The National (Hippo) Drama: Empire and the Nineteenth-Century Scottish Touring Circus

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Abstract
This article demonstrates how nineteenth-century Scottish touring circus sits at the intersection of the National Drama and the imperial spectacle of the circus. It offers a timely analysis of how Scottish (inter)nationalism and nation formation were interwoven with imperialist discourse in popular public imaginaries. By analysing the deployment of and investment in Unionist-nationalist Scottish imagery in playbills, newspapers, and life-writing accounts, and in archives this article newly brings to light, I argue two things: firstly, that the continuities between rural touring and metropolitan permanent circuses helped bridge the historic cultural and ethnic divide between Highland and Lowland communities; and secondly, that this creation of a unified Scottish identity engendered and reflected an (inter)nationalist and imperial sentiment in diverse Scottish audiences. This article, therefore, complicates current conceptions and historiographies of Scottish nationalism which overlook how commitment to Unionism and the empire was often a prerequisite for nationalist feeling.

Keywords
Circus, life-writing, empire, Scottish nationalism, National Drama, archives

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Introduction

In 1903, a Mr A. S. Cook penned and published an article in the Aberdeenshire magazine *Bon-Accord*, detailing his memories of his first visit to Cooke’s Circus some sixty years earlier. While, as he wrote, the arrival of the circus was ‘a great event, and was looked forward to by me with delight and great expectation’, Cook’s observation that the circus show did not match its billing—did not feature the same set pieces, routines, or hippodramatic sequences, nor live up to the lustre of its advertisement—will be familiar to anyone in the business of piecing together and analysing performances of the past. He is worth quoting at length:

On the bills after the circus arrived a winged horse was exhibited, and on this my first visit I was much disappointed that this animal, which was a novelty in Natural History, and, to me, one of the greatest inducements to be present, was not visible. The wood engraving, which I have before me as I write, and which so attracted my fancy and wonder, is the figure of a prancing horse rearing on his hind legs, with the forelegs greatly elevated and pawing the air …. The wings are partly outspread, as if the animal were to fly, and a broad belly band encircles the fiery steed. In the distance there is a pyramid in rough outline, giving the picture an Eastern look, and portraying, as I afterwards found out, a horse with an existence as real as the lamp of Aladdin or the fairy palaces so minutely described in the Arabian Nights Entertainments.1

With the risk of invoking too many cooks, Cook’s impression of Cooke’s playbill illuminates two issues. Firstly, playbills were not always accurate representations of events in any given show, and narrative summaries given on playbills were not always true to the extended performed versions of the act. Understandably, both advertising material and memoir accounts of nineteenth-century circus events written by performers for publication were populated with commercial intentions in order to attract interest from potential audience members. But secondly—and more importantly—such deviations from the actuality of performance are indications of the imaginative world proposed by the playbill. A. S. Cook’s playbill sits before him as he writes: it is not just a piece of memorabilia he has kept, but a piece of literature with hermeneutic potential which he reads. As archive material, the playbill offers a way to access the vision that the circus projects of itself, and thus an idea of what audiences desired when entering the circus space. This article considers how and what such playbills, newspaper advertisements, and discursive reminiscences of performances such as Cook’s account tell us about the Scottish circus’s self-presentation: how circuses tapped into nationalist and imperialist imagery to produce their most popular and fondly remembered performances for diverse audiences, and what this in turn reveals about nineteenth-century Scottish identity.

Most striking about Cook’s description is his fascination with the ‘Eastern look’ of the circus, and his allusion to *Aladdin* and *The Arabian Nights*. For Cook, the Egyptian ‘pyramid’ is the emblem of an exotic, yet real and existing world in a far-flung corner of the globe. The ‘lamp’ of Aladdin and the ‘fairy palaces’ are disappointingly fake adjuncts to this Arabian world. Yet there are two levels of fictionalisation at play here.
Unbeknown to Cook, *Aladdin* is itself a tale fabricated and added to *The Arabian Nights* by a Frenchman, and thus a product of colonial capitalisation on the culture of another country. Writing his own version of the ‘Orient’ in his reading of the playbill, Cook’s overt fascination with orientalism, I argue, wears a special significance in the provincial setting of mid-nineteenth-century Aberdeenshire. Cooke’s Circus is capitalising on the ‘otherness’ of the apparently Arabian setting of the circus’s fiction, and this exoticism itself becomes an agent for upholding the British empire’s imperialist sentiment in the outer reaches of the British Isles. As Kurt Koenigsberger notes, in engaging with modes of display such as the menagerie, zoo, royal exhibition, or pageant, ‘even the poor provincial labourer could feel himself part of a powerful nation’; these popular forms of entertainment ‘facilitated a distinctive brand of imaginative travel across global expanses’ for subjects throughout the home nations of the British empire. Like Koenigsberger, though writing specifically of the touring American railroad circus, Janet M. Davis states that the ‘circus could seemingly collapse physical and temporal boundaries’ by ‘bringing foreign cultures to one’s doorstep’; the travelling circus ‘presented to its audiences a global sensory blitz … that mirrored the nation’s position in the modern world’. Those living far from metropolitan centres could feel that they benefited from the spoils of the empire, and thus become invested in its ideology: even if the images in question, like A. S. Cook’s ‘fairy palaces’ and winged horse, were exaggerated or concocted caricatures. The projection of this ideology by touring circuses in rural Scotland, I suggest, contributed throughout the home nations of the British empire.

The nineteenth-century circus’s reliance on clear iconography and symbols of foreign nationhood makes it a locus of the British nation-building project. Accordingly, investigations of the intersection between nation formation and imperialism(s) are not new to Circus Studies. Davis’s explorations of the American *fin de siècle* railroad circus demonstrate how circus spectacles ‘promoted nationally recognizable themes which contained a heavy dose of American patriotism’ to appeal to diverse audiences, and in turn sculpted the expansionist ideology at the heart of American national identity. Building on Davis’s account of circus spectacles as unmistakably imperialistic and orientalist, Peta Tait argues that their juxtaposition with aerial circus acts ‘validated nineteenth-century ideas of empire and spatial domination’ with ‘expansionist stories of conquered geographical space’. Conversely, scholarship on contemporary circus has turned towards investigating circus as a global and corporate phenomenon, which eschews the ‘nation’ altogether as a radical rejection of the traditional ring circus’s imperialist overtones. As Jennifer Harvie and Erin Hurley remind us, Cirque du Soleil, the most conspicuous success story of the *nouveau cirque*, presents itself as having come from an ‘imagi-nation’. Circus troupes have historically been international spaces featuring performers of diverse national and ethnic origins; but contemporary circus has ostensibly moved beyond the nation as organising principle, attempting to distinguish itself from a nineteenth-century circus tradition which capitalised on advertising interactions with the ‘other’ and often presented their performers as national, ethnic, or continental ‘types’ (in ‘freak shows’ and human exhibits, hippodramatic re-enactments of imperial
conquests, or ‘Wild West’ spectacles) to attract audiences—regardless of whether circus actors actually shared the ethnicity or nationality of the roles they performed.9

Most relevant to this article, however, is the Circus Studies literature on performances of nationality which were not shirked on or off depending on the day’s programmed spectacle. Aastha Gandhi shows how the feminine body in twentieth-century Indian circus had a ‘new role to play in solidarity with the nation’s struggle to assert its nationalist image’ in imagining ‘Mother India’ in the 1940s.10 Gillian Arrighi’s study of the FitzGerald Brothers’ Circus’s ‘unpretentious embrace of its Australian identity’ is similarly a vital model for my exploration of national circus imagery as performed by citizens of that nation, to that nation.11 Scholarship on Scottish circus has not yet taken this approach. Although Kim Baston has shone a light on the performance of Scottish nationality by the Edinburgh Equestrian Circus in the 1790s, she analyses performances of Scottish identity by troupes transferred from London to Edinburgh.12 This article instead focuses on Scottish-owned touring circuses, and how these itinerant productions reached beyond Lowland metropolitan centres to foster a pan-Scottish, hybrid Highland–Lowland identity which could flourish within the context of the British empire. I also demonstrate how the capacity for the circus to reflect and reinforce national imaginaries intersects with a particular popular theatrical tradition in Scotland: the National Drama.

**Scottish Contexts: Unionist-Nationalism and the National Drama**

Ongoing historiographical and critical debates around Scotland and the British empire make the Scottish touring circus a particularly fascinating nexus of inquiry. Colin Kidd has argued that by establishing itself as a ‘sister kingdom’ in ‘imperial copartnership’ with England, Scotland was able to assert its influence on the global stage in the nineteenth century.13 This international prestige was both achieved by and reciprocally fed into what John M. MacKenzie describes as a ‘reconciliation of Scottish ethnic nationalism’, whereby the integration of Highland and Lowland racial and cultural identity provided Scotland with a newly united front with which to encounter the empire and the wider world. MacKenzie makes the case that

a cunningly contrived amalgam of Highland and Lowland elements, neatly represented in the Burns societies and Highland games, Caledonian and St Andrews organisations that sprang up around the Empire, in colonies of settlement, India and dependent territories, helped to satisfy what was already clearly perceived as the basic geographic, ethnic and cultural problem in a Scottish nationalist identity. And by the mid to late nineteenth century, the Scots had a very considerable stage upon which it could be worked out.14

In short, there was no perceived incompatibility between the development of a pan-Scottish nationalist cultural identity and Scotland’s role as an active partner in imperial exploits. MacKenzie’s invocation of the ‘considerable stage’ upon which differences between Highlander and Lowlander could be reconciled is particularly pertinent, as in
this article I turn to consider the circus ring as another ‘stage’ on which a culturally unified Scotland could present itself as equal to its English neighbour, and as an imperial force to the rest of the British empire. Historical pageants, imperial exhibitions, public investitures, and royal ceremonials have all served as the focus of scholarship on how, as Tracy Davis and Peter Holland describe it, ‘performance beyond theatre buildings … bind[s] cities, regions and nations together’, especially in the context of imperial sentiment in the ‘Celtic fringes’. Yet the notion of the circus as an agent that simultaneously unites disparate communities in Scotland as it elevates the nation to (inter) national importance has so far been ignored.

The circus’s performance of a culturally unified Scotland through depictions of its historic and literary national figures places it within a distinct tradition of Scottish theatre history. The National Drama emerged in the nineteenth century as a dramatic genre centred around the performance of repertoire from adaptations of Walter Scott’s Waverley novels. Their popularity, Barbara Bell notes, arose from the ‘perceived cultural and institutional drift towards reducing the status of their nation to “North Britain”’. She continues:

[the novels] made Scotland’s history an acceptable subject for representation … for the first time in many years, Scotland’s actual history and character were considered serious subjects for plays and players …. Once the floodgates were open, the Scots, hungry to reassert their shared cultural identity in a public arena, returned again and again to see their national heroes and heroines played in authentic Scottish settings by Scottish actors with Scottish accents.

Baston has identified aspects of the National Drama in Scottish circus, but only those specifically relating to Edinburgh, Scotland’s Lowland, metropolitan capital. Yet what made the National Drama a theatrical phenomenon was its explosion across Scotland: the plural ‘Scottish settings’ and ‘Scottish actors’ which Bell describes, performed in geggies (travelling booth theatres) and touring productions across the country. The National Drama performed, Ian Brown states, ‘more than one version of Scottishness. Its hybridity sought, however glibly, to embody harmony and peaceful accommodation and resolution between Highland and Lowland identity. The rural Scottish touring circus presented its own version of Scott’s tales across the country, and in so doing embodied—in its itinerant and often ad hoc mode of performance—the pan-Scottish performance of Scottish identity which was established at this time in ‘boundary-crossing and hybridities,’ and ‘bastard forms’ of entertainment. Significantly, scholars such as Brown and Paul Maloney have demonstrated how the later nineteenth-century National Drama provided ‘a performance of Scottishness within the wider empire’ which can ‘be accommodated not only in an imperial, but also a unionist narrative’.

That the circus in particular was able to bear the ideological freight of empire, as well as carry national stories to diverse audiences across Scotland, makes it uniquely illuminating of the ways in which Scottish Unionist-nationalist and imperialist global identity were negotiated in popular, public spaces. The aim of this article is thus twofold: firstly, to demonstrate how the work of the open-air Scottish touring circus sought to unite the division between the Lowlands and Highlands, within a wider project which
is consistent with both a Unionist and imperialist context; and secondly, to expand the methodology with which we approach research on the Scottish circus, which I propose bridges two theatrical and corresponding critical traditions in equestrian circus and the Scottish National Drama. In doing so, I unearth and examine what is at present a critical lacuna: the role of the circus in shaping national identity and attitudes to empire in the home nations of ‘Great Britain’. I use the term ‘(inter)national’ throughout, as a working concept that encapsulates the complexity of Scotland’s developing identity in the nineteenth century: a place at once concerned with evolving a nationalistic sense of cohesive character between Highlands and Lowlands; a separate but sister nation to England and the home nations within Great Britain; and a country keen to assert its international influence across the empire, in part through the confluence of these other identities. Such a study of the development of (inter)nationalism in Scotland also contributes to debates around Scottish national and cultural identity today by suggesting that these conceptions need to be complicated by a historical understanding of the (inter)national and ethnic dimensions of the Union and empire—particularly, in this case, as articulated through circus performances.

A note on methodology. Like A. S. Cook in *Bon-Accord* magazine, we are dealing with imaginaries and projections here—of nation, of self, and of the desired impact or meaning of a given circus performance. It is not the aim of this article to reconstitute or reconstruct rural circus performances in all their intricate detail; not least because many villages and rural townships did not have local newspapers in the early-to-mid nineteenth century, with only county-wide general advertisers featuring the occasional notice and projected programme (itself not always accurate). Corroborating actual events and acts as they were performed with advertising material is all but impossible. Yet the memoirs, life-writing accounts, and newspaper letters studied in this article—sometimes written half a century after the recounted circus performance—offer much valuable insight into how the circus presented itself and was most frequently and enthusiastically remembered. Through these discursive productions, we can witness how the circus hoped to make itself attractive to audiences; how successful the use of national imagery was in producing long-standing, memorable performances; and how compelling the growing sense of a national and imperial identity was to a rural Scottish public usually unaccounted for in such investigations. By analysing the neglected accounts of visits to Cooke’s Circus and Thomas Ord’s Circus, which appear mainly in memoir, epistolary, and poetry form, I examine how those living in small, rural Scottish townships experienced the circus as a place of escape. The first part of this article suggests that the open-air travelling form of the circus created a space of potential disorder and questions whether this resulted in the breaking of formal circus convention and the subversion of hierarchies both within and without the circus ring. However, through an analysis of National (hippo)Drama and other equestrian performances around the country, which both reflected and engendered an (inter)nationalist and imperial sentiment in their audiences, in the second part I suggest that discursive remembrances of different iterations of the circus indicate that the circus was instrumental in the attempted construction of a unified cultural identity between the Highlands and Lowlands. I argue that although the iterant nature of the touring circus at first glance invites emphasis on the locatedness
of performance, in fact, performances even in specific topographies transcend the local and instead highlight (inter)national issues. Ultimately, far from being a space for subverting the Unionist and imperial project in the home nations of the British empire, the circus as experienced by its provincial and metropolitan audiences was a space for Scots to carve out an image of a culturally unified Scotland which would flourish within the British empire.

In the Sticks: Topography and Recollections of ‘Escape’

It is vital to consider the restraints placed on the touring circus by topographical particularities when investigating circus performances in rural Scotland. Large tenting circuses struggled to access small townships with troupes which sometimes exceeded eighty performers. In a bid to attract paying audiences all year round, circuses would usually build a permanent residence in a city or populous town for use in the winter, before splitting into smaller troupes to target separate parts of the country between March and October, ready to amalgamate again the following winter. From the 1830s, the railway was used to transport circus animals and equipment, but towns in the Scottish Borders and remote Highlands were often late to become connected. Writing a history of Galashiels, Robert Hall notes that in 1844 (only half a century before he was writing), there were ‘comparatively few public entertainments at this period’; the railway only arrived in 1849. As such, according to Hall, the arrival of Ord’s Circus in the town with his reduced, open-air touring troupe was the ‘great event of the season’ to townspeople who were ‘ignorant to a large extent of what went on in the great world around them’. It is important not to paint the entirety of rural Scotland with a brush which perpetuates a certain view of provincialism as cut off from the rest of the world and its amusements, but this is a recurring image in the life-writing from the late nineteenth century that retrospectively surveys village life of mid-nineteenth-century Scotland. Life-writers recounting their youth frequently figure themselves as ‘cut off’ from a thriving external world and portray the open-air touring circus as a mode of transportation to a fantasy—often paradisal—location. Upon the occasion of his circus’s arrival in Ballater in February 1843, local shoemaker George Moir presented a poem to Ord which emphasised the isolation of the Aberdeenshire town. It opens by tying the psychological trouble of the townspeople to the starkness of the land, and presents Ord’s Circus as the remedy: ‘All welcome, Ord; beloved sire, we hail thy visit here / Unto those bleak and barren wastes, our care-worn minds to cheer’. There follows:

Like wild flowers gaily sprinkled o’er the weedy path of time,
Thou sooth’st the furrowed crease of care and renders life sublime.
Then welcome to these Highland glens, thy gaudy tinselled throng,
Diffusing gay hilarity, and harmless mirth along.
With venerated anxiousness we wait thy coming here,
Thou ‘Kean of the Arena’ termed, we justly thee revere.
Ord is ‘hailed’, ‘revered’, and ‘welcomed’ to a Highland location which is repeatedly emphasised. The poem ends with another localised welcome: ‘Then welcome to our stormy wilds, tho’ deep immersed in snow, / Our Highland hearts will give thee praise and what we can bestow’. The inaccessibility of the snowy Cairngorm mountains is juxtaposed with a circus which is ‘soothing’ and ‘harmless’. The arrival of Ord’s troupe is figured as the coming of spring: anxiously awaited, the bringer of ‘wild flowers’ radiates gayness and mirth.

John Hutton Browne similarly compares his (or is it another boy’s?) first experience of Ord’s Circus with the arrival of springtide in *The Golden Days of Youth: A Fife Village in the Past*:

To one who witnessed a [hippodramatic] play for the first time it was a fascinating sight. Those men and women to him were the real persons of the story. His emotional nature, fresh and unalloyed, without any contact with the outer world, was fertile soil on which Ord and his little company could sow and reap the reward of their dramatic labour. This was long treasured by the message boy, and served as an impetus to discover the hidden treasure which fortunately came to his hand.28

Browne’s account oscillates between the personal and the universal. The memoir of childhood is advertised as such, but the narrative is conveyed in third person, while the precise name of the ‘Fife village’ is never given. The boy described could be *any* boy; the specificity of the author only returns with the indication towards Browne’s future career as a writer uncovering the ‘hidden treasure’ of literature.29 Likewise, ‘His’ in the third sentence jostles between referents. It could describe the character Ord portrayed in the scene, which ‘rewards’ his ‘dramatic labour’; or it might refer to the young Browne. If so, the circus is the catalyst that transforms Browne’s imagination from just ‘fertile’ to flowering and fruitful, such that Ord’s Circus can ‘reap’ its harvest. It is the ‘impetus’ of the circus’s visit which encourages Browne to reach beyond the ‘inner world’ of the Fife village, into an ‘outer world’ from which, until then, he was excluded. Harriet Anderson similarly remembers Ord’s Circus as a portal to an imaginative, almost mystical world, in contrast to quotidian Inverness-shire life. Ord’s clown, Frank Anderson, is described as the ‘Wizard of the North’ who ‘came to pay the Highlands a visit. A world of enchantment was then indeed opened to [the Inverness residents], beside which the joys of their Saturday pic-nics and little tea parties grew dim’.30 Ord is depicted as a magical—even divine—leader with transformative powers. In a separate account which echoes Anderson’s, John Morrison describes how ‘Mr Ord addressed the multitude and thanked them for their good wishes, and promised them such a performance that night as had never been witnessed before in their good town’.31 The image of Ord among the ‘multitude’ is reminiscent of Jesus’s ‘feeding of the multitude’: the name given to the miracle of the loaves and fishes. Individuals retrospectively depicting Ord’s travels in life-writing present his circus as a site of transformation from the mundane to the miraculous. Indeed, Morrison imagines Ord’s performers as appearing to ‘my untutored mind like visions of Mahomet’s heaven’.32 Ord’s projected vision of his circus is akin to Mohammed’s vision of heaven inhabited by an angel with ‘70,000
Heads’ and speaking ‘70,000 languages’: an image deployed here to indicate the transcendental potential of the circus for its audience. It is no coincidence that numerous separate memoir accounts of Ord’s Circus figure him as an occult or divine miracle worker. This reverberating image in the extant literature suggests the circus was a place which subverted the usual order of provincial life. Circuses travelling into the inaccessible—or at least rarely accessed—parts of Scotland’s Highlands and Borders themselves engendered a form of imaginative travel and transformation for their audiences.

Apparently key to the success of Ord’s Circus performances in becoming sites of transformation and escape (as indicated by village memoirists) was their open-air setting. Thomas Newbigging remembers a ‘programme of horsemanship under the canopy of heaven’ in Galloway; James Turnbull reminisces how Ord’s visit ‘had this very great advantage—the youngsters could witness the whole performance for nothing, as it was held in the open air’. An anonymous chronicler in the *Weekly Scotsman* explains how the circus ring was carved into the ground, rather than being a tenting structure settled atop it:

> A circle or ‘ring’ was made by digging out the earth in order to form a soft foundation for the hoofs of galloping steeds, and the spot was near to the Malt Barns, close by the river Tweed, at Kelso. The situation was somewhat secluded, but in the summer daylight nights Mr Ord brought forth his troupe of trained horses and clowns and acrobats to delight the people of Kelso … There were no places for the rich and places for the poor in the large gathering there; all were alike free at Mr Ord’s entertainments in the open air … It was an entertainment that certainly had many natural beauties surrounding it.

There are two elements of note to draw from this recollection. The first is the human subject’s embeddedness in the specific topography of the Kelso countryside, and how the circus space is dug out and emerges from the land of the visited town. The second is the significance placed by the author (along with Turnbull, above) on the performance being free of charge, and having no banded price tiers for seating—or any seating at all. Ord’s Circus tours were funded through an optional lottery; as the *Weekly Scotsman* chronicler writes, ‘[t]he only method he adopted to defray expenses was a lottery, anyone who could afford sixpence having the opportunity to purchase a ticket for the chance of drawing a prize’. Yet significantly, anyone in the town could sidle up, stand around, and watch the performance for free.

In contrast, permanent winter circus residences charged separate prices for the boxes, gallery, and pit. Marcello Truzzi writes that such structures demonstrate how the circus is ‘essentially an extension of the theatre’, in opposition to the carnival which is ‘an extension of the medieval fair’. Helen Stoddart also reminds us that Philip Astley was formative in constructing the circus as a private theatrical space, in which any chaos concocted during an act is quelled and forbidden to stretch beyond the temporal and spatial bound of the circus experience. The permanent or tenting circus is far from being a carnivalesque space in which disorder, illegitimacy and inversion reign, but rather one in which there is an incorporation but also a hierarchical ordering of both the
forces of chaos and inversion and those of order, ascendance and power in which the latter invariably maintain the upper hand.40

This reliance on and maintenance of hierarchy is carried through into the physical structures which surround the ring. Paul Bouissac discusses how an orthodox power hierarchy is sustained in the very auditorium, when ‘a spectator tries to move to a better seating without having paid the corresponding price’: ‘[w]henever boundaries are crossed by accident or by design, the transgressor is put back in its place’.41 Conversely, the unboundedness of Ord’s open-air circus makes it a site of radical potential for upsetting this hierarchy. At this juncture, it is tempting to suggest that in the open-air touring circus we see a realisation of Mikhail Bakhtin’s ‘carnival’, since the touring circus’s upsetting of hierarchy presents the inverse of Truzzi, Bouissac, and especially Stoddart’s descriptions. Indeed, the memoirists’ recollections of the divine mixing with the earthly and of spring with winter are also emblematic of carnivalistic mésalliances central to Bakhtin’s formula. However, the notion that the carnivalesque meant a priori a radical subversion of hegemonic structures has faced widespread critique;42 and, moreover, despite its al fresco setting, the formal conventions and repertoire of the permanent urban circus were maintained in the open-air touring circus, even though its conventions at first glance were the opposite of the ticketed, seated, and enclosed permanent or tenting circus.

A fitting example of the simultaneous continuity and discontinuity between the permanent urban and touring rural circuses in audience recollections comes with another anonymous retrospective account of Ord’s Circus visiting a village in the Scottish Borders. The author remembers the entertainments held ‘in the open air, beneath the blue skies of summer, and without enclosure or covering of any kind’. But, they say, ‘[u]nder such an arrangement, the admiring spectators closed in so frequently upon the ring that the performers had, once and again, to stop and beseech the onlookers to “retire a little”’. Although a clown asks the audience to step back, the horse he rides begins to ‘speak’ to the young memoirist:

[she] caught my eye and said, or seemed to say, ‘Isn’t he a funny fellow this clown of ours?’

….. So expressive were these looks and winks on the part of the cream-coloured beauty that I clothed them in language, and interpreted them as easily as if they had been conveyed in the plainest English.43

On one hand, the transgression of the boundary between audience and performer results in an inter-species non-linguistic mode of communication, exemplifying the circus’s ability to upend normative orders of village life. On the other hand, the chronicler’s description of the audience impinging into the performers’ space ends with the ring structure and boundary being preserved: the clown is at pains to reinstate the spectacle-spectator binary so that the performance can continue. The formal conventions of maintaining a ring performance space are continuous between different iterations of the circus, whether open-air and rural or indoor and urban. This corresponds with continuities between settled and nomadic life more broadly. In his model of nomadic groups’ interactions with fixed settlements, A. M. Khazanov states that nomads ‘could
never exist on their own, without the outside world and its non-nomadic societies with their different economic systems. Similarly, Yoram S. Carmeli emphasises the need to understand nomadism ‘in its relations with … the non-nomadic order’. Circus touring is inherently reliant upon exchange between these two communities. The touring circus cannot divorce itself from the permanent urban circus, since the outdoor circus is contingent both upon the systems of the towns into which it momentarily enters, and the established model of the tented circus to whose generic expectations it adheres: for example, the maintenance of the ring as a space for performers only, which is a constitutive part of how they construct the ‘fantasy’ world for the audience’s ‘escape’.

This idea of interdependence and continuity between modes of circus performance invites a number of questions. Firstly, if formal conventions remain more or less unchanged between rural and urban Scottish circuses despite great changes in topography and accessibility, can the same be said for the contents of these performances? And, whether yes or no, what can the differences or similarities in the remembrances of these iterations of the circus tell us about diverse or consistent audience expectations and preoccupations of town versus country, and Highland versus Lowland folk, especially across a nation historically carved up along political, religious, and racial lines? The following sections of this article investigate how both urban and rural, and Highland and Lowland Scottish circuses performed a unified sense of Scottishness in their repertoire, using both historic and fictional figures from the National Drama. The outdoor setting of Ord’s Circus discussed in this section aligns touring hippodrama with the geggies which would take the National Drama to remote Scottish locations. As Adrienne Scullion and Alasdair Cameron write, these geggies, ‘in a relaxed and informal atmosphere’, provided Scots ‘with plays about their own country, spoken in a familiar accent for audiences who could not afford the London touring shows or lived in the country and could not travel to the large city theatres’. The circus, doing this same work, also ‘preserved a distinctively Scottish dramatic tradition’.

**Thomas Ord, Unionist-Nationalism, and the National (Hippo) Drama**

Thomas Ord was known as a master equestrian. His most celebrated act—according to how frequently it is recorded in memoirs and discussed between members of the public in newspaper letters—was his execution of ‘protean horsemanship’. Ord first performed the role of ‘Bailie Nicol Jarvie, On Horseback!’ on 2 August 1831, the playbill of which details both how the sequence may have appeared, and how the circus appealed to townsfolk and attracted them to shows. Capitalising on the success of performances of *Rob Roy* in theatres, Ord constructed a new narrative around a well-loved character, advertising the new act as ‘[i]nvented and performed by him only’. Corroborating the playbill’s description, James Turnbull of Hawick recounts how, in the Bailie Nicol Jarvie act, Ord would ‘stand on a bare-backed steed going at a good pace round the [outdoor] ring, and would impersonate about eight different characters. He generally
started as an old fishwife, and finished as Rob Roy’. The same act is recollected by memoirists and other writers across Scotland; in a 1903 magazine and subsequent ‘letters to the editor’, remembering mid-nineteenth-century performances in Banffshire; and once again in an extended account by John Morrison, of Inverness in the 1840s. Ord also performed as the eponymous Rob Roy in recurring performances of hippodramatic adaptations of the play. Significantly, these memoir accounts also suggest that Ord did not tend to change the programmes of his shows depending on their urban, rural, indoor, or outdoor location. The same performance of Rob Roy or Bailie Nicol Jarvie is remembered by Scots from Glasgow (a city in the central Lowlands), rural Banffshire (a Lowland historic county on the far north east coast of Scotland), and Inverness (then a Highland town; it only gained city status in 2000). There are of course elements of nostalgia at play in these remembrances, written either in published memoirs of nineteenth-century life or to newspapers to garner further correspondence; but analysing such nostalgia can be a useful tool, helping us observe which public performances and enactments stayed in public memory and elicited strong feelings of national pride in retrospective accounts.

The popularity of Ord’s ‘protean’ National Drama act and the fondness of its remembrance across the country—it encouraged a two-month-long exchange between multiple correspondents in a 1903 weekly newspaper, as well as newspaper letter panegyrics in 1887, 1889, 1893, 1897, 1899, and 1905, almost fifty years after Ord’s death—demonstrates popular entertainment’s role in forging a cultural movement towards a unified Highland–Lowland identity, and diverse Scottish audiences’ shared appetite for such an imaginary. Ord’s advertisement of the 1831 performance describes how ‘Mr Ord’ appears as ‘Bailie Nicol Jarvie, on his way to Aberfoyle … escaping from the Red Coats’. Many Glasgow audience members would have recognised the story described on the playbill, either from reading Walter Scott’s novel (1817) or more likely from watching its adaptation in Edinburgh or on tour in the geggies. Indeed, they may even by 1831 have seen Bailie already played on horseback by Charles (‘The Real’) MacKay in his renownedly popular adaptation of Scott’s novel, blurring the boundaries between what we now consider as the ‘National Drama’ and circus hippodrama. In Scott’s Rob Roy, Bailie Nicol Jarvie is a Glasgow magistrate and businessman, representative of the new commercial development of eighteenth-century post-Union Glasgow. He is also a cousin of Rob Roy who became embroiled in his adventures at Aberfoyle; both Scott and Ord present Jarvie as a charismatic vagrant who dupes and escapes from the Hanoverian redcoats, alongside the eponymous hero. That the Lowland businessman Bailie and the Highland cattle drover-cum-rogue Rob Roy are united in their adventure is significant in the formation of a unified Scottish identity, integrating Lowland and Highland versions of Scottishness.

Morrison, meanwhile, fondly remembers how Ord’s Rob Roy ‘protean horsemanship’ act in Inverness was completed with the appearance of a host of Scottish heroes, beginning with ‘Scotland’s darling hero, “Sir William Wallace”’:

The next change portrayed ‘Bruce of Bannockburn’ brandishing the fatal battle-axe that killed Sir Henry De Bohun, and as an illustration of history the rider was seen looking with concern at the edge of the axe as if regretting having blunted it on the knight’s skull.
It is crucial to note that the stereotypically ‘Lowland’ creations of Scott, a well-known Unionist-nationalist whose ‘tartanised’ and fervently patriotic retellings of Scottish history celebrated Scottishness within the Union, could happily sit alongside figures of the Wars of Scottish Independence as reconcilable symbols of Scottish nationalism. This illuminates that the aims and preoccupations of Scottish nationalism in the mid-nineteenth century were not anti-English or opposed to England’s past and ongoing imperialism but concerned with ironing out historic antagonisms between Scottish ethnic groups and celebrating a pan-Scottish cultural identity within the Union. Indeed, the figure of William Wallace was recuperated in the nineteenth century as what Bill Findlay describes as an amalgamated ‘Highland-Lowlander’ character; Graeme Morton describes him as the ‘exemplary Scottish patriot [who] carried Scottish national identity forward by containing and neutralising its contradictions’. Further foregrounding this Unionist-nationalist sentiment, the Glasgow playbook describes how in the next horse-mounted quick-change, Ord metamorphoses into ‘Tom Spring, the English Champion’. The quick change was contrived through cloaks attached by a string, which would be pulled to reveal the next character’s garb underneath. In revealing the costume of the ‘English’ champion bare-knuckle fighter, Ord assumes that his Scottish audience would be sufficiently knowledgeable about the London popular entertainment scene, presupposing a shared cultural understanding between nations. Moreover, the physical merging of the Scottish ‘hero’ with the English evokes a symbolic association between them, corporeally united by the single hippodramatic actor. The circus was at heart a commercial enterprise, and the years of training it took to perfect one act alongside the pressures of the touring schedule meant that a ‘protean’ role was a good way of producing variety, through changing costumes denoting different genders, nationalities, and historic characters. But the recurring choice of characters from the National Drama, and the fact they were memorialised by writers fondly remembering their pasts, reveals which performances had lasting appeal. In this case, the ‘acts of protean horsemanship’ repeatedly juxtaposing characters of the National Drama with contemporary English cultural figures demonstrated and reciprocally encouraged a form of (inter)nationalism which sought to unify disparate Scottish communities while emphasising the nation’s current and past partnership with England.

Such examples of Unionist-nationalism in Scottish circus performances reverberate across the archive. To Robert Hall, Galashiels is a town which, ‘unlike most of the towns on the Scottish Border, has little or no ancient history; it inherits no proud traditions of heroic deeds performed by its sons; legend and song are nearly alike silent concerning it’. But hippodramatic performances of Highland and Lowland heroes could give such an ‘obscure country village’ a sense of investment in a broad Scottish history, condensing years of inter-clan and (inter)national disputes into one distilled contemporary Scottish national identity. Hall’s claim is somewhat erroneous, given Galashiels was made a burgh of barony in 1599 and was a parliamentary burgh from 1869, in part due to the town’s centuries-old reputation as a centre of the Borders textile industry. Hall himself mentions Galashiels’s own long and ‘heroic’ Anglo-Scottish history in the annual Braw Lads ceremony, during which horse-riders run the burgh’s borders in commemoration of the town’s first mention in the history books, when Galashielians
attacked English raiders for thieving ‘soor plooms’. But his re-mythologisation of Galashiels as ‘obscure’ and de-emphasis of the Braw Lads ceremony perhaps speaks of an investment in a more mythically holistic, less Galashiels-specific sense of Scottish identity. Displaying a similar merging of local and national identities near the border in Galloway, Ord appeared as ‘Tam O’Shanter on his mare Maggie and other characters followed, and finally he appeared in the dress of a Highland Chieftain with claymore and buckler’. The figure of Ayr-born Tam, a creation of the Scots-language poet Robert Burns who became and remains a cultural symbol of Scotland as a whole, is corporeally merged with Ord clothed in the archetypal Highland dress of Findlay’s hybrid ‘Highland-Lowlander’—all performed in a Lowland town which feels itself sufficiently culturally unified with the Highlands to celebrate its traditions together. The Borderland settings of Galashiels and Galloway in these accounts should not be overlooked. In his chapter which seeks to redress the historiographical emphasis on Highland culture as a ‘repository of unpolluted national virtue’, Paul Readman argues that Borderland identity was

emphatically unionist in ideological complexion … it could accommodate Scottishness and Englishness too, being an important site for the commemoration, preservation, and celebration of different—but now happily compatible—narratives of nationhood north and south. This illustrates the capaciousness of unionist-nationalism.

The circus was one mode through which these different ‘narratives of nationhood’—both within Scotland and in its relationship with England—established compatibility. This is not to say that such narratives of compatible nationhood were left unwritten elsewhere in Scotland. Yet it highlights that Scottish national identity was not a bastion of exclusively Highland culture, but a concoction of various regional identities subsumed into one unified entity.

The recollections of the memoirists whom we visited in the opening section of this article remind us that, while the circus presented a place of escape and potential disorder for inhabitants of small Scottish villages and townships, it was not a place for political or social subversion. Indeed, a further example of this comes in a 1903 account of a meeting of the ‘London Morayshire Club’, whose members spent their meeting in Fleet Street remembering how the circus ‘used to be patronised regularly by our late beloved Queen [Victoria] when she would be at Balmoral:’

After [Ord’s] departure the local children tried to emulate his acrobatic and gymnastic feats, in some cases they ransacked the upper regions of the house (the garrets), where in many homes a goodly number of the ‘45 Jacobite outfits of the rebellion had been secreted away from the redcoat scouts. Having dressed in these outfits of their rebel ancestors who had fought for Bonnie Prince Charlie they might be observed with sword and pistol, kilts, bonnets and feathers careering round the ring ‘just like Maister Ord’.

Ord is described by the Club as ‘first of all, and before anything else, a Scotchman’. His performances of Scottish historical characters encourage the youth to replay the Scottish
past, but precisely as just that: a harmless ‘play’ on history, refocused to exclude bloodshed or animosity. This re-rendering of a bloody past chimes with Readman’s explanation of how, in the Borders at the locations of historic Anglo-Scottish battles, ‘this legacy of violence was increasingly consumed as romantic heritage’. Furthermore, appreciation for Queen Victoria, the last monarch of the House of Hanover, is here demonstrated as compatible with the interests of descendants of Jacobites—those who fought against the Hanoverian government forces in an attempt to reinstate the Stuart monarchy. The Jacobite Risings were not simply a case of ‘Scottish’ versus ‘English’, as Murray Pittock, among others, has noted; yet importantly, any memory of historic inter-clan and (inter)national hostility has been smoothed over in this account, to the extent that swords and pistols are remembered as palatable souvenirs of historic Scotland to a group of pro-Union, pro-monarchy London Club members.

Aside from Rob Roy, Ord also performed as other key figures from the repertoire of Scott adaptations which constituted part of the National Drama, including the Bride of Lammermoor and the ‘Goodman of Ballengeich’ from Scott’s Tales of a Grandfather vol. II (1829): the story of an attack on a vulnerable James V, and a local man’s offering of a basin of water and a towel in assistance, oblivious to the king’s status. The latter is especially emblematic of Scott and the National Drama’s place in a literary and dramatic tradition, after David Hume and James Thomson, which presented a Hanoverian Scotland accommodating aspects of Jacobitism, so often identified with Highlandism. Scott’s orchestration of the 1822 royal visit of George IV, which Ian Brown describes as ‘an act of post-conflict hybridity’ and which included a re-enactment of the washing of the royal hands in the Ballengeich basin, demonstrates how elements of the National Drama and its performance of a proud Scottishness consistent with Unionism bled into the performance of Scottish identity beyond the stage or circus ring. As Cairns Craig writes of the royal visit,

[the iconography of the Highlander, adopted as a badge of national identification by the Lowland Scot in the nineteenth century, is not the iconography of a separate Scottish identity: it is, in fact, the iconography of the unity of the British state.]

Ord’s performance of the ‘Goodman of Ballengeich’ plays to an appetite for the performance of Scoto-Britishness through the ‘hybrid Highland-Lowlander’ and feeds into this public imaginary of proud Scottish participation in the British state. Like geggies and touring productions of the National Drama, Ord’s Circus took this performance of Scottish identity to the outer reaches of Scotland. Indeed, George Roy recounts how, in his experience of life in Memus, north of Dundee—in his memory the ‘ultima Thule’ of drama’s reach—‘the drama was ever to the fore, and no one kept the sacred “croosie” [lamp] of the Memus more brilliantly than John [sic] Ord, equestrian and actor’. Ord’s troupe, writes Roy, were ‘as smart a crowd of actors as could be witnessed in any of the theatres in the big centres’. But Ord’s performance of a unified pan-Scottish and pro-Union identity did not only pertain to the performance of Scottish identity within and around the diverse nation itself. Rather, buttressed against other circus performances of imperial spectacle and exotic displays of the ‘other’, this
form of hybrid nation formation speaks of Scotland’s broader ambitions in imperial copartnership with England, which would allow a newly consolidated sense of Scottishness a global stage on which to perform. The final section of this article investigates how urban and rural Scottish circuses played out and reacted to the exported imperial British imaginary on home territory. Through such an analysis of discursive responses to the open-air touring and permanent metropolitan circuses, we can examine intersecting attitudes to empire, nationhood, and the Union in nineteenth-century Scotland.

**Embracing Empire**

Iain Hutchison paints a picture of a Scottish politics which was ‘firmly British in scope’ by the mid-nineteenth century. Paul Maloney’s work on public attitudes to the British empire as portrayed by popular songs of the Scottish music hall similarly suggests a generally positive view of the empire, especially in cities where the economic benefits of the empire’s trade routes were felt most keenly. Given that ‘from the Scottish public’s point of view empire translated into investment, jobs, work, and a degree of emancipation from the overweening influence of England’, Maloney concludes that there is a link between ‘support for the cause of [e]mpire, and the economic reality of Scottish industry’s reliance on export markets for continued industrial growth’. Like the music hall, circus performances in metropolitan centres stage an advocacy of the British empire and its benefits. More specifically, in line with Maloney’s model, the empire is figured as a structure through which Scottish interests could be centred and flourish. Cooke’s Circus ‘Conundrum Nights’ in Aberdeen serve as a case in point.

Conundrum questions were sent in by the audience to be read out on the stage; the joke that received the biggest laugh was crowned the winner, while the runners up were printed in the city’s newspaper. The recorded conundrums in newspaper reviews thus reveal the local preoccupations of the city dwellers, while they simultaneously spread these preoccupations to an audience beyond those who watched the live performance. For example, an 1879 conundrum satirises the monumental financial failure of the Glasgow banks of the previous year: ‘What is the difference between Cookes’ Royal Circus and the City of Glasgow Bank? The one is directed by the Cookes and the other was cooked by the Directors’. Another conundrum mocks the British government and its failure to resolve the Anglo-Zulu War, which had been prolonged by a two-month siege: ‘Why are the Cooke Brothers more popular than the present Government? Because they brought their Zulu war to a satisfactory conclusion’. Note that the ‘Zulu War’ was a much-performed hippodramatic sequence of Cooke’s Circus, following the vogue for ‘staging grand patriotic spectacles or hippodramatic battle re-enactments’ which, Stoddart states, created ‘near hysterical patriotism, in an attempt to marshal their audiences’ support in the name of the national interest’. The conundrum issues a clear criticism of Britain’s colonial rule, but one stemming from Britain’s failure to quash an uprising, rather than any explicit commendation of the Zulu rebels. It also demonstrates in the Scottish audience a sense of superiority to the Zulu people: as does the ongoing commercial success of and desire for hippodramatic performances of the Zulu War sequence.
Another such example comes in a ‘Conundrum Night’ of 1883: ‘Why do the Aberdeen coal labourers resemble the brave heroes of Tel-el-Kebir?—Because they fought their battle bravely, stood to a man, and at last they won the day’.78 The joke refers to the Aberdeen coal labourers’ strike—again embedding the performance in its local context—and to Britain’s victory over Egyptian rebels in colonial Egypt.79 It thus does double work, suggesting satisfaction in Britain’s suppression of nationalist uprising, while putting local Scottish issues on a par with international concerns through their explicit comparison. More broadly, it indicates that to late nineteenth-century audience members, support of socialist causes was not mutually exclusive with what we might retroactively call ‘conservative’ imperialism.80 Most importantly, this example illustrates support for the British empire’s colonial rule, while showing a Scottish ambition to elevate the intensely local to the importance of the global, so that local Scottish issues were discussed alongside those of the empire. As Lindsay Paterson asserts, by the mid-nineteenth century Scots ‘prided themselves on being partners with England in the [e]mpire … . They continued to maintain this sense of union by asserting their national identity … [but] they felt no need to push further for fundamentally new national institutions’.81 Paterson’s connection of a pride in the empire with a consequent assertion of an overtly Scottish national identity is particularly relevant to the circus, in which national imagery was used to generate a sense of shared cultural unity between the Highlands and Lowlands.

In August 1844, Cooke’s Circus performed for the benefit of the Celtic Dispensary, a Glasgow charitable institution formed ‘to provide medical advice and medicine for poor strangers coming from the Highlands in quest of employment’.82 Analysing playbills can be tricky, since woodblocks for printing would often be reused and do not necessarily always reflect the show actually performed. Yet it is worth considering the imagery in which Cooke’s Circus invests to bring audiences in their droves. Explicit emphasis on the Scottishness of the event in its advertising—the ‘Grand Scottish Night’—tended to be reserved for benefit occasions. But circus acts mentioning various versions of the ‘Highland Lad and Lowland Lass’, usually as double-act routines on the tightrope or on horseback, proliferate in the archive of Cooke’s circus playbills.83 Today, such proudly Scottish imagery might tempt readers to presume a firmly Anglophobic sentiment in this playbill, with nationalism currently perceived as irreconcilable with Unionist politics. Yet, coupled with the evidence of Scottish pride in ‘home nation’ status explored above, the playbill offers another story: that when a Scottish national identity is overtly carved out by the Scottish circus, it is not with explicitly anti-English intentions. Rather, it is to highlight and encourage the assertion of national identity which Paterson describes, within the broader context of the Union and empire. Alasdair Cameron and Adrienne Scullion argue that tartaned and ‘totemic images’ of the ‘Scotch’ figure in popular theatre were ‘approved and even celebrated symbols of a nationality which, under normal circumstances, audiences were never allowed to express’.84 Here, we see circus marketing also following this model, capitalising on the popularity of the National Drama, and building upon the burgeoning public interest of representations of Scottishness onstage. Cooke’s playbill (Figure 1) features the ‘Highland Lad’ and ‘Lowland Lass’ dancing the ‘Double Highland Fling’. Each is
Figure 1. ‘Playbill, Cooke’s Circus Royal’ (1844). Scottish Theatre Archive, University of Glasgow, Eph E/73, 13 August 1844. Reproduced by permission of University of Glasgow Library, Archives & Special Collections.
Clothed in tartan dress, balances on one leg, and clasps the hand of the other; this is an image of unity between two peoples who had historically been considered opposites—a subversion of a well-recognised historic distinction. Additionally, in both the playbill’s image and the charitable event it advertises, there is evidence of what Findlay describes as the ‘hybrid Highland-Lowlander’. As explored earlier, the ‘Highland-Lowlander’ wore Highland garb, arising as a recognised cultural figure due to the ‘migration of Highlanders into the developing urbanised centres of Central Scotland’. Cooke’s ‘Grand Scottish Night’ for the Celtic Dispensary utilises this same imagery to fundraise for the very characters it depicts. Since, as Cameron and Scullion suggest, explicitly celebrating these symbols of nationality was rare for the audience outside a theatrical setting, the circus imagery of the amalgamated figure of ‘Scottishness’ was instrumental in establishing a sense of pan-Scottish cultural legitimacy within the context of the empire: a form of (inter)nationalism.

The circus’s mode of performance, setting National (hippo)Dramas next to equestrian tricks next to imperial spectacles in a single evening’s entertainment, brings Kidd’s designation of Scotland being in ‘imperial copartnership’ with England more starkly into light. The circus was uniquely positioned to highlight Scottish (inter)nationalism. In February 1836, at the end of a two-month run at Aberdeen’s Union Street, Cooke’s Circus’s delivered the ‘Grand Eastern Pageant of the Revolt of the Harem!’, which was well reviewed, with Cooke ‘much admired; as was also, Mr E. Woolford’s performance as an East Indian’. During this run, we know that ‘Mr Woolford’ was also featured heavily in advertisements of explicitly Scottish performances, attempting ‘an entirely new Comic Sketch, entitled Tam o’ Shanter. Likewise, a new National Equestrian Scene, called St Andrew, the Champion Knight of Scotland, with a sudden transition to The Genius of Harmony and Peace’. These he performed alongside his wife, Mrs Woolford, with ‘her elegant Feats on the Tight Rope, as The Highland Lassie’. Although we cannot be sure exactly what occurred in each performance, this demonstrates that the Aberdeen public were accustomed to watching performers shape-shift between representing different nationalities, and to witnessing Scottish performers’ mastery over the representation of the ‘other’. Indeed, to have the ‘Dashing White Sergeant’ in this Winter 1835–6 season performed in the same evening, by the same players, as a ‘Burlesque Parade and Military Picture’ of Napoleon, makes a statement about Scotland’s distinct national identity including space for implicit loyalty to British overseas military campaigns, even twenty years after the last conflict of the Napoleonic Wars. Similar examples can be seen in Ord’s Circus. Although performing almost exclusively in Scotland, the troupe would very occasionally cross the border into the historic counties of Cumberland and Northumberland. In the same year as Cooke’s performance of the ‘Revolt of the Harem’ featuring Woolford as the ‘East Indian’, Ord took ‘The Indian War Dance’ and the ‘Indian Hunter’, alongside ‘The Highland Fling, in Character’ to the Market Square of Whitehaven, in modern-day Cumbria. The newspaper advertisement claims:

to surpass all who have preceded him, he [Ord] has brought forward a Stud of Arabian, Hanoverian, Spanish, and Scotch Horses, which in point of numerical strength, beauty,
agility, all that can delight the eye or astonish the auditor, can compare with that of any other in Great Britain.90

Like Cooke’s audiences in Aberdeen, Ord aims to entice patrons to attend the circus and witness its presentation of local characters juxtaposed with those from across the globe in the colonies; the performance of Scottish identity to an English audience in this context is especially revealing of an establishment of Scotland’s desired (inter)national influence. The advertising material explaining the horses’ origins emphasises this claim for Scotland’s (inter)national importance; the Scottish circus master Ord has mastery over ‘Arabian, Hanoverian, Spanish, and Scotch’ horses, apparently the best in ‘Great Britain’. Moreover, reminiscences of these performances seem to reflect that engaging in the Scottish circus’s (inter)national imaginary bolstered audience members’ confidence in the nation’s international prestige. As an R. F. Proudfoot writes, ‘great as are the feats of artistes in Barnum and other mamoth [sic] establishments got up so grandly by our pushing cousins [in America], Ord’s performances on the Common Green, Strathaven, had surpassed them all’ (original emphasis).91 However nostalgic, such remembrances which recount forms of nation formation in retrospect speak to the importance of popular performances in the development of Scottish (inter)national identity over time.

Conclusion

The image of Ord in his Highland–Lowlander garb was well-recognised and enjoyed across various and diverse communities in Scotland, as were Cooke’s Circus performances of Highland–Lowlander figures juxtaposed with characterisations of the exotic ‘other’. The pervasive continuities between circus performances in diverse locations across Scotland, in part due to the far-reaching popularity of the National Drama, demonstrate that circuses were sites which fostered hegemonic socio-cultural responses to the Union and the wider British empire. Although the circus was a site for fantastical reimaginings of village life, these were not motivated by anti-establishment intentions, nor did they produce anti-establishment sentiment. The open-air provincial touring circus in both remote Highland and Lowland spaces, as well as the metropolitan circus, instead propose a vision of Scotland which projects a common cultural identity for its citizens. The touring circus’s ability to reach geographical extremities and its consequent potential for performance of content peculiar to the local community belies the actuality of the homogeneous performance sequences in each touring location, as remembered by memoirists and other writers. The Scottish circus is instead populated by scenes which symbolically present Scotland as England’s equal, forming a vital constitutive part of the home nations of the British empire, and sharing in its profits, thus presenting an (inter)nationalist Scottish identity. This type of imaginative nation formation is apparent in performances such as James Thorpe Cooke’s ‘Seven Champions of Christendom’, performed in Aberdeen in January 1836, where figures of St Andrew of Scotland, St David of Wales, St Patrick of Ireland, and Tom of Coventry (among others) processed on horseback together; in the same show’s portrayal of ‘Three Ye One’, representing England, Scotland, and Ireland as a united team of equestrians,92 and in a later performance in
Dundee where ‘representatives of different nationalities … appropriately dressed in pretty costumes’ appeared in the arena ‘much applauded, more particularly those representing the British Isles’.93 In this last example, a chorus of children sang a rendition of ‘Rule Britannia’, a song urging British imperial dominance, and written by the Scot James Thomson as part of post-Union propaganda for the Hanoverian settlement. These instances of a simultaneous celebration of empire and the carving out of a space for unified Scottish interests proliferate from each iteration of the circus as recorded in newspaper advertisements and reviews, playbill archives, and life-writing. Life-writing and newspaper letters in particular reveal the lasting impression of this type of nation formation as projected to the outer reaches of the British Isles by touring circuses, demonstrating the circus’s investment in and contribution to Unionist-nationalism in its imagery and imaginary. In correlation with historiographic accounts of Scottish national politics, the circus both reflected and produced a form of (inter)nationalist nation-building in which being a sincere nationalist was not mutually exclusive with being an advocate of the Union and empire.94 On the contrary, support of Unionism and the empire was in fact often a prerequisite for nationalist feeling.

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Notes

1. A. S. Cook, ‘Cooke’s Circus: My First Visit’, Bon-Accord, 21 May 1903. Reproduced in Stuart McMillan, Cooke’s: Britain’s Greatest Circus Dynasty (Glasgow: Smiddy Press, 2012), pp. 26–7. This article is indebted to McMillan’s work collecting, compiling, and publishing playbills and pamphlets related to Cooke’s and Ord’s Circuses. I also thank Aberdeen City Libraries for generously providing scans from their Bon-Accord archive.

2. See Paolo Lemos Horta, Marvellous Thieves: Secret Authors of the Arabian Nights (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), especially pp. 19–21. See Edward Said, Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient (London: Penguin, 1995), p. 3; p. 71. For more on nineteenth-century literary culture and Egyptology, see Eleanor Dobson, Writing the Sphinx: Literature, Culture, and Egyptology (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020).

3. Kurt Koenigsberger, The Novel and the Menagerie: Totality, Englishness, and Empire (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 2007), p. 46; p. 9.

4. Janet M. Davis, ‘Spectacles of South Asia at the American Circus, 1890-1940’, Columbus, 56:3 (May/June 2012), unpaginated—see section titled ‘The Golden Age of the American Circus’ (https://search.proquest.com/magazines/spectacles-south-asia-at-american-
circus-1890/docview/1283771994/se-2?accountid=11862); Davis, *The Circus Age: Culture and Society under the American Big Top* (Chapel Hill & London: The University of Carolina Press, 2002), p. xiii.

5. Colin Kidd, ‘Race, Empire, and the Limits of Nineteenth-Century Scottish Nationhood’, *The Historical Journal*, 46:4 (2003), 873-92, 876, doi: 10.1017/S0018246X03003339. See the section ‘Scottish contexts’ for more on both Kidd and John M. MacKenzie’s analyses of Scottishness relating to British imperialism.

6. Davis, ‘Spectacles of South Asia’ (2012), unpaginated—see section titled ‘The Golden Age of the American Circus’.

7. Peta Tait, *Circus Bodies: Cultural Identity in Aerial Performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 13.

8. Jennifer Harvie and Erin Hurley, ‘States of Play: Locating Québec in the Performances of Robert Lepage, Ex Machina, and the Cirque du Soleil’, *Theatre Journal*, 51:3 (1999), 299-315, 309, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25068678.

9. For a critique of contemporary circus and its racialisation of performers—a continuation, not an interruption, of ‘traditional’ circus’s practices—see Ante Ursić, ‘Cavalia’s *Odysseo* – A Biopolitical Myth at Work’, *Performance Matters*, 4:1-2 (2018), 42-51, https://performancematters-thejournal.com/index.php/pm/article/view/131. Ursić dismantles the binary between so-called ‘contemporary’ and ‘traditional’ circus, proposing the term ‘modern circus’ to describe the type of circus performance which since the eighteenth-century has verified ‘centre stage the dominant prevailing discourse of Western Man’ (49).

10. Aastha Gandhi, ‘From Postcolonial to Neoliberal: Identifying the “Other” Body in Indian Circus’, *Performance Matters*, 4:1-2 (2018), 84-92, 86, https://performancematters-thejournal.com/index.php/pm/article/view/140. For other late-nineteenth and twentieth-century examples illustrating the role of circus in the formation of national identities, see Peta Tait and Katie Lavers (eds), *The Routledge Circus Studies Reader*, (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), especially Mark St Leon, ‘Celebrated, then Implied but Finally Denied: the Erosion of Aboriginal Identity in Australian Circus, 1850s to 1950s’, pp. 209-33; Rachel Adams, ‘Freaks of Culture: Institutions, Publics and the Subjects of Ethnographic Knowledge’, pp. 237-68; and Tracy Ying Zhang, ‘Bending the Body for China: The Uses of Acrobatics in Sino-US Diplomacy during the Cold War’, pp. 405-29.

11. Gillian Arrighi, ‘Negotiating National Identity at the Circus: the FitzGerald Brothers’ Circus in Melbourne, 1892’, *Australasian Drama Studies*, 54 (April 2009), 68-86, 75, https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/negotiating-national-identity-at-circus/docview/195090315/se-2?accountid=11862.

12. Kim Baston, ‘Harlequin Highlander: Spectacular Geographies at the Edinburgh Equestrian Circus, 1790–1800’, *Early Popular Visual Culture*, 12:3 (2014), 283-303, 283, doi: 10.1080/17460654.2014.920717. Baston explains how the Edinburgh Equestrian Circus was an adjunct of both Sadler’s Wells and the Royal Circus in London, transferring both performers and repertoire north from those venues.

13. Kidd, ‘Race, Empire’, 876.

14. John M. MacKenzie, ‘Empire and National Identities: The Case of Scotland’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 8 (1998), 215-31, 221, doi: 10.2307/3679295.

15. Tracy C. Davis and Peter Holland, ‘Introduction: The Performing Society’, Davis and Holland (eds), *The Performing Century: Nineteenth-Century Theatre’s History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), pp. 3-4. For other examples relating specifically to the ‘Celtic fringes’, see John Ellis, ‘Reconciling the Celt: British National Identity, Empire, and the 1911 Investiture of
the Prince of Wales’, *Journal of British Studies*, 37:4 (October 1998), 391-418, doi: 10.1086/386173; and MacKenzie, ‘Empire and National Identities’, especially 226-29.

16. Barbara Bell, ‘The National Drama,’ in Bill Findlay (ed.), *A History of Scottish Theatre* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1998), p. 143.

17. Ian Brown, *Performing Scottishness: Enactment and National Identities* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), p. 150.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 156-7.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 155; Paul Maloney, *Scotland and the Music Hall, 1850–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

20. Brenda Assael’s otherwise excellent investigation into the circus’s ‘construction of an imperial gaze’ focuses almost entirely on urban circuses, and carves out no difference between English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish, rural, or metropolitan iterations. Her work is emblematic of how even ethnographic studies tend not to analyse the rural or emphasise it as a theme. See Brenda Assael, *The Circus and Victorian Society* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2005), p. 80. See also Jacky Bratton, ‘What Is a Play? Drama and the Victorian Circus’, in Davis and Holland (eds), *The Performing Century*. Bratton’s study of circus plays and hippodrama includes analysis of the contributions the circus ring made to the (British) national drama. Yet her analysis of the *George and the Dragon* myth and the ‘seven champions of Christendom’ does not explore why such texts of ‘imperial self-consciousness’ were so popular beyond the confines of English metropolitan centres and across the home nations. See p. 260; p. 259.

21. My methodology here echoes Kélina Gotman’s use of the ‘archival repertoire’, something between the ‘static and hegemonic “archive” of written texts … [and] fluid and bodily “repertoire” of oral and performative events’. While Gotman explores the ‘persistently opaque … language of approximation’ in archives describing gestures of the choreomaniac, for me the ‘opaqueness’ of life-writing accounts of actual rural circus acts (and indeed of the archive itself) reinforces the fantastical elements of circus performance, especially to those living in remote areas of Scotland who rarely encountered such entertainments. See Kélina Gotman, *Choreomania: Dance and Disorder* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 9.

22. Throughout this article, I use ‘space’ in accordance with Michel de Certeau’s definition, space being ‘composed of mobile elements’ which are ‘actualised by the ensemble of movements deployed within it’. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 117.

23. Note, for example, that when Thomas Taplin Cooke and his iteration of Cooke’s Circus toured the US, his troupe numbered eighty-six, including performers, grooms, and bandsmen. McMillan, *Cooke’s*, p. 20.

24. Yoram S. Carmeli, ‘Why Does the “Jimmy Brown’s Circus” Travel?: A Semiotic Approach to the Analysis of Circus Ecology’, *Poetics Today*, 8:2 (1987), 219-44, 225. For more on the conditions of the touring versus the permanent circus, see Helen Stoddart, *Rings of Desire: Circus History and Representation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), especially pp. 34-64 on circus structure and economics.

25. Robert Hall, *The History of Galashiels* (Galashiels: Alexander Walker & Son, 1898), p. 122.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

27. George Moir, ‘Address to Mr Ord on visiting Ballater’ (27 February 1843). Reproduced in Stuart McMillan, *Thomas Ord: Circus Proprietor—Scotland’s Greatest Equestrian—Founding Father of Pindar’s Circus* (Glasgow: Smiddy Press, 2010), pp. 88-9.
28. John Hutton Browne, *The Golden Days of Youth: A Fife Village in the Past* (Edinburgh: William Hunter, 1893), p. 158.

29. Browne also wrote *Glimpses into the Past in the Lammermuirs* (1892) and co-wrote with Norrie McLeish *Ancestral Voices: Story of the McLeish Name* (n.d.).

30. Harriet G. Anderson, *Inverness Before Railways* (Inverness: A. & W. Mackenzie, 1885), p. 25.

31. John Morrison, *Caledonia, a Monthly Magazine of Literature, Antiquity, and Tradition Chiefly Northern*, ed. Alexander Lowson (Edinburgh and Glasgow: John Menzies, 1895), p. 75.

32. Ibid., p. 71.

33. E. Cobham Brewer, *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* (London: Cassell and Company, 1898), p. 592.

34. In 1831 and 1844 Ord attempted to establish tenting circuses near Montrose and Arbroath, and Biggar, respectively; both were met with financial failure. Otherwise, Ord did his performances outdoors when visiting rural areas; when in cities, he occasionally gave performances indoors, for example at the Theatre Royal in Glasgow. See ‘Equestrianism’, *Montrose Standard*, 22 May 1857, 8; ‘Personal’, *Irvine Times*, Friday 19 July 1889, 2; ‘Ord’s Circus’, *West Lothian Courier*, 20 February 1897, 3; ‘Annals of Portobello’, relevant extracts of which are in the *Mid-Lothian Journal*, 29 January 1897, 3, and *Musselburgh News*, 29 January 1897, 3. British Newspaper Archive, britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk, hereafter BNA.

35. Thomas Newbigging, *Love’s Cradles, and Other Papers* (Galloway, 1902). Reproduced in *McMillan, Thomas Ord*, p. 91.

36. James Turnbull, *Hawick in Bygone Days* (Hawick: W & J Kennedy, 1927), p. 33.

37. Anon., *Weekly Scotsman*, 18 May 1893. Reproduced in *McMillan, Thomas Ord*, p. 64.

38. Ibid., p. 64. Descriptions of Ord’s lottery also appear in Turnbull, *Hawick*, p. 33. Turnbull details the lottery’s prizes, amongst them ‘money, watches, clocks, and packets of tea’. See also ‘John Ord, the Equestrian’, *Era*, 8 July 1899, 19. BNA.

39. Marcello Truzzi, ‘The Decline of the American Circus: the Shrinkage of an Institution’, Marcello Truzzi (ed.), *Sociology and Everyday Life* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1968), p. 315.

40. Stoddart, *Rings of Desire*, p. 5.

41. Paul Bouissac, *Semiotics at the Circus* (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2010), p. 83.

42. For an overview of such critiques from Max Gluckman, Victoria Turner, and Terry Eagleton, see Michael Gardiner, *The Dialogics of Critique: M. M. Bakhtin and the Theory of Ideology* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 231. As Eagleton states, carnival is ‘a licensed affair in every sense, a permissible rupture of hegemony, a contained popular blow-off … and relatively ineffectual’. Terry Eagleton, *Walter Benjamin, or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism* (London: Verso, 1981), p. 148.

43. Anon., *The Border Magazine*, 1:8 (September 1896). Reproduced in *McMillan, Thomas Ord*, 59.

44. A. M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 3.

45. Carmeli, ‘A Semiotic Approach’, 221. For more on how the itinerant nature of the circus and its ability to offer employment to local artists enabled exchange between communities, see Kim Baston, ‘Circus Music: The Eye of the Ear’, *The Routledge Circus Studies Reader*, p. 121.

46. Kidd, ‘Race, Empire’, 875–6.

47. Alasdair Cameron and Adrienne Scullion, ‘W. F. Frame and the Scottish Popular Theatre Tradition’, in Cameron and Scullion (eds), *Scottish Popular Theatre and Entertainment: Historical and Critical Approaches to Theatre and Film in Scotland* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Library Studies, 1996), p. 46.

48. ‘Ord’s Circus Playbill’, 2 August 1831, reproduced in *McMillan, Thomas Ord*, p. 26.

49. Turnbull, *Hawick*, p. 33.
50. ‘LONDON MORAYSHIRE CLUB / JOHN ORD SCOTLAND’s EQUESTRIAN’, Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, 3 February 1903, 7. BNA. This newspaper report prompted a string of letters discussing Ord’s feats of horsemanship. See footnote 53.

51. Morrison, Caledonia, p. 75.

52. ‘John Ord Circus Rider and Actor’, Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, 10 February 1903, 6; ‘John Ord, the Equestrian’, Era, 8 July 1899, 19. BNA. See footnotes 53 and 68 for further examples of Ord playing ‘protean’ characters in versions of the National Drama.

53. See the Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser between 3 February 1903 and 31 March 1903. See also ‘Letters to the Editor’, Berwickshire News and General Advertiser, 16 July 1889, 6; ‘Old Ord the Showman’, Northern Constitution, 6 August 1887, 8; ‘Ord’s Circus’, St Andrews Citizen, 23 September 1893, 6; ‘John Ord, the Equestrian’, Era, 8 July 1899, 19; ‘Letters to the Editor’, Dundee Courier, 16 May 1905, 4; ‘Ord’s Circus’, West Lothian Courier, 20 February 1897, 3; ‘Personal’, Irvine Times, Friday 19 July 1889, 2.

54. ‘Ord’s Circus Playbill’, 2 August 1831. Reproduced in McMillan, Thomas Ord, p. 26.

55. Barbara Bell, ‘Charles MacKay’, Findlay (ed.), A History, pp. 152-3.

56. Morrison, Caledonia, p. 75.

57. Bill Findlay, ‘The Case of James Houston’, Cameron and Scullion (eds), Scottish Popular Theatre and Entertainment, p. 34.

58. Graeme Morton, ‘The Most Efficacious Patriot: The Heritage of William Wallace in Nineteenth-Century Scotland’, The Scottish Historical Review, 77:24, Part 2 (October 1998), 224-51, 248, doi: 10.3366/shr.1998.77.2.224.

59. McMillan, Thomas Ord, p. 28.

60. Hall, Galashiels, p. 1.

61. University of Aberdeen Special Collections, NA10284, Burgh of Galashiels Record (1599–1975); see also National Records of Scotland, Counties and Burghs (1855–1975), VR35 – Galashiels Burgh (1869–1930).

62. Hall, Galashiels, p. 4.

63. McMillan, Thomas Ord, p. 91.

64. Paul Readman, ‘Living a British Borderland: Northumberland and the Scottish Borders in the Long Nineteenth Century’, in P. Readman, C. Radding, and C. Bryant (eds), Borderlands in World History, 1700–1914 (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), p. 181; p. 187.

65. ‘LONDON MORAYSHIRE CLUB’, 7.

66. Readman, ‘Living a British Borderland’, p. 171.

67. At Culloden, for example, Murray Pittock has calculated there were more Scots on the government side than that of the Jacobites. For more on the composition of Jacobite and Hanoverian forces, see Murray Pittock, Great Battles: Culloden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 37-49.

68. ‘Old Ord the Showman’, Northern Constitution, 6 August 1887, 8; ‘Ord’s Circus’, St Andrews Citizen, 23 September 1893, 6.

69. For details of the 1822 royal visit, see Brown, Performing Scottishness, pp. 143-52. For details of the hand-washing ceremony, see Lauren Brancaz-McCartan, ‘J. M. W. Turner and the Construction of Scotland’s Dual Scottish/British Identity’, Études écossaises, 20 (2018), unpaginated—see section titled ‘Turner’s representations of Scotland’s dual identity on the occasion of George IV’s visit’, doi: 10.4000/etudesecossaises.1376.

70. Cairns Craig, Out of History: Narrative Paradigms in Scottish and British Culture (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996), p. 110.

71. George Roy, ‘John Ord, the Equestrian’, Era, 8 July 1899, 19.
72. Iain Hutchison, ‘Anglo-Scottish Political Relations in the Nineteenth Century, c. 1815–1914’, T. C. Smout (ed.), Anglo-Scottish Relations from 1603 to 1900 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 249-50.

73. Maloney, Scotland and the Music Hall, p. 171; p. 18.

74. Conundrum nights were a popular occurrence when Cooke’s circus travelled to Aberdeen, especially in the 1880s, when the city’s newspapers and journals would frequently advertise conundrum nights and recount their events. The Aberdeen Weekly Journal and Aberdeen Evening Express reviewed two ‘Conundrum Nights’ at Cooke’s Circus, in 1879 and 1883 (see footnote 75); see also the Aberdeen Free Press and North of Scotland Review, 1880-1889, BNA.

75. ‘Conundrum Night at Cooke’s Circus’, Aberdeen Weekly Journal, 2 July 1879, 4. British Library Newspapers, Part I: 1800–1900. Review also printed in the Aberdeen Evening Express, 2 July 1879, 2, BNA. For more on the City of Glasgow Bank crisis, seeLeo Rosenblum, 'The Failure of The City of Glasgow Bank’, Accounting Review, 8:4 (December 1933), 285-91, https://www.jstor.org/stable/238146.

76. Frances Colenso, History of the Zulu War and its Origin (London: Chapman & Hall, 1880), pp. 261-2.

77. Stoddart, Rings of Desire, p. 71. Many circuses in England and its colonial and settler territories performed hippodramas derived from battles in southern Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. See Peta Tait, ‘Animals, Circus, and War Re-enactment: Military Action to Colonial Wars’, in Gillian Arrighi and Jim Davis (eds), The Cambridge Companion to the Circus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), pp. 127-40; Gillian Arrighi, The FitzGerald Brothers’ Circus: Spectacle, Identity, and Nationhood at the Australian Circus (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2015), especially pp. 141-3.

78. Aberdeen Press and Journal, 6 July 1883, 4, BNA.

79. C. Eldridge, England’s Mission: The Imperial Idea in the Age of Gladstone & Disraeli 1868–1880 (London: MacMillan, 1973), p. 250. The Battle of Tel-el-Kebir was seen as the birthplace of a new phase of imperialism; so Scottish support of the victory is even more emblematic of pro-empire sentiment.

80. For more on economic pressures surrounding the coal strike, see Robert E. Tyson, ‘The Economy of Aberdeen’, John Smith (ed.), Aberdeen in the Nineteenth Century: The Making of a Modern City (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988), pp. 19-37.

81. Lindsay Paterson, The Autonomy of Modern Scotland (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), p. 48.

82. 1812–1928 Post Office Annual Directory: 1844–45 (Glasgow: Edward Khull, 1844), p. 650.

83. For ‘The Highland Lassie’ tightrope act, see McMillan, Cooke’s, 17. For a further example of ‘interracial’ Highland-Lowland union in the ‘Highland Courtship’ act, see Scottish Theatre Archive, University of Glasgow, Eph E7/0, ‘Playbill, Batty’s Circus Royal, Glasgow’, 15 March 1839. For some examples of newspaper advertisements of Cooke’s ‘Scottish Nights’ in other Scottish cities, see Aberdeen Press and Journal, 17 February 1839, 3; Glasgow Herald, 12 August 1844, 3.

84. Cameron and Scullion, ‘W. F. Frame’, p. 39.

85. Highland and Lowland clans were historically figured as opponents, with Highland Gaelic culture being associated with Jacobitism. Linda Colley, Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837 (London: Pimlico, 2003), p. 103.

86. Findlay, ‘The Case of James Houston’, p. 34.
87. Advertisement in *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 3 February 1836, 3; review in *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 10 February 1836, 3.
88. *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 17 February 1836, 3.
89. For more on Scottish equestrian drama and depictions of battle with France (in vogue in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries), see Baston, ‘Harlequin Highlander’, pp. 283-303.
90. ‘Ord’s Splendid Amphitheatre’, *Cumberland Pacquet, and Ware’s Whitehaven Advertiser*, 16 August 1836, 2; ‘Ord’s Splendid Amphitheatre’, *Cumberland Pacquet, and Ware’s Whitehaven Advertiser*, 30 August 1836, 2.
91. ‘Letters to the Editor’, *Berwickshire News and General Advertiser*, 16 July 1889, 6.
92. ‘Grand Historical Equestrian Scene’ playbill, 11 January 1836. Reproduced in McMillan, *Cooke’s*, p. 15; p. 17. For further examples, see *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 13 January 1836, 3, where the performance is said to conclude with ‘the grand Chivalric Pageant of the Seven Champions of Christendom’; and *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 27 January 1836, 2, where a ‘New Equestrian Melange’ is advertised, being ‘a superb representation of the Four Parts of the Globe’.
93. ‘Cooke’s Royal Circus’ review, *The Dundee Courier & Argus*, 18 May 1897, 4. *BL Newspapers, Part I: 1800–1900*.
94. See Christopher Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics, 1707–1994* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 13.

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