

ASLS Scott Conference Postgraduate Prize: 'The Romani Heroes in the Novels of Walter Scott'

By Paul Arant

'There is no knowing what tricks they have amongst them'

From Rebecca in *Ivanhoe*, to Elshie in *The Black Dwarf* and Fenella in *Peeveril of the Peak*, the novels of Walter Scott display a frequent interest in presenting underrepresented groups and minorities in a sympathetic and dynamic way. These characters, while marginalised in traditional historical accounts, are indispensable to the narratives they inhabit and help to drive the central action. Kathryn Sutherland describes these characters, comprising 'social outcasts, gypsies [and] madwomen', as an essential part of the 'unreadable core' of the Waverley Novels, asserting a postcolonial understanding through the texts of what Chad T. May terms 'untold histories' of marginalised groups in society.¹ One of these groups are the Romani, also popularly known as Gypsies or Roma. Deborah Epstein Nord uses Edward Said's critical perspective as a base to provide a summary of how the Romani were perceived and treated in nineteenth-century Britain:

Like the "Oriental" or the colonized, racially marked subject, the Gypsy was associated with a rhetoric of primitive desires, lawlessness, mystery, cunning, sexual excess, godlessness, and savagery. [...] Gypsies were the victims of oppression, harassment, and discrimination and of persistent efforts to outlaw and destroy their way of life. [...] Gypsies functioned in British cultural symbolism as a perennial other, a recurrent and apparently necessary marker of difference that, like the biblical Hagar and Ishmael, represented an alternative and rejected lineage.²

Nord highlights how the Roma were associated with degeneracy and primitiveness, and how they suffered intense persecution while their presence simultaneously confirmed the perceived superiority of British culture. The harsh treatment of the Roma and their negative popular depictions demonstrates how they were, and arguably still are in some ways, considered to be outsiders who were a destabilising or subversive force in society, a fact that cannot be overlooked when discussing the largely sympathetic portrayal of this minority group in the works of Scott.

In particular, two of Scott's novels have Gypsy characters who play integral roles in the narratives they inhabit. The complexity and heroism, or anti-heroism, of these characters and the sympathetic depiction of struggles faced by the Roma are quite remarkable, especially when considering the persecution and marginalisation that they have historically experienced and how they have been usually portrayed in other works of literature. The oppression of the Romani is either mentioned or alluded to numerous times in *Quentin Durward* (1823), where we are introduced to who Roger Savage describes as the Bohemian 'positive Gypsy figure' Hayraddin Maugrabin.³ As a driving force in the progression of the plot, Hayraddin occupies a liminal space in society that allows him to play both sides of the French conflict to his advantage and that of the novel's titular hero. Similarly, in *Guy Mannering* (1815) the hardships of the Roma are detailed in several passages, and the gypsy Meg Merrilies is, according to the July 1815 issue of the *Augustan Review*, 'the great agent' in the narrative, whose knowledge holds the key to the story's resolution.⁴ In both novels, Scott presents his Romani characters as positive forces who work to secure the future of Scottish protagonists, thus revealing a transnational sensibility that emphasises the role of minority and underrepresented groups in national narratives and historical memory. In support of this effort, Scott's Gypsies are endowed with relatable and sympathetic qualities that emphasise their humanity, which is accomplished by revealing the hardships and unjust oppression suffered by the Roma, associating the Gypsies with the Scots, using language and dialect to subvert prejudices and showing how their heroic actions reveal conspiracies, restore order and engender justice.

Until the time Scott first published *Guy Mannering*, and in fact afterwards, there was no shortage of negative depictions of Roma in British literature. Siobhan Dowd, editor of *Roads of the Roma*, asserts that 'from the Gypsy impostors of Ben

Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* to Dodie Smith's dog-stealing Gypsies in *The Hundred and One Dalmatians*, the Roma have usually been portrayed in literature as a 'societal menace'. Dowd further remarks that 'Shakespeare's use of the word "gipsy" has negative connotations, suggesting either rascally acts or eastern lewdness [and] in Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders*, Moll's earliest memory is of wandering "among a Crew of the People they call Gypsies or Egyptians", who did not blacken her skin as they did all the other children "they carry about with them"'.⁵ In short, Scott published his novel in the midst of a time when the Roma were still viewed as a dangerous other and threat to the established social order, which was reflected in the literature of the period.

Not only did Scott have to contend with contemporary social and ethnic prejudices, and of the literature that came before him, but he also had to confront the attitudes of the time in which the novel takes place. Dowd notes that 'by the Renaissance rise of the nation state, the portrayals [of the Roma] turn sharply negative. There are decrees banning Gypsies, some of them genocidal: Gypsies must leave or be hanged. Literary references also become hostile. Gypsies are portrayed as fantastically evil, scheming, stupid, dirty, [and] dishonest'.⁶ Scott, being an avid student of history, was no doubt aware of the extremely negative depictions of Gypsies in fifteenth-century texts and historical accounts during his composition of *Quentin Durward*. Therefore, along with contemporary prejudices against the Roma, Scott had to grapple with the vitriol towards the much maligned minority in the historical moment of the novel's setting. This understanding of time and place is crucial when dissecting the portrayal of the Roma in Scott's novels, and their treatment at the hands of other characters, particularly the politically powerful and antagonistic figures.

In numerous instances throughout *Quentin Durward*, the 'Bohemians' are treated and spoken of with contempt, and they suffer severe abuses at the hands of the French, including outright murder without penalties for the perpetrators. There are several scenes where they are attacked without provocation, including in the story that Hayraddin tells Quentin upon their first formal introduction:

When I was a little boy, our tribe was chased by the hunters after human flesh. An arrow went through my mother's head, and she died. I was entangled in the blanket on her shoulders and was taken by the pursuers. A priest begged me from the Provost's archers, and trained me up in Frankish learning for two or

three years.⁷

The brutality with which his mother is murdered, and the casualness of the retelling, reveal both the hardships endured by Hayraddin, and by extension the Roma, and the seeming resignation to these kind of tragedies because of their commonplace occurrence. Durward asks how Hayraddin came to part with the priest, upon which the Bohemian relates how he stole money from the priest and ‘even the God which he worshipped,’ and then subsequently, while receiving a beating, stabs the priest and flees.⁸ Durward is appalled by the story, yet the Gypsy implicates abuse and foul treatment at the hands of the priest, as the young Hayraddin refused to ‘crouch beneath his blows, for scraps of food’.⁹ Hayraddin’s story, and the numerous instances of dehumanizing abuse and violence suffered by the Roma in the novel, are not examples of the prejudices of the author, but are the realistic depictions of the racism and crimes suffered by Gypsies in fifteenth century France, and by larger implication, Europe in general.

This abuse is also witnessed in the Scotland of *Guy Mannering*. At the beginning of the novel Meg relates recent news about the Roma to Godfrey Bertram, informing him that three Gypsies were sent to prison at the Tolbooth for unspecified reasons that occurred at a fair. She also communicates that two more were recently expelled from a local estate, which she believes to be a grave injustice.¹⁰ A few chapters later, the narrator relates how a Scottish law ‘rendered the character of gypsy equal, in the judicial balance, to that of common and habitual thief, and prescribed his punishment accordingly’, which is followed by ‘other statutes’ of ‘severity’.¹¹ This establishes that the trials suffered by the Roma are not only the result of societal or cultural prejudices, but are also directly caused by those who hold political power.

Towards the end of the novel, as Meg is leading Bertram and his friend Dinmont to the cave where the smuggler Hattaraick hides, she mentions the many hardships she has endured throughout her life, and specifically in relation to her secret oath to restore Bertram to his rightful inheritance: ‘I was doomed—still I kept my purpose in the cage and in the stock—I was banished—I kept it in an unco land;—I was scourged—I was branded—it lay deeper than scourge or red iron could reach—And now the hour is come’.¹² Not only does the passage reveal the

violence and sufferings Meg has endured, but it also shows her noble character and serves as a microcosm of the oppression experienced by the Roma. The effect of showing the suffering of the Roma and their treatment at the hands of Western Europeans, both through conversation and physical actions, reveals a sympathetic eye towards the outcast other, and serves to help imbue the reader with empathy towards a much maligned population that still suffers to some degree in present day Europe.

This sympathy is even more visible in the comparison that is drawn between the Scots, especially the titular character of *Quentin Durward*, and the Roma in numerous instances throughout the novel. Mike Sell notes this comparison: 'Hayraddin is very much like Quentin, coming from a people not unlike the Celts, a people "who had not forgotten the lore which had been taught him"'.¹³ In fact, Durward is perhaps so much like Hayraddin that he is mistaken for a Gypsy the first time he appears in the novel. As he approaches a stream, he is spotted by the Provost-Marshal and King Louis XI in disguise, and the Marshal confuses Durward for 'the Bohemian' because of his 'blue cap'.¹⁴ A few chapters later, in a comedic episode where Durward is searching for his benefactor, Maitre Pierre, the disguised King Louis, he is assailed by several groups of peasants who mistake him for a Gypsy: 'You see by his speech and his fool's cap [...] that he is one of the foreign mountebanks who are come into this country and whom some call magicians and soothsayers, and some jugglers and the like, and there is no knowing what tricks they have amongst them'.¹⁵

This comparison is reinforced several paragraphs later, when Durward finds himself among a group of Roma after attempting to save one of their own who has been hanged for treason: 'The singular assemblage, both male and female, wore turbans and caps, more similar, in general appearance, to his own bonnet, than to those generally worn in France'.¹⁶ The fact that Durward, and the Scots in general, are sometimes confused for the Roma by the French locals is a point of contention for the members of the Scottish Guard of King Louis, and one of the Guard vents his dismay: 'But I think it touches our honour, that Tristan and his people pretend to confound our Scottish bonnets with these pilfering vagabonds' tocques and turbands, as they call them'.¹⁷ One of the effects of this comparison is that it provides the reader with an understanding of how it feels to be a visitor in a foreign land, regardless of nationality, thus creating sympathy for the Roma by

demonstrating that while they are perceived as base, strange and even savage, the possibility that anyone may experience prejudice in a foreign land exists. The novel demonstrates that even a Scot can be perceived, and perhaps treated, in the same way.

The comparison between Scots and Romani is perhaps carried to an even greater extreme in *Guy Mannering*, where the violent eviction of the Gypsy community at Derncleugh may point to a contemporary tragedy of which readers were likely to be aware. Before the forced expulsion of the Gypsies at Derncleugh, Scott relates how Godfrey Bertram's newfound political power has caused him to become insufferable in numerous episodes, thus establishing the Laird's change into an unconscionable and debased actor. On the verge of his plan's commencement, the 'old servants shook their heads at his proposal, and even Dominie Sampson ventured upon an indirect remonstrance', which is somewhat surprising considering the Dominie's perceived harsh view of the Gypsies.¹⁸ However, Bertram continues with his plan, and a 'strong posse of peace-officers, sufficient to render all resistance vain', resort to 'violent measures of ejection'.¹⁹ The Romani homes are mostly demolished, and they 'beheld the work of destruction in sullen silence and inactivity; then set about saddling and loading their asses, and making preparations for their departure. These were soon accomplished [...] and they set forth on their journey to seek new settlements'.²⁰ The 'gypsy procession' is vividly described:

*Four or five men formed the advanced guard, wrapped in long loose great coats, that hid their tall slender figures, as the large slouched hats, drawn over their brows, concealed their wild features, dark eyes, and swarthy faces. ... Behind them followed the train of laden asses, and small carts ... on which were laid the decrepid and the helpless, the aged and infant part of the exiled community. The women in their red cloaks and straw hats, the elder children with bare heads, and bare feet, and almost naked bodies, had the immediate care of the little caravan.*²¹

This and the preceding passage demonstrate Scott at perhaps his most effective, eschewing multisyllabic vocabulary and complex sentence structure for simple, concise and highly visual passages that, in this case, bring to mind scenes that were not altogether unfamiliar to a Scottish audience. Minus the ethnic

descriptors, this tragic scene of impoverishment suggests that of the Highland Clearances.

While the concept of the Roma expulsion mirroring that of the Clearances is not a new idea, it has yet to be seriously considered in terms of sympathising the plight of the Gypsies with that of the Highlanders. Peter Garside discusses how '[c]onventionally Scott criticism has interpreted the expulsion in broad Scottish/historical terms, with a new "commercial" legalism sweeping aside the quasi-feudalistic structures of the gypsy community—a process continued when Ellangowan itself falls by auction to the corrupt lawyer Glossin'.²² However, Garside does go on to note that Graham McMaster 'argued in favour of a displaced version of the Highland Clearances, representing an immediate "parable of contemporary events"', and Garside provides a 'tempting echo' of this idea in the expulsion passage where 'Scott describes the practice of unroofing cottages at evictions, "a summary and effectual mode of [ejection] still practiced in [some] remote parts of Scotland"'.²³ While this is all that Garside has to say about the matter, it should be argued that other passages in the novel support this interpretation of the Gypsy removal as providing a contemporary allusion to the Clearances, which had been ongoing for more than half a century by the time of the novel's publication.

Critics may dispute the idea of Scott subtly denouncing current domestic events in his fiction, but an interest in contemporary political and social conditions is readily apparent in Scott's non-fiction as well as his poetry. In an article about Scott's work as a literary and cultural critic for *Blackwood's Magazine*, Alison Lumsden writes:

*Recent editorial work on Walter Scott's poetry reminds us of the extent to which his verse includes alertness to the political and social circumstances that he saw around him; the dedicatory epistles in Marmion, for example, show the extent to which he is responding to the political conditions of the time while close textual attention to his shorter verse uncovers a poet ... responding both to national events and items of local interest.*²⁴

Scott's poetry reveals an author attuned to the developments of the world around him, so it falls within reason to propose that he may have injected present-day

concerns into his historical narratives. In fact, Scott directly addresses and expresses his opinion about the Clearances in his review of the *Culloden Papers* for *The Quarterly Review*. As if for emphasis, Scott ends his article with a condemnation of the Clearances and their effect upon the Highlands:

In many instances, highland proprietors have laboured with laudable and humane precaution to render the change introduced by a new mode of cultivation gentle and gradual, and to provide, as far as possible, employment and protection for those families who were thereby dispossessed of their ancient habitations. But in other, and in but too many instances, the glens of the highlands have been drained, not of their superfluity of population, but of the whole mass of the inhabitants, dispossessed by an unrelenting avarice, which will be one day found to have been as short-sighted as it is unjust and selfish. Meanwhile, the highlands may become the faery ground for romance and poetry, or subject of experiment for the professors of speculation, political and economical.—But if the hour of need should come—and it may not, perhaps, be far distant—the pibroch may sound through the deserted region, but the summons will remain unanswered. The children who have left her will re-echo from a distant shore the sounds with which they took leave of their own—Ha til, ha til, ha til, mi tulidh!—‘We return—we return—we return—no more!’²⁵

Although Scott begins by commending those landowners who found ‘employment and protection for those families who were [...] dispossessed’, he instantly pivots to denounce those who have completely eradicated populations from the lands of their ancestors. Scott emphasises that this is a more than common occurrence, as it happens ‘in but too many instances’, and condemns the cause as an ‘unrelenting avarice’ that is ‘short-sighted’, ‘unjust’ and ‘selfish’, thereby reinforcing the opinion that the Clearances are a morally corrupt endeavour motivated by greed. He ends by poetically drawing attention to the families forced to leave their ancient home and travel to new lands across the sea, where they will be unable to answer the call of a nation that may need them. In sum, the review’s conclusion demonstrates a determined hostility towards the Clearances and their consequences, thus supporting the possibility that Scott may have included a veiled criticism in his fictional work, seeing fit to use it as a way to engender sympathy for both the Gypsies directly affected in the narrative (and often in real life) and the Highlanders who lost everything.

This criticism is seemingly apparent in a passage that occurs when Meg is leading Bertram and Dinmont to the cave. On the way to their destination, Meg takes them through the 'ruined hamlet' where her community once lived.²⁶ She pauses 'before one of the gables which was still standing' and in 'solemn' tone relates the melancholy tale of what once was and is no more:

*"Do you see that blacked and broken end of a sheeling?—there my kettle boiled for forty years—there I bore twelve buirdly sons and daughters—where are they now?—where are the leaves that were on that auld ash-tree at Martinmas—the west wind has made it bare—and I'm stripped too.—Do you see that saugh tree?—it's but a blackened rotten stump now—I've safe under it mony a bonny simmer afternoon when it hung its gay garlands ower the poppling water.—I've sate there, and," elevating her voice, "I've held you on my knee, Henry Bertram, and sung ye sangs of the auld barons and their bloody wars—It will ne'er be green again, and Meg Merrilies will never sing blithe sangs mair."*²⁷

This striking passage evokes the narratives of those who were forcibly removed by the Clearances, and, furthermore, the vivid metaphors contained in Meg's desperate speech can be seen as casting further light on the contemporary Scottish parallel of the Roma's removal from Ellangowan. In mentioning that she does not know where her 'twelve buirdly sons and daughters are', Meg draws attention to how the destruction of their home caused a dispersal of the family, and perhaps even something worse, much like families affected by the Clearances were often forced to split up due to financial considerations or suffered the far worse fate of death due to starvation, disease or exposure. More immediately, Meg causes her audience to contemplate how her family and neighbours were forced off the land they had always known as home, which can be compared to Scott's emphasis in his *Quarterly* article that 'the whole mass of the inhabitants' of the Highlands were 'dispossessed by an unrelenting avarice'.

The idea of dispersal is also apparent in a line pertaining to the powerful central metaphor that compares the loss and destruction of the village to a dying or dead tree (the direct allusion is that the naked tree and 'rotten stump' are symbolic of the now barren land stripped of the families that had lived there for generations). Meg observes that the 'auld ash-tree' has been stripped bare, which has been caused by 'the west wind'. In Europe, traditionally the west wind has been

associated with mildness, which is perhaps owing to Zephyrus, the personification of the west wind and the messenger of spring who brings gentle breezes, so Meg's use of west wind appears to be incorrect, at least superficially, or she means something else. In a strictly literal sense, this could refer to the wind coming in from the Atlantic Ocean by way of the North Channel and/or Irish Sea, or, in a metaphorical sense, the west wind could be referring to the place where many Scottish refugees of the Clearances ultimately ended up, which were the nations to the west, the United States and Canada. Thus, like the west wind blows the leaves from the tree, the victims of the Clearances are propelled westward by the barons forcibly expelling them from their homes and onto the boats whose sails are blown across the Atlantic. This brings to mind the 'children' mentioned in Scott's *Quarterly* article, whose calls of 'we return—no more' 'will re-echo from a distant shore'. In total, the metaphorical conflation of the Scots and Roma is an empathic exercise that draws the contemporary reader's attention to both the lived horror of the Clearances and the oppression of a minority group that exists within their own nation.

In addition to the comparison of Scots and Gypsies, it is pertinent to explore the use of language by the Roma characters. In *Mannering*, Meg often utilises local Scots dialect when she speaks to other Scottish characters in the novel. For example, when Meg is first introduced at the beginning of the novel when Guy Mannering has arrived at the Bertram's estate of Ellangowen, she addresses the Laird of the manor thusly:

*"Aweel, Ellangowen," she said, "wad it no hae been a bonnie thing, an the leddy had been brought a-bed, and me at the fair o' Drumshourloch, no kenning nor dreaming a word about it? Wha was to hae keepit awa the worriecows, I trow? Aye, and the elves and gyre carlings frae the bonny bairn, grace be wi' it? Aye, or said Saint Colme's charm for its sake, the dear?"*²⁸

As evidenced by the syntax and vocabulary ('bonnie', 'kenning', 'frae', etc.), the passage provides a great example of how Meg speaks in a Border Scots dialect, which linguistically associates her with the other Border Scots in the novel, thus breaking down barriers that exist between ethnically and culturally different groups. It indicates her inclusion into the Scottish landscape, thus marking her as a part of Scottish society and therefore the nation, instead of placing her exclusively outside the established order as a member of a group perceived to be

subversive and degenerate. This aspect of societal inclusion and Meg's Scottish linguistic identity is emphasised in an important narrative moment when she curses Godfrey Bertram after he violently removes the Gypsies from his estate. Garside refers to this monologue as 'arguably Scott's most powerful rhetorical speech in Scots'.²⁹ This is no small matter, and it highlights a major aspect of how the novels challenge negative depictions of underrepresented groups by providing positive and familiar traits to minority characters, and, in this instance, how it gives them agency to act against injustice in a relatable fashion. The opinion that Meg gives the 'most powerful rhetorical speech in Scots' is of course exceptional because of her ethnic identity as a Gypsy and her membership in an outcast group.

Similar to Meg and her Scots dialect, Hayraddin's mode of speech is also important to both his characterisation and the effort to eliminate societal divides. Hayraddin speaks with an educated English dialect, which signals to the audience his status as an intelligent character and someone with whom the audience can relate. Furthermore, Hayraddin's skill with language, in particular the use of jests, witticisms and satirical remarks, provides him with a way in which he is able to stump or rhetorically defeat other characters in the novel, especially those of a higher social class or greater power, thus subverting the established social norms enforced by class and national considerations. An example of this occurs in the middle of the novel when Hayraddin has a secret rendezvous with a German mercenary employed by the novel's primary antagonist William de la Marck, the Boar of the Ardennes. After having discussed a plan to deliver the Countesses into the hands of de la Marck, the mercenary offers Hayraddin some wine and then proceeds to malign him along ethnic and religious lines: 'Take a draught of comfort first [...] but I forget; thou art beast enough to drink nothing but water, like a vile vassal of Mahound and Termagaunt'.³⁰ The insult is clear: besides being a 'beast' or racially inferior, the mercenary compares Hayraddin to a 'vile' follower of a perceived pagan god or demon and a supposed Saracen god, thus implying that he is subversive and degenerate. Hayraddin wittily responds to this slur by stating:

"Thou art thyself a vassal of the wine-measure, and the flagon [...] I marvel not that thou art only trusted with the blood-thirsty, and the violent part of executing what better heads have devised.—He must drink no wine, who would know the thoughts of others, or hide his own. But why preach to thee, who hast

a thirst as eternal as a sand-bank in Arabia?”³¹

This rhetorical display demonstrates the intelligence of Hayraddin, thus challenging the stereotype of Gypsies as uneducated and ignorant, and it also shows how he subverts the accusations of the mercenary by asserting that a truly wise person abstains from alcohol, which enslaves those who consume it (his abstinence from wine also subverts the notion of Gypsies as prone to the abuse of alcohol and other vices). He then furthers this subversion by directly insulting the mercenary's intelligence as being only sufficient to carry out the basest directions of those with superior intellect. In total, Hayraddin's rhetorical skills reveal an intelligent and educated individual that actively challenges both the perception and treatment of his race. Linguistically, it also associates himself with the readership of Scott's novels, who would find him to be relatable in his intelligence and diction.

Having established a sympathy for the Roma based on the evocation of Scottish feelings of subjugation and foreign experience, and a familiarity tied to contemporary events and language, it is pertinent to discuss the heroic value of both Romani characters and how these innovative portrayals helped redefine the literary status of a maligned European minority. As mentioned in the introduction, positive foreign characters appear in several Scott novels. May contends that the minority and foreign characters found in the works of Scott, exist 'on the margins of any traditional historical account, but [are] absolutely essential to the plots of the novels they inhabit'.³² In traditional historical accounts ethnic minorities have been either ignored or maligned, yet in the works of Scott these characters often play an essential role in the progression of the plot and the heroic realisations of the protagonists. In *Mannering*, Meg Merrilies continually assists and saves the main character from disaster, and her actions ultimately ensure the narrative's resolution: she arms the heroes in their fateful battle with the novel's villains, and her dying revelations ensure the arrest of the antagonist Gilbert Glossin and help secure the rightful inheritance of Harry Bertram. May states that by 'Lacking any sort of fixed identity based in place, history, religion, or culture, the bohemians, or gypsies, of Scott's fiction are part of a series of "oriental" figures who stand outside the explanations of national history. Yet as a result of this "liberty," as Hayraddin describes it, these figures function as the driving force behind the plot of the novels'.³³ The 'fascinating' Hayraddin Maugrabin is 'the anti- to the solid

Scot hero [...] a gypsy who plays both sides of a civil war only to lose his life to the hangman's rope—but not before bequeathing his legacy to the handsome and valourous main player'.³⁴ Before he is to be hanged due to the machinations of the French king, Hayraddin reveals to Quentin the plot of the villainous de la Marck in order to help the eponymous hero secure his reputation by preventing a war between France and Burgundy. In sum, without Hayraddin, Quentin would lack the knowledge to defeat the novel's antagonists and ensure his triumph and marriage to Isabelle, Countess of Croye.

Meg and Hayraddin's actions on behalf of ostensible outsiders, Durward a Scotsman in France and Bertram a Scotsman removed who returns to his birthplace as a foreigner, act as a kind of transmission. Their efforts to integrate and restore the central protagonists to the nations they inhabit secures Meg and Hayraddin's own places in the histories of the families they assist, thereby becoming a part of the nation themselves by extension. Moreover, they secure their crucial importance within the narrative, which is itself a model that radically proposes the integration of foreigners and minorities into the project of nation.

In closing, Scott's Gypsy characters provide us with a postcolonial understanding of the treatment of the Roma during the time in which the novels take place and were written, and the value of minorities in both literature and historical accounts. Furthermore, the utilisation of Romani characters as significant positive forces demonstrates an early transnational sensibility that places an importance upon underrepresented or foreign groups in the composition of nation and narrative. It is through these and the central characters that we find a polyphonic representation of the nation and its internal conflicts, thus demonstrating the complex morality of the narratives and the historical memory that informs them.