

**(MIS)REPRESENTATIONS OF OTHERNESS IN DETECTIVE FICTION: THE TRAVELLING GYPSY AS THE CRIMINAL OTHER IN *THE CASE OF THE MISSING HAND***

*Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article*

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**ABSTRACT**

This study seeks to examine (mis) representations of otherness in British detective fiction and focuses on the travelling gypsies as the criminal other in “The Case of the Missing Hand”, a story published in 1895 in *Chronicles of Martin Hewitt* by Arthur Morrison. In line with its objectives, the study firstly introduces characteristics of Victorian detective fiction and then provides a literary analysis of the crime story with a presumed murder victim, an exoticized crime setting, the detective figure and a foreign gypsy as the criminal other. In the article, it is argued that Morrison’s short story is a reflection of the strong stereotyping of the gypsies in Victorian society and depicts misrepresentation of the figure of the outsider gypsy as the criminal/villain in British community for endangering their sense of security and safety in the period. The use of primaeval superstitions as a motive for committing a crime further demonstrates estrangement of the gypsy community by distancing them both culturally and temporally through implications of primitiveness and savageness.

**Keywords:** Gypsies, Detective Story, Crime, Victorian Era, Otherness, Arthur Morrison.

**POLİSİYE KURGUDA ÖTEKİNİN (YANLIŞ) TEMSİLİ: *KAYIP EL VAKASI* ÖYKÜSÜNDE SUÇLU ÖTEKİ OLARAK GÖÇEBE ROMANLAR**

**ÖZ**

Bu çalışma, İngiliz polisiye kurgusunda ötekiliğin (yanlış) temsilini incelemeyi amaçlamakta ve Arthur Morrison’un 1895 yılında *Chronicles of Martin Hewitt* eserinde yer alan “The Case of the Missing Hand” (Kayıp El Vakası) adlı öyküsünde suçlu öteki olarak göçebe Romanlara odaklanmaktadır. Amaçları doğrultusunda, çalışma öncelikle Viktorya dönemi polisiye kurgusunun özelliklerini tanıtmakta ve ardından bir suç öyküsünde olası bir cinayet kurbanı, egzotikleştirilmiş bir suç mahalli, dedektif figürü ve suçlu öteki olarak ele alınan yabancı bir Roman’ı inceleyerek edebi bir analiz sunmaktadır. Bu makale, Morrison’ın kısa öyküsünün Viktorya toplumunda göçebe Roman topluluklarına karşı var olan güçlü basmakalıp yargıların bir yansıması olduğunu ve aynı dönemde İngiliz toplumunun emniyet ve güvenlik duygularını tehlikeye attığına inanıldığı için dışlanan Roman figürünün suçlu/hain olarak yanlış temsilinin yapıldığını ileri sürmektedir. İlkel hurafelerin bir suç işleme nedeni olarak kullanılması, Roman topluluğunu hem kültürel hem de tarihsel olarak ilkel ve vahşilik imalarıyla modern toplumdan uzaklaştırarak daha fazla yabancılaştırdığını gösterir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Roman Toplumları, Polisiye Kurgu, Suç, Viktorya Dönemi, Ötekileştirme, Arthur Morrison.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Published in 1895 in *Chronicles of Martin Hewitt* by Arthur Morrison, “The Case of the Missing Hand” is a short story that carries characteristics of Victorian detective fiction such as “the seemingly perfect crime; the wrongly accused suspect[s] ...; the bungling of dim-witted police; the greater powers of observation and superior mind of the detective; and the startling and unexpected denouement ...” (Detective Story, 2020). Although the story initially seems to be a presumed murder with two suspects due to some superficial evidence found in the crime scene, it soon turns out that the available proof is indeed irrelevant. Detective Martin Hewitt’s profound knowledge about the superstitions of foreign communities and his observation skills and logical interpretation of the clues in the crime scene assist him to figure out the reality about the case and criminals.

More significantly, the story raises fundamental questions regarding (mis) representations of otherness in Victorian detective fiction. To what extent do these narratives reflect the Victorian authors and readers’ perception of otherness and racial/cultural differences, as pure realism or preconceived ideas? How do they strengthen the idea of community or challenge the stereotypes of otherness? This study aims to address these issues with an emphasis on a presumed murder victim, an exoticized crime setting, the detective figure and the foreigner as the criminal “other” in “The Case of the Missing Hand” and argues that the story is a reflection of the strong exclusion and stereotyping of (foreign) gypsies in Victorian society. The use of primaevae superstitions as a motive for committing a crime in the plot further indicates estrangement of the gypsy community distancing them both culturally and temporally through implications of primitiveness and savageness. The figure of the outsider gypsy as criminal/villain depicts its misrepresentation in the British community for endangering their sense of security and safety in the nineteenth century.

## 2. BRITISH DETECTIVE FICTION AND MARTIN HEWITT

Morrison’s detective stories are, in many ways, considered as a continuation of Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes series, which made detective fiction a popular genre in the period (Priestman, 2003: 4). In 1891, Doyle’s “A Study in Bohemia” was published in George Newness’ *Strand Magazine* and introduced Sherlock Holmes to the middle-class readers. In the same year, Morrison wrote a short story on the East End entitled “A Street” published for the *Macmillan’s Magazine*. When Doyle completed his Sherlock Holmes series in a few years, Morrison was offered to write replacement detective stories and commenced to write Martin Hewitt’s mysteries.\* This shift marks a critical change in Morrison’s writing and literary career for he often wrote on slums, poverty and the East End. Along with the Martin Hewitt stories, the Strand also published a series named “Crime and Criminal” in 1894, focusing on the operation of many types of crimes (burglary, forgery and coiners etc.) to educate the public about protecting themselves against crime and criminals (Harper, 2009: 74). The series informed the readers about the identification of criminals’ motives, as well as false or misleading identification.

However, Morrison’s characterisation of Martin Hewitt is distinguished from that of Sherlock Holmes in several aspects. Firstly, the writer attempts to create “a less flamboyant, more realistic detective” unlike the colourful characterisation of Holmes (Harper, 68). Hewitt is depicted as a calm and sometimes dull character in the flow of events in comparison to Holmes’s unpredictable individuality. The puzzle in the story is highlighted and the detective is not an eccentric or exotic character who creates suspense. Socially, Hewitt relies on his profession for financial support and he has moderate training. Having worked as a solicitor’s clerk in the past, he works as an independent and non-specialist professional detective in London (Kayman, pp. 50-51). In *Chronicles of Martin Hewitt*, including “The Case of the Missing Hand” the narrator is a journalist called Brett, a friend of Hewitt accompanying him during his investigations. Unlike Holmes, Hewitt does not use disguises

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\* Morrison’s twenty-five stories were published between 1894 and 1903 and Martin Hewitt was the detective in some well-known magazines such as *The London Magazine*, *The Strand Magazine*, and *The Windsor Magazine*. Shortly after their periodical publication, these stories were published in four volumes: *Martin Hewitt, Investigator*; *The Chronicles of Martin Hewitt*; *The Adventures of Martin Hewitt*; and *The Red Triangle*, a series of six related stories that feature Morrison’s version of Moriarty, the master criminal Mayes (Greenfield, 2002: 18).

and lives as an ordinary citizen in the city. Yet, both Holmes and Hewitt are clever, and they possess superior observation and logical reasoning skills making them distinguished detectives.

In Hewitt's mysteries, ordinariness and the power of common sense and perseverance are reassured. Hewitt is depicted as a character having "no system beyond a judicious use of ordinary faculties" and relying heavily on "common sense and a sharp pair of eyes" (Kayman, 2003: 50-51). Rather than carrying any personal eccentricity, like in most characters in detective fiction, Hewitt is identified by his approaches and methodologies to solve crimes. Hewitt not only uses the force of logical thought and that of deduction, but he also makes use of specialised knowledge and scientific instruments, which makes him the "ideal detective", in Holmes' words (50). Moreover, as part of this genre, these stories reflect the emergence of new forms of state control and surveillance to protect middle-class "property values, sexual morality and bureaucratic rationalities" (44). Middle-to-upper class values are protected against any criminal activities carried out by marginalised individuals or communities, and they are solved by skilled police or detectives.

Foreign criminals, foreign victims and foreign settings have long been used in crime and detective fiction from Edgar Allan Poe's *The Murders on the Rue Morgue* (1841) to "foreign devils" in Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock series. In nineteenth-century English detective stories, criminals are often foreign and they are stigmatized as the "other" or the "exotic" in Victorian society (Schütt, 2003: 73). Placed at the heart of mystery and suspense, the unknown criminal arouses feelings of curiosity and fear, based on preconceived ideas of the author (and the readers) about alterity and difference (Anderson et.al., 2012: 1). In this sense, these stories contribute to national, social and cultural construction of otherness and reflect the ideological approaches of the state on identity, belonging or hybridity.

The use of foreigners in crime and detective fiction further indicates a "transcultural contact zone" in which authors often reflect their society's attitude towards different cultures and societies (Pratt, 1992). In this respect, the use of gypsies as the criminal "other" in Morrison's short story exemplifies a transcultural encounter in Victorian England. The "foreign" gypsy as a representative of a minority group is presented as a suspect of a presumed murder and the detective represents English society. In the story, the projection of evil onto others (minority cultures) is used as a way of distancing dominant cultures from it (Morton, 2004). At the same time, the figure of the detective acknowledges cultural multiplicity by his ability to relate to different social classes, cultures and communities, as elaborated in the next section.

### 3. THE PLOT AND HEWITT'S METHODOLOGY

The story is set in Ratherby, a small town far from London. Martin Hewitt and Brett visit the latter's uncle, the Colonel, in early September. The plot includes the Fosters family from Ratherby, a couple with two sons and one daughter. After the death of Mr John Foster in an accident, Mrs Foster marries Mr Jonas Sneathy, a fortune-hunter and a director of penny banks as well as some insurance offices (Morrison, 1896: 141). Soon, Mr Sneathy finds out that he cannot benefit from his wife's assets due to her ex-husband's will. His brutal nature is eventually unclosed, and he uses physical violence against his wife. Witnessing such a terrific moment, Henry and Robert save their mother and then they beat Mr Sneathy. They further threaten him about chopping his hand off and hanging him to the door. Soon after their departure to London, the two brothers are called back home by their sister and they find out that Mr Sneathy has just left home after an incident. They go out to find Mr Sneathy and ask a coachman in what direction he went. On the same day, Mr Sneathy's body is found in Ratherby hanging to a tree and with the right hand cut off. This discovery leads the local community to assume that he did not commit suicide but was murdered. The only suspects are the young Fosters who threatened him earlier and they were seen walking in the same direction.

Upon the discovery of the body, Hewitt goes to the crime scene (before the police) and finds some evidence that ultimately leads him in a completely different direction regarding the presumed murder and murderer(s). In the first instance, Hewitt comments on hanging and mutilation of the body as "an unusual form of murder" for revenge or spite (Morrison, 1896: 148). Although Hewitt, Bret and Mr Hardwick (the Colonel's neighbour) observe marks of three pairs of shoes on the

footpath, indicating the presence of Mr Sneathy, Robert and Henry together, the detective continues to search for further evidence in the wood. Conversely, Mr Hardwick considers all evidence as proof of the murder of Mr Sneathy by the two brothers. His claim is ultimately falsified by Hewitt's discovery of the truth as the detective claims that initial presumptions could lead to wrong interpretations of available evidence.

Using his high observational skills and reasoning, Hewitt finds out that the rope used for the hanging is an old one rather than that of the Forsters. Based on the evidence such as the missing right hand, muddy marks on the body's knees, clumsily cut locks over the right ear, and right-handed brothers, Hewitt is convinced that the two brothers have not murdered Mr Sneathy. He has a different assumption and therefore he decides to do some further research about the case in the area. In higher parts of the wood, Hewitt and Brett find two recent human footmarks, and soon they discover an unknown trail going down the stream. They follow the footsteps and finds "a couple of small twigs, placed crosswise, with the longer twig of the two pointing down the branch of the road to the left" (Morrison, 1896: 161). In line with these discoveries, the reader is left with several essential questions, as Brett also asks: "Who was this mysterious man with the broken shoe? What had he to do with the murder of Sneathy? What did the mutilation mean? And who were his friends who left him signs and messages by means of crossed twigs?" (161). Following the twig signs, Hewitt and Brett arrive in an open space where they find a gypsy encampment and a few people sitting around a fire. The crime setting is exoticized with superstitions of ancient cultures and the presence of a gypsy encampment in the area.

#### 4. VICTORIAN GYPSIES AND REPRESENTATIONS OF OTHERNESS

Although their origins and the first date of arrival into England is not precisely known, the gypsies have been living in the country as a minority ethnic group from the early sixteenth century. Besides their racial difference, as constant travellers, the gypsies maintained an independent and self-sufficient way of life that contradicts the sedentary life in the British industrial society and bourgeois ideology in the nineteenth century (Matthews, 2008: 5). In *Gypsy-Travellers* (1988), David Mayall depicts the common perception of the travelling gypsies in England as follows:

*[Gypsies] had a freedom resented by the householder and were seen as marginal to the normal forces of law and order. Those travellers who did not work, or were not seen to work, were thought of as idle mendicants; those who did were said to pursue sham and vagabond employments which evaded hard and real toil. In short, they were seen as unwelcome and unsavoury parasites. The nomadic way of life stood in defiance to that experienced and suffered by the sedentary population. It rejected materialism, conformity and subjugation to industrial discipline. Anything that suggested eccentricity and unconventionality was treated with an interest qualified by reserve and suspicion. (90)*

The public's disapproval of their way of life was shared by the state for causing a nuisance in the country and as a threat against the established social and moral order. For these reasons, eight major legislations were enacted from the early sixteenth century until the end of the eighteenth century to control and restrict their movements and places for camping (Mayall, 1988: 189-92). The "Gypsy Problem" continued to mount in the following century and eighteen legislations that were more severe were enacted. This issue was also taking more space in news, periodicals and literary works unlike earlier centuries (Wilder, 2004: 5). Nevertheless, as Mayall also notes, the Vagrancy Act of 1824 was the most harmful law enactment against the travelling gypsies in the period and "it gave considerable discretionary powers to magistrates, who showed little reluctance in enforcing it, and by sweeping the countryside as 'a remorseless drag-net' no nomadic family was able to feel immune from its generalised provisions" (147). With the Act, local authorities were allowed to prevent the gypsies from settling down in a place temporarily without the permission of owners of any private properties (Matthews, 2008: 5).

Since gypsies had lower literacy levels and preserved an oral culture rather than written records, available texts for analysis were often written by non-gypsies (Mayall, 1988: 7). This means that the gypsy identity was often re-constructed by middle-to-upper class, sedentary male artists and

authors in written records of the nineteenth century. Hence, identification of the gypsies as “other” often refers to the gaze and estrangement of settled societies in the countries they wandered. Their racial and cultural differences as well as travelling lifestyle were considered as a deviation from normalcy and denoted their outsider status from the perspective of middle-class sedentary individuals describing them (Matthews, 2008: 31). However, it is still not clear whether their otherness or marginalisation originate from their race, culture or lifestyle (13).

In this context, Morrison’s short story exemplifies the gaze of the white, middle-class male writer and further complicates misrepresentation of the gypsies by identifying the “foreign” gypsy as the criminal other in Victorian England. This is particularly achieved by the narrator’s point of views as a representative of the middle-class Victorians. The story, for instance, opens with Brett’s opinions on the occurrence of mysterious crimes far from London, unlike the common belief that the city is the locus of countless possibilities of criminal activities. In the same passage, the narrator’s view on ancient races, civilization and savagery reflect the common Victorian ideas on marginalising other minority cultures:

*Fantastic crimes, savage revenges, mediæval superstitions, horrible cruelty, though less in sight, have been no more extinguished by the advent of the nineteenth century than have the ancient races who practised them in the dark ages. Some of the races have become civilized, and some of the savageries are heard of no more. But there are survivals in both cases. I say these things having in my mind a particular case that came under the personal notice of both Hewitt and myself—an affair that brought one up standing with a gasp and a doubt of one's era. (Morrison, 1896: 138)*

Brett links savagery and mediaeval superstitions with uncivilised races/communities living in the nineteenth century. His feelings of awe and doubt of his era arouse curiosity and reveal his assumption that all races are developed at some level and they conform to Western ideals of community and civilisation. In this regard, the narrative offers a story of otherness of ancient communities and their “savageries” proclaimed from the beginning.

In the narrative, the gypsies travelling in England are differentiated from the gypsies of other parts of Europe and the narrator makes an explicit connection between criminal activities and “foreign” gypsies, with a reference to different types of gypsies and ancient superstitions. In the story, Hewitt communicates with the gypsies in the Romani language and the English translations are provided by the author in the footnotes.\* The detective’s knowledge of a minority language marginalises him, but it also displays his conformity to a multicultural society through his communication with other ethnicities. The small group consists of gypsies, half-gypsies, and Lees and Hewitt introduces himself and Brett as *pirimengroes* (or travellers). This indicates a strong classification of the gypsies which reinforces their exclusion and otherness in the period. After a short conversation, Hewitt points out that one of the men is a “foreign” gypsy and he is not a Lee:

*"You're not all Lees here, I see?"*

*"Yes, pal, all Lees."*

*"But he's not a Lee?" and Hewitt jerked his head towards the tent.*

*"Why not a Lee, pal? We be Lees, and he is with us. Thus he is a Lee."*

*"Oh yes, of course. But I know he is from over the pawny. Come, I'll guess the tem [country] he comes from—it's from Roumania, eh? Perhaps the Wallachian part?"*

*The men looked at one another, and then the old Lee said:*

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\* Studies regarding linguistic origins of Romani language suggest that it can be traced back to north Indian languages (Kenrick, 2004: 5) Some expressions used by Hewitt in the story are as follows: *Kooshto bock, pals!*" [Good luck, brothers] "*Sarshin, daddo?*" [How do you do, father] he said; "*Dell mandy tooty's varst.*" [Give me your hand] "*Tatty for pawny, chals. Dell mandy the pawny, and lell posh the tatty.*" ["Spirits for water, lads. Give me the water and take your share of the spirits."] (Morrison, 1896: 163-86).

*"You're right, pal. You're cleverer than we took you for. That is what they calls his tem. He is a petulengro, and he comes with us to shoe the gries [horses] and mend the vardoes [vans]. But he is with us, and so he is a Lee."* (Morrison, 1896: 166)

As this passage suggests, the man with the broken shoes is identified as a foreign gypsy and he is the person being close to the mutilated body. He is described by Brett as "a much darker man than any other present" and with the "appearance of a man of even a swarthier race than that of the others" in the encampment (165). The outsidership of the foreign gypsy is reinforced by his darker skin colour and exoticizes the story even further.

Soon later, Hewitt describes him as a Wallachian gypsy, having "an older and purer dialect than that of the English gypsies" and suggests that foreign gypsies still believe in the legend of Hand of Glory:

*It did exist in this country in the last century, when there were plenty of dead men hanging at cross-roads, and so on. On the Continent, in some places, it has survived later. Among the Wallachian gypsies it has always been a great article of belief, and the superstition is quite active still. The belief is that the right hand of a hanged man, cut off and dried over the smoke of certain wood and herbs, and then provided with wicks at each finger made of the dead man's hair, becomes, when lighted at each wick (the wicks are greased, of course), a charm, whereby a thief may walk without hinderance where he pleases in a strange house, push open all doors and take what he likes. Nobody can stop him, for everybody the Hand of Glory approaches is made helpless, and can neither move nor speak.* (Morrison, 1896: 183)

As explained by Hewitt, the Hand of Glory is a superstition that has a long history and took place in folk tales and legends in Europe.\* Hewitt solves the presumed murder of Mr Sneathy as being a suicide and the mutilation of his right-hand by a foreign gypsy who believed in the Hand of Glory. He explicates that Mr Sneathy and the two young Fosters had not met in the wood and they were looking for him to take him to the asylum for they believed he had gone mad. The footmarks of a broken shoe, twig-signs, and some jagged hair are used by Hewitt to use reasoning and deduction in the light of available evidence. The man is arrested by Hewitt and Brett on the very act of practising the superstition and sent to the prison. Yet the next morning, he is discovered to have escaped and is never found again.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Morrison's "The Case of the Missing Hand" is a reflection of the social and cultural anxieties of the Victorian community regarding the travelling gypsies in the nineteenth century. Whilst Brett, as the narrator, represents the middle-class Victorians' attitudes and preconceived ideas towards the gypsies, Hewitt is constructed as a more hybrid character whose role acknowledges cultural multiplicity since he can relate to different social spectrums as well as exotic cultures and communities. Not relying on presumptions and convictions, the detective uses both observation skills and his knowledge about the gypsies, the Romani language and their old superstitions. His empirical approach allows him to solve the crime and prevent false accusations of the gypsy as a murderer.

In this way, the story not only discloses the dominant exclusion and stereotyping of the travelling gypsies in Victorian England, but it also challenges the perception of otherness based on preconceived ideas with its unanticipated end. Although it is assumed that the victim was murdered by his stepsons, it turns out that he committed suicide and his hand was cut off after death by a foreign gypsy who believed in Hand of Glory. Morrison exoticizes the crime setting by choosing a small town far from London, with ancient superstitions and a gypsy encampment not far from the hanged body. Brett's statements in the narrative also emphasizes the estrangement of the gypsy community through implications of primitive beliefs and savagery. Hewitt, as the detective, reassures a sense of security and safety for the middle-class narrator, as representative of the society he writes for. Thereby, the author attempts to subvert the perception of the foreign gypsy as the criminal other and embraces cultural and ethnical difference in a multicultural society.

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\* For other tales and legends on Hand of Glory, see <https://www.pitt.edu/~dash/hand.html>

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## GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

### Amaç

Bu çalışma, İngiliz polisiye kurgusunda ötekiliğin (yanlış) temsillerini incelemeyi amaçlamakta ve İngiliz yazar Arthur Morrison'un 1895 yılında yayınlanan *Chronicles of Martin Hewitt* eserinde yer alan "The Case of the Missing Hand" (Kayıp El Vakası) öyküsünde suçlu öteki olarak göçebe Romanlara odaklanmaktadır. Bu makale, Morrison'ın kısa öyküsünün Viktorya toplumunda göçebe Roman topluluklarına karşı var olan güçlü basmakalıp yargıların bir yansıması olduğunu ve aynı dönemde İngiliz toplumunun emniyet ve güvenlik duygularını tehlikeye attığına inanıldığı için dışlanan Roman figürünün suçlu/hain olarak ele alındığını ileri sürmektedir. Öyküde ilkel hurafelerin bir suç işleme nedeni olarak kullanılması ise, Roman topluluğunu hem kültürel hem de tarihsel olarak ilkel ve vahşilik imalarıyla modern toplumdan uzaklaştırdığını ve daha fazla yabancılaştırdığını gösterir.

### Metodoloji

Çalışma öncelikle Viktorya dönemi polisiye kurgusunun özelliklerini ele almakta ve on dokuzuncu yüzyılın son döneminde yayınlanan Morrison'un polisiye öykülerinin bu alandaki yerini ve önemini açıklamaktadır. Daha sonra olay örgüsü incelenerek suç ve ötekileştirme kavramları ele alınmakta ve göçebe Roman topluluklarının edebiyattaki temsili analiz edilmektedir. Arthur Conan Doyle'un Sherlock Holmes serisinden sonra özel dedektiflerin ön planda yer aldığı öykülerin devamı niteliğinde Morrison tarafından Martin Hewitt karakteri yaratılmış ve akılcı düşünce, bilimsel veriler ve mantık çerçevesinde suç olaylarının ele alınması geleneği devam ettirilmiştir. Öyküde, ilk incelemelerde cinayet olduğu düşünülen bir olayda, dedektif Hewitt'in detaylı incelemesi, gözlemleri ve deneyimi sonucunda maktulün aslında intihar ettiği ve daha sonra olay yerine gelen ve batıl inançları olan yabancı bir Romanın ölünün sağ elini ve bir tutam saçını kestiği anlaşılır. İlk izlenimin olay hakkında yanlış bir değerlendirmeye yol açabileceğini ve ilk şüphelilerin aslında masum olabileceklerini kanıtlayan bir örnek olarak suç araştırmalarında bilimsel veri ve kanıtların kullanılması gerektiğini vurgular.

### Bulgular

Yabancı suçlular, yabancı kurbanlar ve yabancı olay yerleri, Edgar Allan Poe'nun *The Murders on the Rue Morgue* (1841) öyküsünden Arthur Conan Doyle'un Sherlock serisindeki "yabancı şeytanlar" a kadar uzun süredir suç ve dedektif kurgusunda kullanılmıştır. On dokuzuncu yüzyıl İngiliz dedektif hikayelerinde, suçlular genellikle yabancıdır ve Viktorya toplumunda "öteki" veya "egzotik" olarak damgalanırlar (Schütt, 2003: 73). Gizem ve gerilimin merkezine yerleştirilen gizemli suçlu, yazarın (ve okuyucuların) farklılık hakkındaki önyargılı fikirlerine dayanarak onlarda merak ve korku uyandırır (Anderson et. al., 2012: 1). Bu anlamda bu hikayeler, ötekiliğin ulusal, sosyal ve kültürel inşasına katkıda bulunur ve devletin kimlik, aidiyet veya mezleklik konusundaki ideolojik yaklaşımlarını yansıtır.

Yabancıların suç ve polisiye kurgusunda kullanılması, yazarların sıklıkla toplumlarının farklı kültürlere ve toplumlara yönelik tutumlarını yansıttığı bir "kültürlerarası temas bölgesi" ni gösterir (Pratt, 1992). Bu bakımdan, Morrison'ın kısa öyküsünde Romanların suçlu "öteki" olarak kullanılması, Viktorya dönemi İngiltere'sinde kültürlerarası bir çatışmanın örneğidir. Bir azınlık grubunun temsilcisi olarak "yabancı" Roman, varsayılan bir cinayetin zanlısı olarak sunulur ve öyküde Martin Hewitt İngiliz toplumunu temsil eder. Hikâyede, kötülüğün başkalarına (azınlık kültürleri) yansıtılması, baskın kültürleri ondan uzaklaştırmanın bir yolu olarak kullanılmıştır (Morton, 2004). Aynı zamanda, dedektif figürü farklı sosyal sınıflar, kültürler ve topluluklarla ilişki kurma becerisiyle de kültürel çeşitliliği destekler.

Öyküde, İngiltere'de yaşayan göçebe Roman topluluğunun kullanılması bu etnik grubun toplum tarafından ötekileştirilmesi ve dışlanması konusunu gündeme getirir. Kökenleri ve İngiltere'ye ilk geliş tarihleri kesin olarak bilinmemekle birlikte, Romanlar ülkede on altıncı yüzyılın başlarından itibaren azınlık etnik bir grup olarak yaşamaktadırlar. Çingeneler, ırksal farklılıklarının yanı sıra, sürekli göçebeler olarak, İngiliz sanayi toplumundaki yerleşik yaşamla ve on dokuzuncu yüzyıldaki burjuva ideolojisiyle çelişen bağımsız ve kendi kendine yeten bir yaşam tarzını



sürdürmüşlerdir. Halkın onların yaşam tarzlarını onaylamaması ve devlet tarafından yerleşik sosyal ve ahlaki düzene bir tehdit olarak algılanmaları çeşitli sorunlara yol açmıştır. Bu nedenle, göçmen Romanların hareketlerini ve kamp yerlerini kontrol etmek ve kısıtlamak için on altıncı yüzyılın başından on sekizinci yüzyılın sonuna kadar sekiz büyük yasa çıkarıldı.

### **Sonuç ve Tartışma**

Morrison'un "The Case of the Missing Hand" adlı öyküsü Viktorya toplumunun göçebe Romanlar ile ilgili sosyal ve kültürel kaygılarının bir yansımasıdır. Anlatıcı olarak Brett orta sınıf Viktorialıların Romanlara karşı tutumlarını ve önyargılı fikirlerini temsil ederken, Hewitt, rolü farklı sosyal spektrumların yanı sıra egzotik kültürler ve topluluklarla ilişki kurabildiğinden kültürel çeşitliliği kabul eden daha melez bir karakter olarak yansıtılmıştır. Varsayımlara ve kanaatlere kanmayan dedektif, hem gözlem becerilerini hem de Romanlar, Roman dili ve eski batıl inançları hakkındaki bilgilerini kullanır. Ampirik yaklaşımı, suçu çözmesine ve yabancı bir Roman'ın katil olmadığını kanıtlamasına yardımcı olur.

Böylelikle hikâye, sadece Viktorya dönemi İngiltere'sindeki göçebe Romanların dışlanması açığa çıkarmakla kalmaz, aynı zamanda önyargılı fikirlere dayalı olarak toplumun ötekileştirmesine de beklenmedik sonucu meydana okur. Mr Sneathy'nin üvey oğulları tarafından öldürüldüğü varsayılsa da aslında intihar ettiği ve ölümünden sonra Hand of Glory'ye inanan yabancı bir Roman tarafından elinin kesildiği ortaya çıkar. Yazarın, olay yeri olarak Londra'dan uzakta küçük bir kasaba seçmesi, eski batıl inançların kullanılması ve olay yerine yakın bir Roman kampıyla suç ortamını egzotikleştirir. Brett'in anlatıdaki ifadeleri aynı zamanda ilkel inançlar ve vahşet yoluyla çingene topluluğunun yabancılaştırılmasını vurgular. Bu bağlamda, dedektif Hewitt orta sosyal sınıflara bir güvenlik ve emniyet duygusu verir. Aynı zamanda yazar, yabancı Roman'ın suçlu öteki algısını yıkmaya çalışır ve çok kültürlü bir toplumda kültürel ve etnik çeşitliliği onaylar.