

Higher English : *Sunset Song*

Characterisation

(a) Major characterisation : Chris

Realistic features :

1. *archetypal female development (bildungsroman) :*

child → adolescent → woman → lover → wife → mother → widow

[Find evidence from your worksheets on the Song to illustrate Chris's placing within each of these stages.]

2. *psychological realism (stream of consciousness) :*

[Find evidence from your worksheets on the Song to illustrate Gibbon's use of Chris's perspective to heighten narrative immediacy.]

(b) Secondary characterisation :

realistic features :

1. *moral realism : generic balance in secondary characterisation*

[Use your worksheet on the Prelude to group the main characters of Kinraddie, with the addition of the Guthrie family, according to their moral worthiness, as sympathetic, ambivalent, or unsympathetic. Look at the balance among the three groups, and say what this tells you about Gibbon's approach to the secondary characterisation.]

2. *moral realism : individual balance in secondary characterisation*

[Read Chris's thoughts on "How funny were folk..." (p.138). Use your worksheets on the Prelude and the Song to group the main characters as caricatures (ie characters who are flat in their portrayal, whether as sympathetic or unsympathetic characters) or as realistically rounded (ie "mixed and up-jumbled"). What does the balance between the two groups tell you about Gibbon's effectiveness in achieving a sense of moral realism in his secondary characterisation?)

