"What if your future was the past?" Time Travel, Genealogy and Scottish Television Tourism in *Outlander* (2014-).

James Cateridge, Oxford Brookes University

In late 2014, just months after the independence referendum which invigorated and then frustrated nationalist feeling in Scotland, a rash of newspaper reports brought glad tidings to bolster the nation's tourist industry. The Highlands was apparently experiencing a tourist boom driven by the success of *Outlander* (2014-), a US-produced television series set and largely shot in Scotland, despite the fact that the show had yet to be screened in the UK. *The Times* interviewed several very cheerful tour operators including Hugh Allison of Inverness Tours, who stated:

> We brought in multi-day *Outlander* tours this year because we knew how nuts
> it was going to go. We do get some hardcore fans. They want to see the
> locations from the books or TV series and sometimes want to stay overnight in
> a castle or explore their family roots. (Holden 2014)

As Mr Allison notes, *Outlander* is adapted from a series of best-selling novels written by American author Diana Gabaldon, and therefore has a large pre-existing fan base. VisitScotland were clearly aware of this potential, as they had released an online interactive map in August that year to encourage this likely new wave of tourists (Weinstein 2014). Their website entices fans to 'discover intriguing history, fascinating culture... and maybe even that Scotland is the land of your ancestors!' (VisitScotland 2014). VisitScotland also drew optimistic comparisons between *Outlander* and another transnational TV production *Game of Thrones* (2011-) which has had a demonstrable impact on tourism in Northern Ireland (Addley 2014). Whilst *Outlander* was yet to challenge the extraordinary global popularity of HBO's megahit fantasy show, its first season had performed strongly in the US, drawing record audiences for cable channel Starz of over 3 million a week (Kissell 2014).

Here then, it appeared, was an opportunity for Scotland to consolidate and refresh its already considerable appeal for international tourism. As David Martin-Jones has described, the discourses around previous examples of media tourism drivers in Scotland, such as the big-screen adaptation of *The Da Vinci Code* (2006), demonstrate that Scottish media tourism often depends upon heritage iconography and the lure of genealogy in order to encourage

visitors from the Scottish diaspora (Martin-Jones 2014). VisitScotland's promotional material for *Outlander* repeats this theme of family history and personal heritage. International *Outlander* tourists apparently want to 'explore their family roots' or discover the land of their ancestors. Was this just well-targeted destination marketing, or was something more interesting happening? In short, what is it about *Outlander* specifically that might provoke the desire of international fans with Scottish heritage to travel back to their roots? In this article, I will argue that *Outlander* is particularly potent as a tourism driver for diasporic audiences due to its narrative treatment of family history and genealogy, and the ways that these elements intersect with discourses around Scottish nationalism. I shall propose that the show's central narrative conceit of time travel plays a vital role in this regard, as Gabaldon shifts her characters around in both spatial and temporal dimensions, building families which span impossible generational gaps. *Outlander* therefore posits a fictional world which invites readers/viewers to reflect upon - or even vicariously experience - their own personal or family history. Reading the novels or watching the show can also lead to a desire to travel in the real world, both physically to Scotland, and imaginatively through history by visiting heritage filming locations. In their study of the role of the imagination in the experience of *Game of Thrones* tourists, Abby Waysdorf and Steijn Reijnders note the relatively young age of the show's tourist fans, and suggest that older audiences may have a different set of priorities and imaginative processes (Waysdorf et al 2017: 187). As Gabaldon's novel series has been building a fanbase since 1991, the analysis of *Outlander* fandom presents an opportunity to delineate and understand the ways in which media tourism can be meaningful for a more mature demographic.

The TV series *Outlander*, like the novels on which it is based, is set largely in the 18th century, but it is not a straightforward historical drama. Its heroine Claire (Caitriona Balfe) is a 20th century English woman, a WW2 nurse who is holidaying in Scotland with her husband when she visits a mysterious ring of standing stones and falls back through time to the 18th century. Here she meets, is forced to marry and then falls in love with a strapping young Highlander Jamie Fraser (Sam Heughan). The time travel twist of *Outlander* may be read as a narrative embodiment of one of the primary pleasures of heritage drama: the immersion of oneself in the past in an affective and even an erotic sense, as identified by Claire Monk (2011) in her survey of online responses to Merchant-Ivory's *Maurice* (1987). Unsurprisingly, this also makes an attractive selling point for heritage/media tourism. As an example of this trope, one tour operator promises: 'No need to touch the stones of Craigh na Dun to go back in time on this *Outlander*-inspired trail through the Scottish Highlands' (BrendanVacations.com 2017). Media tourism, or the act of travelling to a location associated with a film or TV show, is often discussed in terms of the relationship between narrative and place (e.g. Torchin [2002],

Cateridge [2015]). For media tourists who are engaged by historical characters and landscapes, and may therefore also be considered heritage tourists, these fantasies clearly operate in the temporal as well as the spatial dimension. Furthermore, for heritage tourists with an investment in genealogy, for example Americans or Canadians with Scottish ancestry, the fantasy spaces of media/heritage tourism may be especially meaningful due to their sense of family identity, which is an aspect of a larger (trans-)national identity. *Outlander*'s multiple time-travellers are unusual in the sense that they are predominantly women, and that they all live for many years in the past, several of them bearing children. This means that *Outlander*'s family trees, diagrams vital to the generic conventions of epic historical novels as well as genealogists, are convoluted but also malleable.

Hence my title, borrowed from an ingenious marketing tagline for the first season of the TV show: 'What if your future was the past?' This is true for Claire in a literal sense, but also a figurative one as her progeny and her ancestors are all mixed up in complex ways. For Scottish diasporic audiences, Claire's journey into the past is one which they can partly recreate through future travel plans involving genealogical or 'roots tourism'. In order to explore these complex processes I shall draw upon the work of Steijn Reijnders, whose study of tourism inspired by television detective dramas reconfigures John Urry's 'tourist gaze' (Urry 1990) with genre and narrative. Reijnders' textual analysis of the detective shows discusses not only the representation of space, but also the ways in which the genre *investigates* space in a way which is similar to tourism (Reijnders 2009). I shall consider whether time travel reconfigures history along similar lines. Reijnders also combines textual analysis with ethnographic approaches to analyse his chosen fan cultures, and I shall follow his lead in this regard. Specifically, in this article I shall present data from an online survey which was completed by almost 2,000 *Outlander* fans in March 2017. This evidence will be used to establish a demographic profile of *Outlander* fandom and to begin to answer empirical questions around the novel and shows' impact upon fans' tourism desires and practices. Finally, qualitative data provided by short text answers will inform and guide my textual analysis of narrative, genre and other elements specific to the TV adaptation including costume and casting.

Facebook and 'fannish activity': Evidencing *Outlander* Tourism

Writing in 2002, Matt Hills' survey of the methodologies of fan studies describes the well-established "stand-off" between textual and ethnographical approaches. However, Hills also predicted that this clash of paradigms would be largely superseded by the rise of 'technocultural modes of engagement', with fans' interactions now becoming texts in their own

right on social media (Hills 2002: 170).The technocultural mode of engagement of choice for *Outlander* fans is Facebook, a platform which facilitates the accumulation of very large numbers of like-minded fans into moderated 'groups'. In her recent investigation of fandom across different social media, Rhiannon Bury concludes that Facebook is actually *not* the ideal space for 'fannish activity' due to its focus upon pre-existing social networks, and its insistence upon users going by their real names, which breaches the anonymity contract of online avatar identities common within fan communities. However Bury notes that the platform's groups are more fan-friendly, as they encourage interaction between users not already linked through the 'friendship' node and can build very large transnational communities where privacy is respected (Bury 2017: 636). In addition, evidence suggests that Facebook is by far the favoured social media platform for internet users over the age of 50 (Greenwood et al 2016), a demographic which coincides with the core fanbase of Gabaldon's *Outlander* novels. Whilst it is obvious that the *Outlander* fan groups on Facebook offer a wealth of data, including fan discussions on everything from actors' costumes to filming locations and personal travel plans, there are specific ethical issues around analysing online behaviour which must be acknowledged (Henderson et al 2013). To begin with, most of these groups are 'closed', in the sense that users must apply to join and be approved before being able to access the contents. This implies a degree of trust and confidentiality which, if not respected by all users, would likely lead to a change in the types of communication published, therefore compromising the source. In addition, it would be very difficult (if not impossible) to acquire consent to use the material for research purposes from each individual user when the groups' memberships are typically into the tens of thousands.

Taking these ethical considerations into account, I decided to use the *Outlander* Facebook groups as a recruitment mechanism for a short online survey asking fans about their attachment to the books and shows, their desire to travel to Scotland and motivations for this desire. Even using Facebook as a recruitment tool can raise unexpected issues around participant anonymity and how to manage the researcher's own online identity (Fileborn 2016). To mitigate these concerns, after being accepted into one fan group known as 'Heughan's Heughligans' (named after the show's handsome male star) my identity as a researcher was immediately divulged to the group's administrators, who gave permission for me to publish the survey using a third party platform Typeform which allows answers to be recorded anonymously. As a recruitment strategy this was successful, with 1,956 respondents completing the survey in one week during April 2017.[1] The aggregated results of the survey were also shared within the group after the survey was closed, as several members had requested. As is to be expected with audience surveys, the results both confirmed and complicated my thesis on *Outlander* tourism. On the first empirical question - is there really

any evidence that *Outlander* inspires tourism, and if so does this tourism have a genealogical emphasis? - my data provides positive confirmation. When fans were asked whether watching *Outlander* had increased their desire to travel to Scotland, 85% of them agreed strongly. Whilst this result might have been expected to have been even more conclusive amongst such a devoted fan community, in fact several of the remaining 15% added comments (or even went to the trouble of contacting me directly) to point out a logical flaw in my line of questioning: namely that watching *Outlander* had not *increased* their desire to travel because they were already very keen to visit Scotland after reading the original novels.

This became an important theme of the results overall, and it is clear with hindsight that I underestimated the extent to which *Outlander* fandom is primarily literary rather than televisual. This discovery helped to redirect my textual analysis away from the visual spectacle of the show and towards the elements which survive across both media, particularly narrative and generic conventions. My follow up question which asked *why* the show increased the desire to travel also needs to be read in this light. Here I offered four possible explanations which were drawn from Galaldon's own summary of the subjects which most interest her fans: the history and folklore, the Scottish landscape, the characters, and the fans' own family history (Gabaldon 1999: p. xxviii). Fans were able to choose as many of the options as they liked, and the most popular was indicative of heritage tourism: exploring history and folklore (77%). A substantial subgroup of respondents, around 1 in 4, stated that their own family history played a role in their desire to travel to Scotland. Whilst this is not evidence of a direct causal relationship, as presumably many already wanted to travel before seeing the show, the fact that so many people acknowledged family history as a factor suggests that the genealogical discourse around *Outlander* tourism is more than just marketing blarney. As Paul Basu's study of Scottish 'roots tourism' demonstrates, diasporic Scots are interpolated via popular culture (literary, filmic or otherwise) to believe that they have a mysterious in-built desire to get back to their roots which can only be satisfied through commodified tourism (Basu 2007), and it certainly possible to read the genealogical discourse around *Outlander* as part of this ideological process.

My data also provides evidence of a correlation between the geographical location of *Outlander* fans and those countries that have the largest Scottish diasporic populations (Basu 2007: 15). 62% of respondents lived in the US, with large numbers also residing in Australia, the UK and Canada. Other characteristics also connect these countries, such as the natural spread of Anglophone culture, both in a literary and a televisual sense, as well as the relative penetration of Facebook within different international markets. Nonetheless, the link between countries with a greater than average affiliation with Scotland and places where the show's

fans are clustered is notable, and further reinforces *Outlander*'s potential appeal to diasporic audiences. When asked if they had ever actually travelled to Scotland, almost one third of fans had visited the country, although Europeans, Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders were much more likely to travel than those from the USA. Whilst there, over half these tourists had engaged in *Outlander*-related activity, including guided or self-planned visits to locations important to the books or used in filming the show. Crucially, 1 in 5 visitors had also carried out ancestral research or travelled to places associated with their ancestry. In summary then, my survey findings confirm that watching *Outlander* - or perhaps more accurately reading the books and *then* watching *Outlander* - substantially increased fans' aspiration to travel to Scotland, and that a significant proportion of these fans was also motivated by a yearning to explore their own national heritage and ancestral identity. For the remainder of this article I want to explore a more nuanced question than could possibly be posed in a simple survey format, namely what is it about *Outlander* as a literary and/or televisual text that provokes this desire? I will continue to draw upon evidence from the survey whilst exploring this question, and in particular will cite the richer, more evocative free-text answers where my respondents' distinctive voices and stories could be heard.

'It looked like I came home': Genealogy and the Time Travel Romance

When my survey respondents were asked to describe their experiences of travelling to Scotland, one key word was repeated over and over: 'home':

'I feel like Scotland is my second home'; '[I love] the location, Scotland, home of my family'; 'I went to Scotland so many years ago having read [Diana Gabaldon's] books. It looked like I came home.'

As the similar sentiments of the Scottish diasporic 'roots tourists' interviewed by Paul Basu attest, the sensation of travelling back to the land of one's ancestors can feel like crossing a temporal as well as a physical border (2007). Whilst these sensations are by no means unique to *Outlander* fans, I want to suggest that it is the enabling fantasy of time travel within a romantic context which makes these texts so provocative of the desire to travel. Time travel as a prominent element of recent televisual aesthetics has received critical attention in relation to postmodernism, as a device which enables nostalgia, and also works to dissolve or disrupt generic boundaries (e.g. Jowett et al 2016). *Dr Who* (1963-) is the urtext in this sense, and has a special relevance with regard to *Outlander*, as Gabaldon has cited one of the Doctor's companions from the late 1960s, Jamie McCrinnon (Fraser Hines) as the inspiration for her hero Jamie Fraser (Gabaldon 1999: xxi). The combination of time travel and romance may

seem an unusual one, but literary theorists such as David Wittenberg have noted that time travel 'has long played a significant role' within popular romantic fiction (Wittenberg 2013: 19). Surveying the critical response to what she terms 'paranormal romance' novels, Lee Tobin-McClaine notes that they tend to be perceived as 'regressive and antifeminist; and include 'a disturbing valorization of the prefeminist past' particularly in relation to sexual violence (Tobin-McClaine 2000: 294). Elements of this critique survive in studies of postfeminist media culture, such as Diane Negra's discussion of time-travel romance movies of the 1990s and 2000s. Negra reads these films as part of a wider discourse of 'time crisis' used to belittle contemporary women balancing traditional family life with stressful careers (Negra 2009: 53-59).

Whilst both sexual violence and the tension between work and family are vital at different stages within Claire's character arc, these feminist responses to the time travel romance are valuable reminders that the search for 'authenticity' - whether satisfied through time travel or heritage tourism – is hardly ideologically neutral. As Buchmann et al have described, 'authenticity' is a heavily contested term within tourism studies, which has tended to favour postmodern critical frameworks that can disavow the authentic entirely. And yet the notion retains a genuine currency with tourists themselves (Buchmann et al 2010: 243). Claims for the authentic continue to feature heavily within heritage tourism discourses, which offer tourists an experience which is somehow lacking in contemporary life (Waterton 2014: 46). Therefore, one way to begin to understand what makes the time travel trope within *Outlander* meaningful to its many fans is to examine the motivations given for the travellers' journeys. Do they travel to search for an authentic experience which is missing from their lives beforehand? And are these journeys meaningful to audiences because they mirror some lack of authenticity in their own lives? The first episode of *Outlander* season one motivates Claire's time travel with multiple and competing factors. She begins the story on holiday in Scotland in 1945 with her husband and historian Frank (Tobias Menzies), who is on a genealogical mission to find traces of his ancestor Jack Randall, an officer in the English army in the 18th century. The show therefore offers up an example of 'roots tourism' in its very first scenes, albeit for a character with English rather than Scottish heritage. The couple are meant to be rekindling their marriage stalled by separation during WWII, but Frank seems more interested in his family's past than in helping Claire to conceive a child who might secure the future of their family line. Therefore the most obvious desire or lack which Claire displays is for a child. Here we can recall Negra's discussion of pregnancy in time travel romance movies, which is often presented as a magical (although of course completely counterproductive) solution for a women undergoing a time crisis (Negra 2009: 53-59).

However, in the case of *Outlander*, Claire is not stressed or alienated by work, in fact rather the opposite. Bloody flashbacks to her experience during WWII indicate that she was fulfilled and inspired by her role as a battlefield nurse, and that she misses feeling valued and useful. Claire's desire for a career is restated throughout her time in the 18th century, even at one point directly endangering her role as a mother to Jamie's child. Whilst heavily pregnant Claire continues to treat patients at a religious hospital in Paris, almost causing a miscarriage. What Claire lacks more than a child is a calling, a way to be useful. She certainly has no real interest in the Scots mysticism and folklore which enable the story's 'time machine': the fictitious standing stones at Craigh na Dun. She goes back to the stones to pick up a biological specimen which she glimpsed there when visiting with Frank. Claire's major strengths as a character, including her talent for botany and medicine and her straight-talking confidence, seem to be attributed to her status as an orphan, given that she was forced to be resourceful by a nomadic upbringing spent with her archaeologist uncle. Given this backstory, it is possible to motivate Claire's time travel with her lack of a genealogical history of her own, and therefore a sense of 'home'. This reading is reinforced by the TV show's opening sequence, which introduces Claire gazing into a shop window as her voiceover recalls "I realised I'd never owned a vase. That I'd never lived in one place long enough to justify having such a simple thing." Claire may be the narrative's primary time-traveller, but she is by no means the only character from the novels and TV shows to manage this feat. Whilst in the 18th century she befriends Geillis Duncan (Lotte Verbeek), a woman with similarly modern feelings about female power to her own. Geillis suffers the ultimate punishment of 'unruly women' and is apparently burned as a witch (Faith 1993), just as Claire realises that she too had travelled back in time from the 20th century. In later novels, Claire and Jamie's adult daughter Brianna (Sophie Skelton) also becomes a time-traveller, as does her fiancé Roger (Richard Rankin), who is later revealed to be the descendent of Geillis Duncan. There are further time travellers found in the later novels in the series (yet to be televised), in which the action transfers from Jacobite Scotland to the colonies of the New World. It is worth summarising the narrative motivations of all these time-travelling characters here to establish whether there are any common thematic threads (see table 1).

Table 1: Narrative motivations for time travel across the *Outlander* series.

Character	Extent of time travel	Motivations/Lacks
Claire Randall/ Fraser	Travels 1945 to 1743. Marries Jamie, becomes pregnant, returns from 1745 to 1948. Raises Brianna with first husband Frank until 1968 then returns (alone) to 1765 to reunite with Jamie. Couple emigrate to Virginia.	A baby. A calling/career. A vase (i.e. family, sense of home). A place in genealogical history.
Geillis Duncan/ Gillian Edgars	Scots historian Edgars travels 1968 to 1740s. Marries, poisons husband, apparently burnt as a witch. Survives to bear illegitimate child who is forefather of Roger Wakefield /Mackenzie.	Nationalism, wants to rewrite history so Scots win at Culloden. Passion for Scots folklore lost in 20th century.
Brianna Randall / Mackenzie	Follows Claire through the stones from 1970s to 1760s. Bears a child then marries Roger Mackenzie, descendent of Geillis Duncan. Daughter born with heart murmur leading to return from 1776 to 1970/80s. Family then return to 1770s to remain.	Genealogical search for parents esp. father she has never met (Jamie). Second journey back in time to search for lost son.
Roger Wakefield / Mackenzie.	Follows fiancé Brianna through stones but is nearly killed in attempt. Marries Brianna and returns with her and family to 1970s, before ending their story in 18th century.	Love for Brianna. Also search for genealogical identity as was adopted as a child.
Robert Stringer / "Otter Tooth"	Mysterious shaman who meets the Frasers in Virginia, later discovered to be another time traveller from 1968.	Part of American Indian Movement in 1968. Time travels for ethnic identity, to assist Kahnyen'kehaka tribe fight Europeans in 18th Century.

Sources: Gabaldon, Diana, *Outlander* (1991), *Dragonfly in Amber* (1992); *Voyager* (1993); *The Outlandish Companion Vol. 1* (1999); *The Outlandish Companion Vol. 2* (2015).

The key similarities between these motivations are the desire for family, genealogical searches, and issues of authentic national or ethnic identity. Clearly these motivations are not dissimilar to those of 'roots tourists' in general and *Outlander* tourists in particular, as evidenced in the repetition of the word "home" in the comments of my survey respondents. Given that the character arcs of the central family made up of Claire, Jamie, Brianna and Roger all conclude in the Virginia of the 18th century, there is a sense that these characters might be like the real ancestors of Scottish diasporic readers and audiences. Indeed, whilst the majority of *Outlander* tourism activity to date has happened in Scotland, there are already similar organised tours in Virginia (e.g. VisitAlexandria 2018), and these seem set to increase in number should the remainder of the novels reach the small screen.

'Parallels with my birth country's people's beliefs': Nationalism and Ancestry

One of the most striking of the stories revealed by the Facebook survey of fans came from a Canadian *Outlander* fan, who commented that she was drawn to the series because of 'parallels with my birth country's people's beliefs before communism (Romania)'. This response suggests that the show's exploration of Scottish history may resonate with diasporic audiences across the world, whether Scottish or from a different background. This respondent also chose language which highlights the extent to which we understand national identity in familial terms: '*birth* country'. But most significantly, this account of the show's appeal illustrates the emotional power of a narrative structure which uses time travel to return to a point before a national trauma takes place, and to offer the possibility of a different past and therefore present and future. In *Outlander*, the traumatic national crisis which acts as a pivot for the first three novels and TV series is the battle of Culloden in 1746, which saw the Jacobite rebellion lead by Charles Stuart violently crushed by the English. Today's Scottish diaspora was seeded during the 19th and early 20th centuries, when around two million people left Scotland for a life overseas (Beultmann 2013: 1). Whilst globally this is dwarfed by the fifty million people leaving Europe during a similar period, the relatively sparse population of Scotland meant that the impact was felt more greatly there; for instance, the Western highlands lost an estimated one third of its population between 1841 and 1861 alone (Devine 1999: 468). This period of mass emigration is associated with the 'Highland Clearances', which took place in the wake of Culloden from 1746 and consisted of a systematic dismantling of the Highland culture and way of life. Whilst other factors also contributed to Scottish emigration over the century to come, Culloden and the Clearances hold a special place in the mythological construction of Scottish national identity, and therefore diasporic Scottish ancestry.

Within *Outlander*'s narrative structure, Culloden functions primarily as a tragic obstacle for the formation of the central romantic couple and their subsequent offspring. The same can be said of many historical romances in fiction and cinema (Radway 1987), but the key difference here is that Claire is from the future and therefore knows for sure that the rebellion will fail and that many Scots will lose their lives, including, most likely her new husband and father to her unborn child. Once she has convinced Jamie of this outcome, the two set about attempting to change history, not, as one might perhaps expect, by bolstering the Scottish army at the site of their defeat and therefore winning the war, but rather by preventing the entire Jacobean uprising in the first place by strangling its financial support. Jamie has relatives in Paris who put the couple in touch with the exiled Charles Stuart, who in the TV adaptation is played as a faintly comedic simpering fop by English actor Andrew Gower. Various courtly and financial shenanigans ensue, including encounters with King Louis XV at Versailles, but ultimately their plans are frustrated by the surprise return of the stories principal antagonist, Black Jack Randall (Tobias Menzies), whom the couple believed to be dead. Black Jack is the very same ancestor of Claire's first husband Frank whom the couple were searching for when Claire first fell back through time. In an unlikely but dramatically satisfying coincidence, Black Jack is the first person that Claire meets in the past, and she initially mistakes him for Frank. There is one key element which amplifies and heightens the strangeness of this moment on television, and that is the casting of the same actor, Tobias Menzies, to play both Frank, Claire's gentle bookish husband, and Black Jack, a depraved sadist with a penchant for torture and rape. This uncanny 'doppelganger' effect along with the dreamlike logic of time travel invites a Freudian reading of the scene, with Black Jack as the rampant id released from Frank's rational superego. But we might also consider Black Jack as the 'return of the repressed' in a nationalist sense - as the apparently harmless English history professor morphs into a rampant embodiment of English imperialism, revealing the bloody truth behind Frank's 20th century privilege.

Whatever Black Jack symbolises, ultimately it is his status as Frank's ancestor which presents Jamie and Claire with a genealogical paradox, which is one of the key features identified by Wittenberg's study of literary time travel (2013). Jamie has good reason to want Jack dead, as he suffered a sustained physical and sexual assault at his hands whilst imprisoned by the English army. However, Claire concludes that if Jack dies, Frank will cease to exist, and if Claire is forced to return to the present she will need Frank to help bring up their unborn daughter. Unable to escape this catch 22, the couple are temporarily estranged and their attempts to prevent the Jacobite uprisings fail, drawing them to the point of apparently permanent separation as the battle commences. Thus, it is not the unstoppable march of history that almost destroys the central romantic pairing, but rather the inescapable

bind of ancestry in the perverted shape of Black Jack. This glimpse of the dark side of ancestral history does not necessarily sound consistent with a show which has come to act as a tourist driver for diasporic audiences. But whilst the events depicted in the show are often violent and tragic, not least the battle of Culloden itself, the evidence of my *Outlander* fan survey suggests that this is no obstacle to the desire to travel, in fact sometimes quite the opposite. Of the named locations visited when my respondents travelled to Scotland, Culloden was by far the most significant, and the battleground also received the greatest volume of emotional commentary, with visitors commonly describing the experience of as 'heart-breaking'. Indeed, National Trust Scotland have confirmed that the battlefield at Culloden has seen a significant increase in visitor numbers since *Outlander* went to air (Davies 2015). As other studies of so-called 'dark tourism' have found (e.g. Lennon and Foley 2000) there is emotional catharsis to be found by visiting the places where awful events occurred. Claire herself becomes a 20th century 'dark tourist' at the close of the second season, where the emotional climax is her tearful farewell to Jamie as she kneels at the site of Clan Fraser's mass grave at Culloden Moor. Of course this moment only amplifies the attractiveness of the location for *Outlander* fans with Scottish ancestral heritage, causing a feedback loop characteristic of media tourism.

Conclusions: '…she had never seen the series as it wasn't allowed in Scotland…'

One of the American respondents to the *Outlander* tourism survey reported visiting a Scottish castle used in filming the show and being told by the tour guide that 'she had never seen the series as it wasn't allowed in Scotland... this was right before the vote... interesting!' It certainly is 'interesting' that the idea of the show being withheld from TV screens in Scotland so close to the independence referendum should have gained so much traction. The controversial content of *Outlander* is found in its direct and spectacular dramatisation of the battle of Culloden from the Scottish point of view. By coincidence, the first season of *Outlander* aired in the US in 2014 just as the Scottish independence debate raged in the UK, and it appears that the potentially inflammatory nature of the show did not go unnoticed by the British political establishment. Emails leaked in the wake of the Sony hacking scandal of 2014 illustrate that Prime Minister David Cameron had meetings with the company at which their plans to export the show to British broadcasters were discussed. Although not clear evidence that the Prime Minister was trying to prevent the show reaching a wide audience in the UK, this was certainly an unusual intervention which has prompted much speculation amongst fans and internet conspiracy theorists. (WikiLeaks 2015). The resulting impasse allowed *Outlander* to be poached by streaming service Amazon Prime, who marketed it as their first major exclusive drama series in the UK, and the show eventually arrived on Channel 4's drama channel More4 some three years later in June 2017.

Duncan Petrie has discussed the importance of the Jacobite rebellions for the historical representation of Scotland in cinema, which has tended to cast Highlanders as 'noble savages' fighting the English forces of oppression against a backdrop of untamed Scottish wilderness (Petrie 2000: 53). The associated iconography of Tartanry which exoticises the many films about Rob Roy and Bonnie Prince Charlie has long been criticised as romantic, conservative nonsense designed to appeal to ignorant Hollywood audiences (McArthur 1982). It would certainly be possible to lay similar charges at the feet of the American author Gabaldon and the US production company Starz who produce the TV adaptations of *Outlander.* However, when surveying the critical reaction to both the novels and its TV adaptations, this culturally imperialist discourse is no longer a major factor for critics, industry commentators, and certainly not for fans. In the 35 years since Colin McArthur's important intervention in discussion of Scottish cinema and television, both industries have continued to become increasingly transnational, and, particularly on the digital small screen, it is often difficult to ascribe specific national status. Indeed, for displaced or diasporic audiences this transnationality can help audiences to feel 'at home' (Georgiou 2013). However, as I have demonstrated in this article, it is the novels' and shows' use of the time travel device which both complicates and familiarises what might otherwise be considered inauthentic period fluff. It is easy to imagine how uncomfortable the idea of a glamorous, romantic vision of Culloden on Scottish TV screens in 2014 might have made David Cameron nervous, but in fact the battle, and indeed the entire Jacobite rebellion is presented within the narrative as a tragic folly, triggered by a pompous, ineffective leader. What really matters is family and ancestry, whether that is positive, as with Jamie and Claire's relocation to Virginia, or darker in flavour, as with the inescapability of Black Jack and Culloden itself.

Diana Gabaldon's *Outlander* series of novels is so enduringly popular with loyal fans that she has published two volumes of additional supporting material, *The Outlandish Companions Vols 1 & 2*. In the first volume, alongside character breakdowns, plot synopses and convoluted family trees, Gabaldon outlines her personal theory of time travel. This begins with two founding principles of the logic underpinning the novels and their adaptations: '1) the stone circles mark places of passage, and 2) the ability to pass through time is evidently genetic' (Gabaldon 1999: 331). In the *Outlander* universe, genealogy, family history and ancestral identity are absolutely central. These elements motivate the time travel of its characters, creating a complex web of familial and historical connections which offer a compelling fantasy for a Scottish diasporic readership and audience. The marketing tagline 'What if your future was the past?; becomes an invitation which is difficult to resist for audiences with an interest in genealogy and heritage tourism. The novels and TV shows draw

these viewers into identifying with Claire Fraser and other time travellers as they are transported through time, bringing the historical periods of their ancestors tantalisingly within their reach. Little wonder then that for the legions of *Outlander* fans, as my fan survey demonstrates, time travel creates the desire for physical travel to Scotland. And whether or not this desire is acted upon, for a Scottish diasporic audience (and readership) the idea of their future identity being tied to the past is deeply meaningful and a source of genuine pleasure.

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Ednotes.

[1] The research information sheet given to participants and full results of the survey are available online at http://bit.ly/outlander_survey .