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# **La représentation des mythes et légendes dans la série *Outlander***

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## Partie universitaire :

### Introduction

Scotland is an enigmatic and fascinating country. You can find here vast and spectacular landscapes, pretty old mountains and it provides a rich history. But more than that, Scotland is also a country of myths and legends. The most ancient legends of Scotland participated in shaping the identity of the nation and made its people considerably unique. These myths and legends managed to withstand time and still have a consequential influence on the Scottish inhabitants today and particularly on Scottish tourism.

Scottish mythology inspired artists all around the world and numerous works were created such as in art, literature, movies and others. One good example of this influence is Diana Gabaldon whose works piqued my curiosity. Diana Gabaldon is an American author born in 1952 in Arizona. She is the author of the hugely famous series *Outlander*. This series is today composed of eight books and the first book was published in 1988. Diana Gabaldon is currently writing the ninth book. The success of the series inspired the production of a TV show in the United States. It was first adapted and produced in 2014 by Ronald D. Moore. You can find four complete seasons on the Netflix platform as well as in DVD's. For the moment, each book corresponds to one season and the TV show is considered as following the books even if there are some differences. The first two seasons and books will be studied in this study.

*"It's always two hundred years ago in Highland stories, the same thing as 'Once upon a time', you know."* The story begins in 1945 with Claire Randall. Claire has spent the last six years in the English army, working as a nurse during the second world war. At the end of the war, she gets back to her husband, Franck, a devotee historian and they both decide to travel to Scotland for a second honeymoon. Franck is more than happy to show his wife what remains of this country rich in history and culture, therefore the couple discovers a land full of mysteries and myths. While Claire is rambling alone in the nature, she stumbles upon a standing stones site which is a mythical part of the Scottish culture. By touching the stone, she is mysteriously sent to another period of time, two hundred years ago, in 1743 but still in Scotland. She finds herself plunged

into a bloody battle opposing a highland clan to the English army during the second Jacobite rebellion. Claire is finally rescued by the clan and forced to adapt and learn by herself the culture of the eighteenth century.

The title of the novel *Outlander* is definitely striking and is also a good representation of the mysteries of Scotland. “Outlander” literally means “foreigner” in American<sup>1</sup>. It suggests that Claire is a complete foreigner in this country. Originally, Diana Gabaldon wanted to name her book “Cross stitch”, but her editor didn’t like the idea, thinking it didn’t give a very precise idea of what the book would be about. Diana Gabaldon is American, therefore the title *Outlander* was proposed. The fact that it qualifies Claire is questionable because it’s an American word to depict an English woman in Scotland but it’s clear that it’s easier to understand than “Cross stitch” for foreign readers. Claire is not only an outlander because of her cultural background (she is English), but also since she comes from another period. The title *Outlander* can also depict the world into which Claire enters. In her opinion, this place is totally unknown, what happened to her can easily be called magic. Magic is something strange, unfamiliar, it can even be qualified as ominous and eerie since it’s something the human being doesn’t master and doesn’t understand. One single word which can take numerous meanings is enough to define this series; for that reason, the supernatural will constitute the main part of this essay.

In the first novel, Franck tells Claire that “there’s no place on earth with more of the old superstitions and magic mixed into its daily life than the Scottish Highlands”. Indeed, many works about tales invented in the Highlands of Scotland were and are still produced today. For instance, J.F. Campbell published for the first time in 1860 a series of books called *Popular Tales of The West Highlands*. The tales he tells were orally collected by Campbell<sup>2</sup> and are an irrefutable evidence of the Scottish inclination to tell stories. Campbell would also have invented some of these legends.

But first of all, it’s important to define the notion of myth. The meanings of this word are plentiful but in the studied context, “myth” implies a traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people or explaining a natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings or events<sup>3</sup>. In fact, a myth is typically a

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<sup>1</sup> “outlander”: definition of the [Oxford English Dictionary](#)

<sup>2</sup> As it is mentioned in the flyleaf of volume 1: *Popular Tales of The West Highlands*, J.F. Campbell (1994)

<sup>3</sup> Definition of the [Oxford English Dictionary](#)

traditional sacred story of anonymous authorship and archetypal or universal significance which is recounted in a certain community and is often linked with a ritual<sup>4</sup>. Myths in *Outlander* seems mainly inspired from the Scottish community, but they could also come from another culture and that's what will be studied in this essay too.

In both books and TV show *Outlander*, plenty of myths and legends are illustrated. Besides the fact that Claire Randall is magically transported into another period of time, she witnesses the tendency of the Scottish inhabitants to believe in the supernatural and to be quite superstitious in the eighteenth century. Is this still the case nowadays? The answer will be given later in the essay<sup>5</sup>.

But if the illustration of myths is both in the books and in the TV, there is a real opposition between the two media. The adaption is considered as faithfully reproduced, but some choices have been made that were required because of the technical differences between the two media. That's why I will specify whether I'm talking about the book or about the series each time I will specifically refer to *Outlander*.

Myths and legends in *Outlander* will be the main thread of this thesis. The analysis will be organized around the idea that *Outlander* could not be a worthy representation of the Scottish folklore and culture. The first part of my study will question the literary genre of *Outlander*. Is the series a fantasy fiction, a historical fiction or a romance? In my second part, I will raise the issue of the myths and legends more in details by doing some interpretations and by identifying whether these only are a pure invention of the author or rely on something that belongs to the Scottish culture. The last and final part of this work will focus on the consequences of *Outlander* on Scottish television tourism.

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<sup>4</sup> Laurence Coupe-, *Myth (The New Critical Idiom)* Introduction p. 6 Routledge, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2009

<sup>5</sup> In part II: Myths and legends in *Outlander*

l) Outlander: a fantasy fiction, a historical fiction or a romance?

The *Outlander* series is very difficult to classify. You can find as much magic and love story as real historic facts. Therefore, it can be interesting to begin with a proper definition of some major genres in literature: the fantasy fiction, the historical fiction and the romance.

A fantasy fiction is automatically related to the genre of fantastic. We often associate fantasy with children and young adults, yet this genre can also be found in adult literature. Giving a proper definition of the genre seems quite difficult since it's strongly related to subjectivity, but for the literary critic Tzvetan Todorov, fantasy is linked to the hesitation experience by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event<sup>6</sup>. It's a literature of "uncanny", of "imaginary". There is concretely a confrontation between the reality and unreality. The moment when a scientific explanation is given, we can no more talk about fantasy. Low fantasy and high fantasy are two sub-genres which are associated with fantasy fiction. Low fantasy corresponds to a story where plots occur in our rational, familiar world, where supernatural events occur without causality or explanations whereas high fantasy offers stories that occur in a world completely different from ours, a world which can be named as a "secondary world", with its own set of natural rules. Today, *The Lord of the Rings* written by J.R Tolkien is considered as a classic of the fantasy genre.

A historical fiction is a quite particular genre in the sense that it raises questions about the differences between the fact and the fiction. Many debates exist about the fact that history and fiction can't get along. Here I'll try to draw a simple definition of this genre which initially appeared in the nineteenth century. Sir Walter Scott was considered by the philosopher George Lukács as the introducer of the genre of historical novels with *Waverley* written in the nineteenth century<sup>7</sup>. Lukács confessed that Scott add an essential sociologic dimension that was not present in the previous so-called "historical novels": "[...] characters should be socially and psychologically true, demanding that a ruler make love differently from a shepherd, and so on. The question of historical truth in the artistic reflection of reality still lies beyond his horizon". This means that the historical aspect mustn't be the only one considered. The sociological aspect is as

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<sup>6</sup> Tzvetan Todorov-, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* Definition of the fantastic p. 25 [\[online\]](#)

<sup>7</sup> George Lukács-, *The Historical Novel* Chapter 1 p. 19 [\[online\]](#)

much relevant. *Outlander* is often compared with this myth of historical fiction<sup>8</sup>. Historical novels aim to depict the real past as it truly happened. But they also put forward elements that are not necessarily part of the reality. Authors of historical fictions can invent fictive characters, embellish the truth in order to entertain and draw the reader's attention. But in any case, historical novels bring real historical fact that can help the reader to better understand the past and better know it.

As for the romance genre, it is very ancient because it first appeared in France in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. But its meaning evolved throughout the centuries. At the beginning and during the medieval period, a romance was more about chivalrous epics and heroic journeys: "Romances are generally composed of the Constant Loves and invincible Courages of Hero's, Heroins, Kings and Queens, Mortals of the first Rank, and so forth"<sup>9</sup>. This genre lasted during more than a millennium but was replaced by the romance as we know it today, even if it evolved a lot. Romantic elements and love stories took precedence over the rest, but the notion of "romance" remained. The association of Romance Writers of America talks about a "central love story" and an "emotionally satisfying and optimistic ending"<sup>10</sup>

#### 1) *Outlander*: a fantasy fiction

The *Outlander* series combines many aspects of the fantasy novel. The reason why I chose to focus on myths and legends developed in the books and TV show is because it's full of stories told by the inhabitants but also because inexplicable stories occur within the story. The first and most important aspect is what happens to Claire Randall in the beginning of the story. If the cause of the event as well as the implementation of ritual can and must be questioned <sup>11</sup>, the fact is that Claire is mysteriously transported in another time. The world in which she ends up can have existed, but the event is totally magical. Claire experiences time-travel twice in the first two seasons of *Outlander*: the first time when she arrives in the eighteenth century (episode 101) and the second time when she come back to the twentieth century, her own period of time (episode 213). In this episode, Geillis Duncan, an eighteenth-century friend of Claire also experiences time-travel. This element is by itself sufficient to think the books

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<sup>8</sup> More information in the article: From *Waverley* to *Outlander* reinforcing Scottish diasporic identity through book consumption

<sup>9</sup> William Congreve-; *The Critical Heritage* p. 56 [[online](#)]

<sup>10</sup> [RWA site](#) *About the Romance Genre*

<sup>11</sup> The concept of *Time Travel* will be studied later in the essay (Part II)

belong to the category of low fantasy (described as stories in which magical events occur in the world in which we live). Claire herself, who is a true scientist and who has grown up in a world where thoughts on magical events have long evolved, comes to believe that magic finally could exist. It is shown in episode 103 when she meets Geillis who asks her if she believes in demonic possession. Geillis says that she believes “there are powers beyond our kern, beyond what we can see and hear and touch. Demon, fairy, devil, it doesn’t matter what name we put on them”. Claire is embarrassed, as if she actually didn’t know what to think about it, especially when Geillis interestingly and weirdly asks her if she has never found herself in a situation with no earthly explanation.

But although this magical element is major in *Outlander* in the sense that the whole story is based on this, time-travel is the only event that can’t be explained at all in the story. Other points that could be linked to the fantasy are parts of the superstitions in Scotland. Indeed, Claire hears many supernatural stories from the Scottish people, whether it is in the eighteenth century or in the twentieth century, even if it’s more obvious in the eighteenth century in the TV show. In episode 103, Claire is told that a child is possessed by the devil. Everybody but Claire believes in devil possession and that makes us think that the most important thing to do to make something real is to believe in it: magic can exist if everybody believes it exists. In that case also, *Outlander* can be classified as a fantasy fiction.

## 2) *Outlander*: a historical fiction

In an interview of Diana Gabaldon<sup>12</sup>, the author admitted that she really wanted to write a novel about a particular historical period, no matter the setting. The eighteenth century of Scotland represented for her a key period because of the Jacobite rebellions. Indeed, the Jacobite revolution began in 1688 with the removal of James II during the Glorious Revolution and ended with the battle of Culloden in 1745. It was one century of bloody battles and a lot of divisions inside Scotland itself and the rebels weren’t able to restore the Stuarts to the throne. The Jacobite risings are a major part of the first book and of the first season. Besides, when Claire experiences her first time travel, she immediately arrives in the middle of a battle between a Scottish clan and the English army. Gabaldon obviously tried to represent the brutality of the period,

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<sup>12</sup> Interview of the [Scots Magazine](#) : “Caught Between Two Worlds – Diana Gabaldon Interview”



mainly in the second season by describing the 1746 battle of Prestonpans. Nonetheless, the book as well as the episode in which this event occurs are much based on the role of Claire, who is here to heal and help the soldiers (English as Scottish) who were hurt during the fight. Of course, this part of the story are representative evidences of the horrors of the event and of the quantity of victims and injured after the battle, but it conceals other components of the conflict that are crucial. The TV show tried to represent some of these elements, contrary to the book which is only focused on Claire. By contrast, the political issue is clearly detailed in the book as well as in the TV show. Gabaldon tried to demonstrate the different alliances that were forged during this period, the role of the different military and royal protagonists, the place of the military strategies of the uprising... All of what the main character Jamie Fraser does during the first two seasons is about the Jacobite cause. He is in the centre of this event and acts for it.

Talking about the characters, the figures who are directly concerned by the Jacobite rebellion and who are present in Gabaldon's story really existed in real life. This is of course the case of Bonnie Prince Charlie, the person responsible of the last Jacobite uprising. Bonnie Prince Charlie - whose real name is actually Charles Edward Stuart – and his adepts thought that he was the legal heir to the throne of Great Britain, that's why he decided to lead the 1745 uprising in order to overthrow King George II. *Outlander* TV show tries to represent the personality of the character of Bonnie Prince Charlie. The image which is given of the Prince is quite negative. In the second episode of season II, Jamie Fraser meets Charles Edouard for the first time. The latter is shown as someone a little puerile, reckless and his attitude is quite ridiculous. In real life, Charles Edouard Stuart was transformed as a mythical hero, but he's very often described him as autocratic, immature, totally self-centred<sup>13</sup>. Of course, these elements are not the only ones which depict the Prince, but the TV show mainly concentrated on these points. The TV show also added something that could not be put forward in the books: the generic. The Jacobite rebellions period and particularly the story of Bonnie Prince Charlie inspired many people who invented romantic versions of his life. The famous poet Robert Louis Stevenson is one of them since he

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<sup>13</sup> Lenman B., *The Jacobite Risings in Britain 1689-1746*, London, 1980, pp. 247, 287, 288; 1995, p. 13

produced a ballad in 1896 about Bonnie Prince Charlie's flight to the Isle of Skye after he lost the rising.

*Sing me a song of a lad that is gone,  
Say, could that lad be I?  
Merry of soul he sailed on a day  
Over the sea to Skye.*

*Mull was astern, Rum on the port,  
Eigg on the starboard bow,  
Glory of youth glowed in his soul,  
Where is that glory now?*

*Give me again all that was there,  
Give me the sun that shone!  
Give me the eyes, give me the soul,  
Give me the lad that's gone!*

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

Actually, the song was originally written by Harold Boulton in the 1870's, while the lyrics were a little different.<sup>14</sup> What is important here is that the generic of The Skye Boat Song is a cover of Robert Louis Stevenson's version adapted by Bear McCreary. The lyrics were also modified but what is notably striking is that the word "lad" was replaced by "lass" which could refer to Claire. It could be linked to her magical disappearance of the twentieth century<sup>15</sup>. The generic emphasizes the historical side of *Outlander* by appropriating a big myth of the Scottish history.

It could be easy to think that the author Diana Gabaldon consciously took some cliché Scottish names. The fact is that the famous clans that appear in the show existed in real life. The MacLeod, the MacKenzie, the Cameron that are mentioned in *Outlander*

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<sup>14</sup> Andrew Kuntz-, [The Fiddler's Companion: A Descriptive Index of North American and British Isles Music for the Folk Violin and Other Instruments](#)

<sup>15</sup> This is a point that will be studied in the fantasy fiction part.

were real clans of the eighteenth century in Scotland. But there are no indications that the characters who wear the Scottish names of a clan in *Outlander* really existed. For example, Colum and Dougal MacKenzie don't seem to be mentioned anywhere in history. Nevertheless, one important character of *Outlander* and actually the grandfather of Jamie Fraser, Lord Lovat (Simon Fraser), really existed and was a key figure of the Jacobite rebellion on 1745. Indeed, "in the late autumn of the year large numbers of "Fraser" had joined with the Jacobites<sup>16</sup>". It seems that the author was inspired by the main figures of the real history to create her story but also invented her own characters. That's what makes *Outlander* a historical fiction and not a historical documentary.

About the places, we surely know that some places such as Inverness and Fort William are undoubtedly real. In the TV show, Inverness is often shown for the viewer to realize the veracity of the place (Annex I). Besides, Inverness is a key spot for all the Jacobite risings, a place where many political and military decisions were taken. For example, Culloden, where the last famous battle occurred is not far away from Inverness. Nevertheless, the author Diana Gabaldon admitted in the FAQ of her official website that some places of her book were invented: "So far as I know, there isn't a physical basis for Lallybroch, but then again, I do repeatedly find things that really exist after I've written them, so I wouldn't be at all surprised<sup>17</sup>". It's also the case of the standing stones she describes in the books. Although there are many stone circles in Scotland, the one she presents in the book is clearly invented. Actually, Diana Gabaldon had never been to Scotland before she wrote the series, therefore we can't be sure whether the places she describes are realistic or not.

### 3) A romance

From the very beginning, the novel *Outlander* was associated with the romance genre. Indeed, the first book of the series was prized by the Romance Writers of America RITA Awards for the best 1991 romance<sup>18</sup>. In *Outlander* combines many aspects of the today's classical romance. The love story between Claire and Jamie is central in

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<sup>16</sup> Geoffrey Plank-, *Rebellion and Savagery: The Jacobite Rising of 1745 and the British Empire* p. 59 [[online](#)]

<sup>17</sup> Diana Gabaldon's quote of the official author's website: [FAQ about the books](#)

<sup>18</sup> [RWA site](#) Awards: RITA Awards Winners

the novel and is enough to define the series as a romantic fiction. The fact is that Jamie and Claire must face all the issues that challenge their love: death, war, and the most important of all, time.

We talked at the beginning of this part of the “satisfactory ending” that all romances must have a satisfactory ending is generally associated with “a happy one, with the protagonists overcoming whatever obstacles stand in their way and forming some kind of committed relationship (often betrothal or marriage) by the book’s conclusion<sup>19</sup>”. Actually, the *Outlander* series is not over yet, but in the end of season 2, when Claire comes back in the present to protect herself and her child, her love story with Jamie seems definitely over. As we don’t know the real end of the series it’s difficult to talk about a non-satisfactory ending for the two lovers. We could also think of a new story in each book. Claire and Jamie face a new and different adventure in different places in each book: Scotland in book one and France in book two. Nevertheless, it is certain that the relationship between Jamie and Claire didn’t start in the classical way. Indeed, the couple married even before they knew each other. Their marriage was only a way to protect both of them but certainly not because they loved each other, anyhow at the beginning. Besides, Claire was already married to Franck before she met Jamie, another point that can’t be forget in the sense that it’s not what we first imagine when we think about a traditional relationship. All of these elements present *Outlander* as an example of a non-traditional romance.

It seems that *Outlander* has blurred genres; it can indeed be considered as a romance as well as a fantasy and historical fiction. The fact is that some novels are sometimes difficult to classify because of the numerous themes their author talk about. There is not always a need to find boundaries of genres in novels, to put them in a particular box. For a long time, literature has been supposed to entertain more than anything else and no matter the genre<sup>20</sup>.

## II) *Outlander* myths and legends: some interpretations

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<sup>19</sup> Kristin Ramsdell-, *Romance Fiction: A Guide to the Genre, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition* p.5

<sup>20</sup> The *Harry Potter* books are another example of saga difficult to classify. The “children books” genre was created with the apparition of these books because it was impossible to find the proper category for them.

## 1) Time-travel

Time has always been a very intriguing notion for any human being because it's something that can't scientifically be controlled even if there are multiple studies about this conducted by Newton and Einstein for example. People often talk about coming back into the past to correct some mistakes they've made, or they wish to go into the future to know what will happen to them and to influence their destiny. Time has something magical in it in the sense that any living entity experiences or even endures it at every moment of his or her life.

Thus, plenty of different stories about traveling in time were invented in literature as well as in cinema. *Memoirs of the twentieth century* written in 1733 by the Irish writer Samuel Madden is considered as one of the first novels involving time-travel in literature<sup>21</sup> although it was not considered as science-fiction book but as a satire of *Gulliver's Travel* written seven years earlier. But there are many modern and more famous real fictions that provide time-travel stories such as *The Time Machine* written by H.G Wells in 1895 which is considered as an adult classic of the time-travel genre. In cinema, everyone heard about *Doctor Who* initially produced on television in 1963 as a series and whose real name was *The First Doctor*. Since 2005 there is another TV show of *Doctor Who* produced by Russell T. Davies, Steven Moffat and Chris Chibnall in which time-travel is at the centre of the plot.

But if these stories address the central theme of time-travel, the process is not always the same. In *Outlander*, Claire travels in time thanks to standing stones but it's absolutely not the case of all time-travel stories.

Standing stones are not necessarily famous because of their ability to provide the possibility to travel in time. Standing stones, also known as menhirs or dolmens, are in a sense as old as the human race. They are the creation of men, and the legends around them come from the human's imagination. Therefore, it's quite difficult to determine their real origin. Contrary to the common beliefs, standing stones don't come from the Celts. It is said that they come from a people older than the Celts: the Ligures,

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<sup>21</sup> "The first English book to discard this aversion to chronicling the future"; *Science Fiction Studies* Vol. 12, No. 2 (Jul., 1985), p. 185 [\[en ligne\]](#)

an ancient Indo-European people of the Neolithic period (who gave their name to Liguria, a region of Italy) are mentioned as the first ones to have built dolmens<sup>22</sup>.

In our modern era, the most famous standing stones are on the site of Stonehenge, in England. Even if it's worldwide renowned and visited by millions of tourists, Stonehenge remains a true mystery for all the archaeologists. What we do know is that the site has been used by the Celtic druids for celebrations and other rituals, when Druidry has been recognized as a true religion<sup>23</sup>. Indeed, "the Gaelic for 'Are you going to church?' is *Am bheil thu dol d'on chlachan?* This question translates literally as 'Are you going to the stones?'<sup>24</sup>".

In Scotland, the stones of Stenness and Callanish also stir the curiosity and people want to know what they were built and used for, apart from their religious purposes. Still today, there is no proper answer. But what was studied and frequently repeated is that the stones are instruments of astronomy. The megaliths would be linked to the Sun and the Moon and would be used to make predictions about eclipses. This interpretation is not entirely associated with magic, nevertheless astronomy has always been something fascinating and enigmatic as has been religion.

## 2) The most popular story in Scotland: The Loch Ness monster

It's not possible to talk about Scottish myths without raising the topic of the Loch Ness monster, the most famous creature of Scotland if not the world.

The story of the Loch Ness monster (today also known as Nessie) began in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. It talked about a creature similar to a sea snake that lived in the Loch Ness. Actually, its physical description is different according to the versions. Sometimes, it can even be associated with a salamander, turtles, crocodiles, giant frogs and so much more<sup>25</sup>. The legend was based on numerous testimonies from inhabitants who affirmed that they saw the monster. The first testimony dates from 565, but others followed in the following years, particularly in the 30's. In 1934, a photograph showing the creature was published in a British newspaper (**see appendix**). Unfortunately, the author

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<sup>22</sup> From the article *DE L'ORIGINE DES MONUMENTS MÉGALITHIQUES I.—OPINION DE M. HENRI MARTIN* ; *Revue Archéologique*, Nouvelle Série, Vol. 16 (Juillet à Décembre 1867), pp. 377-396 [\[online\]](#)

<sup>23</sup> Carole M. Cusack-, *Charmed Circle: Stonehenge, Contemporary Paganism, and Alternative Archaeology*, Abstract

<sup>24</sup> Michael Balfour (2003)-, *Mysterious Scotland: Enigmas, Secrets and Legends*, chapter one: The old stones

<sup>25</sup> Nick Redfern-, *Nessie: Exploring the Supernatural Origins of the Loch Ness Monster*, Introduction

admitted later that the monster was only a model and that the picture did not represent Nessie. Other persons and photographers tried to spot the creature after this event, but what they believed they saw was often confusions and simply other animals. Still, the Loch Ness monster encouraged people to create many stories around him.

It's not necessarily inherent in Nessie but in religion, the sea snake is seen as "an omen of disaster<sup>26</sup>". In any case, normal snakes have always been associated with evil (and with good as well) in religion, therefore it's not so surprising that the Loch Ness has been considered as something very negative in people's mind.

In Scotland, people that claimed they have seen Nessie talk about him as an "abomination" or "something which still haunts us<sup>27</sup>". They don't have a happy memory of the beast, which could mean that religion still has consequences on the way they perceive things. There are different stories, and one says that the Loch Ness monster is a murderer that kills poor swimmers in Loch Ness. Another one claims that there was a boat that appeared on the lake and that had the form of the monster. It is reminiscent of the Vikings boats which had the form of a dragon, or of a sea snake. Another story is told about Nessie being the last dragon which succeeded in escaping to the Loch Ness lake when all the other dragons were slaughtered in other places in Scotland. Sometimes, the Loch Ness monster is also associated with the Linton worm, a creature that can live in the water as well as on the shores.

The legend of the Loch Ness Monster is also often told to kids and many children books were written about Nessie, for example Nessie the Lochness Monster written by Richard Brassey.

There is not only the Loch Ness monster that inspired many stories in Scotland. Another creature associated with water has been the subject of many mysteries for a very long time.

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<sup>26</sup> Henry H. Bauer-, *The Enigma of Loch Ness: Making Sense of a Mystery*, p.1

<sup>27</sup> N. Refern-, Op. Cit., Introduction

### 3) Some other tales discussed in the series

#### a) The kelpie: a water-horse

The kelpies are creatures that are known to live in the lochs<sup>28</sup>. There are many lochs in Scotland therefore tales about mysterious creatures living nearby isn't unbelievable.

In one of the tales<sup>29</sup> collected by J.F Campbell in *More West Highland Tales* (Volume 2), the water-horse is described as “a year-old horse, shaggy and ugly”. In another one<sup>30</sup>, it is depicted as being “very tall and large, rough and hairy with no skin upon his face but a dark livid covering.” In more popular and modern stories, he is often represented as a strange creature with the head of a horse and with a blurred body (see appendix 1) but it's also considered as a shape-shifting water spirit. Accordingly, it's very difficult to give a correct description of this myth but the fact remains that it is compared in the tale by Campbell with a famous Greek myth: the Cyclop which is apparently considered as a water-spirit, a creature which lives under ground and eats strangers”. The kelpie, which also lives under the ground since he lives under the water, is reputed to attract people in the sea in which he disappears forever.

The fact is that the deep and unknown water fascinates and raises many questions. People can easily imagine that some magical beasts live under the water like the Kelpie and the Loch Ness monster. Which is ambiguous is that these creatures are almost always associated with evil or with something negative.

#### b) The fairies

Also called the Little Folk, the fairies are mentioned several times in the *Outlander* series. They have several origins, but in the thoughts of Scots, they are little creatures that “live in mounds or hillocks, they love music and dancing, and they fear cold iron<sup>31</sup>”. These beings are known to be a true threat for the humans. The reason why people fear them is because they steal mother's healthy babies to replace them by an ill and weak one, by what is called a changeling. In his books, J.F Campbell collected many

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<sup>28</sup> A loch is a Celtic word, more particularly a Scottish term that refers to an area of water: a lake or an arm of a sea.

<sup>29</sup> The tale is called *The Water-Horse of Raasay*, p.12 of *More West Highlands Tales* (vol.2), J.F Campbell, Birlinn Ltd, New edition (1998).

<sup>30</sup> The tale is called *The Brollachan* p. 534,535 of *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* (vol.1) J.F Campbell, Birlinn Ltd, New edition (1 Feb. 1994).

<sup>31</sup> Heather Kotake-, *Introduction to the Folklore of Scotland* from [http://www.tohoku-gakuin.ac.jp/research/journal/bk2013/pdf/no02\\_04.pdf](http://www.tohoku-gakuin.ac.jp/research/journal/bk2013/pdf/no02_04.pdf).



different stories from the Highlanders about the Little Folk, one of them was named *The Smith and the Fairies*. “It is not your son you have got. The boy has been carried away by the ‘Daoine Sith,’ and they have left a *Sibhreach* in his place<sup>32</sup>.” The “Sith” is the Gaelic name to talk about the fairy and what is funny is that it also means “tranquillity” and “peace”, which is in complete contradiction with the creature’s reputation.

In *Outlander*, when she finds a young baby abandoned in the woods, Claire realizes how much legends and folktales are relevant and can be dangerous. In the eighteenth century, the Scots seemed to really believe that the fairies existed and that they were a real threat to their babies. But was this truly the case in reality? The answer seems to be yes. Ireland is a country where beliefs has been as strong as Scotland. And in the nineteenth century, a few newspapers recorded incredible new recorded to the changelings and Simon Young gathered some of them: “Three are cases of children being abused, in the belief that they were changelings, while another is an account of an adult changeling from Co. Cavan<sup>33</sup>.” In his work, Young talks about mental illnesses to explain these cases.

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<sup>32</sup> J.F Campbell (1860)-, *Popular Tales of The West Highlands*, Volume 1, p. 418.

<sup>33</sup> Simon Young-, Some Notes on Irish Fairy Changelings in Nineteenth-Century Newspapers p. 34, [SomenotesonIrishChangelings.pdf](#)

### III) Signification of the *Outlander's* myths and legends

#### 1) Claire as a time-traveller

Claire, the main female character of the *Outlander's* series, experiences something really singular in the very beginning of the story: she travels through time by touching a stone and lands in a period of time whose she doesn't know anything except what she read in history books. From this perspective, it looks quite simple. But in reality, it's far more complex. The exact mechanics of time-travel in the books like in the TV show are still blur. It seems that Claire does have the ability to travel through time without doing nothing special at all. But she's not the only person who did such a thing: Geillis Duncan, a secondary character Claire meets in the 18<sup>th</sup> century also experienced time-travel but the conditions of her adventure are completely different. In any case, the stones circle near Inverness is always involved. It is the place where everything linked to the time-travel occurs. But in the end of book two, when Claire tries to find out how Geillis found herself into the past, other elements are factored. Geillis' experience involves a particular "position of the Sun and the Moon on the Feast of Beltane<sup>34</sup>". Like I mentioned in part II, the Sun and the Moon played a special role when druids used standing stones for astrology. Beltane is known to be a pagan ritual like Samhain (another ritual mentioned in the story). "Beltane represents the peak of Spring and the beginning of Summer. Earth energies are at their strongest and most active. All of life is bursting with potent fertility and at this point in the Wheel of the Year, the potential becomes conception<sup>35</sup>". It seems the best moment to try to cross the stones since it is said the energies are very active. Actually, Claire also crosses the stones at a certain period: Samhain. This makes us think that this is a decisive element to succeed in the quest of time-travel. Travelling through time for Geillis also involves sacrifice: "The Druids burnt sacrificial victims in wicker cages shaped like men, but individuals where killed by strangling, and the throat slit to drain the body of blood<sup>36</sup>." Indeed, Geillis sacrifices her husband Greg Edgars to achieve her goal.

Otherwise, it seems that the ability to travel through time is genetic since in the following books, it appears that Brianna, Claire's daughter, is also able to cross the stones.

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<sup>34</sup> Diana Gabaldon, quote from the novel *Dragonfly in Amber*, p. 938.

<sup>35</sup> Beltane. In *The Goddess and the Greenman. The Goddess & the Greenman* [\[online\]](#).

<sup>36</sup> Diana Gabaldon, quote from the novel *Dragonfly in Amber*, p. 938

What we could wonder is the reason why Claire is sent in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when she first crosses time. The only comparison that could potentially be made is that both periods (the 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century) are subjects to two big and violent wars. Claire helped in the second world war therefore maybe she was meant to help in the Jacobite war against the British crown as well.

2) The reason why the Loch Ness monster appears before Claire

*A great flat head broke the surface not ten feet away. I could see the water purling away from keeled scales that ran in a crest down the sinuous neck. The water was agitated for some considerable distance and I caught a glimpse here and there of dark and massive movement beneath the surface of the loch, though the head itself stayed relatively still. [...]. The sleek skin was a smooth, deep blue, with a vivid slash of green shining brilliant iridescence beneath the jaw. And the strange, pupilless eyes were a deep and glowing amber<sup>37</sup>.*

In the book, Claire makes a rather unusual encounter, if not impossible. She sees the Loch Ness monster when she and her group camp on the banks above Loch Ness. The description that is made of the beast is unmistakable. But the name of the creature as we know it today is not even quoted once. The name of the chapter (chapter 19) in which Claire sees the beast is called “The Waterhorse” and it’s a little bit disturbing when we know that the water horse can also characterize another legendary creature called the Kelpie. Yet, the legend of the Kelpie is told a little earlier in the book (in chapter 18) by Rupert, a secondary character of the series. Even here, the real name of the creature is not cited, it’s just called “the waterhorse” once again. The choice of giving the same name to two different creatures is questionable. Is it purposeful or did the author not realize that detail?

Oddly, this encounter between Claire and the monster was not adapted on the screen. The reason could be that Claire actually did not really see the Loch Ness monster, she could have just imagined it. Indeed, she is the only person to see it whereas she is surrounded by other people of her group. Moreover, this apparition doesn’t seem to be the kind of thing that would really occur in

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<sup>37</sup> Diana Gabaldon, quote from *Outlander*, a novel, p. 256-257

*Outlander*. If Claire's adventure in the 18<sup>th</sup> century is entirely based on something related to the supernatural, it's finally the only big magical event that occurs in the series, the rest is rather realistic or at least non-magical. The mythical aspect of *Outlander* is subsequently all folktales and told stories. Why would the most famed and legendary creature of the world suddenly and accidentally appear in front of Claire? It doesn't make really sense. Claire doesn't even talk about what she saw to anyone after this. As if it had not even occurred. That could explain why the TV show's director decided not to adapt Claire's encounter with the monster. It would have been weird, the viewer might have not understood. And actually, it wasn't absolutely necessary to the plot.

When seeing the creature, Claire makes a curious statement: "I felt some kinship with it, a creature further from its own time than I [...]". It's hard to determine why she says the monster is "further from its own time" in the sense that the legend claims it's extremely ancient and has almost always existed in people's imagination. Unless the presence of the creature in this world and its apparition in front of Claire are the reflection of the young woman's own story. The Loch Ness monster might be also able to travel through different period of times which would explain why some people have seen it but have never been able to give evidence of its existence. And it would also give sense to the fact that the creature is considered as being immortal. Finally, Claire and the Loch Ness Monster could be two individuals lost in a time which they don't belong to. Their encounter is therefore significant and quite emblematic.

## **Conclusion**

Unconventional would be a correct word to describe *Outlander*. According to the two first books and two first season of the TV show that were partially analysed in this essay, *Outlander* addresses numerous themes and problematics that places it as a romance, as well as a fantasy fiction or as historical fiction. A simple sentence that gathers these three genres could help to extremely quickly summarize the story: An English woman living in the twentieth century is magically sent in the eighteenth during the Jacobite rebellion and there she meets her soulmate.

The main aim of this essay was to talk about the magical aspect of the series. Eeriness and magic are present in each page of the books: it is indeed question of fairies, changelings, time-travels, selkies, water horses and so on, all classic elements of the Scottish culture. But in the end, you realize that fantasy is just a backdrop in the whole story.

Claire traveling through time is the only true fantastic event of the series, the rest is finally only about Scottish culture and folklore. Time-travel is not a part of the Scottish tradition, it's generally a myth that belongs to other cultures, that was invented by another people, not by the Scots or the Celts.

All the other magical elements of the series, the fantastic stories about fairies, kelpies and other creatures of the Scottish world make us think that *Outlander* is far more a historical story than anything else, it's a historical fiction that introduces the Scottish folklore: a novel about life in Scotland in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, about Scottish national identity seen through the eyes of an American author. Let's not forget that *Outlander* is a novel written by an American woman, and it is an American TV show. Therefore, the point of view is not what we could expect of a Scottish author. Not only the history is interpreted by an American, but the show is ultimately "americanized". Because of that, the Scottish national identity represented in the artwork can really be discussed.

## Partie didactique :

### Présentation de la séquence :

Une séquence entièrement consacrée à la série *Outlander*, qu'elle soit faite en collège ou en lycée, n'est pas envisageable pour plusieurs raisons : la série est basée sur une période particulière de l'histoire de l'Écosse, le XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, de nombreux points culturels importants seraient alors mis de côté. De plus, étudier l'Écosse à travers seulement une série télévisée aura pour conséquence que les élèves n'auront qu'un seul point de vue sur l'histoire, ce qui les empêchera de développer une certaine ouverture d'esprit ou de développer leur esprit critique. Enfin, *Outlander* est une série pour le moins violente, autant sur le plan moral que physique, et il est inconcevable de proposer de baser un travail complet sur ce seul support.

Néanmoins, la série met en avant des éléments essentiels de la culture écossaise que j'ai d'ailleurs décidé d'étudier dans la partie disciplinaire de ce mémoire : les mythes et légendes. Au collège comme au lycée, le côté folklorique de l'Écosse est plutôt délaissé et il sera donc intéressant de développer une séquence sur ce pays plein de mystères et de magie afin de faire découvrir aux élèves cette partie du monde anglophone. L'Écosse a inspiré de nombreuses œuvres fantastiques, qu'il s'agisse d'art, de littérature ou de cinéma, il est donc important de leur faire découvrir les origines de ces inspirations.

Cette séquence s'inscrira dans le cycle 4 du CECRL et sera prévue pour une classe de 4<sup>e</sup>. J'ai choisi une classe de ce niveau et pas plus haut puisque les mythes et légendes d'Écosse sont un thème avec peu d'implicite et qui ne requiert pas une maturité particulière. D'autre part, il sera difficile d'envisager cette séquence pour des classes de 6<sup>e</sup> ou de 5<sup>e</sup>. dans la mesure où la tâche finale prévue demandera des compétences linguistiques qui ne sont pas encore acquises à ces différents niveaux de langues. L'apport culturel serait également trop volumineux pour ces deux niveaux.

La séquence, qui s'intitulera *Magical Scotland*, pourra être intégrée dans *Rencontres avec d'autres cultures* comme thème majeur du programme ce qui leur permettra de partir à la découverte de l'Écosse et de réaliser leur tâche finale, qui elle sera plus axée sur le folklore de ce pays.

La première partie de la séquence sera principalement introductive et consistera à présenter le contexte culturel de l'Écosse. En effet, il est important que les élèves aient de bonnes bases avant de se lancer dans la partie plus abstraite qui se concentre sur les mythes et légendes du pays.

**Tâche finale** : Il sera demandé aux élèves de créer leur propre histoire à partir d'une image (trois au choix) représentant un mythe écossais. Ils devront également trouver un titre à leur histoire. Ils prépareront le travail chez eux. Voici les images que je compte leur proposer :

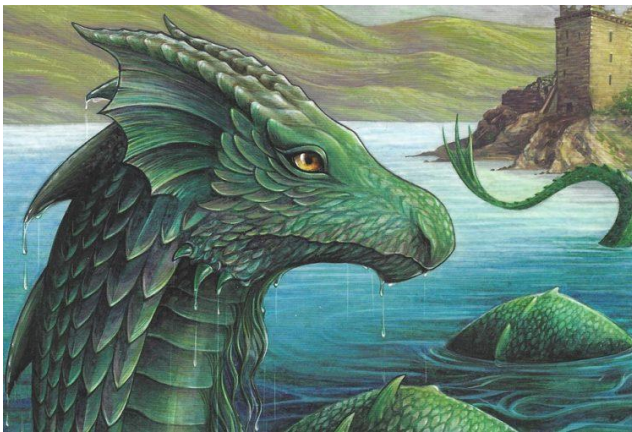


Figure 1 : The Lochness Monster

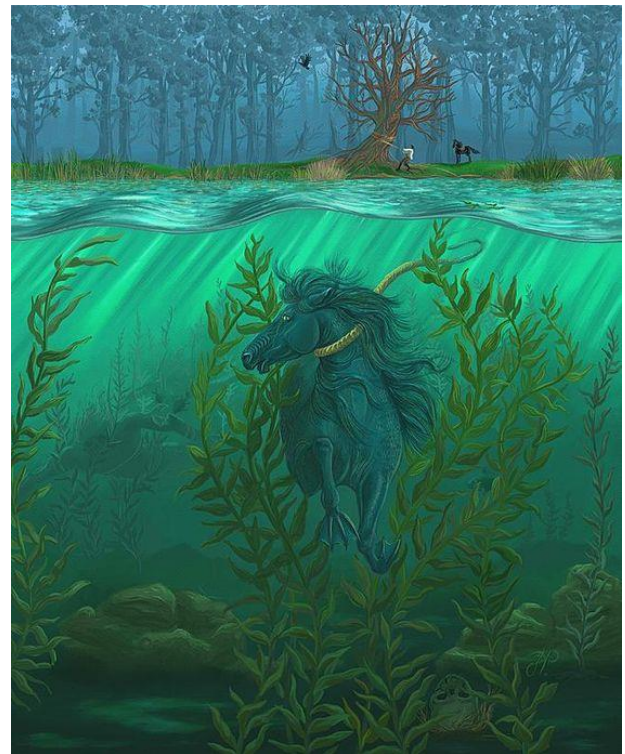


Figure 2 : The Kelpie



Figure 3 : The Standing Stones

<sup>38</sup> Figure 1 : The Kelpie : <https://i.pinimg.com/564x/e2/d9/89/e2d989ff34ba52f506acda43a873e3d9.jpg>

<sup>39</sup> Figure 2 : The Lochness Monster : <https://www.scottishfield.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/101/2018/08/Nessie-crop-750x505.jpg>

<sup>40</sup> Figure 3 The Standing Stones : <https://i.pinimg.com/564x/5b/b6/22/5bb6229a6801a25ce967b935c3f3a13b.jpg>

“You are the writer of a new Scottish novel. Invent a fantastic short story using the images above. Around 100 words.”

« Tu es l'écrivain d'un nouveau roman écossais. Invente une petite histoire en t'inspirant des images ci-dessus. Environ 100 mots. »

Cette tâche intermédiaire permettra à l'élève de se diriger petit à petit vers un niveau B1<sup>41</sup> (intermédiaire) et on considèrera que le niveau A2 sera déjà atteint avant de commencer cette séquence.

**Pour aller plus loin :** Un voyage scolaire dans les Hautes-Terres d'Écosse est prévue pour ta classe. En binôme (ou trinôme), tu dois préparer le voyage en prenant en compte tous les éléments nécessaires à un séjour bien organisé.

### **Les objectifs de la séquence :**

Ces objectifs permettront à l'élève d'acquérir les outils nécessaires à la réalisation de la tâche finale. Néanmoins, ils ne seront pas forcément tous utilisés dans cette dernière.

- Objectifs linguistiques :
  - Objectifs lexicaux : le lexique de l'imaginaire et du fantastique (*Loch Ness monster, the Kelpies, the Fairy Folk...*) sera au centre de cette séquence. On étudiera également le lexique de la description de paysages (*shore, the Highlands*) ainsi que les connecteurs temporels dans un récit.
  - Objectifs grammaticaux : le prétérit (simple et be + v-ing) servira principalement à la tâche finale, puisqu'il sera demandé aux élèves de raconter leur histoire au prétérit. Un rebrassage du présent simple sera également fait. Les mots de liaison ainsi que le superlatif et le comparatif seront également au programme de cette séquence.

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<sup>41</sup> Selon le Cadre Européen Commun de Références pour les Langues, la principale compétence concernée sera :

\* Écrire une histoire, un article, une publicité.



- Objectifs phonologiques : bien que la tâche finale soit réalisée à l'écrit, les différentes prononciations du phonème *-ed* seront étudiées puisque le prétérit est au centre de cette séquence. Il pourra également être envisagé de voir la prononciation du *i* long et du *i* court.
- Objectifs culturels : des repères géographiques et historiques sur l'Écosse seront apportés. Les principaux mythes et légendes d'Écosse seront étudiés ainsi que quelques éléments de la culture et de la tradition.
- Objectifs citoyens : cette séquence permettra d'acquérir une ouverture sur d'autres aspects du monde anglophone, de développer un esprit critique pour se forger leur propre représentation du monde (plus particulièrement de l'Écosse).
- Objectifs méthodologiques : connaître la structure logique d'une histoire et l'organiser ainsi que découvrir l'écriture d'invention permettront aux élèves de réaliser leur tâche finale. L'analyse de l'image sera également importante dans l'objectif de réalisation de cette tâche.
- Objectif sociolinguistique : l'accent écossais sera bien sûr le principal point de l'objectif sociolinguistique. Sans entrer dans les détails, je leur ferai également découvrir le gaélique, une langue celtique importante, surtout en ce qui concerne les mythes et légendes.

### **Anticipation à la séquence :**

Pour commencer cette séquence, une simple question sera posée : *What do you know about Scotland?*

Il s'agira ici de voir quels sont les acquis des élèves en termes de culture écossaise. Je m'attends principalement à des repères géographiques (*Scotland is a country of the United Kingdom*) ainsi que quelques-uns des éléments les plus connus et clichés de la culture (*The Lochness Monster, the kilts, the Celtic music*).

Je leur montrerai ensuite une vidéo du site [VisitScotland](https://www.visitScotland.com) :



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Cette vidéo de 3 minutes sert d'introduction au site touristique et elle présente de manière synthétique les lieux et activités incontournables du tourisme écossais. Il n'y a pas de paroles, juste de la musique. Il ne s'agit pas ici de faire une compréhension orale mais simplement de faire repérer aux élèves ces différents incontournables qui reflètent la culture écossaise. L'objectif ici consiste simplement à introduire le thème de la séquence et ils travailleront l'expression orale. Deux visionnages suffiront à l'exploitation du document.

**1<sup>er</sup> visionnage** : cette première étape consistera à noter des mots-clés sur les éléments principaux qui ressortent dans cette vidéo. Ces éléments seront seulement visuels. La musique sera également importante puisqu'on peut facilement reconnaître une musique écossaise.

**2<sup>ème</sup> visionnage** : à la suite du second visionnage, nous passerons à l'expression orale. Les élèves s'exprimeront en construisant des phrases à partir des mots-clés qu'ils auront notés. Voici un exemple de trace écrite avec quelques phrases que j'attendrais de leur part :

*The video is about Scotland. It's a country with great mountains. We can see lots of old castles and monuments. There is much to do and to see in this place.*

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<sup>42</sup> Vidéo d'introduction du site VisitScotland : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLG6tbYaA88>

Première partie de la séquence :

### ***Cultural Background***

Il est tout à fait possible que les élèves ne sachent pas où se trouve l'Écosse, aussi, il est important de leur faire situer le pays par rapport au Royaume-Uni. Une image représentant le Royaume-Uni sera projetée au tableau.



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Les noms des pays (Scotland, Ireland, Northern Ireland, England) seront retirés et je demanderai à la classe de me dire quels sont ces pays. Je leur demanderai ensuite de me dire brièvement les éléments qui sont dessinés pour chaque pays (the flag, some famous monuments and cities). Cette image leur sera ensuite distribuée et constituera la trace écrite de cette petite activité. Il n'est pas nécessaire de faire une activité plus élaborée sur ce document dans la mesure où il s'agira principalement de leur faire situer l'Écosse par rapport au monde et au Royaume-Uni.

Pour cette première séance et dans la logique du thème principal de la séquence, il sera important de réserver une partie du travail au contexte culturel du pays. L'Écosse a un énorme patrimoine historique qui explique en partie la grande diversité des

<sup>43</sup> Carte du Royaume-Uni tiré du site : <http://www.mac-art.us/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Great-Britain-Map.jpg>

mythes et légendes qui sont nés. Néanmoins, l'histoire écossaise étant particulièrement riche, il ne s'agira pas de retracer son immense parcours mais plutôt de découvrir tout ce qui constitue le pays tel que nous le connaissons aujourd'hui.

Un petit quizz sur l'Écosse sera d'abord distribué afin que les élèves testent leur connaissance sur le pays.

**Worksheet A – Scotland Quiz**  
Test your knowledge of Scotland with this quiz.

- 1) What's the capital city of Scotland?  
a) Glasgow  
b) Aberdeen  
c) Edinburgh
- 2) Scotland used to be an independent state. When did it lose its independence and become part of Great Britain?  
a) 1507  
b) 1707  
c) 1907
- 3) What colour is the Scottish flag?  
a) Blue with a white cross  
b) White with a blue cross  
c) Green with a white cross
- 4) What's the name of the famous lake where a monster is said to live?  
a) Loch Monstro  
b) Loch Grass  
c) Loch Ness
- 5) What's the name of the type of skirt that Scottish men sometimes wear?  
a) Kilt  
b) Scot skirt  
c) Skilt
- 6) What's the national drink of Scotland?  
a) Vodka  
b) Gin  
c) Whisky
- 7) What's the name of the musical wind instrument that is from Scotland?  
a) Wind pipes  
b) Bag pipes  
c) Scottish sax
- 8) When did Scotland get its own Parliament?  
a) 1899  
b) 1959  
c) 1999
- 9) How many languages are spoken in Scotland?  
a) 1  
b) 2  
c) 3

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Les élèves apprécient de se défier et il s'agit d'une entrée douce et simple dans la séquence. Avant la correction, les élèves se mettront en binôme et pourront comparer leur quizz, se corriger et se questionner.

Un travail en salle informatique sera ensuite effectué afin qu'ils vérifient leurs acquis et obtiennent d'autres connaissances. La recherche se fera sur la page :

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<sup>44</sup> Quizz créé par le British Council sur la page :  
[https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/destination-scotland\\_worksheets.pdf](https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/destination-scotland_worksheets.pdf)

<http://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/uk-now/read-uk/scotland> du site du British Council. La classe sera à nouveau divisée en plusieurs binômes. Il s'agira d'un travail de compréhension de l'écrit.

Les élèves liront d'abord chacun de leur côté le document et commenceront à préparer des questions (auxquelles ils devront bien entendu eux aussi savoir répondre) sur le texte pour leur camarade.

Les questions trouvées concerneront les thèmes principaux abordés dans l'article du British Council :

*How many languages are there in Scotland? What are these languages?*

*What's the most popular sport in Scotland?*

Une mise en commun sera ensuite faite à l'oral et une trace écrite découlera alors de ce travail. En plus d'en apprendre encore davantage sur l'Écosse, les élèves réviseront la formation des questions, qui est un point qu'ils ont encore du mal à maîtriser en 4<sup>ème</sup>.

## **Deuxième partie de la séquence :**

### ***Scottish myths and legends :***

Nous entrons dans le vif du sujet avec cette seconde partie de la séquence : les mythes et légendes d'Écosse.

Pour introduire ce thème, il s'agira d'abord de voir ce qu'évoque pour eux les termes « legends » et « folklore ». Je m'attends à ce qu'il connaisse le terme « legends », mais pas celui de « folklore ».

Je leur demanderai ensuite s'ils connaissent certaines légendes écossaises. Le monstre du Loch Ness fera certainement partie des propositions, mais il se peut que certains aient d'autres mythes en tête.

Par rapport à la tâche finale, il est important de leur présenter les créatures légendaires de l'Écosse.

Des images représentant des créatures légendaires d'Écosse seront projetées au tableau. On pourra diviser la classe en deux et chaque groupe s'occupera d'un groupe de créatures. Je leur demanderai une description physique ainsi que d'émettre des hypothèses sur leur lieu de vie, ce qu'ils mangent, ce qu'ils font, est-ce qu'ils sont dangereux ou non.

Un document écrit présentant des créatures légendaires leur sera ensuite distribué.



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Ce document est une infographie présentant différentes créatures légendaires écossaises. Elle est plutôt intéressante dans le sens où des images accompagnent le texte, ce qui est plus attractif et plus parlant pour les élèves. En effet, il leur sera difficile de se représenter quelque chose qui n'existe pas, l'image les aidera donc à développer leur imagination pour la tâche finale.

<sup>45</sup> Image du site : <https://i.pinimg.com/564x/2f/00/cf/2f00cf0ba8a39185bf8bf8a3ca211bb9.jpg>

Les noms des mythes et légendes sont en gaélique et c'est à ce moment qu'il pourra être judicieux de leur présenter cette langue et de faire travailler la phonologie. J'ajouterai en revanche les noms anglais qui correspondent, puisque c'est dans cette langue que les légendes sont le plus souvent présentées. De plus, il est important qu'ils aient l'équivalent anglais dans la mesure où le gaélique est une langue totalement différente.

Une compréhension écrite sera ensuite faite sur ce document.

Un document vidéo sur les kelpies leur sera proposé :



Cette vidéo raconte la légende du kelpie, un créature écossaise légendaire qui possède des caractéristiques de cheval et de poisson. Dans le document, il est question d'une famille qui, alors qu'elle prenait une photo en face de la mer, a rencontré la créature qui a proposé à l'homme de grimper sur son dos. Mais le kelpie, sauvage et fougueux, a emporté l'homme dans les eaux et ce dernier s'est noyé, tandis que le kelpie, lui, a disparu à jamais dans l'océan.

Bien que la vidéo ne soit pas d'excellente qualité, elle présente beaucoup d'avantages pour la didactique. D'abord, le rythme de l'histoire est plutôt lent, tout comme le débit

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<sup>46</sup> Vidéo *The Kelpies* : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZ8licq0JdM&feature=youtu.be>

de paroles des personnages, ce qui fait que les élèves n'auront pas de difficultés de compréhension à ce niveau-là. D'autres part, il est évident que les images illustrent la narration, il est même tout à fait possible de comprendre la trame de l'histoire sans le son. Enfin, il n'y a pas de dialogue, seulement une voix-off, ce qui facilite grandement la compréhension.

L'objectif de la vidéo est principalement d'ordre culturel. En effet, il s'agit de leur faire découvrir le plus de légendes écossaises possibles afin de développer leur imagination. Mais l'enjeu est également de leur faire travailler le prétérit qui leur sera indispensable pour la réalisation de la tâche finale. Un test de grammaire sera proposé au cours de la séquence afin d'être certains que les élèves maîtrisent bien ce point.

**Anticipation de la vidéo :** une capture d'écran d'un passage de la vidéo sera projetée au tableau. Cette image représentera la famille qui rencontre le kelpie.



Il sera alors demandé aux élèves de décrire l'image puis d'émettre des hypothèses et d'imaginer quel genre d'histoire se cache derrière cette image.

Premier visionnage : le premier visionnage de la vidéo se fera sans le son. Les élèves devront décrire ce qu'ils ont vu et ce qui a principalement retenu leur attention. Ils répondront aux questions relatives au lieu, au nombre de personnages, à leur description physique, à la situation de manière générale (ils répondront donc aux questions en wh : who, when, where, what)

Deuxième et troisième visionnages : un deuxième visionnage sera fait avec le son en plus de l'image. Il sera demandé aux élèves de donner plus de détails sur les réponses qu'ils ont donné au premier visionnage.



*What type of story is told here?*

➔ *It's a Scottish legend about the kelpie.*

*Give as many details as you can to describe the creature*

➔ *It's beautiful, dangerous, magnificent. It's a fairy spirit. It lives under the water. He looks like a horse.*

*What really happens in the story? Write some sentences in your own words to describe what you understood.*

➔ *A family of four people is at the edge of the sea. The father wants to take a picture of the whole family. But a sort of horse appears in front of them. They are curious and want to touch the creature. The man, who might be the father, tries to ride the horse. The horse runs and moves toward the sea. Finally, it goes into the sea whereas the man is still on its back.*

Pour terminer cette séquence et dans l'objectif d'une continuité, il sera donc demandé aux élèves de préparer, en groupe, le voyage dans les Hautes-Terres d'Écosse.

Pour commencer, une webquest sera organisée en salle informatique ou au CDI. Plusieurs sites seront donnés aux élèves au préalable afin de les aider dans leur travail. Avant de commencer, nous réfléchirons en classe entière sur les mots-clés qui peuvent être utilisés dans la recherche. En effet, la plupart du temps, les élèves savent se servir d'Internet, mais ne maîtrisent pas toujours la recherche d'informations précises. Il sera donc important de les accompagner dans cette optique.

Les élèves devront se renseigner sur les informations suivantes :

- Des informations civilisationnelles et culturelles sur les Hautes-Terres afin de contextualiser le voyage : la population, le climat, quelques repères historiques et actuels, etc. Pour cela, ils pourront également se servir du quizz fait en début de séquence.
- Les lieux importants à visiter (un lien avec les mythes et légendes vus dans la séquence sera fait. Dans la mesure où le voyage se fera dans les Hautes-Terres, la recherche sera beaucoup plus ciblée ce qui facilitera le travail et obligera les élèves à ne pas lister tous les lieux touristiques de l'Écosse.

- À partir de cette recherche, les élèves pourront créer un itinéraire logique comprenant les lieux principaux à visiter.
- Les activités à faire en dehors des visites
- Les tarifs et horaires. La plupart pourra être trouvée sur le site [VisitScotland](https://www.visitScotland.co.uk). Il faudra bien s'assurer que les élèves sont bien sur la page en langue anglaise, car ils sont normalement automatiquement redirigés sur la page en français.
- L'hébergement (type, lieu, tarifs)

La recherche se fera obligatoirement sur plusieurs séances (trois ou quatre en fonction des besoins). En effet, la quantité d'informations à rechercher n'est pas négligeable, et dans un souci d'autonomie, il est préférable d'accompagner et d'assister les élèves dans leur recherche afin qu'ils ne s'éloignent pas trop de l'objectif.

Ils devront à partir des informations trouvées créer un diaporama rassemblant toutes leurs recherches.

L'aboutissement de cette séquence constituera donc le voyage dans les Highlands, que les élèves auront finalement organisé et préparé eux-mêmes.

## Documents exploités au cours de la séquence :

- Vidéo d'introduction du site VisitScotland :  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIG6tbYaA88>
- Carte illustrée du Royaume-Uni : <http://www.mac-art.us/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Great-Britain-Map.jpg>
- Quizz sur l'Écosse :  
[https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/destination-scotland\\_worksheets.pdf](https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/destination-scotland_worksheets.pdf)
- Image "Scottish myths and legends" :  
<https://i.pinimg.com/564x/2f/00/cf/2f00cf0ba8a39185bf8bf8a3ca211bb9.jpg>
- Vidéo de la chaîne *Discovery Education* sur les Kelpies :  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZ8licq0JdM&feature=youtu.be>

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[http://www.ibiblio.org/fiddlers/SKA\\_SKY.htm](http://www.ibiblio.org/fiddlers/SKA_SKY.htm) (consulté le 05/05/2019)

*Romance Writers of America*, About the Romance Genre,

[https://www.rwa.org/Online/Romance\\_Genre/About\\_Romance\\_Genre.aspx](https://www.rwa.org/Online/Romance_Genre/About_Romance_Genre.aspx) (consulté

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