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AULD LANG SYNE

A Song and its Culture

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5. The Song of Union

The myriad sources discussed in the previous chapter suggest that Burns's *Auld Lang Syne* first came to attention in Scotland in the early years of the nineteenth century, and then, largely due to the influence of theatre, became firmly established throughout Britain and America in the course of the 1820s and 1830s. However, this was also the fate of many other songs, few of which have achieved, or retained, anything like the same status. At some point, however, *Auld Lang Syne* left these songs behind. This development is linked to the traditions that arose around the song, which redefined it and ensured its continued use and dissemination right through the twentieth century. The most important of these are the traditions of singing the song while standing in a circle with arms crossed and hands joined (S∞), of singing it at parting (SΩ), and of singing it at New Year (S_{NY}). S∞ and SΩ possibly developed in tandem, and will be discussed in this and the next chapter. S_{NY} developed slightly later, and will be discussed in Chapter 8.

The difficulties faced when trying to trace how and when the song of *Auld Lang Syne* became established are compounded in the case of traditions such as these. Most of the little available evidence is anecdotal and sketchy at best. Nevertheless, some patterns and contexts do start to emerge, and among the most important of these is a particular type of social group, or rather network, which seems to have had a decisive impact on the international distribution of the song: fraternal organizations—or "fraternal-type organizations" as I will also call them, since not all are fraternal in the strict sense. The common features of this type of social organization are that the members generally subscribe to a common goal or purpose (often self-improvement and/or mutual support) rather than sharing a common heritage; that members are admitted to this organization through oftentimes very elaborate initiation rituals; and that each individual group within the organization is connected to others in a national or transnational network, expressed through shared rituals and symbols. One of the most famous, or infamous examples of this type of organization is also the first one to have an implicit link to *Auld Lang Syne*.

5.1 The Freemasons

> In every regular assembly of men, who are convened for wise and useful purposes, the commencement and termination of business is attended with some form. Though

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> ceremonies are in themselves of little importance, yet as they serve to engage the attention, and to impress the mind with reverence, they must be considered as necessary on solemn occasions. They recall to memory the intent of the association, and banish many of those trifling associations which too frequently intrude on our less serious moments.[1]

That Burns was a Freemason is well known, though the role played by the Freemasons in assisting Burns during his life, and supporting his legacy after his death, is less generally recognized. For this reason, and because Freemasonry became a conscious or unconscious model for so many other fraternal and fraternal-type organizations, it is worth looking at Freemasonry in more detail.

Freemasonry originated in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, either in England or, more probably, Scotland.[2] Scotland had a long tradition of social networks built on trust and mutual support which are reflected in some aspects of Freemasonry.[3] However, speculative Freemasonry—as distinct from operative Freemasonry, the system employed by actual stonemasons—only became widely established in the early eighteenth century, with the foundation of the Grand Lodge of England in 1717. Even by this point, the secrecy of Freemasonry was a source of much unease, and as early as the 1720s the first of many "exposés" of their rituals and practices was published. As David Stevenson has noted, the symbolism and secrecy of the organization demonstrate the late Renaissance origins of the movement and seem to run counter to the spirit of the Enlightenment; at the same time, however, the ideals of Freemasonry encapsulated much Enlightenment thought.[4] Liberty, equality, and of course fraternity were among the watchwords of Masonry, which is one reason for frequent speculation on the role of Freemasons in the American and French revolutions.

These are not the only aspects of eighteenth-century Freemasonry which show it to be a phenomenon very much of its time. Freemasonry developed in an age when the structure of social life was changing. Coffee houses and taverns were becoming more and more the centre of social life, and many early Masonic Lodges met in taverns. By the eighteenth century, these trends were well established, further advanced by the general spirit of affluence and self-assuredness which characterised Georgian life.[5] Freemasonry's development can also be linked back to the seventeenth-century cult of friendship, as demonstrated in an address given by Brother Charles Leslie on the occasion of the consecration of Vernon Kilwinning Lodge in Edinburgh in 1741:

> When friendship is firm and cemented, we enjoy a high degree of pleasure; when it deadens or declines, we experience an equal degree of pain. In every breast there reigns a propensity to friendship, which, once properly established, sweetens every temporal enjoyment, and removes the disquietude to which the infirmities of our nature expose us [...] Nevertheless, though the influence of friendship, considered the source of

1 Preston 1775, 47–48.
2 Stevenson 1988/1, 1988/2.
3 See, e.g., Mackenzie 2003; Caterall 2004.
4 See Stevenson 1988/1.
5 See Rubin 2003.

> benevolence, is unlimited, it exerts itself more or less vehemently as the objects it favours are nearer or more remote. Hence springs true patriotism, which fires the soul with the most generous flame, creates the best and most disinterested virtue, and inspires the public spirit and heroic ardour, which enables us to support a good cause, and risk our lives in its defence.[6]

Strong words indeed, but loyalty to King and Country, and the integrity which distinguishes the patriot from the mere warrior, are merely the extreme end of the spectrum:

> Friendship not only appears divine when employed in preserving the liberties of our country, but shines with equal splendour in the more tranquil hours of life. Before it rises into the noble flame of patriotism, aiming destruction at the heads of tyrants, thundering for liberty, and courting dangers in a good cause, we shall see it calm and moderate, burning with an even glow, improving the soft hours of peace, and heightening the relish for virtue. Hence it is that contracts are formed, societies are instituted, and the vacant hours of life are cheerfully employed in agreeable company, and social conversation.[7]

Lodge meetings were a critical element in the process of cementing these ties of friendship and association. Theoretically at least, religious doctrine and political affiliation were to be left at the Lodge door, just as social class and standing were to play a secondary role to personal virtue and integrity, self-improvement and the attainment of truth. While this did not mean that princes and ploughmen were treated exactly the same in the Lodge—a certain deference to rank was still practised—it did mean that Freemasonry provided a singular opportunity for ploughmen and their like to enjoy the advantages of the chattering classes, giving them access to an exclusive social network at a time when the old structures of aristocratic patronage were in decline. In the particular case of Burns, this was important on several levels. His Lodge brothers helped him raise the subscription necessary to publish his *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* in 1786. Many of the connections he made during his subsequent sojourn in Edinburgh, which were to be so important for the rest of his career, came through Masonry. Finally, after his early death, the Freemasons played a central role in commemorating his legacy—indeed, the specific ways in which we remember Burns owe more than a little to traditions and practices common to the club and Lodge life of the eighteenth century.

The most obvious example of this is the widespread practice, amongst Burnsians and Scots worldwide, of celebrating Burns's birthday with an annual dinner. The Burns Supper, with its formalities, its long and standardized series of toasts, its tendency to overindulgence and to still being a predominantly masculine affair, is the legacy of the kind of suppers so popular in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

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6 First published in 1765 in the *Edinburgh Free-Masons Pocket Companion*, it is quoted here from Preston 1775, one of the most influential of early Masonic publications, where it appears under the title "A Vindication of Masonry", 7–8.

7 Preston 1775, 9-10.

We see them echoed in the proceedings of London's Catch Club, for example, or the Anacreontic Society, as described here by William Parke:

> This fashionable society consisted of a limited number of members, each of whom had the privilege of introducing a friend, for which he paid in his subscription accordingly. The meetings were held in the great ball-room of the Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand, once a fortnight during the season, and the entertainments of the evening consisted of a grand concert, in which all the flower of the musical profession assisted as honorary members. After the concert an elegant supper was served up; and when the cloth was removed, the constitutional song, beginning, "To Anacreon in Heaven", was sung by the chairman or his deputy. This was followed by songs in all the varied styles, by theatrical singers and their members; and catches and glees were given by some of the first vocalists in the kingdom.[8]

Like the Anacreontic Society, eighteenth-century Masonic Lodge meetings also often feature a division between the "primary" part of the evening and a more informal "social" part. After the conclusion of "work", which in many cases meant the initiation or raising ceremonies, the Lodge would conclude in more informal surroundings. Some, notably those with links to the military, specifically took the form of so-called table lodges, where the banquet and its associated toasting were an integral part of the proceedings;[9] elaborate, formal banquets were also the main event of the annual Lodge meetings held on feast days such as St. John's Day, one of the major dates in the Masonic calendar. On such days, as a song for this particular feast puts it,

> My glass will be yours
> And your glass will be mine
> In token of friendship,
> Our hands let us join:
> And with this chearing glass,
> With pleasure round we'll pass,
> The mem'ry of the Great
> And the Good Divine. [...][10]

This typically Masonic sentiment is copied here from a book called *The Young Free-Mason's Assistant*, published in 1784—specifically, the copy once owned by Burns, and now held in the National Library of Scotland.

Masonic songbooks and pamphlets from the eighteenth and early nineteenth century tend to mix Masonic songs with popular songs of the day. There is a fixed core of songs which recur, including *The Entered Apprentice's Song*, and a number of Masonic contrafacta both on this tune and on *God Save the King* and *Rule Britannia*; the latter also provides the tune for another very common Masonic song, *Hail! Mysterious! Hail!*

8 Parke 1830, 80–81. The bacchanalian song *To Anacreon in Heaven* is one of the most famous examples of a migrating melody: its tune later became the tune of *The Star-Spangled Banner*.

9 Tarbert 2005.

10 Bib. II/1784, 114.

Glorious Masonry. As regards the popular, non-Masonic songs in these volumes, some publishers claimed they were for the benefit of non-Masons who may have come upon a copy of the book.[11] However, there are also a good many non-Masonic songbooks that contain Masonic songs, and both factors taken together indicate the purchasing power obviously ascribed to the Masons themselves, the general interest in Masonry at this time, and the natural interchange which occurred between the Lodges and the larger world of which they were part.

Music, and singing, played an important role in Lodge meetings, and thus Masonry and other fraternal-type organizations modelled on it were capable of playing a key role in the establishment and transmission of songs. Not only did they offer a group context in which singing took place, but in many cases also a common set of songs which formed one of the many links to other Lodges. In the words of Simon McVeigh, the increasing centralization of Lodge life from the early eighteenth century onwards "engendered a rare universality across the nation, and, in the form of Masonic songs, a universality of musical culture that few organizations, perhaps not even the church, could match".[12] The most important Masonic songs, including *The Entered Apprentice's Song*, are found across the world right up to the present day. Though the Lodges were not the only context in which people (or rather, men) would come together in a group and affirm their allegiances through song, Freemasonry differed from many other clubs and societies of the time by the sheer number, quality, and structure of the connections. These connections were, firstly, to other Lodges at national and international level, but also to other groups and clubs of which the Masons were members. Many of these other clubs and societies closely mirrored certain aspects of Masonic practice. Freemasonry differed from many, though, in its secrecy and its more extensive use of elaborate and theatrical ritual. These features of Lodge life were so appealing that when the anti-Masonic movement led to a dramatic decrease in the number of American Masons in the 1830s, other secret societies very obviously influenced by Masonic symbolism and ritual sprang up like mushrooms. This process of adoption and adaption of symbolism and ritual, made all the more fluid given that individual men were often members of several different clubs and associations, has been widely commented on.[13]

The Masonic symbolism behind one of the traditions now associated with *Auld Lang Syne* is hinted at in a small and otherwise inconsequential report from the Burns Anniversary celebration held by members of the Burns Lodge I.O.G.T. in Mauchline some time around 1879: "After spending about three hours in the most happy manner,

11 Thus, the advertisement from the start of *The Young Free-Mason's Assistant* states that "As this COLLECTION may fall into the hands of some who are not initiated into the mysteries of Free-Masonry, of course, to them, many of the songs will be unintelligible. It was therefore thought advisable to subjoin a few of the most Celebrated Scotch and English Songs for their amusement", 6. Another interesting example is provided by Hale 1775: ostensibly a general songbook with Masonic songs added, its title page is covered in Masonic symbols.

12 McVeigh 2000, 73.

13 See, e.g., Gist 1940; introduction to Axelrod 1997.

the evening's proceedings were brought to a close by forming the circle of unity, and singing part of 'Auld langsyne'".[14] What is referred to here as the "circle of unity" is almost certainly what is more commonly known as the "Mystic Chain", described by Albert G. Mackey in the standard work *A Lexicon of Freemasonry* as follows:

> **Chain, Mystic** To form the mystic chain is for the brethren to make a circle, holding each other by the hands, as in surrounding a grave, & c. Each brother crosses his arms in front of his body, so as to give his right-hand to his left-hand neighbour, and his left hand to his right-hand neighbour. The French call it *chaine d'union*.[15]

A French dictionary of Masonry elaborates further, stating that the *chaîne d'union* is practised at the close of ceremonies in the French Rite and the Rectified Scottish Rite, both of which were established in the later eighteenth century; the practice was also adopted in the newer rites of French Freemasonry established in the early nineteenth century.[16] Apart from the "closed" form of the chain, in which the arms are crossed, there is also a less common "open form" in which the arms are held loosely at the side of the body.[17] The closed form, however, results in a particularly strong circle, whose individual members must move closer together than if they had joined hands in any other way. Another source, this time from Germany, states that the tradition was rare in English Lodges, but more common in Germany and other countries on the continent. This source also states that the practice generally takes place at the end of Lodge meetings, that it was referred to in 1817 as being one of the oldest Masonic rituals, and that it was taught to the Lodge in Magdeburg by Ferdinand von Braunschweig (1721–1792).[18] It is unclear, however, if the form of the chain referred to is the same "closed" form we now associate with *Auld Lang Syne*, and to which Mackey referred.

The symbolism of the chain is important for Freemasonry and for other fraternal orders, notably the Oddfellows. The *chaîne d'union* or mystic chain links not only the Brothers present, but also represents the mystic tie uniting Masons throughout the world and Masons past, present, and future. How and when *Auld Lang Syne* and this tradition came together is difficult to establish. For this reason, it is also impossible to know whether the tradition S∞ helped engender the tradition of singing the song at parting, or whether conversely the Masonic tradition of forming the mystic chain at the end of Lodge meetings was transferred to *Auld Lang Syne* precisely because

14 Original source untraced, cutting in Mitchell Library Burnsiana, cat. no. 52943 (52940), 68.

15 Mackey 1883 [1858], 50–51.

16 The "Scottish" Rite originated in France, but on the basis—so the story goes—of traditions which came from Scotland. Although French Freemasonry probably started as an offshoot of English Masonry, there is also a tradition that the first French Lodges were those around the court of James II after 1689.

17 Lhomme et al. 1993, 89.

18 Lenhoff & Posner 1932, 832. Ferdinand von Braunschweig became a Freemason in 1740, in the Lodge of the Prussian Emperor Frederick the Second, and was Grand Master of the "Scottish", i.e., Scottish Rite Lodges from 1772.

it, too, had become associated with the end of gatherings and civic events.[19] What is clear is that *Auld Lang Syne* is now as established within Masonic tradition as it is in other social contexts. By the 1870s, Mackey could write that the song "has met with the universal favour of the Craft, because the warm fraternal spirit that it breathes is in every way Masonic, and hence it has almost become a rule of obligation that every festive party of Freemasons should close with the great Scotsman's invocation to part in love and kindness".[20] Contributions from several present-day Lodges (three American, one English) to a now defunct Masonic music website indicate that *Auld Lang Syne* is a favourite song in many Lodges;[21] it is also sung, in French, by French Masons.[22] A recent description of the Masonic use of *Auld Lang Syne*, from a journal published by the Southern States Ancient and Accepted Masons in the USA, gives further information on the practice and what it symbolizes:

> The Masonic routine is to form a circle in which everyone is equidistant from the centre, demonstrating they are all equal. In this regard, the practice adopted by some lodges by placing Masters or other distinguished Brethren in the centre defeats the purpose of the ceremony associated with the song.
>
> At the beginning, the Brethren stand with hands at their sides, symbolizing they are relative strangers. The early verses should be sung (or hummed) very softly as Brethren reflect both on cherished memories of earlier times together and those Brethren who have since passed to the Grand Lodge Above.
>
> When they come to the last verse, "And there's a hand, my trusty frier [*sic*] (friend)", each Brother then extends his right hand of fellowship to his Brother on his left, and the left hand to the Brother on his right.
>
> This symbolizes two things: First, that they are crossing their hearts, second that they automatically form a smaller and more intimate circle of friendship.[23]

Masons in this Rite at least, then, sing several verses of the song, and not just the first verse as has been common oral tradition in English-speaking countries except Scotland

19 In his *History of Freemasonry and the Grand Lodge of Scotland* (2nd ed., 1859), William A. Laurie makes no reference to *Auld Lang Syne* in his list of songs most typically associated with Masonic ceremonies. Laurie 1859, 212.

20 Mackey 1905 [1873/78], 725–726.

21 In detail: the programme of the Annual Table Lodge of Instruction of Jacques DeMolay Londge No. 1390, Houston, Texas; Cincinnati No. 3 Lodge, Morristown, New Jersey; Table Lodge Bulletin of the Grand Lodge of Indiana; *Festive Board Traditions and Songs* of the Norfolk Broads Lodge No. 8368. Information from www.masonicmusic.org, accessed May 2006 (link no longer active).

22 Ligou 1972. The version which Ligou prints is not, as he points out, the version used by French Masons, but the more common French version which we will encounter in Chapter 9. In the introduction to his collection, he explains that one of the aims of his collection is to encourage singing in French Lodges again, and for this reason he has often favoured texts which still have resonance for present-day Masons. I have been unable to locate the French Masonic version, although the now defunct website *Chansons et Chansonnier Maçonniques,* which provided digital access to a sample of French Masonic songbooks going back to the eighteenth century, suggested that the song's use in French Lodges may be more recent than Ligou implies; http://chansmac.ifrance.com/docs/xii/xii.html, last accessed September 2007 (link no longer active).

23 Paterson 1997, quoted here from Hugh Fraser, "Tracking down Auld Lang Syne", *The Hamilton Spectator*, 31 December 1998; I have been unable to access Paterson's original article.

since around the later nineteenth-century. In Scottish communities, the first and last verses are generally sung when the song is used at gatherings, and the arms are crossed only at the second verse. To the defence of other English-speaking communities, often chastised for "getting it wrong" and crossing the arms immediately, it should be emphasized that since they tend to know and sing only one verse, crossing the hands at the first verse is only logical; this may have replaced an earlier tradition of doing so at the chorus.

Many of the records of Burns suppers in the first century after Burns's death are attached to Masonic Lodges, and even a cursory glance through reports of various Burns Festivals, Anniversary Celebrations and the like throughout the nineteenth century shows that the Freemasons had a privileged position in the many processions and ceremonials which accompanied them. They were also very active in raising funds for the public memorials to Burns which, from a certain point in the nineteenth century, were found almost wherever there were Scots. Given the multifarious connections between the Masons and Burns before and after his death, and the very specific nature of this practice, it is highly likely that S∞ is directly related to this Masonic tradition. The role of Freemasonry in engendering this practice would help explain why it could be spread so easily—whether consciously or unconsciously, in Masonic circles themselves or among other groups and gatherings that picked up on particular aspects of Masonic practice. Quite apart from the traditions S∞ and SΩ, this applies to the song *Auld Lang Syne* itself, whose content and sentiment made it the perfect fraternal song.

5.2 The Fraternalist's Song

Studies of fraternal organizations have often noted that they are not given to radical ideas. On the contrary, Gist notes that they "usually emphasize the conventional moral and ethical values of the larger social order of which they are a part. They become, therefore, bulwarks of the *status quo*, conservers of traditional morality, transmitters of existing social values."[24] Again, it is this combination of the small, stable group context and the way in which these groups communicate both with other similar groups and, on occasion, with a wider public, that make them so effective in the establishment or maintenance of social practices.

There are several aspects of the implied and inherited significance of *Auld Lang Syne* that help explain why it was so appropriate for these types of association. Firstly, it is a song of friendship. Secondly, as noted in Chapter 4, the sentiment "Should auld acquaintance be forgot?" was often linked to benevolent and charitable endeavours, two areas in which fraternal associations were traditionally very active; in some cases, such as the friendly societies, this was their whole *raison d'être*. Thirdly, these

24 Gist 1940, 13.

associations were often also concerned with the continuation of tradition, which also resonates with the sentiment of "auld lang syne". Finally, the song explicitly mentions the act of raising a toast and the symbolic act of joining hands, practices which had a particular significance in associations of this type.

Apart from Freemasonry, another well-known example of fraternal organizations is American college fraternities, and it is probably no coincidence that one of the earliest and most consistent uses of *Auld Lang Syne* as a song of parting comes from American college life. The *New York Times*, which began publication in 1851 as the *New-York Daily Times*, lists at least seven incidences of *Auld Lang Syne* being used as a song of parting in the 1850s, and almost all relate to college events and associations. The earliest detailed in this source is the alumni celebration held at Harvard University in July 1852: *Auld Lang Syne* was sung in this instance on the suggestion of the then Harvard president, Edward Everett, but he may have been acting on an existing tradition.[25] The long-standing tradition of singing *Auld Lang Syne* at the commencement ceremonies of American universities (what in Britain are called graduation ceremonies), a tradition picked up by academic institutions in other countries including Taiwan and Japan, is also represented.[26] In 1859, the Packer Institute in Brooklyn (a women's college) and William's College are both reported to have used the song in this way, while at Yale University, a poem written by a graduand was sung to the tune; at William's, the graduating class gathered around the college green to sing it—almost certainly to allow a large circle to be formed.[27] The same thing happened at one of two commencement dinners at Harvard in 1867:

> At length, about four o' clock, this jovial company of students dissolved, and, forming a ring outside Music Hall on the green under the trees, sang "Auld Lang Syne" with tremendous enthusiasm, *hugging in college fashion* [my italics]. Then, preceded by the Italian Band, they marched in decorous procession to the college yard. This was the formal end of the Music Hall dinner; but about fifty of the younger Alumni, who did not like to "give it up so" while the sun was still shining, marched from room to room under the Bandmaster aforesaid, (who by this time had become immensely wealthy from donations,) and completely disposed of all the large stock of rum and claret punches and cigars which had been left by the various classes, enlivening their economic task, meanwhile, with songs. When this duty had been done, and nought was left to swallow or smoke, the dwindling numbers once more joined in "Auld Lang Syne" in the college yard. Half-past six had now come, all had departed, and the yard was deserted.[28]

What "hugging in college fashion" means is unclear, but it could be a way of explaining the practice S∞.

Three of the four remaining incidences reported relate directly to college fraternities. The original American Greek-letter fraternities, as they are also known,

25 *New-York Daily Times*, 24 July 1852.
26 On the Japanese case, see Chapter 10, below.
27 *New York Times*, 21 June 1859, 30 June 1859.
28 *New York Times*, 23 July 1867.

borrowed many elements from Masonry including controlled membership, complex rituals and symbols, and a greater or lesser amount of secrecy surrounding these, not to mention fraternal aims which include promoting the development of the individual, and providing mutual support in a social network. Most developed quickly into a network of "chapters" across a wide geographical area. College fraternities in their present form date back to the 1820s and 1830s, although the very first such fraternity can be dated back to the Phi Beta Kappa society founded at the College of William and Mary in 1776. The later societies arose partly as a reaction to college literary societies, which had sprung up in the earlier years of the nineteenth century. Like the literary and debating clubs of the eighteenth century, which in Scotland counted a certain Robert Burns amongst their most enthusiastic members, these offered a chance to practice skills of oratory and rhetoric, and to read papers on literary subjects. However, according to the students who inspired the first wave of Greek-letter fraternities, one vital element was missing: socialization and through this, friendship. Thus, when the Alpha Delta Phi fraternity was founded at Hamilton College in 1832, the vision was of "a fraternity whose aim should be to supplement the college curriculum by literary work outside of and beyond that prescribed by the college course, and also to develop the social nature and affections of kindred spirits by the cultivation of a fraternal bond of friendship," as one nineteenth-century text put it.[29] *Auld Lang Syne* is reported to have been sung at the end of the Alpha Delta Phi convention at Harvard in 1855, and by the fraternity's Yale chapter at their supper, followed by the society Doxology, in 1856.[30] It also closed the ceremonial dinner of the Psi Upsilon convention held in 1854;[31] the Psi Upsilon fraternity was formed in 1833. Whether these fraternities picked up on existing college traditions, or whether the college traditions were spawned by fraternal use, is unclear. It is also possible that they both derived the practice from sources they had in common.

The other early incidence listed in the *New-York Daily Times* comes from a dinner held in 1856 to celebrate the anniversary of Andrew Hamilton by the Hamilton Literary Association of Brooklyn.[32] This report, which quotes from another in *Boston Star*, states that "with the full chorus of the company, this fine old song was sung 'in the Society's old style,' and then they adjourned", implying that the tradition had been going on for some time. Literary associations are yet another recurrent feature of the club and association landscape of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Although they are not "secret societies" or fraternities proper, many other aspects of their organization recall those of the other groups we have looked at here: membership tends to be strictly limited; the association provides a forum both for the self-improvement of members (through honing skills in creative writing, criticism, or debating) as well as a context for socializing with like-minded people. Some of these

29 Baird 1879, 26.
30 *New-York Daily Times*, 27 July 1855, 2 August 1856.
31 *New-York Daily Times*, 3 July 1854.
32 *New-York Daily Times*, 16 January 1856.

associations were specifically dedicated to the memory of an important writer. Though most of these literary associations have come and gone over the years, a remarkable and lasting exception to this general rule is the practice, established soon after his death, of clubs dedicated to the memory of Burns.

5.3 Immortal Memory: The Burns Clubs and the Burns Cult

By 2020, the Robert Burns World Federation was listing over 340 affiliated clubs worldwide; though most of these were in Scotland, there were also clubs in England, Ireland, mainland Europe (including school groups in Russia and Ukraine), the Americas, and Oceania.[33] Controversy has raged for almost two hundred years regarding whether the first Burns club was the one officially constituted in Paisley in 1805, or the one which members say was unofficially constituted in Greenock in 1801. Most of the information given in this section is derived from Robert Brown's study *Paisley Burns Clubs* (1893), not because of any partisanship on my part but simply because of the general lack of consolidated historical studies of the phenomenon of Burns clubs generally. Brown's book also gathers together much information from clubs outside Paisley.

Again, most of the available information regarding the activities of the Burns Clubs and the other fraternal-type organizations discussed here focuses on major annual celebrations and public ceremonials. These larger-scale public events could involve anything up to several hundred people, or even more in the case of the Burns Festival at Alloway in 1844, and the 1859 centenary celebrations. This contrasts with the regular meetings of these groups, all of which operated a very tight membership: entrance was generally only on recommendation of an existing member, and after a vote had been taken.

The first recorded meeting of the Paisley Burns Club was on 29 January 1805, which for many years was regarded as Burns's birthday until R. A. Smith got hold of Burns's birth certificate in 1818. Around seventy were present, including Smith and the poet Robert Tannahill—both were amongst the most active members of the club. The minutes of this meeting as given by Brown make no reference to any Burns poems or songs, but include a poem by Tannahill and a song by John King written for the occasion. Burns Clubs, after all, were literary clubs where members felt encouraged in their own poetic aspirations. In addition, however, and as the speech in honour of Burns held on that occasion by William McLaren makes clear, the fans of Burns also saw a pressing need to protect the reputation of the Bard from "the poisonous tongue of angry calumny" which emphasized what were seen as Burns's failings (wine and women) at the expense of his virtues (song).[34]

33 Robert Burns World Federation 2020.

34 This address, which goes on to praise Ossian and James Thomson, was published as a pamphlet in 1815.

Reports from the Burns Clubs in this period give a fascinating insight into the way music and song were integrated into social events of this type. They also demonstrate the similarity between even the earliest celebrations held by different Burns clubs. Again, this can be accounted for by the common pool of social practices on which they drew, and also by interaction between the Clubs. Here, for example, is a description of the 1807 celebration held by the Paisley Burns Club, from a letter written by Tannahill to James Clark, bandmaster of the Argyllshire militia at Edinburgh:

> Eighty-four sat at supper; after which Mr. Blaikie addressed us in a neat speech, calculated for the occasion, concluding with a toast 'To the memory of Burns.' The ode which you gave the first spur to, the writing of was well done. The plan was something novel. Mr McLaren spoke the recitative parts very well, and Messrs' Smith, Stewart, and Blaikie sung the song, harmonized in glees by Smith in their styles. In the course of the night were toasted the Kilbarchan meeting and yours. We had a number of original pieces. Smith sang an appropriate song, by the author of 'The Poor Man's Sabbath', who was out from Glasgow joining us.[35] Not one disagreeable occurrence happened, all was harmony, enthusiasm, and good-will. We had two rounds of toasts—one of sentiment and one of authors. We broke up about one, and were all pleased and happy.[36]

The Kilbarchan club which Tannahill mentions was nearly as old as the Paisley club, being founded in 1806. In the course of his study, Brown interviewed some of its surviving members in 1877: one of them, an eighty-one-year-old man named John Wilkie, explained that "the annual meetings about Burns were regarded in the village as of an aristocratic kind", and that this led to the founding of a New Burns Club in Kilbarchan in 1820, at the height of the Radical rising. So committed were members of this new club to the political cause that only bread, cheese and water were served at their Burns Suppers: thus "they did not take anything that was taxed, their object being to starve the Government and cause them to submit to the views of the inhabitants".[37] The Paisley Gleniffer Burns Club, founded in the later nineteenth century, was also set up with the express intention of being less restrictive in its membership: the Chairman of the first Burns anniversary celebration it held in January 1893 noted that "We find no fault with the older club, but we fear it too much resembles the politics of—shall I say Paisley, which never changes, being too conservative. Our times demand a more popular club, which shall be open to every admirer of the poet."[38]

Returning to the early clubs, a report of the first anniversary celebration held by the Johnstone Burns Club in 1813 also gives some flavour of the evening:

> On concluding the address each of the company was presented with a glass of 'Scotch drink' with oaten cakes and Dunlop cheese, in the good old style of Scottish hospitality. The company were honoured with the assistance of the Johnstone Instrumental Band, ably conducted by Mr. Davey, whose merits as a performer are well-known in the district.

35 The poet in question was John Struthers (1776–1847).
36 Letter from Robert Tannahill to James Clark, 2 February 1807, quoted in Brown 1893, 66.
37 Brown 1893, 97.
38 Quoted in Brown 1893, 284.

> A good variety of instrumental pieces, vocal performances with appropriate toasts, sentiments, etc., enhanced the festivities of the night.[39]

Similarly, at the Kilbarchan anniversary celebration of 1816,

> A band of native amateurs, filled up the intervals of hilarity by a rich and judicious entertainment of Scottish music. The display of vocal music for tasteful and scientific arrangement surpassed that of any former anniversary. The songs in general were in unison with the feelings of the company, and many of them ever calculated to awaken the finest sensibilities of the heart.[40]

A similar mix of vocal arrangements and instrumental tunes was also found on the programme of the Paisley club in 1815:

> A select instrumental band of amateurs favoured the company by performing national airs appropriate to the toasts and songs, several of which were original, and of considerable merit [...] In the course of the evening several fine glees were sung by the gentlemen present, which added much to the enjoyment of all present.
>
> The company broke up highly pleased, 'sorry to part' but anticipating 'happy to meet again'.[41]

This is not the only time there is an allusion in these reports to the phrase "happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again": it occurs in 1811 as well. Often taken as a translation of "Bon Accord" (amongst other things, the motto of the city of Aberdeen), the phrase is also common in Masonic circles up to the present day.[42] Another recurring feature is the singing of the canon *Non nobis domine*: Messrs. Smith, Stewart, and Urquhart sang it at the Paisley celebration of 1816, and in Edinburgh in the same year it was given by Messrs. King, Elliott, and Grant.[43] This Edinburgh celebration could boast the attendance of a long list of lords, politicians and captains, with Walter Scott and George Thomson acting as stewards (Thomson is described in the *Glasgow Chronicle* report as "the well-known correspondent of Burns"; but he was also the subject of a toast that evening, the man "to whose enterprise and exertions chiefly it was owing

39 Report in the *Glasgow Chronicle*, 13 February 1813, as quoted in Brown 1893, 81.

40 Unnamed press source, quoted in Brown 1893, 95. The epithet "scientific" applied to music was, at this stage, a compliment, and probably implied a skillful use of harmony.

41 Quoted in Brown 1893, 83, 86.

42 It forms part of what is called "The Tyler's Toast", which was a concluding toast in some Lodges. It ends:

> "Dear brethren of the mystic tie, the night is waning fast
> Our duty's done, our feast is o'er, this song must be our last
> Good Night, Good Night, but ere we part,
> all join in the farewell strain:
> Happy to meet. Sorry to part. Happy to meet again."

This year's Paisley celebration was also marked by the presentation by the local MP of an "ale coup" made from the wood of the so-called Wallace Oak: "The inspiration of the moment gave birth to many affusions worthy of the occasion, and the round was finished with a joyous three-times-three, hands linked in hands round the festive board." Quoted in Brown 1893, 93.

43 Quoted in Brown 1893, 89–90; 98.

that the great number of the exquisite lyrics of Burns had been produced").[44] Although this report lists not only the toasts, but also the accompanying music and songs, *Auld Lang Syne* is not among them. Indeed, the first explicit reference to *Auld Lang Syne* in the sources collated by Brown comes from the 1822 meeting of the Paisley Burns Club: the air is played between the toasts to "The memory of Douglas and Barbour, and the Bards of the Olden Times" and the toast to Mrs Dunlop and other early patrons (quite fitting, given the genesis of Burns's song in a letter to Dunlop). There are scant reports for the following years, but in 1825, according to a long report in the *Paisley Advertiser* quoted by Brown, the air of *Auld Lang Syne* was played after the toast to "The Early Patrons of the Bard".

Mary Ellen Brown has listed the singing of *Auld Lang Syne* at the end of the gathering as being one of the new elements of the Burns Supper tradition that became established via the 1859 centenary celebrations.[45] This anniversary was a major public event, not only in Scotland: over 3,000 people are said to have celebrated in New York. However, though the scale of these events may have cemented the tradition SΩ once and for all, it was certainly becoming established before this—and not only at Burns events, as its use in American college circles demonstrates. The Literary and Convivial Association (L. C. A.) founded in Paisley ca. 1808, which also celebrated Burns's birthday for a while, sang *Auld Lang Syne* before parting at the end of their 1855 celebration.[46] An earlier incidence is noted in a report of a Burns celebration in Wisconsin in 1851, though only published in 1901: it took place on 24 January, and as midnight approached,

> the company arose and ushered in the 25th of January—the birthday of Burns—by joining hands around the table and singing "Auld Lang Syne." After this ceremony the next regular toast was announced. [...] At three o'clock the company again joined hands, and again lifted their hearts and voices with the noble strains of "Auld Lang Syne." The following additional verse was sung and the ceremonies closed, with an agreement to meet "twelve months from date" for a repetition of the scene:—
>
> An' what though we be far awa',
> An' in a foreign clime,
> We'll ne'er forget Auld Scotland's shores,
> Nor the days o' Auld Lang Syne.[47]

The 1859 celebrations were of another order completely, not least in the amount of coverage the events received. Even here, however, there is contradictory evidence regarding the tradition of singing *Auld Lang Syne* as the last song. It was certainly sung at end of the major celebration held by the Boston Burns Club, one of whose speakers was Ralph Waldo Emerson. It had already been sung in the course of the evening as

44 Report in the *Glasgow Chronicle*, undated, as quoted in Brown 1893, 99.
45 Brown 1984, Chapter 6.
46 *Paisley Journal*, 10 February 1855, quoted in Brown 1893, 177.
47 Shiells 1901, 56, 64.

well, following a toast to the sentiment "the Past lives in the Present", and led by John P. Ordway's Aeolian band, "the company standing, and joining in the choral verses." The "Aeolian band" mentioned was a blackface minstrelsy troupe established by Ordway the previous decade. There is no indication that they performed in blackface on this occasion;[48] acknowledging this context nevertheless puts quite a different slant on the report, which continues thus:

> This was one of the most striking incidents of the evening, and one of the most gratifying tributes to age and worth. As the chorus arose it was taken up outside the hall, and the streets rang with the outpourings of the heart which always accompany the singing of this universal song of friendship.[49]

Many of the smaller centenary gatherings in Paisley are reported to have sung *Auld Lang Syne* at the end of the proceedings.[50] By contrast, the programme for the major event held at the Paisley Exchange Rooms does not place *Auld Lang Syne* at the end, but after the toast to "Our Local Celebrities in Literature and Art"; the parting song was *Good Night And Joy Be With You All*, which was still the traditional song of parting in many sectors of Scottish society.[51] Very formal events such as this tend to put more emphasis on proper protocol, so it is possible that what we are witnessing here is a moment of transition between the old tradition and the new. As regards the many early instances in North America, the fact that the newer tradition seemed to become quickly established among the diaspora (or those who were not Scottish at all) is comparable to what seems to have happened when *Auld Lang Syne* became a New Year song, as will be discussed in Chapter 8.

The report of the Exchange Rooms centenary celebration is interesting for another reason, however: it describes that the event was attended by around ninety Freemasons, who had marched in procession, and in full Masonic costume, to the Exchange Rooms from St. Mirin's Lodge.[52] The prominent position adopted by the Masons during events such as this is indicative of the efforts they made generally to commemorate Burns. So self-evident was this that the Masons were also characterized in the dramatization which accompanied the unveiling of a statue of Burns at Glasgow's Theatre Royal in 1877. The overture to this dramatization, featuring many Scottish airs, "wound up appropriately" with *Auld Lang Syne*, and "the introduction of this national lyric influenced the belief that it must lead up to something", as it did:

48 See Tucker 2012 for a discussion of Ordway and his position in the musical culture of 1850s Boston. Tucker notes that early performances by Ordway's group included sections advertised as being performed without blackface.

49 Boston Burns Club 1859, 42.

50 Specifically, the gatherings which took place in the homes of Mr James Holms and Mr John McKenzie, also those organized by The Drapers' Assistants of Paisley and by the employees of the Arkleston Print Works; Brown 1893, 246–248. Brown does not, however, cite his sources for this. There is a slight possibility that he is interpreting events from the perspective of 1893.

51 Report and programme in Brown 1893. The programme again features the canon *Non nobis domine*. On *Good Night And Joy*, see Chapter 6, below.

52 Brown 1893, 192.

> Accordingly, just as the orchestra had made a fresh start in a hymn which chiefly concerns the "Merry Masons," the act-drop rose and disclosed a scene which appealed at once to every reader of the poems of Burns. It depicted the "Twa Brigs" of Ayr [...] The round of cheering elicited by the picture had scarcely subsided when the beginning of a juvenile masonic procession was seen marching on the stage. There were masons of all grades, rifle volunteers of various ranks, magistrates in gorgeous official robes, trades which embraced a competent representation of what is locally known as the "Black Squad," British tars of many classes, soldiers marching to the tune of "The British Grenadiers," and Highlanders, shoulder to shoulder, keeping step to the animated strains of "The Campbells are Coming." As the youngsters entered they took up their positions in various parts of the stage, and when they were all massed they sang "The Merry Masons" in unison with a suitable accompaniment by the orchestra.[53]

Military regiments are also implicated in the spread of *Auld Lang Syne*, as will be discussed in a later chapter, and it is worth bearing in mind that many features of military ceremonial and ritual reflect similar practices in fraternal organizations.

None of the sources referred to here make explicit reference to the manner in which *Auld Lang Syne* was sung. Of interest, however, is that the musical programme on offer is focussed not on communal singing but on instrumental pieces and songs performed by a small group, typically the "glee" arrangement of three singers. This is an arrangement much more suited to the kind of large-scale public event presented by Burns Suppers and other Burns celebrations—events often organized by, but not limited to, the tighter social groups formed by the members of a local Lodge or a local Burns club. The aim on such occasions is celebration, and entertainment, with well-known personalities and musicians drawing in the crowds. In such contexts, it is sufficient for the group gathered for the celebration to actively participate in only a few items of the musical programme. Indeed, the fact that they are led by, or sing along with, local stars of the stage actively fosters the sense of community, of inclusion and of privilege, which is an important function of rituals such as these.

5.4 Solidarity

Dinner and concert programmes, and newspaper reports on them, give a small but solid body of evidence for the establishment of SΩ, but are rarely specific regarding how the song was sung. Thus, of all the traditions associated with the song, references to S∞ are most thin on the ground of all, and it is consequently difficult to date its origins with any degree of accuracy. Once the custom had become established, it was again equally unlikely that it would be referred to directly.

There are, however, a few indications that the tradition was becoming established no later than a decade or so after the tradition of singing the song at parting. Given this temporal closeness, it is reasonable to posit that the rise of the two traditions may have been linked, though possibly also that S∞ took slightly longer to become generally

53 Original source unknown, cutting in Mitchell Library "Burnsiana" album, Mitchell cat. no. 52942, 34.

established. The oblique reference to the "circle of unity" at the Burns anniversary celebration held by a Lodge in Mauchline in 1879 has already been mentioned. Twelve years earlier, in 1867, a report of a concert at the English public-school Marlborough describes how, after the traditional singing of the college song *Carmen Marlburienne*, those gathered sang the national anthem, and then,

> with crossed hands, concluded by singing "Auld Lang Syne" in a manner which few who have heard it forget. The verses were well kept up by the lead of the old members who stood on the orchestra, and the chorus was given as only the voices of 500 boys can give it.[54]

A more oblique indication comes in a piano arrangement by Jules de Sivrai, *Should Auld Acquaintance Be Forgot. Transcription brillant*, published in 1871. The introduction to this piece is specifically "to be played with the left hand alone": this ends with a flashy cadenza which then leads into the presentation of the main M2 theme, which is played twice. In the chorus, the main theme is in the octave below middle C, and the score specifies that the accompaniment, which lies above it, is to be played with the left hand. This means that the arms must be crossed over while playing. While this is not uncommon in piano playing, the two score instructions together do imply that some sort of symbolism was intended in this case.

Although it is fair to presume that the tradition S∞ has its origins in Freemasonry, uncertainty surrounds the origins of the closed form of the Mystic Chain itself. One suggestion is that French Freemasons may have absorbed this tradition from the practices of the *Compagnonnage*, the French equivalent to the British guilds.[55] Freemasonry itself developed from the masonic trade guilds, with the systems of initiation, secret ritual and symbolism directly deriving from the practices whereby stonemasons, whose work meant they were generally itinerant, could best look out for themselves by accordingly looking out for others of their own trade. By the early nineteenth century, those British guilds that still existed had a more symbolic or ceremonial than practical purpose, but many of the older practices continued in the trade societies set up at this time, which in turn are among the immediate forerunners of trade unions. In a study of the development of early trade unionism, Malcolm Chase has argued that tracing a lineage back to the guilds, however tenuous this may have been, helped such fledgling trade societies to validate collective action in the workplace.[56] Thus, workers' societies, like other societies, tended to pick up on existing aspects of group social practice, just as Masonry's symbolism derived in part from

54 *The Times*, 23 December 1867.

55 Lhomme et al. 1993, 90.

56 Chase 2000. Chase also traces relationships between trade societies and other fraternities, including (in Ayrshire collieries in particular) the Freemasons. He notes that probably the most typical feature of fraternal organizations, their initiation rites, were also used in many trade societies. It was only the negative public impact—in the case of the Tolpuddle Martyrs—of revelations regarding initiation ceremonies involving blindfolds and life-sized skeletons that led to such societies being more careful about their practices.

the guilds, college fraternities from Masonry, and so on. In time, of course, workers' movements would lend a very different tone to the ideas of fraternity and solidarity, linking it to a form of struggle and activism in which, as two closing examples not immediately related to *Auld Lang Syne* will show, the chain of unity gains a renewed and pragmatic use.

Figure 5.1 shows a lithograph created by the German artist Käthe Kollwitz in the Spring of 1932. According to her own account, it was produced when Russian acquaintances asked her to make a statement regarding threats of an imperial war against Soviet Russia. Though often given the name *Solidarity*, the original title that Kollwitz gave this lithograph was *Wir schützen die Sowjetunion* (*Propellerlied*),[57] a title which is directly related not just to her sentiment in creating it, but to what she was in fact depicting. The song referred to in Kollwitz's subtitle is better known in English—at least among old Marxists—as the *Song Of The Soviet Airmen* or *Song Of The Soviet Airforce*. Dating back to World War I, it became emblematic for post-revolutionary Russia's attempt to establish itself against hostility from other countries and political systems. The German version, officially called *Rote Flieger*,[58] was the work of Helmut Schinkel, a pedagogue. As a student, Schinkel had come into contact both with communism and with communist efforts to build up a youth movement for workers' children, culminating in the foundation of the *Jung-Spartakus-Bund* (JSB)[59] in 1924. The JSB's methods were based on those developed by the highly successful Boy Scout movement, of which more in a later chapter.

Fig. 5.1 Käthe Kollwitz, *Solidarität / Wir schützen die Sowjetunion* (*Propellerlied*), 1931–1932; lithographic crayon, NT 1229, Cologne Kollwitz Collection © Käthe Kollwitz Museum Köln.

57 *We Are Defending the Soviet Union* (*Propeller Song*).
58 *Red Planes.*
59 Young Spartacus League.

In 1926, Schinkel started to work for the central office of the JSB, producing a children's magazine, several original songs and several translations of Soviet communist songs. He also pioneered agit-prop in Germany, with the idea of a "*lebende Zeitung*" or "living newspaper"—basically, short sketches acted by children and demonstrating central tenets of the communist system and beliefs. It was such a "living newspaper", acted out by Schinkel's own group, the *Rote Trommler*,[60] that introduced *Rote Flieger* or the *Propellerlied* to the German public. As one former "Drummer" recounted:

> The applause was always enthusiastic. But it is almost impossible to describe the overwhelming enthusiasm that the *Aeroplane Song* [*Fliegerlied*] inevitably produced. "We were born / To do these deeds / To Conquer Space and the Universe" That was the song of the young Soviet airforce. [Like *Dunja* and the *Tractor Song*] it was first performed and popularised in German by the Red Drummers. It spread through Berlin like wildfire. And after the Youth Day in Chemnitz [...], workers all over Germany were singing the *Aeroplane Song*.[61]

There was one problem, however. The song, due to its refrain ending on the phrase "We are defending the Soviet Union", was banned. It was, of course, sung regardless, and thus, according to another contemporary testimony, it became "the trigger for many a street battle [...] the police would get their rubber truncheons out and the singers would have to form a front against the attacks". This scene, the same source recounts, is what Kollwitz used for her picture: "Three workers and a woman, shoulder to shoulder, clasp each other's hands with crossed arms—the unbreakable chain of solidarity."[62]

Masonic use had already recognized the inherent symbolism of a human chain which, simply by crossing the arms before joining hands, is much more difficult to break. Kollwitz's lithograph, with the focussed, determined stance of the participants, is at once a reminder of the practical aspect of this chain of solidarity and also its representative power. Again, given the complex interactions and borrowings between the associations and movements introduced in this chapter, it may not be possible to demonstrate direct lineage from other social uses, but it is also highly probable that there were connections—and there may even be a connection back to the tradition

60 *Red Drummers.*

61 "Der Beifall war immer groß. Doch fast unbeschreiblich war die Begeisterung, wenn das Flieger-Lied vorgetragen wurde. 'Wir sind geboren, Taten zu vollbringen, zu überwinden Raum und Weltall ...' Das war das Lied auf die junge sowjetische Luftwaffe. Es wurde damals, wie auch [Dunja, Traktorenlied], erstmals in deutscher Sprache von den Roten Trommlern vorgetragen und popularisiert. Wie ein Lauffeuer verbreitete sich das Lied in Berlin. Und nach dem Jugendtag in Chemnitz [...] sangen in ganz Deutschland viele Arbeiter das Fliegerlied." Lotte Wendt, former Red Drummer, in a letter to the Pioneer group at the Wilhelm-Pieck-Schule in Berlin, 6 May 1956; reproduced in Plener 1996, 106. One of the surest indications of the popularity of the song is that it was parodied by the Nazis.

62 "Um das 'Propellerlied' [...] spielten sich damals sogar Straßenschlachten ab [...] die Polizei [zog] die Gummiknüpel, und die Sänger mußten Front machen gegen die Schläger. Von diesem Zusammenhalt hat sich Käthe Kollwitz [...] zu einem fesselnden Bild anregen lassen: Drei Arbeiter und eine Frau, Schulter an Schulter, halten sich mit verschränkten Armen fest an die Hände—die unzurreißbare Kette der Solidarität." Hansgeorg Mayer, quoted in Plener 1996, 72.

of S∞ as it specifically relates to *Auld Lang Syne*. By the time the workers' movement had developed into an international alliance, the British-wide use of *Auld Lang Syne* as a song sung at the end of larger gatherings was well established. At the end of the International Miners' Congress held in Brussels in 1890, for example, the band played *La Marseillaise*, and

> the English delegation sprang to their feet, joining lustily in the chorus [...] The Germans, not to be outdone, clambered on the stage and sang in chorus the "Marseillaise" in German. Finally, the English delegation, joining hands, with creditable harmony, vigour, and ensemble sang "Auld Lang Syne," ending with a British cheer for the International Miners' Federation.[63]

By the time of the 1893 Congress, also held in Brussels, "The foreign delegates showed that they had learnt to stand hand in hand and sing 'Auld Lang Syne' and the British delegates lustily intoned the 'Marseillaise.'"[64] The tradition, familiar to this day, of *Auld Lang Syne* being sung at the end of the annual Trades Union Congress in Britain goes back to at least 1895,[65] and the International Workers' Congress held in London in 1896 concluded with the singing of *Auld Lang Syne*, *La Marseillaise*, and *La Carmagnole*.[66]

Whichever form and whatever course the lines of influence, imitation and appropriation may have taken, S∞, with or without *Auld Lang Syne*, thus demonstrates perfectly the way that social groups, formalized groups in particular—groups bound around a common ideology or behind a common struggle—reflect one another's modes of expression and communication. Most traditions are not so much inventions as reinventions of traditions already practiced elsewhere, in other contexts—traditions which are eloquent enough or self-evident enough to provide a sense of unity, or solidarity, for another group as well. The connection Kollwitz illustrates between the tradition of S∞ and one of the most popular of Soviet songs is one example; in the United States, meanwhile, crossing arms and joining hands became the most usual form adopted by civil rights activists at demonstrations and marches when singing possibly the most well-known protest song of the twentieth century, *We Shall Overcome*.[67]

63 *The Times*, 28 May 1890.
64 *The Times*, 27 September 1893.
65 *The Times*, 9 September 1895.
66 *The Times*, 3 August 1896. Both *La Marseillaise* and the most famous anthem of socialism, the *Internationale*, have been claimed as Masonic songs, since their authors were Masons (Ridley 1999, 45–46), though the reality—especially in the case of the authorship of *La Marseillaise*—is rather more complex.
67 Eyerman and Jamison 1998.