

МІНІСТЕРСТВО ОСВІТИ І НАУКИ УКРАЇНИ  
ХАРКІВСЬКИЙ НАЦІОНАЛЬНИЙ ПЕДАГОГІЧНИЙ УНІВЕРСИТЕТ  
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# Сучасні філологічні і методичні студії: проблематика і перспективи

## Матеріали

Міжнародної науково-практичної конференції  
для науковців, викладачів, учителів, здобувачів  
вищої освіти

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<b><i>Шкриль Катерина, Одегова Наталія</i></b> The Motivational Aspect of Cooperative Learning in the English Classroom.....	96
<b>СУЧАСНІ ЛІТЕРАТУРОЗНАВЧІ СТУДІЇ.....</b>	99
<b><i>Deniz Suzan</i></b> A Reconsideration of the Childhood Myth and its Reflections in “The Giver” and “The Last Children”.....	99
<b><i>Tamošiūnienė Lora</i></b> Debate of “Distant” vs “Close” Reading in Literature Studies.....	101
<b><i>Веретюк Тетяна</i></b> До питання розвитку жанру детектив в українській літературі.....	103
<b><i>Веретюк Тетяна, Киричук Софія</i></b> Жанр міського фентезі в українській літературі.....	105
<b><i>Володарська Маргарита</i></b> The novel “Little women” by L.M. Alcott: Interpretation Aspects.....	108
<b><i>Горовенко Марія</i></b> Scottish Cultural Identity in the Novel ‘Outlander’ by D. Gabaldon.....	111
<b><i>Князь Ганна</i></b> Рецепція античності в англійській літературі.....	113
<b><i>Козлова Алла</i></b> Осень в лирике Эльдара Рязанова.....	116
<b><i>Кононова Жанна</i></b> Balmont – The Translator of English Poetry.....	119
<b><i>Корнєєва Людмила</i></b> Кросс-опусний художній світ у контексті колективної сутності культури... ..	122
<b><i>Лазарева Олена</i></b> Художня концепція світу та руйнівна саморефлексія у творчості М. Еміса....	124
<b><i>Приходько Віра, Солошенко-Задніпровська Наталія</i></b> Духовний світ людини на війні.....	127

# SCOTTISH CULTURAL IDENTITY IN THE NOVEL “OUTLANDER” BY D. GABALDON

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Folk tales and myths are collective heritage of a particular nation. Myth – is a narrative sequence through which a given culture ratifies its social customs (Oxford dictionary of literary terms, p. 163). Myths are one of the factors which define national identity. Nearly all nations have their own mythology which is passed over from generation to generation. Myths are stories which reflect collective attitude of people to some important issues. Mythology – is a body of related myths shared by members of people or religion (Oxford dictionary of literary terms, p. 164).

The topicality of the abstract is defined by the lack of profound studies of myths and legends in the novel “Outlander” in the light of national identity. The purpose of this work is to explore the ways in which Scottishness is expressed as a part of cultural identity and investigate the means this notion is represented.

Diana Gabaldon is the author of the award-winning, bestselling “*Outlander*” novels. Dr. Gabaldon holds three degrees in science and worked as a university professor before beginning to write fiction. “*Outlander*”, published in 1991, is the first in highly successful romantic novel series, written by D. Gabaldon, a № 1 New York Times bestselling author. “History comes deliciously alive on the page” (New York Daily News). Historical background, Jacobite rebellion, is an important part of the novel, which introduces the concept of Scottishness. Jacobites fought for independence, they fought to restore the exiled king James and were led by his son Prince Charles Edward Stuart.

The plot revolves around life, love and adventures of Claire Randal and Jamie Frazer. The novel consists of seven parts, the first two are set in 1945, portraying the end of WWII and life of the main characters as they try to reconcile with the aftermath of the war, while the rest of the book presents the detailed account of the turbulent events of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Scotland. Scottish myths and legends play crucial role in the plot structure, creating atmosphere of magic and supernatural.

The historical part of the novel is set in the Scottish Highlands. *There is no place on earth with more of the old superstitions and magic mixed up into its daily life than the Scottish Highlands* (Gabaldon, 2014, p. 20).

The central mythic image, which plays pivotal role in the plot development, is the Stone Circles. It is believed that Claire, on the eve of Samhain (pagan religious festival), was able to travel back in time due to the astronomical location of the stones at Craigh na Dun. The motif of time travel is recurrent in the novel and is realized through the image of Craigh na Dun. The truth behind this group of stones is shrouded in mystery. Local people believe that the stones were used by their ancestors for religious purpose. Craigh na Dun is fictional Stone Circle, it was *smaller than Stonehenge...the tallest stone was cleft, with a vertical split dividing by two massive pieces* (Gabaldon, 2014, p. 59). The cleft on the main stone is symbolic,

foreshadowing that the life of the main character will be divided into 2 parts once she goes through the stones.

There are many ancient sites in Scotland, each with its tale to tell. Local legends suggest they embody the petrified soles of the past. According to another version, these could be giants turned into stones by a Saint for their refusal to convert to Christianity. Other legends say the stones were transported by Celtic Giants to perform some rituals.

Another important mythic image in the novel is *kelpie*. In Scottish folklore kelpies are horse-like water spirits, which are believed to have the strength of 100 horses. They are said to possess a dark and dangerous nature. They usually live in running waters. Most of the creatures are thought to be “shape-lifters”. They can disguise themselves as many things in order to lure people to their doom.

In the 18 chapter Rupert tells the story of a water horse that takes a farmer’s wife, *who had come to the loch to draw water, and carried her away to live in the depths of the loch...* (Gabaldon, 2014, p. 344) The story foreshadows the upcoming events at the MacKenzie’s camp that night, with another clan raiding and stealing their horses. It is important to mention that, while telling the legend, Rupert uses a lot of Gaelic words to create atmosphere of mystery and suspense. This device is aimed to realize the concept of Scottishness.

In the first part of the book Claire encounters the monster herself. When she was on the excursion to the Great Glen and Loch Ness, the guide told the myth about the inhabitant of the lake. *There are stories, to be sure, of something old and evil that once lived in the depths. Sacrifices were made to it...* (Gabaldon, 2014 p. 50) The Loch Ness monster is one of Scottish most popular mysterious creatures. The first recorded sighting of it was 1500 years ago when the giant creature jumped out of the lake and ate up a local farmer. Notably, local stone carvings by the Pict depict a mysterious beast with flippers. Since then there have been numerous accounts about the monster. Many of these alleged encounters were inspired by Scottish folklore, where mythical water creature can be found in abundance.

The myth about the Loch Ness is elaborately interwoven into the text. The first reference of it foreshadows Claire’s actual encounter with the creature. In the 19<sup>th</sup> chapter a time traveler meets another time traveler. *Oddly enough I was not really afraid. I felt some faint kinship with it...* (Gabaldon, 2014, p. 360). This description abounds with olfactory and visual images, aimed at creating the atmosphere of mystery and suspense. The idea of Scottishness is complemented with the language Claire uses to comfort the man, who witnessed the sudden appearance of the beast. *It’s only a wee monster. Wee* –meaning *little* is purely Scottish word. The lake itself symbolizes a time-portal, which allows a *water beast* to pass through it. In the novel the lake is depicted with the help of olfactory (*raspberry-caness scent, smell of cold dark water*) images.

Another image which is connected with the element of water is *silkie*. It was introduced in the novel with the reference to Brian Frazer, who was believed to be silkie, because of his *hair like fire* and *the warmth of the oil on his back*. According to the legend, which apparently originated on the Orkney and Shetland Islands, where

*selkie* is the Scots word for seal, a man, who found a beautiful female selkie, sunbathing on the beach, stole her skin and forced her to become his wife. Years later, the selkie found her skin and turned back to seal form. In the novel the tale about Jamie's mother and her mysterious disappearance is revealed to Claire by Auld Alice.

Mythology, legends, folk tale will never cease to exist. It is obvious that cultural identity and cultural heritage of a nation live in mythological mode. The given abstract presents an attempt to analyze how Scottish cultural identity is represented through myths in the novel "Outlander".

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## РЕЦЕПЦІЯ АНТИЧНОСТІ В АНГЛІЙСЬКІЙ ЛІТЕРАТУРІ

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Античність як вид художньої рецепції та трансформації греко-римської спадщини має довгу історію в англійській літературі, на кожному етапі якої оприявнюються пріоритетні форми, риси і способи запозичення античних сюжетів, мотивів і образів. Впродовж тривалого часу дослідників турбує питання, чому античність є невичерпним джерелом, що є формо- і змістотворчим потенціалом для культурного світового спадку, а звернення до античності присутньо збагачує літературний процес.

Термін «античність» був введений до вжитку на початку XVIII сторіччя у французькій мові і позначав особливий тип цивілізації, що належав до ранніх історичних періодів. Поява багатьох розвідок, що пов'язані з історією мистецтв, призвела до звуження поняття «античність» до меж греко-римської культури. Універсальність античного спадку полягає в його множинному проникненні в різні сфери культурно-естетичного розвитку народів Європи та сучасного світу загалом. Багатовікова дистанція між античністю та наступними епохами-реципієнтами стала запорукою успішного використання грецьких сюжетів, образів, мотивів, символів.