

A Walk through the Standing Stones:

The Historical Novel, Gender and the Supernatural in Diana Gabaldon's *Outlander*.

By

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ABSTRACT

Traditionally, historical/fantasy novels perpetuate stereotypical narratives; said works are situated in the past and provide some historical background, though unfortunately history is often sacrificed in the quest for “relevance.” This isn’t the case with Diana Gabaldon’s bestselling *Outlander* novel series. It’s lead female protagonist, Claire Randall, a World War II combat nurse travels through time when she walks through ancient standing stones in Scotland and finds herself caught up in the last Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. Gabaldon, attempts to follow in the footsteps of the works of Sir Walter Scott by transforming the historical novel, interlacing Scottish folklore and foregrounding her concern with the role of women in the making of history. This thesis seeks to show how Diana Gabaldon presents herself as a modern female historical novelist, using these theoretical lenses in order to create her fiction in *Outlander* as well as in its television adaptation.

RESUMEN

Tradicionalmente las novelas históricas / de fantasía perpetúan las narraciones estereotipadas; dichas obras están situadas en el pasado y brindan algunos antecedentes históricos, aunque desafortunadamente la historia se sacrifica a menudo en la búsqueda de la “relevancia”. Este no es el caso de la exitosa serie de novelas *Outlander* de Diana Gabaldon. Su protagonista femenina Claire Randall, es una enfermera de combate de la Segunda Guerra Mundial que accidentalmente viaja a través del tiempo tras caminar por un conjunto circular de piedras sagradas erguidas de Escocia y se encuentra atrapada en el pasado en la última rebelión jacobita en 1745. Gabaldon, intenta seguir los pasos de las grandiosas obras de Sir Walter Scott al transformar la novela histórica, entrelazar el folclor escocés y poner en primer plano su preocupación por el papel de la mujer en la creación de la historia. Esta tesis busca presentar cómo Diana Gabaldon se presenta a sí misma como una novelista histórica moderna, utilizando estos objetivos teóricos para crear su ficción en *Outlander*, así como su adaptación televisiva.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the strongest woman I know, NanVan. My Khaleesi, this one is for you!

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Introduction

Traditionally, historical/fantasy novels perpetuate stereotypical narratives; these works are situated in the past and provide some historical background, though unfortunately history is often sacrificed in the quest for “relevance.” This isn’t the case with Diana Galbadon’s bestselling *Outlander* novel series. Its lead female protagonist, Claire Randall, a World War II combat nurse travels through time when she walks through ancient standing stones in Scotland and finds herself caught up in the last Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. Gabaldon, attempts to follow in the footsteps of the works of Sir Walter Scott by transforming the historical novel, interlacing Scottish folklore and foregrounding her concern with the role of women in the making of history. As a result, Gabaldon presents herself as a modern female historical novelist, using these lenses in order to create her fiction.

For many years Romance novels have catered chiefly to female audiences. Diana Gabaldon broke the stereotypes within the romance genre with her best-selling *Outlander* novels (1991-2014). Gabaldon reshapes the definition of what is considered an “historical romance” by providing vast historical background rich with Scottish folklore and dense character development. Gabaldon’s narratives break away from other women writing bodice-ripping historical romances due her manipulation of various theoretical lenses, such as history, contesting gender roles and the supernatural. This research explores Gabaldon’s adaptation of Sir Walter Scott’s historical fiction, especially in providing women with an important role in the making of history. Gabaldon sends her heroine back to the eighteenth century not only to create an ironic re-visitation of the past but also to contest patriarchal stereotypes.

Gabaldon's *Outlander* romance heroine, Claire Randall, is a World War II combat nurse; she is strong, intelligent and openly sexual. Upon touching one of the standing stones in Craigh Na Dun, Claire goes back in time to eighteenth century Scotland. Luckily, she is able to put her modernity into use, including her knowledge of the future, such as a working knowledge of British history and her vast knowledge of medical procedures and botany. Even though our main heroine is stuck in the past, Gabaldon is able to maintain a consistency with Claire's character, by having a modern woman maintain her wittiness and sassiness in an era ruled by men. By not losing sense as of who she is, Claire gets herself in trouble with various men of that century. Her ultimate goal throughout the first novel, *Outlander* is to return to her own time, but as the novel progresses Claire is immersed within the Highland culture and as a result, she will do anything in her power to stop the tragic Jacobite Rebellion which ended with the extinction of the Highland way of life. An important aspect of these novels is her ability to lure readers in and this is largely due to Gabaldon's knack for including intricate details. Gabaldon engrosses her readers with a historical fiction that accurately presents specific moments in history and interlaces them with Highland folklore and supernatural elements such as time travel. On the one hand, Gabaldon provides intricate details of the Highland culture and historical information as to what was occurring in Scotland during the eighteenth century; on the other hand, she inserts her fiction in which she sends a modern woman back in time. Thusly, this is perfectly translated onto film by producer Ronald D. Moore, who has brought Gabaldon's novels to life in the hit television series "Outlander" which has had four successful seasons so far, due to having Gabaldon herself work as a primary consultant on the show.

Ever since Diana Gabaldon published her first novel in the series, *Outlander* (1991), many critics have analyzed her work as “historical romance.” My research challenges this approach by providing substantial evidence that Gabaldon’s work is far from stereotypical notions of romance; instead its roots are heavily embedded in historical fiction. Gabaldon drew inspiration for her novels from various sources, but most importantly from the Scottish historical novelist, Sir Walter Scott. Gabaldon drew inspiration from “the Waverly Novels” in which, Scott allows his readers to enter into the lives of ordinary people caught up in violent, drastic changes in history.

Various parallels can be drawn between Gabaldon’s *Outlander* and Scott’s novel *Waverly*, for example, the concept of having an ordinary main character become involved in an important historical moment. Gabaldon’s Claire and Scott’s Waverly are both outlanders, or as the Highlanders called them “Sassenachs” or strangers. But as time passes, they are embraced by Highland culture and try their best to prevent inevitable catastrophe at Culloden Moore, the final battle in a civil and religious war known as The Jacobite Risings. Much like Sir Walter Scott, Gabaldon’s novels enthrall readers due to how they present a structured and elaborate plot line while weaving together historical aspects. As a result, Gabaldon has concocted a mesmerizing storyline which keeps her readers engrossed with her fiction and television viewers hooked to their screen.

Research Objectives

The following perspectives are central to my approach: historical fiction, contesting gender roles and Scottish Folklore. During the Jacobite Risings, tensions ran high between England and Scotland, largely due to a struggle between religious beliefs and monarchical succession. It is also during this time period that Sir Walter Scott began writing historical

fiction based on “the Jacobite Rebellion.”; “Jacobite” comes from the Latin word for James (Jacobus). The Jacobite rebels advocated and intermittently fought for the restoration of the Stuart line of monarchs, whom they regarded as the legitimate heirs to the throne.

The final Jacobite Rebellion plays a significant role within Diana Gabaldon’s *Outlander* (1991), in which Claire Randall a World War II combat nurse is hurled back in time upon touching one of the sacred standing stones of Craigh Na Dun in Inverness, Scotland. By having a modern female travel back through time, Gabaldon explores the notions of ironic visitations, in this particular case; Gabaldon has a main female character contesting the stereotypical notions of gender roles. Furthermore, Claire knows very well the outcome of the rebellion and she in turn will try to do anything within her power to stop the extinction of the Highland way of life. Throughout the first novel of the series *Outlander*, Gabaldon follows in the footsteps of Sir Walter Scott by providing substantial historical information. Much of this information she learns from Frank Randall, who is Claire’s husband and a historian with ancestors prominent in the conflict. Claire is able to protect herself and survive in the past due to her knowledge of history.

This in turn, creates an ironic visitation of the past due to how it presents how a modern hero (and this particular case a woman); who utilizes her knowledge of history and medicine in order to survive in an unfamiliar century. Such ironic visitations of the past evoke the American author Mark Twain’s *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court* (1889). Both Claire and Twain’s mechanic, Hank, have traveled through time and find themselves in alien surroundings. Claire and Hank both put into use their knowledge of the future to use in order to survive in the past: Claire utilizes her skills as a combat nurse and her knowledge of botany, while Hank puts into devastating use his skill with firearms and machinery. Claire

passes herself off as a healer in the eighteenth century Scotland while Hank poses as a magician of sorts in King Arthur's Camelot and in turn is respected by the people. Both Claire and Hank know what the future holds and both try to forestall the destruction of noble civilizations but both are unsuccessful. Claire tries to prevent the Jacobite rebellion and Hank tries to stop the murder of King Arthur. Hank uses his American "know-how" to make a better world. He builds secret factories that construct modern machineries, and he also sets up private schools in order to educate the lower class, eradicate medievalist superstitious mentalities and introduce modern ways of thinking. In contrast, Claire uses her medical and botanical knowledge in order to help sick people. She is perhaps too successful: people started to assume that Claire was not in fact a healer but a witch.

As the story develops throughout *Outlander* (1991), Gabaldon not only presents later moments in Scottish history but she also includes other cultural aspects such as the historical figure of the bard, Highland superstitions and Scottish myths come to life. Here is where Gabaldon draws inspiration from Sir Walter Scott's *Waverly* (1814), in the important figure of the bard. In eighteenth and nineteenth century nationalistic medievalism the figure of the bard is presented as a beacon of wisdom and prophecy. In Scott's *Waverly*, the heroine, Flora translates the bard's prophecy of an impending revolution to Waverly, much as Jamie translates the bard's tale to Claire; of a maiden who has traveled through time. Upon hearing the bard's wise words, both Waverly and Claire become allies to the Jacobite cause. Gabaldon adopts Scott's literary techniques by taking history and infusing it with supernatural elements, thus providing readers with an enthralling historical fiction. I also intend to treat further connections between Gabaldon's work and Sir Walter Scott.

Another important element that sets Diana Gabaldon's *Outlander* apart from other historical romances is her interlacing of history with fantasy and folklore. By having a modern female travel through time, Gabaldon presents history from a new perspective. Diana Gabaldon's *Outlander* (1991) breaks the conventions of stereotypical romance novels. By presenting a strong modern female character time traveling 200 years into the past, she contests stereotypical gender roles. Finding herself stuck in the middle of a rebellion, Claire develops into an even stronger female character. The Scottish Highlands have always held a sense of magic and history, to this day folklore and myths still play an important role within Scottish culture. This concept is presented throughout Gabaldon's novels in the use of ancient standing stones. Since ancient times, standing stones have been considered a place of ancient pagan rituals and served as beacons for supernatural energy. Diana Gabaldon drew inspiration from the ancient Callanish standing stones to create the image of the standing stones of Craigh Na Dun in Inverness, Scotland. Observing an ancient Druidic ritual on the eve of Beltane (Samhain or All Hallow's Eve in the television show), Claire touches one of the standing stones and is sent off on a journey through time. The concept of time travel is used as the central conflict throughout Gabaldon's novel, which in turn creates a dichotomy between the past and the future. Gabaldon also includes Scottish folklore by presenting the customs of the Highlands; Highlanders were divided into clans ruled by a particular laird. Even though the Highlanders were Catholic they were also deeply superstitious; hence they believed in the ancient power of the standing stones and well as the "wee folk" or the Fae. I intend to analyze how Gabaldon interweaves these notions of the supernatural and Scottish folklore in her transformation of the romance novel.

Customarily, romance novels perpetuate stereotypical gender roles; the heroine is presented as a frail damsel in need of a strong lead male character to protect her. These stories usually take the protagonists through a traditional plot of characters meeting, instantly falling in love, surmounting obstacles that threaten their relationship, getting married and riding off to a happy ending. This isn't the case with Diana Gabaldon's *Outlander* novels. Its lead female protagonist, Claire Randall challenges established female stereotypes in this genre; she is strong, intelligent and openly sexual. On the other hand, the male protagonist, Jamie Fraser, while initially represented as a typical highlander of the time, as his character develops he undergoes a process of transformation and adaptation to his leading lady. In order to analyze this from a deeper perspective, gender theory shall be consulted, Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* draws a distinction between gender and sex, Butler expands "women, is often used to construct a solidarity of identity, a split is introduced in the feminist subject by the distinction between sex and gender" (6). Gabaldon's *Outlander* breaks the mold with gender stereotypes by having a strong modern lead female and not a simple damsel in distress who awaits a man to save her. I intend to explore the representations of the main characters as their roles are reversed and as they contest traditional representations of gender in this genre.

In order to achieve my investigation, I intend to create an analytical study through the use of various theories. In terms of the historical implications of my research, Linda Hutcheon's theory of Post-Modernist Fiction and historiographic metafiction demonstrates how the genre works through parody to combine literature and history in ways that foreground their interdependence. Gabaldon parodies Twain's *Connecticut Yankee* and Scott's *Waverly* in her revisiting of the Jacobite Rebellion. By creating this re-visitation to the past, Gabaldon allows readers to see how gender and sexuality are implicated in the war; colonialism is

repeatedly imaged as rape of both genders. The most evident image of rape can be seen at the battle at Culloden Moor in which the Highlanders lose not only their battle but also the highland way of life. The catastrophe of Culloden paves the way for the Highland clearances in which Scotland is stripped of its native culture and ravaged by “Sudron” colonizers. On the other hand, this re-visitation presents a contesting of gender roles due to how Claire embodies independence, cunning and intelligence; her knowledge of the future serves as her fortitude but also as her flaw. Being a modern woman in the eighteenth century, Claire is continually breaking the stereotypical notions of the patriarchal system. These notions of gender can be also observed with Jamie: Gabaldon breaks away from the romance genre by presenting her lead male as a Jacobite outlaw with conservative morality and sexual inexperience. Historical romances typically, present frail damsels and sexually charged gallant males; Gabaldon creates a paradox by having her female lead be the sexually experienced one, and she has her male lead raped and tortured. Both Judith Butler and Julia Kristeva’s, among many other theorist, insist that sex and gender are not in unison, though there is a widespread disagreement about the extent to which both are conventional social constructions. In transporting a sexually liberated heroine into a patriarchal past, Gabaldon puts conventional construction of gender and sexuality under significant stress. My research intends, then to explore Gabaldon’s transformation of the genres of the romance novel and the historical novel, her significant uses of Scottish folklore and myth, as well as her abiding concern for the role of women in the making of history.

Chapter I: History

1.1 “A Walk through the Standing Stones”: The Transformation and Reinvention of the Historical Novel within Diana Gabaldon’s *Outlander*

Conventionally, historical/fantasy novels and television shows perpetuate stereotypical narratives; these texts are situated in past centuries in order to provide exotic locales and escapist fantasies though, unfortunately much of the valuable historical information becomes distorted or completely lost as the narrative progresses in order to heighten the drama between protagonists or simply to get higher ratings. This isn’t the case with the television show *Outlander*, an adaptation of Diana Galbadon’s bestselling novel *Outlander* (1991). Its lead female protagonist, Claire Randall, a WWII combat nurse who accidentally travels through time when she walks through ancient standing stones in Scotland, finds herself in the Eighteenth Century and is caught up in the heated tensions between Scotland and England. Apart from being a fantasy show, The *Outlander* television series is an adept representation of the historical novel due not only to the fact that the text remains largely intact, but it also serves as a key element in plot development, the main protagonist tries her best to prevent tragic Scottish events while attempting to return back to her own time. The following chapter will analyze both the novel and TV versions in order to illustrate Gabaldon’s reinvention of the historical novel à la Sir Walter Scott and Mark Twain and the successful adaptation of her novel to television.

Ever since Diana Gabaldon’s novel *Outlander* (1991) was successfully adapted to the small screen, many critics have categorized the show as a “fantasy romance.” The truth of the matter is that the *Outlander* television series strays far from stereotypical notions of romance; instead, its roots are heavily embedded in historical fiction. Gabaldon drew inspiration for her novels from various sources, but most importantly from the Scottish inventor of the historical

novel, Sir Walter Scott. Gabaldon is especially indebted to “the Waverly Novels,” in which Scott allows his readers to enter into the lives of ordinary people caught up in violent, convulsive changes in history.

Sir Walter Scott was a Scottish novelist, poet, historian, and biographer; he is often considered both the inventor and the first great practitioner of the historical novel. One of Scott’s greatest achievements is the Waverly novels series, which are commonly known as “Tis Sixty Years Since” due to the fact that Scott is writing in 1805, sixty years after the final and disastrous Jacobite Rebellion in 1745. At a young age, Scott was fond of listening to his elderly relatives’ accounts and stories of the Scottish Border, and he soon became a voracious reader of poetry, history, drama, and romances. On the other hand, Diana Gabaldon’s educational background is in science. As she states repeatedly, the main reason she started writing was due to her belief that “everyone at a certain point of their life should write a novel.”(Gabaldon) Hence, the easiest way to venture into uncharted waters in her own personal development was for her to write a historical novel; it is here that Gabaldon drew inspiration from Sir Walter Scott. The critic, Cailey Hall in “3 Reasons Why Outlander Is Smarter than You Think,” briefly describes how Gabaldon’s imitation of Scott’s narration style and its later successful translation onto the small screen: “Gabaldon takes the Waverley conceit—of a character unexpectedly thrust into the middle of historic events—and improves it, giving us a strong female protagonist with the added Cassandra-esque burden of historical hindsight. And sex scenes! Which could have improved Waverley, come to think of it.” (Hall)

Sir Walter Scott and Diana Gabaldon both explore the concept of having an ordinary main character become caught up in an important historical moment. Gabaldon’s Claire and Scott’s Waverly are both outlanders, or as the Highlanders called them “Sassenachs” that is

Saxons for Englishmen. But as time passes, these foreigners are embraced by Highland culture and try their best to prevent inevitable catastrophe at Culloden Moore, the final battle in a civil and religious war known as The Jacobite Risings. Much like Walter Scott, Gabaldon's novels enthrall readers and viewers alike due to how they present a structured and elaborate plot line tightly interwoven with historical aspects. Gabaldon has concocted a mesmerizing storyline that keeps her readers engrossed with her fiction; this same enchanting combination is also transferred onto film.

During the Jacobite Risings, tensions ran high between England and Scotland, largely due to a struggle between religious doctrine and monarchical succession. It is also during this time period that Sir Walter Scott began writing historical fiction based on "the Jacobite Rebellion."; "Jacobite" comes from the Latin word for James (Jacobus). The Jacobite rebels advocated and intermittently fought for the restoration of the Stuart line of monarchs, whom they regarded as the legitimate heirs to the throne.

The final Jacobite Rebellion plays a significant role within *Outlander*. Gabaldon's heroine is a modern woman who travels back through time, which allows Gabaldon to explore the notions of ironic re-visitations, in this particular case Gabaldon's Claire contests the stereotypical notions of gender roles. Furthermore, Claire knows very well the outcome of the rebellion, and she in turn will try to do anything within her power to stop the extinction of the Highland way of life. Throughout the first season of the television series, executive producer Ronald D. Moore worked closely with Gabaldon in order to preserve the hybrid genre invented by Sir Walter Scott of momentous historical change and the thrilling personal narrative of a character sympathetic to her readers. Much of this historical background Claire learns from Frank Randall, who is Claire's husband and a historian with ancestors who were

prominent in the conflict. Claire is able to protect herself and survive in the past due to her knowledge of history.

Sir Walter Scott's first Waverly Novel presents Edward Waverly, the main male protagonist. He is an Englishman who is sent to Scotland on military orders and gets thrust into Highland culture. As time passes he comes to embrace the Highland way of life, much like Claire. One of the most noticeable parallels between *Outlander* and Scott's *Waverly* is the importance of the figure of the Bard. In eighteenth and nineteenth century nationalistic medievalism the figure of the Bard is presented as a beacon of wisdom and prophecy. In Scott's *Waverly*, chapter 23; the heroine Flora translates the Bard's prophecy of an impending revolution to Edward Waverly:

I have given you the trouble of walking to this spot, Captain Waverley, both because I thought the scenery would interest you, and because a Highland song would suffer still more from my imperfect translation were I to introduce it without its own wild and appropriate accompaniments. To speak in the poetical language of my country, the seat of the Celtic Muse is in the mist of the secret and solitary hill, and her voice in the murmur of the mountain stream. He who woos her must love the barren rock more than the fertile valley, and the solitude of the desert better than the festivity of the hall.'

Few could have heard this lovely woman make this declaration, with a voice where harmony was exalted by pathos, without exclaiming that the muse whom she invoked could never find a more appropriate representative. But Waverley, though the thought rushed on his mind, found no courage to utter it. Indeed, the wild feeling of romantic delight with which he heard the few first notes she drew from her instrument amounted almost to a sense of pain. He would not for worlds have quitted his place by her side;

yet he almost longed for solitude that he might decipher and examine at leisure the complication of emotions which now agitated his bosom. (Scott, 115)

Within this particular passage Scott uses the sublime natural landscape to convey a sense of fantasy and magic. Flora's lyre resonates with nature itself, singing its prophecy to Waverly. This particular scene parallels one in Gabaldon's *Outlander*, in which during a clan gathering Jamie takes it upon himself to become the translator of the famous highland bard, Gwyllyn for Claire; whose melodious Gaelic song foretells the story of a maiden who has traveled through time and thusly stirs Claire's hopes of returning to her own time:

Gwyllyn rested on his stool to sip wine as one gave place to another by the fireside, telling stories that held the hall rapt. Some of these I hardly heard. I was rapt myself, but by my own thoughts, which were tumbling about, forming patterns under the influence of wine, music, and fairy legends. "It was a time, two hundred years ago..." It's always two hundred years in Highland stories, said the Reverend Wakefield's voice in memory. The same thing as "Once upon a time," you know. And women trapped in the rocks of fairy duns, traveling far and arriving exhausted, who knew not where they had been, nor how they had come there. I could feel the hair rising on my forearms, as though with cold, and rubbed them uneasily. Two hundred years. From 1945 to 1743; yes, near enough. And women who traveled through the rocks. Was it always women? I wondered suddenly. Something else occurred to me. The women came back. Holy water, spell, or knife, they came back. So perhaps, just perhaps, it was possible. I must get back to the standing stones on Craigh Na Dun. I felt a rising excitement that made me feel a trifle sick, and I reached for the wine goblet to calm myself. (*Outlander*, 152)

Upon hearing the Bard's wise words, Claire's hopes of returning back to her own time are not only re-ignited, but she also becomes aware of how even the most impossible thing such as time travel can become possible. Thus, Claire becomes a believer in the myths and Highland superstitions, due to how the Bard's words via Jamie are able to provide Claire with the key to unlock her understanding of how to return back to her own time, back into the arms of her beloved husband. The previous passage presents how narrative through oral tradition is an important element in both Gabaldon and Sir Walter Scott's works.

Consequently as a result of their encounters with a bard both Waverly and Claire become allies to the Jacobite cause. Various parallels can be drawn: for example, many of the characters and situations that Scott presents within his novels are mirrored within *Outlander*. Edward Waverly and Claire Randall Fraser both hail from England, and they are both thrown into a new country. Much as Waverly spends more than six months in Perthshire, Claire is forced to stay at castle Leoch. Both are initially disliked and considered to be untrustworthy by Highland clansmen. Other mirroring characters are: Scott's Baron of Bradwardine and Gabaldon's Duke of Sandringham due to how their loyalties are always in question because they often side with the ones who provide them with greater benefits. Janet Gellatley of *Waverly* and Geillis Duncan of *Outlander* are each accused of witchcraft. Evan Dhu Maccombich of Scott's novel and Dougal Mackenzie in Gabaldon's invite an English fugitive to join them and truly understand the Highland way of life and customs. Other similarities between *Waverly* and *Outlander* are the following: hunting episodes, duels to regain one's honor, raids led by Highland marauders, the concept of blackmail and most importantly the great Jacobite Rebellion. For instance in both literary works Claire and Waverly become immersed in Highland culture but both are kept under vigilance by Highland clansmen during

their stay in the Highlands, due to the suspicion that they might be spies for the British. As time progresses they both come to be viewed as allies of the Highlands.

The Historical/Fantasy television series, *Outlander* has been widely praised by countless critics and compared to other successful fantasy series such as *Game of Thrones*. The small screen adaptation of Diana Gabaldon's work offers a fantasy of tourism that leads to a direct participation in transforming the past, a walk through the standing stones that leads to an adventure in history. Gabaldon attempts to transform the historical novel, interlacing Scottish folklore and foregrounding her concern with the role of women in the making of history. As a result, Gabaldon presents herself as a modern female historical novelist, using these lenses in order to create her fiction and this in turn is successfully translated onto the small screen.

Gabaldon is able to successfully re- imagine history by presenting readers historical events through the firsthand account made by her main character. Claire does not simply review history; she becomes a part of history. As Gabaldon herself maintained in Podcast entitled "Wandering Scots Bookclub," history tends to be written from a victor's prospective. Her novel is centered on the second Jacobite Rising; hence the major sources of information came from the victor's prospective in this particular case, the English. Gabaldon explains how history can be manipulated because it is written from a particular perspective and comes to underwrite cultural bias. Gabaldon gives the particular example of the American Civil War and how the vast majority of texts and information was written from the northern point of view because they were the victors; sadly texts written from the Southern states are sparser and figure less prominently in traditional historical accounts. With this example, Gabaldon explained that in order for her to conduct her research, she relied on the Scottish oral tradition.

After the disastrous loss of the Scots at the battle of Culloden Moore, the English crown decided to punish the Scots for their actions and began conducting the clearance of the Highlands: the use of the tartan, bagpipes and Gaelic became banned. In the introduction of his work *The History of the Highland Clearances*, Alexander Mackenzie elaborates on how the clansmen survivors of the Battle of Culloden went back to their homes only to be greeted by the harsh reality that things would never go back to being the way they were “Many of these brave fellows came back wounded and war-scarred to find, not that a grateful country had taken care that the homes and the helpless ones they had left behind were kept sacred and immune from the greed and ruthless savagery of the landlord or his hirelings, but that their hearths and homes were desecrated and destroyed, and every moral law of patriotism and honor had been violated” (Mackenzie, 115). The Highland Clearances provided England with the opportunity to erase Scottish identity; luckily the Scots were able to preserve their brave attempts at independence through the oral tradition. Henceforth, Gaelic songs recorded Scottish history, despite the English crown’s concerted attempts at ethnocide. Gabaldon herself points out on her own webpage that she never planned on writing a “Historical Romance novel,” let alone a novel set during the final Jacobite Rising:

It was an accident. I thought I’d write a book for practice, just to learn how, and thought perhaps a historical novel would be the easiest thing for me to write; I was, after all, a research professor—I knew what to do with a library. So, where to set this practice book? Well, I happened to see a “Dr. Who” rerun in a weak-minded moment, and was taken by a minor character—a young Scotsman from 1745, who appeared in his kilt. “Well, that’s fetching,” I said. “Yeah, why not? Scotland, eighteenth century.” So that’s where I began, knowing nothing about Scotland or the eighteenth century, with no plot, no outline, no

characters—nothing but the rather vague images conjured up by a man in a kilt (which is, of course, a very powerful and compelling image.) (Gabaldon)

This fascination with eighteenth- century Scotland led Gabaldon to conduct intensive research on Scottish history and the historical novel as conceived by Sir Walter Scott. Gabaldon's intent was to write a historical novel, but as her writing progressed she found herself adding personal comments on certain situations, which gradually turned into Claire's words, leading to Claire's emergence as a first person, intradiegetic narrator.

Gabaldon's strategies of rewriting the past cohere with Linda Hutcheon's definition of postmodernism as a: "contradictory phenomenon, one that uses and abuses, installs and then subverts, the very concept it challenges be it in architecture, literature,...film,...T.V... Histography"(1). Hutcheon elaborates as to how the vast majority of the critical work on postmodernism relies on the following three branches: literature, history, theory and as a result it brings forward the concept of *histographic metafiction*. Hutcheon describes histographic metafiction as "theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs that is made the grounds for its rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past" (5). Diana Gabaldon and Sir Walter Scott present historical accounts of the Jacobite Rebellions of Scotland during the eighteenth century and both interlace fact with fiction: Gabaldon also incorporates fantasy and supernatural elements into her fiction, thus providing a dichotomy between the past and the present. In *Outlander* Claire is constantly finding herself in trouble due to her modern ways. On various occasions in the novel, her feisty personality sets her at odds with the men of that time. As Claire struggles to take care of one of her patients, she lapses into casual obscenities:

I finally finished tying one end and reached for another, which persisted in slithering away behind the patient's back. "Come back here, you...oh, you goddamned bloody bastard!" Jamie had moved and the original end had come untied. There was a moment of shocked silence. "Christ," said the fat man named Rupert. "I've ne'er heard a woman use such language in me life." "Then ye've ne'er met my auntie Grisel," said another voice, to laughter. "Your husband should tan ye, woman," said an austere voice from the blackness under a tree. "St. Paul says 'Let a woman be silent, and—' " "You can mind your own bloody business," I snarled, sweat dripping behind my ears, "and so can St. Paul." I wiped my forehead with my sleeve. "Turn him to the left. And if you," addressing my patient, "move so much as one single muscle while I'm tying this bandage, I'll throttle you." "Och, aye," he answered meekly. I pulled too hard on the last bandage, and the entire dressings scooted off. "Goddamn it all to hell!" I bellowed, striking my hand on the ground in frustration. There was a moment of shocked silence, then, as I fumbled in the dark for the loose ends of the bandages, further comment on my unwomanly language. (Gabaldon, 76-77)

Unlike Gabaldon, Scott was writing only sixty years after the fateful battle at Culloden Moor, creating his own retelling of the past and as a result his fiction honored his ancestors which in turn earned him outstanding success and praise that still continues to this day. In contrast to Gabaldon, Sir Walter Scott writes from within the historic epoch and Gabaldon from a perspective oddly both within and outside it.

1.2 “The Time-Traveling Nurse VS The Time-Traveling Engineer”: Contrast and Similarities between Gabaldon’s *Outlander* and Mark Twain’s *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*

Gabaldon presents historical accounts through the eyes of Claire Randall, a modern woman who is transported to the past. Throughout the first novel and season one of *Outlander*, Claire is hurled onto a different century in which she must rely on her knowledge of the past in order to survive. One of Claire’s cunning attributes is her love for botany and medical procedures due to her training as a nurse. Because of these particular assets she is taken to the Laird of Clan Mackenzie in order for him to decide if Claire is a spy for the English. He appoints her with the task of healer and in this way he is able to spy on her and to see if her intentions are noble. Another great author who successfully presents a dichotomy between different time periods is Mark Twain with *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*. Twain’s main character, Hank shares many common attributes with Gabaldon’s Claire since both are modern people who are transported into the past and trying to adjust to living in the past. Mark Twain published his work in 1889 and interlaced a homodiegetic with heterodiegetic narration form in his story telling; as a result Twain himself is active in the preface of his story. Throughout the novel, Twain opts for a figural narrative, which Manfred Jahn defines as:

A narrative which presents the story's events as seen through the eyes of (or: from the point of view of) a third-person internal focalizer. The narrator of a figural narrative is a covert heterodiegetic narrator presenting an internal focalizer's consciousness, especially his/her perceptions and thoughts. Because the narrator's discourse will preferably mimic the focalizer's perceptions and conceptualizations the narrator's own voice quality will remain largely indistinct. One of the main effects of internal

focalization is to attract attention to the mind of the reflector-character and away from the narrator and the process of narratorial mediation. (37)

In his literary work, Twain commences his narration by incorporating himself within his own work and interacting with his main character. As a result he is creating an ironic revisiting of the past and following the notions of postmodernist fiction. This deviation from narrator (Twain) to reflector character (stranger/Hank) is evident since within the preface of the novel “As I laid the book down there was a knock at the door, and my stranger came in. I gave him a pipe and a chair, and made him welcome. I also comforted him with a hot Scotch whisky; gave him another one; then still another hoping always for his story. After a fourth persuader, he drifted into it himself, in a quite simple and natural way.”(Twain, 8)

Twain allows his character to narrate his story and puts himself aside from the story. It is interesting to see how his main character, is called “stranger” at the beginning of the novel because Twain and readers alike do not know who he is, by Twain stepping aside from the role of main narrator; readers are in a “getting to know” basis with said character and so Hank commences his story by taking control of the narration. In the preface of his work, Twain is the heterodiegetic narrator but when he welcomes the “stranger” into his room “As I laid the book down there was a knock at the door, and my stranger came in” (Twain, 8). This passage upholds has great importance to the narrative of the story because by “placing down his book” this particular action serves as a metaphor for Twain creating a distinction between himself and Hank. Twain steps away from the main action of the narration and proceeds to allow the “stranger”/main character to take control to become the primary narrator of the tale. As a result the reader is able to see this particular transition within the preface of the novel which is entitled “The Stranger’s Story” with this Twain becomes a spectator along with the readers

and proceeds to let “his stranger,” his main protagonist take hold of the narration of the story. This particular “passing of torch of sorts” is described by Manfred Jahn in his work as “authorial narrative” which is described as “An authorial narrator's comprehensive ('Olympian') world-view is particularly suited to reveal the moral strengths and weaknesses of the characters”(Jahn, 30). In his novel, the stranger is a first-person intradiegetic narrator, while Twain remains the author. As a result, the torch is passed from an authorial narrator to an internal narrator, who does not have “authorial” power.

Like Twain, Gabaldon is not directly present in her story but makes use of a reflector character, Claire, and consequently inserts her own ideas through the use of character reflection. Throughout *Outlander* and its series, Diana Gabaldon provides readers and watchers alike with historical events narrated by Claire due to how she relies on the lectures and conversations she had with her husband Frank Randall who happened to be a historian, in order to survive. By having a strong female character narrate past events, it allows readers and viewers alike a determined, personal perspective on history. Being a “Sassenach” or outsider to both Scotland and England she presents historical accounts but in a sense she is biased because of her living outside of the country for time period in her life. Claire was an outsider to England due to how she was raised by her grandfather who was an archeologist, thusly moving around a lot; Claire never had a true feeling of patriotism for her country. On the other hand she was considered to be a Sassenach by the Scots because she was simply a visitor both in the present and the past; hence her sole purpose is to present her own personal accounts without being biased. Following these postmodernist notions, Linda Hutcheon explains:

What the postmodern writing of history and literature has taught us is that both history and fiction are discourses, that both constitute systems of signification by which we make sense of the past (“exertions of the shaping, ordering imagination”). In other words, the meaning and the shape are not *in the events*, but *in the systems* which makes those past “events” into present historical “facts”. This is not a “dishonest refuge from truth” but an acknowledgement of the meaning-making function of human constructs. (89)

Hutcheon expands on the notions in which the re-telling of history through fiction does not taint history but in fact it adds more to it presenting an ironic visitation of the past. Both *Outlander* and *Waverly* present the tragic Jacobite Risings through a new perspective, but being respectful and mindful of the past. As previously mentioned, another author who seems to anticipate postmodern historical fiction in his work is Mark Twain with *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*. Twain also undertakes ironic re- visitations of the past. According to Hutcheon, “The postmodern reply to the modern consists of recognizing that the past, since it cannot really be destroyed, because its destruction leads to silence [the discovery of modernism], must be revisited: but with irony, not innocently” (90). Both Twain’s *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*, and Gabaldon’s *Outlander*, explore how the past can be observed as an ironic visitation. Both Claire and Twain’s Hank are inexplicably hurled back through time and find themselves in alien surroundings. Both put into use their knowledge of the future in order to survive in the past: Claire utilizes her skills as a combat nurse and her knowledge of botany, while Hank on the other hand uses his knowledge of firearms, machinery and engineering; hence, Claire passes herself off as a healer in the eighteenth century while Hank poses as a magician of sorts and in turn is respected by the

people. In contrast to Hank, Claire actually uses her medicinal knowledge to help others while Hank on the other hand uses his knowledge of engineering for selfish reasons. For example in chapter 23 “Restauration of the Fountain,” Hank is in a competition of sorts with the magician Merlin in order to present to the land who is the better “magician” at restoring a dried up fountain which is in such state due to a foul enchantment, but in reality there is simply a problem with the plumbing structure. Hank uses his knowledge of engineering to determine how to bring water back to the well and discredit Merlin. Through the use of ridiculous theatrics and special pump system, Hank is able to restore the water supply and Merlin is left in shame. Hank boasts on his cleverness and superiority in the following:

I sent Merlin home on a shutter. He had caved in and gone down like a landslide when I pronounced that fearful name, and had never come to since. He never had heard that name before,—neither had I—but to him it was the right one. Any jumble would have been the right one. He admitted, afterward, that that spirit’s own mother could not have pronounced that name better than I did. He never could understand how I survived it, and I didn’t tell him. It is only young magicians that give away a secret like that.

Merlin spent three months working enchantments to try to find out the deep trick of how to pronounce that name and outlive it. But he didn’t arrive. When I started to the chapel, the populace uncovered and fell back reverently to make a wide way for me, as if I had been some kind of a superior being—and I was. (Twain 96-97)

It is evident to see how in this particular passage of the novel Twain makes an evident mockery of the past superstitions through Hank. Due to how Hank possesses higher knowledge because he comes from the future he renders himself superior to the people of that time, specially by making a fool out of Merlin who was highly respected. This is just one of

the various examples as to how Hank uses his knowledge for personal advantage. In contrast to Hank, Gabaldon's Claire uses her knowledge to help others and not to boost her ego.

Though both Hank and Claire have different personalities and attitudes toward the past, they both share a common denominator, which is the need to survive in a foreign time.

When these two characters find themselves within the past they try to quickly assess their current situations and ironically enough they are both taken against their wills to meet the people who are in charge. Claire is taken by the Mackenzie clan to Castle Leoch to meet Laird Colum Mackenzie; Hank is taken by Sir Kay to Camelot to meet King Arthur. Both, Claire and Hank know what the future holds and both try to undo the wrongs of the past, but they are ultimately unsuccessful. Claire tries to prevent the Jacobite rebellion and Hank tries to prevent the fall of the Round Table. Hank uses his knowledge for a superior purpose and he starts building secret factories that construct modern machineries of war, he also sets up private schools in order to educate the lower class and eradicate medieval mentality and induce modern ways of thinking; this is all done to also boast his "superiority" as a man from the future. Twain presents this superiority through Hank's theatrics and sarcasm.

Linda Hutcheon has remarked in her research that in the metahistorical novel, events seem to narrate for themselves. Gabaldon's *Outlander* fits into this approach largely due to the fact that the novel as well as the voice over in the television series are narrated from a first person point of view; in this case Claire's point of view. Within her work, Gabaldon creates a paradox between history and fiction by having a modern woman travel back in time; Claire repeatedly challenges the patriarchal society of the Scottish Highlands. Throughout the novel as well as the television series, she finds herself at odds with the men in power due to her strong mind and superior medicinal knowledge. Gabaldon is able to create her intricate

fiction by using history itself to expand the plotline as well as making use of a homodiegetic narrator. Throughout *Outlander* Gabaldon presents the extinction of the Highland culture and how her main protagonist undergoes a change of heart and tries with all her will to re-write the past but with no avail.

During the first novel *Outlander* as well as in the television show, Claire's main concern is to return to her own time and back to the arms of her loving husband, but the more time she spends in the past, the more involved she becomes with the Highland culture and the Jacobite cause. This particular situation can be paralleled to Twain's "Yankee," because as time passes Hank becomes more involved with that century. Like Gabaldon's Claire he also got married and had a child; consequently he tried his best to protect Camelot. In *Outlander*, Claire's bond and comradery with the Highland clansmen increases when she is forced into marriage with Scotsman, Jaime Fraser. In turn, she becomes sympathetic to the Jacobite's largely because of her love for Jaime and because she knows the tragic outcome of Culloden Moor, the fateful place where the Jacobite's will lose their battle against the Red Coats.

To return to Gabaldon's other literary model, Sir Walter Scott: much like Edward Waverly, Claire undergoes a change of heart in terms of the Highland culture. In Scott's "Waverly Novels" his main protagonist, Edward Waverly is an Englishman who grows sympathetic to the Highlanders and is then considered to be a traitor to the English crown. The Highland clansmen do everything in their power to protect Waverly from the English armed forces. Much like Waverly, Claire also falls under the protection of the Highland clansmen when she marries a clansman herself. Again, by allowing her main character to speak her mind and by employing first person narration, Gabaldon separates herself from the story and allows Claire to speak freely.

This particular form of narration keeps readers and viewers alike immersed in the story, as a result it presents a “homodiegetic narrator.” In *Narratology: A Guide to the Theory of Narrative*, Manfred Jahn defines this concept as the following “In homodiegetic narrative the story is told by a (homodiegetic) narrator who is also one of story's acting characters. The prefix 'homo-' points to the fact that the individual who acts as a narrator is also a character on the level of action” (20). Gabaldon’s *Outlander* presents the audience with a homodiegetic narrator who is present in the action and is also hetero-temporal, a narrator who visits the past with a modern mind, replete with modern knowledge and expectations. The homodiegetic voice that is present in Gabaldon’s *Outlander* is successfully adapted onto film and as a result the audience gets the opportunity to truly understand Claire’s thoughts and actions. Gabaldon herself explained that when she was writing the novel she constantly found herself making comments about particular historical events which then led her to write the novel from Claire’s perspective and as a result it creates a dichotomy between the history and fiction.

1.3 “History Meets Romance”: Diana Gabaldon’s Reinvention of The Historical Romance Genre

Returning to the concept of historiographic metafiction: Linda Hutcheon elaborates on how during the nineteenth century, literature and history were considered branches on the same tree of learning. What postmodernism sought to do was to recover or rehabilitate this affinity of literature and history. As we have seen, for Gabaldon history is usually told from the victor’s point of view; hence, *Outlander* presents a different view on history because of the fact that it is narrated by a modern woman, who strongly identifies herself with the losing

side. Even though Claire is an English woman, she grew up outside her country and her knowledge of Scottish history comes from what she has learned from her historian husband. As a result Claire is views Eighteenth century Scotland as an alien place in which she has to be constantly on her guard and use her modern knowledge in order to keep herself alive in the past. Throughout the first novel as well as the television show, it is evident that Claire's knowledge of history stems chiefly from her husband's teachings; this is presented through "flash-backs" or in this case "flash-forwards" in which Claire's historian husband Frank Randall, shares with her his family's history as well as the tragic events of the failed final Jacobite uprising. Gabaldon puts a face to the countless brave souls who lost their lives at Culloden Moor, thusly presenting postmodernist notions once more. In her work Linda Hutcheon elaborates on said notions in the following:

Histographic metafiction refutes the natural or common-sense methods of distinguishing between historical fact and fiction. It refuses the view that only history has a truth in claim, both by questioning the ground of that claim in historiography and by asserting that both history and fiction are discourses, human constructs, signifying systems and both derive their major claim to truth from that identity. This kind of postmodern fiction also refuses the relegation of the extratextual past to the domain of historiography in the name of the autonomy of art. (93)

Following in these particular notions of postmodernist metafiction, Diana Gabaldon, like her literary model Sir Walter Scott, presents history through a new theoretical lens; by interlacing history and fiction together, both authors are challenging traditional notions of what history should be.

This fascination for history and Highland culture drew Sir Walter Scott to write his fiction. The central themes of many of Scott's novels are about conflicts between opposing cultures. Sir Walter Scott began the Waverly novels only sixty years after the final Jacobite uprising, his work presents a sympathetic view of the Jacobite cause by having its main protagonist Edward Waverly fight in the battle of Prestopans. In contrast to Sir Walter Scott, Mark Twain wrote *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* in order to create a paradigm between the past and the future. Twain's Hank makes a mockery of the small mindedness of the past by presenting outrageous images such as modern warfare machinery and knights riding bicycles. Diana Gabaldon on a different note wrote her *Outlander* novels in order to present the difference between time periods as well as out of the urge of having to give a voice to the fallen Highlanders but constantly found herself adding her own sassy remarks and comments. As, Gabaldon elaborates when asked what inspired her to write a metahistorical novel:

I had meant *Outlander* to be a straight historical novel; but when I introduced Claire (around the third day of writing—it was the scene where she meets Dougal and the others in the cottage), she wouldn't cooperate. Dougal asked her who she was, and without my stopping to think who she should be, she drew herself up, stared belligerently at him and said "Claire Elizabeth Beauchamp. And who the hell are you?" She promptly took over the story and began telling it herself, making smart-ass modern remarks about everything. At which point I shrugged and said, "Fine. Nobody's ever going to see this book, so it doesn't matter what bizarre thing I do—go ahead and be modern, and I'll figure out how you got there later." So the time-travel was all her fault.

As Gabaldon herself points out, she accidentally stumbled upon a postmodernist novel which challenges stereotypical notions of what is considered a historical fiction. By finding herself making witty comments throughout the narration, Gabaldon created a homodiegetic narrative that readers and viewers can relate to. Gabaldon herself has stated that she is an admirer of Sir Walter Scott's work and has even written a preface to one of Scott's novels. In order to write her novels, Gabaldon conducted extensive research specifically on the "Jacobite Risings.

One of the main reasons for the high tensions between England and Scotland was due to religious beliefs as well as for power between Catholics and Protestants. In 1743 war broke out between England and France. As France was a Catholic nation, it had always supported the Stuarts' claim to the English throne "The Old Alliance." King Louis XV realized that it would be in his interests if the Stuarts made another attempt to regain the throne. Charles Edward Stuart- "Bonnie Prince Charlie", "The Young Pretender" sailed off and landed in Scotland on July 1745. Once in Scotland, the Bonnie Prince was good at convincing fellow Catholics who lived in the Scottish Highlands to join his cause. With the victory at the battle of Prestonpans, the Bonnie Prince wanted to move his army into England but due to hostile conditions, he was forced to stay in Scotland. King Louis XV of France promised the prince an army of French soldiers but sadly he didn't keep to his word and the soldiers never came. The Duke of Cumberland and his army were now in pursuit of the Bonnie Prince, these two forces finally met on April 16, 1745 on Culloden Moor.

In *The Jacobite Rebellions 1689-1746* Stephen Pringle Thomson, presents heartbreaking accounts of what occurred at Culloden Moor in chapter "The Forty Five," in which he describes the eve of the tragic battle told from a Highlander's point of view. In this

chapter he explains how the Prince's army was famished (their main source of sustenance was oatmeal) and exhausted; he also records that the English Duke's army had over eleven thousand men and the Scots numbered only six thousand (a thousand of them were asleep during the battle and were later brutally executed). The battle at Culloden Moor lasted twenty five minutes, due to the vast army and gun power the Duke possessed. Fearing for his life, the Bonnie Prince Charles fled and went into hiding for many years. As a form of punishment for the Scottish support of Charles, King George II outlawed the use of the tartan, the speaking of Gaelic, and other Highland Customs. Those who broke this law were punished by death; hence the English response to the Scottish uprising was ethnocide, the annihilation not just of an army but also of a way of life.

Diana Gabaldon and Sir Walter Scott present the Highland way of life in great detail, as well as having two protagonists who are considered to be "Sassenachs" or outlanders to the Scottish highlanders. Both Gabaldon's *Outlander* as well as Scott's *Waverly* introduces readers to the Scottish Highland culture, by presenting the brave dignity of the Highland clansmen. In her work *Folklore of the Scottish Highlands*, Anne Ross elaborates on the clan system: "The clan was by no means a democratic organization; like all Celtic society, it was highly aristocratic. The various offices were hereditary; the chief was the commander of the clan in war; every chief had his poet or bard, to praise him in life and to lament him in death. The bagpipe was the military instrument for war-music and it was also much favored in the chieftains' residences" (342). Both Gabaldon and Scott pose their main characters initially as outsiders to this way of life (Claire and Edward both hail from England) but as they spend more time in Scotland, they their sympathy for the Highland way of life and the justice of the Jacobite cause grows increasingly passionate.

The television series breaks away from the stereotypical notions of traditional historical fantasy dramas due to the fact that it presents rich historical information and strong female lead. This is immediately evident in the opening credits of the hit show which presents breathtakingly beautiful Scottish scenery, these images are accompanied by the show's title song entitled "The Skye Boat Song" written by Bear McCreary and sung by Raya Yarbrough. The song presents a nod to oral Highland tradition and sets the tone for the story that is to be shown:

Sing me a song of a lass that is gone

Say, could that lass be I?

Merry of soul she sailed on a day

Over the sea to Skye

Billow and breeze, islands and seas

Mountains of rain and sun

All that was good, all that was fair

All that was me is gone

These lyrics uphold great importance in the story telling process of the show. When carefully analyzed the lyrics song by "the bard" or in this particular case the musician, Raya Yarbrough, presents Claire's story. In the opening lyrics "Sing me a song of a lass that is gone, Say, could that lass be I?" the "lass" the song is referring to is Claire and how she has traveled through time. These soulful lyrics are accompanied by a series of bagpipes and images of pagan rituals and beautiful shots of the Scottish Highlands which in a way makes the viewer feel like they are also being transported back in time along with Claire.

For many years Romance novels have catered chiefly to female audiences. Diana Gabaldon broke with the stereotypes of the genre reshaping the definition of what is considered an “historical romance” by providing vast historical background rich with Scottish folklore and dense character development. Gabaldon’s narratives break away from other bodice-ripping historical romances due her manipulation of various theoretical lenses, such as history, contesting gender roles and the supernatural; what stands out in Gabaldon’s narrative is her ability to narrate history from the perspective of the losers of the Rising, just as Walter Scott had done.

This form of narrative is successfully translated onto the small screen: from the beginning of the pilot episode entitled “Sassenach” the audience is introduced to the main protagonist through the use of a “voice-over,” the audience is able to get a sense as to who Claire Randall is by being presented with Claire’s background history. She is presented as a strong intelligent woman, a skilled WWII combat nurse, who is trying to re- kindle her marriage in Inverness, Scotland with her estranged husband Frank after the end of the war. As the episode progresses it is evident that what seems to connect Frank and Claire is his new found passion for history as well as his own genealogy; the main reason that Claire and Frank are in Scotland is because Frank wishes to track down his ancestor, “Black Jack” Randall, Captain of Dragoons. While in Inverness, Claire and Frank stumble upon the ancient standing stones of Craigh Na Dun. These particular standing stones are notorious in local Scottish folklore due to the legend that people have disappeared after touching the main stone. This is in fact what happens to Claire on the eve of “Samhain,” which is also known as All Hallows Eve. As a result Claire is accidentally hurled through time and finds herself caught up in the eighteenth century when fevered tensions ran high between Scotland and England.

Gabaldon breaks away from the traditional notions of the “historical romance” genre by presenting a strong, intelligent female lead who is unafraid to speak her mind and who is not a traditional damsel in distress. Gabaldon’s Claire contests to traditional television heroines due to how she is able to stand on her own and survive in the past using her strength and knowledge. Gabaldon uses Sir Walter Scott’s work as a source of inspiration and it is quite clear that countless parallels can be drawn between *Waverly* and *Outlander*; both authors sought out to create a retelling of history by interlacing historical facts with fiction. As a result, Gabaldon presents herself as a modern female historical novelist, who interlaces Scottish folklore and foregrounding her concern with the role of women in the making of history in order to create her fiction and in turn this is successfully translated onto the small screen.

Chapter II: Gender

2.1 “Damsel’s don’t Distress”: Gender and Feminism in Diana Gabaldon’s *Outlander*

The vast majority of fantasy romance novels and television series perpetuate stereotypical gender roles; the heroine is presented as a frail damsel in need of a strong lead male character to protect her. These stories usually take the protagonists through a traditional plot of characters meeting, instantly falling in love, getting married and riding off to a happy ending. This isn’t the case with the television show *Outlander*; which is an adaptation of Diana Galbadon’s bestselling series of novels, *Outlander* (1991). Its lead female protagonist, Claire Randall challenges established female stereotypes in this genre; she is strong, intelligent and openly sexual. On the other hand, the male protagonist, Jamie Fraser, while initially represented as a typical Highlander of the time, as his character develops he undergoes a process of transformation and adaptation to his leading lady. The following explores the representation of the main characters and how their roles are reversed and contest traditional representations of gender in this genre. Likewise, comparisons will be made between the characters’ book and film (season one) versions to illustrate how the source material, which was created by a woman, is adapted to film by a male producer.

For many years romance novels have only served to cater to female audiences. Diana Gabaldon broke the stereotypes within the romance genre with her best-selling “*Outlander Novels*” (1991-2018). Gabaldon reshapes gender roles with her main character, Claire Randall who is a World War II combat nurse, and who incidentally travels back in time to eighteenth century Scotland and finds herself in the middle of the Jacobite Rebellion. Countless critics have analyzed Gabaldon’s novels as falling into the “Historical Novel” genre instead of the “Romance” due to how Gabaldon interlaces various theoretical lenses, such as gender studies,

the supernatural and historical elements in order to create the art of storytelling within her novels. These said elements are what made *Outlander* the perfect candidate for a page to screen adaptation. In 2014 executive producer Ronald D. Moore was the man chosen to translate Gabaldon's first novel to the small screen. In a brief interview with Christina Radish, Moore expands on his tactics for bringing the novel to life "We don't tailor it for the non-fan. Starz, from the get-go, said to make it for the fans of the book. They said, "Trust the book." We trust the book. And trust that anyone who samples it and does not know the material will just get pulled into the story. So, that's our philosophy. We just trust this story, so come along with us for the ride"(Radish). By not straying far away from the original storyline, Moore was able to preserve the essence of Gabaldon's work, which in turn leads to an incredibly successful first season of the show currently in its fourth season.

Diana Gabaldon's first novel *Outlander* stands out from other fantasy romances due to how it contests stereotypical gender roles. Its lead female protagonist, Claire Randall, a World War II combat nurse, is unyielding, resourceful, and knowledgeable, and she is unashamed of her sexuality. Upon touching the standing stones in Craigh Na Dun she is sent back in time to eighteenth century Scotland. There she encounters and clashes with various men of the century while never losing sight of who she is and by doing so she challenges the norms of the era. This contesting of gender roles is not only evident throughout the *Outlander* novels but it is also translated into the series.

Executive producer, Ronald D. Moore additionally shared with his interviewer Christine Radish how he has closely worked with author Diana Gabaldon in order to serve poetic justice in the series:

We spent a weekend with Diana, just talking over the story and adaptation and how it would work. I told her how I wanted to approach it, and some of the things that I thought I would change from the book, and she was very open to it... We've given her scripts, and she reads scripts and gives us comments on them. Basically, she's really enjoyed and liked all of the things we've done, which has given us tremendous confidence in the fan response. She's the queen, and the queen likes it, so we're hoping that the rest of the followers like it, too. (Collider)

Gabaldon's *Outlander* presents a surge of originality in the way it incorporates historical events not only to further plot but also expands character development. The main Character is thrown back in time to eighteenth century Scotland, which was a tumultuous period due to the long enduring, tensions for riches and power between Scotland and England. Due to having experience with wars, Claire is intelligent and cunning and as a result she able to use her medicinal and historical knowledge to her advantage. Series creator, Ronald D. Moore was very meticulous writing the screenplay for the series; Moore assured Gabaldon that the historical context of the novel wouldn't be tampered with. Gabaldon herself has stated that her novels are more historical than romantic. In Morgan Kalrich's thesis "Multiculturalism, Sex, and Powerful Women: The New Romance Novel as the Voice of Neofeminism?" Morgan categorizes Gabaldon's work as a historical romance, and she defines it as the following "Historical romances are set in a period of history before 1945 in any geographic location... Similar to all other romance subgenres, historical romances can be rendered more interesting by combining the historical subgenre with another one"(Kalrich,18). Consequently, Diana Gabaldon's *Outlander* is a perfect example as to how history can be interlaced with fantasy in

order to create an intriguing narrative. By finding herself in this new world, Claire is forced to put her knowledge of history to the test in order to survive in the past.

Shortly after traveling back in time through the stones, Claire immediately has a taste of what women in the eighteenth century endure when she runs in to an ill-fated encounter with sadist British Captain, John “Black Jack” Randall which almost ended the foul act of rape; luckily the brave Highlanders of clan Mackenzie intervene. In Chapter five “The Mackenzie” presents Claire’s first meeting Laird Colum Mackenzie, during their conversation Claire rebukes the Laird’s for his demeaning assumptions:

Then he leaned back, eyed me speculatively, and asked, “But how is it, Mistress Beauchamp, that my brother’s men found ye wandering about in your shift?

Highwaymen would be reluctant to molest your person, as they’d likely mean to hold ye for ransom. And even with such things as I’ve heard of Captain Randall, I’d be surprised to hear that an officer in the English army was in the habit of raping stray travelers.” “Oh?” I snapped. “Well, whatever you’ve heard about him, I assure you he’s entirely capable of it.” I had overlooked the detail of my clothing when planning my story, and wondered at what point in our encounter the man Murtagh had spotted the Captain and myself. “Ah, well,” said Colum. “Possible, I daresay. The man’s a bad reputation, to be sure.” “Possible?” I said. “Why? Don’t you believe what I’ve told you?” For the MacKenzie chieftain’s face was showing a faint but definite skepticism. “I did not say I didn’t believe ye, Mistress,” he answered evenly. “But I’ve not held the leadership of a large clan for twenty-odd years without learning not to swallow whole every tale I’m told.” “Well, if you don’t believe I am who I say, who in bloody hell do you think I am?” I demanded. He blinked, taken aback by my language. Then

the sharp-cut features firmed again. “That,” he said, “remains to be seen. In the meantime, mistress, you’re a welcome guest at Leoch.”(Gabaldon, 98-99)

This expectation defying interaction presents how Claire is not afraid to contest the stereotypical roles of patriarchal society in which a woman is considered to be lesser than a man due to her sex. In the quoted passage it is evident how a modern woman must face the harsh reality that she is now in a “new world” of sorts and has to submit to the punitive expectations of a patriarchal society. As Laird Mackenzie proceeds further with his interrogation, Claire’s fury continues to mount when she comes into the realization that Laird Mackenzie doubts her allegations against Captain Randall. Her sharp rebuke of the Laird works to challenge his engrained misogyny. If Gabaldon’s *Outlander* followed in suit of stereotypical “Romance-novel” norms, her female lead would have been portrayed as a hopeless damsel who would have been broken under Laird Mackenzie’s harsh remarks; in its place Gabaldon presents Claire as unapologetic and fearless in speaking her mind.

This is further justified by Gabaldon’s use of first person narration, which is effectively translated onto the small screen by making use of “voice-overs”; Catriona Balfe who plays Claire on the television adaptation interjects Claire’s thoughts and feelings to the audience, her knowledge of Scottish history serves as an instrument of survival and in turn it provides the audience with crucial historical facts, consequently this particular concoction of history with fiction provides further empowers the female perspective and creates a television series with rich substance which caters to both men and women alike. In her essay “A love letter to Scotland,” Stephenie McGuken maintains that the *Outlander* television series is able to capture the Romance not only of its main characters but also the majestic beauty of Scotland itself, “The Romantic view promoted in the show intentionally foregrounds Scottish heritage

sites in such a way that the locations become key to the story's arc. From the first moments of the show's credits, Scotland is presented as an untamed, picturesque, and magical place steeped in unique history. Each historic site utilized in the course of filming comes with its own history, which is adopted, enveloped, and rejected by the production in favor of their constructed view of place and time"(McGuken,7). One of the key elements presented by McGuken is the mention of the profound effect the opening credits present. In *Outlander's* first season it commences with breathtaking scenery of the Scottish Highlands as well as presenting the dance ritual done by druids on the ancient standing stones of Craigh Na Dun, these particular images are accompanied by the melody of Scottish bagpipes; as a result it captures the attention of viewers as well as fans of the books themselves. The combination of said elements in the opening credits, work together to entice viewers to the world that Gabaldon has created in which females are not mere damsels; but warriors themselves who battle fearlessly and do not distress in the sight of patriarchy.

2.2 Loving, Healing and Drinking: Gabaldon's Women Can Do It All!

One of the most noticeable aspects which make Diana Gabaldon's *Outlander* stand out from other "historical romance" novels is its female characters. Traditionally "historical romance" novels present classic patriarchal stereotypes of beautiful naïve maidens and testosterone boosted, male characters who meet and instantly fall in love. Instead of following these traditional notions of "romance" Gabaldon depicts her female characters as highly intelligent, witty and sexually liberated. In the first novel of the *Outlander* book series as well as in season one of the novel's onscreen adaptation, two particular female characters stand out from the rest: Claire Randall who is the main protagonist and Geillis Duncan who befriends

Claire in the past. Both women contest traditional gender roles due to how they are both modern women surviving in the eighteenth century after falling back through time.

When Diana Gabaldon decided to write a novel for the first time, she chose to start by writing a historical novel since her field of work which was biology, a historical novel seemed fitting due to how she was accustomed to conduct careful research; consequently Gabaldon herself stated that she found the setting for her novel after watching an old episode of “Doctor Who” in which a Scottish Highlander from the eighteenth century was introduced. This period and place became the basis for her story and she could not help but put her own reactions into the mouth of her main character, Claire Randall. Gabaldon breaks the mold of the stereotypes surrounding traditional romance heroines with Claire, providing her young heroine with a distinctive childhood upbringing.

At a young age, Claire becomes an orphan and is taken into the care of her uncle Quentin Lambert Beauchamp or as Claire fondly refers to him “Uncle Lamb” who is a renowned archeologist. Instead of having Claire attend a boarding school, Uncle Lamb decides to take Claire with him on his archeological adventures. In traditional romantic narratives, young orphan girls would be sent to a boarding school so they may become “proper ladies” in society, but Gabaldon breaks away from these notions with Claire. Moreover, this is evident at the beginning of Gabaldon’s *Outlander* (1991) where Claire herself explains her unusual upbringing with her beloved Uncle Lamb:

Poised for a trip to the Middle East at the time, he had paused in his preparations long enough to make the funeral arrangements, dispose of my parents’ estates, and enroll me in a proper girls’ boarding school. Which I had flatly refused to attend. Faced with the necessity of prying my chubby fingers off the car’s door handle and dragging me

by the heels up the steps of the school, Uncle Lamb, who hated personal conflict of any kind, had sighed in exasperation, then finally shrugged and tossed his better judgment out the window along with my newly purchased round straw boater. “Ruddy thing,” he muttered, seeing it rolling merrily away in the rearview mirror as we roared down the drive in high gear. “Always loathed hats on women, anyway.” He had glanced down at me, fixing me with a fierce glare. “One thing,” he said, in awful tones. “You are not to play dolls with my Persian grave figurines. Anything else, but not that. Got it?” I had nodded content. And had gone with him to the Middle East, to South America, to dozens of study sites throughout the world. Had learned to read and write from the drafts of journal articles, to dig latrines and boil water, and to do a number of other things not suitable for a young lady of gentle birth. (Gabaldon, 8)

In essence, this particular passage sets the tone for Gabaldon’s narrative and how it breaks away from traditional romance stereotypes; at the beginning of the passage Uncle Lamb is intent on making sure Claire has a proper upbringing since she is only five years old.

Although Claire is of a fairly young age, she presents a strong resilient spirit when her uncle wants to send her to boarding school, which she “flatly refused to attend” and even went to the lengths of holding tightly onto the handle of her uncle’s car in protest. Instead of taking Claire inside the school against her own will, Uncle Lamb decides to take Claire with him on his exotic expeditions. This particular part of the passage works to justify Claire’s actions later on in the narration but also to contest traditional gender norms. Instead of abandoning Claire in the boarding school to become a “proper lady,” he drives away with her and throws her hat out the window as says to her that he has “Always loathed hats on women, anyway”; the action of throwing the hat through the window can be analyzed as the hat itself being a

symbol for the patriarchy and Gabaldon chose it to be thrown literally out the window, but most importantly these actions are performed by a man. Thusly by having traditional stereotypes being thrown metaphorically out the window, Claire has an incredibly interesting childhood due to the fact she learned to do a great many things that would be frowned upon, as Claire states she “Had learned to read and write from the drafts of journal articles, to dig latrines and boil water, and to do a number of other things not suitable for a young lady of gentle birth”. These “unlady-like” actions are further expanded in its onscreen adaptation. In the pilot episode “Sassenach” a flashback sequence shows a young Claire lighting up a cigarette in an archeological site as these previous lines are delivered by Claire herself by means of a voiceover narration. As a result, this unique upbringing plays an important role in Claire’s independent and resourceful nature, of which she makes good use when she becomes a combat nurse.

At the beginning of *Outlander* (1991) the year is 1945 and after providing a brief insight into her childhood upbringing, Claire explains the main reason she is in Inverness, Scotland with her husband Frank is to rekindle their relationship after being separated for a considerable amount of time during the war. As a combat nurse, Claire had an active role in aiding to the wounded. This entailed making tough decisions (such as amputations), thinking on her feet, as well as witnessing gruesome deaths. This is successfully translated onto the television series in the pilot episode “Sassenach,” after the flashback sequence of Claire’s childhood another flashback is provided which presents Claire aiding a wounded soldier who is bleeding to death during the war; Claire’s fast medical actions help save the soldier’s life. Shortly thereafter a celebration breaks out all around her because the war has finally come to an end, and Claire proceeds to grab a bottle of champagne and drink deeply, straight from the

bottle. These two particular flashback sequences have great importance in terms of character development, by having Claire partake in activities deemed unfitting such as lighting cigarettes as a young girl and partake in heavy drinking, Gabaldon is able to contest traditional gender roles and stray away from the notions of traditional romance novels and television shows, where the female characters are frail, timid, sexually innocent.

In fact, Gabaldon chooses to present Claire as a “unique woman” from the opening of the novel by providing her with a rare childhood upbringing, in addition Gabaldon also presents how Claire and her husband Frank are trying to find a way to rekindle their romance that was interrupted by the war. After being apart for nearly a decade, the couple decided to have a second honeymoon with the goal of starting a family; this is beautifully translated into the television series in the pilot episode of season one, entitled “Sassenach,” where both characters are trying their best to make their relationship prevail. In this episode there is a particular sex scene that is accompanied by Claire’s voiceover about Frank in which she states, “Sex was our bridge back to one another. The one place where we always met. Whatever obstacles presented themselves during the day or night; we could seek out and find each other again in bed. As long as we had that, I had faith that everything would work out.” What makes this particular scene contest traditional notions of television romances is how this act of intimacy is shown along with the company of the voiceover in order to show viewers that the act of sex is not used as a means of lust but as a way of connection between two individuals who deeply love each other and are trying to find their way back to normalcy after the horrors of war.

It is evident that Gabaldon’s work seeks to present how women have desires of their own, more so it breaks traditional romantic notions as to how leading female characters are

the embodiment of chastity. Claire is truly unafraid to express her own sexual wants and needs and it breaks away from traditional gender roles, especially in the 1940's in which wives are responsible to cater to their husband's needs. This is clearly presented in this same episode, when Claire and Frank go off to explore the ruins of Castle Leoch and upon discovering a room in the basement, Claire decides to seduce her husband by perching herself suggestively upon a table; she then makes Frank kneel before her and perform cunnilingus for her own pleasure. This scene flouts traditional fantasy romance tropes in which instead of having the male character lead the sexual encounter, it is a woman who plays the seducer and instead of having the scene progress into sexual intercourse, it simply presents an alternate form of sexual intimacy in which a woman is the one initiating the act and is the one who receives all the sexual gratification. While her relationship with Frank seems to be mending at fast pace, this all changes on All Hallows Eve, also known as "Samhain" by the locals.

While conducting extensive research on his ancestor, Frank overhears that on the eve of Samhain a group of townswomen (or as Frank refers to them "witches") gather together on the ancient standing stones of Craigh Na Dun to perform an ancient ritual. Being a skeptic, Claire agrees to join Frank and at early hours to witness the ritual. They find a concealed area and watch in amazement as these women emerge from the darkness and perform the sacred ritual. In the novel, Claire expresses the ethereal quality of the ritual:

The two semicircles passed each other at increasing speeds, sometimes forming a complete circle, sometimes a double line. And in the center, the leader stood stock-still, giving again and again that mournful high-pitched call, in a language long since dead. They should have been ridiculous, and perhaps they were. A collection of women in

bedsheets, many of them stout and far from agile, parading in circles on top of a hill.

But the hair prickled on the back of my neck at the sound of their call (Gabaldon, 44).

In this particular scene, Gabaldon presents the power of divine femininity, these modern druids dance in circles around ancient standing stones and in turn intertwine the feminine with the masculine; these standing stones can be perceived as what feminist theory refers to as “the phallus” which embody the masculine and in turn the modern druids dancing around these stones represent the feminine. This particular ritual harnesses and awakens the ancient power that slumbers within the stones of Craigh Na Dun. Later that same day, Claire returns to the standing stones because she is intent on retrieving a particular flower for her botany collection, interestingly the particular flowers Claire seeks are “Forget me nots”; these particular flowers are fitting to say the least because that particular standing circle serves as a portal through time itself. Perhaps the reason they grow within the circle serves as symbol as to not forget the people who have traveled through the stones. Once more, Diana Gabaldon makes use of the interlacing of the divine feminine (blooming flowers) with the masculine/phallic (the standing stones). Upon retrieving said flowers, Claire notices a humming of sorts coming from the center stone and as the wind picks up, she hears cannon fire coming from the stone itself. When she places her hands on the stone, she is hurled through time itself to eighteenth century Scotland and proceeds to pass out.

When she awakes, Claire finds herself still among the standing stones but is unable to find her vehicle and is frazzled when she sees a battle break out right before her eyes between Scottish clansmen dressed in kilts and the royal British army, also referred to as “red coats” due to their crimson uniforms. While trying to make sense of the situation, Claire believes she has stumbled on the set of a film, and while fleeing she loses the belt of her cream colored

dress; as well as becoming disheveled with dirt and sweat. Thusly it appears as if Claire is wearing a shift which is the common undergarment of that time. It is in this state that she stumbles upon her husband's direct ancestor, Captain Jonathan Randall, captain of the Dragoons whom she mistakes as Frank due to their exact likeness; but Claire quickly realizes that the man standing before her is not her husband because of his cruel, domineering manner. In turn, when he notices her state of "undress," he comes to the conclusion that she must be a prostitute and is intent to rape her. Luckily, she is rescued by one of the Highland clansman who refers to her as "druid"; it is after this grave encounter that Claire realizes that she indeed has fallen through time itself.

Traditionally such situations would make a female character appear frail and insecure, not only because she has been the victim of an unintentional journey through time but also the victim of horribly routine and degrading sexual violence. When Claire travels two hundred years into the past not only must she adjust to her surroundings but also she must adjust to a new reality that in this particular "alien world" un-chaperoned females are considered to be common women and open to violation by any male. This is evident when Claire meets the brave men of Clan Mackenzie and they too mistake her for a prostitute due to her state of undress, which makes Claire furious. When questioned by the clansmen she presents no signs of distress and is unafraid to present her medicinal knowledge when aiding a wounded highlander's shoulder, who happens to be Jamie Fraser and later becomes her love interest. In her essay entitled "Melodrama, Gender and Nostalgia: The Appeal of *Outlander*," Eleanor Ty praises Claire as a strong female lead:

Gabaldon presents a strong, intelligent heroine who is able to perform amazing feats of nurturing and healing because she has the advantage of 200 years of science and

medicine. The first time Claire Beauchamp meets the Highlanders, her ability to fix Jamie's dislocated shoulder compels readers and makes us and Jamie fall in love with the heroine. (Ty, 59)

By performing this miraculous act, Claire leaves all the men astonished and this episode has a lasting effect on Jamie himself. This scene is brilliantly transferred onto the television series and presents comic relief when Claire informs Jamie that she is a nurse and in turn he responds with an "aye" to which Claire annoyingly rebukes "I'm not a wet nurse." Gabaldon presents the dichotomy between the past and the future through the use humor. This is further explored when later in the scene Jamie faints and falls from his horse. Claire asks for the clansmen to aid her by giving her "antibiotics" and fresh bandages to prevent "germs." The men simply stare at her with no idea as to what she is talking about until Claire asks them for alcohol to which all of them respond in a simultaneous "aye."

While cursing in frustration, the men are even further baffled to hear a proper English Lady make use of such profanity. It is this particular moment that provides a clear contrast with gender stereotypes, as well as braking away from traditional romance tropes. After becoming stable, Jamie states that he has no trouble with staying behind with a pistol because he does not wish to hold back his companions, a true act of chivalry; but it is Claire who is not keen on the idea and stands up extending her hand to Jamie, who accepts it, thanking Claire for saving his life for a second time to which she responds "On your feet, soldier" and they continue their journey.

This particular scene serves as a prime example of the reversal of gender roles; Gabaldon contests these notions by providing a male lead that is unafraid to display his strengths as well as his weaknesses. When Jamie falls from his horse and he realizes that they

are slowing down because of him he demonstrates his chivalry as well as vulnerability. In turn, Claire does not agree with these notions and literally pulls Jamie up from his dejected state and onto his feet again. These particular actions that are carried on by the characters is perfectly transferred to film, showing how Gabaldon presents Claire and Jamie as equals, no gender is superior to the other but in turn they both rely equally on one another, thusly breaking any traditional romance notions. After arriving at Castle Leoch, Claire meets with Laird Mackenzie and is invited to stay as his guest, though the Laird has his suspicions of Claire being a spy for the British and has his man Rupert follow Claire around just to make sure, in turn annoying Claire in the process. She finds herself confronting him on numerous occasions, which also provides comedic relief. After careful consideration, Laird Mackenzie makes the decision of appointing Claire as the healer of the castle; in this fashion he would be able to see if Claire is telling the truth about who she claims to be, but for Claire this newly appointed position is a form of imprisonment.

In her stay at Leoch, Claire realizes that Laird Mackenzie suffers from an advanced stage of a rare degenerative disease called “Toulouse Lautrec syndrome,” which causes a severe deformity in his legs. Claire decides that the best way to make the Laird trust her is by treating his ailment, though it does not have a cure. After giving the Laird a massage at the base of his spine, he feels much relieved and allows Claire more freedom around the castle. During one of her walks around the castle grounds, Claire meets Geillis Duncan, a woman with a vast knowledge in medicinal herbs and other things. In episode two “Castle Leoch” Geillis and Claire form a bond due to how both of them share a passion for botany. Geillis also informs Claire that people think that she is a witch because she knows how to get rid of an unwanted child and has aided many women in the village. Hence a unique friendship is

formed between these two women and Geillis insists on having Claire visit her home sometime so that they may share each other's "darkest secrets."

Shortly after being named healer, Claire learns that the Highlanders are quite religious as well as superstitious; it is clearly more evident in the television series. On one of her walks with Geillis Duncan, where she informs Claire that Mrs. Fitzgibbon's nephew is "possessed" after visiting the Black Kirk which is an abandoned monastery said to be accursed. Upon hearing of this, Claire decides to see for herself if the boy is truly possessed. When she goes into the village, she finds Mrs. Fitz at her sister's home and explains that she has gone to fetch the town's priest, father Bain; she also finds the young boy strapped into the bed in order to keep the "demon at bay", as she closely examines the boy Claire realizes that he is in fact poisoned and not possessed. As she tries to explain the situation, father Bain quickly dismisses her and in turn she decides to go to the "Black Kirk" herself; she quickly finds the plant that poisoned the boy and is able to concoct an antidote. When Claire arrives again at the home of the boy; she finds father Bain providing the boy with his last rights, with the approval of Mrs. Fitz. She gives the antidote to the boy and it works. Consequently this infuriates father Bain, he states that Claire's work comes not from a holy place but from the devil. This particular situation embodies how the patriarchy uses religion as a means of oppression; in the eighteenth century the vast majority of people were illiterate and superstitious. This worked perfectly for the patriarchal society to manipulate the masses and to make sure men upheld power. Claire learns these notions the hard way when she gets labeled as a witch along with Geillis Duncan.

Before getting accused of witchcraft and condemned to death by fire, Geillis Duncan is another female character that Gabaldon presents that contests traditional gender roles. When

Claire first meets Geillis upon castle grounds she is amazed at Geillis' knowledge of plants and herbs:

“Those kind are poison,” said a voice from behind me. I straightened up from the patch of Ascaria I had been bending over, thumping my head smartly on a branch of the pine they were growing under. As my vision cleared, I could see that the peals of laughter were coming from a tall young woman, perhaps a few years older than myself, fair of hair and skin, with the loveliest green eyes I had ever seen. “I am sorry to be laughing at you,” she said, dimpling as she stepped down into the hollow where I stood. “I could not help it.” “I imagine I looked funny,” I said rather ungraciously, rubbing the sore spot on top of my head. “And thank you for the warning, but I know those mushrooms are poisonous.” “Och, you know? And who is it you’re planning to do away with, then? Your husband, perhaps? Tell me if it works, and I’ll try it on mine.” Her smile was infectious, and I found myself smiling back... “Fancy that!” she said, still smiling. “And did you know that these”—she stooped and came up with a handful of tiny blue flowers with heart-shaped leaves—“will start bleeding?” “No,” I said, startled. “Why would anyone want to start bleeding?” She looked at me with an expression of exasperated patience. “To get rid of a child ye don’t want, I mean. It brings on your flux, but only if ye use it early. Too late, and it can kill you as well as the child.” “You seem to know a lot about it,” I remarked, still stung by having appeared stupid. “A bit. The girls in the village come to me now and again for such things, and sometimes the married women too. They say I’m a witch,” she said, widening her brilliant eyes in feigned astonishment. (Gabaldon, 162)

This first encounter between Claire and Geillis is of great importance, because it is the first time Claire has met someone with a likeness to her; instead of simply greeting Claire, Geillis presents her knowledge of botany by pointing out the poisonous mushrooms. In addition, Geillis also proceeds to make a joke about using the poisonous mushrooms on her own husband when she states “Och, you know? And who is it you’re planning to do away with, then? Your husband, perhaps? Tell me if it works, and I’ll try it on mine.” This particular joke catches Claire off-guard because women during that century would not make such jokes and much less converse about murdering their husbands. Geillis proceeds to display her vast knowledge on medicine by showing Claire some particular blue flowers which help end an unwanted pregnancy and tells Claire how many unmarried young women come to her for help. Geillis’ unconventional medicinal methods surprise Claire, but also begin their unique friendship. This particular passage presents a secondary female character that shares the same qualities as Claire; Geillis Duncan introduces attributes of a modern day woman because she believes that a woman should have the right to bear a child or not as well as making cheeky jokes.

Diana Gabaldon breaks away from traditional notions of romance and gender by providing a secondary female character that is equal to Claire. Geillis Duncan stands out from other female characters that Claire encounters because she is unafraid to speak her mind, even though these actions lead people to believe she is a witch, instead of denying these accusations of witchcraft. Geillis enjoys the power and mystery it provides her. This is obvious in chapter 9 “The Gathering” when Claire visits Geillis at her home and is astonished to learn how she is able to manipulate her husband. While visiting Geillis a mob has joined together to bring justice for a boy who was caught stealing a loaf of bread and it is father Bain

that drags the boy to the Duncan residence so that Judge Arthur Duncan can carry out the sentence of having the boy lose his hand. Claire is utterly appalled by the news and proceeds to ask Geillis to change her husband's mind; she leaves the room to tend to her husband and upon her return Claire is anxious to find out the fate of the boy:

“Geilie,” I said impatiently. What about the tanner’s boy?” “Oh, that.” She lifted a shoulder dismissively, but a mischievous smile lurked about the corners of her lips. She dropped the facade then, and laughed. “You should have seen me,” she said, giggling. “I was awfully good, an’ I say it myself. All wifely solicitude and womanly kindness, with a small dab o’ maternal pity mixed in. ‘Oh, Arthur,’ ” she dramatized, “‘had our own union been blessed’—not much chance, if I’ve aught to say about it,” she said, dropping the soulful mask for a moment with a tilt of her head toward the herb shelves—“‘why, how would ye feel, my darling, should your own son be taken so? Nae doubt it was but hunger made the lad take to thievery. Oh, Arthur, can ye no find it in your heart to be merciful—and you the soul of justice?’ ” She dropped onto a stool, laughing and pounding her fist lightly against her leg. “What a pity there’s no place for acting here!”(Gabaldon, 171)

These ideas are faithfully translated into the television series: in season one episode 3 “The Way Out,” instead of having Geillis leave the room and later “dramatize” her manipulation, it presents Claire and Geillis conversing on how the boy’s punishment is at the mercy of Arthur’s stomach pains. Consequently, the show provides immense comic relief when a very flatulent Arthur storms into the room in dire need of peppermint to aid his pain and Geillis is more than happy to oblige. After the tonic (and countless farts) a happy Arthur is ready to pronounce judgement. Geillis then proceeds to put on the “dramatic

performance,” but instead of leaving the room, she puts on the “act” in front of Claire and manages to change her Arthur’s mind. Both novel and show present how Geillis is a cunning and intelligent woman.

Another theme that is presented through the character of Geillis Duncan is the use of witchcraft as a means to liberate as well as marginalize women. Gabaldon proceeds to make use of witchcraft as a theme to contest patriarchal society and female empowerment. Geillis uses witchcraft as a means for power, because she has vast knowledge of botany, tonics many people go to her for help but also fear her. Throughout the novel and television series Gabaldon provides hints that Geillis is in fact a practitioner of witchcraft. In the tenth episode of season one, “By the Pricking of My Thumbs” Claire discovers an “ill wish” (a pagan artifact) under her bed placed there by a jealous Laoghaire. When Claire confronts the girl she informs her that she bought the talisman from Geillis. Astonished by the news, Claire decides to visit Geillis at her home, but when she arrives, the house servant informs Claire that she would find her mistress in the woods at midnight. Venturing into the woods, Claire witnesses from afar a naked and pregnant Geillis performing a pagan ritual that reminds Claire of the same ritual she witnessed at Craigh Na Dun. Geillis tells Claire that the child’s father is not Arthur but her lover, Dougal Mackenzie; she goes on to relate that Dougal is married and that the reason for her ritual is so that Mother Nature may allow them to be together. After the events of that night, Dougal’s wife passes away and Arthur dies after being poisoned. Claire then realizes that Geillis is a force to be reckoned with and is also raising suspicion among the people because of her husband’s murder. Consequently, Geillis and Claire are arrested on suspicions of witchcraft. At the trial, father Bain speaks against Claire stating that her

medicinal skills come from Satan and in turn the angry mob demands that both women be burnt at the stake for their unholy crimes.

During the witch trials, Geillis becomes frantic; asking Claire multiple times how she came to find herself in the Scottish Highlands, but Claire stays with her story to which Geillis replies that she is a liar. After the final verdict, Claire is flogged by the angry mob and when Geillis witnesses this, she confesses that she is a witch. When she reveals the “mark of her master,” Claire notices that said mark is actually a small pox vaccine and Geillis is in fact from the future as well. With this shocking revelation Gabaldon presents how both Claire and Geillis are modern women surviving in the past, contesting traditional gender roles in historical romances. Claire Randall and Geillis Duncan are only the first of many other strong female characters that lurk within *Outlander*.

2.3 “Real Men Wear Kilts”: Gabaldon’s Jamie Fraser is Brave, Strong and a Virgin?

In her work *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler presents the complexities of gender construction: “If gender is the cultural meanings that the sexed body assumes, then a gender cannot be said to follow from a sex in any one way. Taken to its logical limit, the sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders” (9). With this said, Butler presents how the concept of gender has been created by society, thus traditional romance novels convey these gendered conventions of frail damsels and strong male protectors. Diana Gabaldon breaks away these notions of traditional gender roles in *Outlander* and its television adaptation. Claire Randall is its fearless time traveling combat nurse as her main character, yet the brave Highland warrior James Fraser who is fearless but sexually inexperienced. The following analyzes how Gabaldon revolutionizes traditional gender conventions of romance in both male and female characters.

The most noticeable aspect in the contesting gender roles occurs between Claire Randall and the Scottish highlander, Jamie Fraser. Traditionally historical romance novels as well as television series follow the stereotypes of frail damsels and their strong male saviors who sail off into a happily ever after; well, this isn't the case with Gabaldon's *Outlander* which presents a strong female lead who can stand alongside her brave warrior. Gabaldon creates her own unique fiction by having her main character Claire being older than Jamie, Claire is 27 and Jamie is 23; customarily in romance novels the lead male character is older and much more experienced than the young female lead, but Gabaldon's Jamie Fraser is stubborn, brave, compassionate and a virgin. This notion contests old-fashioned storylines in which the main female character is chaste and innocent, while the male lead is the worldly wise, sexually experienced one. In season one, episode 6 "The Garrison Commander," Claire's life is in danger and the only means for protection is a hastily arranged marriage to Jamie. This way she will become a Scot and be under the protection of Scottish law; what makes matters more problematic for Claire is the fact that she is already married to man in the future and is far more experienced in the bedroom than Jamie. Claire stands out from other fantasy series protagonists because she is hesitant towards marriage; she finds Jamie Fraser attractive but he is also a complete stranger; their marriage starts off as a ruse for her protection, but over time they learn to love one another and as a result Claire is torn between loving two men. This enables Claire to confide in Jamie in the following conversation before their marriage:

"Does it bother you that I'm not a virgin?" He hesitated a moment before answering.

"Well, no," he said slowly, "so long as it doesn't bother you that I am." He grinned at my drop-jawed expression, and backed toward the door. "Reckon one of us should know what they're doing," he said. The door closed softly behind him; clearly the

courtship was over. The papers duly signed, I made my way cautiously down the inn's steep stairs and over to the bar table in the taproom. "Whisky," I said to the rumped old creature behind it. (Gabaldon, 255)

This particular conversation sets the tone for Claire and Jamie's relationship, even though Jamie is not a modern man; he is able to take his lady's situation into consideration, unbothered by the fact that his future wife is more sexually experienced than he. Claire on the other hand is not thrilled about the marriage and escapes to drink her sorrows away with whiskey. In order for their marriage to be legitimate, Claire and Jamie must consummate it. Claire's apprehensions and Jamie's pre-wedding nerves are delightfully represented in season one, episode 7 "The Wedding"; this episode captures perfectly both male and female perspectives due to how it presents through a series of flashbacks what Claire and Jamie experienced during their wedding ceremony. Traditionally television series would present a wedding scene and then quickly have the wedded couple consummate their marriage immediately with voracious love making; *Outlander* offers a different, more realistic approach in terms of the wedding night of the leading couple. Instead of having Claire and Jamie finally give in to their love and lust for one another, Gabaldon and producer Ronald Moore present this scene at a slower pace. Since Jamie and Claire are practically strangers, the episode shows how they take time getting to know and enjoy one another. As the episode progresses, Claire and Jamie become more comfortable and begin falling in love; when the time comes to consummate their marriage, it is evident that Jamie is inexperienced and is ashamed that he is unable to satisfy his wife, Claire then decides to teach her husband how to please her. This first sexual encounter leaves not only the characters feeling awkward, but also the audience, because it perfectly captures the awkward yet precious reality of losing

one's virginity. In her essay "The Ethics of Adaptation" Jennifer Phillips elaborates on how this awkward first encounter contradicts romance stereotypes in a television series:

In the first place, Jamie, a virgin on their wedding night (which is a rarity in and of itself), is definitely given marks for enthusiasm and effort from his new bride, but their first coupling is less than satisfying. Viewers need not be told this; it is evident not only in the cinematography...but also in the sounds accompanying the couple's lovemaking, which are not those of enraptured pleasure, but of awkward groans of two people who have not yet gotten used to each other's bodies. Awkward first time sex such as this is almost never depicted in film or on television unless, perhaps, played for laughs.

However, in *Outlander* the goal is the honest, real journey of these characters and the foundation of their marriage. (175)

As Phillips indicates, Gabaldon purposefully wrote this awkward first sexual encounter in order to bring reality to a romance novel. Even though Gabaldon's fiction is filled with fantasy and supernatural elements, it is moments like this one, which make audiences, connect to the characters. During their second sexual encounter that Diana Gabaldon presents contesting traditional gender roles, Claire is the one who initiates the sexual act by asking her new husband to undress, admiring his body and encouraging him to do the same with her: here they are able to truly enjoy each other as equals. In her essay "Melodrama, Gender and Nostalgia: The Appeal of *Outlander*" Eleanor Ty expands on Jamie Fraser's unconventional attributes: "What is most attractive about the character Jamie Fraser is his admirable devotion to and adoration of Claire. He is not only strong, fiery, intelligent, handsome stranger, but he instinctively knows how to love, comfort and make love" (63). Gabaldon's main male

character, Jamie Fraser is unafraid to present courage and vulnerability, which in turn breaks away from traditional male stereotypes.

Jamie undergoes a thorough transformation as the series progresses, and as a result he is completely devoted to his beloved “Sassenach,” which is the Gaelic word for “Outlander.” When Claire is taken hostage by sadist British Captain Randall, Jamie does everything in his power to save his beloved, even if it means facing the man literally scarred Jamie’s life. When Jamie was a young man he was taken prisoner by Captain Randall who nearly flogged Jamie to death, this in turn left Jamie scarred physically and mentally. In episode 9 “The Reckoning,” it is the first time ever that Jamie provides all the “voice-overs,” thusly providing viewers a glimpse of Jamie’s thoughts, but also presenting the male perspective. Judith Butler in her work *Gender Trouble* elaborates on the notions that a man can be strong and sensitive: “If it is possible to speak of a man with a masculine attribute and to understand that attribute as a happy but accidental feature of that man, then it is also possible to speak of a “man” with a feminine attribute, whatever that is, but still to maintain the integrity of gender” (33). Since gender is constructed by society, a man can possess feminine attributes and still be a “man.”

During the second half of the first season of “Outlander”, a reversal of gender roles occurs when Jamie is captured by the Redcoats. It is Claire’s mission to find and rescue her husband at any costs, much as Jamie searched for and rescued her. In her journey through the Highlands with Jamie’s sister Jenny, they search for clues and allies in the hopes of finding Jamie. Meanwhile, at Wentworth prison Jamie is submitted to countless tortures at the hands of Capt. Randall, whose intent is to have Jamie submit to him. When Claire finds Jamie’s whereabouts, she quickly travels to the prison but is captured by Capt. Randall, who uses Claire to bait Jamie into submitting to him, to which Jamie reluctantly agrees as is raped

several times by the sadistic captain. The reversal of gender roles is evident within this particular situation in which the lead male character is raped repeatedly instead of the female character and it is up to Claire to find a way to destroy Randall and save her husband. In her essay “Linked...Through the body of one man” Michelle L. Jones elaborates on this revealingly unconventional plot point:

While women are unable to match Randall in strength, they use their intelligence to defeat him. Randall relies on fear to control his victims, and neither Jenny nor Claire are easily frightened of him...Claire preys on his superstitious belief that she is a witch, and gives him prophetic foreknowledge that people fear the most: the moment he will die. Gabaldon flips the traditional romance by rendering the male (traditionally, the hero) helpless at the hands of the villain and empowers the female hero with the ability to outsmart and defeat the villain. (77)

With her knowledge of the future Claire is able to stymie Randall and save her husband, but after his rescue Jamie is severely traumatized by the ordeal; he constantly hallucinates about his brutal encounter and this brings him to a state of severe depression. After facing severe trauma it is Claire who has to save Jamie one more, but here it is not his body that needs saving but his soul. Claire and Jamie go to a monastery, in order to heal Jamie’s physical and emotional wounds. Again Gabaldon flips the concept of gender by having Claire be once more the key to Jamie’s salvation. This particular situation is what Judith Butler refers to as “becoming the Phallus,” which she explains “In order to “be” the Phallus, the reflector and guarantor of an apparent masculine subject position, women must become, must “be” (in the sense of “posture as if they were”) precisely what men are not, and in their very lack, establish the essential function of men” (61). When Jamie is raped it represents for him

the equivalent of being stripped of his masculinity, and in turn it is up to Claire to become the Phallus, to take charge, to take care of her husband and restore his masculinity. After days of no improvement, Claire is able to help Jamie break out of his mental state; thusly proving how strong is the love and bond between them.

Both Claire and Jamie are not typical romance/television characters; Ronald D. Moore was able to successfully bring Diana Gabaldon's work to film without tainting the original work. Gabaldon not only created a work to entertain but moreover to empower. In chapter two of her Dissertation, "Romance and Power: Writing Romance Novels as a Practice of Critical Literacy," Lynn Coddington, elaborates on how novelist's seek to teach women about empowerment "Writing a romance may be one of the most subversive acts a woman can engage in when it comes to challenging patriarchal culture because the women portrayed in romances are powerful, active, and independent... Despite popular conceptions to the contrary, romance heroines are not simpering victims waiting for a man to rescue them. They are, for the most part, modern women with conflicting traits, good and bad, strong and weak, who provide models with which readers can positively identify"(20-21). The Historical/Fantasy television series, *Outlander* in less than a year became lauded by countless critics and still continues to draw rave reviews. The novels as well as the show have been compared to other successful gender-querying shows such as *Game of Thrones*. Diana Gabaldon's work not only presents how not all damsels are in distress and how some men who wear kilts are both fearless and sensitive. The *Outlander* novels and television series will hopefully continue to enthrall readers and viewers alike in the years to come.

Chapter III: Scottish Myths and Folklore

3.1 “Just another Lass who Traveled through the Stones”: How the Supernatural becomes Natural in Diana Gabaldon’s *Outlander*

Strong female characters, rich historical background are the first two themes presented within Diana Gabaldon’s *Outlander* (1991) which consequently transformed said novel into an instant “bestseller”. The third theme that ties these previous two together is the notion of the supernatural. Gabaldon makes use of the supernatural which is tied directly to Scottish folklore. time travel as the main conflict throughout the storyline of her first novel. After witnessing a pagan Druid ritual at the ancient Scottish standing stones of Craigh Na Dun, WWII combat nurse, Claire Randall finds herself being sent back two hundred years in the past. Upon finding herself in this unusual situation, Claire makes use of her medicinal and historical knowledge in order to survive in the past. In her quest to return back to her own time, Claire is introduced to Scottish Highland culture, myths and becomes aware of how real they truly are. Within her first novel *Outlander* (1991) Gabaldon makes use of supernatural elements such as time travel, in order to present it as a key in the conflict of the novel as well as in the television show; the concept of time travel is presented with logical explanation and connected directly to Scottish myths.

At the start of the novel, Claire Randall is in Inverness, Scotland on her second honeymoon with her husband Frank. During their stay in the Scottish Highlands, Claire quickly learns about their customs as well as their superstitions through her husband who happens to be a historian. Gabaldon uses the Scottish Highlands as the setting of her narration due to its ethereal beauty which make supernatural elements fit easily into the progression of the narration because the Highland culture is filled with myths and superstitions that are still

relevant. Within the novel and also on the television show, ancient druid and Celtic rituals are still very much respected in Scotland, specifically “sun and fire feasts”. When Claire and Frank first arrive to Inverness, Scotland, they happen to come during a special event of the Highlands, the time of one of the sun feasts, called “Beltane” which is also known as the summer festival, for its onscreen adaptation it was changed to “Samhain” which is celebrated on Halloween night; this change was made due to the lure behind this ancient Sun and Fire feast in which the veil between realms is thinned and supernatural elements may take place. Due to how the townspeople of Inverness are getting ready for the festivities of said Sun feasts, they rely on ancient pagan practices for protection. Upon their arrival to the Highlands Claire notices in the beginning of the novel, Claire notices she sees how there are streaks of blood upon the thresholds entrance of their inn as well as the rest of the houses down the street, Frank who is a historian and possesses vast knowledge of Highland culture, proceeds to investigate said markings and explains to Claire the logic behind these traditions:

A ritual sacrifice. Fascinating!” He was down on his hands and knees in the grass, peering interestedly at the stain. This hardly sounded better than a homicidal maniac. I squatted beside him, wrinkling my nose at the smell. It was early for flies, but a couple of the big, slow-moving Highland midges circled the stain. “What do you mean, ‘ritual sacrifice’?” I demanded. “Mrs. Baird’s a good church-goer, and so are all the neighbors. This isn’t Druid’s Hill or anything, you know.” He stood, brushing grass-ends from his trousers. “That’s all you know, my girl,” he said. “There’s no place on earth with more of the old superstitions and magic mixed into its daily life than the Scottish Highlands. Church or no church, Mrs. Baird believes in the Old Folk, and so

do all the neighbors.” He pointed at the stain with one neatly polished toe. (Gabaldon, 10-11)

In this particular passage, Frank points out a key element that weighs heavily in the narration when he points out that the Scottish Highlands are a place where old superstitions and magic are mixed into the daily life. Following these notions, Gabaldon is foreshadowing that anything is possible within the Highlands, thusly providing a logic explanation for the future supernatural events such as time travel. Consequently, by providing the imagery of ritualistic sacrifice through the spreading of animal blood on threshold, Gabaldon presents how pagan rituals are embedded within Highland culture regardless of religion and time.

These notions of interlacing Scottish Folklore into the storyline is evident throughout the entire novel, but chiefly it is presented at the beginning of the novel so that readers can anticipate future supernatural events and how they become natural due to how anything seems possible in the Highlands. As Frank further elaborates the reason for said animal sacrifices is to ward off spirits which are said to roam the earth during any of “the four Old Days” or “the ancient feasts”; as Frank explains to Claire “Hogmanay, that’s New Year’s, Midsummer Day, Beltane and All Hallows’. Druids, Beaker Folk, early Picts, everybody kept the sun feasts and the fire feasts, so far as we know. Anyway, ghosts are freed on the holy days, and can wander about at will, to do harm or good as they please” (Gabaldon, 12). In this Gabaldon once again presents how the Highland superstitions are alive and play a key role in the progression of the narration, thusly providing readers with the notions that the supernatural is imbedded within the Scottish Highlands and it has become part of the culture itself. In the previous passage, further elaborates on the notions of the supernatural and folklore; since Frank and Claire have arrived during one of the “four Old Days” which is Beltane and as Frank previously explained

to her how ghost are prone to wander the earth and do as they please; it is later in that same evening in which Frank has an encounter with a ghostly apparition. While on his way back to the inn that they are staying at, Frank witnesses how a man dressed in traditional eighteen century garments stands staring intently at Claire's window, at first he believes that it maybe a former patient of Claire and he even goes to great lengths of even questioning if she had an affair in order to make sense of the situation but as he further explains to Claire that when he approaches the stranger, the mystery man vanishes into thin air and as a result Frank experiences an actual encounter with a ghost which is later to be revealed to be the actual ghost of Jamie Fraser. In the pilot episode "Sassenach" of its television adaptation, Frank's encounter with the ghost of Jamie serves as a foreshadowing of future events and it is presented in a supernatural, otherworldly manner due to how the producers chose to change the festival from "Beltane" which happens to mark Summer Solstice, to "Samhain" the Winter Solstice or how it is most commonly known as Halloween in order to create further sense of magic and mystery to the show.

In *The Symbolism and Sources of Outlander* Valerie Estelle Frankel goes into greater detail to explain the significance of the previously mentioned fire feasts, Beltane and Samhain and the reason as to why the producers of the show decided to proceed with this slight change:

In the books, Claire passes through the stones on Beltane the first time, going to her "summer romance" in the youth of the world, when she and Jamie are youths themselves and the world post-World War is filled with promise. Beltane was a festival of young love and fertility, leaving civilization for the woods and fields, much as Claire does in a more pastoral time. On the show it's changed to Samhain. Part of the decision was because filming had to take place during winter, but also Samhain

and its creepiness can be incorporated as the locals spill cockerel blood and dance among the stones. Later this became All Hallow's Eve\Hallowe'en, and All Saints Day, a time for ghosts, hauntings, and the supernatural. (Frankell, 95)

An important aspect that Frankell mentions is the connection between the Fire Feasts and their respective connection to the novel. As she explains, Beltane marks the summer solstice, it is during the summer in which nature is bountiful, fertile; it is here where Frankel makes the connection between the festival and Claire. When Claire travels back in time, it is not a result of a random supernatural occurrence, in the world that Diana Gabaldon has created within her novels, the supernatural has a valid explanation, the main reason as to why Claire is able to travel back through time is because she happened to be at the right place (Craigh Na Dun) and at the right time (during a Fire Feast).

Frankell also indicates the reason why the feast was changed from Beltane to Samhain was due to the filming production but also the supernatural lure connected with Samhain. Since it is an adaptation of the novel from book to screen, it is understandable that the change had to be made due to how it is easier for viewers to make sense of the supernatural. Ghost, pagan rituals, time travel proceeds to become as a something of "natural occurrence" within Inverness due to stories passes down through oral tradition and thusly it makes seems the impossible, possible within the Scottish Highlands. Shortly after leaving the significance of the day in which they have arrived to Inverness, ironically enough after explaining how supernatural events may occur during festival days, Frank himself witnesses a ghostly apparition. Despite witnessing a ghostly apparition, it is not enough to scare Frank away from witnessing modern day druids perform an ancient ritual within the standing stones at Craigh Na Dun and Claire accompanies him, unknowing what fate has in stored for her.

The world that Diana Gabaldon created within *Outlander* (1991) is one that is filled with strong female characters, rich historical aspects and it is heavily embedded with Scottish myths and folklore. These previous three themes (gender, history, folklore) play a key element within Gabaldon's best seller as well as in its on screen adaptation. Chiefly, the theme of time travel plays a significant role in the novel due to how it serves as the main conflict within the beginning of the novel. After Claire Randall finds herself two hundred years in the past, she makes use of history and medicine in order to survive in the past; but before finding herself in this quite unusual situation, Claire as well as the readers and viewers alike find out that the Scottish Highlands are filled with myths and allusions that supernatural events are alive and real within the land. As a result, Diana Gabaldon presents the Highlands as a place where magic dwells and how a walk through some ancient standing stones may lead one to great adventures.

3.2 “A walk through the Standing Stones and Time Itself”: The Concept of Time Travel within *Outlander*

In *Outlander* (1991) Diana Gabaldon makes use of various themes, such as gender, history and the supernatural, in order to create her fiction. The most noticeable one is the notion of the supernatural which is presented through the use of time travel. When Gabaldon decided to write a novel she thought about writing a “historical novel”, in her personal webpage Gabaldon explains on how shortly after watching an old episode of the hit show “Doctor who” she got the idea to set her novel in Scotland and perhaps even the notion of time travel itself “Well, I happened to see a “Dr. Who” rerun in a weak-minded moment, and was taken by a minor character—a young Scotsman from 1745, who appeared in his kilt. “Well, that’s fetching,” I said. “Yeah, why not? Scotland, eighteenth century.” So that’s

where I began, knowing nothing about Scotland or the eighteenth century, with no plot, no outline, no characters—nothing but the rather vague images conjured up by a man in a kilt (which is, of course, a very powerful and compelling image (Gabaldon)). With this said, it is quite evident to see how Gabaldon drew inspiration for her work but instead of providing her female lead with a “Tardis”, Gabaldon decided to provide a more logical explanation to time travel. Shortly after her arrival to Inverness, Scotland, Claire Randall finds herself time traveling to the past after touching one of the main stones at the standing circle at Craigh Na Dun. For centuries, standing stone circles have upheld a sense of intrigue, due to how their unique structure have been able to stand the test of time and have played a significant role in ancient pagan rituals. In Gabaldon’s *Outlander* (1991), standing stones serve as a focus of energy to which can be harnessed on specific days in order to travel through time itself, thusly providing a logical explanation to events deemed as supernatural.

Briefly after learning about the importance of the “four Old Days” and superstitions within the Scottish Highlands, Claire and Frank visit the town’s vicar Reverend Wakefield to find out more information on Frank’s ancestor, while conversing with the reverend, Claire meets Mrs. Graham who is the vicar’s housekeeper who insists on reading Claire’s fortune with tea leaves as well as her palm and foreshadows Claire’s unique journey which leaves her shook and in disbelief. Later that evening, Frank and Claire embark on a late night journey to the ancient standing stones of Craigh Na Dun in order to witness an ancient druid ritual, to which Frank at first jokingly referred to as witches to Claire, but she further explains “well not witches, actually. There have been witches all over Scotland for hundreds of years—they burnt them ‘till well the eighteenth century—but this lot is really meant to be Druids or something of the sort...But the vicar said there was a local group that still observes rituals on the old sun-

feast days”(Gabaldon,42). Once more, Gabaldon creates connections between folklore and the supernatural, thusly providing solid evidence that the supernatural happenings which occur within the novel as well as its television adaptation is directly connected to Scottish Folklore.

After finding a hidden place near the standing stones, Claire and Frank notice how the druid circle dancers arrive to the scene, they all uphold to the ancient traditions by dressing in white dresses, flowers in their hair and carrying a torch in hand; Claire also notices how Mrs. Graham is the leader of the group. The women slowly start organizing themselves and commence twirling around the stones in a concise and fluid manner, and chanting in an ancient language. Claire notes that the women should have appeared ridiculous, prancing around in sheets but instead they looked delicate and in that moment she felt that she and her husband were witnessing something sacred, ancient and one thing was clear, they should not be there. Valerie Frankel further explains the sacredness of the stone dancers in the following:

Claire First sees the standing stones with the dancers weaving among them. Their ritual links the story to older times and emphasizes a pagan magic present still. Mrs. Graham is their leader, she who inherited palm reading from an older time and offers the ancient magic of the women (notably no men perform the ritual). In the book, Frank notes that the dance words are ancient Norse but the dance is “very much older”...Circle dances are the most ancient, .evoking magic circles and fairy rings. They are egalitarian-meant for all, with no special training for participants. Around the world, they are often danced around a central figure, such as a standing stone or altar. On the show, the scene is filmed to be eerie, beautiful and magical...The scene fills with unearthly chanting and vague ghostly shapes of women, grey on grey, with only the lights truly visible. Faces are not discernable, only shawls and long hair. (81)

One of the most important aspects Frankel notes is how the circle dancers are all female and are egalitarian which means that any woman is welcomed to join the group, thusly providing the image of the divine feminine. These particular groups of women are able to unleash the primal magic within them and awake the power of the ancient standing stones. When the ritual commences, the women start moving in circular motions around the stones, In the novel this particular moment may be difficult for some readers to comprehend due to the complexity of the ritual itself; but as Frankel further explains that in its on screen adaptation this druid stone dancing scene is beautifully translated onto screen due to the serene, delicate movements of the dancers as well as the accompanying musical score which provides the scene with an ethereal essence that leave viewers in a sense of awe, in a way the scene invokes within viewers the same feelings as Claire in that particular moment. In the television series the scene ends with Mrs. Graham standing directly in front of the center stone, chanting in an ancient language, to which she stops when the sun fully rises through the stones and the dancers stop the twirling as well which marks and end to their ritual.

Shortly after the women leave, Frank and Claire walk to the stones, she quickly notices some flowers growing near the main stone as well as a buzzing sound that only she can hear, but before she can further examine them, one of the druid's returns and they leave in a hurry. Later that afternoon, Claire returns to the standing stones because she is intent in retrieving the particular flowers she saw earlier for her botany collection, interestingly the particular flower Claire seeks to retrieve are "Forget me nots"; these particular flowers are fitting to serve as a metaphor of sorts due to how the standing circle itself serves as a portal through time. Possibly, the reason the flowers grow within the circle is to serve as symbol as to not forget the people who have traveled through the stones. Upon retrieving said flowers, Claire

notices a humming of sorts coming from the stones which later transforms into “screams” and as the winds commence to pick up, she hears cannon fire among the screaming coming from the stone itself and when she places her hands on the center stone she travels through time, even though in the novel as well as in its television adaptation does not present Claire physically walk through the stone itself, Claire elaborates on how it feels to travel through time. She makes a comparison between falling through time, the same as when she was car accident in which she was in a weightless state but was awoken to the feeling of falling at high speed, Claire further explains:

That abrupt transition is as close as I can come to describing the feeling I experienced, but it falls woefully short. I could say that my field of vision contracted to a single dark spot, then disappeared altogether, leaving not darkness, but a bright void. I could say that I felt as though I were spinning, or as though I were being pulled inside out. All these things are true, yet none of them conveys the sense I had of complete disruption, of being slammed very hard against something that wasn't there. The truth is that nothing changed, nothing whatever appeared to *happen* and yet I experienced a feeling of elemental terror so great that I lost all sense of who, or what, or where I was. I was in the heart of chaos, and no power of mind or body was of use against it. I really cannot say I lost consciousness, but I was certainly not aware of myself for some time.

(Gabaldon, 50)

Gabaldon presents the act of time travel as a physical and mental transportation. Instead of presenting science fiction images of a “portal” or “wormhole”, she focuses on the experience of the traveler and the toll it takes on the human body. When Claire first starts to explain how it felt to travel through time, she expresses that it felt as if she was being thrown at a high

speed and slammed hard against something invisible, thusly her vision becomes impaired as well as her senses. While Claire never truly loses consciousness, she feels as if she was not aware of herself for a while after she travels through time. By providing readers with such description of what time travel feels like, Gabaldon presents how the concept of time travel has a logical explanation and it is not simply a supernatural act.

When Claire finally “awakens” from her state, Claire finds herself still in the standing stones but is unable to find her vehicle and is frazzled when she hears strong gunshots. Shortly after, Claire witnesses a battle break out right before her eyes between Scottish clansmen dressed in kilts and the royal British army, also referred to as “red coats” due to their crimson uniforms. While trying to make sense of this peculiar situation, Claire comes to the conclusion that she has stumbled upon the set of a period film and while fleeing she loses the belt of her cream colored dress; as well as becoming disheveled with dirt and sweat. Thusly it appears as if Claire is wearing a shift which is the common undergarment of that time. It is in this state that she stumbles upon her husband's direct ancestor Captain Jonathan Randall, captain of dragoons of the royal British army whom she mistakes as Frank due to their exact likeness; but Claire quickly realizes that the man standing before her is not her husband because of his cruel domineer. In turn, when he notices her state of “undress” he expresses to her his intent is to rape her. Luckily, she is rescued by one of the Highland clansmen who ironically refers to her as “Druid” due to her state of dress which strongly resembles the outfit worn by the circle dancers. After this grave encounter with Captain Randall, that Claire realizes that she indeed has fallen through time itself.

Even though Claire believes that she is in an inexplicable situation, there are various logical aspects that are used to explain the concept of time travel within the world that

Gabaldon has created in her novels. The first aspect is the notion that the Scottish Highlands are a place where myths and folklore are real, thusly the people who reside there still uphold and respect ancient practices, such as the celebration of the “four Old Days”. The second aspect is that during specific days of the year (Sun and Fire feasts) time travel is possible but at certain points of power (the standing stones) after certain rituals are carried out (Druid circle dancers). Another interesting aspect is how only certain people are able to travel through time, when Claire and Frank first arrive to the stones of Craigh Na Dun, only Claire can hear a “buzzing” sound being emanated from the stones themselves, in contrast neither Frank nor Jamie cannot hear anything but silence and nothing occurs when they place their hands on the stones. These specific notions on time travel in *Outlander* (1991) are further explained by Valerie Frankel as the following:

There are several rules governing time travel, though Claire is slow to piece them together. Two hundred years appears to be the standard journey, but in the *Outlander* world “it could be changed by use of gemstones, or of blood” as with the ritual (“The Space between”²³⁴). Gemstones protect travelers; so do silver and gold. Focusing on a loved one as anchor also helps, though a person cannot enter time when his or her younger self lives. Only a few people are sensitive to the stones and can pass through-to everyone else, they are inert. It’s established in the first book that Jamie can’t travel- Claire hears the stones singing and feels their power, but he does not. Metaphorically, he’s a character of the romantic past and he’s tied there... This also gives Claire more agency as Jamie cannot come to the future seeking her or offer to accompany her if she goes back-it’s her choice whether to stay or return. (83)

Frankel presents particular rules which govern the ability of time-travel within the world that Diana Gabaldon has created; said rules are discovered by Claire and other characters as the story progresses throughout the novels. At first, Claire is unsure if she can even return back to her own time, afraid that if she dared to travel through the stones once more she would end up even further into the past but in later books when the Jamie forces Claire to travel back to the future due to their lost battle at Culloden Moor, Claire is able to travel back to the future. Even though two hundred years is the standard for time travel as Frankel explained, it is possible to travel through time through the use of gemstones as well as ritual sacrifice; in later novel it is explained that Geillis Duncan was able to travel through time because she murdered her husband and used him as a human sacrifice.

The use of gemstones are also important for travelers due to how they keep them safe while traveling through time, the first time Claire traveled through the stones she had a silver watch with gemstones that disappeared after she traveled through the stones. Another key point in time travel is to have a loved one as an anchor, when Claire time travels throughout the novels she always has a loved one in mind just to make sure she travels to the correct point in time. Lastly, Frankel explains how only certain people are genetically susceptible to travel through time, in *Outlander* (1991) Claire can hear the power of the stones but Frank as well as Jamie cannot, thusly Gabaldon intertwines the notion of “tragic lovers” due to how Frank is unable to travel to the past to bring back Claire and how Jamie cannot travel to the future to be with his beloved Claire. This particular notion of genetic susceptibility is further explored later in the novels when Claire and Jamie’s daughter Brianna has inherited the ability to travel through time from her mother. Through said rules, Gabaldon presents how

time travel is not a mere supernatural occurrence; instead it has an actual logical explanation which is connected to Highland culture.

As presented at the beginning Gabaldon's *Outlander* (1991) the Scottish Highlands are filled with myths, folklore and traditions which are passed down from generation to generation. This is noticeable when Mrs. Graham who is the vicar's house keeper offers to read Claire's fortune using tea leaves, she explains to Claire that she was taught to read tea leaves by her grandmother and it is a gift that has been passed down through generations. After the tragic final Jacobite rising at Culloden Moor, the English government sought out to erase the Highland culture by banning the following: the use of the tartan, bagpipes and even speaking Gaelic. As a result, the remaining Highlanders passed on their traditions through oral tradition in order to preserve their culture. Throughout time, various cultures have relied on the figure of the bard in order to pass along knowledge and culture. When Claire goes back in time, she befriends the Highlanders of Clan Mackenzie and is invited to stay in Castle Leoch to work as healer due to her medicinal skills. During her stay at Leoch, Claire discovers how the clan has a bard who lives there and entertains them with his songs.

The bard has a permanent residency with the clan, hence each evening he graces them with beautiful stories through song, but since all the songs are sang in Gaelic Claire is unable to understand his tales due to how she does not know the language but during a special clan gathering Jamie takes it upon himself to become the translator of the famous highland bard, for Claire; whose melodious Gaelic song foretells the story of a maiden who has traveled through time:

Gwyllyn rested on his stool to sip wine as one gave place to another by the fireside, telling stories that held the hall rapt. Some of these I hardly heard. I was rapt myself,

but by my own thoughts, which were tumbling about, forming patterns under the influence of wine, music, and fairy legends. “It was a time, two hundred years ago...” It’s always two hundred years in Highland stories, said the Reverend Wakefield’s voice in memory. The same thing as “Once upon a time,” you know. And women trapped in the rocks of fairy duns, traveling far and arriving exhausted, who knew not where they had been, nor how they had come there. I could feel the hair rising on my forearms, as though with cold, and rubbed them uneasily. Two hundred years. From 1945 to 1743; yes, near enough. And women who traveled through the rocks. Was it always women? I wondered suddenly. Something else occurred to me. The women came back. Holy water, spell, or knife, they came back. So perhaps, just perhaps, it was possible. I must get back to the standing stones on Craigh Na Dun. I felt a rising excitement that made me feel a trifle sick, and I reached for the wine goblet to calm myself. (Gabaldon, 152)

While Jamie is translating for the bard, Claire notices how the story the bard is singing holds an eerie similarity to her strange journey, thusly proving that for centuries people have indeed traveled through time. The bard’s song presents the story of a woman who traveled through the stones but later returned. Upon hearing the bard’s tale, Claire’s finds out that the standard time span for time travel is two hundred years and secondly all the women who have traveled through the stones have indeed returned back to their own time. After hearing the tale, Claire’s hopes of returning back to her own time are not only re-ignited but she also becomes aware of how even the most impossible thing such as time travel can become possible, thusly Claire finally becomes a believer of myths and highland superstitions, due to how the bard’s words via Jamie are able to provide Claire with the key to unlock the knowledge and

understanding on how to return back to her own time, back into the arms of her beloved husband. In its television adaptation it is more obvious in making a connection between the stories told by the bard tells and Claire, in whom the woman finds a lover in a different time much alike Claire finds a passionate romance with Jamie.

The art of storytelling through oral tradition is present in its television adaption in the opening credits of the show which as Valerie Frankel explains “The opening credits offer a collage of images from the first few episodes: a deer, horses, the stitching of a wound, muddy shoes running, the dragging of the whip, a grasped dirk, running to battle, Frank driving, Frank and Claire sitting on the dock, bare skin and a blanket grasped in passion, and finally the rolling screen of Scotland. This is Claire’s life as snapshots-all the impressions and memories she gains, past and future as she struggles to find her place in a new world and say farewell to the old. These images are intercut with the circle dancers-the force of magic and power that carried Claire away on her adventure” (Frankel, 74). These images presented within the opening credits can be interpreted as if Claire herself is telling her own story to viewers.

The previous images are accompanied by the show’s title song entitled “The Skye Boat song” written by Bear McCreary and sung by Raya Yarbrough. The song is of grave importance for due to how it presents a nod to oral Highland tradition due to how it is an adaptation of a text written by Robert Louis Stevenson a British novelist who wrote a poem about the Bonnie Prince Charlie, for the show the gender of the speaker is altered in order to relate to Claire’s character and it also sets the tone for the story that is to be presented:

Sing me a song of a lass that is gone
Say, could that lass be I?

Merry of soul she sailed on a day
Over the sea to Skye

Billow and breeze, islands and seas
Mountains of rain and sun
All that was good, all that was fair
All that was me is gone

These lyrics uphold great importance in the story telling process of the show because it can be deduced that at the beginning of every episode of the television show, a bard sings Claire's adventure to the audience. When carefully analyzed the lyrics sang by "the bard" or in this particular case the musician, Raya Yarbrough; presents Claire's story. In the opening lines "Sing me a song of a lass that is gone, Say, could that lass be I?" the "lass" the song is referring to is Claire and how she has traveled through time. These soulful lyrics are accompanied by a series of bagpipes and images of pagan rituals and beautiful shots of the Scottish Highlands which in a way makes the viewer feel like they are also being transported back in time and get to experience the Highland culture along with Claire.

When Diana Gabaldon decided to write for the first time, she decided to create a historical novel due to how she was used to doing research, but when she constantly found herself adding witty comments through her main character, she decided to make her main character a woman from the future; also by watching an old episode of "Doctor who?" Gabaldon drew inspiration to set her story in eighteenth century Scotland. Instead of having her main character travel through time as an act of science fiction, but instead it has a logical explanation. After Claire Randall finds herself two hundred years in the past, she makes use

of history and medicine in order to survive in the past; but before finding herself in this quite unusual situation, Claire as well as the readers and viewers alike find out that the Scottish Highlands are filled with myths and allusions that supernatural events are alive and real within the land. As a result, Diana Gabaldon presents the Highlands as a place where magic dwells and how a walk through some ancient standing stones may lead one to travel through time and experience glorious adventures.

3.3 Fortune Readings, Fairies and Changelings, Oh My! The Supernatural as a Means of Preservation of the Highland Culture

Diana Gabaldon breaks away from traditional stereotypes in the genre of “historical romances) in *Outlander* (1991), by providing strong female characters, rich historical background and supernatural elements. Within her narration, the supernatural is presented through use of time travel and how it is directly connected to Scottish folklore and myths. Gabaldon uses time travel as the main conflict at the beginning of her first novel, but also the setting plays a key factor in the storytelling of the novel due to how Scottish folklore is used to explain supernatural events. At the beginning of the novel when Claire and Frank Randall arrive to Inverness, Frank points out to Claire that the Scottish Highland still uphold to old superstitions and customs, after they encounter streaks of blood upon the threshold of all the houses in the town. Old customs and holidays are still upheld and celebrated in the Highlands regardless of religion. As the novel progresses, Gabaldon incorporates Scottish folklore within the work as means of preservation of the Highland culture.

At the beginning of the novel, Claire and Frank go to visit the town vicar, Reverend Wakefield; his house keeper Mrs. Graham offers Claire some tea as well as some Highland customs. After Claire finishes her tea, Mrs. Graham insists on reading Claire’s fortune

through the tea leaves since it has been a talent that has been taught for generations in her family and foreshadows Claire's journey:

She was silent for a long time, once in a while tilting the cup to catch the light, or rolling it slowly between lean palms to get a different angle. She set the cup down carefully, as though afraid it might blow up in her face. The grooves on either side of her mouth had deepened, and her brows pressed together in what looked like puzzlement. "Well," she said finally. "That's one of the stranger ones I've seen."

"Oh?" I was still amused, but beginning to be curious. "Am I going to meet a tall dark stranger, or journey across the sea?" "Could be." Mrs. Graham had caught my ironic tone, and echoed it, smiling slightly. "And could not. That's what's odd about your cup, my dear. Everything in its contradictory. There's the curved leaf for a journey, but it's crossed by the broken one that means staying put. And strangers there are, to be sure, several of them. And one of them's your husband, if I read the leaves aright.

(Gabaldon, 32)

When Mrs. Graham reads the tea leaves, they show her how they are "crossed" which indicates that Claire is to take up a journey but by "staying put" it foreshadows Claire's journey into the past. In her reading, she also informs Claire that she will meet strangers and one of them will be her husband, in this instance Claire believes that Mrs. Graham is referring to the fact that the time apart her and Frank have spent have made them strangers, but in reality she is referring to Capt. Randall who is Frank's ancestor and share exact likeness. With this, Gabaldon presents how traditions are persevered by passing them down from generation to generation; in addition it creates an aura of mystery since what Mrs. Graham has seen within the tea leaves foreshadow what is to come in the story. Not only does Mrs. Graham read tea

leafs, she also insists on reading Claire's palm; to which also indicates of the journey that she is about to embark but also of a second marriage that occurs simultaneously (forked).

After having her fortune read, Claire involuntarily travels back in time two hundred years and is taken back when she notices how the people of the Highland rely on superstitions. This is heavily noted when Shortly after being named healer, Claire learns that the Highlanders are quite religious as well as superstitious; it is clearly more evident in the television series in which during one of her walks with Geillis Duncan, where she informs Claire that Mrs. Fitzgibbons nephew is "possessed" after visiting the Black Kirk which is an abandoned monastery said to be cursed. Upon hearing of this, Claire decides to see for herself if the boy is truly possessed, When she goes into the village she finds Mrs. Fitz at her sister's home and explains that she has gone to fetch the towns priest, father Bain; she also finds the young boy strapped into the bed in order to keep the "demon at bay", as she closely examines the boy Claire realizes that he is in fact poisoned and not possessed. As she tries to explain the situation, father Bain quickly dismisses her and in turn she decides to go to the "Black Kirk" herself with the company of Jamie. Even she is surprised to see how even though Jamie is well educated, he too is superstitious. While at the Kirk, she quickly finds the plant that poisoned the boy and is able to concoct an antidote. When Claire arrives again at the home of the boy; she finds father Bain providing the boy with his last rights, but with the approval of Mrs. Fitz she gives the antidote to the boy and it works. This particular incident serves to present how superstitions are heavily imbibed and respected in the Scottish Highlands even if it costs the life of an innocent.

Another superstition\ myth that creates heavy uneasy to Claire is the myth of the changelings and the Fair folk. While on a walk through the forest with her friend Geillis

Duncan, Claire hears the cry of an infant coming from the woods, Claire finds a sickly child on top of a hill left abandoned with a small bouquet of flowers and a fresh bowl of milk for the faeries. When Claire tries to aid the sickly babe, Geillis insists she leaves it alone due to how it is a changeling and not a human child, Geillis explains to Claire “Surely you know what a changeling is? When faeries steal a human child away, they leave one of their own in its place. You know it’s a changeling because it cries and fusses all the time and doesn’t thrive or grow” (Gabaldon, 495). Claire being a nurse, she goes against Geillis warning a tries to save the infant, shortly after Jamie arrives and agrees with Geillis notions of leaving the child, moments later the babe dies in Claire’s arms. Being an outlander or “Sassenach” to the Scottish Highlands, it is hard for Claire to abide by Highland customs, especially if it involves the life of an innocent. As the novel progresses, Claire comes to the understanding that Scottish myths are taken seriously and uphold great importance for the culture after Geillis and herself are condemned as witches and sentenced to burn at the stake for using witchcraft (medicine).

Throughout Diana Gabaldon’s best seller *Outlander* (1991), the supernatural is presented through use of time travel and how it is directly connected to Scottish folklore and myths. Gabaldon uses time travel as the main conflict at the beginning of her first novel, but also the setting plays a key factor in the storytelling of the novel due to how Scottish folklore is used to explain supernatural events. Claire’s journey to the past is not a simple act of magic; instead she was able to travel through the stones because she was genetically predisposed, not anyone is deemed to be a traveler. Additionally, Claire was able to travel through time because she was in Inverness during the eve of one of the fire feasts (Beltane in the novel/Samhain in the television series). As a result Gabaldon presents in *Outlander* (1991)

the beginning of Claire Randall's journey in the past but also presents the story of the Scottish Highlands. Throughout the novel as well as in its television adaptation, Gabaldon interlaces Scottish history, folklore and myths into her narration, thusly creating a world in which anything is possible.

3.4 Conclusion

Diana Gabaldon's *Outlander* (1991) has broken traditional notions of romance by presenting various strong female characters, such as: Claire Randall, Geillis Duncan and Jenny Fraser. Throughout the novel as well as its television adaptation, these particular female characters have proven not to be no "damsels in distress", instead these women contest to the stereotypical patriarchal notions of gender within the eighteenth century. Within this thesis Gabaldon's main female, Claire Randall character was analyzed in the second chapter of this thesis by means of gender theory; in order to present how Gabaldon uses Claire to present the a dichotomy between the past and the future. This particular dichotomy serves as further research, due to how later in the novels Gabaldon presents other characters that happen to share Claire's ability to be able to travel through the stones and time itself. The most noticeable of said characters is Claire and Jamie's daughter, Brianna; who was conceived in the past and born in the future, due to how Jamie forces Claire to return back to her own time and keep their child safe after the tragic loss at Culloden Moor. Shortly after arriving to the future, Claire is reunited with estranged husband Frank and is forced to explain her adventure in the past because she is pregnant with the child of a Scotsman who has been dead for two hundred years. Frank comes to the agreement to raise the child as his own as long as Brianna never finds out the identity of her true father. Much alike her mother and biological father, Brianna is intelligent, strong willed and stubborn. In later novels, Claire reveals to Brianna the

identity of her biological father after Frank passes away and as a result she becomes enraged and curious to learn more of Jamie. This curiosity with the past eventually serves as a motivation for Brianna to travel back in time, much like her mother did. Further research may be conducted on the complexities of Brianna's character as well with Claire, who has spent living in the future for moreover twenty years with her heart always set in the past. As a result, Gabaldon presents two strong female characters who struggle to find a place of belonging; this can further be analyzed by using gender theory in order to comprehend the complexities of these two modern females from different generations surviving in the past.

Throughout the first chapter of this thesis various parallels were presented between Gabaldon and Sir Walter Scott due to how both writers use history as a basis for their fiction, in *Outlander* (1991) Gabaldon uses the final Jacobite rebellion of 1845 as the basis of her first novel. Further research can be done with the rest of Gabaldon's *Outlander* novels due to how they are all embedded with rich historical accounts. In later novels, Gabaldon takes her main characters through various journeys across different countries, such as: France, Jamaica and eventually America. Further vigorous research may be conducted on how Claire, who is a time traveler, must adjust to difficult circumstances such as the submissive role of women in society and slavery.

In the third chapter of this thesis, the concept of the supernatural, Scottish folklore and myths were explored; the most evident is Gabaldon's use of time travel as a basis for her novel. In the first novel of the series *Outlander* (1991) it remains vague and unclear as to how the concept of time travel works, but in certain moments it is hinted that only certain people possess the ability to time travel. A particular example is whenever Claire is in a close proximity of the standing stones she is able to hear a buzzing sound, as if the stones

themselves were calling specifically to her because neither Frank nor Jamie hear nothing. In later novels it is revealed that certain people possess the unique ability to time travel. Further research may be conducted on time travel by analyzing other characters that possess the ability to travel through time. Brianna inherited her mother's ability to travel through time as well as her later love interest, Roger Wakefield who follows Brianna to the past.

Outlander by Diana Gabaldon breaks free from the formulaic concepts of the romance novel by not presenting female characters as frail damsels in distress. Focusing this thesis on how history, gender and the supernatural are key elements in Gabaldon's narration of a strong time traveling nurse trying to survive in the past, paved the way for scholarly developments. This was achieved by using postmodernist theory in order to present how *Outlander* is not a mere historical romance, instead it can be considered to be a postmodern historical metafiction due to how Diana Gabaldon follows Sir Walter's Scott's footsteps in the retelling of history. Gender theory as well as the supernatural was used to further analyze the novel along with its television adaptation, by doing so it produced a thesis which shows how Diana Gabaldon presents herself as a modern female historical novelist, who interlaces Scottish folklore and foregrounding her concern with the role of women in the making of history.

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