and the end in myth is exemplified by the “return” aspect of Campbell’s theory.⁷⁷ The hero eventually comes back to where his journey started. This synthesis is dramatized by “a reconciliation of the individual consciousness with the universal will,” which is “effected through a realization of the true relationship of the passing phenomena of time to the imperishable life that lives and dies in all.”⁷⁸ Consequently, the dialectical nature of myth is very similar to that of socialism because both depict the spiral process of absorbing individual identities into a collective consciousness/existence.

Speaking of the relationship between consciousness and being, Alexei Losev, an influential Russian philosopher and culturologist, claims that myth represents a dialectically necessary category of both:

For the mythical subject, myth is not fiction but a genuine necessity; and even before we knew what specifically the nature of this necessity was, we had said in advance that this necessity must possess a dialectical nature. We did so because for the mythical subject the non-fictional character of myth is a condition *sine qua non* of his or her entire existence and his or her immediate naïvely existential outlook. And where one finds the immediate and naïve touch of life, there one always finds dialectics, and, if it is not clear yet, a closer examination will necessarily discern it and construct it. Now we see what genuinely dialectical necessity consists in. . . . Within itself, myth contains the dialectic of both the original prehistoric person who has not entered becoming

75. Joseph Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 28.

76. Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1986), 27.

77. See James E. Hansen, “The Dialectic of the Immanent and the Transcendent,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 32, no. 4 (Jun 1972): 545, accessed July 7, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2106291>.

78. Joseph Campbell, *Hero*, 221.

yet and the historical, evolving, and empirically accidental person. Myth is an indivisible synthesis of these two spheres.⁷⁹

The basic premise of Losev's argument is that mythical and dialectical thinking are essentially identical. His reasoning is based on a dialectical interplay between subjective consciousness and objective reality represented by the mythical subject and its existence, respectively. From the perspective of mythical consciousness, Losev argues that myth is real and tangible for those who live it. This is particularly true for cultures whose way of life mirrors the content of their myths, including clothes, customs and rituals. More importantly, Losev's assumption that primitive and modern thought are dialectically intertwined seems to predate Lévi-Strauss' applied Hegelianism. As a result, if mythical thinking is identical to dialectical thinking, myth and socialism are logically compatible.

The dialectical compatibility between myth and socialism is also demonstrated by their implementation of the concept of totality. Hegel's philosophical system emphasizes the role of the whole because only a complete picture communicates accurate and reliable information. In contrast, looking at the individual pieces of a puzzle does not allow us to see the picture in its entirety because something is always missing. Therefore, they are incomplete and untrue. Discussing the category of totality, Hegel alludes to the supremacy of the whole and over the parts:

. . . although the whole is equal to the parts it is not equal to *them* as parts; the whole is reflected unity, but the parts constitute the determinate moment or the *otherness* of the unity and are the diverse manifold. The whole is not equal to them as this self-subsistent diversity, but to them *together*. But this their 'together' is nothing else but their unity, the whole as such. The whole is, therefore, in the parts only equal to itself, and the equality of the whole and the parts expresses only the tautology that *the whole as whole* is equal not to the parts but to *the whole*.⁸⁰

Hegel's assertion that the whole is more significant than the sum of its parts is an inevitable product of the triadic model where each element is absorbed in the process of resolving contradictions. Describing the shaping influence of Hegel's category of totality on modern socialist thought, Georg Lukács, a Hungarian Marxist literary theorist and philosopher, explains that "It was not enough, however, to give it a materialist twist. The revolutionary principle inherent in Hegel's dialectic was able to

79. Aleksei Fyodorovich Losev, *The Dialectics of Myth*, trans. Vladimir Marchenkov (London: Routledge, 2003), 174–175.

80. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 755.

come to the surface less because of that than because of the validity of the method itself, viz. the concept of totality, the subordination of every part to the whole unity of history and thought.”⁸¹ Although Lukács refers to the Marxist adaptation of the category of totality, dialectical and historical materialism in particular, nearly every theme of socialist thought shares its underlying logic. For example, it is present in the socialist idea of wealth which is believed to be produced by shared labour and therefore it should not be owned by individuals but workers as a whole. Consequently, Hegel’s concept of totality determines much of socialist theory and ideology.

The same can be said for myth whose structure is typically defined by the sum of its parts. Lévi-Strauss points out that “if there is a meaning to be found in mythology, it cannot reside in the isolated elements which enter into the composition of a myth, but only in the way those elements are combined.”⁸² An analysis of a myth which focuses on some key aspects such characters or events that occur throughout the narrative offers only partial understanding whereas looking at the myth as a whole is more likely to yield complete information. In order to achieve that, Lévi-Strauss suggests “We have to understand that each page is a totality. And it is only by treating the myth as if it were an orchestral score, written stave after stave, that we can understand it as a totality, that we can extract the meaning out of the myth.”⁸³ This means that we must read a myth synchronically and diachronically at the same time to identify the relation of one individual part to another. In his pursuit of the whole, Lévi-Strauss’s structural approach shows that the concept of totality is as relevant in understanding myth as it is in socialism.

Although Scottish socialism embodied in the Labour Party “came out of ethical, left-wing Liberalism rather than Marxism” and “true socialists like John MacLean . . . were less important in their day than as later icons,”⁸⁴ the ideological content and structure of Scottish socialist novels clearly reflect Marxist dialectic and therefore the concept of totality. A closer examination of the relationship between liberalism and socialism reveals there is historical warrant for this paradox. Despite the striking contrast between the ideologies, “the perpetual dialectic of struggle for the extension of

81. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971), 27.

82. Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, 210.

83. Lévi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning*, 45.

84. Rab Houston, *Scotland: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 30–1.

liberal ideals of liberty and equality becomes a definitely socialist struggle. The dynamic universalism of liberal ideals has an implicitly socialist logic.”⁸⁵ Consequently, the novels both implicitly and explicitly dramatize key tenets of Marxist philosophy and economics which include the concept of totality. Their characters inhabit an objectively existing universe which is built around the notion that the conflict of social and physical forces leads to the resolution of contradictions. Each component of the elementary narrative that the novels have in common is merely part of the whole. The dialectical unity between myth and socialism helps understand the logic behind the ideological uses of myth-making in political propaganda.

85. Ed Rooksby, “The Relationship Between Liberalism and Socialism,” *Science & Society* 76, no. 4 (October 2012): 545, accessed July 6, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41714354>.

Chapter 4

Belief and Reality

Ideology and myth demonstrate the incredible power of ideas that give our lives meaning and purpose. They are more or less systematic constructs that generally show the universe and society are in motion. They can express our hopes and fears, but also the desire to know and understand. However, teleology accounts only partly for the immense influence they have exerted on humanity over the centuries. Although traditionalism may explain their longevity, they need more than continuity to remain influential and valid. “Myth and ideology meet in the arena of belief”⁸⁶ because their operational value is assigned by human subjectivity. This does not mean they must be followed religiously in order to have an impact. Whether they present facts or falsehoods, they rely on people’s willingness to accept that they are essentially true, especially without proof. In fact, both carry overtones of voluntarism because they often portray the will of an individual or class as the fundamental force that shapes social reality.

Myth and ideology structurally consist of sets of beliefs—belief systems. A belief system is generally “the system of symbolic orientations to be found in each individual.”⁸⁷ These orientations are not limited to politics. They embody concepts and notions from many diverse areas of human life. When, for example, one becomes a convinced socialist, they do not merely promote the belief in the equal distribution of political power through a collective decision-making process. On the contrary, they adopt a myriad of very specific views on education, gratification of needs, economics, ethics, ownership and many more. Consequently, in the context of ideology, it is more adequate to define a belief system as

A configuration of ideas and attitudes in which the elements are bound together by some form of constraint or functional interdependence. In the static case, “constraint” may be taken to mean the success we would have in predicting, given initial knowledge that an individual holds a specified attitude, that he holds certain further ideas and attitudes. . . . In the dynamic case, “constraint” or “interdependence” refers to the probability that a change in the perceived status (truth, desirability, and so forth) of one idea-element would

86. The University of Nottingham, “Ideology and Mythology.”

87. Giovanni Sartori, “Politics, Ideology, and Belief Systems,” *Revue Européenne des Sciences Sociales* 17, no. 46 (1979): 95, accessed July 8, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40370769>.

psychologically require, from the point of view of the actor, some compensating change(s) in the status of idea-elements elsewhere in the configuration.⁸⁸

This clarifies the belief nature of ideology in two respects. First, a belief system is a complex whole composed of inter-related parts. The relations and themes within a particular belief system are associated by affinity. If a person displays qualities or convictions that indicate one of these elements, it is possible to anticipate the kind of values and principles that person holds because they are likely to fall in the same category. Second, the individual elements that make up a belief system interact in ways that may not be consistent with the ideology they provide a basis for. Belief systems evolve and are a subject to change. For example, political ideas, such as women suffrage, which were considered immoral a century ago easily pass for socially acceptable and desirable in the present. A single deviation from the norm in a particular belief system is likely to trigger a reaction in those who favor it. In the dimension of politics, if a socialist party decides to adopt conservative policies such as cuts in public spending or privatizing national industries, their voters either adapt and remain loyal or opt for a different party. Just as some ideologies are flexible and can borrow ideas from each other, their followers can combine aspects of various ideologies, too. Aaron C. Kay and Richard P. Eibach show that “differences in individuals’ psychological needs and their relative exposure to and frequency of activation of specific ideologies produce variability in the chronic accessibility of specific ideological resources.”⁸⁹ In different situations, many people may prefer diversity to orthodoxy. As a result, the existence and evolution of ideologies depends on their followers’ psychological interactions with the changes in the belief systems they encapsulate.

A belief system is not necessarily identical with an ideology. For example, there are belief systems which are entirely empirical, and their focus is purely cognitive. They state some truths based on scientific methodology which includes experiments and experience. Talcott Parsons argues that

Such belief systems may contribute to the building of an ideology, indeed always do, but solely as an object of such a paramount interest as it concerns only interpretation of a situation in terms relevant to the attainment of a given specific goal, e.g. victory in war, the belief system is a set of instrumental

88. Philip E. Converse, “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics,” in *Ideology and Discontent*, ed. David E. Apter (New York: Free Press, 1964), 207–8.

89. Aaron C. Kay and Richard P. Eibach, “The Ideological Toolbox: Ideologies as Tools of Motivated Social Cognition,” in *The SAGE Handbook of Social Cognition*, ed. Susan T. Fiske and C. Neil Macrae (London: Sage Publications, 2012), 495.

beliefs. . . . To constitute an ideology there must exist the additional feature that there is some level of evaluative commitment to the belief as an aspect of membership in the collectivity, subscription to the belief system is institutionalized as part of the role of collectivity membership. . . . But as distinguished from a primarily cognitive interest in ideas, in the case of an ideology, there must be an obligation to accept its tenets as the basis of action. As distinguished from a purely instrumental belief there must be involvement of an idea that the welfare of the collectivity and not merely attainment of a particular goal hinges on the implementation of the belief system.⁹⁰

If evaluative commitment to a certain belief is what separates instrumental belief systems from those that form the core of an ideology, socialism, or any other political ideology for that matter, most positively exemplifies the principle. Whereas some common scientific or instrumental beliefs merely state a fact and require its acknowledgement on the part of the individual, ideology is inherently collective and asks the individual to accept and endorse the belief system. The subscription process is a rite of passage that can take many forms ranging from signing an official document to making a personal vow or being casually approved by members of a community. The structure of Scottish socialist novels shows that socialist ideology is most definitely built on an empirical belief system which has a very strong evaluative aspect.

By contrast, the kind of belief systems that constitute myth appear to be non-empirical and speculative in the sense that they offer some truths which may interpret the universe without reality-testing. Alfredo López Austin claims that myth essentially consists of two nuclei, one of which—belief—is

. . . a casual and taxonomic concept with holistic aspirations, which attributes the origin and nature of individual beings, classes, and processes to conjunctions of personal forces. . . . This concept affects the actions and thoughts of human beings about themselves and their surroundings. It is expressed in actions scattered throughout social life.⁹¹

The belief system that underlies myth is therefore an arrangement of ideas and elements that interact to make up a whole. It establishes a connection between the past and present to account for existential and moral aspects of human life. Although it classifies them in the context of the a culture, it does so without any scientific methodology in the modern sense because it often makes use of supernatural props and

90. Talcott Parsons, *The Social System*, (1951; repr., New York: American Book-Stratford, 1952), 349–50.

91. Alfredo López Austin, “Myth, Belief, Narration, Image: Reflections on Mesoamerican Mythology,” *Journal of the Southwest* 46, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 606, accessed July 9, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40170278>.

irrational shortcuts to explain the world. Consequently, the non-empirical character of this type of ideas implies an epistemological association with religious belief systems. Talcott points out that religious beliefs

on the one hand . . . concern the cognitive definition of the situation for action as a whole, including the . . . evaluative levels of interest in the situation. This they share with ideological beliefs. On the other hand, however, they also must include the problems of “meaning” in the larger philosophical sense, of the meaning of the objects of empirical cognition, of nature, human nature, society, the vicissitudes of human life, etc. . . . Religious beliefs then are those which are concerned with moral problems of human action, and the features of the human situation, and the place of man and society in the cosmos, which are most relevant to his moral attitudes, and value-orientation patterns.⁹²

Although not all myths are religious, they commonly address moral issues in a cosmological context. This is quite natural because nearly all human action has moral implications and myths often project microcosmic images of human society. Moreover, their non-empirical character does not prevent them from accounting for the phenomena whose scientific explanation we take for granted in the modern world. What is most important, though, is the evaluative aspect which explains the belief parallels between myth and ideology. Myth presents a taxonomy that frequently requires acceptance and commitment. In this respect myth does not seem to vary dramatically from ideology.

Despite the empirical category of ideology, which often happens to represent the antithesis of myth and religion, it has been widely interpreted as a modern political means of mystifying and misleading the common man. This view questions the well-meaning intentions of ideology, which was originally supposed to do away with the traditional confines of religious morality. Instead of understanding ideology as a cognitive instrument of intellectual liberation, some believe it greatly inhibited the revolutionary potential of the modern proletariat. Early Marxism suggests it was a sophisticated way of maintaining social, political and economic control by the new ruling class—the bourgeoisie—whose rise to power accelerated the decline of the feudal order in the nineteenth century. Concerning the power of ideas, Karl Marx asserted that

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling *material* force of society, is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental

92. Parsons, *Social System*, 367–8.

production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance. The individuals composing the ruling class possess among other things consciousness, and therefore think. Insofar, therefore, as they rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of an epoch, it is self-evident that they do this in its whole range, hence among other things rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age: thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch.⁹³

Marx's heavy emphasis on the role of economy in the process of developing consciousness indicates that ideology is an intellectual product of the ruling class which dominates thought in capitalist society. It is therefore a false belief by definition. This assumption is, of course, the inevitable result of the early interpretation of the Marxist base-superstructure model. The basic premise of the argument is that the economic conditions of human society determine its social and cultural patterns. As a result, an industrial class society is theoretically predetermined to produce literature that actively promotes the vested interests of capitalists while marginalizing and suppressing the aspirations of the proletariat.

However, the simple logic behind the base-superstructure model appears rather controversial when applied to reality. In particular, there seems to be evidence that the economic aspect is horrendously overestimated and fails to provide an accurate view of the cultural dimension of society. Williams shows the limitations of Marx's theory of the production of ideas:

The shaping influence of economic change can of course be distinguished, . . . but the difficulty lies in estimating the final importance of a factor which never, in practice, appears in isolation. . . . Capitalism, and industrial capitalism, which Marx by historical analysis was able to describe in general terms, appeared only within an existing culture. . . . The interpretative method which is governed, not by the social whole, but rather by the arbitrary correlation of the economic situation and the subject of study, leads very quickly to abstraction and unreality. . . . It leads also to the overriding of practical concrete judgements by generalizations, as for ex ample in descriptions of Western European literature of this century as 'decadent' because its social system is judged 'decadent'.⁹⁴

Williams demonstrates why a purely economic interpretation of culture can be detrimental to understanding how ideology is formed and communicated in society.

93. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, trans. S. Ryazanskaya (1964; repr., Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1968), 61.

94. Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society: 1780–1950* (New York: Anchor Books, 1960), 299–300

Even though the ruling class fundamentally affects nearly every aspect of society, it does not determine the consciousness of all the people or the character of their culture as a whole. In other words, a bourgeois society need not necessarily produce a bourgeois culture. The existence of Scottish socialist novels, or any other anti-establishment literature for that matter, gives evidence of the inherent diversity of culture which can display a certain degree of ideological independence. Consequently, prioritizing the importance of the economic background of the novels and their authors may result in some useful insights into the historical context of their origins, but it is not likely to contribute to our understanding of propaganda.

In contrast to Marx, who did not develop any systematic theory of ideology, later Marxism often examines its role in shaping reality in the modern world. The subversive French social theorist Guy Louis Debord, who analyzed the impact of commodities on human life in advanced industrial society, argued that

Ideology is the foundation of the thought of a class society within the conflictual course of history. Ideological entities have never been mere fictions—rather, they are a distorted consciousness of reality, and, as such, real factors retroactively producing real distorting effects; which is all the more reason why that materialization of ideology . . . results in the virtual identification with social reality itself of an ideology that manages to remold the whole of the real to its own specifications.⁹⁵

Although ideology predominantly belongs in the realm of abstract theory, Debord refuses to underestimate its practical implications. While stressing the defining role of ideology in the formation of class society, he points out how we subconsciously adopt and follow the ideas and principles it communicates in the form of the things we possess. According to Debord, this seems to explain the logic behind the dominance of consumer capitalism which rules through the production and distribution of commodities. Ultimately, products that are manufactured for mass use turn out to be the means by which ideology integrates its value system. The list of these commodities includes material objects like the press, clothes and food, but also more abstract products such as culture and education. In other words, people often let the things they own or consume define who they are.

Debord's theory applies to the dramatizations of ideology in the Scottish socialist novels. Using commodities to represent ideological allegiances of the

95. Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (1967; repr., New York: Zone books, 1995), 150.

characters, they generally draw a fine line between socialism and conservatism. For example, they contrast socialist morality with dogmatic views shaped by religion. This sometimes results in ostentatiously didactic passages where the main characters interpret Marxism to criticize the decadent ethic of the bourgeoisie. Moreover, the differences between the antagonistic classes include stereotypical depictions of their lifestyles. The working class typically has no access to quality housing, diet and education, whereas the ideology of the ruling class is associated with power and privilege.

Despite Debord's contribution to the understanding of the ways ideology is diffused in modern society, his analysis appears to reflect the Marxist premise that ideology is essentially deceitful because it rationalizes injustice inflicted by the ruling class. This may be accurate to a certain extent, but the process of rationalization, which ultimately leads to deception, can be completely absent. Eagleton asserts that "not all ideological discourse need be of this kind, however, either because a group may not regard its own motives as particularly shameful, or because in fact they are not."⁹⁶ This is particularly true of capitalism where the power structures do not see themselves as the exploiters or wrongdoers. Consequently, the process of rationalization can be employed to justify ideological values and principles only in certain contexts. It does not necessarily imply that it is a false belief system because a group of people may honestly believe in what they are rationalizing.

In the same way, myth is also able to perform the function of a more or less systematic apologia for social behavior. It can not only express social interests and values but also rationalize them. Debord's sociological understanding of myth suggests it "was the unified mental construct whose job it was to make sure that the whole cosmic order confirmed the order that this society had in fact already set up within its own frontiers."⁹⁷ This hypothesis, which is derived from the theory of knowledge promoted by the French sociologist Emile Durkheim,⁹⁸ indicates myth is a collectively projected representation of society. It was invented to provide a metaphysical way of legitimizing the existence and beliefs of social groups. Commenting on the social origin of myth, Bronislaw Bajon notes it "preserves the momentary experience by giving it duration and

96. Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London: Verso, 1991), 52.

97. Debord, *Spectacle*, 93.

98. See Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E. Fields (New York: Free Press, 1995), 8–18.

translates reality into ideal terms. Moreover, it affirms to man that he belongs and is at home in the meaningful and orderly world of his experience, although obviously myth is the product of imagination and consciousness.”⁹⁹ Unlike ideology, it builds a sense of belonging by irrational means, such as interpreting natural phenomena from the supernatural viewpoint. Nonetheless, the process involves rationalizing social beliefs and attitudes which also plays a significant role in ideology.

By our modern empirical standards, however, myth no longer has cognitive value. This means it fails to help us organize our experience and provide the kind of comfort and security ideologies do. Although it does not fundamentally shape our world anymore, the belief systems that constitute myth still have some residual impact on social reality. Describing the functional parallels between myth and ideology, the French archeologist and historian Paul Veyne observes

In our eyes myth has ceased to tell the truth. On the other hand, it passes for having spoken for something. Lacking a truth, it had a social or vital function. Truth itself egocentrically remains our own. The social function filled by myth confirms that we are in the truth of things when we explain evolution by society. The same could be said of the function of ideology, and this is why this last term is so dear to us.¹⁰⁰

Even if we may not find the content of myth relevant anymore, Veyne argues its social dimension is timeless and universal. The fact that we do not believe in myth because we are likely to consider it illogical and irrational does not mean it has been thoroughly discarded in the modern world. It continues to play a major part in society because its social(izing) function has been passed onto ideology. Campbell highlights the fact that “a youngster is structured to his social environment by absorbing the myths of his social group.”¹⁰¹ Both myth and ideology contribute to the process of determining the character of many formal and informal aspects of social organization in society regardless of being true or false.

Speaking of structuring social life, the reason why ideology appears to be the modern replacement of myth lies in the fact that it is inseparable from the reality that produces it. Eagleton reminds us that

99. Bronislaw Bajon, “Sociological-Ideological Expression and Affirmation of Social Reality in Myth,” *Michigan Sociological Review* (Fall 1982): 37, accessed August 10, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40968911>.

100. Paul Veyne, *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths? An Essay on the Constitutive Imagination* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 124.

101. Joseph Campbell, *Myths to Live By* (New York: The Viking Press, 1972), 42.

Social reality is redefined by the ideology to become coextensive with itself, in a way which occludes the truth that the reality in fact generated the ideology. Instead, the two appear to be spontaneously bred together, as indissociable as a sleeve and its lining. The result, politically speaking, is an apparently vicious circle: the ideology could only be transformed if the reality was such as to allow it to become objectified; but the ideology processes the reality in ways which forestall this possibility. The two are thus mutually self-confirming.¹⁰²

The exclusive relationship between ideology and social reality explains the resisting pattern of many applied political ideologies. As soon as the elements of social life are reconfigured according to the ideology, change is hard but not impossible. In spite of the trouble to distinguish between the two, ideology can wield influence over reality as long people are willing to believe in it and act upon it. As far as the defining role of the belief factor is concerned, Mark Schorer draws a remarkable comparison between mythology and ideology:

Belief organizes experience not because it is belief but because belief itself depends on a controlling imagery and is the intellectual formalization of that imagery. . . . All those systems of abstractions which we call ideologies activate our behavior, when they do, only because they are themselves activated by images, however submerged. An abstraction is a generalization, and you cannot have a generalization without the concrete things to be generalized.¹⁰³

There is little doubt that powerful imagery represents one of the main vehicles for communicating mythology and ideology, but it might be a fatal mistake to suppose it takes priority over belief. They are equally significant. From the functional perspective, ideological and religious belief systems not only organize experience, but, more importantly they require the kind of commitment to collectivity that allows their reproduction. This is particularly true in the context of socialist literature of 1930s Britain. The radical intellectuals became intoxicated with the notion of voluntarism.¹⁰⁴ This mind-over-matter attitude demonstrated the decisive impact of the evaluative aspect that ideological and religious belief systems have in common. Their genuine commitment to the ideology, reinforced by accounts of its successful implementation in the Soviet Union, implies that it was actually the power of belief amplified by encouraging images which led them to accept and actively promote socialism.

102. Eagleton, *Ideology*, 58.

103. Mark Schorer, "Mythology (For the Study of William Blake)," *The Kenyon Review* 4, no. 3 (Autumn 1942): 367–8, accessed July 18, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4331360>.

104. See James Klugman, "The Crisis of the Thirties: A View from the Left," in *Culture and Crisis in Britain in the Thirties*, ed. Jon Clark, Margot Heinemann, David Margolies and Carole Snee (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1979), 27–8.

Chapter 5

Story Form

Long before the invention of writing, oral narratives performed the vital function of recording and preserving human customs and beliefs. Although ideology and myth share the characteristics commonly associated with belief systems, ideology lacks the aspect of narrative which we typically think of when we consider the general properties of myth. Whereas ideology is a set of abstract principles and values without any plot or characters, “the persistent form of myth is story.”¹⁰⁵ Storytelling represents an engaging mode of communicating ideas because it uses a wide range of dramatic devices to create vivid representations of social life. One of the principal reasons why it has been immensely popular in nearly every society since the origins of human language is our need to structure information in a meaningful and interactive way. In this respect, propaganda is very similar to myth because it is “a reciprocal message, self-reinforcing and flexible, which must contain the logic and elements of truth, which must explain and make sense of political and social reality to the point that the propaganda message will become significant of a whole political cosmology.”¹⁰⁶ Both myth and propaganda are therefore social phenomena concerned with information packaging. My goal in this chapter is to establish the relation of the story form to ideology and explain why it represents a perfect vehicle for political propaganda.

Stories are ideologically significant because they can forge and validate social and national identity. Historically, they have been used to give credibility to claims of power and autonomy. Myths and legendary stories have contributed to building and reinforcing images of national self-determination that have survived in politics and popular culture to this day. Pointing out the connections between myth and ideology, Eidinow stresses the fact that story-making is “an instinctive human approach to explaining our world to do it through a narrative form. And stories are very interesting. And one of the reasons why myth is so sticky is because of the narrative form that it uses. It also makes it very powerful. A myth as the story is able to communicate information. But it also makes us feel. So stories can divide communities. They can

105. Dabney W. Townsend, Jr., “Myth and Meaning,” *The Centennial Review* 16, no. 2 (Spring 1972): 195, accessed October 8, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23738355>.

106. Bertrand Taithe and Tim Thorton, “Propaganda: A Misnomer of Rhetoric and Persuasion?” in *Propaganda: Political Rhetoric and Identity, 1300–2000*, ed. Bertrand Taithe and Tim Thorton (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999), 2.

bring them together. They can promote particular ideas.”¹⁰⁷ This means that the narrative form of myth is what gives legitimacy to ideology on the one hand, and persuasiveness to propaganda on the other.

Stories have the incredible ability to make up for the gap in confidence displayed by countries that lack a history long or dramatic enough to justify their existence. The Alamo story demonstrates how a largely fictionalized popular narrative can legitimate a community’s ideology. It gives an account of an 1836 battle during Texas’ war for independence. In particular, it depicts the struggle of two hundred Texans who bravely resisted the Mexican military for nearly two weeks before they were finally defeated. Many versions of the story share a number of historically inaccurate or questionable features which highlight the mythical dimension of the narrative, such as a motivational speech by the Texan commander, exceptional bravery, self-sacrifice, and survival of only one person.¹⁰⁸ It appears as though these narrative elements are fundamental in the creation and reaffirmation of Texan identity. Exploring the effects of the legendary elements on modern Texans, Sylvia Ann Grider points out

The popular legend surrounding the Alamo borders on the sacred in Texas because it expresses, or validates, the mystique that Anglo Texans have of themselves as independent, self-sacrificing, brave, and patriotic. Countless retellings of the legend in schoolbooks, movies, at family gatherings, and state celebrations venerate the forging of the Republic of Texas in the crucible of the Alamo. The martyred heroes of the Alamo have taken on sacred proportions. To reduce the Battle of the Alamo to the dry empirical facts of body count and political consequences is to deprive the saga of Texas independence of its meaning to contemporary Texans.¹⁰⁹

Grider shows that a story and its retelling play a far more crucial role in legitimizing ideology than the actual events or values it portrays. In fact, the evolution of the Alamo story demonstrates how a narrative, and, more importantly the beliefs it communicates can take on a religious note. This is key in establishing unquestionable credibility because a widely accepted traditionalized belief does not require rational justification. It simply becomes a fact. A story is therefore a powerful means of

107. The University of Nottingham, “Ideology and Mythology.”

108. See Perry McWilliams, “The Alamo Story: From Fact to Fable,” *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 15, no. 3 (Sep. –Dec., 1972): 222–224, accessed July 12, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3813977>.

109. Sylvia Ann Grider, “How Texans Remember the Alamo,” in *Usable Pasts: Traditions and Group Expressions in North America*, ed. Tad Tuleja (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 1997), 286–7, accessed July 12, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt46nrkh.19>.

sanctioning certain attitudes and behaviors because it affects our perception of social reality.

Additionally, the Alamo legend and its reception also exhibit the affective character of the story form highlighted by Eidinow above. Stories become popular because of the emotions they communicate and incite. According to Grider, “The constituency or bearers of a historical legend are those who like the tale the way it is because it validates their own culture’s mores and aspirations. Because of the emotional investment that legend bearers thus have in their inventions, to attack or contradict a legend—especially one with such a sacred aura as that of the Alamo—is to risk an immediate and heated counterattack.”¹¹⁰ The emotional bond stories create in the audience has the ideological power to build a community that militantly upholds uniform beliefs. The story form can therefore easily encourage ideological dogmatism.

But stories have been also used to revive and authenticate the mythical and historical backgrounds of marginalized cultures that seek approval. Such is the case of southeastern native Americans who learned how to adapt European narrative traditions to rebuild their nations. Exploring the ways in which they integrated European intellectual strategies to legitimize their independence, Claudio Saunt argues

Cherokees and Creeks embraced the distinction between history and myth to make political claims in the United States—to preserve their sovereignty, defend their land titles, and deflect charges that they were no longer authentic Indians. At the same time, they used both history and myth to try to transform their own nations into states, characterized in this context by centralization, and to turn their fellow Indians into citizens, with the requisite rights and obligations.¹¹¹

Facing the devastating aftermath of aggressive colonialism in the nineteenth century, the successful use of Cherokee and Creek myths in the process of promoting Indian nationalism demonstrates the ideological potential of stories in two ways. First, historical narratives have been commonly used in justifying the power and independence of European nation states. The native Americans proved their effectivity when they subversively turned this strategy against their colonizers. Second, Cherokees and Creeks deployed European narrative categories to boost their own sense of identity

110. Grider, “Alamo,” 287.

111. Claudio Saunt, “Telling Stories: The Political Uses of Myth and History in the Cherokee and Creek Nations,” *The Journal of American History* 93, no. 3 (Dec 2006): 675–6, accessed July 12, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4486409>.

and history. Consequently, the flexibility of the story form shows myth can be effectively used in both legitimizing and diffusing ideology.

The enduring political impact of the Alamo legend and Indian nationalist narratives suggest stories must be compelling to successfully communicate belief systems. Discussing the parallels between ideology and verisimilitude—the assumption that narratives seem authentic when they accurately reflect reality—Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck stress the theory of motivation developed by the French narratologist Gerard Genette:

Story elements are arbitrary because they derive their meaning from their links with the other elements, and not from a connection with the logic of the real world—one that goes without saying. In that sense, they are not motivated. Yet stories regarded as verisimilar succeed in passing off this arbitrary literary logic as real-world logic. The artificial construction seems natural because it is implicitly translated into the common-sense logic that people accept without asking for motivation. The story logic is accepted as common-sensical logic, and vice versa. This is the essence of the naturalization process that is central to ideology if the latter is regarded as the constant transformation of artificial constructs into natural givens.¹¹²

Ideology is more likely to be accepted and validated if the fictional (story) and non-fictional (real-world) dynamic of the narrative is as homogeneous as possible. This condition is necessary to water down the abstract and invasive nature of the ideological construct in order to pass for common sense. In other words, the more motivated/lifelike the story is, the more positively the audience identifies with the ideology it dramatizes.

Scottish socialist novels represent a great example of the literary effort to disguise the artificial story logic as real-world logic in the process of naturalizing ideology. Although some of them display aspects of modernism, such as the montage or stream-of-consciousness techniques, they largely follow the main conventions of the traditional realist novel “whose primary criterion was truth to individual experience—individual experience which is always unique and therefore new.”¹¹³ Carole Snee explains that the realist novel form is “a form which not only offers the reader the most direct access to the experiences embodied within the text, but is also the most readily

112. Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck, “Ideology,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. David Herman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 218.

113. Ian Watt, “Realism and the Novel Form,” in *The Realist Novel*, ed. Dennis Walder (London: Routledge, 1995), 217.

available mode of expression for writers not schooled within a literary tradition.”¹¹⁴ Consequently, the realist bildungsroman form was the most accessible way of communicating the experiences and ideology of the Scottish socialist novelists who did not have access to formal literary education.

Paradoxically, the proletarianization of the bildungsroman involved ideological contradictions. Snee points out that the socialist writers’ choice of literary form was irretrievably bourgeois because “the language and structure of the traditional realist novel is a mode of discourse developed and ascribed value by the dominant class; it reifies and codifies its experience and its perception of reality, and privileges certain feelings and experiences, whilst implicitly condemning others.”¹¹⁵ This is technically true to a certain extent, but it fails to consider the writers’ potential ability to use conventional realism to communicate oppositional politics. In the wider context of proletarian literature, Barbara Foley hypothesizes that “texts will more readily resist generic pressures toward bourgeois ideology—containment of contradiction, for example, or fetishization of personality—if they are anchored in a ‘left’ as opposed to a reformist or economist doctrine.”¹¹⁶ Although Scottish socialist novels recycle a formally bourgeois means of cultural expression, it does not necessarily mean they convey inherently bourgeois ideology. On the contrary, they embody the potential of traditional realism for express social totality.¹¹⁷

Nonetheless, realism offered the writers convenient methods to process and describe urban working-class life. Christopher Whyte asserts that “the classic mode of Glasgow fiction is realism. Glasgow life is felt as a raw, untapped material, an unleavened mass, and the urge is first and foremost to transcribe, to denounce. Realism is traditionally associated with brutal and seamier themes, and is appropriate to a middle-class author’s perception of working-class life.”¹¹⁸ Although this is particularly true for Glasgow-based Barke, the logic also applies to Welsh and Gibbon who were

114. Carole Snee, “Working-Class Literature or Proletarian Writing?” in *Culture and Crisis in Britain in the Thirties*, ed. Jon Clark, Margot Heinemann, David Margolies and Carole Snee (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1979), 167.

115. Snee, “Working-Class Literature,” 168.

116. Barbara Foley, *Radical Representations: Politics and Form in U.S. Proletarian Fiction, 1929–1941* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 261–2.

117. See Georg Lukács, “Realism in the Balance,” in *Aesthetics and Politics*, Theodor Adorno et al. (London: Verso, 1980), 33.

118. Christopher Whyte, “Imagining the City: The Glasgow Novel,” in *Studies in Scottish Fiction: Twentieth Century*, vol. 10, ed. Joachim Schwend and Horst W. Drescher (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1990), 319.

both preoccupied with dramatizing working-class experience. Clarifying the appeal of the realist narrative method, Ian Watt charges that it

allows a more immediate imitation of individual experience set in its temporal and spatial environment than other literary forms. Consequently the novels' conventions make much smaller demands on the audience than do most literary conventions; and this surely explains why the majority of readers in the last two hundred years have found in the novel the literary form which most closely satisfies their wishes for a close correspondence between life and art."¹¹⁹

According to Watt, what helps verisimilitude establish the seeming unity of arbitrary story logic and real-world logic in the realist novel is the way it uses space and time to structure the narrative. Scottish socialist novels are built around the classical view of narrative which "revolves around that which has already occurred and been completed in the story world, in other words, around states, actions and events that are past from the viewpoint of the global narrating position. This kind of narrative is told by the textual voice or personalized narrator as a known fact within the story world, and thrives on certainty or factivity."¹²⁰ Whether they are set in the city or country, the novels always give a detailed presentation of the protagonists and their environments. They define their particular identities including both fictional and non-fictional proper names. Moreover, they are not self-referential because they typically reflect the circumstances of Scottish history and the writers' life experiences. Their primary role, after all, is to convey socialist ideology in a very specific historical and cultural context. Their (semi)autobiographical character helps to present the story in a way that avoids any doubts about its lifelikeness. The advertisement for Welsh's *The Underworld* demonstrates the emphasis the publisher placed on the appeal to authenticity: "It is written by a working man who has seen and lived all he depicts in words of intense realism and rare gripping power."¹²¹ Consequently, placing the events and characters in a specific time and place described in the past tense by an omniscient narrator lends the stories credibility.

Although myth seems to lack the aspect of verisimilitude which is closely associated with the realist novel, they both embody the traditional notion of story which

119. Watt, "Realism," 223.

120. Uri Margolin, "Of What Is Past, Is Passing, or to Come: Temporality, Aspectuality, Modality, and the Nature of Literary Narrative," in *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis*, ed. David Herman (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999), 143.

121. The advertisement appears at the end of Welsh's *The Morlocks* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1924).

is “composed of action (an event or events) and characters (more broadly existents or entities) and that it always proceeds forward in time.”¹²² The story form is a timeless and universal mode of sharing experiences and ideas. It has always been structured around events and characters that represent the link between myth and the realist novel. However, Lévi-Strauss warns against mixing the strategies we use to interpret myth and modern fiction because “myth is impossible to understand as a continuous sequence. We must focus on the bundles of events to understand myth as a totality.”¹²³ Although it makes some sense not to read a myth like a novel, there is no reason why a novel should not be analyzed structurally as though it was a myth. Ultimately, as far as the story form is concerned, myth is the novel’s ancient ancestor. It is only logical that Scottish socialist novels should recycle it because the story form offers a perfect outlet for propaganda.

122. H. Porter Abbott, “Story, Plot, and Narration,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. David Herman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 41.

123. Lévi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning*, 44–5.

Chapter 6

Functions

Myths and ideologies affect social and political life in many specific ways because they are purposeful products of our imagination. Although we may not be consciously aware of their direct influence on the physical and mental landscape of society, they play vitally important roles in how we process ourselves and reality. They define the limitations of human activity which can be immobilizing, but they are also a powerful source of motivation that can encourage us to effect change. On the one hand, they often appear to offer convenient answers and explanations. But on the other hand, these solutions may be only illusions designed to be intentionally deceiving. Despite their ambiguous nature and purpose, myths and ideologies are not amorphous. They have not become obsolete because they continue to reflect our most sincere concerns and convictions. All this suggests that their uses are very likely to overlap. They would not have such an enormous impact on our life if we did not find them meaningful. In this chapter, I compare mythical and ideological functions to show how they correlate in the context of Scottish socialist novels. This correlation will demonstrate an important ideological use of myth for political propaganda.

What seemingly constitutes a major functional link between myths and Scottish socialist novels is their entertaining role. They primarily address our need for sharing experiences in a way that is enjoyable. Despite the varying degrees of their narrative quality, they commonly provide a sense of purpose and interaction which fuel the dynamic of society. Nonetheless, neither myths nor Scottish socialist novels are exclusively intended for entertainment. In fact, Kirk argues that even myths that are chiefly told to amuse the audience often “glorify famous leaders and tribal history by telling of wars and victories . . . or disguise contradictions between national ideals and actuality.”¹²⁴ Besides the ideologically insignificant narrative role, myth appears to lend the novels the glorifying feature. There are frequent references to fictional and historical figures of the Scottish labour movement, such as Keir Hardie and John MacLean. They are depicted with an aura of deep reverence which implies their social and political importance in the context of Scottish socialism. They are the ideological equivalents of the mighty heroes and leaders who are idolized in myths.

124. Kirk, *Myth*, 254.

Additionally, the novels typically center about a strike which has political as well as literary significance. Rideout explains radical writers were fascinated with a strike because it was “clearly a battle in the class war; in such a battle, the abrupt Marxian clash of capitalist class and proletariat was most nearly imaged,” and, more importantly, “the trajectory of the usual strike presents a curve of action aptly designed for artistic expression. The storm gathers, the initial clash occurs, the struggle veers back and forth, producing suspense as the advantage goes now to this side, not to that’ the climax is reached when the strike succeeds or is broken, and the action thereafter drops swiftly.”¹²⁵ On the one hand, the novels generously employ the strike trope because it is an ideal dramatic device and it offers a vast reservoir of socialist imagery. On the other hand, however, it represents another example of how political propaganda recycles mythical functions to convey socialist ideology. Concerning the adaptability of myth, Lévi-Strauss notes “Whether the myth is re-created by the individual or borrowed from tradition, it derives from its sources—individual or collective (between which interpenetrations and exchanges constantly occur)—only the stock of representations with which it operates. But the structure remains the same, and through it the symbolic function is fulfilled.”¹²⁶ Instead of mythical storytelling that focuses on battles and wars to celebrate tribal history, the novels use the (melo)dramatic potential of labour conflict to dramatize socialism.

The structural parallels between myth and ideology which emphasize the role of champions and heroic struggle establish the first type of function. Its purpose is to sanction belief systems and assert political leadership. In his typology of mythical functions, Kirk identifies this type as iterative/operative/validatory because its aim is to “confirm, maintain the memory of, and provide authority for tribal customs and institutions—the whole clan system, for example, or the institution of kingship and the rules for succession; and to reaffirm and institutionalize tribal beliefs.”¹²⁷ Concerning the ideological analogy of this function, Heywood points out that “political ideas and ideologies can act as a form of social cement, providing social groups, and indeed whole societies with a set of unifying beliefs and values.”¹²⁸ The aspects of institutionalization and authorization echo Campbell’s view of the sociological dimension of myth which

125. Rideout, *Radical Novel*, 172.

126. Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, 203.

127. Kirk, *Myth*, 256.

128. Heywood, *Political Ideologies*, 4.

is “the enforcement of a moral order: the shaping of the individual to the requirements of his geographically and historically conditioned social group. . . . Moreover, it is in this moral, sociological sphere that authority and coercion come into play.”¹²⁹ Scottish socialist novels clearly share the first type of mythical function which lends the ideology legitimacy and credibility. It conveys a sense of community organized around the same belief system and working toward a common goal. The novels embody the sociological function of myth that validates and preserves some particular social order because they promote a socialist way of life. The ideology they express encourages individuals to conform to a specific ethical code in order to function as parts of the whole. It establishes and maintains authority for socialist organizations, such as trade unions and political parties which give the narratives a formal appearance of institutionalized and therefore reliable framework of political protest.

The second function that myth and ideology have in common transcends the individual’s microcosm because it explains the world and people’s place in it. Campbell asserts that this cosmological dimension offers “an image of the universe that will be in accord with the knowledge of the time, the sciences and the fields of action of the folk to whom the mythology is addressed.”¹³⁰ The novels present a fundamentally materialist view of the universe governed by the iron rules of reason. In a heavily didactic passage of *The Major Operation*, the writer’s mouthpiece MacKelvie makes a case for materialism:

If you accept the fact that the Universe is real, and exists apart from us, then you must accept the fact that man is part of the Universe and that he does not exist independent of the Universe. It follows then that man is purely a material being. Note that this includes everything about man and everything about the Universe. . . . Colour, for example, which completely baffles description by analogy, actually resolves itself to a matter of light-wave vibrations. To a colour-blind man it is impossible to describe the colour of red. But the appropriate scientist can analyse the red and explain it exactly in terms of light waves.¹³¹

Obviously, the novels offer representations of the universe that agree with their writers’ socialist standpoint. Heywood observes that “in the first place” political ideologies “provide a perspective through which the world is understood and explained.”¹³² Consequently, the novels largely interpret the world as an epic conflict

129. Joseph Campbell, *The Masks of God: Creative Mythology* (London: Souvenir Press, 1974), 4–5.

130. Joseph Campbell, *Myths*, 215.

131. Barke, *Major Operation*, 306.

132. Heywood, *Political Ideologies*, 3.

of social forces, which reflects the basic tenet of historical materialism. The only difference between Campbell's and Heywood's definitions of the cosmological function is that the former speaks about mythology whereas the latter refers to ideology. The fact that the rest of their definitions appears nearly identical proves the functional link between the two.

Furthermore, the cosmological function of myth and ideology has important aetiological implications. In particular, Kirk observes that "the more complex the myth, the more fundamental and abstract the paradox or institution it tends to explain or reflect," especially when "the myth offers an apparent way out of the problem, either by obfuscating it, or making it appear abstract and unreal, or by stating in affective terms that it is insoluble or inevitable, part of the divine dispensation or natural order of things, or by offering some kind of palliation or apparent solution for it."¹³³ Scottish socialist novels may be considered an ideological equivalent of complex myths because they reflect a profoundly abstract belief system. However, the materialist theory which underlies socialism produces a kind of aetiology that resembles mythical problem solving only functionally. While complex myths are likely to obscure the causes of serious problems and speculate about their inevitability, the novels identify the reasons behind the dehumanizing effects of capitalism. Unlike myths, they offer remedy in the form of social and economic transformation of society. As a result, the ideological uses of the cosmological function in Scottish socialist novels are limited by the philosophical monism that determines the epistemological basis of socialism.

The aetiological differences between myth and socialism also indicate that most political propaganda is unlikely to recycle any sort of metaphysical function. According to Campbell, "any properly operating mythology" is served by "the mystical function: to waken and maintain in the individual a sense of awe and gratitude in relation to the mystery dimension of the universe, not so that he lives in fear of it, but so that he recognizes that he participates in it, since the mystery of being is the mystery of his own deep being as well."¹³⁴ The novels represent an antidote to any form of mysticism exemplified by spiritualism or institutionalized religion. They routinely mock the tendency to explain human existence by means of mysterious forces that control the world.

133. Kirk, *Myth*, 258.

134. Joseph Campbell, *Myths*, 215–6.

In fact, they collectively criticize the inhibiting effects of religion on knowledge. For example, Gibbon's *Grey Granite* attacks the metaphysics of religion because it negatively affects education. It depicts the persecution of a liberal teacher who "was telling the bairns the queerest and dirtiest things, . . . drawing pictures on the blackboard of people's insides and how their food was digested and oh . . . *the way that waste comes out.*"¹³⁵ As a result, she is forbidden to teach physiology because the conservative authorities deem it immoral. As far as Barke's criticism of metaphysical mysticism is concerned, his mouthpiece concludes "No element of the supernatural enters into the explanation. For what is the supernatural? Something that exists outside of Nature, outside, over and above the Universe: something that is not material: in a word, something 'spiritual.' This belief in the supernatural may take the crude form of Christian belief. Belief in a Creator who made everything."¹³⁶ Contrasting empirical with non-empirical epistemology, Gibbon and Barke show that metaphysics does not enter the socialist equation.

The best example of the triumph of materialism over religious idealism presumably occurs in Welsh' *The Underworld* where the intellectually awakening protagonist concludes "Old religious conceptions, the orthodoxy of his kith and kin, were fast tested in the crucible of his mind and flung aside as worthless. . . . The cruelty of life as it presented itself to the great mass of the working class, could not be reconciled with the Church's teaching of an all-loving and omniscient Father."¹³⁷ Welsh's poignant accusation of institutionalized religion shows the empirical logic behind the socialist rejection of metaphysics. The protagonist weighs up the metaphysical premise of Supreme Being against the reality to conclude that the notion of afterlife is "crude and barbarous."¹³⁸ As a result, the novels demonstrate that socialist propaganda has little use for the mystical function because its materialist dynamic negates the metaphysical notion of a non-objective universe.

The last important function of myth ideology has a markedly educational/didactic dimension. Both seem to play a key role in the process of shaping individuals who are expected to adopt the values and principles of the specific social

135. Lewis Grassic Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, in *A Scots Quair: Sunset Song, Cloud Howe, Grey Granite*, ed. Ian Campbell (1934; Edinburgh: Polygon, 2006), 531–2.

136. Barke, *Major Operation*, 306–7.

137. James C. Welsh, *The Underworld*, 1920; Project Gutenberg, 2005, accessed August 4, 2016, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15503/15503-h/15503-h.htm>.

138. Welsh, *Underworld*.

order they belong to. Campbell refers to this function as psychological or pedagogical because its purpose in myth is to guide individuals “stage by stage, in health, strength, and harmony of spirit, through the whole foreseeable course of a useful life.”¹³⁹ Myths simply offer role models that facilitate the individual’s ability to internalize belief systems. Without the educational dimension, myth could hardly perform the sociological and cosmological functions.

By comparison, the educational function in political ideologies is largely overshadowed by their main aim to “shape the nature of political systems.”¹⁴⁰ However, in order to have an impact on political systems, political ideologies must create a political culture that produces committed individuals who share common political beliefs. This is achieved by the process of political socialization, which is “the gradual learning of the norms, attitudes, and behavior accepted and practiced by the ongoing political system,” and its goal is to “train or develop individuals that they become well-functioning members of the political society” because “without a body politic so in harmony with the ongoing political values the political system would have trouble functioning smoothly and perpetuating itself safely.”¹⁴¹ The agents of political socialization include mass media, school, friends, and, most importantly, family. As political scientist Kenneth P. Langton states, “Within the family the child has his first experience with authority relationships which he may generalize to larger political systems. Political loyalty, patriotism, national heroes, and devils are all seen as developing early in life.”¹⁴² Consequently, propaganda addresses the educational dimension which facilitates the internalization of political ideologies.

All the novels dramatize aspects of political socialization in different forms. For instance, the hero of *The Underworld* is influenced by his father’s political beliefs at an early age for two reasons. First, he admires his father’s defiance of his tyrannical boss. Second, he attends a socialist meeting where his father and other labour organizers deliver inspirational speeches. Similarly, one of the main characters in *The Land of the Leal* finds socialism appealing because he looks up to his socialist uncle. The novels also employ romantic partners as the agents of political socialization. Such is the case in *Grey Granite* where the protagonist adopts his girlfriend’s socialist outlook. On the

139. Joseph Campbell, *Myths*, 215.

140. Heywood, *Political Ideologies*, 4.

141. Roberta Sigel, “Assumptions about the Learning of Political Values,” in *Political Socialization*, ed. Edward S. Greenberg (New York: Atherton Press, 1970), 20.

142. Kenneth P. Langton, *Political Socialization* (New York: OUP, 1969), 22.

other hand, the character who converts the impressionable hero in *Major Operation* is introduced to socialism by his charismatic wife. Therefore, the educational function is deeply embedded in political ideologies because it is indirectly responsible for their continuity and reproduction.

PART II.

STRUCTURE AND MEANING

If rites can be powerful weapons of the elite, they also represent one of the most potent weapons of the powerless. Lacking the formal organization and the material resources that help perpetuate the rule of the elite, the politically deprived need a means of defining a new collectivity. This collectivity, created through rituals and symbols, not only provides people with an identity different from that encouraged by the elite, but also serves as a means to recruit others to their side.

—David I. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics, and Power*

There are many parallels between myth and ideology which give enough reason to assume political propaganda is prone to recycle mythical structures to communicate ideological belief systems. The principle concern of this section is to determine how Scottish socialist novels dramatize the ideology beyond the traditional narratological framework. It begins with an analytic discussion that aims to uncover some of the less obvious strategies underlying how modern political propaganda operates. It considers the novels from the perspective of totality. The basic premise of this section is that only the whole structure can convey a complete and sufficient meaning as opposed to some fragmented information represented by its individual parts. Consequently, my main interest is in identifying a common pattern by looking at the relations between the core units that make up the system.

As these initial comments indicate, my approach partly prioritizes the relations within a narrative above its content. This is particularly true in chapter 7 which examines the relationships between the fundamental narrative elements within and across the novels to find their best arrangement in order to discover how they communicate socialism on a structural level. However, chapters 8 through 16 consistently address the correlation between the arrangement of narrative units and content to make larger claims about the cultural dimension of modern political propaganda and its representational strategy in Scottish socialist novels.

Chapter 7

Method

Despite its great potential for the modern study of political propaganda, the structural theory of myth has been rarely used to explore its literary dimension. I intend to use the structural approach of Lévi-Strauss to reveal a previously largely unsuspected aspect of Scottish socialist novels. Namely, in the context of political propaganda they display a much more systematic pattern than had been assumed. I argue that this pattern can be schematically reproduced to offer some universal implications for understanding the dynamic of ideological persuasion. Moreover, my structural analysis of the socialist narratives aims to suggest some hermeneutical benefits for the genre. I will approach the novels schematically to decode their composite character as a whole. This will highlight the binary character of political propaganda which I propose to deal with as a set of contradictions that require logical resolution. Therefore, this chapter is devoted to the understanding and evaluation of the underlying structure of relations in Scottish socialist novels to determine their ultimate meaning.

According to Lévi-Strauss, myth consists of gross constituent units called *mythemes*, which represent the individual relations in a story.¹⁴³ In order to identify these basic units, we must break down the story into isolated elements. They often happen to be manifested in the form of the characters' actions or events that occur throughout the story. However, analyzing these units separately would not reveal anything new. For example, looking at a protagonist's behavior in a particular situation in a novel can provide some moral insight into human nature or the writer's beliefs. But it does not say much about the ultimate purpose of the narrative. The same logic applies to the exaggeration of the so-called themes which are frequently the main focus of literary analysis. Admittedly, they can communicate human experience. But they do so only to a limited extent because they offer only a fragmentary view of the whole. Instead, Lévi-Strauss proposes to look "to their relationships, that is, by trying to understand what kind of original system they make up."¹⁴⁴ The isolated units are unlikely to help us comprehend complex phenomena such as literature when we

143. See Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, 210–11.

144. See Lévi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning*, 10.

consider them separately. They must be analyzed as sets, or *bundles* to use Lévi-Strauss' term, of relations that constitute a totality.

In order to decipher the meaning of Scottish socialist novels and their importance for understanding the mechanisms of political propaganda, it is imperative to find the best arrangement of the mythemes embedded in the narratives. This task is more challenging than it looks because the mythemes that may be part of the same set of relations are likely to be scattered across the entire story. In other words, a particular bundle of relations might consist of isolated mythemes that are located at the beginning, middle and end of the story. What tells us they should be grouped together is that they have something in common. For example, if there is a recurrent pattern of characters dying for some reason, these incidents are likely to constitute a true unit—a set of relations which will be juxtaposed with other sets to reveal a significant structure.

The process of identifying the true units in the novels means we must consider them as a series of sequences. These sequences are composed of incidents—mythemes—that appear at different intervals throughout the story. Table 1 offers a schematic analysis of the main incidents in *The Underworld* (N₁=narrative 1). Each row represents a sequence whereas the vertical columns represent sets of relations. I created the tables by carefully grouping the individual mythemes in columns. As soon as a sequence of incidents ran its course, I started over. Having repeated this procedure, the bundles of relations placed next to each other established the perfect arrangement.

Although each table shows a complex pattern that displays a meaningful structure, it does not reveal itself unless it is read correctly. The fact that the mythemes which make up a set of relations appear at different intervals throughout the story poses a potentially serious problem. Most people are used to processing stories diachronically because they generally follow the conventions of linearity. However, the linear arrangement of written text that runs either horizontally or vertically on a page makes it impossible to compare the sets of relations whose grouping defies the rules of linearity. Incidents that occur in a story in a linear order do not necessarily appear so in the tables. For instance, the first column in table 1 puts together two events which the protagonist of N₁ experiences in succession. First, he is involved in a violent skirmish with his schoolmate, and then he gets punished for it by the headmaster. Instead of placing the incidents in the same row in two separate columns, they are grouped together in a single column which makes linear reading inadequate. Therefore, Lévi-Strauss suggests we read them diachronically and synchronically at the same time:

Table 1. Structural relations in *The Underworld* (N₁)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Robert fights Peter at school								
Headmaster abuses Robert	Robert unwinds in the moor			Robert displays desire for the quest				
	Robert joins a union			Robert admires a union organizer				
	Robert prefers work to school	Robert finds the pithead pleasing	Robert fantasizes about work	Robert gets advice from his father				
			Robert goes down the pit		Robert becomes a breadwinner			
					Robert joins a strike			
						Robert cries for freedom		
						Robert turns socialist		
							Robert serves the movement	
								Robert directs a rescue effort in the pit

What if patterns showing affinity, instead of being considered in succession, were to be treated as one complex pattern and read as a whole? By getting at what we call *harmony*, they would then see that an orchestra score, to be meaningful, must be read diachronically along one axis—that is, page after page, and from left to right—and synchronically along the other axis, all the notes written vertically making up one gross constituent unit, that is, one bundle of relations.¹⁴⁵

My purpose is not to retell the content of Scottish socialist novels but understand how they communicate the ideology. For that reason, I must deal with them as a complex arrangement of units and read the stories as a whole. Nonetheless, in order to decipher the pattern, we must first identify the sets of relations represented by the columns. If we accept the premise that the sets of relations consist of interconnected mythemes, each must naturally display a common characteristic. For example, in table 1 the events grouped in the first column say something about the protagonist’s first experience of physical violence. The first set of relations therefore communicates some sort of fundamentally unsettling experience because it undermines the hero’s view of the world. The mythemes in the second column, on the other hand, embody life-changing decisions. The common feature of the third set of relations is a sense of comfort. The fourth column implies a challenging beginning of something new. By contrast, the individual units in the fifth column embody some kind of help the character receives from a third party. The sixth column represents confrontation while the seventh one indicates integration. The elements in the eighth column express a decision to act upon the newly acquired knowledge. Finally, the elements in the ninth set of relations emphasize the need to give an ultimate proof of the hero’s commitment to the new belief system. As a result, table 2 exhibits a simplified overview of columns one to nine whose labels sum up the common features of each set of relations in N₁.

Table 2. Simplified overview of structural relations in *The Underworld*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Preliminary crisis		Redirection	Solace	Immersion	Mentor	Conflict	Acceptance	Praxis	Departure

145. Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, 212.

Having established the individual sets of relations, we can now proceed to reading them from left to right as an orchestra score. This means that we must look at them column after column instead of line by line. The process of reading the two dimensions simultaneously relies first and foremost on a careful analysis of the relationships between the columns. The first three columns positively differ from the rest in that they depict the painful divorce of the hero from his world. As soon as the hero notices a deficiency in his community, he refocuses and moves on. While he is leaving his comfort zone, he is given an opportunity to rest and prepare for his challenge. Therefore, the first three columns which form the first *master set* of N_1 —a configuration composed of three sets of relations—symbolize the hero’s departure.

The specific relationships between the next six columns in table 1 suggest they should be treated as two distinctive master sets each composed of three sets of relations. The second master set is made up of columns four, five and six. What they have in common is that they encapsulate the hero’s arrival and struggle in a dimension that dramatically differs from his known world. He finds himself on a border of two worlds because he is symbolically in between two states neither of which he is part of. Conversely, the configuration of columns seven, eight and nine hints at a different meaning. Collectively, they represent various aspects of inclusion and that is why they form the third master set of N_1 . The hero subscribes to a new community and its belief system because he has become seriously committed to their values. Although each column carries a unique message, they all contribute to the composite structure of N_1 which reveals its true meaning.

The schematic analysis of N_1 shows a clear pattern of rites of passage. Each master set of relations represents an individual stage in a three-step ideological conversion of the hero. In the process of adopting a new belief system, he moves from one stage to another. Arnold van Gennep, the French ethnographer who explored the ritual aspects of human behavior, explains that “the life of an individual in any society is a series of passages from one age to another and from one occupation to another. Wherever there are fine distinctions among age or occupational groups, progression from one group to the next is accompanied by special acts, like those which make up apprenticeship in our trades.”¹⁴⁶ Socialism is an ideologically distinct system of thought

146. Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 2–3.

which affects the behavior of individuals in a society. If an individual decides to become a socialist, they undergo a mental and social process of transformation. The progression from a non-socialist belief to socialist one is physically manifested in certain actions which symbolize the change. Table 2 demonstrates the process where each master set corresponds to Genep's tripartite scheme of rites of passage—*separation, initiation, and incorporation*. The structure of N_1 therefore reveals a significant meaning on a sociological level because it implies the novels communicate socialism through a narrative pattern structured around a series of rites of passage.

To verify this hypothesis, we must consider all the variants of the story and see if the structure matches. Lévi-Strauss emphasizes the fact that myth consists of “all its versions” and consequently “structural analysis should take all of them into account.”¹⁴⁷ If we use table 1 to superimpose the structure of N_1 on the remaining narratives, we will notice some minor deviations on the mythemic level. The differences result from variations in content. For example, a closer look at the individual mythemes in each column in table 3 reveals that the structural relations in *The Morlocks* (N_2) include not only the protagonist but other characters, too.

However, if we consider the entire structure of the narrative, we will notice that the multiplicity of characters represents an unimportant variable in the ritual pattern. What is more important than the number of characters is the common feature of each set of relations. The first column in table 3 implies some traumatic experiences of the characters on personal and family levels. Despite the variations in setting and imagery, they convey a meaning similar to that of the first set of relations in N_1 . These incidents exemplify the preliminary crisis of the hero because they fundamentally uproot the characters' limiting assumptions about the world and their place in it. The second set of relations exhibits the characters' redirection whereas the individual mythemes in the third column are united in that they symbolize temporary relief. The hero's separation from his default ideological settings is closely followed by his transition stage represented by columns four through six whose mythemes illustrate his immersion, help from without and within, and confrontation, respectively. The last three sets of relations in N_2 symbolize the hero's incorporation into a new belief system. This final stage consists of his acceptance of some previously unknown ideological certitudes, urge to put this theory into practice and determination to make sacrifices.

147. Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, 217.

Table 3. Structural relations in *The Morlocks* (N₂)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Sydney travels to Craigside	Sydney rests at a colliery						
		Jamie takes Sydney in						
			Sydney goes down the pit	Jamie trains Sydney				
				Sydney educates the village				
					Sydney confronts the community			
						Sydney turns a reformist		
							Alan believes in revolution	
Alan learns loves Sydney	Mary Alan leaves Craigside			Barney grooms Alan	Alan struggles with guilt		Sydney directs a strike	Alan dies in a riot
								Sydney explains workers' defeat
Sydney recounts his family trauma	Sydney leaves his village							

By contrast, table 4 demonstrates not only structural parallels between *Grey Granite* (N_3) and N_{1-2} but also striking similarities between the variations of the same story on mythemic level. For instance, the reappearing theme of family trauma seems to be a particularly defining aspect of the hero's preliminary crisis. Moreover, the mytheme that constitutes the second set of structural relations in N_3 indicates the importance of coming of age for the hero's ideological rite of passage. Although the remaining sets of relations appear to reflect the uniform pattern of ritual structure of Scottish socialist novels, the last column displays some discrepancy. While N_1 and N_2 use sacrificial death to dramatize the departure of the hero, the protagonist in N_3 leaves his community for political reasons. This, however, does not affect the ritual structure.

Table 4. Structural relations in *Grey Granite* (N_3)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Ewan's stepfather dies	Ewan leaves school for work	Ewan feels home in Duncairn	Ewan starts work		Ewan is hazed by coworkers	Ewan earns coworkers' respect		
			Ewan appreciates the city	Ellen teaches Ewan		Ewan fails to stage a strike			
				Ewan joins a riot					
								The police torture Ewan	Ewan turns communist
								Ewan knows his political role	Ewan breaks up with Ellen
					Jim grooms Ewan				Ewan leaves for London

In table 5, the structural analysis of another version of the ideological narrative reveals some insightful facts about the individual sets of relations in *Major Operation* (N₄). Although the mythemes in the first column commonly symbolize the destabilization of the hero's universe, they suggest the preliminary crisis is the effect of the dichotomy between economy and social relations in the context of Marxist theory. The second column recycles the territorial aspect of redirection whereas the third one is unique in that it accentuates the human dimension of the solace phase. Unlike N₁ and N₃, it identifies empathy as the source of relief during the hero's rite of separation.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
George fails in the role of patriarch	George fails in the role of patriarch	George goes to hospital	Sister Maclean comforts George	George faces the unfamiliar hospital environment	George faces the unfamiliar hospital environment	George confronts his class prejudice	George turns socialist and feels reborn	George thinks of his old friends as class enemies	George dies to save Mackelvie
George fails in the role of businessman	George fails in the role of businessman								
George feels as though his world has become a nightmare	George feels as though his world has become a nightmare			George engages in philosophical discussions	Mackelvie wants to convert George	George considers conversion			

Finally, the structural relations in table 6 give evidence that *The Land of the Leal* (N₅) matches the ritual structure of political propaganda suggested in table 1. Despite some little alterations in N₁₋₅, the common features exhibited by the sets of relations in each narrative are homologous. As long as the incidents qualify for a particular set of relations (a column in the table), they must be added regardless of the inconsistencies in content. After all, it is the sets of relations rather than the content of the narratives that underlie the complex dynamic of political propaganda in Scottish socialist novels.

Table 6. Structural relations in *The Land of the Leal* (N₅)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
David feels the class gap between the gentry and peasants		The family moves to Glasgow		David must adapt to the city		David new division of labour	David refuses the call of his socialist brother	David criticizes his socialist brother	
David feels emasculated				The city is inhospitable				David visits his rural home	
The gentry abuses David's daughter			Andrew enjoys domesticity		Mackelvie guides Andrew	Andrew confronts his father	Andrew turns socialist	Andrew criticizes religion	
Andrew learns about his parents' hardship		Andrew thinks of parents differently	Andrew dates Chrissie		Andrew admires his uncle				David dies in Glasgow
									Andrew dies in Spain

Nevertheless, the differences in the variations of the story could potentially influence the individual roles of each master set in the ritual pattern. For instance, the last master set could be foregrounded and more significant than the previous two. This would translate to emphasizing one stage of the rite of passage at the expense of the other two. However, Gennep points out that “although a complete scheme of rites of passage theoretically includes preliminal rites (rites of separation), liminal rites (rites of transition), and postliminal rites (rites of incorporation), in specific instances these types are not always equally important or equally elaborated.”¹⁴⁸ Unlike rites that stress the aspects of separation or incorporation, such as a bachelor party and wedding, respectively, the structure of the novels leaves no doubt that the series of rites includes all three stages because they dramatize the three-step process of ideological conversion.

Besides the parallels between the pattern of the novels and Gennep’s model, there is another reason why ritual should be considered the dominant structure. The most critical factor in the structural approach of Lévi-Strauss is the process of detecting mythemes because they represent the basic units whose accurate rearrangement reveals the true meaning of a myth. They happen to roughly correlate with what Campbell identifies as the individual stages of the monomyth—a universalizing theory of myth which revolves around the concept of the hero’s journey embodied in a series of rites of passage. Although Campbell’s common template of myth largely draws on Gennep’s scheme, Campbell’s adaptation is unique in the way it modifies and subdivides the individual stages to account for the composite structure of myth. The hero’s journey is essentially a circle, where “a hero ventures forth from the world of common days into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.”¹⁴⁹ Therefore, the monomyth offers a useful framework for the study of Scottish socialist novels because for Campbell it has both personal and political implications.¹⁵⁰

However, the applicability of Campbell’s model is limited. While the structure of the novels displays the ritual pattern of a journey, Campbell’s stress on the return stage does not apply because the socialist heroes do not come back to their communities

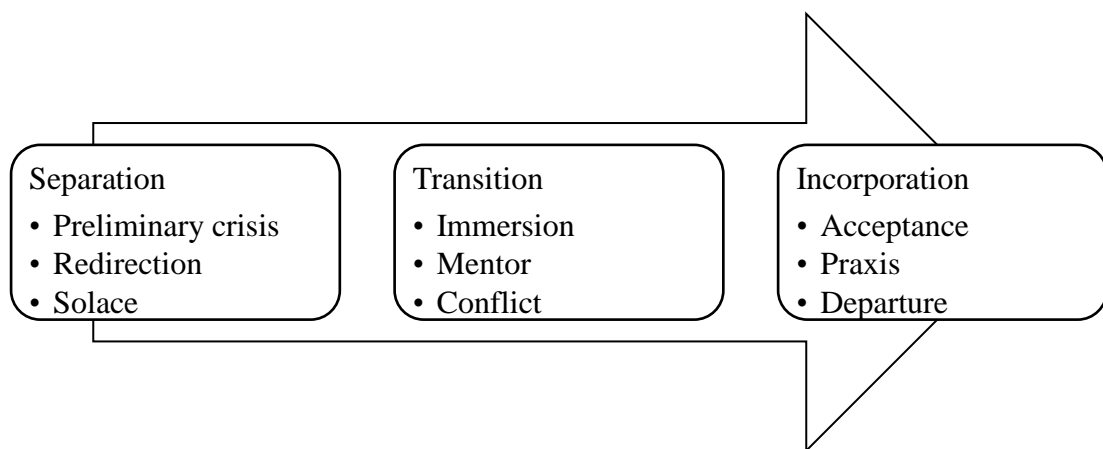
148. Gennep, *Rites of Passage*, 11.

149. Joseph Campbell, *Hero*, 27.

150. See Robert A. Segal, “Myth and Politics: A Response to Robert Ellwood,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 70, no. 3 (Sep 2002): 619, accessed 7 July, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1466526>.

to share the benefits of their newly acquired class consciousness or political ideology. Although I partly use Campbell's monomythical journey to demonstrate how the novels convey ideology, figure 1 shows that their structure resembles a process rather than a cycle. This is because the inherently dialectic structure suggests a way of overcoming contradictions that is more likely to take the form of a spiral than a cycle. What the novels seem to have in common is that they are mostly variations of a story of ideological apprenticeship that consists of "two parallel transformations undergone by the protagonist: first, a transformation from *ignorance* (of self) to *knowledge* (of self); second, a transformation from *passivity* to *action*. The hero goes forth into the world to find (knowledge of) himself, and attains such knowledge through a series of 'adventures' (actions) that function both as 'proofs' and as tests."¹⁵¹ Despite its narratological emphasis, the paradigm of apprenticeship seems to reflect the mythical pattern of rites of passage. Therefore, the structure of Scottish socialist novels reveals how political propaganda recycles ritually significant aspects of mythology to communicate ideology.

Figure 1. Common structural pattern of Scottish socialist novels



151. Susan Rubin Suleiman, *Authoritarian Fictions: The Ideological Novel As a Literary Genre* (1983; repr., Princeton: PUP, 1993), 65.

Chapter 8

Preliminary Crisis

The mythical journey of the proletarian hero typically begins with a series of dramatic events that mark a break with his current way of life. The initial stage of the hero's ideological transformation is a period of unprecedented discontent that thoroughly undermines his assumptions about history and reality. Regardless of social class or political allegiances, the protagonists in Scottish socialist novels traditionally experience some life-changing drama that stimulates their search for ideological self-discovery. This crisis can take the form of a single unsettling episode or it can involve multiple incidents that profoundly affect the hero's mindset. It represents a wake-up call which manifests the deficiencies of the established socio-economic system. In the context of mythology, the preliminary crisis roughly matches Campbell's description of the spectacular adventure of the mythical hero figure. According to his theory, most myths consist of a call to action which announces the beginning of the universal mythical narrative:

But whether small or great, and no matter what the stage or grade of life, the call rings up the curtain, always, on a mystery of transfiguration—a rite, or moment, of spiritual passage, which, when complete, amounts to a dying and a birth. The familiar life horizon has been outgrown; the old concepts, ideals, and emotional patterns no longer fit; the time for the passing of a threshold is at hand.¹⁵²

Although the narrative structure of Scottish socialist novels largely recycles the mythical device of the call to adventure, they do so by means of demythologized imagery. As far as Campbell's monomythical paradigm is concerned, the imagery that accompanies the announcement of the hero's journey is often dominated by "the dark forest, the great tree, the babbling spring, and the loathly, underestimated appearance of the carrier of the power of destiny"¹⁵³ that functions as the messenger of the quest at hand. By contrast, the novels are commonly set in an industrial environment which replaces the mythical fairytale landscape with modern symbols indicating the devastating physical and psychological effects of capitalism. These traditionally include a class-divided community, repressive school, or dysfunctional family.

152. Joseph Campbell, *Hero*, 47.

153. Joseph Campbell, *Hero*, 47.

More importantly, the physical appearance of the harbinger of the hero's journey may be utterly unimportant. In fact, it does not need to embody any metaphysical concept at all. Instead of responding to a call of destiny represented by a supernatural creature, the proletarian hero is simply motivated to act by developments in the physical world. While Campbell identifies the frog or the dragon as the typical heralds of the call to adventure,¹⁵⁴ the heroes in the novels experience institutional injustice, economic exploitation or social displacement and alienation. Scottish socialist novels employ such images of industrialized society to perform the function of the mythical frog or dragon in Campbell's monomyth. They are not only symptomatic of the novels' propagandist intentions, but they also introduce the dialectic antithesis of the hero's universe which underlies the preliminary crisis.

The Underworld illustrates the far-reaching ideological implications of the preliminary crisis. In this classic example of a proletarian bildungsroman, Welsh focuses on the protagonist's road toward a fully-rounded class consciousness. Set in an imaginary mining community in late nineteenth-century rural Scotland, the novel uses the hero's early experience of an abusive school environment to dramatize the preliminary crises. Robert Sinclair's antagonistic relationship with his classmate Peter Rundell symbolizes the hero's growing anxiety about the known world. While Robert comes from an underprivileged miner's family of six, Peter has unlimited access to wealth because he is the mine owner's son. Their continuing physical and intellectual rivalry highlights the divide between the haves and have-nots. It carries overtones of economic inequality that are carefully woven into the ideological narrative. They are expressed more directly during one of the boys' confrontations at school. Robert feels increasingly aggravated when a crowd of students pressures his platonic sweetheart Mysie Maitland to choose Peter as her partner in a children's game. However, what eventually motivates him to assault Peter is his "shining collar, his fine boots and good clothes, and above all the smile, half of shame, half of triumph, upon his face."¹⁵⁵ Although the writer uses Peter's clothes to symbolize his privileged social class, the ultimate symbol of his superiority over Robert is his appropriation of Mysie, who shares the hero's social background. When she is paired with Peter in the seemingly innocent game, he symbolically invades Robert's comfort zone and seizes his highly valuable

154. See Joseph Campbell, *Hero*, 47.

155. Welsh, *Underworld*.

asset. Consequently, the deteriorating relationship between the two boys epitomizes the class conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In the context of the preliminary crisis, it adds to the process of Robert's ideological awakening which characterizes the first stage of the proletarian hero's separation from his former consciousness.

What dramatically accelerates the protagonist's developing disenchantment with the established world order are the repercussions of Robert's fight with his antagonist. In the aftermath of the showdown, Robert stubbornly refuses to cooperate with the school authority. As a result, the headmaster instinctively opts for physical punishment as the best means of disciplining the hero:

That spirit he felt must be broken, or there would be trouble ahead in after years for Robert Sinclair. Mr. Clapper was determined to do his duty, and he believed that Robert in later life would probably feel grateful for this thrashing. He thrashed the boy soundly and severely upon the most sensitive parts of his body, so that the pain would help to break his spirit.¹⁵⁶

Although the headmaster does not break Robert's spirit, his actions fuel the ten-year-old's dislike for authority which marks the peak of his preliminary crisis. Robert's negative experience of school represents a formative influence in his development of class consciousness. It has wider implications for his ideological radicalization because school is a complex organism that functions as a microcosm of society. It is a key agent in the socialization process where individuals learn about not only their places within a particular school culture but also a set of values they need to internalize in order to exist in their communities.¹⁵⁷ Instead of reforming him, though, the headmaster's overreaction incidentally "served to feed Robert's rebellion."¹⁵⁸ Consequently, Robert's traumatic experience of abuse serves as a particularly powerful symbol of the hero's preliminary crisis because it positively shatters any illusions about the world of childhood innocence.

By contrast, in his second novel *The Morlocks* Welsh tackles the preliminary crisis in a slightly unorthodox way because the narrative presents it retrospectively. The story is set in a fictional mining village against the backdrop of the 1920s industrial unrest in Scotland. It centers around two main characters whose ideological

156. Welsh, *Underworld*.

157. See Judith L. Kapferer, "Socialization and the Symbolic Order of the School," *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 12, no. 4 (Winter 1981): 258–9, accessed March 14, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3216574>.

158. Welsh, *Underworld*.

development represents the dichotomy between evolutionary and revolutionary socialism. He delays the exegesis of the protagonist's preliminary crisis until the end of the book. The fact that the story opens with him already on his way seems to suggest that the proletarian hero begins his journey by skipping the first phase of separation. Despite this apparent inconsistency with the mythical paradigm, Welsh does not diverge from the established pattern because that would leave a major gap in the narrative. He merely postpones the explanation of the initial motive behind the hero's epic adventure to build suspense.

During a poignant moment of clarity toward the end of the story, Sydney Barron suddenly his story of woe with Mary Morrison, a member of the mining community who idolizes the hero. Reminiscing about his childhood, he describes the first glimpses of the preliminary crisis:

Indeed, I was much better off than the other children of the village; and although my mother had no visible means of livelihood, I could see as I grew older that she was carrying a secret sorrow of some kind. Sometimes, as I grew older, and had begun to ponder things in my own way, I used to ask her to tell me of my father. Was he dead? If not, where was he? But at these times she put me off with a kiss and a hug, telling me I would know in time, when I was old enough to understand.¹⁵⁹

Sydney's ability to detect his mother's emotional distress has great significance for the preliminary crisis. The hero's emotional radar picks up signals that indicate a deficiency in the known world. This implies that his universe lacks harmony. It encourages him to wonder about and question the established order. In spite of his mother's condescending attempts to silence his growing curiosity, the hero becomes conscious of a major symbolic fault in his microcosm. Consequently, Sydney's memories of fatherlessness are the earliest symptoms of his preliminary crisis.

When he becomes old enough to learn about his mother's tale of woe, Sydney's preliminary crisis reaches a climax. Within the scope of his melodramatic storytelling, Welsh uses a funeral to set the stage for the hero's ultimate break with his current way of life. When Sydney's mother passes away, he finally meets his father who "came to the funeral, and offered to continue paying the expenses of my education; but I refused, and I felt like murdering him when I remembered what suffering he had brought to one of the sweetest of women."¹⁶⁰ The reason why the hero's encounter with his father turns

159. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 266.

160. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 267.

his world upside down is the fact that he seduced his mother but refused to marry her because he was church minister from a privileged family. Instead he paid her hush money to save his reputation and conscience. In the context of the monomyth, Sydney's father embodies a modern incarnation of the mythical messenger who delivers the hero's call to adventure. His unexpected arrival along with the guilt-motivated offer to keep financing Sydney's studies fundamentally upset the hero's world view. What began as a process of questioning his origins turns into a radical refusal of his established identity.

Moreover, Welsh uses the relationship between Sydney's mother, the hero, and the father to draw a clear distinction between the economic power of ethically corrupted upper classes and the moral purity of the dispossessed proletariat. Instead of accepting the money that would help Sydney remain in his comfort zone, his conscience prompts him to turn it down. In a melodramatic attempt to counter the devastating effects of the collapse of his world, he wields morality as a powerful working-class weapon in the symbolic struggle between the labor and the capital. Welsh's stress on the moral superiority of the hero is perhaps symptomatic of the impact of Calvinism on the Scottish working class.¹⁶¹ Therefore, he not only recycles mythology but also austere religious morality to communicate the divide between social classes for ideological purposes.

Ironically, Sydney plays an important role in the preliminary crisis of the other main character in the novel. While the first half of the story mainly focuses on Sydney's efforts to raise class consciousness in the industrial village of Craigside, a large proportion of the remaining part is dedicated to the exploits of his disciple Alan. Although there is a bond of friendship between the two, they are also rivals who compete for the attention of Mary—the proletarian epitome of Madonna. Besides employing her as a stage prop in their romantic fantasies, Welsh uses Mary to stimulate the first phase of Alan's ideological transformation. When he accidentally finds out that she might be romantically attracted to Sydney, Alan's universe falls apart:

So it was true, after all, Mary loved Sydney, and that ended his dream. . . . Mary not his. It was unthinkable. All the years of his life, he could not remember the time when he did not love her. They had grown up together, and he had always imagined that some day she would be his wife. And now—

161. See W. W. Knox, *Industrial Nation: Work, Culture and Society in Scotland, 1800-Present* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 21.

But surely that could not be, he tried to tell himself. She came of collier folk, by birth, and class, by tradition, by common tastes, by training, and everything else, she was the collier's lassie, and he had the first right to her.¹⁶²

Alan's disillusionment represents a perfect example of the preliminary crisis because it has a detrimental effect on the hero's emotional stability. Alan's purpose and sense of belonging appear to have been largely shaped by the unshakable belief in his exclusive relationship with Mary. Consequently, Alan's epiphany fundamentally undermines his universe because it questions the patriarchal assumptions about the dynamic between men and women.

Additionally, this major life crisis critically destabilizes his value system. Apart from shattering his chauvinistic illusions about the relationship between men and women, the notion of Mary's attachment to another man seriously threatens his conservative perception of culture and tradition. Welsh contrasts the fleeting sense of security strengthened by the romantic notion of traditional working-class morality on the one hand, and the need for its redefinition on the other. This clash of moral standards results in challenging Alan's beliefs. Everything he took for granted from social class to history is subject to thorough revision. The hero feels overwhelmed because he is forced to process information that is not compatible with the default settings of his ideological system. Alan's feelings of utter helplessness and frustration show the power of the preliminary crisis to initiate the ideological awakening of the proletarian hero.

Conversely, the preliminary crisis of the introspective protagonist in *Grey Granite* is less dramatic. It is described very briefly at the beginning of the story where the eighteen-year-old Ewan Tavendale is confronted with the sudden death of his stepfather Robert. Although the first phase of Ewan's separation from the known world occurs against the backdrop of such a tragic event, it does not have any emotional overtones. Instead of lamenting Robert's departure, Ewan and his mother Chris have a rational discussion about their future. She notices that Ewan speaks about his deceased stepfather "not heartlessly, just with indifference, as much as to say what did it matter."¹⁶³ This reveals an insightful point. Although Scottish socialist novelists approached the hero's ideological awakening in ways that were formulaic, their individual adaptations of the mythical narrative display a degree of variety. Unlike Welsh's overuse of melodrama, Ewan's indifference shows that Gibbon was less

162. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 180.

163. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 486.

concerned with the superficial effects of the protagonist's emotional distress. What they have in common, though, is the structural use of life-changing events that critically unsettle the hero's value system.

Despite the lack of melodrama, Ewan's emotional detachment does not lessen the importance of his stepfather's death for the preliminary crisis. It foregrounds the economic effects of a breadwinner's failure on his family. After Robert's funeral, Ewan tells Chris "*I'm not going to live off you. And thought for a minute and added with calm sense, Especially as you haven't much to live off. [italics in the original]*"¹⁶⁴ Robert's death forces the hero to step outside of his comfort zone. Ewan's surprisingly mature decision shows a striking contrast between his relatively carefree childhood and the emerging sense of responsibility which is typically associated with adulthood. All that society expected from him was to go to school and help out with chores, whereas now his entire universe is on the verge of radical redefinition. He instinctively understands the implications of Robert's death for his family because it fundamentally challenges the status quo. It represents a major hallmark in the hero's life because he faces a simple choice. Either he can remain within the increasingly destabilized microcosm represented by the village or he can accept the challenge to set off on a journey of self-discovery in order to restore the lost balance in his world. While the former option is unlikely to stimulate his ideological transformation, the latter alternative naturally offers more potential for change. In Campbell's mythical paradigm of rites of passage, Robert's death symbolizes the mythical call to adventure which is the basis of the preliminary crisis.

Regarding the first stage of the hero's separation from his former consciousness, there are a number of structural parallels between Gibbon's *Grey Granite* and Barke's *Major Operation*. Although the latter is far more aggressively propagandist in tone and content, it displays a similar pattern of the preliminary crisis within the mythical framework of the hero's journey. The protagonist in *Major Operation* is a fairly successful businessman whose firm faith in the established world order is severely undermined by the Great Depression in the 1930s. The omniscient narrator condescendingly allows him to sum up the imminent demise of his entrepreneurship in a semi-interior monologue: "What tremendous issues hung in the balance. His wife: Beatrice . . . His business on the verge of bankruptcy. No money: no prospects. The

164. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 486.

frightful economic depression driving him deeper and deeper into despair and insolvency.”¹⁶⁵ In this moment of clarity, George Anderson explicitly states that his crisis consists of a series of unsettling experiences that eventually work together toward unsettling his entire universe. The list of issues, which include his estranged wife Mabel and daughter Beatrice, illustrates the systemic nature of the hero’s crisis. The fact that the collapse of George’s business has a detrimental impact on his dysfunctional family emphasizes the ideological overtones of the preliminary crisis. In particular, it exemplifies the Marxist stress on the defining role of economy in society. That is why the economic component of the hero’s crisis constitutes a key element in the first phase of his separation from the known world. It is an ideological dramatization of the socialist challenge to the legitimacy of the universal status quo.

Another significant aspect of the protagonist’s preliminary crisis is his passionate belief in traditional patriarchal structures, especially marriage and the doctrine of separate spheres. Anderson’s ethics is deeply rooted in the assumption that “Life meant marriage—as soon as a man could see his way to support a wife decently and had found a woman suitable to be a wife. To be a wife meant, sooner or later, to be a mother. There was logic in that. The Home and the Family: he just couldn’t get away from it. . . . What purpose could be greater in life than the bearing and bringing up of children?”¹⁶⁶ Building a traditional nuclear family is clearly George’s top priority. The basic premise of his logic is that woman is destined to fulfil the socially constructed role of housewife and caretaker. Along with pursuing a business career, it represents one of the fundamental pillars of his value system that is based on a sexually unequal division of labor.

However, he systematically fails to live up to his standards of patriarchal morality. George does not have enough confidence to be a decision maker. His lack of self-esteem is demonstrated by his tendency to seek constant approval from his wife. For example, he loathes himself for having to ask her for permission to place his daughter in the front seat of their car.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, the hero is unsuccessful in producing more children because he cannot convince his wife, who has an affair with his best friend, to reengage in sexual activity. Admitting “he just wasn’t a dominant male,”¹⁶⁸

165. Barke, *Major Operation*, 145.

166. Barke, *Major Operation*, 102–3.

167. See Barke, *Major Operation*, 38–39.

168. Barke, *Major Operation*, 113.

the hero gives evidence about the erosion of his masculine identity which represents a key factor in his preliminary crisis.

Clearly, the combination of financial bankruptcy and sexual emasculation is the main cause of the increasing fragmentation of the hero's universe. His self-analysis demonstrates the essence of the hero's preliminary crisis:

He had worried about things he did not understand. The crisis: it was beyond his understanding. It was so vast and terrible and beyond his comprehension he did not know what tomorrow would bring forth. His worry had not been the simple worry of a pound lost that could not be found. He had lost his bearings completely and did not know the moment final, irrevocable ruin would overtake him. He could understand his illness: the doctors could perhaps deal with that. But who could shine a light into the darkness of his world?¹⁶⁹

George's hopelessness is the result of a number of disturbing events that have radically disintegrated the rigid fabric of his belief system. He consciously acknowledges the deficiencies of a morally and economically corrupt world which no longer feels secure and familiar. This corresponds to the mythical call to adventure where "that which has to be faced . . . makes itself known; and what formerly was meaningful may become strangely emptied of value."¹⁷⁰ Everything the protagonist took for granted, including his high standard of living and illusions of patriarchal grandeur, suddenly becomes meaningless. The unanticipated feelings of misery and despair are the emotional effects of the call to adventure which manifests itself through the series of existential tragedies. It gives an impulse to the struggling hero who needs motivation to wake up from his middle-class fantasy and start his mythical journey toward ideological rebirth.

Although Barke's second ideological novel *Land of the Leal* differs from *Major Operation* both in extent and tone, it recycles the mythical narrative form to communicate socialism. The massive scope of this enormously ambitious novel is unmistakably reminiscent of Gibbon's *A Scots Quair*. It narrates the history of two generations of a peasant family that is forced to relocate from the rural area of Galloway in southwestern Scotland to Glasgow. Unlike the time frame and urban setting of *Major Operation*, the story in *The Land of the Leal* spans several decades and shifts between the country and the city. This results in a proletarian epic which begins with a poignant look at the poverty of agricultural workers close to the turn of the century and ends with an account of the urban proletariat in the 1930s. Although Barke uses the length and

169. Barke, *Major Operation*, 149.

170. Joseph Campbell, *Hero*, 51.

realist mode of the novel to tone down his political agenda, a closer look at the novel's structure shows it wields the narrative power of myth as a vehicle for political propaganda.

Barke's two propagandist novels differ not only in their scope but also in the protagonists' class backgrounds which ultimately determine the beginning of the hero's ideological rite of passage. The protagonist in *Major Operation* is undeniably middle-class whereas the hero in *The Land of the Leal* represents a champion of the deprived agricultural proletariat. In contrast to the entrepreneurial profile of George Anderson, David Ramsey spends most of his life working as a dairyman and farmhand for the landed gentry. His Presbyterian upbringing and inherent reverence for aristocracy make him a typical product of the feudal system whose rigid class structure defines his limited universe.

However, David's romanticized view of the agricultural life in southwestern Scotland slowly begins to fade away soon after he gets married and secures a dairy job with poor working and housing conditions. When he finds out his wife Jean is pregnant again, he is overcome with hopelessness because raising another child in such dire circumstances seems utterly unjust. He ends up questioning the socio-economic divide between the gentry and workers:

David would not have been the lover of Burns he was without being a rebel. But he surprised himself in discovering his own rebellious feelings. He began to see the life of the Rhinns in terms of brutal slavish toil and brutal slave drivers. He began to hate the sight of it. He hated . . . [the farmers who] had made their thousands out of the sweat and blood of men and women like Jean and himself.¹⁷¹

The hero's preliminary crisis is marked by a prematurely developed class consciousness which stems from the influence of reading the subversive poetry of Robert Burns. It is reinforced by the dehumanizing effects of the harsh working conditions in his workplace. These factors contribute to his increasing disillusionment with the division of labour in his agricultural community. More importantly, David associates the social injustice his family experiences with the land they work on. This gives his growing dislike of the social order a particularly physical dimension which emphasizes the significance of the preliminary crisis in the hero's separation from his known world.

171. Barke, *Leal*, 194–5.

David's preliminary crisis consists of a series of traumatizing experiences that are arranged in stages over a period of time in the hero's life. *The Land of the Leal* is in this respect no different. In fact, the novel is rather similar to *Major Operation* in the way it depicts emasculation as one of the key processes that affect the hero's belief system. In spite of David's rebellious mind and ambitious dreams, he does not appear to have the capacity to follow through with his plans. He fails to play the dominant role traditionally assigned to men in his community whereas "Jean was physically stronger. David had no energy left over from his work to enable him to assert himself. . . . He was too willing to comply with her wishes, only too glad to allow her to assume control."¹⁷² The protagonist's lack of self-assertion represents an advanced stage of his identity crisis. The hero's known world has become unstable and requires a reboot.

Furthermore, the deepening crisis of David's universe is also demonstrated by the moral degeneration of the gentry he works for. His blind faith in the patrician system that defines David's self-contained world suffers a fatal blow when the son of his aristocratic employer tries to harass his daughter. David feels both ashamed and indignant that his family is a victim of such injustice. His complaints about the corrupt system, which he once associated with law and order, find a sympathetic ear in his co-worker who advises him "never to put your faith in the gentry," because "they're all right when things are goin' all right. . . . But don't you have any feelings—don't you speak unless spoken to."¹⁷³ This type of primitive class analysis helps David get a grasp of the power relations that govern his community, but it does not restore his faith in it. On the contrary, he concludes that "I'll never be able to forget the way things hae turned out. It'll be mony a day afore the wife and me get ower this."¹⁷⁴ The psychological damage inflicted on David by the exploitative actions of the privileged class clearly shows the proletarian hero has become conscious of the symbolic deficiency in his world. The collapse of the protagonist's neatly arranged value system functions as the mythical call to adventure because it fundamentally undermines his economic, social and ethical assumptions.

172. Barke, *Leal*, 206.

173. Barke, *Leal*, 318.

174. Barke, *Leal*, 320.

Chapter 9

Redirection

The second phase in the ideological separation of the proletarian hero from his default belief system is the reorientation toward something bigger than himself. While the preliminary crisis makes the hero aware of some fundamental deficiencies in his known world, the redirection phase affords him a brief glimpse of a more favorable reality. In order to cope with the more or less traumatic effects of his preliminary crisis, the hero is allowed to channel his discomfort into a search for a deeper understanding of the world. This redirection gives him a new purpose in life which typically results in his setting off in quest of self-discovery. Although the previous period of unprecedented discontent is far too emotionally and physically unsettling to be easily forgotten, the hero refuses to let it immobilize him and opts for a potentially empowering destiny instead.

Having faced forces infinitely larger than himself in the form of institutional violence, the eleven-year-old protagonist of *The Underworld* finds an outlet for his frustration in the prospect of trade unionism. As the labor relations in his mining community dramatically deteriorate, Robert's father arranges a meeting to set up a local union branch. At the meeting, young Robert experiences a moment of clarity inspired by the speech of a skilled union organizer:

Little Robert was present in the hall—the only child there; and as Smillie spoke in passionate denunciation of the tyrannies and persecutions of the mine-owners and their officials, his little heart leapt in generous indignation. Many things which he had but dimly understood before, began to be plain to him, as he sat with eyes riveted upon Smillie's face, drinking in every word as the speaker plead with the men to unite and defend themselves. . . . Away beyond the speaker the boy had already glimpsed something of the ideal which Smillie sketched, and his soul throbbed and ached to see how simple and how easy it was for life to be made comfortable and good and pleasant for all.¹⁷⁵

The hero's encounter with Robert Smillie, a fictional character based on a real-life trade unionist and Labour Party politician of the same name, dramatizes the redirection of the little protagonist in four significant ways. First, it allows him to refocus emotionally because the pathos of the speaker offers remedy for Robert's psychological trauma caused by his abuse at school. His experience of injustice

175. Welsh, *Underworld*.

multiplied by his victimized father's anguish helps him relate to the collective suffering of the working-class which he begins to identify himself with. Second, Smillie's ability to spell out the affliction of the miners represents Robert's eye opener. He begins to understand what his community knows from first-hand experience but cannot lucidly explain until the arrival of Smillie. Third, the charismatic labour politician himself gives Robert a new purpose in life because he personifies the noble cause of trade unionism. His moral and rhetorical superiority mobilizes Robert's sense of justice and willingness to fight for dignity. Lastly, Smillie's speech inspires the protagonist's imagination to start actively thinking about a better world. It has a particularly strong impact on Robert who later that night "lay awake, his little mind away in the future, living in the earthly paradise which had been conjured up before him by the warm, inspiring sentences of this miners' leader, and joyful in the contemplation of this paradise of happy humanity."¹⁷⁶ Obviously, it positively succeeds in taking Robert's mind off the corrupt nature of the official belief system that dominates his life. As a result, the new exciting realization of socialist utopia which dawns on Robert exemplifies the intellectual dimension of his redirection.

The second aspect of the hero's redirection has important social implications. As soon as Robert finishes primary school, his mother unsuccessfully tries to persuade him to pursue secondary education. Although he is very bright and boastful about his academic performance, he proudly replies "I'd rather gang to work. I'm ready for leaving the school and forby, all the other ladies are gaun to the pit to work. . . . Besides, it'll mean more money for you."¹⁷⁷ His decision to join the ranks of unqualified workforce at the expense of wasting his academic talents is motivated by two main factors. He remains under the spell of Smillie's persuasive propaganda which leads him to the conclusion that he can contribute to the cause of socialism more as a worker rather than scholar. In this respect, his determination is merely a practical application of his intellectual redirection. However, he also appears to be exposed to some peer pressure because his schoolmates collectively choose to start their careers of untrained miners. Despite the fact that Robert does not share his peers' naivety, he feels bound by the unwritten laws of his social group.

176. Welsh, *Underworld*.

177. Welsh, *Underworld*.

Besides the social dimension of Robert's redirection phase, his decision to leave school and start work early carries strong economic overtones. The hero is mature enough to appreciate the material benefits of being a wage earner. He is eager not only to contribute to the family budget and assume his role of the future breadwinner, but also raise his own standard of living. He begins to fantasize "what it would be like to have a new suit of clothes—real new ones out of a shop. Hitherto he had only enjoyed . . . new ones made out of some one's cast-off clothing. But a real new suit,, such as he had seen the schoolmaster's boy sometimes wearing! That would be a great experience!"¹⁷⁸ What is indicative of Robert's redirection phase is not so much the consumerist urge but the emphasis on being able to match the schoolmaster's child's status. While it might be interpreted as some sort of hyperbolic retail therapy intended to cure his childhood trauma, the hero's craving for new clothes is likely to reflect his need to challenge the schoolmaster who physically abused him in the past. It is a way of asserting his independence. Consequently, Robert's determination to become a productive member of his community represents the material aspect of his redirection.

In comparison, Welsh's second novel *The Morlocks* uses the protagonist's struggle against adverse weather conditions to foreshadow the explanation of his redirection. Welsh introduces Sydney as "the lonely figure of a man, head down and shoulders hunched, was fighting against the storm that raged in his face, as if trying to turn him from his purpose. . . . He had walked many miles to the mining village of Craigside, which he was now approaching."¹⁷⁹ The heavy stress on the heroic character of the protagonist's battle with nature that is preventing him from reaching his goal is symptomatic of the redirection phase for two reasons. It implies that the hero is desperately trying to move away from his traumatizing past. Moreover, the melodramatic depiction of his voyage alludes to Sydney's new purpose that is a direct effect of the redirection process. His retrospective confession, which occurs toward the end of the narrative, confirms the assumptions about the hero's decision to refocus in response to realizing the faults of his old universe. Recalling the devastating effects of his father's unethical behavior on Sydney, the hero remembers "I immediately left the village, where I had known so much love and happiness, went straight out into the world not knowing where I was going; but determined to get away from that part of the

178. Welsh, *Underworld*.

179. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 8.

country.”¹⁸⁰ Sydney’s impulsive decision to roam the world seemingly without direction is the immediate result of his preliminary crisis. Although the goal of his journey is not clearly defined, the act of leaving is a perfect example of the therapeutic redirection of the hero’s life from the tainted past to a potentially better future.

Furthermore, the trajectory of Alan’s story line, which from certain point in the narrative runs parallel to Sydney’s, demonstrates the ritual structure of *The Morlocks*. Both characters decide to leave their communities as a consequence of their personal disasters. While Sydney’s refocus is triggered by a family trauma, Alan’s redirection is motivated by his disappointment in unrequited love. Ironically, Sydney plays an important role in this process because Mary—the object of Alan’s affection—is in love with him. As soon as he finds out about Mary’s implicit rejection of his feelings, Alan chooses to “go out into the movement, boldly, and be the evangel of leading the people along the path that would make them love justice, rather than hate wrong. . . . He would go away from Craigside. The world of men had called, and he would answer it.”¹⁸¹ Unlike Sydney’s redirection, Alan’s is infinitely more purposeful because he has a clear goal—to contribute to the socialist movement. Besides Alan’s ability to find a positive outlook for his desperation, the writer emphasizes the remedial aspect of leaving which mirrors the dichotomy between Alan and Sydney. Therefore, the second stage of their ideological development is identical.

There are striking similarities between the redirection phase of the hero in Gibbon’s *Grey Granite* and those in Welsh’s novels. For one thing, Ewan shares Robert’s resolution to quit school for the sake of finding a job. In spite of his mother, who thinks “*it’s daft, Ewan, you haven’t finished college yet, and then there’s the university,*” Ewan dryly concludes that school is “*not for me. I’m tired of college.* [italics in the original]”¹⁸² He refuses to pursue his studies so that he can become an apprentice in a foundry. Although his mother points that “*you’d go daft in a job like that,* [italics in the original]” Alan unconvincingly replies “*he’d try not to, awfully hard, especially as it was the best job he could come by—and I can come out in weekends and see you quite often. Duncairn’s only a twenty miles off.* [italics in the original]”¹⁸³ The protagonist acknowledges the process of proletarianization could be detrimental to

180. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 267.

181. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 182.

182. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 485.

183. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 485.

his psychology but it does not outweigh his sense of responsibility toward his mother. In addition to assuming the breadwinner's role, Ewan is determined to physically leave his home. The social and physical dimensions of the protagonist's decision to discontinue school highlight purpose of the redirection phase.

Conversely, Barke's *Major Operation* portrays the protagonist's reorientation with a note of medical emergency. This is hardly astounding if we consider the symbolic role of the hero's deteriorating health condition that serves as a metaphor for his ideological conversion. Following the collapse of his family and business, George is diagnosed with duodenal ulcer which explains the abnormal pain he has been experiencing. The doctor orders an ambulance because the hero cannot cover the expenses of nursing home care. George admits that "he had dreaded for a long time now that he would require to be operated upon. He had shrunk from the thought. Now the pain was so awful he would face anything," though "if he had been going to a nursing home it wouldn't be half so bad. But to trust himself to the tender mercies of a public charitable institution like the Eastern Infirmary..."¹⁸⁴ The hero is forced to choose the only rational way out of his misery. The prospect of saving his life regardless of its potential risks becomes George's new purpose that helps him refocus. Despite the dubious nature of his new destination, the involuntary redirection of the protagonist implies the beginning of the hero's quest that occurs in a time when many believed capitalism would be replaced by socialism.

Barke revisits the theme of the passing of an age, which often accompanies the hero's redirection phase, in his grand narrative *The Land of the Leal*. However, compared to Anderson's personal laments in *Major Operation*, the epic scope of *The Land of the Leal* functions as a peasant jeremiad of biblical proportions. When the hero loses his, it signifies the imminent end of the entire feudal system. David follows the trend of Barke's indecisive protagonists exemplified in *Major Operation* in that "He was completely at a loss to know what to do. All he could suggest was that something would need to be done. Jean stepped boldly into the breach."¹⁸⁵ Instead of taking action, the hero remains immobilized by the devastating effects of his preliminary crisis. In Campbell's typology of the monomythical journey, the hero sometimes refuses to answer the call to adventure which turns it "into its negative. Walled in boredom, hard

184. Barke, *Major Operation*, 145.

185. Barke, *Leal*, 419.

work, or ‘culture,’ the subject loses the power of significant affirmative action and becomes a victim to be saved. His flowering world becomes a wasteland of dry stones and his life feels meaningless.¹⁸⁶ David perfectly embodies the refusal of the call because his will to act has been blunted by agricultural drudgery. While his critical thinking has been inhibited by the monotonous routine of the feudal order, David’s wife Jean uses her initiative to save him and their entire family by moving to Glasgow. Although it is forced upon the protagonist, his new goal represents the redirection phase because it offers him an opportunity to cope with the preliminary crisis.

Finally, the significance of the hero’s redirection in *The Land of the Leal* is further exemplified by David’s son Andrew, whose enthusiasm for radical politics contrasts with his father’s conservatism. Concerning the ritual structure of the novel, Andrew picks up where his father left off because his answer to the redirecting call is affirmative. After the family moves to Glasgow, Andrew rediscovers his relationship with his parents whose troubled history he slowly begins to comprehend. The most obvious result of his emotional maturity is “reorientation towards his parents. A gulf seemed to open between himself and his father, a gulf that increased as he drew closer to his mother. . . . He became conscious of a certain quality of pity for him,” which inevitably “brought embarrassment and an uncomfortable sensation of inarticulation.”¹⁸⁷ Andrew’s emotional reorientation is particularly symptomatic of his ideological redirection because he begins to admire his proactive mother who displays some socialist sympathies. On the other hand, he becomes irretrievably estranged from his father, who, despite his rebellious youth, does not show any regard for socialism. Therefore, Andrew’s redirection represents an important harbinger of his ideological transformation.

186. Joseph Campbell, *Hero*, 54.

187. Barke, *Leal*, 445.

Chapter 10

Solace

The last component of the separation stage in the hero's ideological rite of passage is represented by events that symbolize momentary comfort and relief. In this phase, he commonly finds consolation of varying length and degree in activities and people that introduce him to some new physical and emotional realities. The reason behind this period of relative peace of mind is the hero's need to take one last breath before he enters the transitional dimension of his conversion. While the redirection phase points him in a new direction, the solace phase helps him boost his self-esteem that was badly damaged during the preliminary crisis. The association of the hero's solace with a sense of comfort and peace is expressed in his excitement about new tasks such as job opportunities. Alternatively, it can take the form of places where the hero feels safe. These include rural and urban areas that substitute the hero's lost comfort zone. Moreover, the function of the solace phase can be also served by habits that are soothing to the mind like reading, or the pursuit of romantic relationships that build confidence and determination. Solace is therefore the last step in the beginning of the hero's voyage to a new ideological consciousness.

Besides promoting socialism, Welsh's *The Underworld* stereotypically dramatizes a passion for the Scottish landscape which performs the function of Robert's solace. The protagonist periodically retreats to the country where he regenerates in isolation. For instance, the soothing effects of nature help him cope with the loss of childhood innocence after he is beaten at school:

The spell of the moor took possession of him, and his wounded soul was soon wrapped in the soft folds of its silence. The balm of its peace comforted him, and brought ease and calmed the rebellion in his blood. He was happy, forgetting that there ever had existed a schoolmaster, or anything else unpleasant. Here he was free, and no one ever misunderstood him. He gave pain to no one, and nothing ever hurt him here.¹⁸⁸

The moor is a perfect representation of the solace phase because it is a remote place where the hero is left undisturbed to analyze his actions and their consequences. Such places have particularly mythological value because they carry overtones of sacred designation. As Campbell points out, "For a culture still nurtured in mythology

188. Welsh, *Underworld*.

the landscape, as well as every phase of human existence, is made alive with symbolical suggestion. The hills and groves have their supernatural protectors and are associated with popularly known episodes in the local history of the creation of the world. . . . The site can serve, therefore, as a support for fruitful meditation.”¹⁸⁹ Consequently, the moor takes on a sacred note because Roberts interprets it as an entity that grants protection and immunity from the outer world.

Although the moor experience is reenergizing and reaffirming because it stimulates contemplation, it also gives Robert an opportunity to rehearse his separation from the symbolically deficient and corrupt universe. Unlike people and authorities, “the moor always understood. If he were hurt at anything which happened, the moor brought him solace; if he grieved, it gave him relief; and if he were happy, it too rejoiced. He loved it in all moods, and he could not understand how its loving silence was dreaded by others.”¹⁹⁰ He consciously seeks loneliness because he has difficulty coping with the injustice and inequality that pervade his community. In other words, the moor is associated with happiness whereas the civilized world represented by the village is permeated by misery and sorrow. Robert’s urge to seek refuge in the moor is symptomatic of the meditative withdrawal of the mythical hero. Exploring the universal theme of the withdrawal in myths and religions, David Leeming points out “It is a spiritual rite of passage—a rebirth of the self. When the hero withdraws into the wilderness or to the mountain or cave, . . . he literally withdraws into himself to emerge later with the divinity he has found there.”¹⁹¹ In the context of Scottish socialist novels, it symbolizes the last step of the hero’s separation from the known world because it seems to be an unknown territory which his community fears for their lack of understanding.

However, nature is not the only source of Robert’s comfort. Despite the fact that his age disqualifies him from working in the mine, he obsesses about getting an odd job on the pithead. On the one hand, it represents his stepping stone to a becoming a legitimate miner later. But on the other hand, he finds the mere thought of being part of the labour process extremely pleasing. In fact, it boosts his self-esteem to such an extent that he feels as though leaving school and starting work gives him the right to “be

189. Joseph Campbell, *Hero*, 40.

190. Welsh, *Underworld*.

191. David Adams Leeming, *Mythology: The Voyage of the Hero*, 3rd ed. (New York: OUP, 1993), 97.

patronizing to a girl.”¹⁹² Robert’s misogyny is an unhealthy product of his solace phase whose purpose is to reassure the hero before he leaves the confines of his old consciousness.

More importantly, on his first day at work he pauses to admire “the great wheels at the pithead,” and “the big yawning chasm, with the swinging steel rope, running away down into the great black hole,” which was “awesome to look at” because the whole construction gave Robert “the idea of an imprisoned monster of gigantic strength which had been harnessed whilst it slept, but had wakened at last to find itself impotent against its Lilliputian captor—man.”¹⁹³ As much as the moor makes Robert feel happy and safe, the pithead gives him a sense of control and dominance. Consequently, the notion of first work experience is an important aspect of the hero’s solace phase because it is empowering. It increases confidence which the hero will need to be able to break from the known world.

In contrast, the protagonist in *The Morlocks* enters the solace phase when he arrives at the mining village of Craigside. He nearly passes out because of the exhaustion caused by the snow storm, but the engine keepers at the mine take Sydney inside and refresh him. He notices how “the warmth was comforting,” as he “staggered forward to a rude bench, upon which he collapsed in a half-fainting condition.”¹⁹⁴ The fact that the engine keeper offers him shelter saves Sydney’s life. The engine shed is therefore a literal place of solace where the hero can rest and regenerate. He is fascinated by the extent of the engine keeper’s help because he goes on to host Sydney at his home: “Tired as he was, he could not help reflecting upon the position in which he found himself. The kindness with which he had been received by these simple collier folk touched him. He had never thought to meet such hospitality from utter strangers, who, seeing his plight, had asked no questions, but had opened their hearts and home to him with ready sympathy.”¹⁹⁵ Sydney is profoundly impressed by the customs of the miners who are condescendingly portrayed as noble savages. While this romanticized view seems to reflect a stereotypical image of the working-classes commonly entertained by middle-class Marxists,¹⁹⁶ the combination of shelter and genuine

192. Welsh, *Underworld*.

193. Welsh, *Underworld*.

194. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 11.

195. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 25.

196. See Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (1957; repr., Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963), 16.

congeniality offered by the engine keeper's family symbolizes the last step in the protagonist's break from his known world. From the mythical perspective, it constitutes the hero's solace phase because it gives him an opportunity to regain his strength before the upcoming struggle. It also represents a physical separation from his previous phase, where he wandered aimlessly to escape the disastrous impact of the preliminary crisis.

Similarly, the incidents surrounding the second most important character in *The Morlocks* seem to confirm the assumption that the solace phase is associated with places that have symbolic implications for the mythical hero. Alan's decision to leave his village for the more industrialized town of Blantyre suggests socialist propaganda uses urban imagery to provide new comfort zones for the proletarian hero. The vibrant atmosphere in the town energizes Alan, who "found the whole town very excited; . . . Everywhere one heard the latest phases of the dispute discussed, and although there were many wild opinions expressed, Alan was struck by the determined spirit evinced by the men."¹⁹⁷ The enthusiasm exhibited by the local proletariat offers the hero the kind of distraction and reassurance he needs to forget the traumatic events of the preliminary crisis. Instead of dwelling on the emotional damage caused by unrequited love, he finds comfort in attending a union meeting where he witnesses a disturbing shift from reformism to radicalism. As a consequence of meeting some local militants, he eventually finds the idea of revolutionary violence very appealing. Ironically, he does not understand why he suddenly agrees with radicalism because "he had always been against violence, and believed that it could only lead to disaster; but there was some influence abroad that was catching up men, . . . believing . . . that in this way they would the quicker destroy the present system of society, and rebuild it on better and nobler lines."¹⁹⁸ Nevertheless, the political enthusiasm proves contagious as Alan begins to consider the notion of violent revolution. Therefore, the hero's relocation to a town that is ripe for revolution shows that the solace phase need not be exclusively associated with isolated or rural places.

The urban dimension of the solace phase is further illustrated by the city of Duncairn where the protagonist of Gibbon's *Grey Granite* settles with his mother after leaving their village. Instead of experiencing anonymity and estrangement, Ewan adjusts to the rhythm of city life without any difficulty. In fact, he seems to appreciate

197. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 184.

198. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 200.

the change of environment which includes some negative aspects of urbanization and industrialization. For instance, his mother is concerned about the quality of Alan's sleep because there is "a sick yellow furnace-glow, unstill, staining the sky on the morning's edge. . . . He'd surely get sick of it—working down there all day and seeing it all night. But he'd shaken his shapely, sleeked head, no fancies or flim-flams with Ewan at all: *It'll neither wake me nor send me to sleep. Only a light in the sky, you know.* [italics in the original]"¹⁹⁹ Ewan does not mind the glow produced by the foundry where he works because it is part of the urban landscape which is beautiful from the perspective of its totality. The fact that the sky is polluted by the furnace glare can be upsetting. However, Ewan finds it reassuring because there is comfort in the familiarity knowing the light is always there.

Moreover, pondering the aesthetic qualities of the city late at night, he concludes there is "fun in the deadness of Duncairn after midnight, you could stand by the edge of Royal Mile where it wheeled to the moving blackness of Paldy and think the end of the world had come."²⁰⁰ Ewan's poetic description of the city indicates it can be a magical place that restores confidence and relieves anxiety, which is the purpose of the solace phase. It also shows that Ewan has been successfully separated from the rural world because he has adapted to his new urban home.

Unlike Welsh and Gibbon, Barke more systematically relies on simple romantic fantasies to convey a sense of his characters' relief. For example, the shaken hero in *Major Operation* finds comfort in a hospital nurse who shows so much interest in him that he decides to confide in her. Listening to him lament his failed marriage and business, the nurse tries to console him, "I know it's silly to say not to worry, Anderson. But maybe you'll find everything has turned out for the best. All women aren't like that. You'll meet one that will appreciate you—and you'll marry her."²⁰¹ The nurse acts as an agent of solace in two ways. First, her role in the narrative is a perfect metaphor for the hero's solace phase because her job description indicates she physically helps injured people. Second, she positively boosts the hero's confidence and self-esteem. This becomes clear when the hero gratefully admits "you've been a perfect angel to me,"²⁰² and then goes on to fantasize about a new life where he could get "a simple job,

199. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 492.

200. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 514.

201. Barke, *Major Operation*, 275.

202. Barke, *Major Operation*, 275.

such as a clerk might have, and three or four pounds a week and little or no responsibility. . . . He might event marry again. He could be very happy with a girl like Sister MacLean.”²⁰³ Consequently, the nurse represents the solace phase because the hero evidently benefits from her presence physically and psychologically.

Despite the differences in content, Barke repeats the structural pattern of the solace phase in *The Land of the Leal*. Instead of employing a nurse to perform the function of the comforter, he replaces her with the hero’s romantic partner. Only this time the soothing effects are represented by sexual advances of the hero, who declares “To hell with unemployment and Capitalism! This was better than any pictures. This was sweeter than life itself. . . . His only regret was that he had to leave Chrissie at the close in Stuart Street. He could imagine no joy in heaven or earth comparable to going to bed together—and not having to get up in the morning...”²⁰⁴ Contrasting politics with sexual pleasure, Andrew concludes that physical intimacy is the most powerful source of happiness. It demonstrates the temporary sense of confidence and determination which the hero experiences before he enters the most dramatic stage of his ideological transformation. Although the relief experienced by the hero has a notably sensuous tone, it symbolizes the basic premise of the solace phase.

However, Andrew’s solace also carries overtones of domesticity. Before he engages in a romantic relationship, the hero’s new home performs the function of his new comfort zone. This is a logical consequence of his family’s relocation from the country to the city. Along with their father, Andrew and his brother Tom are not excited about moving to Glasgow because the country “was home to them—a home to which they were deeply attached. . . . They both had a horror of living in the smoke and dirt of a city.”²⁰⁵ As a result of their uprooting, “Andrew clung to the social comfort, familiarity and seclusion of the tenement. And whereas Tom could isolate himself in study, he willingly enough joined in the company in the kitchen. Here he not only heard the re-telling of many familiar tales of his parents’ life in Galloway but heard many new ones.”²⁰⁶ Each brother finds his own outlet for coping with city life. While Tom is solaced by studying, the hero explores his family history to improve his fleeting sense of security because family storytelling offers a powerful strategy to reinforce social and

203. Barke, *Major Operation*, 280.

204. Barke, *Leal*, 500.

205. Barke, *Leal*, 424.

206. Barke, *Leal*, 444.

cultural identity.²⁰⁷ Consequently, domesticity and storytelling play an important role in the hero's separation from the old dying world. It provides a momentary consolation before he takes on the challenge of proletarianization in Glasgow.

207. See Barbara H. Fiese and Michael W. Pratt, "Metaphors and Meanings of Family Stories: Integrating Life Course and Systems Perspectives on Narrative," in *Family Stories and the Life Course Across Time and Generations*, ed. Michael W. Pratt and Barbara H. Fiese (London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004), 401, accessed Aug 3, 2018, ProQuest Ebook Central.

Chapter 11

Immersion

The second stage of the hero's ideological conversion begins with entering an unknown world where he experiences a number of trials. Campbell describes the beginning of this initiation process as "the crossing of the first threshold" after which "the individual passes, either alive or in death, into a new zone of experience."²⁰⁸ In fact, the hero's act of passing from the separation to transition stage in Scottish socialist novels seems to recycle some archetypes of religious symbolism. H. Clay Trumbull contends that crossing the boundary line between man's home and the outside world represents "the sacred border or limit of the portion of the earth's surface over which he [man] claimed control, and where he and his were under the special protection of the deity with whom he was in covenant."²⁰⁹ This is particularly true if we consider the fact that the hero's crossing of the threshold often takes the form of territorial passage. For instance, his entrance into a new workplace or other types of physical space symbolizes a mythical transfer into an unknown world.

While exploring the uncharted territory, the hero is expected to prove himself by confronting physical and mental forces that hinder his self-realization. The novels employ a variety of ideologically suggestive imagery to dramatize these incidents. The proletarian hero may face the challenge of his first day at work which often symbolizes his initiation into adulthood on the one hand, and the larger society on the other. Dramatizations of workplace rites of passage in Scottish socialist novels are a source of particularly powerful symbolism. Exploring the incorporation of men into work in heavy industry, Hilary Young points out that "the skills of a trade and the inside knowledge of the work culture were prerequisites to a full-blown masculine identity and inclusion within the male working community."²¹⁰ The immersion phase can also be expressed in placing the hero in an unfriendly environment where he must apply his survival skills. Furthermore, it can be manifested in the hero's encounters with socialism and the labour movement. This can take the form of a theoretical discussion

208. Joseph Campbell, *Hero*, 75.

209. H. Clay Trumbull, *The Threshold Covenant or, The Beginning of Religious Rites*, 2nd ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896), 165.

210. Hilary Young, "Being a Man: Everyday Masculinities," in *A History of Everyday Life in Twentieth-Century Scotland*, ed. Lynn Abrams and Callum G. Brown (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 139.

or its practical application. For example, the hero can join a political group, organize a protest or participate in a sabotage. All these events are often represented in the novels as fundamentally overwhelming experiences that result in the hero's temporary confusion. They are commonly depicted in particularly dark and nightmarish terms. Such negative imagery is intended to amplify the hostile character of the unfamiliar landscape where the hero's ideological immersion takes place.

The most explanatory examples of the immersion phase are perhaps to be found in Welsh's novels because they best embody the sense of the hero's initiation. The main reason is presumably Welsh's use of the coming of age trope which generally dramatizes the individual's introduction to a different social group and state of life. In *The Underworld*, the crossing of the first threshold occurs when the protagonist turns twelve at which point he is "longing to get at work down the pit. It was for him the advent of manhood, and represented the beginning of his real work."²¹¹ Welsh stereotypically describes entering the mine as a gateway to the male world which has implications of power and respect. Although the hero's romanticized view of his initiation is dominated by images of masculinity, little Robert also stresses the transitional aspect of the rite of passage which underlies the meaning of the immersion phase.

More importantly, going down the mine offers a perfect metaphor for Campbell's *hero-dive*—the mythical descent of the hero, who "instead of conquering or conciliating the power of the threshold, is swallowed into the unknown, and would appear to have died."²¹² Welsh's treatment of the protagonist's first day at work certainly reflects mythical symbolism:

At last came the all important moment, and Robert, his father and two men stepped on to the cage. After the signal was given, it seemed to the boy as if heaven and earth were passing away in the sudden sheer drop, as the cage plunged down into the yawning hole, out of which came evil smells and shadows cast from the flickering lamps upon the heads of the miners. The rattling of the cage sent a shiver of fear through Robert, and with that first sudden plunge he felt as if his heart were going to leap out of his mouth.²¹³

The melodramatic account of Robert's disappearance into the pit implies he has joined the world of the dead—the *underworld*, or hell. On an allegorical level, this event

211. Welsh, *Underworld*.

212. Joseph Campbell, *Hero*, 83.

213. Welsh, *Underworld*.

displays parallels with “the universal myth of the descent into the underworld,” where “the hero finds himself an explorer in the province of death itself. . . . The specific purpose of the voyage is usually to retrieve a loved one, to attain knowledge or personal or radical destiny, or simply to complete a great task. Whatever the reason, the myth involves the hero’s suffering or witnessing the actual torments of the underworld before defeating death definitively in rebirth or resurrection.”²¹⁴ The hero is naturally frightened of the unknown territory that awaits him below the surface of the Earth. It is a gloomy place where Robert faces unspeakable horrors.

However, the most traumatizing consequence of his initiation is the death of his father and brother who die in a pit disaster. When the miners finally discover their remains, all that is left of them is “the crushed mass of bloody pulp and rags, smashed together so that the one could not be told from the other—father and son, a heap of broken bones and flesh and blood...”²¹⁵ As a result, the mine appears to function as the belly of a mythical beast that devours men.²¹⁶

The mythical proportions of the hero’s allegorical voyage into the belly of the beast are more clearly delineated in *The Morlocks*. As the protagonist witnesses the miners disappear in the pit, Sydney concludes “This was some insatiable monster, which devoured men in mouthfuls of eight at a time. The genii of the underworld selling its treasures to warm and comfort the world for the lives of men in return. Whose brain had contrived to let it loose in the world? Whose diabolical thought had given it power?”²¹⁷ Welsh harnesses mythical imagery to accentuate the pathos of the hero’s immersion, but this time he highlights the allegory between the mine and the beast in a more vivid language. Building up to the protagonist’s descent, Welsh successfully replicates the hero-dive during which Sydney feels as though “Heaven and earth seemed to rush to meet each other, his heart leapt as if it would choke him, and his hands tightened on the iron bar, as the rattling of chains, the jerking of bolts, and the rushing sound of the air swished upward.”²¹⁸ Consequently, Welsh’s novels epitomize the inward journey of the hero which symbolically triggers the process of his ideological transition.

214. Leeming, *Mythology*, 213.

215. Welsh, *Underworld*.

216. See Joseph Campbell, *Hero*, 83.

217. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 34.

218. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 35.

The Morlocks also illustrates an explicitly ideological form of initiation. Welsh uses Sydney's counterpart Alan to demonstrate the counterproductive effects of the revolutionary road to socialism. Unlike the protagonist, Alan's immersion occurs in a crucible of a fierce class war. Before he commits to militant radicalism, Alan finds himself "wondering if he were the same man who left Craigside only a few short days ago."²¹⁹ These doubts and insecurities represent the mysterious nature of the unknown territory the hero must conquer to prove himself.

Despite his initial hesitation, Alan decides to perform the hero-dive in the form of guerilla warfare under the influence of the local revolutionaries. He takes part in an organized attack on a railroad to prevent a transport of soldiers from quashing the revolt: "A series of deafening explosions followed, which filled the night, and shook the whole district, and he felt himself caught by the shock of the concussion, and pitched headlong forward upon the ground, while a thousand noises assailed his ears, as if to burst them."²²⁰ Alan's painful experience of combat is symptomatic of the mythical hero's crossing of the first threshold which is often interpreted as self-destruction.²²¹ During the initiation process, Alan "saw the stars in the sky tumbling and rocking, as if the heavens were breaking above his head, then came a thump and he lay still in forgetfulness."²²² Metaphorically, the hero appears to have died as a result of entering a new area of experience. All this indicates that Alan's participation in the ideologically motivated raid is a radical dramatization of the hero's immersion phase.

The ideological use of the immersion phase in Gibbon's *Gray Granite* is comparable to that displayed by both Welsh's novels. The protagonist enters the transition stage of his ideological conversion as soon as he starts working at the foundry. Although Gibbon's choice of setting for the hero's initiation reflects the fact that metal manufacturing was Scotland's fastest growing industry until the 1930s,²²³ it does not offer the kind of mythical imagery that is typically associated with the hero-dive. Nevertheless, it remarkably resembles Welsh's descriptions of the miners' underworld. Gibbon depicts the maddening rhythm of the foundry which dominated by "bells snarling hell if the heat now and then went low in one fire or another. In an hour or so

219. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 202.

220. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 208.

221. See Joseph Campbell, *Hero*, 84.

222. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 208–9.

223. See Callum G. Brown, "Charting Everyday Experience," in *A History of Everyday Life in Twentieth-Century Scotland*, ed. Lynn Abrams and Callum G. Brown (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 26.

Ewan'd be dripping with sweat, and drink and drink from the tap in the rear, water that gushed out again from him, a sponge-like life."²²⁴ In the context of mythical symbolism, the blazing furnaces evoke the popular depiction of Hell which is how Ewan feels about the place, "hours clogged with heat, lungs going like bellows."²²⁵ The protagonist seems to be tormented by harsh working conditions that cause dehydration and exhaustion. Consequently, Ewan's industrial workplace represents a modern adaptation of the mythical landscape where the hero confronts terrifying forces beyond his control.

Additionally, Gibbon also dramatizes Ewan's initiation in a more ideologically significant way. The protagonist accidentally comes across a political demonstration while he is shopping for books. As he exits the bookshop, he witnesses some brutalization of the demonstrators by the police. Although the shop assistant begs him "Come back, Sir. There'll be a hell of a row in a minute," he is hypnotized by seeing a policeman "grab a young keelie by the collar and lift his baton and hit him, crack!—crack like a calsay-stone hit by a hammer, Ewan's heart leapt, he bit back a cry, the boy screamed: and then there was hell."²²⁶ The abuse of power by agents of law enforcement is a staple in working-class demonology. It depicts the police as the watchdogs of capitalism.

More importantly, it represents another allegorical example of the hero's crossing of the first threshold. Instead of watching the skirmish silently in awe, Ewan "heard some body cheer—himself—well done, well done!"²²⁷ in response to the protesters' successful counterattack. Ewan becomes emotionally invested in the battle between the demonstrators and the police, but the climax of the hero's immersion is not complete until he is physically swallowed up by the violence. Seeing the police knock down an old man, Ewan feels as though "something took hold of him, whirled him about, shot him into the struggling column."²²⁸ Not only he joins the violent riot, but he inspires the demonstrators to hurl empty bottles at the riot police. This is symptomatic of the immersion phase for two reasons. First, the hero ignores the warning of the sales assistant who serves as Gibbon's ideological representation of the mythical threshold guardian. Ewan is eager to challenge the guardian, who functions as "the watcher of

224. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 503.

225. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 504.

226. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 535.

227. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 535.

228. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 536.

established grounds,”²²⁹ and pass the threshold into the unknown territory symbolized by the skirmish. Second, the moment Ewan is completely absorbed in the fight exemplifies the hero’s initiation dive.

In contrast, Barke’s use of hospital as a metaphor for the hero’s conversion to socialism in *Major Operation*—a title that alludes to the protagonist’s transformation—clearly represents the transition stage of the ideological rite of passage. As soon as George crosses the first threshold of the hospital premises, he unwillingly performs the hero-dive into a previously unknown dimension of experience:

The maelstrom flux of his thoughts was almost more than he could bear in silence. He wanted to shout, to scream. The world was slipping beneath him: nothing was solid, fixed any more. Everything was chaos: whirling chaos. There was no foothold: no hand grasp. Worse! There was no familiarity. All was strange: unknown: unknowable. Nothing more than a momentary flash of recognition as the broken fragment of an image flashed past.²³⁰

Barke’s depiction of the protagonist’s insecurity excellently epitomizes the initiation of the hero because it captures the bewilderment caused by George’s arrival in a completely new environment. It embodies Campbell’s allegorical description of mythical initiation: “Once having traversed the threshold, the hero moves in a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where he must survive a succession of trials.”²³¹ On the one hand, George interprets the hospital as an amorphous place where nothing makes sense. It strongly resembles a dream landscape.

But on the other hand, his predicament is also indicative of the testing aspect of Campbell’s “road of trials.” The longer George stays confined to his hospital bed helplessly listening to the dreadful moans of the other patients, the more terrified he becomes of his upcoming surgery. It takes on an epic note of a quest for survival because “you went in there and they cut you up—it was horrible. You only had a chance in a thousand of coming back alive. God Above!”²³² Moreover, the hospital is not only testing Anderson’s ability to survive physically, but also mentally. For example, he unsuccessfully tries to defend his religious views against an atheist patient. When their conversation is over, “Anderson, profoundly disturbed and profoundly impressed, said: ‘. . . I dread to think that you have the right way of it. But I must confess there doesn’t

229. Joseph Campbell, *Hero*, 75.

230. Barke, *Major Operation*, 149.

231. Joseph Campbell, *Hero*, 89.

232. Barke, *Major Operation*, 158.

seem to be any reply to your arguments.”²³³ Consequently, Anderson’s stay in the hospital represents the immersion phase and the beginning of his road of trials where the hero faces numerous challenges to prove himself.

A similar description of the hero’s initiation dominates the immersion phase in *The Land of the Leal*. The protagonist’s hero-dive is particularly painful because he is unaccustomed to the rhythm of industrial work. David’s new job in the shipyard fundamentally differs from the familiar farm work: “Not only was the assault on his senses continual and devastating: he had unceasingly to adjust himself to an alien environment—a harsh unsympathetic environment that neither gave nor expected sympathy.”²³⁴ David sees the process of proletarianization from the perspective of a tourist on holiday in a hostile culture. In fact, neither David nor his son Andrew can easily adapt to life in Glasgow because of “the cruelty and brutality of a city of endless streets. A city with a heart of stone and a frame of steel and iron; of ugliness and unfriendliness; of noise and clamour and dirt and garbage; an alien people streaming endlessly, unsympathetic, harsh-voiced. There was nothing soft in the city.”²³⁵ The whole city represents an unknown landscape with sinister implications for both father and son. Therefore, Barke uses negative urban imagery to highlight the unfamiliarity and danger generally associated with the hero’s immersion phase.

233. Barke, *Major Operation*, 310.

234. Barke, *Leal*, 439.

235. Barke, *Leal*, 443–4.

Chapter 12

Mentor

Most mythical heroes receive some sort of help from without to accomplish their adventures. The same principle consistently applies to their ideological counterparts in Scottish socialist novels. While in mythology the helper is a “protective figure (often a little old crone or old man) who provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass,”²³⁶ the novels deploy more earthly representations of such supernatural aid. The protective element in the narratives is generally embodied by experienced political agitators, ideological father figures or intellectually superior characters. The involvement of these helpers appears quite purposeful in the case of a hero who exhibits little interest in the ideological journey of self-discovery. They typically need systematic guidance and direction to change their minds because they are either unaware of or directly opposed to socialism. On the other hand, providing support to underprivileged heroes may seem rather redundant because they are naturally inclined to display socialist tendencies. Suleiman explains that instead of receiving help from without, this type of hero often performs the helper function himself because “all the good qualities of the hero—his intelligence, his powers of observation and interpretation, his desire for the quest, etc.—can be considered as helping elements.”²³⁷ Regardless of their ideological predisposition, all heroes in Scottish socialist novels interact with mentor figures who contribute to their conversion.

Before the hero in *The Underworld* starts interacting with proper helper figures, it becomes obvious that he embodies the self-helping aspect of the mentor phase. He displays a degree of intuition, self-awareness and individuality that is unparalleled in his village. At the age of eleven, “he had grown in wisdom and stature, and gave promise of being a fine sturdy boy; but lately it had been borne in upon him that no one seemed to look at things from his point of view. . . . He was already too serious for a boy, and his joys were not the joys of other children.”²³⁸ Robert’s inquisitive and introverted nature earns him the label of “a strange laddie,”²³⁹ which reflects his unique

236. Joseph Campbell, *Hero*, 63.

237. Suleiman, *Authoritarian Fictions*, 83.

238. Welsh, *Underworld*.

239. Welsh, *Underworld*.

position in his community. However, rather than social stigma and mockery, it heralds his inner-motivated ideological transformation into a socialist union organizer. As far as the monomythical paradigm is concerned, the hero's power to observe, analyze and empathize signifies that he belongs to the category of helper.

Additionally, *The Underworld* uses paternal figures to dramatize the helper category. The paternal figure possesses "a knowledge similar, if not identical, to the one sought by the hero," and "he communicates what he knows, helps the hero surmount his trials. His beneficial presence guarantees, in a sense, the hero's success."²⁴⁰ The most obvious example of a paternal mentor in *The Underworld* is Robert's father whose skill and experience offer a reliable source of information about the miner's job. Although Robert's naïve enthusiasm annoys his experienced father, he "understood it all, and was patient with him, answering his enquiries and advising him on many things."²⁴¹ Robert's father functions as the hero's temporary mentor because he shares his knowledge and prepares Robert for his first day inside the pit.

Nevertheless, it is Robert Smillie who becomes the hero's life-long mentor. The main reason why he quickly replaces the hero's father in the role of helper is ontological. Robert's father dies in a pit disaster soon after he instructs the hero in mining. He is practically unable to supervise his son's ideological evolution whereas Smillie remains alive to guide his new apprentice throughout the entire narrative.

More importantly, Robert's father also fails to function as a source of political commentary because he does not possess the ideological know-how to guide the hero effectively. The protagonist immediately begins to admire the politician to the point where "he could have followed Smillie anywhere," and, as it turns out "Bob Smillie never won a truer heart than he did that night in winning this barefooted, ragged boy's."²⁴² Robert's choice of his new mentor illustrates the paradox that the helper "is rarely the hero's biological father. He is rather a spiritual, elective father, whom the hero chooses as his own."²⁴³ Despite his initiative to set up a local union branch, Robert's biological father is politically inexperienced and therefore his potential influence on the hero is very limited. Smillie, on the other hand, has the knowledge, experience and charisma to point the hero in the right direction. He perfectly reflects

240. Suleiman, *Authoritarian Fictions*, 80–1.

241. Welsh, *Underworld*.

242. Welsh, *Underworld*.

243. Suleiman, *Authoritarian Fictions*, 81.

the didactic function of helper figures in the proletarian bildungsroman where mentor characters “elucidate arguments and ideas that cannot necessarily be inferred from ‘story.’”²⁴⁴ As a result of Smillie’s direct impact on the protagonist, the hero transforms from a rank-and-file member into a respected union officer.

The mentor character in *The Underworld* occupies a satellite role in the hero’s mentor phase because he largely contributes to Robert’s development of unionist consciousness. In spite of some minor differences, “Robert’s admiration for his chief was unbounded, though it did not keep him from differing from Smillie at times on matters of detail. . . . Smillie soon realized that there was an unshakable will behind the young man, and watched him under every difficult occasion with a certain amount of pride, as he grew in individuality and resource.”²⁴⁵ It is evident that there is a strong bond between the mentor and apprentice that is based on mutual respect. Their relationship demonstrates the fact that the mentor’s efforts accelerate the hero’s initiation process because he helps him face the challenges on the road of trials.

Welsh structurally recycles the elective father figure in *The Morlocks* where Morrison, the elderly miner who shelters the hero in the solace phase, goes on to replace his biological father and become his helper in the mentor phase. Morrison’s role of mentor proves critically important for the Sydney’s initiation into the miner’s world because he initially represents the only link between the hero and the village of Craigside. While they are in the pit, he gives “an explanation of how Sydney was to perform his duties with regard to the taking and fetching of the tubs. . . . Sydney watched very carefully the maneuvering of how Morrison twisted the tub upon an iron plate.”²⁴⁶ In this passage, the hero plays the part of an attentive apprentice who needs to acquire some knowledge from the master in order to perform some specific task. Therefore, the mentor largely affects the hero’s response to the trials he faces in the transition stage.

However, Morrison’s role of mentor in *The Morlocks* is limited because he does not directly stimulate any ideological change in the hero. Instead, it is motivated by other factors. First, another character in the village convinces the hero to review his ideological perspective. Although he displays radical political beliefs when he arrives in the village, Sydney’s position quickly shifts to reformism as a result of his interaction with Alan, who claims “it was largely due to his work in this [non-violent] direction

244. Foley, *Radical Representations*, 332.

245. Welsh, *Underworld*.

246. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 37.

that Sydney Barron had been won from setting up a group of ‘The Morlocks’ in Craigside.”²⁴⁷ Second, the hero’s innate ability to observe and learn transforms him into his own helper. Sydney’s prolonged exposure to the peaceful rhythms of the mining community and growing concerns about the future of the labour movement contribute to changing his mind about roads to socialism.

Instead of inciting a violent uprising of the local proletariat, the hero chooses to educate them on socialism. For instance, Morrison’s daughter “read and studied under Sydney’s direction,” and “was amazed at the change” because “formerly she was quiet and moody. Now, life had an aim for her.”²⁴⁸ Soon afterwards, the hero’s socialist gospel spreads through the whole district because he “certainly acted like a man with a mission. He formed a class of young miners in Craigside and started them on a course of economics and industrial history. He extended his activities to surrounding villages, . . . He heard everyone, and read their hearts as they were bared to him.”²⁴⁹ While he receives advice from his new mentor, he also utilizes his knowledge and sympathy to help and guide other workers. Therefore, Sydney’s impact on the community reveals a third dimension of the mentor phase—the hero can structurally function as a protective figure.

Concerning the helper category, the relationship between Sydney and Alan shows how multiple characters can perform the function of mentor in a single narrative. While Alan takes credit for Sydney’s revisionism, he also admits he “had been taught by him.”²⁵⁰ However, their temporary symbiotic relationship is terminated when Alan leaves the community of Craigside. He suddenly changes his opinion on violence under the guidance of his new mentor represented by the revolutionary anarchist Barney Blades. When he looks in Barney’s eyes during their first encounter, Alan is “fascinated by the play of fire in their depths.”²⁵¹ This foreshadows Barney’s mentor status because Alan’s first impression suggests admiration. Before long, Alan realizes he is “following by his side, unable to resist the power of the command, which was implied rather than spoken.”²⁵² Recruiting Alan is not very difficult because Barney exploits his vulnerability. Alan explicitly acknowledges his apprenticeship by pointing out “here

247. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 202.

248. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 52.

249. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 52.

250. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 63.

251. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 196.

252. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 196.

was a complete change in his mentality, and Rennie could not help feeling that something very drastic had happened within the last few hours. For here he was marching forward to one of the most desperate hazards imaginable, and yet he could not say that he regretted his change of mind.”²⁵³ Barney structurally operates as a convenient substitute for Alan’s previous helper because he embodies the principle of guardianship. Consequently, *The Underworld* exemplifies the multiplicity of the hero figure on the one hand, and the flexibility of the helper category on the other.

In contrast, the position of mentor in Gibbon’s *Grey Granite* is largely occupied by the hero’s romantic partner Ellen. From the monomythical perspective, the female form of the helper is not uncommon because it represents “the benign protecting power of destiny. The fantasy is a reassurance—a promise that the peace of Paradise, which was known first within the mother womb, is not to be lost; that it supports the present and stands in the future as well as in the past.”²⁵⁴ Beside her mythical association with the archetypal mother, Ellen’s role of helper is highlighted by the fact that she is a teacher by profession. This gives her credibility because she is trained to reproduce and share knowledge. Therefore, it is her who inspires the hero to explore socialism. He is forced to admit she makes a very good point:

And Ewan was saying *Yes, that seems sense and I’ll look it up. I’ve always thought Socialism just a measly whine, MacDonaldisht stuff and politicians’ patter. Different when you think of it as history making, the working class to be captured and led: all right, I’ll give the keelies a chance.* Ellen said *And don’t be so horridly superior; you’ll never lead if you can’t be an equal.* [italics in the original]²⁵⁵

Apart from helping him get a fresh perspective on the ideology, Ellen proves to be the hero’s mentor because she gives him practical advice. Having passed on the essential knowledge, her final remark has a particularly patronizing tone. Instead of letting the apprentice misinterpret the message, she strongly advises caution. Consequently, Ellen embodies not only the epistemic role of mentor, but, more importantly the technical one because she exhibits the supervising principle of guardianship.

Speaking of guidance and direction, the hero eventually switches from socialist Ellen to communist Jim Trease who dominates the rest of the mentor phase. The new

253. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 203.

254. Joseph Campbell, *Hero*, 66.

255. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 524.

guardian starts to consider helping Ewan when the hero is falsely accused of assaulting a police officer during a political protest. While Ewan is awaiting his trial in prison, Trease tells his worried mother “*Ay, well, we’ll do what we can—and a wee thing more. But I wouldn’t advise you to come to the court.* [italics in the original]”²⁵⁶ A lifelong communist, Trease possesses the skill and knowledge to function as a mentor. From his personal experience, he knows Ewan is being tortured in his cell and that is why he suggests the hero’s mother better not see him.

Trease is not motivated to help Ewan by some sense of selfless service to the community. He makes it clear that “of course the communists would exploit the case to the full—for their ends first, not for Ewan’s.”²⁵⁷ Nevertheless, Ewan’s harrowing experience of torture contributes to accepting Trease as his new guardian. Similar to Ellen, Trease offers advice with a condescending note. For example, he patronizes his new apprentice for mismanaging a propagandist event. From the position of teacher, he tells Ewan “you should never let a free fight start at your meetings unless well in the heart of a town, with plenty of police about and folk in hundreds a chance of a snappy arrest or so, to serve the Party as good publicity.”²⁵⁸ Having performed his epistemic function, the guardian goes on to help the hero physically because “Ewan had barked his knuckles a bit, he’d better come up to the Trease house in Paldy and get them iodined. And maybe he’d like a cup of tea.”²⁵⁹ As a result, Trease’s ability to dispense advice and care verifies his role of mentor because he facilitates the hero’s progress on the road of trials.

Regarding the ideological significance of the mentor phase, Barke’s novels duplicate Gibbon’s structural use of a utilitarian helper who indoctrinates the hero. What is particularly interesting about *Major Operation* and *The Land of the Leal* is that they employ the identical character of communist MacKelvie who guides and influences the hero.

The mentor figure in *Major Operation* represents a principal galvanizing force in the protagonist’s conversion to socialism. On the one hand, he functions as the hero’s Virgil because he allegorically guides him through the dream landscape of the hospital. He embodies the power of reason in a world of metaphysical deceit. More importantly,

256. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 610.

257. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 613.

258. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 649.

259. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 649.

MacKelvie performs an explicitly didactic role in that he makes sustained effort to reach and transform the protagonist. As he complacently remarks, “He had made progress with Anderson. Not that Anderson was the kind of man who shows he is being impressed. . . . Just such elements as Anderson could and should be won over to the side of the workers.”²⁶⁰ The teacher-student dynamic of the relationship between MacKelvie and George is symptomatic of the novel of apprenticeship where mentor characters “articulate, and often win the protagonist to endorse, left-wing political doctrine.”²⁶¹ Despite his initial reluctance, the protagonist eventually embraces his teacher’s revolutionary politics: “If you’re a Red then I’m a Red. Not such a good Red as you, MacKelvie: I can never hope that. But with all my strength, mental and physical, I’m with you. . . . If you will have me in the ranks I promise I will never let you down, never let the movement down until I fall down.”²⁶² Consequently, the mentor character is a primary source of political argument in *Major Operation*. He exemplifies the didactic function of the mentor figure because he is the text’s chief source of political commentary as he systematically grooms the hero for his role in the movement.

Before MacKelvie reappears in *The Land of the Leal*, Andrew’s uncle Robert temporarily substitutes the paternal figure of mentor character. When his uncle is invited to stay overnight, “Andrew was glad to have his uncle sleeping with him. The fact that he was a Socialist made him welcome. But Andy also liked him as a man. . . . From his uncle, Andrew learned much about the early married life of his parents.”²⁶³ Besides sharing some essential family-related knowledge with the hero, Robert openly displays his radical politics by promoting the Marxist revolutionary John MacLean who he thinks could be “the greatest man in Britain afore he’s done. He’s about as big a man as Lenin.”²⁶⁴ Although the political influence of John MacLean on Glasgow workers was limited,²⁶⁵ he represents an iconic symbol of Scottish socialism. Consequently, the protagonist’s uncle Robert performs the function of the mentor character not only because he helps the hero learn about his family history, but he also communicates explicitly ideological values that speak to the hero. As a result of the teacher-student dynamic between Robert and Andrew, the hero’s consciousness becomes radicalized.

260. Barke, *Major Operation*, 319.

261. Foley, *Radical Representations*, 332.

262. Barke, *Major Operation*, 363.

263. Barke, *Leal*, 526.

264. Barke, *Leal*, 452.

265. See Iain McLean, *The Legend of Red Clydeside* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1983), 153.

Nevertheless, it is MacKelvie who eventually offers an outlet for Andrew's growing disillusionment with the British labour movement. Andrew is profoundly concerned about the lax attitude of the British government to the rise of fascism in Europe, and "it was in this mood that he stopped and listened to MacKelvie. And as he listened he was convinced that MacKelvie had the right line."²⁶⁶ When Andrew hears MacKelvie speak about the need to unite against fascism, he immediately volunteers to fight in Spain. Consequently, MacKelvie plays the part of teacher because he gives the hero information that is essential to facing his upcoming trials. Furthermore, MacKelvie typifies the principle of elective helper who functions as a substitute for the biological father of the hero.

266. Barke, *Leal*, 568.

Chapter 13

Conflict

The transition stage of the hero's ideological conversion is concluded by a series of confrontations which symbolize the end of his initiation. Unlike the exciting beginning of the road of trials, the further the hero ventures, the more complex challenges he faces. Campbell points out that "after the first thrills of getting under way, the adventure develops into a journey of darkness, horror, disgust, and phantasmagoric fears."²⁶⁷ The dialectic structure of Scottish socialist novels reflects these fears in three basic categories. First, the protagonist may be tested in a physical struggle with hostile forces. This area largely consists in the recurring motif of victimization including dramatizations of negative workplace relations, industrial strikes, or police brutality. It seems to epitomize the common feature of working-class demonology that is thought to have a particularly strong impact on forging class-consciousness in Scotland.²⁶⁸ Second, the protagonist can be dealing with some psychological obstacles such as guilt, regret and insecurity. The last area is explicitly ideological because it addresses the epistemic changes in the protagonist. This category is particularly important because it is indicative of the general outcome of the hero's conversion process. The hero must rely on his strength and integrity to successfully pass from one state to another. Although the mentor can give the hero the means by which he can accomplish his quest, it is the hero's sole responsibility to use the acquired knowledge effectively to his advantage. If he lacks the will and determination to succeed, the quest turns into a narrative of negative apprenticeship. While the positive form of the hero's quest is more common because it does not cause any controversy, it can coexist with the negative one within a single narrative. The juxtaposition of the two can potentially serve to underline the didactic character of political propaganda. Whether the proletarian(ized) hero succeeds or fails to confront his fears, the conflict phase of his adventure is the most defining part of the journey.

The Underworld dramatizes the universal conflict between selfishness and selflessness which all people face at some point in different forms. After the tragic death

267. Joseph Campbell, *Hero*, 111.

268. See Arthur McIvor, "The Realities and Narratives of Paid Work: The Scottish Workplace," in *A History of Everyday Life in Twentieth-Century Scotland*, eds. Lynn Abrams and Callum G. Brown (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 108–9.

of his father, the hero is put to the hardest test of his life. He must replace his father as the breadwinner because his entire family depends on him. However, Robert does not fancy the idea of working in the mine anymore because he is traumatized by the horrid fate of his father and brother. Although he instinctively assumes responsibility for the family, it is not without a serious inner conflict:

He was a mass of nerves and was horribly afraid—indeed, this fear never left him for years—but, young as he was, he recognized his responsibility, to his mother and the rest of the family. He was now its head, and had to shoulder the burden of providing for it, and so his will drove him to work in the pit, when his soul revolted at the very thought of it.²⁶⁹

Despite the hero's traumatic experience, Robert makes a conscious decision to confront his demons by working in the place associated with pain and suffering. The hero's determination to conquer his fears and selfishness for the sake of his family's survival displays a great degree of maturity at the age of twelve. His selfless resolution and courage in the face of adversity sets the tone of his conflict phase.

Robert's next trial is set against the backdrop of the Scottish miners' strike of 1894, a pivotal event in British history. The omniscient narrator praises the hero, who "worked in this fight like a man. He helped to cut down trees and saw them into logs, to cook the food at the soup kitchen. Everything and anything he tried, running errands, and even going with the van to solicit material for the following day's meals."²⁷⁰ Apart from Welsh's obsession with masculine depictions of the hero's struggle, Robert's active participation in the strike demonstrates the challenging aspect of the road of trials. The hero puts a lot of effort into the tasks in order to gain practical experience and prove himself. Moreover, Welsh's portrayal of Robert's premature sense of responsibility and single-mindedness emphasizes the link between the protagonist and the mythical hero: "Robert, though young, took a keen interest in the fight. While other lads of his age looked upon it as a fine holiday, the heavy responsibilities he had to face gave him a different outlook, and so the men seemed to recognize that he was different from the other boys, and more sober in his view-point."²⁷¹ Obviously, Welsh's dramatization of the conflict phase reflects the propagandist intentions of the novel. Although the protagonist embodies a romanticized view of the working class, his

269. Welsh, *Underworld*.

270. Welsh, *Underworld*.

271. Welsh, *Underworld*.

conscious efforts to overcome difficulties resemble the struggle of the mythical hero on the road of trials.

In Welsh's subsequent novel, the conflict phase takes on a more political note. Compared with the challenges faced by the hero in *The Underworld*, the protagonist's major test in *The Morlocks* has explicitly ideological overtones. During a village meeting where the community discusses their union strategy, Sydney urges the increasingly radicalized community to approach the issue with prudence. While most young miners in the village call for a violent method, the hero takes everyone by surprise when he points out "You should aim not at destroying the wealth you have created, but at trying to preserve it, so that there will be an abundance of it, when you have sense enough to claim a better share of it. . . . Don't begin by abusing your leaders. If you can't trust them—find others. Let those who direct the fight get control, and keep it."²⁷² This unexpected about-turn in Sydney's approach is ironic and causes much distress because he was the one who advocated the establishment of a local revolutionary when he first came to the village. Although the radicalized workers represent a majority in the community, "this speech had a more sobering effect, and though there was great disputation about rival policies, Sydney's influence began to tell; for he seemed to have an influence over them, greater than any other."²⁷³ The hero's success in this public showdown is partly due to his role as the miners' mentor which is why the villagers respect him in the first place. After all, he is the reason behind the community's dramatic politicization. The outcome of Sydney's challenge demonstrates the impact of the mentor phase on the hero's ability to resolve conflict.

By contrast, Alan's crucial trials fall in the second category of the conflict phase because they test the hero's mental health. Unlike Sydney, Alan must cope with some negative psychological consequences of his actions. For example, he experiences the paralyzing effects of guilt generated by his participation in the sabotage. Learning about the casualties "upset him very much; for now that he was away from the compelling personality and the cheery light-hearted cynicism of the hunchback, the knowledge that the action in which he had been engaged had resulted in the destruction of so many lives was very unsettling."²⁷⁴ Apparently, he is ashamed of himself because he did not want for innocent people to die. It did not occur to him that the government's retaliation

272. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 60–1.

273. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 61.

274. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 216.

against the workers would be so devastating. Although Alan loses the battle with his conscience, he later achieves a moral victory when he decides to give up his personal belongings to feed his landlady's starving family. It is not easy for him to pawn his golden watch because it reminds him of his mother who gave it to him in more affluent times. Standing in front of the pawnshop, "He was afraid to hesitate when he reached the door, in case he might decide not to go in, and a struggle raged in his heart, as he fingered the watch in his pocket."²⁷⁵ Despite his doubts, he eventually overcomes his fear and proves himself. Feeding the family represents the hero's triumph because "the way in which it was enjoyed gave Rennie joy."²⁷⁶ Alan's trials have two notable implications for the conflict phase. First, without his mentor's reassurance, the hero's courage and commitment are likely to show signs of faltering. Second, the hero can prove himself regardless of some initial failures on the road of trials.

The last phase in the initiation of the hero in Gibbon's *Grey Granite* is far more violent than that of his counterparts in Welsh's fiction. When Ewan starts work at the foundry, he is hazed by the other apprentices. Instead of letting them mock him, Ewan accepts the challenge and launches a pre-emptive strike against the ringleader. The initiation ritual immediately turns into a vicious showdown between the hero and the most aggressive representative of his workmates. Despite his physical prowess, "Ewan dripped blood like a half-killed pig, but he didn't know that, infighting, they were both thick-streaked with blood and snot, holding and fighting."²⁷⁷ Although he does not achieve a decisive victory, the hero proves himself because he does not allow his workmates to intimidate him. When his mother notices the physical damage to his body, he explains "*though my father was a ploughman and you came from a kitchen – that's nothing to do with me, has it? I'm neither you nor my father: I'm myself.* [italics in the original]"²⁷⁸ Ewan's explanation reflects the traditional idea of initiation which "combines an introduction of the candidate into the techniques, duties, and prerogatives of his vocation with a radical readjustment of his emotional relationship to the parental images."²⁷⁹ Apparently, the workplace conflict does not only demonstrate the warrior transformation of the hero, but also his growing need for control and independence from

275. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 232.

276. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 233.

277. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 505.

278. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 506.

279. Joseph Campbell, *Hero*, 125.

his family. Facing the challenge in the conflict phase shows the hero is ready to reach a higher level of individuality.

Ewan's effort to organize a strike in his workplace represents another example of the trials intended to test his determination. As a consequence of his subversive attempts to address the unethical policies of the company, the manager tries to intimidate him: "Ewan hadn't denied it and the manager had asked if he knew what would happen to him, stirring up trouble? And Ewan had said Oh yes, he he'd be sacked when his apprenticeship was done. And the manager had roared *Well then, less of it. You've had your warning, you won't get another.* And Ewan said *Yes, thanks, I've been warned.*"²⁸⁰ The protagonist displays honesty and resilience although his prospective career in the foundry is at stake. It is clear that the hero can navigate his way through the treacherous landscape of the transition stage.

The combination of Ewan's commitment and self-confidence, which he has achieved in the process of overcoming his obstacles, help him face the biggest and most defining challenge of his initiation—torture. When the police press the protagonist to confess to killing a man who died in a demonstration, he refuses to comply. He is subjected to physical abuse where "Two of them held him while Sim Leslie bashed him, then they knocked him from fist to fist across the cell," until "Ewan had heard a queer bubbling, himself blowing breath through bloody lips."²⁸¹ Despite the abuse he receives, Ewan does not back down which indicates he has successfully passed the last trial. His mentor explains to the protagonist's perplexed mother Ewan is tortured because "he's a Communist, you see, or he'll be by now."²⁸² This illustrates the significance of the final test in the hero's initiation. He is now ready to embrace the new ideological creed.

The conflict phase in Barke's *Major Operation* reflects the novel's basic ideological premise that progressive elements of the bourgeoisie can bridge the gap between the middle class and the proletariat. The protagonist faces a series of trials that epitomize this idea. When he arrives at the hospital, he is forced to cope with the kind of people he has always considered his inferiors. Although they help him on his first day, he "felt himself blushing deeply. No sense of decency: no refinement: slum products. You wouldn't sit beside them in a tramcar if there were another seat available.

280. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 556.

281. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 606.

282. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 610.

And yet here he was: obliged to them for intimate service.”²⁸³ However, the longer he stays in the hospital the more he is motivated to overcome his prejudice. As a result of his prolonged hospitalization, he changes his opinion about a patient in his ward who typifies the working class. Because of the patient’s sudden display of genuine sympathy, Anderson remarks ““that’s the most amazing man I have ever met. You would think he was impossible. But you see he’s quite genuine at bottom.””²⁸⁴ More importantly, the philosophical discussions he has with his mentor pressure him to review his middle-class values: “But if everything MacKelvie said were true, and there didn’t seem to be any loopholes, that it was going to be difficult not to be a Red. . . . And yet what had Mackelvie done to make him think, to make him certain he was honest? Upset his political and religious beliefs! . . . One thing anyway: he had learned a lot about the working class. No question that they were in every way superior to his class.”²⁸⁵ Consequently, George’s interaction with the working-class patients and their views encourages him to dismiss his judgmental assumptions about the proletariat. The sequence of social and epistemic challenges he faces on the road of trials is an effective exposure therapy that the hero undergoes in the conflict phase.

On the other hand, the protagonist in *The Land of the Leal* embodies the negative form of apprenticeship narrative where the hero’s adventure turns into its opposite. David completely fails to respond positively to the trials he faces along his journey. The best example of his failure to overcome major challenges is his inability to comprehend the division of labor ushered by industrial capitalism. Although the circumstances of his new job in Glasgow help him integrate in the modern economy, the hero fails to understand the system of mass production and his place in it. Lacking analytical thinking, he is utterly overwhelmed by its sheer complexity:

The world was growing complex, strange and bewildering to David. His immediate work in the shipyard became more understandable, more commonplace. But the yard itself became more and more bewildering maze. He could not understand how it held together, could not see how one man could understand and direct all its manifold activities. He did not realise that no single brain could have directed the work. He did not see that in many ways the yard only held together because men did work that was necessary to do without detailed instruction.²⁸⁶

283. Barke, *Major Operation*, 159.

284. Barke, *Major Operation*, 273.

285. Barke, *Major Operation*, 316.

286. Barke, *Leal*, 446.

David clearly epitomizes the social fallout of proletarianization. Unable to change his feudal mindset, he ends up a helpless victim of industrialization. The industrial division of labor symbolizes a major roadblock the hero comes up against on his road of trials. Unfortunately, David's lack of effort to overcome his fear of the unknown reinforces his ideological role of negative apprentice in the narrative structure of the novel.

Unlike his old-fashioned father, Andrew learns to appreciate his position in the urban proletariat. He gradually readapts to the dynamic of city life whose complexity he finds intriguing rather than threatening. In contrast to the feudal system into which he was born, the world of industrial capitalism represents a learning opportunity. In particular, Andrew's workplace stimulates his curiosity about socialist ideology. He notes that "there was a timekeeper at Finnieston who sometimes talked to him about Socialism when he was noting the men's number checks. But Andrew was afraid of him. He made his blood run cold. He said there was no God: he said Jesus Christ never existed."²⁸⁷ The engineering workshop where Andrew is employed represents a place where the mythical hero confronts his fears to prove himself. Instead of giving in like his father, Andrew accepts the challenge despite its frightening implications.

In fact, the workplace experience contributes to the hero's growing confidence. He is not afraid to speak out against his father's conservative views. Their conflicting political beliefs result in a dramatic showdown during which David uses his paternal authority to silence his son's enthusiasm about socialism. As a consequence of his father's patronizing comments, "Andrew felt rebellion mounting in him. He bitterly resented his father's rebuke."²⁸⁸ While the domestic confrontation represents David's defeat, it signifies Andrew's will to oppose the most significant authority of his life. Therefore, Andrew is the ideological antithesis of his father. He proactively responds to the effects of the industrial division of labor on the one hand, and his father conflict on the other hand. The hero's successful management of these conflicts symbolizes the triumphant completion of his initiation.

287. Barke, *Leal*, 454.

288. Barke, *Leal*, 454.

Chapter 14

Acceptance

As a result of his successful completion of the road of trials, the hero enters the final stage of his adventure which is represented by rites of incorporation. Through his hardships and struggles, he has earned access to a higher level of understanding—the totality of life. The mythical hero's apotheosis is the climax of the "process of self-realization" which "leads the individual in the direction of the universally valid human norms, freedom and unity. To achieve individuation is to achieve freedom from fear and from the limitations of time and to find unity in all opposites. . . . To realize the self in its total reality is to repossess the soul—the world soul of the collective unconscious."²⁸⁹ Although Scottish socialist novels ideologize the mythical concept of apotheosis, they structurally retain the pattern of the hero's ultimate transformation of consciousness. At the beginning of the last part of his journey, the protagonist experiences an ideological about-turn. The morphology of the hero's acceptance phase is varied, though. In the positive form of apprenticeship narrative, the hero typically experiences a rebirth along epitomized by his conversion to socialism. In this type of acceptance, he becomes increasingly class-conscious and revolutionary. Alternatively, the protagonist can adopt a new point of view within the same ideological framework. For example, he can move from the revolutionary to evolutionary variety of socialism or vice versa. Conversely, the hero can take another road entirely. The acceptance phase can turn into refusal which is the case of the negative type of apprenticeship narrative. Instead of embracing a new belief system, the hero stubbornly wishes to preserve his original mindset no matter how detrimental the consequences might be. Consequently, the first step of the last part of the hero's journey generally follows the principle of fresh start.

The protagonist's acceptance phase in *The Underworld* serves the function of renouncing the theoretical basis of the status quo. Questioning the meaning of life, Robert's experience and common sense help him analyze and resolve the epistemological contradictions represented by traditional moral and religious beliefs. "To hell with religions and philosophies, he thought; they were all a parcel of fairy tales to drug men's minds and keep them tame; and he glared impotently at the pitiless

289. Leeming, *Mythology*, 257.

heavens, as if he would defy gods, and devils, and men. He would be free—free in mind, in thought, and unhampered by unrealities!²⁹⁰ The hero seems to have finally become free from the limitations imposed by metaphysical constructs. This intellectual awakening is clearly a dramatization of the mythical hero's apotheosis which is "an expansion of consciousness and therewith of being (illumination, transfiguration, freedom)."²⁹¹ Robert's consciousness has certainly developed. He no longer subscribes to the ideological doctrine of his old universe. Facing challenges along the road of trials has taught him that he is the master of his life. Therefore, the hero's sudden awareness of the deceitful nature of false consciousness represents the illuminating effects of the acceptance phase.

Despite his newly expanded consciousness, the most significant aspect of Robert's acceptance phase is the moment of his definite ideological conversion. It is not until he meets James Keir Hardie, the historical founder of the Labour Party, that Robert upgrades his egalitarian beliefs to scientific socialism. At first, the hero is "kind o' suspecious aboot" the ideology because he is "no' sure jist yet as to what this Socialism is."²⁹² However, his doubts quickly evaporate as a result of Hardie's eloquent speech:

It made an indelible impression on Robert's mind. The way was so simple, so clear, so sure, that if only men like Hardie could go round every town and village in the land, he believed that a Utopia might be brought into being in a very few years; that even the rich people, the usurpers, would agree that this state of affairs might be brought about, and that they'd gladly give up all they had of power over the lives of others, to work cooperatively for the good of all; and already he was deciding in youth's way, he would give his life, every moment of it, to help Hardie and Smillie, and all those other great spirits to win the world to this state of affairs. Body and soul he would devote to it, and so help to make the world a brighter and happier place for all human beings.²⁹³

The protagonist's newly discovered political conviction is the ideological climax of the narrative. Although he displays ambiguous signs of class-consciousness and ethical socialism from the beginning of his journey, Robert's adoption of institutionalized socialism allows him to synthesize his vaguely formulated beliefs and principles in order to form a coherent system. The ultimate unity of opposites embodied in the conversion gives him access to a higher level of consciousness. Metaphorically

290. Welsh, *Underworld*.

291. Joseph Campbell, *Hero*, 228.

292. Welsh, *Underworld*.

293. Welsh, *Underworld*.

speaking, the hero has finally discovered the ultimate knowledge and is ready to act on it.

Out of all Scottish socialist novels, Welsh's *The Morlocks* best exemplifies the paradigm of positive apprenticeship where the ideological hero changes his perspective. While Sydney's initial goal is to rouse revolutionary sentiment among the miners in Craigside, his road of trials leads him to reformism. During a mining accident that buries the protagonist underground, he explains to his radicalized co-worker that "whether it is popular or not, I feel that the country would not stand any attempt at revolution, and with the country against you, you can't do the things you say. My heart cries for revolution, and I'd die in such a cause to-night; but my head tells me that it is work, and organization, and educative propaganda that is needed for years to come."²⁹⁴ Instead of seizing political power by force, Sydney believes the role of the movement is to win popular support. On the one hand, his revisionism reflects the principles of parliamentary socialism promoted by the writer. What is more significant for understanding the strategies of political propaganda, though, is the pattern of rite of passage Welsh adopts from mythology. Sydney's acceptance phase signifies the supreme goal of herohood—the potential freedom from immobilizing thoughts which are in Welsh's eyes synonymous with revolutionary socialism. The protagonist's acceptance of democratic socialism is a consequence of the enlightenment associated with the hero's apotheosis.

Sydney's counterpart Alan, on the other hand, travels in the opposite direction. The uplifting effects of his acceptance phase encourage him to embrace a revolutionary commitment. Although he initially appears to be a rather reluctant revolutionary tormented by his guilty conscience, a particularly tragic event boosts his sense of righteousness. Having witnessed the death of his poor landlady's sick son, Alan has an epiphany and realizes that "if he had had any doubts left," he "became wildly revolutionary in heart and mind. He saw only the system that had brought misery and death; his heart raged with anger, and a terrible passion took possession of him."²⁹⁵ In that flash of illumination, "He now realized the meaning of the desire for a fuller life. He had lived all his days in sordid surroundings, and he knew that poverty cramped him round, and stultified his existence; but he had never realized with such horror how

294. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 160.

295. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 229–30.

terrible were the conditions of life, as his people had lived it.”²⁹⁶ Alan’s apotheosis signals the hero’s mastery of self and his acquisition of some higher, more fundamental truth. He expresses a desire for an unfallen world which translates to the idealized view of a socialist society.

Concerning the apotheosis of the hero, Northrop Frye remarks that “the fact that such characters, who are conceived in human likeness and yet have more power over nature, gradually build up the vision of an omnipotent personal community beyond an indifferent nature. It is this community which the hero regularly enters in his apotheosis. . . . Hence if we look at the quest-myth as a pattern of imagery, we see the hero’s quest first of all in terms of its fulfillment.”²⁹⁷ Alan’s acceptance phase clearly shows how political propaganda recycles the mythical principle of a larger-than-life hero who rises above the common man in an epiphanic moment of clarity.

The ideologization of apotheosis in Scottish socialist novels shows that the acceptance phase can also have a social dimension. Before he experiences his ideological awakening, the protagonist in Gibbon’s *Grey Granite* is incorporated into his workplace community. When Ewan comes back to work after the violent clash with his co-worker, they become friends: “And then as you climbed up to the yard the toff turned round to Alick *Hello!* And Alick gave a kind of a start *Hello!* And they laughed, and Norman went dandering over *Hello!* as well, and a fag to the toff Tavendale. You’d never seen him smoking before, but he took it. [italics in the original]”²⁹⁸ Having passed the trial of social initiation, Ewan accepts a cigarette from his former foes which symbolizes his official integration into their community. Ewan’s incorporation is approved by his co-workers, who point out that “it was the beginning of a gey queer time,” and more importantly by his former nemesis, who claims: “*Ewan Tavendale could tackle any Bulgar here.*”²⁹⁹ The hero’s acceptance phase implies that the process of proletarianization is a rite of passage where the novice must earn the right to enter the ranks of the proletariat, especially if he comes from a different class.

Apart from Ewan’s social incorporation into the proletariat, the acceptance phase is politically manifested in his conversion to communism. In a public statement that follows his release from prison, Ewan shares the most important lesson “he had

296. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 230.

297. Northrop Frye, “The Archetypes of Literature,” in *The Fables of Identity: Studies in Poetic Mythology* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963), 19.

298. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 526.

299. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 526.

learned: the Communists were right. Only by force could we beat brute force, plans for peaceful reform were about as sane as hunting a Bengal tiger with a Bible. They must organize the masses, make them think, make them see, let them know there was no way they could ever win to power except through the fight of class against class, till they dragged down the masters and ground them to pulp.”³⁰⁰ Although the melodramatic manner in which Gibbon dramatizes his protagonist’s apotheosis betrays the writer’s propagandist intentions, it is a definite example of the hero’s ideological ascension. The structure of imagery Gibbon uses to depict Ewan’s conversion certainly draws on myth. It foregrounds the fulfillment of the hero’s quest—Ewan’s successful incorporation into a revolutionary movement and its belief system which has expanded his consciousness.

Barke’s use of mythical images in the hero’s apotheosis is similar to that of Gibbon’s. The ideological conversion of the protagonist in *Major Operation* displays all the signs of the elevated status that can be attained through herohood. What George experiences as a result of his hospitalization evokes rebirth in two senses. First, the surgery which saves his life contributes to his determination to change his life style. He must reinvent himself because he no longer possesses any business nor family. Instead, he has been offered a second chance: “A man seldom expects to begin life over again at forty. He rarely expects to find life after forty more exciting and exhilarating than he has found it. Anderson’s past life had been wasted. It had culminated in a bitter and humiliating defeat. Now he could think of the possibility of victory.”³⁰¹ However, the new beginning is directly linked to his intensive interaction with his mentor and other patients in the ward who forced him to redefine his political views. “He felt he had achieved something permanent through his relationship with MacKelvie: that his past was liquidated: that even his trials and worries had not been entirely useless. Now he saw that the crisis, evil and disastrous though its effects had been, had resulted in definite personal gain.”³⁰² The protagonist’s excitement at his ideological transformation epitomizes the basic premise of the hero’s apotheosis—he reaches a higher level of self as a reward for completing the trials. The fact that George’s conversion coincides with his release from hospital further emphasizes Barke’s allegorical use of mythical imagery because it indicates the hero’s progress from one state to another.

300. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 617.

301. Barke, *Major Operation*, 365.

302. Barke, *Major Operation*, 365.

In *The Land of the Leal*, Barke contrasts the protagonist's negative form of apprenticeship with his son's positive journey of ideological transformation. What largely determines the negative outcome of David's process of incorporation is his initial refusal of the call to adventure. Moreover, his forced participation and poor performance on the road of trials naturally result in the hero's rejection of the potential expansion of consciousness. Unable to confront his fears, David remains imprisoned in his old world:

What he could not understand, what indeed he had been taught to abhor, was the claim of the working class to political independence and to a revolutionary political ideology—the challenge to Capitalism by Socialism. For to David, Capitalism was the natural order of things, if not indeed the divine order of creation; whereas Socialism was the negation of all natural order—was indeed red ruin and the breaking up of laws.³⁰³

The reason behind the protagonist's complete failure to fulfill the mythical quest is twofold. First, his disillusionment with idealism, which can be tracked back to his preliminary crisis, positively neutralizes his rebellious spirit before it can fully develop. Second, his mindset is deeply rooted in the old feudal order and its religious ideology. Therefore, he sees capitalism as its rightful replacement.

Andrew, on the other hand, embraces the unknown both politically and socially. Unlike his old-fashioned father, he accepts the benefits of heroism in the form of a proletarian identity forged by his environment:

There was no room for imaginative escape in the engineering workshop. Everything there was direct and crude in its impact. And though it would be wrong to claim for Andrew a speculative and imaginative brain, yet it was remarkable how much curiosity he did possess and how highly developed was his sense of intelligent apprehension. He acknowledged and indeed proclaimed himself Socialist.³⁰⁴

In comparison to David, Andrew's mind begins to operate on a higher level which is the direct effect of apotheosis. His conversion to socialism is similar to that of George's in *Major Operation* in that it consists of ideological and social incorporation of the protagonist into a new community. As a result of his expanded awareness of self and the world, he is suddenly "proud to belong to the working class."³⁰⁵ Consequently, the process of ideological illumination produces a sense of class consciousness in the

303. Barke, *Leal*, 446–7.

304. Barke, *Leal*, 508.

305. Barke, *Leal*, 509.

hero. This is the essence of the acceptance phase—the attainment of the myth-quest which represents the climax of the hero's adventure.

Chapter 15

Praxis

Although the central importance of the incorporation stage lies in the protagonist's attainment of some absolute ideological truth, he must put that theory into practice to show its positive effects on reality. Allegorically, this principle reflects the mythical hero's mastery of the known world he left at the beginning of his adventure and its unknown opposite he has just conquered. "Freedom to pass back and forth across the world division, from the perspective of the apparitions of time to that of the casual deep and back—not contamination the principles of the one with those of the other, yet permitting the mind to know the one by virtue of the other—is the talent of the master."³⁰⁶ In the ideological context of Scottish socialist novels, the hero's mastery of the two worlds translates to the dichotomy between his class consciousness and the reality of the material world he inhabits. Within the narratological framework of positive apprenticeship, Suleiman argues that "it is in his 'new life' that the hero will undertake the action for which his apprenticeship has prepared him."³⁰⁷ The purpose of his rebirth is to use the ideology to redefine the nature of political systems and transform the world. The images that evoke this notion of ideological action in the novels vary considerably. Following his conversion, the hero may learn to ignore his impulses of individualism and submit his will to the collective. His new consciousness also enables him to identify and confront his ideological opponents. The protagonist becomes an active proponent of the ideological doctrine.

On the other hand, the paradigm of negative apprenticeship invariably results in the hero's inertia and dissolution. While the positive apprentice feels surges of excitement generated by his acceptance of the new ideological consciousness, his negative counterpart's life is plagued by fear and self-doubt which he may channel into desperate aggression. Although the incorporation stage of the hero's ideological journey in Scottish socialist novels is dominated by the dramatic moment of the hero's conversion, the praxis phase performs an important propagandist function—it demonstrates the efficacy and meaningfulness of the conversion.

306. Joseph Campbell, *Hero*, 212–3.

307. Suleiman, *Authoritarian Fictions*, 78.

The protagonist in *The Underworld* exemplifies the empowering effects of ideological consciousness. He becomes increasingly aware that “he possessed talents far above the average of his class. He was sensible of a certain superiority.”³⁰⁸ Despite the temptation to use his talent for personal gain, he does not let this sense of intellectual ascendancy corrupt his character. Instead he acknowledges “the movement must be served and not lived on. Not personal betterment, but the betterment of the whole lot. Whatever it demanded of service from anyone should be given willingly, no matter in what direction the call were made. . . . His own life’s work lay here, working for his own class—for humanity.”³⁰⁹ Consequently, Robert’s praxis phase shows how the acquisition of the ideological truth commits the hero to the cause of socialism. Now that he has become a master of the political ideology, he feels compelled to practice it accordingly.

Besides the sense of loyalty and commitment to the movement, Robert’s ideological consciousness motivates his actions in the workplace. When a pit disaster traps a group of workers in the mine, Robert “seemed to be the one man who knew what to do—at least, he seemed to be the only one who had a definite aim in view and as if by some natural instinct everyone was just ready to do his bidding. He was the leader of the herd towards whom everyone looked ready for a new order to meet any new situation which might arise. Initiative and resource were a monopoly in his hands.”³¹⁰ The protagonist displays all the major qualities associated with the mythical hero. Welsh depicts Robert’s uncontested leadership skills that mobilize his co-workers in a daring attempt to save the imprisoned miners. The fact that he is the only person who possesses the practical knowledge and courage to act implies his mastery of the two mythical spheres.

In fact, Robert’s superhuman ability to remain calm and detached while he rallies the panic-stricken miners gives evidence about his complete control over his life. “He was cool and clear brained. . . . He felt he was standing out of all this maelstrom of suffering and terror. Not that he was impervious to anxiety for the men below, not that he was unmoved by all that it meant to those standing round; . . . the load and the intensity of the pain lifted, and from that moment he had been master of the

308. Welsh, *Underworld*.

309. Welsh, *Underworld*.

310. Welsh, *Underworld*.

situation.”³¹¹ The protagonist’s praxis phase clearly shows the impact of his ideological transformation which allows him to effectively solve problems in his post-conversion period. It epitomizes the hero’s action based on attained knowledge. As result of his incorporation, passivity is not an option for the hero who must actively demonstrate the benefits of the ideological certitudes he has discovered.

The praxis phase depicted by Welsh in *The Morlocks* is comparable in structure and imagery to that in *The Underworld*. Following his shift from revolutionary to democratic socialism, the protagonist’s new ideological consciousness begins to affect the entire village of Craigside. While the fictional industrial unrest appears particularly violent in some parts of the country, Sydney applies his revisionism to keep the strike local and peaceful. Instead of leaving the community without direction, he “threw himself with heart and soul into the struggle, and soon became the chief organizer of all the activities of the village. . . . He was the peacemaker when any disagreement began to show itself; and he kept . . . the spirits of the men and women as cheery as possible. He advised, he worked, he planned until naturally he was looked to for guidance in any emergency that arose.”³¹² He instinctively assumes the role of the community’s leader as a result of his enlightened status. He puts his recently acquired knowledge to practice by exercising the ideological principles he has discovered by his allegorical conquest of the unknown world. Sydney truly embodies the mythical hero because he has successfully carried out the ultimate difficult task which consists in communicating what he experienced during his journey to the ordinary people.³¹³

The assumption that Sydney is the embodiment of successful herohood is further demonstrated by his faculty to interpret the reality which is one of the prerogatives of the mythical hero. Reflecting on the dystopian state of the world in the aftermath of the failed general strike, the hero prophetically concludes that matters “shall certainly be bad for a long time; but we don’t want them to be as they were. They must be better. The old order is going, about through suffering, and out of this sorrow, joy will come, . . . else there is no aim to human existence. . . . The change could have been brought about by better methods; but it would have been longer in coming.”³¹⁴ Sydney speaks from the privileged position of the representative of the socialist

311. Welsh, *Underworld*.

312. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 250.

313. See Joseph Campbell, *Hero*, 202.

314. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 315–6.

movement which implies the hero has become the voice of the oppressed as a consequence of his ideological transformation. The link between the individual and collective expresses the mythical goal of “effecting a reconciliation of the individual consciousness with the universal will. And this is effected through a realization of the true relationship of the passing phenomena of time to the imperishable life that lives and dies in all.” In a way that resembles the protagonist in *The Underworld*, Sydney personifies this concept of mythical mastery of the worlds and freedom to live. He has access to a higher level of knowledge represented by the ideology. At the same time, he can make informed judgments about the casual reality. It is yet another example of the positive form of apprenticeship narrative. The hero undertakes action in accordance with the absolute truth he attained in the previous phase of his incorporation.

By contrast, in *Grey Granite* Gibbon dramatizes the process of the mythical hero’s dissolution in the universal will in an explicitly ideological manner. Since the protagonist’s enthusiastic conversion to communism, Ewan has gradually become a pragmatic proponent of the doctrine. Although he genuinely believes in the ideology which he actively promotes in his workplace and at public events, he has no illusions about his role in the movement “knowing that if it suited the Party purpose Trease would betray him to the police tomorrow, use anything and everything that might happen to him as propaganda and publicity, without caring a fig for liking or aught else. . . . Neither friends nor scruples nor honour nor hope for the folk who took the workers’ road; just *life*. [italics in the original]”³¹⁵ Ewan’s awareness of his worth to the movement is a direct result of his acceptance of the ideological totality where the whole is more valuable than the sum of its individual parts. Therefore, the expansion of the hero’s consciousness, which he experiences during the acceptance phase, motivates him to act as though he is merely a means to an end in the context of historical materialism.

Additionally, Ewan’s practical application of his political convictions does not allow any room for compromise. Ironically, the protagonist’s ideological dogmatism results in abandoning his romantic partner who originally functioned as Ewan’s mentor. When he asks her why she has not been attending the communist party’s meetings lately, she angrily replies “I’ve left the Party! . . . I’m sick of being without decent clothes, without the money I earn myself, pretty things that are mine, that I’ve worked for. . . . If ever there’s anything done for them it’ll be done from above, not by losing

315. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 652–3.

oneself in them.”³¹⁶ Instead of living the austere life of communist revolutionaries, she suggests they climb the social ladder and join the Labour Party in order to raise their standard of living while retaining some of their political views. In Ewan’s eyes, however, this qualifies as unacceptable heresy: “*Go to them then in your comfortable car—your Labour Party and your comfortable flat. But what are you doing out here with me? I can get a prostitute anywhere.* [italics in the original]”³¹⁷ The hero, having achieved victory through his initiation into the communist belief system, breaks up with his girlfriend to preserve his ideological purity. Deirdre Burton claims Ewan’s action is markedly misogynistic in tone. “It is that recourse to the irrelevant insults of sexuality that finally marks Ewan out as the person of limited vision, limited growth—both person and political.”³¹⁸ This is true to a certain extent, but Burton’s judgment about the hero’s political development does not take into consideration its implications for the structural pattern of political propaganda. The fact that the protagonist’s political devotion overrides his personal concerns shows the impact of his ideological dogmatism which is ultimately the purpose of the praxis phase. The hero invariably undertakes action based on his ideological knowledge.

A similar conception of class antagonism appears in Barke’s *Major Operation*. Under the influence of his recently ideologized consciousness, the converted protagonist proudly declares his hostility toward his wife and old middle-class friend who cuckolded him:

‘Before this happened, I was a member of your class. I was brought up in your class. Now I belong to the working-class—and I’m proud to belong to it. You know it has been said an apostate, a renegade, is always very bitter against his former associates. That doesn’t apply in this case. I hate the class to which I belonged, Rowatt. I have a lot to live down for ever having been born into it. But my past can be liquidated. I’m on the other side of the barricade now. I regard you and Mabel as class enemies.’³¹⁹

Unlike the protagonist’s misogynistic remarks in Gibbon’s *Grey Granite*, George’s bitter denunciation of his former class allies in *Major Operation* is rather impersonal. It appears as though he tries to maintain some sort of ideological professionalism in his criticism of the middle-class couple. Nonetheless, it structurally

316. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 663–4.

317. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 664.

318. Deirdre Burton, “A Feminist Reading of Lewis Grassie Gibbon’s *A Scots Quair*,” in *The British Working-Class Novel in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Jeremy Hawthorn (London: Edward Arnold, 1984), 45.

319. Barke, *Major Operation*, 391–2.

performs the same function because it represents the hero's application of the knowledge he gained by converting to socialism.

In *The Land of the Leal*, Barke recycles the theme of conflicting ideologies in the hero's praxis phase. Having proclaimed himself a socialist, Andrew attacks his brother's religious beliefs. As the family discusses the ongoing strike, the hero orders him to "leave Jesus Christ out of the argument—I don't care whose side he was on—it doesn't affect us to-day. Maybe you think you're above politics. But the Church is not above politics. It's on the side of the ruling class all the time."³²⁰ Andrew's patronizing attitude to his brother clearly represents the ideologically motivated action taken by the hero to assert his political beliefs.

The fact that the trajectories of heroes in positive and negative forms of apprenticeship narrative display similar morphology but differ in semantics means that David's praxis phase is structurally identical to Andrew's. While Andrew argues with his brother to criticize religion, their father has a similar row with his own brother except this time the hero mocks socialism. David naturally disapproves of his brother's political views because he believes "Robert was brought up to ken the right way o' things and to have nae truck wi' folk that want to change the whole natural order o' things."³²¹ His allusion to the religious aspect of their upbringing is the outcome of David's refusal to accept socialist ideology and reshape the landscape of his consciousness. Instead, it urges him to promote his conservative ideas.

Moreover, in a futile attempt to revisit his comfort zone, he decides to go on holiday in the rural area where they used to live. Unfortunately, this sentimental trip does not provide much comfort because David realizes "there was no way back to that life: there was no way forward. He had come back to find that the past was dead or dying and that the future was more uncertain than evert it had been."³²² Arguing with his brother and temporarily transforming into a tourist in his own childhood are both examples of the action the hero takes to manifest his unchanged consciousness. From the narratological perspective, the only difference between Andrew's and David's praxis phase is that latter "functions as a cautionary figure: his story shows the reader what one must not do, or be."³²³ Therefore, the juxtaposition of the two contrasting

320. Barke, *Leal*, 524.

321. Barke, *Leal*, 453.

322. Barke, *Leal*, 493.

323. Suleiman, *Authoritarian Fictions*, 86.

forms of ideological apprenticeship offers a revealing insight into the strategies employed by political propaganda.

Chapter 16

Departure

The last task of the proletarian hero in Scottish socialist novels is to offer a definite proof of his genuine commitment to the ideology. Having been positively incorporated into the socialist belief system and/or the working class, the hero's final drama is that of anticlimactic departure which reflects the mythical paradigm of the hero's journey. As Campbell points out, "The last act in the biography of the hero is that of the death or departure. Here the whole sense of the life is epitomized. Needless to say, the hero would be no hero if death held for him any terror; the first condition is reconciliation with the grave."³²⁴ Scottish socialist novels collectively depict the ultimate self-sacrifice of the ideological hero. It mostly consists of the protagonist's dying a heroic death. For example, he may die as a consequence of an industrial accident or political protest. Nonetheless, what these variations of the sacrificial death of the hero have in common is that he does so willingly and courageously. The protagonist's lack of fear of death is indicative of the mythical hero archetype but it also conveniently emphasizes the propagandist goal of the genre. Ironically, it carries inherently religious overtones because it sanctifies the hero's ideological status.

Alternatively, the hero can leave the stage in the literal sense of the word. In this type of hero's departure, he might be tasked with a new political responsibility which requires his relocation. Whether the sacrificial character of the final phase of the hero's journey results in his literal or figurative death, it is a rite of separation. Although it represents physical disconnection from his current state, its semantic implications are different from those associated with the first stage of his adventure. Despite his physical removal, the hero does not give up the knowledge and world he has earned by passing the trials of his adventure. Therefore, the hero's final rite of passage epitomizes his supreme sacrifice to the ideology whose importance it emphatically reiterates.

In a heavily melodramatic ending, the protagonist in *The Underworld* sacrifices his life during a rescue mission to free a group of miners trapped in a pit. Unfortunately, he does not reach them in time because the destabilizing structure of the mine immobilizes him in a shaft. Realizing he has been separated from the rest of the rescue team, Robert experiences a moment of unprecedented hysteria. "For the first time terror

324. Joseph Campbell, *Hero*, 329.

seized him,” and he “raved and swore and shouted in desperation, the sweat streaming from every pore, his eyes wild and glaring.”³²⁵ When he comes back to his senses a minute later, Robert finds out he cannot escape. Despite his imminent death, he remains calm and single-minded:

He was proof against all their terrors now, the spirit could evade them yet; for though the old shaft might collapse and imprison his body and claim it as a sacrifice to the King Terror of the Underworld, no prison was ever created that could contain the indomitable spirit of man as God. He was free—free, and was happy and could cry defiance to the dangers of the mine, to the terrors of time itself. He could clutch the corners of the earth, and play with it as a toy of time, among the Gods of Eternity.³²⁶

Welsh’s purposefully stylized depiction of the protagonist’s tragic death exhibits the key features that underlie the departure of the mythical hero. First and foremost, he bravely conquers his fears and welcomes the moment of his delivery. More importantly, Welsh glorifies Robert’s death to the extent that it evokes the ritual killing of divine kings that frequently takes place in primitive mythologies. James Frazer, an influential figure in the early stages of the modern studies of mythology, suggests human gods are killed to prevent them from aging and becoming weak. “The man-god must be killed as soon as he shows symptoms that his powers are beginning to fail, and his soul must be transferred to a vigorous successor before it has been seriously impaired by the threatened decay.”³²⁷ Robert’s sacrificial death may be read as a mythical allegory of the dying man-god tailored for ideological purposes. The protagonist becomes physically weak as a result of his abortive attempts to free the miners. From the mythical perspective, the only way to preserve the ideological potency of the hero is to sacrifice him. Consequently, Welsh’s vivid imagery stresses the parallels between mythology and the dramatizations of ideology in Scottish socialist novels.

Although *The Morlocks* largely repeats the biography of the mythical hero, it differs from *The Underworld* in that Welsh uses the contrast between two incarnations of the hero to stress the ideological message of the novel. Alan, the politically radicalized version of the hero, sacrifices his life for the revolutionary cause of the Morlocks. In their final endeavor to bring down the power structures, the revolutionary

325. Welsh, *Underworld*.

326. Welsh, *Underworld*.

327. James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (1922; repr., London: MacMillan, 1967), 350.

insurgents launch a desperate offensive against the agents of law enforcement in Blantyre. Alan plays a key role in the incident because he triggers the riot by shooting a police officer who attempts to arrest him. “Alan at once concluded that this was a policeman in disguise; and as he saw a pair of handcuffs being whipped out, drew his revolver, and fired point-blank at the policeman, who fell writhing in agony.”³²⁸ Although he cannot avert his inevitable demise, Alan does not surrender. Instead, he faces the end of his life with determination to die for what he believes in. Therefore, Alan’s resilience in the face of his fast approaching defeat reflects the mythical hero’s reconciliation with his departure.

Conversely, the other ideological incarnation of the mythical hero in the novel is not sacrificed. In fact, he helps to identify and retrieve Alan’s body after the revolutionary riot in Blantyre is quelled. Welsh allows Sydney to live for a reason. He performs the function of the author’s mouthpiece that interprets the sacrificial character of the revolutionary violence in the narrative. He condescendingly points out that “Great movements are built on sacrifices, and sometimes good men even ruin their chances of success by the adoption of too precipitate methods.”³²⁹ More specifically, he uses Alan’s death to emphasize the moral of the story. Having secured Mary’s affections, Sydney tells her about Alan’s “mad exploits that sprang from too much loving of a great cause, the heroic sacrifices, and the courageous acts to ease the sufferings of the people; and above all, the unbending will and unconquerable faith that inspired him.”³³⁰ What is merely evoked in *The Underworld* becomes explicitly clear in *The Morlocks*—the mythical pattern of sacrificial scapegoating of a dying god. Frazer explains that in the context of mythology the human god “was killed, not originally to take away sin, but to save the divine life from the degeneracy of old age; but, since he had to be killed at any rate, people may have thought that they might as well seize the opportunity to lay upon him the burden of their sufferings and sins, in order that he might bear it away with him to the unknown world beyond the grave.”³³¹ Alan dies in combat to justify Welsh’s revisionism, but more importantly he functions as a vehicle for relieving the evils that befall the working class. Welsh’s politicized

328. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 297.

329. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 316.

330. Welsh, *Morlocks*, 317.

331. Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 755.

dramatizations of the killing and scapegoating of a human god perfectly exemplify the ideological uses of mythology in political propaganda.

In contrast, *Gray Granite* is the only exception to the mythical paradigm of a dying hero. With its increasingly stereotypical sketches of Ewan's complete devotion to the communist party, the novel's ending highlights the removal of the hero. However, unlike the rest of the Scottish socialist novels, the departure of Gibbon's hero is not depicted as a human sacrifice to the ideology. Instead, he physically leaves Duncairn for a higher political purpose. He is to lead a hungry march "down south, the windy five hundred miles to London. Lucky young devil that he was to be going, Trease wished it was him that was leading the March," but the party "had given its instructions for Ewan and intended keeping him down there in London as a new organizer."³³² Although Ewan is not physically scapegoated to provide remedy, his departure can be allegorically interpreted as a different category of the killing of a mythical man-god. The fact that the communist party decides to recall Ewan might reflect the mythical practice described by Frazer as killing kings at the end of a fixed term to prevent their degeneration:

Some peoples, however, appear to have thought it unsafe to wait for even the slightest symptom of decay and have preferred to kill the king while he was still in the full vigour of life. Accordingly, they have fixed a term beyond which he might not reign, and at the close of which he must die, the term fixed upon being short enough to exclude the probability of his degenerating physically in the interval."³³³

If we consider Ewan's growing political influence in Duncairn, it is possible to read his relocation to London as a sacrificial killing of a communist organizer who has become too powerful for the party to handle. Before he can get out of control, the party decides to cut him off from his source of potential power. The allegorical reading of Ewan's departure as a sacrificial killing of a divine king can be too big a hyperbole to process. However, the fact that he leaves the city for the sake of the movement is the protagonist's ultimate act of self-sacrifice that evokes the conclusion of the mythical hero's biography.

In Barke's *Major Operation*, on the other hand, the protagonist dies in a way that accurately emulates the killing of a mythical hero. The incident that ultimately motivates him to sacrifice his life to the ideology occurs during a communist

332. Gibbon, *Grey Granite*, 667.

333. Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 361.

demonstration led by his mentor. Despite his post-conversion doubts about his ability to blend in the working class and live up to his mentor's political standards, George eventually displays courage and determination in a desperate act of bravery and defiance. Watching his mentor being clubbed unconscious by the police, the hero runs to his help without any consideration for his own safety. "Anderson felt himself possessed of terrific strength, felt there was nothing he would not defy. Only one thing mattered to him—MacKelvie must not be trampled to death by the horses."³³⁴ He picks up a red flag with a yellow hammer and sickle and uses its pole to topple a mounted police officer from the saddle. Although he saves his mentor, the next horse crushes him to death. Besides the explicit ideological symbolism, Barke structurally recycles the mythical pattern of a dying hero. The protagonist suddenly appears fearless and single-minded—he displays the values we typically associate with the mythical hero facing death.

The whole scene is also symptomatic of the mythical scapegoating of divine kings. As a result of George's self-sacrifice, "From fifty thousand proletarian throats a roar of anger and rage shook the Second City. . . . Triumphant, tumultuous, exultant, fifty thousand demonstrators were already on the move towards the Green."³³⁵ The hero's self-sacrifice seems to renew the protesters' endeavor, which shows how socialist propaganda recycles mythology. What is more, the hero's mentor officially sanctions his martyrdom: "In the coffin before us lies the mangled body of our comrade. We will cherish his memory . . . but here to-day we pledge ourselves to renew our fight against the forces of reaction."³³⁶ George's helper uses the hero's departure to regenerate faith in the ideology among its followers. Consequently, the hero's sacrificial death represents an ideological reenactment of the mythical killing of a human god.

Barke's novels are united not only by their militant advocacy of socialism but also the inherently mythical imagery they use to communicate the ideology. *The Land of the Leal* uses the theme of a dying man-god to create a sense of the hero as a totality of life from an ideological perspective. The influence of the mythical structure can be detected in the heroic depiction of the protagonist's death. Pondering the meaning of life, David admits he "was weary with life. His thoughts often dwelt on death with a

334. Barke, *Major Operation*, 489.

335. Barke, *Major Operation*, 490.

336. Barke, *Major Operation*, 493.

melancholy acceptance and a touch of gratefulness. He had nothing to fear: he had less to anticipate.”³³⁷ Ironically, David has these thoughts of death only a moment before he is run down by the traffic while crossing a road. Nonetheless, they show his reconciliation with the inevitable end which evokes the biographical pattern of the mythical hero.

In fact, the hero’s dying carries overtones of mythical heroism even as he lies unconscious in the hospital. “The doctor thought he would have died that afternoon. But David still had tremendous strength. . . . ‘Poor old chap,’ he said. ‘He’s making a fight for it.’”³³⁸ The fatal accident that causes David’s death is of particular significance to the mythical implications of his departure. He cannot cross the street quickly enough to avoid being hit by the traffic because “the sudden change from a life of active physical labour to sedentary work had brought much physical retribution. He had grown fat and flabby. The beat and pulse of his life had slowed down.”³³⁹ Therefore, David’s death appears to be an allegory of the killing of a human god who shows signs of weakness and decay.

The assumption of David’s sacrificial death bears relation to the departure of his son Andrew. The fact that both the father and son die successively implies the mythical theme of a dying and reviving god, or the killing of a divine king for the sake of his successor. Although both heroes in *The Land of the Leal* sacrifice their lives, their motivation is different. While David dies as an indirect consequence of his devotion to his family, Andrew dies a martyr fighting fascism in Spain. His death is depicted in a particularly heroic way. “Andy was dead. Killed in hand-to-hand fighting. He had fought like a hero, lion-hearted, mad, reckless.”³⁴⁰ Unlike his father, Andrew dies in the prime of his life. From the mythical perspective, this suggests the ritual pattern of the killing of a divine king to prevent his degeneration. Consequently, Barke’s ideologized dramatizations of the sacrificial death of the hero demonstrate the functional link between mythical imagery and political propaganda.

337. Barke, *Major Operation*, 533.

338. Barke, *Major Operation*, 555.

339. Barke, *Major Operation*, 534.

340. Barke, *Major Operation*, 594.

CONCLUSION

Scottish socialist novels perfectly illustrate the ambiguous relationship between literature and propaganda. As Mark Van Doren observes, “The trouble with mere propaganda is that it is merely didactic; and from the merely didactic, . . . nothing can be learned. The trouble with mere literature is that it is merely beautiful; and from the merely beautiful there is no living pleasure to be had.”³⁴¹ The novels certainly display the typical formal and stylistic signs of the propagandist effort to bend the imaginative power of artistic talent to suit its ideological purposes. The controversial tendency in British fiction to politicize art have often led to claims that “artists shouldn’t turn their art into the political propaganda of Marxism because it’d kill it.”³⁴² However, the self-applauding discussion about their role in drawing the line between art and propaganda merits only so much thought. While politicizing literature can have a potentially negative impact on art, Scottish socialist novels are not a cultural showcase for aesthetic bankruptcy. Some of them employ a surprising variety of traditional and experimental literary techniques to communicate the experience of two decades of social and industrial unrest in post-World War I Scotland. Instead of condemning the socialist narratives for what they are, we must put aside our aesthetic prejudice and explore the fact they represent a cultural expression of political propaganda.

It makes infinitely more sense to look at Scottish socialist novels as a great learning opportunity to understand a social phenomenon from a fresh perspective. They exemplify the ideological uses of mythology in modern political propaganda that not only adapts archetypal imagery but systematically recycles the general pattern of rites of passage which defines the structure of conversion narratives.

This is not to say that the novels represent some new ideologically distinct type of mythology. Concerning the potential of left-wing propaganda to manufacture independent myths, the novels seem to reflect the view held by Roland Barthes who argues that socialist myth exists but it is “*inessential*” because “the objects which it takes hold of are rare—only a few political notions—unless it has itself recourse to the whole repertoire of the bourgeois myths. . . . Then, it is an incidental myth, its use is not part of a strategy, as is the case with bourgeois myth, but only of a tactics, or, at the

341. Mark Van Doren, “Literature and Propaganda,” *The Virginia Quarterly Review* 14, no. 2 (Spring 1938): 207–8, accessed July 10, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26445450>.

342. Klugman, “Crisis,” 36.

worst, of a deviation; if it occurs, it is as a myth suited to a convenience, not to a necessity.”³⁴³ The parallels between the story form of myth and the novel form of the socialist narratives that I have shown in the first part of this study indicate that left-wing propaganda positively recycles a distinctly bourgeois means of cultural expression. Nevertheless, it is questionable whether it draws exclusively on bourgeois myths. Although convenience most accurately defines the logic behind the ideological uses of mythology in Scottish socialist novels, it rather demonstrates that “all literary genres are derived from the quest-myth”³⁴⁴ which dominates bourgeois and socialist narratives alike. Consequently, the narratological framework of Scottish socialist novels implies it does not construct a new form of myth but conveniently reproduces some universal mythical structures and imagery that predate the emergence of the realist novel.

My mythological analysis of the novels has revealed two key processes involved in the ideological reprogramming of myth. The first process is fairly self-evident. It reflects the impact of technology and the changing division of labour on the historical production and reproduction of culture. According to Benjamin, “The acceleration of literary competence caused by the extension of the press resulted in an increasing number of writers. It became common property.”³⁴⁵ The increasing access to literacy along with the relocation of the workforce from the country to urban areas led to what I call the proletarianization of writing. This process is characterized by a gradual rise in the number of growingly class-conscious but formally untrained writers who adopted a traditionally bourgeois mode of writing to address the social, political and economic issues of the proletariat. This naturally led to the proletarianization and ideologization of myth. Just as the working class was a product of urbanization and deskilling, writers without formal training in any literary tradition adapted mythical imagery and narrative patterns to communicate their experiences. While this declassified the status of mythology, it also politicized it for propagandist purposes. As a result, the mythical hero underwent a fundamentally ideological transformation to embody the principles of socialism and promote the interests of the proletariat. The mythical hero struggling with supernatural elements turned into a representation of an epic clash between Labour and Capital.

343. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (London: Vintage, 1993), 147.

344. Frye, “Archetypes of Literature,” 17.

345. Benjamin, “Work of Art,” 34.

The social process of proletarianization plays a politically significant role in the novels because it often leads to the hero's ideological transformation. As soon as he joins the proletariat, the hero is naturally more apt to convert to socialism. This seems to reflect the Marxist base-superstructure model which implies that changes in the economic base (proletarianization of the workforce) inevitably result in changes in the intellectual superstructure (acceptance of socialism). However, the mythical pattern recycled by the novels suggests it can be reversed. The hero can become proletarianized as a result of his conversion to socialism. Therefore, while the narrative pattern of ideological apprenticeship primarily harnesses myth to express the classic model of Marxist theory, myth can subversively prove its practical limitations.

The second process underlying the cultural dimension of political propaganda is the systematic ritualization of ideology. Although the common narrative structure of Scottish socialist novels is partly limited by the constraints of socialist realism,³⁴⁶ they communicate the ideology by suspending the casual reality of the hero who sets off on a mythical journey of self-discovery. Townsend, Jr. argues that the "ability to transcend an ordinary situation and transfer the participant into a shadowy, only partially understood realm of deeper reality is the common ground which links myth and ritual."³⁴⁷ In other words, the novels use ritual as a principle dramatic device to depict the transformation of the hero's consciousness from one ideological state to another.

Besides communicating ideology, ritual in Scottish socialist novels also acts as a powerful agent of ideological reinforcement. It provides an opportunity to rehearse abstract value systems, but it also builds a sense of security and collective identity. Rituals play a key role in the process of the hero's incorporation into ideological belief systems because they "strengthen the ties between the individual and the society of which he is a member."³⁴⁸ As a result, the proletarian hero undergoes a series of rites of passage which initiate him into new social and ideological systems. However, the arbitrary rules by which ritual is governed allow the novels to employ a desacralized version of religious initiation.³⁴⁹ Instead of introducing a protagonist to a religious

346. For a detailed description of the constraints of socialist realism see Régine Robin, *Socialist Realism: An Impossible Aesthetic*, trans. Catherine Porter (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 281–2.

347. Townsend, "Myth and Meaning," 194.

348. Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 227.

349. See Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford: The Oxford University Press, 1997), 91.

belief, they depict his conversion to a political ideology. This is achieved through symbolic actions that accompany ritual. For instance, the hero's physical departure from his community symbolizes his separation from his old consciousness whereas the hero's first day at work represents his symbolic initiation into an unknown universe that offers potentially new knowledge. Kertzer observes that symbolism plays an important part in identifying power relations in society and establishing authority.³⁵⁰ Therefore, the novels demonstrate how political propaganda uses the dynamic of myth and ritual for political reasons.

These findings seem to contradict the hypothesis that the first half of the twentieth century saw a gradual disappearance of distinctly working-class culture.³⁵¹ Although recent technological developments indicate that we may be progressing toward a classless culture, Scottish socialist novels represent an example of the propagandist effort to challenge the sense of classlessness that was thought to result in unconscious uniformity.

More importantly, my analysis of Scottish socialist novels suggests a hitherto undetected aspect of the cultural dimension of propaganda. Underneath an easily identifiable exterior of political sloganeering and didacticism lies a significant mythical structure independent of the aesthetic confines of the ideological *roman à thèse*. It involves a logic seemingly opposed to rationality and realism yet inherently present in modern thought with the potential to shape our perception of reality. Once we fully appreciate this imaginative but systematic use of mythology as a vehicle for ideological persuasion in literature, it should be possible to better explain the general mechanism of political propaganda and control the impact of modern propaganda outlets on public.

While these findings improve our understanding of how literature communicates ideology, they do not exhaust the potential of the mythological theory of political propaganda in accessing its scope. We must also look beyond the cultural dimension of propaganda to demonstrate the relevance of myth in politics. For example, an investigation into the role of myth-making in the film industry or education could potentially offer a new perspective on the ideological uses of mythology in propaganda.

350. See David I. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics, and Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 5.

351. See Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, 340–2.

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