ADAPTATION AS A METHODICAL APPROACH: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE NOVEL OUTLANDER AND THE TV SERIES

Saija Pelkonen

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1
1 INTRODUCTION

March 6th in the year 1988 was the day when Diana Gabaldon began writing her practice novel about a handsome Scottish man, an obtrusive modern woman and time travel. Twenty-eight years later she is one of the most well-known romance writers.\(^1\) *Outlander* has evoked my interest not only as a casual reader and fan but also as a literature student. It urges me to ask what the relationship really is between the novel and the TV series that go by the same name.

I will begin by introducing the topic and the subjects of this study. Also the context of adaptation studies is introduced. In chapter two I will examine *Outlander* as an adaptation and locate the work in the intertextual web weaved around genres of time travel and (historical) romance.\(^2\) The theoretical backbones of this thesis — intertextuality and adaptation theory — are introduced in chapter three. In chapter four I will focus on analyzing the *Outlander*. My analysis relies on specific concepts from adaptation theory which will be briefly introduced in the next chapter. Chapter four includes discussion about the significance of time travel and religion, as well as examination of the construction of romantic love and depictions of sexuality. In conclusion I will summarize the differences between the *Outlander* TV series and the novel and I will consider what these differences between the two texts might tell about our society.

1.1 SUBJECT AND AIMS

I focus on analyzing *Outlander* and the TV adaptation of the novel. The *Outlander* novel is a historical romance and is the first part of an eight-part novel series. I will occasionally refer also to other works by Diana Gabaldon listed below and in the appendix. The *Outlander* TV series was first aired in August 9th 2014 and the series will continue with season two in the

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\(^1\) I am hesitant to call Gabaldon a romance writer but we have to settle for it for now.

\(^2\) Outlander crosses many genre lines and is examined via specific genres in this thesis for the sake of convenience. Genre is discussed in more detail in chapter 2.1.
beginning of April 2016. The first season of the TV series is a mostly faithful adaptation, but there are some fundamental differences I found when comparing the two that have notable impact on the meaning of the story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outlander series or “The Big, Enormous Books”³:</th>
<th>Publication year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outlander (Cross Stitch in the UK)</td>
<td>1990</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dragonfly in Amber</td>
<td>1992</td>
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<td>Voyager</td>
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<td>Drums of Autumn</td>
<td>1996</td>
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<td>The Fiery Cross</td>
<td>2001</td>
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<td>A Breath of Snow and Ashes</td>
<td>2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>An Echo in the Bone</td>
<td>2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written in My Own Heart's Blood</td>
<td>2014</td>
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The books in the Outlander series have sold over 26 million copies and have been translated to 36 languages. Gabaldon believes that readers find the books interesting because of the “sense of ‘being there’; the vicarious experience of another place and time.” Another aspect that attracts readers is the historicity of the books, which enables learning while being entertained. Some readers are also curious about the details of botanical medicine and the medical procedures. Most commonly people report to enjoy the characters of the books. Readers care for the characters and want to know more about them — so they keep reading. (The Outlandish

Companion, XXVIII.) The same applies for the TV series. The adaptor of *Outlander*, Ronald D. Moore, says that the viewers do not tune in for the story, they tune in for the characters.

Due to the enormous success and the wide fan base the books have harnessed, Gabaldon received many offers from producers years before Moore bought the options for *Outlander*. Gabaldon, however, was cautious about the idea of translating *Outlander* to the big (or small) screen due partly to the lengthy nature of the novels. Gabaldon waited for the right producer — someone with experience on film making and understanding of the *Outlander* books. (Medley, 25 June 2014.) *Outlander* was adapted by Ron D. Moore only in 2014, 23 years after the first novel was published. A year after its premier *Outlander* was nominated in Golden Globe 2016 awards for best television series (drama). In addition Caitriona Balfe (Claire) was nominated for best actress in television series (drama) and Tobias Menzies (Frank/Jack) for best supporting actor in series. The series has also won various awards including the People’s Choice for Favorite Sci-Fi/Fantasy Show in 2016.\(^4\)

Despite my focus on the TV series, it is by no means the only adaptation made based on the *Outlander* novel so far. There are also spin-offs based on the series: unabridged and abridged audio books, a coloring book, a cooking book and a graphic novel *The Exile: An Outlander Graphic Novel* (2010). I have gathered works by Diana Gabaldon into a table (see appendix: Tables 1 & 2) that are *Outlander* related. I will also later discuss an *Outlander* inspired novel called *Finding Fraser* (2015) in chapter 2.2. All of the works I mentioned above are author approved in some way. Left outside this approval are tons of fanfiction and fan art.\(^5\) All these texts convey the fact that Gabaldon has created a vast and uniform (historical) fantasy world where time travel is possible and many other mystical things plausible. *Outlander* is a world that invites readers and audiences to participate.

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\(^5\) Excluding *Finding Fraser* which could be defined as fanfiction as well as *Here’s Looking At You* (2014) by Mhairi McFarlane (discussed in chapter 2.2).
The reason why I chose to study *Outlander* is because it is a very typical case of novel-to-TV adaptation. It follows the conventions of faithfulness which makes the differences between source text and the adaptation especially interesting. At the same time *Outlander* is a complex text to study. It attempts to turn away from any conventional reading that emphasizes the political and social impact of a fictional text. The text itself is subject to relational reading but the author tries to exert influence on the reading and re-creation process. Adaptation theory in turn is a current research method which fascinates me. Questions about the definition and nature of adaptations as well as the conflict between copyright law and natural human tendencies to adapt is especially intriguing. I believe that adaptation theory is one more tool for understanding the society we live in and its social trends.

First I will define the concept ‘adaptation’ and also define *Outlander* as an adaptation. Then I will examine the theoretical background to adaptation theory, namely intertextuality. I will also consider the pleasure of experiencing adaptation using the ideas and concepts of Roland Barthes. Can *Outlander* create ‘jouissance’, a blissful reading experience? In the analysis I will highlight four major themes in *Outlander* as ‘memes’. Memes are elements in a story that are somehow central to it and get transmitted forward like genes or viruses. I will examine whether all of the themes/memes have remained the same in *Outlander* TV adaptation and whether new memes have been created in the translation from telling mode to showing mode. I will try to answer why some themes have remained the same while some have been transmuted. I will also consider the significance of change in audience and time; in other words the spatial and temporal change.

1.2 The Context: What are adaptations?

Adaptations are often defined as transformations from one medium into another, for example stage, screen or television (Voigts-Virchow 2012, 41). In the center of adaptation studies are works like Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*, Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* and Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* just to mention a few.6

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6 See Cardwell 2002, 26, 162.
These works have been adapted over and over again to new audiences and media. One of the most famous adaptation in the midst of adaptation theorists is the movie adaptation *Romeo+Juliet* (1996) by Baz Luhrman. A more recent example of written-to-visual-medium adaptation is George R. R. Martin’s successful fantasy series *Game of Thrones* which was adapted on TV by HBO and first aired in 2011. These adaptations involve a change in medium but the leading adaptation theorist Linda Hutcheon (1947-) (*A Theory of Adaptation* 2013) defines the term more broadly, as an extensive (re-)interpreted and (re-)created formal entity or product, that is announced to be a transposition of a particular work or works. Adaptation does not necessarily need to involve a change in medium so long as it offers a new point of view. In other words, adaptations could be described as “repetition without replication”. This definition includes works that are adapted within the same medium. For example *Robinson Crusoe* has been recreated in J.M Coetzee’s novel *Foe* (1986). Jean Rhys’s novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) offers an alternative look at the madwoman in the attic, Antoinette Cosway, first created by Charlotte Brontë in *Jane Eyre*.

The field of adaptation studies is fairly new, and is still forming. There isn’t a clear consensus on how to define adaptations and how they are linked to some of the more established concepts of cultural studies such as intertextuality. Where goes the line between simple influence, intertextual reference, pastiche, parody, transmedia, adaptation and others terms related to intertextuality? Pastiche, for example, has been recently considered in a broader sense and not just as a work of secondary value.⁷ (Dyer 2007, 137.) We talk about pastiche when an adapter tries to replicate or imitate a previous work. In effect pastiche ends up spreading the cultural meme present in the adapted work. Adaptation functions similarly even though imitation might not be its main goal. We also separate *parody* from adaptation, although the function may in some cases be similar, to mock the previous work/s.⁸ (Hutcheon 2013, 7-8.) What this discussion highlights is that terms and theories are revisited and redefined all the time. We can

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⁷ Richard Dyer: *Pastiche* (2007). Dyer believes that if parody is based on distance, pastiche is based on (often emotional) closeness.

⁸ Perhaps adaptations could be though as a hypernym for both pastiche and parody.
assume that adaptation theory, as a young field, has a lot of unexamined ground to explore. (Sanders 2016, 61, 64, 70-71, 115.)

Adaptation studies are very author and audience centered. The adapter has to actively re-interpret and re-create a work that is then received by an audience that reads the work as an adaptation. What this means is that the reader has to acknowledge the work as an adaptation. The reader or audience then reads the adaptation in relation to the source text. It could be possible to view Outlander as a stand-alone but for the sake of argument we will assume that the viewer in fact is familiar with the previous works.

Appropriation is an adaptation without formal classification as such. What makes Outlander an adaptation instead of an appropriation is that it is openly announced to be a derivative of the Outlander novel (Hutcheon 2013, 149). To emphasize this point, Outlander TV series is author approved and Gabaldon has been involved in creating the series exerting some control over the process. Partly due to this reason I will in this study rely on a great deal of author centered sources such as The Outlandish Companion (2015) by Diana Gabaldon and several articles concerning the creation of the TV series and comments from the TV series creator Ron D. Moore. Another reason for doing an author centered study is the fact that Gabaldon has openly communicated her opinions and due to the wide fan base her opinions also have a large impact. During this study I will raise author’s opinions which can be sometimes challenging to relate to. Authorial opinions are just one important part of the intertextual web around Outlander. Authorial intention appears to direct the reading and viewing experience, sometimes Gabaldon succeeds in this task and sometimes fails. The authorial perspective is thus one central element in my study and it functions as an intertextual reference and as a map to reading. Gabaldon’s position allows opinion leadership which increase the responsibility of Gabaldon as a writer.

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9 E.g in the trailer and at the beginning of the episode says: “Based on the international bestseller.”

10 We will later examine more closely the relationship between authorial power and adaptations.
I will turn away from the idea of canon in my study even though several adaptation scholars believe that the interest to appropriate clusters around certain authors and texts. Chantal Zabus writes (quoted in Sanders 2016, 151) that there is a “dream-text” that functions as a pre-text to multiple other texts. Zabus’ dream-text is one more term describing the source text in addition to hypotext and subtext. He adds that this central text is nevertheless century specific, meaning that the dream text is not stationary but changes in time. A dream-text functions as a source to an adaptation. What then is the central source text in the 21st century, we are tempted to ask; perhaps Shakespeare? The idea of canon will be discussed more in chapter 2.3.

Despite ignoring a specific canon in my study I will not deny the fact that intertextuality is an inevitable phenomena. Especially popular genre affects the formation of both Outlander adaptation and the novel. Gabaldon openly announces her sources of influence in the Outlandish Companion among other places recognizing the potential influence other texts have on her writing. I do believe that certain memes, or perhaps topoi, are stronger than others but they are usually difficult to trace back to the dream-text or a specific canonical text or author.

The fact that Outlander’s readers/audience is aware of the Outlander’s intertextual connections makes it possible for them to take part in “relational reading”. The term comes from a central intertextuality scholar Gérard Genette, who believes that a knowledge about the hypotext or source is crucial for understanding the full meaning of an adaptive work. (Sanders 2016, 61.) Despite the flagrant invitations to participate, adaptations have only received that much attention. This is partly due to their second-rate reputation among academy and critics. Romance has a similar reputation which makes it astonishing that the Outlander TV series has received such a great success. Hutcheon does argue that if adaptations actually were inferior or second-rate, they wouldn’t have survived. She states: “In the workings of the human imagination, adaptation is the norm, not the exception.” (Hutcheon 2013, 177.) Few stories haven’t been adapted or aren’t adaptations themselves. Adaptations and appropriations are in

11 E.g Harold Bloom believes that all literature today is derived from Shakespeare’s texts: “[Shakespeare] thought all thoughts, for all of us.” (Quoted in Allen 2011, 135).

12 She also writes about her literary influences on her official website (“Influences”).
fact so prominent and prevalent that it can sometimes be challenging to track the source text. In these cases we are talking about appropriations or even memes. On the other hand adaptations carry their own meanings which can differ greatly from the adapted text. Sometimes the differences are so great that adaptations are nearly impossible to detect—in these cases the only nominator seems to be the name. Fidelity is appreciated in the field of adaptations so such instances are rare.

The concept of fidelity is central to experiencing and studying adaptation. Usually, when adapted work is credited in adaptation, certain audience expectations are built. Audience expects certain events and even lines. Gabaldon has also mentioned iconic lines from the novel which she predicts that fans want to hear in the adaptation, one being Jamie’s line to Claire on their wedding night: “You needn't be afraid of me, Claire.” Gabaldon also says that even though there are some changes in the TV series, “there's nothing in there that's inconsistent with the books.” (Neff, L. 2014, Aug 06.) Expectations and fidelity are central in the creation, reception and study of Outlander as an adaptation. One prevalent expectation is that a similar “spirit” with the adapted work is captured in the adaptation. Myths as expectations builders will be discussed in chapter 3.4. Despite my tendency to compare adaptation to the source text, both can be seen as individual works with their individual spirit or essence. My study is comparative in a sense that I am considering the Outlander TV series in relation to the Outlander novel but I don’t wish to evaluate the success of the adaptation.

Adaptations can work as a cultural indicator of changing tastes, values, issues and standards (Sanders 2016, 64). Even in Outlander there can be seen a change in the thematic content which I assume is, to some extent, due to a change in audience as well as the temporal difference. However, I will disregard geographical change because the effect is insignificant in my study. However, the Cross Stitch, UK version of Outlander, is a great example of a work that has been affected by the geographical change. The change has had an effect not only to the title but also to the content. Outlander was published in UK, Australia and New Zealand under the title Cross Stitch. The editors told Gabaldon: "We love the book, but we can’t call it OUTLANDER;
to us, an ‘outlander’ is someone from South Africa.” 

Gabaldon told them that Cross Stitch was the original title and they loved it. Diana Gabaldon agreed to the minor changes made in the edition but overall she has had a great control over the content of her story. Diana Gabaldon effectively refused to sell the options for the series for someone who would modify the story too much and she has been actively a part of the adaptation process.

I believe that adaptations should be studied because they are such a major part of our contemporary media culture. Adaptation can be found virtually everywhere, from movie adaptations and musical references to transmedia franchise — even the character toy you get with your Happy Meal is an adaptation. Having said this, adaptations are not a new phenomenon as they have been around since as long as we know. Sanders argues for the study of adaptations:

> Adaptations and appropriations deserve to be seen as influential and agenda-setting in their own right, and in the process they acknowledge something fundamental about literature and art: that their impulse is to spark thoughts, associations, relationships, and stimulate emotional response.” (Sanders 2016, 212.)

### 1.3 Methodology

My method is qualitative and chronological. I compare the TV series to the novel which was published 23 years prior and assume that the TV series is affected by the novel. I will do this in the light of adaptation theory. I recognize that this comparative approach can be problematic due to the hierarchical nature of comparing one thing to another. However, I aim to avoid evaluating the TV-series based on its fidelity.

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13 Some details added or left out in the edition for example a sex scene at the end of chapter "Raiders in the Rocks" was left out because it was thought to be too graphic to the UK audience. Also a few sentences were added where Claire worries for Frank so she would not be thought as “cold hearted” by the readers.

14 As a side note I must say that seeing the adaptation affects the reader’s experience of the source text. Reading research however goes beyond the scope of my study.
I will analyze the two texts via themes. These themes recur in both texts sometimes as identical and sometimes in an altered form. What these differences are and how they could be explained is in the center of my study. My method can be called hermeneutical. I examine the texts closely, over and over again, reaching new meanings that stand out to me from the texts. My understanding of the text as a whole is formed by references to smaller parts of the text that in turn are understood in reference to the bigger parts. Voigts-Virchow (2012, 38) writes:

The approach of performative hermeneutics [...] would offer tools to connect adaptation studies and literary hermeneutics to the cultural studies concerns that have dominated research into participatory culture. - - Adaptation studies will have to analyze the processes rather than the texts of adaptation.

Following Voigts-Virchows suggestion, I anchor my interpretation in large part to adaptation theory and to the adaptation processes.

I also utilize time series analysis of some sort: I have data from two time periods: 1991 and 2014. This amount of data doesn’t give reliable information about the current or future trends. It can, however, be used as a guide to make educated guesses about the trends today and as extra data for other studies in the future.

There are some limitations in the way I interpret Outlander because the novel was written in a different cultural context. The cultural difference most likely affects the interpretation I have formed and will form at the end of my thesis. I am not familiar with all of the intertextual references the novel and series may make and thus will not even attempt to focus on them in this study. My outlandishness may however be also an asset since my reading may induce new interpretations and ideas that may be unique to a reader who is more similar to the implied reader. As a side notion I want to say that Gabaldon wrote Outlander before ever being to Scotland and knew no Gaelic whatsoever. Outlander depicts how people from different times and cultural contexts meet and try to understand each other. This is also the
basis of hermeneutic interpretation: how we understand something that might be dislocated in
time and culture through recognizing the distance rather than being captured by it.\textsuperscript{15}
The cultural context in \textit{Outlander} to begin with is thus manifold and continues as \textit{Outlander}
becomes an even more widespread phenomenon.

2 \textit{OUTLANDER AND THE TIME-TRAVEL GENRE}

It's just your typical time-traveling-historical-romance-fantasy-drama-adventure.
(Rosen, Lisa 2015, May 28.)

At the end of World War II Claire and Frank decide to go on a second honeymoon trip to
Scotland and spend some time together after a 5-year separation. There Frank can also continue
his research into his own family history. On an Irish traditional holiday Bealtaine (Samhain in
the TV series) Claire is visiting the standing stones of Craigh Na Dun when she loses
consciousness. When she wakes up she realizes that she has slipped back in time from 1945 to
1743. There Claire bumps into Frank’s ancestor Black Jack Randall whose resemblance with
Frank is striking (see appendix for screen capture 2). In the TV series both characters are
performed by the same actor, Tobias Menzies (see appendix 3). Claire is saved from an
attempted rape by Murtagh Fraser. Murtagh takes her with him the other Scots where Claire
meets the wounded Jamie. She tends to him and the courtship begins\textsuperscript{16}.

This was how Diana Gabaldon begun her successful \textit{Outlander} series. Diana Gabaldon has a
Ph.D. in quantitative behavioral ecology and she has written comic books for Walt Disney. She
was a university professor when she began writing \textit{Outlander}, the novel she playfully calls a
“practice novel”. This “practice novel” lead to a whole TV series that have to this day gathered
a massive international fan group. (OC, XVII, 376.) Other works by Diana Gabaldon include
The \textit{Lord John Grey} series, which is separate from the \textit{Outlander} series but takes place in the

\textsuperscript{15} The basis of hermeneutical interpretation described by Kimmo Laine via email consultation 23.4.2016.

\textsuperscript{16} James Alexander Malcolm MacKenzie Fraser by his full name.
same world as *Outlander* and features the same characters. I will mention the *Lord John Grey* series again in chapter 4.4 where I discuss the representation of sex and sexuality. The relationship between the two series complicates the interpretation. Other works by Gabaldon include short stories and a serial novel *Naked Came the Phoenix* (2011) in collaboration with twelve other female authors.

Gabaldon has openly told why she decided to write a historical novel:

> I was a research professor, after all; I had a huge university library available, and I knew how to use it. I thought it seemed a little easier to look things up than to make them up—and if I turned out to have no imagination, I could steal things from the historical record. (OC, XX)

The reason why time travel is involved is related to Claire’s stubbornness and will be discussed more closely in chapter 4.1. Next I will examine why Gabaldon chose to write a historical novel that is situated in the 18th century Scotland and what this choice of topic has to with adaptations.

### 2.1 Outlander as an Adaptation

The show is a marvelous adaptation of the book, and every facet of the production, from writing, directing and acting to costume and set design, has been handled with an artistry, excitement and attention to detail that I’ve seldom seen in television. (Diana Gabaldon in Hayner 2014.)

*Outlander* series is clearly articulated as an adaptation of the novel *Outlander*. I will consider *Outlander* as an adaptation even though it would be entirely possible to study every version of *Outlander* as an independent text also. There, however, are some elements that emphasize the palimpsestuous, or intertextual, nature of *Outlander*. There is a cameo from Diana Gabaldon in episode four that emphasizes the importance of the original author. There are some elements moved from the novel to TV that are not so conventional for the showing mode and might be
detected by a more experienced viewer. Voiceover is an easy way to narrate the main character’s thoughts. In episode nine we hear also Jamie’s thoughts via voiceover, which offers an exciting new point of view to the knowing audience (audience who is familiar with the source text). Voiceover has not always been a conventional element of television, even though its use has increased today.

Before going deeper into the relationship between the two texts, I want to point out that the *Outlander* novel itself is an adaptation: a remake of a fairy tale, or more specifically a Celtic myth involving time travel. In addition to this there is also a more obvious connection. Gabaldon openly admits in her blog that her inspiration to write *Outlander* came from a *Doctor Who* episode. *Doctor Who* is a British science fiction series produced by BBC following a time traveler called only “Doctor”. The first episode aired in 1963 and ended in 1989 composed again since 2005. One of the characters, the young Scottish sidekick called Jamie MacCrimmon, sparked Gabaldon’s imagination and so the place and time was set:

> This character wore a kilt, which I thought rather fetching, and demonstrated—in this particular episode—a form of pigheaded male gallantry that I've always found endearing: the strong urge on the part of a man to protect a woman, even though he may realize that she's plainly capable of looking after herself. (OC, 378.)

Gabaldon has stated that she did not derive Jamie's last name from Frazer Hines, the actor of McCrimmon, since the PBS station on which she viewed Doctor Who habitually cut off the credits, and so she did not learn Frazer Hines' name until some years later. I am tempted to consider if *Outlander* could be regarded as an appropriation of the *Doctor Who: The War Games* series. Both utilize time travel and take place in 1745. Both feature a young Scottish man in a kilt called Jamie. Both have the identical strong theme: war. Jamie fought in the battle of Culloden, and the foundation to the relationship between modern Zoey and 18th century Jamie is similar to Claire and Jamie’s relationship. What I mean to show through this topic is that no work of art is ever truly free of influence. What we can evaluate is how much a text is based on other text or texts and most importantly: what is the significance of those particular connections. (“Official site: FAQ About the Books”. Retrieved February 29, 2016.)

17 Myths as subjects of adaptation and appropriation are discussed in chapter three.
Leaving this poignant detail behind, we next focus on the *Outlander* TV series. The series is a remake or an adaptation of the novel which itself is also an adaptation like we have already established. The TV series further translate and transmit the story through the textual and temporal. The four major themes I want to highlight are time travel, religion, romantic love and sex and sexuality. These themes are closely connected to specific myths and memes which I will also introduce during this thesis. First I will examine how *Outlander* has been transmuted from telling to showing mode and how this transition may have affected the overall meaning of the texts. I will also take into account the temporal and somewhat spatial change that has taken place in the 23 years that has passed between the novel’s first publication and the premiere of the TV-show. I intend to explain why there are differences between the two texts and what the resultant significance is.

The historical setting of the novel would make it tempting to evaluate the political implications of *Outlander*. There are obvious confrontations between the English ‘redcoats’ and the Jacobite rebels -- and the audience’s sympathy is won over by the Scots. Gabaldon herself hasn’t given a clear political statement concerning the current affairs between Scotland and the United Kingdom. It could be interesting to examine the political ambiance throughout Gabaldon’s works. For example her *Lord John Grey* series, even though told from the perspective of a redcoat officer, sympathizes with the Jacobite cause. This point of view will be left out in my study. However, Alexandra Garner has examined the potential effects of the *Outlander* series and the hegemonic influence of the *Outlander* TV show in her paper *Outlander and the Visual Representation of Scottish/British Identity Politics* (2015). Another especially delicious topic would have been the construction of masculinity or the idea of the hunky Scot. Gabaldon and Moore have brought the day dream of many heterosexual women into their living rooms (or wherever they like to experience *Outlander*).

Adaptations and appropriations are often times clear to define either through direct acknowledgement of the influence or indirect one. But when the connection is unintentional we move to the wider sphere of intertextuality and things get complicated. The reader might notice the connection but is it significant anymore if the author didn’t intend to create a
reference? Despite the interesting topic I will leave out discussion about intertextuality that reaches beyond *Outlander* novel or TV series. Being a Finnish reader I have significantly different intertextual web that would for example average American reader. Due to this difference I believe it is most efficient to focus solely on the relationship between the two texts. I will also leave out the numerous other adaptations based on *Outlander* even though discussion about adapting to graphic novel or a cookbook called *Outlander Kitchen* (2016) would have undoubtedly produced some interesting discussion.18

### 2.2 On Authorial Power

We seem to have come back to the romantic conceptions of the author, which is the idea about a “self-generative, creative genius and truth-telling sage to a debased profit-hungry society [...]” (Murray 2002, 25). As Barthes (27) writes: “I desire the author.” There are now tons of articles and interviews where a fan can follow their loved author in addition to official websites, social media and blogs. Gabaldon has commented on these platforms among other things the *Outlander* adaptations and the making of *Outlander* fan fiction.

Official websites, blogs and social media are examples about the various media via which the author can exert influence. Gabaldon functions as an opinion leader. Her opinion about the adaptation directs fans experience and opinion about the TV series. When Gabaldon praises the adaptation the fan can watch it with pleasure. Gabaldon predicts fans will love the TV series as a well, calling it a "good, convincing realization of *Outlander.*" (Neff, L. 2014) Gabaldon comments the first season of *Outlander:* “Oh, I really liked the way you did it. It was a difficult plot, I know, but I think you really found the essence of it. You really found the through line that really defines what this part of the journey is.”

The approval for the adaptation is very important for the fan watching the TV-show and most likely influences the response generated by it. Author may want to boost the viewership of the

18 There is also a website called Outlanderkitchen.com.
adaptation and also control their brand image. If the adaptation is a success, it boosts the popularity of author’s other texts also. In short, all the works somehow related to the source text are in some sense complementary with each other, dependent on the success of one another. The role of the author in the adaptation process may be especially prominent for mainly marketing purposes (Murray 2002, 27). Author may also want to watch over her “children” so they do not get reworked into something they are not. Gabaldon’s fanfiction policy seems to support this interpretation. In 2010 Gabaldon wrote in her blog the following opinion: “I think it’s immoral, I _know_ it’s illegal, and it makes me want to barf whenever I’ve inadvertently encountered some of it involving my characters.” The author exerts her power to the fan community also, controlling how her work is appropriated. The authorial intention which might affect the interpretation of the novel will be discussed later.

2.3 Outlander fan-fiction

On March 2016 I could find only 24 fan fics under the search Outlander and 45 when searching Diana Gabaldon on a website fanfiction.net which all in all contains hundreds of thousands fanfictions. 440 fanfiction posts were found on a website called http://archiveofourown.org/ when I searched Outlander(TV) and Outlander series. More Outlander fan fiction can be found on Tumblr but in summary it seems like Gabaldon’s fanfiction policy is being respected. There are certainly no Outlander dedicated fan fiction websites.

Fanfiction is just one of the many different adaptation manifestations. I want to highlight them in particular because they entail the whole nature of adaptations. Sanders (2016, 198) suggests that there can be no interpretation without participation. She writes that readers are also active participants and not just passive consumers (Sanders 2016, 175). We are active from the first decision to read a certain book or watch a certain show until we forget the story. In between we might adapt and at least appropriate work. We reflect the work in different contexts and the ending point of influence is impossible to draw. The thought here is that we readers are active appropriators and fanfiction is just one manifestation of this trait. Sanders (2016, 193) writes that “social, cultural, and ethical act of participation underpins adaptation and appropriation as concepts and processes.” It is the Web 2.0 and other advances in technology that allow the
manifestation of participation and interactivity. What limits this world of open access and creative freedom is the copyright law. The copyright law protects intellectual property and springs from the idea of originality. When copyright law is extended to adaptations as well, issues become more problematic. We have discussed how Gabaldon, after careful consideration, sold the options for Ronald D. Moore to adapt her novel into a TV series. Many fans however, have adapted Gabaldon’s works in countless ways before this instance: fanfiction and fanart being the most obvious. After realizing that she has stirred up a huge controversy with her initial comment about fan fiction being immoral and disgusting, she deleted the original post and followed up with a more considerate post:

You know, I'm very flattered that some of you enjoy the books so much that you feel inspired to engage with the writing in a more personal way than most readers do. Both for legal and personal reasons, though, I'm not comfortable with fan-fiction based on any of my work, and request that you do not write it, do not send it to me, and do not publish it, whether in print or on the web.

(http://www.dianagabaldon.com/misc/dianas-fan-fiction-policy/)

We can consider Finding Fraser (2014) as a special case amidst fanfiction. The novel is about a young woman who on a whim after reading the Outlander novels decides to go to Scotland and find a love that compares to James Fraser. Gabaldon has positively commented on the Outlander inspired novel: “Jamie Fraser would be Deeply Gratified at having inspired such a charmingly funny, poignant story—and so am I.”19 The existing fan base and the approval of Gabaldon has benefitted the author K. C. Dyer enormously. Since Finding Fraser is self-published, the line between fan fiction and intertextual reference is even finer. Finding Fraser does not include Outlander characters, rather it projects them via the imagination of the main character.20

Another novel featuring a Jamie Fraser named protagonist is Here's Looking At You (2014) by Mhairi McFarlane. The novel is considered chick-lit and attracts readers like me to examine

19 As seen in the cover of the e-book.

20 K. C. Dyers interview on Youtube: Novelist KC Dyer's Breakthrough Success Story (10.8.2015)
who this James Fraser character is and could he match the image we have of him already? Even if the author did not intend to refer to the famous Outlander character, it is nearly impossible to avoid such association—and be financially benefited by it.

In the eyes of a fan, adapting the subject of fandom is a sort of tribute. Fan fiction answers questions like “What if?” It fills in gaps in the timeline, and may continue the story past where the author took it. There is, however a fine line in plagiarism and fanfiction. Fanfiction borrows, or “lovingly rips of” the source text, its characters and the world created by the author.21 The copyright law usually steps in only if the writer has attempted to profit, or has deliberately misled the readers to think they are the original creator. Some authors are on the same lines and approve fanfiction so long as it doesn’t interfere with their ability to make a living. Copyright laws of course function as an incentive to the authors. There is no point in creating something if the creation is immediately snatched away or copied by someone else. (TeleRead, 2010)

In Outlander TV series the gypsies copy the performance created by Claire and Murtagh that was supposed to help Jamie find them. Claire is afraid that two identical performances, (a Sassenach singing a jazz tune), might confuse Jamie who now wouldn’t know which performance to go to. She pays the gypsies to stop performing the song. The gypsies, despite the contract, continue to perform and only because Claire accidentally meets the gypsies again is she able to hear where Jamie might be. A message might be found in this sequence: do not copy the work created by someone else because it is stealing and may have severe consequences. The sequence differs from the novel in that the novel uses only about one page describing the singing and dancing and focuses on the relationship between Claire and Murtagh. The gypsies have nothing to do with the singing and do not blackmail or double cross Claire at all even though Murtagh acts suspicious of them. (O, 678.) Perhaps copyright laws have become a more current topic in the past twenty-years or so.

21 “[T]here are precious few stories around that have not been 'lovingly ripped off' from others.” (Hutcheon 2013, 177.)
What Gabaldon disapproves in fanfiction she approves in fan videos. She posted on March 9th 2016 on her official Facebook page: “I _love_ this! Many thanks to the talented Julia Le Blanc for this marvelous portrait of Black Jack Randall. (I admit that "O, Fortuna" is one of my favorites. I don't often write with music playing, but I wrote large chunks of VOYAGER to "Carmina Burana.")”

At the end she linked the Youtube address to the video. The fan video on thousands of other like it appropriate the video material from the TV series usually adding music to go in the background. It is against the Youtube policies to use copyrighted material without permission and most likely none of the video makers have asked for permission from the producers and artists.

I believe that the fan art and especially fan fiction has a great impact in the meaning of the whole _Outlander_ world created by Gabaldon to the fan fiction readers. A whole world of new possibilities is open with no rules of decency or convention. Fans appropriate the world with little demure. We could consider Coetzee’s _Foe_ and Rhys’ _Wide Sargasso Sea_ in this context. The difference here is—really—just that the author of the source text is still alive. While keeping this notion of participation in mind throughout the whole study we continue to go deeper into the adaptation theory.

2.4 GENRE IN _OUTLANDER_

Sanders (2016, 107) writes that canonical texts and literary archetypes get adapted. Shakespeare is allegedly one of the most established canonical writers who is responsible for creating and enforcing literary archetypes that get adapted even today. Shakespeare will be discussed more when we talk about memes in chapter 4.3. Before that we will examine the study of genres in specific and attempt to place _Outlander_ within some genre(s) in order to see what it is that _Outlander_ actually adapts.
Erica Obey refers to Jacques Derrida in her article *Tall, Dark, and Long Time Dead: Epistemology, Time Travel, and the Bodice-Ripper*. She quotes: “A text cannot belong to no genre [...] there is no genreless text; there is always a genre and genres, yet such participation never amounts to belonging.” (Quoted in Obey 2002.) What genre does *Outlander* “belong” to? One way to answer this question is to look at book-sellers who have grouped the novel series in various genres, most often as romance, historical novels and fantasy. Gabaldon herself doesn’t see *Outlander* series as a romance because it is not a courtship story and does not always have a happy ending. *Outlander* is an exception because it does contain a courtship and does indeed have a happy ending. The later parts of the series do depict the married life between Jamie and Claire but focuses also on the time travel and political aspects of the story. The TV series is described as drama, romance, science-fiction and fantasy. All in all there seems to be a similar genre mix in both works even though the TV series thrive more towards realism and credibility in its description of events. Also the TV series exploit the scandalousness of sex and rape scenes to a greater extent than the novel. The sex or rape scenes are present in their visual form only because of their shock effect rather than because of their function as emotion conveyors between characters which would move the plot forward.

It seems that Gabaldon continues what Adrienne Rich (1929-2012) (quoted in Sanders 2016, 12) suggests: “[F]or women writers it was essential to take on the writing of the past in order to move beyond it into a creative space of their own.” Diana Gabaldon knows her romance and deliberately changed the convention of courtship into depiction of marriage. Even though *Outlander* isn’t conventional romance, it doesn’t change the fact that it is written by a woman to women, which is one of the most enduring trait of romance genre. Gabaldon incorporates to her work a traditionally masculine genre, science fiction. The blending of science fiction and romance is relatively new evolution in the field of genre fiction. Obey (2002, 157-158) writes that the *Outlander* series is probably the most successful of an odd hybrid in romance publishing which is the time travel romance. Gabaldon also subverts gender conventions as Hughes (2014, Aug 24) writes in the article *Is this the new 'Game of Thrones'?*: “Jamie's role

22 Gabaldon explains the genre in *Outlander* on her website among other places: “Genre Labels and the big “romance” question, are they or aren’t they?” (http://www.dianagabaldon.com/resources/faq/faq-about-the-books/#romancequestion)
in it is closer to that of the traditional heroine, in that he's a good-looking virgin who, when not getting his war-wounds treated, spends a fair amount of time getting rescued.” It seems like, in its anti-generic nature, Gabaldon’s *Outlander* has inspired a whole time travel romance literature boom, especially those featuring a tempting highlander. Another very popular time travel romance is *The Time Traveler’s Wife* by Audrey Niffenegger (2003).

Time travel romance is part of “Alternate Reality” romances which includes all types of texts which make use of fantasy or other sort of ‘unreality’. The genre also includes fantasy, futuristic, and paranormal romance. The beginning of the genre can be traced back to the 60s and 70s when science fiction and fantasy became more “female”. The time travel romance proved to be very popular in 1986 when Constance O’Day-Flannery published her first time-travel novel *Timeless Passion*. However, there were several writers before O’Day-Flannery, but it was only in 1992 when Harlequin for the first time referred to such stories as part of a “time-travel genre.” Time-travel romance often valorizes man from the past and glorifies rape. (Calhoun-French 1999, 100, 104.) Rape is used as an effective plot-device in *Outlander* also, but rape isn’t limited only to the violation of women. Instead Jamie is the biggest victim in the series. The series may even offer a new experience to the audience: what if the man you loved was raped? Being stripped away from the feminine victimhood can be an outlandish experience and the topic will be discussed more in chapter 4.4.1.

Obey (2002, 158) claims that *Outlander* might not be considered as science fiction, one reason being that Gabaldon doesn’t see the need to emphasize the science behind time travel. It is true that Claire travels back in time because Gabaldon couldn’t write a plausible 18th century woman — not because Gabaldon deliberately would have wanted to write science fiction. But after deciding that Claire had to go back in time Gabaldon had to plan a convincing story for why Claire goes back in time and how it is possible. The science behind time travel will be closely examined in chapter 4.1.2 *The Gabaldon Theory*.

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23 Cf. Karen Marie Moning (1999). Beyond the Highland Mist (Highlander #1) and the other 5 books from the *Highlander* series.

So how can we define the intertextual context for *Outlander* now that we have seen that the series has the ability to bust through the strictures of genre? Gabaldon herself finds the romance label troubling and prefers to describe her books as historical fantasias (The Denver Post 2004). Gabaldon describes the series: "They're rooted in history but have a very strong element of fantasy." (Stephenson 1997, June 1.) Another possible way for describing the context in which *Outlander* was written would be via TV-novels. *Outlander*, however, most likely was not written television adaptation in mind. In addition to being a practice novel, it was not adapted until twenty-three years later after many refusals and lots of consideration.

The *Outlander* series has been widely compared to a series called *Game of Thrones* (2011), a hugely popular novel series adapted onto the small screen by HBO (Thorpe 2015). The comparison isn’t too farfetched since Diana Gabaldon and the *Game of Thrones* (1996- ) author George R. R. Martin are close neighbors and have worked together on a few works including a cross-genre anthology *Dangerous Women* (2013). *Outlander* and *Game of Thrones* have also been linked together due to the similarities in the production context. The series, however, are very different:

*Outlander's* gaze is female and, at times, breathtakingly frank. Not only is Claire unapologetically upfront about her own desires, it is the male rather than the female bodies which are lingered over - a pleasant contrast to *Game of Thrones'* sexposition and breast shots. (Hughes, S. 2014, Aug 24 [cursive added].)

The change from being the object of gaze to being the spectator is, I believe, one of the biggest reasons why *Outlander* is so popular especially among the female audience. You're get to see things the way a woman would see them. This viewpoint follows the “spirit” of *Outlander* novel. Another major reason for this feminine point of view is that the cast behind the scenes includes women. An *Outlander* fan speculates:

“The presence of females in the writers room, female executive producers, and the fact that [executive producer] Ron D. Moore is so attentive to what women might be thinking, how women might be viewing it, what a strong woman looks like, how a strong woman sounds and that women at any age can have full lives.” (Nededog, 7th May 2015.)
However, even though *Outlander* viewers are mostly women, the viewership has proved to be more gender neutral than might be presumed.\(^{25}\)

Erica Obey links Gabaldon’s work together with the revolutionary “male” Gothic, marked mainly by a revolutionary nature and ability to resist genre classifications. Obey (2002, 160) writes:

“[A]lthough the broad conventions of the story do focus on conventional, conservative valuations of true love, heterosexual sex, and parent-child loyalty, there is a sadistic subtext to Gabaldon’s treatment of these issues that is radical to the point of abusiveness.” (Obey 2002, 159.)

Obey believes that there is a clear epistemological project underlying Gabaldon’s work even though Gabaldon herself doesn’t admit it (Obey 2002, 161). This project will we considered in chapter 4.

To study *Outlander* as an adaptation we must examine both the TV show and the novel as adaptations from the earlier romance literature and the other genres it utilizes. Both works also appropriate historical events and personalities.

### 3 ADAPTATION THEORY

I will begin first by discussing the basis and the history of adaptation theory. Adaptation theory and intertextuality are kindred fields. Adaptations are merely works that have a strong intertextual link to a specific work or works. These links manifest in various ways just like any intertextual reference would—as a quotation, citation or perhaps just a similar structure. Sanders (2016, 6) however, differentiates adaptation from citations because adaptation “constitutes a more sustained and deeper engagement usually with a single text or source [...].”

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\(^{25}\) With statistics varying from 51%-62% female on 38-49% male viewers.
An adaptation could be classified as an obligatory intertextuality, where it is crucial that the reader understands the link to the source text.

After I have established the origins of adaptation theory I move on to discussing the complicated process of adapting. I ask questions such as “Why are adaptations made?” and “How are they made?” and through these questions I will also consider who is pulling the strings. I will in the next chapters consider “the multiple determinations that shape adaptations and the multiple pleasures they provide, even for those who may be unfamiliar with the source text.” (Jim Collins 2010, cited in Sanders 2016, 174.)

Just like the process of creating an adaptation, also receiving them is not simple. Can we assume that the audience is similar in both Outlander works? Why? Where does the pleasure of experiencing an adaptation come from? Lastly I go on to describing the concept of cultural memes. Cultural memes are the crystallizations of our culture and society that are transmitted and translated from one adaptation to another. Whether or not these memes change in the case of Outlander is discussed in chapter four.

3.1 Intertextuality—When the dead awaken

“[A]rt is derived from other art; stories are born of other stories.” (Hutcheon 2013, 2.)

Gabaldon is the manifestation of the authorial power that has been announced dead by postmodernists. Roland Barthes writes in the Text of Pleasure:

As institution, the author is dead: his civil status, his biographical person have disappeared; dispossessed, they no longer exercise over his work the formidable paternity whose account literary history, teaching, and public opinion had the responsibility of establishing and renewing; but in the text, in a way, I desire the author: I need his figure.” (Barthes 1975, 27.)

Sanders (2006, 2) focuses on the level of explicitness of the intertextual reference.
Similarly today, the author seems like a God figure or object of desire to some readers.

Intertextuality studies have focused merely on the source and influence and this idea has been widened especially in later theoretical discussion (cf. Allen 2011, 71). Adaptation theory has a distinct heritage to Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) and Julia Kristeva (1941- ). Adaptation theorists, just like intertextuality theorists, seek to “theorize an interrelation between texts which is fundamental to their existence and which at times seems to get to the heart of the literary, and especially the reading, experience.” (Sanders 2016, 11.) Adoptions are understood as “palimpsestuous” works, works that are built on top of adapted texts and thus haunted by them. They are works in “second degree”, created and received in relation to a prior text—works that are rewritten (cf. Edward Said in Sanders 2006, 2). This means, in adaptation theory, that the source text or texts are emphasized in importance. There is often a contradiction in adaptation studies because there is both the attempt to move away from hierarchical approach and the primary and secondary texts. At the same time analysis is made based on the comparison between the two. However, T. S. Eliot’s essay ‘Traditions and individual talent’ has been also central in forming adaptation theory. One idea is especially central: The meaning of an adaptation is shaped by the relationship it has with other texts — primarily with the source text which in this case is Outlander. This approach emphasizes the web the every text has around it. The impracticality of this approach means that a more simple approach is employed more. Texts that construct the genre which Outlander is also part of could be described as secondary source texts. The novel is the primary source text. As opposed to texts that don’t announce their source text, adaptations have an innate expectation to be compared and contrasted to the (primary) source text and the meaning stems from these actions (Sanders 2016, 10). Despite this focus on the source text, we should keep in mind that the intertextuality of adaptations is also seen as an immensely wide web. (Hutcheon 2013, 6, 21).

The ‘anxiety of influence’ is an idea pitched by Harold Bloom, which states that everything is

27 The term palimpsestuous is loaned from a Scottish poet and scholar Michael Alexander.

28 The essay discusses originality and value and the relationship between the poet and the literary tradition which precedes them.
already written and read, and it implies that originality is impossible in our age.\(^{29}\) This would mean that it is impossible to arrange texts to a certain hierarchy. Gabaldon has embraced this ‘anxiety of influence’ and has combined a whole list of books that have been of influence to her. She has also admitted the origin of her ideas for \textit{Outlander}, a specific \textit{Doctor Who} episode, discussed earlier. (Cf. Allen 2011, 133-4.) The \textit{Outlander} series are also a part of the wide intertextual field of romance, fantasy and historical fiction just to mention a few and those references establish \textit{Outlander}’s genre identity (cf. Cardwell 2002, 67). The \textit{Outlander} contains intertextual references to other works, deliberately or not, and these references are passed onto other works that refer to \textit{Outlander}. We need to note here that intertextual references, in some sense, exist only if the reader recognizes them and activates the web. It follows that every intertextual web is different and interpretations may vary due to this.

Sanders (2008, 24) sees adaptations as complex processes of filtration, and in terms of intertextual webs or signifying fields, rather than simplistic one-way lines of influence from source to adaptation. I also believe that all the intertextual connections and interpretations reader has made, while reading or watching a source text, transfer into a new experience of watching the adaptation. Watching the series without having read the novel may simply facilitate a different kind of interpretation and is by no means a failed or insufficient reading (cf. Sanders 2006, 6). In this case we might define the intertextuality of adaptations as optional because it does not prevent the reader’s understanding of the text.

So if we adopt the view that adaptations are a part of an interminable web of textual works, and that every reader has their own library of textual references, how can we possibly study some particular meaning of a work? I will answer this question first by limiting the reader/audience to what Hutcheon calls \textit{knowing audience}. This allows me to examine \textit{Outlander} as an adaptation. Secondly, I will assume that the knowing audience has some unified interpretation of the source text and that this conception has a central role in shaping the individualized meaning of the adaptation.

\(^{29}\) As Roland Barthes styles it.
3.2 Process of Creation—Adapting from Novel to Television

In this chapter I focus specifically on the transcoding issues that rise when novels are adapted to audio visual or showing mode (cf. Hutcheon 2013, 47, 22). I will ask questions such as who adapts, how and why a novel is adapted on TV? What is the process of creating a TV adaptation? How the change in medium might affect the meaning? (Cf. Hutcheon 2013, 47, 22). I will also give examples about how Outlander TV series differs from the novel.

First, to answer who adapts, we can assume that Ron D. Moore is regarded as the primary adapter even though he works together with an enormous group of people including the director, music director/composer, costume and set designers, actors, editors and producers among others. Moore has developed and written Outlander for television and Diana Gabaldon is mentioned as a consultant.

We should also keep in mind, throughout this study, that there is a temporal and spatial shift in the creation and the reception of Outlander. Outlander was written in the 1980s and was published in 1991. The adaptation aired in 2014. It is impossible in this study to define the significance of this temporal shift because the writers’ and adaptors’ personal motives have a much larger effect to the contents of the work. Secondly, Gabaldon did not write Outlander to global audience whereas the Outlander TV series was adapted knowing that the Outlander novel is an international bestseller. These different contexts most likely affect the contents and constituent meaning of the work but I cannot reliably evaluate them in my study.

Moore describes the process of adapting Outlander as "straightforward”. He says:

It was always kind of clear what the basic structure was: Claire’s trying to get home, then she meets this guy, now she’s falling in love, now she has a conflict, will she go home. You lay it out in a very linear fashion.

Commenting on the season’s second half, which includes the capture of Jamie and his abuse, Moore says: "the show becomes more complicated and the emotional journey more wrenching”. (Wilkinson 2015, Outlander First Look.) What by definition is adapted, when we
write virtually any text, is the heterocosm, or the physical dimension, \textit{``res extensa''}, of the adapted text including the settings, characters, events and situations. What may not be adapted so well or at all, is the \textit{``res cognitas''} or the space of mind. (Hutcheon 2013, 14). For example in \textit{Outlander}, Claire’s space of mind is portrayed by voice-over but mainly by visual cues, which may not translate as well as in the telling mode of the novel.

The \textit{Outlander (TV)} doesn’t follow the chronological order of events unlike the novel. There can be many reasons to this. The new audience needs to be informed and reminded in a different way than the readers of the novel. Main reason is to keep the audiences’ interest high. In the beginning of episode 7, \textit{The Wedding}, there is a flashback to Claire and Frank’s wedding. Then we move on to the steamy post-wedding scenes of Jamie and Claire. Then we skip back to the wedding ceremony recalled by Jamie and Claire. In effect we are shown, in some sense, sex before marriage, unlike in the novel. The TV series in this sense breaks one more convention of romance that was not broken by Gabaldon.

Focusing more closely on television (or visual) adaptation theory, how is the transition from telling to showing mode done? For instance, the showing mode allows certain visual dramatizations in the TV series that the adaptors do not want to spare the audience from. In the novel Jamie tells Claire that the baby she and Geillis heard in the woods alone, left to fairies, is dead. (O, 498.) Claire never sees the baby because Jamie finds Claire first. In the show Jamie finds Claire weeping on the hill, a dead baby in her arms. Cardwell (2002, 87) writes that television programs are very often performative. What the audience experiences is a performance by actors, recorded by the cameras and also the transmission is a sort of performance which invites the audience to imagine. Novels, however, try to convince us to immerse ourselves in imagining the actuality of the events in the text before us. (Cardwell 2002, 88.) The showing mode enables the depiction of the startling similarity between Frank and Jack Randall. The showing mode may also intensify the grotesque scenes involving Jack Randall since the freedom of imagination is no longer with the reader but the viewer must see the details uncensored by one’s imagination.

\footnote{See also Evans 2011, 4-5.}
Television series usually have an opening theme or intro. This sequence functions as a pathway to immersion and tuning to the right atmosphere. A book cover has a similar function in novels but I dare say that the effect is greater when both aural and visual elements are combined. *Outlander* depicts Scottish highland landscapes while playing a Scottish tune, The Skye Boat Song, recalling the escape of Prince Charles Edward Stuart (Bonnie Prince Charlie) from Uist to the Isle of Skye after his defeat at the Battle of Culloden in 1746.

There are some obvious changes made to the novel when it is adapted onto the screen. The first episode is enriched with depicting Claire as a nurse on the battlefield just at the end of World War II. The English flags emphasize the fact that Claire is to be an outlander and enemy in Scotland. The victory celebrations contrast with the cruelty of war evident also in the bloody appearance of Claire. (See appendix: screen capture 1) In the novel Claire’s past occupation as a nurse is only mentioned and her interest with botomy is in the central focus. In effect the TV series appear to be more strongly anti-war and seem to emphasize the political tension between England and Scotland via the depiction of the celebratory English soldiers.

Because *Outlander* is adapted from ‘low’ culture to ‘low’ culture; from popular to popular, there are no major changes to, for instance, the structure. The common popular novel (and TV) gimmicks such as cliffhangers are still used and structure remains chronological and clear despite the added flashback in the beginning. (Cf. Sanders 2016, 153.) Both *Outlanders*, like is typical to romance genre, progress from one episode to another and use what Frye calls, “and then -narrative” instead of “hence-narrative”. Latter aims to explain why something happens where are former merely shows what happens. (Frye 1976, 47). The rhythm in the TV adaptation, however, is modified. The TV show has a relatively fast pace, temporal jumps, cuts, add-ons, and different beginnings and endings. This means that the TV adaptation doesn’t follow the book chapters slavishly.

The TV series has its own form and esthetics. The showing mode means that we can no longer hear (for most of the time) what Claire is thinking but we must infer it from her facial expressions and actions. The adapter might also create clumsy conversations between the characters in order to convey the character's thoughts. This has clumsiness had been, in my
opinion, avoided in *Outlander*. However, what is almost an inevitable consequence of showing mode is that there is an increased amount of the relative action and a decrease in the inner narrative.

Despite the challenge imposed by the change in medium, *Outlander* (novel) has a clear structure and narrative, which makes it relatively easy to adapt as a film. Events progress linearly and narrative is mostly conveyed from Claire’s perspective excluding episode nine which is written from Jamie’s point of view and focuses on the life changing decisions he has to make. In the beginning of the episode we see a blonde woman walking in the background, unrecognizable. The woman may be in fact Laoghaire, alluding to the future marriage of Jamie and her. This scene is clearly a teaser especially to the knowing audience. This opening is well suited because the whole episode is told from Jamie’s point of view. The shift to Jamie’s point of view also makes it possible to show the political events in a more engaging way because audience sees the events unfolding right in front of their eyes. We also get a better idea about Jamie and Laoghaire’s relationship. Jamie still holds some sort of feeling of responsibility towards Laoghaire and we see how his conflicts with Claire wear him down. Jamie’s decision to convince Colum to give back the collected gold for the Jacobite cause contributes to the events at Culloden and the death of thousands of Scots. A second decision Jamie makes is that he pledges loyalty to Claire. He steps down from the higher position as a husband, to an equal partner.

When a novel is adapted on TV, a wider narration is created. (Cf. Sanders 2016, 61.) In addition to the full episode that Jamie is granted, Frank, for example, enters the story in a whole new way. The adapters have offered a new perspective via “adding more Frank” to the story. In the novel Frank is only talked about from Claire’s point of view and is not actually heard or seen. In the TV series Frank is part of the narration in a whole new way. There is for example a breathtaking scene in episode 8 where Claire finds herself near Craigh Na Dun, and starts to rush towards the stone circles. Simultaneously and still 200 years in the future Frank is running towards the circles as well, shouting Claire’s name. Claire hears him, and calls his name back. The scene is disturbed by redcoats who capture Claire. On the other side Frank’s hopes are quickly suppressed by his factual historian’s nature, denouncing the inconceivable experience.
as a delusion. Frank gathers viewers’ sympathies in a totally different way in the TV show than in the novel and Claire appears to be less indifferent towards her modern husband.

In addition to rethinking structure and narration, there is also a challenge for TV adapters to create the things that are not described in the novel. The adapters need to fill in some of these gaps for the reader. The TV adapters also create gaps in adaptations for the audiences to fill in (Hutcheon 2013, 121). The TV audience needs to create a sufficient reading based on the material offered by the adapters. I, for instance, understood that the car accident that Claire compared the time travel experience to, was the same where her parents died when she was five. In the TV adaptation, however, Claire is depicted as a grown woman sitting in the backseat. Thus, the audience might not recognize the connection of these two events. It benefits the adapters to challenge the audience because gaps awaken audience’s interest and lead them (Vacklin 2015, 205). 

Outlander does spell out quite minutely the progression of events or Claire’s thoughts which is most likely due to the need to refer to the novel. There has been some critique over the extensive use of voice-over in Outlander with people saying that they can understand the progression of events even if Claire wasn’t spelling them out in every turn. As a fan, however, it is nice to hear Claire’s voice which creates a feeling of meeting an old friend again.

The topic of fandom leads me to the next question: why adapt? Hutcheon (2013, 85-95) lists four reasons: the economic lures, the legal constraints, cultural capital and personal and political motives. We can speculate that perhaps the most powerful incentive for adapting Outlander has been the “economic lures”, the hope for profiting from the existing fan base and the successful story. This financial attraction holds true for most adaptations today including the Game of Thrones.

The other reason for adapting according to Hutcheon is the legal constraints which have a strong influence over whether or not something gets adapted. For example Finding Fraser could be called an appropriation in a loose sense. The contents, however, are different from Outlander to such extent that legally it is not considered an adaptation. If there was no
copyright law, would *Outlander* have hundreds of successful adaptations already? At least there has been volunteer adapters but Gabaldon has not been always willing to sell the options to the willing.

The third incentive is the cultural capital. This means the adaptation of a culturally significant work, often a novel or play, into a popular form. These more easily accessible popular forms are often used in education and include thus also the economic lure to adapt. However, like we have established, *Outlander* is traditionally considered a low culture work which is adapted to another low culture form, the TV.

Lastly there are the miscellaneous bunch of personal reasons to adapt. These are especially difficult to evaluate without a direct statement from the adapter. Luckily Moore has opened up about why he decided to adapt *Outlander*. He has stated that his wife is a huge *Outlander* fan and that after he got to know the work he was drawn to the strong female characters. The political aims are much harder to define although wanting to depict strong female characters may be considered a political aim. Unfortunately Jenny doesn’t actually grab Jamie from the bollocks, just threatens to, unlike in the novel. There is also the evident Scottish independence movement and “redcoats” allusion. Whether or not we want to focus on the intentions of the authors or the effect of the work itself is outside the contents of my thesis but nevertheless an interesting question regarding future studies of *Outlander*.

### 3.3 Process of Reception—Text of Pleasure

Jim Collins notes that we should study the pleasure adaptations give even to the unknowing audience. I will lightly touch on this subject but will focus on the knowing audience’s pleasure as was established earlier. The reason why adaptation studies examine the faithfulness of an adaptation is because it is directly linked to the reading experience. What I want to find out

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31 It already has thousands illegal adaptations called fan fiction but fan fiction cannot be used for profit and thus might not be defined as “successful”.
was why certain elements of an adaptation are pleasurable and why. Ronald Barthes’ ideas about the text of pleasure seems to give some answer to this question. (Cf. Sanders 2016, 28-29.)

Before we go any deeper into examining how on adaptation is experienced, we need to define the receiver. Is the audience same for both the Outlander novel and the TV series? Bluestone and Einstein believe that the audience for novel and TV are similar. (Cardwell 2002, 50.) Because TV shows are more easily accessible today they have a wider audience than literature. Also the figurative element they contain, as mentioned by Barthes, may explain why TV shows are more popular compared to books. The figurative nature of TV shows will be discussed later in this chapter. The context for creating an adaptation is highly commercial as we have discussed in the previous chapter and the receiver is primarily a consumer. When a successful novel series is adapted on TV, it is probably safe to assume that creators wish to appeal to the existing audience as well as reach new audiences. This offers one explanation as to why the adapters of Outlander emphasize the source text advertising and even in the adaptation itself. (Cf. Cardwell 2002, 50, Hutcheon 2013.)

Bloom believes that writers and readers refuse to accept that everything is already written and read, as was stated in anxiety of influence theory, and instead they keep on writing (or re-writing) and (mis-)reading. Consequently, because of this idea of ‘misreading’ we do not just re-read Outlander as something re-written but we read Outlander as if it has a meaning which has not been written before. Allen (2011, 133) writes: “The combination of rhetorical and psychoanalytical approach to intertextuality is Bloom’s particular contribution to contemporary literary theory’s movement beyond the study of literary texts as if they alone contained meaning.” (Cf. Allen 2011, 132-38.) So the knowing audience balances between re-reading and re-creating the meaning of Outlander.

Hutcheon (2013, 114) describes the pleasures of adaptation:

“Think of a child’s delight in hearing the same nursery rhymes or reading the same books over and over. Like ritual, this kind of repetition brings comfort, a fuller understanding, and the confidence that comes with the sense of knowing what is about to happen next.” (Hutcheon 2013, 115.)
The differences in adaptations compared to the source text also generates pleasure by being “fresh”. A conservative adaptation brings comfort that “lies in the simple act of almost but not quite repeating, in the revisiting of a theme with variations.” (Hutcheon 2013, 115.)

Should we value adaptations based on sales volume, the prices they win or based on the fidelity to the source text? Bluestone, one of the most influential adaptation theorists, urges scholars to ask: “Is it a good film?” He indicates that adaptations should be regarded as separate entities from their source text. I don’t find Bluestone’s question particularly relevant in adaptation studies and neither does he if we examine his actual research. As we have established, adaptations are intertextual by definition, and we cannot look at adaptations separate from their source text. Bluestone’s theory and methodology seem incongruent as he specifically highlights the differences between the subjects of study. Bluestone also writes that “only basic ‘events’ in a novel can be re-presented on screen.” (Cardwell 2002, 45-6.) I believe that much more can be done with sound effects, talented actors and visual elements and others as will be discussed later in the analysis. Having said that, accuracy of re-presentation shouldn’t be in my opinion the goal of an adaptation: adaptation should add something to the experience of watching an adaptation. Via this addition of an *writerly* (*scriptible*) element, which allows reader to create the meaning for the novel, audience should be able to achieve a state of bliss instead of mere pleasure of knowing what is ahead (cf. Allen 2011, 87, 88, 221-2).

Incorporating also Bathes’ ideas of the *text of pleasure* and *jouissance*, I will next consider the pleasure of adaptations and what constitutes a blissful adaptation.

The reason I chose to do a comparative study lies in the ideas of a poststructuralist literary theorist Roland Barthes (1915-1980): the text of pleasure (*plaisir*) and the text of bliss (*jouissance*). A faithful adaptation creates pleasure in the audience, but adaptation that successfully breaks the audience’s expectations has the potential of being a blissful experience. Barthes (1975, 47-8) writes:

> Of all readings, that of tragedy is the most perverse: I take pleasure in hearing myself tell a story whose end I know: I know and I don't know, I act toward myself as though I did not know: I know perfectly Oedipus will be unmasked, that Danton will be guillotined, but all the same . . . Compared to a dramatic story, which is one whose outcome is unknown, there is here an effacement of pleasure and a progression of bliss.
(today, in mass culture, there is an enormous consumption of "dramatics" and little bliss).

What Barthes calls a “figure of the text” is necessary to the bliss of reading. Barthes states: “the film will always be figurative.” (Barthes 1975, 56.) His statement suggests that TV shows are popular because they entail an element of bliss. The showing mode not only invites the audience to imagine, but seduces us. Different figurative elements in *Outlander* are, for instance, the author’s appearance in the text and a viewer’s desire towards a character in it (in fleeting impulses). The text of bliss is very temporary and once it is understood, one must go on to something else (Cf. Barthes 1975, 52-3.)

For the *knowing audience* an adaptation can be very much familiar and predictable, or something delighting and surprising or even irritating (cf. Hutcheon 2013, 22). Hutcheon has remarked that there’s pleasure both in knowing what is going to happen as well as not knowing. John Ellis writes (in Sanders 2016, 33) that the pleasure of experiencing an adaptation is directly connected to memory in a form of prolonging and extending pleasure. The pleasure is not only connected to expectation, but to surprise also (cf. Sanders 2016, 34; Hutcheon 2013, 114.) Thus, if we watch a familiar and predictable adaptation such as *Outlander*, we get this sense of pleasure. If the adaptation is surprising it engages us, maybe even to the point of irritation.

Adaptation can offer new points of entry to the unknowing audience (Sanders 2016, 173). These points of entry, are references to the *Outlander* tradition and include the cameo by Gabaldon. These references definitely engage the knowing audience but whether or not they invite the unknowing audience to read the novels is questionable. A completely oblivious reader might not recognize Gabaldon and may think that the scene is just random and odd. To the knowing audience, the cameo functions as a confirmation of the authorial position of Gabaldon.

Hutcheon’s idea of comfort and Sander’s idea of a creative participant support Barthes’ theory about the *readerly (lisible)* and writerly * (scriptible)* text, the text of pleasure and bliss (or
A blissful text has, what Barthes calls *tmesis*, a source or figure of pleasure, somethings that is not read. Another element is the *brio* of a text, its will to bliss. Barthes is not sure himself how the *brio* of a text is constituted. This is partly due to the indefinite nature of the bliss that *brio* creates: “Pleasure can be expressed in words, bliss cannot.” (Barthes 1975, 21.) However, the pleasure of the text is born from the variation between reading and not reading. In the case of adaptation, being faithful and occasionally straying from the source text and surprising the viewer creates pleasure beyond pleasure. To be this kind of *writerly text*, it can: “[...] if it wants, attack the canonical structures of the language itself.” The *Outlander* novel does not go so far but the adaptation in fact does in a way attack the source text in the process of transmutation and these elements make the text more *writerly* and blissful. There are many more radical examples of an adaptation appropriating the source text into almost a completely unrecognizably different work. In these cases a fan may be furious, but despite the negative response, bliss has been created. Bliss may not always be pleasurable.

In chapter four I will compare both versions of *Outlander* and evaluate the possible pleasures the adaptation generates to the knowing audience. I will evaluate whether the adaptation has been conservatively faithful, creating comfort to the audience, or whether the adaptation has taken a step further, creating a *writerly text* and challenging the audience to take part in the writing process. According to Barthes, intertext is a *circular memory*:

“[T]he impossibility of living outside the infinite text—whether this text be Proust or the daily newspaper or the television screen: the book creates the meaning, the meaning creates life.” (Barthes 1975, 36.)

**3.4 CULTURAL MEMES AND TRANSCULTURAL ADAPTATION**

In addition to obvious events in the story also myths can be adapted. Myths function as expectation builders and can be used in evoking a certain audience response and a certain meaning in a short amount of time. (Sanders 2016, 80-104.) *Outlander* novel also is an appropriation: a remake of a fairy tale, or more specifically a Celtic myth, involving time

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32 I use Barthes’ terms loosely, appropriating them to adaptation theory.
travel. These tales and myths can be grouped together under the term \textit{meme}, which was first theorized by evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins (1941- ). The Oxford Dictionary definition for memes is: “An element of a culture or system of behaviour passed from one individual to another by imitation or other non-genetic means.” ‘The Cultural Meme’ is a concept first used by Dawkins in his book \textit{The Selfish Gene} (1976) (Hutcheon 2013, 32-33, 167, 176-177, 206). Dawkins describes memes as “units of cultural transmission or units of imitation [... ] that, like genes, are ‘replicators’”. However, unlike genes, memes change in transmission, for they need to adapt to the new environment like viruses. Meme’s are the ideas or stories that translate from one medium to another and from one culture to another. The most central feature of memes is that they have the potential of spreading very quickly and accurately to a wide area. Fashion booms would be one form of memes today and myths spreading via literature and other forms of art is just another example.

People have a varying ability to spread memes. A successful writer would be a more efficient meme spreader compared to a person who is in contact with a limited number of people. The fact that memes get adapted in the process of rewriting reminds us that: “there is no such thing as an autonomous text or an original genius that can transcend history, either public or private.” Even though some people are more effective meme spreaders it does not mean that they are the original genius that the romantics try to find. Despite the limited impact of the author “the traces of the storyteller cling to the story the way the handprints of the potter cling to the clay vessel” (quoted in Hutcheon 2013, 111). Shakespeare was not free of influence and cannot be classified as an original genius like Bloom at one point wished to do. The idea of rewriting means that the idea of canon is jeopardized. Due to the immense amount of information in our society and due to the fact that memes evolve more often than are created it is very unlikely to find a large group of people who have read the same exact texts and are familiar with a certain canon. Even though there is a clear attempt to maintain the canon, it will most likely crumble down bit by bit. What are appropriated though, if not the canon, are the mythologies; the myth of romantic love, God and sexuality. And myths are adapted to a certain type of consumption.

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33 For those interested in the Celtic culture, see e.g \textit{Legend and The Celtic World} (1996) and \textit{Dictionary of Celtic Myth} (1997) by Miranda J. Green.
Adaptations are more or less created to the consumers. What gets adapted is a result of the “culture industry”, mass media and capitalism, which end up shaping the canon (Sanders 2016, 174-175). The convenient myths, memes, themes and stories are passed on vertically and spread horizontally. I see memes as elements of the story rather than as whole stories. When these elements or conventions are added together, they build, within time, a whole distinct genre such as romance. These elements include narrative, character types, stock situations and other “stock kit items” or standard parts and can be transmitted in adaptation (Cf. Hughes 1993, 13). Meme still stands for a larger concept and perhaps the ‘cultural meme’ could be the often mentioned “spirit” or “essence” of the adapted text.

The idea of transcultural adaptation takes into account all the cultural elements (or context) that condition meaning (Hutcheon 2013, 145). Closely connected to the transcultural adaptation and translation is the mechanical translation itself. In fact every translation can be considered an adaptation. Sometimes, due to spatial politics, content is appropriated in the process of translation like in the case of *Cross Stitch*. Another big variable is the temporal politics that *Outlander* is affected by even though Gabaldon denies any political influences on her text. She has had feedback from queer right “activists”, feminists and anti-racism people. Postmodernism is the context that we live in, in it all variety and none of its elements cannot be dismissed in analysis. What Gabaldon seems to do though, is resist all of these temporal politics and focus solely on the literal. This lack of political and social responsibility will be considered in chapter 4.1.

Similar to cultural memes are myths and archetypes that are in some contexts even called universal. Themes surrounding these myths can be for example love, death, family and revenge. *Outlander* seems to focus mainly on love and its byproduct, jealousy. Other themes, like family, come in later parts. How should we label the commonly circulating themes that *Outlander* is built upon? Memes, myth, legend, folklore or fairy tale? (Sanders 2016, 105.) Could Gabaldon be critically re-evaluating the popular genres of romance, speculative fiction and historical novel? In the beginning of my study I thought that probably not. Not at least consciously, because Gabaldon was writing a practice novel which she never intended to get
published. However, some deviations from the genre conventions can be seen and has been mentioned by Gabaldon herself. One of the most prominent break of romance conventions is the depiction of marriage instead of courtship (in which the story ends in marriage). In chapter four I will examine the ‘heritage’ of Outlander novel that is evident in the TV-adaptation. What is the relationship between the Outlander texts? How do both Outlander works convey and handle the themes of time-travel, religion, romance and sexuality?

4 NUDITY! ROMANCE! TIME TRAVEL! PAGAN WITCHES! HUNKY SCOTS! MEMES IN OUTLANDER

So what is Outlander conveying besides the obvious: nudity, romance, time travel pagan witches and hunky scots? I have decided to examine four themes that mostly are related to the topic mentioned in the heading: time travel, religion, romance and sexuality. This examination is challenging because the audience’s initial knowledge may vary greatly and thus we cannot assume a certain ‘canon’ that the readers presumably rely on when they create an interpretation of a certain text. What is possible to study though, are the complex relationships between the reader and the text. Researchers capture the first encounters and trace readings and build ‘diaries of critical encounter’ that follow. Mapping out the encounters with different texts help us understand the influences that form our reading. Expanding this highly subjective study into global level like Sanders (2016, 127) suggests, is an enormous challenge. My study is limited to my own observations which, I will assume, are to some extent general.

The cultural memes I intend to address are by definition shared and familiar. However, it is most likely that not each member of the audience is familiar with time travel genre. Some members of audience watching Outlander may think about Doctor Who instantly and some may not never notice this intertextual connection. Similarly, and most certainly, there are differences in understanding the sexual memes present in Outlander. Heterosexual romance may not resonate in a same way in homosexual audience as it resonates in the heterosexual

34 The obvious being stated in the heading, graciously combined by Dekel, J. (2014, Aug 21) in his article Great scot; after two decades, author Diana Gabaldon and director Ronald D. Moore bring Outlander to the small screen.
I mentioned before that myths are appropriated to a certain type of consumption which in the case of *Outlander* is associated with (mostly) heterosexual female TV audience, watching the series in 2014. However, to some extent, the memes are in fact global. Heterosexual love, for instance, is shared over country borders. I will in this chapter examine how these different memes, sometimes limited in audience and sometimes global, translate in adaptation and how the spatial and temporal changes may affect interpretation. First, however, I will discuss Gabaldon’s intent as a writer and how she expects her stories to be read.

### 4.1 It is Just a Story—Authorial Intention

I’m a storyteller, and it is my job to tell the story of these people, keeping faith with my characters, to the best of my ability. Nothing more. (OC, 415.)

Gabaldon seems to turn away from the idea that literature is always politically charged. Even though she writes about a political confrontation between Scottish Jacobites and the English royalists she doesn’t believe that her texts could be regarded as politically influential. Gabaldon argues regarding the politicality of her texts:

> It is not the business of a novelist to pursue political agendas. Still less is it the business of a historical novelist to pursue modern political agendas. It deprives the reader of any sense of perspective or notion of social ambiguity, and reinforces a smug, narrow-minded belief in the self-righteousness of modern Western cultural values that is highly detrimental to the evolution of thought or values. (OC, 412.)

Expanding Brax’s idea about the unavoidability of claiming something when choosing to write in a specific genre, say romance, Gabaldon ends up making claims about the political situation, acceptability of domestic violence and other “western cultural values”. Historical novel also always tells us something about the time when it was written whether or not there is a modern hero thrown back two-hundred years in time. What a novelist does when choosing to write a
historical novel, is to choose to contrast the ‘past’ and ‘present’, using the distance to confirm attitudes and highlighting readers hopes and fears. (Hughes 1993, 1.) Gabaldon deliberately renounces and resists the idea of being politically correct or active as a writer. The effect, however, is that readers still read according to their own sets of references and still create certain meanings based on the text and gather new pieces of ideas, information and values to those sets. According to this logic, Gabaldon holds no responsibility in what she writes or how she might be read:

Any reader brings his or her own experience to a book, and consequently, perceptions will differ. That being so, I cannot possibly write with the possibility of multiple hyper-sensitivities in mind. Such an approach—seeking above all to offend no one, or to adhere to some standard of political correctness—results in blandness and mediocrity. (OC, 415.)

Gabaldon also goes through the trouble of mentioning that she does not write from any “political position”:

I took some pains to make sure she [Claire] didn’t appear as the “standard” heroine in Outlander, including the historically accurate [...] appreciation for a well-endowed rear. I didn’t do so out of any political position on what women ought to look like; merely out of contrariness (having read way too many novels with eighteen-year-old slender heroines), and with urge to make Claire as believable and human as possible. (OC, 413.)

The stories Gabaldon writes defy conventions before her, as well as the cultural norms and pressures around her. However, she certainly does not claim to be immune to influences. Without acknowledging the force of influence, she could not be able to resist them. Some, however, might get past her. In Outlandish Companion Gabaldon wonders why she depicted a Chinese character in Voyager (1993) as stereotypically short: “Was it truly the result of negative cultural stereotyping? (It could be; one doesn’t usually recognize one’s own biases [...]”). (OC, 417.) The fact that Gabaldon writes about a short Chinese man who is addicted to sex doesn’t mean according to Gabaldon that she enforces a stereotype. She doesn’t like the way it is considered politically correct to describe a Chinese man as tall even though his height is irrelevant. In the same way, however, there is no reason for Gabaldon to describe the

35 Concerning a letter from a reader who believes that Claire appears to have an eating disorder.
Chinese man as short either. The fact that there are both short and tall Chinese men means that a writer has to, inevitably, make a political choice. She has to either enforce an image of tall Chinese men, short Chinese men or decide to make no statements at all. However, Gabaldon (OC, 417) does mention a “novelistic intent”, which was to emphasize Mr. Willoughby’s relatively helpless situation in a strange culture via his height. Gabaldon does not let the social standards affect the way she writes: the center of her focus are the characters that live within her and who — she feels like — must be written down as accurately as possible.

Next I will attempt to make a politically charged analysis of this, according to Gabaldon, politically discharged novel. I say that my analysis is politically charged because, as a reader, I have my own political perceptions. I suggest that there is some political and social relevance in how the characters and their relationship with one another is depicted. If we accept that Outlander is just a story about Claire, Jamie and the other characters in 18th century Scotland, we cannot analyze it as a text, for text is created in collaboration with the writer and the reader. In order for Gabaldon to resist conventions she has to accept their existence. The depiction of young heroines in adventure stories is a convention which is similar to stereotypes. Gabaldon however refuses to admit that her novels enforce certain stereotypes. According to Gabaldon, the depiction of Chinese men as short is not stereotypical because, according to normal distribution, some Chinese men truly are short (OC, 416). Perhaps Outlander becomes politically charged only during the process of reception, making it in this sense a writerly text—a text that forces the reader to produce meanings which are inevitably other than final or "authorized." If Outlander is a writerly text like I suggest, there can be very few or no identical interpretations based on the text.

4.2 Time Travel: “What if your future was the past?”

It’s all Claire Beauchamp’s fault. If she hadn’t refused to shut up and talk like an eighteenth-century woman, these would have been perfectly straightforward historical novels. (OC, 341.)
Gabaldon wanted to write an easy historical novel for practice but ended up writing a sci-fi fantasy historical romance novel. This happened just because the main character “wouldn’t cooperate” and Gabaldon ended up allowing a modern woman into her historical novel: “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.” (OC, 377.)

Gabaldon formulated a relatively believable theory for Claire’s time travel experience. Firstly, the stone circles mark the place of passage and only some people, due to genetics, are able to time travel. (OC, 341.) Time travel is thus a force of nature. This theme fits well the conventions of romance genre. The Loch Ness monster also expresses the force of nature: apparently there is a time-gate under the loch through which various creatures come and go. In Outlander novel the Loch Ness monster Claire sees is actually a plesiosaur but this scene is omitted from the TV show. Magic and the supernatural in Outlander TV series has been limited as the production team seems to orientate towards realism, even though Outlander is a fantasy novel.

The time-travel aspect alters the meaning of the novel and TV series considerably. Gabaldon may have added time travel to the story for convenience’s sake but ends up highlighting the female position in the 18th century in a critical way. Whether or not this was accidental cannot be said for sure but Obey believes that the critical meanings Outlander conveys are in fact carefully considered. (Obey 2002, 161.) Gabaldon explains why she chose to begin the book from the 1940s:

I wanted Claire’s transition to the past to be as plausible as possible. Thus, coming from both the hardships of postwar Europe and the anthropological travels with her uncle Lamb, her adaptation to Jacobite Scotland would not be as difficult as it might be for a more modern person. (OC 377.)

It is also easier for Gabaldon to write about Claire coming back if she does not need to write about her own future which would be the case if she had written about a contemporary woman. Gabaldon is appropriating historical events and personalities in her novel. The accurate depiction enables immersion. (Sanders 2016, 177.) Gabaldon is aware of this and rigorously investigates every detail in her novels (OC). What can be done in historical novels in general
is using the historical setting as a way to criticize the present political regimes. Outlander also has been interpreted as sympathetic towards the Jacobite cause and the Scottish independence. The Scottish independence has become a more current topic since the publication of Outlander novel in 1990. Gabaldon herself hasn’t given a clear opinion on the political issues surrounding the United Kingdom, commenting that things are complicated.

Claire, as a modern woman, doesn’t approve the disrespect toward women. The audience too, because of this point of view, is forced to consider the possibility that they were suddenly thrown back to the 18th century. Even the tagline for the series says: “what if your future was the past?” A reader of a simple historical novel might be encouraged to just accept the way of time instead of criticizing it. In Outlander there is a controversial scene which invites the audience both to criticize the event and to accept it. In this scene Jamie spanks Claire because she had disobeyed him and thus jeopardized their group. Claire attempts to get back to the stone circles when she is captured by a bunch of Red Coats. Jamie and the other Scots risk their lives to save Claire from Jack Randall’s hands. Jamie feels like it is his lawful responsibility to punish Claire for disobedience via spanking. In the TV series the scene is made to appear humorous with the choice of background music but it still retains an objectionable undercurrent. It seems almost as if the production team had to lighten the scene up in effect making it discordant. Claire appears to be angry for days after the incident and the whole marriage is on the line. The unwanted appearance of Laoghaire at this time doesn’t help and Jamie is nearly seduced by the young lassie and Claire is helplessly jealous:

“There was, after all, the little scene I had witnessed in the alcove, Jamie holding the girl on his knee and kissing her ardently (I’ve held women in my arms before, his voice came back to me, and they’ve made my heart pound and my breath come short…). I found that my hands were clenched [...]” (O, 426.)

Because we cannot see inside Claire’s head (because of change in medium) the adapters must show Claire’s criticism about the attitudes towards women in the 18th century in some other way. Claire for example makes a nasty joke when every man in the group suddenly stay quiet until the subject of the joke laughs and says: “I have never heard a woman make a joke!”

Adaptors have had to shorten or cut the scenes because of the time limit. Obviously not
everything can be told when you have an 850 page brick in your hands. The lack of creative space is why I believe the advantage of time travel hasn’t been wholly utilized in the adaptation and why the meaning remains similar to normal historical romances without time travel. Instead Moore has decided to focus on the grand scenery, thrilling battle scenes and sexy scenes. In the novel the time travel element creates distance between the reader/audience and the 18th century world disabling immersion. In the TV adaptation, however, the audience is immersed in the 18th century world and for most part accepts the way of life there.

The significance of technology is minimal: humans are depicted as subordinate to nature and able merely to loan its power and fertility. This interpretation is amplified in the TV series because scenes where Claire ponders about the benefits of living in the modern world compared to living in the undeveloped highlands are cut. The novel highlights the lack of conveniences like running warm water and solid roads. The fact is emphasized that there are no methods of mass communication that could help Claire find Jamie when he has escaped from the Red Coats and disappeared.

4.2.1 “YOU ARE NOT TO JUDGE THINGS YOU DON’T UNDERSTAND”

Interestingly, Gabaldon condemns in the Outlandish Companion (343) “presentism”, a contemporary condition where one ends up judging historical times and characters by modern standards. Presentism is a result of not acknowledging the prior texts, events, or some other cultural phenomenon because it isn’t consistent with the present-day notions and thus “fails to acknowledge that any time other than the present has actually existed”. I believe Gabaldon is trying to say that we shouldn’t be ignorant about historical facts and reproach certain things just because you wouldn’t allow it nowadays. Jamie isn’t a violent sadist because he whips Claire — he does it because he is expected to. At the same time though, this obligation is contrasted with Jack Randall who actually takes pleasure in flogging Jamie and does so out of his free will and to his own pleasure. Other example comes from the witch trials. The townspeople are not obliged to burn Claire and Geillis on stake as witches, but they wish to do so. This wish may be a result of fear, superstition and lack of erudition or perhaps it is the result of the pure enjoyment and excitement of “burning the witches”, a relatively common affair before the 18th century. Thus we shouldn’t judge Jamie or even the townspeople for hurting
Claire. We should, however, judge Jack Randall because he hurts Jamie for his own amusement.

What the series does, via time travel, is that it shifts the perspective from a potential 18th century heroine to a modern heroine, who brings the “lack of perspective” to the story, inviting the reader to take this standpoint as well. Claire seems eminently disinterested in historical affairs even though she has learned her basic history from her close uncle Lamb. So what Gabaldon effectively condemns is what she also encourages in her choice of narrator.

“Presentism” is perhaps what I’m doing when I turn away from the canonical approach which finds central the canonical works and authors like the Bible or Shakespeare. Some scholars might believe that I read fictional works “out of context”. However, I believe that if a work cannot be fully interpreted without knowing the source texts (in effect producing insufficient reading), the work is not independent. Instead it is a sort of projection or appendage. What knowledge of the source text can, however do, is deepen the interpretation and reinforce it.

4.2.2 “The Gabaldon Theory”

There is a direct connection between time travel and religion, which Gabaldon clearly articulates in the Outlandish Companion: “If the past can’t be changed by the actions of time-travelers, then this implies the necessity for predestination (or post-destination, as the case may be)—that is, the basic idea that events are “fated” to occur and thus are outside the abilities of an individual to affect. [...] W]e would like to think that somebody is in charge who knows what he’s doing.” (OC, 344.) And it strongly seems like the past, indeed, cannot be changed: “A time-traveler has free choice and individual power of action; however, he or she has no more power of action than is allowed by the traveler’s personal circumstances.” Major historical events cannot be changed, however the question remains: can the past be altered? At least Geillis failed to change the failure of the Jacobite rising but at the same time Claire probably saved Jenny and her family from famine induced starvation by telling them to plant potatoes.

Another intriguing time-travel trivia is that in the “Gabaldon theory” of time-travel, one
character can exist only once within one time. This assumption of nonsimultaneousness means that it is important to be able to control where (or when) in time you go: “[I]f a character tried to exist in a time in which he or she already exist(s/ed), the result should be disaster or displacement of both.” (OC 347.) The time-travel theme is explored more deeply in the other parts of the *Outlander* series. As far as *Outlander* goes, we know that time-travel is somehow connected to the stones and that it is possible to travel back. But is the entity pulling strings an author or some higher power? In postmodern terms Gabaldon as an author comes out and claims responsibility at the same time acknowledging that some people like to believe to the existence of a higher power: “[B]ut as I said, we do like to feel sometimes that someone is in charge. (Foot note: In this case, it’s the author.)” (OC 347.)

4.3 RELIGION

Religion as an institution intrigue scholars across different scientific branches.36 A professor in parapsychology, Susan Blackmore, discusses the topic of religion as a memeplex, or a ‘coadapted meme complex’ in her book *The Meme Machine* (1999). A memeplex is a “group of memes that are replicated together” (Blackmore 1999, 19). “The essence of any memeplex”, Blackmore (1999, 20) writes, “is that the memes inside it can replicate better as part of the group than they can on their own.” Some examples in addition to different religions would include a post circulating on Facebook promising a free shopping spree at some store if you share the particular post with your friends. “Share this post” wouldn’t get circulated on its own but accompanied with “win a free shopping spree” it might get thousands of shares. Often times the post is fake and no price ever did exist but hopeful social network users still share the post and thus the meme is spread. A religion functions in a much larger scale. If we consider Catholicism we have the omnipotent God and Jesus who has died for the sakes of our sins and whose flesh and blood we consume at Eucharist. The idea by itself might not be enough to survive as a meme but when we add to it the threat of hell and the promise for heaven we have a incredibly vital meme that has been adapted both linearly and horizontally for thousands of

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years. The *Outlander* novel continues the spread of this memeplex called Christianity while the TV series transmits a more irrelevant or even critical image of Christianity. Why this meme is passed on mutated? What could be the significance of a single TV series be in a world full of countless other channels for the meme to get passed on? (Copying-the-product (significance of a ‘mistake’ is large vs. copying-the-instructions (one ‘mistake’ corrected by the second adapter))(Blackmore, xi) Next I will examine more closely the depiction of Christianity in *Outlander* and try to give the best possible answer to these questions.

The TV shows way of depicting religion is condensed in the part where Jamie and Claire have escaped the Wentworth prison. In the novel they quickly escape to France while Jamie is still seriously injured and suffers from nausea. In the TV show, however, they stay in an English monastery and leave to France only after Jamie has somewhat healed from his injuries. During their stay in the monastery Claire decides to know what actually happened between Randall and Jamie. Rather than focusing on conversations like the novel does, *Outlander* series show the events directly to the viewer. Gabaldon contrasts the novel and the TV show: “[In the novel Jamie is] telling very vivid, horrifying little details, but it still doesn't have quite the impact of seeing those little vivid horrifying details. Imagine how boring a scene [would be] where the camera comes in, and it is focused on their faces as he is brokenly spilling these little bits to her. If you aren't seeing anything but their faces for 15 minutes, you'd be bored. The way they did it is much more effective in terms of the visual medium.” (*Outlander* Author Diana Gabaldon on the Season-One Finale, and What Changes to the Book Were Hard to Swallow)

Jamie is in a dark place, wavering between depression and salvation. He says: “You canna save a man that doesna want saving.” (*Outlander* S01E16.)

Father Anselm takes the worried and exhausted Claire to the chapel to rest. In the chapel Claire is deep in her own thoughts, thinking that Father Anselm is sitting right behind her. After some time Father Anselm appears and Claire asks surprised:

‘You left?’ I said, once outside the chapel. ‘But I thought you weren’t supposed to leave the, er, the Sacrament, alone?’

He smiled tranquilly. ‘I didn’t, ma chère. You were there.’
I repressed the urge to argue that I didn’t count. After all, I supposed, there was no such thing as a Qualified Official Adorer. You only had to be human, and I imagined I was still that, though I barely felt it at times. (O, 788.)

The way this scene was reconstructed in the adaptation has caused discord between Gabaldon and Moore and some fans also have been disappointed, feeling that the scene was watered down: “One thing they did not do in the finale at the start that I felt was a considerable loss was Claire's interview with Father Anselm in the chapel. I spoke to Ron about it. Claire's spirituality here is important. I am a Roman Catholic, and most of the people involved in making the show are not religious and are not sensitive to those sorts of things.” (Outlander Author Diana Gabaldon on the Season-One Finale, and What Changes to the Book Were Hard to Swallow)

The religiousness of the end-part of the novel contrasts with the atheism of the beginning of the novel. Claire is a very down to earth kind of person, who was raised by her atheist uncle, baptized nonetheless. In the chapel Father Anselm and Claire discuss religion:

‘You are not Catholic?’ he asked in a surprise. ‘Ah, but I forgot, you are English. So of course, I suppose you would be Protestant.’ ‘I’m not sure that I’m either one in terms of belief,’ I said. ‘But technically, at least, I suppose I’m Catholic.’ (…) ‘- - I suppose I’m rather a heathen.’ (O, 780.)

Claire doesn’t hesitate to say God’s name when cursing, in fact, her favorite curse is: Jesus H. Roosevelt Christ. She has a very practical attitude towards life. However, the hardships she faces and the kindness that Father Anselm shows her and Jamie enforce her belief in God.

Later Claire want’s to thank Father Anselm for taking her to the chapel:

’It was . . . restful,’ I said, struggling to find the right word. He nodded, watching me. ‘Oui, madame. It is.’ As I turned to go, he said, ‘I told you that the Blessed Sacrament was not alone, for you were there. But what of you, ma chère? Were you alone?’ I stopped, and looked at him for a moment before answering. ‘No’, I said. ‘I wasn’t.’ (O, 788.)
In the adaptation this conversation is summed up in a brief: “Were you indeed alone?” Claire doesn’t reply. Claire then confesses that she is from the future, and married to two men whom she has brought great suffering upon. Having told everything, Claire is then blessed. Confessing her true identity is one of the most important plot elements in romance, and how it was quickly handled in the adaptation which might frustrate some knowing readers.

There are also changes in how the relationship between Claire and Father Bain is portrayed, the adaptation emphasizing the antagonist nature of Father Bain. Antagonism is defined as an opposite force to the hero’s endeavor in the story. Father Bain (Tim McInnerny) is a Cranesmuir priest who is in the adaptation very tall, bold and intimidating. Father Bain is depicted as evil and manipulative in order to build more suspense in the story via the antagonist/protagonist relationship. Claire works diligently as the MacKenzie clan’s healer hoping to gain their trust and perhaps be set free. When Mrs. Fitzgibbons' nephew falls ill Claire visits him to see if she can help. The locals believe that the illness is actually demonic possession because Father Bain has told them so. In the novel Jamie explains to Claire the extent of social power Father Bain holds in his hands: “[T]hey [the townspeople] hear no more of the world than what Father Bain tells them.” (O, 499) In the TV series Claire comes into conflict with Father Bain who has been performing an exorcism to rid the boy of his evil spirits. When Claire determines that the boy has been poisoned, she administers a cure but also makes an enemy of the priest. The priest is seen again as a witness at the witch trial where he manipulates the townspeople to accuse Claire of witchcraft. The whole exorcism scene is absent from the novel and the novel does not exploit this antagonist relationship between Claire and Father Bain. Instead it describes Father Bain as a religiously responsible man and having a thirst for justice which often manifests in the form of punishment. He appears to be a comical character:

[…] [S]uppressing a smile at the spectacle the fat little priest presented, soutane flapping and argyle socks revealed. At the best of times, Father Bain’s face resembled a clenched fist.” (O, 468.)

In the novel Claire and Father Bain meet in several displeasing situations. Claire witnesses a scene where dogs attack Father Bain. When Claire proposes that she tends to the wound in his
leg, Father Bain sharply refuses saying: “What, a man o’ God to expose his pairsonal parts to the handling of a wumman? [...] [S]uch’ll no be tolerated here [...]!” (O, 468.) Father Bain used Claire’s assumption that the wound might fester if not treated later as evidence of her witchcraft.

The temporal difference in this case might have some effect to the role of religion. Greater significance however is the adapters own personal background and objective. In the novel, religion is an important part of the climax of the story. The novel uses an almost literal *deus ex machina*, intervention by God, to move the story forward. God gives Claire the strength to save Jamie from his apathy inducing trauma. Claire is a smart and educated woman who does not spend too much time thinking about supernatural phenomena. Although she is baptized as a Christian, she considers herself more as an agnostic. The whole journey and things she has been through seem to have only one explanation, which is divine plan. This aspect doesn’t come through as strongly in the adaptation even though Claire does eventually seek some explanation to the events that have occurred. Being meant to be together with Jamie is the most vital explanation that Claire gives to the whole phenomena and it goes hand in hand with religion: God has destined us to meet certain people in our lives.

4.4 Geillis—The Pagan Witch

“Looks like I’m going to a fucking barbecue”, Geillis says when she decides to sacrifice herself so that she and Claire both do not need to burn as witches. Geillis, similar to Claire, is also a time-traveler and has traveled through the stones from the year 1968. Geillis as a character represents modern capitalist ideals, which could be thought as the second religion is *Outlander*. Geillis represents the 1960s hippie culture and the refinding of botanical cures and the power of nature. Going back in time is an escape from the modern issues but the capitalist ideals follow her.

There are some subtle differences between the TV series and the novel. Both in the novel and
in the TV show Geillis sells an ill-wish to the painfully jealous Laoghaire who then places the ill-wish under Claire’s bed. In the TV series Geillis didn’t know that the ill-wish Laoghaire was buying from her was intended to be used against Claire — or that’s what she at least claims. Geillis, however, is a wise woman, and most likely could have guessed the subject of jealousy as was described in the novel. Thus it seems apparent that Geillis is lying to Claire. In the novel the whole ordeal is revealed in the well where Geillis and Claire wait before the witch trial. Claire asks staggered: “You gave her the ill-wish?” To witch Geillis replies: “I didn’t give it to her, no. I sold it to her. - - It was a matter of business, was all. And I don’t give away my customers’ secrets” (O, 520).

In the novel Geillis doesn’t lie because she doesn’t find anything wrong in doing fair business. In the TV series Geillis appears pseudo friendly and cunning instead of woman with strong morals and intelligence. Geillis doesn’t need friends and cares only for her own cause, helping the Jacobite rebellion and enabling the Scottish independence. She finds that she and Dougal have the same goals and ends up being pregnant with his child.

During the witch trial Geillis helps Claire and Jamie escape by revealing her naked and evidently pregnant body and creating a commotion. As far as the audience knows, Geillis is burned as a witch. In reality, she is first saved by her pregnancy for the judges refuse to burn a pregnant woman. It is later revealed that she is in fact saved by Dougal who frames her death. The audience who knows that Geillis survives also knows the importance of Geillis’ character to the story and most likely views her TV character with more interest. This knowing audience can tell that it is not easy to get rid of the tough and guile woman. Geillis’ endurance resembles a modern human who needs to survive in the highly competitive capitalist world.

Geillis says to Claire before causing the huge commotion: “I think it is possible. 1968.” In the novel Claire receives the message some time later saying “1968”, implying that Geillis also is a time traveler. Claire also recognizes the mark left by a smallpox vaccination in Geillis’ arm, the devil’s mark:
“It was something else I had seen that chilled me to the marrow of my bones. As Geilie had spun, white arms stretched aloft, I saw … A mark on one arm … Here, in this time, the mark of sorcery, the mark of a magus. The small, homely scar of a smallpox vaccination.”

4.5 Construction of Romantic Love

[R]omance novels are courtship stories. […] I didn’t want to tell the story of what makes two people come together […]. I wanted to find out what it takes for two people to stay together for fifty years—or more. I wanted to tell not the story of a courtship, but the story of a marriage. (OC, XXVII.)

As was established in the introduction, Outlander can be considered a romance novel among other genres. Because romantic love is the main theme of romance genre, I want to analyze more closely what in fact is the definition of romantic love in Outlander and does the adaptation challenge the themes evident in the novel.

4.5.1 Marriage

The marriage between Jamie and Claire is one of the most pivotal moments of the story. The marriage being arranged, Jamie and Claire are awkward with one another. This awkwardness is temporarily relieved with compulsory sex on the wedding night. Even though Claire experiences sexual desire towards Jamie she still defines the relationship between them “friendship” (O, 301.) She only feels like she is betraying Frank when she starts to fall in love with Jamie. And this does not happen until much later.

One specific scene I want to analyze from romance perspective is the wedding scene. A wedding is usually the literary end of a romance couple but this is where Outlander begins. Claire and Jamie are in a church in front of God, bound together by a pagan blood vow. At the end of the ceremony Claire and Jamie kiss, as is appropriate to a newlywed couple. Claire
describes her feeling as if having “arrived to a safe haven”. This line emphasizes the conventional romance ideal that marriage is for women's protection. This ideal is of course amplified because of the dangerous environment filled with wild boars, witch hunters, rapists and war. Even after marriage, Claire is certainly still an outlander who does not know her way around the 18th century. In the TV adaptation this depiction is left out, and focus is shifted to Jamie’s point of view. In the adaptation the kiss after the wedding ceremony is no longer about Claire feeling protected by Jamie, but a kiss of mutual lust. Even though the TV series don’t give as much emphasis to the marriage myth, novel also questions the reality of marriage and safety. The idea of marriage as a safe haven is contested both in the novel and the TV-adaptation. In fact Claire saves Jamie about as often as Jamie saves Claire. Contradicting this notion is the line by Jamie, which fans consider iconic: “You needn’t be scared of me nor anyone else. No as long as I’m with you.” In episode five Jamie sleeps outside Claire’s door in order to protect her, but Claire seems to be able to protect herself, sneaking with her candle tree ready to bat away the intruder.

Marriage means that Jamie and Claire have promised to be faithful to one another. In some sense, it is seemingly unmotivating for our heroine that the hero is attainable via marriage (Cf. Obey 2002, 162-163). This feature is strongest in the later parts of the novel series but present also in Outlander. The TV series has emphasized the unattainability of our hero by making the jealous Laoghaire a more prominent character who is somewhat able to tempt Jamie out of his wedding vows. But wedding vows are something to be taken seriously. They bound two people together by blood and until the end of time those two people have claim over each other. Jamie and Claire get in a fight after they come back to Castle Leoch and Claire suggests that Jamie can meet any woman she pleases because their marriage was after all arranged. Jamie replies: “‘No claim on me!’ he exclaimed. ‘And what d’ye think a wedding vow vow is, lassie? Just words in a church?’” Jamie then proceeds intimidating: “‘So you’ve no claim on me, Sassenach? You’ll free me to take my pleasure where I like, is that it? Well, is it?’ he demanded.” (O, 430.)The rough sex scene that follows will be discussed in chapter 4.6.1.

So Laoghaire is heartbroken about Jamie and Claire’s wedding and decides to go to Geillis for help and purchases an ill-wish. In the TV series Jamie doesn’t know that Laoghaire was the
one who placed the ill-wish under Claire’s bed. However in the novel Jamie can figure it out by himself instead of brushing the whole episode off as a practical joke like in the TV show. This creates a lot of tension between the characters and probably affects how the scenes play out in the future between the characters.37

Obey (2002, 162) writes that the conventional attribute of the bodice-ripper is “robust, rampant, continual sex”. She describes the novel saying that there is a “peculiar lack of energy” in the depiction of sex in *Outlander*. Even though the depiction of sex truly is very prominent in *Outlander* I have to disagree with some of Obey’s opinions. I disagree especially with Obey’s claim (2002, 163) that the book sounds like a “mother spending 4,500 pages in order to describe her daughter what sex was like with her dad.” Gabaldon describes beautifully the relationship between Jamie and Claire through sex. The power relations as well as the forming of the relationship between Jamie and Claire are strongly evident in sex also. For example, straight after Jamie loses his virginity, he takes full control in bed and lacks any hesitation that was to some extent present during their wedding night. Gabaldon also bravely describes married sex—sometimes had in impractical environments and in not so desirable states of mind—but always lovingly. Sex and love thus seem inseparable in *Outlander*. Claire is infidel to Frank both physically and mentally even though she tries to stop herself from falling in love with Jamie. Love, however, is a force that cannot be resisted. *Outlander* depicts sex between married couples as truly sexy instead of non-existent or boring.

4.5.2 Motherhood

Another thing that the novel expects to come with marriage in addition to sex is motherhood. Not being able to give birth to children makes Claire feel like she is letting Jamie down. Jamie, however, adapts to the situation thinking that having children might not suit their lifestyle. The last climax of the story, which functions more like a cliffhanger, turns out to be Claire’s pregnancy. The pregnancy is poetically revealed at the end of the novel:

37 Jamie is to marry Laoghaire under pressure from his sister Jenny.
The moon above was a Christmas moon, so large as almost to fill the empty window. It seemed no wonder that the tides of sea and woman should be subject to the pull of that stately orb, so close and so commanding. But my tides moved no longer to that chaste and sterile summons, and the knowledge of my freedoms raced like danger through my blood. ‘I have a gift for you too’, I said suddenly to Jamie. He turned towards me and his hand slid, large and sure, over the plane of my still-flat stomach, ‘Have you now?’, he said. And the world was all around us, new with possibility. (O, 849-850.)

The pregnancy is revealed perhaps more realistically in the show, Claire spilling out the fact before Jamie is too seasick to have a conversation. She is uncertain about Jamie’s response to the news since Jamie has told her that perhaps it was better that they didn’t have children. Luckily, Jamie is very happy about the news and similarly to the depiction of novel, the world widens around them as the camera zooms outs.

The myth utilized in this instance is the female fulfillment via pregnancy. The undercurrent during the whole adventure has been Claire’s supposed inability to bear children. It is implicitly narrated that the whole reason why Claire traveled through time is because it is God’s will. She is set to meet Jamie, marry him and have a child. When Jenny leaves her newborn home to seek Jamie together with Claire, she breaks the bondages of motherhood, momentarily, until the physiological reality materializes in breasts bursting with milk. Jenny has to leave Claire by herself and return to her motherly duties that are “a nuisance” she nonetheless chooses to have.

4.5.3 ROMANTIC LOVE IN OUTLANDER

“Love forces you to choose. It makes you do things you would never imagine you’d do.” (Outlander S01E14.)

In Outlander, love is about possession and dedication (or being possessed). Ownership is a natural phenomenon and is not related to legalities. Expressions of love are versatile: verbal, sexual and sometimes even violent. Romantic love is not free from conflicts. Episode 7 (The
Wedding) clearly demonstrates, without too much voice-overs, how conflicted Claire is about marrying Jamie. The adultery becomes worse when she admits that she enjoyed having sex with Jamie. Claire’s expressions and gestures contradict one another. At one moment Claire is skin-to-skin with Jamie, breathless with desire and at another moment she evades Jamie’s touch. Sexual desire forms first and later Claire realizes that she loves Jamie. The TV-series define adultery as betrayal where the novel finds falling in love with someone else the greater wrong. Even though Claire does have Frank on his mind, it doesn’t stop her from enjoying the sexual encounters between her and Jamie. Even though Claire doesn’t admit loving Jamie until much later, Jamie has loved Claire all along from the first time he saw her. Jamie reveals this fact long after the marriage surprising Claire who thinks Jamie married her for convenience's sake.

Love is a great force that can give a lot of strength. In the novel Claire’s love’s force materializes in her fight against the wolves outside Wentworth prison. In the TV series this scene has been cut. Gabaldon writes in OC about the wolf scene in Outlander: “I have had some readers inform me that there could not be wolves in Scotland at the time described, or that it is impossible for a woman to kill a full-grown wolf with her bare hands. Well, maybe so—and maybe no.” (OC, 503.) Most likely the scene was thought to be too unrealistic by Ron D. Moore also and was cut out. Outlander is a somewhat faithful adaptation, but because of the simple fact that there is a change in medium, changes in the adaptation are inevitable. Caitriona Balfe has to rely on her versatile acting skills—facial expressions, posture, and tone of voice—to depict the major love Claire feels towards Jamie. Granted, editor team can also add musical elements and voice overs to mediate Claire’s feelings. However, there is a limit as to how much voice over can be fitted into one episode.

4.5.4 LOVE BETWEEN A MAN AND A WOMAN

The protective hero myth is at the same time weakened as Claire is most of the time capable of protecting herself as well as Jamie, but Jamie also swears to protect Claire with his body and life, and does so twice when Claire is in Randall’s hands. Perhaps Claire can protect herself every other time except when it comes to her husband Frank’s ancestor. This is when our
heroine is weakened and needs the protection of her other husband. There is an interesting
dynamics between Jamie and Frank in later volumes of the Outlander series. Jamie and Frank
both feel the need to protect her. The feeling may rise from love or sense of responsibility as it
may been in Frank’s case. Both also love their daughter Brianna, one has fathered her and the
other one has raised her as his own. The analysis of Frank as a character over the series of
books would be interesting and would most likely offer some new insights to the meaning of
the series. Obey has written: Such belief in objectivity about history, however, is also called
into question, for Claire’s much abused husband is, in fact, a professor of history. Indeed,
perhaps the only way to explain, if not justify or understand, the unfair venom the author seems
to feel for him is a displacement of her rage against “objective,” male history. Gabaldon herself
writes that she appreciates a life-long marriage but decides to write about a woman who falls
in love with a man in few weeks after being separated from her husband and who actually lives
happily with him until she has to go back to the future for the sakes of her unborn child. In
effect she abandons her husband twice. Claire is never criticized for her choices, rather, Frank
is depicted as a distant character who wasn’t able to reproduce.38

Even though Outlander seems to deviate from the traditional way of depicting love via
courtship, it does depict the conventional roles of passive female and dominant male in love.
This depiction is most evident in the sexual relations between Claire and Jamie. What seems
to happen when dominant roles collide—male and male—is that other is forced to become the
passive participant. From this forced “passification”, or rape, Jamie is traumatized for life.

A ring has a long history as a symbol in literature, in many different symbolic functions. Most
notable is the ring in Tolkien which functions as a symbol for “potency” or “potentiality” that
has to be externalized from one’s direct control in order to produce results.39 Where the ring in
Lord of the Rings trilogy (1937-1949) is a symbol for power, function the two wedding rings
in Outlander as symbols for commitment. When Claire is helplessly falling in love with Jamie
she nearly loses the wedding ring that Frank gave her. The ring scene from the novel is moved

38 A horrible destiny for a historian immensely interested in his family tree.

39 As is described by Tolkien in Letter #211(1958).
to the end of the episode, and modified considerably. In the novel Claire is having sex with Jamie while the two rings “chain” her. In the series, however, the wedding ring from Frank falls to the ground almost disappearing to an opening on the floor. Claire picks it up and puts it back on her finger. The effect of such scene is clearly indeterminate. The fear of losing the ring and it then being contrasted to the ring given by Jamie on the other hand summarizes the conflicted feelings Claire is under. The limitations of showing mode is that it is challenging to depict the inner experiences of a person. Claire’s experience in the novel where she feels like she is being ripped apart is more easily showed via a fear of losing her wedding ring.

4.5.5 Husband’s duty

The definition of a good husband has changed over time. Jamie conveys the 18th century idea of a good husband whereas Claire criticizes it. Geillis poisons her husband in order to be able to marry Dougal. In the adaptation Geillis’ husband is described as short and stocky, suffering from bowel problems. Jamie, however, doesn’t understand why Geillis would poison him saying: “He had money, a good position. And I doubt he beat her.” Claire laughs at Jamie’s definition of a good husband when he asks: “What else might she want?” (O, 570.)

We have discussed the depiction of love. Love is something irrational and Jamie thinks after his and Claire’s huge fight regarding her disappearance and resultant captivity in Fort William: “But the truth is, I’d forgiven everything she’d done and everything she could do long before that day. For me that was no choice. That was falling in love.” (S01Ep09) Love, however, is subordinate to justice and Jamie has a husband’s duty to perform on his irresponsible wife who endangered the whole group. Gabaldon writes about the wife-beating scene:

Frankly, this is one of my favorite scenes in that particular book. It illustrates perfectly the cultural and personal clashes going on between these two characters— clashes in which each one is absolutely convinced that he or she has the right of it— and they both do! (OC, 411.)

Like we have mentioned before, in episode nine Jamie decides to pledge loyalty to Claire. He steps down from the higher position as a husband, to an equal partner: “I am your master and you are mine.” Peace is more important than custom.
*Outlander* repeats some common analogies and clichés in describing romantic love. One idea is that your home is where your loved one is. Another one is that the man will protect the woman. Also the love between the two heroes seems to grow day by day—and sex is inseparable from love. Jamie asks Claire: “Does it ever stop? The wanting you?” His hands came around to caress my breast. “Even when I’ve just left ye, I want you so much my chest feels tight and my fingers ache with wanting to touch ye again.” (O, 328.) After another consciousness fragmenting sex scene Claire replies: “I don’t know, Jamie. I really don’t.” (O, 331.)

There is a disturbing difference in the novel and the show. The adaptation raises a question: why would Jamie talk about their shared life in Lallybroch while at the same time taking Claire back to the stones? He even initiates sex while knowing that Claire’s husband is not dead. In the novel he remained tense and silent the whole way. Perhaps the adaptors thought that it was unrealistic that Claire would be surprised that she was being taken back to the stones if Jamie acted weird. In the novel Claire’s lack of attentiveness is explained with the shocking events regarding the witch trial:

> “I didn’t even ask where we were going. Mounted behind him, I was content to rest my face against the broad slope of his back, feeling the motion of the horse rock me into a state of mindless trance.” (O, 553.)

Dougal MacKenzie represents the not so simple relationship between love, husband’s duty and lust. Dougal is a complex character, who loves dearly both her passed wife Maura and Geillis at the same time. Dougal also comes on to Claire during the gathering and later asks her to marry him when Jamie is held captive in Fort William. Dougal would benefit from marrying Claire because if Jamie were to be hanged, Claire would inherit Lallybroch as a widow. In effect Lallybroch would become his, furthering his political power. Sexual desire, love and political aspirations are intertwined in the complex relationships between the characters of *Outlander.*
4.6 Sex and Sexuality

Sex is a mean for communication, change of emotions. Sex can signify power, dominance control, bonds, healing… We (humans) are programmed to watch sex. [...] I do in fact write very good sex scenes because I know what they are for. (Youtube: Outlander author Diana Gabaldon talks about writing sex scenes.)

In the previous chapter we have seen that Outlander seems to limit romantic love exclusively to heterosexual couples. Sexuality is represented in a wide variety. These different representations of sexuality are erotic and not pornographic. Frye (1976, 24) sums up the difference:

[R]omance appears to be designed mainly to encourage irregular or excessive sexual activity. - - Most denunciations of popular romance on such grounds, we notice, assume that the pornographic and the erotic are the same thing: this overlooks the important principle that it is the function of pornography to stun and numb the reader, and the function of erotic writing to wake him up.

Another function of erotic and pornographic writing is to depict the power relations between the characters. The sexual encounters between Jamie and Claire enforce dominant male and passive female positions and the sexual relationship between Jack Randall and Jamie depicts a morbidly misbalanced relationship between a sadist and his victim.

4.6.1 Sex as a Symbolic Device for Feminine Subjugation

I will now consider the sexual relationship between Claire and Jamie, and its relevance to depicting power relations. I continue contrasting both Outlander versions to see how these depictions differ. Gabaldon writes that sex can be a mean to communicate power relations and dominance. The depiction of Jamie and Claire is erotic and this eroticism will be later contrasted to the pornographic depiction of Jack Randall and Jamie’s sex scenes. Perhaps the adaptation appears to be more pornographic because the visual and aural medium amplify the effect of the scenes, enabling more shocking experiences. The difference and effect of eroticism and pornography would rouse interesting discussion in later studies of Outlander.
One of the most distinct differences between the *Outlander* novel and TV series is the depiction of Claire. In the TV series Claire seems to be the victim more often than in the novel. The novel actually seems to guard Claire from rape, illnesses, and accidents as far as possible. Even when there is a threat of such undesirable incidents they are somehow painted over with humor. Claire is battered and whipped at the witch trial but still she is saved from the worst: “In fact, it was only after several blows that I realized the locksman was doing his level best to spare me what he could.” *(O, 539.)* Not too late Jamie comes to rescue. Claire describes her mood: “I felt very much like General MacAuliffe at Bastogne, sighting Patton’s Third Army in the offing. In spite of the horrible danger to Geilie, to me, and now to Jamie himself, I had never been so happy to see anyone.” *(O, 540.)*

The TV show however continues to use the conventional tropes or rape and feminine victimization. Especially in episode 8 when Claire is raped (or at least that is suggested) Jamie carries her away from the scene and instantly joins the other men to clean their traces leaving Claire alone in a state of shock. This scene differs from the novel enormously. In the novel, almost right after the incident, Claire and Jamie have passionate and almost hysterical sex: “[D]rowning the memories of death and near-rape in the flooding of the senses.” *(O, 362.)* The scene also turns out to be even humorous in the novel:

> The sudden release of emotions, couples with Dougal’s worlds, had evoked a picture of Jamie’s face, caught in the act as it were, that I found totally hilarious in my unhinged state. I laughed and moaned until my sides ached. Finally, I sat up, wiping my eyes on my kerchief, to see Dougal and Jamie standing over me, wearing identical expressions of disapproval. *(O, 363.)*

Claire turns out to be nothing like a victim. The victim seems to be more Jamie than anyone else, who is “caught in the act” with a funny expression and then is threatened with a gun and Claire being the one who ultimately saves the situation. So the meaning of the incidence changes from “lingering tendency to laugh hysterically over nothing” *(O, 363)* into a “pivotal moment in my life” (episode 8). Gabaldon did not want to depict Claire as a victim at any point, but the TV series makes a use of this rape trope and uses it to create a conflict between Claire and Jamie. Claire loses her trust to for Jamie and Jamie’s manhood takes a hit.
Sex in this case functions as a device for feminine subjugation. The novel laughs at its face whereas the TV series continue to depict women as the weaker sex. The novel seems to empower women—outside the bedroom. In the bedroom Claire is physically clearly weaker. She is crushed by Jamie’s weight, and cannot stop him if he feels like getting rough with her. There is a disturbing blurring of lines between rape and pleasure. In chapter 4.5.1 we discussed how marriage means that two people somehow possess each other. They have both privileges and obligations. When Claire suggests that Jamie has no obligation to stay faithful to her, Jamie is furious:

“Well, if you’ve no claim on me, Sassenach,” he said, “I’ve one on you! Come here.” He took my face in his hands and set his mouth on mine. There was nothing either gentle or undemanding about that kiss, and I fought against it, trying to pull back from him. [...] I hadn’t realized how bloody strong he really was.” (O, 431.)

Even though Jamie asks for a permission to penetrate her the encounter seems disturbingly like a rape. Claire describes:

The movement went on, disregarding, on and on for minutes, striking me over and over with an impact on the edge between pleasure and pain. I felt dissolved, as though I existed only at the point of the assault, being forced to the edge of some total surrender. [...] My thighs were bruising with the repeated impact, and my wrists felt as though they would break, but his grip was inexorable. (O, 436-7.)

The scene climaxes: “My cry mingled with his, and we lost ourselves finally in each other in that moment of dissolution and completion.” (O, 437-8.) The rough sex is Jamie’s attempt to own Claire and to make her his. This scene is one of the many different representations of sadomasochism evident in the novel. The ownership goes the other way also like Jamie says: “I am your master...and you’re mine. Seems I canna possess your soul without losing my own.” (O, 438.) Sadomasochism manifests in various form in Outlander and oftentimes there is no consent from the opposite party. It is worth discussing how Outlander depicts sadomasochism and what kind of notions it creates in process.

There’s quite a lot of processing of female sexuality and the difference in attitudes towards sex between the 1745 and 1946. Jamie is a virgin and the only concrete knowledge he has about
having sex is from seeing animals having sex. Even his fellow men haven’t bothered advising him too much, except for telling him that women don’t really care for sex. Due to these, female orgasm is a new concept for Jamie. Now, representing an orgasm in a relatively short sex scene may construct a rather unrealistic image of orgasm. Despite this comical detail sex is, well, sex. Sometimes it is really enjoyable, sometimes you would just rather not do it but your partner convinces you otherwise. The lastly mentioned scenario was not included in the adaptation. In the novel Jamie and Claire have sex amidst twenty other Scots. Claire does not fancy the idea but Jamie pushes through. The same scene was also deleted from the UK edition of Outlander, Cross Stitch because the sex scene was thought to be too graphic. (OC, 317.)

4.6.2 MALE-ON-MALE RAPE

The depiction of the relationship between Jack Randall and Jamie seems explicitly pornographic — shocking and in time also numbing. In the novel the events at the Wentworth prison are not directly portrayed but indirectly described by Jamie to Claire. By depicting male-on-male rape, Gabaldon brakes what Mullen describes as the last taboo. (Sielke 2002, 171.) Randall acts like the villain and is the antonym to the happy romance Claire and Jamie would be otherwise living. ‘Evil’ is the first word that comes to mind when Jack Randall is mentioned. Jack Randall in his ambiguous sexual orientation comes across as perverted and twisted. In one moment the audience is charged with hope, “maybe there’s still some good in him” and this hope is then crushed when Randall continues to take pleasure from hurting other people. Tobias Menzies acts beautifully both the “good” Frank whom Claire hopes to see in him and the “evil” Jack. In the novel Claire describes Randall after he has kissed the unresisting Jamie: “Randall’s face when he rose was dreamy, eyes gentle and faraway, long mouth quirked in a smile. Once upon a time, I had loved a smile like that, and that dreamy look had roused me in anticipation.” (O, 722.)

Jack Randall is a smart man who is able to maximize pain and the feeling of despair. Jack Randall develops a sort of fetish towards Jamie during their first encounter at Lallybroch couple of years prior to the events on the book. Randall bullies Jenny when Jamie comes in between. Randall decides to punish Jamie for obstruction and is taken by Jamie’s resilience. Randall’s
inclinations rise from the need for power he lacks in other contexts. He is subordinate to English majors and under the protection of the Duke of Sandringham. The Outlander series depict male-on-male rape very vividly instead of relying on the events described by Jamie himself. This brings us back to the aesthetics of television. If we were only shown the discussion between Jamie and Claire, would the scene have been boring?

Why would Gabaldon decide to make Jamie the victim? On narrative level the tension between Jamie and Randall also enables Claire to act as a knight in shining armor, saving Jamie every chance she gets. Gabaldon explains Randall’s sexual orientation and his interest towards Jamie:

“[T]he vicious flogging was the result of Jamie’s refusal to yield his body to Randall, who gratifies his inclinations with the readiest victims: the Scottish prisoners under his control, who have no recourse or means to escape.” (OC, 7.)

Still charged with killing an English soldier and escaping, Jamie is imprisoned by Jack Randall. While Claire and the Scot men get ready to save him: “Randall must content himself with such brutality as will pass without comment — bruises and broken bones are within the realm of official toleration; homosexual rape is not.” Claire gets to the dungeon before Randall does even more damage but quickly the savior-saved positions are again shifted when Randall has a knife at Claire’s throat. Gabaldon describes:

“Desperate, and feeling that he has nothing left to lose, Jamie makes a devil’s bargain — his body, and silence, in return for Claire’s freedom. Unable to resist the temptation of a victim at once completely unwilling but completely compliant, Randall agrees.” (OC, 10.)

What the audio-visual medium achieves is a vivid description of the brutalities, making the scene appear even more gruesome than in the novel. The novel allows Jamie to describe his feelings about being raped:

“Now it’s like...like my own fortress has been blown up with gunpowder—there’s nothing left of it but ashes and a smoking rooftree, and the little naked thing that lived there once is out in the open, squeaking and whimpering in fear, tryin’ to hide itself under a blade of grass or a bit o’ leaf, but...but not...makin’ m-much of a job of it.” (O,760.)
Jamie reacts physically to the shock and is severely depressed. Jamie has to restore his “manhood” by rebuilding his previous dominant position, by assaulting Claire: “Jamie might reclaim his manhood through the same violence by which it was taken from him.” (OC, 12.)

It is also worth noting that *Outlander* creates a new experience to the, let’s assume, female reader who has to relate to Claire and think: what if the man I love was raped? It is usually women that are victim to rape and *Outlander* shakes this presumption. Considering things from another angle might teach the reader something about themselves as well as open up their world view.

### 4.6.3 Different sexualities represented

Putting aside the larger question of whether it is a novelist’s responsibility to address every possible mental response that every possible reader might have, and handle these in such a way as to maximize the (collectively hypothetical) readers’ self-esteem, in the context of Modern Enlightened Thought [...] It isn’t in case you were wondering. (OC, 407.)

*Outlander* focuses on depicting heterosexual love and verifies the normativity of it. The *Outlander* also features the homosexual and repugnant Duke of Sandringham who is mainly interested in young boys — Jamie being one his victims when he was younger. The Duke of Sandringham is a rather narrow character used mainly as a comic relief and as a plot device to get Jamie freed from his charges.

Judging based on *Outlander* only, it would seem that Gabaldon describes an unfairly anti-gay narrative. *Outlander*, however, is not Gabaldon’s only work. This is where interpretations at the latest become complicated. There is a very strong demonization of Captain Jack Randall

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40 *For a more close analysis from a screenwriting perspective see Sally J. Walker's Screenwriting Secrets in Genre Film* (2012).
who happens to be bi and rapes both women and men as he pleases. Also the Duke of Sandringham is told to be gay and is also a very unpleasant character who is told to have harassed young boys in the past. But if we contrast the Outlander to, for example, the Lord John Grey series that follow a gay English nobleman, we see that he is portrayed in a positive light or at least like a “normal person”. So I need to throw a disclaimer out there that what I might analyze based on Outlander solely does not necessarily hold out throughout all of Diana Gabaldon’s work. Because my study focuses on the subjective reading experience of an individual, I believe I can assume that not every reader is familiar with Lord John which might affect their interpretation of the series. I am not stating that heterosexuals are represented as good and other sexualities as bad in Outlander. Rape (or the threat of rape) is still very evident, and is carried out also by heterosexual men.

Although Outlander depicts a very questionable and limited repertory of sexualities, Gabaldon writes:

I could — as a few readers suggest — have included an admirable homosexual character in the first two books, as “balance” to Black Jack Randall — but that would be perversion of its own sort; distortion of a story for purposes of political correctness — and you already know what I think about that. (OC, 409.)

What I mean to emphasize by discussing the different sexualities represented in whatever fictional work is that a work never stands alone. Many works together form a whole web of, let’s say for example, anti-gay works, or an anti-gay meme. Perhaps Gabaldon does recognize this and wrote a whole novel series around a gay character who is a good friend of both Jamie and Claire. However, Gabaldon writes about creating Lord John to the later parts of the Outlander series:

“[...] Lord John revealed himself as a gay man because he was; i.e., that facet of his personality was key to the part of the story in which he appears—rather than because I felt any need to include a “good” gay character as an antidote to Jack Randall.” (OC, 410.)

It can be dangerous to believe that the events and characters an author describes does not have any impact on the stereotypes, prejudice and ideas present in our society. Perhaps the meanings in Outlander are truly carefully considered like Obey suggests or perhaps Outlander accidentally creates the meanings it does without too much consideration. We are accustomed
to think of the author as a reliable entity but perhaps we should widen our scope and see the underlying aspirations behind different artistic products.

5 CONCLUSIONS

When we discussed fan fiction we saw that the reader and the viewer are not a passive consumers but a creative participants. This idea of participation is central to adaptation studies. In analysis we held in mind that Gabaldon actively adapts and appropriates genres, texts and myths, often consciously, sometimes unconsciously.

We also examined the significance and effect of the change in medium. The shift from telling to showing medium caused various changes. Central challenges were the lack of creative space within to adapt. Also difference devices of narration had to be used in order to convey a similar story. Additional causes for changes were the temporal and spatial shift. Even though it is difficult to say what caused what, I would assume that the change in publishing/airing time didn’t have as large of an impact as did the factors mentioned before. The spatial change might also have an impact but like I mentioned before, we cannot reliably examine these variants effects.

Even though the Outlander TV series sought out to be a faithful adaptation there were some changes in the form, tone and style. There are changes to the chronology of narration in the form of anti-linear structure. (Which is mostly connected to the change in medium. Visuality forces changes in the narration in order to be interesting.) There are also small changes to the headings but most of the time the TV series directly referred to the novel in this way. These changes were oftentimes addressed by the adaptors and Gabaldon always gave these changes — and the whole adaptation — her blessing. The importance of author’s approval is central in contemporary field of adaptations because the author is oftentimes alive and might have a significant impact into the economic success of the adaptation/s.
The reason why adaptation studies examine the faithfulness of an adaptation is because it is directly linked to the reading experience. What I wanted to find out was why certain elements of an adaptation are pleasurable and why. Ronald Barthes’ ideas about the text of pleasure seemed to give some idea.

To conclude I answer the question whether or not the adaptation has been conservatively faithful or whether the adaptation has taken a step further, creating a writerly text and challenging the audience. On the surface it appears that the TV adaptation is as faithful as possible only minor changes made when needed and those changes thoroughly justified to the fans.

Even though *Outlander* TV series convert traditional female and male roles and telling the story from a female perspective, this perspective is diminished in the change of medium. The story is still told mainly from Claire’s perspective, but also from Jamie’s and from a third person perspective. If the original idea was to bring forth “feminine problems” from a “feminine perspective” such as inequity and rape, contrasted with fierce female characters, the effort is somewhat lost in the adaptation. There is not enough time to replicate exactly the novel in a TV-adaptation. Moore has thus decided to increase the amount of relative action, sex and violence while decreasing the proportional religiousness and depictions of inner processes. Even though there has been an effort to describe Claire’s inner battles, the narration is still somewhat “incomplete”.

Having said this, I by no means think that *Outlander* is a bad adaptation. It is carefully put together entirety and it is a great watching experience. What I mean to establish is that the novel and series indeed are separate works, and shouldn’t be evaluated in comparison. What we want to transmute in a from-novel-to-television -adaptation of course depends in the temporal difference, audience and the personal interests of the creators. What the end result is, depends on the expertise of the whole production team. I can only see the end result, and thus cannot say what most of the intentions have been. In this research I did pick out few examples of the deliberate changes the production team did. I went forth to analyze the effect of these deliberate or non-deliberate transmutations hoping, that they would tell us a tiny piece about
the direction our society is going towards. Having seen fierce females taking their safety in their own hands and love being equal for both sexes — I remain hopeful. However I see also room for improvement, especially in depicting non-heterosexual couples, homosexuals and maternity. Both the novel and adaptation convey an idea that it is impossible to be complete without children and the proposition remains the same if we take a look at contemporary literature.

Time travel romances such as Gabaldon’s, inadvertently or not, go a step further, offering a conscious interpretive project within a sharply destabilized symbolic structure. If the postmodernist novel sees a series of signifiers endlessly playing each other out into the mise en abîme, Gabaldon’s novel seems to create an endless series of interpretations, each of which creates a new reality as a signification inferred. (Obey 2002, 164.)

The interpretative hesitation that Obey discusses is exactly what I have encountered in my study of Outlander. The only thing I have achieved in the course of this study is the justification to my interpretations that are lucrative and nowhere near final due to the indeterminate nature of the text. The fact that I don’t agree with most of Obey’s interpretations support the fact that Outlander is a new kind of hybrid genre that contests definitive significations and does so via narrative.

Content drives further content. In other words adaptation is a self-sustained industry and the odds are that Outlander will be feeding more adaptations and appropriations in the future (cf. Sanders 2016, 64). This is why we examined what exactly are the memes that Outlander might potentially convey further. Outlander is popular as an adaptation because it creates pleasure in the already wide population of knowing audience. When audience watches Outlander and sees the novel’s scenes reconstructed in front of their eyes gives the reader feels pleasure. The minor changes, however, can create even a blissful experience. Successful memes, whether original or new, are transmitted further and we keep on evolving.
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Digital sources:


Websites:


APPENDIX

Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Lord John Grey series</th>
<th>Publication year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lord John and the Hellfire Club (novella)</td>
<td>1998</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord John and the Private Matter</td>
<td>2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord John and the Succubus (novella included in Legend II by Robert Silverberg)</td>
<td>2003</td>
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<td>Lord John and the Brotherhood of the Blade</td>
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<td>Lord John and the Hand of Devils (collection of three novellas)</td>
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<td>The Custom of the Army (novella included in Warriors, edited by George R.R. Martin and Gardner Dozois)</td>
<td>2010</td>
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<td>The Scottish Prisoner</td>
<td>2011</td>
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<td>Lord John and the Plague of Zombies (novella included in Down These Strange Streets, edited by George R.R. Martin and Gardner Dozois)</td>
<td>2011</td>
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Table 2. * If a novella has been published both individually and in a compilation I have only mentioned the latter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Outlander-related works</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Outlandish Companion (a guide to the Outlander series containing synopses, a character guide, and other notes and information)</td>
<td>1999</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Exile: An Outlander Graphic Novel</td>
<td>2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Leaf On The Wind Of All Hallows (short story)</td>
<td>2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Trail of Fire (Four Outlander Tales)</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Space Between (Novella) published in an anthology titled THE MAD SCIENTIST’S GUIDE TO WORLD DOMINATION, edited by John Joseph Adams.</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virgins (novella included in the anthology Dangerous Women, edited by George R. R. Martin and Gardner Dozois)</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Outlandish Companion, Vol. II</td>
<td>2015</td>
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Screen capture 1. “Claire and End of the War”
Screen capture 2: “Jack and Frank Randall”