



Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro

Centro de Educação e Humanidades

Instituto de Letras

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***Samudaripen through non-Roma eyes: a reading of the Romani Holocaust
in the novels *The eighth sin* and *Fires in the dark****

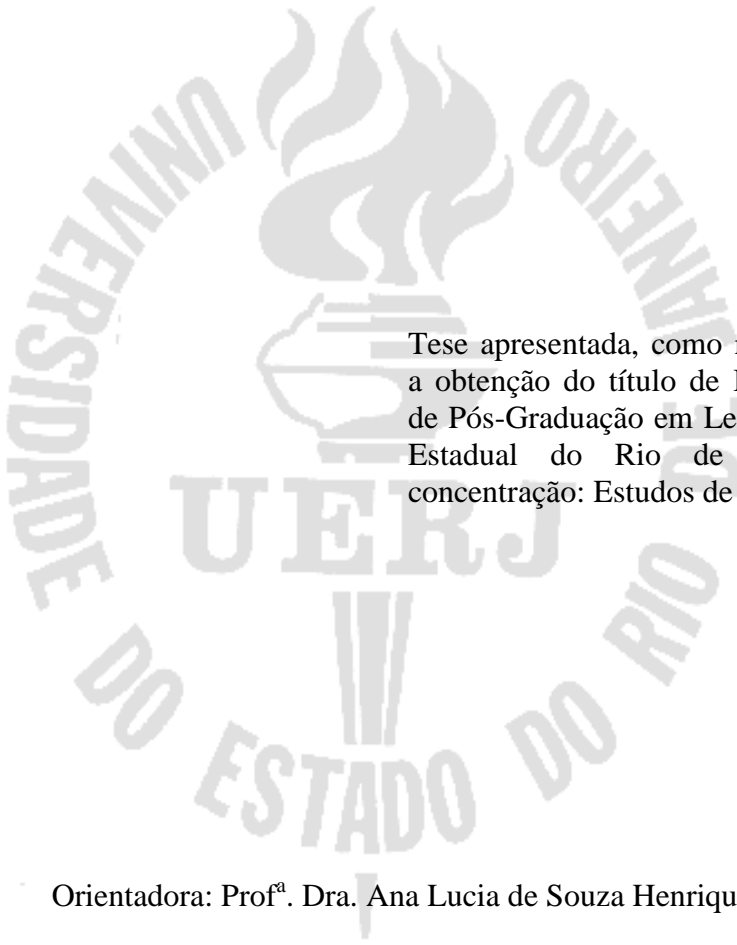
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Tese apresentada, como requisito parcial para a obtenção do título de Doutor, ao Programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras, da Universidade Estadual do Rio de Janeiro. Área de concentração: Estudos de Literatura.

Orientadora: Prof^a. Dra. Ana Lucia de Souza Henriques

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DJANGO ON THE GUITAR

With Django on the guitar
I can almost forget
The journey:
A Diaspora marked by
Benjamin's barbarism,
Complete with slavery, persecution,
And the Devouring.
Where masturbating guards,
Aroused by sadistic acts,
Commit banalities of evil
Among a chorus of bones
And the stench of burning flesh
Seared dirge-like in my imagination

With Django on the guitar
It is almost possible to consider
That which never changes:
A level of freedom
To which one might aim
If anger and resistance
Were less sensible.

Arielle Dylan

RESUMO

PEREIRA, Pilar Castro. *O Samudaripen por um olhar não-Romá: uma leitura do Holocausto Romani nos romances The eighth sin e Fires in the dark*. 2022. 156 f. Tese (Doutorado em Letras) – Instituto de Letras, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 2022.

O objetivo desta tese é investigar como os romances *The Eighth Sin* (1978) e *Fires in the Dark* (2003) discutem o Holocausto Romani durante a Segunda Guerra Mundial e como a memória e a pós-memória deste trauma são apresentadas pelos autores Stefan Kanfer e Louise Doughty, respectivamente, sem lançar mão de estereótipos. Os povos Romá (comumente conhecidos como ciganos) foram e ainda são objeto de representações estereotipadas baseadas em imagens que se referem predominantemente a feitiçarias, roubo ou sedução. Por outro lado, na contramão dos estereótipos, resta comprovado que durante a Segunda Guerra Mundial na Europa por volta de 250.000 a 500.000 Romás foram mortos dentro e fora de campos de concentração, embora tal fato raramente seja abordado. Assim, nossa intenção é examinar como os referidos autores lidaram com esta lacuna de memória na ficção.

Palavras-chave: Ficção. Cigano-Romá. Holocausto-*Porrajmos/Samudaripen*. Memória-pós-memória.

ABSTRACT

PEREIRA, Pilar Castro. *Samudaripen through non-Roma eyes: a reading of the Romani Holocaust in the novels The eighth sin and Fires in the dark*. 2022. 156 f. Tese (Doutorado em Letras) – Instituto de Letras, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 2022.

It is our aim to investigate how the novels *The Eighth Sin* (1978) and *Fires in the Dark* (2003) discuss the Romani Holocaust during World War II and how the memory and the post memory of the trauma are conveyed by authors Stefan Kanfer and Louise Doughty, respectively, without relying on stereotypes. Romani peoples (commonly known as Gypsies) have been and still are the object of stereotypical portrayals, based on images that predominantly refer to witchcraft, thievery or seduction. On the other hand, far from stereotypes, it is documented that during World War II in Europe between 250,000 to 500,000 Romanies have been executed inside and outside concentration camps, although this is a fact rarely touched upon. We, therefore, intend to examine how these writers have dealt in fiction with this memory gap.

Keywords: Fiction. Gypsy-Roma. Holocaust-*Porrajmos/Samudaripen*. Memory-post memory.

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INTRODUCTION

During World War II approximately 250,000 to 500,000 Roma¹ were murdered in concentration camps – a fact that is rarely touched upon. Such genocide promoted by the Nazi has deeply marked the Roma history as one of the saddest and cruelest points of hatred and persecution endured by this people. Therefore, the aim of the research is to investigate how the Roma in *The Eighth Sin* (1978) and *Fires in the Dark* (2003) by Stefan Kanfer and Louise Doughty, respectively, are constructed and how the Romani Holocaust is portrayed and conveyed in these novels. In order to perform such analysis, we understand that it is necessary first to take into consideration some issues regarding the notions of genocide, Holocaust and its representations.

The word “genocide” was coined by Polish lawyer Raphaël Lemkin in 1944 combining the Greek word “genos” (meaning “race” or “tribe”) with the Latin suffix “cide” (to kill). According to the text of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide by the United Nations:

[...] genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.²

Holocaust, on the other hand, has a Greek origin and means “burnt offering” or a “sacrifice consumed by fire”. It became synonym of the mass murders promoted by Nazi Germany during World War II, and, by extension, a word that is often used to refer to any mass slaughter of people in expressions such as nuclear holocaust or the Rwanda Holocaust. In view of the origins of the word, which involves a religious connotation of a voluntary

¹ “Gypsy”, “ciganos”, “gitanos” and other terms are considered pejorative and were imposed on the Roma by outsiders, who believed they had come from Egypt. However, it is well to note that there is no consensus on the matter: some groups have no problem in identifying themselves with said names. *Rom* (or *Rrom*) and the plural form *Roma* mean “man/ men”, and *Romani* refers both to the adjective form and to the language of the Roma. Although such words do not cover all the groups which form the whole ethnic collectiveness, they have been used by several scholars and researchers with a view to standardization (cf. SORIÁ; WEYRAUCH). In order to facilitate the reading, we will employ solely the terms “Roma” and “Romani/ Romanies”, except when otherwise noted in the consulted sources.

² https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.1_Convention%20on%20the%20Prevention%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Genocide.pdf . Accessed 11 July 2022.

sacrifice, another term is preferred to refer specifically to the murder of Jews during the war in concentration camps: the *Sho'ah* or *Shoah*, meaning “catastrophe” in Hebrew.

If there are a few words which were adapted or coined to name the mass murder of peoples, in the case of the Holocaust carried out in World War II, many authors understood at first that there were no adequate words to give meaning to said event; in fact the Holocaust, with its horrors, was such an extreme event that its experience could not be conveyed: it represented a crisis in meaning, and its sense could not be grasped cognitively. And this impossibility would be transferred to the realm of art as well. Theodor Adorno, German philosopher who is quoted by many critics, proposed in the essay “Impossibility and Barbarism” in the late 1940’s that “to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric” (In: ROTHBERG, 2000, p. 19). As cited by Christopher Bigsby, Elie Wiesel, Jewish writer and survivor of the concentration camps, remarked that “[...] a novel about Auschwitz was either not a novel or not about Auschwitz” (BIGSBY, 2006, p. 8). It is not surprising that the first narratives dealing with the Holocaust subject were autobiographies and witnesses accounts, such as Italian-Jewish writer, chemist, and Auschwitz survivor Primo Levi’s *Se Questo è un Uomo* (1947) or *If This is a Man* (1959) in its English translation.

Besides this “unspeakability” of the matter, there is also the concern with how the Holocaust could be represented in art. Reuven Faingold, historian and educator, indicates in his essay “O Holocausto nas artes: os limites da representação” that “discourses of sobriety”³ are generally the most preferred ones:

Therefore, in the field of literature, the preference is for the short chronicle, the testimony or the autobiography. In the audiovisual field, preference will be given to the documentary in detriment of fiction cinema or TV series. In the case of museums, the choice will fall on photographs, documents and objects, leaving aside the scenography, dramatizations and recreations. Or that is, the so-called “discourses of sobriety”, always related to the real, to the immediate, tend to be the favorites of authors and the public. The aesthetic and epistemological positions on the Shoah theme are quite paradoxical. On the one hand, authors such as Lawrence Langer and Aharão Appelfeld argue that the Holocaust challenges an empirical reality, demanding an artistic disfiguration and, on the other hand, [Claude] Lanzmann claims that only art can resolve the dilemma between pious silence and obscene banalization.⁴

³ Original: “Discursos de sobriedade”.

⁴ My translation. Original: “Sendo assim, no campo da literatura, a preferência recai na crônica curta, no testemunho ou na autobiografia. No âmbito do audiovisual, a preferência estará na escolha do documentário em detrimento do cinema de ficção ou do seriado de TV. Já no caso dos museus, o gosto recairá nas fotografias, documentos e objetos, deixando de lado as cenografias, dramatizações e recreações. Ou seja, os chamados “discursos da sobriedade”, sempre relacionados com o real, com o imediato, tendem a ser os preferidos dos autores e do público. As posições estéticas e epistemológicas sobre o tema da Shoah são bastante paradoxais. Por um lado, autores como Lawrence Langer e Aharão Appelfeld argumentam que o Holocausto desafia uma realidade empírica, demandando uma desfiguração artística e, por outro, Lanzmann afirma que somente a arte pode resolver o dilema entre o silêncio piedoso e a banalização obscena.” (FAINGOLD, 2009, p. 102)

However, Faingold also notes that the amount of hybrid representations in which fiction genres and the discourses of sobriety merge increase with the passage of time. Besides the temporal distancing from the Holocaust itself, another important factor to be considered in the representation of the event is the audience who will receive it. Hans Kellner in his article “Never Again is Now” points out the role readers play in such representation, both in arts and in history:

Creating a reader for the Holocaust has been the work of writers, artists, filmmakers, poets, and historians since the end of the war. As [Martin] Jay notes, there was no Holocaust for anyone to experience or witness; it was an imaginative creation, like all historical events.[...]. Creating the event means creating the reader who will recognize the event as an event when it is presented, and who can then follow its course according to the prevailing conventions of readability [...]. We expect a different protocol from what announces itself as a novel than from a film, or an academic history. We expect to see perpetrators and victims differentiated, atrocities linked together, concepts defined and exemplified. We expect that certain events will not be made comic or absurd; we object when certain events are made tragic. Use of the old, the expected, secures the creation of the new by making its novelty nevertheless recognizable as meaning. (KELLNER, 1994, p. 140).

With the succeeding generations there was a shift in the way in which the Holocaust could be represented. There is more freedom to deal with the subject, with both writers and audiences understanding that Holocaust narratives should not be considered as undebatable truths but rather “dramatized consciousness of those seeking meaning and explanations or as dramatizations of the mind seeking appropriate words and images to render experience that seems to defy understanding” (SCHWARZ, 1999, p. 36). As David Schwarz continues, there is also a number of fictional narratives that even with this freer environment return at one point or another to documentary techniques, such as photographs or testimonies, demonstrating “an inner resistance to aesthetic decisions that undermine formal realism or solemnity; they may fear – perhaps unconsciously – that such aesthetic decisions risk dishonoring the dead and trivializing the Holocaust” (SCHWARZ, 1999, p. 36). Christopher Bigsby, on quoting Eva Hoffman’s book *After such Knowledge: A Meditation on the Aftermath of the Holocaust*, points out the healing effect of the dramatization in the following generations:

‘Just as for some survivors only fully remembering could bring about some catharsis, so for the second generation, only a full imaginative confrontation with the past – however uncanny, however unknown – can bring the haunting to an end.’ That past contains pain and may contain shame; it is part real and part fictional, part tangible and part imagined. But the past cannot be left to look after itself. (BIGSBY, 2006, p. 89).

One should also be aware, though, of the downside of having this enormous amount of materials, photographs, lists, etc., regarding the Holocaust that we have now: they become too familiar, losing the power to shock us. Lawrence L. Langer on *The Holocaust and the*

Literary Imagination explains that “after a particular point, catalogues of brutalities and lists of statistics cease to affect the mind or the imagination, not because what they seek to convey lacks significance, but because the mind and imagination lack a suitable context for the information” (LANGER, 1975, p. 83). Therefore, the context, i.e. the narrative one establishes connecting these pieces of information, whether fictional or non-fictional, is crucial for maintaining the memory of the Holocaust activated as well as awareness of its implications in world history. Of course this is also determined by who writes such narratives and what their intentions are.

With the death during the 2000’s of the last eyewitnesses, victims and, why not, perpetrators there is an urgent need to preserve memories of the Holocaust. Memory relies upon narratives to be passed on to future generations; narratives have the power to give voice to the dead, to try to make some sense of what makes no sense, to give some dignity to the victims and restore their humanity, and to be a tool for the following generations to interact with this heritage through fiction. Survivors’ experiences were mediated by trauma, physical and psychological abuse; subsequent generations experience with the Holocaust theme is mediated by its representations: documents, testimonials, researches and documentaries, to name a few. However, memory works the same way for both, as Schwarz puts it:

“[...] But memory distorts even as it records, seeks narrative patterning in its sense-making, and depends often on a repetition compulsion that wears tracks in the mind for subsequent sense impressions to follow. Memory breaks a trail, and in its iteration that complex path of understanding and misunderstanding deepens. Memory relies upon narrative to shape inchoate form and make that path into a road. (SCHWARZ, 1999, p. 11).

Or as Langer (1975) indicates, there is a tension between the events and their implications. The events as they actually happened – in this case the historical event of the Holocaust – disappear in time; however, the implications of such events linger on both for the individual and for the fate of humanity; such implications are rescued by memory and imagination.

Recent studies consider that representations of the Holocaust cannot be understood as a part of a collective memory, which would be linked to a notion of a nation-state. Rather, some consider that the shared memories of the Holocaust are a milestone for the foundation of a cosmopolitan memory, i.e. a memory that goes beyond national and ethnic frontiers. Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider in the article “Memory Unbound: The Holocaust and the Formation of Cosmopolitan Memory” confront the definitions of collective memory versus cosmopolitan memory and trace a timeline of the development of the representations of the Holocaust in Europe and North America. During the 1940’s-1950’s the Holocaust was generally

considered not as a “timeless and de-territorialized measuring stick for good and evil, but instead as a terrible aspect of a particular era” (LEVY, SZNAIDER, 2002, p. 95); in the 1960’s/1980’s, accounts and media representations of the Holocaust reached broader audiences, and “[...] The war generation, whose experience was based on autobiographical references, was gradually replaced by postwar generations, whose understanding of the Holocaust was based on symbolic representations” (LEVY, SZNAIDER, 2002, p. 96); the postwar period, in which the Holocaust became a global icon, and whose dissemination was “facilitated through a number of mass mediated events and their explicit connection to the ongoing conflicts in the Balkans. Most prominently were Steven Spielberg’s *Schlinder’s List* and the inauguration of the Holocaust Museum in Washington”. This was a process in which there was an “Americanization” of the Holocaust and where Jews, while granted the “privileged role as victims”, were also symbols of a genocide that could happen to any people, either Jews or non-Jews, at anytime, anywhere. Cosmopolitan memories are future-oriented, in the sense that they express a collective preoccupation of preventing future risks or humanitarian disasters. Besides, in view of this cosmopolitanization of memories, we understand that it is not necessary to be Jew or any kind of eyewitness of the Holocaust to write about it, whether it is fiction or non-fiction:

Half a century after the Holocaust, it is no longer the atrocities themselves that are at the center of attention (especially in light of the fact that the majority of surviving victims have died), but how the heirs of the victims, the perpetrators and bystanders are coping with these stories and the evolving memories. In other words, the recognition of the ‘Other’ diffuses the distinction between memories of victims and perpetrators. What remains is the memory of a shared past. It is not shared due to some mythical desires and the belonging to some continuing community of fate, but as the product of a reflexive choice to incorporate the suffering of the ‘Other’, constituting what we have referred to here as cosmopolitan memory. (LEVY, SZNAIDER, 2002, p. 103).

In this sense, it is well to note that the Holocaust may be part of a collective memory; however, it bears different meanings for each group involved: “[...] The cosmopolitanization of memory does not mean the end of national perspectives so much as their transformation into more complex entities where different social groups have different relations to globalization” (LEVY, SZNAIDER, 2002, p. 92).

Another commonly used distinction when studying the representation of memory of the Holocaust concerns the difference between survivors’ testimonies, second-generation writers and authors of other fictional reconstructions such as novels, films, paintings, among others. The memories transmitted from survivors to their children or grandchildren are known as transgenerational memory, while the ones worked on by people not directly involved can

be defined as prosthetic memory. Alison Landsberg explains the concept in *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture*:

Prosthetic Memory theorizes the production and dissemination of memories that have no direct connection to a person's lived past and yet are essential to the production and articulation of subjectivity.[...] they [prosthetic memories] are not natural, not the product of lived experience—or “organic” in the hereditary nineteenth-century sense—but are derived from engagement with a mediated representation (seeing a film, visiting a museum, watching a television miniseries). [...] Also, prosthetic memories, like an artificial limb, often mark a trauma. [...] I call these memories prosthetic to underscore their usefulness. Because they feel real, they help condition how a person thinks about the world and might be instrumental in articulating an ethical relation to the other. (LANDSBERG, 2004, p.20-21).

Still according to Landsberg, the technologies of mass culture grant access to these memories by anyone, regardless of ethnicity, gender, or other categories. As such, “the memories forged in response to modernity's ruptures do not belong exclusively to a particular group; that is, memories of the Holocaust do not belong only to Jews, nor do memories of slavery belong solely to African Americans.” (LANDSBERG, 2004, p. 2).

Much has been written about the plight of European Jews under the Nazi regime, to the point that some believe that there is an exhaustion/banalization of the subject. For instance, all authors aforementioned developed their arguments with Jewish victims in mind. However, research is still being carried out regarding the other victims of the Holocaust, including the Roma. Dr. Ian Hancock, scholar of Romani descent and writer of several books on Roma history, calls attention to the fact that many researchers and historians understand that the Jewish fate during the Holocaust was of a unique nature, once they were the only people targeted for genocide on the basis of ethnicity. Nevertheless, in his chapter “Responses to the *Porrajmos* (the Romani Holocaust)” in *Danger! Educated Gypsy: Selected Essays*, Hancock points out that:

Ultimately, *only* Jews and Romanies were singled out for extermination (with the exception of certain exempted groups within each population) on the basis of race/ethnicity. No other targeted populations were thus identified, and for this reason Romanies must not be placed in the residual category of ‘Others’. By the time that the Nuremberg Laws were fully in place, no other categories existed except ‘Jews’ and ‘Aryans’. While the latter category was divided into numbers of specific populations, including Poles, the handicapped, homosexuals (some of whom also belonged to the former classification), Romanies were placed with ‘Jews’, and legislation directed at, and naming Jews henceforth automatically included Romanies. (HANCOCK, 2010, p. 232).

Backing up this line of thought that Romanies were mere casualties of war, there are other “justifications” that are used in this sense: first that Roma culture in general is based on oral tradition; as such, Roma peoples would not be counted for history as we, westerners, understand it, once they leave no records in writing. Besides being a cultural trait, this

strategy of invisibility may also provide some kind of protection from State persecution and control; on the other hand, it makes it difficult to survey the real number of Roma victims of the Holocaust. It is a fact also that many Romanies have no intention of speaking about their experiences. As Hancock explains:

Our people are traditionally not disposed to keeping alive the terrible memories from our history – nostalgia is a luxury for others [...]. Survivors of the Holocaust are today likewise reluctant to speak about their experiences, and so it is that the story is only now beginning to unfold. The task of collecting testimonies is made the more difficult because for some groups, the Sinti in particular, there are cultural restrictions upon speaking about the dead. (HANCOCK, 2010, p. 255).

Second, the recurrent instances we find in mass media concerning mainly the persecution of Jews during World War II, whose emphasis on the uniqueness of Jewish experience during the Holocaust would justify the establishment of Israel. Finally, there is the belief that Romanies were persecuted based on their “asocial behavior” and on all Gypsy stereotypes that have always been associated with the Roma, rather than on their ethnicity. This last reason may in fact be a German government excuse for not paying for war crimes reparations. All these factors contribute to the lessening of the Romani experience and its placement outside history and of the definitions of genocide. In order to reclaim the history of the Roma people during the Holocaust, Dr. Hancock has suggested the use of a specific word in Romani to describe the mass murder of Roma: the *Porrajmos* (sometimes written *Porajmos* or *Pharrajmos*), meaning the Devouring. Other scholars, though, prefer the word *Samudaripen*. The usage of such words and their implications will be later discussed in Chapter 1.

It is clear that the banalization of Holocaust memories has not yet arrived as far as the Roma people are concerned. Dr. Gerhaud Baumgartner in his lecture “Roma Experience of the Holocaust” in the 2021 Auschwitz Speaker Series sponsored by the Midwest Center for Holocaust Education and Union Station Kansas City⁵ affirms that research on the Romani Holocaust only fully developed during the 1990’s. And it is interesting to see that during the 2000’s some novels have been published presenting the protagonism of Romani experience during World War II, from drama to espionage, with titles such as *Fires in the Dark* (2003), *Zoli* (2006), *The Extra* (2013) and *O Baro Xaimos* (2018). We believe that such interest in Romani experience during the war represented in fiction could be linked also to the Decade of Roma Inclusion “an initiative of 12 European countries to improve the socio-economic status and social inclusion of the Romani people across the region. The initiative was launched in 2005, with the project running from 2005 to 2015 [...]”⁶, with the founding of

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6OpT6PL5Pg> . Accessed 23 January 2022

⁶ <http://www.romadecade.org/>. Accessed 14 April 2018.

organizations such as the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program and the Council of Europe.

Up to 2012, with the opening of the Memorial to the Sinti and Roma Victims of National Socialism in Berlin, Germany, there have been no memorials to the Romani people in Europe. The lack of consideration and the extreme contempt for Roma victims and their following generations is so great that, for instance, a pig farm was established in 1971 on the site of Lety concentration camp, in Czech Republic, where more than one thousand Roma were made prisoners and over 300 people have died. Only in 2018 it was closed and a memorial is yet to be built. We agree with Hans Kellner when he says that language is the ultimate site of memorialization, and in the case of the Roma this is particularly true:

Because we are a historical society, the Holocaust must become historical for its memory to survive. The changeless repetitions of ritual will not suffice. Memorialization must ultimately be in language. Even when the memorials take the form of photographs or museum objects, their sense will depend upon a discourse that articulates them. (KELLNER, 1994, p. 128-129).

If first the text was written on the bodies of the survivors, now it is on the pages of theses, dissertations, articles, essays and novels. In this sense, *The Eighth Sin* (1978) and *Fires in the Dark* (2003) are works, as previously mentioned, that deal with this memory gap related to the Romani Holocaust. They offer a different view of the Roma as constructed by non-Roma, an important and highly necessary change of perspective. These are novels written by non-Roma that deal with the Roma culture without relying on the “Gypsy stereotype”; instead of portraying Roma as “gypsies”, they are deep, well-built characters, with a whole set of traditions and culture showing the *Romanipen*, i.e., Romani way of life. They provide a more respectful non-Roma look on the Romani culture. Moreover, both novels, using the World War II period onwards as the historical background, attempt to deal with the rewriting of history through fiction and memory in order to tell stories that had been overlooked, sometimes denied, and, why not to say, almost forgotten. The novels chosen articulate the discourse of sobriety (*The Eighth Sin* more than *Fires in the Dark* as far as the use of actual data and testimonies is concerned), and both novels can be classified in the list of works that add to the prosthetic memory of the representations of the Romani Holocaust. Besides, they bring to the main stage the voice of the Other and their pain, in line with the cosmopolitan memory previously discussed.

The Eighth Sin by Stefan Kanfer presents the story of Benoit, a Roma boy who experienced part of his childhood in the middle of the atrocities of a concentration camp and who lost almost his entire family during World War II. He is a Holocaust survivor and is later

adopted by a Jewish English couple, living first in London and then moving to New York. While pursuing a painter career, Benoit tries to come to terms with his past, struggling to forget what he saw and endured during the war; however, everyday events often bring up traumas he believed to be buried forever. After a lifetime of inner battles and excesses, Benoit finally understands that “the life of seven sins was the avoidance of the eighth, the deadliest sin: the sin of forgetting” (KANFER, 1978, p. 288).

This was the first fiction novel in English (cf. GLAJAR, 2008) to touch upon the Holocaust subject related to the Romani people, presenting as main themes memory, guilt and revenge. *The Eighth Sin* in its portrayal of a less stereotyped Roma and in its approach to a rarely covered subject is indeed a special novel:

While there now are more studies that document the Porrajmos, testimonial accounts by Holocaust survivors, and fictional novels based on real stories, Kanfer’s pioneering novel opened new venues for regarding the complexity of Holocaust stories, and renders Romanies as a specific group of victims by focusing on the historical and cultural aspects of their persecution (GLAJAR; RADULESCU (ed.) 2008, p. 137).

Fires in the Dark (2003) written by Louise Doughty presents the life story of Emil Maximoff, a young man who was part of a nomadic Vlax-Roma group travelling in Czech lands some time before the beginning of World War II. With the war, there is a split in his group; however all of its members end up in concentration camps. Emil is the only one of his group who manages to escape from the horrors of the camp. Emil’s family and friends are murdered and he has to start anew, bearing on himself the responsibility of carrying on the traditions of his people. The narrative innovates on presenting the voices of Romani women to the forefront.

The present work is divided into six chapters. In the first chapter, “The Romani Diaspora: Historical Background”, we will deal with the historical background of the diaspora. It is believed that the Roma have left (or have been taken out) of the northern part of India around 1000 A.D. In this chapter, we will cover some of the routes the Roma have taken until they reached Europe and how they have been received. Some researchers and historians believe that the misunderstandings and the stereotypes against the Roma have sprung in the western mind during this time, how, for instance, Romas were believed to have come from Egypt – hence “gypsies”. Moreover, we will attempt to give a brief panorama of the Romani experience in Europe throughout the centuries, covering the prejudices, slavery years, and persecutions up to this day. For this historical panorama, we will use the works of Dr. Ian Hancock, linguist and scholar, and historian David M. Crowe, among other authors deeply concerned in understanding Roma culture.

In the second chapter “Notes on the Gypsy Stereotype Development”, we will first cover the process of formation and dissemination of stereotypes. To this purpose, we will base our approach on the works of Polish social psychologist Henry Tajfel and his Social Identity Theory. Briefly according to this theory, the dynamics between groups are of key importance to understand how the processes of differentiation of such groups and their members happen. Membership to a specific group (an ingroup) involves questions of identification, comparison, and self-esteem; its components tend to emphasize their positive distinctiveness over other groups (the outgroups). Subsequently, we will discuss the concept of the Wild Man as developed by historian Hayden White, offering a historical background to a possible origin of the Gypsy stereotype as per a Western heritage point of view: who would be the Wild Man as understood by Hebrews, Greeks and Christians. We will also address some notions of Orientalism as developed by Edward Said and how the concept of Orient and everything related to it is fetishized, considered exotic, inferior or backwards. All three theories can be applied to explaining the construction of the Gypsy stereotype.

“The Gypsy Stereotype in Literature, Songs and Movies” is the title of the third chapter, in which we will discuss how Gypsy stereotypes, such as the thief, the carefree wanderer, the seductress and the magician are disseminated through art and how art shapes the individual and collective perceptions related to the Roma peoples. We will give a number of examples, which are not exhaustive, where said stereotypes appear, from children’s literature to pop songs. It is important to notice that negative stereotypes have the power to open the doors to persecutions of all sorts. As Zygmunt Bauman explains in “The Duty to Remember – But What?” in *Modernity and the Holocaust*, “For genocide to be possible, personal differences must first be obliterated and faces must be melted into the uniform mass of the abstract category” (BAUMAN, 2000, p. 227). This “abstract category” is provided by stereotyping.

The fourth and fifth chapters will be dedicated to the analysis of the novels *The Eighth Sin* and *Fires in the Dark*. In order to guide our discussion on these novels we will use the image of a journey. If in the Gypsy stereotype travels are linked to the carefree wanderer, here we have a different situation. Both novels present their protagonists embarking on life journeys in which they have to overcome difficult obstacles of different kinds related mainly to the fact that they are Roma. On facing such problems, these characters show human facets which are as close to Roma reality as possible. They do not subscribe to the stereotype. Prior to the analysis, we will develop a few considerations on the authors and on the novels, in

which we will give a brief profile of Stefan Kanfer and Louise Doughty and the general plot of the novels.

The Eighth Sin analysis is divided into three topics. The first topic is “Depiction of other people’s pain and trauma”, where we will dwell on the strategies employed to convey the atrocities seen on the concentration camps and how the trauma is lived and re-lived by the main Roma character. The second one is “Stereotypes and Romani traditions”, in which we will discuss how the “Romaniness” (the ethnic heritage) is presented as opposed to “Gypsiness” (the Gypsy stereotypes). The last one is “The eighth sin itself – evil, memory and forgetting”, where we will work on how the dynamics of remembering and forgetting is portrayed in the novel and how evil is not something one can leave behind in the past, but rather it is a living entity that permeates the present until it can be finally eliminated. To this end, our analysis will rely on works such as Susan Sontag’s *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003), Hannah Arendt’s *Part Three of the Origins of Totalitarianism* (1968) and David Schwarz’s *Imagining the Holocaust* (1999), among others. Said authors were chosen due to the fact that even though they do not refer specifically to the Roma, they approach subjects such as the Holocaust, the pain of the Other and how the Holocaust can be represented in fiction.

The analysis of *Fires in the Dark* will take into consideration three topics as well. Starting with “History and fiction”, we will establish a connection with the events presented in the novel and the historical facts of World War II in Central Europe. Subsequently we have “The role of women”. In this section, we will focus on how Romani women are portrayed, contrasting it to the Gypsy woman stereotype of the seductress or of the witch. The discussion will be based mainly on two female characters, highlighting the role women play on keeping Romani traditions alive. Lastly, “Stereotypes, traditions and their interactions within the novel” aims at covering how the Romani heritage appears in the novel and how the Gypsy stereotype is shown; we will also draw attention to the subversion that exists in the nature of the “white stereotype”, i.e., the way non-Roma are seen by Roma, a rather unprecedented point of view. Once again, our analysis is supported by works written not with Roma in mind. However, there are exceptions such as Donald Kenrick’s *Historical Dictionary of the Gypsies (Romanies)* (2007), and Professor Gerhard Baumgartner’s 2021 lecture “Roma Experience of the Holocaust”, to name two of them.

In sum, this doctoral dissertation foregrounds the construction of Romani characters and the representation of the *Samudaripen* in the novels *The Eighth Sin* and *Fires in the Dark*. Romani culture, which is often object of misconceptions on the part of non-Roma, flourish in

these narratives as a source of pride and resistance. The memory of the Romani Holocaust is brought to life by fiction and it functions both as a warning and a sign of resilience for future generations. In dealing with these subjects, we intend to contribute to the understanding of how stereotype processes have been applied to Romani peoples and how the novels chosen subvert said processes while addressing the history of Romani fate during World War II. We strongly believe that some historical events should not be forgotten, and the *Samudaripen* is undoubtedly one of them.

There are things you can see and hear, nowadays, long after: the way the ditches were dug, and the way the ground trembled, and the way birds don't fly anymore over Belsen, about what happened to all our Czech brothers, our Polish sisters, our Hungarian cousins, how we in Slovakia were spared, though they beat us and tortured us and jailed us and took our music, how they forced us into workcamps, Hodonin and Lety and Petic (...), how they spat at us in the streets. You can hear stories about the badges that were sewn on the sleeves, and the Z that split the length of our people's arms, the red and white armbands, and the way there were no lean dogs near the camps, the way Zyklon-B turned all the hair of the dead brown, and how the barbed wire flew little flags of skin, the slippers that were made of our hair. You can hear all this and more. What happened to the least of us, happened to us all

(McCANN, C. 2006, p. 47-48)

The Holocaust was a singular event, its particularity insisted upon as if to confer on it a meaning when its chief characteristic lay precisely on the denial of such. Yet at its heart is the all too familiar: sudden and arbitrary death, unbearable loss, memory as simultaneously necessary and unsustainable.

(BIGSBY, C. 2006, p. 378)

1 THE ROMANI DIASPORA: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Diaspora, in brief, refers to the dispersion (either forced or voluntary) of a population from a particular settled territory to another, often far away from the first land of origin. Traditionally, according to William Safran, the concept of diaspora in a narrow sense referred to the historic dispersion of the Jewish, Greek and Armenian peoples from their original native homeland to be scattered throughout the world (In: CLIFFORD, 1997). However, in his essay “Diasporas”, James Clifford points out that such diasporas cannot be taken as a “definitive model”, but rather as “nonnormative starting points for a discourse that is traveling or hybridizing in new global conditions” (CLIFFORD, 1997, p. 249). As such, the concept of diaspora involves primarily displacement and movement of peoples, and may be motivated by several reasons, such as political, economic or social issues. Therefore, according to this broader point of view, it is perfectly acceptable to employ the concept of diaspora to the constant movement of the Roma population (commonly known as ‘Gypsies’) since its first documented appearance in Western history.

Another point we would like to stress is that the Romani people, unlike the Jews, for instance, have no idea of returning to a promised land or to an original homeland. Said feature does not indicate a “failure” in the concept of diaspora applied to the Roma as we understand it. As Avtar Brah explains:

Contrary to general belief, not all diasporas sustain an ideology of return. Moreover, the multi-placedness of home in the diasporic imaginary does not mean that the diasporian subjectivity is ‘rootless’. I argue for a distinction between ‘feeling at home’ and declaring a place as home. [...] In other words, the concept of diaspora refers to *multi-locationality* within and across territorial, cultural and psychic boundaries. (BRAH, 1996, p. 197).

In relation to Roma migrations, researchers understand that there are three great migrations: the first one from central India to Byzantium during the course from the 8th to the 10th century; the second one during the 19th century, when Roma groups from central and south-eastern Europe moved to the rest of Europe and even overseas; and the third one, based on the working migrations from south-east Europe to Western Europe from the 1960’s onwards, which grew even stronger with the collapse and break-up of the socialist countries, such as Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union.

It is not easy to determine the roots of the Roma people. Although there are no precise documents available to confirm so, anthropological studies made to date their origin and linguistic research on the Romani language indicate that the Roma have left (or have been

taken out) of the northern part of India around 1000 A.D. The reasons why they left are still unknown. According to Ronald Lee in his essay “Roma in Europe: “Gypsy” Myth and Romani Reality – New Evidence for Romani History”, most of the works published in the 18th century on the subject indicate that the “Gypsies of Europe were simply *dom*, a low caste of Indian beggars, thieves, prostitutes, musicians and grave-diggers [...] who wandered out of India over centuries” (In: GLAJAR; RADULESCU (ed.), 2008, p. 1). However, still according to Lee:

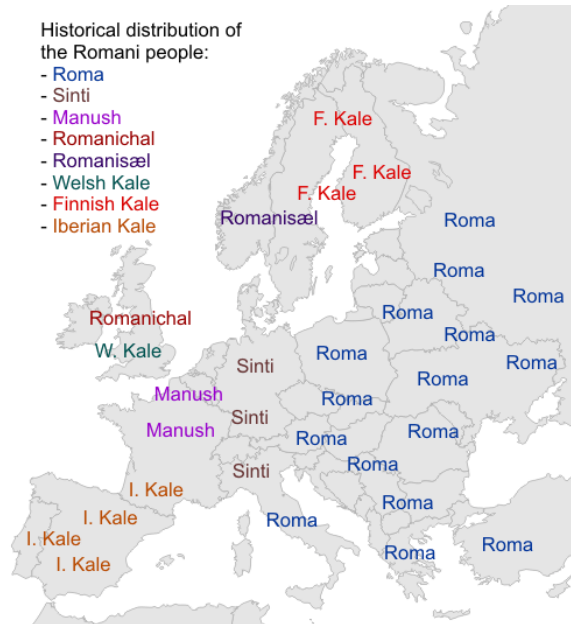
If scholars are looking for the mythical, nomadic Gypsy groups who left India and wandered west, this might seem to be a logical hypothesis, although without any written evidence. However, if one is looking for Indians who left, or were taken out of India, then there is a strong body of written evidence for this theory, which, until recently, has never been seriously investigated. Nobody seems to have considered the thousands of Indian ghulams or slave soldiers taken out of India by Mahmud Ghazni in the early eleventh century. These were utilized as ethnic units, along with their camp followers, wives and families, to form contingents of Indian troops to serve in the Ghaznavid Emirate in Khurasan as *ghazis*⁷ and in the bodyguard of Mahmud and his successors. The existence of such troops is well documented in contemporary histories of the Ghaznavids, as is their participation in the battles in Khurasan. (In: GLAJAR; RADULESCU (ed.), 2008, p. 2).

Therefore, according to this recent standpoint, the origin of the Roma is indeed based in India, however, descending not from a single ethnic Indian group, but rather from a mixture of Indians belonging to different military castes.

It is believed that the first documented indication of the arrival of the Roma in Europe dates back to a record made by a monk at Mount Athos, Greece, in 1100. Later, the Roma reached the Balkans around 1300. From this point on, they have broadly divided into two major groups: the Rom (or Roma), which have gone north, and the Calon (or Kale), which have gone south to the Iberian Peninsula. However, it is crucial to note that there are other major groups which do not wish to be called Rom or Calon, such as the Manouche and the Sinti, and that all major groups are subdivided into smaller groups, mostly named after the main trade of that specific group. For instance, there are the *Lovari* (involved in horse trading), the *Kalderash* (traditionally coppersmiths), the *Ursari* (bear trainers), the *Aurari* (gold washers), and so on. It is important to acknowledge also the existence of another major group, the Dom, which took the route to Middle East and Arab culture countries, and its members are also known as Halebi, Zott or Ghargar, depending on the country they live in. However, we intend to focus on European groups, as the novels to be analyzed in this work deal specifically with the Roma located in Eastern Europe. The major European groups are the Rom, the Kale, and the Sinti, and are traditionally distributed geographically as follows:

⁷ *Ghazi* – “Defender of the frontiers of the Islam”.

Figure 1 - Historical distribution of the Romani people in Europe



Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romani_people Accessed: 8 Aug. 2021.

In the map above, the major group Rom is named “Roma”.

The routes of this diaspora have been marked in the Romani language, of Sanskrit origin⁸, as Bart McDowell affirms:

[...] But linguists, turned detectives, could trace the Gypsy itinerary by the words the wanderers picked up along the way and added to their own language. Romany, as Dr. Sampson said, comes “... scented with an aroma from the East. Thus, in the Gypsies’ speech heard here in England, their rashai, or parson, descends from rishi, the venerable tonsured anchorite of Sanskrit literature, the Rai and the Rawnie [meaning “gentleman” and “lady”] claim kinship with the Rajah and Ranees of India... Persia gave our Gypsies their words for silk and wool and wax, and in Iranian lands they first heard dâriav for ‘sea’ and ‘ocean’. In Byzantine Greece they found their drom, or road, and their foros, or market, and learned their words for heaven and time, for lead and copper, horseshoe and kettle [...]. Thus... you will find in the language of the Gypsies the true history of this people and of their wanderings” (MCDOWELL, 1970, p. 22).

Wherever they have passed through, in groups which formed a *kumpania*, that is a company or a caravan, with wagons and carts pulled by horses, the Roma have received specific denominations from the population already settled on these sites. On the one hand, this fact points out that the presence of the Roma never went unnoticed due to the fact that they were completely different in their ways and clothing, at first fascinating the local populations. On the other, it also reflects the beginning of the many misunderstandings that would be part of the Roma history. They were called “Athinggánoi” or “Atsingáni” in Greece, a denomination first used for Persian mystics, since such mystics were also nomadic and

⁸ Being a diaspora language, Romani encompasses several dialects, such as Angloromani, spoken in English-speaking countries, or Hispanoromani, found in Spanish-speaking countries. However, the basis is the same: Romani.

practiced occult arts; “Bohemians” in France; “Heathens” in the Netherlands and “Gypsies” in English-speaking countries, as it was believed that the Roma came from Egypt. Still according to McDowell:

Gradually, though, the English nicked the name to Gypsy, and in the Balkans and western Europe the names stabilized into words of a ring similar to that of Athíngani: Atzigan, Cigani, Zingani, Tsygany, Zigeuner, Zingari, Zincali. Yet the Gypsies of Europe have a single word for themselves – Rom. In their tongue it meant originally “a man of our own race”. From it comes the word Romani [...] (MCDOWELL, 1970, p. 23).

Figure 2 - First mentions of Roma in Europe until 1600



Source: https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/roma/histoCulture_en.asp Accessed: 8 Aug. 2021.

Even though there is no hard evidence to support dates or reasons why the Roma first arrived in Europe, it is generally agreed that they had already been living in the European parts of the Byzantine Empire before the 13th century. It is also not known why they left Greece and went north; however, by the end of the 14th century, the Roma had already reached Wallachia (Romania today).

The situation of Western Europe and more specifically of the Balkans from the 11th to 13th centuries is crucial for understanding the situation of the Roma and subsequent persecution and slavery. But first, it is worth noticing that even though the misunderstandings have started as early as the Roma presence established itself in Europe, the Roma have not been totally rejected at first. In order to be well received at the local communities, the Roma

made up stories about their past: they introduced themselves as kings, queens and dukes, landowners of faraway lands; or as pilgrims and religious exiles, in a penance to wander around the world. They were even granted safe-conduct permits by the governments and the Catholic Church, even though some of these letters of safe conduct were forged by the Roma themselves so as to have free access to other sites. Moreover, their skills as metal workers, craftsman and even soldiers were useful, as Ian Hancock points out in his book *The Pariah Syndrome*:

At first, the virtual absence of a working class made welcome the skills which Gypsies brought with them from Byzantium and beyond. Two of these skills were smelting and the manufacture of firearms and shot, probably learnt in Armenia and the Byzantine Empire: the words in Armenian for both 'furnace' and 'tin', and the Greek words for 'lead', 'copper', 'nails' and 'horseshoes' have become a part of Romani vocabulary everywhere throughout Europe. (HANCOCK, 1987, p. 16).

However, the good will of the local populations towards the Roma soon faded away. The Roma were considered uncivilized and were associated with paganism and witchcraft. As detailed in the publication *Factsheets on Roma History – Arrival in Europe*:

Declaring their journey a pilgrimage, as well as their letters of safe conduct, assured the Roma a friendly reception at their first appearance in Central and Western Europe. However, the “Gypsies” were considered suspect from the very beginning by the settled population, particularly by those in German-speaking countries. Very soon, their foreign appearance, such as the “black” skin and their “terrible” looks were associated with negative character traits and socially inappropriate behaviour. There are very few neutral descriptions, but numerous and repeatedly mentioned negative ones.

Already in the earliest sources the Roma were presented as wild people, lacking manners and being godless. Smaller offences against property and deceptions were at the root of the Roma’s bad reputation as “cunning thieves”. Fortune telling, which had apparently been a cover-up for pickpockets, aroused the displeasure of the religious authorities. Church representatives assumed “witchcraft and wizardry” behind the Roma’s tricks and feared for the spiritual salvation of their faithful. (EDUCATION OF ROMA CHILDREN, 2018, p.7).

Besides, due to a series of events of paramount relevance during the Middle Ages, namely the Crusades, the decline and fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453 and successive invasions of Tartars in Europe, between 1241 and mid-1400, there was a strong anti-Islamic feeling in Europe as a whole. Such feeling influenced the way the Roma were seen and treated. If first their skills were useful, and their exoticism admired, now the Roma were considered to be enemies, and allies to the enemy, even though there is no proof that the Roma were spies for the Turks. Quoting Hancock:

Because of their strange language and appearance, and their dark skin, they were believed in Christian areas to be Tartars, intruders from the lands now occupied by the Muslims. This was especially true in areas remote from Islamic contact, where the local population had no first-hand idea of what actual Tatars looked like. Even today, two of the words for 'Gypsy' in the German language are Tatar and Heiden (i.e. 'Heathen', 'non-Christian'). There is indication that in Muslim-held areas,

Gypsies were regarded as Christians, or at least as non-Muslims, and treated accordingly in terms of taxation and status. (HANCOCK, 1987, p. 16).

The myths regarding the origins of the Roma created by the non-Roma were many: none of them were positive. As Lou Charnon-Deutsch clarifies in his book *The Spanish Gypsy – the History of a European Obsession*, the protoracism with biblical grounds was born here:

In the Middle Ages, the myths and legends that grew up around the Egyptians often reflected the protoracism inherent in Christian biblical genealogies: They were descendants of Ham, forever marked by the sins of Cain; they had denied succor to the Holy Family as it fled into Egypt and so were cursed to wander the world to atone for their refusal; they were the Egyptians of the old Testament, who, Ezekiel prophesized, would be dispersed among the nations; they had denied their Christian faith and were being punished by forced pilgrimage for five years, or ten, or forever; they were survivors of the Pharaoh's armies that had driven the Hebrews out of Egypt; or, finally, they were a people forever cursed after they participated in the death of the Christ by making the nails with which he was crucified. (CHARNON-DEUTSCH, 2004, p.5).

The persecution suffered by the Roma was spread throughout Europe, but it was crueler in the Balkans, more specifically in Wallachia and Moldavia (which form now, together with Transylvania, Romania). The Roma were gradually persecuted and enslaved due to closing off of the trade routes, and the need for a cheap - and why not an unpaid - work force. Such decline of the economy was an outcome of the change of scenario in Europe with the rise of the Ottoman Empire (15th and 16th centuries) and its subsequent move into the Balkans and parts of Central Europe in the 16th century. David M. Crowe remarks that:

In Royal Hungary, Gypsies were increasingly seen as spies and something of a Turkish fifth column, which caused them to be increasingly subjected to restrictions on their lifestyle and trade. Though still valued for their smithing skills, particularly by the military, these efforts to regulate the Roma eventually forced them to adopt a nomadic way of life. In Bulgaria, which had come under Ottoman control somewhat earlier, the Turks relegated Gypsies to the lowest social ranking, and differentiated between the predominantly nomadic Muslim Roma and the settled Christian Gypsies. The Ottoman conquest of Wallachia and Moldavia, which took place somewhat earlier than the conquest of Hungary, resulted in a series of laws and regulations that governed Gypsy *robi*⁹. (CROWE, 1994, p. xi-xii).

This, in brief, was the economic and philosophical scenario in which the Roma were made slaves – an expected move, once they were considered savages – mainly in Central Europe through part of the 14th century and beyond, until approximately the second half of the 19th century, totalizing over 500 years of enslavement. It is important to point out that the Roma, much like African slaves in the Americas, were treated less than cattle. Men were used for the workforce in gold washing and agriculture, while women attended domestic services and were also sexual objects of their masters. They were sold in markets and members of the same family would be sold separately, children would be taken away from the parents. The

⁹ *Robi* – slaves.

killing of a “gypsy” by a landlord was in theory a punishable crime; however, cruel murders and the practice of torture were common. For instance, Ian Hancock quotes the diary of a French journalist, Félix Colson, written in 1839, in which he describes a typical visit to the home of one of these landlords (a *boyar*):

[At dinner table] Misery is so clearly painted on the faces of these slaves that, if you happened to glance at one, you'd lose your appetite. The Gypsy slaves are addressed by Christian names. Basil seems to be the most common, but they are also given house-names, such as Pharoah, Bronze, Dusky, Dopey or Toad, or for the women, Witch, Camel, Dishrag or Whore. Never does a group revolt. In the evening, the master makes his choice among the beautiful girls - maybe he will offer some of them to the guest - whence these light-skinned, blonde-haired Gypsies. The next morning at dawn, the Frenchman is awakened by piercing shrieks: it is punishment time. The current penalty is a hundred lashes for a broken plate or a badly-curved lock of hair ... it is at this time that the abominable falague is finally outlawed: this was when the slaves were hung up in the air and the soles of their feet were shredded with whips made of bull-sinews (Roleine, 1979:111, In: HANCOCK, 1987, p. 24).

Another description of slavery is given by Mihail Kogalniceanu, Wallachian journalist and reformer who wrote in 1837:

On the streets of the Jassy of my youth, I saw human beings wearing chains on their arms and legs, others with iron clamps around their foreheads, and still others with metal collars about their necks. Cruel beatings, and other punishments such as starvation, being hung over smoking fires, solitary imprisonment and being thrown naked into the snow or the frozen rivers, such was the fate of the wretched Gypsy. The sacred institution of the family was likewise made a mockery: women were wrested from their men, and daughters from their parents. Children were torn from the breasts of those who brought them into this world, separated from their mothers and fathers and from each other, and sold to different buyers from the four corners of Rumania, like cattle. Neither humanity nor religious sentiment, nor even civil law, offered protection for these beings. It was a terrible sight, and one which cried out to Heaven [...]

The Europeans are organizing philanthropical societies for the abolition of slavery in America, yet in the bosom of their own continent of Europe, there are 400,000 Gypsies who are slaves, and 200,000 more equally victim to barbarousness (1837:iv) (1837:16-17, In: HANCOCK, 1987, p. 35-36).

There are also examples of laws against the Roma. Laws which, among other things, forbade the marriage of slaves without consent of the owners – the landlords would arrange the marriages in order to produce “better stock”. Interracial marriages were strictly forbidden, so as not to corrupt white blood, nevertheless, the quantity of offspring from the intercourse between masters and female slaves were already high:

A selection of statutes pertaining to Gypsies, taken from the Wallachian Penal Code of 1818, includes the following:

Section 2 Gypsies are born slaves.

Section 3 Anyone born of a mother who is a slave, is also a slave.

Section 5 Any owner has the right to sell or give away his slaves.

Section 6 Any Gypsy without an owner is the property of the Prince.

Those from the Moldavian Penal Code of 1833 include:

Section II:154 Legal unions cannot take place between free persons and slaves.

Section II:162 Marriage between slaves cannot take place without their owner's consent.

Section II: 174 The price of a slave must be fixed by the Tribunal, according to his age, condition and profession.

Section II: 176 If anyone has taken a female slave as a concubine...she will become free after his death. If he has had children by her, they will also become free. (HANCOCK, 1987, p. 31).

The freedom of the Roma (the *Slobuzenja*) in Eastern Europe legally came in 1864. Such descriptions of the Roma situation in the Balkans echoed throughout Western Europe, and pressure towards abolition grew. With the end of slavery, however, little was made to improve the condition of the Roma. Again, much like what happened with the end of African enslavement in the Americas, the Roma were given no support to reestablish their lives after slavery. Many remained working for their landlords and for monasteries. However, many Roma left the Balkans, and as the situation was at the time, together with the development of industries which left virtually no room for their handcraft, the Roma had no other choice than to keep on moving from town to town in order to make a living. The world had changed and the Roma would have to adapt in order to survive in it. The ones who remained sedentary engaged in agricultural activities, blacksmithing and manufacturing other items. The Roma who were nomads chose to work with entertainment activities (music, bear training and later on, circuses), horse trading, or copper smithing. It is well to point out, however, that this nomadic way of life was also commonly due to laws: in many places, the Roma were forbidden by law to own lands.

Apart from slavery, the same type of persecution happened in other countries of Europe. Germany, France, Spain, Portugal and others also had laws against Roma. They were not allowed to wander from town to town or to speak Romani. For example, in Valladolid, Spain, a document dated of 1538 stated that:

Gypsies are not to move about these kingdoms, and those that may be there, are to leave them, or take trades, or live with their overlords under penalty of a hundred lashes for the first time, and for the second time that their ears be cut off, and that they be chained for sixty days, and that for the third time that *they remain captive forever to them who take them*. Decree of their Highnesses given in the year 1499, and Law No.104 in the Decrees; confirmed and ordered to be observed in the court which was celebrated in Toledo in the year 1525, Law No.58, in spite of any clause which may have been given to the contrary (de Celso, 1538, In: HANCOCK, 1987, p. 55).

Still in Spain there happened another terrible episode: the Great Gypsy Round-up. Enforced by Spanish monarchy, on August 30, 1749 a raid took place simultaneously all over Spain, arresting and imprisoning Spanish Roma to work in labor camps, factories, navy arsenals and depots. A figure between 9,000 to 12,000 Roma were arrested and the goods belonging to them were confiscated in order to fund the operation. During the great

navigations period, the unwanted people in Portugal and Spain were deported to the new colonies in America. Among them there were some Roma. In Brazil, the first documented Roma to arrive was João Torres in 1574, with his wife and children. He was the head of a group of several other Romani families deported by Portugal.

In the 20th century nothing changed with regards to the situation of the Roma. Prejudice, even state-supported, remained the rule. However, one event marked deeply the world history and the history of the Roma. World War II, with all its horrors, established a new level of persecution in human history never achieved before or since. The Holocaust promoted by German Nazis carried on the systematic massacre of millions of people in and outside concentration camps, mainly Jews. However, little is said about the killing of thousands of Roma. Among western European countries, Germany had historically offered the cruelest treatment of Roma. Besides the discriminatory laws, Gypsy hunt, for instance, was a common sport even during the 19th century: “In 1826, Freiherr von Lenchen displayed his trophies publicly: the severed heads of a Gypsy woman and her child. In 1835, a Rhenish aristocrat entered into his list of kills "A Gypsy woman and her suckling babe” (HANCOCK, 1987, p. 61). The Holocaust will be dealt with in more detail during the analysis of the novels, as it is part of the historical background of *The Eighth Sin* and *Fires in the Dark*.

In modern times, it can be said that the Romani diaspora came to a halt, for the majority of Roma is sedentary; it is estimated that only 2% of the whole Roma population in the world are still nomads. Nevertheless, we may understand Romani culture as a diasporic one. According to Clifford:

Some version of this utopic/dystopic tension is present in all diaspora cultures. They begin with uprooting and loss. They are familiar with exile, with the “outsider’s” exposed terror – of police, lynch mob, and pogrom. At the same time, diaspora cultures work to maintain community, selectively preserving and recovering traditions, “customizing” and “versioning” them in novel, hybrid, and often antagonist situations. (CLIFFORD, 1997, p. 263).

Roma settlements are often slums or ghettos, with no basic conditions for livelihood, leading some members of such settlements to alcoholism, drug addiction and petty crimes. Moreover, attacks and pogroms¹⁰ on such settlements still happen nowadays, based on hatred and “ethnic cleansing”. For instance, in May, 2008, in main cities of Italy, especially Naples, Roma camps were attacked and set fire to. The perpetrators were not punished (RESTRICÇÃO, 2008). In 2010, the French government ordered a clampdown on Roma immigrants, destroying Roma camps and returning to Romania and Bulgaria around 1,000 Roma. It was

¹⁰ Form of riot directed against a particular group, whether ethnic, religious, or other, and characterized by killings and destruction of their homes, businesses, and religious centers.

later discovered that there was a document dated Aug. 5 from the French Interior Ministry to the local police prefects ordering “systematic steps for the dismantling of illicit camps, in priority those of the Roma”, clearly targeting an entire ethnic group, rather than individuals (FRENCH, 2010).

In sum, the “solutions” found by governments to the “Gypsy problem” throughout the centuries have been persecutions, enslavement, deportation, massacre, sterilization or forced assimilation (especially true in relation to socialist countries) to the local cultures. The Gypsy stereotype constructed during the Middle Ages still operates on the Roma, leading to marginalization and self-marginalization, as it is hard for a people to maintain a high self-esteem with such a heavy load to carry of antigypsyism. It is true that many sedentary Roma even try to conceal their origins, for fear of suffering prejudice from the society in which they live in.

It is important to point out, though, that there has been a greater level of awareness and mobilization of the Roma. There are scholars, such as Ian Hancock in the U.S., Delia Grigore in Romania and Ronald Lee (1934-2020) in Canada who are prolific writers of Roma issues. Several Romani and non-Romani organizations and non-governmental organizations have been assembled to fight for the rights of the Roma, such as the Romani Union in Prague, Romea.cz, Drom.cz, the European Roma Grassroots Organisation (ERGO), and the European Roma Rights Center (ERRC) are some examples. There are also several Facebook and Instagram accounts, such as @romani.herstory, that advocate rights and visibility to the Roma. The first World Romani Congress took place on April 7-12, 1971 in the UK. The International Romani Day - April 8th – was confirmed in 1990 during the fourth World Romani Congress. The date is meant to celebrate Romani culture, history and language, and to raise awareness of the issues and struggles of the Roma communities.

Such growing mobilization was also responsible for the acceptance and obtainment of permanent consultative status of the Romani people in the UN in 1979 and for the acknowledgement in 1980 that the Roma were also victims of the Holocaust. The very use of the word “Roma” instead of “Gypsy” is a consequence of such initiatives. Nowadays, studies on the Roma and on Roma issues are highly developed in several areas. And due to the internet, they are easier to access. There are programs of Romani Studies in universities such as in the Central European University and Harvard (fbx.harvard.edu) A quick search for terms such as “Roma” or “Gypsy” in websites such as Academia.edu or Jstor.org reveals several academic papers on topics ranging from language, literature and identity to economics and history.

Other two important commemoration dates are May 16th – the Romani Resistance Day and August 2nd – the Roma and Sinti Holocaust Memorial Day. The Romani Resistance Day was established to remember that in this date in 1944 over 6,000 Roma and Sinti fought off Nazi soldiers in Auschwitz II-Birkenau camp in the Gypsy Camp (known as the *Zigeunerlager*) so as not to be taken to the gas chambers. It is believed that they used rocks, knives, and work tools as weapons and managed to resist until August 2nd of the same year. However, some researchers indicate that this long-term resistance would not be possible: historians of the Auschwitz Museum Helena Kubica and Piotr Setkiewicz in their article “The Last Stage of the Functioning Zigeunerlager in the Birkenau Camp” highlight that there is no documental or testimonial proof that there was indeed an uprising, and that it would be highly unlikely that heavily-armed SS soldiers would not suppress a riot without confrontation. In their opinion, the most probable explanation would be that, on learning the fate of the Jewish prisoners of the BIIa¹¹ quarantine camp who were selected to work but ended up murdered in gas chambers, the Roma prisoners decided to offer some resistance; however, no violent rebellion on their part took place:

(...) when soon after the SS men appeared in the Roma camp and ordered young Roma men to leave for work in Germany, to their surprise they came up against passive resistance and the refusal to perform the order. Maybe only then they realized (or some prisoners explained to them) what the reasons of such behavior of the Roma were. The SS men, without the intention to provoke riots and wanting only to calm the mood in the camp, told Joachimowski to prepare the list of Roma able to work, which was supposed to ease these concerns. It all seems to show that the plan brought the result desired by the SS as nothing is known about the expressions of rebellion or resistance when the lists were being prepared or later, directly when the transport was formed and when it left. (KUBICA; SETKIEWICZ, 2018, p. 3).

The second date marks the day when the Nazi succeeded in returning to the Gypsy camp and murdering the remaining 4,300 prisoners of the camp. Here, on the other hand, evidence is strong. Still according to Kubica and Setkiewicz:

On the afternoon of August 2nd, about 4,200 – 4,300 Roma were incarcerated in Birkenau: men, women and children. They were all subsequently led out from the barracks and, in spite of their desperate resistance, loaded onto lorries and transported to the gas chambers next to crematoria II and V. (KUBICA; SETKIEWICZ, 2018, p. 9).

¹¹ German: Bauabschnitt IIa – construction segment 2, sector a. One of the nine camps built by the Germans in Birkenau and one of three men's camps. Source: Mini dictionary of terms from the history of Auschwitz. Available at http://70.auschwitz.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=220&Itemid=179&lang=en. Accessed August 29 2022.

Figure 3 - Sinti and Roma Holocaust sites in Nazi-occupied Europe



Source: <https://www.dw.com/en/europe-remembers-sinti-roma-murdered-under-nazi-rule/a-58705933> Accessed: 8 Aug. 2021.

Both dates are remembered by activists, civil rights movements and institutions concerned with the history and situation of the Roma and Sinti worldwide. In 2020 and 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the events took place online. An example of this we have the European Holocaust Memorial Day for Sinti and Roma (<https://www.roma-sinti-holocaust-memorial-day.eu/>) which features lectures, articles, motion pictures, testimonies of Holocaust survivors, and more, or the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (<https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/>). In social media, such as Facebook and Instagram, it is also possible to follow and learn more about Roma history. Websites as the Rom Archive (<https://www.romarchive.eu/>) or the Council of Europe (www.coe.int), and hashtags such as *#porajmos* or *#samudaripen* are valid sources about the genocide of Roma/Sinti populations during World War II. Referring to said Romani terms, there is no consensus as to their usage, though. As pointed out by historian Dr. Karola Fings in her article “Genocide, Holocaust, Porajmos, Samudaripen”, the word “Holocaust” is no longer used to describe solely the

murder of the Jewish population during the war. “Roma Holocaust” is often used in this sense. However, with the Romani word, the situation is different:

In the 1990s, the activist Ian Hancock (United States) popularised the term *Porajmos*, a neologism translated as ‘devouring’ or ‘destruction’. The term has elicited strong criticism. The linguist Marcel Courthiade (France) has pointed out that the root verb, *porravel* (‘to open the mouth widely’), also has the colloquial meaning of opening other parts of the body. Due to this connotation, which is understood in all dialects, he has described the term as inappropriate.

Instead, Courthiade advocates using *Samudaripen*. The term was first used in the 1970s in Yugoslavia in the context of Auschwitz and Jasenovac. It is a neologism of *Sa* (Romani for ‘all’) and *mudaripen* (murder) and can be translated as ‘murder of all’ or ‘mass murder’. Courthiade argues that *Samudaripen* is unambiguous, neutral and respectful as well as conveying grief. Indeed, compared with *Porajmos*, the term is much less emotionally charged and more precise because it emphasizes the intent to murder and the act of killing in the context of the NS genocide. International Romani Union now employs the term *Samudaripen*. (FINGS, 2019).

It is well to point out that the 2nd August date was only made official by the European Parliament in 15 April 2015, and to this day the most (if not all) Roma descendants have not received any compensation from governments, different from Jewish Holocaust survivors and their descendants. In Germany, only in 1982 the government officially recognized the Sinti and the Roma as victims of Nazi genocide. In 2012 the Memorial to the Sinti and the Roma Victims of National Socialism was established in Berlin, near the Brandenburg Gate.

In Brazil, there is the national commemoration date of May 24th – *Dia Nacional do Cigano* (Gypsy National Day) established in May 25, 2006. There are also non-governmental organizations, cultural initiatives, scholars and activists for the Roma peoples. *União Cigana do Brasil*, led now by the family of the late Mr. Mio Vacite, *Leshjae Kumpania*, *Espaço Cultural Kalons Latatchos*, *Aline Miklos* and *Orgulho Romani*, *Coletivo Ciganagens*, just to name a few, are part of a movement of Roma individuals and entities created by Romani people interested in fighting for their rights and writing their own histories. Besides, we would like to draw attention to the fact that the Roma cannot be considered as a monolithic whole tied up to the past. Roma are composed of peoples of different habits, cultures, religions and even languages. There are feminist movements, and LGBTQIA+ movements for instance that should also be taken into consideration. Another important fact to notice is that the words “gypsy” and “cigano” are not always considered to be pejorative by all Roma groups in all places. Some even prefer not to be called Roma. A criticism often made to the 1971 Romani Congress is that the decisions were made by Rom Roma, and other groups, such as the Kale, had no say. In this work, we chose to use the word Roma to designate the ethnic group and the term “Gypsy” to name the stereotypes, except where otherwise noted.

Also, as far as history is concerned, research on the Holocaust/*Porrajmos* and the impact on Roma populations are still in course. The “Roma Holocaust” is becoming more and more visible. One of the organizations that is engaged in such retrieval of the past is Yahad-in-Unum Association (yahadinunum.org) and the project Holocaust by Bullets. Led by Patrick Desbois, a French Catholic priest, since 2004 the organization investigates and records stories of Jews, Roma and other victims of the Nazis in Eastern Europe. Research teams go into field trips in countries such as Ukraine and Poland to gather evidence, find mass grave sites and interview the aging witnesses of the killings and mass murders during the World War II carried out by the Nazis. It is an initiative to preserve some of the memories that were bound to be lost if not for this research work. They also sponsor educational programs for the understanding and awareness of the Holocaust and of genocides not only in Europe but also in Latin America, United States, Asia and Australia, with lectures and exhibitions. According to Father Patrick Desbois in his article “The Holocaust by Bullets”, the interviews are powerful elements to the body of evidence because:

Their memories oftentimes fill in the details we have gleaned from archival accounts of Soviet and German war crimes investigations, details that would be otherwise soon be lost forever.

They are details about real people. The Jews, Roma and other whose existence the Nazis sought to erase from the earth, were thrown like animals into anonymous mass graves that are disappearing beneath the grass and trees. It has been said that these victims suffered death twice, the first time as human beings, murdered by the Nazis and their allies, the second time as dead persons forgotten by the world. The Russian proverb that a war is not over until the dead are buried spurs us on. (DESBOIS, 2012, p. 82).

...

Hundreds of neo-fascists, far-right activists and local residents took to the streets of a Rome suburb on Tuesday in a violent protest against 70 Roma people, including 33 children and 22 women, who were to be temporarily transferred to a reception centre in the area. [...]

The protesters also included members of the neo-fascist CasaPound party and the far-right Forza Nuova, who finally forced the city council to transfer the Roma women and children to another neighbourhood. [...]

The protesters then stormed a van containing sandwiches and water destined for Roma and destroyed the food. In a video published by the newspaper La Repubblica, protesters are seen trampling on food, while someone shouts: “They must die of hunger.” (NEO FACIST, 2019).

In the 21st century, the situation of the Roma populations is still far from being acceptable. With the rise of the neo-fascism, far-right and neo-Nazi groups in Europe, assaults on migrants and minorities are becoming increasingly common, such as the episode above. They are the scapegoats for xenophobia and racially motivated attacks. In the case of the

Roma, the largest ethnic minority in Europe with around 11 million people, besides from violence and discrimination, this means for most of them poor livelihood conditions in camps, lack of formal education, limited access to sanitary infrastructure and clean water, and exposure to all kinds of diseases. One should note, however, that Roma groups face different realities in distinct parts of the world. There are Roma families that enjoy a good financial situation. It is true that before World War II this was more common, but unfortunately with the war and the confiscation of property and assets of the majority of Roma families, an impoverished population with no right to a monetary compensation or help from the State was created.

In the first semester of 2020 the Coronavirus/ COVID-19 pandemic broke out. Taking place first in China, the virus rapidly reached most of the countries in the planet, causing fear, an unprecedented number of deaths, collapse of healthcare systems, social distancing measures and lockdowns worldwide. The full extent of losses for the world health, politics and economy are still unknown. Even though several vaccines have been developed so far, we still lack an effective cure against the virus.

Regular handwashing is crucial to slow the spread of the virus; however, it is no surprise that Roma communities, as well as other marginalized minorities, are extremely vulnerable during the pandemic, once sanitation services are still lacking in Roma camps and settlements. For instance, according to an ERRC report: “After two years without water a Romani community in Vrela Ribnicka – Podgorica, Montenegro – finally gained access to this basic right [clean water]. Only a day later, the first positive case of COVID-19 was confirmed there.” (EUROPEAN ROMA RIGHTS CENTRE, 2020)

Recently, another report named *Pushed to the Wastelands – Environmental racism against Roma communities in Central and Eastern Europe*, published by the European Environmental Bureau, ERGO Network and Environmental Justice on April, 8th, 2020 deals with another kind of prejudice that affects Roma populations - the environmental racism:

Environmental racism is a term coined in the environmental justice movement and describes situations in which certain groups are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation and a lack of environmental services linked to underlying racially motivated discrimination and exclusion. The effects are negative health impacts, a lower quality of life, and a further deepening of existing inequalities. (HEIDEGGER; WIESE, 2020, p. 9).

According to said report, there are three main categories of situations that Roma populations are deprived of environmental services and benefits: the communities are cut off from public environmental services, such as access to clean water and waste collection; they

are put in danger, as they have no other choice but to live in environmentally degraded and polluted areas; and they are pushed aside by means of forced evictions from land.

The COVID-19 crisis exposed the poverty and exclusion Roma communities have been facing for a long time. Amid all uncertainty and pain humankind will definitely face from now on, we hope the pandemics will also mark a turning point for marginalized communities worldwide. The virus provided a tough lesson showing that no one is safe unless everyone is safe.

2 NOTES ON THE GYPSY STEREOTYPE DEVELOPMENT

German-owned food company Knorr announced Sunday that they are in the process of re-branding and renaming their popular dressing, Zigeuner sauce, due to the racist undertones of their product name. The company had thought it best to replace the name of their much favoured spicy sauce with "Paprika Sauce Hungarian Style" in an effort to eliminate unfavourable interpretations that may be associated with it. (...). Because Zigeuner sauce, literally translated as "gypsy sauce" no longer sits well with these times -- Unilever, the consumer group that owns Knorr said "since 'gypsy sauce' can be interpreted in a negative way, we have decided to give our Knorr sauce a new name(...). For years, civil rights groups have rallied and protested for the product to be renamed. However, the company rejected their petitions in 2013. The Roma and Sinti organisation in Germany have appealed to the company for many years to change the name stating that the dressing is not even part of their traditional cuisine. The word Zigeuner is a derogatory German expression for gypsy.¹² (GERMAN-OWNED, 2020).

Racism, capitalism, and silencing of a minority group. In a single piece of news of August 17, 2020, it is possible to notice the weight of prejudice resting over a whole community of people – the largest ethnic minority in Europe with around 11 million people. Gypsies¹³, ciganos, zigeuner, tsiganes, bohemians. The Roma have always been *par excellence* the scapegoats of the world. Centuries of prejudice have worsened the situation of poverty and marginalization of a great number of Roma communities, which is still a reality nowadays. It is well to note that Roma groups are heterogeneous and present major differences in relation to dialects, religion, beliefs, customs, and class.

Nevertheless, stereotypes, such as the child-stealing gypsy, the dirty, lazy, or carefree wanderer have been reinforced by the media in general and specifically by literary representations. The Gypsy stereotype encompasses at least one of these traits: the gypsy is either as a thief who deceives others and performs petty crimes in order to survive; or as a sorcerer capable of making potions and foreseeing the future, and able to cast spells and curses; or as a romantic character in close contact with nature, living a happy and carefree life in colorful caravans outside the oppressive civilization, with no social obligations. Women are passionate and lustful. In fact, the Gypsy stereotype, once created in the western mind, has never been abandoned. Drowned somewhere under these constructed images there lies the real Roma, and their path of persecution, prejudice and even slavery, as already pointed out in Chapter 1.

¹² <https://www.ibtimes.co.uk/german-owned-knorr-change-racist-name-popular-zigeuner-sauce-1682100>. Accessed October 7, 2020.

¹³ Please refer to footnote #1 for the discussion on the usage of the word “Gypsy” and synonyms.

2.1 Stereotype formation and Henry Tajfel's Social Identity Theory

Stereotype, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary¹⁴, is “something conforming to a fixed or general pattern, especially: a standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment”. Stereotypes are so common in our daily lives, and so ingrained in relationships among members of a given society that they go unnoticed most of the times, to the point they become natural. There are several distinct approaches and theories on the study of stereotypes, which are sometimes contradictory, sometimes complementary, whether based on the group or based on the individual. No single theory or approach may account for the several aspects that come into play when stereotype and prejudice are in focus.

In *Stereotyping and Prejudice Changing Conceptions*, Stroebe and Insko affirm:

Theories differ in whether they explain stereotypes and prejudice in terms of sociocultural causes or in terms of individual processes. At one extreme, there are theories that conceive of stereotypes and prejudice as the result of social conflict (conflict theories) or socialization (the social learning theory). At the other extreme, there are approaches that account for stereotypes and prejudice in terms of individual motives and personality traits (scapegoat theory, authoritarian personality) or in terms of limitations of the information-processing capacity of the individual (cognitive approach) (BAR-TAL et al., 1989, p.12-13).

Taking into consideration theories presented above we may say that stereotypes are means employed by people to give meaning to the world around them. As explained by McGarty, Yzerbyt and Spears in *Stereotypes as Explanations: The Formation of Meaningful Beliefs about Social Groups*:

(...) individuals and groups can be said to be the central facts of society. Without individuals there could be no society, but unless individuals also perceive themselves to belong to groups, that is, to share characteristics, circumstances, values and beliefs with other people, then society would be without structure or order. These perceptions of groups are called stereotypes (MCGARTY et al, 2002, p. 1).

Stereotypes are also employed as tools to affirm individuals' belonging to a certain group. Still according to McGarty, Yzerbyt and Spears:

People form stereotypes to make sense of the world they live in. The things that they tend to make sense of are relations between groups that they encounter, interact with and are dependent on. Perceivers are intent on producing these understandings because they need this knowledge to understand the world and to take coordinate action. (MCGARTY et al, 2002, p. 198).

¹⁴ Available at <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stereotype>. Accessed 13 May 2021.

Such representations/impressions of groups are guided by the following principles: stereotypes aid explanation, once they help to make sense of the world; they are energy-saving devices, as they avoid our effort to seek out detailed information on individuals and/or groups, and to manage in our minds such detailed information; and they are shared group beliefs. This last principle is particularly important, as stereotypes gain more strength if they are shared by more people. For the purposes of this research, we will adopt social identity development theory as elaborated by social psychologists Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner in the articles “An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict” (1979) and “The social identity theory of inter-group behavior” (1986). In this theory, the power of one’s acceptance and feeling of belonging to a specific group is of key importance when considering the relationship among members inside a group and the dynamics among groups. Besides, such belongingness also interferes in the building of one’s identity and self-worth within a group and how belief systems regarding other social groups are created and passed on. It is well to note that a single individual may belong to a variety of groups (nationality, religion, gender, political views, sports teams, and so on) and the prevailing group will depend on the given context.

First, it is important to define what is an ingroup and an outgroup. An ingroup is a social group to which one feels to be a part of. It is a group one identifies with, whether class, gender, race, or religion-wise. An outgroup, on the other hand, is a group with which one does not identify. There is a tendency of the members of an ingroup to see themselves as individuals (an ingroup heterogeneity), while the outgroup members are seen as similar (an outgroup homogeneity).

As such, in this theory, one’s positive self-identity within an ingroup is crucial to the process of stereotyping outgroups:

(...) social identity theory proposes that people want to have a positive self-identity. Because a large part of this identity is made up of a group identity, people can achieve this goal only by feeling positively about the groups to which they belong. One way to achieve this positive feeling is to find ways to distinguish one’s group from others, particularly by seeing one’s own group as better (...) (WHITLEY JR; KITE, 2010, p. 30).

This process of building a positive self-identity involves some degree of coordination within the members of an ingroup. This coordination is based on a belief that the members share points in common while they are different (and often believe themselves to be superior) from other outgroups. As McGarty, Yzerbyt and Spears indicate:

Thus, the most interesting way in which stereotypes can become shared relates to the argument that stereotypes are normative beliefs just like other beliefs. They are shared by members of groups not just through the coincidence of common

experience or the existence of shared knowledge within society, but because the members of groups act to coordinate their behaviour. (...). Group members engage in processes of differentiation to make their group distinctive from other groups, but they also engage in processes of social influence within groups so that their members become more similar to each other on relevant dimensions. (MCGARTY et al, 2002, p. 6).

In this differentiation process, comparisons among social groups are the basis for the establishment of a positive social identity. According to Tajfel in his chapter “An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict”, the following theoretical principles are present in the process of building social identities:

- 1 Individuals strive to achieve or maintain positive social identity.
- 2 Positive social identity is based to a large extent on favorable comparisons that can be made between the in-group and some relevant out-groups: the in-group must be perceived as positively differentiated or distinct from the relevant out-groups.
- 3 When social identity is unsatisfactory, individuals will strive either to leave their existing group and join some more positively distinct group and/or to make their existing group more positively distinct. (TAJFEL; TURNER, 1979, p. 40).

Since the aim of the differentiation is to “maintain or achieve superiority over an out-group on some dimensions” (TAJFEL; TURNER, 1979, p. 41), it is possible to see that this operation of establishing comparisons among groups is undoubtedly a fertile ground for prejudice and discrimination – especially if the superior outgroup is also a dominant group in social hierarchies. According to Brown (1965 apud BAR-TAL et al, 1989, p.5), stereotypes are objectionable not because they are generalizations (for they may be true, not all generalizations are false); they are objectionable because of their ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is present in several cultures, as pointed out by Stroebe and Insko:

Stereotypes of outgroups are typically less positive than those of ingroups. Such ethnocentrism (i.e., ingroup favoritism and outgroup devaluation) has been observed in a wide variety of cultures (LeVine & Campbell, 1972). (...) Stereotypes help to preserve or create positive valued differentiations of a group from other social groups and contribute, therefore, to the creation and maintenance of group ideologies explaining or justifying a variety of social actions against the outgroup. (BAR-TAL et al., 1989, p.5).

Here we would like to quote a brief explanation on the history of use of the word “race” in English, which gradually began to be employed to infer superiority/inferiority relationships of power:

Smedley notes that the word race was not used in English to refer to groups of people until the 1600s, and at that time the meaning was very broad, referring to any group of people with common characteristics. For example, one writer referred to “a race of bishops.” The meaning of the word race slowly narrowed until, in the late 1700s, it took on its present meaning to indicate groups of people sharing common physical characteristics, especially skin color. This narrowing of meaning took place at the same time as Europeans were beginning to colonize and dominate Africa, Asia, and the Americas, areas whose native inhabitants differed in skin color from Europeans. Over time, racial categories based on skin color became a means of differentiating “superior” Europeans from “inferior” others. These categories then

became the focus of stereotypes “proving” the inferiority of non-Europeans and justifying European dominance and race laws limiting the freedom of non-Europeans.

It is important to bear in mind that race is a social category, not a biological one. (WHITLEY JR; KITE, 2010, p. 5).

Such example ethnocentrism and the relationship of power derived from it – in this case white European superiority over other peoples – points directly to the white privilege issue. The white male European superiority that conquers and colonizes the world, and that determines which “races” are inferior or incapable of self-ruling, for instance, is one of the most blatant cases in western society. Of course, stereotypes were (and are) often used for maintaining this status quo, but they can be used also to defy them. It is important to acknowledge the political dimension of the stereotype as a means of either maintaining or challenging the status quo:

For instance, patterns of domination are easier to maintain where the oppressed ‘know their place’, but they are also easier to overturn where the oppressors are identified as oppressors rather than as (say) kindly guardians. (...) Again, the members of the dominant group may be keen to stereotype the members of the subordinate group in order to perpetuate their privileges. Conversely, the members of the subordinate group may be tempted to build a derogatory image of the members of the dominant group in order to change the state of affairs. Interestingly, the stereotypes in these two situations serve very clear yet contradictory goals. (MCGARTY et al, 2002, p. 197).

Another aspect we would like to highlight is the transmission of stereotypes. Inside a specific group there are at least two main forces which perpetuate stereotypes and prejudices towards other groups: family and media. It is undeniable that stereotypes are conveyed to future generations firsthand by the immediate families, and then by other agents of socialization, such as school, relatives, and mass media. This is particularly true in relation to ethnic and national stereotypes, which are culturally shared:

Since racial, ethnic, and gender stereotypes have been found to develop fairly early in life (e.g., Tajfel & Jahoda, 1966; Koblinsky, Cruse, & Sugawara, 1978) parents are likely to be particularly instrumental in their transmission, not only by the information they give to their offspring, but also because their behavior toward members of outgroups may serve as a model. (...)

The influence of mass media like television or radio rests on the one-sidedness with which certain groups are portrayed. (BAR-TAL et al., 1989, p. 16).

In sum, we should remember that stereotypes are based on an ingroup consensus on specific beliefs regarding an outgroup; stereotypes are learned from family, mass media, literature, etc.; they may be accurate or inaccurate, or as Whitley and Kite point out “(...) because stereotypes are based to some extent on observations made about the social world, they may contain a kernel of truth” (WHITLEY JR; KITE, 2010, p. 9); stereotypes may be both descriptive and prescriptive, since “stereotypes can describe the characteristics group

members are believed to have, but they can also tell us what people believe group members should be like and should do.” (WHITLEY JR; KITE, 2010, p. 10); and finally, stereotypes can be positive, too. However, negative stereotypes are more studied, as they are the ones that may provide grounds to prejudice and discrimination, considering that prejudice is the tendency to evaluate such groups or individuals negatively, while discrimination is any attitude or behavior that prevents equality of treatment from being offered to all groups or their members.

These elements (stereotype, prejudice, and discrimination) do not always go together; however, one cannot deny their close relationship when dealing with discriminatory behavior towards minorities, for example. Discriminations occur in various settings. Whitley Jr. and Kite demonstrate that discrimination may be interpersonal, organizational, institutional, and cultural:

The powerful group establishes and maintains its dominance by rewarding those values that correspond to its views and punishing those values that do not. The result is that minority groups and their cultural heritage are marginalized. The resulting cultural discrimination consists of “discrimination and inequality ... built into our literature, art, music, language, morals, customs, beliefs, and ideology ... [to such a degree that they] define a generally agreed-upon way of life” (Benokraitis & Feagin, 1995, p. 49 apud WHITLEY JR; KITE, 2010, p. 17).

Another theory which is important to the present work is scapegoating. Basically, scapegoating occurs when an ingroup blames an innocent outgroup for all its misfortunes, and problems. This happened, for instance, when the Nazis blamed the Jews and the Roma for all economic and social problems of Germany, using this “reason” as a justification for their killing. “In essence, then, scapegoating provides what might be called a “designated villain” to explain the deprivation and frustration caused by social and economic problems.” (WHITLEY JR; KITE, 2010, p. 346).

Groups which are negatively stereotyped are often target of prejudice and discrimination. The degrees of violence may vary; however, the sign that the situation is becoming worse is when a dehumanizing process is carried out by the powerful group towards the outgroup – the outgroup is seen as ranking lower in the humanity scale, even lacking humanity itself. “It is when people dehumanize others, viewing them as lacking the moral sensibilities that distinguish humankind, that they can ignore the internalized and social norms that enjoin compassion and oppose cruelty to others.” (BAR-TAL et al., 1989, p. 153). This process is the extreme negative pole known as delegitimization:

Delegitimization also has behavioral implications for the delegitimizing group. It indicates that the delegitimized group does not deserve human treatment. A delegitimized group is positioned in a category of individuals or groups that should be treated negatively, even sometimes to the extreme - used as slaves or

exterminated. These extreme actions are taken because the delegitimized group is considered a threat to the basic values, norms, or even the existence of the Society itself and its structure. Thus, the delegitimizing group feels an obligation to avert the danger, in order to protect its existence. (BAR-TAL et al., 1989, p. 171).

Delegitimization of the “enemies” was exactly what happened to the minorities during the World War II in Nazi Germany. The enemy outgroups, i.e. Jews, Roma, homosexuals, and others - are categorized as vermin, disease-carriers, aggressors, primitive, savages, and so on. Such process is often used to “justify” genocides, slavery, permanent exclusion from society and exploitations of all sorts. It may be even enforced by laws and institutions, and it creates fear, hatred, and disgust from the ingroup towards the outgroup.

2.2 Hayden White’s Wild Man

Still on the topic of formation and development of stereotypes, we would like to draw a parallel to the concept of “Wild Man” as developed by historian Hayden White (1985). We have chosen his approach as we understand that it adds a historical background to our discussion on the building of stereotypes from a western heritage perspective. First, to White, negation is a crucial stage on the process of positive self-definition, either in terms of individual or group identity. The same can be said in terms of civilization/ humanity versus wildness/ animality. As explained in his essay “The forms of wildness: archaeology of an idea”:

In times of sociocultural stress, when the need for positive self-definition asserts itself but no compelling criterion of self-identification appears, it is always possible to say something like “I may not know the precise content of my own felt humanity, but I am most certainly *not* like that,” and simply point to something in the landscape that is manifestly different from oneself. This might be called the technique of ostensive self-definition by negation, and it is certainly much more generally practiced in cultural polemic than any other form of definition (...) If we do not know what we think “civilization” *is*, we can always find an example of what is not. (...) Similarly, in the past, when men were uncertain as to the precise quality of their sensed humanity, they appealed to the concept of wildness to designate an area of subhumanity that was characterized by everything they hoped they were not. (WHITE, 1985, p. 151-152).

In his discussion on the savage, the Noble Savage, its origins and how it developed and arrived in the Middle Ages, White explains that the idea of what is understood to be a Wild Man (a concept which has been developed and changed throughout the years) derives from three major “heritages”: the classical heritage, with ancient Greece; ancient Hebrew and Christian.

To the Hebrews, to be wild meant not having God's blessings, i.e., to be under a curse; the nomadic life of the hunters was seen as a damned life in relation to the shepherds' settled way of living, the latter being a model of a blissful life. The savage was bad, violent and insane; it should be isolated and live in exile; it could even bear some kind of physical trait which would tell on its state of accursedness – physical deformity, ugliness, or black skin, for instance, would be signs of this. Disturbed mental states could also be considered tokens of not being blessed, and wilderness is the place where evil is at “This is why wilderness can appear in the very heart of a human being, as insanity, sin, evil - any condition that reflects a falling away of man from God.” (WHITE, 1985, p. 160). Besides, the mixture between species was not allowed, for this would be equal to corruption and disorder: the ideal natural order would be characterized by the purity of the species, once God created several species and each one of them would be perfect in itself. Therefore, mixture with the wild would be strictly forbidden.

In ancient Greek culture, the barbarian is the one who is mute or does not speak Greek, that is, someone who lacks the means (language) to achieve true humanity, and this would also apply to the Wild Man. The lack of law would be another savage trait. The wild, according to this point of view, would live near the borders of the civilized society, stealing things in a very furtive way in order to survive. In fact, only by living in a city-state and achieving a condition of politicality one could hope to totally grasp one's full humanity: “(...) *no one outside* the city had the slightest chance at all of *fully* realizing his humanity: the conditions of a life unregulated by law precluded it” (WHITE, 1985, p. 169). As White indicates:

[...] we have almost completed our catalogue of the main components of the Wild Man myth as it comes down from the Bible into medieval thought. Cursedness or wildness, is identified with the wandering life of the Hunter (as against the stable life of the shepherd and farmer), the desert (which is the Wild Man's habitat), linguistic confusion (which is the Wild Man's as well as the barbarian's principal attribute), sin, and physical aberration (in both color (blackness) and size. [...]. The equation is all but complete: in a morally ordered world, to be wild is to be incoherent or mute; deceptive, oppressive, and destructive; sinful and accursed; and, finally, a monster, one whose physical attributes are in themselves evidence of one's evil nature (WHITE, 1985, p. 162)

[...] Medieval, like ancient Roman, thinkers conceived barbarians and the wild men to be enslaved to nature; to be, like animals, slaves to desire and unable to control their passions, to be mobile, shifting, confused, chaotic; to be incapable of sedentary existence, of self-discipline, and of sustained labor; to be passionate, bewildered, and hostile to “normal” humanity – all of which are suggested in the Latin words for “wild” and “wildness”. (WHITE, 1985, p. 165).

To Christians, on the other hand, every human being is capable of being saved, no matter how cursed he/she is provided that one is willing to convert to Christianity. The Wild

Man could be monstrous in appearance, however, he would not be someone with an animal soul; such fact is impossible to happen, once it would be a God's mistake, but God makes no mistakes, once He is perfect. Everybody is capable of being saved, it depends on one's will to accept and conform to the teachings and regulations of the Church: "it remains for the faithful to work for the inclusion of everyone within the community of Church. This meant that even the most repugnant of men – barbarian, heathen, pagan, and heretic – had to be regarded as objects of Christian proselytization (...)" (WHITE, 1985, p.163).

This third heritage allows for a shift of point of view regarding the Wild Man that began in the Middle Ages. Although he was someone to be feared and whose place in society was not to be aspired for, it is also true that the Wild Man is free from social regulations and constraints, being, thus, the object of general secret envy – an envy that would become admiration in the figure of the Noble Savage in the following centuries. Still according to White:

In the Christian Middle Ages, then, the Wild Man is the distillation of the specific anxieties underlying the three securities supposedly provided by the specifically Christian institutions of civilized life: the securities of sex (as organized by the institution of the family), sustenance (as provided by the political, social, and economic institutions), and salvation (as provided by the Church). The Wild Man enjoys none of the advantages of civilized sex, regularized social existence, or institutionalized grace. But, it must be stressed, neither does he – in the imagination of the medieval man – suffer any of the restraints imposed by membership in these institutions. He is desire incarnate, possessing the strength, wit, and cunning to give full expression to all his lusts. (WHITE, 1985, p. 166-167).

White points out some differences between the Wild Man and the barbarian: for instance, the former lives alone in the immediate outskirts of a community and is considered as a threat to the individual (i.e., an example of what one should avoid becoming at all costs), while the latter comes in groups (the hordes) and represents a menace to society in general. Having such differences in mind, we are not trying to state that the Roma are "incarnations" of the Wild Man, however, we strongly believe that it is possible to draw some parallels here: the building of the Gypsy stereotype also derives in part from some of the ideas present on said heritages concerning the Wild Man. "Gypsy" can either represent a utopian state, that is, as someone in close contact with nature, a romantic, benign character; or it may stand for a dystopian state, personified in a character to be avoided. It all depends on the point of view of who is reporting. As indicated by Michel Rolph-Trouillot:

Just as the Savage is a metaphorical argument for or against utopia, so is utopia (and the Savage it encompasses) a metaphorical argument for or against order, conceived of as an expression of legitimate universality. [...] In defense of a particular vision of order, the Savage became evidence for a particular type of utopia. [...]

Just as utopia itself can be offered as a promise or as a dangerous illusion, the Savage can be noble, wise, barbaric, victim or aggressor, depending on the debate and on the aims of the interlocutors. (TROULLIOT, 2003, p. 22-23).

Therefore, one can see how the Roma occupied the “savage slot”. As Ronald Lee points out:

[...] These early Roma followed an exclusive culture, based on the Indian caste system, because of which they saw surrounding non-Roma as sources of pollution that must be kept away from their camps and settlements. The outsiders, mainly peasants, saw this as an attempt to hide something. They began to believe that the Roma were thieves, child-stealers, cannibals, and definitely outside the bosom of the church. Local priests told their flocks that the Gypsies had made the nails used to crucify Christ, and that they and the Jews had colluded to “murder the Son of God”. Their alleged Christianity was also suspect in an age of religious intensity where life revolved around the church, the saints, avoidance of sin and Satan, and eventual salvation after death. Roma never attended mass or took the Holy Sacraments, nor appeared to follow the Christian virtues of hard work for long hours, poverty and misery on earth, leading to eternal rewards in Heaven. (In: GLAJAR; RADULESCU (ed.), 2008, p. 5).

2.3 Edward Said’s Orientalism and Postcolonialism

Another concept worth to highlight when considering the power of stereotypes is Orientalism as developed by academic and literary critic Edward Said. Based on the notions of discursive formation by Foucault and Gramsci’s hegemony, Said established the basis for the development of the Orientalism by pointing out how the West creates and appropriates itself of narratives in which the Orient is always the other – an inferior, barbaric, exotic other. Where history is told by a European-centered point of view, and how such narrative allows and backs up the creation of colonies and empires as from 16th century onwards. According to Said:

Orientalism, therefore, is not an airy European fantasy about the Orient, but a created body of theory and practice in which, for many generations, there has been a considerable material investment. Continued investment made Orientalism, as a system of knowledge about the Orient, an accepted grid for filtering through the Orient in to Western consciousness, just as that same investment multiplied – indeed, made truly productive – the statements proliferating out from Orientalism into the general culture. (SAID, 1979, p.6).

This world division between East/West is not new; the Roman Empire already adopted such classification. Said indicates, however, that this division is not a simple matter of geographic location and maps. East and West are discursive constructions based on power and domination: centers of power (originally Britain and France) use their (pretense) central spotlight to reiterate its superiority, and to control, assess, and manipulate all that is different,

and non-European. Even the idea that there is a world center, and that it is in Europe is a construction. As Said explains “Therefore, as much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West.” (SAID, 1979, p. 5).

The West/Occident managed, by means of its academic, political, and cultural power to secure a role for the Westerners of being “rational, peaceful, liberal, logical, capable of holding real values, without natural suspicion” (SAID, 1979, p. 49). Indeed, the main issue of Orientalism is the uneven relationship of power between East and West:

[Orientalism] is, above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political (as with a colonial or imperial establishment), power intellectual (as with reigning sciences like comparative linguistics or anatomy, or any of the modern policy sciences), power cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, texts, values) power moral (as with ideas about what “we” do and what “they” cannot do or understand as “we” do). (SAID, 1979, p.12).

On the building of stereotypes of East/West, Said points out the force of Christianity and how this Oriental other – mainly embodied in the Islam - was perceived by the Occident. An example of this treatment is described in Chapter 1 of this work, specifically on how the Roma in diaspora were received on first arriving at the West. It is well to remind that even the denomination in English – Gypsy – is a Westerner orientalist label, deriving from the word “Egyptian”. The Islam is the unknown and a threat to the western Christian civilization:

(...) If the mind must suddenly deal with what it takes to be a radically new form of life – as Islam appeared to Europe in the early Middle Ages – the response on the whole is conservative and defensive. Islam is judged to be a fraudulent new version of some previous experience, in this case Christianity.

Not for nothing did Islam come to symbolize terror, devastation, the demonic, hordes of hated barbarians. For Europe, Islam was a lasting trauma. Until the end of the seventeenth century the “Ottoman peril” lurked alongside Europe to represent for the whole of Christian civilization a constant danger (...) (SAID, 1979, p. 58-59).

Said’s theory originally dealt with Europe and its relation to Middle East. With the development of the theory by several other scholars, its scope widened to encompass the rest of the world. Everything that is off the center can be object of an orientalist treatment. This feature is important for the discussion we intend to carry out, once the Roma can be considered as a part of the Orient inside the Occident, if one takes into consideration the diaspora and Roma’s origins in India.

In the same line of thought, the orientalist stereotypes of “exoticness” and “inferiority” applied to Roma populations are also reinforced in postcolonial situations. It is well to point out that the same strategies of power used in colonial and imperial configurations of power

are applied to a great part of the Roma in Europe. Note that the Roma can be considered postcolonial provided that one adopts a broader sense of postcolonialism, as Senada Sali, legal manager at European Roma Rights Centre (ERCC), highlights in her article “Colonialism and Postcolonialism The Roma as Postcolonial subjects: Romani Orientalist Representation in Europe”. Based on the works of professor Elleke Boehmer, Sali explains that she understands ‘postcolonial’ “as an all-inclusive term, used when explaining cultural, political, economic and other diverse forms of marginality” (SALI, 2015, p. 3).

Still on the postcolonial topic, Deepika Bahri in her article “Feminism and Postcolonialism in a Global and Local Frame” indicates the existence of the “third world” inside first world nations: “Postcolonial nations and societies betray their internal hierarchies by identifying their “backward” populations (...). First world nations begin to identify segments of their own population (African Americans, welfare mothers, impoverished cities such as Detroit) as “third world” (BAHRI, 2009, p. 203).

Specifically in relation to the Roma, writer and critic Alan Ashton-Smith states that “[w]hereas traditional postcolonial subjects have had their land settled, the Romani postcolonial subject is an inversion of this – they are obliged to settle on the land of the colonial subject. (...) So this is a colonization of people, rather than land.” (ASHTON-SMITH, 2010, p.82). According to Sali, the Roma constitute an exceptional case of postcolonial people within Europe itself:

Very similar to the Orientalist postcolonial discourse about the South, is the European postcolonial discourse about the Roma. Primarily, as a result of the long-time subordination and asymmetric political, economic, intellectual and cultural relations with the Europeans, Roma have been perceived as ‘inferior’ and ‘an issue’. Additionally, the discovery about their Indian traits contributed for them being viewed as exotic subjects representing the Orient, but settled on European ground, (SALI, 2015, p. 6).

This “colonization of people” evidences an asymmetry of power and it can be directly linked to the concept of coloniality as developed by Anibal Quijano when addressing the North-South divide as presented by Grasfogel. Coloniality highlights that racial/colonial ideologies have not been erased from the world with the fall of the classical colonialism and its colonial administrations. Even though the concept of coloniality was designed to address the North-South divide in a capitalist world-system, it can be applied to the Roma in Europe – that, together with Arabs and Jews, are representatives of an “internal imaginary border” against which Euro-American nation-states were built (GRASFOGEL, 2008, p.98). Still according to Ramón Grasfogel:

Coloniality refers to the continuity of colonial forms of domination after the end of colonial administrations produced by colonial cultures and structures in the

modern/colonial world-system. “Coloniality of power” refers to a crucial structuring process in the modern/colonial world-system that articulates peripheral locations into the international division of labor and inscribes third world migrants into the racial/ethnic hierarchy of metropolitan global cities.” (...) By colonial situations I mean the cultural, political, and economic oppression of subordinate racialized/ethnic groups by dominant racial/ethnic groups with or without the existence of colonial administrations. (GRASFOGEL, 2008, p. 95).

Orientalism and postcolonialism/coloniality reveal how stereotypes are created and imposed upon a group. In our specific case, as discussed here, such concepts can be applied to the Roma situation as far as marginalization and exoticism are concerned and how such processes contribute to erase the real needs and the very existence of Roma peoples.

2.4 Antigypsyism

Finally, we would like to draw attention to the term “antigypsyism”, which we will adopt for conducting our discussion. According to “Antigypsyism – a reference paper” published in 2016 by the Alliance Against Antigypsyism, it is the specific racism against Roma, Sinti, Travellers and other peoples identified as “gypsies” in the public eye/ mind¹⁵.

Antigypsyism is often used in a narrow sense to indicate anti-Roma attitudes or the expression of negative stereotypes in the public sphere or hate speech. However, antigypsyism gives rise to a much wider spectrum of discriminatory expressions and practices, including many implicit or hidden manifestations. Antigypsyism is not only about what is being said, but also about what is being done and what is not being done. (ALLIANCE AGAINST ANTIGYPSYISM, 2017, p. 3).

Still according to this paper, the choice for “antigypsyism” instead of “Romaphobia” or “anti-Romani racism” is important because it encompasses not only Roma populations, but also other ethnic groups affected by it. Besides, the use of the root “gypsy” at its core is justified as follows:

This usage also refutes the argument that antigypsyism should not be used because the term ‘gypsy’ has pejorative connotations. What those who embody antigypsyism are antagonistic towards is actually a creation of the collective imagination that is entirely ignorant of Romani cultures and perspectives. (ALLIANCE AGAINST ANTIGYPSYISM, 2017, p. 6).

¹⁵ The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in the website “Roma and Travellers Survey 2018-2019” available at <https://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2018/roma-and-travellers-survey-2018-2019> and accessed on April 7, 2021, offers the following definition: “Roma and Travellers’ is used as an umbrella term in the definition of the Council of Europe. It encompasses Roma, Sinti, Kale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari, Balkan Egyptians, Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal) and groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term ‘Gens du voyage’, as well as people who identify themselves as Gypsies.”. However, Travellers (either Irish or Scottish) are considered to be a different ethnic group from the Roma, having a different language, habits and origins.

The working definition of antigypsyism highlights the role of stereotypes in the construction of racist practices:

Antigypsyism is a historically constructed, persistent complex of customary racism against social groups identified under the stigma 'gypsy' or other related terms, and incorporates: 1. a homogenizing and essentializing perception and description of these groups; 2. the attribution of specific characteristics to them; 3. discriminating social structures and violent practices that emerge against that background, which have a degrading and ostracizing effect and which reproduce structural disadvantages. (ALLIANCE AGAINST ANTIGYPSYISM, 2017, p. 4)

Among these violent practices there are collective acts of discrimination, such as hate speech, and institutional discrimination that prevents Roma and other groups from getting a fair treatment and protection from the State, as previously discussed. The role of positive and negative stereotypes is once again pointed out, since both erase the history and the actual needs of an ethnic group in favor of an image that suits the interests of a major ruling group:

The stereotypes and clichés that form the ideology of antigypsyism not only consist of demeaning, negative stereotypes, but include positive, romantic, exoticizing stereotypes as well. More importantly, like their negative counterparts, these romantic stereotypes are also understood to constitute characteristics that are unlike those of the self-described 'majority'. The romantic cliché of the 'easy-going Gypsy with a violin' embodies the same social message as does the negative image of 'parasitical Roma relying on social welfare': Both clichés support the idea that 'they' do not earn their living like 'we' do, i.e., through hard labor. As the 'positive' cliché can have equally harmful outcomes, awareness-raising about antigypsyist stereotypes should not only target negative perceptions of Roma and other groups but should address the pernicious effects of considering groups and individuals (and their needs, preferences and potential) through the lens of preconceived group characteristics, including the exoticizing and romanticizing ones. (ALLIANCE AGAINST ANTIGYPSYISM, 2017, p. 11).

3 THE GYPSY STEREOTYPE IN LITERATURE, SONGS AND MOVIES

The Gypsy stereotype, as discussed earlier in this chapter, was gradually developed, and reinforced by arts in general and later on by mass media. As pointed out by Jorge Nedich, Argentinian writer of Romani descent, in an interview in 2019, Gypsy stereotypes:

(...) are generated first in literature. Cervantes has constructed the novella “La Gitanilla” based on stereotypes. Preciosa is a noble young woman who has been kidnapped by gypsies and, as she is a noble girl with Spanish blood in her veins, during the fifteen years in which she lives in the community she does not steal, she is clean, she is a fortune teller, but only speaks the truth. She reads well, she sings well, she is a virgin, and all the gypsies around her are thieves, scoundrels, dirty and promiscuous... And it is not that Cervantes is not telling the truth, such things happen in the community, but not all of its members are like that. Therefore, this generalization Cervantes does, that all gypsies are like that except for the one with Spanish blood is very adamant and false, because not all nobles are like Preciosa.¹⁶

Either portraying an entirely positive or negative image, “gypsies” have been everywhere. In fiction, from Cervantes (*La Gitanilla*, 1613) to Jane Austen (*Emma*, 1815), from Sir Walter Scott (*Guy Mannering*, 1815) to D.H. Lawrence (*The Virgin and the Gypsy*, 1926), and so on, in virtually all cultures worldwide it is possible to pinpoint some examples of the “gypsy”: he/she may be a thief, a magician, or a romantic wanderer. Both men and women can also be sexy, animal-like, seductive characters.

Such constructions compose the Gypsy stereotype, often far from the lives of the real Roma. As related to this question, Christopher James O’Brien in his doctoral dissertation “The Evolving Gypsy Image and the Romani People in Western Imagination” affirms:

[T]he established fundamentals of the Gypsy figure have not been forgotten, and still exist as a standard characterization in Western mind; they are still used in the old ways by many. By now, most attributes of the image – both positive and negative – are cherished by Westerners. In this complex of traits live the villain we love to hate, the independent maverick we admire, the wily and playful trickster we long to emulate, and the penniless unfortunate we are pleased to pity and scorn. Above all, in this world of stress and worries, the Gypsy has come to stand as the epitome of untrammelled freedom, the embodiment of our fondest secret wishes. (O’BRIEN, 2007, p. 24).

¹⁶ My translation. Original: “Se gestan primeramente en la literatura. Cervantes construye el libro «La Gitanilla» en base a estereotipos. Preciosa es una joven noble que fue raptada por los gitanos, y como es una joven noble y tiene sangre de la nobleza española, durante los quince años que vive en la comunidad, no roba, es limpia, dice la Buenaventura pero dice verdades, recita bien, canta bien, es virgen, y los gitanos que la rodean son todos ladrones sinvergüenza, tramposos, sucios, promiscuos... Y no es que Cervantes estuviera faltando a la verdad, eso pasaba y pasa con la comunidad, pero no pasa con todos. Entonces, esa totalización que hace Cervantes, todos son así, menos la sangre española, es una diferenciación muy taxativa y muy falsa, porque no todos los nobles son como Preciosa” Available at http://archivo.laarena.com.ar/la_pampa-la-gente-esta-cooptada-por-los-estereotipis-2085774-163.html . Accessed on 23 May, 2021.

Finally, we believe that it is important to discuss some relevant characteristics of the Gypsy stereotype as it appears in literature, songs and movies. It is not our intention, though, to provide an exhaustive list of occurrences of the Gypsy stereotype, but rather pinpoint some examples, both old and recent, on how these facets that build up the stereotype are portrayed and maintained in western culture.

3.1 Exoticism and seduction

Undoubtedly, whenever one thinks about a Gypsy character, whether in literature or in any media, chances are that either Carmen of Prosper Mérimée's novella *Carmen* (1845), which became the basis of Georges Bizet's opera *Carmen* (1875), or Esmeralda of Victor Hugo's novel *The Hunchback of Notredame* (1831) will come to mind. The fiery female characters portray the common stereotypes associated with the Gypsy woman. Lou Charnon-Deutsch in his book *The Spanish Gypsy the History of a European Obsession* explains that the Gypsy stereotype, as far as the seduction element is concerned, owes much of its strength to the Spanish Gypsy characters, especially female ones. If initially we have the story of a noble girl (Preciosa in *La Gitanilla*) kidnapped by the Gypsies, as observed by Nedich in his interview, gradually the plot changes in the subsequent novels, so as to depict the Gypsy character of a woman as a free spirit, who is dangerous to the non-Gypsy man that falls in love with her. The Gypsy stereotype also encompasses the desire for freedom and for a simpler life, as it will be discussed later in this chapter, Charnon-Deutsch details that:

In the vast majority of stories the mismatched union consists of a man, superior in many ways but often repressed, who is attracted to a woman whose carefreeness and sensual faculties are magnified by comparison. The Spanish aristocrat Andrés of "La gitanilla," the Basque José of *Carmen*, the duke of Bedmár of *The Spanish Gypsy*, Don Juan de Santistevan of "Las castañuelas de Pepa," Captain Phoebus of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and the wealthy Jew of *Morena y trágica* are all wealthy and educated men who lack something in their own society, which draws them to the Gypsy life, especially of Andalusia. The suitor quickly finds he cannot hide behind the privileges of his wealth, education, and ethnicity when he is drawn to a poor, uneducated, bastard Gypsy. At the climax of the story this woman peels away the layers of social hypocrisy and pseudowealth and offers the man a more natural life free of social and sexual convention and a way into a life full of vitality and activity. The consequences of this demolition of walls are often catastrophic; if the Gypsy woman does not find suddenly that she is not a Gypsy after all, if the non-Gypsy man cannot release his bourgeois ties, if non-Gypsy society cannot accommodate the Gypsy and vice versa, the result is failure, separation, or death. (CHARNON-DEUTSCH, 2004, p. 240).

The Gypsy woman is dangerous because she is uncontrollable, almost animal-like, showing a passion that is alluring, yet dangerous to the status-quo. As pointed out by Charron-Deusch, the Gypsy woman freedom, open sexuality and allegiance to nothing and no-one is a threat to the bourgeois family institution, to the social system, and even to the nation. She is the personification of destruction. It is well to note that Esmeralda is not Gypsy in Hugo's novel; she was kidnapped by the Gypsies when she was a baby, and they left Quasimodo in her place. Esmeralda's goodness comes from the fact that she was not born Gypsy, she is white. The racism portrayed in the novel may have been downplayed in the later adaptations of the story in film and theater, however, the over sexualization of Esmeralda as a *femme fatale* is always present, even in the animated Disney film version *The Hunchback of Notre-dame*, 1996. Carmen, on the other hand, was born Gypsy; she is compared to an animal. She is cunning, very sexual, and violent, showing no remorse, for instance, when she stabs another woman. Carmen is first described as follows:

I will sum her up by saying that for every fault she had a quality which was perhaps all the more striking from the contrast. She had a strange, wild beauty, a face that was disconcerting at first, but unforgettable. Her eyes in particular had an expression, at once voluptuous and fierce, that I have never seen on any human face. "Gypsy's eye, wolf's eye" is a phrase Spaniards apply to people with keen powers of observation. (MERIMEE, 1989, p. 14).

This Spanish Gypsy stereotype was spread to British and French artistic representations, and from there to the rest of the world. The literary use of this image goes on; however, the reinforcement is also (and foremost) performed through mass media and pop culture. For instance, in song lyrics, it is quite common to find this mysterious, dangerous, and often heartless Gypsy woman. "Acid Queen", a song in the opera-rock *Tommy* (1976) by the British group The Who, written by Pete Townshend in 1976, shows this sexual drive allied with heartlessness when the Acid Queen is approached by Tommy's parents to cure his autism. Even though we are not sure whether she is actually a Gypsy character, we can see the imagery of the Gypsy "roaming" and "hitting the road":

If your child ain't all he should be now
This girl will put him right
I'll show him what he could be now
Just give me one night
I'm the gypsy, the acid queen
Pay me before I start
I'm the gypsy and I'm guaranteed
To mend his aching heart
Give us a room, close the door
Leave us for a while
You won't be a boy no more
Young, but not a child
I'm the gypsy, the acid queen
Pay me before I start

I'm the gypsy, I'm guaranteed
 To tear your soul apart
 Gather your wits and hold them fast
 Your mind must learn to roam
 Just as the gypsy queen must do
 You're gonna hit the road
 My work's been done, now look at him
 He's never been more alive
 His head it shakes, his fingers clutch
 Watch his body writhe¹⁷

In Brazil, the mass media Gypsy woman *par excellence* is “Sandra Rosa Madalena”. This hit song, written by Miguel Cidras, Roberto Livi and Sidney Magal, was released in 1978 by singer Sidney Magal, and is still very much popular to this day. Sandra Rosa Madalena, a dramatic compound and strange name, has absolutely no say in how she is portrayed. She is the idealized object of the male gaze and desire. She has dark hair and her sensuous dance stirs up everyone. Sandra Rosa Madalena enchants this man, making him feel so sexually attracted to her that he wishes to please her in all possible ways. The idealization is not only of the woman, but also of the love he feels for her: in fact, one may say that it resembles the idea of love as service and eroticism present in courtly love medieval European literature:

She is pretty, her very dark hair
 And her body makes my body rave
 Her look awakens in me a desire
 To lose my mind, to lose myself, to surrender
 When she dances everybody stirs up
 And people scream her name over and over again
 She is the Gypsy Sandra Rosa Madalena
 The woman with whom I dream endlessly
 I want to see her smile; I want to see her sing
 I want to see her body move non stop
 I keep lit the flame inside me
 That ignites whenever she is near me
 I wanna be all the things she likes
 I wanna be her beginning, her middle and her end (...) ¹⁸

¹⁷ Available at <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/who/theacidqueen.html>. Accessed on 4 June, 2021.

¹⁸ My translation. Original: Ela é bonita, seus cabelos muito negros

E o seu corpo faz meu corpo delirar
 O seu olhar desperta em mim uma vontade
 De enlouquecer, de me perder, de me entregar

Quando ela dança todo mundo se agita
 E o povo grita o seu nome sem parar
 É a cigana Sandra Rosa Madalena
 É a mulher com quem eu vivo a sonhar

Quero vê-la sorrir, quero vê-la cantar
 Quero ver o seu corpo dançar sem parar
 Quero vê-la sorrir, quero vê-la cantar
 Quero ver o seu corpo dançar sem parar

Considering the notion of Orientalism in its broader scope, so as to encompass the Roma and the Gypsy stereotype, as indicated in section 2.3, it is clear to see the relation between West, Orient and sex. Here, we can draw a parallel and apply to the representations of the Gypsy woman what Said commented on the works of Gustave Flaubert:

Woven through all of Flaubert's Oriental experiences, exciting or disappointing, is an almost uniform association between the Orient and sex. In making this association Flaubert was neither the first nor the most exaggerated instance of a remarkably persistent motif in Western attitudes to the Orient. (...) Why the Orient seems still to suggest not only fecundity but sexual promise (and threat), untiring sexuality, unlimited desire, deep generative energies, is something on which one could speculate (...) (SAID, 1979, p. 188).

More recently, the song “Belle Andalouse” from the musical *Don Juan* (2003) composed by Félix Gray, the Gypsy woman is a “dangerous fruit”, “faithful and jealous”, and she is an “ideal prey” with her “animal eyes”:

Dance close against me, dance
Let the steps go, the rhythm
Makes beads of sweat fall
Onto my heart
Dance close against me, dance
May your wet legs come forward
May I feel the fury
Beating inside your heart
Beautiful Andalusian
Dangerous fruit from the south of Spain
Faithful and jealous
Make your gypsy body sway
Beautiful Andalusian
When the fire devours your animal eyes
Tanned and jealous
For the hunter, the ideal prey (...) ¹⁹

Dentro de mim mantenho acesa uma chama
Que se inflama se ela está perto de mim
Queria ser todas as coisas que ela gosta
Queria ser o seu princípio e ser seu fim. (...)

Available at <https://www.lettras.mus.br/sidney-magal/67750/> . Accessed on 4 June 2021.

¹⁹ My translation. Original: Danse tout contre moi, danse

Laisse aller les pas, la cadence
Fait couler des gouttes de sueur
Sur mon cœur Danse tout contre moi, danse
Que tes jambes mouillées s'avancent
Que je sente battre la fureur
De ton cœur

Belle Andalouse
Fruit dangereux du sud de l'Espagne
Fidèle et jalouse
Fais balancer ton corps de gitane

Belle Andalouse
Quand le feu dévore tes yeux d'animal
Brune et jalouse

Again, the woman is a temptation to the man. Belle Andalousse and Sandra Rosa Madalena are examples of the “sexual promise and threat” as explained by Said on the relation between Orient and sex as seen by westerners. Both enrapture men with their dance, and imagery related to fire is employed when describing these women. In *Belle Andalousse*, however, there is not the idea of love as service; man is a hunter and the Gypsy woman, a prey. Eroticism here is much more explicit.

The hyper sexualization in relation to Gypsy women is also true in relation to Gypsy men. It is also possible to observe their idealization and/or demonization. In English literature, one of the most famous depictions is Heathcliff of *Wuthering Heights* (1847) by Emily Brontë. He is described as a dirty “dark-skinned gypsy”, an orphan boy rescued from the streets of Liverpool by Mr. Earnshaw (BRONTË, 2006, p. 24). Mrs. Earnshaw, however, is far from pleased with the presence of the boy:

Mrs. Earnshaw was ready to fling it out of doors: she did fly up, asking how he could fashion to bring that gipsy brat into the house, when they had their own bairns to feed and fend for? What he meant to do with it, and whether he were mad? The master tried to explain the matter; but he was really half dead with fatigue, and all that I could make out, amongst her scolding, was a tale of his seeing it starving, and houseless, and as good as dumb, in the streets of Liverpool, where he picked it up and inquired for its owner. Not a soul knew to whom it belonged, he said; and his money and time being both limited, he thought it better to take it home with him at once, than run into vain expenses there: because he was determined he would not leave it as he found it. (BRONTË, 2006, p.24).

Heathcliff is mysterious, passionate, intense, and dangerous and also brings about destruction to everyone around him. His drive for revenge has no limits, and he is also called “devil” and “imp of Satan”, among other names. Even though the young Gypsy is a complex character, it is well to point out his savage behavior, almost like an animal driven by instinct, which surfaces when he loses his temper, and, as the narrative leads us to believe, it is most probably due to his Gypsy heritage.

The Gypsy Lover is also a common image in arts. Similar to the Latin Lover, this stereotype can be considered the male counterpart of the Gypsy *femme fatale*. The Gypsy Lover is a common character found in novellas and novels (including erotic ones), which in general employ the well-known plot of the woman bored with her everyday life who joins a mysterious and sexy Gypsy man to find excitement, passion, love, and her own sexuality. Other times, the Gypsy male character is a seductive man that pursues the woman until she falls for him. Titles such as the “Gypsy Heroes” trilogy of *Sexy Beast*, *Beautiful Beast* and

Wounded Beast (2015) by Georgia Le Carre, *Gypsy Lover* (2005) by Connie Mason, *The Gypsy Prince* (2019) by Elise Marion contribute to the maintenance of the sexy and dangerous Gypsy stereotype. As it can be observed, the following passage from *Gypsy – a Gypsy King Novel* (2018) by Roux Cantrell, Nicolea is the Gypsy, future Gypsy king and master in the art of seduction:

Gypsy eyed the woman before him, remembering who he was with and who he was when he was with her. Here he was Nicolea Petrovic. He settled behind his playmate for the evening. She had the temperament it took to deal with him on his worst day. A master in the art of seduction, the world slipped away as Nicolea devoured Velean's body. (...) He could command her with a touch or a whisper – his choices in the bedroom usually reflected his mood. (CANTRELL, 2018, p. 10).

Jonathan Lee, a Romani activist from Swansea and based in Brussels in his article “Sexy filthy Gypsies: the struggle for Romany identity through the arts” Disponível em: “The Norwich Radical” website best summarizes this stereotype:

Prominent in this depiction is the notion of the sensual Gypsy. The mysterious and taboo nature of the Gypsy lover conjures images of a debauched and sexually promiscuous people whose carnal nature ensnares the hearts of whomever they desire, often through use of the supernatural. The character of the seductive temptress who bewitches White men with her subversive, untamable spirit is common and unchanged since the Elizabethan Era. Similarly, the dark and charming rogue whose allure leads White women astray is an oft used trope of Western film and literature. (LEE, 2016).

3.2 Magicians, witches, and sorcerers

Curses, cards, spells, witchcraft. The arts of the occult are frequently associated with the Gypsy stereotype. Although activities like fortune-telling and palm-reading are traditional to certain Roma groups, constituting even a means of survival, the western mind has amplified the power and the reach of such esoteric practices. The image of the Gypsy fortune-teller (whether by tarot cards, psychic powers or crystal balls) is often used in countless TV shows, films, animations, even for children. For instance, in the animated series based on the franchise *My Little Pony* (1982) there is a unicorn named Gypsy, whose symbol is the image of three glittery tambourines and whose power is fortune-telling, both past and future. Gypsy lives deep in the forest, dances for the other ponies and carries out magic tricks with the help of the wheel of fortune.²⁰

²⁰ <http://mylittlewiki.org/wiki/Gypsy>

Gypsy curses, on the other hand, are dreaded and unescapable, especially if they are cast by an old woman. This stereotypical view is widely employed in horror narratives. As an example in horror fiction, we could mention the novel *Thinner* (1984) by Stephen King, adapted to film in 1996, directed by Tom Holland. Briefly it is the story of lawyer Billy Halleck, a gluttonous man, who runs over and kills a Gypsy woman. Due to his connections in the judicial system, Billy manages to avoid getting charged for her death. After the trial, outside the courthouse, the father of the victim, Taduz Lemke, casts a curse on him: he will lose weight uncontrollably, becoming thinner and thinner, until he dies:

“Thinner,” the old Gypsy man with the rotting nose whispers to William Halleck as Halleck and his wife, Heidi, come out of the courthouse. Just that one word, sent on the wafting, cloying sweetness of his breath. “Thinner.” And before Halleck can jerk away, the old Gypsy reaches out and caresses his cheek with one twisted finger. His lips spread open like a wound, showing a few tombstone stumps poking out of his gums. They are black and green. His tongue squirms between them and then slides out to slick his grinning, bitter lips.
Thinner. (KING, 2016, p. 1).

After going to several doctors and not finding out why he is losing weight so fast, Billy decides to look for the Gypsy camp, and specifically for the Gypsy man, in order to try to withdraw the curse. He learns, after some intimidation and violence against the Gypsy community, that the curse cannot be lifted; it has to be transferred to someone else. At last, Lemke agrees to help Billy: he moves the curse to a strawberry pie in a ritual using Billy's blood.

‘If you want to be rid of the purpurfargade ansiktet [the curse], first you give it to the pie . . . and then you give the pie with the curse-child inside it to someone else. But it has to be soon, or it come back on you double. You understand?’ ‘Yes,’ Billy said. ‘Then do it if you will,’ Lemke said. His thumbs tightened again. The darkish slit in the pie crust spread open. (KING, 2016, p.386).

Finally, Billy, being selfish as he is, takes the pie to his wife. However, not only her, but also his daughter, eat the pie. Realizing the evil he has done, Billy also eats the pie in order to join them in death.

The horror movie *Drag me to hell* (2009), directed by Sam Raimi, is another example of the power of a Gypsy curse. Here a loan officer, Christine Brown, refuses to grant an extension of mortgage for the third time to Sylvia Ganush, an old Gypsy woman. Ganush ends up losing her house, and in an act of vengeance, the old woman curses the officer to be haunted by a demon, who will drag her to hell after three days. After a trail of deaths on trying to lift up the curse, Christine is informed by a fortune teller that the curse can only be passed on to someone else, either living or dead. She tries to pass it on to Ganush, who is now dead, but is not successful in her intent, and the demon indeed drags her to hell. It is interesting to

note that Gypsy curses, as portrayed in mass media, are often expressions of revenge involving either demons or physical impairments, and, finally, death. Moreover, it is quite frequent the notion that Gypsy curses cannot be withdrawn; they can only be passed on to another person.

Returning to the concept of the Wild Man, Hayden White in his aforementioned essay “The Forms of Wildness” comments on how the images of the Wild Man/Woman are merged with the devil and witchcraft during the Middle Ages onwards:

Here, of course, the idea of the wild woman as seductress, like that of the Wild Man as magician, begins to merge with medieval notions of the demon, the devil, and the witch. But again formal thought distinguishes between the Wild Man and the demon. The Wild Man (or woman) was generally believed to be an instance of human regression to an animal state; the demon, devil, and witch are evil spirits or human beings endowed with evil spiritual powers, servants of Satan, with capacities for evil that the Wild Man could never match. (WHITE, 1985, p. 167).

We believe that the construction of the Gypsy stereotype linked with the occult and the devil is grounded somewhere between these two ideas of the Wild Man and the evil powers. The role of the Gypsies in the motion picture *The Wolf Man* (1941), directed by George Waggner, which had a remake in 2010 as *The Wolfman*, by Joe Johnston, is to validate the supernatural existence of a werewolf, and to serve as scapegoats to the community terrified by the violent attacks of a strange creature. In this film, Larry Talbot, on returning to his hometown in Wales to attend the funeral of his deceased brother, is attacked in the forest by a wolf during the night. He manages to kill the beast; however, he gets bitten in the fight. Larry is warned by the members of the Gypsy camp that he will become a werewolf on the next full moon, since he was bitten by one. Larry indeed transforms into a werewolf and murders several villagers until he is finally killed.

Another example in literature is the short story “La main enchantée: histoire macaronique” by Gerard de Nerval, published in 1832. Eustache, a tailor, asks for the magic help of Master Gonin, a Gypsy alchemist, to win a duel with a soldier. Master Gonin makes a living out of presenting himself as a street magician, doing tricks for the entertainment of the crowds, but he also claims to read cards and palms. His palm-reading abilities amaze Eustache, and when in need of help, he contacts Gonin. The help comes in form of a Gypsy spell that enchants the tailor’s hand, so that he wins an impending duel. However, Eustache cannot control his hand after the fight and ends up killing the magistrate who would judge his case. Eustache’s tragic fate is sealed. He is hanged, but the hand has a life of its own, and after it is cut off from Eustache’s body by the executioner, the enchanted hand crosses past the crowd and reaches Gonin, its master, who wants to keep it, once it is believed that an

enchanted hand like this one can be a powerful talisman for thieves. It is well to note that the description of Master Gonin fits the magic Gypsy stereotype:

Regarding its [the monkey's] master, he was one of these gypsy-like figures, rather common a hundred years before, already rare at the time, and now drowned in the ugliness and insignificance of our bourgeois minds: a sickle-blade profile, high but flat forehead, nose very long and very hunchbacked, and yet not overhanging, but not in the style of Roman noses but not in the style of Roman noses, on the contrary, very upturned and with its tip just more prominent than the very prominent thin lips and the chin tucked in. Then, large, slanted eyes obliquely under the eyebrows, which were drawn in a "V", and long black hair completing the ensemble; finally, a certain agile and easy-going air throughout the body's attitude that demonstrated a curious skill of its members, accustomed from an early age to many and various trades.

His costume was an old buffoon costume, which he wore with dignity; on his head, a large, wide-brimmed felt hat, all crumpled and curled up; master Gonin was the name everybody gave him, due to his skill and his spells (...) ²¹

Gypsy here stands for magic, lies and ruin. Here the stereotype is more related to men, described as "the projection of rip-off merchant and con artist by way of magical practices" by Rafaela Eulberg in her article "The Image of the 'Female Gypsy' as a Potentiation of Stereotypes. Notes on the Interrelation of Gender and Ethnicity" (EULBERG, 2011, p. 69).

In song lyrics, we have chosen two examples: Rolling Stones' "Break the Spell" of 1989, written by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards:

In the winter when the cold comes
 And the wind blows with a scornful spite
 And the hard ground feels barren
 And the forest is deathly quiet
 And the whole world lies sleeping
 There's a gypsy all dressed in white
 Put my hand out, ask the question
 Here's the silver, do you have the gift of sight
 Can you break the spell
 Can you ring the bell
 Can you break the spell
 It's cold black as night
 I've got a hard heart
 Since we've been apart
 Can you break the spell
 Break it all down tonight
 In the springtime when the floods come
 And the earth bursts with the terrible life

²¹ My translation. Original: "Pour son maître, c'était une de ces figures du type bohémien, commun cent ans avant, déjà rare alors et aujourd'hui noyé et perdu dans la laideur et l'insignifiance de nos têtes bourgeoises : un profil en fer de hache, front élevé mais droit, nez très long et très bossu, et cependant ne surplombant pas comme les nez romains, mais fort retroussé au contraire et dépassant à peine de sa pointe la bouche aux lèvres minces très avancées et le menton rentré ; puis des yeux longs et fendus obliquement sous leurs sourcils, dessinés comme un V, et de longs cheveux noirs complétant l'ensemble ; enfin, quelque chose de souple et de dégagé dans les gestes et dans toute l'attitude du corps témoignait un drôle adroit de ses membres et brisé de bonne heure à plusieurs métiers et à beaucoup d'autres. Son habillement était un vieux costume de bouffon, qu'il portait avec dignité; sa coiffure, un grand chapeau de feutre à larges bords, extrêmement froissé et recroquevillé ; maître Gonin était le nom que tout le monde lui donnait, soit à cause de son habileté et de ses tours d'adresse" (NERVAL, 1920, p. 33).

And the sun splash on the windows
 There's a gypsy and he's all dressed in white
 My heart burns with the question
 Can you break the spell
 Still hot as fire²²

The Gypsy is part of the seasonal movements of nature – he is so connected to nature that he merges himself with it. This part of the Gypsy stereotype will be dealt with when we discuss the carefree wanderer image. He performs palm-reading and has “the gift of sight”, and, maybe, is capable of breaking the spell that troubles the singer’s heart. In a lighter and more humorous tone, we may mention “Love Potion #9”, a hit song written by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller in 1959, originally recorded by The Clovers in the same year, and whose most well-known version was released by The Searchers in 1964²³:

I took my troubles down to Madame Rue
 You know that gypsy with the gold-capped tooth
 She's got a pad down on Thirty-Fourth and Vine
 Sellin' little bottles of Love Potion Number Nine
 I told her that I was a flop with chicks
 I've been this way since 1956
 She looked at my palm and she made a magic sign
 She said "What you need is Love Potion Number Nine"
 She bent down and turned around and gave me a wink
 She said "I'm gonna make it up right here in the sink"
 It smelled like turpentine, it looked like Indian ink
 I held my nose, I closed my eyes, I took a drink
 I didn't know if it was day or night
 I started kissin' everything in sight
 But when I kissed a cop down on Thirty-Fourth and Vine
 He broke my little bottle of Love Potion Number Nine²⁴

The description of Madame Rue is once again the stereotypical Gypsy: a woman with a “gold-capped tooth” who reads palms, uses magic signs and makes up magic potions. The same “plot” was used in the romantic comedy *Love Potion number 9* released in 1992, with actress Anne Bancroft playing “Madame Ruth”. In relation to this stereotypical image of the Romani women, Rafaela Eulberg points out that:

“Gypsies”, like women, are frequently denounced as lacking rational intellect in comparison to male members of dominant society. The capacity for clear, logical thought is juxtaposed with the “magical powers of the gypsies” and “women’s intuition”. In discourse on the magic of “gypsies” there are claims that the “*female being*” feels particular kinship with the supernatural world. A “mystical gypsy identity” is often put forward that posits gypsies as experts with an ancient magical wisdom. (EULBERG, 2011, p. 68).

It is interesting to see that the mere evocation of the stereotypical figure of a “Gypsy” is enough to make people believe that the divinatory powers of the individual are indeed real.

²² <https://www.lyrics.com/lyric/23066658/The+Rolling+Stones/Break+the+Spell> . Accessed 4 June, 2021.

²³ <https://www.songfacts.com/facts/the-clovers/love-potion-9>. Accessed 4 June, 2021.

²⁴ <https://www.lyrics.com/track/28975044/The+Clovers/Love+Potion+No.+9> . Accessed 4 June, 2021.

An example of this is found in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, first published in 1847. Edward Rochester, a rich older man and Jane's secret love interest, disguises himself as a Gypsy woman during a party at Thornfield Hall. The Gypsy insists on foretelling the future of the female guests in the house, including Jane's – who is his/her main target. Even though Jane is skeptical of his/her powers, other women in the house are not. As Rochester knows the secrets of the guests, his disguise and fortune-telling are believable, and the visit of the "Gypsy woman" shifts from an innocent party entertainment to a disturbing experience. In her first encounter with Jane, the Gypsy is waiting for her in a room that inspires mystery. She puffs a small pipe, and Jane describes her eccentric figure:

She had on a red cloak and a black bonnet: or rather, a broad-brimmed gipsy hat, tied down with a striped handkerchief under her chin. An extinguished candle stood on the table; she was bending over the fire, and seemed reading in a little black book, like a prayer-book, by the light of the blaze: she muttered the words to herself, as most old women do, while she read; she did not desist immediately on my entrance: it appeared she wished to finish a paragraph. (BRÖNTE, 2021, p. 216).

After the session, Jane finds out Rochester's masquerade. However, with this strategy, Rochester manages to discover Jane's true feelings in relation to him. It empowers him over all the women in the house. It is worth noting that the stereotype is extremely powerful; it is as if Rochester indeed possesses magic powers just by impersonating what a "Gypsy" should be like in the minds of society in general; through his words and gestures, Jane is sent to a disoriented, dream-like state during their encounter. She even calls the fortune-teller as "mother". Gypsiness here is a state of mind that can be invoked simply by wearing a costume and acting like one believes a true Gypsy behaves. Indeed, as Walter Allen explains in *The English Novel a Short Critical History* (1986), the unity of tone in Brontë's writing contribute to this state of dream over reality one perceives in the novel.

Even though it is based on a quite stereotypical description (the pipe, the mysterious ambience, the "gipsy hat", the fortune-telling action), it is fundamental to notice that the presence of the Gypsy fortune-teller also indicates a moment of rupture in the novel: these two characters are somewhat equal class and gender-wise. Rochester/the Gypsy fortune-teller embodies an ambiguity of gender. The cross-dressing is a transgression that enables him to cross social boundaries. As indicated by Deborah Epstein Nord in *Gypsies and the British Imagination, 1807-1930*:

But early in the century, literary texts often used Gypsies to represent ambiguous, masculinized, and sometimes celibate femininity, on the one hand, and effeminate or passive masculinity, on the other. The Gypsy in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* is a man—Edward Rochester, of course—masquerading as a woman. With a face "all brown and black" and "elf-locks" bristling from beneath a bonnet, the disguised Rochester quizzes a skeptical Jane and perplexes her with an appearance alien but

familiar, female but male. In this guise, Rochester resembles the outsize Bertha [Mason, Rochester's first wife], another demonic woman with masculine proportions and strength. (NORD, 2006, p.41).

The likeness between the hybrid fortune-teller and Bertha points out once again to the fear of the impurity and of the otherness. The figures of the dark-skinned Gypsy and the creole Bertha Mason (who is described by Rochester as an insane woman, much probably due to her West Indian ancestry) are symbols of the dangerous otherness that menace British pure lineage and fixed-sexuality role. The male/female, sane/insane boundaries are shaken, and specifically the Gypsy stereotype is used to signal this social trespassing. Abby Bardi in her essay “‘In Company of a Gypsy’: The ‘Gypsy’ as a Trope in Woolf and Brontë” explains:

(...) Brontë employs the Gypsy trope in a pivotal scene when Mr. Rochester dresses as a Gypsy woman and purports to tell Jane's fortune in order to gain access to her uncensored view of him. This act is a transgression against social and gender boundaries through which he hopes to enter into a realm that would ordinarily be denied to him, Jane's private discourse. Cross-dressing in a Gypsy disguise enables Rochester to throw off the limitations of his maleness and his class in an attempt to penetrate the secrets of female discourse. (...) Mr. Rochester's performance as a female Gypsy is tinged with eroticism, signalling as it does the breakdown of boundaries of propriety that dictated that a man should not be closeted alone with a woman. In dressing as a Gypsy and overturning gender, Rochester has imperiled the social mores that have operated to preserve Jane's chastity. (BARDI, 2007, p. 47).

3.3 Thieves, robbers and troublemakers

One of the most known facets of the Gypsy stereotype refers to the activities of thieves, kidnappers, and robbers. It is interesting to see that this image is already present in the beginnings of the English novel. Take, for instance, *Moll Flanders*, written in 1722 by Daniel Defoe, who depicts the first heroine (or anti-heroine) of the English novel. As the subtitle of the novel reads, the book is about “*The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders, &c. Who was Born in Newgate, and during a Life of continu'd Variety for Threescore Years, besides her Childhood, was Twelve Year a Whore, five times a Wife (whereof once to her own Brother), Twelve Year a Thief, Eight Year a Transported Felon in Virginia, at last grew Rich, liv'd Honest, and dies a Penitent. Written from her own Memorandums....*”. She is a strong-willed character who led a very uncommon life for a 17th century woman, including several marriages, abandonment of her children, work as a prostitute, and as a thief, and so on. Moll is self-sufficient and a true survivor. Virginia Woolf considers *Moll Flanders* an “indisputably great” (WOOLF, 2014, p. 2165) novel that should

be as famous and as well-known as *Robinson Crusoe*. She comments on the novel in *The Common Reader*:

The briskness of the story is due partly to the fact that having transgressed the accepted laws at a very early age she [Moll] has henceforth the freedom of the outcast (...) He [Defoe] makes us understand that Moll Flanders was a woman on her own account and not only material for a succession of adventures. She [Moll] has a spirit that loves to breast the storm. She delights in the exercise of her own powers (WOOLF, 2014, p. 2166).

Moll Flanders is written as an autobiography of a woman who was born poor and does whatever it is necessary not only to survive, but also to rise up in society. She was born in Newgate prison to a mother who was a convicted felon and who was sent to America when Moll was six months old. The baby was left “[...] a poor desolate girl without friends, without clothes, without help or helper in the world” (DEFOE, 1995, p.10). She does not remember the circumstances of her early years or how she survived. As Molly recalls, her earliest memories are of when she was around three years old with a band of Gypsies, although she has no idea as to how she wound up there:

The first account that I can recollect, or could ever learn of myself, was that I had wandered among a crew of those people they call gypsies, or Egyptians; but I believe it was but a very little while that I had been among them, for I had not had my skin discoloured or blackened, as they do very young to all the children they carry about with them; nor can I tell how I came among them, or how I got from them. (DEFOE, 1995, p. 11).

However, Moll does not want to stay with them:

It was at Colchester, in Essex, that those people left me; and I have a notion in my head that I left them there (that is, that I hid myself and would not go any farther with them), but I am not able to be particular in that account; only this I remember, that being taken up by some of the parish officers of Colchester, I gave an account that I came into the town with the gypsies, but that I would not go any farther with them, and that so they had left me, but whither they were gone that I knew not, nor could they expect it of me; for though they send round the country to inquire after them, it seems they could not be found. (DEFOE, 1995, p. 11).

The passages above are the only mentions of the existence of the Gypsies in Moll’s life. Even though there is no description of this group of Gypsies, some of the traits of the Gypsy stereotype are already there: first, they have no history. Gypsies appear and disappear unexpectedly; they vanish into thin air. They are destitute and nomadic. They do not care for children, as they leave a three-year-old behind; however, it is not clear how they have received Moll. This mysterious past of the heroine of the novel points to another common trait found in literary narratives involving the Gypsy stereotype: it is believed that the child-stealing myth would be a way to account for the existence of white-skinned, blue-eyed Roma. Deborah Epstein Nord in her book *Gypsies and the British Imagination* states that:

In the nineteenth century and earlier, when genetics was unknown and paternity could not be proved, suspicions about true parentage were often close to the surface. Tales of kidnapping and child swapping, in other words, reflect the myth of group homogeneity, as well as the belief in absolute distinctions among racial, national, or ethnic types that almost all groups—but especially dominant ones—hold dear. Gypsies should not have fair children, and the Tullivers [*The Mill on the Floss*] should not have a darkskinned child; otherwise, we cannot be sure of exactly who we are and where we belong. The perpetual and imaginatively powerful divide between light and dark affords cultures one convenient way of drawing the line between self and other. (NORD, 2006, p. 11).

Also, Moll informs the reader that she did not spend much time with Gypsies, as her skin had not been discolored or blackened. The reference to the discoloring is not clear to us, however, the blackening of skin is quite obvious, once one of the traits attributed to the Roma is the darker skin. Such characteristic was (and still is for some Roma groups) basis for discrimination and prejudice against them. *Moll Flanders* is important because, together with *Robinson Crusoe*, marks, as previously stated, the beginning of the English novel. David Daiches in his book *A Critical History of English Literature* points out about Defoe that “his fiction shows with convincing clarity the way in which the developing English novel was linked with the habits of mind and literary needs of the rising middle classes. Defoe is not called “the father of the English” novel for nothing.” (DAICHES, 1994, p. 601). It is worth noting that the use of the outlaw-Gypsy stereotype is already employed as early as the rise of the novel.

Moving forward in time, we see that Jane Austen also makes use of the Gypsy image in the novel *Emma* (1816). Austen is considered to be one of the greatest novelists of manners of the period, writing novels about the English country society and dealing with, as Daiches argues, “[...] the hopes and fears of genteel people of moderate means – a world which, through her delicate and highly finished art, she turned into a microcosm of life in its social aspect” (DAICHES, 1994, p. 744). However, once more Gypsies are employed as a mere narrative device, and not as characters. Emma Woodhouse is a smart, spoiled, and rich young woman who believes herself to be talented to perform as a matchmaker. She embarks on a mission to find a suitor to Harriet Smith, who, she thinks, is Frank Churchill. One day, when Harriet is walking down a road, she comes across a group of Gypsies:

Miss Smith, and Miss Bickerton, another parlour boarder at Mrs. Goddard's, who had been also at the ball, had walked out together, and taken a road, the Richmond road, which, though apparently public enough for safety, had led them into alarm.—About half a mile beyond Highbury, making a sudden turn, and deeply shaded by elms on each side, it became for a considerable stretch very retired; and when the young ladies had advanced some way into it, they had suddenly perceived at a small distance before them, on a broader patch of greensward by the side, a party of gipsies. A child on the watch, came towards them to beg; and Miss Bickerton, excessively frightened, gave a great scream, and calling on Harriet to follow her, ran up a steep bank, cleared a slight hedge at the top, and made the best of her way by a

short cut back to Highbury. But poor Harriet could not follow. She had suffered very much from cramp after dancing, and her first attempt to mount the bank brought on such a return of it as made her absolutely powerless— and in this state, and exceedingly terrified, she had been obliged to remain.

How the trampers might have behaved, had the young ladies been more courageous, must be doubtful; but such an invitation for attack could not be resisted; and Harriet was soon assailed by half a dozen children, headed by a stout woman and a great boy, all clamorous, and impertinent in look, though not absolutely in word.—More and more frightened, she immediately promised them money, and taking out her purse, gave them a shilling, and begged them not to want more, or to use her ill.—She was then able to walk, though but slowly, and was moving away—but her terror and her purse were too tempting, and she was followed, or rather surrounded, by the whole gang, demanding more.

In this state Frank Churchill had found her, she trembling and conditioning, they loud and insolent. [...]. The terror which the woman and boy had been creating in Harriet was then their own portion. He had left them completely frightened; and Harriet eagerly clinging to him, and hardly able to speak, had just strength enough to reach Hartfield, before her spirits were quite overcome. (AUSTEN, 2008, p. 178).

As in *Moll Flanders*, there is no detailed physical description of the group; however, its threatening potential of the Gypsy against a white middle class representative is highlighted. Harriet was not attacked in the first place; she panicked with the sight of a Gypsy woman and a group of children. They are not characters, nor is their presence indispensable to the novel; this scene could be developed presenting any other danger on the road, once it is just a device to bring together Harriet and Frank as her savior. And, once again, Gypsies completely vanish from the scene:

The gipsies did not wait for the operations of justice; they took themselves off in a hurry. The young ladies of Highbury might have walked again in safety before their panic began, and the whole history dwindled soon into a matter of little importance but to Emma and her nephews:—in her imagination it maintained its ground, and Henry and John were still asking every day for the story of Harriet and the gipsies, and still tenaciously setting her right if she varied in the slightest particular from the original recital. (AUSTEN, 2008, p. 179).

The incident gains a legend-like resonance with Emma's nephews, a scene that could be read as how stereotypes are perpetuated in younger generations.

Besides, one may infer that, even though Gypsies provided the exotic flavor in several novels and depictions in media, they were also common figures in the landscape, being an internal, domestic other, as Nord indicates. This domestic other, so close and yet so distant at the same time, is also someone often with no voice (or with little ability to speak), and with no right to representation. This prejudiced image of this powerless other is so present in everyday life that there is no need to be polite: there is no problem in calling them thieves in their faces. For instance, in the play *Incident at Vichy* (1964) by Arthur Miller, in 1942 nine men and a boy are locked up in a detention room at Vichy for a racial inspection by German officers and French police during World War II. The detainees have no idea why they are

there, and they start to interact to try to understand why they were picked up. Among them there is the Gypsy. He has no name in the play and he is not fluent in English:

LEBEAU
Gypsy?
GYPSY, *drawing closer a copper pot at his feet.*
Gypsy.
LEBEAU, *to Monceau*
Gypsies never have papers. Why'd bother him?
MONCEAU
In his case it might be some other reason. He probably stole the pot.
GYPSY
No. On the sidewalk. *He raises the pot from between his feet.* I fix, make nice. I sit
down to fix. Come police. Pfft!
MARCHAND
But of course they'll tell you anything... *To Gypsy, laughing familiarly:* Right?
Gypsy laughs and turns away to his own gloom.
LEBEAU
That's a hell of a thing to say to him. I mean, would you say that to a man with
pressed pants?
MARCHAND
They don't mind. In fact, they're proud of stealing. *To Gypsy:* Aren't you?
Gypsy glances at him, shrugs.
I got a place in the country where they come every summer. I like them, personally –
especially the music. *With a broad grin he sings toward the Gypsy and laughs.* We
often listen to them around their campfires. But they'll steal the eyes out of your
head. *To Gypsy:* Right?
*Gypsy shrugs and kisses the air contemptuously. Marchand laughs with brutal
familiarity.* (MILLER, 1967, p. 13-14).

The prisoners came from different walks of life: there is an actor, a businessman, a psychiatrist, an electrician, a waiter and even a prince. Even though these characters do not know each other, only the Gypsy is immediately coined as a thief by one of the detainees. Gradually, one by one is called to a private room for an interview with the police. Only two of them are released, the rest are locked up to be sent to concentration camps. Needless to say, the Gypsy is the first one to be taken to the concentration camp.

This open lack of concern when associating Gypsy to thieves is still commonly displayed in media, even though there is a growing awareness promoted by Roma activists. In Brazil, in 2012 the Ministério Público Federal (National Prosecution Office) took a plea to the superior court to try to withdraw the derogatory meanings, such as “thief”, from the entry “Cigano” in Houaiss dictionary. It did not succeed²⁵. In 2009, Colombian singer and songwriter Shakira released the song “Gypsy”, which was a hit in several countries:

Broke my heart on the road
Spent the weekends sewing the pieces back on

²⁵ The plea was denied in 2012, once the Court considered that there was no value judgment on the part of the author or of the publishing house, once the usage of the word by the speakers is what determines what is registered in dictionaries. <https://www.migalhas.com.br/quentes/304552/dicionario-com-conceito-pejorativo-da-palavra--cigano--nao-sera-retirado-de-circulacao> . Accessed 18 June 2021.

Crayons and dolls pass me by
 Walking gets too boring when you learn how to fly
 Not the homecoming kind
 Take the top off, and who knows what you might find
 Won't confess all my sins
 You can bet all trying, but you can't always win

'Cause I'm a gypsy, are you coming with me?
 I might steal your clothes and wear them if they fit me
 Never made agreements just like a gypsy
 And I won't back down 'cause life's already bit me
 And I won't cry, I'm too young to die
 If you're gon' quit me
 'Cause I'm a gypsy
 'Cause I'm a gypsy [...] ²⁶

The image of the Gypsy who is ready to steal clothes and who “makes no agreements” gains a more serious tone with the child-stealing Gypsy myth. This is so ingrained in the minds of people in general that it is plain to see that the literary Gypsy is often confused with the real Romani people. To illustrate this point, in the case of the disappearance of four-year-old Madeleine McCann in 2007, one of the lines of investigation was the existence of a blond little girl “allegedly snatched from her family (who) was found living with gypsies”²⁷ in Greece. Later, it was discovered that the “blonde angel” Maria, as the Greek media dubbed her, was in fact the daughter of a Romani Bulgarian couple who could not afford to raise her, and, therefore, gave the girl to a Romani family in Greece²⁸. There was no kidnapping involved. As Nord explains:

Legends of kidnapping and child swapping had long been associated with Gypsies, and accusations of such crimes haunt them to this day. A combination of proximity and distance fostered English fantasies that Gypsies were close enough to switch one of their children with an English child without detection and yet remote enough to place that child permanently out of the reach of his parents. So, the idea went, a child could grow up in a Gypsy family, lost forever to her own. (NORD, 2006, p.10).

One well known example, however, of a gypsy and a kidnapping of a child can be found in *Guy Mannering* (1815) by Walter Scott. The novel was a huge success at its time, even becoming the basis for a play. The play was also known as “Guy Mannering or the Gypsy’s prophecy”. Its plot and characters – and mainly the Gypsy woman Meg Merrilies - were used as inspiration for the works of other writers, such as John Keats and his poem “Meg Merrilies” (1818) and Charles Lamb’s “The Gipsy’s Malison” (1829). Scott would create later a second Gypsy character, Hayraddin Maugrabin, in the novel *Quentin Durward*,

²⁶ metrolyrics.com/gypsy-lyrics-shakira.html . Accessed 16 June, 2021.

²⁷ https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/uk-world-news/mystery-blonde-girl-found-living-2468323 . Accessed 16 June 2021.

²⁸ https://www.reuters.com/article/us-greece-girl-bulgaria-idUSBRE99N0R920131025 . Accessed 16 June 2021.

published in 1823, which we will discuss in the following subchapter. *Guy Mannering* is set during 1770s/1780s and is about a young man, Harry Bertram, son of Godfrey Bertram, Laird of Ellangowan, in Scotland. When he is born, his fortune is foretold by Guy Mannering, who is a young English astrologer travelling in Scotland and, and by Meg Merrilies, an old gypsy woman. Both predict danger in the boy's life. Meg is really fond of the boy and sometimes acts as his protector.

Some time after the birth of his son, while Godfrey acted as a justice of peace, he decides to evict "sundry personages, whose idle and mendicant habits his own *lachesse* had contributed to foster until these habits became irreclaimable." (SCOTT, 2001, p. 73), and among them, there were Gypsies. Meg puts a curse on Godfrey, saying that his house would be as empty as the homes of the Gypsies. The curse scene is powerful, and the description of the Gypsy would influence other artists in years to come:

She [Meg Merrilies] was standing upon one of those high precipitous banks which, as we before noticed, overhung the road, so that she was placed considerably higher than Ellangowan, even though he was on horseback; and her tall figure, relieved against the clear blue sky, seemed almost of supernatural stature. We have noticed that there was in her general attire, or rather in her mode of adjusting it, somewhat of a foreign costume, artfully adopted perhaps for the purpose of adding to the effect of her spells and predictions, or perhaps from some traditional notions respecting the dress of her ancestors. On this occasion she had a large piece of red cotton cloth rolled about her head in the form of a turban, from beneath which her dark eyes flashed with uncommon lustre. Her long and tangled black hair fell in elf-locks from the folds of this singular head-gear. Her attitude was that of a sibyl in frenzy, and she stretched out in her right hand a sapling bough which seemed just pulled. (...)

‘Ride your ways,’ said the gypsy, ‘ride your ways, Laird of Ellangowan; ride your ways, Godfrey Bertram! This day have ye quenched seven smoking hearths; see if the fire in your ain parlour burn the blyther for that. Ye have riven the thack off seven cottar houses; look if your ain roof-tree stand the faster. Ye may stable your stirks in the shealings at Derncleugh; see that the hare does not couch on the hearthstane at Ellangowan. Ride your ways, Godfrey Bertram; what do ye glower after our folk for? There’s thirty hearts there that wad hae wanted bread ere ye had wanted sunkets, and spent their life-blood ere ye had scratched your finger. Yes; there’s thirty yonder, from the auld wife of an hundred to the babe that was born last week, that ye have turned out o’ their bits o’ bields, to sleep with the tod and the blackcock in the muirs! Ride your ways, Ellangowan. Our bairns are hinging at our weary backs; look that your braw cradle at hame be the fairer spread up; not that I am wishing ill to little Harry, or to the babe that’s yet to be born--God forbid--and make them kind to the poor, and better folk than their father! And now, ride e’en your ways; for these are the last words ye’ll ever hear Meg Merrilies speak, and this is the last reise that I’ll ever cut in the bonny woods of Ellangowan.’

So saying, she broke the sapling she held in her hand, and flung it into the road. (SCOTT, 2001, p. 87-88).

Due to a scheme to take over Godfrey's lands set by his lawyer, Gilbert Glossin, Harry was kidnapped when he was five. When the kid was abducted by Dirk, the Dutch smuggler hired by Glossin,

The description of the Gypsy origins in the novel is quite derogatory: they descend from thieves, vagabonds, savages, and work-shy people. However, according to the narrator, as a result of years of intermixing with the Highlanders, Gypsies have become an improved “mingled race”:

It is well known that the gipsies were at an early period acknowledged as a separate and independent race by one of the Scottish monarchs, and that they were less favourably distinguished by a subsequent law, which rendered the character of gipsy equal in the judicial balance to that of common and habitual thief, and prescribed his punishment accordingly. Notwithstanding the severity of this and other statutes, the fraternity prospered amid the distresses of the country, and received large accessions from among those whom famine, oppression, or the sword of war had deprived of the ordinary means of subsistence. They lost in a great measure by this intermixture the national character of Egyptians, and became a mingled race, having all the idleness and predatory habits of their Eastern ancestors, with a ferocity which they probably borrowed from the men of the north who joined their society. They travelled in different bands, and had rules among themselves, by which each tribe was confined to its own district. The slightest invasion of the precincts which had been assigned to another tribe produced desperate skirmishes, in which there was often much blood shed. (SCOTT, 2001, p. 75).

Nevertheless, during the period in which the novel takes place, Gypsies are in good terms with the local landowners until they were expelled. They had professions such as musicians, hunters, manufacturers of horn-spoons and earthenware. Nord indicates that:

With Harry’s kidnapping, Scott sets up the expectation that the Gypsies have committed a crime consistent with their habits,” but he also gives the reader reason to believe that the crime is an act of at least understandable, if not forgivable, vengeance. [...] In chapter 7 of the novel, he evokes a Gypsy history that begins with segregation and outlawry; moves deliberately to integration, domestication, and salutary coexistence; and ends with banishment. A century earlier, the narrator records, Gypsies were little more than “banditti” who roamed about the countryside, stealing, begging, drinking, and fighting. In time, however, they lost the “national character of Egyptians” through intermarriage with Highlanders and thus became a “*mingled race*,” both their numbers and the “dreadful evil” they produced decreasing (1:57 [emphasis added]). (NORD, 2006, p. 30).

Interesting enough that the Gypsy tribe described in the novel is not nomad (a trait commonly associated with Gypsies). They were stationary (their camping place was known as a “city of refuge”) but became nomads because of the eviction. According to Abigail Bardi in her doctorate dissertation “The Gypsy as Trope in Victorian and Modern British Literature”: “The benchmark of their [Gypsies’] assimilation is their occupation of land, and when this is disrupted, they reassume the markers of Gypsiness: peregrination, thievery, and by proxy, child-stealing.” (BARDI, 2007, p. 107). The “intermixture” Scott indicates connects Gypsies to the land, to Highlanders, and, ultimately, to Scotland’s origins. Therefore, the image of the Gypsies is positive in Scott, as they are too part of the formation of the nation.

The novel develops and in a succession of events, and we find out that Harry Bertram managed to escape and survive. Harry becomes Captain Brown and builds his life in India. He

falls in love with Mannering's daughter, Julia, and both men have no idea that their lives had already been in touch once. They all go back to Scotland and, on learning the true identity of Brown, Glossin and Dirk try to kill him once again, but Meg Merrilies prevents this from happening and is shot by Dirk and dies. Dirk is put into prison together with Glossin. Glossin is murdered by Dirk and the latter commits suicide after writing a full confession of his crimes. Brown/Bertram finally reclaims his estate and marries Julia.

Here we would like to highlight the character of Meg Merrilies. It is believed that the inspiration for the character was the wife of the first documented Gypsy king in Yetholm, Scotland during the 1730's-40's: Patrick Faa, whose wife was the six-foot tall queen Jean Gordon. In fact, Meg Merrilies is of fundamental importance both in the novel, as she is the one who predicts the misfortunes of Harry's life when he is born and who actively helps him in his adult life to reclaim his inheritance and state in Ellangowan, but also for future representations of Gypsy women in the 19th century Britain. Meg is a fortune-teller; however, she is seen in a positive light. She is eloquent, dignified. Her physical description is quite unusual:

She was full six feet high, wore a man's great-coat over the rest of her dress, had in her hand a goodly sloethorn cudgel, and in all points of equipment, except her petticoats, seemed rather masculine than feminine. Her dark elf-locks shot out like the snakes of the gorgon between an old-fashioned bonnet called a bongrace, heightening the singular effect of her strong and weather-beaten features, which they partly shadowed, while her eye had a wild roll that indicated something like real or affected insanity. (SCOTT, 2001, p. 45).

Meg Merrilies is a more developed character than her Gypsy predecessors. Even though she casts a curse on Geoffrey Bertram, Scott writes this in a way that all her actions are justifiable, for she is throughout the novel secretly protecting young Bertram. The character was a huge success. Not only poems were inspired by her, but also paintings, as for instance Heywood Hardy's "Meg Merrilies and The Laird of Ellangowan" (1879). There is also a type of shrub rose that carries her name²⁹, and even a kilt pattern was named after Meg in 1829³⁰. The influence of Scott's Meg Merrilies is so strong that, according to Bardi, it is possible to see the similarities between Meg and Mr. Rochester in *Jane Eyre* Gypsy scene:

Not only is Rochester's Gypsy more masculine than feminine, but he/she is similarly clad, and his/her illumination by firelight echoes that of Merrilies; [...] Not only does Jane's description specify that Rochester's cloak is, like Merrilies', red, but she remarks that "elf-locks bristled out from beneath a white band which passed under her chin." (167). The uses of the uncommon word "elf-locks" and of the homonym-like "grizzled" and "bristled", plus the red cloak, hint that Brontë's Gypsy draws directly, if unconsciously, from the trope established by Scott. [...]

²⁹ https://www.lens-roses.com/en_US/shop/product/r-rubiginosa-meg-merrilies-14336?ecom_cat=60&ecom_main_cat=4&page=57

³⁰ <https://www.tartanregister.gov.uk/tartanDetails?ref=2938> . Accessed 17 June 2021.

In arguing that Brontë has drawn from Meg Merrilies in her depiction of Rochester's Gypsy, a reasonable inference, given the similarities and the well-documented influence of Scott on her and her siblings, I am not trying to make a case for influence merely in terms of Brontë, but in terms of the entire century: it appears that "Meg-mania" resulted in some of Merrilies' attributes - her ambiguous gender, her portentousness, and her sublime largeness - becoming well-codified aspects of the increasingly romantic Gypsy trope. While as Trumpener has shown, Merrilies herself is drawn from a variety of previously existing iterations of the Gypsy in the popular imagination, it is perhaps because of Merrilies' own characteristics that we later see the conflation of several important features - multivalent gender, and the ability to function in a narrative to subvert both property distribution and gender roles - that will become components of the Gypsy trope. (BARDI, 2007, p. 118-120).

Meg Merrilies's type of character is not common as far as the Gypsy stereotype representation is concerned. In fact, we believe that she does not fall into the stereotype completely, but her existence (and influence) should be acknowledged.

Unfortunately, for the average public, old and modern, Gypsies do not only abduct children. Dogs and puppies are in danger when Gypsies are around and they can be kidnapped as well. In the children's book *The Hundred and One Dalmatians* (1956) by Dodie Smith, Gypsies try to capture the 99 Dalmatian puppies:

Pongo saw them at the same moment, and he knew they were not houses. They were caravans.

He had seen them once when out with Mr. Dearly and had heard Mr. Dearly say that gypsies lived in caravans and gypsies sometimes stole valuable dogs.

"Halt!" said Pongo instantly.

Could they get past the caravans without being seen? He wasn't going to risk it. Between them and the nearest caravan was an open gate. He would lead the puppies through it and take them through the fields until they were well past the caravans. Swiftly he gave his instructions, which were handed on from pup to pup: "We are to keep dead quiet and follow Pongo through the gate."

And thus did the owner of one of the keenest brains in Dogdom make one of his few mistakes. For in the caravan nearest to them an old gypsy woman was awake and looking out of the little back window. She saw the approaching Dalmatians and at once woke her husband. He was beside her at the window just as Pongo led the way into the field.

The old gypsy woman never read newspapers, so she knew nothing about the stolen puppies. But she knew that here were many valuable dogs. And she knew here were many valuable dogs. And she knew something else, which Pongo did not know. There is a connection between Dalmatians and gypsies. Many people believe that it was the gypsies who first brought Dalmatians to England, long, long ago. And nothing like as long ago as that, there were gypsies who travelled round England with Dalmatians trained to do tricks. And these performing dogs earned money for the gypsies. The old woman could remember such dogs, and she thought how splendid it would be if all these Dalmatians could be trained as money-earners.

"Quick! Close the gate!" she said to her husband. She spoke in the strange gypsy language, which is called Romany. "The only other way out of that field is through a break in the hedge. I will rouse the camp, and we will all stop the dogs there and catch them."

In less than two minutes the whole gypsy encampment was awake. Children cried, dogs barked, horses neighed. It was still so dark that it took Pongo five minutes to find the break in the hedge. And when he found it, he also found the way barred. All the gypsies were there, with sticks and ropes. (SMITH, 2000, p.94-95).

We could not find if the story of Gypsies and dalmatians is indeed true. However, it is interesting to note that, even if they did not steal anything (the dogs appeared in the camp in the middle of the night), the statement that “Gypsies steal dogs” is clearly given.

In Disney’s animated version of the book (1961), the Gypsy camp is not shown. However, another Disney’s production, *Pinocchio* (1940), based on the book *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (1883) by Italian writer Carlo Collodi, shows one of its villains, Stromboli, dressed as a Roma character. He is a money-driven puppeteer and owner of a puppet show in a caravan. He is loud, ruthless, cruel, and tries to enslave Pinocchio, so that he is forced to work for him until he is old and useless and becomes firewood. In the novel, however, this character is Mangiafuocco (“Fire-eater”), and there is no mention of him being a Gypsy or not. Besides, he is not a villain; he shows a good heart and even gives Pinocchio some money to take back to his poor father. Nevertheless, the strength of the image produced by Disney is the one that stays in people’s minds.

3.4 The carefree wanderers

Often the Roma are referred to as “children of the wind”, “followers of the stars” or “children of nature”. Such epithets indicate a type of “amnesia” as far as the Roma are concerned. They show how the western imagination has frequently considered the Roma as a people without a real historical background, as if by some kind of spell the Roma appeared in the world. This is part of the Gypsy stereotype too. As Valentina Glajar indicates in the introduction of *“Gypsies” in European Literature and Culture*: “Whether admired or denigrated, Romanies have been portrayed and perceived as ominous outsiders with a mysterious language and unfamiliar customs, supernatural abilities, **no history**, questionable character, and exceptional musical abilities” (GLAJAR; RADULESCU, 2008, p. 34, bold added). Outcasts have no right to the history of their origins.

Nonetheless, outcasts also offer a different, freer (and often envied) version of life outside society. Even though the major shift in the way the Gypsy was seen occurred in the 19th century with the romantics, it is possible to find examples prior to this century. For instance, there are ballads, both Scottish and Irish that deal about women who decide to run away with the Gypsies, leaving behind a comfortable existence in order to lead a freer life. The Scottish ballad below is called “The Gypsy Laddie (Johnny Faa)”. Note that Johnny Faa

is Patrick Faa's ancestor, a name already mentioned here in relation to Meg Merrilies. The ballad is about a woman who runs away from her husband, the Earl of Cassils, to live with her Gypsy lover.

This ballad is known under several names, such as "The Gypsy Davy", "The Raggle-Taggle Gypsy", "The Lady and the Gypsy", among many others³¹. In relation to the versions, in Scotland, the husband gets his wife back, and the Gypsy lover and his friends are murdered. In one of the versions found in the U.S., the wife refuses to return and prefers to live a not so happy life with her lover. Here we have selected a few stanzas of the Scottish version:

The gypsies they came to my lord Cassils' yet
And O but they sang bonnie!
They sang sae sweet and sae complete
That down came our fair ladie

She came tripping down the stairs,
And all her maids before her;
As soon as they saw her weel-far'd face,
They coost their glamourize owre her.

She gave to them the good wheat bread,
And they gave her the ginger;
But she gave them a far better thing,
The gold ring off her finger.

Will ye go with me, mu hinny and my heart?
Will ye go with me, mu dearie?
And I will swear, by the staff of my spear,
That your lord shall nae mair come near thee.

"Gar take from me my silk mantees,
And bring to me a plaidie,
For I will travel the world owre
Along with the gypsie laddie. [...]"

They wandred high, they wandred low,
They wandred late and early,
Until they came to that wan water,
And by this time she was wearie. [...]"

By and by came home this noble lord,
And asking for his ladie,
The one did cry, the other did reply,
"She is gone with the gypsie laddie."

"Go saddle to me the black", he says,
"The brown rides never so speedie,
And I will neither eat nor drink
Till I bring home my ladie"

He wandred high, he wandred low,

³¹ Source: <http://bluegrassmessengers.com/1recordings--info-200-the-gypsy-laddie.aspx> and http://www.folklorist.org/song/The_Gypsy_Laddie. Accessed 21 June 2021.

He wandred late and early,
 Until he came to that wan water,
 And there he spied his ladie

“O wilt thou go home, my hinny and my heart,
 O wilt thou go home, my dearie?
 And I’ll close thee in a close room
 Where no man shall come near thee.”

“I will not go home, my hinny and my heart,
 I will not go home, my dearie;
 If I have brewn good beer, I will drink of the same,
 And my lord shall nae mair come near me.

“But I will swear, by the moon and the stars,
 And the sun that shines so clearly,
 That I am as free of the gypsie gang
 As the hour my mother did bear me.”

They were fifteen valiant men,
 Black, but very bonny,
 And they lost all their lives for one,
 The Earl of Cassils’ ladie. (FRIEDMAN, 1982, p. 105-108).

The Irish version of this same ballad is named “The Raggle-Taggle Gypsy”. It is still sung nowadays, and one of its most known recent recordings was made by the British-Irish folk-rock group The Waterboys in 1990. This version is taken from the book *100 Irish Ballads Volume 2*:

There were three gypsies coming to my hall door
 And downstairs ran this lady - o
 One sang high and the other sang low
 And the other sang Bonny Bonny Biscay - o

Then she pulled off her silk finished gown
 And put on a hose of leather - o
 The ragged ragged rags about on the door;
 She’s gone with the raggle-taggle gypsy - o.

O saddle for me my milk white steed
 And go fetch me my pony - o
 That I may go and seek my bride
 Who is gone with the raggle-taggle gypsy - o

O he rode high and he rode low
 He rode through wood and copses - o
 Until he came to a wide open field
 And there he spied his lady - o

O what made you leave your house and land
 What made you leave your money - o
 What made you leave your new-wedded lord
 To be off with the raggle-taggle gypsy - o

O what care I for my house and land
 What care I for money - o
 What care I for my new-wedded lord

I'm off with the raggle-taggle gypsy – o

Last night you slept on a goose feathered bed
With the sheet turned down so bravely – o
Tonight you'll sleep in a cold open field
Along with the raggle-taggle gypsy – o

O what I care for my goose feathered bed
With the sheet turned down so bravely – o
Tonight I will sleep in a cold open field
Along with the raggle-taggle gypsy – o (*100 Irish Ballads Vol.2*, 1987, p.92).

The year of the ballad is not known. It is believed, however, that it appeared during the 17th century, with the “expulsion of the Gypsies from Scotland by Act of Parliament in 1609, and the abduction by Gypsies of Lady Cassilis (who died in 1642), her subsequent return to her home and the hanging of the Gypsies involved”³². Johnny Faa, however, appears documented in the history of Scotland during the reign of King James V:

In 1539 the Stuart monarch granted John Faa the right to call himself King of the Gypsies. Historical records show that there was a writ of the Privy Council recognising the right of a ‘John Faw’, the ‘Lord of Litill Egypt’ to rule and enforce laws over his ‘people’. There was another writ, dated February 1540, also signed by James V, which records the granting of protection to ‘our lovit Johnnie Faa, Lord and Erle of Littil Egipt’.³³ (CHARLES FAA, 2019).

Faa was part of a lineage of Scottish Gypsy kings whose last documented member was Charles Faa Blythe, “coronated” in 30 May 1898. The location of their reign and ‘palace’ – the Kirk Yetholm in The Borders – established in 1695, provided an easy two-way escape route, as it is placed on the borders of England and Scotland. The ‘palace’ nowadays is a holiday accommodation.

The oral tradition – here in the nature of a folk ballad that stood the test of time - is a strong means to maintain and perpetuate prejudice, as explained in the first part of this chapter. Gypsies “coost their glamourize owre” the lady (here “glamourize” understood as “to cast a spell”), and they abduct people. On the other hand, the desire to leave behind a well-established, but boring life impels people – and mainly women – to join the carefree Gypsy life. It is better to live a free life without material comfort than to have wealth and the respectability of a good marriage and to be locked up in a closed room where “no man shall come near thee”.

This image of freedom associated with the Gypsies is a common trait in songs. We can draw a parallel here to the song “Gypsy” (2013) by Lady Gaga. Once more, a woman flees to be with a man who calls himself a gypsy. If he truly is, we do not know. However, the

³² http://www.folklorist.org/song/The_Gypsy_Laddie . Accessed 21 June 2021.

³³ <https://www.scottishfield.co.uk/culture/charles-faa-blythe-the-last-king-of-scotlands-gypsies/>

imagery of roaming, freedom and promise of an exciting life linked to the Gypsy is perpetuated:

Sometimes a story has no end
 Sometimes I think that we could just be friends
 'Cause I'm a wandering man, he said to me
 And what about our future plans?
 Does it seem we have even make sense?
 When I got the whole world in front of me
 So I said, "I don't wanna be alone forever
 But I can be tonight
 I don't wanna be alone forever
 But I love gypsy life
 I don't wanna be alone forever
 Maybe we can see the world together
 I don't wanna be alone forever
 But I can be tonight, tonight"

So I just packed my baggage and
 Said goodbye to family and friends
 And took the road to nowhere on my own
 Like Dorothy on a yellow brick
 Hope my ruby shoes get us there quick
 'Cause I left everyone I love at home
 And I don't wanna be alone forever
 But I can be tonight
 I don't wanna be alone forever
 But I love gypsy life
 I don't wanna be alone forever
 Maybe we can see world together
 I don't wanna be alone forever
 But I can be tonight, tonight
 'Cause I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm
 A gypsy, a gypsy, a gypsy

And then he asked me,
 Said, "Baby, why do we love each other?"
 I said, "Honey, it's simple.
 It's the way that you love and treat your mother"
 Thought that I would be alone forever
 But I won't be tonight
 I'm a man without a home
 But I think with you I can spend my life
 And you'll be my little gypsy princess
 Pack your bags and we can chase the sunset
 Bust the rear view and fire up the jets
 'Cause it's you and me
 Baby, for life
 Would you go with me?
 (For life)
 See the world with me
 'Cause I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm
 A gypsy, a gypsy, a gypsy

Russia, UK, Paris, I'm
 Italian, Asian, Kompai
 Africa, India, I'm
 A gypsy, a gypsy, a gypsy I'm
 Latin American, I don't speak German but I try
 Someday in Jakarta, I'm

American, I'm gypsy I
 Bangkok, Australia, Malaysia
 Sweden, Finland, Norway
 Be my home just for the day
 I'm a gypsy, gypsy, gypsy hey³⁴

The “illusion of freedom” the Gypsy image offers is a very seductive one. Writer George Elliot has dealt with the Gypsy image in the *The Spanish Gypsy* (1868) and in *The Mill on the Floss* (1860). In the latter we find Maggie Tulliver, the main character, who shows a dark complexion, and is often compared to a Gypsy: “She’s more like a gypsy nor ever,” said aunt Pullet, in a pitying tone; “it’s very bad luck, sister, as the gell should be so brown—the boy’s fair enough. I doubt it’ll stand in her way i’ life to be so brown.”” (ELLIOT, 2007, p. 109).

Maggie is a dislocated, unhappy eight-year-old child who is always up to mischief, according to her mother. In her family only her father shows some love towards her. Elliot here shifts the paradigm of the child-stealing gypsy usually found in novels: gypsies do not kidnap her, rather, Maggie goes after them, even after her brother, Tom, advises her that “gypsies were thieves, and hardly got anything to eat, and had nothing to drive but a donkey” (ELLIOT, 2007, p. 143). Nevertheless, she insists on her plan:

No! she would run away and go to the gypsies, and Tom should never see her any more. That was by no means a new idea to Maggie; she had been so often told she was like a gypsy, and “half wild,” that when she was miserable it seemed to her the only way of escaping opprobrium, and being entirely in harmony with circumstances would be to live in a little brown tent on the commons: the gypsies, she considered, would gladly receive her, and pay her much respect on account of her superior knowledge. (ELLIOT, 2007, p. 143).

Gypsies one more time are thieves, intellectually inferior, wild and poor. In Maggie’s fantasies, she would be well received, and would feel at home in the Gypsy camp. In her mind, she would gain respect when among Gypsies, and would be “crowned” queen of the Gypsies, receiving the attention and care she longed for. She would be “well and happy” (ELLIOT, 2007, p. 143). The need to escape the “civilized life” is summarized when she first sees the Gypsy camp: “Maggie actually saw the little semicircular black tent with the blue smoke rising before it, which was to be her refuge from all the blighting obloquy that had pursued her in civilised life” (ELLIOT, 2007, p. 146).

Her delusion, though, would not last; Maggie is pickpocketed by them (but her belongings are returned, except for a thimble), disgusted by their food, and disappointed at their not so welcoming reception:

³⁴ <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/ladygaga/gypsy.html> . Accessed 21 June 2021.

Her ideas about the gypsies had undergone a rapid modification in the last five minutes. From having considered them very respectful companions, amenable to instruction, she had begun to think that they meant perhaps to kill her as soon as it was dark, and cut up her body for gradual cooking: the suspicion crossed her that the fierce-eyed old man was in fact the devil, who might drop that transparent disguise at any moment, and turn either into the grinning blacksmith or else a fiery-eyed monster with dragon's wings. It was no use trying to eat the stew, and yet the thing she most dreaded was to offend the gypsies, by betraying her extremely unfavourable opinion of them, and she wondered, with a keenness of interest that no theologian could have exceeded, whether, if the devil were really present, he would know her thoughts. (ELLIOT, 2007, p. 150).

Maggie has all these stereotypes about Gypsies in her mind, but the reality in the camp is rather different. Finally, Maggie is returned safe and sound to her family by the one of the Gypsies by the end of the day. Besides reversing the stereotype, one may say that Elliot also uses the image of the Gypsies as a token to reinforce disruption in the novel. According to Oliver Lovesey in the introduction to the book:

Maggie's transgressive crossing of cultural domains here foreshadows her violations of standards of feminine appearance, decorum, and intelligence later. It also anticipates her commitment to Philip, whom Tom despises, and her passionate, socially disruptive response to Stephen. (ELLIOT, 2007, p. 30).

The disruption is also in relation to what is considered conventional femininity. Maggie, even as a child, defies what is expected from a little lady, and she escapes to the Gypsy camp in an attempt to live her life free from the traditional roles of the civilized society. Although she is disappointed at what she finds there, until she reaches the camp, it is a place that represents freedom from the ties of her traditional community and family.

It is important to note that the "carefree wanderer" can also be portrayed as having an "innocent" side. During the passage from 18th to 19th century, there was a gradual change in how the Gypsy, and more specifically the literary Gypsy, was depicted. If once they were heartless thieves, now they could also represent a bucolic, close-to-nature life. Gypsies are a kind of a romantic "missing link" between the primitive man and the modern society of the 19th century, and not only in Britain. Charnon-Deusch indicates that:

But with the rise of the physical sciences and the concomitant waning of the importance of biblical genealogies, philologists and anthropologists began devising other classificatory systems besides language to assess the value and origins of marginal groups. Depending on their lifestyles and professions, for example, groups were scaled on a grid with nature on one end and civilization and progress on the other. For some nineteenth-century thinkers, Gypsies represented a valuable link with nature that had been lost to modern societies. [...]

In short, Gypsies were "natural" men if not altogether "noble" savages. (CHARNON-DEUSCH, 2004, p. 7-8).

The role of the Gypsy trope is basically to account for the conventional societies' anxieties, as explained by Abby Bardi in her article "'Gypsies' and Property in British Literature":

When Gypsies enter a text, the assumptions that it is the project of the nineteenth century – specifically of the nineteenth-century novel – to stabilize are destabilized: in the presence of Gypsies, property, sexual conventions, gender, and national identity come loose. In rejecting conventions of property and ownership in a postfeudal society, Gypsies became a convenient receptacle for anxieties about other social mores. Gypsies in nineteenth-century British literature trope escape from these restrictive practices, fomenting destabilization on multiple levels throughout the texts they inhabit. (GLAJAR; RADULESCU, 2008, p. 113).

In *Quentin Durward* (1823) by Walter Scott we have another disruptive Gypsy character: Hayraddin Maugrabin. The novel is set during the year of 1468, and follows the story of Quentin Durward, a Scottish archer who tried to escape poverty in Scotland by joining Louis XI of France's Scottish guard. The plot is centered on the rivalry between Louis XI of France and Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, while in the subplot Durward's mission is to safeguard the Burgundian heiress Isabelle de Croye in her journey to Flanders. She takes refuge in Louis's court so as to escape a marriage arranged by Charles. Maugrabin appears in the narrative during this journey and acts as a guide sent by the King to Durward. His description points to an exotic and savage figure:

His dress was a red turban of small size, in which he wore a sullied plume, secured by a clasp of silver, his tunic, which was shaped like those of the Estradiots (a sort of troops whom the Venetians at that time levied in the provinces on the eastern side of their gulf), was green in colour, and tawdrily laced with gold, he wore very wide drawers or trowsers of white, though none of the cleanest, which gathered beneath the knee, and his swarthy legs were quite bare, unless for the complicated laces which bound a pair of sandals on his feet, he had no spurs, the edge of his large stirrups being so sharp as to serve to goad the horse in a very severe manner. In a crimson sash this singular horseman wore a dagger on the right side, and on the left a short crooked Moorish sword, and by a tarnished baldric over the shoulder hung the horn which announced his approach. He had a swarthy and sunburnt visage, with a thin beard, and piercing dark eyes, a well-formed mouth and nose, and other features which might have been pronounced handsome, but for the black elf locks which hung around his face, and the air of wildness and emaciation, which rather seemed to indicate a savage than a civilized man.

"He also is a Bohemian!" said the ladies to each other. "Holy Mary, will the King again place confidence in these outcasts?" (SCOTT, 2009, p. 204-205).

Durward questions Maugrabin during their encounter. It is clear that Maugrabin's allegiance is only to his own freedom: he has no religion, no property, no country, no home – to Durward's astonishment:

"Yet you are no Frenchman," said the Scot.

"I am not," answered the guide.

"What countryman, then, are you," demanded Quentin.

"I am of no country," answered the guide.

"How! of no country?" repeated the Scot.

"No," answered the Bohemian, "of none. I am a Zingaro, a Bohemian, an Egyptian, or whatever the Europeans, in their different languages, may choose to call our people, but I have no country."

"Are you a Christian?" asked the Scotchman.

The Bohemian shook his head.

"Dog," said Quentin (for there was little toleration in the spirit of Catholicism in those days), "dost thou worship Mahoun?" (...)

“No,” was the indifferent and concise answer of the guide, who neither seemed offended nor surprised at the young man's violence of manner.

“Are you a Pagan, then, or what are you?”

“I have no religion,” answered the Bohemian.

Durward started back, for though he had heard of Saracens and Idolaters, it had never entered into his ideas or belief that any body of men could exist who practised no mode of worship whatever. He recovered from his astonishment to ask his guide where he usually dwelt.

“Wherever I chance to be for the time,” replied the Bohemian. “I have no home.”

“How do you guard your property?”

“Excepting the clothes which I wear, and the horse I ride on, I have no property.”

“Yet you dress gaily, and ride gallantly,” said Durward. “What are your means of subsistence?”

“I eat when I am hungry, drink when I am thirsty, and have no other means of subsistence than chance throws in my Way,” replied the vagabond.

“Under whose laws do you live?”

“I acknowledge obedience to none, but as it suits my pleasure or my necessities,” said the Bohemian.

“Who is your leader, and commands you?”

“The father of our tribe—if I choose to obey him,” said the guide, “otherwise I have no commander.”

“You are, then,” said the wondering querist, “destitute of all that other men are combined by—you have no law, no leader, no settled means of subsistence, no house or home. You have, may Heaven compassionate you, no country—and, may Heaven enlighten and forgive you, you have no God! What is it that remains to you, deprived of government, domestic happiness, and religion?”

“I have liberty,” said the Bohemian “I crouch to no one, obey no one—respect no one—I go where I will—live as I can—and die when my day comes.”

“But you are subject to instant execution, at the pleasure of the Judge?”

“Be it so,” returned the Bohemian, “I can but die so much the sooner.”

“And to imprisonment also,” said the Scot, “and where, then, is your boasted freedom?”

“In my thoughts,” said the Bohemian, “which no chains can bind, while yours, even when your limbs are free, remain fettered by your laws and your superstitions, your dreams of local attachment, and your fantastic visions of civil policy. Such as I are free in spirit when our limbs are chained.—You are imprisoned in mind even when your limbs are most at freedom.” (SCOTT, 2009, p. 207-209).

Both the novel and Maugrabin character were not as successful as *Guy Mannering* and *Meg Merrilies* in Britain, however, it was a huge success in France. Scott went one step further with Maugrabin though: the disruption the character brings to the novel is greater, as his freedom is completely the opposite from the pillars on which French society at that time was based. Elizabeth Hanrahan in her dissertation *How French Romantics Recaptured a Past* indicates this change of tone in the character of the Gypsy: “With republican ideals still floating in the air, Hayraddin was a much better fit for France, as he laughed at the kind of national nostalgia that tied Quentin to Scotland (and then France) and the Gypsy Meg to Ellangowen”. (HANRAHAN, 2014, p. 67-68). We can see that Meg is very much part of Scotland: she belongs to that place, so much so that she speaks in Scots, the common people’s language. Maugrabin, on the other hand, is the carefree wanderer *par excellence*. He does not feel himself bound to anyone or anyplace.

Gypsies are then the repository of anxieties of the local populations, and this is reflected in the novels and arts in general. The trespassing of gender, nationality and property boundaries enters the 20th century, and it is more explicit in *Orlando* (1928), novel by Virginia Woolf. In the novel, the Gypsy is the marker of destabilization. Orlando is a young male aristocrat, born during Elizabeth I's reign and who lives through the centuries up to the 20th century. During the reign of Charles II, he is appointed as an ambassador in Constantinople. After spending the night with a woman "apparently of the peasant class" (WOOLF, 2014, p. 1116), he falls into a trance and sleeps for seven days straight. Note again the existence of a "trance", a situation already present in *Jane Eyre*. While he is asleep, his secretaries discover a document which proves Orlando's marriage to a Gypsy woman:

It was nothing less, indeed, than a deed of marriage, drawn up, signed, and witnessed between his Lordship, Orlando, Knight of the Garter, etc., etc., and Rosina Pepita, a dancer, father unknown, but reputed a gipsy, mother also unknown but reputed a seller of old iron in the market-place over against the Galata Bridge. (WOOLF, 2014, p. 1117).

When Orlando awakes, he notices he has been transformed into a woman. As the narrator informs "The change of sex, though it altered their future, did nothing whatever to alter their identity." (WOOLF, 2014, p. 1120). Lady Orlando wears clothes "which can be worn indifferently by either sex" (WOOLF, 2014, p. 1120), and abandons the embassy with the help of an "old gipsy on a donkey" (WOOLF, 2014, p. 1120) to join a Gypsy camp. Orlando is a woman, but in her own terms – she shows a kind of femininity different from the conventional, normative one. If in Brönte the clothes conveyed "gypsiness", in Woolf the clothes of men and women in the Gypsy camp differ very little between them.

Woolf does not present an easy stereotypical physical description of the Gypsies. However, Orlando sees the stereotypical gypsy, and for her, the "Gypsy tribe" is the place of the "carefree wanderers". The camp is the place Orlando goes to (temporarily) escape from her duties:

Within a week they reached the high ground outside Broussa, which was then the chief camping ground of the gipsy tribe to which Orlando had allied herself. Often she had looked at those mountains from her balcony at the Embassy; often had longed to be there; (...) The pleasure of having no documents to seal or sign, no flourishes to make, no calls to pay, was enough. The gipsies followed the grass; when it was grazed down, on they moved again. She washed in streams if she washed at all; (...) She milked the goats; she collected brushwood; she stole a hen's egg now and then, but always put a coin or a pearl in place of it; she herded cattle; she stripped vines; she trod the grape; she filled the goat-skin and drank from it; and when she remembered how, at about this time of day, she should have been making the motions of drinking and smoking over an empty coffee-cup and a pipe which lacked tobacco, she laughed aloud, cut herself another hunch of bread, and begged for a puff from old Rustum's pipe, filled though it was with cow dung. (WOOLF, 2014, p. 1120).

The natural life the camp offers to Orlando is synonymous to beauty, close contact with nature, and all the clichés of life outdoors one thinks when considering running away with the Gypsies. Orlando's vision of the Gypsy life is very much like what Nord highlights: "The Gypsy, imagined as an itinerant outside the economic and social structures of British life, becomes a trope for nonproductive work, refusal of ambition, and the delicacy and softness—the implied effeminacy—of the unsalaried and unharnessed male." (NORD, 2006, p.14).

Besides, the burdens of history, Englishness and traditional woman roles are lifted from Orlando's shoulders when she is in the camp. It represents a kind of a transition stage where borders are useless, once this idyllic, nomadic Gypsy way of life defies the concept of nation-states, and a place where her bodily presence, not biological sex, is what really matters. It is well to note that the Gypsies are not as enthralled by their life in nature as Orlando is. Here we can see that Woolf shows in a very ironical way that Orlando too brings her own western stereotypical vision on what the idyllic life of a gypsy should be. Kate Trumpener in her essay "The Time of the Gypsies: A "People without History" in the Narratives of the West" points out this enchantment of the westerners with the life of the "imaginary Gypsy":

The dream of historylessness, the longing for historical oblivion, takes historical forms and has historical ramifications, however, in its very attempt to banish history from a world it recreates as idyllic. Now far away and lost from sight, the Gypsies are remembered as insouciantly happy. Nomadic and illiterate, they wander down an endless road, without a social contract or country to bind them, carrying their home with them, crossing borders at will. (TRUMPENER, 1992, p. 853).

When Orlando becomes Lady Orlando, she becomes an outcast, and, as such, joins the group of eternal outcasts of society. The Gypsy stereotype once again is used to mark a break of expectations: gender, nationality and property mean nothing to the Gypsies. However, the relationship between Orlando and the members of the camp goes sour: the views of the world are different, the history behind the two ancestries – British and Turkish – are distinct, and, as such, the brief moment of common ground between these two sets of outcasts begins to drift apart, and Orlando finally chooses to leave the camp and goes back to Englishness and its oppression. Where Orlando sees beauty, Rustum el Sadi, the old Gypsy, sees punishment:

He [Rustum el Sadi] had the deepest suspicion that her God was Nature. One day he found her in tears. Interpreting this to mean that her God had punished her, he told her that he was not surprised. He showed her the fingers of his left hand, withered by the frost; he showed her his right foot, crushed where a rock had fallen. This, he said, was what her God did to men. When she said, 'But so beautiful', using the English word, he shook his head; and when she repeated it he was angry. He saw that she did not believe what he believed, and that was enough, wise and ancient as he was, to enrage him. (WOOLF, 2014, p.1122).

In sum, these were a few of the examples we have selected to illustrate the stereotype facets we consider important to take into consideration. In sum, the Gypsy image is built upon an ambiguity:

The European Gypsy stereotype is a monstrous self-contradiction. Idealized, the Gypsy is an innocent child of the universe leading a carefree life under the open sky, a living symbol of freedom in nature. Vilified, the same Gypsy becomes a primitive who has failed to rise out of nature: a lying, thieving, Dirty, work-shy, promiscuous savage who abducts children and even engages in cannibalism. Both caricatures identify Gypsies with nature, conceived as a realm of antisocial self-interest irrevocably at odds this civilization. (GLAJAR; RADULESCU, 2008, p. 45).

This paradoxical image that encompasses the sorcerer, the fortune-teller, the carefree wanderer, the innocent, the thief, the primitive and the seductor composes the literary Gypsy. However, the naturalization of stereotypes can be dangerous to their targets. In the case of Roma, their constant use helps erase Roma's history/histories, and we are left only with the representation of the "imaginary Gypsy", which is often problematic and frequently taken as truth. The gap between fiction and the real Roma is huge, and the main point here is to be aware of the existence of multifaceted stereotype and take it as it is: a fantasy that cannot be confused with the real Roma peoples.

4 *THE EIGHTH SIN: A WANDERER WITH A MISSION - A JOURNEY OF VENGEANCE AND HOPELESSNESS*

In her article “Necessities of Memory” of 1978, Patricia Meyer Spacks, on reviewing three novels released that same year including *The Eighth Sin*, points out that fiction has become a way of holding on to the past – specifically in that case, holding on to the World War II, which, according to the author, obsesses the public during the late 1970s. Given the number of novels that have been released since then regarding this war, it is possible to say that this obsession has not vanished. In a quick search on the Internet we have found several lists of novels from different sources. For instance, in the Chicago Public Library website³⁵, a list of 13 books in English, published in 2021, with the World War II as a backdrop for historical fiction is available.

However, it is still difficult to find fiction originally written in English that deals with the plight of Roma communities during the war (the focus of this research). More difficult still is to find novels originally written in English by Romani authors about said period. Even though there are important Romani writers that have produced works on the subject, such as Matéo Maximoff, Menyhert Lakatos or Ceija Stojka, their novels available in English are translations. That is why we believe that *The Eighth Sin* is a milestone in the fictions regarding World War II: Stefan Kanfer’s second novel is important because it is considered to be the first fictional novel written in English which deals with the *Samudaripen* issue³⁶, calling attention to the fact that the Roma were also victims of the Holocaust.

Stefan Kanfer (1933-2018) was a North American writer, journalist and screenwriter of Romanian descent. A prolific author, Kanfer was a writer and editor at *Time* for more than twenty years and wrote several books dealing with the most different subjects, ranging from the witch hunt years in America (*A Journal of the Plague Years*, 1973), Yiddish theater (*Stardust lost: The Triumph, Tragedy, and Meshugas of the Yiddish Theater in America*, 2007) to biographies of Hollywood artists (*Somebody: The Reckless life and Remarkable Career of Marlon Brando*, 2009; *Ball of Fire: The Tumultuous Life and Comic Art of Lucille Ball*, 2005). Besides, he has served in Intelligence in the U.S. Army and was involved with the investigation and rehabilitation of Nazi victims.

³⁵ <https://chipublib.bibliocommons.com/list/share/199702383/195957252>. Accessed 20 January 2022.

³⁶ According to Valentina Glajar in *Gypsies in European Literature and Culture*, the first fictional account of the *Samudaripen* was Menyhért Lakatos’s *Füstös Képek (Smoky Pictures)*, translated into English in 2015 as *The Color of Smoke*, a Hungarian novel of 1975.

The Eighth Sin was rather successful at the time (it became a Book-of-the-month Club selection) and initiated a discussion in America on the forgotten victims of the World War II. It is important to remember that the war had ended only 30 years before the novel's publication. With this book, and due to his involvement with the Nazi victims, Kanfer was appointed to the President's Commission on the Holocaust³⁷. With Elie Wiesel he has also served in 2003/2004 on the presidential Wiesel Commission³⁸ on the Romanian holocaust in Romania.

The novel covers the story of Benoit Kaufman, a Roma boy from Bucharest who lost his parents and almost entire family during World War II in concentration camps. Benoit is a survivor of the Holocaust and is rescued by the British army from a Nazi camp. Later he is adopted by a Jewish English couple and lives in London until his new family decides to start anew in New York. Benoit becomes an urban angry young man, trying to find his place in the world and to come to terms with his past. After having experienced the seven deadly sins during his life as a successful painter – avarice, pride, envy, gluttony, sloth, lust and, most of all, wrath, - Benoit discovers that there is an eighth sin and it is indeed the most terrible of them: the sin of forgetting. Forgetting his past also meant forgetting his family, his heritage and above all, his history, something Benoit is not allowed to do, once he feels he must avenge the death of his beloved ones by killing the Roma collaborator with the Germans in the concentration camp: Eleazar Jassy, murderer of his own people and Benoit's own brother.

There are three levels of the narrative in the novel: the narrative of Benoit's life, written by himself as an autobiography to his adopted son, Daniel; the inner narrative that comes to his mind in flashes, written in italics, through which Benoit remembers events and conversations which had taken place in the concentration camp; and the real survivors' testimonials of life and atrocities perpetrated by the Nazi against the Roma during the war (identified as "items"), marked by smaller font.

By the end of the novel, when his revenge is finally completed, Benoit goes back to Europe to live as a wanderer on the streets of Paris. As he writes down: "I wander now, a solitary, pointed out by nannies as a madman, the last of the caravan. [...] Americans, they knew how to adjust, accommodate. I never did, I never could" (KANFER, 1978, p. 285).

³⁷ On November 1st, 1978, U.S. President Carter established the President's Commission on the Holocaust and charged it with the responsibility of deciding what might constitute and appropriate national memorial to all who had perished in the Holocaust.

³⁸ The Wiesel Commission was the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania which was established by former President Ion Iliescu in October 2003. It was led by Elie Wiesel and the final report was released in 2004. It was assessed that between 280,000 and 380,000 Jews were murdered or died under Romanian civilian and military authorities. Besides, over 11,000 Romani were also killed.

4.1 Depiction of other people's pain and trauma

In *The Eighth Sin* Kanfer employs a first-person narrative, written in a way that resembles an autobiography which, later in the novel, we see it is a testimonial that Benoit leaves to his adoptive son. However, this autobiography is interrupted by real-life testimonials, the aforementioned "items". These pieces of information are true accounts of survivors and of Nazi commanders and soldiers extracted from non-fiction books, reports and trials, the sources duly indicated, such as *Ravensbruck* (1973) or *The Theory of Practice of Hell* (1950). There are thirty-eight of these items in the novel, and they often appear when Benoit remembers a traumatic experience in the concentration camp. Kanfer uses these items in order to demonstrate that the real devastation promoted during the Holocaust/*Samudaripen* was even worse than that described in fiction. Valentina Glajar points out that *The Eighth Sin* is a docu-novel, or documentary fiction:

Kanfer's novel can be considered docu-fiction in that it documents the Holocaust story of the fictional character Benoit, and focuses on the memories of this character and his post-Auschwitz life, written from the perspective of the 1970's. [...] Kanfer's narrator backs up the fictional story with excerpts from authentic documents. He intersperses these "items", which entail factual accounts that refer specifically to the treatment of Romanies in the concentration camps and their lack of recognition after the end of World War II. These factual "items" provide links to actual events, and while they validate Benoit's story they also anchor the narrative to the history of the Romani Holocaust. (GLAJAR; RADULESCU (ed.), 2008, p. 130-131).

Items validate Benoit's story; the use of such testimonials adds a human component, a "face", with which some of the readers may identify. As related to that, Herbert Hirsch notes that:

People are moved not by definitions and sociological accounts, although these are valuable, but by writings of survivors and witnesses. Scientific method and rigorous analysis may be able to count bodies, but they cannot communicate experience, cannot establish in one human being an identification with another" (HIRSCH, 1995, p.79).

The atrocities described had – and still have – the power to shock the reader. It is well to note that the items come into the narrative when Benoit cannot put into words what he has lived in concentration camps; for him, it is almost impossible to detail the horrors he has seen and experienced in the concentration camp. When Benoit recalls that when he was only a

child he was forced by a Nazi commander to pull a rope to hang a Roma man, the following item is inserted in the narrative to validate and to help him share his memory:

Dangling black puppet twisted against the white clouds. Gypsy like me. Death, we are only your orderlies [...]

Item: First the [Gypsy] girl was forced to dig a ditch, while her mother, seven months pregnant, was left tied to a tree. With a knife they opened the belly of the mother, took out the baby and threw it in the ditch. Then they threw in the mother and the girl, after raping her. They covered them with earth while they were still alive. – R. Bubenicková, *Tabory utrepní a smrti* (Prague: Svoboda, 1969) (KANFER, 1978, p. 72-73).

Torture, murder, rape, people buried alive are part of his routine in the camp. And one of the items deals with the experiments made with the Roma:

Item: [The Gypsy] was locked in a large box with iron bars over the opening. Inside, the prisoner could only hold himself in a crouching position. Koch the Camp Commander then had big nails driven through the planks so that each movement of the prisoner made them stick in his body. Without food or water, he spent two days and three nights in this position. On the morning of the third day, having already gone insane, he was given an injection of poison – E. Kogon *The Theory and Practice of Hell* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1950) (KANFER, 1978, p. 13).

Or when later in his life Benoit's wife, Inger, suffers her first miscarriage, the following item concerning the sterilization of Roma women in the camp is shown:

Item: Professor Clauberg sterilized between 120 and 140 Gypsy girls who had been brought to the camp from Auschwitz. This was probably done by an injection into the uterus. The mothers of the girls signed forms of consent after being promised release. Several died and the survivors were not freed but transported to another camp. One twelve-year-old girl operated upon did not even have her abdominal wound sewn up after surgery. She died after several days of agony. – E. Buchmann, *Die Frauen von Ravensbrück* (Berlin: Kongress, 1959) (KANFER, 1978, p. 216).

The shock produced by the items may be one of Kanfer's goals: after all, by impacting the reader with factual accounts of witnesses, the message against forgetting could be better "engraved" into people's minds.

The question is whether such shock can also lead to a true empathy from the reader. Susan Sontag in her book *Regarding the Pain of Others* in which she approaches issues such as representation and ethics concerning photojournalism and war, indicates that "The [war] photographs are a means of making "real" (or "more real") matters that the privileged and the merely safe might prefer to ignore" (SONTAG, 2003, p.9). A parallel can be drawn with the use of items in the novel: we consider that they are equivalent to war photographs of atrocities that render more "real" the narrative of events which are so absurd that are hard to believe. Or of events that one cannot find words to convey. Nevertheless, such are events that audiences prefer to ignore. We read, we become aware, we are astonished, we may even extract some voyeuristic satisfaction from it, but we do not keep this reality in mind because our lack of empathy. The "voyeuristic lure" Sontag explains "the possible satisfaction of knowing, This is

not happening to me, I'm not ill, I'm not dying, I'm not trapped in a war —it seems normal for people to fend off thinking about the ordeals of others, even others with whom it would be easy to identify” (SONTAG, 2003, p. 78).

Still with Sontag in mind, and following this parallel, she explains about Goya's picture “Disasters of War” and photography:

That the atrocities perpetrated by the French soldiers in Spain didn't happen exactly as pictured—say, that the victim didn't look just so, that it didn't happen next to a tree—hardly disqualifies *The Disasters of War*. Goya's images are a synthesis. They claim: things like this happened. In contrast, a single photograph or filmstrip claims to represent exactly what was before the camera's lens. A photograph is supposed not to evoke but to show. (SONTAG, 2003, p. 38).

In this sense, we understand that *The Eighth Sin*, aims at being both picture (the narrative) and photograph (the items) of the *Samudaripen*, even if empathy with the reader is not fully achieved. Interesting enough Benoit chooses to become a painter “This is why I became a painter. In my denial I thought: suppose God had decreed that words were insufficient. That from now on we were to paint our prayers.” (KANFER, 1978, p. 4).

Some scholars and researchers on the subject of the Holocaust believe that the war and concentration camp experiences are impossible to translate into words. According to Hannah Arendt in *Part Three of the Origins of Totalitarianism*, for instance, the horror of the life in a concentration camp is so overwhelming that it often cannot be conveyed to outsiders; people who have not experienced that amount of pain question the veracity of such testimonials given their absurdity; it is as if the survivor had confounded nightmares with reality; the victim is isolated and its experience cannot be expressed fully:

There are no parallels to the life in the concentration camps. Its horror can never be fully embraced by imagination for the very reason that it stands outside of life and death. It can never be fully reported for the very reason that the survivor returns to the world of the living, which makes it impossible for him to believe fully in his own past experiences. It is as though he had a story to tell of another planet, for the status of the inmates in the world of the living, where nobody is supposed to know if they are alive or dead, is such that it is as though they had never been born. (ARENDR, 1976, p. 142).

If witnesses and survivors have difficulties in narrating their experience, especially in writing, how could fiction deal with the Holocaust/*Samudaripen*? In the case of *The Eighth Sin*, Stefan Kanfer chose to employ real survivor's accounts together with the fictional narrative —the docu-novel format. However, it is interesting to see that they are clearly separated, as if the total fusion between fact and fiction could/would not be possible back at 1978. As Susan Sontag explains “(...) to represent war in words or in pictures requires a keen, unflinching detachment” (SONTAG, 2003, p. 59), and such detachment requires the passage of time. In this sense, David Schwarz in *Imagining the Holocaust* (1999) notes that the

fictionalization of the Holocaust gradually changes as time passes: in a first moment it is mainly composed of first person narratives; then it involves realistic fictions; finally, as one moves further away from the event, such narratives encompass fantasy, parables and myths.

The passages Benoit remembers of his life in the concentration camp and his release and rehabilitation are marked in italics in the text. However, as Patricia Meyer Spacks criticizes, his memories are not complete, nor are they as compelling as the items:

The character of Benoit, in this fictional version of the events, should generate the ultimate persuasion: through him, in him, we might glimpse obliquely what the Nazis really did to the Gypsies. The true enterprise of this novel is to generate such conviction, but its confusion tactics prevents it from doing so. (...) the plot implies that we need not know precisely what Benoit remembers, only *that* he does. (SPACKS, 1978, p.666).

We understand, though, that this impossibility to remember shows a great degree of verisimilitude to the effects of the trauma found in survivors of concentration camps. The difficulty of conveying his experience was so great that Benoit spent three months mute after being released from the concentration camp. Repressed memories and mutism are consequences which were shared by many survivors of concentration camps. On the other hand, it is true, though, that there are passages Benoit does recall with details, and which, in our reading, are as strong as the witnesses' accounts; passages that manage to convey in literary terms part of the horrors witnessed and lived while the protagonist was incarcerated. For instance, the passage when Benoit remembers the fate of Dena, one of the Romani girls of his caravan, who, like his sister Anna, was raped several times by the Nazi guards and then murdered:

Dena came out of the hut at the end of the quadrangle, limping. (...) I seem to see her as brown, and she exits, her dress wet in the middle, with blood running down her leg. She collapses on the ground and two heavy clumping soldiers come toward her, one on either side, and get her to her feet. I recall Dena from the caravan, much younger than my sister Anna. Only a year before she was wandering through the fields dragging a rag doll with her wherever she went. The soldiers try to pull the girl back toward the hut. (...). Once they get her in the hut, her screams continue, now muffled by wood and by hard sounds from the men. In the very early morning she is thrown out, cold and broken. Something inside Dena is punctured; she bleeds from the nose and ears and an hour later perishes in her mother's arms. Her mother is named Olga, a fierce, argumentative woman once; as she holds her dead child she becomes a dark, shaking figure incapable of speech. (KANFER, 1978, p. 117).

Trauma is another major theme in the novel. As many survivors cannot express, nor overcome trauma, they are often considered mad by other people, who have never experienced, and who could never conceive the ordeals in concentration camps. A police officer in New York, for example, told Benoit "There are a lot of crazy people came out of those concentration camps. [...] I apprehended a woman the other day with a number on her

arm. Walking down Lexington and setting fire to every garbage can. Said Hitler was garbage, so garbage was Hitler. So she was burning Hitler.” (KANFER, 1978, p. 165). Christopher Bigsby in his book *Remembering and Imagining the Holocaust The Chain of Memory* explains that:

The camps were so profoundly outside the parameters of normal thought and experience that some spoke of inhabiting another planet so that to understand life there it became necessary to reconstruct an entire ecology, an alien social system, a morality largely contained and defined by the exosphere of this place where people died by ice and fire, where the rise of the sun meant neither warmth nor hope. (BIGSBY, 2006, p. 14).

Benoit frequently feels inadequate in his surroundings, as if apart from the rest of the humankind. He thinks of himself: “I would always be in the trajectory of someone else’s fury. The loony bin is where I belonged, the nut house” (KANFER, 1978, p. 162). This anger and inability to fit into a society that is not ready to welcome survivors are constant companions in Benoit’s life: during his teenage years, he is incarcerated in a juvenile detention center for stealing – an activity that began as a kind of hobby and escalated into a disease-like activity. And he ends his life as a solitary wanderer.

Unquestionably, Benoit suffers from survivor guilt. According to the American Psychological Association’s Dictionary of Psychology, survivor guilt is defined as

[...] remorse or guilt for having survived a catastrophic event when others did not or for not suffering the ills that others had to endure. It is a common reaction stemming in part from a feeling of having failed to do enough to prevent the event or to save those who did not survive. Survivor guilt is also experienced by family members who are found not to carry deleterious genetic mutations that have led to disease and, often, death in other family members, or by family or friends who feel that they did not do enough to succor their loved ones prior to death.³⁹

Survivor guilt is nowadays considered as a symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD symptoms may vary, including flashbacks of the event, irritability, mood swings and suicidal thoughts. Dominick LaCapra in the book *Writing History Writing Trauma* remarks “Trauma is a disruptive experience that disarticulates the self and creates holes in existence; it has belated effects that are controlled only with difficulty and perhaps never fully mastered” (LACAPRA, 2014, p. 80). Many of the survivors of concentration camps experienced such symptoms and Benoit is no exception; he suffers flashbacks and maintains obsessive thoughts about his life in the camp, considering both his actions and lack of attitudes there. He feels disconnected from others, to the point that he cannot establish a real connection to his adoptive parents. Even though he shows all these symptoms, Benoit is clearly in denial and believes (or wants to believe) that he does not suffer from survivor guilt:

³⁹ <https://dictionary.apa.org/survivor-guilt> Accessed 20 January 2022.

There had been some facile palaver about survivor guilt by the shrinks at the Center, who had doped it all out. I had flattered them by taking it seriously. Guilt. What guilt? I had no guilt. The Germans did not feel guilty; why should I?

I had come out of it because...I did not know. (...) I would tell no one. I would never say what I had seen. I would not assume the burden for my people. I would not sell my memoirs or conceal my contempt for a planet that could permit what I had seen. (KANFER, 1978, p. 28).

Benoit also shows hindsight bias, which, still according to the American Psychological Association is “the tendency, after an event has occurred, to overestimate the extent to which the outcome could have been foreseen”⁴⁰. He blames himself for not helping his family survive and cannot silence in his mind the rehashing of the events that led to the destruction of his family. As Benoit bursts out:

When will this stop, this ceaseless revolution of the cerebrum, always backward, backward to the recesses of obscenity? The future is something that everyone reaches... Well let me reach it then, let me go from this swamp of my childhood. Let me go, God, release me, give me a passport from these sins. (KANFER, 1978, p. 116).

Kanfer constructs Benoit as a typical urban PTSD concentration camp survivor. This is also a way of representing other people’s pain and the search for justice – or, in his case, vindication. The fact that the narrative of his life is divided into seven deadly sins shows that Benoit cannot dissociate himself from the guilt and from the burden of being the last of his caravan; his only motivation in life is to find and kill Eleazar Jassy. In *The Eighth Sin* the guilty ones were mainly Germans, as expected. However, Benoit knows that things are not so black and white. In the camp, for instance, his own brother, Eleazar, became a *kapo*, that is, a prisoner obliged to cooperate with the Nazi in exchange for a possibility of having his life spared. As Professor Gerhard Baumgartner claims in his lecture “Roma Experience of the Holocaust”⁴¹, the Nazis often chose Roma as *kapos* because they were already despised by non-Roma prisoners due to their ethnicity. This was a way of reinforcing the hatred towards the Roma, who, as *kapos*, were seen as professional criminals. Arendt explains the role of a *kapo* in the camps:

The SS⁴² implicated concentration-camp inmates – criminals, politicals, Jews – in their crimes by making them responsible for a large part of the administration, thus confronting them with the hopeless dilemma whether to send their friends to death, or to help murder other men who happened to be strangers, and forcing them, in any event, to behave like murderers. The point is not only that hatred is diverted from those who are guilty (the *capôs* were more hated than the SS), but that the

⁴⁰ <https://dictionary.apa.org/hindsight-bias>. Accessed 20 January 2022.

⁴¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6OpT6PL5Pg> . Accessed 23 January 2022.

⁴² SS: abbreviation of Schutzstaffel (Protection Squads). It was initially personal a bodyguard unit to Adolf Hitler which later became a paramilitary elite corps of the Nazi party. It was also involved in the running of concentration camps, death camps, and enforcing Nazi racial policies.

distinguishing line between persecutor and persecuted, between the murderer and his victim, is constantly blurred. (ARENDRT, 1976, p. 150-151).

Eleazar was a *kapo* and was actively involved in the killing of several prisoners in the camp. In that atmosphere, he embraced the madness around him and fulfilled his role to the Nazi's content. As Benoit indicates, Eleazar "[...] killed Gypsies like me. Younger even. He hanged them, shot them. He liked to hurt. [...] He was a Gypsy himself." (KANFER, 1978, p. 121). Eleazar was determined to live at any cost, as Benoit remembers the following dialog back in the camp:

- *But these are our own people!*
- *Our own people? You think they wouldn't do the same to you if they could? There are no more people. Only prisoners.*
- *We can't let them be butchered, Eleazar.*
- *We can't prevent it. [...]*
- *We have to try something.*
- *We have to cooperate. Tell them where to find the Andis family. The Tzawous.*
- *No!*
- *They will find sooner or later. This way we get the credit. We live.*
- *And they die.*
- *And we live. (KANFER, 1978, p. 236).*

In one episode in the camp, we learn that Benoit, as a young boy, as mentioned before, was also chosen by the *kommandant* to help the *kapo* perform his job of hanging a prisoner. He does not want to do it, but he is forced to:

- *(...) Here, come outside, I want you to hold on a rope and pull it.*
- *No, sir. I cannot.*
- *Don't tell me you cannot. There is a disobedient man at the end of this rope. There will be three obedient men at this end.*
- *I'm not a man, sir. Please don't make me do this.*
- *Come on, Ben. Don't spoil it for us*
- *Pretend to pull. Eleazar will do the real pulling.*
- *No, I cannot.*
- *Damn you, pretend or we all die.*
- *Oh, God, where is God now?*
- *Pretend, Benoit.*
- *Pull! Slowly now! Don't let him up too quickly! (KANFER, 1978, p. 72).*

This is another source of guilt and fear Benoit carries into his life. Although he tries to consciously deny it, he took part in an innocent man's death. Glajar indicates that on refusing to obey, Benoit "becomes disobedient himself, and the fear of getting caught and executed haunts him into his adult life. Although Benoit does not become a participant in the crime, as a witness, he takes on the difficult role that places him between the murderers and the murdered". (GLAJAR; RADULESCU (ed.), 2008, p. 135). In this distribution of guilt, Benoit is both executioner and victim. And he later in his life assumes this role once again when he goes after Eleazar for the final reckoning.

Kanfer reminds us, however, that not all Germans are guilty of past crimes. During a stay in Germany due to a mission for the U.S. Army (he was drafted to serve in the Korean War), Benoit became acquainted with a younger generation of Germans who were not Nazis and did not support them; and he was introduced to some German authors who kept diaries during the war and who were not in line with the Nazi conduct: Friedrich Percyval Reck-Malleczewen (1884-1945) (*The Diary of a Man in Dispair*, written between 1936-1944, published in English in 1970) and Theodor Haecker (1879-1945) (*Journal in the Night*, written between 1939-1945, and republished in English in 2007). It is interesting to note that within his novel, Kanfer offers the reader several suggestions of readings related to the Holocaust theme.

In search for reparation the victims of the Holocaust often had two paths to follow: one was that of the common systems of justice – the Nuremberg trials⁴³ cited in the novel are an example of this – and the other was to take justice into one’s own hands, and to this end there were several “Nazi hunters”⁴⁴, people who devoted their lives to chase down former Nazi commanders and soldiers in order either to bring them to court or to eliminate them in a matter of personal vengeance. Such activity reached its peak during the 1960’s-70’s. In the novel, Benoit does not believe in the former method. According to him, “the Nuremberg trials had punished no one I had heard of. The common citizens who tortured us were free.” (KANFER, 1978, p. 29). In relation to this issue of punishment of the Nazi, Isabel Fonseca points out that:

In war-crimes trials, Nazis attempted to justify – or differentiate – the killing of Gypsies by stating that they had been punished as criminals, not as Gypsies *per se*. And they succeeded: although sufficient documents were available immediately after the war, the mass murder of Roma and Sinti was not addressed at the Nuremberg trials, and no Gypsy witnesses were called. To this day, just one Nazi, Ernst-August Konig, has received a sentence specifically for crimes against Gypsies. (FONSECA, 1995, p.268).

Benoit, now a rather successful painter, leaves all behind and embarks on a mission to find the kapo who murdered his family. Even though he was at first reluctant to do so, Benoit uses the services of a Nazi hunter, former nun Eleanor Clair, in order to locate his brother and to do justice at last. Eleanor Clair and her sister Jacqueline were ex-nuns who were prisoners

⁴³ The Nuremberg trials were a series of military tribunals assembled by the Allies in order to prosecute political and military leaders of Nazi Germany between 1945-1946 in Nuremberg, Germany. The penalties varied from 10 years of imprisonment to death. However, many former Nazi leaders managed to flee and live anonymously in several countries of South America, including Brazil.

⁴⁴ During the 60’s/70’s, the Nazi hunters managed to track down and bring to court war criminals such as Adolf Eichmann (a key figure for the implementation of the “final solution”), Klaus Barbie (known as “the butcher of Lyon”) and many others. Such activity declined by the end of the 20th century, once the hunters (who were in their majority former inmates of concentration camps) either reached an old age or died. Some of the most famous Nazi hunters include Simon Wiesenthal, Tuviah Friedman, Yaron Svoray, Beate Klarsfeld and Efraim Zuroff.

in camps as well and make a living out of selling information and dossiers related to Nazis. Their mission is “The finding of people, the uniting of families. The punishment of the guilty” (KANFER, 1978, p. 152). As Eleanor points out, her work is of a major importance, because:

Governments are not interested in truth. Governments are interested in governments. We give information to Israel, to Poland, even to the Soviet Union and the United States when it suits us. But when the information gets too embarrassing – if the Nazi is still in office, if the ex-Kapo is highly placed, if the data is too embarrassing – it often disappears. We prefer when possible to deal with private clients. Or government agencies willing to make a contribution. (KANFER, 1978, p. 152).

With the information provided by the Clair sisters, Benoit managed to track down the whereabouts of Eleazar – who was living a comfortable life in the Caribbean as the owner of an air freight company: Eleazar Jassy had darkened his skin with melanin, enhanced his lips with tattoo and curled his hair so as to pass as a black man. Finally, with the help of the Clair sisters, Benoit can take justice into his own hands by killing his brother Eleazar. However, this does not alleviate pain, as one would suppose; on the contrary: being a real murderer throws Benoit on a sterile, lonely vagabond life in the streets of Paris, to where he has fled, estranged from his wife, his son, and his painting. As he writes “Wherever I am, I sleep poorly and read my scrapbook a lot. Irony supports me and stays my hand when I feel moved to hand death another Romany”. (KANFER, 1978, p. 286).

4.2 Stereotypes and Romani traditions

Stereotypes have played a major role in the persecution of Roma communities, as already pointed out in the previous chapters. In the case of World War II, the process that led to the “final solution” has its roots in the “noble savage” stereotype of the 19th century. Professor Baumgartner, in his aforementioned lecture, understands that this stereotype, which was reinforced by paintings and early photography also in the 19th – early 20th century, prepared the ground for what was to come. The Roma were portrayed as the carefree wanderers, however, the majority of such depictions have never involved true Roma individuals. Paintings of itinerant groups by the roads were made already with the romantic stereotype in mind. Photographs were staged in studios, bearing little resemblance to real Roma. Different from paintings though, photographs were easily copied and spread by means of postcards and *cartes de visite*. Even though only around 10% of the Roma in Europe were nomads, and many Roma families had means and were totally integrated in the mainstream

culture, this stereotyped Gypsy image was the one that survived in people's minds. This, together with the tradition of policing migrants and travelers, the rise of eugenics and the economic crisis in interwar years were crucial factors that led to the *Samudaripen*.

In *The Eighth Sin*, Stefan Kanfer built Benoit Kaufman as a Roma character different from the stereotyped gypsy image commonly found in media in general and in literature in particular. It is possible to see that there is an effort to portray Benoit as a modern, urban character. However, the depiction of his Roma heritage may be understood as problematic: first because his link to his Roma past is mediated by trauma, and triggered by his experiences in the camp. In this sense, even though one may criticize the novel as to the little portrayal of what is expected as Roma ethnic culture, such behavior is totally in line with some of the reactions survivors go through in life. His "Romaniness" is more a memorial than an everyday practice. As La Capra remarks:

(...) in victims themselves, trauma, instead of calling for processes of working-over and working-through, may be valorized as a limit experience or as a stigmata demanding endless melancholy or grieving, whose mitigation or rendering in narrative is perceived as objectionably consoling or even as sacrilegious. Perhaps the most poignant and disarming kind of traumatropism is that performed by victims who experience post-traumatic phenomena, such as recurrent nightmares, not as symptoms or be worked through but as bonds or memorial practices linking them to the haunting presence of dead intimates. (LACAPRA, 2014, p. xvi, xv).

Benoit even says "(...) I would not release my pain, or let loose my **sacred** rage. I still responded to the undertow of older mournings." (KANFER, 1978, p. 56, bold added). Valentina Glajar notes that Benoit might as well be an "imaginary Gypsy", once his earlier Roma life is mostly forgotten and he has not come into contact with any Roma person during the course of his life:

Benoit's constructed "Gypsy" identity has its flaws and, at times, is historically inaccurate. Benoit, despite having a French name, is supposed to be a Romani boy from Bucharest. His grandfather is French, and Benoit remembers stories he used to recount in French. Benoit's last name is Jassy, which is the German name of a city in the northeast of Romania. The novel never elucidates how Benoit and his family end up in a Nazi concentration camp, since a large segment of the Romanian Roma, including ones from Bucharest, were deported to the river Bug in Transnistria during Antonescu's regime. Historians estimate that 25,000 to 36,000 Romanian Roma were deported to Transnistria, where thousands died as a result of starvation, typhus, or execution (Ioanid 225-37). Benoit and his family, however, share the fate of Romanies from German-occupied parts of Europe who were deported to Auschwitz and, namely, to the "Gypsy camp" in Birkenau. (GLAJAR; RADULESCU (ed.), 2008, p. 132).

Second because the data about Roma heritage found in the novel are extracted from documents and books, such as Jean-Paul Clebért's *The Gypsies*, which is Kanfer's the main source of information on Roma culture. There are even passages which are identical in both

books *ipsis litteris*, such as the passage referring to *patrin*⁴⁵. In both texts, the source and the novel, we may read:

- + Here they give nothing
- ⊙ Generous people, friendly to Gypsies
- ⊖ Here Gypsies are regarded as thieves
- /// We have already robbed this place
- △ You can tell fortunes with cards
- ⊖ Mistress is dissolute
- ≠ Master likes women
- ✱ Marriage is in the air (CLEBÉRT, 1970, p. 244-245/KANFER, 1978, p. 214).

Kanfer does not make it clear to which Roma group Benoit belongs, a crucial piece of information to any Roma. Nevertheless, this would be expected, as Kanfer is not Roma, and we believe that this fact should not discredit the novel. On the contrary: this shows an intention of developing a story written in an ethical and respectful fashion towards the Roma. Glajar explains that “(...) his [Kanfer’s] novel is written after extensive research on the Holocaust and his personal involvement with the rehabilitation of Nazi victims”. (GLAJAR; RADULESCU (ed.), 2008, p. 132).

The first moment that we perceive that the novel will not rely on readily-given stereotypes is the assertive sense of identity found in Benoit: he makes a point at stressing that his name is “Benoit”, not Ben, Benny, Benjamin or anything else teachers, doctors and directors insist in calling him after he was released from the camp. His name is the only “concrete” aspect that remained of his former life and of his Roma family and identity, things he was not willing to trade in order to be assimilated. On being adopted by an English Jewish couple, his last name becomes Kaufman. However, he never forgets his original last name, Jassy – but this last piece of information will only be available to the reader at the end of the novel. This shows a striking contrast with the past appearances of Roma characters in former novels where they have no name, no identity, and are present in the narrative only for exotic-flavor purposes.

As previously indicated, Benoit has a few “flashes” of his childhood prior to the concentration camp. Benoit’s foster parents knew nothing about Romani culture and Benoit himself remembers little about this part of his life: it is as if he is also looking for the lost “Romaniness” inside him, as he remembers his caravan times and his sister Anna, who was severely abused and murdered in the concentration camp:

There is a connection I cannot make between contempt and sex. Women are virgins or cunts. But what women can they know besides the ones in the caravan? And there

⁴⁵ Signs and symbols that a nomad Roma caravan would leave behind in order to guide and/or inform another kumpania that happened to pass through the same way. Such signs could be bent flower stems, which indicated the way the caravan followed, or markings in outer walls of farms or in trees.

is no promiscuity in the caravan. How can there be? Even a dancer is protected by her musicians. Flirtation implies betrothal. Violation is punished by banishment. My father remembered a woman screaming when they cut part of her ear off for sleeping with a man not her husband. Was the caravan a lie? Am I dreaming now, looking out the window at my sister's shadow moving in the fan of light? (KANFER, 1978, p. 109).

Benoit's skin tone is seen by the other characters as a marker of his Romani origin, which leads us to consider the existence of the Gypsy stereotype that is based on the color of the skin. To have dark skin in an Anglo-Saxon world is something determinant in Benoit's "Gypsiness": he feels and knows that this marks him as a "Gypsy" to the eyes of other people. He is not white as his foster Jewish parents; nor is he black as his friend Otis. As the latter tells Benoit: "You're not a black man. And you're not precisely white, either. You're the only creature I ever met I feel sorrier for than me" (KANFER, 1978, p. 76). One of the most interesting passages in the novel in relation to the "Romaniness" (his ethnic heritage) versus "Gypsiness" (the stereotype) is when Benoit, in his teens, goes out with Laura, one of his first love interests. In their dialog, the gap between the Gypsy stereotype versus the real Roma is explicit. Laura asks Benoit if he is "a part Negro":

I wondered how I could use this to my advantage. [...] I told Laura that I was a Gypsy. I thought that this might intrigue her. Dark flashing eyes, tales of romantic caravans, Carmen and Don José...
 "You mean like those people in storefronts?" she asked me.
 "Sort of."
 "I thought they were dark because they didn't wash."
 "Maybe they don't. Or maybe they descend from tribes back in India. Anyway, there's all kinds of Gypsies. The English ones are fairer than Van Johnson." [...]
 [...]Then she asked, "What language do you speak?"
 "English. What language do you speak?" [...]
 "Don't be facile. Your father doesn't look so dark. Judging from the picture in the *Times*"
 "He's not my real father. I'm adopted"
 "That's a switch." Laura liked that. "I thought the Gypsies always snatched other people's babies." (KANFER, 1978, p. 103).

Kanfer is quite clever when dealing with the common stereotypes attributed to the Roma, evidencing that stereotypes are constructed by the whites: Gypsies always have dark skin, they are seductive, they do not wash, they have an exotic language, and they kidnap children. Benoit tries to play with the stereotypes and to use one of them to his advantage, but he fails. The power of stereotypes is strong, and the West (in this case personified by the white, North American girl) knows nothing about the Roma: there is only the stereotype. The misunderstandings that help create prejudice remind Benoit (in a painful way) that he is a Roma – and a very isolated one, the "last of the caravan".

Other stereotypes are also reversed in *The Eighth Sin*. For instance, in relation to the future telling skills. When Benoit is released from the reformatory in his teens, he marks the passage of time in the narrative in the following way while talking to the reader:

What is your favourite movie method for illustrating the passage of time? Check one:

- A. Leaves showering down from trees, snow falling, blossoms.
- B. A train cutting through America with terminals dissolving through it: Tuscaloosa, Chicago, Minneapolis, New York.
- C. A colt lengthening his stride, becoming a yearling, then a stallion.
- D. A house rising in rapid stages from a blueprint.

Mine is the bottom of a vaudeville bill: Benoit Kaufman, The Gypsy Mentalist. Then the middle of the bill: Featuring that Genial Gypsy Fortuneteller, Benoit Kaufman. Then near the top of the card: Master Mentalist Benoit Kaufman in his only Philadelphia appearance. Finally, heading the program: The Pantages proudly presents the one and only Benoit Kaufman, direct from his European engagement. For one night only. Followed by a man in overalls with brush. Over the sign he splashes a paper: *Sold Out*.

Or in my case, Let Out. Good-by Auschwitz, St. Luke's Mondale. Farewell to another institution. (KANFER, 1978, p. 81-82).

Benoit plays ironically with the image of the fortune-telling Gypsy, an image frequently used in several instances, as seen in Chapter 3. This is not random: he takes an activity which is commonly associated to occult psychic powers and to Roma women, and subverts it by relating it to a man (himself) in a vaudeville show – a subversion made possible in modern America, where everything can be showbiz. Benoit's access to his Roma heritage is blurred and mingled with his present life in the U.S. Fortune telling and palm reading are activities that many Roma perform to make a living; however, Benoit associates it to fame and fortune in the entertainment industry. Fortune-telling can be also read as mere activity that serves only as a means of marking the passage of time. There is no occult or mysterious function in it; it is only a vaudeville show in which he is the protagonist. Either way, the subversion exists.

When later in his life Benoit meets Inger, his future wife, he instantly falls in love with her. Inger is a singer, musician and a maniac depressive, a condition that would later destroy their marriage. Inger is important because she is the first person to whom Benoit opens up his childhood remembrances. Not even his step parents, Max and Risa, would be allowed into Benoit's few remembrances of his Romani childhood. When he hears Inger sing for the first time: "Not a bad voice; I imagined it as a gold thread, an extension of her hair. She suggested the metal rings on the sides of immemorial caravans; the earrings of the girls, the necklaces worked by my uncle, the ornaments and sequins on the dresses of my aunts" (KANFER, 1978, p. 196). The difference is that before Inger, the remembrances of his Roma heritage were mainly painful ones, linked to the camps, that would come to him in flashes. With Inger,

Benoit willingly recalls happier times; she makes him feel at ease. He even remembers some Romani tales to tell her:

It took a while before I was willing to speak of my origins [...]. But I told Inger more than I had told anyone else about the early days in Rumania. They were not unhappy at all [...] Why had I never told the story of the Gypsy Adam and Eve, for instance, who before sinning gave off their own light? After the Fall they lost their luminosity and two bright bodies were created, the sun and the moon. [...]

I recalled a story often told on the caravan. A young Gypsy presented himself at court and asked for the hand of the king's daughter. This so outraged the king that he threw me (I always assumed the heroic role in this tale) in jail. There I languished until the appearance of Mautya, Queen of the Fairies, protector of the poor and disinherited. Mautya showed me a box and a long stick. "Pull out some of my hairs", she said, "and stretch them on the box. Now pull out more and stretch them on the stick." This is how I made the first violin and bow. I begged the jailer for one more audience with His Imperial Majesty. My new music made the guard wonder, and he brought me before the king, who wept – a thing he had never done before. So I obtained the hand of the girl, dwelt in a castle, and composed all Gypsy airs. The people in the story are gone, but the violin and his children still live, and still make people cry as if they were kings. (KANFER, 1978, p. 211).

Interesting that in his fantasy based on the tale, Benoit is capable of changing his destiny of imprisonment by breaking authority with his art. Inger opens the doors of love for him. And this love provided a brief pause on the revolt Benoit feels against the world; he could never get rid of his wrath, as he informs us. Love was not, however, his salvation "My father had loved my mother. My parents had loved my brothers and my sisters. We had all loved one another in the caravan, and we all had died. No, they had died; I had made it" (KANFER, 1978, p. 28). Inger also awakens in him the lighter, brighter side of his Romani life long forgotten – and somewhat imagined – and a part of Benoit's life which was truly happy – happiness which he felt guilty and ashamed to recall, and which was truly impossible for him to find in anything new after the war. Benoit's Romani heritage and innocence were both stolen from him during his incarcerated years. He longs for this background and tries to reconstruct it in his memory using the few elements left in his mind of his early life. The fact that Benoit sees himself as the protagonist of this fairy tale shows how maybe he would like his life to have been: a Roma young man, unjustly made prisoner, freed with the help of a supernatural influence and art, and who at last finds love and a happy ending. However, this supernatural help did not come when he needed it the most in the concentration camp. And marriage did not provide a lasting love.

Even though at the beginning of their relationship there was love, Benoit married Inger due to the striking contrast between them: she was not like him at all. Inger was chosen exactly because she was the complete opposite of Benoit, from her family background to the light tone of her skin. Benoit explains why he decided to marry Inger, even knowing the relationship was bound to sink: "She was an invention, a production, as elaborate and bogus

as a television special. I needed a woman who was nothing of myself, no sadness, no shadow, nothing dark, not even the pudenda [...]” . (KANFER, 1978, p. 212). The image of showbiz (the “television special”) appears once more in the narrative, here emphasizing the artificiality of Inger in Benoit’s view.

As previously indicated, the color of skin is a strong (if not the strongest) marker of “Gypsiness” in the novel. Another passage where this feature emerges is by the end of the novel during the brothers (Benoit and Eleazar) final reunion. Eleazar also points out this relation between skin color and being a Roma. He tells Benoit “[...] don’t give me Gypsy talk. You don’t even *look* like a Gypsy anymore. Only the skin.” (KANFER, 1978, p. 281). The stereotype related to the skin tone weights deeply on Benoit. One cannot escape from one’s own skin color.

Eleazar is a character that is the personification of evil, at the same level as the Nazis or even worse, as he shows no remorse in killing his own people. Besides Eleazar, Benoit has another brother, Emil, and one sister, Anna. Eleazar was the one that has always shown a degree of malice and sadism ever since he was granted the *kapo* status at the camp. Emil, noticing the evil inclination of their brother, tries to warn Benoit, the youngest sibling, about Eleazar:

- *Benoit, I thought you had escaped. They told me you had.*
- *No, they caught us ten kilometers from Bucharest.*
- *All of you?*
- *I don’t know. Eleazar is the only one with me now in E Block.*
- *Stay away from him, Benoit.*
- *He said he would protect me.*
- *Eleazar is Mulo, a walking curse – death’s double.*
- *He says he can help all Romanies.*
- *Listen to me, Benoit. He has a bad character.* (KANFER, 1978, p. 163).

Mulo is the soul of the dead who comes back to earth to haunt the living – especially the living whom it knew while alive. Some researchers, such as Jean-Paul Clebért, indicate that the *mulo* may be considered a sort of vampire: its point of attachment (its “base”) is a dead body. However, when it releases itself from the body, it may assume the shape it previously had before dying in the form of his/her double to torment the living – even inducing their victims to suicide. No wonder Eleazar is considered *mulo*. In fact, he even is proud of such epithet; so much so that when he chooses another name to disguise his real identity after the war, he picks up “Jonas Melalo”. Melalo is a demon who, according to the legend, was generated by a forced sexual intercourse between a monster king and Ana, a good fairy:

The queen duly gave birth to a demon, *Melalo*, who had the appearance of a bird with two heads and whose plumage was a dirty green colour. [*Melalo* is the most

dreaded demon of the Gypsies]. With sharp claws he tears out hearts and lacerates bodies; with a blow of his wing he stuns his victim and, when the latter recovers from his swoon, he has lost his reason. He stirs up rage and frenzy, murder and rape. (CLÉBERT, 1967, p. 184).

In his new identity, Eleazar is Jonas Melalo and owns a small freight company in the Bahamas, flying things “other people were afraid to fly” (KANFER, 1978, p. 278). In their final confrontation, when Benoit inquires him about his new name, Eleazar replies: “It suits me. I have a bad character. [...] It helped me get through the world” (KANFER, 1978, p. 280). As previously indicated, the line between the roles of victim and perpetrator is somewhat blurred in the novel as far as the main characters are concerned: Benoit is a victim that feels guilty of being alive and of the murders he commits (one in the concentration camp, although he does not effectively pull the rope and the other when he kills his brother, as already mentioned); Eleazar is proud of being evil, but he does so firstly in order to survive. Evil, as Benoit is finally aware, can be anywhere and everywhere, including within one’s family, and not only wearing Nazi uniforms. Eleazar, on the other hand, adopts the name of a demon of a Romani legend, however, there are no witchcraft stereotypes here: every deed is real, evil is indeed real.

What is it then to be a Roma in the novel? Romani language, tales and traditions belong to a past that is not easily retrieved; all that links him in the present to the Roma is his skin color and the psychological scars of the war. However, the color of his skin is a token of the Gypsy stereotype in the eyes of other people. We believe that Benoit’s Roma identity is a solitaire work in progress, a tightrope between Romani fading memories and Western stereotypes while carrying the weight of the trauma in his shoulders. After completing his revenge by killing Eleazar, Benoit goes back to Europe and lives an itinerant life, as mentioned before. As Glajar notices “Ironically, hiding from the police, dressed in rags, dark-skinned, and homeless, Benoit returns to the most stereotypical image of “Gypsies” – that of an outsider and beggar, living at the outskirts of European society.” (GLAJAR; RADULESCU (ed.), 2008, p. 137). Nevertheless, the stereotype of the noble savage, the carefree wanderer is broken. Benoit is the murderer of his own brother, and his Romani life is far from the idyllic images of 19th century paintings and photographs. As Eleazar says to Benoit before being murdered “You want everything to be right again, the caravan rolling through the Transylvanian forest. Songs. Your sisters virgins, your brothers strong. Your father alive. Impossible, Benoit. Draw the picture; don’t try to live it.” (KANFER, 1978, p. 279).

4.3 The eighth sin itself – evil, memory and forgetting

The Eighth Sin is a novel divided into eight chapters: the first one is “Survival”, when Benoit is released from the concentration camp, is adopted and goes to the United States with his new family; and the others are Avarice, Pride, Envy, Gluttony, Sloth, Lust and Wrath. In his sense of not belonging, Benoit lives his life falling in and out of these sins while trying to maintain his sanity until he reaches the last one: his final encounter with Eleazar. The last chapter is also the one that explains what the eighth sin is – the sin of forgetting.

The tension between memory and forgetting is the thread that weaves Benoit’s narrative. He is willing to forget it all, so as to survive and live his life: “(...) if we remember the dying, we have to remember the murderers. Don’t you see? If I bring all of that back, I have to resurrect the Germans. I want them dead. I want *it* dead.” (KANFER, 1978, p. 138); on the other hand, he is also determined to remember:

My memory, my curse (...). I remembered October 14, 1944. I watched Eleazar Jassy and swore as he marched four men, fathers of all, to be hanged slowly in the dense, crackling morning, that one day, if I lived, I would dress myself in the black of mourning and find Eleazar and spill his soul into the dirt”. (KANFER, 1978, p. 89).

His willingness to remember is the attempt of not committing the eighth sin, although at one point of his life Benoit tried hard to incur into it, making it the only sin that he had to consciously fight against. In fact all other sins are not as imposing as forgetting: the mere fact that one does not wish to remember a specific fact automatically brings it to one’s mind.

Besides, the fact that his written memory is the only gift he leaves to his son is quite emblematic of this need to remember. In the novel, there is no hope for Benoit: he is the last of his caravan, and of his people. He only wishes to leave his testimony to future generations, even if they are not Roma, such as his adoptive son. This is a story/history that the world must be aware of. However, as Sontag explains, to make peace is to forget:

Remembering is an ethical act, has ethical value in and of itself. Memory is, achingly, the only relation we can have with the dead. So the belief that remembering is an ethical act is deep in our natures as humans, who know we are going to die, and who mourn those who in the normal course of things die before us—grandparents, parents, teachers, and older friends. Heartlessness and amnesia seem to go together. But history gives contradictory signals about the value of remembering in the much longer span of a collective history. There is simply too much injustice in the world. And too much remembering (of ancient grievances: Serbs, Irish) embitters. To make peace is to forget. To reconcile, it is necessary that memory be faulty and limited.

If the goal is having some space in which to live one’s own life, then it is desirable that the account of specific injustices dissolve into a more general understanding that

human beings everywhere do terrible things to one another. (SONTAG, 2003, p. 90).

Forgetting is also present when one discusses the duties of memory. In this sense, we may draw a parallel between Sontag's and Paul Ricoeur's thoughts in his understanding of the issue. In his view, the duty of memory should be turned towards others as a duty to 1) do justice to another than the self; 2) be indebted to others that came before us, with respect to their heritage; and 3) to recognize that the moral priority belongs to the victims, not to oneself (cf. RICOEUR, 2004). This echoes the thought of Walter Benjamin when he calls our attention to not forget the dead, the defeated, nor to shut up once again their voices (cf. GAGNEBIN, 2006). The duty of memory towards others is not to let them and their struggles fall into oblivion, even though some kind of forgetting may take place in the process.

As such, it is clear to understand why Benoit cannot reach peace: he does not want to fall into the last sin, as he fell into all other sins he experienced during the course of his life. The choice for the seven deadly sins also marks the presence of evil in the novel. If there is an obsession with revenge, there is also on Benoit's part a search for the reasons why the Holocaust happened. In several instances of the novel, Benoit questions God and why such atrocities beyond belief happened to him, to his family and to the Roma in general:

There is a phrase, "Why me?," that cancer patients are said to utter upon first hearing the bad news. But fathers and brothers, there are other ways to die, and the same question occurs to the mental patient, to the child in the ditch, to the hollow eyes of the near-corpse, to all of the century's witnesses. (KANFER, 1978, p. 150).

Benoit cannot forgive, nor forget. He wants to know how can there be a God that allows events like the Holocaust to happen. The use of the sins is not random; it reinforces the innocence of the victims. The concept of sin involves some degree of justice: one will be punished by God if one sins, that is, if one goes against certain established rules and, with this act, makes room for evil to take place. Punishment is (or should be) the natural outcome for the guilty. However, in concentration camps one cannot establish the link between punishment and guilt, as the majority of the inmates there were guilty of nothing. Hannah Arendt comments on the difference between hell and concentration camps mentioning that:

The one thing that cannot be reproduced is what made the traditional conceptions of Hell tolerable to man: the Last Judgment, the Idea of an absolute standard of justice combined with the infinite possibility of grace. For in the human estimation there is no crime and no sin commensurable with the everlasting torments of Hell. Hence the discomfiture of common sense, which asks: What crime must these people have committed in order to suffer so inhumanly? Hence also the absolute innocence of the victims: no man ever deserved this. Hence finally the grotesque haphazardness with which concentration-camp victims were chosen in the perfected terror state: such "punishment" can, with equal justice and injustice, be inflicted on anyone. (ARENDR, 1976, p. 145).

This is directly linked to the concept of evil in a broader sense as discussed by Todd Calder in the essay “The Concept of Evil”:

The problem of evil is the problem of accounting for evil in a world created by an all-powerful, all-knowing, all-good God. It seems that if the creator has these attributes, there would be no evil in the world. But there is evil in the world. Thus, there is reason to believe that an all-powerful, all-knowing, all-good creator does not exist. (CALDER, 2013, p. 1).

There is no connection between crime and punishment. War crimes were not punished. The world did not become a better place after the end of World War II. Benoit’s life of sins was not punished either: he became a successful painter, got married and adopted a son. Except for the pervasive guilt of being a survivor, one can say he had a good life. So, in order to try to find some peace of mind, Benoit takes upon himself the mission to eliminate evil – his brother. Benoit accomplished his mission, but the peace he longed for was nowhere to be found:

And what have I accomplished by his murder? Did I truly extinguish the evil that is supposed to reside in my own skin? Or have I fed it? Or merely reduced the dwindling lives of my people? Or avenged a whole line of martyrs? Or kept wounds open too long after the fact? How long can a Gypsy bleed? (...) (KANFER, 1978, p. 287).

Evil, according to Calder can be of two broad types: natural evil and moral evil. natural evil would be the one caused, for instance, by natural phenomena, while moral evil would be the one perpetrated either by intention or negligence of a moral agent. Besides, their actions must be morally inexcusable and “evildoers must act voluntarily, intend or foresee their victim's suffering, and lack moral justification for their actions.” (CALDER, 2013, p. 18).

In his discussion over the history of the theories of evil he highlights the concept of radical evil as developed by Hannah Arendt, which, in our opinion, is crucial for the analysis of the novel:

For Arendt, radical evil involves making human beings as human beings superfluous. This is accomplished when human beings are made into living corpses who lack any spontaneity or freedom. According to Arendt a distinctive feature of radical evil is that it isn't done for humanly understandable motives such as self-interest, but merely to reinforce totalitarian control and the idea that everything is possible (Arendt 1951, 437–459; Bernstein 2002, 203–224). (CALDER, 2013, p. 12-13).

The Eighth Sin therefore approaches moral evil in the form of radical evil, which is the core force of the narrative. Even though the novel cannot be considered a Gothic novel, it is possible to find some traits in common with the latter, namely the existence of a *locus horribilis*, of a monstrous character and of a monstrous past that continuously haunts the

present. However, there is no intent of creating an atmosphere of suspense, nor leading the reader to experience fear or the sublime; although some passages impact the reader for their sheer cruelty, the intention, as mentioned previously, is to denounce the horrors of the Nazi regime and to create empathy with the reader.

The *locus horribilis* is the concentration camp. The experience of evil and horror is real and the concentration camp can be considered as a *locus horribilis* Benoit (and trauma survivors in general) cannot escape from. It is in the past, but the past still lingers in the present: memories of the camp are triggered by common events of Benoit's life. Although he tries to bury those memories by trying to be numb most of the time, he soon learns that traumatic experiences cannot be erased or forgotten in this way. What is repressed without a proper closure often resurfaces. In this sense, it is perfectly possible to apply the concept developed by Júlio França on the presence of the undying past in the American Southern Gothic to the novel:

In one of its most expressive forms of the 20th century, the Southern American Gothic, this tendency is increased by the dialectic of remembering and forgetting: the return of the past always takes place in a monstrous way, because the past is something that needs to be forgotten while it should not be forgotten. In the words of Toni Morrison: "You can't take it [the past] in, it's too terrible. So you try hard to leave it behind... Forgetting is unacceptable. Remembering is unacceptable."⁴⁶

Benoit only feels alive again with the hunt for his brother and the quest for what he believes will be the extermination of evil from the world. It is interesting to see that Benoit's character only manages to establish a bond with the reader when he remembers his painful past in Auschwitz or when he hunts down his brother in the Wrath Sin chapter. That is, we, readers, feel a greater degree of empathy towards Benoit either when he is suffering or finally achieving his revenge. Again, it is possible to borrow here the concept of empathy as applied to retribution torture narratives developed by França: "A recurring plot in horror stories that explore torture is the transformation of victims of violence into torturers. The narrative strategy of role reversal is a technique that encourages the audience, through empathic relationships, to side with the torturer."⁴⁷

⁴⁶ My translation. Original: Em uma de suas formas mais expressivas do século XX, o Gótico Sulista Americano, essa tendência é acrescida pela dialética da lembrança e do esquecimento: o retorno do passado se dá sempre de forma monstruosa, porque ele, o passado, é algo que precisa ser esquecido ao mesmo tempo em que não deve ser esquecido. Nas palavras de Toni Morrison: "Não é possível absorvê-lo, é terrível demais. Então você se esforça para deixá-lo para trás... Esquecer é inaceitável. Lembrar é inaceitável." (FRANÇA, 2016, p. 9).

⁴⁷ My translation. Original: Uma trama recorrente nas histórias de horror que exploram a tortura é a transformação das vítimas de violência em torturadores. A estratégia narrativa da reversão dos papéis é uma técnica que encoraja a audiência, por meio de relações empáticas, a ficar do lado do torturador." (FRANÇA, 2017, p. 9).

Eleazar Jassy/Jonas Melalo is the monstrous character. Even though the Nazis are responsible for the *Samudaripen* killing machine, the personification of evil is Eleazar. As previously explained, he identifies himself with the demon Melalo. He is the monster that experiences an extreme pleasure in eliminating his own people, showing no remorse whatsoever. As indicated by Calder “(...) it is an essential property of evil actions that the evildoer intends that his victim suffer significant harm (...)”. (CALDER, 2013, p.14). Eleazar proves that monsters can be assembled by governments and institutions, but they can also be found in the most ordinary places, such as in one’s own family. Monsters are among us, carrying out superior orders.

And monsters always come back: in Benoit’s case, he is haunted by the existence of his murderous brother until he manages to kill Eleazar, becoming a murderer and a monster himself. There can be no future after seeing and experiencing evil in its most absolute form, whether it be in concentration camps or in becoming a murderer. Benoit questions himself at the end: was it worth? Evil is really over? Who is the monster after all?

If the boundary between assassins and victims is fluid – assassins can be Roma, innocents may be Germans, victims become murderers, ex-nuns sell information on both victims and culprits – how is it possible to write a single History? How is it possible to achieve justice? According to Eleazar, the Nazi won:

The Germans won the war. You hear? *The Germans won the war*. The men who operated the gas chambers, the guards who commanded us, who made us kill, they’re all walking around, old men or middle-aged, safe, warm, forgetful, happy. The doctors who worked the X-ray machines still practice. The bureaucrats still function. Every now and then they arrest someone. Applause. Meantime Dr. Mengele, who stole the eyes of the Gypsy corpses, is loose. [...]
Who lost the war, then? [...]
You did. [...] The dead too. They lost. And the torn, the wounded. The powerless. (KANFER, 1978, p. 283).

Benoit embarks on a lifelong mission to eliminate evil, personified in his brother. Ironically in this case, according to the site Rombase⁴⁸ in its section “Literature/ Paramisi”, forgiveness is an important ethical value which is manifested in Roma tales and stories:

The ethical value of forgiveness is expressed in the proverb, “*Sar dživaha, te na džanaha te odmukel*” – literally: “How are we going to live if we are incapable of forgiving?” This value is manifested in different contexts we do not find in the tales of other nations: At the end of the story, the hero forgives his treacherous brothers who had wanted to ruin him because of their jealousy; the miraculously resurrected woman forgives her husband who killed her because of his lover – and at the end everyone lives happily ever after.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Rombase is a site dedicated to offering information on the socio-cultural and socio-historical situation of the Roma, developed with the support of the European Community and in cooperation with the Phonogrammarchiv, Austrian Academy of Sciences.

⁴⁹ <http://rombase.uni-graz.at/cgi-bin/art.cgi?src=data/lit/paramisi.en.xml> . Accessed 20 June 2022.

Still according to Rombase, forgiveness is normally limited to members of family. However, as we have discussed previously, monsters cannot be forgiven – and in *The Eighth Sin* the monster embodied by Eleazar Jassy/Jonas Melalo should be killed, so that: "*phujipen/zrada te na avel buter pr'ada svetos*' – 'there be no more evil/betrayal in this world'.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, on a deeper analysis, one cannot say that Benoit indeed acted against this tradition. Said forgiveness found in Romani tales generally refer to errors committed by relatives who show some degree of repentance. The evil Eleazar is responsible for is of a quite different nature from a mere mistake. Eleazar performed revolting acts, as indicated before, and he was rather proud of that.

The novel ends in a disillusioned note. Even though the Germans did not win the war (officially the Allies did), the general feeling of impunity led many people to believe that the war ended without a proper closure, with the punishment of the guilty. In *The Eighth Sin*, Kanfer was able to capture this sad feeling that was raised with the movements of re-writing of history, and specifically with the re-writing of the World War II history during the seventies. With regards to this relation between history and literature Valentina Glajar states that:

The ambivalent relationship between history and literature in the case of the Holocaust docu-fiction does not allow readers to ignore the facts, while at the same time reminding them the story is fictional, although probable. Kanfer makes a sincere effort to present a story of a Romani Holocaust survivor, though a fictional one, and his novel remains one, of only a few, that calls attention to *Porrajmos* and exposes the indifference of Germany toward Romani survivors for decades after World War II. (GLAJAR; RADULESCU (ed.), 2008, p. 131-132).

Memory can be a burden, and in order to help remembering, many devices have been invented by human beings, among them we may cite: museums, paintings, icons, books, monuments, and the internet. We have assigned the duty to remember to other places in order to be free to forget. Pierre Nora writes that "memory has been wholly absorbed by its meticulous reconstruction. Its new vocation is to record: delegating to the *lieu de mémoire*, the responsibility of remembering" (In: ROSSINGTON; WHITEHEAD, 2007, p. 182). The memory-work then can be "outsourced":

Under the illusion that our memorial edifices will always be there to remind us, we take leave of them and return only at our convenience. To the extent that we encourage monuments to do our memory-work for us, we become that much more forgetful. In effect, the initial impulse to memorialize events like the Holocaust may actually spring from an opposite and equal desire to forget them. (ROSSINGTON; WHITEHEAD, 2007, p. 181).

⁵⁰ <http://rombase.uni-graz.at/cgi-bin/art.cgi?src=data/lit/paramisi.en.xml> . Accessed 20 June 2022.

It is well to point out that only in 2015 a memorial was built in Germany in honor of the Roma peoples murdered during World War II. The history of the Roma populations during the war has been obliterated for too long, and the Roma have been denied this *lieu de mémoire*, either for the purposes of outsourcing the memory-work or for the recirculation of memories where they can be visited and refreshed, as Susan Sontag analyses in relation to the memory of the *Shoah*. We understand that the same reasoning could be applied to the Roma as well:

Photographs and other memorabilia of the Shoah have been committed to a perpetual recirculation, to ensure that what they show will be remembered. Photographs of the suffering and martyrdom of a people are more than reminders of death, of failure, of victimization. They invoke the miracle of survival. To aim at the perpetuation of memories means, inevitably, that one has undertaken the task of continually renewing, of creating, memories—aided, above all, by the impress of iconic photographs. People want to be able to visit—and refresh—their memories. Now many victim peoples want a memory museum, a temple that houses a comprehensive, chronologically organized, illustrated narrative of their sufferings. Armenians, for example, have long been clamoring for a museum in Washington to institutionalize the memory of the genocide of Armenian people by the Ottoman Turks. (SONTAG, 2003, p. 68-69).

Besides, as Sontag continues, some people's sufferings are more interesting to audiences than others. And more: victims do wish the representation of their own sufferings, but they also want their suffering to be unique. We believe that Roma plight did not stir enough interest at the time, nor the sharing of "spotlight" with the Jewish Shoah was desired. In the novel, Benoit ponders on the abyss between Roma and Jewish representation in history:

(...) the "Holocaust". Yet the people survive, a nation rises from the flames and bones and screams, even if the rest of the world would prefer it dead, the salt run in its soil, its citizens gone, vanished, assimilated, made over in somebody else's image, preferably somewhere else – Madagascar, maybe. If we are moved by that history, what are we to say to a people totally annihilated or scattered, with no testament or psalms to calibrate the deep well of the past, no compensatory country, no telethons, no bond rallies, no touring orchestras, no Einstein, no Bernstein, no Jessel, no Anti-Defamation League, no suburban pledges, no stand-up comics, no mysterious alphabet, no Moses, no Joshua, no prophets except the ones in the store windows who tell fortunes for a dollar. A people whose number was up in this century when the cities seized the land around them and forbade the caravan, when wanderers without jobs were locked outside the social contract. People who did not even have the privilege of starving when there were Germans and their friends to hasten history on its way." (KANFER, 1978, p. 284).

We suppose that Kanfer was in a way aware of this "exclusiveness" of suffering when dealing with the Holocaust in *The Eighth Sin*. His fiction attempts to shed light to the Roma experience. We believe that at the time the novel was written, it was necessary to speak for the Roma, as the memory of the horrendous events during World War II was starting to be constructed. The difference between Jewish and Romani cultures should be taken into

consideration: while the Jews preserve their memory in writing (with the Torah or memorial books, for instance), the memory of the Roma is not made known, and, therefore, the pervasive belief that the Roma have no history rises. For being a culture attached to recording events on writing, the Jews are more adapted to the modern demand for information, inventory and tracking of western societies. James E. Young reminds us that:

In keeping with the bookish, iconoclastic side of Jewish tradition, the first ‘memorials’ to the Holocaust period came not in stone, glass, or steel – but in narrative. The Yizkor Bikher – memorial books – remembered both the lives and destruction of European Jewish communities according to the most ancient of Jewish memorial media: words on paper. For a murdered people without graves, without even corpses to inter, these memorial books often came to serve as symbolic tombstones [...] (In: ROSSINGTON; WHITEHEAD, 2007, p. 182).

It is a fact that there is a vast literature on Jewish accounts of the atrocities suffered during the Holocaust. According to Ricoeur, testimonials are important because they are the “fundamental transitional structure between memory and history” (RICOEUR, 2004, p. 21). Moreover, testimonials present a human side of history, they communicate experience; their authors may be even considered the new storytellers. One is not moved by figures or maps, but the impact a testimonial narrative offers establishes a point of human connection, empathy and identification. It is true, though, that in the early decades right after the war, part of this first generation of European Roma who directly suffered in concentration camps and in other instances during the war did not wish to talk about their traumatic experiences, which is totally understandable. Such choice for silence gradually diminished over time. Besides, even though there was a great number of survivors during the 1970’s who could tell their own stories, the access of Roma populations to media channels in general has always been very limited, the opposite of what happens to the Jewish population. We agree with Alaina Lemon when she points out that:

(...) public Romani monuments are lacking not out of some cultural aversion to recollection or out of deficient religious motivation, but because Roma have only rare access to the media technologies that broadcast memory and mourning and do not control the architectural boards and educational systems that display and reproduce them, that perform them. Moreover, the socialist states of East Europe, where most Romani survivors lived on after the war, censured war memorials that singled out any ethnic category as having suffered in particular. The problem is not that Roma deny history, but that no infrastructure magnifies their memories as broadly collective, as constituting an “imagined community” (LEMON, 2000, p. 167).

In this gap lies the importance of the novel. The *Eighth Sin* is one of the many narratives that “hold on to the past”. In doing so, it brings light to an event in time that would be otherwise forgotten. Benoit may be considered as a representative of the part of the Roma of this first generation who demanded their right to be heard, rather than remaining voiceless:

he is a Roma man who was ripped off from his old life with his Roma family, became the only survivor of his caravan and was not able to adjust fully to his new *gadjo*⁵¹ life in the United States. Benoit's identity is painfully fragmented: he tries to cling on to the few traces of his Roma life left in his memory of his early childhood to construct his Romaniness, while trying to forget/overcome the traumas of having lived in a concentration camp. Family, Romani traditions, past, future, all of them are shattered due to trauma. Justice, governments, and history have failed the Roma, and the sole compensation of the powerless is revenge, even if it is against one's own brother. But where to go after that? In view of the cruelty and absurdity of the war experience - and specifically of the concentration and extermination camps - we understand that hopelessness regarding humankind and its evolution was indeed the only possible end to Benoit's journey inside the greater picture of Roma peoples struggle for recognition.

⁵¹ The Romani word "*gadjo*" means "non-Roma". The feminine form is "*gadji*" and the plural can be written as "*gadje*", "*gadje*" or "*gadze*". Depending on the Roma group, such words may vary.

5 FIRES IN THE DARK: EMIL'S JOURNEY BETWEEN TWO WORLDS - A CHOICE FOR LIFE AND TRADITION

Born in 1963, in England, Louise Doughty, a journalist and writer, is a member of the Folio Academy and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. In 2019 she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate (D.Litt.) from the University of East Anglia. She has written several plays and novels on different topics, both fiction and non-fiction, such as the thriller *Apple Tree Yard* (2013) and the most recent one *Platform Seven* (2019). Besides, she has written *Fires in the Dark* (2003) and *Stone Cradle* (2006), both dealing with the fate of the Roma during and after World War II.

In an interview conducted by professor and researcher Dr. Eva Ulrike Pirker with writers Andrea Levy and Louise Doughty in 2008, we learn some facts about Doughty's life and work. It is interesting to note that only as a teenager she became aware of the Romani origins of her family and of the prejudice she found with her own relatives. In her words:

My parents are still alive; my father is eighty-three. I certainly needed my parents' generation to get old enough not to mind me writing about the whole Romany thing. When my uncle was still working – he was a builder – he said to me, "I don't want any of my customers to know we're Gypsies." So I could not have written either *Fires in the Dark* or *Stone Cradle* while my uncle was still working. He's still alive, but he's safely retired. And his mother-in-law is dead, and that's important because Uncle Ray married posh, as we say. His wife's family owned a jewellery shop; that was posh enough in Leicester. While her mother was still alive, I couldn't have written about our family background. But basically, when the generation above my parents all died off and my parents got to retirement age, it became okay. (PIRKER, 2009, p.31).

Doughty also speaks about the fascination and the conflicting feelings this discovery brought in her article "History Repeating" published in *The Guardian* in 2008:

(...) In the working-class area of Peterborough where my father grew up during the 20s and 30s, it probably wasn't wise to mention that you had Romany blood, however distant. At that time, my father and his family had no idea about the horrors about to be perpetrated against the Roma and Sinti in Europe under Nazi occupation but prejudice they understood, all right, even from within their own family. "My mother used to hit me when I was bad," one of my aunts once told me, "and she always said to me, 'I'll beat the Gypsy out of you, my girl.'" When my father first told me about our Romany ancestry, he asked me not to mention it to neighbours or friends at school - a suggestion no doubt at the root of my abiding fascination with what is, after all, only a small part of our family history. Even so, he finds it hard to accept that had Germany successfully invaded Britain during the Second World War, he and his family would have qualified for shipping to the gas chambers alongside British Jews. (HISTORY, 17 Sept 2008).

In order to write about the Romani history and traditions in said novels, Doughty's research included a writer's residence at the Masaryk University in the Czech Republic and

studies on the publications of the Romany and Travellers' Family History Society in England and testimonials, among other sources. As such, in view of the fact that Doughty was not raised in the Romani culture.

In *Fires in the Dark*, the main character is Emil, born in 1920 to a nomadic Roma family. The story spans roughly over two decades, from 1927 to 1945, and deals with the story of a small nomadic Kalderash group (a *kumpania*) originally from Wallachia but travelling across the Czech territory some time before the beginning of the World War II until its end. The group goes from village to village looking for temporary jobs mainly harvesting crops for farmers, while trying to survive prejudice and hostility from both local populations and authorities, in a situation similar to that of migrant workers. Poverty, hunger, disease, harsh winters, and Romani traditions from that specific group are described in the novel. *Stone Cradle* is a saga that portrays the three-generation story of a Romani family in England from the turn of the nineteenth century to 1960's from the point of view of two women: Clementina and Rose. The question is whether Romani traditions will survive or not the process of modernization of their world. According to Doughty in her acknowledgements in *Stone Cradle*: "The characters in this novel are invented but many of the incidents that occur are drawn from the memories and recollections of real-life sources, some of whom prefer to remain anonymous. My debt to them is immeasurable." (DOUGHTY, 2006).

It is noticeable the concern the author has with the historical facts and with the research on Romani language and traditions. In the "Note on Language", Doughty makes it clear that the word *gypsy* is often pejorative, a preoccupation which is not often seen. Besides, she acknowledges the variety of Roma groups, explaining that:

'Roma' means "The People". Roma people use the word *gadje*, or *gadze*, for anyone who is not-Roma or Sinti (another Romany group). *Gadje* may be imagined as *whitefolks* said with a great deal of scorn. Roma and Sinti societies are highly complex, with many different groups speaking different forms of the Romani language. The characters in this book are Kalderash (Coppersmith) Roma, who are travelling in the Czech lands but are originally from Wallachia, in present-day Romania, so I have used the Vlach Romani forms of most words. (DOUGHTY, 2003).

It is well to point out also that in relation to formal aspects, we observe the use of italics in the text when foreign words, mainly in Romani, are employed; to indicate the thoughts of characters, especially when such thoughts are emotionally charged in swears and prayers, for instance; and whenever the word "gypsy" is said in a derogatory way by the *gadje*.

5.1 History and fiction in *Fires in the Dark*

Fires in the Dark employs a third-person narrator who accompanies two stories that take place prior and during World War II, covering a timespan from 1927 to 1945: Emil Maximoff's and his nomadic group, and the Maliks, another Roma family settled in Romanov, in South Moravia – the gypsy village. These families will be later united in the narrative in the concentration camp. Emil and his family try to flee, but are taken to Hodonín camp in 1942. He manages to escape, but his family perishes there. So as to survive during the war, Emil assumes a *gadje* identity, joins the Resistance in Prague and fights as a partisan against the Germans. With the end of the war, Emil reunites with the Malik family and marries Marie Malik. With this marriage, he leaves the *gadje* ways behind and goes back to the Romani heritage and traditions.

The novel is in constant dialog with history, as Doughty uses historical events to build up her fictional narrative. The novel opens up with the strenuous birth of Emil in the summer of 1927 in an old barn in Bohemia that would later be known as Czechoslovakia. He is the son of Josef, the *Rom Baró* (the head of the group), and Anna Maximoff. After his son was born, Josef goes to the city in order to buy supplies to the *kumpania*. There, he became aware of Law 117, to be enforced at once, as announced to the whole town by a government officer:

‘The implementation of Law 117 is today announced, being a Law to curb the nuisance caused by so-called Gypsies and other Travelling Persons and Vagabonds (...). All persons who have no fixed abode or who are of nomadic inclination must present themselves immediately to the nearest authority of the state for the issuing of detailed identification. (...). Prints of all five fingers on each hand will be required along with a physical description of each individual. (...). In addition, each individual must provide evidence of means of income, along with a full account of the route their nomadising habits require them to take. Failure to comply with these regulations will result in an immediate fine of one hundred crowns (...). Prison sentences will be levied upon defaulters. (DOUGHTY, 2003, p.20).

The *kumpania* was already discriminated against by both officials and population wherever it passed through. However, with Law 117 dated 19 July 1927 the persecution was enforced by the State itself. As indicated before, this regulation aimed at controlling the movement of nomad populations by registering and documenting people over the age of 14. According to Donald Kenrick in *Historical Dictionary of the Gypsies (Romanies)*, “Over the next 13 years, the number of identity cards issued reached nearly 40,000. Local regulations prohibited Gypsies from entering certain areas.” (KENRICK, 2007, p. 60). If someone was considered to be a gypsy (either being actually Roma or not) during the 20's/30's in Europe

and their papers had this piece of information registered, they would most probably be sent to concentration or extermination camps during the war.

It is well to note, though, that nation-states have always been wary of nomads in general. As for the Roma, for instance, the seeds of the specific persecution by the Nazis can be found as earlier as in 1905 in Bavaria. A census conducted there with all Roma, both sedentary and nomadic, led to a report in which they were labeled as a scourge: the “gypsy scourge”, which should be kept under close surveillance in order to grant protection to Bavarian citizens (cf. LIÉGEOIS, 2008). In 1908, German deputy Karl Iro believed that the main problem would be how to identify a gypsy, and one of the solutions suggested to address this problem was to tattoo a number on the person’s forearm, a measure extremely similar to that which would be later found in concentration camps in order to identify the prisoners.

By 1920’s/30’s, the fascist-Nazi paranoia was already installed in most of Eastern Europe countries. David Crowe explains that:

As the Nazi threat of war loomed larger on the horizon in the late 1930s, most of the countries of Eastern Europe found that unless they wanted to suffer the fate of Czechoslovakia, which was carved up out of existence in a six month period in 1938-1939, or Yugoslavia, which suffered the same fate two years later, they had to enter the Nazi camp as allies. Once war came in the fall of 1939, pressure was gradually brought to bear on each nation in Eastern Europe not under direct German control to implement growingly harsh policies against the Gypsies. (CROWE, 1994, p. xiv).

Still according to Professor Baumgartner in his 2021 lecture “Roma Experience of the Holocaust”, the registration of all non-sedentary population started years before the beginning of the war. So much so that the history of the persecution against the Roma only started to be fully discovered when researchers stopped searching in Gestapo⁵²’s files and turned to the archives of the common criminal police. The records have shown that the surveillance concerning the Roma dated from decades prior to the war. In fact, the presence of nomads has never been totally accepted by governments and nation-states. The discourse of unification of the nation and the pursuit for homogeneity (in spite of the heterogeneity of a given population and the ethnic groups that compose it) in order to strengthen the nation legitimized the absorption of cultures considered “inferior” by groups in power in specific nation-states. Therefore, small nations and minorities – deemed as “backward peoples”- would profit from being annexed to bigger nations, for they would gain access to a world of progress.

⁵² Abbreviation of Geheime Staatspolizei (German: “Secret State Police”), the political police of Nazi Germany. The Gestapo ruthlessly eliminated opposition to the Nazis within Germany and its occupied territories and, in partnership with the Sicherheitsdienst (SD; “Security Service”), was responsible for the roundup of Jews throughout Europe for deportation to extermination camps. Source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Gestapo>. Accessed 5 May 2022.

The macro nation-state aims at controlling minorities and micro nation-states. If such control is not accepted, the “rebels” are persecuted and, in some cases, even exterminated. The Roma in general have always been considered to be on the wrong side of the track as far as progress is concerned. In an age of modern nation-states, the Romani people since the Industrial Revolution have been deemed as backward due to their way of living and to their jobs as artisans, entertainers, horse traders, blacksmithing and other self-employment occupations suitable for nomads. These features, namely nomadism and self-employment, could well have been considered as acts of defiance to established governments – even though such features also represent the only way of making a living for many nomadic groups, Roma or not. Therefore, empires, proto-nations and modern nation states all have attempted to control at any cost the movements of the Roma. It is interesting to note that nomadism is one of the first characteristics promptly remembered when the Romani people are mentioned, even though it is estimated that only 10% of the Roma population during 1910-1930’s were indeed nomads. Before the war, many Roma families in Western Europe were sedentary, the middle class ones living in cities and the poor ones in settlements and hamlets in the country. In the former, a good number of families were often owners of small businesses, such as theaters and shops. Roma men were part of the military and children attended schools.⁵³

In Central Europe, the scenario was somewhat different: the majority of Roma families worked as migrant seasonal workforce in farms and factories, and this is the exact case of Emil and his group. As Josef recalls, the Roma were dragged down by World War I against their will. He recalls his father was a broken spirited man ever since the *gadje* recruited half of the men of the *kumpania* and all of the horses to their “Great War”:

Josef’s father had pleaded to be conscripted so that he could stay with the animals but the colonel said the horses were not being allocated to the gypsy regiment. They wouldn’t even admit Josef’s father into the infantry. They said he was bow-legged and too old. (...) None of the horses or men ever returned from the *gadje*’s Great War. The horses were shot to pieces from underneath their Magyar lieutenants. The Roma regiments were the first to be sent into action to be mown down by the French. (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 10).

In the novel, after the enforcement of Law 117, life was even harder for the *kumpania*. To make matters worse, besides persecution, winters became harsher each year:

Their winter quarters were far from resilient. They were supposed to reside at the Black Huts until March, according to their papers, but the barrel factory in Trebic had closed and there was no more hoop-making to be had. They had to take to the road every few days, illegally, just to feed themselves and the horses. They were working in small towns and villages around in a wide, anti-clockwise arc. The women sold charms. The men cleared snow and dug ditches. They only went out one wagon at a time because it was now against the law for Gypsies to go anywhere

⁵³ <https://www.romasintigenocide.eu/en/teacher/RomaSinitAI2014E.pdf> Accessed May 8 2022.

in a group larger than one family. Law 117 was growing new clauses every season. (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 62).

In short, nomadism, whether it is considered a strategy of survival or as trait later adopted by the Roma themselves as a marker of Romani culture and identity, was considered the core of the “Gypsy problem” as coined by Eastern European authorities. In a totalizing state, the nomad is a threat because it is independent, whether as a group or as an individual. Nomadism is feared because it can destabilize the state: the nomad is dangerous because it is uncontrollable – a body that cannot be tamed, just like the savage, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

Government laws against nomadism were becoming more and more restrictive. In Germany, for instance, the situation escalated quickly: there was the November 24, 1933 law against Habitual and Dangerous Criminals, which “allowed beggars, the homeless, alcoholics and the unemployed to be sent to concentration camps”⁵⁴ and the Nuremberg Laws (1935), which established, based on genetic rules, who was and was not a Jew and which also forbade Aryans to marry Jews, Roma, and non-Aryans in general. The fear of miscegenation leading to contamination, however, is an old concept already found in Hebrew culture, for instance (cf. WHITE, 2001, as previously discussed in Chapter 2 of this work concerning the origins of the concept of the savage). Also as pointed out by Ian Hancock:

The notion that “race mixing” was dangerous both genetically and socially became, to an ever-increasing degree, the focus of such studies [...] because it was already believed that the product of “race mixing” resulted in the worst traits of both parents emerging in their offspring [...]. That non-European blood would contaminate the gene pool of Hitler’s envisioned Aryan “master race” was the underlying rationale for the intended extermination of Romanies and Jews during the Holocaust. (In: GLAJAR; RADULESCU (ed.), 2008, p. 183).

According to the “Chronology of Gypsy History” found in *Historical Dictionary of the Gypsies (Romanies)* by Donald Kenrick, in 1936, the “General Decree for Fighting the Gypsy Menace” was instituted. In 1938 it was issued the “Decree on the Preventative Fight against Crime”, in which all Roma were classified as antisocial, and, as such, many individuals were arrested and forced to work in the building of concentration camps. In 1939 Germany invaded Poland, and World War II broke out. Jewish and Roma peoples were deported to ghettos established by the Nazi. As from 1939, with the conclusion of the construction of work camps, the deportations of the “undesired peoples” – Jews, Roma, political prisoners, homosexuals, Jehovah’s witnesses, and others – began. It is estimated that during wartime

⁵⁴ Source: <http://www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/holocaust/timeline.html>. Accessed 9 May 2022.

there were 30 to 40 main camps and hundreds of subcamps, and that around two million people were killed in them.

By 1942 genocidal policies and racial laws were full enforced, carried out by the Nazi killing machine and its associates. The levels of persecution and murder of the Roma varied from country to country. In general, the groups were sent first to work camps, such as Lachenbach (Austria), Belzec (Poland), Hodonín (Moravia/Czech Republic), among many others, where conditions were inhuman and hundreds of thousands died of exhaustion, diseases, and starvation. The ones who survived could be transferred according to the needs of slave work force in other camps or factories. In some cases, prisoners had to walk from one camp to the other, which were known as the death marches. On 16 December 1942, Heinrich Himmler⁵⁵ ordered that all “Gypsies” still living in the German Reich must be deported to Auschwitz as the last step to the “Final Solution”, where Jews and Roma prisoners would be gassed to death. The most notorious extermination camps are Auschwitz-Birkenau, Chelmno and Treblinka, all in Poland.

Besides the camps, there were also mass shootings in towns and villages in Central Europe and seized Soviet territories carried out by the Einsatzgruppen, also referred to in English as “mobile killing units”, as explained in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum website:

Often referred to as an Aktion, a massacre typically began when Jews and other victims were rounded up or ordered to report to a central destination. The victims were then marched or transported to the killing site. If a mass grave had not already been dug, the victims were forced to dig one. They were stripped of clothes and valuables and driven in groups to the pit. The Einsatzgruppen and their assistants either shot the victims at the edge so that they fell in, or forced them into the grave to be shot. Friends and families often had to watch their loved ones die before them.⁵⁶

In Slovakia, massacres of all sorts took place in several cities, such as Ilija and Slatina. However, it became clear that mass shootings were not efficient and the cost was high. Therefore, murder by gas was the solution devised to kill large numbers of people. In the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, concentration camps in Hodonin and Lety were constructed for “Gypsy families”. According to Crowe, 7,980 Roma were sent to Lety and 7,329 to Hodonin between August 1942 and April 1943. By the same time, but in small numbers, the Roma began to be sent also to Auschwitz. The function of such camps was:

⁵⁵ Heinrich Himmler (1900-1945) was the Reich Leader (*Reichsführer*) of the SS of the Nazi Party from 1929 until 1945. He was the second most powerful man after Adolf Hitler in Germany during World War II, and was responsible for designing and implementing the "Final Solution," the Nazi plan of total annihilation of Jews and of the Roma. Source: <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/heinrich-himmler>. Accessed 9 May 2022.

⁵⁶ Source: <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/einsatzgruppen>. Accessed 10 May 2022.

To exclude from society Gypsies, Gypsy half-breeds (*Zigeneuermischlinge*) and persons leading a wandering way of life in Gypsy fashion, and to educate them for work, order and discipline. All men who were not engaged in regular and useful work were to be placed in these concentration camps together with their wives and children. (In: CROWE, 1994, p. 49).

By 1942 Emil is 15 years old and has two younger siblings: Lidia (Parni) and Josef (Bobo). On disobeying his father and crossing the fields to see what was happening in the village near the place where the *kumpania* was obliged by law to halt in Bohemia, Emil heard shots and came across a fugitive: a Jewish man who managed to escape while being brought from Terezin camp to dig graves for the victims of the mass shootings:

‘Where are you from? Emil gestured towards the man’s prison uniform.
‘Terezin. You’ve heard of it’ He hesitated. ‘I am a Jew’.
Emil shook his head. ‘We try and stay as far away from the news as we can. But I know the Jews are having a bad time’.
The man gave him a long, steady look; a look at once empty yet full of hostility. ‘A bad time’, he said eventually. ‘Is that how you would describe it...? (...). ‘They brought us in trucks, thirty of us. They brought us to dig the graves. (...)
‘Dig graves for who?’
‘The man fell silent, then lifted his chin in the direction of the village. ‘The men who killed Heydrich⁵⁷, that’s what they were saying. Or their friends. I don’t know. None of them looked like trained men to me. They were just villagers, a schoolteacher, a policeman, peasants. They sent the women and children to the camps. Some of the children were being taken to Germany, the blond ones, the ones they thought would make good Germans. I heard them talking...’ (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 114).
(...) The bodies felt heavy (...) A priest, old men. Strong men, small men. It didn’t make any difference. They had killed them all. Some corpses had no fingers or eyes. (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 117).

Even though it is not stated in the novel, this village is most likely to be Lidice⁵⁸ where, in revenge for the murder of Heydrich, all male inhabitants were killed and women and children were sent to concentration camps. A few children were chosen for “germanification”.

The news of the mass murder reach the *kumpania* and there is a split in the group: Josef and his family decide to try to escape by taking the road to Moravia and reach the Slovakian border, while the other families believe that staying where they are is the best option. So, after a heated discussion among men, Josef resigns his place as *Rom Baró* and leaves the next day with Anna, Emil, Parni, Bobo, Tekla (Josef’s cousin), Eva and Ludmila (Anna’s sisters) and Old Pavliná Franzová, an aggregate. They managed to get to Moravia, however, they were stopped on the road by two soldiers. After document checking, the

⁵⁷ Reinhard Heydrich, SS General (1904-1942), Deputy Protector of Bohemia and Moravia and who was assassinated by soldiers/partisans of the Czechoslovak Army. Gestapo officials retaliated for his death by executing hundreds of Czechs and wiping out the entire village of Lidice. He was also involved in the implementation of the “Final Solution”. Source: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Reinhard-Heydrich>. Accessed 9 May 2022.

⁵⁸ <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/story-lidice-massacre-180970242/>

officers inform about Registration Day: August 2nd, all Gypsies throughout the Protectorate must report to the nearest authority. Failure to do so implies the risk of arrest and prison.

On the day of the registration over a hundred Roma were there. However, it was a trap. All Roma were imprisoned and sent to a camp, and their assets confiscated, including the wagon and work tools. In a cruel act, the family's mare was shot dead by the soldiers:

The soldier was replacing his pistol in his holster: 'You have to make sure it is right between the eyes with horses,' he was saying to the other one. 'Anywhere else, you split the skull open and get brains scattered everywhere. Always make sure they are in a ditch or something, lower down than you are. That way you avoid getting soaked.' (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 149).

With cries, screams and beatings, the Roma were loaded into trucks to the camp, which we later find out it is Hodonín camp:

Emil smelt diesel oil, the hot, dark chockingness of the haze which surrounded them. He blinked. It hurt the back of his throat. He would always think of that smell as the smell of the gadje. He heard his mother whisper to herself, her voice cracked and broken, 'Devla, arakh amen. Mule sam.' God preserve us. We are dead. (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 151).

On their arrival to the camp onwards, Doughty offers us striking descriptions of the horrible life in prison and of the decay of the human bodies and of humanity itself in a place like that. Christopher Bigsby in his book *Remembering and Imagining the Holocaust* indicates that:

The camps were so profoundly outside the parameters of normal thought and experience that some spoke of inhabiting another planet so that to understand life there it became necessary to reconstruct an entire ecology, an alien social system, a morality largely contained and defined by the exosphere of this place where people died by ice and fire, where the rise of the sun meant neither warmth nor hope. (BIGSBY, 2006, p. 14).

When he arrived, Josef was a dignified Roma man, with a portent body. After the first sorting in the camp, when his hair was shaved, his clothes taken away from him to be disinfected, Josef was "a bald, shrunken derelict" (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 183). And his condition would only get worse until his death. When Anna last sees him as he dies:

Josef was at the far end of the hut. His deterioration was so severe that for a moment her heart refused to accept that it was him. His face was waxen and his eyes closed, the red rash still livid on his neck. The stubble on his head and cheeks was completely white. She could not detect no movement of the chest cavity, no sign that he was breathing. There was a foul smell. (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 183).

Emil's life, in his turn, was also a nightmare. Besides all the forced work and unbearable conditions of the camp, he was also persecuted by *kapo* Cacko, a sadistic man who took pleasure in torturing and humiliating him. As previously mentioned in the analysis of *The Eighth Sin*, *kapos* were even more hated than the Nazi guards themselves. In one instance, Cacko orders Emil to clean the overflowed latrines where "the filth lived and

bubbled with the insects crawling through it” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 200). Emil answers back, and Cacko understands this as an act of defiance. The latter loses his temper:

The logical part of him (Emil’s) recognized, slowly and quite calmly, that what was about to happen would be beyond the casual beatings he had endured from Cacko before. There was an air of fury and sadism about the man, at that moment: the exercise with the latrines had been no more than an excuse to assuage it. Emil thought, Cacko has me by the scruff of the neck, and trousers, and he is flinging me round so that I gather speed. He is about to smash me into the wall.(...)

The thinking part of him and the feeling, animal part, were reunited as his face slammed into the wall. The head exploded with pain. There was a gushing sensation from the lower half of his face. Then he was on all fours on the filthy floor and Cacko was kicking him in the stomach, grunting with exertion. He fell on one side, his face towards Cacko, and as he opened his mouth to give an uncontrollable, nauseated howl, Cacko’s boot rammed into his face and his head exploded again, with a pain beyond pain. He was nothing but pain. (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 202).

After losing her husband and children, Anna manages to pass on to Emil a sharp piece of metal, to be used as a weapon. The year is 1943, and the camp will be closed in quarantine soon due to a break of typhus. Emil must take the chance to try to escape. He succeeds and adopts his real name – according to Roma tradition a name his mother whispered in his ear when he was born and which is considered his truest but also most secret name – Yenko. As he thinks: “I will die in the open, bravely, screaming my head off. I have chosen to die this way. I am not waiting to rot, not like my father. (...) He let them do it to him. I’m making them do it. There is a difference.” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 304). It is interesting that from this point on he calls himself Yenko, and so does the narrator, as a way to hold on and protect his Roma identity and heritage; Emil and his innocence are dead. And whatever new *gadjo* identity the world offers him, Yenko is his real and truest name.

In his way out of the camp Yenko does whatever it takes to stay alive: he kills, steals food, hitchhikes trains, until he reaches Prague, which is now occupied by the Germans. As soon as he is established in Prague with the help of Ctbor Michálek, a *gadjo* friend of Josef’s, and of Jan Blazek, a Resistance member, Yenko gets new identity papers – he is now a *gadjo* named Jan Michálek, Ctbor’s nephew – and begins to work for the Resistance. In this process, while he stays undercover with Ctbor, Yenko sees convoys of people every night:

As Yenko peered to decipher the inky black night, he saw that behind the motorcycles was a long, thin column of people, civilians: men, women, and children, loaded down with goods, bundles, suitcases. (...)

‘Where are they going? At this hour?’ he whispered to Ctbor.

There was a pause. ‘They are Jews’. After another pause, he said, ‘More Jews. In the name of the Holy Father, more Jews. I did not think there were any left. I thought they were all gone by now. (...)

‘Why do they move them at night?’

‘So the rest of us won’t see, so that we won’t realise how many are being deported. (...)

‘Are the stories really true, do you think, about what they are doing to them?’
Whatever happens to the Jews will happen next to us.

‘No one ever comes back’, Ctibor said slowly. (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 367).

Yenko constantly thinks of his mother and wishes to go back to the camp to rescue her:

He closed his eyes. *Dalé*, he thought, *Mum. Don't die. Don't die before I come back for you. I'm coming. I'm sorry it's taking so long but I have to save myself before I can save you. And I'm being so slow because I'm frightened and I don't know what to do. I'm trying not to think of you. I have to try all the time. If I think about you I will go mad.* ((DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 368).

A few months later, when Yenko finally manages to go back to the camp, he discovers it is empty, except for one person on duty: a drunken Cacko. The *kapo* does not recognize him initially and, when asked where the prisoners were taken, tells him that it is too late: all prisoners had already been taken away to Auschwitz a week before. On knowing this, Yenko tries to kill Cacko:

‘Before I kill him, he thought clearly, he must know who I am.
He pushed his face close to Cacko's, which was bright red, deepening to purple as he gasped for breath. ‘Where are they?’ Yenko hissed viciously. ‘Tell me where they have been sent. Where are they?’ (...)
‘Same place they all get sent. Same place they send the yids. Poland. The General Government. That's where they all end up (...)
‘Where in Poland?’ (...)
‘Well, you know. You know what people are saying. The camps they have there. They are as big as cities...’
‘Tell me...’
(...) *Return undesired*. Isn't that what the lists say at the bottom? I suppose they kill the weak ones straight away but I think they hang on to some of them to work them. Shouldn't think they kept any of ours. Ours were all weak ones by the time they left. They gas them. That's what the Croats said. I'd heard they shot them and burnt them but they said, no, it's gas.’ (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 384).
(...) They [the camps] are like factories, (...) factories for killing people who aren't needed anymore. They gas them. It's quite quick. (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 386).

The deportation of prisoners became common and was fundamental for the logistics of the implementation of the Final Solution. David Crowe points out that the Gypsy Family Camp was opened in Auschwitz by Commandant Rudolf Höss in 1943:

The first transports from the Protectorate⁵⁹ to Auschwitz II began on March 7, 1943, and continued through late January 1944. Authorities closed the Gypsy camp at Hodonín on December 1, 1943, and the last transport of Protectorate Rom, made up of 31 sick “asocials”, left for Auschwitz II on January 28, 1944. By the time Höss liquidated the Gypsy Family Camp on August 2, 1944, about 21,000 out of 23,000 Gypsy inmates had perished in Birkenau's gas chambers. Of the 23,000 inmates, 4,531 were from the Protectorate. (...) (CROWE, 1994, p. 50).

Yenko, however, does not murder Cacko. Different from *The Eight Sin*, vengeance was not in his plans. Nevertheless, the feeling of being alone in the world is the same:

They [his family] were all gone. His father gone, gasping his last on a pallet bed. His mother, beloved Dei gone. Parni gone, eyes blank with bewilderment. Aunt Tekla

⁵⁹ Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia – name of the Czech areas under Nazi control after 1939 with the German occupation of Czechoslovakia.

was gone. Bobo gone; Aunt Eva and Aunt Ludmila; and the others captured in Bohemia, Václav and Bozena Winter and all their daughters; Yakali Zelinka and his wife whose name he couldn't think of and Justin and Miroslav and their wives and children and old Pavliná who would have known before any of them; and all the other Kalderash in all the other camps and the Lowari and the Polska Roma and the Sinti and Boyash (...). Dead, all dead. Pushed into the trucks, climbing up willingly perhaps, believing that nothing could be worse than the camp, not knowing that the worst still lay ahead. (...)
He was the only Rom left in the world. (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 388).

Yenko then goes back to Prague, starts working with Blazek in the black market of goods, and in 1945 the atmosphere is heavy due to the imminent end of the war: "The German soldiers were as unpredictable as dogs – and German civilians were fleeing in droves, making their escape while their soldiers were still there to protect them" (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 402). Many fear that the Germans will not leave the city without burning it to the ground. The newspapers headlines are that Hitler has died. Yenko thinks:

Hitler is dead! Wake up, everyone! Hitler is dead !No, no, that wasn't what he wanted to shout. He wanted to shout, Hitler is dead, but I AM STILL ALIVE. That man, that evil colossus – the gadjo to end all gadjos who spread poison over the earth, he is dead and I, whom he thought to squash like an insect, I AM STILL ALIVE" (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 404-405).

The revolt of the Czech population could no longer be suffocated. Prague becomes a battleground Czechs against the Germans. In the meantime, Yenko is unwillingly dragged to combat with the partisans⁶⁰ against the Germans. Shootings and crossfire between the two sides occur at any time in the city, and German soldiers who were supposed to leave town in an orderly manner murder and torture Czechs, and Czechs, in their turn, try to get their revenge on Germans.

In the middle of this, Yenko reunites with Marie Malik in Prague. She was a Roma girl who he had known at the camp and who was also imprisoned there with her family. He fell in love with her, but in the terrible conditions they were at that time, it was impossible to envision a future of any kind. Marie tells him she had witnessed what happened to his family:

I saw your mother just before she was pushed into the truck. (...)
'Your mother was there. Your little brother was in her arms. He had been very ill after you left' (...) She would not tell him that by then Bobo was blind. 'Your mother was standing holding him. Your aunts Ludmila and Eva were clinging on to her arms. They were crying but she wasn't.'
'Tekla?'
'She died during the quarantine. Lots of people died. Some of the guards too.'
(DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 440-441).

The deportation of Roma families from almost all areas controlled by the Third Reich in Europe took place between 1942 and 1944, and Auschwitz-Birkenau camp was their last

⁶⁰ Members of secret armed forces who fought for the Resistance in occupied territories against Nazi troops during World War II.

stop. According to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum⁶¹ site, it is estimated that around 23,000 of Roma men, women and children were imprisoned there. There was a specific part of the camp known as the Gypsy Camp – the Zigeunerlager – that existed for 17 months and where Roma families stayed together until August 2, 1944, when the Roma were murdered in gas chambers. It is well to note that the head physician of the camp was Dr. Joseph Mengele, and he carried out horrific medical experiments with the Roma, including children.

Marie's family only managed to escape Auschwitz because they were not considered gypsies, a major blow on her father's Roma pride: "We had been released because we weren't considered *gypsies*, because someone in Brno who had never even met us had looked at the paperwork and decided we didn't count. Being not-*gypsies* in their eyes had saved us". (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 443).

With the end of the war, Yenko decides to marry Marie and begin anew, together with her parents. There are feelings of sorrow, sadness and anger in him. However, there is also a determination to live and resume Roma traditions – the Roma traditions of his group, as Marie belongs to a different Roma group, a settled one, which Yenko considers not true Roma – and pass it on to the next generations. Bigsby dwells on the choice for a new life which can be applied to Yenko's attitude:

As related to this choice for a new life, Bigsby, considering the necessity of keeping alive the memory of the atrocities suffered in the camps by its survivors, quotes Aharon Appelfeld who comments on the subject:

Is it a legitimate function to sustain the memory of injustice? Holocaust survivors, Aharon Appelfeld has said, 'had faced excruciating choices, the main one being whether to continue living with the memory of the Holocaust or to start a new life'. Many 'had chosen the new life. The choice was not lightly undertaken. They had wanted to spare their children the memory of suffering and the shame, they wanted to raise them to become free men and women, without that dismal legacy'. (BIGSBY, 2006, p. 18).

The return to Roma traditions would be a strategy to overcome the past and the horrific memories of the war. Forgetting is impossible, but not telling such histories to future generations in a family context is possible, however difficult this choice may be.

5.2 The role of women

⁶¹ Source: <http://www.auschwitz.org/en/>. Accessed 19 May 2022.

Most of the Roma have been sedentary for quite a long time, especially in Europe after World War II. However, during the time period in which the novel *Fires in the Dark* takes place, the Kalderash Roma group depicted in it was nomadic for three main reasons: 1) similar to the situation of the contemporary migrant workers, the group moves from village to village in order to find temporary jobs (mainly in agriculture and coppersmith activities) so as to make a living, while trying to remain undercover from authorities and to escape from persecutions in general; 2) to be true to the traditional “on the road” way of living of the Roma culture, which some of the members are really fond of, and 3) because the Roma were not allowed by authorities to live or camp outside ghettos or to own lands.

Gender, race, and class are crucial factors when addressing the situation of diasporic communities, as pointed out by Deepika Bahri in her essay “Feminism and Postcolonialism in a Global and Local Frame”. Avtar Brah and Ann Phoenix in the essay “Ain’t I a Woman? Revisiting Intersectionality” develop even further this relationship between categories by adopting the concept of intersectionality, in which said factors are in fact part of a greater picture: the structure that makes such categories matter is what should be examined. As they analyze:

We regard the concept of ‘intersectionality’ as signifying the complex, irreducible, varied, and variable effects which ensue when multiple axis of differentiation – economic, political, cultural, psychic, subjective and experiential – intersect in historically specific contexts. The concept emphasizes that different dimensions of social life cannot be separated out into discrete and pure strands. (BRAH; PHOENIX, 2004, p. 76).

Hedina Tahirović-Sijerčić and Cynthia Levine-Rasky also explain intersectionality in the introduction to the book *A Romani Women’s Anthology Spectrum of the Blue Water* in relation to the lives of Romani women:

For the Roma, life in Europe is characterized by flagrant and public anti-Roma racism in Europe (see Fekete; Council of Europe 2012; European Roma and Travellers Forum), often against Romani women (Oprea; Council of Europe 2013; Szalai and Zentai). In Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain, the average situation of Roma women in core areas of social life such as education, employment and health, is worse than that of Roma men (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 45). [...]

[...]Research such as this shows the forms of oppression that affect Romani women specifically. It registers not the “fact” of difference, but the economic and political contexts in which Romani women are differentiated and treated inequitably. Romani women’s ethnicity and gender interest, not at the expense of their class and nationality, but simultaneously. And not all contexts for Romani women’s inequalities are situated in dominant society. They may also found in Romani communities, embedded in traditional social organization. [...] Tahirović-Sijerčić explains that Romani women’s voices “are mostly ignored by the community which is still influenced by power of the men.... Because of their ideals, their education, and their knowledge, these women are discriminated against not just by non-Romani people, but also by their own people, both men and women, making the situation

more difficult.” (TAHIROVIĆ-SIJERČIĆ; LEVINE-RASKY, C. (ed.), 2017, p. 5-6).

In a context of oppression (i.e. a colonial situation, a concept already discussed in Chapter 1) of a postcolonial minority within the heart of Europe, the situation of women is even more complicated. Besides dealing with the consequences of capitalism and its work exploitation system, and racism, women also have the weight of patriarchy on their shoulders. As Clifford points out:

Diaspora women are caught between patriarchies, ambiguous pasts, and futures. They connect and disconnect, forget and remember, in complex, strategic ways. The lived experiences of diasporic women thus involve painful difficulty in mediating discrepant worlds. ‘Community’ can be a site both of support and oppression” (CLIFFORD, 1997, p. 259).

Bearing in mind this concept of intersectionality, Romani women’s lives are crossed by these axes of differentiation, and many of such axes are present in *Fires in the Dark*. Even though they are constantly oppressed and silenced by men in and out of the *kumpania*, their actions show ingenuity and are fundamental for the survival of the group and ultimately to the survival of Romani heritage. It is our intention here to focus on two characters: Anna and Liba, who are depicted, together with the other female characters, in a fashion completely unrelated to the *female fatale* or witch/sorcerer stereotypes dealt with in Chapters 2 and 3; they are ordinary women with their strengths and weaknesses.

The novel opens with an only-women scene: five Roma women assist in the complicated birth of Emil in July 1927, son of Josef and Anna Maximoff. As aforementioned, according to a Romani tradition, the boy has three names: Emil, his common name; Frantisek, his *gadje* name; and Yenko, his real name which only he and his mother know. Other members of the *kumpania* include Tekla, a foster aunt to Emil; Yakali and Václav, heads of other two families, the former father of two boys and the latter father of three daughters. Here we have the first glimpse of the value of women in the group: “A man with three daughters would always feel at a disadvantage next to a man who had produced sons.” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p.14). According to Josef, Václav would not get a good dowry for their daughters “(...) they were short like their father and dark like their mother. Zdenka had receding gums and bad skin.” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 15).

Anna Demeter (her maiden name) was the chosen one to be married to Josef. As explained in the narrative, “Josef had married late for such an eligible Rom – he had been hard to please, and many a family had paraded their daughters before his parents over the years.” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 73). Demeter in Greek mythology is the goddess of corn and

agriculture, fertility, marriage, and motherhood, and Anna will gradually show her “goddess-like” self as the novel progresses.

After marrying Josef, she becomes Anna Maximinoff. Even though it was an arranged marriage, she loves Josef and vice versa. She is beautiful and delicate, and her face is described as “a smooth skinned picture of graciousness, her eyes alight, her fine lips turned in a seraphic smile” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 73). “Anna had long arms that seemed to lift in the breeze when she danced (...). Anna could lose her temper and the men around her – even women – would sigh at the dark flash of her eyes” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 75).

In a patriarchal community as the Roma is, Anna is only considered as a complete woman and a wife that fulfills her role after she gives birth. She raises her status from a *bori* (a childless woman) to a *romni* (a mother). However, it takes seven years until she finally gets pregnant for the first time. From this point on, Anna’s main goal in life is to protect and to care for her son. The novel describes several moments of the domestic life of the group, where women are responsible for cooking, washing clothes, taking care of children, among other domestic chores – the only field allowed for women to act, however, always observing the traditions and the hierarchy of male power. Physical violence of husbands towards wives is common. For instance, when men are discussing what the *kumpania* will do next in the middle of a merciless winter:

There was a sudden burst of laughter from the adjacent wagon. The women were becoming raucous.
‘Someone go and tell those women to keep quiet! We are doing business here!’ growled Václav. The other men glanced at each other. No one was minded to go out in the cold and dark. ‘She’ll feel the back of my hand tonight ...’ muttered Václav. He could not forgive Božena for giving him five healthy girls and one sick son. (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 63).

The *kumpania* travels from site to site in order to find temporary work so as to make a living. In every place they go, they are received with prejudice, scorn and mistrust by local villagers and authorities. Gradually the situation for the group gets worse. The political situation in Czechoslovakia is very unstable due to the proximity of World War II. Winters are severe, food and employment are increasingly scarce and disease spreads through the community. Laws are more and more restrictive against Roma mobility.

When Emil gets sick with pneumonia and almost dies, however, there is a change in Anna’s drive. She makes a promise to herself, which will be particularly important to understand her behavior in the novel:

The illness had come amongst them because they were at the end of their resources. It had nearly taken her child because she had been weak and inadequate. She must work harder, be stronger, more like Tekla. Fate must never again have the chance to play a part in whether her child lived or died. It would be she, Anna Sariyia

Maximoff, Kalderaška, who decided that from now on. God forgive her presumption. (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 83-84).

In 1939 war breaks out. In 1942, as the persecution increases, the *kumpania* splits, as Josef and family decide to leave for Slovakia to try to escape, while the other families decide to stay in Bohemia. By this time, Anna has already two other children: daughter Parni and son Bobo. As she realizes “She had torn along the length of the scar tissue still left from Emil. It had taken months to heal. Three children, it was enough (...). Her body felt turned inside out, wrung out. She was a bag of bones.” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 122).

Their attempt to escape fails, and they are taken to Hodonín camp. Families were torn apart: men were separated from women, and women were separated from their small children. Emil and Josef were located in one ward of the camp, while Anna and the other women were in another building. Parni and Bobo were sent to the children’s block. From this point on, Anna is determined to survive and mainly keep her family alive: “She thought, *I must not go mad. If I am to protect my family and save my children’s lives, then I must think clearly and calmly the whole time we are here. (...). I must not go mad.*” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 187).

Doughty offers us a glimpse of the histories of women victims of the atrocities of the Third Reich in concentration camps:

There were over three hundred of them in the women’s block now. About twenty had gone mad. (...). One of the mad ones was a Kalderaška, the only other in the block, apart from Anna’s group. (...). The woman mumbled at her, her eyes glistening in the gloom of her lower bunk, flapping her hand in front of her face as if attempting to bat away some invisible threat.

A woman sitting on an opposite bunk shook her head. ‘That one is lost, sister,’ she said to Anna. ‘She was on my transport. I watched her go mad. Her children are all dead.’ (...). Five of her children and her parents and everyone else were dead already, she told me. (...). She only had one child left, a boy. He was almost dead, anyone could see that.’ The woman shook her head again, and sighed. ‘We were in the train for three days,’ she continued, ‘just standing in the station, waiting to leave.’ Anna crossed herself. ‘They passed some water in but a couple of women at the front got it all. This one’s boy was crying for water, getting weaker and weaker and more hoarse ...’ (...)

‘She hit him,’ the other woman said simply. ‘Nobody blamed her. We all just wanted him to shut up. Our children were thirsty too. But this boy was crying and crying and everyone knew he was dying and it was driving us all mad. And eventually she started hitting him. And then his crying changed and he was pleading with her but she carried on hitting him and he died.’ (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 218-220).

Anna quickly learns that survival on a concentration camp depends on ingenuity, on knowing the time and place to speak and to silence, and on the complicity among prisoners. She manages to see her children in the other block by bribing the *kapos* with the little food she manages to hide in her clothes, for example. However, as the situation of the camp grows worse with diseases such as pneumonia and typhus, and with the increasingly sadistic

behavior of German guards and authorities in the camp, Anna realizes that they may not escape alive from that hell. Her husband's health is rapidly deteriorating. Her son Emil is the punching bag of a *kapo*, who tortures him out of sheer pleasure. Her little children are getting more and more sick and aloof. Finally, Parni dies:

'Anna,' the kapo snapped, 'registered in Bohemia, three children, František, Lidia and Josef.'

Emil, Parni, Bobo. Oh God.

'It is me,' said Anna, staring at the kapo.

The woman at least had the grace to drop her gaze, and Anna remembered that later. She had looked at the floor. 'Your daughter died this morning,' she said. 'Lidia Růžicková. She died. They told me to tell you.' (...)

Anna pushed herself upright, closed her eyes tightly and wrapped her arms around her body. Her need to hold Parni was excruciating, a deep physical craving. (...) (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 244-245).

Anna's hatred for the *gadje* only grows: "I understand now, she thought, how hatred can make you dull rather than keen – how it can weigh you down until it is impossible to feel any other emotion, until there is nothing else to be bothered about" (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 256). She realizes that the only one who has a good chance of survival is her oldest son. As she tells Pavliná: "My daughter died alone, locked in a stinking *gadje* prison hut. (...) My Bobo will be next. Josef is ill already. Tekla. Who knows which of us will live or die? But I can save one, and I will save him." (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 249). She devises a plan and manages to guide Emil:

'Kill a *gadjo*.' Anna's voice was sharp.

Emil looked at his mother. She continued staring straight ahead as they walked.

'Pick a poor one,' she said, 'a farm worker or a peasant out in his field. Then you must bury the body so it won't be found. Kill him in the morning and spend all day burying him, then travel at night. If they find the body before you're out of the district, you're as good as dead.'

Emil thought about killing a man.

Anna said, 'That's where the others have gone wrong. They have tried to stay away from people, afraid of being caught. You need to hunt one down. I picked up a piece of metal at the quarry last week. It was sticking out of the ground. It's hidden behind my bunk. It's sharp enough to kill. I've been rubbing it, at night when the others are asleep. Each time I do it, I think about you killing a white person, just one *gadjo* for all the lives they have taken from us; Parni, your father, the hundreds of others in here. When you are killing him, think about your father gasping for breath and his soul trapped forever because I couldn't even open a window to let it out. His ghost will wander forever about this place. He will be in torment always. There was blood at your birth, Yenka, a knife. Maybe that meant something. A sign.' (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 283-284).

Thanks to his mother, Emil manages to escape and survive. Anna keeps her promise to keep him alive at all costs. He carries out the plan exactly as his mother designed, including killing an old *gadje* couple. As the novel progresses, we learn that Emil becomes Frantisek, assumes a *gadje* identity and makes a living during some time as a smuggler in the black market after the end of the war. However, when he reunites with Marie, a Roma girl he first

met in the concentration camp, he decides to go back to his roots and to keep up the Roma tradition of his Kalderash upbringing – he is the only survivor of his group and bearer of the tradition. As Emil fantasizes about his future offspring, “He saw himself in old age, bewhiskered and white-haired, sitting beside a fire while his girls argued about which of them should have the honour of bringing him his lime-blossom tea” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 479), it is clear his intention of maintaining patriarchy and his male privileges, as his life once was when he was a child and prince of his Roma group and “[...] used to being adored by a *kumpania* full of girls and women. Adoration was his due” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 69).

The novel shows the agency of a character that would not be considered a feminist in the traditional paradigm of the white western feminism. Anna is a woman deeply involved in her Roma community, true to Roma traditions, and observant of her duties as a married Roma woman. She is also able to survive by negotiating the balance between tradition and patriarchy within the most critical circumstances. By operating through the “paths of wit”⁶² both inside and outside the community, and in the concentration camp, Anna succeeds to keep at least one of her sons alive, and, as a consequence, to maintain her Roma lineage which was almost completely destroyed during World War II. True to her group’s coppersmith heritage, Anna manufactures a small metal weapon for her son so that he is able to defend himself and succeed in his escape from the camp. This is, in our opinion, one of the most powerful instances where the will to survive in the present and tradition are aligned in the narrative. Anna is undoubtedly a symbol of resistance by ingenuity – a type of resistance which is often “erased” by official history and also by celebrated male heroes as far as women are concerned.

What Cabnal explains about the relationship between indigenous women and the maintenance of the patriarchy can be well applied in this case:

Designated by the cosmogonic heteronorm, indigenous women assume the role of caretakers of the culture, protectors, reproducers and ancestral guardians of that original patriarchy, and we reaffirm in our bodies heterosexuality, compulsory motherhood, and the ancestral masculine pact that women in continuum, let us be tributaries for the ancestral patriarchal supremacy⁶³.

Anna’s body is still expropriated by the patriarchy in a colonial situation. She does not question the system in which she is inserted where women are abused, beaten and have no

⁶² My translation. Original: “Caminos de astucia” (CABNAL, 2010, p. 11).

⁶³ My translation. Original: “Designadas por la heteronorma cosmogónica las mujeres indígenas asumimos el rol de cuidadoras de la cultura, protectoras, reproductoras y guardianas ancestrales de ese patriarcado originario, y reafirmamos en nuestros cuerpos la heterosexuality, la maternidad obligatoria, y el pacto ancestral masculino de que las mujeres en continuum, seamos tributarias para la supremacia patriarcal ancestral.” (CABNAL, 2010, p. 19).

voice. However, she shows the beginning of a self-conscience, as developed by Cabnal, when, for instance, she considers her own body after having children, or when she revolts against God – the superior male spirit. Even though Anna regrets it and thinks she failed, she considers herself for some time an invincible woman – a goddess who nurtures and provides for her children, and not a victim. Her prayer shows that:

(...) Forgive me. It is enough. I deserve this perhaps, but my children? Must my children suffer too? She knew her sin. I thought I was so strong, so capable, whatever was thrown at us. I congratulated myself often enough. We were surviving the war so well I thought, thanks to my resourcefulness. I always fed the children a little something every day, even when we had to beg. (...) Right up until we got here, I thought my strength was limitless. (...). Forgive me my pride, O Del. I admit that I have failed. I thought I was God and I am not. (DOUGHTY, 2005, p. 195-196).

Anna represents the strength of one of the many Romani women whose spirit was not beaten down during World War II. Different from many representations found in literature, Doughty presents us with a character that escapes the gypsy stereotype; one who is proud of her heritage and who is part of a silenced and oppressed minority inside an already silenced and forgotten history. Besides, her character can be understood as a feminist, one that is placed outside the white western feminist axis, even if placed inside Europe. Anna refuses to play the victim role imposed on her; however, she has not fully reached the self-awareness level (*autoconciencia*) and appropriation of her own body as explained by Cabnal: “Therefore, self-awareness emerges, which gives an account of how this body has lived in its personal, particular and temporal history, the different manifestations and expressions of patriarchy and all the oppressions derived from them.”⁶⁴

Another female character who is important to understand and denounce the problems poor women face in a patriarchal society is Liba. She is the wife of Jan Malik and mother of Marie, and their family is settled in the gypsy village of Romanov, in Orlavá, South Moravia. Liba is described as a small, secretive woman who wears her headscarf so tight as if the “(...) dark cloth might keep captive any thoughts that are in danger of escaping. She has learnt, over time, that to let a thought escape is a very dangerous thing indeed.” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 156). Her husband Jan is a large, violent man, “patriarch and ruler of all he surveys” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 156). He likes fighting and “fought with other men – any man – and he practiced on his wife” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 157).

Jan abuses his wife physically, sexually and morally. To beat a wife is something common in that community, however, Jan was uncontrollable: “There was a way to hit your

⁶⁴ My translation. Original: “Por lo tanto emerge la autoconciencia, que va dando cuenta de cómo ha vivido este cuerpo en su historia personal, particular y temporal, las diferentes manifestaciones y expresiones de los patriarcados y todas las opresiones derivadas de ellos.” (CABNAL, 2010, p.22).

wife, the men of Romanov agreed, and Jan Malik went way beyond that.” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 157). In one of the passages, the beating is described: “He took his wife out to the front of the cottage, where the whole of Romanov could watch her humiliation, and beat her with a leather strap until her blouse was shredded and stained with blood. The others came to their doors to watch with narrowed eyes, but no one intervened.” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 157). Liba had no one to turn to; she had no family, father or brothers to take care of her:

If she had been a girl from a respectable Roma family then her father or another male relative would have reclaimed her long ago – but Liba belonged to nobody. She was an orphan, sold to Jan by an uncle when a group of itinerant farm-workers passed through Orlová during the cucumber season. She knew nothing of her family history – the aunt and uncle who raised her had told her nothing. As she had no background and no trade, Jan had got her cheap.” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 158).

Liba’s story echoes with the words of Domnica Radulescu in her essay “Performing the Female Gypsy” on the lives of Roma women:

According to Gypsy laws since early modern Europe to recent times, the lives of Gypsy women have often held little value, and could easily be taken away without even a severe punishment to the criminal, and practices like forced juvenile marriages have been quite common. Recent reports on the situation of Roma women in Europe note that since Romani women often live at the fringes of society either because they are economically deprived or socially isolated by anti-Roma behaviors, they may be even more vulnerable than women in general. (In: GLAJAR; RADULESCU (ed.), 2008, p. 198).

The beatings continued even when Liba gave birth. However, Jan never beats Marie: “He never needed to. She was used to standing in the corner and watching as her mother was hammered to the floor, so one of her father’s dark looks was always enough to make her drop to her knees and bow her head in submission” .” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 160). The cycle of abuse, however, would be perpetuated: when Marie reaches puberty, Liba notices that Jan has plans of putting Marie in Liba’s place when the latter dies:

She [Liba] had forseen her daughter’s future.
I will need clean water... he had said, casually. *When you are gone*, he might have added.

It had not occurred to Jan that Marie must learn the ways of a Romni in preparation for marriage. He had clearly never considered the possibility that she might one day belong to another man. She was his daughter. His wife Liba would die before him: she was small and weak and her health was poor. When she was gone, his daughter Marie would take her place, to save him the bother of remarrying. Liba would die and Marie’s sole inheritance would be her father. There would be nobody else for her. She would never have anybody else.

(...) Her daughter, her girl whose bleeding had only just begun, was going to *become* her, identical to her in every way. There would be nothing in her life that her mother had not also had.” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 161-162).

Even though Liba cannot do anything practical about it, to save Marie from this destiny, she revolts internally “I will kill him, she thought, suddenly flooded with strength and purpose. I will kill him for what he is going to do with my daughter” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p.

162). In relation to the issue of violence against women in an oppressed community, Domnica Radulescu points out that:

While there is abundant scholarship on the subject of the marginalization and oppression of Romanians throughout the centuries, there is little work done on gender differences within Gypsy societies that reveals the mistreatment of Gypsy women by both Roma and non-Roma men. As it usually happens, no matter how oppressed and marginalized a group of people may be, there is always another group that is going to be even more oppressed and marginalized: the women of that group. In fact, history and statistics have shown that it is precisely within marginalized and oppressed groups that domestic violence is most rampant. (In: GLAJAR; RADULESCU (ed.), 2008, p. 197-198).

Marie's fate, however, will be a different one. In view of the 1942's Government Decree on the Preventative Fight Against Criminality which considered as officially asocials "Gypsies and *persons wandering in a gypsy fashion*" (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 165), local authorities are supposed to fulfil a quota of arrestments in each village and town. Therefore, in order to save the majority of the *gypsy* village of sixty-seven inhabitants, Karel Malik, Jan's brother and an informal leader of the Roma community of Romanov, hands in to the authorities his brother, Liba and Marie plus Shabba, a crazy old woman. From there, they are taken to the concentration camp, where Marie knows Emil. After the end of the war, they reunite and get married. Liba and Jan are still alive, even though they are both weak and, in Jan's case, mentally deranged. Besides, we learn that the stratagem of offering the Maliks in sacrifice for the whole village was not successful: with the continuation of war, all the other families were sent to a concentration camp in Poland. None of them survived.

The histories and concerns of women have been too long destined to be "footnotes of larger histories" (RUIVANI, 2016, p.72) according to Ranasinha's words on K. Desai's novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. Gender-oriented studies related to women in the Holocaust began only in the second half of the 1980's, in an understanding that the female experience was indeed different from men's. In the article "Why study the issue of women during the Holocaust?" Dr. Naama Shik indicates that there was strong resistance to such gender-oriented approach as "Jewish women were murdered as Jews and not as women" and that "[s]uch research, they claimed, could distort the overall picture due to the application of modern feminist research approaches that could not have been relevant to the period"⁶⁵. In this same line of feminist thought Deepika Bahri notes on the silencing of women in a capitalist order:

Those, however, who resist the usual logic of development defined by a capitalist credo – the subalterns of the world, particularly women – "cannot speak" in the sense that they cannot be heard or understood because they speak in an outmoded

⁶⁵ <https://www.yadvashem.org/articles/general/why-study-the-issue-of-women.html>. Accessed 3 June 2022.

vocabulary, a language inappropriate to this global moment and its logic. Caught within the available register of discourses, woman and her concerns have yet to find an audience even when she does speak. (BAHRI, 2009, p. 203).

Fires in the Dark stands out in its importance as it brings to center stage the resistance voices of silenced Romani women and their everyday plights to the narratives of the Holocaust/*Samudaripen*, adding more diversity and offering alternative points of view to the so-called “official history”. The presence of strong female characters who endure poverty, hardships, domestic violence and the unnamable experiences in the camp where members of the family die one by one represent the power of Romani women in surviving war and patriarchy. Instead of working with the female Gypsy stereotype, the fetishized orientalist images of the female body, we are offered representations and voices of Romani women during the war that embrace the fact that women’s experience is indeed distinct from men’s. This difference and this need for representation are crucial and we understand that they have taken a long time to finally appear in fiction.

5.3 Stereotypes, traditions and their interactions within the novel

Louise Doughty shows us a Roma group with its everyday problems, joys and traditions and having nothing to do with the Gypsy stereotypes. The narrative does not rely on the exoticism of the Gypsy figure. There are no types, but rather individuals. There are no mysterious events, no bigger-than-life villains, palm readings or seductive men and women: they are characters with their own stories who are struggling to lead a common life, in spite of all difficulties. Avoidance of stereotypes is also the avoidance of the political process of silencing the other: the other is not seen as an exotic creature, but rather as someone who is very much like me, who lives and suffers just like oneself. Ian Hancock in his article “Duty and Beauty, Possession and Truth: the Claim of Lexical Impoverishment as Control” explains that:

The manipulation by societies in power of the identities of subordinate groups is achieved in many ways. One such way is through discriminatory legislation, such as that enacted against the Romani people in almost every land, including the United States. Another is through media representation, both factual and fictional. This last category, the portrayal of Gypsies in poetry, film and novels, is the most effective in establishing such negative feelings because they are absorbed subliminally by children. (In: TONG (ed.) 1997, p. 115).

And, we should add, they are absorbed by adults as well.

The novel describes births, christenings (*a mulatsago*), marriages, domestic chores, councils (*a divano*) while offering glimpses of Kalderash traditions. For instance, the concept cleanliness versus being *marimé* (unclean) is present throughout the novel as a relevant topic to the Kalderash group. For instance, the unclean status of Anna after giving birth:

No man will be allowed near Anna for two weeks after the birth, while she is still *marimé*. She will not be permitted to wash or cook or perform any duties which might contaminate them. Instead, she will be tended by Tekla while she lies in the barn, feeds the child, sleeps and dreams of his future. When they are alone together, she will whisper his real name into his ear. (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 4-5).

Or on the *Kalderash* rites towards the dead:

Josef drew breath as if he was about to ask a question. Anna knew what it would be. He had asked it of her many times. *Promise me I will die in the open, so that my soul can leave my body. Promise me you will put coins on my eyes and mouth so that my ghost cannot return to my dead body. Promise me this.* It was his one great fear, that his soul would be trapped in his corpse after death and he would spend Eternity screaming for release. (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 99).

Ronald Lee in “Roma in Europe ‘Gypsy’ Myth and Romani Reality – New evidence for Romani History” calls attention to the fact that ‘Roma in the camps were unable to follow their rules of cleanliness, could not avoid contamination, and became totally demoralized. Women were raped and otherwise abused, and the survivors never fully recovered their image of self-respect.’ (GLAJAR; RADULESCU (ed.), 2008, p. 11). In the novel, Roma characters often mention their worries about cleanliness according to Romani traditions before, during and after the war. As Emil/Yenko, while living as a *gadjo*, mentally apologizes to his Ancestors “for his many recent breaches of the laws of decent behavior”, and that he was doing the best he could to “keep himself Clean” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 374).

The narrative also makes it clear that Roma groups are different among themselves and that traditions vary from group to group. This is fundamental in our opinion if one wishes to deconstruct the Gypsy stereotype. It is quite clear the effort to show that Roma groups are not a monolithic whole, where all members have the same ways and traditions. The novel presents us both settled and nomadic Roma, and it is interesting to see the interaction among such different groups and the prejudice and/or disagreements they have towards each other. Kalderash Vlach Roma are different from settled Moravian Roma, as Josef considers when he sees Emil playing with Moravian Roma children while families share the same ground between journeys:

Josef observed the group. He did not like his son mixing with Moravian Roma.[...] *I don't like him associating with that riff-raff. He should be learning Vlach ways from other Kalderash boys – but there are no other Vlach families round here, and if there were they probably wouldn't associate with us because we've become so used to Moravian ways. There is no one like our strange, mongrel group. What are we*

doing here? Why don't we go back to Wallachia, or Russia, where we belong, and stay put? (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 68).

Settled Roma are looked down for not being considered pure Roma by nomadic Kalderash groups, and vice versa, and these differences are not forgotten, not even in the concentration camp. When Marie tells Emil that her father considers Kalderash Roma as unclean for supposedly marrying *gadje*, Emil loses his temper:

'How dare he? How dare he!' Emil's hands were fists [...] 'Unclean? *Us*? The Kalderash are the best Roma in the whole world. Our women are the most beautiful... you, you don't even have braids! Our men can craft any metal! Copper, iron, tin... you live in a *cottage*, with whitewashed walls and chairs and tables. Tell your father from me, he can come to our block any day and stand in front of me and tell me I'm Unclean. I'll knock him to the ground. My father *died* in this stinking place.' (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 292).

At the end of the novel, when Emil/Yenko is alone with Marie in a hill, his prayer to God before taking her shows this divergence between groups – he will teach her how to be a proper Roma – plus the preoccupation once again with cleanliness:

'Sun and moon, bear witness. Witness this union, and tell God. Tell him I knelt to Cleanse myself and offered him this vow. Dear God, I hereby renounce my *gadjo* ways. If you give me Marie, and she is a virgin, I will live from now as a true Rom. She is not tutored in the true Roma ways but I will teach her as much as I can.' (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 477).

This dignity the Kalderash show of being Roma contrasts sharply with the contempt white people treat Roma groups. The relationship between Roma and *gadje* is shown in the novel as a place of tension. Josef and his *kumpania* friend Václav arrive at a village to buy supplies for the group after Emil was born. They celebrate the birth by drinking some beer at a local shop and end up sleeping in a field nearby. They are woken up by an Officer:

'So, *gypsies*, nothing to do but drink beer and doze, eh? You lucky people. God's favourites I'd say.' [...]
 'Good afternoon, Officer' said Josef stiffly, embarrassed that the man should have been able to approach with none of them hearing.
 The Officer looked at him but did not return his greeting. 'Where you might be going, *gypsies*?' he asked casually.
 Václav jumped to his feet. 'Officer, you must congratulate this man. As we speak, his son is being born.'
Never tell a gadjo where are you going or where you have been. If they know where you come from, they will close the road behind you. If they find out where you're heading, they will have a gallows waiting. [...]
 The Officer stood upright and grinned to show he wasn't fooled. 'The whole village will be out shortly, *gypsies*. I suggest you make yourselves scarce' (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 16-17).

Roma are feared and despised wherever they go. Local populations in general are often suspicious of nomads, and suspicion works both ways here; however the gradual dehumanization of peoples such as Roma or Jews was blown out of proportions with the rise of the Nazi Germany. If the other is not seen as human, it makes it easier to carry out the

extermination. According to Herbert Hirsch in *Genocide and the Politics of Memory*, in Nazi Germany Jews were massively portrayed as parasite or vermin, in a process of using language to promote dehumanization: “After all, killing vermin is legitimate and viewed as self-defense, because you are protecting yourself, your family, your people, your nation from contamination” (HIRSCH, 1995, p. 102), and the same applies to Roma. In the novel there are several instances of this tension between Roma pride and *gadje* contempt, and of cleanliness versus filth. One of the most striking passages is when Anna finally manages to be with her daughter Parni sometime after the family is split and incarcerated in the concentration camp:

‘Dalé... when the war is over, will I not be a *filthy gypsy* any more?’
 Anna kept her voice soft. ‘You will always be a Roma girl, *shei*, Who has been calling you a *gypsy*?’
 We are all *dirty gypsies*. That’s why we’re here. We’re here to be punished for telling lies and stealing all the time and for being a race that God hates, like the Jews. The Jews are even worse, though, because they killed God, in real life, only we just kill him in our hearts. The Germans look like God. They are big and have white eyebrows. We are being tested, and only those of us who have any God in us will ever be allowed out. And to have God in us we have to get rid of the *gypsy* inside ourselves and be decent and sit on chairs and use spoons and our parents are going to burn in Hell because they’re too old to use spoons but maybe if some of us Little Ones work very hard and pray very hard God will let us be non-*gypsy* and then it will all have been worth it, our suffering, and we will thank God with all our hearts and we won’t mind that our parents have burned in Hell because we will be glad...’ [...]
 ‘Who has said these things?’ she [Anna] said, but Parni shook her head defiantly, her lips pressed together. (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 226).

Parni’s discourse summarizes part of the stereotypes attributed to the Roma by the whites: they steal, they lie, they are savages who do not look like God; in fact, they are not worthy of God’s protection and will burn in Hell. Maybe the children are able to escape this destiny provided that they rip out the *gypsy* in them, i.e., they assimilate the *gadje* ways.

Fires in the Dark also shows the other side of the coin, though: how the *gadje* are seen by the Roma – an extremely rare point of view considering fiction written by non-Roma. *Gadje* are treacherous, full of themselves, greedy, and they are not to be set as examples on how to live. Josef thinks of the *gadje*: “White people. *Gadje*. *National* this, *national* that [...] How may one own the earth? Plant on it, travel it, dig it – but own it? *Gadje*. They would plant a flag on the moon if they could.” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 19). They are also seen as slugs, as Tódor Maximoff, Josef’s kin and leader of another Kalderash group, describes the *gadje*: “In South America, the *gadje* are black like us, and so poor, you can’t make a penny out of them. I like my *gadje* fat and white. The English are slugs. All you have to do is squeeze” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 51). Whites are ugly, as Emil asks his mother:

‘Dalé, why are the *gadje* all so ugly? Their faces, they are white and pudgy, and they have big noses and ears, and they are so clumsy when they walk. They are like cows.’

‘They can’t help being ugly,’ Anna responded listlessly. ‘They are born that way. You mustn’t be unkind about their faces. It’s not their fault.’ (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 91).

Whites are gullible too. Ctibor, a Bohemian farmer who made a point at employing Roma in the harvest of his fields, believed that his fortune and good luck was due to a magic spell a Roma woman cast over his lands in return for receiving food for her and her children:

She [the Roma woman] walked him down the path, the children trotting anxiously behind her, to where Ctibor had begun to plant his first one-year-old saplings in neat rows. She told him he must replant them at once, nine trees in a circle for good luck, and always use Gypsy labourers to pick his fruit. Then he would become a fortunate man.

Josef had not the heart to tell Ctibor that the woman was probably more concerned with finding employment for her people than with Ctibor’s future fortune. Ctibor swore that from that moment, his trees were blessed. (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 45).

This reversal of roles, where common stereotypes applied to Roma are applied to the white people is a strong feature in the novel. *Gadje* are thieves as well. During the winter, when Emil was a child and the women of the *kumpania* had to beg in villages to avoid starvation, a *gadje* woman offered Emil (and only for Emil) a bowl of soup. Anna felt robbed:

The woman was a thief. She had stolen Anna’s joy – her rightful joy, the joy of sitting next to her child and feeling happy in the knowledge that she had provided for him. Look at how he was feasting. And look at how the woman was congratulating herself. Thief.

[...] At church on Sunday, she would feel calm and satisfied because she had done a kind thing. She had fed a starving little gypsy boy a bowl of good strong soup. (Being good to a gypsy child got you into Heaven – whereas being good to a gypsy adult made you a sap.) (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 87-88).

Finally the *gadje* are deceitful. They are not to be trusted. Emil/Yenko reaches this conclusion after seeing the Jews being deported during the night in Prague:

We have never expected anything but death from the *gadje*. The Jews have lived with the Gentiles all these centuries, in this city, making things for them, doing business with them, marrying them, and where has it got them? A night stroll through the stony streets of Prague, a choice about which pair of shoes is better for the walk into oblivion. (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 369).

Emil/Yenko is quite aware of this: “I have lived like a *gadjo* for two years. [...] and I have learnt that they are every bit as treacherous as we were always taught. They would betray each other for a glass of beer” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 448). Even after fighting involuntarily as a partisan in Prague and becoming a kind of a Resistance hero, he knows that his place is not with the *gadje*. To live as a *gadjo* was only a way of survival, not something to be desired.

The Roma in the novel also feel guilt for attitudes they are forced to take in abnormal times. Josef feels guilty of putting his family in first place instead of his *kumpania*; as a *Rom Baró* he was supposed to attend to the needs of the group first, but he decides to leave with his family while the others prefer to stay “*What kind of man am I? [...] Am I a true Rom? A*

Rom's first duty is to his family. I must save my family. Yes, a voice whispered, and save your own hide into the bargain. How convenient to have a family. [...] A true *Rom Baró* saves his whole people. You are no true Rom” (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 133-134). Anna feels guilty of not being able to save her family, and she revolts against God, as developed in section 5.2. Emil/Yenko after escaping the camp is haunted by the guilt of having left his family behind:

They are dead. They are all dead, but I'll never know for certain, so they will carry on living just enough for me to be reminded, every day, that they are dead. Every time I have hope, for a minute, they will have to die again.

How will we ever recover? [...] Whatever happiness comes to us in the future, how will we recover from all we have lost? How will the world live now, with splinters in its heart? (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 466).

Memory is a place of torment. In this sense, Lawrence L. Langer in *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination* clarifies this tension between memory and horror:

[...] memory ceases to offer consolation but itself becomes an affliction, intensifying the torment of the sufferer. Or rather, the usual content of memory is replaced by the harsh events of life in the concentration camp, until the past loses the hard edge of reality and the victim finds that both past and future, memory and hope – the “luxuries” of normal existence – are abruptly absorbed by an eternal and terrifying present, a present whose abnormality suddenly becomes routine. At this moment, life becomes too much for man and death assumes the throne in human imagination. (LANGER, 1975, p.78).

Besides, there is also hatred. In his prayer to God at the end of the novel, Emil/Yenko shows his revolt. When he recalls to have killed an old couple on his escape from the camp he says:

‘Dear God, this is all I can say sorry for. I am sorry that I did not admit to myself, before now: I did it to live, but it was vengeance too. There is hatred in me. I think I will always carry it around with me. I cannot put it down.’ [...] Where was God? Where was he when they were all dying in the camps? ‘*Te sai vrakeren mange o Kham thai o Chon...* Sun and moon bear witness...’ He dug his fingernails into his clenched hands. ‘I am not repentant, but I know what I did. I know what it means. I am a man. (DOUGHTY, 2003, p. 477).

Emil/Yenko was dragged to this journey for survival against his will. From being the prince of the *kumpania* to a prisoner in a concentration camp, from a proud Roma to a *gadjo* smuggler, he was caught between two worlds –Roma’s and *gadjo*’s – and had to adopt and adapt to the *gadjo* way of living. However, Emil/Yenko got a second chance in life by going back to his Roma roots. As already demonstrated, *Fires in the Dark* does not work with the Gypsy stereotype. The Roma characters are not types who function as mere accessories to the plot. Rather, all of them are proud of their heritage while conveying the trauma of being targets of a genocidal policy which aimed at stripping them off of every single bit of dignity until their extinction. Stereotypes do not offer room for developing humanity and feelings such as love, sadness, joy and hate, and Doughty was wise enough not to use them.

CONCLUSION

While researching for the writing of this dissertation, I came across several blogs on the internet written by Romani people who offered lists of books dealing with Romani portrayals, both fiction and non-fiction. One of the lists that caught my attention can be found in the tumblr “rroja & ribbons”⁶⁶, dated 14 January 2017. It divided books into 5 categories, namely: “Romani Portrayals of the Roma in Literature/Good reads”, “Informative Literature by non-Roma”. “Mediocre Portrayals of Roma in Literature”, “Bad, Racist, & Outright Inaccurate Portrayals of Roma in Literature” and “Books Written by non-Romani Fraudsters”. Of course, lists are not comprehensive and involve a good deal of subjectivity of who is elaborating them. Nevertheless, it was interesting to see that 1) how this list was constantly repeated by other blogs⁶⁷, either belonging to Roma or not; 2) *Zoli* (2006), a novel by Colum McCann and object of my Master’s dissertation was considered a “Bad, Racist, & Outright Inaccurate Portrayal of Roma in Literature” (to my great surprise); 3) *Fires in the Dark*, along with *Stone Cradle*, was considered a “Romani Portrayal of the Roma in Literature/Good reads”, even though Louise Doughty has already declared that she was not raised in Romani culture and 4) how *The Eighth Sin* cannot be found in any of such lists, indicating that, maybe, this is a novel that did not stand the test of time.

It is a fact that for centuries Roma have been poorly depicted in literature and in other forms of art and media. Stereotypical characters written by non-Roma authors have been the norm, obliterating the diversity and richness of Romani culture. However, we do not believe that the answer lies on the total shunning of non-Roma authors from this field altogether. Specifically in relation to *Samudaripen*, we reckon that fiction written based on research, respect and care – and not on ready-made stereotypes – is of paramount importance, considering that only a few of the witnesses and victims of World War II are still alive today. Unfortunately the Roma, unlike the Jews, have never had an easy access to the media; besides, many of them had no interest in sharing their histories with the public. Consequently, direct access to their testimonies is not as disseminated as it should be.

In this sense, we understand that fiction has a role of not letting the *Samudaripen* history to be forgotten, considering also that interest on the war has not subsided. As David Schwarz

⁶⁶ <https://rrojasandribbons.tumblr.com/post/155861715348/books-about-roma#notes>. Accessed 14 June 2022.

⁶⁷ Blogs such as <https://bihet-dragonize.tumblr.com/>, <https://marsincharge.tumblr.com/post/173463335961/books-about-roma>, among several others.

points out in *Imagining the Holocaust* “As the historical period of the Shoah recedes, imaginative literature will help keep those events alive. Do we not know more about the War of the Roses and the history of Britain from Shakespeare than from Holinshed’s chronicles? If ever a past needs human shape, it is the Holocaust [...]” (SCHWARZ, 1999, p. 6). The fact that there are other fictional novels using Roma characters as protagonists such as *The Extra* (2013) by Kathryn Lasky, a book for young readers, and *Baro Xaimos* (2018) by E.W. Farnsworth, both written by North American, non-Roma authors, might indicate a movement towards the acknowledgement of such stories, even though some novels were more successful than others in depicting Roma culture. Evidently there should be more incentives and access to fiction and non-fiction works written by Roma; however, in our opinion, the more novels exposing the *Samudaripen* written either by Roma or non-Roma we have available, the better.

Still in relation to non-Roma authors writing about Roma, there is also the question of appropriation of the history of a people whose cultural traits and heritage have been constantly misunderstood in the media, and which, we believe, was the basic criterion of the aforementioned list. However, in view of the gravity of the matter – the Holocaust was one of the most traumatic events of the 20th century, a defining moment in world history and a central point to the “self-interrogation of the culture we inhabit today”, as put by Michael André Bernstein (apud SCHWARZ, 1999, p. 8) – we agree with Dominick LaCapra when he considers that:

Being responsive to the traumatic experience of others, notably of victims, implies not the appropriation of their experience but what I would call empathic unsettlement, which should have stylistic effects or, more broadly, effects in writing which cannot be reduced to formulas or rules of method. (LACAPRA, 2001, p. 41).

It is not necessary to be a Jew to write about the *Shoah*. Likewise, we understand that it is not necessary to be Roma to write about the *Samudaripen*. In both cases, though, this empathic unsettlement allied with a high degree of research and thoughtfulness are required so as to avoid the stereotypes already discussed, once this kind of fiction may give voice to voices that are no longer here. Besides, there is also the question that the Holocaust, in view of the dimension of the event, has become a globalized phenomenon and a rule by which other human catastrophes and genocides are measured; it stands for the “dividing line to barbarity” (LEVY, SZNAIDER, 2002, p. 102), according to Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder in the article “Memory Unbound: The Holocaust and the Formation of Cosmopolitan Memory”. Also in this article, it is explained that the representations of the Holocaust are now the focus of studies once it is part of a more comprehensive cosmopolitan memory which is not bound by State borders:

Half a century after the Holocaust, it is no longer the atrocities themselves that are at the center of attention (especially in light of the fact that the majority of surviving victims have died), but how the heirs of the victims, the perpetrators and bystanders are coping with these stories and the evolving memories. In other words, the recognition of the ‘Other’ diffuses the distinction between memories of victims and perpetrators. What remains is the memory of a shared past. It is not shared due to some mythical desires and the belonging to some continuing community of fate, but as the product of a reflexive choice to incorporate the suffering of the ‘Other’, constituting what we have referred to here as cosmopolitan memory. (LEVY, SZNAIDER, 2002, p. 103).

Such concept of cosmopolitan memory comprises the transformation of memory through time and generations while acknowledging the suffering of the Other. This understanding is in line with the concept of affiliative post-memory as explained by Eda Nagayama in her article “Pós-Memória e Trauma Cultural na Cotradução de *Infância Lustrada*, de Bogdan Bartnikowski” that:

The phenomenon of globalization, of displacement and collective appropriation of the memories of the Holocaust, would then take place not only in the macro sphere, of traumatic events and ethnic and national narratives, but also in the individual and social sphere, thus being able to acquire the form of affiliative post-memory, transmission mediated by documentary archives and intensified by growing cultural and artistic repertoires, production of varying degrees of fictionalization. The inevitable temporal distance in relation to the historical Holocaust imposes an effective loss of the possibility of a direct legacy of the generation of survivors and victims, causing the transmission to be necessarily mediated, either by the following generations or by the archives and repertoires available. [...] Unlike the second generation, those with affiliative post-memory are freer for observation and recreation, as they are exempt from an inseparable family bond; not being an inherited position, affiliation thus emphasizes its performative character, in which identification can be experienced as a subjective affect, but discharged from a negative inevitability of family, cultural or ethnic origin.⁶⁸

In this context, *The Eighth Sin* and *Fires in the Dark* can be considered fictions that contribute to the evolving of the Holocaust representations. Both are mediated by documents, either more explicitly or not, however showing different temporal distances from the actual historical Holocaust. *The Eighth Sin* was written only a few decades after the end of the war and of the discovery of concentration camps. Even though the novel was written by a non-Roma, it manages to bring to center stage some real Romani voices by means of the “items”

⁶⁸ My translation. Original: “O fenômeno de globalização, de deslocamento e apropriação coletiva das memórias do Holocausto, se daria então não apenas na esfera macro, de eventos traumáticos e narrativas étnicas e nacionais, mas também no âmbito individual e social, podendo adquirir assim a forma de pós-memória afiliativa, transmissão mediada pelos arquivos documentais e intensificada pelos crescentes repertórios culturais e artísticos, produção de variável grau de ficcionalização. O inevitável distanciamento temporal em relação ao Holocausto histórico impõe uma efetiva perda da possibilidade de legado direto da geração de sobreviventes e vítimas, fazendo com que a transmissão passe a ser necessariamente mediada, seja pelas gerações seguintes ou pelos arquivos e repertórios disponíveis.[...]. Distintos da segunda geração, aqueles de pós-memória afiliativa se encontram mais livres para a observação e recreação, ao estarem isentos de um indissociável vínculo familiar; não sendo uma posição herdada, a afiliação enfatiza assim seu caráter performativo, em que a identificação pode ser experienciada como afeto subjetivo, mas descarregada de uma negativa inevitabilidade da origem familiar, cultural ou étnica.” (NAGAYAMA, 2020, p. 660-661).

spread through the narrative. Stefan Kanfer employs fragments of actual testimonies and accounts of survivors in order to back up his narrative. He uses documents, in our understanding, so as to possibly overcome a much discussed ethical impossibility of representing the Holocaust in fiction, a strategy coined as docu-fiction by Valentina Glajar (2008). One should notice also that the novel reflects the time when it was written, where the main goal was finding and judging culprits and perpetrators of the Holocaust. A critic that could be made to *The Eighth Sin* is that the Romani heritage appears only as a distant and foggy memory of the protagonist, and that the Romani character described in the novel is a Roma created mainly based on data collected from books, not from real life. Nevertheless, we understand that Kanfer employed the tools available to him at the time to capture and translate the memory of an event – the Roma Holocaust – and to call attention to that specific group that was also persecuted on the basis of ethnicity. Kanfer was a pioneer in touching a subject that urged to be disclosed and remembered without employing the stereotypical images of Gypsies.

Fires in the Dark in its turn can be regarded as a work of affiliative post memory. The temporal distance from the actual Holocaust is greater and here we find more room for fictionalization. Louse Doughty focuses the narrative on the journey of the main character and his Romani group and how they survived the war – or not. Romani heritage is much more present than in *The Eighth Sin*, with the use of Romani language, besides focusing on the fact that Roma groups are different, have different traditions and many times do not get along well, adding more verisimilitude to the characters. While in *The Eighth Sin* the Roma group to which Benoit belonged to was not clear, in *Fires in the Dark* Emil/Yenko belongs to the Kalderash Vlach Roma. However, in both novels Roma groups are nomads, indicating that this trait is still quite strong in the minds of non-Roma authors. *Fires in the Dark* brings other points of view to the table when it gives voice to Romani women and shows how life can be when you are caught between a patriarchal society and war – that is to say how life is like when you are an oppressed minority within an already oppressed minority. It is important to say that female characters in the novel are strong and not stereotyped at all. The novel displays female characters that are no witches or seductresses, but rather poor, ordinary women who struggle to make a decent living. Even being confined in the domestic space, they manage to devise strategies for their survival and for the survival of their Roma group.

On the other hand, there are points to which both novels converge. Benoit and Emil share this sensation of being the last survivors of their caravans. Benoit describes himself at the end of the novel as a “madman, the last of the caravan” (KANFER, 1978, p. 285), while

Emil feels he “was the only Rom left in the world” (DOUGHTY, 2005, p. 285). They are the ones who were left to tell the stories of their groups: Benoit does so in writing (as an autobiography he leaves for his son); Emil tries to maintain Roma traditions by marrying a girl from another Roma group, something that according to *Kalderash* traditions would be unthinkable; however, in view of the circumstances, it became the only manner to pass on his Roma heritage to future generations. Both men learn that assimilation to the *gadje* lifestyle is a fertile ground for more traumas, though. In *The Eighth Sin*, we see the problems such assimilation may bring to an orphan Roma child. Benoit becomes a juvenile delinquent, a lost adult who spends his life trying to cope with both cultures while belonging fully to none. In *Fires in the Dark*, Emil adopts a *gadje* identity after he escapes from the concentration camp. Even though it was the only way to survive, he knew that fitting in the white world was not the answer, as the *gadje* are treacherous in his point of view. Living like a *gadjo* was never a solution a Roma should aspire to in both novels.

This feeling of being the last one alive is part of the survivor guilt that both men carry in their lives. They could not save their families. And they live haunted by the memories of their beloved ones who were murdered. Benoit tries to forget, but he cannot do it: “Memory stained the present like a testamental curse” (KANFER, 1978, p. 25). Emil worries about the soul of their relatives “Perhaps these woods held her [aunt Tekla’s] spirit too, joined with that of his father, aimlessly united in their misery: and Parni, small Parni, transformed into a malicious sprite. [...] Who else? Bobo: a small, plump demon?” (DOUGHTY, 2005, p. 376). The pointlessness of the deaths in the way they occurred in concentration camps leads the main characters to revolt against God. Both question where was God who let the horrid atrocities in the camp happen. “*Oh, God, where is God now?*” (KANFER, 1978, p. 72); “[...] Where was God? Where was he when they were all dying in the camps?” (DOUGHTY, 2005, p. 477). Amy Simon in her essay “The Modern Haman: Ghetto Diary Writers’ Understanding of Holocaust Perpetrators” in the book *Representing Perpetrators in Holocaust Literature and Film* observes that:

With no recourse to the notions of guilt or sin, and no God to whom one could cry out and reasonably expect an answer, suddenly there was no hope of finding meaning in destruction. If God were not ultimately responsible for the oppression, then it seemed clear that humans must be the culprit. Thus, the actual people responsible for the destruction were, for the first time, held accountable for their actions. (ADAMS; VICE, (ed.), 2013, p.126).

Revolt may be directed to God, but revenge can only be achieved against a human perpetrator. In *The Eighth Sin* revenge was sought against Eleazar Jassy, Benoit’s brother and a *kapo* in the concentration camp. Benoit carries out his revenge and kills his brother,

however, finds no peace of mind. In *Fires in the Dark* Emil tries to get his revenge on the *kapo* too, but he could not force himself to murder the sadistic guard Cacko. The outcome is different, but Emil and Benoit carry hatred in themselves. In *Fires in the Dark*, not only Emil, but also other Roma characters, such as his mother, express their fury towards the *gadje* and the hardships they are forced to endure:

The hatred she felt about toward that *gadjo* Cacko, towards all the *gadje*, was like a solid lump in her chest, a great weighty rock. She had always wondered why men like Václav Winter were so heavy with their hatred, why the venom towards white people made them so solid and hard. Now, she understood. She hated Cacko so much he had ceased to be a person: she hated all of them. (DOUGHTY, 2005, p. 256).

The novels present the other side of the story, i.e., what Roma think of white people, in a reversal of what is commonly found in literature, where the Roma are depicted as mere stereotypes for entertainment, exoticism, or for a mysterious flavor in the narrative.

Fires in the Dark and *The Eighth Sin* are novels that deal with losses. Losses of lives, of dignity, of faith, of culture, of future, and of the histories of an ethnic group who was targeted for extermination. In Kanfer's novel, being the last of the caravan meant exactly this: the end of a whole ethnic group in Europe; there is no future for the Roma, no possibility of passing on the legacy of a people to the next generations. The loss is complete and Benoit embodies the tragedy that has befallen on his people. In Doughty's novel there are losses too, however, there is also hope for the Roma, provided that they unite. Two groups that before the war did not mingle learn that the only way to resist was by bringing together their forces. Their resilience and perpetuation lie in the mixture of different Roma backgrounds – in this case the settled and the nomadic ones – signaling that perhaps excessive concern with purity, strict traditions and pollution rules may not be the best option to thrive in the modern, chaotic world. Instead, some degree of adaptation is needed. When considering the greater picture, one could interpret that the differences among groups should be worked upon in the name of a more important purpose: the survival of Romani peoples in Europe after World War II.

Even though Roma and Jews – the “smoke brothers” who “went up in chimneys together” (DOUGHTY, 2005, p. 463) – shared the same fate in concentration camps, the studies regarding the *Shoah* and the *Samudaripen* are in totally different levels. The history of the *Samudaripen* is still being discovered, analyzed and written. Testimonies of Roma survivors are not abundant, yet they can be found in the Internet through initiatives dedicated to maintaining the memories of the Holocaust alive, such as *Holocaust by Bullets*, a project mentioned in Chapter 1, or the USC Shoah Foundation Youtube page. Even with such ease of access, we believe that artistic narratives are also strongly needed, especially in this case:

fiction recovers these histories and avoid their oblivion. Literature complements history, as pointed out by Hayden White (2001). David Schwarz indicates that fiction is important because it keeps the Holocaust alive in our imagination, when memoirists have died:

The imaginative energy of Holocaust fictional narratives, transmuting facts in the crucible of art, has become more and more prominent a part of how the collective memory of the Holocaust is shaped and survives. As the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., shows us, it is when Holocaust history is personalized and dramatized, when abstractions and numbers give way to human drama, that the distance between us and the victims closes. (SCHWARZ, 1999, p. 32-33).

The novels at issue acknowledge the diversity and history of Roma peoples. Either by journeys of revenge or resistance, *The Eighth Sin* and *Fires in the Dark* present stories that add to the construction of narratives regarding the *Samudaripen*, making it a more approachable subject to the common reader, and being a source of information on the matter. The Gypsy stereotype is avoided in both narratives in relation to Roma characters themselves; however, when it is employed it functions to expose the ignorance of the *gadje* on the richness and variety of Roma culture and heritage. The experiences of persecution are conveyed through literature, bringing the Roma experience closer to general, larger audiences, shifting them from the realm of scholar texts and academic researches only.

The *Romanipen*, that is the Romani way of life as previously mentioned in the introduction, indeed constitutes a very resilient culture. However, it is worth noting that throughout its history there has been no real concentrated effort on the part of the Roma to build their own nation state, nor to claim a specific homeland or territory. Some scholars, such as Slawomir Kapralski, suggest that this historical persecution could well be a departing point for the creation of a modern Romani national identity, as it is a “tradition to which all Romanies alike were exposed and which corresponds with the Roma versus *gadze* opposition around which ethnic identity has been established, thus making it acceptable for all Romanies [...]” (SAUL; TEBBUTT (ed.), 2005, p. 210), and which bears a huge emotional appeal. As such, the *Samudaripen* would be its milestone, dividing Romani history into “before” and “after”. It is interesting to note that the Holocaust does not constitute a “clear history” for the Roma: Romani survivors were mostly illiterate; the ones who were literate were reluctant to remember and testify the atrocities experienced during World War II. However, these gaps in history could give way to the narration of a nation – a Romani nation - as Benedict Anderson points out in relation to this process of forgetting and remembering: “All profound changes in consciousness, by their very nature, bring with them characteristic amnesias. Out of such oblivions, in specific historical circumstances, spring narratives” (ANDERSON, 2006, p. 204). Of course the creation of a tradition is not an easy task to perform; however, it could be

a start for the construction of the *Romanestan*, the Roma state, a national homeland, even if a not a physical, geographically located one. According to Kapralski “The narrative of the Holocaust bears huge potential to serve as a cornerstone for Romani national identity” (SAUL; TEBBUTT (ed.), 2005, p. 211). In this sense, literature and specifically *The Eighth Sin* and *Fires in the Dark* could take part on such construction of a collective Roma memory: from anonymous footnote victims to symbols of endurance and resistance in the history of the *Samudaripen*.

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